

CHAPTER V: Machado's Mysterious "Beloved"

When he mentioned the name "Guiomar" in his poetry, Antonio Machado must have realized that this name would create a mystery. What was his purpose in using the name, and who or what was behind it? As one might have expected, a great deal has been written on the theme of the beloved in the work of Machado, especially after the publication of the letters by Concha Espina.¹ Normally, the publication of the correspondence of an author helps to clarify certain aspects of his life and work. However, because of the arbitrary and fragmentary way in which the letters were published, exactly the opposite has occurred; the mystery has increased.

1. THE IDENTITY OF THE BELOVED: A Real Woman, or a Poetic Creation?

Those who have written about the theme of the beloved in the work of Machado can be placed in two broad categories: 1) those who feel that the letters published by Concha Espina were written to a real woman (José Luis Cano, Justina Ruíz de Conde, Gerardo Diego, Concha Espina, Leopoldo de Luis, Bernard Sesé, José María Valverde); and 2) those who feel that the beloved was only a poetic creation that has little, or nothing to do with a woman of flesh and blood (Pablo de A. Cobos, Ricardo Gullón, Joaquín Machado, José Machado, Jerónimo Mallo, José María Moreiro, Ramón de Zubiría). Fortified by the publication of the letters, those in the first group tend to interpret the poems devoted to Guiomar more or less literally, as the description of something that took place in the life of the poet. However, those of the second group feel that what Machado says about love is part of his metaphysical thought and, therefore, should not be interpreted literally. So let us take a closer look at some of the discrepancies that have resulted from these two different ways of thinking to see if we can resolve this mystery.

THE PROBLEM OF THE DATE

The first problem appears when the claim is made that both the letters and the "Songs to Guiomar" refer to a real woman with whom Machado fell in love when he was approximately 50 years old. If that is the case, how do we explain the fact that the theme of the beloved appeared in many poems which were written long before the poet could have met the supposed woman of the letters? The brother of the poet, Joaquín Machado has commented in a letter to Jerónimo Mallo: "As for me, I have never met the so-called Guiomar of Concha Espina, the Mrs. So-and-So... but... the physical woman was only the screen on which Antonio projected the beloved who is present in all the work of the poet, even before Leonor... The beloved, the real one, was unique and only came to

¹ Concha Espina, *De Antonio Machado, a su grande y secreto amor* (Madrid: Lifesa, 1950).

be called Guiomar after some time. Guiomar was never the physical woman, but only the poetic creation of Antonio Machado, like Dulcinea, of our Lord Don Quijote."² This problem is further complicated by the fact that the letters have no date, and it has been difficult to ascertain exactly when Machado might have met the mysterious woman. Leopoldo de Luis claims that the first encounter took place in 1927, but that date comes after the publication of the poems about the beloved in *New Songs* and the theory of love that is expressed in *The Apocryphal Songbook*, which were published in 1924 and in 1926, respectively.³

THE BELOVED AND METAPHYSICS

Many of those who believe that the poems dedicated to Guiomar describe the relations of the poet with a real woman have not taken into account (those of the second group insist) the fact that the theory of love which was expressed in the poems already constituted an important part of Machado's metaphysics in the *Apocryphal Songbook*. If Guiomar really was a woman of flesh and blood, it must have been only a coincidence, an accident *a posteriori*, that she came to exemplify his already established theories. In this respect, what was said by the poet's other brother is also significant. José Machado seems to accept the existence of a real woman, but he gives her only minor importance: "Of course I am aware that behind this beautiful name [Guiomar] the lady's real name is hidden... The mysterious lady that this name disguises was at most only the pedestal on which was raised *the other*, the created woman, the poet's real beloved in this case." José Machado recognizes that the human aspect of love, especially that which the poet felt for his wife, had been important in the life of the poet; but it was very different from the love which was described in his work: "If I have deliberately incorporated this love that was pure *creation* [Guiomar], it is so that one can appreciate what is for me the essential difference from the fundamental and real human love he felt for his wife."⁴ So one brother says that he had never met the Guiomar of the letters, and the other seems to know who she is. But both agree that no woman of flesh and blood has the importance of the woman mentioned in Machado's poetry.

One thing that has offended many of Machado's followers is that the woman of the letters has "the outrageous and illegitimate dream" of being something like Petrarch's Laura, or Dante's Beatrice. They cannot accept that one of the poet's admirers would aspire to such an important position, and of this type of woman they have said things like:

² Jerónimo Mallo, "Sobre 'El grande y secreto amor' de Antonio Machado," *Cuadernos americanos*, XI, 1 (1952), p. 221.

³ Leopoldo de Luis, *Antonio Machado, ejemplo y lección* (Madrid: SGEL, 1975), p. 105. José María Valverde feels that there could be two different women in the life of the poet: one whom he met in Baeza before 1926, and another in Segovia that he met in 1927 or 1928; *Antonio Machado* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1975), p. 156 and p. 239. In the third section of this chapter I try to show that the poems written earlier than those dedicated to Guiomar could not describe the relations of the poet with a real woman.

⁴ José Machado, *Últimas soledades del poeta Antonio Machado (Recuerdos de su hermano José)* (Santiago de Chile: Multigrafiado, 1958), p. 85.

"this type of woman doesn't wait to be asked;⁵ and "this good-looking little hussy with rather loose morals" is probably "some conservative religious rightist."⁶ Nevertheless, there is some evidence that supports the similarity between Guiomar and Beatrice. Beside the fact that one can see the influence of Dante in some of Machado's poems, he compares himself to Italian poet on more than one occasion, and there is some similarity in their attitude toward love. For instance, in a poem from *Fields of Castile*, Machado has written, modestly:

Dante and I—pardon me, gentlemen—,
have converted—pardon me, Lucía—,
love into Theology.⁷

But how does the relation between Dante and Machado affect the mystery of the beloved? It has been said that Beatrice is a symbol of religious wisdom, that she helped Dante discover the secret of divine Truth. If Guiomar is Machado's Beatrice, however, this does not help to resolve the mystery of her identity. It reinforces what has been said about her importance for the poet's metaphysical thought, but as in the case of Guiomar, Dante's critics have not always been in agreement about the identity of Beatrice. Some feel, like Boccaccio, that she was a real woman, that Dante's beloved was Beatrice dei Portinari of Florence, who was married to Simone dei Bardi and died in 1290. For others, however, the first reference of Dante to his beloved (*Vita Nuova*, Chapter 2) is ambiguous, and they feel that Beatrice ("the blessed one") represents an abstract influence personified as a woman.⁸

But if she actually exists, who is the woman mentioned in the letters published by Concha Espina, and what importance might she have had in the life of the poet?

PILAR DE VALDERRAMA

Pablo de A. Cobos is the first to declare that the woman of the letters is Pilar de Valderrama,⁹ a woman whom Machado met in Segovia—he wrote an essay about her poetry (OPP, pp. 927-932); he also mentions her name in one of his letters to Unamuno

⁵ José Machado, *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁶ Jerónimo Mallo, *Op. cit.*, p. 215 and p. 222.

⁷ Antonio Machado, *Obras: Poesía y Prosa*, 2ª Edición (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1973), CXXXVI, xxv, p. 217. At this point no one has made a thorough study of the relation between Machado and Dante, but for a more complete study of the relation between Guiomar and Beatrice, the reader may see the book of José Luis Cano, *Poesía española del siglo XX* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1960), pp. 128-129; and of Justina Ruíz de Conde, *Antonio Machado y Guiomar* (Madrid: Ínsula, 1962), pp. 114-115.

⁸ The name Guiomar lends itself to a symbolic interpretation. Just like Beatrice reveals to Dante the secrets of Paradise, Guiomar is the one who "guides" (in Spanish "guia") Machado in the "sea" (in Spanish "mar") which in his poetry represents *the unknown* that precedes and follows our life on earth: "from a hidden sea we come, to an unknown sea we go..." (CXXXVI, xv, OPP, p. 215).

⁹ Pablo de A. Cobos, *Humor y pensamiento de Antonio Machado en sus apócrifos*, 2ª Edición, (Madrid: Ínsula, 1972), p. 50.

(OPP, p. 1,031.) It was José Luis Cano, however, who opened the way for this identification with his study of the sonnet, "Pardon me, Madonna of Pilar, if I arrive..."¹⁰ Justina Ruíz de Conde also suggested that Guiomar was Pilar de Valderrama. In her book entitled *Antonio Machado y Guiomar* she published a study of the poetry of Pilar de Valderrama in which she gave the impression that the poetess was Guiomar, without ever declaring it openly. She talks about the poet and Guiomar as if she had intimate knowledge of their relationship, but in a note where she describes the biographical information which Pilar de Valderrama had given her, she admits: "the interpretation of these events is mine."¹¹ Cobos says that Pilar de Valderrama no longer denies that she is Guiomar,¹² but he does not explain how he knows that this is true. Does he base it on what Justina Ruíz de Conde has said, or did he hear it from the poetess herself? Until Pilar de Valderrama herself finally spoke out, the readers did not know if she was really Guiomar, or if all this was based only on the conjectures of these writers.

Finally, after a silence of almost thirty years since the publication of Machado's letters by Concha Espina, Pilar de Valderrama has been willing to speak about her relations with the poet. In the "Prologue" of the book of José María Moreiro, *Guiomar, an impossible love of Machado*, she has written:

After thirty years of silence I, Guiomar, am writing these words that José María Moreiro has requested as a Prologue for his book...

I met Antonio Machado in Segovia in 1928. From that time until 1935 we saw each other on many occasions. A result of that friendship is the correspondence which lasted until 1936, from which I still have only a few of his letters. I was twenty years younger than he was, and between us there was nothing more than a great friendship, a close contact that was purely spiritual... Between Machado and me there was not, and there could not have been, anything more than an innocent spiritual relationship, since I was then a married woman...

As for the role that I played—not in a biographical sense, but in the poet's creation—it was to have inspired some of his poems... as well as having interrupted, for a short time, his profound loneliness...

Machado, besides being a great poet, was a good and solitary man with an indelible spiritual and human character. It was the illusion of an inamorato, the understanding of a friend, the obsession of a poet.

Guiomar
Madrid, April 1979.¹³

In October of 1979, barely six months after writing these words, Pilar de Valderrama died without having seen more than the first chapter of Moreiro's book, and without having answered several important questions about the history of her relations with the poet.

¹⁰ José Luis Cano, "Un soneto de Machado a Guiomar," in *Poesía española del siglo XX*, Op. cit., pp. 127-139.

¹¹ Justina Ruíz de Conde, Op. cit., p. 131.

¹² Pablo de A. Cobos, *Antonio Machado en Segovia, vida y obra* (Madrid: Ínsula, 1973), p. 101.

¹³ José María Moreiro, *Guiomar, un amor imposible de Machado* (Madrid: Gárgola, 1980), pp. 11-13.

So how does Pilar de Valderrama's Prologue affect the difference of opinion about Machado's beloved mentioned at the beginning of this chapter? There are still some critics who do not believe that the poetess was really Guiomar,¹⁴ but this seems to clarify at least part of the mystery if, in fact, she was the recipient of Machado's letters and she had inspired some of his poems. This also explains certain aspects of her friendship with the poet—when she spoke with Moreiro, she insisted that she was never in love with Machado—but it still does not remove the objections of those who believe that the beloved was primarily a poetic creation.

Fortunately, for those of us who have tried to interpret Machado's work, after his conversations with Pilar de Valderrama, Moreiro was somewhat more specific with regard to several important points. For example, he recognized that "the true credentials of Guiomar... are beyond the human domain of Pilar de Valderrama" (p. 78), and in another place he insists that Guiomar "is, rather than a romantic love, a symbolic love" (p. 49). He also comments on the similarity between Guiomar and Beatrice when he says of Machado that

his love for Guiomar has certain similarities to what Dante felt for Beatrice, since what happened to Dante when his beloved died is that he felt inundated with a mystical and philosophical melancholy that then resulted in *The Divine Comedy*. In it Beatrice symbolizes theological wisdom. Dante meets her in Paradise and Beatrice guides him through the celestial spheres until she disappears; she is in fact nothing more than a spiritualized idea, a symbol, the transition of the soul through the paths of reason until it reaches a state of redeeming grace. All this has a type of mystical symbolism.

Six centuries later Antonio Machado, who is also a symbolist poet like Dante, idealizes Guiomar who, far from being a mere abstraction, corresponds in reality to Pilar de Valderrama. She must be his Beatrice (pp. 63-64).

In this way, Moreiro reinforces the opinion of those who believe, like Machado's brothers, that the physical woman was only the "screen," or the "pedestal" on which was created the image of the ideal beloved. "The love of Machado for Guiomar," Moreiro continues, "is melancholic, somewhere between reality and abstraction, and perhaps that is the reason he created a fictitious name that would not be confused with that of his beloved—a nearby inaccessible reality—since it had to relate to an ideal where both identities were combined in the love of the 'other' in a way which is incomprehensible on a purely material level" (p. 64). So, without contradicting the claim that Pilar de Valderrama is Guiomar, one can also believe that Machado's beloved, like Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*, also represents the concept of ideal love that is part of his metaphysical thought. All of which corresponds perfectly to what Machado states in the poem where he tells us that both he and Dante have converted love into Theology.

Now, before we study the meaning of this symbolic love in Machado's thought, let us consider a different way of looking at the letters to Guiomar/Pilar de Valderrama which may also help to resolve the mystery.

¹⁴ For example, the article by Miguel Ángel Baamonde, "¿Pilar de Valderrama, falsa Guiomar?" which is posted online at: <http://www.abelmartin.com/critica/baamonde.html>.

In the same way that many readers felt the poems for Guiomar were devoted to a real woman, they also felt that the letters published by Concha Espina described real events in the life of the poet and his beloved. Only Jerónimo Mallo had considered a different possibility when he asked: "Could it be that these manuscripts were, either completely or in part, not really letters, in the strict sense of the word, but the notes for a proposed literary work...?",¹⁵ a possibility which he then rejects, as he accepts the theory of a real woman. But this possibility should not be rejected so quickly because, although they were perhaps not notes for a literary work, in speaking with Pilar de Valderrama, Moreiro discovered that, like the poems dedicated to Guiomar, the letters contained many elements that were, in his words, "purely imaginary." He therefore felt that the term "letters" was not adequate to describe the correspondence between the poet and his beloved: "But as for the form, one should not speak of 'letters,' at least not most of them which we have seen... Rather than letters, they are like a diary that was interrupted by the arrival of news from Guiomar" (p. 62).¹⁶ And later he was even more explicit: "As for the content of the missives from Machado to Guiomar, we can emphasize certain constants: idealization or a feeling of distance. Taken together without any response to this date, they end up being a long monologue, an intimate confession more suitable for a diary which was written on separate pages, in which the poet expresses a sense of destiny in order to avoid the tedium of their accumulation and give a greater feeling of reality to what was purely imaginary" (p. 89). So we learn that, in the same way that the Guiomar of the poems is a poetic creation, the woman of the letters is also largely a creation of Machado's poetic imagination. Knowing this helps us resolve another problem that has existed since the publication of the book by Concha Espina.

Something that has annoyed many writers was that Machado could have said things to a woman that seemed banal, and even petty and callow. In spite of what he says in a poem from *New Songs*—"When speaking of love / it helps to use / a bit of exaggeration" (OPP, p. 266)—how could a poet like Machado, who was already in his 50s, call a woman "goddess" and tell her things like: "my entire life is nothing more than homage to my goddess" (Concha Espina, p. 45); and "think of me always on my knees in front of you" (p. 56)? And after his profound expression of grief following the death of his wife, how could he say to another woman: "I have never felt any love but this one. Some time ago I realized this very clearly. My other loves have just been dreams through which I have glimpsed the real woman, the goddess" (p. 34)? But if the woman of the

¹⁵ Mallo, *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

¹⁶ On p. 27 Moreiro says that Machado had written more than 200 letters to Pilar de Valderrama of which only 33 were preserved; he says that at the beginning of the Civil War when the family of Pilar de Valderrama fled to Portugal "about 170 missives of the poet" were thrown into the fire. However, on p. 62 Moreiro changes these numbers when he says: "only 36 of the 160 letters that Machado must have sent to Guiomar were completely preserved." At the end of his book Moreiro reproduces 7 complete letters of Machado to Pilar de Valderrama, including two that were not published in the book by Concha Espina. He also comments on the lack of response by the poetess: "Nobody has ever been able to find even a single letter from Guiomar to Don Antonio" (p. 28).

letters was not a woman of flesh and blood—something which until now has not been given serious consideration—it would be quite different. If the "real woman" from the passage that was just cited, like the woman of the poems was a symbol of ideal love, it would be appropriate to say that his "other loves" were only dreams, by comparison. It would also be appropriate to say that through these dreams he has glimpsed "the real woman, the goddess" whom he has always loved.

To think this way, that the recipient of his letters represented the personification of divine love, would also explain what Machado says in another letter where he exclaims: "You are so 'otherworldly,' my goddess, that it hurts me to see you among mortals" (p. 16). And perhaps he wanted to give us the key to the true identity of the woman of his letters when he said: "you are, above all, soul" (p. 23), and on another occasion when he calls her "goddess of my entrails" (p. 108). (The Spanish words are "*diosa de mis entrañas*." The word *entrañas* literally means "entrails"; however, it is also used figuratively as an expression of affection, meaning "heart" or "soul." Machado must have used this double meaning to show his love and also to indicate that she is his own creation.) This is certainly a strange thing to be said by a man. But if it were a metaphor describing the sensation of divine love that he has felt in his *inner self*, it would make perfect sense. Moreiro offers a similar view when he says: "the expression 'goddess of my entrails' is absolutely correct, because he, and no one else, was the creator of Guiomar as a divinity" (Moreiro, p. 117).

So, thanks to the book by Moreiro, we know for certain that Pilar de Valderrama was, in a human sense, Guiomar. But we also know that, like Dante's Beatrice, Machado's Guiomar—his "guide" through the "unknown"—was much more than a woman of flesh and blood. And although there are still those who are not satisfied by this interpretation, this would seem to reconcile the difference of opinion between those who believe that Guiomar was part of the poet's personal life, and those who feel that the beloved was not a real woman. Guiomar may have had a physical existence, but by demonstrating that the woman of the letters was an idealization of divine love, this also reinforces the opinion of those who feel that Machado's beloved was a poetic creation.

And now that we have resolved the mystery of Machado's relation to Pilar de Valderrama, I will set aside the topic of the "real woman" in order to examine the poetic version of the beloved (not only in the poems dedicated to Guiomar, but in the entire work of the poet) from two completely different perspectives. First, I will make a psychological study, using the theories of C. G. Jung. Then, I will study the theme of the beloved from a metaphysical perspective, with the help of other materials that I will explain when it is appropriate.

2. THE BELOVED AS A PROJECTION OF THE ANIMA

THE THEORY OF THE ANIMA

Jung's theory concerning the *anima* and the *animus* has important metaphysical ramifications.¹⁷ According to Jung, each person has an unconscious "other half," a complementary self belonging to the opposite sex. For a man, it is the anima; for a woman, the animus. What concerns us here, of course, is the anima and her possible importance for the work of the poet Antonio Machado.

Jung himself does not have much to say about the origin of the anima and the animus. He sees them as archetypes of the collective unconscious, and he concentrates on studying them empirically. To find a logical explanation of this theory we must look outside of science, at metaphysics and, especially, at the theory of pantheism.

As we saw in the first chapter, all concepts of pantheism start with the premise that everything is part of one absolute being which is God. When the divine substance is differentiated to form individual souls, each soul has in itself the same divine essence. God is neither masculine nor feminine since His absolute being includes, by definition, all the different forms of universal energy. Therefore, each individual soul is an essentially androgynous being where there is a perfect balance between its feminine and its masculine characteristics. The separation of these opposite forms and the consequent loss of equilibrium occur when the soul is incarnated in the world of matter. Then, its consciousness assumes the attributes of one of these characteristics, while the attributes of the other are submerged in the unconscious. Only the intuitive mind preserves the memory of the original equilibrium, and there remains in the unconscious a latent feeling of a paradise that has been lost. Therefore, when each soul is incarnated in the physical world it suffers a double loss: it loses the awareness of its union with the Divine, and it also loses the conscious awareness of its relationship to the other part of its self.

We already know that Machado's metaphysics is based on a pantheistic view of reality, and it is also clear that he is aware of the loss that was mentioned in the previous paragraph. In the *Apocryphal Songbook*, for example, Abel Martín tells us that "the beloved... is one with the lover, not at the end of the erotic process, like the mystics say, but in the beginning" (OPP, p. 320). In this case, therefore, the "beloved" is that part of the self which belonged to the divine consciousness in the beginning which after the soul's incarnation in the physical world has become what Machado calls, "an imminent otherness." For this reason, love always carries with it a sensation of *absence*, or what Abel Martín calls "the loss of a companion" (OPP, p. 322). This is the origin of what he calls his "cult of woman" which has nothing with sexual desire; for Abel Martín,

¹⁷ In order to study the theme of the anima, I have used the following sources: "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" and "Concerning the Archetypes and the Anima Concept" in *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, IX, 1, 2^a Edition (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971); "The Szygy: Anima and Animus," in *Aion, Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, IX, 2, Op. cit.; *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage, 1965); and *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Doubleday, 1964).

the "great incentive for love" is not physical pleasure, but "the metaphysical thirst for that which is essentially other" (OPP, p. 323). Thus, the concept of the anima is expressed by this short poem from the same section of the *Apocryphal Songbook*:

Woman
is the obverse of the self (OPP, p. 317).

In the metaphysics of our poet the idea of the anima and the animus is also expressed by Machado's term, "the complementary selves,"—"los complementarios"—and the attitude of the person who wants to recover the other half of his self is clearly expressed in this poem from *New Songs*:

Look for your complementary self
who always goes with you
and normally is your opposite (OPP, p. 273).

THE ANIMA AND THE PRIMORDIAL SOUL

For Jung the anima is never a specific woman, but rather an unconscious image which is projected on the women a man knows and sometimes appears in dreams or fantasies: "Every man carries within him the eternal image of woman... This image is fundamentally unconscious, an hereditary factor of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of man, an imprint or an 'archetype' of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by woman... Since this image is unconscious, it is always unconsciously projected on the person of the beloved and is one of the chief reasons for passionate attraction or aversion." Intrigued by the presence of his own anima, Jung wondered about her origin but, finally, he says: "My conclusion was that she must be the 'soul,' in the primitive sense..."¹⁸

Similar to Jung's theory, then, Machado's beloved can be interpreted as a projection of his anima, which is also his primordial soul. Therefore, in poems when the poet speaks of his beloved, he is not describing a concrete woman, but the inaccessible figure of an ideal woman who is always desired, and is always absent. For example, in poem XXIX Machado converses with a "shy virgin" and he tells her:

You will be with me as long as my body projects
my shadow and my sandal treads on the sand (OPP, p. 84).

As long as his soul is condemned to travel within the limits of the physical body, his most intimate companion will be this absent beloved. Then, in poem XVI the poet describes another inaccessible female companion:

Always fleeing and always
nearby, cloaked in black,
the poorly concealed disdainful
gesture of her pale countenance (OPP, p. 76).

¹⁸ *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Op. cit., p. 391 and p. 186.

In these and other poems, the mysterious companion is part of his self—she always accompanies him—and although he pursues her she is always separated from him by an invisible barrier. In another early poem the image of the beloved evokes the nostalgia of this lost union:

Don't you see, in the magic of the ornate mirror,
the familiar oval of a rose-colored face?

But when he hurries to kiss the "bitter flower" of her lips, he discovers that the image has become an impossible ideal:

Oh, anguish! My heavy heart grieves... Is it her?
It cannot be... She walks on... In the blue a star (XV, OPP, p. 75).

Until this time, the poet has never been able to reach the apparently inaccessible goal of uniting with the other half of his primordial self, but he never ceases to long for the recuperation of this lost union.

Years later, in a sonnet from the *Apocryphal Songbook*, Machado once again feels the proximity of the "invisible companion" of his origin and he asks:

Are you coming with me? In my hand I feel
a double pulse; my heart cries out
and wild thoughts deafen me.
It is you who blossom and come to life (OPP, p. 319).

Referring to these lines, Ramón de Zubiría has observed: "We perceive the breathing of a *double* life within a single pulse, two existences within the same blood."¹⁹

A BRIDGE BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

Since the anima often appears in dreams and fantasies, one of her important functions is to serve as a bridge between consciousness and the collective unconscious. A friend and colleague of Jung, Dr. Marie-Louise von Franz, has explained this in the following way: "Whenever a man's mind is incapable of discerning facts that are hidden in his unconscious, the anima helps him to dig them out. Even more vital is the role that the anima plays in putting a man's mind in tune with the right inner values and thereby opening the way into the more profound inner depths... The anima takes the role of guide, or mediator, to the world within and to the Self...; that is the role of Beatrice in Dante's *Paradiso*..."²⁰

In several poems of Machado the beloved also serves as a guide in the world of dreams. The best example of this function is found in poem LXIV:

¹⁹ Ramón de Zubiría, *La poesía de Antonio Machado* (Madrid: Gredos, 1966), p. 106.

²⁰ Marie-Louise von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in *Man and His Symbols*, Op. cit., pp. 181-182.

From the threshold of a dream they called me...
It was the good voice, the beloved voice.
"Tell me, will you come with me to see the soul?"
I felt a caress touch my heart.
"With you always..." And I advanced in my dream
through a long, narrow gallery
feeling the touch of her pure cloak
and the soft pulse in her friendly hand (OPP, p. 115).

In this poem the anima wears a "pure cloak," an image which in Machado's work always denotes the presence of the soul—remember the soul's "pure white tunic" in poem LXI—and once again the poet feels the pulse of a "friendly hand" that leads him through the galleries of a mysterious world that can only be explored "in dreams." In poem XXXVII Machado again speaks to: "my old beloved / who brings me the tabernacle of my dreams" (OPP, p. 88), and in poem CXXII the anima is projected onto the image of his dead wife, Leonor, who also leads him through the world of the unconscious:

I dreamed that you were leading me
down a white path..." (OPP, p. 190).

Finally, this guide also appears in the letters published by Concha Espina when Machado describes a dream in which the mysterious woman leads him along a path that ends in a strange religious ceremony:

You were walking to church wearing a black cloak and mantilla, and in your hand you were carrying a prayer book. I was following you reciting lines of poetry that I can't remember, and you would turn your head to listen from time to time. After that we were on the bank of a river passing between some poplar trees, and finally we were in a church (Concha Espina, p. 83).

The nuptial ceremony in this numinous dream is similar to the *conjunctio oppositorum*, which in Jungian psychology represents the reunion of the two separate parts of the psyche: the conscious and the unconscious. The fact that part of the ceremony takes place by the waters of a river seems to represent a rite of purification, the baptism or initiation of the soul, which permits it to enter the sacred zone represented by the church. This dream also suggests that at this time of the poet's life he has made some progress in the effort to reestablish his contact with the lost part of his self.

Besides the feeling of equilibrium which occurs when the individual makes a connection between the different levels of consciousness, Jung says that the anima at times appears like an "angel of light" who has the power to reveal to man the secrets of the ancient mysteries. And in spite of her somewhat chaotic nature, this angel can sometimes give man the sensation of cosmic order, of knowing the laws that govern the universe.²¹ In the third part of the "Songs to Guiomar" (CLXXIII), Machado dedicates to his own "angel of light" a remarkable memory of cosmic unity in which everything belongs to the timeless realm of a higher dimension:

²¹ "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," Op. cit., pp. 30-32.

Everything becomes transparent in this April light:
everything in the today of yesterday, the Still Now
that time tells and sings
in its mature hours
is fused into a single melody
that is a chorus of evenings and dawns.
To you, Guiomar, this nostalgia of mine (OPP, p. 371).

AN INNER DIALOGUE

In Machado's work, the anima usually appears as figure of purity and goodness. However, Jung tells us that the anima can also have a negative aspect; she sometimes appears as a sort of *femme fatale* who has a chaotic and destructive influence. This aspect of the anima appears when the archetypal images are not assimilated into the conscious mind. As Jung explains, "The pathological element does not lie in the existence of these ideas, but in the dissociation of the consciousness that can no longer control the unconscious. In all cases of dissociation it is therefore necessary to integrate the unconscious into consciousness. This is a synthetic process which I have termed the 'individuation process.'"²² The essential thing is to differentiate oneself from these unconscious contents by personifying them and, at the same time, putting them in relation with consciousness in order to understand them. However, when one ignores the archetypes they can create complexes and neuroses that control the conscious mind and, in the most serious cases, lead to pathological conduct. When they are recognized, Jung says, this more or less guarantees their cooperation. So if Machado's anima usually appears as a beneficial influence, perhaps it is because he has done precisely what Jung recommends. In fact, many poems show that he communicates with his unconscious self and, in doing so, he differentiates himself from these unconscious influences and he also personifies them in order to recognize their importance.

So we do not have to let ourselves be manipulated by the archetypes because they can be assimilated by the conscious mind. But as Jung tells us, it is not always easy to achieve a balance between consciousness and the unconscious: "As the archetypes, like all numinous contents, are relatively autonomous, they cannot be integrated simply by rational means, but require a dialectical procedure, a real coming to terms with them, often conducted by the patient in dialogue form..." which Jung then compares to "an inner colloquy with one's good angel."²³ For several years Jung himself had a dialogue

²² "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," Op. cit., p. 40. It is really quite remarkable to see the similarity between Jung's ideas and those of Machado. Even before Jung published many of his works ("Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" was published in 1934) the following passage appeared in the *Apocryphal Songbook*: "According to Abel Martín, sexual disorders do not originate—like modern psychiatry [Freud?] has said—in the obscure zones of the subconscious, but rather in the most illuminated workshop of the consciousness" (OPP, p. 326). Compare this with the following passage from *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*: "The insinuations of the anima, the mouthpiece of the unconscious, can utterly destroy a man. In the final analysis the decisive factor is always consciousness, which can understand the manifestations of the unconscious and take up a position toward them" (Op. cit., p. 187).

²³ "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," Op. cit., pp. 40-41.

with his anima; as he explains in his autobiography, "For decades I always turned to the anima when I felt that my emotional behavior was disturbed, and that something had been constellated in the unconscious. I would then ask the anima: 'Now what are you up to?... After some resistance she regularly produced an image. As soon as the image was there, the unrest or the sense of oppression vanished... I would speak with the anima about the images she communicated to me, for I had to understand them as best I could, just like a dream."²⁴ Jung also wrote down many of these dialogues with his anima and he even illustrated them with his drawings. Eventually, he gave up this effort because, as he put it, "I became aware that I had not yet found the right language."

Perhaps because he was a poet, Machado hoped to be more successful in finding the "right language" to describe his experience with the anima. We have already seen that some of his poems can be understood as a dialogue with the anima, and there is no doubt that a large part of his poetic work is the result of the effort to exteriorize the words of his own inner voice. It is also clear that his correspondence with Guiomar could very well be part of a dialogue that, like Jung, Machado wrote down in order to assimilate the emotions that were produced by his anima who in that moment was identified with Pilar de Valderrama. This very real possibility reinforces Moreiro's previously mentioned observation that the documents published by Concha Espina were not actually letters, but a sort of poetic diary written in epistolary form.

STAGES OF LIFE

Jung also describes the relative importance of the anima during the different parts of a man's life: "Younger people, who have not yet reached the middle of life (around the age of 35), can bear even total loss of the anima without injury... After the middle of life, however, permanent loss of the anima means a diminution of vitality, of flexibility and of human kindness. The result, as a rule, is premature rigidity, crustiness, stereotypy, fanatical one-sidedness, obstinacy, pedantry, or else resignation, weariness, sloppiness, irresponsibility, and finally a childish *ramollissement* with a tendency to alcohol. After middle life, therefore, the connection with the archetypal sphere of experience should if possible be re-established."²⁵

It is impossible to know with certainty if Machado was ever able to reestablish his contact with the anima after the death of his wife—Leonor died when he was 37 years old—and we do not know if he was ever able to complete the "process of individuation." But from what we have seen through the study of his poetry and his letters to Guiomar, he seems to have accomplished both of these things, at least to some extent.

However, a psychological study only permits us to see one aspect of the mystery of the beloved. In order to view it more clearly, we must look at it from a different perspective. As we saw in the first part of this Chapter, it is clear that the beloved had an important place in Machado's religious and philosophical thought. In the next section, we will examine the relation of the beloved to this aspect of Machado's work.

²⁴ *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Op. cit., pp. 187-188.

²⁵ "Concerning the Archetypes and the Anima Concept," Op. cit., pp. 71-71.

3. THE BELOVED AS A SYMBOL OF A MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT

In terms of the pantheistic metaphysics which was described in Chapter I and in the previous section, Machado saw his beloved as the personification not only of his other, feminine half, but also as part of his self that belonged to the divine consciousness in the beginning. And because in the theology of Abel Martín "God is defined as absolute being," to have divine consciousness is to be aware of All That Is, or to have what Machado has described as "integral consciousness." What Machado calls the "erotic process" that is related to the beloved is the result of the profound desire to recover the loss of this divine consciousness through the use of poetry. For that reason, Abel Martín defines poetry as "the aspiration to integral consciousness" and he insists that "Poetry is also the child of the great failure of love" (OPP, pp. 331-332). Therefore, we will now study the relation of the beloved to the integral consciousness in which both the individual and the divine consciousness are united.

THE NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

Although the effort to extend the limits of human consciousness has existed for many centuries, during the first half of the Twentieth Century and, especially, during the period from 1960 to 1980, we have seen the publication of a growing number of books that describe the emergence of a new type of consciousness. One example is the book of Eduardo A. Azcuy, *Heavenly Archetypes and Symbols*, in which he describes the appearance of certain archetypal symbols that mark the beginning of a "new level of consciousness" along with what he calls the "possibility of a transcendental change" in the collective psyche. Similar to the words of Antonio Machado that were quoted in the "Introduction" to this book, Azcuy feels that humanity is about to enter a new period of spiritual awareness: "If, as it has been prophesied, it is true that we are on verge of an integral *renovatio* in which our mental capacities will be greatly amplified, it is not excessive to speculate about the beginning of a new period of civilization which will make it possible for man to reestablish his contact with the Kingdom of Heaven, together with the final amalgamation of all human cultures."²⁶ I will now examine the theme of the beloved in Machado's work from the point of view of this "new consciousness" with special emphasis on what has been said in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James, and in *Cosmic Consciousness* by Richard Maurice Bucke. First we will see what Bucke has to say about the evolution of consciousness, and then we will see what James says about different states of consciousness. Following that we will examine the characteristics of consciousness that are described in these books and, finally, we will see the relation of all this to the work of Antonio Machado.

²⁶ Eduardo A. Azcuy, *Arquetipos y símbolos celestes* (Buenos Aires: Fernando García Cambeiro, 1976), p. 10. In her monumental work, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1980), Marilyn Ferguson makes a systematic study of the change in human consciousness that has occurred during the past few decades. The "conspiracy" referred to in the title is not an organized effort, but rather the result of similar attitudes that produced a radical change in our view of reality.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The Canadian psychologist Richard Maurice Bucke, who was also the friend and the biographer of Walt Whitman, published his book, *Cosmic Consciousness*, in 1901. According to Bucke, cosmic consciousness is a superior form of awareness that until now few people have experienced. He believes, however, that just as the human race has evolved from the simple consciousness of animals to self-consciousness, we will all eventually possess what he calls the "Cosmic Sense."²⁷ He himself has had it, and he feels that he has discovered evidence of a similar state in other historical figures, such as the Buddha, the Christ, Saint Paul, Plotinus, Mohammed, Dante, Bartolomé de las Casas, Saint John of the Cross, Francis Bacon, Jacob Böhme, William Blake, Honoré de Balzac, Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter. He also studies 36 other cases which he considers "minor or doubtful."

I do not intend to discuss most of Bucke's cases, but in view of what we have said about his importance for Machado's work, I will mention what he says about Dante. When he studies Dante, Bucke maintains, and he backs it up with several citations, that "Beatrice" is a symbolic name that Dante used to represent his own version of cosmic consciousness: "Beatrice—'Making Happy'—is the Cosmic Sense (which, in fact... makes happy). The name may have been suggested by a beautiful girl (so named). If so, the coincidence is curious" (p. 133). In what follows we will see that what Bucke says can also be applied to the "beloved" of Antonio Machado, but first I will try to answer the questions of those who have denied the importance of a non-rational state of awareness.

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Human beings have often believed, instinctively, in what their intuitive consciousness tells them, but during the past two centuries the increasing emphasis that has been given to rational thought has caused many people to lose faith in their intuition. In spite of this, however, there are still some who believe that science has proved the importance of a non-rational consciousness.

The American psychologist and philosopher William James mentions this point in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902. "I cannot but think," James writes, "that the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that science is the discovery, first made in 1886, that in certain subjects at least, there is not only the consciousness of ordinary fields, with its usual centre and margin, but an addition thereto in the shape of a set of memories, thoughts, and feelings which are extra-marginal and outside of the primary consciousness altogether... In particular this discovery of a consciousness existing beyond the field, or subliminally... casts light on many phenomena of religious biography."²⁸ This means, James says, that

²⁸ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Mentor, 1958), p. 188

²⁷ Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (New York: Dutton, 1969), pp. 1-18.

within our mind there are several different levels or states of consciousness; as he puts it, "our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different," and then he makes this important observation: "No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded" (p. 298). James mentions several different examples of non-rational consciousness, among which he includes the "cosmic consciousness" of R. M. Bucke, whose book he describes as "highly interesting" (p. 306). James also says that the "cosmic consciousness" which Bucke describes is very similar to the "mystical state" which he has studied in his own book.

James feels that the discovery of this state of cosmic or mystical consciousness has a definite metaphysical importance. He states that if someone were to ask him about the existence of God and the possible influence of superior forces on the life of human beings, he would have to answer that "it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so might be our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them... If there be higher powers able to impress us, they may get access to us only through the subliminal door" (p. 195).

James also feels that our non-rational knowledge is just as important as what we learn through the use of reason: "Our own more 'rational' beliefs are based on evidence exactly similar in nature to that which mystics quote for theirs. Our senses, namely, have assured us of certain states of fact; but mystical experiences are as direct perceptions of fact for those who have them as any sensations ever were for us" (p. 324). Then James responds to those who still insist on the supremacy of reason: "Yet, I repeat once more, the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe." Then he goes on to say that "there can never be a state of facts to which new meaning may not truthfully be added, provided the mind ascend to a more enveloping point of view. It must always remain an open question whether mystical states may not possibly be such superior points of view, windows through which the mind looks out upon a more extensive and inclusive world... [Knowledge of this] wider world of meanings, and the serious dealing with it, might, in spite of all the perplexity, be indispensable stages in our approach to the final fullness of the truth... Mystical states... may, interpreted in one way or another, be after all the truest of insights into the meaning of this life" (pp. 327-328).²⁹

²⁹ Aldous Huxley has also commented on the relative importance of the different states of consciousness: "Normal consciousness is very useful and, in the majority of cases, an indispensable state of the human mind; but it is in no way the only form of consciousness, nor is it, in all circumstances, the best. In the measure that he transcends his self and his ordinary consciousness, the mystic is able to increase his vision, and he can look more deeply into the depths of our existence"; *Moksha: Writings of Psychedelic and Visionary Experience*, edited by Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer (New York: Stonehill Publishing Co., 1977), p. 149. A similar description of the different states of consciousness by another Spanish writer comes from *The Wonderful Lamp (La lámpara maravillosa)*, by Machado's friend, Ramón del Valle Inclán:

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MYSTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

James and Bucke both agree that the nature of mystical consciousness is essentially the same for all those who have experienced it. (James speaks of the "unanimity" of the mystics [p. 325], and Bucke observes: "the reports of those who have had cosmic consciousness correspond in all essentials" [p. 71].) As an example of this type of experience we can cite the account—told in third person—of Bucke himself. He begins by saying that during a visit to an unnamed English city he was returning from a pleasant evening of discussing poetry with friends. He then continues:

He was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment. All at once, without warning of any kind, he found himself wrapped around as it were by a flame-colored cloud. For an instant he thought of fire, some sudden conflagration in the great city; the next, he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Into his brain streamed one momentary lightning-flash of the Brahmic Splendor which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic Bliss, leaving thence-forward for always an aftertaste of heaven. Among other things he did not come to believe, he saw and knew that the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love and that the happiness of every one is in the long run absolutely certain. He claims he learned more within the few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study, and that he learned much that no study could ever have taught (pp. 9-10).³⁰

Then, James offers the following description of the mystical state that is based on the cases he has studied:

It is natural that those who personally have traversed such an experience should carry away a feeling of its being a miracle rather than a natural process. Voices are often heard, lights seen, or visions witnessed; automatic motor phenomena occur; and it always seems, after the surrender of the personal will, as if an extraneous higher power had flooded in and taken possession. Moreover the sense of renovation, safety, cleanness, rightness, can be so marvelous and jubilant as well to warrant one's belief in a radically new substantial nature (p. 185).

Now, after seeing these general descriptions, we will examine several specific elements of the mystical experience, and then we will see their relation to Machado's work.

Reminiscent of Machado's poem that begins "There are two modes of consciousness...", Valle declares: "There are two types of knowledge that the mystics refer to as Meditation and Contemplation. Meditation [rational consciousness] is that chain of rational concepts through which one arrives at the truth, and Contemplation [mystical consciousness] is the truth itself that becomes our own substance, without the path that links reason to reason and thought to thought. Contemplation is an absolute way of knowing: a loving, quiet, delightful intuition through which the soul enjoys the world's beauty, without speech, in divine darkness: It is like a mystical exegesis of all knowledge and the supreme way of arriving at communion with the All"; *La lámpara maravillosa* in *Obras Escogidas*, Vol. I (Madrid: Aguilar, 1974), p. 521.

³⁰ A Spanish version of Bucke's experience is quoted by Eduardo A. Azcuy, Op. cit., p. 168.

One of the most frequent characteristics of the mystical state is a vision of light: "The person, suddenly, without warning, has a sense of being immersed in a flame, or rose-colored cloud, or perhaps rather a sense that the mind is filled with such a cloud of haze" (Bucke, p. 72). Normally the illumination only lasts for an instant, and for that reason it is often compared to a flash of lightning. Sometimes it is so strong and so startling that the person thinks they are going mad. James has also observed that the mystical experience is often accompanied by "luminous phenomena," and he says: "such reports of photisms [the psychological term] are indeed far from uncommon" (p. 201).³¹

In a letter to Unamuno, Machado has written that "all our efforts ought to move toward the light, toward consciousness."³² Many of those who have written about Machado's work have looked at it from a strictly rational point of view and have therefore not been willing to accept the idea that he was describing a mystical experience. Nevertheless, José Machado has observed that his brother was dominated by "a constant desire for spiritual renewal" (p. 19) and the poet's experiences which are caused by this desire are almost identical to those described by Bucke and James. José tells us that he has been a witness of the "frequent abstractions" of the poet and that "in these moments, so frequent in him and which spiritualists would perhaps call a *trance* state, one could not speak to him of anything and would have to wait until they passed" (p. 35). Then, in a compelling description of his brother's conduct, José declares that in these moments of solitary meditation Antonio at times experienced a sort of instantaneous illumination in which the presence of the Supreme Being was revealed:

What reveals the true God to the Poet is the wonder of creation in the moment when the spark which illuminates it appears. God is manifested in an instantaneous splendor that rarely occurs in the life of mortals. And one could almost say that Poets are, in some way, those who are chosen by this great wholeness that contains everything, in which is enclosed the revealing flash that is granted to those who possess the purest creative faculties. They are the only ones who are able to transmit to us "a few true words." Words heard in the silence of the most intimate solitude in which God appears and to which could be applied the words: "And in the blessed solitude your shadow appeared" (José Machado, p. 44).

³¹ Aldous Huxley describes the phenomenon of light associated with the mystical experience and insists that it is more than just a religious symbol: "I believe one can say for all religions, both primitive and modern, that light is the predominant symbol of the divine, but what is interesting is that this symbol is based on a psychological fact, that the light of the world, the interior light, enlightenment, the clear light of emptiness in Buddhist literature, that all of these... have their origin in psychological experiences" *Moksha*, Op. cit., p. 203. In his study, "The experience of mystical light in celestial beings," Eduardo A. Azcuay also writes: "The experience of light is equivalent to transcending the world of the senses, of penetrating another level of reality, of reaching the very essence of life... The appearance of light acts on the unconscious, awakening the archetype of divinity, and is capable of provoking disturbances of specific numinous nature. In all types of symbolism the experience of light signifies an inner transformation and the entry into another level of reality" in *Arquetipos y símbolos celestes*, Op. cit., pp. 135-136.

³² In Manuel García Blanco, "Cartas inéditas de Antonio Machado a Unamuno," *Revista hispánica moderna*, XXII, 2 (abril 1956), p. 99

James has observed that the mystical experience seems to have a close relationship to the exposure to a natural environment: "Certain aspects of nature seem to have a peculiar power of awakening such mystical moods. Most of the striking cases which I have collected have occurred out of doors" (pp. 302-303). José Machado also says that this mystical illumination occurred when his brother searched for God in nature: "One sees in Antonio a constant desire for communion with nature... When he found himself in nature, our poet was able to distinguish something essential by the light of an instantaneous revealing flash" (p. 44).

José Bergamín is another witness of the poet's life whose "personal memory" is based on "a friendly dialogue which lasted for many years." Bergamín also describes Machado's faith as the result of a mystical illumination: "It is like seeing visions (an astonishing, marvelous vision, Dante called it). It is an enlightened form of seeing which blinds both will and reason which are struck by the revealing flash, like Paul on the road to Damascus... It is a living experience of God, like the truth of the flame of fire which illuminates and burns us. This is how poetic evidence was given by Saint Catalina of Siena, Saint Teresa, and Saint John of the Cross..., the mystical and theological teachers of our Antonio Machado."³³

In Machado's poetry there are frequent descriptions of this instantaneous "revealing flash" which is often associated with the presence of the beloved. An early reference is found in poem LXII:

The cloud is rent: the rainbow
glowing in the sky,
and the countryside enveloped
in a sheet of rain and sunshine.
I awoke. Who is it that disturbs
the magic glass of my dream?
My heart was beating
with wide-open amazement.
...The lemon grove in flower,
the cypress trees in the orchard,
the green meadow, the sun, the water, the rainbow...
and the water in your hair!...
And the entire memory was lost
like a soap bubble in the wind (pp. 114-115).

This poem describes a short alteration in the poet's consciousness when he awakens momentarily from the dream of life and begins to see a new world. First, we have the typical image of the cloud that is torn open to reveal the light. Then, there is confusion and wonder, and his heart is "amazed" because he is not used to this sensation of intensified consciousness. He feels "wide-open," because he is part of all that is. The beloved's presence is suggested by the phrase: "the water in your hair!..." Like the experience of cosmic consciousness described by Bucke, this vision lasts for only a few seconds, and then it disappears as quickly as it occurred.

³³ José Bergamín's words are from the Prologue of a book by José María González Ruiz: *La teología de Antonio Machado* (Barcelona: Editorial Fontanella & Madrid: Ediciones Marova, 1975), p. 14.

James comments on the transitory nature of these experiences when he observes that, except in rare cases, the mystical state does not last for any length of time before it fades into normal consciousness. He goes on to say that these mystical states are difficult to describe but that when they reappear their effect can be cumulative: "when faded, their quality can but imperfectly be reproduced in memory; but when they recur it is recognized; and from one recurrence to another it is susceptible of continuous development in what is felt as inner richness and importance" (James, p. 293).

In what follows, I will comment on the chronology of these experiences with the beloved, but here I can say that for Machado these luminous visions are repeated several times and, like James has said, they seem to expand and intensify. In the sonnet "Love in the mountains" from *New Songs*, he describes another vision of light, and the emotion which accompanies it is much stronger than what was described in poem LXII:

One afternoon he was riding through
the grayish rocks of a steep mountain range.
The leaden balloon of the thunderstorm
bounced from mountain to mountain.
Suddenly, beneath a tall pine
on the edge of the precipice,
a flash of lightning made his horse rear up.
Jerking the reins, he returned to the path.
And there he saw the cloud torn open
and, in the opening, the sharp peaks
of another longer, higher mountain range
—it seemed like a lightning bolt of stone—.
And did he see the face of God? He saw his beloved.
He shouted: to die in these cold mountains! (OPP, p. 293).

Once more the cloud is rent and a burst of light illuminates a mountain range of living rock—"it seemed like a lightning bolt of stone"—that belongs to a superior state of being. The horse represents his rational consciousness, which is startled and must be brought under control—"Jerking the reins, he returned to the path"—by his new, non-rational mind. The fear of dying is felt by the rational self that has ceased to exist,³⁴ as the poet enters a mystical state where he sees the face of his divine beloved.

In his later poems Machado describes this illuminating flash with even greater frequency, and it is still almost always associated with the presence of the beloved. In the third sonnet from "Dream dialogues," he writes:

³⁴ This moment of death is also one of spiritual rebirth. In the book where he writes about his own transformation of consciousness, Franklin Merrell-Wolff describes the death that precedes the awakening to a state of mystical consciousness. As he explains it: "The Awakening, when viewed from the relative perspective, is a 'being born,' and a 'being born' is a 'dying' to the antecedent condition... It is simply the anciently uttered and repeatedly formulated Law: 'The self of matter and the Self of Spirit cannot meet...'. The antecedent condition of Awakening to THAT is a dying to this, in a mystical sense. [...] This mystic death is not the death of the body... In one sense, it is death of attachment to matter, or to the world as object. In a deeper sense, it is death of personal egotism"; *Pathways Through to Space: A Personal Report of Transformation in Consciousness* (New York: Warner, 1973), p. 200.

The glowing embers of twilight, my lady,
the dark storm cloud torn apart,
have painted on the grey rock of
an extended hillside a resplendent dawn.

A dawn congealed in cold rock
that frightens and startles the traveler
more than a fierce lion on a clear day
or, in the mouth of a cave, a giant bear.

With the flames of love burning, ignited
by a troubled dream of hope and fear,
I go toward the sea, toward forgetfulness
—unlike these rocks that enter night
as the darkened planet turns—.

Don't try to call me; I can't come back (OPP, p. 305).

Once again Machado uses the image of the cloud that is rent, the splendor of the new day, and the sensations of fear and hope to show an alteration in the state of his consciousness; he feels fear because this change is new and unknown, and he feels hope because he has reestablished contact with his "lady," his beloved. As in the previous poem, he feels the end of his former existence: the "darkened planet"—the physical world—continues its cycle of days and nights, but the poet "forgets" the things of this world and continues on the path toward the "sea"—the unknown—toward the Great Wholeness which is God. Once he has entered this new life, he echoes the claim made by both Bucke and James, that his life will never be the same—"Don't try to call me; I can't come back."³⁵

The fourth sonnet of Abel Martín in the *Apocryphal Songbook* contains another reference to Dante—it begins with the first phrase of the *Divine Comedy*—and another description of psychic illumination produced by his beloved:

Nel mezzo del camin my breast was pierced
by the arrow of a timeless love.
That it had long followed me unerringly
was shown by the accuracy of its living ray (OPP, ;. 323).

Some writers have felt that this poem contains a reference to Machado's contact with a real woman, but it is also clear that Machado—like Dante—is describing a state of mystical consciousness, whose "living ray" had followed him for many years, and had now brought him the memory of his beloved even more clearly and more completely.

In the letters published by Concha Espina, Machado also mentions a vision of light that is associated with the presence of his "goddess"; in one of his letters he speaks

³⁵ In *The Wonderful Lamp*, Valle Inclán describes several experiences of mystical consciousness that have the same elements as Machado's experience: for example, the description of what happens when he is traveling through the country that he had known as a child, and when he enters a cathedral; *La lámpara maravillosa*, Op. cit., pp. 526-528. Just like his friend and fellow poet Machado, Valle Inclán enters another world that is inundated with light while his confused soul is filled with terror and love when he feels connected to the Whole that surrounds him. Valle also mentions several other elements that will be discussed in what follows: a sensation of timelessness, an identification with the whole, and the vain attempt to describe what he feels with ordinary words.

of "the radiant surprise" of her arrival (Concha Espina, p. 129); in another letter he says: "I recognized you immediately..., my goddess..., by the imaginary halo or crown that always envelops your figure in the eyes of your poet" (pp. 16-17); and finally: "Everything for me is illuminated when I see you" (p. 35).

In the letters Machado also mentions the sensation of being reborn after the contact with his beloved: "you have made me another man with your love" (p. 23) and, as in the poems quoted earlier, he looks down on the ordinary life he leads without the presence of his beloved: "Outside of these moments when we see each other, the rest of my life is worth nothing; nothing, my goddess! I swear to you that nothing in it makes me happy: not successes, not flattery, nor literary fame..." (p. 44). For those who have been illuminated by the divine spirit it is difficult, if not impossible, to readapt themselves to the "dream" of the world produced by the physical senses.

A REVELATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Accompanying or immediately after the vision of light there is often an burst of new knowledge; James refers to this as the "noetic quality" of the mystical experience, which he describes in the following way: "Although so similar to states of feeling, mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance...; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time" (James, p. 293). James feels that most cases of mystical revelation are "on the whole pantheistic and optimistic" (p. 323). Bucke has also observed that this revelation brings with it a sensation of order and harmony in which the entire universe is reflected (for this reason he uses the term "cosmic consciousness"). Those who have this experience feel that the world "is in very truth a living presence" and they know, without knowing how, that "the foundation principle of the world is what we call love" (Bucke, p. 73). Likewise, in the previous section we saw that Jung also spoke of this phenomenon when he referred to the anima as "an angel of light" who reveals to man a vision of cosmic order, together with an understanding of the ancient mysteries.

Here there are also several points of contact with Machado's work. The idea of the world as a "living presence" reminds us of his reference to the physical world as a "lightning bolt of stone" in the sonnet, "Love in the Mountains." On several occasions the mystical beloved reveals knowledge to the poet and it is clear that he has felt the same sense of cosmic order which results in his "pantheistic conception" of reality, and his definition of poetry as "the aspiration to integral consciousness." Perhaps the best example of cosmic vision associated with the beloved is seen in the third part of "Songs to Guiomar" which was mentioned in the previous section. Remember also, the vision of cosmic order that is based on love in the poem, "To the great fullness, or integral consciousness," which concludes with the following lines:

Everything changes but still remains,
everything thinks,
like a coin
in a dream that passes
from hand to hand.
Full of love, the rose and the thistle,
the poppy and the tassel
all come from the same seed.
Harmony:
everything sings in the light.
The forms of zero are erased;
once again we see,
bubbling up from the source,
the living waters of being (OPP, p. 337).

A FEELING OF IMMORTALITY

Basing himself in part on his own experience, Bucke states that those who have cosmic consciousness feel that all things have an eternal essence and that nothing is destroyed. This sensation of permanence makes them lose their fear of death because they are certain of having an immortal soul. This sense of security is not the result of an intellectual conviction, but of something more basic, like the certainty of having a permanent individuality (Bucke, p. 74). James observes that those who experience a mystical state feel that "eternity is timeless, that our 'immortality,' since we live in the eternal, is not so much future as already here and now" (p. 323).

Since it seems to be true that Machado has had an experience similar to those described by James and Bucke, we now have a reasonable explanation for his faith in life after death which we studied in Chapter III. This faith is not just the result of his metaphysical theories; he has also had a direct experience of the permanent self in a moment of cosmic, or as he calls it, "integral consciousness."

PERSONAL EFFECTS OF THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Another important element of the mystical experience that Bucke has observed is a sensation of intense happiness. He refers to it as a moment of "ecstasy," when the person "is, as it were, bathed in an emotion of joy, assurance, triumph, 'salvation'" (p. 73). James agrees with this observation, that the most characteristic element of a mystical conversion is "the ecstasy of happiness" it produces (p. 203). Nevertheless, there are also people of a more somber nature—as examples, James mentions Tolstoy and Pascal—whose melancholy temperament has caused their conversion to bring about a mystical experience where the happiness they feel is less intense.³⁶

³⁶ Franklin Merrell-Wolff says that the Awakening is not always accompanied by a sensation of happiness, especially when the Absolute Being (he refers to it as *Atman*) is reached through the path of knowledge. For this person, the Supreme Being is seen as Knowledge or Wisdom, with less emphasis on joy or happiness; *Pathways Through To Space*, Op. cit., p. 53.

Antonio Machado undoubtedly belongs to this latter group of people with somber temperament. His brother José states that during his entire life the poet suffered because of the "anguish which the inevitable monotony of life produced in him" (José Machado, p. 17). This seems to be the price that he had to pay for having an intense sensibility which made him see that his deepest desires had not been realized. The feeling of melancholy that permeated his life and which also appears at times in his poetry was perhaps caused by the sense of loss that tormented the poet after the death of his wife, and by his unsuccessful efforts to recover the feeling of divine love. On at least one occasion, however, Machado was able to experience a powerful sensation of joy when he felt the presence of his beloved; in one of the letters he writes: "What happiness, Guiomar, when I see you!" (Concha Espina, p. 42).

In his book, James says that after a mystical conversion the person usually loses the desire for many physical pleasures—alcohol, tobacco, etc.—and in some cases there is also a tendency toward asceticism. This aspect of Machado's character will be studied more completely in Chapter VII, but here we can recall his rejection of worldly pleasures when he tells his beloved that, after feeling her presence, worldly desires mean absolutely nothing to him (p. 44). In several early poems, the poet describes his struggle with desire, symbolized by "thirst"; but in 1924 when he published his book, *New Songs*, with several references to mystical illumination, we also find a description of the poet when he speaks of "this sunken mouth / that no longer feels thirst" (OPP. 290).

For his part, Bucke has also made several observations regarding the character and the appearance of persons who have been illuminated by the experience of cosmic consciousness: "Cosmic consciousness, then, appears in individuals mostly of the male sex, who are otherwise highly developed—men of good intellect, of high moral qualities, of superior physique" (p. 65). It is known that in his later years Machado took little care of his physical appearance—"you already know the shabby condition of my clothes"—but there are also frequent references to his superior moral character. Pérez Ferrero describes an incident that shows both these aspects of the poet's character; he says that when Unamuno was in Madrid, he visited the café where the Machado brothers had their *tertulia*, and when he arrived at the door he announced: "I am here to greet the man with the shabbiest clothes and the purest soul of any person I know: Don Antonio Machado."³⁷ José Machado affirms, nevertheless, that when he was young, Antonio "cut a fine figure" (José Machado, p. 93), and with regard to the poet's character, he writes: "Antonio was at all times essentially good-natured and warmhearted" (p. 3); then, later he adds: "He was benevolent and considerate. His compassionate nature was always open to everything and everyone to the highest degree, and in the most exemplary way" (p. 26).

Bucke has also said that during, or after the moment of illumination, there is sometimes a change in the physical appearance of the person; this change is similar to the expression one has in a moment of great joy (he himself had seen a similar change in the appearance of Walt Whitman). In some of the most notable cases, like that of Dante or Christ, the change resembles a real "transfiguration," when their body emits a sort of

³⁷ Miguel Pérez Ferrero, *Vida de Antonio Machado y Manuel* 2ª Edición (Madrid: Austral, 1953), p. 196.

spiritual glow that is visible to other people (Bucke, p. 75). As far as I know, none of his critics have written about a similar alteration in the appearance of Antonio Machado, but in one of the letters to Guiomar he himself speaks of a change in his features which happens during a *visit* by his beloved: "Yes, it is true, my face is illuminated when I see you. It is like what is described by Gonzalo de Berceo, a light shines out of my heart, and it is the light that is put into it by my goddess" (Concha Espina, p. 22). Once again one wonders how a man of great personal dignity like Machado could say something like this in a letter written to a woman, unless it was not in fact a letter, but a symbolic description of an experience that was impossible to describe in rational terms.

AN INEFFABLE EXPERIENCE

Like any non-rational or intuitive experience, everything that is related to mystical consciousness is difficult to describe with ordinary words. James has said that the content of mystical states cannot be communicated to another person; their ineffable quality is something which can only be "directly experienced" (James, p. 293). Bucke also tells us that words which are able to describe an intellectual concept are completely inadequate to describe an experience of cosmic consciousness, unless it is expressed in poetic terms, and even then only a partial description is possible (Bucke, p. 78).

On several occasions Machado mentions the difficulty of expressing himself in the presence of his beloved. In "Memories of dreaming, fever and dozing," a poem written with the intention of imitating the *Inferno* of Dante, the poet is illuminated once again by the presence of his beloved, but then he cannot speak:

The sun broke through the clouds
with its trumpets of silver.
The snow was no longer falling.
I saw her look out a moment
from the towers of forgetfulness.
I tried but was unable to cry out... (CLXXII, iii OOP, p. 362).

And in one of his letters Machado writes: "I still have not been able to express what I feel at your side. Nothing that I have written satisfies me, because I would like to say something completely different from what I have written so far. Because you have made me a different man with your love and this new man has not yet begun to sing" (Concha Espina, pp. 22-23). Even though he was a poet it seems that, like Jung, Machado has had difficulty finding the "right language" to describe the relations with his mystical beloved.

TWO PARTS OF THE SELF

We have already seen that James distinguishes between rational consciousness and what he calls the "extra-marginal" or "subliminal" consciousness, when a mystical experience occurs. Bucke has noticed this same division between the two levels of consciousness; he says that those who have experienced cosmic consciousness feel like they have a double self: one part that corresponds to the rational mind, and another belonging to intuitive or non-rational consciousness (Bucke, p. 62). In his autobiography,

Memories, Dreams, Reflections, Jung also describes the two parts of his consciousness, and he refers to them as "Personality 1"—the conscious self—and "Personality 2"—the self that belongs to the collective unconscious.³⁸

Machado also speaks of having a double self. In his poem, "Portrait" (XCVII) from *Fields of Castile*, he says: "I converse with the man who always goes with me" (OPP, p. 136); and in *New Songs* he tells us: "But look at the other in your mirror, / the other that is always with you" (CLXI, iv OPP, p. 271). Then, in "Proverbs and Songs," from *New Songs*, he tells us that the "you" he addresses in many poems is not another person, but his own inner self:

With the you of my song
I do not address you, my friend;
that you is I (CLXI, I, OPP, p. 279).

As he explains in another poem from this same group, Machado shows no interest in the ego and wants to search for the "you," which is his true self:

It is not the fundamental I
that the poet looks for,
but the essential you (CLXI, xxxvi, OOP, p. 277).

Now, after seeing the testimony of those who knew him, as well as the evidence of his poems and his metaphysics in the *Apocryphal Songbook*, it seems to be undeniable that Machado has in fact experienced a mystical state of consciousness like those studied by James and Bucke. It is also clear that, since it is difficult to describe the nature of this experience, Machado has personified his inner consciousness, like Dante, using the person of his "beloved." Now I will try to determine the approximate date of these experiences by studying the successive appearance of the beloved in the work of our poet. In this way it will be possible to clarify some other aspects of the mystery that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. And when I do this, I will discuss not only the poems dedicated to Guiomar, but also those which refer to the beloved before the poet's encounter with Pilar de Valderrama.

A CHRONOLOGY

Bucke has made a list of the persons he studied (p. 81), where he includes, among other things, their date of birth and also the age when they had their first experience of cosmic consciousness. This shows that, for the most part, the enlightenment occurred when the subject was in the prime of life, somewhere between the age of 30 and 40 years old, approximately. Bucke states that those who had the "cosmic sense" experienced it with differing degrees of intensity. Some, like Bucke himself, experienced it only once; others, on several occasions. The illuminating flash is always instantaneous, but the

³⁸ *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Op. cit., p. 45 and p. 87.

expansion of consciousness which follows can last for several hours or, in the most intense cases, for several days or weeks.

We can only determine in an approximate sense what age Machado might have been when he experienced the feelings he has described in the poems we have quoted. However, there are two periods of time that can be mentioned with some certainty. The first must have occurred during the years when Machado was writing his earliest poems; poem LXII where the "cloud is rent" and first revealing flash of light appears is from the year 1904, when the poet was 29 years old. The theme of the beloved appears in other poems from this period: poems X, XII, XV, XXIII, XXIX, XXXVII, XXXIX, LII, LXIV. All these poems are from *Solitude*, published in 1903, or in *Solitude, Galleries and Other Poems*, published in 1907.

In 1909 Machado is married to Leonor Izquierdo and in 1912 when he publishes *Fields of Castile*, the theme of the beloved has disappeared from his poetry. In the second edition, which appears in 1917, there are several poems dedicated to his dead wife, but in none of these poems do we find a description of the revealing light.

This changes, however, with the publication of *New Songs* in 1924. Here we find a group of poems where the central theme is an interior illumination, which seems to show that the poet has experienced another alteration in the state of his consciousness. First in this group is poem CLXII dedicated to "the Iberian giant, Miguel de Unamuno," a poem which was published for the first time in 1923 (when the poet was 48 years old) with the title "The Eyes." It describes an experience of the poet several years after the death of Leonor; he first mentions the desire to take refuge in the past with the memory of his wife, but time has passed and one day he realizes he can no longer remember the color of her eyes. He goes for a walk full of sadness with his heart "closed to love," and suddenly he sees a woman's eyes so luminous that he is captivated by their splendor:

In the dark shadows of a window
he saw two eyes shining. He lowered his
and continued walking. Like those! (OPP, p. 289).

Are these luminous eyes those of a real woman, or is this a metaphor to describe a new experience of cosmic consciousness? This cannot be a reference to Pilar de Valderrama, since Machado did not meet her until five years later, in 1928. It is also doubtful that, in a poem dedicated to Unamuno, he would describe something as mundane as the sight of a woman in the street; in view of the dedication, therefore, it seems almost certain that this was something more profound.

Then, at the beginning of a group of poems entitled "Glossing Ronsard and Other Poems" (CLXIV), Machado includes a dedication that mentions a woman: "A poet sends his portrait to a beautiful lady who also sent him hers" (OPP, p. 290). Because of the similarity of the topic and the proximity of these poems and the poem dedicated to Unamuno, I think it is clear that neither could be a reference to a real woman; therefore, they must be the personification of another moment of mystical or intuitive consciousness which the poet experienced in the solitude of his silent meditation.

OH, SOLITUDE, MY ONLY COMPANION

In the first two poems from this series that was dedicated to the woman of the portrait, Machado repeats his assertion that for some time now his heart has been closed to love. However, each poem includes the suggestion of an imminent change, an awakening to life and to love. Then, in the fourth poem entitled "This was my dream," the poet finally explains why his heart was closed:

...so during his long journey the pilgrim
pulled the reins in tight around his heart,
so he could wait for the diamantine verse
that was growing in the depths of his soul... (OPP, p. 292).

These words show that the poet was not interested in the love of a real woman, and that is why he had "pulled the reins in tight" around his desires. He did this in order to wait for the pure love that was there within his soul. In this way he prepared himself so that he would be ready to receive the light that was emitted by his true beloved. And as in other poems where he describes the influence of his mystical consciousness, the final lines of this poem suggest the sensation of a timeless existence that has no end:

And I saw a man who in his naked hand
held up, for all to see, the glowing coals of life,
without the ashes of Heraclitean fire (OPP, p. 292).

The "Heraclitean fire" representing time—the *panta rhei* of Greek philosophy—devours all material existence, but in this poem the "coals of life" burn without ashes, that is, without destruction or death.

Immediately after this poem is "Love in the mountains," the sonnet we have already discussed, where the cloud is rent and the poet sees his divine beloved. So the first poems from this series constitute a progression which culminates in this poem which contains one of Machado's clearest descriptions of mystical illumination.

After another series of poems, many of which are dedicated to other writers, there is a new group of poems which also have great importance for the theme of the beloved; they are four sonnets entitled "Dream dialogues." The first two describe the experience of human love, the love of the poet for his wife, Leonor. The third sonnet—"The glowing embers of twilight, my lady..." (OPP, p. 305)—has another description of mystical illumination which we have already discussed. Perhaps the most important poem in this group, however, is the fourth sonnet which sheds more light on the identity of the beloved at this time in the poet's life. Here Machado again describes the change in his life that he has mentioned in earlier poems and this time, when it occurs, he is completely alone:

Oh, solitude, my only companion,
 oh, muse of the miracle that gave words
 to my voice I had never asked for!
 Answer my question: with whom am I speaking?
 Separated from the noisy masquerade,
 I find relief from my lonely sadness
 with you, lady of the hidden countenance,
 always hidden when you speak to me.
 I now think it doesn't matter who I am;
 it is no longer the grave enigma of this visage
 that is reflected in my intimate mirror,
 but the mystery of your loving voice.
 Show me your face and let me see,
 fixed on me, your eyes of diamond (OPP, p. 306).

The problem of his personal identity no longer matters, as it did in poem XXXVII where he tries to see himself in a "hazy / labyrinth of mirrors" (OPP, p. 89). What concerns him now is the origin of the "loving voice" of his beloved that he hears in the silence of his inner consciousness. In this poem where the image of luminous eyes—"your eyes of diamond"—appears once again, Machado speaks with his beloved, repeating things that he has said in other poems and also in the letters, but the *only companion is his solitude*. He insists, moreover, that this invisible companion has been the motivation for his "words"—his poetry—and that everything has occurred spontaneously, without any request on his part. All this is explained by Abel Martín in the *Apocryphal Songbook* when he refers to the *absence* of the beloved: "This should not be interpreted... in a literal sense. The poet is not referring to a love story where passions were rejected or disdained. Here love itself is a sensation of absence" (OPP, p. 322). This does not mean that Machado never had relations with a real woman. But it seems to prove definitively that when he wrote these poems where his beloved appears, and when he formulates the theory of love that is part his metaphysics in the *Apocryphal Songbook*, he was thinking only of the companion of his solitary meditations who is the personification of his inner voice—his *anima*, or his mystical consciousness.

* * * * *

So now we have two plausible interpretations for the theme of the beloved in Machado's work: as a projection of his *anima*, or as the personification of his mystical consciousness. Although I tend to agree with those who feel that in the earlier poems, as well as in those which are dedicated to Guiomar, Machado describes only an ideal love, this does not deny that, at times, he may have used a real woman—Pilar de Valderrama—as the basis for the descriptions of his spiritual beloved. As proof of this, I will again refer to the poem where he compares himself to Dante:

Dante and I—pardon me, gentlemen—,
 have converted—pardon me, Lucía—,
 love into Theology (CXXXVI, xxv, OPP, p. 217).

It is clear that in this poem Machado asks for pardon from "Lucía"—the real woman—for having used her as the symbol of a more perfect love. It is also clear that in this poem he gives us the key—which many critics have ignored or refused to recognize—to all that he has said about love in his poems, and in the *Apocryphal Songbook*.

We must now bring to a conclusion our attempt to find the true reason for Machado's statements about his beloved. Did he ever assimilate the influence of the anima and arrive at the end of Jung's "process of individuation"? Was he ever successful in his attempt to see the "hidden face" of his invisible beloved? In the last part of this chapter I will try to answer these questions by examining the poems which are dedicated to Guiomar, because it is there that Machado has given us the most complete description of his relations with his beloved. And when we consider these poems, it doesn't matter if we think of the anima, or of the beloved as a symbol of a mystical experience. Because we will find that in the final analysis they are really two different interpretations of the same phenomenon.

4. THE POEMS DEDICATED TO GUIOMAR

Parts II and III of the "Songs to Guiomar" (CLXXIII) were published in 1929 in the *Revista de Occidente*. The first part of this group did not appear until Machado published his *Complete Poetry* in 1933. The "Other Songs to Guiomar" (CLXXIV) were first published in his *Complete Poetry* of 1936. This is the same time period when Machado composed the letters to Pilar de Valderrama which constitute a prose complement to the "Songs to Guiomar."

SUNLIGHT AND BELLS IN THE OLD TOWER

In the first part of "Songs to Guiomar," Machado asks a series of questions that express the doubts he experienced when he felt the presence of his beloved for the first time. He wants to know if she is the bitter product of his loneliness,

if she was a yellow lemon...

or if she represents the hope for a pure, new existence:

or the thread of a bright day...

He tries to determine if she represents the memory of his lost innocence:

The futile time
of a dormant lovely afternoon?

or the promise of a new spiritual illumination:

From mountain to mountain the glow
of a true dawn?

We find that in this poem from the poet's mature years he expresses the same doubts that he mentioned in poem XXIX from *Solitude*, when he asked his beloved:

Are you the thirst or the water in my path?
Tell me, my shy virgin companion.

The experience described in this poem is also similar to the moment when he feels the presence of his "invisible companion" in the sonnet, "Springtime," from *New Songs*:

it is you who flowers and is reborn...

and the experience of a mystical state which he describes in "Love in the Mountains," also from *New Songs*:

And did he see the face of God? He saw his beloved...

In these earlier poems the poet also experienced a mixture of confusion and joy during the struggle between his logical mind, which questions and doubts, and his intuitive mind, which patiently waits and loves.

Then, in the second "Song to Guiomar" (OPP, pp. 369-370), Machado seems to have resolved the doubts he expressed in the first. He now knows that the beloved was his companion during the timeless days of his paradisiacal origin:

I dreamed of you in a garden
high above the river, Guiomar,
a garden of a time that is locked
behind bars of cold iron.

And in that garden before the time of their separation, both parts of his soul were easily able to satisfy their thirst in the nearby fountain of divine love:

beside the sacred living water,
all is thirst and all is fountain.

Then, besides representing the woman whom Machado has known in a previous lifetime, Guiomar is also his other half, his "complementary one," and in the paradise that precedes their incarnation in this life, they both create a shared dream of life:

In that garden, Guiomar,
two hearts conceive a mutual
garden at the same time,
and our hours are joined
and intertwined...

Their togetherness was uninterrupted until the moment when they were reborn in the physical world, but then their union was dissolved in the Waters of Forgetfulness:

The grapes
of a dream—we are together—
we squeeze into a clear glass
and forget our double story...

And in the same moment that paradise was lost, the two lovers were also separated:

(One: Male and female,
although a gazelle and a lion,
come together to drink.
The Other: such a fortunate
love cannot be,
not even of a man and a woman:
two solitudes in one.)

Since then the soul has lived as "two solitudes in one" with the anguish of its double loss: that of its divine origin, and that of the complementary, other half of its primordial self.

In the third part of the "Songs to Guiomar" (OPP, pp. 370-371), the poet and his beloved have been united once again: "You are with me, Guiomar... [...] We are going on together: we are free..." Now what threatens them is the implacable God that is conceived by the logical thought which governs the physical world. But neither logic nor material existence can deter the progress of true love:

...although God, like the fierce king
in a story, is mounted on
the best horse of the wind,
although he might
wish a violent revenge,
although he might limit thinking,
no one can touch our free love...

The poet's attitude of detachment, and the love for his beloved, bring about a new experience of mystical enlightenment:

The storm brings a rainbow into the air
and into the planetary sadness of the mountain.
Sunlight and bells in the old tower...

Once again a mystical light bursts into his mind—"Sunlight and bells in the old tower"—and, as on other occasions when he feels the presence of his beloved, he also feels the timeless permanence of his existence:

Oh, afternoon of life and tranquility
that opposed the *panta rhei* with your stillness,
youthful afternoon that your poet loved!...

Then, the poet has a vision of cosmic order when

all is fused into a single melody,
one chorus of evenings and of dawns...

And, finally, the entire memory of this experience is dedicated to the poet's beloved:

To you, Guiomar, this nostalgia of mine.

So the three parts of this poem describe the entire history of the relationship between the poet and his spiritual beloved. In the first part he describes a reencounter with his beloved that causes the doubts created by his rational mind. In the second part the poet describes the memory of their former relationship that has been provoked by a new meeting with his beloved in this life. And in the third part, we return to the present when the poet tells us what happens after the reunion with his beloved. Thus, the "Songs to Guiomar" offer a recapitulation of what the poet has said about his beloved in the earlier poems.

TRANSFORMED INTO LIGHT, INTO A BRIGHT JEWEL

In "Other Songs to Guiomar" Machado no longer feels the doubt that he described at the beginning of the previous group of poems. This time he begins with a new description of the spiritual light that always surrounds the figure of his beloved:

Only your figure
like a bright flash
in my dark night!

In the lines that follow Machado mentions the experience of human love—"your rosy, dark flesh, / suddenly, Guiomar"—but then he goes on to discuss the importance of "forgetfulness." In this way a paradox is created when he says that it is necessary to forget his beloved, before real love can be felt: "In order to love you, I forget you" and again: "in love, forgetfulness adds the spice."

This paradox is only apparent, however, since the poet has a definite idea in mind. Although he is one with his beloved in the beginning—remember the words of Abel Martín (OPP, p. 320)—a separation occurs when the soul is born into the physical world, and in this life the spiritual beloved can never be one with the rational self. His contact with this elusive beloved cannot be produced consciously; it can only occur spontaneously.³⁹ This is what Machado means in the *Apocryphal Songbook* when he says: "Thus, an allure that attracts, repels / ... / ... / and is more accessible when more elusive" (OPP. 323). Because of this, the poet did not ask for the "miracle" that was produced by his solitary muse, and for this reason also he "pulled the reins in tight" around his desires to wait for the spark of true love that sometimes glows in his heart.

³⁹ What Machado is saying here is in complete agreement with the observations of William James. The person who has a mystical experience can make certain mental or physical preparations, but then he must ignore his personal desires and be essentially passive: "when the will has done its uttermost towards bringing one close to complete unification the last step must be left to other forces... In other words, self-surrender is indispensable" (James, p. 170); and later: "to exercise the personal will is still to live in the region of the imperfect self... When the new centre of personal energy has been subconsciously incubated... 'hands off' is the only word for us, it must burst forth unaided" (p. 172).

Thus, forgetfulness is a positive factor which lets the poet triumph over the absence of the beloved.⁴⁰ Only when he forgets the human aspect of love can he access a higher dimension of eternal values. This is confirmed by these words of Abel Martín: "Thanks to forgetfulness the poet can... pull out the roots of his spirit which are buried in the soil of the anecdotal and the trivial, in order to bind them more deeply into the subsoil or living rock of feeling, which does not evoke but instead—at least so it seems—illuminates new forms" (OPP, p. 411).⁴¹ And there is no doubt that Machado is thinking only of these eternal values, and not of the physical woman, when he writes:

All love is fantasy...
[...]
Nothing in love
is contradicted
by the fact that the beloved
has never existed (OPP, p. 412).

With regard to these words, which have often been misunderstood and which are so important for the theme of love in his work, José Machado has written: "Here the poet is absolutely uninterested in the real person; he only wants to achieve a timeless creation, as expressed by the words of his poem: 'Today is always still'" (José Machado, p. 86).

In the third part of "Other Songs to Guiomar," Machado describes what happens when he finally is able to "forget" the human aspect of love and enter a state of mystical consciousness, of union with the absolute being:

When the embers of love barely smolder,
the poet knows his voice swells,
and a mediocre chanter flaunts
his grief and hangs crepe on his viola;
but if love blazes with light, only
the pure melody is heard,
a mountain spring, anonymous and serene.
Under the blue forgetfulness the sacred waters
chant neither your name nor mine.
The clear metal has no trace of
the murky slag; the poet's verse
holds the desire for love that engendered it,
like a diamond with no memory
—a cold diamond—holds the earth's fire
transformed into light, into a bright jewel... (OPP, pp. 373-374.)

⁴⁰ Because of his own non-rational experience, Valle Inclán has a similar view of forgetfulness: "The more one forgets, the more he gains, because he learns to enjoy the world's beauty intuitively, to understand without formal concepts, nor cabalistic figures or rhetoric. The love of all things is the key to the greatest beauty and the one who loves with self-forgetfulness penetrates the world's meaning; he gains mystical knowledge and finds himself illuminated with an interior light, while renouncing the scholastic paths opened by the disputes of the sophists"; *La lámpara maravillosa*, Op. cit., p. 522.

⁴¹ José Machado tells us that, with the theme of forgetfulness, the poet "teaches us the way to distance ourselves from external reality. He is able to replace it with a spiritual reality, which is the only way to experience the miracle of eternal time" (Jose Machado, p. 86).

Like most of Machado's metaphysical thought, these lines, and those that follow, are impossible to understand if one does not view them from the perspective of the "new consciousness" which is the basis for the ideas discussed in this book. This is due, in large part, to the non-rational nature of the concepts that are impossible to comprehend if one follows the path of empirical logic. In the first lines of this poem, then, the poet declares that when love is nothing more than an infatuation—"when the embers of love barely smolder"—it produces only hollow banalities and clichés. But when passion is forgotten and spirit is lit by the light of true love—the love one feels during a moment of mystical consciousness—it produces words that express a pure, impersonal serenity. Then, Machado describes the feeling of losing himself in the absolute being—"Under the blue forgetfulness"—and what he experiences is similar to the ecstasy of the mystics, or better perhaps, the nirvana of the Buddhists.⁴² In this state of "integral consciousness" in which all egotism is forgotten or surpassed, neither the identity of the lover nor his beloved is recalled, because everything is immersed in the "sacred waters" that flow from the primordial fountain of the divine origin. Nothing remains of dark human passions; all that is left is the "clear metal" of the soul, which has now been purified. This is what the poet wishes: that his poetry may express "the desire for love" through which the human aspect of life—"the earth's fire"—is purified and is then converted into divine substance—"transformed into light, into a bright jewel."⁴³

It is significant that Machado's poem does not end with the previously quoted lines. In several earlier poems he expressed his fear that the immersion of his soul in

⁴² In Machado's thought "forgetfulness" is related to the state of nirvana that was discussed in Chapter III. This is confirmed by the fact that, just before he dies, Abel Martín asks for "A sea of forgetfulness"—these are the concluding words of poem CLXIX, "The final lamentations of Abel Martín" (OPP, p. 358)—and then Juan de Mairena tells us that his teacher was "perhaps more interested in the Buddhist state of nirvana than the paradise of the righteous" (OPP, p. 494).

⁴³ In his "Introduction" to *The Secret of the Golden Flower* translated by Richard Wilhelm, C. G. Jung describes a state of detachment—"forgetfulness" of worldly matters—taken from the *Hui Ming Ching*, using words that are very similar to what we have seen in the work of Machado:

By understanding the unconscious we free ourselves from its domination. That is the basis and also the aim of the instructions in our text. The pupil is taught how he must concentrate on the Light of the inmost region, and, at the same time, free himself from all outer and inner bondage. His life-will is guided toward a consciousness without content which none the less permits all contents to exist. The *Hui Ming Ching* says about this detachment:

A radiance of Light surrounds the world of the mind.
 We forget each other, quiet and pure, all-powerful and empty.
 Emptiness is lighted up by the radiance of the Heart of Heaven.
 The sea is smooth and mirrors the moon on its surface.
 The clouds vanish in blue space.
 The mountains shine clear.
 Consciousness dissolves itself in vision.
 The disk of the moon floats solitary.

The Secret of the Golden Flower, Translated by Richard Wilhelm, Commentary by C. G. Jung (New York: Causeway Books, 1975), p. 121.

the sea of the divine consciousness might mean the end of his existence as an individual. But now, after he has finally experienced his oneness with the absolute being, he participates in the miracle of resurrection described in the final stanza of his poem:

On the rose bush of rotting flesh the flower
of forgetfulness opens, and the unexpected flight
of a strange yellow and carmine butterfly
is seen rising from the bottom of a grave.
With the terror of an aroused viper
next to the lizard's coldness,
with the toad fascinated by the blue
dragonfly that flies above the river,
with the mountains of lead and ashes
above the golden fields
bewitched by the May sunshine,
a waft of miracles has been opened
—the poem's angel has willed it—
in the creative hand of forgetfulness... (OPP, p. 374).

Some of the images in these lines are difficult to interpret, but the "rotting flesh" in the first line must represent the death of the rational ego which is necessary before one can enter a state of mystical consciousness; it represents the "mystical death" of one who has lived within the limits and the desires of the physical world. But out of the putrefaction arises a "strange butterfly," the universal symbol of spiritual resurrection.⁴⁴ Here the butterfly represents the eternal soul which emerges from the cocoon of the mortal body⁴⁵ and then triumphs over three symbols of physical existence: the "lizard," the "toad" and the "mountains of lead and ashes." With the help of the poet's "angel"—his beloved—this new life is made possible by the "creative hand of forgetfulness," representing his detachment from worldly desires that allows this new existence to begin.

José Machado gives us an appropriate description of the final results of his brother's religious quest: "Thus it was that Antonio searched for God with God Himself, and neither ideologues, nor theologians, nor preachers were ever able to convince him... about a problem that can never be resolved from the outside, because it is so intimate and personal. If we add to this his lifelong effort to find God in nature, we will see that he has been a true example of *active* religiosity, and in this, as well as his poetry, he opens paths of infinite transcendence for others" (José Machado, p. 45). For Antonio Machado,

⁴⁴ According to J. E. Cirlot, the butterfly is the ancient symbol of the soul and its struggle to reach the light, and it also symbolizes the act of rebirth: *A Dictionary of Symbols* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), pp. 33-34.

⁴⁵ Like Machado, Franklin Merrell Wolff has used the image of a butterfly as a symbol of the rebirth into a superior state of consciousness. The worm is the ancient symbol of the consciousness of rational man which is limited by time and space; the cocoon represents the death of rational consciousness; and the butterfly then is the new, broader consciousness of the spiritual man who is free to enter a new dimension of reality; *Pathways Through to Space*, Op. cit., pp. 208-212.

poetry is not only the desire for artistic creation. As he tells us when he defines poetry as "the aspiration for integral consciousness," the poems we have just examined clearly demonstrate that poetry is his way to recover the totality of his Self, and to reunite himself with the Absolute Being, which is God. This is the legacy which Machado has left for all those who wish to follow him on the path to spiritual perfection.

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