

THE FINAL SOLITUDE OF THE POET ANTONIO MACHADO

(Memories of his Brother, José)

Translated by Armand F. Baker

INTRODUCTION

After translating Machado's poetry and some of his important works of prose, it occurred to me that the biography written by his brother José was not available in English. It contains an intimate, personal account of the poet's life and some thoughtful observations about his work. In it José expresses his opinion about his brother's religious beliefs as well as the relationship between Pilar de Valderrama and Guiomar. He also mentions his brother's friendship with other literary figures like Unamuno, Valle Inclán and Ruben Dario, and he gives a heart-rending description of the poet's final days. Since this was very helpful for my own understanding of Machado's work, I would like to make it available to other English-speakers.

Antonio Machado and his brother José were both artists, but while Antonio used poetry to express himself, José used the visual art of painting. Antonio always had a close relation with his brother, and he and his mother spent the final years of their life with the family of José, who served as his secretary and also illustrated several of his books. Machado's family had always supported the government of the Spanish Republic, so when General Franco staged a *coup d'état* against the Republic and his army was about to capture Madrid, they fled to Valencia where they stayed for two and a half years. When Franco's advancing army neared Valencia they were forced to move once again, this time to Barcelona where they lived for another six months. Then, when Franco's army was finally about to reach Barcelona, Antonio and his mother, together with José and his family, joined the tragic procession of those who struggled to make it across the border into France. Soon after reaching the town of Collioure, in January of 1939, the poet died of pneumonia on the 22nd of February. His mother died just two days later.

The following year, in 1940, the family of José Machado emigrated to Chile where they settled in Santiago. Wanting to give an account of the personal memories of his brother, José wrote this biography, as he says, in 1940. Since *solitude* was a term used in the title for two of the poet's books and it was something he often experienced during his life, José decided to use this word in the title of his biography. After waiting for several years without being able to discuss it with his brother, Manuel, who had remained in Spain and who eventually died in 1947, José finally published the biography in 1957, shortly before his own death in 1958. My translation is based on that early edition of José's book: *ÚLTIMAS SOLEDADES DEL POETA ANTONIO MACHADO (Recuerdos de su hermano José)* Santiago de Chile: multigrafiado, 1958. It is my hope that this translation will broaden the understanding of Machado's life and work.

I have divided the Biography into separate pdf files, which will be posted on this web site as I translate them. I have placed a link to the Table of Contents on the last page of each Part.



ULTIMAS SOLEDADES DEL

POETA ANTONIO MACHADO

(Recuerdos de su hermano José)

PREFACE

I wrote the remarks contained in this work in 1940, in Santiago de Chile. Since then, I have kept them while I waited in the hope of being able to discuss them with my brother Manuel.

Unfortunately, after his death which occurred on the 19th of January of 1947, this opportunity was lost forever. This sad event has forced me to publish these impressions by myself, without his advice and his suggestions, which would have been very helpful due to the fact that I have never written a single line, either in prose or in poetry, because my creative efforts have been directed to painting. Nevertheless, I must take the courage to do it, since I feel that I have what is almost a moral obligation to bring to light the final solitude of the Poet.

Hopefully, as a worthy compensation for these disjointed lines, someone will eventually find in the papers of the other great Poet, my brother Manuel, something written about Antonio which will complement this modest effort!

Because of the profound fraternal relationship that united us during our entire life, this memoir will achieve something that, without it, would have left a permanent gap that no one else would now be able to fill.

To conclude this preface, I only want to add that the words that constitute this work are those that I have written in 1940, in memory of Antonio, and are dedicated to my wife and to my daughters.

José Machado

ASPECTS OF THE POET'S CHARACTER

When I try to explain some aspects of the poet's character and relate some anecdotes concerning his life, I can remember the traits and attributes which, at different times, reveal some characteristics of his personality.

In this work I have tried to describe these traits and attributes in the order in which I remember them. And there is no other order than this disorder which has surfaced in my memory. Moreover, since I am dealing with very different feelings relating to many different topics, it would have been very difficult to do it any other way. I realize there are many scattered elements, but in some ways this helps to give an idea of the complicated and finely textured spirit of the poet. Since that is what I believe, I write this commentary prefaced by the following account of his birth.

In Seville, back in the year 1875 and on the night of the 26th of July—exactly on the day of Saint Anna, the saint of our mother—the Poet Antonio Machado was born. He first saw the light of day in the well-known Palacio de las Dueñas, located on the street of the same name, which used to belong to the Duke of Alba. In the patio by the fountain there is now a plaque commemorating that happy event.

The son of Antonio Machado y Álvarez and of Ana Ruiz Hernández, his paternal grandparents were Antonio Machado y Nuñez and Cipriana Álvarez Durán, who were from Cadiz and Seville, respectively.

His maternal grandfather was named Rafael Ruiz and his grandmother, Isabel Hernández. He was from Seville, and she was from Totana, in Murcia.

The brothers of Antonio, in the order in which they appeared in this life, were the following: Manuel, the eldest, Antonio, José, Joaquín, and Paco. The latter was born in Madrid.

Although our father was born in Santiago de Compostela, he was actually an Andalusian, since his parents were from Andalusia and a few days after he was born they returned to Seville where he grew up and attended school.

In the beginning the main influence of our family on Antonio's spirit came from our father, a well-known and innovative author who, as we know, was the founder of *Folklore in Spain*. Primarily because of this as well as several scholarly language studies, including one entitled *Titín* which was translated into several different languages, he enjoyed considerable prestige at the time. He also wrote several important journalistic and judicial articles that appeared in the newspapers of Madrid, most frequently in the Republican newspaper called "La Justicia," and whose patron was the renowned scholar, Nicolás Salmerón.

In his capacity as the first person to write about Spanish Folklore he has left us several very interesting works dealing with things like “Folk Traditions,” “Flamenco Songs,” “Popular Songs,” and “Andalusian Folklore.” Reading these books—so closely related to the popular taste—undoubtedly left an indelible mark on Antonio.

As for our dear mother, I wish to say here that the essential traits of her character were those of a truly extraordinary kindness, tenderness and devotion, and that these traits were also present in Antonio.

Then, although it is not something which is directly related to the Poet, we believe that it would still be useful and interesting to complete the picture of our family by giving a few facts about our paternal grandfather—Antonio Machado y Nuñez—the first of three successive Antonios who figured in our family.

In 1870 he was Rector of the University of Seville, and in the field of politics (he was of course a liberal) he was also the Governor of that city.

For a while he traveled to Guatemala to be with his brother Manuel who had made his fortune there. However, his stay in America did not last long, since he soon decided to study in Paris where he was Assistant to Dr. Mateu Orfila in the Sorbonne.

Upon his return to Spain, he made the decision to leave the medical profession he had been practicing, since that profession did not really suit his character. It gave him great sadness to see from close up the suffering of humanity which on so many occasions could not be avoided.

It was then that he decided to devote himself to teaching for which, in the area of science, he was already well-prepared, especially in the field of Natural Science. He also wrote a number of important works dealing with that material.

With Federico de Castro he also founded a journal of *Philosophy and Letters*. And if these details are mentioned here, it is because they give a better idea of the interests and the accomplishments of the close ancestors of the Poet. However, the biographical data of our family would not be complete without mentioning our paternal great-grandfather, Don José Álvarez Guerra who, along with other notable qualities, was a illustrious patriot who, at his own expense, organized a group of heroic combatants to fight against the French invaders during the celebrated battle of the 2nd of May, when he almost lost his life. But, as courageous doesn't mean one is not well-educated, in his quieter moments he devoted himself to deep philosophical thought, and he later published a short treatise entitled, “Symbolic Unity,” which is mentioned by Don Marcelino Menendez y Pelayo in his learned studies of this material.

In the year 1883, when our paternal grandfather obtained a position as Professor at the University of Madrid he, together with his wife, our parents and his grandchildren, moved to the Capital. This was done, undoubtedly, thinking of the increased range of opportunities and advantages that would be available to all of us in the future. On the one

hand, being in Madrid offered our father a better opportunity to present his folklore and, on the other, a better education for us children who were still quite young.

This radical change now meant that our paternal grandparents would have a much greater predominance in our new life, since they lived by our side until their death, while the others always remained in Seville.

In 1883, when we arrived at Madrid—or better, when we dropped anchor—Antonio was eight years old. But in spite of his young age, he already possessed in his character the essential traits that would in time constitute his basic personality. The unquenchable light of his homeland that blinds with its pure splendor will always shine in the Poet's memory, like all the first impressions of his infancy, which the rest of his life will never be able to erase.

Among them, perhaps the most important is the memory of the flowing of water in the patio of the Palacio, which later became “The Fountain,” in the well-known poem from his book, *Solitude*. I have always thought that the theme of water is *fundamental* in Antonio's work and, later, I will have more to say about this topic.

And now, following the spiritual inclination of the Poet, we want to make special mention of the influence that the Free Institute of Learning had on his cultural and moral education. And that is especially true of its founder Dr. Francisco Giner de los Ríos and of Don Manuel Bartolomé Cossío, his worthy successor. I am referring to the times shortly after the founding of this important center of education, and to the momentous words of Don Francisco, which he would write sometime later:

“Now we have power and we are lost.”

It was there that the poet received the baptismal waters of the spiritual education which had such an important influence on his formation.

But above and beyond all this, what made him accomplish so much is the incomparable teacher which is life itself, during which it is not always possible to avoid “some things I don't care to remember,” which Antonio mentions in his “Portrait.”

It is the eternal flow of life, with its inevitable monotony, that seems to be the main foundation of his entire work. That is, after much elaboration and explanation.

Thinking about my brother, the Poet Antonio Machado, is both difficult and serious, and it will not be easy to impart to others a complete understanding of him. Someone said that it is difficult to understand foreign blood. In my case, given the brotherly ties that connect me to the Poet, this difficulty is lessened, but not completely removed. Although this close connection allows me to identify with his feelings to a certain extent, I am bound to come up against a personal self which is not penetrable or understandable. In spite of that, I will try to do what I can to bring to light what is most intimate. Having said that, let's get started!

ANTONIO MACHADO

The most important biographical facts from his life as well as the important dates are already given by him with the clarity that was so typical of him. Although these facts appear in many of his books, I have also included some of them here.

Naturally, this work will be based, not on any scholarly criteria, which would be beyond my grasp, but on the multiple impressions that the long life we shared has left on me. I also want to say that I was with him until the end of his life, together with my wife, to whose generous and intelligent help the Poet and I owe so much.

Antonio was a person who was essentially good and kind. That is how it is stated in his "Portrait": "I am, in the true sense of the word, good," and this was obvious at every point in his life whenever kindness was called for.

This great kindness could have only been surpassed by the strength of character and the depth of intelligence which only the great members of humanity have achieved. And if I am sincere, I will say that these traits were his most important qualities. Not only were they present in all his work, but they also influenced the character of others.

These very superior traits, however, had their opposite side. Implicit in his deep understanding of life was also a profound sadness, caused by the fact that he was never able to achieve all of the things he longed for.

We would normally think that a man who was able to create a work of such great magnitude—if I may use that word—ought to have the compensation of being happy once in a while. However, those of us who have been by his side during most of his life know that was not the case.

With a waste-paper basket by his side full of torn and wrinkled papers, he seemed to give a lesson of humility—or maybe it was pride—to those of us who have hoped to accomplish something that is worthy of being preserved. To understand this type of exactitude it helps to recall that the sensitivity of the poet is like that type of person Manuel describes in his memorable line: "he carries his soul on the surface of his skin." And it is likely that this degree of sensitivity, which is nothing to envy in this world, was the main reason he was never able to accept anything less than perfection in his work.

And we also want to mention another remarkable characteristic he possessed: that of his great patience, comparable only to that of Saint Job. How many times in his life did he have to use this trait! We must also recognize his great generosity in all things. And as a man who would throw in the waste-basket sheets of paper that today many would have liked to add to their best accomplishments, one can imagine the great distaste he must have had for things that did not suit his purpose.

With regard to his feelings for his family, we can definitely say that in addition to the great affection he felt for our parents, he also loved his brothers very much. And in

this respect, it was naturally Manuel for whom he felt, not only the purest brotherly love, but also the deepest admiration.

In the area of friendship, he had a very high regard for the two best friends of his youth: Ricardo Calvo and Antonio de Zayas.

We have tried to emphasize the things which in our opinion show the essential nature of his person and which we will try to describe more completely in what follows. Finally, I would only like to add that there was something mysterious and impenetrable in Antonio that would be useless to try to explain, since it was a secret that he carried with him to the hereafter.

In his poem, "Prayer for Antonio Machado," Rubén Darío has recognized this air of impenetrable mystery with the words: "mysterious and silent, we saw him come and go..." This immortal image can only be compared to the one Antonio paints of himself in his wonderful "Portrait," the first poem in his third book, *Fields of Castile*, which was published in 1912. Both portraits are invaluable, since if Rubén Darío senses from outside that which is within, Antonio allows us to witness the warmth of his feelings in a way which is worthy of great praise.

My childhood is memories of a patio in Seville,
and a bright orchard where a lemon tree grows...

In this way I go on impulsively adding things to the true *emotional biography* which is what interests us most, and which I will try to reinforce with items taken from his most memorable compositions.

It is there, in his work, where his unique and genuine nature continues to live: that of his true spirit. The rest he himself describes, when he says:

my story, some things I don't choose to recall.

Now we can begin to see how he always tried to compose his work exactly how he wanted it to be. In reality, he left nothing, or almost nothing, that is open to doubt in the field of literary criticism.

Therefore, in order to prevent any sort of superficial criticism regarding his work, he always made a special effort to make it as refined and polished as possible. It is my feeling that he was completely successful in doing that. But when the inevitable moment came that the interpretation of his work led to a misunderstanding which would try his patience, he would say to himself, "*what* are you thinking about?" or he would utter an ironic phrase: "Now you hit the jackpot, genius!" Those were some of his thoughts about the lack of comprehension.

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And now I will continue trying to discuss the things which show his essential nature and which also provide the best description of his intense and complex spirit.

HIS PROFOUND LOVE FOR NATURE

The love of nature was one of the principal inspirations for his work. I remember very well the days we set off together toward the country, usually at the time when there were still blue shadows on the roads. We left the city, heading in the direction of the small hills at the end of the Paseo de la Castellana. After that we climbed up through them until we were able to see the horizon. While he climbed, Antonio was silent and lost in thought. One might say that the ground, which hardly felt his steps, was beginning to take control of him. Our combined shadow, projected over the yellow stubble of the wheat fields with loving togetherness, was more blue than ever.

Without us being aware, the moment finally arrived when the sun had descended to the point that it shone directly into our faces and it dazzled our eyes. We soon noticed the coldness which, more than coldness, was that infinite sadness of a day that was ending. While the light of dusk still remained, we started for home. And it was then, during the return trip, when Antonio finally broke his silence to start a conversation during which he described some of his impressions and later, during the solitude of night under the lamp light which illuminated his papers, he would write about those days which would never return.

At other times we would travel to the Cañada de la Moncloa, and down in the bottom he would stop to listen, entranced by the strange song of a bird which, he said, sounded like a ball with a ladybird inside. He gave it the name: "bird of the ball." And that is what we agreed to call it, whenever we went back there to hear it.

Remembering these first impressions I believed then, and I still believe now, that I was witnessing the fusion of the Poet's soul with all the nature which surrounded him. The countryside had found a human voice, which it lacked, until the arrival of Antonio. And even the stones, which could have never been more than an echo, now achieved the miracle of having a voice.

HIS LOVE OF FOLKLORE

Antonio had an innate interest in folklore which was probably inherited from our father. All of the books where there was a collection of verses, legends, stories, refrains, sayings, etc. which reflected the spirit of the Spanish people were avidly read by the Poet. One good example of that interest is his magnificent ballad "The Land of Alvargonzalez" in which the heart of our people is beating. Nevertheless, the story, and the verses that it contains were strictly created by him.

The love for folklore is present in all his work and, like the theme of water, constitutes one of the basic elements of his poetry, not only for its deeply philosophical content, but also for the simple form of the verses. Antonio was able to condense his thought to such a degree that sometimes he needed no more than four words to say something essential: "Today is still evermore." In this way he was able to express a

maximum of content with a minimum of words. (This is how it is done in the typical Spanish verse, and also in the Japanese *haiku*.)

What a terrible lesson this must be for poets who have struggled to write volumes of poetry, sometimes as big as a dictionary, when [the] true poetry could have been written on a book of cigarette papers, with some pages still left over.

“What a disgrace,” another great poet, Manuel Machado, has said, “that there is so much ink within everyone’s reach, and these crude versifiers are able to dive with impunity into the nearest inkwell as if they were going to use their pen to fish out a few magic words. These words are first *sung*, like they are by ordinary people, and then they can perhaps be written!”

A great deal has been written about folklore; our father was the first in Spain to do that. After that beginning, volume after volume was added to those that were already published. In these books was the foundation on which the true poetry of our homeland was based. The difference between the poet and ordinary people is, in my opinion, that with the latter many different hearts join together to create, but the poet must create with only his own.

But that is precisely the thing on which Antonio’s admirable originality is based. At any time, and in any work one might choose, one can recognize his incomparable voice with its distinct tone that distinguishes it from all others. For example, this one which is entitled, “Advice”:

The coin you hold in your hand
should perhaps be kept;
the coin of your soul
is lost if not given away.

This *advice* is so typical of him! Once again it shows the generosity of a soul who gives the best it has. As well as a generous invitation to each and every one to do the same. The content of these four lines forms a universal ethic. And he does not use any more, or any fewer words than those necessary to express it. This is the norm he follows in all his work. Then, there are these other lines which also achieve the greatest philosophical depth:

This love that wants to happen
perhaps will be fulfilled;
but when will all that is gone
ever come back again?

to which he adds two more lines which then conclude the poem:

Today is nothing like yesterday.
Yesterday is never again.

It is also typical of him that the final words of his composition contain the greatest emotion. In this case, a philosophical one. Because we know that poets and philosophers go hand in hand.

Then there are these other four lines in which he says with his usual simplicity:

Water and thirst are good;
shade and sunshine are good;
honey from the rosemary flower,
honey from a field with no flower.

This is from his own *folklore*, of which there are many examples in his fourth book of poetry entitled, *New Songs (1917-1930)*. And let us continue with this simple composition:

Good Saint Jerome,
put down the stone
you pound yourself with.
You hit me with it.

This innocent invitation to “put down the stone” irritates Saint Jerome so much that he also hit the person who asked.

Of course the Poet knows perfectly well why the Saint is striking out.

In commenting on the following poem, I would like to say that one must not forget that his poetry never ceased to be part of something real. And thus it is in this case with the delightful Andalusian countryside full of olive trees, over which an owl is flying with hurrying wings.

You could see an owl
flying round and round
over the olive grove.
He was flying to bring
a green twig
to the Virgin Mary.

How the charm of these words still remains in our ears! The *green twig* is nothing special, but that can not be said of the owl’s gratitude.

HIS FONDNESS FOR THEATER

He had an extraordinary fondness for theater, and this was something that he felt during his entire life. He attended regularly from the time he was a child. Somewhere around 1900 he felt so much interest that he not only worked on amateur theatrical productions, but also managed to join the Guerrero Company as an apprentice. He did this for a long time, playing a part that did not have more than four words. And then he

also had to share the part with another apprentice. One night he would say the words to the other, and the next, the other would say them to him.

Thus, fulfilling once more the brilliant future of almost every apprentice who has ever existed, he finally abandoned it.

He had managed to become part of the cast thanks to the recommendation of Don Federico Balart, the Artistic Director of the company, who served in that capacity due to his dual role as poet and art critic.

During his apprenticeship he would spend hours in front of a mirror making gestures and movements with the muscles of his face to achieve different expressions, taking very seriously—like all that he did—the study of physiognomy. He applied himself to the study of anatomy so that he could understand precisely which muscles should be contracted in order to reveal the different states of emotion.

At that time he used to spend the small amount of money he had to go and see the Italian and French actors who sometimes came to Spain. So from the time he was a child he knew the theater inside and out, going almost every night to the “Spanish Theater” in the company of his inseparable brother, Manuel, for whom he felt so much admiration and affection. It was there that he also met the future great actor Ricardo Calvo and the poet Antonio de Zayas who after that became his two closest friends.

HIS FONDNESS FOR MUSIC

He had a passionate interest in music, especially popular music. His favorite classical composer was Mozart. He often used to say he wished he had studied music in more depth so he could compose it, since he found there were times when poetry could only be expressed musically. He was very sorry that he had not felt more interest in music as a child. It was much later, when he began to attend symphony concerts in 1913, that he came to realize how useful it could be for a poet to know something about this branch of art. In his opinion, it was the teacher’s fault that music was not studied with greater interest, because they made it seem so dull.

HIS FONDNESS FOR PAINTING

He also had a passionate interest in painting. How many mornings we went to see the marvelous paintings in the Prado Museum! Antonio spent a great deal of time contemplating the works of this Museum—from the primitive painters to Goya. He studied the different schools of art belonging to each period quite methodically. El Greco, Velázquez and Goya were those he most admired. He was also fond of Mantegna and his wonderful, small painting, “Death of the Virgin,” as well as the elegant, small figure of one of the Magi kings dressed in white, in a painting by Bosch.

He found the contemplation of paintings to be very instructive. He said that painters taught us to see the colors of the world in which we live. He found proof of this in a very immediate way when he came out of the museum and saw the different shades of nature even more clearly. And this was something which helped him appreciate the different aspects of the various schools of art he had just studied.

He thought that, in each period of art, there was a preferred view of reality which was evident in the paintings. He also believed that, depending on how one looked at it, either by examining every minute detail with the eyes wide open, or by squinting so as to see some details, while leaving others in darkness, one could learn to appreciate the different styles of painting. Therefore, regardless of the fact that in all periods there were good painters and bad painters, one must recognize that the best artists from one period were just as good as those from another, even though their techniques were diametrically opposed to each other. As an example, he compared the narrow focus, giving attention to each detail in a primitive painting, to the broad, synthetic, almost scenographic focus of a painting by Velázquez.

RECORDS

He never wanted to have his voice recorded. No matter how good the recording was, he was never convinced. So much so that, once when they wanted him to do it he suggested, jokingly, that they could record anyone else's voice and say that it was his. In that case it wouldn't matter whose it was.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Although he was quick to recognize the great, positive value of photography, it held little personal attraction for the Poet, who never gladly put himself in front of a photographic lens.

In the editions of his books, he always preferred a drawing to a photograph. He thought that the spirit of the person who was photographed was definitely not photogenic, and therefore...

In portrait photos, he felt that one never sees more than the hollow shell, as it were, with which we dress ourselves.

He said that both the photographic plate and the recorded disc are like the mold which is made to copy a piece of original sculpture in which that mysterious something, which is everything, is lost.

How very characteristic of the Poet was this desire for perfection that made him never be satisfied with anything that was not impeccable!

HIS DEBUT IN THE THEATER

In their theatrical work the figures of the two poets, Manuel and Antonio, were united by the closest collaboration. This shared presence was so perfect that, other than themselves, no one ever knew who did what in their theatrical works. Because of that, it often happened that phrases or scenes which were attributed to one, were actually created by the other, and vice versa.

Just as in the creation of poetry, Manuel preceded his brother in writing works for the theater.

As for the first work in collaboration with Antonio, it happened unexpectedly, as I shall explain.

Once when Manuel was speaking with the Countess of St. Luis, the sister of Don Fernando Díaz de Mendoza, in the small salon of the Spanish Theater, she expressed the wish that her nephew, Fernando Mendoza, might be able to stage some romantic work, and she mentioned *Hernani* by Victor Hugo. Upon hearing that, Manuel immediately responded that he could grant her wish right away. This quick response was due to the simple fact that *Hernani* had been translated, in verse no less, by Manuel, Antonio and Francisco Villaespesa, some twenty years ago!

The work had passed through the hands of almost all the directors of theater companies who always accepted it enthusiastically. But if it hadn't been for the whim of this lady, it would have never been performed since, in spite of the fact that twenty years had gone by, like "The Bandits," by Schiller—another magnificent translation—it was still sleeping the sleep of the just.

As we know, the play was a resounding success in Spanish, and this time there was no fear of a riot like that which occurred when the original was produced in France. This happened because, as with everything that is well done, the last thing that mattered was whether it was old or new. What is important is that the work must be good.

I remember that the dress rehearsal took place on the last day of the year of 1925. In this way it ended just shortly before midnight when the usual celebrating began. Among those who attended was the renowned dramatist, Don Jacinto Benavente.

The next day the first performance took place, and it was during the intermission when Maria Guerrero told them: "Yes, yes, this is excellent. Everyone loves the play, but now you two must do something original for the theater."

And that is how the two poets began their theatrical career, after a twenty year delay. This is not to criticize those sharp-eyed producers who could have recognized this a wee bit... earlier. But then everyone has their own point of view...

The following year, the poets' first play, "The Misfortunes of Fate, or Julianillo Varcárcel," was offered to Maria Guerrero by none other than Jacinto Benavente himself, and it was first performed by the aforementioned actress on the 9th of February of 1926, with an enthusiastic reception on the day of its premiere.

This is not surprising for two poets who already knew the theater inside and out from the time they were children, and who had also read and studied all the classical and modern authors. Because of that, this production already bore the seal of their profound theatrical knowledge, as well as that of the most original modernity.

Therefore, their success as dramatists was similar to their achievement as poets. But their plays are nothing like those of other poets.

After "Julianillo Varcárcel" they went on to produce the following plays: "Juan of Mañara," "The Oleanders," "Lola Goes to the Ports," "My Cousin Fernanda," "The Duchess of Benamejí," and finally, "The Man Who Died in the War," which was not produced until after Antonio had died.

They were firmly convinced that true poetic theater could never be thought of like those plays that are full of songs which are more or less melodic. Doing that would result in works that were paralyzed by giving the audience the rendition of an aria or a folk song. Nothing could be further from their understanding of what true theater should be.

They also collaborated in the revision of several classical plays: by Lope de Vega; "The Gardener's Dog," "The Girl of Silver," "The Widow Valenciana," "There is Truth in Love..." By Calderón: "The Steadfast Prince," and by Tirso "Damned for Despair."

All these efforts to create great theater will be studied in depth, once some time has passed and they can be seen from a distance, and their true value will be even more obvious when, from the time when these two poets were writing, only that which really matters remains.

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