



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 3. Issue.3.,2016 (July-Sept.)



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

LORCA AS THE POET OF AVANT-GARDE AND SURREALISM

BINDIYA RAHI SINGH

JRF Research Scholar & Assistant Professor (Guest).
Department of English. H.N.B.G.U (The Central University)



BINDIYA RAHI SINGH

ABSTRACT

Federico Garcia Lorca was a widespread celebrated folk Spanish playwright, artist, singer, and the Andalusia poet. He gave his much attention to the field of drama by using his concept of Surrealism and Symbolism. Hence he has become famous and got popularity in the entire World of literature for his specific works. But his controversial assassination, having queerness, consequently he is fired by the Civil Government during the Spanish Civil War (1936). However, it has destroyed his career. In spite of his early death, his popularity has again arisen and made him the great poet. He wrote a number of Poetic Collection such as; *de Libro De Poems (Book of Poems)*, *de Poema Del Cante Jondo (the Poem of Deep Song)*, *de Suites (Suits)*, *de Canciones (Songs 1921-26)*, *de Primer Romancero Gitano (The Gypsy Ballads)*, *de Poeta En Nueva York (Poet In New York)* and *de Seis Poemas Galegos*. Lorca has given his own views towards theatre that,

A people who do not cherish and promote their theatre are, if not yet dead, in the process of dying; just as theatre which does not capture the vibrancy of society, of history, the drama of its people, has to right to call itself a theatre but is only a casino or a place to kill time¹ (Cuitino,2)

Through this research paper, I would share his impact on the concept of Surrealism and The Avant- Garde which assumes throughout his works whether it relates his poetry or drama. Each word has the meaning of absurdity. What is surrealism and how it relates with Lorca? And how did come this concept into his work? Along with why has he written such kind of concept? That has been elucidating with authenticate remarks.

Keywords: The Avant Garde, surrealism, Symbolism, Consciousness, Sexuality, Visual Lyricism.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

I want to cry because I feel like it-
The way children cry in the last row of seats
Because I'm not a man, not a poet, and not a leaf,
Only a wounded pulse that proves the things of the other side. (263, Poet in New York)

Following lines are able to show his surrealism style along with the poet of the Avant Garde. Virginia Higginbotham describes in her book that Lorca's experience in New York was so bitter that he presented it in cruel ways which can easily see in his poetic collection of *Poet in New York*. It has presented the Lorca's feeling transformed into the depth of sadness and horror which had been revealing throughout his entire lyrics of poetry. Through this point of view, the poet has tried to differentiate between justice and cruelty.² (Higginbotham, 17)

Federico Garcia Lorca was famous for his surrealism in his poetry and painting. Lorca enjoyed in making art with the company of his other surrealist artist Dali and Buñuel. Lorca's mature dramas have been come out from the ancient avant-garde farce and the experience of common people. He used ethos and mythos in his enormous ground of literature. His tragic Character had been given their performance as the puppets in the hands of destiny, and their suffering is presented in farcical detail. Death is used as the icon of the play which always resembles among the people and they are unable to recognise her.³ (Higginbotham, xi) As in *Blood Wedding*, the plea of The Death and the Moon is able to give it the eerie atmosphere and as homicide maniac, she murders both of Leonardo Felix and The Bridegroom. In other play, *The House of Bernarda Alba* also starts with the mourning scene of Bernarda's husband and ends with the death of Adela, the youngest daughter of Bernarda. *Yerma* also has the expression of death when Yerma in the fit intensity and not satisfied with her desire be a mother, killed her husband by her own hands. In *The Butterfly's Evil Spell* also related with the rejection and that become the cause of Curitano's Death. *Love of Perlimplin and Belisa in the Garden*, the theme of deceived love makes the reason of Perlimplin's death in which Perlimplin that is rich in the property but not in age, marries with a young lady Belisa who have no care about his emotions. Among them, *Poet in New York* has totally devoted with the impression of surrealism. He also tries his hand in the field of prose sketches, *Narraciones* and play *Esi que pason cinco anos (When five Years Have Pass)* which have the surrealist theme with the frustration and fear of death along with it has dramatized play within play technique that found in the surrealist films of Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel⁴ (Higginbotham, into-xi).

Moreover, works of Garcia Lorca are the bridge between the Modernism and Classicism. As Modernist Poet he used the concept of surrealism and symbolism in his poetic volume and drawings with it he also followed the Aristotelian concept in his plays. G.B. Morris points out his psychological emotions in his book, *Surrealism in Spain* that, the surrealism begins to emerge, devoting them to the deepest throbbing of the soul. On this way, Angel Del Rio also remarked about Lorca as, when he was in New York, his departure from native Country has totally changed his mind and mood. He has become despondent and lonely in America and passing of time, his thoughts were being transformed into the world of negativity. Further, Angel del Rio describes that whatever significance poet in New York may have does not spring from any genuine contract with actual American life which the poet saw only from the outside.⁵ (Rio, p. xvii)

The sadness of Lorca has revealed in his *Poet in New York*, the plot of death and absurdity which have deeply interwoven into the fabric of poet's personality.⁶ (Schwartz, 7) It can present as follows,

Era la gran reunion de los animales muertos
 Tranpasados por las espadas de la luz,
 La alegria eterna del hipopotamo con las pezuña de ceniza
 Ye de la gacela con una siempreviva en la garganta. (11-14, Danza de la muerte, 248)
 (It was the great gathering of dead animals
 Pierced by the swords of light.
 The endless joy of the hippopotamus with cloven feet of ash
 And of the gazelle with an immortelle in its throat. (11-14) (selected Poems of Lorca, 248)

His attitude towards church was harsh and in order to express his emotion for the religion he has given the view of the church in his poetic *Collection Impression y pajjes* which had never published at his lifetime.⁷ (Higginbotham, 10) In this way, the paradoxical attitude toward the religion, gender and sexuality stands apart him as the poet of an avant-garde. As Virginia Higginbotham shared her views for Lorca that laughter and tears, above all, run through all his poetry. Federico was fundamentally a true elegiac poet, these are the two

concept – Laughter and Tears, have woven into a paradoxical theme in his theatre...Poetry, laughter and tears are the ingredients of his dramatic invention⁸. (Higginbotham, 10). J. L. Stayan also pointed out that Lorca used his tremendous brain in the field of literature to give it extent way, in a case of European Symbolism; he also used perfectly symbol and sign in his each work. Lorca wrote an outstanding trilogy regarding common people language and their rituals. It was his great contribution of drama that he was active with the group of *Generation 27*. An ultimate expression of symbolism sprung only from the rural community of Southern Spain. His representation of the spirit of Spanish people can be understood through his the lore of Andalusia.⁹ (Styan, 85)

From the very beginning of his career, he was much influenced by the music, drawing, and the story of ancients. His Maid servant Dolaras, have imported role by listening to him the story of ghost and fairies. His appetite and dissatisfaction for theatre had been growing day after day and it would have grown in full bloom when he had been performing a farce among his servants as he was a Saint and all were his followers. His passion for the liturgy where he imitates a priest at mass, bedecked in old clothes made to look like a suplice.¹⁰ (Cuitino,7) The absurd theme has been an overwhelming mark of his poetry and drama. However, Graham and Labanyi declares, Garcia Lorca's works itself characterised by both methods of criticism, firstly, it has focused on his own experience and next a traditional way.¹¹(Smith, 70) In addition to it would remember that Lorca must remain a key figure in any new approach to Spanish culture as he was in more tradition literary studies. Paul Julian Smith describes him, I thus seek to make a contribution to this emerging field....a number of publications that have changed the corpus of Garcia Lorca's writing and will perhaps transform our present understanding on its canonicity. Thus we have seen the appearance, much delayed, of three substantial collections of juvenilia- prose, poetry and drama.¹²(Smith, 3) Christopher Flint has stated about his poetry in his article *Flesh of the Poet* in which he explained the background of impersonal confusion surrounding it. Besides it, it seems far from the pseudo-masochistic, the physical and erotic violence in Lorca's poetry accentuates it erotic capacity the body is attached to ulterior meaning: in the face of either biologic necessity (death) or social and political menace such as the night of Gypsies, matriarchy (*the House of Bernarda Alba, Blood Wedding, Love of Perlimplin and Belisa in the Garden*) *Blacks (Poet in New York)*, and the theme of homosexuality (*When Five Years Have Pass, Ode to Whitman*), the human figure opposes its visible presence, its challenge to precisely those thing that threatens the body and hence human identity.¹³(the flesh of the body,190). Lorca has dedicated a poem, *Laments for the Ignacio Sanchez Mejas* to his friend Ignacio Sanchez Mejas who had killed when he was involving in the bullfight, also the poet and the member of Generation 27. Here Lorca expresses his sadistic and stresses through his power of symbolism and metaphorical way that,

A las cinco de la tarde	at five in the afternoon
Eran las cinco en punto de la tarde	it was exactly five in the afternoon
Un nino trajo la blanea sabano	a boy brought the line sheet
A las cinco la tarde	at five in the afternoon
Una espuerta de cal ya prevenida	A basket of lime standing ready
A las cinco la tarde	at five in the afternoon
Lo demasera muerte y solo muerte	everything else was death, only death
A las cinco de la tarde. (Lorca,313)	At five in the afternoon (Lorca, 313)

A favoured trope of surrealism in the combined works of Lorca, Buñuel, and Dalí is able to create a mystic world of literature and art. They have all done made a background of transformation through their talents and achievement. They have transferred modernism into symbolism or surrealism.¹⁴ (Bonaddio,106) Garcia Lorca's production of theatre generates the sinister figure of Death walking on the ground of the Plays, either it's about *Blood Wedding* or *When Five Years Have Pass*. In order to quench his desire by using the ethos and mythos in his works, he creates the visual world of lyricism and symbolsm.¹⁵ (Bonaddio, 51)

Gwynne Edward clearly described the influence of the avant-garde and of the kind of surrealism to be found in *The Public* and *When Five Years Have Pass* is still evident in certain scenes, most obviously in the appearance of the Moon and the Death¹⁶ (Edward, 86) also find in his other plays *Yerma, Blood Wedding* and

The House Of Bernarda Alba. In *Blood Wedding*, the presence of the Moon and the Death disguised as a bagger woman to kill the Bridegroom and Leonardo who has yet arrived into the dense forest;

MOON: they're coming. One band through the ravine and other along the river.

I am going to light up and what do you need?

BAGGAR WOMAN: nothing

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

BAGGAR 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 slide its delicate hissing between my fingers...this fountain of shuddering gushes! (Trilogy of Garcia Lorca, 79)

The theme of *When Five Year Have Pass* has analysed by the critic Corydon Under the title of The Truth of the Life, Corydon has presented the outline of the story in play within play concept as, a Young Man hopes to marry his fifteen- year's old fiancé on her return from a journey of five years duration. When the period has elapsed, he seeks her out, but she rejects him and runs off with a Rugby Player. Remembering the existence of the Typist who advances he had previously rejected; he goes in search of the second woman. When she insists herself on a five-year postponement of their love, the Young Man returns and dies when he plays "hearts" at a fatal game. This central action is repeatedly interrupted by secondary figure of a decidedly non-naturalistic character: a dead cat and a child, a Mannequin, longing for marriage; a girl, whose lover has drowned; a sinister clown and Harlequin, and a yellow mask, also mourning a lost lover and child.¹⁷ (Smith, 71)

The whole incident has been observed with the symbolical conversation among the First Player, Young Man and the Third Player,

YOUNG MAN. (in agony). All right just a drop of chartreuse. It's like night with green moon in a castle where there is a young man with golden sea-weed.

THIRD PLAYER. (firmly). It's absolutely essential that you give us the ace.

YOUNG MAN. (aside). Of hearts!

SECOND PLAYER. (strongly). Because it's either win or lose. Come on. The card.

YOUNG PLAYER. There! (He puts the card on the table.)

At this very moment, the ace of hearts appears illuminated on the shelves of the library. THE FIRST PLAYER produces a pistol and fires a silent arrow. The

YOUNG MAN puts his hands to his chest. (*Lorca Plays Two*, 180)

Lorca attempted to explore the absurd writing for theatre by using the surrealistic language in his painting, plays and poetry. Besides it, the critic Bonaddio describes his witty words about Lorca that, he used lyrics with the combination of the surrealism and his experimental plots influenced by the classicism which has the salient characteristic of fresh interactions, a new methodology of art and exciting conclusion about the theatre of Garcia Lorca. In other words, Bonaddio again writes about him that in the present time study of Lorca's oeuvre would be provided with the new fertile ground for new finders by making their work parallel to Lorca's exciting imagery and exhilarating vision for the theatre.¹⁸ (Bonaddio, 43-44). The motif of death and suffering is the main issue which reveals throughout his works either it may happen with poetry or in the field of drama. They have its cruel effect upon the people and people are just puppets in the hands of the Death. Sufferings and troubles are treated in very living way that audience also can feel the catastrophic downfall of theirs (characters). *A Trip to a Moon* also has the variety of Lorca's mood of Surrealism and it has been written when he was in America and his loneliness was growing day by day with the passing of time. The result of his feeling towards society and the world has burst through his writing. Virginia Higginbotham shared her words as, while Lorca was in New York, his interest was in the device of cinema was appear as-fade in fade out and multiple exposures. Along with *A Trip of the Moon* also composed a trauma of agonising image of cruelty, sexual suffering and identity crisis of a small boy who used to wearing a harlequin suit. He punished for undefined sexual exploits.¹⁹ (Higginbotham, 54) Similarly, it deals with the poem Death's Lament, where the candlestick and the blanket on the ground imply man's difficulty in accepting death;

Upon a black sky,
 Yellow bolt of lightning.
 I came to this world with eyes
 And leave it without them....
 I wanted to arrive
 To where the good arrived
 And I have arrived, My God!...
 But then ,
 A candlestick and a blanket on the ground²⁰ (Cuitino, 19)

The trauma of tension has occupied in *Poet en Nueva York*, where Lorca's personality has been observed with the three dimension features of his character such as dream are used as the therapeutic recollection secondly, the dream has used as wish fulfilment and incorporating desire of the self lastly, his vision of dream anxiety. Fundamentally it is the mixture of both his emotions towards horror and problematic nightmare society. However he surrenders for his extrovert emotions with freakiness attitude which has proved for him a moving and unforgettable experience.²¹ (Robert Hovard, 1981) Chris Perrian points out that Lorca can be genomic, sceptical and cerebral, adopting what were to be thought...his works reveal an aesthetic and poetic that go beyond the crafty simulation of the natural and supernatural order of things and in other sense he was in habit of using words for humour, indirection, masks, and disguise to make them emotional and psychological.²² (Bonaddio,150) The sense of existential hallow and deathly anguish as a poetic mechanism in the writing of Generation-27, Poets have come to had used violent and dissident texts, such as Alberit's *Sobre Los Angels (Concerning the Angel)* and others of the late 1920s, but also in the more overtly Social Writings produced by Pablo Neruda and Damaso Alanso in the 1940s – all were responsible for machination of modernity, to the crisis of the subject and refers Lorca's poetry of surrealism. Miriam Balba Echeverria reminds that the surrealism and symbolism of Lorca have explained and evaluated the introvert crisis of consciousness to remove his loneliness and anguish of modernity at the foreign land.²³ (Richter, 25). On this way the poem of *Ode to Whitman*, by Garcia Lorca, is inspired by the poetic ability of Walt Whitman, have the same expression as would had Whitman. It was his great enthusiastic zeal that he wrote that poem and it reopened the doors of surrealism to Lorca after Dali and Luis Bunuel.²⁴ (Lima, 20-21). This can imply through the following lines;

Ni un solo momento, viejo hermoso Walt Whitman,
 He dejado dever tu barba llena de mariposas,
 Ni tus hombros de pana gastados por la luna,...
 Enemigo de satire,
 Enemigo de la vid
 Yamante de los cuerpos bajo la burda tela... (29-39, Lorca, 274) selected poems
 Not for a moment, Walt Whitman, lonely old man,
 Have I failed to see your beard full of butterflies,
 Nor your corduroy shoulders frayed by the moon,...
 Enemy of the satyr,
 Enemy of the vine,
 And lover of bodies beneath rough clothes... (29-39, Lorca, 274) selected poems.

Regarding this motif of sexuality Ian Gibson, biographer of Lorca has given his statement that no doubt that background of his poetry is the mirror of his deep sexual malaise, a feeling of being rejected and isolated, and the theme of frustration has shifted one play to another. After the publication of his works, and that are concerned with the secret of his homosexuality. After it, he became the icon of homosexuality in Granada. And this was a particular disaster in a town noted for its aversion towards unconventional sexuality. Many people, when they realised that Lorca was not 'normal' according to the canons of standard Spanish sexuality, became uneasy and distanced themselves from the poet.²⁵ (Gibson, 22) The opposition to an exalted "above" reality in Bataille's thinking is similar to what the Spanish avant-garde poet and critic Juan Larrea calls an affinity

towards a sub-reality as evident in Hispanic “surrealist” works of poets such as the Chilean Pablo Neruda and the Peruvian César Vallejo.²⁶(Richter, 12) However, in Lorca’s later work—beginning in 1929 with *Poeta en Nueva York*, arguably his most “surrealistic” collection of poems—there is an abrupt change in styles and themes which anticipate ensuing writings such as *El público* and *Así Que pasen cinco años*. In these works, Lorca departs from a rethinking of traditional Spanish themes and forms and proposes a violent critique of established discourse. Rather than a mere regress to prevalent (or even modernist) forms and aesthetics, a position which many critics have assumed, I contend that Lorca’s poetry and drama constitute a significant departure from such forms and even their vanguards revisions.²⁷(Richter, 19)

Conclusion

To conclude after the following detail about Garcia Lorca it can be said, being the controversial icon in his lifetime and after his short death for the sake of his vibrating theme of surrealism and symbolism which have woven by the colours of myths and symbols, and recited by the lyrics of deep songs. Lorca, of course, comes into this latter category. His plays are the, from the starting and the end, the expression of his emotional dilemmas and his sexual anxieties as well as of the pressure exerted on him by kind of society in which he lived.²⁸ (Gwynne Edwards, 11). In other words, Lorca,s protagonist having counterpart of life or death struggle.²⁹ (Higginbotham,55).

Works Cited

Primary Sources:

- [1]. Maurer, Christopher. *Federico Garcia Lorca: selected Verse (Revised Bilingual Edition)*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.pp.263
- [2]. _____.*Federico Garcia Lorca: selected Verse (Revised Bilingual Edition)*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. pp248
- [3]. _____.*Federico Garcia Lorca: selected Verse (Revised Bilingual Edition)*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. pp.313
- [4]. Federico Garcia Lorca, *Blood Wedding*, Trans. James Graham-Lujan and Richard L. O’Connell. 1st Ed. New York: New Direction, 1955.
- [5]. Edwards, Gwynne. *Lorca: Plays Two*. Methuen London Ltd, 1990. pp. 180
- [6]. Maurer, Christopher. *Federico Garcia Lorca: selected Verse (Revised Bilingual Edition)*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. Pp.274

Secondary Sources

- [1]. Cuitino Louis, Malinz. *Garcia Lorca: for the Beginners*. Hyderabad: Orient Language, 1999. Pp.2
- [2]. Higginbotham, Virginia. *The Comic Spirit of Federico Garcia Lorca*. University of Texas Press, 1935. Pp.17
- [3]. Higginbotham, Virginia. *The Comic Spirit of Federico Garcia Lorca*. University of Texas Press, 1935. Pp.xi
- [4]. Higginbotham, Virginia. *The Comic Spirit of Federico Garcia Lorca*. University of Texas Press, 1935. Pp.xi
- [5]. Rio Del Angel. *Introduction to poet in New York*. Trans. Ben Belitt. New York,1955. Pp. xvii
- [6]. Schwartz, Kessel. *Garcia Lorca and Vermont*. American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. Vol. 42, No. 1 (Mar., 1959), pp. 50-55. JSTOR.Web. 9 December 2015.
- [7]. Higginbotham, Virginia. *The Comic Spirit of Federico Garcia Lorca*. University of Texas Press, 1935. pp.10
- [8]. _____.*The Comic Spirit of Federico Garcia Lorca*. University of Texas Press, 1935.pp.10
- [9]. Styan L, J. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Symbolism, Surrealism and the Absurd*. Vol.2. Cambridge University Press. 1981.pp.85
- [10]. Cuitino, Louis Malinz. *Garcia Lorca for the Beginners*. Hyderabad: Orient Language.95
- [11]. Smith Paul Julian. *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. pp.70
- [12]. _____. *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.pp.3

-
- [13]. Foster William, David, Altanmiranda and Urioste de, Carmen. *Spanish Literature: 1700 to the Present*. Garland Publishing (A Member of The Tylor and Francis Group), Inc: New York and London, 2000. Pp.190
- [14]. Bonaddio, Federico. *A Companion to Federico Garcia Lorca*. Temesis: Boydell & Brewer, 2007. Pp.106
- [15]. _____.*A Companion to Federico Garcia Lorca*. Temesis: Boydell & Brewer, 2007. Pp.51
- [16]. Edward, Gwynne. *Lorca: Living in the Theatre*. London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2003. Pp. 86
- [17]. Smith Paul Julian. *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 71
- [18]. Bonaddio, Federico. *A Companion to Federico Garcia Lorca*. Temesis: Boydell & Brewer, 2007. Pp.43-44
- [19]. Higginbotham, Virginia. *The Comic Spirit of Federico Garcia Lorca*. University of Texas Press, 1935. Pp.54
- [20]. Cuitino, Louis Malinz. *Garcia Lorca for the Beginners*. Hyderabad: Orient Language, 2005. Pp.19
- [21]. Havard G, *Romanticism to Surrealism: Seven Spanish Poets*. University of Wales, 1988.
- [22]. Bonaddio, Federico. *A Companion to Federico Garcia Lorca*. Temesis: Boydell & Brewer, 2007. Pp.150
- [23]. Richter F, David. *The Edge of Surrealism: The Aesthetics of Anguish*. pp. 25
- [24]. Lima, Robert. *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca*. Las Americas: New York, 1963. Pp.20-21
- [25]. Gibson, Ian. *The Assassination of Federico Garcia Lorca*. W. H. Allen. London: A Howard & Wyndham, 1979. Pp. 22
- [26]. Richter Fred, David. *Margins of Poetry: the Performing of the Formless in Lorca's Surrealism*. Diss. Nashville: Tennessee, 1982. Print. Pp.12
- [27]. Richter Fred, David. *Margins of Poetry: the Performing of the Formless in Lorca's Surrealism*. Diss. Nashville: Tennessee, 1982. Print. pp. 19
- [28]. Edward, Gwynne. *Lorca: Living in the Theatre*. London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2003. Pp. 11.
-