

THE USE OF SUBTERFUGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF PLOT AND CHARACTERS IN THE DRAMAS OF
ALEJANDRO CASONA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Alejandro Casona, el autor de comedias, no abandona su misión pedagógica aunque haya abandonado la carrera de maestro."¹ These words, spoken by Juan R. Castellano, express much of the philosophy of Casona.

Casona was first a teacher, and although he gave up this profession, he continued teaching through his writings. Much of his works contain what Sainz de Robles calls "pedagogía del Alma".² The plays, with several exceptions, are subtly didactic.

He first wrote poetry, and much of the poetic is incorporated in his plays. He also frequently brings the other arts into his plays. There are allusions to music and musicians. In at least one play, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, references are made to paintings.

The three principle protagonists of Casona's works are God, Death, and Love. Through Love and Death one approaches God. Death and Love are but a part of God.

A spirit of optimism prevails in the author's works. The recurring elements of suicide, unreality, and frustration are

¹Juan Rodríguez-Castellano, "Doctrinas Pedagógicas de Alejandro Casona", Hispania, March, 1960, Vol. XLIII, p. 25.

²Frederico Carlos Sainz de Robles, Prólogo de las obras completas de Alejandro Casona (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967), p. xxv.

resolved through love. Contrary to many Spanish authors, the role of fate is given small emphasis. His characters are masters of their own destiny. They are given choices within an ethical framework.

The remark Casona made after winning the Lope de Vega prize for his play, La sirena varada, could be applied to all his works. He declared that "his purpose in writing the play had been to show that 'la realidad más llana, triste, y vulgar', is in the end victorious over 'la rebelión de la fantasía'."³

It is the purpose of this study to examine the use of subterfuge in perpetuating action. This necessitates analyzing the ulterior motives of each character.

An analysis of ten dramas is made. They are: La sirena varada, Otra vez el diablo, Nuestra Natacha, Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, La dama del alba, La barca sin pescador, La molinera de Arcos, Los árboles mueren de pie, Siete gritos en el mar, and La tercera palabra.

For each of the above dramas a short summary will be given, accompanied with a study of the use of subterfuge in the development of plot and characters.

³Alejandro Casona, La barca sin pescador, ed. Jose A. Balseiro and J. Riis Owre (New York: Oxford Press, 1966), p. xviii.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF ALEJANDRO CASONA

The educational atmosphere of Alejandro Casona's youth helped to develop his philosophy of life and presented him with an opportunity to develop the skills necessary for a writer.

Alejandro Casona, pseudonym of Alejandro Rodríguez Álvarez, was born March 23, 1903, in the small Asturian village of Besullo. His parents, Gabino Rodríguez Álvarez and Faustina Álvarez García, were both teachers. Of Casona's four brothers and sisters all, but Matutina, became involved in education. Teaching was also to be Alejandro's first profession.

The first five years of Casona's life were spent in Besullo. Here he played with friends and learned childhood games. Here, he also learned to dream of fairies, celestial messengers, and others from the unreal world which were to have an important place in his dramas.

After five years the family moved from Besullo, and as a result of the mobility of the occupation of his parents, he lived in many different parts of Asturias. This living in many different sections enabled him to learn first hand much of the atmosphere and folklore of Asturias.

Alejandro's first two years of high school were spent in Gijón. Two events took place here which were to have a great influence in the life of the young man. The first event was the

reading of Calderón de la Barca's La vida es sueño, and the second a witnessing of a drama performed by the Anita Adamuz Company. It was after these two events that the desire to write works which could be represented on the stage became irrepressible.⁴

Casona received his bachillerato in 1917, after a year of study in Palencia and two in Murcia. While at Murcia, he made many lasting friendships and was influenced by the poets Andrés Sabejana and Pedro Jara Carrillo.

While in Murcia, he, with several friends, formed a theatrical company. This company gave performances of various works in the small theaters of the neighboring villages.

In 1922 Casona entered the Escuela Superior de Magisterio in Madrid. He graduated in 1926 and was qualified as an elementary teacher and supervisor. While attending the university, Casona wrote his first work, El peregrino de la barba florida. This is the only work which was published under his real name.

The first work to be published under the pseudonym Casona was a book of poems, La flauta del sapo, in 1930. The following is Casona's explanation of the origin of his pseudonym: "Casona era el apodo familiar de los míos en Asturias, por la casa solariega enorme y dominante en que nacimos. Así empecé a usarlo como seudónimo y así soy ya irremediabilmente."⁵

⁴Sainz de Robles, op.cit., p. xii.

⁵Casona, La barca sin pescador, op. cit., p. xvii.

Following graduation from the Escuela Superior del Magisterio, Casona was sent as an elementary school superintendent to the village of Les in el Valle de Arán. He spent several years in this isolated valley. Cut off from the rest of Spain, he continued writing and helped form El Pajaro Pinto, a children's theater. The repertoire of the theater contained several works Casona had written specifically for the theater in the dialect of the region.⁶

In 1928, Casona married Rosalía Martín Bravo. She had been his schoolmate at the Escuela Superior del Magisterio. While living in el Valle de Arán, their daughter Marta was born. It was during this stay in el Valle de Arán that Casona wrote La sirena varada.

The first of Casona's works to be presented in a commercial theater premiered in Zaragoza in 1929. It was a dramatization of an Oscar Wilde novel. El crimen de Lord Arturo was performed by the company of María Fernanda Ladrón de Guevara and Rafael Rivelles. It was of but moderate success.

Casona was given a position with the Inspección Provincial de Primera Enseñanza in Madrid in 1931. This was also the year when he was chosen to direct el Teatro del Pueblo. El Teatro del Pueblo was a cultural project of the Misiones Pedagógicas which sent educators and artists into Spanish villages and remote areas to bring them something of cultural and scientific value. This movement was under

⁶Sainz de Robles, op. cit., p. xvi.

the direction of Manuel Cossio in the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Belles Artes.⁷ Casona felt that the five years he directed this traveling company were perhaps the most useful of his life.

The first literary recognition to be awarded Casona was the 1932 Premio Nacional de Literatura. He received this award for his book, Flor de leyendas. The book is an adaptation of immortal literature, Spanish and foreign, for children.

In 1933, the Lope de Vega prize for the best unpublished play was awarded to Casona's drama, La sirena varada. About the success of this work, Casona stated:

Soy en estos momentos un hombre feliz plenamente. Después de adjudicárseme el Premio único de concurso dramático 'Lope de Vega' entre ciento dieciséis concurrentes de España y América, la comedia acaba de estrenarse a todo honor en el Teatro Español por la Compañía Xirgu-Borras. Este me abre de par en par las puertas del teatro a las que por tanto tiempo estuve llamando inútilmente.⁸

Because of the success of La sirena varada, the way was opened for another of Casona's plays, Otra vez el diablo, to be presented in 1935. It, too, was performed by Margarita Xirgu and company and was considered a complete success.

The next of Casona's plays, Nuestra Natacha, was an outstanding success. It ran for five hundred consecutive performances.

⁷Casona, La barca sin pescador, op. cit., p. xliv.

⁸Juan Rodríguez-Castellano, "Alejandro Casona--Español Expatriado", Hispania, February, 1942, vol. XXV, p. 51.

It is the story of an idealistic young woman who in the face of cruel and stupid conventionalism, and at great personal sacrifice, is able to put into effect her ideas for the rehabilitation of underprivileged youth.⁹

Casona wrote Nuestra Natacha with no political purpose in mind, but he was marked as a republican and his works were banned from further presentation. All those who had gathered at a banquet in Leon to celebrate the triumph of Nuestra Natacha were later executed.¹⁰

When civil war broke out in 1936, Casona fled with his wife and daughter to the mountains of Asturias. He left his family there where he thought they would be safe. He returned to Madrid and remained there until being evacuated by the Fifth Regiment.¹¹

After leaving Madrid, Casona learned that the village where he had left his wife and daughter had been destroyed. He was able to reach France and through the International Red Cross contact his family. After several months, Casona succeeded in bringing his family to a small town in Brittany and to safety.¹²

At this point in Casona's life, penniless and exiled, he was offered a position as literary director with a theatrical company

⁹Casona, La barca sin pescador, op.cit., p. xix.

¹⁰Ibid., p. xx

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. xxi.

which was about to embark on a tour through America. The company was headed by Pepita Días and Manuel Collado. Their first stop was Mexico and the company presented scores of plays within a period of seven months.

In 1939, Casona was reunited with his family in Buenos Aires, which became his headquarters. As soon as he was financially able, he purchased a home in Punta del Este, Uruguay--"para soñar y escribir en paz, con mil metros de pinar y el mar frente a la ventana." He named the home La Sirena, in memory of his first success in the theater.¹³

During his exile Casona wrote many dramas. Among the best of these are: La dama del alba, La barca sin pescador, Los árboles mueren de pie, Siete gritos en el mar, La tercera palabra, and El caballero de las espuelas de oro. In addition to writing these plays, Casona wrote many original scripts and adapted others for radio, movies, and television.

In 1961, Casona was able to fulfill a desire he had long expressed, that of returning to Spain. His stay was not long, only a few months, but it produced on consequences. In 1962, he returned for the presentation of his play, La dama del alba, which was the first of his plays to be presented in Spain since his exile.

The presentation of La dama del alba took place at the Teatro de Bellas Artes in Madrid. The play was received by great acclamation

¹³Ibid., p. xxiii.

by both audience and critics. In describing his emotions after the overwhelming ovation, Casona said, "Quizá la noche más hermosa de mi vida artística."¹⁴

Casona's personal character had been molded by adversity throughout his life, but this adversity did not embitter his attitude toward life. His character was of a sort that he was able to put into the mouth of Martín in La dama del alba, words like these: "It is better to sow a new crop than to weep over a lost harvest."¹⁵

In 1964, Casona returned to his beloved Spain to stay. He bought a home in Madrid and once more became active in the literary life of that country. On September 17, 1965, Casona died following heart surgery.

¹⁴Juan Rodríguez-Castellano, "Alejandro Casona--Español Repatriado", Hispania, May, 1963, Vol. XLVI, No. 2, p. 342.

¹⁵Casona, La barca sin pescador, op. cit., p. xxiv.

CHAPTER III

LA SIRENA VARADA

La sirena varada won for Alejandro Casona the Lope de Vega prize for the best unpublished play in 1933. The play had been written in 1929 and was first produced by the Margarita Zirgu-Enrique Borrás Company in the Teatro Español in 1934. The success of this play thrust Casona to the top of the literary field during this era.

The drama takes place in an undefined region. The setting is near the sea and in an old mansion which had been vacant for some time. Evidently the drama occurs in the present, although it could very well have taken place in any other period. There is an aura of unreality surrounding the setting.

As the play opens, Don Florín is paying a visit to Ricardo. Ricardo is a handsome, young man from a wealthy family, who has rejected his former life of ease and luxury. Don Florín is a doctor, family friend, and advisor, who is trying to persuade Ricardo to return to his family and former life.

Ricardo informs Florín that he is gathering members to found a new "Republic". This republic is not based on reason, but on fantasy and unreality, where common sense does not reign. He gives Don Florín his motives when he states:

Encuentro que la vida es aburrida y estúpida por falta de imaginación. Demasiada razón, demasiada disciplina en todo. Y he pensado que en cualquier rincón hay media

docena de hombres interesantes, con fantasía y sin sentido, que se están pudriendo entre los demás. Pues bien: yo voy a reunirlos en mi casa, libres y disparatados. A inventar una vida nueva, a soñar imposibles. Y todos conmigo, en esta casa; un asilo para huérfanos de sentido común (vol. I p. 297).¹⁶

Ricardo further states that he will erect a sign which says, "Nadie entre que sepa geometría." (vol. I, p. 297).

At this time the element of subterfuge is first encountered, with Ricardo's refusal to accept reality. He is using the "Republic" as an escape device from reality. This is self-deception, as he is deceiving himself into believing he can live in a world of illusion and fantasy. Perhaps Ricardo is trying to resurrect his childhood, for one finds he was denied love as a child. Recalling his youth, Ricardo states:

Yo recuerdo a mi madre como una sombra rígida, llena de devociones y de miedo al infierno. No hablaba nunca, no sabía besar. Y mi padre, enfrascado en sus negocios y en sus libros, seco, con una autoridad de hierro (vol. I, p. 299).

Sirena soon enters the drama. She appears through a window and declares that she is a siren from the depths of the sea. She also expresses love for Ricardo. Ricardo states that he does not remember her, to which she answers, "Yo tampoco apenas. ¡Ya hace tiempo, ya! Pero tú me querías. Y ahora ya estamos juntos. ¿No

¹⁶Alejandro Casona, Obras Completas (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967). Throughout the following discussion of the plays, references will be made to lines within the dramas by volume number in Roman numerals and page numbers in Arabic numerals.

me besas, Dick?" (Vol. I, pp. 304-305). The girl also says she is sorry to have delayed so long in finding Ricardo, but that no one would tell her where he was. Ricardo is doubtful that the girl actually is a siren. He is partially convinced after, at his insistence, she sings a siren's song for him.

One is given a first hint, during this scene, about the true identity of Sirena. She calls Ricardo, "Padrino". A girl, María, the daughter of Samy, the circus clown whom Ricardo had saved from drowning, had also called him Padrino upon being rescued.

It is interesting to note the girl's mistaken idea that sirens were from the depths of the ocean. Sirens are usually described as being bird-like with the head and bust of a woman, who by sweet singing entice seafarers to their destruction.

Casona's use of the girl as a siren is subterfuge. The purpose of a siren is to deceive. She deceives sailors with her sweet singing, leading them to their death. Sirena uses her disguise as a siren to gain admittance to Ricardo's "Republic" and win his love.

In the meantime, two other characters are presented, el Fantasma and Daniel Roca. Both characters have little to do with the plot of the drama, but both are examples of the use of subterfuge. Daniel is, and el Fantasma will be, a member of Ricardo's republic. Both men are using the house as an escape from reality.

Daniel is an artist who has gained admittance to the society by blindfolding himself. Ricardo states that Daniel "se ha cansado

de ver siempre los mismos colores y se ha vendado los ojos una temporada para olvidarlos y pensar otros nuevos" (vol. I, p. 295).

The use of the blindfold by Daniel is subterfuge. He is using the blindfold as a device to conceal the truth from the others. He has been blinded by an explosion and he refuses to accept the fact that he is blind. He even goes so far as to pretend he is looking at magazines while wearing the blindfold. One is able to guess the truth behind the blindfold, when Daniel tells Sirena the last thing he saw was: "Una explosión de grisú. Todavía guardo aquí dentro el recuerdo del fuego, las desgarraduras con carbón, los gritos . . ." (vol. I, p. 310).

El Fantasma is a frightened, pathetic character, who readily admits knowing nothing about ghosts. His true name is Don Joaquín and he had come to the house some four years earlier seeking refuge. He used the ghost scheme to keep people from investigating and finding out who he was, as he explains;

Yo vine a esta casa hace cuatro años; estaba desalquilada, y para que no viniera nadie a quitármela se me ocurrió esto de vestirme de blanco y pasearme con una antorcha por el salón (vol. I, p. 302).

This deception is another example of the use of subterfuge in the play.

It is evident that Ricardo did not place great credence in the ghost, as every evening he ordered his servant to leave food for it; and ghosts would need no sustenance. Upon the true identity of Fantasma being revealed, one finds another example of subterfuge. Ricardo insists that Don Joaquín is a ghost. Ricardo succeeds in

deceiving him and convinces him that he is the ghost of Napoleon. He permits Don Joaquín to remain in the attic, leaving only at midnight. It seems that Ricardo has been disillusioned and cannot face the fact that there are not ghosts, so he must have a false ghost for his house.

Ricardo's love for Sirena begins to trouble him. He has been willing to accept her as she is, but he becomes increasingly uneasy about her past. Much of his uneasiness stems from the insistence of Don Florín that Sirena is Samy's daughter, or an accomplice, who is trying to influence Ricardo and gain control of his fortune. Ricardo has the feeling that he has known Sirena before. He asks her where and when they have met, and she replies, "Fue en el mar" (vol. I, p. 318). During a conversation with Sirena, Ricardo, showing his uneasiness about her asks, "¿Quién eres tú? ¿Me quieres . . . de verdad? ¿Quién te trajo aquí?" (vol. I, p. 316-318). Sirena answers that she is a siren and that she loves him.

The mystery of Sirena is resolved with the appearance of Samy. Samy is a circus clown for whom Ricardo has sent. Ricardo wants to make him the king of his "Republic". Samy announces that Sirena is his daughter María, who everyone thought had died. She had not died a physical death, but a mental one. She became insane. Samy had read to her Ricardo's letter, and this revived her memory and affections for him. Subterfuge is evident here, as Samy wanted all to believe María had died, thus sparing him the embarrassment of having a deranged daughter.

With the mystery of Sirena's past solved, Ricardo realizes he cannot love half a woman. Don Florín begins to cure María of her insanity and bring her back to reality. Daniel asks Don Florín why he wants to bring Sirena back from her happy fantasy world to the cruel, dirty world of reality. Don Florín's answer expresses the philosophy of the drama:

Mentirle, no: por dura que sea la verdad, hay que mirarla de frente. ¿Me oye, Daniel? Por dura que sea. De nada sirve vendarse los ojos (vol. I, p. 329).

With the recovery of María's sanity, the other characters of the drama are also returned to reality. Ricardo knows that the life he has created is a hoax and he cannot find true happiness in it. The Fantasma became the gardener of the estate, not finding peace in playing the part of a ghost and hiding in the attic. He says of his new life, "Esto es vivir, y no aquello de antes" (vol. I, p. 325).

Daniel is the only character who cannot accept reality, the reality that he is blind. When Ricardo tears the hoodwink from his eyes, Daniel asks:

¿Por qué lo has hecho? ¿Qué daño te hacía yo?
Si era una ilusión olvidarlo . . . No lo digas a
nadie . . . No lo digas a nadie . . . (vol. I, pp. 337-338).

María, her sanity restored, does not remember her former life. This is evident in her conversations with Ricardo. She asks him, "Sirena . . . ¿Por qué me llamas así? ¿No te gusta mi nombre?" (vol. I, p. 332). Speaking of her former life, she states:

Lo recuerdo a veces. Eso, y otras cosas; todo como si lo hubiera soñado. Y me ocurre que no sé separar lo que es verdad y lo que es mentira (vol. I, p. 331).

Complications arise with the appearance of Pipo. Pipo is the owner of the circus in which Samy has been working. He has seduced María and has come to take her with him. Samy is deathly afraid of Pipo. He tells Don Florín of Pipo's relations with María, simply saying, "Sirena . . . es suya" (vol. I, p. 327). He relates his fear of Pipo to Florín:

Yo lo hubiera defendido contra el mundo entero.
Contra él no podía. La tomé para sí porque le gustaba,
era su voluntad (vol. I, p. 327).

Samy justifies his action by answering Don Florín's wrath with:

¿Yo qué iba a hacer? Sirena, afortunadamente, no
podía comprender; nada podía dolerle porque de nada
tenía conciencia (vol. I, p. 327).

Don Florín wants to know why Samy had not reported Pipo to the authorities, and he answers, "Pero a él le meterían en la cárcel unos días. Y yo en la calle para siempre. Y me quitarían a Sirena para encerrarla . . ." (vol. I, p. 327).

Pipo demands to see Ricardo, but Don Florín, not wanting Ricardo to learn of María's past, refuses. Pipo then tells Florín that he would be satisfied with money if they do not want to return Sirena to him. Here one finds another example of subterfuge. Pipo's true desire is money. He is using the threat of taking Sirena as a means of gaining it, for he says, "Pues, señor, si le he dicho que es mía y que estoy harto de ella . . . Moraleja: que si me la pagan bien . . ." (vol. I, p. 335). Ricardo enters and refuses Pipo's demands, in turn, demanding that Pipo leave, saying,

"Por mi alma que lo meto aquí mismo . . . Salga" (vol. I, p. 337).

Pipo leaves, giving up his claim to María.

María tells Ricardo that she is going to have a child.

Ricardo knows the child cannot be his and answers María's question as to why he is troubled, by saying "¡Porque es de todos los canallas que hicieron banquete de tu locura!" (vol. I, p. 333). But Ricardo still loves her and says, "¡Y te quiero! ¡Te quiero por encima de todo!" (vol. I, p. 334).

Ricardo, out of frustration, and believing María would be happier in her former state, tries to drive her back to insanity. She refuses saying, "No. Ya estuve una vez . . . Es un abismo amargo . . ." (vol. I, p. 339). María feels herself being drawn back into her fantasy world, then she remembers her child and refuses to give in, "Es el hijo, ¿comprendes? Si no fuera por él . . .!" (vol. I, p. 339).

The play concludes with Ricardo once again realizing that he cannot live with his love for María in a fantasy world. He cries, "María.", thus indicating that he is willing to face reality with her.

CHAPTER IV

OTRA VEZ EL DIABLO

The drama Otra vez el diablo is a play based on a universal theme, man conquering the evil within himself. Using this theme, Casona has written a very amusing comedy. Much of the action is carried out through the use of subterfuge, primarily the devil's deeds.

Casona has very specific ideas about the capabilities of the devil. He believes that only through subterfuge can the devil accomplish his desires; Casona states:

Al ser derribado del cielo, Luzbel conservó uno sólo de sus dones angélicos: El de la Sabiduría; pero una sabiduría negra, hecha de astucia y de magia exterior. Para realizar el mal no encontró mejor expediente que engañar al hombre con la apariencia del Bien; por eso sus tentaciones son siempre una oferta de aparentes bienes debajo de los cuales se esconde la esencia misma del mal. . . . Dios hace milagros y el Diablo quiere fingir ese poder; pero en buena teología lo único que le está permitido hacer son falsificaciones y caricaturas de milagros, trucos de magia y de prestidigitación.¹⁷

In the drama Otra vez el diablo, Casona uses his beliefs about the devil, as the devil repeatedly uses subterfuge to gain his end.

The drama occurs in a mythical kingdom long ago. In scene one a group of bandits are discussing their misadventures at a cross-road. They have not had much success in obtaining victims.

¹⁷Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona and the Devil", Hispania, March, 1965, Vol. XLVIII, p. 31.

As the scene progresses one finds the bandits quite paradoxical. They talk of robbing, but they also decry the lack of morality in society.

The protagonist, el Estudiante, is brought into the play after being captured by the bandits. El Estudiante states he is "bachiller por Salamanca" and going to the universities of Germany. The bandit captain welcomes el Estudiante and informs him he is the first person to fall victim to their gang. After relieving el Estudiante of his money, the captain tells him if he wishes to become a member of the bandit gang, he can find them at "El Gallo Blanco" inn.

The element of subterfuge is introduced at this point, with el Diablo. He appears quite suddenly in the scene, and is recognized immediately by el Estudiante. El Estudiante and el Diablo hold a lengthy conversation in which el Estudiante states that he is not willing to sell his soul. In response to el Estudiante's question as to why he was here, el Diablo replies, "A proponerte mi amistad disinteresadamente" (vol. I, p. 350).¹⁸ El Diablo also states, "Tengo que hacer un bien antes de jubilarme. Pero un bien diabólico . . . , con intriga y tentación" (vol. I, p. 351). El Diablo requests that el Estudiante permit him to accompany him. "Tómame como compañero, no te pesará. Yo te enseñaré a hacerte un alma templada al fuego y al hierro" (Vol. I, p. 352). El Diablo's attempt at

¹⁸All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. I.

subterfuge fails, although he promises to return when el Estudiante is more receptive to his proposals.

As el Estudiante muses about which road to follow, la Infantina and her buffoon, Cascabel, appear. At the first sight of la Infantina, el Estudiante falls in love. La Infantina informs el Estudiante that she is looking for a bandit captain, who is thought to be in the country side. She has illusions of being carried away by him. As a young girl, she dressed as "Little Red Riding Hood" and went through the woods in search of the wolf. She is still looking for her "wolf", in this instance a bandit captain. La Infantina is disappointed to find only a poor student, but she also begins to feel love for him. As la Infantina departs, she uses subterfuge to insure el Estudiante will see her again; she drops her handkerchief.

El Diablo reappears and lets el Estudiante know that his services are still available. El Estudiante believes that it would be impossible for a person of his stature to attain the love of such a person as la Infantina. El Diablo, at first, tries to dissuade el Estudiante from thinking about la Infantina, saying:

No seas niño: el amor es un ideal mezquino. Déjame hacer el bien que te prometí. Yo quitaré de tu camino a la mujer y te mostraré lo que hay detrás: la aventura y la gloria (vol. I, p. 358).

El Estudiante refuses to be dissuaded from his objective, la Infantina. He then accepts el Diablo's offer of making him the

captain of the bandit gang, thus being more able to win the love of la Infantina. El Diablo tells him:

Yo te empujaré. Yo seré para ti la bruja de las ambiciones; la que grita a los hambrientos: "Macbeth, tu serás rey, tú serás rey!" (vol. I, p. 358).

At this point one sees two more instances of subterfuge.

The first is el Estudiante's willingness to become a bandit captain in order to gain favor with la Infantina. The second is that of el Diablo's proposition. He is using his offer to gain his end, that of debasing el Estudiante and winning his soul. He gives el Estudiante money so he can buy his way to the captaincy of the bandit gang.

Through subterfuge el Diablo gains appointment as the mentor of la Infantina. He deceives the king and la Infantina's former preceptor into thinking he is a teacher. El Diablo gives a hint to his true identity, but the king and el Pedagogo are not able to see through his disguise:

De día las cosas se presentan tal como son. La noche, en cambio, tiene fantasía, mente y retuerce. Yo odio la luz, y por eso me llamo Mefistófeles (vol. I, p. 366).

When he states that he is Mephistopheles, he is telling them he is the devil; as Mephistopheles was a devil in medieval demonology.

El Diablo, as the mentor of la Infantina, is now able to carry out more of his subterfuge and deception. The drama is filled with lies, deception, and trickery by el Diablo. One of his first acts is to implant into the mind of la Infantina that the only way to stop the troubles besetting the kingdom is to kill the devil.

La infantina becomes obsessed with this desire and offers to marry the one who achieves this feat.

El Diablo's next deception is to tell la Infantina that the only way to kill the devil is with his own dagger. "Habéis de saber, señora, que al Diablo solo se le puede matar con su arma: su propio puñal" (vol. I, p. 371). He describes the dagger in detail to la Infantina. "Es una joya de arte fabricada por él mismo. Tiene la hoja de plata y en el pomo una cruz de rubíes" (vol. I, p. 371). El Diablo knows that no weapon can kill him.

El Diablo then informs la Infantina that a bandit captain possesses the dagger. "Ese puñal lo tiene un estudiante español que es hoy capitán de bandoleros en vuestro reino" (vol. I., p. 371). El Diablo is deceiving her, for in truth he still has the dagger.

La Infantina feels faint and el Diablo opens the doors to the terrace and invites her to go out into the cool night air. He then leaves her alone so she and el Estudiante, who has climbed the palace walls to return her handkerchief, can be alone. After the departure of el Estudiante, el Diablo reappears and states his reason for leaving, "Salí a pedir os un vaso de agua" (vol. I, p. 374).

The scene shifts now to "El Gallo Blanco". El Estudiante and el Diablo discuss the situation within the kingdom. El Diablo informs el Estudiante that people are placing the blame for their troubles on the devil. El Diablo says,

Yo no he hecho nada de eso; pero aprovecho la ocasión, ya que se presenta favorable. Por lo

pronto, ya he conseguido con mis industrias hacer llegar al pueblo la esperanza de un rey joven, batallador y enamorado (vol. I, p. 383).

El Diablo then tells el Estudiante of la Infantina's offer:

Yo como la perdición del reino--el hambre, la peste y la guerra---dicen que soy yo, la Infantina ofrece su mano al que me mate (vol. I, p. 383).

El Diablo gives el Estudiante his dagger and tells him to keep it.

El Diablo admits that no weapon can kill him. "Al Diablo no se le mata ni con éste ni con ningún puñal. Al Diablo se le ahoga, se la ahoga dentro" (vol. I, p. 384). El Estudiante asks what the purpose of the dagger is and el Diablo replies: "Pero te servirá para saber que me has matado, porque ese día se teñirá de sangre" (vol. I, p. 384). El Diablo says this is necessary as:

Los hombres no sabéis vivir sin la plástica; no comprendéis de verdad más que lo entra por los ojos (vol. I, p. 384).

El Diablo serves al Estudiante a drink and while doing so, el Estudiante notices an amethyst ring which the devil is wearing.

El Diablo says it is:

La amatista donde guardo mis filtros mágicos. Yo podría embrujar con la sola voluntad; sin embargo, entre los hombres lo hago siempre con narcóticos y bebedizos que llevo en mis sortijas como un envenenador (vol. I, p. 385).

Thus, one sees how El Diablo accomplishes much of his subterfuge.

El Diablo leaves and la Infantina arrives at the inn with Cascabel. She does not understand why she had come. "He salido como empujada sin pensar bien lo que hacía, y más de una vez creí

morir en el camino" (vol. I, p. 387). El Diablo has bewitched la Infantina so he can bring her and el Estudiante together for their downfall:

Nunca pensé que pudiera atreverme a dar este paso, y, sin embargo . . ., ya lo veis; hasta me he vestido como cuando era niña y buscaba en el monte emociones de cuento (vol. I, p. 387).

La Infantina implores el Estudiante to kill the devil. She tells him that he is the only one who is capable of doing so. Unknowingly, el Estudiante drinks from a glass in which el Diablo has put a magic potion. The potion inflames el Estudiante's passion and he falls upon la Infantina who faints from fright. He then realizes that it was a trick of el Diablo which brought about his attempt to violate la Infantina. He calls Cascabel to come and tie his hands:

Atame las manos; bien fuerte. Más. ¡Así! Y ahora corre; coge el caballo negro, y avisa en palacio que estoy preso, que la Infantina está en peligro (vol. I, p. 389)

El Estudiante's love for la Infantina is stronger than the evil spell cast by el Diablo.

The night passes with el Estudiante struggling to overcome the devil who has possessed his body. With the dawn, the battle is over; el Estudiante wins the fight for his soul. La Infantina awakens and sets him free. She asks him to tell her that what had happened the night before was a dream. El Estudiante replies: "¡Soñaste, sí! ¡Fue mentira todo!" (vol. I, p. 390). What had happened was a lie. It was not el Estudiante who had attacked la Infantina, but the devil within him.

With the arrival of the king, el Estudiante asks for the prize which was to be awarded to the one who killed the devil. He tells them "¡Yo he matado al Diablo!" (vol. I, P. 392). "Se enroscaba a mi carne como una serpiente; luchamos hasta el amanecer. ¡Pude yo más!" (vol. I, p. 392). The king demands proof, and as el Estudiante had killed the devil within himself, el Diablo's dagger was dripping blood. The drama ends with the expectation that la Infantina and el Estudiante will soon marry.

CHAPTER V

NUESTRA NATACHA

Nuestra Natacha is unlike most of the other dramas of Casona. Nearly all of Casona's other dramas take place in a world of illusion and unreality, with the characters seeking to evade reality, not so with Nuestra Natacha. This drama has a very serious and worthy theme, the rehabilitation of underprivileged and delinquent youth through affection and work.

In as much as the drama is of a different type, there is not as much subterfuge as in some of the other dramas, and what subterfuge is used is of a different nature. Natacha is the principle purveyor of subterfuge. But her motives are unselfish. She does not deceive for personal gain, but rather to carry out her convictions and bring her pupils to a useful and happy life.

It is imperative to know something of the background of Natacha before the play can be understood. Natalie Valdés, Natacha, had an unhappy childhood. She had spent some of three years in "el Reformatorio de las Damas Azules", not because she was a delinquent, but because she was a rebel. Don Santiago, a professor at a university, took Natacha from the "Reformatorio" and reared her as his own. The atmosphere of the university permitted Natacha to develop her intellect. She became the first woman to receive the "doctorado en Ciencias Educativas". Her experiences at the

"Reformatorio" inspired her thesis, "Los Tribunales de menores y la educación en las Casas de Reformas."

In act one, several of the principle characters, Miguel Rivera, Lalo Figueras, Luis Aguilar, Flora Durán, and Mario Ferrán, are presented. These characters are classmates of Natacha. They discuss Natacha's triumph and other aspects of student life.

Two instances of subterfuge can be found in the first act. The first is Flora's pretension of an interest in insects. She brings Mario, a naturalist and completely involved in his work, a specimen. One finds that she actually abhors bugs and has only pretended an interest to win the love of Mario. In the last act, Flora reveals her true sentiments towards insects when she says, "Déjame. No me interesan los insectos. No me han interesado nunca. Además, me dan asco. Y la culpa la tienes tú" (vol. I, p. 468)¹⁹

The second example of subterfuge is that of the rich romanticist, Lalo Figueras. Lalo has been studying for his medical degree for fourteen years. He actually does not desire to terminate his studies. He states:

Hace catorce que empecé a estudiar Medicina; tres generaciones han pasado sobre mi cadáver, y yo aquí, firme en mi puesto. Si la suerte me ayuda un poco, no terminaré en otros catorce (vol. I, p. 403).

He has been using his professional student role to enjoy life, as he explains, "Yo lo que quiero es beberme hasta el último trago

¹⁹All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. I.

de mi juventud" (vol. I, p. 403). Lalo tries to fail his last course in order to remain a student:

Era mi última asignatura; había que cuidarla. El profesor me miró al empezar ¡con unas ganas de aprobarme! Pero yo me defendí como un león. El hombre sudaba, se ponía pálido. Qué mal rato pasó el pobre (vol. I., p. 408).

Lalo does pass his final course and he accepts his fate graciously.

Natacha first enters the drama as her classmates are planning a celebration in honor of her achievement. Natacha is pictured as being very elegant and pretty, but with a sad preoccupied expression which she does not lose even when smiling. Although the celebration is in her honor, she does not seem to enjoy it.

During the celebration, Felix Sandoval appears. He is the secretary of the "Reformatorio de las Damas Azules". He offers Natacha the position of director of the "Reformatorio". He tells Natacha:

Su tesis sobre 'Los Tribunales de menores y la educación en las Casas de Reforma' nos ha causado una profunda impresión. Nosotros quisiéramos que nuestro Reformatorio para pequeños delincuentes y rebeldes fuera una institución modelo, como lo que usted sueña (vol. I, p. 422).

He asks Natacha, "¿Nos haría usted el honor de aceptar la dirección del Reformatorio?" (vol. I, p. 423). Natacha is hesitant to accept, then does accept saying:

Lo que yo necesitaría es contar con plena libertad de iniciativa en cuanto al régimen interior. Nunca aceptaría dar un solo paso en contra de mis convicciones (vol. I, p. 423).

The opportunity to put her ideas to work makes Natacha happy and she is now able to enter the festivities as she exclaims to her classmates,

"¡Ahora sí que puedo brindar y reír con vosotros! Al fin voy a trabajar, a ser útil" (vol. I, p. 424).

The second act occurs in the somber atmosphere of the "Reformatorio". The inhabitants dress the same, and are forbidden to wear make-up or have different hair styles. Even laughter is prohibited. Natacha enters the scene and soon begins to make changes.

Everything Natacha does during the following scenes is a type of subterfuge. Without the inmates knowledge, Natacha instills within them a desire to live a useful life. She does this by showing them affection, permitting them to do things which had been previously forbidden, and using their secret desires. Everything is directed toward one goal, channeling their energy toward a constructive and happy life.

When Natacha is presented to the inmates of the institution, they are very serious and stand rigidly at attention. Natacha asks why they are so serious. "¿Por qué estáis tan serias, en fila? Vamos, acercaos acá" (vol. I, p. 428). She puts them at ease and quickly makes friends with them. She asks their names and some of their desires. Fina, an inmate, answers, "Cuidar gallinas y conejos" (vol. I, p. 428). Natacha answers, "Muy bien, Fina; tú cuidarás conejos" (vol. I, p. 428). Encarna, another inmate, tries to hide her laughter. To her Natacha asks, "Y tú, Encarna, ¿nunca te has reído con toda tu alma delante de la gente? ¿Quieres reírte ahora? A ver, que te oigamos" (vol. I, p. 428).

An incident concerning the student's mathematics class is an outstanding example of the use of subterfuge by Natacha. She asks the inmates if there is something she could do for them, and they reply, "Señorita Natacha . . ., si a usted no le parece mal, nosotras quisiéramos no tener nunca más clase de matemáticas!" (vol. I, pp. 429-430). Natacha quickly grants their request. "Perfectamente; no la tendréis nunca más" (vol. I, p. 430). This upsets their teacher, but Natacha knows they will learn mathematics, but not in a regular classroom. She answers Señorita Crespo's question if she really means to omit mathematics by replying, "Las matemáticas, no; las clases" (vol. I, p. 430). Natacha obtains results by letting the girls make their own uniforms, knowing they will have to use mathematics to do so.

The drama continues with Natacha making many changes. She permits the girls and boys of the institution to intermingle. Juan, one of the boys at the institution, pushes Fina because her chickens will not get out of his way. He knows he should not push a girl, but "¡Es que no había ningún chico por allí cerca!" (vol. I, p. 437). Juan states that he does not know what to do with himself. Natacha answers, "Lo que podías hacer es un gallinero. Realmente esos pollos no están bien en el jardín" (vol. I, p. 437). Natacha soon has Juan working off his excess energy, and in a constructive manner.

After three months, Don Santiago and Natacha's former classmates return. They had been on a study trip of the Mediterranean Sea. While on their trip, they had formed a student theatrical group. They want to give one of their first performances at the "Reformatorio".

Natacha is enthused with the idea, knowing it would be a pleasant experience for the inmates.

After the performance of the student theater, La Marquesa appears. She is the president of the group that sponsors the "Reformatorio". She asks Natacha, "¿No habrá ido usted demasiado lejos en sus concesiones?" (vol. I, p. 452). Natacha and la Marquesa quarrel about Natacha's methods. La Marquesa says:

El régimen de trabajo libre, la indisciplina que ya apunta por todas partes . . . Es peligroso todo eso, tratándose de almas moralmente débiles, formadas en el delito y en la calle (vol. I, p. 452).

One finds here another example of subterfuge in the play. The group which sponsors the institution really did not want to make the changes necessary to carry out Natacha's ideas. They only wanted the appearance of a model institution. They deceived Natacha into accepting the position of director to carry out this appearance.

Natacha resigns her position rather than give up her convictions. But to Lalo's question if she has finished her work, she replies:

¿Terminar? ¡Ah!, no; ahora es cuando vamos a empezar de verdad. ¿No os tengo aquí a vosotros? Oyeme, Lalo, te lo pido con toda el alma. Tú tienes una finca abandonada, una granja posible; un día se la ofrecías a estos por desafío . . . Déjanos esa finca, préstanosla (vol. I, p. 455).

Lalo consents and Natacha asks her former classmates, "Ayúdame todos. . . . Dadme un año de vuestra vida para ellos" (vol. I, p. 455).

The third act takes place at the farm one year later.

Natacha, with the help of Don Santiago, had been able to secure

permission for the inmates of the "Reformatorio" to come with her. During the year, the farm had truly become a model institution. With the help of her former classmates, Natacha had molded the inmates into a useful and happy society.

As their year is now ended, it is time for Natacha's former classmates to depart. Natacha is sorry to see them go, especially Lalo. Don Santiago asks if she is going to leave now that the others are going, and she replies, "Seguiré sola mi obra" (vol. I, p. 463).

At this time, Natacha expresses her love for Lalo:

Aquí he aprendido a conocerte; aquí te he visto el alma hasta el fondo. Te he visto luchar como lucha un hombre delante de una mujer . . . Te quiero, Lalo (vol. I, p. 470).

She tells him that she must finish her work and asks if he will wait. Lalo replies, "¡Te esperaré siempre!" (vol. I, p. 470).

In the last scene, one more example of Natacha's subterfuge is seen. Lalo offers to give her pupils the farm. But Natacha refuses, saying:

Pero eso no puede ser. ¡No lo harás! ¿No ves que sería echarlo todo a rodar? Yo he venido aquí a hacer una obra de educación. No quieras reducirla a una obra de misericordia. . . . Hagamos hombres libres, Lalo. Los hombres libres no toman nada ni por la fuerza ni de limosna. ¡Que aprendan a conseguirlo todo por el trabajo! (vol. I, pp. 469-470).

Natacha knows that man does not appreciate what is given him or what he takes by force. She conceals the offer of the gift from the students. Thus refusing the gift, she is helping each of her pupils to make his own way to a successful and happy life.

CHAPTER VI

PROHIBIDO SUICIDARSE EN PRIMAVERA

Concerning Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, Sainz de Robles states, "Estimo esta obra como una de las mejores y más significativas escritas por Alejandro Casona."²⁰ The didactic element of this drama, like that of La sirena varada, emphasizes the idea that it is better to live in reality than in a world of illusion. The characters of this drama try to escape reality by searching for death.

The setting for the drama is an estate in the mountains, which has been turned into a retreat for people who wish to commit suicide. The Hogar del Suicida had been founded by Doctor Ariel, whose father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had committed suicide in the prime of their lives. Doctor Ariel was obsessed with the fear that he, too, would be a victim of the same fate. Doctor Ariel avoided the same fate as his ancestors. He dedicated his life to the study of the techniques, biology, and psychology of suicide. Doctor Roda, the protege of Doctor Ariel, continues his work at the Hogar del Suicida,

Following the ideas of Doctor Ariel, Doctor Roda believes that the people who come to the Hogar del Suicida seeking death can be brought to their senses and made to see that death is not the answer to their problems. This is done by providing solitude and completely surrounding the patients with death. There is a beautiful lake for

²⁰Sainz de Robles, op. cit., p. lxxxii.

suicide by drowning. There is a woods with all the necessary equipment for hanging. The most exotic poisons are made available. There is a chamber with perfumed gas. Literature on suicide and paintings of famous people who have taken their own lives are placed throughout the house.

The Hogar del Suicida is based on subterfuge. Without their knowledge, the people who go there are watched to prevent them from committing the act. Also, the various devices have an alarm system to warn Doctor Roda if one of his patients tries to commit suicide. One learns this as Doctor Roda tells his assistant Hans:

Sí, hágame el favor de revisar la instalación eléctrica. La última vez que el profesor de Filosofía se tiró al agua no funcionaron bien los timbres de alarma (Vol. I, p. 478).²¹

The characters in the drama who come to the Hogar del Suicida are committing an act of subterfuge, in this instance self-deception. All say they have come to find a place and a means of suicide. In reality, they do not want to die, but are striving to find a reason to live. If they had actually wanted to take their own lives, they would not have hesitated to do so. This is brought out by Doctor Roda when he states:

Aquí solo llegan los vacilantes. Desdichadamente el desesperado profundo se mata en cualquier parte, sin menor respeto a la técnica ni al doctor Ariel (vol. I, p. 439).

This is further illustrated by the profesor de Filosofía, who throws himself into the lake every morning, then quickly swims to shore.

²¹All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. I.

The main plot of the drama concerns three people, Fernando, his brother Juan, and Chole. Fernando and Chole are very much in love. They are happy, well-adjusted people, with no apparent problems. They are vacationing journalists who by chance find the Hogar del Suicida. They stay there in hopes of getting a story for their newspaper. Through Fernando and Chole, the story of some of the patients at the Hogar del Suicida is brought out.

An example of subterfuge can be found with el Amante Imaginario. He has come to the Hogar del Suicida seeking a means of death. He tells his story of fantasy to Fernando and Chole. He has been an insignificant person all his life. Upon going to the opera, he has fallen in love with the image of Cora Yako, an opera star. In his fantasy world, he and Cora are madly in love and have traveled throughout the world. El Amante tries to deceive the world with his story, even though it is obviously false. He himself knows the story is false, but as he tells Fernando and Chole:

Pero eso no debe saberlo nadie. Déjeme contar esta historia a todo el mundo. Necesito que la creen todos. Necesito creerla yo también . . .(vol. I, p. 492).

El Amante wants to deceive everybody, himself included, with his tale of love.

Another example of subterfuge appears with Cora Yako, the opera star of el Amante's fantasy. Her purpose in coming to the Hogar del Suicida is publicity, not suicide. She tells Fernando;

Soy artista, ¿sabe? He triunfado en cien países; desdichadamente los años van pasando, las facultades

disminuyen . . . Y cuando disminuyen las facultades
no hay más remedio que aumentar la propaganda (vol. I, p. 507).

As previously stated, the main plot of the drama concerns Fernando, Juan, and Chole. Juan has an inferiority complex and is jealous of his brother. He follows Fernando and Chole to the Hogar del Suicida and his jealousy and fear of fratricide drive him to try suicide. He is stopped by Hens, Doctor Roda's assistant.

As the drama continues, Juan's story unfolds. It is a story of frustration, failure, and jealousy which had its roots in his childhood. He feels that his mother did not love him as she did Fernando. He is jealous of the ease with which Fernando is able to succeed. He has secretly loved Chole, and often times he has done thoughtful acts which Chole presumed Fernando had done. Juan finally overcomes his shyness and tells Chole that he loves her. "¿Es que no sabes que, después de mi madre, no ha existido en mi vida otra mujer que tú?" (Vol. I, p. 512).

Juan's revelation of his sentiment toward his brother and of his love for her, makes Chole think that she is standing between them. She seeks a way to settle the brothers' differences. At first she contemplates fleeing, but as the means of suicide are so near, she tries to drown herself. Juan saves her, but ironically Chole thinks Fernando has been the one who pulled her from the water.

Chole realizes the enormity of what she had tried. She blames the atmosphere of the Hogar del Suicida for her action as she tells Doctor Roda:

Pero me parece que el maestro Ariel y usted se han equivocado con la mejor buena fe. Han ideado un refugio para almas vacilantes, pero no han sospechado lo que un ambiente así puede contagiar a los otros (vol. I, p. 519).

She pleads with Doctor Roda to close the institution so that others will not become infected with the desire to die. "Cierre esta casa, amigo Roda. Emplee su talento y la fortuna del maestro Ariel allí donde los hombres viven y trabajan" (vol. I, p. 520).

Two more examples of subterfuge are evident in the closing scenes. Chole believes the only way to compensate for the feeling Juan has toward his brother and for his love for her, is to remain with him. She tells Fernando of her decision:

Yo seré a su lado la madre que no le supo comprender, la hermana que no tuvo. ¡Que haya por lo menos en su vida una ilusión de mujer! (vol. I, p. 533).

Chole is attempting subterfuge. She wants to conceal her true motives for remaining with Juan.

Chole tells Juan that she is going to remain with him and he glorifies in his triumph. "¿La ves, Fernando? ¡En mis brazos! Ya no eres tú solo. También Juan puede triunfar ¡por una vez!" (vol. I, p. 535). Juan, however, after having his moment of glory, does not accept Chole's offer;

Pero también . . . , por una vez . . . , tengo el orgullo de ser más fuerte que tú, más generoso que tú. . . Llévatela lejos. Ahora ya podéis ser felices sin remordimientos. Porque también yo, ¡por una vez siquiera!, he sido bueno como tú, y feliz como tú. . . , y te he visto llorar (vol. I, p. 535-536).

Juan is perpetuating subterfuge as he permits Chole and Fernando to leave. He has stated that he can live in peace after his triumph,

but in reality he still loves Chole and intends suicide. He is stopped again, however, this time by Alicia, one of the patients who had been seeking death. Juan allows Alicia to take the gun which he had hidden in his hand. They leave together to throw the gun into the lake.

The play ends on a note of hope. Alicia has erected a sign which reads, "Prohibido suicidarse en primavera." The first day of spring has arrived with its promise of new life. Thus, those who have fled reality in search of death are strengthened to begin life anew.

CHAPTER VII

LA DAMA DEL ALBA

One of the most notable features of La dama del alba is Casona's representation of death. His view of death is unlike that of some of the other Spanish dramatists, especially the view of García Lorca.

Casona views death as a serene happening. He represents death in the drama by la Peregrina, a tranquil, beautiful woman. The traveler or wanderer is a woman torn between feminine emotions and a destructive duty. She is a woman who, as the emissary of death, must kill; although instinctively she craves to perpetuate and let live. From these opposing forces there comes a synthesis of ideas; and death becomes almost a coveted prize. That is to say, the wanderer adjusts to her inner desires for warmth and love by representing a death desirable, a stoic solution to temporal problems.²²

The setting for the play is a farm house in Asturias. As the dream begins, one finds the major preoccupation is the death of Angélica. It is the anniversary of her drowning. The body of Angélica has never been found, and for the past four years the mother has made the memory of her older daughter a fetish. She refuses to permit anyone to enter Angélica's room. Her other

²²Bruce M. Goldfaden, "Bodas de Sangre" and "La Dama del Alba," Hispania, May, 1961, Vol. XLIV, p. 325.

children, Andrés, Dorina, and Falín, are forbidden to attend school, as they would have to cross the river where Angélica drowned. The grandfather and Telva, the maid, want the mother to forget what had happened, but the mother says she can only find peace when Angélica's body is laid to rest in the ground.

Martín, the son-in-law and Angélica's former husband, is nervous and quarrelsome. He does not wish to remain home on this particular night. He states that he needs to go to the summer pasture and prepare the colts for the fair. He orders the mare saddled and leaves for the corral.

Subterfuge enters the drama with the appearance of la Peregrina. She is a strange, beautiful woman, dressed in a hood and carrying a staff. She conceals her true identity to gain entrance to the house, knowing it is customary for the people of the region to show hospitality to pilgrims. The mother grants her request for entry, "Déjala entrar. Los peregrinos tienen derecho al fuego y traen la paz a la casa que los recibe" (vol. I, p. 766).²³

La Peregrina has an appointment with Martín and her entrance into the house is part of her plan of subterfuge. Martín returns and is angry because the mare has been turned out and the half-broken colt is saddled. La Peregrina, as an act of humility, straps on Martín's spurs as he prepares to leave. She later confesses to the

²³All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit. , Vol. I.

grandfather her intentions and tells him, "¡Yo misma le ensillé el caballo y le calcé la espuela!" (vol. I, p. 780).

The children are fascinated with la Peregrina. They question her of her travels and want her to join them in playing some games. La Peregrina is hesitant to become involved with the children, but she finally joins the children. The excitement and emotions which the children's games invoke in la Peregrina cause her to tire. She feels herself becoming drowsy, but she tells the children that she cannot sleep now.:

Después; ahora no puedo. Cuando ese reloj dé las nueve tengo que estar despierta. Alguien me está esperando en el paso del Rabión (vol. I, p. 774).

La Peregrina does fall asleep and the children are put to bed.

La Peregrina is awakened by the grandfather, who has recognized her for what she is. He begs her to leave the house. La Peregrina tells the grandfather that since it is nine-thirty, she has missed her appointment with Martín and now there is no danger. She pleads with him to understand her feelings:

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! (vol. I, p. 782).

The grandfather compassionately answers her pleading with, "¡Pobre mujer!" (vol. I, p. 782).

Martín enters the scene again, bringing a girl, Adela, whom he had saved from drowning. The mother is dismayed that it is not Angélica. The mother permits them to place Adela in Angélica's room, as she feels that it is an order from God.

La Peregrina tells the grandfather not to worry about the girl, that she is not close to death. She also tells the grandfather that she will return again when the moon is full seven times, to take a beautiful girl from the river.

Si, todo lo mismo: un río profundo, una muchacha ahogada, y esta casa. Pero ino era esta noche! Todavía faltan siete lunas (vol. I, p. 786).

The next scene of the play takes place seven months later, as the family prepares for the celebration of St. John's Eve. Adela has remained with the family and her presence has changed the atmosphere of the home. Where there was once only a dull, dreary existence, there is now laughter and gaiety.

As the seven months have passed, la Peregrina reappears. The grandfather, remembering what la Peregrina had said, tells her, ". . . Pero no dejes vacía mi casa otra vez, como cuando te llevaste a Angélica" (vol. I, p. 304). La Peregrina answers that she does not know Angélica. This presents a mystery which is resolved during a conversation between Martín and Adela.

Martín has been the only member of the family who has not been able to accept Adela. He refuses to look her in the eyes. If left alone with her, he leaves rather than speak to her. His seemingly lack of acceptance, is in reality love. By concealing his true feelings, Martín is carrying out an act of subterfuge.

Martín confesses his love to Adela, but he tells her because of his love he must leave. He tells Adela that the image of Angélica is false and that she is still alive. "Tú tienes que saber que

toda su vida fue una Mentira. Como lo fue también su muerte" (vol. I, p. 307).

From Martín's story, one learns that Angélica had run away with an unknown lover three days after her wedding. Martín saw them leave and followed them with murderous intentions. The lovers escaped and Martín returned home, a silent, heart-sick man. Upon the discovery of the disappearance of Angélica, searchers found her kerchief in the river. With this discovery, all presumed that she had drowned. By remaining silent, Martín perpetuated an act of subterfuge.

The reason Martín gives Adela for carrying out his subterfuge was not his honor, but for Angélica's honor:

Lo hice solo por ella. Un amor no se pierde de repente. . . , y decir la verdad era como desnudarla delante del pueblo entero (vol. I, p. 808).

La Peregrina hears Martín's story. She begins to feel that her mission may become an act of compassion. She tells the grandfather that they may go to the celebration without fear.

The family departs for the celebration and la Peregrina remains waiting at the house. Angélica appears seeking forgiveness and refuge. Her lover has left her and she is alone without any place to go. She is unaware that Martín has not told the true story of her disgrace and is willing to accept the abuse of the family in order to find one moment of peace.

There are two examples of subterfuge evident at this point in the drama. La Peregrina commits an act of subterfuge as she

persuades Angélica to come with her in place of Adela. She asks Angélica if in a moment of desperation she has not thought of a way of escape:

Aquella noche pensaste, que más allá, al otro lado del miedo, está el país del último perdón, con un frío blanco y tranquilo; donde hay una sonrisa de paz para todos los labios, una serenidad infinita para todos los ojos. . . , ¡y donde es tan hermoso dormir, siempre quieta, sin dolor y sin fin! (vol. I, p. 824).

La Peregrina tells Angélica that she has once destroyed her home and not to do it again by returning. "Piénsalo, Angélica. Una vez destrozaste tu casa al irte. ¿Quieres destrozarla otra vez al volver?"(vol. I, p. 825). La Peregrina tells Angélica that she can redeem something by coming with her. "A salvar valientemente lo único que te queda: el recuerdo" (vol. I, p. 325).

Angélica permits herself to be taken by la Peregrina. In doing so, she perpetuates a final act of subterfuge. She conceals forever her true disgrace and builds a legend of a miracle of her death. She is found with a serene smile on her lips, a crown of roses upon her head, and her body in a perfect state. Her death is an act of redemption for herself, and for Martín and Adela.

CHAPTER VIII

LA BARCA SIN PESCADOR

The theme of La barca sin pescador is similar to that of Otra vez el diablo, man destroying the evil within himself. Also like Otra vez el diablo, is Casona's view of the devil. He is pictured as a deceiver who uses subterfuge to gain his end.

The protagonist of the drama is Ricardo Jordán. He is a cold, calculating self-made man, who controls a financial empire. But as his empire begins to fall apart, his friends leave him.

The first incident of subterfuge is carried out by Enriqueta, Ricardo's mistress. She feels that Ricardo is losing his fortune and wants to get out while she can. She meets with Ricardo's financial opponent to betray Ricardo, although she tells Ricardo, "Estuve cenando en el Claridge. . . con unas amigas" (vol. I, p. 834).²⁴ Ricardo learns that Enriqueta has betrayed him as his banker tells him, "esas cuatro mil acciones lanzadas al mercado esta misma mañana son de la señorita Enriqueta. ¡Su propia amiga!" (Vol. I, p. 837).

As Ricardo's friends leave, el Caballero de Negro, the Devil, enters, bringing with him all of his tricks, deceptions, and other acts of subterfuge. Ricardo recognizes him and asks what he wants, to which the Devil replies, "He visto tu caso y vengo a proponerte

²⁴All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. I.

un negocio. Naturalmente, un negocio espiritual" (vol. I, p. 840).

The Devil informs Ricardo that he has committed all the sins necessary to lose his soul, except one. "Hasta ahora solo un mandamiento te ha detenido: 'No matarás'" (Vol. I, p. 841).

The Devil tells Ricardo that if he will commit the final act, he will return all his power and money to him. Ricardo says he will not kill, but the Devil tells him he will not need to do the act himself, only will it be done:

Que el hecho material no me importa. Basta con la intención moral. Pon tú la voluntad de matar, y yo me encargo de lo demás (vol. I, p. 342).

Ricardo still hesitates, but the Devil spins the globe and stops it with his finger, pointing to a small fishing village in a northern region. The Devil shows Ricardo a scene where a man, Péter Anderson, is walking carefreely along a dangerous path. It is night and the wind and the song the man is singing combine to form a deafening clamor. The Devil tells Ricardo he must act now, and Ricardo quickly signs the contract with the Devil. As he does so, the wind and the song grow to a crescendo, a cry of a woman is heard, and Péter falls to his death from the cliff.

The Devil has carried out his major act of subterfuge, but within this major act, there are smaller, subtler deceptions. Ricardo asks the Devil if it is true that criminals dream of their victims, and the Devil answers, "Tú, no" (vol. I, p. 843). But as the Devil leaves his office, Ricardo still hears the wind, the song,

and the cry of a woman. These sounds will haunt Ricardo until he at last finds peace.

As soon as the Devil leaves, Ricardo receives the news that the stock market has reversed itself and he has recouped his losses. His friends come to his office to congratulate him, but the cry of the woman fills his mind and he orders them out.

The action of the play now turns to the home of Péter Anderson in the small fishing village of the North. Estela, Péter's widow, and the grandmother live alone in the house. Estela refuses all offers of outside help, preferring to make her own way.

Frida, Estela's sister, attempts an act of subterfuge. She pays Estela's rent and does not want the grandmother to tell Estela what she has done. But the grandmother tells Estela about Frida's gift; and Estela refuses to accept it. "No, Frida. Te lo volveré con el mismo amor con que me lo has traído" (vol. I, p. 857).

Since the death of Péter, there has been a dark shadow between the two sisters. Estela will not set foot in Frida's house. Frida asks Estela if it is because of her husband, Cristián. Estela answers, "Los que no fueron amigos de Péter no pueden serlo míos" (vol. I, p. 859). As Estela gives this as her reason, she is committing an act of subterfuge; for she later confesses to Frida that she feels that Cristián was responsible for Péter's death.

Ricardo enters the picture again, as he has come to the small village seeking to justify his crime. He hopes to find that Péter was a rogue and his death justifiable. Ricardo uses subterfuge to

gain entrance to Péter's house. He lets Estela and the grandmother believe he had met Péter some time before. In answer to the grandmother's question if he were a friend of Péter's, Ricardo answers:

Amigos no es la palabra. Le conocí solo un momento, hace tiempo, cantando una canción. Pero fue algo tan importante en mi vida que no podré olvidarlo nunca. Ese recuerdo es el que me trajo aquí (vol. I, p. 863).

Ricardo is due to leave on the boat which brought him, but Estela and the grandmother persuade him to wait two weeks when the boat will again return. Estela also offers him a room at the house. During the two weeks that Ricardo stays at the house, his attitude changes. He finds a peace of mind that he has not known since the death of Péter. He and Estela also begin to fall in love with each other. Ricardo wants to confess his crime to Estela, but he cannot find the courage to do so.

The day of his departure, Ricardo finally summons the necessary courage to tell Estela of his crime. He tells her:

Se trata de la muerte de Péter. . . Usted me no dijo el primer día; aquella muerte no la quiso Dios. Pues bien: tenía razón, Estela. Fue un hombre el que lo hizo. ¡Y ese hombre está aquí! (vol. I, p. 879).

Estela misunderstands his confession and tells him that she knows Cristián killed Péter. "Yo reconocí desde esa ventana su zamarra de cuero. Yo misma borré a la madrugada la huella de sus botas" (vol. I, p. 879).

With the confession that she knows Cristián killed Péter, Estela is also confessing that she has been perpetuating subterfuge.

She has remained silent because of the love for her sister and her sister's child; and let people believe that Péter's death was an accident.

Ricardo again tries to tell Estela of his guilt. At this moment Frida enters telling Estela that Cristián has been mortally injured and that he wishes to speak with her to beg forgiveness. Estela leaves with her sister, knowing that only she can give Cristián the pardon which he is seeking.

Ricardo now realizes the extent of the Devil's subterfuge. The Devil did not perform a miracle, but had taken advantage of circumstances to provide the appearance of one. The Devil appears and Ricardo tells him:

¡Demasiado tarde para engañarme otro vez! Ahora ya sé la verdad. No fui yo quien mató a Petér Anderson. Tú sabías que aquello iba a ocurrir, y la hora y el sitio en que iba a ocurrir (vol. I, p. 881).

The Devil confesses that only Cristián had committed the crime, but Ricardo had wanted to kill, and that was enough for him. "No has matado, de acuerdo. Pero has querido matar. Y para mí esa es la verdad que vale" (vol. I, p. 882).

Seeing how the Devil has deceived him, Ricardo in turn uses subterfuge against the Devil. He confounds the Devil in a totally unexpected way. He tells the Devil that he will fulfill his contract, that he will kill without blood:

¿Recuerdas el día que llegaste a mi despacho? Allí encontraste a un cobarde dispuesto a cualquier crimen con tal de no presenciarlo. . . Contra ese

estoy luchando desde que llegué aquí; contra ese lucharé ya toda mi vida. Y el día que no quede en mi alma ni un solo rastro de lo que fui, ese día Ricardo Jordán habrá matado a Ricardo Jordán (vol. I, p. 883-884).

The Devil accepts his defeat and gives Ricardo his contract saying, "Vine a perder to alma, y yo mismo te he puesto sin querer en el camino de la salvación" (vol. I, p. 884).

Estela returns from her mission with a feeling of peace and strength. Ricardo tells her that he has lost his fortune and wants to remain with her:

Ya no soy un extraño que viene a comprar el sueño por dinero. Ahora soy un hombre sin más riqueza que las manos, como se viene al mundo. Uno de los suyos. Déjeme trabajar a su lado (vol. I, p. 885).

The drama concludes with the symbolic burning of Ricardo's contract with the Devil. As Estela and Ricardo light the fire of the hearth, Estela unknowingly uses the contract to start the fire. This act symbolizes Ricardo's rebirth and his severance of corrupt society.

CHAPTER IX

LA MOLINERA DE ARCOS

When Casona wrote La molinera de Arcos, he used as his model, El sombrero de tres picos by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. Casona follows the general theme of the novel closely. In the preface to his drama, Casona defends his use of the theme by stating that much of modern literature is an adaptation of classical themes, such as Phaedra or Electra. Casona furthermore states:

Aceptar una herencia para trabajar sobre ella, no es solamente un derecho; puede, incluso, ser un deber si contribuye a former en la conciencia pública una tradición artística (vol. I, p. 890).²⁵

As previously stated, Casona's drama follows closely the theme of Alarcón's novel. The plot is built around el Corregidor's lust for Frasquita, la molinera. To fulfill his desire, he attempts many acts of subterfuge, which always seem to go awry.

As the drama begins, one sees an example of subterfuge which is being carried out by the husbands of la Comandanta, la Fiscala, and la Corregidora. La Comandanta states that her husband goes hunting every afternoon. La Fiscala tells that her husband goes fishing every afternoon; and la Corregidora says that her husband chases thieves. The truth is brought out by la Ama. She tells them that all three men are at the mill until dark every day. She answers

²⁵All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. I.

their question as to what attraction the mill has, saying, "¡Lo que hay en el molino es una molinera que le quita el resuello al lucero del alba!" (vol. I, p. 901). These men, along with the dean of the cathedral, go to the mill every afternoon for their tertulia.

El Corregidor continues his deception when he enters and tells the ladies how much work his office demands. "El cuento de nunca acabar: pleitos, incendios, asaltos, espías. . . No hay fuerza que resista" (vol. I, p. 903). He furthermore lays the groundwork for his absence some night:

¡Un robo a mano armada, en despoblado y de noche!
Tengo que ir yo en persona. Si me cuesta pasar el
día entero fuera de casa, paciencia. Y si alguna vez
tuviera que pasar también la noche. . .(vol. I, p. 904)

El Corregidor's accomplice is Garduña, an alguacil. Garduña has just returned from speaking to Frasquita. Frasquita has spurned el Corregidor's latest offer. Now the two men plan a way for el Corregidor to see her alone. Garduña suggests that he go when Lucas, Frasquita's husband, is asleep.

Frasquita appears at the Corregidor's palace, having been summoned by la Corregidora. La Corregidora is fearful that Frasquita may be a temptress, who would accept the temptation offered by el Corregidor. But she finds Frasquita to be a beautiful, gay young woman, who is in love with life.

Frasquita is also pictured as somewhat of a tease. After four years of marriage, she wishes Lucas to be a little bit jealous. She

asks Lucas, "Si yo un día olvidara lo que juré en la iglesia y me de dejara querer. . ., ¿Qué harías?"(vol. I, p. 916). This question is to later have an important significance in the drama.

El Corregidor arrives at the mill as Lucas prepares to take his siesta. He tells Frasquita that it was only by chance that he happened by. But he soon begins pressing her to accept his offer of love. Frasquita tries her own subterfuge, as she wants el Corregidor to name her nephew to a government position. She leads el Corregidor along until at last she tells him that she will not be a part to his schemes, "Ni por las nueve cosas de Catecismo me arriesgaría yo. . ." (vol. I, p. 921). And with this, she pushes el Corregidor on top of the sleeping Lucas, who awakes rather irritably.

The other members of the tertulia arrive, and they make sly insinuations as to why el Corregidor has arrived so early. The reason he gives for his early arrival is another example of his deceit:

Como hacía calor, recordé que hoy vendimiaban en el molino los primeros racimos y me dije: pues vamos a llegarnos a casa de Frasquita a probar esas uvas (vol. I, p. 924).

More subterfuge is evident as one finds that Frasquita and Lucas have been serving food and drink at the tertulia which is not of the quality it is claimed to be. Lucas gives this away as he says, "Una libra y cuatro onzas de jamón, que declaré como de la Alpujarra, pero que era de aquel de Murcia que nos salió tocino" (Vol. I, p. 931), Frasquita answers Lucas's question if she has served

the best wine, saying, "Las primeras rondas, cuando tienen la cabeza despejada, sí; las otras, a medias con la presa del molino" (vol. I, p. 931).

El Corregidor again seeks the help of Garduña. He tells Garduña that Lucas is stopping his passion from being fulfilled. Garduña plans another deception to get Lucas away from the house that night.

That evening, while Frasquita and Lucas are at home, the alguacil, Toñuelo, appears. He has been ordered to bring Lucas back with him to testify about some undisclosed incident. Lucas is hesitant to accompany Toñuelo, as he feels that el Corregidor is using this summons to get him out of the house.

As soon as Lucas leaves, el Corregidor and Garduña enter the scene. Their stratagem to get Lucas out of the house has worked. El Corregidor tries to climb up to Frasquita's window, but slips and falls into the water of the mill. Frasquita, hearing the clamor, rushes out to find el Corregidor half drowned. She at once understands the situation and again declares that she will not be a part of his schemes. She then leaves in search of Lucas. Garduña helps el Corregidor into the house and removes his wet clothing.

At this point, Lucas returns believing both el Corregidor and Frasquita are upstairs. El Corregidor, hearing Lucas, flees, leaving his clothing and a paper naming Frasquita's nephew to the desired position. When Lucas sees el Corregidor's clothing and

The paper on the table, he assumes the worst. He also remembers that Frasquita has asked him what he would do if she were unfaithful.

Lucas's first impulse is to kill, but seeing el Corregidor's clothing, a diabolical plan of vengeance comes to his mind. He tells Toñuelo, "Los pobres no tenemos honra. Pero los ricos sí. . . ¡Y ahí es donde te va a doler!" (vol. I, p. 943). Lucas puts on el Corregidor's clothing and leaves, saying, "Al palacio. ¡También la corregidora es guapa!" (vol. I, p. 943). Lucas's plan of disguise to gain entrance to the palace is an act of subterfuge. Lucas, disguised as el Corregidor, has little difficulty gaining entrance to the palace and to the bedroom of la Corregidora.

The next scene is filled with subterfuge. El Corregidor returns to the palace and everyone, even his wife, pretends not to know him. La Ama begins this deception when she says, "Y qué le trae por aquí tan temprano, tío Lucas?" (vol. I, p. 952). El Corregidor tries to convince her of his true identity, but la Ama tells him that el Corregidor is in bed. La Corregidora joins the scene and she, too, calls el Corregidor, Lucas. The situation is resolved with the arrival of Frasquita. She tells everyone that he is not her husband, but el Corregidor.

One learns that nothing occurred between Lucas and la Corregidora. La Ama states that he was seated across from her all night. "Aquí; sentado en esa silla frente a mí" (vol. I, p. 956).

Frasquita commits subterfuge when she gives the reason for el Corregidor's presence at the mill. "El señor, en cumplimiento

de sus deberes, salió a la caza de ciertos emboscados que ponen en peligro la seguridad de la patria" (vol. I, p. 957).

El Fiscal, el Comandante, and el Deán arrive at the palace and a mock trial is held. Without their knowing it, all of the men are the accused. El Corregidor is accused of being an assulter of honor, el Comandante of leaving his position undefended, and el Deán of setting a bad example. Frasquita then tells them, "Pues ponga cada cual la mano sobre su conciencia, ¡y a ver quién es el guapo que tira aquí la primera piedra!" (vol. I, p. 960).

The drama ends with all of the conflicts being resolved. The only character whose punishment is made known is el Corregidor. For his punishment, he is to be exiled from his wife's bedroom until he can prove his good faith.

CHAPTER X

LOS ARBOLES MUEREN DE PIE

The drama, Los árboles mueren de pie, has been one of Casona's greatest successes. Regarding the success of this play, Sainz de Robles states ;

Los árboles mueren de pie es, hoy, la obra de Alejandro Casona que ha logrado un mayor éxito universal. Ha sido traducida al portugués, al francés, al italiano, al alemán, al holandés, al finés. Ha sido representada en distintos países durante varios meses consecutivos. Ha ganado para su autor una gran fama universal.²⁶

The drama occurs in an idealistic world, rather than in a world of fantasy in which several of Casona's dramas take place. The play begins in an incongruous manner in a modern office with strange people popping in and out. There are secret passages and books which light up, but all of the strange phenomena can be logically explained.

The office is the headquarters for an institution which is dedicated to bringing happiness to unfortunate people who have never known fortune to smile upon them. The institution was founded by Doctor Ariel, the same man who established the Hogar del Suicida in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera. Since many of the tactics are illegal, the activities of the institution are conducted in secrecy. Most of the methods employ the use of subterfuge to gain the desired end.

²⁶Sainz de Robles, op. cit., p. cxxxiii.

Isabel is a lonely, desperate young woman, who has contemplated suicide the previous night. Before she was able to commit the act, she was interrupted by a bouquet of roses being thrown through her window. With the roses was a note which simply read, "Mañana". The next morning, she found a card under her door which gave the address of the office of the institution. She is heartened by the thought that someone cares for her and goes to the office to find the answer to the mystery.

Isabel has witnessed the strange occurrences at the office and is on the verge of leaving when Mauricio, the director enters. He explains the incidents and his explanations give an insight to the use of subterfuge by the participants of the institution.

Mauricio tells Isabel the purpose of the institution is to create happiness:

De los males del cuerpo ya hay muchos que se ocupan. Pero ¿quién ha pensado en los que se mueren sin un solo recuerdo hermoso, en los que no han visto realizado un sueño, en los que no se han sentido estremecidos nunca por un ramalazo de misterio y de fe? (vol. I, pp. 985-986).²⁷

He also tells Isabel of the different activities of the members of the group. One man's job is to help unfortunate hunters. "Anda escondido por los montes soltando conejos y perdiendo perros. Es un protector de cazadores pobres" (Vol. I, p. 988).

²⁷All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. I.

Another man dresses as a beggar. It is his job to keep watch over young men who have recently been released from prison. If they steal an object, the beggar promptly steals it from them:

Después, los objetos robados vuelvan a sus dueños, y el ladronzuelo recibe una tarjeta diciendo: "Por favor, muchacho, no vuelva a hacerlo, que nos está comprometiendo." A veces de resultado (vol. I, p. 988).

The most notable success of the group was the changing of Judge Mendizabal's attitude toward the death penalty. The judge had no qualms about sentencing men to death, but he had an ardent affection toward birds. One evening as he was about to sign a death sentence, a nightingale began to sing outside his window. The song was in reality that of a bird imitator, but it brought a revelation to the judge:

Solo entonces comprendió que hasta en la vida más pequeña hay algo tan sagrado y tan alto, que jamás un hombre tendrá el derecho de quitársela a otro (vol. I, p. 939).

The main plot of the drama concerns an act of subterfuge, which Mr. Balboa has been committing. For twenty years he has been deceiving his wife with false letters from their grandson. The grandson was a scoundrel and thief, whom the grandfather had disowned. But because the grandmother was pining for her grandson, he began to write letters and build an ideal image of the grandson. The grandson actually sends a cablegram and informs them that he is coming home. The grandfather later learns that the boat on which the grandson was to arrive, has sunk with all lives lost. He conceals this information from his wife.

Mr. Balboa has been referred to the institution by Doctor Ariel. He comes, not knowing what can be done, but only hoping that something can be done to preserve the happiness and joy the grandmother has shown since receiving the news that their grandson is coming home.

To help Mr. Balboa, Mauricio plans to impersonate the grandson and have Isabel act as his wife. Mauricio feels that helping to bring happiness into the life of another will have a cathartic effect on Isabel's own problems. Thus the subterfuge of the grandfather is compounded by the plan. The farce is only to last for several days.

It is necessary to fit smaller acts of deception into the broad spectrum of subterfuge in order that their plan can be carried out. An example of this is Mauricio's pretending to like the pastry served by the grandmother. He tells Isabel that he really does not like honey or walnuts:

¿Te fijaste con qué ilusión me comí las tortas
de nuez con miel? Pues si hay dos cosas que yo no
puedo aguantar son la miel y las nueces (vol. I, p. 1017).

Another example occurs when the grandmother learns that Mauricio and Isabel have been sleeping in different rooms. She is very upset, but Isabel tells her, "Simplemente lo que pasa es que por la ventana del jardín entran mosquitos. Mauricio no puede resistirlos" (vol I, p. 1024).

The young couple succeed in bringing happiness to the grandmother. There is also a change which takes place within themselves. Each begins to feel his feigned love change to true love.

Before the farce can be successfully ended, the true grandson appears. He had not taken the boat which was sunk, but another. He sees the grandfather and demands money. Mauricio sends him out of the house, but the grandson threatens to return and expose the farce.

On the day of Mauricio and Isabel's departure, the grandson again arrives. He succeeds in seeing the grandmother, who now knows of the farce. She sends him away saying, "¡Ni un centavo para esa piel que no tiene dentro nada mío!" (vol. I, p. 1041).

The grandmother now commits subterfuge by refusing to tell Mauricio and Isabel that she knows of their deception. She has seen their love grow, and she says, "Les debo los días mejores de mi vida. Y ahora soy yo la que puede hacer algo por ellos" (vol. I, p. 1042).

With her refusal to tell Mauricio and Isabel of her knowledge of their masquerade, the grandmother emerges as the strongest character of the drama. After having been deceived for twenty years, she has the courage to carry on for a few more hours so that Mauricio and Isabel may find happiness in each other.

CHAPTER XI

SIETE GRITOS EN EL MAR

In the drama Siete gritos en el mar, there are two different phases of subterfuge. The first is committed by Casona, who deceives the audience by permitting them to believe the drama is actually occurring, while in reality the action is taking place in the dream of Juan de Santillana. As Casona deceives the audience until the final scenes of the drama, one can say he uses subterfuge to perpetuate the drama. The second aspect of subterfuge is carried out by the characters of the dream who conceal their past.

Santillana has been reading the Memoirs of the Old Captain. While doing so, he falls asleep. A table is upset and this brings about the dream. Casona explains it thusly:

La mesa que está junto a Santillana cae; a su golpe que sugiere detonación, Santillana pone en circulación eléctrica todas sus preocupaciones (la paz y la guerra, el misterio de Nina, la sugestión de Julia--de la que el sueño le revela que se ha enamorada etc., etc. . . .). Y cuando el Steward se acerca a levantar la mesa y despertarle, ha transcurrido toda la comedia.²⁸

Seven of the eight invited guests have some event or deed which they are trying to avoid, escape, or conceal. Subterfuge is the means by which each tries to carry out his schemes. Each of their secrets is brought to light as they confess before meeting

²⁸Charles H. Leighton, "Alejandro Casona and the Significance of Dreams," Hispania, December, 1962, Vol. XLV, p. 700.

death. Of the invited guests, only the young newspaper reporter, Juan de Santillana, has no sin to confess. He has been invited only as a witness.

The drama occurs on the *Nalón*, a steamship, which is going from Italy to Argentina. The time is Christmas Eve. As the drama begins, one learns that the captain has invited eight first class passengers to dine with him. After the guests arrive, he informs them, ". . .Señores: cumplo el deber de anunciarles que todos nosotros estamos viviendo nuestra última noche" (vol. II, p. 26).²⁹

The captain clarifies his statement by telling them that war broke out three days ago. He has been ordered to complete a suicide mission in order that an allied convoy might pass without danger. He, furthermore, states that the other passengers on the ship may have a chance at survival, but that they are doomed because, ". . . Los siete grandes culpables son los que están aquí" (vol. II, p. 32).

The guests' reactions bring about an unmasking of each of their hidden sins. The first man to be unmasked is Harrison. His crime is one of egotism and avarice. He is traveling with a diplomatic passport, but he secretly carries plans for a new weapon. The captain confronts him with this knowledge. "Son ciertos papeles, con unas fórmulas que parecen inocentes, pero capaces de destruir

²⁹All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. II.

ciudades enteras en un minuto" (vol. II, p. 33). By secretly carrying the plans, Hárrison is using subterfuge.

The next person to reveal her crime is Julia Miranda. She is a lonely young woman who intends suicide. She rushes into the room crying to the captain, "¿Por qué quiere condenarme a una muerte que no es la mía? Usted sabía que yo iba a matarme esta misma noche . . ." (vol. II, p. 36). The captain has locked her out of her room, making it impossible for her to carry out her plan. By planning suicide, Julia is seeking to avoid the responsibilities of life. Therefore, she is using subterfuge. Later in the drama, Julia reveals her motives for plotting to take her own life.

Doctor Táven, el profesor de ironía, in his characteristic caustic and satiric manner, suggests that the others reveal their secrets, too:

. . .La gente siempre juega a disfrazarse. ¿Por qué nosotros no jugamos al revés? ¿A quitarnos los disfraces?
: ¡Eso sí que sería divertido! (vol. II, p. 46).

The next person to reveal her sins is Mercedes Zabala, who has remained silent about a death and has committed the sin of lust. She knows her husband caused the death of his former wife, but has concealed this knowledge from him. She confesses to all, ". . . Señores, voy a hacerles una simple presentación. Mi esposo: un asesino. Mi amante: un perfecto canalla" (vol. II, p. 47). Besides concealing the knowledge that her husband contributed to the death of his former wife, Mercedes also has been having an affair with Hárrison.

Zabala now confesses his sin. He has known of the affair his wife was having with Harrison, but has remained silent. He explains his reason for doing so, "Lo acepté como un castigo justo. Tu culpa era demasiado pequeña al lado de la mía" (vol. II, p. 48). He also confesses that he was responsible for his first wife's death. He had not harmed her physically, but mentally. He was in love with Mercedes and refused his wife's love; consequently she had taken her own life.

Nina, who has been traveling under the guise of baron Pertus wife, is the next to reveal her subterfuge:

. . . Mi pasaporte es falso. El sí es el barón Pertus, el del viejo castillo y la vieja familia orgullosa. Pero yo no soy su esposa ni he esperado serlo nunca (vol. II, p. 51).

She also has concealed her past from Pertus. He believes that she is from Paris, but she acknowledges the truth that she was once a girl of the streets of Tangiers.

The guilt of Pertus is brought out by Nina. He is a cold, cruel man with excessive pride, whose whole life from infancy has been demented by the idea that he is a superior being:

Hablo de tu casa y de tu infancia. Una madre rígida, con una autoridad de siglos; unas hermanas mayores, frías como estatuas rubias, y una doble fila de criados viejos, rodeando todos a un niño que no podía reír, que no podía soñar, que no podía jugar con los otros niños inferiores, porque había nacido gran señor y solo podía educarse para la fuerza y la soberbia (Vol. II, p. 52).

The sin of el Profesor is the next to be disclosed. He states that he is not a professor of philosophy, but of irony.

He destroys hope within his students. Furthermore, he has destroyed the capacity to love in the one girl whom he has loved. He states:

. . . ¡Destruir en ella, de raíz, toda capacidad de amar! Ya que no podía ser mía, por lo menos dejarla inútil par los demás. . . (vol. II, p. 62).

As the end draws nearer, Julia relates to Santillana the crime which caused her to plan suicide. She feels that she was responsible for her brother's death and the insanity of her mother. She unintentionally had started a fire which claimed her brother's life and then later she caused another fire which proved to be the breaking point for her mother.

As Santillana and Julia are united in a last embrace, a loud noise is heard and there is darkness. The scene returns to that of the first of the drama, with the exception that the Old Captain is gone and in his place is the Young Captain. The Young Captain awakens Santillana, who at first confuses his dream with reality. Santillana learns that some of the events of the dream are wrong. He finds there is no war, that the young man is the true captain, and instead of being off course, they are approaching the bay of Rio de Janeiro. Santillana also finds that much is the same as in the dream. There is a baby being born aboard ship; and by discreetly questioning each guest as they arrive, he is able to ascertain that each does possess some of the same qualities of the dream.

By using knowledge gained in the dream, Santillana prevents Julia from committing suicide. He has fallen in love with her in

his dream. When she enters, as in the dream, to give the captain a note, Santillana makes her burn the letter without anyone reading it. In this way he destroys her fear of fire and her fear of life.

CHAPTER XIII

LA TERCERA PALABRA

The theme of La tercera palabra is the collision of natural education with social education. Man must form an alliance with both nature and society before he may be considered a complete individual. Juan R. Castellano clarifies this by stating:

Si es cierto--nos viene a decir el autor--que el hombre natural vive apartado de la sociedad y está libre de las complejidades y exigencias de la tiranía social sobre el alma del individuo, también lo es que este hombre, capaz de bastarse a sí mismo, no puede llegar a ser hombre completo mientras no aprenda en el mundo social aquellas virtudes espirituales sin las cuales no le será posible abandonar el reino animal.³⁰

The action of the drama is centered around the social education of Pablo Saldaña and his slow recognition of the third great invisible force of the world, Love. Subterfuge is much in evidence as the Roldáns plot to gain control of Pablo's wealth. Subterfuge is also employed by other characters, but not to the extent of that used by the Roldáns.

Pablo had been reared by his father in a mountain cabin, never seeing anybody. His father had been betrayed by his wife and he felt a great hatred toward society, and in particular women. He took his son saying:

³⁰Castellano, "Doctrinas Pedagógicas de Alejandro Casona," op. cit., p. 27.

¡Mi hijo es mío solo! Vivirá limpio, sin mujeres y sin libros. Será un animal salvaje, pero un animal feliz (vol. II, p. 105).³¹

After twenty years of living as a wild, free animal, Pablo comes to live with his aunts, Matilde and Angelina. His father has died without leaving Pablo any semblance of an education. The aunts undertake the task of domesticating Pablo. To carry this out, they employ Margarita (Marga) Luján as Pablo's tutor.

The aunts use subterfuge to bring Marga to the ranch. Marga does not know that her pupil is a grown man, twenty-four years old. The aunts have told her that her pupil is a young orphan, knowing that Marga would not accept the position if the truth were told.

Marga does not wish to accept the position, however after meeting Pablo, she decides to stay. She is enchanted with his lack of sophistication and directness. As she gives her answer to the aunts, she states, "No sé si tendré algo que enseñar aquí. . . , pero ¡tengo tanto que aprender!" (vol. II, p. 117).

The second act occurs eight months later, Marga has succeeded in teaching Pablo to read and write. Roldán, the administrator of the estate, is furious because Pablo keeps checking his books:

. . . De algún tiempo acá no hace más que revolver mi escritorio, revisando carpetas y tomando notas.
¿Puede saberse qué es lo que anda buscando? (vol. II, p. 120-121).

Roldán is fearful that Pablo may find discrepancies and learn that he is cheating him.

³¹All quotations are from Obras Completas, op. cit., Vol. II.

Roldán sends for his son, Julio, to help in his use of subterfuge. When Julio arrives, Roldán lies to the aunts and tells them he did not send for Julio. One learns in a conversation with Julio that he did send for him, as he asks Julio, "¿Recibiste mi carta?" (vol. II, p. 124).

During the conversation between Julio and his father, one learns that they have been conniving to gain complete control of Pablo's wealth. Now that Pablo has had some formal education, they fear he may learn of their deceptions. But they still plan to carry through with their plot.

One more example of the use of subterfuge is evident. It was begun by Pablo's father and continued by his aunts. They have concealed all knowledge about his mother from him. Marga convinces them that he should have some knowledge of her, but should not know why his father had hated her. She shows Pablo the few remaining objects which belonged to his mother. Unknowingly, Marga also gives Pablo a box which contains letters from his mother's lover. In this way Pablo learns of his mother's indiscretion and he is greatly upset.

To continue their use of subterfuge, Julio threatens Marga in order to force her to help them. At one time she had an affair with Julio, and now he threatens to tell Pablo if she will not help. He tells her what she can do:

. . . Pablo no obedece a nadie más que a ti.
Tú le has enseñado a escribir su nombre, y para

eso habrás tenido que hacerle firmar cientos de veces.
 Ahora solo se trata de conseguir unas cuantas firmas más
 (vol. II, p. 137).

Marga refuses and Julio gives her time to consider her answer or he will tell Pablo what has happened.

The third act takes place some two months later. A birthday celebration is being held to honor Pablo on his twenty-fifth birthday. Julio has tried to win the confidence of Pablo by pretending close friendship. His ulterior motive is to get Pablo to sign papers which will give Julio and his father control of Pablo's estate.

As part of his plan, Julio entices Pablo to drink champagne. As soon as he feels that Pablo has had enough to drink, he suggests that he sign some papers that he has prepared. "Son simplemente unas firmas; del trabajo me encargo yo. Los señores como tú solo ponen la firma" (vol. II, p. 147). But Pablo knows of Julio's intentions and refuses. He states that he has not learned to write with his left hand, as his father obviously did. He says:

. . . El año pasado a mi padre le estalló un cartucho de pólvora en la mano derecha, y ya no pudo usarla más. Esto era por octubre . . ., y, sin embargo, ahí verás firmas suyas de noviembre, de diciembre, de enero . . . ¿Con qué mano iba a ser? (vol. II, p. 147).

As the party progresses, Pablo becomes enraged. A brother to Roldán and an anthropologist, asks ridiculous questions about Pablo's life. The questions so infuriate Pablo that he insults the guests, calling them mere puppets of a stupid society. As the guests hastily leave, Pablo asks:

¡Alto ahí! ¿No habían venido al circo, a divertirse con el hombre-bestia? Pues ánimo, que la fiesta va a empezar. Pero ¡ahora es la bestia la que va a dirigir! (vol. II, p. 157).

The fury which Pablo has shown makes Julio and his father happy. Julio confesses to Marga that the next bit of subterfuge is to make use of Pablo's outburst and his past, and have him declared insane:

Después de veinte años con un padre loco, ¿crees que sería tan difícil hacer internar a un hombre que habla con los pájaros y ve a Dios en los relámpagos? (vol. II, p. 160).

Julio further states that because Marga has refused to help with their plot, he is going to tell Pablo of Marga's indiscretion. Before he can do so, Pablo enters and orders Julio out. Pablo has heard and seen enough to know something is wrong. Marga then tells Pablo of her affair with Julio. Pablo is hurt and enraged. He insults Marga and orders her out of the house. Before she goes, Marga tells Pablo that she is going to have his child. Pablo now, instead of wishing Marga to leave, wants her to remain until the child is born, in order that history can repeat itself and he can take the child and rear it far away from all society. But Marga, in a very powerful scene, refuses:

¡Eso nunca! Mi hijo será la gran obra de mi vida; con todo lo bueno tuyo y todo lo bueno mío. Pero ¡ni la bestia ni el muñeco! Un hombre con la dimensión del hombre. ¿Lo oyes? Quiero ser, ¡por fin!, la madre de un hombre verdadero. . . , un hombre completo. . . , ¡un hombre! (vol. II, p. 164).

Marga faints after her refusal. Pablo now realizes that he loves Marga. He understands that after knowing Marga, he can never be

happy living as he did before. Within Pablo there has been a synthesis of his instinctive behavior and of society and he has become a complete man. He now knows the meaning of Love.

CHAPTER XIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Upon studying the dramas of Alejandro Casona, one finds certain elements which are present throughout his works. A desire to escape reality, suicide, and fantasy appear time and time again. Much of the action takes place in a world of unreality. Although much of the action takes place in similar settings, the plots vary from drama to drama.

Didacticism prevails throughout Casona's works. He was a former teacher and his interest in education did not diminish upon leaving the profession. He has used his dramas to reach more people than would have been possible in his classroom. The didactic element is the basis for the entire plot of Nuestra Natacha. While in the other works, such as Prohibido suicidarse en primavera and Los árboles mueren de pie, the didactic element is more subtle.

The characters, with few exceptions, in Casona's dramas are real. They are placed in unreal situations, but they evolve as real people. Even the demons of Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador have human characteristics. The personification of death in La dama del alba is pictured as a beautiful lady with the same emotions and desires as a woman.

Casona has employed subterfuge in varying degrees. The plots of some of his dramas are built around an act of subterfuge. For example, the plots of Otra vez el diablo and La barca sin pescador

evolve around the deception of the devil. While in other plays, such as Nuestra Natacha, subterfuge plays almost no role in the development of the plot. . But in all dramas, one can find examples of evasion, deceit, and prevarication.

Even though humor was not Casona's motive for writing, humor abounds in his dramas. Humorous situations and ingenious dialogue are used with great success. Also, irony, and occasionally satire, is used to bring out humor.

Casona is an optimistic writer. There is no trace of bitterness to be found in his works. His dramas are full of light, beauty, tenderness, and generosity. He ends all dramas with hope prevailing. His characters always solve their problems and face reality with hope in the future.

The themes of Casona's dramas, such as the recurring theme of man destroying the evil within himself and the uselessness of escape from reality, have a universality which all can appreciate. This universality and the clever manner in which the plays are presented should assure Casona's recognition by future generations as an outstanding writer and contributor to the literary world.

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