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VALLE-INCLAN IN 1920: DISRUPTION, DEHUMANIZATION, DEMYSTIFICATION

City University of New York PH.D. 1985

VALLE-INCLÁN IN 1920:

DISRUPTION, DEHUMANIZATION, DEMYSTIFICATION

by

ROSEMARY SHEVLIN WEISS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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Abstract

VALLE-INCLÁN IN 1920:

DISRUPTION, DEHUMANIZATION, DEMYSTIFICATION

by

Rosemary Shevlin Weiss

Adviser: Professor Daniel C. Gerould

In 1920, Ramón del Valle-Inclán published four new plays: Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey, Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, Divinas palabras, and Luces de bohemia. These works disrupt, dehumanize, and demystify the imagined, unrealistic worlds of his earlier plays, which were based on legend, myth, history, or literary models. Valle-Inclán shatters the illusions on which these worlds were based, reduces their characters to animals to reveal their inner ugliness, and strips superstitious and religious traditions of their mystery, magic, and power.

In La enamorada del rey, Valle-Inclán disrupts the dream worlds of his pre-1920 plays. The old woman of

Tragedia de ensueño never questioned her cruel fate; the Captain of thieves of Comedia de ensueño left his worldly goods in search of an ideal; Concha of El marqués de Bradomín, the Princess of Cuento de abril, and Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor, of Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón, survived threats to their artificial worlds; Ginebra of Voces de gesta never lost faith in the worthiness of her doomed cause. But Mari-Justina of Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey has her dreams shattered, her world disrupted, when she faces the truth and recognizes the object of her devotion to be a feeble, hunchbacked, large-nosed, doddering, ugly old man.

In Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, Valle-Inclán dehumanizes the court world and noble class of La Marquesa Rosalinda, turning its characters into animals to reveal their inner ugliness.

In Divinas palabras, Valle-Inclán demystifies the legendary world of his native Galicia. The house of Montenegro, already degenerated in Aguila de blasón, loses all vestiges of greatness in Romance de lobos with the death of Don Juan Manuel Montenegro. The myth and magic of El embrujado is, with the exception of the paradoxical power of the divine words, essentially gone in Divinas palabras.

In Luces de bohemia, Valle-Inclán presents a contemporary world already disrupted, dehumanized, and

demystified. He calls for a new literary form, the esperpento, to capture the grotesque deformation of this new world.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1905, Ramón del Valle-Inclán published Jardín umbrío, a collection of short stories which included two works written in dialogue, Tragedia de ensueño (written in 1903) and Comedia de ensueño. From then to 1913, Valle-Inclán published ten plays. In general, these plays were set in unrealistic worlds of an imagined past based on legend, myth, history, or literary models.[1] As other symbolist writers, Valle-Inclán was not interested in recreating reality but, rather, in transforming it into something more significant, elaborate, and idealized.

It is known that Valle-Inclán had little admiration for the contemporary Spanish theatre. As early as 1908, Señora Ama, a Benavente comedy about a woman with a philandering husband, caused him to speak out against what he considered the trivial realistic concerns of such plays:

> A mí no me gusta un teatro de esta manera. Con los recursos de presencia que el teatro tiene, nos echa a la cara trozos de realidad. El arte no existe sino cuando

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1. An exception is Cenizas, written in 1899 and revised in 1908 as El yermo de los almas, a domestic drama dealing with adultery in modern day Madrid.

> ha superado sus modelos vivos mediante una elaboración ideal. Las cosas no son como las vemos, sino como las recordamos. La palabra, en la creación literaria, necesita siempre ser transladada a ese plano en que el mundo y la vida humana se idealizan. No hay poesía sin esa elaboración.[2]

From 1913 to 1920, Valle-Inclán did not write for the theatre. It has been suggested that his bitter disappointment at the Teatro Español's refusal to stage El embrujado in 1913 precipitated Valle-Inclán's ensuing seven years of silence.[3] But even though he knew his works were not for the commercial theatre of Madrid, he still believed that one day his time would come:

> . . . nadie mejor que yo sabe que no son obras de público, y mucho menos de público de provincias. Son obras para una noche en Madrid, y gracias. No digo esto por modestia, todo lo contrario. Ya llegará nuestro día pero por ahora aun no alborea.[4]

This statement can partially explain the seven year hiatus as a sort of artistic cooling-off period before Valle-Inclán's return to dramatic writing in 1920. However, these words do not account for the different reality presented in the plays of 1920. The stylized, often idealized worlds of the past have been disrupted, their

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2. Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Don Ramón María del Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1959), p. 107.

3. John Lyon, The Theatre of Valle-Inclán (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 80.

4. Idem, "Valle-Inclán and the Art of the Theatre," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies 46 (1969):135.

people dehumanized, and their beliefs demystified. It is clear that Valle-Inclán was reacting to more than his rejection by a theatre which he did not respect in the first place. For another explanation of the changes, we must look to World War I and events in Spain instead.

In 1916, Valle-Inclán served as correspondent for the Madrid newspaper El Imparcial. He visited northern France, saw first-hand the devastating effects of that conflict and, as so many artists of that time, revealed the personal and profound impact of that war through major changes in his work. Valle-Inclán, as other members of his generation, was also affected by events in his own country, starting with Spain's humiliating losses in 1898, and heightened by the internal disturbances and violence during the weak reign of Alfonso XIII.[5] Bearing these events in mind, it is no wonder that Valle-Inclán disrupted, dehumanized, and demystified the worlds of his pre-War dramatic works.

By "disruption," I mean the result of actions, by inside or outside forces, that shatter the illusions upon which these unreal worlds were based. By "dehumanization,"

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5. For background and details of the political situation, see Gerald Brenan, The Spanish Labyrinth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 1-86. More information, centering on events in Barcelona, will appear in Chapter V.

I mean the grotesque reduction of human beings to animals or objects in order to reveal their inner ugliness. By "demystification," I mean the stripping of mystery, magic, power, and glory from long-held superstitious or religious traditions.

While these techniques of disruption, dehumanization, and demystification are present, in varying degrees, in all the plays of 1920, disruption is most prominent in Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey; dehumanization, in Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza; and demystification, in Divinas palabras. In Luces de bohemia, Valle-Inclán formally defines, through one of his characters, a new reality reflecting the disruption, dehumanization, and demystification of the other 1920 plays.

In Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey, Valle-Inclán disrupts the fantasies of the young Mari-Justina and permanently shatters the world of her wishes and dreams. Mari-Justina sees her King as the ugly, old man that he is--instead of the dashing figure she imagined when the sun was in her eyes. It is this disruption that separates La enamorada del rey from Valle-Inclán's previous plays.

Prior to 1920, the protagonists of Valle-Inclán's plays were allowed to live in unreal worlds with varying

degrees of ideals, artifice, beliefs, and anachronisms. In Tragedia de ensueño, the blind old grandmother awaited death, still believing in the incredible twists of fate that had taken all her sons, their wives, their children and, now, her last grandchild from her. In Comedia de ensueño, a captain of thieves left his band and booty in search of the unattainable. In El marqués de Bradomín, Concha banished her lover when he tried to impose the truth upon the world and persona she had so carefully constructed. In Cuento de abril, the barbaric, intruding Castillians finally withdrew and the Princess of Imberal's "corte de amor" was restored to its former beauty. In Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón, Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor planned to live happily ever after in spite of the fact that their world was not really a fairy tale kingdom. In Voces de gesta, Ginebra willingly sacrificed herself for the Carlist Pretender over a period of twenty years, ever believing in his hopeless cause.

In Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, Valle-Inclan dehumanizes his characters to an extent unknown before 1920. There are similarities between La Reina Castiza and the earlier La Marquesa Rosalinda. Both plays are farces, written in verse, dealing with court intrigues, and centered around a noblewoman's adultery with a lover of inferior station. But, while La Marquesa Rosalinda is

subtitled "farsa sentimental y grotesca," the grotesque elements of the play are balanced by the sentimental treatment of the Marquesa. There is some dehumanization of the commedia dell´arte players as they are likened to dolls with mask-like makeup and there is some deformation of the court´s inhabitants as well. The Marqués is painted and powdered and the duenna is likened to a witch and an owl. However, in Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, Valle-Inclán dehumanizes his characters to an even greater extent to reveal their inner moral ugliness. They take on the physical characteristics of beasts: the Queen, a horse; her Consort, an ostritch; her court ladies, flea-ridden birds; her lower-class companion, a parrot; her lady-in-waiting and blackmailing lover, cats.

Demystification is prominent in Divinas palabras as Valle-Inclán creates a different version of his beloved Galicia--a Galicia without the glory, beliefs, and magic of the older plays.

Aguila de blasón and Romance de lobos dealt with the fall of the once-great house of Montenegro in the person of Don Juan Manuel. His many sins of Aguila de blasón were redeemed in Romance de lobos as he repented and then died in a final, noble attempt to fulfill his feudal duties to the poor. In El embrujado, there was no noble class, nor was there nobility of any kind, in this tragedy of avarice,

lust, and death as Don Pedro Bolaño and the witch Rosa la Galana fought over a helpless infant. However, Rosa's witchcraft was real.

In Divinas palabras, El embrujado's fight over a helpless infant becomes a quarrel over who will earn more money displaying the private parts of a hydrocephalic dwarf at carnivals. As in El embrujado, there is no nobility--nor is there magic. Valle-Inclán has demystified the region. The superstitions, miracles, and spells of the older Galicia become cheap tricks used to seduce women or win money from a drunken crowd. The miracle of the divine words that subdue the vengeful crowd at the play's end is a paradox. The crowd is pacified, not through divine revelation, but by the mere sounds of the Latin words--words they do not understand. However, though the profound miracles and true manifestations of Christian and superstitious beliefs in the earlier plays are demystified in Divinas palabras, the divine words themselves still retain some power.

In Luces de bohemia, the demystification is complete as Valle-Inclán shows us life in a nearly comtemporary "absurd, brilliant, and starving Madrid." He makes his most obvious break with the past as he presents the end of an entire literary movement, the end of justice and, indeed, the end of hope for the future. Life in Spain has become more absurd and grotesque than tragic and Valle-Inclán,

through the dying poet Max Estrella, calls for a new literary form to capture this grotesque deformation--the esperpento.

The disruption, dehumanization, and demystification techniques employed by Valle-Inclán in 1920 demonstrate his irreversible break from the worlds of his earlier plays. Valle-Inclán's world, like Mari-Justina's, was disrupted by an ugly reality which forever colored his works.

CHAPTER II

DISRUPTION

Tragedia de ensueño[1] can be described as an exercise in preventing disruption. It traces a blind woman's sorrow as her orphaned grandson lies dying. The baby is dying for lack of milk because the sheep that served as provider has run off. Characters appear, express concern, and depart. No one takes any action to save the baby. Instead, they passively accept the sheep's departure and the child's resulting death as an act of fate which must be played out. The ladies-in-waiting of a nearby palace perform errands for the old woman and sadly monitor the child's decline. A sympathetic old shepherd (whom Valle-Inclán likens in a stage direction to the holy shepherds who adored the child Jesus) reports that he and his men have spent two days searching for the sheep. He promises to bring the child another sheep--but only when he returns to his flock. He seems oblivious to the need for some immediate action. The inevitability of death is

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1. Ramón del Valle-Inclán, "Tragedia de ensueño," Jardín Umbrío (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1967.)

underscored by various omens. The grandmother tells the shepherd that she hears death beating at the doors. He insists it is only the wind. She informs him of another signal of death--the barking of dogs for the past three days. The palace maids return and remark on the child's unusual whiteness and strange expression. He seems to be looking at something that isn't there. The old woman responds, "¡Una cosa que no se ve!... ¡Es la otra vida!..."[2] The child smiles, seemingly at the angels, and the wind grows louder and colder. The child lies still. The frightened maidens flee as the sheep returns. But the child is already dead. The old woman laments her fate and prays black death to take her to her grandson. The wind continues to beat at the doors.

Tragedia de ensueño bears similarities to Maurice Maeterlinck's The Intruder.[3] Both plays deal with the arrival of Death against which human beings have no defense. In both plays, sounds harken its arrival and, in both plays, an aged blind grandparent "sees" the outcome before the sighted characters. Both plays close with the

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2. Ibid., p. 30.

3. Emilio González López, El arte dramático de Valle-Inclán (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1967), p. 58; Sumner M. Greenfield, Valle-Inclán: Anatomía de un teatro problemático (Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos, 1972), p. 46.

blind figure abandoned (albeit temporarily in The Intruder) by family.

However, Maeterlinck's work has greater dramatic complexity. The arrival of death is symbolized much more elaborately: a week of rain, the rising wind, the stirring of trees, a presence in the garden, the uneasiness of the nightingales, swans and dogs, a coldness entering the room, the sharpening of a scythe, the dimming of the lamp, the unexplained opening of a door, footsteps, the sound of falling leaves, the strange beams of moonlight, the baby's first cries. The passage of time, from just after nine p.m. to midnight, is carefully noted and each further incursion of Death becomes more frightening as it and time march on.

The Intruder is mounted in a framework of reality. A woman is dying after childbirth--a not unknown occurence; her family is gathered around her--to be expected. Every character has a reason to be onstage. The strange events puzzle and confuse these figures as they do the audience. The characters voice their fears and doubts, fears and doubts shared by the viewer. The mounting terror affects spectator and character simultaneously as each is pulled from the familiar world to the unknown.

Tragedia de ensueño, on the other hand, is mounted on a framework of highly unlikely events which precede the

action of the play. A blind old woman has lost her seven sons, their wives, and all their children. This last grandchild is now starving to death. Nothing is done to save him. In The Intruder a doctor has ministered to the sick woman and a nursing nun is in attendance. We never question the premise--childbed fever leading to recovery or death--so we concentrate on the masterful technique that swings the pendulum from temporary rallying to dying. Since safeguards have been taken against death, there is no strange passivity in the face of danger.

But passivity abounds in Tragedia de ensueño. It is destined that the old woman lose her entire family and the tragedy is the playing out of that fate. In this sense, Valle-Inclán's play is close in spirit to the ideas Maeterlinck expressed in The Tragical In Daily Life:

> There is a tragic element in the life of every day that is far more real, far more penetrating, far more akin to the true self that is in us than the tragedy that lies in great adventure. . . . Its province is . . . to hush the discourse of reason and sentiment, so that above the tumult may be heard the solemn, uninterrupted whisperings of man and his destiny.[4]

Maeterlinck takes his tragedy from daily life and makes it suspenseful and extraordinary. Valle-Inclán takes

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4. Maurice Maeterlinck, "The Tragical in Daily Life," trans. Alfred Sutro, in Dramatic Theory and Criticism, ed. Bernard F. Dukore (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1974), pp. 726-27.

his tragedy from the unusual and hushes "the discourse of reason and sentiment." Instead of Maeterlinck's suspense, he reinforces the inevitable. There can be no question of the old woman's destiny--to live on while all she loves die before her. Any disruption of that belief by reason, reality, or doubt will shatter this fragile world.

Thus, while Valle-Inclán, like Maeterlinck, uses non-human symbols to portend the coming of Death--the disappearance of the sheep, the barking of dogs, the likening of the child to a wilting flower and dying star, the cold wind beating at the doors--he eschews many of Maeterlinck's theatrics.

The characters who make brief appearances are there to hush reason, not excite imagination. We must see the action as the conclusion of a predestined pattern of misfortune. The doubts and hopes of Maeterlinck's characters have no place here. There can be no question of the outcome and, since the premise of the play is so susceptible to disbelief, Valle-Inclán must have all his characters passively accept the child's death.

The grandmother certainly accepts this fate. The child's demise will complete the pattern of death. Then she can die. This destiny is supported by the three Palace maids. The youngest describes seeing the child at dawn when he looked whiter than the river's foam. As she touched him,

she felt her hands take away some of his life. She tells how a cloth the old woman wove and gave her to wash was carried away by the current. The older girl tells that the cradle sheet she was given was blown away by the wind. A skein of flax entrusted to the eldest was carried off by a blackbird. Their tales reinforce the fact that the child is doomed.

While Maeterlinck heightens his drama by introducing suspense and conflicting ideas, Valle-Inclán avoids such methods. His fragile world would be disrupted if one character voiced the opinion that this child could be saved.

While the action of The Intruder moves forward towards the moment of possible death, Tragedia de ensueño dwells on the past, reiterating previous woes, until minutes before the moment of death. Bert O. States could just as well have been describing Tragedia de ensueño when he wrote of lyric drama as a

> way of expressing in dramatic form a certain range of subjective attitudes which prefer to stand . . . without concern for probability or for resemblance to anything in the visible social world. . . . The lyrical simply assumes that its audience is willing to suspend its belief in the world as a real place, frought with daily problems, and agrees to view it as an extension of a soul that is at once private and racial.[5]

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5. Bert O. States, Irony and Drama: A Poetics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 197-8.

As in Tragedia de ensueño, disruption is avoided in Comedia de ensueño.[6] There is conflict, but such dissent is caused by greed, not disbelief. The lyric suffering and sorrow of Tragedia de ensueño turns to cruelty and blood; twilight turns to evening; the humble house becomes a den of thieves; the old woman, a witch.[7]

The action of Comedia de ensueño takes place in a mountain cave, the hiding place of twelve thieves, their Captain, and the old woman who cares for them. The thieves return from a foray and reveal their booty. The Captain's prize is a woman's hand, white as a flower, its fingers covered with rings. The old woman removes the jewels and blood, reads the palm and reveals it to have belonged to an enchanted princess whom the Captain might have wed. A hermit enters and announces the approach of a caravan of rich merchants. A white and ghostly dog creeps in and flees with the Princess's hand in its teeth. The Captain orders his band to pursue it, but they rebel and await the caravan. He rides off alone, in a vain search for the missing hand, as the men roll dice to determine their next leader.

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6. Valle-Inclán, "Comedia de ensueño," Jardín umbrío (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1967.)

7. González López, Arte dramático, p. 61.

The Princess evokes the superstitious Galician belief in a beautiful Moorish princess, or queen, "la reina mora," who lures travellers with her jewels and bewitches them. In his "Cartas galicianas," Valle-Inclán has already described her:"

> A la gente que, pues, allí, transitaba para los mercados, solía aparecersele una señora, guapa como un sol de mediodia, con una tienda de cosas muy bonitas, de oro y plata. Y la señora preguntaba con mucha cortesia--¿que vos gusta de mi tienda?--y un suponer éstos contestaban que un VERDUGUILLO, aquellos que unos pendientes, y la señora bonita, entonces, les cortaba un dedo o una oreja, o les afeitaba un lado de la cara... porque era menester decir--"Señora, me gusta usted y su tienda.[8]

In Valle-Inclán's Flor de santidad, an old shepherd tells of his encounter with "la reina mora," adding what can be done to break the spell and marry the princess:

> Para desencantar a la reina y casarse con ella, bastaría con decir: Entre tantas joyas, sólo a vos quiero, señora reina. Muchos saben aquesto, pero cegados por la avaricia se olvidan de decirlo y pónense a elegir entre las joyas... . . . El que ha de romper ese encanto no ha nacido todavía...[9]

All travellers have to do is tell the princess that they prefer her to the riches she has offered them. Then they will have everything. But, while they know what they

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8. Valle-Inclán, "Cartas galicianas," Publicaciones periodísticas de Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán anteriores a 1895, ed. William L. Fichter (Mexico, D.F.: El Colegio de Mexico, 1952), p. 79.

9. cited in Emma Susana Speratti-Piñero, El ocultismo en Valle-Inclán (London: Tamesis Books, Ltd., 1974), p. 14.

must do, their greed makes them forget and they fall under her spell and lose all.

Just as the Moorish princess, Princess Quimera of Comedia de ensueño beckons travellers with her white dove-like hands. The old witch reads in her palm that she has been kept prisoner by a dwarf, who made her hand appear to travellers like a dove or flower. To attract the Captain, she has adorned it with jewels. Even though the Captain is never put to the test--he lopped off the hand before the princess could question him--he is bewitched.

This power is not questioned. After the palm reading, one of the thieves fears that the enchanted ring will disappear. The others scoff at him but, after the flight of the dog--whom they all accept as bewitched--and the Captain's determination to retrieve the bare hand, the greedy band wants no part of the jewels.

As in Tragedia de ensueño, the possibility of a strange fate is accepted. The tone of Comedia de ensueño differs from the first play in its violence and gore, but the outcomes are similar: the central figures follow their destinies, destinies which remain unquestioned. The thieves refuse to follow the Captain in his quest, but never doubt the magical powers that now control him.

As if to justify this quest, Valle-Inclán ennobles the Captain, setting him apart from the other thieves and

the old hag who serves them. At first the playwright introduces the thieves as all of the same breed: "Tienen los rostros cetrinos, y sus pupilas destellan en el blanco de los ojos con extraña ferocidad."[10] However, as the piece progresses, the Captain almost takes on the qualities of a Byronic hero, while his band grows more wolflike in their manner and appearance. Even before Mother Silvia reads the dismembered palm, the Captain is struck by the horror of his deed: "El Capitán queda pensativo. Una nube de tristeza empaña su rostro, y en los ojos negros y violentos que contemplan el fuego tiembla el aureo reflejo de las llamas y de los suenos."[11] He stops the thieves from the desecration of removing the rings and regrets his bloody act: "¡Así hubieran cegado mis ojos cuando la vi! ¡Pobre mano blanca que pronto habrá de marchitarse como las flores! ¡Diera todos mis tesoros por unirla otra vez al brazo de donde la corté!"[12] When he hears the tale of the Princess´s hand, the Captain ceases to behave like the thief he has been. He sits, "pensive and quiet," while his men--the men he had threatened with death should they take more than their share--divide the rings the old woman has

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10. Valle-Inclán, Comedia de ensueño, p. 124.

11. Ibid., p. 127.

12. Ibid.

removed.

The hermit enters but is not what he appears to be. Safely inside the cave, the old, doubled-up figure in sackcloth straightens up without the aid of his staff, pulls off his false whiskers, and announces the approach of a wealthy caravan. Just as the dove or flower that other travellers saw was really the hand of an enchanted Princess, the aged, holy figure is really a look-out for the thieves.

The thieves, upon hearing of the riches in store, greedily bare their teeth like wolves. Meanwhile their Captain, no longer interested in such business "calla contèmplando el fuego, y vuelve a sumirse en la niebla de su ensueño."[13]

As the grandmother of Tragedia de ensueño, the Captain follows his fate alone. In both plays, our sympathy goes to the lonely protagonist, but in Comedia de ensueño, Valle-Inclán uses different means to justify the behavior of the true believer. The old woman of Tragedia was supported by other sympathetic characters who reinforced the belief that she could do no more than live out her predetermined fate. In Comedia, Valle-Inclán keeps our sympathy with the Captain, and his compulsion to follow his destiny, by using only despicable characters to scorn him. Yet even these

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13. Ibid., p. 130.

despicable characters accept his enchantment as real. In both plays the magic and an incredible string of misfortunes are treated as reality. Again, in Comedia de ensueño, Valle-Inclán keeps his lyric world intact.

In El marqués de Bradomín, however, Valle-Inclán introduces a threat of disruption in the character of Bradomín. Before the action of the play begins, the ill Concha has summoned her cousin, the marqués de Bradomín, for a final reunion. She also awaits her two daughters, who have been visiting their father, from whom Concha has been estranged since his discovery of her past adultery with Bradomín. The girls write that their father is dying. Concha summons up the strength to go to him and then returns with the ill man, her daughters, and cousin. Her husband's sickness has brought on a new wave of guilt and a determination to sacrifice her happiness. As Concha has played the roles of lady of the manor, benefactress of the clergy, the blind, the poor and the crippled, spurned mistress, bereft mother, she is now determined to play the devoted wife of a dying man and nobly send her lover away. But Bradomín refuses to be her fellow actor in this new script: he bitterly attempts to disrupt this artifice. Failing this, he finally goes, leaving Concha alone in her protected garden.

Concha, as the characters of other symbolist works,

has made her garden a "refuge for dreamers."[14] Valle-Inclán describes the setting at the start of Act I: "Un jardín y en el fondo un palacio: El jardín y el palacio tienen esa vejez señorial y melancólica de los lugares por donde en otro tiempo pasó la vida amable de la galantería y del amor."[15] Sumner Greenfield calls this garden a pastiche of nostalgic evocations of times past--eighteenth-century France, the Renaissance, Rubén Darío's modernismo, fairy tales, and the Middle Ages.[16] Placed in this setting, at the curtain's rise, is a figure beautifully evocative of the past:

> Sentado en la escalinata, donde verdea el musgo, un zagal de pocos años amaestra con los sones de su flauta una nidada de mirlos prisionera en rústica jaula de cañas. Aquel niño de fabla casi visigótica y ojos de cabra triscadora, con su sayo de estamena y sus quedejas trasquiladas sobre la frente por tonsura casi monacal, parece el hijo de un antiguo siervo de la gleba. La dama palida y triste, que vive retirada en el palacio, le llama con lánguido capricho Florisel.[17]

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14. Ricardo Gullón, "Symbolism and Modernism," in The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of European Languages, ed. Anna Balakian, vol. 2 (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1982), p. 227.

15. Valle-Inclán, "El marqués de Bradomín," La marquesa Rosalinda/El marqués de Bradomín (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1971), p. 145.

16. Sumner Greenfield, "Cuento de abril: Literary Reminiscences and Commonplaces" in Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of His Life and Works, ed. Anthony N. Zahareas (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1968), p. 353.

17. Valle-Inclán, El marqués de Bradomín, p. 145.

This pastiche quality with its possible element of parody, sets up Concha´s world as an unreal one that can easily be disrupted. Bradomín is the agent of this possible disruption. He, her cousin, childhood playmate and then lover, is of Concha´s world, yet apart from it. He appreciates its artifice, but recognizes it as such. His iconoclasm can be tolerated or dismissed, for it is without malice. When, however, he presents a real threat to Concha´s world, he is banished.

Bradomín re-enters Concha´s world in a reunion carefully staged by her. They are to meet in the garden where they last parted. He is moved by that gesture: "Mi alma está cubierta de recuerdos como ese viejo jardín está cubierto de hojas. Es el otoño que llega para todos. Concha, tú sonríes, y en tu sonrisa siento el pasado como un aroma entrañable de flores marchitas que trae alegres y confusas memorias".[18]

Bradomín recognizes Concha´s skillful artifice, but this recognition enhances, rather than lessens, his affection:

LA DAMA
Cuando te fuiste, yo elegí este retiro para toda mi vida.
EL MARQUÉS DE BRADOMÍN
Es más poético que un convento.
LA DAMA
No te burles de mi pena, Xavier.

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18. Ibid., p. 187.

> No me burlo, Concha. Solamente me sonrío, y una sonrisa es a veces más triste que las lágrimas.[19]

Bradomín's appreciation of drama, style, and grandeur extends beyond his love of Concha. It explains, he claims, his attraction to Carlism. When the Abbot of Brandesco insists that the marqués is on a secret Carlist mission, he scoffs at such lunacy and describes his brand of loyalty to the Cause: "Señor Abad, yo soy carlista por estética. El carlismo tiene para mí la belleza de las grandes catedrales. Me contentaría con lo que declarasen monumento nacional."[20] When the Abbot remarks that he has never heard of that kind of Carlism, Bradomín replies, "Los carlistas se dividen en dos grandes bandos: Uno, yo, en el otro, los demás."[21]

His admiration for his uncle Don Juan Manuel Montenegro is based on the same appreciation of style. He confesses to Don Juan Manuel that he, the last marqués de Bradomín, knows little of the line's traditions or the origin of the house itself. But this does not curb his respect or sadness that the great days are ending: "Don Juan Manuel Montenegro es el último superviente de una gran

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19. Ibid., p. 185.

20. Ibid., p. 193.

21. Ibid.

raza. . . . Hermano espiritual de aquellos aventureros hidalgos que se enganchaban en los tercios de Flandes o de Italia por buscar lances de amor, de espada y de fortuna."[22] Concha assures him that he is one of those hidalgos himself, but Bradomín claims his compulsive reading has prevented that: "Los muchos libros son como los muchos desengaños: No dejan nada en el corazón."[23]

It is this emptiness that has led him to seek out the pleasures of life, profess his motto be be, "¡Viva la bagatella!," and savor the artistic embellishments of the garden at Brandesco. But it is his intellect that causes his expulsion. While he is in sympathy with Concha, his disruptive comments are safe. When he tries to impose common sense and rationality on her fantasies, he becomes a threat that must be eliminated.

Concha returns to Brandesco from her ill husband's bedside determined to atone for her sins. She insists that Bradomín must leave her and that she must be a model wife and mother. The marqués knows she is dying. Their last parting had been a mistake, a waste of youth and love, with each one still wanting the other, but too proud to admit it. Before, a sudden wave of mysticism led Concha to send

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22. Ibid., p. 197.

23. Ibid.

him away; now, new devotion to her husband motivates her. The time left them is so short, Bradomín cannot tolerate her new behavior. He is determined that they not reenact their foolish roles.

This time, if they part, there will be no reunion. Bradomín can afford to indulge her no longer. He angrily tells their cousin Isabel, "¿Crees que esa piedad cristiana que ahora la arrastra hacia su marido durará siempre? ¿Crees que después de martirizarse un día y otro día no hará estéril ese martirio otra carta suya?"[24]

But Concha clings to her new vocation and they recreate their former farewell scene in the same setting. She begs him to let her look into his eyes for the last time, to pity her and not look upon her with rancor. He sadly replies, "No es rencor lo que siento, es la melancolía del desengaño, una melancolía como si el crepusculo cayese sobre mi vida, y mi vida, semejante a un triste día de otoño, se acabase para volver a empezar con un amanecer sin sol."[25]

He leaves and Concha is distraught. Once more, she hopes he will return. Her love, her guilt, her devotion were sincere, but she had to make the noble gesture. Just

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24. Ibid., p. 235.

25. Ibid., p. 242.

as her confinement at Brandesco was more poetic than in a convent, her sacrifice is more poetic than adultery. Bradomín threatened to disrupt her performance and had to be banished.

As she changes from role to role, Concha makes herself as powerless to change her fate as the grandmother in Tragedia de ensueño and the Captain of thieves in the Comedia. Her actions can easily be read on a realistic level. She has chosen to obey the rules of Church and society and spurns anyone who accuses her of hypocrisy. But there are more unrealistic aspects of the play as well. In Act II, the duenna Doña Malvina tells Concha's daughters the now familiar story of the "la reina mora." The girls immediately liken her to their mother on the basis of her beauty. But other similarities can be seen. The Moorish queen, we remember, lures travellers with her beauty and her jewels. She wants the travellers to tell her she is most beautiful. Their natures prevent them and they lose her. Concha wants the travelling Bradomín to approve of her noble decision. His nature prevents him and he loses her. The travellers are unable to break the spell and attain the Princess. Bradomín is unable to break through Concha's romantic martyrdom and have her.

The threatened disruption of Concha's world was a plea for sincerity from one loving cousin to another. In

Cuento de abril, disruption takes the form of an all-out assault on Provence by Castille. By the play's end, the Infante from Castille and his soldiers have splattered the gardens of Imberal with blood and hunted the forests bare in their efforts to woo the gentle princess and her ladies-in-waiting. Their clamor has caused the very roses to fall to the ground and reduced the maidens, hitherto described as nymphs in an allegory, to a chorus of nuns.

This Castillian assault on Provence, in the name of love, is no more successful than Bradomín's more gentle urging of Concha to abandon her self-conscious poetic attitudes. In El marqués de Bradomín, Valle-Inclán shows sympathy towards both Concha and Bradomín. In Cuento de abril, he shows no divided loyalties when comparing the refinement of Imberal to the buffoonery of Castille.

Cuento de abril, subtitled "escenas rimadas en una manera extravagante," is a gift from Valle-Inclán to his audience. In the prologue, the playwright writes: "La divina puerta dorada/ del jardín azul del ensueño/ os abre mi vara encantada/ por deciros un cuento abrileño."[26] The last stanza repeats his offer: "Cuento de gaya poesía,/ más elegante que un minué./ Rosa de la galantería,/ que os

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26. Valle-Inclán, "Cuento de abril," Voces de gesta/ Cuento de abril (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1960), p. 99.

brindo en lírico buque."[27]

Cuento de abril fulfills an earlier promise of Valle-Inclan's: "Dadme siempre una mujer, una fuente, una música lejana, rosas, la luna--belleza, cristal, ritmo, esencia, plata--y os prometo una eternidad de cosas bellas."[28] The setting of this gift of beauty is the garden of the Princess of Imberal in Provence. It is a place of cypresses, roses, peacocks, fountains, a garden of love in which a faithful troubador can worship his lady according to the medieval precepts of courtly love.

The importance of this "garden of dreams" as a setting cannot be overestimated. It provides a springboard for the entire action of the piece. Indeed, Valle-Inclán believed that the setting of a theatrical piece creates the story. Therefore, he insisted, a great playwright must be a great architect.[29] Working from this premise, he once supplied an account of the genesis of the gravedigger scene in Hamlet:

> Shakespeare, cuando empezó a escribir Hamlet, se encontró con que Ofelia se le había muerto. 'A esta mujer hay que enterrarla,' se dijo, sin duda. '¿Donde

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27. Ibid., p. 100.

28. Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, Modernismo frenta a noventa y ocho (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1966), pp. 76-77.

29. Roberto G. Sánchez, "Gordon Craig y Valle-Inclán," Revista de Occidente 3 (February 1976):35.

> la enterraremos? En un cementerio romántico, en un cementerio de aldea.' Allí Shakespeare se dijo: 'Aquí tiene que salir un sepulturero. Pero como un sepulturero solo se va a hacer pesado, lo mejor será que aparezcan dos.' Estos dos sepultureros tienen que hablar de algo mientras cavan la fosa de Ofelia. Al hacerlo, lo natural es que encuentren un hueso humano: y ya que lo han encontrado hagamos que éste sea el más noble: un cráneo. Y ahí surgió la admirable situación de Hamlet en la escena del cementerio.[30]

Just as Shakespeare provided Ophelia's cemetery with two gravediggers and a skull, Valle-Inclán supplies the Princess's garden with ladies-in-waiting and a troubador. The troubador is the renowned Pedro de Vidal whose songs of the Princess's beauty have attracted the attentions of the Infante of Castille, now en route to Provence to woo the fair maiden. However, Vidal loves the Princess more than the bounds of courtly love permit and must be taught a lesson. This happens in the first scene when a lady-in-waiting, disguised as a gypsy, tells Vidal that she can put the Princess to sleep with a magic word. Then, if he kisses his lady on the lips, she will be his. The Princess enters, plans the festivities for the visiting Castillians with Vidal and pretends to sleep. Vidal kisses her and, according to plan, she awakes and furiously banishes the overstepping troubador from her sight.

The Infante and his soldiers arrive in the second scene. The boisterous Castillians are out of place in such

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30. Gómez de la Serna, Valle-Inclán, p. 106.

refined surroundings. When the Infante learns that a wild boar hunt is in progress, he eagerly begs the Princess for permission to join the party and to present her with the beast. The hunting party returns with dead deer, venison, a proudly wounded Infante, and the news that Vidal, who had penitently gone to the forest in wolves' clothing, has been wounded.

In the third and final scene, the Infante gladly takes leave of the Princess to return to Castille and fight the Moors. The ailing Vidal enters and begs forgiveness. The Princess grants his wish and returns his kiss. The Infante, enraged, rails against the Paganism of the place, and noisily departs with his soldiers. The ladies watch with great relief. As in El marqués de Bradomín, the force that threatens to disrupt the order of the idyllic garden has been driven out.

Sumner Greenfield has written of Cuento de abril as "little more than a glittering exercise in the Modernist esthetic [that] looks backward rather than forward, toward a stylistic ideal which, without modification, can go no further".[31] However, if we consider this play in the context of disruptution of a dream world, it can indeed be

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31. Greenfield, "Cuento de abril: Literary Reminiscences," p. 354.

seen as a step closer to that end.

Cuento de abril deals with a greater threat than El marqués del Bradomín. Bradomín and Concha were of the same world. The Princess of Imberal and the Infante of Castille are of alien, irreconcilable cultures and there is no chance that Provence can survive while the barbarous Castillians are in her territory. Besides, Bradomín wishes to remain in Brandesco, while, if the Infante succeeds in his wooing, the Princess will leave Imberal. Vidal refers to him as "el raptor español," and a false Paris who will rob Provence's garden of its sun.[32] A lady-in-waiting fears that the Princess, a most elegant flower, will turn as yellow as the Castillian earth.[33] As the ladies watch the warriors leave, they speak of Castille:

UNA AZAFATA
¡Se fue el caballero...!
Bien tornado sea a la su Castilla.
OTRA AZAFATA
¡A la tierra llana,
del vellón de nieve, blanco en el enero,
se va el caballero!
OTRA AZAFATA
¡Vuelve el castellano a la su Castilla,
a la tierra llana
de la mies, al agosto, amarilla!
UNA AZAFATA
¡Torna el caballero al hogar materno,
a la tierra del seco verano y el ventoso invierno!

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32. Valle-Inclán, Cuento de abril, p. 109.

33. Ibid., p. 126.

LA PRINCESA
¡A la tierra que engendró el acero
del corazón y de las armas del caballero![34]

While Cuento de abril deals with Castille and Provence, we will see that Galicia was not far from Valle-Inclán's mind when he created the garden of Imberal. Valle-Inclán borrowed from Galician history in creating the plot of Cuento de abril. It is a retelling of the courtship of the Suebian king of Galicia, Rechario, and a Visigoth princess, daughter of King Theodoric. Rechario, fearful of Theodoric's increasing power, plans marriage to the princess to ensure his conquest of Spain. Travelling to Toulouse from Galicia, he sacks the entire countryside and, finally, places the entire booty at her feet.[35] The fate of Pedro Vidal is also drawn from Galician sources. Alfonso de Bendaña (founder of the house of Brandesco and, therefore, an ancestor of Concha and Bradomín) imprisoned his enemy the Abad de Mos, dressed him in wolves' clothing, and sent him into the mountains, where he was attacked and killed by dogs.[36]

Agustín del Saz sees the Princess and Infante as two

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34. Ibid., p. 148.

35. Emilio González López, "El Cuento de abril de Valle-Inclán: sus fuentes y su arte," Revista Hispánica Moderna 32 (1966):190.

36. Idem, Arte dramático, p. 96.

geographic psychologies.[37] Verdant Provence is contrasted to cold, barren Castille. This contrast is also used by Valle-Inclán in his collection of poems, El pasajero. In the poems "Rosa del caminante" and "Rosa matinal" he compares the landscape of Castille and Galicia and its effect on the inhabitants.[38] This contrast can be applied to Cuento de abril for, as Emilio González López notes, in his verse plays, Valle-Inclán translates non-Galician settings and characters into Galician themes.[39]

In "Rosa del caminante," we see how the harsh climate of Castille affects its people: "Los hombres secos y reconcentrados,/ las mujeres deshechas de parir:/ rostros oscuros llenos de cuidados,/ todas las bocas clásico el decir."[40]

However, when one crosses into Galicia, the change is miraculous. "Rosa matinal" opens with this contrast: "Ante la parda tierra castellana/ se abre el verde milagro de una tierra/ cristalina, en la paz de la mañana,/ y el

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37. Agustín del Saz Sánchez, El teatro del Valle-Inclán (Barcelona: Grafica, 1950), p. 18.

38. Emilio González López, La poesía de Valle-Inclán: del simbolismo al expresionismo (Rio Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1973), p. 35.

39. Idem, Arte dramático, p. 95

40. Valle-Inclán, Claves líricas (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1964), p. 46.

castañar comienza con la sierra."[41]

In Galicia, the lush landscape gives rise to a gentler, beauty-loving people:

> El agrio vino, las melosas niñas,
> la vaca familiar, el pan acedo,
> un grato son de flauta entre las viñas,
> y un místico ensalmar en el robledo.
> . . . . . .
> En un verde cristal de relicario,
> son de esmalte los valles pastoriles,
> tienen la gracia núbil del plenario
> de las doncellas en los veinte abriles.[42]

But landscape is just one of the differences stressed in the play. The Provençal "corte de amor," with its pages, troubadors, madrigals and dancing, is unlike any Castillian celebration. Before the Infante's arrival, the Princess carefully prepared a festive welcome for the Spaniards. Vidal was to write special verses for the occasion and, besides the music and dancing, pigeons were to be released to the sky in pairs. The princess is aware of the Castillian lack of gallantry: "Y no son muy galanas/ las Castillas, que hicieron lanzas de sus florestas,"[43] but since the Infante has travelled to Provence to know her, she has decided to present him with a true picture of her pleasures. Vidal doubts that the boisterous Spaniards will

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41. Ibid., p. 47.

42. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

43. Valle-Inclán, Cuento de abril, p. 111.

be able to appreciate such elegance: "¿Y a ese gran segador de cabezas paganas/ quieres darle la lírica rosa de nuestras fiestas?/ ¿No has oído los romances que cantan sus troveros?/ En vez de arpas, se acompañan con atambores."[44] It turns out that the Infante does have some appreciation for Provençal refinement but he makes it quite clear to the Princess (in just the second speech he addresses to her) that things are very different in Castille:

> Nunca, Princesa mía,
> tú podrás comprender nuestra alegría.
> Serena, grave y fría,
> como el cristal del agua, en una alberca
> que el morisco arrayán de sombra cerca.[45]

But traditions of celebration are the least of the differences between Provence and Castille. Indeed, there seems to be no common meeting ground. Their views of love and honor are disparate as well. The Princess is better suited to Vidal, her inferior, than the Infante, her equal. As did Concha of Brandesco, she has created a world of artifice in her garden. Vidal, unlike Bradomín, is her willing partner. Together they play the games of the "corte de amor." He worships his lady, then falls into disfavor and goes into seclusion, according to the rules of chivalry, to lament and do penance for his transgression. The

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44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 120.

Princess, moved by the sight of his wound "incurred in the pursuit of an ideal," pities and forgives him.[46]

Such courtly love has no place in Castille, where the only wounds that touch the Infante´s heart are those suffered by his hunting dogs. Love is seen in stern, religious terms, never far from the presence of sin:

> Para los castellanos el amor es avispa
> roja y negra. El Demonio está siempre en acecho;
> de sus ojos de gato la maléfica chispa
> les enciende carnales deseos en el pecho.
> Son como frailes que, en la celda hinojados,
> con las barbas de nieve sobre el santo misal,
> aún sienten en la carne abrirse los pecados
> como ardientes panales, como flores del mal.[47]

Strict rules of hierarchy and cruel punishments for infractions are also deep-rooted in the Castillian view of love. It is impossible for the Infante to accept the special privileges of Pedro Vidal. As far as he´s concerned, Vidal deserves to have boiling lead poured into his transgressing mouth. With relish, he describes the gruesome punishment Castille would mete out to anyone bold enough to neglect kneeling before his sisters. The offender would be hanged upside down from the battlements and exposed to predatory crows.

The Castillian soldiers pursue love as they pursue

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46. Greenfield, "Cuento de abril: Literary Reminiscences," pp. 355-56.

47. Valle-Inclán, Cuento de abril, p. 139.

war--with a great deal of blood and a great deal of noise. After the hunt, the soldiers literally dump the bloody carcasses of the forests' deer and venison on Imberal's cultivated, verdant grounds. This action and the Infante's story of his struggle with the boar are repulsive to the ladies who consider these bloodthirsty foreigners rough in speech, coarse, hairy, and as wild as bears.

The clamor of these invaders in the name of love is also shocking to Imberal. The noise reaches its peak volume as the soldiers prepare to depart. The vibrations of their iron-heavy footsteps make the petals fall from the rose bushes.

But the revulsion between Imberal and Castille is mutual. Any hope of a cordial farewell is shattered by the Infante's violent reaction to the Princess's forgiving kiss of Vidal: "Con rudo gesto y altaneras voces se interpone el INFANTE DE CASTILLA. Tiembla todo su cuerpo con un son de hierro, y tiene las dos manos apretadas sobre el puño del estoque, como si abrazase una cruz."[48] The Princess considers his reaction barbaric. He, in turn, calls everything in her garden sinful and pagan. She deems him "un guerrero . . . bárbaro y desnudo/ [que] no supiese

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48. Ibid., p. 145.

más música/ que el golpe de la maza en el escudo."[49] Miraculously, once the soldiers leave, the smell of roses and the song of the nightingale are reborn in Imberal. The monster has been banished and, once again, a special world remains intact.

A monster also threatens to disrupt the world of Valle-Inclán's Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón.[50] However, in this play the greater threat is the playwright's interjection of contemporary anachronistic elements into a traditional fairy tale. La cabeza del dragón follows the traditional fairy tale structure with plot strands taken from classic sources. Its pattern "proceeds from a situation of challenge, disorder, or conflict, to one of resolution or restoration of order."[51] Its plot comes from various tales of the Brothers Grimm and its names and characters are taken, in part, from Cervantes.[52]

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49. Ibid., p. 147.

50. Valle-Inclán, "Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón," Tablado de marionetas para educacion de principes (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1970.

51. Horst S. Daemmrich, "The Infernal Fairy Tale: Inversion of Archetypal Motifs in Modern European Literature, Mosaic 5 (1972):86.

52. For an extensive account of these sources, see E. Susana Speratti-Piñero, "La farsa de la cabeza del dragón, pre-esperpento" in Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of His Life and Works, ed. Anthony N. Zahareas (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 374-85.

As the play opens, Prince Verdemar and his brothers are playing handball in the palace courtyard. The ball, seemingly of its own accord, bounces into a tower window where a mischievous sprite is imprisoned. The princes promise the sprite its freedom for the return of the ball. Only Prince Verdemar intends to keep his promise and steals the tower key from his mother to fulfill it. The king is enraged at the theft and Prince Verdemar flees with only a sword before his brothers can denounce him. Verdemar enters the kingdom of King Micomicón and learns from the Princess's departing Fool that she is to be devoured by a dragon. Determined to save her, Verdemar presents himself as a new Fool and accompanies her to the meeting ground. The sprite reappears and provides Verdemar with a diamond sword, with which he slays the dragon. Espandián, a bully and pledged enemy of Verdemar, cuts off the dragon's head and claims the Princess's hand. Verdemar proves his worth by revealing the dragon's tongue, which he had removed, and disclosing his true identity. The play ends with a banquet attended by both royal families and the betrothal of Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor.

Not evident in this plot summary are the anachronisms which Valle-Inclán intrudes throughout the entire proceedings. In the first stage direction, the playwright introduces us to an ivy-covered multi-turreted

castle which he likens to one from the adventures of Orlando. He describes it as a castle of children's dreams made of either diamonds, bronze, or mist. Then, unexpectedly, he deflates this remote dream world with the more modern comment, "todavía no ha sido restaurado por los arquitectos del Rey. ¡Alabemos a Dios!"[53] The disruption has begun and we realize that, while the plot and setting may belong to the distant past, there is, unlike in Brandesco and Imberal, a very contemporary mentality at work here.

We discover that the land of King Mangucián is a constitutional monarchy. The power is in the hands of the empty-headed Prime Minister whose speeches are dutifully printed and praised by the newspapers. He looks forward to issuing a postage stamp commemorating the capture of the sprite. When the happy occasion is ruined by the escape of the creature and the theft of the key is discovered, the Queens cries, "¡Hay traidores en el palacio! !Estamos como en Rusia!" The King replies, "¡Peor que en Rusia, porque aquí no hay Policía!"[54] The powerful monarch vows to eat the heart of the thief, raw and unsalted. Later, in the final banquet, he is shown as a mere blusterer when he is

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53. Valle-Inclán, Cabeza del dragón, p. 89.

54. Ibid., p. 98.

unable to digest the raw and unsalted heart of a sheep. The sprite explains that dogs, lions, tigers, wolves, cats, and kings of old could eat this dish because of the great amount of hydrochloric acid in their stomachs. But evolution has halted this royal ability. As kings have lost their prerogatives, they have lost their powers of digestion. "Los Reyes constitucionales sólo pueden ser vegetarianos."[55]

The kingdom of King Micomicón also has its share of anachronisms. The blind man who sells newspapers in front of the palace is about to sail to the Indies. The kingdom is fast becoming depopulated by a mass exodus. Only the old and useless will remain, but not for long--a new law orders them to be run over by automobiles. The Fool, unable to entertain a Princess soon to be delivered to a dragon, is also setting forth to the Indies--on a lecture tour. Lecture tours are not the only intellectual pursuits ridiculed in La cabeza del dragón. As Espandián drags the dragon's head to Micomicón, he complains, "Es pesada como una tesis doctoral."[56]

The military also comes under attack in the person of the national hero, General Fierabrás. This doddering,

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55. Ibid., p. 144.

56. Ibid., p. 133.

paralytic old man with a nose that runs like a gargoyle has no record of combat. He is called "Fierabrás" by his wife because of his violent behavior at home. The only fighting he has done has been against phyloxera.

Micomicón's court is peopled with petty nobles: a Master of Ceremonies concerned more with the etiquette of delivering the Princess to the dragon than the victim's feelings, and a Duchess more concerned with the impropriety of her funereal garb than happy that the Princess has been saved.

Valle-Inclán uses certain techniques that will become more prominent in later plays. Satire of contemporary Spanish institutions will become more bitter, characterizations will become less human and more grotesque; but for the time being the teasing is gentle and good-natured. The playwright's disrupting anachronisms do not really affect Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor. Their kingdom may be a constitutional monarchy, but they will marry and, undoubtedly, live happily ever after in it.

Verdemar and Blanca Flor triumph in spite of the intrusion into their dream world. Mari-Justina, the heroine of Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey, is not so fortunate. Her dreams are shattered when reality finally penetrates and destroys the world of her imagination.

It is in this play that the reality which

Valle-Inclán kept from Tragedia de ensueño, Comedia de ensueño, El marqués de Bradomín, Cuento de abril, and La cabeza del dragón finally disrupts and shatters the lyrical dream world. The extent of the shattered dreams and penetration of reality can best be seen by comparing La enamorada del rey to Valle-Inclán's earlier Voces de gesta. Both plays deal with the consequences of a young girl's love for her king. Both plays have a pattern of love, blindness, and devotion. In La enamorada del rey Mari-Justina, temporarily blinded by the sun, gets an untrue, idealized glimpse of the king. She devotes herself to him and suffers the pangs of unrequited love. She finally beholds him as he is--a feeble, hunchbacked, large nosed, doddering old man--and loses all her illusions. In Voces de gesta Ginebra has no love for her fugitive king until she sees him in his pitiful state. She then devotes herself to him, is blinded by an enemy soldier while trying to protect him, and spends the next twenty years loyal to him.

The opening of Voces de gesta, set in nineteenth-century Navarre, finds the heroine in gentle disagreement with Tibaldo, her grandfather. Unlike our previous heroines, steeped in remote traditions, she teases the old man about his constant dwelling on the past: "¡Siempre a mirar y a querer cegar/ en aquel sol de

los días distantes!"[57] Whole-heartedly on the side of youth, she reminds him that there would be no spun wool without first combing, no gathered wheat without first sowing, no bread without first grinding the wheat. She sees the royal line as degenerated: "¡De los Reyes viejos se acabó la raza! . . . ¡Del Rey Carlo Magno de barba florida,/ del otro Rey Carlos de barba bellida/ se acabó la raza!"[58] Ginebra is wooed by the shepherd Oliveros, but refuses to marry him while the Carlist wars are still being waged. Carlino himself then appears and wins the devotion of the young couple. Oliveros decides to join him in battle. Ginebra promises not to reveal the king's whereabouts. Enemy soldiers approach. Their captain, enraged at her denials, rapes and blinds her.

Act II takes place ten years later. Ginebra has been traveling throughout the countryside in search of Carlino with her son Garín, born of her violation ten years before. The local inhabitants and Ginebra share stories of their griefs and suffering during this long war. Enemy soldiers arrive and, with them, the same cruel captain. He drinks heavily and attempts to have Ginebra once more.

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57. Valle-Inclán, "Voces de gesta," Voces de gesta/Cuento de abril (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1960), p. 19.

58. Ibid., p. 22.

Garín fights with him, but the soldier overpowers and kills him. Ginebra rages at the captain and reveals that he is father of the boy. While the drunken man is stunned by the horror of his act, she strangles him. A young woman helps her behead him. She puts the head in her apron as an offering for Carlino and, once more, travels in search of her king.

Act III is set another ten years later. The Carlist cause is still unsucessful. A group of shepherds and soldiers, including Oliveros lament the war, "guerra negra y sin piedad."[59] Ginebra and Oliveros are reunited, two sufferers old before their time because of Carlino. Oliveros has lost all hope in the fight he is sure will continue until there are no more young shepherds to be sacrificed and the king dies. A badly wounded Carlino enters and Ginebra presents him with the head. Ginebra has accomplished her goal of the last twenty years. She has been reunited with her king and is still devoted to him. As she declares her sovereign's greatness, an enemy arrow strikes and kills Oliveros.

As the old woman of Tragedia de ensueño, Ginebra has a tragic destiny that must be played out to its pitiful conclusion. Strikingly, Carlino seems to be aware of this

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59. Ibid., p. 71.

as his voice is heard in prayer before his first appearance. He asks comfort for the blind girl who doubts: "¡Señor, a esta ciega que duda,/ guarda tu ayuda,/ y hazla ser, cuando agoniza/ en su lecho de ceniza,/ como una espada desnuda!"[60] In spite of his prayer, Ginebra suffers greatly. But cruelty is so rampant that the ememy captain has no recollection of having blinded her. Shocked, she asks, "¡Es tan larga y tan roja la historia/ de tu puñal y de tu lanza!"[61]

Just as in Tragedia de ensueño, Valle-Inclán is careful to support Ginebra's and, indeed, all the shepherds' acceptance of destiny--for all are the protagonists of this play. They suffer and bewail their suffering, they realize that their cause is lost, but they are never tempted to abandon their king. It is this lack of inner struggle and resistance to destiny, plus the failure of an attempt to understand why her fate is so malignant that prompts J. L. Brooks to question Ginebra's stature as a truly tragic figure and the play itself as a true tragedy.[62] Ramón J.

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60. Ibid., p. 34.

61. Ibid., p. 60.

62. J. L. Brooks, "Los dramas de Valle-Inclán," Estudios dedicados a D. Ramón Menéndez Pidal, vol. 7. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1957), p. 195.

Sender likewise questions Voces de gesta as a tragedy because of the unworthiness of its cause: "¿Puede concebirse a Prometeo sometido al servicio de don Carlos de Borbón?"[63] Verity Smith dismisses the entire endeavor as a failure: "The symbolism is obvious, the verse grandiloquent, and the characters hollow. It is, in short, a bad play."[64]

But Valle-Inclán had an important tragedy in mind when he wrote Voces de gesta. He told the journalist Luis Antón del Olmet, "Será un libro de leyendas de tradiciones, a la manera de Cuento de abril; pero más fuerte, más importante. Recogeré la voz de todo un pueblo. Solo son grandes los libros que recogen voces ámplias, plebeyas. La Iliada, los dramas de Shakespeare..."[65] For the sake of authenticity, the playwright travelled to Navarre, interviewed old Carlists, studied archives and visited the major battle sights.[66]

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63. Ramón J. Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad de la tragedia (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1965), p. 93.

64. Verity Smith, Ramón del Valle-Inclán (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1973), p. 85.

65. Melchor Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura de Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, S.A., 1966), pp. 144-45.

66. Albert H. LeMay, "The Verse Plays of Ramón del Valle-Inclán: A Poetic Vision" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971), p. 142.

For the shepherds of Navarre, Carlism is the only choice. Carlino himself is no abstraction to them. For twenty years they have known him as he humbly shared their meagre food, lodgings, and sufferings. The enemy, on other hand, is described in horrid terms: "hombres de ojos feroces,/ de manos dominantes y finas como garras,/ de levantado gesto y levantadas voces,/ y de corvo perfil como sus cimitarras."[67] They even lose human qualities as they are identified merely in terms of attributes: "¡Las lanzas lunadas! ¡Las negras bisarmas"![68] Given the alternatives, the shepherds of Navarre have little choice but to follow the Carlist pretender. The frequent lamentations, which Ms. Smith finds grandiloquent, are necessary as constant reminders of the evil and cruelty of the oppressors.

The detractors of this play (on the basis of its validity as a true tragedy), J. L. Brooks and Ramón J. Sender, have taken Lear, Othello, and Oedipus as models. If one must look for classic counterparts, Euripides' The Trojan Women would be a more fitting example. Voces de gesta is, like its antecedent, a tragedy of suffering rather than of action. Both plays have a collective protagonist

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67. Valle-Inclán, Voces de gesta, p. 38.

68. Ibid., p. 37.

(the Trojan woman, the shepherds) with one major figure singled out as representative of the group (Hecuba, Ginebra). There is no attempt in either play to indivualize the characters greatly. They share the same destiny. They will suffer although their only crime is being Trojans, or being loyal to Carlino. Both plays are a series of lamentations with no real resolution. The suffering will continue as the hostilities go on. In both plays there is no justice and the most innocent seem to suffer the greatest.

In spite of the injustice and suffering in Voces de gesta and in spite of all their lamentations, the shepherds never waver in their devotion to Carlino. They adhere to a tradition that will never die. Tibaldo, Ginebra's grandfather, awaits the day when he can sound his trumpet in celebration of the restoration of the old royal line. Before her meeting with Carlino, as described above, Ginebra believes that the royal blood has grown weak. Tibaldo disagrees, stating the popular belief in the lasting heritage of the kings of old:

> ¡La sangre de Reyes no muere, rapaza!
> No hay nadie que fije término a un reinado,
> el buen Rey, gobierna aun siendo enterrado;
> y en vano la muerte pasa su cuchilla,
> pudriendo en la huesa se manda en Castilla.
> Bajo nuestro roble, estando en conciertos,

se oyeron las voces de los Reyes muertos.[69]

The play ends before the venerable oak tree, identified with the continuity of the region´s heritage. Carlino orders the severed head of the enemy captain to be buried there as an offering. He speaks of the tree´s sacred glory and bounty. Ginebra, likens the king to the holy oak: "¡Tú eres también gloria del dia,/ cada alborada renaciente!/ ¡Tu armiño, nieve en serranía/ y el sol corona de tu frente!"[70]

Ginebra´s love of and belief in Carlino, despite all her suffering and the reality that he will never be restored to the throne, is unshaken. As in all the plays studied thus far, there has been no disruption strong enough to shatter the unreal world of its inhabitants. Like the old grandmother, the Captain of thieves, Concha, the Princess of Imberal, Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor, Ginebra´s faith remains unbroken. The first successful disruption takes place in Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey.

Mari-Justina, the heroine of La enamorada del rey, who so loves her King, is an eighteenth-century reincarnation of Don Quijote. The opening of the play is set in a roadside inn in La Mancha. There Mari-Justina

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69. Ibid., p. 22.

70. Ibid., pp. 92-93.

lives with her innkeeper grandmother and steeps herself in romantic tales. The old woman, like the housekeeper and niece of Alonso Quijano in Don Quijote, wants to burn all such romances. Mari-Justina, however, finds an ally in the person of Maese Lotario, a puppeteer like Maese Pedro of Cervantes´ work. Don Facundo, one of the king´s ministers, arrives and summons Lotario to perform for the monarch. He leaves, carrying a letter from the young girl to the king, joined by the caballero de Seingalt, Casanova.

In court, Altisidora, a lady-in-waiting, and Don Facundo discover Mari-Justina´s letter. When the king learns of it he is furious at being mocked, since he believes it impossible to be loved by a young girl. He orders the letter read, but the reading is interrupted by the sudden entrance of a lady in black. Lotario had written unflattering verses about her and then killed her brother in a duel when he tried to defend her honor. The king imprisons the puppeteer and sets off for the inn to see Mari-Justina for himself.

At the inn, the king is touched by the lovesick appearance of the young woman, though he still cannot understand how he can be the object of such a simple young girl´s affection. Lotario, escaped from prison, arrives and formally presents the King to Mari-Justina and shatters her

dream world. She laments, "¡La triste luz de la razon me llega!"[71] This sad light of reason is exactly what the blind grandmother, Captain of the thieves, Concha de Brandesco, the Princess of Imberal, Prince Verdemar, Princess Blanca Flor, and Ginebra have successfully avoided. Suffering at various extremes, they have never undergone Mari-Justina´s "pena de perder mi sueño."[72]

Ginebra never loses her faith in Carlino. To her, even in weakness and defeat, he is the rightful King worthy of her total devotion. Mari-Justina´s king is a hunch backed, bow-legged, big nosed old man. Crooked and feeble, "parece que la corona/ va a entrarle de corbatín."[73] Perhaps if the king had been a vain tyrant, Mari-Justina could have found solace in a romantic notion of wasting away because of the indifference of a cruel monarch. But this king is a simple, likeable ruler, fully aware of his physical shortcomings. His first reaction to the news of the young girl´s plight is anger at being ridiculed. Then he doubts her sanity: "¡Es loca esa rapaza!/ ¿Una nina tan loca es posible que exista?/ ¿O está mal del cerebro,

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71. Valle-Inclán, "Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey,"Tablado de marionetas para educación de príncipes (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1970), p. 76.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., p. 44.

o está mal de la vista?/ ¿Esa desventurada dónde tiene su nido?"[74] He cannot accept the explanation that the history of love is filled with like improbabilities: "¿Os parece que pueda disparar una flecha/ del arco de Cupido, con mi facha y mi fecha?"[75]

To dispell this nonsense, he questions one of the ladies-in-waiting, listing all his ailments, in the hope that she will agree that young girls cannot love in the manner of Mari-Justina. However, she is a flatterer like the rest of his court:

ALTISIDORA
Yo, cuando os veo, tengo palpitaciones.
EL REY
¡Tambien serias capaz de amarme!
ALTISIDORA
¡Locamante!
EL REY
¿Tu no ves mis arrugas?
ALTISIDORA
¡Nada absolutamente!
EL REY
¡Pero si apenas puedo sostener los calzones!
ALTISIDORA
¡Amor es mas que todas esas complicaciones!
EL REY
¡Si llevo tres almillas!
ALTISIDORA
¡Eso me vuelve loca!
EL REY
¡En invierno son siete!
ALTISIDORA
¡La ropa siempre es poca!

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74. Ibid., p. 46.

75. Ibid.

EL REY
¡Si de noche no duermo!
ALTISIDORA
¡Yo tambien me desvelo!
EL REY
¡Si toso!
ALTISIDORA
Os dare para la tos un caramelo.
EL REY
Es la tos de los anos.
ALTISIDORA
Os dare malvavisco.
EL REY
¡Si soy en lo celoso peor que un berberisco!
ALTISIDORA
¡Porque amor os enciende!
EL REY
Porque soy maniatico.
¡Y ademas tengo reuma!
ALTISIDORA
Os amare reumatico.
EL REY
¿Tu no ves en mis sienes la pata de perdiz?
ALTISIDORA
¡Pero os agracia como bizarra cicatriz!
EL REY
Retirate, hija mia. El demonio lo anasca por veces.[76]

At the play's end, Mari-Justina is left with her disillusions. She has refused the king's offer of Don Facundo, requesting that he be given to Lotario's wronged Doña Violenta instead. The king happily matches them, planning to send them a hundred leagues from the palace with Don Bartolo for good measure. He then names Lotario as poet-counselor in their stead. Concha and the Princess of Imberal were allowed to remain in their dream worlds after

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76. Ibid., pp. 47-49.

the departure of forces that threatened their illusions. Mari-Justina has no such consolation.

Some critics have seen Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey as little more than a throwback to Valle-Inclán´s earlier works. Melchor Fernández Almagro questions the playwright´s attribution "farsa italiana" because the play is really a reiteration of previously used efects.[77] Sumner Greenfield also sees the play as closer to Valle-Inclán´s pre-war works than works of 1920 in its "affectionate irony and gentle sadness that everywhere pervades its general frivolity."[78]

These comments are, of course, true to a certain extent. There are similarities between La enamorada del rey and the previous plays. The setting, like its antecedents, is a literary pastiche of, in this case, the eighteenth-century Spanish court, literature of the Golden Age--particularly Don Quijote--and the Italian commedia.[79] Mari-Justina is as much a blue maiden of Rubén Darío as she is a later Don Quijote. This modernist

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77. Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura, p. 183.

78. Greenfield, "Literature and Landscape in La enamorada del rey" in Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of His Life and Works, ed. Anthony N. Zahareas (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1968), p. 562.

79. González-López, Arte dramático, p. 132.

influence can be seen in Sumner Greenfield´s interpretation: "The message of the farce, then, is the ´old´ theme of ´98, nostalgically urging the revitalization of the quixotic ideal as a means of national renovation, and its source, in the final analysis, is literature, the literature of other members of the Generation."[80] Antonio Risco sees Valle-Inclán´s use of Lotario as a defense of his own art which ran contrary to Spanish realism.[81]

Besides the composite setting, La enamorada del rey contains features present in the the earlier works: a dying "lovesick" maiden, a sympathetic poet, a satiric look at the royal court, and academic pedantry. The latter two elements are seen in the persons of the king´s minister Don Facundo, called Don Furribundo when agitated, and the royal chaplain Don Bartolo. Don Facundo fervently urges Don Bartolo to sponsor him for membership to the Spanish Academy on the basis of his scholarly work in which he counted the number of belches emitted by Sancho Panza in Don Quijote. Don Bartolo, however, is committed to one Don Santos who has done superior work counting the times the word "venta" appears in the same novel. Don Bartolo´s literary judgement

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80. Greenfield, "Literature and Landscape," p. 554.

81. Antonio Risco, La estética de Valle-Inclán en los esperpentos y en "El ruedo ibérico" (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1975), p. 90.

is questionable because it is suspected that he cannot read. Both scholars, however, are united in their scorn of Lotario's "contaminated" verse forms--crippled alexandrines and French novelties. They hold firm even when reminded by the poet that his verses are in the mode of El Cid. El Cid is also evoked by the melodramatic woman in black, a modern Jimena appropriately named Violante.

But while La enamorada del rey shares the complicated settings of El marqués de Bradomín, Cuento de abril, and Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón, the search for an ideal of Comedia de ensueño, the hopeless love of El marqués de Bradomín, the satire of La cabeza del dragón, and the "blind" devotion of Tragedia de ensueño and Voces de gesta, this later work cannot be seen as a mere continuation of their plots, themes, and settings.

There is a significant change here. The play marks the end of ideals. Mari-Justina is the first character to lose her dream world. Her dreams are shattered by the truth--a truth that she cannot banish as Concha, or see depart as the Princess of Imberal. Unlike the blind old grandmother and Ginebra, she cannot play out a destiny because that opportunity is taken from her when she meets the king face-to-face. After this meeting, there is no ideal to search for, like the Captain of thieves. There is not even a a middle ground like the constitutional monarchy

of Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor.

Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey marks the last time we will come across an innocent young girl in a garden, palace, or any world of dreams. It is the last time the worst crimes of monarchs will be weakness, old age, and infirmity. It is the last time satire will be good-humored. In future plays, gentle irony will become bitter satire, amusingly incongruous settings and characters will become grotesque, and there will be few characters with the ideals to even wish for an artificial world of dreams. The ugly reality which Valle-Inclán avoided, controlled, banished, or tempered in his earlier plays has finally disrupted the dream world and there will be no turning back. La enamorada del rey is not a continuation of past dramatic elements, it is a distinct break with the past. "La gran ilusión de la vida se convierte en la gran desilusión . . . ."[82]

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82. González López, Arte dramático, p. 134.

CHAPTER III

DEHUMANIZATION

Disruption, however, is not the only technique Valle-Inclán uses in 1920. In Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, Valle-Inclán breaks from the past, employing the method of dehumanization as he systematically deforms the characters of this farce.

While a certain stylization of the human figure is not unknown in his earlier plays, the stylization is, as Sumner Greenfield describes, employed for picturesque or humorous values. In La Reina Castiza, the physical deformation of the characters is used with a didactic intent to reveal their inner ugliness.[1] General Fierabrás of La cabeza del dragón, for instance, is a comic character although described as a gargoyle with a runny nose. The court of Queen Isabel II receives no such light treatment.

The extent of the dehumanization practiced in La Reina Castiza can better be appreciated if we compare it to an earlier farce, La Marquesa Rosalinda, published in 1913.

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1. Greenfield, Anatomía, p. 112.

Both plays are called farces by their playwright. Both farces are written in verse. Both take place in an elaborate court and deal with adultery between a noblewoman and a lover of inferior station. Both women have enraged husbands and grown daughters. Both plays feature mock fights of honor. Finally, Valle-Inclán subtitles La Marquesa Rosalinda a "farsa sentimental y grotesca," signaling a use of the grotesque which will become the most prominent feature of La Reina Castiza.

La Marquesa Rosalinda is set in eighteenth-century Aranjuez in a palace garden likened to Versailles. The garden features flora and fauna now quite familiar to us: myrtle, roses, a peacock, a swan, a nightingale. Indeed, the Marquesa´s garden boasts of a small animal orchestra as the cricket and toad join the nightingale in providing musical accompaniment. Fountains, pagan statues, a lake, and a labyrinth, convenient for romantic intrigues and spying on such trysts, complete the setting.

Into this garden bursts a troupe of commedia dell´ arte players--Arlequín, Colombina, Pierrot, and Polichinela--who secure permission to perform for the Marqués, who has just bid his daughter, Doña Estrella, farewell. The unhappy girl is being sent away from the Queen´s page, whom she loves, to a convent school because, it is suggested, a daughter of marriageable age is an

embarrassment to the Marquesa. Rosalinda meets Arlequín when he produces a shoe she has conveniently lost in the garden. He woos her and the Marquesa, proud that her husband is unlike the absurd spouses of the Spanish theatre, responds to his charms. The Marqués, however, turns Castillian and hires ruffians to attack Arlequín. Rosalinda gives her jewels to her lover and plans to run off with him. Her duenna, an admirer of the works of don Pedro Calderón, informs the Marqués who sends Rosalinda to a convent and has Arlequín arrested for bewitching his wife. At the play's end, a chastened Rosalinda bids farewell to her lover, now released from prison, and longs to return to the peaceful convent life. They are interrupted by Pierrot who demands satisfaction from Arlequín, who has dishonored Colombina. They fight a duel with prop swords. Rosalinda and Arlequín part. The troupe leaves, with its own jealousies and infidelities unresolved.

La Marquesa Rosalinda evokes the memory of earlier works, especially El marqués de Bradomín and Cuento de abril. Rosalinda and Bradomín's Concha are both unfaithful noblewomen seen in rarefied surroundings at a time when they are trying to recapture their youth by means of a love affair--a love affair which is doomed because of the unrealistic demands and hopes the women have pinned on it and because of the intervention of their husbands. Both

women play self-conscious farewell scenes and find varying degrees of pleasure in their sacrifices.

Concha has summoned the love of her youth for a final reunion and sends him away when the illness of her husband demands a romantic sacrifice. Rosalinda seeks a return to youth through a dashing lover. She prides herself on her husband´s and her own disdain for Spanish convention. Her daughter, a painful reminder of the passage of years, safely away, Rosalinda is ripe for Arlequín´s advances. She has only caught a glimpse of him: "Sólo sé el color/ de sus ojos, arcos con flechas de amor."[2] But she yearns for this younger lover: "¡Amor es rapaz,/ y al fruto maduro prefiere el agraz!"[3] Once committed to this affair, she is prepared to go to any lengths to enhance its fantasy, evoking figures of antique times as models. She likens herself to a Helen of Troy who must be carried off by her lover. When Amaranta points out the impracticality of such action (not the least of which being Arlequín´s affair with Colombina), Rosalinda chides, "No te pongas prosaica."[4] She identifies with the Israelites crossing

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2. Valle-Inclán, La Marquesa Rosalinda (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1961), p. 31.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 68.

the desert and, later, when she sees that her husband is not the compliant spouse she assumed, she solemnly tells Arlequín that she has been crying like a Magdalen.

Temporarily released from the convent to attend her daughter's wedding, Rosalinda is now the penitent who longs to return to the peace of the cloistered life. Before, the garden was her retreat for self-indulgent sorrow: "¡Para llorar penas, que lindo retiro!"[5] Now the convent with its swallows, doves, roses, and nightingales is her preferred locale. For Concha, a garden was more poetic than a convent. Rosalinda finds her poetry in the cloistered life:

> ¡Qué santa vida la vida aquella!
> Solo suspiro por el convento
> con sus rosales y sus campanas.
> ¡El coro en blando recogimiento
> y las fugaces misas tempranas!
> Y las azules y vespertinas
> horas del huerto, lleno de aromas.
> ¡Cuando revuelan las golondrinas!
> ¡Cuando se guardan nuestras palomas!
> Busco la ingenua paz del sendero
> místico. ¡El aria de sus loores
> sobre una rosa dice un jilguero,
> y hacen la glosa los ruiseñores![6]

Rosalinda's garden is the setting of the clash of two cultures--Paganism and Castillian morality. Aranjuez offers the Pagan trappings of Imberal and a noblewoman, like the Princess of Cuento de abril, who accepts love from

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5. Ibid., p. 29.

6. Ibid., p. 128.

someone below her station. But the Paganism of Aranjuez is all pretense. The statues have strategically placed fig leaves and eventually become objects of ridicule. Arlequín wins a temporary reprieve from the ruffians hired by the Marqués when they cannot tell whether the appointed place of ambush is a monument to Thalia or Diana. Cursing mythology, they plan to return the next day.

Imberal was a genuine "corte de amor." Aranjuez pretends to be Versailles, but is still very much in Spain. Rosalinda finds that fact the only explanation for her husband's unwonted behavior:

> ¡No sé qué mal de ojo le hicieron en España!
> ¡Es Castilla que aceda las uvas del champaña!
> ¡Son los autos de fe que hace la Inquisición!
> ¡Y las comedias de don Pedro Calderón![7]

Arlequín is much more sweeping in his accusations:

> Yo mejor lo atribuyo al cambio de manjares:
> ¡La sobreasada de las islas Baleares!
> ¡El marisco gallego, que es tanto deleite!
> ¡Y ese queso manchego tan metido en aceite!
> ¡Y el de Burgos! ¡Y aquel vino rancio y espeso
> que reclama la boca tras de morder el queso!
> ¡Y el jamón y los embutidos de los charros!
> ¡Salamanca, con sus doctores y sus guarros!
> ¡Y Córdoba y Navarra! ¡Y Lugo y Candelario!
> ¡Y el pimentón, que en Francia es algo extraordinario!
> ¡Y el sol![8]

The Princess of Imberal was a free spirit.

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7. Ibid., p. 94.

8. Ibid.

Rosalinda, despite her claims of similar freedom, is very Christian. Underneath her pretense, she is uncomfortable with Arlequín´s Pagan imagery and warns him that he is in the land of the Inquisition. While she condemns her husband´s new-found honor, she requests the Mother Superior´s prayer against toothaches.

As Rosalinda and the Princess of Imberal differ, so do the men who profess love to them. Vidal and Arlequín are both lower in station than their ladies, both performers, and both poets. But Vidal fervently worships his mistress and wins her love through the rules of the chivalric code. Arlequín is a jaded suitor, weary of love. He skillfully woos Rosalinda, but assures the jealous Colombina that it is a plot to gain money for the troupe. In his dealings both with Rosalinda and Colombina there is, unlike Vidal, a definite detachment. Colombina cries, "¡Tu ironia me vuelve loca!"[9] and, later, "¡Tanto cinismo me asesina!"[10] When Colombina dramatically swears to drown herself, Arlequín advises her to wait because "un soponcio no tiene objeto/ cuando no hay gente."[11] Vidal unquestioningly accepts every action of his mistress. When Rosalinda makes her

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9. Ibid. p. 45.

10. Ibid. p. 47.

11. Ibid., p. 137.

final dramatic exit, Arlequín marvels: "¡Lindo gesto!/ !No vuelve la cabeza! ¡Es que no llora!"[12]

Arlequín not only is ironic and cynical, but is cynically and ironically presented by the playwright. At the end of Act I, the clown addresses the moon, evoking memories of younger, happier days. But the sentimental figure of the lover is undermined by grotesque elements. Paul Ilie points out that the traditional poetic images Arlequín uses are consistantly deflated.[13] For example:

> ¡Oh, luna de poetas y de orates,
> por tu estela argentina
> mi alma peregrina
> con un ansia ideal de disparates![14]

The moon of poets and orators fills his pilgrim's heart with an anxious ideal of--absurdities. Or:

> ¿Quién el poder a descubrir acierta
> de tu cara de plata,
> de tus ojos de muerta
> y de tu nariz chata?[15]

The description of the moon deteriorates from a face of silver, to eyes of death to--a flat nose. The speech ends with:

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12. Ibid., p. 136.

13. Paul Ilie, "The Grotesque in Valle-Inclán; A Monograph" in Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of His Life and Works, ed. Anthony N. Zahareas (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 506-7.

14. Valle-Inclán, La Marquesa Rosalinda, p. 51.

15. Ibid.

¡Hilandera divina de sonetos!
El barro de mi alma se aureola
con tu luz enigmática,
y tu saluda con la cabriola
de una bruja sabática:
Luna que de soñar guardas las huellas,
cabalística luna de marfil
tu escribes en lo azul moviendo estrellas:
¡Nihil![16]

Thus the moon, a divine spinner of sonnets with its enigmatic light is saluted with a leap from a witches' sabbath by a man with a soul of clay. What sign does this ivory cabalistic moon give as it writes across the sky in stars: "¡Nihil!" What response does the moon make to this soliloquy? It winks at the clown like a duenna seducing a page:

La luna, enmascarada en el follaje,
saca un ojo mirando al comediante,
como la dueña que seduce al paje
y deja ver un cuarto de semblante.[17]

The moon is not the only vehicle through which sentimental moments are deflated. Arlequín and Rosalinda have scarcely parted, Arlequín having sworn to return tomorrow, when Colombina rushes in and attacks him with "¡Ingrato! ¡Falso! ¡Engañador!"[18] The lovers' final parting is interrupted by Pierrot demanding satisfaction for his wronged honor. Pierrot and Arlequín duel, but their weapons are prop theatrical swords. The forthcoming wedding

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16. Ibid., p. 52.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 45.

of Doña Estrella and the Page is preceded by a lengthy haggling over her dowry.

This juxtaposition of romantic and rude elements is signalled in Valle-Inclán's subtitle for La Marquesa Rosalinda: "farsa sentimental y grotesca." The interplay between the sentimental and grotesque has been identified on many levels. John Lyon separates the sentimental and grotesque in terms of main plot and subplot, the Colombina-Pierrot-Arlequín being a "grotesque counterpoint to the Rosalinda-Arlequín relationship."[19] Emilio González López adds to this the contrast between the setting and theme--the refined, rococo, aristocratic garden and the false human values depicted therein.[20] Paul Ilie also identifies the grotesque nature of La Marquesa Rosalinda as "setting the very human relationships among the characters against the backdrop of pastiche romanticism."[21] The incongruity, therefore, of the Marquesa-Marqués-Arlequin triangle, echoed by an inferior Colombina-Pierrot-Arlequín triangle, set in a garden in Aranjuez that imitates Versailles provides the grotesque element in this sentimental and grotesque farce.

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19. John Lyon, Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 72.

20. González López, Arte dramático, p. 123.

21. Ilie, "The Grotesque," p. 505.

While it is true that the players are clearly identified with the grotesque as Valle-Inclán systematically dehumanizes them, grotesque elements are thoroughly distributed in La Marquesa Rosalinda. Paul Ilie recognizes three kinds of dehumanization employed by Valle-Inclán in his other works:

> The first is the use that is made of masks and clowns. . . . The second is the use of wax and porcelain dolls: still-form figures designed to accentuate a pose or to highlight an isolated moment in space. The third type of characterization consists of marionettes and automatons, both of which emphasize the animated features of the human body without conceding to the latter any human dignity.[22]

With these methods of dehumanization in mind, we can see how thoroughly Valle-Inclán integrates the grotesque in La Marquesa Rosalinda. The players incorporate most of these elements with their mask-like makeup, doll-like associations, and unrealistic movements. Colombina is first described as a powdered, vain, empty doll. Furious at Arlequín for flirting with Rosalinda, she struts off like a crooked ugly old woman. Later, she walks with small trot-like steps, accompanied by Polichinela who leaps grotesquely. This hunchbacked player is described as jocund and grotesque and as an old Silenus when he dances with the court ladies.

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22. Ibid., p. 519.

Pierrot, his face painted with lime, is a much more somber figure, associated with death. Valle-Inclán describes the wronged husband: "Trágico, a fuer de ser grotesco,/ sale Pierrot haciendo zumba./ En su rostro carnavalesco/ hay una mueca de ultratumba."[23] When he challenges Arlequín to a duel, his voice is likened to a bassoon in a funeral.

Arlequín's movements are pirouettes. He mocks the hired assasins with a grotesque pirouette, tips his hat and pirouettes at the ladies-in-waiting after he is released from prison, and likewise salutes Rosalinda at their final meeting.

The minuet is the movement associated with the Page and his beloved Doña Estrella. They are idealized figures of beauty. Beautiful, too, is Rosalinda, who is described as a timid turtle dove and most often likened to a rose.

However, the noble circle of Aranjuez has its grotesque elements as well. The Marqués is a painted and powdered old man. The Priest is a hypocrite who boasts of writing illicit love letters for his former patroness. Colombina correctly describes him as a priest who does not say mass. Amaranta, Doña Estrella's duenna and companion to Rosalinda, is described as a witch and an owl.

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23. Valle-Inclán, La Marquesa Rosalinda, p. 48.

While the human beings of the play become less than human, the garden's flora and fauna take on human actions and attributes. The cricket and toad become musicians who accompany the human action. The cricket provides a violin accompaniment as Arlequín replaces Rosalinda's shoe and woos her. The toad is a flutist providing the music for Polichinela's dance with the ladies. When the unhappy Doña Estrella is being led off to the convent, the entire garden pities her. She claims the nightingale bids her farewell, the peacocks and swan sigh, the roses tearfully shed their petals, the silver fountain weeps, and the cricket plays a funeral march. These objects and creatures show more sympathy than the human figures of La Marquesa Rosalinda.

But the grotesque aspect of La Marquesa Rosalinda is still the subordinate one. A pastiche of sentimentality and beauty are the play's major attributes. Rosalinda, like Concha, for all her romantic pretenses, is smiled at--never ridiculed. The garden, with its incongruous elements, is still lovely. In his Prelude, Valle-Inclán evokes the pirouette and the pavane, Beethoven, Lohengrin, Pegasus, Banville, Versailles. Valle-Inclán stresses the stylization and unreality of the setting. Ermilo Abreu Gómez describes Valle-Inclán stopping a rehearsal of La Marquesa Rosalinda:

> Un momento, un momento, por favor. ¡Un momento! El tono no es el conveniente. No se trata de una comedia de Benavente, ni de Linares ni de Echegaray; se trata

de un juego, de una burla, de una cosa que pasa sobre una nube; nada de lo que allí se dice es cierto ni verdadero.[24]

The idea of an ephemeral world, where nothing is what it seems to be, is reinforced in the prelude where Valle-Inclán describes the story of Rosalinda as a "bella mentira," a beautiful falsehood. "Mentira" certainly applies to La farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, but there is nothing "bella" in that farce. "Grotesca" abounds; "sentimental" is completely absent. From the beginning of La Reina Castiza, Valle-Inclán signals a different tone. Instead of the graceful prelude of La Marquesa Rosalinda, we find in the terse apostillon evocations of jeering, puppets, and malicious writings of revolutionary publications:

Corte isabelina,
befa septembrina.
Farsa de muñecos,
maliciosos ecos
de los semanarios
revolucionarios
"La Gorda," "La Flaca" y "Gil Blas."[25]

In La Marquesa Rosalinda's prelude, Valle-Inclán rhymes his "bella mentira" "con el ritmo de las piruetas."[26] In La Reina Castiza the playwright is

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24. Ermilo Abreu Gómez, Sala de retratos (Mexico, 1946) pp. 283-4, cited by Greenfield, Anatomía, p. 26.

25. Valle-Inclán,"Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza," Tablado de marionetas para educación de principes (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1970), p. 147.

26. Valle-Inclán, La Marquesa Rosalinda, p. 9.

inspired by a much different rhythm as his modern muse kicks up her heels, whirls provocatively, and lifts up the back of her skirt:

> Mi musa moderna
> enarca la pierna,
> se cimbra, se ondula
> se combra, se achula
> con el ringorrango
> rítmico del tango
> y recoge la falda detrás.[27]

La Reina Castiza represents an extreme departure from the refinement of Valle-Inclán's earlier works to a world marked by knavery, egotism, lust, and vulgarity.[28] An early clue to the contrast between this world and that of La Marquesa Rosalinda is given in the very first stage direction. The familiar moon shines through the leaves and whitens the royal palace. Suddenly, reflected in the lake, the palace seems to crash into the water. The farce begins.

La Reina Castiza covers the events of one evening during the reign of Queen Isabel II, as imagined by Valle-Inclán. One of the Queen's vices, the most annoying one to her ministers, is what the Gran Preboste refers to as epistolary incontinence. She writes shocking letters to her many lovers who then blackmail the Treasury or sell these writings to the Royal Consort who commits the blackmail

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27. Valle-Inclán, La Reina Castiza, p. 147.

28. González, Arte dramático, p. 160.

himself. This time, the blackmailer is an impoverished student who demands to become the Archbishop of Manila--his only qualification being prior service as an altarboy. The Queen is too excited about an upcoming ball, arranged by her low-class companion Lucero del Alba, to care about the matter and stays only long enough to be reminded of the lover in question.

Repulsed by the Gran Preboste, the student goes to the Consort for payment in Act II. Torroba, the Consort's hunchbacked guitar player, tries unsuccessfully to lower the blackmailer's price. The scoundrel then enters the bedchamber of the Infanta and is forcibly removed by Don Tragatundas, a decrepit major general. No threats from the Gran Preboste can persuade the student to give up the original letter. The rival factions of the court argue and the Consort, in a frustrated rage, demands a divorce.

The drunken Queen returns in Act III and retires to her chamber with another lover, Don Gargarabete. The Consort arrives with the participants of Act II's squabble and demands a conjugal visitation. Mari-Morena, the Queens's lady-in-waiting, denies him entry. Torroba and Lucero fight and kill each other. The Queen awakens and orders Mari-Morena to kick the dead combatants back to life. They revive, Isabel mildly greets her once again timid Consort, and a voice from the plaza is heard

announcing the appointment of a new Archbishop of Manila.

The moral tone of the Court is set, of course, by Queen Isabel who cares only about satisfying her lascivious desires. When told by the Gran Preboste that her behavior will cause a scandal in the Cortes, her response is to dissolve that government body. When told of the demand for the Archbishopric, she admits that she doesn´t even know where Manila is. She is annoyed at the Gran Preboste for keeping her from her revels. She only stays to listen because she wonders just who this lover can be. The letters must have been written in the summer, she decides, because her writing is much more formal in winter. She is amused that she has stooped so low when she learns the blackmailer´s station. When she urges the Gran Preboste to read her a sample passage from her letter, he refuses with, "¡Quien puede retener en el meollo/ aquel volcan de vuestro diccionario!"[29] When Mari-Morena reminds the Queen that the encounter took place on a night when she was badly beaten, she merely praises the girl´s memory. Later, when Isabel returns from the ball, she delightedly tells the court that she danced with a soldier who spoke badly of the Consort, the government, and herself.

The immorality of the Queen is only the first step

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29. Valle-Inclán, La Reina Castiza, p. 172.

in Valle-Inclán's grotesque treatment. "Moral ugliness is reproduced by physical grotesqueness in which the figures of the court, initially stripped of positive moral values and human dimensions . . . are further dehumanized and transformed into a condition of stylized animality."[30]

The dehumanization of Isabel reduces her to the figure of a horse. She is likened to a mare in heat as she anticipates the ball, trembling from the flesh under her chin to her old, ungraceful haunches: "un temblor cachondo le baja del papo/ al anca fondona de yegua real."[31] When she tipsily returns, her chest is likened to a hyperbolic accordeon. Rosalinda, the earlier noble adultress involved with a man of lower station, suffers no such grotesque treatment. Her romantic pretensions, as described above, are gently chided but she is never harshly ridiculed or physically distorted.

Rosalinda's husband, while made somewhat distorted by his use of cosmetics and foolish by his sudden espousal of the Spanish code of honor, suffers none of the indignities of Isabel's Consort. The Consort is an

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30. Greenfield, "La Reina Castiza and the Esthetics of Deformation" in Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of His Life and Works, ed. Anthony N. Zahareas (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1968), p. 547.

31. Valle-Inclán, La Reina Castiza, p. 175.

effeminate, blubber-lipped, deaf, emotionally unstable, and ostrich-like gourd with the voice of a eunuch. When Torroba reads a copy of the student´s inflamatory letter, the Consort has to cup his hand to his ear to understand. He weeps in frustration as he once again demands a divorce and, at the end of Act II, becomes a bird as he puts his "beak" under his armpit like the ostrich. To his credit, he is tired of playing the fool and, outside the Queen´s badchamber, is determined to gain both entry and some authority in the court. When the Gran Preboste asks what the enraged Consort has decided to do, he replies:

> Dar un escandalo esta noche,
> porque estoy hasta la corona
> cansado de hacer el fantoche.
> ¡Abrid esa puerta![32]

However, when he learns that his wife has been awakened by the disturbances of his entourage, he quickly reverts to his cowardly behavior and begins to feel sick.

In La Marquesa Rosalinda, Doña Estrella was a figure of beauty, a butterfly sent away to a convent. La Reina Castiza´s Infanta Francisca is no such creature. At her first appearance she is described as a witch from an entremés dressed in a petticoat that gives a false impression of attractiveness. She and her maids have

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32. Ibid., p. 230.

boisterous voices, crooked hairdos, thick tongues, and "un mimo grotesco de niñas pequeñas"--the grotesque delicacy of little girls.[33] As the Infanta arrives at her mother's bedchamber with the Consort's party, she and her screaming women are described as having the same hideous masks as those found in a pack of playing cards.

The duennas of the court are flea-ridden, large beaked birds. As they gossip and play cards at the beginning of Act III, one of them squeamishly plucks a flea from beneath her garter. They are also hypocrites. While the Queen is in her bedchamber with Don Gargarabete, a duenna is shocked to see Lucero del Alba and Mari-Morena kiss. She decries the morals of today's youth and boasts that in her ten years of marriage she never kissed her husband on the lips:

> Las saludables máximas del Barón de la Andilla
> ¡que corrupcion de tiempos y que contaminados
> los jóvenes de ahora! ¡Que siglo de pecados!
> Diez años fui casada, y ese beso imprudente
> no le di a mi marido. Le besaba en la frente.[34]

In La Reina Castiza, not one character escapes Valle-Inclán's dehumanizing pen. Lucero del Alba talks like an old parrot, sings like a cricket, and has the puppet-like strut of a cock. Mari-Morena undulates like a cat.

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33. Ibid., p. 200.

34. Ibid., p. 224.

Catlike, too, is the blackmailing student. He flees "con el ¡fu! del gato."[35] When Don Tragatundas drags him to the Consort by the nape of the neck, the frightened man's eyes bulge and his tongue wags like a bell clapper.

Besides animal imagery, other members of the court are identified with broad gestures and considerable noise. The Gran Preboste wounds the air with the waving of his cane. He chokes and coughs on the smoke of his cheap cigars. His loud footsteps and the beating of his cane are heard from offstage before his Act II entrance.

Also heard, before his entrance, are the heel taps and twirling cane of Don Gargarabete:

> ¡Tac! ¡Tac! ¡Tac! DON GARGARABETE
> bajo las sombras del paseo,
> surge con fatuo taconeo
> y el bastón en un molinete.
> ¡Tac! ¡Tac! ¡Tac! DON GARGARABETE.[36]

General Tragatundas's sources of noise are his jangling spurs. His dyed moustache is like a snorting, copulating animal. His first appearance is farcical. A creaking door suddenly opens, revealing the Intendente. Suddenly Tragatundas appears in front of him:

> Rechina una puerta:
> sale repentino
> un viejo ladino

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35. Ibid., p. 160.

36. Ibid., p. 161.

que estaba detrás.
Y enfrente aparece
torciendo el mostacho,
otro mamarracho
al mismo compás.[37]

Lucero del Alba is also the subject of a sight gag as he and Ulpiano, the hunchback, lunge at each other in a parody of Kabuki theatre:

Con simultánea zapateta,
como en un drama japonés,
se derrumban el Jorobeta
y el manolo del Avapiés.![38]

As in La Marquesa Rosalinda, while the human figures become less than human, animals and objects take on elements of human behavior. Act I begins with a serenade by frogs and crickets and closes with music provided by a now familiar cricket orchestra.

The royal palace, which seemed to crash into the lake, is reflected through the garden fountains and seems to tremble as the Gran Preboste and Don Gargarabete argue about the Queen's morals in Act I.

The moon, active in La Marquesa Rosalinda as it winked like a duenna seducing a page, is far more animated in La Reina Castiza. After the Gran Preboste reminds the Queen that leeches had to be applied to her hind quarters after her beating, the moon puffs out its cheeks and, as its

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37. Ibid., pp. 195-96.

38. Ibid., p. 233.

painted doll's face reddens, literally explodes with laughter. At the end of Act I, as the crickets play, the moon performs acrobatic tricks on top of the black poplars that serve as its trampoline. The play ends with the sun bouncing on the palace roof like a ball.

It is said, but not proven, that Valle-Inclán sent a copy of La Reina Castiza to King Alfonso XIII, grandson of the dramatized Isabel II, with the following warning:

> Señor: Tengo el honor de enviaros este libro, estilización del reinado de vuestra abuela doña Isabel II, y hago votos porque el vuestro no sugiera la misma estilización a los poetas del porvenir.[39]

Whether true or not, it seems that Valle-Inclán had a definite didactic purpose in mind. In 1926, he combined La Reina Castiza with Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey and Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón to form the collection Tablado de marionetas para educación de príncipes.

While future monarchs can learn from all these plays, there are great differences between the rulers dramatically depicted. King Micomicón, an imposing gigantic figure one hundred years of age with a long beard like Charlemagne, wants to give up his kingdom and flee with his beloved daughter to spare her from the dragon. King

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39. Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura, p. 186.

Mangucián, despite his bluster, is a constitutional monarch with the appetite of a vegetarian. King Carlos of La enamorada del rey could, with his ugliness and ill health, become a truly grotesque figure. However, he is a kind man aware of his disabilities who pities the suffering girl and her devastating revelation, dismisses his pretentious, pedantic minsters, and appoints a poet as advisor for the betterment of his kingdom. Both plays end with a happier future in store. Prince Verdemar, who will be king someday, is a model of honesty, loyalty, compassion, and courage. King Carlos's kingdom will be enlightened by means of poetry.

Isabel II, on the other hand, has no redeeming features. As ugly inside as her outer appearance suggests, there is no end in sight to her unregal behavior. Blackmail and corruption will continue to follow her immoral acts and the laws of the land and freedom of the press will continue to be disregarded. Unlike the other works in Tablado de marionetas, there is no suggestion of a better monarchy. Instead, we have a court peopled by animals whose dehumanized appearances and actions startle the very sun and moon into non-celestial appearances and actions.

La Reina Castiza signals another innovation made by Valle-Incián in 1920. La enamorada del rey marked the disruption of a world of wishes and dreams. La Reina

Castiza marks the extensive use of a dehumanizing deformation of characters to reveal, harshly and unforgivingly, their inner moral bankruptcy.

In its temporal setting, La Reina Castiza is, so far, the most immediate of Valle-Inclán's plays. Instead of going to the distant past or a still remote eighteenth century, Valle-Inclán is writing of a monarch who ruled from 1833 to 1868--two years after the playwright's birth--and who was the grandmother of his ruling King. This more recent setting foreshadows the esperpentos in which the playwright deals with more contemporary issues, not camouflaged or diminished by being set further back in time.

CHAPTER IV

DEMYSTIFICATION

As Valle-Inclán turns to his native Galicia, he continues the disruption and dehumanization techniques of La enamorada del rey and La Reina Castiza in Divinas palabras. He also employs a new method of demystification as he depicts a Galicia stripped of its former beliefs and traditions.

The importance of Galicia in the life and works of Valle-Inclán cannot be underestimated. We have already seen in Chapter I how, in his poetry, he praised and preferred the rich land and the people of his native region over the barrenness of Castillian Spain.

As a Galician, Valle-Inclán was heir to a rich and varied heritage. By the eighteenth century, this northwest corner of Spain had been ruled by the Celts, Roman legions, Suebi and Asdengi Vandals, and the Visigoths. Emilio González López has found in these strains two main currents that run through Valle-Inclán's early plays. From the Celts there is the lyric vein which we have already seen in Cuento de abril, La farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey, La Marquesa Rosalinda, and La farsa infantil del la cabeza del

dragón. From the Germanic roots there is the strong and barbarous tradition we have seen in Voces de gesta and will see in Aguila de blasón, Romance de lobos and El embrujado.[1]

The duality in the plays of Valle-Inclán is not just between the lyric and barbaric, but between the Christian and heathen as well. Alfonso R. Castelao, a fellow countryman has noted:

> Era pagano por imperativo de la tierra nativa, que guarda en su seno los legados múltiples de nuestra tradición celta, y era cristiano por imperativo genetico de su ascendencia aristocrática, tal vez semita. Don Ramón era la perfecta síntesis de dos ramas étnicas entrenzadas, con estigmas de diferente naturaleza, entre el Sol y la Cruz, entre Venus y María. Aunque quisiera no podría dejar de ser gallego. Su carne era tierra gallega, sus huesos eran piedra gallega, sus venas eran ríos gallegos. Y su espíritu indefinible era el propio espíritu indefinible de Galicia.[2]

Anthony N. Zahareas and Sumner Greenfield find another duality in Valle-Inclán's treatment of his homeland--an exaltation and a mockery. "On the one hand," they write, "Galicia often seems a moral and spiritual dunghill; on the other, the atmosphere of mysterious traditions or superstitions and the people's lusty vulgarity

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1. González López, Arte dramático, p. 26.

2. Alfonso R. Castelao, Galicia y Valle-Inclán (Lugo: Ediciones Celta, 1971), p. 36.

are fascinating, if not always beautiful."[3]

Carlos del Valle-Inclán, the author's son, finds the influence of Galicia so important that, he believes, one cannot truly understand Valle-Inclán outside the context of his homeland:

> En este valle de Salnés y ante este mar de la Arosa, en este ambiente de misterio y leyenda, pasa Valle-Inclán la niñez. Sus ojos se abren a la luz entre brumas y lluvias, y lo primero que oye son historias de trasgos y aparecidos... No se puede comprender a Valle-Inclán fuera de su paisaje natal.[4]

Fortunately, Juan Ramón Jiménez has identified a parallel example of a culturally and geographically isolated Celtic land steeped in folklore, where superstitious beliefs are often stronger than Catholicism--a land that may be more familiar to the non-Galician. The country, of course, is Ireland and the writers he identifies with this heritage are William Butler Yeats and John Millington Synge. Valle-Inclán, Jiménez writes, "era, fué, es un gallego, un celta auténtico. Su par hay que buscarlo en Irlanda mas que en Galicia."[5] He characterizes Valle-Inclán as

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3. Anthony N. Zahareas and Sumner Greenfield, "Galicia: Introduction" in Valle-Inclán; An Appraisal, p. 250.

4. Carlos Luis del Valle-Inclán, Preface to Corte de amor, by Ramon del Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe S.A., 1960), p. 12.

5. Juan Ramón Jiménez, "Ramón del Valle-Inclán (Castillo de Quema)" in La corriente infinita; crítica y evocación, ed. Francisco Garfias (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961), p. 98.

"[s]ensual, supersticioso e incrédulo (incrédulo de Dios, crédulo de las hadas y las brujas, como los irlandeses también)."[6]

Yeats, Synge, and Valle-Inclán believed that a writer must be steeped in the customs, beliefs, language, and feelings of his own people. Yeats called for a National literature which he defined as

> the work of writers, who are moulded by influences that are moulding their country, and who write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end. . . . I mean by deep life that men must put into their writing the emotions and experiences that have been most important to themselves. . . . If one condescends to one's material, if it is only what a popular novelist would call local colour, it is certain that one's real soul is somewhere else.[7]

Yeats found in Synge a truly National writer. He praised Synge's ability "to express his own finest emotions in those curious ironical plays of his, where, for all that, by the illusion of admirable art, everyone seems to be thinking and feeling as only countrymen could think and feel."[8]

Valle-Inclán comes very close to his Celtic counterparts when he states his belief that art must truly

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6. Ibid., p. 101.

7. William Butler Yeats, "First Principles," in Dramatic Theory and Criticism, pp. 655-56.

8. Ibid., p. 656.

reflect a nation's people: "Creo que la suprema aspiracion del arte, y especialmente del teatro . . . debe ser recoger, reflejar, dar la sensacion de la vida de un pueblo o de una raza."[9]

Valle-Inclán never forgot the frightening, supernatural tales told to him as a youth by his grandmother's old servingwoman:

> Tenía mi abuela una doncella muy vieja que se llamaba Micaela la Galana. Murió siendo yo todavía niño. Recuerdo que pasaba las horas hilando en el hueco de una ventana, y que sabía muchas historias de santos, de almas en pena, de duendes y de ladrones. . . . Aquellas historias de un misterio candoroso y tragico, me asustaron de noche durante los años de mi infancia y por eso no las he olvidado.[10]

As Valle-Inclán, Synge was indebted to the "folk-imagination" of the "herds and fishermen along the coast from Kerry to Mayo, or from beggar-women and ballad-singers nearer Dublin."[11] He claimed:

> When I was writing The Shadow of the Glen, some years ago, I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kichen [sic]. This matter, I think, is of importance, for in countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a

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9. Francisco Madrid, La vida altiva de Valle-Inclán (Buenos Aires: Poseidon, 1943), p. 339.

10. Valle-Inclán, Jardin umbrío, p. 9.

11. John Millington Synge, "Preface to The Playboy of the Western World" in Dramatic Theory and Criticism, pp. 659-60.

> writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry, in a comprehensive and natural form.[12]

Valle-Inclán also cherished the living language of his people. He differentiated between words which imprison thought and the ever-changing idiom of the pueblo´s collective soul. He pities those cultures that cling to old, dead languages rather than generate their own dialects:

> Triste destino el de aquellas razas enterradas en el castillo hermético de sus viejas lenguas, como las momias de las remotas dinastías egipcias, en la hueca sonoridad de las Pirámides. Tristes vosotros, hijos de la Loba Latina en la ribera de tantos mares, si vuestras liras no quebrantan todas las cadenas con que os aprisiona la tradición del Habla. ¡Y mas triste el destino de vuestros nietos, si en lo por venir no engendran dialectos suyos, ciclos de una nueva conciencia en la lengua de los Conquistadores![13]

Yeats wrote, "Let us learn construction from the masters, and dialogue from ourselves."[14] Valle-Inclán also looked to native sources for his dialogue. Deep as his attachment was to Galicia, Valle-Inclán transcended the provicial. He wrote, "Nuestro teatro no puede negar que nace in Castilla."[15] What, to him, most characterized the idiom of the Spanish theatre was the shout. Guillermo

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12. Ibid., p. 660.

13. Valle-Inclán, La lámpara maravillosa (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpa Argentina, S.A.), p. 50.

14. Yeats, "Windlestraws," in Dramatic Theory and Criticism, p. 650.

15. Madrid, La vida altiva, p. 351.

Díaz-Plaja writes, "Los personajes no hablan, gritan."[16] Valle Inclán amusingly differentiates the Spanish theatre from the French on this basis. Two French actors find themselves face to face and start to talk. When we see them, they are speaking almost is a whisper. Two Spanish actors, he claims, barely exchange four phrases and start to shout. "Es el idioma," he writes. "El castellano es para gritar." He recalls Don Juan Tenorio's reflective monologue after he has murdered Don Luis and the Comendador ("Llamé al cielo, y no me oyó . . . ."). It is truly a reflection, but is always shouted by Spanish actors. "Sólo en castellano se puede meditar a gritos."[17]

Humorous as his tone may be, Valle-Inclán is serious about the importance of recognizing and then utilizing the essential characteristics of one's language, instead of adopting inappropriate foreign conventions. He also applies this dictum to what he considers true Spanish attitudes towards his characters. A Spanish writer, he claims, is always a bit superior to his characters. Much as Cervantes, for example, admired Don Quijote, he shied away from sentimentality. A French writer, Valle-Inclán believes,

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16. Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, Las estéticas de Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1965), p. 199.

17. Madrid, La vida altiva, pp. 351-52.

would interject at each step, "¡Oh, mi heroe, mi heroe!"[18]

Valle-Inclán considers a certain cruelty and indifference to pain a very Spanish quality. A Russian, he claims, reacts to suffering as if it were created expressly for him. The Spaniard knows that suffering, like the sun, has and will always exist for everyone. Intead of adopting violent attitudes, the Spaniard shrugs his shoulders and lets it pass.[19] This attitude is important to bear in mind when reading the Galician plays of this chapter. So far, we have only encountered great suffering in Tragedia de ensueño and Voces de gesta. In those works, Valle-Inclán showed much sympathy for the old woman, Ginebra, and the Carlist followers. In these new plays, we will see more injustice than lamentation.

For Valle-Inclán there were three ways of viewing the world artistically or aesthetically: on one's knees, on one's feet, or from the air. On one's knees, the Homeric position, the writer views his characters as superior beings--gods, semi-gods, and heroes. On one's feet, the Shakespearean position, the writer views his characters as brothers who have the same human virtues and defects as himself. Shakespeare could have suffered the same jealousy

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18. Ibid., p. 107.

19. Ibid.

as Othello and the same doubts as Hamlet. In the third manner--the manner adopted by Quevedo, Cervantes, and Goya--the writer is on a superior plane and looks down at his characters with irony.[20]

Antonio Buero Vallejo questions whether Valle-Inclán was ever so removed from his characters. As a theoretician he may have wanted to be an unmoveable judge, but as an artist he was too understanding and, at times, compassionate.[21] In the air, Valle-Inclán's view was as penetrating as if he were standing next to the characters he was observing. Valle-Inclán's acute observation, Buero Vallejo claims, is the basis of his greatness.[22]

If one can see Valle-Inclán as too perceptive to remain consistently removed from his characters, one can also see him as too perceptive to remain consistently on his knees. He does not restrict himself to a single viewpoint in each play just to prove a literary theory. Nevertheless, Valle-Inclán's identification of these three vantage points can be useful when studying the plays of Galicia.

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20. Gregorio Martínez Sierra, "Hablando con Valle-Inclán," ABC(Madrid), 7 December 1928, cited by Lyon, The Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 209.

21. Antonio Buero Vallejo, "De rodillas, en pie, en el aire," Revista de Occidente 44-45 (November-December 1966): 140.

22. Ibid., p. 146.

In Aguila de blasón and Romance de lobos, Valle-Inclán comes as close, as he ever does, to his knees as he traces the decline of Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, his larger than life hero. In El embrujado, he views his characters more as equals. In Divinas palabras, he breaks from the past as he did in the previously studied plays of 1920. This time, he demystifies the Galicia of the earlier plays as he looks down at characters now stripped of the heritage, traditions, and beliefs that belonged to a Galicia of the past.

We have already met Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, the hero of the Comedias bárbaras, in El marqués de Bradomín as he briefly passed through Brandesco on his way to Viana del Prior to beat a scribe. Valle-Inclán described him then in noble terms:

> El caballo relincha noblemente y el viento mueve sus crines venerables. Es un caballo viejo, prudente, reflexivo y grave como un pontífice. Don Juan Manuel se levanta sobre los estribos y deja oir su voz de tronante fanfarria que despierta un eco lejano.[23]

Don Juan is hard of hearing, but too proud to admit to it. The marqués and priest admiringly speak of him as "magnífico" and "arrogante" although he can no longer afford to pay the many servants he still retains.

Upon his return to Brandesco, Don Juan describes the

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23. Valle-Inclán, El marqués de Bradomín, pp. 194-95.

lineage of the houses of Montenegro and Bradomín. Of Spanish and German descent, the Montenegros are descended from a German Empress and boast the only Spanish escutcheon featuring metal upon metal: golden spurs on a silver field. The ancient house of Bradomín is known by many titles--Marquesado de San Miguel, Condado de Barbanzón and Señorío de Padín--but the oldest and most illustrious is the Señorío which dates back to Don Roldan, one of the twelve Peers of the Realm. Once lured by a siren and shipwrecked off the coast of the isle of Salvora, he sired a son called Paladín, later known as Padín.[24] This is the ancient and noble blood flowing through the veins of Bradomín and Montenegro and the heritage so important to appreciate when we see the Don Juan Manuel Montenegro of Aguila de blasón and Romance de lobos.

Aguila de blasón bears similarities to Valle-Inclán's plays already studied in Chapters I and II. Besides the appearance of Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, there are references to the Carlist Wars, as in Voces de gesta. Also similar is Valle-Inclán's use of a generalized setting combining the nineteenth century and the Middle Ages. This setting has been considered a pastiche, just as the worlds of Chapter I with their combination of Christian and Pagan

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24. Ibid., pp. 210-11

elements, literary styles, and time periods.

The generalized setting has led to different critical interpretations. Sumner Greenfield places Aguila de blasón in nineteenth-century Galicia with medieval elements of primitivism, feudalism, and barbarism.[25] Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, on the other hand, places the work in the Middle Ages with anachronistic nineteenth-century elements.[26] Obdulia Guerrero, in a more widely accepted view, sees the Comedias bárbaras as a true view of nineteenth-century Galician historical, social, geographical, legendary, and superstitious elements:

> La geografía es Galicia, los personajes son gallegos, el léxico por su musicalidad, ritmo, galaicismos..., responden al medio geográfico y a la única lengua posible para sus personajes. Realismo histórico, realismo geográfico, realismo humano característico de la producción valleinclanesca.[27]

However, Valle-Inclán was not attempting a historical account of nineteenth-century Galicia but, rather, a memory piece of the bygone Galicia of his youth. Comments he has made on painting can appropriately be applied to these plays: "Para la obra de arte nada es como

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25. Greenfield, Anatomía, p.61.

26. Díaz-Plaja, Las estéticas, p. 195.

27. Obdulia Guerrero, "Sobre las 'Comedias bárbaras' de don Ramón del Valle-Inclán," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos 199-200 (Julio-Agosto 1966):469.

es, sino como la memoria lo evoca."[28] Here, Valle-Inclán's aim was to preserve the impressions and youthful memories of a past age. In a letter to C. Rivas Cherif, he refers specifically to the Comedias bárbaras:

> He asistido al cambio de una sociadad de castas (los hidalgos que conocí de rapaz) y lo que yo vi no lo verá nadie. Soy el historiador de un mundo que acabó conmigo. Ya nadie volverá a ver vinculeros y mayorazgos. Y en este mundo que yo presento de clérigos, mendigos, escribanos, putas y alcahuetes, lo mejor--con todos sus vicios--era los hidalgos, lo desaparecido.[29]

While similarities exist between Aguila de blasón and the earlier plays there is, with the exception of Voces de gesta, a great difference in tone. Of the two historic and cultural Galician strains, the barbaric Germanic-Suebian dominates the more lyrical Celtic.[30] A brief look at the acts of Don Juan Manuel's sons in Aguila de blasón more than demonstrates this. In Act I, the sons attack and rob their father. In Act II, Don Pedrito, the eldest, rapes the miller's wife, ties her up, and sets his dogs on her. In Act III, the brothers scheme to subvert their mother's will. In Act IV, Cara de Plata and his brother Don Farruquiño, a seminarian, steal a corpse from the cemetery

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28. Rodolphe Stembert, "Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán y la pintura," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos 311 (Mayo 1976):471.

29. Lyon, Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 39.

30. González López, Arte dramático, p. 72.

and boil off its flesh to sell the skeleton.

This barbaric mode predominates but, in contrast to the sons, are the women of the play--Don Juan Manuel´s saintly wife Doña María and Sabelita their ward, who has caused herself and Doña María much grief by becoming Don Juan´s mistress. Sabelita suffers great guilt for her sinful betrayal of Doña María. At the opening of the play, her uncle Fray Jerónimo´s fiery sermon on sin drives her from the church. She complains to Doña Rosita that Don Juan treats her like a slave and offends her with other women. She has condemned her soul for him yet she can´t stop loving him. We witness his inconsiderate treatment of her in the third scene when he reprimands her in front of the miller.

After Sabelita gains Doña María´s forgiveness, she leaves the place of her unhappiness, nearly drowns, and finally is returned home. It is now Don Juan´s turn to depart. When he takes the miller´s wife as his new mistress, Doña María orders them and Don Galán, his fool, off the estate.

Though Don Juan leaves his ancestral home in disgrace, throughout the play Valle-Inclán has given him larger-than-life dimensions. In his first appearance, he is described as

> uno de esos hidalgos mujeriegos y despóticos, hospitalarios y violentos, que se conservan como retratos antiguos en las villas silenciosas y muertas,

las villas que evocan con sus nombres feudales un herrumbroso son de armaduras.[31]

Though old, he still has the voice of a "gran señor" and, even after he is attacked and robbed, his voice is confused but strong. His white hair and beard are likened to the Magi and as he drinks with Liberata, the miller's wife, his spirited, rustic, and strong appetite is likened to the banqueting old heroes of the Iliad.[32]

Act III Scene ii shows us Don Juan Manuel at his most imperious. Visited by the Constable and Scribe (perhaps the same man Don Juan travelled to beat in El marqués de Bradomín), the lord of the manor refuses to answer questions about the attack and robbery or recognize any lawful authority other than his will. Placing himself above the law, he laughs at justice fit only for women, children, and old people with trembling hands. He will administer his own justice. Out of patience, he cries, "¡Aqui el juez soy yo! . . . ¡El rey soy yo! . . . ¡Yo soy leon! ¡Yo soy tigre!"[33]

Great as he may be at that moment, Valle-Inclan makes it clear that Don Juan Manuel is, in terms of absolute

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31. Valle-Inclán, Aguila de blasón (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1964) p. 13.

32. Ibid., p. 149.

33. Ibid., p. 68.

feudal power, weaker than his more illustrious ancestors. An old woman remembers his father, don Ramón María: "¡Como se acaban las noblezas! ¡Ay, si hubieseis conocido al abuelo don Ramón María! ¡Era el primer caballero de estos contornos, un caballero de aquellos que ya no quedan!"[34] Don Juan Manuel, with great glee, tells the meddlesome Scribe and Constable how his grandfather dealt with the law. After years of lawsuits with the Dominican friars, he armed his servants, attacked the convent, murdered seven friars, and nailed their heads over his door. He adds that, after hearing this tale from his scandalized mother, he vowed to settle his legal difficulties in like manner.

This tale indicates a loss of absolute authority, but it is an authority most feudal lords were losing in the nineteenth century. In the case of Don Juan, the greatest sign of the degeneration of the house of Montenegro is seen through his sons. Señor Ginero, an old man nearly run down by Cara de Plata, curses at him, "¡Un rayo te parta, hijo de Faraón!," and predicts the end of their power: "Se abajan los adarves y se alzan los muladares. Raza de furiosos, raza de déspotas, raza de locos, ya veréis al final qué os espera, Montenegros.![35] Doña Rosita rightfully claims

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34. Ibid., p. 46.

35. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

that the sons have inherited their father's despotism but none of his nobility: "Por cierto que son la deshonra de su sangre esos bigardos. Sólo han heredado de su padre el despotismo, pero qué lejos están de su nobleza. Don Juan Manuel lleva un rey dentro."[36] Don Juan himself recognizes that he is the "último caballero" and that his ancestral home has become a den of thieves who wish his death.

One of the few areas of agreement between Don Juan Manuel and his wife's Chaplain is the degeneration of nobility as seen in the six sons:

> EL CABALLERO
> Ya no hay hombres como nosotros, capaces de morir por una idea. Hoy los enemigos, en vez de odiarse, se dan la mano sonriendo.
> EL CAPELLAN
> ¡Acabóse nuestra raza!
> EL CABALLERO
> ¡Así se hubiese acabado!... Pero es lo peor que degenera. ¡Yo engendré seis hijos que son seis ladrones cabardes![37]

In spite of a civil relationship with the Chaplain, Don Juan sees religion in his own terms and, therefore, has his own confessor in the form of his animal-like servant and fool Don Galán. When Doña María asks how he can tolerate this servant's insolence, Don Juan points out that he serves

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36. Ibid., p. 17.

37. Ibid., p. 72.

the same purpose as his wife´s confessor:

> ¡Don Galán es mi hombre de placer! ¡Y también una voz de mi conciencia! . . . Don Galán, con sus burlas y sus insolencias, edifica mi alma, como don Manuelito edifica la tuya con sus sermones. . . . No blasfemo. Uno y otro nos dicen las verdades amargas. Tu capellán las rocía con agua bendita, y mi bufón con vino.[38]

Don Juan´s religious practices are, to say the least, unorthodox. He tells Doña María that he does not really believe in God but he does believe in saints on earth. She is that kind of saint for him. While his actions constantly offend her Christian beliefs, these beliefs prevail at the play´s end when Don Juan obeys her command to leave his home with Don Galán and the miller´s wife.

But, though Christianity prevails at the final curtain, throughout the play there is (as will be seen in all the Galician plays) a coexistence between Christianity and Pagan superstition. Here, unlike the earlier works, the coexistence is not an artificial pastiche as in Brandesco, Imberal, or Aranjuez where the Christian Concha, the Princess, and Rosalinda self-consciously created artificial worlds with Pagan elements. In Galicia both Christian orthodoxy and folk superstition are deeply ingrained beliefs of profound importance in the inhabitants´ lives.

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38. Ibid., p. 71.

This combination of religious and cultural practices can best be seen in the Act III midnight anticipatory baptism. Sabelita, having obtained Doña María's forgiveness, leaves the house of her transgression. In her travels, she is stopped by a young man and his father-in-law and asked to participate in this folk and Christian ritual. The young man's pregnant wife has been given the evil eye and will not give birth to a healthy child unless the spell is broken by a prenatal baptism after midnight under a bridge bearing a cross. The Christian family has taken the necessary precautions, marking each end of the bridge with the seal of Solomon to protect them from witches. In a stage direction, Valle-Inclán compares the unborn child to the Pagan symbol of love: "el feto se mueve en las entrañas de la madre, y el misterio de la vida parece surgir del misterio de la noche, bajo la roja llamarada de la antorcha sostenida por un niño, como en el símbolo pagano del amor."[39]

Sabelita performs the baptism according to the Catholic rite, thus combining beliefs in the evil eye, witches, the seal of Solomon, and Christian baptism. After the ceremony, the playwright evokes the Christian image of Mary and Joseph as the pregnant woman rides away on an ass,

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39. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

flanked by her husband and his mother:

> Un asno aparejado con jamugas lleva a la preñada. El marido y la abuela caminan a los flancos. Al verlos por la vereda aldeana, brota, como el agua de una fuente clara, el recuerdo cándido, ingenuo y piadoso de la Huida a Egipto.[40]

The actual Virgin Mary appears to Doña María in an Act IV vision. Cara de Plata has taken leave of his mother before joining the Carlists. Doña María kneels to pray and the Infant Jesus appears. He leads her through the countryside in search of Sabelita, warning her that she will be punished for her reluctance to pardon the girl unconditionally. Cara de Plata will die in the Carlist Wars and, if Sabelita dies in mortal sin, Doña María will be damned as well. The Child disappears into a cave and then the Virgin appears, spins silver thread into a net of crystal, and lets it fall to serve as a stairway of light for Jesus to climb. Valle-Inclán describes this event as a miracle. Emma Susana Speratti-Piñero sees it as a dream brought on by Doña María's sorrow at Sabelita's departure and worry over Cara de Plata.[41] Doña María herself considers it a premonitory dream from heaven. The steadfast Catholic and her superstitious servant Micaela La Roja find a common belief in the visitation of mysterious souls in dreams:

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40. Ibid., p. 97.

41. Speratti-Piñero, Ocultismo, p. 133.

DONA MARIA

Esta noche tuve un visión que lleno mi alma de remordimiento. Un sueño que fue como un aviso del cielo.

LA ROJA

Somos hijos del pecado, y no podemos alcanzar el misterio de las ánimas que nos visitan dormidos, ni entender sus avisos.

DONA MARIA

Alguna vez en el sueño, nuestra alma oye y entiende sus voces, pero al despertar pierde la gracia y olvida...

LA ROJA

El día es como un gran pecado, y pone tinieblas en los ojos que han visto y en los oídos que escucharon...[42]

Dreams are not the only means, however, of seeing the future in Aguila de blasón. When Cara de Plata tells his mistress he is leaving for the Carlist Wars, she tells him that she has already read it in her cards.

Besides the midnight baptism and the interpretation of dreams, folk traditions and religious beliefs are mixed in Don Pedrito's rape of Liberata. Emilio González López identifies the rape itself as a primitive Celtic act of enforcing subservience and Pedrito's setting on of dogs as part of the Christian tradition, harkening back to the dogs that licked and healed Christ's wounds.[43]

The Celtic past is evoked in the accompanying stage direction: "Bajo la vid centenaria revive el encanto de las

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42. Valle-Inclán, Aguila de blasón, p. 132.

43. González López, Arte dramático, p. 84.

epopeyas primitivas, que cantan la sangre, la violación y la fuerza. . . . El primogénito siente con un numen profético el alma de los viejos versos que oyeron los héroes en las viejas lenguas."[44]

It is one of the women tending to Liberata after the attack, La Curandera, who tells of Christ blessing all dogs. But her account is soon combined with tales of half-dog, half-wolf creatures and a discussion of whether the wolf characteristics of their offspring, most ferocious at the full moon, are inherited through the animals' milk or blood.

Don Juan Manuel's servants share the same fascination with the supernatural. At the start of Act III, they sit by a stone chimney which reminds Valle-Inclán of the chimneys inhabited by witches and goblins in grotesque folktales. After gossiping about the Montenegros, they tell of a cow giving birth to a two-headed calf.

Liberata, the miller's wife, also believes in witchcraft. In Act V, now Don Juan's mistress, she appears dressed like an Infanta, surrounded by servants sitting at her feet like ladies-in-waiting. They discuss Don Juan's bewitchment of Sabelita. Liberata requests a handkerchief of Sabelita's so the Saludadora de Céltigos can break this

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44. Valle-Inclán, Aguila de blasón, p. 45.

spell. Rosalva, one of the women, is too afraid to comply. A woman from her village had gone to the witch for a spell to retain her married lover. The next day, his wife died.

Liberata is thwarted not only by the women who fear for Sabelita but by Doña María as well. The sight of the "farsa carnavalesca" of Don Juan's hiding his new mistress under the table is too much for the long-suffering woman to bear. Doña María orders Don Juan and his retinue off the estate. The great man bows to her demands and exits into the stormy night with Dón Galan, like Lear and his fool. As Liberata follows, Don Galán thinks of his group as three stars in the night. But for Don Juan, Don Galán is the only star. He is a soul of God. Liberata is a fox and Don Juan himself is a cast-out wolf: "un lobo salido, un lobo salido, un lobo salido..."[45]

The end of Aguila de blasón marks a low point in the life of Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, as the great sinner becomes a cast-out wolf. Wolves play a prominent part in Romance de lobos as the "lobo salido" returns to his ancestral home, repents his sins, assumes his feudal duty as protector of the inflicted, and is murdered by a human wolfpack--his very own sons.

Aguila de blasón had a fiery Christian opening--Fray

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45. Ibid., p. 154.

Jerónimo's dramatic sermon on the everpresence of sin. The opening of Romance de lobos is in the folk tradition. Don Juan, drunkenly riding home late at night, meets the Santa Compañía, the company of Galician dead who rest by day and roam the land in chains by night, completing their penance. Their talk of sin upsets Don Juan as profoundly as Fray Jerónimo's sermon unsettled Sabelita. Returning home, his fears of death are confirmed. He learns that Doña María is dying. In spite of a raging storm, he forces the village sailors to take him to Flavia Longa, his ancestral seat. Doña María has already died, and her sons have sacked the estate. Her ghost appears to Pedrito, while he and Farrunquiño are stripping her chapel. Pedrito flees and comes upon Don Juan, who has taken a group of beggars under his protection. Father and son fight, but the leper of San Lázaro and the reappearing ghost of Doña María protect Don Juan. When Don Juan arrives at Flavia Longa, the Chaplain informs him that the sailors have been shipwrecked. They go to the chapel and discover the guilty Farrunquino. Don Juan insists on seeing his wife's body and then is carried to Doña María's bedchamber where he makes a formal confession before the servants and beggars. Three of Don Juan's fleeing sons threaten a pack of horsedealers and in the ensuing fight Don Mauro slays Oliveros, his illegitmate half-brother.

Don Juan has locked himself in Doña María's bedchamber, awaiting his own death. Against his will, the servants have found Sabelita, whom the sons had turned out as soon as their mother died, and Artemisa, an illegitimate daughter, and prevail upon them to persuade Don Juan to open his door. Cursing the lot of them for disturbing him, Don Juan departs in fury.

As a storm approaches, Don Juan takes shelter with Don Galán and Fuso Negro, a beggar he encountered on the beach. In a scene again reminiscent of King Lear, the once noble man--whose children have taken everything--his fool, and a counterfeit madman seek refuge from the storm in a cave. He hears the widow of one of his sailors cry. She and her four children sought charity at Flavia Longa, but the Montenegro sons set dogs upon them. In a final attempt to regain his estate, Don Juan returns with his outcast servants and beggars. He dies at the hands of Don Mauro. As the poor lament him, his sons curse the forthcoming lawsuits that will delay their inheritance.

The world of Romance de lobos is, as Aguila de blasón, a mixture of Christianity and superstition. The saintly Doña María intervenes after death to prevent Don Pedrito's desecration of her tomb. Later her appearance prevents patricide. Don Juan embraces Christianity as he repents his former ways.

Hovever, the catalyst for his repentance is the Celtic Santa Compañía, known in Ireland as the Gentle Army or the Company. His frightful encounter gives Don Juan a dreaded premonition, but he is not sure of what. He tells his servant Micaela la Roja, "Mi corazón me anuncia algo, y no sé lo que me anuncia... Siento que un murciélago revoltea sobre mi cabeza y el eco de mis pasos, en esta escalera oscura, me infunde miedo, Roja."[46] The wind, sounding like the laughter of goblins, heralds the sailor who informs him of Doña María's grave condition. Don Juan recalls his recent premonition and is certain of her death: "¡Ha muerto! ¡Esta noche he visto su entierro, y lo que juzgué un río era el mar que nos separaba!"[47] Later, when Don Juan curses those who will not let him die in peace, he offers the continuous barking of dogs as proof of his imminent death.

The use of the wind and barking of dogs as harbingers of death is reminiscent of Tragedia de ensueño where the same omens foreshadowed the infant grandson's fate. Don Juan's sons and their wolfish behavior are echoes of the band of thieves in Comedia de ensueño. The suffering

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46. Valle-Inclán, Romance de lobos (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1968), p. 15.

47. Ibid., p. 19.

poor recall the suffering shepherds of Voces de gesta. The animal imagery used to reveal the characters' souls (both in Romance de lobos and Aguila de blasón) reminds us of Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza. Don Galán is associated with dogs. He barks in imitation of them and calls them his brothers. Don Juan (in Aguila de blasón) boasts to the scribe and constable that he is a lion and a tiger. At the end of that play, however, he is a homeless wolf. In Romance de lobos, Don Juan calls his interfering servants hyenas, wolves, and scorpions. The Chaplain calls Don Juan's sons Cains and ravens hovering over the dead. He claims that mountain wolves have more charity than they.

Wolves, of course, are the dominant images of Romance de lobos. Leaving the doomed ship, Don Juan boasts, "Yo veo de noche como los lobos . . . "[48] The Chaplain calls the Montenegro sons wild animals when he discovers their theft of all the chapel lamps. Don Juan sadly replies, "Son lobeznos, hijo de lobo."[49] As he prepares to die, he laments, "¡Fui pastor de lobos y ahora mis ganados me comen! ¡Engendré monstruos y estoy maldito!"[50] Wolfishness also becomes a quality of the elements. The

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48. Ibid., p. 37.

49. Ibid., p. 80.

50. Ibid., pp. 111-12.

wind howls like a wolf.

The rages of nature--the storms, the shipwreck, the wind--reflect the fury of the characters as well. This technique is obvious in the dark chapel when Don Juan senses the beating of wings. The Chaplain assumes that an owl has broken in and drunk the lamp oil. Don Juan replies, "Las alas que yo siento se abren dentro de mí."[51]

However, in Romance de lobos, Don Juan regains his former spirit and grows greater as his sorrows increase. Overcome by remorse over his treatment of Doña María, he repents--but on his own terms. Man needs many women, he tells himself. Therefore, his sin is not so much his infidelity but his inconsiderate failure to hide his indescretions from her. His Act I speech, which begins with the acknowledgement that God has ordered him to repent his sins, turns to a condemnation of a religion as dry as an old woman's breasts with a pious face and the body of a greyhound bitch. He longs, instead, for a polygamous life in which he could care for his many women and children. Because the Church condemns this, he is a sinner whose legitimate sons have tried to rob and kill him:

> Como el hombre necesita muchas mujeres y le dan una sola, tiene que buscarlas fuera. Si a mí me hubieran dado diez mujeres, habría sido como un patriarca...

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51. Ibid., p. 78.

> Las habria querido a todas, y a los hijos de ellas y a los hijos de mis hijos... Sin eso, mi vida aparece como un gran pecado. Tengo hijos en todas estas aldeas, a quienes no he podido dar mi nombre... ¡Yo mismo no puedo contarlos!... Y los otros bandidos, temerosos de verse sin herencia por mi amor a los bastardos, han tratado de robarme, de matarme...[52]

While clearly unorthodox, this repentance stresses obligation--the acceptance of his feudal obligations. These are the duties for which he will give his life.

Moments later, Don Juan comes across the group of beggars with whom his fate will be sealed. He promises them the corn in his barn because it is his duty to do so. He foresees a day of true justice in which they will rise up, burn the cornfields, and poison the water. But since they are unable to rise up, for the time being, he will be an enlightened master and provide for them:

> Nacisteis pobres, y no podréis rebelaros nunca contra vuestro destino. La redención de los humildes hemos de hacerla los que nacimos con ímpetu de señores cuando se haga la luz en nuestras conciencias. ¡En la mía se hace esa luz de tempestad! Ahora, entre vosotros, me figuro que soy vuestro hermano y que debo ir por el mundo con la mano extendida, y como nací señor, me encuentro con más ánimo de bandolero que de mendigo. ¡Pobres miserables, almas resignadas, hijos de esclavos, los señores os salvaremos cuando nos hagamos cristianos![53]

In the final acts of Romance de lobos, Don Juan assumes Lear-like dimensions. Leaving his house in the storm, he is met by his old servant Micaela La Roja and

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52. Ibid., p. 38.

53. Ibid., p. 43.

Sabelita. In this scene, and the ones to follow, there are intentional echoes of Shakespeare´s tragedy. La Roja questions, "¡Señor! ¿Adónde camina con la blanca cabeza descubierta a la lluvia?"[54] Don Juan rejects Sabelita as unjustly as Lear rejected Cordelia and as scornfully as Lear cursed Goneril and Regan: "El Demonio te llama voz de mentira, cuervo de ingratitud, sierpe de hipocresía, brasa de lujuria!"[55]

As Lear commanded the storm to do its worst, Don Juan begs the raging sea to take him. He, too, refers to his age, weakness, his discomfort in the wind and rain, and the cruelty of his children.

> ¡Tengo la pobreza y la desnudez y el frío de un náufrago! ¡No se adonde ir! . . . ¡Ya soy pobre! ¡Todo lo he dado a los monstruos! .Mi alma en otra vida, aquella vida de que huyo, también fue un mar, y tuvo tempestades, y noches negras, y monstruos que habían nacido de mí! ¡Ya no soy más que un mendigo viejo y miserable! ¡Todo lo he repartido entre mis hijos, y mientras ellos se calientan ante el fuego encendido por mí, yo voy por los caminos del mundo, y un día, si tú no me quieres, mar, moriré de frío al pie de un árbol tan viejo como yo![56]

Taking refuge in the cave, weakened by the storm and hunger, Don Juan, as Lear, fears for his sanity. It is the lamentation of the sailor´s widow and her children that

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54. Ibid., p. 112.

55. Ibid., p. 113.

56. Ibid. pp. 113-114.

rouses him to action. He summons up his little strength and leads them to his estate for charity. Valle-Inclán describes his arrival with the widow, children, and madman Fuso Negro in epic terms: "EL CABALLERO camina entre ellos como un viejo patriarca entre su prole: Dolor, Miseria y Locura."[57] Joined by the beggars and servants cast out by his sons, he gains entry. He leads the poor, now his true children, to claim what is justly theirs, as he had promised:

> ¡Entrad conmigo todos! ¡Mis verdaderos hijos sois vosotros! ¡Ayudadme para que pueda saciar vuestra hambre de pan y sed de justicia! ¡Ayudadme como hijos! ¡Ayduadme como animales hambrientos, como arcángeles o como demonios! ¡Rabiad, ovejas!"[58]

They cry, "¡Es nuestro padre!"[59]

In the final confrontation, the sons greet their father's order to depart with cruel mockery. As they prepare to eject the poor again, Don Juan makes one last great attempt to defend his chosen children. Here, Valle-Inclán gives Montenegro a kingly and Christ-like nobility: "EL CABALLERO interpone su figura resplandeciente de nobleza: Los ojos llenos de furias y demencias, y en el rostro la altivez de un rey y la palidez de un Cristo."[60]

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57. Ibid., p. 132.

58. Ibid., p. 135.

59. Ibid., p. 136.

60. Ibid., p. 138.

He strikes his son, Don Mauro, who retalliates with a death blow. In the ensuing confusion the leper, El Pobre de San Lázaro, attacks the patricide. They fall into the hearth flames. The victor rises: "Transfigurado, envuelto en [las llamas del hogar], hermoso como un haz de fuego, se levanta EL POBRE DE SAN LÁZARO."[61] While the beggars mourn, "Era nuestro padre," Don Juan´s biological sons curse the lawsuits that will keep them from their inheritance for twenty years.

In his death, Don Juan regains the stature he lost at the end of Aguila de blasón. But he is not the only character who has changed. Emilio González López points out another significant difference--the emergence of a new order. While in Aguila de blasón the majority of the peasants and beggars were cowards, in Romance de lobos they rise in valor to displace the aristocrats. From them comes Oliveros, who dares to defend his natural father, and El Pobre de San Lázaro who symbolizes, in the final apotheosis, the uplifted spirit of the humble triumphing over the criminal arrogance of the ruling classes.[62] Don Juan Manuel Montenegro does not end his days as the "lobo salido" of Aguila de blasón. In the words of J. L. Brooks, "Don

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61. Ibid. p. 139.

62. González López, Arte dramatico, p. 80-81.

Juan es todavía un héroe, un ser humano, quizá un héroe fantástico y grotesco, pero todavía un héroe, y no visto al revés."[63]

Don Juan Manuel Montenegro was the last nobleman of his line and, certainly in the Galician plays, was one of Valle-Inclán's last great figures. In El embrujado, the playwright introduces the landowner Pedro Bolaño. Here Valle-Inclán is not viewing the protagonist "from his knees." He shows us the frailty of Bolaño and how the combination of greed, lust, and death ends in tragedy--a domestic tragedy lacking the more universal significance of the Comedias bárbaras.

El embrujado centers around the struggle over a young child. Before the action of the play Don Miguel, the son of the wealthy Pedro Bolaño, is murdered on the eve of his wedding. Rosa la Galana, the son's former mistress, gives birth to a son she claims is Don Miguel's. Don Pedro wishes to raise the child as his grandson. For this, La Galana wants land and money. Unable to reach an acceptable financial arrangement, Don Pedro hands the child over to her at the end of Act I.

In Act II we meet "el embrujado" the bewitched Anxelo, another former lover of La Galana and the true

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63. Brooks, Los dramas de Valle-Inclán, p. 185.

father of the child. He lives in torment, desperate to confess to the murder of Don Miguel but still under the spell of Rosa, whom he greatly fears. He warns El Pajarito, Rosa´s new lover, of her witchcraft and begs her, when she arrives with their child, to release him from her spell. At the end of the act Mauriña, Anxelo´s new mistress, cries out that the child has been stolen. El Pajarito fires several shots at the escaping thief.

In Act III we learn that the kidnapper is Don Pedro´s servant Malvín. The child is dead and Malvín dies of his wounds. Don Pedro rues his avarice and Rosa angrily leads Anxelo and Mauriña to hell.

J. L. Brooks describes Don Pedro as a pale shadow of his predecessor Don Juan Manuel Montenegro and faults the play, as he did Voces de gesta, for its lack of a dynamic personality--here in the characters of Don Pedro and Anxelo--to unify the piece.[64] However, what Brooks sees as a weakness, is Valle-Inclán´s intentional artistic choice. The Galicia of the Montenegros is gone. There are no larger-than-life heroes to view from one´s knees. Now, one has a character with all too human virtues and defects, an equal to view on one´s feet, who never achieves the greatness of Don Juan Manuel.

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64. Ibid., p. 186.

Brooks is correct in calling Don Pedro a shadow. Valle-Inclán does so himself during the course of the play. In his first appearance, Don Pedro enters slowly and noiselessly "como una sombra." Valle-Inclán continues: "Hay en toda su figura una tristeza medrosa, algo de fantasma y algo de desenterrado."[65] Such a description could never be applied to Don Juan Manuel, even in his most hopeless moments.

"Don Juan Manuel Montenegro," Juan Guerrero Zamora writes, "era descendiente de las novelas de caballerías y se arrojaba a empresas de fuste romántico. . . . Don Pedro Bolaño es un caballero sedentario, un senor de labranzas."[66] However, Valle-Inclán does not give us a stereotype of a bitter, miserly landowner. As in the case of Don Juan Manuel, Pedro Bolaño has known better times. It is stressed that, before the murder of his son, Don Pedro had been kind and generous. An old villager tells a stranger, "Con la muerte del hijo se hizo más tirano."[67] One of the countrywomen claims, "¡No es conocido don Pedro

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65. Valle-Inclán, "El embrujado," Retablo de la avaricia, la lujuria y la muerte (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1961), p. 83.

66. Juan Guerrero Zamora, Historia del teatro contemporáneo, vol. 1 (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1961), p. 176.

67. Valle-Inclán, El embrujado, p. 78.

Bolaño! ¡Aquella risa tan liberal para los pobres y ricos, la enterró con el hijo que le mataron!"[68]

Though embittered, Don Pedro has two sources of hope and joy in his life: Doña Isodina, his intended daughter-in-law and, of course, the child. In a tender moment in Act III, he tells Doña Isoldina of his desire to take her in, marry her to another young man and care for their offspring as his grandchildren.

Don Pedro's longing for Rosa la Galana's son is not rational. It is widely accepted that the child is not Don Miguelito's, that Rosa has had many lovers, and that the child resembles her former lover, Anxelo. But Don Pedro has pinned all his hopes on the child. He asks Doña Isoldina, "¿Tú comprendes la cárcel que sería esta casa quitando el sol de todas sus ventanas? Pues eso será mi vida si no recobro al nieto."[69] But life does become the dark prison he fears in spite of, or because of, his plans. He does recover the child through the intervention of Malvín, but the loyal servant is mortally wounded in the attempt and the child is killed. Don Pedro refused to meet Rosa's demands because, he claimed, they would leave him poor. Now he has lost everything because of his avarice. As Malvín lies

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68. Ibid., p. 84.

69. Ibid., pp. 135-36.

dying, he realizes the consequences of his decision, "¿Acaso la avaricia me ha endurecido el corazón?"[70]

The death of the child and the profound sorrow of the "grandparent" harkens back to Tragedia de ensueño. Don Pedro's desire for death--"¡Tan viejo y tan solo! ¡Ya me pueden enterrar!"[71]--could have been spoken by the grandmother of the earlier tragedy. There is of course a difference between the two works. The blind grandmother could not control the destiny of her grandson. Don Pedro's actions contributed to the death of his grandchild.

However, in both plays, Valle-Inclán foreshadows the child's death. In Tragedia de ensueño, as we have seen, the Palace maids reinforce the sense of doom as they relate how the child's cloth, cradle sheet, and skein of flax were carried off by the stream, wind, and a blackbird. In El embrujado, before Malvín returns with the dead child, a young girl enters with a nest of turtle doves that have died mysteriously.

This foreshadowing and other cases of premonition occur frequently throughout the play. The characters of El embrujado share the same superstitious beliefs as the figures of the other Galician plays. Don Pedro believes in

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70. Ibid., p. 143.

71. Ibid., p. 145.

"anuncias del corazón" and "una voz secreta." He tells Doña Isoldina that he foresaw the struggle over the child and that he had dreamed of his son's death before the event. The night before his murder, Don Miguelito read in the cards three times that a woman would betray him. So great is Don Pedro's belief in the truth of the cards, he refuses to allow Diana de Sálvora to read them. She responds that a valiant heart does not fear to learn its destiny. The beaten man replies, "Corazón valiente otro tiempo lo fui y lo mostré."[72]

Not all the characters of El embrujado can foretell the future. The blindman, El Ciego de Gondar, foresees the arrival of Doña Isoldina, "la paloma blanca que viene por el camino para posarse entre nos."[73] When she does arrive, he boasts to his impressed listeners, "¡Dona Isoldina es una paloma blanca! . . . Senti al gavilan volar sobre ella. Senti a la sierpe alentar para ella. Sentí al Santo Angel de la Guarda majar sobre todos nosotros, bailándose un ribeirana encima de la cabeza y de los hombros, con sus pies blancos."[74] Malvín, however, quickly deflates the charlatan, informing the assembled that Doña Isoldina

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72. Ibid., p. 140.

73. Ibid., p. 91.

74. Ibid., p. 95.

arrives at that hour daily to see the baby.

While the powers of the Ciego de Gondar are questioned, there is no doubt that Rosa la Galana is a true witch. The blind man is terrified to admit to Don Pedro that Rosa paid him to sing a ballad of Don Miguelito´s death: "¡La lengua se me caiga! Prometí con juramento no revelarlo a persona nacida. Si falto, me condeno. ¡Tan seguro que me condeno! Me condeno de firme y voy de cabeza para los Infiernos. ¡Tan seguro que voy!"[75] The villagers also fear Rosa. As she first approaches, they quickly break off their tale of Don Miguelito´s death and pray that she has not overheard them: "Las hilanderas, con la cabeza vuelta hacia el camino, murmuran de una en una, con largas escalas llenas de misterio: ¡Muera el cuento! ¡Muera el cuento! ¡Muera el cuento!"[76] As she greets them they chant, as in a rosary, "¡El Señor la depare! ¡El Señor la depare! ¡El Señor la depare! ¡Amen!"[77] Juana de Juno, the bravest of the lot, dares to refer to witchcraft as she informs Rosa that Don Pedro has entered the house. He must still be there because he has not come through the door and, not being a witch, cannot fly from the chimney. An exchange

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75. Ibid., p. 90.

76. Ibid., p. 99.

77. Ibid., p. 100.

follows, in which Juana insinuates that she knows more than the others about Rosa La Galana:

JUANA DE JUNO
Excusas de nombrarte, que bien te conozco.
LA GALANA
No eres tú sola la que me conoce.
JUANA DE JUNO
Por sabido que no. Yo te conozco a un modo y no faltará quien te conozca al otro.
LA GALANA
¿Lo dices con segunda?
JUANA DE JUNO
Lo digo con la fe de Dios. Alégrome conocerte.[78]

As Rosa exits with the child, Malvín notices her dog-like walk. The villagers murmur religiously, "¡Brujas fuera!... ¡Brujas fuera!... ¡Brujas fuera!..."[79]

Rosa's supernatural powers are further explored in Act II as Anxelo tries to break from her domination. He tells Mauriña that Rosa has bewitched him and begs his greedy mistress to let him enter the house, light a blessed candle and bar the door against Rosa's approach. He describes the torment of his captive soul: "Siento dentro de mí un espíritu cativo revolar y batir como el pájaro en una gayola."[80] He wants no part of Rosa's scheme. Instead, he only wishes to confess in Church and save his soul.

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78. Ibid., p. 100.

79. Ibid., p. 105.

80. Ibid., p. 110.

When Valerio El Pajarito, Rosa´s new lover, arrives, Anxelo tries to warn the confident man of the evil woman´s powers. He describes his first meeting with Rosa La Galana. It was after sunset and, returning from harvesting, a barking dog with shining eyes crossed Anxelo´s path. He kicked its head and it filled the darkness of the night with the howl of a captive woman. A little later Anxelo came to a tavern and Rosa was seated in the doorway. She filled him a glass and he felt her eyes on him. Putting the wine down, he noticed blood on her face. She wiped it off with a cloth and then let him see that the cloth was still white. She asked which road he had come by and whether he had come across anyone. At that moment, he recognized her voice as that of the dog he had kicked. She asked him to serve him and he bravely answered he would if she made room for him in her bed. She laughed and showed him the cloth again. It seemed covered with blood.[81]

As he finishes this eerie tale, Anxelo hears a noise. The blindman says it is a bell ringing in the wind. Anxelo knows it is a barking dog that only he can hear. Rosa then appears and Valle-Inclán describes her speech as the furious bark of a dog. Later in Act III, as Malvín lies dying he says that a white dog came after him. At the end

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81. Ibid., pp. 120-22.

of the play Anxelo and the now repentant Mauriña try to confess their sin to Don Pedro, but are interrupted by the sounds of a barking, followed immediately by Rosa´s entrance. Enraged at the death of the child and the attempted betrayal of Anxelo and Mauriña, she orders them both to follow her. When they ask where she will take them, she answers, "¡A los Infiernos!"[82] The three go off and a moment later three white dogs enter and bark at the door.

Before Rosa´s final exit, she scornfully spits on the ground and makes the sign of the horns with her left hand, audaciously parodying the gesture an innocent villager would make to ward off witches. In Act II, Rosa also displays her manipulation of others´ beliefs. The blindman´s companion innocently tells Rosa that Anxelo has been given the evil eye and, as in Aguila de blasón, should be taken to the river at midnight to bathe by the light of the moon. The blindman thinks a visit to the shrine of San Pedro Mártir will be more effective. Rosa herself suggests that of Sana Junta de Morana and even offers to help the tormented Anxelo. She then invites the assembled group to join her in a moonlight picnic under an oak tree, like witches.

The suggestion of a midnight baptism is not El

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82. Ibid., p. 150.

embrujado's only reference to Aguila de blasón. The image of the Holy Family was evoked in the former play, when the pregnant woman rode off accompanied by her husband, on foot, after the anticipatory baptism. In El embrujado, both the birth and death of Christ are evoked in a tableau after the death of the child is discovered. A servant believes the dead infant resembles the Baby Jesus. Valle-Inclán then describes Doña Isoldina, the child, Don Pedro, and the servants as follows: "DONA ISOLDINA, sentada en una silla de roble, tiene acostado al niño en su regazo. En torno, sobre las losas, están arrodilladas las figuras familiares como en los retablos del nacimiento y de la muerte de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo."[83] However, in Aguila de blasón, the Biblical comparison is a hopeful one. The birth of the child will be a blessed event. In El embrujado, the tableau is perverse. The baby is dead. The woman holding him is not his mother. His mother is a witch. His father has been murdered. His death has been caused by his grandfather's avarice.

El embrujado's avarice, superstition, and a struggle over the possession of a child appear again in Valle-Inclán's Divinas palabras, but in this work the playwright does not view his characters with the compassion he has shown in El embrujado. Instead, he ascends to a

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83. Ibid., p. 145.

higher plane and looks down upon them.

Laureano, the child argued over in Divinas palabras is, as the child in El embrujado, illegitimate. His is also a filthy, hydrocephalic, idiot dwarf. His mother, Juana la Reina, has died while begging by the roadside. Fighting over the poor orphan are his mother's sister Marica del Reino, her brother Pedro Gailo, and his wife Mari-Gaila. They desperately want the boy, not out of love, but for the money they can make displaying him at carnivals. They agree to share the child who, when in Mari-Gaila's charge, dies of too much alcohol while she is off with Lucero (also known as Séptimo Miau), a new lover. Frantic over the loss of this source of income and fearful of the rage of Marica del Reino, Mari-Gaila and her husband order their daughter to leave the idiot and his cart at his aunt's house in the middle of the night. Before dawn, his corpse is partially eaten by pigs. This, however, does not prevent the family from further displaying him to raise money for his funeral expenses. Later, a group of villagers catch Mari-Gaila and Séptimo Miau making love, strip her and lead her in a wagon to the church and her sacristan husband. Pedro Gailo jumps from the Church's roof, arises, and limps into the Church. He re-enters, crosses to his wife, ritualistically extinguishes a candle over her crossed hands and then strikes them with a missal. To the crowd he recites,

"¡Quien sea libre de culpa, tire la primera piedra!"[84] He is met with jeers. When he repeats the words in Latin--"Qui sine peccato est vestrum, primus in illan lapidem mittat"--and the crowd is miraculously subdued. He hands the candle to his wife and leads her to the Church. As she enters her sanctuary, Laureano´s head appears like an angel´s.

Divinas palabras, set in Galicia, shares trappings we have seen in the earlier Galician works. The Ciego de Gondar reappears along with his companions and other assorted beggars who travel from fair to fair. The characters of this rural agricultural society, in general, share their earlier counterparts´ adherence to both Christianity and superstition. However, the Galicia which Valle-Inclán depicts in 1920 is very different from the Galicia of Aguila de blasón, Romance de lobos, and El embrujado.

In the Comedias bárbaras, the land and the people were in harmony--so much so that acts of nature echoed the passions of the characters. Galicia itself, was a vague, generalized composite of Valle-Inclán´s childhood memories, peopled by inhabitants who lived according to feudal and

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84. Valle-Inclán, Divinas palabras (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1972), p. 135.

nineteenth-century traditions. The Galicia of Divinas palabras is a beautiful, lush setting of cypresses, grape arbors, poplar and oak groves, fig trees, cornfields, emerald sacred rivers from Roman times, heather-covered cliffs, rose-colored dawns, blinding sunlit days, and starlit nights. At first glance, the inhabitants seem appropriately set in these surroundings:

> The villagers, beggars, errant tinkers and fairground fortune-tellers . . . are a basically faithful reflection of Galician rural life and not an image that has passed through the heroic filter of memory. Valle has abandoned his backward-looking feudal nostalgia, the medieval reminiscences and the links with aristocratic tradition.[85]

But, while the types of characters depicted in Divinas palabras may be "basically faithful reflection[s] of Galician rural life," they are also, basically, a moral and--with the exception of Mari-Gaila--physically ugly lot in contrast to the beautiful countryside they inhabit. The playwright also treats them very differently from their predecessors who inhabited the land in the earlier plays. No longer on his knees looking up at his characters in admiration, or standing alongside viewing them with compassion, Valle-Inclán has assumed the third position, looking down upon them clinically and dispassionately: "Valle-Inclán mira ahora clinica y despasionadamente a un

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85. Lyon, Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 91.

mundo gallego moralmente frío en el que se manifiestan jirones de inhumanidad y de humanidad--más aquellos que éstos . . ."[86]

A result of this detachment is a dehumanization of the characters. While it is true that characters of the earlier Galician plays had grotesque and animal characteristics, they had very human qualities as well. Don Juan Manuel Montenegro's manservant Don Galán, besides his grotesque, animal behavior, was truly devoted and loyal to his beloved master and feels deep love and tenderness for Sabelita. In Divinas palabras, Valle-Inclán uses a technique of dehumanization more similar to the method he employed in La reina castiza, made much more incongruous here because of the beauty of the setting.

The larger-than-life Don Juan Manuel Montenegro was the major figure of the Comedias bárbaras. In El embrujado, Pedro Bolaño, a powerful landowner vied with Rosa la Galana, an equally powerful witch. In Divinas palabras, the only recurring character with any authority is a sacristan--Pedro Gailo, the hen-pecked, cuckolded husband of Mari-Gaila. The first character to appear, Valle-Inclán describes him as "un viejo fúnebre, amarillo de cara y manos, barbas mal rapadas,

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86. Sumner Greenfield, "Divinas palabras y la nueva faz de Galicia" in Valle-Inclán; An Appraisal, p. 577.

sotana y roquete. Sacude los dedos, sopla sobre las yermas renegridas, las rasca en las columnas del pórtico. Y es siempre a conversar consigo mismo, huraño el gesto, las oraciones deshilvanadas."[87] He is cross-eyed and has only four hairs on his head, which stand on end when he is agitated. He is an ineffectual man, easily manipulated by the stronger women in his life. When the Deputy suggests that he and his sister share Laureano, Marica del Reino awaits her brother's opinion. His response is completely noncommittal: "Lo que propone aquí este vecino honrado en un consejo, y a nosotros comple tomarlo o dejarlo. Mi sentir ya está manifiesto, el tuyo debes declararlo."[88] Coerced by his sister to avenge his honor, in Act II Scene 6, he drunkenly boasts to his daughter how he will sharpen his knife and cut off his wife's head. Moments later, the pathetic cuckold decides to pay back his unfaithful wife in kind by being unfaithful himself--committing incest with their child. Simoniña puts an end to that scheme by pushing her feeble, drunken father into his own bed. When he learns of Laureano's death, he is afraid he might have to testify. Usually a ridiculous figure, when he climbs to the bell tower Valle-Inclán likens him to bird beating its wings.

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87. Valle-Inclán, Divinas palabras, p. 13.

88. Ibid., p. 42.

Pedro Gailo´s sister, Juana la Reina, also flails her limbs about. As she is dying, Valle-Inclán describes her arms as the blades of a wind-mill. When she is dead, he calls her a suffering relic with shin-bones sticking out from her dress like two candles. Her surviving sister, Marica del Reino, is a serpentlike hypocrite. Juana´s fellow beggar, Rosa la Tatula, is a hunchbacked, toothless, old hag. Simoniña, the only child of Pedro Gailo and Mari-Galia is a graceless child, "abobada, lechosa, redonda con algo de luna, de vaca y de pan."[89] As greedy as the other women of her family, she only mourns her cousin´s death when she sees the money her mother has collected and realizes there will be no more. Then she wails, "¡Ya se fue el sol de nuestra puerta! ¡Ya se acabó el bien de nuestra casa! ¡Ay, que se fue de este mundo sin mirar por nos!"[90]

Lucero, also known as Séptimo Miau and Compadre Miau, is a sinister rogue who travels from fair to fair with his trained dog and bird. As his names suggest, he is identified with the devil and has the stealth and many lives of a cat. At the play´s start, he is traveling with his mistress and their child. He regards his son only as a nuisance and his response to the mother´s fears that

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89. Ibid., p. 30.

90. Ibid., p. 96.

something may happen to the boy is that they can always make another. His bird Colorín, however, is irreplaceable and he worries about whether it has enough seed. We learn from his mistress that he has killed another man. His mistress is named Poca Pena, an appropriate name for the kind of care she receives from him. Valle-Inclán generalizes her character so much so that "[a] esta mujer la conocen con diversos nombres, y, según cambian las tierras, es Julia, Rosina, Matilde, Pepa la Morena."[91] Lucero's frequent partner-in-crime, is Miguelín el Padrones, an effeminate thief who constantly licks a mole in the corner of his mouth. This mole is later shaved off by Lucero in retribution for giving Laureano the fatal dose of brandy.

Minor characters of the play are often reduced to animal attributes and, sometimes, are not even members of the animal kingdom. Marica la Reina's neighbors are hens and chickens. The old women are mantillas. Two members of the Guardia Civil are a pair of three-cornered hats.

As in La Marquesa Rosalinda and La farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, as human beings become more like animals, animals take on human characteristics. The bird Colorín tells fortunes and the dog Coimbra coughs like an old woman.

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91. Ibid., p. 14.

But, in Divinas palabras, the epitome of the grotesque--in terms of ugliness, animal, and even sub-animal qualities--is Laureano, the filthy, epileptic, orphaned hydrocephalic dwarf. Like an animal, he sleeps on straw--in the cart his mother pushes throughout the countryside, displaying her son as a freak. He earns brandy by imitating animals, thunder, or firecrackers. In El embrujado, Pedro Bolaño and Rosa la Galana were fighting over a child. In Divinas palabras, Laureano's aunts and uncle are fighting over a commodity. When Mari-Gaila hears of Juana la Reina's death, she vows to take care of the cart. When the Deputy suggests that the families share Laureano, he explains the arrangement in terms of different owners sharing time in a mill.

Laureano dies a gruesome death, gasping for breath in the midst of an epilectic attack, writhing and clawing at his straw mattress as the patrons of the tavern look on--and as Mari-Gaila, responsible for his welfare, is off with Lucero. Even after death, he knows no dignity. Flies swarm around him. Simoniña sneaks him and the cart to Marica del Reina's house in the middle of the night. Before dawn, he is half-eaten by pigs. Still treated as a commodity, he is decked out in a crown of camellias, and a badly sewn, gawdy shroud, with a plate lying on his swollen belly to collect money for his burial.

However, in the midst of all this ugliness, there is one character of some beauty--the adultress Mari-Gaila. Fair-skinned, blonde, graceful, witty, and full of life, she outshines all the women of the region. But underneath these attributes lies the same greed as her countrymen. It is she who comes up with the lucrative idea of displaying Laureano´s private parts and she who consistently cheats her sister-in-law by keeping the cart longer than her allotted time. Mari-Gaila does not suffer the physical distortion that Valle-Inclán´s other characters undergo in the play. Instead, her actions are deflated, recognized by her own countrywomen as histrionic displays.

When learning of her sister-in-law´s death, she ostentatiously enacts a scene worthy of Greek tragedy: "MARI-GAILA deja caer el cantaro, desanuda el pañuelo que lleva a la cabeza, y . . . abre los brazos en ritmos trágicos y antiguos. . . . Detenida en lo alto del camino, abre la curva cadenciosa de los brazos, con las curvas sensuales de la voz."[92] She bewails her grief, but her performance is quickly deflated by the knowing countrywomen:

> MARI-GAILA
> ¡Escacha el cántaro, Simoniña! ¡Simonina, escacha el cántaro! ¡Que triste sino! ¡Acabar como la hija de un déspota! ¡Nunca jamás querer acogerse al abrigo de su familia! ¡Ay cuñada, no te llamaba la sangre, y te

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92. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

llamó para siempre la tierra, que todos pisan, de una vereda! ¡Escacha el cántaro, Simoniña!

UNA MUJERUCA

¡No hay otra para un para un planto!

OTRA MUJERUCA

De la cuña le viene esa gracia.

OTRA MUJERUCA

Corta castellano como una alcaldesa.[93]

Besides deflating her dramatic moments, Valle-Inclán lowers her to the level of Laureano before she is redeemed. Discovered with Lucero, she is captured by the angry mob and placed, as naked as she had stripped Laureano, in a straw-filled cart, thus undergoing the same public humiliation she inflicted on her nephew.

But debasing his characters (either by deflating, dehumanizating, or rendering them physically grotesque), as Paul Ilie notes, is only one method of ridicule. "Religious motifs, or semi-moralistic vestiges of them, would be another."[94] It is this area that marks the greatest departure of Divinas palabras from the previous Galician plays.

In Aguila de blasón, Romance de lobos, and El embrujado superstitious beliefs were real. Adherence to Christian doctrine, even if not traditionally orthodox, was also sincere. This sincerity is changed in Divinas palabras.

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93. Ibid. p. 31.

94. Ilie, "The Grotesque," p. 513.

Of course, the folk heritage is still apparent. Oncoming death is again predicted by a howling dog. Serenín de Bretal, a neighbor of Marica del Reino, believes that the moon killed Laureano, as it makes mad and then kills the already perturbed.[95]

Fortune telling by cards, so important in El embrujado, is prominent in Divinas palabras. Mari-Gaila believes in the ill fortune caused by the suit of spades. When she learns of Laureano's death, she remembers that she had found the seven of spades buried in the sand when she was with Lucero. Later, Rosa la Tatula reminds her that the cards foretold love for her three times. Mari-Gaila scoffs at this, but is clearly attracted to Lucero.

Mari-Gaila also believes in the truth of prophetic dreams. In Act II Scene ii, she tells Miguelín that she has dreamed of a man for three nights and that if Lucero bears the face of the man of her dreams, she will believe he has a pact with the Devil. Lucero's demonic quality is underscored by the folk belief that the Demon can take the shape of a dark man.[96] As a prelude to their love-making, Lucero bites Mari-Gaila's lips:

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95. Speratti-Piñero, El ocultismo, p. 28.

96. Ibid., p. 59.

SEPTIMO MIAU
¡Bebí tu sangre!
MARI-GAILA
A ti me entrego.
SEPTIMO MIAU
¿Sabes quién soy?
MARI-GAILA
¡Eres mi negro![97]

But, in Divinas palabras, Valle-Inclán demystifies the closely held beliefs of the earlier plays. Superstition is usually a cynical means of conning one's fellow man. Coimbra indicates with its paws that Pedro Gailo will be a cuckold, but this act is part of a repertoire of carnival tricks that Lucero has taught it. Colorín picks up the paper containing Mari-Gaila's fortune with its beak, but this is also part of Lucero's carnival routine. While Mari-Gaila takes the card bearing the seven of spades, Lucero successfully uses it as a means to seduce Mari-Gaila:

MARI-GAILA
¡Las siete espadas! ?Cómo se interpreta?
SEPTIMO MIAU
Que de siete trabajos te recompensas durmiendo esta noche con Séptimo.
MARI-GAILA
¿Y si duermo la semana?
SEPTIMO MIAU
De su vida entera.
MARI-GAILA
¡Se proclama usted Dios!
SEPTIMO MIAU
No conozco a ese sujeto.[98]

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97. Valle-Inclán, Divinas palabras, p. 76.

98. Ibid., p. 74.

Marica del Reino also uses the trappings of superstition in an effort to achieve her own ends. Furious at her sister-in-law for keeping the cart past the allotted time and eager to gain permanent custody of her nephew since he has proven so profitable, she tells a neighbor that her sister´s ghost appeared to her, begging her to take the child.

Valle-Inclán applies the pattern of demystifying superstitious beliefs to Christianity as well. In Aguila de blasón, the Child Jesus led the holy Doña María in her search to rescue and save the soul of her beloved niece. In Divinas palabras, the lewd and hairy Goat Goblin, a representation of Mari-Gaila´s sexual restlessness,[99] gives her a sensuous ride as she attempts to dispose of her dead nephew´s body.

As in the area of superstition, there are false counterparts for true Christian beliefs, and people who cynically use Christianity for their own ends. Along with the carnival denizens, there appears a Christian family--two old parents and their young daughter--on a pilgrimage. They contrast greatly to the other occupants of the tavern as they eat their simple meal. Valle-Inclán describes then in religious terms:

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99. Speratti-Piñero, El ocultismo, p. 58.

> A canto del hogar, un matrimonio de dos viejos, y una niña blanca con hábito morado, reparten la cena. Rosquillas, vino y un pañuelo con guindas. La niña, extática, parece una figura de cera entre aquellos dos viejos de retablo, con las arrugas vien dibujadas y los rostros de un ocre caliente y melado, como los pastores de una Adoración.[100]

The young girl offers Laureano some food. He behaves obscenely. She places her offerings in the cart and returns to her parents, "abstraída y extática. Con su hábito morado y sus manos de cera, parece una virgen mártir entre dos viejas figuras de retablo"[101]

These religious people are not, however, the only pilgrims we meet in Divinas palabras. The penitent who sleeps on a pillow of stone, with whom the Ciego of Gondar and Mari-Gaila share their provisions, turns out to be the Polish Count, a notorious criminal hunted by the Guardia Civil.

Of the main characters, the figure who conforms most to true Christianity is the simple sacristan. His sister, who tried to use the questionable appearance of Juana la Reina's ghost to take Laureano from Mari-Gaila, now tries to use Mari-Gaila's sin to dispose of her sister-in-law forever. She demands that her brother restore the family honor. This request is absurd because there is no

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100. Valle-Inclán, Divinas palabras, p. 85.

101. Ibid., p. 86.

indication of a tradition of honor in her family in the first place. Laureano, after all, was a bastard and Juana la Reina died after a long bout with venereal disease. Nevertheless, Marica del Reino will do anything she can to be rid of Mari-Gaila--including sacrificing her own brother. Pedro Gailo is weak enough to give in to his sisters´s demands for revenge, but his heart is not in it. It is no wonder that his plan to cut off his wife´s head becomes a feeble and unsuccessful attempt to sleep with his daughter, and ends in a drunken stupor.

Ineffectual as he appears, Pedro Gailo is not a complete fool. He is very aware when religion is hypocritically used because of greed, hatred, or jealousy. When Marica talks of his "fate," he rails against her and her fellow hypocrital gossips and is shocked that she is willing to sacrifice him so easily: "El sino que me dan las lenguas murmuradoras. ¡Abrasadas sean tantas malas lenguas! ¡Así se pierde a un hombre de bien que iba por su camino sin faltar! ¡Cuitado de mi! Marica, hermana mía, ¿cómo de considerarlo no te entra la mayor pena?"[102] It is this man, in the spirit of true Christianity, who utters the divine words, dispells the mob, and forgives his wife.

What is the effect of the divine words? On one

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102. Ibid., p. 70.

level, it is possible to see them as another means of ridicule. The words of Christ, spoken by a hen-pecked cuckold, serve to disperse an angry mob. But the mob is ignorant of the words' meaning and, therefore, learns nothing. What follows is not ridiculous. As Emilio González López notes, there is irony and paradox in the situation, but not in the use of the words themselves. The loftiness of the Biblical words is contrasted to the base human passions of the ignorant crowd; the noble language opposes the curses of the mob; the words of Christ are spoken by an ugly, cuckolded sacristan.[103]

Though the words themselves are incongrous under these conditions, they do have a true magical power. In La lámpara maravillosa, Valle-Inclán wrote,"[e]l verbo de los poetas, como el de los santos, no requiere descifrarse por gramática para mover las almas. Su esencia el el milagro musical."[104] Such a miracle is enacted in Divinas palabras. In the stage direction after Pedro Gailo's pronouncement, Valle-Inclán writes

> Milagro del latín! Una emoción religiosa y litúrgica conmueve las conciencias y cambia el sangriento resplandor de las rostros. Las viejas almas infantiles respiran un aroma de vida eterna. No falta quien se esquive con sobresalto y quien aconseje cordura.

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103. González López, Arte dramático, pp. 175-76.

104. Valle-Inclán, La lámpara, p. 42.

> Las palabras latinas, con su temblor enigmático y litúrgico, vuelan del cielo de los milagros.[105]

After the dispersal of the crowd, as the now calm Mari-Gaila is led to the Church, the camellia-crowned head of Laureano appears like the head of an angel. The play ends as Mari-Gaila enters the Church, which Valle-Inclán describes as "circundada del aúreo y religioso prestigio, que en aquel mundo milagrero, de almas rudas, intuye el latín ignoto de las DIVINAS PALABRAS."[106]

So, despite the base actions of the ignoble characters of Divinas palabras, a miracle does take place. As Antonio Buero Vallejo indicates, the divine words succeed on three levels. The mob is calmed; the adultress is saved because the crowd subconsciously intuits the meaning of the Latin words; and, as shown by Laureano's angelic appearance, every human creature is sacred.[107]

In Divinas palabras, Valle-Inclán does not create characters to view from one's knees, as in the Comedias bárbaras, or stand alongside, as in El embrujado. Instead, he has given us ugly, ignorant, selfish, scheming, and greedy characters whom he views detachedly from above. But,

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105. Valle-Inclán, Divinas palabras, p. 136.

106. Ibid., p. 137.

107. Buero Vallejo, "De rodillas . . . ," p. 139.

even here, there is a power, a tradition, an eternal lesson, that can work miracles. In Luces de bohemia, we will see an end of tradition and hear Latin prayer referred to as the slang "gori-gori."

In a fascinating study, Manuel Bermejo Marcos interprets Divinas palabras as an esperpentization of Spanish political events and figures during 1885-1902, the Regency of María Cristina.[108] In 1885, as Alfonso XII lay dying, the Conservative politician Antonio Cánovas del Castillo and his Liberal counterpart Práxedes Sangasta signed the Pacto del Pardo, guaranteeing the continuation of the royal line. Cánovas and Sagasta agreed to take turns governing the country for Alfonso XIII during his minority.[109] Bermejo Marcos finds a parallel to this Pact in the agreement between Pedro Gailo, Marica del Reino, and Mari-Gaila to take turns governing Laureano after the death of Juana la Reina. The pigs devour parts of Laureano, just as the United States devoured Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines in 1898. The Latin words reflect the oratory of the Spanish Cortes and the many politicians whose orders determined the fate of a populace that rarely understood

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108. Manuel Bermejo Marcos, Valle-Inclán: introducción a su obra (Salamanca: Ediciones Anaya, S.A., 1971), pp. 198-225.

109. Gerald Brenan, The Spanish Labyrinth (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964), p. 5.

their meaning.

While all the elements of Bermejo Marcos´s thesis may not be equally convincing, it is difficult to read Divinas palabras and ignore the striking political parallels. But, for an explicit treatment of a more contempory political, cultural, and social climate, we can turn to Luces de bohemia. In this work, Valle-Inclán employs all the techniques he has used in the other plays of 1920--disruption, dehumanization, and demystification--and calls for a new dramatic form, the esperpento.

CHAPTER V

LUCES DE BOHEMIA

In Divinas palabras, despite the manipulation of superstitious and religious beliefs by charlatans, a miracle did take place, proving the everlasting power of the Biblical divine words. In Farsa y licencia de la Reina castiza, grotesque, dehumanized characters practiced their various corruptions in a stylized, victimless world based on historical figures, but removed in time. In Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey, Mari-Justina lost her dreams and illusions. But the world to which she awoke was not a vile one; it was just not the beautiful one she saw when the sun distorted her vision.

In Luces de bohemia, there is no spiritual apotheosis and there are no divine words to establish order and forgiveness and show that every human being is sacred. The dehumanized characters prey upon one another, as in La Reina castiza, but this time there are consequences. Victims suffer greatly in a contemporary arena. As in La enamorada del rey, the protagonist's view of the world is shattered, but the disillusionment is far more widespread.

Mari-Justina's illusion centered around her king. For Max Estrella, all human beings become grotesque deformations of classical ideals as they parade before distorting mirrors in a world that is itself a grotesque distortion of civilization.

Luces de bohemia follows the last hours of the life of the blind poet Máximo Estrella as he, like Dante, descends to hell, contemporary Madrid, with his Virgil, Don Latino Hispalis.[1] The play begins in Max's garret after his receipt of a rejection notice for his latest work. He despondently suggests to his wife that they and their daughter end their lives. They are interrupted by the arrival of Don Latino who brings more bad news. He was unable to get a fair price for the books the poet had asked him to sell. They leave to call on the cheating book dealer, but Max's daughter knows they will end up in the tavern of Pica Lagartos.[2]

In the tavern, Max pawns his overcoat to pay for a lottery ticket. The boy he sent on the errand returns,

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1. Anthony N. Zahareas, "Notes," in Luces de bohemia, trans. Anthony N. Zahareas and Gerald Gillespie, Edinburgh Bilingual Library, no. 10 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 224.

2. Scene ii, the visit to the bookseller, was added by Valle-Inclán in a 1924 revision of the play. It will be considered, along with the other interpolated scenes, at the end of this chapter.

bloodied, and tells of fighting in the streets. In the confusion La Pisa-Bien, a prostitute, goes off with Max´s ticket and he and Don Latino pursue her. After overtaking her in the street, they enter a bakery frequented by the Modernist poets. They become uproarious and Max is arrested for disturbing the peace. The young poets follow him to police headquarters. At the police station, Max continues to offend the authorities and he is hauled off to jail.[3] His followers storm the editorial offices of El Popular whose editor, after arguing politics and theosophy, arranges Max´s release.

From jail, Max goes to the Ministry of Interior Affairs to seek redress for his arrest. Don Paco, the Minister, a past friend, arranges a monthly pension for Max, which the poet accepts instead of the punishment of the police he came to demand.

Next, he and Don Latino visit the Cafe Colón, habitat of Rubén Darío. Max extravagantly spends the money he has gotten from Don Paco on dinner and champagne. They discuss death, philosophy, and religion. Darío recites the end of his latest poem as Valle-Inclán evokes fin-de-siecle Paris and Paul Verlaine.

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3. Max´s jail scene with the young anarchist, another 1924 interpolation, will be discussed below.

Later, as they walk through a park, Max and Don Latino are accosted by two prostitutes. The old whore, a parody of Tasso´s Armida, goes off with Don Latino. The young one tries to seduce Max--"Christ with Mary Magdalene; and Don Quijote with Maritornes."[4]

Returning home, the cold and dying Max expresses his new aesthetics to the unsympathetic Don Latino.[5] Tragedy, people, and Spain itself have become esperpentos--grotesque deformations. As Max hallucinates about his own funeral, the frightened Latino abandons the poet, returning only to retrieve the dying man´s wallet. A neighbor and concierge find Max´s body.

Max´s wake is a grotesque farce as his body is subjected to indignities in an attempt to determine whether or not he is actually dead. After services, two mourners remain in the cemetery--Ruben Dario and the well-known character from Valle-Incl´n´s earlier works, the marqu´s de Bradom´n. They discuss differences in Hellenic and Christian beliefs, and are led out of the cemetery by two gravediggers, reminding them of Ophelia´s funeral.

The final scene is set once more in Pica Lagartos´s

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4. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 252.

5. Scene xi, the third 1924 interpolation, dealing with the victims of the political situation, will also be treated at the end of this chapter.

tavern. Ostentatiously mourning, the drunk Latino vows to publish Max´s writings and give all the proceeds to the family. He says nothing of giving them the money he now has, after cashing in Max´s winning lottery ticket. As the low-life denizens claim shares of the prize money, an old newspaper woman announces the suicide of two women--Max´s wife and daughter. Distancing himself from any responsibility, Latino attributes the suicide to grief for Max since the women were used to being poor and hungry. Pica Lagartos remarks, "¡El mundo es una controversia!"[6] Don Latino, thief of what is rightfully Max´s to the end, solomnly declares it an esperpento.

In Luces de bohemia, unlike Divinas palabras, there is no divine power in which to have faith. In general, the first-rate minds are disbelieving, finding no comfort in Christian dogma. The hangers-on merely mouth the tenets of the latest theological fads. In Scene vii, Don Latino banters with Don Filberto, the editor from whom he seeks help in obtaining Max´s release from prison. Don Filberto quotes Rubén Darío and proudly states that he reads and, sometimes, admires the geniuses of modernism. He writes stories as well. Quite the wit, he gives the assembled

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6. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, ed. Zahareas and Gillespie, p. 220.

group examples of his repartee, ending with, "Teosóficamente podría explicársela a ustedes, si estuviesen ustedes inicidiados en la noble Doctrina del Karma."[7] Don Latino then feels called upon to establish his own credentials in the field. "[T]his discussion," writes Anthony Zahareas, "reflects a favourite topic of the time, but made pretentious in order to satirize pseudo-intellectuals. Fascinating ideas are bandied about by frivolous thinkers."[8] In Scene ix Latino, eager to impress Rubén Darío, tries to capitalize on the poet´s interest in celestial mathematics, prompting an exasperated Max to cry, "¡Calla, Pitagoras!"[9] Darío is grateful that there still are mysteries, that all cannot be understood: ¡"Se obran prodigios! Afortunadamente no los vemos ni los entedemos. Sin esta ignorancia, la vida sería un enorme sobrecogimiento."[10] Latino, less profound, is much more certain about the order of things. Darío admits to Christian beliefs of God, Christ, Heaven, and Hell. Max, however, believes in nothing after death: "Para mí, no hay

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7. Ibid., p. 140.

8. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 242.

9. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 164.

10. Ibid.

nada tras la ultima mueca. Si hay algo, vendré a decírtelo."[11] In Scene xii, the dying Max asks Latino to recite a prayer, but he uses the term "gori-gori," "a humorous colloquialism for the Latin prayers mumbled by priests at funerals."[12] At the cemetery, the marqués de Bradomín and Rubén Darío exchange religious views on death. Darío prefers the Greeks who sanctified life. Bradomín prefers the Christian santification of death. However, when Darío suggests they return the next day to place a crucifix on Max's grave, Bradomín replies, "¡Mañana!" Mañana habremos los dos olvidado ese cristiano propósito."[13] Spiritual beliefs have indeed degenerated when even a self-prophessed Christian cannot be sure he'll remember to sanctify a friend's grave.

Even though Valle-Inclán looked at the characters of Divinas palabras with detachment, the miraculous power of the divine words intervened with supernatural effect. In Luces de bohemia there is no intervention. The characters have to fend for themselves and the weak and poor are at the mercy of the crafty and politically strong. Valle-Incláń handles these crafty characters as he handled those of

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11. Ibid., p. 166.

12. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 256.

13. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 206.

La Reina Castiza; he deforms and dehumanizes them.

It is fitting that Don Latino Hispalis makes his first appearance with a dog because the dog is the animal with which Valle-Inclán associates him most. Max, referring to Latino, tells Don Paco that his "dog" is waiting for him. When the usher says that the only one waiting for him is an old fellow, he confirms his claim with, "Don Latino de Hispalis: mi perro."[14] At Max's wake, Latino calls himself the poet's faithful dog. It is his dog that knocks down one of Max's funeral candles. Latino is associated with other animals as well. When singing with the Modernists, he boasts that he can reach lower notes than a hog. Max refers to him as a Hispalic pig and also as an illustrious camel. When he hallucinates before his death, Max claims Latino has turned into an illustrious ox from the stable at Bethlehem. When Max explains the aesthetics of the esperpento, Latino meows. Enriqueta la Pisa-Bien, the prostitute, calls Latino a crazy goat.

Don Latino de Hispalis (Hispalis, being the Latin name for Seville) is not based on a specific literary figure, although he does typify the greedy followers who hoped to profit from their associations with the Modernists. Dorio de Gadex, however, is based on the writer Eduardo de

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14. Ibid., p. 158.

Ory who was, in the words of Anthony Zahareas, "a facile writer, a vagabond and an irritating snob and know-all."[15] He adds that de Ory was a known plagiarist. In Luces de bohemia, he is an ugly, hunchbacked, plucked bird. Valle-Inclán describes his greeting to Max, "¡Padre y Maestro Mágico, salud!," as "versallesco y grotesco."[16] Dorio de Gadex holds the masses in contempt and expresses surprise that Max listens to their "braying."

Don Filberto, the newspaper editor, has hook-like fingers. He also has the hands of a skeleton scribe at the Day of Judgement. Instead of hands, La Pisa-Bien has claws with which she tries to get hold of Max's lottery ticket. Her pimp, El Rey de Portugal, shakes his shoulders like a dog trying to shake off fleas.

As in La Reina castiza and Divinas palabras, characters often become less than animals. The Modernists, as they run to the newspaper office, become "[c]halinas flotantes, pipas apagadas, romanticas greñas"--articles of clothing and clumps of hair.[17] This identification is stressed when they arrive at their destination: "greñas,

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15. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 233.

16. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 116.

17. Ibid., p. 128.

pipas, gabanes repelados, y alguna capa."[18] At Max´s wake, Dorio de Gadex, Clarinito, and Pérez--fellow Modernists--are described as three funeral puppets. After the funeral, as the tavern frequenters demand part of Max´s winnings, Don Latino´s hands droop like a puppet´s.

Also, as in the earlier plays, animals take on human characteristics and objects advance to animal or human behavior. The dog that urinates as Max lies dying has bleary eyes like a poet´s. In the newspaper office, the telephone rings like a cricket and, at the Ministry, it urinates in the lap of the Minister´s secretary.

But, while the dehumanization of people, the humanization of animals, and the animation of objects are similar to that of La Reina Castiza, there are essential differences in the characters of Luces de bohemia. In La Reina Castiza, the characters were generally so despicable that no one could really worry about their fates. In Luces de bohemia, there are victims. The play ends with the news that Max´s wife and young daughter have committed suicide--an act Madama Collet deplored in the first scene.

The main victim, of course, is Max Estrella. Valle-Inclán´s model for his protagonist was Alejandro Sawa, a Modernist writer who had spent much time with the

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18. Ibid., p. 136.

symbolists in Paris. It may have been Sawa who started the close friendship between Valle-Inclán and Rubén Darío. At any rate, the lives of Sawa, Darío, and Valle-Inclán were linked. Sawa, like Max, died "blind, crazy, and furious," leaving an unpublished manuscript. His suffering and death greatly disturbed Valle-Inclán, who described his end in a letter to Darío:

> Vengo a verle después de haber estado en casa de nuestro pobre Alejandro Sawa. He llorado delante del muerto, por él, por mí y por todos los pobres poetas. Yo no puedo hacer nada; usted tampoco, pero si nos juntamos unos cuantos algo podríamos hacer.
>
> Alejandro deja un libro inédito. Lo mejor que ha escrito. Un diario de esperanzas y tribulaciones.
>
> El fracaso de todos sus intentos para publicarlo y una carta donde le retiraban una colaboración de sesenta pesetas que tenía en El liberal, le volvieron loco en los últimos días. Una locura desesperada. Quería matarse. Tuvo el final de un rey de tragedia: loco, ciego y furioso.[19]

In 1916, Rubén Darío died and Valle-Inclán felt that loss even more deeply: "¡Es horrible! ¿Con quién comentaré ahora mi Lámpara maravillosa? Rubén hubiera tomado su whiskey, yo mi píldora de cáñamo índico, y nos hubiéramos internado en el misterio. Él era un hombre que estaba en contacto con lo misterioso."[20]

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19. Allen W. Phillips, "Sobre Luces de bohemia y su realidad literaria," in Appraisal, p. 601.

20. Phillips, "Ruben Darío y Valle-Inclán: historia de una amistad literaria," Temas del modernismo hispánicos y otros estudios (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1974), p. 170.

But Max Estrella exists not only as Alejandro Sawa or even, as suggested by Jean-Paul Borel, as a reflection of Valle-Inclán himself[21]--but as a dramatic character in the same mold as Don Juan Manuel Montenegro. Valle-Inclán describes Max as "un gran carácter clásicoarcaico, recuerda los Hermes."[22] We see him, as we saw Don Juan Manuel--particularly in Romance de lobos--as a once-great figure, helpless at the end of his life. As Don Juan cried "Ya soy pobre" to the sea, Max Estrella lashes out against his condition: "¡La Academia me ingora! ¡Yo soy el primer poeta de España! ¡El primero! ¡El primero! ¡Y ayuno![23]

Both Don Juan Manuel and Max are the last of their lines--Don Juan, the last hidalgo and Max, the last symbolist poet. Don Juan leaves behind his sons who reject his tradition and steal his possessions. Max leaves his followers who cannot carry on his tradition and Don Latino, who takes his lottery ticket, manuscript, and ideas.

The Modernist poets of Luces de bohemia (with the exception of Rubén Darío who had, in fact, died before the play was written) are, at worst, literary thieves and, at

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21. Jean-Paul Borel, El teatro de lo imposible, trans. G. Torrente Ballester (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1966), p. 214.

22. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 88.

23. Ibid., pp. 116-18.

best, pretentious, untalented hangers-on. They are wonderfully evoked by Juan Ramón Jiménez as he describes entering a room in which Valle-Inclán was reading Rubén Darío's Cosas del Cid aloud to between eight and fifteen followers:

> Todo feo, sucio, incómodo. Lo único bueno, al parecer, es el alcohol en sus múltiples destilaciones y etiquetas. Rubén Darío pide una vez y otra 'whisky con soda,' coñac Martel Trois Etoiles. Personajes todos, sin duda; pero yo sólo me fijo en Rubén Darío, que oye estático, y en Valle-Inclán, que recita metido. . . . Rubén Darío, botarga, pasta, plasta, no dice más que 'admirable' y . . .[l]os demas repiten 'admirable, admirable,' con vario tono, relijioso, corriente, murmurado. "Admirable' es la palabra alta de la época, 'imbécil' la baja. Con 'admirable' e 'imbécil' se hizo la critica modernista. Rubén Darío, por ejemplo, 'admirable;' Echegaray, 'imbécil,' por ejemplo.[24]

The Modernist poets of Luces de bohemia are portrayed by Valle-Inclán in an even more outrageous manner. They become a light opera chorus, a "troop of nightingales," in the words of Don Latino.[25] Led by Dorio de Gadex, in Scene iv, they become imbecilic chanters:

> DORIO
> El Enano de la Venta.
> CORO DE MODERNISTAS
> ¡Cuenta! ¡Cuenta! ¡Cuenta!
> DORIO
> Con bravatas de valiente.

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24. Jiménez, "Valle-Inclán," pp. 91-92.

25. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 118.

CORO DE MODERNISTAS
¡Miente! ¡Miente! ¡Miente!
DORIO
Quiere gobernar la Harca.
CORO DE MODERNISTAS
¡Charca! ¡Charca! ¡Charca!
DORIO
Y es un Tartufo Malsín.
CORO DE MODERNISTAS
¡Sin! ¡Sin! ¡Sin!
DORIO
Sin un adarme de seso.
CORO DE MODERNISTAS
¡Eso! ¡Eso! ¡Eso!
DORIO
Pues tiene hueca la bola.
CORO DE MODERNISTAS
¡Chola! ¡Chola! ¡Chola!
DORIO
Pues tiene la chola hueca.
CORO DE MODERNISTAS
¡Eureka! ¡Eureka! ¡Eureka![26]

The mindless Modernists are not the only literary figures in Luces de bohemia. Government figures want to be known as creative, witty, and sensitive as well. Besides the editor, who proudly discussed theosophy with Don Latino, the Ministry of Interior Affairs has its poets. When Max enters to obtain satisfaction for his arrest and ill treatment, he is intercepted by Dieguito García, the Minister's deputy, who tells Max that he, too, is a writer and may one day return to his calling: "Yo tengo la nostalgia del periodismo...Pienso hacer algo...Hace tiempo acaricio la idea de una hoja volandera, un periódico ligero, festivo,

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26. Ibid., pp. 118-20.

espuma de champaña, fuego de virutas."[27] After Max's departure, the Minister--who once wrote poems to Max's sister--tells his assistant how happy he is that he escaped Max's cruel fate by giving up poetry. But, he adds--unaware that he is addressing a fellow artist manqué, Dieguito cannot understand this. He was not born a poet.

His Excellency plays his scene with Max for all that it is worth. Although he truly admires and pities his old friend, he, as Concha of Brandesco, cannot resist the dramatic possibilities of this reunion. As Max, also overacting, comes forward for a farewell embrace, His Excellency, "tripudo, repintado, mantecoso, responde con un arranque de cómico viejo, en el buen melodrama francés."[28] After Max's departure, His Excellency gestures--"[a]quel gesto manido de actor de carácter en la gran escena del reconocimiento."[29]

Pretentious and self-conscious as he is, the Minister is correct about the suffering and degradation of a poet. As Max resembles Don Juan Manuel Montenegro in his plight and legacy, he evokes memories of Laureano in Divinas palabras in his dying and after his death. As Max lies

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27. Ibid., p. 150.

28. Ibid., p. 156.

29. Ibid., p. 158.

dying, a dog urinates in the street. Don Latino returns, only to take his wallet--just as Miguelín took Juana la Reina´s purse as soon as she died. As the concierge and a neighbor open the front door, Max´s body slides over the threshold. To the neighbor, Max´s body, like Laureano´s, represents little more than an inconvenience.

Max´s casket, like Laureano´s, is a shoddy affair--though not in this case for lack of caring. It is a crude, narrow pine box, so badly made that a sharp nail almost scratches Max´s temple. Don Latino indulges in the same ostentatious mourning as in Divinas palabras. He tries to deny his drunkenness by claiming that it is true sorrow that causes his breath to smell of brandy. He quotes from Max´s writings and, as he is firmly escorted out, his dog jumps over Max´s corpse and knocks down one of the funeral candles. Max´s ordeal is still not over. The sinister Basilio Soulinake, also known as the Russian anarchist and writer Ernesto Bark, appears. Valle-Inclán describes him as "un hombre alto, abotonado, escueto, grandes barbas rojas de judío anarquista y ojos envidiosos, bajo el testud de bisonte obstinado."[30] He immediately starts a controversy by stating that Max is not dead but catatonic. The drunken coachman resolves the ensuing argument by prying open Max´s

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30. Ibid., pp. 194-96.

hand and burning his thumb as Claudinita, Max's daughter, howls and beats her head against the floor in horror.

The graveyard scene opens with the two gravediggers commenting on how unimpressive Max's funeral was. Even the two mourners who stayed behind--Bradomín and Darío--are more comfortable discussing philosophy, literature, and future plans than the recently departed Max Estrella.

What then becomes of Max? In Divinas palabras Laureano became an angel. Max does not believe in an afterlife. He can only live on in the memories of those who loved him and through his work. All of this becomes absurd. Don Latino will have charge of his manuscripts and what he can keep of the lottery money after Max's creditors have staked their claims. Max's wife and daughter, whom his winnings could have spared, are dead.

Jean-Paul Borel interprets the purpose of the three scenes after Max's death, as a means of showing how empty the world has become after Max is gone.[31] But this may be too sentimental a view. John Lyon, on the other hand, views Max's death as deliberately anti-climactic to avoid any sense of a tragic culmination and to show that "in the eyes of society, Max's death is as irrelevant as his life. . . . Valle wishes us to see that Max's grotesque

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31. Borel, Teatro de lo imposible, p. 218.

circumstances hound him to the grave and beyond."[32]

It is in Scene xii that Max actually describes the esperpento, an already existing term applied to ugly persons, things, or absurdities in general. Luces de bohemia, however, marks its first use as a literary genre.[33] Though we have seen "[l]os héroes clásicos reflejados en los espejos concavos"[34] throughout the play, the most obvious example of esperpentization is the plot itself--Max and Latino's descent to hell:

> La comedia de Dante, ya no divina, es ahora tragedia, sin Beatriz y sin Paraíso. Y el nuevo poeta inquisidor de tinieblas es grotesca máscara del altivo y espléndido Alighieri; él mismo yace en las tinieblas. Y su Virgilio es el más infiel, el más rastero de los lazarillos: don Latino, pedante, imbécil, ladron.[35]

Valle-Inclán intentionally took Dante and Virgil for a walk past the distorting mirrors. If inferior writers distort, it is not because of artistic intent but because they are unable to understand the classics. In the graveyard scene, Bradomín expresses his admiration of

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32. Lyon, Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 115.

33. Rubia Barcia suggests that Valle-Inclán may have been aware of the Mexican use of the term to describe certain theatrical pieces. See Zahareas, "Notes," p. 254.

34. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 182.

35. Emilio Miró, "Realidad y arte en 'Luces de bohemia,' Cuadernos hispanoamericanos 199-200 (July-August 1966):260.

Shakespeare´s ability to take a timid philosopher and a silly young girl and create a beautiful tragedy. He shudders to think what would happen to Hamlet if the Quintero brothers, popular comic playwrights of the day, had tackled Shakespeare´s material: "Querido Rubén, Hamlet y Ofelia, en nuestra dramática espanola, serían dos tipos recocijados. ¡Un tímido y una niña boba! ¡Lo que hubieran hecho los gloriosos hermanos Quintero!"[36]

In the 1920 version of Luces de bohemia it is mainly what has happened to literature and, specifically, to poets that gives Max the insight that life is grotesque and that the only way to recreate such grotesqueness is to take classic ideals and distort them. In La enamorada del rey, Mari-Justina dedicated herself to an impossible ideal and languished for love of her king. In Luces de bohemia, Max dedicates himself to poetry and suffers and dies in the world of Bohemia.

Max claims, in Scene iv, that he feels like one of the people but, at this time of great upheaval in Spain, he does not seem to be deeply affected by the political situation. True, he rails against Antonio Maura as he is being to taken to jail, but his attitude stems as much from the politician´s behavior as director of the Spanish

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36. Valle-Inclan, Luces de bohemia, p. 206.

Academy, as it does from his work as Prime Minister.[37] The Modernist poets repeat Max´s protests against Maura but, as we have already seen, they will repeat anything.

By the time Max uses the term esperpento, he has indeed been through hell. In one evening he has had a manuscript rejected, been cheated by a book dealer, bought a lottery ticket while his family was starving, gotten arrested and thrown in jail and, most important, sold his honor for a government pension. He has become no better than Don Latino: "Conste que he venido a pedir un desgravio para mi dignidad, y un castigo para unos canallas. Conste que no alcanzo ninguna de las dos cosas, y que me das dinero, y que lo acepto porque soy un canalla."[38]

John Lyon sees in this scene a pivotal shift in Max´s attitude towards himself: "Max goes to demand satisfaction for an offence to his dignity and ends up by accepting a cash payment on a regular basis. The heroic posture cannot survive this indignity and Max is now fully aware that he is tainted by the society he lives in."[39]

In Scene xii Max actually formulates his aesthetic theory for Don Latino. Classical heroes have tragedies.

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37. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 119.

38. Ibid., p. 156.

39. Lyon, Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 116.

But there are no classical heroes. Now they have become grotesque and absurd, as if they have passed before concave mirrors. Spain itself has become a grotesque deformation of Hellenic-Christian civilization.[40] Therefore, any sense of the tragic in Spanish life must be created by a systematically deforming aesthetic. In the esperpento, Max will transform classical norms with the mathematics of a concave mirror.[41]

In Luces de bohemia, Max arrives at a new view of reality. According to Ricardo Gullón, this use of the esperpento is "to approach reality in a more lucid and open-eyed way than the so-called realistic way. The idea [is] to discover what we might call the 'essence' of reality."[42]

Max discovered this reality and the aesthetics to recreate it through his own experiences. Mari-Justina had reality suddenly thrust upon her. In the 1924 Luces de bohemia, Max undergoes a similar experience as the realities of the outside world from which he was so isolated, are

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40. It is not until 1924 that Max states, "Espana es una deformacion grotesca de la civilizacion europea."

41. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 182.

42. Ricardo Gullón, "Reality of the Esperpento," in Valle-Inclán Centennial Studies (Austin: University of Texas, 1968), p. 125.

thrust upon him in Zaratustra's bookshop, a prison cell, and a street. These scenes trace Max's political education as he is confronted with life outside his Modernist Bohemia.

Scene ii, the bookshop, is an esperpento in its own right. Described as a cave and owned by a beetle-like, hunchbacked Zaratustra, it parodies Plato's cave and Nietzsche's Zarathustra.[43] The scene introduces us to the grotesque hell we are about to share with Max, it establishes the character of Don Latino, shows the Modernists' relation to the outside world, and introduces us to the prisoner who will start Max's political indoctrination.

Zaratustra inhabits his cave with a cunning mouse, a dog, a cat, and a parrot that recites, "¡Viva España!" He is a grotesque figure. Besides his animal appearance, Valle-Inclán likens him to a puppet. He has a puppet's features and hands, and is called an exploiting puppet.

Don Latino's canine characteristics are again established as Valle-Inclán describes his behavior as that of a cowardly dog barking from between its owner's legs. We see that Latino and Zaratustra are in collusion against Max. The books the poet has come to reclaim are still lying on the counter, but Zaratustra and Latino tell the blind man

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43. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 224.

they have already been sold. This glimpse of Don Latino will color our reactions to him for the rest of the play. We now know that even when he appears to be helping Max, he is not to be trusted.

We are better prepared for Max´s final comments on Spain as we hear him criticize her institutions. "España, en su concepción religiosa, es una tribu del Centro de África."[44] We also hear him scorn the Spanish people for their simplistic theology. "La miseria del pueblo español," he expounds, "la gran miseria moral, está en su chabacana sensibilidad ante los enigmas de la vida y de la muerte."[45] Here, Max exhibits his removal from reality. Hungry as he is, he is unaware of the plight of his poor countrymen. He condemns them for their lack of intellectual depth, never considering that lengthy philosophical conversations are a luxury only the few can enjoy.

While Max, Don Latino, and Don Peregrino Gay (a writer and traveller based on Ciro Bayo[46]) discuss comparative theology and the possibility of setting up a national church, life is going on outside the bookshop. Policemen and their handcuffed prisoner pass by, there is a

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44. Valle-Inclán, Luces de bohemia, p. 98.

45. Ibid., p. 100.

46. Zahareas, "Notes," p. 225.

great deal of noise, but the three Bohemian intellectuals continue their converstaion, ignoring everything else.

In Scene vi, Max comes closer to reality when he shares a cell with Mateo, the Catalan prisoner who had passed Zaratustra's bookstore. Now Max's formal political education begins.

The Catalan question, Gerald Brenan writes "poisoned the political atmosphere in Spain as much as the Irish question had poisoned that in England."[47] Historically closer in culture and language to France than Spain, Catalonia had formed separatist movements since the seventeenth century. When the Carlists were finally defeated in 1876, their belief in self-autonomy lived on and the right-wing and clergy joined the rising Catalan Nationalism movement. Industrial leaders, who resented Madrid's unfair taxation of the province, formed the Lliga Regionalista. Alejandro Lerroux, who urged the violent overthrow of the Church and the destruction of wealth, formed a left-wing Radical party. These different groups joined to form Solidaridad Catalana in 1905, when they perceived a mutual threat from the Law of Jurisdictions, which outlawed criticism of the Army.

Catalan solidarity was not in the government's

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47. Brenan, Spanish Labyrinth, p. 24.

interest. Criminals were hired to bomb factories and kill industrialists. This violence was blamed on the Anarchists. When the violence grew, Prime Minister Maura's Home Secretary, La Cierva, suspended Constitutional rights and placed Barcelona under martial law.

Violence errupted again, culminating in the 1909 Semana Trágica riots protesting the sending of Catalan reservists to Morroco. Lerroux's followers broke with their leaders, killed clergy, destroyed churches and convents, and desecrated tombs. La Cierva put down these riots with greater violence and the Maura government fell.

The next seven years were relatively calm. The Solidaridad Catalana was broken up, the Anarchists concentrated on forming trade unions, and the Industrialists' Lliga was given economic and political concessions. But in 1917, the government reneged on a settlement with striking Northern Railway workers, provoking a general strike. The Army was called in and, in three days, seventy people were killed, hundreds were wounded, and two thousand workers were imprisoned. By 1919, both the factory owners and trade unions regularly employed terrorist gangs, or pistoleros. Repeating the events of 1917, the peaceful settlement of a workers' strike was subverted, this time by the arrest of the union leaders. A general strike followed. It lasted two weeks and remained non-violent.

Nevertheless, the military intervened and arrested thousands. La Cierva than let loose his pistoleros. The workers retaliated. Rioting was widespread, military law was declared in Andalusia and, again, the government fell. The King appointed the ruthless General Martínez Anido as Civil Governor. He organized gunmen to shoot the union leaders on sight; he instituted the ley de fugas, under which arrested unionists were shot on the way to the police station and then falsely accused of trying to escape; he arrested workmen and then promptly released them to be shot by pistoleros waiting for them outside the jails.[48] These are the conditions under which Max's fellow-prisoner has lived.

It is clear that Max knows something of the anarchist movement in Catalonia. It is also clear that he is unaware of the extent of the suffering and injustice. Mateo declares himself "un paria" and Max identifies him as a Catalan worker by his use of that epithet. When Mateo confirms that he is a worker from Barcelona, Max immediately asks if he is an anarchist. Though sympathetic to the young man's plight, Max addresses social and political issues with the flamboyance he displays in the tavern. Exhibiting the same superficiality for which he scorned the Spanish people

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48. Ibid., pp. 25-73.

in Scene ii, Max suggests setting up an electric guillotine at the Puerta del Sol. Patiently, the prisoner tells him that is not the way to social justice. Easily led, Max quickly goes from expressing his love for Barcelona to approving its destruction. It becomes obvious that Max knows little of the realities of the labor struggle and the brutality of the police. Max ridiculed the police and screamed for the death of Maura in Scene iv. Escorted by friends to the police station in Scene v, Max bantered with Don Serafín the Inspector, called him a bureaucratic worm and "Serafín el Bonito"--his nickname. When Max was taken to his cell, he cried that he was being assassinated. Max had friends to go to the press and arrange his release. Mateo is alone. He has been tracked down by the police in town after town and knows that someday he will be released from some jail and shot as an escaped prisoner, under the ley de fugas. The fate of the young man--his possible torture and certain death--touches Max. When Mateo is taken away by the jailor, Max weeps "de impotencia y de rabia."[49]

Scene xi increases Max's political awareness as he hears a woman's great suffering played against the selfish interests of the bourgeoisie. Max is shattered by the cries

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49. Ibid., p. 136.

of the woman whose baby has been shot and is appalled by the indifference of the shopkeepers who are more concerned about the damage done to their stores during the disturbance.

Rifle shots are heard and the bereaved mother cries out again. While Max grieves for her, Latino comments, "Hay mucho de teatro."[50] Moments later Max learns the shots were for Mateo. He can no longer bear this sorrow:

> Latino, ya no puedo gritar...¡Me muero de rabia!...Estoy mascando ortigas. Ese muerto sabía su fin...No le asustaba, pero temía el tormento...La Leyenda Negra, en estos días menguados, es la Historia de España. Nuestra vida es un círculo dantesco. Rabia y vergüenza. Me muero de hambre, satisfecho de no haber llevado una triste velilla en la trágica mojiganga.[51]

It is in the very next scene that Max defines the esperpento. Now, for Max, Spain has truly become "una deformación grotesca de la civilización europea."[52] Because of the doses of reality he received in the 1924 interpolated scenes, Max's claim is much more effective. His comments are no longer the discoveries of a poet, but of a man who has faced real grotesqueness, cruelty and injustice.

Max's experiences in these new scenes are more shattering to him than Mari-Justina's meeting with the

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50. Ibid., p. 178.

51. Ibid., p. 180.

52. Ibid., p. 182

actual king. Lyon posits that the experience might have been shattering for Valle-Inclán as well, an artist "who had always sought for stasis or permanent essence in art through a stylized vision of the past or through myth and legend."[53] But once reality has been faced, there is no going back--not for Max, not for Mari-Justina, not for Valle-Inclán. The disruption of Valle-Inclán's world forever changed his writing.

In the same year as La enamorada del rey, La Reina castiza, Divinas palabras and Luces de bohemia, Valle-Inclán told the interviewer Cipriano Rivas Cherif, "No debemos hacer Arte ahora, porque jugar en los tiempos que corren es inmoral, es una canallada. Hay que lograr primero una justicia social."[54] From that time on, Valle-Inclán used the aesthetics of the esperpento to disrupt, dehumanize, and demystify life in order to reveal the grotesque essence of an inescapable reality.

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53. Lyon, Theatre of Valle-Inclán, p. 108

54. Díaz-Plaja, Esteticas, p. 248

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study began with the sufferings of a poor blind woman and ended with the sufferings of a poor blind man. Both characters longed for death to end their grief. However, the old woman of Tragedia de ensueño accepted the injustice of her fate. Max Estrella, on the other hand, railed against the injustices around him and labelled his homeland a grotesque deformation of civilization. Max and the old woman were of different worlds.

Indeed, we have seen many worlds in the plays of Valle-Inclán from Tragedia de ensueño through Luces de bohemia. We have seen worlds of great refinement and beauty, and worlds of crudeness and ugliness. We have seen worlds peopled by noble and elegant heroes and heroines, and worlds inhabited by ugly, coarse, animal-like creatures. We have seen worlds bound by widely-held systems of values and beliefs, and orderless worlds in which honor, religion, and folk traditions are a sham.

Besides the differences between these worlds themselves, there are differences in Valle-Inclán's

relationships to them. In the pre-War period, Valle-Inclán intentionally created artificial worlds inspired by literary movements and legends of his homeland. In 1920, he turned from creating worlds of the past to reveal the existing world of the present.

In his early plays Valle-Inclán, in the symbolist mode, drew from literature and created elaborate, pastiche worlds evoking Maeterlinck, eighteenth-century France, the Renaissance, Rubén Darío's modernismo, fairy tales, the Middle Ages, Beethoven, Lohengrin, Pegasus, Banville, Versailles, Cervantes, El Cid, the commedia dell'arte. Lush gardens featured fountains, statues, myrtle, roses, cypresses, and labyrinths. Swans, peacocks, and nightingales were joined by crickets and toads, providing musical accompaniment for characters whose movements were modeled on the minuet, pavane, and pirouette.

In his plays set in Galicia, Valle-Inclán created a legendary world based on the tales heard as a boy. Eschewing historical accuracy which, to him, was not the purpose of art, he created memory pieces set in combined Medieval and nineteenth-century worlds.

However, Valle-Inclán broke from the earlier literary movements and the legendary past of his pre-War plays. In 1920, he confronted the realities of the twentieth century.

In Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey, Valle-Inclán disrupted the artificial dream worlds of the first group of plays considered here. The old woman of Tragedia de ensueño never questioned her cruel fate; the Captain of thieves of Comedia de ensueño left his worldly goods in search of an ideal; Concha of El marqués de Bradomín and the Princess of Cuento de abril, despite threats of disruption, remained secure in the artificial worlds they created; Prince Verdemar and Princess Blanca Flor, of Farsa infantil de la cabeza del dragón, survived threats to their fairy tale kingdom; Ginebra of Voces de gesta never lost faith in the worthiness of her doomed cause. But Mari-Justina of Farsa italiana de la enamorada del rey had her dreams shattered, her world disrupted, when she faced the truth and recognized the object of her devotion to be a feeble, hunchbacked, large-nosed, doddering, ugly old man.

In Farsa y licencia de la Reina Castiza, Valle-Inclán dehumanized the court world and noble class of La Marquesa Rosalinda, turning its characters into animals to reveal their inner ugliness.

In Divinas palabras, Valle-Inclán demystified the great legendary world of Galicia's past. The house of Montenegro, already degenerated in Aguila de blasón, finally lost all vestiges of greatness with the death of Don Juan

Manuel in Romance de lobos. The myth and magic of El embrujado was, with the exception of the paradoxical power of the divine words, essentially gone in Divinas palabras. In Luces de bohemia, he presented a contemporary world already disrupted, dehumanized, and demystified.

However, the grotesque techniques of the esperpento do not represent a rejection of Valle-Inclán's earlier work. Andrés Franco writes, "The threads of continuity in Valle-Inclán are found in his intense devotion to the elaboration of his style as a function of his changing perspectives on reality and his involvement with Spain as myth and reality."[1] Valle-Inclán approached his later plays as he did his earlier works. He created worlds and then devised appropriate styles with which to convey their locales, characters, and "reality." While Valle-Inclán changed the worlds of his plays, he did not change his belief in the importance of elaborate stylization to express the "realities" of these different worlds. Disruption, dehumanization, and demystification were the methods Valle-Inclán used to stylize the worlds of 1920.

We have seen how important stylization was for Valle-Inclán. The simple setting of Tragedia de ensueño was

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1. McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama, 2nd ed., s.v. "Valle-Inclán, Ramón María del," by Andrés Franco.

appropriate for the simple woman whose sorrows he depicted. In Comedia de ensueño, Valle-Inclán extended the dimensions of the stage, setting his den of thieves, with its blazing hearth, on a high mountain--emphasizing the drastic quest of the Captain. The elaborate, anachronistic, ecclectic gardens and palaces of El marqués de Bradomín, Cuento de abril, Cabeza del dragón, and La Marquesa Rosalinda were essential to recreate the "realities" of their inhabitants. Such a setting, literally jolted, correctly housed the grotesque beings of La Reina Castiza. La Mancha was the perfect location for the reincarnation of Don Quijote, Mari-Justina of La enamorada del rey, and the rustic settings of Voces de gesta and El embrujado were essential to those tragedies. The timeless locale of Aguila de blasón and Romance de lobos evoked Spain's legendary past, and the storms and shipwreck reflected the passions of its characters. The beauty of Galicia in Divinas palabras made the ugliness of the characters and their actions even more striking. Therefore, it naturally followed that Valle-Inclan would also rely on stylization to reflect the reality of Luces de bohemia's modern, grotesque Spain without heroes. He did that literally, by reflecting classical heroes in concave mirrors.

"[W]e no longer have any tragic heroes, but only vast tragedies staged by world butchers and produced by

slaughtering machines."[2] Friedrich Duerrenmatt wrote these words more than thirty years after Luces de bohemia. The fact that Duerrenmatt´s statement is better known, is, unfortunately, emblematic of Valle-Inclán´s world-wide recognition today.

The centennial of Valle-Inclán´s birth was marked in 1966. Major journals devoted to Spanish literature published commemorative issues and several presses published critical anthologies. However, almost twenty years later, knowledge of Valle-Inclán´s work in America is still largely confined to academic circles. While Valle-Inclán has achieved recognition in Europe, there have been no English translations of his plays since the 1960´s and these translations account for only five of his twenty-three plays. La cabeza del dragón was translated in 1918, Romance de lobos in 1957 (but never published), Comedia de ensueño in 1961, Luces de bohemia in 1967, and Divinas palabras in 1968. In his own country, the important Luces de bohemia could not be produced until 1972.

Since the easing of censorship in Spain in 1963 and the death of Franco in 1975, more new Spanish plays are becoming known. Fortunately, English translations of these

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2. Friedrich Duerrenmatt, "Problems of the Theatre," in Dramatic Theory and Criticism, p. 855.

works are and will be appearing. The works of Valle-Inclán, however, remain largely inaccessible to the reader of English. This is a great loss to later Spanish dramatists, whose work is now attracting attention in the English-speaking world. George Wellwarth claims: "Just as no later-day English epic poet would dream of attempting to justify the ways of God to man without first consulting Milton, so no serious contemporary Spanish dramatist would dream of writing a play without consulting Valle-Inclán."[3] Marion P. Holt writes: "In the 1960's several younger dramatists began to demonstrate a more direct concern for the harsher realities of Spanish society and to seek inspiration in Spain's own tradition looking particularly to the example of Valle-Inclán."[4]

As the work of later Spanish playwrights is best read in the light of Valle-Inclán, Valle-Inclán's later plays are best read in the light of his earlier works. It has been the intent of this dissertation to share, with readers of English, the worlds of Valle-Inclán's early plays and the playwright's steps towards the esperpento.

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3. George Wellwarth, The Theatre of Protest and Paradox (New York: New York University Press, 1971), pp. 354-55.

4. Marion P. Holt, The Contemporary Spanish Theatre (1949-1972) (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), p. 162.

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