

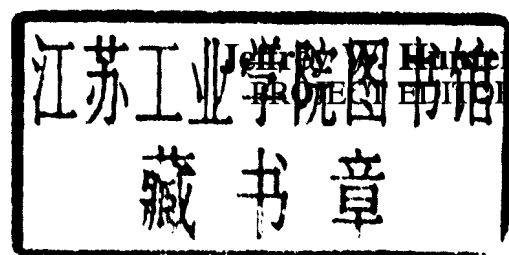
☐ Contemporary
Literary Criticism

CLC 226

Volume 226

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and
Other Creative Writers



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Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 2,000 authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 include authors who died after December 31, 1959. Previous to the publication of the first volume of *CLC* in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. *CLC*, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially important to today’s reader.

Scope of the Series

CLC provides significant passages from published criticism of works by creative writers. Since many of the authors covered in *CLC* inspire continual critical commentary, writers are often represented in more than one volume. There is, of course, no duplication of reprinted criticism.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or dramatic production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science fiction writers, literary and social critics, foreign authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews taken from hundreds of book review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning from the beginning of an author’s career to the most current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other published writings that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

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- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
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- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- Whenever possible, a recent **Author Interview** accompanies each entry.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Thomson Gale.

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Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Literary Criticism Series Advisory Board xiii

Antonio Buero Vallejo 1916-2000	1
<i>Spanish dramatist and essayist</i>	
Eminem (Marshall Mathers) 1972-	118
<i>American lyricist and rap artist</i>	
P. D. James 1920-	177
<i>English novelist, short story writer, and nonfiction writer</i>	
Truth in Memoirs	
<i>Introduction</i>	253
<i>Representative Works</i>	253
<i>Arguments For and Against Fictionalization</i>	254
<i>Reaction to James Frey's A Million Little Pieces</i>	269
<i>Other Suspected and Proven Memoir Hoaxes</i>	280
Paul West 1930-	289
<i>English-born American novelist, critic, short story writer, essayist, poet, and autobiographer</i>	

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 375

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 483

CLC Cumulative Nationality Index 497

CLC-226 Title Index 513

Antonio Buero Vallejo

1916-2000

Spanish dramatist and essayist.

The following entry presents an overview of Buero Vallejo's career through 2005. For further information on his life and works, see *CLC*, Volumes 15, 46, and 139.

INTRODUCTION

Buero Vallejo's plays were heavily influenced by the Francoist and post-Francoist eras in which he lived and wrote. His work stands in marked contrast to the superficial, sentimental plays that were popular in prewar Spain and to which some longed to return after the dismantling of the oppressive Franco regime.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Buero Vallejo was born in Guadalajara, Spain, in 1916 to Francisco Buero, a military engineer, and Cruz Vallejo. He nurtured a love of painting with two years of study at the San Fernando School of Fine Arts in Madrid and expected that he would become an artist, but the Spanish Civil War intervened. For his service to the Loyalist army as a medical assistant, Buero Vallejo was imprisoned for six years, at times on death row, by the regime of Generalissimo Francisco Franco. He continued his artistic endeavors while in prison and although he could have bargained with guards for an easel and proper supplies, he refused to deal with his captors and thus was limited to creating basic sketches and watercolors balanced on his lap. Consequently, his painting skills diminished, but he gained a passion for bearing righteous witness that would find its outlet in dramatic writing. Released from prison in 1949, Buero Vallejo introduced his play *Historia de una escalera* (1949; *Story of a Stairway*) which presents a brutal picture of postwar Spain. The play won the prestigious Lope de Vega Drama Prize, and in the same year he was recognized with the Friends of the Quintero Brothers Prize for *Las palabras en la arena* (1949; *Words on the Sand*). Buero Vallejo produced an average of one play per year into the 1970s and was honored with dozens of awards. He received the National Drama Prize four times, the Leopoldo Cano Prize five times, the Maria Rolland Prize three times, and the Medalla de Oro del Espectador y la critica eight times, in addition

to many other awards. In 1971 he was elected to the Spanish Royal Academy and in 1986 he received the coveted Miguel de Cervantes Prize. Buero Vallejo died April 29, 2000, in Madrid.

MAJOR WORKS

Buero Vallejo's plays are primarily redemptive tragedies, stories in which people overcome misfortune with abiding hopefulness. The author expressed his own criticism of the Francoist regime and hope for the future of Spain through the uplifting components of his plays. With constant interference from censors and the threat of sanctions as severe as imprisonment if he were classified an opponent of the state, Buero Vallejo exercised *posibilismo*, a quiet form of protest characterized by degrees of compromise. In acquiescing to some of the censors' objections on minutiae such as synonymous words, it seems Buero Vallejo was able to divert their attention from the intense, potentially seditious symbolic messages that are the heart of his oeuvre. In encouraging the censors' attention to details, he obscured the "big picture" from them. *En la ardiente oscuridad* (1950; *In the Burning Darkness*) presents the conflict between two students at a school for the blind, one of whom refuses to accept his blindness, as symbolic of the Spanish people's passive acceptance of totalitarian rule. Examining communication difficulties from another perspective, Buero Vallejo replicated the experience of deafness for audiences of *El sueño de la razón* (1970; *The Sleep of Reason*), which recounts Spanish artist Francisco de Goya's resistance to the tyranny of King Ferdinand VII.

After Franco, when Spain ostensibly became an intellectually liberated society, Buero Vallejo noted the emergence of the *pacto de olvido*, or agreement to forget, that quickly gained ground among the Spanish people. Buero Vallejo saw great danger in this willingness to dismiss the past and railed against the *pacto de olvido* in his post-Franco dramas. He used the metaphor of imprisonment in *La fundación* (1974; *The Foundation*), which equates the journey toward freedom with passage through a series of prisons, each of which is significant. Buero Vallejo fictionalized Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy with *La detonación* (1977; *The Shot*), which relates the last ten years of the life of critic José Mariano de Larra. Buero Vallejo uses the character of Larra to voice many of his own beliefs

about the role of the intellectual in a repressive and censored society. *Jueces en la noche* (1979; *Judges in the Night*), *Caimán* (1981), and *Diálogo secreto* (1984; *The Secret Dialogue*) all delve into the problems of building a democracy after years of authoritarian rule. *Lázaro en la laberinto* (1986; *Lazarus in the Labyrinth*), clearly an allegorical condemnation of the *pacto de olvido*, examines the dangers of forgetting at the interpersonal level. The protagonist, Lázaro, is tormented by his inability to recall the details of a tragic event from his past. He, and by inference all of Spain, is unable to move on with his life until he resolves this forgotten or perhaps suppressed event. Buero Vallejo's condemnation of revisionism also appears in his final two plays, *Música cercana* (1989; *The Music Window*) and *Las trampas del azar* (1994). Also in 1994, an omnibus of Buero Vallejo's plays, *Obra completa*, was published in two volumes.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

In considering his dramatic techniques, most critics recognize Buero Vallejo for the artistry and visual richness of his plays, drawn from his early years as a painter, and for his facility in the use of symbolism and metaphor to engage audiences in his intellectually profound plots. However, discussions of Buero Vallejo's career often center not on the content of his plays but on the political climate in which they were written. Buero Vallejo's *posibilismo* drew condemnation from more outspoken radicals, who accused him of compromising his integrity out of cowardice. Buero Vallejo, however, maintained that his measured approach would make the difference between publication and dormancy for his plays, and in fact all but two survived the censors and reached their intended audiences. Catherine O'Leary observed, "Only that which exists can be judged later and although the restrictions on the Spanish writer working during the Franco regime may have been severe, he still possessed a voice, which according to Buero, he was obliged to use to the best of his ability. He had little time for those who claimed that they did not write because they could not say what they wanted to say." Buero Vallejo completed his career without further imprisonment or other severe political consequences, and scholars reviewing his life's work generally conclude that he served as an effective voice against both oppression and the haste to forget it that is common but damaging to newly liberated societies.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Historia de una escalera [Story of a Stairway] (drama) 1949
Las palabras en la arena [Words on the Sand] (drama) 1949

En la ardiente oscuridad [In the Burning Darkness] (drama) 1950
La señal que se espera (drama) 1952
La tejedora de sueños [The Dreamweaver] (drama) 1952
Casi un cuento de hadas: Una glosa de Perrault (drama) 1953
Madrugada (drama) 1953
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El terror inmovil: Fragmentos de una tragedia irrepresentable (drama) 1954
Hoy es fiesta (drama) 1956
Las cartas boca abajo [Letters Face Down] (drama) 1957
Un soñador para un pueblo [A Dreamer for a People] (drama) 1958
Teatro 2 vols. (dramas) 1959-1962
Las meninas: Fantasia velazquena en dos partes [Las meninas: A Fantasy] (drama) 1960
El concierto de San Ovidio [The Concert of Saint Ovide] (drama) 1962
Buero Vallejo: Antología teatral (dramas) 1966
Teatro selecto (dramas) 1966
El tragaluz [The Basement Window] (drama) 1967
La doble historia del doctor Valmy (drama) 1968
Mito [Myth] (drama) 1969
El sueño de la razón [The Sleep of Reason] (drama) 1970
Llegada de los dioses [Arrival of the Gods] (drama) 1971
La fundación [The Foundation] (drama) 1974
La detonación [The Shot] (drama) 1977
Jueces en la noche [Judges in the Night] (drama) 1979
Caimán (drama) 1981
Diálogo secreto [The Secret Dialogue] (drama) 1984
Lázaro en la laberinto [Lazarus in the Labyrinth] (drama) 1986
Música cercana [The Music Window] (drama) 1989
Obra completa 2 vols. (dramas, poetry, prose, and essays) 1994
Las trampas del azar (drama) 1994
Futuro del teatro y otros ensayos (essays) 1999

CRITICISM

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[In the following essay, Herzberger observes that the "painterly metaphor" embodied by Francisco de Goya is the key to interpreting *El sueño de la razón*.]

Francisco de Goya first appears in *El sueño de la razón* in the second scene of Act One, a scene repeated early in Act Two: the artist at work, painting. It is not a fortuitous configuration of events that advances this view of the protagonist near the beginning of each act. For painting (and the nature of art) inheres in the basic structure of *Sueño* [*El sueño de la razón*] and provides the frame within which it unfolds. As a number of critics have pointed out, most of *Sueño* develops with Goya as the center of consciousness.¹ His deafness functions as one of the principal dramatic determinants of the play, and when Goya is present on stage, the audience is permitted to hear only what he hears and to perceive reality as he perceives it. The use of gestures and mime thus becomes crucial to communication: the characters are compelled to converse with Goya in a way that focuses always on his perspective of things. However, it is not merely his inability to hear that shapes Goya's perceptions (and therefore our own) but also his view of art and artistic creation. Above all in *Sueño*, Goya is portrayed as a painter. Even as a political dissident, or in his moments of personal anguish with Leocadia, Goya's essential being is defined always within the painterly metaphor. Hence it is to this metaphor that we must attend in order to grasp fully the underlying structural and thematic unity of the play.²

In addition to the systematic representation of Goya-as-artist, the commingling of several correlative elements in *Sueño* enhances the centrality of the artistic metaphor. For example, Goya's *pinturas negras* are projected on the stage throughout the play, reminding us always of his imaginative power to create the world as he sees it. In addition, titles of several of the *Caprichos* and *Desastres de la guerra* inform the dialogue of the violent attack on Goya's home, thus combining art and life in the structuring of plot. Other principal characters (Arrieta, Duaso, Leocadia) play an equally important part in expanding the artistic metaphor. They interpret Goya's paintings in several dialogues during the course of the play, and their commentary casts art as an undisguised device for shaping the reality made available to the audience. Clearly, Buero has sought to integrate the artistic metaphor into the very fabric of his work, and, as it develops, the paintings function less as props outside the central drama than as essential *dramatis personae*. Unlike in a picture book, where illustrations often serve an augmentative function, safely paralleling what has been conveyed in language, Buero's incorporation of painting into *Sueño* creates an iconicity that defines the nature of the entire aesthetic enterprise. It not only reveals the deep meaning of the play, but also structures and mediates its constituent elements.

To a greater or lesser degree, all art is about itself and its own creation. Goya himself admits that this principle impels his painting by offering an interpretive inroad to

his artistic imagination: "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos." That is to say, Goya's etching of his creative process turns his art back on itself as its own referent. His art in effect becomes his imagination incarnate. The self-consciousness of the undertaking thus creates a system of meaning in which the work's own artistry serves as both point of departure and destination.³ Since Buero co-opts the title of Goya's *capricho*, the artistic substance of the drama is immediately laid bare. As icons, the paintings projected on the screen during the drama contain their own referent. Their very nature intimates a desire in the artist to be free of the world, to be suspended in the rarefied reality of the artistic condition. Hence the peculiarly Goyesque vision is firmly established from the outset of the play and the forms and strategies of artistic self-sufficiency move to the fore. Goya in fact suggests the self-reflexive aspect of his art in *Sueño* when he makes the verb "to paint" intransitive: "No es fácil pintar, pero yo pintaré" (p. 130); "Tengo que pintar aquí" (p. 139).⁴ Goya does not proclaim the need to paint *something*, but rather the urgency *to paint*. Artistic composition thus becomes for Goya an ekphrastic enterprise whose meaning lies in creation as an expression of the human will and in the sovereignty of the imagination.

The implied autonomy of Goya's work is also linked to one of the principal sub-themes of the play: isolation and solitude. Goya lives in both physical and spiritual isolation in the *quinta del sordo* and endures an inner exile that segregates him from direct contact with contemporary society.⁵ He has rarely left his house in two years and is mindful that he exists "en el desierto" (p. 165). Furthermore, he affirms that he spends his days "sin que se acuerden de mí y pintando lo que me dé la gana" (p. 130). This idea is reiterated throughout the play and underscores his impotence in the face of political challenges from the king. More importantly, however, the stark portrayal of Goya's seclusion facilitates the elaboration of an artistic norm that is at once affirmed and transgressed by the whole of the play. That is to say, since Goya's solitude subjugates all other aspects of his existence, it inspires him to unleash the mystery and terror of pure imagination. Cut off from the outer world, his art comes to embody the inner patterns of the mind rather than convey the observable flow of social reality. The dominion of the *pinturas negras* hints at this process, and at first glance they appear to preclude the desired continuity between political and artistic commitment.

Yet isolation does not suggest insulation for Goya, just as the autonomy of his imagination never engenders art that is singularly self-reflexive. At the core of Buero's vision of Goya (and at the center of Buero's writing as a whole) lies refusal to admit the romantic disenchantment that art has no obvious function. Buero denies that art's unique position as aesthetic object bestows upon it

what Terry Eagleton terms “the status of a solitary fetish.”⁶ Despite the systematic affirmation of Goya’s isolation in *Sueño*, and the concurrent authority invested in the autonomous imagination, there is nonetheless a generative energy in the play that vivifies what Charles Morris called the “double semantic thrust” of art, and what Paul Ricœur more recently has termed “split referentiality.”⁷

In essence, both Morris and Ricœur recognize that art is not one thing and life another, but rather that the two are conjoined on a single plane of being. In order to grasp the full measure of this interfusion, it is necessary to account for the creative imagination, the artifact produced, and the interpretive function of the reader (viewer). Buero seems to be supremely aware of the conjunctive nature of this process, for its constituent elements are threaded throughout his play, affording thematic and structural unity within the artistic frame. I have already suggested that, at least in part, Goya turns the artistic process back on itself, and that *Sueño* lays bare this process by portraying the painter isolated from society and his art nourished by pure imagination. Yet art for Goya (Buero) is also able to represent the world about him, and is projected into that world through a type of referential reciprocity derived less from mimesis than from avoidance of the prevailing artistic norms of correspondence. If we view mimetic art not as a mirror of reality but as a correspondence to rules, conventions, and forms structuring reality within art, it becomes evident how Goya turns convention on its head. Despite his isolation, social reality indeed imposes itself on his art. But the nature of this imposition in *Sueño* grows from a bi-modal sequential process. On the one hand, we witness the manner in which his paintings depart from current artistic canons, while on the other we observe how the characters (including Goya) become the principal interpreters of the artist’s work.

Goya’s aesthetic deviation assumes thematic significance from the outset of the play. Early in Act One Calomarde (the king’s advisor) dismisses the worth of Goya as court painter: “¡No es el gran pintor que dicen, señor! Dibujo incorrecto, colores agrios . . . Retratos reales sin nobleza ni belleza” (p. 17). For Calomarde, Goya transgresses the norms of mimetic tradition and therefore is to be scorned and ridiculed. In contrast, the painter Vicente López adheres to established conventions and merits recognition and praise: “Un gran pintor es Vicente López. . . . [él] es también un pintor virtuoso. Sus retratos dan justa idea de los altos méritos de sus modelos. Cuando pasen los siglos, Vuestra Majestad verá, desde el cielo, seguir brillando la fama de López y olvidados los chafarrinones de ese fatuo” (p. 118). Although Calomarde’s judgment is infused with an irony he fails to perceive, the aesthetic posture he assumes locates Goya on the margins of mimesis and, therefore, on the fringe of artistic value.

Calomarde’s interpretation of Goya’s work shapes the action of *Sueño* in a practical sense, since his influence over the king ensures Goya’s continued exclusion from the court. More importantly, however, it establishes from the outset of the play the central role afforded interpretation. The artistic position enunciated by the characters, as well as their evaluation of Goya himself, in large part turns upon their view of the *pinturas negras*. Furthermore, Goya’s character is also developed most fully through recurrent reflection on his own work and his desire for exegetic completeness. This interpretive enthusiasm enables the painterly metaphor to be cultivated not parenthetical to the action as a contrived literary device, but rather as an essential component of the work’s dramatic center.

The judgment of Goya’s aesthetics by the other characters of the play in large part duplicates Calomarde’s stance. Each of the characters speaks to the nature of Goya’s art and denounces it as an affront to artistic tradition. Arrieta asserts, for example, that “[Goya] ya no es un gran pintor, sino un viejo que emborriona paredes” (p. 191). Father Duaso concludes concerning Goya’s paintings that “bellas no son” (p. 156), and explains to the king that Goya “decora las paredes con feas y torpes pinturas” (p. 170). For her part, Leocadia simply judges Goya’s works to be “espantosas” (p. 124). In each of these instances, the paintings clash with the expectations of the viewer and are therefore dismissed as inartistic. As a result, the confluence of two essential aspects of *Sueño* is confirmed. The refusal to embrace Goya’s painting complements on an artistic plane the isolation he already suffers as a political exile. At the same time, it focuses the attention of the audience on art and aesthetics, thus validating the centrality of the artistic vision that gives shape to the play.

Buero has complicated the problem here, however, by implicitly incorporating the spectator of the play into the interpretive process. The audience—of the play—observes the characters observing the paintings of Goya. While the internal spectators (the characters) reject Goya’s new art, Buero clearly demands more sympathy from his external audience. Of course, the larger frame of reference for the play is defined by the assumed artistic knowledge of the external audience. The projection of the black paintings on the backdrop of the stage represents for this audience a kind of artistic symbiosis (of literature and painting) in which it is invited to evaluate the works at the same moment they are discussed on stage by Buero’s personages. In this sense, the play stands as a literary adumbration of Goya’s aesthetics and their sustained vitality over time. The contemporary spectator is expected to affirm this proposition, even as the internal interpreters scorn Goya’s work as “ugly and stupid.”

Despite their derogation of Goya’s art, the characters nonetheless draw upon it in order to understand and

explain the world around them. And it is precisely by means of their frequent discussions of the paintings that Buero affords Goya's art a referential role in the play over and above their presence as artistic objects. For example, in one fashion or another, each of the characters attempts to interpret Goya's mental state through the concretized product of his imagination. Leocadia finds firm evidence of Goya's insanity in the paintings:

LEOCADIA:

Estas [pinturas] son horribles pinturas de viejo. . . .
De viejo demente.

ARRIETA:

¿Estás insinuando que ha enloquecido? (*ella cierra los ojos y asiente*).

(p. 124)

Arrieta, on the other hand, encounters both anguish and mental instability in Goya's painting on a personal as well as political level:

ARRIETA:

Ahora, bajo el gran silencio, el pintor se consume y grita desde el fondo de esta tumba, para que no le oigan.

DUASO:

¿Por miedo?

ARRIETA:

O por locura. Tal vez las dos cosas.

(p. 156)

For his part, Dr. Duaso, who dismissed the artistic validity of Goya's work, agrees with Arrieta's conclusions and reports to the king that Goya's condition "podría ser indicio de locura senil" (p. 170).

The characters' search for a determinate meaning in Goya's paintings suggests a fundamental question that intrudes upon all exegetic inquiry: is the specific interpretation, the giving of meaning, correct? Is Goya indeed a madman whose delusions and terror are embodied in the stroke of his brush? Is Goya himself identifiable and available to the characters within his art? In short, do the paintings function as a kind of diaphanous synechdoche of the artistic personality that stands behind them? These questions call forth a wide range of complex issues, of course, and raise theoretical problems that lie outside the scope of this study. Nonetheless, within the play Buero suggests an answer that allows for the precarious centering of the author within his work at the same time that he discounts the interpretations offered by the other characters. In order

to grasp this intrinsic proposition of the play we must again turn to the role of painting, but in this instance, to Goya's understanding of his own artistic process.

What first distinguishes Goya from the other interpreters of his art is the absence of aesthetic shock at his divergence from artistic norms. Although Goya recognizes that his black paintings controvert tradition, and he even suspects their value as art—"Yo gocé pintando formas bellas, y éstas son larvas. Me bebí todos los colores del mundo y en estos muros las tinieblas se beben el color" (p. 184)—he is less concerned with value than with the process of creation and the relationship between art and life. Through much of the play Goya evinces an almost obsessive need to tell others what his art *means*, thus affirming his desire to express a view of the world by means of the painterly metaphor. Rather than offer a determinate or restrictive meaning, however, Goya seeks to illustrate to his friends (i.e., the interpreters of his art) the nature of his entire creative process.

In the first place, Goya is aware that an undefined and even uncontrolled imagination impels the course of his painting. Hence he is able to construct a new, virtual reality that supplants what is concrete and specific. His discussion with Arrieta of the "hombres voladores," for example, must be seen as evidentiary rather than symbolic: "No estoy soñando con ángeles . . . ¿Imaginar el futuro? ¡Le digo que los he visto! (*Arrieta traza signos y señala a Asmodea*.) Eso sí es imaginación. Un pobre solitario como yo puede soñar que una bella mujer . . . de la raza misteriosa . . . le llevaría a su montaña" (p. 137). What is important in this instance is that imagination not only allows Goya to dream, but to paint. Imagination for Goya is not merely the rearranging of what already exists into newly configured patterns, but rather an enabling energy that permits him to emancipate his art from the limiting confines of reality and the ordering control of aesthetic doctrine.

Buero portrays Goya's imagination as splendidly autonomous, but never remote. Hence despite the sense of pure creation suggested above, the imagined coalesces with the real in Goya's art in a way that precludes the dichotomy between mimesis and self-reflexivity. If on the one hand Goya has imagined the flying men, on the other he has painted the violence of the world "porque la he visto" (p. 162). His portrayal of the priests in *El Santo Oficio* is similarly inspired: "Igual que cuando me denunciaron a la Santa Inquisición. Me miraban como a un bicho con sus ojos de bichos, por haber pintado una hembra en puras carnes . . . Son insectos que se creen personas. Hormigas en torno a la reina gorda. . . . Les parece que el día es hermoso, pero yo veo que está sombrío. . . . Sí, al fondo brilla el sol. Y allá está la montaña, pero ellos no la ven. . . . Una montaña que yo sé que hay" (p. 131). Goya clearly imposes here his vision on the world around him and

makes it available to others through the images of his canvas. Art never mirrors life for Goya, but rather appropriates and transfigures it, with the imagination as catalyst.

In contrast, however, life may imitate art. Buero writes in one of his stage directions, for example, that Goya is transformed into “uno de los penitenciados que él grabó y pintó tantas veces” (p. 202). Goya likewise perceives his circumstances as linked to the painting that stands before him: “Mire *Las Parcas*. Y un gran brujo que ríe entre ellas. Pues alguien se ríe. Es demasiado espantoso para que haya una gran risa. . . . Este muñeco que sostiene una de ellas soy yo” (p. 185). Art works similarly upon the painter’s imagination. A woman’s voice in one of his reveries declares, “Imita este pobre imbécil de tu pintura” (p. 175); while later, in the long dream sequence that parallels the etching, “El sueño de la razón,” Goya again evokes an image from his art that depicts the political terror of the moment: “Los voladores están llamando a todas las puertas de Madrid” (p. 199). Hence Goya invests reality with the creative authority of art, and by doing so reaffirms the eminence of the play’s painterly vision.

Two additional examples help define the importance of imagination for Goya, both in the creation of his art and in its intrusion into the world. The first has to do with his recurrent evocation of Mariquita and the central role afforded the painting, *Asmodea*. Mariquita does not appear directly on stage, but rather inhabits Goya’s private world of imagination. He “hears” her voice throughout the play and even orders Leocadia to bring her to the house. At the same time, Goya’s imaginative powers are placed in the service of art most explicitly in his creation of *Asmodea*. He not only breaks with the concrete reality of everyday existence in the painting, but projects the newly created reality into the future and links it with a reverie of hope (p. 184). The eventual conjoining of Mariquita and *Asmodea* thus speaks to the nature of split referentiality that Buero envisions as the essence of Goya’s art. This becomes evident near the end of Act One: Goya speaks with Mariquita as *Asmodea* is projected on the stage. Mariquita first evokes the painting (“¿Cómo no va a oír a su *Asmodea*?” [p. 165]), then relates it to her own existence: “Quita, quita, quita . . . Mariquita, Mar, Marasmodea, dea, dea, dea, . . . Marasmo” (p. 165). The interfusion of the two occurs entirely within Goya’s imagination, of course, and it underscores the way in which all reality in the play is channeled through his artistic vision. Mariquita indeed exists, as does the painting: both are objects in reality. However, both are metamorphosed by Goya’s imagination and their contextual association, and come to be identified with hope.

A number of critics have suggested that *Sueño* embodies the darkest vision of Buero’s theater, and that the hope associated with his earlier tragedies has been

replaced by despair.⁸ Goya’s defeat by the king and exile to France humiliate the artist, and the *pinturas negras* he leaves behind are portrayed as the work of a madman. In contrast, others have encountered a vision of optimism in the play. William Giuliano, for example, points to the friendship of Duaso and Arrieta as an attempt at reconciliation between liberals and conservatives, while John Dowling finds a small note of hope present in *Asmodea*. Martha Halsey underscores the ambivalence at the end of the play, though she cites the final utterance (“Si amanece, nos vamos” [p. 213]) as a clear sign of optimism.⁹ It must be remembered, however, that since Goya’s artistic vision stands behind much of what occurs in the play, any suggestion of hope is best understood as a product of the painterly image. *Asmodea* indeed offers a reprieve from despair, but its message remains ambiguous amid the cluttered ruins of Fernando’s Spain and its link to Mariquita and fear. The authentic hope of *Sueño*, therefore, lies not in the specificity of a single work, but in the broader proposition of painting and imagination.

Goya’s imaginative freedom, in marked opposition to his political repression, enables him to challenge the limits of the possible. His dreams and paintings, as well as the social and historical circumstances in which he lives, coalesce to blur the distinctions between art and life. Buero’s portrait of the artist as an old man near death, rather than as a young man on the verge of life, in no way mitigates the power of his artistic vision to represent and shape the world as he perceives it. This, then, is the hope that finally obtains in the play—a hope based not on the symbolic implications of a single painting, or on the potential resolution of political turmoil, but on the whole of painting as an existential and political act that liberates the painter from the imposed patterns of reality. Significantly, Goya never turns from reality to pretend it does not exist, but rather reshapes it with the creative vision of his art. Even when it appears that he may be locked into what James Joyce calls a “black adaphane” (a material darkness), he is able to project himself into future and different worlds through the constant play of his imagination, which is concretized and affirmed by his painting. This is suggested by the stage directions as Goya leaves his house for the final time: “[Goya] gira y lanza una ojeada circular de despedida a las pinturas. Contemplándolas, una extraña sonrisa le calma el rostro” (p. 213).¹⁰ To be sure, the *pinturas negras* may be inspired by fear or madness, but the tranquility of Goya’s demeanor at the end of the play reflects the liberating authority of art and imagination, which enables him to transcend the finitude of life.

The marriage of artistic imagination and reality is most explicitly rendered in *Sueño* during the violent scene in which Goya is beaten and Leocadia raped. Several critics have pointed to the juxtaposition of this segment to Goya’s dream, and have shown how the grotesque

figures of the latter are mirrored by the equally grotesque *voluntarios realistas* participating in the attack on Goya's home. That is to say, critics have underscored the way in which Goya's dream has prefigured reality. Of greater significance, however, is the role of Goya's art in these segments. As the attack grows in intensity, unseen men and women voice titles from *Desastres de la guerra* and the *Caprichos*. On one level, of course, the titles complement the specific action taking place on the stage: the violence of the attackers and the horror of Goya's response are captured in titles such as "Para eso habéis nacido" (p. 200); "Murió la verdad" (p. 204); "No se puede mirar" (p. 204), etc. More importantly, however, the voices function as narrators who use art to establish a concrete reality and to reveal the way in which Goya, as artist, defines the nature of that reality. Hence it is less Goya's dream that prefigures the attack on his home than the way in which Buero foregrounds the commingling of art and imagination to convey the protagonist's personal and political anguish.

The painterly metaphor also shapes a number of other scenes in *Sueño*. For example, Goya's art is cast into the social world of the play from the very beginning. When Calomarde describes the execution of General Riego to Fernando, the king interrupts him and proposes a visual metaphor: "Se diría un grabado de Goya" (p. 116). The king in effect proclaims Goya's art a more dramatic and concise representation of the particular reality at hand, thus the painterly image supplants language as mediator of his perception. Fernando is also linked to the artistic metaphor through his embroidery. In both scenes in which he appears, the king embroiders throughout his dialogue with other characters. Calomarde, however, elevates the king's handicraft to the level of art: "Bordar también es pintar . . . ¡Vuestra Majestad pinta mejor que ese carcamal [Goya]!" (p. 118). The implied meaning of Fernando's "art," of course, is the weaving of a plot in which to ensnare Goya. This is confirmed at the end of the play by one of the narrative voices and by Goya himself:

VOZ MASCULINA:

Yo sé que un hombre termina ahora un bordado . . .

GOYA:

Y dice . . . Me ha salido perfecto.

(p. 212)

Again here, life conforms to art, and Goya perceives the parallel even as he laments the outcome.

The artistic metaphor also prevails in the scene where the *realistas* break Goya's window with a stone. The message attached conveys a threat not with words, but with a drawing. As Goya notes, "Un consejo pictórico.

También son pintores. Escuchen: ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre un masón y un lacayo de los masones? Pinta una horca con un sapo viejo colgando y pone debajo: aunque no me apunté, el son bailaba" (p. 164). As with Goya's own drawing for the king, art takes the place of language here and Goya articulates clearly the power of the artistic image.

Near the end of the play Goya utilizes a metaphor analogous to painting that further affirms his artistic perception of the world. When Leocadia confesses her fears and desires after being raped by the sargeant, Goya draws upon the theater to illustrate his feelings: "Nunca sabré qué has dicho. Pero quizá te he comprendido. . . . Y a mí también me he comprendido. ¡Qué risa! ¡Comedia de cristobitas! Pasen, damas y caballeros. Deléitense con los celos del cornudo Matusalén y las mañas del arrogante militar . . . El viejo carcamal amenaza a su joven amante porque no se atreve a disparar contra otros. ¡Así es! ¡Cuando ellos entraron yo no llegué a tiempo a la escopeta porque no quise! Porque no me atreví a llegar a tiempo. ¡Pura comedia!" (p. 208). A few minutes later, following an eruption of anger and despair, Goya reiterates the comparison: "Otra vez la comedia" (p. 210). What is important here, of course, is not Goya's awareness that he is playing a dramatic role (this is not metatheater), but rather his self-definition using an image that suggests life follows the patterns of art.

There is in Buero's portrait of Goya a nourishing reciprocity between the real and the imaginary. The *pinturas negras* do not merely echo at ever-intensifying levels the anguish of the painter as it is represented on stage, but rather share in the actual creation of reality. Goya's artistic imagination, therefore, begets not only a painting, but also a world that is shaped by painting. His work represents, in short, an aestheticizing of history and an artistic autobiography. Buero is supremely aware of this process, since his recurrent use of the painterly metaphor promotes a consistent *weltanschauung* grounded in the dominion of art. To understand Buero's portrayal of Goya, therefore, is to acknowledge that art reveals, as Paul Ricœur writes, "the deep structures of reality to which we are related as mortals who are born into this world and who dwell in it for a while."¹ Goya's paintings enrich the world because they enable us to see it anew. This capacity to shape reality, and the process through which it is represented in *Sueño* (creation-artifact-interpretation), stand as both the medium and message of the whole of Buero's play.

Notes

1. See, for example, Martha Halsey, "Goya in the Theater: Buero Vallejo's *El sueño de la razón*," *KRQ*, 18 (1971), 207-21; John Dowling, "Buero Vallejo's Interpretation of Goya's 'Black Paintings,'" *His-*