

A TRANSLATION OF SEVENTEEN ESSAYS
EXEMPLARY OF THE WORK OF JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ

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EXEMPLARY OF THE WORK OF JOSE ENRIQUE RODO

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PREFACE

The continent of South America, and Central America, Mexico and the island republics, have never been looked upon, from the viewpoint of the people of the United States, as a land where beauty and art, philosophy and "culture" in general flourish. That this is an erroneous conception I hope to bring out in the translations of a selected group of essays taken from a compilation of writings found on the desk of the Uruguayan author, José Enrique Rodó, after his death in 1917.

Whether the countries to the south of us be called "Latin America", "Hispanic America", or "Iberian America", (each of which is incorrect to a certain degree) they well deserve, as a group, recognition of their fine cultural achievements. As a group, they deserve this recognition, but they cannot be considered in any way as having a "group" mind, since these countries, like the nation north of the "border", have had contributed to their make-up an infinite number of races and creeds, with a corresponding infinite array of ideas and ideals.

Although Uruguay, the "patria" of the man I have taken as my conception of "Latin" America's finest contribution, not only to literature, but to any phase of lofty ideas and ideals and creed for living, is a predominantly white country, along with being one of the three most progressive countries in South America, I still feel that in the production of literary work, Uruguay, in the person of Rodó, can stand as a fine example for the rest of these countries.

Colombia, for example, one of the countries in the North of South America, is known for her poetic people. It is the general rule, and not the exception, for a Colombiano to be a poet. Still in the vein of poetry, Nicaragua's contribution was Rubén Darío. Argentina gave rise to the "novelas gauchescas", and was the native land of Hugo Wast. Peru and Chile have given us, in the "novelas realistas", the life of the "roto", and the author of Broad and Alien is the World, (El mundo es ancho y ajeno), Ciro Alegría.

Rodó, in my opinion, stands even above the aforementioned writers. Rarely do we find such great men, who, realizing that the infinite and celestial speaks to them through the things of the every-day world, think upon these things, and present them to their fellow men in such sublime and beautiful terms, parables, we might even call them, indicating to them the heights of which each is capable, and for which each must strive.

Rodó, although a constant seeker of eternal truths, had also as his creed, "Renovarse es vivir" (to renew oneself is to live). It is with this outstanding thought in mind that he wrote "Los Motivos de Proteo", (The Motives of Proteus). Of Proteus, we find the following in the Diccionario Enciclopédico Abreviado:

"En la mitología griega, dios marino, hijo de Poseidon, o de océano. Tenía la facultad de predecir lo futuro, pero al ser consultado solía tomar formas distintas y a menudo espantables, y los que eran bastante audaces para cogerle y sujetarle a traves de sus cambios de forma, lograban que les hablara."

"In Greek mythology, a god of the sea, son of Poseidon, or of the ocean. He had the power of predicting the future, but on being consulted, he was accustomed to take different

forms, frequently frightening ones, and those who were audacious enough to catch him in spite of his changes of form, succeeded in having him speak to them."

Thus, Rodó chose Proteus as his symbol for a creed of life; a constant changing, renewing, of thoughts and ideas. Rodó believed that if one were faced with failure, one could change it into success through a re-directing of one's aims and objectives. This constant re-directing of one's course in life, is, as it was in The Motives of Proteus, the basic idea of the essays I have chosen for translation from the group which was printed under the title of Los Últimos Motivos de Proteo (The Last Motives of Proteus), after the author's death. These essays, prior to the printing of this book in 1932, had never been read. In the prologue, Dardo Regules states:

"Tengo sobre la mesa un monton de manuscritos que provocan, en cierta medida, la emoción de papeles sagrados. . Los dejo así, --en desorden de trabajo inacabado, --el maestro. . Y así los he encontrado al cabo de los años, como un testimonio callado y vivo de su espíritu. Me toca, por privilegio de amistad, explorarlos por primera vez. Nadie los ha leído antes. Y la lectura se hace en común con los cuatro hermanos ejemplares: María del Rosario, Isabel, Julia y Alfredo . . Alfredo, --todo comprensión y todo distinción espiritual, --nos ayuda hasta el fin, en esta tarea que acomete con prolijidad conmovedora. . .

Páginas trucas, --en parte sin relación entre si, material de una obra en formación o sobrante abandonado de una obra concluida,--el autor no las había revelado aún ni a los espíritus mas íntimos. Y no nos podemos sustraer a la emoción de entrar en este "reino interior" donde el maestro se entregaba a sus meditaciones, en el espontaneo desaliño de la primera confidencia con su obra, tal como no lo frecuentabamos ni en los libros, ni en la vida. La muerte ha libertado las puertas de ese reino interior inviolado. Vemos al maestro en su labor ahincada y creadora. No en la página definitiva y concluida, sino en esa hora heroica de la gesta de la forma, durante la cual, el desfallecimiento y la adivinación, mientras se conquista, en dura jornada, la plenitud del estilo o de la verdad. La estancia interior del Rey Thule se abre. . .

"I have on the table a heap of manuscripts that provoke, in a certain measure, the emotion of sacred papers. . . He left them thus, . . . the Master. And thus I have found them at the end of the years, as a quiet and living testimony of his spirit. It falls to me, as a privilege of friendship, to explore them for the first time. No one has read them before. And the reading is being done in coordination with the four exemplary brothers and sisters: María del Rosario, Isabel, Julia and Alfredo. . . Alfredo, all understanding and spiritual distinction, . . . helps us to the end, in this task that he undertakes with moving prolixity.

Incomplete pages. . . in part with no relation among themselves, material of a work in formation, or in excess, abandoned from a finished work, . . . the author had not revealed them to even his most intimate friends. And we cannot help submitting to the emotion of entering this "inner kingdom" where the Master devoted himself to his meditations, in the spontaneous abandon of the first confidence with his work, such as we do not come upon even in books, or in life. Death has opened the doors of that inviolated inner kingdom. We see the master in his work, vehement and creative. Not in the definite and finished pages, but in that heroic hour of creation of form, during which, weakness and guessing, (are apparent) while it is being conquered, in a hard day's labor, in the fullness of style and truth. The inner room of King Thule is opening. . .

The thoughts contained in the seventeen essays I have chosen for translation appear to be similar to thoughts in essays contained in Los Motivos de Proteo. These essays, (the ones chosen for translation), were all taken from "The Book on Vocation" (El Libro de Vocation) of The Last Motives of Proteus (Los Últimos Motivos de Proteo).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF "LOS ULTIMOS MOTIVOS DE PROTEO",
JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODO

Born into an old and rich family of Uruguay in the year 1872, José Enrique Rodo was raised in an intellectual environment which no doubt guided him in the choosing of a literary career. Rodo manifested this calling early in life, by establishing, along with two of his brothers, a publication on literature and social science.

Rodo spent his entire life, with the exception of his last two years, in Montevideo among his friends and family and the solitude of his study. He was never married. Rodo died from a fever contracted in Italy in 1917 while he was acting as representative on the European continent for an Argentine magazine.

Besides his devotion to literature, Rodo was also a politician. In 1901, he gave up a position as Director of the National Library of Uruguay to enter Congress, to which he was elected in 1902 and 1908. He took an earnest part in initiating social legislation; he was opposed to anti-church legislation. Rodo's influence acted as a rallying point and was due to his authority as an exponent of optimism, as a stylist and as an advocate of unity in South American literature and culture.

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FOR THE ONE WHO HAS A POETIC MEMORY

For the one who has a poetic memory, this condition of the memory harmonized with the separation from present reality, in absorbed and profound life, can be a permanent force of transforming regression: almost a re-living in the past.

Have you not heard it said how the suggestion of the hypnotist usually manifests itself also in the sense of taking the soul of the subject back to a former era of his life, effecting in his (faculty of) memory the evoking of a (certain) memory, which is again for him a living and actual reality; a memory which, in its time, evokes through association the concomitant facts of conscience and the general and intimate tone of life, and thus recomposes, while the (hypnotic) sleep lasts, the entire soul, such as it was, in an extraordinary "return" of youth or of infancy?

Certain souls can obtain through their capacity of attention and sympathy regarding the images of what used to be, something which resembles this suggested resurrection of an "I" of another time. And if in them, (the images), the absorption of an instant has the virtue of reanimating a memory, even to reproducing all the emotion and the accompaniment of that past reality, like those mosses which after being dead for entire years, among the leaves of an herbarium, revive (in) sprinkling them with some drops of water; if even in the corporeal, the intense memory of a former wound comes, in some constitutions, even reopening it and making it bleed (magic and extraordinary force): the vigorous, systematic cultivation of the memories of a part of the past, in the solitude

and the habitual concentration of life, can it not give (up to a certain point) the appearance of continuity and permanence to that "realization" of the images of memory?

Yes, of course! and how many souls, which solitude shelters, closing the eyes of the mind to the reality that surrounds them, as we close those of the body in order to better evoke the image of some material object, take delight in the rapture and happiness of memory, the benefit of death in regard to things of the present, and of resurrection in better times! . . . Of one who thus consecrates himself to the inner life of a memory, is it a simple metaphor to say he lives in the past? Oh monasteries, oh refuges of deceived ones and conquered ones! he who puts himself behind your walls and succeeds in penetrating the secret of the souls which humble eyes reflect beneath the hoods and the veils, how many he would surprise with those raptures in which he lives contemplating in ecstasy a worldly vision, lifted up over the passing of time; and how would he come to know that your solitude and your peace are for the many souls which inhabit you, and that only for such a consolation they seek you; as (in) that marvelous country of the legends of Rubruquis where the young traveller kept intact, for ever, his youth and his strength and grace that he had at the time he entered (the country).

There are other souls which necessity subjects to the tasks and disputes of the world, and that with this mechanical exercise, where they don't put forth any more than the very exterior of themselves, they alter, scarcely have they in returning passed

the doorway of the house, that rapture of the memory, that "withdrawing-into-one's-self" which restores them to the joy of a lost pleasure: souls that are as a book would be in whose even pages only were cold figures and venal announcements, and whose uneven pages contained stories of fairies or soft and divine lines of poetry. When the painstaking work ceases, when liberty returns from the breast of silence and calm, then it is incorporated into the redeemed imagination, as the beautiful princess in the awakening of the sleeping forest, which is here the recording of a remote story. In this way, many souls, in love with a past which carried away with it their happiness and love, resolve affirmatively, for that which touches themselves, the proposal of Mephistopheles: "Does the past exist? Is there a difference between that which was, and pure nothing?" It exists, yes, for the one who carries it in his breast, oh sweet zither of Eunomo!; and the memory, which consecrates its immortality and its eternal freshness is, through its mysterious power over us, one of the pious arts of Proteus.

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TO HATE THE GIFT WHICH ONE HAS

Vocation is the inner feeling of an aptitude; and it is a natural law that almost always aptitude is accompanied by the vocation which moves it to develop itself. It is in the order of things that, one who has a special gift loves it and takes pleasure in it. But the case is not lacking of the one who possesses an aptitude, and is conscious of it, far from esteeming it and honoring it, thankful for the gift from nature, pays for this gift with indifference and aversion. Even in those who develop and exercise their real aptitude, the esteem they make of their gifts is usually a point less than nothing, and is a good deal beneath that which they devote to another inferior aptitude which is concurrent in them, or to one, illusory and vain, which they think they possess. On the other hand, the tyranny of a passion, of an interest, of a science, as in the ascetic who represses and sacrifices his talents, judging them vanities of the world, can inhibit the feeling for his vocation and make it the object of dishonor and oblivion. But, can this lack of love exalt itself sometimes even to hate? Can it be that the aversion towards the superior gift which has been received from nature should come even to the abhorrence of this gift, and passionate rage against it? Why not, when the instinct of the aptitude rises up and rebels against the unjust sentence, when necessity, the irrepressible desire of expansion which is usually in the essence of great vocations, fights against the disparaging force which the will makes to dominate it and repress it?

THE NEW SOUL

Two conclusions stem, for our purpose, from these examples of conversive virtue with which is manifested, or in which actively consists, all human superiority.

One (conclusion) is that if the inner sensations, of inspiration, can modify, up to a certain point, the characters of personality, not only lifting to a rare and sublime height those which already exist in it, but abolishing them at times and substituting in their place others which resemble them in nothing and even are their lively antitheses, this insures that the substance of which we are made is essentially plastic and modifiable. And they are the same forces of love, of passionate interest, of subjugating attention, of transferring sympathy, which they produce in the character, the happy and efficacious mutation of an hour; they are the ones which, disciplined and directed to a systematic end, for which they are worth the alliance of time, have the power of producing in ordinary souls real and definite transformations. The other is the conclusion that the inferiority and littleness of which you are a spectator in yourself, in the course of your ordinary life, do not have to be the reason that you fail to esteem your conjectures that in the unknown and virgin of your soul takes root some one of the superior forces that raise man over the average of men. The choice of those talents takes little stock in the conditions to which the judgment of the world would pay attention, in the person of the one under consideration. An enforcing of the character is the occasion; and the work

to which your activity is applied is not an end which remains outside of it, a passive object to which the soul transcends, but a complement with which its personality is integrated in a higher personal synthesis. The splendid phase can alternate in it the same with a relative light of medium splendor as with a completely opaque one.

The "new soul" of Pythagoras, now understood in its supernatural and mythical sense, now in the human sense of an alteration which proceeds the organic base of the personality; the "new soul" is the secret of all sublime superiorities.

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ON TRUE PERSONALITY

Frequently, the artificial physiognomy with which our personality appears transformed is not distinguished from the natural and proper (personality), except in the intensity of gesture or harmony of its lines. The real character remains, but a general exaltation magnifies it, or rather it is deformed, in characterish appearance, as the countenance of one who looks at himself in an agitated sphere.

Other times, it is an acquired character, a new personality, that which rapture excites and moves. This personality presents clear and magic outlines. Perhaps it is lively, while the one it substitutes is timid; perhaps it is joyful, while the other, melancholy; perhaps proud, while the latter, humble. Perhaps it is unique in appearances, in loves, in hates. It is like an intruding guest who has usurped the place of the master and whom the servants respect and revere.¹ Do not seek to infer in what way this wayfaring guest will be manifested in a soul, if you know only the real personality. All the differences, all the disagreements, are possible between the personality nature has created and nature develops or modifies, and that which rapture evokes from a mysterious center. And the most singular and interesting yet is that, frequently, this latter appears the natural and primitive (personality): frequently it appears to be the same personality created by nature, which, broken the limits where habit had it contained, its frank and bared expression reappears; or rather, without

(1) The manuscript has before and after "servants" the word "traitorous" between parentheses, as an adjective that needed to undergo a new analysis before being included. Moreover, there is included between the parentheses the expression "de la cosa".

coming to discover such a deep seat of the soul, the superficial covering separates from it, which those artifices with which it is always disguised, compose, in part, before the look of others and even before that of its own conscience, and the soul sees clearly the truth of itself, and scarcely mentions it without caution; and in this way is changed, not the real man into a fictional one, but a man habitually false, into another real person, although he be ephemeral: from whence are born sincerity and the truth which rapture is accustomed to put on the lips of men.²

(2) The original has some free words, which would make one suspect that this page should complete itself with some parable or example, and the subsequent commentary. These words say: Mosto Seneca and then: "Thus inspiration usually re-establishes natural man." The manuscript remains, with the former, scrupulously reproduced.

COMPLETE LIFE

It is not only a faculty which fortifies itself, nor a sense which refines and modifies itself; it is not a single phase of organic or moral life that beautifies and transfigures itself. It is the harmonious union of all these. It is also that vital sense, that deep and diffused feeling of our being, that elemental organic conscience, from whence life acquires its tonicity: that with its exaltation relifts us and with its lessening lets us down. It is a greater force and harmony that comes from that profound fountain, and at whose step everything appears to vibrate in a new way, and to harmonize better, because, thus as beneath the bow of an instrument, cords mold their vibrating forms, and from the relation of these different forms, but united among themselves by numerous accords, springs an individual and continuous sound: in this way, each organ, each sense, each faculty, touched by a mysterious bow, gives its adequate vibration and concurs with it (to form) a harmonious and most perfect whole. Through this art, in an instant, all the contradictions and dissonances of the soul disappear; there returns, in order, all that within it that was only a disconcerted multitude; all of the hostile inclinations fail to contend, as if a piece of music had sounded that put them in sweet suspension and ecstasy; and the sentiment in which all are resolved is at the same time as if there were in the soul more force, and this force more orderly, one, and mistress of itself.

TO TRANSPORT ONE'S OWN SOUL TO THAT OF ANOTHER

Not long ago, fixing my attention on the undulation of a snake that at a short distance from me was crawling over the ground, there was presented to me, in a more intuitive and plastic way than ever, the dependence on which rests a perfect comprehension in regard to identity. I verified, through my eyes, an observation with which, on reflection, I was already acquainted. A contemporary thinker, Souriau, who has devoted many pages to the esthetics of movement, notes how our immediate impression of the serpentine movement of the snake is not translated in that feeling of approbation and complacence which grace moves from the first instant, in us, but only the analysis serves as an efficacious measure in order that, objectively, we may recognize the hidden grace in those slithering evolutions. But appealing to exactitude of analysis, what movement is there where the elements of a graceful form concur than in the slithering movement of the snake? . . . The lack of appearance of effort, the elegant picture; the agile and rhythmical development of the waves in which the light body is released, subtly, like a flame which the wind twists and agitates on the level of the ground, isn't this grace?; is this not lively, dynamic beauty, as much as that which unfolds from the harmonious human force in the contests of the stadium, or from the wings of the bird which mounts up, soaring, through the air? Our ineptitude for perceiving it intuitively is born in part, doubtlessly, from a repugnance or enmity, which blinds the perspicacious sight of love, the greatest agent of intellect and sympathy; but even more, it is born from a profound

difference of organization, in regard to the means and form of movement. We do not understand without labor, the mechanism by whose virtue the reptile moves. We identify ourselves easily with those movements of the quadruped that walks, of the bird that flies; but in that dragging undulation, in that fleeing over the earth, with the whole body, without feet, without _____³, there is something so unadaptable to the nature of our organism, so strange to the natural dispositions of our being, that the imagination is incapable of reproducing it sympathetically in us, as when it determines, by the efficacy of an image, a principle of imitative activity.

How often I remember this observation in the presence of limitations of pleasure, of sincere inner oppositions, with which even superior spirits, placed in front of the work of others, which is also (opposition), but in a different way, reveal an amazing lack of comprehension, which does not proceed either from malice of will, nor from weakened sensibility, nor from hate, but from insuperable antagonisms of moral structure! . . . How often I remember it, and with what vehemence I would tell it to all that _____, to the antipodes of their souls, if I did not know that the faculty of transporting one's own soul to another has unredeeming limits in each one of us! Break the mold of your personality, in order to understand the beauty that is contained in organizations different from your own. If you are a bird, a domestic cat, and find one day, in your path, a strange being, which slips along, hissing, on the ground, and of which _____

3 This blank and all following blanks indicate that words were omitted in the original.

which is beautiful; try for an instant to slither along, hiss. . make yourself a serpent, if you are _____ on that which is beautiful in the snake.

THE ARTIST WHO DIRECTS THE CURRENTS OF THE WIND

There is yet another sphere of deeper and more essential transfigurations. The poet and the painter evoke concrete forms, which they vivify with their own spirit, poured out of the personal mold; but the artist who directs the currents of the wind, he who governs the sonorous multitudes, that one, when he leaves his ordinary personality, like clothing on the beach, on the edge of the ocean into which he hurls himself, is ready and capable of descending into the regions where passage to others was never given; and not only, tearing aside that which is the outer covering and limits in human feeling, he takes possession of their very virtuality and quintessence; not only does he penetrate, to where a subject is offered, a sympathy which makes them equal, but submerges himself even more, and arrives at the most remote profundity of the affinities and primary stimuli: to the depth of fundamental life, where all that which is created is one, where all speak a single and clear tongue, whose memory will be born again in the consciences of men on the evoking of the harmonious magic. There is nothing like great music for breaking into the soul where it is present, the terms of its own personality and diffusing itself through as many of the possibilities as the being embraces. He who is called Mozart, he who is called Bellini, he who is called Beethoven, is an immense Proteus, whose incoercible essence incarnates in the same way in a hundred-year-old forest, as in the fervor of a violent torrent, or in the arch of an august basilica; in the same way usurps the mountain's way of being, as that of the errant cloud or of the slender thread of

rain; in the same way by means of sacks of wind, as by the crow of the bird, or through the wings of the insect that lives hidden beneath the grass; now it beats in an innocent breast, now feeds and inflames some savage throats (gullets), now is a brow that thinks more deeply than one thinks with words; now it is distributed and infiltrated into an entire multitude; now it takes an angelic body and is carried off to peaks where the freshness of the infinite aspires and contemplates the beginning of all things and is saturated in the light of eternity.

Through the transforming efficacy of this divine art in the souls of those who listen to it, if they have been born to listen to it, it is possible to infer what may be the virtue of an equal inclination in the soul of those to whom it makes a gift of its inspirations, and who drink, in their own fountain, its sacred waters.

A teacher of psychology showed, not long ago, and verified with observations which were full of interest, the truly hypnotic action which music always exercises, to a greater or lesser degree, on talented performers. As soon as Pachmann sat down at the piano, his character changed completely, and as in the hypnotized subject to whom is suggested, with only one word, emotions which are reflected, one after the other, with amazing plasticity, on his countenance, thus a hundred souls go stampeding successively across the masque of the musician, while in musical time, the harmonious torrent brings with it, tenderness, voluptuousness, anger, enthusiasm, adoration, terror, melancholy. But he who performs is but the intermediary, the cupbearer who has not torn off and trodden the bunch of grapes for his own self;

even more intense, even more deep, than the emotion of the one performs,
is, as one may imagine, the emotion of the one who creates.

INSPIRATION IN AN HEROIC NATURE

Who doubts that if inspiration is a new soul, a new soul works also in the activity of a heroic nature? The inspiration of battles is, as much as of others, disassociation, transfiguration and a dual spirit. From the most common clay foundry can be of value the alchemy which makes gold. The hero is, frequently, in ordinary life, the one who appears most foreign to that mysterious force, which, the sublime occasion at hand, will spring from his soul, as lightning from a cloud.

The ecstatic impulse; the communicating serenity which sheds a miraculous oil over the waves of fear; the sharp look that orders and divides huge multitudes and fixes there, in front, in space, the site where the triumph is to be, are things whose traces are usually scattered in the hero, without leaving the least vestige by which one might recognize them, no sooner does he leave the field where he seems so great to the tasks and customs of peace. In Mark Anthony, the ancient ones admired the opposition between the Sybarrite of Capua and the lion of war; in Marius, the light impressionability that moved him in public gatherings, and the firm and imperturbable calm with which he excelled over the confusion of arms. Who would recognize Murat, the conqueror, the ray of heroic audacity, in the pusillanimous king who does not dare take a step for himself in the advices of the government, and torments himself with a hundred different thoughts without executive force? When they asked Napoleon the judgment that he had formed of Ney, he answered: "On the field of battle he is a god; away from it, he is a child."

And of Napoleon himself, the memoirs of his doctor tell us what a prodigious organic transformation was produced in him scarcely had the tempest in which he ruled as a genius surrounded him. While in peace, his pulse beat slowly and faintly, and the depression of his spirit kept him in a constant state of ill health, comparable to one who breathes in a rarified atmosphere, with the first thunder of combat his heart recovered its natural rhythm, all the activity of his being took on a double impulse, and the exaltation of a vital sense filled with a voluptuous joy, as must happen in a sea animal that, after having been taken from its element, is returned to the bosom of the water.

THE STRUGGLE FOR STYLE, WHEN IT IS STRONG AND DEEP,
TRANSFIGURES PERSONALITY

Even when the work of an artist is not applied to forging an imagined soul, in which his own melts and vanishes; and even when, if he only writes of himself, he may not have the inspired touch, the virtue of lending it new life and feeling, nor does he augment and excite unusually those which he already recognizes as his, in such a way that he creates in himself a distinct personality, if not in quality, in intention: still the work in itself, the combat of style, when it is strong and deep, gives way in the writer-artist to a transfiguration of personality, which, as in the one who, a prey of sublime intoxication, dissipates the memory and conscience of his true being, snatches all of it away to the work, and twists his moral nature even to bringing to light, from the most agitated soul, beneficial reactions from intelligence and from will. When the abbot, L'Epee, is threatened with excommunication, there is born in his soul the purpose of consecrating himself to his pious undertaking of teaching the deaf-mutes. When Bernal Diaz del Castillo reads, in his old age, the history of Gomara, where he sees omitted his old braveries and his glory, he feels tempted to become a writer, in order to vindicate them, he who, up to that point, never had touched a pen; and thus he writes his vibrant and gracious chronicle. The pain of deceit, the ugly reality felt beneath the idea or the idol in which he believed, scarcely convert the will to more firm courses, as when Malte-Brun, political propagandist, the first at being a geographer, sees Bonaparte, his idol,

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unmasked, the 18th of Brumario (second month of the French Republican year); and abandons the civic arena and consecrates himself to science where glory awaited him. The grief which is born from material goods, impels Fourier to the apostolate, as in antiquity it had impelled Zeno to philosophy, making him pass through the doorway of Stoa.

One's own pain, or rather, someone else's, shared through a live sympathy, is the secret of transfigurations in which the aptitude of the artist and the poet, already revealed, but contained within a medium height, soars extraordinarily over its august shadows like the clouds which are to emit from themselves the storm.

FALSE CHANGES IN DIRECTION

In the history of that pompous literature, that in the country of Iran sprang from the influence of Islamism, there is told a case that, because of its expressive simplicity I shall choose as an example of the false changes in direction. Anvari, a poet, was ignorant of the fact that this work of writing poems might give some right to appreciation from the powerful ones, when one day, seeing pass the resplendent retinue of the sultan, noted in it a proud magnate, who, they told him, was one of the poets of the court. His ambition stimulated, Anvari asked to be heard by the sovereign, and captivated him with his ardor in such a way that he came to be, (he also) an aulic poet. Anvari had arrived at the top by the road of his natural being; and instead of being satisfied in the joy of this merited honor, he coveted other laurels, scorned those which he had legitimately gained, and decided to change the glory of the poet for the knowledge and authority of the astrologer. But as Anvari was not called by Heaven to read the language of the stars, but to understand the grace and beauty which there are in the things of the earth, Anvari read badly, made sinister prophecies which oppressed his people, and when his omens were disclaimed through reality, he was compelled to flee from the mockery of the courtiers, and took refuge in a different city; not so distant that to it could not arrive the echoes of his dishonor as before had arrived those of his glory. Unfortunately for Anvari, the memory of the mob, which is usually a fugacious wave for the deeds from which is born some honor, it is

resistant bronze for those who grow smaller, degenerate; and while he lived, the people no longer saw in him the lofty poet, but the ridiculed astrologer. Anvari thought wrongly if he believed that the laurels with which the court had girded his brow would guard him in the street from the stoning of the multitude.

AN APTITUDE WHICH DISAPPEARS IN A SUDDEN AND
MYSTERIOUS WAY

A true and deep vocation is a force that moves _____ in a certain sense. It is not to be considered as the motivating impulse of just one faculty, as a tendency that can be explained apart from the rest (of the tendencies) that occur in us: it must be considered as the personality itself in movement. Hence the active and concrete realization of the vocation, the road it takes, the way it instills itself in work which, reacting at the same time upon it, fixes and clarifies it: all this is a thing so personal and so lacking an equivalent, outside of _____ as all that which is based on the incommunicable originality of its own temperament. An aptitude that disappears from the soul in a sudden and mysterious way, without being able to explain itself, either by natural decadence, or through modification of conditions of life, or by weakening of the will, or through a vicious change in the procedures of art; fatal and instantaneous extinction of a light by an unknown blow is a painful and strange thing, of which examples are not lacking.

Antiquity tells us of the rhetorician, Hermogenes, who (although) he arrived at an extremely old age, his superiority of spirit died with first youth, never to return. And if in this case of the Greek rhetorician it is fitting to suppose the trace of an infirmity of mind, as in that which history tells of Albertus Magnus, stricken while he was finishing a speech in his professorial chair at Colonia, with the sudden disappearance of his eloquence and his

intelligence, other names give us a more outstanding example of this
mystery. For instance, the name of Rafaellino del Garbo. . .⁴

⁴ This chapter remained unfinished at the height of this
sentence.

GENIUS REVEALED IN THE SOUL OF THE POET

Vanished, all that which is interposition of dead things, sheets of paper, mute letters, the work appears revealed in the soul of the poet as in the instant of creation, sacred and mysterious. Propagating in infinite reverberations, each phrase puts in movement, within the soul, a new world. Each word tears aside the obscurity of abstraction and converts itself on the spot into an imaginary vision which comes to simulate the sensation of the eyes; sometimes, by means of a vaporous apparition, subtle nymph, born of the air in which it is drawn; other times as an image of _____ and precise contours, opened by the calm chisel in the limpid firmness of marble; other times as a palpitating and sanguine creature, whose vigorous lineament is drawn on the gold of the sun, among the clamour and vigor of nature.

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A BOOK IS A GREAT INSTRUMENT OF
INTERIOR REFORMATION

A book is a great instrument of interior reformation; but not principally because of its intellectual efficacy and the power of conviction which it stores; but because of its intensity in feeling and image; not principally because of that which it sets forth, but because of its ardor, and its life, and because of what there is in it of subjugating will, and of the enchantment of the heart; not principally because of the power itself of an idea, but because of the virtue that the idea, drawn and animated, acquires in order to touch the springs with which emotion is awakened and movement is provoked.

Perhaps there never was a book of abstract and cold philosophy, that, without the interposition of other books, might make a human soul be modified; but the doctrine is converted in fervor and redemption, or in vertigo and madness, when the artist appropriates it for himself, releasing it then to the winds of life; and here I call artist all those who, with their writings, their teachings, or their examples, dress in beauty and clarity an idea.

A new doctrine is like the word of a god, who, in order to reveal to us his law, is obliged to take incarnation in human flesh, and to walk alive and palpable among us, and to speak to us with parables, and to make us weep with his passion. This is the book of the artist, when he joins an ideal purpose to its beauty: the life and passion of an incarnated idea in order to reveal himself to us.

There is no intellectual concept, that through itself, moves us to practice an action, nor that, without the help of an image, enamors us. When the mystic feels the necessity of defending an idea of the infinite and the eternal, the object of his love, from the rivalry of worldly, real and tangible goods, he must lend to that supreme, undetermined object, an imaginary form, a divine body, which may humble and dim the beauty of worldly things. Such is the vision of the mystic one; and art reproduces it, for each idea, in each one of us, kindling in us the faith and love of a thought which it draws from the obscurity of abstraction and raises over the altar where prayer and sacrifice may be offered to it.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW IF THE DIRECTION
OF YOUR SOUL HAS BEEN CHANGED

There are books that through their accumulation of reflective life; through their complexity and intensity; through that which they equal on contact with nature itself; through the way in which they seem to give us the totality of things; serve in order that we may test in them all the edges of our sensitiveness, of our spirit, of our judgment.

Read in infancy, in adolescence, in youth, in manhood, how differently they show themselves to us, and show us, on reflection, the image of ourselves! Read in disillusionment and defeat, in triumph and prosperity, how many new things about ourselves they make us know in each one of these cases; how many secrets they bring to light from our inner world, as if they augmented in us, the diaphanous quality, serenity, and perspicacity of the vision of conscience!

If you want to know if your soul has been changed and it is some time since you last read the Quijote, take it and read it again.

THE BOOK THAT MOLDS MEN

What an immense and varied life, what an immense and varied force is that world of light paper, raised over the true world, as the horseman or the horse.

There is the book that motivates revolutions; the book that leads multitudes; the book that conquers tyrannies; the book that evokes and restores dead things; the one that publishes unknown miseries; the one that constitutes or renews nations; the one that unearths hidden treasures; the one that expels phantoms and melancholies; the one that raises over alters, new gods. There is the book that, buried like a giant in sleep, beneath the dust of centuries, one day is raised to light, and with a blow of its foot shakes the world. There is the book where the future is present, the idea of what must be changed in human life, in movement, in color and in stone. There is the book that transforms itself in keeping with generations; immortally efficacious, but never equal to itself; the book of which one may ask:—What will men feel who read it in future time? As one may say:—What will they feel, not even felt by us, before a sunset, or before the sublimity of sea and mountain? There is the book, whose name remains significant and violent, like a flag that waves on the heights, when few read in it any other thing than the name. This is the one that saves a people from oblivion, or from seeing its liberty taken away, and the one that multiplies the fish in the net of the poor; and the one that tends the sweet dreams, given alike to the soul of the worker and to that of the prince: dreams, sweet, soothing element which the order of the world also

needs.

But there is still another kind of book, through which that which that fragil and marvellous object has as an instrument of action, of energy, manifests in the real, a work in the deepest workshop of life; and it is the book that molds characters, an artifice of the will, propagator of a certain type of men; that which takes, as a mound of wax, one or several human generations, and, with moulding force, manages them, banding them over to the ways of the world, marked with its invisible and lasting stamp.

THE ESSENTIAL DUALITY OF OUR PERSONALITY

This is Glauco, a jovial and transient spirit. Could he not, through a systematic action of my will, in the sense of _____ to the calls that evoke him, to the conditions that are propitious to him, exorcising that which puts him to flight and makes him vanish; couldn't he rule one day in my soul, alone and continuous, as far as the fundamental tendency of a person can be, within our complexity?

Perhaps, but I want also for my soul that part of me that is not Glauco's. Because with him are clarity, peace and harmony; but in austerity, in gloom, which in the soul remain outside of his confines of light, there are springs and wells for those for whom he does not know the way. There interest nurtures its roots for the sacred and infinite mystery; there springs the vein of love whose slope goes down to where are the defeated and wretched ones; there resides the comprehension of another beauty other than that contained in form, and the sadness that carries in itself its balsam and whose accents are better than the sweetness of delight.--No, you are not entirely right; oh luminous and serene guest of mine, oh pagan, who revives in my soul; and although with your presence you make me discern the glory of the gods, I want you to leave a spot within me for the melancholies about which you do not know, for the troubles which you do not understand; for the sources of love which are unknown to you!

Frequently, that new personality that the art of education excites and can make prevail over the other, taking the basis of

the spontaneous inconsequences of the latter, or provoking them; that new personality exists, no longer planned, but almost finished in our nature: the deviations or anomalies of our personality show themselves, then, not through scattered singularities, ideas, emotions, impulses of will which do not maintain a harmonious relation with the others, because they conform in an isolated way and without direction; but through an entire order of facts of conscience which it embraces, together and simultaneously, all of the soul, and that, thus through its general character as through its duration, it resembles a new personality which might be substituted, during a certain time for the one which did exist, a second soul which might eliminate the one which ordinarily functions, an alter ego which would share the governing of oneself. Those in whom this happens, in an intense and frequent way, can say, like Faust: "Two souls live within me, and tend unceasingly to separate one from the other." They are the temperaments of contrast, or rather the compound temperaments, of Paulhan; the alternating contradictions of Ribot. But more than a peculiarity of a kind of temperament, couldn't this dualism be considered an almost universal condition of human nature? . . . The complexity that is, as we note, in the essence of our nature, almost always takes the form of a dual opposition, of a double grouping of the things of the soul according to chosen contrary affinities, which divide our inner world into two rival fields. If this opposition comes to manifest itself on occasions through the eventual preponderance of the weaker one, which achieves an ephemeral triumph, and overthrows transitorily the one who had it captive, or rather

if the almost equal power of the two forces that compete brings about that with so much authority and frequency, one prevails against the other, the duality appears confused, and the doubled soul manifests itself in such a way before its own conscience; and by means of its acts, before the observations of the world. But the duality will not fail to exist because it remains ignorant of the one who carries it in himself, nor in the case that, through incoordination and inferiority of the weaker tendency, the latter only succeeds in showing itself sometimes through isolated inhibitions, or diminishing secretly the force which the rival power unfolds in its acts; without it ever remaining alone in the soul, and giving a reason for itself. This lesser personality is then, like those celestial bodies whose existence only came to be suspected through the alterations which they produce in the movement of others. A glimmering or vague feeling of this dualism appears to be in the bottom of those same souls which with more power are conscious of their personal unity and entirety. Who knows if for the interpretation that the primitive man gave to the shadow which his body projected in the light, and to the image which his reflection transposed in the waters, facts in which he saw the manifestation of a mysterious half of his being, independent from the other, and perhaps it was then, in the human conscience, the soul, the immortal Psyche, the angelic butterfly; who knows, I say, if for such an interpretation did not concur, besides the surprise of the innocent senses before the arts of nature, a certain dark conscience of a struggle of inner powers, now outlined in the bosom of primitive simplicity and nature?

The familiar character, the demon, which pagan antiquity placed in the breast of each man; that race of intermediary divinities between the terrestrial and the olympic, which perpetuates in each individual destiny his propitious or fatal suggestion, is clearly the myth in which was united the observation of this duality which is in the depth of souls.—“Can there be a man who has not seen demons?”—asked the adepts of Pythagoras according to an aristotelean _____ . That which I understand is this: can there be a man who has never felt over himself the presence of a different power than the one which directs the thoughts and acts of his ordinary life? Clearer still, the intuition of this complexity was conceded to men, since they were baptized; because the Christian idea is now, in itself, the affirmation of a fundamental duality of our nature; and the feeling of this duality should favor the conscience and the expression of all inner contradictions. In the tortures of a temptation or doubt, in the struggles of holiness and sin, of the angel and the beast, of the clay and the spirit, the Christian feels his spirit divided between two powers. Like the horseman of the ballad of Murger, between the horseman from the right and the horseman from the left, thus he goes his way through life, between the Enemy and the Beloved, between the "king of Babylon and the one of Jerusalem"; and this discord of which the holy souls speak to us, does not correspond simply to an opposition of exterior stimuli, nor to inner modifications, separated only to abstraction and personified in order to imagine them. There is frequently, in it, a deeper psychological reality, which refers to the latent division of the personality, as

in two partial personalities; one, which dominates, constantly, or preferably; another, which aspires to dominate, and stretches towards it, without rest, in the spirit; in the spirit perhaps to whose depth the clarity of conscience has never reached.

Let us call this unfaithful inhabitant of our soul the inner person, in which are organized the hidden tendencies that, subjugated by those who habitually exercise their power over each one of us, fight, nevertheless, in order to prevail over these (latter), and sometimes accomplish their design. Is there a soul where there is not housed, more or less in secret, this guest? Is there a confession, an individual story, or psychological daily account, where one does not perceive or guess the traces of its presence? I look at the backs of the books in the bookcase which I have in front of me, and I choose, by chance, some names. Balzac! Was there a hidden person in Balzac? Who can doubt it if he remembers the enlightened, mystic, the sovedenborgiano who usually crosses in an unexpected manner, in his immense work, the road of the positive observer, of the prophet of reality? Quevedo! There I see, in a book, the face that smiles, denies, and mocks; then, in another book, that of penitent austerity, that of aceticism of thought and of heart.— Machiavelli: Beneath the manifest personality of the contemporary Florentine of the Borgia family, without a moral law of that which is not of the correctness of beauty and force; how does he raise up, and reveal suddenly in him the hidden censor, the soul oppressed, tempered, for virtue! The inner personality of Heine! Who does not know and admire him, if he is the angelic dreamer who, breaking the hard covering of the demolishing sceptic, amazes from time to time with the roses of the Songbook in his hand? . . .

THE MODERN CRITIC IS BY TRADE THE MAN OF
PERPETUAL METAMORPHOSES

The superiority of tolerance which today we liken to the concept of great and fertile criticism, is that taking root more in that which is deep than that which institutes pure intelligence, implies a certain aptitude for personal change. Ancient criticism, inflexible and dogmatic, took root in the beginning of the identity of spirits. Modern (criticism) rests on the feeling of the infinite complexity and diversity of human nature. The modern critic is, through his trade, a man of continuous changes of mind and heart: a man of many souls, capable of putting himself in unison with the most diverse characters and the most opposed conceptions of beauty and life. The faithful image of this generous virtuality, key to our present idea of the critic, could be pointed out in that very complex and multi-form intellectual existence of Sainte-Beuve, an unseizable Proteus, participant in all the modifications of thought and sensitivity which found an echo in the soul of his contemporaries, from the algebraic materialism of the eighteenth century, to the overflow of sentiment and color of the romanticists; from the brilliant helenism to the gloomy Port-Royal.

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