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Modernism in the Prose and Verse of Ruben Dario

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MODERNISM IN THE PROSE AND VERSE
OF RUBEN DARIO

by

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VITA

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A perusal of any outstanding anthology or history of Spanish-American literature will bring to the reader's eye the name of Rubén Darío. A cursory observation will bring out the fact that he was the most notable exponent of the Modernist Movement. "Since the time of Rubén Darío, it has been impossible to leave out Spanish America in anthologies."  

The purpose the author of this work has in view is to provide the reader with a knowledge of this great modernist and the movement of which he is the father, and to attempt to show how he is the embodiment and actual prime mover of this literary movement cultivated by him and which has so greatly affected all of the Americas and, eventually, Spain, the mother-country of Latin America. A study of the Modernist movement and its position in world literature today is also afforded the reader, accompanied by a re-appraisal and re-evaluation of Rubén Darío and his position in today's literary currents. Modernism is understood by too few in all of its ramifications and phases. Few are cognizant of the fact that it is South America's own personal contribution to Spanish letters, a gift presented from the colonies to their mother. It was the publication of Rubén Darío's revolutionary volume of prose

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and verse, Azul, that signalled the definite intercourse of Modernism with the other current literary genres of the world and hailed its entrance and acceptance into European and world literary currents.

Darío is one of the most attractive figures in modern poetry. He is the outstanding representative of Modernism in that particular literary field. We are often prone to categorize writers into certain literary classifications and as belonging to, and writing for, a certain class or nation. This can not be said of Rubén Darío, who wrote for all nations, a poet of the democracies. With Darío's universality and overpowering influence upon the literature of our neighbors to the South in mind, it is hoped that this study will, by means of a more complete understanding of Darío and the movement he personifies, create a greater understanding of the ideals and accomplishments of our democratic neighbors, so necessary for unity and peace in today's world. We would like to look upon Darío as a man of the past, present and future; a lover of freedom and all mankind, a citizen of South America, yet the world his home and belonging to all. We are in sad need today of great literary figures such as Rubén Darío, who could do so much to foster better understanding and greater harmony between all nations and peoples through the medium of the pen rather than arms.
INTRODUCTION

The Modernist Movement, although not considered a definite literary school, and though revived in South America, is, in reality, a complete translation and acceptance of earlier and contemporary French literary schools, namely, the Parnassians and Symbolists, headed by a group of young modern poets in South America, led by the master of modernism, Rubén Darío, and which found its best means of expression in the form of poetry. The writers and poets of this new literary field, for lack of a more suitable name, called themselves modernistas. These young, modernist poets have been well defined by Craig:

"The young idealist of these days felt himself a spirit thrown... into an environment to which he did not belong. He had a soul above the sordid aims of his fellow-men, and his art and his ideals were things beyond their comprehension... Finding little sympathy in the world of men, and having none of the missionary zeal that would have converted them to his way of thinking, he naturally turned away and found solace in the world of the imagination." ¹

In his searching for a definition of Modernism, the label that has been attached to the works of these poets, Arturo Torres-Ríoceo finds that:

"As this novel poetry was neither classic nor romantic, neither European or American, it was difficult to know what to call it. Spanish Americans were sure it was something new, something very modern, and for lack of a more definite name, they labeled it Modernismo."²

"It is interesting to point out," says Isaac Goldberg, "that the 'modernistas' are not really so much innovators in this respect as they are revivers. They rescued Spanish verse from a slavery to a few meters by resuscitating others that had long lain dormant and by introducing French forms..."³

In Spain, Modernism is a term used to denote a movement in its world of letters which began there not long before the disaster of 1898, and still continues to develop. It is not easy to define, since nebulosity is one of its aims. Vagueness and nebulosity are the only two characteristics which make Spanish Modernism akin to that of South American. They are, in reality, almost two separate and different literary movements.

Difficult as it is to tie the Modernist movement of South America up with an exacting and calculated definition, Espasa-Calpe does provide us with the following:

"Modernismo no puede constituir escuela o tendencia literaria alguna, porque es propio de todas... viene a romper los moldes viejos y anticuados. En literatura la escuela modernista ha seguido un camino paralelo al tornado por los escultores y, sobre todo,


Modernism sprung from two deep-rooted and yet widely separated tendencies:

1) the desire of a young generation of Americans for a new artistic expression, and 2) the inspiration of certain European techniques. This searching for something new, as was the goal of the modernists, and the desire to cast off restraints are not unpeculiar to youth. In this case, the young poets sought to free themselves from the restraints of the Romanticists and the Classicists. Modernism presented them with the desired escape. Since France had greater influence among the South American literati, the Modernist movement took on the facets and tenets of current French literary movements.

However, certain events besides those of a literary nature also occurred which set the stage and made ripe the opportunity for such a genre to find its way into the literature of Latin-America and to further develop.

After its recovery from the Civil War, the United States took upon itself control of the hemisphere, so to speak. It controlled the Pan-American Congresses that met and "interpreted the Monroe Doctrine in a one-sided fashion." Meanwhile, the South American countries were just recovering from an epic of chaotic revolution into an era of peace and prosperity. With North America's attitude of supposed benevolence and protection, Latin

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America rightfully feared the United States. This fear and suspicion can be verified and detected in the writings of such men as José Enrique Rodó, José Santos Chocano, Rubén Darío and others.

The state of South America at that time is well expressed in the words of the Peruvian essayist, Luis Alberto Sánchez, "... mentalidad tolerante y pseudoliberal, una literatura formalista y bizantina, y una política oligárquica." ⁶

With the political sphere leaning toward nationalism, a small but potent literary element, prompted by devotion to their Spanish heritage, devoted and directed all of their talents and efforts against the new -ism that was being nurtured before their eyes. Coupling their ingrained devotion to all that was Spanish with what they had absorbed of spiritual and literary import under France's tutelage, a group of literary men renewed their interest in Spanish classics and by means of their works, tried to do the same for their countrymen. These men are the aforementioned modernistas.

South America was infused with a literary rebirth which, in the end, enabled it to discover its own authentic personality. The Hispanic nations of the New World entered into the currents of universal literature. The modernistas now found themselves champions of a movement of rapid growing success. The movement became representative of the cultural life of Spanish America. "Yet, this culture was definitely not indigenous in its origins

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⁶ Ibid., p. 79.
or its expressions; it was a European culture, shaped very largely under the tutelage of France."

Upon South America's liberation from Spain, French influence spread rapidly across the sea into nearly every phase of South American life. Journeys were made by the well-to-do to Paris where many attended schools, and others, after a brief stay, returned to South America with French statuary, furniture and books.

The point cannot be overstressed regarding the French influence upon this movement. Three French literary groups affected the South American writers and their works; the Parnassians, Symbolists and Decadents. They all were anti-Romanticists and realists. "They favored a more classic interpretation of art... refuge in the ivory tower, an objective attitude toward life." The Parnassians, though less influential, reintroduced the impersonal attitude of the classic school of pre-Romanticism days, and sought objective reality. The Parnassian poets were of capital importance to the development of South American modernism. The Parnassian frequently may not have been a poet but he never failed to be an artist. This fact greatly attracted the modernistas, who were eager to be artists of the pen. Leconte de Lisle, Baudelaire and Heredia taught their admirers how to employ a poetic idiom, how to manipulate a language as the artist his brush or the sculptor his chisel. These fine, technical points and beauty of expression, so perfected by the French, was a panacea for the new Spanish poetry of South

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America, which poetry, Arturo Torres-Ríoseco says, "tended towards abruptness in manner and was poor in technical resources."\(^9\)

The Parnassian influence is notable in almost all the modernists of Spanish America: in the _Lascas_ of Salvador Díaz Mirón, in the _Hojas al Viento_ of Julian del Casal, in the best works of Gutiérrez Najera and others, and especially in the _Prosas profanas_ of Rubén Darío. Parnassian poetry, with its decorative elements, sculptural images and martial rhythm, even today exercises an influence on several Hispanic American poets.

William Henry Hudson, historian of French literature, says of the Parnassians:

"The title Parnassian is in no sense descriptive; it arose accidentally out of the anthology entitled _Le Parnasse Contemporain_ and was, to begin with, used only as a collective name for the contributors to this enterprise; but it presently came to be transferred to the group of young poets who gathered about Leconte de Lisle in his salon, and were more or less in sympathy with him in his aesthetic ideas regarding the impersonality of all great art, the elimination of the disturbing element of individual feeling in the treatment of external things, and the supreme importance of form.\(^{10}\)

Between 1866 and 1876 the group, led by two geniuses of poetry in their early twenties, Catulle Mendès and Xavier de Ricart, attained great popularity. These two young men were greatly indebted to a famous young publisher of the time, who read and accepted their poetic attempts and published them in his

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periodical. With the appearance of their works in Le Parnasse Contemporain on March 2, 1866, the literary career of Mendes and de Ricart was launched and Parnassianism reached its greatest heights. The title of the official organ of the Parnassian group was a challenge to the old romantics of the generation of Victor Hugo and Lamartine, and an appeal to the Latin and Hellenic tradition represented by J. du Bellay, André Chenier and the living tetrarchat, Leconte de Lisle, Banville, Theophile Gautier and Baudelaire, whom the young men took as their patrons. Among other lesser known poets who wrote for the Parnassian weekly were Coppée, Sully Prudhomme, Mallarme and Paul Verlaine. With the passing of time, these latter poets became the foremost modern writers of their country.

The spirit and objectivity of the Parnassians, though often vague and obscure, did possess definite tenets and goals. Impassibility was the movement's catchword, and its object was, in general, the plastic presentation of themes admitting romantic freedom and colour, but excluding romantic sensibility and Byronic egoism. The method used by the Parnassians to accomplish said sensibility and feeling was a refined choice and manipulation of phrase, rhythm and stanza.

The spirit or formula of Parnassianism, "Art for art's sake," a phrase which they made popular, had its vogue outside of France in the later years of the nineteenth century, notably in South America, where it found a fine poet in Rubén Dario, and also in England, where it fitted into the reaction against the ethical preoccupations of the Victorian classics. It was at this time that South America was so susceptible to European influences and Dario and his followers were eager to accept it.
At the time Dario composed Azul, Parnassianism was the dominant foreign influence, but it was a Parnassianism that was modified by the writer's desire for greater personal freedom than was consistent with its principles and by the acquaintance that he had already made with the work of the French Symbolists. With increasing enthusiasm and fervor Dario continued his study of the new literary tendencies, and without any sacrifice of his own originality and individualism and without abandoning what he had learned from the Parnassians, he assimilated the new theories and gave them expression in his poetry.

Gradually at this time the Symbolists of France made themselves and their new literary movement felt, and they became very popular in South America. When the Symbolist poetry appeared in France, the poets of South America were adhering to the Parnassian formulae; consequently their assimilation of Symbolism was slow, and at times it only modified their works superficially. Ruben Dario may serve as an example. In his Prosas profanas he is a perfect Parnassian; in his next volume, Cantos de vida y esperanza, the Symbolist technique is evident in a few poems, but in his compositions of greater depth he still reveals the influence of classical form, of pictorial, sculptural effects, and of precise rhythm. And to the end of his life Dario remained fascinated by light and rhythm, by decorativeness and brilliance of expression qualities more characteristic of the Parnassian mode than of the Symbolist.

French Symbolism, (that of Verlaine more than that of Mallarmé or Baudelaire) penetrates deeply into the aesthetic sensibility of the Spanish American poets. The soul of the Spanish American permits easy access to the
symbolistic atmosphere of vague confines, its quality of fantasy and metaphysics, its undulating, subtle rhythm, its emphasis on musical expression and other poetic delicacies. The full and complete influence of the Symbolists, however, is easier to observe in the post-modern poets, among whom Parnassianism no longer carries weight.

The Symbolist-Decadent poets rebelled against realism and impersonality. Therefore, they did not agree with the isolationism, or "back-to-the-ivory-tower" movement of Alfred de Vigny as advocated by the Parnassians. These poets rose in action against the clear-cut precision and technical restraints of the Parnassians. At first they called themselves Decadents, but afterwards adopted the name of Symbolistes. The title was not well chosen, but it served to indicate one special feature of their new conception of art—its mystical or transcendental quality. "Their principle," says William Henry Hudson, "was to proceed not by exact statement but by subtle suggestion; to substitute impression for mere description, and instead of addressing the intellect, to evoke moods and feelings by magic words and the rhythm of verse. Hence their deliberate cultivation of the vague and obscure, their love of elusive fancies, fleeting sensations and half-realised ideas, their attempt to penetrate beneath the surface of conscious experience into that twilight region which in turn seemed to them to lead out into the infinite."11

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Ibid., p. 278.
Three French poets influenced the Symbolist-Decadents; Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine and Stephen Mallarme, all once obscure contributors to Le Parnasse Contemporain. The Symbolists, although a larger literary group than the Parnassians, were a more loosely connected group, due mainly to the fact that many of them were of foreign extraction. The movement owes it origin to their revolt against Naturalism as being too concrete, and against Parnassianism as being too clear-cut to satisfy young minds who had caught from Edgar Allen Poe and Charles Baudelaire, from Wagner and to some extent from the pre-Raphaelites, the "sense of the ineffable" and were seeking a medium for its expression.

Verlaine, as spokesman and the most exemplary of the Symbolist-Decadents defined the origins of their movement thusly:

"A certain number of young men, tired of always reading the same sad horrors, called Naturalistic... a little detached from the Parnassian serenity, took it into their heads one day to read my verses, written for the most part without any preoccupation with schools. These verses pleased them..."12

Verlaine, therein, proclaims himself the founder, innocent and without intention of being so, of the great literary movement.

Following the style and characteristics of Verlaine as found in his verses, succeeding poets used Symbolism not to declaim nor depict, and least of all to transcribe, but to suggest: to communicate in their lost subtlety

the most intimate and evanescent tones of experience. Charles Baudelaire himself, had been engaged in the same quest.

The French public was, at first, half inclined to regard the new poetry as a hoax. Yet, because it had an affirmative sense, it was in fact the adjective "Symbolist" which obtained the honor of designating one of the most glorious periods of French poetry. The public took seriously to a volume of parodies, Les Delinquescences d' Adore Floupette, of 1885, which made symbolic poetry popularly familiar. But, in the meantime, Paul Verlaine had entered the circle; he gave it a catchword: "Pas de couleur, rien de la nuance," and in his book, Trois Poètes Maudits, he introduced the young poets to their true masters, Rimbaud, Corbière and Mallarmé.

The year 1885 may be taken as the center or point of greatest popularity of the movement. It was Mallarmé who provided the Symbolists with their aesthetic theory and the most accomplished models of metric style, and in the entire course of the movement Mallarmé's weekly conversations were probably the most effective influence at work, an influence not unfelt in the British Isles, where it coincided with the aesthetic movement and the Celtic renaissance.

A very comprehensive account of the Symbolists and their movement is presented in the Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada:
la imitación, por tanto, perdiendo la libertad no menos que la novedad que alardeaban y cayendo en el mismo defecto que achacaban a los viejos clásicos y los románticos. Objeto que trata de expresar el simbolismo, lo ultrarreal, esto es, lo desconocido, la nada; medio, el juego oscuro, raro, desusado o nuevo de palabras o metafóras; nada para el objeto, oscuridad para la expresión.

Dividíase la escuela simbolista en tres: fue decadente e impresionista, con Verlaine; harmónica libreversista con Mallarme; mística con Masterlink. Luego llegó Moréas, con su neo-clasicismo, a enterrarlas todas tres. Dos novedades trajo el simbolismo. En la forma, la dislocación del alejandrino centelleante de Victor Hugo, suprimiendo los hemistíquios clásicos y poniendo la cesura en medio de una palabra y no, como en el versoclasico, al fin de la palabra y principio de pie; libertando, por decirlo de una vez, el verso de muchas de sus reglas y disciplinas, convirtiéndolo en una especie de prosa rimada o solamente ritmada.13

This French literary school had an overpowering and almost unbelievable influence upon the young, immature modernistas of South America, primarily because both groups were self-expressionists; "man is a universe in himself."14 They sought to sound the well of human personality, and to accomplish this, they used all of the arts of suggestion they could master.

"Where the Parnassians chiseled for the eye, they ( the modernistas ) chanted for the ear."15 Julio Cejador yFrauca called the Symbolists neo-idealists, which, indeed, the Modernists also were.

15 Ibid., p. 7.
Of the Symbolists, Goldberg says:

That modern French poetry which was destined to reform the poetry of Spain through the modernist spirit, which first affected Spanish America, was itself, influenced by Germanic philosophy. 16

The modernists developed a unique, literary genre all of their own, yet were cognizant of their indebtedness to the Parnassians for new beauties of line and form; and to the Symbolist-Decadents for a sense of color and nuance, a deeper susceptibility to the musical possibility of words.

French intellectual dictatorship gradually became absolute. Lamartine and Musset were read and imitated throughout an entire century; Victor Hugo was for the bards of our continent the emperor of the realms of poesy; Balzac was for our first novelists undisputed master, for they had not yet discovered the genius of Stendahl; and Theophile Gautier revealed to us a world of exotic beauty. The contemporary modern poets in South America were indeed greatly indebted to the aforementioned French intellectuals. "Under the renewed influence of the French, the Spanish American poet acquired a cultural consciousness," 17 This truth is very much in evidence in the works of Rubén Darío and many of his followers.

At this point it must be noted that the more vigorous and talented of the younger poets, seeking freedom from the bonds of tradition, began by recognising Rubén Darío as master, but having once gained this freedom, they

16 Ibid., p. 9.

were determined to retain it. They perceived, too, the danger that lurked in too close imitation of a poet inimitable in his own special field; they turned away from the artificiality and pose of too many of the modernistas, from their dilettanteism, from their French and Hellenic exoticism; they strove to cast off all foreign influence and struck out along a new path that led them back to nature, to actual life as they saw it, to racial and national inspiration. Dario himself was quick to see the injury being done to his reputation by a too servile imitation that he was far from desiring; "No busco que nadie piense como yo, ¡Libertad! ¡Libertad! mis amigos. Yo no os dejéis poner libre de ninguna clase." (Opiniones, 1906). As far back as 1899 he was aware of the harm being done the movement by the tendency toward mere artistry of some of those calling themselves modernistas. In his letter to La Nación for November 26, of that same year, he wrote; "Hoy no se hace modernismo—ni se ha hecho nunca—con simples juegos de palabras y de ritmos. Hoy los ritmos implican nuevas melodías que cantan en lo íntimo de cada poeta la palabra del mágico Leonardo: 'Cosa bella mortal passa, e non dell' arte.'"

Even before it became generally apparent that Modernismo was to lose its ablest supporters, the versatile genius of Dario was assimilating the new ideas in literature. Rather than remain the leader of a lost cause, he preferred to follow the lead of the able exponents of the "New Poetry." Moreover, the new movement struck a responsive chord in his nature; ideas and feelings that had lain dormant until then were now given an opportunity for expression, the results being the production of some of his most enduring
poems. Such is his Cantos de vida y esperanza, and outstanding work which
gives him an important place among the most vigorous poets of contemporary
literature.

Despite the fact that Modernism is a foreign contribution to South
America, and primarily a French one, it does contain decided marks of Latin
individuality, Arturo Torres-Ríoseco says: "Modernism... is not blind
imitation; rather it is an assimilation, a combination of foreign elements
in which a genuinely Hispanic American sensibility is expressed." The same
author says in a later place: "With modernism, we (South America) could have
become entirely independent of French tutelage, and in fact we did so,
partially."19

The young, fervent modernistas have not hesitated to ask themselves to
what extent has influence of French literature been beneficial to them and
to also consider what course South American literature would have taken if
deprived of the constant guidance of the French models. The answer seems to
be apparent and obvious. During the entire nineteenth century France boasted
a magnificent lyric poetry, superior in artistic sensibility and in formal
distinction, if not in profundity, to that of all other nations; her novelists
from Stendhal to Proust were masters in their genre; her critics combined
classical culture with an extraordinary artistic intuition. Not all of
these admirable qualities passed into Spanish American literature, but on

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18 Ibid., p. 110.

19 Ibid., p. 111.
occasion the disciple was truly worthy of his teachers, as, for example, were José Enrique Rodó, Alfonso Reyes, Rubén Darío and Eduardo Mallea.

Further study of the influence and benefits derived from the French models shows that French literature has served also to counterbalance the disproportionate enthusiasm that exists on the South American continent for popular and folkloric literature. Mistakenly enough, it has been believed by South American men of letters and laity that the strictly popular is necessarily the most strictly American. The indigenous legends may pass into refined literature, as certain Peruvian and Mexican novelists and writers of short stories have amply proven.

"On the other hand, then," says Arturo Torres-Ríoseco, "without the orientation afforded by the French models, our literature of South America would have remained chiefly popular, and on the other, it would have turned inevitably to the most current forms cultivated on the Iberian peninsula."20 Thus, the great influence of the French modernists upon the Latin American modern poets was potent in its effectiveness not only as an inspiration, but in actually the form modernist poetry was to employ. Modernist poetry would, evidently, not have attained such universal renown and popularity had it not followed the French schools.

There were certain characteristics of the pre-Modernist Spanish poetry which hindered its universal acceptance. During the second half of the nineteenth century Spanish literature notoriously lacked unity; in fact, it

20 Ibid., p. 115.
may be said that instead of a literary current there was only a group of individual writers, who expressed merely a series of strictly personal conceptions rather than a national aesthetic movement. What was lacking was a definite school of thought and a union of efforts and ideas to formulate a national school of literature. The French models served as an impetus and an example for the Spanish to follow.

To account for the wide divergency between the Spanish American poets and those of Spain, we should recall that the Spaniard of South America sees the world from a viewpoint greatly divergent from that of his Iberian forebears. The Spaniard of the Iberian peninsula, a tenacious regionalist within Europe, exalts the characteristics peculiar to his racial makeup. With reason does Miguel Unamuno affirms that Spain is situated in the North of African Spanish America, on the contrary, ever since the early days of its independence has tried to place itself in contact with all the cultures of the world and to profit from the best elements of each. Spain has always been reluctant to do so, feeling that within her own borders lay her greatest potentialities and a source for all of her literary currents. The cosmopolitanism of South America has given a very special and unique tinge to their culture, forbidding forever its return to the old Spanish forms.

This kind of an attitude led to literary emancipation, if you will, and has, as a consequence, caused Latin America to draw closer to France, whose type of culture, eminently cosmopolitan, has been welcomed throughout the world. The close affinity with all that represented France may be considered as the source of South America's universality and appeal. South America and her
modern poets continued in that eclectic position during the entire nineteenth century, and still retain it today despite the apparent temporary eclipse of French civilization. The defining elements of her personality have already been fused into a new whole. Today, no one can deny that the Spaniard and the South American are different men. The Spaniard is dogmatic, simple, severe, sober, impassioned, carved of a single block; the Spanish American is less decisive, less assured, more flexible, elegant, pliant, superficial, sensitive. He offers in opposition to the virile austerity of the Spaniard the courtesy of the Frenchman. Even the language, spoken and written, has undergone modifications in America. The Spanish American's manner of speaking is less declamatory, less emphatic than that of the Spaniard; rather it is softer, more intimate; the Spaniard is more dramatic, the Spanish American more lyrical. Modern Spanish American poetry embodies all that has been said above pertaining to language characteristics of our neighbors to the South. Arturo Torres-Biéseco, in drawing up his comparison says:

"There are basic differences also in the written language. The typically Spanish period of great sweep, constructed with numerous relative pronouns and conjunctions, is broken by the Spanish American into independent sentences. Spanish style, even that of such authors as Miguel Unamuno and Pió Baroja, who are so little inclined toward purism, gives evidence of strong racial flavor, inherent in the structure of the sentence and in countless archaisms. The Spanish style breathes of harsh landscape, of austere nobility. When a Spanish American writer tries to imitate it, as for example Rodríguez Larreta in La Gloria de don Ramiro, the result is an obvious un-Spanish concoction that gives us the impression of a French stylist attempting to imitate the prose of Santa Teresa, the mystic."21

21 Ibid., p. 116.
He continues:

The harmonious, musical, colorful sensitivity and vibrant style of such modern Spanish American writers as Díaz Rodríguez, José Enrique Rodó, Ventura García Calderon, and Carlos Reyles approximates far more closely the work of any French author of our century than of any Spanish author. The sensibility of our modernist prose is essentially French and it is best adapted to the complicated mechanism of South American psychology, now constantly undergoing transformation. To illustrate further the differences between Spanish and Spanish American style, one may note that where the Spanish American would employ a Gallicism as the logical solution to a minor linguistic problem, the Spanish writer would prefer to reconstruct his entire sentence so as to avoid the Gallicism. This phenomenon is indeed indicative of what is happening to a language and to the soul of two peoples. Unfortunately, it seems today that South America is completely divorcing herself from her mother country, Spain, and literature seems to be the potent mover in this sad disunion.22

Further evidence, and more illuminous, of the separation between Spanish and Latin American literature can be found in the field of poetry. When a Spanish poet wishes to introduce a new aesthetic orientation in his time, he resorts to the old national models; thus, for example, García Lorca sought inspiration in Luis Góngora, in the old song books and ballad collections, and in the dramatic works of the Golden Age. On the other hand, when a Spanish American poet seeks to create a new literary school, he resorts directly to the French schools, the Parnassians, Decadents and Symbolists. Rubén Darío, Herrera y Reissig, González Martínez, José María Eguren, Vicente Huidobro, Pablo Neruda, Xavier Villarrutia—in effect, all the poets desirous of modern innovation—have scrupulously avoided the Spanish tradition, adopting rather the Gallic intellectual attitude, target

22 Ibid., p. 116.
of the criticism of Juan Valera. In summation of his comments regarding the
disunity between South America and Spain, Arturo Torres-Ríoseco concludes:

One can readily see that modernism has never, nor will, attain great heights in Spain, for the movement is contrary to all that personifies Spain and her great literary and cultural heritage.23

The history, then, of Spanish Modernism must be written with a back-ground colored by South American poetry and prose, in the regions where the movement has had its inception and greatest success.

A great number of the contemporary literary historians today feel that France is losing her grip and influence upon Latin American literary fields. Arturo Torres-Ríoseco comments on this trend, stating:

If the influence of French culture is at an end on our continent we should lament an irreparable loss. I have great faith in the permanence of French genius; I hope that Hispanic America will continue faithful to certain dictates of its spirit and that it will maintain that democratic conscience which was created for our good by the 'philosophes' of the 'Encyclopédie'.24

Despite its decline in influence and import today, the new literary school of Modernism which developed from the French, is still popular and has many followers at the present time.

Although the movement is decidedly French in its origin and literary characteristics as has been pointed out previously, it has reached its greatest heights of perfection in South America where it was crystalized by Rubén Darío. "He transformed a language; he infused new life into the

23 Ibid., p. 117.
24 Ibid., p. 118.
The birth of the new literary trend has been dated, not by its beginnings, but rather by the appearance of the first epoch-making book of the new school. The date is 1888, when Azul, a volume of prose and poetry, was published in Valparaiso. This historic piece of New World literature was received with acclaim by many young writers, especially those of Buenos Aires who were ardent admirers of Dario and who adapted to the Spanish language the form and substance of the French Parnassian, Decadent and Symbolist schools of verse.

The popularity of Azul was assured because in it, Dario welded the tendencies and methods of all of the writers in the Spanish language into a product of his own. This adapting and welding of French style to Spanish American literature was done through the medium of imitation and translation. "These modernists were like the followers of Gongora; they desired to be understood only by the elect." They, therefore, followed in the footsteps, vague and nebulous though they were, of their French literary predecessors. Unfortunately, obscurity and whimsicality were too often taken by the less gifted "modernistas" to be the acme of art. Furthermore, the chief aim of the new modernist poets was to be original, and to make of poetry an art in itself without any dogmatic purpose. Naturally, then, these poets embraced the "art for art's sake" theories so popular in France. Yet, great success was attained by the poets in creating new poetic forms and meters. This

25 Ibid., p. 182.
Poetic revolution was felt as far away as Spain. That Darío was responsible for this unexpected influence of the new school upon Spain there can be little doubt. "The influence of modernism on the mother-country was effected in a large part by Darío's genius, rather than by the Spanish American poets as a group."27 Ancient rules of prosody were rejected by Darío and his young poet-followers who felt that art was a veil meant to cover the brutalities of life. So saturated by the French influence, they decried regionalism, believing their civilization to be European. This belief, of course, was, in the main, the cause for Modernism never being acceptable or popular in Spain, where regionalism and local pride predominated among the writers. Fortunately, the modernista poets who were to follow rejected, to a great extent, this absurd philosophy and built their poems on an universal Americanism.

Because these young poets sought the exotic, a very strong tendency among modernist poets, they revered the works of the French Symbolist, Paul Verlaine. Verlaine was the literary hero of Darío, and like faithful followers, the young modernist poets accepted him also as their master.

Although Rubén Darío was the true master of all modernist poetry, there were many excellent poets who preceded him, such as the Mexicans, Gutiérrez Najera and Salvador Díaz Miron, the Cuban, Julian del Casal and José Silva

of Colombia. "In their writings may be found almost all the new tendencies, but in none of them are the innovations so completely and definitely established."28

"It is a tribute to Dario's talent that he could gather ideas from so many diverse sources and make them into his own by means of his marvelous ability for writing verses. He was like a bee that could make honey from many flowers."29 We know that Dario and his followers were acquainted with the writings of North America's counterpart of Dario, Walt Whitman, famed poet of democracy. But it was Dario who was to imbibe, as the bee, all of the sweet currents of literature to formulate and establish the movement which he personifies.

Frederico de Onís says:

La semilla que él (Dario) esparció, fructificó en todas partes y por primera vez la cultura de España y de la América Española alcanzó verdadera unidad y universalidad hispánica.30

The importance of the Modernista movement lies in its universality. Writers in all of the Spanish speaking countries have been influenced by it, including no small number in the mother-country, Spain. Its effect upon prose has been almost as great as that of verse. The rhetorical result of the movement was the breaking up of the long Castilian prose period, into


short sentences connected more by the logic of thought rather than by grammatical particles. Certainly their introduction of unique figures of speech and flashes of imagination and imagery have left an indelible mark upon modern literature. All of these qualities have found their way into the works of Dario.

The poets of the Modernista movement wrought, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, as great a revolution as did Juan Boscan Almogaver and Garcilaso de la Vega in the sixteenth century. It is not surprising that this literary revolution should have been instigated by South Americans, because lyric poetry is their natural mode of self-expression. To their poetic minds, poetry has been:

the suitable vehicle of expression for their keen emotions, their quick sensibility to the environment, and their extreme sensitiveness to the conduct of other human beings. \(^{31}\)

The society and environment that produced the poets of this era were conducive to the development of just such literary products found at the end of the nineteenth century in South America. The young men found or felt a keen joy in living. The beauties of nature appealed to all of their senses with pagan intensity. The poets, desiring to express themselves in verse, found the Spanish forms too rigid. Because they turned to the French models which gave them either greater freedom of expression or a novelty of form, their fellow men scoffed at their verses and condemned their sentiments as immoral. Understanding now why these young, high-

spirited poets were at odds with their social environments, we can understand why they took refuge in an artificial world of beauty.

In retiring into an "ivory tower" world, it is not to be concurred that the poets did not defend their position as champions of a new genre and continue their sharp attacks upon their opponents, the principal ones being the traditionalists. Rubén Darío himself, in his Vida de Rubén Darío por él mismo, says:

Yo hacía todo el daño que me era posible al dogmatismo hispánico, al anquilosamiento académico, a la tradición hermosillosa, a lo pseudoclasico, a lo pseudoromántico, a lo pseudorealista y naturalista, y ponía a mis raros de Francia, de Italia, de Inglaterra, de Rusia, de Escandinavia, de Bélgica, y aun de Holanda y de Portugal sobre mi cabeza.32

The astute efforts and keen scholarship of Rubén Darío and his followers, so frequently overlooked by many, can be appreciated and more fully understood when we are cognizant of the actual accomplishments of these men. It was they who first assimilated the poetic principles of the French Symbolists and made of them an integral part of modern Spanish poetics. Umphrey cites some of the changes brought about by these bold innovators in the poetic field. He says:

Changes were brought about by a casting off of all rules of prosody that depended merely upon their age and traditional prestige for their authority, and, in the longer verse forms the caesural pause was freely shifted.33

32 Rubén Darío, Vida de Rubén Darío escrita por él mismo, (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci, 1915), p. 196.

Several elements influenced Rubén Darío and the Modernist movement, the theme of this paper. They were: religion and economics, as well as schools and people. The three French literary schools which wielded such a power over the new South American movement have been discussed.

The chief aim and hope of the new Modernist poets, then, was to be original and to make of poetry an art in itself without any dogmatic purpose. Rubén Darío defends this aim, and likewise that of his followers, in a letter written in November, 1899, in which he says:

We had this movement of Modernism in America before it appeared in Castilian Spain, and for very clear reasons; partly, it was because of our close material and spiritual commerce with the different nations of the world; but chiefly, because there exists in the new generations of American writers an immense thirst for progress and a lively enthusiasm, which constitutes their greatest potentiality, and through which, bit by bit, they triumph over the obstacles of tradition, the walls of indifference, the oceans of mediocrity.34

Therein, the purpose of the movement is ably and tersely stated by its father, Rubén Darío. Two years after the publication of Azul, while Darío was in Guatemala studying the works and style of Ricardo Palma, the Peruvian tradicionalistas, he clarified once again the movement and its characteristics in rich tones, describing Modernismo as "el espíritu nuevo que hoy anima a un pequeño pero triunfante y soberbio grupo de escritores y poetas de la América española." He continues to define the movement as:

La elevación y la demostración en la crítica, con la prohibición de que el maestro de escuela anodino y el pedagogo chascarrillero penetran en el templo del arte; la libertad y el vuelo; el triunfo de lo bello sobre lo preceptivo en la prosa, y la novedad en la poesía dar color y vida y aire y flexibilidad al antiguo verso que sufría anquilosis, apretado entre tomados moldes de hierro. 35

A full and complete understanding of Modernism, as expressed by the genius of its founder, Rubén Dario, is, however, still unattainable unless a study, though it be brief, be made of his life and the various phases, both mental and physical, he passed through and the influences he encountered in his numerous travels and experiences at home. Modernism has been hailed for its cosmopolitanism and universal appeal. This is readily understandable when we realize that cosmopolitanism and universality are the outstanding and predominant characteristics of the father of Modernism. His life, a composite of rises and falls, successes and misunderstandings, has been the story of Modernism personified. A close parallel is observable. Dario perfectly personifies the movement to which he devoted all of his literary talents and even his very life.

THE LIFE OF RUBÉN DARIO

Rubén Darío is one of the most attractive figures in modern poetry. The man impressed his personality upon the writers and readers of two continents.

Félix Rubén García Sarmiento was born in Metapa, Nicaragua, on January 18, 1867. He was of mixed Spanish and Indian blood. His mother, Rosa Sarmiento, took him to San Marcos de Colón, a small mountain village in Honduras. Due to the fact that her marriage was a matrimonio de conveniencia, a separation followed a few months after Rubén's birth. In San Marco he was adopted by Colonel Félix Ramírez and his wife, Bernarda Sarmiento de Ramírez, Darío's maternal great-aunt. There is record of his baptism in the Cathedral at León. After Colonel Ramírez's death, Darío went to live with his father's aunt, Doña Rita de Alvarado. She provided him with an excellent education, sending him to study under the Jesuits at the National Institute. His Catholic education provided him with certain standards and principles, which later in life were to be his salvation, although during his early manhood they remained dormant. "De su educación infantil lo quedó el sentimiento católico, que nunca perdió a pesar de su paganism y su escépticismo intelectual..."¹ But Rubén Darío learned more from his personal experiences, reading and travels than he did from his formal education which was intermittent and desultory.

A blending of the two bloods produced in Rubén Dario a literary temperament different from that of other Spanish writers. It is not surprising that Dario showed early signs of being literarily gifted. A manuscript dated July 10, 1881 contains poems and articles written by him and published in local papers. A perusal of this manuscript shows that even at an early age, Dario had read much of classical Spanish literature and that he knew French and Latin. In his autobiography, written near the end of his life, we observe where he made the acquaintance of good literature, both prose and poetry, and made several attempts at original compositions as a mere boy. A study of his early poetry shows that he merely imitated the poets of that period: Camoamor, Zorrilla, Becquer and Bartrina. Imaginative and impressive as he was precocious, he was deeply affected by weird tales told to him by servants. He was tormented by the mysterious sounds he heard at night in the old colonial house of his great aunt. "Darkness and death inspired in him vague fears that he was never able to overcome and the mysteries of life were enigmas that worried him continually." Erotic tendencies manifested themselves early and he wrote love poetry long before he had reached the age of adolescence. Lacking almost entirely the wholesome, normal experiences of boyhood, he may be said to have passed directly to manhood without the usual transition of youth.

At the age of thirteen, in 1880, Dario went to Managua, Nicaragua, where he was employed in the National Library, and at the age of 18 published his

first book, *Epístolas y poemas*. Yet, even before his poetry began to appear in newspapers and periodicals in his thirteenth year, his reputation as a precocious genius had spread beyond the limits of his native city and within a few years the *poeta niño* was known throughout all of Central America.

In 1881, he went to Salvador, and there, through the friendship of Francisco Gavidía, he learned of Victor Hugo and Émile Theodore Leon Gautier. This period of Dario's life is covered in his book, *Primeras notas*. His fervid aboriginal blood predominated over the Spanish in this work.

Rubén Dario's love for French poetry and his keen interest in the literary revolution taking place on the continent, led him to Chile, where he further studied French and was influenced by the works of Gustave Flaubert and Catulle Mendès. While in Santiago, Dario worked for two popular periodicals of the time, *La época* and *El mercurio*, in order to earn enough to live and dabble in poetic experiments. Journalism was the profession that appealed most strongly to him and the newspapers of Central and South American countries gave him his early experience in a profession that was to take him later to many countries of Europe. As a result, he was to become one of the most cosmopolitan writers of modern times.

Despite the excellent work done by Dario while working for the two Santiago papers, he lost his job. This can be accounted for when we observe how enamored he became with everything written and advocated by the French modernists, plus being affected by the luxurious life afforded him in Santiago.

At this time, Dario published *Los abrojos*, a small volume of poetry
published in Chile and which ably illustrates how greatly he was influenced by such writers as Becquer and Campoamor, the outstanding Romanticists. Like the Romanticists, Dario, too, assumed a great air of independence, independence of all restraints and authority, almost to the point of heresy, at least, in the realm of his spiritual life. Yet it must be kept in mind that Dario remained always a Catholic at heart. This is amply proved in Los abrojos, in which he says: "I am a wise man. I am an atheist; I believe in neither god nor devil, (...But I am dying. Send for a confessor.)"

In 1888 appeared Dario’s first truly great original work, Azul, which was to revolutionize modern Spanish-American literature, and the work was to establish the date of the birth of Modernism. Dario’s fame was now established and he was hailed as the grand poet of America and Spain, "the voice of the native-born crying out: 'America for the Americans.'" In Azul, which is a collection of short stories and poems, we see the transformation of a clever imitator of the older poets into an original writer of cosmopolitan culture. Juan Valera, notable among Spanish writers for his breadth of culture, said of Azul in his famous Preface to the book, "Si el libro...no estuviese en buen castellano, lo mismo pudiera ser de un autor francés que de un italiano, que de un turco o de un griego. El libro está impregnado de espíritu cosmopolita."

An opportunity to again take up the work he so much loved, journalism,


4 George W. Umphrey and Carlos García Prada, op. cit., p. 7.
was afforded Dario when he was officially appointed correspondent of one of the great newspapers of the New World, La Nación, of Buenos Aires, a position that he retained for life. This position supplied him with the means of livelihood for twenty-five years, and the articles and poems that he contributed to its pages, later to be republished in book form, fill the major part of many volumes needed to contain his writings.

Shortly after the publication of Azul, Dario returned to Salvador to marry Rafaela Contreras, a Honduran. While in Central America, where Dario settled after his marriage, he made his living by journalistic work on half a dozen newspapers. At this time Dario met José Santos Chocano, who was a man of far-reaching and clear vision. He filled Dario with a desire to write and propagate the feasibility of their being an interdependence of Saxon and Latin America. Dario's horizon and scope broadened and he was soon recognized for his devotion to the cause of all people and was sent to Madrid in 1892. He sailed for Madrid as a delegate of Nicaragua to the Centenario del Descubrimiento de América. While there, Dario met and was received by the great ones of the Restoration: Emilio Castelar y Ripoll, Juan Valera, Menéndez y Pelayo, Núñez de Arce, and Doña Emilia Pardo Bazán. A lasting friendship was established between Juan Valera and Rubén Dario as a result of this trip. As Nicaraguan minister to Madrid, he became a sort of literary lion in the Spanish capital, where the younger literary set, especially the Latin Americans resident in Europe, gathered about him as they had done in Argentina. It was while Rubén Dario was in Madrid that he received word of the death of his wife, so he did not enjoy domestic
happiness for long.

While in Madrid, Dario found decadence. New artists and writers were in demand; Jacinto Benavente in the theatre, Valle-Inclán and Pío Baroja in the novel, and Miguel Unamuno and Azorín in the essay. Dario found himself the father and master of the new young poets, Manuel and Antonio Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Villaespesa and Marquina. A product of Dario’s trip to Madrid was his book, España contemporáneas, and a great part of his poetical work, Cantos de vida y esperanza, his most mature and intense work.

With no suitable means of livelihood offering itself, he returned to Nicaragua, although an effort was made by some of his literary acquaintances to persuade him to remain in Spain.

On the return journey to Nicaragua, Dario stopped off at Habana, Cuba, long enough to make the acquaintance of one Julian del Casal, a poet and one of the precursors of the literary movement known as Modernismo. An intimate friendship arose and they even collaborated on writing some poetry.

Dario returned to the continent and went to Paris after his appointment as Colombian consul to Buenos Aires. However, he had now attained such literary fame that even though in Paris, miles from his homeland, he continued to be the literary leader of Latin America. This fact demonstrates the great literary power and influence Dario exercised over the Spanish world. Unquestionably, he was a man of wonderful ability and adaptability, the latter of which enabled him to gather his multifold experiences, his sentiments and his information from the most varied and incongruous sources, to weigh and judge them, almost instinctively, those that fitted into his
program. Soon he began to proclaim his cause almost as avidly as Santos Choano had done, announcing himself as "the herald of the natural unity of all the races living on the American continents." And yet, Dario never became the poetical champion that Jose Santos Choano long has been. Dario's interest, education and associations had always been and continued to remain Latin.

While in Paris at that time, Rubén Darío became a very good friend of an outstanding critic, Vargas Vila, to whom we are indebted for providing us with an excellent literary portrait of Rubén Darío as the latter appeared at that time. Vargas Vila writes:

He was still young, well built, with a genius's glance and a sad air. It seemed that all of the races of the world had placed their seal upon that countenance, which was like a shore that had received the kisses of all of the waves of the ocean. It might be said that he had the countenance of his poetry—Oriental and Occidental, African and Japanese, with a perpetual vision of Hellenic shores in his dreamy pupils. And he appeared, as always, sculptured out of Silence; he was his own shadow.

After his extended stay in Paris, and due mainly to lack of funds, Dario departed for Buenos Aires where he was consul. The literary circles of Argentina gave him a cordial welcome. The poetry that he had already published and the articles he was contributing to La Nación as regular correspondent, gained him a warm reception. A series of critical studies of the French Decadents and Symbolists and of some of the more individualistic older poets, such as Edgar Allen Poe, were already appearing in La Nación;

5 Isaac Goldberg, op. cit., p. 117.
collected into book form with the title Los raros, they established his reputation among the modernistas as an authoritative critic and as a master of Spanish prose.

Shortly after the outbreak of the European War, Dario, broken down in health, visited New York as a guest lecturer at Columbia University. He then went on to Guatemala, where he was royally and enthusiastically received, and hailed as the bard of South America. But, unable to stand the fatigue of public receptions, his visit was shortened upon doctor's advice and he was hurried to Nicaragua in a dying condition.

Although not fifty years old at the time of his death, Dario had been, for a quarter of a century, the foremost literary figure in Latin America. His genius was naturally cosmopolitan, and his long residence in Buenos Aires, Madrid and Spain largely accentuated this cosmopolitanism. Literary and scientific reciprocity between all of the countries of the Western hemisphere he saw coming in the not distant future and he was clear sighted enough to see that Latin America was destined to get more out of it than English-speaking America. In Edgar Allen Poe, Walt Whitman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Nathaniel Hawthorne he recognized spirits kindred to those of Latin America yet different; and from all of them he learned to remodel the conventional Spanish rhythm and to give it new forms and greater life and variety. Though Dario carried the flag of reform yet few Spanish poets have been truer and more fervid interpreters of Latin life and culture than he, who had drunk deeply at the fountains of the two mothers of the Latin races.
Darío, himself, left us many personal accounts of his life. Beside those already mentioned, he wrote Peregrinaciones in 1901, which is an account of his travels in Italy. In La vida de Rubén Darío escrita por él mismo, he preserves for posterity the charm of many a fleeting moment of his unique and adventurous life.

After 1896, when Darío published Prosa profanas, he was hailed as the greatest poet in the language since Quevedo. However, around 1920, the inevitable reaction against his glory set in. Fortunately enough, Rubén Darío was already dead and did not have to suffer further because of the New Worldists who began to decry his literary works and efforts. However, Darío's admirers were many and even until today they are fascinated by his colorful imagery, his wealth of literary allusions, his verbal felicity, and the boundless variety, flexibility and rhythmical skill of his verse, in which he surpasses any other poet in the language and becomes a peer of Algernon Swinburne in England.

Darío's career as a poet may be said to end with the year 1910. His health was giving way rapidly under the great strain of his feverish activities and dissipations. Worried by the increasing difficulty of making a living by his pen, lacking the peace and quiet of domestic life at an age when they become more essential to happiness, he lost his zest for life and became more interested in his past achievements than new enterprises.

His hurried trip back to Nicaragua, which was made in a dying condition, ended with his death on February 6, 1916. The poet of the Americas had reached his native country, there to be buried in the soil he loved so
An anonymous tribute has been written concerning Rubén Darío, which aptly portrays for us, in a few terse, choice words, his dual personality and philosophy of life:

Según todos los que le conocieron, fue Darío un hombre fundamentalmente bueno, un niño grande, cuyos errores y des- arreglos procedían de su misma ingenuidad y exaltación sentimental, de típica inadaptación genial. Era timido y audaz, místico y sensual, amante del placer y temeroso de la muerte, católico y pagano, noble y a menudo abyecto, inclinado al reposo familiar y siempre errante...6

6 Rosenberg and Lowther, op. cit., p. 17.
THE PROSE AND POETRY OF DARIO

Today, the thirty-four years that have passed since the death of Ruben Dario afford a perspective through which we may view his prose and poetry afresh. It is in the field of poetry that the fame of Ruben Dario rests. Arturo Torres-Ríoscco says: "I have always maintained that Dario is the great poet of our continent and one of the most eminent in the Spanish language."

Dario's eminence and popularity is due not only to his new poetry but also to the many innovations in rhyme and versification initiated and renovated by him. These are commented upon with the poems as they are studied.

Unfortunately, Dario is known essentially for his most superficial poems, for those in which there is more external luster than profound sensibility, more beauty of form than vital vibration. For example, we may suggest "La bailerina de los pies desmudos," "El clavicordio de la abuela," "Cyrano en España," "El faisán" and "El reino interior"; all very beautiful poems, but lacking in the anguish, the tremors of life.

Dario was more, however, than a poet of form and cold, unemotional luster. Closer study of some of his greatest and most profound works show

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1 Arturo Torres-Ríoscco, The Epic of Latin American Literature, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 120.
that he, like Verlaine, succeeded at times in penetrating the innermost recesses of the soul, in revealing the most intimate, most subtle emotions, and in expressing them without rhetoric, in the simple communication of sentiment. He created poetry of enduring beauty; even as early as in his Proses profanes, in which Modernism reached its peak, he gives evidence of that deeper, truer type of composition. An example:

**DICE MIA**

Mí pobre alma palida
era una crisálida.
Luego mariposa
de color de rosa.
Un ceño inquieto
dijo mi secreto...
¿Has sabido tu secreto un día?
¡Oh Mia!
Tu secreto es una
melodía de un rayo de luna..."
"¡Una melodía?"

The depth, spiritual and literary beauty of Dario is perceptible in other of his works. He sought an interpretation of the designs of God in natural manifestations, approaching thus a kind of modern mysticism. Dario was always the exponent of the cultivation of internal rhythm as opposed to profane clamor. In fact, he was the profound, philosophical, carefully scrutinizing poet that González Martínez (who imitated Rubén Dario) demanded in his "Tuercole el cuello al cisne"; for Dario in the following sonnet reaches the same heights as the Mexican poet, Martínez:

Ama tu ritmo, y rima tus acciones
bajo tu ley, así como tus versos:
crea un universo de universos,
y tu alma una fuente de canciones.
La celeste unidad que presupones
hará brotar en ti mundos diversos,
y al resonar tus números dispersos
pitagoriza en tus constelaciones.

Escucha la retórica divina
del pájaro del aire y la nocturna
irradiación geométrica adivina;
mata la indiferencia taciturna
y engarza perla y perla cristalina
en donde la verdad vuela su urna.

Dario's poetry, likewise, serves as a mode for successive poets to follow and because of its imaginative and esoteric themes, an inspiration for many literary masterpieces of Modernism. Pedro Salinas says: "La poesía de Rubén Darío en sus seguidores podría servir como una maravillosa muralla de irrealidades y placeres de la imaginación que aislaría al escritor de las aflicciones inmediatas que le rodeaban." Dario's works, both prose and poetry, also serve to reconstruct a picture of the times in which he lived. His works can very readily be appraised and considered in the light of their aesthetical, historical and social significance.

The first published works of this literary genius appeared in a review entitled El Ensayo, published in 1880. Speaking of this review and the works in it, Darío wrote: "Están los primeros versos en una revista titulada El Ensayo, publicada en mal papel, con tipos de imprenta deplorables...." He further on continues: "Son estos (versos) con los publicados en el diario El Termómetro, los primeros versos literarios míos."
That writing and composing verse came naturally to Darío as a child is evident, for in his autobiography, Darío puts forth the question, as though foreseeing that it will be asked in the years to come, "¿A que edad escribí mis primeros versos?" He, himself, responds, "No lo recuerdo precisamente; pero ello fue harto temprano... No he podido recordar ninguno..., pero sí sé que eran versos, versos brotados instintivamente. Yo nunca aprendí a hacer versos. Ello fue en mí organico, natural, nacido."

The effect of Darío's style and themes was almost immediate upon its readers. His works were as soothing balm and the peace and serenity which pervaded the works affected the readers. Arturo Torres-Ríoseco says: "A sus lectores deleitaba el ensueño romántico (habían leído mucho a Beóquer), la calida voz, parisina, la elegante decoración barroca, el término poético con perfume de rosas y sabor de fruta. El dulce susurro de su verso era como brisa de mar de trópico, como rocío de seda."5

Darío seemed to penetrate the innermost recesses of the reader's soul and mind. In this sense he was like Paul Verlaine. Torres-Ríoseco states: "Como Verlaine, Darío penetró a veces los secretos más hondos de la sensibilidad, las pequeñas emociones más íntimas, y las expresó sin retórica, en la simple comunicación del sentimiento. Poesía pura de una belleza eterna."6

4 Ibid., p. 49.
6 Ibid., p. xxiii.
That Dario does not fulfill the same role today as a penetrating and universally read and understood poet is, in a great measure, due to the reader rather than the poet and his works. Torres-Ríosco says: "Rubén Dario no le llenó el gusto al lector de hoy, pero parte de la culpa es del lector y no del poeta." 7 He further states causes for Dario's loss of popularity with today's reading public. "Dario no fue poeta social; no cultivó el tema negro; no fue poeta católico aunque fue hombre católico; no fue ni siquiera poeta democrático... y por eso Dario no es el poeta favorito de los hispanoamericanos de hoy." 8

Many contemporary Latin American authors and critics feel that Dario will return to his former literary position with the passing of time and after his works have mellowed and taken on a more mature aspect. That he ever will be for the reading public what he was for his own generation is doubtful. For them he was, says Torres-Ríosco, "fué para la generación del año veinte un poeta artificial, cortesano, afrancesado, extraño a la vida de su continente." 9

Dario has been classified as a poet of three types: social, classical and Catholic. The social poet is most in evidence in Cantos de vida y esperanza. Arturo Torres-Ríosco, speaking of the success of this work after its publication in 1905, says of Dario, "Dario se ha transformado en poeta

7 Ibid., p. xxiii.
8 Ibid., p. xxii.
9 Ibid., p. xxii.
social, en el alto significado de esta palabra. Expresa una honda inquietud continental en su "Salutación del Optimista" y "A Roosevelt" y ya no se puede decir de él que no sea el poeta de América."10

A ROOSEVELT

¡Es con voz de la Biblia, o verso de Walt Whitman, que habría que llegar hasta ti, cazador! Primitivo y moderno, sencillo y complicado, con un algo de Washington y cuatro de Nemrod! Eres los Estados Unidos, eres el futuro invasor de la América ingenua que tiene sangre indígena, que aún reza a Jesucristo y aún habla en español.

Eres soberbio y fuerte ejemplar de tu raza; eres culto, eres hábil; te opones a Tolstoy. Y domando caballos, o asesinando tigres, eres un Alejandro-Nabucoedmosor. (Eres un Profesor de Energía como dicen los locos de hoy.)

Crees que la vida es incendio, que el progreso es erupción; que en donde pones la bala el porvenir pones.

No.

Los Estados Unidos son potentes y grandes. Cuando ellos se extremen hay un hondo temblor que pasa por las vértebras enormes de los Andes. Si clamáis se oye como el rugir del león. Ya Hugo a Grant lo dijo:—Las estrellas son vuestras.— (Apenas brilla, alzándose, el argentino sol, y la estrella chilena se levanta...) Sois ricos. Juntaís al culto de Hércules el culto de Mammon; y alumbrando el camino de la fácil conquista, la Libertad levanta su antorcha en Nueva-York.

Mas la América nuestra, que tenía poetas desde los viajos tiempos de Netsahualcoyotl, que ha guardado las huellas de los pies del gran Baco; que el alfabeto pánico en un tiempó aprendió;

10 Ibid., p. xxv.
que consultó los astros, que conoció la Atlántida, cuyo nombre nos llega resonando en Platón; que desde los remotos momentos de su vida vive de luz, de fuego, de perfume, de amor; la América del grande Moctezuma, del Inca, la América fragante de Cristóbal Colón, la América católica, la América española, la América en que dijo el noble Guatemal:—Yo no estoy en un lecho de rosas—; esa América que tiembla de huracanes y que vive de amor, hombres de ojos sajones y alma barbara, vive. Y sueña. Y ama, y vibra; y es la hija del Sol. Tened cuidado, ¡Vive la América española! Hay mil cachorros sueltos del León español. Se necesitaría, Roosevelt, ser, por Dios mismo, el riflere terrible y el fuerte cazador para poder tenemos en vuestras fieras garras.

Y, pues contáis con todo, falta una cosa; ¡Dios!

In this ode we find the Spanish-American feeling toward the United States given full expression. Dario is here a social-minded poet, par excellence. The poem, equally vigorous in form and content, voices the poet's personal opinion as well as South America's widespread suspicion of America's imperialistic tendencies in the first years of the century. "Tened cuidado. ¡Vive la América española! Hay mil cachorros sueltos del León español." If physical strength be lacking, God will protect that part of America, "que aún reza a Jesucristo y aún habla español." Personally, Dario had no animosity for Roosevelt; indeed, "in Todo al vuelo" he speaks of him as "a marvelous example of mankind, free and untamed." The point of view taken by Dario in this poem, the Latin American view of the United States, was the natural reaction to the later developments of the Monroe Doctrine. It was not the first expression of this feeling, but it is the first in which a really great writer gave it the weight of his personal
prestige. The fear of American "imperialism" had recently received great impetus from the acquisition by the United States of the concession to build a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. Dario eulogizes, as he himself says, "the solidarity of the Spanish American spirit in face of possible imperialistic movements of the men of the North."11

In view of these facts it becomes obvious that the references in the first line to the Hebrew prophets and to Walt Whitman are ironical, referring to the alleged Pharisaism of the New England politicians and to the Democracy lauded by Walt Whitman, which Dario disliked intensely. Dario established his fame as a social poet with the publication of this outstanding literary piece.

In 1910, when Dario published his marvelous "Poema del Otoño," he revealed so perfectly his understanding of an dexterity with the poetic idiom. Discussing that poem, Arturo Torres-Rioseco says, "...bien podria ser considerado nuestro poeta clásico."12 This work may be compared favorably with the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam; it is a song of pagan optimism, an appeal to eternal youth and love. Lapidary strophes of exceptional lyricism succeed each other in amazing profusion. Forgetful of his old sorrows, Dario exclaims jovially:

Y no obstante la vida es bella,
por poseer
la perla, la rosa, la estrella,
y la mujer.


The overwhelming beauty of life makes him remark in an exaltation of crystalline purity:

Y sentimos la vida pura,
clar, real,
cuando la envuelve la dulzura primaveral.

Dario's "Poema del Otoño" will remain the loftiest contribution of aesthetic sensibility from a continent which has inherited a great deal of the pagan temperament of Greece.

Dario's renown as a Catholic poet, came, if at all, after the publication of his poem, "Lo Fatal." And yet, his Catholicity is of a different strain than that to which we are accustomed, for Dario was never a fervent Catholic, rather, however, he was a nominal one. His consciousness of original sin, his desire to encounter the living God, almost the human God, his absurd persistence in attempting to penetrate the ultimate mysteries of life, and his terror of death never gave him peace. His existence was one of inner torment, and upon giving expression to the fearful torment that reigned within him he rose to great poetic heights. Few poems can equal the following in dramatic intensity and aesthetic vision:

**LO FATAL**

Dichoso el árbol que es apenas sensitivo,
y más la piedra dura porque ésa ya no siente,
pues no hay dolor más grande que el dolor de ser vivo,
ni mayor pesadumbre que la vida consciente.
Ser, y no saber nada, y ser sin rumbo cierto,
y el temor de haber sido y un futuro terror...
Y el espanto seguro de estar mañana muerto,
y sufrir por la vida y por la sombra y por
lo que no conocemos y apenas sospechamos,
y la carne que tienta con sus frescos racimos,
y la tumba que aguarda con sus funébres ramos, 
y no saber adónde vamos, 
ni de dónde venimos!

In justice, Dario must be classified a religious poet, as he has been, although this fact is often overlooked. He was imately Christian and it can be well understood what he terms "the hopeless despair, the utter futility of a struggle with the infinite, in which the efforts of man are as fragile as butterfly wings, and the rhythm of his heart as potent as the descent of a snowflake." The simple soul redeems man, whereas the covetous, envious nature harbors a nest of burrowing moles. Embued with a delightful pantheism, the lofty soul may discern the turbulent music of the world in the twilight, or even in the pupil of a cow's eye.

In Dario the philosophy of pantheism and Spanish mysticism are tinged with Oriental fatalism. This is observed in the following verse by Dario:

Ay, triste del que un día en su eafinge interior pone los ojos e interroga. Esta perdido. 
Ay, del que pide eurekas al placer o al dolor. 
Dos dioses hay, y son Ignorancia y Olvido. 
Lo que el árbol desea decir y dice al viento 
y lo que el animal manifiesta en su instinto, 
cristalizamos en palabra y pensamiento. 
Nada más que maneras expresan lo distinto.

But actually, Dario was the first to forget his own philosophy, for neither through this pantheism nor through his orthodox Catholicism did he ever achieve the tranquility or the confidence of the mystics.

As Dario has been classified by his critics as three kinds of a poet, social, classic and Catholic, so have his works been divided into three phases or stages, each marked by the publication of an outstanding literary work. The first period or phase began with the appearance of Azul, a small
volume of poetry and prose. It was Dario's first important contribution to literature. It was published in Chile in 1888, and it had the rare good fortune to attract the attention of the Spanish critic and novelist, Juan Valera, whose weekly articles in El Imparcial of Madrid were awakening a new interest in Spanish American literature. Two of these articles, written in the form of letters addressed to Spanish American writers and published the following year in book form as Cartas americanas, dealt with Azul, and so penetrating was Valera's criticism, both favorable and unfavorable, that it established in a great part, the fame of the work.

In his famous Preface to Azul, Valera states that the title of the work was not appropriate. He criticizes Dario for using it and for copying from the French. The French motto, "L'art, c'est l'azur!", used by Dario seemed, to Valera, an empty phrase, for Valera asks: "Why is art blue, rather than green, red or yellow?" Dario responded in his Historia de mis libros that he did not know the famous Huguesque phrase when he wrote Azul. He says:

although I was acquainted with the musical stanza from
Les Chantiments:

"Adieu, patrie
L'onde est en furie!
Adieu patrise,
Azur!"

But blue was to me the color of dreams, the color of art, a Hellenic and a Homeric color, the coeruleum which in Pliny is the simple color resembling that of the heavens and the sapphire..."\(^{13}\)

Juan Valera was impressed by the Gallic qualities of Dario's style, especially of his poetry. As his language was excellent Castilian, Valera termed Dario's Gallicism mental rather than verbal. *Azul* was a pure work of art with the stamp of originality. Though it showed that its author was saturated with the most extreme type of French literature, he imitated no one writer. His adoration of nature was pantheistic. And though, at times, there was an exuberance of sensual love, as in the poems on the seasons, there was something religious about that love.

Valera could not escape commenting upon Dario's outstanding characteristic, his cosmopolitanism; so profound is the *espiritu cosmopolita* that pervades the whole book that Valera can hardly believe that it is the work of a young man who had never been out of Central America except for a short residence in Chile. (At this time Dario had not begun his travels to Europe and throughout South America.)

This cosmopolitanism had been gained, apparently, through the study of contemporary French literature. No Spanish writer, in the opinion of Juan Valera, had so completely assimilated the spirit of France. In the Preface to *Azul* he says:

Ninguno de los hombres de letras de esta Península, que he conocido yo, con más *espiritu cosmopolita*, y que mas largo tiempo han residido en Francia, y que han hablado mayor el francés y otras lenguas extranjeras, me ha parecido nunca tan compenetrado del *espiritu* de Francia como Ud. me parece ...Veo, pues, que no hay autor en castellano más francés que Ud. Y lo digo para afirmar un hecho, sin elogio y sin censura. En todo caso, más bien lo digo como elogio. Yo no quiero que los autores no tengan carácter nacional; pero yo no puedo exigir de Ud., que se nicaragüense, porque ni hay ni puede haber aún historia literaria escuela y tradiciones literarias en Nicaragua...Estando así desculpado el galicismo
de la mente, es fuerza dar a Ud. alabanzas a manos llenas por lo perfecto y profundo de ese galicismo; porque el lenguaje persiste español, legítimo y de buena ley, y porque si no tiene Ud. carácter nacional, posee carácter individual... En el libro hay cuentos en prosa y seis composiciones en verso. En los cuentos y en las poesías, todo está cincelado, burlado, hecho para que dure, con primor y esmero, como pudiera haberlo hecho Flaubert o el parnasiano más atildado. Y, sin embargo, no se nota el esfuerzo, ni el trabajo de la lima, ni la fatiga del rebuscar; todo parece espontáneo y fácil y escrito al correr de la pluma, sin mengua de la concisión, de la precisión y de la extremada elegancia...Todo en el libro está meditado y criticado por el autor, sin que esta su crítica previa o simultánea de la creación perjudique al brio apasionado y a la inspiración del que crea...Si se me preguntese que enseña su libro de Ud. y de que trata, respondería yo sin vacilar: no enseña nada, y trata de nada y de todo. Es obra de artistas, obra de pasatiempo, de mera imaginación. ¿Qué enseña o de que trata un dije, un camefio, un esmalte, una pintura o una linda copa esculpida?...En este libro no se que deba preferir: si la prosa o los versos. Casi me inclino a ver mérito igual en ambos modos de expresión del pensamiento de Ud. En la prosa hay más riqueza de ideas; pero es más afrontesada la forma. En los versos la forma es más castiza...\[14\]

With such high praise coming from such an outstanding literary giant in Spain, and numerous other critics, among them Conde de las Navas, heralding it as a "treasure of the language," the book became known and asked for as much in Spain as in America. Juan Valera continues his high praise of Darío, saying in the Preface: "...es autor tan a la moda de París y tanto chico y distinción, que se adelanta a la moda y pudiera modificarla e imponerla.\[15\]

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\[15\] Ibid., p. v.
Arturo Torres-Ríoseco feels that Azul may have gone unheralded and unread had it not been for Valera, the critic. Torres-Ríoseco says:

Azul posiblemente hubiera caída en el olvido a no ser por el artículo que publicó don Juan Valera en Los Llanos del Liberal, y si Manuel Rodríguez Mendoza al aplaudir el libro no hubiese atacado violentamente al prologuista del mismo Eduardo de la Barra, por sus ideas contrarias a la escuela que empezaba a formarse.16

The most important poems in this revolutionary book, Azul, were those which voiced the feelings excited in the poet's mind by the four seasons of the year. Spring, of course, suggests love; but so do the others. Summer love is symbolized in the mating of Bengal tigers. That day, however, the tigress was killed in the hunt by the prince of Wales; wherefore the tiger, mourning in his lair, dreamed of revenge, of sinking his claws in the tender bosoms of children and maidens. Love in the autumn is tinged with the melancholy of the season of dying things; nevertheless, a friendly fairy whispers secrets to the poet, what the birds are singing, and what the girls are dreaming.

**AUTUMNAL**

En las pañitas tardes
yerran nubes tranquilas
en el azul; en las ardientes manos
se posan las cabezas pensativas.
¡Ah, los suspiros! ¡Ah, los dulces sueños!
¡Ah, las tristezas íntimas!
¡Ah, el polvo de oro que en el aire flota,
tras cuvas ondas tremulans se miran
los ojos tiernos, humedos,

las bocas imundas de sonrisas,
alas crespos cabellera,
y los dedos de rosa que acarician.

En las palpías tardes
me cuenta un Hada amiga
las historias secretas
llemas de poesía:
lo que cantan los pajaros,
lo que llevan las brisas,
lo que vaga en las nieblas,
lo que sueñan las niñas.

Una vez sentí el ansia
de una sed infinita.
Dije a Hada amorosa:
"Quiero en el alma mía
tener la inspiración honda, profunda,
imensa: luz, calor, aroma, vida."
Ella me dijo: /Ven! con el acento
con que hablaría un arpa. En él había
un divino idioma de esperanza.
/Oh sed del ideal!

Sobre la cima
de un monte, a media noche,
me mostró las estrellas encendidas.
Era un jardín de oro
con pétalos de llamas que titilan.
Exclame: /Más!

La aurora
vino después. La aurora sonreía,
con la luz en la frente,
como la joven timida
que abre la reja, y la sorprenden luego
ciertas curiosas mágicas pupilas.
Y dije /Más!

Sonriendo
la celeste Hada amiga
prorrumpió: "Y bien! /las flores!
Y las flores
estaban frescas, lindas,
empapadas de olor: la rosa virgen,
la blanca margarita,
a la azucena gentil y las volubiles
que cuelgan de la rama estremecida.
Y dije: /Más!

El viento
arrastraba rumores, ecos, risas, murmullos misteriosos, alelos, músicas nunca oídas.
El Hada entonces me llevó hasta el velo que nos cubre las ansias infinitas, la inspiración profunda y el alma de las liras.
Y lo rasgo. Y allí todo era aurora.
En el fondo se vía un bello rostro de mujer.
¡Oh, nunca,
Pierides, direís las sacras dichas que en el alma sintiera!
Con su vaga sonrisa "¿mas...?" dijo el Hada.
Y yo tenía entonces
elamadas las pupilas en el azul; y en mis ardientes manos se posó mi cabeza pensativa...

As for winter, its snow may drive men from the city streets, but what better music than that of the snowfall to accompany his caresses and kisses.

In each of the four poems of the series Lyric Year, the varying phase of love is felt, but Otoñal (Autummal) is the most original in conception and execution; it is most prophetic of the poet's later progress; it is the most human. Dario himself comments upon these short verses in which he did not hesitate to employ words from other languages, especially French, and in which he abandoned the usual methods and paid most attention to the interior melody, which contributed to the success of the rhythmic expression; new adjectives; and to the study and firmness of the etymological meaning of each word. He says of Primaveral: "I think I have given a new note to the orchestration of the romance." Of Estival he comments: "I tried to create a passage of force." In Autumnal the influence of music returns. It is comparable to Armand Silvestre's melodic and beautiful Pensamiento de otoño.
After reading the four seasonal poems, the critic Juan Valera says:

"Entre las cuatro composiciones en las estaciones del año, todas bellas y
raras, sobresale la del verano."17

Azul contributed fine poetry to the field of modern poetry, but its prose
must not be overlooked. In its unique and controversial prose we find un-
mistakable signs of a literary revolution and literary qualities that place
the author among the great masters of contemporary Spanish prose, Valle-Inclán,
Benavente, and José Enrique Rodó. In the content of these prose selections
fantastic, idealistic impressions, rather than stories in the ordinary sense,
it is still the poet that creates. The language flows with remarkable
clarity. "Not so much for what they say are the tales of Azul worthy of
notice. They represent an innovation in style, not in thought."18 Dario set
a pattern of frivolous elegance, now out of fashion, the more so because it was
so much admired and copied in its day, in the short stories and sketches of
Azul. He was to achieve at a later date a more sober and yet colorful style
in his crónicas, especially in the group collected under the title Tierras
solares (1904). The prose of Dario's day took the form of essays, crónicas,
articles and books of travel and literary criticism. A large part of the
writings of Dario and of Gutierrez Najera consists of crónicas. Dario's book
Los raros (1896), first published in the shape of separate articles in the

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periodical known as La Nación of Buenos Aires, was a brave attempt to acquaint the unwilling reader with the names of a few European masters and a number of minor figures whose fame has proved ephemeral; to the Europeans he added José Martí and Edgar Allen Poe.

Dario has told us in what manner he considers Azul and the prose found in it a work of innovation. He says:

I abandon the usual order, the conversational cliches; I give attention to the interior melody, which contribute to the success of the rhythmical expression: novelties in the adjectives.

What was the origin of the novelty? The origin of the novelty was my recent acquaintance with French authors of the Parnassian school, for at that time the Symbolist struggle had scarcely commenced in France and was not known outside much less in our America. My real initial inspirer was Catulle Mendès. Some of his lyrico-erotic tales, and one or another of the poems in the Parnasse Contemporain were a revelation to me.19

Continuing to elaborate on his background and telling of the many and varied influences exerted upon him and his works, Dario continues to say:

Habituated to the eternal Spanish cliche of the Golden Age, and to Spain's indecisive modern poetry, I have found in the Frenchmen... a literary mine to exploit: the application of their manner of employing the adjective, of certain syntactic methods, and of the verbal aristocracy, to Spanish... and I, who knew by heart Baralt's Dictionary of Gallicisms, understood that not only an opportune Gallicism, but also certain peculiarities of other languages, were most useful and of incomparable efficacy when appropriately transplanted. Thus my knowledge of English, Italian and Latin was to serve me later in the development of my literary purposes.20

19 Ibid., p. 134.
20 Ibid., p. 137.
The above-quoted passages enhance our knowledge of Dario, his mind, background and the various influences which molded his thoughts and works. Therefore, the uniqueness and cosmopolitanism of Azul is easier understood and detected.

Three of the best short stories in Azul are: "El Velo de la reina Mab," "El rey burgués," and "El sátiro sordo." In them and the other stories and sketches found in Azul are to be noted qualities of styles that were characteristic in the best French prose and that were to be considered real innovations in Spanish: flexibility, delicacy, fine shading, clarity and precision of expression. A comparison of the prose style of Dario, with its fondness for short sentences and its simple, rhythmic phrasing, and the periodic, oratorical style of Spanish prose writers of the preceding generation show clearly the extent of the innovations that he made popular among his younger contemporaries.

The abovementioned prose compositions were impressionistic pieces, almost poems in prose. Though most have the form of tales or fairy stories, their scenes being laid in Greece or some other land of the author's imagination, some are mere torments of imagination and imagery. Nearly all teach the compelling force of the desire for the ideal. Whether for the poet the ideal is a nymph in the woods, ("La ninfa"), or for the gnome the ruby, ("El rubí"), symbol of the reproductive power of mother earth. Blue is the color of the ideal, like the veil of queen Mab, ("El velo de la reina Mab"), who comes in her car of a single pearl to the four lean unshaven men in the garret, the sculptor, the painter, the musician and the poet. Complaining
bitterly of their luck, their lamentations are turned to laughter after she has wrapped them in her veil through which they glimpse life with a rosy tint.

The swan was Darío's sign and symbol. It was the perfect example of beauty serving no useful purpose. Many romanticists following in the footsteps of Darió employed the same symbol. This bird-symbolist or mito-ave, so successfully carried out by Darió was accepted and employed by many writers, but it was not until the poet, González Martínez wrote his famous Tuércelo el suelo al cisme, that the bird-myth was challenged and eventually the theme was completely abolished by all writers, and the downfall of Modernism began.

Pedro Salinas skillfully traces the bird theme throughout the works of Rubén Darío, stressing the various meanings employed by Darío in the use of the bird theme, and outlining its rise and fall. He says:

Rubén Darío, condensador e intérprete genial en lengua española de tantos temas de la poesía francesa del siglo XIX, casi llega a una teoría del cisme, y de lo ciónico. Ya en la prosa de Agul se asoma el cisme, adjetivado de un modo preciósista. Y luego, de Prosas profanas en adelante, el pájaro y sus símbolos cruzan una y otra vez por sus poesías, señalando con su presencia casi obsesiva el lugar central que ocupa lo ciónico en su poética. Con razón confiesa, en los soberbios endecasilabos que abren Cantos de vida y esperanza que estaba su

...jardín de ensueño
lleno de rosas y de cismes vagos.21

A study of the swan theme shows that Darío employed it frequently and most successfully in Agul, where it appears in three tales. Salinas con-

...el estudio de la temática de Rubén Darío será el tema del cisme uno de los capítulos más seductores. En tres cuentos de Azul, por lo menos, "El rey burgués," "La ninfa," y "Amuérala," introduce a su favorita. En Prosas profanas, Darío consagra dos poesías al cisme. La primera es "El ático"...Representa esta poesía algo así como el entronizamiento del cisme en el mundo poético de Darío. Más adelante nos encontramos en el mismo libro con "El cisme," soneto alejandrino...De él ha nacido Helena, princesa de lo bello. Eterno es su canto:

Sobre las tempestades del humano oceano
Se oye el canto del cisme; no se cesa de cír.

Pero aquí, de la exaltación lírica del ave pasa Darío a la consagración del cisme casi como símbolo progenitor de la nueva poesía:

Bajo tus alas blancas la nueva Poesía
Concibe en una gloria de luz y de armonía

La Helena eterna y pura que encarna el ideal.

Conforme a esta visión, el arte nuevo, el modernismo lírico, ha nacido del fabuloso ayuntamiento de la Poesía con ese cisme, cargado de símbolos.22

The swan theme appears in many of the poems in the volume Prosas profanas. Salinas continues:

En las mismas Prosas profanas apunto doce poesías más donde aparece el cisme, en una u otra forma. ("Era un aire suave," "Divagación," "Sonatina," "Bouquet," "El país del sol," "Heraldos," "El poeta pregunta por Stella," "Friso," "Palimpesto," "Copla esparga," "Daine," y "Yo persigo una forma.") Es curioso notar que Prosas profanas termina, como con la más airosa rúbrica posible, con un verso "de cisme": "Y el cuello de gran cisme blanco que me interroga. 23

22 Ibid., p. 95.
23 Ibid., p. 96.
Further study of the swan theme follows as it is developed in *Proses profanas*, when that particular literary work is treated.

The book *Agul* terminated with a series of sonnets: *Caupolican*, which introduces the Alejandrino sonnet of the French into the Spanish language.

**CAUPOCLICAN**

Es algo formidable que vió la vieja raza;  
Robusto tronco de árbol al hombre de un campeón  
Salvaje y aguerrido, cuya forzada masa  
Blandiera el brazo de Hércules o el brazo de Sansón.

Por caso sus cabellos, su pecho por coraza,  
Pudiera tal guerrero, de Arauco en la región,  
Lancero de los bosques, Nemrod que todo casa,  
Desjarrettar un toro o estrangular un león.

Anduvo, anduvo, anduvo. Le vió la luz del día,  
Le vió la tarde pálida, le vió la noche fría,  
Y siempre el tronco de árbol a cuestas del titán.

"/El Toqui, el Toqui!", exclama la conmovida casta.  
Anduvo, anduvo, anduvo. La aurora dijo: "Basta."  
E irguióse la alta frente del gran Caupolican.

*Venus* is the same and *De invierno* is of French influence. The  
*Medallones* are in praise of some poets which Dario admired: Leconte de Lisle,  
Mendes, Walt Whitman, Ricardo Palma and Miron of Mexico.

Beauty is the dominant theme of *Agul*, beauty both sensuous and spiritual. In writing the book, Dario sought particularly for the musical quality in which his native tongue is so rich but which he made evident in some ways not attempted before. Coupled with the sensuous and spiritual beauty so dominant in *Agul*, a pattern of frivolous elegance, now out of fashion, the more so because it was so much admired and copied in its day, helped to make the book the great literary masterpiece of its day and kind.
The author of this memorable and revolutionary work commented thusly upon Azul:

It may be a work of pure art without anything to teach or moralize; despite its defects it is one of my preferred. It is a work, I repeat, which contains the flower of my youth, that exteriorizes the intimate poetry of my first illusions and that is impregnated with a love or art and for love.  

Proas profanas introduces the second phase of Dario’s writings. The work was published at the expense of his friend, Carlos Vega Belgrano, in 1906. The strange title and its employment by Dario is explained to the reader by the outstanding critic of Proas profanas, Jose Enrique Rodé. He says:  

In his study of the old Spanish poets, Dario became familiar with their use of prosa in the sense of “poem in the vernacular.” He knew, too, the sequences, or proses, Latin hymns that resulted in the setting of words to the music following the allelulia in the Roman Catholic liturgy, a practice that became popular in the early tenth century. That the title was suggested by these sacred proses of the liturgy is clearly indicated by the second element, profanas, that is, “not sacred.” Just as the liturgical hymns, the “sacred proses,” broke away from the quantitative meters of Latin verse, and came to depend for their rhythms upon accent, so the “profane prose” of Dario broke away from conventionality in form and content.  

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Rodo, in his excellent criticism of the book, comments upon its literary value and the originality of the versification found in it:

...elegiremos de ella lo que nos parece más característico y de más alto valor. Es su última colección de versos la que representa...la plena tensión del arco del poeta. No bien hacemos nuestra entrada en el libro, el poeta nos toma de la mano, como el genio de algún cuento oriental, para que retrocedamos con él a la vida de una época llena de ame-
nidad y de gracia...26

Rodo continues:

La originalidad de la versificación concurre admirablemente al afecto de ese capricho delicioso. Nunca el compás del do-
decasílabo, el metro venerable y pesado de las coplas de Juan de Mena, que los románticos reajustaron en España, después de largo olvido para conjuro de evocaciones legendarias, ha-
bía sonado a nuestro oído de esta manera particular.27

Retracing the background and influences which played such a great part in this second great masterpiece by Darío, one can perceive clearly why variety, melody, suppleness and refreshness can be found in this volume. Such variety and uniqueness was not evident in the poetry of Azul. His spirit has become even more cosmopolitan, and at the same time, more Gallicized. His art has become deep as well as broad, and tinged with that symbolist-decadentism that he transplanted to Castilian soil.

Prosas profanas' chief claim to lasting fame lies in the unique technical innovations found in the work. The three most noticeable and which affected future techniques are: 1) a new musicality of verse. The breaking away from

27 Ibid., p. 275.
conventional forms of verse was due, in part, to another characteristic of symbolism, the close association of poetry and music. Just as Parnassianism, closely allied to design and sculpture, was the poetry of line and form, symbolism with its close affiliation with music, was the poetry of sound and rhythm. Unable to produce the desired musical effects by means of the conventional meters, the Symbolists cast aside many of its bonds and delighted in new combinations. In Prosas profanas are many masterpieces of melodious verse in which to the lyric melody of other great Spanish poets was added the suggestiveness of Wagnerian music. Such a poem is "Sinfonía en gris mayor,"

SINFONÍA EN GRIS MAYOR

El mar como un vasto cristal azogado
Refleja la lámina de un cielo de zinc;
Lejanías bandadas de pájaros manchán
El fondo brúñido de palido gris.

El sol como un vidrio redondo y opaco
Con paso de enfermo camina al cenit;
El viento marino descansa en la sombra
Teniendo de almohada su negro clarín.

Las ondas que mueven su vientre de plomo
Debajo de muelle parecen gemir.
Sentado en un cable, fumando su pipa,
Está un marinero pensando en las playas
De un vago, lejano, brumoso país.

Es viejo ese lobo. Testaron su cara
Los rayos de fuego del sol del Brasil;
Los recios tifones del mar de la China
Lo han visto bebiendo su frasco de gin.

La espuma impregnada de yodo y salitre
Ha tiempo conoce su roja nariz,
Sus crepos cabellos, sus biceps de atleta,
Su gorra de lona, su blusa de dril.
In medio del humo que forma el tabasco
Ve el viejo el lejano, brumoso país,
Adonde una tarde calienta y dorada
Tendidas las velas partió el bergantín...

La siesta del trópico. El lobo se adorme.
Ya todo lo envuelve la gama de gris.
Parece que un suave y enorme esfumado
Del curvo horizonte borrará el confín.

La siesta del trópico. La vieja cigarra
Ensaya su ronco guitarra senil,
Y el grillo preludía su solo monótono
En la única cuerda que está en su violín.

This poem recalls Théophile Gautier's _Symphonie en blanc majeur_, written about 1852. It seems fair to assume here that Dario deliberately offers a challenge to the French poet. Gautier in his _Symphonie_, seeking symbols whereby he may convey to his reader the dazzling whiteness of one of the fabled "femmes-cygnes" that swim singing in the Rhine, paints a picture of extraordinary brilliance. The remainder of the poem is a bringing together of all the white and rare and beautiful things in nature as possible sources of this splendor. G. Dundas Craig, commenting on this French poem says:

The images are beautiful, and the smoothness and beauty of the language intensify the effect. But the effect is almost overpowering; there is no escape from this "implacable blancheur"; there is no background or relief. The poem lacks, to make it truly symphonic, as the title suggests that it should be, the contrast of tone and movement that every good symphony possesses.28

The same author then comments on Dario's challenging poem:

The _Sinfonía en gris mayor_ is an equally graphic presentation of its subject. Dario notes that this poem was 'drawn from nature,' and adds: 'I have seen those stagnant waters, those blazing coasts, the old sea wolves who loaded the dye-wood on their sloops and brigantines, and departed with sails set for Europe. Drinking, morose, or

smiling, they sat on the poop in the evenings, singing songs of Normandy or Brittany, and accompanying themselves on their accordions, while the woods and estuaries near by, overgrown with mangrove, sent forth puffs of hot wind and night-dew from the marshes.'

Such is the picture Dario paints in prose, a picture little less brilliant than that in the poem. In the latter, however, the power of suggestion is greater... The artistic instinct of Dario, it seems to me, shows itself truer than that of Gautier, for in the Nicaraguan's poem the greyness is not unrelieved; the burnished face and the red nose of the old mariner give the variety necessary in a poem that proclaims itself a symphony.

The second most noticeable and influential technique innovated in Prosas profanas was: 2) new strophic forms such as the single-rhymed tercet. This is closely associated with the chief characteristics of symbolism as regards content, the suggestion of ideas, sensations, moods, by means of symbols; by allusion merely, not by direct mention or description. Dario's fine literary taste and capacity for self criticism kept him from going to the absurd extreme of some of the symbolistes and modernistas, who attempted to work out a definite scheme of sense associations, color in music, music in color, color and perfume in vocal sounds. The tercet of Dario facilitated the desired expression of music and feeling of color. 3) free movement of the caesura. This indeed was an innovation, for such a bold change required daring on the part of Dario.


30 Craig, op. cit., p. 262.
With the final acceptance of these innovations Dario, in no small measure, brought freedom and amplitude to poetry. "But within that freedom he spoke of his age; over those paths he drew new vehicles of beauty. And after all, mankind feeds upon feelings and thoughts, not hexameters and heptasyllables."31

Associated with this expression of freedom and purely personal sensations and the suggestiveness of symbols and sounds are other qualities in *Prosa profanas* that are readily excused in the exquisite poetry of Rubén Darío, but which brought his influence into disrepute in the abuses of his servile imitators. With him, the disassociation of art and morality did not result in licentiousness of thought, because of his innate refinement and his belief in the identity of truth and beauty, the object of his life-long cult. The refined sensualism that made physical love the motive for many beautiful poems was held in check by this love of the beautiful, by his instinctive shrinking from all that is vulgar or ugly in the moral as in the material world. His aristocratic exclusiveness, symbolized by the *torre de mármol*, the *torre esbúrnea*, the *alcázar interior*, to which he retired for poetic inspiration, broke, for the time being, the vital contact with the world of reality, a contact that was to be re-established fortunately, at a later period. The

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cosmopolitanism that permitted his spirit to wander at will through all ages and all countries in search of the beautiful and the rare resulted in his temporary "anti-Americanism," the studied avoidance of local color and racial traditions that became mere affectation in his imitators. The exotism that produced Divagación readily lent itself to mere artistry in a school of poets. The elegant artificiality of the court life of Versailles in the eighteenth century made its irresistible appeal during this period and inspired some of his most beautiful verses, a notable example being the Watteau-esque fantasy, Era un aire suave.

ERA UN AIRE SUAVE

Era un aire suave, de pausados giros;
El Hada Harmonía rimaba sus vuelos;
E iban frases vagas y tenues suspiros
Entre los sollozos de los violincelos.

Sobre la terraza, junto a los ramajes,
Diríase un tremulo de liras ecolías
Cuando acariciaban los sedosos trajes
Sobre el tallo erguidas las blancas magnolias.

La marquesa Eulalia risas y desvíos
Daba a un tiempo mismo para dos rivales,
El vizconde rubio de los desafíos
Y el abate joven de los madrigales.

Cerca, coronado con hojas de viña,
Reía en su máscara Término barbudo,
Y, como un efebo que fuese una niña,
Mostraba una Diana su mármoles desmudo.

Y bajo un boscaje del amor palestra,
Sobre rico almohad al modo de Junta,
Con un candelabro prendido en la diestra
Volaba el Mercurio de Juan de Bolonia.
La orquesta perlaba sus mágicas notas,
Un coro de sones alados se oía; 
Galantes pavana, fugaces gavotas
Cantaban los dulces violines de Hungría.

Al oír las quejas de sus caballeros
Ríe, ríe, ríe, la divina Eulalia,
Pues son su tesoro las flechas de Eros,
El cinto de Cipria, la rueca de Onfalia.

¡Ay de quien sus mieles y frases recoja!
¡Ay de quien del canto de su amor se fíe!
Con sus ojos lindos y su boca roja,
La divina Eulalia, ríe, ríe, ríe.

Tiene azules ojos, se maligna y bella,
Cuando mira vierte viva luz extraña;
Se asoma a sus húmedas pupilas de estrella
El alma del rubio cristal de Champaña.

Es noche de fiesta, y el baile de trajes
Ostenta su gloria de triunfos mundanos.
La divina Eulalia, vestida de encajes,
Una flor destroza con sus tersas manos.

El teclado armónico de su risa fina
A la alegre música de un pájaro iguala,
Con los staccati de una bailarina
Y las locas fugas de una colegiala.

¡Amoroso pájaro que trinos exhala
Bajo el ala a veces ocultando el pico;
Qué desdenes rudos lanza bajo el ala,
Bajo el ala aleve del leve abanico!

Cuando a media noche sus notas arranque
Y en arpegios aureos gime Filomela,
Y el ahumado címano, sobre el quieto estanque
Como blanca góndola imprima su estela,

La marquesa alegre llegará al boscaje,
Boscaje que cubre la amable glorieta
Donde han de estrecharla los brazos de un paje,
Que siendo su paje será su poeta.
Al compás de un canto de artista de Italia
Que en la brisa errante la orquesta deslíz,
Junto a los rivales la divina Eulalia,
La divina Eulalia, ríe, ríe, ríe.

¿Fue acaso en el tiempo del rey Luis de Francia,
Sol con corte de astros, en campos de azur
Cuando los alcázares llenó de fragancia
La regia y pomposa rosa Pompadour?

¿Fue cuando la bella su falda cogía
Con dedos de niña, bailando el minué,
Y de los compases el ritmo seguía
Sobre el tacón rojo, lindo, y leve el pie?

¿Fue cuando pastores de floridos valles
Ornaban con cintas sus albos corderos,
Y cian, divinas Tiras de Versalles,
Las declaraciones de sus caballeros?

¿Fue en ese buen tiempo de duques pastores,
De amantes princesas y tiernos galanes,
Cuando entre sonrisas y perlas y flores
Iban las casacas de los chambelanes?

¿Fue acaso en el Norte o en el Mediodía?
Yo el tiempo y el día y el país ignore,
Pero sé que Eulalia ríe todavía,
¡Y es cruel y eterna su risa de oro!

1893.

Two outstanding poetic works of Proces prohas employ the swan theme,
commenced in Azul and popularized therein. One is "El Cisne" and the other
"Blasón."

EL CISNE

Fué en una hora divina para el género humano.
El Cisne antes cantaba sólo para morir.
Cuando se oyó el acento del Cisne wagneriano
fue en medio de una aurora, fue para revivir.

Sobre las tempestades del humano océano
se oye el canto del Cisne; no se cesa de oír,
dominando el martillo del viejo Thor Germano
o las trompas que cantan la espada de Argantir.
While Dario was in Buenos Aires in 1893, where he was composing *Prosas profanas*, he attended a performance of the Wagnerian opera, *Lohengrin*. Dario tells us that he was introduced into the Wagnerian secrets by a Belgian musician and writer, Mr. Charles de Gouffre, and was inspired by *Lohengrin* to write this sonnet. In this poem Dario renders homage to the swan and its importance in classical and Scandinavian mythology, but he regards the swan of modern times as something more significant. The swan that brings *Lohengrin* to the rescue of Elsa is a new inspiration and introduces the poet to a new world of the imagination:

"Fue en medio de una aurora, fue para revivir..."

The swan was Dario’s symbol and the symbolism of the swan is authoritatively expounded in this poem. The swans, however, can not serve any base utilitarian ends. Says Craig:

They (swans) live apart, 'like chiseled, wandering icebergs,' thus symbolizing their cold aloofness from the ordinary things of life. Theirs is a pride Olympian—'de orgullo olimpico sois el resumen.' They represent the absolute Beauty, existing for the sake of Beauty and for that alone. In this poem the swan, 'eucharistic' in its purity, becomes for the new poetry the symbol of the ideal, the pure, the eternal.}

"La espada de Argantir"...is probably a reminiscence of the poet's reading of Leconte de Lisle.

In "El Cisne" we note the poet's preoccupation with the story of Leda and the Swan, with which we may compare, says Craig, Milton's early fondness for the story of Orpheus and Eurydice; the difference in the stories pointing to a characteristic difference in the mind and temperament of the two poets.

In form "El Cisne" is a sonnet written in lines of fourteen syllables (the Spanish Alexandrine). Dario claims that this particular poetic form was his invention, the first example being his sonnet, "Caupolicán." Critics dispute the assertion, for one or two examples of earlier writings have been found by other writers, yet it is certain that this use of the Spanish Alexandrine by Dario gave it immense popularity. Craig says: "It has become so popular, indeed, that it is safe to say that the majority of sonnets produced since "El Cisne" have been written in this form."33

The second outstanding and popular poetic piece of Prosas profanas is "Blason," written by Dario while he was in Madrid in connection with the Columbus centenary celebrations, and which was dedicated to the Countess of Peralta, a French lady kindly disposed to poets.

BLASON

El olímpico cisne de nieve
Con el ágata rosa del pico
Lustra el ala eucarística y breve
Que abre al sol como un casto abanico.

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33 Ibid., p. 259.
En la forma de un brazo de lira
Y del asa de un ánfora griega
Es su cándido cuello, que inspira
Como prora ideal que navega.

Es el cisne, de estirpe sagrada,
Cuyo beso, por campos de seda,
Ascendió hasta la cima rosada
De las dulces colinas de Leda.

Blanco rey de la fuente Castalia,
Su victoria ilumina el Danubio;
Vinci fue su barón en Italia;
Lohengrin es su príncipe rubio.

Su blancura es hermana del lino,
Del botón de los blancos rosales
Y del albo toisón diamantino
De los tiernos corderos pascales.

Rimador de ideal florilegio
Es de armiño su lírico manto,
Y es el mágico pájaro regio
Que al morir rima el alma en un canto.

El alado aristócrata muestra
Lises albos en campo de azur,
Y ha sentido en sus plumas la diestra
De la amable y gentil Pompadour.

Boga y boga en el lago sonoro
Donde el sueño a los tristes espera,
Donde aguarda una góndola de oro
A la novia de Luis de Baviera.

Dad, Condesa, a los cisnes cariño,
Dioses son de un país halagüeño,
Y hechos son de perfume, de armiño;
De luz alba, de seda y de sueño.

The Countess of Peralta's coat-of-arms shows a swan on a field of azure; hence it gave the poet an opportunity for paying a compliment to his friend and for singing at the same time the praises of the swan, the symbol of his art and aspirations.
In this poem, as in "El Cisne", Dario brings together all of the pleasing myths that in his mind were associated with the swan. The reference to the Danube has puzzled critics. Craig feels that it may point to the widespread fame of the swan, because the Danube in ancient times was the limit of civilization. On the other hand, it is probably connected with the Lohengrin legend, although the incidents of that story are supposedly to have occurred along the Rhine, Dario probably used the word "Danubio" because it happened to offer a novel and interesting rhyme for the word "rubio." Such was the temperament of the modernist poet.

The swan is the aristocrat among birds, as Dario felt himself to be an aristocrat of the spirit in the midst of an unpleasant and sordid democracy. Hence, not unfrequently, Dario's mind turned to courtly scenes. In imagination he sees the brilliant blue expanse of the lake crossed by the glittering white swans, and this reminds him of the fleurs-de-lis—the emblem of the kings of France. This, in turn, carries him back to the court of Louis XV, to the lake at Versailles, and to the king's favorite, Madame de Pompadour, lavishing her favors on the swans. All of this revolted the poet Gutierrez Martinez, who was later to be so instrumental in the downfall of modernism.

Metrically, this is another of Dario's experiments in versification, the line consisting of three anapests with the hypermetrical syllable; or technically described, it is anapestic trimeter, hypercatalectic.
With reference to the swan theme as employed by Dario so boldly in his two poems, "El Cisne" and "Blasón," Pedro Salinas, the critic, says:

El cisne lohengriniano...era el príncipe encantado, doncel de leyenda nórdica, mito espiritualista y sentimental que complementaba a la perfección el otro mito sensual.  

The swan is significant in two ways in Dario's poetry. One:

el ser fuerte condensación de ingredientes paganos y sensuales, tan constantes en varias formas en la obra de Dario; es decir, su significado de mito griego del amor carnal. Y otro, el de contener en la historia de Lohengrin, el encanto romántico de lo caballeresco legendario, del romanticismo exterior...Dario abruma a su ave favorita con otras variadas misiones significativas. Es emblema y cifra de lo blanco, le cita entre los cirios, las margaritas, los lirios, la nieve:

'Su blancura es hermana del lino,
Del botón de los blancos rosales
Y del albo toisón diamantino
De los tiernos corderos pascales.

Es de armiño su lirico manto.'  

(Blasón)

...en "El Cisne" y "Blasón," se transforma en eterna fuente de inspiración estética, procreador, en muchísimas obras de la poesía, de un nuevo ideal de belleza helénica... Dario usa el cisne muy copiosamente por su puro valor plástico, sin ir más allá de su forma bella y de las asociaciones de imágenes materiales que desperta:

'Luiza el ala eucarística y breve
Que abre al sol como un casto abanico.'  

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36 Ibid., p. 108.
Although Pedro Salinas' criticism and scholarly study of _Proses profanas_ deals primarily with the background of the work and the various dominant themes found therein, he does give Dario high praise and favorable criticism of this work. He says:

...era una literatura de los sentidos, tremula de atractivos sensuales, deslumbradora de cromatismo... Nunca habían cantado las palabras castellanas con alegría tan colorínesa, nunca antes brillaran con tantos visos y relumbres como en las espléndidas poesías de Dario. Era una literatura jubilosamente encarada con el mundo exterior, toda vuelta hacia fuera.

Despite the favorable criticisms showered upon his book by many critics and its apparent popularity with the reading public, Dario was never completely happy and satisfied with the outstanding work of his second literary phase. He was dissatisfied with its gaudy brilliance and in despair before the apparent impossibility of finding a definite form of expression, attempts to analyze himself:

En mi jardín se vio una estatua bella,  
se jugó marmol y era carne viva;  
un alma joven habitaba en ella;  
sentimental, sensible, sensitiva.

In these four famous lines from his most well known poem, "Yo soy aquel...," we have the true Dario, the Dario as he wanted others to think of him. It was only in his later works, and especially in the third period of his works, that we find the sensitive, sensible Dario.

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37 Ibid., p. 21.
In 1905 Dario published the third volume of his list of revolutionary works. *Cantos de vida y esperanza* was a threefold collection containing strains of racial and international significance, hauntingly beautiful melodies of Hellenic perfection and personal utterances like, "Juventud, divino tesoro" of his beautiful poem dedicated to Martínez Sierra, "Cansión de otoño en primavera." At the time of the publication of this volume, Modernism had gained recognition in Spain and Spanish America. A new tendency began to deplete its ranks of its most virile and talented writers; the first phase of the movement gave place to the second, that of present day literature, in which Dario became one of the best exponents, although no longer the undisputed leader. This breaking of ranks was due to many causes. Dario, especially in the symbolist stage of his evolution, was not a safe poet to imitate, except by those of strong individuality and sound literary judgement; and unfortunately many of his most ardent admirers lacked these qualities. Some of the most easily imitated characteristics of his *Poesias profanas* were not far removed from mannerisms, and were saved from becoming defects by his exquisite poetic temperament and fine literary taste; some of his followers, lacking these saving qualities, soon brought the name of their leader in disrepute. His aristocratic exclusiveness became with them snobbishness; his exquisitiveness, his ultra-refinement of thought and word, became effeminate affectation; his skillful metrical experiments led to all sorts of exaggerations; his symbolism opened the way to unintelligible euphuism; his poems inspired by the elegance of XVIII century life in France and by Hellenism of the French variety let loose a deluge of
poems on the same themes, but without inspiration. As in the case of that other great poet of three centuries ago, Luis de Gongora, with whom Dario might well be compared as regards poetic temperament and literary influence, the master suffered from the abuses of his followers; just as gongorista came to be a term of reproach so rubendariaco.

The poems of Cantos de vida y esperanza, composed during the six years from 1899 to 1905, show absolutely no definite break with the poetic theories that underlie the poems composed during the preceding ten years and published as Prosas profanas in 1896 and in 1900; there is, however, in many of them a new note that clearly differentiates the third stage of his literary evolution from the two preceding. With the avowed purpose of breaking the bonds of conventionality and tradition in both the form and content of poetry, he had consciously avoided local color and racial feeling; he had even sought remoteness from the actualities of life, taking refuge in his high tower of ivory, his alocazar interior, to which pure art alone could find an entrance. The result was the production of many poems of exquisite beauty in form, of rare refinement in thought and sentiment, of great metrical variety. The result was, too, the suppression of that part of his nature that was ready to respond to the call of race and of humanity when permitted to do so. That pure art alone could not satisfy him he tells us in preface to his Cantos de vida y esperanza:

La torre de marfil tentó mi anhelo,
quise encerrarme dentro de mí mismo
y tuve hambre de espacio y sed de cielo
desde las sombras de mi propio abismo.
With the appearance of this important volume, Dario became a social poet, a poet of the people in the highest sense of the word. He gives voice to the inner uneasiness of his continent in "Salutación del optimista" and "A Roosevelt," and no longer can it be said that he is the poet of America. Universal and cosmopolitan aspirations harmonized with his poetic theories so long as he remained in Spanish America; later, study and travel in the mother country and absence from his native land during his sojourn in many parts of Europe aroused in him the pride of race that supplied him with new themes for poetic inspiration. In the stately, measured hexameters of the "Salutación del optimista": "Inelitas razas uberrímas, sangre de España fecunda," he shows his pride in the glorious accomplishments of the Spanish race and his firm belief in the renaissance of its spirit and ideals.

SALUTACIÓN DEL OPTIMISTA

Inelitas razas uberrímas, sangre de Hispania fecunda,
espíritus fraternos, luminosas almas, isalve!
Porque llega el momento en que habrán de cantar nuevos himnos
lenguas de gloria. Un vasto rumor llena los ámbitos; mágicas
ondas de vida van renaciendo de pronto;
retrocede el olvido, retrocede engañada la muerte;
se anuncia un reino nuevo, feliz sibila sueña,
y en la caja pandórica de que tantas desgracias surgieron
encontramos de súbito, talismanica, pura, riente,
cual pudiera decírla en sus verso Virgilio divino,
la divina reina de luz, la celeste Esperanza!

Paídas indolencias, desconfianzas fatales que a tumba
o a perpetuo presidio, condenástés al noble entusiasmo,
yrás el salir del sol en un triunfo de liras,
mientras dos continentes, abonados de huesos gloriosos,
del Hércules antiguo la gran sombra soberbia evocando,
digan al orbe: la alta virtud resucita
que a la hispana progenie hizo dueña de siglos.
Abominad la boca que predice desgracias eternas; abominad los ojos que ven sólo zodiacos funestos; abominad las manos que apedrean las ruinas ilustres, o que la tea empúñan o la daga suicida.
Sientense sordos impetus en las entrañas del mundo, la iminencia de algo fatal hoy comienza la tierra; fuertes colosos caen, se desbandan bicefalias águilas, y algo se inicia como vasto social cataclismo sobre la faz del orbe. ¿Quién dirá que las savias dormidas no despierten entonces en el tronco del roble gigante bajo el cual se exprimió la ubre de la loba romana? ¿Quién será el pusilánime que al vigor español niegue músculos y que al alma española juzgue áptera y ciega y tullida?
No es Babilonia ni Ninive enterrada en olvido y en polvo, ni entre momias y piedras reina que habita el sepulcro, la nación generosa, coronada de orgullo inmortal que hacía el lado del alba fija las miradas ansiosas, ni la que tras los mares en que yace sepultada la Atlántida, tiene su coro de vástagos, altos, robustos y fuertes.

Unanse, bríllen, secúndense tantos vigorej dispersos; formen todos un solo haz de energía espiritual.
Sangre de Hispania fecunda, sólidas, inclitas razas, muestren los dones preteritos que fueron antaño su triunfo. Vuelva el antiguo entusiasmo, vuelva el espíritu ardiente que regaré lenguas de fuego en esa epifanía.
Juntas las testas anciañas cepidas de líricos lauros y las cabezas jóvenes que la alta Minerva decora, así los manes heroicos de los primitivos abuelos, de los egregios padres que abrieron el surco prístino, sienten los soplos agrarios de primaverales retornos y el rumor de espigas que inició la labor triptolemos.

Un continente y otro renovando las dejas prosapias, en espíritu unidos, en espíritu y ansias y lengua, ven llegar el momento en que habrán de cantar nuevos himnos. La latina estirpe verá la gran alba futura en un trueno de música gloriosa; millones de labios saludarán la espléndida luz que vendrá del Oriente, Oriente augusta en donde todo lo cambia y remueve la eternidad de Dios, la actividad infinita. Y así sea Esperanza la visión permanente en nosotros, inclitas razas uberrimas, sangre de Hispania fecunda!

Beside demonstrating Dario's devotion and faith in his race and his universality, "Salutación del optimista" is proof of the versatility of
Dario that on occasion he was able to leave his "ivory tower" and concern himself with the life of ordinary men around him. In an excellent manner does the poem display certain important characteristics of his mind and art and at the same time illustrate the movement of thought and feeling that was going on in Spanish American countries about the time he wrote. This poem is important as pointing to a change of attitude in Spanish American writers toward the mother-country, Spain.

Similar is the poem "Al Rey Oscar":

Mientras el mundo aliente, mientras la esfera gire,
mientras la onda cordial alimente un ensueño,
mientras haya una viva pasión, un noble empeño,
un buscado imposible, una imposible hazaña;
una América oculta que hallar, vivirá España.

With racial pride nowhere manifest in his earlier poems, he says in "Los Cisnes," "Soy un hijo de América, soy un nieto de España." Criticized because of his Gallicism in Prosas profanas and in Azul, he shows in many poems of his last phase that he was thoroughly Spanish at heart. Arturo Torres-Ríoseco's criticism of this third important volume further reiterates the change which occurred in Dario, from that of the ivory tower to a love of his race and country. He says:

Cantos de vida y esperanza indica una verdadera revolución en la actitud mental de Dario por lo que se refiere a su continente y a su madre patria. Así en su prólogo a Cantos de vida y esperanza, Dario pudo decir, "El movimiento de libertad que me tocó iniciar en América se propagó hasta España, y tanto aquí como allá el triunfo está logrado... es el libro más representativo de la obra total de Ruben Dario. La dorada superficialidad de sus Prosas profanas desaparece y el poeta ensaya motivos mucho más profundos en una inquieta sed de comprensión racial. Dario expresa en este libro su fe inquebrantable en el pasado y en el porvenir de
las tierras hispánicas y se prepara a celebrar su grandezza en el clásico hexámetro: "Español de América y Americano de España, cante, eligiendo como instrumento el hexámetro griego y latino, mi confianza y mi fe en el renacimiento de la vieja Hispania en el propio solar, y del otro lado del océano en el coro de naciones que hacen contrapeso en la balanza sentimental a la fuerte y osada raza del norte".

We can thus see that en Cantos de vida y esperanza is an instrument which Dario uses to express his sincere confession, ardent passion and profound melancholy. Further than this there is something of the pure joy of creation, the joy of the artist in the domination of his tools. The volume, better than any of his previous works, exemplifies the man who wrote it; for it most reveals his inner sincerity, his complete psychology, and his technique, now at its greatest height of perfection, triumphs.

If we desire to search for and seek out the true Dario and find the poet in all his greatness, we must study those poems in which he probes his soul and inner thoughts. Wounded to the core by the challenge hurled at him by José Enrique Rodó, the outstanding critic of his day, Rubén Dario attempts not only to be the poet of his race, but also to reflect intensely all humanity. This is in evidence in his beautiful and stirring poem, "La Dulgura de Ángelus."

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LA DULZURA DEL ÁNGELUS

La dulzura del ángelus matinal y divino que diluyen ingenuas campanas provinciales en un aire inocente a fuerza de rosales, de plegaria, de ensueño de virgen y de trino de ruiseñor, opuesto todo al rude destino que no oree en Dios...El aureo ovillo vespertino que la tarde devana tras opacos cristales por tejer la inútil tela de nuestros males,
todos hechos de carne y aromados de vino...Y esta atroz amargura de no gustar de nada, de no saber adonde dirigir nuestra prora
mientras el pobre esquife en la noche cerrada va en las hostiles olas huérfano de la aurora... (¡Oh, suaves campanas entre la madrugada!)  

Commenting on this poem, González Blanco holds that it may be regarded as proof of Darío's deeply religious nature and his ardent Catholicism.

However, Craig feels that this poetic piece is nothing more than "the reaction of a sensitive mind to the aesthetic charm of a quiet countryside as the bells ring out their message..." Reproductions of Millet's reknown picture, the Angelus, were very popular at the time of Darío's writing and may have suggested the subject to his mind. Most important however, and more characteristic of Darío, is the almost morbid preoccupation with the thought of death, the prospect of which seems to fill him with a strange fear. It seems plain from the line,


40 G. Craig, op. cit., p. 267.
"todos hechos de carne y aromados de vino..."

that Dario was conscious that much of the suffering he endured was the fruit of his own intemperance.

With the desire now to serve his fellow man and to write about him and for him, Dario is ready to venture forth from his ivory tower, from the "jardin de sueño, lleno de rosas y de cianes vagos," into the world of conception of the poet's mission. There is in the poems of this collection less of the aristocratic exclusiveness; although he still shows interest in what the masses are doing and thinking. Love as a theme of inspiration no longer holds its dominant place and position of importance; other feelings and passions, contemporary events and men of action supply material for poetical compositions in which the content becomes as important as the form. This was indeed a change over the younger Dario, who permitted content to be subordinated to form, regardless the cost.

The exoticism of Prosas profanas, "muy siglo diez y ocho y muy moderno, audaz, cosmopolita," was in keeping with the poet's conception of art at the time, his "bookish" inspiration, his self-conscious seeking for the quintessence of thought and sensation would have been out of place in poems inspired by contemporary life and deep personal feeling. If the charge of effeminacy was not without foundation when applied to the poet of Prosas profanas, it could surely no longer be made against the poet who had written Marcha triunfal, with its strong free verse and bold rhythmic swing in the Whitmanesque manner.
MARCHA TRIUNFAL

¡Ya viene el cortejo!

La espada se anuncia con vivo reflejo;
ya viene, oro y hierro, el cortejo de los paladines.

Ya pasa debajo los arcos ornados de blancas Minervas y Martes, los arcos triunfales en donde las Famas erigen sus largas trompetas, la gloria solenes de los estandartes, llevados por manos robustas de heroicos atletas. Se escucha el ruido que forman las armas de los caballeros, los frenos que mascan los fuertes caballos de guerra, los cascos que hieren la tierra y los timbaleros que el paso acompañan con ritmos marciales.

¡Tal pasan los fieros guerreros debajo los arcos triunfales!

Los claros clarines de pronto levantan sus sones,
su canto sonoro,
su cálido canto,
que envuelve en un trueno de oro
la augusta soberbia de los pabellones. El dice la lucha, la herida venganza, las asperas crímenes, los rudos penachos, la pica, la lanza, la sangre que riega de heroicos carmines la tierra; los negros mastines que azusa la muerte, que rige la guerra.

Los áureos sonidos anuncian el advenimiento triunfal de la Gloria; dejando el picaecho que guarda sus nidos, tendiendo sus alas enormes al viento, los cóndores llegan. ¡Llegó la victoria!

Ya pasa el cortejo.
Señala, el abuelo los héroes al niño: Ved como la barba del viejo
los bucles de oro circunda de armiño. Las bellas mujeres aprestan coronas de flores, y bajo los pórticos vense sus rostros de rosa, y la más hermosa sonríe al más fiero de los vencedores.
Honor al que trae cautiva la extraña bandera;  
honor al herido y honor a los fieles  
soldados que muerte encontraron por mano extranjera!  
/Clarines!  /Laureles!

Las nobles espadas de tiempos gloriosos,  
desde sus panoplias saludan las nuevas coronas y lauros:—  
Las viejas espadas de los granaderos, más fuertes que osos,  
hermanos de aquellos lanceros que fueron centauros:—  
Las trompas guerreras resuenan;  
de voces los aires se llenan...  
—A aquellas antiguas espadas,  
a aquellos ilustres aceros,  
que encarnan las glorias pasadas...

Y al sol que hoy alumbrá las nuevas victorias ganadas,  
y al héroe que guía su grupo de jóvenes fieles,  
al que ama la insignia del suelo materno,  
al que ha desafiado, ceñido el acero y el arma en la mano,  
los soles del rojo verano,  
las nieves y vientos del gelido invierno,  
la noche, la escarcha  
y el odio y la muerte, por ser por la patria inmortal,  
saludan con voces de bronce las trompas de guerra que tocan la  
mancha triunfal...

Just as the first part of the title of Cantos de vida y esperanza  
indicates a closer contact with life, so the second part suggest renewed  
hopefulness in the author’s outlook upon life. Prosas profanas is perhaps  
"un libro optimista," as José Enrique Rodó said of it, "a condición de que no  
confundaís el optimista poético con la alegría de Roger Bontemps"41 and yet,  
because of his comparative lack of seriousness toward his art, its optimism  
is much less convincing than that of Cantos de vida y esperanza. That he had  
periods of doubt and melancholy when he drank deep of the cup of bitterness

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is proved by such poems as "Melancolía," "Nocturno," "Lo Fatal," and "Letanía de nuestro señor don Quijote," in which we find a world-weariness and despondency more profound than in any of his earlier poems because of the more evident. The following poem is exemplary of these qualities.

**LETANÍA DE NUESTRO SEÑOR DON QUIJOTE**

Rey de los hidalgos, señor de los tristes, 
que de fuerza alientas y de ensueños vistes, 
coronado de áureo yelmo de ilusión; 
que nadie ha podido vencer todavía, 
por la adarga al brazo, toda fantasía, 
y la lanza en ristre, toda corazon.

Noble peregrino de los peregrinos, 
que santificaste todos los caminos 
con el paso auguste de tu heroicidad, 
contra las sertezas, contra las consciencias 
y contra las leyes y contra las ciencias, 
contra la mentira, contra la verdad...

Caballero errante de los caballeros, 
baron de varones, príncipe de fieros, 
par entre los pares, maestro, ¡salud! 
¡Salud, porque juzgo que hoy muy poca tienes, 
entre los aplausos o entre los desdones, 
y entre las coronas y los parabienes 
y las tonterías de la multitud! ***

¡Ruego por nosotros, hambrientos de vida, 
con el alma a tientas, con la fe perdida, 
llenos de congojas y faltos de sol, 
por advenedizas almas de manga ancha 
que ridiculizan el ser de la Mancha, 
el ser generoso y el ser español!

¡Ruego por nosotros, que necesitamos 
las mágicas rosas, los sublimes ramos 
del laurel! Pro nobis ora, gran señor. 
(Tiembla la floresta del laurel del mundo, 
y antes que tu hermano vago, Segismundo, 
el pálido Hamlet te ofrece una flor.)
¡Ruega generoso, piadoso, orgulloso;
ruega casto, puro, celeste, animoso;
por nos interceda, suplica por nos,
pues casi ya estamos sin savia, sin brote,
sin alma, sin vida, sin luz, sin Quijote,
sin pies y sin alas, sin Sancho y sin Dios.

De tantas tristezas, de dolores tantos,
de los superhombres de Nietzsche, de cantos
áfonos, recetas que firma un doctor,
de las epidemias de horribles blasfemias
de las Academias,
¡libranos, señor!

De rudos malosines,
falsos paladines,
y espíritus finos y blandos y ruines,
del hampa que sacía
su canalocracia
con burlar la gloria, la vida, el honor,
del puñal con gracia,
¡libranos, señor!

Noble peregrino de los peregrinos,
que santificaste todos los caminos
con el paso augusto de tu heroicidad,
contra las certezas, contra las consciencias
y contra las leyes y contra las ciencias,
contra la mentira, contra la verdad...

¡Ora por nosotros, señor de los tristes,
que de fuerza alientas y de ensueños vistes,
coronado de aúreo yelmo de ilusión,
que nadie ha podido vencer todavía,
por la adarga al brazo, toda fantasía,
y la lanza en ristre, toda corazon!

In his last years Darió was intensely interested in Dante and
especially devoted to the Bible. Attempting to express his apocalyptic
visions, he veered toward the poetry of dreams. Rare combinations of images
and reminiscences imbue it with the tone of mystery, the constant fluctuation
between the visible world and the metaphysical, so essential to all great
poetry. Here he ceases to be the diverse sensational, voluptuous poet, fond of rapid shifts of sentimental states. In this third period or stage he has found his sense of moral and aesthetic unity, the former in an orthodox Catholicism, the latter in a bare form of rhetoric. Thus once more we have evidence of the continued, although somewhat not apparent, influence of Catholicism upon Dario's life as well as his works. The faith was never completely void and absent in Dario.

At this point one recalls the words of the modern Spanish thinker, Ramiro de Maestu, concerning Ruben Dario:

If, as he felt the dualism of the pure form as opposed to impure, he had felt with the same perspicuity that of the pure life as opposed to the impure, Ruben would not be merely one of the greatest poets of our language, but another Milton (in my opinion, the greatest poet that the world has ever known), and his verses would reveal to men from now till the end of time the found of life.12

Actually, Ruben Dario was not far from that state of exaltation in which one goes through the world conscious of good and evil, or virtue and sin. He felt with absolute certainty the duality of life, and he expressed it in many of his poems of this, his last period. Nevertheless, only at the end of his life did he prefer the difficult road toward God, and then he followed it with fanatical ardor. In his poem, "Peregrinaciones," he embarks on a long journey through the desolate shades of death. This Dantesque poem is truly one of the great and profound works of Dario.

12 Ramiro de Maestu, "El clasicismo y el romanticismo de Rubén Dario," Nosotros, 15:17, January, 1922.
En un momento crepuscular
pensé cantar una canción
en que toda la esencia mía
se expresaría por mi voz;
predicaciones de San Pablo
o lamentaciones de Job,
de versículos evangélicos
o preceptos de Salomón.
¡Oh, Dios!

Las torres de la catedral
aparecieron. Las divinas
horas de la mañana pura,
las sedas de la madrugada
saludaron nuestra llegada
con campanas y golondrinas.
¡Oh, Dios!

Hacia que vaga Compostela
iba yo en peregrinación.
Con Valle-Inclán o que San Roque,
¿adónde íbamos, Señor?
El perro lo que nos seguía
¿no sería acaso un león?
Íbamos siguiendo una vasta
mudezumbre de todos los
puntos del mundo, que llegaba
a la gran peregrinación.

Era una noche negra, negra,
porque se había muerto el sol:
nos entendíamos con gestos,
porque había muerto la voz.
Reinaba en toda una espantosa
y profunda desolación.
¡Oh, Dios!

¿Y dónde íbamos aquellos
de aquella larga procesión,
donde no se hablaba ni oía,
ni se sentía la impresión
de estar en la vida carnal,
y si en el reinado del ¡ay!
y en la perpetuidad del ¡oh!
¡Oh, Dios!
Y jamás habiamos visto
envuelto en oro y albor
emperador de aire y de mar,
que aquel Señor Jesucristo
sobre la custodia del sol
¡Oh, Dios!
para tu querer y tu amar.
Visión fue de los peregrinos,
mas brotaron todas las flores
en roca dura y campo magro;
y por los prodigios divinos,
tuvimos pájaros cantores
cantando el verso del milagro.
Por la calle de los difuntos
vi a Nietzsche y Heine en sangre tintos;
parecía que estaban juntos
y iban por caminos distintos.
La ruta tenía su fin,
y dividimos un pan duro
en el rincón de un quicio, oscuro
con el marqués de Bradomin.

Like a modern Dante, who, at the end of the pilgrim’s road finds the
revelation of the miracle of Christianity, Dario feels the pleasure of the
supreme harmony in the presence of Our Lord.

Keenly aware of the tragedy and fruitlessness, at least spiritual, of
his life, Dario sums up his suffering and mental anguish in the words: "A
vast pain, and minor cares." And he finds strength for resignation before
his great doubts in the beauty of the world and in a vague mysticism. He
writes:

Saluda al sol, araña, no seas rancorosa.
Da tus gracias a Dios, ¡oh sapo! pues que eres.
El peludo cangrejo tiene espinas de rosa
y los moluscos reminiscencias de mujeres.
Saber lo que sois, enigmas siendo formas;
deja la responsabilidad a las Normas
que a su vez la enriarán al Todopoderoso...
(Toca, grillo, a la luz de la luna; y dance el oso.)
The Dario we desire to remember is the Dario of these later years. At the time he wrote *Cantos de vida y esperanza*, he also had spoken of his frustrated youth, of the bitter deflation of his existence, of the falsity of bohemian life; he had felt the terror of stumbling groggingly toward the unknown, the horror of the human slough, of feeling himself ephemeral in the world, of the terrible nightmare of the thought of death. But he does not want to know the answer to these enigmas.

The last important poem written by Dario, although written after the publication of *Cantos de vida y esperanza*, has all of the feeling and beauty of the poetic works found in that volume. It is "Pax," written while he was in New York. When the poet was on his return trip to his native land he stopped to rest and visit friends in New York. He seemed, at that time, to have a premonition that it was to be his last visit. The poem is the magnificent invocation of a Catholic poet.

**PAX**

Io vo gridando pace, pace, pace...
Lanza su anatema a Palas:
odiosa a las dulces mejillas
puesto que das las flechas y las balas,
abominada seas...
acercando el puñal a la garganta
o sacando la espada de la vaina;
y en el nombre de Dios
casas de Dios de Reims y de Lovaina
las derrumba el obús cuarenta y dos.

Que la guerra es infernal, es cierto;
cierto que duerme un lobo
en el alma fatal del adanida;
más también Jesucristo no está muerto,
y contra el homicidio, el odio, el robo,
el es la Luz, el Camino y la Vida.
In this poem, the poet vibrates with the tragedy of his time, that tragedy which has been repeated in our days and for which there seems to be no cure in this world of ours—so small and yet so haughty. The greatness, depth and keenness of Dario are so apparent in this last work of his life, and we welcome it for it shows us the true Dario, the mature and completely universal Dario. "Pax", a Catholic poem by a Catholic poet, so fully devoted to his faith at the time of its writing, seems to contain the only solution which will end wars; a love of all men for love of God. Dario’s message is as pertinent today as it was when written. It is only for us to heed it. Unfortunately, this work has been little publicized and appears in all too few anthologies of poetry, South American or otherwise.

Dario, the romanticist, lays down the tenets he believes the poet should be held to. By the writing of Cantos de vida y esperanza he has changed his idea of the poet’s mission to a more practical and universal one. In Tierras solares of 1904, speaking of the "tristeza andaluza," Dario says: "Yo tengo fe en la vida y en el porvenir. Quiza pronto la nueva aurora pondra un poco de su color de rosa en esa flor de poesía nostálgica. Y al ruiseñor que canta por la noche al hechizo de la luna, sucedera una alondra matutina que se emriaque de sol." In this way does the poet of the ivory tower express his faith and hope in the future.

One can detect the decided change in the attitude of Dario in a careful study of the poems and prose of the third stage of his literary career. The works express the thoughts of the man, and there is a tranquility, a peace, and a great hope for the future of his beloved Latin America.
Now in a stage of mellowness and of a more settled and peaceful mind, Dario reflects over the past. In his Historia de mis libros, he says:

I have been filled with anguish when I sounded the depths of my faith and found it insufficiently sturdy and rooted, when the conflict of ideas has caused me to waver and I have felt that I have had no constant and certain support. (translated by Isaac Goldberg).

These are the words of a repentant sinner, who hesitates not to proclaim his past errors and desires to return once more to the tranquility and peace he has so long been without. It can be said that in Cantos de vida y esperanza, Dario makes with engaging frankness a confession of his past, and a criticism of his own literary career. In it he referred to the lost ideals he once possessed in his youth, his sensuality, his love of beauty, the bitterness of disillusion, his longing for sincerity in art. And yet, being wholehearted artist that he was, Dario did not fully renounce his Epicureanism or become devout as did Verlaine.

Cantos de vida y esperanza has always been of very special interest to the critics and writers interested in Rubén Darío, for it contains in both its prose and poetry much autobiographical material. Such is his outstanding work "Pórtico," an autobiographical poem in which the author reaches a new depth of human feeling and a sonorous splendor of utterances which has placed him among the modern poets of the first rank in any language. This poem is better known by the title, "Yo soy aquel..."

PÓRTICO

Yo soy aquel que ayer no más decía
el verso azul y la canción profana,
en cuya noche un ruiseñor hablaba

que era alondra de luz por la mañana.

   El dueño fui de mi jardín de sueño, lleno de rosas y de címanes vagos; el dueño de las tortolillas, el dueño de gondolas y liras en los lagos;

   y muy siglo diez y ocho y muy antiguo y muy moderno; audaz, cosmopolita; con Hugo fuerte y con Verlaine ambiguo, y una sed de ilusiones infinita.

   Yo supe de dolor desde mi infancia, mi juventud... fue juventud la mía? Sus rosas aún me dejan su fragancia—una fragancia de melancolía...

   Potro sin freno se lanzó mi instinto mi juventud montó potro sin freno; iba embriagada y con puñal al cinto; si no oyo, fue porque Dios es bueno.

   En mi jardín se vio una estatua bella; se jugó mármoles y era carne viva; un alma joven habitaba en ella, sentimental, sensible, sensitiva.

   Y tierna ante el mundo, de manera que encerrada en silencio no salía, sino cuando en la dulce primavera era la hora de la melodía...

   Hora de ocaso y de discreto beso; hora crepuscular y de retiro; hora de madrigal y de embriego, de "¡Te adoro!", de "¡Ay!" y de suspiro.

   Y entonces era en la dulzaina un juego de misteriosas gamas cristalinas, un nuevo de notas del Pan griego y un desgranar de músicas latinas,

   Con aire tal y con ardor tan vivo, que a la estatua nacían de repente en el muslo viril patas de chivo y dos cuernos de sátiro en la frente.
Como la Galatea gongorina
me encantó la marquesa verleniana,
y así juntaba a la pasión divina
una sensual hiperestesia humana;

todo ansia, todo ardor, sensación pura
y vigor natural; y sin falsia,
y sin comedía y sin literatura...
Si hay un alma sincera, es la mía.

La torre de mármol tentó mi anhelo;
quise encerrarme dentro de mí mismo,
y tuve hambre de espacio y sed de cielo
desde las sombras de mi propio abismo.

Como la esponja que la sal satura
en el jugo del mar, fue el dulce y tierno
corazón mio, henchido de amargura
por el mundo, la carne y el infierno.

Mas, por gracia de Dios, en mi conciencia
el Bien supo elegir la mejor parte;
y si hubo espera hiel en mi existencia,
me libré toda acritud el Arte.

Mi intelecto libre de pensar bajo,
baño el agua castalia el alma mía,
peregrinó mi corazón, y trajo
de la sagrada selva la armonía.

¡Oh, la selva sagrada! ¡Oh, la profunda
emanación del corazón divino
de la sagrada selva! ¡Oh, la fecunda
fuente cuya virtud vence al destino!

Bosque ideal que lo real complica,
allí el cuerpo arde y vive, y Psiquis vuela;
mientras abajo el sátiro fornica,
ebria de azul deslizó Filomela

perla de ensueño y música amorosa
en la cúpula en flor del laurel verde,
hispápila sutil liba en la rosa,
y la boca del fauno el pezón muerde.
Allí va el dios en celo tras la hembra,
y la caña de Pan se alza del lodo;
la eterna Vida sus semillas siembra,
y brota la armonía del gran Todo.

El alma que entra allí debe ir desnuda,
temblando de deseo y fiebre santa,
sobre cardo herido y espina aguda:
asi suena, asi vibra y asi canta.

Vida, luz y verdad, tal triple llama
produce la interior llama infinita;
el ArTe puro como Cristo exclama:
EGO SUM LUX ET VERITAS ET VITA.

Y la vida es misterio, la luz ciega
y la verdad inaccesible asombra;
la adusta perfección jamás se entrega,
y el secreto Ideal duerme en la sombra.

Por eso ser sincero es ser potente.
De desnuda que está, brilla la estrella;
el agua dice el alma de la fuente
en la voz de cristal que fluye d'ella.

Tal fue mi intento, hacer del alma pura
mía una estrella, una fuente sonora,
con el horror de la literatura
y loco de crepúsculo y de aurora.

Del crepúsculo azul que da la pauta
que los celestes éxtasis inspira,
bruma y tono menor--;toda la flauta;
y Aurora, hija del Sol-- ;toda la lira.

Pasó una piedra que lanzó una honda;
paso una flecha que aguzó un violento.
La piedra de la honda fue a la onda,
y la flecha del odio fuese al viento.

La virtud está en ser tranquilo y fuerte;
con el fuego interior todo se abrasa;
se triunfa del remor y de la muerte,
¡y hacia Belén...la caravana pasa!
In Stanza four Dario speaks with some degree of self-pity of the sufferings of his childhood. He refers to this also in his Autobiografía which appeared in Caras y Caretas in Buenos Aires in 1912. The poem further reflects the mood of despondency that clouded his later years. He gives, says G. Dundas Craig, a full and detailed picture of the dreamland which alone offers him a retreat from rude contacts with the world of reality. In his struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil, he had become embittered and his art offers the only means of escape from the sordidness of the actual. The "selva sagrada" symbolizes the home of the ideal. This sacred grove is a pagan paradise, where sensual instinct ranges unashamed. But the soul entering therein in pure and native simplicity, though stung by the reproaches of the prude or the puritan, will offer no stain; rather the inner flame will glow the brighter, and he will behold Life, Light and Truth.

In his commentations upon "Yo soy aquel...," G. Dundas Craig says:

Life has been unkind to him (Dario); his early works, Azul and Prosas profanas, have excited much criticism, some of it ill-natured; he is on his defense; but his conscience is clear, and calumny has no terrors for him.

Paso una piedra que lanzo una honda; pasó una flecha que aguzó un violento;[44]

"La Galatea gongorina"..."la marquesa verleniana"...These references to Luis de Gongora (1561-1627) and Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) are significant and important. Dario had read widely in the older Spanish classics. He had read them, moreover, with the keen insight of an erudite poet, and had in consequence been able to see beneath the surface and to penetrate the

eccentricity of Gongora. That his study of Gongora influenced his style is highly probable. Of his indebtedness, says Craig, to Paul Verlaine of France, Darío makes no secret. He makes many references to him in his poems; for example, in his magnificent "Responso."

RESPONSO

Padre y maestro mágico, liróforo celeste
Que al instrumento olímpico y a la sirena agreste
Diste tu acento encantador;
Panida! Pan tu mismo, que coros condujiste
Hacia el profundo sacro que amaba tu alma triste,
A él son del sistro y del tambor;

Que tu sepulcro cubra de flores Primavera,
Que se humedezca el aspero hocico de la fiera,
De amor si pasa por allí;
Que el humo recinto visite Pan bicorne;
Que de sangrientas rosas el fresco Abril te adorne
Y de claveles de rubí.

Que si posarse quiere sobre la tumba el cuervo,
Ahuyenten la negrura del pájaro protervo,
El dulce canto de cristal
Que Filomela vierta sobre tus tristes huesos,
O la armonía dulce de risas y de besos,
De canto oculto y florestal.

Que púberes canesoras te ofrenden el acanto,
Que sobre tu sepulcro no se derrame el llanto,
Sino rocio, vino, miel;
Que el pámpano allí brote, las flores de Citeres,
Y que se escuchen vagos suspiros de mujeres
Bajo un simbólico laurel;

Que si un pastor su pícano bajo el frescor del haya,
En amorosos días, como en Virgilio, ensaya,
Tu nombre ponga en la canción,
Y que la virgen nayade, cuando ese nombre escuche,
Con ansias y temores entre las líneas lúeke,
Llena de miedo y de pasión.
De noche, en la montaña, en la negra montaña
De las Visiones, pase gigante sombra extraña,
Sombra de un sátiro espectral;
Que ella al centauro adusto con su grandezza asuste;
De una extra-humana flauta la melodía ajuste
A la harmonía sidereal.

Y huya el tropel equino por la montaña vasta;
Tu rostro de ultratumba bañe la luna casta
De compasiva y blanca luz;
Y el sátiro contemple sobre un lejano monte,
Una cruz que se eleve cubriendo el horizonte
Y un resplandor sobre la cruz!

In his prose, Dario speaks affectionately of Verlaine as "pauvre Lélian," and one of the most touching passages in his autobiography is his account of his one and only meeting with him in Paris shortly before Verlaine's death. In "Portico," Dario's claim to "una sensual hiperestesia" --a sensitiveness to succuous impressions that was beyond the power of ordinary mortals--is very characteristic of the decadent school to which Dario belongs. He was no democrat: "Yo no soy un poeta para muchedumbres."

He wrote for an audience of the élite; in short, he definitely ranges himself with Góngora and the other practitioners of the culturanismo of the seventeenth century.

Dario wrote his autobiography about four years before his death. It appeared first in Caras y caretas, published in Buenos Aires. Many of the feelings expressed in "Portico" are retold in prose form in this work.

Commenting on his autobiography, Isaac Goldberg says:
His autobiography, written about four years before his death is a book of engaging candor, revealing the man behind the poet. He assumes no airs, nor role of an inspired prophet; nor does he, on the other hand, impart to his frankness any suspicion of parading pose, of sensational confession. His prose here is simple, unpretentious, even conversational, yet rich in colorful words and felicitous phrases...He is the possessor of a deep sense of humor which, like all deep humor, plumbs the well of Sorrow.

Returning to Cantos de vida y esperanza, of which the poem "Portico" and the prose work, Autobiography, appear to be sequels, we find the theme of the swans used for the final time, and the employment of that theme held up to almost ridicule by one González Martínez. Scarcely do we open the volume than we observe that Dario begins his rich verse with references to his favorite bird, the swan. In the preface, Dario desires and does express his protestations of the possible and probable North American imperialism "sobre las alas de los immaculados cíes, ilustres como Júpiter." In this volume there are five poems dedicated to the swan, four under the common title of "Los cíes," and the fifth entitled "Leda." Speaking of these poems, Pedro Salinas writes:

En el primer poema se presentan los cíes como un refugio delicado y acariciador contra la ilusión y el desánimo.

Cíes, los abanicos de vuestras alas frescas
Den a las frentes palidas sus caricias más puras
Y alejen vuestras blancas figuras pintorescas
De nuestras mentes tristes las ideas oscuras.

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Faltos de los alientos que dan las grandes cosas,
Que haremos los poetas sino buscar tus lagos?

Y, sin embargo, en la estrofa final cíanes son los que lanzan al aire el augural grito esperanzado:

Y un cíane negro dió: "La noche anuncia el día."
Y un blanco: "La aurora es inmortal! La aurora es inmortal!"

Still commenting upon the swan-theme in Cantos de vida y esperanza, Salinas says:

En el poema tercero de "Los cíanes" y "Leda," encajan más bien en el sector de la poesía sensualista y neohelenica de Dario, y nos ofrecen al cíane en función de amante de Leda. Confírmase aquí que para Dario esa mítica copula es la que confiere al cíane, para siempre, su don de aristocracia y su derecho a reclamar parentela con lo divino.46

Of the fourth poem, Salinas comments:

En el cuarto poema Dario supone un pacto de dioses y bestias, en que se atribuye a la alondra la luz, al buho la sabiduría, al amor a las palomas, etc. Pero los cíanes son los "divinos principes," "vagos," "immaculados," "maravillosos."47

Dario employed the swan theme frequently in this volume, and never more beautifully. However, rebellion arose against the theme, which had been circulating in a great number of the works of poetry of South America...
between the years 1900 and 1910. At the time, the prestige and popularity of the bird-theme seemed unyielding. In Mexico, a young poet by the name of Gutiérrez Martínez wrote a startling piece of poetry entitled "Tuéscela el cuello al ciano." Apparently a harmless and unenmous poem, it was to create quite a scene on the literary stage, and has been said previously, was to be responsible, at least in part, for the decadence and eventual complete decline of modernism. In this poem, which the poet used as his weapon of attack against Dario and his ilk, Gutiérrez Martínez is desirous of seeing an end of the allusions to the swan, "el teoría cínico"; "el ciano de Vigny que es el poeta que crea y que lleva encima el fardo del soilo vulgar; en Baudelaire, el ser místico, la criatura ideal y exquisita, desterrado en la pobreza de este mundo; en Mallarme, el ciano que es el ansia de ideal pureza, de creación perfecta." This attack upon the swan-theme as employed by some of the outstanding symbolists, decadents, parnassians and modernists was to have far-reaching results, which are outside of the realms of this particular study.

_Cantos de vida y esperanza_ has had such great success and popularity in South America and Spain because of the work's pure and intimate lyricism. Many poems contain the sentiments and collective ideas of the Spanish world, thus without a doubt, Dario is the poet of America. In this work Dario is a more profound and simple poet. His technique is more difficult and complex, the difficult simplicity of maturity.

In many of these highly technical and mature poems, as we have already
seen, give vigorous expression of the poet's love for his native country and for all of the countries in which Spanish is spoken; reminiscences of childhood and youth in Nicaragua, as found in "Allá lejos," New World scenes, indigenous legends and tales of their heroes as found as themes for "Momotombo" and "Tutecotzimi," love of native land and exultant pride in the accomplishments of his race, as in "Canto a la Argentina." This poem is the longest of his poetical compositions and is a very notable contribution to the "New Poetry" which class of poetry Dario began to embrace and advocate in his last years as a poet. When Argentina celebrated the centenary of her Declaration of Independence, it was fitting that Rubén Dario should contribute the best that was in him toward the celebration. The following portion of the long poem are two stanzas, considered by many critics to be the finest lines found in the commorative work and contain the crux of the entire piece. The following lines are the ones most frequently found in anthologies of poetry.

CANTO A LA ARGENTINA
(Fragment)

***Hombres de España poliforme, finos andaluces sonoros, amantes de zambras y toros; astures que entre peñasco aprendisteis a amar la augusta Libertad; elásticos vascos, como hechos de antiguas raíces; raza heróica, raza robusta, rudos brazos y altas servidencias; hijos de Castilla la noble rica de hazañas ancestrales; firmes gallegos de roble; catalanes y levantinos que heredasteis los inmortales fuegos de hogares latinos;
Dario had spent many years in Buenos Aires on the staff of La Nación, and for still longer period he had lived in Europe as foreign correspondent for the same great newspaper as it was in Buenos Aires that recognition was first given his leadership in the new literary movement known as Modernismo, and it was there that he was always sure of the warmest welcome; in short, Argentina was the country of his predilection, though not of his birth. It was therefore fitting that Argentina should be the theme of his longest poem.

In forty-five stanzas, ranging in length from eight lines to seventy-six, the lines varying in length from six syllables to twelve, he describes the multifarious activities and aspects of the great southern Republic, and calls attention to her past achievements and predicts a more glorious future, the refrain "en la fiesta del centenario" supplying the motif. Because of his heartfelt interest in the theme and because of the greatness of the theme itself, his inspiration is sustained from the invocation of the first line; "Argentina! Argentina! to thee concluding verses taken from the national anthem: "Oid, mortales, el grito sagrado: /Libertad! /Libertad! /Libertad! Liberty and opportunity are the two words engraved on her portals and carried to the ends of the earth within trumpet blast. The fertile pampas, almost boundless in extent and inexhaustible in productiveness; Buenos Aires, the teeming metropolis of the Southern Hemisphere, offer liberty and opportunity. In search of these, many have come and many more will come to this land of
opportunity, this "paraiso terrestre," this "Atlantida resucitada." The elements that go into this vast melting pot of the Southern continent for the amalgamation of many races, "el cosmico portento de obra y de pensamiento que arde en las poliglotas muchedumbres" are vividly characterized, Russians, Jews, Italians, Spaniards and French. With clear eye and sure hand he pictures Argentina of today in all of its manifold aspects; turning the flash-light of his poetic inspiration now upon the past, now upon the future, he exults in the greater Argentina that is to be. In the vigorous optimistic poet of the "Canto a la Argentina," with its well sustained epic flight, there is little to remind us of the exquisite artist, the Symbolistic, Subjective poet of Proses profanas, unless it be the notable mastery of meters and rhythms.

Through the medium of his works alone, the three great phases of Dario's life, both personal and literary, can be seen. Azul, representative of his first phase, shows his devoted allegiance to all that the new French schools advocated, high style tones of exoticism, egotism, Parnassian romanticism and even l'vie bohémie. Proses profanas, exemplary of his second phase or literary period, shows Dario at his best as a modernista, and at this time Modernism reached its peak. Symbolism was added to Parnassianism and Romanticism. With the appearance of Cantos de vida y esperanza, we find the Dario we can truly admire, and the Dario who has forgotten himself, who desires to repent his past life, and does to an extent, and who becomes a writer for all, a truly universal literary figure.

In his verse, Dario was able to escape almost entirely from the murk of his real existence into an imaginary world of ideal beauty. Traces of his
life do find their way into his poetry, the pleasures of the flesh particularly, and the agonies of doubt and remorse. But it is this touch of the real that gives Darío his uniqueness and which causes him to appeal to the reader. It has been because of universality and popular appeal of Cantos de vida y esperanza and its themes of Pan-Hispanism and Americanism that we can justifiably call Darío the poet of America. In his famous ode entitled, "A Roosevelt," he sounded a portent against "Yankee imperialism" that gained him the applause of the entire South American continent.

Darío was the complete master of romanticism and modernism in all of its ramifications. His was the greatest technical skill, the greatest successes with metrical innovations. He was the escapist, par excellence, and at the same time the poet of that new Worldism which was to mark the end of the modernist movement.
DARIO AND SPANISH AMERICAN LITERATURE

Previous to the birth of Modernism in South America, her literature had been, for the most part, literature from the mother country. Gradually the influence of Paris was felt as far away as Latin America and the young authors of the period sought the popular contemporary French schools as their models, and brought with the Parnassian and Symbolist schools a complete revolution in South American literature. Heretofore, it had been bound and hemmed in by strict classic rules, although some freedom was allowed by the Romanticists. In a brief span of time Modernism became world wide. The great writers of many nations began to advocate the new movement, set into motion by Rubén Darío. In England there were: Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne, Oscar Wilde and Rudyard Kipling; the the United States: Walt Whitman, Edgar Allen Poe and Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson; in Germany: Suderman, Hauptmann and Nietzsche, whom Darío greatly admired, for the writers of Germany always maintained a great respect for the writers in the Spanish language; in Russia there were: Garshin, Korolenko, Chekov and Gorki; Bjoernsen and Ibsen in Scandinavia; and d'Annunzio in Italy. Indeed, Modernism became world wide.

The literary campaign, begun in Buenos Aires, was a sign of the times. The members of this new move, headed by Darío, advocated a return to artistic expression that should be native and not subservient to Europe. In spite of Darío's forswearing for a short while all American subjects as
unpoetical, he influenced several prominent writers to follow him, the most reknown of whom were José Santos Chocano and Leopoldo Lugones.

In the beginning, Dario's literary influence was exerted through the popular and current periodicals of Buenos Aires. While on the editorial staff of La Nación, Buenos Aires' outstanding journal, Dario began to exert an influence over the young authors around him. Dario acted as a medium between the young literary artists and the modernist precursors, Paul Grousac, Santiago Estrada and José Martí. The young writers used to imitate the articles of Dario and these articles became the topic of heated conversations at many tertulias in many coffee shops in Buenos Aires.

The poets agreed that Dario brought freedom and amplitude to the poetry of Latin America. "But within that freedom he spoke of his age; over those paths he drew new vehicles of beauty. And after all, mankind feeds upon feelings and thoughts, not hexameters and heptasyllables." The poets' choice of the best poem of Dario's, the one most expressive of the modernistic style and technique was his La Sonatina, the most rhythmical and musical of all of the poems in the collection entitled Prosas profanas. This poem proved the most popular in Spain and Latin America and provided inspiration for many of the rising young poets.

LA SONATINA

La princesa está triste... ¿qué tendrá la princesa?
Los suspiros se escapan de su boca de fresa,
que ha perdido la risa, que ha perdido el color.
La princesa está pálida en su silla de oro,
está mudo el teclado de su clave sonoro;
y en un vaso olvidada se desmaya una flor.

El jardín puebla el triunfo de los paves reales.
Parlanchina, la dueña dice cosas banalos,
y vestido de rojo pirueta el bufón.
La princesa no ríe, la princesa no siente;
la princesa persigue por el cielo de Oriente
la libélula vaga de una vaga ilusión.

¿Piensa acaso en el príncipe de Golconda o de China,
o en el que ha detenido su carroza argentina
para ver de sus ojos la dulsura de la luz,
o en el rey de las islas de las rosas fragantes,
o en el que es soberano de los claros diamantes,
o en el sueño orgulloso de las perlas de Ormuz?

¡Ayl la pobre princesa de la boca de rosa
quiere ser golondrina, quiere ser mariposa,
tener alas ligeras, bajo el cielo volar;
ir al sol por la escala luminosa de un rayo,
saludar a los lírios con los versos de Mayo,
o perderse en el viento sobre el trueno del mar.

Ya no quiere el palacio, ni la ruesca de plata,
ni el halcón encantado, ni el bufón escarlata,
ni los oíones unánimes en el lago de azur.
Y están tristes las flores por la flor de la corte;
las jazmines de Oriente, los nelumbos del Norte,
de Occidente las dalias y las rosas del Sur.

¡Pobrecita princesa de los ojos azules!
Está presa en sus ojos, está presa en sus tules,
en la jaula de mármol del palacio real;
el palacio soberbio que vigilan los guardias,
quien custodian cien negros con sus cien alabardas,
un lebre que no duerme y un dragón colossal.
¡Oh, quién fuera hipsípila que dejó la crisálida!
(La princesa está triste. La princesa está palida.)
¡Oh visión adorada de oro, rosa y marfil!
¡Quién volará a la tierra donde un príncipe existe
(La princesa está palida. La princesa está triste.)
más brillante que el alba, más hermoso que Abril!

¡Calla, calla, princesa—dice el hada madrina—
en caballo con las alas hacia acá se encamina,
en el cinto la espada y en la mano el azor,
el feliz caballero que te adora sin verte,
y que llega de lejos, vencedor de la Muerte,
a encenderte los labios con su beso de amor!

Because of the haunting beauty, the obscure tints and the various references to things Oriental and the recurrent use of the swan theme in this poem, the poets and contemporaries hailed it as epitome of modernistic poetry.

Darío, by the force of world events, was being drawn closer to his continental brethren and out of himself. Between 1896 and 1905 the Spanish American War had been fought and it had induced in the younger generation of Spain and Latin America a deep pessimism that turned it to foreign channels, predominantly French. The writing of Prosas profanas hastened Darío's fame as a poet, for it had stemmed the tide and dispelled the growing pessimism. Darío had left his ivory tower and faced the challenges so rapidly placed before him. Darío began to gain in vigor and power as his influence began to manifest itself in the works of his contemporaries.

Many critics of today claim that José Enrique Rodó or Martínez Sierra was responsible for the return of Darío to the limelight and eventual popularity. Be that as it may, Darío returned to the people and it was then that his influence was really felt and that he became a model and inspiration
for the up and coming young writers. Among the young contemporary writers there were many who turned to Darío and his movement for inspiration and were greatly influenced in turn by Darío and his works. Among them was Leopoldo Lugones, a close friend of Rubén Darío and, like him, an admirer of the French literary schools. In his *Los crepúsculos del jardín* (1905), he is the vanguardist of strained but colorful metaphors, so reminiscent of Darío's earlier works. "Melancolía," a poem in this collection shows the influence of Darío.

**MELANCOLÍA**

A la hora en que a la tarde le aparecen ojeras,  
Cuando quedo más pasos por last tristes riberas  
Donde entre brumas lilas esfumarse las naves,  
Y afligen como adiós os los vuelos de las aves  
Que afrontan lejanías hondas como la muerte;  
Cuando el sol moribundo sangres pálidas vierte  
En la imperial fatiga de su grandezza inútil;  
Cuando el amor es necio, cuando la gloria es fútil;  
Cuando la misma pena, por el cansancio trunca,  
Conoce el desconsuelo de no revivir nunca;  
Cuando en el pecho amagan incurables dolencias;  
Cuando en el alma hay naves que preceden ausencias:—  
Lo que en ambos fué dicha resa en mi una plegaria.

Vístese de heliotropo la tarde solitaria;  
Los pensativos sauces despidense del día  
Con un desasosiego tal, que se creería  
Hallar bajo cada uno de los sauces aquellos,  
Una huérflana pálida de languidos cabellos.

Algo tuyo que gime flota en el oleaje  
Taciturno, y agrava la inquietud del paisaje.  
Y estoy tan triste, tanto, que ni llorante puedo;  
Pues bajo esa nostalgia que se acurrucha en miedo,  
No sé por qué inconclusa sugestión de las brisas,  
Sufro, y las mismas lágrimas se me vuelven sonrisas.
Like Darío, Lugones wrote with strength and facility which showed that he had mastered the intricacies of rhyme and rhythm so completely that he has few peers among the world's poets. Furthermore, Lugones carried the standard of cosmopolitanism to greater heights than even did Rubén Darío, and he was heralded as Argentina's most varicolored and cosmopolitan poet of the twentieth century.

As a result of Darío's change of spirit which was reflected in his works, especially those of the third literary phase of his writings, Darío was hailed as the poet of America. It was then that his influence reached the far-distant country of Peru, and in the hands of Peru's favorite and most outstanding modernist poet, José Santos Chocano (1875-1934) we see the principles established by Darío carried forth. Chocano, also a friend of Darío, though only through correspondence, was one of Latin America's most forceful and colorful poets. He was greatly inspired by the popular poems of Darío, such as "A Roosevelt" and "Canto a la Argentina." Santos Chocano sang of the Indians and the other rich inheritance of his native Peru; the conquistadores, for instance; he described the inspiring, lofty and imposing Andes, the mighty Amazon River, the torrid, treacherous tropics. But his grandiloquent, mannered rhetoric rarely jibes with his theme. Comparing Santos Chocano and Rubén Darío, Arturo Torres-Ríosseo says:

All his (Chocano) work gives us the sensation of a lack of internal vigor, for which the poet wishes to compensate with a superabundance of the merely decorative. This phenomenon is also visible in Darío, even in such poems as "Salutación del optimista," which have been considered typically American...When singing of his people, Chocano adorns himself with Inca jewels and with the plumes of the conquistadores, and declaims in pompous tones. When Darío sang of the glories of
Chile, he adopted a Homeric or Huguesque air.²

Santos Chocano wrote in somewhat the same manner as Walt Whitman, who chanted the song of North America and its dream of democracy in his stirring and very effective *Leaves of Grass*. The influence of Darío upon Santos Chocano is readily detected in such poems of Chocano as: "La Visión del condor" and "Blasón," both found in Chocano's well known volume entitled *Alma América*.

LA VISION DEL CONDOR

Una vez bajó el condor de su altura
a pugnar con el boa, que hecho un lazo,
dormía astutamente en el regazo
compasivo de trágica espesura.

El condor picoteó la escama dura;
y la sierpe, al sentir el picotazo,
fingió en el césped el nervioso trazo
con que la tempestad firma en la anchura.

El condor cogió al boa; y en un vuelo
sacudiólo con ímpetu bravío
y lo dejó caer desde su cielo.

Inclinó la mirada al bosque unbrío;
y pudo que ver que, en el lejano suelo,
en vez del boa, serpenteaba un río...

Chocano's play on words and euphony and also his versification innovations are in evidence in this poem which also uses a bird theme. Further influence of Darío is much more apparent in the following popular poem, "Blasón," which title was also used by Darío.

BLASÓN

Soy el cantor de América autóctono y salvaje; mi lira tiene un alma, mi canto un ideal.
Mi verso no se mece colgado de un ramaje
con un vaivén pausado de hamaca tropical...

Cuando me siento Inca, le rindo vasallaje
al Sol, que me de el oestro de su poder real;
cuando me siento hispano y evoco el Coloniaje,
parecen mis estrofas trompetas de cristal.

Mi fantasía viene de un abolengo moro:
los Andes son de plata, pero el León de oro;
y las dos castas fundo con épico fragor.

La sangre es española é incaico es el latido;
¡y de no ser Poeta, quizas yo hubiese sido
un blanco Aventurero ó un indio Emperador!

Santos Chocano's popularity, like that of Rubén Darío, has suffered
at the hands of modern critics, less sympathetic than their predecessors.
In his appraisal of Chocano, Torres-Ríoseco says: "(Chocano) who was once
called the foremost poet of the continent, is now accused of superficiality
and prosainment."

The influence of Darío over the modernist poet of Uruguay, Julio
Herrera y Reissig (1873-1910) had great affect upon that country's poetry.
For it was Herrera y Reissig who was responsible for the introduction of
modernism into Uruguayan literature. In Ernesto Morales' comprehensive
anthology of American poets, he says of Julio Herrera y Reissig:

Original hasta la extravagancia por odio al lugar común, me-
taforico hasta la paradoja, Herrera y Reissig ha dejado más
de una obra maestra. Sufrió decisivas influencias de poetas

3 Ibid., p. 121.
franceses afines a su temperamento de exquisito, pero supo al-
quitrarlas y darles color, alma propia. Si un defecto tiene,
es su exotismo; pero este resulta de su misma sinceridad, ya
que Herrera y Reissig fue un idealista, un soñador que vivió
de espaldas a la vida su mundo de quimeras. 4

Like Darío, at the time of his writing Agul, we find that Herrera y
Reissig, too, turned his back upon the world of reality and created for him-
self his own world of idealism.

Today, some critics assert that Herrera y Reissig, the verbalist, as
he has been labeled by many, is the true precursor of the lyric vanguard.
He cultivated a form original to America but too close to the French model.
Rubén Darío, on the other hand, possessed a formula of his own, developed in
accord with his intimate artistic sense. Today we are slightly confused by
his verbal capers and technical acrobatics. We find a manifest discrepancy
between the daily life and the sonnets of Herrera y Reissig, as in his "El
Despertar," just as there is an abyss between Darío's Prosas profanas and
the meiocrity of almost all the Hispanic American nations. Reminiscent of
his very earliest poetic works in this sonnet by Herrera y Reissig.

EL DESPERTAR

Alisía y Gloris abren de par en par la puerta
y torpes, con el dorso de la mano haragana,
restréganse los húmedos ojos de lumbre incierta,
por donde huyen los últimos sueños de la mañana...

La inocencia del día se lava en la fontana,
el arado en el surco vagóso despierta
y en torno de la casa rectoral, la sotana
del cura se pasea gravemente en la huerta...

4 Ernesto Morales, Antología de Poetas Americanos, (Buenos Aires:
Editor Santiago Rueda, 1941), p. 779.
Todo suspira y ríe. La placidez remota
de la montaña sueña celestiales rutinas.
El esquilón repite siempre su misma nota
de grillo de las candidas églogas matutinas.
Y hacia la aurora se agan agudas golondrinas,
como flechas perdidas de la noche en derrota.

In an attempt to obtain a true picture of Darío's position in Spanish American literature, his indirect influence must not be overlooked. His influence upon the modernist poets, such as Leopoldo Lugones, José Santos Chocano and Julio Herrera y Reissig, plus many more lesser known poets, was that of imitation and inspiration. In the case of one José Enrique Rodo, the influence of Darío was unpremeditated and indirect. Rodo, the great critic of South America and authoritarian on Rubén Darío owes his success to Rubén Darío because of the latter's masterpiece of modernism, *Prosas profanas*. Rodo was the first outstanding South American critic who imitated and followed in the footsteps of great masters of criticism and scholarship such as Menéndez Pelayo, García Icazbalceta, José Toribio Medina, and A. Gómez Restrepo.

At the end of the nineteenth century, criticism which was then based upon the French schools of criticism, became more philosophical and aesthetic. The true source of inspiration of Spanish American critics was French critics' theories, such as those propounded by Rémy de Gourmont. The work of Rodo is the product of that criticism. He marks in prose, as positively as Rubén Darío in poetry, the constant orientation toward the French spirit. In Rodo's essay on Rubén Darío, he applies the determinist theory of Taine, but relies more on his intuition, applying his knowledge of
symbolist criticism, with its interchanges, suggestions and divinations. Rodó, after writing his essay on Darío, abandoned the type of Spanish criticism to enter wholly into the currents of the European, thus continuing a general process of artistic orientation. Says Arturo Torres-Ríoseco: "We could apply to Rodó the same words with which he defined Rubén Darío: 'He is not the critic of America'." José Enrique Rodó effected a new stylistic orientation in the literature of the entire continent, as Darío had done in poetry. The two literary artists go hand in hand, for both have greatly influenced, in their particular fields, the literature of Latin America.

The appearance of Darío's Proses profanas in 1896 provoked a storm of criticism, applause, generous gestures of admiration, and course attacks. Indeed, it was an extraordinary book for its time; it denoted a poetic revolution such as occurs among a people but once in a century. But the significance of that revolution needed explanation, and Rodó was its masterly interpreter. His Rubén Darío is unprecedented in Spanish American literature. It marks a date which might well have been the beginning of a great philosophico-critical movement, but which unfortunately was lost in the vast cultural lacuna of the times.

In phrases of exceptional beauty Rodó explains the innovations and virtues of Proses profanas, its souring rhythm, the exquisite selection of vocabulary, the images, the motifs, the quintessence of form, and the background of exotic themes. In prose worthy of the verse of Darío, Rodó makes

5 Arturo Torres-Ríoseco, op. cit., p. 141.
observations of striking originality, and ends by remarking the animistic impassivity of so refined a poet. For under that array of brilliant lights, precious stones, fireworks, roses, and tinfoil there lay a "soul wrapped in Swedish fur." Darío was not the poet whom America awaited. He was a master in the assimilation of French poetry; but although his value as a craftsman was unquestionably great, he did not interpret the soul of his continent.

Rodó was not mistaken in his evaluation, says Arturo Torres-Rosseco. For Darío, in that volume, was indeed not the poet of a primitive, unmanered continent, but a talented and audacious imitator of the French. He was a great poet in form, but he lacked the vibrating, savage energy that his race demanded.

Rodó's essay, written in an undulating style, slow in movement, dazzling in color; serene in judgement, and profound in thought, soon became known throughout the Spanish-speaking world and carried the fame of Rubén Darío from Buenos Aires to Madrid. Never before had the Castilian tongue known so intimate a fusion of definitive ideas and artistic form. For the first time there appeared in South America a phenomenon not rare in France, the combination in one person of the thinker and the poet. Such was Rodó, then—philosopher and aesthete; and thus he continued to the end of his days.

With his analysis of the principal work of the movement perfected by Rubén Darío, the Uruguayan writer became the recognized critic of South America, and of modernism. In effect, his essay notes carefully all the salient points of that movement. Rodó, who was familiar with the French Parnassian and symbolist schools, found little difficulty in observing the
repetition of the French poetic phenomenon in America. Thus he could well conclude that the volume of the Nicaraguan bard represented little else than a transplantation of aesthetic forms. Despite the fact that almost every Spanish American critic has discussed the question of the degree of French influence in the work of Darío, the germ of all of that has been said may be found in Rodó's essay.

We are indebted to Rodó for his notes on Darío's hexameters, a poetic device successfully employed by Darío, only to be adopted and used by his contemporaries and successors. Scores of critics and scholars have since studied Darío's poetry, only to arrive at definite conclusions which place Darío in a prominent and conspicuous place among Latin American poets. Recently, however, Navarro Tomás in his laboratory in Madrid has examined the matter of Darío's hexameters. His experiments prove conclusively that there are long and short syllables in Spanish verse, but that the same syllable may be at one time long and another time short, and that its length is determined by its position with regard to the principal accents of the line and to the final pause.

Darío, in admiration of the great Latin classics, such as the works of Horace and Virgil, desired to use the spondee and dactyls as employed by them. In getting spondees into his line, Darío was forced to do violence to the language. Thus, the line,

\[ \text{La di/vina/reina/ de luz, la ce/leste Esperanza,} \]

cannot be scanned as a hexameter unless the first two syllables are treated as a spondee, and the next two as another. This makes awkward reading. As if to
compensate for the weakness of the spondee in his verse, Darío takes a liberty that is fairly common in modern Spanish poetry. If his caesura is preceded by one or two unaccented syllables, he disregards them and introduces two more unaccented syllables before the next strong accent, as in the line,

\[ y \text{ en } \text{la/ caja pán } | \text{dórica } // \text{ de que} | \text{tantás des} / \text{gracias sur} | \text{gieron...} \]

These added syllables are described by Jaimes Freyre as \textit{silabas agregadas}, and are to be absorbed (embebidas) in the pause. These added syllables give a heaviness to the line that is neither Horatian nor Virgilian.

In his best lines, as in the first line of "Salutación del optimista,"

\[ \text{Inolitas razas uberrímas, sangre de Hispania fecunda...} \]

Darío makes as near an approximation to the Latin hexameter as Longfellow did in \textit{Evangeline}.

The closest parallel to the Darian hexameter is to be found in Carducci, and it was probably the rhythm of his verse that Darío had in mind when he wrote "Salutación del optimista." In many lines, however, Darío's verse follows no definite pattern: his dithyrambic utterances may be best regarded as an eloquent or grandiloquent kind of free verse. The free verse of Darío was to set the pace for many poets to follow, and at the same time Spanish American verse was to find itself free from the binds and shackles in which it found itself at the hands of Darío's predecessors.

Amado Nervo (1870-1919), of Mexico, was another of the poets of the modernist trend to follow closely in the footsteps of his intimate friend, Darío. Next to Darío, Nervo is the most widely read of Spanish American poets. Like Darío, he spent the most productive years of his life in Paris
and Madrid. Nervo was always sympathetic with Darío's aims and ideals, a sympathy which finds expression in the poem, *Homenaje*, written on the occasion of Darío's death in 1916. In this poem, the refrain,

Ha muerto Rubén Darío,
¡el de las piedras preciosas!

is significant, indicating the aspect of the master's work that most strongly appealed to the younger man. We find in Amado Nervo the same fondness for experimenting with new metrical effects as in Darío, the same sensitiveness to the musical quality of words and rhythms, the same felicity of phrase, and the touch of melancholy characteristic of the Modern school. Like Darío and Verlaine, Nervo did not attain his power of mystic absorption without struggle. He experienced the seductions of the flesh and the torments of a stylite; but, says Craig, "the combat between the soul and the body, the spiritual and the material, Christ and Pan, which in Darío ceased only with death, had in the Mexican poet an earlier and happier ending."6 In 1914, Nervo wrote:

Siento que estoy en las laderas
de la montaña augusta de la Serenidad;

and, having attained this peace of mind, he was able at last to comprehend the meaning of things:

Compreendo al fin el vasto sentido de las cosas...

Although his poetry never attained the vividness and power of introspection as did Darío's, Nervo was greatly influenced by the master of Modernism, and Nervo, himself, did much to promote the school of modernism

and its tenets, to which he was so devoted.

Another close friend of Darío's and one who fell under his literary spell was Ricardo Jaimes Freyre of Bolivia. Rubén Darío and Jaimes Freyre met in Buenos Aires and became steadfast friends. They collaborated in the production of a short-lived literary review, the Revista de América, by which they hoped to win over the more ardent spirits to the new school of Modernism. Like his master, Darío, and other Modernist poets, Freyre seeks his inspiration in scenes remote from the world of the present and the actual. Freyre excelled his master in the field of descriptive poetry. He is at his best in El Alba, in which he shows a richness of imagination in the scenes he evokes and in the associations he brings with them that is wholly admirable. Speaking of this poem, Craig says: "His picture of the dawn breaking over the sleeping town, for example, is worthy to be set alongside of Wordsworth's picture of London seen from Westminster Bridge."7

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**EL ALBA**

Las auroras pálidas,
Que nacen entre sombras misteriosas,
Y enredados en las orlas de sus mantos
Llevan girones de sombra,
Iluminan las montañas,
Las crestas de las montañas, rojas;
Bañan las torres erguidas,
Que saldan su aparición silenciosa,
Con la voz de sus campanas
Soñolienta y ronca;
Ríen en las calles
Dormidas de la ciudad populosa,
Y se esparcen en los campos

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7 G. Dundas Craig, op. cit., p. 289.
Donde el invierno respeta las amarillentas hojas.
Tienen perfumes de Oriente
Las auroras;
Los recojieron al paso, de las florestas ocultas
De una extraña Flora.
Tienen ritmos y músicas harmoniosas,
Porque oyeron los gorjeos y los trinos de las aves
Exóticas.

Su luz fría,
Que conserva los girones de la sombra,
Enredóse, vacilante, de los lotos
En las anchas hojas.
Chispeó en las aguas dormidas,
Las aguas del viejo Gangas, dormidas y silenciosas;
Y las tribus de los árabes desiertos,
Saludaron con plegarias a las pálidas auroras.
Los rostros de los errantes beduinos
Se bañaron con arenas ardorosas,
Y murmuraron las suras del Profeta
Voces roncas.

Tendieron las suaves alas
Sobre los mares de Jonia,
Y vieron surgir a Venus
De las suspirantes olas.

En las cimas,
Donde las nieblas eternas sobre las nieves se posan,
Vieron monstruos espantables
Entre las rocas,
Y las crines de los búfalos que huían
Por la selva tenebrosa.
Reflejaron en la espada
Simbólica,
Que a la sombra de una encina
Yacía, olvidada y polvorosa.

Hay ensueños,
Hay ensueños en las pálidas auroras...
Hay ensueños,
Que se envuelven en sus girones de sombra...
Sorprenden los amorosos
Secretos de las nupciales alobas,
Y ponen pálidos tintes en los labios
Donde el beso dejó huellas voluptuosas...
Y el Sol eleva su disco fulgurante,
Sobre la tierra, los aires y las suspirantes olas.

The dawn coming from the East, brings with it the exotic scents and
sounds of the Orient, and memories of Arabian deserts, of the Isles of
Greece and of Venus rising from the waves, of the sword lying rusty and
forgotten under the oak; all of these are reminiscent of Dario's early
poetry.

Of all the poets to join ranks with Dario and his school, none
attained the heights of pure Parnassianism within the Modernist movement
as did the Colombian poet, Guillermo Valencia (b. 1872). The epitome of a
Modernist's adaptation of Parnassianism finds no greater expression than in
the poem, *Leyendo a Silva*, written by him on the death of his friend and
fellow-countryman, Jose' Asuncion Silva (1896). Like Dario and others of
his school, Valencia was a devoted student of French and Italian poetry,
particularly of Paul Verlaine, Mallarme and d'Annunzio. As in Dario, too,
we find in Valencia a delicate sensitiveness to impressions of sensuous
beauty, and a power of recording such impressions in a language of a
remarkably musical quality. However, unlike Dario, Valencia never used his
poetry as a social weapon. That was not done by a true Parnassian. The
poetic principle of the three syllable foot, greatly preferred by Dario, as
in his "Marcha triunfal," was the inspiration for the creation of Valencia's
new type of verse. The following are a few characteristic stanzas from
Valencia's most outstanding work of poetry.
LEYENDO A SILVA

Vestía traje suelto de recamado viso
en voluptuosos pliegues de un color indeciso,
y en el diván tendida, de rojo terciopelo,
sus manos, como vivas parásitas de hielo,
sostenían un libro de corte fino y largo,
un libro de poemas delicioso y amargo.

Allí los metros raros de musicales timbres:
yá móviles y largos como jugosos mimbres,
ya diáfanos, que visten la idea levemente
como las albas guijas un río transparente.

Allí la Vida llora y la Muerte sonríe
en el Tédio, como un ácido, corazones deslía...

Aquesta, el pie desnudo, gira como una sombra
que sin hacer ruido pisara por la alfombra
de un templo... y como el ave que ciega el astro diurno
con miradas noctálopes ilumina el Nocturno,
do al fatigado beso de las vibrantes olines
un aire triste y vago preludian dos violines...

y prosiguió del libro las hojas volteando,
que ensalza en áureas rimas de son calino y blando
los perfumes de Oriente, los vividos rubíes
y los joyeles mórbidos de sedas carmesíes.

The beauties of this poem, more Parnassian than of any other school,
were imbibe4 by Valencio through his admiration and study of Darío. And so
one sees, as he delves into the beauties of modern Spanish American poetry,
the shadow of Darío, though in many cases overpowered by the great literary
accomplishments of his students and followers, still exerting a tremendous influence over many great poets. Each is indebted to Darío for some particular phase in his own particular work, but all must, in truth, owe fidelity to Darío, for he was the cause for their inspiration, the force behind their greatness, and eventual success.

The literary mysticism of Manuel Díaz Rodríguez, as found in Peregrina and Camino de perfección, is his own expression of the same type of non-religious mysticism as found in Darío's El reino interior. Rafael Arevalo Martínez, author of El hombre que parecía un caballo, was a strange eccentric Modernist poet, little known outside of his native land, but a true interpreter of real beauty and metaphysics. Says Arturo Torres-Ríoseco: "Su estilo es típicamente modernista; metáforas, símbolos, imágenes, vocabulario, ritmo, todo lo aprendió de Darío."³

Rubén Darío's indebtedness to Julian del Casal must not be overlooked, especially in regard to Darío's volume, Prosas profanas. Where Darío saw talent and literary genius he took advantage of them and employed the best parts of what he observed. That delight in color and that sensual joy in the refinements of elegance which del Casal displayed from the first are evident in this work of Darío. Moreover, Darío passed several weeks in Havana, Cuba, in intimate acquaintance with del Casal. They wrote in collaboration, one inspiring the other, and from which poems it is impossible for the critic to separate their respective compositions.

There were other fine Modernist poets too numerous to mention here, who were inspired and influenced by Dario. To mention a few who have risen to the realms of comparative popularity, at least among the reading public of their own country, there are: Leopoldo Díaz (b.1862), of Argentina; Carlos Reyres (1868-1938), of Uruguay; Boldomero Sanín Cano (1860) of Colombia, Manuel Díaz Rodríguez (1868-1927) and Rufino Blanco-Fombona (1874-1944), of Venezuela; and Enrique González Martínez (1870) of Mexico.

In the works of these authors, most representative of the followers of Dario, we find certain metrical styles and rhythmic forms employed which they copied from Dario. These versification innovations, plus inspirations for the themes and subject matter as used by Dario, captivated the young writers who were eagerly awaiting the opportunity to break away from the rigid restraints advocated and enforced by adherence to Spanish literary traditions. Apart from these new stylistic innovations it was the spirit of Pan-American Dario that established his popularity. One can not overlook nor deny the overpowering effect of such poems as Salutación al águila and Canto a la Argentina upon the literature of South America.

Today we can observe that Dario's greatest influence, and perhaps most effective and lasting, was upon the writers who joined with him while he was a journalist in Buenos Aires. They observed how tactfully and uniquely he welded tendencies and methods of all of the writers in the Spanish language into a product of his own. They were intrigued and awed by the manner in which Dario renewed the poetic vocabulary, more so than had ever been done since the time of Luis de Góngora. And despite all of the influences which
came into play in the literary life of Dario and his devotion and admiration to the literary schools of the French, Italians and even North Americans, he remained a good Spanish American as well as a good Spaniard. He was truly a universal poet with an appeal to all and whose influence was felt more without South America than within its borders. Dario opened the door to the young writers that flocked about him as well as to those who were to follow him. Although many of his disciples, in their intense and fervid devotion to Modernism and its master, did an injustice to Dario and the movement by breaking away to the extreme and employing ultra-modern themes and techniques of meter and style, they did have opened for them by Dario new horizons and vistas, new avenues whereby they could express themselves and unrestrained vent could be given to poetic inclinations. For these the poets of South America and Spain must be grateful to Rubén Dario, the father and prime-mover of Modernism in Spanish literature. His influence is universal and his heritage for all nations.
CONCLUSION

There is always a certain advantage in making a study which is not contemporary, because one may observe and comment over the whole and observe all the influences which were felt by the subject being treated, and likewise, to behold from the horizon broadened by the passing years just what influence the subject, in turn had upon his contemporaries.

Dario’s life was one of great variety and unexpected occurrences. Born in comparative obscurity, he rose to great literary heights, and of even greater importance, he overcame all of the bitter handicaps and trials of life which beset him and died in the love and peace which is given only to those who have loved God and who have died in repentance. Despite his wanderings and a life replete with debauchment and indulgences in illicit pleasures, he managed, before death overtook him, to find the path which would lead him to home.

His works may be said to parallel his own personal life, for in their beginnings, they, too, find their theme and inspiration in love, passion, wanderings and vice. Taking for their settings foreign and Oriental places, following the styles of the literary movements of the continent, Dario eventually returns, in his works, once more to his beloved Latin America, where he was hailed as the poet of America.

We may ask, and rightly so, what was present in the works of Dario that brought him such acclaim and reknown. If we study some of the early
poems of Dario, for he is considered a great poet rather than a master of prose, such poems as, *Sonatina*, *Marcha triunfal*, *Era un aire suave*, and *El reino interior*, which are rich in color, resplendent with dazzling images, exquisite elegance of diction and rhythm linked with purpose and idea, we can understand why the Nicaraguan bard was acclaimed as the interpreter of the aesthetic sensibility of the time. We can observe without prejudice, for we are able to look over the whole period of his life and see all of the elements which made it up and which helped form it, and in turn, the influence and literary stature attained by the writer, Dario; a place so lofty that no poet of his period surpasses him in brilliance. For nearly thirty years he reigned from Paris and Madrid over the kingdom of decorative poetry, Parnassian-Symbolistic themes and expression. His celebrated *Marcha triunfal* is illustrative of the enthusiastic energy which captivated the American continent.

Today we are prone to forget and bypass, if you will, the days of yore. Persons and events which occurred before our time are to us, unfortunately, as though they had not been. By adopting such a philosophy or outlook on life, and being concerned just with the present, we overlook and ignore, perhaps unconsciously, our great past and the heritage that is ours today because of that past and the great people that made it up. Therefore, it becomes necessary to delve into the past, and in this case, the not too distant past, and re-evaluate those great men who are now gone. A re-evaluation of Dario will present us with a Dario few have known or truly understood.
Darío has suffered unjustly, as did Luis de Góngora, at the hands of his supposed followers, who because of their failure to emulate their master, brought about the downfall of the very movement they themselves were advocating, and with that downfall the name of Darío, too, began to sink into oblivion. To the generation of 1920, Darío was an artificial, courtly, Gallicized poet, totally alien to the life of his continent. His metrical forms which once not too long previously had brought him fame and popularity, did not interest the new writers who proclaimed the destruction of poetic form; his verbal refinement, for which he was praised on the Continent, sounded hollow in the ears of the revolutionary followers of Marinetti and Cocteau, who were once admirers of Rubén Darío. They interpreted the anachronism of his themes as an invasion of reality.

Darío's popularity also suffered in the '20's because the public was demanding poets who would write of social problems and upon themes of current interest. Darío was not a social poet; he did not cultivate the Negro theme; he was not a Catholic poet, though he was a Catholic man; he was not even a democratic poet as his contemporary to the North, Walt Whitman. Arturo Torres-Ríoseco presents a challenging thought in this regard by questioning whether these characteristics have anything to do with poetry or the making of a poet. Such questions and thoughts arise as the advantage of being able to re-evaluate a person and his works after enough time has elapsed to enable one to do so. Today, literature of the moment, that is, current literary works, are in vogue as a result of the move begun in the 1920's. Therefore, Darío is not the favorite poet of Spanish Americans today. However, his
position and attainments in the field of Modern Poetry and his influence upon so many can not be overlooked or denied.

Rubén Darío was a master of the Spanish language. "Only Gongora, that incomparable master of the lyric muse, equaled the great Nicaraguan poet in artistic agility in the Spanish language." It would seem impossible that the vigorous author of the Canto a Argentina should be able to refine his poetic instrument so ineffably; but in his Canción otomonal, Darío's multiple gift, that capacity for emotional artistic adjustment which gives to his poetry its great variety, is clearly manifest; and we must confess that in purity of diction, in lightness of treatment and in intimate harmony this poem is definitive.

After the death of Rubén Darío, the old masters were forced to yield their positions to the renovators of the language and of poesy to those who had never contracted the modernist vogue.

One can not fail to recognize the fact that through the medium of translation a great amount of the force and beauty of Darío's poems are lost. This is, perhaps in a certain measure, the cause for Darío's being little known and read in non-Spanish speaking countries. Translations always lose a certain amount of the work's original intention, thought, and beauty. A lyric of Darío is untranslatable because, through the moulding influence of tradition or the action of individual thought, fervor, suffering and experience, the matter has been purged of all that is superfluous, left at last in an irreducible minimum, transparent, substantial, and intense, possessing the complicated simplicity of light or water. The flexibility, vigor, and exotic

savour which is so characteristic of Darío's poetry is lost in translations.

A man's greatness, or failings, can often be measured by the praise, or condemnation, he receives at the hands of his contemporaries and critics. Many critics of South America and Spain have not hesitated to acclaim Darío and all of his literary accomplishments, and not a few have hesitated to shower upon him unflowery epithets and criticisms. One of the critics of South America who greatly esteemed Darío offers us a few pointed thoughts regarding Darío. He was Julio A. Leguizamón, who gives us a concise and well-worded account of the literary values and accomplishments of his literary hero, Darío. Leguizamón says:

Rubén Darío unifica y da sentido a una época literaria. Su figura revolucionaria, de extrañable esencia americana e hispánica, se recorta, por extraña paradoja, sobre un fundo de tendencias exóticas y artificiales. Pero este don cosmopolita y universal, capaz de asimilar la savia de todas las culturas que a él llegaron no malea su significado...

It is significant to note at this point that Darío's roots were deep in the old Spain cultivated by the Romantic revivalists, Bérceo, Archpriest of Hita and of the mediaeval ballads; in Garcilaso, San Juan de la Cruz, Santa Teresa de Ávila, especially, and Fray Luis de León, that great literary monster and genius. Darío is in the succession of true Romantic poets; he echoes the passionate lyricism of Espinosa; reproduces the exotic romanticism of Zorrilla; is continually inspired by the intimate music of Bécquer; and takes up the sentiments (and in his early work follows the manner) of

Núñez de Arca.

Upon a Spain so enriched with such literary geniuses as mentioned above, did the great and accomplished Dario cast all of his modernistic tendencies and works only to have them completely accepted and incorporated into their literature.

Upon the death of Darío in 1916, Enriquez Ureña, the critic, wrote:

With the death of Rubén Darío, the Spanish language loses its greatest poet of today—the greatest because of the aesthetic value and the historical significance of his work. None, since the times of Gongora and Quevedo, has wielded an influence comparable, in reviewing power, to Darío's.

This is high tribute to a great man offered by an outstanding and reliable critic. Further acclaim comes from the skilled pen of an outstanding contemporary educator and author of today, Arturo Torres-Ríoescio. He says:

Rubén Darío was the greatest of the modernists. There was a dualism in his nature: sordidness of his existence and exquisite beauty of his poetry. He lived in cheap apartments. His entire worldly career was one of economic failure and complete moral disintegration; his poetical career was an unparalleled example of achievement and artistic integrity.

E. K. Mapes, a North American critic, has made a study of the works of Rubén Darío and especially of the influence of the French schools upon him.

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It is worthy of note to repeat what Mapes has to say about Dario: His conclusion is a just one:

En resumen, Dario conoció admirablemente bien la lengua y la literatura españolas y realizó la mayor parte de su obra maravillosa sirviéndose únicamente de los recursos de su propia lengua, que manejó con incomparable gusto personal. Durante la última parte de su vida conoció el francés casi tan bien como el español y sacó de él muchas novedades. No se le puede reprochar sin embargo, de haber innovado sin discernimiento. Su juicio era por lo común, muy sobrio e inspirado por un sentido serio de la dignidad y el valor del arte. Era un gran poeta español, un incomparable artista, un sabio innovador cuyas busquedas han traído a la lengua española numerosos elementos de valor permanente.5

No better understanding of Rubén Darío can be had then that which comes from his own pen. In his autobiography he says:

En el fondo de mi espíritu, a pesar de mis vistas cosmopolítas, existe el inacabable filón de la raza; mi pensar y mi sentir continúan un proceso histórico y tradicional.6

We have seen that the decorative, baroque style of Rubén Darío yielded before the sincerity of his poetic vision, becoming transformed into expression of perfect clarity. The monotonous rhythm based on regularity of accents effects the brusque movement inherent in the theme. His very concept of poetry marks a definitive evolution, for Darío here abandons French or exotic themes in order to interpret his own suffering, his maladjustment, his ultimate faith in Christ, his constant awareness of the presence of death.

At the time of Darío's death that revolution in world literature, the repercussions of which resounded among the Week of Modern Art celebrated at

6 Ibid., p. 20.
São Paulo, and in the multitude vanguardist tendencies, was already evident. Dário was neither the assailant of those new theories nor the defender of an obsolete aesthetic sensibility; on the contrary, more than one revolutionary poet was encouraged by the master.

Some critics assert that the true precursor of the lyrical vanguard was the Uruguayan poet, Julio Herrera y Reissig. This belief implies an error in vision. Herrera y Reissig cultivated a form original to America but too close to the French model. Dário, on the other hand, possessed a formula of his own, developed in accord with his intimate artistic sense. He himself tells us: "My poetry is mine, within me." And that is why he once asked the poets of America not to try to imitate him.

A Dário has been presented whom few people know. The harmonious but cold poet of Prosas profanas has his well-defined place in our letters; the interpreter of the Spanish soul has been recognized by critics of the Iberian peninsula; Dário, composer of civic songs, has been called the "poet of America"; he has been studied as a classicist, as a浪漫ist, and as a modernist. With this new portrait of Dário, we may say with Arturo Torres-Ríoscco: "Dário may be still considered the greatest poet of the Spanish American continent."

Rubén Dário, in conclusion, is of the past, present and future. From the very nature of poetry and its incapability of being transferred into another tongue, it is inevitable that he will never be to other peoples what he will remain to Spaniards. He crystallized an epoch; he transformed a language; he infused new life into the Castilian muse; he retained his own
personality while absorbing all the currents that appeared during his career; he became, as we have seen, a legendary figure even during his own lifetime. He belongs not only with the greatest poets that have written in the Spanish tongue, but with the masters of universal poesy. For above the early Parnassianism, the later Symbolism and the final complex humanism, is the eternally human of a poet who was peculiarly of his day, and by that same token, of all ages.

Dario will always hold a position high in South American letters, for since the advent of Agul, it has been impossible to leave out Spanish American poetry in anthologies. In all modern poetry, Dario stands out as its most attractive figure. His cosmopolitanism made Dario not only a poet for and of his people, but for every nation and era. His later works placed him in a position of popularity and made him the recipient of much acclaim, especially among the peoples of the democracies. Indeed, Dario was a lover of freedom, which is clearly evident in the great movement for literary freedom initiated by him, in effort to break the shackles and bonds with which tradition and classicism held South American literature. The freedom of literary style in both poetry and prose, as enjoyed by South American writers at present, is in no small way due to the efforts of Dario and Modernism.

This literary emancipation for which South America is indebted to Rubén Dario was not attained in a short span of time nor without criticism on the part of contemporaries and opposition of the more conservative writers. Dario began his move for literary freedom only after earnest study of the leading French literary schools of the times, the Parnassians,
Symbolists and Decadents. Azul was the revolutionary product of this concentrated study and application of the modern French principles.

Darío's literary career, begun as a journalist in Buenos Aires, was now launched and he was accepted by many as a full-fledged author. Literary successes followed in rapid succession, marked by two outstanding works, Proses profanas and Cantos de vida y esperanza, both written after Azul, and both demonstrating the maturity and literary beauty and growth of Darío. Azul gained lasting fame not for its beauty or style, for it was rather a weak and insignificant volume as regards its composition and style, but it holds an outstanding place in South American literature because it so boldly broke off with the bonds which until then, had held Latin American literature captive to traditional and classical forms and stylistics.

In Cantos de vida y esperanza, Darío seemed to backtrack and several of the compositions in the volume revealed the influence of classical form in their precise rhythm and sculptural effects. However, Darío was not backtracking. Rather, he had descended from the ivory tower of Alfred de Vigny, which he had ascended while under the spell of the French writers, and once down-to-earth, Darío beheld the actual and real world about him. Hence, Cantos de vida y esperanza is his most realistic and practical work, and because he treated the many social, political and moral problems in the volume, he was hailed as the poet of America, the bard of the democracies. The genius of Darío was in full bloom.
It was at this time that Dario exerted his greatest influence upon succeeding modern poets, both in South and Central America and in Spain. The most prominent writers, and there were numerous lesser known authors, the best known were: José Santos Chocano, Leopoldo Lugones, Julio Herrera y Reissig, Amado Nervo, Ricardo Jaimes Freyre and Guillermo Valencia.

Dario influenced, directly and indirectly, each of these literary men in a particular manner, for Dario was so all-embracing of things modern and literary, that he had no definitely singular style or characteristic to hand down, and each one of the above mentioned writers sought inspiration or example in either Dario's themes, versification, obscurity or vagueness. They all admired Dario and adapted for themselves that part of their master they most liked.

Thus, Dario the master, and his many followers became intense and fervid in their devotion to Modernism which opened for all literatures new horizons, new pathways of expression. Dario has become synonymous with Modernism as a consequence, a literary household word, if you will, and therefore, Dario was no longer the property of South America alone, for he is, today, universal and his heritage for all mankind.
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Robert C. Mac Neely has been read and approved by the members of the Department of Spanish.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 18, 1957
Date

Signature of Adviser