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José Rubia Barcia: Biography & Selected Bibliography

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JOSE RUBIA BARCIA '1

José Rubia Barcia was born on July 31, 1914, in El Ferrol (Galicia). He received his primary and secondary education in his native province of La Coruña, and earned the degree of *Bachiller en Letras* (with highest honors) at the University of Santiago in 1931.

José Barcia's interest in Arabic and in Spain's Islamic heritage led him to the University of Granada, where from 1933 to 1936 he was a Research Fellow at the *Escuela de Estudios Arabes de Madrid-Granada*. After receiving the degree of *Licenciado en Filosofía y Letras* (with highest honors) in 1934, he continued his studies towards the doctorate, serving at the same time as a lecturer at the University and a teacher of Latin at the Instituto Ganivet.

After the Civil War broke out in the summer of 1936, José Barcia gave up his studies and left Granada. In 1937-38 he was in Valencia, where he was a lecturer at the University and editor of the literary magazine *Armas y Letras*. Shortly before the Republic fell in 1939, José Barcia, like so many thousands of his countrymen, made his way to France, whence, later that year, he emigrated to Cuba.

In 1940 he founded and directed the *Academia de Artes Dramáticas* in Havana. While in Cuba he also taught at the Summer School of the University of Havana and published several essays in the *Revista* of the University. He also wrote a number of articles on literature, culture, and Spanish politics, which appeared in several Havana newspapers.

Américo Castro, interested in Barcia's studies on Hispano-Arabic culture, invited him to Princeton University, where, during the academic year 1943-44, he was a lecturer in Spanish in the Department of Romance Languages. But visa problems prevented his staying on at Princeton. After a brief period of employment at the U.S. Office of War Information in New York, José Barcia

traveled west to Los Angeles, where in 1945 and 1946 he worked as a director-writer at the film studios of Warner Brothers. It was in Los Angeles that he met and married Eva López in 1945. The couple was to have two daughters, Adela and Elena, both of whom were graduated from UCLA and earned graduate degrees at other universities.

In 1947 José Barcia began his teaching career at UCLA as a lecturer in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, where his fellow Galician, César Barja was one of a number of distinguished Hispanists. In 1949 he was promoted to Assistant Professor. His marriage to the lovely Eva and his promotion provided a degree of security and support which enabled him to dedicate himself to research and his own creative writing for the first time since his days in Granada.

In the years that followed, the quality of his critical essays on Valle-Inclán won him wide recognition. In 1955 José Barcia was promoted to Associate Professor and in 1961 he became Professor. His *Bibliography and Iconography of Valle-Inclán (1866-1936)*, published in 1960, immediately became and has since remained an indispensable tool for anyone seriously interested in the work of the Galician author. A Guggenheim Fellowship in 1962-63 enabled him to do research in Europe on the *esperpento*, leading to several major essays on this aspect of Valle-Inclán's art.

While the scholarly and creative writings have won José Barcia the respect of his colleagues and students, his human qualities have earned him something equally valuable, their affection. Although José Barcia has been particularly sensitive to the problems of new faculty members and graduate students, many others with serious problems have also found in him a sympathetic friend, always ready to listen patiently and to offer help and encouragement. While chairman of the Department from 1963 to 1969, José Barcia made every new faculty member aware that he or she had a good friend at UCLA, a university known for its impersonality.

While he was chairman, José Barcia and his wife Eva established a record for hospitality difficult to surpass. At dinners and receptions in their home, they created an environment where people became friends. At their Ashton Avenue home—over the years a California Mecca for Spanish film directors, artists, writers, and scholars—Barcia's colleagues and students have been able to meet and talk with such admired figures as Americo Castro, Luis Buñuel and José Luis Borau.

It would be misleading to speak of José Barcia without mentioning his students, who constitute an aspect of his life work from which he derives deep satisfaction. Indeed José Barcia has had a profound and abiding influence on a great many students. He is known as a professor with unusual talent for teaching students how to read literary texts well and to expand their analytical imagination. José Barcia is also an unusually talented director of doctoral dissertations. Several of these have been published as books. Others, given their quality, will doubtless see publication in the future.

Recently much of José Barcia's attention has been directed towards problems of translation, and his collaboration with Clayton Eshleman in this regard led to a National Book Award for Translation in recognition of their superb edition of César Vallejo's *Complete Posthumous Poetry*. But José Barcia has also been working on a number of other research projects, for he has never ceased being interested in every aspect of Hispanic culture. Retirement will for him be a busy time, as he can now explore these many interests free from departmental responsibilities.

José Barcia will direct to completion the dissertations of doctoral students currently under his supervision. And he will also from time to time teach a graduate course in nineteenth- or twentieth-century Spanish literature at UCLA. In the years ahead his many friends expect to continue to benefit from his knowledge, enthusiasm, and encouragement. They wish him health and as much satisfaction in his new stage of his career as he has had in the one just completed.²

Roberta Johnson
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NOTES

1. We are grateful to Margarita Alvarez, secretary of the UCLA Spanish Depart-

ment, for providing biographical information on José Barcia, to Elena Barcia for the photograph in this volume and to Nancy Berry, secretary of the Scripps College Modern Languages Department, for her excellent typing assistance.

2. Since the final editing of this volume, the University of California at Los Angeles has granted José Rubia Barcia a very rare phased retirement. Beginning in the fall of 1982 he will teach on a regular part-time basis for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese there.

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(A partial list from over 100 books and articles.)

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