



FRUSTRATION, HONOR AND DEATH IN THE TRILOGY OF FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

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ABSTRACT

In this research Paper, we will try to light on the theme of frustration honour and death in the plays of Federico Garcia Lorca who is the most eminent painter, singer of Andalusia Folklore and a poet of gipsy ballads. He was the master of Puppet theatre. His surrealistic style makes him the greatest dramatist among other contemporaries dramatist. It was his great writing for the Spanish Literature that he wrote rural trilogy as *Blood wedding*, *Yerma* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Following these plays he knits the symbolical background with the Aristotelian concepts. His first play *Blood Wedding* is based on the theme of bloodshed and feud between two families which ends with thirst of murder to Bridegroom and Leonardo who belongs to the Felix Family and second one, *Yerma* is cry of a barren mother who murdered her husband in order to not satisfy her desire to be a mother and after abuse by her husband and last one *The House Of Bernarda Alba* ends with the death of honor of Adela by the orthodox cal attitude of Bernarda Alba. So this trilogy highlights the eminent features of his dramatic style overwhelming stresses and tensions throughout his entire plays along with, they have many symbolical songs in it.

Keywords: Frustration, Destiny, Lullaby, Death, Repression of Libido, Aristotelian norms of tragedy

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Garcia Lorca has the great place in the history of Spanish Literature. His plays are known for his surrealistic style in which the character of the plays was Death as a bagger woman, woodcutters, and the moon also assumes the living character on the earth. The play *Blood Wedding* published in 1936 and premiered in 1933 at Madrid on 8 March 1933, is a symbolic drama in which, Death has been dealing an important role. It has been called a trilogy because of it language, reference and genre as the language of the Act III and Act I have lyrical quality through the lullaby and conversational tone of the wood cutters. And the second feature for its reference rises from the real aspect of living and it has been come to light to the writer through a

newspaper evidence not a crop of mind. The dramatist has given the shape of it in order to express his feeling towards the incident. For Genre, he followed to the Aristotelian concept of his play by using as the issue of prophecy and fatality.¹ (44)

The story of *Blood Wedding* has the simple and direct plot that a clear appeal for its torrents of passion and purgative in its idiom of folk tragedy. The principal characters of this drama have their ends for the sake of cruel death and honour. Throughout the story, *Death* has shown its fatal effect and takes away the lives of Bridegroom and Leonardo. As the very beginning of the play which starts with the argument at the motif of a knife. The mother has scared about the double use of that

knife and abuses that person who made it cut the human flesh into many pieces as it also success the lives of her older son and her husband. Mother says that,

Knives, knives. Cursed be all knives, and even hoes and the scoundrel who invented them. (*Trilogy of Garcia Lorca*.33)

Bridegroom was then at three when his father and brother have killed in a feud. The family has the traditional dual with the Felix family. The passion for getting married with Bride has become the central point of the drama. Bride had secret affair with Leonardo. But against it, she gets marry with the Bridegroom and elopes with Leonardo at the wedding night. Therefore plot develops as a triangle situation as traditional- for an obvious concern with Spanish conscience as reflected in everyday existence, Codification- the barbaric concept "an eye for an eye" and the mixed concept of the strange and demanding laws of *Honor* so prevalent in Spain and third concept of mysticism which has the additional concept of traditional and codification. In this way, fate always appears in each situation and has a controlling power as it may master and all human being is the puppets in its hand. This fate always leads them to death.² (190-1)

The statement of the Virginia Higginbotham is that the plays-*Blood Wedding*, *Yerma* and *The House of Bernarda Alba* do retain an aura of myth. The dramatic symposium of these plays are drawn from nature and is woven into the story so that the forces of nature or fate seem close to, if not responsible for the action.³ (89)

Blood Wedding is the first serious play which starts with the ominous theme of the feud between two families the families of the bridegroom and Leonardo Felix and ends with the feud between the Bridegroom and Leonardo by killing each other. The poor old mother has remained alone in her house. Her husband and older son had already haunted by the death in those dual. Along with she had a terrible feeling in her heart that her remaining son would die on a day in the matter of fact she had always try to distance those weapons and person which can harm him. The Bride knowingly brings her dismal fate upon herself, yet disaster also befalls the innocent characters of the drama. It is the suffering

of the others who rise to an important question: who is the central character of the play?⁴ (91)

In detail when we read the plays by Lorca we conclude that all heroines of the play have accomplished freedom expression of their selfhood because of repressive and regressive social and political structure. They struggle for their biological as Yerma's desire for a child, as it is Adela who tries to break the chains of marginalisation enforces by her own mother Bernarda Alba. In the *Blood Wedding*, Leonardo tries to apart from Bride but it is his horse who moves towards her house as he says that he did everything to forget her, but that he mounted his horse and '*the horse went straight to your door.*' The tension of the mother has grown through step by step till the selected day for the wedding. Leonardo after knowing it gets frustrated as he does not ready to accept the truth of his ex-beloved. In the first act when the maidservant watched him near the window, she warns her to make distance with him. In spite of the marriage fixed with the bridegroom, he has no pay attention to that tradition and makes an afford to meet with her before the wedding. At the time of wedding she looks very indifferent as she before, she is not excited for marrying as the Bridegroom seems. It is a turbulent time for her, since the man who really excites her sexuality, is not her husband to be, but it is Leonardo. That is to say that it is Leonardo who has a burnt desire to satisfy her sexuality and to fulfil her passion she elopes with him into the dense forest after her marriage with the Bridegroom. She comes close his embraces and says, 'It's as though I'd drunk a bottle for anise and fallen asleep wrapped in a quilt of roses.'⁵(175) It pulls me along, and I know I'm drowning –but I go on down' (p.60). In the last scene, the woodcutter also reveals the truth that her body was made for him; his body for her' (p.80).

In this play, the theme of Honor and Frustration again reveal the character of the mother when she allows her son to kill the Leonardo and get back his wife Bride. It was her honour that sacrifices her only son. It has taken from the Greek tragedy yet pity and terror, recognition, *deus ex machina*, chorus, and hamartia. In detail, the tragic emotions of pity and terror, the character who suffer should be close to each other. The catastrophe that

overtakes the Mother and the Bride may be attributed to their 'error', the mother's residing in her persistent hatred of the Felix family which in her marrying a man she does not love. Thirdly, is as much as the Mother brings about the opposite of what she seeks there is the 'reversal of intention' of Greek tragedy, and in her understanding of the Bride's contribution to the death of her son the Greek 'recognition'. The ultimate anguish and solitude of the Mother and the Bride, more than the deaths of the two men, awaken pity and terror. Through the supernatural figure such as the Moon, The Death, the Girls who like the fates, unwind and cut the thread of life are able to make it the Greek *Deus ex Machina*. The song of the girls and the final lamentations of the mother and the Bride, Leonardo's wife and the Neighbour are the example of the Greek Chorus.⁶ (132 -133)

A forgone conclusion of the drama when the Bride and Leonardo have entered into the forest symbolised as the reign of the Death, the mysterious scenario has revealed to the Bridegroom. The Death who is disguised as a bagger woman tells the right address to the Bridegroom. Thereafter she discloses her cruel controversy to the Moon which also presents as a Knife shape face; her appearance is eerie which can able to make the aura of a tyrannical plot. The Moon's words are full of menace with a white inhuman face illuminates the world of human being along with a terrible, merciless and icy light from which no one and nothing can escape. It is cynical intention to kill and quench their thrust with the blood of them. As her own words are able to disclose her vision or cruel mind about those people who had entered into the woods⁷(149),

But this night there will be
Red blood for my cheeks,
And for the reeds that cluster
At the wide feet of the wind.

Let there be nighters shadow nor bower,
And then they can't get away!
...Who is hiding? Out, I say!
No! They will not get away! (77)

At the ends the play which was begun on the motif of a knife and now it would have ended with the death of both people who were involving in the dual and they had stabbed each other by the knives. The

plot of double death has tremendous terror which ends with the lamentation of the mother and again repeat with the of the Leonardo as the mother had already suffered entire her lives and the wife of Bridegroom neither can live with her husband nor fulfil her desire to find her lover, Leonardo, she has become a virgin widow at the last of the drama⁸ (95).

The mother is slapped at her cheeks and pitiable condition is similar as Maurya, an old mother in *Riders to the Sea* by J. M. Synge in which she has lost her seven-member into the depth of the ocean and it was her only surviving son Bartley who is also decided to join the fair of Connemara to sell his horses. Maurya had denied not going but he did ignore him. Moreover, the play ends with dead body carried by the Irish People and now she has no fear about the Ocean. Like the Mother in *Blood Wedding*, "They're all dead now: and at midnight I'll sleep, sleep without terror of guns or knives."⁹ As Maurya articulates in acceptance of her fate: "*No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.*"¹⁰ In the same way, the Mother in *Blood Wedding* possesses the same laments and she says to the Bride that...

...a little knife,
On their appointed day, between two and
three,
These two men killed each other for love.
With a knife
With a tiny knife.
On this Bride expresses her regretting
feeling
...and this is knife
A tiny knife
That barely fits the hand
Fish without scads, without river...
With this knife
Two men are left stiff. (95)

Lorca wrote his second tragedy based on the theme of sterility, a feeling of childless desire through the central figure Yerma who wants to fulfil her desire. The title is also having the significance meaning "Yerma" which deals with Barren. So the frustration and the unfulfillment desire of a barren mother transform her anxiety into a criminal by committing

an act of murder of her own husband in the fit of her incompleteness.¹¹

The house of Bernarda Alba is a clash between the mother and her five daughters towards the forces of tradition, custom, of social value. Bernarda's attitude towards her daughter was not easy to concern. She dominates her daughter in their each decision so she always uses to a cane for giving them a direction. Play starts with the mourning scene of Bernarda's husband and as the tradition organise there is not freedom to lead life pleasantly until eight years after the death of a person. So Bernarda commands them strictly.

The theme of frustration and honour find in his every plays *Blood Wedding*, *Yerma*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*, *The Butterfly's Evil Spell*, *when five Years pass*, *Mariana Pineda* so on are able to present the human psychology.

The origin of *Yerma* does not relate to the real life event. The tragic poem of Lorca based on the theme of a sterile woman who has suffered problems of interpretation.¹² (235) In order to prove this view, many critics declared it as she is a main tragic character whose final strangling of her husband is consequently for her triumphant and liberating over her own yearning. Other critics add that she is as a murderers condemned to an eternity of barrenness.¹³ (pp.133-55)

Lorca has used the theme of frustration in his poetry in order to express his grief for that people. It also reveals in his "Elegy to Dona Juana", a mad spinster for her country akin to Marina Pineda. *The Balled of the Black Sorrow* presents the despondent dilemma of rejected lover. *The Butterfly's Evil Spell* has the same theme of dejection in love by deceiving of the Butterfly with Cuiritano who suffers much more agony and ends its life in the fit of depression. As a matter of fact, he cries apart from her and says,

Who gave me these eyes I hate?
And this hand the try
To clutch a love I cannot understand
And that will end my life?
Who had lost me among shadows?
Who bids me suffer because I have no wings? (p.238)

Another major theme in *Yerma* is the theme of honour, for it is partly Yerma's belief in honour that keeps her from her adultery and despite her longing for a child, faith to on uncaring husband.(pp 220)¹⁴ Day by day Yerma's Frustration had been growing in order to fulfil her yearn. On the other hand, her husband stands silence on her wish. He had fecund for her. In spite of he hadn't allowed her to go outside the home as the name of honour. Along with she feels disgusted in her inner conscience. It is her neighbour who discloses her pregnancy after awhile whispering made by her husband. And what is happening with Yerma as she has passed two years with Juan and he doesn't pay attention on this instead rebukes her as,

I'm not the one who sets it there, you do it by your conduct and town's begging to say so. It's beginning to say it openly. When I come to a group, they all fall silent; when I go to weigh the flour, they all fall silent, and even at night, in the fields, when I awaken, it seems to me that the branches of the trees become silent too. (p.136)

From the very beginning of the play, she has fought for being the mother. She always has the dream for a child. It is her anxiety that she touches of her bully in order to feel motherless and sings a lullaby for her imaginative wife. At the fit to cure her, she goes to shrine secretly without informing her husband. At the crossroad when she goes for the pilgrimage, there was an old man and through her character reveal the corrupted of the shrine. The old woman wants to spoil her character at her suggestion to make the relationship with her own son so that she might conceive. Against it, she denies to accept it. She already was too much upset by this dilemma and he has also tried to blemish her character. Juan has been trying to suppress her desire by saying,

Many women would be happy hilling the life you do. Life is sweeter without children. I'm happy not having them. We are not to blame...You are what I'm after! In the moonlight, you are beautiful.
On this Yerma replied, you pursue me as if I were a dove you want to devour.

Joan embarrasses her into his arms and he laid down surface the earth to kiss her. She also goes

near to her and holds her neck upon her hands and the curiosity of the madness that she had got choked his throat.¹⁵ (112-113)

First and for most salient features is based on the theme of sex and reproduction. This waking theme of the drama is able to present the plea of Yerma by committing a crime to murder her husband in a mad frenzy.¹⁶ (pp.177)

In his last drama, *The House of Bernarda Alba* relates with the hypocritical attitude and political repression of Bernarda Alba. Her arrogant attitude has revealed from the very beginning of the play when the crowd of the women has gathered to mourn in the funeral of Bernarda's husband she doesn't to shed the tears of her servant as the poor have not right to mourn. She always in the habit of taking iron sticks on her hands to show her merciless nature toward her daughters. The drama begins with the conversation between Poncia and the servant they have been talking about harshly and in abusive tone about her torture,

Thirty years washing her sheets. Thirty years eating her leftovers. Nights of watching when she had a cough. Whole days keeping through a crack in the shutters to say no spy on the neighbours and carry her the tale...life without secrets one from the other. But in spite of that curse her may the pain of the piercing nail strikes her in the eyes of...Bernarda here for this, and the other! Till I leave her- just like lizard the boys have squashed. (p. 152)

Bernarda gives the order her daughter that...None of them has ever had a beau and they've never needed one! (p.168). Although Bernarda has declared Augustus, 38 yrs old with Pape El Romano, as she having a lot of money by her first father. In this matter, Adela who is 28 yrs old has an affair with Pape El Romano and also wants to marry him. But her happiness converted in sadistic tone after getting the news of her sister marriage with her Fiancé. Adela is only the character who stands alone to break her hypocritical rule and revolts against her mother. Adela snatches the cane of her mother and brakes it into two parted and states...this what I do with the tyrant's cane. (pp.209). It is the climax of the play that Adela ends up by taking her own life; and despite all the indications to the contrary, Bernarda denies not to shed tears on her short

death. Bernarda declared to her daughters that Adela had died a virgin.¹⁷ (178-79)

Take her to another room and dress her as though she were a virgin. No one will say anything about this! She died a virgin ...tears when you are alone! We'll down ourselves in a sea of mourning. She, the youngest daughter of Bernarda Alba, died a virgin. Did you hear me? Silence, silence I said. Silence! (p.201)

The presence of fate as the Greek tragedy akin to *Blood Wedding*, Creates a final terrible bleakness as Adela hangs herself and her sisters face a future devoid of hope. The feeling of pity awakened by our awareness of Adela's earlier of terror aroused by the Greek Tragedy. 18(200-1)

At this, Yerma in the fit of intensity has made a crime to struggle him by her own hands by saying...

YERMA: Barren, barren, but sure. Now I really know it for same and alone.

(She rises. People begin to gather.)

Now I'll sleep without starting myself awake, anxious to see if I feel in my blood another new blood. My dry for ever! What do you want? Don't come near me, because I've killed my son. I myself have killed my son! (pp.147)

Lorca and Synge reflect their national heritage in a way that sets their plays apart from those of other twentieth-century dramatists. Living in economically marginal countries whose folk cultures were still intact, both observed at close range people who still believed in ancient traditions, and both made full artistic use of folk material. Their dialogue and metaphors are drawn from nature, and their superstitious peasant characters inhabit a fatalistic world far from the technological society dramatised by Shaw and Ibsen. Jean Smoot begins her comparative study with a survey of the two playwrights' aesthetic views. In four remaining chapters, she compares, respectively, *Riders to the Sea* with *Bodas de Sangre*, *In the Shadow of the Glen* with *Yerma*, *The Playboy of the Western World* with *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, and *Deidre of the Sorrows* with *Dona Rosita la soltera*. The most successful of these comparisons is the first, which underscores the sense of destiny and the resignation of the mothers to the loss of their sons shared in the two plays. While detailing their shared language and

ironic tone, however, Smoot does not stress that Synge's basically realistic world does not approach the lyrical violence of Lorca's. In spite of their use of colour symbolism and the supernatural, Lorca and Synge produce very different dramatic experiences. The primary difference is Lorca's obsession with sexual frustration. Noting that the widows of *Riders* and *Bodas* react similarly to loss of their sons, Smoot seems to forget that the fateful pull of the sea lacks the dramatic impact of the erotic passion which destroys the characters of *Bodas*. The nobility and dignity Smoot finds in both plays is an after-thought in *Bodas*, a more complex drama than the one-act *Riders*. As John Gassner has pointed out, the Irish mother of *Riders* does not fight fate. Lorca's characters are able to present their lust and murder before they are defeated.¹⁹ (212)

Conclusion

Garcia Lorca's three rural tragedies, *Blood Wedding*, *The house of Bernarda Alba*, and *Yerma*, tie up and twist the strands of a few people's passions so tightly that only 'the only tiny knife, the tiny golden knife'. Sometimes real, sometimes symbolical can prove the centre of the conflict. Who is the Bride in *Blood Wedding* destined for? For the Bridegroom or for the Leonardo, the other man who attracts her with the irresistible fascination? The Bride decides in favour of the later, elopes with Leonardo, but who is she, to make the decision? It is Death; disguised as a beggar woman who must decide everything. She brings two men face to face to kill each other in the rage of revenge. Death makes them fight and they are dying. It is the fatal effect of Death that Bride remains a virgin widow and without the lover. The Death slaughters all the characters. In the other sense *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Lorca in which Death also has the cause Adela's destiny; she has got suicide hang herself with the help of a sailing fan. Pape El Romano, typifying man, the male secretly coveted in the tormented souls of those women, will not give his love to any of the sisters neither to be his mistress in a rapture of passion, and who seeking to quench her thirst for life in the embraces of a man, falls into the arms of one who is concealed behind, death.²⁰

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