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THE HUMAN DILEMMA IN THE THEATERS OF ALEJANDRO CASONA
AND ANTONIO BUERO VALLEJO

By

Michael A. Oke

B.A., University of Montana, 1965

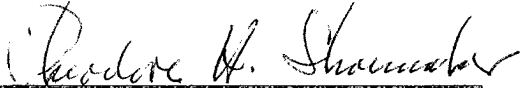
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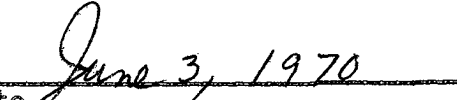
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Spanish drama in the twentieth century has not been of uniform quality. With the exception of a few dramatists such as Federico García Lorca, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, and Jacinto Benavente, there was a lack of good Spanish playwrights during the first thirty years of this century. However, in the past four decades there has appeared new dramatic talent which has raised the level of Spanish drama and put it on a par with contemporary European drama. Two of the new dramatists who have been especially responsible for this revival are Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo.

Alejandro Casona, whose real surname was Rodríguez-Alvarez, first came into theatrical prominence when, in 1934, he won the coveted Lope de Vega prize for his drama, La sirena varada. This prize, which is awarded annually by the city of Madrid to the dramatist who submits the best unperformed original drama, was awarded, surprisingly, to a little known school teacher from the region of Asturias, Casona. Although the prize winning drama is a good one, according to Juan Rodríguez-Castellano the awarding of the prize to Casona was partially due to the fact that the Spanish theater had arrived at a lamentable state of inertia and was producing works of scant originality and poor quality.¹ Nonetheless, Casona was to prove himself an outstanding dramatist. He, along with García Lorca and Max Aub, has

been credited with restoring to the Spanish theater its best traditions, particularly the poetic impulse characteristic of that theater.²

Casona was fresh and original. He went against the predominant trends in the twentieth century Spanish theater. These trends called for plays which made little demand upon the audience; dramas which glossed over serious issues with facile optimism, presented only superficial or unquestioned moral theses, and divorced themselves from the social conditions of the time.³ While there also appeared along with Casona other dramatists of merit, his dramas continued to be among the best written in Spanish for thirty years following the success of La sirena varada.

In 1949, fifteen years after Casona won the Lope de Vega prize, another unknown dramatist surprised the theatrical world in Spain by winning that same prize. Buero won this honor for his drama, Historia de una escalera. Casona was in exile, living in Argentina, in 1949 and the Spanish theater had lapsed into the same lethargic state from which he had begun to release it. The Spanish Civil War had caused dramatists such as Casona to flee the country and had caused the death of others, notably that of García Lorca. Rodríguez-Castellano states that the theater of post-Civil War Spain presented "for the most part, comedies whose chief merit was the avoidance of any issue likely to bring the wrath of a politically sensitive government down upon its head."⁴

Buero was soon acclaimed as a leader of the Spanish theater. He provided the Spanish stage with a vitality which brought it back into

the mainstream of the modern European theater.⁵ Francesco Vian, writing in 1952, said: "Antonio Buero Vallejo es de los pocos dramaturgos españoles de hoy que ofrecen promesa de revitalizar el teatro contemporáneo de España y elevarlo a un nivel comparable al de otros países."⁶ Buero, like Casona, has been influential in the Spanish theater. He has introduced new dramatic themes. Among a group of young dramatists who attempted in 1946 to break away from the Spanish theater in order to produce dramas more in keeping with the times, Buero was the first to produce commercially. His Historia de una escalera served as a point of departure for a generation of realistic young playwrights.⁷

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE AUTHORS

Alejandro Casona grew up in the mountainous region of northern Spain known as Asturias. This area, which is rich in folklore, superstitions, and natural beauty, is where the small village of Besullo may be found. There on March 23, 1903, Casona was born to a family of educators. One sister, Matutina, became a pediatrician, but Casona's other sisters and brother became, like their parents, teachers. Casona prepared for a teaching career, but demonstrated early in his life an inclination towards the theater as well. Casona spent the first two years of high school in Gijón in his native province, but finished high school in Marcia and then, in 1922, enrolled in the Escuela Superior del Magisterio in Madrid. His graduation thesis for this school, written in 1926, may reflect his interest in the theater, for its title is "El demonio en la literatura y el arte."

In 1929 Casona wrote a play, Otra vez el diablo, but he was not able to get it produced then. However, his interest in the theater was rewarded in 1932 when he was named director of the Misiones Pedagógicas, an organization of the newly installed Republican government, established to bring the theater to the rural and remote villages of Spain. For four years, until 1936, Casona directed this organization and during that time also gained recognition for La sirena varada. With the outbreak of the Civil War Casona was labeled a Republican and had to flee Spain to save his life. Early in 1937 he made his escape and joined a theatrical troupe with which he toured Central and South America. In July, 1939, Casona and his wife and a daughter settled in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He also had a villa in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Between 1963 and 1965, he made visits to Spain to help produce some of his plays. He died in Madrid in September, 1965, a victim of heart disease.⁸

In September 1916, Antonio Buero Vallejo was born in Guadalajara, Spain. Buero's father was a military engineer, but Buero displayed an interest in painting rather than engineering. His comfortable, middle-class family provided him with the necessary lessons in painting and he has become an accomplished artist. Buero also showed literary talent at an early age. When he was seventeen he won a literary prize from the Association of Students in his school, the Normal School or Institute of Guadalajara. Buero continued his education at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Madrid, from

which he graduated in 1936. Shortly thereafter he joined the Republican Army in the Civil War and served as a medical-aid corpsman. When the Republic collapsed in 1939 Buero found himself a political prisoner and spent six years, until 1945, in jail.⁹

Buero, after his pardon and release from jail, soon turned to writing, though he continued to paint to earn a living until his literary efforts met with success. By August, 1947, Buero had written two of his most widely acclaimed plays, En la ardiente oscuridad and Historia de una escalera, and had two others in manuscript form.¹⁰ When he won the Lope de Vega prize in 1949, Buero was fully dedicated to a career as a dramatist. Ten years later, in 1959, Buero married Victoria Rodríguez, a young actress, and, as of 1967, they have had two sons, Carlos and Enrique.¹¹

QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR THEATERS

The region of Asturias has had an undeniable influence on the dramas of Casona. The folklore, superstitions, and customs of this region may be seen in Casona's drama, La dama del alba, which is written about the people in Asturias and dedicated by the author to the region. The beauty of Asturias engendered in Casona an appreciation of and fondness for nature. Plays such as La barca sin pescador and La tercera palabra reveal in their plots a belief by Casona in the redemptive qualities of nature and its simple beauty. In both plays people from urban areas find a new and better life for themselves when they are placed in contact with

rural areas where modern civilization has not altered greatly the natural environment. Even the name "Casona" reflects the influence upon the dramatist by his birthplace. Casona adopted the name of his family's home in Besullo, "la Casona" (the Big House), first as a pen name and then as his surname.¹²

Juan Chabás has said that all of Casona's works appear to "brotar como un mundo tierno, de un clima de poesía."¹³ This poetic climate is associated with the worlds of fantasy and imagination which Casona created in his plays. Casona himself said of his theater:

"No olvides que mi teatro tiene sus raíces en la más profunda tradición artística española; es ese entrecruce de imaginación y realidad que ya se da en Cervantes, Calderón, y El Greco. También, es de carácter tradicional lo maravilloso y sobrenatural"¹⁴

Most of the complimentary appraisals of his drama mention in particular Casona's use of fantasy or irreality. According to George Tyler Northup, "Casona has an excellent knowledge of theatrical technique and shows a pleasant mingling of realism and fancy."¹⁵ Often, the fantasy and irreality take the form of evasion, which is an attempt by the characters in the plays to avoid their problems. In plays such as La sirena varada Casona made use of evasion, reported by José García López to be a frequently occurring twentieth century theme.¹⁶ Ricardo and don Joaquín in this play have voluntarily chosen to evade reality by creating an unreal world for themselves. Sirena, on the other hand, has been forced by the unhappy environment in which she lived to seek escape and becomes insane.

Gonzalo Torrente Ballester recognizes Casona as the post-Civil War Spanish leader in the use of evasion as a theme.¹⁷ Casona himself admitted that evasion through escape from reality was characteristic of his theater, but denied that he sought to avoid, by writing about evasion, coming to grips with reality. Shortly before he died, Casona told Rodríguez-Castellano: "No soy escapista que cierra los ojos a la realidad circunstante Lo que ocurre es, sencillamente, que yo no considero sólo como la 'realidad' la angustia, la desesperación, y el sexo. Creo que un sueño es otra realidad tan 'real' como la vigilia."¹⁸

Several critics have agreed with Casona that he did not seek to avoid reality. J.D. Lyon writes that, in Casona's theater "the imperious claims of reality always assert themselves. Casona . . . makes the theme of escapism his dramatic material: a very different thing from writing escapist literature."¹⁹ Víctor Auz Castro credits Casona with bringing realism back to the Spanish theater. After 1930, when Spanish playwrights began to deal with European developments and the reality of Spanish life, this critic asserts, their works were first influenced by such plays as Casona's La sirena varada.²⁰

There is some confusion, however, surrounding the use of the term "realism." Doris K. Arjona states that "heading the rebellion against the realism of the commercialized middle class were the great figures of García Lorca . . . and Alejandro Casona," who "were not satisfied with giving their readers the pleasure of identifying with familiar loves, hates, joys, and sorrows."²¹ Apparently, realism in

this sense refers to the presentation of a reality which was acceptable to middle-class Spanish society rather than to an attempt to report what was real about the life of man. The Spanish theater immediately prior to Casona avoided important issues concerning man's condition in society, and made a few demands upon the audience.

Three other recurrent themes, besides fantasy and realism, in Casona's plays are God, death, and love.²² Casona believed in God and the Catholic faith. This belief is reflected in his use of these three themes, particularly by the form which they take as protagonists in his plays. Though Casona did not personify God or love, they are often spiritually present. In La tercera palabra, a play which combines all three themes, the presence of God is made evident by the lightning and thunder which occur when Pablo prays to God not to let Marga die. For Ricardo Jordán in La barca sin pescador, love, which comes from God, serves as the basis for the strength he finds to defeat the devil. He has sold his soul to the devil in order to maintain his position of wealth, but does not suffer eternal damnation. The love which Ricardo finds in Estela helps to defeat the devil by enabling Ricardo to kill within himself the greedy, callous man who made the original pact. Satan, symbolic of eternal death, appears in this same play in human form. Yet, death is not always personified as evil in Casona's plays. "La dama" in La dama del alba appears as death in the form of a lovely lady who brings the ultimate peace and serenity to the prodigal daughter, Angélica.

God is present in the lives of men; love helps men find personal and spiritual redemption; and even death may be as benevolent as "la dama." These messages in Casona's plays suggest that he was optimistic. One critic has stated that Casona's work reflects the optimism of a teacher who expects problems to be solved.²³ Casona did not remain in Spain during the Civil War, nor did he have to live there after the war under the repressive regime which Franco imposed upon Spain. Writers have not been free in Spain to express any opinion they wish without fear of possible governmental reprisal. Thus set apart from the restrictive influences to which Buero and other dramatists in Spain have been exposed, Casona lived in an environment more likely to produce optimism. He did suffer from his forced separation and exile from Spain, but, in spite of the sadness this caused, his optimism remained undiminished and he retained a faith in mankind and in Spain.²⁴ There is in Casona's theater a dream of perfection and humanity in man, a dream of which only poets and men of good will are capable.²⁵

Casona preceded Buero in the Spanish theater by fifteen years. Undeniably, he has influenced Buero, particularly in the area of fantasy and realism. Casona's blending of these two elements is fundamental in the work of Buero, for the fantasy which pervades Buero's and other contemporary dramatists' plays stems in large measure from Casona's influence.²⁶ Though Casona exerted an influence upon Buero, Robert Kersner notes that Historia de una escalera represented a break with the tradition of Buero's predecessors,

Casona and García Lorca.²⁷ This influence, then, has been less complete. Even within the realm of fantasy, José Sánchez notes that Buero shares "the attitudes of García Lorca and Casona . . . and yet has broken away from recent literary traditions."²⁸

Buero apparently has not had positive influence on the theater of Casona, who was aware of Buero's drama, but said of it: "En cuanto al teatro español contemporáneo estimo de valor innegable al que hace Buero . . . seguido de Carlos Muñoz, Alfonso Sastre, Lauro Olmo, y otros; pero para mí todos ellos 'cultivan un teatro rabiosamente realista que a mí no me va,' aunque comprendo su temática perfectamente."²⁹

Buero has revealed in his plays, in addition to influence by Casona, certain effects of his personal history. The artist's training which he received, particularly the development of an eye for detail, has enabled him to picture with detail and clarity the lives and the environment of his characters. His first love, painting, served as an invaluable apprenticeship in observation.³⁰

The Spanish Civil War and its aftermath have also influenced Buero's writing. In El tragaluz, for example, the plot revolves around an incident which occurred in the life of one family during that war. Also, Buero still bears the stigma of having been a member of the Republican Army during the Civil War. There is a minority in Spain which opposes his works and Buero himself because his Republican service has not been forgotten and because

he has refused to take sides in politics since the war.³¹ This opposition exists within the government also. The post-Civil War government has censored all plays and determined their representability on the basis of whether or not they are offensive to the government's political dogma or prestige. Though not always consistent, this censorship had, as of 1954, prevented the production of at least one of Buero's plays, Aventura en lo gris.³²

Despite the difficulties imposed upon him by Franco's Spain, Buero has continued to earn the respect of drama critics. He possesses and has perfected the skills necessary to write good quality dramas; especially his delineation of characters and development of conflicts have stood out.³³ Buero's character delineation reveals his protagonists in speeches by them which contain plain language, effective because of its simplicity and directness.

Some credit for Buero's success must also go to the fact that he does not compromise with expediency; his plays do not suffer from a lack of substance due to an attempt by Buero to avoid issues which might offend either the Spanish government or the audience. While Buero does not openly invite government objection by writing material directly critical of it, he does, in plays such as Historia de una escalera, portray problems concerning poverty and social immobility which imply a need for improvement and for which the government may in some degree be held responsible. His dramas are original and attentive to the conditions of contemporary

society in Spain. Rodríguez-Castellano writes that Buero has resisted the exigencies of expediency, calling for the avoidance of controversy, which exist within the atmosphere of the Spanish theater, and adds: "¡Qué lejos estamos con él (Buero) del teatro discursivo que busca éxitos por medio de la frase ingeniosa o del teatro de evasión que . . . ofrece un mundo mejor, donde las angustias son ficticias o son mínimas!"³⁴

Buero's theater also possesses a universality which transcends the particular problems and situations of his characters. He gives his theater universality by creating characters who are representative of fundamental qualities in human life.³⁵ Dimas in Irene o el tesoro represents the type of miserliness and greed which blinds men to the needs of others. In Hoy es fiesta Pilar is representative of the qualities of goodness and compassion. She stands out against the background of petty quarrels and concerns exhibited by her neighbors. Characters such as Dimas and Pilar are not, however, beyond the scope of reality as human beings. They fit within the environment and situation of their dramas and reveal themselves in ordinary interaction with other persons in the plays.

Buero does not avoid dealing with the problems of man in society, but his characters, like those of Casona, do try to escape their own difficulties. According to García Pavón, Buero's Historia de una escalera brought to the theater "problemas de honda entraña colectiva, que superaron el escapismo o los conflictos de índole individual o de vida privada estricta, que dominaron y dominan el teatro más común."³⁶

Buero's characters, confronted with these problems, such as personal failure and inability to cope with the demands of society, try to evade the reality of their lives and, in so doing, demonstrate the insufficiency of reason alone in solving problems.³⁷

Buero always presents in his dramas a realistic portrayal of the condition of man and his problems. Often this portrayal gives a melancholy tone to the dramas, for in real life man meets with failure and disappointment as well as with success. Ángel del Río considers Historia de una escalera to be "obra melancólica en la cual entrecruzan vidas monótonas de gente humilde en quienes prenden las ilusiones para desvanecerse con los años y renacer más tarde en los hijos."³⁸ Buero uses this melancholy as a means of expressing in tragedy man's noble inquiry into the sources of his own nature, but because his dramas are tragic some critics have been led to characterize Buero as a pessimistic writer.³⁹

There are critics, however, who join Buero in denying that he is a pessimist. G. Torrente Ballester, for example, prefers to say that Buero, rather than being a realist, is a dramatist whose point of departure is an exceptional fidelity to the time in which he lives and to the society which surrounds him.⁴⁰ Such fidelity does constitute a type of realism, that which carefully observes and reports what is seen. Within the context of his article, Torrente Ballester is making the point that Buero is not a realist if realism is equated with pessimism. To those who have accused him of pessimism, Buero has replied:

La mayoría de las obras maestras del teatro han sido tragedias (y) el autor genial de cualquier época escribe, por lo común, tragedias. De igual manera el autor joven no puede ser, ni biológica ni socialmente, pesimista. Vive por definición de la edad de la ilusión y el optimismo Yo me veo por dentro como un hombre y un escritor de tendencia trágica, que es, aproximadamente, el contrario de pesimismo a secas. La tragedia teatral es signo de . . . esa risa valerosa y conmovida que se exhala sin cerrar los ojos. Es el signo de la vitalidad de un pueblo ante su destino.⁴¹

Buero, then, considers himself to be a tragedian. According to one critic, Buero's grasp of the tragic situation, a situation which is not confined to a single event but rather derived from the totality of the situation which surrounds the characters, has made him the greatest tragedian in contemporary Spain.⁴² His concept of tragedy corresponds to that of the classical Greeks; he defines tragedy as the conflict between liberty (free will) and necessity (the limitations imposed upon man by other individuals, by society, or by an enigmatic destiny).⁴³

In Buero's tragedy the limitations upon free will are more often imposed upon the characters by themselves or by society than by an enigmatic destiny. By deceiving themselves with their own egoism, greed, or prejudice, the characters lose a true vision of their common humanity with other people.⁴⁴ The blind students in En la ardiente oscuridad refuse to recognize the tragic nature of their handicap. They limit their freedom because they have established artificial limits upon the extent and nature of their activities. Although these blind students believe that they can lead a normal life, their orderly world is easily shattered by the presence of Ignacio, who is

bitterly aware of his blindness, yet aspires as the others do not to really see and to escape the shackles of blindness.

Ignacio also exemplifies another characteristic of Buero's tragedies, for a striking constant in them is the theme of the individual in conflict with the values of those who surround him.⁴⁵ His hope for sight reflects an optimism which the other blind students do not possess and the triumph of his ideas, as they are adopted by his opponent, Carlos, further indicates that Buero is not pessimistic. Amalia in Madrugada prefers love to wealth, in direct contrast to the relatives of Mauricio, her dead husband. She triumphs also and thus the conflicts which she and Ignacio have with the other characters in their plays provide the basis for the plots and for the tragic, yet spiritually triumphant conclusions to the plays.

THE THESIS PROBLEM

Essentially, the dramatists' theaters seem to differ in the following ways:

(1) Casona's characters are often creative, imaginative, or dynamic individuals; Buero's characters are often weaker individuals than those of Casona. They seldom succeed in whatever they try to accomplish.

(2) In Casona's plays the protagonists are often found in strange settings and facing unusual problems; in the plays of Buero both the setting and the problems are often quite ordinary.

(3) Casona's characters try to solve their problems by extravagant means or by escaping from them; Buero's characters

may also try to escape, but seldom take strong measures to deal with their problems.

(4) Casona's characters are often misled by their own illusions or self-deception so that they behave in strange ways; Buero's characters may have goals which they dream of attaining, but the pursuit of these goals is not very vigorous.

(5) Casona's plays usually end happily and solutions are provided for their problems; Buero's plays usually end without apparent triumph or relief for the protagonists and their problems are not fully solved.

These differences indicate that Buero is a realist in the sense which a noted authority on the Spanish stage, Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, gives to the term "realism." This authority defines the term by writing that the realist would give "igual importancia a la fealdad que a la belleza, a lo sucio que a lo limpio. El realismo pintó a los hombres como son, no como pudieron o debieron ser."⁴⁶ Buero complies with this definition because he insists upon producing an accurate portrayal of human life. "For him a dramatic work should have a purpose and mirror life in all its manifestations: joy and laughter as well as tears and remorse."⁴⁷

Realism is sometimes equated with pessimism. A dictionary of current literary terms defines realism in the arts as "a loosely used term meaning truth to observed facts of life (especially when they are gloomy)."⁴⁸ While it is true that in Buero's theater there is little of the kind of happiness found in Casona's plays, it cannot be said

of Buero that, because he is a realist, he is a pessimist. Certain indications of Buero's optimism have been cited in the present study, indications which reveal a subtle optimism based upon the resilience and inner strength of man, rather than upon the possibilities he may have for living a happy life. How, where, and in what ways does Buero's optimism manifest itself? How does it compare with Casona's optimism? These are questions which the present study will attempt to answer.

In order to present a balanced selection of the two dramatists' plays, seven by each man have been chosen as primary sources. These plays, selected as representative of each author's theater, are:

<u>Play</u>	<u>Abbreviated title</u>	<u>First performed</u>
By Casona:		
<u>La sirena varada</u>	<u>Sirena</u>	1934
<u>Nuestra Natacha</u>	<u>Natacha</u>	1936
<u>Prohibido suicidarse en primavera</u>	<u>Prohibido</u>	1937
<u>La dama del alba</u>	<u>Dama</u>	1944
<u>La barca sin pescador</u>	<u>Barca</u>	1945
<u>Los árboles mueren de pie</u>	<u>Árboles</u>	1949
<u>La tercera palabra</u>	<u>Palabra</u>	1953
By Buero:		
<u>Historia de una escalera</u>	<u>Historia</u>	1949

<u>En la ardiente oscuridad</u>	<u>Oscuridad</u>	1950
<u>Madrugada</u>	<u>Madrugada</u>	1953
<u>Irene o el tesoro</u>	<u>Irene</u>	1954
<u>Hoy es fiesta</u>	<u>Hoy</u>	1956
<u>Las cartas boca abajo</u>	<u>Cartas</u>	1957
<u>El tragaluz</u>	<u>Tragaluz</u>	1967

The abbreviated titles will be used only when referring to quotations from the plays.⁴⁹

Both Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo have excellent credentials in the twentieth century Spanish theater. Therefore, they may be compared as equals in dramatic ability. Their plays are among the most widely read and performed in that theater. Within these plays the protagonists differ in their individual characteristics, their strengths and weaknesses. All of them serve, however, to reveal the dramatists' beliefs concerning man. The way in which the characters are used by the dramatists, the combinations of traits they possess as individuals and collectively, and the effect which the interplay of these traits has upon the outcome of the plot provide, when analyzed, a worthwhile approach towards providing answers for the questions posed by the thesis problem.

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- ¹⁵George Tyler Northup, An Introduction to Spanish Literature

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 461.

¹⁶José García López, Historia de la literatura española (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1964), p. 646.

¹⁷G. Torrente Ballester, Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1956), p. 466.

¹⁸Rodríguez-Castellano, "Mi última conversación con Alejandro Casona," 186.

¹⁹Lyon (ed.), Hoy es fiesta, p. 9.

²⁰Auz Castro, "Panorama of the Spanish Theatre Today," 191.

²¹Doris K. Arjona, "The Spanish Theater of Today," Educational Theater Journal, 11 (December, 1959), 266.

²²Richard E. Chandler and Kessel Schwarz, A New Anthology of Spanish Literature (Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 108.

²³Arjona, op. cit., 267.

²⁴Sánchez (ed.), Historia de una escalera, p. xxix.

²⁵Rodríguez-Castellano, "Mi última conversación con Alejandro Casona," 193, citing José Barro Quesada, "Saloncillo," ABC, Madrid (October, 26, 1965).

²⁶Arjona, op. cit., 268.

²⁷Robert Kersner, "'Historia de una escalera,' A Play in Search of Characters," Homenaje a Rodríguez-Moñino, Vol. I, eds. J. Homer Herriott and others (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1966), p. 280.

²⁸Sánchez (ed.), Historia de una escalera, pp. xiv-xv.

²⁹Rodríguez-Castellano, "Mi última conversación con Alejandro Casona," 187.

³⁰Rodríguez-Castellano (introduction), En la ardiente oscuridad, p. x.

³¹Sánchez, op. cit., p. xvii.

³²Rodríguez-Castellano, "Un nuevo comediógrafo español," 18.

³³M. Manzanares de Cirre (ed.), Un soñador para un pueblo, by Antonio Buero Vallejo (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1966), pp. ix-x.

³⁴Rodríguez-Castellano, "Un nuevo comediógrafo español," 23.

³⁵Ibid., 19.

³⁶F. García Pavón, El teatro social de España (1895-1962) (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1962), p. 135.

³⁷Martha T. Halsey, "The Dreamer in the Tragic Theater of Buero Vallejo," Revista de estudios hispánicos, 2 (November, 1968), 283.

³⁸Ángel del Río, Historia de la literatura española, Tomo II (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), p. 378.

³⁹Rodríguez-Castellano (introduction), En la ardiente oscuridad, p. xiii.

⁴⁰Torrente Ballester, Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea, p. 470.

⁴¹Rodríguez-Castellano, "Un nuevo comediógrafo español," 19.

⁴²Arjona, "The Spanish Theater of Today," 269.

⁴³Halsey, "The Dreamer in the Tragic Theater of Buero Vallejo," 265.

⁴⁴Lyon (ed.), Hoy es fiesta, p. 21.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁴⁶Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, Diccionario de literatura (Madrid: Aguilar, 1949).

⁴⁷Juan Rodríguez-Castellano (ed.), Las Meninas, by Antonio Buero Vallejo (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 2.

⁴⁸A. F. Scott, Current Literary Terms (London: MacMillan, 1967).

⁴⁹Readers unfamiliar with any of the above plays may consult the plot synopses in El arte dramático de Antonio Buero Vallejo, José R. Cortina (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1969), CAPITULO III, "Estudio de los temas y clasificación correspondiente de las obras," pp. 29-58, and Casasa's Obras completas, 2 volumes, edited by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961).

Chapter 2

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

The success of any drama may well depend, in no small measure, upon the skill with which the dramatist has developed and made use of his characters. Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo may, therefore, attribute some of their success in the theater to the fact that their characters are interesting individuals, well portrayed by the author, and serve the purposes of the author. Each of the dramatists presents a wide variety of protagonists within his theater, protagonists which also differ from those of the other dramatist.

While there are differences between the characters of the two dramatists, the protagonists do indicate that Casona and Buero have a fundamental belief in the value of the individual person. Such a belief, in turn, gives added significance to the protagonists, for their impact upon the reader or the audience must be increased by the knowledge that the dramatists consider them, as representative of real people, important. What they say and do may be regarded as significant to the dramatists.

Robert Chandler and Kessel Schwarz report that Casona insisted upon the value and dignity of the individual in a depersonalized world.¹ Dr. Roda in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera and Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie both exemplify this insistence. They are directors of institutions whose purpose it is to care for the individual who has been neglected or mistreated by society. Even

Death in La dama del alba is represented by a lady who shows compassion for the individual and who feels sorry for the loved ones of a person she must take with her. Buero's concern for the individual is most clearly shown in El tragaluz. A Madrid newspaper review says of this play: "El tragaluz nace de una preocupación por el individuo, por el destino de todos y cada uno de nosotros. Y es, además, un grito de individualismo" ² In the play two brothers are discussing the identity of an unknown person appearing on a postcard. Mario, who in his concern for the individual is the opposite of his opportunistic brother Vicente, asks him regarding that individual: "¿Nunca te lo has preguntado tú, ante una postal vieja . . . quién fue éste?" ³

Intangible forces also appear, but less frequently than do individuals, as protagonists in the plays. These forces are important and represent an idea which the dramatist has chosen to symbolize in the plot, but which is not conveniently represented by a character. God, death, and love compose the principal ideas symbolized in Casona's dramas. The devil in La barca sin pescador, though he appears in human form, is a force representing the presence in man's life of evil, temptation, and possible eternal death. In Historia de una escalera, a central protagonist is the stairway. ⁴ It represents for Buero the futility in the lives of those who have given in to the adverse conditions in their environment. In El tragaluz Buero uses a train whistle in the background to serve as a reminder of a tragedy involving a train in the life of a certain family. The whistle recalls to mind an act of greed and treachery which has not

been atoned for by the man who committed it.

Whether individual or force, the protagonists of each dramatist are found in environments which differ from those of the other dramatist. According to Juan Chabás, "las criaturas dramáticas de Casona [están] envueltas en la atmósfera que ellas mismas crean con su acción y su palabra en ese mundo" ⁵ Thus, Casona's characters create, to a certain extent, their own environment, particularly when they have escaped from reality and constructed in fantasy new lives or ways of living for themselves. Ricardo in La sirena varada has created his own unreal world within the large old house he acquired. Similarly, the mother in La dama del alba lives within the world of perpetual mourning she has maintained since the apparent death of her daughter Angélica. These worlds which Casona's characters have created for themselves bear little resemblance to the more common and mundane conditions in which Buero's characters are most often found. Buero generally uses lower-class characters in their everyday environment. ⁶ Particularly in plays such as Historia de una escalera, Hoy es fiesta, and Las cartas boca abajo one may find protagonists who have little or no success in changing or escaping from the places in which they live.

In their own particular surroundings, the protagonists perform not only as individuals but also as a part of the communal personality. Doris K. Arjona notes that Buero has a sense of the individual as a part of the communal personality, especially in Historia de una escalera and Hoy es fiesta. ⁷ Each of the characters

in these two plays has a separate identity, but his personality is also a component part of the world which he may unknowingly share with other characters in the play. In the second of these plays, for example, doña Nieves represents the hopeful part of the communal personality in the tenement house, while Nati represents the bitterness in that same community. Some of Casona's characters seem unaware of or unwilling to assume their role within their community, or, in a larger sense, within the community of all mankind. Fernando and Chele in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera do not realize until they stumble upon Fernando's brother Juan in an asylum for potential suicides that they have anything in common with persons less fortunate than they. For Pablo in La tercera palabra civilization is to be scorned and avoided. He, Fernando, and Chole must all be taught by someone else that they cannot exist independently of other people.

This brief description of the two dramatists' protagonists indicates that each has believed in the value of the individual, but also that their protagonists may be forces symbolic of different concepts, may live in different environments, and may have different roles within their local community or the community of man. It is appropriate, therefore, that each dramatist differs from the other in his selection of characters to express an idea on the same general subject. As an example, one may point to the question of what is moral or immoral in the behavior of man. Casona's characters are often less ordinary than Buero's and he has chosen, in La barca sin pescador, the devil to discuss the distinctions between legal

and moral guilt.⁸ "El caballero de negro," as the devil is called in this play, points out to Ricardo that while merely willing a crime to be committed may not be legally punishable, it is quite sufficient to convict him who wills it of a moral transgression: "Hay crímenes sin sangre, que no están en el Código El hecho material no me importa. Basta con la intención moral. Pon tú la voluntad de matar, y yo me encargo de lo demás." (Barca, pp. 447 and 449) Another supernatural character, the lady who is Death in La dama del alba, tells the prodigal daughter Angélica that what is really important is not that Angélica should regain her position in the family but that she should preserve the good memory which the mother has of her.

Since Buero writes more often about common people than does Casona, he leaves to them the expression of moral truths about man and the way he conducts his life. Doña Nieves, the fortune teller in Hoy es fiesta, says that one must always hope because hope is eternal. Her words, spoken soon after the tenement dwellers who are her neighbors have had their hopes for winning the lottery crushed and after Silverio has just lost Pilar, indicate that even in the hours of darkest despair man should not give up. Juan Guerrero Zamora writes that Buero makes in his plays a sketch of real life which reveals degradation in human society, but also shows "the seeds of salvation contained in the popular classes."⁹ In Historia de una escalera this salvation, which may be both physical and spiritual, becomes possible because Fernando hijo and Carmina hija have not given up. Their parents, in that they have succumbed to the adverse

influences of poverty and social immobility, symbolize the degradation of the human spirit. The children, who are not afraid to hope in spite of their unhappy surroundings, represent the salvation of their own spirit from despair and perhaps of themselves from the poverty of their physical environment.

Casona and Buero have also used different characters to express the belief that there exist happiness and hope as well as sorrow and despair in the life of man, and that this truth must be recognized by man. Often, Casona uses older people to get this point across. Telva in La dama del alba and the grandmother in La barca sin pescador are examples. One of Casona's most interesting characters, Telva, who is a family servant and friend, tells the bereaved mother that the family should not be kept in perpetual mourning over the death of Angélica. The grandmother, prior to Ricardo Jordán's arrival, laments the lack of cheer which has pervaded the home of Estela Anderson since the death of her husband Peter. Both of these old women have refused to accept unhappiness as a permanent condition of their lives or of the lives of those for whom they care. Buero, on the other hand, chooses younger people in many instances to find a balance between unhappiness and the possibility for a better life. Fernando hijo and Carmina hija in Historia de una escalera certainly see life in a broader perspective than their parents do. These young people realize that there may be hardships to overcome before they succeed in extracting themselves from the tenement building, but are hopeful enough to try. In Las cartas boca abajo Juanito

is not discouraged or defeated by the failures of his parents. He finally convinces them that he may succeed where they have not.

The balanced view of life which these protagonists of Casona and Buero possess reflect the balance between the defects and the admirable qualities which may be found in the personalities of the protagonists. Just as life is composed of both good and bad things, so the personalities of the dramatists' protagonists generally are composed of good and bad qualities. Some protagonists, it is true, seem to be totally bad or completely good. On the negative side, the miserly Dimas in Irene o el tesoro and the spiteful Leonor in Madrugada have no apparent redeeming features. Among Casona's characters Mauricio "el otro" in Los árboles mueren de pie appears entirely devoid of goodness. To the other extreme, it is difficult to find anything which is offensive about Pilar in Buero's Hoy es fiesta or about the two maiden aunts in Casona's La tercera palabra.

Commonly, however, the protagonists as individuals and as a group possess a fairly even mixture of character flaws and desirable characteristics. In Nuestra Natacha and La sirena varada, for example, one finds characters who refuse to face reality and characters who insist upon facing it. Lalo in the first of these plays rejects reality and prefers the sheltered world of a student. Natacha eventually causes him to abandon his position. Ricardo in La sirena varada is called upon by don Florín to face reality, including the truth about Sirena. Thus there is balance in the plays among those who avoid reality and those who advocate it. Among

Buero's characters Mario in El tragaluz insists that his family recognize the truth about the death of the younger sister Elvira. Even though this truth has already caused his father to go insane, Mario's concern for the individual makes him confront his brother Vicente, who is forced to reveal his guilt concerning Elvira's death. Mario's ability to face the truth, even when it is bitter, counters the essentially undesirable trait of seeking to avoid the truth, which Vicente and the mother exhibit. Like Mario is Juan in Las cartas boca abajo. Though his wife Adela refuses to accept the unhappy truth that she and Juan have not succeeded in creating a good marriage, Juan realizes this truth and offers her hope for improving their situation: "Quizás esta noche logremos lo que no hemos logrado durante años: poner las cartas boca arriba, confiar el uno en el otro; aprender, en definitiva . . . , a envejecer juntos." (Cartas, p. 56)

The variety of flaws or undesirable characteristics found among the two dramatists' protagonists may be derived from defects within their personality or from pressures in their environment which cause them to make, in the eyes of the audience, incorrect choices or responses. Often the undesirable consequences; such as poverty, mental anguish, and loneliness; which the protagonists suffer as result of their actions are derived from a combination of internal and external causes. In the cases of Fernando and Urbano in Historia de una escalera the poverty and spiritual stagnation which has come to beset their families result from a combination of

their own lack of willpower and the social immobility which characterizes their society. Robert Kersner writes that these two men recognize their potential for another existence, but are unable to translate their consciousness into action.¹⁰ Señorita Crespo in Nuestra Natacha is similar to Fernando and Urbano in that her personality flaw restricts her behavior to the detriment of herself and others, the students in the reformatory. Her inflexibility or unwillingness to accept new ideas, along with the outmoded concept of juvenile reform prevalent in her society, combine to assure that she continues to insist upon strict discipline as the only method of reforming the students. Referring to the relaxation of discipline which Natacha's enlightened approach to reform requires, señorita Crespo says: "Aquí no hace cada uno más que lo que le gusta. Si las cosas siguen así, esto, más que un Reformatorio, va a parecer una colonia de vacaciones." (Natacha, p. 162)

There are also characters whose behavior causes some kind of bad effect who appear to act in harmful ways independent of adverse outside influences. The maliciousness of Leonor in Madrugada has no apparent association with a condition in her society and does cause Amalia to suffer. The ingratitude and selfishness of Mauricio "el otro" in Los árboles mueren de pie results in great unhappiness in the home of Balboa, though that home tried to treat him well.

Sirena in Casona's play about her offers an example of a protagonist whose defect, the inability to face reality which leads her to insanity, has been caused by external forces almost entirely.

One can clearly perceive that Sirena has been driven mad by an unhappy environment. Kessel Schwarz notes that Sirena, along with don Joaquín, seeks a fantasy world to avoid the cruelty of the real one.¹¹ It is more accurate to say that fantasy sought her in the form of insanity, for she is not a weak-willed person. She exhibits towards the end of the play, when she resists Ricardo's efforts to bring on her insanity again, a strength of character which indicates that only adverse conditions, not a weak will, could have caused her to go insane. The father in Buero's El tragaluz fought a losing battle to insanity after seeing his son Vicente take away all the family provisions, causing the starvation of the baby Elvira.

Discussing personality defects and admirable qualities in general terms, the present study has demonstrated that they are in balance among the characters and that they may be derived from internal or external causes. What, specifically are some of these defects and qualities common to characters in both theaters? How do these traits counterbalance each other? Some have already been mentioned. Lalo in Nuestra Natacha and Ricardo in La sirena varada exhibit, as noted, the weakness of being unable to face reality. Neither of them has been forced to abandon reality by the type of hardships faced by Sirena; their inability stems from an unwillingness to accept the tedium of their daily lives and the responsibilities of the real world. Their self-centered search for a more pleasant way of living blinds them to the needs of those around them, but for both of them there appears a person with the strength

to make them leave their artificially contrived world. Natacha involves Lalo in helping the reformatory students and, in so doing, causes him to take interest in the world beyond the confines of student life. Rodríguez-Castellano has called don Florín in La sirena varada "la única persona que representa la razón y demuestra que el ansia de verdad es instintiva en nosotros."¹² Don Florín advises Ricardo to permit that Sirena be cured of her insanity. Ricardo's eventual acceptance of this advice indicates that even in those who voluntarily have chosen to avoid reality the desire to know the truth remains.

Rather than seek the kind of physical separation from reality which Ricardo achieves, Buero's characters often reveal the weakness of being unable to face reality by succumbing to the harsh realities of their unhappy lives so that their view of life becomes distorted by despair or bitterness. They lose a clear vision of the even balance between the good and the bad which constitutes reality, and the duty of those who are capable of facing the truth becomes to correct the others' distorted view of it. In En la ardiente oscuridad, Ignacio takes it upon himself to show to the other blind students the truth about their handicap. He ultimately succeeds in convincing only one person, Carlos, and then only at the cost of his own life.

Ignacio's limited success indicates that some characters in Buero's theater do not find the strength or the help necessary to return to reality. Irene in Irene o el tesoro never does abandon

her illusion of the "duende." In Casona's theater there are also examples of such a failure, for Daniel the blind painter in La sirena varada and Hans in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera never give up their particular forms of irreality. The inability of these characters to live without some form of self-deception reveals a personality defect. Conversely, the protagonists in both theaters demonstrate strength and admirable qualities when they confront their problems instead of running away from or ignoring them. Ruth Richardson writes that in Casona's theater the characters only find happiness when they behave ethically and confront the reality which life affords them.¹³ Ricardo Jordán in La barca sin pescador, for example, acquires an inner strength born of knowing he has at last behaved ethically when he mentally kills the greedy man who was his former self. Silverio in Hoy es fiesta at last determines to face with dignity the consequences which may follow his confession to Pilar of the guilt he feels is his for the death of her daughter. Significantly, Buero places Silverio's final determination to confess just after this man has helped Daniela face the truth about the tragic need her mother has for her. At the time when Silverio becomes willing to reveal his own shortcomings, he helps another person to recognize them in a loved one.

Closely associated with the ability to face reality, and often a means by which it becomes possible to do so, is the capability which some characters possess to be touched by and react positively to the influence of love. This inner sensitivity helps the characters

find the contentment which has escaped them. According to Ruth Gillispie, Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie finds that a pious lie and illusions are not infallible solutions to human problems.¹⁴ He also discovers, when he becomes aware of the mutual love between him and Isabel, that he cannot seek fulfillment in his personal life only by providing through deception this fulfillment for others. Buero has also created characters who profit from the influence of love. Most outstanding is Amalia in Madrugada, whom Sergio Nerva has called "una alma redimida, purificada por el amor."¹⁵ Her love for her deceased husband enables her to defeat his greedy relatives and even they are affected by this example of love:

Dámaso. Y ojalá que esta noche nos sirva a los dos para algo, Leonor Adiós, Amalia. No nos juzgue demasiado mal... Quizás nuestro mayor delito ha sido...la pobreza.

Lorenzo. Usted nos ha vencido. No era difícil, con el dinero a sus espaldas...

Amalia. No era el dinero lo que estaba a mis espaldas.

Lorenzo. (Sardónico.) ¡Ah! ¿No? ¿Qué era?

Amalia. (Muy dulce.) El amor. (Madrugada, p. 202)

The relatives, who have behaved "like reptiles," recover their dignity upon recognizing their sickening obsession with money.¹⁶

When characters fail to respond to the stimuli which might cause them to improve their lives, they suffer from the personal defect of being inflexible. Though they may, as in the case of señorita Crespo in Nuestra Natacha, appear to be strong-willed, they are often simply afraid to change. Perhaps the best examples

of this defect among Buero's characters are the blind students in En la ardiente oscuridad. Initially, they respond to Ignacio's sobering influence. His bitterly truthful approach to the fact of their mutual blindness awakens these students, with the exception of Carlos, to the tragic nature of their handicap. Ignacio is concerned about the spiritual blindness of these students as they examine their position in the world of those who see, as well as about the physical blindness of the eyes. As Rodríguez-Castellano states, Ignacio is not content to go through life with blindness of the soul.¹⁷ After Carlos has killed Ignacio, the other students accept his death as the defeat of his ideas and are no longer willing or able to maintain his bitterly honest attitude towards blindness. They return to their false happiness, for as individuals and as a group they are too weak to change and to face reality without Ignacio's leadership. The real tragedy of the play, therefore, stems not from Ignacio's death but from the inner, spiritual blindness of the students and from their inability to change. In the end, only Carlos comes to accept Ignacio's ideas.

Self-deprecation, sometimes in the form of an inferiority complex, appears as a flaw in the personality of both Casona's and Buero's characters. The would-be suicides in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera serve as examples in Casona's theater. Among these characters Juan most clearly reveals feelings of inferiority when he tells Chole: "No servía... ¡No he servido nunca!" (Prohibido, p. 259) Silverio in Hoy es fiesta is a

character in Buero's theater who thinks very little of himself. Though he has compassion and forgiveness for the faults of others, he has little for his own guilt. Both Juan and Silverio begin to regain their self-respect when they serve others. The willingness to serve causes them to see beyond their own, private worlds in which they have been unhappy. At the end of the play Juan provides companionship for Alicia, who also has regained self-respect by helping others. Silverio, as he helps Daniela and doña Balbina, finds the strength to confess his guilt to Pilar.

This willingness and capability to serve exists in other characters also, particularly in Casona's theater. Ricardo Jordán's words to Estela in La barca sin pescador demonstrate his desire to stay on in the village and serve those whom he once thought only to pay for the harm he may have caused them: "Ahora soy un hombre sin más riqueza que las manos, como se viene al mundo. Uno de los suyos. Déjeme trabajar a su lado." (Barca, p. 493) He has found true contentment in working with Estela rather than in trying to accumulate wealth. In Nuestra Natacha Lalo's service to the reformatory students helps him learn to accept responsibility outside of the student life he has maintained for himself. Sainz de Robles observes that in nearly all of Casona's plays there is a person, such as Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie, charged with teaching something.¹⁸ Mauricio does more than just hope for a better treatment of sad and lonely people forgotten by society; he teaches Isabel and the audience that such people can and should be taken

care of by others. He is interested in curing the soul of unhappy people: "Lo que estamos ensayando aquí es una beneficencia pública para el alma. De los males del cuerpo ya hay muchos que se ocupan." (Arboles, p. 596)

In his characterization of Sofía in Irene o el tesoro Buero shows that well intentioned service to others, though it may be an admirable quality in a character, does not always prove sufficient to alleviate suffering, particularly mental anguish. Sofía, whose service to the family of Dimas as a cook may help satisfy Irene's physical need for food, does not succeed in consoling Irene, though she tries: Dios te ayudará: tú lo verás. Él consuela siempre. Ya ves, a mí me ha dado los pucheros y no necesito más." (Irene, p. 210) Irene remains despondent, but, with the coming of Juanito the "duende," Sofía's words of consolation do prove to be prophetic. "La voz" which directs Juanito may be the voice of God.

For those who suffer and do not find relief through the love of others, by regaining their self-respect, or by serving others, there is another admirable trait, patient and even hopeful resignation to one's problems, which helps some of them. Resignation differs from despair in that it admits hardship but retains hope; while despair may either fail to admit responsibility for hardship or deny that it exists, but does not recognize the possibility or hope of relief. In La dama del alba Telva has adapted to the loss of her sons and husband much better than has the mother of the family to the loss of her daughter Angélica. Telva's resignation contrasts markedly with

the mother's despair as she reveals her method of honoring the memory of the seven sons and husband who died in a mining accident: "¡Los lloreé de pie, trabajando! Después, como ya no podía tener otros, planté en mi huerto siete árboles, altos y hermosos como siete varones. Por el verano cuando me siento a coser a la sombra, me parece que no estoy tan sola." (*Dama*, pp. 364-365) The mother fails to find consolation for her loss because she refuses to become resigned to Angélica's death. For Telva, then, resignation brings consolation; while for Juan in Buero's Las cartas boca abajo it brings the realization that, while he has failed, his son need not do the same. After Juan admits that he has failed in his work and in his marriage, his resignation to this plight enables him to think of Juanito's needs instead of just his own.

The interplay of the various flaws and admirable qualities in the protagonists' personalities reveals each dramatist's ideas about man. It is important to note that both Casona and Buero have, in most instances, created characters who may react both positively to benevolent influences and in unfortunate ways to adverse influences. While there are, as pointed out in the present study, characters who cannot change, there are more who can. If some of Buero's protagonists, such as Fernando and Urbano, have succumbed to oppressive or saddening conditions in their environment, there are others who have been able to take advantage of helpful changes or persons coming in contact with them. Even the greedy Dámaso in *Madrugada* learns from Amalia's example of love. Thus Rodríguez-

Castellano can correctly assert that "Buero's vision of life is, rather than dark and narrow, desperately honest, with deep resources of love and faith. In his plays one finds not only tormented souls but also people who can laugh, weep, and even repent."¹⁹ In Casona's theater the would-be suicides in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera recover from the adverse influences which have driven them to seek death as a means of escape; they respond positively to the beauty of life in nature surrounding them in the asylum.

Casona and Buero agree that man possesses some capability to control, to either improve or worsen, his life situation. Yet, there is evident a difference between them with regard to the nature and amount of this control. Casona's characters exhibit more control than do Buero's over their physical environment. Though characters in both dramatists' plays have been unhappy in their surroundings, Casona's escape physically from the places in which they have encountered problems. In La tercera palabra Marga leaves the lonely environment of a university and the city. Characters seeking illusion in place of reality in La sirena varada isolate themselves in a house with a door over which there is to hang a sign reading, "Nadie entre que sepa geometría." (Sirena, p. 120) These and other characters of Casona escape, but Buero leaves only the hope that some of his protagonists, such as Juanito in Las cartas boca abajo and Fernando hijo and Carmina hija in Historia de una escalera, may get away from the depressing homes from which they come. Only death frees Irene in Irene o el tesoro and Ignacio in En la ardiente oscuridad.

Since Buero's characters remain in the environment which has produced many of their problems, they are forced to exhibit more control over their mental attitudes and ideas than are Casona's characters who, by physically escaping, can more easily ignore the unhappy environment which once caused them to suffer. Juanito's father, Juan, changes nothing but his mind and his self-image; Ignacio has no choice but to control his thinking while living with his physical handicap, blindness. Rodríguez-Castellano describes Buero's characters as "ordinary people striving to fulfill their innate destinies in whatever terms, consistent with human dignity, [are] open to them."²⁰ They must seek these terms within the environment which has given rise to their problems and, when they succeed, they have shown themselves superior in the control of their emotions to some of Casona's protagonists. To be sure, Casona's characters must eventually return to the reality they have escaped; they must acquire new mental insights concerning their problems. However, as Ruth Gillispie has implied, they are afforded by their escape an opportunity to refresh themselves before returning to grapple with the problems which reality imposes.²¹ Buero's characters must perform the more difficult task of mentally coping with their problems unaided by such reinvigorating escape.

An important achievement of which some characters in both theaters prove capable is the realization that they are important as individuals. The editors of an edition of La barca sin pescador assert that Casona's characters return from the realm of fancy to

the realities of this world when they realize their own ethical significance.²² Ricardo Jordán in this play learns that to Estela he is worthwhile just as an individual person and not because he is wealthy. This knowledge frees him from the illusion he has held that the procurement of wealth is, in itself, a worthwhile endeavor. Amalia in Madrugada, one of Buero's strongest characters in terms of willpower, strives to find her importance as an individual. She wants to know that her late husband Mauricio loved rather than pitied her.

Amalia and Ricardo Jordán aspire towards the same goal and, though they arrive at it in different ways—he by traveling and she by working out her problems where they began—they prove that both dramatists' characters do share some common goals. Martha T. Halsey describes another common goal when she writes that some of Buero's characters are "dreamers who strive to transcend the limits of the human condition."²³ This is true of Ignacio in En la ardiente oscuridad, for he tries to transcend both his physical blindness and the introspective blindness of his fellow students. One of Casona's characters, Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie, attempts, by the use of illusion, to transcend the misery of the human condition as he finds it present in some unhappy people.

Because the characters in both theaters aspire towards some common goals, it seems probable that they may encounter some of the same problems. Miss Halsey has also mentioned that there are protagonists in Buero's theater who struggle against the obstacles imposed by self or by society.²⁴ This is equally true of characters in Casona's

theater. It is therefore appropriate that these obstacles or problems should be examined in more detail. An understanding of the nature and sources of the protagonists' problems, and of the ways in which they manage or fail to solve the problems, will provide additional insights concerning the image each dramatist has of man as he faces the human dilemma, the dilemma of satisfying his physical and spiritual needs without harming others, in an environment which sometimes impedes his most noble efforts.

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¹Richard E. Chandler and Kessel Schwarz, A New Anthology of Spanish Literature (Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 108.

²Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (ed.), Teatro español, 1967-1968 (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968), pp. 153-54, citing Adolfo Prego, Blanco y Negro, Madrid.

³Antonio Buero Vallejo, El tragaluz, p. 198. Henceforth, all quotations drawn from Buero's plays will be cited in parenthesis with the abbreviated title of the play and the page number. All page numbers will be with reference to the text of the play as it is found in the appropriate edition of Teatro español. Consult the Bibliography under Primary Sources for more precise information. The same procedure will be followed for Casona, with all quotations being drawn from his Obras completas.

⁴Chandler and Schwarz, op. cit., p. 119.

⁵Juan Chabás, Literatura española contemporánea (1898-1950) (Habana: Cultural, 1952), p. 666.

⁶Francis Donahue, "Spain's Theater of Commitment," Books Abroad, 43 (Summer, 1969), 355.

⁷Doris K. Arjona, "The Spanish Theater of Today," Educational Theater Journal, 11 (December, 1959), 270.

⁸Sainz de Robles, Teatro español, 1962-1963, p. 181, citing Alejandro Casona, "Autocrítica."

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¹⁰Robert Kersner, "'Historia de una escalera,' A Play in Search of Characters," Homenaje a Rodríguez-Moñino, Vol. I, eds. J. Homer Herriott and others (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1966), p. 280.

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- ¹⁴Ruth C. Gillispie (ed.), La sirena varada, by Alejandro Casona (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951), p. xi.
- ¹⁵Sainz de Robles, Teatro español, 1953-1954, p. 148, citing Sergio Nerva, España, Tánger.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 146, citing Adolfo Prego, Informaciones, Madrid.
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- ¹⁹Juan Rodríguez-Castellano (introduction), El concierto de San Ovidio, ed. Pedro N. Trakas (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 3.
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Chapter 3

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE CHARACTERS

Both as a cause and as a result of the personality flaws and shortcomings of the characters, the problems confronting the characters provide important information about the dramatists' attitudes towards man. By answering the question, "What problems does man face?", one may determine in what ways the dramatists feel that man concerns himself with his environment and personal well-being. The methods of dealing with problems and the successes or failures which result will indicate to what extent Casona and Buero believe that man can effectively act on his own behalf.

William H. Shoemaker writes that "throughout Casona's work runs a preoccupation with spiritual crises, often created by social problems, and revealing keen psychological understanding, tender human sympathy, and profound moral concern."¹ This quotation reflects the dual nature of problems, similar to the dual nature of personality flaws discussed in the previous chapter of the current study: there are both problems of a personal, spiritual nature and problems in society which may contribute to the personal difficulties. The spiritual problems are of great importance in Casona's theater, for this dramatist does not illustrate as directly as Buero the problems of society. For the most part, Casona's characters deal with their personal problems while set apart from the poverty and other problems of society in which Buero's characters are found. The inmates of the asylum for would-be suicides in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera

concern themselves with how to commit suicide more than with whatever has made them arrive at such a desperate frame of mind.

In Historia de una escalera Fernando and Urbano are ultimately confronted with problems which plague all of mankind, the relentless passage of time, disillusionment, and their own failures.² However, their first concern is with how they may advance themselves within the structure of the society in which they live. Urbano has chosen to advance himself by his membership in a workers' syndicate. Fernando disagrees with this method, preferring to work alone, and says: "¿Qué tengo yo que ver con los demás? Nadie hace nada por nadie." (Historia, p. 106) These two men's preoccupation with how to advance within their society and Fernando's cynical assessment of the amount of help one can expect from others illustrate Buero's interest in problems which characterize the society of man. Francis Donahue considers Buero a leader in the "Theater of Commitment," whose plays try to cope with the problems which confront man in society, the "problems of the day."³ Another writer on the Spanish theater says that Spanish audiences "welcome the kind of theater that reflects the problems, the anxieties, and the realities of their own existence Buero is today the champion of the so called 'theater of social engagement.' "⁴ His characters struggle with their personal problems where those problems began, in their everyday environment.

Casona and Buero characterize in different ways the problems which confront the common man. The portrayal of personal problems

in Casona's plays is rarely complicated by the concurrent presence of problems such as social immobility, which come from the protagonists' environment, for these characters have escaped from their ordinary surroundings. The personal difficulties are relatively uncomplicated and are characterized by particular individuals. The two Roldán's, father and son, who represent greed, are clearly opposed to the well-being and happiness of Pablo and Marga in La tercera palabra. Yet the direct results of greed, the physical deprivation of someone else, do not appear in the play. Similarly, in La dama del alba one finds that Death, a problem which all men must face, is characterized by a woman who is compassionate. The only real death of a character in the play, Angélica's, brings joy rather than the sorrow which usually accompanies it. Greed in Buero's Irene o el tesoro takes form in the person of Dimas, and also in the conditions which are encountered in his home.

In some of Buero's plays, the problems are not clearly brought into focus. Donahaue states that in Historia de una escalera the characters struggle against something undefined and undetermined.⁵ For Fernando and Urbano the problems confronting them turn out to be a combination of the unchanging conditions of society, symbolized by the nearly unchanged appearance of the stairway over a thirty year period, and the personal shortcomings of the protagonists, their inability to accept responsibility and act positively on their own behalf. However, the nature of their difficulties does not become apparent to Fernando and Urbano, who persist in finding excuses for

their failure and do not recognize their own weaknesses. The dual nature of problems with both personal and social factors involved makes the characterization of these problems in Buero's plays complex and the proper identification of them more difficult for both the protagonists and the audience.

Another difference between Casona and Buero has to do with the influence the Spanish Civil War may have had as a source of the problems characterized in their plays. Problems generated by the war appear quite clearly in some of Buero's plays. In El tragaluz the death of Elvira, which occurred before the play opens to follow the actions of her family, resulted in part from the conditions of starvation which existed during the war in Spain. Also, in Aventura en lo gris, a play not analyzed in the present study, the hardships of war are much in evidence. The subject of war scarcely appears in any of the seven plays by Casona which are analyzed in this study. In another of his works, Siete gritos en el mar, war serves only as a means by which the lives of a group of ship passengers may be placed in peril, so that they might reveal themselves under the fear of sure death. Possibly the fact that Buero suffered a more prolonged exposure to the horrors of the Civil War than did Casona accounts for the different emphasis each has given to war as a cause of problems.

Obviously, then, the two dramatists have not portrayed in the same way or with the same amount of emphasis the problems confronting their characters. Yet there are also similarities between them and

these similarities provide a common ground on which it is possible to determine what both dramatists consider to be the relationship between man and his problems. This relationship, which is essentially the balance or lack of balance existing between the magnitude of the problems and the capabilities of man to cope with them, helps determine the amount of optimism or pessimism to be found in each dramatist's treatment of man and the problems he faces.

Both dramatists are concerned with the problems of the common man today, the man who, when the play is over, appears to possess no extraordinary gifts or excessively damaging faults. Ruth Richardson states that Buero's works "tratan de los problemas que afrontan los humildes y los pobres y que terminan en tragedia."⁶ Even in Casona's theater, where it appears that there are many unusual characters, Rodríguez-Castellano observes that the playwright deals with human problems and that, no matter how arbitrary the world of his plays may be, the protagonists invariably act like human beings.⁷ Like the characters in Buero's Historia de una escalera, some of Casona's protagonists also suffer from the universal problems of the passage of time, disillusionment, and failure.

An important series of similarities may be found in the specific problems the protagonists in both Casona's and Buero's plays face and in the solutions to the problems. Though the external causes of the problems may be given different emphasis and the source of them may vary, the appearance and association of the problems with the individual characters reveal that in both theaters man encounters

many of the same difficulties. The similarities occur because the roots of the problems generally lie in the commonly shared traits which the characters in both theaters possess. In Chapter 2 of the present study it has been noted that these characters seek, through in different ways, to escape their problems. Thus, when Ricardo in Casona's La sirena varada and Carlos in Buero's En la ardiente oscuridad both refuse to face up to reality, they cause others associated with them to do the same. There results in both plays problems associated with evasion of responsibility, such as the problem of returning Ricardo, Carlos, and their followers to reality. The solution to the escapism in both plays is for another individual, don Florín for Ricardo and Ignacio for Carlos, to initiate the return to the real world. By the end of the play Carlos has learned to face reality but the other blind students have not; Ricardo has also learned this though one of his companions, Daniel, still persists in blindfolding his eyes.

Characters in the plays of both dramatists face the problem of trying to live in a dehumanized society, a society which lacks concern for the individual person. Shoemaker calls La sirena varada an attack on the dehumanization of life, which he asserts was a characteristic theme in Western World literature between the First and Second World Wars.⁸ In this play Ricardo has suffered an unhappy childhood in which he was brought up according to strict religious rules, but without the love which Christianity espouses. His parents were apparently indifferent to his personal feelings, just as society

was to Sirena's dilemma and to don Joaquín's poverty. So these three protagonists all have sought escape from the dehumanized treatment they have received. In another of Casona's plays, Nuestra Natacha, the inmates of the reformatory which Natacha comes to direct have been subjected to a strict regime of discipline which has ignored their individual needs. Lalo, reacting against a society where this kind of problem is allowed to exist, shelters himself from society by remaining a perpetual student. The would-be suicides in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera have suffered loneliness, unhappiness, and poverty, all of which may be indicators of an uncaring society.

The main problem in Historia de una escalera, according to García Pavón, is a lack of sufficient ways for each person to realize his own personality, economically and morally.⁹ Jean Paul Borel reports that a major problem in this same play is to be true to oneself and to choose in love as the heart dictates, which the parents of Fernando hijo and Carmina hija have not done.¹⁰ Both of these problems point towards the fact that society in this play is dehumanized; it does not contain an atmosphere that will allow the weakwilled individual to behave independent of its influence. Hence, Fernando and Elvira marry because Fernando wants her father's money and Urbano and Carmina marry because there is no one else left for them to choose. El tragaluz contains a character, Vicente, who represents the dehumanizing attitude prevalent in his society. His brother Mario describes this society: "Me repugna nuestro mundo. Todos piensan que en él no cabe

sino comerte a los demás o ser comido. Y encima, todos te dicen: 'Devora antes que todos te devoren!' " (Tragaluz, p. 196) José Monleón writes that in this play one finds the "vieja pregunta unamuniana, la renovación de la problemática del individuo" ¹¹

Unamuno expressed in both prose and poetry his concern with the individual person, whose identity he felt was lost in the mass of humanity. ¹²

The solution to the problem of dehumanization is, in both dramatists' plays, for the characters to realize their own ethical significance, even within a society which seems to deny that the individual can be significant. Thus in Casona's plays Ricardo, Lalo and the would-be suicides find that they are important persons, just as Ricardo Jordán does in La barca sin pescador. Often they make this discovery when someone else demonstrates friendship or love towards them. After trying to create a world in which they can feel important, as Ricardo does in La sirena varada, Casona's characters learn to accept the idea that if even one person is concerned about them, they are worthwhile individuals. The solution Buero offers in Historia de una escalera is, as are many of the endings to his plays, less concrete than the solutions Casona has provided. One cannot be sure that Fernando and Urbano and their wives have learned from their son and daughter that people can and do still care about each other and are willing to work for the other's good, but it does appear likely that Fernando hijo and Carmina hija have discovered in each other their own ethical significance. In El tragaluz Vicente learns too late that

that the individual life, especially that of his sister Elvira, does count. However, there is hope that Encarna will find new meaning in her life through the love of Mario and the birth of the child she bears.

The dehumanization of society tends to isolate the individual in the sense that, since his particular importance is not recognized, he finds himself alone. Another problem which isolates some of Casona's and Buero's characters is a lack of meaningful communication between those individuals who are, ostensibly, concerned about each other. Juan and Adela in Las cartas boca abajo are excellent examples of this problem in Buero's theater. The very title of the play, indicating that their "cards" are "face down", suggests that people in it are not being honest with or revealing themselves to each other. Juan pleads with Adela to speak openly with him when he asks her to "poner las cartas boca arriba, confiar el uno en el otro" (Cartas, p. 56), but she refuses to do so. In Hoy es fiesta one finds a lack of communication between doña Balbina and her daughter Daniela.

For some time after Balboa threw their ungrateful grandson out of the house, Eugenia refused to communicate with him. Thus in Casona's Los árboles mueren de pie a whole series of problems and deceptions arise out of this single difficulty which Balboa has been unable to cope with, except by using deceit. When he fabricates a new and redeemed life for the grandson, Balboa restores conversation between himself and Eugenia, but he has supplanted no communication with communication which is based upon a lie and such false intercourse still

lacks meaning. Two sisters, Estela and Frida, have ceased to speak openly with each other in La barca sin pescador. Frida complains to Estela about the latter's recent coldness towards her: "Cuando vengo te encuentro tan distinta, tan lejos... Trato de hablarte y ni siquiera me oyes; como si estuvieras en otra cosa." (Barca, p. 465)

By hiding her thoughts concerning the possible guilt of Frida's husband Cristián for the death of her husband Peter, Estela makes the truth concerning her suspicions all the more difficult for Frida to live with when this truth is revealed.

The obvious solution to this problem is the reopening of meaningful communication between the estranged parties. Juan never succeeds in getting Adela to fully recognize her own part in the failure of their marriage; however, she does at least speak her mind openly towards the end of the play. She tells Juan just how little she thinks of him and, despite the fact that this is not a very encouraging way to renew communications, it is a beginning. Soon after she speaks her mind, Juan is able to get Adela to agree that their son Juanito is better off leaving home. Daniela in Hoy es fiesta learns from Silverio that, even though her mother is very unhappy about it, by telling the truth she has saved doña Balbina rather than ruined her. Again, Casona's solutions prove more decisive. Balboa and Eugenia come to a full understanding of each other. Estela, when she at last admits her suspicions and then pardons Cristián, does away with the bitterness which she could not previously conceal in her association with Frida.

Until she spoke her mind openly and pardoned Cristián, Estela had felt a certain amount of guilt for keeping such a terrible secret to herself. The problem of guilt confronts several other characters in the plays of Casona and Buero. Guilt may result from a specific act. Certainly Ricardo Jordán in La barca sin pescador is driven by the guilt he feels for the death of Peter Anderson to seek to ease his conscience by helping Peter's family. The father of "the other Alicia" in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera killed his daughter, a hopeless paralytic since infancy, when he discovered that he was soon to die of an incurable illness. He would not leave his daughter to the care of society, but, when it appears that he will not die, he feels guilt for having needlessly put to death his daughter. Guilt may also be generalized, for García Pavón points out that Ricardo Jordán, who has indirectly been responsible for the death of some of the people he has economically exploited, "se siente, por conducto de la imaginación, solidario con todos los hombres que puedan caer por el egoísmo de unos pocos."¹³ Having been one of the few to whom García Pavón refers, Ricardo comes to feel guilt for the hardship of all those whom he has exploited, as well as for Peter Anderson in particular.

Specific and generalized guilt also occur among Buero's characters. Vicente in El tragaluz is guilty of having caused Elvira's death and, though he will not admit to this guilt, tries to compensate for his misdeed by providing for the material well-being of his

parents and brother. Silverio feels guilt in Hoy es fiesta for the death of Pilar's daughter. A more generalized type of guilt Sergio Nerva describes in a review of Las cartas boca abajo. He writes that in Buero's portrayal of moral problems one finds "la lucha del hombre, en conflicto con su conciencia."¹⁴ The guilt which arises from moral problems may not always be attributed to a specific act. In this drama reviewed by Nerva, Juan's guilt results from the knowledge that he has failed to do things which might have advanced him and helped his family. The struggle over failure which Juan has with his conscience causes him to realize his guilt and to determine that he will help Juanito avoid making the same mistakes he has made. When Dámaso in Madrugada comes to recognize that he and the other relatives of Mauricio are guilty of greed he asks Amalia not to judge them too harshly. Juan Guerrero Zamora sees in this play a struggle between avidity and the spiritual aspect of love.¹⁵ It is the avidity which causes in Dámaso the sense of guilt.

By taking some positive action to correct their errors many characters shed their guilt. Dámaso goes only as far as to admit that he and the other relatives are culpable, but Juan, as mentioned, takes steps to help the most obvious victim of his own failures, his son. Ricardo Jordán travels to Peter Anderson's village, intent at first upon easing his conscience by giving money to the family of this man he believes to have killed. However, the money is never offered, for Ricardo learns that his sincere concern just as a presumed friend of Peter is what really counts. Not money but service frees Ricardo

from his guilt. The father of "the other Alicia" in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera informally adopts the Alicia who is also in the asylum for potential suicides, thus helping a girl very much like the daughter he mistakenly put to death. All these characters regain self-respect as they reform themselves and shed their guilt.

Sainz de Robles identifies the theme in Casona's La tercera palabra as the collision between natural education and social education, and the manner of integrating the two.¹⁶ This drama exemplifies another problem found in the dramatists' works, the difficulty in arriving at a reasonable balance between the liberating effects of nature and the restricting influences of society. Pablo and Marga begin at opposite ends of the spectrum in this conflict--he at the end of nature, which knows no rules but those derived without the arbitrary process of reason which produces the laws of society; she at the end of society. The natural beauty and freedom of the country surrounding the asylum in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera also conflicts with the society which has chased the would-be suicides to the asylum and, by offering the alternative of life as it can be in nature, counteracts the self-destructive impulses engendered by life as it sometimes exists in society.

Nature in Buero's theater is associated with the free will to follow one's natural inclinations. Opposed to these inclinations are the rules and the accepted values of society. Martha T. Halsey has noted that social immobility has interfered with Fernando's and Urbano's natural desire to succeed in Historia de una escalera.¹⁷

Unimpeded by the rigidity and the restrictiveness of the society surrounding them, these two men might have been able to carry out the plans which they voiced early in the play. The influence of society is subtle in En la ardiente oscuridad. Society has formed certain notions about the role of blind people in it and, in reaction against the notion that they are unhappy misfits, the blind students deny their own natural desire to see in order to pretend that they are normal anyway. Thus, Carlos argues with Ignacio about the proper concept of those who are blind:

Carlos. ¿Quieres decir con lo que nos has dicho que los invidentes formamos un mundo aparte de los videntes?

Ignacio. Pues... sí. Un mundo aparte... y más desgraciado.

Carlos. ¡Pues no es cierto! Nuestro mundo y el de ellos es el mismo. ¿Acaso no estudiamos como ellos? ¿Es que no somos socialmente útiles como ellos? . . . ¿No amamos, no nos casamos?

Ignacio. (Suave.) ¿No vemos? . . . Confías demasiado. Tu seguridad es ilusoria... (Oscuridad, pp. 129-30)

Those characters who have chosen wisely between the conflicting interests of society and nature have sought a balance between the two. Marga determines to raise the baby she carries as "un hombre con la dimensión exacta de un hombre . . . un hombre completo." (Palabra, p. 812) Ignacio does not fully accept either the stereotyped image of blindness which society has imposed upon him or the false optimism of Carlos. He really holds out hope that he might see, a hope which society discredits and for which Carlos claims to have no need. Fernando and Urbano prove to be too weak to overcome the restrictions of society. However, the hope for freedom is yet alive in their children.

The problems just discussed and others not illustrated in the present study indicate that man is vulnerable to a variety of problems. Though these problems tend to limit his freedom or make him unhappy, most of them are, in the last analysis, controllable by man. When they are first introduced, the characters of Casona have sought to escape their problems; those of Buero have been unable to either cope with their problems or to flee from them. Neither dramatist's protagonists succeed in changing to any great extent the society which has been partially responsible for their troubles, though Casona's do sometimes appear to have gotten away from that society for a while. Yet, because some characters still maintain or finally regain control of their emotional reactions to the problems, Casona and Buero say that man can exert control over them. What becomes important in exerting this control is not the ability to affect changes over the external influences of society, but rather the ability to react responsibly and intelligently to the challenges which society and personal shortcomings present in the form of problems.

Sacrifice and duty are necessary, key aspects of Casona's philosophy.¹⁸ Hence self-sacrifice, including the sacrifice of cherished illusions, and performance of one's duties figure prominently in the solution to most problems in Casona's theater. When the protagonists become willing and able to see the world in a broader perspective than that provided by their own narrow and self-seeking concerns, they surmount the very problems which have led them to concentrate only on themselves. This may also be said of the way in

which Buero's characters solve their problems, but, as noted in this chapter, solutions to problems in his theater, particularly in plays such as Irene o el tesoro, are not as concrete as those in Casona's plays. Buero has defended this characteristic of his theater: "Una comedia no es un tratado, ni siquiera un ensayo; su misión es reflejar la vida, y la vida suele ser más fuerte que las ideas."¹⁹

The relative magnitude of man's problems and his ability to cope with them provide a balanced picture of man's life in the two dramatists' theaters. Most of the important problems are successfully met and solved by the protagonists, though there are some notable failures on the part of such people as the blind students in En la ardiente oscuridad and Daniel in La sirena varada. Alfredo Marqueríe has written that for Buero life is a mixture of vital expressions: "voces, gritos, risas, sollozos, pecados, delitos, castigos y arrepentimientos, conciencias limpias, de sueños tranquilos, o sucias y atormentadas por el remordimiento."²⁰ Of the two dramatists, perhaps Casona tips the balance of good and bad in life more in favor of the good. However, his theater has been praised by various critics for its realism and one may correctly conclude that, in general, his portrayal of problems substantiates this praise.

Numerous references to the characters' desire to escape have been made in the present study. This desire has manifested itself as a personality flaw, particularly among protagonists who lack the inner strength or the help to directly confront their problems. Thus escape becomes an attempt to solve problems by avoiding them. The particular

ways in which each dramatist views man's attempt to avoid reality, and the effect which such an attempt has upon those who find it to be necessary, merit further study because in both dramatists' theaters escapism by the characters is a recurring theme.

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- ¹¹Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (ed.), Teatro español, 1967-1968 (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968), p. 159, citing José Monleón, Triunfo, Madrid.
- ¹²Unamuno's concern for the individual is expressed in his concept of "intrahistoria." The reader may find a development of this concept in Unamuno's En torno al casticismo, I. "La tradición eterna"; and in his poem En un cementerio de lugar castellano.
- ¹³Sainz de Robles (ed.), Teatro español, 1962-1963, p. 184, citing F. García Pavón, Arriba, Madrid.
- ¹⁴Sainz de Robles (ed.), Teatro español, 1957-1958, p. 3, citing Sergio Nerva, España, Tángier.
- ¹⁵Juan Guerrero Zamora, "The Spanish Speaking Drama Astride Two Continents," World Theatre, XI, 4 (Winter, 1962-63), 354.

¹⁶Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (ed.), Obras completas, of Alejandro Casona (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961), Vol. I, pp. 97-99.

¹⁷Martha T. Halsey, "The Dreamer in the Tragic Theater of Buero Vallejo," Revista de estudios hispanicos, 2 (November, 1968), 265.

¹⁸Kessel Schwarz, "Reality in the Works of Alejandro Casona," Hispania, 40 (March, 1957), 59.

¹⁹Juan Rodríguez-Castellano, "Un nuevo comediógrafo español: Antonio Buero Vallejo," Hispania, 37 (March, 1954), 20.

²⁰Sainz de Robles (ed.), Teatro español, 1956-1957, p. 38, citing Alfredo Marquerie, ABC, Madrid.

Chapter 4

DREAMING AND SELF-DECEPTION AMONG THE CHARACTERS

The conflict between reality and illusion has served as a theme or plot basis for many Spanish authors and dramatists. Miguel de Cervantes' immortal Don Quixote and Calderón de la Barca's La vida es sueño offer but two examples of this theme in Spanish literature. Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo have carried on this literary tradition in many of their dramas. Kessel Schwarz, in his interesting article on reality in the works of Casona, notes that "a theme of conflict between reality and idealism or the interplay of the material and the visionary has been characteristic of many Spanish authors Alejandro Casona continues this tradition in his acceptance of the theme."¹

Previous references to reality and illusion in the present study have provided tentative definitions of these two terms. Only by reading the dramatists' plays may one arrive at a full understanding of what definitions for the terms have been accepted and used by Casona and Buero. In general, reality refers to that which is tangible or measurable or that which is based upon or derived from concrete evidence. A fuller description of the two levels of reality appears below in this chapter. Dreaming, in the context encountered in this study, means daydreaming, envisioning or imagining things, often desirable, which are not yet accomplished facts. When that which is dreamed of becomes, to the dreamer, an accepted fact then there results self-deception. For example, Irene may dream of having a small child

to care for in Irene o el tesoro, but when she accepts as real the existence of her imaginary "duende" Juanito she practices a form of self-deception.

There is specific evidence which, in addition to a reading of the two dramatists' plays, proves that the theme of reality in conflict with illusion appears in the theaters of both Casona and Buero.

Richard Chandler and Kessel Schwarz report that a favorite theme of Casona's is that of "men and women who escape from the real world which has hurt and disillusioned them, but learn finally that real happiness comes from facing reality" ² A problem basic to all of Buero's theater, according to Martha T. Halsey, is escapism versus realism or illusion versus truth. She reports that Buero's answer to these choices is illustrated in Ignacio's reply to Carlos in En la ardiente oscuridad: "No tenéis derecho de vivir, porque os empeñáis en no sufrir; porque os negáis a enfrentaros con vuestra tragedia . . . procurando olvidar" ³ (Oscuridad, p. 121)

J.E. Lyon states that Buero sees as the main obstacle to true happiness the unwillingness of man to confront the reality of his situation, and cites as an example this same play. ⁴

Two levels of reality may be found in Casona's and Buero's plays: the physical level of concrete, tangible evidence and dealing with that which can be observed and empirically proven; and the level of the mind, consisting of intangible thoughts, ideas, and images which have a factual basis. Thus the imaginary level of reality differs from illusion in that the former is based upon an acceptable truth; whereas

the latter may be created solely in the mind of a character and devoid of any association with the truth. The two endings of Irene o el tesoro offer an excellent example of the two levels. On the physical level, the other characters in the play observe that Irene has either jumped or fallen from her window and been killed by her fall to the pavement below. However, the audience sees Irene as she and Juanito glide away on a pathway of light extending from her window. This seemingly fantastic ending is plausible if one accepts the idea that "La Voz" which speaks with Juanito is, in fact, representative of God.

Both dramatists question the idea that there is only one reality, the physical one. Isabel Magaña Schevill states that at the ending of En la ardiente oscuridad, Carlos inherits the pre-occupation of Ignacio, the man he killed, and is left with the disquieting question: "¿Es preferible la tranquilidad ficticia al anhelo de lo irrealizable?"⁵ Significantly, Buero himself has, on at least two separate occasions, made specific reference to the existence of two levels of reality. In his "autocrítica", which accompanies Irene o el tesoro in the 1954-1955 edition of Teatro español, Buero says of this play:

Una comedia, en suma, "perspectivista", equívoca, donde se insinúa que la realidad puede, acaso, poseer más de un plano, y que la fantasía puede esconder también una tremenda realidad.⁶

In an April, 1958, letter to Isabel Magaña Schevill, Buero states:

A través de sus obras, el autor de teatro intenta, implícita or explícitamente, una visión total del mundo. Esta es compleja: rara vez puede atenerse al simple reflejo de la realidad aparente . . . ?

Buero therefore concludes that a dramatist does not present a balanced and realistic portrayal of life if he chooses to ignore entirely the existence of a reality based upon imagination. He implies through words spoken by "La Voz" in Irene o el tesoro that those men who, in their wisdom, have refused to recognize the existence of this reality are not fully aware of all that reality encompasses:

Para la loca sabiduría de los hombres, tú [speaking to Juanito] y yo somos un engaño. Pero el mundo tiene dos caras... Y desde la nuestra, que engloba la otra, /ésta es la realidad! ¡Esta es la verdadera realidad! (Irene, p. 260)

Casona has also made direct reference to the two levels of reality. He asks about the desirability of destroying the illusions created for the grandmother in Los árboles mueren de pie:

Entonces, ¿todo aquello que parecía tan hermoso y tan fácil no puede resistir más que un instante, como un sueño? ¿Es posible organizar técnicamente un mundo de "felicidad dirigida", o cada cual ha de conquistar su pequeña parcela feliz con el mismo sudor y el mismo trabajo con que se gana el pan?⁸

In La dama del alba the illusions of the mother regarding the goodness and purity of Angélica are reinforced rather than destroyed, for this prodigal daughter's body appears in the water near the bridge, miraculously preserved four years after she was presumed to have drowned there. It would seem that Casona favored maintaining those illusions which are derived from the spiritual level of reality and which have proven beneficial rather than harmful. The spiritual reality about Angélica, which is based upon the truth if her behavior prior to becoming involved with an illicit lover is taken into account, survives because of the consolation it provides for the grief-stricken mother.

However, those characters who prefer fantasy for its own sake, such as Ricardo in La sirena varada, or who must use self-deception to shield them from an undesirable truth, such as Daniel in this same play, are made to face reality.

Casona's reality, then, centers not on the concrete and patent alone, but also on the reality of dreams, fantasy, and imagination. His realism, states Elías Gómez, "caracteriza al hombre y . . . va más allá de la muerte."⁹ The reality of Angélica's true nature, as the mother sees it, receives its final support from the complicity of Death, "la dama", in La dama del alba. This fantastic character convinces Angélica to maintain her mother's concept of her by committing suicide in the deep water where she was supposed to have drowned before. Like Buero, Casona insists that a realistic portrayal of man and his life should take into account and make evident that human experience, especially that of the mind, transcends the physical limitations of the body or its environment; that things imagined or hoped for may exist as well as tangible realities. Sainz de Robles writes that Casona rejects only a reality without room for the ideal or for that of which man dreams. "Casona, he asserts, is one of the few men who has succeeded in creating harmoniously the two realities of man: the physical reality and the spiritual reality."¹⁰

Rather than attempting to avoid dealing with the real conditions of human life, Casona's and Buero's insistence upon the existence of a dual reality reveals human experience in a broader perspective than that available to the narrow-minded who reject as fanciful all that which

is not proveable. The characters' overt reactions to any of these conditions, blindness for example, may be quite different from their internal reaction. Blindness causes Ignacio in En la ardiente oscuridad to appear and act as a blind man, complete with walking stick. However, his internal, mental reaction--constituting the spiritual reality of his condition--sustains the hope and optimism which his external appearance would seem to deny. It appears in Los árboles mueren de pie that the illusions which Mauricio and Isabel have helped create for the grandmother have been maintained in spite of the appearance of the real grandson, Mauricio "el otro". This evidently true condition constitutes the physical reality, but, on the level of the mind, one discovers that the grandmother is fully aware of the deceit and preserves the illusion for the sake of Mauricio and Isabel. It has been said that for Buero "la realidad idealizada . . . puede ser superior pero, para ser auténtica, deberá fundirse con la realidad concreta."¹¹ This statement may also describe Casona.

With regard to the characters, the problems they face, and the way they face them, a series of similarities between the plays of Casona and Buero have been discussed in the present study. There are also aspects of their concept and use of the reality-illusion theme which show that these two dramatists, for all their apparent differences in the theater, have much in common. As in the case of problems and how they are faced, discussed in Chapter 3 of this study, the similarities in the use of this theme exist because Casona and

Buero have much the same concept of man.

A type of self-deception occurs when the characters decide that they can somehow escape from rather than confront their problems. The specific reasons which motivate or necessitate escape are essentially the same for protagonists in both theaters. Three young women in Casona's plays--Isabel in Los árboles mueren de pie, Alicia in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera, and Adela in La dama del alba--all point out that they have sought escape from life because they could not endure the unhappiness which it afforded them:

Isabel. [To Mauricio] Estaba desesperada..., ¡no podía más! Nunca tuve una casa, ni un hermano, ni siquiera amigo Ayer, cuando perdí mi trabajo, me sentí de pronto tan fracasada, tan inútil... (Árboles, p. 594)

Alicia. [To Dr. Roda] Fue un momento de desesperación. Había oído hablar de una Casa de Suicidas, y no podía más. El hambre..., la soledad... . . . Nunca he conocido amigos, ni hermanos, ni amor. (Prohibido, pp. 225-226)

Adela. [To the grandfather and others] Me pesa el aire en el pecho como plomo . . . Tendré que volver a caminar sola, como hasta hoy; sin nadie a quien querer..., sin nada que esperar... (Dama, pp. 387-388)

The problems of loneliness, poverty, and despair force these women to desperate measures, even suicide, to avoid reality. Obviously, such problems also exist in Buero's plays and have similar effects upon the characters. Buero says of Irene: "La cruel vida vulgar es la que determina, precisamente por serlo, el escape mental--y material--de Irene."¹²

There are some differences between Casona and Buero regarding the motivations for escape and how they are portrayed. It has

already been noted in the present study that Casona's characters talk about, but are not seen immersed in, the unhappy conditions which have forced them to flee reality; while Buero's are pictured in the midst of those conditions. Also, only in Casona's theater does one find characters such as Ricardo in La sirena varada or Lalo in Nuestra Natacha who have suffered no physical privations and yet seek escape. However, a close examination of their primary reasons for escape will reveal that they are motivated by essentially the same reasons as those who are poor. Rich or poor, it is basically the influence of mental problems--problems of feeling alone, useless, afraid, or unwanted--which cause a character to turn to illusion and self-deception. Ricardo has suffered an unhappy childhood and Lalo fears taking on the responsibilities which life outside the academic environment will impose upon him.

The methods or means by which the characters affect their escape may vary from a simple refusal to accept reality, to the positive creation of a new reality, and even to the contemplation of suicide and to insanity. The mother in La dama del alba refuses to adapt to the death of Angélica or to accept the idea that life must go on despite such personal tragedy. Her method of escape from this reality about life becomes a negative reaction to it. The only thing she creates is an atmosphere of perpetual mourning in the home. Among Buero's characters Vicente in El tragaluz demonstrates well the way in which a person avoids reality by doing little else than refusing to accept it. He rationalizes about the death of Elvira by saying that

many more just like her died during the Civil War and insists for a long while that he could not have gotten off the train which carried him, with the family provisions, away from the rest of the family.

Contrasting with the mother's and Vicente's simple refusal to accept reality are the actions of protagonists such as Ricardo in La sirena varada. He constructs his own reality, based upon illusion and the lack of logic. Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie sets about creating illusions to cure other people of their unhappiness. This type of escape is more common to Casona's theater than to Buero's; about the only protagonists of Buero who create their own world are the blind students in En la ardiente oscuridad, and they do it more by adopting a certain state of mind than by deliberately affecting noticeable changes in the environment. R.E. Lott notes only that these students have "delusions of normalcy."¹³

Suicide is another means of escape which appears in both theaters, but more often in Casona's. The same three women who described their unhappy lives--Isabel, Alicia, and Adela--contemplated suicide as the ultimate escape from their problems. However, with the exception of Angélica in La dama del alba, who is persuaded by Death itself to take such a course of action, none of Casona's characters actually succeeds in taking his own life. For the protagonists who have not succeeded "the redeeming image of love accompanies and defeats the self-extermination impulse."¹⁴ No character may be found in Buero's plays who contemplates suicide. Though Irene, in effect, kills herself when she steps out of her window to ascend the path of light

visible to her and the audience, she does not do so with the specific intent of committing suicide.

Irene, if not quite insane, is at least mentally disturbed by the constant hostility of those around her and by the grief she bears for the loss of an infant son. Complete insanity seldom appears as a means of escaping to irreality in either dramatist's theater. Obviously mad are the father in Buero's El tragaluz and Sirena in Casona's play about her. Dimas in Irene o el tesoro winds up in an asylum, but, even though he is quite miserly, he appears to be more the victim of scheming between his wife and his business partners than a man completely insane. Characters who are quite depressed, such as those who contemplate suicide in Casona's theater, still retain the capability to distinguish between reality and illusion in all but their own particular cases. They are blinded only to the real alternatives available to them as methods of dealing with their problems.

In addition to the characters' actions and words, both dramatists have used other ways of demonstrating the presence of irreality in the characters' lives. Casona has favored the physical appearance of supernatural characters--who might otherwise exist only in the mind and superstitions of his protagonists--to show that man may have certain unreal experiences. Doris K. Arjona observes, however, that even though Casona "sometimes pushes fantasy to the edge of unreality in a character or situation, [it] is later seen to be just within the realm of possibility."¹⁵ The devil in La barca sin

pescador appears as a contemporary businessman to Ricardo Jordán, who is himself a company executive. Thus the devil exists here as he might in the mind of a man like Ricardo and admits to him that the traditional concept of the devil, in a cloud of smoke and a red cape, has become outmoded: "Era el traje de la época. Ha habido que cambiar un poco la tramoya y la guardarropía, para ponerse a tono." (Barca, p. 445) Another human-like supernatural character in a play by Casona is, of course, "la dama" in La dama del alba.

Irreality in Buero's theater has appeared as a supernatural character in visible form, the one example being Juanito the "duende" in Irene o el tesoro. In this same play "La Voz" is an unseen protagonist who may at least be heard. Besides these two obvious representatives of irreality, José Sánchez points out that some specific elements of fantasy in Buero's plays are the blind and the disguised.¹⁶ A portion of Chapter 3 of the present study has indicated that the blindness of the students in En la ardiente oscuridad is spiritual as well as physical. Hence their blindness may symbolize the fantasy of those who, whether they see or not, are unable to perceive reality. In a play not discussed in this study, Un soñador para un pueblo, Buero presents, in the men of Madrid who insist upon wearing hats and capes to mask their identity, a symbol of the backwardness and superstition which the principal character, Esquilache, tries to combat. Such superstition may be associated with fantasy.

Self-deception and illusion occur, then, in a variety of forms and are symbolized in different ways by the dramatists. What effects

do these phenomena, in all their diversity, have upon the characters? The most immediate effect produced for the characters in either theater is that self-deception and illusion shield them, at least temporarily, from the harsh realities of their everyday lives. As noted in this chapter, it is precisely for such a purpose, to erect some kind of barrier between themselves and their environment, that the characters indulge, knowingly or unknowingly, in this type of escapism.

Under the right circumstances such escapism may be beneficial. Irene's escape, which begins as a spiritual reality in her mind and progresses to a type of self-deception bordering on insanity when the "duende" becomes real to her, extracts her from an intolerably unhappy life and, even though it causes her death, may also have led her to Heaven. The circumstances surrounding her permit Irene no other means of coping with the sadness. Her one ally, aside from Sofía, is Daniel, a boarder who is himself too weak-willed to be of much assistance. Regarding Casona's characters, Ruth Gillispie (as noted in Chapter 2) has observed that their escape may provide them with a refreshing and reinvigorating break from the every day concerns that have troubled them.¹⁷

Another beneficial effect of escapism by self-deception and illusion accrues from the insight into their own nature which it provides some of the characters. Mauro in Las cartas boca abajo comes to realize, after his deceit has been exposed, just what kind of person he has been: [To Adela] "Me miro por dentro y no encuentro ni repugnancia siquiera, porque estoy vacío. He sido para ti lo que

para todos: un espejo que te devolvía tu reflejo." (Cartas, p. 72)

After encountering and eventually defeating the devil, Ricardo Jordán in La barca sin pescador learns how harmful and meaningless his activities as a ruthless businessman have been. He experiences in fantasy with the devil the terrible effect his calloused behavior may have had on those whom he has exploited. The devil makes him see the death of a man who may represent all men whose very life Ricardo has imperiled in the pursuit of his own ends.

James R. Staum and Ruth Gillispie assert that Casona did not find in fantasy--illusion and self-deception--a permanent solution to human problems. "Casona deals with the human tendency to escape from reality into fantasy, or the essentially hopeless attempt to force reality to conform to our desires," writes Staum, and he adds that this attempt is "doomed to exposure and defeat."¹⁸ According to Miss Gillispie, Casona "is no advocate . . . of illusion that approaches escapism. The truth, no matter how bitter, is more desirable than illusion."¹⁹ As the present study has noted, however, Casona permitted some illusions--such as those of the mother in La dama del alba--to survive. Likewise, Buero insists that his characters face up to the truth about themselves and their environment. For a very few, such as Buero's Irene or Casona's mother in La dama del alba, some form of self-deception does prove the best solution for their problems; for the majority of both dramatists' characters this is not true. Among this majority, the characters either return to reality and profit in some way for having done so,

or persist in their self-deception and suffer undesirable consequences as a result. Hans in Prohibido suicidarse en primavera seems doomed to go on seeking the type of morbid satisfaction which he believes he derives from the suffering of others. The blind students in En la ardiente oscuridad must go on living a tenuous and unrealistic life of happiness which may easily be shattered by realists such as Ignacio.

The fact that the characters have illusions and deceive themselves may be construed as a criticism of man on the part of Casona and Buero, for it does indicate a certain kind of character flaw, a propensity to avoid rather than to accept responsibility. On the other hand, it would seem a far more severe criticism of man if the dramatists did not permit their protagonists to dream. Before a goal is attained it must be dreamed of and held worthy of accomplishment. Without dreaming man would be a dull creature and probably incapable of significant progress. The parents in Historia de una escalera have lost their ability to dream and retain only the residual ability to deceive themselves ~~so~~ that they can find causes other than their own shortcomings for their lack of progress. They have stagnated. The danger in dreaming, that it will arrive at only the kind of self-deception practiced by the parents, is overshadowed in the theaters of Casona and Buero by the advantages dreaming offers, the capability of seeing beyond one's present misfortune and the opportunity to plan for a brighter tomorrow.

The characters have been discussed in terms of their personal good and bad traits, the methods they use and the abilities they

possess to cope with problems, and the nature, extent, and effect of dreaming and self-deception among them. It still remains for the present study to draw conclusions, based upon what has been discussed, which will prove that both dramatists are essentially optimistic. What is the net result of the interplay between the factors in man's life examined in the preceding chapters? In what ways and to what degree do the conclusions based upon these results reflect the optimism of Casona and Buero? Are they at all pessimistic? These questions remain to be answered.

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Chapter 5

OPTIMISM IN THE DRAMATISTS' THEATERS

The conclusion of a drama gives meaning to all that has preceded it. In the conclusion are revealed the good or bad consequences which ultimately result from the characters' actions and thus it exposes what the dramatist believes may happen to man, faced with certain problems and possessed of certain defects and admirable qualities. The futility or usefulness of a character's actions may be determined by finding out whether those actions have been beneficial or harmful to him and the people with whom he is associated. This determination, in turn, shows to a great extent the dramatist's optimism or pessimism: if the character's actions are more beneficial than harmful then, in general, one may assume that the dramatist is optimistic about man's ability to cope with the human dilemma; conversely, if the actions are futile or harmful then he would seem to be pessimistic. Thus one needs to know what Casona and Buero have done or said in their dramas' conclusions in order to determine their optimism or pessimism.

An analysis of a drama's ending must take into account the possibility that there is more than one conclusion. In Chapter 4 of the present study the two levels of reality, it was determined, may provide two conclusions, an apparent one and a more subtle, symbolic one. The symbolic conclusion may not be an accomplished fact, but rather a situation or type of action which the dramatist has implied will occur in the future. Though one cannot be sure,

it seems likely that the younger generation in Historia de una escalera will succeed where the parents have failed and this ending to the play is symbolized in the renewed hope which Fernando hijo and Carmina hija voice in the last scene.

By comparison with Buero's plays, Casona's have more definite conclusions. They often end with a clear indication of what has happened to the characters and of what may happen to happen to them in the future (providing fictional characters can have a future beyond the book or play). The dramatic endings of La tercera palabra and La sirena varada are similar. In both of them the heroine finds a new inner strength stemming from the promise of new life which her pregnancy denotes, and the hero at last determines to accept, in response to the influence of love, the responsibility given him by the heroine. There seems little doubt that Pablo and Marga and Ricardo and Sirena are happy and will continue to be so. In addition, these definite endings may teach something to the characters and the audience alike. An obvious lesson in the plays mentioned above is that through love one discovers that what he once considered to be important--for example, Pablo's preoccupation with the uncivilized life--may not really be too worthwhile when compared to a lifelong companionship.

The imaginative or spiritual level of reality often provides the symbolic conclusion to a play. Since this level of reality has great importance in Buero's plays, it is natural that the symbolic conclusion should appear frequently in his theater. Martha T. Halsey

notes that in Irene o el tesoro and En la ardiente oscuridad the outward defeat of Irene and Ignacio, both of whom die, implies the survival of their inner hopes and ideals.¹ Obviously, neither of these plays ends as happily, on the concrete level of reality, as do most of Casona's plays. Yet Buero's plays have indicated, in the opinion of at least one critic, that the protagonists have undeniably triumphed in a spiritual way. This type of triumph may also teach a lesson, though what the audience or characters learn is contingent upon their perceptiveness. Some drama critics and audiences alike have insisted that the unhappy life led by the characters in Historia de una escalera provides a rather pessimistic view of the life of the poor. However, the play's real lesson is that hope and the possibility for happiness survive in the relatively hostile environment of poverty. Jean Paul Borel writes that the conclusion finds Fernando hijo and Carmina hija not making the same mistakes as their parents; they are true to love and to each other despite parental opposition.²

Taking into account the two possible endings to their plays, what have Casona and Buero said about the futility or usefulness of man's actions? Regardless of whether the actions are well advised or misdirected, they do, say the dramatists, bring results. A man is capable of effecting changes in his life, though the amount of his control over the changes may vary according to his individual traits. Further, the plans most vigorously executed may not always be the best ones. Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie is quite energetic and enterprising in the pursuit of his goal of providing happiness for others through

illusion. His actions seem well advised and do produce some desirable results; for example, they save Isabel's life. However, Mauricio loses control of all the possible consequences of his actions when he himself becomes blinded to reality by his constant practice of deception. In Las cartas boca abajo, Juan's actions, his studying, have brought him to the brink of success, yet he loses control of them and fails to win the university faculty chair when personal jealousy interferes with his efforts. Hence according to Casona and Buero man's actions may bring results and some men are capable of determined action, but the good or bad results which his activities bring about are determined more by how well advised the actions are and how intelligently man pursues them than by the vigor with which they are pursued. Also, it is not so important that a man begins to confront his problems by taking and wisely pursuing a good course of action as it is that he winds up on the right course, though he may have made some errors before.

Initially, some characters may not properly identify the problems which actually confront them. They may, like Fernando and Urbano in Historia de una escalera, assume that environmental conditions, not their own shortcomings, prevent them from succeeding. Each devises a plan, guaranteed to bring him success, which he will surely--but never does--put into action "tomorrow." By the end of the play these two men still appear ignorant of the true cause of their failure, but in other plays this is not so. Juan in Las cartas boca abajo discovers his weakness and begins to make amends. Ricardo Jordán in La barca sin pescador finds out that his problem is not how to make money but how

to live a worthwhile life. He then decides to stay in the village and serve Estela. Once the real problems are identified and the apparent ones eliminated, man begins to deal with the former effectively in many of the dramatists' plays.

The process of identifying and confronting the problems, successfully concluded, results in the improvement of the characters with regard to their mental attitudes about life. Juan and Ricardo Jordán are certainly better men at the end of their plays than they were at the beginning. Unaided, except by the sobering effect his failure to gain the faculty chair must have had, Juan changes from a man jealous of a more successful scholar, Carlos Ferrar Díaz, to a man fully aware of his shortcomings and ready to help his son do better. Ricardo Jordán, with the help of the love between him and Estela, changes from a ruthless businessman to a sincere friend, concerned about the well-being of others.

The triumphs of Juan and Ricardo symbolize that the course of a man's life may be changed at some point along the way. He is not destined to follow the same errant path he may have followed for many years. Also, these triumphs show that once a man has turned over a new leaf he may help not only himself but others as well. The possibility for laudable and effective change, therefore, is one of the essentially desirable things which characterize life and are symbolized in Casona's and Buero's plays.

There is specific evidence, in the form of statements by drama critics and in the form of characters' actions and words, which proves

that the dramatists are optimistic. Both professional critic and layman alike, however, may find that optimism in Casona's theater is more obvious than in Buero's theater. The former's plays end happily. According to Sainz de Robles, Casona has taken to his work an essentially optimistic spirit. From each of Casona's works, he reports, the spectator may extract the assurance that "en la Humanidad, mientras no se traicione a sí misma, existen motivos para sonreír, para soñar, para esperar gozosamente."³ William Shoemaker has written that, though Casona may have suffered from his forced flight and exile from his native land, his "characteristic optimism remains undiminished and in him burns a faith in mankind and in Spain born of deep and tender human love."⁴ Sainz de Robles was writing in 1961 and Shoemaker in 1947, but they both strongly confirm the presence of optimism in Casona's plays. Possibly because this optimism is relatively obvious, research for the present study has actually found fewer specific references to it than to Buero's optimism.

"The suffering portrayed in Buero's tragedy," claims J.E. Lyon, "does not necessarily indicate pessimism."⁵ This is certainly true, but suffering does provide a major barrier to recognizing optimism in Buero's plays and to proving that it exists. The sadness of a tragedy masks the subtle optimism contained in the drama. In essence, Buero's (and Casona's) optimism is predicated upon the idea that the presence or lack of physical comfort does not necessarily determine the quality of a man's life. For Buero what matters is that a man mature, learn, and take the responsibility for his actions. In order to recognize

and prove his optimism, therefore, one must distinguish between physical wellbeing and the true contentment found only in the mind.

The specific evidence in both dramatists' plays which proves that there is optimism centers around four main areas: hope, religious faith, positive action and learning by the characters, and the balance which exists between the good and the bad in man's life. Additionally, one may point to the considerable importance of love in Casona's plays and to the demonstration of optimism through tragedy in Buero's plays. To some extent evidence in each of these areas may be found in nearly all of the dramas considered in the present study, though certain of the dramas are more representative of a particular type of optimism than are the others.

Optimism by its very nature and definition requires hope, which directly contradicts the pessimistic tendency to expect the worst. Hope, a feeling that what is wanted will happen, may remain, as it does in Hoy es fiesta, when there is little else to offer encouragement to the protagonists. Regardless of the amount of hope or the presence of other encouraging conditions, however, hope is present in every drama by either playwright.

Because hope refers to that which is not yet accomplished, the dramatists must often rely on symbolism to denote its presence. Balseiro and Owe state that Prohibido suicidarse en primavera ends on a note of hope because, after fleeing from reality, the protagonists return to it and are strengthened by the hope of spring.⁶ In addition to spring, which is almost universally accepted as a sign of renewed hope, Casona

has placed at the end of this play Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" as background music. In the play's last scene Alicia discusses spring and Beethoven with Juan:

Alicia. También él [Beethoven] estaba solo y con fiebre cuando lo escribió. Pero él sabía que la primavera trae una flor y una promesa para todos.

Juan. ¿Lo cree usted así?

Alicia. El doctor me lo dijo un día: "No pidas nunca nada a la vida. Y algún día la vida te dará una sorpresa maravillosa."

Juan. ¿Y espera usted?

Alicia. Siempre Hoy es día de vida y esperanza.
(Prohibido, p. 285)

Other plays by Casona which exemplify hope are La barca sin pescador and Nuestra Natacha. In the former Ricardo Jordán finds hope for a better life after defeating the devil and by relying upon love from Estela, to whom he says: "No hay nada que un hombre no sea capaz de hacer cuando una mujer le mira." (Barca, p. 494) When, at the end of the other play, Lalo tells Natacha, "¡Te esperaré siempre!" (Natacha, p. 215), he is saying both that he will wait and will hope for her. Natacha remains behind at the farm to complete her work with the reformatory students, but Lalo has hope that she will succeed and has the patience to wait until she is finished.

Among all of Buero's plays, perhaps Hoy es fiesta most clearly expresses hope and optimism. In a Madrid review of this play Nicolás González Ruiz has written:

Hoy es fiesta es una obra optimista. No de optimismo bobo . . . , sino de esa comprensión y ternura fundamentales que al decir "la vida es así" no lo hacen con amarga desesperación, sino pensando, como aquí taxativamente se dice, que la esperanza siempre permanece.

Besides providing consolation for the unfortunate inhabitants in the

tenement house in this play, Borel notes that hope serves the additional purpose of making the characters face up to their own particular problems and shortcomings, for, by hoping and failing, they come to see themselves more clearly.⁸ Thus the characters may have learned, after they had apparently won and then lost the lottery, that their hope for a better life cannot be confined to a single time or place, a thought which doña Nieves expresses with the closing words of the play: "Hay que esperar... Esperar siempre... La esperanza nunca termina... La esperanza es infinita..." (Hoy, p. 110) Other of Buero's dramas, however, have also drawn attention to their hopeful conclusion. Referring to Las cartas boca abajo one finds the following in another newspaper review:

Al final de la obra, bello canto a la redención esperanzadora, el esposo, la madre y hasta la pobre enferma silenciosa funden y suelden sus vidas, licuando sus egoísmos para poder entibiarse con el cariño reencontrado en el hijo que renuncia al abandono de su hogar.

José R. Cortina has summarized the role of hope in Buero's tragedies:

Para Buero, el meollo de la tragedia es la esperanza, la cual puede desdoblarse en dos: solución vital a los problemas del hombre y justificación metafísica del mundo"10

The significance of religion in the dramatists' plays provides further evidence of their optimism. Christian dogma espouses the virtues of brotherly love, kindness, and forgiveness in mortal life and the promise of eternal life when the body has died. Therefore, if Casona and Buero have shown in their dramas that Christianity is a functional and practiced reality in the lives of the characters, then they have been optimistic about man.

One of the three main protagonists in Casona's theater is God. In Chapter 2 of the present study it was noted that in La tercera palabra God's presence is made known by the sound of thunder in response to a prayer by Pablo. As one might expect, this twentieth century "Segismundo" has found God in nature. He describes to Marga his discovery of God, which occurred one night when, as a boy, he was trapped alone in a terrible storm:

Y de pronto sentí que no estaba solo... Alguien se acercaba en la oscuridad, llamándome desde la tierra, abrazándome con el viento, mirándome desde las estrellas Comprendí que aquello que estaba allí conmigo era, sencillamente, Dios.
(Palabra, p. 782)

In La dama del alba the pilgrim lady who is Death refers to the ultimate peace and serenity which death provides; such a concept of death may coincide with the Christian concept of the life eternal. The defeat of the devil in La barca sin pescador appears to be a victory for love and for God from whom love comes.

Again in Buero's theater there is one play which more than the others exemplifies a particular manifestation of optimism; in this case Irene o el tesoro most clearly illustrates in Buero's theater the existence of religious faith. "Las sabias y prudentes, las bondadosas voces que vienen de la altura," writes González Ruiz, "no pueden tener mas que un origen, y Dios está siempre detrás de todos los milagros que solo son posibles porque existe Él."¹¹ The miracle to which this critic refers is the way that Irene glides away on the path of light, holding in her arms the "duende" Juanito. "La Voz" has directed Juanito to seek out Irene, the real treasure, and permits

the "duende" to bring Irene with him. It is hard to deny that the symbolism of this closing scene denotes the presence of God and the union with Him in paradise which Irene and all mortals are promised. Hoy es fiesta, Buero's play of hope, also has religious overtones. García Pavón states that this play is a symbol of the life of those who, though in need, can live because they can hope for the great "fiesta de la redención."¹² Hence the eternal hope of which doña Nieves speaks is the hope which all Christians, particularly the lowly and mistreated, hold dear: the hope of ultimate happiness in eternal life.

Before the hope of eternal life is fulfilled, however, the characters must live out, as best they can, their mortal existence. In order to make his mortal existence enjoyable or at least bearable, man must make some kind of self-improvement; he must learn a valuable lesson about himself and life and take some kind of positive action based upon what he has learned. When such improvement and action occur in the plays of Casona and Buero, they denote optimism.

In order for many of the characters of Prohibido suicidarse en primavera to go on living they must improve themselves by finding an alternative to suicide as a means of solving their problems. This they do when they become concerned with one another and thereby forget or minimize their own difficulties. According to Sainz de Robles, Casona teaches in this play that "la salvación humana no está en deshumanizarse voluntaria o violentamente, sino en vivir con sujeción a las exigencias--para el bien o para el dolor--de lo humano"¹³

One of the exigencies of being human is, in this play, to recognize one's common bonds with others. Fernando and Chole learn this through their association with Fernando's brother Juan. Alicia, who once tried to be a nurse but gave it up when the death of some of her patients became too depressing for her, must and does learn that the bonds between humans are of joy as well as of sorrow. Mauricio in Los árboles mueren de pie and Ricardo in La sirena varada both learn that they cannot voluntarily substitute fantasy for real life, particularly when their own emotions become involved. The main lesson learned by the characters named above and others in Casona's plays is that life is not all good or all bad; that one must seek a balance and happiness in life somewhere between unachievable bliss and unreasonable sorrow.

William Shelmutt has written that in Historia de una escalera "the first two generations are depicted as failures, but for the third generation the author implies not failure, but success . . ." ¹⁴

Fernando hijo's plans are more resolute than were his father's and are plans which he intends to put into action right away rather than tomorrow. The son and daughter Fernando and Carmina have learned from their parents' failures the necessity of facing problems squarely and acting resolutely. By the end of the play it seems that even the parents, despite their disillusionment and bitterness, have learned from their children something they had forgotten about life. Much has been made of the "miradas, cargadas de una infinita melancolía" (Historia, p. 147) with which the parents watch their children promise happiness to each other. The infinite melancholy is born of the

realization by the parents that they too once made such promises to one another; however, it also signifies a mellowing of the embittered feelings which they have so recently displayed in their argument on the stairway. The youthful optimism contrasts with the parents own pessimism, and reveals to them that the truth about life is not that it must be bitter but rather that it can be good. Buero further emphasizes the importance of learning in El tragaluz, for Vicente's failure to learn from Mario that the individual is important results in the former's death. His confession came too late, for it awakened in his father's demented mind the memory of a guilty act for which Vicente had for too long failed to atone. In this same play, however, Mario and Encarna, two people who have been unable to face the world alone--Mario has hidden from it and Encarna has depended upon the charity of Vicente--learn to trust in each other and thereby gain the courage to plan for a bright future together.

Buero's characters also learn that there is balance between happiness and sorrow in life. The presence of this balance in both dramatists' plays is a sign of optimism. On the one hand it proves that neither has viewed life as something devoid of pain; thus their optimism is not unrealistic. On the other hand, it proves that Casona and Buero do not hold the pessimist's attitude that nothing one does will turn out well.

It is true that in most cases Casona's characters are happier at the end of the play than are Buero's. Considering this fact alone one may correctly say that happiness triumphs more definitively in Casona's

theater and that this theater tips the balance in life more in favor of the good than does the theater of Buero. However, as R.E. Lott has written, "Buero accepts neither hope nor despair as the unique meaning of the denouement, saying that the two concepts complement each other."¹⁵ In a review of Madrugada González Ruiz states that the pessimism and bitterness for which Buero has been reproached by critics "no son ya el fondo único, sino la dosis necesaria, la que no se puede negar sin pecado de hipocresía."¹⁶ Borel says flatly that he does not accept the idea that the world which Buero paints in his dramas is entirely negative and one in which it is impossible to live happily.¹⁷ Three separate authorities on drama have thus asserted, in effect, that Buero has not made his theater one of negative pessimism, but rather one in which happiness remains possible. Though the characters' physical surroundings may indicate to the audience or reader that Buero sees little else but unhappiness and failure in man's life, the pessimism which such surroundings might engender is offset by the spiritual triumph achieved by some characters.

One of the reasons that Casona's theater portrays more happiness is that love is such a powerful and ever present protagonist in it. "El amor es la base fundamental de toda la intensa y extensa producción dramática del ilustre autor de La dama del alba."¹⁸ This "fundamental base," as Sergio Nerva calls it, serves principally as the means by which characters are redeemed to a better life. The present study has taken note of the fact that love helps characters cope with their problems and face reality; Ricardo Jordán in La barca sin pescador

and Pablo in La tercera palabra are just two of the many examples of characters who have been helped in this way. Love's beneficial influence upon the protagonists helps make their world one in which optimism is possible, but it is also worth noting that Casona himself loved his characters and mankind in general. He admitted in the stage directions preceding La tercera palabra his regard for the two maiden aunts, Matilde and Angelina: "Son dos tipos pintorescos, con cierto aire de abanico y álbum familiar; pero el autor, que siente por ellas una irremediable ternura, prohíbe expresamente convertirlas en dos tipos ridículos." (Palabra, p. 733) Both within his dramas and in his fondness for their characters Casona demonstrated a love for and optimism towards man.

Chapter 1 of the present study made the point that Buero has distinguished between sadness found in tragedy and pessimism which is not. Buero's insistence upon the necessity of making this distinction appears again in the following words by him:

La confusión de lo trágico con lo pesimista que llega, increíblemente, a formularse con frecuencia en letras de imprenta es tal vez la muestra más triste y pesimista que pueden ofrecer de sí mismas esas gentes apresuradas y a veces reidoras que la sufren.¹⁹

Tragedy for Buero is not an end in itself; it is a means by which he expresses his optimistic belief that man may triumph over the hardships and failures which are portrayed in tragedy. Rather than pessimism, Robert Kersner sees in the final glances of "infinite melancholy" (Historia, p. 147) a sort of challenge for the world around the characters and for the audience. The challenge exists, he says, because

for Buero tragedy is filled with hope.²⁰ Hope, not pessimism, is the message of Buero's tragedies, and hope, as the present study has noted, is a definite sign of optimism. Buero himself has written:

La tragedia propone la fundación del optimismo en la verdad y no en la mentira: en el reconocimiento de todas las cosas y no en el escamoteo de las peores. Propone el único optimismo posible, si es que esta virtud ha de ser una realidad del hombre y no una falacia sin consistencia.²⁰

For Buero, then, tragedy is not a way to portray the unhappiness which man suffers; it is rather, the type of drama chosen by him to reveal the complete truth about man's life. That truth, once revealed, provides the foundation of optimism in the dramas of Antonio Buero Vallejo.

How does one conclude discussion about the presence of optimism in the theaters of Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo? Certainly one thing which must be made clear is that all the conclusions arrived at are not considered to be beyond dispute. It seems quite obvious to the writer that throughout both dramatists' theaters the interplay of the characters, their problems, and the methods they use for solving the problems leads inevitably to the conclusion that Casona and Buero are optimistic about man's ability to face the human dilemma--which, to reiterate, consists of trying to satisfy his physical and spiritual needs without harming others, in a society which sometimes impedes his most noble efforts--and to solve it. This much must be insisted upon. However, the particular proofs leading to the conclusion about optimism, and the numerous interpretations and analyses of

the dramatists' materials necessary to arrive at these proofs, may well be debated. Very likely no two people will derive exactly the same impressions from the same dramatic material. Even the authorities on drama cited as sources in the present study differ among themselves and, since they too are human, are subject to error. Nonetheless, if, as an irreducible minimum, those who read or see the dramatists' plays can agree that neither has been cynical about man and that both say he can does live a life which affords him some satisfaction and is worthwhile, then there can be general agreement that Casona and Buero are optimistic, though perhaps in different ways and to different degrees.

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Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo represent individually and collectively many of the finest characteristics of the Spanish theater. They combine an honest and realistic approach to the problems of today with features which have given the Spanish theater outstanding dramas. For example, the Spanish national character has traditionally placed great importance on the value of the individual. Each man, as he stands before God and his fellowman, is considered the equal of other humans in that he is equally important spiritually, if not also temporally. The Spanish theater has portrayed this individual importance in plays such as Lope de Vega's Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña, and Doris K. Arjona has stated that one of the basic traditions of the Spanish theater is its concern with man as an individual, not as a cog in society.¹ Chapter 2 of the present study reveals that Casona and Buero also have demonstrated in their plays a belief in this national and theatrical tradition of the individual. Isabel Magaña Schevill, writing about Buero's drama, has summed up the position and importance of the individual in both dramatists' theaters: "La lucha por el porvenir humano se reduce, al fin y al cabo, al combate individual del hombre que logra vencerse a sí mismo."² Though the individual man may be his own greatest impediment to happiness, he is also his own greatest ally.

The present study has also made evident, however, that Casona and Buero have chosen to portray the individual in different types of dramas. Casona's plays are not tragedies, for they end with the characters seemingly assured of living happily ever after. Buero, on the other hand, is a tragedian, one of the best in the modern Spanish theater. His plays do not end as happily as do Casona's. According to José R. Cortina, Buero's tragedies produce a catharsis, or purging of the emotions, which Buero considers to be "un perfeccionamiento espiritual."³ Catharsis has the effect of clearing the mind of the emotions which have clouded it and thereby permitting the protagonist to see himself more clearly. Even without tragedy Casona produces a type of catharsis; by the end of his plays there has occurred a dramatic scene in which the characters express their deepest emotions and come away having learned something about themselves.

Further evidence of the dramatists' concern with the individual has come from the discussion in Chapter 3 of the characters' problems. In the last analysis, these problems center around the individual and his reaction to the conditions of society which surround him. This is not to say that societal conditions and problems are ignored by the dramatists. Casona's characters relate in conversation with others the sad experiences they have had in today's society; Buero's characters remain immersed in that society.

Chapter 4 of this study has explored the two playwrights' treatment of another theme characteristic of the Spanish theater and Spanish

literature in general, the conflict between reality and illusion. Certain protagonists, one discovers, have sought to escape rather than to confront their problems and have done so by indulging in some form of self-deception. While in some cases their illusions prove to be beneficial, the majority of the protagonists find peace within themselves only after abandoning their illusions and facing up to reality and their problems.

Still, Casona and Buero have not denied their characters the ability to dream of a better life. Out of their dreams the characters derive hope for some future success, either for themselves or for those whom they love. The presence of hope becomes particularly important in Buero's theater because the people in his tragedies do not by the end of the play find themselves surrounded by a relatively happy situation. For this reason, one finds in Buero's theater "esperanza como clave de la fe vital en el porvenir del hombre."⁴ Casona, according to Richard Chandler and Kessel Schwarz, accepts the possibility of happiness both in this world and the next.⁵ Buero also has admitted to this possibility, though not as strongly as Casona, whose characters' hopes for happiness appear to be near realization or already realized at the play's end. Thus, from the analysis of the two dramatists' optimism found in Chapter 5, one may deduce that, while both Casona and Buero are optimistic, they vary in the degree to which they possess and portray this optimism. In the former's theater optimism is more open and is substantiated by the present reality of the characters' situation; in the latter's theater there is still room for doubt that all will

turn out well, but, principally because of the presence of hope, optimism remains alive in the present and future aspirations of the characters. One cannot deny that these aspirations may be fulfilled.

In the last few years before his death Casona saw a relaxation of the Spanish government's hostility towards him and he was able to return to Spain and have some of his plays produced there. This relaxation in government policy also resulted in an apparent lessening of censorship of the theater. Buero's previously censored and suppressed play, Aventura en lo gris, was at last produced on stage in 1963.⁶ However George Wellworth, writing in 1969, still found that censorship in Spain permitted only "spineless pap" on the stage and that Buero and other dramatists had suffered from it.⁷ Buero's personal attitude towards censorship indicates that he does not consider it a serious problem. Due to the conditioning which any dramatist receives from the society in which he lives, Buero has observed that there exists "the impossibility of absolute freedom in writing not only in Spain, but also in countries considered to be politically free."⁸ Kessel Schwarz quotes him as saying, "Creo que el público es receptivo, aunque sea burgués," indicating that there is growing acceptance among the Spanish public for severe criticism of the status quo.⁹

A complete list of the dramatists' plays which were not analyzed in the present study may be found in the Appendix. This list shows that during his thirty-one years of prominence in the theater (1934-1965) Casona wrote a variety of dramas. The categories into which his dramas are divided suggest topics or ideas for other theses on Casona.

For example, one might study his plays based upon the lives of historical figures in order to determine how he has portrayed these figures and in what ways some of the main characteristics of his theater, such as the reality-illusion theme, have appeared in these plays. How have these characteristics caused Casona to modify the life story or events in the life of the historical figures? Another worthwhile field for exploration could be the ways in which Casona has treated in his plays the stories and characters which he derived from Spanish folklore and literature. Since Casona's plays, written by a former schoolteacher, always teach something, didacticism in the plays provides a possible subject also. Suggested topics for studies of perhaps less than thesis length may include Casona's adaptations of works by non-Spanish authors; his use of ordinary nighttime dreams in at least two of his plays (about which Charles Leighton has written an article¹⁰); and the possible influence of the Asturias region which may appear in his plays (see an article by Rodríguez-Castellano¹¹).

Buero's work in the theater has been less diverse than Casona's in terms of the number of different sources of information or inspiration for the plays. Also, the most outstanding characteristic of his theater, tragedy, has already been the subject of a doctoral dissertation by Martha T. Halsey: "The Tragedies of Antonio Buero Vallejo."¹² However, there are yet some topics which suggest themselves for thesis studies. Providing that there is sufficient information available, a study of the effects which censorship in Spain may have had on his

theater would prove interesting. William Shelnut, Jr. has found that the symbolism of Historia de una escalera is directed at Spain's current social conditions and immediate past history.¹³ This type of symbolism, along with the assertions that Buero's theater is committed to the betterment of social conditions among the poor, gives evidence that a study of how Buero's concern for the common man today appears in his dramas would be challenging and fruitful. Buero's Spanish version of Hamlet and his plays about two famous Spaniards, Velázquez and Esquilache, could yield good topics for non-thesis level research. One might discuss how, in any one of these plays, Buero treated the principal character, particularly with regard to any changes from the original character or deviations from known facts.

There are other outstanding dramatists writing for the twentieth century Spanish theater, but the student of Spanish literature may find no two finer representatives of this theater than Alejandro Casona and Antonio Buero Vallejo. Reading and analysis of their plays will provide the student, as it has the writer of the present study, with an excellent introduction to the best plays and playwrights of contemporary Spanish drama. Casona is representative of the lyrical and openly optimistic approach to drama about contemporary man.

Bruce M. Goldfaden, in his magazine article "Bodas de sangre and La dama del alba," compares Casona to one of Spanish literature's most poetic dramatists, Federico García Lorca.¹⁴ Buero has in common with García Lorca the writing of tragedies, but does convey more optimism. Both Casona and Buero have been innovators in the Spanish theater.

At the beginning of the present study it was said that Spanish drama in the twentieth century has not been of uniform quality. Obviously the same statement could be made about the drama of any century. However, the theaters of Casona and Buero, if followed by other dramatists of equal caliber, may provide a key to the future of Spanish drama. Within their plays the two dramatists present hope for and optimism towards man as he faces the human dilemma; while the plays themselves, because of their uniformly excellent quality, give the Spanish theater hope for continued high standards of drama and give the drama students an optimistic attitude towards the possibility that this hope may be realized.

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APPENDIX: THE DRAMATISTS' OTHER PLAYS

ALEJANDRO CASONA

Casona found ideas for his dramas' plots in a variety of different sources. The following list of his dramas not discussed in the present study is an attempt to categorize his plays according to the type of source from which the idea for each play was derived. The place and date of the play's "estreno," when available, are given in parentheses following the title.

(1) Plays based upon the lives of historical figures:

María Curie (Buenos Aires, 1940).

Sinfonía inacabada (Montevideo, 1940). Based upon the life of Franz Schubert.

Corona de amor y muerte (Buenos Aires, 1955). Based upon the story of Inés de Castro.

El caballero de las espuelas de oro (Madrid, 1964). Based upon the life of Francisco Quevedo.

(2) Plays based upon Spanish folklore and literature:

Retablo jovial. This is a collection of plays which Casona wrote for and had performed by his "Teatro del Pueblo," the theater of his Misiones Pedagógicas (1932-1936). Those indicated by place and date in parentheses have also had professional performances.

"Sancho Panza en la ínsula," also known as "Sancho Panza en la isla Barataria" (Mexico City, 1937).

"Entremes del mancebo que caso con mujer brava." Derived from "Ejemplo XXXV" of El conde Lucanor.

"Farsa del cornudo apaleado." Derived from "History LXXVII" of the Decameron.

"Fablilla del secreto bien guardado." Based upon a popular Spanish tradition.

"Farsa y justicia del corregidor." Based upon a popular Spanish tradition.

La molinera de Arcos (Buenos Aires, 1947). Based upon El sombrero de tres picos by Alarcón.

La Celestina (Madrid, 1965). Based upon the famous Spanish novel by the same name.

El burlador de Sevilla. A version of the famous Don Juan theme.
Peribáñez. Based upon Lope de Vega's Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña.

(3) Plays based upon stories by non-Spanish authors:

El crimen de Lord Arturo (Habana, 1938). Based upon an Oscar Wilde novel by the same English name.

Carta de una desconocida (Porto Alegre, 1957). Based upon a novel by Stefan Zweig.

El sueño de una noche de verano. Based upon Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.

Ricardo III. Based upon Shakespeare's drama by the same English name.

(4) Plays which have to do with real, nighttime dreaming:

La llave en el desván (Buenos Aires, 1951).
Siete gritos en el mar (Buenos Aires, 1952).

(5) Children's theater:

Casona's Teatro infantil is composed of:

"El lindo don Gato."

"A Belen, ¡Pastores!" (Montevideo, 1951)

(6) Other plays not specifically categorized:

Otra vez el diablo (Madrid, 1935)

El misterio del 'Marie Celeste' (Madrid, 1935)

Romance de Dan y Elsa, also known as Romance en tres noches (Caracas, 1938).

Las tres perfectas casadas (Buenos Aires, 1941). El anzuelo de Fenisa (Buenos Aires, 1958). Don Rodrigo.

ANTONIO BUERO VALIEJO

As of 1968 Buero had written a total of seventeen dramas. The list below categorizes the ones not discussed in the present study as Casona's are categorized above.

(1) Plays based upon the lives of historical figures:

Un soñador para un pueblo (Madrid, 1958). Based upon the life of the Spanish statesman and political figure, Esquilache.

Las Meninas (Madrid, 1960). A fantasy based upon the life of the great Spanish artist Velázquez.

(2) Three other plays are related to persons or events found in history or mythology:

Las palabras en la arena (Madrid, 1949). A one act play about adultery and inspired by a Biblical episode found in John 8: 1-11.

La tejedora de sueños (Madrid, 1952). Based upon the legend concerning the wife of Ulysses, Penelope, who wove and then unwove a tapestry while awaiting her husband's return.

El concierto de San Ovidio (Madrid, 1962). A dramatization of the event which is supposed to have inspired Valentin Haüy (1745-1822) to open the first school for the blind.

(3) A play based upon one written by a non-Spanish author:

Hamlet, Príncipe de Dinamarca (Madrid, 1961). Based upon Shakespeare's Hamlet.

(4) Other plays not specifically categorized:

La señal que se espera (Madrid, 1952). Like Hoy es fiesta, this play emphasizes the presence of hope in the life of man.

Casi un cuento de hadas (Madrid, 1953). A near fairytale, but also a tragedy.

Aventura en lo gris. Original version, not produced, written before 1949.

Aventura en lo gris (Madrid, 1963). A revised version whose basic content remained unchanged.

La doble historia del doctor Volmy. Not produced, written in 1964.