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## RUBEN DARIO

Rubén Darío consciously assumed the role of a literary innovator at a time when in his estimation the poetic production of Latin America seemed limited to imitations of José Joaquín Olmedo's "Canto a Junín" ["Song to Junin"],\* which celebrates a victory of the Wars of Independence, or an unending "Ode to the Agriculture of the Torrid Zone" in the style of Andrés Bello. Indeed he would become the foremost representative of the new literary movement, to be known as Modernism, that would constitute the coming of age of Latin American literature.

Particularly in his prose writings, Darío refers often to the Central American context in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the *Viaje a Nicaragua* [*Journey to Nicaragua*] (1907), Darío expresses his feelings of nostalgia for the tropics, his desire to return to his homeland of Nicaragua where he had been born in the town of Metapa on January 18, 1867. Quite apart from the poems and short stories that have a Central American setting, there are numerous articles on the history, the literature, the cultural and intellectual life of his homeland. From the age of fourteen, Darío had begun to publish poems in various Central American newspapers, paying homage to civic leaders and literary figures, praising the noble mission of the press in Nicaragua, defending the cause of anticlerical liberalism against the reactionary influence of the Pope and the Jesuit order. Under the tutelage of José Leonard, the young poet, conscious of the social role of writers, became an ardent admirer of the ideals of democracy, and political liberalism, as represented by the eminent journalist Juan Montalvo to whom he dedicated a lengthy poem of tribute. Throughout his entire life, Darío remained a proponent of the cause of Central American political unity; his elegy to Máximo Jerez, a leader of the Nicaraguan liberals who died in 1881, constitutes a declaration of his fervent faith in the principles of political freedom and Central American union.

These were the years in which the precocious poet displayed the literary gifts that gave promise of a brilliant artistic career. Darío was a voracious reader in whose writings the influence of numerous authors belonging to several literatures can be discerned. It is difficult to note a consistent orientation in their early stage of his literary development for Darío produced a

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\* Translations in brackets supplied by Editor.

wide range of poems in imitation of several poets; the reader finds short lyrics on sadness, love and the charms of various ladies, patriotic hymns to such revolutionary heroes as Simón Bolívar, sketches of Central American scenes and landscapes, and poems of tribute to literary figures. The first volume, originally entitled *Epístolas y poemas* [*Epistles and Poems*], which he sent to the National Press of Nicaragua, bears the date of 1885, although it did not appear until 1888 with a new title, *Primeras notas* [*First Notes*]. The subsequent volumes published in 1887, namely: *Rimas* [*Rhymes*] written in the style of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, excommunicated according to Darío by the Inquisitors of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, and the formalist tradition; *Abrojos* [*Thorns*] based on the bittersweet confections of Ramón de Campoamor; the *Epic Chant to the Glories of Chile*, another exercise in the political or patriotic vein, belong to the first stage of his poetic career.

Darío had also become a dedicated journalist; in an early article entitled "La Prensa y la libertad" ["The Press and Freedom"], he had expressed his sense of involvement in political and intellectual pursuits, perhaps in keeping with Victor Hugo's notion of the poet as social prophet.

But during the ensuing years his efforts were channelled more exclusively toward artistic endeavours. In 1886 the young poet chose to live in Chile because he wanted an atmosphere that would be more appropriate for his studies and intellectual development. It proved to be a rather fortunate decision, for in Santiago and Valparaiso Darío was able to meet for the first time many of the leading figures in the Latin American literary world. He also became more familiar with the avant-garde of French authors, namely the Parnassians and the Symbolists, was hired as a foreign correspondent by the prestigious Argentine periodical *La Nación*, and caught the attention of the entire Spanish-speaking artistic community when he published *Azul...* [*Azure...*], a collection of exotic poems and short stories. The date of publication of *Azul...* (1888) has long served to mark the beginning of the modernist period; Darío himself claimed this distinction for *Azul...* in the first chapter of his *Historia de mis libros* [*The History of my Books*] (1909), "that of having initiated an intellectual movement that would later have so many triumphant consequences". However, Rubén never intended to claim entire credit for the flowering of modernism, as his many articles dealing with such authors as Julián del Casal, José Martí, among the elders so to speak, or to Amado Nervo, Leopoldo Lugones and Ricardo Jaimes Freyre amply prove.

During the following period in which he served as correspondent for *La Nación* of Buenos Aires and as diplomatic envoy, Darío became a roving ambassador for modernism throughout the Hispanic world. The publication of his two major volumes of poetry, *Prosas profanas* [*Lay Hymns*] (1896) and *Cantos de vida y esperanza* [*Songs of Life and Hope*] (1905) soon earned him his dominant position among Latin American poets.

Perhaps the course of Darío's life between 1893, when he first arrived in Buenos Aires, until his final departure from Spain in 1915, can best be described as one of travels and chronicles. In his monumental edition of Darío's poetry, Méndez Plancarte collected the abundant production of these years, following the peregrinations of the poet from Valparaiso to Buenos Aires, from Mallorca to Paris, from Mexico back to Nicaragua. During these same years, Darío published the greater part of his prose writings; the reader finds sketches of Latin American capitals, reflections on contemporary Spain, chronicles of life in Paris at the turn of the century, in fact a wealth of articles that far outstrip the limits of conventional journalism. The outbreak of the First World War served to impress upon Darío the realization that his career as a roving correspondent and spokesman for Latin American poetry were drawing to an end.

Partly to undertake a lecture tour, partly to return to what he himself considered his true home, Rubén returned to Central America in 1915 with the knowledge that his death was imminent. His health had been undermined by adverse conditions and a history of excessive drinking. For a time he was received by the dictator of Guatemala, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, who eventually surrendered custody of the poet to Rosario Murillo, the wife that Darío had abandoned many years before. Upon his death, February 6, 1916, Nicaragua declared a state of national mourning that was observed throughout the Hispanic world.

### *Azul . . .*

It is somewhat misleading to speak of *Azul . . .* as a Parnassian book for the foreign influences upon Darío's poetic style were cumulative rather than strictly successive. The young poet who had chosen Víctor Hugo as a master in 1882, did not forsake the eloquent romantic when he was introduced to the Parnassians such as Leconte de Lisle, or still later to the symbolist poets, namely: Paul Verlaine, Jean Moréas and Stéphane Mallarmé. As a poet, Darío matured by absorbing as he went the lessons of Hugo, of Gautier, of Catulle Mendès, as well as a host of Spanish authors. What he learned from the magnificent orator and journalist José Martí or what he gleaned from the aristocratic and serene poet Jean Moréas was gratefully acknowledged in such critical writings as *Los Raros* [*The Rare Ones*] and *Historia de mis libros*.

There were two editions of *Azul . . .*, the first containing the short stories in prose, the poetic suite entitled the "Lyric Year" and two short poems; in 1890 Darío added thirteen short lyrics, three of which were written in French. The discerning readers at the time noted the fresh, original tone of this book. Even if in the "Lyric Year" the seasons are sung in the quite traditional measures of the "romance" and the "silva", there is an air of artistic refine-

ment, of delicate or sumptuous suggestion, of meticulous care in the craft of verse that recalls Darío's defense in 1888 of the parnassian and decadent esthetics. In keeping with his habit of choosing those elements of novelty and experimentation which he could exploit in his own writings, Darío carries out in *Azul* . . . his intention, stated in an article on Catulle Mendès, of reproducing in poetry certain aspects of painting, sculpture and music; writers like Mendès had suggested the possibility of "painting the color of a sound, the perfume of a star, which was something like capturing the very soul of things". In Darío's judgment, this subtle, delicate, suggestive art was being practised primarily by French writers. Moreover, Darío felt that he had to choose very carefully the authors he would imitate, with the express purpose of "being himself", of developing those gifts that he recognized within himself.

Conservative critics, who did not share Darío's predilection for novelty and experimentation or for the new cult of artistic purity and elevation, were aghast at the exotic strain, and pagan themes in *Azul* . . . , at the foreign influences, at the conscious effort to modernize or "make subtle" the craft of Spanish versification. To the repeated charges of deliberate innovation, Darío would plead guilty, for he felt that Latin America was about to proclaim its literary and intellectual independence. Naturally he claimed for himself a major role in breaking down the strictures of tradition, but he never failed to hail the contributions of other "daring writers", like José Asunción Silva, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, and Leopoldo Lugones, just as he acknowledged his debts to such masters as Hugo, Verlaine and Paul Groussac.

### *Prosas Profanas*

*Prosas profanas* (1896) represents the full development of Darío's poetic techniques, the first of his two major volumes of poetry. Darío was pleased to find that the sophisticated French critic, Remy de Gourmont, considered the title itself a "trouvaille". Just as the European decadents used religious terms to express profane (i.e. amorous or exotic) meanings, Darío borrowed the word *prosa* from medieval Latin in which it meant a hymn that followed prose pronunciation and word order. In his autobiography Darío noted ruefully that critics, except for Rodó, were unable to understand even the title of the book; they failed to take into account the Latin *prosas* of the medieval church, the secular poems of such early Castilian poets as Gonzalo de Berceo and the more recent "Prose pour Des Esseintes" of Stéphane Mallarmé. However, the rather negative reactions of the "followers of tradition and academic dogma" were founded on much more than an unusual title. *Prosas profanas* represented a "nascent reform", as Darío puts it, that would transform Spanish poetry. But Darío did not create new

verse forms so much as use, as no one else had done before, the wide variety of techniques and forms of Spanish versification. In doing so, he would become the supreme musician of Latin American poetry. In *Los Raros*, Darío states that he was fascinated by Paul Verlaine's notion of "music above all else", but he also insisted on the "principle of interior music", on the ideal melody of the poetic thought. The suggestive power of his verses create a mood, an atmosphere that conveys the impression of sight, sound, feelings and intuitions. Darío refuses to be simply a "rimador" or a mere technician; the atmosphere of irreality in *Prosas* was specifically conceived in order to suit the exalted, aristocratic themes he had in mind.

Conscious of what he called the "hierarchy of poetic ideas", Darío sought to conjure up strange, exotic visions — of remote landscapes, pallid princesses, colorful birds. The content alone of *Prosas* was disturbingly foreign to the "literary bourgeoisie". This book does contain a world quite apart from the vulgar reality of an age that Darío then dismissed as unpoetic. Caught up in his aristocratic vision of exotic lands such as poets inhabit in their dreams, Darío claimed to detest the world and the time in which he happened to have been born. By way of compensation, he sought to express his own visions of a gallant, frivolous 18th century, of his idealized Paris, or of his personal, enchanted Orient. In the "interior kingdom" of his imagination, Paris became as unreal, for example in "Divagación" or "Era un aire suave", as the mystic isle where Darío's centaurs meet for their colloquy. Needless to say, this Paris is quite different from the city Darío described in *Parisiana* [*Parisiennne*] as well as other chronicles. The poet of *Prosas* resembles Des Esseintes, the esthete who is the main character in Huysmans' *A rebours*, in that he is a "raro", an aristocratic soul who strives to attain the vision of ineffable beauty. Darío insists on the somewhat remote character of ideal beauty which he associates with classical Greek themes, as in his so-called "archaeological recreations", or with medieval or oriental art.

In keeping with the "cosmopolitan flavor" of *Prosas*, Darío sought to vary the poetic effects, ranging from the nostalgic, the hedonist, the erotic to the reflective tone. Perhaps the harshest criticism has been aimed at the frivolous aspect of Darío's poetic inspiration: his creation of ornate castles, pallid princesses, watteauesque characters like Pierrot, and the exotic birds such as the swan.

José Enrique Rodó, the Uruguayan sage, anticipated such accusations of frivolity and artificiality when he declared that Darío's cult of artistic forms limited the universality and human content of his poetry. It is unfair to dismiss these poems as shallow and merely rhetorical; a closer reading of several of the *Prosas* will reveal a more thoughtful Darío. But this book represents most of all a period of arduous intellectual and artistic activity during which Darío strove to justify his ideals of poetic expression. As he confesses in the *Historia de mis libros*, this was his bountiful springtime in which he pursued "the form" of his intellectual aspirations, this very pursuit being the subject of the final poem in *Prosas profanas*.

*Cantos de Vida*

*Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), Darío's songs of life and hope, has long been recognized as his greatest book. At this point in his career, Darío was universally hailed as the most important poet in the Spanish language, and in certain poems, such as "To Roosevelt" and "Salutation of the Optimist", he seemed to assume the task of poetic spokesman for the Hispanic world. Charles Watland points out in his biography of the poet that "the hope in the *Songs of Life and Hope* is largely for a possible better future for the Spanish world or at any rate expresses confidence in its chances for survival". Darío expresses a view of life that is more reflective, personal and sober. There is even a note of anguish in certain songs of "life"; the experience of personal frustration, of his unavailing struggle against material conditions brings about a somber realization of what life entails, as opposed to the enticing fantasies he may have formerly entertained. In such autobiographical poems as "Yo soy aquel que ayer no más decía", Darío reveals his personal sense of age as he laments the passing of youth; the thought of death, the inner torment of his conscience revives the deep-seated need of religious consolation that he would experience during the rest of his life. Whatever "human content" Rodó and others found wanting in *Prosas profanas* can be found in abundance in this volume that deals with the quality of human hope, for example in "Canto de esperanza", "Spes" and "Torres de Dios".

But *Cantos* remains above all an artistic triumph of the first order. Against the repeated charge of "adulteration" or undue attention to foreign models, Darío returns to traditional Spanish poetry, even to the cancioneros.

His profound admiration for Spanish culture is made evident in such poems as "Sonnet to Cervantes", "To Goya", and "Litany of Our Lord Don Quixote". Darío seeks to reaffirm certain principles that critics had unjustly accused him of neglecting; in *Cantos* we find an abiding love of Spain, an awareness of the travails, both intellectual and political, of his native Latin America, and a distrust of the United States, seen as a threat to political independence. Darío finds much in the fabulous history of Spain to shore up his cultural consciousness. As much as the young intellectuals of the generation of 1898, Darío pondered the consequences of the Spanish-American war and the crisis within Hispanic culture itself.

In *Cantos*, Darío begins to see poetry in a somewhat different light; in answer to his own question as to the nature of art itself, he replies that poetry constitutes a probe into the absolute, into the nature of man and the universe. The poet's role in the religion of art, notions taken up at greater length in such critical writings as *Los Raros*, is that of a secular apostle. His mission is to know himself and thereby to edify by his life of struggle and abnegation, those souls that are pure enough to understand the superior morality of the artist. The poet must be involved, not in frivolous pursuits,

but in the most pure experience of love, in the enigma of spiritual aspirations which alone reveal the intimate meaning of life. Whereas the early verses may have been anticlerical in content and certain poems in *Prosas* may have been decadent in tone, the question of time in *Cantos* sheds a harsh light upon the interior drama of a poet torn between cruel reality and his aspirations; without arriving at a specifically religious interpretation of his own dilemma, Darío nevertheless sees a religious sense in the conflict between body and soul, the anguish of spiritual aspiration and physical desire.

Although we do not find in *Cantos* the luxuriant style that characterized the more florid passages in *Prosas profanas*, Darío remained a delicate craftsman, for example in his treatment of the theme of the swan. However, there is in *Cantos* a tendency to avoid rhetoric and artificiality, to make the poems more personal and subtle in order to express Darío's most intimate thoughts. Already Darío himself had gone beyond the more florid aspects of modernist poetry.

The failing health of Rubén prevented him from collecting another major book of poetry, but his poetic career certainly had not terminated with *Cantos*. In such volumes as *El Canto errante* [*The Roving Song*] (1907), and *Poema del Otoño* [*The Poem of Autumn*] (1910), the reader encounters once again the theme of time and of the struggle to affirm human values in the face of death. There are also many beautiful evocations of Latin America, but on the whole the notes of sadness, doubt and anguish provide a rather grim counterpoint to the graceful melodies that Darío would produce until the very end of his life.

#### *Dario's Prose*

Of the several volumes of prose writings, among which one finds a variety of forms, namely articles, short stories, autobiography, sketches of places and persons, only the stories of Darío have received substantial critical attention. To a large extent, the short stories published in *Azul* . . . constitute the more innovative portion of that revolutionary book. The subject matter of these fanciful stories, such as the bourgeois king and the beggar poet, the satyr who is serenaded by Orpheus himself, the Parisian style nymph, Queen Mab, the palace of the sun, reminds one of *Prosas profanas*. Describing his own style of story writing, Darío refers to the delicate princesses who live in the "blue" atmosphere of stories that he qualifies as "Lírico-erótico". "Azul . . .", the ineffable blue, is seen as the symbolic color of dreams and visions; it is the color of art itself in its purest form. With reference to the plot, the details and the poetic tones of his "French" tales, Darío recognizes his debts to such authors as Catulle Mendès, Armand Silvestre, and Alphonse Daudet. In the *Historia de mis libros*, Darío states that in the section entitled "In Chile" he was performing experiments in color and sketching which he



felt were unique in Spanish prose; these word pictures are described as "pictorial transpositions". In the same context he claims that certain texts, such as "To a star", "The Song of Gold", "The Veil of Queen Mab" are really prose poems conceived in musical terms, such as cadence, rhythm, verbal sonority. He intended to reproduce in Spanish the stylistic effects of the French story writers, or, as he calls it, the "Parisian manner". Although an impeccable critic, Juan Valera, did praise him for his excellent use of the Spanish language, Darío had to admit that he was "penetrated with the spirit of France"; less tolerant critics would accuse him of subservience to French models. Darío, painfully aware of these objections to his alleged "gallicisms" and Parisian frivolity, insisted that in order to carry out the reform and revitalization of Spanish literature it was necessary to borrow from the French writers whose superb techniques and genuine dedication to the art of writing he greatly admired. In doing so, Darío did change the character of Spanish prose. In *Azul* . . . , he imitated the sentence structure, the choice of vocabulary of the Parisian authors, avoiding the more complex rhetoric of traditional Spanish prose. In *Los Raros*, Darío would declare that every good poet develops an excellent prose style; it would be useful to compare his own prose, with respect to style, choice of vocabulary, use of metaphors and images, with his poetry.

Sufficient critical interest has yet to be focused on what could be called the narrative vein of the great lyric poet's production. Apart from numerous narrative poems, we find Darío's gifts as a story teller displayed in two novels—the first entitled *Emelina* was written in collaboration with Edward Poirier, and the second remained in fragmentary form a historical novel that owes much to Flaubert's *Salaambô*—and primarily in his development as a story writer which begins with "A las orillas del Rhin" in 1885. Between 1888 and 1894, Darío wrote most of his finest stories, such as "The Smile of Princess Diamantina" and "The Legend of Saint Martin"; after 1894, he concentrated mainly on his poetry and his journalistic endeavours.

Darío wrote with respect to Catulle Mendès, a Parnassian writer, that his stories and articles were really those of a poet. In *Letras hispánicas* [*Hispanic Letters*], Raimundo Lida insists quite rightly that such a criterion should be applied to the study of Darío's stories; one should note the lyricism, the splendid images, the opulent colors, the sustained use of symbols and metaphors, of poetic motifs. Just as in his books of poetry, Darío's rich imagination plunders legends, mythologies, those remote worlds lost in time or fantasy; the verbal artistry in certain stories is similar in many ways to that of *Prosas profanas*. For example, in the "Song of God", which Darío considered to be a prose poem, he uses certain paragraphs as the prose equivalent of stanzas; a number of sentences have the form and rhythm of verses, with elements of rhyme, alliteration, parallel constructions and hyperbaton. The reader finds this use of rhythmic prose even in passages that have no narrative element, as in the critical articles in *Los Raros* or in the article of 1898 in which Darío consciously imitates the complex prose style of Ma-

llarmé, as a tribute to the deceased master. Whether stories, critical studies, prose poems or portraits of literary and intellectual figures that he called *Semblanzas* or *Cabezas* [*Biographical Sketches*], Darío remained a master of poetic prose. To his poetic language he would give the form of articles, or stories, or poems in verse form.

In his critical articles, Darío articulated many important critical concepts that shed light upon his own works, such as the cult of artistic form, originality, artistic refinement, the hierarchy of ideas with reference to poetic expression, universality, the religion of art, and the apostolate of the writer. *Los Raros* (1896) in itself pleads the cause of universality for Darío examines the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Henrik Ibsen, the Cuban poets José Martí and Augusto de Armas, the Portuguese author Eugênio de Castro, and a number of French writers whose works he relates to the Symbolist Movement. This book, consisting of articles published mostly in *La Nación* of Buenos Aires between 1893 and 1896, constitutes the most important document in Spanish dealing with the Symbolist Movement in France. In contrast to other books of literary criticism such as *Opiniones* [*Opinions*] and *Letras* [*Letters*], *Los Raros* is the only work in which we find a certain unity of perspective; Darío stated that, except for the chapters on Camille Maclair and Paul Adams that were added on the second edition of 1905, this entire book was written during what he called "the full development" of the Symbolist Movement in France. The question of the evolution of this perspective (or of what Darío calls his "thought", to be understood in an esthetic verse) suggests that his critical faculties developed by means of contact with the notions on literature held by other writers. In *Los Raros*, Darío's judgements refer to works of certain French authors whom he places within the context of symbolism. If Rubén deals with Poe, Whitman, or Ibsen, this choice can be explained by the fact that their works were favorably received in France during the Symbolist period. Augusto de Armas, on the other hand, represented a clear example of the attraction that Paris exercised on foreign authors; in the connection, Darío shows that the French capital was then the focal point for currents that linked several literatures. In Darío's mind, Symbolism represents an entire literature—free, lofty, and original—that was created from the tenets that might be attributed each in turn to a previous literary school. For example, Darío claims in his discussion of the works of Leconte de Lisle that the Parnassians are the sons of Victor Hugo, whereas the Symbolists are his grandchildren. Leconte de Lisle in turn elevated the cult of artistic form which was to inspire others in the creation of a more pure poetry.

Paul Verlaine is seen as a master of poetic harmonies and Jean Moréas as the model of poets in his self-discipline, his moral superiority over the base miseries of the world. In a chapter on Lautréamont which owes much to the influence of Léon Bloy, Darío accurately predicts the literary fortunes of the *Chants de Maldoror*. He relates the achievements of minor poets such as Jean Richepin, Laurent Tailhade, Edward Dubus, and Théodore Hannon

to the same artistic evolution, as exemplified by such masters as Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé.

In *Los Raros*, Darío is also attentive to the writers of poetic prose, such as Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Léon Bloy, whom he praises for their verbal artistry. We find a fragmentary declaration of the literary values that Darío sought to express in his own writings. In addition to the revelation of Darío's extensive knowledge of French literature, *Los Raros* displays his eminent gifts as a literary critic.

Much of the neglect of Darío's prose writings stems from the mistaken notion that he wrote articles only to earn a living, a not very comfortable one at that. One should not object to the fact that the chapters of *Los Raros* or *España contemporánea* [*Contemporary Spain*] were originally written as articles; many of his poems were first published in various journals and newspapers. In the composition of his articles, Darío showed the same talents of improvisation and stylistic innovation, the same artistic insight that he displayed in *Azul*... or *Prosas profanas*. Darío was among a number of eminent Latin American writers, such as Martí, Paul Groussac, and Enrique Gómez Carrillo, who contributed a great deal to the level of literary journalism.

*España contemporánea* (1901) gathers an interesting collection of impressions — of Barcelona and Madrid at the turn of the century, of King Alfonso and writers like Pardo Bazán, Campoamor and Núñez de Arce, of editors and the "Immortals" of the Royal Academy, of country "fiestas" and of the progress of "modernism" in Spain. The thirty articles had been commissioned by the editors of *La Nación* in order to describe, as Darío puts it in his *Autobiography*, the "present situation in which the mother country found herself". Despite the fact that "official spokesmen" spoke out constantly in the Madrid Press against "decadents, esthetes and modernists", Darío seems fascinated by the sheer spectacle of "robust" Barcelona, of Madrid "with its waves of capes and quaint types, its meetings, political, intellectual and artistic". Our chronicler seems to go everywhere in search of new impressions, visiting museums, literary salons, book stores, a carnival, the ceremonies of Holy Week, the Bull Ring. Attentive to all aspects of Spanish culture, Darío gives ample evidence of his abiding respect for the traditions of Spain. It is with genuine sorrow that he notes on one hand the absence of strong leaders in Spanish politics, and the apparent stagnation in literary and artistic circles which pointed out the triumph of modernism in Latin America. Official attitudes in Spain were impeding the more cosmopolitan currents, of free and individual expression, that "anarchism" which in Darío's eyes seemed to supply the base for artistic revival. However, Darío would be cheered later on by the original contributions of such writers as Juan Ramón Jiménez and Ramón del Valle-Inclán, who shared many of Darío's convictions.

The reverse side of the Spanish coin is *Parisiana* (1908) and the section of *Peregrinaciones* [*Pilgrimages*] (1901), entitled "In Paris", wherein Darío details the never-ending spectacle of life in the French capital. Darío rapidly describes the city at Christmas time, the visits of such crowned heads as Edward VII of England, and Victor Emmanuel of Italy, the Victor Hugo

museum, meetings of anarchists in the Latin Quarter. To his lively Parisian chronicles, Darío adds a journal of his peregrinations throughout Europe.

The *Viaje a Nicaragua* is more than an account of his return to the tropics; in many ways, this book represents a defense of his origins. The final chapter contains an exhortation to the citizens of Central America to work for political union in the face of the threat posed by the United States. Darío's concern for the future of Latin America is made quite evident through his prose writings that deal with the history and cultural institutions of his homeland. His unstinting efforts to raise his works to the level of universality were guided by a very genuine kind of nationalism.

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MARCEL CHABOT