



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 "Imposibilismo" (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?

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.



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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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