To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Raymond Spoto entitled "The Primitive Themes in Don Ramón Del Valle-Inclán." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Spanish.

Carl W. Cobb

Carl W. Cobb, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Ferdinando D. Mauricio

T.B. Irving

A M Vazquez Bigi

Dick Penner

Accepted for the Council:

Hilton A. Smith

Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

Thesis
Thes
.

THE PRIMITIVE THEMES IN DON RAMÓN DEL VALLE-INCLÁN

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Raymond Spoto

June 1976

1286733

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation

to my beloved wife and companion

Allyson

and to my daughter

Marcella Stefani

who has brought a new dimension

to our lives

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of the Department of Romance Languages and Literature at the University of Tennessee for their guidance and for their interest in my graduate studies, especially Dr. Carl W. Cobb, whose advice and support are largely responsible for this study on Ramón del Valle-Inclán. To the staff of the library at the University of Tennessee I wish to also address a note of gratitude for their help in securing often obscure material. I wish to express my thanks to my parents, Angelo and Florence Spoto, whose sacrifices made possible my education. Finally to my wife and friend, Allyson, I give the full measure of my gratitude. This study owes much to her careful editing, constructive criticism, and constant encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The critical literature on Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866-1936), a Spanish writer of the Generation of 98, has made frequent mention of the primitive aspect of his works. To date, however, no definitive and systematic study has dealt with the sources and manifestations of the author's primitive themes in depth. Therefore it is essential to clarify the nature of these themes and examine the influences throughout the various stages of his writing. This dissertation thus traces the development of Valle-Inclán's primitivism with respect to the literary and intellectual influences of his time and shows how primitive motifs were shaped by the author's position in the Generation of 98, his native Galicia, decadentism, Expressionism, and Nietzschean and Freudian concepts. These influences provided the structure upon which Valle-Inclán constructed the primitive world which forms the background of many of his works.

While Valle-Inclán's position within the Generation of 98 has been a problematical one at best, this study of his primitivism further shows that the concerns, ideals, and influences which characterized the writers of that generation were also those of Valle-Inclán. His avid interest in intrahistoria, barbarism, pre-Christian religion, ancient art, and the Middle Ages fixes him securely within the Generation of 98 and contributes to the refinement of his primitive themes.

Perhaps more regionally rooted than others of his generation, Valle-Inclán sought and found inspiration for his primitivism in the

rustic countryside of his native Galicia and in the themes and style of the Galician writers who preceded him. The archaic image of Galicia in the Comédias was to a large extent inspired by regional writers such as Rosalía de Castro, Curros Enríquez, Benito Vicetto, and Pardo Bazán. Their influence is clear in his preference for archaic words, his allusions to the Celts and Suevi, and his admiration for the once illustrious nobility of Galicia. Regarding the thematic structure of the Comedias, Benito Vicetto and Pardo Bazán were indeed influential in inspiring such themes as the father-son struggle and social degeneracy.

Valle-Inclán's primitivism is also a reflection of Nietzschean philosophy regarding the instincts, strong will, Dionysian passions, the cruelties of war, and scorn for traditional morality. These themes are clearly evident in Valle-Inclán's Sonatas, the Comedias bárbaras, and La guerra carlista.

An examination of the fierce nature of Valle-Inclán's primitivism, in particular the father-son struggle which unfolds in the Comedias bárbaras, suggests a certain degree of familiarity with Freudian theory. It is not important for the purpose of this study to show that Valle-Inclán was consciously influenced by Freud, but only to point out the striking similarities between this conflict and Freud's observations of primitive societies based on studies circulating toward the turn of the century. Furthermore, in the Oedipal struggle which characterizes Cara de Plata (1922), written several years after Águila de blasón (1907), and Romance de lobos (1908), the presence of Freudian themes is even more evident.

The influence of the decadent movement was another source of sustained inspiration, and one which has been incorporated into this analysis of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes. Decadent literature played a vital role during Valle-Inclán's formative years and its presence can also be seen in his later works. This movement, which exalted fierce passions, barbarism, and primordial instincts, was highly compatible with Valle-Inclán's fascination with the primitive. Decadent literary themes dealing with unrestrained eroticism, incest, the Fatal Woman, the ancient Don Juan myth, classical art forms, pseudomysticism, and primitive religions readily found their way into the Sonatas, the Comedias, La lámpara maravillosa, and later works such as La cabeza del Bautista and Ligazón.

In analysing Valle-Inclán's primitivism we have also examined the influence of Expressionism in the author's later works which are characterized by the esperpento. In Expressionism there is a fondness for Freudian themes, primordial clashes, and turbulent passions. Much of this influence is reflected in the grotesque and distorted imagery of Valle-Inclán's esperpento which reveals the barbarous aspects of humanity that are incongruous with modern civilization. His portrait of the raw atmosphere and characters in Divinas palabras and Tirano Banderas stresses the sordid and ignoble forces which govern mankind. In discussing the influence of Expressionism particular mention is made of the presence of Freudian symbolism and the Oedipal struggle, both of which are clearly visible in Cara de Plata and commonly appear in the expressionist theatre.

It is indeed apparent that several sources contributed to the refinement of the primitive themes in Valle-Inclán's writing. Yet Valle-Inclán emerges from this study clearly defined as a member of the Generation of 98 who was concerned with the problems of history and interested in intrahistoria, and who sought artistic inspiration in Spain's remote past.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION: THE PRIMITIVE THEMES IN DON RAMÓN DEL VALLE-INCLÁN	1
II.	VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM: AN ASPECT OF THE GENERATION OF 98	33
III.	VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM AND HIS NATIVE GALICIA	77
IV.	VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM AND NIETZSCHE	94
V.	THE FREUDIAN NATURE OF THE PRIMITIVE CONFLICT IN LAS COMEDIAS BÁRBARAS	116
VI.	VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM AND THE INFLUENCE OF DECADENTISM	160
VII.	VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVE THEMES AND EXPRESSIONISM	199
VIII.	CONCLUSIONS	217
BIBLIOGRAPHY		229
VITA		242

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PRIMITIVE THEMES IN DON RAMÓN DEL VALLE-INCLÁN

Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866-1936), a dramatist, novelist and a member of what is known as the Generation of 98, was an eclectic writer who kept abreast of the literary currents of his time. Valle-Inclán can well be considered a complex literary figure in the vanguard of his generation. In fact, many of the confusions surrounding his work stem from a lack of research relative to the multiple influences which appear in his writing. As a result, several pertinent questions and problems have not been adequately examined.

During the last decade critics have recognized the need to reexamine Valle-Inclán's works and today, many years after his death, we are witnessing a new surge of interest in him. This trend became more pronounced following the 1966 centenary commemoration of Valle-Inclán's birth. The last few years have seen not only a reevaluation of his merits as a writer, but also a revival of his plays. These developments have been accompanied by theatrical productions in Paris and Madrid, translations and numerous interpretations of his works:[1]

> There is no question that today Valle-Inclán's literary reputation is more secure than it was at the time of his

---

[1]Anthony N. Zahareas, ed., "Preface," Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of his Life and Works (New York: Las Américas, 1968), p. xii.

> death. Literary historians recognize Valle-Inclán as an experimentalist and as an important innovator, while analysts of literary influence know that many important writers during and after Valle-Inclán, among them Lorca and Cela, were influenced by him, and that the course of contemporary Spanish literature was changed by him in a way that may be said of very few writers.[2]

During Valle-Inclán's lifetime, however, critics in Spain failed to recognize him as a great writer. This more than likely was because he was deemed too avant-garde, in a country in which scholarship in the field of modern literature had been rather ineffective. As a result, several complex questions surrounding his work have remained unanswered.[3] In regard to the lack of recognition and appreciation for his work, Valle-Inclán himself often said that the Spanish stage was as yet not adequately prepared for his dramas and that the literary circles, with few notable exceptions, lacked the imagination to understand his experiments.[4] This was no doubt the case since Spanish literature, with the exception of Valle-Inclán, García Lorca, and Casona, has been not only largely unimaginative, but has also provided few opportunities for scholarly discussion.[5]

Although it is true that Valle-Inclán's theatre did not enjoy widespread popularity, there were those who recognized his artistic talent. Jacinto Benavente, for example, praises him as "un extraordinario temperamento de autor dramático. Ninguna de sus obras ha tenido larga duración en los carteles ni un éxito popular. Pero era un gran autor

---

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. xii.

dramático."[6] Juan Ramón Jiménez also tells us that Valle-Inclán had something special—an instinct or insight which could not be fully grasped: "dio con su instinto mucho más de lo que nadie pudiera prever."[7] Other contemporaries of Valle-Inclán, however, looked upon him merely as an extravagant writer whose influence on Spanish letters was limited to his role as an important innovator in Spanish prose.[8] Ramiro de Maeztu, for example, criticized what he considered Valle-Inclán's "afirmación incansable de que lo esencial en literatura es el estilo."[9]

There has been a tendency among critics to emphasize only Valle-Inclán's esthetic stylization, and many have viewed him as a modernista interested only in the eccentric, frivolous and exotic. This concentration on stylistics has led the critics to disregard the thematic content of his works:

> Each work is usually examined as a stylistic tour-de-force and, inevitably, Valle-Inclán has acquired a reputation for brilliant inventiveness of artful contrivance; critics usually overlook the content of his works and often treat the action and historical background as if they were brilliant aesthetic exercises.[10]

This emphasis upon style has given way to an enduring scholarly polemic which has sought to determine whether Valle-Inclán was actually a member

---

[6]Pedro Salinas, Literatura española siglo XX (Madrid: Alianza, 1970), p. 116.

[7]Ibid., p. 120.

[8]Zahareas, "Preface," in Valle-Inclán, p. xiii.

[9]Salinas, Literatura, p. 117.

[10]Zahareas, "Preface," Valle-Inclán, pp. xiii-xiv.

of the Generation of 98. Indeed, some critics have maintained that he was aloof from Spain's problems and the intellectual concerns of his generation. Because of these various conflicting views, Valle-Inclán's position in the Generation of 98 is both vague and difficult to determine. While Ángel Valbuena Prat maintains that Valle-Inclán was an esthete who remained aloof from the concerns of his generation, Ángel del Río asserts that he was very much a part of it:[11]

> Su españolismo es tan profundo como el de cualquiera de ellos y está en la base de toda su obra: en el sentimiento sensual y religioso, en su poesía arcaizante y campesina, en la violencia de sus personajes, en su culto a lo medieval y gótico o lo grotesco y barroco, en la emoción céltica y regional de sus evocaciones de la vida gallega, en el realismo deformado con que presenta a sus personajes o crea un ambiente o en la ironía moral y quevedesca de sus esperpentos.[12]

In Valle-Inclán's early works such as Femeninas (1895), the short stories and essays compiled in Publicaciones periodísticas de Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán anteriores a 1895, and the Sonatas (1902-1905) it appears that the Galician author was removed from the concerns of the Generation of 98.[13] Much like Juan Ramón Jiménez's early works, the Sonatas reflect the musical quality of modernism and the search for "absolute beauty": "El lenguaje de estos primeros libros es predominantemente musical y esta musicalidad es en rigor lo que más le

---

[11]Ángel Valbuena Prat, Historia de la literatura española, vol. III (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1968), p. 515.

[12]Ángel del Río, Historia de la literatura española, vol. II (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 273.

[13]The Publicaciones were compiled and edited by William L. Fichter.

acerca al modernismo."[14] These works are important in the sense that they reveal the esthetic preferences of the author during his formative years and "provide the seeds for subsequent character creations."[15] Yet they scarcely touch upon Spain's problems. In general his early works portray a world of fantasy, evading reality:

> Ya desde sus primeros años de aprendiz de escritor, lo que le interesaba a Don Ramón no era pintar la realidad tal y como era, sino dar vuelo a la fantasía para crear algo nuevo y original.[16]

This early flight from reality can be attributed to the influences of the decadents, the symbolists of the fin de siècle, and the Modernists who embraced the motto "art for art's sake." Because of these influences, we can perceive that a vague, suggestive and mysterious atmosphere often pervades Valle-Inclán's earlier works:

> Muy significativo para el desarrollo de su estilo personal es el repetido uso que hace Valle-Inclán de voces como vago, oscuro, misterioso, lejano, sombrío, supersticioso, etcétera, para efectos simbolistas, o, si se quiere, modernistas. Se recordaba que la época en que se escribieron las historias de Femeninas fue la de los comienzos del simbolismo en la literatura francesa y del modernismo en las letras hispanoamericanas.[17]

The influence of French literature and Modernism reaches its high point in the Sonatas, which employ an art form that is both amoral and

---

[14] Del Río, Historia, vol. II, p. 291.

[15] Roberta Salper de Tortella, "The Creation of a Fictional World," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 120.

[16] William L. Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas de Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán anteriores a 1895 (México: Colegio de Mexico, 1952), p. 21.

[17] William L. Fichter, "Primeros aciertos temáticos y estilísticos," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 194.

indifferent to the realities of Spain and the concerns of the Generation of 98:

> En las Sonatas, biografía galante del marqués de Bradomín, culmina el modernismo en la prosa española: erotismo, religiosidad y perversión, preciosismo ornamental en la reconstrucción de ambientes (Galicia, trópico americano, Italia, Navarra).[18]

During these same years, however, Valle-Inclán's works reveal a new interest in his native land of rural Galicia where he finds inspiration in the rustic peasantry and archaic surroundings. These works include: Jardín umbrío (1903), a collection of short stories, Flor de santidad (1904), a pastoral tragedy depicting the Galician peasants and their primitive way of life, Jardín novelesco: Historias de almas en pena, de duendes y de ladrones (1905), and Aroma de leyenda (1907), a collection of poems with a verse in the Galician dialect placed at the end of each selection. In contrast to the refined atmosphere of the Sonatas, Valle-Inclán stresses the folklore, traditions, and barbarism which characterize the rustic inhabitants of rural Galicia. In other words, he begins to find inspiration in his own native surroundings and allows his well developed modernista style to fuse with the harsh reality of the Galician countryside. No longer does he create a forced aristocratic or exotic setting; rather he portrays life in a society he knows and understands well. It is not surprising that his writing acquires a more original tone as he approaches the reality of his native land. For example, in Aromas de leyenda Valle-Inclán employs the

---

[18]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 271.

modernista style to depict the nostalgic scents and the everyday sensations which recall his childhood: "Oh, lejanas memorias de la tierra lejana,/ Olorosas a yerbas por la mañana."[19] He nostalgically describes the pealing of bells in the early morning, "canta húmeda de aurora la campana aldeana," and the monotony of the afternoon, "tañen las esquilas lentas, soñolientas."[20] Here, in contrast with the Sonatas, no attempt is made to evoke an exotic or a refined atmosphere. At this point, like other members of the Generation of 98, he emphasizes the monotonous toil of daily existence, the landscape, and tradition:

> Aromas de leyenda is fully modernist in style. The content, however, because of its insistence on the regionalistic note of Galician landscape and tradition, because of its lack of Parnassian overtones are closer to the Generation of 98 than the more cosmopolitan movement from America.[21]

In 1907, with the appearance of Águila de blasón, the first drama in a trilogy entitled Comedias Bárbaras, Valle-Inclán presents the archaic and feudal structure of rural Galicia in violent conflict with the parliamentary system of government and rising middle class social values which threaten the older order with extinction. Similar to other members of the Generation of 98, Valle-Inclán begins to view with scorn what he considers the insipid mediocrity of this new bourgeois society:

> En el campo político la generación del 98 nunca pudo superar la antinomia entre su educación liberal, producto del ambiente en que se criaron, y su personalísimo individualismo que los lleva muchas veces a una posición antidemocrática o a

---

[19] Edmundo García-Girón, "Valle-Inclán, Modernist Poet," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 418.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 419.

> la aceptación, en el caso de Valle, del tradicionalismo que no es sino un caso extremado de individualismo histórico.[22]

During this same period (1908-1909) Valle-Inclán writes a triology entitled La guerra carlista which narrates the historic struggle of the Carlist War (1872-1876). In these novels the author noticeably exalts the primitive passions and the ancient traditionalism of the rapidly disappearing feudal society of Navarre. In the vitality of this waning civilization, he finds both virtue and artistic inspiration in contrast with the humdrum existence of the new order:

> When Valle-Inclán began writing, Spanish society had settled down after the upheavals of the nineteenth century into what his generation believed to be a pointless, stagnant existence governed by a colorless regime which they felt deserved all the insults that were aimed at it.[23]

We can see the final phase of Valle-Inclán's literary evolution in what is known as the esperpento, which reveals the influence of an artistic movement called Expressionism.[24] This change became apparent after his visit to France in 1916 when he came into direct contact with European artists and intellectuals. In Luces de Bohemia (1920), he introduced this new literary form and explained its esthetic function. Traces of it can be found in earlier works, however, and it is clearly

---

[22]María Dolores Lado, "La trilogía de La guerra carlista," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 336.

[23]Francisco Ayala, "Man and Mask," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 41.

[24]In the genre known as the esperpento we find the influence of Expressionism which was a prevalent movement in art during the early decades of the twentieth century. We shall devote a separate chapter to Expressionism with respect to Valle-Inclán's primitivism and the turbulent world of primordial instincts which characterize such works as the Comedias bárbaras and Divinas palabras.

present in the collection of poems entitled La pipa de kif (1919).[25]

The esperpento may be analyzed in the following manner:

> The guiding principle of his new art is that we need to deform reality systematically in order to capture its essence. Because the genuine artist's imagination can probe the tragic evils that distort mankind, he stresses the ugly and absurd aspects of human existence.[26]

It now becomes apparent that Valle-Inclán's art has grown to reflect the concerns of his generation. He now presents a distorted and degrading image of Spanish society in which the author stresses the crude nature of human existence. In the esperpento there is a marked change in the portrayal of the aristocracy when compared, for example, to the Comedias bárbaras:

> Aristócrata por nacimiento y por vocación, sus primeras obras tienen una añoranza antigua de nobleza perdida. Luego, esa añoranza aristocrática se convierte en burla e injuria contra lo desarraigado, contra la pseudoaristocracia ciudadana, es decir, contra la nobleza que se traiciona convirtiéndose en señoritismo.[27]

The aura of respect which surrounded the nobility in the Comedias bárbaras no longer exists. Valle-Inclán, like Quevedo and Goya, now depicts his characters as inferior, grotesque, and distorted creatures or as mere puppets who appear ridiculous even in the saddest moments of life.[28] The remaining vestiges of nobility are deformed and treated with irony. In

---

[25]Salinas, Literatura, p. 95.

[26]Anthony N. Zahareas, "The Absurd, the Grotesque, and the Esperpento," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, pp. 99-100.

[27]Valbuena Prat, Historia, vol. III, p. 521.

[28]Gerald Gillespie, "Luces de bohemia: Tragedy and Esperpento," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, pp. 619-621.

Los cuernos de don Friolera (1921), the traditional Calderonian honor theme becomes utterly absurd as we view mankind taken up in a helpless and miserable existence with no control over its destiny:[29] "El principio de honor ordena matar. ¡Pim! ¡Pam! ¡Pum! . . . En el cuerpo de carabineros no hay maridos cabrones!"[30]

The esperpento's distorted view of humanity projects the tragic sense of Spanish life and presents it as a bizarre and animal-like caricature of European civilization.[31] Although Valle-Inclán's earlier works reveal some concern for Spain's problems, in the esperpento it becomes obvious that his distortion of Spanish society is in harmony with the preoccupations of the Generation of 98:

> Por el esperpento ingresa Valle-Inclán en el 98, en España,
> en la mejor tradición, en el santo ruedo ibérico.
> Desengañado de martelos con las princesas de similor,
> vuelve, hijo pródigo del 98, al solar paterno, a su patria,
> a sus angustias, a la gran tragedia de España.[32]

Although a significant amount of research has been done on Ramón del Valle-Inclán, particularly on his Sonatas and esperpentos, very little has been written on the primitive themes which appear in several of his works. The primitive element is particularly strong in the Comedias bárbaras which consist of three dramas. The two dramas entitled Águila de blason and Romance de lobos appeared in 1907 and 1908. However, a

---

[29]Anthony N. Zahareas, "Friolera: El hombre visto con 'la perspectiva de la otra ribera,'" in Valle-Inclán, p. 632.

[30]Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Obras completas, vol. I (Madrid: Plenitud, 1952), p. 999. Henceforth quotations from Valle-Inclán will be indicated in the text as I or II, and the page number.

[31]Salinas, Literatura, p. 110.

[32]Ibid., p. 114.

third drama, Cara de Plata, written much later in 1922, heads the triology and presents problems in criticism, since it is subject to different literary influences.[33] In all three of the Comedias the presence of these themes is obvious enough; yet they are merely characterized as "primitive," "barbarous," and "grotesque" by the existing scholarship with no attempt being made to develop a pattern for them. Furthermore, little attention has been given to the influences that prevailed both in Spain and abroad during Valle-Inclán's long career as a writer. As a result, no lengthy systematic study has linked Valle-Inclán's interest in the primitive to the philosophy of the Generation of 98 nor to the influence of the Galician writers who preceded him. Likewise, when the critics speak of the influence of decadent literature they almost inevitably refer only to the Sonatas and fail to recognize the relationship between decadentism and primitivism in his works. With respect to the esperpento and Expressionism, very little attention has been given to the emphasis Valle-Inclán places upon the primitive. Nor have links been established between Valle-Inclán's interest in the primitive and the new theories in the field of psychology which were emerging at the turn of the century. Regarding the problem of insufficient scholarship, Anthony Zahareas maintains that there has been a tendency to merely describe Valle-Inclán and "his carefully constructed pure art" as "irresponsible," "sensational," "frivolous," and "decadent":

---

[33]Since Cara de Plata was written fourteen years after Romance de lobos, we shall focus upon certain stylistic changes which in some ways set it apart from the first two.

> . . . in spite of the amazing number of publications, few studies on Valle-Inclán's work are intelligent, scholarly and thorough. There are of course exceptions but, given Valle-Inclán's elaboration of various commitments, there is a need for much historical groundwork on many early and later works.[34]

Although criticism of Valle-Inclán's primitivism has tended to be both sketchy and inadequate, critics have indeed affirmed the existence of primitive motifs in Valle-Inclán's Comedias bárbaras and other works. Of these works Salvador Madariaga says:

> His [Valle-Inclán] inspiration is kindled in those corners of Spain where there still lingers—or lingered when he wrote, for such things nowadays die out quickly—a life ruled by the primitive traditions of peasantry and chivalry: below, humility towards the lords, stretching from heroic devotion to abject servility; above, a natural authority founded on courage and high tradition, on egotism degenerating towards license and tyranny; and over all, high and low, the deeply rooted beliefs of a devotional religion enfolded in clouds of superstition . . .[35]

Madariaga continues:

> It is this primitive world in which the passions grow richer and purer than in our own urban civilizations, where, like the trees in our cities, our passions are lightless and cheerless and covered with the grime and ashes of our hearths; it is in this primitive world that Valle-Inclán describes his fiction.[36]

Ángel Valbuena Prat also recognizes the presence of primitive themes in Valle-Inclán's Comedias bárbaras. Indeed, Valbuena views the primitive as the prime moving force within the trilogy: "en el fondo alienta un soplo de tragedia primitiva, desde la superstición a los sentimientos

---

[34]Zahareas, Valle-Inclán, p. xiii.

[35]Salvador de Madariaga, The Genius of Spain (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1923), p. 139.

[36]Ibid.

primarios, que eleva a un plano de alta tradedia toda la obra."[37] Although Valbuena does not develop the idea of "los sentimientos primarios" and the "alta tradedia" with respect to the primitive struggle between Don Juan Manuel Montenegro and his sons, he stresses the presence of savage vitality in the Comedias bárbaras:

> Los motivos de la muerte y el misterio, desde lo solemne a lo supersticioso; lo repulsivo, lo macabro, la imploración ascética de sacrificio, se entrelazan entre los gritos de salvaje vitalidad de gran parte de estas comedias.[38]

Ángel del Río characterizes the Comedias bárbaras as "Obras de una inspiración primitiva y estilización, dramática más que lírica, de un mundo de terror y violencia: de supervivencias medievales."[39] Alfredo Mantilla also perceives primitive motifs in the trilogy: "El ambiente de las comedias es primitivo, brutal. El conjunto de las supersticiones gallegas apuntala esta atmósfera."[40]

Let us briefly consider the relationship between the primitive in Valle-Inclán and the problems which most concerned the Generation of 98. Valle-Inclán's primitive themes, as well as his portrayal of rustic landscapes, superstitions, and the exterior features of Catholicism, clearly illustrate his interest in the conflict between barbarism and Christianity in Spain—a conflict frequently treated by other members of his literary generation. For example, the theme of pre-Christian envy

---

[37] Valbuena Prat, Historia, III, p. 528.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Del Río, Historias, II, p. 272.

[40] Alfredo Matilla, "Las comedias bárbaras: Una sola obra dramática," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 304.

appears in Antonio Machado's long narrative poem entitled La tierra de Álvar González and in Unamuno's novel Abel Sánchez. Machado describes Unamuno's Abel Sánchez as a "libro precristiano."[41] Valle-Inclán also focuses our attention upon this problem in his description of the cruel and primitive leader Santa Cruz in La guerra carlista. This priest, instead of teaching Christian virtues and the love for one's neighbor, instills hatred and demands blood: "un guerrero antiguo, lleno de fe primitiva . . . similar al vate druida."[42] In Pío Baroja's works depicting the rural Basque regions, we also become aware of the lingering vestiges of pre-Christian religions: "Restos de . . . paganismo . . . brujerías y supersticiones."[43] In discussing Valle-Inclán's native Galicia, Unamuno maintains: "El paganismo que en ninguna parte murió, sino que se hizo bautizar cristianizándose más a menos, late aquí más vivo que en otras regiones españolas."[44]

Although the Generation of 98 stresses the Church's traditions, culture and art, they were skeptical and critical of orthodox religion. We clearly perceive this same attitude in Valle-Inclán. Although in his earlier writing he often portrays the surroundings of the Church, he is merely interested in the artistic aspects of his religion and tends to

---

[41]García Blanco, En torno a Unamuno (Madrid: Taurus, 1965), p. 254.

[42]José Antonio Maravall, "La imagen de la sociedad arcaica en Valle-Inclán," Revista de Occidente, vol. XV (Oct., Nov., Dec. 1966), p. 236.

[43]Carlos Orlando Nallím, El problema de la novela en Pío Baroja (México: Ateneo, 1964).

[44]Miguel de Unamuno, Obras completas, vol. I (Madrid: Escelier, 1968), p. 668.

present the clergy and the rites of the Church as priestly cults and pagan rituals. This is evident in his Marqués de Bradomín, the main character of the Sonatas:

> Bradomín es católico sólo en su adhesión exterior a un culto espléndido. En el fondo le reconocemos dos actitudes a-religiosas, i-religiosas y aun anti-religiosas: a) culto a lo impío, sacrílego, blasfematorio y satánico; y b) culto a las magnificiencias sensuales de la liturgia católica.[45]

Instead of orthodox religion, the writers of the Generation of 98 preferred a more meaningful approach to fulfilling man's spiritual needs or a more individualized and charitable form of Christianity.[46] The movement known as Krausismo, which profoundly influenced the Generation of 98, clearly reveals this tendency: "se trata de un sistema fifósofico concocido con el nombre de panenteísmo o doctrina de todo en Dios . . . Sistema en parte racional, con implicaciones místicas o pseudomísticas pero, sobre todo, de un profundo sentido ético."[47]

Constant allusions to the Gnostic symbolism of Priscillian, a heretic executed in Galicia in 385, definitely reveal Valle-Inclán's aversion to orthodoxy. In fact, in La lámpara marvallosa (1916) he tells us "fue en algún modo discípulo de Miguel de Molinos. De su enseñanza deduje mi estética" (II, 602). In Guía espiritual, Miguel de Molinos (1628-1691), an unorthodox mystic, expounds upon his doctrine called

---

[45]Enrique Anderson-Imbert, "Escamoteo de la realidad en las Sonatas," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, pp. 209-210.

[46]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 224.

[47]Ibid.

quietismo: "doctrina mística que busca la perfección cristiana en el amor de Dios y la inacción del alma, desdeñando, por ello, las obras."[48] It is interesting to note that of all of the so-called "mystic" writers in Spain, Valle-Inclán is most attracted to the creed of an unorthodox Catholic condemned by the Inquisition:[49]

> Molinos, per molto tempo sepolto sotto la condanna del l'-Inquisizione (benchè sia dubbia la sua eterodossia, e indubbia solo la sua aspirazione a una religiosità tutta intima, incline a utilizzare poco le forme esteriori del culto care particolarmente ai Gesuiti suoi nemici), fu ripubblicato in Spagna, nel testo originale spagnolo, nel 1906.[50]

In his aversion to orthodox religion Valle-Inclán reverts back to the essence of Christianity—charity. In so doing, he evokes the humble figure of Saint Francis of Assisi, the prime example of primitive Christianity:

> Bajo la bóveda cristalina de aquella gran hora mística se oye una voz que habla con la hormiga y con el agua, y con las yerbas y los ajenjos del monte. Es el alma del pobrecito de Asís; carece de ciencia teológica, pero está lleno de la inocente fragancia que tienen las malvas en los huertos de sus monjas Claras. Un gran ideal estético se guarece como

---

[48] Ángel del Río, Historia de la literatura española, vol. I (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 480.

[49] We should add that this psuedo-mysticism on the part of Valle-Inclán is also representative of the decadent and modernista movements in literature. In The Concept of Modernism in Hispanic Criticism (Boulder: Pruett Press, 1966), p. 39, Ned J. Davidson, in his discussion of esthetic mysticism, states: "These new mythologies arise from the interrelation of the arts and the province of sensations peculiar to them. They also develop a protest to the optimism of nineteenth-century science and postivism and the philosophy of reality that they had imposed upon the epoch."

[50] Franco Meregalli, Studi su Ramon del Valle-Inclán (Venice: Libreria Universitaria, 1958), p. 45.

> divino ruiseñor en el capillo franciscano que enseña la Imitación de Cristo Jesús. (II, 586)

It is apparent in Romance de lobos that Valle-Inclán finds no charity in what to him is an unchristian world: "Pobres, miserables, almas resignadas, hijos de esclavos, los señores os salvaremos cuando nos hagamos cristianos" (II, 671). While it is true that Don Juan Manual Montenegro, protagonist of the Comedias bárbaras, ultimately repents and renounces his sins and material possessions so that he may become the charitable father to the poor, he does so without alluding to the institution of Christianity. In fact, during his symbolic pilgrimage, Don Juan's conversion, which occurs outside the Church, reflects disdain for organized religion: "¡Qué lejos suena la campana! . . . La religión es seca como una vieja . . . ¡Como las canillas de una vieja! . . . Tiene cara de beata y cuerpo de galga" (I, 688).

Another characteristic of the Generation of 98 is its interest in Spain's past and the intuitive interpretation it gives to history. Azorín affirms: "En cuanto a mí, el tiempo en concreto, es decir, la historia, me ha servido de trampolín para saltar al tiempo en abstracto. La generación del 98 es una generación historicista."[51] Azorín continues: "Los grandes hechos son una cosa y los menudos hechos son otra cosa. Se historia los primeros. Se desdeña los segundos. Y los segundos forman la sutil trama de la vida cotidiana."[52] In Valle-Inclán's works the

---

[51]José Martínez Ruiz, La generación del 98 (Salamanca: Anaya, 1961), p. 52.

[52]Ibid., p. 54.

"vida cotidiana" also prevails. He creates a static and timeless society in which legends and folklore comprise the historical framework. Valle-Inclán's view of history is similar to what Miguel de Unamuno calls intrahistoria:

> Valle-Inclán, como Unamuno, se lanza a la historia desde la intrahistoria. Es el suceso pequeño, los "menudos hechos," que dice Azorín, lo que le interesa a Valle. La historia real, la que de verdad cuenta, no es la historia oficial narrada por los historiadores sino la historia de la gente pequeña, el conjunto de las vidas intrahistóricas.[53]

In verse Antonio Machado praises Valle-Inclán's Flor de santidad and the timeless legend that it evokes:

> Esta leyenda en sabio romance campesino,
> ni arcaico ni moderno, por Valle-Inclán escrita,
> revela en los halagos de un viento vespertino,
> la santa flor que nunca se marchita.[54]

Another important influence upon the Generation of 98 and in Valle-Inclán's primitivism, is that of Friedrich Nietzsche. The first translations of Nietzsche's works began to appear in Spain in 1900.[55] Although Nietzsche's ideas had a great impact on Valle-Inclán's generation, his philosophy was loosely and whimsically employed. Azorín tells us:

> ¿Qué idea tenían de Federico Nietzsche los escritores pertenecientes a cierto grupo? En Europa, en aquella fecha, se tenían noticias breves y vagas de este filósofo. Y sin

---

[53]María Dolores Lado, "La trilogía de La guerra carlista," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, pp. 334-335.

[54]Alfredo Carballo Picazo, "Antonio Machado y Valle-Inclán," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, No. 160 (April, 1963), p. 8.

[55]Alberto Adell, "Nietzsche en España," Insula, No. 259 (June, 1968), p. 1.

> embargo, esos escritores, ayundándose de libros primerizos, libros en que se exponía la doctrina de tal pensador, crearon un Frederico Nietzsche para su uso, y ese Nietzsche sirvió, indiscutiblemente, como pábulo en la labor de los aludidos literatos.[56]

Nietzsche's importance, however, lies in the fact that the Generation of 98 saw in him the exaltation of life, vitality, nobility, and power. The virtues Nietzsche stressed contrasted with what they considered to be the mediocrity surrounding them. In Valle-Inclán we see a pronounced admiration for strength, courage, primitive instincts, and the will to act. Gonzalo Sobejano explains this as Valle-Inclán's "rebeldía del individuo frente a las tendencias allanadoras del progreso europeo, y esa rebeldía la sintió Nietzsche como nadie."[57]

Needless to say, we cannot ignore the influence of writers within Valle-Inclán's own native region. The Galician authors of the last half of the nineteenth century played a vital role in influencing Valle-Inclán's primitivism. Their allusions to Celtic myths and their presentation of the rugged and semicivilized society of Galicia call attention to the primitive aspects of Valle-Inclán's homeland. Nostalgia for the waning aristocracy and its struggle with the encroaching middle class are basic themes in the poetry of Manuel Curros Enríquez (1851-1908) and the novels of Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851-1920):

> Curros siente un gran respeto por el aristócrata de las viejas familias de su tierra, por el hidalgo compesino que, como el famoso Pedro Moscoso de Los pazos de Ulloa de la Bazán, va

---

[56]Martínez Ruiz, La generación, p. 49.

[57]Gonzalo Sobejano, Nietzsche en España (Madrid: Gredos, 1967), p. 222.

> desapareciendo, arruinado por las trampas e intrigas de los criados enriquecidos a su costa. Curros odia a la clase media de mayordomos, escribanos, abogadillos y cacicuelos baratos que han invadido la campiña gallega.[58]

We must also discuss the importance of Benito Vicetto, another Galician novelist whose themes of lust and incest no doubt influenced Valle-Inclán's creation of Don Juan Manuel Montenegro.[59] It is very likely that the despotic patriarch of the Comedias was modeled after the main character in Vicetto's El caballero de Calatrava (1863).[60] Vicetto's protagonist, a despotic, tempestuous and lustful noble, is almost the exact portrait of the hero in the Comedias bárbaras.

The influence of two important Galician poets should also be mentioned with respect to Valle-Inclán's interest in primitive motifs: Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885) and Eduardo Pondal (1835-1917). Rosalía de Castro's poems represent the archaic tradition of Galicia and remind us of the Galician-Portuguese verses of the Middle Ages.[61] Eduardo Pondal receives inspiration from the Celts and Galicia's primitive past: "canta con espíritu osiánico y nebuloso la melancolía del paisaje gallego y el fondo tradicional y céltico del alma de su región."[62] There can be little doubt that Valle-Inclán was attracted to this same myth. In

---

[58]Emilio González López, "Valle-Inclán y los escritores gallegos," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 252.

[59]In Fichter's Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 67, Valle-Inclán mentions Vicetto's name and describes him as a writer who left an impression on him.

[60]José Rubia Barcia, "Valle-Inclán y la literatura gallega," Revista Hispánica Moderna, vol. XXI (April, 1955), p. 124.

[61]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 406.

[62]Ibid.

several of his works, allusions to Celts, druids and dolmens create an atmosphere of marked antiquity. Juan Ramón Jiménez, who sees this myth as a major source of Valle-Inclán's literary inspiration, even goes so far as to refer to Valle-Inclán as a Celt and compares him to the Irish poets: "Valle-Inclán era un celta. Cabe compararle más justamente con George Moore, Synge y Yeats."[63]

Before discussing Valle-Inclán's primitive themes in depth, we must develop the concept of "primitive," as it applies to his works. Essentially, the primitive refers to those primordial desires and aggressions in man which civilization has sought to control by the enforcement of certain recognizable taboos:

> Taboo is a very primitive imposition imposed from without (by an authority) and directed against the strongest desires of man. The desire to violate it continues in the unconscious; persons who obey the taboo have ambivalent feelings toward what is affected by the taboo.[64]

These desires and forbidden pleasures date back to the dawn of civilization, and we can perceive them in the behavior patterns of all societies. Since ancient times man has been haunted and his behavior has been molded by pervasive forebodings and fears stemming from the social restraints placed upon him. Through the ages the taboo has served as an omnipresent reminder that man must contain his passions and not succumb to the crimes of incest and murder. In this way the social group strives to maintain order in what would otherwise be a savage and chaotic world.

---

[63]Salinas, Literatura, p. 120.

[64]Sigmund Freud, The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, A. A. Brill, trans. (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 831.

In the Comedias bárbaras the father's despotic power represents order and stability. Yet this force yields to the primitive savagery and the unbridled desires of the "brother clan." As in primitive social groups, the fierce sons, envious of their father's concubines and material posessions, remove the paternal figure of authority and fight among themselves for the spoils of victory. This turbulent struggle brings about confusion, fear, and the inevitable destruction of the Montenegro clan. This social disintegration is accompanied by a type of tragic pre-Christian guilt which laments the fate of the brothers.

In the trilogy, Valle-Inclán emphasizes the primordial traits and temperament of the Montenegro clan. In fact, it is possible to interpret the central theme of the father-son conflict along the pattern developed by Freud in his essay Totem and Taboo (1913), which draws upon his definitive work, The Interpretation of Dreams (1900). By employing Totem and Taboo in this analysis of the Comedias bárbaras we do not want to insist that Valle-Inclán had read Freud's essay and was consciously influenced by it. Sigmund Freud was all but unknown in Spain when two of the dramas in the trilogy, Águila de blasón (1907) and Romance de lobos (1908) were being written. Nevertheless, Valle-Inclán, an avid reader, a habitual frequenter of the cafes and tertulias, and an eclectic writer who kept abreast of the vanguard movements, could have become indirectly acquainted with Freud's momentous ideas and theories. In fact, a line in Águila de blasón (1907) may suggest that Valle-Inclán was familiar with the modern theory of the Oedipus complex. The despotic patriarch of the Montenegro clan, when speaking of his son Pedro, laments:

"¡Qué no hubiese dejado muerto a ese hijo de Ediop!" (I, 587). Yet, when discussing the Oedipus complex and the primitive father-son conflict, we must be certain to emphasize that, while Freud interpreted the Oedipus myth in the twentieth century, A.D., Sophocles had dramatized this myth in the fifth century B.C. Thus Valle-Inclán's conception of the father-son struggle may have originated from Freudian ideas, but it may have also come from his own reading of Sophocle's tragedy.

Although there is no direct link between Freud's works and the primitive father-son conflict portrayed in the Comedias, it appears that his ideas were beginning to circulate in intellectual circles of the time. In 1911 there appeared in La Lectura a lengthy article by José Ortega y Gasset on Sigmund Freud entitled "Psicoanálisis, ciencia problemática." In this article Ortega calls particular attention to Freud's influence in the arts and to his growing popularity:

> Los discípulos de Freud aumentan de día en día en Austria, en Alemania, en Italia, en Estados Unidos y forman una compleja asociación con numerosos centros particulares, con varias revistas y series de publicaciones.[65]

Because of the growing interest in myths and totemism in primitive societies at the time when the Comedias were being written, there exists the possibility that Valle-Inclán could have come into contact with literature on these subjects. For example, in Freud's Totem and Taboo, which relies heavily upon J. G. Frazer's observations on primitive societies compiled in The Golden Bough, we become aware of the vast

---

[65]José Ortega y Gasset, Obras completas, vol. I (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966), p. 219.

research in this area prior to the appearance of Freud's ideas. Freud focuses our attention on the abundant studies dealing with these topics: "The subject has gradually acquired great scientific interest and has called forth a copious literature."[66] In 1922, the same year that Cara de Plata appeared, another article by Ortega on Freud was published. In this article, entitled "Las Obras completas de Sigmundo Freud," Ortega announces the translation of Freud's complete works.[67] Although it is quite possible that Valle-Inclán was already in contact with basic Freudian concepts prior to 1922, by that year he had at his disposal the translation of the prolific psychiatrist's complete works.

In the Comedias the central theme is developed around a despotic primeval father and his rapacious sons who, envious of the father's many wives, his material wealth, and his power, join forces and destroy him. The theme alludes to two basic crimes in primitive societies which consist of the sons' removal of the father and incest with the mother. Freud asserts that these acts represent the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex.[68] He further maintains that the bulk of social development is built upon this complex: "I want to state the conclusion that the beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex."[69]

---

[66]Freud, Basic Works, p. 808. Regarding J. G. Frazer's studies and Freud see p. 835.

[67]José Ortega y Gasset, Obras completas, vol. VI (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1964), p. 301.

[68]Freud, Basic Works, p. 917.

[69]Ibid., p. 927.

In discussing the striking similarities between Freud's theories and the basic themes of the Comedias, we must stress that reference to incest is purely symbolic, since not even Valle-Inclán, a rebel against Spanish customs, would be so bold as to degrade the sanctity surrounding the Spanish mother. Nevertheless, we perceive this theme in the struggle which centers around Don Juan Manuel's concubines and personal possessions. The Freudian theme of social disintegration also appears. The sons in the Comedias bárbaras, although successful in revolting against their father, do not reap the rewards of victory because the elimination of the patriarch only brings about chaos and social decay. They are condemned to fight among themselves for the rest of their days. The brothers, depicted as a pack of ravaging wolves, are only successful in destroying the social order. Without a strong figure to assume the role of the father there can be no stability. Thus in the trilogy the Cain theme prevails:

> Aún cuando nada dice, sabe quiénes fueron los Caínes que le ataron para robarle. (I, 571)
>
> No seáis como los cuervos,que caen en bandada sobre los muertos papa comérselos. ¡Cuervos! ¡Caínes! (I, 662)
>
> Vosotros, Caínes . . . Sois como los perros. (I, 663)

El Pobre de San Lázaro, a character in the Comedias, casts the ominous presage: "Las casas más grandes se consumen como los cirios del velorio, cuando los hijos se alzan contra los padres y pelean por las herencias" (I, 685). Once the brother clan has violated the taboo and dispatched the father, then, the struggle over his domain ensues:

> Sexual need does not unite men; it separates them. Though the brothers had joined forces in order to overcome the

> father, each was the other's rival among the women. Each one wanted to have them all for himself like the father, and in the fight of each against the other the new organization would have perished.[70]

On this tragic note, Valle-Inclán concludes the trilogy:

> La voz de todos.—¡Era nuestro padre! ¡Era nuestro padre!
>
> La voz de los hijos.—¡Malditos estamos! ¡y metidos en un pleito para veinte años! (I, 721)

In Valle-Inclán's depiction of the barbarous father-son struggle we notice a great admiration for the illustrious aristocracy of Spain's remote past. To a large extent this vision is molded by his association with the writers of the Generation of 98 who also found inspiration in the glorification of Spain's primitive past.[71] Yet we must add that the seeds of Valle-Inclán's primitivism, as well as his creation of Don Juan Manuel, are rooted in his early decadent works.[72] Nevertheless, we notice a great difference between the decadent and refined Bradomín of the Sonatas and the dynamic Vinculero of the Comedias: "Es un hidalgo mujeriego y despótico, hospitalario y violento, rey suevo en su pazo de Lantañón" (I, 500). A great deal of this admiration for Don Juan Manuel no doubt stems from Valle-Inclán's personal respect for this type of rustic nobility.[73] In fact, a passage in Águila de blasón leads us to

---

[70]Ibid., p. 917.

[71]Lado, "La trilogía," p. 336.

[72]See Valle-Inclán's admiration for the primitive Pedro Tor in Fichter's Publications, pp. 68-69. As we shall observe, Valle-Inclán constantly alludes to the primitive in his early works.

[73]Roberta Salper de Tortella, "Don Juan Manuel Montenegro: The Fall of a King," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 319. With respect to Valle-Inclán's personal identification with the ancient nobility of Galicia, Salper de Tortella maintains: "Valle obviously admires the Vinculero's vital, unintellectual energy, and forcefulness. And what is more, the

believe that he fancied himself just such a noble man: "¡Ay, si hubiese conocido al abuelo Don Ramón María! Era el primer caballero de estos contornos, un caballero de aquéllos que ya no quedan" (I, 582). However, it is necessary to stress that his new vision of unfettered vitality and primitive passions reflects an important aspect of decadent literature and contrasts sharply with the protagonist of the Sonatas who delights in consciously flouting sexual morality and views savagery, perversion and death as esthetic experiences.[74] Valle-Inclán, now presents, in the person of Don Juan Manuel, the unbridled passions of a primitive hero who reacts only to the impulses of the moment. Valbuena Prat describes this new vision as "una grandeza primitiva" which differs greatly from the portrayal of Bradomín.[75]

In the Comedias we should not interpret this evolution as a shifting away from the influence of decadentism. We must remember that primitivism, similar to the type we find in the Comedias, plays a very important role in the works of decadent writers. This is apparent when we consider that an essential characteristic of decadent art is atavism, or the tendency to revert to the primitive state. Atavism provides a

---

Marqués de Bradomín, in so many ways his fictional alter ego, shares Valle-Inclán's admiration for the kingly Mayorazgo."

[74]In Bradomín the placid esthetic sensation prevails. Life assumes a passive role. In "Escamoteo de la realidad en las Sonatas," p. 207, Anderson-Imbert affirms: "la vida vale menos que el arte . . . El hombre refinado debe convertir su vida en un objecto de arte y apaciguarse en la autocontemplación."

[75]Valbuena Prat, Historia, vol. III, p. 528.

form of escape for the decadents who manifest a general scorn for the complications and inhibitions which accompany modern civilization. As A. E. Carter maintains, the decadent writers were attracted to the conflicting and obscure forces which beckon man back to the "seas and jungles from which he emerged . . . This uneasiness is nowhere more curiously demonstrated than in the idea of decadence as it flourished in nineteenth century French literature."[76]

While decadent writers delight in portraying refined aristocratic, atmospheres and corrupted civilizations, they also stress the harsh, uncivilized, and primordial drives which motivate mankind. This apparent contradiction reveals the complex nature of decadent art which is composed of many contrasting elements. Francesco Flora explains the complexity of decadence and views primitivism as one of its contrasting features:

> Il Flora vede ora il Decadentismo come una civiltà vissuta da tutta l'Europa dell'estremo Romanticismo al simbolismo, e comprende manifestizioni varie e anche, almeno apparentemente, contrasti: in esso l'esaltazione del barbaro e del primitivo si accompagna ad una incapacità di comprendere i propri simili. Sono questi contrasti che generano quel desiderio di false corrispondenze tra arte e vita che alimentano le esperienze di molti decandenti.[77]

Thus the exaltation of the primitive is an important theme in decadent literature. The decadent writer, who tends to place great emphasis upon the senses and the experiencing of new feelings, often

---

[76] A. E. Carter, The Idea of Decadence in French Literature: 1830-1900 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 4.

[77] Riccardo Scrivano, Il decadentismo e la critica (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1963), p. 46.

attempts to evoke what Giuseppe Borghese describes as the "stadi primitivi della sensibilità. Questo retrocedere si chiama in D'Annunzio belluinità, barbarie, mito, in Pascoli, con intonazione diversissima, si chiama infanzia."[78] In discussing atavism Benedetto Croce affirms: "La letteratura, che già si pasceva d'immagini erotiche e patologiche, si riempì presto di questa nuova tendenza romantica, falso-erotica, brutale e sanguinaria, e la convalidò e la inserì negli animi."[79]

We must be careful to stress that the exaltation of the primitive in decadent literature is not, however, the romantic vision of the noble savage. It is rather an image of man dominated by erotic passions. Max Nordeau, in his study entitled Dégénérescence, devotes considerable attention to this phenomenon. Nordeau interprets atavism as a "retour maladif à des degrés de développement excessivement reculés et tout à fait bas."[80] This view of man in a low state of development stresses not nobility, but eroticism as the driving force. Nordeau alludes also to this primitive man who "se laisse aller sauvagement et follement a ses désir, san égard aux lois de la société, et sans tenter d'opposer une digue a l'impétuosité furieuse de ses instincts."[81]

---

[78]Giuseppe Antonio Borghese, "Pascoli e il decadentismo," in Scrivano, ed., Il decadentismo, p. 83.

[79]Benedetto Croce, La letteratura italiana, vol. IV (Bari: Laterza, 1968), p. 397. It may be noted that Croce refers to decadence as "later romanticism."

[80]Max Nordeau, Dégénerescence, vol. I (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1894), p. 358.

[81]Ibid., p. 337.

Valle-Inclán was no doubt aware of the relationship between atavism and decadentism. It is interesting to note that he specifically employs the word atávico in Sonata de invierno while recalling the splendid military glories of the past: "Al toque de la trompeta siente el Marqués alzarse dentro del ánimo guerrero, despótico, feudal, este noble ánimo atávico" (II, 721). This decadent influence appears mainly in the works in which Valle-Inclán exalts the vital passions in his vision of a feudal and semicivilized Galicia. Interest in primitivism, however, is first perceived in his early works and becomes especially noticeable in Sonata de estío, Sonata de invierno and Flor de santidad. Finally, it culminates in the turbulent world of the Comedias bárbaras, in which society is motivated by superstition and erotic passion.

In analysing Valle-Inclán's themes dealing with primitivism we shall present various aspects and influences. We shall begin with the author's preference for archaic and primitive motifs which form an integral part of the literature and philosophy of the Generation of 98. We must then focus upon Valle-Inclán's native land and the prevalence of primitive motifs present in the works of the Galician writers who preceded him. In discussing the interest in various aspects of the primitive with respect to the intellectual atmosphere in Spain at the turn of the century, we must also consider the impact of Friedrich Nietzsche on Valle-Inclán's generation. We shall view Nietzsche's exaltation of vitality, the will to act and the Dionysian passions which offered a poetic contrast to what the Generation of 98 perceived as stagnancy and mediocrity in Spanish life.

In order to fully grasp the extent of Valle-Inclán's fascination for the primitive we shall present the turbulent world of the Comedias bárbaras in which unrestrained passion and eroticism reign supreme. Here the author presents primitivism in its natural and unfettered form. In the trilogy, the themes center around the sexual drive which emerges as the motivating force while we witness a violent "son clan" competing with the father for possession of concubines and material goods. As we shall observe, this conflict alludes to the Oedipus complex and evokes the dread of incest. Thus the thematic content of the Comedias will be interpreted in relation to the ideas and theories established by Sigmund Freud in Totem and Taboo.

Our study will then compare specific aspects of Valle-Inclán's fascination for the primitive to decadent literature in general, and parallels will be drawn between the two. We shall mainly examine such works as the Sonatas, the Comedias, and La lámpara maravillosa. In analysing these works emphasis will be placed on decadent themes which find inspiration in the archaic, remote, and primitive. One theme in Valle-Inclán's works is pseudomysticism which, in La lámpara maravillosa, evokes pre-Christian barbarism, and pagan eroticism under the guise of Christianity. Another theme deals with the unbridled passions, cruelty, and perversions of the mythical "Fatal Woman." This archetype in decadent literature, as we shall see, appears in such works as Valle-Inclán's Sonata de estío, Divinas palabras, La cabeza del Bautista, and Ligazón. In portraying this type of woman, Valle-Inclán glorifies the carnal passions and presents a female counterpart of the lustful

patriarch, Don Juan Manuel Montenegro. Finally, our attention must focus upon the famous "decadent" writer, Gabriele D'Annunzio, whose works had a profound impact on Valle-Inclán. Parallels will be drawn between the primitive father-son struggle in D'Annunzio's La figlia di Jorio (1903) and Valle-Inclán's Comedias.

A final section will deal with the influence of a European movement known as Expressionism which appears in the esperpento and the distorted vision of humanity and civilization which characterizes Valle-Inclán's later works. We shall concentrate upon the primitive nature of the esperpento and Expressionism. Furthermore, the presence of Expressionism appears in Cara de Plata (1922) and is indeed significant in our study of primitivism, for it reflects the influence of Freud and often depicts father-son struggles.

CHAPTER II

VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM: AN ASPECT OF THE GENERATION OF 98

A complete analysis of Valle-Inclán's interest in the primitive must take into consideration the themes and ideas commonly expressed in the writings of the Generation of 98. Although we can trace the influences of Valle-Inclán's primitivism to many sources such as decadence, the Galician writers of his native region, Nietzsche, Freud, and Expressionism, this chapter will limit itself to a discussion of the primitive as a theme basic to the Generation of 98. In order to become aware of the importance of this theme we must discuss the generation's fascination for pre-Christian religions, superstitions, myths, the coarse vitality of the rural inhabitants, and Spain's medieval tradition. These writers were attracted to the folklore, timeless traditions, and the passions of Spain's peasantry. Interest in such themes was to a great extent the result of the Generation of 98's scorn for the colorless middle class and the rapid growth of bureaucracies which brought about sudden change in the society of the late nineteenth century.[1] In sharp

---

[1]We can observe an excellent example of this admiration for tradition and contempt for the middle class in Valle-Inclán's Los cruzados de la causa (1908), the first novel of a trilogy entitled La guerra carlista. In this nostalgic portrayal of the Carlist War (1872-1876), Valle-Inclán lauds the supporters of tradition who defend the Church against the forces of liberalism and centralization. In this novel we hear Bradomín express the sentiments of the proud but dying feudal order: "¡El genio del linaje! . . . Lo que nunca pude entender

contrast to this society, the Generation of 98 exalted the art and language of the Middle Ages and gave attention to the lingering vestiges of feudalism and barbarism which they found in Spain's rural regions.

In analysing these tendencies among the writers of the Generation of 98 we shall see that Valle-Inclán's portrayal of the primitive is representative of the ideas and artistic concepts of his generation. Azorín clearly expresses the philosophy of his generation: "Hay que remontarse a los primitivos para encontrar algo espontáneo, jovial, plástico, íntimo."[2] In an effort to find the "primitive" the generation reacted against the immediate past (realism, positivism, and naturalism) and looked with great reverence upon the myths and traditions of Spain's remote past:

> Perfectamente individualizados, los autores jóvenes coinciden en el anhelo de una fórmula que les emancipe de toda tutela inmediata. No abominan de la tradición: lo que hacen es buscarla en fuentes más remotas. De ahí la preferencia que muestran por lo lejano en el tiempo y en el espacio: por los poetas y artistas primitivos en que España balbucea; por las gentes que, inmutables viven apegados a la entraña de la Castilla maternal.[3]

In Valle-Inclán this tendency is especially pronounced. José Antonio Maravall, in discussing what he calls "el papel del primitivismo,"

---

es el liberalismo, destructor de toda la tradición española. Los mayorazgos eran la historia del porvenir . . . vivía en ellos el romanticismo de las batallas. . . . Eran la sangre más pura, destilada en un filtro de mil años . . . (II,381)

[2]Guillermo Díaz Plaja, Las estéticas de Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1965), p. 45.

[3]Melchor Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura de Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1943), p. 104.

describes Valle-Inclán's flight from the present reality as "una huida de la realidad del presente, realidad a la que Valle-Inclán se siente hostil."[4]

Valle-Inclán's depiction of the feudal and primitive society of rural Galicia is indeed compatible with the Generation of 98's interest in the rugged peasantry of Spain's remote regions. Their robust vigor, passions, and vitality are themes which attracted Valle-Inclán's contemporaries:

> Para la generación del 98 el campo y sus habitantes representan una España real, sólida; su belleza es verdadera, las pasiones de sus hombres son gritos fidedignos del alma española. Los hombres que habitan las sierras y los páramos donde crecen la encina, la retama, el chopo, serán con frecuencia crueles y toscos, mas nunca dejan de ser hombes enterizos y consistentes.[5]

Valle-Inclán places this same emphasis on the harsh nature of the peasantry of his native Galicia:

> Lañeros encorvados y sudadores que apuraban un vaso de vino y continuaban en su ruta hacia la aldea, y mendigos que mostraban al descubierto una llaga sangrienta, y calderos negruzcos que cabalgaban en jacos de áspero pelaje y tenían en el blanco de los ojos una extraña ferocidad. (I, 1194)

The dramatist Jacinto Benavente was also attracted to the coarse nature of the Spanish peasantry. The theme of incest, an important aspect of Valle-Inclán's primitivsm, is the moving force which leads to violence in Benavente's well known rural tragedy, La malquerida (1913). In this drama Benavente departs from the usual satire of the aristocracy

---

[4]José Antonio Maravall, "La imagen de la sociedad arcaica en Valle-Inclán," Revista de Occidente, vol. XV (Oct., Nov., Dec. 1966), p. 226.

[5]Pedro Laín Entralgo, La generación del noventa y ocho, p. 45.

and middle class of Madrid and presents the passions of the rustic peasants of Castile. Here the uncontrolled desires of incest and the crime of murder dominate the action. The theme of incest pervades the drama and culminates when Esteban and his stepdaughter, Acacia, reveal a mutually strong attraction for each other. In the final scene Esteban expresses the savage desire to break family ties, abandon civilization, and live with the beasts: "¡Vamos los dos! ¡Qué nos den caza si puen! ¡Entre esos riscos! Pa quererte y pa guardarte, seré como las fieras que no conocen padres ni hermanos."[6] Nevertheless, the incestuous act is not consummated. Benavente successfully blunts the impact of the incest theme by presenting a stepfather-stepdaughter relationship which is not fully developed. As in Valle-Inclán's Comedias Bárbaras, respect for the traditional Spanish family prevails.

Valle-Inclán's generation was also fascinated by the archaic ruins and vestiges which evoke the epic struggles and the chaotic flux of the nascent Spanish culture during the Middle Ages. Likewise, they found a poetic freshness in the literature of that time. Among these writers we notice a great interest in the traditional ballad which portrayed lust, haughtiness, envy, parricide, and fratricide. In fact, they perceived that these attributes still existed in the rural areas of Spain. For example, Antonio Machado describes the peasants of Soria as coarse people dominated by the bestial passions of envy:

> Abunda el hombre malo del campo y de la aldea capaz de insanos vicios y crímenes bestiales que bajo el pardo sayo esconde un

---

[6]Jacinto Benavente, La malquerida (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964), p. 72.

> alma fea, esclavo de los siete pecados capitales. Los ojos siempre turbios de envidia y tristeza, guarda su presa y llora lo que el vecino alcanza.[7]

In characterizing these people Machado stresses the existence of envy and violence: "Mucha sangre de Caín/ tiene la gente labriega."[8]

It is this very envy and violence which inspire Machado to recreate the medieval ballad. In a long narrative poem entitled La tierra de Alvar González, Machado employs the traditional octosyllable in depicting the theme of pre-Christian envy. The background for this epic poem is the hostile Castilian countryside: "la recreación épica del numen sanguinario y fiero de los campos castellanos."[9] The poem, which recalls the ancient Cain theme, is cast in a setting in which Machado reveals vengeance and violence as the norm: "Machado understood this Cain-Abel theme as one of envy and a pre-Christian spirit of vengeance at the heart of the people of Castile."[10] The ballad tells of the envy of the older brothers which, stemming from the father's preference for the youngest son, culminates in parricide. The inheritance is cursed and the guilt ridden sons are destined to meet the same tragic fate.

In Valle-Inclán's generation we find further evidence of concern for the theme of pre-Christian envy. Miguel de Unamuno, in his novel Abel Sánchez (1917), presents an updated version of the classic Cain-Abel

---

[7]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 38.

[8]Ibid., p. 39.

[9]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 288.

[10]Carl W. Cobb, Antonio Machado (New York: Twayne, 1971), p. 88.

conflict. Here he depicts the passion of envy which ultimately overwhelms the strong willed protagonist, Joaquín Monegro. The society Unamuno presents is aloof and indifferent. Unable to recognize the merits of Joaquín, it bestows its favor upon Abel Sánchez, a likeable but less worthy person. Although Unamuno defends his protagonist, Joaquín Monegro, extreme envy is what eventually causes his downfall: "Y al fin la envidia que yo traté de mostrar en el alma de mi Joaquín Monegro es una envidia trágica, una envidia que se defiende, una envidia que podría llamarse angélica."[11] Apart from this philosophical defense of Joaquín, however, there lies at the heart of this novel the problem of pre-Christian envy, hatred, and vengeance symbolized in the figures of Cain and Able. This is apparent in the deathbed scene when Joaquín desperately asks: "¿Por que nací en tierra de odios? En tierra que el precepto parece ser: '¡Odia a tus prójimos como a ti mismo!'"[12]

We can observe further proof of concern for the conflict between Christianity and barbarism in a letter from Antonio Machado to Unamuno. In discussing Unamuno's novel Abel Sánchez, Machado emphasizes this problem:

> Su Abel Sánchez es libro precristiano que V.—el hombre de Cristo en el pecho—tenía que escribir para invitarnos a expulsar de nuestras almas al hombre precristiano, al gorila genesiaco que todos llevamos dentro . . . el caínismo perdura a pesar de Cristo.[13]

---

[11]Miguel de Unamuno, Obras completas, vol. II (Madrid: Escelicer, 1967), p. 686.

[12]Ibid., p. 811.

[13]García Blanco, En torno a Unamuno, pp. 254-255.

These writers, aware of how little success the Church had made in extirpating these passions, stress the true Christian ideals of love and charity. Thus Machado, disturbed by the problem of hate and envy portrayed in the primitive Cain theme in Unamuno's novel, advocates a return to Christ: "Vengamos al Cristo. Si la envidia es el odio al prójimo por amor de nosotros mismos, ¿qué será de la fraternidad?"[14]

The Generation of 98, in seeking a solution to the ills which plagued humanity, found the ideal Christian spirit expressed by the Russian writer Leo Tolstoi: "Sólo los rusos—¡bendito pueblo!—me parecen capaces de superarlo por un sentimiento más noble y universal. El tolstoísmo salvará a Europa, si es que ésta tiene salvación."[15] Instead of the aloof precepts of orthodox religion, the writers of Valle-Inclán's generation preferred Tolstoi's resistance to authority by practicing the simple charitable virtues of primitive Christianity—"love, brotherhood, faith, life in Christ."[16] Tolstoi professed Christ's teachings of "love thy neighbor as thyself" and stressed "kindness toward him, abhorrence of murder and of tormenting one's fellow man."[17] Unamuno clearly expresses this influence in his ideas regarding Christianity, brotherhood, and orthodox religion:

> Tengo, sí, con el afecto, con el corazón, con el sentimiento, una fuerte tendencia al cristianismo, sin atenerme a dogmas

---

[14]Ibid., p. 256.

[15]Ibid., pp. 255-256.

[16]Stefan Zweig, The Living Thoughts of Tolstoi, selections trans. by Nathan Haskell Dole (Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1939), pp. 16-18.

[17]Ibid., pp. 99-100.

> especiales de esta o de aquella confesión cristiana. Considero a todo el que invoca con respeto y amor el nombre de Cristo, y me repugnan los ortodoxos, sean católicos o protestantes.[18]

Of great concern to the Generation of 98 was the problem of superstition and paganism which continued to linger in certain regions of Spain. Valle-Inclán's contemporaries were well aware of the impact that these vestiges of primitive barbarism and pre-Christian religions had on Christianity. In fact, in several remote areas of the Basque provinces, as well as in the Galician countryside, pagan rites, witchcraft, and superstition were still competing with Christianity when Pío Baroja and Valle-Inclán were writing. Christianity, having been absorbed in many cases by the primitive forms of religion that preceded it, had little significant influence save for exterior rituals.

We can perceive this very conflict in some of the works of Pío Baroja. In novels and short stories which take place in the rural Basque regions, he calls attention to the conflict between barbarism and Christianity. In reference to this aspect of Baroja's works, Carlos Orlando Nallim asserts: "Restos de ese paganismo fueron las prácticas de brujerías y supersticiones hasta siglos después de cristianizado, y aun quedan creencias y costumbres que ratifican esa aseveración."[19] Nallim continues:

> La iglesia empleó todo su poder para desterrarlos. Tuvo éxito en su empresa, sin embargo todavía quedan leyendas

---

[18]Unamuno, Obras completas, vol. III (Madrid: Escelicer, 1968), p. 260.

[19]Nallim, El problema de la novela en Pío Baroja, p. 44.

> y supersticiones como vestigios de aquella religión de otrora, aunque poco a poco va desapareciendo.[20]

In Unamunos's writings we also notice an interest in pre-Christian religions and barbarism. He focuses our attention upon the ancient Celtic beliefs in Valle-Inclán's native Galicia and maintains that they had merely been overshadowed by Christianity:

> Vagan por las selvas y veneran los árboles. El paganismo que en ninguna parte murió, sino que se hizo bautizar cristianizándose más o menos, late aquí más vivo que en otras regiones españolas, tal vez porque el antepasado del gallego, un celta, tenía una mitología de que carecía el beduino abuelo del castellano, el iberò recio.[21]

In Valle-Inclán's portrayal of the peasantry and the rustic nobility of Galicia we perceive the author's fascination for primitive passions, cruelty, pre-Christian religions, and superstitions. In the Comedias bárbaras we also notice the themes of envy and fierce hatred which characterize the father-son struggle. Valle-Inclán, like other members of the Generation of 98, was aware of the absence of Christian love and charity. Instead, he often saw savage cruelty as the norm.

In presenting such hatred and cruelty Valle-Inclán, like his contemporaries, alludes to the lack of Christian charity which is expressed in the writings of Tolstoi. This is evident in La guerra carlista as Don Juan Manuel laments the brutal and senseless murder of a young soldier:

> Pobre mozo, hubiera buscado asilo en mi casa, le hubiera defendido. . . . Es la verdadera hidalguía, y la verdadera

---

[20]Ibid., p. 45.

[21]Miguel de Unamuno, Obras, vol. I, p. 668.

> doctrina del filósofo de Judea. . . . Comprendo la guerra por una causa tan pequeña y no la comprendo por un príncipe. Jesús Nazaret no hizo guerra, pero dio su sangre por la redención de los humildes, cuando todos la daban por los reyes y emperadores. (II, 377)

Like Tolstoi, Valle-Inclán stresses love of one's neighbor as opposed to the aloofness and indifference which orthodox religion has for human suffering:

> El clero reza en latín para que no se enteren los siervos que labran la tierra. Ese pobre mozo merecía ser amparado. . . . Todos hubieran venido contra mí. Claro está que me habría defendido a tiros. Entonces, ¿por qué predican el amor al prójimo? Si le amo como a mí mismo, le defiendo como a mí mismo. Ese mozo, hijo de pescadores, era mi prójimo. (II, 377)

In sharp contrast to these Christian ideals La guerra carlista constantly portrays savage cruelty under the guise of Christianity during the Carlist War. In this trilogy there are few traces of Christian charity. The emphasis is given to pre-Christian barbarous passions which dominate the action. In these works Valle-Inclán recalls the many tales he had heard as a youth of the religious fanaticism and primitive cruelty which characterized the Carlist struggle. These themes apparently made a deep impression on him, since in 1908 he traveled to Navarre, spoke with Carlist War veterans, consulted the archives, and visited the principal battle sites.[22]

In La guerra carlista recurring characters such as Bradomín and Don Juan Manuel are given secondary roles while the main action centers around the bloodthirsty, vindictive, and compassionless priest, Don

---

[22]Lado, "La trilogía de La guerra carlista," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 340.

Manuel de Santa Cruz. Instead of a spiritual leader embodying the virtues of Christianity, he is depicted as a fierce and primitive tribal chieftain:

> Era su crueldad como la del viñador que enciende hogueras contra las plagas de sus viñas. Miraba subir el humo como en un sacrificio, con la serena esperanza de hacer la vendimia en un día del Señor. (II, 500)

The only force that motivates Santa Cruz is a primitive hatred for the enemy. For him, the war serves as an enigmatic cleansing force inspired not by Christian ideals, but rather by pre-Christian barbarism narrated in Greek and Roman history:

> La guerra santa está por encima de la ambición de los reyes, del arte militar de los capitanes. El cura sentía dentro de su alma palpitar aquella verdad, que le había sido dada en el retiro de su iglesia cuando leía historias de griegos y romanos. (II, 502)

Santa Cruz's religious crusade bears no resemblance to Christianity. On the contrary, it is revealed as a mysterious form of primitive sacrifice in which Santa Cruz himself is presented as a Celtic priest: "Ahora aquella verdad era su verdad, la sentía sagrada y sangrienta, toda llena del arcano profético, como las entrañas de una res sacrificada por el vate druida" (II, 502). José Antonio Maravall characterizes Santa Cruz as

> un guerrero antiguo, lleno de fe primitiva que, con un sentido profético similar al vate druida, lee an las entrañas de la res sacrificada para orientarse en una guerra elemental. Una guerra que no es sino la violencia espontánea que mana de las gentes.[23]

---

[23]Maravall, "La imagen," p. 236.

We find this same violence and primitive thirst for blood in Santa Cruz's followers. Valle-Inclán presents them as savage people who worship only the tribal leader as if he were a type of deity: "gentes sencillas y fieras como una tribu primitiva, cruel con los enemigos y devota al jefe" (II, 485). These peasants look back nostalgically to the days of primitive ritual and blood sacrifice:

> Aldeanos que sonreían con los ojos llenos de lágrimas, oyendo cuentos pueriles de princesas emparedadas y que degollaban a los enemigos con la alegría santa y bárbara, llena de bailes y de cantos, que tenían los sacrificios sangrientos ante los altares de piedra en los cultos antiguos. (II, 485)

In Flor de santidad (1903), the Comedias bárbaras, and other works Valle-Inclán frequently employs motifs which allude to the primitive religion of the ancient Celts who inhabited not only Galicia but other regions of northern Spain as well: "Sentada al abrigo de unas piedras célticas, doradas por líquenes milenarios, hilaba una pastora" (I, 1178). Valle-Inclán's imagery often depicts the lingering presence of ancient societies abounding in tonsured priestly cults, druids and dolmens which provides a barbarous setting for his primitive themes. In Valle-Inclán's writings the Celtic myth, composed of primitive religion and customs, is still very much alive. In an article entitled "Una visita al convento de Gondarín" he speaks with great nostalgia for an age when "Los vates druidas que, ceñidas las blancas vestiduras de lino, iban a celebrar los cruentos sacrificios sobre la tosca piedra de sus dólmenes que el muérdago cubría."[24] In the drama Voces de gesta (1912), which unfolds

---

[24] Fichter, Publicaciones, p. 62.

in medieval Navarre, the Celtic tradition forms an integral part of the thematic structure. This pastoral tragedy, an allegorical representation of the nineteenth century Carlist struggle, employs primitive religious motifs which evoke the Celtic past. In Voces de gesta there is no reference to the institution of Christianity; only the sacred oak tree is venerated as the Celtic altar of laws, rights, and traditions:[25]

> ¡Ara de nuestras oraciones!
> ¡Patriarca del encinar!
> ¡Relicario de las tradiciones!
> ¡Llama sagrada en el hogar!
> ¡Dosel de leyes y costumbres
> de un milenario, son tus ramas
> un palmar a las muchedumbres
> y la corona de las famas! (I, 163)

We observe an important aspect of Valle-Inclán's primitivism in his portrayal of Christianity and the conflicting forces of superstition.[26] This inspiration quite appropriately came from his native Galicia, the region of Spain in which Christianity exercised the least influence. In fact, when Christianity was introduced into Galicia in the fourth century

---

[25]The druids, who worshiped the oak tree, were notorious in the Greco-Roman world for their human sacrifices. In The Famous Druids (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 24, A. L. Owen quotes the elder Pliny's account of the Celtic religion: "The Druids 'held nothing more sacred than the mistletoe' and the oak, 'and they never perform any of their rites except in the presence of a branch of it.'"

[26]See Rosa Seeleman's discussion of the vital role superstition plays in Valle-Inclán's primitivism in "Folkloric Elements in Valle-Inclán," Hispanic Review (vol. III, no. 1, 1935), p. 117: "Valle-Inclán makes extensive use of . . . superstitions and witchcraft. An aura of mystery and loneliness lies upon these people . . . suspicious of all aspects of nature and the woodlands. The primitive . . . and the absolute fixity of their notions provide Valle-Inclán with a distinctive means of characterization and atmosphere, a good point of departure for his portrayal of the Galician peasant."

A.D. it was immediately consumed by pagan cults which centered around the Gnostic heresy led by Priscillian. Unamuno, who was very much interested in Galicia's pre-Christian religions, affirmed in an article written on that region in 1912 that the Gnostic heresy still prevailed:

> Todo el fondo pagano del pueblo gallego levantó cabeza en el gnosticismo de Prisciliano, el hereje galaico, el único gran hereje español de los primeros siglos cristianos, gnosticismo que duró tres siglos si es que del todo ha muerto. Este Prisciliano, cuyas obras se encontraron no ha mucho, ha de darnos la clave de no pocos problemas que suscita el estudio del alma galaico.[27]

As Unamuno maintains, vestiges of this paganism were still extant when Valle-Inclán was writing. Thus allusions in Valle-Inclán's works to superstition and pagan rites are not forced and provide a natural setting for the primitive passions he presents.

Ramón Sender, in analysing Valle-Inclán's works, stresses the primitive as seen in the ancient superstitions of Galicia. Sender discusses the harsh nature of the omnipresent pre-Christian gods in Flor de santidad, a novel relating the innocent love of Adega, a twelve year old shepherdess, and the tragic fate of the mysterious pilgrim who seduces her:

> Todo en esta novela sucede en la adusta intemperie de los dioses antiguos, aquellos dioses que se instalaban con toda su grandeza a la orilla del riesgo entre la indiferencia y la crueldad. . . . Un dios indiferente y lejano, pero atento a propiciar y a mantener la fatalidad del dolor con un fin que sólo él conoce.[28]

---

[27]Unamuno, Obras, I, p. 668.

[28]Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 111.

Vestiges of primitive religion and superstition abound in Flor de santidàd as well as in other works portraying rural Galicia. Allusions to black horses, cats, and goats serve as credible motifs which reflect this superstitious tradition. Valle-Inclán exploits superstition and embroils the satanic with the divine. In Flor de santidad, for example, the young shepherdess Adega naively believes that she has been seduced by a divine power and is miraculously carrying in her womb the Christ child: "Anciana sois, más aún habéis de ver al hijo mío . . . Conoceréisle porque tendrá un sol en la frente. Hijo será de Dios Nuestro Señor" (I, 1226). The others, however, voice their belief in the devil's ability to seduce women and to make them conceive.[29] Adega herself speaks of nigntly visitations by the devil:

> ¡Mirad allí el demonio! . . . ¡Mirad como ríe! Quería acostarse conmigo y llegó a oscuras. ¡Nadie lo pudiera sentir! Sus manos velludos anduvieronme por el cuerpo y estrujaron mis pechos. Peleaba por poner en ellos la boca como si fuera una criatura. ¡Oh! ¡Mirad donde asoma! (I, 1227)

To ward off such evil it is a common practice for primitive people to carry with them an assortment of objects: "Llevaba en el justillo cruces y medallas, amuletos de azabache y faltriqueras de velludo que contenían brotes de olivo y hojas del misal" (I, 1178). In order to

---

[29]This medieval superstition is explained in detail in Francesco Maria Guazzo's Compendium meleficarum, trans. by E. A. Ashwin (London: John Rodker, 1929), pp. 30-31. Valle-Inclán, of course, was familiar with this superstition and in Romance de lobos he allows Fuso Negro to elaborate on it: "Métese [the devil] por las chimineas abajo para montar a las mujeres y empreñarlas con una trampa que él sabe. . . . Y las mujeres conocen que tienen encima el enemigo, porque la flor de su sangre es fría" (I, 712).

purge her soul of the devil, Adega is subjected to a popular form of exorcism:

> Adega, arrodillada entre la dueña y el criado, reza llena de terror. Terminada la misa, todas las posesas del mal espíritu son despojadas de sus ropas y conducidas al mar, envueltas en lienzos blancos. Adega llora vergonzosa, pero acata humilde cuanto la dueña dispone. Las endemoniadas, en frente de las olas, aúllan y se resisten enterrando los pies en la arena. El lienzo que las cubre cae, y su lívida desnudez surge como un gran pecado legendario, calenturiento y triste. . . . Los aldeanos arrodillados, cuentan las olas. Son siete las que habrá de recibir cada poseída para verse libre de los malos espíritus y salvar su alma de la cárcel oscura del infierno. ¡Son siete como los pecados del mundo! (I, 1230)

While the exorcism is being performed the sheep of the village die of a disease attributed to a diabolical cause. Yet exorcism remains the only primitive means of combatting what the people interpret as the invisible force of evil: "¡Levántate, rapaza! . . . No dejes escapar la oveja. . . . Hazle en la testa el círculo del Rey Salomón que deshace el mal ojo. . . . ¡Con la mano izquierda, rapaza! (I, 1188).

In Flor de santidad Valle-Inclán, while portraying the collective spirit of the peasantry, alludes to a pre-Christian form of religion or superstition which Ramón Sender describes as animism.[30] Sender, in his discussion of primitivism in Flor de santidad, elaborates upon this ancient form of religion known as animism, or the belief whereby primitive people conceive of natural objects, such as rocks and trees, as having souls: "Lo que mejor define el acento primitivo de Flor de santidad es la aparición de formas animistas que están aun vivas entre las gentes

---

[30]Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 111.

campesinas."[31] Valle-Inclán, seeing artistic potential in this ancient superstition, was quick to exploit it:

> El animismo es una deformación de lo real y como toda deformación tiene implícatas posibilidades poéticas. Hacer hablar al río y llorar al viento o cantar al árbol y rezar a la brisa en una serie naturalmente coordinada es de una antiquísima eficacia.[32]

Another superstition to which Valle-Inclán alludes is the peasants' fear of the wandering souls of Purgatory. This belief is no doubt rooted more in pre-Christian traditions than in Christianity itself. According to Aubrey Bell, religion in rural Galicia emerges as a mere revival of ancestor worship centered around the cult of souls.[33] Not out of Christian love, but rather out of great fear, the peasants pay tribute to these departed ones:

> In the priest's view the souls must be released from the torments of Purgatory, by the peasants the souls are regarded as possible tormentors. They have to be propitiated with food, otherwise there is no limit to the harm they may work.[34]

Thus Valle-Inclán's portrayal of passions and pre-Christian barbarism is an important aspect of his primitive themes which definitely reflects the interests of other members of the Generation of 98. This same depiction of superstition and barbarism which appears as a common theme in the works of his contemporaries is indeed significant in that it plays a vital role in creating a background of ineffable fear,

---

[31] Ibid., pp. 100-111.

[32] Ibid., p. 111.

[33] Aubrey F. G. Bell, Spanish Galicia (London: Brodley Head, 1922), p. 14.

[34] Ibid., p. 15.

guilt, and horror which accompanies the primitive father-son struggle in the Comedias.

Another important aspect of the Generation of 98, which is quite compatible with Valle-Inclán's creation of static and primitive societies, is seen in the Generation's profound interest in time and history. In order to appreciate more fully Valle-Inclán's fascination for the primitive it is essential to analyze the manner in which the Generation of 98 interpreted time and the passing of events. These writers sought to penetrate into the eternal flow of Spanish culture in order to portray the timeless existence of tradition and folklore in Spain's rural regions. The history of major events and chronology were of little value in their attempt to capture the essence of Spanish culture, for each writer expressed his own personal vision of history. Thus Unamuno spoke of intrahistoria, Ganivet alluded to infrahistoria, and Azorín stressed the importance of lo menudo and minucioso. Valle-Inclán, in a manner uniquely his own, also embodied a similar vision of history in presenting his legendary and mythical Galicia.

Although Azorín described these writers as "una generación histórica," we must not interpret the word "histórica" as meaning a disciplined study of past events.[35] Nor was it the history compiled in official chronicles or found in newspapers. It was, rather, an acute interest in the minute daily occurrences which were thought to mirror the eternal soul of the Spanish people.

---

[35]Martínez Ruiz, La generación, p. 55.

José Ortega y Gasset, in some respects a member of the Generation of 98, placed a great deal of importance upon seemingly trivial but vital events and sensations. For Ortega, history consisted primarily of "primores de lo vulgar."[36] Ortega rejected the traditional approach to history, for it is unable to grasp the essence of life itself:

> Miran los historiadores de la historia sólo la política y la cultura, y no advierten que todo eso es sólo la superficie de la historia; que la realidad histórica es, antes que eso y más hondo que eso, un puro afán de vivir, una potencia parecida a las cósmicas; no la misma, pero sí hermana de la que inquieta la mar, fecundiza a la fiera, hace temblar la estrella.[37]

Ortega calls attention to the vital nature of humanity which is incompatible with history. In his essay entitled Historia como problema he perceives a certain inflexibility in history ("razón histórica") which is inharmonious with the turbulent state of flux characteristic of humanity ("razón vital"). This conflict, a primary concern of Ortega, appears as a constant theme in several of his works.

In attempting to define the Generation of 98's concept of history, perhaps the best interpretation can be found in what Unamuno refers to as intrahistoria:

> Los periódicos nada dicen de la vida silenciosa de los millones de hombres sin historia que a todas horas del día y en todos los países del globo se levantan a una orden del sol y van a sus campos a proseguir la oscura y silenciosa labor cotidiana y eterna, esa labor que como la de las madréporas suboceánicas echa las bases sobre que se alzan los isolotes de la historia. Sobre el silencio augusto,

---

[36] Ibid.

[37] José Ortega y Gasset, La rebelión de las masas (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966), p. 53.

> decía, se apoya y vive el sonido; sobre la inmensa Humanidad silenciosa se levantan los que meten bulla en la historia.[38]

We can clearly see further evidence of scorn for documented history in a letter from Unamuno to Ganivet. Unamuno, concerned with the vital aspects of Spanish culture and the collective spirit of the people, views history as an obstacle which conceals the passions, myths, and eternal values of his race:

> La historia, la condenada historia . . . nos ha celado la roca viva de la constitución patria; la historia, a la vez que nos ha revelado gran parte de nuestro espíritu en nuestros actos, nos ha impedido ver lo más íntimo de ese espíritu. Hemos atendido más a los sucesos históricos que pasan y se pierden, que a los hechos subhistóricos, que permanecen y van estratificándose en profundas capas. Se ha hecho más caso del relato de tal cual hazañosa empresa de nuestro siglo de caballerías, que a la constitución rural de los repartimientos de pastos en tal o cual olvidado pueblecillo.[39]

Although Unamuno concedes that history reveals a great deal with respect to human conduct, he maintains that it says little about the intimate aspects of human existence. Unamuno affirms: "La historia da noticias empíricas respecto a la conducta de hombres, pero no dice nada respecto a la eseñcia del hombre; que enseña noticias, pero no engendra saberes."[40] According to Unamuno, history is the awareness of passing events and the social, superficial, and visible aspects of humanity while intrahistoria represents "lo irracional e inconsciente, lo espontáneo, lo eterno, lo profundo y silencioso de la vida humana."[41]

---

[38]Unamuno, Obras, III, p. 185.

[39]Martínez Ruiz, La generación, p. 55.

[40]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 146.

[41]Ibid.

This same attitude characterizes Antonio Machado in his vision of history. Machado also reacts against academic and journalistic history, since he finds in it a neglect or denial of the eternal and vital qualities of mankind. Machado placed considerable importance upon "live sources of information" which he and other members of the Generation of 98 gathered from the oral tradition of the people. In an article on Valle-Inclán Machado states:

> Los jóvenes no tienen ya, como tuvimos nosotros en nuestra juventud, fuentes vivas de información. Don Ramón y el círculo de sus amigos escuchamos de labios de nuestros abuelos, de nuestros padres y de nuestras madres, relatos de hechos vividos o presenciados, los más autorizados juicios sobre aquellos sucesos, y la historia escrita tiene para nosotros mucha menor importancia que tuvo la inmediata tradición oral.[42]

Likewise, Azorín presents much the same view in the novel Doña Inés. In this novel he exalts the spontaneous legend which flows from the heart of the people and not history: "La leyenda ha venido a la Historia. La leyenda es más verdad que la Historia. La leyenda hace cristalizar sentimientos e ideas que están en la conciencia de todos. . . . La leyenda vence a la Historia."[43] As we notice in Azorín's novel, the poetic view of history and the concept of intrahistoria were more than mere intellecutal ideas limited to their essays and correspondence with one another. On the contrary, it went far beyond that and found expression in the novel, theatre, and verse. In their works these writers constantly evoked the timeless nature of the harsh

---

[42]Alfredo Carballo Picazo, "Antonio Machado," p. 17.

[43]Martínez Ruiz, Obras, p. 653.

landscape and created a static portrait of life by fusing their characters with it. An excellent example of this can be seen in Unamuno's popular novelette San Manuel bueno, mártir, which is virtually teeming with allusions to the eternal repository of tradition reflected in the never changing customs of the people and the land. In this short novel the mountain, the deep blue lake, the landscape, and the collective beliefs of the people are fused into a timeless image of a rustic society:

> Mira, parece como si hubiera acabado el tiempo, como si esa zagala hubiese estado ahí siempre, y como está, y cantando como está, y como si hubiera de seguir estando así siempre, como estuvo cuando empezó mi conciencia, como estará cuando se me acabe. Esa zagala forma parte con las rocas, las nubes, los árboles, las aguas, de la naturaleza.[44]

In reference to the Generation of 98 and their portrayal of the landscape, Laín Entralgo discusses a tendency called interiorismo which he considers to be the dominant note of a generation that wished to avoid the harsh reality of contemporary Spain. In developing this idea, he compares Valle-Inclán to Machado, since both writers depicted a dream-like atmosphere in which history was viewed from a mythical perspective embodied in the poetic and timeless landscape: "Paisaje y poesía son también los senderos preferidos por el interiorismo de Antonio Machado. La tierra de España y la obra poética de los españoles le permiten soñar una interpretación de España."[45] We notice a similar interpretation of

---

[44]Miguel de Unamuno, San Manuel bueno, mártir (New York: Las Américas, 1960), p. 56.

[45]Pedro Laín Entralgo, España como problema (Madrid: Aguilar, 1957), p. 560.

Spain's remote past in Ángel Ganivet's allusions to Séneca and the stoic myth inherent in the philosophy which he referred to as infrahistoria.[46] Ganivet called attention to the primitive nature of the Spanish race which continued to persist even in modern times. Ganivet saw in Spain an irrepressible primitive spirit which not only preceded Séneca, but had not as yet been altered by history.[47] This spirit, hidden beneath the surface of time, represented the ideal makeup of the Spanish race:

> Séneca no tuvo que inventarla porque se lo encontró inventado ya; sólo tuvo que recogerlo y darle forma perenne. . . . El espíritu español, tosco, informe, al desnudo, no cubre su desnudez primitiva con artificiosa vestimenta; se cubre con la hoja de parra del senequismo, y este traje sumario queda adherido para siempre y se muestra en cuanto se ahonda un poco en la superficie o corteza ideal de nuestra nación.[48]

Any treatment of Valle-Inclán's creation of static and timeless societies which provide the background for his primitive themes must be analyzed in reference to Unamuno's concept of intrahistoria and the ideas of other members of his generation regarding time and history. Like his contemporaries, Valle-Inclán prefers the legend over history. This is evident in Sonata de invierno, in which Bradomín decries history as a negative force and extols the legend as a vital and essential aspect of human existence:

---

[46]Ángel Ganivet, in Idearium español (Madrid: Suárez, 1933), p. 6. comments upon the importance of minute events surrounding Spain's inner strength built upon Seneca's stoic philosophy: "Toda la doctrina de Séneca se condensa en esta enseñanza: no te dejes vencer por nada extraño a tu espíritu; piensa en medio de los accidentes de la vida que tienes dentro de ti una fuerza madre, algo fuerte e indistructible, como un eje diamantino alrededor del cual giran los hechos mezquinos que forman la trama del diario vivir."

[47]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 139.

[48]Ibid.

> Yo callé compadecido de aquel pobre exclaustrado que prefería la Historia a la leyenda, y se mostraba curioso de un relato menos interesante, menos ejemplar y menos bello que mi invención. ¡Oh, alada y riente mentira, cuándo será que los hombres se convenzan de la necesidad de tu triunfo! ¿Cuándo aprenderán que las almas donde sólo existe la luz de la verdad son almas tristes, torturadas, adustas, que hablan en el silencio con la muerte y tienden sobre la vida una capa de cenizas? (II, 187)

The same scorn for newspapers and reporters which Unamuno expressed also appears in the writings of Valle-Inclán:

> Frente a la historia narrada y superficial de los periodistas y de las comadres, levanta Valle-Inclán la intrahistoria hecha cada día por los hechos concretos, aunque sean fragmentarios, no el flatus vocis de los historiadores.[49]

In opposition to official chronicles, Valle-Inclán prefers the spontaneous stories and legends which continually circulate among the common people in Spain's remote regions.[50] For example, in La guerra carlista the countess of Verriz reveals the author's disdain for newspapers and reporters: "¡La Historia! ¿Sabes tú quién hace la Historia, hija mía? En Madrid, los periodistas, y en estos pueblos los criados" (II, 526-527).

In Valle-Inclán's narratives and dramas of Galicia the predilection for Unamuno's concept of intrahistoria is also visible. For example, in

---

[49] Ibid., p. 167.

[50] María Dolores Lado in "La trilogía de La guerra carlista," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, pp. 334-335, asserts: "Valle-Inclán, como Unamuno, se lanza a la historia desde la intrahistoria. Es el suceso pequeño, los 'menudos hechos,' que dicen Azorín, lo que le interesan a Valle. La historia real, la que de verdad cuenta, no es la historia oficial narrada por los historiadores sino la historia de la gente pequeña, el conjunto de las vidas intrahistóricas."

Flor de santidad, the author presents a primitive society which, not having felt the impact of civilization, remains as it was before the dawn of history:

> El primitivismo de Flor de santidad se puede hallar incluso en la circunstancia histórica. Por ejemplo, apenas está presente la agricultura en la narración. Todo es pastoreo y caza como en los tiempos en que el hombre no había aprendido aun a hacer germinar las semillas en el agro ni a cocerlas porque no sabía cómo encender tal vez el fuego.[51]

Valle-Inclán, in depicting primitive societies, employs his own vision of intrahistoria in an attempt to penetrate beneath the surface of time and capture the collective spirit of the people as reflected in their language, myths, and superstitions:

> Por su parte Valle-Inclán pretende calar profundamente en la vida intrahistórica. No deja cuadros de historia a la manera galdosiana ya que no le interesa aquel suceso histórico, sea una crisis política, una batalla o una nueva ley; todo esto es para él la mera superficie de la historia.[52]

In certain works such as Flor de santidad, for example, Valle-Inclán is not interested in depicting strong individual characters, but rather presents a communal vision of society: "No se preocupa en desarrollar profundamente la psicología de sus personajes novelescos, porque éstos no le interesan como individuos, sino en lo que tienen de histórico y comunal."[53]

In Valle-Inclán's portrayal of static societies the author stresses the daily and routine existence and intimate life of the peasants. In

---

[51]Sender, La dificultad, p. 122.

[52]Lado, "La trilogía," p. 335.

[53]Ibid.

this manner he reflects Azorín's preference for "la sutil trama de la vida cotidiana." For Valle-Inclán this is an extremely effective manner of narrating, since tha author is able to employ minute events of an unchanging feudal and semibarbarous society. What Azorín refers to as "lo menudo y minucioso" appears in Valle-Inclán's constant allusions to archaic motifs, the customs, and intimate beliefs of the people. Valle-Inclán thus portrays an ancient "mythical" society (milenaria) which, having undergone little if any change throughout the centuries, still possesses its original primitive charm:

> Valle-Inclán . . . maintiene rotundamente la posición arcaica con todas sus consecuencias, llegando incluso a una concepción mítica del tiempo. Estima que lo bello, lo ideal y lo verdadero están en el tiempo viejo y en sus reliquias y por tanto, busca el "modelo" ético social en los restos de la sociedad del pasado.[54]

Ancient tradition, therefore, and not history, is what attracted Valle-Inclán, and he viewed it as being "bella como un romance y sagrada como un rito" (II, 228). In a lecture presented in 1910 he stated his belief that writers should attempt to capture the remote beauty found in the collective spirit of popular literature: "El artista debe mirar el paisaje con ojos de altura para poder abarcar todo el conjunto de los detalles mudables. Conservando en el arte ese aire de observación colectiva que tiene la literatura popular, las cosas adquieren una belleza de alejamiento."[55] This is evident in Valle-Inclán's description

---

[54]Manuel García Pelayo, "Sobre el mundo social en la literatura de Valle-Inclán," Revista de Occidente, vol. XV (Oct.-Dec., 1966), p. 259.

[55]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 206.

of Adega in Flor de santidad: "No llevaba cuenta del tiempo, más cuidaba que en el mes de San Juan remataban tres años. La voz de la sierva era monótona y cantarina: hablaba el romance arcaico casi visigodo, de la montaña" (I, 1178).

In Flor de santidad (Historia milenaria) the author is not interested in developing strong characters such as Bradomín and Montenegro, who dominate the action in the Sonatas and the Comedias. He is much more interested in portraying the collective and passive behavior of the Galician shepherds.[56] In his portrait of this primitive society Valle-Inclán poetically focuses upon the pious legends and the crude realism of popular tradition:

> La prosa de Valle-Inclán expresa en Flor de santidad su valor poemático al servicio de una intención nueva. Narraciones anteriores se habían centrado en anécdotas de tipo individual. Ahora prefiere el autor ascender a la expresión de estados generales de ánimo, según un amplio movimiento de pasiones primitivas, operando en abigarrada masa popular.[57]

The omnipresence of religious statues, churches which adorn the landscape, and the blind faith of the people who mix superstition with religion serve as means by which the author evokes mysterious moods. In this atmosphere are suspended the vague primitive notions and beliefs of the inhabitants of rural Galicia:

> La soledad profunda del paraje, el resplandor del ocaso, anubarrado y con luna, la negra, desmelenada y penitente

---

[56]Melchor Fernández, Vida y literatura de Valle-Inclán, pp. 101-102.

[57]Ibid., p. 102.

> sombra del peregrino, le infundían aquella devoción medrosa que se experimenta a deshora en la paz de las iglesias, ante los retablos poblanos de santas imágenes: bultos sin contornos ni faz, que a la luz temblona de las lámparas se columbran en el dorado misterio de las hornacinas, lejanas, solemnes, milagrosas. (I, 1179)

In this novel, the shepherdess Adega, like the zagala in Unamuno's novelette San Manuel bueno, mártir, blends into the landscape. Unaware of time and undoubting in faith and belief in miracles, Adega is an ideal reflection of Unamuno's intrahistoria:

> Adega, cuando iba al monte con las ovejas, tendíase a la sombra de los grandes peñascales y pasaba así horas enteras, la mirada sumida en las nubes y en infantiles éxtasis el ánima. Esperaba llena de fe ingenua que la azul inmensidad se rasgase dejándole entrever la Gloria. Sin conciencia del tiempo, perdida en la niebla de este ensueño, sentía pasar sobre su rostro el aliento encendido del milagro. (I, 1183)

Valle-Inclán's creation of a static and archaic society in which time has made little impact emphasizes such adjectives as milenario, milagroso, vetusto, arcaico, primitivo, etc. These adjectives adequately describe the primitive types who abound in the background of his works depicting feudal Galicia. We notice a good example of this in Valle-Inclán's depiction of Florisel in Sonata de otoño. Florisel, the page of Bradomín's lover Concha, is characterized as a living vestige of a remote and primitive age: "Tenía las respuestas estoicas de un paria. Con su vestido de estameña, sus ojos tímidos, su fabla visigótica y sus guedejas trasquiladas sobre la frente, con tonsura casi monacal, parecía un antiguo siervo de la gleba" (II, 137).

The concept of intrahistoria also plays a vital role in Valle-Inclán's interpretation of Spain's remote past in the intangible or

dream-like atmosphere portrayed in La lámpara maravillosa. Amid pseudomystical intuitions Valle-Inclán revives the Gnostic symbolism of Priscillian, the Latin influence in language, literature, religion, and primitive art.[58] In La lámpara we can clearly perceive the author's concern with the concept of time: "En La lámpara maravillosa nos cuenta que su intención artística más honda fue siempre mostrar cómo debajo del tiempo se halla, engendrándolo, la eternidad."[59] In a manner characteristic of Azorín, Valle-Inclán relates how his artistic objective is to demonstrate that beneath the surface of time there is a mysterious quintessence that fuses past and future:

> Yo también quería advertir en la vana mudanza del mundo eterna razón que lo engendra en cada instante, creando la divina identidad de todos los ayeres con todas las manañas. Fue una áspera disciplina hasta encontrar la norma estética sobre el mismo sendero que conduce a la beata quietud. (II, 602)

Valle-Inclán sees in art a mysterious power which is capable of fusing Spain's primitive past with her present. Only art can efface

---

[58]The mystical, as referred to here, has a loose meaning and is not employed in the traditional sense. Morón Arroyo, in "La lámpara maravillosa y la ecuación estética," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 451, affirms: "La mística técnica habla luego de un estado de contemplación infusa al cual sólo se llega por gracia de Dios. En Valle-Inclán, aunque hay alusiones a esta gracia, ni siquiera se alude a esta distinción. Valle-Inclán usa la terminología con absoluta falta de rigor." Regarding Gnostic symbolism and Priscillian, Morón Arroyo maintains Op. 452) that "Aunque La lámpara no cita nunca a Prisciliano y sólo una vez a los priscilianistas (II, 589), para nosotros es perfectamente explicable que Valle-Inclán, al tratar de dar expresión al ser de su raza, lo hiciera en lenguaje gnóstico, como lo hizo Prisciliano, el obispo del siglo IV, gallego."

[59]Laín Entralgo, España como problema, p. 559.

time: "El arte es bello porque suma en las formas actuales evocaciones antiguas, y sacude la cadena de los siglos, haciendo palpitar ritmos eternos, de amor y de armonía" (II, 603). This idea is clearly reflected in his interpretation of Velázquez's paintings: "Y el mismo sentido del arte se advierte en el pincel velazqueño que difunde todas las imágenes en la luz y las aleja en el espacio revistiéndolas en un encanto quietista, como hace la memoria al evocar las imágenes alejadas en las horas" (II, 593).

Valle-Inclán's esthetic, pseudomystical, and Gnostic ideas as presented in La lámpara appear at first glance to be extraneous to the preoccupations of the Generation of 98. However, the pseudomystical philosophy is indeed important since, apart from reflecting the influence of the decadent movement, it manifests the impact that Krausism had on the Generation of 98. Krausism played an important role in forming the generation's vision of time, religion, and nature. Ángel del Río describes this movement as

> un sistema filosófico conocido con el nombre de panenteísmo o doctrina de todo en Dios, según el cual el mundo se concebía como conjunto de las manifestaciones de la esencia divina en el tiempo y en el espacio. . . . Sistema en parte racional con implicaciones místicas o pseudo-místicas.[60]

Unamuno explains how in the late nineteenth century the Krausist movement influenced his generation with respect to mystical and pantheistic concepts:

> Es tan vivo en esta casta este individualismo místico que cuando en nuestros días se coló acá el viento de la

---

[60]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 224.

> renovación filosófica postkantiana nos trajo el panteísmo krausista, escuela mística hasta en lo de ser una perdurable propedéutica a una vista real que jamás llega.[61]

Thus in the concerns which center around the problem of time or the concept of intrahistoria we observe a mystical, pantheistic, and unorthodox approach to God and the mysteries of the universe. This quest is readily apparent in the allusions to pantheism which abound in La lámpara maravillosa, reflecting what Unamuno refers to as a coexistence of Christianity and paganism: "contubernio de cristianismo y mitología naturalista celta."[62] As Morón Arroyo points out, several examples of pantheism appear on only one page:[63]

> Yo sentado bajo el parral de mi huerto aldeano, me puse a rezar. En aquella beatitud del campo, del mar y del cielo, me sentí lleno del sentimiento divino. . . . El crepúsculo se me revelaba como el vínculo eucarístico. . . . Tenía el campo una gracia matutina y bautismal. . . . En la estrella que nacía vi el rostro de Dios. (II, 565)

Pantheism and pseudomysticism, as developed in La lámpara, are indeed compatible with the author's primitivism. Contemplation, quietude, and ecstasy are all manifestations of this tendency. Valle-Inclán's many allusions to the enigmatic, the ineffable, and the futility of expressing one's true feelings, suggests primitive man's perplexed state and vague notions of the mysteries of the universe: "Los hombres primitivos tienen una tendencia a la quietud y al éxtasis (defensa pasiva contra sus perplejidades) y en eso coinciden con Valle-Inclán, quien identifica la

---

[61] Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 118.

[62] Morón Arroyo, "La lámpara," p. 453. [63] Ibid.

quietud con el logro de la expresión artística."[64] Thus in La lámpara Valle-Inclán expresses many of the concerns of the Generation of 98 regarding time, religion, and Spain's mythical past. This, combined with pseudomystical intuitions, is another means by which Valle-Inclán captures the primitive.[65]

Along with the Generation of 98's interest in Spain's intrahistoria we must call particular attention to its fascination for the Middle Ages. Each writer, in one way or another, sought to recreate Spain's primitive and medieval past: "Los hombres del 98, cada uno a su modo y con precisión diversa, inventan un nuevo tradicionalismo primitivo o medieval."[66] To a great extent this tendency was a form of escapism in which the writers of Valle-Inclán's generation could relive the glory and vital passions inherent in the ancient feudal order of the Middle Ages. This, of course, contrasted sharply with the cruel disillusionment in Spain which followed the disaster of 1898. As a result, we notice among these writers an attempt to evade the reality of the present situation in favor of what Laín Entralgo refers to as "el ensueño": "Negativamente, el soñador se evade del mundo real. El mundo real no

---

[64] Sender, La dificultad, p. 114.

[65] Regarding Valle-Inclán's primitivism and the intuitive ideas expressed in La lámpara, Ramón Sender asserts on pp. 114-115 in La dificultad: "Lo primitivo en la expresión literaria se admite entre otras cosas por una falta de adecuación y de exactitud entre lo que se siente y lo que se expresa, es decir, entre el qué y el cómo, pero esa falta de adecuación y de exactitud no debe dar en lo primitivo una impresión de esterilidad ni de limitación torpe, sino de ingenuidad y de inocencia con algun encanto implícito."

[66] Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 226.

le satisface; . . . El soñador, suele decirse se evade desde su mundo real hacia un mundo ideal."[67]

Thus the Generation of 98 found solace for Spain's ills by looking introspectively into the legacy of ancient art and traditions. The solutions to Spain's problems, they reasoned, must necessarily come from within Spain itself. Ángel Ganivet clearly expresses the desire to revive this lost spirit:

> Una restauración de la vida entera de España no puede tener otro punto de arranque que la concentración de todas nuestras energías dentro de nuestro territorio. Hay que cerrar con cerrojos, llaves y candados todas las puertas por donde el espíritu español se escapó de España para derramarse por los cuatro puntos del horizonte.[68]

Unamuno, a definite adherent of Ganivet's philosophy, stressed the importance of Spain's art and religion while probing into her intimate and eternal truth which he described as "nuestra primitiva e íntima esencia."[69] Baroja also perceived in ancient Spanish art a true reflection of the national character. Thus for the Generation of 98 the soul of Spain was imprisoned in the art forms of the remote past. This interest in art is significant, since primitivism and archaic motifs reflect the general fondness that this generation felt for the paintings and the literature of the Middle Ages.

Of great importance in this context was the literary influence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, since this movement led Valle-Inclán's contemporaries to reevaluate the virtues of

---

[67] Ibid., pp. 172-173.

[68] Ibid., pp. 172-173.

[69] Ibid., p. 187.

primitive painting. This school of painting and poetry exercised a significant influence upon these writers. In this movement Ángel del Río perceives an attempt to "Resucitar la simplicidad, la naturalidad y el sentimiento de los pintores primitivos italianos anteriores a Rafael."[70] The Pre-Raphaelites of England and the Generation of 98 are similar in that they both sought to evade the reality of the late nineteenth century."[71] In the Pre-Raphaelites we perceive a love for Chaucer, the ballads, and the medieval world of the imagination: "For them medievalism began as an escape from the drabness of the contemporary world."[72] Thus, according to Del Río, the impact that the Pre-Raphaelites made on Spanish letters is seen in "el primitivo medieval y en las relaciones entre lo pictórico y lo poético."[73]

Pío Baroja, who was particularly interested in primitive painters and Gothic art, was well aware of the influence that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had upon his contemporaries:

> Botticelli y los prerrafaelistas parecieron pintores que sólo tenían un valor histórico antes de que Rossetti, Ruskin y sus amigos pusieron a flor de tierra no sólo su valor histórico, sino un valor real. . . . El arte gótico nos parece tan claro como el arte griego, y además, está mucho más cerca de nosotros.[74]

---

[70] Del Río, Historia, II, p. 438.

[71] D. S. R. Welland, The Pre-Raphaelites in Literature and Art (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1953), pp. 38-39.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Del Río, Historia, II, p. 438.

[74] Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 127.

The writers of the Generation of 98 were also extremely fond of the Spanish medieval poets: "Todos los escritores del 98 se sienten atraídos por el mundo de los primitivos."[75] Azorín maintains that this attraction is a form of protest against the stagnant literature of the late nineteenth century: "una protesta contra la ampulosidad del ambiente."[76] Instead, the Generation of 98 preferred the "sencillez y la espontaneidad" of the Spanish medieval poets.[77] In contrast to the ornamental style of the Baroque and to much of the rhetorical and pompous literature that followed, Valle-Inclán's generation discovered in the poetry of the Middle Ages a basic humanity, simplicity, and freshness which appeared to them to be genuinely aristocratic.[78] We can clearly observe this attitude in Azorín's praise of the medieval poet, Gonzalo Berceo: "Lo elemental es lo aristocrático: el vino y el pan."[79] Azorín affirms the importance of this medieval poet with respect to the Generation of 98: "Sienten por ese poeta viva simpatía los escritores del 98—y éste es el rasgo esencial de la escuela—van a ese poeta, como van a otros autores de la Edad Media, como reacción lógica contra la ampulosidad en literatura."[80]

---

[75]Ibid., p. 225. [76]Ibid. [77]Ibid.

[78]Laín Entralgo comments regarding the Generation of 98 and the Middle Ages in La generación, p. 227: "Azorín, y con todos los escritores del 98, ven en su mocedad la historia de España posterior a los Reyes Católicos como un bosque de sucesos aparatosos o grandes, bajo cuyo suelo fluye la vena delicada de nuestra primitiva autenticidad."

[79]José Martínez Ruiz, Obras selectas (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1962), p. 896.

[80]Ibid., p. 895.

In a similar manner Unamuno expressed a great fondness for the popular language of the people which reflected Spain's ancient traditions. In fact, he perceived the soul of the Spanish race in the primitive language of the peasantry. In En torno al casticismo (1895) he maintains:

> La lengua es el receptáculo de la experiencia de un pueblo y el sedimiento de su pensar; en los hondos repliegues de sus metáforas (y lo son la inmensa mayoría de sus vocablos) ha ido dejando sus huellas en el espíritu colectivo del pueblo, como en los terrenos geológicos el proceso de la fauna viva. De antiguo, los hombres rindieron adoración al verbo, viendo en el lenguaje la más divina maravilla.[81]

Given this fascination for the ancient language and the collective spirit of the people, it should not surprise us that Valle-Inclán and his generation were also interested in the medieval ballad which depicted the chaos and strife during the time when Castile was beginning to exert its hegemony over its rival states. As we have already observed, Antonio Machado reworked the ancient ballad in La tierra de Alvar González. Azorín affirms the influence which this popular genre had upon his generation:

> Los romances evocan en nuestro espíritu el recuerdo de las viejas ciudades castellanas, de las callejuelas, de los caserones, de las anchas estancias con tapices, de los jardines con cipreses. Estos romances, tan sencillos, tan ingenuous. . . . A lo largo de vuestros versos se nos parece la España de hace siglos.[82]

Thus Valle-Inclán's contemporaries harkened back to the art, poetry, and the language of the Middle Ages which recall Spain's ancient heritage.

---

[81]Miguel de Unamuno, Obras completas, vol. III (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1958), p. 199.

[82]Martínez Ruiz, Obras selectas, p. 912.

This same tendency is quite pronounced in Valle-Inclán and forms an integral part of his primitivism. In creating a barbarous setting for his works Valle-Inclán was indeed attracted to what Unamuno described as Spain's "primitive essence": "Para buscar su propio camino estético, el método de Valle-Inclán ha consistido entre otras cosas, en meterse dentro del arte español, y el arte le ha conducido hasta lo que Unamuno llama 'nuestra primitiva esencia.'"[83] With reference to Valle-Inclán's enthusiasm for primitive art Azorín maintains: "Sobre Valle-Inclán han ejercido una honda influencia las tablas de los pintores primitivos; nada más afín espiritualmente a ese arte que la concepción literaria del gran prosista."[84] The influence of primitive painting and the Pre-Raphaelites is quite apparent in Valle-Inclán's works. On several occasions Valle-Inclán reveals, among allusions to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, his admiration for the artists of the Middle Ages. In Historias perversas, for instance, the adjective "prerrafaélica" enters into his descriptions: "aquella cabeza melancólicamente inclinada que con crencha de oro, partida por estrecha raya, tenía cierta castidad prerrafaélica."[85] In another reference to this movement Valle-Inclán writes: "todos los hombres que Augusta conociera hasta entonces . . . hubieran querido convertirla en una madona prerrafaélica."[86]

---

[83]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 192.

[84]Ibid., p. 225.

[85]Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Historias perversas (Barcelona: Maucci, 1907), p. 157.

[86]Ibid., p. 176.

This same fondness for medieval art led Valle-Inclán to reject the literature of Spain's Golden Age. Like other members of his generation, Valle-Inclán was severely critical of the Golden Age theatre and the literary style of baroque which, according to him, had lost "el alma de su raza":[87] "A fuerza de buscar la España eterna en la España inmóvil, estática, la España legendaria de una 'edad heroica,' Valle-Inclán rechaza la imagen de la España barroca o del mal llamado 'siglo de oro' porque ya no es una España primitiva y originaria."[88]

We recognize the profound influence of the medieval poets in the language employed in Flor de santidad, which recalls the rustic and simple life portrayed in Berceo's poems: "En esa fabla hallamos módulos que nos recuerdan al viejo diácono de Berceo en sus historias hagiográficas. El tiempo de la cuaderna vía y los gozos de bon [sic] vino."[89] In this novel Valle-Inclán also makes allusions to the poetry of the Spanish Middle Ages and evokes the verses of the Arcipreste de Hita and the Marqués de Santillana: "esos añejos decires de los jocundos arciprestes aficionados al vino y a las vaqueras y a rimar coplas" (I, 1190).

As we have observed, Valle-Inclán and his contemporaries sought the originality and spontaneity of the ancient Spanish language which had been preserved in the poetry of the Middle Ages: "Celebrando el habla

---

[87] Maravall, "La imagen de la sociedad," p. 237.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ramón J. Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 109.

primitiva, canta Valle-Inclán, como Azorín la vida espontánea y alegre, la dulce claridad de la España medieval."[90] Valle-Inclán no doubt disliked the influx of neologisms that filtered into the Spanish language during the Renaissance. In contrast, he preferred the natural and unaffected tone of the ancient ballads, poems, and proverbs which served as the repository for the authentic language: "Era nuestro romance castellano, aun finalizado el siglo XV, claro y breve, familiar y muy señor. Se entonaba armonioso, con gracia cabal, en el labio del labrador, en el del clérigo y en el del juez" (II, 577). Valle-Inclán reveals the same scorn which Azorín held for "la ampulosidad en la literatura."[91] In referring to the epoch of Ferdinand and Isabella and the period which immediately followed, Valle-Inclán asserts:

> Castilla entonces tuvo un gesto ampuloso viendo volar sus águilas en el mismo cielo que las águilas romanas. Olvidó su ser y la sagrada y entrañable gesta de su naciente habla, para vivir más en la imitación de una latinidad decadente y barroca. Desde aquel día se acabó en los libros el castellano al modo del Arcipreste Juan Ruiz. Las Españas eran la nueva Roma: el castellano quiso ser el nuevo latín, y hubo cuatro siglos de literatura jactanciosa y vana. (II, 577)

We perceive this scorn for the so-called "ampulosidad" in the works which unfold in Galicia, since it is in these works that the "language of old" prevails. Valle-Inclán thus presents the vocabulary of the Galician people which had undergone relatively little change throughout the centuries:

> Así hablaban hace cuatro siglos y así hablan hoy, todavía. Es un idioma escueto, pulido por la erosión de los amores

---

[90] Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 125.

[91] Martínez Ruiz, Obras selectas, p. 896.

> y las desgracias, las herejías y los milagros, por el viento y las lluvias y más henchido de sentido que el de Castilla hasta fines del siglo XVI antes de la transformación culterana y conceptista que hoy usamos.[92]

In presenting a barbarous atmosphere of rural Galicia in Flor de santidad and the Comedias Valle-Inclán is quick to exploit the ancient language and the motifs of Spain's medieval tradition which hold a great poetic potential: "El prestigio remoto y soñado de una Edad Media llena de vida y de posibilidades poéticas es, quizás, la clave que mejor nos hace entender el mundo inventado de sus narraciones gallegas."[93]

Valle-Inclán's creation of ancient and static societies depends to a great extent upon the use of primitive words and the archaic syntax of his native Galicia.[94] Like Unamuno, he is attracted to the first stages of linguistic development which flow from the flock and the plow at the dawn of civilization. He exalts an age when the mind was "full of God" and when society, with a great capacity for intense religious beliefs, was also rich in myths, rituals, and superstitions:

> Los idiomas son los hijos del arado y de la honda del pastor. . . . Labranzas y ganados ocuparon la mente del hombre en el albor del mundo, después de la caída. ¡La mente del hombre ya estaba llena de la idea de Dios! Así avertimos en las más viejas lenguas una profunda capacidad teológica y una agreste fragancia campesina. (II, 574)

Like other writers of his generation, Valle-Inclán affirmed his interest in the ancient ballads. In La lámpara maravillosa he expresses great

---

[92]Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 109.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Morón Arroyo, "La lámpara maravillosa," p. 459.

appreciation for this genre which he evokes in his portrayal of the Montenegro clan.[95] Although he does not employ the traditional octosyllable in the Comedias bárbaras, his presentation of Don Juan Manuel and his fierce sons recalls the ballad of the Middle Ages. Valle-Inclán's characterization of the venerated and titanic patriarch brings to mind the haughtiness of the protagonists of the ancient ballads. Don Juan Manuel, a kingly figure similar to a folkloric hero, is a recurring character portrayed with epic grandeur, who makes pronounced appearances in several of the works which depict feudal Galicia. He is first seen in "Rosarito," one of the five original stories of Femeninas, and reappears in subsequent works such as Sonata de otoño, Sonata de invierno, El marqués de Bradomín, Jardín novelesco, La guerra carlista, and the Comedias bárbaras.

Valle-Inclán evokes the memory of the old ballads even in the title given to one of the Comedias—Romance de lobos. He furthermore likens the action and the primitive bestial passions of the Montenegro clan to the epic grandeur of the traditional ballad. We can readily observe this in Águila de blasón as Don Pedro, the eldest son, brutally violates Liberata La Blanca, one of his father's concubines:

> Hilos de roja sangre corren por las ágiles piernas, que palpitan entre los jirones. Bajo la vid centenaria revive el encanto de las epopeyas primitivas, que cantan la sangre, la violación y la fuerza. Liberata La Blanca suplica y llora. El primogénito siente con un numen profético el alma de los versos que oyeron los héroes . . . la derriba y la posee. (I, 581)

---

[95] See La lámpara, II, p. 608.

We also observe a similar portrayal in Romance de lobos in the fierce battle between Don Juan's sons and a group of rustic peasants. The violent encounter is one of teeth gnashing savagery. In the struggle between Don Mauro and Oliveros, one of Don Juan Manuel's numerous offspring, we witness a titanic combat worthy of the ballads of old Castile:

> El mozo, siempre blandiendo su pica, va sobre Don Mauro. El bastardo y el segundón se miran frente a frente: Oliveros, pálido por el ansia de la pelea, estremecido con el deseo del vencimiento, y el segundón, fuerte, soberbio, con la cabeza desnuda y las manos rojas de sangre, como el héroe de un combate primitivo en un viejo romance de Castilla. (I, 698)

Valle-Inclán perceived this same epic grandeur and archaic splendor in the bloody Carlist War. Allusions to the fanatic Carlist crusade present the waning movement as an enchanting vestige of medieval traditions. Carlism, for Valle-Inclán, possessed "el encanto solemne de las viejas catedrales." He tells us of his admiration for "la boina y la capa" because they were reminiscent of an "imperio de una corte arcaica" while the roving bands of soldiers appeared to him as if they were "nimbadas de una heroica leyenda."[96]

In an endeavor to recreate the atmosphere of the ballads Valle-Inclán presents Don Juan Manuel as a mythical figure engaged in an epic struggle with his sons. The aging patriarch is depicted as a legendary noble or as a venerable king. In order to identify Don Juan Manuel with the prestige of the medieval poems, the author consciously portrays him,

---

[96]Lado, "La trilogía de La guerra carlista," pp. 338-341.

along with the secondary characters, as an ideal and timeless representation of Spain's archetypal heroes.[97] This is evident in a lecture given in 1910 in which Valle-Inclán maintained that it is the artist's duty to elevate the hero and to attribute to him that which he is not: "Hay que pintar a las figuras anadiéndoles aquello que no hayan sido. Así un mendigo debe parecerse a Job y un guerrero a Aquiles."[98] Thus Valle-Inclán, disillusioned by the reality of his contemporary world, evoked the myths of the past in an attempt to revive the archetypes of the traditional folk ballads. With respect to this particular tendency, Ortega y Gasset maintains that Valle-Inclán admired the free and instinctive life as if he himself were part of another time and would actually have liked to give free rein to his own violent passions.[99] Needless to say, this was not possible since his actions were restricted by the social standards of his day: "pero ante el espectro rígido de los códigos, resuelve, con muy bien acuerdo, amar tan sólo aquellos tiempos y aquellos héroes como una tradición familiar."[100] Valle-Inclán, whom Ortega describes as an "alma rezagada algunos siglos," remained shackled to the art and traditions of Spain's remote past:

---

[97]Laín Entalgo, La generación, p. 206.

[98]Ibid.

[99]José Otega y Gasset, Obras completas, vol. I (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966), p. 20.

[100]Ibid.

> Sordo al menos, al rumor de la vida próxima, aun adora los escudos familiares que evocan leyendas hidalgas, los hombres que hacen huir, como Ignacio Loyola, una calle de soldados, y desprecian a los villanos y a las leyes; guarda en la memoria un recuerdo deslumbrante de trajes riquísimos y brilladores, de joyas históricas y valedoras en ciudades, de posturas históricas, de largos apellidos sonoros que son como crónicas, de toda la tamoya, en fin, la soberbia, cuantiosa y archivada de la edad aristocrática.[101]

Thus, as we have observed, the primitive is an important aspect of the writings of Valle-Inclán and his generation. The primitive which so strongly characterizes Valle-Inclán's Comedias also appears, in one form or another, as a basic theme among the writers of the Generation of 98. Interest in the primitive is reflected in the generation's portrayal of the fierce passions, barbarism, and superstitions of Spain's rural inhabitants. Likewise, the concern for history or what Unamuno described as intrahistoria reveals a profound fascination for the primitive in that it stresses the folklore and timeless traditions of Spain's peasantry. Also important in our discussion of primitivism is the generation's affinity for Spain's ancient past, archaic art forms, and her primitive language. This is indeed evident in the attention which the generation gave to the medieval ballad and poetry which depicted vital passions and the nascent Spanish language before the influx of neologisms which accompanied the literature of the Golden Age.

---

[101] Ibid., p. 23.

CHAPTER III

VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM AND HIS NATIVE GALICIA

Valle-Inclán's fascination for primitive themes was inspired to a large extent by the writers of his native Galicia. In several of his works he evokes the ancient Galician countryside, first occupied by the Celts and later by the Romans, Suevi, and Visogoths. In these works he often alludes to the folklore, ancient traditions, and superstitions of the rural inhabitants of Galicia. In many of Valle-Inclán's best works the archaic, nebulous, and mysterious presence of Galicia can be strongly felt. Ernesto Da Cal asserts that "Galicia ocupa un lugar importante en casi toda su obra ya como tema central, ya como fondo, ya por el carácter de los personajes."[1] Valle-Inclán often emphasized the coarse aspects of Galicia. His portrayal of Galicia as a semibarbarous land forms a natural and ideal setting for the savage conflicts which appear in such works as the Comedias bárbaras. The misty landscape and the superstitions of the peasantry provide an excellent background for the primitive passions and unrestrained erotic drives which appear as themes in many of Valle-Inclán's works. In depicting such barbarism, Valle-Inclán stresses the beauty of the ancient Galician surroundings and the folklore of its rustic inhabitants:

---

[1]Ernesto Da Cal, Literatura del siglo XX (New York: Dryden, 1955), p. 52.

> Rude peasants and strange folk tales, of primitive passions and lyric softness, of sensuous qualities and spiritual values in the landscape . . . from the evocative mists of the Sonata de otoño to the violent world of the Comedias bárbaras.[2]

In creating his primitive world Valle-Inclán has a tendency to idealize his native Galicia. We notice this same admiration in his portrayal of other regions in northern Spain. The people and the landscape of these areas are, for him, bastions of conservatism and traditionalism which provide an excellent backdrop for his primitive themes:

> Valle conserva en su fondo la imagen de la sociedad inmóvil, la idealiza al enfrentarla con la deformacion madrileña, y prefiere y busca modos sociales de carácter arcaico, en correspondencia con su imagen primitiva e idealizada.[3]

Apart from the personal and artistic preferences which enter into this idealized vision of Galicia, we notice the strong influence exerted upon him by nationalistic Galician writers and intellectuals who clamor against the "injustices" they suffered at the hands of the central government in Madrid:

> Valle-Inclán, recogiendo todo el sentir y la crítica de los nacionalistas gallegos, levanta su voz contra el Renacimiento español y aun más contra el Siglo de Oro y exalta la Edad Media, en la que lo gallego tuvo tanta influencia en la vida literaria española.[4]

As we have already observed, this attitude coincides with the Generation of 98's general scorn for Spanish Golden Age literature. Valle-Inclán's

---

[2]Zahareas and Greenfield, "Galicia," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 249.

[3]Maravall, "La imagen," p. 234.

[4]López González, El arte dramático, p. 48.

personal sentiments forced him to look with disdain upon a literature which, according to him, had given up its language, religion, and soul.[5] Valle-Inclán rejected "la vetustez de la ciudad castellano—la imagen de la España barroca o del mal llamado 'siglo de oro,' porque ya no es una España primitiva y originaria."[6]

Valle-Inclán views his native Galicia as the authentic source of Spain's cultural values and gives less importance to Castile's contributions. We notice these regionalistic sentiments in his artistic appraisal of two famous and historic cities—Santiago and Toledo. Santiago's appeal lies in its ability to resist time and change:

> De todas las rancias ciudades españolas, la que me parece inmovilizada en su sueño de granito, inmutable y eterna, es Santiago de Compostela. . . . En esta ciudad petrificada huye la idea del Tiempo. No parece antigua sino eterna. (II, 600)

The ruins of Toledo, on the other hand, give an impression of "polvo, de vejez y de muerte" (II, 600). Valle-Inclán perceives Toledo as a "calavera que ríe con tres dientes sobre el infolio de un anacoreta, y dice que todo es polvo" (II, 600).

These regionalistic sentiments are found in the Galician writers who immediately preceded Valle-Inclán, namely in Rosalía de Castro's nostalgic poetry, the declamatory poems of Manuel Curros Enríquez, and the pantheistic verses of Eduardo Pondal: "De las fuentes literarias, Valle-Inclán se sirvió principalmente de la poesía en la lengua gallega, de la de los grandes poetas del siglo XIX, Rosalía de Castro, Curros

---

[5]Maravall, "La imagen," p. 237. [6]Ibid.

Enríquez y Eduardo Pondal."[7] In prose Valle-Inclán was inspired to a great degree by the novels and historical writings of Benito Vicetto and Manuel Martínez Murguía: "dos distinguidos historiadores gallegos del mismo siglo: el ferrolano Benito Vicetto y el corunés Manuel Martínez Murguía, el primero también novelista y el segundo crítico literario, biógrafo y polemista, cabeza visible del movimiento nacionalista gallego, en las postrimerías del pasado siglo y principios del actual."[8] We must stress above all Valle-Inclán's interest in Emilia Pardo Bazán's naturalistic novels. Two novels which depict the rustic nobility of Galicia had a profound influence on Valle-Inclán: "le impresionan dos novelas que aparecen en esta misma época: Los pazos de Ulloa y La madre naturaleza, las dos de Emilia Pardo Bazán."[9]

There is no doubt that the writers of Galicia played an important role in Valle-Inclán's primitivism. In fact, with respect to the regional literature of Galicia, there is very little that Valle-Inclán did not read: "hay muy pocas cosas de las escritas en su región—en gallego o en castellano—que Valle-Inclán no haya leído."[10] This influence is especially significant, since Valle-Inclán encountered these writings at a young and impressionable age:

> Los antecedentes de su estilo están en su tierra y en la obra de autores poco conocidos al público pero que ofrecen la mayor parte de los temas poéticos o novelescos que usa don Ramón.[11]

---

[7]González López, El arte dramático, p. 50. [8]Ibid.

[9]Rubia Barcia, "Valle-Inclán y la literatura gallega," p. 94.

[10]Ibid. [11]Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 18.

From the works of these writers Valle-Inclán drew upon those aspects which appealed to the senses and fused them with his poetic vision of medieval and feudal Galicia: "asimilará y hará suyo todo aquello que le impresione y que luego reaparecerá formando parte del mundo de su recuerdo en que ya van a esfumarse los límites de lo personal y de lo ajeno."[12] According to Aubrey Bell, we can clearly observe the presence of these Galician writers in Valle-Inclán's ability to exploit the native landscape for the purpose of creating vague moods and an atmosphere of foreboding:

> Galician writers as a rule are as keen-sighted as they are lyrical, and Señor Valle-Inclán unites love of the concrete and minute design with a vague atmosphere of dreams, visions, miracles, and mystery. That, no doubt, is part of his method of suggestion. He hovers on the fringes, and is at home in the mists and murmuring shadows and haunted hills of Galicia, with its mystics and visionaries, its pilgrimages and superstitions, or in describing the peasants in their dreamy vagueness, sudden ecstasies, distraught fancies and crafty stealth.[13]

However, Valle-Inclán owes more to the Galician writers than his ability to create moods, superstition and lyrical vignettes. Many of his basic themes which reflect the barbarism and violence of the harsh Galician countryside were employed by the regional writers who preceded him:

> Los temas mayores de la obra de don Ramón, su sentido del paisaje con perros en los horizontes, viento en el alero y agua en las gárgolas, las brujas y los trasgos, los peregrinos, los monstruos, las prostitutas aldeanas, los curas blasfemos y esa fusión de la armonía de la naturaleza

---

[12]Zahareas and Greenfield, "Galicia," in Zahareas, p. 250.

[13]Aubrey F. G. Bell, Contemporary Spanish Literature (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1933), p. 133.

> con el turbio caos de la violencia humana, están el los autores regionales anteriores.[14]

In analysing Valle-Inclán's fascination for primitive motifs, the Middle Ages, and his fondness for the Galician language, we must discuss the influence of Rosalía de Castro's verses in the Galician dialect. The archaic flavor of her melancholy poems, reminiscent of the old Galician-Portuguese lyrical poetry, was indeed compatible with Valle-Inclán's view of medieval Galicia.[15] The poetess's Galician verses depict deep regional sentiments, pride of her native land and scorn for Castile. We can perceive these feelings in the following Galician lines:

> Permita Dios castellanos, castellanos que aborreço
> qu' antes os gallegos morran,
> qu' ir a pedirvos sustento . . .
> Castellanos de Castilla
> tendes corazón d' aceiro,
> alma como as peñas dura
> e sin entrañas o peito.[16]

Rosalía de Castro's ability to employ skillfully the archaic Galician language and to capture the timeless spirit of the land (soidade and morriña) can be seen in her exploitation of the primitive dialect which possesses "certa frescura patriarcal e primitiva":

> Atrevínime a escribir estos cantares, esforzándome en dar a conocer como alguhas d'as nosas poéticas costumes inda conservan certa frescura patriarcal e primitiva, e com'o noso dialecto doce e sonoro e tan a propósito com' o pirmeiro pra toda clase de versificación.[17]

---

[14] Sender, Valle-Inclán y la tragedia, p. 19.

[15] Del Río, Historia, II, p. 406.

[16] Rubia Barcia, "Valle-Inclán y la literatura gallega," p. 109.

[17] Rosalía de Castro, Obras completas (Madrid: Aguilar, 1960), p. 264.

While Rosalía de Castro's Galician dialect, lyricism, popular poems, and anti-Castilian sentiments appealed to Valle-Inclán, he was more taken with what she referred to as the "certa frescura patriarcal e primitiva," for it was that quality of her language which motivated his style and choice of words. We recognize this influence in Valle-Inclán's archaic syntax and vocabulary:

> Ese sentimiento está en el fondo mismo de su estilo, de su lengua, que tiene como base el castellano hablado en Galicia, es decir, una mezcla de castellano y gallego, tanto en el vocabulario como en la sintaxis.
> De esa mixtura lingüística saca Valle-Inclán efectos estéticos de extraordinaria expresividad, incorporando al castellano todas las suaves y matizadas cadencias líricas del idioma de su tierra.[18]

Valle-Inclán, well aware of the linguistic vitality of the old Galician dialect, employed in his syntax many of these same archaic words for the purpose of creating a rustic atmosphere. These words, however, do not appear forced since the author's native familiarity with the language and folklore of Galicia provided him with the necessary background to employ them naturally:

> No se avenía al carácter de Valle-Inclán el andar a la búsqueda de estos vocablos anacrónicos diccionario en mano. . . . En su Pontevedra natal tuvo oportunidad Valle-Inclán de escuchar estás palabras en boca de otros y de pronunciarlas él mismo para apreciar así su pátina libre del polvo que ocupaba sus gemelas castellanas. Las posibilidades estéticas que encerraban no podían ocultársele a su temperamento de artista y comenzará a sacar partido de ellas desde los albores de su carrera.[19]

---

[18] Da Cal, Literatura, p. 52.

[19] J. Amor y Vázquez, "Los galaicismos en la estética valleinclanesca," Revista Hispánica Moderna, vol. XXIV, no. 1 (Jan. 1958), p. 12.

Eduardo Pondal was another Galician poet who strongly influenced Valle-Inclán's primitivism. Pondal found inspiration in the Celtic past of Galicia. In his Quexumes dos pinos and Campana d' Aullons he sings in the bardic tradition of the melancholy of his land: "canta con espíritu osiánico y nebuloso la melancolía del paisaje gallego y el fondo tradicional y céltica del alma de su región."[20] The dominant presence in Pondal's poetry is the rugged landscape of the Galician coast and the harsh sea which ravishes it. He characterizes this primitive land as "tierra de lobos."[21] This cruel environment with its mist, superstitions, and vestiges of the Celtic past evokes in Pondal's poetry the existence of a pantheism which seeks God's presence in all the forces and manifestations of nature:

> Pondal es un bardo celta de alma panteísta que ve en todos los seres, entre ellos al hombre, como pequeñas partes de una sola divinidad que es la tierra gallega, que para él se personaliza en la costa de Bergantinos cubierta de castros y dólmenes celtas, y su eterno compañero, el fiero mar de la costa.[22]

The same pantheism which characterizes Pondal's verses is present in Valle-Inclán's Flor de santidad. In regard to Valle-Inclán's works depicting Galicia, Emilio López González maintains: "Hay en Valle-Inclán una evidente influencia de Pondal, que consiste principalmente en el aliento de panteísmo celta que transpiran todas sus obras de carácter

---

[20]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 406.

[21]Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 19.

[22]Emilio López Gonzáles, "Valle-Inclán y Curros Enríquez," Revista Hispánica Moderna, vol. XI (July-Oct. 1945), p. 217.

gallego."[23] It is apparent that this primitive form of religion harmonizes with Valle-Inclán's artistic preferences since it forms a vivid part of the superstitious background in Flor de santidad. Sender, in affirming the primitive nature of Flor de santidad, also calls attention to this ancient form of religion. He refers to it, however, not as pantheism, but rather as animism, or the belief that natural objects such as rocks and trees have souls.[24] Thus this pantheism or animism, inherited from Pondal, becomes in Valle-Inclán yet another manifestation of primitivism.[25]

Another Galician poet who influenced Valle-Inclán was Manuel Curros Enríquez. However, while Valle-Inclán based his literature mainly on "art for art's sake," Curros Enríquez entertained as basic themes revolutionary ideologies centered around land ownership and justice. Nevertheless, the two writers coincide in their mutual admiration for the nobility of the waning feudal order:

> En Valle-Inclán como en Curros predomina la nota dramática, aunque en ambos el dramatismo mana de una fuente distinta: en Curros es el producto de una ideología política social; mientras en Valle-Inclán obedece a un puro ideal estético. Pero, a pesar de estas diferencias de origen, los dos escritores coinciden al apreciar el drama del campo gallego.[26]

---

[23] Ibid.

[24] Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 111.

[25] It should also be stressed that this same pantheism as seen above can be associated with the influence of Krausism. As Unamuno indicates in Laín Entralgo's La generación del noventa y ocho, p. 118, pantheism played an integral role in the art of the Generation of 98.

[26] González López, "Valle-Inclán y Curros," p. 218.

Both writers sensed nostalgia for the aristocracy of Galicia which represented the traditions of the Middle Ages:

> Curros siente un gran respeto por el aristócrata de las viejas familias de su tierra, por el hidalgo campesino que, como el famoso Pedro Moscoso de Los Pazos de Ulloa de la Pardo Bazán, va desapareciendo.[27]

The two writers also held great contempt for the rising middle class and its uprooting of the old way of life:

> Curros odia a la clase media de mayordomos, escribanos, abogadillos y cacicuelos baratos que han invadido la campiña gallega con el vigor y tenacidad de una planta parásita que seca el árbol secular de la nobleza gallega y vive a expensas de las huertas campesinas.[28]

Nevertheless, what in Curros was mere respect for the nobility becomes in Valle-Inclán a lofty ideal worthy of imitation:

> Valle-Inclán hereda este sentido de estimación por el hidalgo; pero convierte el respeto en admiración que le lleva a declararse uno de estos bravos montaraces señores gallegos, restos de una orgullosa raza que siempre desafió altanera el poder de los reyes, y que sobrevive como una ruina feudal en medio de la civilización contemporánea.[29]

The Galician novelists also held great reverence for the primitive feudal order. This is evident in Emilia Pardo Bazan's portrayal of the Moscoso family in Los pazos de Ulloa (1886) and La madre naturaleza (1887). Although Valle-Inclán was probably not at all interested in Pardo Bazán's naturalistic techniques, he was no doubt attracted by the themes of social degeneracy, incest, and primitivism which characterize the Moscoso clan. In fact, critics have indicated a direct relationship between Pardo Bazán's novels and Valle-Inclán's primitive society depicted in the Comedias bárbaras:

---

[27] Ibid. [28] Ibid. [29] Ibid., p. 219.

> Comedias bárbaras, que tienen entre sus antecedentes más inmediatos, en la literarura de tema gallego, la novela Los pazos de Ulloa, de Emilia Pardo Bazán—en la que la novelista naturalista presenta la decadencia de una casa solariega.[30]

Although Pardo Bazán's influence on Valle-Inclán appears to have been limited to her themes of noble decadence and barbarism, these are precisely the elements which form the primitive world of the Comedias:

> Sabida es la insistencia de la crítica oficial en considerar Los pazos de Ulloa de doña Emilia Pardo Bazán como cuna de la Comedias bárbaras. Pero la influencia no pasa de una sugestión temática. La condesa trata en su novela de la desintegración de una casa ilustre. El héroe de las Comedias bárbaras, don Juan Manuel Montenegro, viejo señor de horca y cuchillo, es también el último representante de un linaje en decadencia.[31]

Pardo Bazán and Valle-Inclán definitely coincide in that their literature rests upon the crude reality of the primitive society which inhabits the Galician countryside. Although Pardo Bazán and Valle-Inclán differ in style and in their manner of depicting this aristocracy, both writers stress as basic themes the presence of social decay, superstition, unbridled passions, and violence.

> Historia y naturaleza, religiosidad medieval y paganismo violencia y sensualidad, feudalismo y barbarie, ciudad y campo son los elementos temáticos que la novelista combina en un panorama bien trabado de la vida gallega.[32]

In Pardo Bazán's "paisaje de lobos" the medieval surroundings often appear more pagan than Christian. The same atmosphere of violence and

---

[30]González López, El arte dramático, p. 78.

[31]Sender, Valle-Inclán y la dificultad, p. 18.

[32]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 213.

sensuality seen in her novels is mirrored in Valle-Inclán's Montenegro clan. Both writers depict the decay of a feudal structure in which instinct and lust prevail over stability and self-restraint. In Los pazos de Ulloa, for example, Pedro Moscoso, the despotic heir of the Ulloas, has degenerated to a point where he is little different from the serfs under him. His lack of restraint makes him appear more as a lustful tribal chieftain than as the ruler of an illustrious noble house.

In Pardo Bazán's La madre naturaleza a similar atmosphere prevails. In this novel the author focuses upon the incestuous love between Perucho, the illegimate son of Pedro Moscoso and his concubine, Sabel, and Moscoso's legitimate daughter, Manolita. The title, as well as the theme, are indicative of Pardo Bazán's interest in the primitive: "Grandioso es el escenario de la naturaleza donde se agitan las figuras, y tanto por esto el carácter primitivo de tales amores, queda espléndidamente justificado el título de la Madre Naturaleza."[33]

Two other Galicians who exerted a strong influence on Valle-Inclán's primitivism were Benito Vicetto and Manuel Martínez Murguía. As historians of Galicia's primitive and feudal past, they played an important role in shaping Valle-Inclán's view of his native land. From them he received two different historical perspectives. Whereas Vicetto paid more attention to the medieval Germanic nobility (the Suevi), Murguía stressed the importance of the more primitive Celts.[34] Both views appear

---

[33]M. Romero-Navarro, Historia de la literature española (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949), p. 590.

[34]González López, El arte dramático, p. 51.

frequently in Valle-Inclán's works depicting Galicia. In the development of his primitivism Valle-Inclán's poetic imagination was sensitive to the artistic potential of Galicia's enchanting past. Thus he was quick to exploit the Celtic and Germanic myths which pervaded his region:

> The name of this land—Galicia—is philologically connected with all those names—Portugal, Gaul, Gallic, Gaelic, Wales, Wallen—which suggests a more or less vague relationship of race or language or both, between several people of Western Europe. It is therefore, a favorite country for the vagaries of the Celtomaniac, and, to the believers in the myth of the Blond Beast, it even offers the alluring fact of a distant domination by the Germanic tribe of the Suevi, who seem to have left a trace of their passage in the occasional occurrance of red-haired and blue-eyed types of great physical beauty.[35]

In Valle-Inclán's early works we find the presence of Vicetto's description of the ancient Suevi. The quaint Galician town of Monteforte recalled the memory of "la antigua Suevia," and awakened in him Vicetto's vivid descriptions of the Suevian "luchas de hermandades, de incendios y ruinas de castillos, de contiendas feudales."[36] As for Murguía, to whom Valle-Inclán referred as "mi eminente amigo el Sr. Murguía," his influence is clearly seen in Valle-Inclán's allusions to the Celtic past which abound in the works set in Galicia.[37]

Vicetto's six volume history of Galicia (Historia de Galicia, 1866), which was extremely popular during Valle-Inclán's youth, presents a harsh picture of this region in the Middle Ages: "Fue Benito Vicetto

---

[35]Salvador de Madariaga, The Genius of Spain, pp. 128-129.

[36]Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, pp. 66-67.

[37]Ibid.

quien difundió en la juventad gallega de aquel tiempo, que era la de Valle-Inclán, una vision medieval, fuerte, de origen suevo-germánico de su tierra."[38] Murguía, a generation younger than Vicetto and a contemporary of Valle-Inclán, delved into Galicia's Celtic past which, at the time, was of great interest to European historians: "La atención y estudio de Murguía se fijó an los elementos más primitivos de la etnología gallega, en los del pueblo celta, que era entonces estudiado por los mejores historiadores de Europa."[39] The influence of both historians is of great importance in Valle-Inclán, since in his works depicting Galicia, he employs the Celtic as well as the Suevian-Germanic past for a primitive backdrop:

> Por la obra de Valle-Inclán corren constantemente estas dos corrientes, que son dos lados de la misma cara gallega: la céltica amorosa, amable y lírica, que tiene sus raíces en Murguía; y la arrogante suevo-germánica que procede de Vicetto. Son las dos notas gallegas, la lírica céltica y la épica germánica.[40]

Benito Vicetto's romantic novels no doubt influenced Valle-Inclán's primitivism as much as did his Historia de Galicia. This is evident in Valle-Inclán's early works compiled and edited under the title Publiciones periodísticas de don Ramón de Valle-Inclán anteriores a 1895. Here Valle-Inclán reveals great admiration for Vicetto's ability to depict the haughtiness of the bloodthirsty and sadistic Galician nobility of the Middle Ages. In discussing Vicetto's novel Los hidalgos de Monteforte, Valle-Inclán tells of the impression that this novel once made upon him:

---

[38] González López, El arte dramático, pp. 50-51.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 51.

> había yo leído la novela muy rapaz, y todavía recordaba el delicioso estremecimiento que su lectura me produjo. Sensación quizás de horror y pavura; pero al mismo tiempo agradable y artística.[41]

A trait which further reveals Vicetto's influence on Valle-Inclán is the tendency for having the main characters reappear in several works. The Marqués de Bradomín, Don Juan Manuel and Cara de Plata not only appear in several works but at times actually play major roles: "La reaparición de personajes de unas obras a otras, fenómeno esporádico en Vicetto, se convertirá en norma en Valle-Inclán."[42] However, regarding influences, we perceive a more striking similarity between Vicetto's Count of Pallares, the protagonist of El caballero de Calatrava, and Valle-Inclán's Don Juan Manuel Montenegro:

> Era uno de aquellos nobles déspotas y altaneros de entonces a quienes miraban los vasallos con tanto o más respeto que al Eterno . . . era el verdadero tipo de aquellos señores de horca y cuchillo que no tenían más ley que su espontánea voluntad, y que desde sus bien garnecidos castillos se burlaban de sus mismos reyes.[43]

Like the protagonist of Vicetto's novel, Don Juan Manuel is also a noble "de horca y cuchillo." As José Rubia Barcia emphasizes, the difference in description between the two despotic lords is slight. In fact, Rubia Barcia asserts that both characters would appear almost identical if we were to substitute in the above description the words hidalgo, pazo, and justicia for noble, castillo, and reyes.[44]

---

[41]Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 67.

[42]Rubia Barcia, "Valle-Inclán," p. 124.

[43]Benito Vicetto, El caballero de Calatrava (Madrid: Manuel Alvarez, 1863), p. 98.

[44]Rubia Barcia, "Valle-Inclán," p. 124.

In El caballero de Calatrava Vicetto's themes of lust, cruelty, incest, and murder border on the primitive. In a dramatic scene the Count of Pallares and his illegitimate son are locked into a mortal father-son struggle for the possession of the latter's half sister. After slaying his son, the victorious father marries the son's half sister. Thus we perceive obvious similarities between these themes and the primitive struggle which characterizes the Comedias. Both writers present savage conflicts motivated by erotic drives. Regarding Vicetto's themes and his influence on Valle-Inclán's writing, Rubia Barcia maintains that these same elements were later cultivated by Valle-Inclán: "Sadismo, sombras de incesto, amor y muerte de la mano, inmoralidad extremada, etc., elementos todos que aparecen sistemáticamente cultivados y que . . . Valle-Inclán cultivará también con predilección."[45]

Thus in our presentation of Valle-Inclán's predilection for barbarous backgrounds and savage struggles we must consider the importance of the Galician writers of his native land who, in depicting the ancient past of their region, constantly evoke the primitive. These writers were fascinated by the archaic language and the tempestuous nobility of the Middle Ages, and they idealized Galicia's Celtic and Germanic past. Respect for the vanishing nobility, social degeneration, and primitive passions were important themes which appeared in the works of these writers. Therefore, in our discussion of the Comedias bárbaras, we shall analyze how Valle-Inclán's depiction of the feudal order and the barbarous

---

[45]Ibid., p. 125.

Montenegro clan is built around these same motifs and the primitive myths surrounding his region.

CHAPTER IV

VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM AND NIETZSCHE

While analyzing Valle-Inclán's primitivism it is essential to focus upon the momentous impact of Friedrich Nietzsche with regard to the ideas of the Generation of 98. Many of Nietzsche's concepts are compatible with the Generation's predilection for primitive people driven by spontaneous impulses. They thus find a place in the literature written in Spain at the turn of the century. In Valle-Inclán's works Nietzsche's ideas are clearly mirrored in the Sonatas, the Comedias bárbaras, and La guerra carlista. Gonzalo Sobejano sees this influence reflected in themes such as

> Desprecio de las leyes convenidas por la autoridad, identificación de la virtud con el ímpetu del hombre que la realiza, orgullo de sangre y voluntad de mando, elevación del valor al rango de nueva virtud, capacidad de odiar al enemigo y combatirle y vencerle, culto a las primitivas y ante-cristianes dotes del hombre: fortaleza, desdén, astucia, belicosidad.[1]

Valle-Inclán's creation of Bradomín and Montenegro represent for Sobejano two basic and very important aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy—beauty and life which center around the mythical figures of Apollo and Dionysus:

> El amoralismo esteticista y la apoteosis de la fuerza, encarnados respectivamente por Bradomín y Montenegro, son aspectos de la cultura nietzcheana que se complementan y entreveran a menudo. Sus últimos ideales pueden titularse: Belleza y Vida. En Nietzsche estos conceptos están mitificados en Apolo y Dionisos.[2]

---

[1]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 225. [2]Ibid.

The German philosopher's ideas regarding the above concepts play an important role in the writings of Valle-Inclán's contemporaries, including both the Modernist writers as well as his companions of the Generation of 98. Valle-Inclán's close contact with both groups of writers led him to become familiar with Nietzsche's basic ideas. Sobejano sums up Nietzsche's influence on both groups in the following:

> Los modernistas sienten como mayores focos de atracción en el pensamiento de la exaltación dionisíaca de la vida y la justificación estética del mundo; los noventayochistas se fijan tanto o más que en esto en los pilares del evangelio de Zaratustra: muerte de Dios, voluntad de poder, eterno retorno, anhelo del superhombre.[3]

We should first of all focus upon Nietzsche's popularity in Spain at the turn of the century and certain aspects of his philosophy which attracted the members of Valle-Inclán's generation: such concepts as the strong will, the problem of religion, the "eternal Return," and the poetic longing for the regeneration of man and society as seen in Nietzsche's "Superman." We must emphasize that, directly or indirectly, Nietzschean concepts affect the thinking and art of Valle-Inclán's generation. Indeed, to some critics, the greatest influence upon this generation is seen in Nietzsche. Furthermore, there are those who say that his philosophy played a greater role in Valle-Inclán's generation than in any subsequent group of Spanish writers:

> Que la generación del 98 fuera la que recibiese más intensamente el deslumbramiento, o iluminación nietzscheana, es un hecho de sobra conocido. Para ninguna otra generación posterior

---

[3]Ibid., p. 195.

> significó tanto Nietzsche ni para ninguna otra representó su pensamiento, abreviado en forma directa y fresca, tal iluminación y autodescubrimiento.[4]

This same view is also held by Sobejano: "Es lugar común de la crítica la estimación de Nietzsche como una de las influencias determinantes, quizás la mayor en el espíritu del 98."[5]

In Spain Nietzsche's ideas began to enter into intellectual circles in the 1890's. Although translations of his works did not appear in Spain until 1900, there is clear evidence to prove that familiarity with his basic concepts was common before that date.[6] Pío Baroja for one, an admirer of Nietzsche, had already become acquainted with the German philosopher's ideas before 1900 by means of French translations. In 1899 Baroja comments:

> Nietzsche! He aquí el nombre de un filósofo que de poco tiempo a esta parte ha sido admirado y escarnecido, considerado como genio y tachado de imbécil y decadente. . . . De Francia vino su nombre a España . . . Nietzsche, como hombre, es un caso; como filósofo, es un temperamento; como artista, es un decadente.[7]

In general there is substantial documentation which attests to Nietzsche's popularity among Valle-Inclán's contemporaries:

> An impressive quantity of evidence exists to prove that Nietzsche's ideas about the arts were well known to Spanish writers. Reviews, excerpts, and summaries of his writings are strewn throughout the journals of the day.[8]

---

[4]Alberto Adell, "Nietzsche en España," Insula, no. 259 (June 1968), p. 12.

[5]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 259. [6]Adell, "Nietzsche," p. 1.

[7]Pío Baroja, Obras completas (Vol. IV, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1951), pp. 852-854.

[8]Paul Ilie, "Nietzsche in Spain: 1890-1900," PMLA LXXXIX (1964), p. 9.

Ramón Gómez de la Serna comments: "Hoy no se puede leer una página ignorando a Nietzsche."[9]

An analysis of the intellectual trends at the turn of the century reveals the reasons for the enthusiastic acceptance of Nietzschean philosophy among Spanish writers. Perhaps we can perceive the basic reason in the general scorn and hostility which these intellectuals held for the middle class and the growing power of the modern state. Regarding this general disdain for the middle class, Sobejano states:

> La mediocridad de este vulgo se define por vía negativa. Consiste en la carencia de cualidades extremas, ni inteligente ni bruto, ni santo ni criminal, ni delicado ni soez, ni acaudalado ni enteramente desposeído, ni cultivado ni inculto, el burgués español de la Restauración no se distingue en nada por ser moderado, mediocre, mediano en todo.[10]

Pío Baroja saw in Nietzsche a vital protest against the encroaching power of the modern state: "Hay, es indudable, en él una tendencia sana: la protesta contra las ideas hegelianas, de absorber al individuo por el estado."[11] As Paul Ilie points out, there were some who saw a basic threat to humanity in the power of this rising middle class and the leveling force of democracy:

> El moderno movimiento democrático equivale . . . al empequeñecimiento del hombre. El colectivismo soñado por los cerebros superficiales de los modernos socialistas es la

---

[9]Dolores King Arjona, "La voluntad and la abulia in Contemporary Spanish Ideology," Revue Hispanique, vol. LXXIV (1928), p. 582.

[10]Gonzalo Sobejano, Forma literaria y sensibilidad social (Madrid: Gredos, 1967), p. 197.

[11]Baroja, Obras, vol. IV, p. 853.

> degeneración total, el embrutecimiento de la humanidad, reducida a la condición de un rebaño.[12]

The above fear is clearly related to the Nietzschean concept of the "herd" or the Sklavenmoral "based on the values of the mob, which is weak and contemptible, but strong enough, thanks to its numbers, to assert itself and get its scale of values recognized as universal morality." This, of course, contrasts sharply with Nietzsche's Herrenmoral, or the idea of the master "based upon the aristocratic values—beauty, strength, courage, power, and all that increases these."[13] Among the intellectuals of the time there existed a pervasive fear that, because of the ever increasing strength of the masses, the Herrenmoral, representing courage, culture, and beauty, faced possible extinction. Therefore, the tendency to exalt nobility, will power, and primitive vitality appeared as a possible solution to this problem. Ramón Pérez de Ayala, in interpreting these concepts, explains this fear and affirms society's needs for a strong and select leadership:

> En la especie humana, la ley de convivencia, ya desde el budismo, es la llamada ley moral, inventada e implantada por el resentimiento de los débiles, o sea del mayor número, a fin de defenderse contra los fuertes, estorbarles el juego de su libertad y anularlos en definitiva; ésta es la moral de los esclavos, de resentidos, moral anti-natural; de aquí que la especie humana, lejos de regenerarse, degenera y deteriora; si el hombre ha de regenerarse y superarse es menester implantar una nueva moral libre de los señores, de

---

[12] Ilie, "Nietzsche," p. 92.

[13] A. H. J. Knight, Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Nietzsche (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 45.

> los hombres fuertes, que permita el desarrollo ascensional de la especie.[14]

Another reason for the enthusiastic acceptance of Nietzsche's philosophy is seen in the Generation's struggle against the ennui and mal de siècle, or the general state of mental depression which plagued Europe at the turn of the century. Valle-Inclán's generation hailed Nietzsche's exaltation of the will, vitality and impulses as a possible antidote for this pessimism. They, like Nietzsche, reacted against what they viewed as excessive intellectualism, the consciousness of suffering, and the pessimistic philosophy of Schoperhauer which, finding no solution for the constant torment of desire, renounced all effort in favor of ascetic denial.[15] This, together with a loss of faith in religion, the shattered hopes of the French Revolution, and the overexpectations of science, produced despair and skepticism.[16] The result of this pessimism and excessive intellectualism manifested itself in the weakening of the equilibrium coordinating thought and action. All of the above factors, as Doris King Arjona states, culminate in the paralysis of the will:

> The mind, no longer doing battle against the world, turns on itself, analyzing as spectator what it performs as actor, destroying its illusions, paralysing its will, leaving itself nothing but denial, the consciousness of what Leopardi, Schopenhauer's great predecessor in pessimism, called "l'infinita vanità del tutto."[17]

---

[14] Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Más divagaciones literarias (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Almagro, 1960), p. 122.

[15] King Arjona, "La voluntad," p. 582.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

In contrast to this excessive intellectualism and ascetic denial of life, Nietzshe's philosophy gives emphasis to life and the natural instincts by subordinating the thinking process to man's vital drives and impulses. For Nietzsche, the thinking process is in itself no more than the "relation of these impulses to one another."[18] Thus Nietzsche stresses the importance of the reality of man's primordial vitality: "There is nothing real but our world of desires and passions, and we cannot sink or rise to any other reality save just the reality of our impulses."[19]

These ideas, then, found their way into the writings of the Generation of 98. In Pío Baroja's El árbol de la ciencia despair of the spirit is a basic theme reflected in the makeup of the main character, Andrés Hurtado. The author expresses his sentiments against this prevailing pessimism as Andrés is warned that too much intellectualism is a danger to life itself:[20] "Ese intelectualismo no te puede llevar a nada bueno."[21] Yet, in contrast to the pessimism developed in El árbol de la ciencia, Baroja, in another novel, César o nada, presents César Moncada, an aggressive, strong willed, and astute character who represents Nietzsche's prototype of vitality, will power, and action. In many ways Moncada is the portrait of a modern Cesare Borgia, the shrewd and despotic

---

[18]Paul Elmer More, Nietzsche (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), p. 67.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Pío Baroja, El árbol de la ciencia (New York: Las Américas, 1968), p. 201.

[21]Ibid., p. 202.

ruler of the Papal States whom Nietzsche so admired.[22] In a manner quite similar to his Renaissance counter part, Moncada cunningly gains power and purges his rivals. His motto, in harmony with Nietzsche's scheme, can be expressed in three words: "acción, esfuerzo, lucha."[23] In this novel there is a strong affirmation of life itself as a constant struggle which must be fought amidst the hate and passions of mankind: "Hay que vivir y luchar al aire libre, entre los hombres, en medio de las pasiones y de los odios."[24]

Vallè-Inclán's generation, which sought inspiration in the peasantry, the primitive past, and the refreshing vitality of medieval literature, also found in Nietzsche a possible antidote for the pessimism and excessive intellectualism which characterized the time. There was, therefore, among these writers a marked tendency to stress Nietzsche's ideas regarding vitality, individualism, will power, and action in an attempt to combat what Sobejano calls "el nihilismo supercivilizado."[25]

Like Nietzsche, the Generation of 98 was skeptical about ideologies, religion, and ideas, while it exalted individualism, emotions, and sensibility.[26] It thus is not difficult to understand how the concept of "will to power," embodied in the strong individualism, easily took roots in Spanish intellectual circles: "It is not hard to account for the tremendous enthusiasm he [Nietzsche] inspired. The Spanish mind,

---

[22]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 215.

[23]Nallim, El problema, p. 215.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 226.

[26]Del Río, Historia, vol. II, p. 242.

long accustomed to exalt the individual, hailed the idea of the Superman."[27] In placing its faith in a Superman who, according to Nietzsche, would have the power to go "beyond good and evil" and to transcend society's "false" moral scheme, the Generation of 98 was again revealing its concern for the problems which plagued conventional religion. Their skepticism sent them searching for new solutions. Therefore they no doubt saw in Nietzsche's ideas a new approach to morality based on "the change from the morality of good and evil depending on supernatural rewards to the nonmorality of the purely natural Will to Power."[28]

With respect to the concept of the Superman, Ángel Ganivet affirms: "la libertad hay que buscarla en el poder de los hombres fuertes."[29] He praises Cesare Borgia and Napoleon as the strong type of leaders modern society desperately needed: "Los Borgia y Napoleón significan para Ganivet ejemplos históricos de individualidad enérgica que trasforma la vida de las colectividades."[30] Miguel de Unamuno also spoke of a need for a new man if society wished to attain a higher level of development: "Un hombre neuvo es la renovación de todos los hombres, porque todos cobran su espíritu, es un escalón más en el ascenso de la humanidad a la sobrehumanidad."[31] In emphasizing the subjective nature of man, Unamuno, like Nietzsche, saw society as the "means and the individual the end."[32]

---

[27] King Arjona, "La voluntad," p. 580.

[28] More, Nietzsche, pp. 69-70.

[29] Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 267.

[30] Ibid., p. 268.

[31] Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 210.

[32] Ilie, "Nietzsche," p. 92.

The individual, with all his emotions, passions, and contradictions was, for Unamuno, the ultimate goal of civilization: "El cultivo del hombre es el fin de la civilización; el hombre es el supremo producto de la Humanidad, el hecho eterno de la Historia. ¡Qué hermosura ver surgir de los detritus de una civilización un hombre neuvo!"[33]

As a result of the barbarism, cruelty, and injustice which the members of Valle-Inclán's generation saw around them there was a tendency to view orthodox religion with skepticism. Thus, in one form or another, we hear echoes of Nietzsche's famous statement proclaiming that "God is dead."[34] Although Nietzsche claims "God is dead; we have killed him," it is difficult to understand how such an idea could appeal to writers in a country with a strong religious tradition unless we distinguish between contemporary Christianity and the original gospel. In essence Nietzsche states that the spirit of Christ has died, since he considers the Church to be an anti-Christian institution. For Nietzsche, the charitable brotherhood of early Christianity has perished: "The Christians have never practiced the actions which Jesus prescribed to them. . . . The Church did not have the courage, nor the will, to profess the works which Jesus demanded. . . . The Church is exactly that against which Jesus preached."[35] Given this interpretation, it is not at all difficult to perceive reflections of Nietzsche's ideas regarding the death of God in the writers of Valle-Inclán's generation. Ángel Ganivet,

---

[33]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 211.

[34]Kaufmann, Nietzsche, p. 84.

[35]Ibid., p. 293.

as a substitute for his lost faith, sought a new and simple faith based upon universal love for one's fellow man and the land. In Los trabajos del infatigable creador Pío Cid (1898) he expresses faith in the free spirit, strong will, and natural impulses which have been liberated from the negative influences of traditional religion.[36] In this novel, the main character, Pío Cid, adheres to a philosophy which echoes the Nietzschean idea on the death of God. Sobejano interprets this philosophy:

> El principio de su moral es el amor por todos, pero no en un plano de fraternidad cristiana, sino como ideal humano, al margen de cualquier credo religioso. Enteramente de acuerdo con Nietzsche ("Dios ha muerto," "Permaneced fieles a la tierra") se conduce y se expresa Pío Cid.[37]

Unamuno also probed into Nietzsche's philosophy in search of a substitute for his lost faith:

> Le atrae la audacia soñadora del filósofo trágico, proque él mismo se siente sujeto de una tragedia (la pérdida de la fe), que intenta remediar apelando a la voluntad, a la fe en una nueva fe, al ensueño, a la visión profética.[38]

In exalting unorthodox and primitive religion it appears that the Generation of 98 found some form of substitute for their lost faith in Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence:

> He, Nietzsche, looked into his own heart and into the world of phenomena, and beheld there a ceaseless ebb and flow, without beginning, without end, and without meaning. The only law he could discover, the only rest for the mind, was some dimly foreseen return of all things back into their primordial state afresh on the same dark course on chance—the Eternal Recurrence.[39]

---

[36] Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 272.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., p. 287.

[39] More, Nietzsche, p. 84.

Echoes of this Nietzschean concept are perceived in Azorín's novels and vignettes in which time and space fade into the background, making way for a poetic recurrence of past events and sensations. For Azorín, "vivir es ver volver": "Es ver volver todo en un retorno perdurable, eterno; ver volver todo—angustias, alegrías, esperanzas."[40] Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence suggested for Unamuno the constant longing to exist eternally:

> había descubierto Nietzsche la posibilidad de perdurar en "la vuelta eterna." Uno y otro [Unamuno and Nietzsche] llegan a soluciones distintas (vida de ultratumba, eterno retorno) por haber sentido el mismo vértigo ante la nada.[41]

Spanish writers were also inspired by Nietzsche's exaltation of the primitive embodied in the concept of Dionysus. In affirming savagery, sexual passions, and chaos, Nietzsche, in the Birth of Tragedy, alludes to the figure of Dionysus, which for him, represents "life as it is": "His worship [Dionysus] was orgiastic, derived from Asia, and performed at intervals with extraordinary and somewhat disgusting excesses of sexual promiscuity and savagery."[42] Nietzsche's interest in Dionysus is related to certain primitive aspects of Greek civilization during the sixth century B.C. when, from time to time, rationality and social restraints would give way to barbarous impulses.[43] He saw in this

---

[40]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 160.

[41]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 285.

[42]Knight, Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Nietzsche, p. 68.

[43]Ibid.

civilization what he called "the will to life" which centered around the cult of Dionysus. Nietzsche held great reverence for this cult, which gave freedom to sexual passions and found harmony in the continual process of creativity and destruction: "Dionysus: sensuality and cruelty. The past might be explained as enjoyment on the part of the begetting and destroying power, as a continual creation."[44]

We notice among certain writers in Spain at the turn of the century a tendency to stress the impulsive and instinctive aspects of life which center around Nietzsche's philosophy concerning Dionysus. Gonzalo Sobejano, in discussing Eduardo Marquina's (1879-1946) early works, focuses upon certain elements which he describes as "una pasión dionisíaca, afirmadora de la fuerza y del vivir pujante."[45] Sobejano also observes the influence of Nietzsche in the emphasis which the Spanish poet, Francisco Villaespesa (1877-1936), gives to the instincts. In Villaespesa we perceive an interest in the primitive, erotic, and pagan motifs which evoke, as Sobejano maintains, "la antigua inocente alegría de la carne."[46] In a poem entitled "El alto de los bohemios" (1902) we observe Nietzsche's influence in the constant allusions to primitive instincts: "Soy un alma pagana. Adoro el dios bifronte. . . . ¡O viejo pan lascivo! . . . mi ley es el instinto."[47] His appeal to the instincts is a common tendency which also appears in other poems: "Todo es instinto . . . la vida libre para los bravos. . . . Agilicemos nuestro instinto. . . . Esa es la fuerza suprema de la vida."[48]

---

[44] Ibid., p. 91.

[45] Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 206.

[46] Ibid., p. 210.

[47] Ibid., pp. 210-212.

[48] Ibid., p. 212.

Another Spanish writer who was influenced by Nietzsche is Felipe Trigo (1864-1916). Ramón Gómez de la Serna described Trigo in 1909 as "Darwiniana, anticlerical, Nietzscheana."[49] In discussing Trigo, Sobejano focuses upon his interest in the erotic and in the primordial instincts. Trigo gives emphasis to carnal passions and the natural forces of life itself: "supremacía de la emotividad, superfluencia erótica, predominio de lo vital sobre lo moral."[50] Yet, in affirming the importance of the instincts and sexual drives, Trigo is concerned with the lack of spirituality which plagues society. This is the basic theme in his novel La bruta (1907). This novel, dealing with the lust, cruelty, and egoism which torment the heroine Aurea, expresses Trigo's hope that somehow society might achieve some form of harmony between the conflicting forces of savagery and spirituality:[51]

> Todo el papel de la civilización humana estará en esto: en haber salido de un salvajismo con barbarie para retornar a un salvajismo sin barbarie [después de pasar por una era de espirtualismo cristiana].[52]

In one form or another these very same Nietzschean concepts regarding the instincts, the primitive, the Superman, creativity, and destruction appear in Valle-Inclán's Sonata de invierno, the Comedias bárbaras, and La guerra carlista. In these works we find Nietzsche's exaltation of

---

[49] Ibid., p. 228.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Regarding this concept, see Sobejano's discussion in Nietzsche, p. 239.

[52] Felipe Trigo, La bruta (Madrid: Editor Renacimiento, 1913), pp. 326-327.

the primitive which contrasts with the weaknesses and decline of European civilization perceived by many intellectuals of the time. In Valle-Inclán's primitivism we clearly observe the emphasis which Nietzsche gave to the instincts and to Dionysian passions: "la fijación del alcance verdadero del arte y del pensamiento bárbaro, envuelve a Valle-Inclán en esa corriente dionisíaca."[53]

Other elements of Nietzsche's philosophy which influenced Valle-Inclán's primitivism can be described as "la apología de la fuerza, del ímpetu bárbaro" and "el amoralismo estético."[54] Like Nietzsche, Valle-Inclán emphasized the natural instincts and the "triumph of life." This is evident in his depiction of Bradomín and Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, who are driven by erotic passions and flaunt their many conquests.[55] In the Sonatas we notice an admiration for strength, violence, and cruelty. In the Sonata de estío, for example, Valle-Inclán extols ruthless banditry: "reyes bárbaros, magníficos, sanguinarios."[56] Likewise, in Águila de blasón he praises primitive times which exalted blood, rape, and force (I, 581). In the Comedias Don Juan Manuel is a prime example of an individual whose strong will allows him to rule despotically and satisfy his immediate impulses: "este pequeño dios del feudo galaico no admite más voluntad que la suya. Cuando siente apetito carnal, arrebata a una de esas pobres mujeres. Cuando tiene sed, bebe sin tasa. Cuando

---

[53]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 213.

[54]Ibid., p. 214.

[55]Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura de Valle-Inclán, p. 82.

[56]Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, p. 453.

se aburre, hace platicar sandeces a su bufón."[57] In discussing Nietzsche's influence upon Valle-Inclán's works, Doris King Arjona calls attention to the strong will which characterizes Bradomín in his pursuit of adventures. This "will to power" culminates in the savage struggle between Don Juan Manuel and his sons in the Comedias:

> In the Comedias bárbaras the Marqués gives way to Don Juan Manuel, more brutally erotic than the Marqués, a turbulent child of Nature, whose will rebels against the trammels of his time. . . . There is hardly to be found in all modern literature a more stupendous struggle than that between him and his evil sons, who have wills second only to his own.[58]

In the Comedias bárbaras reflections of Nietzschean philosophy appear in Valle-Inclán's attack against the lofty equalitarian ideals fostered by the bourgeois class. In contrast to this disdainful vision of modern society, Valle-Inclán reveals great admiration for the rustic, harsh, and even primitive life style of the decaying feudal order of Galicia.[59] Although Valle-Inclán never mentions Nietzsche by name, he views the power of the masses and the leveling forces of democracy as a basic threat to the beauty inherent in the ancient aristocracy. In La guerra carlista we notice a marked reaction against these socioeconomic leveling trends, liberal ideas, and the growing influence of the masses. Sobejano, in discussing this particular aspect of the above trilogy, asserts: "palpita en todo ello la rebeldía frente a las tendencias allanadoras

---

[57] Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 221.

[58] King Arjona, "La voluntad and Abulia," p. 642.

[59] Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 222.

del progreso europeo, y esa rebeldía la sintió Nietzsche como nadie."[60] Sobejano continues with respect to Valle-Inclán and the negative sentiments his generation held for progress and democracy: "siente Valle-Inclán, como otros muchos artistas de su generación, la náusea del igualitarismo."[61] Thus in Juan Manuel Montenegro we perceive a revolt against the new democratic order with its complex legalistic system: "Las leyes desde que se escriben son malas. Cada pueblo debía conservar sus usos y regirse por ellos. Yo cuento setenta años y jamás acudí a ningún alguacil para que me hiciese justicia" (II, 389). Montenegro's primitive vision of justice is simple, personal, and direct:

> Pero si con ley buena hay sentencia mala, puede haber con ley mala sentencia buena, y así no está la virtud en la ley sino en el hombre que la aplica. Por eso yo fío tan poco en las leyes, y todavía menos en los jueces, porque siempre he visto su justicia menos pequeña que la mía. (II, 389)

Thus we see in the primitive and iron willed patriarch a sharp contrast with what Sobejano describes as "la náusea del igualitarismo" of this new society. Montenegro finds in society nothing but insincerity and hypocrisy: "ya no hay hombres como nosotros, capaces de morir por una idea. Hoy los enemigos, en vez de odiarse, se dan la mano sonriendo" (I, 598).

---

[60] Ibid.

[61] When discussing Valle-Inclán's vision of middle-class society, we should add that part of this negative reaction stems from the influence of decadent literature which delights in shocking the bourgeoisie. In El arte dramático de Valle-Inclán, p. 9, Emilio González López maintains: "El afán de asustar al burgués, que muchos críticos atribuyen a las actitudes literarias y personales de Valle-Inclán, le llevó en el drama a apartarse totalmente del tema burgués, y de su tratamiento moral o ideológico aburguesado."

Like other members of his generation, Valle-Inclán was interested in the Nietzschean Superman concept. Reflections of this idea appear in Valle-Inclán's portrayal of Don Juan Manuel in Romance de lobos as he strives during a divine pilgrimage to become the prime example of Christian charity and brotherhood. Paul Ilie interprets this type of divine mission as an integral part of the Superman concept:

> The self-realizing activity of the ego, when it arrives toward the Superman, is transformed into an ideal or divine mission on behalf of mankind; the clearest example of this was the Hero, including Jesus. Nietzsche's moral directive was to engage in this aspiration.[62]

Echoes of this philosophy are also observed in the feudal patriarch's noblesse oblige and primitive Franciscan charity together with an awareness of power and haughty arrogance:

> La redención de los humildes hemos de hacerla los que nacimos con ímpetu de señores cuando se haga 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. (I, 671)

The above passage also reflects Nietzsche's skepticism regarding traditional religion. The nobility, according to Nietzsche, has the obligation of assuming God's role in that it must lead the masses and uplift society: "Si se cree que Dios no existe, como Nietzsche, lo lógico es el suicidio immediate o el endiosamiento del hombre . . . reemplazar a Dios con el hombre . . . porque, eliminado Dios, no hay más que el hombre."[63]

---

[62]Ilie, "Nietzsche," p. 93.

[63]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 239.

Regarding the problem of faith and orthodox religion, Valle-Inclán tends to express faith in a vague and intuitive form of religion which recalls Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Recurrence. Valle-Inclán's pseudomystical, quietist, and primitive vision of religion is not at all unlike Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence: "Mi vida se repite en el mundo incorpóreo de los fantasmas, y cuando llegue a la muerte, con el alma libre de la cárcel de barro, veré todo el pasado en el círculo eterno de las sombras mías" (II, 580).

Tracès of Nietzsche's philosophy appear in Valle-Inclán's amoral attitude which finds virtue in primitive cruelty and barbarous passions. Regarding this aspect Sobejano calls attention to the Nietzschean inversion of "Good and Evil" which exists in Valle-Inclán's works.[64] Nietzsche's concept known as the "transvaluation of values" is compatible with Valle-Inclán's primitivism, for it has little concern with accepted moral standards while it stresses the power of the will and vital impulses.[65] Sobejano observes this very same inversion of traditional morality in the Galician author's depiction of vital scenes which may be considered cruel and perverse when viewed from an accepted moral perspective:

> Así como Nietzsche, para defender la abolición de la moral, se pronunció a menudo como si su intención consistiese en invertirla, cambiando el mal en bien y el bien en mal.[66]

---

[64] Ibid., pp. 214-215.

[65] Paul Elmer, Nietzsche, pp. 69-70.

[66] Sobejano, Nietzsche, pp. 214-215.

Valle-Inclán clearly expresses this philosophy in the Sonata de invierno as the Marqués de Bradomín declares:

> Los pueblos como los mortales sólo son felices cuando olvidan eso que llaman conciencia histórica, por el instinto ciego que está cimero del bien y del mal, triunfante de la muerte. (II, 209)

He also tells us in the Sonata de invierno that the horrors of war are beautiful (II, 228). Bradomín shows great disdain for compassion while cruelty and haughtiness take on positive values:

> experimentaba un goce amargo y cruel, dóminando el femenil sentimiento de compasión que nacía en mi ante mi propia desgracia. El orgullo, mi gran virtud, me sostenía. (II, 222)

As we shall observe, Nietzsche's ideas regarding war and destruction are also compatible with Valle-Inclán's primitivism. In discussing this particular aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy, Ramón Pérez de Ayala asserts: "La salud del hombre superior sólo se obtiene viviendo con riesgo, en permanente estado de guerra daniña y dañosa."[67] Nietzsche views the martial instinct as a means of combatting the "cowardly and utilitarian" spirit which he perceived in European society: "La guerra y luego más guerra."[68] War was to Nietzsche the matrix of all things: "la guerra, madre de todas las cosas."[69] We see reflections of these same concepts in Valle-Inclán's La guerra carlista. In accord with Nietzsche's philosophical attack on institutions which protect weak individuals, Valle-Inclán portrays war as a force which promises mankind a greater

---

[67] Pérez de Ayala, Más divagaciones, p. 126.

[68] Ibid., pp. 126-127.

[69] Ibid., p. 127.

destiny:[70] "Comprendía entonces el fin de la guerra, y que la sangre sobre aquellos campos era también signo de la redención" (II, 462).

Valle-Inclán presents war as an enigmatic or undefinable primitive force which motivates mankind. In La guerra carlista war alone for the sake of action, violence, and purification becomes a positive value. In his discussion of Nietzsche in regard to the above trilogy, Sobejano stresses the primitive: "la transposición de los valores cristianos a los primitivos."[71] The zealous desire to purge and annihilate in the three works appears as manifestations of Nietzsche's ideas which suggest that out of the debris left by war a new and more creative force may surge forth. One of Valle-Inclán's characters expresses this same philosophy: "Es preciso destruir y crear" (II, 390). Likewise, the protagonist, a bloodthirsty priest named Santa Cruz, finds virtue, solace, and harmony in the death and destruction of war: "Haría la guerra a sangre y a fuego, con el bello sentimiento de su idea" (II, 502). Santa Cruz shows no compassion or remorse. Instead, he finds tranquility in war and scorns normal daily existence: "No le turbaba el remordimiento. Era su alma una luz clara y firme como piedra de cristal. Sabía la verdad de la guerra y el mezquino don de la vida" (II, 505). In this trilogy Valle-Inclán presents compassion and clemency as weaknesses: "En la guerra, la crueldad de hoy es la clemencia de mañana"(II, 353). Santa Cruz sees the Carlist War as a primitive crusade. He scorns

---

[70]See Pérez de Ayala, Más divagaciones, p. 126.

[71]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 224.

Christian virture and takes great delight in the extermination of his fellow man:

> Cuando al ordenar un fusilamiento, en pos de otro fusilamiento, veía palidecer a sus tenientes, recordaba, despreciándolos, el duelo de las mujerucas enlutadas mientras cantaba los responsos en su iglesia de Hernialde. (II, 505)

He finds no evil in the atrocities of combat: "Las torturas, los incendios, las muertes, eran males de guerra, no pecados del hombre" (II, 542). In contrast to the present, Valle-Inclán evokes a more glorious epoch in Spain's past when his country obeyed the primitive instinct of war: "España ha sido fuerte cuando impuso una moral militar más alta que la compasión de las mujeres y de los niños" (II, 353).

Thus Valle-Inclán, like his contemporaries, was influenced by the impact which Nietzsche's philosophy had on the prevailing ideas at the turn of the century. It is apparent in our discussion that Valle-Inclán was attracted to the emphasis which Nietzsche gave to the instincts, will power, intuitive concepts of religion, and the "Eternal Recurrence." These ideas had a great appeal to Valle-Inclán and are definitely compatible with the primitive themes which we find in his works. As we have observed, Nietzsche's exaltation of Dionysus, primitive passions, the destruction of war, and scorn for traditional morality form an integral part of the primitive conflicts which appear in the Sonatas, the Comedias, and La guerra carlista.

CHAPTER V

THE FREUDIAN NATURE OF THE PRIMITIVE CONFLICT IN LAS COMEDIAS BÁRBARAS

In a thorough analysis of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes we must seek to arrive at what is meant by the term "primitive" and to determine why many critics use this adjective to describe the Comedias bárbaras. The exact nature of the term, as it is used in relation to the Comedias, needs clarification, since many scholars have failed to develop it in direct relationship to the fierce father-son struggle which stems from the sons' envy of the father's concubines and his material wealth. The fact that critics have not produced a thorough study of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes in relation to the father-son conflict in all likelihood results from a certain reticence among Spanish critics who, being sensitive to matters pertaining to the traditional Spanish family, prefer not to elaborate upon so threatening an interpretation. It may also be that the scholars have merely failed to recognize the father-son struggle as the central focus of primitivism in the Comedias.

Whatever the reason for not developing Valle-Inclán's primitive themes along these lines, the critics have definitely affirmed, albeit vaguely, the presence of the primitive in the Comedias. For example, Angel Del Río maintains that the Comedias are "Obras de inspiración primitiva."[1] Salvador Madariaga alludes to the primitive "licence and

---

[1]Del Río, Historia, II, p. 272.

tyranny" of Valle-Inclán's Galicia.[2] Ángel Valbuena Prat suggests that in the Comedias there exist "los sentimientos primarios" and "salvaje vitalidad" with respect to the father-son struggle.[3] Alfredo Matilla asserts that the atmosphere of the Comedias is "primitivo, brutal."[4] Franco Meregalli, in his discussion of the Comedias, refers to Valle-Inclán as "un poeta di sensazioni e di suggestioni primordiali."[5]

Of the above critics, only Matilla singles out the father-son struggle as being the vital thrust of Valle-Inclán's primitivism. That is, he centers the primitive conflict around the rivalry between the father and the sons over the opposite sex: "Dos bandos en pugna: Padre e hijos."[6] Regarding this primitive struggle, Matilla maintains: "En lo primitivo, las fuerzas básicas del deseo, al igual que las del bien y el mal están nítidamente separadas. El deseo se halla encarnado en lo masculino y lo feminino. Del choque entre los dos brota el pecado que es el eje del conflicto."[7] According to Matilla, the personages of the Comedias are driven by primordial sexual passions in an atmosphere of violence and superstition. "El lazo de unión es la barbarie y el pecado . . . La barbarie y el pecado tienen como apéndices la violencia,

---

[2]Madariaga, The Genius, p. 139.

[3]Valbuena Prat, Historia, III, p. 528.

[4]Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 304.

[5]Franco Meregalli, Studi su Ramón de Valle-Inclán, p. 23.

[6]Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 295.

[7]Ibid., p. 309.

la superstición, el satanismo, el sexo."[8] Matilla perceives Valle-Inclán's feudal Galicia as a reflection of primitive societies in which the female sex is presented as passive (Doña María, Sabelita) while the males (Don Juan Manuel, Cara de Plata, Don Pedro) are continually driven by their unbridled passions:

> La mujer se mueve en el ambiente doméstico, en la iglesia, el miedo, el misterio, el llanto, el temblor, la superstición. Es la fuerza pasiva. El hombre, siempre a caballo, es el espacio amplio, el deseo desatado. Por eso casi todos los maridajes son consecuencia del rapto, ultraje, lujuria, violencia.[9]

Although Matilla suggests the basic nature of the primitive atmosphere portrayed in the Comedias, an in depth systematic study is still lacking. An analysis of this primordial father-son conflict which poses a potent threat to the very roots of civilization must be attempted if we are to become familiar with the true nature of Valle-Inclán's primitivism.

The father-son conflict is the central topic which we shall examine in this chapter. Since the theme parallels the basic ideas set forth by Sigmund Freud in Interpretation of Dreams (1900) and Totem and Taboo (1913), allusions and comparisons will be made to Freud's works with reference to the primitive as it appears in the Comedias bárbaras. Moreover, the Comedias bárbaras were composed during a span of years in which Freudian concepts were attracting a great deal of attention. In its final form the trilogy consists of Cara de Plata, Águila de blasón,

---

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

and Romance de lobos. However, in spite of this order, Águila de blasón was actually the first to be published in 1907. It was then followed by Romance de lobos (1908), and several years later Cara de Plata (1922) appeared. In our analysis of the primitive we must stress that the similarities between Freud's basic concepts and the themes in Valle-Inclán's trilogy are far too striking to be overlooked. We can observe them in the fierce combat between the father, Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, and his plundering wolf-like sons who gradually undermine the control that the old patriarch once had over his domain. This results in primitive chaos and turbulence as the overwhelming father figure is cast aside and ultimately murdered so that the sons may seize his concubines and material wealth. With the removal of the father, however, stability no longer exists and the sons turn on each other in a savage struggle over the patriarch's possessions.

In discussing the author's primitive themes in a Freudian context, we must point out that Valle-Inclán alludes to the two crimes which, according to Freud, are the most common among primitives: incest and parricide. These acts are forbidden by the most ancient social taboos: "The oldest and most important taboo prohibitions are the two basic laws of totemism: namely, not to kill the totem animal, and to avoid sexual intercourse with totem companions of the other sex."[10] Although Valle-Inclán does not develop the theme of incest, so as not to clash with the

---

[10]Freud, Basic Writings, p. 831.

traditional values of the Spanish family, he develops a similar conflict around the father's many wives or concubines, his material possessions, and his envious sons who openly revolt against his authority.

Once again we must point out that this study does not insist that Valle-Inclán had read Freud's momentous essay and was directly influenced by it. However, as stated in the introduction, it is quite probable that Valle-Inclán, an avid reader, a frequenter of intellectual tertulias, and an eclectic writer in the vanguard of his generation, was familiar with Freud's basic theories. It should be noted that studies regarding primitive societies were circulating at the turn of the century in numerous articles. Freud attests to the immense popularity of such studies: "The subject has gradually acquired great scientific interest and has called forth a copious literature."[11] We must also add that during Valle-Inclán's time Freud's ideas were being expressed in certain theatrical works in other countries.[12] According to Jean Jacquot, these works were inspired by Freud and the "primordial reality" of the Greek theatre:[13] "Nous avons pensé qu'en examinant la série des pièces modernes inspirées par les tragédies d'Eschyle, de Sophocle ou d'Euripide,

---

[11]Ibid., p. 808.

[12]See Introduction, pp. 19-20, in which José Ortega y Gasset discusses (in two separate articles written at the time when Valle-Inclán was composing the Comedias) the impact which Freud's theories had upon literature and art.

[13]Jean Jacquot, Le théâtre moderne (Paris: Edition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1961), p. 95.

nous serions à même saisir de certains traits révélateurs du théâtre d'aujourd'hui."[14]

In the Comedias the basic themes center around a fierce Oedipal struggle. It appears that Valle-Inclán was familiar with the Oedipal theme which stems from Greek antiquity or which had perhaps come to his attention from some commentary or discussion of Freud's Interpretation of Dreams (1900). The presence of this theme becomes quite evident in Águila de blasón as Don Juan Manuel, a man who deprecates book learning, makes a very forced allusion to the Oedipus complex in a tense moment as he confronts his eldest son, Pedro: "¡Qué no hubiese dejado muerto a ese hijo de Edipo!" (I, 587). Other terms which suggest Valle-Inclán's familiarity with the Oedipal struggle also appear in the trilogy. In 1922, when Cara de Plata was written, it appears likely the Valle-Inclán was by then aware of certain Freudian ideas. For example, it seems that Valle-Inclán had been exposed to Freud's theories regarding phallic symbolism as discussed in Interpretation of Dreams.[15] In Cara de Plata Valle-Inclán employs this symbolism with a tinge of decadence as he embroils the divine with the erotic. The word itself is employed in one scene to show the "phallic triumph" of the old Vinculero who lifts Sabelita on to his powerful horse. The seduction of the beautiful Sabelita is represented as a victory over his young and handsome son, Cara de Plata:

---

[14]Ibid., p. 89.

[15]Freud, Basic Writings, pp. 371-375.

> En el romántico pórtico, bajo los santos de piedra, el fálico triunfo, la risa en baladros, los ojos en lumbre, la greña frenética, Sabelita, con un grito invoca al lejano caminante de los caminos crepusculares. (I, 527)

Valle-Inclán also makes a forced allusion to incest which, when spoken by one of Don Juan Manuel's sons, the coarse and rapacious Don Farruquiño, definitely appears out of place. In a scene in which Don Farruquiño attempts to seduce the harlot Pichona, the lover of his brother, he asks Pichona if she is frightened by incest. This reference to incest is unnatural and even comical in that it goes beyond the realm of the vocabulary of the characters that the author is portraying:

> Don Farruquiño.—Vamos a deshacer esa cama, Pichona
> La Pichona.—¡No seas faccioso!
> Don Farruquiño.—Lucrecia pudibunda, ¿te asusta el incesto?
> La Pichona.—Hable en cristiano, déjese de latines. (I, 624)

As we shall see, the primitive themes of parricide and infanticide, first expressed in Interpretation of Dreams and later developed in detail in Totem and Taboo, also prevail in Valle-Inclán's Comedias. Freud, in his discussion of the Oedipus complex in the Interpretation of Dreams, calls attention to the primitive myths treating of the tyrannical father, parricide, and infanticide. Ancient folklore, of course, abounds in myths in which the son cannot avoid the prophesies of parricide and incest with the mother.[16] The father in turn, in order to avoid the fulfillment of such prophesies and the inevitable destruction of his kingdom, exposes (i.e., murders) the male children.[17] The Oedipus myth,

---

[16] Stith Thompson, Motif Index of Folk Literature, vol. XXII (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1932), pp. 46-47.

[17] Ibid.

of course, contains all of these prophesies.[18] Regarding these primitive myths, Freud maintains:

> In the lowest as well as in the highest strata of society, filial piety towards parents is wont to recede before other interests. The obscure legends which have been handed down to us from the primeval ages of human society in mythology and folklore give us a deplorable idea of the despotic power of the father, and the ruthlessness with which it was exercised. Kronos devours his children, as the wild boar devours the litter of the sow Zeus emasculates his father and takes his place as the ruler. The more tyrannically the father ruled in the ancient family, the more surely must the son, as his appointed successor, have assumed the position of the enemy, and the greater must have been his impatience to attain the supremacy through the death of his father.[19]

This tyrannical archetypal father is indeed portrayed in the Comedias bárbaras. Like a tribal chieftain, Don Juan Manuel has absolute control over his subjects, who humbly obey his commands and satisfy his carnal desires: "¡Isabel, tú y todos haréis lo que yo mando! ¡Pedro Rey, dirás a tu mujer que venga a verme mañana, y os perdono la renta de este año!" (I, 577). The trilogy abounds in allusions to his lust for women, and his virility is reflected in his numerous offspring and his extreme haughtiness. His lust for power eclipses his six sons and he becomes a hated obstacle to their own desires: "Es un hidalgo mujeriego y despótico" (I, 500). His will is unconquerable and his carnal appetite recognizes no limits:

> Nunca reconocí ley ajena para mi gobierno. Saliendo a mozo, maté a un jugador por disputa de juego. Violenté la voluntad

---

[18] Edith Hamilton, Mythology (Boston: Brown and Co., 1942), pp. 375-376.

[19] Freud, Basic Writings, p. 303.

de una hermana para hacerla monja. A mi mujer afrenté con cien mujeres. (I, 555)

Freud speaks of primitive patriarchs or "paternal deities" who possess god-like attributes much like the traits which characterize the old Mayorazgo. Freud maintains: "That a man should become a god and that a god should die, which today seems to us an outrageous presumption, was still by no means offensive to the conceptions of classical antiquity."[20] There are certainly ample allusions scattered throughout the Comedias to suggest that Don Juan Manuel is one of these mortal gods or kingly patriarchs:

Las puertas del rey no son más caritativas . . . (I, 582)

El rey soy yo . . . (I, 621)

Vuelve a tu silla el rey de Castilla . . . (I, 624)

Vuelven los desvalidos a tener padre . . . (I, 718)

Es nuestro padre. (I, 720)

He is the absolute ruler of the Montenegro clan: "Aquí no hay más señor que yo, ni más voz que la mía" (I, 576).

All of these attributes make the father the envied and hated target of the sons, who are inclined to take out their frustrations on his concubines, his illegitimate offspring, and his material possessions. Envy and hatred for the father describe the handsome son, Cara de Plata, as he hastily departs on his powerful steed while the arrogant patriarch and his beautiful mistress, Sabelita, look on from afar:

---

[20] Ibid., p. 921.

> El hermoso segundón desata el caballo, que piafa atado en la sombra de un rudo arco de piedra, cabalga de un salto y sale al galope, bajo la mirada orgullosa del genitor. En lo alto de la solana, rubia como una espiga, infantil y risueña, está la ahijada del Vinculero. (I, 502)

Don Juan Manuel's illegitimate offspring serve as a constant reminder to the sons of the patriarch's virility: "Tengo hijos en todas estas aldeas, a quienes no he podido dar mi nombre. . . . Yo mismo no puedo contarlos . . . (I, 668). Oliveros, son of the peasant, Ramiro de Bealo, is one of these illegitimate sons: "La barba de cobre, los ojos de esmeralda y el corvar de la nariz soberbia, algo que evoca, con un vago recuerdo, la juventud putañera de Don Juan Manuel Montenegro" (I, 696). Oliveros is hated by the envious sons who insult and attack him:

> Oliveros.—De la nobleza que vengan, vengo yo.
> Don Rosendo.—Por detrás de la iglesia no hay nobleza, sono hijos de puta.
> Don Mauro.—Tú siempre serás hijo de un cuerno de Ramiro de Bealo. (I, 697)

The father's fear of the sons is another primitive theme which prevails in the trilogy and recalls the myth of Kronos, who devoured his children for fear that they might bring him harm. This common tale, which evokes the Oedipus myth, is echoed in the Comedias. Fear of the sons is voiced by Don Juan Manuel as he bemoans the fact that he had not earlier committed the savage act of infanticide. This is evident in the advice he bestows upon Paula la Reina as he encourages infanticide so that the father may avoid the scourge which the sons will inevitably bring: "Retuércele el cuello para que deje de sufrir, y da libertad a su alma de ángel. . . . Ojalá yo se lo hubiese retorcido a mis hijos"

(I, 684). Don Juan Manuel, in his old age, is obviously fearful of the danger he sees in the growing audacity of his sons. The gigantic leper, El Pobre de San Lázaro, declares: "El señor Mayorazgo cuando hace poco te decía que torciese el cuello a tu hijo, sin duda pensaba en todas las tribulaciones de su vida (I, 687).

This same motif is repeated throughout the trilogy. It is seen in the father's warning to Don Farruquiño. He tells the son that he will meet the same fate at the hands of his sons: "Si tienes hijos, ellos me vengarán. . . . Los votos no te impedirían tenerlos" (I, 692). Just like a primitive father portrayed in ancient myths, Don Juan Manuel thinks of his sons as diabolical monstrosities bent only upon his destruction:

> ¡Engendré monstruos y estoy maldito! ¿Por qué de aquel vientre de mujer santa salieron demonios en vez de ángeles con alas? ¡Estaba maldito el sembrador! ¡Estaba maldita la simiente! ¡Muerte, no tardes! Sácame de este pozo de sierpes y dame a tus gusanos. (I, 706-707)

The father sees death approaching and the disintegration of the Montenegro household: "Todos desean mi muerte, y mis hijos los primeros. Esos malvados convertirán en una cueva esta casa de mis abuelos" (I, 577-578). The prophetic voice of the blind Vieja is reminiscent of the soothsayer of the Greek drama and echoes Don Juan Manuel's words. She curses the birth of sons who crucify the "Divine Father" (I, 645).

We perceive other references to the myth of Oedipus in Valle-Inclán's allusions to the medieval legend of Judas Iscariot. This popular myth attributes to the infamous Judas other vile deeds such as

parricide and incest with the mother.[21] Valle-Inclán no doubt was familiar with this common tale which was an adaptation of the Oedipus story handed down from the Middle Ages.[22] In Águila de blasón Valle-Inclán employs the name Iscariote in describing the fierce and treacherous son, Don Farruquiño.[23] Thus, in light of the ominous father-son struggle, these allusions to Judas Iscariot appear as another reflection of the Oedipal theme.

Valle-Inclán's use of dream imagery and visions in the Comedias also suggests the influence of Freud. In the Interpretation of Dreams, Freud placed great emphasis upon the unconscious, which, in the case of Oedipus, reveals itself in the forms of dreams:

> In the very text of Sophocles' tragedy there is an unmistakable reference to the fact that the Oedipus legend had its source in dream-material of immemorial antiquity, the content of which was the painful disturbance of the child's relation to its parents.[24]

To illustrate this idea Freud goes on to quote a passage from Oedipus Rex in which Jocasta comforts Oedipus who is troubled by a dream: "For many a man hath seen himself in dreams / His mother's mate, but he who gives no heed / To suchlike matters bears the easier life."[25]

---

[21]Paul Franklin Baum, "The Medieval Legend of Judas Iscariot," PMLA, vol. XXXXI (Dec. 1932), pp. 482-483.

[22]Ibid., p. 586.

[23]See Obras, I, p. 630.

[24]Freud, Basic Writings, p. 309.

[25]Ibid. We must again stress that these ideas had their roots in classical antiquity. Refer to the words uttered by Oedipus and Jocasta in Sophocles Oedipus the King, ed. and trans. by David Grene and Richard Lattimore (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 51-52.

A Freudian interpretation of the Comedias bárbaras must consider "dream-material" as it appears in Valle-Inclán's trilogy. In the Comedias dreams darken the dramas with the burden of guilt not only on the part of the sons, but the father as well. As we shall observe, in Cara de Plata, as in Oedipus Rex, the confession of the Penitente serves the function of a dream in that it brings to the conscious level Cara de Plata's unconscious desire to commit parricide. Likewise, in Romance de lobos we shall examine dream imagery and guilt feelings which center around the Oedipus complex and the fear of parricide.

In discussing Freudian symbolism in the Comedias we must stress the fact that Valle-Inclán was interested in the unconscious and irrational behavior of humanity. In quoting Valle-Inclán, Alfredo Matilla calls attention to the author's awareness of the role played by the unconscious mind and chaotic impulses:

> Creo cada día con mayor fuerza que el hombre no se gobierna por sus ideas ni por su cultura. Imagino un fatalismo del medio, de la herencia y las taras fisiológicas, siendo la conducta humana totalmente desprendida de los pensamientos. Y, en cambio, siento los oscuros pensamientos motrices consecuencia de las fatalidades del medio, herencia y salud.[26]

In Matilla's discussion of the Comedias we can observe that Valle-Inclán's reference to "oscuros pensamientos" reveals a definite interest in the workings of the unconscious mind. Valle-Inclán's belief that man is governed neither by his ideas nor his culture affirms his interest in the dark, ineffable, and primitive forces which influence mankind. Furthermore, he found in unbridled passions and primitive behavior (as

---

[26]Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 296.

did Freud) an explanation for some of the problems of contemporary life.

Regarding primitive themes and Freudian concepts, we must also mention the fact that such motifs commonly appeared in the expressionist theatre which enjoyed great popularity during the time Valle-Inclán was writing the Comedias:[27]

> Dans les oeuvres de cette génération qui a subi l'influence de Freud, l'erotisme fournit un langage symbolique qui exprime toutes les revendications de l'individu, aussi bien ses aspirations spirituelles que son désir physique.[28]

We perceive in Valle-Inclán's Comedias, as in Expressionism, tense struggles between father and son. Primitive instincts and the unconscious played an important role in Expressionism.[29] Alfredo Matilla focuses upon this influence in Valle-Inclán: "La relación de Valle-Inclán con el drama expresionista ha sido apuntado por varios críticos . . . busca, como Valle-Inclán, la oposición polar. El tema . . . de la oposición padre-hijos, es un lugar común en dicho movimiento."[30]

After having discussed these basic similarities between Freud's ideas as expressed in the Interpretation of Dreams and the themes in

---

[27]See chapter on Valle-Inclán's primitivism and the influences of Expressionism.

[28]Camille Demange, "L'expressionisme allemand et le mouvement révolutionnaire," in Jean Jacquot, ed., Le théâtre moderne, p. 173.

[29]Carl E. W. L. Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1965), p. 30.

[30]Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 315.

Valle-Inclán's Comedias, we may now proceed to develop these specific primitive themes and compare them to the theories established by Freud in Totem and Taboo. In this essay, Freud presents a study of the primitive family which relies heavily upon the theories previously set forth in the Interpretation of Dreams, with the emphasis primarily upon the Oedipus complex and its various manifestations as viewed in primitive societies.

In brief summary, Totem and Taboo is essentially a study of the relationship in primitive societies between father and sons. Freud discovers that the totem or totem animal which is revered is often representative of the father:

> The totem is first of all the tribal ancestor of the clan, as well as its tutelary spirit and protector it sends oracles and, though otherwise dangerous, the totem knows and spares its children. The members of the totem are therefore under a sacred obligation not to kill (destroy) their totem, to abstain from eating its meat or from other enjoyment of it.[31]

Taboos are developed to protect the totem from those who might violate it. The word taboo means uncanny, dangerous, forbidden, and unclean. We should point out that taboo restrictions are different from moral or religious prohibitions and are probably humanity's oldest unwritten code of law rooted in a prereligious age.[32] According to Freud, the necessity of the taboo stems from man's strong desires for the very things which the taboo restricts:

---

[31]Freud, Basic Works, p. 808.

[32]Ibid., p. 821.

> Very ancient prohibitions which at one time were forced upon a generation of primitive people from without, that is, they probably were forcibly impressed upon them by an earlier generation. These prohibitions concerned actions for which there was a strong desire. They maintained themselves from generation to generation, perhaps only as a result of a tradition set up by the paternal or social authority. But in later generations they have already become "organized" as a piece of psychic property.[33]

Although Freud refers to many taboos, this study is primarily concerned with the oldest and the most sacred among them: namely, not to kill the totem animal (the father) and to refrain from intercourse with totem companions of the opposite sex.[34] In other words, the taboo develops as a means of preventing the acts of incest and parricide, primitive man's two major crimes. Freud asserts that the totem was in reality a substitute for the father.[35] The taboo in primitive times was violated when the "son horde," jealous of the patriarch, revolted against his power: "One day the expelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde." The result of such an act brought about ambivalent feelings toward the father which were characterized by guilt and remorse for their deed:

> They hated the father who stood so powerfully in the way of their sexual demands and their desire for power, but they also loved and admired him. After they had satisfied their hate by his removal and had carried out their wish for identification with him, the suppressed tender impulses had to assert themselves. This took place in the form of remorse, a sense of guilt was formed which coincided here with the remorse generally felt.[36]

---

[33] Ibid., p. 831.

[34] Ibid., p. 915.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., pp. 916-917.

According to Freud, this act of violence was met by a profound sense of guilt which manifested itself in the totem feast, a commemoration of the dreadful act which became the foundation for social organization, moral restrictions, and religion.[37] Freud goes on to state that the origins of Christianity center around a similar feast which commemorates the sacrifice, not of the Father, but of the Son.[38] Out of the guilt and fear stemming from the violation of the taboo came the prohibitions and stability needed to form a civilization. The deed would not be repeated and its execution would bring no gain:[39]

> Though the brothers had joined forces in order to overcome the father, each was the other's rival among the women. Each one wanted to have them all to himself like the father, and in a fight against each other the new civilization would have perished.[40]

Freud concludes that "the beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex."[41]

As we view the father-son conflict in the turbulent world of the Comedias bárbaras, we perceive striking parallels between Freud's study of the primitive family and Valle-Inclán's own primitive themes. Beginning with Cara de Plata, we immediately sense the fierce father-son struggle. Tension between the handsome segundón Miguel (Cara de Plata) and his father is developed early in the drama and flares into the open

---

[37] Ibid., p. 916. The totem feast recalls the savage act of the sons who, after having killed the father, devoured his flesh.

[38] Ibid., pp. 924-925.

[39] Ibid., p. 928.

[40] Ibid., p. 927.

[41] Ibid.

while the other five brothers remain in the background. The Oedipal struggle naturally does not focus on the mother, since, as previously stated, Valle-Inclán, although a bold writer much inclined to decadence, does not go so far as to offend the sanctity of the Spanish mother. Instead the conflict centers around the son's jealousy of the father's young and beautiful concubine, Sabelita.[42] This is coupled with envy of the father's overwhelming sexual prowess and hatred of his haughtiness and highhandedness.

In this drama, Cara de Plata, a spendthrift given to gambling, possesses certain noble traits which set him apart from the other sons. The father holds him in high esteem when compared to the other brothers:[43]

---

[42]Regarding the theme of incest with respect to Sabelita, Valle-Inclán alludes to a father-daughter relationship between the old Mayorazgo and the beautiful young concubine who was virtually raised in the Montenegro house. This is evident in Águila de blasón when Doña María Soledad, after having forgiven her husband's vices so many times, is unable to bear the sight of the destruction of her family which results from the terrible envy on the part of the sons: "¡Por ella he sufrido los mayores dolores de mi vida! Ha olvidado que la había recogido en mi casa y criado como una hija" (I, 604-605). An emotional exchange of words between Doña María and Sabelita reveals that the latter, far from being an ordinary concubine of the Vinculero, is more like a daughter and an immediate member of the family:

> Doña María.—Te lloré como se llora una hija muerta. ¿No era yo tu madre?
> Sabelita.—¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía!

[43]Don Juan Manuel has hope for Cara de Plata. His hope and fondness for the segundón also appear in Los cruzados de la causa. In an article entitled "Don Juan Manuel Montenegro: The Fall of a King," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 333, Roberta Salper de Tortella discusses the father's predilection for Cara de Plata, who does not allow himself to degenerate to the primitive savagery of the other sons: "Throughout Cruzados Don Juan Manuel manifests a special affection for Cara de Plata and thinks that perhaps Cara de Plata, unlike his other sons, will save him."

"Tus hermanos te pervierten con sus malos ejemplos. No te pido que seas un santo, cada edad reclama lo suyo; pero no olvides la obligación de tu sangre, como hacen los otros perversos" (I, 501).

This is an important aspect to consider when analysing Cara de Plata's character, since it must be kept in mind that his struggle with the father is limited in that it centers around only one woman and his hatred for the father does not result from the indiscriminate lust which characterizes the other sons. As we shall see, only Cara de Plata possesses the restraint which prevents him from falling to the level of the other sons.

In Cara de Plata the first hint of tension is suggested in Miguel's ironic words as Don Juan Manuel abruptly interrupts his conversation with Sabelita and reprimands the segundón for gambling. Cara de Plata responds by saying that "Nadie está libre de una tentación." The meaning of the word "tentación" proves to have significant meaning as the drama progresses.

Further evidence of the father-son struggle is voiced by a lunatic beggar Fuso Negro, who foreshadows the imminent tragedy. This symbolic figure, an incarnation of evil, cries out in a shrill voice: "¡Se juntó una tropa de hermandiños! ¡Para acá viene! ¡La torre entre todos nos va a quemar!" (I, 500).

Cara de Plata's hatred for the father and his desire to commit parricide become even more pronounced with the arrival of the Penitente who confesses a terrible sin. Cara de Plata listens carefully as the Penitente, with guilt and fear, tells of his horrible dream:

Penitente.—Hago penitencia por mi salvación.
Cara de Plata.—¿De qué eres reo?
Penitente.—¡De muerte! ¡Peor que Caín! ¡Tuve el hacha suspendida sobre la cabeza de mi padre!
Cara de Plata.—¿Mataste a tu padre?
Penitente.—¡Espantado de verme, cayó fulminado. ¡Maté a mi padre con el aire de hacha! ¡Bastó mi saña para matarle! (I, 518)

Thus the poetic phrase "aire de hacha" carries a Freudian meaning in that the Penitente is suffering from the guilt of knowing that he wished for his father's death. In order to avoid the fulfillment of his dream, the Penitente has fled from his home: "Del demonio revestido, dejé la casa de mis padres y salí a correr mundo" (I, 517). The troubled Cara de Plata takes heed of these words and recognizes the need to escape from his father's house. The Penitente, although he flees from this dreadful temptation, is unable to escape from his guilt. When the attentive and curious Cara de Plata asks his name, he responds in despair: "¡Maldito me llamo! ¡Mala intención! ¡Mal pensamiento! ¡Negro infierno! (I, 518). At this point in the drama Cara de Plata is not yet ready to acknowledge his own guilt and dismisses the Penitente as a liar.

In the meantime, Sabelita is forced to leave Don Juan Manuel's estate at the bidding of her uncle, the abbot, for tension between the Church and the Montenegros has been growing because of Don Juan Manuel's arrogance and highhandedness. Although technically Don Juan Manuel is Sabelita's padrino or sponsor, the relationship between the two is obviously much more involved. The arrogant Mayorazgo, knowing that he has control over Sabelita, releases her, insisting that she will return to him of her own accord: "No llores niña. Tu volverás, que el tiempo

es mudanza" (I, 513). Don Juan Manuel has a mysterious control over Sabelita, who is sexually attracted to this powerful father figure. According to Robert Lima, Sabelita, who lacks personal will, is "forced to accept her fate by some undefined inner compulsion."[44] In parallel with primitive societies, the revered father figure has the same power of a tribal leader in keeping with what Freud characterizes as "paternal deities."[45] This same pervasive power which cannot be merely explained as menial servitude on the part of Sabelita is further developed in a later scene after Sabelita has been taken from the cathedral and is once again living in the ancestral house.[46] The Abbot again appears to claim his niece; however, Sabelita's will is paralysed by the old Vinculero to whom she is deeply and mysteriously attached. In this scene Sabelita behaves as if she were shackled by some supernatural force:

> Sabelita.—Los pies me atan. ¡Andar no puedo! Estoy dañada del malo!
> El Abad.—¡Ven conmigo!
> Sabelita.—Tengo grillos. ¡Los pies me atan!
> El Abad.—¡Te sacaré arrastrada de las trenzas!
> Sabelita.—¡Padrino, no me ponga cadenas! ¡Rompa el negro imán con que me prende! ¡Déjeme libre, libérteme!
> El Caballero.—Libre eres.
> Sabelita.—¡Bórrate, espanto! ¡Alma mía, avaliéntate, supérate! ¡Padrino, rompa este atribulado cautiverio!

---

[44] Robert Lima, "Valle-Inclán: The Man and his Early Plays," Drama Critique, IX, ii (1966), p. 76.

[45] Freud, Basic Writings, p. 921.

[46] Lima, "Valle-Inclán: The Man," p. 73.

As the drama progresses, tension between father and son mounts. Cara de Plata's envy and hatred for the father continue to worsen because Sabelita has resumed her relationship with the Vinculero. The segundón, in an attempt to flee from his troubles, visits a harlot named Pichona la Bisbisera. This scene is important in that it reveals Cara de Plata's inner conflict. There can be no doubt that he is deeply disturbed by the knowledge that his father has just brought Sabelita back to the ancestral house. Pichona fears the consequences and is reticent to speak of the fact that she has seen Don Juan Manuel and Sabelita together: "¡Arrenegado sea el pecado! . . . No quiero condenarme. El Vinculero me ha parecido. . . . ¡Si el padre y el hijo se encuentran!" (I, 532).

Pichona becomes a significant character in that she is employed to reveal the hidden desires and motivations of the main character. This becomes obvious when Cara de Plata engages in conversation with her while taking a few sexual liberties with her person. The harlot perceives that Cara de Plata is being consumed by a deeply rooted problem: "Tú tienes una pena, y por eso bebías copa tras copa en casa de Ludovina. . . . Deja ese negro cavilar y abrázame. . . . Tienes el frío de la muerte en tus labios!" (I, 537). As Pichona reads the segundón's fortune, she, with prophetic insight, inquires: "¿Tú has pensado alguna vez en hacer una muerte?" (I, 538). Cara de Plata, of course, denies this, but Pichona insists: "Las cartas te ligan con un muerto" (I, 538). His inner conflict, guilt, and ambivalence are further manifested in his impotence and indifference to Pichona's

advances: "Abrázame, tesorín. Abrázame, mi rey moro castellano. ¡Es la primera vez que me buscas! ¿Por dónde consumes la flor de tu sangre? ¡Tienes la boca fría! ¡Tesorín, abrázame!" (I, 538).

In the final act Cara de Plata once again seeks out Pichona in an attempt to forget his troubles. Miguel, however, cannot find peace, for at this very time he is menaced by a shrill voice coming from the chimney. In true esperpento style, Valle-Inclán presents the repulsive, distorted, and grotesque beggar, Fuso Negro. At the realistic level, Fuso Negro, a loathsome creature, pursues Sabelita out of his demented sexual cravings. However, on a symbolic plane, he represents a daemonic figure who has come to torment Cara de Plata with painful revelations. He begins by making allusions to cuckoldry: "¡¿Qué cabrón te ocupa la cama pichona?" (I, 550). This naturally cannot be interpreted literally, since Cara de Plata has no spouse. Fuso Negro is obviously alluding to Cara de Plata's beloved Sabelita, who has been taken away from the cathedral and once again living with the father: "Un gallo turqués que se metió por medio" (I, 551). The potent "rooster" to whom he is referring is the old Vinculero. Amid the trumpet-like shrills of Fuso Negro's voice, Cara de Plata is forced to accept the burdensome truth. In a riddle-like manner Fuso Negro relates what has happened to Sabelita: "¡Toupourroutou! Bien veo los cuernos del bonete! El girasol de su sotana, un gallo turqués está a piteirarla. ¡Toupourrotou! ¡Oiga el grito que pasa la noche!" (I, 552). Fuso Negro then becomes quite blunt with Cara de Plata: "Ya el virgo de la sobrina se lo llevó el ladrón vinculero" (I, 552). The beggar continues to elaborate, much to Cara de

Plato's despair: "Desnuda en cabellos, da voces y se cubre los pechos, en una cueva de Lantañon. El gallo turqués está a piteirar sobre la pita blanca" (I, 552). Cara de Plata now fully grasps Fuso Negro's daemonic message, and in a fit of rage the handsome segundón admits the horrible truth: "¿Qué negra luz me alumbra? ¡Es mi padre el ladrón que me roba!" (I, 552). In fear of the act he is about to commit he desperately cries out: "¡Satanás me ampare!" (I, 552). In a burst of passion Miguel grabs a hatchet, crashes through the door, hastens to the ancestral house, and approaches the fulfillment of the Penitente's prophecy:

> Cara de Plata, con sorda brama, los ojos en lumbre, airado, frenético, del tajo hogareño arranca el hacha. Armado con ella revuelve el brazo, hunde la puerta, se lanza a la noche estrellada. (I, 552)

The final scene unfolds in the courtyard of the Montenegro estate. We see the Mayorazgo jesting with Don Galán, an insolent hunchback and buffoon who serves as the voice of his master's conscience. With his mocking laugh he taunts the guilt-ridden patriarch: "¡Jujú! Viejo enamorado, corazón enlutado" (I, 553). The Vinculero, although he fears that his licentious ways will bring great woe upon his family and realm, has not yet decided to renounce his vices:

> ¿Pero vale la pena de arrepentirse y hacerse santo tan a deshora, cuando tan pocas ocasiones de pecar pueden brindarse Mundo, Demonio y Carne? ¡Si me hubiera acordado hace treinta años! Ahora parece un escrúpulo de Fariseo. (I, 553)

It is evident, however, that the sin he has just committed against his own son weighs heavily on his conscience: "No hay en toda mi vida un naipe tan negro como el que ahora levanto" (I, 553).

Don Juan Manuel and Don Galán are then interrupted by the hoofbeats of Cara de Plata's horse as he tempestuously approaches the ancestral house. In Valle-Inclán's description of Cara de Plata we perceive a mingling of the divine with the satanical as the favorite son Miguel rebels against the god-like patriarch: "Divino de luna el yelmo de sus cabellos, y el hacha en su brazo desnudo, negra centella" (I, 554). The primitive Oedipal struggle reaches its climax as the envious son, driven to the brink of despair, cries out: "¡Padre, vengo a matarle!" (I, 554).

The Vinculero offers no resistance and stoically accepts his fate. He bids Cara de Plata to "open the gates of Hell" for him. However, he remains as arrogant and unyielding as ever. When Cara de Plata demands that the father release Sabelita, the old man taunts him further by saying that there are thousands of girls who would serve equally well: "Todas las horas nacen mujeres a miles, y padre no hay más que uno" (I, 554).

The violent act is not realized, since at that very moment both father and son are distracted by the candles of an approaching procession led by the Abbot in search of a sinner at the point of death. Don Juan Manuel, knowing that he is that sinner, boldly declares his sins: "En el arte de mal vivir un maestro y el hacha del verdugo suspendida sobre la cabeza" (I, 555). The haughty Mayorazgo then proceeds to confess his sins in public: "Soy el peor de los hombres. Ninguno más llevado de naipes, de vino y mujeres. Satanás ha sido siempre mi patrono. No puedo despojarme de vicios. Me abraso en ellos" (I, 555-556).

The son's anger grows with that of the crowd while they listen to Don Juan Manuel boast of his conquests and refuse to amend his primitive vices. The amoral and egotistic Vinculero further provokes the crowd by insisting that he be absolved: "A mi mujer afrenté con cien mujeres. . . . ¡Cambiar no espero! ¡Dame la absolución, bonete!" (I, 556). The mob, infuriated by Don Juan Manuel's bold confession and his demands, attacks him physically and thus provides the son with the ideal opportunity to destroy the father. Nevertheless, the action of the rabble only serves to arouse in Cara de Plata the class instinct which prevents him from joining the mob. Instead, at his father's bidding, he charges his horse into the attackers and scatters them.

Although Cara de Plata does not complete the primitive attack on the father, the Oedipal theme is clearly present. In utter despair the ambivalent segundón, torn between hatred and guilt, exits with the final words: "¿Dónde está el rayo que a todos nos abrase?" (I, 556). These words are apocalyptic since, although Miguel's nobility will not allow him to commit the savage act, in horror he foretells the ultimate disintegration of the Montenegro clan which will result from the destruction of the father by the other sons.

The primitive conflict continues in Águila de blasón. The struggle is further developed and appears even more savage, since the brothers now band together as the primitive "brother horde" which Freud describes in Totem and Taboo. We notice a progression in the hostility toward the father and in the direct actions taken against him and his possessions. In Cara de Plata the hatred of the father centers around only one woman.

Although the desire to commit the primitive act of parricide is quite strong, there is still restraint in the segundón, who is noble and civilized enough to refrain from giving free rein to his passions. In Águila de blasón, however, the desires are put into action. This is in direct relation to Freud's interpretation of primitive behavior which tends immediately to convert thoughts into action: "Primitive man is not inhibited, the thought is directly converted into the deed, the deed is for him, so to speak, rather a substitute of the thought."[47] Thus in Águila de blasón the jealousy and hatred on the part of the son clan surfaces in the form of violence against the father, his numerous concumbines, and his material possessions. It is no longer just one son pitted against the father, but all the sons together who, with gnashing teeth, attack him like a pack of wolves.

As a result of this attack against the father, we perceive a growing chaos, turbulence, and decay within the Montenegro household. The theme of social decay resulting from this fierce father-son conflict is one which closely parallels the theories established by Freud in Totem and Taboo: "They hated the father who stood so powerfully in the way of their sexual demands and their desire for power."[48] Yet, without this powerful figure, social stability degenerates into a savage Cain-like struggle among the sons over the spoils of the deposed father: "Each one [brother] wanted to have them [women] to himself like the

---

[47]Freud, Basic Writings, p. 930.

[48]Ibid., p. 916.

father, and in the fight of each against the other the new organization would have perished."[49] We must analyse Águila de blasón in the context of these two themes.

As the action unfolds in Águila de blasón, the son clan, with the exception of Cara de Plata, attempts to do violence to Sabelita. Sabelita brings this fact to light: "Los encontré una tarde en el atrio de la iglesia, y no me arrostraron y me cubieron de lodo porque me defendió Cara de Plata" (I, 562). The eldest son, Don Pedro, is by far the most aggressive: "El mayor sobre todo es un bandolero" (I, 562). The sons, under the leadership of the first born, band together to steal the father's grain: "Sus hijos se habían juntado, y le habían vendido el trigo" (I, 563). As the action progresses, the sons, poorly disguised as a band of highwaymen, break into the ancestral house in an attempt to rob the old Vinculero. The father's words seem to indicate that he knows the identity of the thieves: "Me han robado otros ladrones como vosotros" (I, 567). Even under the threat of death the arrogant patriarch refuses to yield to their demands. In the ensuing confusion he manages to escape shouting: "fuego, fuego." When asked where the danger is, the Mayorazgo cries out: "¡En mi casa! ¡En casa de Juan Manuel! (I, 567). The father's words are significant. When interpreted at the symbolic level the "fire" becomes representative of a deeper and more pressing problem which burdens the Mayorazgo.

---

[49] Ibid., p. 917.

In the exchange of gunfire, Don Juan Manuel, skilled in the use of weapons, strangely misses at close range. Likewise, the bandits, after having fired several shots, fail to hit the old patriarch. Although the Oedipal struggle is obvious, the sons still hesitate to deliver the fatal blow. It is also interesting to note that Don Juan Manuel refrains from firing into the group of bandits while apparently failing to recognize the ferocious hatred of his own sons under their flimsy disguise. When the servants arrive and find the old man lying stunned at the threshold of the ancestral house, they are horrified by the tragedy which has fallen upon the Montenegro household. In a scene reminiscent of the Greek theatre, the servants join together to form a chorus ("Voces de Criados") and lament the fate of the kingly father: "¡Era el padre de los pobres! . . . ¡era el espejo de los ricos! . . . ¡Era el más grande caballero del mundo!" (I, 568).

In the next scene the obvious identity of the bandits is revealed. La Roja, a loyal servant, reads into the Vinculero's troubled thoughts: "Batalla con los pensamientos. Aún cuando nada dice, sabe quiénes fueron los caínes que le ataron para robarle. . . . Esta noche le oí suspirar mientras aquí le velaba con Don Galán" (I, 573). Don Juan Manuel, however, is unable to admit such a harsh truth even though the entire household is aware of the identity of the thieves. He tries to ignore the words of Don Galán, who constantly taunts him: "Se murmura que no eran bandidos, sino los hijos de mi amo" (I, 573).

Gradually the old Vinculero is able to face up to the truth: "Don Galán, ¿qué hacemos con unos hijos que conspiran para robarnos?"

However, the primitive father can only view such matters in terms of power. In his thoughts he evokes the primitive theme of infanticide as he contemplates the death of his sons. The burdened father unmasks his true desires and laments the fact that he is no longer able to commit such an act:

> El pensamiento vuela de día y de noche. . . . El mío vuela y realiza todo lo que mis manos no pueden realizar porque me las ata la vejez, como me las ataron aquellos miserables. Si estas manos fuesen con mis pensamientos, ya los había ahorcado a todos. (I, 574)

He admits that he recognized his first-born, Don Pedro: "Yo he conocido al que venía enmascarado" (I, 578), and fears for his life and the future of his estate: "Todos desean mi muerte, y mis hijos los primeros" (I, 578). His words evoke the primitive myth in which the fated sons will eventually destroy the father's kingdom: "Esos malvados que engendré para mi afrenta, convertirán en una cueva de ladrones esta casa de mis abuelos" (I, 578). In keeping with this ancient myth and Freud's theories regarding the Oedipus complex the Mayorazgo cries out: "¡Que no hubiese dejado muerto a ese hijo de Edipo!" (I, 587). Yet the old patriarch shows no remorse and is not ready to amend his sinful and despotic ways. Instead he resolves to fight until the end: "Si traspasan los umbrales de esta casa, he de matarles y cavarles la sepultura en el zaguán (I, 578).

For the time being the brother clan (tropa de hermandiños) disbands and abandons the direct attack against the Mayorazgo's person. Instead they make an effort to strip him of his women and material goods. The outcast brothers who have been banished by the father from their home

are representative of Freud's description of the primitive "brother clan," which consists of the brothers who join forces for the purpose of destroying the father:

> One day the expelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde. Together they dared and accomplished what would have remained impossible for them singly.[50]

Don Pedro, the leader, attempts to undermine the father's authority by seizing the mill which is run by the miller and his attractive wife, Liberata. The grain and the mill represent Don Juan Manuel's personal possessions and the special liberties enjoyed by the father which result from such ownership. Don Pedro begins by challenging the liberties that the father takes in exchange of payment:

> Don Pedrito.—Es preciso que paguéis a mí la renta que mi padre no cobra, y si no podéis pagarla, que dejéis el molino.
> Liberata.—¿Viene con licencia del amo?
> Don Pedrito.—Yo de nadie necesito licencia. (I, 580)

Then, in a brutal scene which Valle-Inclán likens to the primitive epics, the primogénito turns loose his snarling hounds on the father's concubine. The animals severely maul her and shred every stitch of her clothing:

> Con los ojos extraviados se sube a un pozo para defenderse de los canes que se alzan de manos aulladores y saltantes. . . . los dientes feroces y albos. Hilos de sangre roja corren por las ágiles piernas, que palpitan entre los jirones. (I, 581)

The ferocious Don Pedro then proceeds to violate the whining and pleading Liberata.

---

[50] Ibid., p. 916.

In order to arouse sympathy for the father and create a dramatic situation, Valle-Inclán stresses the noble traits which the Vinculero possesses—qualities which are totally lacking in the rapacious wolf-like sons: "Sólo han heredado de su padre el despotismo, pero qué lejos están de su nobleza" (I, 562). "¿Hay puerta de más caridad que la suya?" (I, 582). This very charity, as opposed to the cruelty of the selfish plundering sons, is the one virtue which redeems the lustful despot: "Las puertas del rey no son más caritativas" (I, 582). The savage sons, on the other hand, who turn against one another, are characterized as Caínes (I, 582).

Nevertheless, the father's charity is not enough to prevent the tragedy from occurring, since for years his despotism and lustful example have nurtured the envy and hatred of his sons. In fact, his charity is also an object of contempt, for it too represents the father's power. Thus nothing can prevent the disintegration of his feudal empire. This instability encourages the vassals to question Don Juan Manuel's authority and the local officials attempt to make him conform to the law. His suffering and passive wife, Doña María Soledad, after having failed to mediate between father and sons, is now living apart from her husband. Sabelita, overcome by guilt, abandons Don Juan Manuel. Nevertheless, the relentless Vinculero invites the miller's wife to take her place. In spite of the impending tragedy, he persists in his old ways.

The father's fear and guilt are revealed when the local authorities seek to obtain a statement regarding the violent incident with his sons. When asked who caused the wounds that kept the Vinculero in his bed for

several days, he enigmatically replies: "Son antiguas cicatrices que se han abierto ahora: achaques de viejo" (I, 594). The father's response, when taken literally, appears to be a mere concealment of his sons' misdeeds. Yet, when interpreted symbolically, the Freudian message is obvious. Implied in these words is the hatred and hostility between father and sons which has been fermenting over the years. Formerly he had pretended that such a conflict did not exist: "Cuando vivían bajo mi techo yo cerraba los ojos y aparentaba no advertir cómo se llevaban el trigo y el maíz de mis tierras" (I, 599). Now the father, no longer able to control his domain, sees the festering wounds burst open as the sons make direct attacks against his person.

As the erosion of paternal authority progresses, the primitive Cain struggle and its resulting chaos grow more severe. The brothers turn on one another in an attempt to win all the spoils of victory even before the father's death. Don Mauro seeks to protect his potential inheritance by casting the entire blame for the robbery and violent attack against the father on Don Pedro: "Fue mi hermano Pedro" (I, 602). Echoes of the primitive Caín theme prevail in the Chaplain's warning to Don Mauro: "El Caín que acuse a su hermano será desheredado" (I, 602).

In the next scene, Doña María, fearful of the impending fate awaiting both the father and the sons, wishes to divide her estate in an attempt to save the family. Knowing that the outcast sons have been disinherited by the father, she dreads the consequences: "que me dejasen retirar a un convento y repartir entre mis hijos lo que hayan de heredar a la hora de mi muerte" (I, 606).

The tension between father and sons grows even greater when Liberata informs Don Juan Manuel of his son's attack on the mill and on her person. The father orders that Don Pedro be shot on sight should he appear near the mill again: "quiero que mates con mi escopeta y que sea cargada por mi mano" (I, 617). At this point in the drama it becomes clear that Cara de Plata, in spite of his prodigality and his hatred for his father, will not allow himself to degenerate to the level of the other brothers. In his brief appearance the author once again singles out the noble qualities which set him apart from the others: "Jugador y mujeriego. . . . Pero aun en la estrechez a que sus devociones le han llevado, acierta siempre a mostrar un ánimo caballeresco y liberal" (I, 602). Thus, in order to avoid the fulfillment of the Penitente, he flees with his uncle, Xavier Bradomín, to join with the Carlists. His parting words foretell the destruction of the clan and how the outcast sons, forced like wild beasts to plunder in the forest, will meet a tragic fate: "El día en que no podamos alzar partidas por un rey, tendremos que alzarla por nosotros y robar en los montes. Ése será el final de mis hermanos" (I, 618). By moving away from temptation, only Cara de Plata exercises the restraint which prevents his downfall: "Sólo se salva Cara de Plata por no llevar a la acción lo que piensa."[51] Thus he is able to avoid the dreadful act of parricide:

> En Cara de Plata y Águila de blasón repetidas veces se intenta salvar la figura del segundón Muguel. . . . La exclusión de

---

[51]Matilla, "Las Comedias bárbaras," p. 302.

> Cara de Plata de la última parte de la Obra, el romance de los hijos lobos, lo salva de la catástrofe que cierra la trilogía.[52]

As Águila de blasón draws to a close, the guilt ridden Don Juan Manuel laments while he watches his feudal empire crumble. The gnawing fear that Sabelita has died deeply troubles him: "Siento como si un gusano me royese el corazón. Aquellas manos, que otras veces me servían como a su rey, están ya frías" (I, 635). For the first time in the trilogy, in a sincere attempt at repentance, he invokes prayer. These words represent the beginning of a process which will eventually culminate in the father's conversion to the basic principles of Christianity in the final scenes of Romance de lobos. In the meantime, however, the sons continue the relentless attack on the father: "Otra vez volvió a presentarse en el molino uno de los hijos de mi amo . . . llevóse las dos vacas" (I, 645). As death closes in on the Mayorazgo, a blind old shepherdess pierces the silence of the night with mournful words which foreshadow Don Juan Manuel's fate: "Y todos los años los inocentes que beben en el pecho de las madres crucifijan al Divino Señor" (I, 645).

In Romance de lobos the primitive conflict between father and sons reaches its climax. The drama, a dirge of guilt and renunciation of sin, portrays the father desperately seeking salvation while the savage sons become bolder in their attacks. In his attempt to convert to Christianity, the patriarch loses the fierce instinct to fight: "Don

---

[52] Ibid., p. 308.

Juan Manuel, once the invincible beast, becomes too human in his remorse and grief to survive the onslaught on his untamed offspring."[53]

In Romance the action takes place during the night on the stormy and sea-ravaged Galician coast as the deranged patriarch roves about the countryside.[54] The drama begins in a dream-like atmosphere in which the Vinculero, overcome by guilt and too much drink, is held spellbound by a litany of witches and mysterious voices in the night:

> Otra voz.—¡Eres nuestro hermano, y todos somos hijos de Satanás!
> Otra voz.—¡El pecado es sangre, y hace hermanos a los hombres como la sangre de los padres! (I, 654)

The strange voices foretell his wife's death:

> Una voz.—¡Reza con los muertos por los que van a morir! ¡Reza, pecador!
> Otra voz.—Sigue con las ánimas hasta que cante el gallo negro. (I, 654)

Suddenly, Don Juan Manuel, as if awakening from a profound sleep, regains his senses: "El caballero, como si despertase de un sueño, se halla tendido en medio de la vereda" (I, 658). His dream proves to be the prophetic vision of his wife's funeral: "¡Ha muerto! Esta noche he visto el entierro, y lo que juzgué un río era el mar que nos separaba" (I, 685). His intense guilt stems from the awareness that his licentious behavior has brought untold suffering to his passive and saintly wife, Doña María Soledad:

---

[53]Lima, "Valle-Inclán," p. 75.

[54]Matilla calls attention to the similarities between Shakespeare's King Lear and Romances de lobos. See Matilla's discussion in "Las Comedias," p. 294.

> A estas horas habrá muerto aquella santa. . . . En el cielo la pobre abogará por mi. . . . ¡Por mí, que fui su verdugo! . . . Sin embargo, la quería, y si vuelvo los ojos al pasado no encuentro en mi vida otro pecado que haber hecho una mártir de mi pobre mujer. (I, 668)

His guilt continues to grow with his adverse fortune. He goes out to sea in a storm and the entire crew perishes. In the meantime Sabelita attempts to drown herself and his plundering sons sack the very church in which their shrouded mother lies. Only at this point do the first notes of Christianity begin to appear in the trilogy. The contrite Vinculero, aware of the wretched example he has set for his sons, renounces his lustful passions and advocates the gospel of Christ in his treatment of the poor. However, it is now too late to be saved. The fallen patriarch must resign himself to his ultimate fate as he roams about the stormy countryside stoically awaiting his death.

Thus against this background we notice a change which occurs in Don Juan Manuel. Grief over the death of Doña María, the loss of Sabelita, and torment resulting from the vices which made him the envious enemy of his sons bring about this change. He is now prepared to renounce his carnal desires and material wealth in exchange for more lofty ideals: "¡Yo he sido siempre el peor hombre del mundo! . . . quiero arrepentirme. La luz . . . se enciende en las tinieblas donde el alma vivía" (I, 690). The Vinculero now abstains from his worldly passions and advocates charitable virtues; that is, he returns to the Christian virtues. Valle-Inclán no longer depicts the Mayorazgo as a prime example of arrogance and carnal desires. Instead of the lustful father who boasts of being motivated only by "Mundo, Demonio y Carne," he is now characterized by

certain Christian attributes which set him apart from his sons: "De la lucha entre padre-hijos surgirá el armazón de la drama y la posibilidad dramática de la salvación. La rununcia del pecado significa el rechazo del instinto sexual y la renuncia a los bienes terrenales."[55] In his repentance Don Juan Manuel seeks to become the charitable father of a host of squalid and mutilated beggars who take shelter from the elements in the ruins of an ancient castle. This change in character redeems him and sets the scene for the dramatic conclusion of the trilogy:

> Para llegar a ser padre de los pobres, el héroe tiene que pasar por la desposesión. De ser padre de demonios, de lobos, a ser padre de una masa informe de desheredados, de enfermos paupérrimos. Así se logra el rescate del alma del caballero.[56]

It is now apparent that the Mayorazgo abandons his extreme primitive egoism in favor of a more Christian and civilized form of altruism: "El caballero siente una emoción cristiana" (I, 672). This new spirit is reflected in his generosity and the empathy he shows for the misery of the wretched beggars and lepers he encounters: "Todo el maíz que haya en el troje se repartirá entre vosotros. . . . Tenéis marcado el alma con el hierro de los esclavos, y sois mendigos porque debéis serlo. . . . Debo ir por el mundo con la mano extendida" (I, 671). Yet we must emphasize that the patriarch's conversion occurs against the background of nature's harsh elements amid pagan ruins—far from the clergy and altars of the Church. For Don Juan Manuel, his own personal charity is more meaningful than the lofty orthodox precepts of the Church: "La

---

[55] Ibid., p. 311.

[56] Ibid.

religión es seca como una vieja. . . . ¡Como las canillas de una vieja! Tiene cara de beata y cuerpo de galga" (I, 668).

As the final clash between father and sons approaches, we perceive a profound sense of guilt on the part of the sons which surfaces in the form of Freudian dream imagery. Don Pedro, burdened with fear and guilt, voices the horror of what would result from a face to face encounter with the father: "Temo el momento de verme frente a frente" (I, 674). These guilt feelings, symbolized in the form of visions of his dead mother, can be interpreted as manifestations of the Oedipus complex which, according to Freud, is revealed in dreams or, in this case, frightening apparitions: "Yo la vi levantarse en la caja. . . . Me pareció ver la sombra de mi madre y hasta entender su voz" (I, 676). The Oedipus theme is artistically suggested in the tormenting visions which precede the fearful encounter between Don Pedro and the father. These visions carry with them a great sense of guilt, for they reveal latent desires which are difficult for the conscious mind to bear—certain truths which the eldest son would rather repress:[57] "Es verdad, estoy borracho sin haber bebido. . . . Ojalá estuviese borracho" (I, 676).

The presence of the Oedipus complex becomes even more evident in the fierce showdown between the father and Don Pedro. In a tense

---

[57]The idea of suppressed guilt associated with the Oedipus complex and discussed by Freud in the Interpretation of Dreams (1900) was perhaps understood by Valle-Inclán when he wrote Romance de lobos in 1908. In Basic Writings, p. 308, Freud states: "King Oedipus, who slew his father and wedded his mother Jocasta, is nothing more or less than a wish-fulfillment—the fulfillment of the wish of our childhood. But we . . . have since our childhood succeeded in withdrawing our sexual impulses from our mother, and forgetting our jealousy of our father. We recoil from the person for whom the primitive wish of our childhood has been fulfilled with all the force of repression which these wishes have undergone in our minds since childhood.

exchange of words Don Pedro menaces his father with death while brandishing the staff of the leper, El Pobre de San Lázaro. However, when the menacing son is at the point of delivering the fatal blow, he is forced to retreat in great fear at the sight of his dead mother's ghost lurking in the shadow behind the gigantic leper: "Don Pedro retrocede, y arroja el bordón lejos de sí. Detrás del pobre está la sombra de Doña María" (I, 679). Don Pedro's words are symbolic and reveal the heavy burden of guilt which the eldest son must bear. In returning the staff which sustains the gigantic leper, Don Pedro utters in despair: "Ten tu cruz, hermano. . . . ¿Tú no sabes dónde hallaré yo la mía?"

As the drama progresses, Valle-Inclán stresses the savagery of the sons: "Son como fieras. . . . Son lobeznos, hijos de lobos" (I, 690). The Cain theme, in parallel with Freud's interpretation of this primitive conflict, becomes more pronounced:

> ¡Aún está caliente el cuerpo de vuestra madre, y ya peleáis como Caínes! . . . ¡Los lobos en el monte tienen mas hermandad que vosotros! Nacidos sois de un mismo vientre y peleáis como fieras que acaso se hallan en el camino. (I, 662)

In the absence of paternal authority, the once humble and docile servants now follow the rebellious example of the plundering sons: "Como cinco lobos, los cinco hijos están repartiendo cuanto hay en la casona, y los criados, a escondidas, también apañan lo que pueden" (I, 665). Sabelita, suspected of possessing the family jewels, becomes a target for the sons' jealousy and frustration as they quarrel over their inheritance. Benita la Costurera, who prepares Doña María's

shroud, relates how the sons drag Sabelita away from the mother's deathbed and assault her:

> ¡De la misma cabecera de la difunta la echaron a la calle arrastrándola por los cabellos! . . . Como no se halló nada en la casona, sospechaban que la ahijada tuviese escondido dinero y alhajas. (I, 665)

Don Mauro, in an attempt to secure the ancestral jewels for himself, threatens a faithful servant, Andreína, with death should she reveal his plans to the other brothers: "He de segarte la lengua si dices una sola palabra a mis hermanos" (I, 681).

The fierce rivalry between the sons drags the once prosperous Montenegro household into such chaos and ruin that when Don Juan Manuel invites the host of squalid beggars to eat from his table, he discovers that there is no longer any bread. The servants lament in utter disbelief: "¡En una casa tan rica no haber pan en el horno! . . . ¡Ni harina ni grano en una casa tan rica!" (I, 685). As the moment of the father's death approaches, the sons are already at the point of destroying each other: "Vanse a matar. . . . Pelean haciendo las particiones" (I, 717).

In the closing scenes of the trilogy Don Juan Manuel, resigned to his fate, stoically awaits death: "Mis horas están contadas" (I, 705). He is finally able to face up to the truth and admit that his lust and unbridled passions are responsible for his sons' actions. Among allusions to the primitive deed in which the sons devour the father the Mayorazgo confesses: "Fui pastor de lobos y ahora mis ganados me comen" (I, 706). In fact, the final scenes of Romance de lobos abound in imagery similar to Freud's characterization of the primeval sons who,

after having slain the father, feast on his body.[58] This imagery first appears in the tense encounter between Don Pedro and the father. The eldest son, with gnashing teeth, warns the father: "No me encienda la sangre, que si me vuelvo lobo, lo como" (I, 678). This idea is also reflected in the Mayorazgo's desperate words: "¡Muerte no tardes! ¡Sácame de este pozo de sierpes y dame tus gusanos! . . . Que me coman tus hijos, pero no los míos" (I, 707). The Vinculero's words once again suggest this theme when he speaks of selling his head to his sons who would feast on it: "Y se la comerían como rico manjar" (I, 709). The taunts from Fuso Negro are also symbolic of this primitive act: "Don Pedrito diría: ¡Yo quiero la lengua! Don Gonzalito diría: ¡Yo quiero los ojos!" (I, 707). Reference to this primitive deed is again repeated when the wife of a drowned sailor blames Don Juan Manuel for his death and curses the old patriarch: "¡Mal can le arranque el corazón y lo lleve por el arenal! ¡Mal cuervo le coma los ojos! (I, 714-715). The Vinculero, aware of his fate, responds: "Calla, mujer, que tus maldiciones ya se cumplen" (I, 715).

The ultimate act is finally carried out by Don Mauro who, with a wolfish howl, strikes the old man squarely in the face. The father falls dead to the floor. Then the Beggar of Saint Lazarus once again appears and both he and Don Mauro, with gnashing teeth and amidst flames,

---

[58] Regarding this particular imagery, Freud in Basic Writings, p. 916, maintains: "This violent primal father had surely been the envied and feared model for each of the brothers. Now they accomplished their identification with him by devouring him and each acquired a part of his strength."

enter into a savage struggle in which they actually eat each other. The miraculous figure of Saint Lazarus rises triumphantly from the flames. The gravity of the dreadful act which has just occurred provokes a form of pre-Christian guilt which surges forth and consumes the people who lament the tragedy in a manner characteristic of the Greek chorus:[59] "He was our father." The sons, fearful of the curse they have brought upon themselves, wail in despair: "Malditos estamos" (I, 721).

Thus in our analysis of the primitive themes in the Comedias it is apparent that the entire trilogy centers around the primordial struggle between a tyrannical father and his envious sons. In Cara de Plata we notice the main focus is upon the Oedipus complex as the young segundón painfully becomes aware of the unconscious desire to commit parricide in the struggle over the beautiful Sabelita. However, in Cara de Plata these desires are still restrained. In the following drama, Águila de blasón, the conflict between father and sons burst into the open. It is no longer one son pitted against the father, but rather all the sons who now band together and form a fierce and deadly group similar to what Freud describes as the "brother horde." These sons, bent upon destroying the tyrannical father and assuming his position, bring about chaos and

---

[59]Regarding this tragic guilt and the ancient Greek chorus, Freud maintains in Basic Works, p. 926, that the "hero of the tragedy had to suffer; this is today still the essential content of a tragedy. He had taken upon himself the so-called 'tragic guilt,' which is not always easy to explain; it is often not a guilt in the ordinary sense. Almost always it consists of a rebellion against a divine or human authority and the chorus accompanied the hero with their sympathies, trying to restrain and warn him, and lamented his fate."

cast a shadow of fear and guilt as they struggle among themselves over the fruits of victory. This leads the way to the inevitable tragedy and the ultimate destruction of the Montenegro clan. With this background we enter into Romance de lobos, which is a dirge of guilt. The guilt which accompanies the savage father-son struggle is not related to the Christian virtues of love and compassion. It reflects instead a type of pre-Christian guilt which is similar to what Freud describes when discussing primitive societies and ancient drama. In this tragic atmosphere the sons, with blood-stained hands, commit the final act.

CHAPTER VI

VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVISM AND THE INFLUENCE OF DECADENTISM

In our study of Valle-Inclán's primitivism it is essential to examine certain influences which stem from decadent literature. In decadentism we notice a reaction against realism which appears in the exaltation of art, exoticism, declining civilizations, eroticism, and barbarism. Decadentism in so many ways is primitivism except it is accompanied by a morbid awareness of the harsh nature of barbarous motifs. Within this same framework Valle-Inclán sought to exploit the artistic potential inherent in the superstitions and passions which held sway in his native Galicia. The influence of decadentism in Valle-Inclán's writing was indeed significant, for it is clearly visible in his early works and the Sonatas. This same influence lingers and continues to be present even in later works such as Divinas palabras (1920), La cabeza del Bautista (1924), and Ligazón (1926). Regarding the constant influence of decadentism, López González maintains: ". . . no le abandonará nunca sino que aparecerá un tanto transformado."[1]

Although many critics refer to Valle-Inclán as a decadent writer, no lengthy critical studies have attempted to interpret his primitive themes in relation to decadent literature. In fact, in the numerous

---

[1]González López, El arte dramático, p. 59.

scholarly articles compiled by Anthony Zahareas in a critical study entitled Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of his Life and Works, scarcely any mention is made to the vital role played by decadentism in the author's portrayal of the primitive lust and violence which we see in the Comedias. Instead critics often limit themselves to the word "decadent" when describing many of Valle-Inclán's works without establishing a relationship between his interest in primitive motifs and certain tendencies in decadentism which reveal a fascination for pagan rituals, pseudomysticism, incest, and savagery.

However, some critics allude to the primitive element when discussing Valle-Inclán's decadent works, which unfold amid a background of blood, cruelty, and beauty. For example, Gerald Gillespie and A. N. Zahareas suggest the existence of the primitive in what they describe as "primeval motifs" which characterize Valle-Inclán's desire "to penetrate beneath the Apollonian surfaces into the tenebrous realm of human nature."[2] Gillespie and Zahareas single out certain aspects of decadentism which form the nucleus of the primitive themes we perceive in the Comedias: "rebellion-libertinism; submission-purity; dark-light; . . . male (donjuanismo, aggression, cruelty)—female (beauteous virgin,

---

[2]Gerald Gillespie and A. N. Zahareas, "Rosarito and the Novella Tradition," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 281. Gillespie and Zahareas maintain on p. 286, that Valle-Inclán's decadent motifs reflect the Galician author's great insight into humanity's primordial and confused passions: "Valle-Inclán presents us early in his career with an almost grotesque vision that decadently flashes with poetic beauty: he knows instinctively that Sex and Religion are connected, that the demonic and the innocent interact, that Death and Love interlock, and he's sorry and cruel at the same time."

victim)."[3] Likewise, Enrique Anderson-Imbert, in his analysis of the decadent influences in the Sonatas, alludes to the primitive philosophy surrounding Valle-Inclán's vision of the mythical Don Juan: "demonio, mundo, carne."[4] This egocentric philosophy, interested only in immediate pleasures and bearing no concern for society, is indeed the focal point of many of Valle-Inclán's works.

Valle-Inclán himself, in discussing the Sonatas, explained the Don Juan myth as a reflection of unrestricted primordial drives and extreme egoism which have no respect for religion or the rights of others: "falta de respeto a la religión y a los muertos . . . satisfacción de las pasiones saltando sobre los derechos de los demás . . . conquista de las mujeres."[5] This theme, which Valle-Inclán views as "eterno," is at the crux of the Comedias bárbaras. This is manifest in the words of the haughty Don Juan Manuel Montenegro, who boasts that his life has centered around "Mundo, Demonio, Carne" (I, 553). Ramón Gómez de la Serna also envisions this theme ("Mundo, Demonio, Carne") as a fundamental aspect of Valle-Inclán's art since, as the Galician author himself maintains, these three elements form the essence of the "eternal myth": "Don Juan es el ideal para los hombres; todos los hombres admiran a Don Juan y lo admiran por su trinidad monstruosa."[6] As we shall see, this same

---

[3]Ibid., pp. 286-287.

[4]Enrique Anderson-Imbert, "Escamoteo de la realidad en las Sonatas," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 208.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Don Ramón María del Valle-Inclán (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1944), p. 64.

perverse trinity lies at the heart of the pseudomystical and erotic intuitions which the Galician author reveals in portraying the intangible world in La lámpara maravillosa.

Before proceeding with our discussion, we must sketch the basic aspects of the decadent movement during the years 1870 to 1900. In order to perceive the relationship between decadentism and Valle-Inclán's primitive themes we must first bear in mind that decadent writers tended to view man as a victim of too much civilization and culture:[7] "Man's ills result from his own culture; he cherishes the memory of primitive nature like a lost paradise."[8] Amid the unrest and pessimism which marked the later nineteenth century, many intellectuals exalted the primitive in contrast to the materialism, science, and the excessive complications which accompany civilization.[9] In analysing decadent art, A. E. Carter calls attention to the interest in what he terms "obscure atavistic forces which call him [man] back to the seas and jungles from which he emerged."[10] According to Carter, decadent literature, with its predilection for aristocratic and superrefined surroundings, appears at first glance as a revolt against primitivism. Yet, in affirming a link between primitivism and decadence, Carter maintains that decadentism is in other ways "another manifestation of the same old myth."[11]

We may explain this negative view of modern society as a reaction to the ennui or weariness which plagued intellectuals during the last

---

[7] Carter, The Idea of Decadence in French Literature, p. 52.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 87.

[10] Ibid., p. 4.

[11] Ibid.

decades of the nineteenth century. Although much of this feeling resulted from a loss of faith in traditional religion, it can also be viewed as a rejection of intellectual movements such as positivism and naturalism which had perhaps placed too much faith in the sciences while neglecting the human spirit.[12] Obviously the sciences proved unable to provide cures for the ills of humanity. This awareness brought with it a great deal of pessimism as many intellectuals began to distrust and even scorn the sciences along with anything that appeared to be highly civilized. According to William Eickhorst, decadence "grew out of the vacillating, unstable, weary, and pessimistic frame of mind of a group of intellectuals, who react against positivism, materialism, and naturalism."[13]

Along with this scorn for the sciences and highly civilized societies, intellectuals and artists also became indifferent to altruism and lofty humanitarian ideals.[14] Instead of altruism and love for others, they showed a tendency to draw inward and to concentrate upon the senses and immediate pleasures. We can clearly observe this in

---

[12]Benedetto Croce, La letteratura italiana, vol. IV (Bari: Laterza, 1968), p. 393. See Scrivano, Il decadentismo, p. 157.

[13]William Eickhorst, Decadence in German Fiction (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1953), p. 15.

[14]We perceive this tendency in Valle-Inclán and other Spanish intellectuals who react negatively to the atmosphere in Spain during the last decades of the nineteenth century: "Como muchos otros escritores de su generación, sufrió Valle-Inclán, de joven, la influencia del decadentismo, que predominaba en la literatura europea, a fines del siglo XIX. En este arte los jóvenes escritores encontraban el mejor vehículo para expresar su sensibilidad exquisita y refinada; y a formar su personalidad explosiva y llamativa, contra el fondo gris del ambiente español de la época de la Restauración. See Emilio López González, El arte dramático, p. 23.

decadent literature, which tends to portray egocentric characters who are always in search of rare sensual pleasures, but who are incapable of real love:[15] "Instinctively they find their way to beauty and to the pleasures of the senses. They take great delight in everything that is regarded as not normal by ordinary men."[16]

Decadent writers also exalted art which, to them, was of prime importance and totally independent of society. For example, Charles Baudelaire asserts that "la poésie . . . n'a pas d'autre but qu'elle même."[17] For these writers, art was not to be compromised by moral or social interests. As Max Nordau affirms, art is "au-delà du bien et du mal."[18] In the decadent motto "art for art's sake," we notice an attempt to escape from the realities of the present day: "Decadence substitutes for life a world of illusion, a dream in which one may forget oneself."[19]

---

[15] Eickhorst, Decadence, p. 15.

[16] Ibid., p. 21.

[17] Quoted in Nordau, Dégénéresence, vol. II, p. 59.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Eickhorst, Decadence, p. 21. We may clearly perceive the influence of decadentism in Valle-Inclán's creation of Bradomín. Regarding the concept "art for art's sake," Bradomín's philosophy in the Sonata de invierno is: "Yo no aspiro a enseñar, sino a divertir. Todo mi doctrina está en una sola frase: ¡Viva la bagatela!" (I, p. 242). Valle-Inclán's art also reflects the same escapist tendency characteristic of decadent literature. Enrique Anderson-Imbert, in "Escamoteo de la realidad en las Sonatas" in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 208, calls attention to this aspect: "Había en la literatura de entonces 'poetas malditos,' 'decadentes,' 'satanistas' y Valle-Inclán vio en ese culto a lo mórbido un escape de la realidad." Likewise, Emilio González López describes this same characteristic in Valle-Inclán's dislike for nineteenth century realism in the theatre. Instead, Valle-Inclán favors "el triunfo del sentimiento sobre las circunstancias exteriores, y la exaltación de la hipersensibilidad hasta la morbosidad." See El arte dramático de Valle-Inclán, p. 33.

In their escape from the real world and their rejection of religion, science, and reason, decadent writers turned to artistic surroundings which appealed to the senses and found inspiration in remote lands, ancient civilizations, and primitive peoples.

Thus it is within this context that we must analyse Valle-Inclán's primitivism so that we may clearly understand the relationship between decadentism and the turbulent world of carnal impulses portrayed in the Comedias. Although Valle-Inclán claims to have been unaffected by the influence of decadence ("Los decadentismos de la generación no los he sentido jamás"), its presence is nevertheless apparent in his works.[20] It is obvious that Valle-Inclán was in contact with this movement, for, like other decadent writers, he enjoyed portraying in an aloof and unemotional manner, or as a supreme manifestation of art, such motifs as sexual perversions, incest, and savage cruelty. Furthermore, in an article entitled "La poesía de Europa y en América" (1892), we see in Valle-Inclán's own interpretation of decadent literature that the author understood and was quite familiar with this movement:

> La poesía de Europa . . . es una poesía de inteligencias enloquecidas o desquilibradas; de hombres que sufren de una exaltación mística, que muchas veces no está en el alma, sino en los nervios, y en el cerebro, vibrante por la lectura de algún autor moderno, sugestivo o maníaco. Los ingenios de hoy, no tienen aquella sublime serenidad de los ingenios clásicos; son enfermos mentales . . . padecen la neurosis del siglo, y este estado enfermizo de la inteligencia, dependiente de la falta de vigor físico, del lastimoso decadentismo a que llegó el cuerpo, en las grandes capitales se manifiesta en las artes y sobre todo en la literatura.[21]

---

[20] Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, p. 391.

[21] Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 210.

Valle-Inclán, in spite of his negative criticism of this movement, was inspired by certain aspects of decadentism which he often employed in creating barbarous conflicts and settings. We notice that decadent motifs such as superstition, cruelty, and incest appear as natural characteristics of the passions and raw instincts of the barbarous society he depicts. Aubrey Bell summarizes this idea quite well: "He [Valle-Inclán] has a passion for the minute, the refined and exquisite, but he does not lack in vigor and is, in fact, a very energetic decadent."[22] It is apparent that aspects of decadentism dealing with primitive passions, pre-Christian religions, and pseudo-mysticism held the greatest appeal for Valle-Inclán. This is evident in his praise for what he calls "una vuelta a lo antiguo, tendencia nueva de la que en España apenas hay noticia."[23] This return "a lo antiguo" can be associated with his interest in pseudomystical cults and the pagan spirit which was passed on to him by the modernist poets, especially Rubén Darío:[24] ". . . escriben hoy, igual que escribían, a haber nacido en Grecia dos mil años hace."[25] Valle-Inclán exalts both pre-Christian religions and the myths which often characterize modernist verse. In a decadent manner, Valle-Inclán praises those poets who possess a certain pre-Christian charm: "Verdaderos poetas paganos, en su alma la doctrina

---

[22]Aubrey Bell, Spanish Contemporary Literature, p. 129.

[23]Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 115.

[24]Francisco Umbral, Valle-Inclán (Madrid: Unión Editorial, 1968), pp. 53-56.

[25]Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 211.

de Cristo no dejó huellas . . . en sus versos rara vez se descubre que pertenezcan a una sociedad cristiana."[26] Guillermo Díaz-Plaja affirms that, among the decadent motifs which often appear in modernist poetry, Valle-Inclán is interested in "el tema del primitivismo."[27] Valle-Inclán's fascination for the primitive aspect of modernist poetry is evident as he praises it for being a form of "verdadero atavismo."[28]

Thus those aspects of decadentism which extol the ancient past and barbarous passions held the greatest attraction for Valle-Inclán. As a result, these are the elements which appear frequently in his works. Beginning with Valle-Inclán's earliest works we can perceive his fondness for the primitive and his predilection for the vestiges of the Celtic civilization still visible in Galicia. From Valle-Inclán's artistic perspective, these ruins have a unique beauty in that they evoke memories of primitive religions and cruel sacrifices. In "Una visita al convento de Gondarín" (1892), a short vignette, Valle-Inclán portrays in a decadent manner the beauty he sees in primitive savagery: ". . . cruentos sacrificios . . . dólmenes . . . . Ídolos, ritos . . . la encina sagrada . . . la superstición popular . . . el incienso, etc. . . ."[29] Likewise, his view of ancient Mexico calls forth the bloody struggles and the cruelty of the Spanish conquistadors ("hijos de Alarico el bárbaro y de Tárik el moro"), as well as the rituals and

---

[26]Ibid.

[27]Díaz-Plaja, Las estéticas del Valle-Inclán, p. 45.

[28]Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 211.

[29]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

sacrifices of the Aztecs: ". . . los héroes vencidos que esperaban la muerte con valor estoico."[30] We see similar examples of this in Valle-Inclán's exaltation of the lust and spontaneity of the primitive surroundings which form the background of the Sonata de estío: "La naturaleza, lujuriosa y salvaje, aun palpitante del calor de la tarde, semejaba dormir el sueño profundo y jadeante de una fiera fecundada."[31] The emphasis given to the senses and primordial passions is what López González refers to as "el triunfo del sentimiento."[32] This "triumph" is clearly visible in his works, especially the Sonata de estío, in which Valle-Inclán frequently employs the adjective "voluptuous" in his description of the sensual Niña Chole, and in his constant allusions to "el triunfo de la vida" and "la exaltación gloriosa de la carne."[33]

Amid these allusions to the "triumph of life" and the "exaltation of the flesh," Valle-Inclán embroils eroticism with primitive religions and the rituals of his own Catholicism. We notice this mingling in descriptions such as "el doble encanto sacerdotal y voluptuoso . . . celebramos nuestras bodas con siete copiosos sacrificios que ofrecimos a los dioses."[34] Valle-Inclán also associates sexual suggestions with the vestiges of primitive religious temples which adorn the Galician

---

[30]Ibid., p. 169.

[31]Valle-Inclán, Obras escondidas, p. 419.

[32]López González, El arte dramático, p. 33.

[33]Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, pp. 424, 425.

[34]Ibid., p. 424.

countryside. In Águila de blasón, for example, he surrounds Sabelita with Celtic ruins for the purpose of suggesting the erotic:

> Sabelita está sentada a la sombra de unas piedras célticas, doradas por líquenes milenarios. Desde el umbral de la casa se la divisa guardando una vaca, en lo alto de la colina druídica que tiene la forma de un seno de mujer. (I, 640)

In Sonata de estío Valle-Inclán stresses the "magnificence" of primitive sins depicted in ancient literature: "Era el magnífico pecado [incest] de las tragedias antiguas."[35] In a decadent tone he laments the fact that civilization has placed prohibitions on certain acts:

> He suspirado más de una vez lamentando que los siglos hayan hecho un pecado desconocido [homosexuality] de las divinas fiestas voluptuosas . . . el tiempo antiguo de griegos y romanos, cuando los efebos coronados de rosas sacrificaban en los altares de Afrodita.[36]

In the Sonata de invierno Valle-Inclán expresses great admiration for the less restricted sexual passions of ancient times:

> Lamenté más que nunca no poder gustar del bello pecado, regalo de los dioses y tentación de los poetas. . . . El efebo me habló en latin, y en sus labios el divino idioma evocaba el tiempo feliz en que otros efebos, sus hermanos, eran ungidos y coronados de rosas por los emperadores. (I, 229)

Yet, in exalting these forbidden pleasures, Valle-Inclán is careful to emphasize that he personally rejects certain decadent perversions such as homosexuality, which he nevertheless describes as a beautiful sin: "Felices y aborrecidas sombras: ¡me llaman y no puedo seguirlas! Aquel bello pecado, regalo de los dioses y tentación de los poetas, es para mí un fruto hermético."[37]

---

[35] Ibid., p. 425.

[36] Ibid., pp. 436-437.

[37] Ibid., p. 437.

Like other decadent writers, Valle-Inclán sought inspiration in the decline and corruption of ancient civilizations such as Greece, Rome, and Byzantium. We can clearly perceive Valle-Inclán's fascination for Byzantium which, as Mario Praz explains, appealed to the decadents who delighted in "living over again the gory annals of the Eastern Empire . . . hemmed in on all sides by barbarian conquerors."[38] We can observe Valle-Inclán's interest in this period in his allusions to monstrous forms, chimeras, superstitions, and turbulent passions portrayed in Byzantine art. In La lámpara maravillosa he tells us that

> Los monstruos del arte bizantino, donde las formas originarias degeneran hasta el absurdo, nos enseñan esta comprensión de belleza en pugna con aquel helenismo. . . . Górgolas, canecillos, endriagos, vestiglos, traían esta nueva intuición entrañada en sus formas perversas. (II, 588)

In keeping with the tendencies of other decadent writers, Valle-Inclán often alludes to the lust, passions, and cruelties of the Borgia popes in Italy during the sixteenth century.[39] He evokes this atmosphere in his admiration of the bloody exploits of a ruthless conquistador: "Era hermoso como un bastardo de César Borgia. . . . Sus sangrientas hazañas son las hazañas que en otros tiempos hicieron florecer las epopeyas."[40]

The principal themes in decadent literature tend to focus, in one way or another, upon man's basic sexual drives. As we have already seen,

---

[38]Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. by Angus Davidson (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1968), p. 29.

[39]Ibid., p. 314.

[40]Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, p. 432.

the motivating force of Valle-Inclán's Comedias bárbaras is the crude and primitive sexual instinct. In other works, however, these same crude impulses often appear as a serene manifestation of art in which rare sexual tendencies seem to possess an ineffable beauty. Some of these decadent motifs which Valle-Inclán portrays are inspired by ancient art forms and primitive myths. For example, in Valle-Inclán's works we find allusions to a common theme in decadentism which centers around the desire of a man to become a woman, or to become a combination of both in order to experience new pleasures.[41] In decadent literature characters possessing these traits abound and they are described as being "androgynous."[42] The portrayal of these characters reveals a decadent fascination for ancient art forms which elicit this mythical fusion of man and woman. Valle-Inclán also reveals an interest in certain art forms which allegorically depict the fusion of man and woman, and man and beast. In the fusion of man and woman Valle-Inclán find an artistic ideal and refers to it as the "rosa clásica" or the "rosa andrógina" (II, 592). In his fascination for primitive myths, he evokes bestial passions and instincts in forms which possess both human and animal characteristics: "Todo el renacimiento italiano está imbuído de este concepto metafísico, que el mundo antiguo había tenido su más hermética alegoría en los mitos de sirenas y centauros" (II, 592). However, for Valle-Inclán, the fusion of male and female sex represents

---

[41] Carter, The Idea of Decadence, p. 39.

[42] Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 332. Praz describes this period as a "mythical age of pornographic literature" in that ancient art forms are given new and perverse interpretations. See pp. 332-343.

an even higher ideal: "el mármol andrógino de Venus Afrodita. . . . La rosa clásica, maravillosa armonía de los antagonismos" (II, 593).

This same classic myth is an important theme in the decadent portrayal of the lustful, cruel, and sadistic female known as the "Fatal Woman" who possesses aggressive masculine qualities.[43] Joseph Péladan, a French writer who profoundly influenced Valle-Inclán, often portrayed this violent type of woman. As we shall see, she also appears in Valle-Inclán's Sonata de estío, Divinas palabras, La cabeza del Bautista, and Ligazón. In discussing this so-called "Fatal Woman," Péladan, the author of numerous decadent works and the founder of a pseudomystical society known as the "Ordre Kabalistique de la Rose Croix," voiced the common belief among decadents that

> The number of women who feel themselves to be men grows daily, and the masculine instinct leads them to violent actions, in the same proportion as that in which the number of men who feel themselves to be women abdicate their sex and, becoming passive, pass virtually to a negative plane.[44]

This decadent vision of the female sex plays an important role in Valle-Inclán's primitive motifs since, like so many other characters portrayed in the Galician author's works, the so-called "Fatal Woman" allows Valle-Inclán to exalt the glorification of the flesh and bestial passions.[45] This woman served as an excellent example of the decadent interest in unbridled eroticism and cruelty. Charles Baudelaire depicted this "Fatal Woman" as being "wholly diabolical in body and in spirit," while Barbey d'Aurevilly, who to a great extent influenced Valle-Inclán,

---

[43] Ibid., p. 320.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Maxmilian Rudwin, The Devil in Literature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1931), p. 269.

saw her as the incarnation of the dark and chaotic forces embodied in Satan. Generally speaking, the decadent writers portrayed her as

> An adept in all the black arts and an expert in all forms of sexual perversions. She is portrayed wallowing in the wildest sexual orgies of lewdness and licentiousness, continually invoking, extolling and worshipping Lucifer.[46]

This woman is often portrayed as a beast, a fiend, a vampire, or a timeless creature who represents the animalism and the lust of past ages.[47] In French paintings she reflects the theme of satanic beauty inherent in primitive mythology.[48] We may see her in the form of a Sphinx—a bloodthirsty beast with the "face of an imperious woman."[49] In these paintings there is no clear distinction between the sexes and it is difficult to determine at first glance which is the man and which is the woman: "lovers look as though they were related, brothers as though they were lovers, men have the face of virgins, virgins the faces of youth; the symbols of 'Good and Evil' are entwined and equivocally confused."[50]

Gustave Moreau's famous painting Salomé became a major inspiration of decadent writers including Valle-Inclán.[51] The Galician author evokes the image of Salomé in describing the unbridled passions of his female characters. In the Sonata de estío, for example, Valle-Inclán describes the "voluptuous" Niña Chole by alluding to the cruel and

---

[46]Ibid., p. 268.

[47]Ibid., pp. 268-269.

[48]Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 295.

[49]Ibid., p. 296.

[50]Ibid., pp. 290-291.

[51]Oscar Wilde's play (1894) written in French and based on the story of Salomé, no doubt, influenced Valle-Inclán.

bloodthirsty Salomé who demanded the head of John the Baptist. Amid numerous allusions to incest between the Niña Chole and her despotic father, Valle-Inclán compares her perverse passions to Salomé: "Era el magnífico pecado de las tragedias antiguas. La niña Chole estaba maldita como Mirra y Salomé."[52] In the Niña Chole, then, we find the cruelty and the erotic appeal which characterize the decadent "Fatal Woman": "La crueldad de la criolla me horrorizaba y me atraía."[53]

A similar type of woman is portrayed in the primitive atmosphere of rural Galicia. She is Mari-Gaila, the protagonist of Divinas palabras (1920). Mari-Gaila, an attractive, lustful, and unfaithful wife, torments her husband with her indiscriminate promiscuity. Once again we become aware of the primitive theme of incest as Mari-Gaila's husband, Pedro, attempts to seduce his daughter, Simoniña. In this setting we find a powerful and unrestrained woman who, in many ways, appears to be a female counterpart to the lustful Don Juan Manuel of the Comedias:

> Con Mari-Gaila es la sensualidad arquetípica de la mujer eterna. Para Valle-Inclán la adúltera es la encarnación de la mujer clásica y la gracia sensual, una descendiente de carne y huesos de la antigüedad pagana, cuyo cuerpo exuda ritmos clásicos y el entusiasmo de una bacante por la glorificación de la carne.[54]

Promiscuity is what characterizes Mari-Gaila, Valle-Inclán's prototype of the decadent "Fatal Woman." In discussing this work, Emilio González

---

[52]Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, pp. 425-426.

[53]Ibid., p. 408.

[54]Sumner Greenfield, "Divinas palabras y la nueva faz de Galicia," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 582.

López stresses the presence of the primitive element in the characters which he describes as "personajes primitivos" who resemble "la vida vegetativa animal."[55]

We can find this same type of woman in Valle-Inclán's short drama entitled La cabeza del Bautista (1924). Valle-Inclán again presents the action against the background of a harsh environment. The Galician author embroils eroticism, sadism, and death in the portrayal of La Pepona, who recalls the cruelty of Salomé. The seductive Pepona, in a moment of sexual frenzy, delights in watching Don Igi's dagger fatally pierce her lover: "¡Bésame otra vez, boca de piedra! . . . La boca le beso. . . . ¡La muerdo y la beso! . . . ¡Vuélveme los besos que te doy, cabeza yerta!"[56]

This same female character also appears in the one act play Ligazón (1926). Amid the superstitions and primitive surroundings of rural Galicia we see La Mozuela who, lustful and aggressive, devours her lover like a vampire: "¡Besa! ¡Muerde! Ligazón te hago! . . . Descúbrete el hombro. Me cumple beber tu sangre. . . . Pues entra a deshacerme la cama" (II, 805).

Pseudomysticism is another important aspect of decadentism which must be considered when analysing Valle-Inclán's primitivism. Pseudomysticism, unlike the traditional mysticism which we tend to associate with grace and spiritual contact with God, centers around a very basic

---

[55]González López, El arte dramático, pp. 167-169.

[56]Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, p. 903.

theme in Valle-Inclán's works—eroticism. Valle-Inclán employs "mysticism" for the purpose of creating a sensual and barbarous atmosphere reminiscent of ancient religions and primitive rituals. In one way or another, Valle-Inclán weaves his "mysticism" around carnal desires and erotic suggestions. For example, he describes the Niña Chole's nude body as "una de esas visiones místicas y carnales."[57] In evoking the erotic, Valle-Inclán associates this pseudomysticism with superstition, sadism, and the incense, liturgy, and artistic surroundings of the Church. In his depiction of feudal Galicia he often intertwines the atmosphere of the Church with the popular belief in exorcisms and primitive rituals. He also employs the magnificence of the Church's art and liturgy in creating an erotic "mystical" background characteristic of a pagan temple. Like other decadent writers, Valle-Inclán rejects the beliefs of religion in order to portray only the exterior ritual or that which appeals to the senses.[58] We can perceive all of the above elements in Valle-Inclán's Sonatas:

> Bradomín es católico sólo en su adhesión exterior del culto espléndido. En el fondo le reconocemos dos actitudes; a-religiosas, i-religiosas y aun anti-religiosas: a) culto a lo impío, sacrílego, blasfematorio y satánico; y b) culto a las magnificencias sensuales de la liturgia católica.[59]

Valle-Inclán's decadent form of "mysticism" is especially apparent in La lámpara maravillosa. Amid vague intuitions and sensations

---

[57] Ibid., p. 453.

[58] Nordau, Dégénérescence, vol. I, p. 132. Max Nordau describes this aspect of the Church as "une fête catholique" which "parle a tous les sens."

[59] Anderson-Imbert, "Escamoteo de la realidad," pp. 209-210.

Valle-Inclán attempts to create a pseudomystical atmosphere by alluding to certain artistic and erotic elements which he believes to be hidden in the Cabala, Gnosticism, quietism, and the Holy Trinity. It is important to point out that Valle-Inclán's interest in certain religious ideas and pre-Christian forms of worship were rooted in a society known as the "Ordre Kabalistique de la Rose Croix," founded by Joseph Péladan, whom Valle-Inclán highly admired.[60] Péladan's society was a modern mystery cult which devoted itself to the magic and occult cabalistic meanings inherent in early Christianity.[61] This society, however, was only attracted to those aspects of Christianity which they perceived as erotic, sacrilegious, and diabolical.[62]

We can see Valle-Inclán's admiration for Péladan and his society in an article entitled "Muerte de Enrique Mélida" (1892).[63] Furthermore, it is also obvious that Valle-Inclán imitated Péladan's eccentric habits. Valle-Inclán's manner of dress reminds us of Péladan, who had long hair and a long beard and draped himself in an old blanket which reached down to his feet.[64] Regarding this close similarity in dress, Díaz-Plaja maintains: "llega a Valle-Inclán la figura de aquel extraño personaje de barba frondosa, vestido de túnicas talares, que firmaba Sar Josephin Péladan, miembro del 'Supremo Consejo' de la 'Rosacruz del Templo y el Grial o Rosacruz Católica.'"[65]

---

[60] Praz, The Romantic Agony, pp. 316-317.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, p. 115.

[64] Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 316.

[65] Díaz-Plaja, Las estéticas de Valle-Inclán, p. 110.

The influence of Péladan and the "Rose Croix" in Valle-Inclán's primitivism is indeed visible in the so-called "intuitive" revelations expressed in La lámpara maravillosa. In these obscure ideas we discern the Galician author's interest in pre-Christian forms of religion and their primitive appeal to the senses. Of these religions, he is particularly interested in an early Christian heresy known as Gnosticism, which flourished in his native Galicia. This heresy, led by Priscillian during the fourth century A.D., combined Christian doctrines with Greek and Oriental philosophies. We also find in Valle-Inclán's writings allusions to the Cabala, an occult religious philosophy developed by certain medieval rabbis and based upon a mystical interpretation of the Scriptures. These philosophies are also combined in La lámpara with the quietist ideas of Miguel de Molinos, a seventeenth century Spanish mystic.[66]

Yet Valle-Inclán is far from being a mystic in the traditional sense. Unlike Miguel de Molinos, Valle-Inclán is not concerned with the problems of grace and those spiritual activities which lead to virtue.[67] He is far more concerned with the primitive appeal to the senses which he finds in this type of "mysticism": "en el uso de lo gnóstico, como en el uso del 'misticismo,' como en el uso del quietismo, Don Ramón y las fuentes no son más que estímulos para que él desarrolle su demonio."[68] It is important to note that Valle-Inclán himself asserts that this so-called mysticism is nothing more than a means of expressing his

---

[66]Morón Arroyo, "La lámpara maravillosa," p. 454.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid.

"Daemonium" (II, 560). We recognize the presence of this daemon in Valle-Inclán's vague intuitions which constantly suggest the erotic:

> Todas las cosas, bajo la sombra del pecado, se mueven por estar quietas sin conseguirlo jamás, pero el místico que sabe amarlas descubre en ellas un enlace de armonía, una divina onda cordial: La Gracia. . . . En todas las cosas duerme un poder de evocaciones eróticas. (II, 566)

We perceive in Valle-Inclán's unorthodox religious philosophies a tendency to evoke primitive religions, especially those ancient cults with strong sensual appeals. Valle-Inclán found a rich source for his primitive motifs in the Gnostic heresy which prevailed in his native Galicia. This early Christian heresy contained certain barbarous aspects which definitely fascinated Valle-Inclán. Perhaps the single most important characteristic of Gnosticism, insofar as Valle-Inclán was concerned, can be found in the longing to reach an intuitive understanding of the divine by reverting back to pre-Christian forms of worship: "es díficil hallar en las sectas gnósticas otro carácter común que el de un intento de fusión del paganismo con el cristianismo."[69] The lingering presence in Gnosticism of eastern mystery cults no doubt attracted Valle-Inclán: "ritos misteriosos, mitos y evocaciones mágicas . . . misticismo heterodoxo . . . toda mixtificación proveniente de las religiones orientales, la renovación de cultos a divinidades paganas" (Cibeles, Iris, Mithra).[70]

---

[69] Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana, vol. XXVI (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1958), p. 393.

[70] Ibid., pp. 393-394.

With respect to Valle-Inclán's primitivism and unorthodox beliefs, we should point out that the Gnostic heresy would more than likely attract him, since it presented the greatest threat to early Christianity: "la más potente herejía de la primitiva Iglesia."[71] It also opposed the Christian concept of the afterlife, i.e., the resurrection, Heaven, and Hell.[72] Instead Gnosticism maintained that everything was destined to return to its primitive state.[73] Although the Gnostic ideal consisted of freeing oneself from material and sensual pleasures, Valle-Inclán was probably attracted to a different aspect which advocated "la moral de la indiferencia y del libertinaje."[74] Certain aspects of the Gnostic faith, then, were indeed compatible with Valle-Inclán's decadent and primitive vision of religion, especially what might be called the tendency to "pervertir a los cristianos."[75]

In La lámpara maravillosa we find another aspect of Valle-Inclán's primitivism in the author's attempt to capture the essence of the myths and passions portrayed in ancient art. This reveals Valle-Inclán's interest in the irrational drives which in modern civilization continue to motivate mankind. For the Galician author, primitive passions, obscure forces, and carnal desires are the very elements which comprise art and provoke profound emotions when captured intuitively. We observe Valle-Inclán's interest in the primitive in his longing to comprehend the chaotic passions and the unconscious drives which he believes are

---

[71] Ibid., p. 394.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

inherent in ancient art forms such as painting, poetry, music, and dance:

> aquella voz atávica y desconocida . . . la edad remota . . . la flauta panida . . . había aprendido a oír las voces más lejanas . . . el secreto de las conciencias . . . nuestra vida dionisíaca entrañada de intuiciones místicas . . . el espíritu primitivo . . . los mitos helénicos . . . el estado primitivo de sobrenaturaleza . . . este instinto oscuro, etc. . . . (II, pp. 559, 561, 569, 572, 575, 584, 585)

Likewise, the horror of primitive myths and tragedy ("la Esencia Bella") are presented as an enignatic force which contains "dark" mysteries:

> Las sombras de las fábulas antiguas, cubiertas de horror y de sangre, levantan sus brazos entre la niebla de los mitos, como espectros de nuestra conciencia, que se busca ávidamente en todo grito de dolor y tiembla al reconocerse. Y este instinto oscuro que nos advierte, como bajo el imperio de la fatalidad pueden mordernos todos los dolores, es al mismo tiempo una intuición estética. (II, 585)

As in the works of other decadent writers, Valle-Inclán's "mysticism" is not linked to the traditional concepts of "Good and Evil": "ni el bien ni el mal de las cosas" (II, 558). Thus, when seeking to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity, Valle-Inclán presents what appears to be a primitive or pre-Christian form of religion based on art, eroticism, and vague intuitions. If we analyse his "Exégesis trina," the presence of these elements becomes evident, since Valle-Inclán's ultimate goal is not reason, morals, or ethics, but rather a desire to attain "eternal beauty": "Tres son los tránsitos por donde pasa el alma antes de ser iniciada en el misterio de la eterna belleza: Primer tránsito, amor doloroso; segundo tránsito, amor gozoso; tercer tránsito, amor con renunciamento y quietud." Although each of the above phases is linked to the three persons of the Holy Trinity and the three elements

of time (past, present, future), we realize, after a careful analysis, that all of these suggest the erotic.

In discussing Valle-Inclán's desire to remove the antagonism between past, present, and future in seeking to achieve a magical fusion of these contrary elements ("la divina identidad de todos los ayeres con todas las mañánas"), he embroils the Holy Trinity with the satanic (II, 602). The essence of his philosophy centers around the three basic forces which motivate his primitive hero, Don Juan Manuel Montenegro: "Mundo, Demonio y Carne se nutren de Pasado, de Presente y de Futuro. A los tres centros divinos están vinculados los tres círculos temporales, y a los círculos temporales los tres enigmas del Mal" (II, 596).

Valle-Inclán, in accord with Priscillian's Gnostic heresy, conceives of the Holy Trinity as a whole without distinction in regard to persons.[76] Priscillian believed that the Trinity consisted of the following: "unidad sin distinción de personas ni propiedades, quitaba el 'y' y enseñaba que Cristo era Padre, Hijo, Espíritu Santo."[77] Thus Christ formed the essence of all three: "su imagen y su primogénito es Cristo, en el cual no se halla el 'es' y 'no es,' sino sólo el 'es.'"[78]

---

[76]Morón Arroyo, "La lámpara," p. 453.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid. Priscillian's interpretation of the Christian dogma relied heavily upon the sciences, mathematics, and pagan literature. Valle-Inclán, fascinated by these pre-Christian elements found in early Christianity, also evokes these same ideas in his vision of the Holy Trinity: "Las continuas alusiones de Valle-Inclán al número, al punto, al círculo, recuerdan la doctrina sobre los círculos. . . . La exégesis trina de Valle-Inclán es un uso mítico del dogma cristiano."

Valle-Inclán, in a decadent manner unrelated to ethics and morals, employs this heresy in portraying Christ as the ideal representation of "eternal beauty." Valle-Inclán views Christ as a supreme art form ("la rosa andrógina") who has the magical power to fuse all contrary forces such as past, present, future, and "Good and Evil": "Cristo Señor Nuestro cifró en el amor la suma perfección" (II, 584). To arrive at this supreme "esthetic" vision one must intuitively sense the presence of Christ. In accord with the Gnostic heresy, only Christ can fuse the three so-called mystical progressions ("amor doloroso, amor gozoso, amor con renunciamento y quietud").

In this interpretation we find the basic erotic elements that lie at the heart of Valle-Inclán's primitivism. Thus allusions to the Trinity serve as another means of portraying the basic primitive motifs which inspire many of his works: "Carne, Demonio, Mundo."[79] He somehow finds a relationship between these three elements and the Trinity, which remains aloof from moral and social concerns. Valle-Inclán's vision of the Trinity centers around art and that which appeals to the senses. Therefore, in Valle-Inclán's portrayal of the Trinity we see the Father as "la rosa erótica" or the "enigma panida." The son is the "rosa andrógina"; the Holy Spirit is the "rosa estética" (II, 590-595).

In Valle-Inclán's collection of poems entitled El pasajero (1920) we find allusions to the Holy Trinity in relation to the primitive myths

---

[79]See Morón Arroyo's interpretation of the "Exégesis trina" ("La lámpara," p. 454) regarding "Carne, Demonio, Mundo," art, and the Holy Trinity.

of Greek antiquity and the pagan-Christian conflict of the fourth century. In these poems the rose, which tends to symbolize the erotic and the undefinable nature of existence, is employed in evoking the Trinity and pre-Christian barbarism. We can clearly discern this in a poem entitled "Rosas astrales" in which the author alludes to the god, Hermes Trismegist, the Greek name given to the Egyptian god, Thoth. In "Rosas astrales" he evokes pre-Christian barbarism ("Dorados sagrarios. . . . Encendidos ritos. . . . Tesoro Demíurgico") and praises Julian, a fourth century Roman emperor who abandoned Christianity in an attempt to restore paganism:[80]

> Arcano celeste, agnóstico arcano
> donde los enigmas alzó Trismegisto:
> por querer leerte, abrió Juliano
> . . . en su imperio el cisma y se hizo Anticristo,
> Exégeta, Gnóstico del cielo pagano,
> una Metamorfosis solar vio en el Cristo.[81]

Valle-Inclán, like other decadent writers, found an attractive charm in the "enigma" and evil surrounding the myth of Trismegist. Allusions to Trismegist, a mythical figure who represents evil and confusion, is no doubt an influence which stems from the decadent poet Charles Baudelaire. The Satan of Baudelaire's poem "Les litanies de Satan" is this same Trismegist or "Hermes the Unknown."[82] This Egyptian god of darkness and confusion whom the Greeks named "Trice great," represents all that which is evil or unholy.[83] He is the antithesis

---

[80]Karl Adams, The Christ of Faith (New York: Mentor Omega Books, 1962), p. 175.

[81]Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, p. 1153.

[82]Pierre Emmanuel, Baudelaire: The Paradox of Redemptive Satanism (Univ. of Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1970), p. 119.

[83]Ibid., p. 121.

of the Holy Trinity and evokes the primitive myths of Egyptian antiquity:[84]

> This anti-God is totally inscribed in the world that he creates himself, here below and in hell. He is the god of time sempiternal, the Sphinx of an unfathomed secret, the preserver of irreparable acts.[85]

In Valle-Inclán's reference to "una metamorfosis solar" we perceive the decadent inversion of "Good and Evil" which centers around the figure of Trismegist who, in evil and darkness, finds light: "Along winding paths, he leads toward a divine goal: he is Sother, Savior; from darkness, he becomes light."[86] Thus Valle-Inclán's interest in this ancient myth serves as another example of his primitivism which opposes orthodox Christianity and exalts the barbarism inherent in pre-Christian religions.

Any discussion of decadentism in relation to Valle-Inclán's primitive themes must certainly focus upon the violence and barbarism which often characterize decadent literature. Although in decadent literature we find superrefined, civilized, and aristocratic surroundings which appear to be the direct opposite of primitivism, we must emphasize that there also exists a pronounced tendency to exalt the coarse and uninhibited aspects of human nature characteristic of primitive people. In discussing this tendency A. E. Carter maintains that decadent writers manifest a longing to revert back to a primitive state of existence. They are often fascinated by the undefinable nature of primitive

---

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

emotions which Carter describes as "obscure atavistic forces."[87] Riccardo Scrivano calls attention to this same characteristic: "l'atavismo e la violenza."[88] Benedetto Croce also employs the word "atavism" in describing the decadent fascination for barbarism, bestiality, and cruelty which appear as artistic or beautiful motifs:[89]

> La guerra, il sangue, le stragi, le durezze, le crudeltà non erano più oggetti di deprecazione e di ripugnanza e di obbrobio, ma come cose necessarie ai fini da conseguire, si facevano accettevoli e desiderabili, e si rivestivano di una certa attrazione poetica.[90]

In this same manner Valle-Inclán frequently employs the word "atavism" in glorifying the horror of war and barbarous passions:

> Yo sentí alzarse dentro de mi ánimo guerrero, despótico, feudal, este noble ánimo atávico . . . el horror es bello, y amo la púrpura gloriosa de la sangre . . . y a los viejos soldados crueles . . . y a los que violan a las doncellas.

Giuseppe Antonio Borghese perceives this "atavism" or longing to revert back to a primitive stage of development as "belluinità, barbarie, mito."[91] A. E. Carter sees this interest in decadent writers as a "link between something very ancient and something which is far from extinct in our own time."[92] This same idea is expressed by Max Nordau, who sees in decadence a profound tendency to explore the primitive in an effort

---

[87] Carter, The Idea of Decadence, p. 4.

[88] Scrivano, Il decadentismo, p. 12.

[89] Croce, La letteratura, vol. IV, pp. 394-395.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Scrivano, Il decadentismo, p. 83.

[92] Carter, The Idea of Decadence, p. 150.

to link the present with the past: "l'effort pour revenir aux commencements est une particularité de la dégénérescence et est fondue dans son essence la plus profonde."[93] According to Nordau, there is a general predilection to identify with the lowest and most ancient stages of human development: "un retour a l'état des choses des hommes primitifs."[94] We can easily perceive this interest in the works of the Italian writer Gabriele D'Annunzio: "From far, far away there came to him a troubled yearning, from the most distant sources, from the primitive bestiality of sudden unions, from the ancient mystery of sacred lusts."[95]

Francesco Flora maintains that in decadent literature a primary theme is "l'esaltazione del barbaro e del primitivo" which often goes together with titanism and irrationality.[96] We see another aspect of decadentism in the exaltation of the unrestrained ego which recognizes no limitations. Melchor Fernández Almagro, in his discussion of D'Annunzio's influence on Valle-Inclán, calls attention to what he describes as "el egoísmo más desenfrenado."[97] Valle-Inclán reflects the common belief among decadent writers that life becomes enhanced when it frees itself from reason and social restrictions and is allowed to obey the impulses: "La vida puede más que los hombres, si los hombres se

---

[93]Nordau, Dégénérescence, vol. II, pp. 312-313.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 386.

[96]Quoted from Scrivano, Il decadentismo, p. 46.

[97]Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura, p. 81.

abandonan a la insana voluptuosidad de su yo personal e intransferible."[98] This extreme egoism emerges as an integral part of the ancient Don Juan myth which Valle-Inclán employs in presenting the erotic impulses which motivate Bradomín and Montenegro. Egocentricity abounds in these characters who, void of all altruism, think only in terms of their own desires, triumphs, and sensations and act without restraint and consideration for others.

This primitive egoism which we find in Valle-Inclán's characters recalls the philosophy of the Marquis de Sade. In portraying a myriad of perversions and unnatural acts De Sade's basic philosophy maintains that mankind is trapped in a primitive struggle in which each individual seeks as much pleasure as possible at the expense of others:[99]

> La filosofía de Sade es el egoísmo integral. Cada hombre tratará de aniquilar a sus víctimas para exaltarse a sí mismo, sin más ley que su propio placer. Sade insiste hasta el cansancio en que la base de su moral es el hecho primordial e inmediato de la soledad absoluta en que nos ha hecho la naturaleza. El mayor dolor de los demás será siempre de menor importancia que mi placer.[100]

This same egoism is especially prevalent in the portrayal of the despotic and impulsive Don Juan Manuel Montenegro. It is obvious that Don Juan Manuel places his own pleasures first even at the expense of his wife, his sons, and his entire feudal estate. This primitive ego ("l'egoismo sensualistico") brings about great destruction and results

---

[98] Ibid.

[99] Manuel Durán, "Del Marqués de Sade a Valle-Inclán," Asomante, II (1954), p. 42.

[100] Ibid.

in moral anarchy.[101] It is a savage promiscuity which, as in decadent literature, remains indifferent to love and family bonds: "l'état des savages vivants en promiscuité sexuelle sans amour individuel et sans forme quelconque de famille."[102]

Scarcely any mention is made with respect to the influence of decadentism and Valle-Inclán's creation of the primitive patriarch in the Comedias. Yet in examining his early works it becomes obvious that Montenegro is just as much a product of decadent literature as is Bradomín. In "Crónicas galicianas" (1891) we already see the depiction of a violent type in Pedro Tor, a precursor of Don Juan Manuel: "era una especie de Hércules de feria . . . naturaleza vigorosa, roble y toro juntamente . . . un misterioso fenómeno de atavismo . . . un terrón saturado de gérmenes de vida. . . . Aquel hombre en su exceso de vida. . . ."[103] In describing this primitive character Valle-Inclán stresses Pedro Tor's "exceso de vida." When analysing these "excesses" in Don Juan Manuel we notice that they emerge as an "aggrandizement of the individual" at the expense of society.[104] The primitive hero needs no justification for his acts: "all'azione compiuta per impulso istintivo non si può chiedere una giustificazione etica."[105] Free from social restrictions Valle-Inclán's hero thinks only in terms of his own

---

[101]Scrivano, Il decadentismo, p. 57.

[102]Nordau, Dégénérescence, vol. II, p. 61.

[103]Fichter, Publicaciones periodísticas, pp. 68-69.

[104]Eickhorst, Decadence, p. 13.

[105]Scrivano, Il decadentismo, p. 115.

immediate pleasures: "senza peso di risponsabilità, tutto istinto e sensibilità primogenia."[106]

In analysing many of the primitive elements found in the Comedias we must specifically point out the influence of the famous Italian writer, Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938). In D'Annunzio's works dealing with the rustic people of his native Abruzzi we find the presence of primitive themes such as incest, instinctive behavior, bestial passions, and superstition. Of all the writers who inspired Valle-Inclán, it is very likely that D'Annunzio had the greatest influence on the Galician author's primitivism. According to Anderson-Imbert, D'Annunzio's influence was indeed profound in comparison to that of most other writers of the time.[107] Furthermore, we should call attention to the fact that around 1907, at the very time Valle-Inclán was creating the barbarous world of the Comedias, one could always find D'Annunzio's book Laudi on his desk.[108]

Mario Praz emphasizes the impact which D'Annunzio's primitivism had on the decadent writers of the time. D'Annunzio's powerful depiction of his semibarbarous Abruzzi captured the attention of many decadent writers:

> The most monumental figure of the Decadent Movement, the figure in which the various European currents of the second half of the nineteenth century converged, was given to the

---

[106] Ibid.

[107] Anderson-Imbert, "Escamoteo de la realidad," p. 214.

[108] José Rubia Barcia, "A Synoptic View of Valle-Inclán's Life and Works," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 13.

> world not by France but by Italy, and by a part of Italy in which, more than in any other, the general level of life is instinctive and primitive, a real "Italia barbara"—the "remota e inculta" province of the Abruzzi.[109]

In portraying this region D'Annunzio stresses the presence of "esseri primitivi. . . . Il turpe e l'animalesco . . . sensazioni di natura fisiologica . . . animalità oscura e triste."[110] Benedetto Croce also emphasizes the primitive element: "l'ebrietà barbarica dei lontani padri . . . l'anima antica."[111]

Interestingly enough, D'Annunzio and Valle-Inclán are similar in that the art of both accents the primitive. While often they both create a framework of refined and aristocratic surroundings, there is a dynamic force, when depicting their native lands, which surges forth and becomes the dominant characteristic in their art. Regarding D'Annunzio, Praz asserts:

> Indeed he is always and before everything the child of a semibarbarous race, who coming into contact with a more mature civilization, assimilated it rapidly and summarily, with the inevitable discords which result from such a process of imperfect adaptation. Beneath the veneer appears from time to time, the spirito crudo (raw nature).[112]

Likewise, we can say the same about Valle-Inclán, since both writers more or less shared the same background and were raised in a harsh and semibarbarous society:

---

[109]Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 386.

[110]Luigi Russo, Compendio storico della letteratura italiana (Florence: Casa Editrice D'Anna, 1969), p. 724.

[111]Croce, La letteratura, vol. IV, p. 138.

[112]Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 386.

> D'Annunzio and Valle-Inclán shared a common cultural heritage—first, as the sons of semibarbarous peoples living on the fringe of civilization and, second, as literary dilettantes with an acquired taste for modern cosmopolitan sophistication.[113]

Furthermore, the rugged countryside of the Abruzzi, as well as that of rural Galicia, offered vital contrasts to the languor and pessimism which many intellectuals associated with modern civilization:

> They [D'Annunzio and Valle-Inclán] embody sensibilities typical of much earlier times, while surviving into the late nineteenth century. This is the vision that Valle-Inclán and D'Annunzio project, and the historical context provides an excellent opportunity for contrasting the primitive barbaric with the civilized modern.[114]

Mario Praz specifically explains the relationship between D'Annunzio's primitivism, which obviously influenced Valle-Inclán, and the interest which decadent literature had in barbarism and cruelty:

> At the contact with French Decadence, the feeling for profanation, for taboo, which was innate in D'Annunzio, found a propitious soil in which to develop; cruelty in love, which served the French Decadents as a stimulant to a naturally feeble instinct, was also an essential part of the "primitive bestiality" of a semisavage stock such as the Abruzzese, since primitive people are just as cruel as the ultracivilized, the former from instinct, the latter from mental erethism.[115]

In order to illustrate D'Annunzio's influence on Valle-Inclán's Comedias we must examine the above mentioned "bestial" or "primitive" aspects which are clearly visible in D'Annunzio's Novelle della Pescara (1886) and his famous drama, La figlia di Jorio (1903). In the Novelle della

---

[113]Lisa E. Davis, Valle-Inclán and D'Annunzio: A Study in Literary Relationships (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Dissertation Abstracts, 1970), p. 119.

[114]Ibid.

[115]Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 386.

Pescara, a collection of short stories dealing with popular customs and the folklore of the Abruzzi, D'Annunzio embroils the religious rites of Christianity with eroticism, primitive cruelty, and superstition. For example, in "La vergine Orsola" D'Annunzio employs the atmosphere of the Church to suggest undefinable mysteries and erotic sensations:

> Sotto l'odore dell'incenso, sotto le palme benedette nella penombra mistica, in tutto quell'ammasso di cristiani e di cristiane, piccole scintille erotiche scoccavano per attrito e si propagavano e si congiugevano . . . quella voluttà.[116]

Another short story, "Gli idolatri," projects a savage struggle between two neighboring villages brought about by an offense committed against the patron saint of one of the villages. What is striking is that the violent atmosphere of hatred is void of Christian ideals and the villagers idolize their patron saints as if they were pre-Christian gods. They even carry their saints into battle as the villagers of one town attack their neighbors with axes and other crude weapons in an attempt to dethrone the patron saint of the other village. D'Annunzio portrays these passions in the following manner: "il culto cieco e feroce del suo unico idolo . . . davano uno strano aspetto di barbari . . . una espressione di dolore cosi terribilmente bestiale . . . l'odio ereditario."[117] The "mystical" surroundings of the Church (golden candelabra, the organ, and incense) provide a background for the bloody struggle: "E il mite odore dell'incenso vagava sul conflitto."[118]

---

[116]Gabriele D'Annunzio, Novelle della Pescara (Rome: Vittoriale Degli Italiani, 1940), pp. 38-39.

[117]Ibid., pp. 153-155.

[118]Ibid., p. 162.

We note a similar atmosphere in D'Annunzio's drama La figlia di Jorio. This piece is extremely significant in our analysis of the primitive themes which appear in Valle-Inclán's Galicia, since D'Annunzio portrays the lust, violence, father-son conflict, and superstitions which Valle-Inclán later portrayed in the Comedias. D'Annunzio's tragedy also abounds in myths and primitive motifs which depict "un tono epico primitivo . . . l'Abruzzo mistico, lussurioso, superstizioso . . . riti."[119]

In D'Annunzio's drama we perceive a background which is quite similar to Valle-Inclán's Comedias. In the rustic setting of the rural Abruzzi we find taboos, a despotic father, and the struggle between father and son over a peasant girl. The conflict, which culminates in parricide, is lamented by a chorus which, with great fear and guilt, demands cruel and severe punishment for the offender. The action takes place in the presence of the totem-like image which the clan venerates as its protector and calls the Angelo Muto.

In the conflict between Aligi, the son, and Lazaro, the father, we perceive a striking similarity between this drama and the Freudian theme which characterizes Valle-Inclán's Cara de Plata. In La figlia di Jorio we find an envious and fearful son who must tolerate a despotic father who exercises absolute control over his offspring. In the struggle over Mila di Codra, a peasant girl whom many believe to be a sorceress, the

---

[119]Russo, Compendio, pp. 726-727. Regarding D'Annunzio's famous drama, we should note that this rural tragedy has inspired artists and an opera, still given in Italy, composed by Ildebrando Pizzetti.

father sternly reproaches his son for his transgressions and humbles him with his power:

> Io sono il tuo padre; e di te
> far posso quel che m'aggrada,
> perchè tu sei come il bue
> della mia stalla. . . .
> E a me data è su te
> ogni potestà, fin dai tempi
> dei tempi, sopra tutte le leggi. . . .
> Inginocchiati, e bacia
> la terra.[120]

Aligi pleads with his father who, determined to seduce Mila di Codra, is unyielding. Much to Aligi's dismay, the father continues to pursue Mila: "Sei sola con me. Non avere paura."[121] In a dramatic scene which reminds us of Valle-Inclán's Cara de Plata, we see the son who, in a state of rage, seizes an ax. However, unlike Cara de Plata, Aligi does not hesitate to mutilate his father: "Si precipiterà contro il padre. Scorgerà nel ceppo rilucere l'asce ancora infissa. La brandirà cieco d'orrore."[122] Aligi cries out in despair as he gives his father the final warning: "lasciala, per la vita tua!" He then delivers the mortal blow: "Colpirà il padre a morte."[123]

A comparison of La figlia de Jorio with the Comedias in relation to the primitive themes which characterize both, reveals D'Annunzio's

---

[120]Gabriele D'Annunzio, Tragedie, sogni e misteri, vol. I (Milan: A. Mondatori, 1939), p. 891.

[121]Ibid., p. 896.

[122]Interestingly enough, Valle-Inclán employs similar imagery in the Penitente's dream and in the final scenes of Cara de Plata when the son menaces the father with an ax: "Tuve el hacha suspendida sobre la cabeza de mi padre . . . arranca el hacha . . . el hacha en su brazo desnudo . . . el hacha del verdugo . . ." (I, 517, 552, 554, 555).

[123]D'Annunzio, Tragedie, p. 897.

influence on Valle-Inclán. We can detect many of the same primitive motifs in both such as the despotic father, the father-son conflict, the dread of parricide, and the act itself with the resulting fear and pre-Christian guilt. In La figlia di Jorio we even notice the presence of the Angelo Muto, a carved image, who protects the clan. The son (like Montenegro's sons) has great fear for the act he is about to commit: "ch'io non faccio questo al mio padre."[124] Likewise, the chorus, reminiscent of the Greek tragedy ("Il coro delle lamentatrici"), laments the act and demands that it be severely punished. The people then pass sentence. First, the hand that committed the act must be cut off. The son is then to be tied in a sack with a snarling mastiff and cast into the depths of the river:

> . . . il popolo è giustiziere
> del parricida e l'ha nelle mani.
> . . . che la mano gli taglino,
> prima che nel sacco lo serrino
> col can mastino e lo gettino
> al fiume dove fa gorgo.[125]

We also perceive the undefinable primitive guilt in the fact that it horrifies the people to believe that a member of the clan bears the responsibility for such a transgression. Thus, by casting the blame on the diabolical power of an outsider, Mila di Codra ("la femmina straniera"), they convince themselves that the primitive taboo has been preserved and that their clan has been spared: "L'infamia è tolta da noi. / Di nostra gente non viene il parricida."[126]

In discussing Valle-Inclán and the literary influences of his time we have called particular attention to the various aspects of decadent literature with respect to the author's interest in the primitive. As

---

[124] Ibid. [125] Ibid., p. 904. [126] Ibid., p. 929.

we have observed, decadentism provided Valle-Inclán with much of the inspiration which went into the creation of characters like Don Juan Manuel, whose primitive philosophy is simply "Mundo, Demonio, Carne." In Valle-Inclán's depiction of Bradomín and Montenegro we clearly perceive the influence of certain aspects of decadent literature which exalt man's basic drives and appear as the prime forces which motivate these characters. It is indeed evident, after having examined many of Valle-Inclán's works, that Valle-Inclán's fascination for erotic impulses, primordial instincts, savagery, and pseudomysticism, stems primarily from decadentism.

CHAPTER VII

VALLE-INCLÁN'S PRIMITIVE THEMES AND EXPRESSIONISM

In completing our analysis of Valle-Inclán's themes we must devote some attention to the presence of the primitive element which we perceive in the distorted and grotesque imagery known as the esperpento. This is significant, for the esperpento was to a large extent a reflection of a European movement in art and literature called Expressionism (1900-1930) which became an important source of Valle-Inclán's primitivism in his later years. The term Expressionism was first coined in 1901. However, expressionist tendencies appear in the works of German writers years before this date.[1] Regarding this movement and Valle-Inclán's esperpento, González Lopéz singles out the connection which exists between the Galician author's portrayal of harsh and animal-like personages and the expressionist theatre which also "gustaba de los personajes primitivos y fuertes."[2]

Expressionism, which enjoyed popularity at the time when Valle-Inclán was writing Cara de Plata in 1922, concerns us in our study, for we perceive in it a fascination for primordial drives and primitive conflicts similar to those we have examined in the Comedias. Furthermore,

---

[1]Carl E. W. L. Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1965), pp. 4-6. Regarding Valle-Inclán and possible contacts with Expressionism at the turn of the century, we should note that Pablo Picasso, considered an expressionist by many, was gaining fame as a painter.

[2]González López, El arte dramático, p. 169.

cast in a barbarous setting, J. L. Brooks defines the characters as "Goyesque figures preoccupied with the primitive instincts of avarice, lust, and death."[18] We can see, for example, a close relationship between Expressionism and the deformed humanity, cruelty, and primitive horror found in Goya's "Disasters of War" or in "Saturn Devouring his Children." Carl Zigrosser, who views Goya as a precursor of Expressionism, stresses this relationship:

> Modern man has found, in addition, in manifestations of the abnormal psychology, in visions and dreams, in violent death and the macabre in general an expressive medium for emotional reactions. Some of these have been anticipated in the works of Goya.[19]

Valle-Inclán himself affirmed the profound influence which Goya had on his writing. In discussing the origins of the esperpento, he asserted: "Esta manera es ya definitiva en Goya. Y esta consideración es la que me movió a dar un cambio en mi literatura y a escribir los esperpentos, el género literario que yo bautizo con el nombre de esperpentos."[20] This influence is obvious in his depiction of human beings "dehumanized to animalistic physical proportions" with beauty (physical as well as moral) portrayed as "grotesque and ugly."[21] Much like Goya, he paints a warped portrait of Spanish reality in which "the noblest human values

---

[18] J. L. Brooks, "Valle-Inclán and the Esperpento," BHS, XXXIII (1956), p. 154.

[19] Carl Zigrosser, The Expressionists (New York: George Braziller, 1957), p. 8.

[20] Matilla, Las "Comedias bárbaras," p. 175.

[21] Sumner Greenfield, "La reina castiza and the Esthetics of Deformation," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 541.

Expressionism, which originated primarily in Germany, was influenced by the theories of Freud.[3] Expressionism as well as surrealism (also colored by Freudian theories) presented themes dealing with the irrational, the unconscious, and dreams. These ideas appeared in Spanish literature and definitely influenced Valle-Inclán:

> Había entrado en este período en la literatura española para exaltar los caracteres primitivos y fuertes, gobernados más por sus instintos, por su subconsciencia, que por su conciencia. . . . A la convergencia de estas dos corrientes debe la literatura española del siglo XX la década más espléndida, la del 20 a 30, en la que apareció: la novela y drama expresionista de Valle-Inlán; la novela expresionista de Pérez de Ayala y Gabriel Miró; la novela surrealista de Ramón Gómez de la Serna, y apuntó el teatro y poesía de García Lorca.[4]

In our study of Valle-Inclán and the influences of Expressionism, we must call attention to a change which becomes visible in his works written after his visit to France in 1916. At that time, Valle-Inclán, who was no doubt already familiar with the Vanguard movements, came into direct contact with European intellectuals and new ideas. These experiences apparently influenced his development of the esperpento and the distorted portrayal of humanity which became increasingly visible in his works after 1916:

> Valle-Inclán comienza a buscar nuevos caminos en su estética; es a partir de 1916 cuando se evidencia una dirección distinta en su poesía, en su drama y luego en la novela, ya iniciada en las Comedias bárbaras. El viaje a Francia y al frente aliado

---

[3]See Camille Demange in Jean Jacquot, Le théâtre moderne, p. 173.

[4]González López, El arte dramático, pp. 170-171.

> puede haber dirigido la visión del mundo de Valle-Inclán hacia derroteros más europeístas en su momento histórico.[5]

We notice a change in his portrayal of the primitive, for after Valle-Inclán's return from France, he became interested in other manners of presenting the harsh surroundings of his native Galicia. Thus in the esperpento we perceive a marked change in Valle-Inclán's vision of primordial conflicts and base passions. As Sumner Greenfield maintains, Valle-Inclán's depiction of the primitive had previously consisted of "belleza evocativa."[6] After 1916, however, the same fascination for the primitive prevails, but what was once beautiful is now grotesque and repulsive: "En la posguerra el mal sigue fascinando a Valle-Inclán, pero ha perdido su exotismo . . . se expresa negativamente, por la estilística deshumanizante."[7] Valle-Inclán's primitive surroundings now take on the harsh nature of a cruel world which he distorts in the esperpento: "seres toscos y primitivos."[8] As Greenfield notes, this more realistic and far less idealized portrait of rural Galicia appears in Divinas palabras (1920):[9]

---

[5]Alfredo Matilla-Rivas, Las "Comedias bárbaras" de Valle-Inclán como obra expresionista (University of Michigan: University Microfilms, 1967), p. 125.

[6]Sumner Greenfield, "Divinas palabras y la nueva faz de Galicia," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 578.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Under this ironic title ("las ambigüedades de título"), which recalls the words of Christ, unfolds a spectacle of pagan sensualism, lust, grotesque scenes, and a forgiving husband who recites the words of Christ: "Las 'divinas palabras' de Pedro Gailo devuelven proporciones humanas al espectáculo." See Greenfield's "Divinas palabras," pp. 582-583.

> La obra ofrece un panorama de las realidades del mal: adulterio, lujuria, obscenidad, avaricia, crueldad, hipocresía, homosexualidad, vanidad, incesto . . . hay pocos valores positivos para compensar esta fealdad, ninguna sonrisa sentimental de tolerancia, poca ironía amorosa por parte del autor.[10]

It is important to recognize, however, that Valle-Inclán's presentation of this "new" vision of feudal Galicia reveals an interest not in morality, but rather in the basic primordial instincts which, for him, form the essence of life: "busca lo grotesco no para satirizar éticamente y alcanzar conclusiones morales . . . sino para revelar en qué consiste . . . la esencia del hombre y en qué promiscuidad—de muerte, carne y almas confusas."[11] The forces of life are rooted in the "primary instincts" in which "radican las fuentes de la vida."[12]

Divinas palabras serves as an excellent example of the influence of Expressionism. The primitive inspiration, although still basic to Valle-Inclán's writing, is now presented as a savage and repulsive force which plagues humanity. There are no redeeming features such as nobility and honor which, to a certain degree, appear in the Comedias. Instead we find a degenerated humanity motivated only by base instincts: "un panorama atroz, gesticulante, pasiones primitivas y motivaciones elementales."[13] Emilio López González attributes this change to the influence of Expressionism and the esperpento:

---

[10] Ibid., p. 579.

[11] González López, El arte dramático, pp. 172-173.

[12] Ibid., 173.

[13] Ibid., p. 170.

> Divinas palabras, tragedia de carácter más monstruoso que grotesco, es la obra por excelencia del nuevo arte dramático expresionista de Valle-Inclán. . . . Es la humanidad doliente, movida de nuevo por las fuerzas del retablo de la avaricia, la lujuria y la muerte, que aparecen en forma más monstruosa en esta obra. Y esta es la razón de que algunos críticos lo califiquen de esperpento.[14]

In presenting primitive passions as a repulsive and distorted vision of reality, Valle-Inclán definitely reflects expressionist tendencies. The esperpento, like expressionist art, portrays humanity and traditional values in a deformed manner: "The element of distortion accounts for much that occurs in expressionist art."[15] Distortion is the means by which the expressionist artist rebels against the science and mechanization of modern civilization and attempts to reveal the unconscious and the subjective nature of the ego:[16]

> It is not that the artist arbitrarily decides on distortion; it is not simply mutilation of the object. His very concept of art, his insistence on the sublimation of the subject, compels the artist to distort the object. . . . In the first place, distortion is the result of the attempt to paint the whole psychic experience, to paint all the association that the ego may acquire in relation to the object.[17]

Yet, while discussing these modern influences, we must also mention the fact that Expressionism was not totally foreign to Spain, for some critics have traced its roots to the works of Goya. Valle-Inclán's expressionist tendencies, which recall the barbarism and turbulence of Goya's "dark period," presents a cruel and chaotic vision of society. Regarding such works as Divinas palabras and Ligazón (1926), which are

---

[14] Ibid., pp. 166-167.

[15] Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism, p. 15.

[16] Ibid., p. 8.

[17] Ibid., p. 20.

suffer aberration and perversion."[22] Goya's influence is further evidenced in Valle-Inclán's own interpretation of the esperpento in Luces de bohemia (1920). In this drama Max Estrella, a blind poet, and Don Latino view Spain as the distorted reflection of a concave mirror which reveals Valle-Inclán's concern for the "tragedy of Spain":

> Max: El Esperpento . . . los ultraístas son unos farsantes. El esperpentismo lo ha inventado Goya. . . . Los héroes clásicos reflejados en los espejos cóncavos dan el esperpento. El sentido trágico de la vida española sólo puede darse con una estética sistemáticamente deformada. . . . España es una deformación grotesca de la civilización europea . . . .
>
> Don Latino: ¿Y dónde está el espejo?
>
> Max: En el fondo de un vaso. . . . Deformemos la expresión en el mismo espejo que nos deforma las caras, y toda la vida miserable de España. (I, 939)

We also perceive in Valle-Inclán's esperpento, as in Goya's art, the emphasis given to the bestial aspects of humanity. In a collection of poems entitled Pipa de kif (1919) he speaks of a new interest in animals which returns to him in his later years. In the poem "Bestiario" he reveals that his childhood fascination for animals once again appeals to him:

> ¡Olvidada casa de Fieras,
> con los ojos de la niñez
> tus quimeras
> vuelvo a gozar en la vejez!
> . . . . . .
> Muere la tarde—un rojo grito
> sobre la fronda vesperal.
> Y abre el círculo de su mito
> El Gran Bestiario Zodiacal.[23]

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] Valle-Inclán, Obras escogidas, p. 1291.

In portraying these bestial passions Valle-Inclán was also aware of modern theories regarding the unconscious which played an important role in Expressionism. In presenting the esperpento Valle-Inclán often exposed man's irrational, bestial, and primitive behavior as a caricature which appeared incongruous with modern civilization.[24] With respect to man's savage instincts Valle-Inclán gave much importance to the forces of the unconscious mind and irrational impulses: "Creo cada día con mayor fuerza que el hombre no se gobierna por sus ideas ni por su cultura."[25] Valle-Inclán also speaks of "oscuros pensamientos motrices."[26] This same view of civilization is often presented in the esperpento as Valle-Inclán portrays humanity as a grotesque disfigurement which is still basically primitive in nature. The Galician author's fascination for the primitive leads him to search into the past for what Matilla describes as "el caos que es telón de fondo de sus días."[27]

In analysing Valle-Inclán's interest in the unconscious and the Freudian themes which appear in the Comedias we must call attention to the fact that similar motifs dealing with primitive conflicts are also characteristic of Expressionism. The expressionists, in presenting dreams and unconscious motivations discover a means of revealing confused and ambivalent desires. Walter H. Sokel stresses the importance of

---

[24] Joaquín Casalduero in "Oberservaciones sobre el arte de Valle-Inclán," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 154, stresses the bestial element with respect to Expressionism: "Cala siempre la bestialidad humana."

[25] Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 296.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

dreams in Expressionism and calls attention to the themes of parricide and mother-son incest in dramatizing the "Freudian Oedipus complex in its primitive essence."[28] In Valle-Inclán's Cara de Plata we can easily observe the presence of Freudian symbolism. In this Comedia Valle-Inclán alludes to the Oedipus complex revealed in the unconscious desire to commit parricide which surfaces in the Penitente's dream: "¡Tuve el hacha suspendida sobre la cabeza de mi padre! . . . ¡Maté a mi padre con el aire de hacha! (I, 518).

Oscar Pfister gives great importance to the unconscious in expressionist art: "The expressionists want to reproduce the intrinsic meaning of things, their soul substance. . . . The expressionist creates out of the depth of things, because he knows himself to be in those depths."[29] In describing expressionist painting, Pfister focuses our attention upon what he defines as regressions to precultural forms:

> Regression within expressionism is often remarkably striking . . . expressionism sharply regresses toward precultural primitive forms. Gauguin travelled to Tahiti and intoxicated himself with the art of the savages. Others rave about negro plastics.[30]

Dahlstrom also emphasizes this regression in expressionist art: "We make note of the primitive and infantile forms which appear in

---

[28]Walter H. Sokel, Anthology of German Expressionist Drama (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), p. xiii.

[29]Oskar Pfister, Expressionism in Art: Its Psychological and Biological Basis, Trans. by B. Low and M. A. Mugge (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1922), pp. 189-190.

[30]Ibid., p. 194.

expressionist practice; in painting, a regression toward a savage state in man."[31]

Valle-Inclán's fascination for precultural forms and man's primitive origins is quite evident in La lámpara maravillosa (1916), as he strives to strip civilization of its "mask" and capture man in his primitive essence:[32]

> Otro día, sobre la máscara de mi rostro, al mirarme en el espejo, vi modelarse cien máscaras en una sucesión precisa, hasta la edad remota en que aparecía el rostro seco, barbudo y casi negro de un hombre que se ceñia los riñones con la piel de un rebeco. (II, 560)

We observe this same interest in "precultural" forms as Valle-Inclán expresses a desire to "volver al primer instante" (II, 565). As Paul Ilie maintains, Valle-Inclán, in his longing to capture the true nature of humanity and its motivations, "searches back to the prehistory of man's character-role, suggesting the primitive and perhaps even animalistic metamorphoses of the human face."[33]

The expressionists wanted a reevaluation of primitive and folk art in terms of new lines of interest.[34] In their concern for the primitive,

---

[31]Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism, p. 23.

[32]In La lámpara Valle-Inclán's pseudomysticism, which no doubt stems mainly from decadentism, also reveals tendencies which correspond to a certain degree with Expressionism. Carl Zigrosser, in The Expressionists, p. 8, maintains: "The expressionists may be said to have a certain affinity with the mystic. Both live in the cosmos of their own imagination, quite apart from the workaday world."

[33]Paul Ilie, "The Grotesque in Valle-Inclán," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 517.

[34]Zigrosser, The Expressionists, p. 7.

as manifested in the forces of death, sex, and nature, they preferred what Carl Zigrosser describes as the "Dionysian afflatus over Apollonian intellectual balance."[35] Likewise, Valle-Inclán, in exalting ancient art forms, gives importance to the Dionysian passions which he perceives within mankind: "la risa de los faunos y la siringa de los sátiros, y la danza trocaica de los silvanos aún estremecen los bosques, y los hombres no han dejado nunca de oír a los genios inmortales" (II, 597).

Under the influence of Expressionism Valle-Inclán employs the esperpento in presenting a deformation of reality which exposes the savage aspects of tyranny, fear, and superstition. In stripping civilization of its "mask," he presents mankind as an ugly and barbarous force which submits to the forces of injustice and tyranny.[36] This is indeed what we observe in Valle-Inclán's novel, Tirano Banderas (1926). This novel, painted against a background of a land torn by the hatred of turbulent political struggles, recalls the author's travels in Mexico in 1921. The protagonist, Santos Banderas, a Latin American cacique, rules despotically over the people of Santa Fe in an atmosphere of terror and superstition:[37] "la crueldad de los isbirros, el terror, el azar, la

---

[35]Ibid., pp. 9-11.

[36]"Valle-Inclán aplica la técnica del esperpento, la deformación sistemática del espejo cóncavo, y así como en el esperpento de Goya el espejo muestra a la mujer hermosa su realidad íntima, una serpiente enroscada en una guadaña. . . ." See Javier Herrero, "La sátira del honor en los esperpentos," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 683.

[37]Santa Fe is a city in the imaginary republic, Santa Trinidad de Tierra Firme. In writing a novel about Spanish America, Valle-Inclán attempts to create a prototype of Latin American dictators by attributing to him characteristics of other despots. Likewise, he strives for a synthesis in language with respect to the idioms and vocabulary of other

desesperación, la resignación, la muerte. . . ."[38] In creating the terror and primitive aura which surrounds Santos Banderas, Valle-Inclán attributes to him animal-like characteristics: "Pájaro nocherniego, lechuzo, rata fisgona."[39] He frequently presents Santos Banderas as a walking image of death with green saliva flowing from the corner of his mouth: "parece una calavera con antiparras negras . . . veníale la costumbre de rumiar la coca, por donde en las comisuras de los labios tenía siempre una salivilla de verde veneno" (II, 676). In a barbarous atmosphere of superstition the fierce dictator rules with the power of a tribal chieftain: "¡Generalito Banderas se proclamaba inmune para las balas por una firma de Satanás! Ante aquel poder tenebroso, invisible y en vela, la plebe cobriza revivía un terror teológico, una fatalidad religiosa poblada de espantos" (II, 788). Ricardo Gullón perceives the terror and superstition of the people as only a primitive submission to the forces of tyranny: "Superstición y satanismo, claves para entender la novela, explican el sometimiento y docilidad del pueblo. . . . No es posible vencer . . . el poder de las tinieblas. . . . El simbolismo demoníaco es apropiado para revelar las esencias de las tiranías."[40]

Spanish American countries. This, however, has the effect of creating a rather nebulous atmosphere, since he was only familiar with Mexico. Valle-Inclán, in a letter to Alfonso Reyes, asserts: Una síntesis el héroe, y el lenguaje una suma de modismos americanos de todos los países de lengua española, desde el modo lépero al modo gaucho." See Emma Susana Speratti Piñero, "Valle-Inclán y México," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 708.

[38] Ricardo Gullón, "Técnicas en Tirano Banderas," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 728.

[39] Ibid., p. 729.

[40] Ibid., p. 744.

We should now focus upon the specific role which Expressionism plays in the conflict in the Comedias. Although the main theme of all three Comedias bears striking similarities to Expressionism, in Cara de Plata this resemblance appears in the style and imagery as well as in the theme. Having been written fifteen years after Águila de blasón (1907) and Romance de lobos (1908), Cara de Plata (1922) reflects certain changes which set it apart from the earlier Comedias and render it more akin to the expressionist theatre. The difference is basically in the new style and manner in which Valle-Inclán views the feudal society of Galicia. In discussing this change, José Alberich maintains that there is a closer relationship between Cara de Plata and the esperpento characteristic of the monstruous world in Tirano Banderas: "Lo primero que choca en esta Comedia bárbara rezagada es, por supuesto, el estilo, más cercano al expresionismo grotesco de Tirano Banderas que al lenguaje de las otras comedias."[41] In Cara de Plata we also notice a marked change from the idealized portrait of the Galician nobility which Valle-Inclán presented in the early Comedias: "En 1908, el egotismo era nobleza; en 1922, monstruosidad blasfema."[42]

In Cara de Plata we perceive a difference in Valle-Inclán's portrayal of secondary characters such as the hordes of beggars who have now lost their primitive candor and appear harsh and repulsive: "Los mendigos ya no tienen ese aire de mansedumbre evangélica que tenían en

---

[41]José Alberich, "Cara de Plata, fuera de serie," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, vol. XLV (Oct. 1968), p. 299.

[42]Ibid., p. 305.

Romance, y no hay ningún leproso que glorifique la pobreza y el sufrimiento."[43] Instead we find a rebellious mass of people and a hostile clergy, led by the Abbot of Lantañón, who attempt to curtail the licentiousness and abuses of the Montenegro clan. We can observe a clear example of this in the characterization of Fuso Negro, who changes from a harmless beggar in Romance to a repulsive and demented figure driven only by his sexual cravings: "Fuso Negro se esguinza, con una espantada, sacando la lengua. Una nalga negruzca le palpita entre los jirones de remiendos. ¡Touporroutou! (I, 503). His role is now symbolic and he carries the Freudian message which foreshadows the inevitable chaos which will result from the impending father-son clash. "¡Touporroutou! ¡Se junto una tropa de hermandiños! ¡Para acá viene! ¡La torre entre todos nos va a quemar! ¡Touporroutou! (I, 503).

In Cara de Plata the constant ear-piercing cry ("Touporroutou") with which Fuso Negro communicates his sinister presence is also a characteristic of Expressionism. The expressionists often employed these sounds as a means of revealing the state of chaos which they perceived in the world. Thus, for them, communication consisted of stridence, shrill voices, and abrupt utterances. As Dahlstrom maintains, "the expressionist must call out in a loud voice if he expects anything in chaos to hear him."[44]

In Cara de Plata we observe a similar expressionist tendency in the abrupt dialogue which Valle-Inclán employs in communicating tension and

---

[43] Ibid.

[44] Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionist Drama, p. 34.

confused passions. In Cara de Plata this harsh and violent dialogue, consisting of very short sentences or disjointed words, is often combined with somewhat lyrical passages. We thus find a mingling of lyricism, curses, threats, and obscenities.[45] Walter H. Sokel explains this as a typical aspect of Expressionism: "Lyrical passages alternate with obscenities and curses. Characters speak past rather than to each other. Language tends to be reduced in some plays, to two—or one—word sentences ("the telegraphic style"), to expletives, gestures, pantomine."[46] Valle-Inclán frequently employs this stylistic device in portraying the hostile conflict in Cara de Plata. For example, abrupt curses hurled against the licentious Montenegro family pierce the silence and are then followed by placid serenity: "¡Montenegros! ¡Bárbaros selváticos! . . . Se alejan con esa plática dorada de latín, como las piedras de la Quintana . . . el ocaso en el arco de las campanas" (I, 522). We find a more dramatic example of this in the fierce encounter between father and son: "Divino de luna el yelmo de sus cabellos, y el hacha en el brazo desnudo, negra centella." Cara de Plata then cries out in despair: "¡Padre, vengo a matarle!" (I, 554).

Apart from these stylistic similarities which reveal Valle-Inclán's familiarity with Expressionism, we must examine the main theme and its relationship to this movement. As we have already observed, Freud's ideas had a profound influence on Expressionism. These theories, which Freud developed in Interpretation of Dreams in 1900, had been circulating

---

[45] Matilla, Las "Comedias bárbaras," p. 188. See Matilla's discussion of telegraphic style, expletives, etc., on pp. 187-190.

[46] Sokel, Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, p. xiii.

in Europe before Valle-Inclán wrote Águila de blasón (1907) and Romance de lobos (1908). It is essential to stress that Freudian concepts were basic themes in Expressionism.[47] Although these same Freudian ideas regarding ancient myths and the primeval family are present in the early Comedias, it is extremely difficult to speculate as to what extent Expressionism may have influenced Valle-Inclán at that time. However, fifteen years later Valle-Inclán once again went back to portray the father-son struggle in Cara de Plata.[48] In this Comedia we can clearly perceive the influence of Expressionism in the dream imagery and the Freudian symbolism which reveal the Oedipal problem.[49]

In the Freudian imagery surrounding the father-son conflict in Cara de Plata we can observe a close relationship to the expressionist

---

[47] Ibid.

[48] Although it is not quite clear why Valle-Inclán decided to write another Comedia in 1922, Alfredo Matilla maintains that the author wanted to place Cara de Plata first in the trilogy in order to give more background to the conflict which erupts in Águila de blasón and Romance de lobos: "Cuando Valle-Inclán vuelve sobre el tema gallego en mil novecientos veintidós, después de haber escrito Divinas palabras en mil novecientos veinte, lo hace completando la trilogía bárbara. El drama había quedado incompleto. Águila de blasón, primera de las comedias . . . no daba suficientes antecedentes para alcanzar plenamente la solución de Romance de lobos. . . . Cara de Plata, inicia los temas que había desarrollado Águila de blasón (sin antecedentes, como hemos dicho): donjuanismo, pecado, arrepentimiento, violencia, primitivismo, lucha de padres-hijos." See Matilla, Las "Comedias bárbaras," p. 202. Even though there exist stylistic differences between Cara de Plata and the earlier Comedias, there is definitely a unity of theme. We would certainly agree with Sumner Greenfield in that Cara de Plata is faithful to the primitive patterns established in the first two Comedias: "The settings are familiar and so is the theme." See "The Esperpentic Vision of the Comedias bárbaras," in Zahareas, ed., Valle-Inclán, p. 586.

[49] Sokel, Anthology, p. xiii.

theatre which also depicted similar themes and primitive struggles. Alfredo Matilla, in his study of Valle-Inclán and Expressionism, touches briefly upon the importance of this type of conflict. Although Matilla makes no reference to Freud, he singles out the importance of "polar oppositions" and father-son struggles which frequently appear in the expressionist theatre:

> La relación de Valle-Inclán con el drama expresionista ha sido apuntado por varios críticos. . . . Baste señalar ahora que el drama expresionista busca, como Valle-Inclán, la oposición polar. El tema a veces eje de la obra, de la oposición padre-hijo, es un lugar común en el teatro de dicho movimiento.[50]

This polar struggle which Matilla perceives in the Comedias is to a large extent the very essence of Expressionism. According to Dahlstrom, the expressionist's concept of reality consists of these struggles:[51] "The anti-poles . . . are attracted centripetally and struggle with great tension toward each other. . . ."[52] We find this in the conflict between the opposite sexes, father and sons, and generations: "this type-man and type-woman must struggle as though all the hate and all the love of chaos be present in them. Other examples of polarization and centripetal struggles are found in the opposition of father-son, the old generation and the new. . . ."[53] Maurice Gravier also singles out the importance of these oppositions in the expressionist drama: "En particulier, le drame expressioniste, surtout allemand, repose en grand

---

[50]Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 315.

[51]Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism, p. 35.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid., p. 36.

partie sur l'opposition des générations: les pères contre les fils, les fils contre les pères."[54]

In the constant clash of these so-called centripetal forces we can see the chaos and turbulence of man's unconscious drives and irrational behavior. In the Comedias these same passions surface as a result of the fierce hostility between father and sons. According to Matilla, this centripetal struggle is developed primarily around sex and the clash between Don Juan Manuel and his sons: "Como temas dramáticos, en relación al expresionismo alemán, nos centraremos en el antagonismo de los sexos y el del padre y los hijos."[55]

Moreover, in discussing the primitive atmosphere which surrounds the primordial struggle in the Comedias, Matilla calls attention to other aspects of Expressionism. Although Matilla points out several similarities between Expressionism and the chaotic world which Valle-Inclán portrays, our primary interest concerns what Matilla describes as "regresión a formas pre-culturales: primitivismo . . . polarización y lucha centrípeta entre generaciones y entre los sexos."[56] In presenting these similarities he stresses the primitive aspect of Valle-Inclán's Comedias which he perceives as a "regression in time": "Se logra esta regresión colocando la acción de las Comedias en un ambiente primitivo, medieval, bárbara."[57]

---

[54]Maurice Gravier, "Les héros du drame expressioniste" in Jean Jacquot, ed., Le théâtre moderne, pp. 124-125.

[55]Matilla, Las "Comedias bárbaras," p. 192.

[56]Ibid., p. 209.

[57]Ibid., p. 211.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

In our discussion of Valle-Inclán we have emphasized that primitive themes played an important role in several of the author's works. In presenting the various influences in Valle-Inclán's works and certain aspects of his writing, we have noticed that the primitive had a strong appeal which remained with him throughout his entire career. We have seen it in his early vignettes, the Sonatas, and La guerra carlista. It is indeed present in a crude and barbarous form in the primeval father-son struggle which we have thoroughly examined in the Comedias. Valle-Inclán's fascination with the primitive, as we have observed, persists in his later works and plays a vital role in creating the pseudomystical world of La lámpara maravillosa. The primitive element also forms an integral part of the esperpento which the author employs in depicting the unrestrained passions and barbarous background in Divinas palabras. Thus the primitive reflects an important part of Valle-Inclán's early works and continues to be present even in the final stages of his literary evolution characterized by the esperpento and Expressionism.

Our examination of Valle-Inclán's primitivism has stressed the fact that the author's themes definitely reflect the influence of the Generation of 98 and the writers of his native Galicia. Yet, at the same time, our study has revealed that Valle-Inclán was an eclectic writer who readily assimilated decadent motifs, Nietzschean and Freudian

ideas, and expressionist tendencies. As we have noticed, these various influences tend to merge and overlap in his writing. The influence of the decadent movement, for example, which is clearly present in Valle-Inclán's early works, continued to attract the author even in his later years. For this reason it is difficult to attribute a single primary influence to a given work even though there were definite periods in Valle-Inclán's career in which certain influences were stronger than others.[1]

Although several influences from outside of Spain entered into Valle-Inclán's vision of the primitive, much of his original inspiration, as we have pointed out, stemmed from within Spain itself. Valle-Inclán's primitivism was compatible with the basic ideas of the Generation of 98 regarding the language, art, and literature of Spain's remote past. Valle-Inclán's interest in his country's "eternal" traditions, the passions of its robust peasantry, and pre-Christian religions was characteristic of a generation which harkened back to "lo lejano en el tiempo, los poetas y artistas primitivos, las gentes que, inmutables viven apegadas a la entraña de Castilla maternal."[2] Valle-Inclán, in his fascination with folklore and the collective behavior of the static and feudal order of Galicia, presented his own vision of what Unamuno referred to as intrahistoria. In keeping with the tendency of the Generation of 98 to evade Spain's recent history, Valle-Inclán reached

---

[1]See Meregalli, Don Ramón, p. 23.

[2]Fernández Almagro, Vida y literatura, p. 187.

far back into time in an effort to capture what Unamuno described as "nuestra primitiva e íntima esencia." Valle-Inclán, in drifting into an illusory world or el ensueño, attempted not only to re-create, but also to identify himself personally with the vitality, turmoil, and the illustrious nobility which he found in the traditional ballad of the Middle Ages: "El habla primitiva . . . la dulce claridad de la España medieval."[3]

An analysis of Valle-Inclán reveals, as we have indicated, that much of his interest in the primitive was rooted in his native Galicia as well as in the works of the writers of that region who immediately preceded him. It is not surprising that much of his inspiration surged from the archaic Galician countryside with its ancient ruins, misty climate, folklore, and superstitions. Constant allusions to those surroundings served as a means of creating atmospheres of antiquity and mystery: "folk tales . . . primitive passions . . . spiritual values in the landscape . . . evocative mists."[4] The Galician countryside provided Valle-Inclán with an ideal background for his depiction of primitive passions and conflicts: "la sociedad inmóvil . . . de carácter arcaico, en correspondencia con su imagen primitiva."[5]

Valle-Inclán's primitivism, as we have pointed out, also found inspiration in Nietzsche's philosophy regarding the instincts, Dionysus,

---

[3]Laín Entralgo, La generación, p. 187.

[4]Zahareas and Greenfield, "Galicia," p. 249.

[5]Maravall, "La imagen," p. 249.

and will power. In Valle-Inclán's portrayal of the primitive, Nietzsche's ideas were employed in his characterization of strong-willed individuals who exalt the instincts, and the ancient traditions of feudal Galicia, and who resist change. Nietzsche's philosophy regarding the traditional concepts of Good and Evil was definitely a factor in the formulation of Valle-Inclán's amoral vision of primitive cruelty and the fierce nature of war which Sobejano explains as "la transposición de los valores cristianos a los primitivos."[6]

Any study of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes must stress, as we have done, the importance of the father-son struggle in the Comedias. Since this father-son conflict forms the nucleus of Valle-Inclán's primitivism, we have focused upon it in order to define its exact nature. Although several critics have affirmed the presence of the primitive in the Comedias, no lengthy study has attempted to deal with the primordial Oedipal struggle which Valle-Inclán employs in his portrayal of the archetypal Montenegro clan. Furthermore, since critics have failed to discuss the striking similarities which exist between Valle-Inclán's themes and Freud's momentous theories, we have analysed the relationship between the conflict in the Comedias and the basic ideas concerning dreams, myths, and the primitive family set forth in Interpretation of Dreams and Totem and Taboo.

In examining Valle-Inclán's primitivism we have also focused upon the literature of the decadent movement which was a constant influence

---

[6]Sobejano, Nietzsche, p. 224.

throughout the author's long career: "no le abandonará nunca sino que aparecerá un tanto transformado."[7] There exists no lengthy analysis of Valle-Inclán which links his primitivism to certain aspects of decadentism. Yet within the decadent movement we find the source of many of his primitive motifs. As we have observed, Valle-Inclan's portrayal of primitive myths, incest, savage instincts, and cruelty was a reflection of certain themes which played an important role in decadent literature. Valle-Inclán, like other decadent writers, took great delight in exalting the primitive and in flouting the traditional morality imposed by highly civilized societies and the Church. Thus, instead of orthodox religion, Valle-Inclán preferred to create barbarous atmospheres characterized by superstitions, pagan rituals, and pseudomysticism.

The influence of Expressionism, as we have seen, also entered into Valle-Inclán's depiction of the primitive. We have focused upon the presence of Expressionism in the esperpento which Valle-Inclán employed in revealing man's bestial or primitive traits as repulsive deformations of reality. Also important is the fact that Valle-Inclán's primitive themes centering around the father-son struggle were themes which definitely attracted the expressionists, who were interested in Freud's concepts regarding dreams, the Oedipus complex, and the unconscious. Valle-Inclán, who was quite aware of the power of the unconscious in determining man's chaotic impulses, emphasized not the stable forces of logic and civilization, but rather the "oscuros pensamientos motrices."[8]

---

[7]González López, El arte dramático, p. 59.

[8]Matilla, "Las Comedias," p. 296.

In our analysis of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes we have concentrated mainly upon specific works. For example, Flor de santidad, La guerra carlista, and the Comedias have been examined in our discussion of the influence of the Generation of 98 and its concern with barbarism and pre-Christian religions. The primitive cruelty, savagery, and extreme hatred for one's fellow man which appear in La guerra carlista were themes developed by Unamuno and Machado in presenting the pre-Christian spirit of envy and vengeance of the people of Castile. Valle-Inclán's portrayal of pastoral, legendary, and static societies as analysed in Flor de santidad is clearly a reflection of Unamuno's concept of intrahistoria just as the primitive Montenegro clan of the Comedias reveals the Generation of 98's interest in the turbulent struggles narrated in the archaic language of the medieval ballad.

As we have seen, the archaic image of Galicia in the Comedias was to a large extent inspired by regional writers such as Rosalía de Castro, Eduardo Pondal, Curros Enríquez, Benito Vicetto, and Pardo Bazán. Their influence is clear in his preference for archaic words, his allusions to the Celts and Suevi, and his admiration for the once illustrious nobility of Galicia. In the thematic structure of the Comedias we found that Benito Vicetto and Pardo Bazán were quite influential in inspiring such themes as social degeneracy and the father-son struggle.

In discussing Valle-Inclán's primitivism we have also focused upon certain Nietzschean concepts which enter into the Sonatas, La guerra carlista, and the Comedias. In these works Valle-Inclán's characterization of strong-willed individuals driven by erotic desires and fierce

hatred is largely a reflection of Nietzsche's philosophy concerning the instincts and will power. This is especially evident in his portrayal of the old patriarch in the Comedias who, in sharp contrast to the excessive lack of vitality which Nietzsche and other intellectuals of the time associated with civilization, represents unrestrained passions, strength, and conquest. His despotic will ("aquí no hay más señor que yo") is challenged only by the fierce determination of his savage sons.[9] We have also observed that Valle-Inclán's amoral vision of primitive cruelty and war, as portrayed in the Sonata de invierno and La guerra carlista, were likewise echoes of Nietzsche's philosophy: "el instinto ciego que está cimero del bien y del mal" (II, 222). The traditional values of clemency and compassion are substituted by the Nietzschean virtues of destruction in Valle-Inclán's depiction of a fanatic and primitive crusade: "En la guerra, la crueldad de hoy es la clemencia de mañana" (II, 353).

There is no doubt that the father-son struggle is the central unifying theme in the Comedias. As we have carefully observed, Valle-Inclán's depiction of the struggle between Don Juan Manuel and the savagery of his envious sons closely parallels Freud's concepts regarding the primeval family. We have noticed that the primitive myths treated by Valle-Inclán in the Comedias are echoes of the same myths which Freud had discussed in formulating the Oedipus complex in the Interpretation of Dreams (1900). These myths are clearly perceived in Águila de blasón

---

[9]King Arjona, "La voluntad and abulia," p. 642.

(1907) and Romance de lobos (1908), and continue to persist in Cara de Plata, which was not written until 1922. These ideas are evoked by the despotic Don Juan Manuel who, expressing the fear of parricide and the inevitable destruction of his feudal kingdom, laments having not committed the barbarous act of infanticide: "Retuércele el cuello . . . ojalá yo se lo hubiese retorcido a mis hijos" (I, 684). Valle-Inclán, in presenting these myths, was probably aware of the modern interpretation of the legend of Oedipus.

As we have observed, the social disintegration which results from the father-son conflict is also a concept discussed by Freud. The removal of the powerful patriarch does not unite the sons, but rather destroys all unity as they fall into fierce competition for the spoils of victory. The emergence of this Cain struggle foretells of the impending destruction of the primitive clan: "Las casas más grandes se consumen como los cirios cuando los hijos se alzan contra el padre y pelean por la herencia" (I, 685). Likewise, allusions to the savage act of slaying the father and devouring his flesh is another Freudian idea: "Fui pastor de lobos y ahora mis ganados me comen" (I, 706).

Valle-Inclán's fascination for primitive civilizations reveals the profound influence of decadentism which we have observed in his early essays and vignettes compiled by William M. Fichter. This same inspiration is also visible in the passions portrayed in later works such as La cabeza del Bautista and Ligazón. The influence of decadent literature was indeed a prime factor in the Sonatas and the Comedias in which the main characters tend to be driven by primordial impulses

centered around sexual conquest. These egocentric individuals exalt the base motivations so characteristic of decadent literature: "libertinism . . . submission . . . donjuanismo, aggression, and cruelty."[10] As Valle-Inclán himself maintained, the "eternal" Don Juan theme centers around a simple and primitive philosophy based upon erotic drives, extreme egoism, and a lack of respect for others: "Mundo, Demonio, Carne."[11] This same philosophy lies at the crux of his interpretation of the Holy Trinity which he embroils with the Gnostic heresy and eroticism evoked from pre-Christian religions.

In our study of the barbarous world of the Comedias we have focused specifically upon the influence of Gabriele D'Annunzio. Both Valle-Inclán and D'Annunzio were writers who exalted the superstitions, folklore, and passions of societies on the fringe of civilization. As we have indicated, Valle-Inclán appeared extremely interested in D'Annunzio during the years when he first began to write the Comedias. Furthermore, the themes in the Comedias bear a close similarity to the conflict depicted in D'Annunzio's La figlia di Jorio.

Our analysis of primitive motifs in Valle-Inclán's later works such as Divinas palabras, Tirano Banderas, and Cara de Plata reveals the presence of Expressionism. This influence which appeared in the esperpento caused Valle-Inclán to adopt a different view of the harsh surroundings of rural Galicia. His interest in unbridled eroticism and

---

[10]Gerald Gillespie, "Rosarito and the Novella," pp. 287-288.

[11]Anderson-Imbert, "Escamoteo," p. 208. Also see Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Don Ramón, p. 64.

base passions continues, but he no longer presents them with the nostalgia and sentiment characteristic of earlier works. Instead we have observed a repulsive atmosphere of vile passions. We perceive a similar setting in Tirano Banderas. In this novel, tyranny, superstition, and submission are depicted as grotesque forces which continue to plague civilization.

This study of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes has also called attention to the expressionist influence manifest in the struggle between father and son in Cara de Plata. As previously indicated, the dialogue in Cara de Plata is definitely characteristic of expressionism ("telegraphic" or short and abrupt utterances, and shrill voices). More important to this study, however, is the expressionists' interest in Oedipal symbolism. Similarly, Cara de Plata's unconscious repression, fear, and guilt are brought to the surface by the Penitente's dream and the ominous words of Fuso Negro. This same theme regarding the ancient conflict between father and son was indeed a common theme in the expressionist theatre: "la lucha de padres-hijos . . . primitivismo."[12]

Our study of Valle-Inclán's primitive themes reveals that his interest in the raw instincts, barbarism, pre-Christian religions, and ancient art was to a large extent the reflection of various literary and intellectual movements which he readily assimilated. Valle-Inclán's concern with the dark forces which motivate mankind was indeed a significant aspect of his works, for it looms as a constant theme. In

---

[12]Matilla, Las "Comedias bárbaras," pp. 209-211.

this theme we can observe a difference only in the style or manner which the author employed in presenting the primitive in his later years.

Although our analysis of Valle-Inclán has focused upon several literary and intellectual influences which were not of Spanish origin, we must not lose sight of the fact that he was definitely a member of the Generation of 98 and that the ideas of his generation served as the primary source of his primitivism. It is important that we stress this, since Valle-Inclán's position in the Generation of 98 has been somewhat obscured by the critics. In our presentation of Valle-Inclán's primitivism we have been careful to point out that his basic themes and ideas were compatible with his generation. As we have observed in our discussion of Valle-Inclán and the Generation of 98, the rational and objective nature of officially documented history was viewed as a problem by Valle-Inclán and his contemporaries, who instead preferred an irrational, subjective, and mythical approach to history. In portraying a static vision of Spain in which time has had little impact, Valle-Inclán's generation found solace in the legends of Spain's remote past. Around this vision the members of the Generation of 98 developed their own subjective interpretation of history which they called by different names. Unamuno, for example, in searching for Spain's "primitive essence" alluded to what he referred to as intrahistoria. Likewise, Ganivet, who reached far back into pre-Christian times and evoked the philosophy of Seneca and the stoic myth, presented a similar view of history which he called infrahistoria. Azorín gave great importance to legend and placed it above history: "la leyenda vence a la

historia."[13] Machado presented a mythical landscape which allowed him to "soñar una interpretación de España."[14] Ortega y Gasset called attention to the problem of incorporating the vital element into history which he defined as "la razón vital."

In much the same manner Valle-Inclán exalted the legends and the collective values of the people in opposition to history (II, 187). The superstitions, barbarism, and pre-Christian religions which appear in many of Valle-Inclán's works also concerned Baroja, Machado, and Unamuno, who perceíved in Spain elements of a primitive spirit which remained relatively unaltered by Christianity. Valle-Inclán, in portraying the primitive society of Galicia, often retreated into an illusory or intangible world. Like his contemporaries, he sought refuge from the realities of his time in the legends of his feudal Galicia. In his portrayal of static societies and the archetypal Montenegro clan we perceive the Generation of 98's concern with history and its attempt to capture Spain's "mythical" past. Around the remnants of the waning Galician nobility we see a struggle which unfolds in a timeless land ("milenaria"). Thus, in a manner typically characteristic of the Generation of 98, Valle-Inclán's primitive themes reveal the interest which his generation had in intrahistoria, folklore, and Spain's "eternal" traditions.

---

[13] Refer back to our discussion on this important aspect of the Generation of 98 and see Laín Entralgo's La generación, pp. 145-172.

[14] Laín Entralgo, España como problema, p. 560.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Karl. The Christ of Faith. New York: Mentor Omega Books, 1962.

Adell, Alberto. "Nietzsche en España." Insula, XXIII, 259 (1963), pp. 1, 12.

Alberich, José. "Cara de Plata, fuera de serie." Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XLV (Oct. 1968), pp. 299-308.

Alonso, Damaso y C. Bousoño. Seis calas en la expresión literaria española. Madrid: Gredos, 1963.

Amor y Vázquez, J. "Los galaicismos en la estética valleinclanesca." Revista Hispánica Moderna, XXIV (1958), pp. 1-26.

Arquer, Borja. La generación del 98 hoy. Barcelona: Ramón Sopena, 1968.

Ayllón, Cándido. "Experiments in the Theatre of Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, and Azorín." Hispania, XLVI (1963), pp. 49-56.

Balseiro, José. Blasco Ibáñez, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Baroja. Cuatro individualistas de España. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1949.

Barga, Corpus. "Notas, Valle-Inclán." Revista de Occidente, XIV, 151 (1936), pp. 88-91.

Barinaga Fernández, Augusto. Movimientos literarios en los siglos XIX y XX. Madrid: Alambra, 1964.

Barja, César. Libros y autores contempóraneos. Ganivet, Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, Azorín, Baroja, Valle-Inclán, Antonio Machado, Pérez de Ayala. Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1935.

Baroja, Pío. El árbol de la ciencia. New York: Las Américas, 1968.

_____. Obras completas, vol IV. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1951.

Baum, Paul Franklin. "The Medieval Legend of Judas Iscariot." PMLA, XXXII (1932), pp. 481-632.

Bell, Aubrey, F. G. Contemporary Spanish Literature. New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1933.

Bell, Aubrey F. G. Spanish Galicia. London: Brodley Head, 1922.

Benavente, Jacinto. La malquerida. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964.

Blanco, Manuel. En torno a Unamuno. Madrid: Taurus, 1965.

Borelli, Mary. "Valle-Inclán, Poet of Sarcasm." Hispania, XLIV, 2 (1961), pp. 266-268.

Borghese, Giuseppe Antonio. "Pascoli e il decadentismo" in Riccardo Scrivano, ed., Il decadentismo e la critica. Florence: Nuova Italia, 1963.

Brooks, J. L. "Valle-Inclán and the Esperpento," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XXXIII, 3 (1965), pp. 152-164.

Bueno, Javier. "Diálogo con el que se fue: Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán." Insula, XVI, 176-177 (1961), pp. 14-15.

Campbell, Joseph. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. New York: Pantheon Books, 1953.

Cano, J. L. "Valle-Inclán y la crítica." Insula, II, 22 (1947).

Carballo Picazo, F. "Antonio Machado y Valle-Inclán." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 160 (1963), pp. 6-17.

Carter, A. E. The Idea of Decadence in French Literature: 1830-1900. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1958.

Castro, Rosalía de. Obras completas. Madrid: Aguilar, 1960.

Castroviejo, José María. Galicia: guía espiritual de una tierra. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1960.

Cela, Camilo José. Cuatro figuras del 98: Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Baroja, Azorín y otros retratos y ensayos españoles. Barcelona: Aedos, 1961.

Chadwick, Nora K. The Druids. Oxford: Univ. of Wales Press, 1966.

Cirlot, J. E. A Dictionary of Symbols. New York: Philosophical Library, 1962.

Cobb, Carl W. Antonio Machado. New York: Twayne, 1971.

Coddou, Marcelo. "Valle-Inclán visto por Alfonso Reyes." Atenea, CLXIV, 414 (1966), pp. 133-144.

Croce, Benedetto. La letteratura italiana, vol. IV. Bari: Laterza, 1968.

Da Cal, Ernesto. Literatura del siglo XX. New York: Dryden, 1955.

Dahlstrom, Carl E. W. L. Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism. New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1965.

D'Annunzio, Gabriele. Novelle della Pescara. Rome: Vittoriale Degli Italiani, 1940.

_____. Tragedie, sogni e misteri, vol. I. Milan: Mondatori, 1939.

Davis, Lisa E. Valle-Inclán and D'Annunzio: A Study in Literary Relations. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Dissertation Abstracts, 1970.

Del Río, Ángel. Historia de la literatura española, vols. I & II. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963.

Demage, Camille. "L'expressionisme allemand et le mouvement révolutionnaire," in Jean Jacquot, ed., Le théâtre moderne. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1961, pp. 168-174.

Díaz Plaja, Guillermo. Las estéticas de Valle-Inclán. Madrid: Gredos, 1965.

_____. Modernismo frente a noventa y ocho. Una introducción a la literatura española del siglo XX. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1951.

Domenech, Ricardo. "Quien lleva dentro de sí un mundo verdadero: hombres, idioma, paisaje." Insula, XVI, 178 (1961), p. 10.

Durán, Manuel. "Del marqués de Sade a Valle-Inclán." Asomante, II (1954), pp. 40-47.

Eickhorst, William. Decadence in German Fiction. Denver: Alan Swallow, 1953.

Emmanuel, Pierre. Baudelaire: The Paradox of Redemptive Satanism. Univ. of Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1970.

Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana, vol. XXVI. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1958.

Espina, Antonio. "Notas: Tirano Banderas, novela por don Ramón del Valle-Inclán." Revista de Occidente, 44 (1927), pp. 274-279.

Fahoda, Gustav. The Psychology of Superstition. London: The Penguin Press, 1969.

Fernández Almagro, Melchor. "Esquema de la novela contemporánea." Clavileño, 5 (1950), pp. 15-28.

_____. Vida y literatura de Valle-Inclán. Madrid: Nacional, 1943.

Fichter, William L. Publicaciones periodísticas de Ramón del Valle-Inclán anteriores a 1895. México: El Colegio de México, 1952.

Flora, Francesco. "Temi e mezzi espressivi del decadentismo," in Scrivano, ed., Il decadentismo e la critica. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1963, pp. 156-166.

Flynn, Gerard Cox. "The 'Bagatela' of Ramón del Valle-Inclán." Hispanic Review, XXXII, 2 (1964), pp. 135-141.

Foss, Martin. Death, Sacrifice, and Tragedy. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and its Discontents, trans. by Joan Riviere. London: Hogarth Press, 1939.

_____. The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, trans. by A. A. Brill. New York: Random House, 1938.

_____. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XXIII. London: Hogarth Press, 1964.

Ganivet, Ángel. Idearium español. Madrid: Suárez, 1933.

García-Girón, Edmundo. "Valle-Inclán: Modernist Poet." Hispania, XXXIX, 2 (1956), pp. 257-260.

García Martí, Victoriano. "Valle-Inclán." Ateneo, 5 (1952), pp. 4, 22.

García Pelayo, Manuel. "Sobre el mundo social en la literatura de Valle-Inclán." Revista de Occidente, XV, 4 (1966), pp. 257-287.

García-Sabell, D. "Emilio González López: El arte dramático de Valle-Inclán." Insula, XXIII, 262 (1968), p. 12.

Gil Ildefonso, Manuel. "De Baroja a Valle-Inclán." Cuadernos Hispano-americanos, LX, 167 (1964), pp. 36-44.

_____. "Rubén Darío en la prosa de Valle-Inclán." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, LXXI, 211 (1967), pp. 472-480.

Gómez de la Serna, Ramón. Don Ramón María de Valle-Inclán. Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1944.

González López, Emilio. El arte dramático de Valle-Inclán. New York: Las Américas, 1967.

_____. "Valle-Inclán y Curros Enríquez." Revista Hispánica Moderna, XI, 3, 4 (1945), pp. 215-226.

González Ruiz, Nicolás. "Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán." Bulletin of Spanish Studies, II, 8 (1925), pp. 173-178.

Gourmont, Remy de. Decadence and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideas, trans. by William Aspenwall. Bradley: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1921.

Granjel, Luis S. Panorama de la generación del 98. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1959.

Gravier, Maurice. "Les héros du drama expressioniste," in Jean Jacquot, ed., Le théâtre moderne. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1961, pp. 117-130.

Greenfield, Sumner M. "Valle-Inclán en transición: Una brujería dialogada." La Torre, XIII, 51 (1965), pp. 175-192.

Guazzo, Mario. Compendium malificarum, trans. by E. A. Ashwin. London: John Rodker, 1929.

Guerrero Bueno, Obdulia. "Valle-Inclán y su vinculación con el modernismo rubeniano." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, LXXI, 211 (1967), pp. 551-555.

Gullón, Ricardo. "Realidad del esperpento." Insula, XXIII, 257 (1958), pp. 1, 10-11.

_____. Valle-Inclán Centennial Studies. Austin: University of Texas, 1968.

Hamilton, Edith. Mythology. Boston: Brown and Co., 1942.

Hoffman, Frederick J. Freudianism and the Literary Mind. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1957.

Ilie, Paul. "Nietzsche in Spain: 1890-1900." PMLA, LXXXIV (1964), pp. 80-96.

Isella Russell, Dora. "El pinocho lírico de Valle-Inclán." Asomante, XIX, 2 (1963), pp. 30-40.

Jacquot, Jean. Le théâtre moderne. Edition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1961.

Jiménez, Juan Ramón. El modernismo. México: Aguilar, 1962.

Johnson, Ernest. "Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán, burlador." Hispania, 4 (1952), pp. 407-409.

Jonas, Hans. The Gnostic Religion. The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.

Jung, Carl Gustav. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. by R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968.

_____. The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature, trans. by R. F. C. Hull. New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1966.

Kaufman, Walter. Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Anti-Christ. Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965.

King Arjona, Dolores. "La voluntad and la abulia in Contemporary Spanish Ideology." Revue Hispanique, LXXIV (1928), pp. 573-667.

Knight, A. H. J. Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Nietzsche. New York: Russell & Russell, 1967.

Lacosta, Francisco C. "Diversos aspectos estilísticos en la prosa de Ramón del Valle-Inclán." Hispania, XLV, 4 (1962), pp. 683-685.

Lado, María Dolores. Las Guerras Carlistas y el reinado isabelino en la obra de Ramón del Valle-Inclán. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966.

Laín Entralgo, Pedro. España como problema. Madrid: Aguilar, 1957.

_____. La generación del noventa y ocho. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1963.

Levy-Bruhl, Lucien. Primitive Mentality, trans. by Lilian A. Clare. London: George Allen, 1923.

Lincoln, Jackson Steward. The Dream in Primitive Culture. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970.

Lima, Robert. "The Man and his Early Plays." Drama Critique, IX, 2 (1966), pp. 69-78.

Lyons, J. E. "Valle-Inclán and the Art of the Theatre." Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XLVI, 2 (1969), pp. 132-152.

Mac Cullock, J. A. Medieval Faith and Fable. Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1932.

Madariaga, Salvador de. De Galdós a Lorca. Buenos Aires: Sudamérica, 1960.

_____. The Genius of Spain. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1923.

Malinowski, Bronislav. The Father in Primitive Psychology. New York: Norton and Co., 1966.

Mañach, Jorge. "Valle-Inclán y la elegía de América." Revista Hispánica Moderna, II, 4 (1936), pp. 302-306.

Maravall, José Antonio. "La imagen de la sociedad arcaica en Valle-Inclán." Revista de Occidente, XV, 4 (1966), pp. 225-256.

Marías, Julián. Valle-Inclán en el "Ruedo ibérico." Buenos Aires: Columba, 1967.

Martínez Ruiz, José. La generación del 98. Salamanca: Anaya, 1961.

_____. Obras selectas. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1962.

Matilla-Rivas, Alfredo. Las "Comedias bárbaras" de Valle-Inclán como obra expresionista. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Microfilm, 1967.

Meregalli, Franco. Studi su Ramón del Valle-Inclán. Venice: Libreria Universitaria, 1958.

Montague, Summers. The History of Witchcraft. London: Kegan, Trench, and Trubner, 1926.

More, Paul Elmer. Nietzsche. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912.

Nallim, Carlos Orlando. El problema de la novela en Pío Baroja. Mexico: Ateneo, 1964.

Nash, Manning. Primitive and Peasant Economic Systems. San Francisco: Chandler Co., 1966.

Nora, Eugenio G. La novela española contemporánea (1898-1927). Madrid: Gredos, 1958.

Nordau, Max. Dégénérescence, vols. I & II. Paris: Felix Alan, 1894.

Ortega y Gasset, José. La rebelión de las masas. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966.

_____. Obras completas, vols. I & IV. Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966.

Otero Seco, Antonio. "Sobre Valle-Inclán y el esperpento." Asomante, 2 (1964), pp. 15-27.

Owen, A. L. The Famous Druids. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

Pérez de Ayala, Ramón. Divagaciones literarias. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Almagro, 1958.

_____. Más divagaciones literarias. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Almagro, 1960.

Pfister, Oskar. Expressionism in Art: Its Psychological and Biological Basis, trans. by B. Low and M. A. Mugge. London: Kegan, Trench, Trubner, and Co., 1922.

Praz, Mario. The Romantic Agony, trans. by Angus Davidson. Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1968.

Quinto, José María de. "Las comedias bárbaras de Valle-Inclán." Insula, XXIII, 259 (1968), pp. 15-16.

Ramírez, Manuel D. "Valle-Inclán's Use of Imagery and Figurative Vocabulary." Hispania, XLIV, 2 (1961), pp. 260-265.

Romero-Navarro, M. Historia de la literatura española. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949.

Rosenbaum, Sidonia P. and Juan Guerrero Ruiz. "Ramón del Valle-Inclán: bibliografía." Revista Hispánica Moderna, II, 4 (1936), pp. 307-314.

Rubia Barcia, J. A. A Bibliography and Iconography of Valle-Inclán, 1866-1936. Berkeley: University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 1960.

_____. "El esperpento: su signo universal." Cuadernos Americanos, CLVII, 2 (1968), pp. 215-237.

_____. "Valle-Inclán y la literatura gallega." Revista Hispánica Moderna, XXI, 2 (1955), pp. 93-126; 3-4 (1955), pp. 249-315.

Russo, Luigi, Compendio storico della letteratura italiana. Florence: Editrice D'Anna, 1969.

Rudwin, Maxmilian. The Devil in Literature. Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1931.

Salinas, Pedro. Literatura española del siglo XX. Madrid: Alianza, 1970.

Scrivano, Riccardo. Il decadentismo e la critica. Florence: Nuova Italia, 1963.

Seeleman, Rosa. "Folkloric Elements in Valle-Inclán." Hispanic Review, III, 2 (1935), pp. 103-118.

Segura Covarsí, Enrique. "Las acotaciones dramáticas de Valle-Inclán." Clavileño, VII, 38 (1956), pp. 44-52.

Sender, Ramón José. "Algo más sobre Valle-Inclán." Cuadernos Americanos, LXVIII, 2 (1953), pp. 275-283.

_____. Examen de ingenios. Los noventayochos. New York: Las Américas, 1961.

_____. "La gestación literaria de Valle-Inclán." Cuadernos Americanos, LXII, 2 (1952), pp. 270-281.

_____. Valle-Inclán y la dificultad de la tragedia. Madrid: Gredos, 1965.

Smith, Jones M. "Concept of Decadence in Nineteenth Century French Literature." Studies in Philology, L (1953), pp. 640-651.

Sobejano, Gonzalo. Forma literaria y sensibilidad social. Madrid: Gredos, 1967.

_____. Nietzsche en España. Madrid: Gredos, 1967.

Sokel, Walter H. Anthology of German Expressionist Drama. Garden City: Doubleday, 1963.

Soldevila-Durante, Ignacio. "Valle-Inclán, ingenio avisado y espejo de discretos." Torre, 58 (1967), pp. 79-104.

Sophocles. Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone, trans. and ed. by David Grene and Richard Lattimore. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955.

Speratti-Piñero, Emma Susana. De "Sonata de otoño" al esperpento. London: Tamesis Books, 1968.

_____. La elaboración artística en Tirano Banderas. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1957.

Tompson, Stith. Motif Index of Folk Literature. Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana, 1932.

Torre, Guillermo de. "La evolución de Valle-Inclán." Insula, XVI, 176-177 (1961), pp. 1, 19.

Torrente Ballester, Gonzalo. "Algo sobre Valle-Inclán." Indice de Artes y Letras, IX, 74-75 (1954), pp. 224-239.

_____. Teatro español contemporáneo. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1957.

Trigo, Felipe. La bruta. Madrid: Editor Renacimiento, 1913.

Umbral, Francisco. Valle-Inclán. Madrid: Union Editorial, 1968.

Unamuno, Miguel. Obras completas, vols. I & II. Madrid: Escelicer, 1968.

_____. Obras completas, vol. III. Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1958.

_____. San Manuel bueno, mártir. New York: Las Americas, 1960.

Valbuena Prat, Angel. Historia de la literatura española, vol. III. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1968.

_____. Teatro moderno español. Zaragoza: Partenón, 1944.

Valle-Inclán, Ramón. Historia perversas. Barcelona: Maucci, 1907.

_____. Obras completas, vols. I & II. Madrid: Plenitud, 1952.

_____. Obras escogidas. Madrid: Aguilar, 1967.

Vega, Celestino F. de la. "Perfil gallego de Valle-Inclán." Insula, XIV, 152-153 (1959), p. 4.

Vicetto, Benito. El caballero de Calatrava. Madrid: Manuel Alvarez, 1863.

Welland, D. S. R. The Pre-Raphaelites in Literature and Art. Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1953.

Whyte, Lancelot L. The Unconscious before Freud. London: Tavistock Publications, 1960.

Zahareas, Anthony N., Rodolfo Cardona and Sumner Greenfield, eds. Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of His Life and Works. New York: Las Américas [Josè Rubia Barcia, "A Synoptic View of Valle-Inclán's Life and Works," 3-34; Sumner Greenfield and Anthony Zahareas, "The Development of Valle-Inclán's Work," 35-39; Francisco Ayala, "Man and Mask," 40-42; José Ortega y Gasset, "Sentido del preciosismo (La sonata de estío)," 48-56; Amado Alonso, "La intención esteticista (Las sonatas)," 57-68; Manuel Durán, "Renovaciones temáticas y estilísticas (Origen y función del esperpento)," 69-77; Anthony N. Zahareas, "The Absurd, the Grotesque, and the Esperpento," 78-108; Roberta Salper de Tortella, "The Creation of a Fictional World: Valle-Inclán and the European Novel," 109-30; José F. Montesinos, "Modernismo, esperpentismo o las dos evasiones," 131-50; Joaquín Casalduero, "Observaciones sobre el arte de Valle-Inclán," 151-58; Gonzalo Sobejano, "Valle-Inclán frente al realismo español," 159-71; William L. Fichter, "Comienzos literarios: La formación literaria de Valle-Inclán," 177-91; César Barja and William L. Fichter, "Primeros aciertos

temáticos y estilísticos," 192-200; Enrique Anderson Imbert, "Escamoteo de la realidad en las Sonatas," 203-15; Rodolfo Cardona, "El tiempo en Sonata de otoño," 216-23; Emma S. Speratti-Piñero, "Valle-Inclán y México: Parte I. Sonata de estío," 224-29; Roberta Salper de Tortella, "Valle-Inclán and the Marqués de Bradomín (Sonata de invierno and El Marqués de Bradomín)," 230-40; Alice R. Clemente, "Valle-Inclán, Translator," 241-47; Emilio González López, "Valle-Inclán y los escritores gallegos (Flor de santidad)," 251-62; César Barja, "Flor de santidad," 263-66; Ramón Sender, "Flor de santidad y la dificultad de la tragedia," 267-72; Ernesto Da Cal, "Observaciones sobre 'Mi hermana Antonia,'" 276; Anthony N. Zahareas and Gerald Gillespie, "Observations on the Form and Tradition of the Novella: Toward a New Appraisal of Valle-Inclán's Tales," 277-80; Gerald Gillespie and Anthony N. Zahareas, "Rosarito and the Novella Tradition," 281-87; Alfredo Matilla, "Las Comedias bárbaras: Una sola obra dramática," 289-316; Roberta Salper de Tortella, "Don Juan Manuel Montenegro: The Fall of a King," 317-33; María Dolores Lado, "La trilogía de La guerra carlista," 334-51; Sumner Greenfield, "Cuento de abril: Literary Reminiscences and Commonplaces," 353-60; Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce, "Voces de gesta: Tragedia pastoril," 361-73; Emma S. Speratti-Piñero, "La farsa de La cabeza del dragón, pre-esperpento," 374-85; Robert Lima, "The Commedia dell'Arte and La Marquesa Rosalinda," 368-415; Edmundo García-Girón, "Valle-Inclán, Modernist Poet," 417-23; Raimundo Lida, "Darío, Lugones, Valle-Inclán," 424-41; Ciriaco M. Arroyo, "La lámpara maravillosa y la ecuación estética," 443-59; Alfredo Matilla, "La media noche: Visión estelar de un momento de guerra," 460-66; Manuel Durán, "La pipa de kif; Del modernismo al esperpento," 467-78; Malcolm Griffith, "Theories of the Grotesque," 483-92; Paul Ilie, "The Grotesque in Valle-Inclán," 493-539; Sumner Greenfield, "La Reina Castiza and the Esthetics of Deformation," 541-52; Sumner Greenfield, "Literature and Landscape in La enamorada del Rey," 553-62; Jean-Paul Borel, "Reflexiones sobre un Retablo," 563-66; Jean-Paul Borel, "El embrujado y el mundo trágico de lo imposible," 567-71; Gerald Gillespie, "La rosa de papel," 572-75; Sumner Greenfield, "Divinas palabras y la nueva faz de Galicia," 577-83; Sumner Greenfield, "Cara de Plata: The Esperpentic Version of the Comedias bárbaras," 584-97; Allen W. Phillips, "Sobre Luces de Bohemia y la realidad literaria," 601-14; Gerald Gillespie and Anthony Zahareas, "Luces de Bohemia: Tragedia y esperpento," 516-21; Anthony N. Zahareas, "La elaboración de la historia en Luces de Bohemia," 622-29; Anthony N. Zahareas, "Friolera: El héroe visto con 'la perspectiva de la otra ribera,'" 630-35; Rodolfo Cardona, "Los cuernos de Don Friolera: Estructura y sentido," 636-71; Javier Herrero, "La sátira del honor en los esperpentos," 672-85; Joaquín Casalduero, "Sentido y forma de Martes de carnaval," 868-94; Harold L. Boudreau, "Valle-Inclán's Return to the Novel: 1926-1936," 695-98; Emma S. Speratti-Piñero, "Valle-Inclán y México: Parte II, Tirano Banderas," 699-710; Joseph H. Silverman, "En torno a las fuentes de Tirano Banderas," 711-22; Ricardo Gullón, "Técnicas en Tirano Banderas," 723-57; Harold L. Boudreau, "The Metamorphosis of the Ruedo ibérico," 758-76; Harold L. Boudreau, "Continuity in the Ruedo ibérico," 777-91; Harold L. Boudreau, "The Moral Comment of the

Ruedo ibérico," 792-804; Emma S. Speratti-Piñero, "Los últimos artículos de Valle-Inclán," 805-21; Domingo García-Sabell, "*La cara de Dios*," 813-18.]

Zardoya, Concha. *Poesía española del 98 y del 27*. Madrid: Gredos, 1968.

Zigrosser, Carl. *The Expressionists*. New York: George Braziller, 1957.

Zweig, Stephan. *The Living Thoughts of Tolstoi*, selections trans. by Nathan Haskell Dole. Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1939.

VITA

Raymond Spoto was born in Rockford, Illinois, on April 30, 1940. The son of Angelo and Florence Spoto, he attended neighborhood elementary schools and graduated from Rockford West High School in 1958. He received his B.A. degree in Spanish and history from Northern Illinois University in 1962 and his M.A. degree in Spanish literature from the University of Illinois in 1967. From 1967 to the present he has been employed by the University of Wisconsin—Platteville as a member of the Foreign Language Department. His wife Allyson teaches social studies in Platteville and they are the parents of a daughter, Marcella Stefani.