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BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

1974

NEO-ROMANTICISM IN ALEJANDRO CASONA

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NEO-ROMANTICISM IN ALEJANDRO CASONA

CHAPTER I

TWENTIETH CENTURY SPANISH THEATER

Since its very inception, Spanish literature has been characterized by dualistic tendencies, a fact inextricably related to the coexistence of literary movements throughout Spanish history. For example, while Spain tenaciously adhered to Middle Ages traditions, the Renaissance dawned elsewhere and its ideas began to infiltrate Spain. When this revival definitively arrived in Spain, the result was a panorama of diametrically opposed coetaneous values. Spaniards preserved select literary traditions and beliefs of the passing era at the same time that they were incorporating characteristics of the current one, often resulting in violent contrasts which were to become firmly embedded in the Spanish psyche.

Such a situation is not peculiar to one epoch, but can be traced throughout Spanish history. A case in question is the Baroque period in seventeenth century Spain. Here dualistic characteristics are particularly evident. Not only do Renaissance traits exist concurrently with Baroque excesses, they are at the same time modified by them. Thus, a

clash between opposing values becomes the rule rather than the exception. Ideally Spaniards felt that they had a divine mission to rule the world and spread the doctrines of Catholicism; such was the case during the reign of Carlos V. However, at the time when the Baroque arose sixteenth century values had all but disintegrated, Spain had lost her once legion power, her lands and people were wasted, the country was financially ruined. Spaniards, unable to cope with such a devastating and demoralizing situation, feigned the ostentation they once rightfully claimed, deluding themselves in the belief that their country would once again rule the world. Contrasts between opposing values, first seen in the Middle Age - Renaissance conflict, reappeared in the Baroque: real versus ideal, subjectivism versus objectivism, with the result here being a virtual bursting forth of excesses and pretensions.

The nineteenth century Romantic movement in Spain is another illustration of dualistic tendencies. A composite of various ages, Romanticism owes a good part of its emphasis on individualism to the rise of the middle class at the end of the Middle Ages as well as to Renaissance and Golden Age ideals. Similarly Romanticism is but an extension of the Baroque: just as the latter was a reaction to the objective, generalizing nature of Classicism, so too was Romanticism a reaction to Neo-Classicism. For a time, reason and emotion, the ego and the non-ego, existed side by side. Fortunately or not for Spain, Neo-Classicism had never really taken root and Spain still basically held on to Golden Age ideals, values, and excesses, more in keeping with her individualistic nature. In this sense, she was already predisposed to the Romantic movement before it arrived on the Spanish scene. The contraposition of

Neo-Classical norms with the Spanish psyche, a composite of Renaissance and Baroque individualism and rebellion, produced Romanticism. Although the names may vary from age to age, the tendencies seem to remain constant, thus giving rise to new movements formed of opposing values and traits.

The twentieth century is no different from the rest of Spanish history. This point is especially valid in the field of drama, not only in the years following the Spanish Civil War but also in the pre-war era.

> . . . we can see that the Spanish dramatists of today are the heirs of a tension composed of a belief in the value of uncompromising idealism and a realization of its usefulness; of a belief and a pride in the uniqueness and superiority of Spain and a realization of its backwardness in contrast to the rest of the Western world.[1]

Throughout this century, literature has been a product of the creative tension between old and new tendencies, as is aptly manifested by noteworthy writers, among them the dramatist Alejandro Casona. However, an understanding of twentieth century dramatic development is essential to the comprehension of Casona's place among his contemporaries. Therefore, a division of this era into periods, however arbitrary the classifications may be, reveals definite patterns: 1900 until the advent of the so-called Generation of 1927; 1927 until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War; and 1936 until the present.

From 1900 to 1927, the Spanish scene was dominated by the realistic bourgeois drama of Jacinto Benavente. A reaction to Echegaray's Romantic thesis play, Benavente's dramas returned verisimilitude and

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[1]George Wellwarth, The Theater of Protest and Paradox (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 360.

naturalness to the stage. Benavente gave drama new life and was thereby called the creator of the modern comedy, dominating the field for almost half a century.[2] Benavente achieved success with Gente conocida, which was a synthesis of an innocuous but somewhat responsible social satire; he had learned from the public reaction to his previous work El nido ajeno, a failure because it had been too critical of the existing social structure.[3] Benavente's dramas offended no one; his success was due to total acceptance by the bourgeoisie, a class which required conformity and banality as the norm. Benavente's school was comprised of Manuel Linares Rivas and his bourgeois thesis drama, Gregorio Martínez Sierra and his plays of sentimental realism with a faint suggestion of thesis, and Felipe Sassone Súarez.[4]

The regional theater was a coetaneous extension of Benavente's realistic bourgeois drama. The main exponents of costumbrismo and the sainete sought to provide the public with pure diversion, thereby voiding their plays of ideological interest. As a result, they were highly successful. The leaders of this offshoot of Benaventian realism were Joaquín and Serafín Álvarez Quintero whose main love was Andalucía, Carlos Arniches who often mixed the pure costumbrismo of Madrid with social criticism in the vein of the Generation of 1898, and Pedro Muñoz Seca who

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[2]Jack Horace Parker, Breve historia del teatro español (Mexico: Ediciones de Andrea, 1957), p. 146.

[3]G. G. Brown, A Literary History of Spain: The Twentieth Century (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1972), pp. 113-114.

[4]Ángel Valbuena Prat, Historia del teatro español (Barcelona: Editorial Noguer, S. A., 1956), p. 588.

was famous for his development of the sainete.[5] The regional theater evolved progressively to the theater of pure humor with Enrique Jardial Poncela, Joaquín Abatí y Díaz, Antonio Paso y Cano, and Tono (pseudonym of Antonio de Lara) as the leading dramatists.[6]

During the same era that Benavente's school was enjoying favor, there arose another group which was diametrically opposed to it. This school became known as the teatro poético, closely related to Modernism in its anti-realistic bent. It protested against the prosaic world which characterized twentieth century society.[7] Among its proponents were Antonio and Manuel Machado, Francisco Villaespesa, Eduardo Marquina, Luis Fernández Ardaván, José María Pemán, Enrique López Alarcón, Ramón de Godoy, and Fernando López Martin.[8] Also included were Ramón Goy de Silva, Joaquín Muntaner, and Mariano Tomás.[9]

By its very nature, the teatro poético provided a sharp contrast to the prosaic realism of Benavente. Although both had their own league of staunch advocates, Benavente's school was without doubt the more successful and popular of the two. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the juxtaposition of the prosaic and the poetic produced a contrast which would later be intensified with the advent of war.

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[5]Janet Winecoff Díaz, "Twentieth Century Spanish Theater at a Glance: Currents, Figures, and Experiments," Romance Notes, IX, i (Autumn, 1967), p. 23.

[6]Parker, p. 153.

[7]Díaz, p. 23.

[8]Parker, p. 161.

[9]Valbuena Prat, p. 618.

Coetaneous with the bourgeois drama, the regional theater, and the poetic theater was the Generation of 1898. This group has not been accorded much attention by literary critics due to the fact that its members achieved more memorable successes in other genres.[10] However, Ramón del Valle Inclán, Miguel de Unamuno, and Azorín (pseudonym of José Martínez Ruiz) deserve a distinct place in the evolution of the twentieth century theater for they effected a synthesis of two existing and somewhat different tendencies: Modernism combined with realism.[11] In addition, their dramatic efforts often forecast changes in the genre. For example, Valle-Inclán has been singled out as a precursor of the Generation of 1927 in his use of the esperpento, which has obvious affinities with Surrealism.

> Valle-Inclán almost singlehandedly pulled Spanish drama into the mainstream of twentieth century thought. With his sardonic overview of life Valle-Inclán was able to show the grotesqueness of the contrast between the pundonor of the Spaniard and the circumstances of the modern world.[12]

Not only is his technical use of the esperpento surrealistic, but its underlying ideology emphasizes the duality of the Spanish world.

Unfortunately, however, Valle-Inclán was not appreciated in his day. In fact, due to the conformistic tastes of the bourgeoisie, many renovating attempts failed completely or were accorded minimal attention. Spaniards virtually ignored not only Valle-Inclán's experimentations with farsas and esperpentos, but also Jacinto Grau's poetized and dramatized myths, Goy de Silva's symbolic lyricism, Gómez de la Serna's flights

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[10] Ibid., p. 589. [11] Díaz, p. 23.

[12] Wellwarth, p. 356.

toward irreality, and Azorín's fledgling surrealistic attempts.[13] Prior to 1927 the public was not ready for change, although the first traces of innovation were beginning to be seen.

The period of 1927 until 1936 was perhaps the most fruitful and varied one in all of twentieth century Spanish drama from the standpoint of internal liberalization. The public taste was not as restrained, foreign influences were more apparent, and writers began to experiment with new art forms. However, Spain was not totally liberalized in the strictest sense of the word: the bourgeoisie still reigned supreme. Nevertheless, more change was admitted than in previous decades, and there was strong evidence that innovative efforts might gain a firm foothold given a few years' time. Unfortunately the outbreak of war in 1936 destroyed any creative seed that had possibly begun to germinate.

The Generation of 1927 was primarily a generation of poets. Its importance in the theater lies in its attempt to break the fetters of Benaventian realism and conformity which bound the theater. In the poetic realm, the Generation of 1927 assimilated foreign influences, accepting more vanguard elements such as surrealism and expressionism, and combining them with traditional materials.[14] This dualism was soon reflected in the theater. On the one hand, writers were concerned with universal and eternal themes such as essence, being, reality, illusion, and truth. On the other hand there was a revival of interest in the classic theater.

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[13]Alejandro Casona, Obras Completas, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, I (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. xxxiv.

[14]Michael Benedict and George Wellwarth, eds., Modern Spanish Theater (New York: Dutton and Co., 1968), p. xiv.

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enjoyed creative freedom, even though public taste hindered their total imaginative output. Nevertheless, the fact remained that artists could safely voice their opinions without fear of retribution or reprisal. Postwar works, however, were markedly intranscendental and often repetitious and boring.

The reasons for this apparent vacuum of subject matter are both intrinsically political and social. The trend begun prior to the war of an almost exclusive bourgeois audience continued; few provincial theaters reopened after the war and the efforts of the Misiones Pedagógicas disbanded. Furthermore, since production costs then were prohibitive, this situation was of necessity reflected in the price of admission tickets, thereby restricting entrance to the more affluent classes.[17] As before the war, this group was quite conservative and desirous of being merely amused. This was doubly compounded by the fact that light drama, no matter how inferior, offered these people an escape from the harsh reality surrounding them in the aftermath of war. Plays of pure diversion remained in vogue, out of choice as well as necessity.[18]

On the political side, authors were limited in subject matter. The theater, since it reached more people more directly and forcefully than the other genres, was used as a weapon of propaganda for the existing regime. Due to the strict exercise of censorship, only the most inane and banal material was allowed on the stage.[19] Hence, many fine plays met an unwarranted and hasty demise. The theater was filled with

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[17]Janet Winecoff Díaz, "The Postwar Spanish Theater," South Atlantic Bulletin, XXXIII, ii (March, 1968), p. 7.

[18]Ibid., p. 8.

[19]Ibid.

translations, adaptations, a return to Greek tragedy, and the autos sacramentales.[20] Such a deplorable state has prompted the belief that the Spanish theater in the immediate postwar period was one of testimony rather than invention.[21] This type of literature is often referred to as teatro de evasión for it avoids political and social themes, concentrates on pure entertainment and psychological works, and attempts minimal thematic or structural techniques. Writers such as Alfonso Paso, Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena, Victor Ruiz Iriarte, José María Pemán, José López Rubio, Joaquín Calvo Sotelo, Miguel Mihura, and Edgar Neville fall into this category.[22] Nevertheless, toward the end of the 1940's there was a slight change in the works of Ruiz Iriarte, López Rubio and Neville: writers were beginning to be more adept in the composition of their escapist plays.[23]

In reaction to the teatro de evasión there arose what is known as the teatro social which actually began in 1949 with the production of Antonio Buero Vallejo's Historia de una escalera, and was given further impetus in 1950 when José María de Quinto and Alfonso Sastre signed the "Manifiesto de Teatro de Agitación Social" attacking the existing political and social institutions.[24] This group is composed of notables like Sastre, José Emilio Aragonés, Buero Vallejo, Rodríguez Buded, Carlos Muñiz, Lauro Olmo, Antonio Gala, and Alfredo Manas.[25] However, these

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[20]Valbuena Prat, p. 658. [21]Brown, p. 144.

[22]Díaz, "Twentieth Century Spanish Theater," Romance Notes, p. 26.

[23]Brown, p. 157.

[24]Díaz, "Postwar Spanish Theater," South Atlantic Bulletin, p. 10.

[25]Ibid., p. 11.

writers are forced to cope with the censorship faced by the evasionistas.

> Censorship limits them to the "objective" presentation of problem situations - poverty, inadequate housing, wages or employment - or the demonstration of how substandard conditions rob the individual of dignity, affect him psychologically, or bring unhappiness to his family life. When problems of liberty are treated, the most frequent method is indirect, using other times or countries.[26]

The old guard of social protest must rely, then, on direct realism or historical allegory.

Among members of the new guard, one finds José María Bellido, Antonio Martín Ballesteros, and José Ruibal, to name but a few. Due to their very subject matter, few works have been presented commercially in Spain. These men and their daring dramas form the current underground movement.[27]

> Many of the plays of this type will inevitably be without interest for non-Spaniards because of the obsessive single-mindedness of the political pleading, but some of them rise above their immediate interest because of the brilliance of their satire and the power of their theme, which, since it is always allegorized, may be taken to apply to any oppressive society or political system.[28]

The theater in exile exists concurrently with the theater of evasion and that of social protest. Either during or after the war, many writers fled from the mother country. Among the most famous to leave Spain were Jacinto Grau, Max Aub, Rafael Alberti, Pedro Salinas, Rafael Dieste, José Bergamín, and Alejandro Casona. In contrast with the propagandistic nature of purely entertaining literature in Spain,

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[26]Díaz, "Twentieth Century Spanish Theater," Romance Notes, p. 26.

[27]George E. Wellwarth, "Teatro español de vanguardia," Primer Acto (Madrid), CXIX, p. 53.

[28]Wellwarth, Theater of Protest, p. 366.

literature in exile is a rich one comprising a broad range of tendencies, ranging from Aub's teatro épico to Casona's juxtaposition of reality and illusion.[29] Nevertheless, literature in exile transmits a feeling of nostalgia for Spain, often as stridently as literature in Spain deplores existing conditions.

> Los que voluntaria o forzadamente se quedaron en España escriben bajo la presión de un ambiente totalitario. Los que salieron viven en el destierro con la nostalgia de la patria lejana, la amargura de la derrota y separados de las fuentes primarias de toda creación literaria, el suelo y la lengua del escritor. Todos anhelan volver a encontrar su voz entera en una patria libre.[30]

Alejandro Casona falls into that group of dramatists who had begun to enjoy great popularity prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, but who had been forced to leave Spain due to the expediencies of war. It is unfortunate that Casona found it necessary to flee, for had he remained his works would most assuredly have been immensely popular, given their subject matter and evasionista bent. Spain too suffered from his loss, for in Spain works were being produced along the same thematic lines but without his talent.[31] Casona's works have been classified as part of the teatro de evasión but a close study of them shows that his so-called evasionismo encompasses a sharp criticism of modern society characterized by bourgeois materialism and a scientific nature.[32] Moreover, in varied symbolic and thematic techniques, Casona's dramas

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[29]Díaz, "Postwar Spanish Theater," South Atlantic Bulletin, p. 9.

[30]Angel Del Río, Historia de la literatura española, II (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1948), p. 353.

[31]Díaz, "Postwar Spanish Theater," South Atlantic Bulletin, p. 9.

[32]Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona y las ideas," Insula, XIX, ccvi (enero, 1964), p. 15.

represent a return to some Romantic traits and are a harbinger of present thought as well. The combination of nineteenth century techniques with a twentieth century outlook coalesce in Casona's drama, and place his works in the current known as Neo-Romanticism: new in that it is tinged with the modern preoccupations of man lost in an unfeeling cosmos ever-searching for identity; new in its criticisms of the current dehumanization of society and its concomitant materialism; new in its overall focus which emphasizes the importance of man within a twentieth century context. Yet, at the same time Casona's Neo-Romanticism is but another manifestation of the rebelliousness inherent in the Spanish psyche since the beginning of time. Whether it be called Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic, or Neo-Romantic is irrelevant: the persisting evidence remains that the literature of Spain represents a fusion of currents and beliefs, each firmly rooted in and drawing inspriation from the preceding one and simultaneously innovating as well. Casona does not digress from this pre-established pattern for his entire dramatic production is the embodiment of Spain.

CHAPTER II

REALITY AND ILLUSION

In La sirena varada, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, and Los árboles mueren de pie, Casona examines the problem of reality and illusion as it appears within the context of modern society. His twentieth century focus of the theme is a Casonian Neo-Romantic characteristic for the author believes in man's direct personal confrontation with himself and also with the advanced technology of the modern age. Casona, then, adhers to the Romantic tenet of escapism from the insensitive world of the nineteenth century, at the same time that he amplifies this Romantic notion to encompass twentieth century preoccupations, thereby entering the realm of Neo-Romanticism because of his broader perspective. His re-evaluation and intensification of a pre-twentieth century belief gain added force when juxtaposed with dramatic techniques of purely Romantic invention. Consequently, the combination of a modern Neo-Romantic ideology with theatrical devices of the preceding age produces the creative tension apparent in the dramas of reality and illusion. Although much of Casona's theater dwells to some extent on this theme, La sirena

varada (1934), Prohibido suicidarse en primavera (1937), and Los árboles mueren de pie (1949) are most representative of his Neo-Romantic ideology.

The juxtaposition of the ideas of reality and illusion within these works produces a dualism which underscores thematic development, with reality taking precedence over illusion upon the final outcome. This last point is basic to a Casonian Neo-Romantic ideology, for it is in his acceptance of reality that he differs from his contemporary Luigi Pirandello, from the Romantics, and from many twentieth century existentialists. Casona himself acknowledges his debt to Pirandello " ... en cuanto a su técnica de emplear el doble plano de realidad y fantasía."[1] But here is where the similarity ends for Casona's dramas do not sanction illusion as an answer to present-day problems, nor do they blatantly deny the existence of God, as do Pirandello's.[2] It is at this very juncture that Casona enters the realm of Neo-Romanticism. As an artist, he allows his characters to enjoy the delights of evasion and flights from reality into the illusory world, in a most characteristically Romantic vein. However, and this point is central to the issue, the emotional importance of the individual gives way to a modern philosophical interpretation of the value and plight of man. A true nineteenth century Spanish Romantic would allow idealism to run rampant throughout his plays: the characters would die for the women they love, they would be at irreconcilable odds with society resulting from their beliefs, they would be despondent and melancholic. Casona, unlike traditional Romantics, recognizes the limits

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[1]Juan Rodríguez Castellano, "Mi última conversación con Alejandro Casona," Revista de estudios hispánicos, I (1967), p. 187.

[2]Charles H. Leighton, "Casona and Lorca: A Brief Comparison," Modern Drama, VII, i (May, 1964), p. 30.

of human existence and the value of the individual and consequently is fully aware of the implications of unchecked illusions. Despite its inherent defects, such as materialism, excessive scientific emphasis, and metaphysical disorientation, twentieth century society is one which must be faced; reality, no matter how harsh, must be accepted with all its philosophical implications. In Casona, Romantic emotive appeal gives way to a Neo-Romantic grasp of the situation; evasion becomes acceptance. Although the basic technique may be Romantic, the final solution is modern. Casona utilizes within a twentieth century framework Romantic strategems and ideologies, but only to a certain limit: when he has thoroughly submerged his characters in a Romantic world, he immediately confronts them with the reality of the twentieth century.

Likewise, Casona could never be termed an existentialist in the strictest sense of the word. It is true that he shares the existentialist revulsion for nineteenth century rationalism[3] and is against the positivistic and physico-mathematical basis of modern science.[4] What separates Casona from the twentieth century existentialist as well as from the nineteenth century Romantic, however, is the element of optimism. The Romantic is an isolated, solitary, emotional soul striving to find an ideal world within a nineteenth century society. The Existentialist likewise exhibits somewhat similar characteristics of solitude and alienation, but experiences angst when confronted with the terrible freedom to create his own existence in a chaotic and empty world. The typical

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[3]Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona and the Revolt against "Reason"," Modern Language Journal, XLVI, ii (January, 1962), p. 56.

[4]Ibid., p. 58.

Casonian Neo-Romantic is a lone figure, yet his is a type of "angustia superada"[5] for he returns to reality instead of continuing to avoid it; the element of optimism through confrontation is always present, as in the theater of Albert Camus. Thus, Casona elaborates upon Romantic escapist impulses, relating such tendencies to twentieth century situations, yet he never falls into existential desperation in the face of an unfeeling, modern world. At best he represents the bridge between Romanticism and Existentialism.

La sirena varada was first produced in 1934. The action of the play is as follows: Ricardo, rebelling against society, has established a community by the sea for refugees from reason. Among his followers are Daniel, a painter who wears a bandage over his eyes supposedly so that he may be able to dream up new colors, and Don Joaquín, the official fantasma of the group. One day an old family friend and doctor, Don Florín Nisal, visits Ricardo in an attempt to get him to return home and give up his unusual idea. His arrival coincides with that of Sirena, a beautiful, young girl who enters the house through a window facing the sea. She is a most unconventional person and often seems quite mad. Naturally Ricardo gradually falls in love with her. The arrival of Samy, the circus clown, reveals that Sirena is really his insane daughter María. As a result, Ricardo decides that reality must be faced and consents for Don Florín to help María. Later the circus impresario Pipo arrives and offers to sell his sexual property Sirena to Ricardo, who in turn banishes him from the premises. Disillusioned, Ricardo rips off

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[5]Victoriano Rivas André, "Poesía y angustia en el teatro de Casona," Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, XX, lvii (1966), p. 19.

Daniel's blindfold, only to discover that the latter is really blind. María saves Ricardo from entering the world of illusion completely, for she refuses to resort to illusion: she will remain in the real world for the sake of her unborn child.

Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, produced in 1937, takes place in the Hogar del Suicida run by Dr. Roda and his assistant Hans. The institution is especially designed for those disillusioned souls who desire death desperately. There the atmosphere is calm and all the implements necessary for a glorious suicide are readily accessible. Of course, such an inviting situation would thwart even the most avid potential suicide candidate, and, as a result, no one is willing to commit the final, definitive act, even though given such a splendid opportunity. Victims generally pass through the three stages of hysterical crying, pensive meditation, and finally the loss of the desire to die. The Hogar del Suicida is populated with varied types: the Amante Imaginario, who for years has dreamed of an imaginary, idealized life with the singer Cora Yako, but rejects her when he really has the chance to marry her because she is a very coarse, earthy, and aggressive woman: the Dama Triste, who thinks her body is worthless until shown differently and who falls in love with the Hombre de Filosofía; the Padre de la Otra Alicia who has killed his paralytic daughter by euthanasia and who finds paternal solace in Alicia, who in turn clings to Juan; and many others. Most important of all the characters are Chole and Fernando, amorous young journalists who stumble upon the place and choose to remain to help Dr. Roda with his patients. While there, their dreamy world undergoes a metamorphosis: they discover the hate which Juan, Fernando's brother,

feels for him, and as a result Chole attempts suicide in an effort to reconcile the brothers. Eventually Juan and Fernando come to a fraternal understanding. Chole offers to stay with Juan, who refuses to have her on the grounds that her very offer has made all the suffering which he has experienced worthwhile. Chole and Fernando remain together and Alicia comforts Juan at the end of the play.

In Act I of Los árboles mueren de pie, the real world seems fantastic: a perfectly modern office is sporadically populated with a bevy of weird character types who are constantly changing roles throughout the act. Isabel and Balboa are witnesses of this entire spectacle. Eventually these two meet the director, Mauricio, who explains that his organization was established to bring hope to disconsolate people: it has served its purpose well for it saved Isabel from committing suicide the previous night. Balboa enlists Mauricio's aid in an attempt to bring some happiness into his wife's life. The plan is that Mauricio and Isabel will pretend to be Balboa's long lost nephew and wife. This charade will be for the benefit of the Abuela who has not been herself for the twenty years that her nephew has been gone. The plan succeeds and the Abuela is temporarily deceived. During the course of their stay in the Balboa household, Isabel falls in love with Mauricio, unknown to him. Unfortunately, the idyll ends when the real nephew arrives and demands money from his relatives. The Abuela discovers the deception, but says nothing for Mauricio and Isabel have made her happy. At the end, Mauricio discovers that he loves Isabel.

In these works Casonian Neo-Romanticism is a result of the author's distinctive use of twentieth century ideology and symbolism employed in

conjunction with theatrical techniques common to the Romantic period. This is especially true in the very titles of each of the plays. The Romantic predilection with far-away worlds and remote times is shown by the reference to the siren in La sirena varada. In classical mythology the siren was a sea nymph reputed to be part woman and part bird, capable of luring sailors to their eventual death by her destructive singing.[6] By juxtaposing sirena with varada, which refers to something brought to a standstill, Casona has symbolically implied the end of a dream world: mythology is not based on fact, it is merely the product of imaginative minds, and, just as the bird-woman siren, it must be halted in flight and the reality of the situation must be faced. Prohibido suicidarse en primavera is characteristically Romantic in its mention of suicide, with its denial of life and overt exhibition of extreme hopelessness. However, just as in La sirena varada, the dualism of terms within the title, in this case, prohibido and suicidarse, reinforces the creative tension of the work and gives an indication of its Neo-Romantic bent: Casona forbids his characters to kill themselves, an action contrary to Christian ethics, and thereby affirms the necessity of their very existence; they must confront reality. The word primavera further reinforces the latter idea for it implies an awakening of the senses to the facets of nature and life; it is a rebirth of sensations which have remained dormant during a barren winter. The fact that Beethoven composed a "Hymn to Nature" played at the arrival of Spring is also significant from the standpoint of Casona's use of Romantic ploys, for although Beethoven was by no means

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[6]Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York: The New American Library, 1942), p. 43.

a totally Romantic composer, he was " . . . to a certain degree drawn to the spiritual sphere of romanticism. There can be no question as to the numerous threads that lead from him to the romanticists . . . ."[7] Casona's mention of composers, as well as other musicians and painters in many of his plays exemplifies the Romantic notion that thirst for beauty finds expression in the other arts. Finally, the title Los árboles mueren de pie exhibits Romantic preoccupation with death, mueren, coupled with the Neo-Romantic imagery of the tree, symbolic of the inexhaustible life of the cosmos and, by extension, immortality.[8] The fact that trees die standing can symbolize, as one critic notes, " . . . the stoic acceptance of all that life has to offer in the way of suffering and death."[9] By the same token, it can also be symbolic of the indefatigable spirit of Casona's characters. Although death is inevitable as the logical end to existence, life must be faced actively, de pie, not passively. It is in this confrontation with modern society that the characters assert themselves.

Each of the institutions in La sirena varada, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, and Los árboles mueren de pie are examples of Casona's disdain for twentieth century mechanized society and the impersonality of a computerized age: Ricardo's "asilo para huérfanos de sentido común"[10]

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[7]Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1941), p. 752.

[8]J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. by Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1962), p. 328.

[9]Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona as Essayist: The Message Finds Its Medium," Revista de estudios hispánicos, VI (1972), p. 112.

[10]Alejandro Casona, La sirena varada, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 297.

where no one will be allowed to enter who knows geometry, symbolic of advanced mathematically oriented cultures; Dr. Roda's refuge for potential suicide victims who are disgusted with the dehumanization and impersonalization of society; and Mauricio's secret organization which brings love to victims of mechanization. In the latter play, a real twentieth century setting is so populated with unreal elements that it seems fantastic. By making reality seem illusory Casona is denying a society which would foster such elements. In his overall desire to return to a more simple era, he is Romantic; it is in his confrontation with a specific twentieth century problem that he becomes a Neo-Romantic ideologically, for the outcome of each play advocates active acceptance and an end to illusion.

From a purely technical viewpoint, all the stage settings bear a strong Romantic stamp in their distinctively melodramatic symbolism. The use of Romantic techniques does not weaken the impact of a Casonian Neo-Romantic ideology, but rather it merely indicates that the roots of Casona's philosophy can be found in nineteenth century dramatic devices and concepts. In La sirena varada, Act I opens with indirect red and green lights, life and love versus death, the basic dualism of the play. The reader immediately has an inkling that these two forces will be at odds, and this is true throughout Act I. On the other hand, the stage in Act III is illuminated by an intimate white light, indicating a state of illumination, that is, the recognition of the true worth of reality. A strong green light appears when Ricardo attempts to induce Sirena-María to revert to illusion; his turning it off is symbolic, since Casona has earlier equated illusion to virtual genocide. Act I of

Prohibido suicidarse en primavera is set in winter, the sterile, barren season. Although all the action takes place in a House of Suicide, it is always light, again, death versus hope. This is further reinforced by the fact that the gallery is dark but the mountains in the background are white, and that portraits of famous people who have committed suicide exist side-by-side wi... a tranquil, pretty garden. The replacement of the suicide portraits with Botticelli's "Spring" in Act II is clearly a direct reference to the beginning of the transition from illusion to reality. Finally, in Act III, it is morning and Spring, the dawn of a new life. At the final curtain Beethoven's "Hymn to Nature" is played loudly and happily in a most characteristically Romantic fashion. Los árboles mueren de pie does not deviate from the pattern of the other two plays. The organization is located at Avenida de los Aromos, 2448. In numerology, the number two signifies conflict; four, rational organization and the human situation; and eight, regeneration and spiraling towards heaven.[11] By extension, spiritual awakening will save man from his deplorable situation. A red light appears throughout Act I symbolizing both a state of suffering and a state of love. A bird, symbolic of the need for spiritualization in man, sings. In Act III, the color white appears. As in the other plays, through the vehicle of using stage directions to create mood, Casona's symbolism is visually apparent: Act I establishes the problem of reality versus illusion, Act II serves as transition, and Act III represents the triumph of reality, generally amid stark white light or loud and joyful music. The use of such contrasts in each of the plays further emphasizes thematic content.

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[11]Cirlot, pp. 221-223, passim.

In his presentation of the central characters of each of the plays, Casona once again utilizes nineteenth century dramatic devices to advance his Neo-Romantic ideology of confrontation. In La sirena varada, Ricardo is described as a typical Romantic hero: a young, idle recluse, he is a rather extravagant, sad, unkempt person. In Act I, he sings "La donna é mobile qual piu mal vento" " . . . suggesting the Bohemian and libertine nature which Ricardo shares with the Duke in Rigoletto."[12] He is searching for an ideal world, as the best of the Romantics, for he feels that " ... la vida es aburrida y estúpida por falta de imaginación. Demasiada razón, demasiada disciplina en todo."[13] His decision to form an asylum for people like himself is characteristic of the Romantic notion that the individual is an isolated being, a creative genius, an idea which has its basis in the belief that the individual is the center of all experience. Ricardo views himself as a solitary figure who must flee from technological society and create a new world on the ruins of the old. He is the prime example of a Casonian hero for he is an extension of the Romantic who also operates outside the moral and ethical limits of society: he lives with María outside the legal boundaries of marriage. When María discovers she is pregnant and is not sure who is the father, Ricardo nevertheless decides to accept the child as his own. The fact that Casona permits Ricardo to find happiness with María indicates that the author sanctions such an action, in spite of the contention of the critic Charles Leighton who believes that Casona's

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[12]Angel A. Borrás, "Muscial Underscoring in the Dramas of Casona," Hispania, XLVII, iii (September, 1964), p. 507.

[13]Casona, La sirena, p. 297.

characters " ... al hacer el equivalente del "salto existencial" ... casi siempre acuden a normas morales. ... Los pocos que no lo hacen son presentados como obviamente represibles por su autor."[14] Ricardo's is a decision which is clearly an indication of changing moral views. It is this twentieth century love which is the redeeming element in the drama, for Ricardo accepts reality because of the impending birth of the child.

Sirena, likewise, is the ephemeral Romantic heroine: mystery surrounds her origins for she cannot remember anything of her past. When she rediscovers herself, she is known as María, symbolic of purity and youth. As Ricardo states: " ... Sirena es la libertad y la fantasía mismas."[15] She, too, is a Casonian heroine, for as Don Florin says: "¿Qué clase de mujer es ésa que llega de noche ocultándose, a entregarse a un desconocido?"[16] Christian norms are meaningless to her. In essence, in La sirena varada Casona is saying that man must not seek escape through a world of illusion; he must confront a dehumanized society, using whatever methods he can, although they may violate Christian ethical principles. This desire to face the problems of a scientific age is thus a Casonian Neo-Romantic trait.

In Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, again Casona places two young lovers outside moral boundaries: Chole and Fernando are in love, and living together. This situation is accepted by the other characters In fact, Dr. Roda makes one of the few comments alluding to their lives together when he says that theirs is " ... una vida en plenitud, audaz,

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[14]Charles H. Leighton, "Las ideas," Insula, p. 15.

[15]Casona, La sirena, p. 312.

[16]Ibid., p. 315.

enamorada, llena de esperanzas y de horizontes ... ."[17] In this play, Casona does not describe either character utilizing Romantic terminology. This he does with minor characters such as the Amante Imaginario who is a frightened, nervous, nameless, young, disillusioned and lovesick poet who listens to the Romantic composer Chopin the the woods at night![18] Chole and Fernando, on the other hand, are at first depicted as happy and uncomplicated; their eventual changing of roles emphasizes the conflict between what is real and what is illusion. Juan's revelation of his hidden passions with regard to his brother Fernando provides the stimulus which prompts Chole to come out of her dream world and attempt suicide. She reveals the Neo-Romantic thesis of the play when she says: "Yo me he acercado a la muerte, y he visto ya que no resuelve nada; que todos los problemas hay que resolverlos en pie."[19] Although both Fernando and Chole have passed in and out of the state of illusion during the course of the drama, the reader knows that at the end their lives have changed considerably for they have undergone a metaphysical metamorphosis: they have defeated disillusionment.

Finally, in Los árboles mueren de pie, the central character Mauricio exhibits " ... una elegancia natural ligeramente bohemia."[20] Also, the idealistic side of the protagonist at the beginning of the play classifies him as a Romantic hero in the sense that he believes

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[17]Alejandro Casona, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 487.

[18]Ibid., p. 476. [19]Ibid., p. 519.

[20]Alejandro Casona, Los árboles mueren de pie, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 982.

there is good in all men and that they need to escape from the prosaic world. It is only through Isabel's love that he comes into contact with the reality of the twentieth century and realizes that escape is not the only answer. Isabel is described in a Romantic vein with her nervousness and sad demeanor.[21] Hers is a tormented emotional state, a fact which " . . . is reinforced when she . . . can play Ravel's Bolero, but only with one finger. This piece is appropriate, with its monotonous theme, crescendoing to a savage climax."[22] Her fabricated marriage to Mauricio in order to bring the Abuela some happiness makes her become aware of the fact that reality is superior to illusion. She actually begins to live the part in which she is cast and comes to the decision that "una mentira hay que inventarla; en cambio, la verdad es tan fácil."[23]

All of the protagonists in these plays are philosophically modern and artistically Romantic. Since theirs is a philosophy of engagement via the acceptance of reality and retention of love, no one could ever attempt suicide as the nineteenth century Romantic hero. However, Casona is not a totally dedicated adherent of the acceptance of reality: in each play there is always one character who opts for illusion. There is a plausible explanation, though, for each decision to enter into the illusory world: since Daniel is blind, the harsh reality of his situation does not seem quite as severe while he is blindfolded. By the same token, the Amante Imaginario would rather conjure up an ideal woman than have to live with one who is extremely domineering. The Abuela does not want to destroy happiness for Mauricio and Isabel, who not only feel that

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[21]Ibid., p. 966. [22]Borrás, p. 507.

[23]Casona, Los árboles, p. 1019.

they have helped someone but who also have fallen in love through the vehicle of deception. In the overall picture, then, Casona is saying that while man must face this life, a little bit of dreaming is not harmful, and perhaps is even necessary in an unfeeling society, as long as it does not take precedence over reality.

Alejandro Casona's Neo-Romanticism is, thus, a fusion of a twentieth century philosophical ideology and the most basic, simplistic nineteenth century Romantic techniques. The combination of these two elements produces one cohesive literary style characteristic of the Casonian theater. Typical Romantic ploys utilized in his dramas of reality and illusion are the following: use of the arts in literature as an expression of the innermost feelings of either the writer or the protagonists; use of stage directions to create a definite mood; appearance of idealized, sentimental symbolic descriptions; and emphasis on the importance of the individual and of his need to avoid reality. What makes Casona a Neo-Romantic, then, is the assimilation of these Romantic techniques within a twentieth century focus. His characters operate outside pre-established ethical and moral limits. Casona's creations do not seek refuge in distant worlds as do typical Romantic heroes. Nor do they succeed in escaping from reality, for they must of necessity confront it. His are not emotional protagonists, but rather, they are highly philosophical ones faced with the problems of reality versus illusion, a technological society apparently devoid of love, the disintegration of social and moral values, and a universe constantly in flux. Casona tempers latent Romantic idealism with modern philosophy to produce Neo-Romanticism: although society may be too scientific or insensitive, man must not flee from it, but rather make his own reality within the boundaries of love.

CHAPTER III

DREAMS

In La llave en el desván and Siete gritos en el mar, Casona attempts a re-examination of the significance of dreams based on his knowledge of twentieth century pyschoanalytical methods. It is from this broadened perspective afforded only through the work of modern researchers such as Freud that Casona can treat the dream as an intrinsic part of man's psyche. This distinctive, more liberalized approach to dream analysis clearly differentiates the twentieth century from all other time periods, and is, perhaps, one of the Neo-Romantic traits peculiar to Alejandro Casona.

Of the two dramas, La llave en el desván most obviously employs the Freudian method of psychoanalysis. The plot is very simple: Mario, a noted chemical engineer is on the verge of financial ruin, for an American firm has introduced a new hydrogen furnace almost simultaneously with his own discovery of it. Compounded with this is the fact that he is plagued by a dream which terrifies him. Don Gabriel, his doctor, and his sister-in-law Laura then spend the remainder of the drama attempting to psychoanalyze him. In the process, Laura discovers not only that she

loves Mario, but also that his wife Susana has been unfaithful to him, and that his best friend and associate Alfredo has betrayed him. The play ends in a manner reminiscent of Mario's dream, and the reader becomes most acutely aware of the fact that Mario has killed Susana when, at the final curtain, he says: "Ahora sí... Ahora no estoy soñando... "[1] Clearly the plot is secondary to the dream itself. After the initial expository material essential to any play, Casona's characters spend the greater part of the drama preoccupied with the hidden meanings of Mario's dream. Dreams have always been useful methods of predicting future events or symbolizing forces at work in drama, but it is this emphasis on the psychoanalytical aspect which differentiates La llave en el desván from pre-twentieth century dramas involving dreams.

Don Gabriel Miranda, the family doctor, is an adherent of the belief that dreams are symbolic and intrinsically related to past events.

> GABRIEL: ... Muy respetable; pero yo no creo que los sueños sirvan gran cosa para iluminar el porvenir. En cambio, pueden ser muy útiles para hacernos ver más claro el presente... y, sobre todo, el pasado.
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> LAURA: ¿En este caso también?
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> GABRIEL: En éste, especialmente. Casi me atrevería a jurar que esa pesadilla de Mario está toda construída con emociones y recuerdos viejos.[2]

When directly questioned as to whether or not he is strictly Freudian, Gabriel answers negatively. Nevertheless, " ... precisamente por eso puedo afirmarte que nadie nos ha ayudado tanto como él a penetrar en lo

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[1]Alejandro Casona, La llave en el desván, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 1106.

[2]Ibid., p. 1068.

más escondido del alma."[3] His methods consist of encouraging Mario to relate other dreams, exploring memories in an attempt to correlate past and present, and finally interpreting Mario's dream in terms of the latter's repressed desires, much in the same vein as Freud would do.

Laura, on the other hand, represents traditional dream interpretation. While Gabriel believes that dreams originate in forgotten painful childhood events, Laura holds that they have predictive value. Of course, this conservative notion has appeared often in literature. It in no way represents any psychoanalytical effort but is nothing more than a prefiguration in a drama. Both approaches are essential to the final outcome of the play, however. Because as a child Mario witnessed the death of his unfaithful mother, he subconsciously relates this event to his relationship with his wife Susana, who he senses is unfaithful. When he discovers that his fears are justified, he shoots his wife, just as the woman was shot in his dream. At the end of the play, in a kind of Nietzschean eternal return effect, Mario's dream becomes a reality, and Gabriel shows that it is the result of his hidden past. Liberal and conservative approaches to dream interpretation fuse together in one cohesive whole. Perhaps this is what characterizes La llave en el desván as being exemplary of one of the Casonian Neo-Romantic tendencies, for he utilizes traditional methods, and at the same time he modifies them somewhat due to a more liberal twentieth century interpretation.

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[3] Ibid., p. 1074.

Related to this mixture of traditionalism and liberalism is Casona's character portrayal. Don Gabriel is very much a twentieth century man; he scoffs at outmoded beliefs, questions present situations, and attempts modern techniques. Laura, on the other hand, is the epitome of the past age. She is Romantic in her isolated, melancholy, lonely, and inferior life; her love for Mario is intense and emotional. Finally, she is the mouthpiece for the past belief that dreams foretell the future. Surely this juxtaposition of traditional and modern, of conservatism and liberalism, gives added force to Casona's drama and serves to emphasize the basic differences between the two methods.

Theatrical techniques likewise intensify the difference between twentieth century and past approaches. A normal setting prevails throughout the drama except on two distinct occasions. First, during Don Gabriel's psychoanalytical session with Mario, the lights are dimmed and music of Mario's childhood is played. The effect of such techniques is to transport Mario into a recital of past dreams which might in some way be related to the central dream in the play. Both the lighting and the music serve as external stimuli which prompt forgotten memories. The second time Casona alters the setting is at the end of the drama, and it bears a distinctive Romantic stamp. Conditions simulating Mario's dream appear onstage: stifling heat is followed by a strong wind, thunder, and rain. The turbulence on the set mirrors the chaos within the protagonist and provides the emotional appeal necessary to produce feelings of fear and terror in the audience. Clearly, Casona has contrasted a purely nineteenth century emotional melodramatic technique with both a normal setting and a twentieth century psychoanalytical session.

Casona's utilization of a modern perspective not only functions as an indicator of twentieth century dream interpretation, but also emphasizes the everchanging role of man in society. No longer content to view a dream as merely predictive or symbolic of dramatic forces, twentieth century man, and Casona in particular, sees himself at the very center of the dream. In La llave en el desván, Mario, symbolic of modern man, is the main issue, for the dream is rooted in his forgotten past, a fact of which he is very much aware. His repressed desires and fears coalesce with his discovery of betrayal, producing a dramatic climax which owes its basic foundation to childhood experiences. Gabriel's comprehension and utilization of psychoanalytical methods on Mario does not prevent by any means the latter's eventual actions, but it does shed light upon the origins of these actions. Thus, Casona's approach to dream interpretation in this particular drama is thereby distinguished from that of his predecessors, and can perhaps be considered as one of this author's Neo-Romantic characteristics.

Siete gritos en el mar, produced in 1957, deals also with a dream, but the technique in this play differs somewhat from La llave en el desván, produced the previous year. The action of the actual play is simple: Santillana falls asleep reading the Memorias de viaje of one of the ship's past captains and awakens at the end of the play. What singles out this drama is Santillana's dream, for the reader is unaware that Santillana has been dreaming until the final pages of the play.

The actual dream predates twentieth century techniques in its emphasis on the predictive quality of dreams. It would be unfair at this point to cite the influence of Jung, who also believes that dreams

foretell future events, for he had really just begun to formulate his theories at the time when Casona produced his play.[4] What differentiates Santillana's dream and places it in a study of Casonian Neo-Romantic tendencies is the ideology contained within the dream itself. Many of Casona's ideas which distinguish him from pre-twentieth century authors appear in Siete gritos en el mar and are therefore a reiteration and summary of the Casonian brand of Neo-Romanticism. Casona believes that man can freely choose from varied courses of action open to him. In Siete gritos en el mar, he rejects the notion of predestination as he also does in El crimen de Lord Arturo. Likewise, implicit in the drama is the criticism of a technological society with its emphasis on insensitivity and monetary gain, an idea which also appears in works such as La barca sin pescador and La sirena varada, for example. In addition, Casona believes that man must confront his situation and make the best of it whether it be by positive overt actions or by self expatiation. Finally, suicide for Casona is non-existent in a world of love, a notion which also is advanced in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera.

Siete gritos en el mar is a complicated play because of its multiple ideological content. The main characters illustrate how the peculiarly Casonian Neo-Romantic ideology is advanced.

All the characters in the play are passengers on a pleasure ship, the Nalón. This vessel is symbolic of the real world and contains all the problems which arise from daily living. As Nina says: "Un barco es

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[4]Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona and the Significance of Dreams," Hispania, XLV, iv (December, 1962), p. 701.

otro mundo en pequeño, con su vida propia."[5] The man in charge of this liner is the Capitán, who is perhaps one of the most interesting characters in the drama. In his role as the supreme commander of the ship, he represents Casona, the author, who can be considered an omnipotent creator when he actively fashions his drama according to his own preferences. By extension, he can also be likened to an all-powerful God who rules the world. The primary importance of the Capitán, therefore, resides in the fact that in Siete gritos en el mar the creator/author figure is obviously visible. In works such as Prohibido suicidarse en primavera and La sirena varada, men like Dr. Roda and Don Florín represented the stabilizing element in chaotic worlds, and their presence implicitly admonishes prudence and offers tacit support. Here the stabilizing element takes on an added quality of omniscience: "¡Qué tipo curioso! Habla siempre como si conociera de antemano todas las respuestas, y hasta cuando parece más serio le asoma una sonrisa detrás de los ojos."[6] and "Esa seguridad desconcertante..., como si supiera de antemano todo lo que va a ocurrir y cómo va a occurir."[7] Each of the characters senses that the Capitán knows him completely. The reader feels that the Capitán has advance knowledge of the eventual downfall of the characters and wants to save them by placing them in an untenable situation, their impending deaths, therefore forcing them to repent (Zabala, Mercedes, Baron Pertus, Nina, Julia, and the Profesor to an extent) or be damned (Hárrisson). If the Capitán symbolizes Casona, then it is apparent that his message

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[5]Alejandro Casona, Siete gritos en el mar, in Obras Completas, II, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 20.

[6]Ibid., p. 15. [7]Ibid., p. 36.

emphasizes the fact that man's personal recognition of individual shortcomings suffices to save him: " ... cuando se sabe morir, no importa cómo se ha vivido."[8]

It is possible that Casona chose to employ the omniscient godhead figure for two reasons: (1) to show that there is some overriding force in twentieth century society who cares about man and who wants to help him save himself and become master of his destiny through love; and (2) the use of an all-knowing figure on the dream level would be more readily accepted as true by a reader accustomed to tangible facts, thereby giving Casona more freedom of expression and innovativeness.

The characters who represent Casona's beliefs are seven men and women traveling aboard the Nalón. Regarding them, Casona himself says: "Los siete pecadores protagonistas ... no son siete por casualidad, aunque no respondan a la lista ortodoxa de los pecados capitales... ."[9] Throughout the ages, the seven traditional capital sins have been considered to be pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth. However, Casona's own admission of a more liberal interpretation of these sins shows his tendency to question established tradition and redefine the evils apparent in modern society, as many twentieth century authors do.

Casona's friend and critic Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles suggests that Nina represents sensuality; Baron Pertus, pride; Zabala, crime; Mercedes, vice; Profesor, indifference; Julia, despair; and

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[8] Ibid., p. 34.

[9] Alejandro Casona, Obras Completas, I, p. cl.

Hárrisson, egoism and avarice.[10] Although some of these traits seem to correspond to the traditionally accepted sins, in reality they differ somewhat, reflecting a completely Casonian Neo-Romantic ideology or amplifying traditional beliefs in keeping with a modern perspective.

Hárrisson exhibits egoism and greed due to the exigencies of modern technological society. His indiscriminate production and selling of arms to the highest bidder illustrates modern preoccupations with personal, nonaltruistic advancement and is indicative of the insensitivity caused by an advanced, impersonal society. That Casona loathes such an impersonal attitude is apparent: Hárrisson, although given the chance to repent, when placed in a terminal situation by the Capitán, refuses, attempts to buy his way out, and is shot.

Baron Pertus and Nina typify the Casonian belief that man, no matter how evil, can rectify his deplorable condition through the positive action of love. The Baron suffers from excessive pride, insensitivity, and sadistic impulses. When faced with death, he comes to the realization that he really loves the prostitute/mistress Nina and she, him. It is this true love which gives them both the courage to face death.

Likewise Zabala and Mercedes undergo a somewhat similar transformation for each realizes that by their destruction of Zabala's first wife's love, which was a pure one, theirs was tainted with guilt. Their very confrontation with the sordid details of the past raises them to the stature of characters in control of themselves and their particular situations, unwilling now to seek escape in imaginary worlds.

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. cli.

The Profesor is also guilty of a Casonian sin, for he is indifferent and insensitive to the needs of others. Given his sarcastic and unfeeling personality, it is a major breakthrough when he admits that he once loved. Prior to this admission, the Profesor shows no feelings. His exhibition of some emotion partially redeems him of his indifference.

Julia's chief sin is despair, a word alien to a pure Casonian final view of life. In Casona's plays, despair always of necessity recedes into the background when confronted with the forces of love, tenderness, and concern. This is exactly what happens to Julia when she and Santillana fall in love.

Taken as a whole, these seven sinners each initially possess the latent capacity for redemption which eventually comes to the fore in most of them. By recognizing one's faults or those of the world's, man can assert himself positively. Evasion into unrealistic worlds as an escape from an unpleasant situation will not provide the answer. Only confrontation will.

The birth of a child at the end of the dream is indicative of the awakening on the part of the sinners: " ... ese niño es un poco hijo de todos."[11] A baby, untainted by material preoccupations and nonaltruistic impulses and evil tendencies is the progeny and unrealized potential of every man, sinner or saint. By awakening to a recognition of one's interior worth, man can divest himself of greed, indifference, criminal instincts, despair, and sensuality.

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[11]Casona, Siete gritos, p. 69.

Finally, when Santillana wakes up at the end of the play, he realizes that he has been dreaming. As he meets each character who had been in his dream, he realizes that his dream was but a forecast of things that have the potential of taking place if only given the proper stimulus. The fact that Santillana attempts to save Julia, for example, from her suicidal attempt is clearly indicative of Casona's belief that destiny can be altered in that man is free to choose alternative courses of action. The reader is left to assume that Santillana will attempt to stimulate an awakening in each of the characters and eventually save them, thereby paralleling the events which transpired in his dream.

Alejandro Casona, then, has utilized the dramatic technique of the dream in two distinct manners. In La llave en el desván, he has examined the significance of a dream on the basis of psychoanalytical inquiry. While not denying the traditionally accepted belief in the predictive quality of a dream, he has nevertheless questioned this interpretation by his very use of a purely twentieth century method. His attempt to introduce a new perspective into previously entrenched ideas is perhaps the best indicator of Casonian liberalism. This change in focus likewise makes him a Neo-Romantic for he utilizes concepts alien to previous centuries at the same time that many of his theatrical maneuvers are reminiscent of nineteenth century Romanticism.

Siete gritos en el mar on the other hand is quite different from La llave en el desván, although it too takes a dream as its focal point. The distinction between the two plays arises from the fact that while La llave en el desván contains a Neo-Romantic approach fused with nineteenth century techniques, Siete gritos en el mar almost exclusively deals with

the exposition of Casona's personal ideology. The author's beliefs, as exemplified through his characters, are very much in keeping with the twentieth century tendency to question traditional ideas and concepts, finally arriving at the conclusion that man is responsible only to himself: since society has advanced to the point of insensitivity, man, the master of his destiny, has the opportunity to raise himself above the level of self-degradation by a conscious confrontation and a positive affirmation of self. Casona's beliefs are therefore most liberal and innovative in comparison with the nineteenth century Romantics who believed that fate was an unchangeable determinant in man's life, and who often allowed their heroes to escape from the world and often commit suicide. Casona's modern ideology, therefore, is but an expression of his Neo-Romantic tendencies and places him in the mainstream of contemporary drama.

CHAPTER IV

FATE

In El crimen de Lord Arturo, Alejandro Casona re-examines the traditional concept of fate from a twentieth century perspective. The resulting interpretation is therefore more liberal than that of nineteenth century Romantics, for Casona places the responsibility for man's destiny on man himself, not on unseen and uncontrollable forces. Consequently, Casona's view of fate can thus be qualified as a part of twentieth century trends to question previously established ideas and concepts. The traditional Romantic focus on the importance of the individual is given a more extensive treatment and emphasis in the twentieth century, and this in turn leads to the modern idea that man is responsible only to himself, a belief basic to Casona's Neo-Romantic ideology.

This rejection of the notion of predestination appears in Siete gritos en el mar and in El crimen de Lord Arturo. In the former play, Casona utilizes a dream as a symbol of the traditional treatment of the concept of fate. Within the dream itself, Casona shows that the destiny of the passengers cannot be changed. Since fate dictates that they will die at a certain time and place, nothing can alter the flow of events,

for destiny within the dream is inflexible. Casona, then, utilizes the vehicle of the dream traditionally as a predictive tool and as an indicator of a pre-twentieth century ideology.

However, once Santillana wakes up at the end of the play and realizes what has occurred, he becomes aware that his dream was merely a forecast of what could happen given the proper stimuli. It is at this point that a Casonian Neo-Romantic ideology appears, for the author implies that man is free to choose and he is not bound by any pre-established plan. In the dream, for example, Julia was predestined to die in wartime. In reality, however, she chooses Santillana's love over death. Man must confront himself in his modern situation; he must forge his own existence since destiny has no control. Ideologically this rejection of the traditional treatment of predestination situates Casona in the current of Neo-Romanticism, for it is a reaction to a deterministic concept of life prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century.

In Casona's first drama, El crimen de Lord Arturo, published in 1929, Lady Clementina has invited the chiromancer Séptimo Podgers to her party. During the evening, he reads Arturo's fortune and informs him that it is Arturo's destiny to kill someone he loves: if he does not freely choose his victim, then he will kill Sibila Merton whom he is to marry in two days. Arturo immediately cancels all wedding plans without explanations to his fiancée and plots to eliminate Tía Clementina. His plan to poison her fails for she dies a natural death. Again Arturo stalls Sibila's questions while attempting to kill Tío Deán de Chichester with a bomb; of course, the bomb does not work. At this point, Arturo decides that he himself will be the victim and is making plans to drown himself

in the Thames when Podgers appears and attempts to blackmail Alm for Tía Clem's death, unaware that it was a natural one. As a result, Arturo kills Podgers and the reader assumes that he will marry Sibila.

The title of the play shows a marked delineation between good and evil for it brings to mind the goodness of the legendary King Arthur, as well as the evil connotations commonly associated with the word crimen. This contraposition of two diametrically opposed terms is a practice common to the melodramatic facet of nineteenth century Romanticism. Its appearance in the title alerts the reader to the fact that these two forces will be at odds during the play, and that, supposedly, evil will triumph, for the title reads "Lord Arthur's Crime." The central idea of Casona's drama hinges on the concept of fate and its importance to man. Casona has treated this notion Neo-Romantically as in Siete gritos en el mar, for he has symbolically rejected the belief that man is incapable of controlling his destiny, thereby rendering this view of fate much more liberal than that of a pure Romantic: Podgers is fraudulent, deceptive, and evil, and by extension, so is the idea of fate. The play should instead be entitled "Séptimo Podgers' Crime" since he attempted to deceive Arturo unscrupulously into believing that Arturo would kill someone he loved. The revelation of Podgers' deception affirms that man can and does control his destiny. This explains Casona's comment, through the vehicle of the character Arturo, "Era una obra de justicia."[1] when he kills Podgers: the chiromancer had deceived him and made him believe that he could not

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[1]Alejandro Casona, El crimen de Lord Arturo, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 287.

change the course of events. Arturo's discovery of this betrayal of necessity forces him to eliminate the man who had implanted such an absurd notion in his mind. Such an act is warranted as a prevention against similar occurrences. Earlier in the play, Sibila also reinforces the notion that destiny is meaningless when she says: "Yo creo que, cuando es el amor que está en juego, se puede luchar contra todo."[2] Sibila's statement receives added emphasis given the symbolism of her name. In Greek mythology, the Sibyllae were reputed to be wise women endowed with great prophetic powers. They supposedly interceded with the gods on behalf of man. Hence, in this play Sibila's thoughts should be considered as representative of Casona's philosophy. Love is the redeeming factor of life and man is at the core of existence for he is the master of his destiny.

Since Neo-Romanticism is a fusion of a liberal twentieth century philosophy with some techniques characteristic of nineteenth century Romanticism, it would follow that since El crimen de Lord Arturo is ideologically Neo-Romantic, some of its techniques should bear a striking resemblance to those of the Romantic movement. In this play, however, Casona does not use stage settings and asides as frequently as in La sirena varada, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera and Los árboles mueren de pie. In fact, they are obviously missing. Other than situating the first act at night as a typical Spanish Romantic would have done, Casona virtually neglects the utilization of melodramatic mechanical devices such as lightning, thunder, and unexpected letters. This apparent

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[2] Ibid., p. 241.

dismissal of visual Romantic aids can, perhaps, be explained by the fact that El crimen de Lord Arturo was the author's first drama and was patterned after a narration by Oscar Wilde. It is conceivable that Casona wanted his first play to reproduce faithfully the drama of an established writer, a fact which is supported by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles:

> Uno de sus mejores aciertos ha sido conservar en los diálogos para la escena todas las frases ingeniosas - muy abundantes - que sazonan la narración, e igualmente servirse de los fragmentos dialogales que, en ésta, se entreverán con la parte propiamente narrativa, sin retoque alguno, por creerlos inmejorables, y dando tono medido al ambiente y a los personajes, de tan pura cepa británica.[3]

Casona's rejection of visual stage settings and accoutrements does not exclude his utilization of other Romantic techniques. Prefigurations, a constant in nineteenth century Romantic drama, are apparent in El crimen de Lord Arturo. For example, at the beginning of the play, Arturo tells the story of an old gypsy who had run away horrified when asked to tell Arturo's furtune; later in the play, Podgers is somewhat reluctant to do the same. The appearance of these warnings of future events is somewhat sporadic throughout the drama and by themselves are not conclusive evidence of Casona's inclination towards Romantic techniques. However it is in the portrayal of both major and minor characters that Casona illustrates his true predilection for the use of Romantic ploys, which are nonetheless subservient to his Neo-Romantic ideology that man can control his own destiny.

From a purely ideological standpoint, the most intriguing character in the play, although he is a minor one, is Séptimo Podgers. The

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[3]Alejandro Casona, Obras Completas, I, p. lvii.

selection of the name Séptimo is an extremely dramatic choice for this word embodies not only the forces of evil in the play, but also those of good. The number seven, and by extension, seventh, is symbolic of perfect order and union,[4] the positive forces in man. It also " . . . is greatly used in certain magical creemonies and ritual. It shows the domination of both the seen and the unseen by the power of the will . . . ."[5]; to many people in modern society, the occult and all its practicioners are evil. This juxtaposition of positive and negative values is further reinforced by the fact that although the number seven symbolizes union and order and hence the seven virtues in man, it also brings to mind the seven capital sins for which man is supposedly damned.[6] In Podgers, evil takes precedence over good, but by the very contrast of these two elements Casona has doubly reinforced the inherent wicked nature of the man.

Similarly, Casona enshrouds Podgers in a mysterious aura, basic to the Romantic style: " ... no tiene nada misterioso por fuera; ... . Lo que tiene de quirromántico se lo conocerá usted en los ojos."[7] This statement equates chiromancy with mystery, and in Podgers this mystery is accessible only through the eyes, which, in his particular case, happen to be green. Again, the symbolism of green eyes emphasizes the contrast between good and evil, thereby making the latter more forceful when considered within the entire context of the man. The act of seeing

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[4]Cirlot, p. 223.

[5]Sepharial, The Book of Charms and Talismans (London: W. Foulsham and Co, n.d.), pp. 13-14.

[6]Cirlot, p. 223.

[7]Casona, El crimen, p. 226.

" . . . represents a spiritual act and symbolizes understanding."[8] Green represents lividness and death.[9] Podgers has lived in remote lands, in a most typically Romantic mode, for ten years, a fact which is significant for ten is the number of destiny,[10] acting as an "encantador de serpientes."[11] The accumulation of such details envelopes Podgers in a mysterious aura. This together with the fact that in England he lives on 42 Oxford Street, makes him an even more mystifying character: four symbolizes emotional intensity and two is related to the " . . . dual functions of Spirit and Matter, of the visible and invisible worlds."[12] Casona has most adeptly used a descriptive Romantic technique to portray the nature of this character.

Until his deception is discovered and the poetic justice typical of nineteenth century Romantic melodramas occurs, Podgers is the mouthpiece of the Romantic belief in fate. At one point, he says to Arturo: "Por encima de nosotros la fatalidad mueve nuestros hilos sin que sepamos jamás..."[13] and "Todo en la vida es fatal, ..."[14] These statements imply that man cannot tamper with his fate for it is not accessible to mortals. Unfortuantely, however, for Podgers, and by extension, for Romantic ideology, this notion is rendered invalid when Casona allows Arturo to discover the inherent fallacy in reasoning of this sort: Podgers is the incarnation of the forces of destiny, he is proven to be

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[8]Cirlot, p. 95. [9]Ibid., p. 51.

[10]Sepharial, p. 14.

[11]Casona, El crimen, p. 227. [12]Sepharial, p. 13.

[13]Casona, El crimen, p. 234. [14]Ibid., p. 235.

a fake, therefore the idea of destiny is also invalid. The murder of Podgers is at the same time the symbolic death of the nineteenth century belief in fate and the birth of the Neo-Romantic support of the idea that man can control his destiny.

Casona also uses Romantic techniques in the presentation of other characters, especially the protagonist Arturo, who represents the forces of good. This character resembles his nineteenth century counterpart Don Álvaro in many respects for he is young, very much in love, and mysterious: the gypsy refused to tell Arturo's fortune because it was so horrible. When he discovers that his so-called fate is to kill, he states that he will run away to live on a mountain, showing the Romantic predilection for heights and isolation. He is most irrational and melancholic in the best of Romantic traditions, regarding his apparently devastating situation. His decision to go to Venice to await Tía Clem's death is in keeping with his Romantic bent, for what better place is there than the city of those ill-fated lovers Romeo and Juliet? What saves Arturo from sinking into the abyss of the persecuted Romantics is his discovery that man can control his destiny and is the master of his fate. It is this Neo-Romantic touch which converts Arturo into a truly modern protagonist.

Therefore, both Siete gritos en el mar and El crimen de Lord Arturo place more importance on the individual and his ability to choose freely than on the concept of destiny. It is true that the individual is central to Romanticism, just as he is in a Neo-Romantic philosophy of life. What differentiates the two viewpoints is the broader perspective of the modern age. The twentieth century considers man as being freed

of previously entrenched ideas, while the Romantic man is a firm adherent to the traditional belief in fate. In El crimen de Lord Arturo, Casona emphasizes the symbolic death of the idea of irreversible fate. In Siete gritos en el mar he utilizes the vehicle of a dream to stand for traditional concepts; however, in real life, the characters are not bound by any inflexible plan but are free to choose. This is the essence of Casonian Neo-Romanticism.

CHAPTER V

THE DEVIL

Just as fate, dream analysis, and the problem of reality and illusion play an important part in Casona's theater and show him to be a Neo-Romantic, so too do the plays dealing with distinct phases of the supernatural. Otra vez el diablo (1935) and La barca sin pescador (1945) treat the theme of the Devil; La dama del alba (1944) focuses on the notion of Death; and La casa de los siete balcones (1957) deals with the world of the spirit, all of which are different aspects of supernatural forces.

During the Romantic era, the devil came to occupy a singular position in literature: "Romanticism is thoroughly suffused with the spirit of Satan. Satanism is not a part of Romanticism. It is Romanticism."[1] The devil became a symbol for the Romantic of all that is daring, mysterious and gloomy. Because the typical Romantic loved liberty, he felt a particular kinship for that fallen archangel who had dared to

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[1]Maximilian Rudwin, The Devil in Legend and Literature (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1931), p. 278.

challenge divine authority. Similarly, the Romantic experienced a peculiar type of camaraderie with the devil since both have always felt misunderstood and scorned.[2] For the Romantic, the devil is a force to be revered and feared: empathy and temerity combine to produce a most imposing picture of Satan during the nineteenth century. Likewise, Satan remains removed from mortal man and is regarded more as a force than as a real and tangible creation. It is this inaccessibility and intangibility compounded with Catholic doctrine which made the devil seem so ominous and powerful in the Spain of the Romantic period.

In modern times, when values are constantly questioned and changed, a more liberalized concept of the Devil often prevails.

> In our days, the Devil is not an object of contempt, but of consideration. He is treated not comically but seriously, nay sympathetically. We have come to realize that there is so much of us in the Devil and so much of the Devil in us that it would not be fair to treat him harshly.[3]

The devil is what men make of him, and modern man has often not been as severe with Satan as have been his predecessors. Such is the case in Casona's theater which revolves about the figure of the devil. The Neo-Romantic Casona, unlike nineteenth century Romantics, does not view the devil as an ominous creature. Rather, his is a more liberal approach: recognizing that small part of Satan intrinsic to every man's being, Casona has sought to humanize the Devil somewhat. No longer does the figure of the devil feed on the emotions as in the nineteenth century. Rather, he is considered more philosophically and pragmatically in a modern context. Casona has altered the traditional Romantic conception

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[2] Ibid., pp. 286-288, passim. [3] Ibid., p. 278.

of Satan and made him more humanized and believable in his dramas Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador.

Otra vez el diablo concerns a contract made between the Estudiante and the Diablo. The Estudiante meets the Diablo in the mountains, and the latter eventually succeeds in enlisting the Estudiante's aid: the Diablo wants to commit a diabolically good act so as to modify the evil conception of him commonly accepted by man. The Estudiante is finally convinced by the Diablo's arguments only because the Diablo promises to help the Estudiante secure the love of the Infantina. The Diablo eventually becomes the Infantina's preceptor and convinces her that the evil rampant in the kingdom will stop only when someone succeeds in killing the devil with the latter's own dagger. The Infantina's father offers her hand to whoever can kill the Diablo in such a manner. Naturally, the Diablo gives the knife to the Estudiante who symbolically kills his interior devil and therefore lives happily ever after with the Infantina.

The opening scenes of La barca sin pescador are set in thoroughly modern times. Ricardo Jordan is on the verge of financial ruin, and he has been betrayed by his lover Enriqueta. It is at this point that the Caballero de Negro enters and proposes a pact: since Ricardo has never exhibited any moral compunctions about normally sacred values, why not commit murder? If he will only desire the death of Péter Anderson, the Caballero de Negro will restore to him all his former wealth and power. Naturally, Ricardo agrees, only to spend the remainder of the play attempting to salve his guilty conscience. He journeys to the late Péter's home, falls in love with Péter's wife, Estela, enjoys the simple life and discovers that he really did not kill Péter: it was Cristián who actually

committed the crime. The Caballero de Negro reappears saying that Ricardo has not fulfilled his contract for he has not really killed anyone; at this point the new good Ricardo Jordan says that he has obliterated the old and wicked Ricardo Jordan. The devil and Ricardo part as friends, and Ricardo and Estela live happily together.

In the selection of the titles of these works, Casona has varied somewhat from his usual format. While other titles show the contrast between good and evil as in El crimen de Lord Arturo or emphasize underlying ideology, as in his dramas of reality and illusion, the titles of these plays are deceivingly straightforward. Otra vez el diablo refers, quite reasonably, to the fact that the devil is once again to make his appearance in literature, as one of the many variations possible on a given theme. It in no way reflects the modern context in which the devil will be placed, as La sirena varada for example symbolically signified the end of illusion in modern times. Similarly La barca sin pescador bears no deep, underlying significance; it merely refers to Péter Anderson, a fisherman who built a boat but was killed before he could use it. Some critics, notably Charles Leighton have said that barca symbolizes the domestic life and love unknown to Ricardo before his arrival in the fishing village.[4] There is merit in this thinking, it is true, especially since Casona himself in an essay entitled "El mar, la mar" stated: "Al pensar en la barca la vio apacible y doméstica, trabajando para un hogar, no más allá de los límites de pesca o las orrilas del río; por

[4]Charles H. Leighton, "Essayist," Revista de estudios hispánicos, p. 116.

eso la bautizó mujer."[5] However, a dichotomy of terms exists here which Leighton has failed to recognize. If barca symbolizes the domestic life which Ricardo has not experienced, how then can one reconcile this with the common symbolism of the fisherman as a seeker of wisdom and regeneration, as an operator on the very sources of life?[6] Casona clearly states that the boat has no fisherman, or rather, that the sources of wisdom and life cannot be found in a simple domestic routine embued with a spirit of live, peace, and contentment. Such a notion is clearly out of line with Casona's basic ideology for he is a staunch adherent to the notion that man needs to simplify society and control his own destiny by facing reality through the medium of love. Therefore, the title of this work can be no more than it states: a boat without Péter Anderson.

Perhaps Casona's reasoning in giving these two particular plays commonplace titles relates in part to his insistence on the fact that the devil is more humanized in the twentieth century than he was in Romantic times. By rendering the titles simple, it is possible that he felt he would lower the degree of emotionalism attached to the evil machinations of the devil, thereby facilitating a more liberalized approach to a study of his methods.

Casona's Neo-Romantic tendencies in these plays are manifested by the introduction of a new ideology, in this case, a modern view of the Devil, through the utilization of some techniques characteristic of

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[5]Alejandro Casona, "El mar, la mar," Índice literario, suplemento de El Universal (Caracas) (23 abril 1959), p. 4.

[6]Cirlot, p. 101.

of nineteenth century Romantics. Such a process corresponds to the pattern followed in his other dramas.

The stage settings of each of the two works are strongly reminiscent of the past Romantic age. In Otra vez el diablo the setting in Act I is a crossroads in the mountains in the late afternoon. Both the location and the time of day are favorite ones of the Romantics, although a more ardent Romantic would have plunged the scene in complete darkness, rather than leave it in the waning hours of light, in order to produce a more obvious effect. The setting itself is symbolic of the inner loftiness of spirit (mountain) latent in each man and the decision (crossroads) he must make between good and evil. Such a setting immediately alerts the reader to the fact that opposites will be at odds in the play. This is reinforced by the fact that throughout the play Casona juxtaposes light and darkness, the old and the new, and positive and negative values. Such maneuvers are no more than melodramatic, Romantic ploys designed to attract the emotions.

The most interesting act from the basis of a study of Romantic stage directions is the third and final one in which the Estudiante fights the devil within him.

> A red light - the light of passion - momentarily illumines the face of the student, and a white light - the light of innocence - shines on the face of the princess. Dawn, the hour of truth, begins to filter into the inn, the whistling of the wind dies away, and the sound of a distant flute is heard.[7]

This scene occurs while it is raining outside; since rain is a purifying

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[7]Alejandro Casona, La sirena varada, ed. and with a Prologue by Ruth C. Gillespie (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. xvii.

agent, it stands to reason that the Estudiante is cleansing himself in the struggle with the forces of evil and passion. The red light on his writhing fade signifies not only the light of passion, but also a state of suffering, sublimation, and love,[8] and it is by this very love that he can save himself. As the flute in the distance plays Grieg's "Morning" from the Peer Gynt Suite, bells ring and a beautiful new day dawns. Such a visual scene does not need dialogue at all since the symbolism is so obvious: the Estudiante has rid himself of the evil within him as the bells peal: "¡Son las campanas de Dios que están repicando de gloria!"[9] An interesting point can be made with regard to Grieg the composer and Casona the Dramatist: when Grieg composed his chief works, Romanticism was no longer an ideal to him as it had been to Chopin or Schumann, only an artistic métier.[10] So too with Casona who utilizes Romantic techniques but only as an artistic means to a Neo-Romantic end.

The stage setting of La barca sin pescador likewise utilizes typical Romantic descriptions to advance a Neo-Romantic ideology. In Act I, Casona depicts a very mechanized society, similar to the ones in his dramas of reality and illusion. The fact that society is mechanized to the point of insensitivity is further emphasized by the fact that it is cold and the action takes place in winter: lack of warmth implies stagnation or the presence of death, and winter is the most desolate season of the year. By extension, modern society is devoid of feeling. The

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[8]Cirlot, p. 53.

[9]Alejandro Casona, Otra vez el diablo, in Obras completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 393.

[10]Lang, p. 746.

reader's discovery later in the play of Casona's abhorrence of computerized society is therefore reinforced by these visual aids. Suddenly the lights dim and in a most melodramatic fashion music announces the arrival of the Devil: a similar technique is employed in the operas of Puccini, Verdi, Rossini, and Wagner in which the main character is always identified with a particular musical motif.[11] In this case the use of music is a further reinforcement not only of the entrance of the devil himself, but also of the tendency of Romantic writers to mingle the arts in their works thereby giving fuller expressions to their creative feelings. Act II is situated on a Nordic coast, showing the Romantic predilection for distant places; the Devil supposedly prefers to live there. "The North was anciently believed to be the region of darkness and was later considered, by transferred meaning, as the realm of evil."[12] This fact is significant for in reality it is in the North that Ricardo eliminates the evil within him. Such a purging is successful in symbolically dispelling the ominous connotations given to Northern places, and by extension, to those who inhabit Northern areas, in other words the Devil. Ricardo also lights a fire for him and Estela with the contract he had made with the devil: the decomposition of the devil's hold on man (the contract) has been accomplished by the spiritual energy (the fire) produced by true love (Estela).

Prefigurations, common Romantic techniques, also occur in these two plays dealing with the devil: in Act II of Otra vez el diablo, for example, Cascabel's song prefigures the Infantina's eventual marriage to

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[11]Borrás, p. 507. [12]Rudwin, p. 63.

the Estudiante; and in Act I of La barca sin pescador, the cry Ricardo hears forewarns the reader that he will suffer guilt feelings over the death of Peter. Such prefigurations are frequent and are mechanical devices designed to maintain emotional appeal.

However, the elements which distinguish Casona's dramas from those of pure Romantic invention are to be found in the distinct personalities he imparts to the Devil in each of his plays. The utilization of any number of Romantic techniques would not serve to classify his dramas as Neo-Romantic were it not for the fusion of these stylistical devices with a modern view of the situation. In these particular cases, Casona has transformed the ominous, inaccessible Romantic devil into a human, tangible Neo-Romantic figure inextricably bound to man and the human condition. The devil in Otra vez el diablo is characterized by a haze of discreet mystery, implying that he no longer resorts to foreboding and frightening techniques: "(... Es un diablo maduro, sin edad. Viste pulcramente de figuroso luto: calzón, birrete y ferreruelo, y habla con una naturalidad mundana tocada a veces de melancolía.)"[13] Not only does he speak as humans do, he says he is a Catholic, a fact which most definitely does not adhere to the devil's traditional horror of all things pertaining to the Church. This devil is one who is rather vain for he wants people to think of him as handsome. His view of himself and his so-called machinations is not a satanical one, but rather a very gentle one, for he feels that humanity has misunderstood him and misconstrued his intentions.

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[13]Casona, Otra vez, p. 348.

> Yo no soy un tramposo ni un aprovechado. Es verdad que he firmado algunos pactos, pero siempre favorables al hombre. Contratos leoninos. Si yo daba el amor, la juventud o el dinero, lo daba en buenas condiciones. En cambio, hay que ver lo que mis contratantes me entregaban: unas almas remendadas, llenas de lepras y de vicios. Un asco.[14]

This devil wants to be remembered for the good he has done since people always associate him with evil: "Tengo que hacer un bien antes de jubilarme. Pero un bien diabólico..., con intriga y tentación."[15] Although the satanical intent is apparent in this statement, it is nonetheless softened by the fact that Casona's characterization of this particular devil is sympathetic. The devil becomes very attached to the world through the vehicle of Casona's liberalization of him: "Por ahora estoy muy a gusto en la Tierra. (Se sienta a la lumbre.) ¡Ay amigo mío! Estos días me han devuelto el humor y la juventud."[16] In addition, he calls the student his friend, not in a malicious, satanical manner, but in a most fraternal one. It is only in his act of tempting the Estudiante to seduce the Infantina that Casona allows his devil to assume for a moment his characteristically evil role. This action is justified stylistically because at this point the student is symbolically destroying the inherent evil tendencies within him; if they were not deliberately made to appear negative, he would not strive to eliminate them. Therefore, the devil's action provides the catalyst necessary to start the entire reaction: temptation, resistance, sublimation, victory. Viewed in this light, the act of temptation becomes a positive force for it stimulates the Estudiante to broader horizons, thereby reinforcing the idea that satanical

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[14] Ibid., p. 349.

[15] Ibid., p. 351.

[16] Ibid., p. 381.

machinations inspire man to rise above his situation and continually strive to better himself. The devil of Otra vez el diablo is consequently a humanized, spiritualized sort of devil for he has emotions, he reasons, prays, and motivates man to higher aspirations: Casona's view of him is much more liberal than that of any of his nineteenth century counterparts.

In La barca sin pescador, the Caballero de Negro is a bit more devious, but this does not imply a lesser degree of humanization. Casona continues the liberalized portrayal of the devil begun in Otra vez el diablo in this drama: he is not depicted as a purely intangible supernatural force, but rather as a common man conducting business in an everyday world. The devil "(... viste chaqué y trae al brazo su carpeta de negocios. Solamente su sonrisa fría, su matiz rapaz y su barbilla en punta denuncian, bajo la apariencia vulgar, su perdurable personalidad. ... .)"[17] The fact that he is described physically in this manner does not minimize the humanization process, for this description could be applied to many men, not exclusively to Satan. To reinforce this belief, Casona adds that his is an " ... aspecto provinciano, de pequeño burgués."[18] The fact that the Caballero de Negro leaves his glove behind after his dealings with Ricardo is indicative of the author's belief that the devil is very real and tangible. As Leighton says: "Perhaps the author, ever the pedagogue, is trying to point out this fact to his audiences, to rouse them from their lethargic attitude towards evil."[19] Perhaps

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[17]Alejandro Casona, La barca sin pescador, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 838.

[18]Ibid., p. 839.

[19]Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona and the Devil," Hispania, LXVIII, i (March, 1965), p. 34.

Casona is also attempting to make the figure of the devil a believable one, more readily accessible than he was in Romantic times. The supreme evidence of Casona's more humanized treatment of the devil occurs at the end of the play. The devil says: "Vine a perder tu alma, y yo mismo te he puesto sin querer en el camino de la salvación. ¡Es para jubilarse de una vez!"[20] The Caballero de Negro bears no resentment whatsoever towards Ricardo and they both part as friends. This is surely a twentieth century conception of the mentality of the devil, for a nineteenth century Romantic would not usually allow his devil to be so open-minded and nonchalant about losing a soul.

In both plays, the devils serve as catalysts which motivate both of the protagonists to destroy the devil, and by extension the evil within. The Estudiante in Otra vez el diablo and Ricardo in La barca sin pescador accomplish this destruction through the vehicle of love, a force which has appeared in most of Casona's plays.

The depiction of the Estudiante is an excellent example of Casona's use of Romantic techniques. This hero is a vagabond, one of those renegade types so appealing to nineteenth century Romantics: "(... un estudiante español desenfadado y mozo. Tiene un prestigio de novela picaresca apenas empañado por un vaho de aulas. ... .)"[21] He falls in love with the Infantina immediately, idealizes her constantly, desires her passionately, and visits her secretly, much the same as Don Álvaro did with Leonor one hundred years ago. He rises above pure Romantic buffoonery

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[20]Casona, La barca, p. 884.

[21]Casona, Otra vez, p. 344.

when he finally becomes aware of the value of true love over the baseness of pure passion. Instead of succumbing to his innate animal instincts, he struggles against them throughout the night and finally is victorious over evil when the new day dawns, symbolic of his pure, nascent love for the Infantina. It is by his defeat that the Estudiante becomes a Neo-Romantic hero for he has realized the value of this real world within the context of his own personal individuality.

In La barca sin pescador, Ricardo undergoes much the same metamorphosis as the Estudiante: the means are somewhat different, yet the end result is the same. Mechanized society has made Ricardo into an insensitive brute, capable of committing the most heinous crimes against moral and ethical principles: he steals other men's wives, breaks contracts as well as his word, and is unmoved by suffering and death. Casona does not describe him romantically as he does the Estudiante, for to do so would lessen the callous picture of the man which the author has so deftly painted. Rather, Casona shows how Ricardo becomes a Neo-Romantic hero in his effort to face the reality of his situation once he realizes that he has a conscience. He defeats the devil within him by symbolically killing the insensitive Ricardo Jordan he once was and replacing him with a new spiritualized Ricardo Jordan filled with a love of life. The Estudiante destroys one facet of evil, passion, while Ricardo does away with his entire former self; no matter how severe the method, the result is still a more spiritually enlightened man ready to face life. Estela summarizes the basically optimistic Neo-Romantic view of the modern situation when she states at the end of the play: "Creo

que la vida, aunque a veces amargue, es un deber. Creo que en la tierra y en el mar está todo lo que necesitamos. Y creo que Dios es bueno."[22]

In summary, Casona's plays dealing with the devil as one form of the supernatural are similar in their Neo-Romantic ideology. Both Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador attempt to present a more human, everyday picture of the devil. In addition, the author emphasizes the importance of man as an individual and the necessity for modern man to face himself. According to Casona's Neo-Romantic ideology, evil exists within man and consequently can be destroyed by positive action; the focal point of the Casonian thesis is the individual. This emphasis on personal confrontation with the latent, interior forces of evil leads finally to the belief that love is the vehicle which enables man to face life and surmount all obstacles.

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[22]Casona, La barca, p. 878.

CHAPTER VI

DEATH

A second aspect of the supernatural which Casona treats is that of death as it appears in La dama del alba. The twentieth century concept of death is multi-faceted and depends solely on one's point of view. What is essential here is not a discussion of the varied opinions prevalent today, but rather a study of only one man's concept of death. As in his depiction of the Devil, Alejandro Casona attempts to humanize the figure of Death, thereby rendering it more tangible to modern man. The Romantic either feared or desired death; the Neo-Romantic is no different, for human nature is still basically the same. What separates these two movements is a more liberal attitude. Whereas nineteenth century death was regarded as an ethereal force, twentieth century death is considered to be a real and viable working element in society and a necessary part of each life. Casona himself has voiced his personal opinion on this topic:

> La idea de la muerte como compañera y amiga es una constante del pensamiento y de la poesía españoles. El más grande de sus filósofos, Séneca, era un romano de Andalucía que no hacía más diferencia entre ella y la vida que entre una lámpara encendida y la misma lámpara apagada. Los místicos la invocaban como una liberación. Lope de Vega llegó a considerar que toda la vida no es más que un juego de

> colores desenvuelto a la orilla de la muerte. Y la condenación de Tirso contra Don Juan no es tan airada contra el Burlador del Amor que contra el Burlador de la Muerte... Con estos antecedentes no pretendo ningún amparo previo para mi << Dama de Alba>>. Consigno simplemente que está afincada en lo más entrañable de nuestra tradición literaria.[1]

Certainly the theme itself is rooted in Spanish tradition, but its singular treatment marks it as a strictly Casonian one. Casona attributes his predilection towards supernatural elements to his native land of Asturias: "Esa inclinación mía a lo sobrenatural no me la pueden achacar a ningún escritor extranjero: la bebí en nuestra tierra de Asturias."[2] Likewise, as Casona himself says: "En última instancia solamente se llega a lo universal por el camino de lo nacional."[3]

La dama del alba opens with a general feeling of depression and gloom: the Madre has never ceased to mourn the death of her daughter Angélica four years before on the Noche de San Juan. As a result, she is very protective of the rest of her family. One evening Peregrina arrives at their home and becomes so absorbed in the children that she misses her appointment with Martín, Angélica's husband. It is at the beginning of Act II that the Abuelo recognizes Peregrina as Death. Martín returns with Adela whom he had found drowning in the river; she eventually occupies Angélica's place in the home and hearts of the family. On the Noche de San Juan Martín professes his love to Adela, revealing that he cannot marry her for Angélica is still alive; she is not a saint

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[1]Rafael Vazquez Zamora, ""La dama del alba," de Casona," Insula, XVII, clxxxvi (mayo, 1962), p. 15.

[2]Rodríguez Castellano, "Mi última conversación," p. 188.

[3]José Luis Cano, "Charla con Alejandro Casona," Insula, XVII, cxci (octubre, 1962), p. 5.

but an adulteress and he has kept silent only to preserve her memory for the Madre. Peregrina overhears, and when Angélica returns home shortly thereafter, Peregrina takes her instead of Adela. Adela and Martín can marry; Angélica is regarded as a saint by the townspeople for her body is in perfect condition when she is discovered in the river.

The stage settings play an important role in establishing the mood of this drama, as in any Romantic theatrical presentation. Act I is given a mysterious, eternal quality due to the fact that it takes place somewhere in Asturias at an undetermined time. Since it is night and the act occurs in winter, the stage is set for the entrance of an equally gloomy character. However such is not the case: by the use of the stark contrast between the foreboding setting and the beautiful Peregrina, Casona immediately sets the tone for his characterization of the latter as a sympathetic figure in a most Neo-Romantic vein. This melodramatic juxtaposition of good and evil occurs frequently throughout the play, as in the situation of the happy, innocent children playing while Telva discusses the mining disaster in which all her sons died. It functions not only as typical Romantic emotional appeal, but also as an emphasis on the positive nature of Death, thereby preparing the reader to accept a more liberal interpretation of it. Therefore, although dogs howl each time that the Peregrina arrives on the scene, feelings of fear yield to feelings of sympathy on the part of the reader due to Casona's exceptionally favorable depiction of Death. In the final act, the action occurs not in winter, but in summer when life is totally imbued with the heat of love, passion, and fertility. Angélica's body is discovered as a new day dawns in all its splendor: her actual death thus appears as

a positive force in the drama. It is true that Casona's general view of death does not differ from one facet of the Romantic conception of it, for, like his nineteenth century counterpart, he sees it here in Angélica's case as a liberation and a form of salvation. What distinguishes this drama, then, and what makes it Neo-Romantic is not Casona's acceptance of death, but rather his liberalized, humanized characterization of the figure of Death.

Since the title refers to the main character, any discussion of symbolism pertaining to it does of necessity encompass the protagonist of the drama. In his essay "El mar, la mar," Casona elaborates on his conception of the appearance in literature of Death as a woman:

> Nosotros, menos dados a la abstracción, y con el corazón chorreando por todas las junturas del idioma, imaginamos la Muerte como una buena amiga piadosa que nos espera al final del camino para cerrarnos los ojos con unas manos que, por miedo a sentirlas demasiado frías, quisiéramos que fueran de mujer.[4]

Consequently Casona's conception of Death is that of a type of mother figure who will patiently comfort and love man and calm all his fears. The mother figure not only implies positive attributes, it also symbolizes death and destiny.[5] This dualism serves to illustrate the ambivalence of the nature of death on the part of man, and especially, Romantic and Neo-Romantic man: love and hate, desire and revulsion. Likewise the contraposition of two symbolic frames of reference gains added force when taken into consideration with the rest of the title: La dama del alba. Casona choses to equate this embodiment of desire/revulsion (dama)

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[4]Alejandro Casona, "El mar, la mar," Indice literario, p. 4.

[5]Cirlot, p. 207.

with the beginning of a new existence (alba). Light, and by association dawn, is equated with the spirit; it is a creative, positive force and a sign of spiritual strength.[6] The juxtaposition of a positive/negative figure of Death with a positive interpretation of Dawn results in a doubly reinforced optimistic symbol: death is not to be feared for it will bring spiritual strength and contentment to man.

Although this interpretation of death is not innovative, it becomes most distinctive in the Neo-Romantic humanization of Peregrina. She is beautiful, fragile, and tranquil. "Ella es joven, tiene el pelo como la espiga y las manos blancas como una gran señora."[7] No longer does Death appear as a supernatural, ethereal force, but rather as a very real person. She is capable of laughter and warmth, as is supported by the fact that when she forgets her commonly accepted role as one who extinguishes life, she assumes human qualities: when she plays with the children her heart beats, she smiles, and her hands become warm, symbolic of life and love. She desires to be accepted as a friend by man: "Sólo quisiera, antes de marchar, que me despidieras sin odio, con una palabra buena."[8] Her relationship with the Abuelo is one of friendship and mutual aid: both desire the happiness of Adela and Martín, at the same time that they comfort each other:

> PEREGRINA: ... También yo quisiera adornarme de rosas como las campesinas, vivir entre niños felices y tener un hombre hermoso a quien amar. Pero cuando voy a cortar las rosas, todo el jardín se me hiela. Cuando los niños juegan

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[6] Ibid., p. 179.

[7] Alejandro Casona, La dama del alba, in Obras completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 767.

[8] Ibid., p. 780.

> conmigo, tengo que volver la cabeza por miedo a que se me queden fríos al tocarlos. Y en cuanto a los hombres, ¿de qué me sirve que los más hermosos me busquen a caballo, si al besarlos siento que sus brazos inútiles me resbalan sin fuerza en la cintura? (Desesperada.) ¿Comprendes ahora lo amargo de mi destino? Presenciar todos los dolores sin poder llorar... Tener todos los sentimientos de una mujer sin poder usar ninguno... Y estar condenada a matar siempre, siempre, sin poder nunca morir! (Cae abrumada en el sillón, con la frente entre las manos. El ABUELO la mira conmovido. Se acerca y le pone cordialmente una mano sobre el hombro.)
>
> ABUELO: ¡Pobre mujer!
>
> PEREGRINA: Gracias, abuelo. Te había pedido un poco de comprensión y me has llamado mujer, que es la palabra más hermosa en los labios de hombre.[9]

Casona, through the Abuelo, has humanized Peregrina to the extent of calling her a woman who has dormant emotions and desires which have the potential to come to the surface if given the necessary stimulus, such as losing oneself in the laughter and gaiety of children. Furthermore, were the Peregrina not concerned with the feelings of herself and of man, she could have just as easily taken Adela instead of Angélica. Instead, her conscience dictates that she select the latter as her companion for eternal life.

Angélica's death is especially significant for the element of suicide is generally absent in Casona's theater: his characters opt to face life, aided by love, and hence can never fall into the abject desperation of one who has lost all desire to live. It is true that Angélica does commit suicide in this drama, but Casona's deft treatment of the problem through his humanization of Peregrina justifies the suicidal act. Peregrina talks to Angélica, woman to woman, explaining to

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[9] Ibid., p. 782.

her that her death is the only solution available if she wants her mother to continue to revere her memory. The emphasis is more on Peregrina and her ability to comfort and help another, than on the fact that Angélica is about to die.

> En realidad Angélica no muere su muerte, sino la que conviene a las creencias y sentimientos de los suyos y al clima legendario que rodea al remanso, muy a propósito para que nazca en la aldea una nueva leyenda. La idea ... tiene bastante originalidad, que aparta a La dama del alba de la tradición dramática sobre la muerte.[10]

Casona has made it appear that Angélica's departure from this world is not a conscious extermination of life, but rather a subconscious continuation of an already established memory. Surely this view of death is a more liberal and most distinctively Casonian one.

In La dama del alba, then, Casona attempts to change the popular consensus about death by rendering it more human. His portrayal of Peregrina is sympathetic, for he depicts her as a woman capable of deeply rooted emotions and feelings, not as an ethereal, intangible force. It is this process of humanization which singles out Casona's description of death as one of his Neo-Romantic characteristics.

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[10]José Caso Gonzalez, "Fantasía y realidad en el teatro de Alejandro Casona," Archivum, V (1955), p. 312.

CHAPTER VII

WORLD OF THE SPIRIT

The third and final phase of the supernatural in Casona's works concerns the world of the spirit. Like his approaches to the Devil and to Death, an abstract idea becomes real force. In his drama La casa de los siete balcones he has liberalized the nineteenth century notion that the más allá is populated with statues who talk, cadavers, ghosts and ghouls; instead, he deals with the world of the spirit sympathetically to the point of humanization. In brief, the action of the play is as follows: Uriel, a young man who cannot speak, lives with Tía Genoveva, an old maid aunt who lives in the past, and Ramón, his father. Ramón is on the verge of financial ruin and sees his only hope of salvation in the money which his father-in-law left when he died. Unfortunately for Ramón however, Genoveva, his sister-in-law has hidden the money and refuses to reveal its location. Goaded by Amanda, his maid and mistress, Ramón tricks Genoveva into believing that her lover of forty years ago wants her to come to America. She is so happy that she tells him where to find the money. Unknown to Genoveva however, Ramón plans to commit her to an asylum once he gets the fortune. Rosina, the good servant,

alerts Uriel to what is happening and sends him to get Don Germán, the family doctor and the only one who has any control over Ramón. Uriel falls from his horse and dies in his effort, and is accepted into the spirit world by his mother, grandfather, and friend Alicia.

Casona views the spirit world as a positive force and treats it in a most sympathetic manner, much in the same vein as mystics like Santa Teresa de Jesús. His conception of it is not anything like that of nineteenth century Romantic dramatists, for the latter populated their spirit worlds chiefly with tombs, ghosts, and other strange occurrences. To Casona, life after death should not be feared at all for it is nothing but a more peaceful continuation of a life to which man is already accustomed. Casona's approach to this situation is far more liberal than his Romantic predecessors, and it is this liberalism and more human element which classify him as a Neo-Romantic.

They symbolism of the title is applicable to the Neo-Romantic ideology of the work. The word casa connotes feelings of safety and security and is the symbol of the repository of wisdom.[1] Balcones refers to those openings of the soul receptive to the entrance of external stimuli and knowledge. Considered together, these words denote the entrance of knowledge into the vast area of wisdom which man is capable of possessing. However, the entire symbolic meaning of the title hinges on the interpretation of the number seven. Seven can refer to perfect order and by extension, the seven virtues, or it is symbolic of pain and the seven capital sins.[2] Clearly these interpretations are diametrically

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[1]Cirlot, p. 146. [2]Ibid., p. 223.

opposed. However this contrapostion of good and evil in the title is intrinsically related to the characters of the play. If the number seven is taken to denote pain and the seven capital sins, then a place of safety becomes one receptive to the forces of evil, as represented by Ramón and Amanda, together guilty of the seven deadly sins. The symbol viewed in this manner becomes onimous, repugnant, and sinister. If the number seven is representative of order and the seven virtues, then the home receives a positive connotation, as represented by Tía Genoveva and Uriel in particular. This melodramatic juxtaposition of contrasting elements is merely one Romantic technique utilized by Casona to advance his Neo-Romantic belief that man must be receptive to the positive elements in life, for it is only by opening his soul that he can know the meaning of love.

In order to advance his Neo-Romantic ideology, Casona utilizes some Romantic techniques in his stage settings: all are very theatrical and prey on the emotions. This is especially noticeable in the last two acts when messengers from the spirit world appear on the scene. Lights dim creating an unreal atmosphere; a harp is playing in the background. Just hearing a harp would be sufficient to set the mood necessary for the entrance of the dead, for in melodramatic works music always is associated with particular emotions and situations. The Madre, the Abuelo, and Alicia are all dressed in white, symbolic of purity, innocence, peace, and contentment. Casona has recourse to Romantic techniques only when dealing with these three characters. At all other times in the play, his stage directions are quite terse and direct. Such a contrasting technique is utilized to reinforce the actual appearance on the scene

of the spirit world. Were the whole play set in a melodramatic environment, the entrance of the Madre, the Abuelo and Alicia would not be as effective theatrically. Again, Casona is striving to attract the emotions in a most theatrical, Romantic fashion.

Casona's characterization of the spirit world is one of the Neo-Romantic elements of this play. He does not depict the Madre, Alicia, and the Abuelo as ethereal entities, but rather as real persons: the Madre is dressed festively, the Abuelo wears his "uniforme de gala, con sus estrellas y condecoraciones"[3] and Alicia is a typical fifteen year old: "(... Gran pamela con lazo, echada hacia atrás, dejando descubierta la cabeza. Vestido de verano. Trenzas o bucles y calcetines. ... .)"[4]

Their speech is quite normal and all, especially the Mother, express concern for Uriel. When Uriel is killed at the end of the play, his mother exhibits very human qualities for she cannot bear to watch what is happening to her son. The Abuelo comforts her during the entire ordeal, much the same as he would do if he were human. Casona has thus removed the boundaries which separate life and death by making the dead seem alive. He has liberalized the conception of the spirit world by showing that it is occupied by personages who are capable of emotions such as love and fear. Gone are the cold, gruesome elements associated with the dead in the Romantic period; instead they are replaced with sympathetic, sensitive ones.

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[3]Alejandro Casona, La casa de los siete balcones, in Obras Completas, II, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 288.

[4]Ibid., p. 291.

It is interesting to note the symbolism of the number three with respect to the Madre, the Abuelo, and Alicia. Since Casona is dealing with the phases of the supernatural, it is significant that he should allow three of the dead to appear on the scene instead of only two or one. Actually, if only the Madre and the Abuelo had appeared, the play would still have been just as effective for Alicia's role was very minor, serving only to establish the fact that she is Uriel's friend. Why, then, did Casona select three characters? Perhaps his reasoning relates to the fact that the number three not only represents the Trinity, but also Spirit, Body, and Soul, as well as Wisdom, Love, and Truth.[5] Since Casona's Neo-Romantic philosophy advocates the acceptance of reality (Truth) through the vehicle of Love, it only stands to reason that man would mature (Wisdom) in the process. Likewise, since three symbolizes the Spirit, Body, and Soul, its use within the play would help to reinforce the idea of a humanized spirit world within the context of modern society.

Finally, this statement of Tía Genoveva is worth consideration:

> GENOVEVA: La otra /baraja/ los tenía todos. Esta, solamente los que valen siempre. ... El uno, que es número de Dios. El tres, que es la Santísima Trinidad. El cinco, que son las Llagas de Cristo. El siete, que son los Dolores de la Virgen, y el doce, que son los Apostoles. Son los únicos numeros verdaderos.
>
> URIEL: ¿Y los otros?
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> GENOVEVA: Los otros solo sirven para comprar y vender; son los de los comerciantes.[6]

Genoveva equates numbers with religion. However, there is other symbolism attached to the particular numbers which she considers as real:

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[5]Sepharial, p. 13. [6]Casona, La casa, p. 296.

the number one is the number of unity, of creation; the number three represents spiritual synthesis; five is the number of Man; seven is termed the Mystic Number; and twelve is symbolic of cosmic order and salvation.[7] All of Genoveva's interpretations of the symbolism of numbers can be extended to incorporate Casonian Neo-Romanticism. For example, Casona believes in corporeal and spiritual union, for he has humanized the figures of the Devil, Death, and the Dead (Number 1). Similarly, he believes that spiritual synthesis is imperative before man can face the real world (Number 3). Casona affirms also that man is the pivotal point about which all the tenets of his Neo-Romanticism revolve (Number 5). The forces of good and evil so predominant in Casona's plays are contained in the mystical number seven. And finally, the author believes that man can find himself if he faces life and all the ramifications of social existence (Number 12). It is interesting that Casona should have selected those particular numbers instead of others since they do fit quite nicely into his Neo-Romantic ideology.

Casona's vision of the supernatural is therefore characterized by a liberalized consideration of the subject. He has humanized awesome forces to such an extent that the boundary between man and the supernatural often seems to disappear. Death, the Devil, and the world of the spirit, as Casona presents them, fall within the grasp and comprehension of modern man, thereby imparting to his Neo-Romanticism its distinctiveness.

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[7]Cirlot, p. 224.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION, SOCIETY, AND WOMAN

In Nuestra Natacha (1936) and La tercera palabra (1953), Casona's treatment of women, educational methods, and nature assumes a more liberal interpretation than that accorded these subjects during nineteenth century Romanticism. Although Casona's insistence on experience-based learning methods and his advocation of a return to a more simple, unhurried society are not innovative ideas at all, they take on a modern focus when viewed within the context of twentieth century civilization. These two Casonian beliefs are nothing more than a reiteration of a purely Romantic ideology which places more emphasis on the individual, however they become characteristic of Casonian Neo-Romanticism due to their very intensification and reinforcement of pre-existing Romantic ideologies. Similarly, Casona's viewpoint receives a broader, more encompassing significance when considered not only as a more vehement reaffirmation of Romanticism, but also as a reaction diametrically opposed to the ordered world produced by late nineteenth century Positivism. Casona relocates each individual at the center of existence, instead of considering him important socio-politically as part of a group as was

done in the impersonal Positivistic focus. This return of man to the position of importance accorded him before the advent of Positivism serves to re-emphasize more clearly the importance of each individual's existence, thereby functioning as the basis of Casona's Neo-Romantic ideology. Similarly, the author's liberalism is further manifested in his treatment of women, for he reflects purely twentieth century preoccupations with women's liberation from restrictive standards. Previously, women had been bound to ideas of female subservience, male domination, and a totally domestic orientation. Casona's insistence on the importance of all individuals, regardless of sex, is indicative of his liberalism, and by extension, is an example of another of his own Neo-Romantic characteristics.

In Nuestra Natacha and La tercera palabra the author's beliefs concerning education, societal composition, and women actively complement each other and demonstrate Casona's modern preoccupations arising from a twentieth century society which has become dehumanized and desensitized. These ideas have appeared in one form or another in some of his other plays. In La sirena varada, for example, Ricardo establishes a home by the sea in an attempt to avoid the ravages of modern technological civilization by returning to a simpler, more uncomplicated existence. In addition, Ricardo Jordan finds true happiness in Estela's simple fishing village in La barca sin pescador, thereby facilitating his rejection of the harried, materialistic society of which he had been a part. These examples are but two instances among the many in which Casona advocates the substitution of simplicity for complexity in life. Similarly, the author's belief in the fact that man learns best and most enduringly by

experience is implicitly demonstrated by Ricardo Jordan's encounter with two contrasting worlds in La barca sin pescador and his decision to choose the simpler of the two; had he not been able to experience both of these life styles, he would not have had any basis for comparison and consequently could not have made a first-hand selection. Finally, Casona's treatment of most of his female characters to this point has been a sympathetic one for he views women as individuals capable of decisions equal to those of their male counterparts and often showing astute wisdom and judgment as in the case of Sibila in El crimen de Lord Arturo. His depiction of Chole as a journalist in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera exemplifies Casona's belief that a woman is capable of working in society in positions formerly held only by men.

Casona's educational liberalism is patently obvious in the figure of Natalia Valdés, the protagonist of Nuestra Natacha. This character functions as the spokeswoman for modern educational theory which has its roots in the teachings of John Locke in the seventeenth century and which can be traced through the nineteenth century Romantics and the Spanish Institución Libre de Enseñanza at the turn of the century and on into the twentieth century and modern educators such as Dewey, Bruner, and Pestalozzi. Casona's focus, therefore, is not innovative but rather is a reaffirmation, reconfirmation, and reintensification of pre-existing theories. Natacha, and by extension Casona, believes that education should not be pure memorization and drills. Rather, a school is a microcosm of society. Since it is life, learning should be an evolving process based on experience. Educational processes should prompt children to utilize their rational powers, thereby comparing, contrasting,

evaluating, and analyzing in the process. This utilization of the inquiry method in education is far more stimulating than pure memorization. Casona believes that the process of learning can be more instructional and advantageous than the mere products of learning. It is therefore this rationale which prompts Natalia to abolish classes of mathematics at the Reformatorio de las Damas Azules. Since the children loathe studying math so much, a mental barrier of necessity has arisen, and they beg Natalia to eliminate instruction in this subject. At the same time, however, that Natacha terminates these formal classes, she also promises the girls new uniforms, provided that each one will be responsible for making her own.

ENCARNA: ¡Vestidos nuevos!

FINA: Pero yo no sé cortar.

ENCARNA: Yo te ayudo. ¿Cómo los queréis?

MARIA: Azules.

FINA: ¡Blancos, blancos, que es como se ve si están limpios!

MARIA: ¿Qué podrá costar?

ENCARNA: Somos treinta..., a tres metros. Un buen percal puede encontrarse a una sesenta y cinco... Espera. (Hacen grupo en torno a la mesa rodeando a ENCARNA, que prepara lápiz y papel. Vuelva MARGA).

FINA: (Corriendo a ella). ¡Marga! ¡Por fin!... ¿Has visto a la nueva directora? Es más guapa..., más buena... Me ha prometido que me dejara criar conejos y gallinas. Además, ¿sabes? ¡Nunca más tendremos clase de matemáticas!

MARGA: ¿De verdad?

FINA: ¡Nunca más!... ¡Y vamos a tener vestidos nuevos ..., blancos...! ¡Mañana iremos a Madrid a comprar la tela! (MARGA se ilumina feliz. Corre a la pizarra y escribe en

letras grandes: << ¡Abajo las matemáticas! >> Entre tanto, las demás hacen su trabajo.)

ENCARNA: Noventa, a una sesenta y cinco. Nueve por cinco, cuarenta y cinco.

FINA: (Corriendo a ella). Y llevo cuatro. Nueve por seis, cincuentra /sic/ y cuatro...

MARIA: Y cuatro, cincuenta y ocho. (NATACHA, desde la puerta, sonríe contemplando la escena).[1]

Natacha has provided a stimulus, new dresses, which has inadvertently prompted the girls to utilize mathematical principles, although they themselves do not realize it.

Similarly, Margarita Luján employs identical logic in her instruction of Pablo. Pablo has demonstrated a definite aversion towards learning to read and write. Instead of forcing him to learn to perform these basic functions, Marga provides him with a desire to learn, a method far more effective than any disciplinary tactic imaginable. In order to create a thirst in Pablo for learning, Marga reads to him a poem by Walt Whitman about the beauties of nature, a subject which Pablo knows intimately since he has lived in the mountains for so many years.

MARGA: ¿Lo has entendido ahora?

PABLO: Ahora creo que sí. (Se levanta, tomando el libro.) ¡No era ningún imbécil el tipo este!, ¿eh? Habla de las cosas pequeñas como si fueran grandes; y además tiene el valor de la verdad.

MARGA: ¿Por qué lo dices?

PABLO: Porque yo conozco la yerba desde que nací; la he respirado toda mi vida, he llegado hasta morderla con

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[1]Alejandro Casona, Nuestra Natacha, in Obras Completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), p. 434.

mis dientes..., y, sin embargo, <<tampoco yo sabría decir lo que es la yerba>>. (Hojea el libro como un horizonte desconocido). ¿Es así todo el libro?

MARGA: Todo. La Tierra y el Hombre frente a frente.

PABLO: Estoy seguro de que a mi padre le hubiera gustado. ¿A ti también?

MARGA: Lo he leído cien veces. Es como un amigo.

PABLO: Entonces, ¿qué le vamos a hacer?... (Un poco como vencido.) Aprenderé a leer.[2]

By stimulating Pablo to compare what he has heard with that he knows of life, Marga has given him the incentive and desire to want to read, a method which is more conducive to assimilation than any traditional one. Similarly, Marga employs the same technique in convincing Pablo that he should learn to write.

PABLO: ¿Podrías enseñarme a escribir como el que hizo ese libro?

MARGA: No, así seguro que no.

PABLO: Y si no se escribe así, ¿vale la pena escribir?

MARGA: Puede ser útil. Es una manera de hablarse la gente desde lejos: ¿Recuerdas lo que me dijiste antes? Si yo estuviera en aquella montaña me llamarías gritando: <<¡Margáaaa!>> Pero si estuviera veinte montañas más allá, ¿de qué te serviría gritar?

PABLO: Iría a buscarte a caballo.

MARGA: Y si en lugar de veinte montañas estuviera veinte países más allá, al otro lado del mar, ¿de que te serviría el caballo?

PABLO: (La mira inquieto.) ¿Qué quieres decir? ¿Es que piensas marcharte?

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[2]Alejandro Casona, La tercera palabra, in Obras completas, I, with a Prologue by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1963), pp. 111-112.

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MARGA: Entiéndeme, Pablo; no se trata de eso. Te pregunto simplemente: si yo estuviera muy lejos y quisieras llamarme, serían inútiles el grito y el caballo... Tendrías que escribirme, ¿no?

PABLO; Contesta tu primero. Si estuvieras en el fin del mundo y yo te escribo llamándote, ¿vendrías?

MARGA: ¡Quién puede saberlo!

PABLO: Contesta, Marga. Vendrías, ¿sí o no?

MARGA: (Le mira largamente. Baja los ojos y la voz.) Vendría.

PABLO: Entonces, está bien: enseñame a escribir.[3]

Casona believes also that the learning process should not be a one-sided discipline. Not only should the teacher gently lead her students in the right directions by stimulating them to new discoveries, she, too, should learn in the process. Casona demonstrates his belief in this receptiveness necessary on the part of the instructor when he has Natacha work and learn alongside her charges during their stay at Lalo's farm. He removes the traditional barriers existing between teacher and student since everyone in the commune works for the common good. Likewise, Marga is not just Pablo's teacher, she is also Pablo's student. Pablo opens up a whole new world to Marga, by showing her the beauties of nature, by allowing her to hear the different calls of birds, and by showing her different types of trees found in the forest. In both cases, the teachers have likewise profited from the learning process, but only because they are receptive and open, as Casona believes they should be.

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[3]Ibid., pp. 112-113.

Casona's ideas on education, then, are not radical in their orientation, but rather traditional from a historical perspective. What imparts to them their distinctiveness is the fact that they are a twentieth century reverbalization and reaffirmation of previous beliefs. In a modern society which has become so concerned with the products of learning, it is often necessary to re-emphasize the importance of the process and experience of education. This is what Casonian Neo-Romanticism strives to accomplish.

Not only does the author expose his educational beliefs through Natacha and Marga, he also shows his concern for female equality by his very characterization of them. Both women hold doctorates, a fact which was almost unheard of in a pre-twentieth century world, but which is most commonplace and not at all unusual now. Additionally, Natacha enjoys the distinction of being the first female to hold a doctorate in Education in Spain. The fact that Casona has both dress simply, elegantly, and conservatively shows that he does not want to characterize them as unusual or strange. Were these women to behave extravagantly, by process of association the assumption would arise that all female educators border on the bizarre and are, consequently, strange. Rather, Casona's normal portrayal of them serves to cast a favorable light on all women who have completed graduate studies and shows this accomplishment to be a most normal and logical occurrence in modern society. Likewise, Casona has removed traditional barriers by having Pablo accept a woman instead of a man as his teacher. His liberal twentieth century emphasis on the rights of woman shows a woman who is actually more intelligent than a man, with the man himself admitting it and allowing her to teach

him. Casona's emphasis, then, on the necessity of the equality of women in a world previously dominated by men is clearly indicative of his liberal Neo-Romantic bent.

Finally, Casona believes that modern man must return to a simpler existence. Like his educational ideas, this notion is not radically new, for Jean Jacques Rousseau, a precursor of French Romanticism, was an adherent of the same idea. Casona's Neo-Romantic liberalism serves to intensify this Romantic belief prevalent in the early to mid-nineteenth century and is likewise a reaction to the Positivistic orientation of society in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Casona believes society should direct its focus once again on the individual as it had done during the Romantic age. Society today has become much too dehumanized and entirely too technologically and scientifically oriented, and it must of necessity concentrate on its very core: man and his interrelations with other individuals. Casona has shown through Natacha's venture with communal living how a perfectly altruistic social situation can succeed:

> Es nuestro primer pan. Ese trigo lo hemos sembrado nosotros, lo hemos molido en nuestro molino y se ha cocido en nuestro horno. Venga, tío Santiago. ¡Verá usted qué hondo sabe el pan cuando es verdaderamente nuestro![4]

Man has forgotten how gratifying it can be to do everything for himself without the aid of modern technological inventions. He has lost that feeling of accomplishment which only can come with total self-subsistence independent of all external elements, save only the basic tools supplied by nature. By working together towards a common goal, Natacha and her

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[4]Casona, Natacha, p. 465.

group have eliminated the rigid societal structures characteristic of evolving civilizations and have learned by experience that altruism is much more conducive to total self-realization than is egotism. Casona's return to nature, then, in Nuestra Natacha is not an advocation of a resumption of the habits of primitive societies, but rather an affirmation of the necessity of self-knowledge and fulfillment through the altruism inherent in a cooperative effort. Casona sees Natacha's farm community as the symbol of what all society should ideally be, and it stands out in stark relief when contrasted with the technological bent of modern society. Likewise, Natacha's refusal to leave the commune with her peers at the end of the play exemplifies Casona's belief that it is man's moral responsibility to seek actively the means of self-realization by divesting himself of the scientifically oriented accouterments of society, and by gaining his subsistence with his own hands through hard work.

In La tercera palabra, Casona initially depicts Pablo as a purely natural man, devoid of the internal struggles between good and evil which arise once man becomes a social creature. He has lived for twenty years in the mountains away from the rigors of society with only his father who idealized him. His is a very simplified world, as is shown by his explanations of the existence of God and of Death:

> PABLO: Una tarde, estando yo solo, la /corza/ vi llegar arrastrándose, con una mancha roja aquí. Yo trataba de lavarle aquella mancha, pero ella me miraba con los ojos tristes, como diciendo: << No te canses, pequeño; ya es inútil.>> Se recostó junto a la lumbre a esperar. Y de repente sentí que un frío misterioso cruzaba la puerta..., que algo terrible iba a pasar delante de mí sin que yo pudiera hacer nada... Y así me quedé temblando en un rincón, hasta que vi claramente que los ojos seguían allí, pero la mirada ya no. Cuando llegó mi padre y dijo

la palabra <<Muerte>>, no hacía falta; yo ya lo sabía. ¿Comprendes ahora?

MARGA: No sé... La muerte es una quietud que se ve y un frío que se toca. Pero Dios...

PABLO: Es lo mismo. Lo que yo no podría entender nunca es una máquina de escribir, si no me lo explicas tú; es demasiado complicado. En cambio, la Muerte y Dios son tan sencillos...

MARGA: ¿También a Dios lo descubriste tú solo?

PABLO: Como lo hubieras descubierto tú. Es otra cosa natural.

MARGA: Pero, por lo menos, habrías oído esa palabra.

PABLO: La palabra, sí. Pero ¿qué son las palabras hasta que no sabes de verdad lo que llevan dentro? Fue una noche que, al volver de caza, me separé de mi padre y me encontré perdido en una montaña desierta. ¿Has estado alguna vez allá arriba cuando va a estallar la tormenta?

MARGA: Nunca.

PABLO: La noche entera parecía contener el aliento esperando no sé qué..., y se hizo un silencio tan grande que me corrió un escalofrío desde la nuca hasta los cascos del caballo. Porque entonces te das cuenta de todo lo pequeño que eres y todo lo solo que estás. Apreté desesperadamente las espuelas para escapar de aquella soledad, pero inútil: el caballo seguía temblando sin moverse. Y de pronto sentí que no estaba yo solo... Alguien se acercaba en la oscuridad, llamándome desde la tierra, abrazándome con el viento, mirándome desde las estrellas... Algo, mucho más grande que yo, pero que quería meterse entero dentro de mí para llenar mi soledad de hombre. No pude resistir el miedo y grité la única palabra capaz de quitármelo: << ¡Padre! >> En ese momento estalló un trueno como una respuesta, y toda la noche se iluminó con un relámpago. Y entonces comprendí que aquello que estaba allí conmigo era, sencillamente Dios.[5]

Pablo's world prior to his education is a very elemental one. He can neither read nor write, he does not know how to react in social situations,

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[5]Casona, La tercera, pp. 133-134.

he is most barbaric from a society's civilized point of view. Of course, this type of existence is a most limited one for man must of necessity interact with others in order to achieve total realization of self. Casona realizes that modern society is formulated upon the basis of social intercourse and is not naive enough to believe that total withdrawal from a materialistic society is the solution. By the same token, he abhors the insensitive positivistic bent of society as exemplified by the Profesor de Antropología and his purely scientific interest in Pablo as an example of the Primitive Man instead of considering Pablo as a real person. Rather Casona advocates a fusion of the two poles: " . . . neither the Natural Man nor the Social Man alone bears the essence of true felicity; both are essential - a marriage of the best elements of each."[6] This belief is essentially the one also advanced in Nuestra Natacha. Mutual cooperation within the framework of a simplified society devoid of all scientific, positivistic, technological inclinations will of necessity produce the gratifying self-fulfillment and love vital to man's existence.

Although Casona's ideas are utopian, they nevertheless indicate his concern for the present state of modern society. In Nuestra Natacha and in La tercera palabra, Casona has not only shown his particular form of Neo-Romanticism to be a reaffirmation of the Romantic emphasis on individual importance, but he has also demonstrated it to be a result of his aversion to the dehumanized, insensitized products of a Positivistic

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[6]H. Kay Moon, "Caleron and Casona," Hispania, XLVIII, i (March, 1965), p. 40.

age. Casona's liberal view of a woman's position marks him definitely as a twentieth century liberal and is likewise perhaps a definite characteristic of his own Neo-Romantic orientation.

CHAPTER IX

HUMANITARIANISM

In virtually all of his plays, Casona re-examines the significance of love within the context of twentieth century humanitarianism. Although his view of love is multi-faceted and encompasses not only passion, egotism, and desire, but also, sublimation, redemption, purity, and Platonism, it focuses both directly and indirectly on the altruistic significance of interpersonal relationships. The Casonian perspective of love thus gains added relief when considered as a complement to his over-all Neo-Romantic ideology. Although his emphasis on particular characteristics of love may mirror past beliefs, Casona is differentiated from pre-twentieth century authors in his broad humanitarian perspective. In Casonian Neo-Romanticism, modern society is to blame for the evils rampant in the world, for it is the preponderance of a mechanized, dehumanized, overly scientific and technological environment which has contributed chiefly to personal debasement and demoralization. For Casona, then, the evils of a modern, bourgeois, materialistic society are sins against love.[1]

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[1]Charles Leighton, "Casona and Lorca," Modern Drama, p. 33.

He places the redemptive and purgative qualities of a true, interpersonal, self-sacrificing love at the very core of his ideology and sees in these features the salvation of man. Such a belief becomes a fundamental Casonian Neo-Romantic characteristic when considered in an encompassing perspective of the modern age.

Casona's emphasis on altruistic instead of egocentric love is directly related to twentieth century preoccupations. Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset, and Antonio Machado, among others, have professed a belief in the necessity for personal identification with the problems of another through the vehicle of love. These and other modern writers see a definite need in society for fraternal brotherhood and compassion, for present-day society has become insensitized to extremes. Humanitarian love for Casona is an extension of these current beliefs. For him, this type of love is vital, although it may be rather idealistic, for it presupposes the total immersion of the individual within the needs of another person. It is the complete giving of self in any relationship to the exclusion of personal self-interest. Altruism, and by extension humanitarianism, focuses attention not on a one-sided relationship. Rather, its emphasis is outward and limitless; it aims at suppressing self-interest and emphasizing the common good of another person or group of persons. Such is the case of Natalia Valdés in Nuestra Natacha who devotes herself completely and totally to the needs of those within her commune; as long as her presence is necessary, she will never leave the farm, but rather will continue to work there devoting her talents to the betterment of her students in particular and humanity in general.

Certainly it can be argued that egotism is at the very heart of altruism, for a man must be motivated by personal desires before he has the potential to become sensitive to the needs of others. However, and this point is central to the issue, egotism is limited to a narrow circle of interest; its focus cannot extend past the basic desires of each isolated individual. Casona's humanitarianism on the other hand, is characterized by its outward focus on another. Its starting point may be self-interest, yet the final result becomes an idealistic expression of beneficence and brotherly love. This explains why Natacha begins her work in the reformatory as a personal crusade against detention homes arising from her experiences as a child; her work is nothing more than an attempt to modify a structure to which she had personally been forced to submit. Upon undertaking her venture, Natacha restricts herself, for she is motivated by purely personal stimuli. Her characterization enters the realm of Casona's Neo-Romanticism when she gives herself totally to her charges. The extension of personal boundaries to encompass the needs of others marks the beginning of humanitarianism. The development of interpersonal relationships, as exemplified by Natacha's complete devotion to her children in the commune and vice versa, definitely situates Natacha at the end of the play within the limits of pure Neo-Romantic humanitarianism. Society is to blame for the stringent, dehumanizing situation in the reformatory; Casona shows through Natacha that hope for the future rests with those few isolated individuals who place the needs of others over highly restrictive personal interests.

Laura, in <u>La llave en el desván</u>, similarly considers Mario's necessities to be more vital than her own personal desires. Even though

altruistic impulses are not as obvious in this drama as in Nuestra Natacha, the nevertheless exist, although in greatly reduced proportions. Laura's love for Mario leads her to renounce her prestigious scholarship to the university in order to be near Mario and help him during a trying situation in his life. Were Laura not motivated by a desire to identify with Mario's problems and needs, she surely would have accepted the stipend. As it is, Casona shows her as being open and receptive to others.

Likewise in Siete gritos en el mar, Santillana's attempt to save Julia at the end of the play is indicative of a Casonian Neo-Romantic treatment of love. In this particular work, the reader assumes that Santillana will aid all the first-class passengers. Such an assumption is based on his humane treatment of Julia and his prevention of her suicide by giving her the love she so desperately needs. Given the context of Santillana's dream and his actions when he awakens, the reader is fairly certain that Santillana will later stimulate self-awareness in the other six passengers. The compassion he exhibits towards Julia is a prefiguration of his total altruistic potential which is realized only partially at the end of the play.

In his dramas of reality and illusion, Casona implicitly emphasizes the necessity for salvation through altruism within a modern situation. In La sirena varada, he depicts Ricardo as a refugee from a technological society. Were the modern condition not so impersonal and mechanized, Ricardo would not have fled it and could have possibly experienced selflessness within its confines. However, Casona adeptly shows that modern societal structure lacks the primary foundation of love, thus forcing the characters to resort to illusory situations. For this reason

Ricardo establishes a home by the sea for fugitives from reason. The fact that Ricardo returns to reality at the end of the play is significant, for he faces the rigors of society supported emotionally and spiritually by Sirena's love. By his total immersion in her problems, Ricardo discovers himself. His altruistic impulses not only benefit Sirena, but Ricardo simultaneously profits by them. This is the essence of pure humanitarianism: love and the inclination to help someone produce total self-awareness.

In Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, Chole identifies with Fernando's problems through love to such an extent that she is willing to commit suicide. Although this is an extreme which Casona usually does not sanction, its very inclusion in the drama as a dramatic technique emphasizes the radical limits of altruistic impulses. If Chole were not emotionally and amorously concerned for Fernando and his brother Juan, if she were concerned only with her own personal happiness, she could never have justifiably ever considered death. The realization that she was the cause of their struggle provides Chole with the necessary motive for suicide. Her drowning attempt does not demonstrate an irrational move originating in self-pity, but is rather depicted as a logical solution to Fernando's problem. Casona quite predictably does not permit Chole's death, but the example illustrates the possible limits of altruistic impulses.

Similarly the Abuela in Los árboles mueren de pie exhibits Casonian humanitarianism in her refusal to destroy the illusion of happiness perpetuated for her by Mauricio and Isabel. Hers is a type of fraternal love fostered by the couple's display of compassion for her.

Mauricio and Isabel act as they do for they understand the Abuela's feelings of loneliness due to the absence of her nephew. They give of themselves willingly, not asking anything in return. This altruistic gesture is reciprocated by the Abuela at the end of the play with her decision to continue the charade. She astutely realizes that Mauricio and Isabel have fallen in love and resolves to suppress her own personal desires, thereby allowing them to feel fulfilled in the knowledge that they have given her some happiness.

In La dama del alba, Martín is similar to the Abuela for he refuses to reveal the truth of Angélica's supposed death. This display of compassion and concern for the Madre is indicative of his charitable nature. It would have been much easier for him to expose Angélica's adulterous actions, but Casona's Martín instead chooses to remain silent so as not to hurt the Madre, for whom he feels empathy and tenderness. He subjugates his personal desires to more noble and gratifying ones.

In both Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador, Casona illustrates how egotism serves as the catalyst for self-realization through altruism. Both the Estudiante and Ricardo Jordan come to defeat the evil within them only when they each realize the true limited nature of egotism. Prior to this discovery, each is motivated by base impulses, either purely physical passion or material greed. Both men are extremely self-centered at the beginning of the dramas, yet undergo radical metamorphoses at the end of the plays. Although Casona does not explicitly demonstrate their altruistic tendencies, he strongly implies at the end of the plays that both men will exhibit compassion and empathy in the future for they have symbolically destroyed their egoistic selves.

Likewise in Tres diamantes y una mujer, Perla is willing to give up all her wealth and glory for Fransisé. Through love she identifies with him and his life style, although he makes his living as a common thief. Her realization that his happiness depends on his continued success in his chosen profession prompts her to renounce her preconceived moral principles and dedicate herself totally to him. For Casona, love within or outside of legal boundaries is irrelevant. What is important in a Casonian Neo-Romantic view of life is the existence and actuation of an altruistic love.

These dramas by no means represent a complete treatment of Casona's view of love, but serve merely as specific examples of the importance of altruism, an intrinsic characteristic of his Neo-Romantic ideology. While his emphasis in other plays is somewhat unrelated to this humanitarian aspect, such differing considerations like love as pure passion or egotism are stylistically necessary given the complexity of amorous emotions. Such a divergence does not weaken Casona's basic beliefs, but rather strengthens them given the very contrast produced by a comparison of the varied facets of love with his Neo-Romantic ideology of humanitarianism advanced in his total dramatic production. Casona believes that the situation of a desensitized modern society is not hopeless. The author's optimism then resides in the emphasis on the redeeming qualities of love. Love for Casonian Neo-Romanticism, thus, is one characterized by compassion and empathy for others. Only through fraternal humanitarianism can man survive in a modern society which is rapidly becoming devoid of eternal values. An altruistic sense of life will produce the self-awareness necessary to face the twentieth century mechanized world.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Alejandro Casona is more concerned with the philosophical implications of the modern condition than with technical, dramatic and innovative efforts for the advancement of his ideology. The focal point of this tendency in all of his dramas is the individual: man confronted with himself, with other men, and with his environment. It is in this emphasis on the individual as the center of existence that Alejandro Casona exhibits characteristics which classify him ideologically as a Neo-Romantic.

Casonian Neo-Romanticism appears to be not only an intensification within a modern context of nineteenth century Romantic beliefs, but also a re-examination of the present societal situation. The author's propensity to question and redefine existing values and traditional beliefs is part of the twentieth century tendency to put greater stress on the singular importance of the individual as the focal point of life. Since traditional values are no longer valid in a society which has become dehumanized, insensitized, and overly technological, man must confront life alone. The active assertion of self raises the individual above his situation to the level of a Casonian Neo-Romantic hero.

Casona's dramas reveal that certain beliefs remain constant throughout in one aspect or another. Considered as one cohesive unit, these ideas assume the form of the ideological traits which characterize Casonian Neo-Romanticism. In dramas such as La sirena varada, Los árboles mueren de pie, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, and La tercera palabra Casona shows his disdain for the highly mechanized and overly scientific technology which tends not only to demean the individual but which is also a constant of the modern age. Rejection of these dehumanizing aspects of society is indicative of a plea by the author for a more empathetic and elevating concern for man himself. Casona's attack on modern insensitivity is also indirectly shown in dramas such as La llave en el desván, Siete gritos en el mar, and Romance en tres noches, for the main characters never would have found themselves in such untenable situations had it not been for the present societal condition.

Since a computerized, callous century has relegated the individual to an inferior, dehumanizing position, the author is convinced that the solution to the problem of insensitivity lies in man's active confrontation with his situation, and not his escape from it. Natacha, Ricardo Jordán, Sirena, Fernando and Chole, Lord Arturo, and the Estudiante are but a few examples of Casonian Neo-Romantic heroes who assert themselves by facing the harsh realities of life, their interior selves, and/or other men. These characters become symbolic of Man, the focal point of the drama of existence.

Casona's more liberal, twentieth century interpretation of the modern condition simularly leads him to humanize the figures of death, the devil, and supernatural forces. By making the unreal seem more

tangible, he eliminates the traditional barriers between life and the unknown, showing the latter to be inextricably bound to earthly existence. Such is the case in his depiction of the devil in Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador; with death in La dama del alba; and with the supernatural in Corona de amor y muerte and La casa de los siete balcones. In each instance, the humanization of traditionally awesome forces renders them believable and viable constants of life.

Casona likewise adheres to the Neo-Romantic belief that man is the master of his destiny, as exemplified by El crimen de Lord Arturo and Siete gritos en el mar. Each man can choose freely from varied courses of action for he is not bound by any preconceived plan. The traditional, inflexible nature of fate is thus rendered meaningless, for Casonian Neo-Romantic heroes and heroines such as Lord Arturo and Julia Miranda are capable of forging their own destinies.

The author is not so idealistic as to believe that man is always good, for he does recognize the existence of both interior and exterior forces of evil as they appear in dramas like Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador. However, no matter how deplorable a man's life may be, the element of salvation is always present. Self awareness through positive overt actions and self-expatiation are vital to the formation of the whole individual. Characters such as Natacha, Laura, Martín, and Perla demonstrate that man can save himself. It is by his very confrontation with himself and his society that the Casonian Neo-Romantic hero rises above his situation and is saved through an exhibition of a humanitarian and altruistic love.

Much of a Casonian Neo-Romantic ideology has its roots in predeeding literary movements; however, Casona's freer interpretation within a modern age sets his beliefs apart from those of his predecessors. History has yet to determine if Neo-Romanticism will attain the stature of a full-fledged literary movement or whether certain traits of it will only appear sporadically throughout this century. The fact remains, however, that Alejandro Casona does exhibit a Neo-Romantic ideology in his dramas. It is possible that other twentieth century authors will fall into the same category as Casona, but this can only be established from the vantage point of historical perspective. It cannot be denied, however, that a continuity of twentieth century thought is constant in Casona's theater and appears to be an intensification, redefinition, and amplification of Romantic tenets within the context of the modern age. This is the essence of Casonian Neo-Romanticism.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY

The factual information contained in this chronology was gathered from various sources. Among others, the following critics deserve mention: Ángeles R. Arango, Manual Antonio Arias, Manuel F. Avello, José A. Balseiro, Bernard Dulsey, Antonio García Miñor, Ruth C. Gillespie, Charles H. Leighton, Adela Palacio, J. Riis Owre, Juan Rodríguez Castellano, José Rodríguez Richart, Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, Juan Santana, William H. Shoemaker, Eliana Suárez-Rivero. Sainz de Robles has been used as the primary source of information, as well as Casona's own articles and works. If at any time the abovementioned scholars have been in disagreement with Sainz de Robles, an effort has been made to note conflicting data.

1903 - né Alejandro Rodríguez Álvarez on March 23 (reported as March 3 by Rodríguez Castellano), in Besullo, a small town close to Cangas de Narcea, in the province of Asturias. Parents: Gabino Rodríguez, a native of Asturias, maestro rural and later director de graduada in the provinical capital of Oviedo; and Faustina Alvarez, a native of León, schoolteacher. It is purported that the young Casona developed his liking for the sciences from his father and his predilection for the arts from his mother. Alejandro was the third of five children: Teresa, Matutina, Alejandro, José, and Jovita; all were educators save Matutina, who was a pediatrician.

1908-1913 - lived in Villaviciosa (Sainz de Robles is the only critic who makes mention of this).

1913-1922 - lived and studied in Gijón, Palencia, and Murcia. Many critics disagree as to Casona's whereabouts during this period. The following is a brief summary of the different opinions:

1. Sainz de Robles: 1913-1915 - lived in Gijón where he studied the first two years of his bachillerato at the Instituto «Jovellanos», here begins his attraction to the theater

stimulated initially by reading Calderón's La vida es sueño and, viewing the stage production of Benito Pérez Galdós' La loca de la casa. (Balseiro and Suárez Rivero say the first play he saw was Canción de cuna of María de la Lejarraga and Gregorio Martínez Sierra). 1917-1922 - studied in Murcia. 1918 - fell under the influence of Andrés Sobejano with regard to the theater. 1919 - entered the university in Murcia; he also attended the Conservatorio de Música y Declamación without his parents' knowledge. 1920 - in October, he published his historical romance "La empresa del Ave María" in the magazine Polytechnicum (Murcia). 1921 - he was forced to leave the university for financial reasons.

2. Angeles R. Arango: 1914-1916 - studied in the Instituto General y Técnico <<Jovellanos>> in Gijón. 1916-1917 - studied in Palencia in the Instituto General y Técnico (today known as the Instituto de Enseñanza Media <<Jorge Manrique>>) and was also enrolled in courses in the Instituto de Murcia. 1917-1919 - enrolled in the Instituto de Murcia.

3. Shoemaker, Balseiro, and Riis Owre: although they do not mention specific dates, these critics attest that Casona studied the first two years of his bachillerato in Gijón, one year was spent in Palencia, and two years in Murcia, completing the bachillerato in 1917. 1919 - entered the University of Murcia for two years.

4. Rodríguez Richart - 1918-1922 - lived in Murcia (on one occasion, the same critic states that Casona lived in Murcia from 1919 until 1922).

1922 - went to Madrid to study at the Escuela Superior del Magisterio, a training school for elementary school superintendents and normal school professors.

1923-1928 - attended literary tertulias at the Café de Platerías and the Pombo in Madrid with men like Federico Sainz de Robles, Juan Ramón Sender, and Benjamín Jarnés, among others.

1926 - graduated from the Escuela Superior del Magisterio with the title of Inspector. His thesis was entitled "El diablo en la literatura y en el arte." Publication of El peregrino de la barba florida, a collection of poems with a prologue by Eduardo Marquina (Madrid: Mundo Latino). (According to Adela Palacio, Casona used his given name instead of his pseudonym).

1927 - death of his mother. Wrote Otra vez el diablo.

1928 - married Rosalía Martín Bravo, a classmate at the Escuela Superior del Magisterio. Secured a position in the town of Les in the

Valle de Arán, remote in the Pyrenees, as an elementary school superintendent. While in the Valle de Arán, he organized El Pájaro Pinto, a children's theater. Placed as a finalist in a literary contest organized for amateurs by the newspaper ABC; his entry was Otra vez el diablo.

1929 - finished writing La sirena varada while in the Valle de Arán. Did the Spanish translation of four short pieces by the Frenchman Augusto Strindberg. In February, he went to Zaragoza to see the première of his first work to be produced commercially, El crimen de Lord Arturo (Compañia María Fernanda Ladrón de Guevara - Rafael Rivelles). (Rodríguez Richart believes that the date was January 16, instead of February as stated by Sainz de Robles).

1930 - on February 19, a daughter Marta was born. Casona served as an elementary school superintendent in parts of León and Asturias during 1930 and 1931. Published La flauta del sapo, a collection of poems (Valle de Arán); this was the first work to bear the name "Casona." Regarding the adoption of this pseudonym, Casona has made the following comments:

1. Letter dated January 30, 1938, to José A. Balseiro: "Casona era el apodo familiar de los míos en Asturias, por la casa solariega enorme y dominante en que nacimos. Así empece a usarlo como seudónimo, y así soy ya irremediablemente."

2. Letter dated March 24, 1946, to William H. Shoemaker: "Nací y me crié en una vieja casa solariega que por ser la más grande de la aldea es llamada por todos 'la Casona.' Es frecuente en las aldeas (donde por ser casi todos parientes, los apellidos se repiten mucho) distinguir a las familias por el lugar que habitan. Así se dice 'los de la Fuente,' 'los del Valle,' y en mi caso 'los de la Casona.' Al publicar mi primer libro destinado al público, decidí adoptar ese seudónimo, que he empleado desde entonces, y que ha llegado a sustituir a mi apellido, incluso en la vida de relación."

1931 - birth of the Second Republic on April 14. Casona was named Inspector of Schools in Asturias and became part of the Inspección Provincial de Primera Enseñanza de Madrid.

1931-1936 - duration of the Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas under the Ministerio de Instrucción Publica y Bellas Artes with Manuel B. Cossió as president. Casona was named director of the Teatro del Pueblo or Teatro Ambulante and served in this capacity for five years. Casona wrote three one-act plays especially for the Teatro del Pueblo: El entremés del mancebo que casó con la mujer brava, Sancho Panza en la insula Barataria, and Balada de Atta Troll (later incorporated in Nuestra Natacha).

1. William Shoemaker notes: "Briefly stated, the misiones sought to perform a work of social justice by bridging the abyss between the cities and the rural districts and by removing through communication the isolation of the latter. . . . The visit of a group of misioneros would normally last a few (five to ten) days and would include the showing of motion picture films, the reading of pieces of good literature (often national poetry), talks on such subjects as personal hygiene and practical agronomy, the playing of fine recorded music, and the performance of short plays. Somethimes a puppet theater and teacher-training courses were included."

2. Casona himself says: "Durante los cinco años en que tuve la fortuna de dirigir aquella muchachada estudiante, más de trescientos pueblos . . . nos vieron llegar a sus ejidos, sus plazas o sus proches, levantar nuestros bartulos al aire libre y representar el sazonado repertorio ante el feliz asombro de la aldea. Si alguna obra bella puedo enorgullecerme de haber hecho en mi vida, fue aquella; si algo serio he aprendido sobre pueblo y teatro, fue allí donde lo aprendí. Trescientas actuaciones al frente de un cuadro estudiantil y ante públicos de sabiduría, emoción y lenguaje primitivos son una tentadora experiencia."

1932 - received the Premio Nacional de Literatura for Flor de levendas. During this year, he lead eight of the twenty misiones conducted.

1933 - received the Premio Lope de Vega presented by the Ayuntamiento de Madrid for La sirena varada; the jury was headed by Joaquín Alvarez Quintero and there were one hundred sixteen entrants. Publication of Flor de levendas. (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva) The work was signed Alejandro Rodríguez "Casona" (Adela Palacio).

1934 - première of La sirena varada on March 17 (Teatro Español de Madrid; Compañia Margarita Xirgu - Enrique Borrás). Première in Florence of the Italian translation of La sirena varada. First edition of La sirena varada in La Farsa (Madrid), Año 8, Num. 357, 14 July 1935.

1935 - première of Otra vez el diablo (revised) in Madrid on April 26 (Xirgu - Borrás Company). Collection of teatro menor done for the repertoire of the Teatro Universitario. Adaptation of Alfonso Hernández Catá's El misterio de 'María Celeste' in July (Teatro de la Zarzuela; Compañia Rambal), according to Shoemaker. (Sainz de Robles and Rodríguez Richart state that it was premièred in Valencia by the Compañía Rambal in the Teatro Ruzafa on January 12). Wrote Nuestra Natacha in Canales in the province of León; work was performed in Barcelona in December. First edition of Otra vez el diablo in La Farsa (Madrid), Año 9, Núm. 410, 27 July 1935.

1936 - first performance of Nuestra Natacha in Madrid on February 6 (Teatro Reina Victoria; Compañía Pepita Díaz de Artigas - Manuel Collado). First edition of Nuestra Natacha in Madrid. Czechoslovakian première of Nuestra Natacha in Prague. Beginning of the Spanish Civil War on July 18. Casona fled with his wife and daughter through the mountains to Asturias where he left them and returned via Gijón, Santander, and San Sebastián. He was in Irún the last hours before it fell on September 4. He crossed through France to Barcelona and went to Valencia and Madrid, staying in Madrid through November when he was evacuated to Valencia by the Fifth Regiment. Lost contact with Rosalía and Marta in December.

1937 - eventually Casona found his family and brought them to a small town in Brittany. Offered the literary directorship of the theatrical company lead by Pepita Diaz and Manuel Collado. Set sail in March from Cherbourg for Mexico. Casona remained with this group for two years during which time he traveled to Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and Peru. Finished and produced Prohibido suicidarse en primavera on June 22 in Mexico (Teatro Arbéu).

1938 - Casona's theatrical company went to Cuba and Puerto Rico. In Caracas on June 17, he produced his Romance de Dan y Elsa (Teatro Nacional; Díaz - Collado Company); this play was later called Romance en Tres Noches. Finished a new version of El crimen de Lord Arturo which was produced in 1938 in Havana. Read a paper in the Aula Magna of the University of Havana which was published in part in the Revista de Indias (Bogotá, 1938) entitled "Las mujeres de Lope de Vega." Gave a series of lectures at the Teatro Comedia in Havana: "El Amor: Historia," "El Amor: Geografía," "El Amor: Psicología y Etica." These lectures were staged by the Díaz - Collado Company.

1939 - in July, Casona established Buenos Aires as his permanent headquarters; there he lived on Calle Moreno for three years and on Calle Arenales in the Barrio Norte for twenty-one years.

1940 - première of Sinfonia inacabada on May 21 in Montevideo (Teatro Solís). Wrote María Curie. Biografía escénica in collaboration with Francisco Madrid; Casona refused to publish it, but the work was first performed in Buenos Aires (Teatro Smart). Wrote an original movie script entitled "Veinte años y una noche" (Estudios Filmadores Argentinos). (Nestor Astur Fernández notes the publication of a farse, Pinocho y la Infantina Blanca Flor done on June 16 in the Teatro Ateneo).

1941 - première of Las tres perfectas casadas on April 18 in Buenos Aires (Teatro Avenida; Compañía Lola Membrives). Original movie script entitled "En el viejo Buenos Aires" (Estudios San Miguel). Adaptation of a work by Edmundo d'Amicis done for the film

industry entitled "La maestrita de obreros" (Estudios Filmadores Argentinos). Wrote Una misión pedagógico-social en Sanabria; teatro estudiantil (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de Cultura Española, a publication of the Patronato Hispano-Argentino de Cultura). First edition of Entremés del mancebo que casó con mujer brava (with La sirena varada and Prohibido suicidarse en primavera). (Buenos Aires: Losada).

1942 - première in Paris of the French version of La sirena varada (Le Belier Theater). Première in Rio de Janeiro of the Portuguese version of Sinfonía inacabada (Teatro Regina). Original movie script entitled "Concierto de almas" (Estudios Baires). Casona also did one of the six episodes of the movie script "Ceniza al viento" (Estudios Baires).

1943 - translated into Spanish the works of H. R. Lenormand: La inocente (L'innocente), La loca del cielo (La folle du ciel), and Los fracasados (Les ratés). Original movie script entitled "Cuando florezca el naranjo" (Estudios San Miguel). Original movie script of his own Nuestra Natacha. Adaptation of a work by Ibsen done for the film industry, "Casa de munecas" (Estudios San Miguel). Adaptation of Cantiga XCIV of Alfonso el Sabio done for the film industry, "Margarita la tornera." Adaptation of a work by Galdós done for the film industry, "El abuelo." (Shoemaker dates this 1946). Lecture entitled "Galdós y el romanticismo," published in Cursos y Conferencias, a magazine of the Colegio Libre de Estudios Superiores of Buenos Aires. Première of the Portuguese version of Nuestra Natacha in São Paulo (University Theater). Première of the Portuguese version of Prohibido suicidarse en primavera in Rio de Janeiro.

1944 - première on November 3 of La dama del alba in Buenos Aires (Teatro Avenida). Publication on November 4 of La dama del Alba. Movie script entitled "El María Celeste" based on Casona's own play (Estudios Sono-Film). Première of the French version of Nuestra Natacha in December (La Bruyere Theater). First edition of La dama del alba (Buenos Aires: Losada).

1945 - première on August 24 of La barca sin pescador in Buenos Aires (Teatro Liceo). Script done in collaboration with Jules Supervielle based on Jacques Bernard's Martine and entitled "Le fruit mordu" (Andes Film). Lecture on "Nueva poesía" read at the Ateneo <<Pi y Margall>> in Buenos Aires. Première in Rio de Janeiro of the Portuguese version of La dama del alba in Pernambuco, Brazil (Art Theater).

1947 - Première of La molinera de Arcos on June 19 in Buenos Aires (Teatro Argentino).

1949 - première on April 1 in Buenos Aires of Los árboles mueren de pie (Teatro Ateneo). Publication on May 7 of Retablo jovial, five

one-act farces (Farsa del cornudo apaleado, Farsa y justicia del Corregidor, Fabilla del secreto bien guardado, Sancho Panza en su ínsula, and Entremés del mancebo que casó con mujer brava) (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo). First editión of Sinfonía inacabada (with La molinera de arcos) (Buenos Aires: Losada).

1950 - Purchased a country home in Punta del Este, Uruguay which he named "La Sirena." First edition of Los árboles mueren de pie (Buenos Aires).

1951 - première of La llave en el desván on June 1 in Buenos Aires (Teatro Ateneo). First edition of La barca sin pescador (with La sirena varada and Los árboles mueren de pie) (Buenos Aires: Losada).

1952 - returned to Argentina on March 6. Première on March 14 of Siete gritos en el mar in Buenos Aires (Teatro Politeama).

1953 - première of La tercera palabra on May 29 in Buenos Aires (Teatro Odeón).

1955 - première of Corona de amor y muerte on March 8 in Buenos Aires (Teatro Odeón). Wrote essays "Don Juan y el diablo" (El Universal, October 14), "La casa del amor" (Indice literario, November 29). Began composing a series of essays which appeared under the title "Temas de siempre" (Leighton).

1956 - openly acknowledged a desire to return to his native Spain. (Rodríguez Richart makes note of a trip to France, Italy, and Portugal from January to March. On the trip, he stopped in Barcelona for five hours and saw his brother, sisters, and his eighty-eight year old father). Wrote essays "Pícaros y caballeros" (El Universal, February 12), "La bella durmiente de Nápoles" (El Universal, September 4), "El balcón de Julieta" (El Universal, December 5), "Dulce enemiga" (Indice literario, March 27), "El niño y su mentira" (Indice literario, May 29), "Platero y Juan Ramón" (Indice literario, November 13).

1957 - première on April 12 in Buenos Aires of La casa de los siete balcones (Teatro Liceo) for which he received the Premio de Argentores. Première of Carta de una desconocida on May 9 in Porto Alegre (Teatro São Pedro). Wrote essays "Las siete cursis de Granada" (El Universal, July 9), "El arte de bautizar" (El Universal, September 4), "Repertorio de pecados" (El Universal, October 15), "Pueblo y teatro" (El Universal, November 6), "Estética del fracaso" (El Universal, December 4), "¿Brujas otra vez?" (Indice literario, February 5), "Un minuto de eternidad" (Indice literario, March 5), "Técnica del ultraje" (Indice literario, April 2), "Galantería" (Indice literario, May 14).

1958 - adaptation of Lope de Vega's El anzuelo de Fenisa (Buenos Aires). While Casona traveled in Europe, Rosalía returned to Madrid for a visit. Wrote essays "Famosos disparates" (El Universal, January 5), "El niño que no quiso crecer" (El Universal, March 10), "Palabras sin pasaporte" (El Universal, April 2), "El secreto de Dulcinea" (El Universal, December 28), "Amigos de cien brazos" (Indice literario, February 11), "Saudades" (Indice literario, May 6), "Tres sonrisas y una mujer" (Indice literario, November 27).

1959 - Wrote essays "Yo pecador" (El Universal, June 2), "La luna invadida" (El Universal, October 16), "El mar, la mar" (Indice literario, April 23), "Dos letras, dos mundos" (Indice literario, August 20).

1960 - Took another trip to Europe, visiting Paris, Prague, and Vienna.

1961 - première of Tres diamantes y una mujer on March 16 in Buenos Aires (Teatro Ateneo: Compañía María Aurelia Bisutti y Carlos Cores). Adaptation of Tirso de Molina's El burlador de Sevilla (Buenos Aires).

1962 - adaptation of Lope de Vega's Peribáñez o el Comendador de Ocaña (Buenos Aires). (In the same work, Sainz de Robles contradicts himself and also states that the above work was done also in 1964). Production of La dama del alba in Spain on April 22 (Teatro de Bellas Artes).

1963 - production of La barca sin pescador in Madrid on April 22 (Teatro de Bellas Artes). Production of Los árboles mueren de pie on December 18 in Madrid (Teatro de Bellas Artes). Theater critics in Barcelona name La barca sin pescador as the best play of the season.

1964 - bought a piso in Madrid. Production in Spain of La casa de los siete balcones on March 29 (Teatro Lara) and of La tercera palabra on October 20 (Teatro Marquina). Première in Madrid of El caballero de las espuelas de oro on October 1 (Teatro de Bellas Artes). (Sainz de Robles also states that the première took place on October 2. Suárez Rivero and Balseiro state that the play was first performed on July 14 in Barcelona.

1965 - (According to Rodríguez Richart, Casona went to Poland in January to see one of his plays). Production in Spain of Las tres perfectas casadas on September 10 (Teatro Lara). Revival of La sirena varada on April 18 (Teatro de Bellas Artes). Adaptation of Fernando de Rojas' La Celestina on October 11 (Teatro de Bellas Artes) (Balseiro and Suárez Rivero set this date as October 12). Production in Spain of Prohibido suicidarse en primavera on February 12 (Teatro Lara). On July 13, he underwent surgery of the mitral valve; a second surgery was necessary on September 13. On

September 17, at 4:00 p.m., Alejandro Casona died of cardiac paralysis. His body was taken at 11:00 p.m. of the same day to the Teatro Lara to lie in state; this was where Las tres perfectas casadas was then being performed. On September 18, he was buried in the cemetery of Nuestra Señora de la Almudena, the municipal cemetery of Madrid.

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