

THE LITERARY CRITICISM AND MEMOIRS OF JUAN RAMÓN JIMÉNEZ

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“The true poet relives in abbreviated form
the complete history of poetry. . . .”

J. R. J.

Like so many great poets of today and of the past, Juan Ramón Jiménez wrote in scattered and diverse form a great deal of literary criticism. Though to some extent ancillary to his vast production, miscellaneous critical pages are also voluminous and often repetitive since he never did fulfill his often expressed desire to collect them in organic form. He constantly spoke of publishing books of criticism with varying titles (*Crítica paralela*, *Epoca*, *El modernismo*, *Prosa crítica*) or others about his literary life and the historical circumstances in which he as a writer lived. Of a first rate critical mind, he was, of course, actively associated with a crucial period of Hispanic letters covering over sixty years (1900–1960), during which time Spain and Spanish America produced some of their most distinguished artists. The modern critic who does not take into account his judgments, however partial they may be, is making a grave mistake and will have only a limited vision of this significant literary period. Friends and enemies alike recognize his instinct for praise of quality and, at times, for devastating comments on the mediocre.

It would be a formidable and even impossible task, surpassing the scope of a mere essay, to study in depth such an ample corpus of critical materials which include lectures, essays, reviews, letters and prose fragments of all kinds, not to mention the brilliant lyric portraits

or caricatures collected in *Españoles de tres mundos*. His literary conversations have also been scrupulously recorded.¹ My intention is much more modest: to point out certain general directions his criticism has taken over the years and show his preferences, avoiding whenever possible minor details which are of particular interest only to the specialist in modern Hispanic literature. I shall also pass over polemical issues and personal attacks made on certain contemporary poets, from Guillén to Pablo Neruda, a subject about which much has been written. Let us say from the start, however, that Juan Ramón was an impassioned and aggressive critic, never loath to express in the strongest terms his personal opinions. Another limitation in the following pages: I shall give little or no attention to the hundreds of aphorisms of Jiménez, because they deal more with larger aesthetic concerns pertinent to his own poetry and not with specifically critical matters. However, there will of course be some overlap since aesthetic guidelines, critical principles and direct comment often become so entangled in the prose of Juan Ramón that they are hard to differentiate.

In sum, it is difficult to have a balanced understanding of Juan Ramón Jiménez, the man and the artist, without a direct knowledge of his miscellaneous critical texts which are both personal and historical in nature. As a body they also go far toward affording a more profound grasp of certain intricacies of Hispanic literature in the twentieth century.

The Texts

One of the most obvious reasons that the criticism by Juan Ramón has not yet received the attention it deserves has been the dispersion of texts, buried in newspapers and magazines often hard to consult, not to mention many unpublished and even undeciphered manuscript pages. This bibliographical hurdle has been substantially overcome by recent collections, and now we have available a wide range of materials on which to base any estimate of his constant critical activity, which always ran closely parallel to his creative writing. Five specific books must be mentioned in this context, and we owe their publication to the zeal of two outstanding Spanish specialists in the poet's work: Ricardo Gullón and Francisco Garfias.

In *El trabajo gustoso* (Mexico: Aguilar, 1961) the editor Garfias collects the principal lectures that Juan Ramón gave (with one

exception) at different universities and cultural gatherings after the Spanish Civil War during his long years of residence in this hemisphere. The pages which give the title to the book were read, though not by the poet himself, in the *Residencia de Estudiantes* in Madrid prior to his departure for the United States under the original title of *Política poética* (Madrid: Instituto del Libro Español, 1936). In the collection four items are of particular significance here: "Poesía y literatura" (Florida, 1939), "Poesía cerrada y poesía abierta" (Argentina, 1948), "El romance, río de la lengua española" (Puerto Rico, 1954), and the second part of "Alerta" entitled "El modernismo poético en España y en Hispanoamérica." In the same year (1961) and also under the editorship of Garfias appeared in Madrid *La corriente infinita (crítica y evocación)*. This volume reproduces especially shorter pieces, written over a longer span of time, the earliest being Juan Ramón's important review of *Soledades* (1903) by his friend Antonio Machado, as well as comments about Antonio's brother Manuel (*Alma*) and the Andalusian poet Manuel Reina. However, this volume does contain other texts of capital importance for the inside history of the period: "Recuerdo al primer Villaespesa," "Ramón del Valle-Inclán (Castillo de quema)" and "Recuerdo a José Ortega y Gasset." We shall deal in some detail with all three subsequently. Two other pieces require special note here: the profile of Salvador Rueda ("El 'colorista' nacional") written in 1933, a nostalgic and indulgent critique on the death of the then lonely and forgotten poet from Málaga, and finally the open letter to José Revueltas ("¿América sombría?"), which constitutes one of his final pronouncements on Neruda and which is particularly noteworthy for Juan Ramón's ideas about America, *indigenismo* and other miscellaneous topics.²

As is well known, Juan Ramón gave a course on modernism in 1953 at the University of Puerto Rico, and Ricardo Gullón, with the necessary cooperation of others including Juan Ramón's wife Zenobia, published some years later an extensive volume with an incisive prologue, *El Modernismo. Notas de un curso* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962).³ This is not the place to describe the preparation of the volume nor its contents, but let it suffice to say that modernism, understood in its broadest sense as a general attitude and an epoch not artificially limited either in time or space, is in more ways than one the fundamental theme of Juan Ramón's criticism, related always to the historical panorama of the period he knew so well both as a witness and participant. Although the critic, now assuming the professorial

garb, is on the whole consistent in his judgments, these pages are just what they claim to be: course notes. They should, therefore, be read as such, taking into account their unpolished nature, evident repetitions and even contradictions. However, it should not be forgotten that these notes do constitute a singular document offering the reader a penetrating, although sometimes arbitrary, analysis of a complex and contradictory epoch in the renewed growth of Spanish and Spanish American literature. These lectures grow out of Juan Ramón's vast knowledge of the period and his talents as a creative writer closely involved in literary life during the first half of the current century. In rereading the text I find particularly interesting his exposition of *indigenismo* as an integral part of modernism, as well as his simple but convincing words explaining to his students the main principles of parnassianism and symbolism.⁴ The pages that underline the continuation of certain romantic attitudes within modernism are especially appropriate in the general presentation of such a complex literary movement.⁵

In *Estética y ética estética (crítica y complemento)*, published in 1967, Francisco Garfias brings together additional materials, principally brief fragments and notes which tend to support the uncompromising critical attitude of Juan Ramón. Of special significance are the pages called "Autocrítica," a constant direction in the creative process of the poet,⁶ and also the editor reprints from *Nosotros* the important text "Crisis del espíritu en la poesía española contemporánea (1899-1936)" to which we shall refer later on.

I have purposely left for the end of this rather lengthy bibliographical exposition an extremely important book which Juan Ramón himself organized, at least in its first edition: *Espanoles de tres mundos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942), composed originally of sixty-one sketches of writers, artists and other intellectuals (not excluding their children), a number now considerably increased in the most recent edition prepared by Ricardo Gullón (Madrid: Aguilar, 1969) and introduced by an exhaustive study by the same editor. It is not necessary for me to offer anything but a few cursory comments on these lyric portraits or caricatures written in a dense and concentrated prose both stylistically complex and highly elaborated. Even Juan Ramón, a confessed advocate of the simple and unadorned, admits to his baroque style: ". . . I believe (and so did Quevedo) that caricature is the natural vehicle of the baroque, and I admit to being baroque in many of my caricatures, but with a constant complement of lyrical balance . . ." (Gullón ed., p. 71).

The three worlds alluded to in the title and further explained by the subheading ("Viejo mundo, Nuevo mundo, Otro mundo") are, of course, Spain, Spanish America and the Beyond, inasmuch as the collection contains portraits of certain favorite writers such as Bécquer, Martí, Silva and others the author could scarcely have known. His imaginative depiction of them does not suffer on that account. It is appropriate here to draw attention to the open attitude toward America that always characterized Juan Ramón from the earliest days when his friend Villaespesa used to shower him with books and magazines containing texts by unknown or exotic modernists from Spanish America.⁷ In fact, as has been often noted before, it is in the evocation of José Martí that Jiménez gives us a clue to his *modus operandi*:

Until I experienced Cuba, I did not fully understand José Martí. Countryside; background. A man without surroundings of his own or of ours (with him and in him) is not a real man. I always love the backgrounds of a man or an object. Background offers me the man in his essence and his true place. If I don't have the surroundings, I make the man or the object transparent. (Gullón ed., p. 93)

Although *Españoles* does not give us (nor does it intend to) a coherent picture of the period, certain texts do contribute substantially to our knowledge of the literary world and the personality of contemporary writers working within this framework of aesthetic ferment. Nevertheless, Jiménez does write in his already quoted prologue that his little book ". . . is in its vision and the fullness of its creation the panorama of my times, a competent book" (*ibid.*, p. 69). The texts themselves, unaltered as a rule since their original publication despite inevitable changes in the author's point of view, are fragmentary, as is so much of Jiménez' criticism, but they do not lack an inner unity which makes of them a small but self-contained universe.

The most distinguished quality of these portraits is the lyric prose in which they are written, but, at the same time, they always maintain a critical edge which concerns us here and confers a unique value on the texts. Irrespective of these two complementary qualities, what more moving prose can be ascribed to Juan Ramón than his second portrait of Antonio Machado? What depth of vision he attains in the exceptional evocation of Darío as a marine being, alternating with his own text pertinent verse of the American poet! With a supremely

delicate touch he places Rosalía de Castro forever in her native Galicia and transfigures Don Francisco Giner in a blaze of light and fire. Metaphors and daring stylistic devices of all kinds, as well as a unique syntax and rich vocabulary, aid the writer in reaching a perfect identification with the person represented. An effective example, full of overtones for the prepared reader, is the imaginative use of themes and qualities traditionally associated with Bécquer, in order to create a background for the detailed picture of the life and death of the romantic poet so revered by Jiménez. He captures his subjects from surprising points of view, with a procedure often resembling a cubist collage as has been noted, and recreates an interior vision of their person, combining the lyrical with the exaggeration characteristic of the art of caricature. In his brief epilogue the author, critical of the inadequate and hostile conditions in Spain for the artist, explains that the people who form his gallery are for this reason essentially of heroic cast.⁸

Brief Overview of the Criticism of Juan Ramón

Perhaps the most revealing general statement that Juan Ramón Jiménez makes in reference to the double and complementary nature of his literary criticism is the following taken from his open letter to José Revueltas:

Above all, I like nothing better than a serious high-minded criticism that describes in a balanced manner the thought and feelings of the writer. I detest fawning and defamatory criticism and especially a mixture of the two, for our duty is to express frankly what strikes us as good or bad about ourselves and others without worrying about side effects. . . . Therefore, when I criticize others I treat them the same as myself. I approach poetry as a creator and criticism, first in terms of my own creation and subsequently in terms of general criticism of poetry, as if I were not a creator. It is clear that the critic, however sagacious he might be, cannot always be correct, just as he cannot embrace, frequently due to some unavoidable ignorance of an important circumstance, the most fundamental aspects of the writer under review. . . . (*La corriente infinita*, pp. 189–190)

From the above it is evident that Jiménez is deeply conscious of the necessity for any serious writer to come to grips with his own art. In *Diario de un poeta recién casado* we are concerned primarily with three things: the general precepts that govern his criticism, his historical vision of the epoch and also certain specific opinions he holds regarding the work of other writers. As we have pointed out, a certain overlap cannot be avoided. It is not our intention to focus on his aesthetic ideals, but rather to try to isolate aspects of the critical opinions of Hispanic literature held by Juan Ramón.

When his passions did not cloud his judgment and lucidity, Juan Ramón certainly had one of the most acute critical minds of our century, as well as an excellent memory. Cernuda, who could not be accused of being in the least partial to the poet, thought so,⁹ and Ricardo Gullón, years later, seems to echo this assumption.¹⁰ It is not sufficient to say that Jiménez' criticism is impressionistic in nature. Although one must give considerable importance to its highly personal and unconventional qualities, it is at the same time criticism controlled by a sure sense of true artistic values and their successful realization. Nor is Juan Ramón inclined to contradict historical fact. Furthermore, criticism in *Espanoles de tres mundos* is highly expressionistic in technique and expression in another respect.

As we have already seen, his criticism, with the exception of the longer pieces which are on the whole of a later date, is fragmentary and inevitably reflects aesthetic prejudices. Juan Ramón, of course, was a polemical figure, sensitive and easily wounded, sharp of tongue, whose biting sarcasm was not muted in his personal attacks on Guillén, Salinas, Bergamín, Aleixandre and Neruda. Lorca and Alberti were generally spared this scathing disdain and outright enmity. In Jiménez' defense, one must realize that he often had to attack in order to defend himself.¹¹ Certainly some of his opinions are excessive, but no reader could expect complete conformity. Juan Ramón was, after all, very outspoken about certain aspects of the work of Unamuno and Machado, the two contemporaries he genuinely admired the most.¹²

Notwithstanding the myth of Jiménez' isolation from reality, Jiménez was not indifferent to what was going on around him. On the contrary, he was highly sensitive and alert to cultural innovations of the day. It is true that on the whole he did not take violent political positions or espouse social causes. However, the accusation of spiritual narcissism pales somewhat if one takes into account the texts of the final years. He gave ample evidence of his firm commitment not

only to absolute beauty, and, in fact, it can be said that his harsh temperament tended to mellow during his years spent in America. During his lifetime, particularly after his return to Madrid in 1912, Juan Ramón was in close contact with literary groups and became a strong influence, as is well known, on the younger poets, whose work he at first stimulated and welcomed for publication in his highly selective reviews. Let us also bear in mind his meticulous editing of special editions, including *Cantos de vida y esperanza* of Darío and later on the publications of the *Residencia*, another activity which tends to place him squarely in the mainstream of Madrid literary life. In fact Juan Ramón, who was dedicated entirely to his art as few poets have been, led a literary epoch. His influence and encouragement are a part of his legacy.

We have available now a good sampling of the early critical texts of the writer, who, for example, often commented from the pages of *Helios* (1903–1904) upon the works of Azorín, Darío and Amado Nervo among others. Jiménez' commentary on *Soledades*, already mentioned, appeared in *El País*. A few key phrases from his earliest critical text, a commentary on *La copa del rey de Thulé* (1899) of Villaespesa reveal his early critical orientation:

Routine criticism will go into a book on the hunt for imperfections to throw up to ridicule. . . . Speculative criticism that enters into a book in search of an inappropriate word or sentence is idiotic; even more idiotic is to negate a poet (as does Valbuena) because he may make a mistake in the use of an adjective. . . . Unfortunately, a poet's work is not judged in the state of exaltation in which it was written but rather in cool cerebral analysis. . . . It would do no harm for the critic to raise his aim and to judge the work from a broader viewpoint, by contemplating it on its own grounds and not his. . . . This would require that he enter into the poet in a fusion of spirits. . . . Instead of a chemical analysis of a book, it should be studied with fullness of mind, and this study should be a stroll through an artistic soul. Otherwise, more and more data will be accumulated, a series of bibliographical poetic notes will be done, and one will never draw near to the poet's character. (*Crítica paralela*, pp. 222–223)

At the same time that Jiménez recommends comprehensive and positive criticism in tune with the author himself, his exaggerated self-

discipline and self-criticism, which led to constant revisions and reorganization of his work in search of perfection, never flagged over the years. His severity and demanding nature added to the legend, but he also sought after a just criticism. We find convincing confirmation of this idea in the following brief text:¹³

... I have been more demanding and chastising of myself than of anyone else, and the proof of the matter is in the process of my work and my life. The fact that I have criticized aspects of the life and work of certain poets does not mean that I do not esteem them for their worth nor that, should the occasion arise, I would not assign them their proper place in any collection or anthology.

Other occasional critical pages appeared in his reviews, particularly in *Indice* (1921–1922) and the *cuadernos* he published in the intervening years, not to mention contributions to *Renacimiento* and to *España*. In the decade of the 1930s and even slightly earlier, he began to write more and more prose, including many texts which were to form *Españoles de tres mundos*, as well as the longer pieces on Villaspesa and Valle-Inclán published in *El Sol* (1936) just prior to his exile. They represent the virtual beginnings of his maximum contribution to the memoirs of an entire epoch. New impetus was given to his critical prose after his arrival in America, doubtless fostered at least in part by his lecturing responsibilities. And, during these final years of his life, he was a frequent contributor to literary reviews both in Spain and in Spanish America.¹⁴

Juan Ramón and Modernism

No theme is more central to the general criticism of Juan Ramón Jiménez than that of modernism, a focal point from which other critical concerns seem to spring. In many texts and with some inevitable repetition, he gives us the informed opinions of an involved witness who actively participated in the renovation of Hispanic letters at the turn of the century and who, years later with a changed and mature perspective, meditated on his own literary experiences during those days long past.

Juan Ramón, of course, extends the limits of modernism and sees it as a total movement of reform, a modern twentieth-century renaissance. At the same time he seeks to establish its links with

Spanish poetic tradition. Likewise he urgently desires to isolate the true and lasting poetic values of modernism, separating them from the passing and rhetorical aspects of the movement.¹⁵ In facing this formidable task, Juan Ramón takes into account the origins and antecedents of modernism, the formative influences on the poets and the ways in which they turned these stimuli to their personal creative advantage. A great deal has already been said about the subject, a fact which simplifies our task here, and we shall be content to state a few evident truths as advocated by the critic. Nor are we concerned with the seemingly interminable discussion about modernism and the Generation of 98, phenomena which are, of course, not exclusive in the thinking of Jiménez.¹⁶

The notion of modernism as an epoch and an attitude, a critical concept which has enjoyed great favor in certain sectors, is first expressed by Juan Ramón in his well-known definition given in an interview with Proel in 1935.¹⁷ As will be recalled, he insists at this time that modernism is a general tendency, not merely a question of form and that it signifies the revival of poetic beauty buried for so long by the vulgarity of nineteenth-century poetry. At the pinnacle of the movement are two different revolutionary writers: Unamuno and Darío. The former represents the spiritual and ideological aspects of the new aesthetic. The vast influence of the Nicaraguan poet, who brilliantly combined with French poetic innovation his own Hispanic heritage, was primarily one of a formalistic and sensorial nature. Juan Ramón often tells us of his early readings of Darío and the enchantment they held for him; he was always faithful to his friend and master; the poet he so admired was not the exotic nor frivolous one but the intimate and personal writer he had discovered even in *Prosas profanas*.

Another fact related to the idea of continuity should be mentioned here: the all encompassing importance of Bécquer, the beginning of contemporary poetry for Juan Ramón and a strong formative influence on his own poetry and that of so many twentieth-century writers. The debt is incalculable and the texts are explicit:¹⁸ his purity and suggestive brevity, the poetic magic, touched them all (Darío, Unamuno, and above all Juan Ramón as well as Antonio Machado).¹⁹ So far as other poets of the nineteenth century are concerned, Juan Ramón recognizes the poetic excellence of Augusto Ferrán, Rosalía de Castro and Manuel Paso, qualities shared in varying measure also by the Andalusians Manuel Reina and the prolific Salvador Rueda. And above all he frequently admitted to the influence of the regional

poets writing in their dialects: again Rosalía, Curros Enríquez, Verdaguier. But soon the modernists were dispersed by circumstances, and the greater poets were discovering new avenues, although they had been inevitably enriched by their experiences in the early years of the century.²⁰

*Memoirs and Criticism: Three Texts*²¹

This is the pertinent moment to refer to three fundamental texts, two of which date from 1936 and the other written at the time of the death of Ortega (1953), since they all afford glimpses and reminiscences of the epoch, not to mention their intrinsic interest for the evolution of Juan Ramón himself. In "Recuerdo al primer Villaespesa (1899–1901)" the author recalls with precise detail his hectic arrival in Madrid, summoned by Villaespesa and Darío, and his immediately unfavorable reaction to the city. Readings of his early verse (then entitled *Nubes*), constant and feverish movement, Darío, declamation of the poetry of American modernists, unabated urgency, bohemian life: all pass in rapid review here. A cyclone of activity, as he says, constitutes a way of life so foreign to him that he soon returns to the tranquillity of Moguer, leaving behind for publication his juvenile poems. Some time elapses: "Pasé por Madrid en mayo de 1901, camino de Francia, donde empezó mi reacción contra el modernismo agudo, que me hizo caer demasiado del lado opuesto, *Rimas*" (pp. 124–25). Further details of Madrid literary life: the well-known visits by the poets to the Sanatorio del Retraído, publication of *Helios* and the laconic phrase: "En realidad, mi relación con Villaespesa había terminado, 1902, con mi modernismo" (p. 126).

The continuation of this *recuerdo* is less descriptive and more critical, even harsh in tone. The modernism of Villaespesa (and we must agree) was essentially exotic; he was, Juan Ramón affirms, "un alhambrista" (p. 127), always faithful to modernism in its most exterior facets. Darío, on the other hand, represented the ideal synthesis of more profound lyricism, influencing all the poets and, as Juan Ramón so often said, the major formative influence on his own poetry and also on Antonio Machado. Neither poet was Parnassian, but both intimately embraced symbolism. Having stressed the wide contact his friend had had with American writers bent on reform, Jiménez becomes more stringent:

In Spain no one has been able to represent an unconscious poetic talent better than he. This has its merit. It would be useless to try to study deeply Villaespesa's work, look for an ideology in it, something so easily done with Unamuno and Antonio Machado (p. 129). . . . He was like so many myopics in the world of poetry today, the modernist who did not realize what modernism was and what it was not, what it could be and what its potential was. Therefore, he was the only one among us who kept on being a modernist until the end. . . . (p. 130)

Still he remembers, not without nostalgia, those early days of his literary experience at the turn of the century:

. . . The memory of those days of enthusiasm, fervor, dynamism, hope, liberty, faith comes back to me, perhaps the best April of my life (I'm not sure), but certainly the most brilliant and profuse. Afterwards, control, serenity, unity made their appearance; that vigor and warmth are gone forever. At times I have looked at my early verses and the surroundings where I wrote them with the idea of finding that oriental splendor, that color of 1899; but they were not like I remembered them. Doubtless, the color was in my eyes then and in the memory of my eyes at that time. . . . (p. 132)

Of greater significance perhaps are the pages devoted to Valle-Inclán which constitute a high point in the historical and critical output of Juan Ramón. Their firm friendship lasted for many years, although they saw each other infrequently after about 1925. We first glimpse Valle in the Café Pidoux, declaiming loudly (of course) a poem of Dario (naturally), as the latter silently continued to drink nearby. Valle escaped with Juan Ramón to another of his nocturnal haunts, this time reciting with equal ardor verses of Espronceda. We follow the writers eventually to the Sanatorio: discussion of *Rimas* and the return to the *romance*, as a reaction to the more exotic strains of modernism. Regional poets, symbolism imported largely from France, of course Bécquer. Influence of Valle and Dario. Years later: the theater, close relationship between painters and poets. Again Espronceda who, along with Galicia saves Valle from D'Annunzio: *El estudiante de Salamanca* ". . . which for Valle contains the beginnings of Picasso and the cubism he now wants to embrace" (p. 137). The final part of this exceptionally expressive text

departs from the merely anecdotal and gives us an incisive and imaginative vision of the man and the writer. Despite an unjust remark about *La lámpara maravillosa* ("it has no oil, just smoke," p. 139), Juan Ramón refers to his style and language which had such a profound influence on other writers, from Machado to Lorca and Alberti. In the interests of brevity, I excerpt here only from this fine page:

. . . His style and vocabulary did not come out of any dictionary at all, but from the street, the café, the open roads, his own rich inner workings. Valle-Inclán took shelter in his language, from its roots he grew flowers and fruits. Each of his words was a language, and I think that he cared for nothing that was not his language, good or bad. . . . His language was flame and hammer, the first shoot of trees and chisel, without he himself knowing how or why. A supreme language become man, a man, because of his language, turned into a fable. . . . (p. 139)

Juan Ramón plays down the so-called histrionics of Valle: "due to a timid pride" (p. 140). Often as he strolled with his friends, he had not eaten: ". . . I was then so far outside of reality and he also, while at the same time so within it, that neither one of us realized our hunger. His diatribes were fusses without cutting edge, horns without tips. What mattered to him was the substance, the quality of the sentence, not the ends" (p. 141).

The third *recuerdo*, which evokes the imposing figure of Ortega remembered from their earliest meetings, was written years later from the perspective of his residence in America. It is a warm tribute to the writer and to the philosopher, couched in a direct and transparent prose quite different from that of the preceding text, much closer to the baroque expression of *Espanoles de tres mundos*. Juan Ramón recalls their contact prior to Ortega's departure for Germany and his contribution to *Helios* under the pseudonym of Rubén de Cendaya; later on they met almost daily in the *Residencia*. The first book that was published under his editorship was *Meditaciones del Quijote*. It is not surprising, as Jiménez reveals, that Ortega was not overly enthusiastic about his poetry influenced by Verlaine and Baudelaire. He would have preferred the type of poetry about Castile cultivated by Unamuno and Machado (" . . . he had already written that his ideal for Castilian poetry would be a less descriptive Antonio Machado combined with a more sensuous Unamuno." p. 114). This launches

Juan Ramón into a long aside about Castile and the mode of those who chose it as a poetic theme. In the same text there are also singularly interesting observations about the homage to Azorín in Aranjuez planned by Ortega and Juan Ramón,²² and the personal differences which cropped up between the poet and the author of *La voluntad*. It would be impossible to mention here all the details of their encounters, a relationship which was strengthened when Ortega directed *España* (1915) and also later on when he founded the *Revista de Occidente*, which at a later date when Ortega himself had little to do with the magazine Juan Ramón used to call *Revista de Desorienté*.

The praise that Juan Ramón accords to Ortega is quite remarkable: “. . . he always moves a higher level (p. 124). . . . I have never heard him knowingly support anything false, nor harm anyone on purpose. How different his backbone from that of so many others misdiagnosed by some modish Galen! In the history of Spain, so like a bad refrain, José Ortega y Gasset occupies, and I insist on this, a permanent place among the most outstanding . . .” (pp. 125–26). However, what seems highly significant to me is the lengthy comparison made between the prose of Ortega and that of certain of his contemporaries (p. 124). In this regard, I want at least to call attention to his words directed at Ortega:

. . . Among contemporary Spanish prose writers Ortega stands out for the way his words fit together. . . . In Ortega, it seems as if every word is the exact size of his head. If he sins on the side of mannerism . . . it is never to the point of vulgarity. Occasionally, his excessive metaphors diminish his writing. . . . Although Ortega is so much a writer, I always like to hear him talk, because he has no time to prepare his metaphors. His spoken language is truly beautiful, and he also has the good fortune to possess a sonorous voice, with deep inner resonances (pp. 124–25)

A Few Considerations on the Nature of Poetry

The text devoted to Ortega is in many ways a suitable bridge to a brief discussion of several final concepts which are basic to the presentation of literary criticism in Juan Ramón Jiménez. When he

complains, for example, about the theme of Castile in certain writers from different parts of the peninsula, this subject can easily be related to his almost obsessive preoccupation with literary authenticity, a matter to which he turns again and again. Juan Ramón does not hesitate to praise writers who concern themselves with their own regions and to criticize those who describe less familiar areas:

. . . I had a strong sense of being Andalusian and not Castilian, and I already considered the exaltation of Castile on the part of southern writers to be an inconceivable dilettantism (above all the Castile of hungry hidalgos, typical of the picaresque) . . . and I was never able even when I related many times in prose all that I had seen in Madrid, where I used to live, and in my trips in Northern Spain, to consider myself a Castilian. In all frankness, I declare myself an enemy of that exaggerated devotion to things Castilian, that brotherhood of capes and other idiocies. . . . (pp. 114–15)

He particularly admires Valle for his Galician theater; he prefers Azorín when he writes about his native *Levante*; he praises the Basque short stories and novels of Baroja; he attaches much greater value to the poems of *Soledades* or the later *Abel Martín* than to those collected in *Campos de Castilla*.²³ Echoes of the same insistence on authenticity of time and place are liberally dispersed throughout his critical texts. Also in the same *recuerdo* of Ortega, though briefly (p. 120), Jiménez refers mordantly to the generation of Guillén and Salinas, poets characterized by virtuosity but lacking in *voz*,²⁴ and compares it to the newer group of poets whose work had the desirable qualities of *naturalidad* and *frescura*. Though unable to save themselves entirely from the vices of baroque style (like Juan Ramón himself), the younger writers had attained a more direct and straightforward expression.

These succinct observations are rather controlled if we compare them with other statements that fairly bristle with resentment and hostility. Let us turn briefly, nonetheless, to his "Crisis del espíritu en la poesía española contemporánea (1899–1936)," originally published in *Nosotros* and now collected in *Estética y ética estética* (pp. 150–69). And we do so not to dwell on the unfortunate disagreements between the poets themselves but rather to stress more general concerns pertinent to our main purpose in the present essay.

Once again the poet reaffirms the preeminent and influential

position of Darío ("... he offers us a renewed and augmented quality of vocabulary, a rhythm, and a style neglected since the Andalusian Góngora, one that also exists in the depths of Bécquer," [p. 152] and Unamuno, who gave to Spanish poetry a metaphysical and spiritual quality lost since Bécquer, as well as an authentic accent forgotten for many centuries.²⁵ Then, of course, Antonio Machado and Juan Ramón himself. However, in the subsequent generation of poets, the critic notes a return to a cold intellectualism and a calculated elimination of the more human aspects of poetry. Without comment, I shall quote here directly the words of Juan Ramón:

Spanish poetry, like poetry in general (this generation is identical throughout the west) is gradually losing its spiritual quality, its inherent grace and giving way to art, a playful intelligence, all kinds of frivolously optimistic games, with a consequent abundance of modishness, verbiage, swindles and tricks in order to fill up space. There is, at times, the illusion of profundity as far as such a thing is possible in a poetry that is not essential but merely skillful. . . . (p. 157)

These poet professors, as Juan Ramón called them, who had been deeply influenced at an earlier time by the Andalusian poet, simply lack individuality and "accent." Accent, as we have seen, is defined as genuine authenticity and spiritual ecstasy, qualities radically opposed to poetry devoid of feeling and true emotion. Lorca and Alberti are on the whole exempt from this sweeping condemnation:²⁶

... They are much closer to those of us who began at the turn of the century. The most notable, Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti, two more Andalusians, rob their "inspiration" from the succession of events in their environment, from the rich mine of the unexpected in life. Not spiritual yet, but not mere intelligence either; sensual movement, direct color, generous imagination, ondulent rhythm, picturesque assimilation, succinct and less abstract anecdote, gift of the senses. (p. 160)

Juan Ramón clamors for the spiritual quality in poetry and in criticism as well (p. 168). His final words in this essay are characteristic, and again we find poet and critic side by side:

... There is a conscious and honorable, strict and loving attitude, elevated like poetry, that is poetry and criticism at the same

time. It appeals to me a great deal. There is another attitude, clothed in colorful garment and surrounded by the lines of circumstance, hateful or facile, that intrigues me not at all. I believe fully and only in poetry as love, the ideal of life, spirit: a unique grace. (p. 169)

It is not hard to find implicit in these words a pledge which honors Juan Ramón not only as a poet of merit but also as a critic bound by the same principles.

Another text bears mention in this connection: the lecture entitled "Poesía y literatura" (*El trabajo gustoso*, pp. 35-58). Here Juan Ramón differentiates between poetry and literature, attributing to the former the highest of all virtues: the expression of the ineffable, as well as a special and privileged capacity springing from the contemplative states of pantheism or mysticism. Poetry is then simply defined in the following manner:

. . . an intimate, profoundly deep and elevated fusion in us, thanks to our contemplation and creation, of what is real that we think we know and what is transcendental that we think we do not know . . . since awareness does not operate in such a state of complete dynamic ecstasy, in such an absent presence, poetry is necessarily intuitive and therefore elemental and simple. The object and subject of its creation and contemplation are one, and no unnecessary adornment is called for. (p. 37)

Literature, on the other hand as we follow this critical reasoning, is decorative, exterior and ingenious since it does not create. It copies and compares, thus diminishing its originality. However perfect literature may be, it is still artificial and only attains a relative beauty as opposed to the absolute attained by true poetry. It is rhetorical and emphatic, a mere plaything in the hands of the clever craftsman. Great poetry implies emotive depth, reached only in a selected few by miraculous means: "Literature is a state of culture, poetry a state of grace that antedates and postdates culture" (p. 41).

Authentic poetry in Spain is represented by the anonymous popular poets and is also to be found to some degree perhaps in Garcilaso and Fray Luis de León, but above all in San Juan de la Cruz, Bécquer and the early Machado. Literature too has a distinguished past, counting among its many adepts such outstanding writers as Quevedo, Góngora, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán and others.

The examples adduced by Juan Ramón to illustrate his thesis are varied, but we are content to merely point out a few conclusions at this time:²⁷

What elements of beauty have they discovered, what affirmations or negations remain pending after these examples are read? Poetical writers: simplicity, smoothness, virtue, accent, mystery, ineffability; literary writers: coolness, external charm, incidental sensuality. Literature attains only relative beauty, and without substantial grace; realism, an entertaining midpoint, adequate beauty with a sensual base; poetry, absolute beauty with transcendent grace. (p. 57)

True poetry is that which, while sustained and rooted in visible reality, desires, by means of ascension, invisible reality; intertwining roots, at times interchanging; it aspires to the total world, fusing, as in the total world, evidence and imagination. For this reason it is unsayable. . . . (p. 58)

It would be impossible to cover here all subjects of critical interest in the prose of Jiménez, but two other matters merit at least passing reference. The poet was wont to protest vehemently against the baroque and mere poetic virtuosity. However, he seems to consider the baroque as an inherent Spanish failing, and, as we have seen, he confesses that the prose of *Españoles de tres mundos* is cut from that mold. And so it is, to a high degree. In his diaries, nevertheless, one finds:

Baroque, no

Caricature should have the same qualities as ordinary description: clarity, concision, and simplicity.

It can only be baroque when the person or thing that is caricatured is baroque. Otherwise, the caricature is worthless. (*La corriente infinita*, p. 280)

On commenting upon the publication of the complete poetry of Domenchina, Juan Ramón admits that the baroque style has produced great works in Spain, but he sees a danger here and issues a stern warning:

. . . The baroque is one of the great rivers of blood in the crusade-like Spanish soul that will never dry up, that seems to flow from the sea to its source. A baroque artist needs a lot of resources in

order to fulfill his obligations and those of his complex destiny. Whoever gets entangled in this walled city, has to be well armed in order to scale its towers and descend into its wells, in order not to get lost in the twisting streets of his domain. Otherwise, difficulties occur, symptoms of colic appear, and there is an intricate paralysis of body and soul. (*Critica paralela*, p. 249)

In this context, let us not forget another constant preoccupation of Juan Ramón: the exact nature and definition of classicism, a preoccupation that produced innumerable aphorisms.

There is a final but not unimportant consideration without which any exposition of the critical ideas of the poet would be seriously lacking: the role of *lo popular* in Spanish poetic tradition. Certainly one of the major characteristics of twentieth-century Spanish poetry is the revitalization of popular elements, their elevation to a high degree of sophisticated lyric tension. To this neopopular trend, which probably reaches its zenith in Lorca and Alberti, Juan Ramón contributes notably from his earliest poems, as did also Manuel Machado in a different way. Our critic often says that the fusion of *lo popular* and *lo culto* gives rise to a genuinely aristocratic and refined literary expression. In a short commentary on a lecture by Menéndez Pidal ("Notilla," *Estética y ética estética*, pp. 204-05) he differentiates two basic and constant styles in Spanish literature. One is popular, collective and impulsive; the other pertains to the minority and is individualistic as well as static. We shall not quote all the names that Juan Ramón uses as illustrations, but he does pose the question as to whether great poetry is not generally poetry which fuses the two, the popular and the refined (*Romancero*, Manrique, San Juan, Gil Vicente, Bécquer), an expression endowed with the spiritual quality which he demands of poetry. The ideal: poetry which is ". . . fresh, natural and spiritual due to its popular base, supreme because of its idealism" (p. 205). When he comments upon North American poetry ("En casa de Poe," *La corriente infinita*, pp. 123-30), he makes the same distinction although the terms he uses are slightly different: "Two forms of expression have always coexisted in art: one tendency towards the intuitive, natural, direct; the other more artificial, intellectual, rhetorical" (p. 128).

Juan Ramón Jiménez does not believe, of course, that artistic creation is a spontaneous act, as he clearly explains in his notes to the *Segunda antología poética* ("That a poem is spontaneous does not mean that, after having come forth, it has not been submitted to the

purge of consciousness . . . *Crítica paralela*, p. 157). He further maintains that the popular is an imitation or perhaps even an unconscious tradition derived from a refined art which has been lost: "There is no popular art, only imitation, the popular tradition of art" (*ibid*). Elsewhere Juan Ramón confesses the supreme difficulty facing the cultured poet who wishes to capture the essence of the popular and the ineffable intuitions which by their very nature defy expression by the individual poet ("Lo popular," *Crítica paralela*, pp. 202-05).²⁸

Summing up: Some Final Remarks

As I have tried to show in the preceding pages devoted to Jiménez' criticism, his opinions, although often impassioned and partial, are extremely useful and even invaluable to the historian of Hispanic letters in the twentieth century. We have dealt with a large body of texts, highly varied in substance, which naturally enough give clear evidence of artistic preferences and prejudices. However, they are the product of a discriminating taste. The critical vision of Jiménez is always thought-provoking in the formulation of general concepts bearing on Hispanic literature in its broadest sense, always exact and penetrating in the specific detail so often related directly to his own personal literary experience. His remembrances of things past and his critical judgments constitute a significant portion of his legacy.

Finally, Juan Ramón Jiménez does not conceive of poetry and criticism as antithetical activities but rather as complementary ones, closely allied in the creative process. In this regard, one level of critical labour hardly mentioned above is of the highest order: the tireless sifting, expunging and correction of his own work. The complete literary man is both poet and critic. The premises of each are not to be separated in the mind but rather combined in a complex process of mutual enrichment contributing to the true fulfillment of the artist. And, after all, is not this the sign of genuinely creative criticism?

NOTES

1. Juan Guerrero Ruiz, *Juan Ramón de viva voz* (Madrid: Insula, 1961) and Ricardo Gullón, *Conversaciones con Juan Ramón* (Madrid: Taurus, 1958).
2. Another text of singular importance in this connection is the letter of January 1942, which Juan Ramón, then residing in Coral Gables, writes to Pablo Neruda: Juan Ramón Jiménez, *Selección de cartas* (Barcelona: Picazo, 1973), pp. 134–135. For an exhaustive treatment of the relationship between the two poets, see Ricardo Gullón, "Relaciones Pablo Neruda-Juan Ramón Jiménez," *Hispanic Review*, 39 (1971), 141–166.
3. In *Crítica paralela*, ed. Arturo del Villar (Madrid: Narcea, 1975), the editor reproduces previously unpublished class notes on modernism which correspond to university classes given in 1943, pp. 267–288.
4. *El modernismo. Notas de un curso*. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962), pp. 226–29 and esp. pp. 255–60. In this regard, see also "El modernismo, segundo Renacimiento," *Crítica paralela*, pp. 305–309.
5. Cf. Ricardo Gullón, "Juan Ramón Jiménez y el modernismo," prologue of *El modernismo*, especially pp. 25–39. Elsewhere *El último Juan Ramón Jiménez* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1968) Gullón recalls his arrival in Puerto Rico and how he attended Juan Ramón's seminar: ". . . el interés de sus lecciones consistía tanto en lo que decía, iluminaciones singulares, con frecuencia adivinaciones, como en el modo de decirlo, con arte de conversador en quien las ideas fluyen libre y oportunamente, intercalando anécdotas, recuerdos, citando poesías o fragmentos de prosa. No se trataba de un curso ortodoxo, ordenado y expuesto según reglas académicas, sino de sugerencias y recuerdos ofrecidos como testimonio personal" (p. 122).
6. In reference to his self-criticism and continued repentance ("Mi mejor obra es mi constante arrepentimiento de mi Obra"), Juan Ramón writes: ". . . Las pasiones ciegas están equilibradas en mí por las de buena vista: un ojo me forma el mundo y otro me lo deforma o me lo reforma. Con esta visión, hago el bien y me arrepiento; entonces hago el mal y me arrepiento también. Mi vida y mi obra son una rueda de fuego constante de arrepentimientos; pero mi estética y mi ética, mi locura y mi cordura, mi calma y mi guerra tienen siempre una meta suficiente, que me consuela de todo: la mujer desnuda." *Cuadernos*, ed. Francisco Garfias (Madrid: Taurus, 1971, p. 130.)
7. I deal extensively with the subject of America in the work of the poet in an article which will appear this year in the *Revista Iberoamericana*: "Juan Ramón Jiménez e Hispanoamérica: su presencia en la obra y el pensamiento del poeta."
8. It would be unjust not to mention briefly certain anthologies in which are represented selections from the critical prose of Juan Ramón Jiménez: (1) *Pajinas escogidas (Prosa)*, selection and preliminary note by Ricardo Gullón (Madrid:

Gredos, 1958), a book which collects diverse fragments of both critical and creative prose, including the long poem "Espacio" in its definitive prose version of 1954; (2) *El andarín de su órbita. Selección de prosa crítica*, ed. and introduction by Francisco Garfias (Madrid: Emesa, 1974); and (3) the already cited *Crítica paralela*.

9. Luis Cernuda "Juan Ramón Jiménez," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 19 (1942), 163-178, on referring in his often harsh commentary to the portraits later collected in *Españoles de tres mundos*, writes categorically: "La crítica literaria de Juan Ramón Jiménez va expresa en esos retratos, y tiene a veces tal justeza que ningún otro crítico de su tiempo le alcanza. . . . La crítica de Juan Ramón Jiménez va casi siempre más allá de la figura literaria del personaje, y lo ve y nos lo ofrece como elemento de un conjunto más vasto, en el tiempo o en el espacio, lo cual es en definitiva la misión de la crítica" (p. 176).

10. Ricardo Gullón, "El arte del retrato en Juan Ramón Jiménez," prologue, *Españoles de tres mundos* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1969), pp. 11-64.

11. The texts are numerous and explicit. We shall quote only two brief examples: "Mis respuestas críticas (respuestas, entiéndase bien, porque yo no ataco nunca el primero, sino que me defiendo, sobre todo en lo histórico) no están nunca relacionadas con ningún asunto político" (*Orígenes*, 10 [1953], p. 14); and, secondly, he states in a letter to Alberti (1946): "Siempre, Alberti, a pesar de sus destrezas, le tuve cariño a usted . . . si he escrito algo que le haya rozado desagradablemente, siempre con la compensación del elogio justo, ha sido, *conste*, como respuesta. Nunca he atacado a nadie más que respondiendo. Eso se puede comprobar por las fechas. . . . Yo no contesto nunca a un cobarde anónimo ni a un tercero. Ataco, pero siempre con mi nombre y con mi cara, usted lo sabe bien." *Cartas. Primera selección*, ed. Francisco Garfias (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962), pp. 380-82.

12. In the "Prólogo jeneral" for "Alerta" [*El trabajo gustos*, pp. 211-217], a series of literary conversations destined to be read over the radio in 1942, a project never realized totally, we read for example: ". . . Quiero siempre ser un exaltador de lo que me parece bueno, y hablaré aquí de lo mejor, de lo bueno y de lo mejor entre lo mezclado de mejor y peor, a veces de lo malo, nunca de lo mediocre. A veces tendré que negar; todos los críticos del mundo lo han hecho. En la crítica el cauterio puede ser tan válido o más que el abrazo, y puede también ser seguido de él. Claro está que el libro y la revista son mejores, por diversos motivos, para el cauterio. El radio, por diversos motivos también—el primero por la falta de permanencia en el oído del que lo escucha—, es más apropiado para la exaltación" (p. 212). And he then adds: ". . . Yo soy un gustoso rectificador de mi vida y de mi crítica. Desde aquí, tierra nueva siempre para mí . . . he visto siempre 'de otro modo' a España, a Europa, a la misma América y al mundo en general; y también la poesía, mi poesía, la crítica y mi crítica" (p. 214).

13. When Enrique Díez-Canedo (*Juan Ramón Jiménez en su obra* [México: El Colegio de México, 1944]) copies the quoted text (p. 89), he also cites a well-known aphorism of Juan Ramón which offers a brief statement of his critical attitude: "Alentar a los jóvenes, exigir, castigar a los maduros; tolerar a los viejos."

14. For additional autobiographical and literary material Ricardo Gullón quotes at length from an interview made in Puerto Rico (1953), *El último Juan Ramón*, p. 106 and ff. Complete texts are now collected in *La corriente infinita* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961), pp. 237–251.

15. In his splendid portrait of José Martí (*Españoles de tres mundos*, ed. Gullón, pp. 93–97) the poet also speaks in general terms of his affinity with the great Cuban writer, who did not cultivate the artificial and decadent aspects of modernism as did his compatriot Casal. Of his own intentions he states: “. . . Yo he sentido y espresado, quizás, un preciosismo interior, visión acaso esquisita y tal vez difícil de un proceso psicológico, ‘paisaje del corazón,’ o metafísico, ‘paisaje del cerebro’; pero nunca me conquistaron las princesas exóticas, los griegos y romanos de medallón, las japonerías ‘caprichosas’ ni los hidalgos ‘edad de oro.’ El modernismo, para mí, era novedad diferente, era libertad interior. No, Martí fue otra cosa, y Martí estaba, por esa ‘otra cosa,’ muy cerca de mí. Y, cómo dudarlo, Martí era tan moderno como los otros modernistas hispanoamericanos” (p. 95).

The following text is also pertinent in this same context: “. . . los mejores modernistas, es decir, los que creyeron que el modernismo no consistía en lo exótico ni en lo decadente, sino en lo vivo, en lo libre, en lo auténtico, en lo humano, esto es: en la mezcla de hermosa forma y espíritu grande, fueron al pasado para buscar en él lo mejor, llevarlo al futuro y divisar lo eterno. Y que yo buscaba esta busca, este traspeso y esta visión desde el punto de vista del amor universal; que yo no quería considerar la poesía o las disciplinas estéticas o científicas en general, de una manera desligada y fría, sino desde la inteligencia sensitiva y el sentimiento ideal.” (*Crítica paralela*, p. 276.)

With reference to modernism as an abstract theme, Jiménez clearly defines its importance in his literary criticism: “. . . La materia que forma estas lecturas es una síntesis de mi libro ‘El Modernismo,’ en el que trabajo hace años y del que ya he dado otros fragmentos en mis seminarios de las universidades de Miami y Duke. *En este libro, que con otro, “Epoca,” considero mi testamento crítico, pretendo poner en su sitio lo que a mi modo de ver significa este maltratado asunto del modernismo,*” *El trabajo gustoso*, p. 216 (italics mine).

16. Juan Ramón has often expressed his opinions on this subject, particularly in his conversations with Ricardo Gullón [see also by Gullón “Juan Ramón y el modernismo,” *Direcciones del modernismo* (Madrid, 1963), pp. 27–66], but it is also worthwhile pointing to two comments contained in letters, the first being a criticism of the book of Díaz-Plaja (*Modernismo frente a Noventa y Ocho*) to be found in a letter to José Luis Cano (*Selección de cartas*, pp. 252–253) and in another of earlier date addressed to Ricardo Baeza (*Cartas. Primera selección*, pp. 248–286).

17. In this connection, see also the letter of Juan Ramón (March 21, 1935) in which he elaborates on the Proel text. (*Cartas. Primera selección*, pp. 348–350).

18. In addition to many random allusions to Bécquer and the profile in *Españoles de tres mundos*, see “Dos aspectos de Bécquer (poeta y crítico),” *La corriente infinita*, pp. 109–120.

19. For example Juan Ramón ("Un enredador enredado," *La corriente infinita*, pp. 133-140) differentiates in his admired friend Antonio Machado three poets: the disciple of Darío, the poet of Castile and the follower of Bécquer ("... el delicado discípulo de Bécquer, hijo del simbolismo francés tan español, tan andaluz; admirador del más hondo Unamuno; el mejor Antonio Machado, el que sobrevivirá no en el libro, en la memoria y en los labios, por encima de los otros dos. Este esquisito, trasparente, fino, sencillo Antonio Machado que sueña y canta en la juventud y vuelve a cantar y soñar en la vejez, escribe en tiernos endecasílabos o en fluentes octosílabos, asonantados los dos versos casi siempre, y espresa lo más recóndito y misterioso de su alma de místico con toques de pícaro," p. 137).
20. A final synthesis is worth remembering here: "En Miguel de Unamuno empieza nuestra preocupación metafísica 'consciente' y en Rubén Darío nuestra conciente preocupación estilística, y de la fusión de esas dos grandes calidades, esas dos grandes diferencias, sale la verdadera poesía nueva. . . . Y después de Miguel de Unamuno y Rubén Darío, y antes que ningún otro, pues en él comienza, sin duda alguna, y de qué modo tan sin modo, aquella fusión, Antonio Machado, el fatal." (*Estética y ética estética*, pp. 86-87).
21. In the case of the three texts in question our quotations all come from the following sources: "Recuerdo al primer Villaespesa (1899-1901)," *Páginas escogidas (prosa)*, ed. Ricardo Gullón (Madrid: Gredos, 1958), pp. 121-133; "Ramón del Valle-Inclán (Castillo de quema)," pp. 133-142; and "Recuerdo a José Ortega y Gasset," *El andarín de su órbita* (Madrid: Emesa, 1974) pp. 112-126.
22. In an unpublished article "Juan Ramón Jiménez y Azorín: notas sobre sus relaciones literarias" to appear in the commemorative issue of *La Torre*, I deal extensively with this homage to Azorín.
23. Juan Ramón does not hesitate to refer to "las hermosísimas canciones de su juventud y su senectud" ("Recuerdo a Ortega," p. 116) before and after *Campos de Castilla*, and elsewhere ("Un enredador enredado," *La corriente infinita*, pp. 133-140) he says that the third Machado, the poet of Castile is: "... el más vulgar, en los dos sentidos . . . el más exaltado hoy, tras la guerra en España, por un grupo de escritores españoles y extranjeros de los dos bandos, y ayer por todos los tradicionalistas; el Antonio Machado de Castilla con todos los tópicos literarios y poéticos, encinas, arados, olivos, tipos castizos de mujer y hombre . . ." (p. 138).
24. In a letter to José Luis Cano (*Selección de cartas*, pp. 247-49) Juan Ramón writes: "... Los poetas pueden dividirse en poetas con voz de pecho y poetas con voz de cabeza. Para un crítico imparcial es muy fácil señalar los poetas con ese labio, ese falsete, ese sonido de nariz o de boca, o los poetas con voz de pecho o los poetas con voz de cabeza. ¿Quién podría negar, por ejemplo, que San Juan de la Cruz, Bécquer, Antonio Machado tienen voz de pecho? ¿que Herrera, Calderón de la Barca, Jorge Guillén tienen voz de cabeza? La voz de pecho puede llegar a todos, la de cabeza, no. Es claro que el no tener voz de pecho no quiere decir que se sea inferior; pero un poeta sin voz de pecho llegará difícilmente a las inmensas minorías" (p. 249).

25. In his conversations with Juan Guerrero (*Juan Ramón de viva voz*) he defines *acento* in the following manner: “. . . que es lo que la gente del pueblo llama ‘dejo,’ o sea un ‘sonido’ propio, peculiarísimo, que una vez usado por un poeta nadie que vuelva a usarlo podrá hacer desaparecer; viene a ser algo como una música interior, personalísima, que el verdadero poeta comunica a su verso. Ocorre que aquellos poetas que no están dotados de acento buscan a veces en las formas poéticas aquellas que tienen ya cierta musicalidad” (pp. 197–198).

26. Other poets, including Moreno Villa and Antonio Espina, enjoy the favor of the demanding Juan Ramón, but above all it is pertinent to point out in this context the positive evaluation given to the verse of the younger generations about which he was extremely well informed. In this connection a brief fragment “Muy significativo (A José María Valverde. Poeta de emanación),” reproduced in *Estética y ética estética*, deserves mention: “Para mí es muy significativo ver que la mejor parte de la juventud poética actual de la lengua española se da cuenta, por fin, de esa limitación, asombrosa e incomprensible, de los poetas virtuosos de la jeneración intermedia entre la de ellos y la mía, para todo lo espiritual, lo ideal, lo trascendente. . . . Lo espiritual, lo ideal, lo trascendente, que venía a mí, en lo contemporáneo poético español, desde Bécquer y Unamuno, acaba en España con mi Jeneración. Por fortuna, empieza otra vez en la que viene después de la de Lorca, como reacción natural y ansiosa contra el hartazgo físico. Hay en España ahora, dentro y fuera, jóvenes poetas españoles que son ejemplo claro de ello.”

Obviously Juan Ramón feels that after the virtuosity of certain poets, Spanish poetry of the younger writers is again turning toward the ideals of his own generation, and, not only does he call the poems of Miguel Hernández *vivos* (*Crítica paralela*, p. 247), but also writes, prior to his departure in 1936 for America, that the poets beginning their work (he includes among others Aleixandre, Cernuda and Altolaguirre) were already expressing “su cansancio de la poesía injeniosa y su anhelo por la poesía natural, directa, y sobre todo espiritual.” (*Cartas. Primera selección*, p. 350).

27. A companion piece to the above lecture is another entitled “Poesía cerrada y poesía abierta” (*El trabajo gustoso*, pp. 83–115), whose point of departure is the famous *duende* and *ángel* so familiar to the readers of Lorca. Again Juan Ramón takes up the question of the *inefable* and the *fable*, differentiating open poetry (the most national and universal, symbolist and popular) from closed poetry (international and foreign, academic and courtly), and closes with quotations illustrative of these two permanent directions he seeks to demonstrate in the historical development of Spanish poetry.

Space also prevents us from any detailed comment on a later significant text “El romance, río de la lengua española” (pp. 143–87) which was read at the University of Puerto Rico on the anniversary of the death of Cervantes (1954). Incidentally, it incorporates additional extended commentary on Antonio Machado (pp. 147–153).

28. As a corollary we reproduce here a fragment of one of the letters to José Luis Cano (*Selección de cartas*, pp. 246–255), who had consulted him about an anthology of

Andalusian poetry he was preparing. Juan Ramón writes that he used to laugh when the critics talked of his ivory tower; he preferred the term *azotea abierta*. He then goes on to refer directly to the relationship of Machado and Unamuno with the *pueblo español*: "A mi me parece que ni Unamuno ni Antonio Machado pensaron concretamente en el pueblo al escribir sus versos. Antonio Machado y yo nos tratamos mucho de jóvenes y sé bien lo que pensaba. Nunca lo vi hablando con el pueblo. Era hombre de paseo solitario, de tertulia burguesa y de libro. Unamuno se vale del pueblo para sacar de él lo que pueda en analogía y sintaxis, pero no piensa en él cuando escribe. . . . Precisamente la *Tierra de Alvar González* es lo más flojo de Antonio Machado. No, Unamuno es mucho más minoritario que ningún poeta español de cualquier tiempo" (p. 248).