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From Pardo Bazán to Valle Inclán: The Case of the *Falso Marqués*

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The problem of literary relations suggested by the title of my paper has received considerable attention from Valle-Inclán scholars. Studies that pinpoint the influence of 19th-century authors who were popular when Valle was young allow us to reconstruct the cultural milieu or "horizons of expectations"¹ within which the young modernist developed. This research provides tools for studying Valle's practice of borrowing from others to produce texts that, as one critic has stated, appear as an "enorme nido de urraca donde se hacinan pedacitos procedentes de multitud de nidos ajenos."²

The most conspicuous "pedacito" in this intertextual "nest" is the degenerate *hidalgo*, a figure that gives thematic unity to a major portion of Valle's works. Possible models for this figure have been found in the novels of Benito Vicetto, Nicomedes Pastor Díaz, José María de Pereda, Pío Baroja, and Emilia Pardo Bazán. In all cases, critics affirm the possibility of influence by showing similarities in character description or plot development, the *hidalgo* being taken as a key to Valle's political ideology at different stages of his career.

But if we limit ourselves to the question of esthetics, intertextuality as such acquires special meaning. Valle's intentions of exposing the "grafting"³

1. Hans Robert Jauss: "The coherence of literature as an event is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics, and authors. Whether it is possible to comprehend and represent the history of literature in its unique historicity depends on whether this horizon of expectations can be objectified" ("Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti. U. of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1982, p. 22.)

2. José Alberich, "Sobre la configuración literaria de don Juan Manuel Montenegro," *BBMP*, 59 (1983), 298. On this same theme, vid. José Rubia Barcia, "Valle-Inclán y la literatura gallega (I)" *RHM* 21, 2 (abril 1955), 93-196 and "Valle-Inclán y la literatura gallega (II)" *RHM*, 21, 3-4 (julio-octubre 1955), 294-315.

3. Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction*. Cornell U. Press, Ithaca, 1983, pp. 134-56.

basis of writing can be seen as just another scheme for problematizing the nature of literary discourse, a concern that becomes increasingly prevalent among writers of his generation. Yet the possibility that he inherited the very impulse to flaunt intertextuality, to my knowledge, has not been considered.⁴ It is for this purpose that I turn to Valle's compatriot, Emilia Pardo Bazán, a source of unquestionable influence, and whose *falso marqués* appears as more than just a sign of a shared culture code. The problem of authenticity personified by this figure in *Los pazos de Ulloa* and *La madre naturaleza* connotes an attitude toward writing that, in and of itself, foreshadows certain practices of the avant-garde generation.⁵

As can be said of Valle's works, the artistic unity of Pardo's novels can be ascribed to her portrait of the *hidalgo*. This portrait is developed within a paradigm typical of the 19th-century, that of the dialectics of city and country. The latter is personified by the *Marqués de Ulloa*, whose degenerate lifestyle proves irreparable. The former is projected through the predominant point of view of the gentrified outsider: Julián, the priest, who arrives at the beginning of *Los pazos* and eventually fails to put the *marqués* back on the road to Christian salvation; and Gabriel, Don Pedro's brother-in-law, who departs at the end of *La madre naturaleza*, leaving the last of the Moscoso line isolated without a male heir in a Ulloa deprived of a legal *marqués*. Neither accomplishes the common goal described metaphorically by Gabriel when he states: "he de desbrozar esa maleza."⁶ That is, neither manages to eradicate the weeds of adultery (in the first novel) and of incest (in the second) that threaten the family tree.

The metaphor of the "maleza," then, is a part of the broader genealogical metaphor from which these two novels derive their unity as a cycle. In this regard, it is significant that Julián's first experience at the *pazo* should evolve within the archives. This episode occurs the morning after his arrival, in chapters III, IV, and V, and it provides important clues to the cycle's underlying symbolism.

The narrative thread in this episode as elsewhere corresponds to Julián's perceptions of reality. At the beginning of chapter III, the priest observes the once orderly, now overgrown estate, then focuses on the "último vástago de

4. Georges Güntert, in "La fuente en el laberinto: Las *Sonatas* de Valle-Inclán" (BRAE, 53 (1973), 558): "Valle, al elaborar las *Sonatas*, medita constantemente sobre lo que está haciendo hasta llegar a representar *el mismo acto de escribir*, de crear ritmo y música de palabras." Otello Lottini, in "Lo scrittore e la scrittura: Preludio alle *Sonatas* di Valle-Inclán" (AION-SR, 21 (1979), 307): "Bradomín seregge su un precario equilibrio, sulla proliferazione della finzione letterari che moltiplica i propri fantasmi nel tentativo di rendere reale ciò che è reale per definizione. A fronte della irrealtà della letteratura, si trova, infatti, la realtà della scrittura." On self-consciousness in the fiction of Benito Pérez Galdós, see: Robert Spire, *Beyond the Metafictional Mode: Directions in the modern Spanish novel*. U. of Kentucky Pr., Lexington, K, 1984, pp. 25-31.

5. Others who treat the literary relations between Pardo and Valle are: José Alberich, "Sobre la configuración literaria de don Juan Manuel Montenegro," *BBMP*, 59 (1983), 295-351; Emilio González López, "Valle-Inclán y la Pardo Bazán" *Divinas Palabras y El Tetrarca en la aldea*, Grial, 20, 212-216; Nelly Clemessy, "De Emilia Pardo Bazán a Ramón del Valle-Inclán: à propos de *Los pazos de Ulloa*," *Travaux de l'Institut d'Études Latino-Américaines de l'Université de Strasbourg*, XV (1975), 129-39; M. García-Pelayo, "Sobre el mundo social en la literatura de Valle-Inclán," *Revista de Occidente*, XV (1971), 257-87; and Obdulio Guerrero, "Sobre las comedias bárbaras," *CHA*, 199-200 (julio-agosto 1966), 467-81. For further reading on the matter of genealogy in the modern novel, see Patricia Tobin, *Time and the Novel: The Genealogical Imperative*. Princeton U. Pr., 1978.

6. E. Pardo Bazán, *La madre naturaleza*. Alianza, Madrid, 1982, p. 140. Further citations correspond to this edition.

los Ulloa" who is whistling idly, "como quien no sabe qué hacer del tiempo."⁷ Together Don Pedro and Julián proceed first into the house, perceived by the priest as an "enorme caserón," "destartalado (y) descolorido," and finally into the archives, that are covered with dust and overrun by insects. In chapter V, Julián, having failed to make any sense of the family records, refocuses on the estate's "mecanismo interior" —the "establos," "cuadras," "cultivos," etc. (PU, 42)— before abandoning his efforts to organize the archives in favor of the ill-fated task of salvaging the *marqués* himself.

If the movement in chapters III and V appears as a descent into and emergence from a hidden reality —first from the gardens into the house, then into the archives, and finally back out into the gardens— the nucleus of this episode corresponds to chapter IV, which deals exclusively with the archives. The chapter is subdivided into two sections. The first portrays Julián attempt to clean and organize books and papers; the second outlines the Moscoso family tree. The perspective in both of these sections can be taken, again, as an important key to the meaning of this episode. In the first section, the impressionistic description of Julián's work over an indefinite period of time represents a sudden break with the moment-by-moment recounting of his first two days at the *pazo*. In the second part, the narrator emerges to relay secrets for the reader's benefit about the family history that Julián will fail to grasp. We are told that while the *capellán* was trying to unravel the "madeja sin cabo" in this "laberinto sin hilo conductor," and while Don Pedro enjoyed the privileges of *marqués*, a relative from a collateral line to whom the title rightfully belonged was squandering his money at the gambling tables in Madrid.

Now the image of the labyrinth used in reference to the archives betrays a deeper correlation between Pardo Bazán's and Valle Inclán's narrative. It has been argued that, in the "Sonatas," the labyrinth applies not only to the image of the gardens at the "Palacio de Brandeso" but to the undulating, sonorous "verbal reality" of the literary text. The same critic contends that Valle thereby postulates "una estética de la obra que se había casi olvidado desde los lejanos tiempos de Góngora y de Cervantes: la consciencia de que toda obra literaria puede ser concebida también como *alegoría del acto de escribir*."⁸ Such a connection seems more than likely in the "Cebre cycle," where the labyrinthine archives contain texts that influenced the author herself.⁹ In a gesture that recalls the barber and priest's scrutiny of Don Quijote's library, Julián allows the moths and worms to eat away on the pages of Voltaire and Rousseau. His belief that Don Pedro's wife would be better suited as the "perfecta esposa de Cristo" reminds us of yet another of Doña Emilia's literary avatars, Fray Luis de León, whose translation of the *Song of Solomon* figures prominently in the second novel. Therein, Gabriel claims to discover how Perucho and Manola learned to read when he finds their scribbling in the margins of a book that is itself a reading of another text: "Según los garrapa-

7. E. Pardo Bazán, *Los pazos de ullos* (Alianza, Madrid: 1974), p. 30 Further citations correspond to this edition.

8. Georges Güntert, "La fuente en el laberinto: Las Sonatas de Valle-Inclán," BRAE, 53 (1973), 543-67. The passage cited.

9. Harry L. Kirby, Jr., "Pardo Bazán's Use of the *Cantar de los cantares* in *La madre naturaleza*," *Hispania*, 61, 905-11.

tos que he visto en la edición, Manuela y su..., ¡lo que sea!, aprendieron a leer por ese libro... Tiene algo de simbólico... La más negra no es el texto, sino los comentarios..." (MN, 240).

Gabriel's discovery of reader's commentaries of a rewritten text—one whose style and theme, moreover are imitated in *La madre naturaleza*—places Doña Emilia's reader squarely within the next link of this epistemological chain. We are forced to become self-conscious as we discover in Gabriel the tool of intertextuality. Reading is objectified in such a way as to suggest that a literary text is real not for what it is but for the way it interprets and is reinterpreted, that is, for its "comentarios". Writing and reading are essentially a matter of influence.

It is for this reason that the pattern created by Julián's and Gabriel's memory or impressions acquires special meaning. In the final analysis, the character's consciousness, construed as a screen for transmitting effects or "influences," serves both as the "hilo conductor" through an imperfectly understood reality and the very object of our gaze.

This correspondence is emphasized at key junctures where the organization of the text is shown to depend on memory or awareness. In the archives episode, chapters II and III both and, for example, as Julián remembers what Don Pedro's uncle told him before he left Santiago. The first recollection contains what is commonly taken as Pardo Bazán's Naturalist credo—"La aldea, cuando se cría uno en ella y o sale de ella jamás, envilece, empobrece y embrutece" (PU, 24)—whereas the second recollection specifies the priest's goal at the *pazo*: "todo eso de la casa de mi sobrino debe de ser un desbarajuste... Haría usted una obra de caridad si lo arreglase un poco" (PU, 33). Both give clues for interpreting the story, as do Julián's impressions that are projected where chapter IV is subdivided and that make explicit the metonymical link between the archives, the family, and the house:

El *archivo* había producido en el alma de Julián la misma *impresión* que toda la *casa*: la de una ruina, ruina vasta y amenazadora, que representaba algo grande en lo pasado, pero en la actualidad *se desmoronaba* a toda prisa. Era esto en Julián aprensión no razonada, que se transformaría en convicción si conociese bien algunos antecedentes de *familia* de marqués" (PU, 37; underlining mine).

In short, Julián's imagination, the screen on which decay and degeneracy are portrayed, appear also as the force that structures the narrative. It functions as our uncertain road through a transitional reality.

Gabriel's impressions reinforce this notion in the second novel as he leads us though a highly symbolic reality (with forking paths and winding rivers) to the end of the Moscoso line. The end is announced as he watches the weak and tired Don Pedro fail his ritualistic test of strength that requires the *marqués de Ulloa* to begin the annual *mallada*: "el marqués se veía ya (...) pudriéndose en el cementerio." (MN, 228-29). That end is sealed in the ensuing episode, a heated showdown between Don Pedro and Perucho. The revelation to the latter that he is the illegitimate heir to the false *marqués* renders futile Perucho's love for Manola (since this makes him her half-brother)

and causes Don Pedro's children to leave, thereby precipitating his final isolation at Ulloa. The scene occurs in the *marqués's* bedroom that, as we are carefully reminded, is adjacent to the archives.

Although we return to the symbolic space where the impressions of genealogical degeneracy began, we are afforded an unprecedented perspective. The heated argument between father and son evolves behind a closed door, leaving us to share the severely limited viewpoint of an eavesdropping hired hand. The scene parallels Don Pedro's violent showdown with Julián at the end of *Los pazos*, which is projected with the same imperfection, in this case through the incognizant mind of Perucho, a young child at that point. By forcing us to infer information from the outcome about each novel's climax, the author reinforces at this crucial spot what she began to imply in the archives, where fiction and the family are carefully linked through the *hidalgo's* name:

Al pasar a una rama colateral la hacienda de los pazos de Ulloa, fue el marquésado adonde correspondía por rigurosa agnación; pero los aldeanos, que no entienden la(s) agnaciones, hechos a que los pazos de Ulloa diesen *nombre* al título, siguieron llamando marqueses a los dueños de la gran hueronera (p. 42).

Thus we conclude that our search for absolute truth at Ulloa is tenuous in a reality taken at face value: like the family, whose *marqués* is allowed to play out his fiction in the absence of the unknown, "real" *hidalgo*; and like the text, portrayed as a partial system of verbal signs (of "nombres" and influences) within the historical spectrum of literary discourse. We understand as well the unifying value of the archives within this scheme, the metaphoric labyrinth that brings the family and text under a single sign and that converts our reading into a search for hidden or subtextual meaning.

The falseness that is basic to *Los pazos de Ulloa* and *La madre naturaleza* may lead us to emphasize from a new angle a legacy that criticism has merely begun to elucidate.¹⁰ The patterns outlined herein point directly to the notions of the "novela lírica," the poetics of absence, and the question of self-referentiality, features commonly associated with the avant-garde currents of twentieth-century fiction. The *hidalgo* constitutes a particularly interesting thread in this intertextual weave, one that leads from the "Marqués de Ulloa" to "el de Bradomín," the "caballero legitimista" through whom labyrinths, legitimacy, and textuality are also interrelated. And finally, as a bond between these two Galician writers, the *hidalgo* exemplifies how an element that reflects a common culture code may become the vehicle by which implied aesthetic coordinates are transmitted from one author to another.

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10. Darío Villanueva, "Los pazos de Ulloa, el naturalismo y Henry James," HR, 52, 2 (Spring 1984), 121-39, and "Más sobre la novela lírica," *Insula*, 461, 11; Maurice Hemingway, *Emilia Pardo Bazán: The Making of a Novelist*. Cambridge U., Cambridge, 1983; Mariano López, "A propósito de *La madre naturaleza*," BH, 83, 1-2 (Jan.-June 1981); Obdulia Guerrero, "Sobre las *Comedias bárbaras*," and J. Rubia Barcia, "La Pardo Bazán y Unamuno," CA, 113 (1960), 240-63.