

From an Apocryphal Songbook

CLXVII

ABEL MARTIN

*Abel Martin, poet and philosopher, was born in Seville (1840).
He died in Madrid (1898).*

His Work

Abel Martin wrote several major philosophical works (*Five Types of Objectivity, From One to the Other, The Universal Attribute, The Essential Heterogeneity of Being*) and a collection of poems that was published in 1884 with the title, *The Counterparts*.

We will try to say something about his philosophy which is presented more or less implicitly in his poetic writing,* and we will leave it to others to make a systematic study of his strictly doctrinaire discourses.

His point of departure appears to be the philosophy of Leibniz. Like Leibniz he conceives of reality, or substance, as something which is constantly active. Abel Martin thinks of substance as energy or power that can create movement, and is always its cause, but also exists without it. For Abel Martin, movement is not essential. This power can be immobile—it is in its purest form—but that does not mean it ever ceases to be active. The activity of this pure power or substance is called consciousness. However, the conscious activity by which this pure substance is revealed is not unchangeable or rigid because it is immobile; on the contrary, it is in a constant state of change. Abel Martin distinguishes movement from mutability. Movement implies space; it is a change of position which leaves the object intact. Moving objects do not change; their change is only apparent. “The only things which actually move are things which do not change,” says Abel Martin. Which means that we can only perceive the movement of things when they remain exactly the same at two different points in space. Their real, essential change cannot be perceived—or thought of—as movement. Mutability, or substantial change, on the contrary, is non-spatial. Abel Martin insists that substantial change can not be thought of conceptually—because all conceptual thought implies space, *an outline of the mobility of that which is unchangeable*—but it can be intuited as the most immediate way in which *consciousness* (the pure activity of substance) recognizes itself. Responding to the common sense objection that movement is necessary in order to perceive change, Abel Martin says that no one has ever thought of movement logically without contradiction, and if it is intuited, which sometimes happens, it is *always* as the movement of an unchangeable object. Because of this, there is no need to try to establish a relation between change and movement. Common sense or ordinary feeling can in this case, as often happens, insist on its right to maintain that what is only apparent is real and to affirm, therefore, the reality of movement. But no one can ever claim that movement changes substance, or that movement and change can occur simultaneously.

*“According to Juan de Mairena, all poetry presupposes the existence of a metaphysics... and the poet has an obligation to explain it separately in terms that are clear” (OPP, p. 349).

Abel Martin does not follow Leibniz in the conception of monads as multiple substances. The concept of multiple substances is not an appropriate way to interpret the meaning of substance. "When Leibniz," says Abel Martin, "speaks of a multiplicity of monads and says that each one is a mirror of the universe, that is, a more or less clear representation of the entire universe, he is not thinking of substance as a force which is constantly active; he sees these monads only from the outside, as passive beings that are formed by reflection like a mirror, in a way that has nothing to do with consciousnesses that are an image of the universe." The monad of Abel Martin, because he also speaks of monads, would not be a mirror or a representation of the universe, but rather the universe itself as conscious activity: *the great eye that sees all as it sees itself*. This monad can be thought of abstractly in any one of the infinite points of the total sphere that constitutes our spatial representation of the universe (a rough or apparent representation), but in each one of them would be an all-inclusive self-awareness of the entire universe. The universe thought of as substance, an active conscious force, supposes a single, unique monad that would be something like the universal soul of Giordano Bruno (*Anima tota en toto et qualibet totuis partes*).

On the first page of his book of poetry, *The Counterparts*, Abel Martin says:

My eyes in the mirror
are the blind eyes that gaze at
the eyes with which I see them.

In a footnote Abel Martin makes it clear that these were the first three lines of poetry he wrote and that he has published them, in spite of their apparent triviality or their mediocrity because somewhat later, after some reflection and analysis, he gleaned from them the entire body of his metaphysics.

The second composition in his book is as follows:

Thanks, my lady;
I lost my self through your eyes;
it was what I wanted.

And a few pages later he adds:

And in your eyes that I never saw
I have sought myself:
in the gaze with which you see me

In the poems of Abel Martin one realizes that, given his conception of substance as indivisible and changeable, motionless and active, the poet is concerned with its four apparent aspects: movement, material depth, cognitive limitation and multiplicity of subjects. For the poet Abel Martin, the latter is the fascinating problem of love.

We know that Abel Martin was a very erotic person; we know this through the testimony of all those who knew him, and because in his poems there are numerous expressions, which are more or less exaggerated, of a passionate worship of woman.

Some examples:

Woman
is the obverse of the self.

Without love, ideas
are like ugly women,
or the problematic imitations
of the bodies of goddesses.

(Page 59)

Without woman
there is no creation or knowledge.

(Page 125)

And other examples which are more or less fortuitous but not less interesting than this one:

...Although Onan sometimes knows
much that Don Juan ignores.

(page 207)

We know that Abel Martin was a womanizer, and he was perhaps also an Onanist; a man, in short, who was disturbed and bothered by woman, by her presence as well as her absence. And it was undoubtedly love for woman that led Abel Martin to formulate the following question: What is it that makes an erotic object possible?

Of the five forms of objectivity that Abel Martin studies in his most important work of metaphysics, he regards the first four as only apparent, that is, they appear to be objective, but in reality they are projections of the subject itself. So then, the first form he studies is that constant unknown aspect of knowledge when it is considered as an infinite problem, which has only the assertion of objectivity. The second, the so-called objective world of science—discolored and disqualified, a world of pure quantitative relationships—comes from the effort to destroy the subjectivity of an object of the senses which, of course, is never fully realized, and which, even if that were to happen, would only result in diminishing the subject, but would never reveal an object, that is, something opposite or different from the subject. The third is our own interpretation as living beings, properly called the phenomenological world. The fourth form of objectivity corresponds to the world that results from the interpretation of other living subjects. “The latter,” Abel Martin says, “actually seems to be contained in the world of my own interpretation, within which they can be recognized by a certain vibration, or by voices which I try to distinguish from my own. Even before being able to speak, a child is able to differentiate between these two worlds which we tend to unify into one homogeneous interpretation. This fourth type of objectivity is not, in the final analysis, really objective, but an apparent dissociation of the unique subject that engenders both by combining and by differentiating each topical and conceptual element of our psyche, the currency of every living group.”

However, according to Abel Martin, there is a fifth form of objectivity, or better, a fifth attempt at objectivity, that is so close to the boundaries of the subject itself that it seems to be a real *other*, an object not of knowledge, but of love.

And now we are ready to examine the erotic poetry of Abel Martin.

Love begins to be revealed as a sudden increase in the richness of life, even though the concrete object toward which it is directed may never appear.

SPRINGTIME

Clouds, sunshine, a meadow and a village
spread out over the hilltop. In the air
of this frigid country spring placed
the beauty of its poplars on the riverbank.

The roads in the valley lead to the river
and there, next to the water, love awaits.
Has it donned these youthful clothes
for you, my invisible companion?

And this scent of bean fields in the wind?
And that first white daisy?...
Are you with me? In my hand I feel

a dual pulse; my heart cries out,
and in my temples my thoughts deafen me:
It is you who blossom and come to life.

“The beloved,” Abel Martin says, “accompanies the subject, but does not appear or confront it as an object of love; in one sense, it is one with the lover not at the end of the erotic process, as it was for the mystics, but in the beginning.”

In a long chapter of his book, *From One to the Other*, on the subject of love Abel Martin explains the meaning of the previous sonnet. We will not follow him down the path of pure speculation which leads to the core of his own metaphysics where he attempts to demonstrate that love is what could be called the self-revelation of the fundamental heterogeneity of the primordial substance. For now, let us examine only his poems, which are so clear and so simple that, as Martin has stated, even the ladies of his time felt they were able to understand them better than he could. And let us also examine the notes which accompany these erotic verses.

In one of these Abel Martin says: “Some educators have already begun to understand that children should not be taught to be mere imitations of men, that there is something sacred in childhood that is only experienced by living it fully and completely. But how seldom we ever have respect for the sacredness of youth! And we try, at all costs, to keep young people separate from love. We ignore, or try to ignore, that chastity is the virtue par excellence of young people, that lust is always something felt by their elders, and that neither nature nor social relations offer the dangers for their students that educators fear. More perverse and more mistaken certainly, than our priests and nuns, they try to convert the young person into a stupid child who plays, not like a child for whom play is life itself, but with the seriousness of fulfilling some solemn rite. They try to turn muscular fatigue into a sleeping pill that precludes sex. They try to separate our young people from the gallantry to which they are naturally inclined, and direct them to sports and to other physical activities. This is perverse. And let us not forget” he adds, “that pederasty, a deviant superfluous activity, is an inseparable companion of all calisthenics.”

ROSE OF FIRE

Lovers, you are woven from springtime,
out of earth and water, wind and sun.
The mountains are in your breathless lungs,
in your eyes the fields of flowers.

Walk forth during the spring of your life
and drink freely from the sweet milk
that the lustful panther offers you today,
before she waits threateningly in your path.

Step forward when the axis of the planet
descends toward the summer solstice,
when almond trees are green and violets fade,

when thirst is near and the spring is nearby,
toward the evening of love, fulfilled,
with the rose of fire in your hands.

Abel Martin has little sympathy for the erotic feelings of our mystics whom he describes as *immature priests and nuns who are as anxious as they are ignorant*. In this he commits a grave injustice, which shows he has little understanding and, perhaps limited knowledge, of our mystical literature. In order to understand this aberration, however, we must keep in mind that Abel Martin does not believe that our spirit progresses even one inch down the road to perfection, nor does it arrive at what is essential, by avoiding or by eliminating the world of the senses. The latter, even though it belongs to the subject, does not for that reason cease to have a definite and indestructible reality. Only its objectivity is, in the final analysis, apparent; but even as a form of objectivity—that is, an attempt to be objective—because of its nearness to the conscious subject, it is still more real than the world of science or of traditional theology: it is closer than they are to *the heart of the Absolute*.

But let us continue with the erotic poems of Abel Martin.

THE WAR OF LOVE

Time has turned my beard to silver,
recessed my eyes and enlarged my forehead,
and because it is so clear in my memory,
the deeper it is, the more it reveals.

Childish fear, adolescent love,
how this autumn light beautifies you!
Bitter paths of an ugly life,
you are turned to gold by the setting sun!

In the fountain where the water floats
how the legend written in stone stands out:
an hour remains on the abacus of time!

And how that absence from our rendezvous,
under the elms turned golden by November,
comes to life out of the depths of my past!

“The beloved,” explains Abel Martin, “never comes to the rendezvous; she is only there *in absentia*.” Then he adds, “But do not interpret that literally.” The poet is not referring to a love affair of passion that is scorned or rejected. Here love is itself a feeling of absence. The beloved is never present; she is something that is longed for and waited for in vain. As he recalls the entire history of his love, the poet remembers the first moment of erotic anguish. It is a feeling of solitude, or perhaps better, a sense of loss, of the unexpected absence during the promised rendezvous that Abel Martin is trying to describe in this sonnet which seems to be romantic. From this moment, love begins to be conscious of itself. The erotic object is about to appear—the beloved for the lover, or vice versa—which is opposed to the lover,

like a magnet attracts it also repels

and that, rather than joining with him, always remains the *other* which is separate from the lover, and which is impenetrable, not by definition like the first and second persons of grammar, but in reality. This is when, for certain romantics, the erotic Calvary begins; for others, the erotic war with all its enchantments and its dangers; and for Abel Martin, poet and complete man, it is all this, as well as an indication of the essential heterogeneity of being.

We want to make it clear however, that Abel Martin is not erotic in the Platonic sense. For Martin, Eros does not start with the contemplation of a beautiful body as it does for Plato; this is not the love of the great Athenian which leads from the contemplation of a beautiful young man to the contemplation of ideal beauty. Abel Martin rejects Dorian Love and homosexuality, not for moral but for metaphysical reasons. For Martin, Eros is aroused only by contemplation of the feminine body and by the incompatible differences he finds in it. Moreover, Abel Martin does not feel that beauty is the incentive for love, but rather the metaphysics of what is essentially *other*.

*

Nel mezzo del cammin my breast was pierced
by the arrow of love from another time.
That it had been following me unerringly
was shown by the accuracy of its living ray.

Like a magnet that attracts, also repels
(oh, bright eyes with a furtive glance!)
a love that astounds, spurs, flatters and pains,
the more it is offered, the more elusive it is.

If a fragment of thought were able to burn
not in the lover, but in love, it would be
the most profound truth one might see;

and then the mirror of love would shatter,
its enchantment destroyed, as well as the
panther of desire that my heart would have.

The mirror of love would shatter... With this Abel Martin means that the lover would renounce everything that is a reflection in love, because he would start by loving

in his beloved that which in essence never reflects its own image. All the tragic power and the unfathomable metaphysics that we find in that short poem,

Thanks, my lady:
I lost myself in your eyes;
it was what I wanted.

now becomes transparent, or at least, translucent.

*

In order to gain a clear understanding of Martin's poetic thought which contains his comprehensive point of view, it is necessary to keep in mind that the poet attempts, as he himself declares, to create a new form of logic in which all reasoning must adhere to the fluid quality of intuition. A Heraclitean mode of thought, Martin says, is not compatible with Eleatic logic. This is the cause of the apparent gaps that some have observed in his conceptual thought, in the lack of agreement between the premises and the conclusions of his reasoning. In all true ratiocination there can be no conclusions that are contained in the premises. When thought is based on the spoken or written word, one must be careful to show that it is impossible for the premises to be valid, and to remain that way, at the moment of conclusion. True logic does not allow for fixed suppositions or absolute concepts, but living realities that are immobile while being in a constant state of change. The concepts or forms we use to capture what is real cannot be rigid if they are to adapt themselves to a constantly changing reality. Abel Martin realizes that it is impossible to express this in ordinary language. But he believes that poetic language can suggest the evolution of fixed premises by means of conclusions that are sufficiently flexible or open so that the reader or the listener is able to calculate the changes that the former must necessarily undergo from the moment when they were fixed to that of their conclusion. In this way he can see clearly that the original premises of his apparently inadequate conclusions are not really expressed by language, but are those that have been produced by the constant changes of thought. Abel Martin calls this *the external outline of a provisional logic in which A is never A in two consecutive moments*. Nevertheless, Abel Martin has a profound admiration for the logic of identity which, precisely because it is not a logic of what is real, seems to him a miraculous creation of the human mind.¹

After this digression, let us return to our consideration of the erotic poetry of Abel Martin.

"When human love is considered psychologically, it differs from the animal," Abel Martin says in his treatise *The Universal Attribute*, "by the constant exaggeration of the imaginative faculty which, in extreme cases, changes the higher mind that thinks

¹Abel Martin is far from believing in the pragmatic value of absolute logic. The logical mode of thought is one which is never in agreement with life. Its uselessness, in a vital sense, makes it the greatest problem for the philosophy of the future. Abel Martin does not feel that usefulness is the supreme value, but simply one of many human values. Uselessness, on the other hand, is not valuable in itself. And while we are talking about the negative aspect of logical thought, this does not necessarily mean that we believe usefulness is superior. But neither should we be surprised if we were to find in it an even greater importance than that of being useful.

and imagines into a form of arousal within the animal mind. The disproportion between the arousal, the mental harem of modern man—which in Spain is often markedly Onanistic—and the sexual energy which the individual possesses, causes a constant state of disequilibrium. Doctors, moralists and teachers should always keep this in mind, without forgetting that this disequilibrium is, to a certain extent, normal in human beings. Imagination has a much greater effect on human copulation than mere physical contact. And perhaps that is as it should be since, otherwise, only our animal nature would be perpetuated. But it is necessary to put a halt, through moral censorship, to the tendency which is natural in man, to confuse physical contact with an imaginary image that is perceived or, even more dangerous and more frequent in superior minds, with an image that is created. Man should never deny his own animal nature, and doctors and hygienists should always keep this in mind.”

Abel Martin does not over-emphasize this topic: when he refers to it is always in the context of his own metaphysics. According to Abel Martin, sexual disorders do not originate, as modern psychology supposes, in an obscure part of the subconscious, but rather in the most enlightened zone of consciousness. The erotic object, the last resort of objectivity is also, on the lowest level of human love, a subjective projection.

Now let us include here some of the verses of Abel Martin that are loosely related to this topic. It should be noted that Abel Martin usually does not put his ideas in verse form; however, these are always with him:

ADVICE, VERSES, NOTES

1

In my herbarium I have
a dissected afternoon,
lilac, violet and gold.
Whims of a lonely man.

2

And on the following page
the eyes of Guadalupe,
whose color I never knew.

3

And a forehead...

4

A childlike kaleidoscope.
A little lady, at the piano.
Do, re, mi.
Another at the mirror
putting on lipstick.

5

And roses on a balcony
just around the corner,
on God Help Me street.

6

Short-lived love affairs,
such as: "Come with me."
... "Come back soon, dear."

7

In the sea of woman
few capsize at night;
many do at dawn.

8

Each time we see each other
it's a date for tomorrow.
That way we will never meet.

9

The plaza has a tower,
the tower has a balcony,
the balcony has a lady,
the lady has a white flower.
A gentleman has passed by
—who knows why he passed by!—
and he took away the plaza
with its tower and its balcony,
with its balcony and its lady,
with its lady and its white flower.

10

On the street of my jealousy
I see you behind twenty grated windows,
always chatting with someone else.

11

I am having bad dreams.
I will wake up.

12

The morning bells
that are ringing
will wake me up.

13

The morning gave me
a bouquet of roses for your window.
Through a labyrinth, from street to lane,
I have hastened in search of your window.
And I find that I am lost in a labyrinth
on this flowering morning of May.
Tell me where you are.
Twists and turns. I can go no further.

*

Abel Martin says: “Consciousness as reflection, or an attempt to be aware of being aware, without love or an impulse which is directed toward the other, would only be a hook that is constantly waiting to capture itself. But consciousness exists as a reflective activity because it turns back on itself after exhausting its effort to reach a transcendent object. It then realizes its limitation and sees itself as an erotic impulse aimed at *the other* which is inaccessible.” Its reflection is more apparent than real because, in fact, it does not turn back on itself in order to capture itself as a pure conscious activity, but as the erotic current which flows out from the very heart of its being. It discovers love as its own imperfection, that is to say, its *immanent other*, and then becomes aware of the essential heterogeneity of being. Because Abel Martin, who has not overcome even for a moment, the subjectivism of his time, feels that all objectivity, strictly speaking, is only apparent, a changeable mirage, an illusory projection of the subject outside of himself.

But these appearances, mirages, illusory projections, the results of a desperate effort of the self (the absolute subject) to surpass its own limits, always have a positive value since through them *consciousness* is achieved in its proper sense, which is to know, or suspect, its own heterogeneity, to have an analytical view—separating by abstract logic that which is in reality inseparable—of constant and immovable change.

The great eye that sees all as it sees itself is, certainly, an eye that sees ideas, in theory, of vision to distance; but ideas are nothing other than the alphabet or the group of homogeneous signs that stand for the essences that make up being. Ideas are not, in fact, essences themselves, but a drawing or outline traced on the black slate of non-being. These children of love, and in a sense, of the great failure of love, never could be conceived without it, because it is love itself (the attempt to surpass its own limitation) which projects them onto *nothingness* or on the *absolute zero*, which the poet also refers to as the *divine zero* since, as we shall see later, God is not the creator of the world, but of nothingness. Ideas, then, do not have an essential reality, per se; they are mere faded imitations or likenesses of the real essences which constitute being. Real essences are qualitatively different, and their ideal projection is less substantial and more removed from being the more homogeneous they become. These essences can only actually be

separated after their illusory projection and, according to Martin, there is never any desire of one for the other, since as one inseparable group they all long for the other, *for an entity that is opposite from themselves*, from that which they are, in short, for something which is unattainable. In the intra-subjective metaphysics of Abel Martin, love always fails, but knowledge does not. Or perhaps it is better to say that knowledge is the reward for love. But love, as such, never encounters its object; or expressed poetically: attaining the beloved is always impossible.

In dreams he saw himself
reclining on the breast of his beloved.
In dreams he shouted: "My beloved, wake up!"
And it was he who woke up; because he held
his own heart as a pillow.

(*The Counterparts.*)

The ideology of Abel Martin sometimes is obscure, which is inevitable for a poet who does not define his terms beforehand. As an example, we do not always know what he means with the word *essence*. He usually wishes to designate that which is absolutely real which, in his metaphysics, always refers to the subject itself, since outside of the subject there is nothing. And Martin never uses this word to refer to something that exists or is realized in time and space. For Martin, when this term is used to indicate a great diversity, it is artificial. All conscious activity is through and for the subject, and for integral consciousness there is nothing that is not consciousness itself. Being is conceived by Martin as active consciousness which is motionless and changeable, essentially heterogeneous, always as subject, and never the passive object of external forces. Substance, or being which *is everything as it is itself*, always changes because it is constantly active, and it stays immobile because there is no energy outside it which could move it. "The mechanical conception of the world," Martin adds, "is being conceived as pure inertia, being which is not itself: *unchangeable and in constant movement*, a whirlwind of ashes that is agitated—no one knows why or for what purpose—by the hand of God. When this hand (that was still part of the *chiquenaude* of Descartes) is not taken into consideration, being is conceived as something which *is not*. In Spinoza, for example, the attributes of substance become those of pure nothingness. Because of its longing for the other, consciousness reaches the limit of its power and begins to see itself as the absolute object, to think of itself as it is not, to *desire itself*. The tragic eroticism of Spinoza carried the annihilation of the subject to an extreme limit. "And how could it not try," Martin asks, "to recapture its own essential self?" This task was begun by Leibniz—philosopher of the future—Martin adds; but it can only be completed by poetry, which Martin defines as the attempt to achieve a state of *integral consciousness*. The poet, as such, renounces nothing, nor does he try to disparage any outward appearance. For him the colors of the rainbow are not less real than the vibrations of the ether which accompany them in a parallel fashion; the latter are not less real than the former, nor is the act of seeing any less substantial than that of measuring or counting vibrations of light. This is why an esthetic life which strives for moral perfection in a vacuum, or the elimination of vital representations is not, for Abel Martin, a path that leads anywhere. *Ethos* is not purified, but only impoverished by the elimination of *pathos*, and although the poet must know how to distinguish between

them, his real mission is to reintegrate both within that zone of consciousness where they are inseparably one.

In his *Dialogue Between God and the Saint*, the latter says:

“For love of you I have renounced everything, everything that is not you. I made night in my soul so that only your light could shine.”

And God answers:

“Thank you, son, because even fire-flies are part of me.”

When Martin was asked if poetry is an effort to express what is immediate in the psyche since since, according to his doctrine, consciousness captured at its source would be integral consciousness, he answered: “Yes and no. For man, immediate consciousness is always captured on the rebound. Poetry is also a product of the failure of love. In man, consciousness begins by being pure spontaneity; on this first level there can be none of the fruits of culture. It is a blind activity, although it is not mechanical but animated, *animality* if you like. On a second level, it begins to see itself as a muddy river and tries to purify itself. It feels it has lost its innocence; it sees its own richness as something extraneous. This is the erotic moment, a time of deep restlessness, in which the immanent *other* begins to be seen as something transcendent, as an object of knowledge and of love. It feels that God is not in the world nor is there any truth in man’s awareness. On the way to integral consciousness, or true self-consciousness, this moment of solitude, or anguish is inevitable. Only after erotic desire has created the forms of objectivity”—Abel Martin mentions five in his metaphysical work, *From One to the Other*, but in his final writings he mentions as many as twenty-seven—“can man reach the true vision of consciousness, by reintegrating the aforementioned forms or *reversals of being* into a pure heterogeneous unity so that it can see itself, live itself and *be itself* in complete and total intimacy. The Pindaric *Be what you are* is the end of this path of return, the goal that the poet strives to accomplish.” *But nobody*, says Martin, *can ever be what he is, if he cannot first see himself as he is not.*

*

We have reproduced the following two paragraphs from his book, *The Universal Attribute*:

“1. Lyrical problems: The materials with which the arts are created (without completely excluding music, but excluding poetry) are something that is not configured by spirit: stone, bronze, colored substances, vibrating air, crude materials, in short, whose laws can be investigated by science and which the artist himself does not comprehend. Like the sculptor who uses bronze or marble, the poet is also given his material, which is language. With it he must first visualize something which does not yet have form, something which after his labor will be the foundation of an ideal world. But while the artist begins by overcoming the resistance of these crude materials, the poet struggles with a new type of resistance: the spiritual connotation of the words which constitute his artistic material. Words, as opposed to stone or colored substances or moving air, are by themselves signifiers of that which is human, to which the poet must give a new and different significance. The word is, in part, an article of exchange, a social creation, a tool of objectivity (objectivity in this case implies an agreement among different subjects) and the poet strives to make of it a means to express an individual spirit, a unique object,

a qualitative value. Between a word that is used by everyone, and a word of poetry is the same difference as that between a coin and a jewel of the same material. The poet turns a coin into a jewel. How is that? The answer is complicated. A goldsmith can destroy a coin and even use it to make a new form, although not capriciously or arbitrarily. But the poet is not allowed to destroy the coin to make his jewel. His working material is not the sound on which language is based, but the different implications of that which is human which the word contains. The poet works with elements already given form by spirit, and although he uses them to make a new form, he cannot disfigure them.

“2. All of the forms of objectivity, or the appearances of objectivity except art, are the result of destroying the subject by making it an object; they tend to be definite forms of space and time: figures, numbers, concepts. Their objectivity signifies above all homogeneity, disqualification of that which is essentially qualitative. Therefore, space and time, which give limits to the results of disqualification, are a condition *sine qua non* of their making, which is previous, or as Kant would say, *a priori*. Only at this price does science achieve objectivity, the illusion of the object, of being that is not true *being*. The impulse toward the unobtainable *other* results in an effort of homogenization; it creates only a shadow of being. When we *think* of matter, it is reduced to atoms; dynamic change is converted into the movement of unchangeable particles in space. *being* has been left behind. Being is the eye that looks, and beyond it are empty time and space, the black slate, pure nothingness. Anyone who *thinks* of pure being, being as it is not, actually thinks of pure non-being or nothingness. And anyone who *thinks* of the change of one to the other thinks of a pure becoming which is just as empty as the elements which compose it. So logical thought is only achieved in the void of the senses; and although the ability to inhibit being is a marvelous power from which the enchanted palace of logic emerges (the mechanical concept of the world, the critique of Kant, the metaphysics of Leibniz, to mention a few modest examples), nevertheless, it is never possible to *think* of being; contrary to the classical maxim, being and thought (thought which is homogeneous) never coincide, not even by chance.

Let us trust
that nothing we have thought
will be the truth.

(See Antonio Machado.)

Then Martin adds, “But art and, especially, poetry which acquire even more importance and satisfy a greater need the more man’s logical mind progresses—this importance and this need have nothing to do with the esthetic value of the works that are produced in each period—can only be seen as an activity which is diametrically opposed to logical thought. In poetry there is an effort to recapture the reality of that which has been *un-realized*; or to put it in another way, once being has been thought of as it *is not*, it is necessary to think of it as it *is*. It is imperative to return it to its rich and inexhaustible heterogeneity.”

This new type of thought, which we will call *poetic thought*, is *qualifying* thought. It is definitely not a return to the chaotic sensibility of animal awareness. It has its own rules which are not less rigorous than those of homogenizing thought, although they are quite different. This type of thought takes place amid what is real, not among shadows; amid intuitions, not concepts. “*Non-being* is now thought of only as *non-being* and is

therefore consigned to the trash basket.” By this, Martin means that, once the hollow emptiness of these forms of objectivity is made clear, they no longer serve as a means for thinking of what *is*. When being is thought of qualitatively as having an infinite extension, without the slightest loss because of this infinite scope, there is no human or divine dialectic that could cause the change of a concept into that of its opposite because, in fact, that opposite does not exist.

Therefore, poetic thought needs a new dialectics without negations or opposites, that Abel Martin has sometimes called lyrical, or on other occasions, magical; this is the logic of substantial change or immobile becoming, of being that has changed or is changing. Behind this truly paradoxical and apparently absurd idea is the most profound intuition that Abel Martin has ever tried to achieve.

“The Eleatics,” says Martin, “did not understand that the only way to prove the immutability of being would have been to demonstrate the reality of movement, and that their truly logical arguments were counterproductive; that only those of Heraclitus, on the other hand, could prove the unreality of movement and demonstrate the mutability of being. For how could it be possible for something which was *constantly* changing to occupy two different places in space in two successive moments in time without ceasing to be what it was and becoming something else? Continuous change is unthinkable as movement, since movement implies the stability of the moving body in two different places and in successive moments. A discontinuous change with intervals, and a lapse of time that mean the annihilation of the moving body, is also unthinkable. There is no possible transition between *non-being* and *being*, and the synthesis of both concepts is unacceptable in any kind of logic that tries at the same time to be ontological, because it does not correspond to any reality.

Nevertheless, Abel Martin claims that, without producing any contradiction, one can state that the concept of non-being is a definite human creation; and he has devoted a sonnet to this topic at the conclusion of the first part of *The Counterparts*:

TO THE GREAT ZERO

When Being that is itself made nothingness
and took a well-deserved rest,
day finally had its night, and man
had company in the absence of his beloved.

Fiat umbra! And human thought appeared.
In his hand he held up the universal egg,
empty and cold, without color or form,
filled only with a weightless mist.

Take the essential [Zero?] zero, the hollow sphere,
which you must perceive if you wish to see it.
Today it forms the back of your beast,

and the miracle of nonbeing is fulfilled;
poet, dedicate a song of the frontier
to death, to silence and to forgetfulness.

In the theology of Abel Martin God is defined as *absolute being*, and therefore nothing that *is* could be his creation. For Abel Martin, God as creator and protector of

the world is a Judaic concept which is as sacrilegious as it is absurd. On the other hand, it can be said that nothingness is a divine creation, a miracle wrought by being in order to think of itself in its totality. Put another way, God gave man the great zero, nothingness or all-inclusive zero, that is, zero formed by the negation of all that is. In this way the human mind possesses a concept of totality, the sum of all that *is not*, which logically serves as limit and boundary for the totality of all that *is*.

Fiat umbra! And human thought appeared.

Keep in mind these things: homogeneous thought—not *poetic*, which is now divine thought—; thought of the rational biped that cannot ever coincide with the pure heterogeneity of being, not even by chance; thought that must think of nothingness in order to think of what is, because in reality it thinks of it *as non-being*.

After this sonnet, which receives a certain emphasis, comes the *song of the frontier* (a Gypsy song, or *cante jondo*) *to death, to silence and to forgetfulness*, which forms the second section of *The Counterparts*. The third section has the following lines as a prologue:

THE GREAT FULLNESS OR INTEGRAL CONSCIOUSNESS

May the supreme Zero in his statue
—cold marble,
an austere brow,
and one hand on his cheek—
at the great bend in the river,
meditate forever on the shore,
and may his glory be eternal.
And may the divine logic
that perceives
without a single false image
—there is no mirror; just a fountain—
declare: be
all that is, and may all that sees
see itself. Motionless and active
—sea and fish and living hook,
all the sea in every drop,
all the fish in every egg,
all newborn—
offering a song of oneness.
Everything changes and all remains,
everything thinks,
and is like a coin
in a dream that passes
from hand to hand.
Rose and thistle filled with love,
poppy and tassel
born from the same seed.
Harmony;
everything sings in the light.
The forms of zero are erased;
it sees again, bubbling up from their source,
the living waters of being.