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SPECIAL ISSUE ON JUAN RAMÓN JIMÉNEZ

GUEST EDITOR
Howard T. Young

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Construction and Deconstruction: The Theme of Fleetingness
in Poems by Juan Ramón Jiménez, and Pedro Salinas.
Andrew P. Debicki 115

Abstract. Both Juan Ramón Jiménez and Salinas reveal in their poems a striving to capture the essences of things, continuing in this quest a tradition coming to them from symbolist poetry. By examining several poems written by them, however, we discover a basic difference in their way of embodying this striving. Juan Ramón, concerned with the perfection of form, remains within a logocentric tradition in which the poem attempts to embody its meanings objectively; Salinas, on the other hand, writes poems the meanings of which evolve with successive readings and reflect the theme of reality's fleetingness. A close analysis of the texts exemplifies this difference and also suggests that in spite of it the poems of both authors remain subject to possible "deconstructions" on the part of the reader. (APD)

Juan Ramón Jiménez: Of Naked Poetry and The Master Poet
(1916–1936).
Graciela Palau de Nemes 125

Abstract. The phrase *naked poetry* was coined by Juan Ramón Jiménez in 1916 and represents a style which influenced an outstanding generation of poets in

twentieth-century Spain, among them Jorge Guillén, Pedro Salinas, Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, Vicente Aleixandre and many others. This symbol is rooted in a sublimated concept of the essential naked woman, his wife, loved and possessed by the poet. At the same time it represents an essential poetry, devoid of all external adornment. It was used by Jiménez immediately after his marriage in a short poem which traces a parallel between the evolution of his poetic style and the sentimental episodes of his love life. It is related to disrobing (*desnudar*), a verb which originated in Spain with a mystical connotation meaning “to give up,” “to deprive oneself,” “to renounce.” In the poetic career of Jiménez it is the point of departure for an artistic asceticism which leads to the neomystic union with a divinity described in *Animal de fondo* (*Animal of the Depth*), his last major work, of 1949.

In the years of the preeminence of Jiménez (1916–1936), Spanish and foreign critics had great trouble explaining his new style. They called it stark, stripped, cryptic; they said that it created, aesthetically, a sense of incompleteness; that it turned sensations into concepts; that it expressed all which in nature is incapable of concrete realization. A review of this early criticism helps to convey the character of Jiménez’ *naked poetry* in the years when he became the master poet of Spain. (GPdN)

Towards a Poetry of Silence: Stéphane Mallarmé and Juan Ramón Jiménez.

Mervyn Coke-Enguïdanos 147

Abstract. In an era of apparent dissolution, “la Obra” of Juan Ramón Jiménez, like “l’Oeuvre” of Stéphane Mallarmé, has for its goal the attainment of timelessness. In both poets, the concept of absolute Time—the timelessness of eternal Time—is yoked with the ideal of silence. But this is no ordinary silence, and certainly not the kind that results from inadequacy of expression. It is the silence of perfection, the expression of the ineffable: pure Poetry. Since the poetic language is the silent language of thought, both Mallarmé and Juan Ramón seek to convey the pure idea. In so doing, both must stringently eliminate whatever is not essential in their poetry. The astonishing paradox, central to Mallarmé and Juan Ramón alike, is the urge to create an “unwritten” poetry. (MC-E)

Juan Ramón Jiménez and Nietzsche.

John P. Devlin 161

Abstract. The young Juan Ramón Jiménez shared the enthusiasm for the writings of Nietzsche prevalent among his contemporaries. More significant are the interest in and affinity with Nietzsche which persisted into the poet’s maturity.

Jiménez found in Nietzsche not only a man of ideas but a poet who claimed to be a potent spiritual force. Both writers held that the modern age could recover a sense of spiritual integrity through the will of the individual to live and interpret human existence as an aesthetic phenomenon. Nietzsche's views on the nature of art and the role of the artist helped to sustain Jiménez' exalted and elitist view of poetry and the poet's mission. Jiménez felt an ethical kinship with the philosopher who asserted the absolute uniqueness of the creative individual, the end of whose existence was self-realization through his art. Nietzsche's doctrine of heroic vitalism as an antidote to chronic spiritual malaise corresponds to Jiménez' revitalized vision of the poetic word proclaimed in the *Diario* and elaborated in subsequent verse and prose writings. (JPD)

An Inquiry into Juan Ramón's Interest in Walter Pater.

John C. Wilcox 185

Abstract. The evidence for Juan Ramón's interest in Pater, which began around 1920 and was still active twenty years later, is discussed in this paper. Pater's view of death and dying and his attitude toward the decadent persona are described in so far as they indicate the spiritual affinity that exists between him and Juan Ramón. Pater's aesthetic idealism, and the presence of similar ideals in Juan Ramón's own work are then examined. The second part of the paper concentrates on the great interest Juan Ramón took in Pater's evocation of the Mona Lisa. The potential impact of the aesthetic idealism inherent in this passage, its Platonism in particular, receives special analysis in the light of *Espacio*, and in consideration of Juan Ramón's 1943 remark: "I am, have been, and always will be a Platonist." (JCW)

"The Universal Andalusian," "The Zealous Andalusian," and the "Andalusian Elegy."

Richard A. Cardwell 201

Abstract. Biographers and critics have been content to repeat Juan Ramón Jiménez' own comments concerning the influence upon him of Krausism, the Institución Libre de Enseñanza and the personality and model of Francisco Giner de los Ríos. In general, little discussion of the nature of that contact and virtually no evidence for arguing the importance or the shape of Krausist ethos on Jiménez' intellectual formation have been adduced. In previous studies I have considered Jiménez' literary apprenticeship in the light of the Krausist contacts. In the present study I further contend that *Platero y yo*, arguably his best known work, represents not only a major statement of the poet's idealism but that it was written under the spell of Giner's example and teachings. *Platero* is not only a

story for children, it was intended also as an example of Giner's "pedagogía íntima." As such the work can take its place in the main corpus of the poet's work as yet another statement of *la ética estética*. This essay further clarifies the formative ideological influence of Giner's idealism. (RAC)

The Literary Criticism and Memoirs of Juan Ramón Jiménez.
Allen W. Phillips 225

Abstract. Equally as demanding of others as he was of himself, Juan Ramón Jiménez conceived of literary criticism as a serious and exacting task. The critic and the poet, standing side by side, are devoted to complementary activities of mutual enrichment. However fragmentary and partial the critical opinions of Juan Ramón may be (also outspoken and polemical in nature), they are invaluable as a personal historical and aesthetic guide to about fifty or sixty years of Hispanic literary development (1900–1960). Not to take them into account is to fail to recognize a highly important aspect of his total artistic personality. These varied critical texts are a product of a first rate intelligence and the sensibility of a writer of consummate discrimination who was endowed not only with an excellent memory but also a very special talent for appreciating the authentic. Juan Ramón as a critic is quick to praise (San Juan, Bécquer, Darío, Unamuno and Machado) and at the same time strong in his censure of certain contemporaries.

Several recently collected volumes of miscellaneous critical materials have resolved the bibliographical muddle for the initial study of this fundamental aspect of the poet, but still particularly important are the expressionistic portraits of *Espanoles de tres mundos*, longer tributes to Valle, Ortega and Villaespesa as well as the extensive lectures delivered in his latter years. Examination of these pages gives us an historical and creative overview of the period in which he lived and worked in addition to original considerations about the evolution of Hispanic poetry. Of course, one of the constant focal points of his literary criticism was the modernist epoch of his early days, a movement or attitude which he considered to be a modern twentieth century renaissance. Together with detailed study of these two areas of historical and aesthetic nature, in the ensuing pages some conclusions are pointed out as to the essence of poetry according to the theories of Juan Ramón Jiménez, who always differentiated between poetry and literature, finding in great poetry emotive depth and spiritual authenticity. (AWP)