

Biograph of Tótila Albert (1892-1967)

With an introduction by Claudio Naranjo

The Birth of the I
Epos

Volume I - Life

Edited by Claudio Naranjo
and Sebastian Elsaesser

Introduction to Tótila Albert's "The Birth of the I"

It is a great satisfaction for me to publish a part of Tótila Albert's poetic work.

Tótila was, what the Romans called a "vates", a seer who expresses himself through poetry. He was known mainly as a sculptor to his contemporaries, but he used to say that sculpture was his profession, while poetry was his vocation, and it seems to me that he was mainly a prophet, especially towards the end of his life, when he was more interested in awakening people, drawing their attention to the aberrations of collective life, and giving them an idea of life in a truly healthy society.

Tótila Albert was the first to speak out against patriarchy, but his vision of a healthy society did not correspond to an easy return to matriarchal values. He sought a society in which there is a balance between the fatherly, the motherly, and the childlike (what he called the "Three Times Ours").

But the premise for the social and political expression of this balance, he said, was the inner harmony between the three principles within us: three aspects of our being, which he said Christianity misinterpreted by positioning the mystery of the Trinity in a patriarchal culture that divine motherhood cannot accept.

More than anyone else, Tótila has been a spiritual father to me, even though he could have been my grandfather by age, and he has never accepted a different relationship between us than that of brothers.

Close to death, he said goodbye to me one day with the words "Now you will be Tótila. I'm leaving." To my reply that I had hardly understood his "Message of the Three" and had not experienced until now that death and that rebirth, of which he told me, he replied that I only lacked time. Without a doubt, he felt that his seed had been planted in me and fallen on fertile soil, and the following decades proved that he was right.

Seeing me as his closest friend and his most important spiritual heir, he decided to make me the heir to his poetry and asked me to call a lawyer to give this wish a legal form. I asked an acquaintance to perform this service. After welcoming us— it was already in his last year of life — he explained to us that he had wondered why he was still alive after he had finished his work at the age of 72. However, he also said that he still had something to do: to ensure that his work was published. He said that Beethoven could afford to claim of his work "that it is self-respecting", because he knew very well how deeply his music had penetrated the world. He was right, for his funeral resembled that of an emperor.

On the other hand, for Tótila it was important to look after the future of his work, which was not only unknown until then, but was also to remain unknown for many years. He had even toyed with the idea of doing what Goethe had intended to do with his Faust II: to seal his manuscript and to add a note to the package: "To open 100 years after my death." For Tótila did not expect to be understood before this time, just like Goethe.

Apparently, the 100 years in Tótila's case are more figurative than literal, since only 47 years have

passed between his death (1967) and this publication (2014).

I did not hurry to make Tótila's work known, out of the feeling that I would know when the right time had come.

During the first three years after Tótila's death, the moment of publication had not yet occurred, as work and family demanded all my attention.

This phase was followed by a period of pilgrimage in which everything was subordinated to spiritual life. After that, I lived for many years through what I could call my personal Odyssey, which, after the beginning of a new life, continued in the stormy waters of my own transformation process.

Finally, an intensive teaching activity, which coincided with the maturation of the fruit of my life, kept me from the task.

In the meantime, however, I have learned to better understand both German and Tótila - through my own spiritual maturation. This is also evident in my books, in which I talked about Tótila and thus paved the way for the eventual publication of his work. First I explained his social philosophy in "The End of Patriarchy" (Via Nova), and later I also wrote about the "Birth of the I" epic in "Songs of Relief" (Hugendubel).

Already in the late 1970s I thought about publishing an anthology of Tótila with selected chants of the epic, with the help of Dr. Lola Hoffmann and Lama Govinda. This project would have been contrary to the express wish of Tótila, who had already refused to break up his work in individual fragments during his lifetime. However, the anthology I was thinking about has never been published and I am happy about it. Later, my friend Sebastian Elsaesser became interested in the project and offered to help me, but after some time he developed serious health problems. It was not until 20 years later that he commissioned Christina Riedel, his secretary in Germany, to digitally recompose the epic. And only recently did he work through the spelling mistakes and punctuation of the two typewritten versions that survived the Second World War – one in my hands and the other at the University of Basel.

We live in stormy times, and one does not read poetry during a storm.

One will therefore understand that, as I pass Tótila's legacy on to the world, it feels as if I am putting a fragile basket in a river, confident that providence will place it into good hands.

Nevertheless, I sense that the time has come to complete the task, not only because I trust in the organic development of things, but because I feel that the responsibility I once assumed as the heir of Tótila's poetic work is something like the tangible echo of a greater and more subtle responsibility towards his mission. This also coincides with my strong, albeit less tangible, commitment to advancing social change through impulses in education.

I cannot fail to compare my friend to King Tótila of the Ostrogoths, whose armies enthusiastically stormed into battle and were able to wage a decisive war while they saw their king during the battle upright on his horse, even though he, who galloped between them, was already dead.

So I hope that Tótila, always present in his work, will inspire us to win the war against patriarchy, even though he himself felt socially useless in his time, as he never received recognition from his Chilean contemporaries for his understanding of patriarchy and the nature of a healthy society.

I end this introduction with the wish that the magic of life can bring the “Birth of the I” closer to those who are open to Tótila’s spiritual legacy, so that it may penetrate the present world with its critical revisions and may also influence future generations.

Claudio Naranjo

Tótila Albert – his life and his work

Tótila was born on 30 Nov.1892 in Santiago, Chile. His father - Don Federico Albert - was born in Germany and was the son of the court musician Max Albert, a half-brother of Ludwig II of Bavaria.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Chilean government wanted to advance the development of the country by inviting a number of well-known personalities from Europe, whose names are still known today: Gay, who described many local animal species, Philippi, known for his book on birds in Chile, and Poenisch, whose books on algebra were still used when I was in high school.

“Don Federico”, as he was respectfully called, was the director of the recently opened Museum of Natural History. He was responsible for ensuring that trout was introduced in South America and spent a lot of time researching how to adapt trees from all sorts of countries of the world into the most diverse climatic zones of our long-stretched land. Like Humboldt, he was at home in all natural sciences, a type that has disappeared today due to the increasing complexity of specialization and the tendency of science to divide itself into an infinite number of fields. He was a man of action who planted the dunes to stop erosion, who drafted new laws to protect forests and various animal species, and created the breeding grounds for oysters. In general, it can be said that he was an active ecologist and was far ahead of his time – a pioneer in fostering an attitude that is more and more often encountered today.

I remember Tótila telling me about taking a trip as a child with his father to the virgin forests of the South. And one of the most characteristic images I have of Don Federico is about he and his 10-year-old son allegedly encountering a geyser that was spitting out salty water in rhythmic bursts. He was of the opinion that the water, which he had determined was cold and salty, was coming from the surf of the nearby coast and channeled through an underground tunnel.

So, he explored the coast and after discovering the expected cave, he decided to prepare a final proof: soon Tótila, who, on the instruction of his father, had remained seated beside the sporadically splurging water, saw his father fly into the air in one of the “eruptions of the geyser”.

Don Federico must have calculated with great self-assurance that he could hold his breath for as long as it would take to get through the tunnel and he was obviously willing to take some risk to carry out this adventurous experiment.

Another image that played a major role in Tótila’s memory was to see Don Federico sitting at his desk at night. Tótila has mentioned this well-known scene several times, as his father sat there writing after he himself had been sent to bed. From his descriptions one could feel the loving respect for this tireless and idealistic worker. But above all, I remember him talking with sorrow about our idiotic country not having been able to profit from his father’s efforts and that the fruits of his labor having been wasted after his death. The Department of Fish and Game, which he had created at the time, became a ministry, subject to the game of political interests, and so now forests were burned relentlessly to make room for herds of cattle, without regard for the beauty of nature or the ecological consequences, while the rivers that flow from the Andes to the Pacific Ocean and are rarely used as an energy source, carry ever more soil from our narrow strip of land into the sea.

Tótila's mother, Teresa Schneider, was his father's cousin. Both parent pairs were against the marriage, because it was considered incestuous at the time. That's why Teresa ran away from home as a teenager to meet up with her future husband on the sailing ship that was to bring them to Chile.

It is believed that she shared her husband's love for nature as she kept frogs and snakes as pets (she was therefore suspected of witchcraft). But her artistic inclinations were more characteristic of her, and were also shared by her son. Tótila was grateful that he was allowed to grow up with her piano playing, and that even before he was even born, and he remembered that even before he was able to read, he preferred his mother's books with the narrow irregularly long lines to the books of his father, in which the lines were always the same length and the whole page was filled.

During his adolescence, he noticed his mother's criticism of his father's idealistic service to Chile. She demanded that he rather work for himself and his family. The conflict of the parents caused a split in the psyche of the child and later in life this burdened the inner alchemy, through which the souls of his father and mother were united – first as intra-psychic persons and later as universal principles.

Tótila was born prematurely due to a shock his mother suffered. A burglar had entered the house at night and his mother had been quick-witted enough to pretend she had a pistol in her hand, which scared the man away. However, she reacted with such a heavy fear that the contractions began.

In the poetic autobiography, which Tótila wrote at age 37, he says: his hunger was so enormous that he needed a total of 13 nurses to breastfeed him. From the early childhood memories he experienced during the psychological process of writing, three stand out as particularly frightening: when the candle factory next to their house caught fire and he was rescued by a maid from being trampled by the horses of a fire truck; also the various times he was held over the fire as punishment for wetting the bed; and the incident when his elementary school classmates wrestled him to the ground and threatened to castrate him, until a teacher appeared, making the group disperse quickly. Among the happiest childhood memories is the one in which he played with his parents in a zither trio.

Playing the zither was a family tradition, because the concert zither was an invention of Federico's father, Max Albert (this Max Albert was a half-brother of Ludwig II of Bavaria and was a court musician). He had developed it from the traditional instrument and composed many pieces for it.

(These works had been left behind in his studio in Berlin when Tótila left for Chile head over heels at the outbreak of World War II. I don't know if other copies "survived".)

Very early, he learned to play the instrument and he often played with his parents, either at home or at private performances. This situation, in which he and his parents sang and played as a trio, prefigured that later in his life he would become "Ambassador of the Trinity". Also, his early musical experiences were precursors to a very different, new, and very intimate engagement with the music in his mature years: when he "sang" his poems to the music of great German romantics.

Tótila had a sister, Tusnelda. On the deathbed, when her children were already young adults, her mother asked "Tussi" to be like a mother to her brother. This last wish she fulfilled with devotion. After the death of Tótila, the old woman at the age of 76 went to visit his grave every day until the end of her life.

Tótila was 11 when his parents separated and he, his sister, and mother travelled to Germany. The ship they were travelling with ran aground near Tierra del Fuego - Patagonia and the ship's screw broke. When the water reached the deck, the passengers evacuated to an uninhabited island where they lived on clams. There – during miserably cold weather - Tótila got typhoid and lost his hair. Although most of the hair grew back, there remained a bald spot, in the form of a tonsure.

Deeper than the impact of the accident, however, was that of the separation: It was not only a separation from his father and his homeland, but also – as it later became apparent – a separation from both parents and the loss of everything he could have called home.

When one reads Tótila's report on his first 36 years, it seems that his parents (at least the father) had not intended a final separation. His mother spoke with longing of a return to Germany, although her homesickness rather expressed how unhappy she was in her marriage. Over time, this became increasingly clear. On this journey, Tótila became aware of the conflict between his parents, and this contributed much to his eviction from the paradise of childhood. It looks as if it was intended that Tótila should stay with his mother, but this plan did not become a reality.

After a short stay in Berlin, where mother and children stayed with Tótila's relatives, they continued to Munich. Here, in her hometown and distant from the family of her husband (one can assume that she had felt criticized), Teresa had apparently intended to live with Tótila and Tusnela, but after a while the letters of her husband from Chile demanded that they should return to Berlin, so that Tótila could go to school there. As a result, the mother, who did not want to live with her husband's family, continued to live with her daughter in Munich, while Tótila was sent to his uncle in Berlin. Uncle Otto suffered from a disease that had an impact on his leg and prevented him from walking. So Tótila spent a lot of time at his bedside and took care of him. Uncle Georg worked at the stock exchange during the day. After some time, George married and so Aunt Ida came into the house. (*To the strict woman who does not...*).

Towards the end of the year, Tótila's father came to visit them, and mother and sister joined them also for a few days. Here's a picture of one of those days. (in Canto 18 of *Life*).

Soon it was Christmas. On that day, something happened which is interesting as an indication of both Tótila's talent as an artist and as the father's attitude towards it. I quote a fragment of the 29th Canto from Tótila's autobiographical work.

*The boy stands by the window and
Rolls warm wax to thin plates,
He builds the Church again,
The walls open rows of windows,
The tower rises to consecrate itself to God,
The portal rises narrowly.
The warm knife melts the smooth
Separate parts into a round.*

*The father silently opens the door
And stands in the light of a tree.
"What are you doing here?" The boy lights up
With his church before him.
"For you, my father!" Soon after
Was their glance moistened by dew.
Form of a distant dream
Frozen to the reminder: "Son, don't*

*Lose yourself in dreams, artist don't
Be, but everything else! Even my father
Who an artist was, forbade me.
You should not end poor and inglorious!"
"Who might turn the fate around!
Beloved Father!" thought here
With himself the son "You, my adviser,
Even recognized the higher duty!"*

Next came a time when he, who was used to being alone, came into a class with 60 classmates and where, as one can easily imagine, "So violent all lust suffocated." Tótila tells us (Canto 31, *Life*, p. 108) that he "shyly looked inside and fled to the secret being;" and yet he adds:

*But all the noise flowed wonderfully
To him, who sat island-lonely -
He was in the protection of his own soul ...*

Within a few months, the inward-looking dreamer began to express himself in poetry. A remarkable achievement, considering that only one year before, when he came to Europe, he had begun to learn his mother's language.

There is a family photo in which Tótila (about 4 years old) holds a roll of paper in his hand. He once told me the story behind it: the photographer, who was already beneath the cloth used at the time to shield the light behind the camera, had put all in the desired place, but Tótila cried and no one could get him to stop. The photographer then suddenly had an idea: he gave the boy a roll of paper to hold in his hand and that seemed to make him happy. Tótila saw this picture as a prophecy for his future dedication to poetry and it is not improbable that even for the four-year-old the roll of paper - combined with the letter of the father and the mother's reading - had a meaning.

Although, as a child, he probably wrote more than one poem (he says that he once wrote one to his mother as a gift when they returned from church), the outburst of creativity in Berlin was apparently combined with a new influence, which he gratefully expressed in his poetic report (Canto 32, *Life*, p. 108) about his life, when he was 13 years old: that of Johanna, a 40-year-old woman.

*Johanna was in that year
when our boy was thirteen
probably close to forty. Unwed
and also chaste she died.
"Come up to me," venerated image
The longing that retains the courage,
Knowing what she liked.
Your silver hair is so fine!"*

Apparently, Tótila found refuge in poetry long before he wrote his own, because I remember him

telling me that he was reading Lenan and others under the desk without the teacher noticing. It is to be assumed that this “finding-refuge-in-poetry” increased along with the growing tumult in his life, as the conflict between his parents grew.

After much pressure on the part of his father, Tótila’s mother travelled with Tussi to Chile, only to finally realize that she could no longer be happy there.

She returned to Bavaria, not without being harshly judged by her husband and his relatives. In the 38th Canto of Life (p. 122), Tótila writes:

*So much suffering confused everyone,
In the dark they were looking for their
Hands, but only in vain,
They remained eternally unreconciled.
The son who mocks his mother,
Tore the letters of her life.
The remorse that soon crept into him,
He still feels at the heart as a claw.*

The agony of his family situation increased Tótila’s feeling of loneliness in the crowd until it got to the point where he exploded in anger and later uttered in Canto 38 that the school knows nothing of souls:

*The school knows nothing about the souls
Shipped on the class track
The performance out of the mind
Teachers set travel deadline,
Forget that you are soul
And longing have for another land,
Recognize willingly your diligence
And also their right to steal your time.*

To make matters worse, he lost the friendship of his old classmates, when he was separated from them, due to the loss of half a year in order to move to the last class.

In a bout of anger and vindictiveness, Tótila threw his poems into the trash. The nineteen-year-old remained in his resolution until the death of his father, almost 20 years later, when it pushed him into what he called a return: in an area that is like a life “on a higher octave” or life after you died. After graduating from high school, Tótila returned to Chile to study agriculture, out of obedience to his father.

Don Federico expected him to be his successor: and Tótila, who later in life became a critic of the state and the church, and was known for remaining true to himself, as a teenager didn’t even dream of questioning his father’s authority and even less to take his life into his own hands.

But even more important than the university was for Tótila to hike with his father through the peaceful lushness of the pristine forests of southern Chile. Or playing the zither with his father in front of people he had frequent dealings with: most were landowners, who sought his advice. At

one of these performances - in the house of Don Eliodoro Yuez – (today, one of the most important streets of our capital bears his name) Tótila had his first romantic arousal – when, while he was playing and singing, the daughter of the host fainted. (The mutual attraction of the youths was not talked about and was without any further development, and so it was only years later, when he was back in Berlin that he kissed a girl for the first time.) It was also around the time when he was earning the first money of his own – he taught other girls to play the zither (possibly arranged by his father), with no less extra-musical fascination. On an outing (1914) Don Federico and Tótila were met by a rider with a telegram for him: Teresa in Munich was terminally ill.

“I wish I could tell her that I forgive her,” said the father. On this occasion, Tótila had the courage to confront him by asking him to limit his words to just expressing his love. “Perhaps she, too, has reason to forgive you.”

“*The father came to a new reading*” wrote Tótila - “*and was a sound from head to toe*”. They rushed back to the next village and shortly afterwards received the message of Teresa’s death.

Later in Berlin, his sister gave Tótila the last message, which their mother gave her on the deathbed: “Tell Tótila that he is a poet and not a farmer.”

I don’t know if Don Federico knew about it before Tótila returned to Germany, if his behavior was influenced by the communication, and he therefore offered him to return. I don’t think so, because otherwise, he would also have received his mother’s farewell message at the time. I think that Don Federico came to question on his own his hitherto completely unquestionable project to make his son a version of himself.

A long time ago Tótila had decided to sacrifice himself for the will of the father – but not without psychological consequences. First, he endured two years of training in which he was not interested. And he must also have suffered when the classmates treated him like a stranger and mocked him (mainly because of the great compassion he felt for the pain of animals subjected to castration and branding, and because of his suggestion that this pain should be alleviated through anesthesia).

The feeling that he was not on the path of his own self-realization certainly left him empty and made him the victim of neurotic feelings and thoughts that such an emptiness create. In his later writings, he described how he was annoyed that his father was in the eyes of all the “great men” while he remained in the shadows; and that he had a desire to surpass his father.

An important fantasy, which he reports in his autobiography, integrates this “Oedipus” impulse of the competition with his father through loving admiration: In it he sees himself as a sculptor who creates a frieze that represents his father’s exploits.

The event that led to the change of career occurred when Tótila’s childhood friend Ismael Valdés Alfonso (later known in Santiago as “The Naturalist”, the first and for decades the only owner of a natural food shop and restaurant) arrived one day with a load of plaster. The two young boys played with it all day and finally Tótila made replicas of the head of Zeus and Rodin’s “The Kiss”. Don Federico must have been impressed, because this time his attitude was exactly opposite to the one he had demonstrated earlier.

That Christmas his son gave him a church made of wax and, after a few days, the father solemnly presented him with an alternative: “Do you want to become an artist?” Tótila had no doubt, but his father still had some concerns. “What if you are not successful during your lifetime and you would have to renounce comfort and would also have to give up a family life? Would you still want to be an artist?” Tótila said yes, and so Don Federico offered to return him to Berlin in order to receive

adequate training there.

The newspapers published the incident in Sarajevo (January 17, 1914) at the time, in which Tótila created his plaster sculptures. When his father offered to send him to Germany, the First World War had already broken out and Tussi could not return to Chile, her country of birth. Now he joined her in the house of the recently widowed uncle. During Tótila's absence from Berlin, Uncle Otto had also died and Tussi had, he found, become an attractive young woman.

Don Federico's dominance should follow Tótila implicitly, in a subtle way, even during the first two years in Germany, at the time when he felt most grateful for his freedom. Although the father was touched by his son's sculptures and had recognized his talent, he determined that Tótila should study painting! Perhaps he saw it as a profession that would lead his son to worldly success; perhaps he considered painting to be a more important form of art; whatever the reason was, Tótila accepted the goal of the education that his father set for him and only worked on sculpture if one of his professors advised him to develop a better sense of shape, for example.

Tótila's training period was once again quite bitter: both the teachers and the uniformed students who went to school with him declared him furiously a "parasite": a foreigner who was exempt from being sent to the front.

Although apparently none of his teachers had had a great influence on him, three years of supervised work made him quite skillful, of course. Afterwards, he worked briefly in the studio of Anton Metzner as an assistant and apprentice, but left the position after taking offense at the rude manner in which Metzner had corrected him. His father, who came to visit his family at the time, saved him by giving him his own studio, equipped with everything he needed to start working.

Towards the end of 1917, he created his true Opus 1: *The Hill Women* (Hügelfrauen). In the fourth chant of the Epic of the "El Tres Veces Nuestro" (The Three Times Ours), which he wrote almost thirty years later, he describes the process of how the five sculptures were designed.

The timing was certainly not irrelevant: it was the last winter of the First World War, as "one suffered from hunger and cold and from an immense death" and "living became a luxury." While he was sitting in his studio, with his head between his hands and looking inward, he felt his whole body vibrate and he saw how "the limits of suffering" circled around him – that is, the outlines of the first figure. He felt moved to take the same stance by holding his knees to his face and giving a scream, which seemed to flow towards his feet, like a stream of tears.

Tótila wrote: "For the first time, I felt my wave-like rhythm singing". The spontaneity, power, and "otherness" of this inspiration are akin to "possession" and, more generally, a shamanistic experience. This type of experience was repeated as long as he worked as a sculptor and poet. The process developed further and it was as if he was sinking into a deep sleep and awake with the thought: the pain had vanished and in its place was "a single great thought", an experience embodied by Tótila in his second figure. The other three - "striving", "creative activity", and "perfection" - were apparently conceived after he had completed the first two. At that time, Tótila was lying in bed with a high fever and a diphtheria attack and was nursed to health by his father.

Don Federico was not open to Modernism, which followed a few years of cubism, and he advised his son to follow the Greek ideal. But when the five figures were finished, he was again able to advance beyond his conventional limits. Deeply moved, he embraced Tótila and said what he would never forget: "This, my son, is new and eternal. I am your first adept".

Tótila has repeatedly told me that the *Hill Women* represent the “five steps in meditation” that every religion knows. However, I have never received more precise information from him as to what these steps relate specifically to in any religion, nor have I encountered any use of the expression “five Steps of Meditation” in my many years of religious research. The succession of suffering through understanding and then the pursuit of perfection, however, is contained in the “Noble Truths” of Buddhism. The five-fold mandala finds a resonance, both in the Buddhist and the Christian lines. The steps he describes and to which he has given form, express a natural development: thought springs from suffering; striving from thinking; creative action (creative expression) from striving – crowned by perfection.

The “fivefoldness” of the *Hill Women* at the beginning of his career as a sculptor suggests the “fivefoldness” of the Epos with which he began his poetic work, ten years later. I’m sure he didn’t do it on purpose, it was more the expression of an archetypal inspiration: a creative process that unfolded according to certain laws and structures of which he - hardly “an author” – was an adoring witness. (Again and again, I heard of his reverence for the miracle of the “Music Dictate” – inwardly an impromptu sacrament and a new artistic form outwardly, with which he would be occupied until late in his life.)

All that remains to be said is that the name of the monument refers to an idea that could not be realized. The Town Hill (Landeskronen) of Görlitz became his patron: the five figures were to be created in monumental proportions – the four seated figures at the foot of a very regularly shaped hill formation, which Tótila had selected, and the fifth on top of the hill. The figures should be hollow, each a “temple” for a different activity - “suffering” – a music hall; the second - “thinking” - a lecture hall - and so on until to “perfection” in the middle, dedicated to dance. The offer of the benefactor was valid only on the condition that war should not break out, a condition that could not be fulfilled. Tótila never found an opportunity to carry out the monument. For him the *Hill Women* represented the pyramids of the Western world, “microcosmic” pyramids – in contrast to the “macrocosmic” geometric form of antiquity. (Without a sponsor, the work remained as created by his hands, in a five-fold outbreak of inspiration – and I am afraid that the central figure exists only as a photo.)

The *Hill Women* opened up more opportunities for Tótila. First came professional recognition – even before the plaster copies of his original clay figures were sent to him: the craftsman, who had carried out this work, had happened to pass by Lederer’s studio before he went to Tótila’s studio. Lederer, at the time a highly respected and influential sculptor, was very impressed. He visited Tótila and shortly thereafter offered him a top prize of the State of Prussia (which he could not accept, because he was a Chilean).

The *Hill Women* not only opened the sculptor’s access into the circles of the professional sculptors: they also brought him into contact with his first German friends; people who admired him and whom he also admired. From that point on, he had a “circle”. Probably, his friendship with Arnold Nadel was the closest – the singer, conductor, composer, and poet through whom he got to know Li-Tai-Pe and other Chinese poets, who later disappeared in some Nazi extermination oven. I believe that Tótila also learned a lot from Franz Evers, although there were great discrepancies between the two. Evers was very interested in the occult. Part of the “circle” were also: Gerhard Conitzer, who escaped the concentration camp and emigrated to Bolivia, and Franz Hartmann. Another important friendship (although short-lived) he had with Theodor Däubler, whom Tótila valued as a poet even

more than Rilke, and who, when he saw the *Hill Women*, supposedly said, “This goes far beyond Barlach.” Tótila later became so angry with Däubler that he destroyed a portrait of him that he had just finished.

In the following ten years, after the creation of the *Hill Women*, Tótila was very productive as a sculptor. He presented no less than twenty works per year in the *Secession* and the *Juryfreie Kunstschau* exhibits. One can see pictures of some of these works in a book by Julius Bart, which was published in Berlin: the bust of Metzner, “Earth Prayer”, “Io” (embracing Zeus in an invisible cloud), the series of Dante’s bas-reliefs and, most importantly, (in the opinion of Tótila), “the Great Couple”, which he later called in Spanish “Ritmo Eterno” (eternal rhythm).

In “El Tres Veces Nuestro” he talks about his experience when he created these two huge self-uniting bodies, in which he suggested a rather natural force than a human experience, through their elongated bodies “thrusting forth eight limbs entwined in a song of love”.

The body is as complete as the Word of God.

The artist as honest as his love strong.

Love is inherited. I am born, live and die in it.

Therefore, working with a chisel is sacred.

After finishing his work, he heard that some people thought there was some resonance to the picture of the pairing “Phasmatodea” (an insect that looks like a stick and hardly stirs), which he met as a child with his father in the Chilean jungle had seen.

Particularly noteworthy is the large number of erotic works among Tótila’s sculptures. As with the tantric sculptures from ancient India, their beauty appears to rest in a highly innocent appreciation, void of pleasure, where sexuality flows in as a sacred force. There could be something similar said about Tótila’s later sexual poetry. This was certainly an expression of his inner world, where innocence prevailed over more conventional feelings, similar to William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Any feelings of guilt or shame, that may have leaked into his mind during his childhood in a puritanical atmosphere were completely ignorant of sexuality. It seems that all fears and feelings of guilt about sex had dissolved into nothingness as he got older and he was unusually free in this regard, even before the years of his spiritual incubation and realization.

There was no great romantic love in his life during this time and yet, there were many sexual friendships, which, in addition to sculpture, were truly the most important aspect of his life. Years later, when the journey “to the other shore” spontaneously began for him, and his experiences were echoed in his poetry, his erotic life was still more intensive and extensive, and it is remarkable how the common devotion of the lovers to him brought them together as friends, so that they agreed to be with him alternately for different days of the week.

Although Tótila was successful in the eyes of other artists and the critics, he had no commercial success, which explains why his large sculptures were only made of plaster. Fortunately, some survived the Berlin bombings when they were under the protection of the Ibero-American Institute. Some, such as “The Great Couple” (Ritmo Eterno) and the fifth of the *Hill Women* (“Completion”), were apparently destroyed. Over time, Tótila found a sponsor in Dr. Reitz from Stuttgart, who admired his work and could afford it; he was a frequent client who sometimes commissioned special pieces. (I have heard that he is no longer alive, but that the sculptures he owns - some of which are made of

metal- are located in Stuttgart.)

Tótila, it must be said, has never been able, either at this time or before, to earn his living, even though he was very well known. I believe it had nothing to do with the nature of his sculptures, but rather with the fact that he was not of this world. This was reflected in his disdain for business and in the refusal to seek material benefits. I don't think he would have survived those years in Berlin without the support of his father, sister, and friends (among them his relative, the Crown Prince).

In the summer of 1921, Arturo Valdés Vergara, a childhood friend, who had been very influential through a gift, arrived in Berlin and set up a painter's studio. Shortly thereafter, he died unexpectedly of an intestinal disease. Tótila inherited his studio, which was much more spacious than his own and allowed him to undertake larger works; there was also a room in which he could sleep, and so he lived there until 1939, instead of with his uncle and sister. Shortly afterwards, he received a letter from the mother of his late friend with the invitation to come to Santiago. The place that had been left empty in her heart, would now be open to Tótila, she said; and Tótila rejoiced in the opportunity to see his father again. Don Federico had returned to Chile at the end of World War I, shortly after he witnessed Tótila's artistic beginnings and had helped him to build a model for the *Hill Women*, because they were supposed to be placed on their hill.

With a 3rd class ticket Tótila sailed again to Chile. This time, he carried some of his works to exhibit them there. In Santiago, he remained with the Valdés family, the mother and seven brothers of his deceased friend. "*Now I am you in the midst of it*", he says to Arturo in his mind, while he suffers from loneliness. He had even more reasons to be sad: the limited circumstances in which his father had lived because he wanted to provide as much help as possible to his brother George, who was suffering from hunger in Berlin and had lost everything due to the inflation.

When Tótila opened his exhibition, the newspapers called him a giant ("small outwards, a volcano inwards"); nevertheless, it was here that he met his first enemies. Just as he had become the object of hostility in Germany to those who had seen him as the "foreigner", he now encountered even greater hostility from members of an artist group ("Montparnasse") who were highly appreciative of French art and detested the Germans. Their opposition would become expressive in conjunction with a project (and, in the long run, be successful), which required Tótila's entire strength during his stay, which would therefore be extended: a monument to the Chilean poet Manuel Magallanes Moure.

Here is the description of how the project came into being and developed: Manuel Magallanes had expressed his desire to get to know Tótila and to see his works; he announced his visit for a specific day. However, he did not appear for his appointment: he had died suddenly on the way to his brother's house in Santiago. Tótila went there to see his body and gave him the honor of making a death mask. Later, when everyone was standing around the coffin, the brother expressed the wish of the family and friends to erect a monument to him and because of the "rare coincidence" that Tótila was also Chilean and that the poet had him in mind. In order to pay tribute to his last wish, they wanted that the monument be built by Tótila. They were poor, the brother explained, but they would make a collection for the material and urged him to contribute his work for free. Tótila accepted the order.

Tótila built a wooden fitting in the garden of the Valdés. He imagined the monument as a cylindrical structure covered by a cathedral, protruding out of a well with scenes from the poet's life and work around the surface.

During the time he was working on the six-and-a-half meter high structure, the Montparnasse group began with their criticism, while others took up its defense. Tótila immersed himself into the life and poetry of Manuel Magallanes. At the same time, he supplemented the work of wood – the monument made of clay was already finished – with seven figures which portrayed the poet's life and his poetic realization. Then, while the disputes continued, he transformed it into plaster. Pedro Prado – the poet, who was considered the head of “the Ten” (an intellectual group to which Manuel Magallanes also belonged) was also part of the Montparnasse Group. Prado turned against Tótila, when he was against chiseling the monument out of white marble. (Quite violent was his first reaction when he saw the completed work. “Friends of Manuel Magallanes, what will be left for us?” he added, turning to them. Tótila never forgave his joke about the possibility of making the head removable and interchangeable so that his head or the head of those who die later could replace it.) On one occasion, he made the remark that the monument resembled a phallus. To which Tótila agreed with satisfaction: was this is not a natural symbol of a creative activity? Prado was outraged. His influence was great and, once he became an opponent, it soon became clear that the monument would not be executed in its original form. Thus, Tótila decided to return to Europe and to leave the plaster work of the sculpture in the garden where he had created it.

After a stay in Buenos Aires, where he exhibited his works with very exceptional success, and in Paris, where he visited Notre Dame and Chopin's tomb, he returned to Berlin. In 1928 (a transposition of 1892, his year of birth), he had his plaster master make a mask of his face (now in my possession).

Around this time, he received news about the deteriorating health of his father and, shortly thereafter, of his sudden death. Six months later, he received the news that his monument had been destroyed. Now, that Don Federico no longer exerted his influence, it was possible for some fanatics to enter the garden at night with hammers to destroy it.

Tótila's pain was compounded by this news and moved him into a state of deepest sorrow. At some point around this time, something happened that Tótila described as a *Darkening the World* and an *Opening of the Ear*.

I remember him talking about the sunlight becoming moonlight. But I don't remember exactly if this was at the time he received the letter with the unfortunate news, or when he received his father's death mask. When he received the death mask, the first poem had come to him.

This was the “*Opening of his Ear*”, the poetic inspiration, the inner guidance, and spiritual intuition.

After the “*Opening of the Ear*” and after receiving his father's death mask, Tótila passed through a period of intense vision, during which he believed he was given a cosmic inspiration, which was not only reflected in his poems, but also in a guided inner process, and so it seemed to him that he was living two lives simultaneously: the ordinary life and that of a person who had died in his earthly self and wandered about in a new dimension.

From the very beginning, his contemplative life was closely linked to his poetic life. In the following pages of his volume of poems, which he simply called LYRIK, this can be observed. It contains mainly verses, but also some pages of prose as well as descriptions of dreams.

The extensive work of Tótila begins with one of the few poems that has a title “Arabic Teaching Poem”. It describes how our soul returns to Allah, as we fall asleep, which we forget when we wake up. It ends in a humorous tone with the request for the grace of a deep sleep.

I wrote about Tótila's work in my book “Songs of Enlightenment”. Instead of revisiting this task, I will next give a fragment of what I said there under the title “Self-birth in Five Books”.

*How was mother the birth
Whom I thank the holy life?
Forgive the Son who calls you
Because three times ten and seven years
He wrestles sporadically for the true
Never do complain and out of the tomb
Up summons you his thought
Because need captivates him like a belt.*

Thus, begins the first Canto of *Life*. Like any of the 120 cantos of the first volume – consisting of 12 stanzas each with 8 verses (in the mirror rhyme abcddcba). These 12 stanzas are symmetrically grouped (6 on each side) on opposite sides, which the poet experienced as an image of the left and right sides of his own body. It's his mother, who speaks in the second group of six stanzas in this Canto and subsequently in the last:

*Now find out what I learned:
Heaven settled upon me
I bent over to him with an open womb
My will was extended into space
I let you go beloved son
You will once belong to me anew
But don't hurry and just create*

It seems to me that the loss of the father was not just an experience of deepest sorrow for Tótila, but that this also reconnected him with his deceased mother - an experience in which he mourned much more deeply for her now than he could at the time of her departure. As a young man he had remained in the world of his father after the separation of his parents.

Tótila had often said that our parents here on earth are both, the instrument and the obstacle to our relationship with our cosmic parents, and his epic poems were a unique document of this transfiguration.

After it begins with the birth of the poet, Volume I leads us through his life until the age of 37, when he began writing.

Similar to Proust, it is autobiographical, because a re-experience of the past results in an echo. Experiences from the unconscious are saved, a distillation of its essence and, above all, the transformation of an experience in the light of a higher perspective – a viewing of the events of his life *sub-specie aeternitatis*.

Just as *Life* begins with childbirth, it ends with “dying before dying”: an experience, which he reproduces very succinctly at the very end of his last Canto. More clearly, the poet, in the penultimate stanza of Canto 120 describes his falling - as a winged being - into the pupil of a cosmic eye, in which he vanishes.

Love shows us our goal

*One eye not closed nor too open
Only looks into creation forever
Receives us coming from afar
The light blood of our star
Because it's alive and frightened
How I freed from my matters
fell into the eye of all creation.*

*I say "I" out of last distress
Because the pupil smudges my name
Which she does not need like scripture
I don't know if I'll be back
When I consume myself in essence
Just as finiteness goes out
How was it where we came from?
A light in the dark was death.*

Volume II - Return.

Just like the process of becoming aware of a life that was half-consciously “wasted” (“failed,” as Tótila used to say) had been the result of distancing himself from life by following his beloved parents into death, the process of dedicating his life to poetry was the starting point for the broader task of expressing a more profound and higher realm than that of life itself; a second level of autobiography followed the *memory of the past* in Volume II: the life of the one who writes his life.

Not only did Tótila not know how long his autobiographical poem would become, but it also came unexpectedly for him – shortly after he had started *Life*, he felt inspired to start a second volume. From that moment on, he worked on both at the same time.

Return - as he called his second row of 120 cantos - could have been “Death” also, because I remember, as Tótila told me, that he wrote *Life* “in the grave”, while he was rotting. That Volume II is called *Return* means, on the one hand, the return to the source and, on the other hand, the return from the realm of death to that of life.

“I don't know if I will return”, it echoes at the end of Volume I, and the stanza, with which he begins, is a clear continuation of that:

*A light in the dark was death
And it no more extinguishes inside
Than when the day expires in the night.*

Volumes I and II reflect almost simultaneous aspects of Tótila's experience – one represents the content (the conscious return to the past in order to create a new existence in the face of death) and the other the context of the experiences of this process: an immeasurable distance of someone who has escaped from life, so to speak. However, the connection with the writing of *Life* was not only that of the distance (i.e. having died), but a contemplative experience: a visionary life that is predominantly concerned with the creative process which is involved in both, the contrast to and

the continuation of the records of the past. This is what it is all about in Volume I, in which the continuation of this spiritual diary is contained in the poems that precede the Epic.

Among the circumstances expressed in Volume II, *The Birth of the I*, there is one that can certainly be regarded as the one at the centre. Tótila has often referred to that in his later poetry, much like Monet, who time and again painted the pond with the water lilies. This created a deepening of the experience, which marked the end of his “first life” and which I quote, from the end of his autobiographical volume.

*I am the bird called return
Released from the hills
And fly pushed by the winds
With fathermother wings*

While Jung would say that he was seized again by the same archetype, I believe that the new beginning at the end of *Life* was only the beginning of the beginning, and that only now the seed experience was coming to full bloom.

In Canto 21 of *Return* we learn that, while he had been writing it, he also had been busy with writing Canto 21 of *Life* and that the pain of separation from his father and his homeland (when he was eleven years old) while travelling to Germany with his mother and sister, he once again had lived through. Later that day, at a piano concerto with a friend, he re-enters the pain of early separation, triggered by the stimulus of the music. This apparently triggered an explosion and a turning from inside-to-outside embodiment, accompanied by the feeling of flying out of the body. As before, he experienced himself as a being with wings, carrying his mother and father on the right and left wings. But while in Volume I we hardly know that falling through the pupil of a huge eye is an enlightenment (*“A light in the dark was death”*), the second experience is not only a dramatic involvement of the body, but also an extension of the visionary journey and, in the end, a deeper self-destruction. The climax of this *“Journey into Death”* did not take place in the concert hall, but later when he relived the visionary experiences.

In Canto 23, we learn how Tótila was deeply moved by the grandness of the flying body and the distant eye. He is surprised about the sublime will of his own hand. The finger that prints the word of heaven shines, and that is what makes the eye visible. He possesses wings given by death (*“wings out of death”*) and he does not stop in front of the eye, even if it would burn him.

He addresses it: *“Receive me as you will”*. Then the eye takes him in with all strength and he is overcome with the desire to penetrate the pupil with his shining hand - until he falls “burned out”.

The contemplative journey continues in Canto 24. It is dark and he fears that the eye may be closed. He wonders if he still “is”. He must *“swim with deaf senses”* and he fears that the eye will not remember where he is. Then comes “a river of interlocking forms that look like water, air, and molten glass.”

At this point he encounters the appearance of the tree. Or rather, it becomes a tree with “two crowns”: the one that bears fruits and leaves, and the symmetrical branching of the roots. For him, this becomes the symbol of Return.

“Fire of the roots also drove me, so that I could catch fire – crown beyond the dark realm of the roots”:

its trunk grew from darkness into another night. The sun sucked the tree's energy up until it fell into the dark eye – where there is no sun or moon. He thinks that perhaps the womb was also an eye, through which he had penetrated into the world. A deep level of total annihilation - **excessus mentis** - will be the fact that at the end of the Canto 25, the pen in his hand and in front of a sheet filled with writing, he wonders if he is still alive.

In his later life he expressed these experiences in a sculpture in bas-relief, which was destroyed not so long ago during the Chilean dictatorship. Although in the original experience he had the feeling of transforming himself into a bird of prey, in the sculptural translation of this experience, he presents himself as being carried by a condor who grabbed him by the waist with his beak, which he holds high above his head. Beyond Tótila's experience of transforming into a bird of prey, while the winged body experience matured, it seemed to him that hands turned into claws. The separation between bird and man in the sculpture was also emblematic for Tótila's mind: a rising spiritual body that is nourished by the deceased physical body.

Thus, as in his vision, one can also see his father in the sculpture (shown at the beginning of Volume II), pointing towards the sky on the right, while the mother is on the left side pointing towards the earth (and her son), and he points with his index finger forward and holding the other hand on his heart, however, his zigzagging hands suggesting lightnings.

Not only in his sculptures, but also in his poetry, Tótila returned to the picture "*The Bird of Return*", especially at the beginning of a cycle of a hundred poems under the same title, which can very well be described as an ongoing dialogue in space.

In the last canto of Volume II, we get to what for Tótila is "*the brightest day of the Return*": it is a time of fulfillment in the realm of the night — a fulfillment - one could say - taken from the experience of death and nothingness. A very loving completion leaves him in the constitution to serve his fellow human beings. Really, the creative process around which his life revolves – "*going to death*" and "*awaken singing*" (as he describes it in the eighth stanza) – had been an act of love all along; a sacrificial offering of the night in his heart and of his heart itself.

I can imagine that Tótila was aware of Dante's description when he came to the firmament of the immovable stars and faced the constellation prevalent at his birth - Gemini. A constellation also rises – and descends by the middle of the last page of volume II: the constellation of the human being – as if it meant that the precondition for true humanity had been attained and that life "down here" had been brought back into its context, under a star-bright perspective that opens up to him.

The last verse of Volume II is an echo of the first one at the beginning of Volume I. As if he wanted to convey that *Life* and *Return* are mirror images of each other, it also indicates a conclusion via the contents of the last stanza. At the beginning of the second page of the Canto, the poet told us that he sees the star-bright night above him and below himself a misty valley, of which we know that it represents his first time on earth; then we saw how he lifted his gaze and found the "*constellation of the human*"; now he turns towards the misty valley below and (it seems to us) he guides the evening light into his face (and returning from the past), which shines through his encounter with death.

Volume III - Constellation of the Human.

The name that Tótila gave to the third group of 120 cantos is the "*constellation of the human*". He speaks to us here of a shift from a personal to a planetary identity that is now becoming the world

of father-mother-child.

The realm of the moon, the sun, and the stars is added and more generally a viewing of the material universe sub-specie aeternitatis.

I remember well that Tótila called the book *constellation of the human*, but I have recently seen that the title (handwritten by himself on the first page of the typewritten document, which was kept in the library of the University of Basel since before the Second World War) was simply “*Star*”.

Sometimes, Tótila spoke of the constellation of the human as a “journey through science” insofar as it included a view of the material universe through the lens of scientific insights. Far from being a verse-shaped science, as Lucretius tried to do, it brings a contemplation, within which the patterns of the universe and its laws are a metaphor for becoming an experienceable truth.

It is a journey through cosmology transformed into myth, as in Dante, and an exploration of material facts, permeated by meaningfulness, such as those that some scientists in recent years have become aware of (the accordance of timeless mystical insights and the description of reality by the new physics). He did not have to go deeply into the subject-specific scientific literature to find meaningful facts. We also have to understand that there was much more for him in science than what is self-evident for us today. In Canto 91, for example, he looks at the dynamic structure of matter – that it constitutes a “mosquito dance” of sub-atomic particles (something that was not available to Dante to support mystical meanings) and that they affect the mutual emergence of radiation (lightness) and gravity (heaviness) as a statement that also is our experience, as to how motion gives inertia power, while gravitating towards the nothing indicates the source of great life energy. Towards the end of the poem he developed the idea that matter may possibly be permeated by God: when matter takes the form of the face of God through love (e.g. when it becomes a person) the human is born. Here we come across the mythical theme of “ascending” in scientific garb. Or is this not so, considering that the ascent is handled in the most direct way, without the need for artificially created symbols? The poet imagines how matter all can lose all its weight (e.g. from the English “de-materialize”: become invisible, disappear) when it becomes aware of its transcendent, final nature. The next Canto is again about the consideration of material existence and again in the shape of a stone.

Here, however, the focus is on the compassionate embrace of matter and the poet’s darkness by crying about his sacrifice to carry the weight of the world. The entire Canto expresses a participation in the nightly *mater*. If Tótila had called Volume II “Death”, it would have been appropriate to call Volume III “Return”, for in it comes a deepening of the return both to the heavenly as well as to the earthly - to the cosmic ground, which is like a death, where we come from and also to the immanent here and now, that is our life. Some of the elements in Volume III sometimes contain a reflection of the creative process in the present. This is how Canto 17 reflects e.g. Tótila’s consideration of whether or not to write in rhyme form.

*Alright, I shouldn't rhyme
Because the best rhyme bends
The living true germ
That lies in the seed*

*Wait, I'm looking for rhymes quickly
Which still exist on rhyme
Oh I just find glue
Me who loves rhymes!*

*So was he indeed right?
Does rhyme make no sense?
Why did the ancients rhyme?
Is my faith gone?*

*Rhyme - germinate - rhyme – glue
Who knows! Am I mad?
What is glued cannot germinate
Isn't rhyming what's supposed to be?*

*And I'm starting to write
End with the word germ
Wait where the syllables stay
Come the syllable rhyme!*

*Oh I had completely forgotten
That I want to let go of the rhyme
And I run like obsessed
Back on the glue.*

*I reflect on teachings
And obey where I can
Want to bravely fight back the rhymes
After all, I'm man!*

*That I say man, is a blessing
Do I say human maybe and find
No rhyme and I'm embarrassed
Worse than a child*

*Because the child can dream
Without binding to the word
Plays in the shade of the trees
Tired it goes on*

*Sleeps and grows from game to games
Dream in from picture to picture
How they fell into it
And his eye swells*

*Like a soil full of germs
Bursting at the first ray
Dream and life will rhyme
When you become growth*

*So let me keep rhyming
Because the real rhyme bends
Not the straight-up germination
That's in the seed.*

In Volume III, apart from the consideration of material existence, the most important thing is the extent of Tótila's process of returning to the present and into the world, as can be seen in the opening of the Canto.

*So good, I'll stay here
With the poor people
Those who don't know what an animal
Or a tree means*

As in Dante's earthly paradise, an inner healing allowed him to see the disease of the world, so also here; he is too aware of the state of the incorrigible:

*But did God want for them to see
Themselves just right for once
Their hollow mirror swells
Even what is void*

*Their hearts will be hard
Hitting in machines
To help the expensive present
Rapidly still to serve*

On the last page of this volume III, Tótila uses the effigy of a "Mosquito-Dance", which he had previously associated with sub-atomic particles, as an indication of a full participation in humanity. The last two verses suggest that individuality dissolves in the cosmic depth of a night that is alone. This is reminiscent of Einstein's answer to the question, which is the most important question that a scientist can ask. "Whether the universe is benevolent" was his answer. Tótila answers in agreement – in so far as he lets us recognize the "night" as the outermost sphere of love.

*He inhales Love
And exhales Love
The night is all alone
In the Star House.*

Volume IV - The Sun in the Father.

As soon as Tótila had finished writing the hundred-twentieth Canto of Volume III, he felt spurred on to start a fourth volume; and yet, we know this, as he dates his poems, there was a break of about eight months between the third and the fourth Canto *The Sun in the Father*.

The reason was that, after he had written the first three, he decided that he should delve deeper

into the new field of experience, otherwise he would never finish Volume II. The decision to return to Volume II and not to continue writing the fourth volume, constituted the greatest effort of will in all of his life, he has assured me several times, it amounted to staying in the underworld for the sake of work, at a time when he was at the gates of heaven.

Tótila described to me that the experience of Volume IV was like burning in the sun. Since his journey had been one of self-destruction from the beginning, and if he says that the “three-dimensional body” is burned away, we can interpret it within this context only to mean that it is a deeper type of annihilation (and accordingly a deeper and more definitive plain of transcendence). Reading through his work in the last few years, I have often wondered why he thought that his spiritual experience only began with writing Volume IV, while the spiritual experience in his poetry is so present from the very beginning. Nevertheless, we must take him seriously when he says that everything before was a preparation for a real spiritual experience.

Just as the content of Volume III is science, so the content of *The Sun in the Father* is religion. In fact, he sometimes informally referred to it as “a journey through the religions”. From a different point of view, one could also say that the realm into which he now entered is one which the Christian tradition called “the communion of the saints”: which, by arriving at the core of consciousness, is shared by the enlightened of all times. Under the line-up of individual and cultural presences that he encounters in Volume IV - from the old Babylonian to the early American civilization, to the most recent decades – it is Buddha, who first appeared in the first half of Canto 17 Tótila’s spiritual eye.

*White and immaculate
Like the lotus and the white
Elephant in the womb*

The Buddha is absolutely pure like the water lily floating on the mud, which nourishes it and like the white elephant, who entered Queen Maya’s body in her dream during her virginal conception. *You were one I named sun*, says Tótila to the historical Buddha Gautama, now that he has learned what it means to “give birth to the sun” and to “become like the fire”.

The Canto reaches its climax with the sensual contemplation of Buddha’s cremation – a living symbol of his explosive extinction in the inner light. But from the hardship of extinction “grows water lilies, elephants, and temples – and even more fire!”: the abundant wealth of the cultural expression of Indian Buddhism.

*Body in flames
Ashes to the scatterer
Lotus elephant
Temple gave and fire*

The second half is dedicated to the historical Jesus, so that the whole thing is a kind of two-columned entrance to the remaining “journey through religions”. Here is a stanza:

*Love was the word
God us brought
As his son and as he left*

Did he suffer and awakened

Canto 40 is dedicated to Osiris.

*Holy the body
And living coffin
Which held the awakening
God in itself*

“Holy the Body” at the opening seems to be a very accurate introduction into the Egyptian vision. “Living Coffin”, with indirect reference to the sarcophagus that indicates the idea of an apparently living body. A means of transport of life, which in itself is mechanical — absolutely mechanical - and yet a vehicle of the God of revival. It ends with Osiris, emerging from the ship of the day trip, stepping into the boat of the “luminous Night Journey”, “in which the Radiant still is.” Around the boat the song of the dead reverberates, reconciling the Sun who returns to life.

*And the God out of the boat
Of his day trip steps
Into the boat of the light night ride
Where the luminous is silent*

*To the boat singing
Sounds from the dead
Recurring Sun
Reconciled with life*

During his reflections on religions, Tótila encountered various mythological expressions of the journey into the interior. He felt great empathy for the legend of Perseus, Pegasus, and Medusa. For him, Pegasus was a “winged body” of liberation, in contrast to the embodiments of the growing patriarchy (Perseus) and matriarchy (Gorgon).

At the beginning of Canto 74, he speaks of the blood that pours from the torso of the beheaded Gorgon (“Where to, blood robbed of the way”) and the poem ends with the effigy of Pegasus as he flies away from Perseus, pushing with one of his hooves the rock on Mt. Helicon, and how water pours out of the rock - the origin of the Fountain of Poets - Hippocrene.

Tótila grants Islam (Canto 81-83) more space than other religions, apart from Buddhism. However, he expresses both here and in the case of traditional religions, not just fellowship and homage. It also includes condolences and criticism of the dogmatic and authoritarian religiosity.

Just as the contradiction of spiritual penetration is associated with degeneration / aberration - Tótila discusses the connection with the wise and simultaneously monstrous Aztecs and their excessive cannibalistic sacrifice. In Canto 80 he writes ironically:

*With fire and with sword
If the doctrine is broadened
The multiplicity convinces*

That one honors unity

Just as we find recognition throughout Volume IV, to what extent obscuration is interwoven with enlightenment in the development of religions, we learn also of people whose spiritual breakthrough brought psychological complications with it. Thus, Tótila felt the highest esteem for Nietzsche, in whom he saw a primal enemy of the patriarchal order – but he felt compelled to address his imbalance, too much like a burning sun at the zenith. He was also very close to Hölderlin and he celebrated him as much as he mourned for him as a victim of a spiritual accident.

In Canto 72 he speaks of Goethe and one has the feeling that he addresses Goethe, the courtier, the overly cautious and conventional privy councilor, who, despite his genius and his ability to speak through Mephistopheles, had not been able to advance to the ultimate consequence by sanctifying the world and the embodied individuality.

*In the name of who created himself
I bring you a parable
I wear a cloven hoof
It is to me a divine event*

*You shudder at the horns on the face
Through them I am a new
Through them I gained this light
Through them I do not burn in the fire*

Volume V - The Night in the Mother.

The title of the fifth volume of the epic of the self-birth is called *The Night in the Mother* and belongs to an experimental realm, which Tótila describes as a Falling into-the-cosmic Night, after having walked through the Sun. No longer the “planetary” night that alternates with the day, but a dark interstellar space, from which the suns are born.

As in the previous volumes, the actual content of the fifth volume reflects a further realm of consciousness. Sometimes he spoke of the five spheres of experience, through which he had traveled, as through “five stages of meditation”, as well as various bodies or types of “suffered themes” – in accordance with the characteristics of the five senses.

As he saw it, this fifth volume contained the very latest of his epic, apart from being an I Epic (an epic of the course of the individual transformation is given in the first person rather than by a literary character in the third person). He thought he had gone further than in his earlier attempts to find expression for the Great Mother Night.

Dante was right, Tótila explained, when he said that there was no language possible beyond the sphere of fire. Thus, he agrees with him that this was not possible before science gave us the knowledge of a process, whose form is the exact “microcosmic” replica of this realm. In the development of the embryo in the uterus, he saw a repetition in the greater uterus.

Thus, the epic in the mother area of Volume V becomes the epic of the embryo after conception and the “deeds” of which the poem sings, are just like the three layers from which the different organ systems spring: the exact development of our nervous system through our midst, our hearts,

our eyes, liver, and so on – in such a way that each statement (as Tótila used to express it) is both “microcosmic” and is also “macrocosmic” or mystical: embryologically exact and hinting at a spiritual experience.

Although the final birth, as it was experienced by Tótila, did not happen until the end of Volume V, it had marked a new beginning, even before he had begun to write of the experience of the loving winged Trinity in space. Thus, the enlightenment of Volume IV (Tótila’s Paradise) coincided with the birth into a higher sphere. Again, here occurred a birth in the transition from the realm of the Volume IV into that of Volume V (p. 6):

*Open door and window
To your grief
The dead are ghosts
In the long run
Focus your bright time
Into the dark Eternity*

This is where the poet’s last step to separate himself from the loves of his childhood is realized - a separation that deepened even more along his passionate participation in the process of mourning.

In Volume III, he had already made a leap towards detachment, a leap away from the personal to the “planetary” bound-trans-person: the contemplation of this physical body-god, which Tótila in conversations sometimes called Mater, the Latin word for matter and mother. The death of the psycho-dynamic-personal sphere of the father and the mother was implied by the omission of two verses indicated in Volume III: while the stanzas in the second volume consist of six verses, in Volume III, they are only four-liners.

Another leap towards detachment was the burning away in the sphere of fire – the experience background of Volume IV.

If “flying out of the body” was the core of the visionary experience with which Tótila’s spiritual life began at a higher level, so he felt the detachment from the body so strongly that the “cleansing by the fire” appeared like an incineration of the three-dimensional world of Mater / Energy in Space / Time. The superhuman quality of being in this experience - an encounter and fusion with the loving solar father – is probably better marked as divine rather than just human, as was the case in the *Constellation of Human*.

Even the deepened return to the world of the mother and matter in the “shape” of a new body (in volume V) takes place in the background of the most extreme detachment of an “intergalactic night,” the nothingness that expands as “the sun” and “the moon”.

I see in volume V, *The Birth of the I*, the expression of the Nirmanakaya stage and level of development as recognized in Vajrayana Buddhism – and what at the same time is the theme of the last bardo in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*: namely, re-entry, or rebirth. It is a stage of perfection in which the journey to death reaches its climax, and here death completes the birth of a new life.

Here I quote the first stanza again:

*Open door and window
To your grief
The dead are ghosts
In the long run*

*Focus your bright time
Into the dark Eternity*

The double meaning of the verb “focus” (“Dichte” in German) allows Tótila quite aptly to address, both the contraction as well as poetic creation – the essence that is a distillation of the essential. (He enthusiastically quoted Novalis, who advised poets not to describe.) I understand “Bright Time” as the time under the living. However, the image also refers to the finding, about which there were reports in the thirties, namely that during the fertilization of the egg, light radiation is seen.

In this first canto, we feel an end to the grief at the time of a loving reunion with a female cosmic presence.

This is also due to the nature of an incubation and I see it as a reference to the transformation of the body. It is a state of highest peace and abundance.

*Praying makes the soul sick
When it is ripe for thanks*

Although regressive embryonic silence of the mind is not yet compatible with the activities in this the world, it will one day so be – just as in the course of meditation one will arrive at the experience of the truth of extinction in the middle of life, an experience of In-this-World, but not of Her.

*From silence separate
Me the deeds
And I want the two of them
Well formed*

The paradisiacal state in the womb requires a purity, which is in contrast to the pollution, to which we are exposed in the world after birth.

Tótila sees this as a state in which the dust of the earth penetrates through the senses.

*But earth dusts
Through the window and the door*

Although the theme of the “death/rebirth” journey is a sinking into the state of the embryo in the mother’s womb which was certainly present in the inspiration of the Taoists, alchemists, and others, Tótila believed that the course of the incubation of a transcendent spiritual body could not be properly expressed before science could accurately transmit biological information on the origin (the formation) of the embryo. The similarity of the “macrocosmic” interstellar space and the “microcosmic” womb lies in the “rhyme” or the pattern of the universe and was not only just another metaphor. A metaphor, yes, but not an artificially invented one: a natural symbol and an expression – again - of which he assured us: “*I do not create symbols, I am symbol.*”

Just as we could say that the whole Epic has been both a journey through the night and a return, so the whole transforming journey is the pregnancy of a new being in the womb of nothingness.

Canto 20 in Volume V considers the analogy of the five stages and areas with the five parts of the primitive embryo: while volume V bears similarity to the embryonic plaque, Volume IV reflects the chorionic villi (and the later placenta) of a higher body – which forms “his connection to the macrocosm”. Volume III corresponds to the umbilical cord, which connects the new being with the hereafter, while Volume II – “the Waters of Return” - which corresponds to amnion. In the first volume (*Life*) Tótila saw the equivalent to the yolk sack that arises before the embryo and from which the new being is nourished early in its independent existence. He notes that biographical material only appears in Volumes I to III.

Tótila made a surprising discovery when looking at embryonic development *sub- specie aeternitatis* (which followed the contemplations about the traditional religions and mythological symbolisms), namely, that there is a link between the three layers from which the primitive embryo is created and the universal nature laws of father, mother, child. In the ectoderm (from which our nervous system and our sensory organs are formed) he saw a connection to the “macrocosm”; whereas in the endoderm (origin of the abdominal intestines and the lungs) he saw our connection to the earth, and in the mesoderm (from which the organs used as support and action are formed, as well as the sexual organs), Tótila saw the expression of the nature law of the child – the reconciling nature is reflected by the structural fact that the original mesoderm is formed from two layers: the one borders the ectoderm and the other the endoderm.

One aspect of embryonic development, which Tótila saw as a unique expression of the turning around in our inner metamorphosis, is that of inversion. In this process, the hollow space (the germ bubble) that we once were became a two-layered structure (in which the mesoderm develops).

The moment of *inversion* took place for Tótila in the time of its collapse into an inner abyss, when his body had split from head to toe into two and its interior in the form of (parent-related) wings flew into the air.

It is also about inversion in the way the nervous system is formed as a furrow along our back, becoming a rod, moving towards the center of our embryonic body. It was also an *inversion* in Tótila’s Experience when, as soon as he started to write Volume IV, he felt a physical turn of his skull: a clear sense that what was in the front part of the of the skull, was then in the occipital area (back of the head) and vice versa. I think he would have supported me in saying that the towards outside/towards inside movement of inverting – such as death/rebirth also – is an essential structural form in our process of transformation.

If life in the womb may be a means of transport for the expression (as in all of Volume V) of pregnancy, which precedes a spiritual birth, so are the contractions - the last stage of transition in our pre-birth existence - expression of a laborious inward-looking event that directly precedes the fulfillment.

From what Tótila told me personally, I can say that this event was associated with pain in the groin and I am convinced that this was due to an unusually sudden slackening of the physical reinforcement in the sacral plexus, since the intrusion of prana from top to bottom into his body had come to an end. This is the theme of Canto 109.

Just as the pain and relative helplessness that women experience is countered through the help of the midwives, Tótila felt that during the period of transition, he was helped by invisible presences,

and I am sure that where he writes “birth helper”, he meant to include Dante and especially Milton. I quote the first stanza from Canto 109, in which the metric suggests strongly a fast forward movement.

*Do you think it could happen
I think that's already the contractions
Come you thinking knowers
We come and want to be birth helpers
Support my back and the loins
How is it supposed to end?*

The word contractions (*Wehen*) is very beautiful in German, as it refers to the pain of birthing and the blowing of the wind - a juxtaposition of meanings, with which Tótila plays here to indicate a whirlwind forward movement in the birth canal.

The characteristics of the night have changed in this canto, because now it is no more the quiet and soothing night of the womb:

“Driving urgent urgent night”

or

“Holding jerking gaping night.”

Or as it is called at the moment of actual birth (at the end of the first page):

“Flooding bleeding glowing night,”

is told to her, perhaps, both by the child and by the midwives, and the poet says through them:

“We consider you happy the jump is done”

Dante’s metaphor at the end of the Divine Comedy is to make the circle angular, in conjunction with the attempt to fit the human together with the divine, finds its echo in verses relating to how the round skull makes its “angular” pelvic frame round, as he expands it.

*Form it angular in a circle
The pelvis is quietly completed*

In the penultimate stanza we first see shoulders, arms, and pelvises, until the whole body emerges, “from the crest to the sole of the foot”. In the end, the newborn is made to preserve the heavenly powers and “to recognize the light in its nights.” By transforming the alliterative and metric form and personifying the night in the first verse, which he dedicates to the newborn, we observe the completing of a transformation of the night into the light. It is as if the energy of the uterus transferred to the child. The helpers address the “jumping, vibrating, singing cry” that he is now, and they tell him that they live by his side, tremble, and breathe, and they end with the exclamation: “Now let the uterus be restored in its old state and the child be separated from the mother.”

The last Canto - number 120 - has a resonance with the first verses of the opening of the volume.

The time of paradisiacal existence in the womb is over and one is born into the world, plagued by forces of deception, which harm the individual life of “you and I”.

*Close door and window
For your joy
Today are ghosts
In the building
The One you and I
Mothers are afraid*

Mothers have good reason to be afraid as they carry new life into a fallen world of patriarchy (if I may use the words that Tótila used years after he wrote his epic).

In this Canto, he addresses, quite rightly, his higher self as a child and master — for it is a life to which he has given life, and at the same time it is a self-birthing life that guided him. It becomes clear that he evokes his child in him, in the image of the winged body, in this vision that preceded his new life and which provided an implicit background for many of his poems. He is born and

*Five healthy fingers
Are a star
Messenger
To their Lord
We invited him as a guest
Because you have the place*

The vehicle is now ready for the predestined owner.

*Spiritually joy blows
Around the house
Knows the building
In and Out
And goes and comes back
In evil and happiness*

Tótila’s epic of self-birth has brought him to a space that he called “the Musing Room” (Buddhists would call it Dharmadatu). I would say, even though he had already heard the entire epic at that time (and even as a song with a melody), he was at the end one step higher on the inspiration ladder. Soon he would experience a different quality of inspiration, in which the apparitions were so impressive, he believed that what he wrote was not his own work.

It began with him listening to music from Beethoven (one of his later quartets), a gift that Ruth had brought him, who later became his wife. Tótila was so very connected with Bach’s language that he did not properly immerse Beethoven in his inner world until he enthusiastically found out belatedly that he was his soul brother.

Soon his intimate familiarity with Beethoven’s experience – a kind of spiritual osmosis, the

logical consequence of his own spiritual adventures – gave Tótila the idea for the project of a poetic translation of the content embodied in Beethoven's music. In this way, he would create a monument to Beethoven and he wrote several Cantos in this sense, which became the beginning of a new volume of poems, which he called *The Preserved You*, a spiritual biography of Beethoven, which he received through the chronological decoding of his work. After these first cantos, however, Tótila began to hear words in the music and saw them no more as his own work. This was the beginning of what he called "music dictation". At first, he only made "poetic translations" of the exposition (in music written in "Sonata Form" at the beginning there is a section that presents the topics: exposition, this is followed by the "development", the "recapitulation" and, at the end, the "coda") of the sonatas of Beethoven, concerts for quartets, or symphonies, but after the "Eroica" he began with the "listening" of the entire composition – and wrote poems that were based on the music one syllable per note. However, Tótila's efforts in Berlin suffered an abrupt end, when his sister, who worked in the Chilean embassy, told him that war would be declared the next day. He left within a few hours with the last transatlantic liner leaving the coast of Germany; he walked away empty-handed ("with his hands in his pockets," he once told me) and even left behind his epic – albeit a typewritten manuscript of his valuable work (now lost) had been handed over to the University of Basel in the late thirties.

After returning from Germany, he immediately gained fame as a sculptor, but over time, he became more and more forgotten – for although he was quite well known for the monuments he created in the course of several years, he was unable to make his art pay for his sustenance.

At first, he was honored with the dignity and privileges of a "Professor Extraordinario" - a title that the University of Chile had never awarded before. This meant that he had a studio in the back of the building of the Museum of Fine Arts, in which also the Art School was located.

Later, however, he created enmities and this space was taken away from him again. I have the impression that this is due to his relations with colleagues, especially when it came to assessing the performance of students.

Tótila was not diplomatic, had clear ideas and frustrated the expectations of some, who thought that he would support their preferential position in an amiable way. I suppose they must have perceived him over time as kind of "wild", for he embodied truth too much to be socially acceptable; just like Socrates must have generated personal antipathy, which was beyond the reasons given for this purpose. However, Tótila was neither aggressive nor hostile, but, on the contrary, very kind. How could he, who had a clear view, not see the mediocrity around him that generated inconvenience through his mere presence?

About two years after he was given the studio, some colleagues got together one night and threw his great works of plaster over the stair railings of the third floor into the courtyard. Perhaps this was their reaction to the fact that he had not heeded their wish that he should get out of there. He had never been told that the use of the studio would be temporary, and to quite the opposite, he firmly believed that the studio had been given to him permanently. However, he was never clearly told what had happened. The principal of the school, whom he knew personally, and who had also been involved, stated that he could not believe the testimonies of the employees, who had secretly seen the professors in their white coats.

Tótila had taken care of his upkeep, partly through private contracts, partly through public contracts, - e.g. monuments -, and he probably assumed that he would continue to be well regarded by the authorities, as they initially considered him as the most remarkable sculptor of Chile. However,

as far as the public monuments, after his first work, he lost their favor. Above all, his monument to Rodó – a socially conscious thinker, known for his book “Prosperos Observatorium” - contributed to this change of attitude, because some did not agree that he, instead of portraying Rodó, had presented Shakespeare’s “Ariel and Caliban”.

In addition, the nudity of Caliban caused offence to some angry conservatives, who published threats to blow up the huge sculpture. The controversy over this continued for years in the newspapers.

Next, the city approached Tótila for a monument to Victorino Lastarria, whereupon he answered with the depiction of Jacob’s struggles with the angel.

It had been explained to Tótila that, although the committee responsible for the monument wanted to give him this commission, it was officially necessary to invite other artists to an open competition. He agreed, and so all submitted pieces were exhibited in the central courtyard of the University of Chile, so that the public could see them. Tótila’s sculpture presented an inward-looking Jacob, who tries to grab an angel, who is just above him, hands clenched with yearning, that pass through his body as if he were not made of matter. The angel is quasi suspended in mid-air through having his leg on Jacob’s hip. I assume that the opinion of some of the newspaper critics had been influenced by the participants in the competition. This could explain that, despite the great enthusiasm with which Tótila’s sculpture was received, it was whispered that the figure contained a disguised homosexual demonstration of an embrace of two naked figures.

Perhaps it was because the public was not accustomed to visualizing biblical scenes with naked people and certainly also not to the fact that Tótila participated in Michelangelo’ delight to depict human bodies naked. It shocked some people and so the rumors became more and more audible. Perhaps those who were on the selection committee were too political not to pay attention, or perhaps they were affected by something else, and the gossip was just an excuse. In any case, the prize was not given to him this time and this embittered him greatly.

The figures are now in the basement of the Museum of Modern Art in Santiago with other pieces that would need to be restored. For many years, I have been offering the museum to have a cast of it made, but the bureaucracy in Chile is the deadliest instance of the creative initiatives I have ever known, and so I have never received a written reply to my offer.

Another composition he created in Chile had its origins in his reaction to a competition – this time it was a monument in honor of Rubén Darío. It was never completed in its full size, as the award was once again given to a rival. Today, however, there is a bronze copy of Tótila’s piece, thanks to Herman Scherchen, who later led the National Symphony Orchestra and had taken the initiative to have a bronze cast made of it. This piece has luckily survived, while many others which were made of plaster, were destroyed during the earthquakes. It represents a man and a woman who approach each other, each with an arm forward and one outstretched to the back. They express that they have come to meet each other and at the same time leave the past behind – and thus also the idea of a continuous coming and parting. It seems that they held something invisible between their hands stretched out to the front and almost touching each other, an allusion to a rose in Darío’s poem, by which Tótila was inspired. Of this poem it can be said that the last line “Let’s approach death through love” is the theme of the composition.

Although his name was well known to almost everyone and despite the great respect that

surrounded Tótila in the city of Santiago, - not to mention the excellence of his work – he was less and less successful as a breadwinner and I have been a witness myself, how his wife Ruth resented it and interpreted it as his failure.

Out of a feeling of great despair - since arriving in Chile - Tótila had invited Ruth to move to him and I imagine that he asked her to marry him, with the feeling that this were the least he could do for her, as he asked her to leave England, where she had successfully settled since the mid-1930s. Undoubtedly, they loved each other very much in the first years in Chile and their family life was further enlightened by the birth of their daughter Luz Iris, for whom Tótila was a very maternal father who changed diapers and gave her much of his time.

Ruth Ehrman soon became a successful teacher at the best private school for girls in the city, Santiago College. Later she had the reputation of being the best English teacher from whom some, like myself, were very happy to have learned German. (She taught through conversations, while at the same time making intelligent comments for the students about vocabulary and grammar.) Then she became interested in child psychology and became a very successful and gifted councilor for parents with difficult children, and so she became even more successful than before. This would have been an ideal nest for Tótila – he had always longed for a patron – if he had been supported in his free creative expression; but that was not the case, because Ruth resented the fact that the contributions to the livelihood of both were not balanced. Eventually, she offered him a solution: to create a private academy.

Her part in this step was renting a place and using her far-reaching connections. Tótila took the opportunity to have a place where he could work as a sculptor and interested students could learn something from him. (At this private Academy painting was also taught, and the first professor was Malakowsky and later Kurt Herdan, who had just come from Israel and who later became Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Chile.) Tótila initiated his students with the task to copy Beethoven's death mask and then Nietzsche's. Then, he encouraged them to continue with more creative work. However, it was clear that those who came to him did not want to become professional sculptors – because the University offered a more complete artistic education and certification. I have the impression that those who became his students during this time did so not necessarily because of the sculpture: they rather appreciated the opportunity to work with Tótila, and valued what being with him added to their minds and their lives. They felt not only inspired, but also healed.

Thanks to the Academy, we still have some pieces from Tótila's autumn of life, including the bas-reliefs "The Earth" and "Air" and the three-dimensional version of "The Earth". This latter piece spent many years there, despite my repeated offers, to have it cast in bronze. When the Italian Ambassador to Chile intervened, my offer was finally accepted. This is how a bronze version of "The Earth" came to stand in a small hall at "El Palacio de la Moneda" the seat of government in Santiago.

Another aspect of Tótila's biography and another dimension of his work had already become apparent in the late thirties, after he had left Germany and during the Second World War - when he began to write political poems. It is clear that the rise of National Socialism had shaken him out of his inner alchemist laboratory, in which he had isolated himself, a place of personal incubation and contemplative efforts.

It was only later that he began to engage in accusing patriarchy and in an informal militancy,

which he used to call the “Three Times Ours”. It was during the last years in Berlin, where he was initially shocked into having to look out from his “ivory tower”: he had to understand not only the tragedy of the confusion of humanity and the danger that was to come, but also the nature of social madness - the inner aspect of the world catastrophe.

The perception of this psychospiritual disease (confusion) behind the external madness of the world he first expressed in three letters, with an intimate kind of address and yet addressed to archetypal beings instead of persons: the mother, the father, and the child. The letters reflect Tótila’s early insight into the universality and centrality of patriarchy. He wanted them to be printed and distributed over the city by plane.

After Tótila settled back in Chile and found enough peace of mind to write poems again, he wrote a series of “hymns” as he described them. He told me that he saw them as “word posters”, statements with the intention to attract the attention of readers, such as a poster on the wall, with its bright colours, which attracts passers-by. Although I called them political poetry perhaps it could be seen more as an expression of a “mystical-political” spirit, because they are not only deeply felt insults against the patriarchal order, but also the singing of a prophetic vision: a healthy society, that emerges from the trifold loving embrace of the father, the mother, and the child within the family. They are present to all and embodied in the moral values of culture and institutions.

In a desperate attempt to be understood, by the Chileans, who could not read German, or the Germans, who, in their nationalistic patriotism, were committed to the Nazi state and its war, Tótila began to write in Spanish, although he knew it to be the language of a eleven-year-old, since he had spoken it rarely since he left Chile at that age. Whoever reads his Spanish Epic of “Tres Veces Nuestro” (Three Times Ours) in 120 Cantos, feels inevitably as if reading ancient Spanish poetry, in which the meaning of some words and the metric are unknown.

Just as we tend to be open to the art, with which we are unfamiliar, it is necessary that we also apply this to Tótila’s poetry, because again, the metric is unusual and the words can have different meanings. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that a modern reader will be as tolerant of the peculiarities of a contemporary poet, as when he read ancient Spanish, and I believe that this affected the acceptance of the content quite seriously.

Tótila did not receive a positive reaction from his friends, to whom he had shown his manuscript. Whatever the literary value of his book, it can be considered the expression of a vision of patriarchal madness and awakened spiritual life, a loving interplay of the “Inner Three”.

Nevertheless, I do not see Tótila as a poet when he tries to show the madness of the world and when he tries to interest us in his vision of a better alternative: I see him more as a prophet — someone with an enlightened social message and mission. This was an aspect of his life that was not devoted to writing, because he was always willing to help others realize both the global disease and our human potential. I would even say that his concern representing Bodhisattva for our general well-being was a constant peculiarity of his mind - even though in very rare moments (after reading his morning newspaper for example) he could also convey a sense of something tragic. There is no one, with whom I could compare Tótila better than Jeremiah, although Tótila’s favorite book was “Tao-Te-Ching” by Lao Tse.

I got to know Tótila through my mother and became his friend, despite the great age difference - he was almost sixty and I was a bit over 20 - and since I saw him as someone with the wisdom I longed for, I picked his brain, and observed him in a way was comparable to the one Plato described

about learning from Socrates: every word, every deed and every gesture.

A page he had written about the beginning of Beethoven's *Eroica* and he showed me, after we had become friends and before I had learned German, left a big impression on me. It seemed to me that normally music indicates a background for poetry, however, it was quite different in Tótila's poetry, where each syllable belonged to a note, and although I didn't even speak the language, I could but hear as to how an O, I, or U was related to the music in such a way that, by listening carefully, I could hear the letters. The Music Dictation allows the structure of the music to become visible. For those who understand German, the coherence between music and words is even greater than music with text, where the process is exactly the other way round as the composer writes the music to the words. Although I played music from a very early age, nothing helped me more than Tótila's Music Dictation to reveal the contemplative dimension of music, and so my musical sensitivity was greatly deepened.

I believe that not only was Tótila very important for me in my life, but I was also important in his – because apparently it was our friendship that brought him back to music dictation again. He had experienced it like an abortion when he was suddenly disturbed in his contemplative life to deal with Beethoven's second *Rasumovsky Quartet*.

Perhaps it was because Beethoven's "abortion" was still laden with mourning, because many years had passed, or because of his age, that he felt not up to the titanic dimension of Beethoven's project and he gave Schubert his attention, instead of Beethoven.

He remembered having heard Schubert's "Unfinished" in Berlin, during his "Beethoven Period", and how he visualized in the first movement an archaic Mexican ceremony, in which an adolescent, who had been brought up since his birth to be a self-sacrifice, climbed the temple steps to the top to sacrifice his heart to the sun. For him, Schubert was someone who heroically had sacrificed his sustenance and even his marriage to his musical calling. When he heard Schubert again at fifty, he took the music not only as an expression of self-offering, but he saw Schubert also as a priest of beauty and in the end, he perceived the "Unfinished" as an expression of "death before dying", which he personally had experienced as the beginning of his regeneration. Just as Beethoven had suffered from his deafness, Schubert had suffered from the insecurity of a life dedicated to art. Instead of accepting his father's offer to become a teacher in his school, he had taken it upon himself to be courageously faithful to his vocation. Just as Beethoven had been awakened by his deafness, so was Schubert through the foreboding of his early death: for syphilis was then what might be AIDS today.

The Music Dictation of Schubert ended Tótila's assumption that the Music Dictation was connected exclusively with Beethoven and after he had completed Schubert's "Unfinished" and the "Ninth Symphony in C Major" Tótila wondered who, after Beethoven and Schubert, might have expressed musically the inner journey of awakening from death and rebirth. Or, to put it another way, to whom, after Schubert, may have been passed the torch of transmitting the musical heritage of consciousness?

It was quite natural that he was interested in Schumann, through whom Schubert had become known, in particular. Could it be that by listening to Schumann, he would also be connected with the Music Dictation?

Since a classmate from high school had given me some old records, among others Schumann's Fourth Symphony, I brought them to Tótila of course, as I visited him briefly before my weekly German lesson with his wife. Already as I was leaving, he showed me the first stanza that had "come

to him” – and already with this first page one could realize that Schumann had awakened something else in him. In hindsight, it can be said that it was clearly the only time in Tótila’s Music Dictation that a traditional mythological symbol appears: Lucifer – the fallen angel – the prototype of turning away and the possible return of humans to the divine source.

After Schumann came Brahms, whom Schumann had supported so generously by having called him a kind of musical messiah (“The one we have been waiting for”).

Tótila had despised Brahms as “epigone” until he became attracted to him. Now he went so far as to seeing him as a hidden saint, whose enlightenment was partly due to death (of both his mother and Schumann) but mostly thanks to the huge happiness of a harmonious family. Tótila thought that while Beethoven had to struggle hard for his spiritual victory, it was given to Brahms not to fall so far from paradise. It seems that the experience with death was sufficient to awaken him.

Tótila found an echo in Brahms more than in any other musician and he saw Brahms as emblematic of “the balance between the Inner Three”. He also saw him rather as fellow citizen of a later age, closer to the world in which we live today, than Beethoven. He heard that his music was permeated by the same spirit that had entered music through Beethoven’s “Ninth”: The feeling of WE or humanity.

Even in old age, he explored some of Beethoven’s late quartets – he began with the last opus 135 – in which Beethoven had written above the first three notes of the last movement “must it be”. Tótila’s text on this slow introduction shows us a situation in which someone resists death until he can accept it – especially in the Allegro – that starts with the reversal of the theme and the words “it must be!” Subsequently, Tótila explored many other works by the composers, which I mentioned above, and then paid attention to Bach’s six-voice Ricercar, later the *Musical Offering* and also Bach’s organ Toccata in D minor and some Mozart, until his work on a Mozart concerto halfway through was interrupted by a heart attack.

At that time, Tótila closed the academy and stopped sculpting, but continued to write, and maybe a deterioration in his health included a gift of (holy) providence, because he could stop working to earn money and was allowed thus to focus more on his more important work. He devoted himself not only to the dictation of music, but also to other works: a series of poem cycles, including the six-line poems that I list here.

He called the last of these cycles of poems *God’s Writer*. Here, of course, he referred to the core of his creative experience. I quote here the introductory page.

God’s scribe hates the feint

I believe that, while Tótila was in Germany, he saw himself as a medium regarding his Music Dictation - a kind of invisible transmission from Beethoven to him - and there is little doubt that Beethoven was for him something like Virgil was for Dante in his Divine Comedy. Tótila used to say that Beethoven was his teacher and that his merits were only that he had been prepared sufficiently to become “Beethoven’s secretary”.

However, later in his life, after dictating along the music of several composers, he said that he translated *melos* into *logos*, which meant that the structure of the music contained an objective content in encrypted form. He felt that his own work was related to that of a diver - he was someone with the gift to bring that to the surface of consciousness, which the normal listener only unconsciously perceives. From this interpretation, it seems to me that this phenomenon is not a

transfer of consciousness between two minds, but much more what Beethoven meant when he said that his music originated in the heart and is directed to the hearts of others - and, what is great music in general - only to a fuller and deeper degree, so that the one who has the deeply experienced knowledge of what the composer “says” is in a privileged position because he can read the impression of the composer’s subtle mind. I have no doubt that beyond what can be inferred from understanding his personal journey, in Tótila worked a wonderful inspiration that I simply believe came from a single source – be it in the Hill Women, the lyrical or epic poetry, or the Music Dictation of Beethoven, Brahms, and other German composers. In his language, I would say it was an inspiration that reflected his connection and increasing involvement in the “Realm of the Muses”.

A few years after his heart attack, he had a stroke that paralyzed his right arm and terminated his writing. He never recovered from it, he could not use his right arm or walk without problems, and he had lost the ability to count backwards or solve arithmetic problems; nevertheless, I remember his irony after an appointment with the neurologist, where he said that despite such deterioration, he sometimes felt in contact with Mozart or Alexander the Great and he assured me that his mind continued to develop.

He later had to be hospitalized for a mesenteric infarction and never returned home. I visited him several times in the Catholic University Hospital, when he was lying there connected to tubes. I was amazed that in such a state he was still interested in hearing from me. He asked what I would tell him about, asked about my mother and sent her greetings.

The last person to see him was his daughter Luz; as she was about to leave the room, in response to her “see you tomorrow” she heard his last words: “how funny!” She hadn’t left the hospital yet when she was told that he had died.

It seems very fitting that Tótila Albert Schneider, poet of the Trinity and the Triple Birth, whose life symbolized the integration of the Inner Three, should submit to a triple death: successive strokes of the heart, brain, and intestines.

His remains lie in the Santiago Metropolitan Cemetery. He wanted to have on his grave the words given below, without a name and without a date. I assume that his eccentricity ended up being contrary to his family’s own desire to retain a keepsake of him, so the visitor can read the following inscription: *Tótila Albert 1892-1967* and the corresponding passage from the end of his text about the 2nd movement of the Clarinet Quintet of Brahms:

The Birth of the I is the beginning of love

Photo



Don Federico Albert, Tótila's father



Teresa Schneider, Tótila's mother



Tótila Albert



Tuseda Albert, Tótila's sister