

## THE FINAL SOLITUDE OF THE POET ANTONIO MACHADO

(Memories of his Brother, José)

(Part 2)

### HIS SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT

Whenever he could, Antonio tried to avoid any kind of testimonials and banquets. The only time he was glad to accept this type of recognition was when a small reunion was held to honor the two poet brothers in the garden of the Free Institute of Learning. This took place on the afternoon of February 21, 1926, to celebrate the successful debut of their first play, “The Misfortunes of Fate, or Julianillo Varcárcel.”

In that garden of his childhood, in Madrid, under the shade of that old walnut tree so beloved by all, were his old teachers, his former classmates, and a new, much younger generation. It was there that this memorable celebration was held, organized by the Association of Former Students of the Institute.

We all gathered eagerly around the dearly beloved Mr. Cossio to hear the simple and admiring words which he read to the gathering, and as we all listened, it brought back the sacred memory of the founder of the Free Institute of Learning: Don Francisco Giner de los Ríos.

As he spoke, with the skill that only good educators seem to possess, he praised the efforts of the two poets for their play, “Julianillo Varcárcel,” while making specific reference to the sublime poetic value of Doña Leonor de Unzueta.

The event concluded when Manuel recited—as only he could do it—Antonio’s poem, “To Don Francisco.” In the quiet garden filled with silence and devotion, the words sounded almost like a prayer:

“Since the schoolmaster is gone...”

\* \* \*

And now, before continuing with the complete text of the admirable words read by Mr. Cossio, I will add—supported by the comments of Antonio (that is, of Mairena)—that criticism should never be affected by ill-will or by any arbitrary or capricious criterion. And even less by the pretentious superiority of those who boast that they have accomplished everything, when in reality they have done nothing.

In the words of the renowned philosopher and guitarist, Heredia, to be a critic “one needs to have” the confluence of a many different circumstances. The first should be an open and sincere feeling of sympathy and love for the work that one is judging, which is also the best way to penetrate the spirit of the author. And above all, to make an effort to capture the beauty and the emotion it portrays. One might surely expect that criticism should try to point out what is essential and positive in any sincere attempt to

create a work of art. This would be not only the fairest, the most noble and most generous thing to do; it would also be the most efficient, since giving encouragement is much better than the opposite.

But this could only happen if the critic has reached the same, or even greater, intellectual and cultural level as the author who is criticized. Without this condition his opinions will have no more value than those of any Tom, Dick or Harry to whom, no matter how great he believes he is, one may always say: “what you think doesn’t matter.”

And as one of the very best examples of what this noble and cultivated type of criticism can be, we will now quote the words of that beloved and admired educator, the renowned art critic, Don Manuel B. Cossio, which were given on that occasion:

“Colleagues and good friends: since I am the oldest member of this group, I have been asked today to offer this warm reception and the fervent praise of all those present to our two distinguished and beloved poets. I have never before been chosen to express the collective voice of the group in tributes and celebrations like this, but here I am doing it for the first time, when I am only two steps away from the beyond. You will believe me if I confess to you the desire that my few words may touch your souls, and that they may reach you on delicate and subtle wings. The best heroes of ancient Greece were always winged; and from the old Homeric poets, who were eternal fountains of emotion, flows the image which is suitable for my purpose of expressing the collective emotion of this pleasant moment we all share.

When the angry Achilles locks himself away in his tent, neither the courageous Ajax nor the wise Ulysses can get through to him. The one who finally moves him is his old teacher, Phoenix, with something so simple and so pure!

‘Remember, Achilles,’ he tells him, ‘the time that your father, the elderly Peleus, asked me to accompany you when he sent you from Pythia to Agamemnon, when you were still a child without the experience of a disastrous war, nor of the battles where men can gain fame, and he ordered me to teach you to speak well, and to do great deeds.’ Only then did the heart of our hero melt.

If the sacred spirit of our schoolmaster—oh, dear poets!—were to appear by chance among this familiar foliage, always green and vibrant, under which he wished to be buried in order to remain among you and continue hearing the comforting sound of voices both old and new, that same spirit would also tell you, like Phoenix to Achilles: ‘Remember when you were children and your father, here beloved by all, sent you to this house—where I always tried to teach deep wisdom—and he sent you to learn two things, the same as Achilles: to say beautiful words, and to do noble deeds.’

Fortunately you have learned to do this, and it is also fortunate for us because, with your beautiful words, you have recreated, you have beautified and you have purified our life for a long time now.

And what is more, in “The Misfortunes of Fate” you have imagined, and you have created crystal clear symbols of noble actions, and you have done this with words of pure beauty. “Always be sincere, oppose what is false, strengthen your own nature: live your own life,” your Segismundo, your Julianillo Valcárcel, says and does without reserve. And he dies because of love and for the sake of love, which is the most beautiful thing. And since, without wanting to die in order to love he wants beauty even more, as he dies with a feeling of divine benevolence in his heart, he relinquishes love: for sincere selflessness, for the grace of the Graces, for the Charites, that is again, for love itself, and for human kindness.

This is why your Leonor, converted into Don César, is the most poetic figure of the tragicomedy, the one who affects us most, the one whom we see in our dreams, and who reaches most deeply into our hearts.

If the blessed spirit of our schoolmaster could speak to us again, he would tell us exactly the same thing as Julianillo and doña Leonor. Be true to yourself; reject the empty golden goblet; die for love in all its forms; for the divine “Graces”; and let the human and the divine “Charites” rule over your desires. You have used words, many beautiful words; you have created masks: poetic characters who perform noble acts; you have been faithful to the oldest program of learning in history, the program of Peleus and Phoenix, which is also the program of our beloved schoolmaster.

For this we salute you, for this we honor you, for this we embrace you in the renewed brotherhood of those distant and wonderful springtime days we spent together.

In my opinion, this is the only kind of criticism that is worthy of the work done by these two poets.

As a curiosity, I will add that this first performance of the drama of Manuel and Antonio was accepted by Benavente with these words which were spoken to Manuel: “It is more than thirty years since they have given me a work like this to read” and he immediately went to Maria Guerrero who, a short time later, presented it on the day of its premiere. And if there was good luck—if you can refer to *merit* as good luck—which happened before its actual debut, it was just as lucky that Mr. Corrio wrote a review about this superior creation for the Spanish stage.

There will come a time when the actual value of the Machado brothers’ theater is recognized, and even what has been said here to praise it will not suffice to show the true importance of their work. The marvelous painting of Velázquez in “Las Meninas” cannot be appreciated from close up; a certain distance is necessary. In the same way time, which provides distance, will also determine what this theatrical work is worth and that it is perhaps worth even more than some have thought. No, this theater is not separate from the rest of their work; on the contrary, it adds a very interesting part which now completes the whole.”

## ON BANQUETS AND TESTIMONIALS

Antonio felt the deepest aversion for this type of enthusiastic event which happened so often. He thought that it was really an effort, perhaps unconscious, to distract attention from what really mattered. He felt it was preferable to work in silence, rather than going to sleep under the weight of these praises, which are often tributes by people who don't even know the work which is being praised. And besides, it is dangerous to think one has reached, or is about to reach, the high point of one's career because, after that, one never accomplishes anything which has real value.

## DECLAIMERS AND RECITERS

This was something he could never put up with. And being a person who always acted with so much kindness and consideration, he tried to see if there wasn't some way to keep people from reciting his poems. Unfortunately, he was never able to do that.

Then he also did not want to hurt these people financially, so he usually ended up by resigning himself.

When the radio announced that someone was now going to recite one of his poems, he would immediately turn it off. And since he was always thoughtful, he said that his poems were made to be read, and it devalued them to make them a victim of recitations that were bombastic or grandiloquent. And what is more, it was quite common to hear a poem recited in a context outside of the spiritual climate in which the poet had created it. That was why it annoyed him so much. And when someone who was associated with the recitation or the reciter invited him to come and hear one of these recitals, to avoid telling them how much he disliked it, he would say: "I can't go because it would affect me too deeply, and at the moment I am not feeling well."

## ALWAYS CLEAN-SHAVEN

He never grew a moustache or side-burns or a beard. He was always careful to shave himself because he didn't like to see hairs on his face. This way his features were always free of any affectation. And one must remember that, when he was still young, moustaches and thick beards were quite common. He would never accept any of these modes or fashions. He preferred the one used by comedians, bull-fighters and priests. All his life he portrayed himself exactly as he was. And the passing years have proved him correct, but it was only a way to disguise the ravages of time.

## HIS FONDNESS FOR TOBACCO

All his life he was an incorrigible smoker. But he usually discarded his cigarettes very soon after he lit them. Later, during the war, he smoked more often. And on days

where there was no more tobacco, he eagerly looked for cigarettes he had begun in order to finish smoking them.

In Valencia he even smoked aromatic herbs which they sold as a substitute for tobacco. But they displeased him so much that he threw them away almost immediately after lighting them. Tobacco was so essential for him that almost as soon as he threw one cigarette away he would light another, in spite of the bad effect it had on his health. Nevertheless, when his wife became sick, this inveterate smoker did not hesitate a moment to stop smoking completely.

### HIS FONDNESS FOR COFFEE

He had an extraordinary fondness for coffee. There were days when he drank eight or ten cups. Every night we had to leave a cup of coffee on the table where he was working so that he could use it to conclude the endless series of cups he drank during the day. However, he never liked tea.

### A GOOD ANDALUSIAN

Like a good Andalusian he had a sweet-tooth, but this fondness was nothing compared to his overwhelming preference for fruit. Oh, the delicious aroma and the charm of their colors!

### CLOTHING

“You already know the shabby state of my clothes,” he says in his “Portrait.”

It was part of his legend that he never paid the slightest attention to his clothing. But beneath all this he had a much greater regard for elegance than those who were constantly bragging about it. As he put it: I don’t dress well, because I can’t. And since I can’t wear something new and of good quality, I prefer not to give it much importance. If I did that, I would be like those who say: “Now that I have this jacket, I need a suit.”

So if he was not able to achieve complete perfection, it was better to just let it go: “Either Caesar or nothing.” How typical of him this was, and how characteristic of his way of thinking and acting, even though it was something not really important to him.

Beside that, the only thing he really cared for in his suits was that they should be large enough and not “fancy,” as he called clothes that were very snug and fashionable. One can understand why he needed large clothes since he always had his pockets full of books and papers. Nothing that he wore ever looked stylish, but his appearance always had a certain lordly air about it.

To clarify why the lapels of his suit were almost always covered with ashes (something which made our mother constantly pursue him with a brush in her hand) he gave the following explanation: “since I am thickset and I lean forward in order to write, the only place for the ashes from my cigar to fall is on my lapels. So either you have to remove my lapels, or they are going to be covered with ashes.”

As for his boots, as someone has stated, they were in fact quite large and also rather misshapen; but his was caused by the fact that his feet often hurt him and he needed to wear footwear that was soft and large enough.

When he was told that the excessive size of his boots was not very attractive, he answered: “There are two types of people in the world: those who look you in the face, and those who look at your boots.”

### THE PURSUIT OF A BUTTERFLY

I will never forget the expression of anguish on his face when we were in the mountains, as he watched the pursuit and the capture of a delicate butterfly which was perched on the petals of a rosemary flower.

How could anyone dare to break the magic enchantment of this fragile and delicate beauty? When:

So that you could be born,  
with her magic wand  
a fairy once silenced  
the tempests of stone  
and chained the mountains  
so that you could fly.

When a butterfly appeared like a miracle from heaven, with divine colors shining on its wings—illuminated by the sun—it makes us think of an enchanted world which we would like to capture with our hands so it could not escape. Without even thinking that our dream would be lost forever the instant we were successful in our attempt!

..... you live,  
your color and your wings  
in the air, in the sun, over the rosemary  
so free, so graceful!...  
May Juan Ramón Jiménez  
pluck for you his Franciscan lyre.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then let us also remember this rather eccentric and unusual composition about “The flies”:

You, familiar  
relentless gluttons;  
you, common everyday flies,  
remind me of everything...

Before it was only in the mountains; now here they are, in the family living-room.

.....  
the bright summer afternoons  
when I began to dream!  
.....  
And in the hated classroom,  
.....  
pursued  
for the love of all that flies  
.....

Until they finally cease their incessant buzzing around everything:

I know that you have landed  
on the enchanted toy,  
on the thick closed book,  
on the love letter,  
on the motionless eyelids  
of the dead.

Then, the poem ends with these last two lines which conclude the cycle of the poem which, in my opinion, is in no way inferior, to the "Mountain butterfly":

you, my old friends,  
remind me of everything.

So much admiration for all that lives, and then is able to achieve the miracle of continued life in his poems!

And on another occasion he describes the two modes of consciousness and then he asks, which is the best:

There are two modes of consciousness:  
one is light, and the other patience.  
.....  
Tell me: which is best?  
Visionary consciousness  
that beholds in the deep aquarium  
live fish,  
swimming freely,  
that cannot be caught,  
or that accursed task  
of throwing on the sand,  
dead, those fish of the sea?

### HIS EVER-PRESENT MELANCHOLY

The distress which he always felt, caused by the monotony of life, which for him, was related to the freedom of his soul, found its beautiful and symbolic expression in these lines which say:

.....  
like an encaged hawk  
that looks at the sun through the bars...

This view of “the sun through the bars” describes a restlessness, a sadness that expresses once more the melancholy that he told us he had felt ever since he was a child.

A obvious proof of this was the fact that he once told me there was never a moment in his life that he didn't long for a happier life. The inevitable monotony of our existence made him feel this anguish, which was something very characteristic of him. And to this we can add these words of our good mother: “Antonio never experienced the happiness that is typical of childhood.”

### CHILDREN

He always regarded children as something sacred, and you should have seen the delicate way he would hold a little one in his hands. He would lift them up filled with nervousness, as though he was fearful that some sudden movement would make him lose his grip. What anxiety he felt!

Whenever he saw children that were a little older dressed up in fancy clothing he would say: “Parents should never dress their children with such bad taste, making them look ridiculous. That should be left to... their elders.”

### AFTER A FEVER

He once said he had noticed that strong colors acquired an extraordinary brilliance after he had a fever. As an example, he pointed to a pin cushion of green silk that had never had such an intense color for him. He said that a fever seemed to make his vision more acute.

### CERTAIN HABITS

During the middle of the night he had the custom of putting his head under a stream of water that came from a spout in the fountain. He would stay there for almost half an hour, seeming to enjoy it immensely. He did this not only in the summer, but also in winter, no matter how harsh the weather was, without seeming to mind the cold water



which at times would come out almost completely frozen. Afterward, uninterrupted by this experience, he would continue working many times almost until dawn, and beyond.

### PLAYING GAMES

Games bored him so much that they did not hold the least attraction for him. I only remember sometimes seeing him play chess with the white and red marble chess set that used to belong to our family. But that was when he was child, and after that I never saw him play again.

As a rule, it seemed to him that those who liked to play chess had their heads filled with pawns, knights and castles instead of ideas. He felt the same way about those who play dominoes and cards, etc. He had a poor impression of all these people. He once described this group of people as,

“playing cards while they ignored death”

Why mention those professional gamblers!

During his entire life he only had a certain fondness for playing ball. So when his nieces were playing he would sometimes intervene and catch the ball in the air with an agility that showed he had often done this as a child.

During his final weeks in France, looking out of the balcony of our room he would see people come to play ninepins in the town square. Whenever he saw them he couldn't keep from exclaiming; “There come those hooligans again!”

### AN ENEMY OF ROUTINE

He hated routines with all of his five senses. For that reason, he was always eager to see something new. If he had been blessed with a large fortune, he would have liked to spend his life traveling. Within his means, he did this as much as possible.

With his profound vision of reality, he incorporated into his work all the new landscapes he was able to see. His love for nature always inspired new themes for his poetic compositions; on the other hand, he was never fond of public gatherings or social groups which he never attended willingly, always fleeing from any organization that followed a pattern of routines.

He was always filled with a desire for spiritual renewal.

## PREFERENCES

Nobody was more jealous of his own spiritual freedom. This feeling allowed him to live a completely independent life which avoided all run-of-the-mill activities.

Someone might think—with utopian naïveté—that this kind of life would be terribly boring. But no. The most boring thing for him was having to put up with visits in general, and some more than others.

This made him search very carefully for the least frequented cafés in order to avoid any uncomfortable social encounters as much as possible. It might be said that his attitude was that of a true epicure, since he had adopted this preferred situation that few others were able to enjoy. In fact, this is something which his admirers ought to be happy about because, in the final analysis, if he had less social contact, there are few who were able to maintain closer contact with the spiritual.

Therefore, if he was able give us his best mature thinking, it was because he did not waste his time on anything else, since he had so little time to live.

So it could almost be said that anyone who has his books and reads them would know the poet completely, as if the beating of his living heart were still preserved in them. Or in the words of Heredia, the philosopher from “Lola goes to the Ports”: like “the mechanism of a good wristwatch.” And happily it will keep ticking for a long time!

## HIS STRONG WILL

In spite of the fact that he sometimes appeared to have a weak character, this was only external because, with things that really mattered, he never failed to accomplish what he proposed, using whatever effort was necessary. And in doing, so he sometimes showed a truly astonishing amount of energy.

He was never controlled by anything or anyone. On the contrary; he constantly influenced others—without trying to do so—who naturally listened to him like an oracle.

He always showed so much objectivity in whatever was being discussed that even the most stubborn and passionate opponents ended up agreeing with him.

This strength of character was something he demonstrated in everything he did. A good example is that, after many years of being a teacher, he went on to finish his doctorate in the Department of Philosophy and Letters, in spite of the fact that he was much older than the other students. He also devoted himself to learning English. Later he also worked at improving his Latin, which he had studied superficially before. He did this in order to be able to read Shakespeare and Virgil in their native language.

He used this strong willpower not only to control himself, but also to oppose anyone else who wished to control him. In this way, he never did anything that he did not wish to do.

### FORGIVE BUT NOT FORGET

He was an inexhaustible source of kindness and benevolence for everything and everyone; however, when someone offended him by acting incorrectly or with evil intent, he would always forgive, but never forget.

### RUBEN DARIO

Ruben Dario came to Spain representing the government of Nicaragua while General José Santos Zelaya was President. In 1908 he presented credentials accrediting him as the ambassador of his country to King Alfonso XIII of Spain.

It has often been the case that in Latin America they would send one of their greatest intellectual talents as representatives of their respective countries. On this occasion it was Nicaragua that was lucky enough to send a representative with the talent and the intellectual stature of Ruben Dario. When asking to have this ambassador approved by the court of Spain, President Zelaya could well have said to himself:

“Instead of asking you for a favor, this is one I am doing for you.”

Upon his arrival in Spain, soon after the national disaster caused by the loss of her Colonies, the distinguished poet encountered a propitious environment for the creation of the Modernist literary movement, of which he is now a master.

With the help of his strong personality, he was able to bring in important French influences which were easy to assimilate and which could then help with the renovation of Spanish letters.

In his diplomatic valise Dario had something more important than his credentials: the books that would reveal his new and original poetic inclinations, which produced the astonishment and the admiration of the poets of his day. He delved more and more deeply into French customs, which already were used to a certain extent, because of the influence of a small group of writers generally referred to as the Generation of '98.

Among the most talented and enthusiastic group of poets that were considered important were Manuel and Antonio Machado, and Juan Ramon Jimenez. The brothers worked assiduously with the latter, and all three made a sincere and enthusiastic effort to collaborate in several newly published journals. For the first time in the journal *Helios* they finally were able to achieve their goal of collaborating with the Nicaraguan poet, in spite of the personal sacrifice this represented for him, since his poems and his works were usually published in well-known, better paying journals and this had helped him

deal with his precarious economic condition. It also demonstrated the generosity and the great affection Dario felt for his enthusiastic young friends.

In reality, the effect that Ruben Dario produced in Spain was like the appearance of a true King who seduces with his dazzling colors and his deep, vibrant sonorities that caused real astonishment. In his “Marcha triunfal,” the vivid colors of the cortege of conquistadors, enveloped by the “golden thunder” of their strident trumpets of war, are something so vital that whenever these lines are read they resound with an indistinguishable power. All this and much more in the work of this poet caused a tremendous enthusiasm in Antonio, precisely because it was his opposite.

With that profound Spanish restraint, our poet feels that Dario’s magic vision will strengthen him more and more, causing an unquenchable emotion to vibrate within his eager spirit. And this, even though his poetry is naturally closer to that of Becquer; to that poetry which is described as: “Natural, brief, lean, emerging from the soul like an electric spark that creates emotions with a word...” with words that have the gift of awakening ideas residing in the depths of our imagination, vivid and vibrant words which have an eternal resonance.

Antonio’s poetry takes a similar path to that of Dario, but with the most complete and personal originality which follows him like a shadow.

Then, as we continue with the great Spanish American poets it would not be fair to omit the illustrious Mexican poet and diplomat, Amado Nervo, who also enjoyed great prestige among the members of the younger generation of that time. As we know, he was a subtle and graceful poet who was accompanied by a certain mysticism and delicacy which is always present in his poetic work.

Let us declare once again that Latin America contributed to the realm of poetry nothing less than the renowned Ruben Dario who was more than enough for its glory.

We must now say something about the editors of that time which is not very complimentary to them. In particular, about a certain editor who was one of the biggest supporters of Modernism and who offered Dario for three of his works—*Azul*, *Prosas profanas* (1896), and *Rimas*—the exorbitant price of five hundred pesetas!!! Unheard of, right? And this, as I said, was one of the most enthusiastic propagandists, in an editorial sense, of Modernism. He loved it so much that when some of those *crickets who chirped at the moon* in those days (and every age) came to offer him their “baby swallow”—as Manuel called a new work which the authors carried under their arm—the first thing this editor asked them was:

“Are you a modernist?”

And if they answered “no” he would turn his back on them, but not without saying to them paternalistically:

“Try learning to write Alexandrine verses.”

For him, undoubtedly, Modernist poetry could not be created without the extensive use of Alexandrine verses. Of course, in an unconscious way, this could not help but increase the popularity of that type of poetry which reached the unheard of length of fourteen syllables. Sometimes Dario, as well as other poets, replaced the traditional Alexandrine line with another which created a new effect. And this was one of many things which influenced the new pattern of interior rhymes and which enriched this new poetic style.

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Antonio often met with Dario in the Café Levante in Madrid. I remember that Dario had a very serious demeanor, but with a certain childlike aspect which made him seem very attractive.

From the beginning he showed a great deal of sympathy and admiration for both Manuel and Antonio. He says this in his magnificent portrait with those marvelous lines about Antonio, which are directly inspired by his character.

Acting as a good friend to Dario, on more than one occasion Antonio helped him avoid a serious altercation. It is common knowledge that the Nicaraguan poet at times reached a certain degree of excitation which got him into familial quarrels.

On one of these occasions during the middle of the night, trying to avoid an even greater dispute, Antonio took him to the house of Vargas Vila, a person who had great influence over the poet. And in fact, Dario allowed himself to be taken there, thus keeping things from getting much worse.

The next day he stayed in bed. When Antonio went to see him to learn how things had gone during the rest of the night, since was still in bed the great Dario said to him: "Do you remember those anchovies we ate with the wine? Well, they were what caused the problem." And nothing that was said could make him change his mind.

On another occasion when he had gone to the Palace to present his credentials as ambassador of his country to Spain, he had forgotten to bring them, and when he realized this he was forced to go back and get them.

When he returned from his visit to the Monarch and was asked how it had gone, Ruben Dario only responded: "His Majesty said nice things," and there was no way to make him say anything else.

Setting aside these anecdotes for the moment, I will add that in spite of the fact that Antonio was one of the most fervent admirers of the great Ruben Dario, he says very clearly in the Prologue of *Solitude*, published in 1917, exactly what the esthetic criteria for his first book are. It becomes obvious that it is precisely his absolute originality that is his most outstanding characteristic.

In the following paragraph, which I am going to quote verbatim, he speaks quite modestly of the goals (I would dare to say accomplishments) which at that time separated him radically from Dario.

And this is what he says: “But I tried—and notice that I am not speaking of successes but of goals—to follow a very different path (from that of Dario). I felt that the poetic element was not the word for its phonic value, nor the color, nor the line, nor a group of sensations, but rather a profound vibration of the spirit; it is something which the soul offers, if it offers anything, or something which it says, if it says anything, with its own voice, as an active response to a direct encounter with the world. And I still believed that man is able to discern the words of an intimate monologue by distinguishing the living voice of the inert echoes; that by looking within he can also discern vital intuitions and universal sentiments. My book was not the systematic realization of this goal, but this was the esthetic principle which I followed at the time.”

This “profound vibration of the spirit” which the Poet mentions is a reference to those essential sentiments which we all possess. Neither feelings which are more or less the same, nor identical thoughts or matching words really matter when one person’s thoughts coincide with those of another.

I remember that in the admirable study by the famous French critic Sainte-Beuve which serves as the Prologue to the Complete Works of Virgil, translated from Latin into French, he tells us how the famous author of the *Aeneid* had been criticized, and on one occasion had even been accused of plagiarism. To which it seems the aforementioned poet responded that when he found something that was said in a definitive way which agreed with his own thoughts, he didn’t hesitate to repeat it thinking, modestly, that he would never be able to say it better.

The mere fact of being able to choose the best from someone else’s poems shows the superior critical spirit and great understanding which in no way detracts from the great work of someone with the lofty stature of Virgil, as his admirable poems show.

And finally, returning once again to Ruben Dario, whom the learned professor Dr. José Ortega y Gasset calls “the divine Indian,” we see that, in his well-known “Prayer for Antonio,” he has written lines like these:

“...he created profound songs  
whose secrets only he knew”

confirming the fact that originality is a truly inaccessible secret. And this is the case with Antonio, as seen by another Poet.

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