



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (026)

TEXT: *En la ardiente oscuridad*

AUTHOR: Antonio Buero Vallejo

EDITION: Annotated Spanish Edition (Stockcero)

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Author's Prologue and Critical Studies)

1. THE BLINDNESS AS METAPHOR:

Realistic Symbolism:

Buero Vallejo insists that the play is not about "blind people in particular," but about "man in general." Blindness serves as a powerful metaphor for the human condition: our limitations, our ignorance, and our refusal to see the tragic reality of existence.

The "Iron Curtain" of Reality:

The institution where the characters live represents a society that constructs a false sense of happiness ("la moral de acero") to avoid confronting its defects. This is often interpreted as a critique of Francoist Spain, where official propaganda masked social and political problems.

2. THE CONFLICT: IGNACIO VS. CARLOS:

Ignacio (The Tragic Visionary):

He refuses to accept the "lie" of happiness. He yearns for sight (truth/freedom) even if it causes pain. He represents the non-conformist individual.

Carlos (The Defender of Order):

He defends the institution's rules and the collective "happiness." He sees Ignacio as a threat to the community's stability.

The Dialectic:

The conflict isn't just Good vs. Evil; it's a clash between two ways of existing. Ignacio's death is tragic, but his spirit "infects" Carlos, who ends up adopting Ignacio's doubts.

3. "POSIBILISMO" IN THEATER:

Buero Vallejo advocated for "Posibilismo" (Possibilism): writing plays that could pass censorship and be performed within the regime, yet still convey a critical message through symbolism and subtext. This contrasts with "Impossibilismo" (writing radical plays that would never be staged).

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Political Allegory:

How does the "Institution" in the play reflect the structures of a totalitarian state? Discuss the role of "Don Pablo" and the rules of the center.

The Ending:

Analyze the final scene. Does Carlos's final line ("...ahora están brillando las estrellas...") suggest hope or despair? Has Ignacio truly won?

Disability Studies:

While metaphorical, the play deals with physical limitations. How does Buero portray the psychology of exclusion versus integration?



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PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Buero Vallejo, Antonio.** *En la ardiente oscuridad*. Stockcero, 2004.
- **Halsey, Martha T.** *Antonio Buero Vallejo*. Twayne Publishers, 1973.
- **Doménech, Ricardo.** *El teatro de Buero Vallejo*. Gredos, 1973.

PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. *What is the main setting of the play?*

- A) A prison in Madrid
- B) An institution for the blind
- C) A hospital during the Civil War
- D) A rural village in Andalusia

Correct Answer: B

2. *Which character represents the spirit of non-conformity and tragic anguish?*

- A) Carlos
- B) Juana
- C) Ignacio
- D) Don Pablo

Correct Answer: C

3. *What term is used to describe Buero Vallejo's strategy of writing critical plays within the limits of censorship?*

- A) Surrealism
- B) Esperpento
- C) Posibilismo
- D) Tremendismo

Correct Answer: C

4. *How does the play end for Ignacio?*

- A) He escapes the institution
- B) He regains his sight
- C) He dies (accidentally or murdered)
- D) He becomes the director

Correct Answer: C

5. *The play is often interpreted as an allegory of:*

- A) The Spanish Civil War
- B) Life under the Franco dictatorship
- C) The discovery of America
- D) The industrial revolution

Correct Answer: B

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