

Caligula and *La muerte no entrará en palacio*: A Study in Characterization

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Camus' dramas *Les Justes* (1949), *Caligula* (1944), and *L'Etat de siège* (1948) reveal a criticism of actions which violate the principle of human solidarity and fraternity, of actions which result in man's tyranny over his fellow man. In *L'Homme révolté* (1951) Camus criticizes the tyranny seen in the history of the Western civilization; he pinpoints revolt against existing ideologies as rebellion which has turned into only another form of tyranny. For example, the declaration of democratic values at the beginning of the French revolution was marred by betrayal of these principles and the establishment of revolutionary tyranny. Subsequent revolts also turned into tyranny, as manifested by fascism and Stalinism.

In contrast to Camus' presentation of a progression, tyranny-revolt-tyranny, Puerto Rican writer René Marqués criticizes the static tyranny which has clouded his island's freedom for over four centuries: Puerto Rico's colonial situation first under Spain and, since 1898, under the United States. He laments the fact that rebellion is, by and large, unsuccessful. His drama *Mariana o el alba* (1965) recalls the frustrated attempts of rebel nationalists to free Puerto Rico from Spain's dominance in 1868. The drama *Un niño azul para esa sombra* (1958) reveals the same fate for the modern-day rebel: defeat in his opposition to Puerto Rico's domination by the United States.

However, in his drama *La muerte no entrará en palacio* (1956), Marqués portrays the successful overthrow of tyranny. Don José, the governor in Marqués' play who is based on the character of Luis Muñoz Marín (governor of Puerto Rico 1948-64) who wishes to perpetuate his island's dependency on the United States, is opposed and finally assassinated by those who wish independence for their island.¹ This drama resembles Camus' *Caligula*, which depicts the exercise of unlimited power on the part of the Roman emperor Caligula and his final overthrow. Camus' possible influence on Marqués becomes apparent if we study the

main and secondary characters of the two dramas. In the course of this study we also discover how Marqués adapts the Frenchman's characterization to suit his political purposes.

The two dramas present tyranny inherent in radicalism or conservatism. After the death of his sister Drusila, whom Caligula loved dearly, the Roman emperor meditates on what lies between the beginning of one's life and one's death. Observing the humdrum, routine existence of his subjects—an existence in which one takes for granted one's security and never thinks about anything—Caligula concludes that men die, and that they are really not happy.² He therefore wishes to have man live by the light of this truth. He indicts his subjects for not thinking beyond their immediate existence, for being smug about their security; he also wishes to introduce artistic emotions into their materialistic world. Caligula ruthlessly deprives his subjects of their ordered existence. In an effort to bring man "liberty," to force him to think about his mediocre existence, Caligula disturbs the very securities which keep men satisfied: the Emperor confiscates property, executes sons and fathers, violates wives, begins and ends famine at whim. Fear compels the subjects to laugh in chorus at Caligula's whim, or to repeat litanies of devotion to Caligula dressed as Venus. Caligula's intentions mark him as a Camusian hero: he wishes to sensitize men to the senseless nature of the world by embodying the absurd himself, to dissolve the myth of absolute security. Yet Caligula also embodies the anti-hero, the rebel turned tyrant, whom Camus criticizes in *L'Homme révolté*.

Don José, on the other hand, is the conservative tyrant. Once he realizes that the stability of his power hinges on the continued economic prosperity which the United States bestows upon the island, Don José prefers to perpetuate the island's dependency on the United States. By signing a Protectorate with the North, he strengthens the ties which preserve his authority.³ Unlike Caligula, who fosters upheaval, Don José must work to prevent change. He attempts to destroy the seed of liberty planted by nationalist leader Don Rodrigo (Albizu Campos 1891-1965), resorting to espionage and outright oppression. Don José also institutes a propaganda program which defames the ideal of liberty as romanticism which will cause upheaval and threaten the status quo. Marqués has therefore invested Don José with Caligula's tyranny; yet Caligula's intention of causing upheaval in man's materialistic existence is converted to Don José's intent to keep man highly satisfied with his Calibán world.

Marqués, like Camus, emphasizes the fact that tyranny involves excess—that tyrants have exceeded the limits of moderation and reason. Marqués utilizes Camus' theory of limits. Don José's wife Doña Isabel begs the governor not to overstep a limit in his emphasis on materialism: "Dale a mi pueblo toda la ciencia y todo el progreso que él pueda asimilar. Pero no pases del *limite*. Ten cuidado de que la dosis no sea excesiva."⁴ Don José is suffocating his nation by insisting on satisfying only man's acquisitive nature. Distorting real values, he trespasses the line between life and farce. The poet Teresias comments on this farce: "Cuando se borra el *limite* entre la farsa y la vida se tiende a vivir sólo la farsa. Pero no basta entonces vivir la farsa. Se pretende, además, que otros también la vivan" (II, 264). Chereva also comments upon Caligula's trespass of boundaries: "Sans doute, ce n'est pas la première fois que, chez nous, un homme dispose d'un pouvoir

sans *limites*, mais c'est la première fois qu'il s'en sert sans *limites*, jusqu'à nier l'homme et le monde" (II, 34).

Both leaders are presented in the dramas as "gods" who possess unlimited power. Don José proclaims his absolute power: "Tengo todos los derechos" (II, 295), and Caligula declares: "Je viens de comprendre en fin l'utilité du pouvoir. Il donne ses chances à l'impossible. Aujourd'hui, et pour tout le temps qui va venir, ma liberté n'a plus de frontières" (I, 24). Caligula plays the role of Venus, a capricious god of flowers and murders to whom the patricians pay homage even though they fear his contradictions. Don José is described as a god who reigns over a nation of dwarfs; people obey him blindly, dazzled by economic prosperity.

These gods are overthrown in both dramas by other "deities," gods who represent liberty for Puerto Rico in Marqués' play, and gods who represent order, reason and moderation for the Roman empire in Camus'. The young poet Scipio warns Caligula of the rebellion of new gods against the present deities: ". . . je crois qu'alors tu as fait le nécessaire pour qu'un jour, autour de toi, des légions de dieux humains se lèvent, implacables à leur tour, et noient dans le sang ta divinité d'un moment" (II, 69). In *La muerte*, Don José is warned of the Lord's wrath which will vent itself on a land which has built itself on false bases. The voice of Don Rodrigo repeatedly issues a Biblical warning: "Cuando lleguen las lluvias, cuando se desborde el torrente de los ríos, cuando soplen los vientos y den con ímpetu sobre la casa, ¡la casa será derribada!" (I, 242).

Yet human, not divine, wrath descends upon these two tyrants. The governor's daughter Casandra assassinates her father in the denouement, and, by destroying economic tyranny, reestablishes a balance between the nation's economic and spiritual well-being. The drama ends with death; yet the death of tyranny restores life to the nation. In *Caligula* the instrument of rebellion is Cherea who represents reason, moderation, acceptance of limits. Knowing that man seeks security, Cherea insures life for the Roman empire by assassinating Caligula.

The protagonists of both dramas are presented as solitary figures—men who have thwarted love when they follow their destinies as despots. They alienate themselves from natural and human emotions by pursuing destinies from which they feel they cannot deviate. Camus artfully traces Caligula's growing alienation from love. After the death of his sister, Caligula decides that loving is *not* living. Love, for him, subsequently turns into lust: he ravishes Mucius' wife and commands his subjects to frequent the National Brothel, warning of execution for those who do not pursue their lustful desires. In the denouement, he even abandons his lust when he kills his mistress Caesonia. Camus contrasts Caligula's alienation with Scipio's love. The young poet appreciates life, and his thoughts always turn to love. Camus makes an incision between Scipio's and Caligula's world when he has Caligula tell the young poet: "Tu es d'un autre monde" (II, 58). Caligula must exist in his own world, alone with his destiny. He considers himself the unique teacher of men, a person who can make men live with knowledge of the truth. He will use his power to fulfill his personal destiny: "La logique, Caligula, il faut poursuivre la logique. Le pouvoir jusqu'au bout, l'abandon jusqu'au bout. Non, on ne revient pas en arrière et il faut aller jusqu'à la consommation!" (III, 75). He is the god who expects no love from his subjects, for as he himself admits in the denouement: "j'ai conquis la divine clairvoyance

du solitaire" (IV, 106). He crushes out love "pour parfaire enfin la solitude éternelle que je désire" (IV, 106).

Marqués' character Don José is also described as a solitary figure. He must divorce himself from people who in effect love him and attempt to make him see the error of his ways: Don José's wife Isabel, who attempts to enlighten her husband about the spiritual sentiments of the common people; the delegation of "campesinos" who express such feelings in the governor's presence; Alberto, the young fiancé of the governor's daughter Casandra, who views the signing of the Protectorate as a death blow to the nation's desire for liberty; and the poet Teresias who reminds the governor that he has not followed the nation's destiny by carrying out the ideal of emancipation. In the second half of the drama, Don José is alienated from friends and family. He also must follow his destiny. He cannot afford examinations of conscience and thus divorces himself from Teresias, refusing to see events and actions as the poet sees them. Teresias practically uses Caligula's statement to Scipio, when he says that he and Don José live in irreconcilable worlds: "Tu mundo y mi mundo no podrán jamás sincronizarse" (II, 267). Like Caligula, who retreats into a lonely world, Don José ultimately retreats into and lives exclusively in the politician's world; he plays the part of the politician who lives by rhetoric and hypocrisy, stating "El político es el hombre" (II, 294).

Both Don José and Caligula may be described as tragic figures: their views on life are limited and the effect of such limited views upon their subjects prompts the heroes' tragic demise. Both Caligula and Don José have, at the outset, what appear to be noble aims. Caligula claims that his actions will serve to make men think. Don José wishes to provide economic security for the nation, with the ideal of independence held out for the future. However, the frailty of the human condition—the hubris, ambition, obsession with power—emerges as the true motivation of their actions. The ideal is sacrificed to egotistical intent: Caligula's extreme attempts to implement the ideal, and Don José's abandoning the ideal of liberty. The moral order is disturbed and then righted by opposing forces.

Before his demise, Caligula reaches a recognition of the error of his ways, and concludes that the freedom he used to implement his theory was not the right one: "Je n'ai pas pris la voie qu'il fallait, je n'aboutis à rien. Ma liberté n'est pas la bonne" (IV, 108). Don José, in contrast, never openly recognizes his error. As D. L. Shaw has pointed out, Don José has momentary flashes of insight (for example, aware of his growing insensitivity, he compares his lack of consciousness to that of a spider on his office wall, I, 233), but there is no evolution of character, no final decision which involves recognition of his erroneous path.⁵ It should be noted that Don José's insights are dispersed mainly throughout the first act; his insights are thwarted at the end of this act by a rationalization and justification of his position. In Alberto's presence he admits that power corrupts ("Es fácil serlo todo antes de llegar al poder" I, 234) but that it is his destiny to forge ahead as history's "villain" so that Don Rodrigo may shine as its hero: "Siempre tiene que haber alguien ensuciándose el alma para que otros muestren sus caras limpias ante la Historia" (I, 234). He states that no one—not even Don Rodrigo—could maintain the purity of ideals in a position of power: "Pero él aquí, en mi puesto, durante dieciocho años en mi puesto, se estaría pudriendo tanto como yo." By the second act, therefore, Don José, having justified and rationalized his position,

divorces himself from any former insights and continues with his lonely destiny—a struggle to maintain power.

Marqués does present the external trappings of tragedy in his drama: the Greek chorus, stock characters of tragedy such as Tiresias of *Oedipus Rex* and Casandra of *Agamemnon* and the *Trojan Women*, two characters whose visionary prophecies are not believed. It may therefore seem strange that he does not allow his “tragic” figure—Don José—to evolve. To understand why Marqués thwarted Don José’s possible evolution is to understand Marqués’ political purpose. He deliberately frustrates the tragic evolution to pinpoint Puerto Rico’s political reality: that leaders of the Popularist Creed (Luis Muñoz Marín and even the incumbent Rafael Hernández Colón) refuse to understand that Puerto Rico must march on to liberty, for this admission would entail the elimination of their power. Marqués wishes to condemn such self-serving leaders. He must therefore avoid an evolution of character which might create sympathy for, or exalt, these men.

For Marqués, condemnation must be launched not only against the leader, but also against the people who blindly follow this head of state. Camus criticizes in *Caligula* a social structure, both before and after the advent of Caligula’s madness, of a docile, thoughtless mass preoccupied with creature comforts. Marqués utilizes this portrayal in his drama, for it mirrors his nation’s social structure under Don José. The patricians’ docility with respect to Caligula’s whims becomes the obedience of government officials to the mandates of Don José. The patricians’ concern with the treasury above all else in *Caligula* becomes Don José’s orientation toward material benefits in *La muerte*. Helicon’s statement that he never thinks is converted into the description of Don José’s mesocratic staff: “Se echa de menos en el grupo la nobleza que confiere una auténtica comprensión y sabiduría de la vida y sus problemas, o la mirada encendida por el fuego de una eterna juventud visionaria” (II, 309). Marqués is also careful to insert from *Caligula* the fear of change and the need to be assured that there are laws which will help the nation to maintain the status quo.

Caligula’s atrocious disturbance of the status quo generates rebellion against the tyrant. In *La muerte* there are no atrocities on the part of the leader; man is highly content and Don José perpetuates this felicity. Marqués, therefore, generates rebellion by investing Caligula’s theory—that the nation must experience change—in a minority. Marqués utilizes those scenes in *Caligula* which pinpoint even in the Frenchman’s play the nobility of the Emperor’s initial intents. For example, the scene between Helicon, munching onions, placing emphasis on lunch, and Caligula, emphasizing religion, art and love in Act I, becomes the scene between Don José, praising his materialistic order, and the delegation of “campesinos” who stress the need for a spiritual independence. In Helicon’s presence Caligula states that “Les choses, telles qu’elles sont, ne me semblent pas satisfaisantes” (I, 15). Compare this with the young peasant’s rebellion against Don José’s ordered, materialistic world, “¡Pero eso no basta!” (I, 219). Marqués places in the peasant’s character Caligula’s search for something beyond the immediate world in order to counteract a Helicon and Don José who are highly satisfied with things as they are. And he points to the spread of this sentiment when he invests it in several characters—Alberto, Casandra, Doña Isabel, Teresias, etc.

Rebellion is highly serious in Marqués’ play, whereas in *Caligula*, it is mainly

farcical until the denouement. It must be remembered that Caligula's subjects are either docile to Caligula's whims, or disgruntled but fearful. Marqués, on the other hand, presents in a minority a heroic rebellious force from the outset of the drama. Marqués therefore converts what is farce in *Caligula* into a most serious rebellion. Caligula creates a farcical rebellion when he labels Mereius a rebel against Caligula's wish that he die. He indicts him for drinking an antidote to poison which turns out to be only a remedy for arthritis. Consider in contrast Marqués' presentation of the death of the young rebel in action during the uprising against Don José. Doña Isabel tells us sadly of the peasant's death: "Y el Mozo expió su pecado sobre la roca más dura de Altamira. ¿Lo sabías José? Su sangre cubrió la piedra de mi montaña. ¡Qué fácil es para la fuerza matar la fe de un pueblo débil!" (II, 279).

Caligula actually attempts to aid the rebel when he burns evidence of Cherea's plot to kill the emperor. Despite the emperor's intent to deify himself, he nevertheless encourages revolt: "Continue, Cherea, poursuis, jusqu'au bout le magnifique raisonnement que tu m'as tenu. Ton empereur attend son repos. C'est sa manière à lui de vivre et d'être heureux" (III, 81). In contrast to Caligula's aiding the rebel, the rebel forces in *La muerte* face severe danger and persecution. Consider Don José's thwarting the rebel in his suppression of the uprising and in his indictment of Don Rodrigo in a guilt by association.

The rebels' concern for the nation to the point of their accepting self-sacrifice (for example Casandra who lays down her life for her country) may be contrasted with the cowardice of one subject in *Caligula* who, fearing that Caligula is dead, offers his life for the Emperor. When the living Caligula tells him that his generous offer was accepted, the patrician shrieks that he does not want to die, and that Caligula cannot be serious. Caligula does not believe that his subjects are capable of a heroic act: "Vous êtes incapables d'un acte courageux" (II, 43), and this is largely evident until the denouement. Marqués, in contrast, provides us with a heroic minority whose sacrifice for ideals is repeatedly underscored.

Rebellion in *Caligula*, although not overt until the end, has certain gradations which again are adapted by Marqués to suit his political thesis. Camus provides in different characters a comprehension of the Emperor's views and/or action taken against him. Helicon, for example, is not a complete automaton. He comes to understand that Caligula wants plotting against him, and that Caligula would not mind being killed. He thereby understands the madman's purpose: to make man think when faced with insecurities, and that thought will lead to rebellion against the one who disturbs those securities. Helicon understands that death is Caligula's fate, and that Caligula himself accepts his destiny. Yet Helicon takes no action against the mad Emperor. Scipio also comprehends Caligula's purpose but is unable to take action against the Emperor because he loves him (despite the fact that Caligula killed Scipio's father). Here personal love takes precedence over a love for the nation. Interestingly enough, those who do take action against the emperor have assorted motives: the once docile patricians assassinate the Emperor; however they do *not* comprehend Caligula's purpose and their motives for assassinating the Emperor are, by and large, based on petty revenge. Cherea, on the other hand, comprehends Caligula's purpose and takes action against him. His reason for assassinating the Emperor is not petty revenge, but dedication to

an ideal: that life must have some meaning, that all actions are not equal, that one cannot perform actions solely to gratify one's desires.

These three orientations—1) comprehension but no action (Scipio and Helicon); 2) action but no comprehension (the patricians); and 3) comprehension which leads to action (Cherea)—are exploited by Marqués once again to suit his thesis. He rejects the second, for he must discount any action not based on a comprehension of the nation's plight—especially an assassination for revenge which is self-serving. He strengthens the third by multiplying the figure of Cherea in Teresias, Alberto, the young mozo, Doña Isabel, etc. These are people who understand an ideal and act to enforce it, in ways ranging from persuasion to assassination. The minority, invested with Caligula's ideal that life must have change, is also invested with Cherea's ideal: that life must have meaning. Life, for them, has meaning only if Puerto Rico attains its liberty. By investing Cherea's characteristics in the minority, Marqués spares the minority from being characterized by Caligula's tyranny. The minority upholds Caligula's noble intents, but becomes invested with Cherea's ideal of moderation. Moderation, for them, means elimination of the excessive emphasis on materialism in their country and the establishment of an even balance between "pan" and liberty.

Cherea experiences no growth; his ideals are intact from the beginning of the drama, and he merely waits for the right moment to kill the Emperor. So too, in the figures mentioned above in Marqués' play there is little or no growth; they realize their duties from the outset of the drama. Marqués also combines "1" and "3" (the growth to comprehension and the subsequent action) in two different ways. First he provides a dramatic development in the character of Casandra. At first she is a docile Helicon—an immature girl, ignorant of her country's plight. However, just as Helicon begins to understand Caligula's purposes, so too, Casandra begins to comprehend her father's purpose to maintain his power, and with this comprehension, she becomes conscious of the national predicament. But unlike Helicon, she resorts to active rebellion to save her country from death. She thus joins the ranks of Cherea, Alberto and the young peasant. Marqués invests Casandra with an ideal—liberty for her island—but makes her grow to comprehend the necessity for maintaining this ideal. This dramatic evolution from ignorance to knowledge in one figure is necessary for Marqués' political creed: a lesson for his docile countrymen whereby they are shown that they too can and must grow to comprehend and act in behalf of their country's plight.

Secondly, Marqués develops from *Caligula* the skeletal element of personal love which should become subordinate to love for the nation. Scipio's love for Caligula prompts his refusal to participate in the assassination of the mad Emperor. Cherea is willing to put aside personal feelings for Caligula when he realizes that the Emperor is frustrating the ideal that life must have meaning. This polarization becomes a dramatic development in Marqués' drama again in the figure of Casandra. When Casandra realizes that her father is frustrating the nation's ideal of liberty, her love for the nation transcends filial love. Don Rodrigo's statement, "¡Sangre de amor como bautismo de libertad para los pueblos!" (I, 251), accurately describes Casandra's heroic action. Her love for the nation has caused bloodshed, but this bloodshed (elimination of tyranny) serves to "baptize" or give new life to the country. Marqués' political intent

caused him to demonstrate that a person can grow to a realization of the nation's need for independence, that a true love for one's nation prompts such a realization, and that the nationalist outlook takes precedence over personal love. Marqués makes Alberto's evolution from the personal to the national a model for Casandra's. When Casandra wishes that she and Alberto flee from the palace and live together happily elsewhere, Alberto puts aside his personal love for Casandra, and accepts his responsibilities: "Estamos viviendo una crisis y no podemos eludir nuestras responsabilidades" (I, 248). When Alberto plans to assassinate Don José, Casandra discovers the gun. In the struggle which ensues, the gun accidentally fires and Alberto is killed. It is now Casandra who continues Alberto's work and fights for her nation's lost ideals. Casandra's development brings her closer to the prototypical tragic heroine, than Don José is to the tragic hero. Don José self-serving intentions make him the villain, whereas Casandra is what Don José is not: she evolves from a girl concerned with her personal interests to one who puts aside the personal in favor of the national, and who sacrifices herself for the nation.

Marqués also takes the theme of personal love—Caesonia's support of the tyrant—and invests it in Doña Isabel's support of her husband. Yet Marqués converts Caesonia's "blind" faithfulness to Caligula into Doña Isabel's growing "desengaño" with her husband's world. He depicts her remaining at his side physically but not emotionally; he converts her emotional alienation into the physical and emotional alienation of other family and friends of Don José. Once again personal love becomes subordinate to love for the nation.

The influence of the Frenchman in Marqués' play is apparent in descriptions which support characterization. Descriptions of a deranged Caligula—"Il a l'air égaré, il est sale, il a les cheveux pleins d'eau et les jambes souillées" (I, 13)—becomes Casandra's disorder at the end of *La muerte*: ". . . el cabello . . . está ahora semisuelto; . . . los ojos, enrojecidos de llanto, tienen una mirada alucinada; la capa, abierta al frente, deja al descubierto pliegues de la túnica gris manchados de sangre: . . ." (II, 320). Caligula's disorder which is the result of tyranny becomes Casandra's necessary upheaval to thwart the tyrannical perpetuation of a materialistic status quo. Marqués also takes the device of Caligula rushing through a storm in Act I and applies it to Don José's assurance in Act II that a "storm" will not affect his status quo. He asks Teresias, "¿Crees que habrá tormenta este año?" "Hace más de veinte años que no nos azota un ciclón." "Hasta las fuerzas ciegas de la naturaleza nos son propicias. ¿No te dice nada eso, visionario?" (II, 260-61). Irony is implicit here, for Don José is "blind" to the growing political storm which will end in his death.

In an effort to avoid "natural" inclinations of mankind (love, comprehension) Caligula makes references to the need for "masks." Even though Marqués does not mention "masks" he artfully makes Don José mask himself in the politician's world of rhetoric. For example, the night the Protectorate is signed, Don José praises his "noble" nation, whereas previously in Alberto's presence, the mask had slipped and the governor had referred to his nation as miserable and stupid.

Marqués also adapts from *Caligula* the image of the drama, to refer to the unfolding of the nation's history. *Caligula* contains continual references to man's enactment of the drama of his life. In Scipio's presence, Caligula admits that he

is acting: "J'ai joué" (II, 59). He plays the role of a god when he appears dressed as Venus. In a drama where Caligula plays the part of fate, fate implies implanting in man's lives the artistic. And art is introduced to his subjects when Caligula gives them a ballet performance. His pronouncement that the performance is ended anticipates the termination of his role in this drama. When he kills Caesonia, he also makes reference to the falling of the curtain for his mistress. Marqués, on the other hand, couches his play within the broadest image of the theater. At the outset of *La muerte*, Marqués makes Teresias point to the termination of the drama: the tyrant has been assassinated and Casandra, the hand of justice, is immortalized in marble (having committed suicide after assassinating her father). We then witness history magically reversed and, with the aid of a flashback, follow the development of this drama of mankind.

Caligula's use of the sun as symbol of the impossible is contrasted with the "sleep" which Caesonia advises for the emperor. Caesonia tells Caligula: "Il faut dormir, dormir longtemps, se laisser aller et ne plus réfléchir. Je veillerai sur ton sommeil." But Caligula prefers action: ". . . de quoi me sert ce pouvoir si étonnant si je ne puis changer l'ordre des choses, si je ne puis faire que le soleil se couche à l'est . . ." (I, 26-27). Marqués converts this dialogue into descriptions of people who "sleep," for example the descriptions of the guards in Don José's palace as automatons (II, 259) and the description of the officials in Don José's government as potential giants whom Don José crushed and converted into their present state (II, 309). For Marqués, such people sleep because they never think. The *independentistas*, on the other hand, wish to change this order of things. For them, national independence—the sun setting in the east—is made impossible because a tyrant is subordinating a nation's destiny to his personal caprice.

Marqués also exploits from *Caligula* the use of nature to reflect the disturbance or the harmony of the social order. Caligula has disturbed the world's natural order. He has brought dissonance into nature, destroying the symmetry which Scipio still appreciates: ". . . la ligne des collines romaines et de cet apaisement fugitif et bouleversant qu'y ramène le soir . . ." "Et de cette minute subtile où le ciel encore plein d'or brusquement bascule et nous montre en un instant son autre face, gorgée d'étoiles luisantes" (II, 57). Scipio's flight from Rome signals the triumph of Caligula's discord, at least until the emperor is assassinated by the patricians and Cherea. The negation of nature in *La muerte*—the silent nightingale, Casandra's dream of cutting down the ceiba tree—mirrors the death of the social order under Don José's tyranny. In contrast, the life-giving force of liberty for the island is represented by the seed which Don José should allow to germinate. As Doña Isabel tells her husband: "¡Es tan hermoso ayudar al triunfo de la vida!" (I, 224). Life also triumphs in the figure of Casandra. Told by her mother that the nightingale will sing once again for her, she reflects the triumph of nature's harmony when she kills her father and sabotages tyranny and dissonance.

Camus' influence on Marqués is apparent. Marqués has taken a rebel-tyrant from *Caligula* and converted him into a tyrant from beginning to end. He strengthens the rebellious force against tyranny by investing in it Caligula's theories and Cherea's ideals. He makes it more cohesive than in *Caligula*, and even demonstrates, for political purposes, how man can and must overcome docility

with respect to the status quo. He emphasizes the necessity to put aside personal gratification, a content with the status quo, when man realizes that the status quo is frustrating the nation's destiny. Don José never achieves this, but his daughter Casandra evolves to the point where she works solely for national ends.

Marqués has personally scoffed "influence study," telling the critics that they are free to attribute to him whatever influences they choose.⁶ Taking his advice seriously, however, uncovers the fact that his drama does bear the mark of his familiarity with the contemporary literary forms and artists in Europe and the Americas. In his early drama *El sol y los Mac Donald* (1948), Marqués draws on Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury* in his portrayal of the decline of Southern nobility, hastened by intolerance, incest and racism. The presentation of the family mansion and portraits recalls O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Gustavo's words reveal a Pirandellian mask which hides true personality: "La máscara que nos oculta ha de caer hoy o mañana . . . La realidad no admite la penumbra . . . La verdad no puede ocultarse."⁷ The adoption of the mask by O'Neill and its appearance on the scene as a concrete object in *The Great God Brown* is later utilized by Marqués in his drama *Carnaval afuera, carnaval adentro* (1960). Man's isolation, his inability to communicate, his claustrophobic existence within four walls—a theme basic to Sartre's *Huis Clos*, Ionesco's *Amédée, ou Comment S'En Débarasser*, and de Pedrolo's *Cruma*—is repeated in Marqués' *El apartamento* (1964). Influence therefore is diffuse in Marqués' work; but it must be kept in mind that influence is not mere imitation; Marqués' originality in adapting the influence to suit his political and humanistic purposes is the true mark of his genius.

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Notes

1. October 28, 1950 marked a nationalist attempt against Governor Muñoz Marín (governor since January 1949) as well as an attempt to seize some towns in the center of the island. However, the governor, aided by the state police and the National Guard, crushed the attempt and imprisoned nationalist leader Albizu Campos. Marqués dramatizes this event at the end of Act I of *La muerte*; the quelling of this rebellion provokes more discontent and finally ends in the *fictional* assassination of the governor in the denouement.

2. Albert Camus, *Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Bruges: Editions Gallimard, 1962), I, 16. Subsequent quotations from this work will refer to this edition.

3. 1952 marked the establishment of the Commonwealth or Estado Libre Asociado of Puerto Rico. It remains in existence today, despite the claims by nationalists that this agreement perpetuates Puerto Rico's colonial status under United States protection and control.

4. René Marqués, *Teatro*, I (2nd ed.; Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural, Inc., 1970), 212. Subsequent quotations from this work will refer to this edition. The underlining is mine.

5. See D. L. Shaw, "René Marqués' *La muerte no entrará en palacio*: An Analysis," *Latin American Theatre Review* 2/1 (Fall 1968), 31-39.

6. See prologue by F. Vázquez Alamo to René Marqués, *Teatro*, II (Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural, Inc., 1971), pp. 7-12.

7. Marqués, *Teatro*, II, op. cit., *El sol y los Mac Donald*, III, 136.