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RUBEN DARIO'S FINAL PROFESSION OF PYTHAGOREAN FAITH*

THEODORE W. JENSEN

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At the risk of seeming presumptuous, but in the interest of promoting deserved scrutiny of this aspect of the poet's art, this writer suggests that Rubén Darío was, in fact, a *modernista* Neopythagorean. Pythagoreanism was not just a poetic device, but a way of life for Darío, whose interest commenced at an early age and continued evolving until his death. Furthermore, Rubén's failure to attain Pythagorean harmony in his own life, due to conflict between his Christian up-bringing and his pagan yearnings, was one of his great disappointments, and is reflected in the melancholy lines and verses of his final works.

Since there is scarcely space here to consider the major elements of Old Pythagoreanism and their mutation over the centuries into Neo Pythagoreanism, let alone investigate their role in the twentieth century Pythagorean Society's esoterica, let us instead pause briefly to outline those characteristics associated with Rubén's *pitagorismo*, what we might loosely describe as «Theosophic Pythagoreanism»:

1. A rhythmic conception of the universe. The universe consists of a series of dualisms, of opposing forces, unified and preserved from chaos by a divine cosmic harmony.
2. Number is the key and secret foundation of this harmony. Music represents the best example of the relation of number to harmony.
3. Immortality may be achieved through a series of reincarnations or transmigrations of the soul (metempsychosis), which need not reappear in human form.

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3. Immortality may be achieved through a series of reincarnations or transmigrations of the soul (metempsychosis), which need not reappear in human form.

4. A tendency to confuse Platonism, Orphism, and Pythagoreanism.
5. Great interest in the occult sciences, and also in the esoteric doctrines of oriental religions, as manifestations of Pythagorean correspondences.
6. A preoccupation with the confrontation between Old Christian or Jewish cultures and the Hellenic or Roman ones.
7. A rejection of positivism through an attack on its excesses occasioned by an unlimited, and consequently (and pythagorically) evil science, and its rejection of faith in favor of reason.

These were not arbitrary ideas, nor did they just happen to occur to Rubén through divine illumination. The first three are traditionally Pythagorean; the unusual nature of the others is derived from a variety of sources which influenced Darío and other *modernistas* of the epoch, especially his friends Leopoldo Lugones and Amado Nervo. Before dealing with the Pythagorean elements of Darío's works, some of the background of his sources must first be reviewed.

Darío's Pythagorean core was based on readings of classical sources such as Ovid and Plotinus, Heraclitus, Plato, and others.² But superimposed over those was a little-scrutinized, but vitally important, pseudo-Pythagorean influence: the Theosophical Society. Darío was touched deeply by Theosophy, in spite of a later disillusionment with its spokeswoman, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.³ Darío became a theosophist,⁴ one especially interested in Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*.⁵ He drew from its doctrines many ideas and motifs, especially those of the Pythagorean kind, which soon found their way into his works. Theosophy had an immediate influence on his short-stories, and Darío admitted that it contributed poetic inspiration. His theosophic poems, such as «AUN,» are at least vestigially Pythagorean.⁶

Theosophists believe that Theosophy was founded in the third century A.D. by the initiator of the Neoplatonist movement, Ammonias Saccas, and that the Neopythagoreans Porphyry, Plotinus, and Iamblichus were indeed theosophists.⁷ This would explain why there is a strong Pythagorean basis to theosophical doctrines, and yet also why—through the Neopythagorean influence—they stress the occult nature of those Pythagorean elements.

Darío encountered in Blavatsky's tomes many Pythagorean teachings, ones not set forth as theories, but rather as arcane truths, lost or concealed from general knowledge. For instance, Blavatsky discusses healing and medicinal powers of music, listing examples from ancient to modern times (*Iris*, I, 215). She defends at length the Pythagorean theory of the music of the spheres, using scientific evidence of her era to substantiate it (*Iris*, I, 275). She discusses the microcosmic nature of man, linking it to the

Pythagorean Monad (*Iris*, I, 212). She suggests that Pythagorean metempsychosis would supply «every missing link in the chain of evolution» if modern scientists could be induced to study it closely (*Iris*, I, 9), and deliberates upon it herself in great detail (*Iris*, I, 328 & 351). She reviews Pythagorean sacred numbers (*Iris*, I, 9) and refers to Plato, who maintained that the Pythagorean 12 (Dodecahedron) was the geometrical figure employed in constructing the universe, as «the ardent disciple of Pythagoras» (*Iris*, I, 9). She states that all of Copernicus' theories were taken from Nicholas De Cusa's *De Docta Ignorantia*, and that De Cusa derived his data from «Hermes and the works of Pythagoras.»⁸ Blavatsky also presents the Neopythagorean concept of the nature of the soul as a basis for spiritualist theories, and an explanation for vampirism (*Iris*, I, 499), somnambulism, prophecy and clairvoyance (*Iris*, II, 588 & 591), and mesmerism (*Iris*, II, 588), emphasizing that Pythagoras himself was a mesmerist (*Iris*, II, 77). Pythagorean writings were done in code, said Blavatsky, so that to the initiate, mathematics—for example—really meant «Esoteric Science, Gnosis (magic)» (*Secret Doctrine*, III, 45).

One of the most striking theosophic themes, which greatly influenced Darío, is the relationship established between Pythagorean and Christian metaphysics. St. Luke is presented as a Pythagorean Essene, and Christian ideas are seen as being derived from those Pythagorean Essenes (*Iris*, II, 144). The Gospel of John is said to have been truly written by a Neopythagorean (*Iris*, II, 91). Says Blavatsky, «All that is grand and noble in Christian theology comes from Neoplatonism.» (*Secret Doctrine*, III, 307) In fact Blavatsky comes very close to claiming that Jesus himself was a Pythagorean, noting that he spent his youth with the Pythagorean Essenes (*Iris*, II, 548), and claiming that «All his sayings are in a Pythagorean spirit, when not verbatim repetitions.» (*Iris*, II, 337) She compared sentences from «Sextus, the Pythagorean,» with verses from the New Testament (*Iris*, II, 338). And still there is more, including an association of Pythagoreanism with the Orient and Middle East (*Iris*, I, 347). This assumes the form in Darío's works of a fascination for the meeting of pagan with Christian («Respono a Verlaine»), and his often noted pagan-Christian bipolarity.⁹ And finally, Blavatsky's scathing attacks against positivism and Comte must have highly influenced Darío. In any case, by 1890 he was quite anti-positivist, and that became more evident as Darío's interest in Pythagoreanism, theosophy and other esoteric philosophies increased.¹⁰

Another important source, although perhaps not as much so as Blavatsky, was Edouard Schuré, one of the leaders of spiritualism in later nineteenth century France. A significant fount of Pythagorean motifs, he is perhaps viewed too seriously by some scholars insofar as his Pythagorean expertise. While Schuré was a much more skillful writer than Blavatsky, their thoughts were very similar, they published in the same era, and—most intriguing—one chapter of Schuré's influential *Les Grandes Initiés* [*The Great Initiates*] was later published as *Pythagoras and the Delphic*

Mysteries, with slight alterations so that Pythagoras is called a theosophist, and Pythagoreanism the «very heart of the theosophic doctrine, the arcanum of religions and philosophies...raising a corner of the veil of Iris to the light of Greek genius.»¹¹ All the previously noted theosophic-Pythagorean statements of Blavatsky, and more, are to be discovered in Schuré's *Les Grands Initiés*. Schuré stresses, moreover, an association of Christ with Pythagoras, and Pythagoras with Apollo. The Apollo connection is already superbly studied by Erika Lorenz, and is an essential hidden influence in Rubén's poetry, and behind his fascination with Apollo and Orpheus.¹² Indeed, a seeming confusion of Orpheus and Pythagoras in Darío's spirit may be noted in these verses from «En las constelaciones» (1980) [*In the constellations*]:

En las constelaciones Pitágoras leía; Yo en las constelaciones
pitagóricas leo, pero se han confundido dentro del alma mía el
alma de Pitágoras en el alma de Orfeo.¹³

*[In the constellations Pythagoras would read; in the
Pythagorean constellations read I, but within my soul have
become confused the soul of Pythagoras in the soul of Orpheus.]*

This blend of Orphic and Pythagorean may be a direct influence of Schuré. Lorenz, in fact, sees a deeper meaning behind the main mythological images of Darío, which she believes mask a Pythagorean concept of universal harmony.¹⁴ Like Blavatsky, Schuré emphasizes the occult nature of Pythagorean teachings, noting that the term «esoteric» comes from the Pythagorean initiation ceremony. Schuré also links Pythagoras with the Egyptian «Mysteries,» magic, theurgy, Chaldean magic, the Persian Magi, and the Jewish Kabal.»¹⁵

With sources like Blavatsky and Schuré, it becomes more comprehensible how Darío and other *modernistas* derived some of their more unconventional Pythagorean beliefs. Yet, there were still other sources, also, ones more of inspiration, perhaps, than information. Among these must be listed Victor Hugo, Gérard de Nerval, Honore de Balzac (*Seráphîta*), Louis Ménard, Leconte de Lisle («Dies Irae»), Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, Eliphas Lévi, Franz Mesmer, Swedenborg, Antoine Fabre d'Olivet, Camille Flammarion, and Edgar Allan Poe.¹⁶ But let us now turn from Darío's Pythagorean sources, to his Pythagorean literature.

Darío's literary success is owed in part to the high artistic standards he set, ones rarely seen since the masters of the Spanish Golden Age. His works are beautiful in the Aristotelian manner: they elicit the highest pleasurable human experience, that of contemplation, the exercise of intellect upon concepts. The plots, when they exist, evince organization suggestive of design or appropriateness. Interior elements may appear to occur by chance, but there is ample evidence of a controlling desire. They evoke katharsis within

the reader. At times this takes the form of pity or fear, but most often it is that less-talked of katharsis which gratifies one's sense of human dignity. For his works were not didactic vehicles, but rather, ones which explored the relation of man and universe. That exploration frequently is expressed in Pythagorean terms, and explores Pythagorean ideals.

Like the real Pythagoras, Darío usually made his an hermetic or symbolistic exploration, accessible only to the «initiate.» These works are covertly Pythagorean, such as his poem «La tortuga de oro» [*The Golden Tortoise*].¹⁷ But at times his emotions could not be contained within the hermetic shell, and burst forth in full view of the non-initiate, as overtly Pythagorean manifestations.

His very earliest Pythagorean elements tended to be chiefly ornamental in appearance, yet sometimes concealed covert Pythagorean explorations. Three early short stories, for instance—«La historia de un picaflor» (1886) [*The Blue Bird*], and «El palacio del sol» (1887) [*The Palace of the Sun*]/—make use of Pythagorean-based Apollonian imagery and symbolism, and a beautiful manipulation of poetic space, which anticipates Gaston Bachelard,¹⁸ to disguise their Pythagorean core.¹⁹

In a previous study we have noted a Pythagorean-based motive for Rubén's verbal mystification-illumination, his poetic musicalization, and his flirtation with the occult.²⁰ But in this scrutiny, we will focus on some overt, and hence often strongly emotional, manifestations. This reduces the vast number of works to be considered, thereby perhaps overcoming one of the principal obstacles to understanding, since otherwise we might scarcely be able to view the forest because of the large number of trees. By so doing, we finally may uncover the bedrock of Darío's literary pythagoreanism.

As early as 1880, in poems such as «A ti» [*To Thee*], «Una lágrima» [*A Tear*], and «El poeta» [*The Poet*], Darío inserts Pythagorean elements. Yet it might be argued that these do not reflect a covert Pythagorean exploration, but perhaps only continue a long tradition of poetic ornamentation.²¹

But in 1882, in his long poem «El libro» [*The Book*], appears his first Pythagorean manifestation which is decisively not ornamentation. Containing references to the harmony of the spheres, universal harmony, macrocosmic and microcosmic correspondences, it associates these with a god of harmony. Yet, not the Christian God, but the Old Testament god, a Pythagorean one, who is the First Principle, the Pythagorean Monad, the number One:

«Hosanna» a Ti, Dios creador;
Dios sin triángulo, Dios Uno,
que no eres Siva ni Juno
Dios que me gozo en amarte...,
que nunca llega a tocarte
ni a comprenderte ninguno (p. 59).

/Hosana to Thee, creator God;
 God without triangle, God one,
 Who are not Siva nor Juno; God
 whom I joy in loving..., whom
 no one will ever succeed in
 touching nor in comprehending/

Besides a brash rejection of Christian for pagan, in this poem the young poet also personifies and exalts «The Book» in such a way as to cause one to wonder if the Nicaraguan autodidact had in mind that *Apocalypsis Goliae* of the Middle Ages, wherein Pythagoras is characterized as a man transformed into a book.²²

In «El velo de la reina Mab» (1887) [*«The Veil of Queen Mab»*], Darío for the first time openly reveals his association of artistic perfection with Pythagorean ideals, when the musician in the story states:

yo escucho todas las armonías, desde la lire de Terpandro hasta
 las fantasías orquestales de Wagner. Mis ideales brillan en medio
 de mis audacias de inspirado. Yo tengo la percepción del
 filósofo que oye la música de los astros.²³

/I listen to all the harmonies, from the lyre of Terpander to the
 orchestral fantasies of Wagner. My ideals shine in the midst of
 my inspired audacities. I possess the perception of the
 philosopher who hears the music of the spheres./

In the same year a most significant work appeared, his novelistic fragment *El hombre de oro* [*The Man of Gold*]. This work is a pivotal one, not only because for the first time in his narrative fiction he makes direct reference to Pythagoreanism, but because it reveals an intense psychological conflict within the great poet, which was deeply and indelibly to affect his work from this time onward.

In this narrative, Darío creates a purposeful dualistic point-counterpoint of opposing cultures: the pagan Greco-Roman (represented by a party in the home of a Roman aristocrat) and the Judeo-Christian (represented by a meeting of Christian who are hearing Malchus read a letter from Saint Paul). The meeting and the party occur simultaneously in Rome during the time of Tiberius. Lucius Varo is the novel's spokesman for what is good in the pagan culture, and Saint Paul—although not physically present—is the Christian prolocutor. This opposition of seeming opposites may be seen as Pythagorean in nature, denoting the initiation of another change of religions in the Pythagorean universe, in much the same manner that souls pass through different cycles. Schuré had noted that Pythagoras taught that entire races were reincarnated in cycles from planet to planet.²⁴ Similarly, as Greek culture was succeeded by Roman, so now would Chris-

tian succeed Roman.

Yet the passing of the old is never total. A portion of the old culture is always assimilated into the new one. Darío causes us to ponder this, through Varo's ruminations about the replacement of Saturn by Jupiter, and his speculations as to whether Jupiter, now confronted with Christ, felt the same uneasy anticipation as had Saturn.²⁵

Not only elements of its religion and art, but also Hellenic (and Pythagorean) philosophy had been absorbed into the Roman. Darío, in his first direct reference to Pythagoreanism, emphasizes that through the following statement by one of his Roman characters:

Los astros del cielo están en relación con nuestros destinos. Nuestras almas están influidas por la música pitagórica: hay en nuestro ser una parte que nos viene de la altura luminosa. Pues bien, así como los celestes astros están en continuo movimiento—y si lo suspendiesen cesaría el orden en la máquina del universo—, nuestra naturaleza nos impulsa también a no permanecer fijos en un solo punto...necesario nos es la traslación (p. 23).

[The stars of heaven are related to our destinies. Our souls are influenced by Pythagorean music: there is in our being a part that comes to us from the luminous heights. Well then, just as the celestial stars are in continual movement—and if they were stopped all order would cease in the machinery of the universe—our nature impels us also to not remain fixed in one place...movement is necessary for us.]

Some ideas of art, music and philosophy survive because they are good. Just as Darío encounters literary inspiration (and perhaps personal consolation) in Pythagorean themes, so too did Saint Augustine make use of some Pythagorean ideas to strengthen Christian theology. In this novel, Darío explores the use made of pagan ideas by the new Christians. For instance, Varo recalls how St. Paul—in an effort to convert him—claimed that he had seen Pan and his nymphs one day (p. 40). Paul himself is a most intriguing figure for Darío to dramatize here, since he was at the same time a Jew, a Christian, and a Roman citizen. Darío seems to be using him here to symbolize the continuence and synthesis of all these within the Pythagorean cosmos. Paul is referred to as «the new philosopher,» bringing to mind the man Aristotle termed the «first philosopher,» Pythagoras. Furthermore, the poet, Varo (an obvious alter-ego for Rubén) perceives a hidden, covert, pagan core deep within Paul: «A través de su aspereza, de su terquedad, de sus relámpagos, creérase oír un blando rumor de abejas» (p. 38) [*Through his gruffness, his stubbornness, and his brilliant flashes of wit, one could believe he heard a soft buzzing of bees*]/. Bees, we recall, are symbols for

souls in Neopythagorean writings,²⁶ and have been used also as a Hellenic symbol in Darío's poem «Interrogaciones» (1907).

In this context, Varo/Darío suggests that not all that should have been absorbed into Christianity was, in fact, accepted by the Christians. *Eros* (carnal love) is to be succeeded in the new order by *ágape* (love of God): «El cristianismo llamaba a los desheredados a un *ágape* fraternal bajo el amparo del Señor» (p. 41) [*«Christianity called the disinherited to a fraternal *ágape* under the protection of the Lord»*]. When St. Paul attacks *eros* as Roman sexual license, Varo protests, and defends it. Varo/Darío is not against *ágape*, but he is for *eros*, which he perceives as a natural biological reality which should not be suppressed (p. 40). Both are necessary in Darío's Pythagorean cosmos, and to exclude one is unnatural and disruptive. Pythagorean dualism advised that the universe is composed of opposite forces bound together by divine harmony. Excess if anything was evil; that was why Pythagoras taught continence and asceticism. Varo's defense of *eros* is clearly a reaction to what he perceives as an attempt by early Christians to totally eliminate it, while as the same time it may be rationalization for Rubén's libido.

Throughout this work Darío makes clear that he is not sympathetic with the Roman excesses in the name of *eros*: the homosexual advances upon helpless slaves (p. 25), for instance, or the casual intent to rape the Christian girl, Lucila. This is evil, and he welcomes moral changes in this regard. But Paul's apparent design to completely eradicate *eros*, rather than simply restrain it, is in itself evil, from Varo's point of view. It is excessive, and goes beyond natural limits. Darío's defense here of carnal love becomes one of the most predominant and important themes of his works. Called «panerotismo» [*paneroticism*] or «misticismo erótico» [*erotic mysticism*] by Pedro Salinas, this phenomenon has its Pythagorean roots exposed by Salinas also, albeit from a different perspective, when he notes that: «el poeta siente en el placer carnal como un medio de llegar a la unión con el principio mismo del mundo»²⁷ [*the poet senses, in carnal pleasure, a means of achieving union with the first principle of the world, itself*].

The dualistic structure and the *ágape-eros* conflict in *El hombre de oro* reflect an intense psychological conflict of Darío's. He is a modern hedonist. He loves pagan art, music, beauty, wine and carnal love. As a young man he rejects Christianity in «El libro,» brashly and stridently waving the banner of paganism. Yet five years later, in this novel, the latent alcoholic reveals that his Catholic up-bringing has begun to be felt through perceptions of guilt, and fear of heavenly retribution. Coupled with those is the drawing of compassion and admiration in him for the artistic, aesthetic and humanistic beauty of Christ the man, suffering and sacrificing himself for mankind. Rubén had been deeply drawn to Pythagoreanism because it was a beautiful pagan philosophy, one closely associated with both Apollo, patron of poets, and also with the Archetypal Musician, Orpheus. Pythagorean theories of dualism and harmony would seem to allow the

coexistence of both *eros* and *ágape*, and metempsychosis would permit the «sinner» a second chance. Still...could Rubén somehow retain his Pythagorean beliefs, within the framework of a Christian context? *El hombre de oro* is the first and best of a series of narrative works wherein he attempts, through his art (like Schuré and Blavatsky in their dogmas), to fuse Christian and Pythagorean. If an accommodation can be achieved in his art, then it might also succeed in life (reminiscent of Oscar Wilde's proposal that Life copies Art, in his essay «The Decay of Living»). A series of narrative explorations is launched concerning the occult in Christian miracles, the pagan metamorphosed into Christian, and other pagan-Christian confrontations: «La muerte de Salome» (1891) [*The Death of Salome*], «Palimpsesto I» (1893) [*Palimpsest I*], «En la batalla de las flores» (1893) [*In the Battle of Flowers*], «Voz de lejos» (1896) [*Voice from Afar*], «La leyenda de San Martín» (1897) [*The Legend of St. Martin*], «La fiesta de Roma» (1898) [*The Roman Party*], «Historia prodigiosa de la princesa Psiquia...» (1906) [*Prodigious History of the Princess Psiquia...*], «Palimpsesto II» (1908) [*Palimpsest II*], and «Huitzilopochtli» (1915). Six others have Biblical settings: «Hebraico» (1888), «El árbol del rey David» (1891) [*The Tree of King David*], «Las pérdidas de Juan Bueno» (1892) [*The Losses of Good John*], «Cuento de Noche Buena» (1893) [*Christmas Eve Story*], «El Salomón Negro» (1889) [*The Black Solomon*], and «Las tres reinas magas» (1912) [*The Three Wise Women*]. Three have Greco-Roman settings: «El sátiro sordo» (1888) [*The Deaf Satyr*], «Respecto a Horacio» (1893) [*Respect to Horace*], and «Las siete bastardas de Apolo» (1903) [*The Seven Bastards of Apollo*]. Yet three others, «La ninfa» (1887) [*The Nymph*], «Carta del país azul» (1888) [*Letter from the Blue Country*], and «Sor Filomela» (1894) reflect less obvious confrontations of pagan and Christian.

But in his later years we see Rubén in anguish at his failure to resolve the conflict between his pagan yearnings and his Christian fears. In his poem «Divina psiquis» (1905) [*Divine Psyche*] for instance, his soul—characterized as Psyche and as a butterfly—is torn between pagan (and Pythagorean) and Christian: «Entre la catedral y las ruinas paganas/vuelas, ¡oh Psiquis, oh alma mía!» (p. 753) [*Between the cathedral and pagan ruins you fly, oh Psyche, oh my soul!*].

Still, spurred on by an eerie visitation by the ghost of his dead friend, Jorge Castro,²⁸ and his anguish and guilt at his alcoholism, Rubén continued to manifest Pythagorean elements in his works. His «Ama tu ritmo» (1901) [*Love Your Rhythm*] was a totally Pythagorean statement by Rubén, almost as if from an initiation ceremony:

Ama tu ritmo, y ritma tus acciones
bajo su ley, así como tus versos;
eres un universo de universos
y tu alma una fuente de canciones.

La celeste unidad que presupones
 hará brotar en ti mundos diversos,
 y al resonar tus números dispersos
 pitagoriza en tus constelaciones.

Escucha la retórica divina
 del pájaro del aire y la nocturna
 irradiación geométrica adivina;
 mata la indiferencia taciturna
 y engarza perla y perla cristalina
 en donde la verdad vuelca su urna (p. 693).

/Love your rhythm, and rhythm your actions under its law, as well as your verses; you are a universe of universes and your soul a fount of songs. The celestial unity you presuppose will cause to sprout in your diverse worlds, and upon echoing your dispersed numbers, pythagorize in your constellations. Listen to the divine rhetoric of the airborne bird and divine the nocturnal geometric emanation; kill taciturn indifference and link pearl after crystalline pearl where truth tips her urn/.

Darío's poems «Metempsychosis» (1907) and «En las constelaciones» (1908) further substantiate the continuation of his Pythagorean ruminations. His short story «Mi Tía Rosa» (1913) [*My Aunt Rose*] is very important, since the narrator-poet is another obvious alter-ego for Rubén. In this tale he reveals again that his ideal music is Pythagorean; but even more significant, he links it for the first time with the erotic figure of Pan, proving that not only Apollo held that place of honor in Darío's kosmos: «Mi música, la pitagórica, que escuchaba en todas partes: Pan» (p. 332) [*My music, the Pythagorean music, that I would listen to everywhere: Pan*]. The context of the story implies that Rubén links Pythagorean music with *eros*, since Pan is usually so-associated, and appears here with Venus.

In his final works, Rubén communicates despair, fear of dying because of the excesses in his life, and sadness at having been unable to attain the solace of Christian belief. In his beautiful and brooding poem «La Cartuja» (1914) we experience one of Rubén's final Pythagorean professions, one which shows that he still is wistfully yearning for a synthesis of Christian and Pythagorean:

Sentir la unción de la divina mano,
 ver florecer de eterna luz mi anhelo
 y oír como un Pitágoras cristiano
 la música teológica del cielo. (p. 939)

/Oh to feel the unction of the divine hand, to see blossom from

eternal light my longing and hear, like a Christian Pythagoras,
the theological music of the heavens/.

Rubén Darío's other final profession is found in *El oro de Mallorca* (1913-1914) [*The Gold of Mallorca*], a clearly autobiographical novelistic fragment. Appearing shortly before his death, it provides an invaluable insight into his thoughts. Chapter Two—published the same month as «Mi tía Rosa» (which, we recall, linked Rubén's concept of music and poetry with both *eros* and Pythagoras, and was also autobiographical)—discloses that Darío is still a *modernista* Neopythagorean. Through his alter-ego, the musician Benjamin Itaspes, Rubén reveals in this bitter-sweet novel that his religion is a passion for art, and that his art is Pythagorean:

Pitágoras y Wagner tenían razón. La Música en su inmenso concepto lo abraza todo, lo material y lo espiritual, y por eso los griegos comprendían también en ese vocablo a la excelsa Poesía, a la Creadora. Y que el arte era de trascendencia consoladora y suprema sabía por experiencia propia, pues jamás había recurrido a él sin salir aliviado de su baño de luces y de correspondencias mágicas.²⁹

/Pythagoras and Wagner were right. Music in its immense concept embraces everything, material and spiritual, and consequently the Greeks comprehended also in that word Sublime and Creative Poetry. And that art was of a consoling and supreme importance he /Benjamin Itaspes/ knew through personal experience, since he had never turned to it without leaving soothed by its bath of lights and magical correspondences/.

Two years before his death at age forty seven, in this final important work, Rubén has penned a poignant final profession of Pythagorean faith, undisguised, and even more forceful in maturity than that intimated by the brash young poet of fifteen years in «El libro.» We know from his last poems that he still wished to embrace Christian beliefs; yet he could not reject his Pythagorean ideals. A more clear statement of his views can scarcely be imagined, unless the timid Nicaraguan genius were to revert to a frightening and defiant gesture, such as that his friend and fellow Neopythagorean *modernista*, Leopoldo Lugones, would someday make on the Isle of the Tigers.

NOTES

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1. Erika Lorenz, *Rubén Darío bajo el divino imperio de la música* (Managua: Academia Nicaragüense de la Lengua, 1960). Raymond Skyrme, *Rubén Darío and the Pythagorean Tradition* (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1975).
2. Charles Watland, *La formación literaria de Rubén Darío* (Managua: Publicaciones del Centenario de Rubén Darío, 1966), p. 115. Arturo Marasso, *Rubén Darío y su creación poética* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Kapelusz, 1954), pp. 28 and 101.
3. Angel Rama, *Rubén Darío: El mundo de los sueños* (San Juan: Univ. of Puerto Rico, 1973), pp. 71-74.
4. Enrique Anderson-Imbert, *La originalidad de Rubén Darío* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1967), p. 25.
5. Leopoldo Lugones (hijo), *Mi Padre: biografía de Leopoldo Lugones* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Centurión, 1949), p. 268.
6. Máximo Soto-Hall, *Revelaciones íntimas de Rubén Darío* (Buenos Aires: El «Ateneo» P. García, 1925), pp. 75-76. Its meaning to theosophists can be found in Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1877), II, p. 31. Future references to *Isis Unveiled* will note page numbers in the text, and refer to this edition.
7. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (Pasadena: Theosophical Univ. Press, 1946), p. 3. This text is an unaltered reprint of the first edition published in 1889.
8. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1897), III, p. 368. Further references to *The Secret Doctrine* will note page numbers in the text, and refer to this edition.
9. Antonio Oliver Belmás, *Este otro Rubén Darío* (Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1960), p. 409. Ramiro de Maeztu, «El clasicismo y el romanticismo de Rubén Darío,» *Nosotros*, 40 (1922), p. 128.
10. Anderson-Imbert, p. 200.
11. Schuré, *Pythagoras and the Delphic Mysteries*, trans. F. Rothwell (London: William. Rider & Son, 1923), pp. 64 & 132.
12. Erika Lorenz, pp. 30-37.
13. *Poesías completas* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961), p. 1157. Further references to his poetry will note page numbers in the text, and refer to this edition.
14. Lorenz, pp. 101-134.
15. *The Great Initiates*, trans. Gloria Rasberry (West Nyack, N. Y.: St. George Books, 1961), pp. 218, 277, 280 & 310.
16. For a detailed description of these references, see Theodore Jensen, «Modernista Pythagorean Literature: The Symbolist Inspiration,» *Waiting for Pegasus: Studies of the Presence of Symbolism and Decadence in Hispanic Letters* (Macomb: West. Illinois Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 169-179. Flammarion was an admirer of Pythagoras, and a severe critic of Comte. Mesmer's doctoral thesis was to a great degree a re-statement of the Pythagorean theory of correspondences [Christopher McIntosh, *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival*

(London: Rider & Co., 1972), p. 31/. Poe's Pythagorean influence on Darío is noted by John E. Englekirk, *Edgar Allan Poe in Hispanic Literature* (New York: Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos, 1934), pp. 185, 284, 210.

17. Raymond Skyrme, «The Pythagorean Vision of Rubén Darío in 'La tortuga de oro,'» *Comparative Literature Studies* (1974), pp. 233-248.

18. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 22.

19. An extensive analysis of this is in preparation, but is too lengthy to be explained here.

20. Jensen, «Modernista Pythagorean Literature...»

21. As in English poetry, noted by John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry 1500-1700* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1961).

22. See Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 317.

23. *Cuentos completos*, ed. Ernesto Mejía Sánchez (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950), p. 53. Unless otherwise noted, further references to his stories will note page numbers in the text, and refer to this edition.

24. *The Great Initiates*, p. 343.

25. *El hombre de oro* in *Cuentos* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1965), p. 39. Further references to this work will note page numbers in the text, and refer to this edition.

26. John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), p. 70.

27. «Paloma y esfinge, o la fatalidad erótica de Rubén Darío,» *Realidad*, 2 (1947), p. 73, expanded and published in 1948 as Salinas' classic *La poesía de Rubén Darío*. Richard A. Cardwell, «Darío and 'el arte puro': the Enigma of Life and the Beguilement of Art,» *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 47 (1970), p. 43, concludes also that Pythagorean metaphysics are an important part of Darío's «panerotismo.»

28. Soto-Hall, pp. 77 and 157.

29. *La Nación*, 7 December 1913. Reprinted by Allen W. Phillips in «*El oro de Mallorca: Textos desconocidos y breve comentario sobre la novela autobiográfica de Darío*,» *Revista Iberoamericana*, 33 (1967), pp. 449-492.