

THE TWO MICAELAS: THE ARCHETYPAL WOMAN IN VALLE-INCLAN

Valle-Inclán creates two Micaelas -Micaela la Galana and Micaela la Roja¹ - who play a singular role in his narrative discourse. Both are archetypes from a mythic aorist. They are, within Valle's universe, figures of universal significance. The Micaelas are embodiments of nostalgic memories of an aoristic history before industrialism, of pre-urban images. They are chroniclers of a world whose creator would like literature to function as an imaginary alternative to modern society, as a palliative for its crass failures.

The fictional life of the Micaelas² accompanies the period when the Marqués de Bradomín is the protagonist of Valle's discourse, because it is Bradomín, as authorial surrogate, who seeks to evade sordid confrontations with history, and with the most Romantic of yearnings, to retreat to a past utopia that never existed. Micaela is the crucial link for the fulfillment of this desire. She holds the key to this pre-urban utopia; to this combination of childhood fantasies and memories, and adult need to evade reality. Micaela is a socially marginal woman who is guardian and transmitter of popular traditions of rural life. As such, she is the only woman in what can certainly be called a model phallogocentric society,³ able to subvert the law of patriarchal order and briefly take control of the narrative discourse..

The Vision of Reality: 1888-1915

In the early years (the period up to the publication of *La lámpara maravillosa*, 1916, and *La medianoche*, 1917), Valle-Inclán's fictional world is a projection of a vision of reality that turns away from the present and shuns a confrontation with *fin de siècle* Spain. It is an attempt to create a past that never was. Alternately accosted and repelled by a hostile reality, and lacking either the conceptual apparatus or personal clarity to yet confront the present,⁴ Valle, in his early search for an understanding and perspective on Spanish history and society, consciously evades the present and creates a static, permanent, aoristic past. In the guise of his fictional surrogate, Valle takes refuge in a metaliterary Galicia -a Galicia which, although historically verosimilar in many ways,⁵ is essentially the product of a nostalgic, inward-looking vision of reality still groping for absolutes, eternal values (childhood, family, clans ritual, tradition). Religion does not provide transcendental explanations for Valle-Inclán, so he seeks to endow literature with that purpose.

Yet his (Bradomín's) nostalgia, at once playful and serious, is not without its own dialectic. In the very creation of Bradomín, with the Marques' intricate movings in and out of the past⁶ -the invention of a new form of writing- Valle sets up the foundation for the ironic, Brechtian perspective that will culminate in the birth of the esperpento. When, in the move to Madrid (**Luces de bohemia**), Valle abandons the search for eternal values and permanence, he plunges into a confrontation with and deconstruction of Spanish history that starts in the 1920s and marches backwards until 1868 (**Ruedo ibérico**) -a relentless, meticulous dissection that was unfortunately truncated in 1936.

The Evolution of an Archetype

Micaela la Galana and Micaela la Roja perform the same function in Valle's discourse: each is an ancient maid that has been with the family for years, knows their complete history and is undyingly loyal to them. Both partake of that ambiguously familiar relationship with the masters of the house that is so typical of their situation and -significantly- both women are described in almost identical terms.

La Galana belongs to the Bradomín household and most particularly, to Bradomín's childhood; La Roja is part of the Montenegro **entourage**, and as none of the Montenegros evoke their past to the extent that Bradomín does, we only know of her direct participation in Don Juan Manuel's (and the other Montenegros') adult life. "Micaela" as a fictional character, however, is only carefully delineated once. Valle-Inclán undertakes the complicated, often oblique process of exteriorizing his **reino interior** (the yet unarticulated fusion of fantasies, intuitions and experiences which ultimately coalesce into a fictional creation -a process we will examine in detail in following pages) only once. The various tentative, incomplete attempts at forming "Micaela" as well as a characteristic process of presentation of the fictional entity are exercised only with la Galana. When la Roja first appears in **Aguila de blasón** she is simply flashed before us in already completed form without either having gone through the mechanics of early **bocetos** or having been spoken of or alluded to by other characters in any previous work. La Roja thus becomes, rather than an independently formed personage, a replacement for La Galana: a replacement barely perceived and unconsciously accepted by the reader because of the previous familiarity with Micaela la Galana.

Valle-Inclán conceives a fictional character in what he refers to as "las larvas de mi reino interior"⁷ as a combination of remembered reality and the ability to "oír las voces más lejanas"⁸ or be it, to evoke and articulate ideas, fantasies, intuitions which up to that moment remained in murky, undiscernible, "unheard" form. The exteriorization of this **reino exterior** is a slow, often uneven process during which various tentative attempts at creating a character appear before he or she is finally named and presented to the reader.

Once the early fragmentary attempts have coalesced into a definite character, the creative process moves into the second stage. Valle presents a character by evoking him (or her) in his entirety and holding him "still" for a moment before placing him in the fictional world to interact with the other players. This method,

reminiscent of motion picture technique, isolates the character momentarily outside of time, allowing for careful examination. Like a theatrical or cinematographic director, Valle-Inclán emphasizes the exterior signs of personality. He tells us of gestures, facial expressions, salient physical traits, clothing -never psychological processes or complicated workings of the human mind.

“Todas las cosas bellas y mortales que nosotros creamos son para los ojos o para los oídos, alternativamente. Su goce no pueden disfrutarlo los dos sentidos a la vez.”⁹ This aesthetic consideration is a key factor in the creation of a fictional character. First the visual evocation is given and then, when the description is completed, the figure is given a voice and begins to speak. Partially because of his desire to allow for maximum sensual comprehension and partially because of the propensity to impose order and structure -implicit in the definition of **quietismo** throughout *La lámpara maravillosa* -Valle-Inclán tends to follow this pattern in most of his character presentations, including, as we will now see, that of Micaela la Galana.

Before directly naming la Galana in the *Sonata de otoño*, Valle showed interest in this archetype by briefly speaking on two occasions of **una vieja** identifiable as the future Micaela. In “A media noche”, an early story important as an initial attempt at creating a fictional Galician world, we read: “Sentada al pie del postigo, que aún permanecía abierto en hora tan desusada, estaba una viejezuela, **tocada con un ‘mantelo’ y rezando medrosamente.**”¹⁰ These last two phrases are words Valle-Inclán will reserve exclusively for both Micaelas and thus one may assume that this old woman is, in fact, the first appearance of the character who -eleven years later- will be named Micaela la Galana.

In 1897 “Epitalamio” (a short story later retitled “Augusta”) was published. The last line of the tale, “y la vieja criada, que había conocido a los otros señores, hilaba sentada al sol”¹¹ brings us slightly closer to Micaela as she will appear in the first *Sonata* where Valle-Inclán will frequently picture Micaela as spinning. Even more important as a step in the forging of the archetypal servant -the collective memory of the patriarchal life of Galician **pazos** where both the mode of production and the mentality remain static- is the aura of permanence which surrounds “la vieja criada”. This quality of being an almost eternal fixture of the scene -seeming to have always been there and to be able, somehow, to remain forever- is almost a metonymic trait that will define Micaela la Galana in every work in which she appears. Valle-Inclán, God of his paper world, is creating his own eternal values, his own archetypal principles.¹²

Thus, we are somewhat prepared to recognize the character who, a few years later in 1902, is introduced for the first time in the following way: “Una vieja hilaba en el hueco de una ventana. Concha me la mostró con un gesto. ¡Es Micaela... la doncella de mi madre... la pobre está ciega! No le digas nada.”¹³ Bradomín and Concha had been walking throughout the latter’s palace, reliving happy scenes of their childhood when, significantly, they come upon the almost statue-like figure of Micaela -a further reminder of their childhood in which the woman played an important role. In the lines immediately preceding Micaela’s initial appearance Valle-Inclán described the setting surrounding the old woman: “En un testero cerco mortecino de luz la mariposa de aceite que día y noche alumbraba ante un Cristo

desmelenado y lívido.”¹⁴ Micaela is then set into this scene as one further object rather than as a living, moving entity. She becomes, in a sense, identical to the faithful, eternal light that burns day and night alongside her, with biblical endurance. Just as the house, the physical surroundings, have stayed the same so has Micaela. She is blind now and a little older, but one “knows” she was never young nor different in any significant way. Her being and existence are aoristic -they occur in an indefinite time, outside of, beyond logical temporal boundaries.

The six works in which la Galana is named or takes part all are set in Galicia, and she appears only during 1902-1914, the years in which Valle-Inclán’s discourse concentrates in his negative province. Subsequently, Galicia recedes into the background for several years and when it briefly comes to fore again in the early 1920’s -in *Divinas Palabras* and *Cara de Plata* -neither Micaela la Galana nor Micaela la Roja reappear. This is so because a “Micaela” -por antonomasia- is the chronicler and transmitter of a world of *vinculeros* and *mayorazgos* that Valle places in a timeless, permanent, ‘mythical’ past.¹⁵ Part of a way of life, she belongs to an important land-owning family who have been patriarchs of a certain region for many years. Usually nobles or descendants of nobility, their name and power are permanent fixtures in the rural area they dominate. Without the importance of such clans the figure of Micaela loses much of its significance. When, in 1920, Valle-Inclán deals directly with Galicia again his vision has changed and the emphasis is no longer on this region as the seat of feudal *mayorazgos*. In *Divinas palabras* the *pueblo* is the protagonist, and *Cara de Plata* shifts the emphasis the former *Comedias bárbaras* placed on the *Vinculero* and his possessions to the young *Segundón* who does not incarnate the feudal structure. (By 1924 Valle-Inclán will write “He asistido al cambio de una sociedad de castas (los hidalgos que conocí de rapaz), y lo que ví no lo verá nadie. Soy el historiador de un mundo que acabó conmigo. Ya nadie volverá a ver vinculeros y mayorazgos....”)¹⁶

In the introduction to *Jardín umbrío* Bradomín explains that la Galana holds the key to much of his knowledge about his childhood, his mysterious, but cherished past utopia. Furthermore, he attributes all of the stories in the anthology to his grandmother’s *doncella*: “Tenía mi abuela una doncella muy vieja que se llamaba Micaela la Galana... sabía muchas historias de santos, de almas en pena, de duendes y de ladrones. Ahora yo cuento las que ella me contaba.”¹⁷

As we examine each of Micaela la Galana’s appearances in the order in which Valle-Inclán wrote them, we will see the gradual, meticulous evolution of the archetypal character in Valle’s discourse, and the innovations in his textual practice contained in the creation of Micaela la Galana and her relationship to the Marqués de Bradomín.

In the first work in which la Galana is named directly, the *Sonata de otoño* (1902), Concha mentions as she and Bradomín are looking at the old woman, that Micaela was her mother’s *doncella*. In the introduction to *Jardín umbrío*, written one year later in 1903, Micaela is remembered (just as she is actually seen in *Otoño*) as passing “las horas hilando en el hueco de una ventana,”¹⁸ but is now referred to as Bradomín’s grandmother’s *doncella* - a *doncella* who as the Marqués tells us, “murió siendo yo todavía joven.”¹⁹

Micaela la Galana is next mentioned -she does not actually appear- in the

Sonata de invierno, written slightly later in 1905. The action is situated in Estella, Navarra, and when Fray Ambrosio's **ama** enters to serve the chocolate to her master and the Marqués de Bradomín, she says to the latter: "El Señor Marqués no se acordaba de mí. Pues le he tenido en mi regazo. Yo soy hermana de Micaela la Galana. ¿Se acuerda de Micaela la Galana? Una doncella que tuvo muchos años su abuelita, mi dueña la Condesa."²⁰ Then in a statement which surprises the reader of either the **Sonata de otoño** where the Marqués saw and commented on Micaela or **Jardín umbrío** where Bradomín attributes its entire contents to stories he remembered having heard from Micaela la Galana, the Marqués turns to Micaela's sister and gives us to understand he does not remember la Galana and how could he be expected to for "¡Ay, Señora, si tampoco recuerdo a mi abuela!"²¹

The inconsistencies in Bradomín's memory reinforce Micaela's aoristic quality; she has a permanence not bounded by logical dimensions of time and space. This mention of la Galana is noteworthy also because, paradoxically, it serves to link her with that portion of the Galician **pueblo** who exist on the fringes of the Bradomín and Montenegro households, thus enhancing her "reality". Although one tended to assume that Micaela was from either Brandeso, Cela, Céltigos, Gondar or some other nearby town and entered into the service of the Bradomíns at an early age, these words from her sister lend another dimension of credibility to the ritual chronicler of popular traditions. Indeed, some years later, in 1913, when Valle-Inclán writes of Rosa la Galana -a young, attractive woman who did the bewitching in "El Embrujado", a drama taking place in rural Galicia- one unconsciously links Rosa, a woman of the **pueblo**, with Micaela although the **mote** might be nothing more than a coincidence.

Micaela la Galana does not reappear again until 1914²² when we read of her in the last short stories Valle-Inclán wrote: "Juan Quinto," "Mi bisabuelo," and "Milón de la Arnoya."

Elsewhere I have shown that Valle-Inclán's experiments in temporal determinations of the narrating instance were essential in the creation of the Marqués de Bradomín.²³ The Marqués' recollections (he is, after all, a man of memory) combined in various ways with the past and present fictional world serving both to enhance the creation of Bradomín and of the novelistic universe. In the last three stories Valle wrote in which a close relationship exists between Micaela la Galana and Bradomín (both Bradomín the child who knew Micaela so well and Bradomín the nature narrator who vividly remembers her), the innovations in temporal determinations of the narrative discourse are complex and revealing.

In the introduction to **Jardín umbrío**²⁴ Bradomín tell us, in effect, that all of the following stories are literary transcriptions from the Galicia oral tradition ("Ahora yo cuento las que ella [Micaela] me contaba"). However, in only three of the stories is the narrative voice consistent with the introductory proposal. "La Adoración de los Reyes", "El Rey de la máscara" and "Un ejemplo" are the only tales told in the third person with a heterodiegetic,²⁵ or totally absent narrator, the narrative perspective coherent with the prologue. Many of the stories, like "Mi Hermana Antonia", are Bradomín's own memories, told in the first person. Bradomín, the narrator, is also present in this case as a character in the story he is telling, making these narratives homodiegetic. Following Genette's classifications,

stories such as "Del misterio" and "El miedo", where the narrator, telling the story in the first-person, not only appears inside the narrative as a personage, but figures as its principal character, are autodiegetic.

In the three stories in which Micaela appears the "voice" the act of narrating itself, what kind of narrator and narratee are implied- often involves the use of several of Genette's definitions within the frame of a single tale. This is so because while it is the nature Bradomín who narrates in the first person many of the stories dealing with his own memories of past experiences, in other instances he, the adult, is remembering tales which Micaela in turn remembered from her past and told him as a child. Thus, in addition to being one of the central figures he himself recalls about his childhood, Micaela becomes Bradomín's most important link with a past that either occurred before he was born or when he was too young to remember the events. This temporal expansion achieved by varying the narrative dimensions of voice and distance, allows the "histoire" (the sequence in which events 'actually' occurred as we can infer from the text) to extend beyond the limitations of Bradomín's own recollections into a previously unknown past.

In "Juan Quinto", the Marqués recalls a story that Micaela remembered from an experience in her own youth and once told Bradomín: "Micaela la Galana contaba muchas historias de Juan Quinto, aquel bigardo que cuando ella era moza, tenía estremecida toda la Tierra de Salnés".²⁶ It is a tale of an almost legendary figure in Galicia who lived before Bradomín was born. However, as "este tiempo de que hablaba Micaela"²⁷ is recounted to us in a third person narrative, filtered through the Marqués' memory, it becomes a part of the narrator's on distantly removed past - that is, the traditional, popular culture of Galicia. It is an aoristic past, permanent and untouched by the present. Valle-Inclán achieves this absolute distance between fictional and narrative time by the presence of Micaela and her structural role in the narrative discourse.

Micaela never actually appears in "Juan Quinto"; rather, she serves as the secondary narrator. Bradomín, the primary narrator who is telling the story in our, the reader's time, recalls how Micaela recounted the tale to him many years ago and recollections of the old woman talking to him serve to begin and conclude the story: "Micaela la Galana contaba muchas historias de Juan Quinto" (opening line, p. 13); "Micaela la Galana, en el final del cuento, bajaba la voz santiguándose, y con un murmullo de su boca sin dientes recordaba la genealogía de Juan Quinto" (concluding line, p. 19). The presence of Micaela at the beginning and the end of the story lends another temporal dimension to the work because both perspectives -that of the mature Bradomín, the actual narrator and that of Micaela, the remembered narrator-contrast with the time in which the action within the story 'actually' transpired, in the timeless past of Galician folklore, of Micaela's youth.

"Mi bisabuelo" is written in the past tense ("Don Manuel... fue un caballero alto... Hablaba poco, paseaba solo, era orgulloso..." p. 159), but Bradomín, the homodiegetic narrator, interrupts the first paragraph with the narrative present: "La imagen que conservo de mi abuelo" (p. 159), and continues to recount what he himself remembers about his great-grandfather. However, when he reaches the point when he wishes to recall an episode from his relative's youth -obviously much before Bradomín himself was born- he must call on Micaela la Galana for aid; that

is, she will assume control of the narration.

As Bradomín concludes what he alone remembers before invoking Micaela's memories, we are told "Ya estaban frías las manos de mi bisabuelo cuando supe cómo se habían cubierto de sangre", (p. 161) and the reader is prepared for an explanation of how the hands had been covered with blood. We are then swept back to the scene of Bradomín's childhood in the following sentence which begins a new paragraph: "Un anochecido escuché el relato a la vieja aldeana que ha sido siempre la crónica de la familia: Micaela hilaba su copo en la antesala redonda, y contaba a los otros criados las grandezas de la casa y las historias de los mayores" (p. 161). Bradomín, now using Micaela's memories filtered once again through his own, continues recounting what "la vieja criada" told them that night: "De mi bisabuelo recordaba [Micaela] que era un gran cazador, y que una tarde, cuando volvía de tirar a las perdices, salió a esperarle en el camino del monte el cabezalero de un foral que tenía en Juno" (p. 161).

The transference of narrative control from Bradomín to Micaela in order to tell a "story within a story" (a metadiegetic narrative) is done by analepsis. That is, the transposition from the primary narrator's place in time to that of the child listening to Micaela is achieved by a technique similar to the cinematographic flashback. The fadeout, or beginning of the analepsis, is in the sentence "Ya estaban frías las manos... cuando supe". The juxtaposition of the adverb **Ya** conveying the immediacy of the present and the verb **estaban** in the narrative past is an effort to bridge the far-off scene of what Bradomín is remembering and the vivid present of the evocation. The flashback is completed in the following sentence ("Un anochecido escuché el relato a la vieja aldeana") because the narrative is temporarily abandoned and we are participating exclusively in the past scene.

At the conclusion of the story Bradomín, the narrator, detaches himself from his memories of Micaela and his youth and returns to the narrative present. This separation is achieved by a series of skillfully constructed sentences which bring us closer and closer to the narrator's present. Once again similar to a cinematographic approach, this technique resembles the conclusion of a movie flashback and the return to the present moment. The reader is still partaking of the remembered past as he begins reading the final paragraph of the story where the verbs are in the imperfect: "Todos habían huído, y eran los dos solos en medio del camino, frente al muerto. Contaba Micaela la Galana que a raíz de aquel suceso mi bisabuelo había estado algún tiempo en la cárcel de Santiago" (p. 169). We are then brought one step closer to the present moment as the present perfect and the preterite interrupt the narrative past of the imperfect:

Muchos años después, para una información genealógica, he tenido que revolver papeles viejos, y pude averiguar que aquella prisión había sido por pertenecer al partido de los apostólicos el señor Coronel de Milicias Don Manuel Bermúdez y Bolaño. Era yo estudiante cuando llegué a formarme cabal idea de mi bisabuelo (p. 169).

And finally, the reader's present is united with Bradomín's fictional actuality as we read: "Creo que ha sido un carácter extraordinario, y así estimo sobre todas

mis sangres la herencia suya. Aún ahora, vencido por tantos desengaños, recuerdo con orgullo aquel tiempo de mi mocedad” (p.169) with a predominance of verbs in the present tense. The circle is now completed: “Mi bisabuelo” began in the narrative present with Bradomín telling us “La imagen que conservo de mi bisabuelo”. Then we saw the present dissolve, replaced by the vivid evocation of a distantly removed past. We were immersed in the remembered past until Bradomín once again resumed control of the narrative and carried us back to his fictional present, to the conclusion of the story where narrative time and fictional time are merged.

“Milón de la Arnoya” is narrated in the third person, but unlike “La adoración de los Reyes”, “El Rey de la máscara”, and “Un ejemplo”, the narrator is not always absent, and Micaela herself appears as a character. After several pages of heterodiegetic narrative, Bradomín lets us know he has been “witnessing” the scene (“Mi abuela acababa de asomar en el patín....” p. 227), but from “nowhere”; his temporal dimension and special perspective are not defined. It is not until the last line of the story that Bradomín assumes a homodiegetic position (“Yo solamente vi, cuando anocheció y salió la luna, un buho sobre un ciprés” p. 232), placing himself as a character within the story as well as its narrator.

Micaela la Galana appears simply as another character in the action and is not used as device to extend the limitations of Bradomín’s own memory. Since the event recounted actually took place when Bradomín was old enough to remember it, the story easily recalled and narrated by the mature Bradomín without the aid of Micaela. Thus, this is the only story in which one can directly observe Micaela as a figure in the fictional world rather than hear about her from Bradomín’s distant memories.

The old servant appears three times throughout the story. First she is helping Doña Dolores Saco, “mi abuela materna”, to walk: “Mi abuela acababa de asomar en el patín, arrastrando su pierna gotosa y apoyada en el brazo de Micaela la Galana” (p.227). A while later when the two women first see **la renegrada**, Micaela leans over to her mistress and says, “Parece privada, Misia Dolores!” (p.228) And finally, in the concluding portions of the story when **la renegrada** is being held down we read: “Micaela la Galana bajó con un rosario, y en aquel momento oyéronse grandes voces que daba en calzada Milón de la Arnoya” (p. 232).

Micaela’s role in “Milón de la Arnoya” is similar to that of **Sonata de otoño**; in both instances her fixture-like, permanent quality is emphasized. She has always been at Bradomín’s grandmother’s side and knows exactly how to fit smoothly into the household. This eternal quality is one of Bradomín’s favorite ways of recalling Micaela because she, more than any other singular figure, is associated with the security and permanence with which an adult nostalgically endows certain episodes or persons that played key roles in his childhood. Valle-Inclán emphasizes la Galana’s mastery of time by the repetition of several defining **estampas**: Micaela sewing, praying, sitting near a window wrapped in a blanket or recounting tales of the village and the grand families -all scenes which represent fragments of that utopian past so crucial for Bradomín’s present.

Micaela la Roja

Micaela la Roja reappears in **Aguila de blasón**, **Romance de lobos** and **Los cruzados de la causa**. Her creation (in itself and vis-á-vis la Galana) is an instance (of which there are many in Valle-Inclán's textual practice) of multiple genre transfer of a fictional character. The example of Micaela, however, is unique in that Valle, while retaining the same archetypal features and defining traits of his original chronicler of popular Galician traditions (Micaela la Galana), changes only the "last name" (la Roja) thus reinforcing the previously suggested notion that a "Micaela", by definition, is the ancient voice of rural popular culture.

Micaela la Roja is first introduced in an **acotación** form **Aguila de blasón**:

En el silencio resuenan los pasos de una vieja que viene por el corredor. Es Micaela la Roja: Sirve desde niña en aquella casona hidalga, y conoció a los difuntos señores. Entra lentamente: en sus manos tiembla la bandeja con las jícaras de cristal, que humean en las marcelinas de plata.²⁸

Micaela serves the food, leaves the room, and "El choclear de sus madreñas y su voz cascada extinguen poco a poco en el largo corredor".²⁹ La Roja is evoked primarily by remembered sounds -the noise of wooden shoes clacking on hard floors, dishes shaking on a tray- rather than by the visual details used with la Galana ("hilando su copo", "sentada en la ventana", etc.). This is so because la Roja here "lives" in a drama where prose description is at a minimum and the more immediate sense of sound is more effective. Unlike la Galana who belongs to various levels of Bradomín's past (childhood in **Jardín umbrío**; more recent past in **Sonata de otoño**), la Roja, a theatrical creation, operates in the same temporal plane as the Montenegros and the rest of the characters, yet has a homologous role to la Galana.

This second Micaela is more mobile, more vivid, more "alive", as it were, than her fictional predecessor because she is a figure who creates herself with her own sounds and voice. La Roja has the same qualities of permanence and "eternality" as la Galana, but the second Micaela has less of a static, timeless quality. Her solidity and permanence are conveyed by what the other characters and la Roja herself tell us about her years of service, loyalty and dependability rather than by making her another object or fixture within a particular scene.

Micaela la Roja moves in and out of the main action of both of the **Comedias bárbaras** frequently; as the "senoir maid" she has a certain freedom and familiarity in the Montenegro home similar to la Galana's in the Bradomín family. Like the first Micaela, la Roja is very old ("¡Cómo se conserva esta Micaela! Debe andar con el siglo, pero es de esas naturalezas antiguas!")³⁰ and "ha visto nacer todos los hijos de Don Juan Manuel".³¹ Utterly loyal to the Master and his family,³² she, like la Galana, is allocated the role of being **la crónica**, and although she is "genre-prohibited" from narrating fragments from Galician popular culture or the Montenegros' past, on frequent occasions her remarks indicate a familiarity with the Montenegro lineage and the history and legends of the region.

In **Aguila de blasón** the Montenegros attribute almost supernatural prophetic powers to Micaela. She has the peasant's simple unquestioning belief in religious ritual and custom and believes the course and nature of things are determined by omens, fate intuition. Toward the end of **Aguila** this trait is emphasized to the point that Micaela hears death entering the door ("Tú has dicho, vieja loca, que la muerte entraba por esas puertas?" El Caballero says to her) and la Roja's presence -almost bewitching- enhances the scene's dramatic irreality.

In **Romance de lobos** Micaela plays the same role as in the first **Comedia bárbara** and, once again, her appearances³³ are accompanied by characteristic sounds ("El lento arrastrar de sus madreñas cuenta sus años").³⁴ La Roja does not change or evolve in any significant way, but more attention is given to the superstitious aspect of her personality. Her initial appearance: "Una ventana se abre en lo alto de la torre, sobre la cabeza del hidalgo y asoma la figura grotesca de una vieja en camisa, con un candil en la mano"³⁵ -recalling in a curious way the witch-like figure of Duque de Rivas' "Una Antigualla de Sevilla"³⁶ -is characteristic of the way in which Micaela is handled in this work. Overtones of seventeenth century ascetic code as well as baroquely romantic clashes of lights, colors and smells are present throughout the work.

In **Los cruzados de la causa**³⁷, written immediately after **Romance de lobos**, in 1908, the witch-like grotesque aspect of Micaela described in external, sensual terms in the **Comedias bárbaras** is altered and Valle emphasizes, almost exclusively, the semi-mystical or internalized aspect of la Roja's primitive religious beliefs and superstitions. Don Juan Manuel refers to her as **bruja** and the old woman chants a type of mystical encantation: "Yo te conjuro, a las tres, por las tablas de Mosén".³⁸ The references to light -**candil** or **lámpara**- take on mystical meaning³⁹ rather than the theatrical exuberance sought in the two earlier dramas.

Valle-Inclán emphasizes the superstitious, irrational and mystical aspects of Micaela because, as the permanent repository of "la Galicia popular y tradicional," she evolves dynamically as Valle's vision of that cornerstone of his discourse changes. In the period in which he is writing the first two **Comedias** and **Los cruzados de la causa**, the irrationality of feudal Galicia is intensified. In **Los cruzados** primitive ritual yields to new heights of the occult and the irrational,⁴⁰ culminating in the mystical. In his continual search for a "world view", what Valle-Inclán often called the ability to see "desde una estrella... fuera del tiempo, fuera del tiempo y del espacio",⁴¹ the exploration and intensification of the irrational aspects of history and popular tradition reach a high point before they are subsequently absorbed into the mature view of Spanish society and history of the post-1920 works.

With the creation of Micaela la Roja Valle-Inclán was able to transfer an archetypal creation not only from one feudal household to another, but from one stage in the evolution of his fictional world to a subsequent one, and from one genre to others. Justo as the name Brión is synonymous with a particular type of **mayordomo** in Valle's text, a "Micaela", part of Valle-Inclán's creative "larva" since 1891, is an archetypal creation, the faithful servant and chronicler of popular tradition. Moreover, by creating her twice, Valle endows the name "Micaela" with a metonymic quality; the very mention of Micaela suggests or is associated with the legends and history of a now decadent rural aristocracy.

The Archetypal Woman in Patriarchal Society

¡Las mujeres! A las pobres se las puede hacer únicamente la justicia de la conocida frase de Schopenhauer. ¡Y ahora ya ni siquiera tienen los cabellos largos! En la presente civilización... no tienen qué hacer nada las mujeres."

Valle-Inclán, *El Sol* (Madrid), Nov. 20, 1931⁴²

Be it rural Galicia, courtly or bohemian Madrid (the Church, the military, bureaucracy, etc.), Valle-Inclán's cultural discourse affirms the patriarchal structure of *fin de siècle* Spain. Women are alternately scorned, paternalized, brutalized, ridiculed and used for the physical or psychical benefit of males. In Valle's textual practice there are no instance of male/female love (of anything approaching a mature relationship) that occur within the structure provided by Spanish society for just that purpose. In other words, the bourgeois marriage -a structural nexus of *fin de siècle* Spanish society- does not exist in Valle-Inclán's discourse. The relationships between men and women are characterized by adultery, rape, incest, hypocrisy, postures, paternalism and pretense. Montenegro is a brute; Bradomín (when all is said and done) is paternalistic and condescending.

That Valle-Inclán was scornful of feminism as a political movement transpiring throughout Europe at the turn of the century and reflected in Spain in the writings of Concepción Arenal and Emilia Pardo Bazán, is unfortunate but not surprising.⁴³ In this he was sharing the unreflective, defensive misogyny of the most of the Generation of 1898. However, to define Valle-Inclán's vision of women as a simple, unmediated reaction to social conditions is both unfair and incorrect. Feminism is more than a struggle for legal gains. It is one manifestation of the largely concealed structure of values which informs and underlines factual statements, and particularly, those modes of feeling, valuing perceiving and believing which have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power. Sexism and gener roles are questions which engage both material realities and unconscious personal dimensions of human life. In this sense, feminism, the desire to achieve equality for women, is not just another political project, but a dimension which informs and interrogates every facet of personal, social and political life.

In the process of rewriting (recording) the world, Valle-Inclán gradually worked out his own terms of perception as a semi-autonomous activity. I shall designate Valle-Inclán's point of view, most particularly from the 1920s on, as the "reification of humanity"⁴⁴. Everyone in Valle's world undergoes the effects of reification -the sealing off of the psyche, the division of labor of the mental faculties, the fragmentation of the bodily and perceptual sensorium⁴⁵. And, from this narrative perspective, women and men are equal; Tirano Banderas gets no better treatment than Isabel II; the Duque de Ordax is homologous to Eulalia Redín, and so on.

In his first writings, however, Valle-Inclán's vision of women was more

traditional. The upper-class women of the early stories (Augusta, Octavia, Rosita, Eulalia) are essentially viewed with the **modernismo** optic. Women are assimilated "a un elemento del paisaje, a una roca más, siniestra o luminosa,... la mujer, el cisne, y el templete griego tienen exactamente la misma importancia y la misma función decorativa".⁴⁶ In the **Comedias bárbaras** women are judged by the conventional Catholic mannichian and patriarchal norm: they are "good" or "bad". If they are "good", they are married or widowed, repressed, long-suffering and passive; they can derive joy from maternity, but never from sex. If they are "bad", they are sensual, boisterous, licentious, and/or whores.

It is in this period of Valle-Inclán's narrative discourse that the two Micaelas have a unique role. Their function as archetypes from Galician aorist history is what principally defines a "Micaela". Gender assignation is not important. Micaela is not only "timeless", she is "sexless", or "bisexual". The tight divisions between masculine and feminine which underlie Valle-Inclán's cultural discourse are lost with Micaela. She, as the chronicler of and main link to the past utopia that Bradomín needs to function in his present, is the only woman exempt from the bevy of subordinate roles women have throughout this stage of Valle-Inclán's textual practice. As a socially marginal woman who presides over rural popular traditions, Micaela is the only female (because she ceases to function as one) able to challenge the patriarchal order and, as we saw, briefly take charge of the narrative discourse.

Roberta L. Salper

Senior Lecturer Tel Aviv University

Notas

¹ Micaela la Galana reappears or is alluded to in eight works: "A media noche" (1889), "Augusta" (1897), *Sonata de otoño* (1902), introduction to *Jardín umbrío* (1903), *Sonata de invierno* (1905), "Juan Quinto" (1914), "Mi bisabuelo" (1914), and "Milón de la Arnoya" (1914). Micaela la Roja appears in *Aguila de blasón* (1907), *Romance de lobos* (1908), and *Los cruzados de la causa*. (1908). part of the evolution of Valle-Inclán's new form of writing, understanding "form" as indicator of point of view.

² That is, between 1902 and 1914.

³ The term is Jacques Derrida's. Simply stated, the ideology of phallogocentrism is the conscious, undistorted, invariant and nameable vision of male firstness and its corollary female secondness. See Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago, 1979), p. 97.

⁴ That Valle was constantly, and dynamically, exploring and searching is patently clear from the anthology of writings compiled by Dru Dougherty, *Un Valle-Inclán olvidado: entrevistas y conferencias*. Madrid, 1983.

⁵ See, for example, the documentation provided by María del Carmen Porrúa, *La Galicia demonónica en las Comedias Bárbaras de Valle-Inclán* (La Coruña, 1983), *passim*, and by Eliane Lavaud, *Valle-Inclán du Journal au Roman 1888-1915* (París, 1979), pp. 281-306.

⁶ See my "La dimensión temporal y la creación del Marqués de Bradomín," *Insula* (Madrid) XXI, 236-7 (July-August, 1966), and "Valle-Inclán and the Marqués de Bradomín," in *Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal of his Life and Works*. Anthony Zahareas, ed. New York, 1969, pp. 230-240.

⁷ *La Lámpara maravillosa*. Madrid: Austral, 1960, p. 22.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁰ According to William L. Fichter, *Publicaciones periodísticas de don Ramón del Valle-Inclán anteriores a 1895* (México, 1952), p. 14, this was the first story Valle published in the Madrid press. It appeared in *El Globo* on July 30, 1891. Subsequently, Eliane Lavaud has shown that on June 7, 1891 Valle published a short story entitled "El Mendigo" in the *Heraldo de Madrid*. (See her "Un cuento olvidado de D. Ramón del Valle-Inclán: El mendigo, Papeles de Son Armadans, Palma de Mallorca, April, 1973, CCV, pp. 85-91). For the purpose of this study, what is most significant is that Valle-Inclán literally began writing with the outline of this archetypal woman.

¹¹ "Augusta" in *Corte de amor*. Madrid: Austral, 1960, p. 99.

¹² It is not until 1916-1917 that Valle-Inclán ceases to play "God". "Según Corpus Barga, quien estuvo con Valle-Inclán en París en 1916,... Valle-Inclán habiendo llegado a rechazar la herejía de sentirse Dios Padre como novelista, buscaba, sin embargo, un punto de vista de creación total," quoted in Dougherty, *ob. cit.*, p. 54, note 67. See also the revealing prologue to *La media noche*, "Yo, torpe y vano de mí, quise ser centro y tener de la guerra una visión astral, fuera de geometría y de cronología, como si el alma, desencarnada ya, mirase a la tierra desde su estrella. He fracasado en el empeño..." (Madrid: Clásica Española, 1917, p. 8). The search for this "vision astral" is, in fact, part of the evolution of Valle-Inclán's new form of writing, understanding "form" as indicator of point of view.

¹³ **Sonata de otoño**. Barcelona: F. Granada, 1907, p. 87. Valle mentions here that Micaela was Concha's mother's maid. However, in all subsequent works la Galana worked not for Señora Bendaña, but for the Bradomín family. This inconsistency, conscious or unconscious on Valle-Inclán's part, serves to reinforce Micaela as a prototypical creation: a "Micaela" is an aged female chronicler of a decaying feudal rural tradition.

¹⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 87.

¹⁵ Michel Butor develops this concept in **Repertoire II** (París, 1964), pp. 63-64.

¹⁶ Quoted in Dougherty, p. 147, note 177.

¹⁷ **Jardín umbrío**. Madrid: "Opera Omnia," XII, 1920, introduction. This introduction appeared in the original editions of **Jardín umbrío**, Valle's first published collection of stories, edited in Madrid by Rodríguez Serra in 1903, and in all subsequent editions. For details on various editions of Valle-Inclán's stories, see Lavaud, **Valle-Inclán du Journal au Roman**, pp. 251-271.

¹⁸ **Ibid.**, introduction

¹⁹ **Ibid.**, introduction.

²⁰ **Sonata de invierno**. Madrid: "Opera Omnia," VIII, 1941, p. 48.

²¹ **Ibid.**, p. 49

²² In 1905 Valle-Inclán wrote a short story entitled "Nochebuena" in which the protagonists are the Arcipreste de Céltigos and his niece Micaela who lives with him. However, this Micaela, young, innocent and attractive, has nothing to do with *la vieja criada*. The Arcipreste's niece is not given a last name and never reappears again in Valle-Inclán's works.

²³ See my "The Creation of a Fictional World (Valle-Inclán and the European Novel)," in **Ramón del Valle-Inclán: An Appraisal...**, pp. 109-130, in addition to articles cited in footnote 6.

²⁴ I am using the 1920 edition, the one included in Valle-Inclán's *Obras Completas*.

²⁵ The term is from Gérard Genette, **Narrative Discourse** (Cornell University, 1980). See particularly chapter 5, "Voice".

²⁶ **Jardín umbrío**, p. 13.

²⁷ **Ibid.**, p. 13.

²⁸ **Aguila de blasón**. Buenos Aires: Austral, 1946, pp. 16-17. She appears or is mentioned on the following pages: 16-20; 26-27; 31-32; 40-41; 57; 81-83; 85; 125-26; 144-45.

²⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 17

³⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 18

³¹ **Ibid.**, p. 17.

³² Examples of Micaela's loyalty are numerous: Act I, p. 26, when one of the thieves tries to exhort la Roja to help him, she exclaims, "¡Comí su [Don Juan Manuel's] pan por cincuenta años!" Also, Act II where she faithfully cares for her wounded master, or p. 125 where we see Micaela's loyalty to Doña

María. Valle further emphasizes Micaela's loyalty to the Montenegros by contrasting her with another of the family *criados*, Don Galán. At odds with Micaela, *el bufón* laughs at his master, mocks his position and the household and society, whereas Micaela totally accepts her position, never questioning or criticizing as long as custom and habit are not disturbed.

³³ *Romance de lobos*. Madrid: "Opera Omnia," XIX, 1942. She appears or is mentioned on pp. 19-27; 30-31; 183-93; 214-215; 251-55.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183. Other examples on pp. 187, 214.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁶ Al punto un ventanilla / de un pobre casuco abren / ... una mano y brazo asoman /, que sostienen por el aire / un candil, cuyos destellos / dan luz súbita a la calle".

³⁷ Madrid: Austral, 1960. Micaela appears or is mentioned on pp. 83-85; 105.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³⁹ For example, these words of Micaela: "¡Palabra de misal, lámpara de altar, tu corona de llamas quebrantarán! Yo te conjuro, ánima bendita, para que dejes este mundo y te tornes al tuyo" followed by this description of her: "Arrodillada en el claro de luna. esperó con el terror del misterio, oír el vuelo del alma que dejaba el mundo para volver al Purgatorio", *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴⁰ For an overall study of this subject, see E. S., Speratti-Piñero, *El ocultismo en Valle-Inclán*, London, 1974.

⁴¹ Interview of Valle-Inclán by C. Rivas Cherif in *España* (Madrid), May 11, 1916. Quoted in Dougherty, *ob. cit.*, p. 82.

⁴² Quoted in Dougherty, p. 223.

⁴³ Eliane Lavaud refers to Valle-Inclán's dislike of feminism as a political project in *Valle-Inclán du Journal...*, pp. 218-222, as do Zahareas and Gillespie in their translation of *Luces de Bohemia* (Texas, 1976), note 41, p. 227.

⁴⁴ I discuss this concept in more detail in my *Valle-Inclán y su mundo: Ideología y forma narrativa*. Amsterdam: Rodopi (forthcoming).

⁴⁵ For the guiding definition and discussion of "reification", see Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Cornell, 1981, *passim*.

⁴⁶ Manuel Durán, "Del Marqués de Sade a Valle-Inclán", *Asomante*, X, 2 (1954), p. 44.