

TÓTILA ALBERT /LIFE AND WORK

In words, images and excerpts from his “musical dictation”

Tótila Albert Schneider was born in Santiago, Chile, on November 30, 1892. Don Federico Albert, as he was called in Chile, was born in Germany, and was a son of a court-musician -- Max Albert -- secretly known to be a half-brother of king Ludwig II of Bavaria.

Toward the end of the 19th century the Chilean Government took the initiative of contributing to the country's evolution by attracting several personalities from Europe, and the names of some of these are still well remembered: Gay, who described many local animal species, Phillipi, well known for his book on birds, Poenisch, whose books on algebra were still in use when I attended high-school.

Don Federico (as he was respectfully called) was director of the recently created Museum of Natural History, was responsible for bringing the trout to South America, and devoted much time to experimenting in every climatic zone of our long country with the growing of trees from other parts of the world. He was one of those all-round naturalists a la Humboldt -- a type that has disappeared today with the increasing complexification, specialization and compartmentalization of science. More characteristically, even, he was a man of action, who planted dunes to stop erosion, originated legislation to protect forests and animal species, created oyster nurseries, and generally speaking, was a pioneering and active ecologist, a forerunner of a type beginning to appear in our time.

I remember Tótila telling me of his childhood excursions with his father into the beautiful virgin forests of the south, and one of the most emblematic images that I have of Don Federico is that of him on the occasion when, in the company of his ten year old son, he came upon a seeming geyser that shot rhythmic spurts of salty water. He was of the ... cold and opinion that the water which he ascertained was cold and salty was impelled by the surf at the nearby coast, and was channelled through an underground tunnel.

He proceeded to explore the seaside, and upon discovering the expected cave decided to proceed to the final test: soon Tótila, who, following his instructions, continued to sit by the intermittent spurt, saw him fly out of the “geyser” in one of its explosions. Don Federico must have calculated with precision and a self-assurance that he would be able to hold his breath while propelled along the tunnel, and surely he was willing to take some risk upon himself for the sake of adventurous investigation.

Another image of Don Federico that stood out in Tótila's mind was that of him at his desk at night. More than once Tótila evoked this familiar scene of his father writing after he had been sent to bed, and through his telling one could sense his loving respect toward the indefatigable and idealistic worker that he had been. Mostly, however, I remember him speaking with grief of how our idiotic country failed to benefit from his father's efforts, and had wasted the fruit of his labor after his death. The Department of Fish and Game which he had created then became a ministry subject to the play of political interests, and now forests were burnt incessantly to make room for the cattle, without regard for beauty or consequences, while the many rivers that flowed from the Andes to the Pacific, scarcely used as energy-sources, carried ever more of our narrow strip of humus into the ocean.

Tótila's mother -- Teresa Schneider -- also was his father's first cousin, and since the parents of both opposed a marriage that then deemed too incestuous, she eloped as a teenager to join her future husband in the sailboat that brought them to Chile.

It may be conjectured that she shared her husband's love of nature, for she kept snakes and frogs as pets (and she suspected of witchcraft for it). More characteristically, however, she was artistically inclined -- as her son would be. Tótila was grateful for having grown up in the atmosphere of his mother's piano playing since he was in her womb, and remembers that, before being able to read, he preferred his mother's books, with narrow lines of irregular length, to his father's books in which the lines, of equal length, covered the whole page.

Toward his adolescence, Tótila became aware of his mother's criticism toward his father's idealistic service of the Chilean nation: she contended that he should work for himself and his family instead. The conflict between the two created a split in Tótila's psyche as a child and, later in his life, became a challenge to the inner alchemy through which mother and father were united in his soul -- first as intrapsychic persons and later as universal principles.

Tótila was born prematurely the day after his mother shocked by fright. A burgler had entered the house at night and she had had the presence of mind to simulate having a gun in her hand and scare the man away. Her emotional reaction, however, was intense enough fear to trigger the onset of labor.

In the poetic autobiography that Tótila wrote at the age of thirty-seven he says that such was his hunger when he came into the world that it occasioned a succession of thirteen wetnurses to give him the breast. Early memories that he re-experienced during the psychological process that this writing expressed, three stand out as particularly frightening: the fire of the candle factory adjoining his house during which he was saved by a maid from being run over by the fire-wagon horses; the times when he was held above the fire as punishment for wetting his bed, and an occasion when his elementary school class-mates held him to the ground and threatened to castrate him before the appearance of a teacher caused them to disband in a rush. Among his happy childhood memories perhaps the most characteristic were those of the times when he joined his parents in a zither trio.

Playing the zither was a family tradition, for the concerto zither was the invention of Federico's father Max Albert who had developed it from the traditional folk instrument and composed abundantly for it.¹ (His works were left behind by Tótila in his Berlin studio when he precipitatedly left for Chile on the eve of World WarII. I don't know whether other copies may survive.)

Tótila learned to play the instrument early in his childhood and often joined his parents either at home or in private recitals. This situation in which Tótila played and sang in trio with his parents, prefigures his becoming a "messenger of trinity" in his later life, just as the early musical experience prefigured Tótila's deep involvement in music in a very different and novel way in his years of ripeness, when he would "sing" his poetry to the tune of the great romantics in the German musical tradition.

Tótila had a younger sister called Tusnelda. On her deathbed, when her children had become young adults, their mother asked "Tussi" to be like a mother to her brother, and this she devotedly undertook. After Tótila's death at the age of 76, the old woman continued to pay daily visits to the grave of her brother while her health permitted it, to the end of her own life.

Tótila was 11 years old when his parents separated, and he, along with Tussi, journeyed to Germany with their mother. The ship in which they travelled was stranded in the vicinity of Fire Island and its keel broken. When the water reached the deck level the passengers were evacuated to an uninhabited island where, for weeks, they fed on its abundant clams.

¹ This Max Albert was a half-brother of LudwigII of Bavaria and a court musician.

There, in the freezing cold, Tótila caught the typhoid fever, was at the brink of death and lost his hair. Though he recovered most of it he always, from then on, carried a bald spot that resembled a priestly tonsure in his crown.

Deeper than the impact of this accident, however, was for Tótila that of separation, particularly since this turned out to be not only a separation from his father and his native country, but, as it came to pass, a separation from both parents and the loss of anything he could call home.

It seems, reading Tótila's account of his first 36 years, that his parents (or, at least, his father) didn't intend of a definitive separation. His mother spoke with longing of a return to Germany, though it is likely that her nostalgia was an expression of an unhappiness in marriage that was to become more explicit. The journey, in any case, punctuates the beginning of Tótila's awareness of the conflict between his parents, which awareness, in turn, constituted much of his fall from childhood eden. It seems, again, that it was intended for Tótila to stay with his mother, but this plan was not to be carried out.

After a brief stay in Berlin, where mother and children stayed with Tótila's paternal uncles, they proceeded to Munich. Here, in her home-town and away from her husband's family (where, it may be conjectured, she felt criticized) Teresa apparently planned to live with Tótila and Tussi, but after some time, however, her husband's letters from Chile demanded that they return to Berlin so that Tótila could go to school there. The outcome was that the mother, unwilling to join her husband's family, continued to live in Munich with her daughter, while Tótila was sent to the house of his uncles. Uncle Otto suffered from some illness that affected one of his legs, was no longer able to walk and had because of his condition become irritable and demanding. Tótila was to spend much time sitting by his bed and taking care of him. By uncle George T felt understood, but he spent his days working at the stock market. After some time George married, and aunt Ida came into the household as a stern surrogate mother "that didn't understand what moves a mother's heart".

Towards the end of the year Tótila's father came to visit them, and also his mother and sister came from Munich to join them for some days. Here is an image that Tótila has left us of one of those days (In Canto XVIII of *Leben*): which is of interest as an indication of both Tótila's artistic talent and his father's attitude toward it: Christmas was approaching, and on that day T presented as a gift to his father a semblance of a church—"its tower raging toward heaven in self offering to the divine"—and his father must have both perceived his talent and become upset by it, for he responded by warning T that he should not become a dreamer, and that he would be free to do anything he wanted in his life except become an artist.

Next, there came a time when he, who was used to being alone, came into a class of sixty where, as may be imagined, "all pleasure was powerfully choked". In [canto XXXI](#), of his the autobiographic poem that constitutes the first part of his epic T later wrote (*Leben*) that he timidly turned inwards and "flew to the secret Essence". Within a few months the introverted dreamer began to find expression in poetry -- a remarkable feat if we consider that he had only begun to learn the language from his mother on the year before leaving for Europe.

[Picture]

There is a family picture in which Tótila, about four years old, holds a roll of paper in his hand. He once told me the story behind it: the photographer, already under the curtain used in those days to screen the light behind the camera, had everybody in the desired position but Tótila cried and there was no way to stopping him. Then he had a sudden intuition: he placed the paper in his hand and that seemed to make him happy. Tótila saw the picture as an omen of his future dedication to poetry and it is not unlikely that already to the four year old that roll of paper -- connected to his father's writing and his mother's reading, had meaning.

Though Tótila had probably written more than one poem as a child (he tells of one such occasion, when he did so as a gift to his mother upon returning from church) his burst of creativity in Berlin seems to be related to a new influence that he has gratefully acknowledged in the poetic account of his life: that of Johanna, who was about 40 at the time when he was 13.

Johanna war in diesem Jahr
da unser Knabe dreizehn zählte
wohl nahe vierzig. Unvermählt
Und keusch auch starb sie.
“Zu mir steige, verehrtes Bild!
Die Sehnsucht, die den Mut behält,
Zu wissen, was sie gern erwählte.
So rein ist auch dein Silberhaar!”

Tótila seems to have found a refuge in poetry even before writing his own, for I recall his telling me how he read Lenan and others at his desk behind his teacher's backs. It is likely that this going to poetry for refuge increased with the onset of further turmoil in his life, when the conflict between his parents intensified.

After much insistence on his father's side, Tótila's mother journeyed with Tussi to Chile, only to conclude that she could not be happy there anymore. She returned to Bavaria, not without condemnation from the husband and his relatives. In the 38th canto of *Leben* Tótila writes:

So vieles Leid verwirrte alle,
Im Dunkeln stießen, suchten sich
Die Hände, aber nur vergebens,
Sie blieben ewig unversöhnt.
Der Sohn, der seine Mutter höhnt,
Zerriss die Briefe ihres Lebens.
Die Reue, die ihn bald beschlich,
Fühlt er am Herzen noch als Kralle.

Under the torment of his family situation, Tótila's sense of loneliness-among-themany intensified, to the point of exploding in rage and in canto ... he says that school knows nothing of souls:

Die Schule weiß nichts von den Seelen
Verfrachtet auf dem Klassengleis
Die Leistungen aus dem Verstande
Die Lehrer setzen Reisefrist,
Vergessen, dass du Seele bist
Und Sehnsucht hast in andre Lande,
Erkennen willig deinen Fleiß
Und auch ihr Recht, dir Zeit zu stehlen.

To make things worse, he lost the friendship of his old classmates when he was separated from them by the loss of a half year to enter the last class.

Under a spell of resentment and vindictiveness Tótila threw his poetry into a wastepaper basket. The nineteen-year old kept to his resolution -- until the death of his father, nearly 20 years later, precipitated him into he called *Wiederkehr*— a realm that was as a life “on a higher octave” or the life of one dead. After obtaining his *Abitur*² Tótila returned to Chile to study -- in obedience to his father’s wish -- agriculture.

Don Federico expected Tótila to become his successor; and Tótila, who later in life became a denouncer of State and Church and prominent in obedience to himself, was still in his late adolescence, did not dream of questioning his authority, much less of taking his life in hand.

Yet more important than the university was for Tótila riding with his father through the peaceful exuberance of the virgin forests of the Chilean south. Or playing the zither with his father to the audience of the Chilean society that he frequented: mostly farm-owners who sought his advise. It was during one such occasion -- at the house of Don Eliodoro Jañez (commemorated today by one of the important streets in our capital) that Tótila experienced his first romantic excitement -- when, as he played and sang, the daughter of their host fainted. (The mutual attraction of the youngsters didn’t come to words or further developments, however, and it was to be only years later, in Berlin again. that Tótila for the first time kissed a girl.) It was also during this time that Tótila earned the first money in his life -- teaching the zither (possibly through his father’s arrangement) to other girls with no lesser extra-musical fascination.

[última visita a la madre antes de ir a Chile]

During a forest journey in 1914 that Don Federico and Tótila were met by riders bringing a telegram: Teresa, in Munich, was mortally ill.

“I wish that I could tell her I forgive her” said the father. This time Tótila had the courage to confront his father, begging him to do no more than express his love. “Perhaps she, too, has reason to forgive you.” “Der Vater kam zu neuer Lesung” writes Tótila -- “und war ein Klang von Kopf zu Fuss.” They hastened back to the nearest village and soon received the news of Teresa’s death.

Later, in Berlin, Tussi gave Totila his mother’s deathbed message: “Tell Tótila that he is a poet, not an agriculturist.”

I don’t know whether Don Federico knew of this before Tótila’s return to Germany, influencing his behavior, offering to send him there. I am inclined to think not, for then it is likely Tótila would have received his mother’s good-bye message by then too. I think that, independently, Don Federico came to question his thus far unquestionable project of fashioning Tótila into another version of himself.

Tótila had thus far decided to sacrifice himself to his father’s will -- though not without psychological consequences. To begin with, he suffered during two years a training that didn’t interest him and also he must have suffered among classmates who perceived him as an oddball and scorned him. (specially on account of how much he cared about the pain inflicted to animals through branding and castration, and his proposition that such pain should be alleviated through anesthesia.)

Surely the sense of not being in the path of his own realization left him empty, and a victim of the neurotic feelings and thoughts that such emptiness engenders. In his later writing (*Leben*, Canto ...), he has described how he resented them

² The “*Abitur*,” examination taken at the end of the Berlin gymnasium.

seeing his father as the “great man” in the eyes of all while he was left in the shadow; and how he began to harbor a wish to surpass his father.

A significant fantasy reported in his autobiography integrates this “Oedipal” impulse of competition with his father with one of loving admiration: in it he sees himself as a sculptor creating a frieze which depicts his father’s exploits.

The event precipitating Tótila’s change of career came about when a childhood friend of Tótila came to visit with several bars of plaster. The two youngsters spent the day playing with it and in the end Tótila produced copies of a Zeus head and of Rodin’s “The Lovers.” Don Federico must have been impressed, and his attitude this time was the opposite than that what it had been.

Within some days, he solemnly presented Tótila with an alternative to his present course of studies: would he like to be an artist? Tótila had no doubt about it, but his father had further questions. What if he did not achieve success in his lifetime, and had to renounce comforts as well as a family life? Would he still want to be an artist? And at Tótila’s affirmative response he still wanted to know: “suppose that you not only fail to get recognition during your lifetime, but even after your death. Would you want to be an artist even then? Tótila said yes and Don Federico then offered to send him to Berlin once more, to get the appropriate education.

The newspapers announced the Sarajevo incident on the day (January 17th, 1914) in which Totil produced his plasteline sculptures; when his father offered to send him to Germany, World War I had already been declared and Tussi was unable to return to her country of birth. Now Tótila joined her in their recently widowed uncle’s home. In the course of Tótila’s absence from Berlin Uncle Otto too had died and Tussi, he was to find, had become an attractive teenager.

Don Federico’s dominance was to follow Tótila implicitly and in a subtle manner even during his first two years in Germany, when he felt most thankful for his freedom. In spite of the fact that it was through his son’s sculpting that he had been touched and in which he had recognized his talent, his father has sent him to study painting! Perhaps he saw this as a profession more conducive to worldly success; perhaps he deemed painting a more important art; whatever the reason, Tótila accepted the goal that his father set for him and only took up sculpture when one of his professors advised him to do so in order to develop a better sense of form.

Tótila’s period of schooling was, once more, rather bitter: both the teachers and the uniformed students that attended the classes at such and such resented him as a “parasite”: a foreigner exempt from being sent to the front. Though none of his teachers at the Kunstgewerbeschule and the school of fine arts seems to have been an important influence to him, three years of supervised work naturally made him skillful. After that, he worked for a short time at Anton Metzner’s studio as assistant and apprentice, and left one day taking offense at the rudeness with which Metzner had corrected him. His father, who in the meantime had come to visit his family, rescued him by setting him up in an independent studio with all that he needed to begin working.

Toward the end of 1917 Tótila produced his true Opus 1: the Hügelfrauen. In the fourth Canto of the epic of “El Tres Veces Nuestro” written in Spanish nearly thirty years later, he described the process through which the five sculptures were conceived.

The time was surely not irrelevant: it was the last winter of World War I when “one suffered from hunger and cold and immense death” and “living came to be a luxury.” While sitting in his studio with his face between his hands, looking within himself, he felt his whole body vibrate and saw orbiting around him “the limits of suffering” -- i.e. the contours

of the first figure. He felt moved to adopt the same posture, bringing his knees to his face, and to let out a scream, which seemed to flow as if it were a stream of tears, toward his feet. “For the first time I felt my undulating rhythm singing,” Tótila writes. The spontaneity, forcefulness and “otherness” of the inspiration are akin to possession and, more generally, shamanistic experience. It was to recur throughout his work as a sculptor and a poet. The process continued to unfold and it seemed to him as if he sank into sleep and woke up in “thinking: pain had vanished and in its place was “a single great thought” an experience embodied by Tótila in the second figure. The other three—“striving”, “creative activity” and “perfection” were apparently conceived after the first two were realized and while Tótila, nursed by his father, lay in bed with a high fever and a case of diphtheria.

Don Federico was at first not receptive to a modernity that anticipated in some years the emergence of cubism, and he advised his son to follow the Greek example. When the five figures were finished, however, he was able to overstep once more his conventional boundaries. Deeply moved he embraced Tótila and said to him what he would never forget: “this, son, is new and eternal. I am your first adept.”

More than once Tótila told me that the Hügelfrauen expressed the “five steps of meditation” known to every religion -- though I never obtained from him specific information as to how these steps are referred to in any particular one, nor have I come across the expression “five steps of meditation” in many years of religious exploration except for the five consecutive “paths” of the vajrayana. The sequence from suffering through understanding and then striving to perfection is contained in the “noble truths” of Buddhism, however; and the fivefold mandala echoes the esoteric streams of both Buddhism and Christianity. The steps, as described and sculpted by him, of course convey a natural unfolding: from suffering springs thinking; from thinking striving; from striving creative action -- crowned by perfection.

The fivefoldness of the Hügelfrauen at the beginning of Tótila’s career as a sculptor foreshadows the fivefoldness of the epic with which he began his poetic work ten years later. I am sure that this was not a deliberate intent of his, but an expression of an archetypal inspiration: a creative process unfolding according to a lawfulness and structure of which he -- hardly “an author” -- was an admiring witness.³

The name of the monument -- it remains to be said -- makes reference to an idea that never came to be realized. The Landskrone of Görlitz was to be its patron: the five figures were to be realized in more than monumental proportions -- the four sitting ones upon the foothills of a regular shaped promontory chosen by Tótila in his domains, and the fifth one at the Summit. The figures were to be hollow, each a “temple” for a different activity: the first -- “suffering” -- a music hall; the second -- “thinking” -- a lecture hall -- and so on to “perfection,” at the center, devoted to dance. There was a condition to the sponsor’s offer, however, and this was not fulfilled. That ... with the war. And never again did Tótila find an opportunity to materialize this monument of which he thought as the pyramids of Western world, “microcosmic” pyramids -- in contrast to the “macrocosmic,” geometric ones of antiquity⁴.

The Hügelfrauen opened the way for Tótila into a wider world. First came professional recognition -- even before the plaster castings of his clay originals were delivered to him: the craftman who carried out the task happened to stop at Lederer’s before coming to Tótila’s studio that morning. And Lederer, a most prestigious and influential sculptor of

³ Again and again I heard him express his awe at the ongoing miracle of the “music dictation” -- inwardly a spontaneous sacrament and outwardly a new artistic form with which he was to be occupied still later in his life.

⁴ Without a sponsor, the work remained as it came from his hands in a fivefold burst of inspiration -- and I fear that the central figure doesn’t exist anymore except in photographs.

that time, was impressed. he came to visit Tótila and soon after making his acquaintance he informally offered him the prize of the State of Prussia.⁵

The Hügelfrauen not only opened the way for Tótila as a sculptor in the professional circles: it brought him into contact with his first German friends; people who admired him and whom he admired in turn. From that time onward he had a "circle." Perhaps the warmest of these friendships was with Arno Nadel -- cantor, conductor, composer and poet⁶ who acquainted him with Li-Tai-Pe and other Chinese poets and eventually disappeared into some Nazi furnace; from Franz Evers too I think that Tótila learned much, though there were sharp disagreements between the two. Evers was particularly interested in the occult. Other members of the circle were Gerhard Conitzer, who found his way to Bolivia after escaping a concentration camp, and Franz Hartmann. Another important friendship (though short lived) was with Theodore Däubler whom Tótila admired as a poet over Rilke and who, in turn, had said when he saw the Hügel Frauen: "das geht weit über Barlach." Tótila later became so angry with Däubler that he destroyed a portrait of his which he had just finished sculpting.

During the decades that followed the Hügelfrauen Tótila was most prolific as a sculptor, exhibiting as many as twenty works per year at the Secession and the Juryfreie. Pictures of some of these may be seen in a book published in Berlin in 1924 by Julius Bard: the bust of Metzner, "Erdebet," "Io" (embracing Zeus as an invisible cloud), the series of Dante bas-reliefs and, most importantly (in Tótila's opinion), the colossal couple ("Das grosse Paar") that he later called in Spanish "Ritmo Eterno".

In "El Tres Veces Nuestro" he tells of his experience as he sculpted this great sized representation of the two giant bodies mating and suggesting more a force of nature than human experience through their elongated bodies "thrusting forth eight limbs entwined in a song of love":

The body is so whole as the word of God.
The artist so sincere as deep his love.
Love is inherited. I am born, live, and die in it.
This is why working with a chisel is holy.

After finishing the work and hearing some people comment on it, he recounts, he understood that it was an echo of a memory of seeing "palotes" mating as a child in the Chilean virgin forest, in the company of his father.

Specially remarkable among Tótila's sculptures are his numerous erotic works. Like the tantric sculptures of ancient India, their beauty seems to rest in a supremely innocent appreciativeness, devoid of lust, wherein sexuality flows like a sacred natural force. Something similar may be said of Tótila's later sexual poetry, and surely this was the reflection of his inner world, where innocence seemed to have prevailed over conventional sentiments much as in William Blake at the time of his Songs of Innocence and Experience. Whatever guilt or shame may have seeped into his mind during childhood in a puritanical atmosphere and in total ignorance of the facts of sex, it seems that with maturation all guilt and fear about sex had dissolved, and he had become in this regard, even before his years of spiritual incubation and realization, unusually free.

There was no great romantic love at this time in his life, and yet an abundance of sexual friendships that were truly the most important aspect of his life besides sculpting. Years later when the journey "to the other shore" spontaneously began for him and his experiences found echo in his writing, his erotic life became even more intense and extensive,

⁵ Which he was not able to accept in virtue of his Chilean birth.

and it is remarkable that a common devotion to him brought lovers together in friendship so that they collaboratively took turns to be with him on different days of the week.

[elaborate: Cassier, Scheler]

Though Tótila was successful in the eyes of artists and critics, he was not a commercial success, which explains that his large sculptures were only cast in plaster. Some fortunately survived the bombing of Berlin while under the custody of the Instituto Ibero-americano. Others including “Das Grosse Paar” (Ritmo Eterno) and the fifth of the Hügelfrauen (“Vollendung”) appear to have been destroyed. In time Tótila found something of a patron in Dr. Reitz, from Stuttgart, who admired his work and could afford it; he was a frequent customer who sometimes commissioned him special works⁷.

Tótila, it must be said, was never either now or ever successful in earning a living in spite of his notoriety. I think that this was not due to the character of his sculpture so much as to his lack of worldliness, his disdain for business and his refusal to apply himself to seeking his material advantage. I don't think that he would have survived in Berlin years without the support of his father, sister and friends (among whom was his blood relative the Kronprinz).

In the Summer of 1921 that childhood friend of Tótila who had so significantly influenced his destiny through a gift of plasteline, arrived in Berlin, and set himself in a painter's studio. Shortly afterwards he died unexpectedly from a rheumatic fever, and Tótila inherited his studio--which, more spacious than his own, permitted him to undertake larger works; also, it had a room to sleep in, and from then until 1939 Tótila lived here rather than in the house of his uncle and sister. Before long, however, he received a letter from his deceased friend's mother with an invitation to Santiago. The place that was left empty in her heart was now open to Tótila, she said; and Tótila rejoiced at the opportunity to see his father again. Don Federico had returned to Chile for health reasons at the end of the war, shortly after being a witness to Tótila's artistic beginning and helping him create a model of the Hügelfrauen as they were intended to be placed on their hill.

With the ticket given to him Tótila sailed once more to Chile (in third class) this time with a collection of his works to exhibit. Once in Santiago he stayed with the Valdés family -- composed by the mother and the seven brothers of his late friend. These brothers did not understand him, just as they didn't understand his late friend. “Nun bin ich du in ihrer Mitte” he tells Arturo in his thoughts, as he suffers from loneliness. He had further stimulus for sadness upon seeing the limitation under which his father has been living, in his effort to send his brother George as much help as possible, who still suffered from hunger in Berlin, and in the meantime had lost everything during the inflation.

When Tótila's exhibit opened the press proclaimed him a giant (“ausen klein, vulkanisch innen”); yet on occasion of it Tótila came against his first enemies. Just as in Germany he had been the object of ill-will from those who saw in him the foreigner, now he was met with an even greater ill-will from the members of an artistic circle (“Montparnasse”) that exalted French art and detested the Germans. Their opposition was to make itself felt (and eventually succeeded) in connection with a project that absorbed Tótila's energies during the length of his stay: a monument to the Chilean poet Manuel Magallanes Moure. This is how the project originated and developed: Manuel Magallanes had expressed an interest in meeting Tótila and seeing his work, and he announced his visit for a certain day. He was coming from out of town, but never arrived to his appointment, for he died suddenly upon arriving to his brother's house in Santiago, where Tótila came to see his body and honor him with a death mask. Later, around his coffin, the poet's brother told Tótila of the wish of his family and friends to erect a monument in his memory, and explained to him that honoring the peculiar

⁷ I am told that he is no longer alive but that the sculptures that he owned (some of them in metal) exist in Stuttgart.

coincidence of his being not only Chile but the poet's mind, they wanted him to be the one to realize it. They were poor, he further explained, but would make a collection for the material, and begged him to contribute his work freely. Tótila accepted.

In the garden of the Valdés home Tótila built a wooden armature, envisioning the monument as dome-covered cylindrical structure arising from a fountain, with scenes from the poet's life and inner development around its surface.

As he worked on the six and a half meter tall structure, the Montparnasse group began their criticism -- and others undertook the defense. Tótila immersed himself in Manuel Magallanes's poetry and life as he filled the wooden work until the monument in clay was completed, with seven figures representing the poet's life and poetic experience. Then it was cast in plaster, and the discussions continued. Pedro Prado -- the poet who was the acknowledged head of "the ten" (an intellectual group to which Manuel Magallanes had belonged) and was also part of the Montparnasse, turned against Tótila when the latter disagreed with his wish that the work be in white marble.⁸ One day he commented that the monument resembled a phallus. Tótila, pleased, agreed: was this not a natural symbol for a creative activity? Prado was outraged. His influence was great, and once he became an opponent it was clear that the monument would not be realized in its definitive form. Tótila then decided to return to Europe, leaving the plaster version of the sculpture in the garden where he had created it.

After a stop in Buenos Aires where he exhibited his works with unusual results, and in France, where he visited Notre Dame and Chopin's tomb, he returned to Berlin, where in 1928 (permutation of the year of his birth 1892) he had his plaster caster make a mask of his face (now in my possession). By this time, he received news of his father's deteriorating health, and sometime later of his sudden death. Also, six months later, news came to him that his monument had been destroyed: not having the influential Don Federico to count with, fanatics entered the garden by night with hammers. Tótila's mourning was further complicated by this information, which precipitated him into an intense mourning.

And at some time some thing happened that T described as a darkening of the world and an opening of the ear.

I remember T telling me that daylight seemed to turn into moonlight—but I now no longer recall whether this happened at the time of reading the letter that brought the news of his father's death or later, upon receiving his father's death-mask. What is certain is that after seeing his father's death mask his first poems came to him, and there must have been a difference between the level inspiration involved now and in his youth, for he spoke of the event as an "opening of the ear" and meant by it not only poetic inspiration, but inner guidance and spiritual intuition.

Ver como se incluyen las fotos.

After this T underwent a time of intense visionary life when he underwent a guided inner process and it seemed to him that he was living two simultaneous lives: the ordinary, and that of one who, having died to his earthly self roamed in a new dimension.

His contemplative life was from the very beginning intimately linked to his poetic life, and this, which may be followed through the successive pages of a volume that he simply entitled *Gedichte* (containing mostly verse but also some pages in prose—such as descriptions of dreams). It begins with the single poem that bears a title in the vast corpus of Tótila's work: "Arabic Teaching Poem"--which tells how, when we fall asleep, our souls go back to Allah, and this we forget on waking up. It is very brief, and it humourously ends with his asking for the grace of a sound sleep.

⁸ So big was his first reaction to seeing the work when it was completed. And then he added addressing himself to the "friends of Manuel Magallanes' what will be left for us? Tótila never forgave him for joking about the possibility that the head could be removable and changed to that of himself and others -- who were to die later.

T regarded these poems “the incubation of my work”—and by “work” meant his epic—where he undertook “to recreate the world in poetry”

I have written extensively about Totila’s epic in my book “Songs of Enlightenment” and also briefly in Lee Lozovicz’s volume on sacred poetry, so instead of undertaking the task afresh I will just insert next a fragment of what I wrote in the latter:

Totila was not a seeker who became a sage but one who was, so to say, struck by lightning, becoming self-enlightened through a succession of inner initiations. Through his epic "Die Geburt aus dem Ich" (literally "The Birth of I") we can witness the process of his inner development.

It began with the death of his father when he was 36, time at which "day became like night" for him and "his ear was opened." The first three volumes of his work sing his spontaneous orphic journey.

The epic is composed of five volumes of 120 cantos each, each canto being, in turn, composed of twelve stanzas symmetrically distributed in two symmetric groups of six on opposite pages.

The five volumes of the work reflect different levels of existence that the poet came to know successively in his own evolution as he wrote. The first -- Life (Leben) corresponds to his autobiography proper: his life between birth and the time of an internal death that constituted the beginning of both the writing and a re-birth process.

The second volume -- Return (Wiederkehr) begins with the same verse with the first volume ends: "Ein Licht im Dunkel war der Tod1," and its content is not so much that of outer life but the "second life" that began for Totila with his plunging into a path of spontaneous transformation and contemplative experience. I remember Totila saying to me that as Leben was the story of his early life, volume II was the life of the one who wrote Leben "from within the grave."

The third volume -- Constellation Man (Sternbild Mensch) reflects a new shift in consciousness to a less personal perspective. Here the poet identifies with the life of the material cosmos, and the content is no longer childhood memory (I) or vision (II); but "ordinary life" in the present. It is the present and the ordinary as lived by one who in a certain way has left the world, and there is at first a certain grotesqueness about it as suggested by the very opening verses of "Sternbild Mensch":

Also gut ich bleibe hier
Bei den armen Leuten
Die nicht wissen was ein Tier
Oder einen Baum bedeuten2

The interweaving of a contemplative "journey through science" and daily experience with a quality of detached ordinariness in volume III is like a prelude to the content of volume IV -- The Sun in the Father (Die Sonne im Vater) the content of which is the realm of spiritual experience proper. Totila's spiritual explosion in volume IV takes the form of what he sometimes called a "journey through the religions." At a deeper level, it was the expression of his participation in the shared consciousness of the enlightened of all times and cultures, a "communion of saints."

In Night in the Mother (Die Nacht in die Mutter) -- the fifth volume of "Die Geburt aus dem Ich" -- the poet's consciousness leaves behind the fire realm of volume IV and now identifies with inter-galactic space.

What at the macro-cosmic level is the space out of which crystallize the suns, is echoed micro-cosmically in the womb, where the development of the embryo proceeds. Totila claimed to have discovered that the process of higher spiritual development can be expressed through the life of the fetus in view of this natural symbolism.

The "hero" in volume V is, then, the embryo in the womb, and his deeds the self-generation of his tissues and organs -- beginning with the union of the gametes in fecundation, continuing with the invagination (stülpung) of the blastocist and the origin of the three embryonic layers -- endoderm, ectoderm and mesoderm. Every canto of *Die Nacht in die Mutter* may be read on two levels of meaning. It literally describes some event in the development of the embryo (such as the descent of the heart from the neck or the testicles from the loins, the development of the spinal cord from the primordial skin or the formation of the spiral inner ear) while it also conveys an inner meaning concerning the incubation of higher consciousness.

Near the end of the volume (in canto 109) as he completed his "Die Geburt aus dem Ich" both literally and experientially, Totila felt as if he was physically giving birth and in the end, transcending the five realms of "suffered matter" through which he had journeyed, he felt born into a sixth sphere of consciousness which he called "Die Musische Raum" -- the space of the Muses.

Totila's epic of self-birth **brought him** into a realm that he called *Die Musische Raum*—the space of the muses--and Buddhists would rather call the *Dharmadatu*). I would say that even though the whole of the epic had then been heard by him (and even heard as a song with a melody), at the end of it he was a step closer to the source on the ladder of inspiration. And he would soon experience another quality of inspiration, in which the phenomenon of inspiration was so striking that he did not think of what he wrote as his own work.

It all began with listening to the record of one of Beethoven's late Quartets that had been brought to him as a gift by Ruth--who later would become his wife. Totila had been so attached to Bach's language that he had not quite accepted Beethoven into his inner world until now belatedly he found himself marvelling at the experience of having a soul-brother. Soon this intimate familiarity with Beethoven's experience—a sort of spiritual osmosis that was the corollary of his own recent spiritual adventures--gave birth in Totila's mind to the project of write what would amount of a poetic translation of the content embodied in the B's music. In this way he would create a monument for Beethoven, and in this spirit he did write several cantos that became the beginning of new volume poetry that he called "The Revealed Thou" -- a spiritual biography of Beethoven obtained through the chronological decodification of his work. After these initial cantos, however, Totila began hearing words in the music and no longer felt that they were his own creation. Such was the beginning of what he called the "music dictation". At the beginning he only produced "poetic translations" of the exposition sections of Beethoven's sonatas, quartets concertos or symphonies, but beginning with the *Eroica* he "auscultated" the entire compositions—and wrote poems that match the music a syllable to a note. Totila's poetic endeavour in Berlin came to an abrupt end, however, when his sister, who worked in the Chilean Embassy, reported to him that war was to be declared on the following day. He left within a few hours, on the last transatlantic leaving the German coast; and in his haste, he left barehanded ("with his hands I his pockets" I remember him saying), leaving even his Epos behind--though a typescript of his precious and now lost manuscript had been consigned to the University of Basel in the late thirties.

Totila's life as a sculptor in Chile, after returning from Germany, began with generalized recognition and acclaim, but with the passing of time he met with opposition until he was relatively forgotten—for in spite of being well known for

the public monuments that he created in the course of the early years, he was no longer successful at surviving through his art.

First he was honored with the dignity and privileges of a “Professor Extraordinario”—a degree never before extended by the University of Chile—which not only involved teaching but the right to have an atelier in the building of the museum of Fine Arts—in the back portion of which the school of fine arts functioned.

Later, however, when he elicited antagonism among members of the faculty, the space was informally but effectively taken away from him. It is my impression that such antagonism originated from the interactions among teachers on occasion of evaluating their students merits. Totila was not diplomatic and had clear views, and this frustrated the expectations of some that he would amiably support preferences arising from favoritism. I imagine that he embodied too much truth to be socially acceptable, just as Socrates must have inspired a personal dislike that went beyond the explicit reasons offered as rationalizations. Not that T was aggressive or antagonistic, for, on the contrary, he was very kind, yet if he had clear vision, how could he not see the mediocrity around him and thus cause the discomfort of some by his very presence? About two years after he had been given up the atelier, a group of professors united during the night and threw his large works in plaster over the third floor banisters into the inner courtyard. Perhaps this was their reaction to his not having heeded their wish to have him go away, for he had never been told that the use of the atelier would be temporary and, on the contrary, it was his understanding that he had been granted permanent use of it. But he never was told what had happened, and the school’s director, whom he knew involved, claimed not to believe the testimony of employees who had seen the clandestine professors in their white robes.

Totila had supported himself partly through private commissions and partly from public ones—i.e. monuments—and he must have imagined that he would continue to be distinguished by the authorities, who at first saw him as the worthiest Chilean sculptor. Yet also in the matter of public monuments he run out of favour after his early works. Particularly his monument to Rodó—a social thinker known for a book entitled Prospero’s observatory—influenced this change of mind, for some were not pleased that instead of portraying the man Rodó he had sculpted Shakespeare’s Ariel and Caliban. The nakedness of Caliban, furthermore, had something about it that scandalized some angry conservatives who published threats of dynamiting the gigantic sculpture, and the polemic about it was to continue for years in the papers.

Illustration

T found a patron again in a Chilean president, who commissioned him with a bas relief for the frontispiece of a large building surrounded by a beautiful park then called Parque Cousiño, devoted to an educational project that lived less than the art that adorned and celebrated the idea. Don Pedro’s idea was an echo of Plato’s—as is apparent from his motto: “to govern is to educate”. It is well apparent today that government’s service to virtue has not been as noticeable as the use of education in the service of politics and government, and in view of that it may have been fitting that T’s 7 meter long bas-relief with the representation of “the flight of genius”—that he also called “The Bird of Returning” (and I have already shown on occasion of his vision of flying with Father-Mother wings)—was destroyed. I tried to save it when the cement was cracking, by recruiting the willingness of a contemporary artist to repair it and offering the necessary funds; but of course it was necessary to go through official channels, this was the time of the military dictatorship, and it seems that my seeking the collaboration of the chief of museums and libraries—Me Arnelo—only had the effect of making things worse. When I returned to the country a year later, the bas relief was gone and I was not even able to find out where I might find its remains. It was on T that fell the commission to erect a monument for Aguirre Cerda’s grave, and here, in the old Cementerio General it is possible to see an “angel of learning”—represented by a tall feminine winged figure holding a book before her eyes.

Next T was approached about a monument to the Chilean historian Victorino Lastarria, and to this he responded with a representation of the struggle of Jacob with the angel. It had been explained to T that though the committee responsible for the monument wanted to entrust the work to him, but officially, it would be necessary to invite other artists to an open contest. He agreed, then, and all the pieces submitted were exhibited in the central patio of the University of Chile so that they might be appreciated by the public. T's maquette represented an inward looking Jacob seeking to grasp an angel slightly above him with crisp hands seen to go through his body as it were immaterial—the angel supported in midair by his hand on Jacob's hip. I suppose some of the voices of the newspaper critics were influenced by partisans of one or another among the contestants, and that this may explain that, in spite of the acclaim with which Totila's sculpture was received by the public, the official verdict seems to be influenced by the rumour that there was a disguised homosexual intent in the embrace of the two naked figures.

Pict

Perhaps in part because people are not used to imagining Old Testament scenes in the nude, and certainly because Totila partook in the Michaelangelic delight in displaying naked human bodies, some were shocked, and the rumour became louder. Perhaps because those in the selection committee were too political to disregard it, or perhaps because some influence had been brought to bear on them and the very gossip was a pretext, it was not to Totila that the commission was given this time, and Totila was bitter about the betrayal to which he had been subjected. The piece is now in the basement of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Santiago along with other works needing restoration. On more than one occasion I offered to the museum the funds necessary to have a cast made of the endangered and damaged original, but Chilean bureaucracy is most deadening toward creative initiatives, and I never received a written answer to my offers.

Pict

Still another important composition that Totila created in Chile originated in response to a contest—this time for a monument to Ruben Darío. It was never realized in full size, because once more the distinction was given to a rival, but a bronze copy of Totila's maquette exists today because Herman Scherchen, who came to conduct the National Symphony orchestra in the late forties, took the initiative of having it cast in bronze—and thus it has survived while many of T's other works in plaster have been destroyed in earthquakes. It represents a man and a woman walking toward each other, each with an arm extended forwards and another backwards suggesting their coming to meet and also their leaving the past behind—as also the sense of an ongoing coming and an ongoing farewell. They seem to hold something invisible between their forward reaching and nearly touching hands, and this is an allusion to a rose in the Darío poem from which T took his inspiration-- a poem in which the verse "Let us approach death by the path of love" may be said to be the true theme of the composition.

Pict

In spite of being someone whose name was well known to practically everybody in town and in spite of the great respect that surrounded Totila in Santiago – to say nothing of the excellence of his work – he became less and less and less successful as a breadwinner, and I was a witness to how his wife Ruth had come to resent what she regarded as his failure.

Totila had invited Ruth to join him in Chile out of a great forlornness since his arrival here and I imagine that he proposed marriage to her feeling that he could do no less if he wanted her to leave England, where she had settled successfully since the mid-1930's. There was no doubt much love between them during their early time in Chile and their family life was lighted further by the birth of their daughter Luz Iris - to whom Totila became a most motherly

parent, first changing her diapers and feeding her and later continuing to give her his attention and time. Ruth Ehrman soon became a successful teacher at the best private school for girls in town--the Santiago College—and later she came to be regarded the best known English teacher. (I remember Otto Kernberg taking English lessons from her, while some, like myself, learned German with much pleasure—for she taught through conversation while at the same time taking intelligent notes for her students with reminders concerning vocabulary or the grammar involved. Then she entered the field of child psychology, and became a very successful and skilled advisor to parents of difficult children-- and thus even more successful than she had already been. This would have provided an ideal nest for Totila—who had always longed for a mecenass-- if he had come to be supported in his free creative expression; but this was not quite the case, for Ruth increasingly resented that their contribution to their joint living expenses was unequal. In the end, she offered a solution: the creation of a private academy.

Pedro Aguirre

Her contribution to this step would be the initial rental of the place and the public relations, she proposed, and Totila accepted the opportunity of having both a place to sculpt in and one where interested students could learn from him. Also painting was taught at this private academy, that occupied a small space in the basement of a downtown shopping center, T's initial partner being the painter Malakowsky, who was later followed by Kurt Herdan, when the latter arrived from Israel (and later became Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Chile. Totila started his students with the task of copying Beethoven's death mask and then that of Nietzsche, later stimulated them to proceed to more creative work, and it was clear that those who came to him were not people interested in pursuing sculpture as a profession – for the university presumably offered a more complete artistic experience and accreditation. It is my impression that those who became his students at the time did not even come for sculpting in a very specific sense either: it was the case, rather, that they valued the opportunity to be in contact with Totila, appreciated what came into their minds and into their lives through nearness to him, and to some extent felt not only inspired but healed.

To the existence of the Academia we owe the existence of a number of pieces of Totila's old age, including the bas reliefs "The Earth" and "Air" and the three-dimensional version of "The Earth"—that still sits in the basement of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. After many years of unsuccessful offers to the museum and the School of Fine Arts, to which it belonged, I thought that finally I had found the person who would champion the duplication of the fragile "La Tierra" in a Chilean ambassador to Spain. Yet after two years of waiting unsuccessfully for his influence on the local authorities to have an effect, I think that I was a bit too rude in my criticism of the Chilean bureaucracy, and our communication was interrupted. Days after this (and years since I began approaching the relevant authorities about my offer to fund the duplication and preservation of the masterpiece) I was surprised that the museum published in Santiago's chief newspaper **El Mercurio** a letter to Luz Albert in answer to her request to transport the piece to the Bienal exhibit in Sao Paulo, in which it was explained that they could not authorize this in view of its fragile condition, that it would be necessary to restore it and cast it in metal—and that this unfortunately had not been possible for lack of funds!

Another aspect of Totila's biography and a different dimension of his work had become apparent already in the late thirties, when he was still immersed in his Beethoven project and volume: a concern with the state of the world and a wish to awaken his contemporaries to its patriarchal aberration. Though intense, it only became absorbing after leaving Germany, and still during WWII, when he began to write political poetry.

It is clear that the development of nazism shook T out of the inward alchemical laboratory into which he had secluded himself as a place of both personal incubation and contemplative endeavour, yet only later did the indictment of patriarchy and his militancy for what he used to call the Dreimal Unser (literally "The Thrice Ours", or "The World of the Three") find poetic expression.

In Berlin, his initial shock upon grasping the tragic upsidownness of humanity, the danger ahead and the inner aspect of the world catastrophe, first found expression in three letters, intimate in style and yet adressed to archetypal entities rather than persons: the Mother, the Father and the Child. They reflect T's early insight into the universality and importance of patriarchy, and Totila wished that they might be printed and distributed by aircraft over European cities.

Later, when some time after settling in Chile Totila had peace of mind enough to return to poetry, he wrote a series what he called "hymns" and he took to be something akin to word posters. Though I have referred to them as "political poetry" they may be more accurately seen as expressions of a "mystico-political" spirit, for they are not only heartfelt invectives against the patriarchal order but also the singing out of a prophetic vision: a sane society arisen from the threefold loving embrace among Father, Mother and Child—in the family, in the mind of each and in the values embodied in the culture and in the social institutions.

Soon, however, it became apparent that he could not expect his poetic activism to reach either Chileans or Germans, since the former didn't understand the language and the latter were mostly patriotic nationalists too inimical to their anti-authoritarian content; and thus he began to write in Spanish. This was the language of a twelve year old, however—the age at which he had left the country—and thus the reader of his Spanish *Epopeya del Tres Veces Nuestro* (in 120 cantos) inevitably feels in the presence of something akin to a foreign accent that gets in the way of appreciating the text unless he is able to adopt an attitude like that we adopt when reading archaic poetry, where the meaning of some words and also the meter are unfamiliar. Since it is less likely that a modern reader will be as easily tolerant with the idiosyncracies of a contemporary poet as he is when reading one from the middle ages, though, it is no wonder that T failed to receive positive feedback from the friends to whom he showed his manuscript. Whatever the literary value of his book, however, it may be taken as an expression of his vision of patriarchy and of the awakened spiritual life as a loving interplay of the "inner three".

Yet it is not just of Totila the poet that I think when I speak of his wish to show us the madness of the world and to interest us in his vision of a better alternative: I see him, rather, as a prophet—i.e. one with an enlightened social message and mission not circumscribed to writing. He was one always ready to engage others in understanding both the world-wide sickness and our human potential, and I would say that his bodhisatvic concern for our common welfare came to be a permanent feature of his mind, and his reaction to reading the morning paper was such grief and concern that I do not think that there is anybody to whom I associated T so much as Jeremiah.

P aguirre

I came to know T through my mother and became his friend in spite of a considerable age difference—he being in his late fifties when I was in my early twenties. Recognizing him as one who embodied the wisdom that I sought, I questioned and observed him in a way comparable to that described by Plato through Appolodorus in reference to learning from Socrates' every word, action and gesture.

A page written to the beginning of Beethoven's Eroica that Totila showed me early in our friendship (and before I had learned any German) caused a very deep impression on me, for it seemed to me that while music has often been used as a musical background for poetry (Meloepa) here was a new kind of art (where every sillable corresponds to a note in such a way that even not knowing the language I could appreciate that an O an I or U or were so coherent with the music that it seemed I might have arrived at the corresponding letters through attentive listeningalone) .The form of the music dictation, too, echoed musical structure, making it more explicit, while one who understood the language could

find a coherence between music and words even greater than in a most vocal music--where the composer writes music to the poets words and thus the process is the reverse. In spite of having been a musician since an early age, nothing like Totila's music dictation helped me unlock the contemplative dimension of music, so my perception of musical depth was considerably increased.

Not only was Totila of great importance in my life but I was important in his- for it was apparently our friendship that stimulated him to reconnect with the music dictation-- which had seemed to him an abortion since he was suddenly interrupted in his contemplative endeavour while he occupied himself with Beethoven's second Rassoumowsky quartet.

Perhaps because this Beethoven "abortion" was still laden with mourning and after many years and at his present age he did not feel up to the titanic proportion of his Beethoven project, now it was not to Beethoven that he turned his attention, but to Schubert.

He remembered having listened in Berlin to Schubert's "Unfinished" during his Beethoven years, and how then, upon hearing its first movement, had visualized an archaic Mexican ceremony: one in which a youth, educated since birth for self-sacrifice, climbs up the temple stairs to offer his heart to the sun at its summit. He saw Schubert as one who had heroically sacrificed his sustenance and even his marriage to his musical vocation, and now that Totila listened to Schubert again in the fifties not only did he perceive the music as an expression of self-offering, but Schubert as a priest of Beauty, and the *Unfinished* as the musical expression of that "death before dying" that he had personally known as the beginning of his regeneration.

I was with T one day when he received the visit of a used book salesman—Heinz Plesch—who brought him a Schubert biography, through which T ascertained how much Schubert had suffered from the precariousness of a life dedicated to his art and his courageous decision to follow his vocation rather than accepting his father's invitation to join him as a teacher. T, too, was one who had put faithfulness to his calling above anything else, and thus was a suitable medium for the decoding of Schubert's message. But if Beethoven had been awakened by his deafness, Schubert had been awakened by the anticipation of a premature death, and here the facts of Schubert's life confirmed what T had heard already in the opening somber melody of the *Unfinished*—played by the cellos—to which he had written: "denkst du vielleicht auf einen frühen Tod? (Do you perhaps think of a premature death?)

The music dictation from Schubert put an end to T's implicit surmise that the music dictation was something specifically linked to Beethoven, and after he had finished "auscultating" the *Unfinished* and then Schubert's *Great* or 9th Symphony in C major, Totila wondered who, after Schubert and Beethoven, may have also given musical expression to the inner death-and-rebirth journey of awakening .Or, to put it differently: to whose hands, after Schubert, had passed the torch of transmission in what he envisaged as a musical lineage of consciousness contagion?

It was only natural that he interested himself in Schumann- through whom Schubert had mostly become known. Might it be that auscultating Schumann would also link him to the musical dictation?

Since a high school friend had given me some old records that included Schumann's Fourth Symphony, it was natural that I brought these to Totila, as I visited briefly with him one day before my weekly German lesson with his wife. Already on my way out, he showed me the first stanza that had "come to him"—and already from this first page it could be appreciated that the music dictation to Schumann had evoked a distinct content. In retrospect I can say that Schumann is the only instance in Totila's music dictation where there appears a traditional mythological symbol: Lucifer- the fallen angel-- as the prototype for the Fall and potential Return of human consciousness to the Divine Source.

And then, after Schumann came Brahms, whom Schumann had so generously endorsed, announcing him to be a sort of musical Messiah ("The one whom we expected"). Totila had disdained Brahms as an "Epigone" until, at this point in his life, he seemed to be drawn to Brahms' door. And now, after listening to his first symphony and reading about his life, he came to see him as a hidden saint—whose enlightenment had come about in part through the impact of death

(both Shumann's and his mother's) but largely through the good luck of good parenting. It seemed to Totila that while Beethoven had had to struggle very hard for his spiritual victory, Brahms had been given by life the gift of not falling quite so far from paradise, so that the experience of the death of those he loved, it seemed, had been enough to awaken him.

Totila came to feel that Brahms echoed his mind more than any of the other musicians, and saw Brahms as emblematic of "the balance between the inner three". He also heard in his music the same spirit that had entered music through Beethoven's ninth: the We sense: the sense of humanity.

Also, in his old age, Totila explored some of Beethoven's late quartets—beginning with the very last op. 135—in which Beethoven had written above the three opening notes of the last movement the words "muss es sein". T's text to this slow introduction presents us with the situation of one who resists death till he decides to embrace it-- in the allegro proper, that begins with the joyous inversion of the motive and the words "es muss sein!"

After this, T explored many other works of the composers I have mentioned, and also turned his attention to Bach's Ricercare in six voices at the end of the *musical offering*, (also to Bach's d minor organ toccata) and to several Mozart violin sonatas, until halfway in his work on a Mozart piano concerto he was interrupted by a heartstroke.

Now T closed the academy and stopped sculpting, but resumed writing, and perhaps this deterioration of his health involved a gift of Providence, for in excusing him from toil that mostly constituted a gesture of collaboration, allowed him to concentrate in his more essential work. And he not only devoted himself to the music dictation, but alternated between this and other works: a number of poem-cycles, comprising poems of six quatrains—such as "Wir sind im Ich-Fall", "Gesang aus drei Seelen", "Trunken von mir geh ich Schlafen", "Der selbst-bewusste Name" and "Der Schreiber Gottes"

If I think that while in Germany T took his music dictation to be the expression of a mediumistic experience--a sort of invisible transmission of mind from Beethoven-- and there can be little doubt that Beethoven became to him something similar to what Virgil had been to Dante throughout the *commedia*. Totila said that Beethoven had been his teacher, and that his only merit had been to be sufficiently "prepared to become Beethoven's secretary". Yet later in life, after writing to the music of various composers, T spoke of translating the *melos* into the *logos*, which implied the notion of an objective content encoded into the structure of the music, and he conceived of his own work as one akin to that of a "diver" with the ability to bring to the surface of consciousness what the ordinary listener perceives only unconsciously. According to this interpretation, it seems to me that the phenomenon of the dictation was not exactly one of a mind-to-mind transmission of consciousness, but rather what Beethoven meant in saying that his music originated in his heart and was directed to the heart of others; which is what great music is in general—only that to a fuller or deeper extent, so that one who personal experience has gained access to a deep experiential understanding of what the composer "says" is in a privileged position to read the imprint of his subtle mind. I cannot doubt, however, that, beyond the understanding that derived from his personal 'journey' there was at work in T a great inspiration, which I find simpler to understand as originating in a single source—be it the case of the Mountain Women, of the lyrical or epic poetry, or in his dictation to the music of Beethoven, Brahms and other German composers. In his language, I would say that it was an inspiration that reflected his connection and increasing participation in "the space of the Muses".

Years after his heart stroke, a brain stroke paralysed T's right arm and put an end to his writing. He never recovered the use of his right arm, needed assistance in walking and showed organic brain damage when tested in such abilities as counting backwards or arithmetic operations. Yet I remember his irony after a visit from the neurologist, as he considered how, in spite of not being able now to knot his tie, he sometimes felt in contact with beings of the past like Mozart or Alexander the Great, and he could assure me that his mind continued to evolve.

Later he was hospitalized for a mesenteric infarct, and never returned home.

I visited him several times at the hospital of the Universidad Catolica, as he lay with tubes in or out of his veins and orifices. I marveled that in such a state as he was, he could still be interested in hearing about me, asking what I had to tell him, inquiring after my mother and sending her greetings.

The last person to see him was his daughter Luz, who heard his last words just before she left the room, in answer to her "I'll see you tomorrow": "Wie komisch!"

She had not yet left the hospital when she was told that he had passed away.

It seems most appropriate that Totila Albert Shneider, poet of the trinity and of the triple birth, whose life had been emblematic of the integration of the inner three, should have been, in a way, slayed by a triple death: successive strokes at his heart, brain and gut.

His remains are now in Santiago's Cementerio Metropolitano, along with the words at the end of his text to Brahms' Clarinet Quintet—Die Geburt aus dem Ich ist der Anfang der Liebe--which he envisioned on his grave without name or date. I guess his family in the end thought such eccentricity contrary to their own wish to support his memory, so the visitor can read Tótila Albert 1982-1967 and a Spanish translation of the indicated passage:

“el nacimiento del yo es el comienzo del amor”.

(THE BIRTH OF I-HOOD IS THE DAWN OF LOVE)