

- Jones, David Richard and Susan Jones. "Federico Garcia Lorca: A Study Guide" [www.repertorio.edu](http://www.repertorio.edu), 16-2-2009.
- Lorca, Federico Garcia. *The Blood Wedding*. Trans. James Graham-Lujan and Richard L. O'Connell. Cited in *Drama: the Elements of Drama*, Laurence Perrine Ed.. Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 2004.
- Lorca, Federico Garcia. *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Trans. A.S.Kline. [www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com), 20-1-2009.
- Lorca, Federico Garcia. *Yerma*. Trans. A.S.Kline. [www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com), 20-1-2009.
- "Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-36)", [www.imagi-nation.com](http://www.imagi-nation.com), 16-2-2009.
- "Federico Garcia Lorca", [www.kirijasto.sci.fi](http://www.kirijasto.sci.fi), 16-2-2009.
- "Federico Garcia Lorca", *Wikipedia: the free encyclopaedia*, [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

## ملخص البحث:

## دراما الموت في ثلاثية الأرض الأسبانية

## لفيدريكو غارسيا لوركا

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي سبب وكيفية هيمنة الموت في ثلاثية الأرض الأسبانية للمسرحي الأسباني فيديريكو غارسيا لوركا (1898-1936) والتي هي عبارة عن ثلاث مسرحيات تراجيدية (زفاف الموت و بيرما و منزل برناردا البا) . يظهر الموت في هذه المسرحيات بوصفها قوة مسيطرة و مؤثرة في ذات الوقت على الحياة الأسبانية بكل جوانبها مع اتخاذ أشكالها وأنماطها متعددة بتعدد هذه المسرحيات الأمر الذي يعزى إلى تأثير لوركا بما كان يجري في الحياة الاجتماعية والسياسية في أسبانيا في ذلك الوقت والآثار السلبية الموجودة في الواقع الأسباني والتي شوهدت كل نوع من أنواع التواصل الإنساني جاعلة من الموت القوة الوحيدة المطلقة و المسيطرة على الحياة.

edition, henceforth; all subsequent references will be parenthetically cited within the research.

<sup>12</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, trans. A.S.Kline, [www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com), 20-1-2009. Act I, P.9. All references to the play are taken from this edition, henceforth; all subsequent references will be parenthetically cited within the research.

<sup>13</sup> Jones and Jones, p.13.19

<sup>14</sup> Angel Del Rio, "Lorca's Theatre", cited in *Lorca: a Collection of Critical Essays*, Manuel Duran (ed.), (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962). P.153.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.149.

<sup>16</sup> "Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-36)", [www.imagi-nation.com](http://www.imagi-nation.com), 16-2-2009.

<sup>17</sup> "Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*", [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

<sup>18</sup> Duran, p.11.

<sup>19</sup> Jones and Jones, p.9.

## CONCLUSION

It is astonishing fact how death can be sometimes a motivator and an instigator to certain artists as it happens with Federico Garcia Lorca, the Spanish poet and playwright. In his *Earth Trilogy*, Lorca presents death in this collection of tragedies as a concept, theme, technique and even sometimes as a character. Affected by the backwardness of his country, Lorca views death as a sort of a cult that is dominating the lives of Spanish people who are unable to achieve change and accommodate themselves with the outside world. In *The Blood Wedding*, the first tragedy in this collection, death

appears as the natural result for the young people who want to change their lives and to surround themselves with the noblest human feeling that is love. That is why they are punished for this guilt, and this punishment takes the form of a beggar woman who symbolizes death. In *Yerma*, the second tragedy of *Rural Trilogy*, death reappears as a spiritual and physical death that controls the heroine's life. So Yerma at the end realizes that her life and peace of mind cannot be attained without ending her husband's life, and this exactly what she does at the end of the play. In *The House of Bernarda Alba*, the last part of Lorca's Trilogy, death appears as a means of salvation to Bernarda's daughter Adela. Adela finds that the only means to get rid of her mother's control is death.

What is noteworthy, death in these plays is shown as a power that everybody and everything depend on. Even life depends on death, and life instigates its existence and power from death and this is Lorca's intention in these tragedies, that death might not always be an end. Death sometimes represents the new start for a new life and new change and this is what any nation should understand to go on in this world, and this is what Lorca wished to the Spanish earth. Thus, *Earth Trilogy* turns to be an artistic expression of a man's love for the earth of his country and of his death as well for its sake.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Duran, Manuel. Ed.. *Lorca: a Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962.

because I've murdered my  
child! I've killed my own  
son!

(III, ii, p.49)

The son, thus no more means anything to Yerma. Out of her desperation she kills in her husband her own child. Furthermore, the tragedy happens in the *House of Bernarda Alba* is attached to the savageness and brutality of tyrants and the necessity to save and free the Spanish earth. Bernarda represents the cold blood fascist regime that is capable of sitting and watching any of her daughters die "for a whole year without turning off that cold little smile" (II, p.27) as Poncia describes her. At the same time, she is the woman with a leopard's face as Maria Josefa, Bernarda's mother, speak about her. As Adela shouts in her mother's face "that's enough of your gaoler's voice" and "that is how I treat the tyrant's rod" (III, p.41), taking her mother's walking stick, cutting it into two halves, this scream represents the agitated scream of every young man or woman in the face of tyrants. Ironically speaking, in all these three tragedies, it is as if Lorca anticipated his own death and the savage way he was executed in 1936, after the break of the Spanish civil war. Accused of being supporters of the popular front, Lorca along with his brother in law were shot by Franco's nationalist militia on August, 19.<sup>19</sup> Lorca was thrown into unmarked grave near his homeland, Granada, ending by this the life of a man, but never ending him as a legend. It is true that Lorca's life was cut short, but his creative mind is still breathing whenever a poem to be read or a play to

be performed, to be the live witness on the unstable life and death of a man and his love to the earth of his unstable nation.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Damaso Alonso, "Lorca and the Expression of the Spanish Essence", cited in *Lorca: a Collection of Critical Essays*, Manuel Duran (ed.), (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962). P.50.

<sup>2</sup>David Richard Jones and Susan Jones, "Federico Garcia Lorca: A Study Guide", [www.repertorio.edu](http://www.repertorio.edu), 16-2-2009. P.4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> , "Federico Garcia Lorca", [www.kirijasto.sci.fi](http://www.kirijasto.sci.fi), 16-2-2009.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> , "Federico Garcia Lorca", *Wikipedia: the free encyclopaedia*, [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

<sup>7</sup>Manuel Duran (ed.), "Lorca: Introduction", cited in *Lorca: a Collection of Critical Essays*, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962). P.8.

<sup>8</sup>Wikipedia, the free Encyclopaedia.

<sup>9</sup>Barbara Probest, "Arriving where we started", cited in [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 20-1-2009.

<sup>10</sup>Federico Garcia Lorca, *The Blood Wedding*, trans. James Graham-Lujan and Richard L. O'Connell, cited in *Drama: the Elements of Drama*, Laurence Perrine (ed.), (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 2004). Act. III, Sce.i, p.1069. All references to the play are taken from this edition, henceforth; all subsequent references will be parenthetically cited within the research.

<sup>11</sup>Federico Garcia Lorca, *Yerma*, trans. A.S.Kline, [www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com), 20-1-2009. Act I, Sce.ii, p.17. All references to the play are taken from this

is the way the three plays are combined together to show themes of oppression, depression, agitation, yearning and more dominantly the way death plays its game on human life and how spiritual death turns to be an actual death controlling the lives of those freedom seekers, as if Lorca intends to say that there is no way out for this community to get rid of this dilemma without a real change, the change that can eliminate all the rotten habits of Spanish community. Add to this the agitated nature of Lorca that instigated him to speak in a painful and hopeless tone in the time he wrote these plays and "tackle problems everybody was afraid to speak about"<sup>18</sup>.

Moreover, many critics view these three tragedies and themes of depression and death expressed in them to the way Lorca looked to Spanish system. Politically speaking, Lorca was known to be anti-fascist and that he was involved in many political activities against the pre-Franco regime because he loved the Spanish soil and the Spanish earth. This love is translated artistically and dramatically in these three plays. The bride in *The Blood Wedding* represents to Leonardo the earth, the land that must be saved and protected as Leonardo defends this love saying:

What glass splinters are  
stuck in my tongue  
Because I tried to forget you  
and put a wall of stone...  
But I was riding a horse  
went straight to your door  
And the silver pins of your  
wedding  
Turned my red blood black.  
And in me our dream was  
chocking

My flesh with its poisoned  
weeds.  
Oh, it isn't my fault.  
The fault is the earth's  
And this fragrance that you  
exhale  
From your breast and from your  
hands.

(III, i, p.1072)

This might be the reason why Leonardo is the only character in the play that is given a name. Leonardo represents the sincere Spanish young man who tries to save his land even if his action casts him his life. Yerma, on the other hand, also searches the salvation and protection of the land. Actually, she may herself stand for the land that should be saved from her tyrant husband who forbids her freedom. Moreover, Yerma's husband may stand for the country that is impotent and unable to give its people what they want, but the will of the people is stronger than its will, that is why Yerma decides to revolt against it as she attains the power to kill Juan and sets herself free:

Juan : kiss me ... like this.  
Yerma : that, never. Never  
(Yerma gives a cry and  
grasps her husband  
by the throat. He falls  
backward. She chokes him  
until he is dead (the choir  
of pilgrims starts up.)  
Barren, barren, but I'm  
certain at last. Now I know  
for certain. And alone (she  
rises. People begins to  
gather) I'll sleep without  
waking with a start to see if  
my blood announces new  
blood. With a body barren  
forever. What do you  
want? Don't come near me:

that is to wither if not nourished with "free earth's hidden fires", otherwise there is no existence, there is no life to be continued and death is to be the only controlling power in Yerma's life. This idea is reinforced by the emergence of three allegorical characters, a woman's mask, a man's mask and a boy that suggests the unity of family, but this unity seems a fragile one. The symbols and metaphors used now are related to blackness and darkness. Even when there is a description of whiteness or white colour, the meaning still carries no hope and no chance of salvation to Woman because Man is superior and the most controlling figure in this world:

Woman's Mask: When the darkness falls  
I'll tell you

When the glittering night  
is falling.

When it gleams above our  
wandering

I'll rip the seams of my  
clothing

Boy: Suddenly there came the  
nightfall.

See there the darkness gathering  
In the depths of mountain water.

Male Mask: Ay, now how white  
Ay, how she sighs in the branches!

You'll be red poppies, carnations  
When the man spreads his mantle.

(III, ii, p.44)

This same atmosphere of blackness and spiritual death is also recreated in the third tragedy, *The House of Bernarda Alba*. The same yearning is repeated but this time, the yearning is not for children, rather it is the yearning of a woman for a man. This theme is the dominant theme in this play and it is lyrically sung by the chorus as a sign to its importance:

Chorus: the reapers are leaving,  
They're off to the reaping,  
And with them the hearts  
Of all the girls watching

(II, p.22)

This song summarizes what happens in the house of Bernarda Alba. Her girls were never a subject of even being in the least interaction with men. Men represent the forbidden fruit to Bernarda's girls, that's why their feelings are dominated with anticipation. Lorca's exclusion of any male character also suggests this fact.<sup>17</sup> The girls live in a severe atmosphere of yearning and sexual tension, everything in this world is corrupted, destroyed and coloured with blackness and silence as if these girls are shut in a cupboard as La Poncia (Bernarda's servant) comments on the way Bernarda shuts her daughters in. La Poncia also anticipates that "there are storms brewing in each of these [girls] rooms" (III, p.37), and every girl longs to open the doors and windows of this prison and sets herself free as Martirio (Bernarda's fourth daughter) and Adela repeats the song of the chorus "nostalgically" and "passionately" as a reference to their longing to freedom:

You girls there from the village  
Open your doors and windows  
The reaper wants your roses  
To brighten his sombrero

(II, p.23)

Of course, poetical heaviness found in *The Blood wedding* and *Yerma* is reduced in *The House of Bernarda Alba* except for certain songs that, as in the condition of Lorca's plays, summarize the major theme of each play. What is noteworthy

and death are intermingled. Life depends on death and death is the result of life, and thus death turns to be a power that can only defeat but never to be defeated.

As such, Yerma can also be seen searching for death as a power despite the fact it is not physical death but a spiritual inner death of her own. As a woman, Yerma suffered spiritual emptiness at the hands of her husband from the moment she got married five years before the play's action begins. When the Old Woman told her that she should "wait for God's grace, and seek a refuge in your husband's love", Yerma replies that "Ay! You've poked your figure into the deepest wound in my flesh" (III, i, p.20). So Yerma is a wounded woman and this wound is deeply found in her spirit. At the same time, Yerma's actions and speeches about her husband explain a great contrast to her actions and behaviour with Victor. Her action as she smells with great yearning the ascent of Victor suggests the oppressed nature of Yerma and how she married a man chosen by her father and not by her. Her gazes at Victor are obvious to everybody as the Fourth Washer Woman comments on Yerma's condition "when she is alone, when he's not right in front of her, she sees him behind her eyes" (II, i, p.23). That is why Yerma is searching for a child's being in her womb or her hands to compensate love lacking in her life and searches to fill the great gap in her spirit through children. Children thus to Yerma are only a means, not an end. Lorca in this play is working again on linking spiritual death and psychological conflict inside Yerma to lyricism. Many lyrics, as in *The Blood Wedding*, are put

sometimes in the form of lullabies that Yerma sings to her supposed to be child:

Where do you come from, my child?

From heights that are icy cold.

What do you need, my love?

'the warm feel of your robe'.

Let branches stir in the light

And fountains leap in the air!

I can only say yes, my child.

I'll be broken and torn for you.

What grief it is to me now,

Your first cradle, this womb!

When, my child, will you come?

(I, i, p.7)

Later on, and for the sake of getting a child, Yerma prays with a chorus of women. This pray takes the form of a lyric rich in its fabulous metaphors and images that makes it an excellent poem:

Lords, who makes the roses flower

Don't leave my rose to wither

Over her body that suffers

May the yellow rose flower

And in your servants' bellies

Set free earth's hidden fires.

The heavens have their gardens

of happiness in flower:

glows the rose of wonder

between briar and briar.

A ray of dawn appears

An angel watches over,

With his wings of thunder

With his eyes to suffer.

All about the leaves, there

Runs a milk-white river moistening the faces

Of the stars that quiver.

Lord, may your rose bloom,

In my barren flesh.

(III, ii, pp.42-43)

Sadness dominates the general atmosphere through these lyrics. The metaphor repeated is related to the rose

community, this caused him to be a witness on the oppression practised on the weaker sex.

Of course, whether this is the right interpretation or not, no one can deny the artistic value of Lorca's plays whether in characterization, theme, structure or even in the use of lyrical language in which many critics believe that Lorca excelled in using it because Lorca was able to create "a drama in which the dark and sombre passion of tragedy becomes stylized within a lyrical and musical framework, but without loosing any of its intensity"<sup>15</sup>. Death thus comes hand in hand with poetry in these plays. The lullabies to Leonardo's son, sung by Leonardo's wife and mother in law, foreshadow the coming crisis and the expected death and the close catastrophe are clothed with lyricism:

Mother-in-Law: lullaby, my baby

Once there was a big horse

Who didn't like water.

The water was black there

Under the branches.

When it reached the bridge

It stopped and it sang.

Who can say, my baby,

What the stream holds

With its long tail

In its green parlour?

Wife: Carnation, sleep and dream,

The horse won't drink from the stream.

Mother-in-Law: My rose, asleep now lie,

The horse is starting to cry.

His poor hooves were bleeding,

His long mane was frozen,

And deep in his eyes

Stuck a silvery dagger.

Down he went to the river,

Oh, down he went down!

And his blood was running,

Oh, more than the water.

(I, ii, p.1041)

Quite amazingly, what happens to the horse in this lullaby happens to Leonardo and the tragic fate of the horse is the tragic fate of Leonardo himself. It is Leonardo who wanted to drink from the stream of love, but he is got "a stuck with silvery dagger" instead. Of course, this lullaby consists on heavy symbolism mentioned here at the beginning of the play to anticipate what is coming forth to Leonardo. Moreover, the language used by the bride intensifies her own tragedy, creating of her a universal feminine type, put in conflict between her love and her village tradition on the one hand and a bloody revenge between two families, each is asking for the blood of the other, on the other hand.<sup>16</sup> As such, this dilemma is intensified throughout poetic, lyrical language that consists on much more sadness as it is obvious in the following speech of the bride to Leonardo:

Carry me with you from fair to fair

A shame to clean women

So that people will see me

With my wedding sheets

On the breeze like banners.

.....

Run!

It's fitting that I should die here,

With water over my feet,

With thorns upon my head.

And fitting the leaves should

mourn me,

A woman lost and virgin.

(III,i, p.1073)

Lorca mixes tragedy with lyricism. In other words death and violence are mixed with poetic language and music, by combining contrastive images and objects. Lorca intends to show that life

before. It's all old women's foolishness.<sup>11</sup>

This girl is not given a name, so again Lorca tries to generalize this problem and creates of depression as the only controlling feeling not only inside Yerma, but also inside every woman character in the play. Thus, Yerma turns to be a very distinctive symbol of the modern Spanish woman who carries the features of classical heroines, prohibited the normal sort of life, kept imprisoned with a barren husband in a barren house, and the only solution left to her is to fight such barren existence. Moreover, Yerma represents an alive image of the woman who has no future because she does not have a present. That is why she struggles to have one as her words to the First Washer Woman show:

I'm not thinking about tomorrow, but today. You're old and you see things like a book already read. I know I'm thirsty and that I'm not free. I need to hold my son so that I can sleep peacefully...and even if I knew my son was going to torment me and hate me and drag me through the streets by my hair, I'd still welcome his birth with joy, because it's better to weep over a living man who gives us pain, than over this phantom that squats year after year on my breast.

(III, i, p. 20)

This same fact can be applied to Bernarda Alba's daughters. Bernarda can be viewed as a cruel character, the one who locks the chance in front of any of her daughters to get married. She

imprisons every one of those girls because she believes that "the men are not of their class" and so "they're fine as they are"<sup>12</sup>, so men are inferior to her daughters. Bernarda, thus can be seen in the same vision of the mother in *The Blood wedding* "in the sense that she embodies the harsh, restrictive social codes that repress women"<sup>13</sup>, and both stand as symbols of the harsh Spanish rural world. Ironically speaking, *The House of Bernarda Alba* presents a sincere image of sexual tension in Bernarda's daughters through involving no man on stage, even Pepe el Romano, the suitor, does not appear actually on stage. Romano serves as a dream to every daughter of Bernarda simply because he is a man and those girls are denied men.<sup>14</sup> In the condition of Adella, the youngest daughter, she cannot live without this dream, thus she chooses suicide, preferring to revolt against the tyranny of her mother with her own life to intensify the cruelty of Bernarda. Amazingly, this matter creates a great wonder at the way Lorca presents two completely different sorts of women at one time whether in this play or in the earliest ones. Why women represent leading figures in all these three plays?. The answer to this question cannot be resolved, because its secret is left to Lorca himself. It is sometimes left to believe that it might be attributed to Lorca's homosexual nature that is responsible for his choice of women as the leading figures in plays. Maybe the hard experiences Lorca got because of his nature led him to understand the hard experiences of a major layer suppressed by society that is the woman and maybe because Lorca was grown up in a rural



Look how my ashen  
valleys already are waking  
In longing for this fountain  
of shuddering gushes! <sup>10</sup>

The forest, the moon, the beggar woman, they all carry the signs of tragic fatality that swallows the lives of the young couples who tried to stand against all that is rigid in their society and to get freedom. The result is a heap of conflicting and sorrowful feelings that arose in every one of them. The bride wishes Leonardo to kill her and make her oblivion so that he can save his life out of her extreme depression. The bride starts to lament her life and her existence, searching for her own rest in death, the death that can get her and Leonardo peace and salvation:

Bride: From here I'll go on alone.  
You go now! I want you to turn  
back.

Leonardo: Hush, I said!

Bride: With your teeth, with your hands,  
anyway you can,

Take from my clean  
throat

The metal of this chain,  
And let me live forgotten

Back there in my house in the ground.

And if you don't want to kill me

As you would kill a tiny snake,

Set in my hands, a bride's hands

The barrel of your shotgun.

Oh, what lamenting, what fire,

Sweeps upward through my head!

What glass splinters are stuck in my  
tongue!

(III, i, p.1071)

Such grievous words reflect a tortuous spirit. The bride chooses death on the chains she used to be strangled with in her previous life. As they wanted

to escape, she has taken the initiation of escapement as she "first went down the stairs" and "put a new bridle on the horse" (III, i, p.1071) belonged to Leonardo, but since they are entrapped in the forest, there is no other solution except death to get the freedom they could not get in life.

Yerma, on the other hand, can be also seen as a woman who searches to be free, but society holds her down. Throughout the whole play, Yerma seems so devastated as she sees all women accompanying their children unlike her barren hands that accompanies no child. At the beginning of the play and in the bedroom of Yerma, Lorca shows a surrealistic image of a shepherd dragging a child who is dressed all in white. Then, the problem of Yerma becomes more crystal. Her basic problem is not children, rather it is the problem of every Spanish woman, marriage without love and without the least understanding between any married couples. It seems that this reality is very current in society as it is obvious in the speech of the Second Girl to Yerma as they speak about the cause of marriage:

Yerma: Why marry then?

Second Girl : because they made me marry. They make everyone marry. If it goes on like this, there will only be little girls left. Anyway... in reality you're married long before you go to church. But the old women fret about these things. I'm nineteen and I hate cooking and cleaning. And now I have to spend the whole day doing what I hate. What for? Why did my husband need to become my husband? We do the same now as

already involved in a love affair with Adela, Bernarda's youngest daughter. Romano chooses to marry Angustias because of her fortune. Adela and other girls find in Romano as the chance that shouldn't be missed by any one of them, for Romano represents the golden and the only chance for each to get away from the frustration of the mother. The only one who is dear enough to challenge Bernarda is Adela. Refusing to submit to the will and power of the mother, Adela chooses to commit suicide by hanging up herself after Bernarda shoots at her lover Romano, and the play ends up with Bernarda's orders of the full discretion and utter silence to the way Adela is tempted by Romano and the way she has committed suicide. What counts to Bernarda of course is not her own daughter, but her own arrogance and self conceit, and these two features represent the portraiture of the unbearable, dictatorial Bernarda.

It seems that in all these three tragedies men and women are put in severe conflicts with society, the society that practices a sort of oppression and frustration on its members. Symbolically speaking, this society is taking different forms. Sometimes it is represented by the forest as in *The Blood Wedding* or the figure of the husband as in *Yerma* or even the figure of the mother as in *The House of Bernarda Alba*. They all stand for different forms of one power, the Spanish society with all its hindrances and obstacles, preventing its people from communication with changes going on in the real outside world forbidding them as well their own freedom. Thus, Lorca chooses death as the only future and outcome of such conflict. All these views

are attributed to Lorca's opinion that "great art depends upon a vivid awareness of death, connection with a nation's soil and an acknowledgment of the limitation of reason"<sup>9</sup>. To support this connection between art and death in his works, Lorca uses a variety of means such as different vivid symbols, allegorical forms of characterization and a very special sort of a lyrical language.

In *Blood Wedding*, for example, Lorca presents certain allegorical characters, such as the moon and the beggar woman that both symbolize death. The moon presented in this play is not seen in the view of the classical romantic perspective of the moon. The moon sprinkles in this play so as to enlighten the way to death and the groom to the place of Leonardo and the bride. As such, the moon conspires with death to hunt the two lovers, showing the way in front of their pursuers as it is obvious in the moon's speech with the Beggar Woman who symbolizes death. This speech shows a vivid, violent image of how the moon and death search for blood and bloodshed:

Moon: They're coming. One band through the ravine and the other along the river. I'm going to light up the boulders. What do you need?..

Beggar woman: Nothing.

Moon: the wind blows hard now, with a double edge.

Beggar Woman: Light up the waistcoat and open the buttons;

the knives will know the path after that.

Moon: But let them be a long time a-dying. So the blood

will slide its delicate hissing between my fingers.

ex-lover. It is only at the wedding day that everything is raised to the climax and nothing can be done any more to save the situation. After her wedding ceremonies, the bride is fully aware that her feelings towards Leonardo are unaltered and the same condition for Leonardo despite the fact that he is married to another woman now. The two thus decide to run from the whole world and they succeed in achieving this aim, but bad omens accompany them wherever they go. As they escape, they enter a forest in which death in the form of a beggar woman is roaming and searching to end lives along with the moon. The moon, on the other hand, plays the role of an observer on the two lovers to reveal their place to death and their pursuers. Meanwhile, the play ends with the struggle between the groom and Leonardo and their mutual death and the screams of the mother (as in the beginning of the play) that how absurd that a tiny knife ended the lives of two healthy young men.

In *Yerma*, Lorca's second *Rural Tragedy*, described by Lorca as a tragic poem in three acts and six scenes, the same theme related to death is repeated, but now the struggle is not between two men over a woman rather it is between a woman and her husband. Yerma is a farmer's wife who has been married for five years and twenty days to Juan. Yerma's dilemma can be summarised in the fact that she could not have any children during her marital life, and she cannot get a divorce from her husband and marry another man to get children because the society forbids her this right. So the only life that Yerma possesses is the life of devastation and loneliness.

These feelings are so intensified inside Yerma up to the extent in which Yerma, desperate of this sort of life, chooses to kill her husband, killing through him all the potential chances of being a mother because she cannot marry again.

Death as a dominating theme continues with Lorca's third *Rural Tragedy* *The House of Bernarda Alba*, a drama of women in the villages of Spain. Despite the fact that Lorca did not intend to make this play the last part of *Earth Trilogy* (for he was murdered before finishing this trilogy in 1936), still many critics believe that this play represents a continuation for the first two parts because it was the last play written by Lorca, in addition to the fact that this play shows the same components of the two earliest plays. In this play, the leading figure is Bernarda Alba, a woman at her sixties and has just been widowed her second husband. Thus, as a very strong and dominating woman, Bernarda declares that morning in her house will last for the next eight years as it is current in her family. Bernarda has five daughters who are all living in the shadows of the severe controlling figure that is the mother, who prevents them from having any sort of relation or any sort of contact with men. As a result, they remain single though they age between 20 to 39 years. The dilemma in the play starts with the envies of the younger four girls to their elder sister, Angustias (Bernarda's elder daughter from her first husband). Angustias inherited from her father a huge sum of money unlike the other girls who inherited much less. Meanwhile, Angustias is engaged to a man in his twenties, Pepe el Romano, who has been

misconceptions of his society as well as its backwardness compared to other western countries. These ideas were more intensified after Lorca made a visit to New York in 1929 and he stayed there for one year.<sup>6</sup>

In New York, Lorca was astonished by the strange atmosphere of the city which serves as an expression of solitude, anguish and chaos, but at the same time, Lorca admired its "modern beauty". In New York, Lorca was able to apprehend the great elapse between the Spanish life and society and the modern life going on in other regions of the world.<sup>7</sup> After such an experience, Lorca started a new era of literary production. This time it is not dominated by poetry only, but also with poetic drama. The literary production of Lorca this time took the form of a special sort of tragedies that combine lyricism, satire, death and an extreme sense of solitude, all at one time. Lorca intended a such sort of drama as this to criticize the negative aspects of the Spanish society, giving these plays the title *Rural Tragedies* or *Earth Trilogies*. These tragedies are *The Blood Wedding* (1933), *Yerma* (1934), and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1936), each of which is dominated by a strange atmosphere and characterizations of death. As a matter of fact, death in Lorca's works in general seems to be an obsession more than being treated as a theme or a concept since Lorca was born and grown up in unstable country, and this country has been passing by a long experience with death. In other words, death was treated as a cult in the Spanish daily life. You cannot understand the significance of life without understanding the significance of

death first. That is why death represents a very essential component in Spain's history and culture. As such, death to Lorca's characters in his trilogy represents the salvation that those characters are desperately searching for.

In *Blood Wedding*, the play presents the themes of death and the oppressed love and the consequences of this oppression in the realm of society. In this play Lorca puts in his characters a huge heap of passion which turns to be a destructive force to them. The characters are given no names (except for Leonardo), to intensify the idea that the dilemma attached to this play is attached to the Spanish society as a whole.<sup>8</sup> The play is originally based on a real event happened in the province of Almeria in Spain of a bride who runs away with her lover at her wedding night, the matter that suggests Lorca's intention to combine what is real with what is artistic.

The play opens with a scene that gathers the Mother (who seems to get a cruel nature), and the Bridegroom in an atmosphere full of bad omens. As it is reported by the mother, her husband and her elderly son have been killed years ago by a family named the Felixs. As the son asks about a knife to cut grapes, the mother gets furious at how easy a small knife can end the life of a man. Thus the play is opened with a major theme centring on death, the death that swallows people easily. Eventually, it is revealed that the bride used to be involved with a man whose name is Leonardo Felix, a cousin to the person who killed the groom's father and brother, but the mother insists on going on in the project of wedding even though the bride still has certain feelings to her

## THE DRAMA OF DEATH IN FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA'S EARTH TRILOGY

A. L. HIND AHMED al-kurwy  
University of al-Qadissiya

### ABSTRACT

The present study aims at investigating three plays written by the Spanish poet and playwright Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) that are *The Blood Wedding*, *Yerma* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*, and the way death is elaborated by Lorca in these plays. Death in these plays represents a dominating and massive power that controls and affects the lives of the Spanish multitude.

The study falls into one section and a conclusion. Through this section, a detailed analysis is made to the way death is functioning and how Lorca makes death appear in different forms in each play. The conclusion concentrates on the major findings of the study.

In what words or expressions can one describe the literary talent and production of an artist like Federico Garcia Lorca? The man is considered to be the unsolved mystery of Spain and its greatest gifted figure. Maybe because the effect Lorca printed on his homeland is very much like the effect printed by Brecht on Germany. But in Lorca's condition "Spain turned out more bitter, more impregnated with its own character, more closed, more tragic, more obsessive than any other nation"<sup>1</sup>. Ironically, this was not the same environment Lorca has grown up in. Being born in Fuente vaqueros, near the city of Granada on 5 June, 1898, Lorca was a subject to the influence and the charms of this region with its "melodic populars, and lyrical rivers"<sup>2</sup>, causing Lorca to be "a poet from birth and unable to help it"<sup>3</sup>.

This unextrodinary effect of art, especially poetry, extended to the next years of Lorca's youth. Lorca showed great enthusiasm to learn the Spanish

popular ballads, enriching himself with romantic and classical literature, combining it at the same time with a great interest in music. All these influences participated together to create Lorca's lyrical mind.<sup>4</sup> Henceforth and through the 1920s, Lorca was able to achieve a remarkable success as a poet, especially with the collection of poems entitled *Gypsy Ballads* (1924-27). Through this collection, Lorca started to inspire a whole nation through his presentation of the folk and gypsy traditions, leading Lorca to be "the poet of Andalusia and its gypsy subculture"<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, Lorca was also known to be a social activist. He along with many artists like Salvador Dali and Juan Ramon Jimenez, the famous Spanish artists, formed "Generation 27", a sort of an art club aimed at reviving the heritage and culture of Spain. Lorca found in Spanish history folklore as the perfect medium through which he can speak freely of his ideas, criticizing the