

A STUDY OF THE VOCABULARY OF VALLE-INCLÁN IN
THE COMEDIAS BARBARAS

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MAURINE FAULKNER, B. A.

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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared
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Rebecca Switzer
In Charge of Thesis

Rebecca Switzer
Director of Department

Accepted:

W. H. Clark
Chairman, Committee on Graduate Study

PREFACE

One of the most interesting and most noticeable ways in which Valle-Inclán expresses his originality and individuality is through his vocabulary. Because of interest in this phase of his works, the following study has been made. The Comedias bárbaras, which form one unit of the author's writings, were chosen for the intensive work of this study because they were thought to be most representative of Valle-Inclán's vocabulary. In order that this study might be as accurate as possible, each word used in Cara de Plata, Águila de blasón, and Romance de lobos was listed, together with noteworthy comments. The following discussion consists of the classification of these words.

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CHAPTER ONE

VALLE-INCLAN THE ARTIST

From the so-called Generation of 1898 Spanish literature has received a great rejuvenating and reviving influence. After her defeat in 1898 Spain began to awaken from her lethargy and to recover from her tendency to live in the reflection of her past glory. She became cognizant of the reality of life today. Some of her people began to think along new lines and to try to infuse new vigor into the masses. A group of writers came into existence who portrayed this renaissance of Spain in various ways, presenting social problems and revealing the essentially national traits of individualism, democracy, realism, naturalism, and regionalism.

They were free thinkers who abandoned the old fixed rules of writing and established rules of their own, displaying markedly different ideals of artistic expression. The outstanding tendency among them was eclecticism -- freedom in form and thought. Their works, written in various forms, ranged from the extreme realism of Pardo Bazán and Blasco Ibáñez to the highly imaginative and fantastic work of Ramon del Valle-Inclán. To these writers of the Generation of 1898 Spain owes her literary prestige today.

One of the most interesting phases of this new Spanish literature is the emphasis on artistry in prose and poetry

with appeal to the senses and emotions by the use of musical and suggestive words. The content is not profound and philosophical, for its purpose is merely to charm and entertain the reader. In the classical period of Spanish literature Góngora (1561-1627) had employed a very elaborate and ornate style in which he emphasized the unusual in manner of expressing exaggerated and fantastic images. His artistic works were filled with conceits and his images were so obscured with words that sometimes the thought was lost. However, in the works of Bécquer, the romanticist, the images are painted in equally colorful and musical words; but his emphasis on assonance, rhythm, and suggestive power achieves just as artistic form without obscuring the thought. Bécquer's influence was felt by Rubén Darío, one of the most artistic of modern writers. Like Bécquer, Rubén Darío appeals to the senses and emotions of his reader through the intrinsic beauty of his words and the pictures he suggests with them. He is an artist who knows and appreciates beauty of form and thought. This feeling for beauty and art is also apparent in Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán, a contemporary of Rubén Darío and a man whom the Nicaraguan admired much. The artistic prose works of these men are very similar.

Valle-Inclán, a writer of the Generation of 1898, is the outstanding representative of modern artistic prose in Spain. The guiding principle in his life might be expressed

by the old adage "ars gratia artis"; for Valle-Inclán has portrayed his life, his personality, and his thoughts in most colorful and appealing word pictures. Since very few actual facts are known about the earlier part of his life, he has had ample opportunity to invent as many interesting stories as he wished about his family and his own adventures. Don Ramón pictures his ancestry as rich and aristocratic and adds more color by intimating that one of his family was an oriental princess. Even the date of his birth is doubtful; some say that it was 1869, but it is generally accepted as 1870. His early life, spent in Galicia, was probably quite uneventful; however, Valle-Inclán would have us believe that it was filled with adventure in the Americas, Africa, the Provinces, and Paris. He claims to have had many romantic escapades in love and in war; and he boasts of assassinating an English lord. Just how he lost his arm nobody knows, even though Gómez de la Serna has written a pamphlet entitled The Thousand and One Ways That Valle-Inclán Lost His Arm; however, it is quite probable that the accident occurred in a common brawl in a cafe. Valle-Inclán also says that he was a lay brother in a monastery and a soldier in New Spain. But who can vouch for the veracity of these fabulous and picturesque tales? Don Ramón wishes to paint a life of mystery, adventure, and romance which will impress and entertain his public.

Valle-Inclán was just as much an artist in his appearance as in his life. He was a tall, aristocratic, and dignified figure who always wore black. A black cape was funereally draped over his left shoulder where his arm was missing. Large horn-rimmed spectacles rested on his incredibly long, humped nose and shaded his dark brown eyes with their thick, black lashes. The long scraggly beard which reached to his girdle gave an air of distinction and dignity. His one hand had long artistic fingers which at times nervously combed his beard. Though Valle-Inclán appeared to be a man of much reserve, dignity, and pride, his eyes radiated compassion and interest in humanity. He was kindly and hospitable and showed a great interest in young people. He delighted in talking and having his tertulia at the Café Regina in Madrid where he reveled in his fantastic and mysterious tales or discoursed on some literary subject. Don Ramón was a master conversationalist and never lacked words to express his ideas or get him out of difficulties. If he were asked a question he did not wish to answer, he expertly shifted the conversation to another topic while the listener was scarcely aware of the fact. He received attention and respect wherever he went, and it was a privilege to watch and to hear this eccentric man talk. Because Valle-Inclán possessed such a strong and individual personality, he had great influence on his listener. But now

this great influence is lacking in the Café Regina; Madrid will no longer be permitted to enjoy his tertulias.

En Santiago de Compostela, ciudad donde residía habitualmente, y era como un telón de fondo a su figura, falleció hace pocos días Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán, el 'Gran Don Ramón' de las barbas patriarcales, que un alto poeta llamara de 'chivo', no con travesura irreverente sino por destacar el paganismo del atributo con que el eximio escritor decoraba su pecho.¹

His death early in January, 1936, has deprived the literary world of much charm and art.

However, the artistic ability and temperament of this writer have been preserved in his works. His ability to tell a story and conjure up word pictures is as strong in his writing as it is in his conversation. He impresses his reader as well as his listener by his careful selection of words. Although he has written both prose and poetry, his prose is as poetic as poetry. Don Ramón is a stylist. Although his work shows a laborious perfection, the result is so beautiful and harmonious that all else is forgotten except the sensation or image he calls forth. His words are chosen with greatest care for sound and suggestive power; Díez Canedo says of Valle-Inclán: "The words do not exhaust the sensation. No one will stop merely with the image the

¹ "El Día," Montevideo, Uruguay, January 12, 1936.

poet conjures up, because the image brings with it the ineffable train, a complex of suggestions.² Valle-Inclán selects words which fit his ideas, characters, and scenes, and for this reason the many peculiarities of colloquial speech are found throughout his works. Archaisms, dialecticisms, coined words, and literary words are marshalled with skill and grace by Valle-Inclán. He is a master of words. The assonance and rhythm of words which contain many vowels have a particular appeal for the Galician, and in the supreme beauty of his words the art of Valle-Inclán is revealed. ".... sus libros, únicos, sin influencias, de estilo propio y vocabulario exclusivo, van proclamando el talento de este escritor singular."³

⁴ Mr. Beals has divided the works of Valle-Inclán into three classes: the sonatas, the novels of Galicia (including the Comedias bárbaras), and the Carlist War novels. Since the scenes and characters of the Comedias bárbaras are from Galicia, a study of the vocabulary of Cara de

² Carleton Beals, "Valle-Inclán in the Café," (Quoted from Diez Canedo), Bookman, November, 1930, Vol. 72, p. 261.

³ "El Día," Montevideo, Uruguay, January 12, 1936.

⁴ Beals, op. cit., p. 262.

⁵Plata, ⁶Águila de blasón, and ⁷Romance de lobos might be considered as truly representative of the vocabulary of Valle-Inclán.

⁵ Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Cara de Plata, Renacimiento, Madrid, 1923. (When reference is made to this work, the letter "C" will be used.)

⁶ Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Águila de blasón, Sáez Hermanos, Madrid, 1922. (When reference is made to this work, the letter "A" will be used.)

⁷ Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Romance de lobos, José Izquierdo, Madrid, 1914. (When reference is made to this book, the letter "R" will be used.)

CHAPTER TWO

ATMOSPHERE THROUGH APPEAL TO THE SENSES

Valle-Inclán is a master story teller and one who delights in creating atmosphere that will impress and enchant his reader. The supernatural element of the witches, the weird effects of the various forms of nature pictured by him, and religious superstition have an irresistible effect. Although some of his scenes are nebulous and fantastic, the reader is swept along so forcibly with the thoughts of the author that it all seems real and natural. Other scenes are depicted with such clear-cut precision that they horrify the reader with their striking details. Somber, indistinct, and fantastic scenes are contrasted with colorful and light scenes. The author has chosen his words with care in order that they may convey exactly what he wishes to say. Valle-Inclán's ability to paint the various types of background rests upon his innate feeling for words and their power to conjure up images that appeal to the senses and emotions.

One of the strongest appeals to the senses in the novels of Valle-Inclán is his appeal to the eye by using various colors, by suggesting colors, and by contrasting light and darkness. Such words as ⁸amarillo, ⁹áureo, ¹⁰azul, ¹¹bermejo,

⁸ A., p. 254

¹⁰ A., p. 80

⁹ R., p. 92

¹¹ A., p. 13

¹² blanco, ¹³ gris, ¹⁴ negro, ¹⁵ rojo, and ¹⁶ verde make his scenes picturesque and vivid by suggesting definite colors; however, there are other words which paint scenes in terms that merely lend the impression of color. It seems that these words which create a fantastic and less distinct effect occur more frequently than the former type of word. The author decides on the effect he wishes to produce, and then selects his words with the greatest care. When he speaks of a color, he does not always name blanco, negro, or rojo, but he uses various words to bring forth the different shades of a color or to suggest it. For instance, he con-
¹⁷
 veys the idea of white by using such words as blanco,
¹⁸ blancura, ¹⁹ blanquear, ²⁰ albear, ²¹ albo, ²² albura, ²³ palidez, ²⁴ pálido,
²⁵ alunado, ²⁶ argentado, ²⁷ argentar, ²⁸ nieve, and ²⁹ nevado. He says,
 ".... La rodean otras devotas, y en la oscuridad albean los

12 A., p. 14

21 A., p. 97

13 R., p. 231

22 A., p. 182

14 A., p. 16

23 A., p. 158

15 A., p. 97

24 A., p. 37

16 R., p. 13

25 C., p. 43

17 A., p. 14

26 A., p. 46

18 R., p. 54

27 C., p. 203

19 A., p. 108

28 R., p. 259

20 A., p. 14

29 A., p. 342

pañolitos blancos, que esparcen un olor de estoraque el
 abanicar el rostro de la desmayada. Varias voces susu-
 rran en la sombra." For shades of black he uses negro,
negrura, negruzco, gris, and oscuro; for blue he uses azul,
azulado, and azulenco. Don Ramón ranges from shades of
 yellow (amarillo, amarillento, sol, fosforecer, fulgurar)
 through shades of gold, copper, and bronze (aureo, oro,
cobre, and bronce) to shades of red (rojo, rojizo, berme-
jo, and ensangretado). Green is a color that appears
 frequently in such words as verdear, verde, and verdoso.

30 A., p. 14

42 R., p. 40

31 A., p. 16

43 A., p. 40

32 R., p. 71

44 R., p. 92

33 A., p. 273

45 A., p. 254

34 R., p. 231

46 A., p. 267

35 A., p. 47

47 A., p. 263

36 A., p. 80

48 A., p. 23

37 A., p. 51

49 A., p. 131

38 R., p. 60

50 A., p. 13

39 A., p. 254

51 A., p. 59

40 A., p. 247

52 A., p. 79

41 A., p. 54

53 A., p. 79

54 A., p. 319

In contrast to the various shades of darkness and shadows
 55 56 57 58 59 60
 (noche, nublado, penumbra, sombra, nebuloso, and anochecer)

there are many words which bring out the idea of light,
 61 62 63 64 65 66
 such as alumbrar, brillante, brillo, brillar, chispa, clarear,
 67 68 69 70 71 72
esclarecer, estrellado, iluminar, luciente, luna, lustroso,
 73 74 75
luz, reluciente, and resplandeciente. The author's use of
 light in the following passage is characteristic:

.... Los ladrones corren hacia donde sonó la
 voz, y hallan la ventana abierta y sola, sobre el
 cielo estrellado y profundo. ... La luna penetra
 en la sala y esclarece débilmente. Reunidos en
 el fondo, bajo el argentado reflejo, los ladrones
 se hablan en voz baja.⁷⁶

These words of light might be used to create a bright and

55 A., p. 14	66 A., p. 276
56 A., p. 55	67 A., p. 46
57 A., p. 13	68 A., p. 46
58 A., p. 15	69 A., p. 51
59 A., p. 287	70 A., p. 235
60 A., p. 17	71 A., p. 32
61 A., p. 31	72 A., p. 67
62 A., p. 332	73 A., p. 13
63 R., p. 92	74 A., p. 284
64 A., p. 13	75 A., p. 54
65 R., p. 123	76 A., p. 46

cheerful atmosphere, but by contrasting them with sombre surroundings Valle-Inclán often presents an eerie and fantastic background, as in this passage:

Los dos rezan a media voz, con un bisbiseo devoto y confuso, que se junta en las sombras de la capilla al chisporroteo de las velas. Las dos inclinan las cabezas y ponen en blanco los ojos para poder alzarlos al altar, desde donde responde a su mirada extática de una Dolorosa. El parpadeo de las luces da una apariencia de vida al cerco amoratado de aquellos ojos, a la boca dolorida, a las mejillas con dos lagrimas de cristal. Sabelita y la vieja se santiguan al terminar su rezo.⁷⁷

Through his effective use of color and shadow Valle-Inclán makes his background stand out vividly or recede in darkness and indistinctness.

Closely connected with the words of color are the words which create an atmosphere of gloom and sadness or mystery. Valle-Inclán writes much of death and scenes where death has been. He conveys this impression by using words which speak of death, such as ⁷⁸muerte, ⁷⁹mortecino, ⁸⁰mortaja, ⁸¹moribunda, ⁸²momia, ⁸³inanimado, ⁸⁴cementerio, ⁸⁵entierro, ⁸⁶epitafio,

⁷⁷ R., p. 189

⁸² A., p. 264

⁷⁸ A., p. 14

⁸³ A., p. 319

⁷⁹ A., p. 325

⁸⁴ A., p. 17

⁸⁰ R., p. 54

⁸⁵ R., p. 18

⁸¹ A., p. 125

⁸⁶ A., p. 262

121 122 123 124 125 126
sollozar, sufrir, tortura, triste, tristemente, tristeza,
 127
 and zozobrar furnish suggestions of sadness and death.

The suffering and affliction felt by the characters in these dramas are made poignant to the reader through the suggestive power of the author. Death comes very close to the lives of his characters and they feel it deeply. Superstition, mystery, and death have a very strong influence on these simple people, and for this reason they talk about them repeatedly. Valle-Inclán associates an air of witchery and mystery with this funereal background. In describing the scene in the large kitchen of don Juan the author says:

....Bajo la ancha campana de la chimenea que cobija el hogar y los escaños donde los criados se sientan, alárganse las lenguas de la llama como para oír las voces fabulosas del viento. Es una chimenea de piedra, que recuerda esos cuentos campesinos y grotescos de las brujas que se escurren por la gramallera abajo, y de los trasgos patizambos que cabalgan sobre los varales donde cuelgan las morcillas puestas al humo....¹²⁸

In creating these mysterious settings Valle-Inclán uses

121 A., p. 182

125 R., p. 58

122 A., p. 22

126 A., p. 121

123 A., p. 227

127 A., p. 223

124 A., p. 111

128 A., pp. 131-132

such words as ¹²⁹aparición, ¹³⁰apariencia, ¹³¹asomar, ¹³²bruja,
¹³³bulto, ¹³⁴demonio, ¹³⁵diablaesa, ¹³⁶embruja, ¹³⁷embrujo, ¹³⁸encantar,
¹³⁹misterio, ¹⁴⁰sombra, ¹⁴¹crimen, ¹⁴²entenebrece, ¹⁴³gemido, ¹⁴⁴gemir,
¹⁴⁵locura, ¹⁴⁶maldito, ¹⁴⁷moroso, ¹⁴⁸noche, ¹⁴⁹nocturno, ¹⁵⁰nublado,
¹⁵¹oscuridad, ¹⁵²oscuro, ¹⁵³penumbra, ¹⁵⁴tempestuoso, ¹⁵⁵vislumbre,
¹⁵⁶anochecer, ¹⁵⁷anubarrado, ¹⁵⁸leproso, ¹⁵⁹and loco. The author

129 A., p. 285	144 R., p. 117
130 R., p. 189	145 A., p. 148
131 A., p. 33	146 A., p. 44
132 A., p. 108	147 C., p. 227
133 A., p. 32	148 A., p. 14
134 A., p. 21	149 A., p. 263
135 R., p. 17	150 A., p. 55
136 R., p. 17	151 A., p. 14
137 A., p. 201	152 A., p. 47
138 A., p. 215	153 A., p. 13
139 R., p. 57	154 R., p. 29
140 A., p. 15	155 A., p. 51
141 A., p. 75	156 A., p. 17
142 A., p. 278	157 A., p. 259
143 A., p. 191	158 R., p. 81
	159 A., p. 28

weaves such words throughout the story with so much skill that his reader cannot fail to feel the atmosphere. He appeals to the ears, the eyes, and the superstitious nature in the following passage:

Avanzan las dos sombras hacia el presbiterio. Sus pasos huecos, en la soledad de la capilla, tienen una vaga resonancia, y las palabras un misterio de sombra.¹⁶⁰

Scenes of somberness, melancholy, and fantasy are favorite settings for Valle-Inclán and in portraying them he shows much art and skill.

Along with the background of mystery and sadness in the Comedias bárbaras is felt the presence of a religious ecstasy. Although some of Valle-Inclán's characters, for instance María Soledad, are intensely religious, others are unbelievers; nevertheless they have a profound awe and superstitious attitude toward the church and its people. They talk about the church and its practices. Therefore, we find many words pertaining to religion.

Since many of the author's scenes are laid in parts of the church, one group of words which he uses pertains to the church itself. Typical ones are ¹⁶¹altar, ¹⁶²capillas,

160 R., p. 149

162 A., p. 13

161 A., p. 13

¹⁶³cancel, ¹⁶⁴claustro, ¹⁶⁵colegiata, ¹⁶⁶consola, ¹⁶⁷convento, ¹⁶⁸crucifijo,
¹⁶⁹cruz, ¹⁷⁰iglesia, ¹⁷¹nave, ¹⁷²presbiterio, ¹⁷³púlpito, ¹⁷⁴sacristía, and
¹⁷⁵sagrario. Other words which pertain to the officials and
practices of the church are ¹⁷⁶bigardo, ¹⁷⁷canónigo, ¹⁷⁸capellán,
¹⁷⁹clérigo, ¹⁸⁰clerigote, ¹⁸¹crucero, ¹⁸²cura, ¹⁸³curato, ¹⁸⁴fraile, ¹⁸⁵fray,
¹⁸⁶monja, ¹⁸⁷sacristán; and ¹⁸⁸bautismo, ¹⁸⁹bautizar, ¹⁹⁰bautizo, ¹⁹¹bendecir,

163 A., p. 114

178 A., p. 20

164 A., p. 309

179 R., p. 51

165 A., p. 13

180 C., p. 114

166 A., p. 223

181 A., p. 207

167 A., p. 69

182 A., p. 251

168 A., p. 59

183 R., p. 147

169 A., p. 104

184 A., p. 23

170 A., p. 13

185 A., p. 13

171 A., p. 13

186 A., p. 25

172 R., p. 92

187 A., p. 13

173 A., p. 13

188 A., p. 205

174 A., p. 165

189 A., p. 201

175 R., p. 92

190 A., p. 77

176 A., p. 26

191 A., p. 104

177 A., p. 137

¹⁹²canónico, ¹⁹³ceremonioso, ¹⁹⁴confesar, ¹⁹⁵consagrar, ¹⁹⁶curial,
¹⁹⁷dominico, ¹⁹⁸esclavina, ¹⁹⁹exclaustrado, ²⁰⁰excomuni6n, ²⁰¹letania,
²⁰²litúrgico, ²⁰³misa, ²⁰⁴monástico, ²⁰⁵parroquial, ²⁰⁶plegaria,
²⁰⁷rectoral, ²⁰⁸romero, ²⁰⁹rosario, ²¹⁰salmodia, ²¹¹santificar, santi-
²¹²guar, ²¹³santuario, ²¹⁴seminario, and ²¹⁵seminarista. These words,

too, add to the religious atmosphere; but perhaps even more than this they make the scenes impressive. Since Valle-Inclán claims to have been in a monastery, he knows how to portray such scenes very artistically and

192 C., p. 67

204 R., p. 133

193 C., p. 125

205 A., p. 223

194 A., p. 180

206 A., p. 309

195 R., p. 49

207 C., p. 125

196 C., p. 47

208 A., p. 99

197 A., p. 146

209 A., p. 28

198 A., p. 114

210 A., p. 75

199 R., p. 185

211 A., p. 233

200 A., p. 165

212 A., p. 245

201 A., p. 247

213 A., p. 164

202 A., p. 223

214 C., p. 100

203 A., p. 59

215 A., p. 16

realistically. He conveys the spiritual feeling and
 faith of his characters through such words as ²¹⁶alabado,
²¹⁷amén, ²¹⁸ángel, ²¹⁹angélico, ²²⁰beata, ²²¹bendición, ²²²benditas,
²²³bienaventurados, ²²⁴caridad, ²²⁵confesión, ²²⁶credo, cristiana-
²²⁷mente, ²²⁸cristiano, ²²⁹devoción, ²³⁰devota, ²³¹Dios, ²³²divino,
²³³espíritu, ²³⁴fe, ²³⁵gracia, ²³⁶infierno, ²³⁷numen, ²³⁸pecado, ²³⁹pecador,
²⁴⁰penitencia, ²⁴¹piadoso, ²⁴²piedad, ²⁴³religión, ²⁴⁴religiosa,

216 A., p. 312

217 A., p. 205

218 A., p. 85

219 R., p. 97

220 A., p. 25

221 A., p. 103

222 A., p. 25

223 A., p. 289

224 A., p. 102

225 R., p. 164

226 R., p. 100

227 A., p. 133

228 A., p. 106

229 A., p. 114

230 A., p. 14

231 A., p. 35

232 A., p. 16

233 A., p. 16

234 A., p. 160

235 A., p. 16

236 A., p. 60

237 A., p. 97

238 A., p. 14

239 R., p. 190

240 R., p. 15

241 A., p. 212

242 A., p. 14

243 R., p. 70

244 A., p. 338

²⁴⁵sacrificio, ²⁴⁶sacrilegio, ²⁴⁷sacrílego, ²⁴⁸sacro, ²⁴⁹sagrada, ²⁵⁰salva-
²⁵¹ción, ²⁵²santidad, ²⁵³santisimo, and ²⁵⁴santo. In Águila de
blasón and especially in Romance de lobos, caridad is
 used many times. It may be seen from the variety of
 words pertaining to religion that Valle-Inclán knew his
 characters and was familiar with the practices of the
 church. He uses this religious atmosphere to accentuate
 his background of mystery and melancholy.

Another appeal which the author makes is through
 words denoting measure. Many of his sounds and images
 are described as distant from the scene of action --
²⁵⁵lejano, ²⁵⁶lejos, and ²⁵⁷lejanía occur frequently as in "A lo
²⁵⁸lejos, el verde y oloroso cementerio de una aldea" and
 "Se oye a lo lejos una campana, una de esas campanas de
²⁵⁹aldea, familiares como la voz de las abuelas." The idea

245 A., p. 114

253 A., p. 24

246 R., p. 57

254 R., pp. 123-221-259, etc.

247 A., p. 169

255 A., p. 336

248 R., p. 156

256 R., p. 13

249 A., p. 148

257 A., p. 217

250 C., p. 23

258 R., p. 13

251 A., p. 208

259 R., p. 66

252 A., p. 75

del vino que hierve con el romero se difunde por la
 corte como un bálsamo oloroso y rústico" and "El olor
 de la cera y del incienso ha quedado flotando en la
 estancia." The same sense is stimulated by such words
 as aroma, ahumar, olor, rancio, tabacosa, olfatear, and
oloroso. Likewise, Don Ramón appeals to the gustatory
 sense with agrio, amargo, rancio, apetitoso, salado,
salobre, amargar, meloso, and miel. The sense of touch
 or feeling is especially prominent in scenes of death
 and mystery. The feeling of cold seems to be used more
 than any other and to be expressed in more different

270 A., p. 103

279 A., p. 122

271 R., p. 87

280 A., p. 155

272 A., p. 177

281 A., p. 132

273 A., p. 99

282 A., p. 339

274 A., p. 14

283 A., p. 268

275 A., p. 132

284 R., p. 194

276 R., p. 133

285 R., p. 171

277 A., p. 216

286 R., p. 54

278 A., p. 99

287 A., p. 75

ways: ²⁸⁸ aterido, ²⁸⁹ enfriar, ²⁹⁰ escalofrío, ²⁹¹ fresca, ²⁹² frío, and
²⁹³ even húmedo might be thought of in this respect. Heat
²⁹⁴ is expressed by calentar, ²⁹⁵ caliente, and ²⁹⁶ calor.

However, it seems that Valle-Inclán appeals more to the eyes and ears than to other sense organs. He delights in using onomatopoeic words to charm his reader as well as for his own satisfaction. One can imagine the Galician's reading aloud with great pleasure such passages as "En la sombra de la chimenea el gato, tiznado de ceniza, ²⁹⁷ maúlla Los maullidos del gato continúan en la oscuridad," "Se oye una risa irreverente, y el murmullo del comento se apaga y se confunde con el ²⁹⁸ murmullo de un rezo." and "Varias voces susurran en la ²⁹⁹ sombra." Like Virgil, he is fond of using ulular. "En ³⁰⁰ la antesala el viento se retuerce ululante y soturno,"

288 A., p. 177

295 R., p. 48

289 A., p. 178

296 A., p. 320

290 R., p. 16

297 A., p. 273

291 A., p. 75

298 A., p. 15

292 A., p. 16

299 A., p. 15

293 A., p. 160

300 R., p. 31

294 A., p. 95

and "El mar ululante y negro" ³⁰¹ Silbar, ³⁰² ceceo, ³⁰³ bis-
³⁰⁴ biseo, ³⁰⁵ aullar, ³⁰⁶ aullador, and ³⁰⁷ murmurar are also favorite

words of the author. Just as expressive, but not so

soothing as these words are ³⁰⁸ carcajada, ³⁰⁹ cuco, and ³¹⁰ toc-

toc. Perhaps Don Ramón likes these words because they

contain so many vowels and these vowels are generally

a, o, or u. Besides the onomatopoetic words, Valle-Inclán

uses words which suggest pleasing sounds, such as ³¹¹ armonía,

³¹² campanada, ³¹³ cantar, ³¹⁴ canto, ³¹⁵ eco, ³¹⁶ resonancia, and ³¹⁷ sonoridad.

However, sounds which are more harsh and less musical are ex-

pressed by ³¹⁸ clamor, ³¹⁹ desentonado, ³²⁰ estrepito, ³²¹ chillar, ³²² crujir,

301 R., p. 35

312 A., p. 200

302 A., p. 97

313 A., p. 49

303 C., p. 27

314 R., p. 124

304 R., p. 189

315 A., p. 150

305 R., p. 53

316 R., p. 149

306 A., p. 97

317 A., p. 196

307 A., p. 67

318 R., p. 83

308 A., p. 275

319 R., p. 185

309 R., p. 75

320 R., p. 210

310 R., p. 27

321 A., p. 245

311 C., p. 103

322 A., p. 112

323 324 325 326 327
ladrido, rugir, ruido, ruidoso, and trueno. Valle-Inclán
 is as much an artist in sound as he is in color, for his
 musical ear loves rhythmical words and words with many
 vowels.

Don Ramón, through his many appeals to the senses by
 careful selection of words, creates an atmosphere that is
 picturesque, vivid, and real to the reader. His back-
 ground is felt as much as seen because of his wonderful
 power of suggestion. A writer who was not a true artist
 with a deep feeling for words and their power of appeal
 and suggestion could not have written such a passage as,

Sale la vieja andando a tientas. Canta un
 gallo, y el hidalgo, hundido en su sillón de la
 antesala, espera con la mano sobre los ojos. De
 pronto se estremece. Ha creído oír un grito,
 uno de esos gritos de la noche, inarticulados y
 por demás medrosos. En actitud de incorporarse,
 escucha. El viento se retuerce en el hueco de
 las ventanas, la lluvia azota los cristales, las
 puertas cerradas tiemblan en sus goznes. ¡Toc-
 toc!¡Toc-toc! Aquellas puertas de
 vieja tracería y floreado cerrojo, sienten en la
 oscuridad manos invisibles que las empujan
 Toc-toc!¡Toc-toc! De pronto pasa una ráfaga
 de silencio y la casa es como un sepulcro. Des-
 pués, pisadas y rosmar de voces en el corredor.
 Llegan rifando la vieja criada y Don Galán.³²⁸

323 A., p. 19

326 A., p. 123

324 A., p. 39

327 R., p. 15

325 A., p. 59

328 R., pp. 26-27

CHAPTER THREE

MASTER OF WORDS

Don Ramón del Valle-Inclán is one of the most versatile of Spanish writers. He may be classed as a regionalist, a traditionalist, a realist, a romanticist, and a modernist -- in other words, an eclectic. These varied interests have led him to the different fields of thoughts, sentiments, and ideas peculiar to various regions and periods. Although his interest centers in Spain, and especially in Galicia, it extends to other parts of the world, the Americas, France, and Africa. Likewise, his modernism does not overshadow his interest in the Middle Ages and the classics. Therefore, since different sensations and ideas call for their own mode of expression, an unusual vocabulary is necessary for a writer such as Don Ramón.

Like other writers of the Generation of 1898, Valle-Inclán manifests an interest in the classics and in Mediaeval Spain. Since he is a traditionalist and wishes to revive a mediaeval atmosphere, his vocabulary contains many words which were used in the Middle Ages, but which are now archaic or obsolete. The Galician's love for the old as well as for the unusual is apparent in his use of the literary words and archaisms with which he enriches

and dignifies his prose. He delights in adorning his prose with rare and poetic words.

To Valle-Inclán words had a particular appeal and for this reason he was a close observer of the speech of the people with whom he came in contact. His use of this vulgar speech has made his works regionalistic. The characters and scenes portray regionalism, but perhaps it is best shown through the colloquial and dialectic conversation of the characters. Since Galicia is so near to Portugal, words from the Portuguese language have crept into the Galician vernacular. Don Ramón has also borrowed words from the dialects of other regions.

Since the author's extensive vocabulary contains so many unusual words, it is not always easy to determine their origin. For those words which cannot be found in the dictionary several theories may be offered. First, they may exist in the popular speech of Galicia or some other region. Since language develops with a people and they change old words or make new ones as their need arises, many of these popular or slang words are not in the dictionary. Hence, Valle-Inclán may have picked up these expressions from the people. Second, these words may have been coined by the author's imagination. Because of his artistic temperament and originality, he is very capable of inventing words to suit his ideas and his fancy.

However, it would be difficult for us to prove here which of these theories is true.

Don Ramón's tendency to use popular speech and his desire to use different forms to express various and exact shades of meaning are shown in his abundant use of suffixes and prefixes. The tendency to use emphatic forms has always been prominent in the nature of the Spaniard. Therefore, he has taken the root word and shaded its meaning with the suffixes and prefixes which came into the language from Vulgar Latin. Menéndez Pidal says:

El sufijo es el recurso mas abundante de formación de palabras nuevas. Las lenguas romances son mas pobres en raíces que la latina, de la cual dejaron perder una gran masa de vocabulario; pero suplen esta pobreza con una riqueza mayor de derivaciones.³²⁹

Valle-Inclán employs an unusually wide range of suffixes. There are diminutives such as -ito, -ico, -ín, -ino, -illo, -uelo, -ete, -zuelo, -cito, and -ejo. Although he uses these forms frequently, he does not use them to the exaggerated extent of piling up many of them in one place. Generally they are scattered out even more than they are in the following passage:

³²⁹ Menéndez Pidal, Manual de gramática histórica española, Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, Madrid, 1929, p. 190.

Dona Jeromita

.....¡Pues aunque estuviéseis a la puerta de un ventorillo! ¡No habléis todos a una, selváticos! ¡Hermano, ponga paz!

El Abad

No me sale del bonete.

El Abad

330

¡Mi tonsura ha sido ultrajada por un carajuelo!

Valle-Inclán does not use suffixes as promiscuously as some other writers, such as the Quinteros. He chooses his words and selects the place to use them so aptly that there is no sense of artificiality.

Although it is generally considered that diminutive suffixes are more prevalent in popular speech, in the Comedias bárbaras it seems that the author has used more words with augmentative suffixes (-ón, -ona, -azo, -aza, -ota, -ote, and -ajo). The suffix -ón, -ona, which is used very frequently to denote large size or an increased degree of a quality, sometimes conveys the idea of grotesqueness or clumsiness. In such terms as bailón, borrachona, burlón, carreton, and mocetón the latter idea seems

330 C., p. 58

331 M. Montrose Ramsey, A Spanish Grammar, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1929, p. 516.

332 C., p. 223

335 R., p. 255

333 R., p. 139

336 A., p. 17

334 A., p. 126

more likely. The suffixes -ote and -ejo convey about the same idea although they are not so frequent as the -ón.

Other suffixes which Valle-Inclán uses are -oso, -anza, -ario, -al, -il, -ela, -ísimo, -iego, -iero, -ezno, -uzco, -or, -ana, -esco, -uco, -eza, -ejo, -ivo, -ero, -era, -eno, and -aje. There is a decided preponderance of adjectives ending in -oso. Perhaps the Galician used this suffix more because the sound is pleasing to the ear. The two vowels and the sibilant consonant form a suffix that is easy to pronounce and one that has a musical and rhythmical sound. This use of -oso is also a literary tendency, for the suffix -oso was quite popular in the time of Cicero. Then, too, it conveys shades of meaning with which the author may make his scenes more impressive, for example; ³³⁷fabuloso, ³³⁸fatigoso, ³³⁹leproso, ³⁴⁰nebuloso, ³⁴¹oloroso, ³⁴²sigiloso, and ³⁴³tenebroso. In comparison with the other suffixes there is a large number of adjectives containing the suffix -esco. Some of the rarer suffixes which Don Ramon

337 A., p. 131

340 A., p. 287

338 A., p. 211

341 A., p. 99

339 R., p. 81

342 A., p. 36

343 C., p. 272

uses are -ezno, -uzco, -iego, and -uco. All of these suffixes are repeated frequently in the Comedias bárbaras; however, the significant thing about his use of suffixes is the unusual variety. The following passages are typical of his use of suffixes:

Don Galán sale de la alcoba con los carrillos inflados por su gran risa bufonesca. Liberata le ve salir, se santigua y reza una oración..... Toda blanca y temblorosa llega a la cama..... En una lamparilla de plata tiembla la luz. Los ratones corren y chillan bajo las tablas del piso.³⁴⁴

Han llegado al atracadero donde se abriga la barca, grandes peñascales coronados por las ruinas de un castillo..... Es peligroso el paso de aquellas rocas negras y gigantes-cas, erizadas de mejillones y cubiertas de limo, donde los pies resbalaban.³⁴⁵

There is not such a variety of prefixes as there is of suffixes in the Comedias bárbaras, and the Galician's use of prefixes seems to be normal with a few exceptions. He has many words beginning with the prefix a- as in

346 347 348 349 350 351
abajarse, abalanzar, abravar, acallar, adivinar, aquietar,

344 A., p. 245

348 C., p. 104

345 R., p. 39

349 R., p. 124

346 A., p. 175

350 A., p. 152

347 R., p. 48

351 R., p. 80

and others. This is probably due to his fondness for the sound "a"; however, it also shows his tendency for archaic forms, for this prefix came from the Latin prefixes ad- or ab-. The tendency in Literary Latin and especially in Vulgar Latin to add these prefixes is seen in Old Spanish, but many of them have disappeared in modern Spanish. Of the approximately twenty words beginning with a- there are five in which all the vowels are a's, three in which all are o's and a's, and two in which all are u's, o's, and a's. These three sounds appear in many Spanish words, for there was a tendency to retain them from Literary and Vulgar Latin. The o and u were often confused and the diphthong ou became o in the romance language. The a generally remained in Spanish as it was in Vulgar Latin. The musical quality of these broad vowels appealed to the Spanish people as well as to Valle-Inclán.

In the Comedias bábaras Don Ramón uses several words beginning with the prefix re-, such as recatar, redoblar, rellenar, renombrar, and retemblar, which seem to be used

352 M. Pidal, Op. cit., Sec. 20, p. 59.

353 Ibid., p. 59

357 A., p. 251

354 Ibid., Sec. 17, p. 56

358 C., p. 97

355 A., p. 191

359 R., p. 15

356 A., p. 193

for emphasis and effect. Other prefixes found in these works are com-, con-, contra-, de-, des-, em-, en-, in-, im-, inter-, entre-, ir-, pre-, re-, sobre-, pro-, and tras-; however, these are common prefixes and might be used by any writer.

Valle-Inclán's use of prefixes and especially his use of suffixes add clarity and rhythm to his prose. It also shows his realistic trend in using popular speech. Other examples of colloquial speech are seen in the Galician's use of dialectic words, archaic words, and coined words.

It is practically impossible to prove the fact that a word was coined by a writer because there is always the possibility that the word may exist in some vernacular. This is especially true in Spain where there are so many provinces, each with its own dialect, that it is easy for a word to be taken with little or no change from one province to another. On the other hand, due to his love for the rare and unusual, Valle-Inclán is a writer who is likely to coin words.

In the Comedias bárbaras approximately ninety-two words were found which could not be found in the Diccionario de la lengua española compiled by the Real Academia Española, and only twenty-one of this number could be found in the Diccionario enciclopédico de la lengua castellana

of Zerolo. This leaves about seventy-one words unaccounted for. Three of these words are compounds (lobicán, tornaluz, and verdilargo). Although this tendency to use compound words is found among the Spanish people, it is not so prevalent in Spain as it is in Germany.

Another popular tendency that was noted in these words is that of adding -ear to verbs. Menéndez Pidal says that "estas formaciones son numerosísimas y siempre crecientes, para crear toda clase de verbos nuevos." Therefore, it is not so unusual to find such verbs as choclear, corrotear, mordisquear, sacear, and trenquear.

Adementado and adeprender show the use of double prefixes. The Diccionario de la lengua española of the Real Academia Española says that deprender is a word that is used very little; so it seems plausible that our author may have created this word by adding the prefix a- to deprender. Perhaps adementado came into existence by the same method, for this use of double prefixes was fairly common.

360 M. Pidal, op. cit., Sec. 87-88, p. 201

361 Ibid., p. 287

365 R., p. 261

362 A., p. 14

366 A., p. 324

363 A., p. 19

367 C., p. 154

364 A., p. 324

368 R., p. 118

369 C. H. Grandgent, An Introduction to Vulgar Latin, D. C. Heath, New York, 1907, p. 15.

Again Valle-Inclán's fondness for the sound of "a" may be noticed in the fact that twenty-one of these unusual words begin with a and many words with only the vowels a, o, and u are used, such as ³⁷⁰ achalananar, ³⁷¹ arambol, ³⁷² arramaco, ³⁷³ arroás, ³⁷⁴ aturujo, ³⁷⁵ barbollar, ³⁷⁶ broar, ³⁷⁷ cosca, ³⁷⁸ croca, ³⁷⁹ curmano, ³⁸⁰ fulvo, ³⁸¹ gargalladas, ³⁸² moja, ³⁸³ rebanar, ³⁸⁴ rosmar, and ³⁸⁵ soturno. There is no particular trend noted in the other words. Their origin is still uncertain.

As he travelled to various regions, Valle-Inclán picked up words from the dialects and languages with which he came in contact. These words he weaves into the conversation of his characters with skill and grace.

In the Comedias bárbaras dialectic words are used by the various classes of people: Don Juan, Cara de Plata, el Sacristán, the peasants, and the beggars. Valle-Inclán

370 C., p. 100

378 R., p. 26

371 C., p. 25

379 A., p. 254

372 A., p. 245

380 C., p. 187

373 R., p. 141

381 C., p. 255

374 C., p. 187

382 A., p. 25

375 A., p. 191

383 A., p. 123

376 R., p. 206

384 A., p. 42

377 C., p. 259

385 R., p. 31

even employs them in his directions and explanations; therefore their use must be general.

Our author was familiar with the speech of all classes of people in Galicia; he knew their peculiar expressions and their popular or folk songs. In Romance de lobos Paula la Reina sings this little lullaby to her baby:

¡ Eh, meniño, eh! ...
 Pra Santo Tome'
 ¿ Teu pai quen foy?
 ¿ Qua nay quen e? ...
 ¡ Eh meniño, eh!

In Cara de Plata we find another little song,

Noite noitiña de miegos o trasnos
 Fun á ó muiño d'o meu compadre;
 Fun pol'o vento, vin pol'o aire.³⁸⁷

In these novels of Valle-Inclán there is a wide variety of dialects although there are few words from each dialect.
 388 389 390 391
 From Provençal he uses denantes, lisiado, ulular, yantar,
 392 393 394
escachizar; from Santander, rizon, runflar; and from the

386 R., pp. 124-125

390 R., p. 31

387 C., p. 262

391 A., p. 132

388 A., p. 104

392 C., p. 110

389 R., p. 71

393 R., p. 43

394 C., p. 175

Americas, ³⁹⁵cuspe (Chile), and ³⁹⁶moscovia (Cuba). Such
gallicisms as ³⁹⁷compango, ³⁹⁸parletano, and ³⁹⁹jardín are found.
⁴⁰⁰Achalanar comes from Cordoba, ⁴⁰¹apenar from Aragon, ⁴⁰²sarillo
from Asturias, and ⁴⁰³trenquear from Murcia and Teruel. We
also find colloquialisms from Galicia in Don Ramón's
vocabulary, such as ⁴⁰⁴chantar, ⁴⁰⁵rachar, and ⁴⁰⁶mamoa. Other
colloquialisms or familiar words, as the Real Academia
Española classifies them, are ⁴⁰⁷achicharrar, ⁴⁰⁸antiparras,
⁴⁰⁹asús, ⁴¹⁰galicoso, ⁴¹¹gimotear, ⁴¹²por mor de, ⁴¹³taco, ⁴¹⁴talmente,

395 C., p. 255

405 C., p. 85

396 A., p. 331

406 C., p. 13

397 R., p. 132

407 R., p. 14

398 A., p. 103

408 A., p. 173

399 A., p. 61

409 A., p. 90

400 C., p. 100

410 C., p. 250

401 A., p. 259

411 A., p. 276

402 A., p. 297

412 A., p. 244

403 A., p. 324

413 C., p. 122

404 A., p. 242

414 A., p. 104

415 416 417 418 419 420
tundir, bisbiseo, chupona, corcovo, crio, gaiterar,
 421 422 423 424
majeza, mismamente, monago, and pelucona. These words
 show various popular tendencies; for example: achicharrar
 and bisbiseo are onomatopoeic words; antiparras is a
 compound word; gimotear contains the suffix -ear; and
galicoso, chupona, and monago are words with suffixes.

Therefore, the fact that Valle-Inclán borrows words
 from ten different dialects and languages besides using
 words peculiar to his own Galician indicates a wide ac-
 quaintance with various regions, his interest in them,
 and his exactness and precision in expressing his thoughts.

Another colloquial characteristic of Valle-Inclán
 is his tendency to use archaisms. Although Spanish was
 developed from Latin, it has become a language in the
 full sense of the word. There were two channels through
 which Spanish developed: one was Vulgar Latin and the
 other was Literary Latin. These two strains may be
 noted in the Spanish of today. Especially in colloquial

415 R., p. 181

420 C., p. 153

416 R., p. 189

421 A., p. 241

417 C., p. 235

422 C., p. 71

418 A., p. 21

423 A., p. 15

419 C., p. 241

424 A., p. 258

speech do we find traces of Vulgar Latin. These rare forms which are sometimes used in popular speech appealed to Valle-Inclán. He liked to use them and preserve them in his works.

Some words such as ⁴²⁵catar, ⁴²⁶catear (which shows the popular tendency of adding ⁴²⁷-ear), ⁴²⁸alcuño, ⁴²⁹amostrar, ⁴³⁰corvar, ⁴³¹falagare, ⁴³²fosa, ⁴³³maginar, ⁴³⁴marcelina, ⁴³⁵nacencia, ⁴³⁶nocharniega, ⁴³⁷pinto, and principesa are Latin words which might have been used with little or no change in Old Spanish, but which are now considered anticuadas by the Real Academia Española. Forms like ⁴³⁸conformidade, ⁴³⁹abade, and ⁴⁴⁰ustede represent the last stage of the development from Latin to Spanish before the final form. ⁴⁴¹Bon, ⁴⁴²fontela, and ⁴⁴³ponte

425 A., p. 83

434 A., p. 323

426 R., p. 220

435 C., p. 175

427 A., p. 252

436 R., p. 19

428 C., p. 149

437 A., p. 116

429 A., p. 163

438 R., p. 173

430 C., p. 247

439 A., p. 314

431 R., p. 228

440 A., p. 87

432 A., p. 312

441 R., p. 233

433 A., p. 24

442 R., p. 225

443 A., p. 125

are latinisms because the o has not diphthongized to ue,
as it did in accented syllables in Spanish. There was a
confusion in Vulgar Latin and Old Spanish of the f and h.
Valle-Inclán likes to use the old forms with the f as in
facienda, fierro, fabla. He also uses the archaic form
planto instead of modern llanto. Trujimos, trujo, and
vide are archaic forms of the perfect tense of traer and
ver, respectively. There are several verb forms ending
in -des, as riades (a form of reir), which are the old
forms after the Latin t had changed to d and before

444 M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 49

445 Ibid., p. 101

446 A., p. 69

447 R., p. 193

448 R., p. 134

449 R., p. 45

450 M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 104

451 A., p. 112; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 276

452 C., p. 225; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 276

453 A., p. 66; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 278

454 R., p. 136

455 M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 107

the d disappeared. Other archaic forms which Valle-Inclán uses are ⁴⁵⁶agora and ⁴⁵⁷agorina for ⁴⁵⁸ahora, ⁴⁵⁹anday for ⁴⁶⁰andad, ⁴⁶¹asina for ⁴⁶²así, ⁴⁶³dende for ⁴⁶⁴desde, ⁴⁶⁵vos for ⁴⁶⁶os, ⁴⁶⁷noso for ⁴⁶⁸nuestro, ⁴⁶⁹luengo for ⁴⁷⁰largo, and ⁴⁷¹escura for ⁴⁷²oscura. We also find such Latin forms as ⁴⁷³in, ⁴⁷⁴lar, ⁴⁷⁵non, and ⁴⁷⁶pace. All of these forms have been preserved in colloquial speech and it is from the people themselves that Valle-Inclán takes them.

Besides the archaisms we find many literary words in the vocabulary of the Galician. Words such as

456 A., p. 133; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 294

457 C., p. 275

458 R., p. 38

459 A., p. 85; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 295

460 R., p. 75

461 A., p. 133; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 216

462 C., p. 237

463 A., p. 114; M. Pidal, op. cit., p. 112

464 C., p. 145

465 C., p. 185

466 R., p. 136

466 R., p. 51

468 C., p. 185

⁴⁶⁹concupiscencia, ⁴⁷⁰centurión, ⁴⁷¹genuflexión, ⁴⁷²pitagórica,
⁴⁷³pulcritud, and ⁴⁷⁴agros add mellowness and sonority. Most
of the verbs in the literary class are verbs of the first
conjugation, such as ⁴⁷⁵dictar, ⁴⁷⁶edificar, ⁴⁷⁷iluminar, ⁴⁷⁸narrar,
⁴⁷⁹and navegar; however, there are a few verbs from the
other conjugations. Spanish nouns ending in -tud and -dad
came from the accusative singular in Latin -tutem or
-tatem with a loss of the -em and a change of t's to d's
as in ⁴⁸⁰gratitud and ⁴⁸¹humildad. Spanish nouns ending in
-ción came from the Latin words ending in -tion, as
⁴⁸²salutacion and ⁴⁸³revelacion. Valle-Inclán uses these lit-
erary words because he loves the old, the unusual, and
the artistic.

So skilfully does Valle-Inclán compose, however, that
this unusual vocabulary consisting of colloquialisms,

469 R., p. 51

477 A., p. 51

470 A., p. 104

478 A., p. 335

471 R., p. 92

479 A., p. 109

472 C., p. 103

480 A., p. 210

473 A., p. 24

481 R., p. 110

474 A., p. 108

482 A., p. 202

475 A., p. 207

483 A., p. 313

476 A., p. 16

dialecticisms, literary words, archaisms, coined words, and truly Spanish words never seems to produce an unnatural or strained effect. The words are so aptly chosen for the idea image that they are to suggest or the effect of musical cadence that they are to produce -- in a word, his artistry is so complete -- that the reader loses sight of any tendency toward striving for effect and revels with the author in a sense of beauty. Far above everything else he is a master in the art of word painting.

CHAPTER FOUR

VALLE-INCLÁN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

Although Valle-Inclán lived during a period when the interest of Spanish writers such as Unamuno, Pío Baroja, and Pardo Bazán centered in social problems and philosophy, his interest was in reviving the legends and atmosphere of the Middle Ages and in creating an imaginary and fantastic background. Form and impression were much more important to him than profundity of thought. However much critics may criticize this emphasis on form of expression and lack of content, they cannot overlook Valle-Inclán's contribution to the Spanish language by enriching it with beautiful and expressive words.

Don Ramón's enrichment of the Spanish language lies, not in the extraordinary extent of his vocabulary, but in the variety and beauty of his words. His vocabulary is not extensive; in fact, it may be considered very small when compared with that of Shakespeare, who is said to have employed the largest vocabulary ever used by any man. Valle-Inclán uses approximately 4500 words in his Comedias bárbaras and Shakespeare uses about 20,000 words

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in his prose and poetry. Milton uses about 8000 words

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in his poetry. However, in comparing these vocabularies it must be remembered that, in the count of Shakespeare's vocabulary, all of his works were studied, while in the count of Valle-Inclán's vocabulary only the Comedias bábaras, which form only a part of his total works, were studied. The fact that Shakespeare wrote so much more than Valle-Inclán and that he wrote on so many different subjects must also be taken into consideration. Because of the subject of the Comedias bábaras and the artistic nature of the author, perhaps the larger part of his vocabulary consists of unusual words. Many of the more common words in the writer's vocabulary do not appear in his works. Valle-Inclán's vocabulary compares more favorably with that of Milton; and it is possible that if all of the works of both authors were considered, the vocabulary counts might be similar. In the works of both authors the aesthetic and artistic aim is apparent.

In the novels of Valle-Inclán art in words and images is supreme.

484 Otto Jespersen, Growth and Structure of the English Language, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1923, p. 217.

485 Ibid., p. 217.

Todo lo que tiene de noble la raza se refleja en ellas, y no resultan contrahechas ni artificiales, sino como arrancadas de un lienzo de Velázquez o, mejor, del mundo real, visto con mirada penetrante de artista que descubre la armonía de las formas y embellece las imágenes, no porque las retoque, sino porque ve mas rasgos en ellas, y los ve mejor, con una visión mas comprensiva, serena y luminosa. Este poeta y novelista aristocrático resulta un gran pintor del pueblo.⁴⁸⁶

It is true that in the Comedias bárbaras we find the looseness and freedom of colloquial speech with its dialecticisms, its archaisms, and its coined words; however, Don Ramón uses these with discrimination. He does not use popular speech promiscuously as the Quinteros do, but he chooses from the vernacular words which appeal to him through their beauty or expressiveness, and he further enriches his highly artistic prose with the use of many literary words. Valle-Inclán is a connoisseur of words. He is also an artisan, as well as an artist, who with his different types of words weaves a somber or vivid atmosphere and background for his impressive narrative. The aesthetic and the artistic are always paramount in his works.

It is difficult to evaluate the work of a contem-

⁴⁸⁶ Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, Novelas y novelistas, Casa Editorial Calleja, Madrid, 1918, p. 223.

temporary writer and to prophesy his future place in literature, but it seems that Valle-Inclán's works will live to be read and appreciated for their intrinsic beauty and art. He is a writer who belongs to no certain period but to all periods, for art will always have a universal appeal. In setting this high artistic standard Valle-Inclán has given a challenge to future generations; or, in the words of Julio Casares,

La juventud intelectual de América, ya tan exquisitamente cultivada, esa juventud innovadora, que ha hecho del Arte, una como Teología de la Belleza, esa, acogerá a Valle-Inclán, aclamará a Valle-Inclán, seguirá a Valle-Inclán, como a un Maestro, como al mas alto y puro Maestro, que el Renacimiento de la España literaria puede ofrecer a la inquietud ávida de sus almas, enamoradas de un severo Ideal.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁷ Julio Casares y Sánchez, Crítica profana, Renacimiento, Madrid, 1932, p. 20.

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