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Woman, Family and Society in the Theatre of Federico García Lorca

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by

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All quotations from Obras completas by Federico García Lorca are taken from the sixteenth edition. (Madrid, 1971)

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CHAPTER 1

The Artistic Development of a Poet

....Lo que más me importa es vivir.
Me paso el día en la calle: a ratos en los cafés, charlando..
Frecuento los paseos, y algunas temporadas me voy al campo.
El campo me gusta más que nada. Allí vivo, corro, trajino en faenas campesinas dos horas y escribo cinco. Donde mejor escribo es en el campo. (p 1727)

Federico García Lorca considered himself not as a poet primarily but as a social being. His inspiration was drawn from what he saw and heard around him; real people and things provided the principal source of his literary works. He was a man who was immersed, both consciously and unconsciously, in the traditions of his country. Indeed the above statement by Lorca himself reveals the essence of these literary beliefs. He needed constant contact with other people, not just his academic and literary contemporaries, but with the man in the street. What did this signify? As I intend to demonstrate, Lorca's sympathy with the pueblo extended beyond his recognition of their intimate knowledge of popular tradition, for he strove to understand the thoughts and opinions they possessed concerning the fabric of their lives and the social conditions limiting their horizons.

However, for the moment, I wish to confine my study of Lorca's relationship with society to the issue raised in the second half of his affirmation: Lorca's love of the campo. I believe that the poet was not just referring to the purely physical aspects of the countryside. His associations with its inhabitants made him acutely aware of the strong link created and maintained by popular tradition and folklore between the land and the people who worked it. Lorca was brought up in the small village

of Fuentevaqueros by his family and their employees who had a deep regard for the customs of country life. From the earliest age he listened to and then learnt the songs, sayings, superstitions and folklore which had become an integral part of the adults' lives. Generally symbols used in songs and sayings become over the years as real as the object itself, as Stephen Reckert observes; "in impersonal traditional verse...., the symbolic motifs are constant and collective, and simple replacement can be more freely used in the reasonable confidence that they will be recognised."[1] Undoubtedly Lorca assimilated many of these images in the early years of his life. As his passion for the collection and preservation ofpopular verse increased, he gradually became more aware of the importance of folk culture on the Spanish character. In 1919 he was already preoccupied with the poetic forms of the romance. A year later, during his visit to Granada, Menéndez Pidal recalled that the youth had offered his services:

> un jovencito me acompañó durante unos días, conduciéndome por las calles del Albaicín, y por las cuevas del Sacro Monte para hacerme posible recoger romances en aquellos barrios gitanos de la ciudad. Ese muchacho era Federico García Lorca, que se mostró interadísimo en aquella para él extraña tarea recolectiva de la tradición, llegando a ofrecerme él y enviarme más romances.[2]

It is clear that what most attracted the young poet was the gathering of songs from his native Andalucía and particularly from Granada, although later he did scour the whole of Spain to record lullabies. His eagerness to gather such material was, furthermore, the beginning of his deep concern for the culture of his people and its value to modern society. The expedition he undertook to seek out cantaores for the Concurso del cante jondo in 1922 was followed several years later by another effort to bring together hitherto scattered verses. Lorca wrote to Melchor Fernández Almagro to reveal that

Emilio Prados had given him the task of organising a collection of popular songs, including romances. He added that the production of the book, which would bring to light matter never before published, would be of the utmost importance. The concern the poet felt over the possible disappearance of popular songs remained equally strong throughout his life. In the early thirties, he spoke of how certain aspects of folklore were being destroyed:

> .... Rusia y España tienen en la rica vena de su folklore enormes e idénticas posibilidades, que no son las mismas, por cierto, en otros pueblos del mundo. Desgraciadamente, en España se ha hurgado en el cancionero para desvirtuarlo, para asesinarlo, como lo han hecho tantos autores de zarzuela que, a pesar de ello, gozan de boga y consideración popular. Es que han ido al cancionero como quien va a copiar de un museo, y ya lo dijo Falla: No es posible copiar las canciones en papeles pentagramados; es menester recogerlas en gramófonos para que no pierdan ese elemento imponderable que hace más que otra cosa su belleza. (p 1744)

An essentially Bourgeois society was not merely crushing the wealth of folk tradition in Spain, it was using it for its own ends without considering the original purpose of songs and sayings. This was to put into words the traditional attitudes and beliefs of the people, not , as the middle class authors were then doing, to give pleasure to the bourgeoisie. Lorca publicly made known the debt he felt to his family and their servants and in general to the country folk throughout his land for teaching rich children like him the songs and stories of the country. It kept him and his contemporaries in contact with their roots and heritage, thus providing a strong traditional background against which they could react.

Music, which had dominated all other interests during the first nineteen years of his life, provided Lorca with a deeper knowledge of his native land. His music teacher, Don Antonio Segura, taught him not only classical

compositions but also popular songs. Of course, this introduction to the culture of his people was reinforced by his father whose favourite occupation after the day's work consisted of gathering his workers together and singing songs such as El café de Chinitas and Los cuatro muleros.[3] Lorca recognised the immeasurable importance of his maids in his musical education by dedicating a canción to one of them, Irene García.

The year 1913 marked the beginning of a most rewarding friendship between the youth and Falla, and consequently the beginning of the master's influence over his follower, who was to receive Falla's knowledge of siguirayas, polos, martinetes and other popular songs. Lorca never forgot the devotion with which the older man conducted his gift of creativity. Later the mature poet payed this tribute to his mentor:

> Yo he aprendido del maestro Falla, que además de un gran artista es un santo, una ejemplar lección. En muchas ocasiones suele decir: "Los que tenemos este oficio de la música."..... Yo estoy con Falla. La poesía es como un don. Yo hago mi oficio y cumplo con mis obligaciones, sin prisa, porque sobre todo cuando se va a terminar una obra, como si dijéramos cuando se va a poner el tejado, es un placer enorme trabajar poco a poco. (p 1765)

The culmination of their friendship resulted in the practical experiment of the Concurso del cante jondo in 1922. It was the product of a serious attempt by the two artists to gather the best traditional singers in the country to show Spain this aspect of folk culture which was by then in a rapid state of decline. The poet added his own effort to revive the dying art of the cante jondo in his book of poetry of the same name, where guitars, the saeta and tears combine to reveal a mournful picture of this tradition. This love of popular tradition, plus an awakening social purpose, reveal his concern to close the ever widening gap that was emerging in practice between folk tradition and society.

How did Lorca take advantage of the popular material he had collected over the years? His transformation and adaptation of traditional imagery have been chosen by many scholars as an important object of study. Barea echoes the general starting point of these critics: "Lorca recogió el rico caudal de las expresiones populares y lo transformó en rico caudal de imágenes poéticas."[4] Certainly the symbolic architecture of most of his work has its cornerstone in the world of folklore. Water, birds, the air, wind, flowers, earth, horses, bulls, woods, all represent examples of the way in which the poet has plucked from the store of traditional idiomatic phrases and songs accumulated by the country dweller during his long years of contact with nature. It is not my intention to deal with these instances of Lorca's debt to folklore, which has been examined in detail elsewhere. I am more concerned with his treatment of refrains and ballads particularly as illustrations of social thought and attitudes.

The publication of his work, as well as its actual composition, indicates his regard for established customs. Lorca enjoyed reciting his poems and in some cases his plays, to a small audience. He played the role of the juglar, entertainer of the people. He clearly committed himself to the principle of the involvement of the artist with the public. A Gallego Morell gave proof of the poet's voluntary return to the intimate relationship between artist and community when he noted his habit of enclosing in letters unpublished poems, with the result that some were lost and others reappeared in different versions.[5] Articles on Romancero gitano and Poeta en Nueva York appeared even before the two works were published. Guillén marvels at the response of ordinary people to Lorca's use of recitation in his prologue to the Obras completas of Lorca :

> Pues bien: ¿cómo, por qué magia van a volver a identificarse el arte para pocos y el arte para muchos? Este es el gran secreto de Federico García Lorca. Su poesía, tradicional y novísima a un tiempo, y siempre de la mejor calidad, exige para su plenitud la recitación en público. (Otra tradición perdida.) Y el público la entiende, y al público le gusta. Y mucho. ¿Qué milagro es este? ¿Qué ha ocurrido?
>
> (P LIII)

The miracle is simply explained when the poet's obvious interest in the public is contrasted with the apparently staid literary atmosphere prevailing during the nineteen twenties and even the early thirties. But this will be examined later in the chapter. However Lorca's reluctance to part with his work was not just due to his desire to maintain a personal association between himself and his audience, for he also feared that once his work had been published it would no longer belong to him. He gave an interview in 1933 explaining both positions:

> Este libro sobre Nueva York que traje de mi viaje a los Estados Unidos no he querido darlo a ninguno de los editores que me lo han pedido. Después lo publicaré; pero primero quiero darlo a conocer en la forma de una conferencia; Leeré versos y explicaré cómo han surgido. Es decir, lo iré leyendo y analizando al mismo tiempo. (p 1730)

In the same interview he declared:

> Escribir, sí, cuando estoy inclinado a ello, me produce un placer. En cambio, publicar, no. Todo lo contrario. Todo qué yo he publicado me ha sido arrancado por editores o por amigos. A mí me gusta recitar mis versos, leer mis cosas. Pero luego le tengo un gran temor a la publicación. Esto se produce en mí porque cuando copio mis cosas, ya les empiezo a encontrar defectos, ya francamente no me gustan. Hay versos míos que se han propagado antes de publicarse. Mis libros me han sido arrancados a la fuerza. ¡Con decirles que tengo actualmente 4 libros de versos que aún no me he decidido a publicar! (p 1729)

He felt that recitation alone met the demands he made on art. Only then could he improve his work and explain it, helped perhaps by the reaction of his audience.

Lorca's love of the theatre began in his childhood. He was first unwittingly introduced to its charms by his father, who, as Cano relates, gave him a toy theatre:[6] the type of theatre the child especially loved to perform required puppet characters. Once more it is Cano who points to a specific point in Lorca's childhood when the arrival of a touring gipsy company brought alive the excitement of the stage.[7]

The first indication the mature poet gave of his consistent affection for puppet theatre occurred at the beginning of January, 1923, when he and Falla combined to present their first puppet theatre. The auditorium was in fact Lorca's family home in Granada and the young poet filled it with children. However, the repertoire was not confined to plays obviously written for children. It included Los dos habladores by Cervantes with the accompaniment La historia del soldado by Stravinsky as well as an adaptation by Lorca of the popular Andalusian story La niña que riega la albahaca y el príncipe preguntón. As so often happened, an acquaintance of the poet, Hermengildo Lanz was persuaded to help by making the puppets. A letter sent to Fernández Almagro in 1922 describes his excitement for the plan and his concern that children should have contact with this popular tradition. In Buenos Aires, 25th March 1934, he recalled in a dialogue introducing his new play Los títeres de Cachiporra his first venture in puppet theatre:

The character Cristóbal began:

> Señoras y Señores:
> No es la primera vez que yo, don Cristóbal, el muñeco borracho
> que se casa con doña Rosita, salgo de la mano de Federico

García Lorca a la escenita, donde siempre vivo y nunca muero. La primera vez fue en casa de este poeta,¿te acuerdas, Federico?; era la primavera granadina, y el salón de tu casa estaba lleno de niños que decían: "Los muñecos son de carnecilla, ¿y cómo se quedan tan chicos y no crecen?" El insigne Manuel de Falla tocaba el piano, y allí se estrenó por vez primera en España La historia de un soldado de Stravinski. Todavía recuerdo las caras sonrientes de los niños vendedores de periódicos que el poeta hizo subir, entre los bucles y las cintas de las caras de los niños ricos. (p 143/4)

The children's amazement at the eternity of puppets was paralleled by the poet's wish to play his part in perpetuating the everlasting puppet tradition. Puppets were, and are still even today, regarded as essentially entertainment for the pueblo. By inviting poor and rich children to that show in 1923 Lorca introduced the rich to unsophisticated theatre, demonstrating how rich and poor can enjoy the same spectacle. It must be noted that this successful trial is not as straightforward as it appears. Children are gradually deprived of their innocence by social pressures. It is only before they become fully immersed in the class hierarchy that all children can fully appreciate basic folk culture.

In the same speech he reaffirms his fondness for a tradition which binds him to his childhood and to all children in Spain:

> POETA Me gustan. Desde mi niñez yo te he querido, Cristobita, y cuando sea viejo me reuniré contigo para distraer a los niños que nunca estuvieron en el teatro. (p 144)

The warning with which the poet began the play contains a clear message: the object of puppet theatre was to break away from the middle class conventions of ordinary theatre returning to simple and popular themes which everyone should enjoy:

MOSQUITO ..... Yo y mi compañía venimos del teatro de los burgueses, del teatro de los condes y de los marqueses, un teatro de oro y cristales, donde los hombres van a dormirse y las señoras .... a dormirse también. Yo y mi compañía estábamos encerrados. No os podéis imaginar qué pena teníamos. Pero un día vi por el agujerito de la puerta una estrella que temblaba como una fresca violeta de luz. Abrí mi ojo todo lo que pude - me lo quería cerrar el dedo del viento - y bajo la estrella, un ancho río sonreía surcado por lentas barcas. Entonces yo avisé a mis amigos, y huimos por esos campos en busca de la gente sencilla, para mostrarles las cosas, las cosillas y las cositillas del mundo; bajo la luna verde de las montañas, bajo la luna rosa de las playas ..... (p 723/4)

Around the same period Lorca prepared his puppet theatre La Tarumba to take part in la feria del libro held in the paseo de Recoletos, Madrid; he achieved a complete success with the performance of a different work, El retablillo de Don Cristóbal. In the prologue to the play he indicated that the simple, rude language uttered by the characters was reaped from the conversations of country folk: "El poeta que ha interpretado y recogido de labios populares esta farsa de guiñol tiene la evidencia de que el público culto de esta tarde sabrá recoger, con inteligencia y corazón limpio, el delicioso y duro lenguaje de los muñecos." Lorca continued: "El guiñol es la expresión de la fantasía del pueblo y da el clima de su gracia y de su inocencia." (p. 1019)

His purpose behind this warning was to arm his audience, frequently comprised of the middle class and intellectuals, against the shock of hearing unrestrained language, harsh phrases and apparently fanciful images which were derived from real speech and which was missing from the bourgeois comedies of the day. It is apparent that Lorca, who was proposing a return to traditional theatre, was alive to the taste of his audiences in general who were completely unprepared for such a

drastic change. In order to help them adjust to the new state, he reminded them that they should, like him, recognise the debt the theatre owed to its origin, puppet shows. Again, in the prologue to Los títeres .... he illustrated the importance of a tradition which created such a famous character as Falstaff:

> POETA Usted es un puntal del teatro, don Cristóbal. Todo el teatro nace de usted. Hubo una vez un poeta en Inglaterra, que se llamaba Shakespeare, que hizo un personaje que se llamaba Falstaff, que es hijo suyo.
>
> CRISTÓBAL Bueno, usted lo sabrá mejor que yo; pero a mí no me gusta la luz eléctrica.
>
> POETA Yo creo que el teatro tiene que volver a usted. (p 144)

Puppets are conventionally rigid in their attitudes and actions. In La zapatera prodigiosa Lorca has transferred these qualities from the puppets the Zapatero uses in his story to himself and his wife. The Zapatera especially is violent in action and words (p 917). But while they are exaggerated, her gestures and shouts are perfectly in keeping with traditional puppet theatre. Her illusions and fantasies reminded one critic, after seeing the opening performance of the play, of a popular puppet character:

> la muchacha aldeana, que acaso estuviera en localidad de arriba, reconocerá de seguro en la zapaterilla a la Doña Rosita de las farsas que alguna vez ha visto representar en la plaza de su pueblo. Al cabo todas las mujeres se parecen entre sí mucho más que los hombres, e esta hembra caprichosa, oscilante, por que sí, de la ternura al furor, es la caricatura de la imprescindible Eva.[8]

Why then has Lorca not simply used puppets? He has employed puppet techniques in order to follow the path trodden by stock comic patterns, but he has also denounced the rigidity of character in the cobbler and his wife as an evil prevalent in the life of many of his Spanish contemporaries.[9] Bernarda Alba echoes the bullying character of the puppet Don Cristóbal. In imperiousness and diction her character maintains an

extreme rigidity and coldness. The lack of development in her character repeats the unmistakable traits of the puppet. As Virginia Higginbotham rightly comments, she is at times a caricature whose "puppet-like qualities derive from the puppet farces that Lorca wrote earlier in his career."[10] I believe that the derivation was deliberate, for it links the rigidity of a traditional theme with the extremism of social behaviour of which the mother is guilty. The puppet tradition which frequently appears throughout Lorca's plays became a fully integrated theatrical tool which accentuates characterization and clarifies plot.

Literary Influences

Before I begin a detailed study of Lorca's reactions to the traditional and conventional values of society expressed in his letters and speeches and in his work, it will be useful to take stock of the literary influences exerted upon the artist. I will pay most attention, in the course of this brief excursion into the literary world of the poet, to the popular and social features of the stimuli.

Certainly, Lorca was familiar with the classics: he read the plays of Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca and Tirso de Molina,[11] and he formed his first acquaintance with Don Quijote at the age of ten.[12] Lope produced the most direct effect on the poet, for the popular songs and traditional customs which were the hallmark of the master's plays found an echo in the "folk" drama of his descendent. Both were so well versed in popular expressions that they could make almost exact versions of folk songs which not only served as local colour and gave spurious authenticity to the play but also threw light on the plot and the characters. For example, Peribáñez hears the reapers singing the song

recording his wife's resistance to the Comendador, enabling him to act accordingly :-

La mujer de Peribáñez
hermosa esa maravilla;
el Comendador de Ocaña
de amores la requería.
La mujer es virtuosa
cuanto hermosa y cuanto linda;
mientras Pedro está en Toledo
desta suerte respondía:
"Mas quiero yo a Peribáñez
con su capa, la pardilla,
que no a vos, Comendador,
con la vuesa guarnecida."[13]

In a similar way the Zapatero, who has returned home dressed in the disguise of a puppeteer, tells his wife a thinly concealed account of her own character. Artlessly the girl reveals her sympathies for the poor Talabartero, hounded by his aggressive, bad tempered partner into leaving her. The cobbler begins:

En un cortijo de Córdoba,
entre jarales y adelfas
vivía un talabartero
con una talabartera.

(expectación)

Ella era mujer arisca,
él hombre de gran paciencia,
ella giraba en los veinte
y él pasaba de cincuenta.
¡Santo Dios, cómo reñían!
Miren ustedes la fiera,
burlando al débil marido
con los ojos y la lengua.
(Está pintada en el cartel una mujer que mira de manera infantil y cansina.)

ZAPATERA ¡Qué mala mujer! (p 958/9)

In both cases the dramatists have used their intimacy with popular verse to imitate its qualities, at the same time providing an essential part of the plot. However, a radical difference arises between Lope and Lorca in their observations on society. Lope developed a rather hesitant criticism

against the class system. In Fueteovejuna and Peribáñez his sympathies were directed towards the pueblo as a whole. The village of Fuenteovejuna makes a collective revolt against the despotic Comendador; although they are not praised by the King and Queen they are pardoned for their deed. Peribáñez, champion of decent country folk, wins his individual struggle against his superior, who apart from his vice of lust is portrayed as a just governor in every other respect. On the other hand, as I shall later examine, Lorca focused his attention on the plight of the individual against the strict rules and conventions of a tradition bound-society.

The artist included in the programme of his stay in Buenos Aires during 1934 two of his own plays, Bodas de sangre and La zapatera prodigiosa, and his own adaptation of La niña boba. All three plays enjoyed a huge success and Lorca's reputation was further strengthened. The expressions and songs created or recorded by some of the dramatists of the Golden Age were the major reason for their popularity with ordinary folk from the sixteenth century to the present day. By the middle thirties, Lorca realised that he must aspire to create drama for the people, and therefore decided to respect the framework erected by his ancestors:

> El teatro que ha perdurado siempre es el de los poetas... Y ha sido mejor el teatro en tanto era más grande el poeta. No es - claro - el poeta lírico, sino el poeta dramático. La poesía en España es un fenómeno de siempre en este aspecto. La gente está acostumbrada al teatro poético en verso. Si el autor es un versificador, no ya un poeta, el público le guarda cierto respeto. Tiene respeto al verso en el teatro. El verso no quiere decir poesía en el teatro. (p 1775)

Luis de Góngora, along with other poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, enjoyed tremendous popularity in the middle twenties. 1927 marked the tercentenary of his death and brought renewed interest in

his work, especially among young poets, and in particular those from his birthplace, Andalucía. Lorca commemorated this date with his famous lecture, La imagen poética de Don Luis de Góngora. At the beginning of his lecture, Lorca inferred that the celebrated imagery of the poet was not as culto as might first appear:

> El lenguaje está hecho a base de imágenes, y nuestro pueblo tiene una riqueza magnífica de ellas. Llamar alero a la parte saliente del tejado es una imagen magnífica; o llamar a un dulce tocino de cielo o suspiros de monja, (son) otras muy graciosas, por cierto, y muy agudas; llamar a una cúpula media naranja es otra; y así, infinidad. En Andalucía la imagen popular llega a extremos de finura y sensibilidad maravillosas, y las transformaciones son completamente gongorinas. (p 62/3)

Some of the imagery coined by Lorca, which at first appears to rival that of Góngora in complicated obscurity, likewise has strong roots in the world of popular expression. In Casida del sueño al aire libre Lorca joins together such disparate elements as jasmin, a bull and dawn (all familiar sights to country folk) to create an image of visual and auditory brilliance which conveys the atmosphere of a fiery dusk:

> Flor de jazmín y toro degollado.
> Pavimento infinito. Mapa. Sala. Arpa. Alba.
> La niña finge un toro de jazmines
> y el toro es un sangriento crepúsculo que brama. (p 571)

As the above quotation illustrates, Lorca shared with Góngora the same delight in the plastic qualities of imagery. Sight, the most important of the senses, provides in poetry a mentally vivid picture of the world of nature. Lorca's poetic homage to Góngora, 'Soledad insegura', written in the spring of 1926, reveals the influence of the old poet. The cold, harsh aspect of nature is exalted by the reflecting worlds of the night

sky and the sea:

> La noche cobra sus precisas huellas
> con chapines de fósforo y espuma.
> (p 618)

However, while enthusiasm for Góngora was producing exaggerated displays of poetic virtuosity, Lorca rediscovered another poet, Soto de Rojas, another native of Andalucía. Unlike the extrovert Góngora who came from Córdoba, Soto de Rojas lived in intimate seclusion within the enclosed gardens of Granada. Characteristically, Lorca threw himself into the task of honouring this relatively unknown poet. In a letter to Fernández Almagro (1926), he declared that his fellow students of poetry would devote a period of time to study Soto de Rojas at the Ateneo in Granada and that he would open the proceedings with an inaugural lecture. Elsewhere he revealed that he intended to publish an edition of Soto's Paraíso cerrado para muchos, jardín abierto para pocos containing notes and comments by himself. Apart from a short story in the collection Impresiones y paisajes entitled 'Granada - Paraíso cerrado para muchos', Soto's influence on the modern poet seems in general to be confined to his affection for Granada. The diminutive, which is frequently heard in Granadian speech, was used in particular by both poets to translate the introspective atmosphere of the town into words.

The down-to-earth, shrewd servants and old woman in Lorca's plays are a fusion of several different sources. Firstly, they represent maids and old ladies the poet knew as a child and whom he loved to watch and imitate. Secondly, they reflect a literary tradition. La Poncia, Dolores and La Vieja are all descended from La Celestina, the most notorious of

all women servants in Spanish literature. The Vieja's confession, "Yo he sido una mujer de faldas en el aire" echoes the uninhibited delight in sex advocated by the Celestina, who urged Elicia:

> Gozad vuestras frescas mocedades, que quien tiempo tiene y mejor le espera, tiempo viene que se arrepiente. Como yo hago ahora por algunas horas que dejé perder, cuando moza, cuando me preciaban, cuando me querían ..... Besaos y abrazaos, que a mí no me queda otra cosa sino gozarme de verlo. 14

The Vieja appears to be encouraging the unhappy wife to throw away inhibitions. The Criada in Bodas de sangre and La Poncia in the final play written by Lorca, echo her earthy enjoyment of sex. However, this activity has been confined within the limits of marriage, for the boundaries imposed by convention have been too strong for them to consider rebellion. The Criada enviously admires the Novia's luck: "¡Dichosa tú que vas a abrazar a un hombre, que lo vas a besar, que vas a sentir su peso!" (p 1207) while in the other play, the woman, describing to the five daughters her first meeting with her future husband, reveals that sexual desire formed the basis of their relationship:

> Era muy oscuro. Lo vi acercarse y al llegar me dijo: "Buenas noches." "Buenas noches", le dije yo, y nos quedamos callados más de media hora. Me corría el sudor por todo el cuerpo. Entonces Evaristo se acercó, se acercó que se quería meter por los hierros, y dijo con voz muy baja: "¡Ven que te tiente!" (p 1476)

The Ama in Doña Rosita la soltera is equally aware that marriage means sex. The heroine explains to her that as her fiancé has had to go to America they will undergo a marriage by proxy. The servant pays no heed to conventional niceties; she asks in plain words what is going to happen to her mistress on the wedding night.

However, as I shall develop in later chapters, these earthy characters are much more than the mere embodiment of literary tradition. They are the creative representations of real women Lorca knew in his youth or on his tours around Spain. Their realistic manner and witty, pithy words are derived as much from popular expressions as from literary conventions.

I wish to pick out just two points in the popular play, La zapatera prodigiosa to demonstrate how the author uses known literary traits to accentuate certain features in the play. He took delight in ridiculing the majestic figure of the Alcalde, who is in fact undignified and a parody of the self-made man. He could well be related to the fat figure whom Quevedo inflated into a caricature of the tyrant:

> ¿Miras este gigante corpulento,
> que con soberbia y gravedad camina?
> Pues por de dentro es trapos y fajina,
> y un ganapán le sirve de simiento. [15]

Both artists were keen to expose absurdity in a leader of society who, in theory, should possess the qualities, not the defects of human nature. Lorca has, in addition, chosen the tradition of disguise to enrich his play. It is in keeping with the rustic tone of the plot and it also emphasizes the basic contradictions in the Zapatera's character. Here, as in his other plays, he has used his artistic skill to pick from literary tradition (just as he did from popular expressions and folklore) elements that accentuate character and clarify plot and place both in a firm setting easily recognisable to the audience.

Contemporary Art and the Student Years

It is evident that the young man, moving in intellectual and artistic circles which delighted in the free exchange of ideas was conscious of contemporary vogues and figures in the literary world. The question posed by his contact with new thoughts and philosophies concerns the influence, if any, other authors had on him. Bearing in mind Lorca's character, always unsettled and often surrounded by friends and acquaintances, it is doubtful if he read a great deal; certainly among the poets of his generation, Cernuda was better read. Furthermore, it has yet to be established that Lorca understood French well enough to read it. If he knew no foreign language, his range of foreign reading matter was confined to translations in his mother tongue and the adaptation of themes and arguments of various artists by Spanish authors.

Of course, Lorca named many established writers and movements in his lectures and interviews, but his younger brother Francisco provides an explanation for his apparent wealth of knowledge:

> He was not the <u>homme de lettres</u>, even though his contacts with outside literatures might at first surprise one by their vastness, he was host to these by a sort of contamination, an inevitable absorption of poetic seed, more than through systematic study or deliberate purpose. I could tell, having in some cases been the conveying vessel, what scant, circumstancial knowledge he had of various foreign poets who are the basis of contemporary poetic movements. 16

It is probable then that rather than assimilating the philosophies in vogue, he gained at the most a working knowledge of many foreign artists by watching their plays or by listening to what friends said about them. The poets referred to by Lorca may well be known only in passing, and by remembering the words of others.

Only a handful of foreign plays were translated in the series of dramatic works published by Teatro moderno during the twenties and thirties. But these few do include a Maeterlink play, The Intruder, The Father. by Strindberg, two works by Wilde and four by Ibsen: Ghosts, A Doll's House, Hedda Gabler and The Wild Duck.[17] The Norwegian had become a well known personality in Spain. The centenary of his birth was noted by the magazine Blanco y negro in March 1928, in the following month Lola Membrives, an actress who frequently performed in Lorca's plays, appeared in the title role of The Lady from the Sea..[18]

Several critics have pointed to similarities between Lorca's later plays and the drama of Ibsen. Sánchez in particular refers to the parallel use of the symbols of the door and windows which act as barriers cutting the characters off from the outside world. He asserts that during the last period of the Spaniard's life, when his preoccupation with the state of society was at its height, the Norwegian dramatist exerted a profound influence on him: "La última manera dramática de Lorca, hemos repetido, refleja una postura crítica, una inquietud de tiposocial. Su nueva fuente de inspiración, insistimos, fue Ibsen."[19] This statement exaggerates the importance of Ibsen's ideas on the younger man. The Spanish traditional beliefs concerning honour, class, and other conventions belong to a different type of people from those treated by Ibsen. Certainly Lorca followed his predecessor in his obsession with female characters. But the freedom of action which the latter's female protagonists seek and which was beginning to be cherished by many of the young women who lived in the cities and towns of Spain, was almost completely unknown to those who remained isolated in the small villages scattered throughout the country.

From 1929 until the middle thirties the other foreign playwrights who enjoyed success in the Madrid theatres were Cocteau (Orphée and La Voix Humaine), Giraudoux (La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu)[20] and plays by Gorki, Checkov, Lenormand and Pirandello were also performed in the capital.[21] It is probable that Lorca heard of most of these plays or even went to see them; their fame as avant-garde theatre would certainly have reached his ears. Compared with the conservative state into which had fallen the popular bourgeois drama of the period these plays would have provoked a strong reaction in the theatre-going public. Lorca was concerned (and this I shall discuss in a later chapter) with the contrast between the liveliness of other European drama and the rut into which the Spanish theatre had fallen.

It is clear that Lorca was familiar with at least several of Synge's plays. La Barraca, the student company with which the poet was intimately involved, is known to have performed Playboy of the Western World. Auclair's study on his life comments on the interest Riders to the Sea aroused in him. The play was introduced to him by Miguel Cerón and produced this response:

> Pour García Lorca, ce fut le ciel ouvert, la démonstration que le réalisme des thèmes que l'habitaient, sa conception de théâtre - vérité où les gens de sa terre vivraient leurs vrais drames, parleraient leur vrai langage - juteux, imagé, était réalisable, puisque réalisée.[22]

Certainly the mother in this play is matched by the Madre in Bodas de sangre, for they are both left to mourn their dead sons. The Playboy of the Western World has in Pegeen an aggressive, shrew-like figure who rivals the Zapatera in ferocity. However both characters are traditionally familiar, so that it is worth no more than a passing recognition of their similarities.

The most interesting of comparisons lies in the declarations both dramatists made concerning the role of theatre in society. They both included folklore andpopular language in their plays (or at least Lorca did so in his popular plays); both wanted a return to natural - or in Synge's words "primitive" - emotions to be heeded by society; both proposed the abandonment of middle-class drama and the portrayal of the traditional folk heritage of the people.[23]

Lorca, who was acquainted with many of his contemporary artists, met Unamuno, Juan Ramón Jimenez and Machado among the older generation of Spanish authors. Unamuno gave Lorca's theatre what his brother Francisco called "passionate schematism - but with a touch of Andalusian grace, an advocation for the plastic and the musical, which the great Basque did not possess."[24] The young poet expressed his admiration for the intensity with which his elder lived the problems facing Spain:

> ¡Qué grande es Unamuno! ¡Cuánto sabe y cuánto crea! El primer Español. Se abre una puerta en cualquier parte, sale Unamuno por ella, con su cuerpo y su cabeza, y se ve en seguida eso: es el Español, el primer Español. Todo lo crea y sabe por estar tan arraigado en nuestro suelo y tener tanta luz en la mente. "Una cosa es la cultura - me decía - y otra la luz. Eso es lo que hay que tener: luz." (p 1761)

Antonio Machado, a considerable influence in Lorca's first work, was a fine example of how an artist could combine popular verse with literary convention. The works of Azorín, Valle-Inclán and others would have been familiar to the poet, but more than any other work Zorrilla's Don Juan Tenorio drew his attention. Zorrilla's popularity had grown into a kind of a cult to the theatregoers of Madrid. In his book A Spanish Tapestry, Kenny elucidates: "In November, too, it has been the fashion in Madrid for the

last 50 years or so to go to Don Juan Tenorio, ... Most people knew some of the more florid and melodramatic verses by heart."[25] Indeed Lorca parodied the romantic heart of the hero Don Juan in Escena del teniente describing the soul of the lieutenant as an "alma de tabaco y café." (p 332) However, according to Schonberg, the more serious aspects of Zorrilla's play have exerted a strong influence over the younger man. The critic claims that he derived from this one work "le cliché romantique, libéral" found in the heroic act of Mariana Pineda, the dialogue of the two lovers in Bodas de sangre, the last act of Yerma and in Doña Rosita.[26] Schonberg has clearly overstated his case. It is highly probable that Lorca may have taken, consciously or unconsciously, several ideas from the romantic play, but the passion of the Novia and Leonardo and the extreme to which Yerma is driven contain far more than mere imitation. Lorca did not follow closely any particular literary model. While admitting several literary sources for parts of his work, exaggeration of their importance must be avoided. The measure of Lorca's poetic skill lies in his assimilation, not in his imitation, of an immensely varied range of sources.

Lorca passed the years of his youth not in the pursuit of academic knowledge, but in the enjoyment and pursuit of the freedom which student life offered him.[27] After passing his bachillerato in 1915 at the age of seventeen, he went to Granada University where he studied law, philosophy and arts, and then to Madrid University. He eventually graduated from there in law only in 1923. While he lived in Granada he was a leading member of the Rinconcillo which used to meet in the Café Alameda in the Plaza de Campillos. This group comprised aspiring poets and young intellectuals, including J. Mora Guarnido, Paquito Soriano, J. Fernando Montesinos (the future husband of Concha, Lorca's sister, who became mayor of Granada),

Miguel Pizarro, M. Fernández Almagro, A. Gallego Burín, M. Angeles Ortiz, Don Fernando de los Ríos and Don Manuel de Falla. Occasionally artists outside the cultural life of Granada visited the café. Apart from reading their work and forming discussion groups it was the Rinconcillo's habit to honour poets and writers connected with their town; they celebrated homages to Zorrilla, Albéniz and Gautier. The young men were radical in their thoughts and freely exchanged all manner of topics and ideas.

Don Fernando de los Ríos, a well known socialist and future Minister of Education in the Republic, whose daughter Laura was to marry Francisco, Lorca's younger brother, aired his views to a responsive audience. Ramón Pérez de Roda who had been expelled from the Jesuit College for heresy was a champion of Oscar Wilde and knowledgeable on English writers.[28] In this liberal climate, Lorca coined the word "putrefacto" to describe all that was conventional and, even worse, old. In his prologue to the Obras completas Guillén explains the creation of the epithet which typified the vigour with which the young men strove to debase the conventions of staid Granada:

> La generación de Federico García Lorca ignoraba el marfil de torre. Las puertas no servían para defender ninguna clausura, que habría sido "putrefacta". (Vituperio que inventó Federico; Café de la Alameda, Granada. Los putrefactos: dibujos de figuras grotescas: "El cancro abrasador de los desiertos".... El adjetivo pasa a Salvador Dalí, a Pepín Bello, y todos lo empleamos) La putrefacción de la encerrona estética no fue nuestro pecado.
> (p XXXIV)

When he transferred to the University of Madrid, Lorca lived in the Residencia de Estudiantes, a student hall bustling with life and full of young artists and intellectuals. Characteristically, he spent more time roaming the streets of Madrid, discovering its true atmosphere, strolling in the Retiro, going to films and meeting friends in cafés. Cano aptly

states: "Vivir y ver vivir era para él lo primero. Como solía decir a sus amigos, él era vidista antes que nada."[29] He preferred to wander among the alleys of the working class districts in Madrid, which represented for him the true life of the capital rather than visit the smart avenues and centres of the rich.

It was in Madrid that Lorca met the artists with whom his name was to be included in the group of the generation of 1927: Guillén, José Bergamín, Gerardo Diego, Dámaso Alonso, Alberti, Salinas and Chabás, The young men who met to discuss literary ideas enjoyed playing light-hearted word games which were derived from the traditional nonsense rhymes where reason plays no part. The verse created was christened gitanjáfora (also anaglifos) and the only rule of the game forbade that any word should be connected with another; illogicality and surprise were the main ingredients.[30]

Lorca lived in close contact with other contemporary writers, artists and intellectuals as well as those he had met in Madrid. His letters witness this wide circle of acquaintances. He wrote frequently to Guillén; Melchor Fernández Almagro, Joaquín Romero Murube, José Caballero were among his correspondents. He dedicated poems to Salinas, Guillén, Fernández Almagro, Buñuel, Cernuda, Aleixandre and others. In no sense could Lorca be considered as the poet isolated from society, for he took great delight in communicating the life of an artist with the outside world as well as associating with fellow artists. As his fame increased, his life became a constant whirl of activity. By the thirties he was involved in the direction of his plays, and he gave many lectures and interviews. He went to conferences, the theatre, the cinema and still found time to create new drama and poetry. In fact he was a personality in his own right.

During the twenties diverse literary movements began to make themselves heard in Spain. Ultraísmo, creacionismo and surrealismo were terms which were bandied about by many young writers. In this climate where rejection of literary values reigned, Lorca tended to stay on the fringe of such movements, taking from each whatever appealed to him. The feeling of unrest which was to erupt in the Civil War had quickly spread to the world of art. Marcel Duchamp's own contribution to the artistic interpretation of this atmosphere typifies the irreverant, mocking treatment of his generation to conventionally respected ideas: he added a moustache to the Mona Lisa.

Lorca's friendship with Dalí abounded in the demonstration of non-conformist behaviour. However, it is not clear how much influence the younger Dalí had on the poet. Cobb closely studies their relationship, deciding that Dalí was responsible for much of Lorca's contact with surrealist ideas:

> During the years 1921-28, Lorca and Dalí were very close, both personally and as artists. Their central impulse was towards freedom, freedom to throw off all the shackles binding total expression of personality, including even scatological and sexual taboos. Dalí came to represent for Lorca the influence of the Catalonian group from which Barcelona attempted to import and develop Freudian and surrealist ideas from France and the rest of Europe. [31]

It is beyond doubt that the two who met in the Residencia were very close friends, but it is difficult to find evidence providing detailed information on the effect of Dalí's surrealism on Lorca. Certainly Dalí has acknowledged his debt to Fraud, the mentor of surrealists in France and Spain,[32] and his deliberate eccentricity and aggressive non-conformism are other prerequisites of supposedly surrealist thought.

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It is true that Lorca's love of art could have made him more receptive to the visual qualities of the movement. Lorca's admiration for Dalí's paintings, expressed in a letter to Sebastián Gasch, did not mention the specific effect surrealist technique had produced on him. However, he was aware of the outrage Dalí's and also Joan Miró's work provoked in middle-class citizens, and this he told Gasch in 1928 after taking part in an exhibition of surrealist art in Granada. He informed his friend of the project's success: "Te envío este programa de una fiesta que celebramos en el Ateneo y que fue un escandalazo.

Cuando yo proyecté y elogié los cuadros de Miró, se armó una cosa gorda, pero yo <u>dominé</u> al público y hasta los hice aplaudir." In the same letter to Gasch, he said: "También proyecté cosas de Dalí, del que hice un gran elogio." (p 1650) The desire to shock, which was one of the surrealists' creeds and amply demonstrated by Dalí, was something that appealed to Lorca too, and the two friends often played jokes in the Residencia. One day, finding themselves short of money, they made the room a desert. Lorca recalled their antics: "Abrimos la ventana y pedimos socorro a las gentes, perdidos como estábamos en el desierto. Dos días sin afeitarnos, sin salir de la habitación. Medio Madrid desfiló por nuestra cabaña." (p 1695) <u>Primeras canciones</u> and <u>Canciones</u>, written between 1921 and 1924, contain certain images whose purpose is to shock and whose inspiration lay more in popular tradition than in any literary movement. These poems show that even in his earliest creations the poet had the intention to jolt his audience out of their complacency. Nonsense rhymes such as:

Sillita de oro
para el moro.
Silla de oropel
para su mujer. (p 372)

and the imagery in "Malestar y noche" (Canciones):

> Abejaruco,
> En tus árboles oscuros.
> Noche de cielo balbuciente
> y aire tartamudo. (p 403)

precede the seemingly senseless imagery found in Poeta en Nueva York.

This later poetry arouses in the reader a disturbing unease at the gratuitous violence and cruelty vividly illustrated here:

> con una cuchara,
> arrançaba los ojos a los cocodrilos
> y golpeaba el trasero de los monos.
> Con una cuchara. (p 478)

In general, Lorca shied away in his poetry from the excesses of surrealist principle and practice and in a letter to Gasch he refused to be labelled as a devotee of the new doctrine:

> Ahí te mando los dos poemas. Yo quisiera que fueran de tu agrado. Responden a mi nueva manera espiritualista, emoción pura descarnada, desligada del control lógico, pero ¡ojo!, ¡ojo!., con una tremenda lógica poética. No es surrealismo, ¡ojo!, la conciencia más clara los ilumina. (p 1654)

The poet's acquaintance with Cernuda and Alberti, whom he had also met at the Residencia and his respect for their poetry were likely to familiarise him with the searing criticism they, and the French surrealists made of social conventions. Cernuda's fierce denunciation of all that society had hitherto championed took on a politically committed stance in Alberti, who became a member of the Communist party. Both poets revealed in their work the emptiness of social traditions, especially those concerned with Catholicism. Durán classified the three of them as

surrealists: "Los españoles influidos por el surrealismo - Gómez de la Serna, Lorca, Alberti, Cernuda, Aleixandre, estuvieron en pugna constante con la sociedad y con los 'académicos'."[33] This rather sweeping statement does not pay due attention to the other side of the coin; Lorca may have criticised the conventions of middle-class society but he did try to counter the destructive nature of his comments by doing his utmost to change the structure of the theatre to meet with the needs of all ranges of society. Indeed, it was not principally academics he was fighting but the bourgeoisie. He would have been critical of academics who were deaf to the calls of the real world but he was friendly with a number of intellectuals who used their skills to help others. Surrealism may well have sharpened several themes in Lorca's work, but he cannot be categorized as one of its devotees.

The immediacy with which art could attract an individual greatly appealed to Lorca, and the use of colour, so much identified with his birth place and Southern Spain, heightened its effect. Several of his acquaintances were painters, the most famous being Dalí. Lorca expressed his respect for the Catalan's work by devoting a poem to him. 'Oda a Salvador Dalí' was written in 1926 when the painter, who was Lorca's junior by seven years, was still comparatively unknown. The poet, while conscious of his friend's immaturity, praised his lively imagination:

> Alma higiénica, vives sobre mármoles nuevos.
> Huyes la oscura selva de formas increíbles.
> Tu fantasía llega donde llegan tus manos,
> y gozas el soneto del mar en tu ventana. (p 619)

Lorca had considerable knowledge of the works of Picasso, who was greatly esteemed by the young. At a banquet held in honour of the launching of the supplement Gallo, he gave a lecture called 'Sketch de la pintura nueva'

beginning his study with Monet and the Impressionists and tracing their influence to Cubism, whose main exponents were Picasso, Gris, Braque and Miró. (p 127/8)

The painter M.A. Ortiz and the sculptor J. Cristóbal were members of the Rinconcillo in Granada. Lorca's ever widening circle of acquaintances included young painters and writers and it is in keeping with the concern he felt for these young men that he often wrote letters of introduction for them to his friends. Angel Ferrant was recommended to show interest in a young painter called Juan Antonio Morales, and Federico de Onís was introduced to Ernesto Martínez Nadal. The pages on which Lorca wrote his letters and notes were often studded with doodles and pictures illustrating, sometimes humorously, what he was proposing in words. He took up painting and with the enthusiasm with which he normally threw himself into new ventures, he frequently met and corresponded with Sebastián Gasch who acted as his adviser and critic during the period 1927-1928. Painting was outwardly a game which in fact he treated with seriousness and purpose. Indeed an exhibition of his drawings took place in the summer of 1927 in Barcelona. It was organized by a number of his friends including Dalí and fellow Catalans, Foix and Gasch.

The execution of techniques he used in his painting was governed by the major principle he followed in his poetry and drama: the interpretation of reality. Above all, he was at his best when he drew fanciful and almost childlike pictures taken from reality but embellished by his imagination, rather than following any vogue which was in fashion. In one of his letters to Gasch, he explained his purpose behind this:

> Hay milagros puros, como 'Cleopatra', que tuve verdadero escalofrío cuando salió esa armonía de líneas que no había pensado, ni soñado, ni querido; ni estaba inspirado, y yo dije: ¡Cleopatra! al verlo, ¡y es verdad! Luego me lo corroboró mi hermano. Aquellas líneas eran el retrato exacto, la emoción pura de la reina de Egipto. Unos dibujos salen así, como las metáforas más bellas, y otros buscándalos en el sitio donde se sabe de seguro que están. Es una pesca. Unas veces entra el pez solo en el cestillo y otras se busca la mejor agua y se lanza al mejor anzuelo a propósito para conseguir. El anzuelo se llama realidad. Yo he pensado y hecho estos dibujitos con un criterio poético-plástico o plástico-poético, en justa unión. Y muchos son metáforas lineales o tópicos sublimados, como el 'San Sebastián' y el 'Pavo Real'. He procurado escoger los rasgos esenciales de emoción y de forma, o de super-realidad y super-forma, para hacer de ellos un signo que, como llave mágica, nos lleve a comprender mejor la realidad que tienen en el mundo. (p 1658)

So Lorca took a keen notice of all around him and used his observations as the foundation stone on which his imagination could build. The influence of the visual arts on his written work is revealed through imagery. Lorca drew for the reader a mental picture, frequently emphasizing its visual qualities by adding the colour of the object. 'Preludio' in Canciones contains the following scene:

> Cien luceros verdes
> sobre un cielo verde,
> no ven a cien torres
> blancas, en la nieve. (p 413)

We already know that snow is white but Lorca repeats the association by inserting the specific epithet. This quality of his poetry is intensified until it reaches horrific vigour in Poeta en Nueva York where he injects colours not normally associated with the noun, indeed often contradicting its normal meaning. The usual picture of dawn is completely destroyed by the poet who replaces it with a scene of grim, black despair:

> La aurora de Nueva York tiene
> cuatro columnas de cieno
> y un huracán de negras palomas
> que chapotean las aguas podridas. (p 497)

Of course Lorca's theatre is a clear indication of the visual quality prevalent in his work. But occasionally he did draw through other characters a picture of an individual and then deny the audience the opportunity of seeing him in flesh and blood. The powerful, virile, figure of Pepe el Romano and the horse which symbolizes his strength are presented through the remarks of the other characters and the child Yerma craves for is no more than a figment of her imagination, yet he ruins the lives of two individuals. In short, Lorca drew from other creative fields to create a literature that appealed to the eye as well as to the ear, thus doubling its effect on the individual and reminding him of its relationship to the real world.

Lorca and the Cinema

The novelty of the cinema incited keen enthusiasm in Spain. Magazines such as Blanco y negro included film reviews and information in their composition and other newspapers like El cine and La santalla were founded to specialize in the cinema and its stars. After the silent films which began the cinema's life, two essentially diverse paths were trodden by film directors and their audiences. The great Hollywood companies with their respective stars became an industry and churned out film after film. On the other hand, the avant-garde movements in literature and art generated a new style of film. Buñuel and Dalí, both well known to Lorca, combined forces to create Un chien andalou. As Dalí commented, its effect on the cinema-going public was enormous: it 'was the film of adolescence and death which I was going to plunge right into the heart of witty, elegant and intellectual Paris with all the reality and all the weight of the Iberian dagger ....."[34] While it is uncertain whether Lorca saw the film, Morla Lynch states that he

and the poet saw Buñuel's La edad de oro at a private showing in Madrid during 1931. The violence enacted in both films represented Buñuel's intention to shock and provoke his audience. In his lecture 'Vampiro de ojos: The cinema and Spanish poetry of the 1920's and 1930's', C.B.Morris examines the purpose behind the two productions: "But in Un chien andalou Buñuel is more interested in challenging habits of mind than traditional values and ways of life, which become the targets of his attacks in L'âge d'or, whose truculence justifies Henry Miller's description of him as 'a man who flings dynamite'."[35]

The general unrest and political unease which were rife throughout Europe brought the sweeping changes in artistic form and theme, and Buñuel, before most people, realised the way the film could reflect and dramatise this atmosphere. The third film he directed in 1932, Las Hurdes, tierra sin pan, which unflinchingly revealed the poverty gripping a backward part of Spain, was a testimony of the growing social concern for the Spanish working class which many intellectuals and artists were experiencing.

Morla Lynch recounts Lorca's appraisal of the film La edad de oro: "Al final de la función, Federico declara que el film contiene cosas magníficas".[36] His favourable reaction to this and other films, including La mort d'un ruisseau by R. Livet and Le sang d'un poète by Cocteau reflected his open attitude towards the new cinema. He deemed that the interpretation of the individual was correct providing that he showed no prejudices or adhesion to tradition.[37] However the public's reaction to the films was as fierce as the violence and brutality in them. They were incomprehensible to many people. Violent protests erupted, often among right-wing elements in the audience and brawls ensued between defenders and attackers of the films; in one extreme case paint was flung over the screen.

The speed with which images flashed by, particularly in American silent movies, was emulated by Lorca in his experiemental theatre. In El paseo de Buster Keaton, the crazy movement of the bicycle, which acquires a life of its own, reflected the mad chases seen in the Keystone Cops and other films: "Buster Keaton cae al suelo. La bicicleta se escapa. Corre detrás de dos grandes mariposas grises. Va como loco, a medio milímetro delsuelo." (p 894) The unusual shots which were so effective in the cinema were the source of several stage directions. The bed in El público spins round, and the light takes on "un tinto plateado de pantalla cinematográfica." (p 1165) the perspective in Don Perlimplín's dining room becomes hazy and indistinct and a motorized canoe flits across the bay in La doncella, el marinero y el estudiante. In one respect, the playlets formed an experiment of transmitting in words what the silent movies suggested by images. In several cases Lorca left the cinematographic effects as they were; the visual impact of the white-faced comic (such as Larry Semour) obviously left its mark on him. The Doncella mentioned in the title of the playlet, is rescued by: "Emilio Prado y Manolito Altolaguirre, enharinados por el miedo del mar." (p. 903) The dead in 'Oda al rey de Harlem' are qualified in gruesome detail by the adjective "enharinados".

The immediate impact of Un chien andalou was to inspire Lorca to write a film script Viaje a la luna. In the script Lorca borrowed many of the techniques of the experimental cinema, for instance he gave this direction: "The Camera, with accelerated pace, descends the stairs and, with a double exposure, ascends them"; and shortly afterwards he continues with this piece of technical virtuosity: "A triple exposure of the ascent and descent of the stairs".[38] But he did not confine himself to the mere style of the vanguard cinema: he rivalled it in violence and mystery. A little boy is beaten by a woman; a live fish is squeezed to death by a

hand; a woman vomits. Even more important is the strong sexual violence running throughout the script. Shot 5 begins his disturbing obsession with the sexual organs, and later a naked boy appears. This image is followed by that of a moon which "fades into a male sexual organ and then a screaming mouth." Sexual violence is the outcome of a shot of a sensual kiss, for the boy then bites the girl's neck and pulls her hair. The girl "defends herself from the boy who with great fury gives her another profound kiss and places his thumbs over her eyes as if to plunge them into their sockets."[38] The violent savagery and sexual behaviour outdo or at least challenge the most provocative of Buñuel's films. However, this script was never filmed and it seems likely that Lorca wrote it with one eye on emulating the extravaganzas of some surrealist cinema even though some of the scenes might have genuinely represented his emotional state at the time.

Lorca saw that the cinema created the opportunity of reaching a far wider audience than the theatre could hope to attract. However, when the era of film was in its infancy he stated categorically, according to Auclair, that he would never become involved in the cinema because it afforded no contact with the public.[39] Later he was to change his mind, for he realised that it could recall to many people the different traditions of his country. Yet he was still reluctant to play an active role in this project:

> Lorca ama el folklore español como nadie. Las cosas andaluzas, sobre todo, le seducen. Ahora se va a filmar una cinta de costumbres regionales. Canto, aldea, tradición, espectáculo, música. La casa productora quiere que Lorca hable ante el micrófono, explicando todos los planos, todas las variantes de la película. Y Lorca duda. Si el <u>film</u> está bien, Lorca hablará.[40]

In 1935 he still played with the idea of using the cinema to bring popular customs to the attention of the Spanish people. This time his aim was to

reproduce the atmosphere and colour surrounding the bullfight. Like the first project it remained in the planning stage.

Like art, the cinema appealed to Lorca because of its visual impact. Its popularity with artists of new ideas and themes lent to the film world an aura of experimentation and unorthodoxy which reflected just as art and literary movements did a rebellion against established values and conventions. Lorca used some of its techniques in the theatre and realised the potential it had invented of reaching a mass audience. He was an active participant in the energetic and non-conforming groups of artists and intellectuals and all these influences gradually left their trace on him, as will be implicit when I later examine Lorca's reaction to traditional society.

Poetic Schizophrenia

The variety which marks Lorca's work is indicative of a kind of artistic schizophrenia. His immediate response to being labelled as a folk poet, or a writer of experimental plays, was to turn to a completely different style. Of course early works such as Impresiones y paisajes and Libro de poemas reflect strong literary influences which he was soon to discard. The short stories of his first literary creation, written when he was still in his teens, are the direct result of a tour around Spain organised by Berruete, his professor of History of Art at the University of Granada. Of course, Poema del cante jondo, Romancero gitano, Canciones, to a certain extent, and even Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, as well as his folk drama, illustrate the poet's intimate knowledge of popular verse. Devoto is correct to assert that his mastery over tradition had achieved technical brilliance:

> En estos tres libros (Poema del cante jondo, Romancero gitano, Llanto por I. Sánchez Mejías) de profunda estilización, el documento tradicional se confunde y esfuma con los elementos surgidos directamente de la fantasía del poeta. Así como Falla llega a la creación de falsas melodías populares, García Lorca elabora falsos versos tradicionales: y el hecho de que nazca de su poesía una línea de falsísima tradición gitano-anduluza (aun siendo ésta de naturaleza estrictamente comercial) confirma la validez de su actitud tradicionalista. 41

The famous gipsy ballads reveal how cleverly Lorca could embellish popular songs with elegant images whose brittleness and glitter distract the reader from the often harsh reality of the events at the basis of the poems. He demonstrated the virtuosity of his poetic skills with fine examples of synaesthesia; 'Reyerta' contains the following image:

> Sangre resbalada gime
> muda canción de serpiente.

The appeal to the ear and to the eye forms an attractive outer shell which, however, brings the reader no nearer to reality than the lines which follow:

> Señores guardias civiles:
> aquí pasó lo de siempre.
> Han muerto cuatro romanos
> y cinco cartagineses. (p 429)

Yet the ennoblement of the commonplace and the myths created from the deeds of such ordinary mortals as gipsies and the Civil Guard were considered by the poet to be easily recognisable to country folk as he wrote to Jorge Guillén in 1926:

> En esta parte del romancero procuro armonizar lo mitológico gitano con lo puramente vulgar de los días presentes, y el resultante es extraño, pero creo qu de belleza nueva. Quiero conseguir que las imágenes que hago sobre los tipos sean entendidas por estos, sean visiones del mundo que viven, y de esta manera hacer el romance trabado y sólido como una piedra. (p 1598)

He had evidently not forgotten the obligation he felt to give back popular tradition to the people to whom it belonged, but in a way relating to the time in which they lived.

After he realised how damaging to his reputation the immediate glory with which critics covered his poems and reading was, he vehemently protested against the facile labels the literary pundits were trying to pin on him. He denied that the Romancero gitano was merely a reproduction of popular art, arguing that although the sources were popular, his technique and style were deliberate and reasoned, contrary to the spontaneity of popular verse form. (p 1732) He expressed horror at the image of the flamenco poet the press had created:

> El libro es el poema de Andalucía; y lo llamo gitano porque es lo más aristocrático y representativo de Andalucía. Un libro donde apenas está expresada la Andalucía que se ve, pero sí la que se siente. Es un libro antiflamenco. (p 1805)

The letters Lorca wrote at the beginning of 1927 to Jorge Guillén, Jose Bergamín and Melchor Fernández Almagro include indignant protests against the general clamour which firmly placed him in the category of popular poet. Lorca finished the Romancero at the end of 1926; even then he was beginning to feel strong resentment against the gipsy myth. In a letter to Guillén he exclaimed: "Una vez terminada este romance (Guardia Civil) y el Romance del martirio de la gitana Santa Olalla de Mérida daré por terminado el libro. Será bárbaro. Creo que es un buen libro. Después no tocaré ¡jamás! ¡jamás! este tema." (p 1613)

By the January of the following year he was in no doubt of the general impression the public had formed of him. Again he complained to Guillén:

> Me va molestando un poco <u>mi mito</u> de gitanería. Confunden mi vida y mi carácter. No quiero de ninguna manera. Los gitanos son un tema. Y nada más. Yo podía ser lo mismo poeta de agujas de coser o de paisajes hidráulicos. Además, el gitanismo me da un tono de incultura, de falta de educación y de <u>poeta salvaje</u> que tú sabes bien no soy. No quiero que me encasillen. Siento que me van echando cadenas. (p 1614)

Lorca escaped from these chains by turning his attention to a very different form of literature: experimental theatre.

After the completion of <u>Mariana Pineda</u>, written in 1925, which was derived from historical and popular sources and written in a traditional vein, there was an interlude of three years before he returned to the theatre. In 1927, he regarded <u>Mariana Pineda</u> as at the margin of his work[42] and the following year he provided proof of his new interest by the creation of a series of experimental playlets. A letter to Fernández Almagro makes it clear that he had begun his excursion into the world of experimental drama as early as 1926, while he was still completing the <u>Romancero gitano</u>:

> Hago unos diálogos extraños, profundísimos de puro superficiales, que acaban todos. ellos con una canción. Ya tengo hechos 'La doncella, el marinero y el estudiante', 'el loco y la loca', 'el teniente coronel de la Guardia Civil', 'Diálogo de la bicicleta de Filadelfia' y 'Diálogo de la danza', que hago estos días.
>
> Poesía pura. Desnuda. Creo que tienen un gran interés. Son más universales que el resto de mi obra ....(que, entre paréntisis, no la encuentro nada aceptable.) [43]

He had no intention of writing theatre which could be performed; the illogical and the incongruous are what dominate <u>El paseo de Buster Keaton</u>, <u>La doncella, el marinero y el estudiante</u> and <u>Quimera</u>. However, contradicting the principles which he laid down in the letter to Almagro, Lorca

wrote during that period La zapatera prodigiosa. Auclair states that it was created in the summer of 1926 and that it was essentially a reaction against the avant-garde theatre being performed in France and filtering through to Spain. This work has many of the ingredients of traditional theatre: songs, puppets, stock characters and even such details as the food the Zapatera prepares for her husband, a direct reminder of Lope's plays. It is as if Lorca were trying to please both of the opposing interests he felt in his mind and two completely different sections of the public. He was catering for the taste of the minority and the majority at the same time. The beginning of the thirties heralded the continuation of his interests in avant-garde literature, but he did not neglect the popular aspects of the theatre. In 1931 he wrote and was working on Retablillo de Don Cristóbal, El amor de Don Perlimplín and Así que pasen cinco años, an unlikely conglomeration of puppet theatre, an erotic drama and purely experimental theatre. Indeed, he introduced into Así .... and Viaje a la luna the purely traditional figures of the Harlequin and the Clown. But it was rather like the surrealists' version of consequences, for these characters were treated in a sinister way. In the play the Arlequín entices the Joven into the circus with the words: "El poeta Virgilio construyó una mosca de oro y murieron todas las moscas que envenenaban el aire de Nápoles. Ahí dentro, en el circo, hay oro blando, suficiente para hacer una estatua del mismo tamaño..que usted." (p 1119) Here Lorca borrows typically surrealist techniques of mystery and latent violence to cloak a traditional character with unease and tension. The harlequin he frequently featured in his drawings did not possess a laughing face but an expression of melancholy.

Lorca was reluctant for Así.. and especially El público to be performed. He feared that the audience would not tolerate the second play and refused

to present it to the public of Buenos Aires as he said: "En cuanto a la otra, que se titula El público, no pretendo estrenarla en Buenos Aires, ni en ninguna otra parte, pues creo que no hay compañía que se anime a llevarla a escena ni público que la tolere sin indignarse." (p 1731) His reluctance to talk candidly about these plays may have been an indication of his wish to avoid an adverse reaction from the public. He would certainly have known that the plays would not have received the acclaim won by his "popular" drama, for his experimental theatre automatically excluded the popularity he had wanted his other drama to attract. However, in the last year of his life, he still affirmed that the plays which as yet were largely unknown to the public were truly representative of his art and philosophy. In an interview with Felipe Morales he revealed:

> Yo en lo teatro he seguido una trayectoria definida. Mis primeras comedias son irrepresentables. Ahora creo que una de ellas, Así que pasen cinco años, va a ser representada por el Club Anfistora. En estas comedias imposibles está mi verdadero propósito. Pero para demostrar una personalidad y tener derecho al respeto he dado otras cosas. (p 1811)

These other things included the three plays which set the seal on his reputation as a dramatist: Bodas de sangre, Yerma and La casa de Bernarda Alba. They enjoyed a success which the works written in the surrealist vein never attained. Is it permissible to take the words of Lorca as a final judgement of his valuation of the plays? I think not; if one bears in mind the butterfly state of his constantly changing attitudes (p 91) and his increasing preoccupation with the role that theatre ought to play not only in the cities but also in the rural communities. His experimental theatre, almost a rejection of his ties with the pueblo, was too removed from the general experiences of the people to be of value to them. The early thirties, which witnessed the height of his experimental period, also continued to see the unsettled feelings and emotional crisis

which were tormenting the poet. But the plays and poems he wrote during the last years of his life fuse more solidly than before popular tradition with innovations, highly developed skills and techniques.

One aspect above all else runs through Lorca's work: he drew the sources from his poems and plays from reality. Once the starting point was established, he felt free to develop his imagination. In 1928 Lorca gave a lecture entitled 'Imaginación, inspiración, evasión' where he explained the concepts which directed his artistic reasoning. The relationship he drew between imagination and reality was the foundation of all he wrote:

> Pero la imaginación está limitada por la realidad: no se puede imaginar lo que no existe; necesita de objetos, paisajes, números, planetas, y se hacen precisas las relaciones entre ellos dentro de la lógica más pura. No se puede saltar al abismo ni prescindir de los términos reales. La imaginación tiene horizontes, quiere dibujar y concretar todo lo que abarca. (p 86)

Lorca took great notice of everything around him. He observed the natural world and society and the relationship between them with equal interest, and this is reflected in his works. He described the atmosphere of both town and country in Impresiones y paisajes; his knowledge of local history and popular beliefs coupled with the statue and painting in his home town all provided him with sources for Mariana Pineda; the popular verse which resounds stylishly in the Romancero gitano and Poema del cante jondo he heard sung and recited by country folk. Bodas de sangre is the fusion of a popular song describing a girl's rejection of her fiancé for her cousin and a newspaper article which appeared in the ABC, 25th July 1928 which examined a murder of revenge. Lorca's sister, Isabel claims that even Así was derived almost entirely from recollections of events which took

place in his childhood:

> Elle est entièrement faite des souvenirs d'enfance de mon frère, à peine transposés. Ainsi, le Clown de l'acte III est un petit garçon qui venait jouer avec nous déguisé en clown. L'épisode de la morte de la chatte, celui de l'enterrement de l'enfant, sont à quelquelques détails pris de faits réels. Et tant d'autres.... 44

It was usual for the poet to allow the themes which suggested themselves through the real world a considerable length of time to develop (five years for Bodas de sangre and three for Yerma), in which his imagination worked on them and moulded them into the shape it wished. This period of gestation transported his ideas from the plane of reality to that of poetry.

The essential quality which Lorca made his own was his interpretation of life. He was not a poet who drew inspiration from his mind alone. He lived in a period of social, political and artistic turbulence and he enjoyed being involved in all that was happening around him, both among fellow artists and people in general. Only when Lorca is considered in this perspective will a true picture emerge of his attitude to life as expressed in his poetry and his plays and this I intend to reveal.

Andalusia

Granada in particular and Andalucía in general exerted a deep influence on Lorca. The atmosphere of the town was enhanced by its physical isolation, for it is ringed by the Sierra Nevada and a group of hills. Its inhabitants reflected the introverted nature of their town by their own characters and habits. The poet was fully aware of the inward-looking, quiet ambience which reigned over the town and its people. Impresiones y paisajes evokes the character of Granada, for the author

uses diminutives to reflect how many things are reduced to the same unimportance. However, in Bodas de sangre the power of man to destroy is emphasized by the terrible diminutive cuchillito, the power of such an insignificant, small object is in fact immense. Lorca did indeed love the domesticity which prevailed in the town, which brought nature and man-made objects to the same size by the diminutive quality of its vision. After years spent in Madrid he still adhered to the picture of Granada he had formed in his youth. Carlos Morla Lynch describes his friends enthusiasm for his native town which in 1932 was as strong as ever:

> Federico aborda ahora su tema favorito: España, y de España, Granada. - Deberías vivir allí un mes, o muchos meses, conmigo - me dice - ; como nadie penetrarías el embrujo de Granada. No es un embrujo grande ni está suya una belleza monumental. Y en ello está precisamente su hechizo y distinción: cosa íntima para dentro de la habitación, cosa chica, patio chico, música chica, agua pequeña; todo reducido y concentrado, como para que pueda sentirlo un niño. 45

The poem 'Noche' in Poema del cante jondo illustrates the delicacy of this world: "Ventanitas de oro/tiemblan" (p 308). Elaborating on the temperament of Granada in his lecture on Soto de Rojas which marked a revival in Granadian culture, Lorca explained how it limited the horizons, thus enabling Granada to recoil into itself.

The climate of the town added particular colour to the poet's childhood, and as a man he loved the flowers and countryside which gave to each of the seasons such a distinctive atmosphere. The fierce heat of summer turns to autumn coolness and fragrance. In a letter to Jorge Guillén written at the very beginning of September 1926 Lorca described the effect nature had on him:

> Ahora estoy en 'la huerta de San Vicente', situada en la vega de Granada: Hay tantos jazmines en el jardín y tantas 'damas de noche'que por la madrugada nos da a todos en casa un dolor lírico de cabeza, tan marvilloso como el que sufre el agua detenida.
>
> Y sin embargo, ¡nada as excesivo! Este es el prodigio de Andalucía. (p 1603)

Flowers form a vital part of Andalusian folklore, and throughout his "popular" poetry and plays, Lorca included flower symbols, demonstrating the knowledge he had gathered from his homeland.

The Arabic tradition which reached into most areas of the customs and history of Granada was noted with great interest by the poet. The young men who formed the Rinconcillo introduced him to the history of the Moors and their poets. The zeal for the study of the Arabic heritage of Granada was encouraged by Emilio García Gómez, a scholar of Arabic poetry who later compiled an anthology of Arabic-Andalusian verse. The group planned excursions to visit the strongholds of the expelled Moors and they paid homage to Arabic poets. Lorca obviously joined in these activities, for he wrote in 1923 to Fernández Almagro from Granada of the preparations taking place:

> Se trata, queridísimo Melchor, de hacer en terrenos que ofrece Soriano (Lapresa) en su finca de la Zubia un morabito en honor de Abentofail y dos o tres más genios de la cultura arábiga granadina. Dentro se pondrá una biblioteca de cosas árabes granadinas, y fuera se plantarían, alrededor del monumento, sauces, palmeras, y cipreses. ¡Qué alegría, Melchorito, ver desde Puerta Real la blanca cúpula del morabito y la torrecilla acompañándola! Además sería el primer recuerdo que se tuviese en España para estos sublimes hombres, granadinos de pura cepa, que hoy llenan el mundo de Islam .... Pensamos además invitar a sabios moros de todo el Oriente, que vendrán a Granada, y hacer una antología de Abentofail dirigida por Navarro, con cosas mías que yo haré para entonces.

Lorca loved the intimacy of the world the Arabs had created just as he

realized that the diminutive and reduction in size so enjoyed by Góngora and Soto de Rojas and which were an integral part of the Moorish tradition, were the personal property of Granada more than any other part of Andalucía.

The most direct result of the interest in the Arabic culture shown by Lorca is his collection of poems called Diván del Tamarit. In 1930 García Gómez had published his anthology of poems and soon afterwards Lorca began to write his work. Turning away from his excursion into the province of experimental drama, he remembered the cultural heritage of his birthplace, recalling the efforts with which the Arabs strove to dominate the ferocity of nature to create a landscape full of water and giving a coolness never before attained. In his delightful book, A Rose for Winter, Laurie Lee describes the skilful delicacy of the Arabs' private colony of Granada, explaining too, perhaps, why the Spanish poet was so fond of the place:

> Here the art of the nomad Arab, bred in the raw heat of deserts, reached a cool and miraculous perfection. For here, on the scented hills above the green gorge of the Darro, he found at last those phantoms of desire long sought for in mirage and wilderness - snow, water, trees and nightingales. So on these slopes he carved his palaces, shaping them like tents on slender marble poles and hanging the ceilings with decorations like icicles and the walls with mosaics as rich as Bokhara rugs. And here, among the closed courts of orange trees and fountains, steeped in the langours of poetry and intrigue, he achieved for a while a short sweet haven before the austere swords of the Catholic Kings drove him back to Africa and to oblivion. 47

"El Gallo del Defensor"

Granada's literary taste was still deminated by the romantic dramatist Zorrilla and local writers whose main inspiration was drawn

from the local colour of the town. The contemporary literary atmosphere was fixed on the past. After writing his earlier works, Lorca moved away from these influences and saw the artistic ambience of Granada in a very different light. The enclosed nature of the town played a large part in forming its character. Lorca explained in his lecture 'Homenaje a Soto de Rojas' in 1926 that the introspective world Granada had created for herself brought with it contemplation and fantasy but that it also brought about inaction:

> Sostenemos con los amigos largas conversaciones en medio de sus valles. Vive con la fantasía. Está llena de iniciativas, pero falta de acción. En este ocio es natural que el pensamiento vaya y venga por sus mundos, se llene de riquezas y adquiera capacidad de finos matices. Así como también cierta desesperanza, cierta melancolía grandísima de no querer realizar y dar forma a lo que se tiene pensado y se es capaz de hacer. Granada ha visto muchas cosas que ha dejado pasar. (p 1687)

Lorca and his friends found that this laziness which prevented change was extremely marked in the literary circles of the town: the magazine devoted to the arts still maintained the opinions and attitudes it had formed years before. Granada's position towards contemporary artists was, according to the poet, one of apathy. Such was his indignation over the reception given by Granada to José Ortega y Gasset and Pío Baroja that he wrote to the Defensor de Granada condemning its citizens for not welcoming the writers as they deserved.[48] He and other young men finally overcame the lethargy which was threatening to envelop all the inhabitants of the town by setting up a magazine intended primarily for their age group, and whose ideas were contrary to the staid literary conventions upheld by the older generation. Of course his rediscovery of literary masters who were connected with Granada was an attempt to widen the town's knowledge. But many of its intellectual and academic figures were certainly conservative in their approach to the theatre. The only

antecedent to the revolt against established taste took place in 1915, when the dissatisfaction expressed over the traditional way of life began in Madrid and spread to Andalucía. A group of young men including Constantino Ruiz Carnero (who later became editor of the daily newspaper, the Defensor de Granada), Antonio Gallego, and José Fernández Montesinos began a new magazine called Andalucía, daughter of the Madrid magazine, España 1915. The enterprise lasted for only two numbers but it made known the state of mind prevailing among its young supporters which Mora Guarnido describes as "una resolución de planear y puntualizar valorizaciones que, aunque frustrada, podía considerarse característica de una generación de inquieta conciencia y de aspiraciones elevadas."[49] The effect of the first world war was beginning to make itself known even to a neutral country such as Spain; the economic crisis which had started at the beginning of the century and which would continue until the thirties also left its mark on the young. A new way of life seemed the only solution to some, although at that stage an alternative had not been proposed which was acceptable to the majority of people. Only much later would the socialist idea of a left-wing Republic take root in the minds of the people. Lorca was too young to join in the efforts of the creators of España 1915, although he would possibly have heard about its aims and even read its copies in the Centro artístico in Granada. It is apparent that his dissatisfaction with the attitude adopted by many Granadians was present as early as 1924. He wrote to Fernández Almagro complaining of its dead atmosphere:

> Granada es horrible. Esto no es Andalucía, Andalucía es otra cosa.... Está en la gente .... Y aquí son gallegos. .... La verdadera Granada es la que se ha ido, la que ahora aparece muerta bajo las delirantes y verdosas luces de gas...[50]

Two years later he once more complained to Almagro of the boredom he suffered

in Granada, which was aggravated by the dislike he then experienced for his own poetry. He felt the need to escape from the stifling atmosphere of Granada and to go far away so that his imagination could be given room to work. The discontent he felt over the way the Romancero gitano was being received was no doubt a major factor controlling his state of mind; obviously, Granada was immediately associated with the gipsy verses and it is likely that the town became a source of malaise for him. Seen under these circumstances Lorca's active participation in a scheme which was openly hostile to the traditions revered by the older generation in Granada was part and parcel of his desire to play a useful role in society.

Lorca was in frequent contact with contemporary artists and intellectuals who formed the Rinconcillo, a group united in its love for Granada. Their meeting provided the opportunity for free exchange of ideas, light-hearted discussions and examination of the new literary vogues which had penetrated Spain, and it was here that the venture of launching a magazine finally became a reality. Like so many other ideas, the possibility of creating a magazine had been gathering momentum in Lorca's brain over a period of several years. In 1921 he expressed his keenness for a similar project:

> La Revista (con letra mayúscula) hay que hacerla....
> Sacaremos dinero de donde podamos, pero ¡hay que hacerla!
> ¿Vamos a realizar aquello que pensábamos del repique? Y,
> sobre todo, hay que dar unos cuantos palitos a la Mariana.
> ¡Ya sabes tú quien es la Mariana! Creo que podemos contar
> (aparte del gobernador) con todos los mejores y algunos
> peores que son bastante simpáticos. 51

With his usual exuberance he could not help directing a passing shot at the establishment which represented law and order. The idea of a magazine became practicable in 1927, and when it was eventually founded in Granada

the consternation of the middle classes was as great as Lorca and his friends had desired. They finally decided on the title El Gallo del defensor for it was to be the literary supplement of the paper Defensor de Granada, which enjoyed a wide circulation. The first number of the Gallo appeared in February 1928; it contained a short story by Lorca called La historia de este gallo (p20-6) which illuminates the reasons behind the creation of the magazine. The protagonist Don Alhambro dearly loved Granada, but his affection for the town did not blind him to its defects: "Amaba con ternura deshecha de coleccionista todos los permanentes filtros mágicos de Granada, pero odiaba lo típico, lo pintoresco y todo lo que trascendía a marcha castiza o costumbrismo." (p 20). This echoes the motives behind the young men's concern for the future of their home. Folbwing this, the poet goes on to reveal the town's attitude to Don Alhambro, or in other words, themselves. Soon two factions were formed, friends and enemies of the men whose aim was to reveal the falseness of the legendary aura surrounding Granada which in fact was "la ciudad menos pictórica del mundo." (p 21) After due meditation the hero decided that the only way to waken the city from its stupor was to found a magazine whose motto would be a cock. Don Alhambro thought that it would be necessary to find a live bird to be the true model on which to base his idea. He searched unsuccessfully all quarters of Granada to find the cock until the only recourse left to him was to steal one. His next plan was to order an embroidery of the gallo. This posed problems, which he luckily did not have any difficulty in resolving. Rather than ask the nuns of the Convent Santo Domingo, he preferred the popular artistry of Paquita Raya. Lorca knowingly described her gift: "tenía un arte más popular, más vibrante, un arte republicano, lleno de sandías abiertas y de manzanas endurecidas sobre el tejido. Arte de exactas realidades y emoción española." (p 23) However a period of ten years elapsed without the protagonist being able to start his magazine. The

reason for this delay reaffirms the poet's criticism of the inactivity which dominated Granada: "La reacción y suma de esfuerzos no se realiza en esta tierra extraordinaria. Dos y dos no son nunca cuatro en Granada. Son dos y dos siempre, sin que logren fundirse jamás." (p 24) The unhappy conclusion to the tale recounts Don Alhambro's frustrated death. Speaking at a banquet in honour of the magazine, Lorca apologised for the inaction which had prevented him from carrying out the idea of forming a magazine which had been revolving in his mind for so long. He compared himself to his hero:

> Hay en todos nosotros el mismo germen contemplativo y la misma actitud patética del don Alhambro de mi leyenda. Cinco, seis veces ha estado esta revista a punto de salir. Cinco o seis veces ha querido volar. Pero, al fin, ya está entre nosotros viva, con ganas de vivir mucho tiempo: (p 124)

Lorca then added a postscript to the story; his fellow editors had brought to his house Don Alhambro's cockeral thus reinstating the title of the magazine and ensuring its future success. Indeed, the motif of the gallo was an excellent sign of the paper. The Defensor de Granada commented on a literary dinner given on the 9th March 1928 and described the visual impact of the revista's emblem: "En un ángulo del salón aparecía un grabado monumental de 'gallo', y en los platos de cada comensal flotaron por anticipado brillantes y policromados gallos de celuloide, deambulando también por el salón algún que otro gallo de carne y hueso." Implicit in this arrangement for the dinner is the intention to shock the older generation out of their complacency. Fernando de los Ríos, was, later in the same year, to point out this at a banquet given in honour of the magazine:

llamo la atención sobre la importancia del actual movimiento estético, que anima y da energías a la juventud representante de la nueva generación, movimiento que no puede desconocerse ni despreciarse, pues es universal, y además una generación no se equivoca nunca; es necesario seguir el movimiento y comprenderlo, sin que esto quiera decir que se vincule uno con él, pero sí que le presta atención debida y recibe de él todas las sugerencias que la juventud ofrece. 52

Characteristically, Lorca entreated his many friends and acquaintances to contribute poems, paintings and articles to the magazine. He had gained the help of Dalí, who was to illustrate the Gallo, and Falla, who agreed to publish an article in the first number. The fame of these two artists, the first a subject of curiosity and the hero of the avant-garde, the second admired by young and old alike, gave considerable impetus to the circulation of the magazine. Lorca wrote to Guillermo de Torre from Granada in January 1927 describing Dalí's illustrations " Va decorado por Dalí de una manera atrevidísima y su formato es en forma de biombo y papel amarillo intenso." (p 1631) This was to be no usual layout. He asked Sebastián Gasch to write an article on Picasso or Chirico, and added that he had derived a lot of his ideas from the Catalan magazine L'amic de les arts, encouraging his friend to participate in the new scheme. He also obtained contributions from other acquaintances, including Guillén and José Bergamín.

But his main interest lay in the publicity the Gallo could give to young, aspiring artists. His aim was to provide new writers with their first chance to be read by the general public. He published work by his younger brother, Francisco, Gómez Arboleya, Joaquín Amigo, Luis A. Cienfuego, López Banís, Francisco Cirre and several other young artists. Indeed the magazine designed to appeal specifically to the young was the only one to cater for them in Granada, and the first new literary venture to appear in the province for years. The readiness of the magazine to break

down the barriers set up by the conservative atmosphere of the town was explained by Lorca at the Banquete de Gallo in March 1918:

> Revista de Granada, pero fuera de Granada, revista que recoja el latido de todas partes para saber mejor cuál es el suyo propio; revista alegre, viva, antilocalista, antiprovinciana, del mundo, como lo es Granada.... Granada es otra cosa más permanente y más elevada en la conciencia nacional: términos históricos, poéticos y rumor de belleza pura. No somos nosotros ya, gracias a Dios, los granadinos que se encierran, sino los que salen, los que buscan y los que necesariamente encontrarán. (p 124)

His purpose is explicit, he wanted to change the tempo and tastes of Granada. It is worth bearing in mind the subtitle of the magazine: Revista de alegría y juego literario. The two numbers produced certainly followed this description. They pursued the path marked out by experimental literature; in fact much of the content was surrealist in style. In the second publication Lorca included two of his playlets, La doncella, el marinero y el estudiante and El paseo de Buster Keaton; both works indicate a radical divergence from conventional literature. However, the deliberate intention to shock had its desired effect (p 124): copies of the first Gallo were sold out in two days and the whole of Granada was set agog by the almost unheard of audacity shown by its contributors. In the University of Granada fights broke out between gallistas and no gallistas. But the second edition of the magazine which comprised un manifiesto antiartístico catalán was not so successful. This is hardly surprising. The traditionalists of Granada who bought the first copy out of sheer curiosity were overcome by indignation and refused to read further numbers. So through lack of support, Gallo only lived for two copies; however it had achieved a brief but brilliant success and had provoked in the town a state of excitement not seen for many decades

Lorca's first practical experience in the business of literary production showed him the strength of the opposition. It is also evidence of his growing participation in social problems. He not only reacted against traditional literature by creating his own experimental drama; he also expressed in a tangible way the commitment he felt as an artist towards the public in general.

'La Barraca': a theatre of the Republic

After his brief flirtation with Gallo, Lorca became interested in a far more serious venture. The new Spanish Republic heralded a period of radical change in the life of the poet. The socialist government gave him the opportunity of putting into practice the idea which had been gaining weight in his mind for several years, by providing an annual subsidy of three hundred thousand pesetas to cover essential expenses for travel and equipment. He had wanted to form a theatre company which would play to ordinary people and not just those who happened to live in cities or large towns.

After its victory the government planned sweeping reforms; its ambitious programme included the building of thirty thousand new schools and two new theatre companies: El teatro del pueblo, which was directed by Alejandro Casona, and El teatro universitario. The enthusiasm which greeted the new political state enveloped many young artists and intellectuals as well as the majority of the working people. These two different classes felt united for the first time in many years in their aim to improve the quality of life throughout Spain. The subsidy provided by the State through its minister F. de los Ríos, whom Lorca already knew well,

covered the costs of running the enterprise; it would pay for the coach, scenery and other vital equipment but no more, for La Barraca was a non-profit making organisation. It derived its existence from the voluntary efforts of its participants who were paid no salary but whose reward lay in the success of the venture. Based in Madrid, the company toured Spain at weekends and in the vacations. The work entirely carried out by the students was to prove a valuable link between the workers and the students. Of course, it must be remembered that university students had played a large part in the downfall of Primo de Rivera. The vast majority of them came out on strike in 1929 - a critical response to the dictator's royal decree of the preceding year to reform Universities.[53]

Lorca's plan for the structure of the theatre company was approved by the Federal Union of Students and in 1932 the student company La Barraca came into existence. Trépannier includes in his study "García Lorca and La Barraca" several articles submitted to the Union:

> article 2 les buts de La Barraca sont éducatifs et populaires, différents de ceux des théâtres universitaires, laboratoires de théâtres d'essai qui existent en Angleterre et aux Etats-Unis.
> article 3 Ce théâtre propose d'être essentiellement révolutionnaire; c'est-à-dire qu'il se propose de réagir contre les metteurs en scène attardés entre les mains desquels se trouve alors le théâtre espagnol.
> article 14 b) des représentations à prix réduits pour les étudiants.
> c) des représentations gratuites pour le peuple.
> d) des représentations publiques à des prix ordinaires.[54]

Its aims could not be more specific. It remains to be seen how closely Lorca adhered to them.

The poet, who was given the key position of organising the company,

chose twenty two men and eight girls, all students and none with previous theatrical experience. He deliberately chose to reduce the important role he played in the creation of the company, preferring to remain a fairly anonymous figure behind the scenes.

Indeed he considered himself to be as responsible as the students for taking on a variety of jobs. He dressed like the other members in the mono, so that there was no visible sign to determine the leader from the rest of the group. The overalls, which later became the uniform of the Republican proletariat in the Civil War, illustrated the sense of unity and equality they wished to represent. Lorca's comparative anonymity within the body of the Barraca is caught in a photograph taken of the company displayed in the magazine Blanco y negro on the 6th November, 1932 (Photograph I). Among the actors, none of whom is named in the caption below, is Lorca (I believe that from a report in the Defensor de Granada he played the Sombra in the auto La vida es sueño). [55] In an interview given in the same year he expanded on the structure of the group:

> Aquí no hay primeras ni segundas figuras; no se admiten los divos. Formamos una especie de falansterio en que todos somos iguales y cada cual arrima el hombro según sus aptitudes. Si uno hace de protagonista, otro se encarga de distribuir los bastidores, otro se convierte en un organizador de los efectos luminosos, y el que parece que no sirve para nada está, sin embargo, haciendo a maravilla el oficio de conductor de camiones. Una democrática y cordial camaradería nos gobierna y alienta a todos. Y así vamos, carretera adelante .... (p 1710)

The variety of tasks which each member was willing to execute was due in large measure to the enthusiasm of each individual and also to their keeness to succeed. The cheerfulness with which they met the people was a reflection of the new feeling of hope pervading Spain.

Teatro universitario «La Barraca».



Los entusiastas jóvenes que componen la agrupación que pasea por España el castizo título "La Barraca" han hecho un alto en sus andanzas puebleras para presentar una muestra de su arte en el Paraninfo de la Universidad Central, donde han dado varias representaciones interesantísimas. Una de las obras elegidas fué el auto sacramental, de D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, "La vida es sueño", al que se refiere dos de las fotografías de estas planas, y que constituyó un acierto rotundo, alto exponente de lo mucho y bueno que hay que esperar de este teatro tan genuinamente popular y español. Verdadera obra de cultura, "La Barraca" merece unánimes elogios y constantes alientos. Completó el programa de la simpática fiesta la magnífica actuación de la Orquesta Universitaria y coros del Instituto-Escuela, que, bajo la dirección del maestro Benedito, desarrollaron un selectísimo programa, uno de cuyos momentos recoge la primera de nuestras fotografías.

(FOTOS ZEGRÍ)



During the first months after the birth of the company Lorca's enthusiasm was so great that he neglected his writing in order to concentrate all his energy on the Barraca. As director de escena he produced the plays and adapted them to the requirements of the audience. Indeed he saw to every detail; the setting, the tone of voice, the movement of the characters and the effect of all these diverse elements as one unity. He was in fact a stern task-master for he expected from the students the same total dedication with which he threw himself into the project. His early training in the art of music and popular verse made him conscious of the need for rhythm in the theatre, not only rhythm in the songs but in movement, gesture and modulation. The practical experience which he was gaining had a marked influence on his later plays; for example while he was pondering over the plot of Bodas de sangre he was involved in La Barraca and acquiring insight into theatrical techniques. His directions became tighter and the care with which he planned the stage was now not merely theoretical but practical too.

Throughout the one and a half years in which the small group achieved phenomenal success it was closely associated with the politics of the left. It owed its existence to the government. However, when public sympathy was transferred to the right-wing La Barraca lost both spiritual and financial support. The statements made by Lorca, who insisted that the theatre's aim was to please the poor, clearly created a feeling of hostility and apprehension among the middle and upper classes. When the political situation altered in 1934, the subsidy given to the company was reduced by half and then stopped completely.

As tension grew between the opposing factions in Spain, the reception given to La Barraca in the towns and villages was mixed. In Soria the play Vida y sueño was stopped because of fighting between monarchists and

anarchists and critics of F. de los Ríos. It was also the target for opponents, mainly Catholics, of the Union of Students. In other places the slightly less fierce attitude of the townsfolk allowed the company to perform and in some cases to win over the audience's sympathy. According to Auclair, Lorca never forgot the Company's debt to his friend F. de los Ríos; in Alicante, where the minister was in audience, the poet composed a song in his honour (it is interesting to note that in a time of political extremism he still advocated the voice of moderation):

> ¡Viva Fernando!
> ¡Viva Fernando!
> ¡De los Ríos Lámparez
> Barbas de Santo!
> Padre del socialismo
> de guante blanco
> Besteiro es elegante
> ¡pero no tanto!
> Hay que ser socialista
> ¡pero no tanto! 56

Just after the election of the new government in 1934 Lorca voiced his fears concerning the continued existence of La Barraca:

> Una subvención, que es el motivo principal por que apresuro mi viaje de regreso: por temor de que el cambio de Gobierno nos la quite. Aunque, pensándolo bien, no creo que esto suceda, porque ¿qué Gobierno, cualquiera que sea su orientación política, va a desconocer la grandeza augusta del teatro clásico español, de nuestro mayor timbre de gloria, y no va a comprender que es el más seguro vehículo de la elevación cultural de todos los pueblos y todos los habitantes de España? (p 1749)

Examining this statement it appears obvious that the poet firmly believed art to be above politics. But by asserting that the duty of the theatre lay in its contact with the people and not only with the middle and upper classes he was involuntarily inviting the antagonism of those very people who had elected a right-wing government and thus placed himself on the side of those who supported the left. Political and social unrest meant extremism in both wings of politics; in this atmosphere it was inevitable that the company should close down.

So the separation between Lorca and the student company he had launched was due in part to its increased unpopularity as the pendulum of political feeling in Spain swung to the right and in part to his reviving interest in the creation of new literary work.

Mildred Adams reported the intentions of the poet at the very beginning of his association with La Barraca:

> We plan to adjust prices to the audience, too, to hold invitation performances for the rich people of a town, and then the following nights charge little or nothing, so that the working people can come. You see we really are very much in earnest. We believe we can do our part toward the great ideal of educating the people of our beloved Republic by means of restoring to them their own theatre. We will take God and Evil, God and Faith into the towns of Spain again, stop our caravan, and set them to play their parts in the old Roman theatre in Merida, in the Alhambra, in those plazas all over Spain that are the centre of the people's life, those plazas that see markets and bullfights, that are marked by a lantern or a cross. We have had a dream for a long time, and now we are waiting to make it come true. (p 1703/4)

Here he revealed two important themes which reappeared time and time again in his statements concerning the role he proposed art should play in society. Firstly, the <u>pueblo</u> should be encouraged to enjoy the theatre by taking the theatre to them rather than by expecting them to go into towns and pay the inordinately high prices which the upper classes could afford; secondly, the <u>pueblo</u> should think of the theatre as belonging to them, for the Spanish traditional theatre should be returned to its creators. Two years later in 1934, after touring with the company, he reaffirmed his sympathy for the ordinary folk, adding the following criticism of the middle classes:

> Hay un solo público que hemos podido comprobar que no nos es adicto: el intermedio, la burguesía, frívola y materializada. Nuestro público, los verdaderos captadores del arte teatral, están en los dos extremos: las clases cultas, universitarias o de formación intelectual o artística espontánea, y el pueblo, el pueblo más pobre y más rudo, incontaminado, virgen, terreno fértil a todos los estremecimientos del dolor y a todos los giros de la gracia. (p 1748/9)

There is no doubt that in artistic terms at least Lorca was a man of the Republic: his dislike of the middle classes (his own social class) became more intense during his years touring with La Barraca. He abhorred the favours which wealth alone could bring to artists. So the theatre, over the years the property of the privileged few, had at last returned to the people with the creation of La Barraca; consequently it was hardly surprising that the middle classes were cool in their appraisal of its shows. Lorca declared he cared for the reaction of these people as little as they cared for his theatre. Talking of La Barraca, he claimed:

> Claro que le gusta al público. Al público que también me gusta a mí: obreros, gente sencilla de los pueblos, hasta los más chicos, y estudiantes y gentes que trabajan y estudian. A los señoritos y a los elegantes, sin nada dentro, a esos no les gusta mucho, ni nos importa a nosotros. Van a vernos y salen luego comentando: 'Pues no trabajan mal.' Ni se enteran. Ni saben lo que es el gran teatro español. Y luego se dicen católicos y monárquicos y se quedan tan tranquilos. Donde más me gusta trabajar es en los pueblos. De pronto ver un aldeano que se queda admirado ante un romance de Lope, y no puede contenerse y exclama: '¡Qué bien se expresa!' (p 1761)

This damning attack underlinesthe natural sympathy the poet felt towards the <u>pueblo;</u> it also implies that the plays which were performed in the towns and cities of Spain largely ignored the classics and catered for the taste of the "señoritos y elegantes", for they were as degenerate as their audience. As Gibson rightly states: "llego a considerar que el dramaturgo no podría seguir avanzando estéticamente sin identificarse

con la realidad social de su propio país y tiempo."[57] Indeed the elegant young men Lorca scorns had often been linked to students who had previously revelled in being men of leisure. However, it seems that owing to the fame of the company students were being considered as useful members of the society for perhaps the first time. A report in the Mercantil valenciano emphasized the new bonds which were linking students and workers, a phenomenon unheard of before then, as an important factor in its success:

> La Barraca no va sobre un viejo carromato; 'La Barraca' tiene por asiento un camión y con él recorre incansablemente pueblos y aldeas, a los que nunca llegaron los cómicos de la legua, para ofrecerles nuestro teatro clásico y para recordarles que la juventud de la F. U. E. sabe que esos pueblos existen, que esos pueblos también tienen ansias de saber; para recordarles que en la República el estudiante ha dejado de ser un señorito ocioso e improductivo, para convertirse en un ciudadano que arma a los que no pudieron adquerir ni las más rudimentarias enseñanzas. [58]

The aims of La Barracca expressed in the articles which began its existence were faithfully executed by Lorca, who proved himself to be truly concerned with the plight of the poor and the working class, in respect to art at least.

La Barraca performed more Golden Age plays than anything else, although authors who declared their willingness to write for the theatre included Vicente Aleixandre, Manuel Altolaguirre, Luis Cernuda as well as Lorca himself. Plays by Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca and Tirso de Molina, Cervantes, Juan de Encina, Lope de Rueda, Gil Vicente and others were revived and presented to the people of Spain. Of Lope's plays Fuenteovejuna and Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña were the most popular, for Lorca chose to perform the two plays most closely associated

with the life of his audiences. Indeed Schonberg remarks that, according to Pablo Neruda, Lorca searched many villages and towns in Extremadura to find the exact costumes the characters in Peribáñez would have worn.[59] While this play reflected the pride in honour which rules the conduct of countryfolk, Fuenteovejuna illustrates the village unity against the tyrannical governor. Both plays exalt the qualities of the peasants' characters, implicitly faulting the character of the noblemen. The villagers who saw the plays were able to grasp the link which still existed between them and the ruling classes in the present day. Auclair states that the company's repertoire included La vida es sueño. Lorca believed that even if some of the audience were unable to understand the philosophical argument posed in the play, they would appreciate the poetry and the music. He wanted in any case to stretch the response of the audience to the fullest possible extent. Rivas Cherif suggests that, in fact, Lorca chose the play not for its theological content, but to explore its dramatic possibilities.[60]

He felt that another way in which he could widen the horizons of his audience was to give two completely different performances of the same play. He planned to use El mágico prodigioso for the experiment, using first a traditional interpretation and then playing it in a completely modern style, in order to determine which of the two methods the public preferred. Although this project never left the planning stage, it was indicative of his keenness to test the people as much as possible. Another attempt to discover the taste of the pueblo prompted him to introduce a modern play to his countrymen. Synge's Playboy of the Western World was performed in translation for its treatment of popular speech and folklore corresponded closely to the kind of theatre Lorca believed was most appreciated by the people. The poet himself explained

the reason behind his choice of plays:

> The theatre is especially adapted to educational purposes here in Spain. It used to be the most important means of popular instruction, popular exchange of ideas. In the days of Lope de Rueda it was just such a theatre on wheels as we are planning now. It went into all the villages, and gave all the famous old plays which foreigners find so marvellous, and which are so badly neglected in Spain. Outside of Madrid today the theatre, which in its very essence is a part of the life of the people, is almost dead, and the people suffer accordingly, as they would if they had lost eyes or ears or sense of taste. We are going to give it back to them in the terms in which they used to know it, with the very plays they used to love. We are also going to give them plays, plays of today, done in the modern manner, explained ahead of time very simply, and presented with that extreme simplification which will be necessary for the success of our plan and which makes the experimental theatre so interesting. (p 1703)

Lorca not only directed the plays but he also arranged them in a manner he thought most suitable for the audience. Thus he cut thirty lines from the end of El Caballero de Olmedo because he thought they detracted from the climax which had just been reached. (p 1786) He altered Fuenteovejuna considerably, eliminating from the play the appearance of the monarchy; however, he told his audience before the performance that they would see an anthology of the play. The motive for the reshaping of these plays lay in his overwhelming concern that the play should appeal to the audience, and he strove to omit all that was superfluous or boring to them. His resolution in executing his task reflected the boldness of his character as far as art was concerned.

The involvement Lorca wanted the artist to maintain with the people of Spain committed him to evolve a company which brought drama to them. There can be no doubt that Lorca had now practically displayed his artistic philosophy in a manner which placed him firmly to the left of the spectrum

in social and, implicitly, in political affairs.

The Role of the Theatre

After the success of La Barraca, Lorca collaborated with Pura Ucelay in 1932 to create Los clubs teatrales de cultura. According to Cano he considered their function to be an extension of the work carried out by his touring company: their "objectivo - dice Federico - es hacer arte al alcance de todo el mundo. Los clubs teatrales de cultura surgen contra el teatro mono y cursí de las sociedades recreativas, en que 'el baile y la cuchipanda teatral son la principal razón de su existencia."[61] The plays which the clubs would present were to be new works by relatively unknown artists. Lorca was firmly convinced that the clubs should cater for young, obscure artists and resist any pressure by the commercial artists to perform well known plays:

> Lo importante es que comiencen estos clubs teatrales a actuar y representar obras que no admiten las empresas. De otra manera, a la guisa de las sociedades actuales de aficionados, resulta que el público que acude a ellas vive con varios años de retraso respecto de los espectáculos públicos. Solo representan obras ya caducadas, fáciles, sin interés alguno. Así no pueden surgir buenos intérpretes, ni menos autores. (p 1719)

If the organizations worked in the way Lorca suggested, then they would eliminate the delay between the plays being written and published. He was also pointing an accusing finger at the conservative theatres which relied on established authors rather than risking a failure by an unknown artist. Lorca also permitted the performance of his own works that he did not think suitable for his major concern, La Barraca. Consequently one of the clubs in Madrid opened with a double bill, <u>La zapatera prodigiosa</u> and <u>El amor de Don Perlimplín.</u> It seems fairly certain that he was too

involved with his own theatre to take any other part than adviser, allowing his plays to be performed in this new venture. But his participation in the project indicated the growing antagonism between Lorca the dramatist and the conventional theatrical circle.

Lorca became more vociferous in his attacks on the conservative plays and their audiences frequently seen in the theatres of Madrid. His outspokenness was a relatively late development, for in 1927 he escaped from awkward questions by refusing to comment on the state of the theatre:

> Para mí escribir, lo mismo teatro que libros, es un juego, un entretenimiento que me divierte. Yo busco la alegría y no las preoccupaciones, naturalmente, en este deporte. Por eso no quiero decirle a usted nada en serio, ni complicarme, ni crearme conflictos con autores, críticos, amigos y enemigos, que para el caso de divertirnos es lo mismo. 62

But the only solution to the decadence the mature Lorca believed was widespread in the theatre popular with the middle-classes was the injection of new blood into the whole system. The constancy with which he expressed in the last three years of his life critical opinions on the contemporary theatre provides overwhelming testimony of his concern for the path it would take in the future. He argued that it was blameworthy in its submissive agreement to perform whatever the public demanded. (p 141) In order to counteract the slump in artistic merit, Lorca urged that the theatre should reassert its authority and once more guide, rather than be guided by, the taste of its audience; and furthermore, it should appeal to the masses first and foremost:

> El teatro tiene que ganar, porque la ha perdido, autoridad. Los autores han dejado que el público se les suba a las barbas a fuerza de hacerle cosquillas. No, no hace falta recobrar la autoridad perdida y poner dignidad artística en los camerinos. Hoy solo algunos autores viejos tienen esta autoridad. Hay que desterrar de una vez todas esas cantilenas ineptas de que el teatro no es literatura, y tantas otras. No es más ni menos que literatura. Afirmar lo contrario es como decir que Doña Francisquita no es música. Yo espero para el teatro la llegada de la luz de arriba siempre, del paraíso. En cuanto los de arriba bajen al patio de butacas, todo estará resuelto. Lo de la decadencia del teatro a mí me parece una estupidez. Los de arriba son los que no han visto Otelo ni Hamlet, ni nada, los pobres. Hay millones de hombres que no han visto teatro. ¡Ah! ¡Y cómo saben verlo cuando lo ven! Yo he presenciado en Alicante cómo todo un pueblo se ponía en vilo al presenciar una representación de la cumbre del teatro católico español: La vida es sueño. No se diga que no lo sentían. Para entenderlo, las luces todas de la teología son necesarias. Pero para sentirlo, el teatro es el mismo para la señora encopetada como para la criada. (p 1767)

Lorca believed that once the theatre returned to its true vocation of appealing to all classes of society then it could educate the people who had never before enjoyed its work.

The poet diagnosed that the ill afflicting the Spanish theatre and its authors lay in its lack of contact with contemporary life. (p 1775) In the lecture 'Charla sobre el teatro' given again in 1935, he returned to the proposition that the only cure for the theatre existed in its interaction with the people, for the public and the dramatist should help one another:

> Un pueblo que no ayuda y no fomenta su teatro, si no está muerto, está moribundo; como el teatro que no recoge el latido social, el latido histórico, el drama de sus gentes y el color genuino de su paisaje y de su espíritu, con risa o con lágrimas, no tiene derecho a llamarse teatro, sino sala de juego o sitio para hacer esa horrible cosa que se llama 'matar' el tiempo. (p 150/1)

Theatre must therefore descend from its pedestal to find the basis of society and so the traditional forms of entertainment. A year later Lorca turned his attention to the rut into which contemporary authors were hopelessly embedded. He scorned them for writing primarily for the bourgeoisie or the intellectuals, for they did not extend the theatre's capabilities to its fullest range to embrace all classes of society and all age groups:

> Se escribe en el teatro para el piso principal y se quedan sin satisfacer la parte de butacas y los pisos del paraíso. Escribir para el piso principal es lo más triste del mundo. El público que va a ver cosas queda defraudado. Y el público virgen, el público ingenuo, que es el pueblo, no comprende cómo se le habla de problemas despreciados por él en los patios de vecindad. (p 1810/1)

He concentrated his attacks, too, on the many actors who applied pressure on the authors to write a part especially for them, and also on the authors themselves who regularly churned out a work with no care for originality. Against this background of decadence and jaded familiarity, Lorca contrasted his own conception of the theatre:

> Tengo un concepto del teatro en cierta forma personal y resistente. El teatro es la poesía que se levanta del libro y se hace humana. Y al hacerse, habla y grita, llora y se desespera. El teatro necesita que los personajes que aparezcan en la escena lleven un traje de poesía y al mismo tiempo que se les vean los huesos, la sangre. Han de ser tan humanos, tan horrorosamente trágicos y ligados a la vida y al día con una fuerza tal, que muestren sus traiciones, que se se aprecien sus olores y que salga a los labios toda la valentía de sus palabras llenas de amor o de ascos. Lo que no puede continuar es la supervivencia de los personajes dramáticos que hoy suben a los escenarios llevados de las manos de sus autores. Son personajes huecos, vacíos totalmente, a los que solo es posible ver a través del chaleco un reloj parado, un hueso falso o una caca de gato de esas que hay en los desvanes. (p 1810)

He emerged unscathed from contact with the somewhat sordid scenes of the theatrical world which he graphically criticized, and furthermore used his fame to attract attention to the faults he believed were crippling the beneficial effect art should have on all sections of society.

Society and Theatre

To what extent were the views expressed by Lorca in lectures and interviews present in his own drama? As I have already examined, his dissatisfaction over some areas of the artistic world grew during the years 1926 to 1927 when some critics narrowed his skills to one aspect only, that of the popular gipsy poet. An article concerning Mariana Pineda also provoked dismay in Lorca. He was alarmed by the political interest creeping into the theatre: "...Anoche recibí el artículo donde se da la noticia de Mariana. Me dio miedo el ambiente del teatro."[63]

The play was performed with complete success in June, 1927, after considerable reluctance on the part of Martínez Sierra to present it. It is probable that he remembered the failure of his production of Lorca's first play El maleficio de la mariposa which he had urged the young man to write, but also he could have felt uneasy because of the political overtones some saw in the play. Cano claims, like others, that Mariana's desire for liberty could be taken as a veiled attack on the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.[64] Indeed Lorca's attempts to disown all interpretations in political terms went largely ignored. After Lorca's death, Altolaguirre opened a performance of the play as homage to the poet with an explicitly political interpretation of its background and even of its meaning:

Mariana Pineda, el drama que vamos a representar se estrenó en Madrid durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera. Aquel estreno, que constituyó un verdadero acontecimiento literario, tuvo también un profundo sentido político. Toda la España amante de la libertad, acudió a las representaciones. Federico García Lorca tenía escrita su obra desde hacía tres años. La llevaba en su prodigiosa memoria de tertulia en tertulia inútilmente. Los directores no se decidían a representarla, entre otras razones, porque Mariana Pineda era entonces un drama político. Mariana Pineda, la romántica heroina española de la libertad, granadina como Federico, fue asesinada a manos de la reacción absolutista de Fernando VII por bordar una bandera de los liberales. 65

So, rather unwillingly, Lorca was dubbed a supporter of the Left.

La zapatera prodigiosa, first performed in 1930, witnessed the author's involvement with the audience. The author, proposing the standards Lorca stressed should be maintained by the theatre, demands the right to have the complete attention of the audience:

> EL AUTOR Respetable público .....(Pausa) No; respetable público, no; público solamente, y no es que el autor no considere al público respetable, todo lo contrario, sino que detrás de esta palabra hay como un delicado temblor de miedo y una especie de súplica para que el auditorio sea generoso con la mímica de los actores y el artificio del ingenio. El poeta no pide benevolencia, sino atención, una vez que ha saltado hace mucho tiempo la barra espinosa de miedo que los autores tienen a la sala. (p 911)

The play received good reviews but was taken off after a short spell due to the feverish political and social atmosphere gripping Spain and Madrid in particular. A year later Lorca wrote the puppet farce Retablillo de Don Cristóbal. Once more the author, this time a poet, and the director appear. The quarrel which takes place between them reveals indirectly the dramatist's mistrust for the director who dominates

the poet, giving as absolute his own interpretation of the play. Again the prologue contains a sharp appeal to the audience to pay proper attention to the events of the play. The poet also warns the audience to treat the rough language they will hear and which he regards as a welcome change to the commonplaces prevalent in bourgeois theatre as a vital and refreshing part of the play: "Así, pues, el poeta sabe que el público oirá con alegría y sencillez expresiones y vocablos que nacen de la tierra y que servirán de limpieza en una época en que maldades, errores y sentimientos turbios llegan hasta lo más hondo de los hogares." (p 1019) (It is worth remembering that the original version of Don Perlimplín, directed by Rivas Cherif, was banned by the censor in 1929 because some passages were deemed openly erotic.) Lorca was not prepared to tone down the language or content of his plays to appease the usual middle-class audience; he preferred instead to use speech to show man's unrefined, true nature.

El público marks the most daring attempt by Lorca to explore the relationship between the dramatist and the audience. Written during a period devoted to the creation of experiental works, he wrote the play in part to study how far he could extend his imagination before he lost the attention and ultimately the sympathy of the public. In the last scene of the play the students discuss the reason why the audience reacted violently to the director's decision to allow them behind the scenes. Once they have proof that the play is created out of illusion they cannot replace the fantasy they have evolved from the earlier scenes of the play and they instead turn to violence and destruction:

> MUCHACHO 1° Aquí está la gran equivocación de todos y por eso el teatro agoniza: el público no debe atravesar las sedas y los cartones que el poeta levanta en su dormitorio.
>
> .....

ESTUDIANTE 2° Es una cuestión de forma, de máscara. Un gato puede ser una rana, y la luna de invierno puede ser muy bien un haz de leña cubierto de gusanos ateridos. El público se ha de dormir en la palabra, y no ha de ver a través de la columna las ovejas que balan y las nubes que van por el cielo.

ESTUDIANTE 4° Por eso han estallado la revolución. El director de escena abrió los escotillones, y la gente pudo ver como el veneno de las venas falsas había causado la muerte verdadera de muchos niños. No son las firmas disfrazadas las que levantan la vida, sino el caballo de barómetro que tienan detrás. (p 1160/1)

The theatre-within-theatre technique is not new; Pirandello was one of its leading exponents. However, it did give Lorca the opportunity to air his ideas, most of which seem to centre around his desire to shock his audience out of the complacency which the bourgeois theatre had produced in them.

The experimental plays which Lorca wrote did in some ways contradict the aims which he voiced elsewhere. While they were representative of a new type of theatre, they turned their back on the majority taste; the pueblo would not have been capable of comprehending them; the middle-classes would have refused to consider them seriously. So, typically, Lorca swung from these plays to those that were directed to a Spanish audience. Bodas de sangre, Yerma, La casa de Bernada Alba all had roots in tradional verse and folklore. They all enjoyed tremendous success. Bodas de sangre was performed twice in 1933, firstly in Madrid and then in Buenos Aires. The only paper to contain a critical review of it was El Debate, an official paper of the extreme right, especially the C.E.D.E. Yerma was first shown at the very end of the following year. However the surge of support for the right wing at that time provoked fairly widespread indignation against the work. Agitators who tried to

stop the opening performance with cries denouncing Azaña were quietened by the majority and Gibson draws an illuminating picture of the general frenzy of the Right: "la prensa reaccionaria se negó sin excepción a reconocer el genio del dramaturgo y acusó la obra de inmoral, anti-católica, desconocedora de los problemas de España."[66] However this uproar was due not solely to their interpretation of the play. Margarita Xirgu, who played the leading role and who was one of the favourite actresses of Lorca, had given shelter to Azaña who had just been released after his imprisonment by the right-wing government for stirring up the Catalan revolt. She had also committed herself to the policies of the Left in other circumstances[67]; she had refused to tour Italy because of its war with Ethiopia and she had given a world gala performance in Barcelona for the benefit of political prisoners. Furthermore, the dramatist gave an interview to the newspaper El Sol a fortnight before the first night of the play reaffirming his sympathy with the poor. Auclair states how damaging this was to him: "Mais crier cela sur les toits à un moment de tension politique risquait de lui nuire et de porter préjudice à sa pièce."[68] Certainly although the left-wing papers including the Defensor de Granada gave Yerma admirable reviews, it was heavily criticised by such papers as La Nación, Informaciones and La época. Auclair even remarks that after two weeks of performances there were rumours that the play would be banned. She may well be right in her assertion that Lorca was spoiling the possible success of the play by giving vent to his opinions; however his association with La Barraca and the innumerable comments made during the years of his fame concerning his position in society would have already been well known to many. According to Schonberg, even the play Doña Rosita met with political interpretations at the end of 1935:

Elle fut jouée à Barcelone le 13 décembre 1935 par Margarita Xirgu et déclencha un énorme succès. Signe des temps, on comprenait. On comprenait même trop, puisqu'on voyait dans cette peinture du temps jadis, outre des intentions de politique antimonarchiste et la condamnation d'un régime asphyxiante, la glorification de la servante, fille du peuple et de la nature, seule indemne de cette plaie d' hypocrisie, de bigoterie et de refoulement, seule véridique et sein au sein d'une bourgeoisie dégénerée. Il y eut des manifestations qui compromirent la représentation souhaitée à Madrid, et que le poète, ne les avant nullement prévues, réprouvait en se plaignant:

'On est en train de faire une machine sociale avec ma Rosita'.[69]

The extreme passion which both political wings felt towards their individual doctrines enveloped all aspects of society; every individual almost inevitably became drawn into the arena whether he was willing or not, and Lorca's activities and declarations concerning art and the people lent to his works social and political overtones whether they were intentional or not.

During the last years of his life the dramatist made plans for future work which were never implemented. The projects he envisaged are important, for they reveal the opinions he was then forming in preparation for years ahead. Bearing in mind that many of his plays took several years to be written, one can deduce to a certain extent that Lorca was turning to social problems for themes and inspiration. In 1934 he stated that plans for the future included a new type of work dealing with themes hitherto not thought likely dramatic plots: "Después quiero hacer otro tipo de cosas, incluso comedia corriente de los tiempos actuales y llevar al teatro temas y problemas que la gente tiene miedo de abordar. Aquí, lo grave es que las gentes que van al teatro no quieren que se les haga pensar sobre ningún tema moral." (p 1767) (Is it possible that these things included sexual and religious problems which were personal to him?) The following year he reiterated his desire to create drama of social and human importance, and he especially mentioned an anti-war theme and a plot concerning the struggle of survival borne by the poor contrasted

against the easy life of the rich. (p 1772)

Lorca's attitude towards the responsibility of the theatre in contemporary society was expressed in many aspects of his life. The enthusiasm with which he launched the magazine Gallo, the remarkable success of La Barraca, the lectures and interviews he gave and, as I shall later develop, his own plays all display the constant concern Lorca felt as an artist with the improvement of Spanish society.

Lorca's Childhood and Adolescence

Lorca was born in 1898 to parents who enjoyed considerable prestige and wealth in the area. The eldest of four children, he showed great curiosity for his family background. His mother was the second wife of Señor García Rodríguez, but Lorca admitted that in his childhood, it was his father's first wife who occupied his thoughts: "Mi padre se casó viudo con mi madre. Mi infancia es la obsesión de unos cubiertos de plata y de unos retratos de aquella otra 'que pudo ser mi madre', Matilde de Palacios. Mi infancia es aprender letras y música con mi madre, ser un niño rico en el pueblo, un mandón." (p 1693/4) So even as a child he was preoccupied with the structure of the family,and most especially with the heads of family. However, for the moment, the second part of the statement is more relevant to my study. The child realised that it was his father who had rescued the family's property from increasing decay, for he had thrown all this energy into managing the family estate. Lorca acknowledged that he inherited his father's passion, whilst his mother passed onto him her intelligence and sensitivity.[70] The enthusiasm and energy with which his father ran his business were reflected in his concern for his eldest son. The family moved from the peaceful village of

Fuentevaqueros, where Lorca first developed his love for the countryside and the people who inhabited it, to Granada, where he could receive a sound education. Indeed, although he was afflicted by a serious illness in the first years of his life, the poet remembered his infancy as one of freedom and innocence. The prologue to Libro de poemas describes the gaiety of his childhood in the village, and elsewhere he added:

> Toda mi infancia es pueblo. Pastores, campos, cielo, soledad. Sencillez en suma. Yo me sorprendo mucho cuando creen que esas cosas que hay en mis obras son atrevimientos míos, audacias de poeta. No. Son detalles auténticos, que a mucha gente le parecen raros porque es raro también acercarse a la vida con esta actitud tan simple y tan poco practicada: ver y oír. ¡Una cosa tan fácil! (p 1770/1)

According to him, he lived in freedom as a child, storing up what was later to be his source of nature by remembering details of the country and nature and the folk themselves. The observationsmade by Lorca were no doubt real, but Couffon gives a more likely indication of his true childhood activities when reporting an interview with Lorca's maid of that time, Carmen Ramos, who declared: "Federico nunca salía. O mejor dicho sólo salía para acompañar a doña Vicente, que era muy piadosa, hasta la iglesia, o bien para buscar a don Antonio en la escuela."[71] Bearing in mind the distortion which memory can give to past events, and Lorca's prodigious imagination, it seems probable that he in fact led a sheltered childhood, very much controlled by his parents. It is evident that he formed a strong friendship with the schoolmaster of the village, Don Antonio Rodríguez Espinosa, and he used to visit him out of school hours, not the most likely pursuit of a carefree country boy.

The wealth which his father had accumulated provided him with the

many benefits which a child of prosperous parents could receive. He was granted permission by his father, who appeared externally at least to be the unchallenged head of the family, to study music as a hobby. But he rejected his son's request to follow music as a career. He remembered that although his master Don Antonio Segura was a talented musician, the opera he had written had been a failure and he was still unknown. The death of the teacher, coupled with his parents' refusal to permit their son to travel to Paris to study music seriously, turned Lorca away from music, and in turn gave him a new interest: poetry.

His father's strong ties with the local way of life, which was provincial and restricted, and his constant awareness that he was a self-made man exerted a great influence over his relationship with his son. He felt the need to maintain the family prestige, and to give his acquaintances no opportunity for gossip; he wanted his son to continue and add to the prosperity which he had built up, and he thought this could only be pursued through a professional career. Thus, after completing his school education, Lorca was sent to Granada University to study law and two other subjects. When he had passed one section of the course he was allowed to continue his studies at the University of Madrid, where other members of the Rinconcillo were also living. However, his departure from the family in 1918 was accompanied by the same control previously exerted by his parents. His mother insisted that he went into lodgings at the beginning of his stay there; later he transferred to the Residencia de Estudiantes.[72]

The practical side of Señor García Rodríguez's character wanted results from his son; he wanted exams to be passed and the youth to settle down in a career followed by good middle-class citizens. It is natural therefore

that the poet's daydreaming and lack of concern with the tangible results of his education antagonised his father who blamed his poetic aspirations for his failure in examinations. Indeed, Mora Guarnido suggests that before finally going to Madrid his poor examination results drove his father to call on the professors and lecturers he and his friends knew in order to help Lorca over the hurdle of passing the section of the course. As for his son, he simply was not interested in finishing his studies, but acknowledged the need to pass them if only for his father's sake.

His father, who adhered closely to social regulations and customs, was outraged by the youth's non-conformity in dress and habits: he would get to bed in the early hours of the morning and rise late; he paid little attention to his own appearance, his hair was longer than fashion dictated and his clothes were unorthodox. His absent-mindedness was the frequent cause of unpunctuality at meal-times. All these things were completely incomprehensible to the father whose life was organised around the precepts of "normal" social behaviour.[73]

Lorca's first poetry was met with opposition from his father similar to that provoked by the young man's zeal for music. His father appreciated poetry provided that it remained a hobby and did not interfere with the career he had planned for his son. Before he paid for the publication of Impresiones y paisajes he asked Mora Guarnido, Professor Berrueta and Fernando de los Ríos for advice. He also asked the opinion of Lorca's former schoolmaster to judge his work around the year 1920; fortunately Espinosa realised his literary merit. The father's shrewdness in business matters made him wary of putting money into an enterprise that was unlikely to pay for itself, and he certainly did not wish himself or his son to be associated

with any kind of venture that would appear irresponsible to his contemporaries. However; it also suggests a distinct lack of faith in his son's talent, and distrust for anything that might be termed out of the ordinary.[74] Only gradually did Lorca gain independence from his father. Indeed, it was not until the last years of his life that he was recognised as a poet in his own right by his father.

For the major period of his life Lorca was almost completely dependent on his father for material support. He knew he was lucky to have been born into a wealthy family, and he was grateful for the opportunities it gave him, but at the same time he felt that the power his parents had over him burdened him with ties and duties towards them from which he desired to free himself. In September 1926, his anxiety over this condition became critical. He confided to Jorge Guillén during this period:

> Quiero por otra parte ser independiente y afirmar mi personalidad dentro de mi familia, que me da, naturalmente, toda clase de gustos y facilidades. Apenas lo he dicho en casa, mis padres se han puesto contentísimos y me han prometido si empiezo pronto a estudiar darme dinero para un viaje por Italia, que yo sueño hace años. (p 1603)

Evidently the carrot dangled before Lorca's eyes, the opportunity he so desired of visiting another country, entailed the all-important condition that he earned himself a suitable place in society by passing his examinations. His parents still looked upon poetry as a pleasant diversion and their persistent persuasion that he take up a responsible job provoked this response later in the same month:

> También me gustaría <u>ir de lector</u> una temporada. París sería el ideal. ¿Pudiera conseguir esto? Ocurre una cosa. Mi familia me da todo el dinero que quiera y más, en cuanto me vean en un camino ...., cómo diré ....., oficial. ¡Eso es, oficial!

> Pero por primera vez se oponen a que siga haciendo versos sin pensar en nada. Basta una cosa mínima de esfuerzo mío para que ellos queden satisfechos. Por eso quiero empezar a hacer algo....oficial. Lo de lector sería bueno antes de cualquier oposición y útil para la orientación de catedrático. (p 1609)

Lorca looked upon a "serious" occupation as no more than a position to placate his parents. The following year he agreed to make a final effort to complete his course of studies in Madrid; although he eventually only passed one of the three subjects he had originally planned to study: law. The decision to finish his education was due to his father's influence. Writing to Antonio Gallego Burín, the poet explained:

> Poco a poco el topo doméstico del amor familiar ha ido minando mi corazón en mantillas, convenciéndome de que debo, por deber y educación, terminar mi naufragada carrera de Letras .... ¿Qué te parece? Ya había pensado mi padre en que me tenía que marchar a Madrid en octubre y toda la familia estaba conforme, pero con una conformidad resignada, no alegre, como yo deseo, a causa de estar mi padre dolorido al verme sin más carrera que mi emoción ante las cosas. Ayer mi dijo: "Mira, Federico, tú eres libre; vete donde quieras,porque yo estoy convencido de tu extraordinaria vocación por el arte; pero ¿por qué no me das gusto y vas haciendo como quieras tu carrera? ¿Te cuesta algún trabajo? Si en este setiembre hicieras alguna asignatura, yo te dejaré marchar a Madrid con más alegría que si me hubiese hecho emperador." [75]

Even in 1929 it was Lorca's father who paid for his trip to America; only from around 1934 onwards did the poet earn sufficient money to gain material freedom from his parents. The pleasure it gave him was equal to the restraints he had previously felt. Typically, it was only then that his father openly acknowledged that poetry was a worthy profession for his son.

Although Lorca accepted the money which his parents gave to him, he felt uneasy at the position he thus acquired. As he grew older, his

preoccupation concerning the role of the poet in society developed, his sympathy for the poor and the underprivileged grew more defined. But while he became increasingly aware of the social injustices in contemporary society, he knew that he was being supported by a middle-class family and that others could quite accurately describe him as a señorito living off his father's wealth. From time to time he suffered pangs of conscience. Consequently it is not unusual to find in his correspondence pleas to his friends to lend him money. In 1925, he wrote to Melchor Fernández Almagro:

> Una lata te voy a dar. Quisiera saber cómo puedo cobrar en la Sociedad de Autores y si tú podrás cobrar por mí y enviármelo. ¿Es una lata? Perdóname, Melchorito, pero a nadie más que tú tengo confianza para decirle esto y perdirle este favor.
>
> Contéstame a vuelta de correo. Ahora no quisiera pedir dinero a mi familia para marchar y ya les he gastado un horror.[76]

The depression which his dependence on his parents cast over him became more intense in the following year when difficulties arose over the production of Mariana Pineda. The death of the mother of Margarita Xirgu caused the actress to put aside her plans for the play. Lorca was eager to prove himself a playwright after the failure of his first play, El maleficio de la mariposa. Once more he confided in Almagro over the distress the lack of news about the play caused him. His keenness to see the play on the stage was motivated by two main concerns: firstly to give pleasure to his father and show himself as a talented writer; secondly to escape from the family's clutches in Granada:

> Mi familia, disgustada conmigo porque dicen que no hago nada, no me dejan moverme de Granada. Yo estoy triste como puedes suponer. Granada es odiosa para vivir en ella. Aquí, a pesar de todo, me ahogo.
>
> Tengo varios proyectos, pero quiero dejar ultimatada esta desastrosa intervención mía en el antro del teatro, intervención que hice para agradar a mis padres y he fracadado con todo el equipo. Yo no lo siento por mí. Pero sí por mi padre, que es tan bueno y que hubiese tenido tanta alegría con el estreno de esta obra.[77]

As he grew independent from his parents he was able to look back with more objectivity and be truly grateful to his family, perhaps for the first time. For he knew that the wealth of his parents and their resignation in paying for all his expenses gave him comparative freedom both in the manner in which he wrote and by the fact that he did not have to write to earn a living. (p 1770; p 1732)

The sensitivity of Lorca's character endowed him with the capacity of seeing many different sides to one situation. Thus it is possible to extract from his interviews and letters a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward his family. Brought up in a conventional middle-class household he was subject to all the restraints placed upon a young man whose attitude to life did not conform to that of his father's. Occasionally, resentment at the restrictions imposed on him and at the dependence on his parents can be glimpsed in his statements. Yet at the same time, he was grateful to them for the comparative ease with which he led his own life. Certain writers on Lorca have accordingly proposed totally contrasting views of the relationship between the poet and his family. For example, Morla Lynch stated that before visiting America he went to Granada to spend a few days with his parents whom he loved greatly,[78] whereas Cobb describes the hostility he claimed Lorca expressed against them while he was in New York:

> After a very little time, Lorca escaped into a vacation in Vermont in the home of a friend, Philip Cummings, a young man who had been studying in Spain. Lorca seems to have been in a dangerous psychological state, for Cummings reported later that he repeatedly expressed hostility towards his family. Apparently his father had encouraged him to make the trip with the hope that he would regain his equilibrium.[79]

One can deduce from these two apparently conflicting reports how torn Lorca was between loyalty to his family and criticism of their way of life. It is also a perfect illustration of his rapidly changing state of mind which affected all areas of his life.

Lorca revealed in 1923 that his father suffered from nerves; it is likely that he was, like his son, a highly sensitive man, but with an overwhelming desire to see him established in society with a good education and the appropriate qualifications behind him. To learn instead that his son was relatively unconcerned with these social trappings exasperated him. In order to convince his son that he ought to settle down, he imposed strict rules which in some cases amounted to forbidding him to travel unless examinations were passed or studies continued. Lorca wrote letters asking friends to speak to his father on hisbehalf.[80] The female members of the family proved less absolute but just as persuasive in their influence on the poet. His father's sister, who lived with them until her marriage, was responsible for teaching him to play the guitar and acquainted him with flamenco songs and dances. His mother seemed to be a reassuring figure, often the buffer between the opposing members of the family.[81] However María Martínez Sierra, in an interesting account of her meeting with the poet, gives the impression that while he was with whom she presumes to be his mother and sisters he was cushioned from contact with the outside world and, by implication, over-protected by the women:

> Recuerdo en esfumada visión, unas cuantas señoras austeramente vestidas, rodeando al poeta. ¿Madre, hermanas, parientes? En todo casa andaluza hay muchas mujeres. No han adaptado aun aquellas nobles hembras la universal costumbre de desgajarse del tronco familiar a no ser - y ello nunca totalmente- por vía de matrimonio. Al calor del viejo hogar van quedando y rodean,más exacto sería decir envuelven a los hombres en niebla de cariño casi idiolátrico... [82]

This observation indicates the traditional way of life Lorca's family upheld.

In order to achieve a well-balanced and accurate study of Lorca's position regarding his family and society in general, it will be necessary to examine the subject of his evident homosexuality. Recently much attention has been focused on this facet of the poet's nature; critics have either probed into the psychological depths of homosexual symbolism in his work[83] or they have skirted around the subject rather gingerly. It is unlikely that the facts concerning the matter will now be fully revealed, and the prevailing atmosphere of the time drew a veil over the behaviour of those who did not conform to the general pattern of morality. It was more or less left to the individual to take the matter into his own hands, either proclaiming his homosexuality to the shocked world, as Oscar Wilde did (and of course a contemporary of Lorca's, Cernuda, who left people in no doubt over his leanings), or acting as discreetly as possible in the hope that such traits would be ignored. Lorca himself did not publicly mention the theme of homosexuality at all, although, as I will examine in a later chapter, important aspects of his work are coloured by this most personal inclination. It seems fairly clear that, from reports of the time and biographies by his contemporaries, Lorca was not involved in any deep attachment with a woman. As a youth, he confided in Emilia Llanos Medina, who was twelve years his senior and a well known figure in the society of his home town.[84] He was also a very good friend of Ana-María Dalí, but there is no reason to think that their friendship was any more than platonic. However, he was popular with women and his understanding of and sympathy for their position in society is evident from his plays.

According to Auclair, the poet first heard rumours concerning his homosexuality when he was 21.[85] However, throughout his life he maintained complete secrecy about his sexual inclinations except to a very few close friends.[85] This was hardly surprising for a man in his position in a society where, especially before the advent of the New Republic, any matter concerning sex, let alone what was then considered a sexual abnormality, was strictly taboo. Auclair goes so far as to state that for some individuals to read poetry was sufficient evidence to label the offender as a marica.[86] Furthermore, the poet was extremely anxious that his parents should not learn of his homosexuality; not only were they upholders of conventional and traditional customs, but, as I have just indicated, they also provided Lorca with the money he needed to continue his literary career. Auclair reasons, with just cause, that this was perhaps the motive behind his attempts to escape from Granada to Madrid and eventually to America. Other acquaintances, such as Manuel de Falla, an orthodox Catholic, and Fernando de los Ríos, were among those whom Lorca feared might turn against him if they ever became aware of his homosexuality. The respect which he felt towards these people and the severity with which society looked upon the homosexual in all probability combined to place upon him extreme pressure to conform externally, while emotionally, he experienced as strongly as ever the force of his own feelings.

In his study of the poet, Mora Guarnido states categorically that neither he nor his friends noticed any indication of Lorca's homosexualtiy. He does stress the terrible affect such inclinations would have on a poet:

> Pero si la persona que sufre esa desviación de destino en lo sexual está dotado al mismo tiempo de un talento y una sensibilidad excepcionales, es de imaginar su suframiento, su tragedia íntima al llevar en la conciencia el peso secreto de una culpa involuntaria y tremenda. [87]

(This stress, I believe, was implicitly present in much of Lorca's work and, as I intend to show, manifested itself in particular in his portrayal of love, marriage and conventional relationships, as well as in his treatment of the family and motherhood.) On the other hand, Auclair states that in the comparatively free atmosphere which prevailed among the members of La Barraca Lorca talked of his homosexuality with his friends. She claims that he spoke to Rapín and another mature student of the social evils which surrounded homosexuality, and that he expressed disdain for the role of the "normal" man who was no more than an agent for reproduction.[88] She goes on to suggest that Lorca had one good friend among the troupe and quotes him as repeating the phrase:

> "Que más vale un buen amigo
> que no ser mal marido." [89]

But this took place in the sheltered, private world of the touring company and not in the open society, where Lorca feared shocking his acquaintances and the public in general.

It was only through his experimental plays and later work that he allowed the presence of any conscious vestige of his emotions directly concerned with homosexuality. The plays were, according to the author, unrepresentable, for Lorca strove to keep his personal life out of the reach of the public. At the end of his life, when he clarified his attitude concerning social problems, he began to be slightly more frank about his personal emotions. He had planned to write a play called Destrucción de Sodoma, and he wrote Sonetos del amor oscuro, which unfortunately have never been published. Vicente Aleixandre paid homage to the poet in the magazine Hora de España in 1937 and mentioned the effect the sonnets produced on him and the insight they gave into the poet's feelings:

Su corazón no era ciertamente alegre. Era capaz de toda la alegría del universo. Pero su sima profunda, como la de todo gran poeta, no era la de la alegría. Quienes le vieron pasar por la vida como una llave llena de colorido, no le conocieron. Su corazón era como pocos apasionado, y su capacidad de amor y de sufrimiento ennoblecía cada día más aquella noble frente. Amó mucho, cualidad que algunos superficiales le negaron. Y sufrió por amor, lo que probablemente nadie supo. Recordaré siempre la lectura que me hizo, tiempo antes de partir para Granada, de su última obra lírica, que no tenía terminada. Me leía sus Sonetos del amor oscuro, prodigio de pasión, de entusiasmo, de felicidad, de tormento, puro y ardiente monumento al amor en que la primera materia es ya la carne, el corazón, el alma del poeta en trance de destrucción. 90

It is disappointing that Lorca's homosexuality has been dragged up by certain parties to discredit the poet after his death. Gibson's detailed investigation of the circumstances behind Lorca's death points to Schonberg's interpretation of his homosexuality and his version of the poet's death, a sordid "affaire des moeurs" as one that suited the Spanish dictatorship perfectly. It removed all blame from the nationalist authorities in Granada and converted his death into a crime of personal vengeance.[91] A month after his death, the fascist paper El diario de Huelva, while affirming Lorca's sympathy for the politics of the Left, alluded to his homosexuality in a tone of derision:

> La descomposición entre los marxistas es tan grande que ni siquiera respetan a los suyos. Para escapar a la furia roja el autor del Romancero gitano no ha ganado nada en ser el 'correreligionario' de Azaña en política, en literatura y en... ¿cómo decirlo? en sexualidad vacilante.

It appears that rumours concerning Lorca's homosexual tendencies were widespread throughout Granada and Spain in general. Gibson briefly sums up the attitude adopted by many of these people.: "Este insinuación a la homosexualidad de Lorca es típicamente de la mentalidad católica y tradicionalista de la derecha española."[92]

The notoriety which his homosexuality earned him would have tarred him automatically with the brush of the Left wing.

The most renowned and enigmatic friendship Lorca maintained was with the painter Salvador Dalí. From Lorca's own accounts they were great friends for a considerable number of years; they first met at the Residencia de estudiantes in Madrid and it was not until approximately 1928 that the influence they bore on each other began to wane. Schonberg is in no doubt that the two artists were involved in a deep, intimate relationship; however, Mora Guarnido similarly insists that the critic's interpretation of their friendship is false. The Spaniard firmly attacks Dalí's role in what he considers to be the exploitation made by Schonberg of Lorca's homosexuality. Dalí himself gives a vivid impression of the attraction he felt towards the poet in his autobiography:

> The personality of Federico García Lorca, produced an immense impression upon me. The poetic phenomenon in its entirety and "in the raw" presented itself before me suddenly in flesh and bone, confused, blood red, viscous and sublime, quivering with a thousand fires of darkness and of subterranean biology, like all matter endowed with the originality of its own form. 93

Lorca, who was the senior by seven years, did not reveal in detail the effect the painter had on him. His letters to other acquaintances mention Dalí as a close friend, and they describe his stay with the Dalí family at Cadaqués. It is only in the poem devoted to the Catalan that a notion of the feelings of the poet can be gauged. It is evident that Lorca admired the young painter's talent and technique; but one verse in particular has caused perplexity among certain critics:

> Pero ante todo cante un común pensamiento
> que nos une en las horas oscuras y doradas.
> No es el Arte la luz que nos ciega los ojos.
> Es primero el amor, la amistad o la esgrima.
> (p 621/2)

Lorca created a word picture in the poem of Dalí's search for perfection, his elegant stylization, but he also weaved a hazy film over any accurate interpretation of the relationship they shared.

The tranquillity Lorca experienced as early as 1921 gradually increased until it reached crisis point in the years 1927 to 1928. In keeping with his desire to conceal his homosexuality from the majority of people, he stressed optimism and happiness, while to his friends, he revealed the mental anguish he was suffering. In 1927 he wrote to Sebastián Gasch complaining of the spiritual depression into which he had sunk, but at the same time refraining from giving the cause of his misery: "Pero no te puedes hacer idea lo que he pasado de cosas. Mi estado espiritual no es muy bueno, que digamos. Estoy atravesando una gran crisis sentimental (así es) de la que espero salir curado." (p 1644) Schonberg alludes to the final break in his relationship with Dalí as the cause of this crisis. This may well be correct, but the importance of the crisis lies not in the facts behind it but on the way it affected his work and attitude to society in general. By the following year he claimed that he had recovered from the traumatic experience he had undergone and that he was beginning a new kind of poetry which was in fact experimental literature - a revolt from traditional ways of literature and, by extension, thought. In an interview with José R. Luna in 1934 he talked of the embarrassment he felt on seeing his name displayed in public, for this reminded him of the disparity he knew existed between the private Lorca and the one he presented to society at large:

> No puede imaginarse la vergüenza que me da el ver mi nombre así, en grande, expuesto al público. Tengo la sensación de estar desnudo ante la curiosidad de las gentes. No puedo soportar la exhibición de mi nombre... Era como si dejara de ser yo. Como si dentro de mí se desdoblara una segunda persona, enemiga mía, para burlarse de mi timidez desde todos estos cartelones. (p 1757/8)

Lorca seemed to be suggesting in the vaguest of terms that the character put on parade before the public conveyed not the real emotions of the poet, but simply acted as a shield to hide him from the criticism of conventional society.

In what way did the homosexual nature of Lorca affect his attitude towards society? Certainly it must have coloured his appraisal of the family structure in Spanish society, both generally and of his own family in particular. Marriage would naturally have been viewed with distrust and disapproval, especially arranged marriages which were still found in Spain. It is essential therefore that any examination of Lorca's treatment of heterosexual love with regard to the social institutions which surround it should bear in mind the prejudices which Lorca as a homosexual may have felt towards them. I will be considering in detail the importance of the poet's homosexuality on the way he presented society in the final part of my thesis.

However, for the moment, it is of primary importance to study Lorca's characters in their specific social context, for they represent in practical terms the duty he felt as an artist to draw on themes based on real life, and by doing so he had to lay bare the faults and injustices of society towards the individual.

Lorca in the Bustling 20s and 30s

The social positon Lorca was born into offered him the advantages of financial security and gave him the opportunity of a good education. However, it also brought obstacles which hindered a smooth relationship with the <u>pueblo</u>. By protesting against the poverty which the majority

of Spaniards endured, he reacted against the relatively easy life enjoyed by the middle-class and upper-class, but at the same time he clung to the status his family had given him. Rebellion against his parents would have involved two important factors: he would no longer be sure of the material support of his family, and he would cast himself out of the family circle whose members he held in great affection and thus betray their wishes and ideals. As the social and political atmosphere of Spain grew increasingly tense, he developed to a great extent a social consciousness which broadly followed the spirit which brought the second Republic into existence. The sympathy he felt for the poor and for those who lived on the fringes of society was nevertheless instinctive as well as social. Although he travelled with La Barraca and through the medium of art expressed his solidarity with the pueblo, he never openly renounced his own superior social status. So the poor never accepted him as an equal while some members of his own class regarded him with suspicion because of his outspoken views concerning their duty to society.

Lorca's opinions have to be set against a background of extreme social unrest. He himself was clearly aware of the political tensions splitting the country. In an interview with Alardo Prat, which was reported in El sol and then in Defensor de Granada, he explained how a solution would be found for Spain's problems; however, he was under no illusion over the gravity of the situation facing Europe as a whole:

> El ambiente de nuestro tiempo aparece muy confuso; pero no tanto para que se pueda uno convencer de que esta confusión no tenga aurora clara. Se percibe que en todo el mundo se pugna por desatar un nudo que ofrece grandes resistencias. De ahí esta oleada social que todo lo anega. En estas circunstancias, el arte ha venido a constituir una preoccupación secundaria en el mejor caso, puesto que en otros poquísima gente le presta atención. 94

1929 marked the year of the collapse of Wall Street, and, perhaps even more immediately important for Spain, the growing power of Hitler in Germany. In an interesting concise history of the years of the Dictatorship F. Bravo Morata indicates the effects of National Socialism on Spanish society:

> La repercusión de todo esto en España es múltiple. De una parte, los adictos al general Primo de Rivera se sienten encantados con este auge sensacional de la nueva Alemania de Hitler, pero hubieran preferido que esto se realizase unos cuantos años antes, no ahora, en que la corriente de opinión española se hace por momentos más evasiva a los ideales de la Dictadura del general. De otra parte, los rivales del Gobierno se escandalizan por el tono excesivamente militar de este nuevo movimiento alemán, y temen que el general resuelve sus problemas a la manera hitleriana. 95

In the same year, Mussolini organised a referendum to determine the extent of his public support; he was given a huge vote of confidence.

The Dictatorship and the Monarchy were closely linked and more and more people turned against both institutions in favour of the idea of a Republic as the only hope of improving their lot. Bravo Morata reports how tension increased in 1929:

> Ya no se trata sólo de obreros que desean ganar mejores jornales, sino de masas que se van situando muy ostensiblemente contra el sistema, contra la monarquía misma. Es curioso que por causa de la Dictadura ha dejado de ser inviolable la persona del Rey. Ya no se conforman los levantiscos con dar gritos contra los patrones o los sindicatos libres; quieren acabar la Dictadura y, con la Dictadura, todo el sistema monárquico ¡que el rey se marcha y que venga la república! En la palabra <u>república</u> están, de momento, puestas las ilusiones de una gran mayoría de trabajadores por cuenta ajena y, lo más sorprendente, también grandes núcleos del empresariado, e incluso del Ejército y de la Armada. 96

A strong socialist government headed by Manuel Azaña was elected in June 1931. However the left-wing parties which made up the Government were too divided to agree on a coherent programme of social reform. The anticlerical nature of the Republic also brought about increasing support among Catholics for the politicians of the right wing, who in fact formed a coalition government after the elections of 1933. It took this event to arouse the indignation of the majority of the left-wing and in February 1936 the Popular Front was voted into power. Extremism on both sides of the political spectrum was rife. Kenny gives a concise description of the primary elements of contention between the two factions:

> The commencement of the Republic coincided with the assumption of power, through the Council, by the men of this generation, at that time only beginning to approach the apogee of their mandate. They were between 25 and 40 years of age when this period started and between 30 and 45 when it ended - an age when one has both reached maturity and may still look forward to a better future. It was the men of this generation who were divided into two bitterly opposed factions. Social progress and welfare - the objects of the whole generation in common - were pursued by different means and from widely different viewpoints, which constituted the integral principle of each generational unit. For the left-wing the watchword was 'liberty', for the right-wing 'order'. To the Left 'Order' meant being shackled to the <u>status quo</u> and so to the abhorred ancient usages; for the Right 'Liberty' meant the destruction of revered tradition. [97]

The incompatibility between the doctrines of the opposing sides was too powerful and too extreme to be replaced by moderation. No attempt was made to comprehend the point of view of the adversary; a civil war was the inevitable outcome. Strikes and demonstrations by the workers were reported in most of the large towns and cities; from 1932 onwards these were met by counter demonstrations and rallies held by the right wing. The anarchists at the extreme of the left decided that merely peaceful protests were useless against the complacency of the property

owners and the bourgeoisie. They began the second stage of attack against the old social order by deliberate destruction of its physical symbols; factories were destroyed and churches were the major target for attack. The steps taken by Azaña's government to increase the standard of living among the peasants and workers by raising wages and improving social conditions were repealed by the following government; chaos reigned. André Malraux's novel Days of Hope brought alive the differences between the two sides and the effect of the stern measures of the Right to restore the class hierarchy and balance the economy:

> (García)....'What separates the Right and Left wings in Spain isthe taste for, or the horror of, humiliation. The Frente Popular stands, amongst other things, for a combination of all the people with a horror of it. For instance, let's take the case of two impecunious petits bourgeois in a village before the rising; well, the one on our side was all for cordiality; the other for stand-offishness. The desire for fraternity on the one hand and, on the other, the cult of hierarchy are very definitely up against each other in this country - and in some others too, perhaps.'
>
> Manuel distrusted the psychologist's views on such subjects, but he remembered the words of old Barea: 'The opposite of humiliation, my lad, it ain't equality, it's fraternity.'
>
> 'Where I'm factually informed, ' Pradas put in, 'that under the Republic, wages have been tripled and, as a result, the peasants have at last been able to buy themselves shirts; and when I hear that the fascist government has put back the old wages, and, as a result, thousands of newly opened shops where they sold shirts have had to close - then I understand why the lower middle class in Spain is with the proletariat, heart and soul. 'Humiliation' wouldn't bring even two hundred enlistments'. 98

The last period of the left-wing government brought another rush of idealistic hope among its supporters; as Brenan reports, during the first months of 1936 communism made itself felt among the people of Spain (to the cost of the anarchist movement): "And behind them stood Russia. All that spring the shops were flooded with translations of Lenin, novels by obscure Russian authors and descriptions of life in the great

Socialist paradise. Russia provided not only material assistance but a mystique which gave its votaries an energy and a devotion unequalled by any other party in Spain."[99]

Certainly the atmosphere which prevailed among the many intellectuals and artists of Lorca's acquaintance reflected the fervour of a new style of politics. Of his contemporaries Alberti became completely committed to the doctrine of communism. He had also been born into a middle-class family, but his rebellion against his background was open and far less complicated than was Lorca's position. In some ways Lorca admired Alberti for the ease with which he threw off the shackles of convention. The liberal spirit which reigned in the Residencia de estudiantes where the two lived gave them and many others a firm background of spiritual freedom. But it was not until his trip to New York and his involvement with La Barraca that Lorca decided to openly express his views. The ease with which the poet moved within the left-wing circles obviously gave the impression of his sympathy towards them. During the Republic he was frequently present at functions concerned with the artist's role in society. In May 1933, Azaña opened the Feria del libro, and he was followed by poets including Lorca, Alberti, Cernuda, Altolaguirre, Neruda and Arturo Serrano Plaja, who read their work. This group of artists was thus publicly known to have supported the socialists. Fernando de los Ríos was another acquaintance of long standing whom Lorca admired, who was constantly preoccupied with the need to educate the poor. María Martínez Sierra illustrates how well an enterprise of his was received by ordinary people:

> En Granada, el entusiasmo romántico de Fernando de los Ríos, catedrático en su Universidad y a la sazón ministro de Instrucción Pública, había sembrado profundamente bibliotecas escolares; hasta en uno de los paseos más concurridos de la ciudad existía un kiosco-biblioteca del cual podían

> tomarse libremente los libros y siempre habían lectores. En resumen, en menos de treinta meses se había logrado el prodigio de esta región de Andalucía, casi totalmente anafalbeto, de que supiesen leer todos los chiquillos entre siete y seis años.

Andalucía as a whole was one of the poorest areas in Spain, the peasants were reduced to poverty and they were ruthlessly exploited by a handful of landowners. There is no doubt that these folk believed that the structure of their country should be altered from the bottom upwards.

Before the advent of the Socialist Republic Granada had always been a traditional and reactionary town. Lorca's visits became more infrequent after his parents moved to Madrid in 1930, but during his stay there he appreciated its countryside if not its customs. He liked to shock its conservative inhabitants with deeds and words. Gallo is the most obvious example of his attempts to arouse Granada from its lethargy, but according to Auclair he also enjoyed putting dread into the putrefactos and he once claimed vociferous support for Russia and ostentatiously gave money to girls collecting for El socorro rojo.[101] Well known to the majority of citizens in Granada by the middle thirties, many of his opinions would have circulated among them. To most people he would have appeared an odd figure, a bohemian and supporter of the left. However, he truly thought that on the very eve of the Civil War he would be safe with his parents in the town where he was a common figure. He was convinced that he was an apolitical being and that he was too cowardly to take an active part in any aggression; this he felt would be sufficient to keep him out of danger. He separated political involvement from concern for social injustices, thinking that every honest man would automatically take up the banner of the oppressed in matters concerning inequality and poverty. On the other hand, before he left Madrid he took part in public meetings against the

fascists (including a banquet for the communist poet Alberti). Cano reports that one of these acts was the demand for the release of political prisoners, and that on 1st April his name appeared with those of Alberti, Cernuda, Altolaguirre, Sender, Pérez Ferrero and others on a manifesto demanding the freedom of the Brazilian Revolutionary leader, Luis Carlos Prestos.[102] At about that time he sent a message of support in Ayuda, the paper published by El socorro rojo internacional to the workers of Spain on the 1st May.[103]

A banquet organized in honour of Lorca before his visit to America in 1929 provided the opportunity for him to put into practice his ideas concerning the disparity between rich and poor:

> Mañana se reúnen todos mis amigos para despedirme. Es una fiesta organizada por los chicos de la Universidad y no se permitirá la entrada a personas mayores de treinta años, en venganza del que al banquete que dieron últimamente no pudieron ir porque costaba treinta pesetas. El precio de las tarjetas es de cinco pesetas y será un rato inolvidable.[104]

However, the lighthearted amusement which this decision afforded him concealed behind the fun a serious gesture to offer an equal opportunity for both young and old, rich and poor to attend the function. Following his return from America, he dedicated the next two years to the practical commitment of the artist towards the lower ranges of society. When he had broken his association with La Barraca, he broadened his horizons and spoke generally of his own plan for the society of the future. Towards the end of an interview with Alardo Prats on the 21st December 1934, he declared:

> 'Yo sé poco, yo apenas sé' - me acuerdo de estos versos de Pablo Neruda -, pero en este mundo yo siempre soy y seré partidario de los pobres. Yo siempre seré partidario de los que no tienen nada y hasta la tranquilidad de la nada se les niega. Nosotros - me refiero a los hombres de

significación intelectual y educados en el ambiente medio de las clases que podemos llamar acomodadas - estamos llamados al sacrificio. Aceptémoslo. En el mundo ya no luchan fuerzas humanas, sino telúricas. A mí me ponen en una balanza el resultado de esta lucha: aquí, tu dolor y tu sacrificio, y aquí la justicia para todos, aun con la angustia del tránsito hacia un futuro que se presiente, pero que se desconoce, y descargo el puño con toda mi fuerza en este último platillo. (p 1766)

This statement, although made on humanitarian grounds rather than on political ones, placed him firmly on the left wing. The interview, published in the Defensor de Granada and in El sol, the popular Madrid newspaper, was immediately known to thousands of people. Bearing in mind the events which had recently occurred, the swing to the right wing, the sacking of the town hall officials in Granada and, more important, the harsh measures used to contain the Asturian uprising, Lorca's firm pledge to support the rights of the poor, to what many would have considered the detriment of the middle-class were extremely controversial. Gibson clarifies the significance of Lorca's speech:

> Pronunciadas sólo pocos meses después de la matanza de los mineros asturianos y en medio del recrudecimiento del sentimiento reaccionario, en una época en que la renta media de los españoles era vergonzosamente baja, las palabras del poeta no dejaban jugar a dudas : él estaba con los pobres contra los ricos, con los obreros y campesinos que luchaban contra las fuerzas opresoras y antidemocráticas, decididas a mantenerlos en una posición de sujeción económica y cultural...[105]

Although the end of 1934 brought a right-wing government, Lorca's voice did not falter, and the tenacity with which he revealed his convictions brought with it more debate. For his statement was issued only a week before the opening performance of Yerma: the uproar in the audience proved how his speech had been noticed by the right-wing members of Spain. Among the many

ideas of the dramatist which never went beyond the planning stage was a political tragedy. Lorca revealed this in 1935 (p 1772) when political extremism was splitting the country; clearly he was anxious about its political future. His personal solution to cure nervousness was work:

> A veces, cuando veo lo que pasa en el mundo, me pregunto: '¿Para qué escribo?' Pero hay que trabajar, trabajar. Trabajar y ayudar al que lo merece. Trabajar aunque a veces piense uno que realiza un esfuerzo inútil. Trabajar como una forma de protesta. Porque el impulso de uno sería gritar todos los días al despertar en un mundo lleno de injusticias y miserias de todo orden: ¡Protesto! ¡Protesto! ¡Protesto! (p 1771)

He felt that the most effective manner in which he could help the poor and the underprivileged was through his art. Later he showed in detail how this protest could be converted into a literary form:

> Ahora estoy trabajando en una nueva comedia. Ya no será como las anteriores. Ahora es una obra en la que no puedo escribir nada, ni una línea, porque se han desatado y andan por los aires la verdad y la mentira, el hambre y la poesía. Se me han escapado de las páginas. La verdad de la comedia es un problema religioso y económico-social. El mundo está detenido ante el hambre que asola a los pueblos. Mientras haya desequilibrio económico, el mundo no piensa. Yolo tengo visto. Van dos hombres por la orilla de un río. Uno es rico, otro es pobre. Uno lleva la barriga llena, y el otro pone sucio al aire con sus bostezos. Y el rico dice: "¡Oh, qué barca más linda se ve por el agua! Mire, mire usted, el lirio que florece en la orilla." Y el pobre reza: "Tengo hambre, no veo nada. Tengo hambre, mucha hambre." Natural. El día que el hambre desaparezca, va a producirse en el mundo la explosión espiritual más grande que jamás conoció la Humanidad. Nunca jamás se podrán figurar los hombres la alegría que estallará el día de la Gran Revolución. ¿Verdad que te estoy hablando en socialista puro? (p 1812)

Lorca had fully realized the title of the category into which his beliefs fell, and did not refute the label "socialist", for he would have known the purely humanitarian meaning of the word. Indeed as Machado claims, [106]

Lorca might have been politically harmless in essence, but the interviews he gave, his lectures and theatre and poetry were enough to ensure that he was regarded as a man of the Republic. The final public statement Lorca issued reflected his humanitarian ideals. He wanted man to cross national frontiers in order to escape from the restrictions of political dogma imposed by a particular country. He raised his sight above the level of politics to embrace the common faith of all men:

> Yo soy español integral, y me sería imposible vivir fuera de mis límites geográficos; pero odio al que es español por ser español nada más. Yo soy hermano de todos y execro al hombre que se sacrifica por una idea nacionalista abstracta por el solo hecho de que ama a su patria con una venda en los ojos. El chino bueno está más cerca de mí que el español malo. Canto a España y la siento hasta la medula; pero antes que esto soy hombre del mundo y hermano de todos. Desde luego no creo en la frontera política. (p 1817)

Lorca's death has been shrouded by insinuations, rumour and propaganda. Only in the last couple of years has a detailed and accurate examination of the circumstances of his assassination been possible.[107] It is now evident that he was shot by the fascists in Granada. His written and spoken support of the Spanish people was powerful enough to arouse the wrath of the rebels. Gibson records that Ruiz Alonso, who was responsible for the poet's arrest and subsequent shooting, was reported to have said of Lorca, "hizo más daño con la pluma que otros con la pistola."[108] The first information of his death produced by the fascists laid the blame on a variety of parties: the communists, or personal enemies. They even conjured up the fictitious assassination of Jacinto Benavente in order to circulate the story that the poet was killed as a measure of reprisal. Lorca's work and his name were banned by Franco's regime until 1950; when his works did appear after then they were badly censured. The natural reaction of the left wing to create a martyr figure of him for their cause

is understandable. The left wing paper Hora de España issued a homage to the poet, asserting his allegiance to their ideology; many well known poets and artists who had officially turned to the Left when Civil War broke out paid their respects.[109] The same paper revealed the hypocrisy of the right wing who claimed that Lorca was in fact a supporter of their cause. It reports how the phalangist paper Unidad had contained an article called 'A la España imperial le han asesinado su mejor poeta,' referring to Lorca's death.[110] The poet's socialist views were close enough to the political feeling of the day to place him firmly on the left wing in concept if not in practical terms.

CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

Drama of the People

Social Tradition and Convention

Against this background of political, social and literary unrest, Lorca wrote his plays. In their themes, characters and plot they generally echo the social conventions and traditions which Lorca found still dominated provincial life. Only in the large towns and cities, especially in Madrid and Barcelona, were modern ideas concerning the reform of social institutions and rules given the chance to operate. What I want to do now in my study of Lorca's theatre is to concentrate on the social implications which are constant in his plays, with specific examination of the relationship between the women in the dramatist's work and the society in which they are portrayed. It is essential to remember that Lorca did not create his drama out of a void; he was a gregarious man and took a keen interest in people around him. The turbulence prevalent during the late twenties and all the thirties in most of the countries of Europe reached an exaggerated pitch in Spain; calm and moderation were lost underneath a tidal wave of political extremism. To conduct a serious examination of Lorca's reactions to established customs and traditions expressed in his work without taking account of the social life of the poet would create a one-dimensional, distorted picture of his philosophy of life. Therefore I wish to treat the plays' references to social habits in Spain with regard to the traditional importance of social customs and with regard to the reaction to them by Spanish society of the period.

How did Lorca show the wealth of tradition which is an integral

quality in many Spaniards' lives? The folk songs he collected as a youth provided him with an invaluable stock of popular sources. The country sayings and beliefs he had heard spoken in his childhood by the maids and country folk remained in his memory. He knew too the weight of restriction imposed by convention upon the life of a small community. He used all these elements in his plays to conjure up a vivid picture of the conditions which tradition has achieved in his characters. However, the folklore which abounds in his plays was as Guillén rightly stated: "más bien 'folklorquismo' según la fórmula de Sender, otro Ramón...." (p XLII) He either adapted popular verse to suit his purpose or created his own songs, which could hardly be recognized as the invention of a modern author. The songs, sayings, superstitions and country speech which bear relevance to my research into his plays will be dealt with according to the attitudes they express. Here I am taking a completely different view from the one Correa adopted in his book La poesía mítica de García Lorca. While that critic dwelt on the structure of the individual songs, I will consider them in their relationship with the play as a whole. Obviously they automatically provide local colour and give atmosphere to the play, but they have a more important function than that; they develop a character's personality, they provide insight into the plot, they indicate the strength which tradition holds over the lives of country people. Correa also excludes La casa de Bernarda Alba from his examination into folkloric myths in Lorca's drama. It is true that there is much less popular material in the play, but what does exist is important. Furthermore, the critic, basing his study on the role of nature in the play, reasons that he also omitted to consider this play as most, if not all, the action takes place inside the house. However, the interior action, the thoughts which dominate the minds of the daughters and grandmother transport them into the open-air, the country and the world of nature. I will illustrate

that Lorca used popular sources to contrast and to accentuate the social traditions which oblige the characters to comply with accepted norms.

It is my intention to examine popular and social tradition by studying in detail their various features rather than considering Lorca's approach play by play. The method of study I propose to follow will avoid the repetition which is bound to occur when examining the plays individually. So it will be possible to trace the development and constancy of Lorca's treatment of social codes and practices in his work. As a result, Lorca's concern with various aspects of society will be clearly revealed.

The three plays which I particularly wish to study, Yerma, La casa de Bernarda Alba and Bodas de sangre, like several of the other plays, are built around the customs of a small village community. Lorca knew the way of life in these places; he had been brought up in the village of Fuentevaqueros; on his tours around Spain and especially with La Barraca, he would have come across many isolated communities and talked to the peasants who lived there. Thus because of these practical experiences, he was able to base the characters in his plays in a position that was akin to village life in Spain. As I have already mentioned, the fervour of diverse opinions concerning the individual's responsibility to all sections of society, the currents of political feeling and the extreme difference between political ideals, were restricted to a large extent to the large cities and towns of Spain. The immense number of villages and homesteads scattered throughout Spain[1] and the difficulties of communication with them have brought about the introspective character of many of their inhabitants. Brenan makes this point straight away in

his informative book, The Spanish Labyrinth[1]

> The first point to be noticed isthe strength of provincial and municipal feeling: Spain is the land of the patria chica. Every village, every town is the centre of an intense social and political life. As in classical times, a man's allegiance is first of all to his native place, or to his family or social group in it, and only secondly to his country and government.[2]

Lorca refrained from making explicit references to politics in his creation of village communities; he did, however, make full use of the intense preoccupation with the social norms and customs indicated by Brenan. In La casa de Bernarda Alba the introspective, isolated condition of pueblos is represented by one house. Bernarda has ordered all windows and doors to be locked and barred, symbolically there can be no escape to the outside world and thus no new air can penetrate the confines of the house. Bearing in mind the subtitle of the play Drama de mujeres en los pueblos de España and the opening description of the house's thick walls, the isolation deliberately constructed by the mother is symbolically a dramatic, intensified view of the position of many Spanish villages. Lorca gave an earlier example of this dread of the unknown in Así que pasen cinco años, for the Joven demands all the doors and windows be closed; in this respect he is a simpler version of Bernarda. The social conditions to which the characters pay great attention whether they obey them or rebel against them have one factor in common: tradition has decreed the values and taboos by which the community lives. The paststill governs the lives of the living because its conventions are the only conditions the village people know. They have been passed down over many generations until they are completely accepted. It follows that once tradition becomes a natural part of daily life, the structure on which it was based is forgotten and no-one questions if it is still valid in modern times. Aldous Huxley's

conclusion concerning Eskimos could equally well apply to the characters drawn by Lorca:

> People who are born into an isolated and homogeneous community are liable to be conditioned much more strictly than the members of a society composed of many diverse elements and in contact with other societies, having traditions different from its own.... Comparison is the beginning of criticism, and he (the Eskimo) has nothing with which to compare the accepted conventions of his small world. [3]

Lorca presents his characters against a sharply delineated background. The labels by which the characters are known: Novia, Novio, Soltera, Padre, Madre, Criada, Ama, Suegra, immediately reveal their relationship to the other characters and the position they hold in society. Both traditional clothes and settings impose from the moment the curtain rises visible restrictions on the characters. Mariana Pineda contains numerous allusions to the period and atmosphere of Granada. The provincial atmosphere of the nineteenth century was created by the dramatist in speech as well as dress and setting. The details with which he recalled the design of the town lend to the play an air of authenticity:

> Telón representando el desparecido arco árabe de las Cucharas y perspectiva de la plaza Bibarrambla, en Granada, encuadrado en un margen amarillento, como una vieja estampa iluminada en azul, verde, amarillo, rosa y celeste, sobre un fondo de paredes negras. Una de las casas que se vean estará pintada con escenas marinas y guirnaldas de frutas. (p 781)

The girls who visit Mariana Pineda also comply with the fashion of the day: visually they are typical Andalusian beauties and when they speak the audience will find that their appearance reflects their characters. Ten years later Lorca returned to Granada to place his heroine Doña Rosita in the end of the last century. As she grows older during the work, so the style of the clothes she wears changes to fit the period. She, like the characters found in the play I have just mentioned, is an echo of the type of woman found then. Lorca achieves this effect by giving a detailed frame-

work of the time. Examining his plays set in the villages of Spain, and in Andalusia most frequently, it is evident that Lorca's technique remained much the same; less detail is provided than in the two historical plays but the attention paid to describing the environment in which his characters live is continued. Even in the puppet theatre the artist took care to provide a suitable background. Los títeres de Cachiporra is set against a typically Andalusian backcloth:

> El teatrillo representa una plaza de un pueblo andaluz. A la derecha, la casa de Señá Rosita. Debe haber una enorme palmera y un banco. Aparece por la izquierda Cocoliche, rondando, con una guitarra entre las manos y envuelto en una capita verde oscura con agremanes negros. Va vestido con el traje popular de principios de siglo XIX, y tiene puesto con garbo el sombrerillo calañés. (p 735)

Cocoliche's dress immediately puts him into the category of a romantic Andalusian lover. All the plays whose characters live in small communities contain a host of references to customs, dress and the traditional way of life. The mothers in Bodas de sangre and La casa de Bernarda Alba dress austerely in black, a vivid reminder to the rest of the village of their widowhood; their dwellings reflect the sparseness of their way of life. Lorca paid careful attention to the house of Bernarda, for there the family is to spend the next eight years of its life. The walls of the home are pure white, the doors "en arco con cortinas de yute rematadas con madroños y volantes". The chairs are of rush and offer little comfort, the only relief in the room coming from the pictures on the walls, pictures which Lorca describes as "Cuadros con paisajes inverosímiles de ninfas o reyes de leyenda." (p 1439) From the very introduction of his plays, then, the dramatist has revealed the traditional way of life which dominated his characters. The exterior pressure exerted by convention is maintained throughout the works, enclosing the protagonists in a cage and offering no escape.

The criticisms which many people made of traditional values constituted a major symptom of the atmosphere of social reform which supporters of the left wing intended to effect throughout the country. Love for tradition became a negative value because it provided a ready-made excuse not to develop new ideas. María Martínez Sierra pointed out its faults: "los conservadores españoles ignoran la ciencia del conservar que es el construir y llaman tradición al eternizarse de los males: ignorancia, miseria, privilegio."[4] On the other hand, the Republic was, it was reported, in favour of a healthy tradition created and maintained by the people as a whole:

> ¡Sépanlo de una vez para siempre los confesionistas y los pseudotradicionales! La Revolución, la República es amante de la tradición y de la historia, pero no de la que ellos exhuman para satisfacer apetitos y encenegar conciencias, sino de la que contiene el verdadero tesoro, muchas veces inédito, de las virtudes de la raza. [5]

Lorca was eager, in this respect, for the pueblo to conserve its folk and popular heritage, provided that the false social traditions clung to for no valid reason disappeared.

The dramatist showed by his characters' continual references to the past in justification of present actions, that he was well aware of the degenerate state of Spanish rural life. Just as country folk frequently speak of the ancient buildings which made up the village,[6] Bernarda uses tradition for tradition's sake, as it conveniently requires no thought and can be used at a moment's notice. Bernarda hints at its usefulness when she says: "No pienso." Hay cosas que no se pueden ni se deben pensar. Yo ordeno." (p 1496) In other words she can apply known norms to any situation. Thus she need not consider the motives behind her responses not the actions of her daughters. Visually Lorca created a vivid example of her handling of tradition; she wants to have a black fan

respectful of her widowhood, as the coloured one which Adela gives her is not. The fan itself, traditionally a conveyor of mine, accentuates the character of the mother; she will hide behind it, as she hides behind tradition to maintain her iron rule over her household. The hollow shell of tradition is echoed in the cycle in which the girls are trapped. The widowhood of the mother in Bodas de sangre involves the same kind of voluntary exile from public life, for the Madre states, "Hace veinte años que no he subido a lo alto de la calle." (p1178) The death which has just occurred at the beginning of La casa de Bernarda Alba brings the inevitable tolling of bells, confinement to the house and strict mourning for eight years. But it also brings about another death which will ensure the continuation of the cycle. The justification behind Bernarda's imposition of mourning shows how tradition provides the perfect excuse for her to keep control over her daughters: "En ocho años que dure el luto no ha de entrar en esta casa el viento de la calle. Hacemos cuenta que hemos tapiado con ladrillos puertas y ventanas. Así pasó en casa de mi padre y en casa de mi abuelo." (p 1451) So tradition has not just a paralysing effect but a deądly one.

Lorca showed in his plays how, through the older generation, the past rules the young as well. There exists in Lorca's characters, from the earliest onwards, this regard for tradition which is usually accompanied by the elder generation's strong belief that what was is good belongs to the past. El maleficio de la mariposa, performed in 1920, contains this comparison by Doña Curiana between the past and the present:

> Estás muy enamorada,
> ya lo sé. Mas en mi época
> las jóvenes no pedíamos
> los novios a boca llena,
> ni hablábamos en parábolas
> como hablas tú. La vergüenza
> estaba más extendida
> que en estos tiempos. (p 680)

Social convention was paramount in governing the position of individuals and their relationship with one another. The feudal system illustrated in the plays written during the Golden Age was still present in the drama of Lorca. Individuals were divided into classes and were judged to a large extent by their position in the social hierarchy. Although Schonberg asserts: "Dans cette facilité à se déplacer d'un pole social à l'autre on touchera du doigt le caractère démocratique fondamental des Espagnols, qui s'alignent naturellement au niveau fraternal humain et familier hors de toute caste et de tout formalisme,"[7] he could find no evidence to support his claim in the plays of Lorca. The statement which the poet made in 1934 revealed that he distrusted the importance which a high social position automatically gave an individual:

> Los hombres, en su mayoría, tienen una vida especial que usan como tarjeta de visita. Es la vida que se les conoce públicamente y que ellos mismos presentan diciendo: "Yo soy este"... se les recibe pensando; "Si usted dice otra vida, una vida gris, agazapada, torturante, diabólica, que trata de ocultar como un feo pecado. Mucha gente ha hecho su fortuna diciendo al oído de algunos ricos las siete palabras milagrosas: "Me das Tanto o lo digo Todo..." Ese Todo es el eje de la vida gris... (p 1752)

He gave vent to his disillusionment with and disregard for those who had attained high social position and especially to his distate for the power money held over people. Likewise the Zapatera shows her disgust for the influence it exerted " Ay dinero, dinero!, sin manos y sin ojos debería haberse quedado el que te inventó." (p 915) A little later in the play Lorca returned to this theme, this time to show how little the neighbour wanted to pay for her shoes and the Zapatera's anger at both the woman's greed and her husband's gullibility. This time it is she who is concerned about material gain. Juan too is reluctant to part with his money. He is of the opinion that children are too expensive to rear; on the other hand in order to better his social position he is prepared to spend money to buy Victor's flock of sheep. The ownership of land is of vital import-

ance in assessing an individual's place in the village. The Novio's advice to Leonardo in Bodas de sangre to buy land is for him not only his solution to the wife's complaints of her husband's roaming the countryside, but indicates the conventional aspect of the Novio's character. Land brings respect and security, and thus a step forward on the social ladder. Bernarda Alba is the wealthiest land-owner in the district, consequently her refusal to move from the village in order to find acceptable suitors for her daughters is governed by her fear of descent in status, as La Poncia shrewdly points out: "Claro que en otros sitios ellas resultan las pobres." (p 1457) The preoccupation Lorca felt with the important role which land and wealth played in social relationships was not merely a device for dramatic tension. He knew that before a freer society could be formed, traditional customs would have to be challenged as false. Kenny supports Lorca's assessment of the importance of these factors in rural communities, and his study implicitly acknowledges the Spaniard's understanding of country folk:

> Everyday speech proves over and over again that all the town-folk are aware of the existence of distinct hierarchal levels and it also indicated what they think and feel about them. The distinctions referred to by the generic name of 'classes', and people speak of the 'low class', the 'middle class' and the 'high class'.... The fundamental principle is always the ownership of land. In classifying an individual they often use such phrases as these: 'that man hasn't got a square inch of land', or 'that man hasn't got anywhere to fall dead in', meaning that he lacks possessions not only in land but of any kind....
>
> Property in land has been shown to have manifold sociological consequences: a person acquires as many degrees of esteem as the acres of land he possesses. Land measures social status and social status gives the measure of land.... [8]

The anxiety to own more land, or to maintain what one already possesses which Juan and Bernarda Alba have shown, provides the reason for the keenness of the Novia's father in Bodas de sangre to marry his daughter

to the Novio, for he comes from a wealthy family. Talking to the Madre he admits his delight at the match: "Tú eres más rica que yo. Las viñas valen un capital. Cada pámpano una moneda de plata. Lo que siento es que las tierras ...., ¿entiendes? ....., estén separadas. A mí me gusta todo junto." (p 1196)

The effort which these characters make to ascend the social ladder reflects, according to Kenny, the basic nature of traditional society:

> The anxiety, the hunger for property, the urge to increase the number of one's fields, the effort put into work, are particular reflections of that competitive spirit which is a driving force behind all aspects of the social system. The rigid stratification of the community and the tenacious effort to rise to a higher economic category are other manifestations of the same imperative. 9

Lorca's characters are obviously conscious of their position in society for they are treated, and treat others, with the degree of respect their class demands, and indeed they expect the behaviour of their acquaintances to comply with the demands of convention. Thus the pompous Teniente Coronel in Escena del teniente coronel de la guardia civil demands complete obedience. He is fully aware of his own importance:

> T.C. Y no hay quien me desmienta.
> S. No.
> T.C. Tengo tres estrellas y veinte cruces.
> S. Sí. (p 328/9)

When the Zapatero married the young girl, he chose a member of a lower social class; the Vecina points out to him that the trouble he now has with his wife was only to be expected: "¡Qué lástima de hombre! ¡Cuánto mejor le hubiera ido a usted casado con gente de su clase! ....., estas niñas, pongo por caso, u otras del pueblo." (p 919) The last remark she

makes is intended to reveal to the audience her hidden jealousy, for if one of her daughters had married the cobbler, she would have found herself in a secure, respected position. The self-consciousness behind the characters' recognition of the role they must play to live up to social expectations and even rise beyond them, is given an ironic twist in the dramatist's treatment of the Zapatera. She was literally penniless before her marriage, but now considers herself above the rest of the villagers. (p 913) Furthermore, her daydreams now lead her to believe that she could have married someone rich and handsome.

In contrast, Leonardo's explanation for not marrying the Novia while it was possible clearly puts the blame on his social inferiority: "Tú, que me conoces, sabes que no la llevo. Dímelo. ¿Quién he sido yo para ti? Abre y refresca tu recuerdo. Pero dos bueyes y una mala choza son casi nada. Esa es la espina!" (p 1213) The effect which the Novia's rejection of Leonardo has on the plot is immense. If their marriage had been agreed, the tragedy would not have happened. Following this strictly limited line of study, the play could be narrowly defined as one of a class struggle; however Lorca held in far greater importance the power of passion and its collision with social conventions. Nevertheless, while not wishing to exaggerate the social overtones of the play, I believe that the social relationship between the two lovers should be kept in mind. Similarly the reason maintained by Bernarda for keeping her daughters in the house lies in their social superiority in the village. She is convinced that to marry any of the local men would be beneath the dignity of her daughters: "No hay en cien leguas a la redonda quien se pueda acercar a ellas. Los hombres de aquí no son de su clase. ¿Es que quieres que las entregue a cualquier gañán?" (p 1457) She repeats her disdain for the local suitors when she rejects Enrique Humanas' courtship of Martirio because he was only a <u>gañán</u>. It is worth noting that the boy's surname

is a clear illustration of where the dramatist's personal sympathy lies. Bernarda constantly reminds those around her of her rank in society, whether by direct allusion or by reference to her wealth. She tells Prudencia that the furniture she has given Angustias as a dowry cost her sixteen thousand reales. Lorca implicitly criticizes the mother's blind allegiance to the trappings of society, which marks success not in humanitarian terms but by material possessions. He is also intent on illustrating how her greed for wealth and status makes her unsympathetic to the plight of the poor. She is indeed a classic example of the social snob. She reflects the callous attitude of many rich towards the poor. She shows no compassion for the maid, La Poncia, but uses her knowledge of her mother's past to control her. La Poncia is not a servant, but a slave to her mistress; by this form of blackmail Bernarda uses her as a spy for local gossip and as an informer on her daughters. Lorca clearly intended her to be a truly amoral character. She is ruled by social tradition alone. What Lorca wanted to show as even more horrifying and dangerous is the way in which she influences all who surround her. Thus La Poncia browbeats the Criada who in turn shows equal scorn for the poor as her mistress. (p 1443/4) In fact the two dependents are smaller, less harmful versions of Bernarda. But there is little hope of society improving when such influence takes place with apparent ease. While she refuses to give away any of her dead husband's clothes and forbids the maid to cry on the day of her husband's funeral, she considers the poor as animals - this is the essence of her cruelty:

> Menos gritos y más obras. Debías haber procurado que todo esto estuviera más limpio para recibir al duelo. Vete. No es este tu lugar. (La Criada se va llorando.) Los pobres son como los animales; parece como si estuvieran hechos de otras sustancias. (p 1445)

The plight of the middle classes who feel that they have to maintain the image they themselves have created is taken up by Lorca in Doña Rosita to show to what lengths some people will go to in order to guard their status; the Madre's mammoth task of giving her three spinster daughters all they need to impress the outside world is an extremely difficult one, but one in which she has so far succeeded for they have remained in their social rank:

> MADRE Hijas, aquí tengo confianza. No nos oye nadie. Pero usted lo sabe muy bien: desde que faltó mi pobre marido hago verdaderos milagros para administrar la pensión que nos queda. Todavia me parece oír al padre de estas hijas cuando, generoso y caballero como era, me decía: 'Enriqueta, gasta, gasta, que yo gano setenta duros'; ¡pero aquellos tiempos pasaron! A pesar de todo, nosotras no hemos descendido de clase. (p 1393)

All Lorca's plays, even in the insect world of El maleficio de la mariposa, reflect the strong class system which was still prevalent in the rural communities of the time. As Sharp suggests, La casa de Bernarda Alba contains the most references to the problems which social tradition causes. However, to state as he does "This play is one of Lorca's few commentaries on class differences"[10] is rather misleading, for he is ignoring in particular the barriers which hamper a smooth relationship between men and women, which I have noted in Bodas de sangre and La zapatera prodigiosa, and which will be examined in more detail in the chapter concerning the convention of marriage.

The class to which an individual belongs is determined not by moral qualities but by money. The influence money has had over man has long been a subject for popular verse. The following song describes how it can affect the esteem an individual takes in himself and his family:

Si tu madre se realza
Porque tú tienes dinero,
Si se realza tu madre,
La mía ya llega al cielo.[11]

Another song reveals the importance of money on a relationship:

Parece que me miras
¿quieres comprarme?
No tienes tú dinero
Para pagarme.[12]

In Lorca's plays, the protection of honour and social standing is considered essential in maintaining one's place in the village, but the place has been decided by wealth. Therefore the detail with which Lorca describes the preliminaries to a marriage and the obsession with property is designed to illustrate the domination of material wealth over the individual. Cristóbal in Retablillo de Don Cristóbal kills the Enfermo for his money in order to marry Rosita. Indeed the influence money can bring has been well noted in popular song. One such verse offers a succinct appraisal of the situation:

Tendrás muchos amigos
Si gastas oro;
Pero si no lo gastas
Andarás solo.
Porque ahora es moda
Apreciar el dinero,
No la persona.[13]

Juan's determination to use as much water as possible to irrigate his crops entails his wakefulness during the night, for it is his turn for water at 4 a.m. The greed for wealth which for him is more important than the child Yerma craves for, is the basis of many popular verses like the following:

Ser rico y ser avariento
Una misma cosa es;
Porque nunca se separa
La codicia del tener. 14

Like Bernarda, Juan will spare no effort to increase his wealth, but will give nothing away.

The plays which draw inspiration from the rural, introspective communities throughout Spain examine the harmful effect people whose lives are centred on the past can have on any individual who transgresses the unwritten laws of the village. The traditional way of life many villages adhere to allowed no room beyond the strict controls it had set up to govern an individual's behaviour. The conscious revolt led by Adela (and to a less serious extent by the Muchacha in Yerma) results in failure. Why is this? Extremism breeds extremism. Lorca intended to lay bare the rigidity of social conventions in his plays; the passive obedience to certain norms of conduct by the majority necessarily means an equally fierce denunciation of them by the individual if he seriously wishes to escape from the net of tradition entangling him. Of course, the battle with which the two opposing forces fought each other brought about the destruction of the individual; for he could not hope to conquer the combined force of tradition and society. However the resistance of social conventions to any move for freedom leaves the reader or spectator fully conscious of the failure of society to accept, or even adapt itself to, new conditions which the young were demanding.

The Zapatera Prodigiosa's rebellious attitude to the villagers stems from the society in which she lives. For if the villagers were not so vociferous in criticizing any deviation from the accepted norms of behaviour the girl would not flout their regulations so deliberately. Thus she encourages the amorous advances of the young men in the village simply to annoy the gossips, but when she finds their language is becoming too forward, she promptly chastises them for being impertinent:

MOZO No me muevo de este sitio sin el sí. ¡Ay mi zapaterita, dame tu palabra! (Va a abrazarla.)

ZAPATERA (Cerrando violentamente la ventana.)

¡Pero qué impertinente, qué loco! .... ¡Si te he hecho daño te aguantas! .... Como si yo no estuviese aquí más que paraaa, paraaa .... ¿Es que en este pueblo no puede una hablar con nadie? Por lo que veo, en este pueblo no hay más que dos extremos: o monja o trapo de fregar .... ¡Era lo que me quedaba de ver! ....
(p 932/3)

Similarly she cannot accept her guilt in driving her husband away by her continual nagging, but blames his actions on the villagers. Her open hostility to the traditbnal conventions of the village, and the Zapatero's complete acceptance of these laws are equally responsible for her husband's disappearance. Both Yerma and Juan follow the precepts laid down by the society according to their own interpretation of its demands: However, one voice of protest is heard in the play: Lorca created the lively, happy-go-lucky Muchacha to champion the individual's rights in the face of social orthodoxy. She denounces the conformity which is the bastion of convention as a bribe which demands that people act against their wishes. In her attack on the artificial restrictions maintained by her elders she attempts to arouse Yerma from her meek obedience to social precepts: "Yo te puedo decir lo único que he aprendido en la vida; toda la gente está metida dentro de sus casas haciendo lo que no les gusta. Cuánto mejor se está en medio de la calle. Ya voy al arroyo, ya subo a tocar las campanas, ya me tomo un refresco de anís." (p 1294) It is surprising that Honig has considered the Lavanderas to be the only real representatives of rural society in the play: "The Washerwomen who provide the only immediate social setting to a play turning more and more about an individual, are divided in their opinions."[15] As I have tried to point out, Lorca's plays are generally concerned with an individual or individuals,

but specifically with his or her position in society, or the relationship he has with other people. Yerma does not appear to me to be an exceptional case. The Lavanderas indeed play an important role in showing the general attitude taken towards Yerma's behaviour (and that of her husband). On the contrary, they are not alone; the Vieja and her daughter, the Muchacha, the sisters in law, María and Dolores, all provide additional information about society's appraisal of Yerma's character. While she and her husband both accept the strictures of tradition and still cannot find a peaceful solution to the differences separating them, Bernarda Alba is so confident that she expects her daughters to accept the conventions she maintains. Certainly they have been brainwashed throughout the length of their lives into complete obedience, but once doubt grows about the motives behind Bernarda's principles harmony cannot remain in the family. It is Adela who decides to question the laws laid down by her mother (her mother's complete tyranny causes her explicit revolt). Even so the might of one individual is not capable of conquering Bernarda, who externally at least has at her call the full weight of tradition and convention.

Before pursuing my examination of social themes in Lorca's work, I think it worthwhile to consider any political overtones which may be glimpsed in his theatre. Mariana Pineda is the drama which at first appearance is most likely to contain a political message. Schonberg asserts that the play was written "en protestation contre le coup d'Etat de Primo de Rivera (septembre 1923)"[16] Likewise Couffon considers the start of the dictatorship linked to the time when Lorca began to write Mariana Pineda. There is no doubt in Couffon's mind of the message the dramatist was going to impart:

> Resulta coherente que un poeta liberal en busca de personajes haya escogido por heroína de nueva obra a la joven de su ciudad natal que el siglo antes se había distinguido en la lucha contra el absolutismo y la arbitrariedad de Fernando VII, al punto de ofrender la vida. Y resulta una reacción nada sorprendente que en el curso del año 1924, cuando más se arraba el yugo de Primo de Rivera, el poeta haya sentido la necesidad de cantar a la libertad por intermedio de esa valerosa Mariana que la había encarnado con tanto brillo. A cien años de distancia, España volvía a encontrar el mismo clima de angustia, de un orden impuesto a cualquier costo, bajo la doble férula del ejército y la política. 17

However, Lorca's treatment of his heroine and of the liberal cause is not as straight-forward as these critics say and which the political blasphemy "dictatorship" stirred up. Brenan assessed that instead the intentions of the dictator were basically good:

> Primo's own personality was not an unattractive one. He was an Andalusian landowner from Jerez; the province where hard-drinking, whoring, horse-loving aristocracy rules over the most starved and down trodden race of agricultural labourers in Europe. It is a region where the hatred of the poor for the rich has been accumulating for generations. But Primo evidently did not share the feelings of his set. All his actions show a desire to remedy the condition of the poor within the framework of what was possible to him. As a general too he was something of a pacifist. 18

The development of Lorca's social conscience is generally not fully expressed until the last years of the twenties when he had more contact with the people.

The liberal cause championed by Mariana was given sympathetic treatment by Lorca. However, there are two objections to be raised before committing him to a strong political standpoint which he himself denied expressing. Firstly Mariana is a historical figure; Lorca meant to follow to some degree the details of the real event; secondly, she became

the heroine of popular legends, such was her appeal to the populace. The play was written in 1925 at a time when dissatisfaction was growing with Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, and the fact that the play was strictly a period piece was overlooked by some who saw in it a direct attack on the contemporary power scene. In Granada 1930 brought another surge of interest in the woman. There was much discussion about whether a celebration should mark the centenary of her death. She was constantly linked with the ideas of the left wing, the supporters of the future Republic and with the philosophy of contemporary feminism.[19] During the Civil War, in 1937, Altolaguirre arranged a performance of the play at the Segundo Congreso Internacional de Escritores, and he read the following as a prologue to the play:

> Mariana Pineda, El drama que vamos a representar, se estrenó en Madrid durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera. Aquel estreno, que constituyó un verdadero acontecimiento literario, tuvo también un profundo sentido político. Toda la España amante de la libertad acudió a las representaciones. Federico García Lorca tenía escrita su obra desde hacía tres años. La llevaba en su prodigiosa memoria de tertulia en tertulia inútilmente.[20]

The idealistic vision Pedro set forth concerning a new fate for the pueblo appealed directly to the imaginations of the audiences:

> No es hora de pensar en quimeras, que es hora
> de abrir el pecho a bellas realidades cercanas
> de una España cubierta de espigas y rebaños,
> donde la gente coma su pan con alegría,
> en medio de estas anchas eternidades nuestras
> y esta aguda pasión de horizonte y silencio.
> España entierra y pisa su corazón antiguo,
> su herido corazón de Península andante,
> y hay que salvarla pronto con manos y con dientes. (p 832)

Ironically, once she is captured by the government forces and can no longer

be of any use to the liberals, she forms such a strong conviction of her affiliation to the Liberal cause that she rises above her past passion for Pedro. She becomes a symbol of liberty who, freed from political burdens, is above all humanitarian in quality. The fanatical ardour with which the liberals pay more attention to their cause than to the individual is sharply outlined as shallow in contrast to the greatness Mariana acquires:

> Amas la Libertad por encima de todo,
> pero yo soy la misma Libertad. Doy mi sangre,
> que es tu sangre y la sangre de todas las
> criaturas.
> ¡No se podrá comprar el corazón de nadie!
>
> - - - - - - - - - - - -
>
> Ahora sé lo que dicen el ruiseñor y el árbol.
> El hombre es un cautivo y no puede librarse.
> ¡Libertad de lo alto! Libertad verdadera,
> enciende para mí tus estrellas distantes.
> (p 889/90)

Rather than assuming that direct comment can be found in Lorca's theatre on the contemporary political scene, one could do better by analysing the characters in individual plays and considering if they bear comparison with the events which were taking place around him. The Zapatera and her husband possess an extreme rigidity in their opinions concerning society around them. To this extent they are both extremists, the wife in her revolt against convention, and the husband in his total acceptance of it. The obstinacy with which they cling to their views makes them both suffer. Even at the end of the play when the two are reunited, the Zapatera is not completely happy. The strength of her rebellious character will now turn its attention to defending, with the cobbler, their position against the village:

> ¡Qué desgraciada soy! ¡Con este hombre que Dios me ha dado! (Yendo a la puerta.) ¡Callarse, largos de lengua, judíos colorados! Y venid, venid ahora, si queréis. Ya somos dos a defender mi casa, ¡dos!, ¡dos!, yo y mi marido. (Dirigiéndose al marido.) ¡Con este pillo, con este granuja! (p 978)

Beneath the apparent good humour of the farsa, it is not difficult to find a solution to avert the course of action the couple are taking. Moderation on both sides, and a willingness to hear the other partner's point of view, would have prevented the extreme position both characters adopt. In the light of increasing political tension between the opposing left and right wings in Spain, perhaps Lorca was attempting to point out that reason would be the only means of averting a certain war. Yerma deals with a very difficult problem in a similar way. Juan and his wife both have utter faith in their personal viewpoint: Juan does not want children, Yerma does. The complete unwillingness on both sides to comprehend the reasons of the other, is another example of the wide difference which separates the characters. Furthermore, their refusal to compromise echoes once more the irreparable split which had appeared among the people of Spain. Yerma finally is driven to murdering Juan in order to achieve peace of mind. The playwright may well be casting a warning glance towards the outcome he feared would inevitably result if the radically opposed political parties of Spain did not reach a compromise.

Bernarda Alba, like Juan, portrays blind faith in the past; the dogmatic manner in which she supports without question the way of life laid down by tradition in order to maintain her own authority lends to her the character of an obstinate reactionary, tradition-bound fanatic who dominates by fear. The severity which controls her attitudes to the behaviour of other people is so absolute that once her daughter Adela is openly defiant of her, she cannot conceive of a compromise: destruction therefore is the only weapon she has to defeat her enemy. So sure is she of her authority that she is blind to La Poncia's warnings that all is not well in the household. The maid's perceptive appraisal of her mistress:

"Cuando una no puede con el mar lo mas fácil es volver las espaldas para no verlo." (p 1520) reveals the complacency with which Bernarda believes in her own superiority, for tradition will support all her actions. Lorca insinuated that support of tradition by conservatives in Spain simply to maintain the old ideals and status quo found in this mother an exemplary follower. Her character does not develop throughout the play: likewise Spanish society kept tradition stationary and an enemy of change. However, Lorca did not overlook the opposition's hatred of traditional policies. Adela strives to rid herself of all family ties and conventions: her mother's tyranny provides an equally harsh reaction. Adela wants nothing less than complete freedom: her death in the face of the collective force of tradition reflects the impossibility of her rebellion in the society of the day, and the uselessness of traditional values which are no longer relevant, and indeed positively dangerous.

In this play, the last to be written before his death, the urgency with which Lorca appealed for compromise and flexibility in society reached its height. He proclaimed his belief that Spain was in fact on the edge of self-destruction. Unless the hatred which embittered its opposing factions could be diminished by co-operation, then the strength of tradition which engendered extremism in its supporters and opponents would expel from his country a peaceful existence. The play, as Virginia Higginbotham points out, is not truly tragic, for social oppression had made Bernarda Alba what she is and in turn it is responsible for her daughter's reactions. The critic argues that the play is better termed a satire on the continuance of now useless traditional beliefs and conventions, and makes the point that Lorca could have been suggesting that human dignity and moral integrity could not exist in such a society.[21] One could, indeed, go further. Surely the criticism which the social habits provoke are as much a product of the extreme adherence to traditions

as are complete acceptance of them? In that case, Lorca was predicting the horrific outcome such a conflict would inevitably produce: war. He openly preached man's responsibility to his fellow beings in his interviews and lectures. One of his intentions, which he blended into his plays, was then an indirect warning of the horrors which direct confrontation would bring unless his people became aware that a compromise was the only way to prevent civil war. He transferred to individual characters in his plays the extreme views of social groups in the hope that society took upon itself a greater degree of responsibility for its own destiny.

Popular Tradition

The traditional popular verse which acted as one of the stimuli of his Romancero gitano gave Lorca the reputation of a poeta inculto, which, as I have already noted, he found irksome and unjust. The glittering facade of gipsies, folklore and nature which accounts for much of the success of the book, hides something rather different. For behind the mythology created by the poet lies a malaise, an undertone of violence and sordidness which reveal both the artist's unease and a somewhat veiled comment on Andalusian society. By choosing gipsies as a compact social group, Lorca showed in the Romancero how they were victimized by the representative of law and order, the Guardia Civil. However, after closer examination of individual gipsy characters, their portrayal is not by any means as sympathetic as it first appears. Antonio El Camborio is for example basically a pompous, mincing little figure; his heroic struggle and subsequent death are not as glorious as they seem:

> Bañó con sangre enemiga
> su corbata carmesí,
> pero eran cuatro puñales
> y tuvo que sucumbir. (p 447)

In actual fact the reader learns that he was involved in a sordid brawl. Lorca's insistence that the gipsy theme was only one aspect of his work repudiates the image others have built around the poetry. He declared that it also contained a picture of contemporary Andalusia:

> En su esencia es un retablo andaluz de todo el andalucismo. Al menos como yo lo veo. Es un canto andaluz en el que los gitanos sirven de estribillo. Reúno todos los elementos poéticos locales y les pongo la etiqueta más fácilmente visible. Romances de varios personajes aparentes, que tienen un solo personaje esencial: Granada .... (p 1700)

If Andalusia, and Granada in particular, is the core of the work, then he drew an unhappy picture of its world. The violence committed by the Guardia Civil and the gipsies and the overriding pena which he stated elsewhere to be the only true character in the Romancero present a gloomy, pessimistic view of his birthplace. The loneliness and sadness which obsess Soledad Montoya underline the suffering the poet was then undergoing and reflect the unhappy state of Andalusia where according to him death and cruelty reign:

> Soledad de mis pesares,
> caballo que se desboca,
> al fin encuentra la mar
> y se lo tragan las olas.
> No me recuerdes el mar,
> que la pena negra, brota
> en las tierras de aceituna
> bajo el rumor de las hojas. (p 436/7)

'Reyerta' is concerned with a brawl, 'Romance de la guardia civil española' describes the exploits of these police against the gipsies, but these are not the first impressions generally received. So, did in fact Lorca deliberately cover up the less attractive areas of the poems by adding his own mythology which dazzled the reader with its brilliance and beauty?

The stories built up by country folk around the gipsy and the implacable defender of law and order, the Guardia Civil, which Lorca knew and adapted in his own fashion, perpetuated the deep rift between these two sections of society. As a child, he was told tales of family vendettas, the deeds of the Guardia Civil and injustice of the law towards the poor by his maids,[22] whose country background provided them with a wealth of popular material and a gift for telling it. However, the stories evolved around the cruelty of the guards were not just exaggerated relics of former years, the terror which they caused was still evident in country villages. María Martínez Sierra, an infatigable supporter of the underprivileged noted: "Lo que es certísimo es que el terror a la guardia civil constituye sentimiento indesarraigable en el pueblo andaluz ... y cuando un sentimiento echa tales raíces en el corazón mismo de una multitud, sus motivos habrá."[23] Brenan elaborates on the relationship the Civil Guard had with the people of Spain:

> The Civil Guard was one of the few really reliable and incorruptible bodies of men in Spain. Carefully picked and highly disciplined, they lived scattered in small fortified posts among the towns and villages, forbidden to intermarry and to associate familiarly with the local inhabitants or to move about unarmed all alone. This rule has led to their being known everywhere as La Pareja .... It goes without saying that in poverty-stricken districts - that is to say, throughout a large part of Spain - their relations with the working classes were of open hostility and suspicion. Living as they did among their enemies, they became unusually ready to shoot. Again and again mild riots and demonstrations have become dangerous because the Guardia Civil could not keep their fingers off their triggers. And from the moment that, in the nineties, the Anarchists rather tentatively took to violence too, the readiness of the Guardia to shoot became greater than ever. After 1931 the hatred between them and the villagers made many parts of Spain ungovernable.[24]

Lorca emphasized the traditional brutality of their authority and the terror they inspire in the Romancero. The poet pictured them drunkenly

banging on the door of the house where the boy is hidden in 'Romance Sonámbulo' (p 430/2), and in the 'Romance de la guardia civil española' they ravage the peaceful village:

> Pero la Guardia Civil
> avanza sembrando hogueras,
> donde joven y desnuda
> la imaginación se quema.
> Rosa la delos Camborios,
> gime sentada en su puerta
> con sus dos pechos cortados
> puestos en una bandeja.
> Y otras muchachas corrían
> perseguidas por sus trenzas,
> en un aire donde estallan
> rosas de pólvora negra.
> Cuando todos los tejados
> eran surcos en la tierra,
> el alba meció sus hombros
> en largo perfil de piedra. (p 456/7)

In the same poem they are described as "jorabados y nocturnos", carriers of doom and menace. Their hearts made of patent leather show only hardness and black evil. Nearly a decade after the book achieved phenomenal success, Lorca was plagued by the protests of the Guardia who argued that they had been unfairly presented. A court suit was even filed against Lorca, but there is no evidence that it took place.[25]

It is worth noting that in his plays the Guardia Civil are not mentioned. His theatre specifically examines the lives of country folk, and the guardians of law have no place in the pueblo's concept of justice, which consists of their adherence to the rigid conditions laid down by the traditional virtues of honour, decency and the status quo.

The portrayal of the gipsies, which Lorca afterwards insisted was a theme in his poetry and nothing more, does illustrate his instinctive

sympathy with the underdog (the negro is another example of this in Poeta en Nueva York). The struggle the gipsies maintained against their traditional enemy, the Civil Guard, represents in Barea's opinion the fight waged by the Spanish people as a whole against this force:

> He spoke of nothing but the traditional feud of rural police and smugglers, public order and vagrants; but every encounter with his gipsies eternally ingenuous, reckless, and gallant even in their small vanities , and authority embodied in the Civil Guard, became in his poetry a clash between ominous organized violence and generous, gay, human freedom. And it was this underlying meaning which Lorca's simplest reader felt more clearly and concretely than his sophisticated public. [26]

This interpretation contains at one level at least some truth. The Guardia Civil, given the ironic title of La Benemérita, were tainted as brutal aggressors; however, the idyllic aura of the gipsies which Barea sees in el Romancero is occasionally marred by the sordid situation in which theyfind themselves. Gibson gives a hint of the subtlety of Lorca's treatment of these people coupled with the sympathy with which he reveals their degradation at the hands of authority when he remarks, with special reference to the 'Romance de la guardia civil española':

> Para Lorca, el gitano simboliza los elementos más profundos de la psique, la última fuente de lágrimas y risas, mientras la Guardia Civil representa el poder represivo de la llamada 'civilización moderna' que tiene por fin eliminar la vitalidad y la espontaneidad. El poema, por consiguente, rebasa las fronteras de Andalucía, y tiene una significación universal.[27] (my underlining)

The oxymoron "traditional modern society" would be more precise, for the Guardia were eager upholders of the tradition-bound conventions

which were championed by the reactionary parties. The sympathy which the poet felt for the gipsies extended to the whole Spanish pueblo which found itself on the lowest rungs of the social ladder, oppressed and then forgotten by the minority. The gipsy in the songs and laments of the Poema del cante jondo became a mythological figure in the Romancero, a symbol of the poor. According to Carlos Morla Lynch, Lorca ascribed his gipsies' spiritual importance to the dignity with which they lived:

> ....Y luego tienes a los gitanos ...., que son príncipes, príncipes que roban y que matan. Pero, aunque maten y roben, aunque mientan y engañen, permanecerá invulnerable en ellos la dignidad propia e innata de su raza. Es una dignidad a prueba de pobreza y de vagancias sin rumbo. Son barcos sin banderas, desprovistos de anclas. 28

Lorca delicately illustrated their grace in his 'Preciosa y el aire' :

"Y los gitanos del agua/levantan por distraerse,/glorietas de caracolas/ y ramas de pino verde".(p 427)

The overblown character of Antonio, the only figure to call Lorca's name on his death comes under the gaze of the poet in his lecture on the book. The character is summed up as a "Gitano verdadero, incapaz del mal como muchos que en estos momentos mueren de hambre por no vender su voz milenaria a los señores que no poseen más que dinero, que están tan poco cosa." (p 1807) This admiration he voiced was reflected in the grandiose circumstances with which Lorca surrounded his death.(p 448) The disdain of the moneyed middle classes is obviously sincere; however the real facts behind Antonio's death remain ambiguous. Is in fact the poet sketching tongue in cheek the ease with which poetry can inflate the simplest, most sordid of incidents into an epic narrative? The critics are fairly divided about this matter. In her contention that the poem

pays homage to the noble character of the gipsy, Delong contradicts the ironic overtones Cambell, D. Marín and Díaz-Plaja find in the same work.[29]

Lorca's anxiety to resist the label of popular poet does indeed seem to indicate a different intention from the one accepted by the public. Certainly the many facets of his own character would suggest as reasonable the various themes inside the framework of one work. If this is true, and I believe this to be the case, then it is possible to find in the Romancero gitano a rather jaundiced, disillusioned view of man's nature as well as a sympathetic portrayal of the Spanish people's harassment by the guardians of tradition and order, the Civil Guard.

The sympathy Lorca felt towards the gipsy was part and parcel of the instinctive manner in which he was drawn towards the underprivileged of any country: "Yo creo que el ser de Granada me inclina a la comprensión simpática de los perseguidos. Del gitano, del negro, del judío..., del morisco, que todos llevamos dentro." (p 1700) He assessed that the humanitarian bond between him and the unfortunates who hovered on the outskirts of society to be a particular product of his native town. Certainly he felt a deep regard for his and all maids and servants who gave a valuable service to children by telling them stories of traditional country life.

The poor too were a constant subject of concern to Lorca. The romantic vision which inspires Impresiones y paisajes does not prevent the reader from glimpsing Lorca's real concern for the lot of the poor. The faded beauty which the narrator sees and wishes to retain in 'Jardín romántico' is to be replaced by the more pressing need of vegetables than the

ornamental display of roses and other flowers. The daydream that the narrator conjures up of the past grandeur of the garden contrasts abruptly with the necessity of the poor to earn a decent living:

> '¿Es de ustedes este jardín? ....' Y ellos respondieron: 'No señor; es de la señora marquesa...., pero, como es tan buena, nos lo ha dado para que plantemos una huerta.' '¡Qué infamia! ¡Qué lástima de jardín!', exclamé yo .... 'Cómo se ve - me dijo la madre - que usted está bien comido. ¡Si viera usted lo poco que ganamos! .... Ya así, convirtiendo este jardín en huerta, venderemos lechugas y coles en la ciudad y podrán comer algo más mis hijos ...' Los niños, escuálidos, seguían su tarea .... La madre suspiró: '¡Qué ganas tengo que no se estile comer ..! '¿Sabe usted lo que le digo? - hablé yo -. Que está muy bien desaparecido el jardín'.... (p 1581)

Again in his first literary venture, Lorca noted the illnesses which plagued poor children (p 1589/90) and remarked on the need to improve social conditions and remove injustices. As yet the youthful poet is idealistic in his aims and rather than give his work a social purpose and complexion, the poor appear more as a literary theme. However the seed of his preoccupation with the social ills of his time has been planted.

By the time he reached the end of his life, he expressed open hostility to the rich through the servants in his later plays. In Doña Rosita la soltera, the Ama roundly curses the rich for their lack of humanity towards those beneath them. (p 1424) Bernarda Alba's Criada lists the degrading chores which her class are forced to carry out in order to earn a living: "Suelos barnizados con aceite, alacenas, pedestales, camas de acero, para que traguemos quina las que vivimos en las chozas de tierra con un plato y una cuchara. Ojalá que un día no quedáramos ni uno para contarlo." (p 1444/5) Here the dramatist laid bare the drudgery

of the poor and their complete dependence on the rich.

Lorca drew the maids in his plays as robust, earthy good-natured creatures, surely a reflection of the maids his family employed and whom he never forgot.[30] The Ama, La Poncia's and the Novia's maid all emerge as real people, full of a natural dignity and a sharpness of wit which refuses to be subdued by the social conventions which govern their mistresses. The Criada in Bodas de sangre is more excited than the Novia by the presents given to the girl by the bridegroom. She is fully aware that sex is the basic reality of marriage and is not afraid to say so. Likewise, the affection she feels for her mistress is uttered openly, without the awkwardness convention would bring: "Es para arreglarte mejor esta onda. Quiero que te caiga sobre la frente. (La Novia se mira en el espejo.) ¡Qué hermosa estás! ¡Ay! (La besa apasionadamente.) (p 1207)

The Ama in Doña Rosita is in some ways a more human version of La Poncia; the down-to-earth nature which both maids possess is enhanced in the Ama by wit and good-humour and above all love for her mistresses. She unconsciously resorts to the crudities of country speech which shook the aunt. Lorca uses her to mock the refinement, essentially a cursi quality, of the middle classes. But she is also the confessor of the Tía's intimacies, and rival for the affection of Rosita. By the end of the play she has become the object of her superiors' admiration for her physical endurance and implicitly for her mental stamina:

TÍA ¡Ojalá tuviera yo tus años!

AMA Nos llevamos poco, pero como yo he trabajado mucho, estoy engrasada, y usted, a fuerza de poltrona, se la han engarabitado las piernas.

> TÍA ¿Es que te parece que yo no he trabajado?
>
> AMA Con las puntillas de los dedos, con hilos, con tallos, con confituras; en cambio, yo he trabajado con las espaldas, con las rodillas, con las uñas. (p 1413)

She has to use all her strength to support the Tía and Rosita by the end of the play. She alone can cope with the strains fate has put on the family. She ignores her mistress's shameful admission that she can no longer pay her wages and in turn she becomes the leader while the two women submissively let her take care of them. The humanitarian essence of her character reflects Lorca's acknowledgement of the dignity which is integral to the character of many Spanish country folk.

The harmony which reigns in the friendly relationship between mistress and servant in Doña Rosita disappears in La casa de Bernarda Alba. The formal superiority of the mistress, which in the previous play appeared only superficial and for the sake of convention, is absolute. La Poncia completely depends on Bernarda and as such her position is quite typical of the ordinary maid as described by Kenny:

> Servants are the responsibility of the head of the household- they are not covered by the system of social insurance- and, when they fall ill or reach retiring age, the family is expected to care for them. The maid thus becomes wholly dependent on the good will of the master and mistress and outwardly considers them as beneficient figures. She is expected to sisar, i.e. filch trifles, especially on the shopping accounts, and most families will be content to keep this within limits. 31

The most obvious difference between this general account of the maid's position in the household and the maid portrayed by Lorca lies in the last sentence quoted. Such is Bernarda's miserliness that she forbids any filching of her possessions. In order to maintain complete dominance she rules Poncia and the Criada with a rod of iron, demanding super-human

standards of efficiency; when she returns from the funeral of her husband she expects everything to be "más limpio" and the room to be "blanquísimo". Her presence remains with her subordinates even when she is not with them. So the hierarchy which she maintains between herself and her maids is extended in their relations with one another. La Poncia bullies the Criada (p 1440) who in turn bullies anyone lower than her in the social scale. She treats the Mendiga with a lack of humanity characteristic of Bernarda. Because of La Poncia's total dependence on her, the mother manipulates her at will, making her spy on the neighbours and on the daughters. She muses bitterly about her subservience to her enemy: "Treinta años lavando sus sábanas; treinta años comiendo sus sobras; noches en vela cuando tose; días enteros mirando por la rendija para espiar a los vecinos y llevarle el cuento; vida sin secretos una con otra, y sin embargo, ¡maldita sea! ¡Mal dolor de clavo le pinche en los ojos!" (p 1442). The insight with which she judges the true position of Bernarda gives her a clearheaded logic which her mistress does not have: "Claro que no le envidio la vida. La quedan cinco mujeres, cinco hijas feas, que quitahdo Angustias, la mayor, que es la hija del primer marido y tiene dineros, las demás, mucha puntilla bordada, muchas camisas de hilo, pero pah y uvas por toda herencia." (p 1442) In spite of Bernarda's cruelty to her, La Poncia is the only character who dares to tell her the truth about the tensions which are building up inside the minds of the five daughters. She can in fact achieve some kind of revenge by seeing her mistress fall into the trap she had foreseen. Finally, she is still capable of showing the earthy wit of the <u>pueblo</u>; she fascinates the daughters by her down-to-earth account of her husband's courtship before her marriage to him. Furthermore, her common sense, which is not distorted by social conventions and traditions, finds a solution for Adela's predicament, which the girl will not accept as it inhibits

her passion. Lorca has shown that she, as much as any character, has escaped from the fetters of tradition which Bernarda has used to imprison the household. It is implicit that her survival is due in large measure to her belief in the values adhered to by country folk who consider moral qualities more important than blind obedience to tradition.

The Codes of Honour and Decency

One of the most outstanding of these moral qualities was honour. It was as much a part of the philosophy of the country folk in Lorca's day as it was in the plays of Calderón. The individual must be certain that his actions are in keeping with the concept of honour he had inherited and which other people of his acquaintance have formed of him. Behaviour fitting the dignity of one's status must indeed not only be pursued by the individual, it must be witnessed by his neighbours. To a certain extent, then, honra has become an external quality which marks the degree of respect one can hope to attain from the rest of the community. The general comment Huxley made on social behaviour is especially appropriate to this view of honour: "...not all restraints are felt to be restraints, people can be so conditioned as to accept certain artificial restraints as if they were part of the order of nature!"[32] The traditional importance of honour, a relic of the Golden age, was indeed present and flourishing in the dramatist's time. The preservation of the old codes of conduct was in keeping with the tradition-bound conventions which much of Spain still regarded as necessary as she looked to the past not to the future for guidelines to shape her present society. Honra had been at the basis of established society for centuries, it had succeeded in controlling any attempt to step out of line. However, the respect the individual had

for the external appearance of order and what others might think was more important than the individual's wish to act as he pleased. In his study of a Spanish village Aceves gives a sociological interpretation of the value of honour in society:

> Two of the most widely known aspects of Christian character are the related values of honour and shame. According to Peristiany (1966:11), honour and shame are constant preoccupations in small and exclusive societies where primary rather than secondary relations are most important, and where a man's personality is as significant as the social position he holds in the society. The Spanish village provides precisely this type of social setting, where, as Aceves has noted, honour is both the person's estimation of his own worth and his claim to pride as well as the acknowledgement of his fellows to his right to that self-conception and pride. (1969:21) [33]

Popular verse has long examined the question of this virtue, concerning itself with its influence on social relationships. The first song I quote utters a warning to those who attempt to rise above their social station, and therefore exaggerate their honour; the second describes the individual's desire to defend his honour against attacks on it:

> No te pongas tan alta
> Ni tan subida,
> Que otras mucho más altas
> Se ven caídas.
> No me rebajes;
> Que puedo ser la honra
> de tu linaje. [34]

> Ande diciendo tu madre
> De mi honra no sé que;
> ¿Para qué enturbiar el agua
> si la tiene que beber? [35]

There is, however, another aspect of the Spanish concept of honour than the one that concentrates on the virtue gained by honourable conduct

through the external standards invented by society, and which, as I shall later consider, has in the figure of Bernarda a blindly loyal supporter. The second aspect of typically Spanish honour arises from the literary tradition which has existed for many years and which is best illustrated by the literature of the Golden Age. The plays in particular examine the influence of honour on closed communities and they concentrate on the moral quality of gaining a virtuous life through exemplary conduct.[36] Lorca gave his own interpretation of this individual concept of honour in the character of Yerma, and to some extent in the Zapatera Prodigiosa. However, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter, the pride the individual takes in his personal honour is too insufficient a guarantee of conformity to the external role of honour to protect him from the criticism of the community. It is the duty of the man to uphold, and if necessary to defend, his dependents' honour as well as his own. Peristiany's examination of the honour held by a family illustrates how closely the head ought to look after the behaviour of his subordinates:

> ....Even when honour is inherited in the family name it has to be asserted and vindicated. To accept this is to accept the all-powerfulness of public opinion rather than that of a hierarchical superior. When the individual is encapsulated in a social group an aspersion on his honour is an aspersion on the honour of his group.[37]

The responsibility of the Zapatero, Juan and Bernarda, whose dominance over the family group invokes the image of a male figure, and the Padre and Madre in Bodas de sangre, for the conduct of the female members in particular of their household becomes entirely concentrated on the external form of honra; fear of causing an attack by their neighbours on their wives and daughters and consequently on their own good name overrides all other considerations. When Juan finds Yerma in the house

of Dolores, la Conjuradora, in the early hours of the morning, the first thing that comes into his mind is not what drove his wife to seek the help of a sorceress but the possibility of the village finding out, and thus impugning his honour: "¿Qué haces en este sitio? Si pudiera dar voces levantaría a todo el pueblo para que viera dónde iba la honra de mi casa; pero he de ahogarlo todo y callarme, porque eres mi mujer."
(p 1331)

The male has a special responsibility if he is to conserve intact his honour: he must prove his virility and his domination over his wife. Peristiany examines this point by relating man's honour to the vices of cuckoldry and adultery:

> The horns (of the cabrón), a phallic symbol, are also the insignia of the Devil, the enemy of virtue, whose associates possess other symbols of phallic nature, such as the broomstick upon which witches ride. Yet male sexuality is essential to the foundation of the family, as well as necessary, in its associated aspect as courage, to its defence. As well as potentially evil, it is also, when combined with shame as manliness, good. The manliness of a husband must be exerted above all in the defence of the honour of his wife on which his own depends. 38

This statement makes Juan the most interesting male character in Lorca's plays. The zeal with which he defends the external honour of himself and his wife results in his decision to bring his sisters to watch over Yerma while he is out in the fields, in order to prevent her from wandering about in the village and thus inciting gossip; nothing so drastic as adultery is needed to trouble his honour. However, Juan fails to understand that Yerma fears for her honra as much as he fears for his. The lack of communication which separates them prevents them from realizing that their individual concept of honour rests on two different values. Yerma feels pledged to maintain the honour of her name and of her femininity by bearing a child, which can only happen with her husband's

help. Juan wants a peaceful married life which will cause no comment from the villagers. What he forgets is that the country folk who live near him expect children from a marriage as a matter of course; by persisting in his belief that life is better without children, he is automatically provoking the gossip of the village, just as much as his wife does by her strange behaviour.

Juan fears that Yerma might bear a child out of wedlock. This would have had a catastrophic effect on the social position he has maintained through honourable conduct. But Lorca portrayed in El amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín a highly different account of the situation Juan feared. Let me again turn to a sociological study of honour in Spain to report the usual reaction to a wife's adultery: "The most serious challenge to a man's honor is to insinuate that he is a cuckold by referring to him as a cabrón."[39] In order to give Belisa a soul, Don Perlimplín is fully prepared to run the risk of social opprobium and let himself be considered a cuckold:

> (Vibrante.) ¡Eso es! Yo necesito que ella ame a ese joven más que a su propio cuerpo. Y no hay duda que lº ama.
>
> MARCOLFA (Llorando.) Me da miedo oírlo ... Pero ¡cómo es posible! Don Perlimplín,¿cómo es posible? ¡Que usted mismo fomente en su mujer el peor de los pecados! ....
>
> PERLIMPLÍN Porque don Perlimplín no tiene honor y quiere divertirse. ¡Ya ves! Esta noche vendrá el nuevo y desconocido amante de mi señora Belisa. ¿Qué he de hacer sino cantar? (Cantando.)
>
> ¡Don Perlimplín no tiene honor!
> ¡No tiene honor! (p 1010)

In the original version of this play, Lorca gave stage instructions that while he was in bed with his wife his protagonist should wear on his head a pair of horns, the ancient symbol of cuckoldry, denoting the

horns of the he-goat. Lorca borrowed the traditional symbol denoting dishonour to show the gullibility of the old man and the misfortune which arranged marriages can bring as well as a disregard for social conventions.

Mariana and the Zapatera are forerunners of Yerma in their stern defence of honour. Mariana dares Pedrosa to find anything dishonourable in her actions or character and the cobbler's wife fights off all men who think she is easy game when her husband has left her, just as Yerma later scorns her husband's insinuations that she might dishonour him by turning to another man:

> No te dejo hablar ni una sola palabra. Ni una más. Te figuras tú y tu gente que sois vosotros los únicos que guardáis honra, y no sabes que mi casta no ha tenido nunca nada que ocultar. Anda. Acércate a mí y huele mis vestidos; ¡acércate! A ver dónde encuentras un olor que no sea tuyo, que no sea de tu cuerpo. Me pones desnuda en mitad de la plaza y me escupes. Haz conmigo lo que quieras, que soy tu mujer, pero guárdate de poner nombre de varón sobre mis pechos. (p 1332/3)

Juan's reply to her bitter protest emphasizes the huge rift which separates them and also clearly illustrates the two opposing forms of <u>honra</u> they each follow:

> No soy yo quien lo pone, lo pones tú con tu conducta y el pueblo b empieza a decir. Lo empieza a decir claramente. Cuando llego a un corro, todos callan; cuando voy a pesar la harina, todos callan, y hasta de noche, en el campo, cuando despierto, me parece que también se callan las ramas de los árboles. (p 1333)

He, like so many men of the time, blames woman for actions which affect him. Indeed, as the feminist magazine, <u>La voz de la mujer</u> correctly

pointed out, woman generally not only accepted the restrictions honour placed upon her but actually upheld its decisions: "En vez de protestar, entonces y ahora, la mujer es la más severa juez de su hermana de sexo y la más transigente y blanda para la moral del hombre."[40] The Lavanderas (and the woman villagers in La zapatera prodigiosa) are eager to spot any unbecoming or suspicious behaviour in other women. They are the echoes of Juan and the male characters in other plays whose sole concern rests with their wife.

Much has been written about the importance of honra in Yerma.[41] Certainly it is true that Yerma will not consider relations with another man, for she refuses the Vieja's offer to join her and her son; even if Victor had directly approached her, it is highly unlikely she would have deserted all she believed in to go away with him. Because of the high regard she has for the honour of her own name she refuses to admit to herself that her sterility stems from her husband. Effectively, honra closes all posible escape from the impasse in which she is trapped, and leaves her confronted with the awful dilemma of uncertainty whether she will ever bear a child or not.

The strangeness of the wife's actions reflects a disturbed state of mind as she becomes increasingly obsessed with her need to have a child. This causes her to seek possible solutions in people and events existing on the fringe of society. She visits Dolores, the sorceress; she goes by night to the cemetery to take part in superstitious rites; she finally travels to the romería in the hope of finding fulfilment. All these actions are capable of tarnishing her external reputation, and, consequently, her husband's honour. The fourth Lavandera neatly sums up the conformity an individual must observe throughout his life.

to avoid gossip: "Yo planté un tomillo, yo lo vi crecer.

El que quiera honra, qúe se porte bien." (p 1301)

C.B. Morris is right in stating: "It is significant too that her increasing desperation drives her to spend a night out of doors and jeopardize Juan's honour when she is very prickly about her own."[42] However, the scales with which the couple weigh their own values register completely different results. Yerma is not worried by the comments made by other people, she is only conscious of her personal code of honour which limits her own conduct and her duty to act in accordance with the standards of her ancestors. The wife's murder of Juan stems above all from the overwhelming maternal urge which seeks to be satisfied or forever tranquil; to some degree his death is the result of pressures loaded on Yerma by the natural world and, by its opposite, society. In the play there can be glimpsed an implicit criticism of the exaggerated attention paid by both parties to the traditional code of honour in both its moral and social forms which forces man to act within rigid limits, and which the murder of Juan proves is no longer valid and indeed distinctly harmful in contemporary society.

Virginia Higginbotham links La casa de Bernarda Alba with Golden Age literature: "In her fanatical fear of gossip Bernarda can be compared to Calderón's ghastly heroes whose conception of honour is a parody of Christian values. Like Calderón, Lorca dramatised a sick society, implicating all the main characters of his play."[43] The mother's complete dominance over her daughters underlines her charadter as the opposite of the compassionate, understanding figure usually associated with the mother. Bernarda considers it her duty to protect the good name of her daughters and, by extension, her own good name. Virginity, which Adela proudly declares she has lost,is the foundation on which

honour rests. Kenny describes the restraints imposed upon Woman by the guarding of a family's honour:

> Even the most insignificant points can endanger the good name of a woman whether she is married or unmarried and whatever the social position she must stay on the alert all the time, ready for an attempt on her virtue. Victory consists in flight or defence. We have already seen what barriers the community interposes in the relationship between girls and young men, and the steps preliminary to the wedding. Many mothers repeatedly tell their unmarried daughters that they would sooner see them dead than with child. One of the basic responsibilities of a mother is to watch her daughter's moral conduct, to know what she is doing when out of doors, with whom she dances or talks, what the young men say about her. [44]

The wrathful reaction of Bernarda to the news that a spinster of the village has had a child and buried it to escape the opprobrium of her neighbours illustrates her adherence to the general pattern of behaviour as described in the above quotation. Virginity is indeed the only virtue an unmarried woman need possess. Aceves comments on the role of the spinster in the community in his study of a Spanish village and the similarity between the normal family's reaction to a daughter who has disobeyed the unwritten code of moral conduct and Bernarda's anger with Adela is striking:

> Vergüenza is of critical importance for women, who are expected to be above reproach especially in so far as sexual activities are concerned. The ideal role model for the woman is the Virgin Mary - the Immaculada. ....Premarital sexual intercourse is prohibited and if a woman is known to have indulged in such behaviour she and her family are dishonoured. The family honour may be restored by disowning the girl; this may mollify the community but the sense of shame felt by the parents or near relatives may endure many years. [45]

The defiant way in which the mother pronounces on Adela's death that her daughter died a virgin is most significant; her death at least can hide what could not be so easily guarded if she had lived.

Bernarda hands down to the rest of her household the hypocritical use of honra which conceals her real intentions behind the cloak of convention. Thus La Poncia's advice to Adela to wait until Angustias dies in childbirth and then marry Pepe combines common-sense with complete hypocrisy and cold bloodedness. Likewise, Martirio, having found out her sister's passion for Pepe, appeals to her to stop the affair at once for the sake of the family's honour. However, the reader and audience are made aware that Martirio suffers from a frustrated love of the man and is deeply jealous of her younger sister's success. (p 1526) So once again the outer skin of honour hides the real motives behind a charadter's actions. The external appearance of honra is responsible, or so it seems, for all the mother's actions; it conceals the personal emotions of rage, cruelty and tyranny which constitute her true nature and which have completely dehumanized her even before the beginning of the play:

> Y no quiero llantos. La muerte hay que mirarla cara a cara. ¡Silencio! (A otra Hija) ¡A callar he dicho! (A otra Hija) ¡Las lágrimas cuando estés sola! Nos hundiremos todas en un mar de luto. Ella, la hija menor de Bernarda Alba, ha muerto virgen. ¿Me habéis oído? ¡Silencio, silencio he dicho! ¡Silencio! (p 1532)

E.C. Riley has compared the importance of honour in the three main rural tragedies: "Lo que aquí une, a través del general simbolismo de la sangre, los elementales conceptos de Vida y Madre. En Bodas de sangre el honor es ultrajado; en Yerma, su rígido código triunfa; en La casa de Bernarda Alba se muestra desfigurado en algo grotesco y maligno."[46]

To state that Yerma marks the triumph of honour is surely to miss the veiled attack Lorca made on the extremism of both partner's obsessions. Riley appears to be taking the play at surface level without considering the possibility of a different level lying below the initial understanding

of the play. For although Yerma keeps her honour intact, she loses the only one precious to her, her unborn son, and so her victory, if one can even call it that, is incomplete and sour. She now is left with a hopeless, lonely future and a concept of honour which is no longer of use to her, as she cannot prove the fertility of her stock without a husband.

Riley's assessment of the role of honour in the second play is broadly relevant. Certainly the Novia rejects the convention of marriage and a secure future for a life of passion with Leonardo, and he disowns even more drastically his former situation of husband and father. The force of passion which grips both of them does not heed a call to respect society's rules. However, the events which take place closely resemble the patterns of conduct laid down by their ancestors. Stock, <u>casta</u>, becomes a vital factor in determining, and even predisposing, the reactions of characters. The vendetta which the Madre continues against the family of Leonardo provides from the very start a menace of impending disaster on the play. Leonardo, onee engaged to his cousin, La Novia, who is about to marry the mother's only remaining son, is therefore an automatic enemy, for the mother believes that if she were for one moment to hate Leonardo's family less her own concept of honour would be damaged. The bad stock of Leonardo which the Madre insists on reviling (p 1227) vividly contrasts with the virtues of her son who comes of good stock: "Es de buena simiente. Su padre pudo haber tenido conmigo muchos hijos." As soon as the Madre learns that the girl her son is to marry was once the fiancée of her enemy and that her mother had run away with another man, she fears for her son. So when the two escape together, the mother has no difficulty in attributing the blame to their bad blood. (p 1244) Indeed, the Novia herself unconsciously identifies herself with her mother when she proves

her passion for her lover by telling him that even if her mother called from the dead, she would not leave him. The Novio, too, has no other course than to follow the path trodden by his ancestors and take revenge on his enemy. He is not acting as an individual but on behalf of his father, brother and relatives.

The three young people are all hounded by their ancestry and all follow the fate allotted to them. The Novio and Leonardo kill and are killed; and the Novia suffers the same lot as her mother who "no quería a su marido." (p 1181). The inevitability with which death strikes both sides without distinction ironically emphasizes the power of their inescapable destiny.

Lorca constantly made his characters refer to their pride in their family to accentuate the influence the past had on their lives. The Zapatera defends her honour against the sly insinuations of her admirers by recording the decency of her family (p 942/3). Yerma gains the immediate respect of the Vieja when she names her family; on the other hand the old woman warns her that Juan is in the wrong, for he comes from bad blood:

> La culpa es de tu marido. ¿Lo oyes? Me dejaría cortar las manos. Ni su padre, ni su abuelo, ni su bisabuelo se portaron como hombres de casta. Para tener un hijo ha sido necesario que se junte el cielo con la tierra. Están hechos con saliva. En cambio, tu gente no. Tienes hermamos y primos a cien leguas a la redonda. Mira qué maldición ha venido a caer sobre tu hermosura.(p 1344)

Yerma's suspicions about her husband's fertility reach full pitch after this revelation. But she is unable to alter the situation because of her devoted faith in her honour and even in that of her husband.

Family tradition is therefore extremely relevant to the estimation of the individual's worth in the eyes of the village as a whole. The events of the past can influence in an inescapable way the present, and the importance of origin increases rather than fades with the passage of time. Lorca's preoccupation with the effect this has on individual relationships is evident. As I have illustrated, he considered that the straightjacket honour imposed on any situation prevented the freedom of an individual to act as he wished.

The frequency with which the word 'decency' comes to the lips of Lorca's characters is the natural consequence of the importance attached to the outward display of honour. Decency, a quality of moral righteousness, becomes an external value of a 'normal' community. In other words, the image presented to a stranger should give the impression that the villagers live in accordance with this norm of behaviour. In many cases Spanish people consider that 'indecent' events can only be caused by strangers who have no roots in the place. La Poncia extols the virtue of decency by echoing the hypocritical attitudes of her mistress when she defends the decency of the men of the village by claiming that only men who did not belong to the village would be capable of causing the dishonour of a single woman (p 1456).

Lorca took delight in exposing the hypocritical nature of selfrighteousness from the very beginning of his literary career. Alacrinito blithely mocks in <u>El maleficio de la mariposa</u>:

> Y aunque pobre soy decente.
> ¿Que me emborracho? .... Pues bien:
> ¿No se emborracha la gente?
> Yo soy un viejo inocente. (p 691)

The Zapatera dismisses the accusations made about her by the townsfolk as "cosas muy indecentes" (p 944), which degrade, in her own estimation, the noble quality of her character. Yerma refuses to accept that the people she sees in an effort to cure her barrenness taint her own good name. She protests to Dolores, whom she visits in the cemetery: "No soy una casada indecente; pero yo sé que los hijos nacen del hombre y de la mujer." (p 1329) It is ironic that her husband insults her good name by roundly condemning her for her immoral behaviour when he has been the cause of any indiscreet action (p 1315).

Not surprisingly, Bernarda Alba is a devout believer in the display of decency, which satisfies her desire to show a united front of respectability and superiority in the village, while it is in truth a convenient front for the preservation of her own authority. She rebukes Angustias for her indecent behaviour in looking for Pepe on the day of her step-father's funeral. She piously laments the effort needed to exert any influence over her eldest daughter:

> Esa sale a sus tías; blancas y untuosas y que ponían los ojos de carnero al piropo de cualquier barberillo. ¡Cuánto hay que sufrir y luchar para hacer que las personas sean decentes y no tiren al monte demasiado! (p 1456)

(It is interesting to note that her daughter's descent provides an infallible excuse for her wayward behaviour, lifting any blame from herself.)

In the name of decency she takes an even sterner view of those women who transgress social conventions; showing no compassion whatsoever she demands retribution for the spinster who killed her baby. This is in direct conflict with the law passed during the reign of the Republic that illegitimate

children were classed as legitimate and no distinction was made between married and unmarried mothers. As in the case here, such laws were ignored in the small isolated villages.[47] La Poncia scathingly judges the true worth of her mistress in these few words: "Ella, la más aseada; ella, la más decente; ella, la más alta." (p 1441) Bernarda, in effect, uses all moral qualities for a purely social purpose, and more ominously still, for the purely private and selfish motive of maintaining her superiority over all whom she knows.

Throughout the plays, Lorca has pointed out that the traditional virtue of decency was essentially an empty, hypocritical convention not used for its moral worth but to preserve the standards set by social tradition.

The Importance of Public Opinion

The few wealthy inhabitants obliged the village community to conform to a set pattern of behaviour. This faced the individual with a kind of social bribe. He is forced to be on guard at all times not to provoke the gossip of his neighbours if he is to remain a trusted member of the community. The associations aroused by the phrase <u>qué dirán</u> bring fear and trepidation to law abiding citizens, for not only is abuse directed at the individual but also at the members of his family. Kenny's description of the care taken to maintain a decent air of respectability could well refer to such characters as Bernarda Alba, the Zapatero and Juan:

> If a person behaves incorrectly he makes the family, especially his parents, 'undergo vergüenza'; the family participates in the shameful situation. Though they are not directly to blame, nevertheless it is possible that they are to a certain extent responsible, since had they brought up their son better or set him a better example he might have known how to behave more correctly.
>
> .....Very important is the presence of other people as witnesses; the greater number of people present, and the higher their social status, the greater the vergüenza suffered. The action in itself is not as important as the surroundings in which it takes place. Even though the phrase to undergo vergüenza is mostly applied by oneself to oneself, and even though it is an intimate feeling of humiliation, it bears reference to the part played by other people's opinions, embodied in the phrase ¿qué dirán? 48

Indeed, the characters I have mentioned fear to be dishonoured in any way, not because of the moral standards they set themselves, but through their fear of what others might say. The Zapatero has an obsessive desire for his household to act according to the norms of society; his wife's threats against the decency which he has preserved throughout his life wrenches from him entreaties to prevent her from spoiling the peaceful existence he had previously enjoyed. His confession: "Toda mi vida ha sido en mí una verdadera preocupación evitar el escándalo" (p 921) could not be clearer: he has lived with one eye on the reaction of his neighbours, every gesture, every word has been measured before being pronounced in order to achieve the best impression on the witnesses, as Kenny observes, of his moral state. The Zapatera deliberately flouts convention to spite her staid husband, and more precisely, I would judge, to arouse them both from the monotony of their existence. However, her reactions elicit a different response to the one she expects; her husband runs away to hide from the wrath of the respectable members of society which he vividly foresees:

> ¡Con todo el mundo y a estas horas! ¡Qué dirán los que vengan al rosario de la iglesia! ¡Qué dirán en la casino! ¡Me estarán poniendo !... En cada casa un traje con ropa interior y todo. (La Zapatera se ríe.) ¡Ay Dios mío! ¡Tengo razón para marcharme! Quisiera oír a la mujer del sacristán; pues ¿y los curas? ¿Qué dirán los curas? Eso será lo que habrá que oír (p 931)

It is interesting to note that Lorca has named members of the Church among those pillars of convention. He was suggesting that the Church's role in the village, as in many villages in Spain, was not primarily concerned with spiritual aid, but rather with the trappings of social convention. The hypocrisy with which the villagers condemn the Zapatera to her husband and spread highly coloured tales of her exploits only to self-consciously rally round her when she learns of the cobbler's flight echoes the insincerity with which they obey the traditional standards of behaviour in order to use them for their own selfish ends. The social criticism which Lorca hid under the surface of his plays is again in evidence in <u>Yerma.</u> Almost as soon as the curtain is raised every action of Yerma and her husband which diverges from the rigid code of attitudes the villagers follow is in the possession of the gossips. Juan is fully aware of the pressures put upon him because of this; he therefore demands from his wife total compliance to the unwritten rules of conduct. When she is late in bringing him his food, Juan anxiously demands: "No comprendo en qué te has entretenido." Yerma's reply cannot reassure him: "Oí cantar los pájaros."

JUAN "Está bien. Así darás que hablar a las gentes." (p 1299)

When she acts more and more strangely, her husband's concern is not for her state of health but for the gossip it will cause in the community (p 1315). He is so preoccupied with the appearanee he feels they must maintain to preserve his <u>honra</u> that he prevents Yerma from enjoying any freedom. Lorca emphasizes his condemnation of the way traditional virtues

were manipulated by others to control the life of any individual when Juan answers Yerma's defence of her actions with a bland, automatic rejoinder which shows his sweeping disregard for his wife's emotions:

"YERMA: Hablar con gente no es pecado
JUAN: Pero puede parecerlo." (p 1315)

Appearance matters; that could be the motto for Juan. The horror he expresses at discovering his wife at the cemetery is not motivated by any religious qualms over her unchristian behaviour, but at what people will say. Juan, and another follower of social tradition, Bernarda Alba, are both perfect examples of the Spaniard who puts his place in society above all else:

> The Castillian peasant frequently views his world as a place where trouble lurks everywhere; a world of suspicions and mistrust where order is a tenuous thing difficult to achieve and more difficult to maintain ..... the fear of disorder, disharmony and trouble is ever present and the signs are everywhere abundant: the barred windows, the secrecy that pervades business deals, and the ever present fear of the ubiquitous 'they' who seem to be so powerful an agent of social control. 49

Bernarda is at the same time a powerful leader in the village hierarchy, a member of the <u>they</u> whom other villagers so fear, and a puppet of the control she herself helps to enforce. She insists on knowing every detail about any misconduct which occurs. It is below her dignity and naturally that of her daughters to find out news personally, so she sends her servant, La Poncia, to report on a hubbub in the streets (p 1503). However, even if the mother does not need to draw attention to the fetters of social convention, Magdalena bitterly denounces the ubiquitous creatures who rule all their lives: "nos pudrimos por el qué dirán." (p 1461) This statement proves a sharp warning of the final events in the play. The noise caused by Adela's suicide and the shooting by Bernarda awaken

the neighbours, and even at the height of the crisis, the mother considers them more important than her family. She orders silence and proclaims with total hypocrisy the virginity of her dead daughter. For the sake of the all-powerful 'qué dirán' and honour she is willing to tell a blatant lie.

In many of his plays Lorca sketched a brief, but shrewd illustration of the effect gossip had on society. His aim was to point out to the audience the ease with which the attitudes of others could rule an individual, firstly through fear, as in the case of Rosita, who wants to leave the house in secret: "Pero yo prefiero salir de aquí con la calle a oscuras. Si no fuera posible apagaría el farol. Do todos modos los vecinos estarán acechando (p 1426)", or secondly, by the character's appreciation of it for his or her own ends; for instance, the reactions of the guests provide an excellent excuse for the Novia to repel the advances of her new husband, and hide the anguish she feels on her marriage (p 1240).

All the plays in which the community exerts a vice-like grip on the individual examine the problems of social relationships in such a closed environment. The geographical and cultural isolation which exists in these places automatically make the inhabitants look inwards into their own familiar world. Therefore it was far too easy to allow a preoccupation with gossip and social appearance to reach exaggerated and harmful heights. I believe Lorca considered that the time was long overdue for a radical change in society, and a replacement of social traditions with values that were relevant to a new age, and this he tried to assert in his rural dramas.

Country Speech and Sayings

The dramatist cleverly demonstrated how ready-made phrases are a convenient prop to support traditional attitudes. As a child, he had no doubt heard many in the conversations of his maids and father's employees. They are in fact an integral part of country speech, especially in Andalusia. Caro Baroja reveals how many people cling to their favourite expressions as an infallible way of backing their opinions:

> Los andaluces, por ejemplo, son de tal modo aficionados a refranes y lugares comunes que muchas veces sus conversaciones parecen al de fuera algo arbitrario, incoherente y barroco, cuando, en realidad, son lo más ajustado a normas viejas que pueda haber. A cualquier cosa que diga uno, el andaluz le replica con un refrán o un 'a propósito'. 50

Lorca put his knowledge of stock phrases to a particular purpose. Those characters particularly who blindly accept traditional values have set dicta on their lips to give a concise reply to any awkward question. In Los títeres de Cachiporra this achieves comic effect; the hollowness of Cristobita's belief in the traditional expression is mildly humourous: "Me gustaría hablar con ella,pero no quiero que tome demasiada confianza. La confianza es la madre de todos los vicios. ¡No me digas que no!" (p 733) In later plays the eagerness with which Juan and Bernarda Alba resort to stock phrases to prove their point is much more forbidding. Their curt commands and orders are vocal illustrations of their faith in the past to deal with the present. These crutch words are simply an effective barrier for the two characters to stand behind. Juan reprimands Yerma for swearing because "Está feo en una mujer" (p 1299). The lucid argument he gives for not wanting children reveals his inability to think for himself: "Sin hijos es la vida más dulce." (p 1348) The

series of ready-made proverbs concerning the virtues of honour are quickly exhausted by Juan (p 1311) and indeed by the Lavanderas. The fifth washer-woman dismisses honra as a quality all decent people should possess: "La que quiere honra, que la gane." (p 1301)

Bernarda applies her store of stock phrases to maintain her dominance over others. Three times she drums out harsh rebukes to her maids to ensure their subservience:

"Menos gritos y más obras." (p 1445)

"Me sirves y te pago. ¡Nada más!" (p 1458)

"Eso es lo que debías hacer. Obrar y callar a todo. Es la obligación de los que viven a sueldo." (p 1500)

Twice she repeats this affirmation: "Aquí no pasa nada..." (p 1519) as if to comfort herself against the possibility of the untoward occurring. Her statements prevent her from having to reassess the situation and note the disturbing elements of her daughters mental health. Indeed her maxim could well be the reply she made to Adela's question about the stars: "..... es mejor no pensar en ellas." (p 1516)

Her repetition of the same phrase or similar expressions exemplify the dramatist's intention to expose the blinkered, dogmatic attitude she holds towards life. Juan and Bernarda both echo their obsessive regard for tradition by the tenacity with which they cling to dicta and dogma.

Lorca accurately reflected the speech and sayings of country folk in his plays. From his childhood he paid great attention to how ordinary people expressed themselves. He emphasized, in an interview, the deep interests he had in the highly coloured speech of the peasants:

> A mí me interesa más la gente que habita el paisaje que el paisaje mismo. Yo puedo estarme contemplando una sierra durante un cuarto de hora; pero en seguida corro a hablar con el pastor o el leñador de esa sierra. Luego, al escribir, recuerda uno estos diálogos y surge la expresión popular auténtica. Yo tengo un gran archivo en los recuerdos de mi niñez de oír hablar a la gente. Es la memoria poética y a ella me atengo. (p 1771)

He knew the influence nature had on the life of the Spanish people. They worked on the land, were dependent upon it for their livelihood and were surrounded by it as they lived in small isolated villages. Not surprisingly, its presence is reflected in their speech and in their customs and Lorca was careful to blend into his folk dramas these details of the peasant's life. The first play he wrote includes a remedy to mend the butterfly's broken wing:

> Dale el rocío añejo
> y ponle un tibio paño
> con emplastos de ortigas
> y polen de azucenas. (p 699)

This and the home-made recipes suggested by the Soltera to cure the mother's ailments in Doña Rosita la soltera illustrate how keenly Lorca noted country folk's faith in the powers of nature. Bodas de sangre, La casa de Bernarda Alba and Yerma allcontain mentions of food; the lemon drink which the cobbler and the Vecina Negra offer to the Zapatera is the same as the refreshment offered to Leonardo by his wife.[51] The traditional dainties which the guests eat after attending the funeral in Lorca's final play and the tray of tit-bits offered to the mother and her son in Bodas de sangre on their official visit to his fiancée add to the rural atmosphere of the plays. When the Zapatera explodes with rage

against the villagers, the names she calls her enemies and the down-to-earth, abrupt manner of her speech are mannerisms commonly found in the conversations of real individuals: "Cállate, larga de lengua, penacho de catalineta, que si yo lo he hecho..., si yo lo he hecho, ha sido por mi propio gusto.... Si no te metes dentro de tu casa te hubiera arrastrado, viborilla empolvada." (p 912) She laughingly jokes that if the boy tells her "cosas muy indecentes" "cojo un pimiento picante y te pongo la lengua como un ascua." (p 944) Bernarda also prides herself on the peppery qualities of her character.

Devoto has dealt admirably with popular sources in the dialogue of Doña Rosita la soltera:[52] the only addition to the play I will make concerns the humorous earthy wit of the Ama. She utters a popular refrain to the horror of her mistress, for vulgar sayings belong strictly to the pueblo:

> AMA: Como quien tiene boca.... Como decían en mi pueblo:
> La boca sirve para comer,
> Las piernas sirven para la danza,
> y hay una cosa de la mujer....
> (Se detiene y se acerca a la Tía y lo dice bajo.)
> TÍA: ¡Jesús! (Signando.)
> AMA: Son indecencias de los pueblos. (Signando.) (p 1353)

The mildly obscene verses repeated by Don Cristóbal are, as Devoto observes, taken directly from popular childrens'songs and games.[53] Similarly the conversation between the Gata and Niño in Así que pasen cinco años echoes the earthiness of popular expression (p 1066).

Proverbs, like stock phrases, are part and parcel of the public's

vocal equipment:

> ....For the language used in the pueblo is full of proverbs which reflect its history, adages and short pithy sayings which are sometimes devastatingly scurrilous in their application. With such a range as Castilian supplies the illiterate scarcely needs to think gramatically when he can reach out to an apt maxim to serve any occasion. When logic fails in an argument the confident use of a proverb may succeed. 54

This indeed applies to both proverbs, and, as I have shown, to stock phrases. The proverbs chosen by Lorca serve a double function: they show how strongly the character's roots are embedded in their country life, and secondly they throw light on the plot. The exchange between Angustias and Magdalena denotes the pitch the daughters' frustrations have reached, for they seek relief through petty bickering:

ANGUSTIAS: Y, además, ¡más vale onza en el arca que ojos negros en la cara!

MAGDALENA: Por un oído me entra y por otro me sale. (p 1472)

The prejudiced faith in the precepts of their predecessors which many of Lorca's characters reveal are emphasized by their belief in superstit - ions. Ignorance coupled with respect for the opinions of previous generations maintain superstitions. The Niño in Mariana Pineda echoes the prejudice of his forefathers when he says he dislikes gipsies because: "Sus madres son las brujas" (p 821). The anxiety which the Zapatera arouses in her husband when she swirls the chair round underlines how tradition-bound he is. Devoto has found the exact proverb relating to this superstition: "que el que hace girar una silla trae desgracia".[55] The visual effect too brings home the ridiculous nature of the cobbler's

character:

> (La Zapatera coge una silla, y, sentada en la ventana, empieza a darle vueltas.)
> ZAPATERO (Cogiendo otra silla y dándole vueltas en sentido contrario.) Si sabes que tengo esa superstición, y para mí esto es como si me dieras un tiro,¿por qué lo haces?
> ZAPATERA (Soltando la silla.) ¿Qué he hecho yo? ¿No te digo que no me dejas ni moverme?
> ZAPATERO Ya estoy harto de explicarte...; pero es inútil. (Va a hacer mutis, pero la Zapatera empieza otra vez y el Zapatero viene corriendo desde la puerta y da vueltas a su silla.) ¿Por qué no me dejas marchar, mujer? (p 928/9)

The dramatist has grouped together two events which recall to the audience superstitious forebodings in La casa de Bernarda Alba. The salt spilt by Magdalena and maliciously commented on by Amelia and the pearl engagement ring of Angustias cast a shadow of ill fortune over the house. The first superstition constitutes a general warning of gloom, the second is a taste of the bad luck which will hound the family:

> PRUDENCIA (a Angustias) ¿Te ha regalado ya el anillo?
> ANGUSTIAS Mírelo usted. (Se lo alarga.)
> PRUDENCIA Es precioso. Tres perlas. En mi tiempo las perlas significaban lágrimas.
> ANGUSTIAS Pero..las cosas han cambiado.
> ADELA Yo creo que no. Las cosas significan siempre lo mismo. Los anillos de pedida deben ser de diamantes. (p 1510)

It also points to the deliberate attempt by Adela to ruin her elder sister's future marriage. Lorca has deliberately included superstitions in his plays to underline the rural element in them and to emphasize the traditional atmosphere in which the characters are embedded.

Poeta en Nueva York and Violence

A study of social traditions in the plays of Lorca will benefit from an examination of Poeta en Nueva York. I believe that the work throws light upon his personal philosophy for it forms part of his experience of society and it reflects his growing preoccupation with the injustices perpetrated by the rich on the poor.

It would be useful to study the reasons why Lorca went to New York. His visit was not just the result of a desire to broaden his horizons and travel; on the contrary, in many ways it was a negative way of getting away from his native land. As many critics have commented, Lorca had been suffering an emotional crisis prior to his decision to leave Spain. Fernando de los Ríos gave him the opportunity or accompanying him to New York. His father, pleased that his sonwould travel with his responsible friend, paid his expenses.

From various letters he wrote before the trip, it is evident that the poet felt increasingly hemmed in by what he considered was the restrictive atmosphere of his country and the protective circle of his family. He wanted to be aroused by new stimuli which a completely alien land would provide, preferring New York to any European country which he believed would be too similar to the place he wished to leave. However, the letters he wrote to his friends from aboard ship and later from New York contain conflicting news of the poet's happiness. Morla Lynch states that while

Lorca was travelling to his destination he was apparently depressed, anxious and homesick: "Tengo hambre de mi tierra y de tu salonato de todos los días. Nostalgia de charlar con vosotros y de cantaros viejas canciones de España."

"No se para que he partido-agrega; me lo pregunto cien veces al día. Me miro en el espejo camarote y no me reconozco. Parezco otro Federico."[56] So a previous letter to his friend stating that, in spite of, or even because of, the disagreeable impression he had already formed of New York, he felt optimistic about enjoying his future stay, was written in the first flush of enthusiasm at visiting a completely foreign country (p 1673).

The letters sent to his friends while he was living abroad do create an illusion of happiness. They also relate how easily he had gained friends and how well he progressed in English. As I have already pointed out, the poet's character expressed in the letters very often took on the personality of the person to whom it was directed, or the letter is perhaps a false picture of his true state, intended to mask his true emotions. Therefore these letters cannot be simply accepted at face value. The enthusiasm with which he described a gayer aspect of New York was definitely not reflected in his poetry:

> Yo vivo en la Universidad de Columbia, en el centro de Nueva York, en un sitio espléndido junto al río Hudson. Tengo cinco clases y paso el día divertidísimo y como en un sueño. Pasé el verano en el Canadá con unos amigos y ahora estoy en Nueva York, que es una ciudad de alegría insospechada. He escrito mucho. Tengo casi dos libros de poemas yuna pieza de teatro. Estoy sereno y alegre. Ha vuelto a nacer aquel Federico de antes que tú no has conocido, pero que espero conocerás. (p 1674)

The poet seemed to insinuate that he had finally recovered from the emotional torment against which he had been battling. Cano deduces from this letter that Lorca came back from America happier and more confident about his own work.[57] It seems true that he returned calmer and with new interest in literary creation, but it is questionable if he returned as "aquel Federico de antes," for the new experiences and contacts which had made a deep impression on him would obviously have reshaped some parts of his character. As I will demonstrate, he came back more aware than he had been of the imperfections of civilization.

The shock Lorca received when he came face to face with a country so different from his own gave his poetry a tension and anguish not immediately connected with his earlier works. Many critics are divided in their opinions of the effect the city had on his personality. Auclair declares that it was rejected by Lorca because it was so different from Spanish towns: "Car son oeuvre correspond à son enfance, par action ou réaction; Poète à New York criera son refus d'un univers étranger au sien.[58] According to Lorca, he wished to visit America for the clear reason that it was so strange; thus it is rather misleading to claim that he rejected it. The anguished state of his mind, combined with a new, heightened awareness of social injustices which he had to some extent been accustomed to see in Spain gave his poetry its sharp character. Barea approaches a just picture of the probable situation of the author: "He who defended himself by heightening, not by blurring his sensitiveness, and by transmitting his own version to others, was suddenly thrown back

on his weakness and loneliness in surroundings, where his senses were bewildered and dislocated, his vision no longer clear."[59]

As I have pointed out, his vision had in fact been obscured before he left Spain due to some unspecified emotional problem which clearly was of extreme importance to him, and which he strove to keep private. Furthermore, Lorca had at that time been in contact with writers and artists of Surrealism: the style in which he would convey his emotions may well have been affected by the contemporary popularity of Surrealism in the literary circles in which Lorca moved. He himself made public his personal view of the city: "No he querido hacer una descripción por fuera de Nueva York, como no la haría de Moscú. Son dos ciudades sobre las que se vierte ahora un río de libros descriptivos. Mi observación ha de ser, pues, lírica. Arquitectura extrahumana y ritmo furioso, geometría y angustia." (p 1713) In another interview, the poet elaborated on the impressions he had received of the city:

> .....Nueva York es terrible. Algo monstruoso. A mí me gusta andar por las calles, perdido; pero reconozco que Nueva York es la gran mentira del mundo. Nueva York es el Senegal con máquinas. Los ingleses han llevado allí una civilización sin raíces. Han levantado casas y casas; pero no han ahondado en la tierra. Se vive para arriba,para arriba, ... Pero así como en la América de abajo nosotros dejamos a Cervantes, los ingleses en la América de arriba no han dejado su Shakespeare. (p 1812)

What he found most distressing then was the American's obsession with the present and with their own lives, but only in purely material terms; they had not behind them the wall of literary tradition which Lorca believed gave a nation its stability. He inferred in the statement that the lie the American lives issues from his complete preoccupation with progress, but

with progress not of the entire people but of the individual and his acquaintances.

Contrary to the information Lorca imparted in his letter, Auclair and other critics confirm that while he lived in New York he mixed mainly with other Spaniards,[60] and his English was, according to public opinion, virtually non-existent. Consequently,he was forced to gather a view of the city from seeing it and the activities performed by its inhabitants. Any communication he experienced with the people was confined to universal sounds - cries, laughter, shouts - so the salient picture he formed was bound to be impressionistic:

> Existen las montañas. Lo sé.
> Y los anteojos para la sabiduría.
> Lo sé. Pero no he venido a ver el cielo.
> Yo he venido para ver la turbia sangre. (p 515)

Lorca came to a foreign place to see the evils a nation was capable of producing. His inability to understand all but the common language of sounds all men make, inevitably heightened his awareness of the misery in New York. However, because of its completely alien culture the city exposed the injustices its system maintained much more easily to the poet than a familiar European city would have done. It is essential to bear in mind how prejudiced Lorca's view was; while attacking the faults of social conventions, he ignored the advantages of its civilization. It may well be true that during this period of disturbed emotions he considered happiness and optimism not to be outstanding qualities of poetry. Indeed the "Nueva York de cieno/Nueva York de alambre y de muerte" (p 523) clearly illustrates the jaundiced eye with which he gazed on the city. The poet created in Poeta en Nueva York an image of himself surrounded by a

frightingly hostile world, a void (p 492). As a measure of protest and bewilderment against the domineering weight of American society, he will let his hair grow long. 'Paisaje de la multitud que vomita' expresses graphically the feeling of solitude and terror the city produced in him:

> Me defiendo con esta mirada
> que mana de las ondas por donde el alba no se atreve,
> yo, poeta sin brazos, perdido
> entre la multitud que vomita,
> sin caballo efusivo que corte
> los espesos musgos de mis sienes. (p 488)

The poet railed in horror against the oppression crushing the poor. In his imagination he pictured that the children of these people would be born into virtual slavery. 'Danza de la muerte' contains a damning attack on contemporary social standards:

> El mascarón bailará entre columnas de sangre y de números,
> entre huracanes de oro y gemidos de obreros parados
> que aullarán, nocheoscura, por tu tiempo sin luces,
> ¡oh salvaje Norteamérica! ¡Oh impúdica!,¡oh salvaje,
> tendida en la frontera de la nieve! (p. 486)

The poem 'La aurora' consists of a flat contradiction of the usual visions of hope, light, peace conjured up by the symbolic awakening light. Optimism and love are replaced by destruction and death and hopelessness:

> La aurora llega y nadie la recibe en su boca
> porque allí no hay mañana ni esperanza posible.
> A veces las monedas en enjambres furiosos
> taldran y devoran abandonados niños. (p 497)

Lorca protested against the plight of the poor; he did so with all the force of the emotions which had been building up inside him. He opposed the innocent suffering of these people with the greedy inhumanity of the rich and the idolization of their god: money, and its temple, Wall Street. Barea argues that the venom with which he attacked the capatalist system of America and aligned himself with the poor was attributable to the shock the situation must have had upon him: "He had to arrange his landscape; he had to acknowledge the mass suffering and mass ugliness which he had not recognised on the lesser plane of Spanish society."[61] This statement holds true only to

a certain extent; he had for many years felt an instinctive sympathy for the poor. However, on his return from America he did show himself to be a firm supporter of the lower classes in practical terms or La Barraca, in his interviews and lectures and indirectly in his plays. So New York was a catalyst which aroused the dormant social conscience which he already possessed.

Lorca described in the interview 'Iré a Santiago' the hypnotic effect Wall Street had upon the rich:

> Impresionante por frío y por cruel. Llega el oro en ríos de todas las partes de la tierra, y la muerte llega con él. En ninguna parte del mundo se siente como allí la ausencia total del espíritu; manadas de nombres que no pueden pasar del tres, y manadas de hombres que no pueden pasar del seis; desprecio de la ciencia pura y valor demoníaco del presente. Espectáculo de suicidas, de gentes histéricas y grupos desmayados. Espectáculo terrible, pero sin grandeza.
>
> - , Horrible. Nadie puede darse idea de la soledad que siente allí un español, y más todavía un hombre del Sur. Porque si te caes - por ejemplo-, serás atropellado, y si resbalas al agua arrojarán sobre ti los papeles de sus meriendas. Esas son las gentes de Nueva York, las multitudes que se apoyan sobre las barandillas de los embarcaderos. (p 1715)

The shock of Wall Street was intensified by the fact that Lorca visited New York when it was in the throes of the great economic crisis of the depression. The unexpected crash of the dollar created a chaotic situation:

> El 1929 internacional tiene por sobre todas las noticias una prolongada y tensa que viene de América: la aurísima crisis del dólar, el crack de toda la poderosa economía de los Estados Unidos, y ello hasta límites dramáticos que sólo un mes antes nadie se hubiera atrevido a sospechar. En ochenta días se producen nada menos que 14 millones de despidos, quiebran centenares de empresas y se suicidan unas cuantas docenas de capitanes de la industria y del comercio. 62

'Danza de la muerte' contains a fierce denunciation of Wall Street and its followers, the "borrachos de plata", "Los hombres ríos". Lorca insinuated that the worship of money automatically brought spiritual death, as he attacked the figureheads of the capitalist system, heads of state, the millionaires and the Pope. He finished with a gloomy prophecy of the ruin of the world:

Que ya las cobras silbarán por los últimos pisos,
que ya las ortigas estremecerán patios y terrazas,
que ya la Bolsa será una pirámide de musgo,
que ya vendrán lianas después de los fusiles
y muy pronto, muy pronto, muy pronto.
¡Ay, Wall Street! (p 484-7)

Lorca broadened his attack in 'Nueva York oficina y denuncia', uttering a biting criticism of a society whose top classes ignored their social inferiors. Justice and equality were non-existent. Lorca, in his wrath, turned the city into hell:

Yo denuncio a toda la gente
que ignora la otra mitad,
la mitad irredimible
que levanta sus montes de cemento
donde laten los corazones
de los animalitos que se olvidan
y donde caeremos todos
en la última fiesta de los taladros. ..
La otra mitad me escucha
devorando, orinando, volando en su pureza,
como los niños de las porterías
que llevan frágiles palitos
a los huecos donde se oxidan
las antenas de los insectos..
No es el infierno, es la calle..
No es la muerte, es la tienda de frutas. (p 516)

The poet believed that the only salvation for society lay with the poor; when they bestowed on themselves the dignity every human ought to have as a right then a more equal society would be founded. In 'Grito hacia Roma' the poet included himself among the people whose duty was to shout for their rights:: the basic one being food ::

porque queremos el pan nuestro de cada día,
flor de aliso y perenne ternura desgranada,
porque queremos que se cumpla la voluntad de la Tierra
que da sus frutos para todos. (p 522)

The degradation of the poor is vividly accentuated by Lorca in 'Oda al rey de Harlem':

> Es por el silencio sapientísimo
> cuando los camareros y los cocineros y los que limpian
> con la lengua/las heridas de los millonarios... (p 481)

Lorca's sympathy for the negro, the socially oppressed member of American society was instinctive, but this vision of the negro did not derive from his imagination alone. He used to wander around the streets of Harlem seeing them in their community as well as in their working relationship with the white American. Lorca captured the spirit of Harlem in an interview recounting the impression it made on him:

> ..... Lo que yo miraba, y paseaba, y soñaba era el gran barrio negro de Harlem, la ciudad negra más importante del mundo, donde lo más lúbrico tiene un acento de inocencia que lo hace perturbador y religioso... Recelo negro por todas partes, Méndez. Algo muy típico de esa raza. Se teme a las gentes ricas de Park Avenue, Las puertas están entornadas. (p 1714)

However, Lorca knew how differently negroes were considered in artistic circles. New York led the world in this respect for it recognised the negro's theatrical worth. There he was a popular, almost cult figure:

> El teatro nuevo, avanzado de formas y teoría, es mi mayor preocupación. Nueva York es un sitio único para tomarle el pulso al nuevo arte teatral. Los mejores actores que he visto han sido también negros. Mimos insuperables. La revista negra va sustituyendo la revista blanca. El arte blanco se va quedando para las minorías. El público quiere siempre teatro negro, deliran por él.
>
> El prejuicio teatral contra los negros es solo social. Nunca artístico. Cuando canta un negro en un teatro se nace un 'silencio negro', un silencio cóncavo, enorme y especial. Cuando un actor blanco quiere absorber la atención del público, se pinta de negro, Al Jolson. La gran carcajada del norte-americano- una carcajada desgarrada, violenta, casi ibérica - es arrancada siempre por el actor negro. (p 1699/1700)

Thus the negro approached the gipsy in the interest Lorca felt in them. Both social groups enjoyed renown for their artistic merit, both had been the traditional victims of the class hierarchy.. According to Barea, the negro's importance in the poetry of Lorca at this time is parallel to the nostalgia he felt for Spain. Indeed the negro's similar social position to the gipsy made him an obvious figure to examine. But this cannot be regarded as an accurate interpretation of the negro's role in Poeta en Nueva York. The intensity and clarity with which the poet outlined the negro's oppression are far greater than his treatment of the gipsy in the Romancero gitano. Talking of the negro in the interview 'Iré a Santiago' the poet explained that he wanted to portray him against the background of his native land:

> Yo quería hacer el poema de la raza negra en Norteamérica y subrayar el dolor que tienen los negros de ser negros en un mundo contrario; esclavos de todos los inventos del hombre blanco y de todas sus máquinas, con el perpetuo susto de que se les olvide un día enceder la estufa de gas, o guiar el automóvil, o abrocharse el cuello almidonado, o clavarse el tenedor en un ojo. Porque los inventos no son suyos.
> (p 1714/5)

Lorca interpreted their longing to return to their natural environment in 'Norma y paraíso de los negros' (p 477/8) and in 'Oda al rey de Harlem' (p 478/82): the negro's desire to return to his native land may well echo the loneliness and bewilderment Lorca experienced in an alien society. It also reflects Lorca's belief that to live in a just society man must return to his origins and live in harmony with nature. Both poems in the section 'Los negros' foresee that the negro will be obliged to resort to violence in order to punish his repressors who have ruined his natural environment. The Janitor in 'Oda al rey de Harlem' is the symbolic victim of white men:

Es preciso matar al rubio vendedor de aguardiente,
a todos los amigos de la manzana y de la arena,
y es necesario dar con los puños cerrados
a las pequeñas judías que tiemblan llenas de burbujas,
para que el rey de Harlem cante con su muchedumbre,
para que los cocodrilos duerman en largas filas
bajo el amianto de la luna,
y para que nadie dude de la infinita belleza
de los plumeros, los ralladores, los cobres y las cacerolas
de las cocinas.
¡Ay Harlem! ¡Ay Harlem! ¡Ay Harlem!
¡No hay angustia comparable a tus ojos oprimidos,
a tu sangre estremecida dentro del eclipse oscuro,
a tu violencia granate sordomuda en la penumbra,
a tu gran rey prisionero con un traja de conserje! (p 479)

In his tirade against the social superiority of the white American, Lorca set the latter's material comfort against the physical and spiritual ghetto in which the negro was cornered.

Sections IV and X of the work echo Lorca's obvious relief at leaving the model capitalist city to visit "civilization". Cobb has misinterpreted his application of the word: "In actual fact, could Lorca seriously contend that Spain was more 'civilized' than New York. The poet probably intends to suggest that the freedom of expression he has experienced in New York will be forbidden by the restrictions of 'civilization' in his native Spain."[63] Firstly, Lorca was travelling directly to Spain; but he stopped at Cuba where as he himself said in an interview (p 1716) the <u>real</u> America existed. The life there was not centred upon material success as it was exclusively in the city he had left. Secondly, Cobb affirms that the restrictions Spanish civilization maintained were of true significance to the title. This would hardly account for the optimistic end to the book, nor would it emphasize fully the artificial conventions of money and class which have ruined New York. The "intellectual game" which Barea justifiably sees as making up half of the poems' contents[64] and the "evasion both

through irony and through the mist of surrealism"[65] were both methods used by the poet to express stylistically the emotions the place conjured up in him. His reactions to what he saw around him were sincere, but possibly exaggerated by his own mental state. The personal cry of protest he uttered in 'Poema del lago Edem' became universal as he spoke for every man in New York and in the world:

> Pero no quiero mundo ni sueño, voz divina,
> quiero mi libertad, mi amor humano
> en el rincón más oscuro de la brisa que nadie quiera.
> ¡Mi amor humano! (p 499)

Images of violence abound in Poeta en Nueva York. Lorca particularly lingered over the killing of domestic animals to feed the upper classes, for violence is an intrinsic quality of a society who live off the land and where one class depends on the subjugation of the other:

> Todos los días se matan en New York
> cuatro millones de patos,
> cinco millones de cerdos,
> dos mil palomas para el gusto de los agonizantes,
> un millón de vacas,
> un millón de corderos
> y dos millones de gallos,
> que dejan los cielos hechos añicos. (p 515/6)

In the majority of his poems, however, violent wounding or killing of animals is present. A woman turns an octopus inside out in 'Paisaje de la multitud que vomita'; 'Vaca' contains a graphic picture of a dying cow. 'Oda al rey de Harlem' exposes man's unreasoned inhumanity to animals:

> Con una cuchara,
> arrancaba los ojos a los cocodrilos
> y golpeaba el trasero de los monos.
> Con una cuchara. (p 478)

Before he had written these poems he had already mentioned man's cruelty to animals in 'Oda al Santísimo Sacramento del altar'; he came out strongly against blood sports, for they were no more than massacres of defenceless victims:

> Para el asesinato del ruiseñor, venían
> Tres mil hombres armados de lucientes cuchillos.
> Viejas y sacerdotes lloraban resistiendo
> una lluvia de lenguas y hormigas voladoras. (p 632)

Nothing could be more pathetic than the swallows on crutches Lorca pictured in 'Panorama ciego de Nueva York'. He repeated the same verbs of violence and pain to pound home the cruelty which existed in the city. Gemir is mentioned several times (p 512/4); the poet is assassinated by the sky in 'Vuelta de paseo'; different forms of the verbs orinar, vomitar, devorar, herir, ahogar, quemar, degollar assail the reader. Apparently gratuitous physical violence is rife in Lorca's mind. Torture takes place; whips, pins, knives and other instruments of destruction abound. He noted the violent atmosphere of the city wherever he went. (p 1714) But to this he added his own mental torment which matched even too perfectly the frenzied air of New York. Furthermore, the sadistic element of violence which may well have been a fantasy of the poet recurs throughout his work. It is nearly always associated with social conventions which Lorca was implicitly attacking. Even so in many cases it is heightened and dignified by his treatment. 'Degollación del Bautista', written in 1930, is definitely connected to Poeta en Nueva York, which Lorca was creating during that time, in its theme of violent destruction. Indeed the title of this short story, like 'Degollación de los inocentes', 'Suicido en Alejandria', 'Nadadora sumergida' and 'Amantes asesinados por una perdiz', all written during the same period of literary activity, offer a direct parallel to the poems. The reds' battle against the blacks is the plot of 'Degollación del Bautista',

and obsessive violence permeates the work. Lorca showed at the same time an ambiguous mixture of horror and delight at the monstrous events taking place:

> Vencieron al fin: en el último goal.
> Bajo un cielo de plantas de pie. La degollación fue horripilante. Pero maravillosamente desarrollada. El cuchillo era prodigioso. Al fin y al cabo, la carne es siempre panza de rana. Hay que ir contra la carne. Hay que levantar fábricas de cuchillos. Para que el horror mueva su bosque intravenoso. El especialista de la degollación es enemigo de las esmeraldas. Siempre te lo había dicho, hijo mío. No conoce el chicle, pero conoce el cuello tiernísimo de la perdiz viva.
>
> El Bautista estaba de rodillas. El degollador era un hombre minúsculo. Pero el cuchillo era un cuchillo. Un cuchillo chispeante, un cuchillo de chispas con los dientes apretados. (p 28)

As I shall later examine, Lorca viewed the knife with great fascination. Sacrificial slaughtering provides a flood of blood and an almost grisly enjoyment on the poet's part. He drew a situation where violence and terror reigned and where conflict was relished. Against the background of increasing social unrest his intention to show how violence can be enjoyed is clearly disturbing.

The Romancero gitano contains some glimpses of the sadistic cruelty enveloped in a wrapping of glittering hardness, which reaches its height in Poeta en Nueva York. The 'Martirio de Santa Olalla' is a blood thirsty version of a traditional theme; 'Reyerta, 'Muerte de Antoñito el Camborio' and 'Romance de la guardia civil española' - all have violence at the core of their content. The image in the first of these poems:

> Sangre resbalada gime
> muda canción de serpiente. (p 429)

points to the preoccupation with blood found in his later works. But here the image is stylized and provokes not horror, but delight in an elaborate example of synaesthesia. The Novia's proud demand to the Madre in Bodas

de sangre to avenge her son's death by torturing her indicates how violence relieves personal emotions: "(A la Vecina) Déjala; he venido para que me mate y que me lleven con ellos. (A la Madre) Pero no con las manos; con garfios de alambre, con una hoz, y con fuerza, hasta que se rompa en mis huesos. ¡Déjala!" (p 1269) Bernarda Alba's authority veils a delight in cruelty which bears parallel with Lorca's treatment of violence in his earlier poetry. The exaggerated actions with which she reinforces her domination are perfectly acceptable to the society in which she lives. She slaps Angustias and Martirio, she carries a cane with her (while she has her bastón, Cristobita of El retablillo de Don Cristóbal carries his porra with him wherever he goes) and she treats all that does not suit her with fierce disgust:

> BERNARDA: ....Niña, dame el abanico.
>
> ADELA : Tome usted. (Le da un abanico redondo con flores rojas y verdes.)
>
> BERNARDA: (Arrojando el abanico al suelo.) ¿Es este el abanico que se da a una viuda? Dame uno negro y aprende a respetar el luto de tu padre. (p 1451)

Symbolically however, the intransigence of her authority is challenged by Adela when she breaks her mother's cane, an act of aggressive frustration equal to anything executed by her senior. At the end of the play Bernarda gains ample revenge by taking the gun; her daughter cannot match this calculated show of strength. Knives feature in many of Lorca's works and they often cause an untimely death. In the Poema del cante jondo, the poem 'Puñal' contains a dedication to the dagger's cold power (p 302/3). The 'Diálogo del Amargo' included in the same collection emphasizes the cruel element of destruction the knife wields over mortals:

AMARGO: Un cuchillo no tiene que ser más que un cuchillo.
JINETE: Se equivoca.
AMARGO: Gracias.
JINETE: Los cuchillos de oro van solos al corazón. Los de plata cortan el cuello como una brizna de hierba.
AMARGO: ¿No sirven para partir el pan?
JINETE: Los hombres parten el pan con las manos. (p 336/7)

The contempt the Jinete expresses for using the knife for any other purpose than for wounding or killing anticipates the Madre's fear of it in Bodas de sangre. The Novio asks for the knife to cut grapes, an inoffensive task; however he finally uses it for its true purpose at the end of the play and the mother's mistrust of the instrument is well founded. Again the knife becomes a symbol of cruelty and torture in Poeta en Nueva York, and this in turn is an effective reflection of the poet's tormented feelings. The mother's hymn to its devastating powers in Bodas de sangre contrasts the knife's relative smallness with man, huge in comparison. And yet this does not prevent it from killing instantly a human being who has taken years to be created and mature. Ironically and most important, a knife is both the product and the destroyer of man. (p 1271/2)

In the vast majority of cases where Lorca used these and other objects of violence, he was stressing not only his own emotions but those of the society in which he lived. The poet took advantage of this theme of violence to provide a channel where his own passion could be directed, and to reveal how violence had become an integral quality of life. He warned that unless a peaceful settlement could be reached to ensure a more just and equal world, then violence would be met with violence. Lorca dreaded the thought of large-scale violence in terms of whole countries or social groups. Couffon disclosed in his book on the poet an interview he had with a cousin of Lorca who affirmed his fear of warfare and direct physical confrontation:

> Era su odio a la guerra. Recuerdo como si fuese hoy una noche en que estaba sentado en este mismo salón y se le ocurrió que algún día él podía combatir: María - me decía - ¡Yo revuelto con los soldados!. ¡Por Dios! ¡Una pistola en mis manos!. ¡No! ¡Fuego!. ¡qué miedo!. me cag .... de miedo al oír los disparos. Tendría que ir con un culero detrás de mí.[66]

Two poems in Poeta en Nueva York openly denounce warfare. Spain was comparatively sheltered against the holocaust of the first world war. America had been actively involved; the effect of the war on the people was still present when Lorca visited the country. 'Grito hacia Roma' bitterly attacked the Pope's inability to intervene in political struggles:

> dirá: paz, paz, paz,
> entre el tirite de cuchillos y melones de dinamita; (p 521)

The Catholic Church's ineffectiveness in matters of human importance shocked Lorca profoundly. The second poem 'Iglesia abandonada', subtitled 'Balada de la gran guerra', explains why he hated war, for it reveals his horror at the useless killing which war entails. He concentrated on the grief of one individual with great tenderness and sympathy. The father's lament at losing his son far from home and without his knowledge receives added poignancy as the father knows the only record of his son will be the articles of clothing the authorities return to him:

> Sé muy bien que me darán una manga o la corbata;
> pero en el centro de la misa yo romperé el timón y
> entonces
>
> vendrá a la piedra la locura de pingüinos y gaviotas
> que harán decir a los que duermen y a los que cantan por las esquinas:
>
> él tenía un hijo.
> ¡Un hijo! ¡Un hijo! ¡Un hijo!
> que no era más que suyo, porque era su hijo!
> ¡Su hijo! ¡Su hijo! ¡Su hijo! (p 483)

It is widely held that Lorca was a coward as far as physical violence was concerned. Certainly the fear he had for physical violence in real life contrasts with the almost sadistic images and expressions found in the work written in particular in the period during his visit to America.

Perhaps he found satisfaction in relieving his emotional anxieties through imaginative violence. He also expressed his abhorrence of violence in society and vehemently criticised its use to perpetuate social conventions and traditions. To sum up, there seems to be a tendency in his work to divide the theme of violence into two distinct categories: firstly he created theoretical violence to counter his own emotions, and secondly, he disliked it immensely as a means of controlling society in general.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

Nature and Society - Opposing Forces

Nature versus Society

Lorca knew how country folk lived, thought and acted in accordance with their natural surrounding. Having been brought up in two small villages he knew the simple faith the villagers had in a natural way of life. However, social traditions and conventions acted against the freedom nature gave and as he moved from the country to towns he saw what effect the social trappings had on man. His early poetry in particular reflects the deep affection he held for the countryside he had seen around him at Fuentevaqueros. The letters he wrote from there as a young man showed, too, how much he appreciated nature's splendour! He compared the peace of the countryside to the hubbub of the town and he commented on the soothing impression nature had on him:

> El campo está magnífico,¿por qué no vienes un día?„ y yo con todo el campo demasiado dentro del alma. ¡Si vieras que puestas de sol tan llenas de rocío espectral ....., ese rocío de las tardes, que parece que desciende para los muertos y para los amantes descarriados, que viene a ser lo mismo!. ¡Si vieras qué melancolía de acequias pensativas y qué rodar rosarios de norias! Yo espero que el campo pula mis ramas líricas este año bendito con los rojas cuchillas de las tardes. [2]

His first poetry showed how the romantic melancholy of nature was in harmony with his own moods. (This of course was not new; the literary convention of nature's empathy with man had in Garcilaso de la Vega a great exponent.) In Canciones, 'Preludio' reveals the poet's keen observation of nature and at the same time illustrates the way it blends with his emotions.

Las alamedas se van,
pero dejan su reflejo.

Las alamedas se van,
pero nos dejan el viento.

El viento está amortajado
a lo largo bajo el cielo.

Pero ha dejado flotando
sobre los ríos sus ecos.

El mundo de las luciérnagas
ha invadido mis recuerdos.

Y un corazón diminuto
me va brotando en los dedos. (p 412)

Lorca overtly declared his love of the countryside by setting many of his plays in the country. His first play has as its backdrop a lyrical arrangement of nature, but his later plays reflect his concern to place characters in a real community by surrounding them with a life-like representation of the countryside in physical and sociological terms. Thus Victor the shepherd in Yerma, is not just a shadowy figure; Lorca took pains to draw him as a man whose job lay in the land just like the other villagers. He is one shepherd among many (p 1305).

Correa considers that Poeta en Nueva York and La casa de Bernarda Alba, along with the plays he labels the "obras citadinas" - Mariana Pineda and Doña Rosita la soltera - are exceptions in Lorca's work for they are not created against a scenery of "el aire libre y la naturaleza abierta"[3]. The first two works he quotes, as I shall later show, have important references to nature which accentuate Lorca's high regard for a simple mode of living. I would like to examine these plays and the poetry of Lorca paying particular attention to the roles of nature and social convention and the relationship between these two fundamentally opposing states. Let me begin with Poeta en Nueva York, for it is, I believe, the

work where the conflict between nature and society is at its most critical. The poet himself described the results which a mechanized, modern society produced on nature and man:

> Hombre y máquina viven la esclavitud del momento. Las aristas suben al cielo sin voluntad de nube ni voluntad de gloria. Nada más poético y terrible que la lucha de los rascacielos con el cielo que los cubre.

He continues:

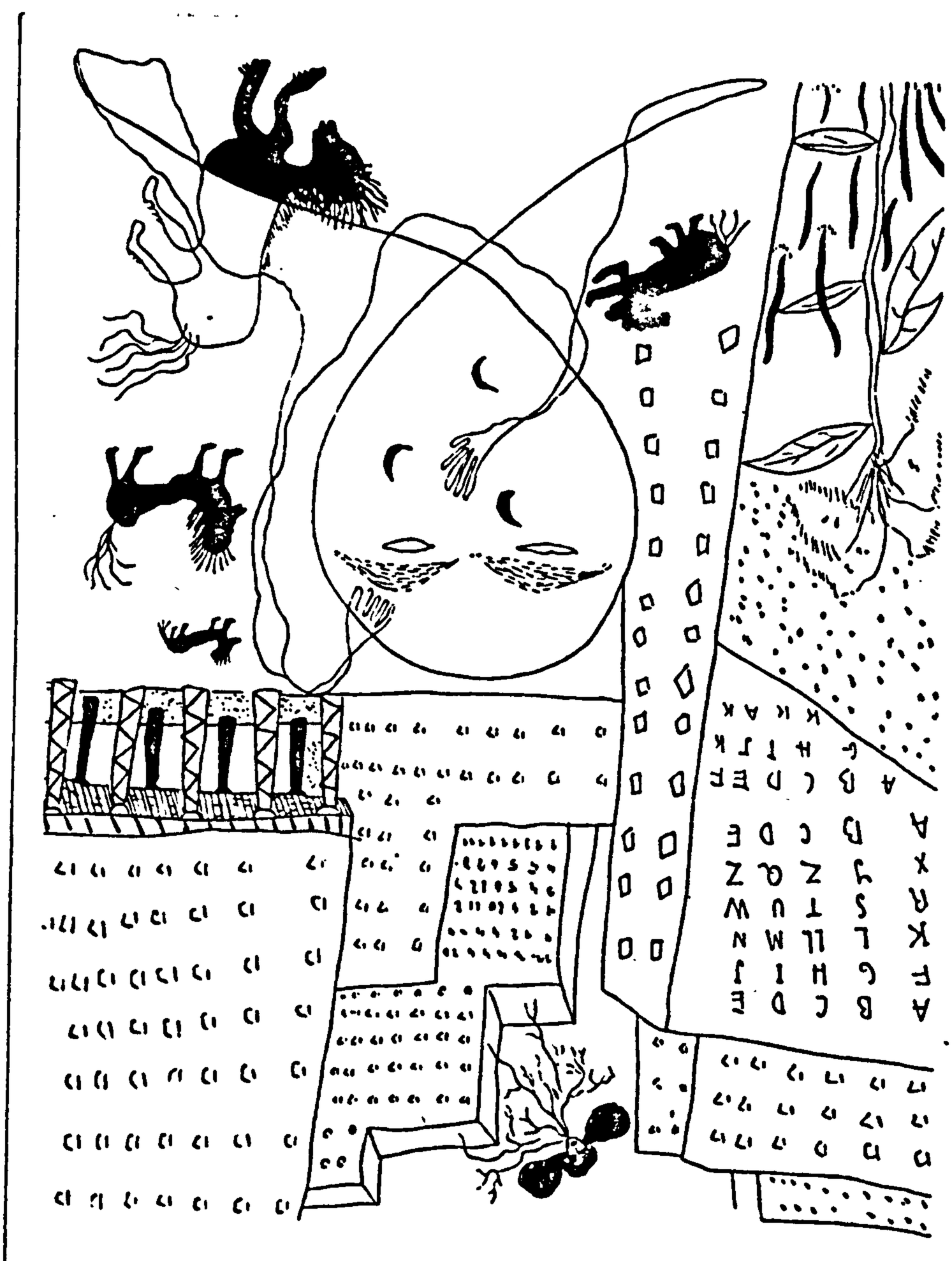
> Ejército de ventanas, donde ni una sola persona tiene tiempo de mirar una nube o dialogar con una de las delicadas brisas que tercamente envía el mar, sin tener jamás respuesta ... (p 1713)

Man in his greed to improve his social position by means of material success is capable of raping nature. Correa interprets Lorca's use of imagery of violence and destruction as the result of the poet's encounter with modern civilization: " se halla de pronto privado de su espontánea y natural comunicación con el mundo afirmativo de la naturaleza cósmica, y su mundo interior sufre una caída que produce un derribamiento momentáneo de todos sus valores...."[4] The loss of Lorca's communication with nature which Correa rightly points out has been destroyed by society. He could not look around him to find relief from the pressures of social order as he could in Spain. So although the critic may be right in saying that the poetry is not set against complete countryside, it must be remembered that the poet is still finding points of reference in a nature radically altered by man - the basis is the same then, nature is the catalyst of his imagination. Even dawn has been corrupted by the inhabitants of New York:

> Un río (de sangre) que viene cantando
> por los dormitorios de los arrabales,
> y es plata, cemento o brisa
> en el alba mentida de New York. (p 515)

Man has lost his capacity to see beauty in nature in 'Paisaje de la multitud que orina', where he will have to look through the eyes of an idiot, devoid of the feelings wealth and success bring, to see the point of life. The poet was trying to point out that enslavement to money causes man to look past his physical surroundings. Good land is only suitable for buildings which will provide more offices. The title 'Nueva York: oficina y denuncia' reveals that Lorca was well aware that nature was not being destroyed to build homes but to construct dwellings to house man's obsession with money. He drew his own impression of the city, called Perspectiva urbana con autorretrato and covered it with skyscrapers. On these skyscrapers are meaningless lines of letters, which show Lorca's bewilderment at the English language. The anonymity of these huge buildings which are studded with windows provides a telling contrast to the poet's self-portrait. His face expresses horror, and what is more it is unrecognizable. He is the visual equivalent to the "poeta sin brazos". He is surrounded by animals, all of which are fierce and predatory.[5] These creatures and the leafy plant at the bottom of the drawing indicates how all natural life has been killed or at the most put into neat gardens or zoos to make way for the development of the city. They will, he feared, have to resort to violence to regain their natural environment.

Lorca's sympathy for the negro is not surprising when one considers how highly they both regard nature. In 'Norma y paraíso de los negros' the hatred of the Negro for the artificial, man-made jungle of New York is made abundantly clear.. They join in the poet's condemnation of a society which had ruined nature:



Yo denuncio la conjura
de estas desiertas oficinas
que no radian las agonías,
que borran los programas de la selva,
y me ofrezco a ser comido
por las vacas estrujadas
cuando sus gritos llenan el valle
donde el Hudson se emborracha con aceite.

(p 517)

Lorca hoped for a return to a civilization based on the natural world where artificial inventions and social rules would have no place. The outline of this dream can be glimpsed in 'Ciudad sin sueño' :

Otra día
veremos la resurrección de las mariposas disecadas
y aun andando por un paisaje de esponjas grises y barcos mudos
veremos brillar nuestro anillo y manar rosas de nuestra lengua,
(p 493)

The poet's attack on the state of life he saw around him was not simply the isolated incident that Correa suggests.[6] Naturally it was the most specific and fierce attack that he made on society. It was, in fact, his only real encounter with the new age of civilization New York stood for. In this sense alone it was an isolated condemnation of man's so-called progress. The effect it caused on his already frayed nerves was extreme; the animals such as the ants, iguanas, serpents, bears, crocodiles, reflected the seething hatred which afflicted his view of the city. On his arrival in Cuba he was reassured by the soothing sight of countryside and the comparatively primitive society of the inhabitants, who felt like him a deep attachment to their natural environment. His visit to New York certainly sharpened his perception of how life should be and how it would be if a stop was not made to end man's path to destruction.

The Romancero gitano had previously contained an indication of Lorca's future preoccupation with the effect of society on nature. There

he contrasted the premature death of man by the knife against a background of bright, almost stereotyped nature. Indeed, he combined the one element with the other to produce an uneasy mixture of artificiality which removed the poetry from the plane of harsh reality. Thus the shots fired by the Civil Guards at the girls are transformed into an apparently beautiful image:

> Y otras muchachas corrían
> perseguidas por sus trenzas,
> en un aire donde estallan
> rosas de pólvora negra. (p 457)

But the seeds of his preoccupation with the quality of life are there in this ambiguous collection.

El maleficio de la mariposa had marked the first step taken in his plays to examine the relationship of man with his natural surroundings. Throughout his plays, the characters see in the countryside a remedy for their anxieties and a useful comparison by which they can measure their joy or sorrow. The Mujer in Bodas de sangre remembers the happiness she felt on her wedding day:

> "(Llorando) ¡Acuérdate que sales
> como una estrella!
> Así salí yo de mi casa también. Que me cabía todo el campo en la boca". (p1224)

However, society impinges on the lives of many of the characters. The Vecina relates how the son of an acquaintance of hers had recently both his arms cut off by the "máquina" (p 1179). The most telling symbol of the false security with which the Spanish community has enveloped its members concerns the bride's headdress. The Novio has chosen for her artificial orange blossom with the conviction that it will last for ever (p 1231/2). However, it is as false as the bride's love for him and its artificiality is a sour comment on the convention of marriage. Yerma is

set for much of the time in the fields around the village. Like the majority of village men, Juan works on the land, but he wants not merely to make a living, but to increase his property. This keeps him away from his home, and consequently is the root cause for his wife's loneliness. In contrast to Juan, Victor tends to his flock with a genuine love for nature; his decision to move away from the fields causes Yerma to note the restrictive quality of the life she leads because of her husband's obsessive interest in his land:

> YERMA Haces bien de cambiar de campos.
>
> VÍCTOR Todos los campos son iguales.
>
> YERMA No. Yo me iría muy lejos. (p 1322)

Yerma implicitly criticized her husband's commercial harnessing of nature's energies, for his greed for water obliges Juan to stay away all night. While he is watering his fields, he is not caring physically for Yerma's craving for a son. Like the orange blossom in Bodas de sangre, the water guarded by Juan shows that artificial arrangement of fertile nature causes unhappiness and disappointment.

Feal Deibe remarks that Juan dies only when he abandons his work to declare his intention that they should try to live in harmony by loving each other without any preconceived motive.[7] But he dies not because he is prepared to reject a life of order, but because he has far too long been opposed to the natural inclinations of his wife.

Adela is the only character in La casa de Bernarda Alba to accept the beauty and freedom of nature as an important part in her life. Judith Bull correctly interprets that her recognition of the stallion as a handsome, powerful creature and her interest in nature set her apart from her sisters: "In poetic terms, she is the only one whose vision is not restricted by the roof of the house, and whose virility does not waste away inside the white

sepulchre."[8] She alone wishes to know the meaning behind the popular saying:

> "Santa Bárbara bendita,
> que en el cielo estás escrita
> con papel y agua bendita." (p 1516)

Bernarda's unwillingness to explain the rhyme might well be, as Miss Bull suggests, that the issue could endanger her authority. Indeed the outward appearance of harmony she is eager to maintain would find a strong reinforcement in the power wielded by the ancianos. However, Bernarda's reactions raise another point; Adela is the only one to find in the natural world an example of the freedom which she so desires. Upholders of tradition can and indeed must resort to looking inwards, that is into the lives of their neighbours and the social order of the village rather than outwards, for outside lies freedom and danger and the fertility which would quickly influence the individual.

Lorca - An Instinctive Anarchist?

Spanish anarchism is traditionally strongly idealist and moral in character. The anarchist's aims were to attain his utopia, by force if necessary, by reconstructing primitive agrarian conditions to enable the village as a group to work the land and share its produce.[9] The nature of its ideals was however so idealistic that the practice of anarchism could only last while intolerable conditions made the peasants revolt. The Anarchist magazine, La revista blanca, summed up its party's key policy in 1931: "Pon la tierra, patrimonio de todos los hombres, en las manos de todos los hombres. La propiedad, en perjuicio de los más débiles, es una inmoralidad condenada por todas las leyes naturales."[10] The importance Spanish anarchists and especially their founder Bakunin placed on a natural order of existence bears a certain resemblance to Lorca's personal philosophy as expressed in his literature. This is not so improbable as may first

appear. The poet was educated in Andalusia where the peasants lived in extremely bad conditions. They were under the complete domination of the property owners and worked the land for a mere pittance. Brenan viewed the situation in this light:

> ...the cacique system is at its worst in Andalusia and regularly at every election Catholic-Conservative deputies are returned for Anarchist constituencies. When force ceases to be possible, bribery takes its place, and down to the last election of 1936 tens of thousands of starving labourers took the money or promises of work of the landlords and voted for their candidates. 11

Even though the mature Lorca spent most of his time in Madrid, he would surely have been aware of the social injustices taking place in his native land. The advantage of the country way of life, which he stressed in his work, was in this respect an opinion shared by the labourers themselves, who wanted to live off the land. His distrust of modern society was rooted in what he considered to be its basic fault: its artificiality. Brenan's description of Bakunin's theory shows then how near Lorca was to the anarchist ideology:

> One will see from this that if Bakunin wishes to destroy the state, he compensates for it by attaching a new importance to society. For society is or should be the fluid in which men must live if they are to draw their proper nourishment. In the present bourgeois world men are starved without knowing it. He therefore maintained that a free society will necessarily create strong, understanding men and accepts without fear a strengthening of those great conservative forces that govern societies, custom and public opinion, which are good "because they are natural". Something must be said about the word "natural", for it is one of the keys to Bakunin's ideas. He was greatly impressed by the growing artificiality of modern life, which he thought could only be arrested by some very deep transformation in the structure of society. And just as all artificiality in his eyes was bad, so all "nature" was good. This is why destruction plays so large a part in Bakunin's theories and planning for the future so little. (The passion for destruction, he once said, is also a creative passion.) He believed that if the State and rule of force it stood for, could only be destroyed with all those little components that separate men from one another, nature would cause new and

> better social organisms to arise to fill their place. He forgot, no doubt, that once just such a catastrophe occurred in Europe and that what grew up was not anarchism, but the horrible and cruel anarchy of the early feudal age. As we shall see later, there lies at the root of anarchism a fatal paradox. [12]

At first sight it seems that the custom and public opinion Bakunin so admired were indeed criticized by Lorca. If one notices, however, that this is qualified in the statement by the adjective "natural", it is possible to argue that the artist, who disliked intensely the artificial codes of behaviour which fossilized traditional communities, admired also the intrinsic qualities of honour, wit and sensibility of the peasant portrayed by the servants, maids and young girls in his plays. As I have already examined, the author abhorred violence perpetrated by one part of society on the other; therefore his support of anarchist doctrine was probably unconscious and confined to its theoretical not practical application. On the other hand the criticism of the convention of marriage one can deduce from the plays drew him quite firmly to the anarchist philosophy of free love:

> El estado pretende que el matrimonio, o bien sea la unión del hombre y la mujer para constituirse una familia, sea sancionado y autorizado por la ley y por la religión; el anarquismo anhela que el hombre y la mujer se unan libremente, impulsados por sus propios sentimientos de afinidad y lazos de verdadero amor, sin sanciones de intermediarios de ninguna especie, porque el amor legalizado deja de ser amor por estar tenido con el sentido común y con las leyas de la naturaleza. [13]

However tenuous the connection may seem, it does reassert the instinctive social feelings Lorca possessed and his sympathy for the ordinary people of Spain.

Natural Man and Woman

¡Mira la tierra, mujer!
Y al hijo, si le tenemos,
te pido que le enseñemos
su fe desde el primer día.
Que a nuestra tierra venere,
que ella, cuando se la quiere,
se da todo. 14

The above verse, taken from the poem 'Estampas castellanas' written in 1929, marks the love man felt for the land which surrounds him and on which he is dependent. Lorca never lost his love for the countryside which he first felt as a child in Fuentevaqueros. He translated his affection and knowledge of man's association with nature through popular symbols. By using these symbols he also indicated to what extent society was trying to reject the simple structure of country attitudes for something rational and artificial. As we have seen, the characters in his plays are roughly divided into two groups; those who feel a strong affinity with the earth - generally servants and common folk and individuals dominated by passion - and on the other hand, those who try to brush it aside. Of course, the dramatist is also pointing out that the strong intimacy between the country dweller and nature unconsciously moulds him, and produces a completely different culture than the materialistic society of large towns and cities. Indeed the setting of Poema del cante jondo, some parts of the Romancero gitano, Bodas de sangre, La casa de Bernarda Alba, Yerma and La Zapatera prodigiosa are echoes of the land where he lived:

tierra seca,
tierra quieta
que de noches
inmensas 15

I do not intend to give a detailed analysis of folkloric symbols in Lorca's poems and plays; instead I prefer to deal with their relationship with man and his environment, concentrating on the most important symbols only.

The most intimate parallel forged between man and the natural universe lies in the shared fertility of man and earth. Bodas de sangre is especially concerned with a relationship between the two which go beyond death. Man's virility is constantly compared to the abundant quality of the land around him. The Madre regrets the passing of her son into dust but even so she refuses to call the place where her menfolk are buried a cemetery, preferring to think of them as having returned to their 'home': "Pero no; camposanto, no, camposanto, no; lecho de tierra, cama que los cobija y que los mece por el cielo." (p 1267/8) When, as in the case of the Novio and later Juan, man is unable to be fertile, he has failed in his mission, for he has interrupted nature's reproductive cycle and set man out of rhythm with the earth.

Lorca generally surrounds his characters with a windy atmosphere which is half sensual, half threatening. As he acknowledged, its presence is traditionally found in popular verse::

> Pero lo que en los poemas del 'cante jondo' se acusa como admirable realidad poética es la extraña materialización del viento, que hanconseguido muchas coplas.
>
> El viento es personaje que sale en los últimos momentos sentimentales, aparece como un gigante preocupado de derribar estrellas y disparar nebulosas, pero en ningún poema popular he visto que hable y consuele como en los nuestros ... (p 49)

Preciosa, like the Niña in 'Arbolé, Arbolé,' is pursued by this gigantic monster:

Niña, deja que levante
tu vestido para verte.
Abre en mis dedos antiguos
la rosa azul de tu vientre.

Preciosa tira el pandero
y corre sin detenerse.
El viento - hombrón la persigue
con una espada caliente. (p 427)

So the wind is an erotic force, his sword a phallic symbol which tries to 'deflower' girls; it is in fact the exterior manifestation of the pull of nature on woman in particular to act according to her sexual urges, rather than be tied by the conventions of society. Similarly in his plays, there exists allusions to the wind that imply sexual activity. Thus Perlimplín asks after his wedding night with Belisa why the balconies are open and his wife replies "Porque esta noche ha corrido el aire como nnca" (p 998). The girls in La casa de Bernarda Alba want the doors open to allow a draught of air to enter to cool their fevered emotions. Adela tells her sisters she will go to the doorway to get a breath of fresh air and characteristically her sisters insist on accompanying her for they want a freedom they are afraid to seek by themselves.

The breeze also suggests violence, a violence which sometimes cannot be restrained. Its force damages all the roses in Doña Rosita's garden just before the women prepare to leave the house, as if to destroy all they will leave behind. At the very end of Yerma, Juan decides to act against a situation which does not exist physically but which he feels all around him: "Ha llegado el último minuto de resistir este continuo lamento por cosas oscuras, fuera de la vida, por cosas que están en el aire." (p 1347) However the reaction of his wife contrasts strongly with his opinion. She believes that things of nature are as real and important

as any social values. The Madre compares man to the wind; both are free, but in freedom lies the danger of the unknown. Traditionally the wind is a shadowy dangerous and unknown figure, feared by gipsies who think the wind is the devil sneezing!

Lorca shares the passion for water which inspired the Arab occupiers of Granada to build the fountains and construct water courses wherever possible. In a letter he wrote to Melchor Fernández Almagro in 1923 he described what free-flowing water meant to him:

> Ya se está terminando mi temporada de campo, pues dentro de pocos días regresaremos a Granada, y de allí es probable que a Málaga (la ciudad que más quiero de toda Andalucía, por su maravillosa y emocionante sensualidad en carne viva), donde veré el mar, la única fuerza que me atormenta y me turba de la Naturaleza ....¡Más que el cielo!
> ¡Mucho más!
>
> Ahora mismo me pondría a decirte muchas cosas del mr ... ¡pero para que las oyera el mar! Frente al mar olvido mi sexo, mi condición, mi alma, mi don de lágrimas ...¡todo! Sólo me pincha el corazón un agudo deseo de imitarlo y de quedarme como él, amargo, fosfórico y desvelado eternamente.[16]

The attraction for the symbolic quality of water remained with Lorca all his life (although paradoxically it is widely reported that he was afraid of the sea and was extremely reluctant to bathe in it). The four Muleros in Cantos populares go to the river, essentially a place of freedom, while several poems in Canciones proclaim the liberty water enjoys:

> Agua, ¿dónde vas?
> Riyendo voy por el río
> a las orillas del mar.
> Mar, ¿adónde vas?
> Río arriba voy buscando
> fuente donde descansar.[17]

Banks and shores provide the nearest sanctuary for man. Both 'San Rafael' and 'San-Miguel' contain allusions to river banks and the second poem underlines the unrestrained course of water which is like the strength of passion man must not unleash:

> Y el agua se pone fría
> para que nadie la toque.
> Agua loca y descubierta
> por el monte, monte, monté.
>
> .....
>
> El mar baila por la playa,
> un poema de balcones.
> Las orillas de la luna
> pierden juncos, ganan voces. (p 438/9)

The gipsy leads the Casada Infiel to the river and after their night of passion they wash in its water, so clearly its freedom make it an ideal place to jettison morality.

Constant references are made by the characters in Bodas de sangre to the importance of water in country life. The Madre tells her son that his father would have covered the scrub land where the Novia lives with trees, even if he had to look for water in order to make the earth fertile. Paradoxically, when the Zapatero swallows his saliva, he is symbolically denying his virility, an attitude frowned upon with deep suspicion by the ordinary Spanish male. The marriage of the young couple in Bodas de sangre brings songs of joy which recognize a union that should be productive:

> LEONARDO La mañana de casada
> la corona te ponemos.
>
> MUJER ¡Para que el campo se alegre
> con el agua de tu pelo! (p 1221)

But the Novio is only a stream while the bride compares Leonardo to a raging torrent, "un río oscuro". Hence the social institution of marriage is gravely undermined by natural impulses, which, as the Suegra and Mujer sing, cannot be controlled:

> Nana, niño, nana
> del caballo grande
> que no quiso el agua.
> El agua era negra
> dentro de las ramas.
> Cuando llega al puente
> se detiene y canta.
> ¿Quién dirá, mi niño,
> lo que tiene el agua
> con su larga cola
> por su verde sala? (p 1184)

Villegas justly sees the woman's song as an indication of the eventual willingness of the horse to drink, for it can no longer hold back its emotions; similarly Leonardo struggles uselessly to reject his natural inclinations: "han comprendido que el dique que contenía la energía acumulada se ha resquebrejado." [18]

It is ironic that while the lover cannot control his passion, Juan lets his passion die. His wife hopes to remedy the situation by urging him to go to the river and bathe and then go to the roof and be soaked by the rain, a double allusion to the fertility of water which she longs to be continued in her husband. Indeed the only virile man she likes is Víctor, significantly a shepherd, a father figure. While the two talk she believes she hears a song sung in a voice which she compares to a "chorro de agua". (p 1296) Juan is described as a dry man who hoards up water during the night for his land, but symbolically refuses to use some of it to give Yerma the satisfaction she longs for. Instead of being with his wife at night, he is on his land in order to make it more fertile.

> Estaré toda la noche regando. Viene poca agua,
> es mía hasta la salida del sol y tengo que defenderla
> contra los ladrones. Te acuestas y te duermes.
> YERMA (Dramática.) ¡Me dormiré! (Sale.) (p 1300)

His miserliness is so deep that he guards both his material and his sexual possessions, water and semen. Refusing to give life, he is contradicting the statement the Vieja makes on his wife: "Los hijos llegan como el agua" (p 1288).

The dryness which is inherent in Juan spreads to Yerma. It is too late when, at the end of the play, the husband drinks, for his partner's thirst can no longer be satisfied. Yerma's barrenness gradually becomes an increasingly desperate problem as time passes. To highlight this, the Lavandera's songs, which scorn the barren wife and praise the power of water:

> Dime si tu marido
> guarda semilla
> para que el agua cante
> por tu camisa.
> Las ropas de mi niño
> vengo a lavar
> para que tome al agua
> lecciones de cristal. (p 1307)

anticipate the song of the Hembra and Macho, which delight in the contact between nature and man. Although Yerma firmly maintains her conviction in the ease of reproduction which she expressed in song:

> Pero tú has de venir, amor, mi niño,
> porque el agua da sal, la tierra fruta,
> y nuestro vientre guarda tiernos hijos,
> como la nube lleva dulce lluvia. (p 1316)

she cannot reconcile herself to an easy, spontaneous relationship with her husband which would bring about the subject of her dreams. As C.B. Morris states, "The Vieja's conviction, which she repeats in her confrontation with Yerma in the last act, that children "Están hechos de saliva" (iii, ii)

is one that Yerma instinctively rejects; to Juan's command of "Bésame así" she replies with prudish repugnance "Eso nunca" (iii, ii)".[19]

Her final attempt to conceive through the pagan magic of the romería again brings her into contact with water, water is metaphysical as well as physical. María exclaims that there exists "Un río de hombres solos baja esas sierras" (p 1338) who are waiting to give their abundant fertility to help barren women, and the Vieja offers her son to Yerma. The young woman's reply is devastatingly frank; she compares the son to a glass of water when she needs gallons of it to satisfy her thirst.

The girls in La casa de Bernarda Alba are constantly pacing the house to drink water. Adela in particular feels the necessity to drink as often as possible. Revealingly, when the horses are locked up and trying to get out she goes out for water, thus demonstrating that she will not be locked up like the mares, but she will choose to meet the stallion/man and look for the fertility water gives. In fantasy Adela escapes to the riverside to meet Pepe while María Josefa escapes to the seashore to satisfy her erotic longings. Lorca cleverly introduces Pepe as a symbol of the sea when La Poncia points out:

"Cuando una no se puede con el mar"...(p 1520).

But the house and the town in which the family of Bernarda live are bounded by water which is not free-flowing but as stagnant as the social system of the village. The mother admits the reality of the physical rot of the village, which in turn is symbolic of its spiritual life:

"Es así como se tiene que hablar en este maldito pueblo sin río, pueblo de pozos, donde siempre se bebe el agua con miedo de que esté

envenenada." (p 1450) E. Martínez Lopez discusses how important the local Granadian setting was to the author throughout his life:

"El aljibe, los cauces oscuros, las hondas cisternas, el agua estancada, fija en un punto, que tanto obsesionó a Lorca, es ciertamente el mejor y más granadino símbolo de esta Granada de la pena."[19] This is true not just in his essays on Granada but in his conception of village life in the South of Spain in particular. Indeed, Lorca's reply to a homage paid to him by his home village of Fuentevaqueros in 1929 points out the value of water emotionally and physically on small communities:

> Y ya que estamos juntos - añade - no quiero dejar de elogiar vuestra maravillosa fuente de agua fresca. La fuente del agua es uno de los motivos que más definen la personalidad de este pueblecito. Los pueblos que no tienen fuente pública son insociables, tímidos, apocados.
>
> .....
>
> El pueblo sin fuente es cerrado, como oscurecido, y cada casa es un mundo aparte que se defiende del vecino. (p 1697)

The pozo in La casa de Bernarda Alba symbolises the restricted and artificial force on which the village centres its life. This stagnant water is constantly contrasted with the freedom of flowing water. It even becomes, as Martirio calls it, a "pozo de veneno", for, like passion that cannot flow freely, water builds up until it becomes a flood of destruction. The dried up well also indicates the sterility of the régime maintained by Bernarda. Furthermore, it reflects her own character; she is dried up to such an extent that she wants to kill natural passion and repress life. Her insistent cruelty in keeping her mother away from the well for the mere reason that the neighbours might see her reveals the harshness of her personality.

Lorca has utilized the popular symbols of his ancestors to make allusions to thirst, joining water and heat to emphasize the frustrations of his protagonists. Neumann noted the sexual importance of thirst:

> Even today sexual symbolism is still colored by alimentary symbolism. In the fertility ritual sexuality and nourishment are related; the sexual act, which induces fertility, guarantees the fertility of the earth and hence man's nourishment, and linguistically the two spheres are also connected. Hunger and satiety, desire and satisfaction, thirst and slaking, are symbolic concepts that are equally valid for both of them. 20

Cúrianita asks where she can find water to cure her raging thirst, the Joven in Así que pasen cinco años drinks a glass of water to stop the burning passion which exists inside his body. Unconsciously, the characters are asking for help to relieve their overpowering desire for sexual activity. Perlimplín gives a clearer indication of the link between thirst and the need for sexual fulfilment when he learns that Marcolfa wants him to marry:

> PERLIMPLÍN ¡Ay Marcolfa, Marcolfa! ¿En qué mundo me vas a meter?
>
> MARCOLFA En el mundo del matrimonio.
>
> PERLIMPLÍN Y si te soy franco, siento una sed ....¿Por qué no me traes agua? (p 986/7)

Adela in particular repeatedly voices her desire to drink water and even wakes during the night. Having experienced some sexual satisfaction, she wants complete fulfilment, which of course would place her outside society. Similarly, the heat of the character's passion is paralleled by the physical warmth of the land, the one emphasizing and underlining the other.

The poem 'Thamar y Amnón' develops against a setting of dry, scorched earth which is a perfect backcloth for Amnón's parched, feverish lust for his sister:

> Yedra del escalofrío
> cubre su carne quemada. (p 465)

And in an equally erotic atmosphere, although less tense, Preciosa is pursued by the "espada caliente" of the wind. The Joven is similar to Juan in this instance for the latter does not want the sun to dry up the water which irrigates his fields, but is not aware of the effect heat has on his wife. Knowingly, the fourth Lavandera likens the heat in the couple's home to hell:

> Cada hora que transcurre aumenta el infierno en aquella casa. Ella y sus cuñadas, sin despegar los labios, blanquean todo el día las paredes, friegan los cobres, limpian con vaho los cristales, dan aceite a la solería, pues cuando más relumbra la vivienda más arde por dentro. (p 1304)

Heat and passion are symbolically equated in the play when the Macho sings of the burning power of the naked body of a pretty wife, and the second Mujer asks God to calm the fury of her desire for a child by cooling with His hand the cinders she feels on her face (p 1339). In the same way the daughters in Lorca's last play feel such heat inside the house (which, it must be noted, Bernarda has unwittingly produced by locking the doors and barring the windows so that no wind enters the house) that they are suffocated. The Segadores (whose passions are immediately satisfied) are not affected by the heat, while in contrast Martirio simply cannot stand the strength of the heat and eagerly awaits the winter:

AMELIA .... ¿Qué te pasa?

MARTIRIO Me sienta mal el calor.

AMELIA ¿No es más que eso?

MARTIRIO Estoy deseando que llegue noviembre, los días de lluvias, la escarcha, todo lo que no sea este verano interminable. (p 1488)

It is in Bodas de sangre where heat is most intimately linked to passion. The Novia and Leonrdo are drawn together by the warmth of their desires which unless satisfied will burn them to death. The girl describes why she ran off with her lover by calling herself a "mujer quemada" who needed to be drenched not by the small stream of the fiancé but by the dark river of Leonardo. However the Novia, like her mother, lives in the secanos where heat withers all attempts to make the land fertile. It is as if the girl has been contaminated by the sterility of the land in which she lives; she can only bring destruction to those around her. Lorca implicitly echoes her fate when Leonardo foresees the outcome of their action:

"Se abrasa lumbre con lumbre.
La misma llama pequeña
mata dos espigas juntas." (p 1259)

Death is associated with snow and ice. The Mujer calls the dead Leonardo a mound of snow. Coldness also symbolizes not only a physical death but a mental one. Thamar's rigidity is contrasted with the heat of Amnón's passion; five frozen doves lie at her feet and Yerma knows that if she accepts her husband's offer for her to look after one of his relative's children her arms will freeze if she holds him. Lorca

focuses attention most sharply on the chilliness of death in Doña Rosita la soltera. The rose which symbolizes the rapidity with which life passes and opportunities die is killed by the cold:

> Abierta estaba la rosa,
> pero la tarde llegaba,
> y un rumor de nieve triste
> le fue pesando las ramas;
> cuando la sombra volvía,
> cuando el ruiseñor cantaba,
> como una muerta de pena
> se puso transida y blanca; (p 1404)

Coldness comes inevitably to kill passion. Lorca is intent on underlining how death brings finality and with it a regret that life is not experienced according to desires but according to society.

An individual's inclinations can only be followed when he is surrounded by a completely natural environment. Lorca concentrated throughout his literary work on the olive grove and river bank as examples of man's intimacy with nature. The 'Poema de la siguiriya gitana' in Poema del cante jondo shows the olivar as a place entirely surrounded by nature, away from man-made constraints, and 'Preciosa y el aire' takes the matter one stage further by revealing that Preciosa is near olive trees when the wind tries to seduce her. The countryside is a place of freedom in Lorca's three major tragedies, a place traditionally associated with men, for they work in the fields while women stay at home.

The two lovers in Bodas de sangre penetrate the heart of a wood in an attempt to merge into nature and be lost to society. Yerma intends to go to the olive grove to fetch her husband his food; and the Segadores

in La casa de Bernarda Alba come from the mountains and assert their sexual passion by taking a prostitute to the olive groves:

> LA PONCIA: De muy lejos. Vinieron de los montes. ¡Alegres! ¡Como árboles quemados! ¡Dando voces y arrojando piedras! Anoche llegó al pueblo una mujer vestida de lentejuelas y que bailaba con un acordeón, y quince de ellos la contrataron para llevársela al olivar. Yo los vi de lejos. El que la contrataba era un muchacho de ojos verdes, apretado como una gavilla de trigo. (p 1485)

La Poncia's comparison of the youth with an ear of wheat is derived from traditional association, which compares the fertility of nature with that of man. Lorca cleverly ties another knot in the chain of events by noting that Adela has straw on her skirt; obviously she has been in the pajar with Pepe. Apart from the religious connotation of wheat with the bread of life which the poet explored in his youthful work, he concentrates on its symbolic connotation of fertility. In Bodas de sangre the wedding guests are offered trays of wheat, an optimistic indication of the fertile future of the new marriage and of man's dependence on the earth, for without its produce he cannot survive. The Madre's comparison of men to wheat - "Los hombres, hombres; el trigo trigo" (p 1174) - refers again to the similarity of the two phenomena.

Lorca used his knowledge of folklore and the popular speech of country people to insert into the fabric of his plays symbols of wheat, as we have just seen, and especially flowers. It is worth remembering Alberich's assessment of this symbolism:

> Esta costumbre tan antigua, que ahora tan inocente, ha tenido sin duda en su origen un significado erótico, basado en el hecho de ser las flores los órganos sexuales, de las plantas. Lo que ha hecho Lorca es, simplemente invertir la dirección del piropo, que ahora va de la hembra al varón en vez de lo contrario.[21]

Of course, Lorca did resort to flower symbolism for women, s especially to those popular poems concerned with the attempts of the wind to seduce young women:

> 'No vayas solita al campo
> cuando sopla el aire recio;
> porque las niñas son flores
> que hasta las deshoja el viento."[22]

Doña Rosita is structured on the parallel state of the rose nurtured by the uncle and the existence of Rosita. Lorca himself expressed his intention behind the symbolism:

> Doña Rosita tiene un tío que es botánico. Su fino arte consigue una rosa que él llama la rosa mutábile, flor que por la mañana es roja; más roja al mediodía; ala tarde blanca, y por la noche se deshace. Esta flor es como el símbolo del pensamiento que he querido recoger en Doña Rosita. Pensamiento que la propia doncella repite una..y otra vez, a lo largo de la comedia....(p 1800

However, he did use flower symbolism much more widely to underline the fertile, flamboyant nature of man. I do not intend to list in great detail the symbols he used, but I do wish to pick out several that are most important to the understanding of this concept.[23] The Novia in Así que pasen cinco años orders the Criada to throw away the flowers brought to her by her fiancé. Symbolically she is rejecting the potential

virility of her suitor. The mother in Bodas de sangre refers to the virility of her dead husband and son by calling them geraniums. She also deprecates the former association of Leonardo and the fiancée by referring to the adelfa, traditionally a plant that first has a pretty flower and then turns bitter.[24] The fertility rites praised not only in the romería, but in the songs of the Lavanderas in Yerma, are full of floral images - rosa, clavel, flor, all refer to the virile power of the male. Correa includes them in the overall atmosphere of mythic fertility created by the dramatist:

> las canciones líricas de Yerma con su aureola de mágico acontecer, su denso ritualismo, la presencia actuante del cosmos y los encadenamientos metafóricos alrededor de la venida del niño, los símbolos de la flor, el florecimiento, la luz y ciertos conceptos arquitípicos, nos transportan a la concepción mítica del hombre en el vientre de la mujer, y en tal virtud le asignan en puesto como figura mítica del universo. [25]

But the frequent references to flowers indicate more than a mythic relationship between man and nature; they point to an unconscious union of man with the natural world against the artificiality of social regulations. This is especially seen in Lorca's treatment of orange blossoms and the bride's crown. In one of his early poems he shows how easily the purity of orange blossom can be spoilt:

> La naranja es la tristeza
> del azahar profanado,
> pues se toma fuego y oro
> lo que antes fue puro y blanco. (p 258)

The next major reference to its fragility comes much later in Así que pasen cinco años when the Muchacha sings of losing her crown and then finding it. The Novia more explicitly rejects the conventions linked with orange blossom in Bodas de Sangre. She protests against a marriage with a man she does not love, her crown of azahar and by extension the conventional institution of

marriage. The Criada's cry of horror emphasizes the rebellious quality of her act:

> No son horas de ponerse triste. (Animosa.) Trae el azahar. (La Novia tira el azahar.) ¡Niña! ¿Qué castigo pides tirando al suelo la corona? ¡Levanta esa frente! ¿Es que no te quieres casar? Dilo. Todavía te puedes arrepentir. (p 1208)

However, the dramatist had added one extremely important detail: the orange blossom is made of wax; it is as artificial as the Novio's love for the girl. Although the fiancé claims its artificiallty is an advantage as it will last for ever, it mirrors the Novia's false emotions for him. Finally she escapes with Leonardo with "la corona puesta." The visual mark of purity becomes ironical and useless. Later she appears without the orange blossom; in other words she has rejected convention and accepted her role as an adulteress. She has cast off the potential peace and security of the corona to seek true fulfilment outside society. It is interesting to note that while the Novia's crown of flowers is artificial when she follows social rules and gets married, the crown put on the head of Paca la Rosita, the prostitute in La casa de Bernarda Alba is made of real flowers even though she is contravening the customs of society. The irony of the prostitute's crown flouts social decency, but Lorca, I believe, is quietly injecting his personal viewpoint by such close attention to detail. He is saying that what is natural is right and if it upsets society it shows the folly and antiquated falseness of its structure.

When Lorca uses bird symbolism in his drama, he generally confines himself to the traditional meanings indicated by Alberich: "el deseo insatisfecho de cohabitación, y el pájaro ha sido, desde tiempos inmemorables, una figuración folklórica del miembro viril".[26] In El amor de Don Perlimplín a flock of black paper birds fly past the balcony; they indicate firstly that the marriage is, like the birds, artificial and secondly that Belisa's passion, which is not satisfied by her husband, will

bring about the disaster of death (whose popular colour is black). So their strange appearance gives the preliminary warning of the tragic tone at the end of the play. In Yerma the Lavanderas encourage enjoyment of sexual intercourse, comparing man's penetration to a bird's restless flight:

> Y abrir el vientre a pájaros sin sueño
> cuando a la puerta llama temblando el invierno. (p 1308)

In an earlier scene María describes the sensation of the new life within her as "un pájaro apretado en la mano" (p 1280) and compares her child to a dove of light: "Pero . . la noche que nos casamos me lo decía constantemente con su boca puesta en mi mejilla, tanto que a mí me parece que mi niño es un palomo de lumbre que él me deslizó por la oreja." (p 1281)

However some animal symbols reveal a violence and ferocity. La Poncia compares her mistress to a lizard, for she is dry, withered and flourishes in the arid, sterile conditions of her home. The maid also calls herself a dog whose master is Bernarda, and she acts as a guard dog to prevent the family from escaping. María Josefa compares her daughter and grand daughters as vicious and ugly creatures just as the Vecina Amarilla calls the Zapatera's home the place for a lion or hyena:

> Bernarda,
> cara de leoparda.
> Magdalena,
> cara de hiena. (p 1523)

But two of the main animal symbols found in the work of Lorca are those of the horse and the bull. The former is the symbol of unconscious instinct; it carries man to his fate mindless of whether it should be a happy or tragic one. In strength and virility the horse is an obvious symbol for man. Lorca repeatedly used it throughout his career. He constantly associated the rider and horse so closely that they became one and share the same emotions. Thus in 'Romance del emplazado' both the

horseman and his steed suffer from insomnia, while the 'Burla de Don Pedro a caballo' equates the strength of the horse with the man's longing for food and sexual activity:

> Montado en un ágil
> caballo sin freno,
> venía en la busca
> del pan y del beso. (p 461)

The women in some of Lorca's plays compare to horses the men who have so much power over them: Mariana Pineda declares that she is tied to a force greater than herself:

> ¡Abre, Clavela! Soy una mujer
> que va atada a la cola de un caballo. (p 848)

The Zapatera dreams that her fantasy lover, Emilio, has a fine horse with a long white tail which reaches the water of a stream. These two allusions underline man's sexual power and woman's sexual frustration.

Leonardo's horse in Bodas de sangre is so clearly drawn that he becomes a vital character in the play. He reflects the passionate power and virility of his master by the speed with which he gallops to the Novia. In the important lullaby sung by Leonrdo's wife and mother, the horse, which struggles to avoid drinking the water he is so near to, parallels the two lovers who are so near to fulfilling their passion, but unable to achieve a peaceful existence together. Leonardo also claims that his steed carries him off to his lover:

> Pero montaba a caballo
> y el caballo iba a tu puerta. (p 1258)

He generally rides to see the Novia at such a frantic speed that the sweat pours off his mount. The girl is quick to note the influence man and horse have on a woman: "Un hombre con su caballo sabe mucho y puede mucho para poder estrujar a una muchacha metida en un desierto." (p 1214)

It is not surprising that his wife links the disappearance of Leonardo with his horse, such is their intimacy. Consequently the Novio wants a horse to ride after the pair, and once he is mounted he is possessed by a feeling of violent anger equalling the passion felt by Leonardo for the girl. Lorca has plucked from the traditional personality of the horse his strength, potential fertility, speed and the unbridled passion which represent man's deepest instincts.[27]

La casa de Bernarda Alba examines the symbolic relationship between the stallion (man) and woman. The stallion is so intent on mating that he tries to knock down the walls of his stable; eventually Bernarda allows the horse to be turned out into the relative freedom of the yard provided that the mares are kept well locked up:

> (Levantándose furiosa.) ¿Hay que decir las cosas dos veces? ¡Echadlo que se revuelque en los montones de paja! (Pausa, y como hablando con los gañanes.) Pues encerrad las potras en la cuadra, pero dejadlo libre, no sea que nos eche abajo las paredes. (p 1509)

This speech is a direct reflection of her attitude towards men and women; her daughters are kept in the house while men are free to go to the country, roam the streets and have relationships with prostitutes, simply because they have been born men. Indeed, there is another aspect of the situation of the mares/women, for they are both of good stock but both (with the exception of Angustias) will only fetch a low price at market and in marriage. This being so, Young's interpretation of these events is not a misrepresentation ofthe play but a total failure to note the dichotomy between the sexes: "Because the stallion is prevented from mating, penned in the coral, he tries to break down its walls. Similarly thwarted in fulfilling their natural desires, the women try to break out of their prisons."[28] The white stallion fills the

darkness just as the unseen Pepe is in all the women's minds. Neither the wife in Quimera is afraid of the horse, nor is Adela, who is the only one to acknowledge the beauty and power of nature. She is closely linked to the virility of the stallion/Pepe, for it rolled on the straw and Adela has straw on her skirt. (Likewise the Vieja describes the sexual charm of Yerma by revealing her effect on a stallion: "¿Quién puede decir que este cuerpo que tienes no es hermoso? Pisas, y al fondo de la calle relincha el caballo": (p 1288).) Lorca has emphasized in all his references to the horse that the horse's intimacy with nature and his power cannot easily be subjugated by society.

Lorca also used the traditional symbols of the bull and the bull-fighter to reinforce man's virile image. This is especially so in the popular verse Lorca recreated: 'El café de Chinitas' reports the confident boast of Paquero that he is a better bullfighter than his brother; La Loca in Balcón is surrounded by toreritos who have to wait until she has finished her washing before they can fully enjoy her company.[29] The protagonist in 'Reyerta' is compared to a toro just as the Madre in Bodas de sangre voices her disbelief that a bull of a man can be killed by a knife or a bullet: "¿Y es justo y puede ser que una cosa pequeña como una pistola o una navaja pueda acabar con un hombre, que es un toro?" (p 1173) In Yerma a reference to "toro nupcial" in the wedding songs precedes a clearer allusion to man's virile role when the Macho compares husbands to bulls and the crowd urge him to symbolically use on the woman the horns attached to his head (p 1342). However, the horns, which also give rise to an association with the devil, appear in El amor de Don Perlimplín ... to show that the hero has been deceived by his wife and to mock his lack of the virility honoured by the tradition of the bullfight.

The knife or sword is at times used to represent man's penis and at other times to carry out the destruction of man, as the mother complained in Bodas de sangre. Of course, it is ironical that man's own inventions can turn against him. The great wind in 'Preciosa y el aire' is the proud possessor of an "espada caliente", a clear allusion to his lustfulness; however, the knife-seller in 'Diálogo del amargo' indicates the potential threat of the knife. This is developed in the play I have just mentioned. The Madre's fear of knives is seen from the very beginning; she does not want her son to use one even for the purpose of cutting grapes. In terrible appreciation of the self-destructiveness of man, she sings a hymn to the cruel power of this diminutive object:

> Vecinas: con un cuchillo,
> con un cuchillito,
> en un día señalado, entre las dos y las tres,
> se mataron los dos hombres del amor.
> Con un cuchillo,
> con un cuchillito
> que apenas cabe en la mano,
> pero que penetra fino
> por las carnes asombradas
> y que se para en el sitio
> donde tiembla emmarañada
> la oscura raíz del grito. (p 1271/2)

I believe that it is now possible to assess the great and ever increasing concern Lorca conveyed by means of symbols with man's relationahip with nature.

The Catholic Church

Catholicism and its rituals appealed to Lorca and made a deep mark on him. Later, though, he became disillusioned with Catholic dogma and was increasingly critical of its inability to guide modern society.

Religion was no comfort to Lorca in his preoccupation with the horror which accompanied death. It was physical decay that repelled Lorca and made him question the possibility of an afterlife. Of course this obsession was not new: Quevedo had long since dwelt on man's worthlessness and physical corruptibility and the parish priest evokes the physical torment of sinners in Hell from the pulpit.

Perhaps what is most striking in this aspect of the author's work is that on two occasions death comes through the voluntary act of suicide, which is nothing less than a crime and a sin according to Catholic dogma. The title of the tale 'Suicidio en Alejandría' (in Narraciones) directly challenges the policy of the Spanish church, while his final play ends on the suicide of the heroine. This, and the dramatist knew it, would have shocked any orthodox Catholic audience. And yet in La casa de Bernarda Alba the curtain falls on a note of religious hypocrisy, for the mother, who observes the ceremonies of the Church, lies about her daughter's suicide and declares her daughter to be a virgin. She needs to tell these lies in order to conform to the social and moral ideology of the Church. In two blows Lorca is attacking the hypocrisy of society and the rigid uncompassionate attitude of the Church towards those desperate enought to take their own life. It is not surprising that the dreadful tales of the fate of sinners narrated to the young from an early age are intended to prevent suicide or even the thought of it.

I wish to examine in some detail the social character of religion which Lorca drew in his work. But first, in order to achieve a balanced view of the traditions of the Catholic Church painted by Lorca, it will be useful to put into perspective the role religion has played in the

development of Spain.

The strength of the Church originated in its struggle to drive out the Moors. The unifying force she had on all the regions of the country during the eight centuries of gradual reconquest gave the Church a powerful, neo-military domination over the people. The Inquisition, which was created to maintain the purity of the faith, reinforced the Church's strength, while at the same time emphasizing its national character, so that it could broadly claim allegiance from all spectra of society. However, the year 1812 marked a radical change in its policies, for it became involved in the political battle of the Peninsular War. From then on it became automatically associated with the upper classes.[30] The war in fact drove the Spanish pueblo away from the hitherto all powerful grip of the Church, especially as it increased its wealth and association with the rich as the years passed by. From the death of Alfonso XII to shortly before the Civil War it grew in political stature. The Queen Regent who succeeded Alfonso made a pact with the Church by giving it a considerable fortune to avert the danger of a Carlist uprising. At that period, too, the liberalization which was taking place in France was causing its clergy to emigrate to Spain; the result of this settlement was the tremendous increase in church buildings and institutions and the even greater dominance of the Jesuits. Opposing the increase of the middle and upper classes to Catholicism, the surge of anti-clericalism was not a new phenomenon; it had been alive in Spain for many centuries.. Quevedo's satire against the clergy was an acrid example and popular verse had traditionally found the priest an ideal object to attack:

> Clérigos y confesores,
> Obispos y cardenales,
> En el tribunal de Dios,
> seremos todos iguales.[31]

The beginning of the twentieth century heralded further conflict between traditional Catholics and their critics. In 1901 Galdós' 'anti-clerical' play Electra was performed for the first time; it caused a furore and began the pressure to limit the numerous religious bodies and the powers they had inherited. However, as Brenan aptly points out, the Church, instead of reaching for support in the main body of Spain, the pueblo, consolidated its position and clearly showed itself to be a supporter of the ruling classes:

> Disdaining the slow work of example and persuasion, it has preferred to fall back on the authority of the State. Thus instead of meeting the Socialists and the Anarchists on their own ground with labour organisations, friendly societies and projects for social reform, it has concentrated its efforts upon the search for a government that would suppress its enemies by force and restore to the Catholic religion the privileged position it held two centuries ago. This has meant that its action has been mainly political and, since its allies have naturally been taken from the wealthiest and most reactionary classes, that it has drawn upon itself in the course of the struggle the hostility of every decent or progressive force in the country ..... When one remembers that this political intransigence, often covered the greatest laxity of conduct and more or less total absence of the Christian virtues, one cannot be surprised that the Church became to large sections of Spaniards the symbol of everything that was vile, stupid and hypocritical. The devotion of individual priests and monks, the sincerity and humanity which large numbers of Spanish Catholics have always shown, was obscured by the militant and reactionary attitude of the hierarchy. 32

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, civil marriages and funerals were increasing in number; and although people, and more specifically women, still attended ceremonies and festivals, less Spaniards were going regularly to mass or were sincerely committed to the Catholic dogma. Indeed, the rigidity of the Catholic Church was matched by the equally extreme position taken against it by the anti-clerical lobby. Just before the Republic criticism of the Church was becoming more vociferous and widespread. In a book concerned with examining the fundamental precepts

of Catholic doctrines, Teología y eugenesia, Torrubiano Ripoll scathingly attacked the papism of his countrymen: "Nuestro papismo, superior al del Papa, es ya verdadera idiosincrasía, de esos dichos intereses, Aquí todo está condenado por la Iglesia: esa es muleta muy cómoda para nuestros cojos intelectuales."[33] In the following year, 1930, the lawyer Jiménez de Asúa included in his guide to the youth of the day a warning against the prejudice nurtured by the Church.[34]

Not surprisingly, the second Spanish Republic introduced sweeping reductions in the powers of the Church:

> the annual State grant to the clergy (about 67 million pesetas) was to cease, all convents were to be dissolved and their goods nationalized and all religious schools with the exception of the seminaries were to close. ..... The Republic had come in as a reaction against the Dictatorship and the Monarchy: the Church had been the strongest supporter of both. During the recent elections it had deliberately identified the cause of the Monarchy with that of the Catholic religion. In the Catholic press and in the pulpit the Republic candidates had often been denounced as 'sold to Moscow gold' [35]

The steps prepared by the new administration to establish divorce and recognize only civil marriage and secularize cemeteries, as well as the abandonment of financial support, were the result of the widespread disillusionment with religion. The government did make one false move; it did not realize that it could have amassed valuable support by appealing to the young clergy and parish priests who were in general in favour of the Republic, and who were, in contrast to the bishops and monastic orders, extremely poor. So, for the first time in its history Spain had rejected its principal characteristic: Catholicism:

> Its majority voted for all these articles of the Constitution, causing the withdrawal en masse of the Government and one of the ministers. In his first speech the new President declared on the 13th October 1931 that "Spain is no longer Catholic!" [36]

It was, for the most part, the Anarchists who took this statement most literally by burning and destroying many churches in Spain. The desecration of these places began almost at the same time as the Republic was born. The magazine Blanco y negro consistently reported burnings and bombings from 1931 to the outbreak of the Civil War. I turn again to Brenan to find an explanation behind the violence of the Anarchists' attacks on the physical and spiritual existence of Catholicism:

> It can only, I think, be explained as the hatred of heretics for the Church from which they have sprung. For in the eyes of the Spanish libertarians the Catholic Church occupies the position of Anti-Christ in the Christian world. It is far more to them than a mere obstacle to revolution. They see in it the foundation of all evil, the corruptor of youth with its vile doctrine of original sin, the blasphemer against Nature and the Law of Nature, which they call Salud or Health. It is also the religion which mocks with its pretence of brotherly love and mutual forgiveness the great ideal of human solidarity. [37]

Andalusia, in particular, was beset by the destruction of churches. In Lorca's homeland the rift between the traditional supporters of the faith and the poor, equally fanatical Anarchists was immense. When the Civil War did erupt it was hardly surprising that Franco took up the cause of the Church and made it part of his 'crusade'.

Lorca and the Church

Lorca made it known during the troubled years of the thirties where his sympathies lay. He made sporadic criticisms of the Church, both implicit and explicit in his creative work, and in his interviews and lectures. To be labelled a liberal, which was the view many people had of

Lorca, was enough in the atmosphere of tension and hatred to incur the wrath of the Catholic forces [38]: to publicly express, as he did, doubts on the function of the Church was to lay himself open to attack.

As I have already ascertained, Lorca moved among free-thinking liberal men and women who quickly saw the faults in the Church's structure. He would have known anti-clerical themes in the cinema, especially in the films of Buñuel. L'Age d'or and Un Chien Andalou mock religious conventions, the former containing several vivid scenes where priests pray aloud under a grand piano and where a priest is in an orchestra playing Wagner.[39] Dalí in particular had completely rejected Catholic dogma, and influenced by the Surrealist movement he echoed their strong anti-clericalism. Alberti became increasingly antagonistic to the Church and Cernuda thoroughly condemned the restrictions the Church imposed upon individual behaviour. Lorca would have obviously been aware of the demonstrations and counter-demonstrations held by the Catholics and their opponents throughout Spain during the thirties. It seemed impossible not to take sides over the matter.

Lorca reflected in many of his plays the frequency and ease with which the name of God springs to the lips of his characters in the form of traditional pleas for help. Of course, this is a literary commonplace, dating back to the time of Lazarillo de Tormes, but it does show how traditional beliefs and customs still stood firm among country folk. Mariana Pineda calls God to her aid (p 826) and Clavela repeatedly resorts to religious stock phrases to show her support for the heroine (p 804). Both the Zapatera and her husband invoke God to witness their

words: and similarly the neighbours affect a pious attitude to give weight to their criticisms of her (p 9623). Plays as different as Los títeres de Cachiporra and La casa de Bernarda Alba contain examples of automatic traditional appeals to God for help, so often have the refrains been used that they lose their true meaning and become instead convenient crutch words. The phrases are generally no more than an outward, often hypocritical, show of religious piety.

Lorca also consistently noted the social aspects of religion, this time in the funeral ceremony. The burial service is the most important manifestation of religion for him and it is treated with special regard to its external form. Baroja has captured the essence of the show with which man must appear to follow the precepts of the Catholic Church:

> ...la gente ha cogido de un modo muy fuerte la idea- muy característica del catolicismo, a diferencia de otras ramas cristianas - de que es de orden fundamental el cumplimiento exacto y absoluto de los deberes religiosos que se exteriorizan y toman un aire social. Es decir, la asistencia a la mayor cantidad de ceremonias religiosas posible, la frecuentación de los sacramentos en su máximo grado, etcétera.
>
> Una negligencia en alguna de estas obligaciones es algo muy mal visto considerado desde el punto de vista estrictamente social. 40

In this sense, the Madre in Bodas de sangre and Bernarda Alba, who both accept the rules of the strictest mourning, reflect the social impositions expected of them. Black must be worn, the widows must not leave their home and the external cohesion of the family in the second play presents to the outside world an example of traditional and conventional grief.

However, his two experimental plays reflect more scathingly the hypocritical cant of the burial ceremony. Priests are criticised too for their lack of consideration in reciting with apathetic haste the

rites in El público:

ENFERMERO (En voz baja.) ¿Cuándo va a comenzar el toque de agonía?

LADRONES (Levantando los cirios.) Santo. Santo. Santo.

DESNUDO Padre, en tus manos encomiendo mi espíritu.

ENFERMERO Te has adelantado dos minutos. (p 1164)

The Niño in Así que pasen cinco años complains that once the mourners have cried at his grave, as he knows they will, they will proceed to forget him. In the Romancero gitano religious ceremonies only assume importance as death draws near. The Emplazado must learn to cross his hands, he must put a cross on his door in preparation for his approaching death. (p452)

It must be noted that Lorca's horror at the physical decay which accompanies death is heightened by the intrusion of a former burial. The sincerity of the natural grief of the Mother and the Novia in Bodas de sangre needs no formal liturgy by priests. The whiteness and simplicity of the room in which they meet gives the deliberate impression of a chapel. Indeed it is meant to seem like a church in its peacefulness and purity, but it is without encumbrance of priests and formal ceremonies. The naturalness of the mother's sadness contrasts sharply with the hypocritical manner in which Bernarda arranges a pompous ceremony for her dead husband. La Poncia notes the splendour of the occasion, deliberately emphasizing the social nature of the event: "Llevan ya más de dos horas de gori-gori. Han venido curas de todos los pueblos. La iglesia está

hermosa. En el primer responso se desmayó la Magdalena." (p 1439) Bernarda's house, once the mourners have returned there, resounds with hollow falseness, for hate and envy are uppermost in the minds of the women. Lorca marks a shocking contrast between the solemnity of the traditional responses she utters and the mother's biting attack on the guests as soon as they depart:

> BERNARDA ¡Andar a vuestras casas a criticar todo los que habéis visto! ¡Ojalá tardéis muchos años en pasar el arco de mi puerta!
>
> LA PONCIA No tendrás queja ninguna. Ha venido todo el pueblo.
>
> BERNARDA Sí; para llenar mi casa con el sudor de sus refajos y el veneno de sus lenguas. (p 1450)

Bernarda feels she has fulfilled her social duty merely by providing a funeral service that befits her high social status in the village. Her own emotions are not important; an outward appearance of decent grief is all that counts.

Lorca has thus exposed the rites of burial and mourning as prescribed by the Catholic Church to be hollow and hypocritical. On the other hand, when the mourners are alone and untrammelled by the trappings of religious convention, they express sincere and often pious emotions. Bells, noted with great effect in his last play and to be heard in other works, priests and churches were far too numerous and influential in Spain for an increasing number of people; and Lorca tried to point out in his works the harm caused by a blind adherence to Catholicism.

Lorca's pointed attacks on the clergy began in somewhat subdued fashion in his first work, Impresiones y paisajes. In one short story concerning the town of Granada, he notes the stark contrast between the beauty and tranquility of Catholic devotion and the harsh reality of the outside world:

> Hay una tragedia de contrastes. Por una calle solitaria se oye el órgano dulcemente tocado en un convento. ... y la salutación divina de Ave María Stella dicha con voces suavemente femeninas.... Enfrente del convento, un hombre con blusa azul maldice espantosamente, dando de comer a unas cabras. Más allá unas prostitutas de ojos grandes, negrísimos, con ojeras moradas, con los cuerpos desgarbados y contrahechos por la lujuria, dicen a voz en cuello obscenidades de magnificencia ordinaria; junto a ellas, una niña delicada, harapienta, canta una canción piadosa y monjil.... (p 1567)

Even so the criticism the poet was making of the introverted world of nuns was part of the romantic and liberal tradition which influenced him as a youth.[41] Certainly he would have been shocked by the poverty and degradation suffered by the peasants he saw on his tour around Spain with Berruete, but he used the impressions he had formed to create a scene of literary contrasts rather than to expose social injustices.

It was not until Poeta en Nueva York that he injected into his work an open hostility to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The titles of 'Grito hacia Roma' and 'Iglesia abandonada' indicate at once the force of his contempt for religion. The first poem contains an attack on the idealistic, fairy-tale world of the church, which is unable or unwilling to keep in touch with modern society. He did, in fact, go

farther than that by suggesting that the Catholic religion was not just an anachronism, but a negative and harmful force. From the title, too, the poet made it clear that it was not just religious faith he was attacking but the Catholic Church, and more specifically still, the head of its structure, the Pope. He was inferring that on the Pope's orders his followers blindly rejected the task of righting social injustices in the world. The leader's ignorance of the poverty and oppression rife in society was expressed in his priest's precepts and practices:

> Los maestros enseñan a los niños
> una luz maravillosa que viene del monte;
> pero lo que llega es una reunión de cloacas
> donde gritan las oscuras ninfas de cólera.
> Los maestros señalan con devoción las enormes cúpulas
> sahumadas;
>
> pero debajo de las estatuas no hay amor,
> no hay amor bajo los ojos de cristal definitivo.
> El amor está en las carnes desgarradas por la sed,
> en la choza diminuta que lucha con la inundación;
> el amor está en los fosos donde luchan las sierpes del hambre,
> en el triste mar que mece los cadáveres de las gaviotas
> y en el oscurísimo beso punzante debajo de las almohadas.
>
> (p 521)

Indeed Lorca denounced the Pope's inability to translate into action the symbolic meaning of the holy communion or sermons of love and compassion. As a telling result, workmen are already making coffins unmarked by crosses for unborn children. In his complete ignorance, the Pope does not realize that the healing, life-giving force of Christ is applicable to modern man. In reply to the Pope's traditional empty declaration of the guiding light of love - a message so ineffectual that while it is being said men are dying, wars are being waged and the rich are increasing in wealth - Lorca urged mankind to renounce the Pope's hollow postulations and demand the justice, peace and equality which God proclaimed was man's right:

la muchedumbre de martillo, de violín do de nube,
ha de gritar frente a las cúpulas,
ha de gritar loca defuego,
ha de gritar loca de nieve,
ha de gritar con la cabeza llena de excremento,
ha de gritar como todas la noches juntas,
ha de gritar con voz tan desgarrada
hasta que las ciudades tiemblen como niñas,
y rompan las prisiones del aceite y la música,
porque queremos el pan nuestro de cada día,
flor de aliso y perenne ternura desgranada,
porque queremos que se cumpla la voluntad de la Tierra
que da sus frutos para todos. (p 522)

Auclair sees in the poem an indictment of false Christians,[42] but this is to miss the point. Lorca attacked the corner stone of the traditional hierarchy; he wanted religion to be reborn and to come into live contact with all levels of society, not just the rich or the pious. In the same vein Correa considers that the poem contains one gleam of positive affirmation when the poet cries to the Pope to restore old values.[43] The values for which Lorca pleaded come from the Bible, the original transmitter of Catholicism and not from the faith's messengers. Lorca's wish to return to what he believed to be the foundation of religion arose from his consciousness of man's suffering and, above all, from his humanity. The poem 'Iglesia abandonada' examines how a father needs help from the Church to come to terms with his grief; but, as the title suggests, he receives from it no comfort. Schonberg's assertion that the poem contains 'Nul sentiment religieux. Mais une douleur maternelle désespérée, que rien, aucune foi, aucun espoir ne viendra consoler"[44] completely disregards the title of the work and the air of disillusionment contained in the hostile references to religion:

Subí a tocar las campanas, pero las frutas tenían gusanos
y las cerillas apagadas
se comían los trigos de la primavera. (p 483)

Priests are qualified as "idotas" (p 496) and three friends ransack churches in order to find the poet (p 473/5). Here traditional respect

for the Church is transformed into deliberate rebellion. It echoes the destruction of places of worship committed by supporters of the left wing in frenzied attacks against the once all powerful dominance of the Catholic faith over the lives of ordinary Spaniards. Malraux evokes the passionate rancour many people then harboured against the priesthood and all that it signified:

> The peasants blamed the clergy for the way they backed the upper class, for having condoned the punitive measures which had followed the revolt in the Asturias, approved the spoliation of the Catalonians, and always taught the poor folk a meek submission to injustice; and now the Church was sponsoring the Holy War against them. One of them disliked the priests' voices because they didn't talk like proper human beings; many resented the harshness of hypocrisy - according to their rank - of the men the priests employed to bolster up their influence in the villages. 45

The wedding scene in Bodas de sangre bears no direct reference to any Christian aspect of the ceremony. Was Lorca reluctant to recreate the ceremony? Surely its importance lies in the fact that the two are bound by the Catholic service to remain together, faithfully and productively, for the rest of their lives. There would be no need to pointedly represent the scene for the audience would have been well aware of the implication behind the marriage. The absolute bond created by the Church between the Novia and the Novio emphasizes the pledge they have made to each other and hence the force of passion which drives the bride and Leonardo to break their vows.

I have already commented on the hypocrisy of the prayers recited by Bernarda Alba. The antithesis between a truly Christian doctrine and the mother's apparent acceptance of it is sharply defined when she refuses to give away any of her husband's clothes. But La Poncia calls the house a convent; in which case Bernarda would hold the position of mother superior.

Is Lorca subtly mocking the nature of such an institution by equating it to the stern cruelty and lack of christianity which makes Bernarda's household more of a hell than a heaven?

Lorca indicated that formal religion had lost all meaning in society; it had become nothing more than a prop for society to lean upon by reaffirming traditional conventions for its own sake. He contrasted the empty droning of the Catholic services with the sincere belief which could only be found away from the confines of formal religion. Priests are dismissed as false purveyors of God's work; they are the mere instruments of society to keep the sinner, that is the ordinary man, in his place. The Scriptures have always stressed the duty of the rich to help the poor. Lorca translated the teachings he must have absorbed in his youth into the poem 'Grito hacia Roma' where at the end he identified himself with the people in their demand for the food and essentials which are their right. Brenan comments on the social aspects in the Bible and the way in which the Church has tried to brush aside its importance:

> The Bible, and especially the New Testament, contains enough dynamite to blow up all the existing social systems in Europe, only by force of habit through the powers of beautiful and rhythmic words have we ceased to notice it... The danger has therefore always existed that any weakening in the influence of the Church, any desertion of the interests of the poor by the priesthood, would lead to a greater emphasis being placed upon the social principles of equality, voluntary poverty and brotherly love that, along with many other things, lie at the root of Christianity. 46

Theoretically, then, the duty of the priest must be to encourage the rich to help the poor. 47

However much the rich generally ignore the moral duty to care for

those less fortunate than themselves, the poor have traditionally clung to the belief that while they do not achieve justice on earth, then they will at least be shown God's mercy at their death and will be received into heaven. The rich on the other hand will be punished for their sins. This view had been expressed in popular verse for many years:

> Si quieres subir al cielo,
> Tienes que subir bajando
> Hasta llegar al que sufre
> y darle al pobre la mano. [48]

During the last years of his life, Lorca expressed in the interview 'Iré a Santiago' his plans for considering anew the ideological struggle between rich and poor and writing a sociological drama on the religious and social injustices in the world. (p 1812) Likewise, the Ama in Doña Rosita, written in 1935, reveals something of the author's preoccupation with the responsibility of man:

> AMA Pero estoy segura que van al infierno de cabeza. ¿Dónde cree usted que estará don Rafael Salé, explotador de los pobres, que enterraron anteayer, Dios le haya perdonado, con tanto cura y con tanta monja y tanto gori-gori? ¡En el infierno! Y él dirá: "¡Que tengo veinte millones de pesetas, no me apretéis con las tenazas! ¡Os doy cuarenta mil duros si me arrancáis estas brasas de los pies!"; pero los demonios, tizonazo por aquí, tizonazo por allá, puntapié que te quiero, bofetadas en la cara, hasta que la sangre se le convierta en carbonilla.
>
> TÍA Todos los cristianos sabemos que ningún rico entra en el reino de los cielos, pero a ver si por hablar de ese modo vas a parar también al infierno de cabeza.
>
> (p 1424/5)

Lorca captured the people's instinctive hope that justice will be done in heaven if not on earth. Indeed, the Ama's strong conviction in God's judgement acts as a kind of incentive for enduring life on earth.[49] Lorca himself was deeply moved by the inhumanity of one section of society on another; he was scathingly critical of the Church's efforts to help the poor and, while hoping for justice after death, he was more concerned in redressing the wrong on earth.

The artist's keen ear noted the bells which tolled regularly through-out Spain, in villages and in towns. The physical presence of the Church was yet another aspect of its dominance over the people; for the peals which most peasants knew by heart called for a collective social response. Lisón Tolosana explains the language of bells and their effect on the community:

> Las campanas expresan el aspecto cooperador, armónico, del orden social, o la restauración de este orden perturbado. Invitan a todos los feligreses a asociarse en los momentos críticos y difíciles; solicitan la cooperación de los demás cuando un miembro del grupo se encuentra en el difícil tránsito a esta o la otra vida, cuando está en el umbral de la frontera. Por otro lado, las campanas ritualizan los momentos de la vida del hombre más transcendentales para la vida del grupo; su nacimiento, agonía y muerte, es decir; los aumentos y pérdidas del mismo. Un grupo que realmente se esfuerza en mantenerse como tal tiene necesariamente que ritualizar en forma acusada los nacimientos, los matrimonios y las muertes.
>
> La campanas lanzan además otro mensaje por la parroquia; son la voz de los antepasados, el clamor de los feligreses muertos. 50

The tolling of bells therefore provokes a traditional reminder to the individual and to the village of the role of the Church in their lives. Lorca transferred this reminder to his work. One of the poems in Libro de poemas is entitled 'Campana', and the title reappears in Poema del cante jondo, with the subtitle 'Bordón'. One of the most vivid uses Lorca makes of the sound of bells is in his Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, where bells are replaced by the repetition of the hour of the bullfighter's death (p 537). In his plays too, the peal of bells is pronouncing the religious piety which frames society. On the death of Mariana Pineda bells toll in her memory: in El amor de Don Perlimplín they mark the visit of the Duendes and Belisa's subsequent adultery (p 1000). As in the first play the death of the old man is recorded by the tolling of bells. Indeed the cycle of life and death goes on in a perpetual cycle,

for the peals seem never to end. La casa de Bernarda Alba begins and ends with them, for death opens and closes the work. The Criada is haunted by their noise in the first scene for they formally announce to the whole village the length of the funeral service for Bernarda's dead husband. At the end it is the death of Adela that motivates their tolling. The formal mark of respect they symbolize is in shocking contrast to the hypocrisy of the lying mother. Auclair affirms the presence of bells in so much of the Spaniard's work by recalling his love of music[51]; however, Lorca used them specifically to emphasize the hold of religion on Spanish village communities in particular.

Woman and Religion

Lorca focuses on woman's relationship with the Catholic Church, although some male characters in the artist's work do take on the symbolic role of martyr to illustrate the pain and suffering one individual will bear to help another. The Viejo in El público wears a crown of thorns. But it is Don Perlimplín who most ably demonstrates the sacrifice he is willing to make to endow Belisa with a soul. His self-inflicted martyrdom is not induced by religious fervour but rather to give his wife a spirituality she hitherto did not possess. In Poema del cante jondo it is the male lover who describes himself as Christ on the cross to illustrate the torment of his passion:

> ¡Yo la he querido tanto!
> Sigue esa veredita.
> En las manos,
> tengo los agujeros
> de los clavos.
> ¿No ves cómo me estoy
> desangrando? (p 306)

Poeta en Nueva York contains several allusions to the poet himself being sacrificed in order to help nature regain its beauty and society to lose its cruelty and materialism. He is reduced to a "pulso herido", a human martyr who alone and instinctively rejects the injustice rife in the world; to his dismay, the poet believes that God is oblivious to the state of the world.

Zdenek points to the fact that Spanish women saints suffer more than men[52]; and certainly Lorca's version of the martyrdom of Santa Olalla bears witness to the horror of the tortures inflicted upon her, and in contrast, to her own bravery and exaltation. Indeed it can be considered the martyrdom of womanhood rather than Christianity. Barea states how children are taught by Catholic priests to long for a martyr's death, for the greater the pain suffered, the more joyous the reunion with God and this produces its greatest effect on girls:

> This educational process breeds, particularly in the girls, the ideals of Lust through Pain; Holiness through Horror and Virginity triumphant over Violence and crowned by the Heavenly Bridegroom, the conclusion of this beihg a breeding-ground of sado-masochism in legends and paintings of martyred saints in Spanish churches. [53]

Certainly Lorca, like most Spaniards, would have been affected not only by the accounts of the terrors of hell taught him by Jesuit priests but also by the stories of martyred saints whose torture was equally violent and brutal. It would be worth bearing in mind this point when one forms a general impression of the violence running through the artist's work.

Mariana Pineda compares herself to Saint Magdalena; she makes several allusions to her impending martyrdom in the dual cause of liberty and love: "¡Aunque en mi corazón clavaran vidrios/no hablaría!" (p 857) Indeed towards the end of the play her actions take on the submissive stance of the Woman Incarnate ready to die for her cause: "Mariana se sienta en el banco, con las manos cruzadas y la cabeza caída, en una divina actitud de tránsito." (p 882) The crown of orange blossom the Novia wears on her wedding day is converted into a crown of thorns she will wear in sacrifice of her passion for Leonardo. Once more her willingness to die and suffer for him reveals an essentially female passivity and subordination to man. It reflects at the same time her instinctive feeling that her natural passion is the only path to follow and that social martyrdom will not break her desire.

Yerma, the virgin in 'Elegía' and Doña Rosita, to a certain extent, again suffer by their longing for love and affection. The woman in the poem, like Rosita, waits in vain for a man to love her as time gradually slips away:

> Nadie te fecunda. Mártir andaluza,
> tus besos debieron ser bajo una parra
> plenos del silencio que tiene la noche
> y del ritmo turbio del agua estancada.
>
> .....
>
> ¡Oh mujer esbelta, maternal y ardiente!
> Virgen dolorosa que tiene clavadas
> todas las estrellas del cielo profundo
> en su corazón ya sin esperanza. (p 202)

Lorca continues the poem by showing how she is the typical woman of Andalusia whose inward passion has to be subdued to present a calm, passive front to the world while she becomes increasingly frustrated.

In this way he has subtly changed the implications of martyrdom from the pain and anguish drawn on the face of the Virgen de los Siete Dolores, and the woman who will die a martyr because she remains a virgin. Traditionally, Christian women die virgins because they wish to retain their virginity:

> La muerte corona el suplicio del hombre mártir; pero es aun más grave la pena que se reserva para una virgen. Quedan en élla cualidades morales que ultrajar, y es abandonada en poder de hombres borrachos, o expuesta como una ramera en las esquinas de las calles.[54]

Lorca's heroines die unfilfilled. Like Yerma, the woman also craves for the physical experience of motherhood. Yerma's frustration is so great that she wishes to undergo pain and loss of blood in order to create a child and bring him into the world. In other words, she aspires for the martyrdom of motherhood. But while she cannot be fertile, she will bear the burden of the martyrdom of her wish: "Yo sabré llevar mi cruz como pueda, pero no me preguntes nada." (p 1313) with the overriding implication that as long as a solution is found it will be possible to wait. She points to the future she will be forced to bear when she reveals that she can only tolerate the pain of uncertainty for the moment. One has a feeling that she cannot keep her patience much longer: "....Si pudiera de pronto volverme vieja y tuviera la boca como una flor machacada, te podría sonreír y conllevar la vida contigo. Ahora, ahora déjame con mis clavos." (p 1313). Therefore in some ways Yerma's murder of Juan is a self-sacrifice for she kills all prospects of bearing a child. So it is she rather than her husband, who at least dies and is thus ensured of getting his own way by not giving her a son, who is the martyr figure.

Adela also refers to wearing a crown of thorns, the difference between



her sacrifice and that of the Novia being that her eventual death is self-imposed; her decision to have intercourse with a man is a conscious one. She will be the victim not for the cause of Christianity, but for the cause of social freedom. She identifies herself as a martyr figure persecuted by social convention and its upholders, just as Martirio's name at once covers her with an aura of frustration and helplessness given earlier to Doña Rosita.

Lorca bestowed upon his female characters in particular the burden of martyrdom against a tradition-bound society. He has revealed how passions frustrated by social taboos cannot be felt without great sacrifice on the individual. Lorca knew the traditional and all too often true belief that many girls were forced to become nuns either because of sexual indiscretions or because it was the only alternative to a life of lonely spinsterhood. As an anonymous poem states:

> No quiero ser monja, no,
> que niña namorádica so.
> Dejadme con mi placer,
> con mi placer y alegría,
> dejadme con mi porfía,
> que niña malpenádica so.[55]

Impresiones y paisajes contained the first indication of the poet's anxiety over the fate of nuns; he declared that their chief activity in 'Otro convento' was olvidar; their escape from life leads them to indulge in day-dreams, sometimes of a sensual nature. The Monja gitana in the Romancero gitano also compensates for her lack of communication with the outside world through fantasy:

> ¡Qué bien borda! ¡Con qué gracia!
> sobre la tela pajiza,
> ella quisiera bordar
> flores de su fantasía. (p 433)

I have already noted the similarity between a convent and the house governed by Bernarda Alba. The double side of the nun/jailer figure of Bernarda had a precedent in the two sisters of Juan whose job it was to guard the honour of his wife and consequently of himself. Lorca's treatment of nuns shows his genuine concern with the frustrations he believed were powerful in them.

Woman had generally been cast by the Catholic Church in the role of an inferior being and sometimes even as a temptress and carrier of evil spirits ready to entice man away from God. Miss C. J. Whitbourn has drawn the traditional character of woman as described in sermons:

> The preachers publicly denounced the sins of woman; her vanity, disobedience, spite, garrulity and wantonness. Collections of examples abound in tales of vain or unfaithful wives, or instances in which he has traded on his wife's disobedience to punish or kill her, of the seduction of virtuous men by lewd women. [56]

Marañón also traced woman's traditional inferiority back to the myth of original sin; he showed the contradiction that while religious believers considered woman as evil, they found the perfect woman in the Virgin Mary, and made her the ideal to whom all women must look for inspiration.[57] When woman failed to live up to the ideal, the Church looked upon her with severity. As such she was an object to be treated with contempt and so were those who supported her. In 1927 the Heraldo de Madrid reported that a local paper, Diario de Huelva, had been excommunicated for the astounding temerity to print an article on Woman's contemporary fashion![58] Even now, women are still trying to rid themselves of the prejudices upheld by the Church. The three sisters who have recently caused a stir in Portugal by the publication of their combined work

The New Portuguese Letters have been opposed by the Catholic organisation: "Mrs Horta claimed the Roman Catholic religion was biased in favour of men and that women suffered what she called 'sexual and family repression!"

María Martínez Sierra wrote of her growing concern for the traditional influence of the clergy over women. She reflected the increasing social criticism being directed at the Church, mostly by left-wing supporters and intellectuals during the thirties. Women had just been granted the vote and she was well aware of the political consequences it could bring:

> Esto hace temer harto el resultado del voto feminino. No es que la mujer española sea demasiado cristiana. Su clero la ha dejado durante tantos siglos en tal ignorancia que, a decir verdad, pocas son las españolas que saben lo que dicen al recitar-ellas dicen rezar- el Credo, como si el Credo fuese una oración al ogival del Padre Nuestro. El único deber religioso universalmentec comprendido por el devoto sexo feminino español es asentir a lo que dice el cura. El "Amén" es el áncora de salvación. Comprender o saber que asiente está de más, y hasta puede comprometer la felicidad eterna. [60]

Indeed the pressure exerted by the Church on its members to vote for the Catholic, conservative right wing was such that nuns were given permission to leave their convents for the first time since making their oaths to vote.[61] Margarita Nelken even suggests that all faithful women, nuns or not, have been influenced or at least harangued by their priests for a political cause:

> ....No hay una sola mujer española, católica practicante, es decir, una sola mujer que se confiese, que no haya sido interrogada por su confesor acerca de sus ideas políticas y acerca de la inclinación que ha de darles y que ha de procurar dar a las de cuantos la rodean. [62]

In 'San Miguel' Lorca concentrated on one aspect of the devotions of countrywomen to the Church in their dressing of saints. Their almost sensual devotion to God and by extension to the priest points to the fact that, apart from the home and the family, the Church is their main occupation in life. R.A. Young observes: "....For many Spanish women, to go to Church is the main diversion. Only then may they see the men of the town, and then while being observed by other women".[63] Of course Bernarda's remark that the only man her daughter may look at in church is the priest, and only then because he is dressed in a "skirt", illustrates her complete external obedience to the precepts of Catholicism. However, from the decrees of the period the Catholic Church must have been aware of the bodily charms of their women followers. The Pope dondemned "el impudor de nuestra época" in 1928 and in 1930 a notice was posted on the door of Bilbao Cathedral in accordance with the wishes of the Pope. It included such instructions as these on the correct dress for women and children: Women were to wear dresses half-way down the calf and girls to wear dresses to their knees, "Las mujeres no podrán ir a la iglesia con medias de color carne, y ni las mujeres ni las niñas podrán llevar los brazos desnudos."[64] 'Soltera en misa', an early poem, captures the passionate devotion of a <u>beata</u> to the mystic ceremony:

Ojos de toro te miraban.
Tu rosario llovía.

Con ese traje de profunda seda,
no te muevas, Virginia.

Da los negros melones de tus pechos
al rumor de la misa. (p 399)

The purpose of marriage is, according to the Catholic dogma, procreation, as Manuel points out in <u>Days of Hope</u>:

"What has the Church taught our women? Two things only: to obey and to procreate" 65

Man must follow the rule laid down by St. Paul: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman .... but if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn."[66]

Yerma is an exemplary devotee of the precepts laid down by the Church. She sees sex as a duty, no more; but a duty which must be fulfilled to give marriage a validity. Her strong maternal urge, plus this blind devotion to Catholic teaching, combine to make her disregard any other role than that of motherhood. Juan is a partner for reproduction, not a lover. It is no wonder that their relationship so rapidly deteriorates when social and religious pressures reinforce her natural instinct. Lorca's treatment of this problem provided a sharp contrast with his complaint during the lecture 'Las nanas infantiles' of the burden women have to suffer for their numerous pregnancies - poor physical health in unhygienic conditions:

> No debemos olvidar que la canción de cuna está inventada (y sus textos lo expresan) por las pobres mujeres cuyos niños son para ellas una carga, una cruz pesada con la cual muchas veces no pueden. Cada hijo, en vez de ser una alegría, es una pesadumbre, y, naturalmente, no pueden dejar de cantarle, aun en medio de su amor, su desgana de la vida... (p 95)

Lorca implied in a carefully veiled criticism that society is at fault in not helping the poor, and that religion is at fault for so vehemently condemning any form of birth control. His lecture challenges the position adopted by Delgado Capeans and most other faithful supporters of the Catholic dogma:

> la sociedad debe proteger y respetar a las familias numerosas, proporcionándolas viviendas sanas e higiénicas; dignificar como algo sagrado la maternidad, que ha sido siempre considerado como don del cielo y una bendición de Dios. 67

The author seems ignorant of the physical strain childbirth produces on the mother.

In all the diverse aspects of religion found in Lorca's work, there is one constant. He was always wary of the strong, almost irresistible capacity of the Church to control the external customs of the community. He opposed against this harsh control the sincerity of a free religious belief which did not need the structure of the Church to survive. To state as Auclair has done that the problem concerning God does not enter his work is to disregard his treatment of the institutions and followers of Catholicism. To conclude, Lorca was deeply concerned with the influence the Church exerted over the life of the individual.

CHAPTER III
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CHAPTER IV

Woman and her Family

No quiero que te vayas
ni que te quedes,
ni que me dejes sola,
ni que me lleves.
Quiero tan sólo...
Pero no quiero nada.
Lo quiero todo. [1]

A Historical Approach

I now wish to direct my study of Lorca's theatre towards an examination of his female characters with reference to their role in society. Before I begin my detailed study of their importance in his plays, it would be useful to have a close look at the functions traditionally performed by woman in a literary, popular and social context. If this framework is not considered as a background against which Lorca's characters react, then no deep understanding can be attained from his treatment of woman.

From the Middle Ages, literature has been divided into two camps, one exalting women, the other reviling them. S. de Madariaga gives his view of these opposing schools of thought:

> el que enfrenta a los poetas árabes (ya españoles, ya orientales) y a los trovadores provenzales por un lado, y a los frailes y clérigos por el otro; los unos procurando transcender el amor sensual para elevarlo a una altura mística que transfiguraba a la mujer en ángel y hacía del amor una adoración; los otros, atormentados por las tentaciones de la carne, rebajando el amor al nivel del pecado, lo que hacía de la mujer un terrible demonio. [2]

In both cases woman was looked upon as an object and labelled accordingly; the so-called feminists were using her as much as their opponents were as a mere instrument of propaganda. The admirers of woman's physical beauty

perceived her only as a creature of pleasure who would gratify their desires. However, the women who became idols of admiration were for the most part delighted; with little or no education or culture they suddenly realized the power (even if it were purely sexual) they held over men. Only during the reign of the Reyes Católicos did ladies of the aristocracy begin education and they were in the great minority. Many women, and certainly all in the lower strata of society, remained in almost total ignorance. It is not surprising then that the matters debated by feminists and their opponents were moral. Pilar Oñate relates how easily the Church became involved in the argument:

> Sea de ello lo que quiere, es lo cierto que en esta época amigos y enemigos de las mujeres continúan discutiendo sólo acerca de sus condiciones morales. A los poetas cortesanos censores de la mujer se unen religiosos, que ven en el sexo feminino el maycr peligro para la salvación de las almas.[3]

It is perhaps La Celestina which first strikes a balance between the spiritual love acclaimed by the aristocracy and pure sexual fulfilment, previously the goal of the lower classes. Calixto wants physical as well as spiritual love, and similarly his servants do not limit themselves to sexual enjoyment but desire a more lasting bond. The book also questions woman's traditional subjugation to man in love affairs, and presses for the right to enjoy love and sex.[4]

The sixteenth century heralded new topics of debate in the feminist wrangle. The complete damning of woman's character became largely a matter for popular verse and song, for the upper classes turned their attention to woman's intellectual capacities.[5] The dramatists of the Golden Age generally mocked the woman who was a blue stocking. In La dama boba Lope de Vega ridicules the intelligent sister while raising to the status of heroine the dull one, who becomes spiritually the cleverer after she

has been awakened by the force of love. Indeed, in La Dorotea, Lope revealed the effects of man's treatment of woman:

> Que todo se aprende, hija; y no ay cosa que no sea más fácil que engañar a los hombres; de que ellos tienen la culpa; porque nos han privado el estudio de las ciencias, en que pudiéramos divertir nuestros ingenios sutiles, sólo estudiamos una, que es la de engañarlos; y como no ay más de un libro, todas le sabemos de memoria. 6

The feminist tradition upheld in the fifteenth century was indeed the beginning of the cult of woman as a figure of esteem. C. J. Whitbourn marks the impact this had on literary thought:

> Ideas which came to be commonplaces of fifteenth century amorous verse, such as the divinity of the beloved and the fact that she is the salvation and ennobling power of the lover, are shown as appearing in a multiplicity of places at widely spaced intervals of time. The literary tradition that idealizes love and seeks to impose a series of rules governing courtship is a continuous and universal one. 7

Love became a service, which took place in secrecy; it had its own code of practice laid down by man who claimed his loved one as the goal. This of course led to the secret worship of man for a married woman, and to the vogue for adulterous affairs. Contrary to the teaching of the Church, this development would naturally have given the anti-feminists another weapon to point against women.

In the nineteenth century, Bécquer created a woman synonymous with poetic inspiration:

> Ella tiene la luz, tiene el perfume,
> el calor y la línea;
> la forma engendradora de deseos,
> la expresión, fuente eterna de poesía.

Her physical presence alone was sufficient inspiration for him: the following verse in the same poem bitingly showed:

¿Que es estúpida?.....¡Bah! Mientras callando
guarde oscuro el enigma,
siempre valdrá, a mi ver, lo que ella calla
más que lo que cualquiera otra me diga. 8

Thus the feminist tradition in fact relied to a great extent upon the admiration of man for his partner's sexual charms, while it largely ignored her claims to mental equality, but granted her freedom of choice in marriage. The men who penetrated the wall of prejudice erected in the Middle Ages and maintained to the present day were for the most part isolated in their attempts to liberate her from male domination.

The cult of misogynism has claimed more attention in Spain than the idealization of woman. This may prtly be so because of the wealth of traditional verse and superstition devoted to woman's inferiority. In addition, the Church and many leading authors have been outspoken in their denunciation of woman. Cristóbal de Castillejo (1490-1556) succinctly summed up his opinion of the female sex:

Que las hemos menester,
Como otras cosas, acá,
De que usamos.
Biestas en que caminamos,
Alhajas que poseemos
y casas en que moramos. 9

The seventeenth century had in Gracián an equally bitter critic of woman. Of course his religious commitment provided him with further evidence against the female sex. Woman was a temptress and an enemy. Quevedo gave full vent to his misogynist tendencies in some of his poems, especially in his attacks on cosmetics, something vilified by the Church :

Vida fiambre, cuerpo de anascote,
¿cuándo dirás al apetito, 'tate',
si cuando el Parce mihi te da mate,
empiezas a mirar por el virote?
Tú juntas en tu frente y tu cogote
mono y mortaja sobre seso orate,
pues siendo y viviente disparate
untas la calavera en almodrote. 10

Luis de León was the man who firmly put woman into her place: the house. La perfecta casada provides the female reader with a guide-book for living. He begins by prescribing the general pattern of behaviour woman must follow:

> porque el servir al marido, y el gobernar la familia, y la crianza de los hijos, y la cuenta que juntamente con este se debe al temor de Dios, y a la guarda y limpieza de la consciencia (todo lo cual pertenece al estado y oficio de la mujer casada), obras son que cada una por sí pide mucho cuidado, y que todas ellas juntas no se pueden cumplir sin favor particular del cielo. 11

He based his arguments on Catholic dogma, thus lending to his work an air of formidable authority which was echoed by fellow misogynists down the years. He was the first to compile a guide on the social conduct of woman. Indeed, even in 1934, the book was being advertised as an invaluable aid to woman in persuasively sugared terms: "Un recuerdo para la novia:: Una atención para la esposa:: un libro delicado y exquisito para regalo de bodas." 12

Lorca knew Quevedo well; it is unthinkable that he was not acquainted to some extent with Luis de León's work. His company, La Barraca, performed several plays of Lope and Calderón, and he would have known their major works. It seems likely that Lorca was far better versed in the mysoginistic side of Spanish literature than in its feminist counterpart. Furthermore, he would have been familiar with the popular songs and rhymes attacking woman and he would have been aware of the effect of the Arabic invasion on the social role of Spanish women.

Oñate explains in El feminismo en la literatura the influence of the Arab population on popular and literary tradition, in particular in the thirteenth century: "...pasa a nuestra patria el antifeminismo oriental." 13

Woman's hypocrisy, cunning, coldness, greed and envy were repeatedly criticised and described for these were the only defences available to the oriental woman, bound in a slavery far greater than her Spanish sister. Hayes illustrates the Arabs' scorn for women: "Arab tradition provides us with some examples of the derogatory attitude. One group of Bedouins says that women were created from the sins of the satans, another that 'she was manufactured from the tail of a monkey".[14] Arabic tradition made of the veil a national costume for woman. She had to be covered from head to foot, and kept indoors to prevent man's dishonour. Arabic tradition, which remained strongest in the South of Spain, caused the tightening of social constraints affecting Spanish woman. In Cancionero de la guerra Antonio de Vega compares how the Spanish way of life still bore strong resemblance to the Arabic culture:

> Las mujeres españolas están tan recluídas como nosotras. Como si el Islam hubiera entrado entero en la Cristanería.
>
> Las mujeres españolas se quedan en sus casas, y no descienden al naranjal redondo de la plaza de España; ni pasean por la luneta, ni entran chillando como golondrinas en los comercios de esos hombres que tienen el rostro del color de la hierba seca. [15]

Hayes believes that the suspicion and distrust for woman are the product of a natural hostility. Man sees in her a different, alien being and in order to keep her submissive to his wishes he has derided and ridiculed her, perpetuating the image of the evil woman.[16] Certainly this has not just happened in literature, popular verse has long dwelt upon the shallowness, fickleness and falsehood of the female sex:

La mujer es un charquito
de mucha profundidad;
El fondo de puro lodo
Y la capa de cristal.

Papeles son papeles;
Cartas son cartas;
Palabras de mujeres
Todas son falsas.

El mundo es una colmena
Y la mujer un panal.
-;¡Ojo alerto, colmenero!
-;¡Colmenero, alerto está![17]

Lorca would certainly have been taught by his teacher priests the story of Adam and Eve, the first true example of misogyny in the Christian world. Popular verse has emphasized the original treachery of the female sex:

Una mujer fue la causa
De la perdición primera;
No hay perdición en el mundo
Que por mujeres no venga.[18]

Lorca therefore would have been fully conscious of the weight of prejudice, social and moral, which has shaped woman's position in society over the centuries until the present day. In the villages he came to on his travels, he would have heard the traditional refrains and superstitions regarding woman and he would have seen their practical application towards the female members of the community. He would have known too through literature man's responsibility for woman's present plight. Against this traditional view of woman, however, the social and political atmosphere of the period was attempting to create a deliberate revolt. A considerable number of people in the large towns and cities in Spain were carrying out a revaluation of all former conventions Lorca lived in Madrid for most of the thirties until his death in 1936. Through his work he reveals his own opinion of the old and the new thought concerning woman.

The Social Development of Woman - The Long Road to Freedom

I now wish to consider the social progress of woman in the twentieth century.

From the end of the nineteenth century, woman was generally improving her position in European countries. Spain however lagged behind in her treatment of women:

> During the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of this century womennwere gradually admitted to secondary school and university education; property laws were reformed in their favour; marriage and divorce laws were altered with a view to improving their position (although complete equality of rights has not been achieved yet in this or most other countries); women were enfranchised, first in municipal elections only and later, at the end of the first World War, generally.
>
> The development was, if not simultaneous, more or less the same in almost all European countries and in America - except in the Catholic countries of France, Italy and Spain. 19

The first World War was instrumental in bringing about a more rapid increase in woman's participation in society than could otherwise be expected. Women had to go to work, at least in the countries that were engaged in the fighting, while the men were absent. Technical advances brought administrative and mechanical skills, and almost all women found they could tackle these tasks efficiently. When the war was over, the losses inflicted on manpower by the great number of dead or wounded gave women the opportunity to continue working. Spain took no part in this war, and therefore it experienced no great social change, and no strong impetus for women to work. However, it did see how the character of the other European nations changed almost overnight, for women could no longer be denied work on the grounds that they were incompetent. The war also brought the long-awaited agreement on the vote for women in these countries.

So Spain, although not directly affected by these events, felt the reverberations of the changes.

During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, women did begin to form themselves into recognised groups such as La Unión de Feminismo Español. Their aims were to gain the moral, social and economic improvements of their position in the country.[20] They found their voice in magazines such as La voz de la mujer, which were dedicated to promoting the cause of women's rights in a moderate, subdued fashion; other organisations appeared in the late 20s, including La cruzada de mujeres españolas, Comité femenino pro paz, Asociación católica de la mujer, Asociación femenina de educación cívica; they represented a fairly wide spectrum of society and in general their approach was consistent with their political stance.

Towards the end of the dictator's rule, in 1928, it is evident from newspaper reports that positions were adopted by feminists and anti-feminists alike as the arguments on the two sides grew more heated. On the one hand, a lecture given by Don José Arenas Alévalo and reported in the Defensor de Granada drew an optimistic sketch of woman's achievements in work and society while in the same paper Francisco Peramos Mintero described what he believed was the perverted substance of feminism; talking to a girl of eight he recounts the brainwashing she will receive at the hands of the feminists, "La maternidad es un yugo vergonzoso y antiestético; el matrimonio, un resabio de esclavidad para la mujer; la vida, un baldón para nuestro sexo."[21] In fact, Primo de Rivera had interested himself in the woman's movement and showed his basic sympathy with her cause by granting minor improvements, including protective labour laws and posts in some areas of local government.

Under the Republic, people were exposed to the injustice of poverty which existed outside all the major cities, and indeed among the lower classes within these environments. María Martínez Sierra described the misery in which many peasants lived:

> No creáis que exagero al hablar de la miseria española,... Casi todo el que vive en la ciudad tiene un capital o un empleo, que le permiten mandar a la compra. Pero, si salís de ella, no necesitarás ir muy lejos para encontrar, primero, aduares y, después, aldeas, donde el encender lumbre para guisar una cazuela de patatas con una cucharada de cebo, es acontecimiento excepcional .... y de saber leer y escribir, no hablemos. A menos de cincuenta kilómetros de Madrid, creen los aldeanos que República quiere decir degollina de curas... 22

The only way to combat poverty and ignorance has been by education and social justice, which lay, according to many feminists, in the hands of women. María Martínez Sierra toured Spanish villages from 1934 to 1936 asking women to join the new movement, to educate themselves and to work for their living. She exhorted them to be responsible for introducing their families to a new state of health, both physical and mental. She also persuaded female workers to join trade union movements:

> La mujer es tremendamente individualista, ustedes lo saben bien, señoras mías, y un poco demasiado exclusivista. Es natural; ha vivido siempre tan encerrada, tan apartada del mundo y de la vida, que no ha podido aprender, como el hombre, las grandes lecciones de la fraternidad humana. Vive para sí y para los suyos, y muere por los suyos heroicamente, pero su heroísmo no suele traspasar las puertas de su propio hogar. 23

There is no doubt that the female supporters of the Republic were aware of the huge amount of progress needed to bring woman to the social level of their male counterparts. María Martínez Sierra attacked women

who did not go to work but wasted their time worrying over trivial household affairs. She wanted woman to use her natural talent to realise the social dreams of the Republic:

> A trabajar, ¿en qué? Todos servimos para algo; todos somos capaces de hacer algo excelentemente. Excelsa obra de mujeres es llevar el hogar al mundo, si se quiere, convertir el mundo en hogar. Actividades para las cuales basta tener corazón de madre y conciencia de persona honrada, están en esta tierra española absolutamente desatendidas. Sólo en lo que a la infancia se refiere; faltan escuelas, faltan sanatorios, faltan hospitales, faltan campos de juego, faltan cantinas y colonias escolares; faltan casas-cunas, faltan abrodoreres para madres lactantes, faltan gotas de leche, faltan casas de educación para niños delincuentes. [24]

The tangible result of the Republic's concern was the Protección al trabajo de la mujer, a Catholic society whose aim was to eliminate the excessive profits made by the retailer and thus enable the working woman to claim an appropriate wage for her labour.[25]

The new administration laid great importance on the need for education. But it encountered extreme opposition especially from country women who believed that reading was a male prerogative.[26] Female students did, in fact, seem to take education more seriously as the Dictatorship gave way to the Republic.[27] Indeed, before 1931, women had aroused Primo de Rivera's wrath, in connection with student unrest:

> ...Las señoritas estudiantes y algunas pertenecientes a centros públicos, no sólo no han servido, en general, para calmar los ánimos, oponiéndoles un espíritu cordial y femenino, sino que, en ocasiones, los han exaltado, abusando de su débil condición para extremar los insultos a los agentes de la autoridad. Yo que vengo alentado tantas ilusiones por darles la mayor participación en la ciudadanería en todas las matices, habré de pensar maduramente si conviene restringir la entrada del sexo femenino en la Administración pública y en las carreras del Estado. [28]

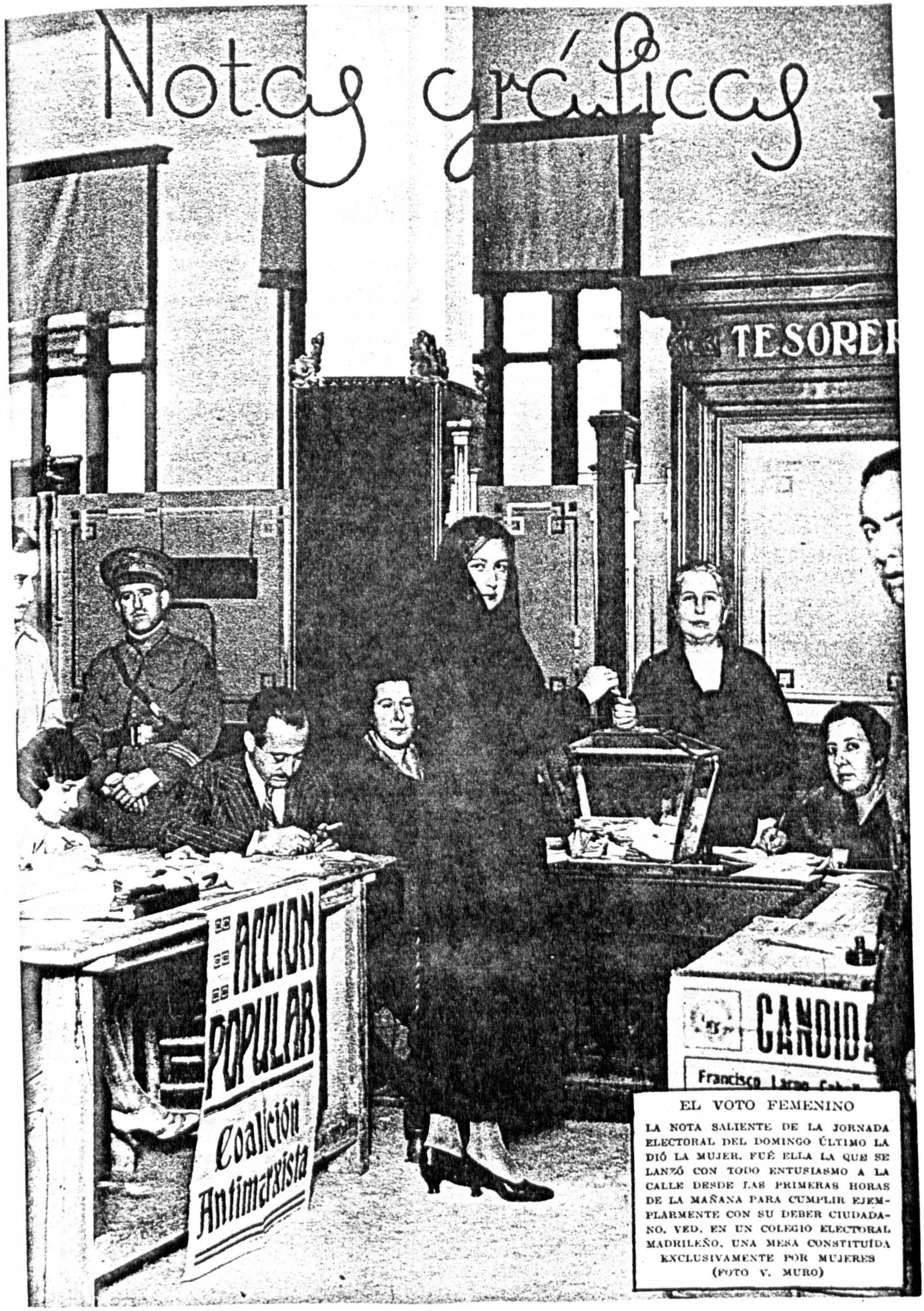
But although the Republic brought about the enfranchisement of women in Spain, this action is believed to have played, ironically enough, a large part in its downfall. Opinion was generally divided among the feminists concerning the way in which their contemporaries would vote, although rather more feared the consequences. Obviously the propaganda and education of women designed to create an atmosphere of social tolerance had not reached the ears of country folk or the middle classes, for in November 1933, women were reported to have voted en masse for the right-wing parties. Brenan explains why:

> In the middle classes many of the women whose husbands voted Republican followed their priest's direction and voted for the Right. In the working classes it was different; here the women were just as anticlerical as the men and the socialist vote therefore did not suffer. [29]

Evidently women of the middle-classes were too entrenched in their traditional role to take kindly the exhortations of the left-wing to work or participate in some kind of social reform, and this may have also been the case in the upper strata of village life. Only the working class as such responded to the attempts of the socialists to achieve a radical change in social structure. As Geraldine Scanlon points out in an unpublished thesis, the essential character of the feminist movement in Spain was political:

> Spanish feminism never enjoyed a free and independent development; it was, perhaps inevitably, drawn into the more general conflict between the Left and the Right. Its failure is due in part to the fact that the Right appreciated more fully than the Left both the dangers it could represent for the cause of a 'Catholic traditional Spain' if allowed to develop unchecked, and its possible usefulness if skilfully manoeuvred, It was the success of the conservative 'take-over' of feminism that finally rendered it innocuous. [30]

Notas gráficas



EL VOTO FEMENINO

LA NOTA SALIENTE DE LA JORNADA ELECTORAL DEL DOMINGO ÚLTIMO LA DIÓ LA MUJER. FUÉ ELLA LA QUE SE LANZÓ CON TODO ENTUSIASMO A LA CALLE DESDE LAS PRIMERAS HORAS DE LA MAÑANA PARA CUMPLIR EJEMPLARMENTE CON SU DEBER CIUDADANO. VED. EN UN COLEGIO ELECTORAL MADRILEÑO, UNA MESA CONSTITUÍDA EXCLUSIVAMENTE POR MUJERES

(FOTO V. MURO)

Both left-wing and right-wing newspapers and the magazines devoted to the feminist cause railed against each other. The anarchist magazine La revista blanca revealed the ignorance and superstition weighing on women over the centuries, while the Conservative magazine Mujeres españolas contained an article in 1929 condemning the excesses of their left-wing sisters: [31]

> Porque existe un feminismo rojo, no hay motivo para condenar su carácter general, al feminismo. Porque haya mujeres que, intentando sobrepasar su condición natural y lo que la ley moral ordena, prediquen y practiquen ideas contrarias a la excelsitud de hogar cristiano y la función propia de la mujer no hay razón suficiente para evolver en la censura hasta el feminismo sano, que situado a perfecta equidistancia de toda clase de sectores, precisamente para que sea mas digna compañera del hombre, y sepa defender con mejores armas la felicidad de su hogar y la de sus hijos. No es precisamente feminismo el que constituye una amenaza para el hogar cristiano y la paz social. [32]

It is interesting to note that after the elections in 1933 there appears to be much less interest in the feminist organisations, particularly in papers and magazines.

But the problem facing the socialists was real enough, as María Martínez Sierra reveals, the most difficult task was actually coming into contact with women in country villages and certain areas:

> Porque en Granada y su provincia la mujer no existe. No es exageración. Socialmente no existe. No cuenta; jamás se le han ocurrido que pudiera contar. Ni a ella ni a nadie. ....Y, llegado el momento de reclamar el voto de la mujer, nos encontrábamos con que más de la mitad del cuerpo electoral fuera de nuestra influencia y se nos escapaba de entre las manos. [33]

Certainly the opposition had in the Church its greatest supporter and ally. Priests in general took great care to recount to their female parishioners the horrors of the Spanish socialist doctrine. The most glaring example would have been the left's insistence on human rights, including, of course, sexual

freedom.[34] Under the free-thinking new government, the sexual relations between man and woman were openly discussed. After the popularity of Freudian theories, intellectuals and writers became increasingly interested in hitherto taboo subjects. Morla Lynch records a visit paid to him by Ana Kachina, who had just written a book on the physical nature of women:

> Una novela que ha escrito, que se titula Los días impuros, y que trata de ciertos crisis orgánicos que sufre el sexo bello. No le satisface su obra. El relato que me hace de su idea es absolutamente edificante y sano, de carácter psicológico y médico. En extremo edificante.

A left-wing magazine, El gallo crisis, contained an article in 1934 revealing the new woman shaped around the old skeleton:

> Este siglo que vivimos ha descubierto a la mujer: nos ha desnudado a Magdalena. El deporte de la carne al aire libre ha hecho de la mujer un secreto a voces: era antes como el misterio que haciendo uso de un solemne rito católico, sólo desabría, en actititud de oficiante, el marido. La mujer era un sacramento, hoy es un arte.
>
> Ha hecho su aparición un personaje de tipo napoleónico: el modisto; y un modelo ideal de la plástica de la mujer; el figurín. Se ha creado el sol, la playa, la montaña, el rubio platinismo, las artes médicas de la bellexa del cine. Magdalena, ayudada por tantos cómplices, servida por el arte descompuestamente materialista y por el capitalismo ha destruído la norma bella del pudor, la doctrina de la vergüenza. Es un recuerdo melancólico- que se hace a veces en realidad en algunas mujeres campesinas y populares, en ciertas señoritas del antiguo régimen femenino - la mujer con paisaje de humanidad: de leche creadora y del sudor del trabajo....Pedimos la mujer sin aparato: cuyos pechos sean fuente de vida, ilustración finamente sensitiva de la maternidad, y no producto de la novísima - picaresca, y aun pornográfica - ortopedia de la belleza. La mujer ha huído de la ropa interior - de la clásica ropa interior defensiva, que mantenía el clima humano de la sangre haciendo una serpiente de no formas. [35]

So the female body was openly appreciated, and the traditional modesty with which woman had been covered was flung aside. Of course, sport had recently become fashionable for women. The sporting section in the magazine Blanco y negro frequently referred to women's exploits. Accordingly, the traditionalists denounced the often too obvious physical aspect of sport as unbecoming and a symptom of the degenerate tone of the period.[36] Many magazines designed to attract a readership among the middle-classes devoted sections to female domestic pursuits such as fashion, cookery, and by the thirties problem pages were in vogue. Advertisements underlined woman's subservient position. They were forthe most part devoted to improving her appearance in the eyes of the opposite sex. There were advertisements for slimming (always pictures of obese women, not obese men, were featured); dyes for lightening grey or dull hair were, it was stated, sure to give women a new lease of life. Advertisements proclaiming the success of vanishing creams for wrinkles insisted on the effect women afterwards would have on men.

Although the Republic constitutionally granted equality to women in practice only a small minority ever achieved true emancipation. Why was this? Firstly, many middle-class women were safely entrenched in a traditional way of life; they did not work because they did not wish to. Secondly, mainly in villages, country women never realized the existence of the opportunities being created for them in the cities. In both cases, tradition and convention held women firmly in their places; indeed, whether in rebellion or total acceptance, they were the product of social tradition. Holtby accurately interpreted that state of affairs had progressed very little, if at all, by 1934, in most parts of Spain:

> ...and still today in most parts of the country, girls are educated to be pawns in the family game of prestige or alliance, submissive wives and fertile - if not particularly competent - mothers. Their education is largely conventional; it is limited and pious. Exquisite embroidery and the cooking of elaborate dishes are thought more important items of the curricula than hygiene, social science or elementary economics, although these would, one might think, actually serve them better even in their specialized destiny as house-keepers and mothers. Girls may not be unchaperoned. Courtship is a whole time cult, yet marriage is usually dictated by family interest. The reja through which compliments are whispered, the mantilla employed as a veil to emphasize hidden charms, the parade to church between young men may be spied through interlaced fingers, notes dropped, and assignations made - these symptoms of semi-harem status are still observed in modern Spain. 37

So a woman was not morally pure if she had as much as kissed another man. The bland morality of these sentences taken from Blanco y negro shows how fiercely traditionalists fought new ideas:

> ¿Cuántos recién casados podrán alegrarse hoy de haber sido los primeros y los únicos en besar a sus esposas? ¿Cuántas muchachas merecerán los bíblicos dictados, eternamente poéticos de 'fuente sellada' y 'huerto cerrado'? 38

As usual, virginity is a female virtue, and no mention is made of male purity.

Lorca spoke at a meeting of the Reunión republicana femenina in a homage to the dead painter María Blanchard. He was also a guest speaker at the Lyceum Club, founded in 1926 and whose first president was María de Maeztu. He would have known the ideals cherished by feminists; he would have seen in the villages throught Spain the miserable burden their sisters were enduring. Furthermore, his visit to America would have shown him how women there could enjoy relative freedom. Yerma, Bodas de sangre and La casa de Bernarda Alba were all written during the Republic, when

woman's position in society was being reassessed and when a few women were engaged in a stern struggle against traditional values.

It is Bernarda Alba in particular who stands for the old principles the feminists were trying to abolish. The new position they were striving to achieve was contrary to Bernarda's mature. María Martínez Sierra explains the ideal virtue woman should possess:

> ...Las demás miserias sociales (toda miseria individual es producto y consecuencia de una miseria social) son culpa de los hombres, y deben remediarlas los hombres. La sociedad las hahecho, la sociedad está obligada a hacerlas desaparecer, y nosotras, como miembros individuales de esa sociedad, debemos llevar a la obra redentora cada una nuestro grano de arena. Esta es la caridad bien entendido.[39]

Charity, understanding and compassion are completely lacking in Bernarda. The mother's tyrannical character, which is a parody of male dominance, deeply marks her daughters. Their efforts to escape from the prison are made more acute when one remembers the play was first performed in 1936 when the conflict between left and right was bitter and ominous. Adela's proud declaration that she is free to do with her own body what she likes dared the women in the audience to rebel as forcibly as she:

"¡Yo hago con mi cuerpo lo que me parece!" (p 1479)

To underline the significance of her statement, she repeats her determination to free herself from social ties regarding sexual matters:

"Mi cuerpo será de quien yo quiera." (p 1479)

So the increasingly loud demands of socialist women to be treated as man's equals and the equally violent attitude of traditionalists to thwart

any progress were a significant backdrop to the play. But Lorca's plays, and this play in particular, do more than reflect the atmosphere of the period; they indicate what tragic consequences might occur if women were not given room to breathe. The Zapatera insists on her basic right of freedom:

> Me casé contigo, ¿no tienes la casa limpia? ¿No comes? ¿No te pones cuellos y puños que en tu vida te los habías puesto? ¿No llevas tu reloj, tan hermoso, con cadena de plata y venturinas, al que le doy cuerda todas las noches? ¿Qué más quieres? Porque, yo, todo menos esclava. Quiero hacer siempre mi santa voluntad. (p 922)

The girl becomes not just an individual but the spokeswoman for her sex: "Desde luego, la Zapatera no es una mujer en particular, sino todas las mujeres .... Todos los espectadores llevan una zapatera volando por el pecho." (p 1718/9)

Bearing in mind Lorca's instinctive sympathy with the female sex, let us now examine his female characters in detail in relation to the social and political climate of the day.

Woman's Home - Castle or Prison?

The whole life of Spanish woman was centred on the house. The Englishman's house may be his castle, but for many Spanish women it was rather a prison or convent. Indeed, G. Martínez Sierra made his heroine in La jaula abierta compare these two extremes: "La casa es nuestro reino, es verdad, pero es nuestra cárcel; sus cuatro paredes limitaban irremediablemente nuestra vida."[40] From the fifteen and sixteenth century men have

laid down the unwritten rule that woman's place is in the home. Pedro de Luxán wrote his Coloquios matrimoniales in 1550 describing the follies a woman ought to avoid: "porque andar las mugeres por las calles a ruar, o por las huertas a se festejar, ni a ella es honesta, ni a sus casas provechosa".[41]

The severe criticism directed by the pueblo against any woman, married or single, if she strays from her house binds her to complete obedience because of the restrictions placed upon her by honra. Thus her husband, father or brother is her keeper; for his honour and place in society is as much at stake as hers. La perfecta casada too gives a categoric opinion of woman's role: if she is given a taste of freedom (in other words if she leaves her house for other matters than mass) she is prone to temptations of the worst kind. Obviously her whole day should be devoted to her duties in the house, for she is incapable of doing anything else:

> ....si la casada no trabaja, ni se ocupa en lo que pertenece a su casa, ¿qué otros estudios o negocios tiene en que se ocupar? Forzado es que, si no trata de sus oficios, emplee su vida en los oficios ajenos, y que de en ser ventanera, visitadora, callejera, amiga de fiestas, enèmiga de su rincón, de su casa olvidada, de las casas ajenas curiosa, pesquisidora de cuanto pasa, y aun de lo que no pasa inventora, parlera y chismosa, de pleitos revolvedora, jugadora también.[42]

These categorical statements about woman's place in Spain are not confined to literature alone; proverbs, mostly pejorative, abound concerning the necessity to keep her in the house. Significantly, the pat phrases of Juan and Bernarda Alba illustrate this most aptly. C.B. Morris has indicated the similarity between Juan's dictum "Las ovejas en el redil y las mujeres en su casa" and the proverbs:

"La mujer y la gallina por andar se pierden aína" and "La mujer casada y honrada, la pierna quebrada y en casa: y la doncella, pierna y media".[43] The bland assertion that the street is a place of sin - "La calle es para la gente desocupada" (p 1272) - illustrates again the store of neat assumptions, popular sayings and superstitions which he drew on.

However, the standard of behaviour followed by Juan is typically that found in small villages throughout the country. There woman stays in the house throughout her life; as a young girl she is watched over by her parents; when married her husband becomes her guardian, and the cycle is complete when it is her turn as a mother to protect her daughters from the evils of the outside world. However, if it is possible, she leaves the house even more rarely once she is married. Caro Baroja explains that she makes sorties from her house only out of necessity:

> Si el hombre casado hace una vida un poco social, la mujer casada, en cambio, se retrae. Apenas sale más que lo estrictamente necesario, lo que exige el buen mantenimiento de las relaciones y el cumplimiento de los deberes religiosos. [44]

Usually she goes to mass early in the morning, and spends the rest of her day cooking, cleaning and sewing. Of course if she has children her day is spent with them, even so the company she entertains is restricted to her husband, her family and a few friends. In La casa de Bernarda Alba Amelia and Martirio speak about one of their friends who since her official engagement has retired completely from any kind of social life:

> AMELIA: ¿Te fijaste? Adelaida no estuvo en el duelo.
>
> MARTIRIO: Ya lo sabía. Su novio no la deja salir ni al tranco de la calle. Antes era alegre; ahora ni polvos se echa en la cara. (p 1459)

The girl has taken on the status of a wife even before her marriage, such is the zealous nature of her fiancé's wish to guard his honour.

It is not surprising that this aspect of her life changed relatively little, for she knew nothing else. Of course, the house was and is a place of security for many women rather than a prison, but the restriction of vision, both physical and mental, imposed upon the majority of them automatically reduced their appreciation of the outside world. Lorca knew how traditional customs still exercised great influence in rural Spain above all. His plays reflect the oppression of woman's situation by pointing out through the upholders of tradition the rigidity of the standards they maintained. His drawings also include the theme of houses with barred windows. Alcoba, sketched in 1934, creates the impression of loneliness and frustation of the women behind the window. The poems 'Encrucijada' and 'Sorpresa' both reveal the danger of the street, where violence and death lurk. Clearly he knew how men alone occupied the streets in Spain, their untranquillity lending them a sinister character.

Woman must above all keep her house clean and tidy; in La casa de Bernarda Alba this is observed to the point of fanaticism. However, the Zapatera finds that these tasks are not enough to fill her day. She bewails her loneliness and isolation in a village which notes her every action. In spite of her dislike for her neighbours, in her desire for company she cannot help but talk to them:

> Y no quiero más conversación, ni contigo ni con nadie, ni con nadie, ni con nadie. (Entra dando un fuerte portazo.) Ya sabía yo que con esta clase de gente no se podía hablar ni un segundo ...; pero la culpa la tengo yo, yo y yo ..., que debía estar en mi casa con ....., casi no quiero creerlo, con mi marido. (p 913)

The Joven in Así que pasen cinco años goes one step further than Juan in following traditional thought. The Joven does not apply the sanctity of

the house to woman but to himself. He lives in the insular world of his home; the street is foreign to him. This voluntary withdrawal from the outside world is symbolised by his desire to block out all external sounds:

> VIEJO: ¿Qué pasa en la calle?
>
> JOVEN: Ruido, ruido siempre, polvo, calor, malos olores. Me molesta que las cosas de la calle entren en mi casa. (Se oye un gemido largo. Pausa.) Juan, cierra la ventana. (p 1049)

It is interesting to note that it is the Novia who wants to keep the windows open, for like Adela she wants to receive new experiences and is prepared to cast off tradition in order to satisfy her emotions.

Marriage automatically means withdrawal from social life; the maid sings to the Novia reminding her what will happen once she is wed:

> Galana,
> galana de la tierra,
> mira cómo el agua pasa.
> Porque llega tu boda
> recógete las faldas
> y bajo el ala del novio
> nunca salgas de tu casa. (p 1226)

Yerma is completely dependent on her husband; her faithful acceptance of social conventions emphasize her vulnerability to its pressures. Thus she hands herself over to tradition, but at the same time she feels trapped and isolated in her home. Juan works in the fields the whole day and often during the night. She has no children to keep her busy. It is no wonder that she becomes increasingly more rebellious as her desire for a child grows, for the house is empty and she has too much time to

ponder over her troubles. Yerma gives her reasons for wandering out of doors by condemning her way of life: "Justo. Las mujeres dentro de sus casas. Cuando las casas no son tumbas. Cuando las sillas se rompen y las sábanas de hilo se gastan con el uso." (p 1312)

Lorca illustrates with remarkable insight in La casa de Bernarda Alba the effect of the repressive atmosphere of the house on the daughters. They cannot escape, they cannot open windows or doors to breathe fresh air because their mother has closed them in exaggerated obedience to the most traditional codes of mourning. So they pace up and down the house, wandering from one room to another in a futile effort to gain privacy. To emphasize the stifling force of the house, La Poncia refers to it as a presidio. The daughters cannot look outwards or have any interest in the affairs of the world; instead they turn their attention to what happens inside the house and become tense, bickering incessantly. When the Segadores pass by they can only watch from a window, seeing the men's freedom as something they will never possess. The song of the Segadores illustrates the frustration they suffer:

Ya salen los segadores
en busca de las espigas;
se llevan los corazones
de las muchachas que miran. (p 1486)

In one poem of El alba del alhelí (1925/6) Alberti took up a similar position concerning the plight of young girls kept indoors:

Sé que montas a caballo.
¡Que te dé el sol!
¡Al campo, a caballo, amor!

¡Descorre las persianas,
rompe ya las celosías
que estás muy pálida!

¡Que té de el sol!
¡Al campo, a caballo, amor!

¡Ay, malhayan los morillos
que en esta gloria de España
te han amortajado viva
detrás de la persianas!

¡Rompe, amor, las persianas!
¡Abajo, amor, las cortinas,
que estás muy pálida!

¡Que te dé el sol!
¡Al campo, a caballo, amor! 45

The similarity between this poem and the reaper's song is striking.

The exhortation voiced by the chorus to the girls to open their doors and windows, and thus symbolically break the hold tradition has over them, provokes very different responses in Adela and Martirio:

CORO (Muy lejano) Abrir puertas y ventanas
las que vivís en el pueblo,
el segador pide rosas
para adornar su sombrero.

LA PONCIA ¡Qué canto!

MARTIRIO (con nostalgia)
Abrir puertas y ventanas
las que vivís en el pueblo ....

ADELA (con pasión) ....el segador pide rosas
para adornar su sombrero. (p 1487)

Martirio is fully resigned to experience her desires in a dream world, in contrast to Adela, whose response is so fierce that it foreshadows

her eventual rebellion against convention. That Alberti wrote the poem some ten years before Lorca started to work seriously on La casa de Bernarda Alba may indicate a possible source of the song. What is more important than the connection between the two is how both poets have revealed the basic frustration which lies at the heart of every 'decent' girl who lives in villages which largely ignored the atmosphere of change gradually forming in the towns. The horse is the messenger of passion in Alberti's poem and in Bodas de sangre and in La casa de Bernarda Alba; he takes the rider to the countryside and freedom as opposed to the strict conventions of village life. One of María Josefa's wild murmurings voices the illusion Adela cherished, and obliquely the natural code of life Lorca wished to see in Spain:

> Yo tengo que marcharme, pero tengo miedo que los perros me muerdan. ¿Me acompañarás tú a salir al campo? Yo quiero campo. Yo quiero casas, pero casas abiertas y las vecinas acostadas en sus camas con sus niños chiquitos y los hombres fuera sentados en sus sillas. (p1525)

The freedom advocated here and in Alberti's poem is denied physically by the repressive forces of the house.

However carefully the guardians of tradition strive to avoid any physical contact with the dangers of the street, they cannot control the emotions of their charges. Thus the daughters are tormented by increasingly strong passions whose frustration makes them bitter, but only openly rebellious in one case. Margarita's defiant remark in El gallardo español by Cervantes is parallel to the aggressive stance Adela will adopt:

> Vi que volaban los tiempos,
> Y que encerraban las rejas
> El cuerpo, mas no el deseo
> Que es libre y muy mal se encierra. [46]

Lorca uses doors, windows and walls as symbols to represent the physical limitations of the lives of his female characters in particular. The Madre's definition of marriage could not be clearer in the bare way she states the protection and confinement the house affords: "Un hombre, unos hijos y una pared de dos varas de ancho para todo lo demás." (p 1200) When her husband died she simply continued to follow a similar existence but this time with only the wall before her to look at: "Sí. Yo no miré a nadie. Miré a tu padre, y cuando lo mataron miré a la pared de enfrente. Una mujer con un hombre, y ya está." (p 1176)

But Leonardo knows that walls cannot shut out the passion he and the Novia share; mere physical restrictions are not sufficient protection against overwhelming emotions. His acknowledgement of this and their eventual escape together show how worthless such barriers are. Likewise, the futility of Bernarda's assurance that her house is an island which deals with its internal problems in complete isolation from the outside world is evident: "¡Aquí no pasa nada. ¡Eso quisieras tú! Y si pasa algún día, estate segura que no traspasará las paredes." (p 1499) Her blindly dogmatic conviction that all matters must be treated in relation to their social importance prevents her from understanding anything that falls outside this concept.

The Zapatera, Rosita la Soltera, Yerma, Novia, the daughters of Bernarda all feel the strain of being tied to the house. They react either with resignation or revolt depending on their disposition and their circumstances. When one considers the atmosphere of the age and the traditional mode of life conveyed in these plays, the underlying criticism of the female characters' position is strongly accentuated. As soon as

the second Republic was founded, the question of woman's place in society came into prominence. Woman was recognised as a valuable member of the labour force in towns at least. In 1933 Beatriz de León's article on 'La vida femenina de hoy' in Blanco y negro leaves no doubt that she considered work an extremely useful outlet:

> El matrimonio sigue siendo el ideal de todas las muchachas, pero las de hoy aspiran, mientras llega el hombre soñado, a hacer otra cosa que a quedarse, los brazos cruzados y en insoportable aburrimiento, esperando al futuro y problemático marido. Y desde el día en que el matrimonio ha dejado de ser la única salida a la mujer, todos los usos y costumbres ligados a esta concepción de la vida han perdido su significación.[47]

The daughter's frustration in La casa de Bernarda Alba would have seemed doubly cruel, for they were denied not only a loving and relaxed home life but the freedom to participate in a useful occupation outside the home by their tyrannical mother. The authority enforced by Bernarda and Juan (and the Zapatero to some extent) deliberately prevents the women from experiencing what more and more women considered their right: active participation in society. Concepción Arenal's critical assessment of the effect of tradition on woman's role is perfectly applicable to most of the female characters in Lorca's plays:

> Se ha querido limitar la vida de la mujer, física, moral e intelectual, de manera que no saliese del hogar doméstico, sin ver que no era obra de concentración, sino de mutilación la que se hacía; que de la criatura debilitada no podía ser la mujer fuerte, ni de la persona rebajada y empequeñecida, la gran figura de la esposa intachable y de la madre modelo.[48]

Indeed, it would be wise now to ascertain in more detail if in fact a good home life really exists in Lorca's plays. We find that Juan and Leonardo stay away from their homes as much as possible, that the Zapatero is not happy in his, and that the daughters of Bernarda Alba consider their

house a prison not a home. The poet has demolished the cant voiced by traditionalists concerning the importance of the home, as in this extract, written in piously sentimental terms taken from La voz de la mujer:

> las dulces palabras de las cariñosas sonrisas de la mujer que reina dentro de las cuatro parades de la casa. Palabras y sonrisas que fuertemente aprisonan al hombre y no le dejan sentir la necesidad de buscar fuera de su casa lo que con tanta abundancia halla en la suya. 49

Another article in the same magazine praises the quiet peacefulness and love which exist in the home.[50] Only one article in La voz de la mujer does in fact point to the true state of affairs. The authoress describes how modern woman is leaving what is called the hogar, but adds the most important rider:

> Para que la mujer hubiese desertado el hogar, como pretenden sus detractores, fuera menester que ese hogar existiese. Es decir, que hubiese una hora en el día en que la familia se reuniera para mantener viva la llama del amor en los corazones de los que la componen.
>
> Mas tal no sucede ni ha sucedido aquí nunca, salvo raras excepciones. Y no porque de esa reunión sacrosanta haya desertado la mujer, sino porque de ella nunca formó parte el marido ni los hijos; esto es el hombre.
>
> El hombre español en cualquier parte se halla mejor que en su casa. Terminadas las horas del trabajo no vuelve a ella, sino que se va al Casino, al café o al bar, para establecer una tertulia donde no pueden ir su mujer ni sus hijas, ni su madre ni sus hermanas. Esto hace el hombre español, a pretexto de tomar el vermouth antes de comer y de cenar; el café, después de comer y de cenar. Y ello no tiene más objeto que el de permanecer fuera de su casa, adonde sólo acude a la hora de las comidas, hora que reserva para leer los periódicos. 51

If city women have begun to go out to work, they have, the feminists argued brought to the home industry and commerce. In any case, as Lorca has shown, the home unit no longer existed in many Spanish households.

The dramatist has surrounded his female characters with the trappings of the family life they pursue. They sew, cook and clean.

Of course traditionally authors have debarred woman from more academic activities in order to keep her busy with domestic tasks. Moratín uses Doña Mariquita to criticise the pedante Doña Angustia in La comedia nueva:

> ...si soy ignorante, buen provecho me haga. Yo sé escribir y adjustar una cuenta, sé guisar, sé planchar, sé coser, sé zurcir, sé bordar, sé cuidar de una casa, yo cuidaré de la mía, y de mi marido, y de mis hijos, y yo me los criaré. 52

Although the Lavanderas' erotic songs in Yerma present a rather different view (for they sing in praise of the fertile power of water (p 1306/10)), their mere physical presence on the stage sharply underlines their ordered way of life. Sewing seems to be the occupation most widely executed by the female characters. The Monja Gitana embroiders flowers which in her imagination she sees growing in open countryside (and in popular verse woman's occupations are often derived from those of her archetype, the Virgin Mary). In Los títeres de Cachiporra, Rosita has to sew for a living. Mariana Pineda's contribution to the Liberal cause is to sew a flag. The Doncella in one of his short plays is only too eager to embroider her wedding linen with letters of the alphabet ready for any suitor to come along. Both Yerma and Los títeres de Cachiporra open with the protagonists immediately enacting their conventional roles: Yerma is sitting with a sewing basket at her feet, while Rosita is actually sewing. When María brings material back from the shop in order to make clothes for her unborn child, Yerma is filled with envy and a desire to help her friend in the task, as if to share her motherhood. Similarly, Doña Rosita and the daughters of Bernarda are futilely making garments and linen for their bottom drawer. At heart they know that their sewing only

serves to maintain an illusion and to prevent them from being idle. Martirio's intention to make a camisa illustrates at the same time her resignation to her fate and her jealousy of Adela:

> ADELA (A Martirio, que trae unos encajes.)
> ¿Y estos?
>
> MARTIRIO Son para mí. Para una camisa.
> ADELA (con sarcasmo,)
> Se necesita buen humor.
>
> MARTIRIO (Con intención.)
> Para verlo yo. No necesito lucirme ante nadie.
>
> LA PONCIA Nadie le ve a una en una camisa.
>
> MARTIRIO (Con intención y mirando a Adela.)
> ¡A veces! Pero me encanta la ropa interior. Si fuera rica la tendría de holanda. Eso es uno de los pocos gustos que me quedan. (p 1483/4)

Lorca used the traditional occupations of woman as an integral part of the plot as well as the background which places her firmly into the role allotted to her by society.

It is interesting to note that the Zapatera Prodigiosa, the Novia and Adela, who all react against the restrictions of convention, do not illustrate to any great extent the virtues possessed by their sisters. The popular verse which compares the lack of skill in domestic tasks to the quality of a woman's character could be applied to the Zapatera:

> Tus pies son muy ligeros
> Para la bulla,
> Y tus dedos muy torpes
> Para la aguja,
> ¡Fuerte desgracia
> Es tener ligereza
> Mal colocada! 53

She is capable of cooking well, but allows her temper to control her actions; she prepares a fine meal one day and then has nothing to eat the following day.

Certainly the characters' unwillingness to participate fully in normal conventional society indirectly reflects their resentment against traditionally acceptable female occupations. It also reflects the fear borne by supporters of tradition that feminists would drag woman away from so-called female occupations. La voz de la mujer published a typically sentimental poem to warn its readers of possible dangers:

> ¿Es que no encuentras placer
> en las cosas de tu hogar,
> ni te atrae el coser, ya
> ni te gusta ya guisar
> como te gustaba ayer? 54

Lorca generally handles with little sympathy the family relationships which abound in his plays. Bodas de sangre, Yerma, La casa de Bernarda Alba and La Zapatera prodigiosa all consider the intimate relationship between the head of the family and his or her subordinates as jaded and no longer valid, remains of the feudal system within the family structure. Very rarely then there exists a harmonious atmosphere created by the characters. Is Lorca implicitly criticizing the importance placed on family relationships and especially on the dominance of the head of the family, as one that has been blindly accepted through the centuries and which is now characterized by its bad rather than good points? For the heads of the family, as I will later illustrate, continue their reign through the social bribes of obedience, honour and chastity; the father in Los títeres de Cachiporra, Bernarda Alba and Juan control the lives of dependents in the name of values upheld by the community at large. No allowance is made for individual whims or emotions, for in conformity lies social esteem. It should be remembered that the dramatist himself felt the weight of his father's authority, although it would be unwise to place too much importance on his personal experience as an interpretation of the motives behind his treatment of the family group. What I intend to show is that blood ties can be broken or tested to the extreme

by the artificial pressures of convention.

Although in Lorca's own family his father appears to have been the strong figure; in his plays it is the woman, once widowed, whose authority is the most severe. Of course, Spain is celebrated for the matriarchal figure; the woman assumes the masculine role of domination if there is no man to take upon himself the task. Certainly the aggressive figures of Bernarda and the Madre display total dominance over those around them. The latter's pride in her son does not prevent her from assuming complete control over him. As C. Lison Tolosana has noted, the son has always been dependent on the head of the family:

> el hijo carece de autoridad y peculio propio, es - según frase ya citada-como un criado que está sin sueldo, sólo por la comida. Y esto es general, no depende de zonas ni formas de manda. 55

The Generation Gap - A Family Structure

As important as the hierarchy of the family is in Lorca's plays, it is interesting to note that the mother and father figures (although Juan and the Zapatero are husbands they think and act as old men) reveal by their intransigent belief in tradition and the goodness of the past, a great physical and mental age difference to their children and spouses.

The dramatist disliked the old in body and spirit, and his distrust in their wisdom continued from his youth to the end of his life. In 1925 he told Melchor Fernández Almagro of his fear of old age:

"Parece que acabo ahora de entrar en la juventud. Por eso cuando tenga sesenta años no seré viejo .... Yo no voy a ser viejo nunca."[56] Nearly ten years later he clarified this statement with a vehement repudiation of the wealth of experience the old are supposed to possess:

> No puedo tolerar a los viejas. No es que los odie. Ni que los tema. Es que me inquietan. No puedo hablar con ellos. No sé qué decirles. Sobre todo aquellos viejos que piensan que, por solo serlo, están en todos los secretos de la vida. Eso que llaman experencia y que tanto nombran los viejos, no la concibo. En una reunión de ancianos, yo no sabría decir una palabra. Me aterrorizan esos ojillos grises, lacrimosos, esos labios en continuo rictus, esas sonrisas paternales, ese afecto tan indeseado como puede serlo una cuerda que tire de nosotros hacia un abismo ..... Porque eso son los viejos. La cuerda, la ligazón que hay entre la vida joven y el abismo de la muerte. (p 1755/6)

It is the old woman who futilely advised Yerma to wait patiently for a child. Her life is ending while the young woman's is just beginning. No wonder that Yerma refuses to listen. Similarly the heroine's excursion into the countryside to bring Juan his food emphasises the rift separating old and young: "Con las faenas, los hombrés estan en los olivos, hay que traerles de comer. No quedan en las casas más que los ancianos." (p 1292) When one contrasts her distrust of the old with Juan's bland statement at the beginning of the play that "Cada año seré más viejo" (p 1275) it is not surprising that she cannot wait to let things happen of their own accord: her husband's placid acceptance of old age sounds in her ears like a declaration of passivity leading to death not fertility.

The old people's use of past experiences to handle present situations can control the most delicate of matters: marriage. Bernarda Alba and the Madre both wish to arrange the future lives of their families. The Viejo in Así que pasen cinco años is basically concerned about his daughter's

happiness but he possesses no understanding of her problems, emphasizing the lack of communication which divides the two generations. The father in Los títeres de Cachiporra also dwells in the past and refers to it for examples of decent behaviour. He decides that Rosita will marry Cocoliche because he is rich. The explanation for his decision could not be clearer: "Aquí mando yo, que soy el padre. Lo dicho, dicho, y cartuchera en el cañón. No hay que hablar más." (p 732) When his daughter protests against the absurdity of his reasons he curtly provides past conduct as an example:

> ¡A bordar y a callar! ¡Qué tiempos estos! ¿Van a mandar los hijos en los padres? Tú harás caso de todo como hice yo caso de mi papá cuando me casó con tu mamá, que, dicho sea entre paréntesis, tenía una cara de luna, que ya, ya ... (p 733)

The relationships between mother and father and sons or daughter becomes the opposite to the ideal situation, described in this popular verse:

> A tus hijos no muestres
> Rostro severo,
> Que el amor se conquista
> Con el afecto.
> Y ya ganado,
> Lograrás corregirlos
> sin espantarlos. 57

Bernarda Alba provides a total contrast to this piece of advice; she maintains her authority not through bve, but by exerting complete domination over her household. Her use of the word "respect" underlines the hypocrisy with which she attempts to cover her rule:

> Afortunadamente mis hijos me respetan y jamás torcieron mi voluntad.
> LA PONCIA ¡Eso si! Pero en cuanto las dejes sueltas se te subirán al tejado.
> BERNARDA ¡Ya las bajaré tirándoles cantos! (p 1500/1)

So she is under no illusion about her daughters' feelings towards her. She prefers a reign of terror to a situation in which she would not be in complete control.

The age gap between Bernarda and her daughters, and in particular, Adela, is deliberately underlined by the dramatist. He wished the audience to note the physical and mental gap which separates her from the young. However, although María Josefa is eighty, her madness returns to her the youthful passions and frustrations which her grand daughters are experiencing. The mother's callousness and hypocrisy reach their peak in her treatment of the old woman and reveal how she manipulates the social structure of the family to suit her own ends. She willingly becomes not a mother but a jailer in order to achieve outward social harmony. It is amazing that she can issue orders to Angustias, who is almost forty, and her other daughters, all over twenty, and still maintain complete obedience. She has succeeded in brainwashing them through her position as head of the family by invoking social conventions, and by her tyrannical and physically brutal manner. She does not even attempt to mask her tyranny with a façade of affection; the only emotions she is capable of showing are anger and contempt. There is a clever parallel within the play when Prudencia tells her neighbour that her husband has still not forgiven her daughter for marrying a man of whom he does not approve. Bernarda admires his rigidity, she recognises in him the qualities which she possesses. She pays no heed to her friend's quiet warning that affection has more power than intransigence,

and this signals the eventual conflict which results from her extremism.

It seems impossible that Bernarda, while so quick to glimpse the effect of passion and frustration in others, will not believe that her offspring are troubled by the same torments. She does not realise that their constant bickering and arguments are the outlet for their pent-up emotions.

The more Adela's passion for Pepe consumes her, the more obvious is her hate and scorn for her sisters. It is as if she does not want to be contaminated by their sterile frustrations. Her ferocity and determination to win complete sexual freedom is chanelled into hate for her virgin sisters. Martirio's jealousy, partly caused by her physical deformities, against which she has built the barrier of fear for men, soon becomes apparent. She trails Adela through the rooms suffocating her even more within the already unnatural confines of the house. Her final denunciation of Adela's affair with Pepe is not because of family ties of loyalty and blood but rather in spite of them. What motivates her is her own hopeless love for the man and her over-powering jealousy for the success of her sister who uses her body as she wills. Her condemnation of Adela highlights the extremes to which passion can run within the limits of an atmosphere heavy with frustration. Lorca took the basic plot from a family situation he had watched in Andalusia. He was fascinated by the imprisonment imposed by the mother and even more so by the effects of imprisonment on the girls.[58]

The short plays and experimental dramas contain several violent allusions to the family situation. Buster Keaton kills his own children with a wooden dagger. He briefly laments their death and then promptly

forgets that they existed. Obviously they have no place in his life. However, El público contains the most severe criticisms against the conventional family system. The students' discussion turns to how they can radically change society. Destruction is the key to their vision, and the family will be one of the institutions to fall:

ESTUDIANTE 1° Y lo destruimos todo.
ESTUDIANTE 5° Los tejados y las familias.
ESTUDIANTE 1° Y donde se hable de amor entraremos con botas de 'football', echando fango por los espejos.
ESTUDIANTE 5° Y quemaremos el libro donde los sacerdotes leen la misa. (p 1167/8)

It is worth noting that Lorca was reluctant to see this play performed. Such open hostility to conventions would clearly have marked him as revolutionary, a classification which the dramatist rejected.

Even so, in most of his plays there exists the underlying theme of the pressures exerted on individuals by the family. Some characters such as the Sobrino in Doña Rosita la soltera use family ties as an excuse to escape from pressing commitments. He leaves Rosita by declaring it is his duty to his father to go abroad to seek his fortune, for he will not marry her until he has established himself in the world.

Leonardo and his wife in Bodas de sangre are bound together by their child and another which is yet to be born. The couple have passed from the state of marriage to that of family. Likewise, the pressure on Leonardo to renounce his passion for the Novia and settle down are even more heavy. But this is not enough to prevent him from being dominated by passion for the girl: indeed the stability and comfort of family life seem tame in comparison. It is ironic that while a child cannot keep Leonardo's marriage together, he becomes the entire reason for the break-up of marriage in Yerma.

The protagonist feels excluded from the closeness of the community by her inability to bear a child. In addition, she comes from a fertile family which serves to intensify her own desire to produce. In contrast, the Vieja's description of Juan's ancestors underlines his infertility: "Ni su padre, ni su abuelo, ni su bisabuelo, se portaron como hombres de casta." (p 1344) It seems paradoxical that Juan prefers to amass money from the land rather than devote his time and affection on his wife in order to produce a son, when he must realise that he will have no-one who will continue his work. Traditionally, 'the Spanish concept of land and family ties the one to the other so firmly that they almost become interdependent:

> A man's right to the land rests upon his being a member of a family. Land and family thus combine to form a tight union which embraces and unites all the members of the family, who strive together to keep and if possible enlarge their holding. 59

This reasoning surely lay behind the eagerness of the Padre in Bodas de Sangre to see his daughter wed, so that lands would be joined and eventually he would have grandsons to continue and increase his property. While Busette applauds Juan's efforts to earn a fortune - "Quiere progreso material y riqueza económica y a este fin dedica sus esfuerzos. Su tenacidad y fuerza moral (quizá voluntad) en este sentido es admirable"[60] - he has failed to see that his work will seem of no avail to the majority of his fellow villagers if he has no sons to hand on his work. Yerma's loneliness and her feeling of uselessness in a county community emphasize the emptiness of the marriage. As a mere wife she plays the role of inferior in the marriage and she is under the complete authority of her husband. Women can only legitimately take charge when they have obtained the status of mother and widow. But even in these circumstances she is

still the victim and - even worse - the perpetuator of social tradition. Arenal's perceptive judgement of the vital role woman plays in society shows how she can influence all ways of life:

> El tedio de la mujer hace grandes estragos en la paz doméstica; enemigo invisible y poderoso, parece como que se identifica con las existencias que envenena, y se presenta con el poder de la fatalidad .... todo el que le observe con atención se convencerá del daño que hace, de que produce un malestar en la mujer que se comunica a la familia, y es como ciertas enfermedades que revisten mil formas, pero cuyo origen es el mismo. 61

The Forgotten Women - Spinsters and Widows

Lorca's preoccupation with the nature of women extended beyond marriage to the problems and frustrations experienced by spinsters. His sympathy and understanding of their hopeless desires and sexual emotions translate into poetry the concern expressed by feminists of the period over the lot of these women. Virginity, preached by society and religion as the only state of the unmarried female, leads as the Revista blanca is anxious to point out, to physical and psychological disturbances:

> La virginidad es el prejuicio que más ha predominado en todos los países, en muchos de los cuales no ha podido extirparse por completo. La mujer tiene que ocultar sus deseos sexuales, sus ansias de vida innatas a todo individuo normal, hasta que un hombre legalice su posesión mediante un acto matrimonial, religioso o civil. La virgen, subyugada por estos execrables prejuicios, se ve obligada a no manifestar los deseos de su corazón, porque así lo exige la moral absurda e irracional. 62

W. Holtby explains the pressures exerted by artificial rules on the natural inclinations of spinsters:

> As for those unmarried women who remain virgins, some, highly sexed by biological make-up, suffer physically. Their individual personality requires an activity which it has been

denied. Others, never finding satisfactory occupation outside the domestic sphere, are constantly aware of the second-best position enjoyed by unmarried women in the home. But even more are affected, I think, by the pervasive and penetrating influence of opinion. The twentieth century had dethroned human reason and set up the nerves and memory in their place. Freudian psychology has sanctioned the extreme veneration of sex....Puritan morality taught unmarried women that the loss of virginity doomed them to the torments of Hell in the next world, twentieth-century morality teaches them that the retention of virginity dooms them to the horror of insanity in this one. 63

Turning to the poem 'Elegía' it is remarkable to think that Lorca wrote it when he was just twenty and yet expressed with deep, intuitive sympathy the frustrations and torments of a mature woman who is destined never to know sexual fulfilment or the physical culmination of motherhood:

Como un incensario lleno de deseos,
pasas en la tarde luminosa y clara
con la carne oscura de nardo marchito
y el sexo potente sobre tu mirada.

Llevas en la boca tu melancolía
de pureza muerta, y en la dionisíaca
copa de tu vientre la araña que teje
el velo infecundo que cubre la entraña
nunca florecida en las vivas rosas
fruto de los besos.

.....

Nadie te fecunda. Mártir andaluza,
tus besos debieron ser bajo una parra
plenos del silencio que tiene la noche
y del ritmo turbio del agua estancada.

Pero tus ojeras se van agrandando
y tu pelo negro va siendo de plata;
tus senos resbalan escanciando aromas
y empieza a curvarse tu espléndida espalda.

¡Oh mujer esbelta, maternal y ardiente!
Virgen dolorosa que tiene clavadas
todas las estrellas del cielo profundo
en su corazón ya sin esperanza.

Eres el espejo de una Andalucía
que sufre pasiones gigantes y calla,
pasiones mecidas por los abanicos
y por las mantillas sobre las gargantas
que tienen temblores de sangre, de nieve,
y arañazos rojos hechos por miradas. 64

The young poet has glimpsed and captured the suffering and frustration which lie well concealed behind an outward exterior of calm. But this woman is not alone in her anguish, for Lorca is deliberately underlining that she is one of many, a prisoner of convention and tradition.

The spinster, automatically considered a woman unable to attract men, is regarded with disdain. However, she is obliged to maintain strict control over her emotions in order to live up to the correct social pattern. Lisón Tolosana examines the effect of these social pressures on her character:

> La soltera, por su parte, no se encuentra en un momento psicológico de calma. Tiene que acechar su contorno interno y externo. Dentro de casa tiene que mostrarse agresiva, fuera, atractiva. Sabe además que parte de su atracción externa depende del éxito de su agresividad interna. 65

Mocked by popular verse, both spinsters and bachelors are regarded as useless to society:

> Un corazón sin amor
> Es una planta sin fruto;
> El infeliz que no quiere,
> ¿Para qué vive en el mundo? 66

Lorca indicated from his first dramatic work onwards the social attitudes taken towards spinsters. Alacranito becomes involved in an argument with the Curiana Guardiana who calls him "¡Canalla y medio!" His immediate retort refers to her unmarried status: "¡Y tú loca y soltera!" (p 712) Magdalena knows, in La casa de Bernarda Alba, that she will never marry and so she tries to resign herself to her fate, but with little success.

Dona Rosita symbolizes the woman abandoned by her loved one, and yet unable to adjust to the blow. She lives out the rest of her days in

a world of frustration and fantasy. An interview by María Martínez Sierra with a woman whose situation is similar to that of Rosita shows how well the dramatist knew how to choose and reflect a reality bound up with tradition:

> Yo - dice otra - tengo treinta y cinco años, y ni me he casado, ni ya me casaré; porque el hombre a quien quise y pensé que me quería, se casó con otra más rica, o más bonita, o con más gancho para convencerle, y yo soy tan tonta, que no sé si le sigo queriendo, o si me he quedado tan harta de querer que no he tenido arranque para querer a otro. No soy pobre de solemnidad; mi madre está cansada, mi padre es viejo, ya no trabaja, y no le gusta salir de casa .... Aquí vivimos como un convento ... Algunas veces pienso ¡Qué largos son los días! A veces, mirándome al espejo y viendo algunos canos en las sienes; ¡Qué corta es la vida! Me aburro mortal - mente; y no es que no tenga nada que hacer; tengo que cuidar a mis pobres viejos, que ya van estando un poco achacosos, y que me quieren tanto, que nada les parece bien si no lo he hecho yo misma; tengo que llevar el manejo de casa, procurando estirar este poco dinero para que parezca un poquitillo más; tengo que coser, además de la ropa de casa, mis propios trajes, porque desde niña he tenido maña para arreglar trapos. No me sobra una hora, y, sin embargo, ¡yo sí que sé también lo que es aburrimiento!. 67

In 1935 Lorca gave several interviews concerning the play Doña Rosita and he clearly stated the theme with which he intended to trouble his audience: "Se trata de la línea trágica de nuestra vida social: las españolas que se quedan solteras."(p 1768) Later he elaborated upon this statement: "Aquest es el drama profund de la solterona andalusa i espanyola en general. Espanya es el país de les solteres decents, de les dones pures, sacrificades per l'ambient social que les envolta." (p 1798/9) Perhaps his most scathing criticism of Spanish society was once more concerned with this play and the evils spinsters had to endure:

> ¡Cuántas damas maduras españolas se verán reflejadas en doña Rosita como en un espejo! He querido que la más pura línea conduzca mi comedia desde el principio hasta el fin. ¿Comedia he dicho? Mejor sería decir el drama de la cursilería española, de la mojigatería española, del ansia de gozar que las mujeres han de reprimir por fuerza en lo más hondo de su entraña enfebrecida. (p 1800)

Clearly woman had still to a great extent neither recognised her predicament nor found a way to overcome her handicaps, Lorca's aim was to expose her frustrations, and obliquely her desires, and to provoke the audience into awareness of her social plight and even sympathy towards her.

CHAPTER IV

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CHAPTER V

Marriage — A Social Necessity

It is indeed a woman's role to marry. According to Arenal, it is often the last escape from a miserable existence. The feminist talks of the many reasons why her countrywomen marry, and love is not among the principal ones:

> Puede no amarle, ni sentirse con vocación para el matrimonio, y no obstante, casarse, porque las mujeres no tienen otra carrera. La joven mira por su porvenir: muerto su padre, casados sus hermanos, le espera la pobreza, tal vez la miseria, o el amargo pan que le dé una cuñada, la soledad material y moral que quien recorre la triste escala de no ser <u>necesaria,</u> ser <u>inútil</u> y ser <u>estorbo</u>; ve su destino de vestir imágenes y su apodo de solterona, y se casa sin amor, tal vez sintiendo aversión por el hombre que ha de ser su compañero hasta la muerte. ¡Desdichado si le ama! ¡Desventurados los dos si ella ama a otro algun día![1]

There may not be such overtly dramatic reasons for Yerma and the Zapatera or the Novia to wed, but social pressures all play their part in the desire for motherhood, respectability and social protection.

However, <u>Bodas de sangre</u> shows how things begin to go wrong from the wedding ceremony itself. The dramatist has used his knowledge of popular customs to give to the scene a backcloth of traditional happiness and festivity which contrasts sharply with the Novia's true emotions. The wedding songs present Lorca with the opportunity to provide local colour and authenticity to the ceremony while making a telling contribution to the plot.

Lisón Tolosana has described the function of the wedding guests:

> ...Pero a esta representación hay que añadir un tercer actor, los invitados, que recuerdan en más de un sentido al coro de las tragedias griegas sofocleanas. Ellos son un elemento fundamental del drama y como tal desempeñan su papel, unas veces subordinados, pero otras, en los momentos cumbres, independiente y principal.[2]

This was certainly Lorca's intention. The happy songs resound ironically against the Novia's unhappiness and tension. The sensuality of the songs only heightens the feeling of her passion not for the Novio but for Leonardo:

MUCHACHA 1ª — (Entrando)
Despierte la novia
la mañana de la boda;
ruede la ronda
y en cada balcón una corona.

VOCES
CRIADA — ¡Despierte la novia!
(Moviendo algaraza.)
Que despierte
con el ramo verde
del amor florido.
¡Que despierte
por el tronco y la rama
de los laureles!. (p 1217)

The corona which marks the joy of chastity before marriage has been thrown down by the Novia, who rejects the future bliss it traditionally represents.

The visit by the Novio and his mother to formally ask for the girl's hand in marriage is embellished by Lorca to incorporate the customary gifts the groom brings and the refreshment offered to the guests. The abrupt business-like way the parents discuss the arrangements bring to the fore the finality of the decision made by the girl and her father. However, after the guests return to their home, the Novia's unwillingness to show the Criada her presents allow the audience to guess that after all her pledge to marry might not be irrevocable:

NOVIA (Agria.) Quita.
CRIADA ¡Ay, niña, enséñamelos!
NOVIA No quiero,
CRIADA Siquiera las medias. Dicen que son todas caladas. ¡Mujer!
NOVIA ¡Ea, que no!
CRIADA Por Dios. Está bien. Parece como si no tuvieras ganas de casarte.
NOVIA (Mordiéndose la mano con rabia.) ¡Ay! (p 1203)

Indeed, the girl's silence during the discussion over their arrangements of her marriage shows an outward obedience to her father which in fact owes less to respect than to fear of her own emotions. This scene also follows the pattern of meetings between the two sides. Kenny describes what happens in the majority of cases:

> ...A day and hour are appointed for the boy's parents to call on the girl's to 'ask for the wedding' (pedir boda). Gifts may possibly be exchanged on this visit, but are not an essential requirement. Once the date of the wedding is agreed, the talk quickly concentrates on the economic resources that the couple can count on, what their respective families will pass on to them and give them, where they will live, etc.; the character of the visit is markedly economic. The couple themselves take no part in it at all. [3]

Even the colour of the Novia's wedding dress has symbolic value, both in the play and in a more general context. The bride wears a long black dress in the style of the last century. Black was the traditional colour for wedding dresses in certain regions of Galicia. The people themselves explain its significance in Antropología cultural de Galicia:

> aquí era la boda de negro siempre. Los zapatos de boda eran los zapatos que lleveban para la sepultura .... al casarse ya se ponen de luto aquí. Chica joven que se casa, pañuelo negro a la cabeza; ahora ya empieza a cambiar, pero aún se hace. Y el vestido también es negro ya, de luto, no sólo el pañuelo .... ya Un anciano me explica: se ponían y aún ponen de luto al casarse porque pasaban al libro de los villos, pasaba yala juventud. Y se casaban de luto ya. La madre llora cuando sale la hija a casarse y dice: 'miña filla xa non é miña, xa eres de teu home.[4]

The father's joy and contentment, stemming from the knowledge that

the marriage will bring an increase in land and wealth, testifies how the business arrangements play a vital part in the social convention of marriage. Bernarda is obviously proud of the expensive presents she has given to Angustias. Even so, the money the mother has spent on her daughter cannot ensure her future happiness. All the daughters busily sew sheets for their trousseau, a traditional custom seemingly designed to fill the time of the young women, and to inculcate into them the idea that marriage is a necessity. Lorca has focused his attention on the girls' needlework to point out not only the conventions which Bernarda maintains, but also the ironical hopelessness of the task for all but the eldest know that the strict period of mourning they are forced to undergo will prevent any chance of marriage.

Marriage was for many centuries seen as a business agreement where success lay in finding a partner who belonged to a higher social scale. Even in the 1930's the problem pages beginning to appear in magazines issued advice to its readers such as:

> Eva indecisa - Desde luego lo aconsejo no se case con el pobre a quien dice querer, y acepte al rico, a quien cree detestar. Razona usted demasiado, y demasiado bien. Y cuando se razona, el sentimiento para convertirse en negocio. He aquí su caso. Usted se confiesa una mujercita insignificante, y está segura de que no lo es. Dice usted que el 'elegido' as bueno y sabe que, una vez casado, se convertirá en un hombre 'de serio'. Con tanta sabiduría del mundo no sé para que pide usted consejos, ni dude siquiera. Si a los cuatro años de matrimonio todos los hombres se parecen de una manera lamentable con relación a sus mujeres, decídase usted por el que tiene dinero. Al fin, el pobre y el rico han de ser iguales, cuando menos, le quedará la parte agradable de su riqueza. [5]

At least here the woman was free to choose for herself; the characters in Lorca's plays are generally told whom and when they must marry.

Arranged Marriages

The arranged marriage has traditionally been a target for many types of literature and popular verse. For many centuries the freedom of a woman to choose her husband had been the subject of debate and dispute. La Celestina was perhaps the first work to clearly advocate a union of love rather than a business agreement. Melibea's assertion that "más vale ser buena amiga que mala casada"[6] is flatly contradicted by the Spanish proverb "Quien casa por amores ha de vivir con dolores".[7] Indeed, even Marañón, who had the reputation in the 1920s and 1930s of being a free-thinker, warned against marriages that took place out of passion and not because of more sensible and, according to him, importance factors:

> El matrimonio por amor ha venido siendo el arquetipo de la unión intersexual. Dos jovenes se ven sin conocerse, y en la primera mirada quedan traspasados por el flechazo de la pasión. Ya sólo desean ser el uno del otro. Se quieren, y todo lo demás no les importa. La posición social, el porvenir económico, los pleitos de familia, incluso los odios nacionales y las razones del Estado: todo les es indiferente. Todo lo superan, y, al fin, se unen por la fuerza del amor, ante la cual nada se resiste.
>
> Este es el esquema ideal que ha servido de argumento a tantas historias, a tantos poemas .... y de prólogo a tantas tragedias.[8]

He concentrates not on rendering a rigid social system more flexible, but prefers to stay within the bounds of conventional behaviour to promote a marriage of agreement. The passion of Leonardo and the Novia may well have turned itself into a creative rather than a destructive force if they had married when they were free; instead society places between them the barrier of legal propriety and they are forced to try to hide their emotions. Leonardo bitterly recalls his social inferiority: "Dímelo. ¿Quién he sido yo para ti? Abre y refresca tu recuerdo. Pero dos bueyes y una mala choza son casi nada. Esa es la espina." (p 1213) The popular verse is applicable

to Leonardo and the suitor of Martirio rejected by her mother:

> No enamore quien tenga
> Poco dinero,
> Que aunque sea bueno mozo,
> Quedará feo,
> Pues las mujeres
> Huyen como del diablo
> De quien no tiene. [9]

In Lorca's plays marriage is little more than a question of economics and convenience where the parents, and in particular the mother, handle the arrangements and virtually decide the fate of their daughters.

The marriage between Don Perlimplín and Belisa is arranged by his maid Marcolfa and the Mamá of the girl respectively. Marcolfa is almost a mother figure to her master, and she decides that he needs a wife to look after him in his old age. Neither partner is over-anxious to marry but is willing to leave all decisions to the elder women who dominate them. While Mamá does not realise that Perlimplín's use of the we form is not just a quaint form of speech, but the indication of his servant's role in his proposal, she unscrupulously sizes up his social position and does not consult her daughter other than to inform her of his wealth:

> MADRE (a Belisa) Don Perlimplín tiene muchas tierras; en las tierras hay muchos gansos y ovejas. Las ovejas se llevan al mercado. En el mercado dan dinero por ellos. Los dineros dan la hermosura .... Y la hermosura es codiciada por los demás hombres.
>
> PERLIMPLÍN Entonces .....
>
> MADRE Emocionadísima .... Belisa .... vete dentro ..., no está bien que una doncella oiga ciertas conversaciones. (p 985)

The obvious disparity between their ages, coupled with Belisa's strong sexual urge which Perlimplín cannot satisfy, both point to the folly of a marriage in which the partners are strangers. Similarly, in Los títeres de Cachiporra and Retablillo de Don Cristóbal the father and mother are solely preoccupied in marrying their daughters to a rich suitor; attention is paid to the girl's commercial value rather than to her feelings. The Zapatero's

pathetic tale of how his sister forced him into marriage, conveniently placing the blame on someone other than himself, reveals his spineless, timid character (p 926). He believes himself to be the victim of society and yet at the same time he is its most faithful defender.

Yerma married Juan not through love, but because she was told to accept him by her father; in her ignorance she felt that any man who offered her marriage would be able and willing to become the father of the children she so desired; her passive regard for social conventions strongly contrasts with her feverish determination to bear a child. Throughout thepplay, the couple are complete strangers to each other; their relationship has hardly progressed since their wedding day. The mulish way in which Juan maintains his authority as husband and master over Yerma without knowing why she is acting so strangely and his wife's equally complete incomprehension of her husband destine the marriage to failure. But ironically, neither criticises the institution of marriage, nor even denounces the system of arranged marriage. It is left to the second Muchacha, a headstrong, outspoken girl, to dismiss marriage as useless and harmful:

> .... Se casan todas. Si seguimos así, no va a haber solteras más que las niñas. Bueno, y además ..., una se casa en realidad mucho antes de ir a la iglesia. Pero las viejas se empeñan en todas estas cosas. Yo tengo diecinueve años y no me gusta guisar ni lavar. Bueno; pues todo el día he de estar haciendo lo que no me gusta. ¿Y para qué?¿Qué necesidad tiene mi marido de ser mi marido? Porque lo mismo hacíamos de novios que ahora. Tonterías de los viejos. (p 1293)

It must be noted that Yerma's reaction is one of shocked indignation. This is above all ironical, for if she had been capable of ridding herself of the mantle of social convention, she could have found happiness and fulfilment. However, she remains inextricably controlled by conventional morality and therefore can only look to her husband to be the father of her unborn child.

Bernarda Alba will not allow her four youngest daughters to marry beneath their social status. However, as the offspring of her second marriage they have no inheritance and thus little chance of forming an alliance that would please their mother. Lorca draws a clever parallel between their position and that of the mares who although they come from good stock will only get a low price. The daughters are regarded as little more than animals whose sole function is servility to the male sex. However obvious Pepe's intention to marry Angustias for her money may be to the other daughters, she clings to her future wedding as the only means of escape from the house. It matters little to her whether her marriage is just an arrangement convenient to both partners. Pepe does not even attempt to hide his purpose with words of affection; as Angustias recounts his words, he boldly and unsentimentally states why he wishes to marry: "Ya sabes que ando detrás de ti, necesito una mujer buena, modosa, y esa eres tú si me das la conformidad." (p 1475) His dry tone contrasts with the passionate words spoken by La Poncia's future husband, who wanted only to touch her body. The lower classes were not bound by the same social constraints as their superiors. At least they have the opportunity of a franker relationship, while Pepe's regard for his bride reveals how devoid of emotion the traditional standard of a 'good' marriage had become. In all cases the verse:

> Cásate, niña, a gusto,
> Ya nadie temas;
> Yo me casé a disgusto
> Y paso penas.

indicates how arranged marriages can end in failure and unhappiness, especially for the wife. In his dramas, Lorca illustrates how true this warning is. Kenny sees the position of the parent as a guardian of the social hierarchy:

> parents still exercise considerable control over the choice of a spouse, and those who are conscious of their social position will ensure that their children do not marry beneath them. 'Casa tu hijo con tu igual, ¡y no dirán de ti mal! ... runs the saying.[11]

The Zapatera is fortunate considering the standards set by this saying, for her marriage is arranged with the shoemaker because her family is impoverished and needs his money. Even the Alcalde's offer to make the Zapatera his mistress is like a business proposal. He is prepared to lavish his money on her in exchange for her body.

Both Yerma and the Zapatera are determined to respect the institution of marriage even though they have experienced not happiness but frustration and bitterness. Nor do Leonardo and the Zapatero set out to break their marriage vows, for they symbolically represent the traditional social structure which has reigned in Spain for so long, a structure which now means, according to the dramatist, only individual anguish.

One of the most harmful aspects of the arranged marriage in particular is the frequency with which old men choose brides who are scarecly more than young girls. Of course, this topic has been the subject of popular verse and proverbs for many centuries. In the majority of cases an anonymous author warns against such a match, arguing that it will bring deceit or unhappiness:

> La que con viejo rico
> Niña se casa,
> Ajenos gustos compra,
> Y el pobre paga,
> Y con hálagos
> Trae al viejo contento,
> Pero engañado.
>
> No te cases con viejo
> Por la moneda::
> La moneda se acaba
> Y el viejo queda. [12]

On the other hand, society finds it perfectly acceptable that the husband should be older than his wife. Problem pages in the 1930s often dealt with enquiries from anxious suitors and the answer was usually in

favour of the mature man as this example shows:

> Un hombre con nueve años más que una mujer, para el matrimonio, está igualado en edad con la mujer misma. A pesar de la diferencia. En cambio una mujer con un año más que un hombre es vieja para el matrimonio con el hombre mismo. Por encima de las escasas diferencias. 13

The ridiculous self-complacency which permits the writer to lay down such arbitrary rules points to the prejudices of the time - prejudices which still exist even in enlightened England.

Conventionally too, the bride should be very young. Cristobal arrogantly asserts that Rosita is a little too old, but he eventually agrees to marry her after her mother has bargained with him, for she emphasizes the difference in their ages (p 1034).

The Zapatero, who is 53, realizes his mistake too late. He should have married an older woman for companionship rather than a fiery girl of 18. He acts like a fussy father, not a husband, and he cannot control her by authority, nor by understanding her feelings. Quite simply neither can imagine the other's plight, for they are separated by the unconquerable wall which stands between the two generations. At the end of the play, when the wife has converted her elderly husband into a dashing figure, she cannot equate the reality of the situation with her dreams. Don Perlimplín and Belisa are the same age as this couple; this play is another interpretation of the same problems of the arranged marriage and the incompatibility of a man and wife who belong to two different generations. The only way Perlimplín can aspire to bring happiness to his young bride is by deceit. He pretends to be a young and virile lover in order to satisfy the sexual desires of Belisa and he ultimately brings about his own suicide to fill her with the spiritual love he could not inspire in her while he lived:

"Viejo verde, monigote sin fuerza, tú no podías gozar el cuerpo de Belisa ...., el cuerpo de Belisa era para músculos jóvenes y labios de ascuas." (p 1016/7)

Perlimplín's acknowledgement of his old age and his fear of not satisfying Belisa mark a mental old age which separates him from her. Of course, he also belongs to a long literary and popular tradition, of which Morla Lynch asserts Lorca was well aware.[14] But the dramatist has created more than just a version of an old tale; he has added a pathos which is profoundly disturbing.

Likewise, although Juan may not be old in years, he belongs to the older generation in manner. His zeal in cultivating his land and his reluctance to participate in sexual activity mark him as a prematurely old man. Certainly, his lack of sexual drive makes him physically incompatible with his wife, just as his wish to have no children who would disturb his routine consigns him to a twilight existence of premature old age.

Fernando, the unsuccessful admirer of Mariana Pineda, and Pepe, the suitor of Angustias, are both much younger than their women. Angustias behaves physically and mentally like an old woman. Mariana's concern for her children shows her as a mature woman. For most audiences, then, these relationships would have provoked an adverse reaction, just as they were meant to see the dangers of a marriage where a husband was much older than his wife. Even Primo de Rivera could not escape public criticism of his planned wedding to a woman nearly half his age. When he announced the engagement in 1928 to a woman much younger than himself, there was general uproar. Federico Bravo Marata explains why:

> ....estamos en la España de los lutos eternos, de las cencerradas a los viudos que se casan, de las madres solteras apedreadas en los pueblos. ¿Cómo esta España - ¡y en 1928! - va a comprender que un hombre de 58 años intente casarse? Es la España que ve con buenos ojos que los hombres maduros o viejos tengan sus amantes, siempre que no se sepa demasiado, siempre que, sobre todo, se guarden las formas. [15]

In his drama, therefore, Lorca was focusing on customs and practices that would be guaranteed to elicit in his audience some response to mutual relationships close to, and not remote from, their own experience.

The Sexual Controversy - Masters and Slaves

The unrest in Spain during the twenties which eventually brought about the second Republic did much to break the complete silence which prevailed over sexual matters. Greater freedom came as the Church lost its grip over many people in Spain, not only the working classes but intellectuals and artists. Lorca reflected in his plays the preoccupations which were being openly discussed by some of his contemporaries. He examined the two major reasons for marriage, legalised sex and propagation, in a number of plays, showing how ordinary men and women had been indoctrinated into blind acceptance of traditional Christian morality, and how it affected (in most cases adversely) physical relationships. The Church has constantly advocated sex as a means of propagation, not enjoyment. This attitude encouraged two results: firstly, as Barea points out, it brought each generation under the eye of the Church:

> In Spain, this law was reinforced by the rules of the Moorish harems (marriage must be fertile), rules which influenced the non-Moorish society of the country and survived the expulsion of the Moors. It was adjusted, exalted, and perpetuated in the stern teachings of the Church, which made it sinful for a husband and wife to enjoy each other, but righteous to multiply. [16]

Secondly, it gave woman a role which was to become their primary function, and kept them firmly in the house, away from the outside world in which their husbands worked. Indeed as Holtby points out, in 1934 marriage had become the vital step to woman's principal role, maternity:

> Society, trained to safeguard its biological interests at a time when increase of population was desirable, willnot let women choose. It dogs their steps, hounding them into marriage, into maternity, with the best intentions - and usually with the full cooperation of women. 17

This was not surprising, as motherhood was the most satisfactory way of filling their spare time. Of course, the more children a woman produced, the greater the need for her husband to stay at work, in the fields or in the factory, to earn a living for his family - hence the syndrome continues in a never ending, vicious circle. The Father says in Bodas de sangre that marriage means sons to carry on working in the fields; Laurie Lee met a farmer strikingly similar to that character while he was travelling in Spain:

> He was once, it seemed, a great landowner hereabouts, possessing 12 farms and 12 sons, all famous and worth much gold. Then 4 of the farms were lost in a lawsuit, and 4 of the sons in the Civil War. But that was not the end of him. There were potatoes here, cork trees farther on, maize down by the madhouse, and olives in the valley of toads. There was also a garden for tomatoes, an onion patch, a mill, a vineyard and a ruined chapel full of fattened pigs.
>
> 'Buy land and breed sons', he said, 'and you can't go wrong. Come war and thieves and ruined harvests - they don't signify at all! He thumped himself hard in the loins. 'If a man's got strong blood, like me, and scatters his seed wide enough, that man must flourish. Such is the truth and I tell it to you.' 18

Yerma feels perhaps more than another character her destiny as a mother. She accepts absolutely the Spanish code of morality which lays down that woman should marry not out of love but out of duty to bear children. Barea discussed the implications of Lorca's ability to dramatise the tragic consequences of the two individuals involved:

> It is Lorca's supreme art that through this exceptional case, not intended to be 'realistically' sound, the Spanish public conceives the full meaning of a code the ultimate consequences of which are usually ignored because it is no longer obtrusive enough to be discovered in the innumerable small frustrations and spiritual distortions of sex life. To this public Yerma's actions are, within her code, inevitable and right. But the nakedness of her emotions and the crude, clear discussions of the sex act, sperm and spirit, not only bare but also attack the roots of this code. 19

Let us examine Yerma's reactions in more detail before we return to this statement. She has no desire to <u>enjoy</u> love-making with Juan, allowing no preliminary caresses or play (p 1290). But does this mean she is frigid? I think not. She and her husband never felt the slightest spark of passion for each other as bridegroom and bride; Juan has been as responsible as his wife for not trying to work out some kind of deeper relationship. Bloch's description of the effect the social code of morals has on sexual activity illuminates the couple's marital problems:

> En la mayor parte de los casos la frialdad de la mujer es solamente aparente, bien porque tras del velo que prescribe la moral convencional del retraimiento exterior se oculta una ardiente sexualidad, o porque el hombre no consiga despertar oportunamente las complicadas sensaciones eróticas, tan difíciles de solucionar. 20

On the other hand, Juan has been glad of his wife's sexual reticence and

stiffness; her remark that "Cuando me cubre cumple con su deber" (p 1329) could not be more explicit. The sexual act is for him a mere bodily function, deprived of warmth and excitement. However, this function does not bring about the results required of it: children. The Vieja's first question to Yerma is whether she has any offspring. As time passes, the marriage becomes increasingly unusual in the eyes of the villagers, for it contravenes the unwritten code of wedlock which they and especially Yerma expected to be followed. Delgado Capéans gives a perfect example of the typical reaction towards a childless marriage:

> La familia sin hijos es un terrible peligro para la Patria y para su progresivo engrandecimiento moral, religioso, económico, intelectual, cultural, artístico ..... Es una plaga inmensamente mayor que una guerra.
> .....
>
> No hablo sólo de las familias sin hijos, me limito también a las familias que tienen uno o dos hijos; porque si mueren sus progenitores, un grave peligro por la Patria .....
>
> Verdaderamente, los niños son los ángeles del hogar, que van sembrando los caminos de la vida de flores para que las espinas del vivir no hieran los pies de los padres ..... Cuando el niño es recibido con alegría y se aceptan de buen grado los pesares y sacrificios que su educación supone, el amor y el aprecio mutuo de los padres aumenta y se refuerzan notablemente los vínculos matrimoniales. [21]

He caps these warnings of pious sentimentality with a trite verse to illustrate his fear of modern thinking:

> El miedo al hijo es ya tan espantoso que podríamos hablar de las 'huelgas de madres'. '¡No más niños!', gritan muchos padres modernos. Pero ¿no comprendéis que familia y niño y madre y niño se completan? Mirad, señoras:
>
> Familia sin hijos, jardín sin flores.
> Familia sin hijos, campana sin voz.
> Familia sin hijos, pájaro sin canto.
> Familia sin hijos, árbol sin fruto.
> Familia sin hijos, triunfo del paganismo.
>
> ¡Qué triste es el hogar sin esas flores, sin esa voz, sin ese canto, sin ese fruto! ..... [22]

Even the so called feminist magazine La voz de la mujer still retains its respect for the mother figure, which in fact is inculcated into girls from an early age. A Granadian youngster of 12 wrote a poem which was published in the magazine, sickly sweet in its sentimentality:

> Sin niños el hogar es triste
> sin niños la vida es penosa,
> que es el niño la prenda del hogar
> cual de jardín lo es la blanca rosa.[23]

The Lavanderas' lack of sympathy towards what is after all a personal matter is patently obvious. They automatically believe that one of the partners must be at fault, for "Tiene hijos la que quiere tenerlos" (p 1302). Surrounded by a fertile countryside which Juan does his best to cultivate, Yerma feels out of tune with social, moral and natural orders. Victor, the only man who aroused in her a sexual response, cannot be her salvation, for the bonds of marriage are unbreakable. Besides, she does not at first associate enjoyment with sexual intercourse; 'decent' women should consider sex as a physical necessity, no more. At the end of the play, she is so exasperated and frustrated that she refuses the appeal by Juan to respond passionately to his kiss with the words: "Eso nunca". She totally rejects it as repugnant to her nature and to her social conditioning. The songs of the Lavanderas which exalt sexual passion form a striking contrast to the severity of the heroine's moral standards and it is ironical that these women, who see sex as an act of pleasure, should scorn the barren wife (p 1300-10). Their homage to the virility of their husbands exposes and isolates Juan's dry nature. To say, as Correa has done, that the songs are not vital to the play is to ignore the lushness of their content and the excitement of their tempo which Lorca has deliberately composed to highlight Yerma's poverty.

However marriage does include more than just the duty to procreate:

it legalises the sexual act and so makes it decent. On the other hand, no advice used to be given to the newly wed. Marañón pronounced a scathing attack on the marriage that automatically produced offspring:

> Sabemos, deseamos - sobre todo las mujeres - que los hijos vengan después de las efusiones corporales del amor. Pero nadie nos instruye sobre la transcendencia y sobre la técnica de esta misión suprema. A los hombres se nos da por suficientemente enterados con la experiencia de los burdeles. A las mujeres no se las dice nada, para no herir su candor. Después de casados, se supone que, roto el misterio, y está todo sabido. Y sólo, quizás, los días antes de la boda hay una explicación a medias palabras; cuando no se delega toda la misión informativa en el apóstol san Pablo, cuyos excelentes consejos, por lo menos, debieran leerse el día mismo en que se conocen los novios, y no delante del altar, cuando el espíritu no está para epístolas y, sobre todo, cuando las cosas no tienen ya remedio ..... Mas en el orden sexual, ninguna advertencia. Con tal que la unión del hombre y la mujer sea legítima ante las leyes y ante la Iglesia, la sociedad no se ocupa de más. Que no haya escándalo, que no haya pecado; y en cuanto a los hijos, que salgan como quieran ..... [24]

Men may see sex in marriage as a pleasure, while their wives are supposed to consider it a duty. According to Cristóbal and the mother of his bride, his marriage creates an opportunity for sexual activity rather than anything else. The Ama in Doña Rosita .. shows with her country shrewdness her alarm at the proposed marriage by proxy. Her conviction that a marriage is invalid unless it is consummated immediately explains her acute concern to find out what will happen on Rosita's wedding night:

> AMA Y por la noche, ¿qué?
> ROSITA ¡Por Dios!
> AYOLA Muy bien dicho. Y por la noche, ¿qué?
> TIA ¡Niñas!
> AMA ¡Que venga en persona y se case! ¡'Poderes'! No lo he oído decir nunca. La cama y sus pinturas temblando de frío, y la camisa de novia en lo más oscuro del baúl. Señora, no deje usted que los 'poderes' entren en esta casa.
> (Ríen todos.)
> ¡Señora, que yo no quiero 'poderes' !' (p 1410)

The Criada's concise definition of marriage in Bodas de sangre reinforces the down-to-earth attitude held by one of the lower classes. They are the only ones not to cover up such matters. However, they are

extremely ignorant of why children are impossible for some. The Criada leaves no doubt about the fundamental reason for marriage: '¡Pero, niña! Una boda,¿qué es? Una boda es esto y nada más. ¿Son los dulces?¿Son los ramos de flores? No. Es una cama relumbrante y un hombre y una mujer." (p 1207) The Novio unconsciously echoes this assertion of the importance of sex when he excused himself for wanting to kiss his new wife with the words: "Ya es sagrado". (p 1238) Dickson sees the bride's resistence to marrying her suitor as connected to her "vida de reina" and her reluctance to live with one man who is "not even a personality to her but an abstract phallic principle."[25] His interpretation narrows the issue rather. She is reluctant to marry someone for whom she feels no love, and like Yerma she feels no warmth towards the person she has dutifully to live with for the rest of her life.

However the girl's eagerness to find out from the Novia what it is like to be married indicates the strong sexual drive (whether it be coupled with maternal instinct or not) which torments many women.

As we have seen, Lorca includes in his plays several allusions to his female characters' longing to participate in an active sexual life. Yerma records with great honesty the joy which she entered married life with:

> Yo conozco muchachas que han temblado y que lloraban antes de entrar en la cama con sus maridos. ¿Lloré yo la primera vez que me acosté contigo? ¿No cantaba al levantar los embozos de holanda? ¿Y no te dije: '¡Cómo huelen a manzanas estas ropas!'? (p 1276)

The dramatist's treatment of the ritual dances at the end of the play underlines the force and beauty of physical relationships between man and woman. Honig has made the ludicrous mistake of stating that the male and female are both played by women. He has forgotten that the pronouns refer to the Máscaras, a feminine noun.[26] There is no doubt that the Macho, like Pepe el Romano, Leonardo and Victor, is a symbol of masculine virility who wields enormous erotic power over women.

It is the female partner who suffers more than her husband from the effects of traditional inhibitions surrounding sexual matters. Yerma's ignorance is apparent; social structure has shut in her face all channels of information. Before the marriage it seems obvious that no members of her family gave her advice on sex or marriage. In despair she turns to the down-to-earth Vieja to plead for information:

> Las muchachas que se crían en el campo, como yo, tienen cerradas todas las puertas. Todo se vuelven medias palabras, gestos, porque todas estas cosas dicen que no se pueden saber. Y tú también, tú también te callas y te vas con aire de doctora, sabiéndolo todo, pero negándolo a la que se muere de sed. (p 1291)

She simply wants to know what to do in order to conceive. But the community judges an individual for not conforming to motherhood, while at the same time refusing to disclose the information she needs. She innocently believes that failure to conceive is due to lack of affection (p 1287/91); it must be added that not all the blame must be laid on Juan as Yerma is equally guilty of not showing affection. She does not really believe that her sterility could be connected with any physical defect of her husband until it is pointed out to her as a possibility. One must remember that country girls received very little general education; superstition ruled, and old wive's tales were rife. Of course, the longer she waits for a child, the more tense and frigid she becomes, and consequently the less likely she is to conceive. C.B. Morris also mentions that Juan may simply be holding back and therefore reducing the chances of conception. Víctor's blunt advice concerning Juan "¡que ahonde!" may well refer to the husband's reluctance to penetrate his wife fully. As Alberich has acutely observed Lorca's treatment of sexual matters and difficulties reveals how he joined in with a considerable number of artistic and intellectual figures who talked openly for the first time about subjects that had traditionally been shrouded in silence:

> Lorca abre brecha voluntariamente en la reticencia burguesa sobre materiales sexuales, y para esto debió ayudarle su familiaridad con el pueblo sencillo, sobre todo con el rural de su región nativa. En su teatro, el lenguaje espontáneo y franco de las criadas contrasta a este respecto con los remilgos de las señoras. [27]

Wives were kept in the house originally to preserve their honour and to earn the esteem of the husbands by their virtuous conduct. Education then never became necessary for woman, for she did not need more than a rudimentary knowledge of basic economics to manage her home. This state of affairs, which remained constant from the fifteenth century onwards, was only being fought with any great vigour in the 1920s and the 1930s by feminists and supporters of more radical political groups in several European countries and in America. They did not fail either to criticise the effect of sexual conventions on their kind. Their role as reproductive agents was discussed by E. Zuloaga in Blanca y negro in 1935; the husband, symbol of the State, talks to the Spanish woman:

> tú eres la mujer y la madre. Tú estás siempre en casa, siempre en casa. Yo siempre fuera, en la calle, en la faena, en el combate. Ganando y perdiendo. Luchando. Me faltan tiempo y carácter de educador. Yo necesito hijos perfectos. Tú sabes parirlos y formarlos. Házmelos numerosos - eras fecunda -, santos como tú, fuertes como yo. [28]

But what in practice did this mean? It meant, as I shall demonstrate in more detail in a later section of this thesis, that a man stayed away from the house from dawn until well into the night and that the home created by man to keep woman content was in fact a myth, for it did not exist. However, male superiority has been postulated in literature and popular verse for centuries. For example, Fr. Hernando de Talavera viewed the role of wife as one of complete subjugation to her husband in all aspects:

> Aun devéis mirar, noble señora, que no sois libre para hacer vuestra voluntad; ca el día que fuisteis ayuntada al marido en el estado matrimonial, ese día perdiste vuestra libertad. Porque no solamente tomó el marido el señorío de vuestro cuerpo, como vos tomastes del suyo, mas sois subjecta a él y obligada a vos conformar con su voluntad y en todo lo que no fuere pecado mortal o venial .... Y si esto os paresce grave, quejaduos de la primera madre, que para toda su posteridad meresció esta sujección por su grande viviandad .... Y aunque no toviera pecado, era cosa natural y mucho razonable que la mujer, que comunmente, como tiene flaco el cuerpo y much menor el esfuerzo, así no tiene tan complida discreción, sigua y obedesca el seso y querer del varón, que en todo en más perfecto, ca es ley general que todas las codas inferiores e menores sean movidas e regidas por las superiores e mayores ....(Cap 111) [29]

Even so, modern psychologists and scientists such as Havelock Ellis have dismissed women as merely creatures of instinct who are best suited, in conventional society, to be under the control of reasoned man. Freud, of course, spread the myth of woman's sexual inferiority, and Hayes refers to the natural gregariousness of his sex who leave their wives in the home to talk with fellow man. Holtby attacks the Catholic Church as resposible for propagating perhaps more extensively than literature or science woman's inferiority:

> The Papal Encycical upon Christian Marriage significantly entitled 'Casti concubii' and dated December 31, 1930, is a social document of immense importance. Naturally it upholds the view that matrimony is an indissoluble sacrament, divorce an unmitigated evil, birth control a sin, and the subservience of wives a divine principle.
>
> The subjection of the wife to the husband, states the Encyclical, 'does not deny or take away the liberty which belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human being and in view of her most noble office as a wife and mother and companion' but it does exclude that 'exaggerated licence which is not for the good of the family', and it forbids that in this body which is the family, the heart be separated from the head to the great detriment of the whole body.

The attitude is clear enough. In marriage the position of husband and of children is positive; that of the wife is dependent and ancillary.[30]

I wish now to examine the male characters created by Lorca, paying constant attention to their traditional role of master. Amnón and to a lesser extent the gipsy lover in 'La casada infiel' reveal a strain of erotic power perhaps deriving from the Arabic culture, which is capable of sweeping all obstacles to one side. The obvious satisfaction of the gipsy in his own virility is apparent as he refers boastfully to his night of passion:

> Aquella noche corrí
> el mejor de los caminos,
> montado en potra de nácar
> sin bridas y sin estribos. (p 435)

However, some of the dramatist's other male protagonists project the image of bully rather than anything else: both Cristóbal and Cristobita need to assert their superiority over everyone with whom they come into contact. Cristobita assesses Rosita as would a horsedealer sizing upon a horse, and he thinks of her only in physical terms: "Es una hembrita suculenta. ¡Y para mí solo! ¡Para mí solo!" (p 734) The mayor in La zapatera prodigiosa also enjoys exerting his authority over his fellow villagers; he rebukes the cobbler for not marrying sooner, stating that he ought to be a widower of at least one wife. He provides the Zapatero with his personal prescription for keeping control:

> Y tú, siempre tú; ¡qué demonio! Vamos, lo estoy viendo y me parece mentira cómo un hombre, lo que se dice un hombre, no puede meter en cintura, no una, sino ochenta hembras. Si tu mujer habla por la ventana con todos, si tu mujer se pone =agria contigo, es porque tú quieres, porque tú no tienes arranque. A las mujeres, buenos apretones en la cintura, pisadas fuertes y la voz siempre en alto, y si con esto se atreven a hacer kikirikí, la vara, no hay otro remedio. (p 925)

His rejection of woman as anything other than an object for pleasure and a servant to look after his needs clearly places him in the class of those who regard complete superiority as the only conduct becoming to man.

El público contains a more explicit example of Lorca's concern with man's tendency to dominate woman. Juliet has been fashioned by a man to fit his ideal; because she is moulded by him, she is dependent on him. Indeed, she may well be "verdaderamente feminina" precisely because she is a product, an invention of man. Her male equivalent is the Jugador de rugby, the image of the Novia's ideal man, or, more precisely, of what the Joven should be. Knight compares him to several other characters: "He is symbolic of lo macho like Leonardo, Víctor and Pepe el Romano. To the Novia he is a dragon, and as his secondary symbol, he has the horse, one of Lorca's symbols of virility."[31] The Novio is admired by his mother because of his virility; she has drummed into him the idea that his descendants were all full-blooded men; the instructions she gives him as a guide to married life firmly place him in the role of master:

> Con tu mujer procura estar cariñoso, y si la notas infautada o arisca, hazle una caricia que le produzca un poco de daño, un abrazo fuerte, un mordisco y luego un beso suave. Que ella no pueda disgustarse, pero que sienta que tú eres el macho, el amo, el que mandas. Así aprendí de tu padre. Y como no lo tienes, tengo que ser yo la que te enseñe estas fortalezas. (p 1241)

She frequently refers to her menfolk, and especially the Novio, as a carnation or geranium, popular symbols of virility and erotic beauty. Juan also uses the cloak of his domination to remain as aloof as possible from Yerma's appeals to talk things over. He does, however, miss out one point which the Madre advises her son to copy, that is to be affectionate; he may be the master, but he makes no attempt to mitigate this by love. His only amorous suggestion to Yerma comes too late; after rejecting her approaches he finds that the tables are turned and that his wife rejects him. Although he uses his freedom as head of the household to spend his day in the fields rather than in his home, he does not use that freedom to relax with other men, instead he stores up his wealth. He has been bitten by the illness of

capitalist society: greed for material success; even so his work can keep him occupied far more than Yerma can be in the house. She explains the enormous difference which separates their two lives: "Los hombres tienen otra vida: los ganados, los árboles, las conversaciones, y las mujeres no tenemos más que esta de la cría y el cuido de la cría." (p 1313/4) The Macho is left to uphold male domination in the sexual field; he identifies men with bulls, able to conquer any female in his path. Leonardo and Pepe are both intimately associated with the horse. The former says it is not by choice that he comes to see the Novia but that his horse takes him, by pure sexual instinct, to her. Pepe is frequently identified with the stallion which is allowed to go free while the mares are kept locked up. Similarly the men enter the patio after the funeral ceremony but the women go straight to their homes and stay there. Adela likens Pepe to a lion, denoting his strength over all women; however, she is the only one to openly respond to his purely erotic force; apart from the incident of the stolen portrait, her sisters are too timid and too influenced by convention to feel anything other than fear. Indeed, Bernarda's advice to her eldest daughter, Angustias, is that of complete obedience; marriage is more or less a relationship between slave and master. Angustias had asked her fiancé why he seemed so preoccupied; her mother rebukes her for being too forward: "No le debes preguntar. Y cuando te cases, menos. Habla si él habla y míralo cuando te mire. Así no tendrás disgustos." (p 1513) Men are granted all their wishes for the simple reason that they are men - tradition decrees this and La Poncia echoes it in her dictum "un hombre es un hombre" (p 1520), and that gives him the right to act as he wishes. Bernarda maintains that if a man is no more than an animal, then woman is his drudge, who is entitled to no opinions of her own. At the same time she is clearly ignorant of the power man wields over her sex, and in particular, over her five daughters.

Despite her maid's veiled warnings, she fails to recognise the havoc Pepe is causing in her household. (p 1520)

The story concerning the parents of Adelaida evokes the devastating power of man over woman. Martirio gives a lurid account of the events:

> Su padre mató en Cuba al marido de su primera mujer para casarse con ella. Leugo aquí la abandonó y se fue con otra que tenia una hija y luego tuvo relaciones con esta muchacha, la madre de Adelaida, y se casó con ella después de haber muerto loca la segunda mujer. (p 1459)

Amelia's ingenuous question about why the husband was not punished for his crimes elicits the cynical reply of Martirio that man can count on the complicity of his fellow men to hide crimes. Two other events happen in the play which emphasize man's right to enjoy sexual relations with women, and conversely, their right to criticize women. A local woman is carried off to the olive grove (a place where nature and natural passions mix in freedom) while her husband is left tied up. Man is not expected to control his sexual urges; indeed it is the woman's fault for she is the one who provokes him until he cannot contain his passion. In the same way, it is conventionally accepted that man needs to acquire experience; La Poncia relates how she sent her son to a prostitute:

> Hace años vino otra de estas y yo misma di dinero a mi hijo mayor para que fuera. Los hombres necesitan estas cosas.
>
> ADELA Se les perdona todo.
> AMELIA Nacer mujer es el mayor castigo.
> MAGDALENA Y ni nuestros ojos siquiera nos pertenecen. (p 1486)

The complaints of the daughters lament their fate; paradoxically man is the instigator and the punisher of the same act. He gives a woman a child and then, if, as is the case of the spinster in the play, she is unmarried and tries to hide her 'crime', he judges her. Similarly, the third Lavandera disdains women who are unable to have children for they have no use in marriage, so they just as well take on the job of satisfying man's lust. Consequently, the prostitute, or any woman associated with her profession, is immediately

shunned by all 'decent' women.[32]

The double standard which exists between the male and the female has created a dual role for woman. The decent woman, the one who is destined to become a wife and mother, must remain a virgin until her marriage, but the prostitute is beyond any kind of moral judgement. She does not compete with the decent woman, indeed she helps to maintain the virgin's important position in society. Although Martínez Sierra and others waged a lively campaign against prostitution in the thirties, it was common in villages and among the poorly educated. While it remained permissible for a man to have an adulterous relationship outside marriage, for a married woman to do so it was a crime. Lorca's poem 'La casada infiel' not only renders an account of a popular theme, but also shows how the gipsy ends the event by giving her a present of a work basket, almost as a payment, because she was legally tied to another man. As a single man he is quite willing to take advantage of the situation, but he refuses to become further involved with the woman because she is married. Popular songs give many tales of adulterous women; some warn men to distrust them because they are fickle:

Enamoré a una casada
y luego me arrepentí;
Como olvidó a su marido
Me olvidará luego a mí.

Others commend these women as they have experience and provide an ideal casual partner:

No quiero amor con doncellas;
Que las casadas me dan
Todo lo que necesito;
Me dicen si quiero más.[33]

Kenny explains the social implications of a wife's adultery in these terms:

> When it does not affect the unity of the household, a husband's infidelity is accepted with resignation by the wife; but the in-

fidelity of a wife is the greatest possible degradation for a man. This is not only because it sullies his manliness, with the added implication that he is unable to satisfy his wife; but also because it threatens the very base of the household structure, which it is his responsibility to guard and preserve. More important still, it is a testimony of lack of shame in his wife, whom he should view as the ideal type of unsullied motherhood. For every man sees in the girl he courts a future mother, and the worse insults in the language are directed against the individual's parentage.[34]

The traditional symbol for the deceived husband is horns. Popular verse warns man of being cuckolded, cornudo, the worst insult he can receive:

> Yo conosí a un hombre e bien
> Acostarse bueno y sano
> Y amanesció al otro día
> Con un cuerno en cada mano.[35]

When Lorca describes Perlimplín after his wedding night as wearing a pair of golden horns, the implication could not be clearer. It is as if the normal roles of man and woman had been reversed, for the hero's reply to the incredulous Belisa reveals that he has known no other women, while his wife's sexual urge is extremely strong. However, Perlimplín does not care about his reputation in the eyes of society; he is prepared to withstand the taunts of the outside world in order to give Belisa a soul. Here Lorca is examining the classic situation of the deceived husband who deliberately rejects his social role. He is suggesting a different interpretation of a subject hitherto treated by most people in a traditional stereotyped way. Indeed some of the dramatist's male characters are not the dominant figures of the master. As we have seen, Perlimplín is under the firm influence of his servant Marcolfa; likewise the Novio is easily ruled by his mother. What is more, Perlimplín is incapable of satisfying the demanding appetite of Belisa. The Zapatero and Juan are unable to satisfy their wives either. On the other hand, it is the groups of men and anonymous or symbolic figures who are prototypes of the virile male. The carefree Segadores invite all women to sport with them, and the Macho and Pepe are both representatives of the virile, strong male.

Obviously Lorca's own character must be taken into account in the search for a resonable interpretation of his obsession with failed heterosexual relationships; his homosexual tendencies would have intensified a fear of the voracious sexual urges of woman. Characters painted in more detail are portrayed as timid, weak, and incapable of satisfying the ever hungry wife. The husbands especially who have been led into the institution of marriage fail to satisfy their partners, but the symbolic male who advocates a natural relationship which gives full rein to the force of passion is the one who most enjoys his sexual encounters. Between these two poles lies the rather ambiguous figure of Leonardo; his virility cannot be doubted for he has given his wife a child and she is about to give birth to another, and the sexual power he wields over the Novia is enormous. However, he is not really willing to leave his wife and home for the girl; it is only the irresistable pull of his emotions that makes him escape with her; his death is the punishment for his behaviour. If he had remained at home, he would not have been happy or tranquil, but by abandoning his required position he has placed himself outside society. Oddly enough, Jiménez de Asúa asserts that adultery was not uncommon in Spain at that time, because the man usually married a decent virgin whom he does not love and who is not passionate. So he turns to other women to experience the excitement he cannot obtain from his wife.[36]

The Maniquí criticizes the Joven in Así que pasen cinco años for not being forceful enough, calling him a "dormida laguna". Even the Novia wants him to play the role of the strong male, but this time to contrast with her own conception of the innocent maiden. Knight rightly interprets the Joven's attitude toward these two women as unwilling to take up the opportunities they have made::

> The Joven loses the Novia and the Mecanógrafa because he refuses the opportunities they represent, although in terms of everyday reality, he has relegated one to the past and the other to the future. That is why it is not incongruous for the Mecanógrafa to say in Act III that she 'has loved him' and 'will love him', and then to ask '¿Porqué dices ahora?' [37]

Lorca's satirical portrayal of the Alcalde in La zapatera prodigiosa reveals just how ludicrous he found the attitude of the 'normal' man to woman, the mayor describes himself as a lustful master and macho, who rules through physical domination and pays no heed to any of his wife's feelings. Cobb has pointed out the tendency in the dramatist's work to portray the man as weak and timid while the woman is demanding and aggressive: ".....In a more general way, Lorca's drama reflects the modern theme now becomecommonplace in world drama: the emasculation of the male character and the rising domination of the female."[38]

The importance of Sexual Fulfilment

There is a distinct correlation between the degree of tranquillity in a character, whether male or female, and of sexual fulfilment; we have seen how men who are unable to satisfy the sexual appetite of their wives are correspondingly ill-at-ease and miserable. Similarly, the effects of a passion which must be fulfilled, without regard to the conventions laid down by society, induces a malaise which finally leads to death and destruction. These effects are usually not so dramatic on the female characters. Nevertheless their sexual urge is shown to be as strong, if not stronger, than that of their male counterparts. Lorca has frankly and sincerely focused his attention on woman's plight in a matter that was traditionally not discussed. The emergence of new ideas during the 1920s and 1930s allowed people to air their views, if only in the towns and cities, for it must be remembered that very little reached the isolated villages dotted throughout Spain. Even at the very beginning of his career Lorca

in Impresiones y paisajes outlines the type of woman he was to introduce in some of his poems, and especially in his plays. Women who yearn for the chance to realize themselves as women run through his work; the spinster in 'Elegía', Yerma and Doña Rosita all have details in common and most important of all they are destined to live an existence of frustration and they can do nothing about it. 'La casada infiel' shows a woman seeking satisfaction from men other than her husband; the conclusion to be reached seems to be that sexually her marriage is not a success. Rosita in Retablillo de Don Cristóbal lightheartedly recites her sexual urges. It becomes clear from her indiscriminate catalogue that she craves for physical contact:

> pero yo quisiera estar;
> en el diván
> con Juan,
> en el colchón
> con Ramón,
> en el canapé
> con José,
> en la silla
> con Medinilla, ..
> en el suelo
> con el que yo quiero,
> pegada al muro
> con el lindo Arturo,
> y en la gran 'chaise-longue'
> con Juan, con José, con Medinilla,
> con Arturo y con Ramón.
> ¡Ay!, ¡ay!, ¡ay!, ¡ay!
> Yo me quiero casar, ¿me han oído? (p 1032)

Once she has married Cristóbal, who sleeps on their wedding night after having eaten and drunk too much, she demonstrates her sexual appetite with various men, and consequently has a large number of children. Her sexual capacity is enormous, and Cristóbal is simply incapable of satisfying her.

The Zapatera dominates her husband; she is a fiery creature, full of life and the possessor of an earthy sensuality which only the Zapatero igmores. But she remains faithful to him even after he has left her, she finds the loneliness hard to bear even though she has supposedly disliked

his company. The vacuum created by the husband's departure is more frankly drawn by the Mujer in Quimera:

> ....Yo, en cambio, estaré sola en la cama. Tendré frío. El tiene ojos marivillosos; pero lo que yo amoes su fuerza. (Se desnuda.) Me duele un poco la espalda. ¡Ah! ¡Si me pudiera despreciar! Yo quiero que él me desprecie ....que me queme. (Alto.) Adiós, adiós .... Enrique. Enrique ..... Te amo. Te veo pequeño. Saltas por las piedras. Pequeño. Ahora te podría tragar como si fueras un botón. Te podría tragar, Enrique ..... (p 909)

There can be no doubt that the playwright's appraisal of a wife's situation is created with an instinctive sympathy and understanding, which ignores the myth that woman does not enjoy deep sexual stimulation, and which explicitly reveals the amount of passion of which she is clearly capable. In Bodas de sangre the mother's description of man as "hermoso" and the loving way she illustrates his physical power in terms of smell, coupled with the obvious enjoyment she found in her relationship with her husband, point to the earthy frankness with which country people describe natural emotions and which conventional society has tried to conceal under a cloak of 'decency'. Even the comparison of Pepe to a horse and a lion in La casa de Bernarda Alba points to the female characters' awareness of man's power. Alberich comments on this aspect of Lorca's creative force:

> Las expresiones de este tipo refuerzan una idea que aparece insistentemente como elemento importante, en las tres tragedias, a saber, que el deseo sexual es en la mujer normal, y no sólo en las viciosas tan fuerte y dominante como el varón, cosa que silenciaba casi siempre la literatura pacata del siglo XIX y que aceptan muchos especialistas en psicología sexual. 39

It is no wonder, then, that the Novia should prefer Leonardo, sexually experienced and clearly potent, to the virgin and timid Novio. She justifies her action to the Madre with comparisons which accentuate the great difference between the two rivals:

> Yo era una mujer quemada, llena de llagas por dentro y por fuera, y tu hijo era un poquito de agua de la que yo esperaba hijos, tierra, salud; pero el otro era un río oscuro, lleno de ramas, que acercaba a mí el rumor de sus juncos y su cantar entre dientes. Y yo corría con tu hijo que era como un niñito de agua, frío, y el otro me mandaba cientos de pájaros que me impedían el andar y que dejaban escarcha sobre mis heridas de pobre mujer marchita, de muchacha acariciada por el fuego.
> (p 1269)

Early in the play she vents her frustration over her lack of freedom in a vehement outburst against her lot. She grasps the Criada by the wrist to stop her seeing the presents given to her by her fiancé. Her strength is equal to a man's, and indeed she cries out in exasperation that she wishes she were a man, for then she would have at least more freedom to satisfy her passion. Even though she proclaims her chastity to the Madre, it seems likely that she is a virgin in body but certainly not in mind.

Yerma can only seek sexual fulfilment in her husband. Her complete acceptance of the social code of moral behaviour forbids her to seek fulfilment in anyone except the man to whom she is legally tied. In order to come into contact with fertility, she turns to the world of nature; she remarks that she wants to climb to the roof in a deep-seated longing to find a life-giving source in nature. She is prepared to join in semi-pagan ceremonies, to sit out all night and to incur the hostility of the community; in fact she is prepared to undergo all these tribulations to bear a child. It is not surprising then that with no artificial means of birth control, Juan should fail to sexually satisfy his wife. This dogmatic rejection of her pleas means that slowly her frustration builds up until it explodes in the death of her husband; it also brings hopelessness but tranquility, for in his death ends Juan's cold half-hearted attempts at doing his duty.

La casa de Bernarda Alba again focuses on the sexual frustrations of the young women. A similar remark to the one by Yerma is uttered by La Poncia. She declares that if the daughters were let loose they would go to the roof to seek peace in nature. Indeed she is the only one to perceive the truth about the girls' frustrations, for she has the experience and age of a sexually mature woman. The girls resort to different defence mechanisms to protect themselves from their hopeless desires. Martirio suffers the physical deformities of a hunchback. To compensate for her ugliness she fears men and feels repelled by any suggestion of the erotic. However, she is a victim of reversed reasoning and she maintains that her deformity causes her fear of men, refusing to admit that she is using it as an excuse. She is completely frustrated, and has become bitter and bad-tempered and extremely jealous of anyone who can enjoy a physical relationship with man. Such is her frustration that she complains that life is not more than a clockwork existence. This is implicitly shown by her use of short, stilted sentences. Magdalena loses all interest in life; her answer "lo mismo me da" reflects the sadness and uselessness of her routine existence, and her limp resignation to it. It is Adela who leads the protest against woman's imprisonment, advocating a sexual freedom as complete as that enjoyed by men. Her statement "Mi cuerpo será de quien yo quiera", is a declaration of war against the traditions upheld by her mother (p 1479). It is not love that she feels for Pepe but an instinctive passion. Her hatred for the system in which she is trapped hardens her resolve to achieve sexual freedom with a man, and Pepe is the most convenient candidate. Her sexual appetite is as fierce as Rosita's and Belisa's; she intends to satisfy her hunger by treating man almost as a mere animal, thus duplicating his attitude towards her sex. María Josefa underlines her granddaughter's character, as well as reiterating the frustrations of the other girls. Although Sharp is right in affirming that Adela's affair with Pepe recalls "the strain of

Moorish eroticism in the lustful attitude towards sex,"[40] it is far more than simply the repetition of a traditional element of the Spanish character, for it is in accord with the demands of modern woman in the late 1920s and the 1930s who desired independence, both sexual and social. She is an advocate of freedom from all the trammels imposed by tradition.

Indeed, Lorca has drawn in his tragedies two opposing types of woman: the type represented by Yerma, who competely accepts the role society imposes on her with the result that it is both the cause and victim of her own unhappiness, and the type represented by Adela whose rebellion is so absolute that it comes in direct conflict with tradition. So resolute is the will of both forces that neither wins, but at least Adela's suicide is as positive as were the deliberate deaths of the suffragettes in her condemnation of society's methods of dealing with anyone who was an outcast. The Zapatera is an uneasy mixture of these two representatives, while the Novia and Belisa are completely consumed by passion, breaking rules not by design but through instinct.

The Institution of Marriage

The institution of marriage was reexamined during the 1920s and 1930s as many men and woman began to reject the once sacred rules of tradition. Marañón's appraisal of the true state of most marriages was pessimistic:

> Matrimonios llamados felices, en los que el desamor se esconde tras una apariencia de corrección social y familiar, a lo sumo coloreada levemente de cordialidad. La esposa se consuela de este desamor con su frialdad sexual, con el ejercicio de las tareas maternales, y quizá con las prácticas religiosas; .... Y en cuanto al marido, se consuela también con el torbellino de sus quehaceres sociales .... y, desde luego, casi siempre, con una amante. [41]

Of course the themes of the folly of marriage and the unhappiness it causes have long been a ready subject for popular verse. Many emphasized how luck and fate play a vital part in the choice of partner. [42]

Once again, throughout Lorca's work there is a fundamental preoccupation with the question of marriage which becomes more intense at the end of the 1920s and continues until his death. It is worth noting that during this period interest was increasing in the issue of divorce. The late1920s aroused open enthusiasm for divorce in intellectuals and left-wingers and even in those of the Catholic faith such as Torrubiano Ripoll: "Sin género de duda y sin que mi conciencia católica, iluminada por un profundo estudio de la teología, me ponga el menor obstáculo, yo soy partidario y propugnador del matrimonio con divorcio vincular."[43] After the institution of the second Republic, support for the divorce bill became more vociferous. Feminist magazines such as Mujer advocated divorce as a necessity in modern day society: "El divorcio es algo fundamental en los días que vivimos, para la moralización y dignificación del matrimonio, que al fin es la familia, y el pueblo, y la nación toda."[44] Divorce was in fact introduced in the autumn of 1931. It was one of the last divorce bills to become law in a European country, but it was in fact one of the most progressive, for women did not have to state on what grounds they wanted to obtain it, thus protecting them from their natural pudor. By 1933 left-wing supporters of divorce were again having to defend their bill against increasingly hostile traditionalists and Churchmen.

Canciones contain two poems that hint at criticism of the convention of marriage. In 'Trasmundo' yo rejects the symbolic value of the wedding ring, while in 'Lagarto' the poet lightheartedly probes the cause of the creature's sadness. He and his wife have lost their wedding ring, proof of their union, and significantly made of lead not gold. It seems that from the beginning the marriage was destined by the lead ring to be unhappy.

The Zapatero and his wife are unable to reconcile themselves to the basic qualities of each other's personality. The Zapatera wants to be more than just a slave, while her husband tries to make her adhere strictly to social convention. Both partners are over-critical and intolerant of the other's faults and they seem to be without common interests. It is only by disguising himself as a puppeteer and returning to see his wife that the Zapatero can discover what are his wife's emotions. Even so these are not really true, for the Zapatera cannot escape from the dream world she has created to save herself from the boredom of her humdrum existence. The husband describes the differences which exist between herself and his wife: "Ella soñaba con un mundo que no era el mío, era fantasiosa y dominanta, gustaba demasiado de la conversación y las golosinas que yo no podía costearle, y un día tormentoso de viento huracanado, me abandonó para siempre." (p 967) He has previously confessed to the Alcalde that he no longer loved his wife, but his obvious unhappiness is matched by his wife's plight, for she is economically dependent on her husband, and thus under his command. Besides she is misunderstood by him and the villagers who consider her daydreams as wild bouts of evil fancy rather than desperate attempts to escape from a reality which is harmful to her.

The Novia in Bodas de Sangre knows it is her duty to love her future husband; "Tengo que querer". There is no spontaneous warmth of passion on her part, just her grave realization of the great step she is about to take. Marriage for her is not a happy event: "estos pasos son pasos que cuestan mucho": in other words, it calls for a sacrifice of her emotions.

Yerma takes the problem of marriage a stage further. The couple have been married for several years when the play opens. Firstly, as has already been discussed, the couple seem to be physically incompatible. Strangers before their wedding day, they have never been able to discuss why they feel so little for each other. Juan simply cannot understand why his wife is so obsessed with children. He makes sure that she lives in material comfort and thinks that that should be enough to satisfy her:

> Hablas de una manera que yo no te entiendo. No te privo de nada. Mando a los pueblos vecinos por las cosas que te gustan. Yo tengo mis defectos, pero quiero tener paz y sosiego contigo. Quiero dormir fuera y pensar que tú duermes también. (p 1313)

On the other hand, Yerma's longing for a child is sufficient to completely alienate her from her husband. C.B. Morris defends Juan's rejection of her:

> When she asks rhetorically '¿Es preciso buscar en el hombre al hombre nada más?" (1,ii pp 1290), by implicitly supplying the answer 'No' she demonstrates her failure to appreciate that her husband, a man, is something more than an animal, a reproductive tool, and that the marriage bed is something more than a stud farm. When she goes on to ask, "Entonces, ¿qué vas a pensar cuando te deja en la cama con los ojos tristes mirando al techo y da media vuelta y se duerme?" (1, ii, pp1290), she cannot begin to think why Juan rolls over in bed and falls asleep: because he resents docile submission, because he resents being used as a machine for making children by a woman who confesses that she seeks no enjoyment in the means of making children. Her last question to the Vieja shows the power her unborn child exercises over her; when Juan rolls over she asks: "¿He de quedarme pensando en él o en lo que puede salir relumbrando de mi pecho?" (1, ii, 1290). Yerma cannot see that thinking about having a child and thinking about her husband are not mutually exclusive alternatives. Thinking about a child need not prevent her from thinking about her husband.[45]

But does Juan show Yerma any affection? Could he not have tried, by tenderness and caresses, to arouse in her the feelings of passion Church and society have deemed undesirable in a woman? It is rather easy to put the blame on Yerma, dismissing the moral and social conditioning to which she

has been subjected since childhood. C.B. Morris states: "Juan is not really strong enough to stand Yerma's too disturbing accusations expressed in looks, insomnia and sighs, ...". Why then does he not attempt to talk to her? He is a victim of social convention to a certain extent; he would, naturally a reticent man, have found difficulty in talking about an intimate matter, but when a subject such as this is shrouded in silence, he would have found it extremely embarrasing to broach it. However, for such an important matter, one would have hoped that he could gather enough courage to talk to her frankly for the first time since they had met over something that fundamentally affected them both. When in his final outburst he does desire her, it is too late; the gap has grown so wide that neither of them can bridge it. Lorca has deliberately set this tension against a background of sexual fulfilment and enjoyment. The Lavanderas sing of their pleasure in love-making, exalting homage to the man who brings both sexual and material well-being; they scorn the barren wife as she goes against natural and social desire. The chants sung by Yerma and María to induce fertility bear traces of the earthy realities of sex which the Macho and Hembra celebrate and which forms an ironic contrast to the couple's marriage. The climax of their mutual misunderstanding is reached when they both say "te busco a ti" and mean completely different things. Lorca's insight into and exposé of the inadequacy of traditional man/wife relationships is startling. Although such freedom in discussing matters was strongly supported by the Republic and heralded by the theories of Freud, it is still remarkable that the playwright could instinctively penetrate the intricacies of a tortuous relationship which he himself had not experienced and which he felt the subject to be sufficiently important to show his anguished play to what were in the main bourgeois audiences. To suggest that perhaps the husband is sterile, or even that the wife is frigid, suggested with startling frankness that marriage was not automatically a happy institution.

The popular song warning men and women of the pitfalls of marriage:

> Cásate y disfrutarás
> De los tres meses primeros;
> Y luego desearás
> La vida de solteros.[46]

is a parallel to La Poncia's description of the expected behaviour of a husband:

> A vosotras que sois solteras, os conviene saber de todos modos que el hombre, a los quince días de boda, deja la cama por la mesa y luego la mesa por la tabernilla, y la que no se conforma se pudre llorando en un rincón. (p 1476)

The servant did however get her own back for her husband's inconsiderate behaviour by illustrating the energy of countrywomen; she beat her husband when he went too far. Martirio stresses that the lot of women in marriage is not a happy one: "¡Qué les importa a ellos la fealdad! A ellos les importa la tierra, las yuntas, y una perra sumisa que les dé de comer." (p 1460) Certainly Bernarda Alba showed no affection for her dead husband; she tells Magdalena not to cry for him, referring to him not by his name but by the word "muerto" which shows a complete lack of warmth and respect. Indeed it is the Criada who alone shows affection for the man, and also reveals a sexual satisfaction not visible in the marital relationship of her master and mistress: "¡Ya no volverás a levantarme las enaguas detrás de la puerta de tu corral! .... Yo fui la que más te quiso de las que te sirvieron." (p 1445)

It could well be that Lorca sensed in man a certain fear of woman's ability to create life; this fear has led to the irrational conviction that the male must keep control over the female. However, he also discerned the unfairness with which tradition, both social and moral, have maintained through ignorance standards that were no longer valid - and this is of more

direct importance to his portrayal of society. He was in fact interpreting through characters like the Zapatera, Adela and even Yerma and Bernarda the complex situations in which they find themselves as soon as they marry or think of relationships with men. He is subtly echoing in his drama the suggestions put forward by such 'modernists' as Gregorio Martínez Sierra:

> Ya está aquí el día en que la vieja relación conyugal, que ya no es sino forma externa y vacía, se ha de transformar en una unión de iguales, de por vida o de por tiempo (eso dependerá de creencias y convenciencias, que en nada han de afectar a la igualdad en derecho de los esposos), con muchas ocasiones, desde luego - ¿qué humana relación no las exige si quiere perdurar? - pero consentidas por ambas partes con libertad. 47

When the Tía upbraids her niece Rosita for not talking about her future, she could well be rebuking Spanish women in general for passively accepting life (and in particular the laws of marriage) : "Ese es el defecto de las mujeres decentes de estas tierras. ¡No hablar! No hablamos y tenemos que hablar." (p 1427)

Erotic Power

Lorca sketched the erotic beauty of women in several of his poems. His remark to Melchor Fernández Almagro in 1925 points to an incipient responsiveness of his senses: "Hago por primera vez en mi vida poesía erótica. Se me ha abierto un campo insigne, que me está renovando de una manera extraordinaria. Yo no me entiendo, Melchorito. Mi madre dice: '¡Todavía estás creciendo!' ...."[48] There are two observations worth making about this statement: firstly he had obviously come to acknowledge the physical power which woman exercises over man and man over man; secondly,

he was still under the influence of his family, who still considered him in need of care and protection. Even before the realization of the erotic beauty of physical nature, Lorca made several allusions to the naked charm of woman: the poem 'Lucía Martínez' gives a powerful picture of the poet who is ready to "Consumir tu boca/y a arrastrarte del cabello/ en madrugada de conchas." (p 399) The sadistic tendency in the male to dominate what he sees to be a highly dangerous and ever eager challenger is evident in these lines. The temptation Amnón undergoes is vividly captured by the poet:

> Thamar, bórrame los ojos
> con tu fija madrugada.
> Mis hilos de sangre tejen
> volantes sobre tu falda.
> Déjame tranquila, hermano.
> Son tus besos en mi espalda
> avispas y vientecillos
> en doble enjambre de flautas.
> Thamar, en tus pechos altos
> hay dos peces que me llaman,
> y en las yemas de tus dedos
> humor de rosa encerrada. (p 466)

Indeed, woman unknowingly so attracts man that he in turn blindly allows free rein to his passion, which ultimately leads to a destructive force against the very woman. The vicious circle witnessed here is seen in a more complex form in Bodas de sangre and in a rather more veiled way in La casa de Bernarda Alba and Don Perlimplín. Rarely in his work do the sexual responses of both male and female lead to the casual, unrestrained acceptance of passion found in the poem 'La casada infiel' :

> En las últimas esquinas
> toqué sus pechos dormidos,
> y se me abrieron de pronto
> como ramos de jacintos. (p 434)

It is in the collection of poems Diván de Tamarit where Lorca presents sensuality in all its power, a sensuality that is not carefree but full of pain, uncertainty and darkness:

> Nadie comprendía el perfume
> de la oscura magnolia de tu vientre.
> Nadie sabía que martirizabas
> un colibrí de amor entre los dientes. (p 557)

It is a sensuality that in 'Oda al santísimo sacramento del Altar' becomes erotic pleasure given by the body of Christ:

> Cantaban las mujeres por el muro clavado
> cuando te vi, Dios fuerte, vivo en el Sacramento,
> palpitante y desnudo, como un niño que corre
> perseguido por siete novillos capitales.
> .....
> Yo miraba tu forma deliciosa flotando
> en la llaga de aceites y paño de agonía,
> y entornaba mis ojos para dar en el dulce
> tiro al blanco de insomnio sin un pájaro negro. (p 630)

Lorca has now openly committed himself to the conscious appreciation of the male body, a step forward in warning the world of his homosexual tendencies.

In his plays, Lorca's inclusion of sexually attractive bodies becomes more frequent during the late twenties and early thirties. The Joven in Así que pasen cinco años describes his intention to carry the Mecanógrafa off naked to a place of extreme coldness. However, as early as 1926, the dramatist sent to Fernández Almagro the first version of the play El amor de Don Perlimplín (Scene ii, Act IV). It is much more openly erotic than the published play. Could it be that Lorca feared the censor might have banned the original? In any case, it is here that Lorca gives full rein to his erotic fantasies. Belisa is in a splendid state of undress: "La luna le ilumina un seno de oro y otro de plata"[49]. In addition, the dramatist gives specific instruction for the voice of Belisa, omitted in the version found in Obras completas ("La voz

sensual y engolada de Belisa suena como un chorro gordo de agua entre frescuras ...)"[50] Even so, Lorca has left many allusions which clearly indicate the atmosphere of the final play. By adding the subtitle Aleluya Erótica, he is warning the audience of what they should expect. Once again his willingness to throw off the trappings of social convention and to reveal open sensuality points to his being regarded as a dramatist who did not conform to middle-class standards. Belisa appears half-naked and almost completely naked, songs offstage use obvious sexual symbolism; she voices her sexual fantasies concerning the unknown young man:

> Debe tener la piel morena y sus besos deben perfumar y escocer al mismo tiempo como el azafrán y el clavo. A veces pasa por debajo de mis balcones y mece su mano lentamente en un saludo que hace temblar mis pechos. (p 1002)

Like. Belisa, Adela and the Novia appear in a state of undress. The two girls wear only petticoats. Such a sight would visually shock an audience used to a strict code of dress. Indeed, the Catholic Church was constantly advocating during the twenties and thirties that women should be dressed in a decent manner.

The more the characters are frustrated, the greater becomes their sexual urge, not expressed simply through speech, but through action too. Generally sensuality is firmly tied to the force of passion the characters possess. But Lorca does concentrate rather more on the effect of passion on women. There is something of a contrast to the wealth of popular verse which relates the terrible power woman has over man:

> Una vela se consuma
> a fuerza de much arder;
> Así se consume un hombre
> Al lado de una mujer.
>
> Las mujeres son ladronas,
> Que les quitan a los hombres
> La luz del entendimiento
> Y sin sentido los podrá./ Aunque la razón les sobre.[51]

The frustrated emotions of the Monja gitana find relief in her embroidery through the symbolic meanings attached to the flowers she sews. Mariana Pineda at least feels the stirrings of passion for a live man, even though she is hiding the cold truth that he is using her infatuation for his own motives.

The ardour of her passion is equalled by Belisa's love for a fictional hero; nothing will stop her from satisfying her desire. Belisa is, in some respects, a predecessor of the Novia, blindly following the dictates of passion. Of course, the madness of passion has been a continual source of popular songs:

> El amor es una cosa
> ¡Dios nos libre y Dios nos guarde!,
> Que hacer perder los sentidos
> Al que los tiene cabales.
>
> El amor es un fuego
> Cuya materia
> Cuanto más se consume,
> Más se fomenta. [52]

In 1934 a question about love and passion elicited in Blanco y negro the following reply:

> CAPRICHOSILLA: Voy a repetirlo una vez más; cuando se razona el amor no existe. El verdadero, entiéndase. Enamorarse es, precisamente, vivir un lapso de tiempo - el que el amor dure - con carencia absoluta de razón. No se ve ni se oye más que para el amor mismo. Y lo demás no existe. Y cuando existe es ..... que no existe el amor. [53]

Of course, although the legend of unreasoning love has been nurtured and cherished over the years, it does not mean that in reality allowances are made for the demands of passion. On the contrary, society retains a rigidity

of convention which forces the individuals to reject it or else be rejected. This is the case of Adela and the Novia and of Yerma too; passion which does actually reach an extreme fury becomes a danger to established society and therefore needs to be stopped. The Novia is fully aware of the social crime she has committed by running away with Leonardo but is unable to stop herself from going with him:

¡Ay qué sinrazón! No quiero
contigo cama ni cena,
y no hay minuto del día
que estar contigo no quiera,
porque me arrastras y voy,
y me dices que me vuelva
y te sigo por el aire
como una brizna de hierba.
He dejado a un hombre duro
y a toda su descendencia
en la mitad de la boda
y con la corona puesta.
Para ti será el castigo
y no quiero que lo sea.
¡Déjame sola! ¡Huye tú!
No hay nadie que te defienda. (p 1258)

In a similar way Adela excuses her relationship with Pepe by saying that she was swept by a wave stronger than herself: "arrastrada por una maroma". (p 1504) But the Madre is affected by another kind of passion: she is determined to keep constant, even eternal vigil on the enemies of her family, the Félix:

Me duele hasta la punta de las venas. En la frente de todos ellos yo no veo más que la mano con que mataron a lo que era mío. ¿Tú me ves a mí? ¿No te parezco loca? Pues es loca de no haber gritado todo lo que mi pecho necesita. Tengo en mi pecho un grito siempre puesto de pie a quien tengo que castigar entre los mantos. Pero me llevan a los muertos y hay que callar. Luego la gente critica.

(p 1227)

So society has been partly responsible for fomenting a passion it now deems exaggerated. In most cases Lorca sees passion as a kind of sickness. This is underlined in his portrayal of Yerma as afflicted physically as well as mentally by the force of her emotions (this will be examined in more detail when I consider the role of the mother figure in society created by the poet.)

As several scientists and sociologists were eager to point out from the middle twenties to the Civil War, the people who were the most ready to transgress from 'normal' behaviour were women. Physically they were tied to the home and spiritually they were even more influenced by social and spiritual norms advocated by the Church than their menfolk. It is the Lavanderas who are quick to note Yerma's unusual behaviour, and one of them voices her suspicion that the heroine is sexually attracted to Victor, the shepherd:

> "Hay una cosa en el mundo que es la mirada. Mi madre lo decía. No es lo mismo una mujer mirando unas rosas que una mujer mirando los muslos de un hombre. Ella lo mira." (p 1303)

The mother views with distrust the bride's background, and the Vecinas gloat over the Zapatera's lot when her husband leaves her. But paradoxically, woman, as the same people indicate, is also more likely to become a slave of passion than man, because of her social environment. Gregorio Martínez Sierra urges a change from this position:

> Quiero decir no hacer del amor - barca maravillosa para la hora embrujada, pero inestable puerto de reposo para las infinitas horas serenas - la única razón de existir ..... El hombre sufre menos en estas violentas tormentas pasionales, no porque menos ama, sino porque sabe vivir fuera del amor, y ha creado en su mundo cientos de cientos de intereses y otros motivos de apasionamiento 54

Lorca believed that when the flow of blood is supremely strong, it has to run its course, no matter what the outcome may be. The Leñador succinctly illustrates the overwhelming force of passion when he says: "Hay que seguir el camino de la sangre." (p 1246) The power of blood which drives a man and woman to act without reason or control, leading to almost inevitable tragedy in a society which thrives on order and convention, is bound to be negative.

Family Ties

Sangre also stands for breeding or family. This is its major meaning for the Madre who delights in the fact that her family is descended from good stock. However the Novia's mother comes from bad stock and it is not at all surprising to the Madre that the Novia should be like her mother. Likewise the Padre says of Leonardo: "no tiene buena sangre" - one of the most insulting accusations a Spanish man can make. Yerma carries on the traditional beliefs declared by the characters in Bodas de sangre. She curses her parents for being of good stock, knowing that she will never be able to rival their fertility: "(A gritos.) ¡Maldito sea mi padre, que me dejó su sangre de padre de cien hijos! ¡Maldita sea mi madre, que los busca golpeando por las paredes!" (p 1334)

Yet the Ama, a rough countrywoman drawn with great sympathy by Lorca, refutes the power of blood ties stating that in her opinion physical contact is important. Implicitly she is laying emphasis on the physical power of sangre, which is capable of overriding the claims of ancestry:

> Como que yo no creo en la sangre. Para mí esto es la ley. La sangre corre por debajo de las venas, pero no se ve. Más se quiere a un primo segundo que se ve todos los días, que a un hermano que está lejos. Por qué, vamos a ver. (p 1360)

Certainly Adela's passion for Pepe weakens her obligations of family love towards her sisters and mother. Her reply to La Poncia's enquiry about how much she likes Pepe is frankly revealing: "¡Tanto! Mirando sus ojos me parece que bebo su sangre lentamente." (p 1482) The chance of physical intimacy overrides all other influences, such is the depth of her sexual longings.

As Correa points out, the protagonists are impelled by adverse fate to carry out the will of their destinies. It does not matter what obstacles are put in their way, the outcome has to be the same, such is the interwoven strength of their passion and fate. To say as Goldfaden does that: "The conflict is internal, a raging battle within the characters of the play..., and the outcome depends greatly on the strength of the characters themselves,"[55] is to miss the point of Lorca's avowed intentions.

Both the Novia and Leonardo know that, in spite of their words of protest and feeble attempts to oppose the course of events, their passion will dominate all other considerations. Leonardo neatly points out this when he observes how hopeless it was for him to become married and for the Novia to accept marriage in order to avert their feelings for each other: "Porque tú crees que el tiempo cura y que las paredes tapan, y no es verdad, no es verdad. ¡Cuando las cosas llegan a los centros, no hay quien las arranque!" (p 1214)

The fate which ignites and maintains their passion for each other brings them to the final tragedy; any feeling of conflict is quickly subdued within the individual and it is rather, as I will later show, a feeling of guilt that uselessly torments them. The unwieldy artificial barriers erected by society do no more than emphasize the force of the protagonists' feelings and the extreme rigidity of an antiquated social system.

The second Lavandera reveals the basic reason for Yerma's unhappiness: "Todo esto son cuestiones de gente que no tiene conformidad con su sino." (p 1304) It is the woman's fate to obey convention and to live frustrated under the laws of honour. However, Juan cannot force his wife to accept the fate he has moulded for her. Thus conflict ensues, ending in death. Once again, in La casa de Bernarda Alba we find that there is one character, Adela, who, like the barren wife, cannot resign herself to the frustrated existence her sisters suffer. Angustias tells Magdalena not to put her fiancé's initials on the sheets because she intuitively knows her fate; she will not marry, but live with her sisters in complete isolation. On the other hand, it is Adela's fate to resist convention and succumb to passion; but she makes no attempt to stop her feelings, it is as if will and fate combine to mount an unbearable attack on convention, and allow her to be free from guilt. To this extent, Adela is the only woman to admit that she wants the sexual freedom and passion her fate proclaims she will have. Yerma and the Novia are in the grip of passions beyond their rational control and blame fate for their conduct. Perhaps Adela is the fusion of these two characters, a woman who willingly throws off social restraint to allow her passion free rein. She is perhaps Lorca's rather sketchy creation of the 'modern' woman.

Guilt Behaviour

Guilt behaviour has been considered a theme worthy of tragedy since the classical Greek theatre, when it was considered to have been caused by one

of the traditional demons such as honour, avarice or lust and thus constitute a tragic flaw in the human character. The Spanish concept of guilt seems to be more concerned with its social exterior manifestations. It can be the result of both moral and social pressures, as La Celestina and the Golden Age drama illustrate. It seems likely that Lorca's interpretation of culpa had its roots in the native tradition.

Lorca has certainly caught the exact mood of individuals hounded by some inexplicable force to act without heed. The psychoanalytical view of guilt strongly asserts that it is social pressures put upon the individual that increase his acknowledgement of blame:

> El encuentro normal con los sentimientos de culpabilidad y con la culpa no procede, en general, de la concepción cristiana; más bien, está refleja ampliamente la actitud interna del hombre culpable para con su propia culpabilidad. Sigue siendo esencial para esto el influjo de la cultura y concepción del mundo, en influjo de las normas sociales, además, la acción posterior de una educación severa o suave; finalmente, el poder de la opinión pública y la angustia de ella dependiente. Esta angustia determina también aquel propósito, unido indisolublemente con el concepto de la culpa, de nuestro orden social; el castigo. La culpa, en cuanto tal, no puede existir en sí, péndulo que oscila sólo por un lado. 56

In his three tragedies, Lorca has shown that there is a need to put the blame somewhere else, a trait that is both psychologically and socially accurate.

His characters express the need to give rational explanations for their faults. A frequent excuse is to lay the blame either on social pressures or on a superhuman power such as the earth or fate. The Zapatera prodigiosa has no hesitation in blaming her neighbours for the disappearance of her husband. In fact she repeats this belief several times throughout the play, as if to underline the unbearable pressure the community put upon their

relationship: " ..... estoy sola desde que se fue por culpa de todos vosotros mi probecito marido de mi alma;" (p 942) and "Mi marido me dejá por culpa de las gentes y ahora me encuentro sola, sin calor de nadie."(p 963)

Once again, in Bodas de sangre fate and passion combine to form an acute awareness of guilt. Leonardo is compelled by fate to follow the inclination of his passion, disregarding the taboos enforced by society. This provides a convenient excuse for his behaviour, as does the precedent of both his and the Novia's ancestors. He reveals to the Novia the guilt he experiences but which he cannot explain in rational terms: "Después de mi casamiento he pensado noche y día de quién era la culpa, y cada vez que pienso sale una culpa nueva que se come a la otra; pero, ¡siempre hay culpa!" (p 1214)

Riley has put the blame squarely on the Novia because she does not try to resist temptation. He remarks that Leonardo knows the girl could have prevented the tragedy.[57] She did in fact attempt to reject the advances of Leonardo, and this is proved by the simple reason that she has accepted the Novio as her future husband. However, fate prevents her from going through with married life, a fate which, in contrast to Riley's conviction that it is not binding, is omnipotent because of its combination with fate, passion and inheritance. Indeed, Lorca is not concerned to examine the moral problem; he felt that the characters were meant to be unhappy or happy as the case might be, and that destiny overruled the prosaic rationality of who or what was to blame. The number of times the word culpa crops up in Yerma emphasizes how eager the characters are to find a scapegoat for their fears or actions. The Lavanderas also point out that it could be Juan who could be to blame for his wife's sterility. The husband does attempt to reject the concept of guilt in his only frank and ardent conversation with his wife in order to gain some kind of loving relationship:

> (Acercándose.) Pienso que tenía que pasar así. Oyeme. (La abraza para incorporarla.) Muchas mujeres serían felices de llevar tu vida. Sin hijos es la vida más dulce. Yo soy feliz no teniéndolos. No tenemos culpa ninguna. (p 1348)

However, his attempt to find a solution to their problem comes too late; Yerma is well past the stage of being rational; the unborn child has long since assumed vital importance. While the couple look most of the time for positive proof of their partner's guilt in destroying their marriage, the sisters in La casa de Bernarda Alba deny personal blame and place it on some superhuman force which dominates them. In all cases guilt is the emotion that makes the character feel most out of harmony with society.

The Conflict between Passion and Convention

Passion is often associated with nature in folklore and popular verse and these associations were exploited by Lorca throughout his literary career, although with different intention in his later works. Libro de poemas heralds the close relationship between man's feelings and nature. Echoing the Romantic poets, the young artist sets his own emotions against the world of nature:

> La pena de la tarde estremece a mi pena.
> Se ha llenado el jardín de ternura monótona.
> ¿Todo mi sufrimento se ha de perder, Dios mío,
> como se pierde el dulce sonido de las frondas? (p 271)

Romancero gitano concentrates mainly on the physical relationship between man and nature as recounted in popular verse. Soledad Montoya is described in terms of natural phenomena (436/7) and in 'Thamar y Amnón' nature and the young man are both subjected to strain and tension:

> Toda la alcoba sufría
> con sus ojos llenos de alas.
> La luz, maciza, sepulta
> pueblos en la arena parda,
> o descubre transitorio
> coral de rosas y dalias.
> Linfa de pozo oprimida
> brota silencio en las jarras.

En el musgo de los troncos
la cobra tendida canta. (p 465)

In 'Diván del Tamarit' night is the place for a lovers'meeting and death. Nature's ferocity can be matched by the cruelty and courage of the two lovers in 'Gacela del amor desesperado':

La noche no quiere venir
para que tú no vengas,
ni yo pueda ir.

Pero yo iré,
aunque un sol de alacranes me coma la sien.

Pero tú vendrás
con la lengua quemada por la lluvia de sal. (p 559)

'Gacela de la raíz amarga' equates love to bitter roots which spread everywhere. Here the poet's distaste for and fear of love is evident in the symbolism evoked. In contrast, the 'Gacela del amor marvilloso' interprets love as every good thing in the natural wold, everything that is free from the taint of society. However, in 'Gacela de la terrible presencia' the poet returns to his old feelings of fear and dread. He wants nature to become barren, decayed and dark. In other words, he refuses to consider love as a fertile, happy experience, but confines himself to the despair and destruction of the failure of love. He prefers to see the "verde veneno" of sexual frustration and perversion - in all probability homosexual passion - to the torment of unfulfilled passion. In the poems grouped under the title Poemas sueltos he returns to the theme of his obvious unease with heterosexual love. He shows how each part of nature, the olive grove, the tree, the river, had its own place, but he is alone and lost in the breeze. In other words, the life of heterosexual passion holds no purpose and no future for him.

In the 'Casida de los ramos' and in Poeta en Nueva York alike, nature

becomes hostile. Here vicious beasts overpower such delicate animals as the nightingale. 'Luna y panorama de los insectos' also concentrates on the harmful aspect of nature:

> Y la luna.
> Pero no la luna.
> Los insectos, .
> los muertos diminutos por las riberas,
> dolor en longitud,
> yodo en un punto,
> las muchedumbres en el alfiler,
> el desnudo que amasa la sangre de todos,
> Y mi amor que no es un caballo ni una quemadura,
> criatura de pecho devorado.
> ¡Mi amor! (p 513)

The Joven in Así que pasen cinco años wants to shut himself off from the external world of nature and the senses, just as Bernarda successfully does. He is contrasted with the amigo, who delights to the extreme in all the natural and sensual pleasures possible; he wants to open the windows and allow a passionate storm to enter the room. The storm is an important symbol in the play, for it emphasizes the tension existing between man and nature and the social world and the wildness of natural forces, and the eclipse is an added effect of nature to bring to a climax the blind passions of the characters.

The popular songs encountered in Romancero gitano and Poema del cante jondo recur in the traditional plays where they act not only as a relief but also bear direct importance on the plot. They contain allusions, in particular in the three major tragedies, which illustrate the characters' relationship with nature. The Lavanderas in Yerma compare male virility to a warm jasmin (p 1309), while the Macho repeats the flower symbolism in his ecstatic account of an uninhibited sexual encounter:

> Siete veces gemía,
> nueve se levantaba,
> quince veces juntaron
> jazmines con naranjas. (p 1342)

The songs express in terms of nature the joy and spontaneity of passion which Yerma does not feel. In the same way, the wedding songs surround the Novia with an atmosphere of happiness and heady sensuality which she does not possess. Although the singers pay homage to the virility of the Novio, they are unable to arouse any passionate response in his bride:

MUCHACHA 3ª

El novio
parece la flor del oro.
Cuando camina,
a sus plantas se agrupan las clavelinas.
(p 1219)

His potential fertility is never allowed to grow, for he is destined to die violently and with his marriage unconsummated.

Lorca described in an interview the love he felt for nature which inspired Bodas de sangre: "De lo contrario, no hubiera podido escribir Bodas de sangre. Este amor a la tierra me hizo conocer la primera manifestación artística." (p 1754/5) Throughout this play man is constantly reminded by symbols, allusions and popular imagery of his connections with the natural world. He is compared to a mountain, his roots are revealed to lie in the countryside and his strength and virility find a parallel in the earth. Leonardo excuses his conduct in pursuing the Novia by relating the natural earthy power over him:

Que yo no tengo la culpa,
que la culpa es de la tierra
y de ese olor que te sale
de los pechos y las trenzas. (p 1258)

Indeed to say as Barnes does that Leonardo "is the only character in Blood Wedding who is given a name; and appositely, he is the character most grounded in reality. He is the only one who really acts according to his own desires, who forces his own tragedy, rather than being destiny's puppet" [58] is to ignore the combined role fate, passion and the power of nature play in marking out his destiny.

Man(s evolution is referred to by the roturation and propagation of crops by the Madre, who is also reminded by nature of the relative fertility of her own marriage. In reply to her son's statement that his bride has a headache, she retorts: "Para mí fue como una herencia ..... Es la roturación de las tierras, la plantación de árboles nuevos." (p 1240) She also refers to sewing the seed of fertility and both she and the Padre see marriage as an institution upheld, above all, for the propagation of the species.

Both Leonardo and the Novio are described as being like ears of corn, for they are both basically alike in death in smallness and vulnerability compared to nature's universe. In the same way, it is no coincidence that the Novia, who longs for the torrential passion of her lover, lives in "los secanos", whereas her mother once lived in 'tierra rica" and consequently ran away from a place where she found only frustration. The Madre asserts that her husband would have covered the land with trees, a task the son is unable to tackle, thus asserting the sterile side of his character. Dickson sees the climax of the play not in the death of the two young men but in the Novio's failure to consummate his marriage and therefore play the natural and social role of the husband:

> Leonardo and the bridegroom live impersonally and die impersonally, without greatly affecting the spectator. The real tragedy of the play lies in the fact that the bridegroom dies before he can fulfil his fecundating role. Had the bride been impregnated, thus assuring the continuity of life, the double death might have been archtypally appropriate, and not a tragic interruption of the death and rebirth cycle.[59]

The critic is pointing to the constant gap between life and death which preoccupied Lorca for the whole of his life. The killing of the two men is

surrounded by a passage of ritualistic death where the cutting of trees, symbolically the cutting of fertility or the phallic symbol, demonstrates the ultimate sterility of death. The defects in the Novia's character noticed by society are illustrated in terms taken from the countryman's intimate knowledge of nature; she is seen in terms of "malas hierbas" and "espinas".

Yerma feels the spark of potential passion only when she comes into contact with Victor, who, significantly, is a shepherd and on friendly terms with nature. She repeats the simple question and answer technique of traditional verse in the song that sensually urges the shepherd figure to sleep with her:

> y si oyes voz de mujer
> es la rota voz del agua.
> Pastor, p'astor,
> ¿Qué quiere el monte de ti?,
> pastor.
> Monte de hierbas amargas,
> ¿qué niño te está matando?
> ¡La espina de la retama! (p 1295/6)

Both Yerma and Adela long to escape to the country to find freedom and fertility. The latter does in fact reach fulfilment in nature and straw on her skirt is a sign of that. She is the only daughter who in her imagination enjoys fresh air and the immensity of the natural world, and similarly she is the only one willing to meet men on their own ground, in the countryside. It is ironic that her mother is such a good horse-breeder, for her success stems not from a love of nature, but from financial greed.

The basic elements of nature, heat, water, and earth and trees which are repeated throughout Lorca's plays connect man with the earth - the Novia and Leonardo go up to the woods; Adela and María Josefa along with the protagonists of 'La casada infiel' go the the river bank. These ties with nature are so strong that they cloud the characters' judgement of other influences.

This ultimately leads to disaster because in a world in which society plays a crucial role in man's intercourse with man, nature is destroyed if it threatens to conquer artificial laws. Lorca's primary concern is centred on the bases on which the pattern of life is structured. He wishes to reveal the powerful fertility of nature and the overwhelming adversity it faces from a hostile society. He illustrates this in his plays and particularly in the three tragedies by contrasting the following conditions: earth with artificiality; fertility with sterility; and fate and passion with convention. One could add to this list love or passion in opposition to marriage, for the dramatist views this institution with cynical distrust. In nearly all cases, marriage automatically excludes happiness and passion, and it is unbreakable. Is indeed Lorca implicitly criticising marriage as a social and religious convention which is no longer valid in modern society? Certainly in his plays it is impossible to find a truly harmonious marriage, for the partners have been, knowingly or not, coerced to conform with convention. Never is the marriage made of <u>two</u> loving partners who have followed their natural inclinations. Even when the women do not get wed, they simply live in emotional frustration and social isolation, and widows also suffer the same lot. Alberich has examined the erotic strain running through the artist's works in relation to social pressures:

> según su poesía, los instintos básicos del hombre, entre ellos y el más importante, sin duda, el erótico, existen un irremediable conflicto con las reglas y leyes de la sociedad occidental contemporánea; a esto hay que añadir la obsesiva preocupación del poeta con la estirilidad fundamental de ciertas relaciones amorosas. [60]

As I intend to show, this critic is rather straying from the point when he talks of certain love relationships, for extremely rarely does love in the true sense exist. Usually what is depicted is a blind and furious sexual passion which cannot be controlled; when love if felt by one individual, it

is usually unreciprocated. Indeed Lorca is insinuating through the whole range of his poetry and drama that people are generally incapable of sharing a loving relationship. He is in fact questioning the happiness of every individual.

The plays I wish to deal with are concerned to a greater or lesser extent with the relationship between man and wife, or two lovers. The Zapatera prodigiosa cannot resign herself to the true position of her husband and her future life with him. As a means of escape she lives in a fantasy world which affords some relief to her frustrated emotions. However, by playing out her escape role, she succeeds in antagonising her husband to such an extent that both mistrust and almost hate each other:

> ZAPATERO: yo creo que esto lo hace por atormentarme; porque estoy seguro., ella me odia. Al principio creí que la dominaría con mi carácter dulzón y mis regalillos: collares de coral, cintillos, peinetas de concha.., ¡hasta unas ligas! Pero ella .... ¡siempre es ella!
> (p 925)

Neither makes a real attempt to understand the other. In El amor de Don Perlimplín we do find that the hero is prepared to sacrifice himself to give Belisa a depth of feeling she has so far not found. In many ways the girl and her mother are alike; both women repeat the social clichés of affection which serve only to show a lack of sincerity, and Perlimplín's innocence is strongly contrasted with the worldly-wise, voluptuous figure of his new wife:

> PERLIMPLÍN He tardado en decidirme ... Pero ....
> BELISA Di.
> PERLIMPLÍN Belisa..... ¡yo te amo!
> BELISA ¡Oh caballerito! ....., esa es tu obligación.
> PERLIMPLÍN ¿Sí?
> BELISA Sí.
> PERLIMPLÍN Pero ¿por qué sí?
> BELISA (Mimosa.) Pues porque sí. (p 990/1)

In other words, Belisa expects the formal appearance of love to exist in her marriage, which would then give it the comfortably solid air of respectability found in bourgeois, arranged marriages. She is astonished to find that her husband has had sex with no other woman, a thing she accepts as a matter of course; she blithely announces that she has known no other man than her husband, being aware that hypocrisy and deceit are the basis for the normal relationship between man and wife. Perlimplín's inability to combine passion with his husbandly duties has forced him to create a lover figure to satisfy his wife's sexual desires. Only outside marriage can some measure of happiness be achieved, perhaps because Belisa has been conditioned to believe that the only way she will be happy is not in her marriage to a strange old man, but outside it where intrigue and passion can reach the peak of her fantasies. She, like Adela and La Novia, has a strong sexual appetite, greater than that of her partner.

Busette's interpretation of Lorca's female protagonists shows how Yerma (and the Zapatera prodigiosa) cannot overcome her frustration by looking outside her marriage: "Como casi todas las heroínas de Lorca (excluyendo a Belisa, Adela y la Novia de Así que pasen cinco años), la preocupación de Yerma por su honor actúa como una reacción que anula su tendencia hacia lo sensual."[61] She openly reveals to Juan the lovelessness which has created such a large rift between them. She cannot find in her husband any source of passion which would have made, one suspects, her marriage more bearable:

YERMA ¡Ya está! ¡Ya está! ¡Y es inútil que me retuerza las manos! Una cosa es querer con la cabeza ....
JUAN Calla.
YERMA (Bajo.) Una cosa es querer con la cabeza y otra cosa es que el cuerpo, ¡maldito sea el cuerpo!, no nos responda. Está escrito y no me voy a poner a luchar a brazo partido con los mares. ¡Ya está! ¡Que mi boca se quede muda! (Sale.)
(p 1335)

The terrible frustration which grips her like a vice forces her to behave in two quite contradictory ways. She obeys social conventions with great eagerness and complete acceptance, in order to defend her honour; but the force of her passion to conceive a child makes her forget or reject certain social norms, such as staying inside the house. Juan is equally full of contradictions; his wish to have no children automatically and unconsciously sets him against the very society he does his best to defend. So they become more and more entrenched in their own attitudes and their marriage finally reaches breaking point. Yerma and Juan obviously believed marriage was a good, worthwhile institution, yet all they found was incompatibility and destruction.

Like Leonardo, the Sobrino in Doña Rosita la soltera hides a passion which lies elsewhere than in his avowed love. Both men feel the pressures of a socially binding contract but both firmly reject it. Rosita is the victim of thwarted passion and a contrived marriage: her unrequited love does fill her life in disproportionately large terms. As time passes, she ceases to love the Sobrino, and clings instead to his image, for it leads her from the isolation of her life into a world of purpose. The Sobrino's decision is in fact as final as Leonardo's abandonment of his wife. The latter, who married in an attempt to subdue his passion for the Novia, has used social convention in the same way that she intends to employ it. But the erection of artificial barriers is futile:

¡Qué vidrios se me clavan en la lengua!
Porque yo quise olvidar
y puse en muro de piedra
entre tu casa y la mía.
Es verdad. ¿No lo recuerdas?
Y cuando te vi de lejos
me eché en los ojos arena.
Pero montaba a caballo
y el caballo iba a tu puerta. (p 1257/8)

She feels no passion for her future husband, but accepts his obvious affection as within the normal gamut of emotions allowed by the bonds of marriage. The girl thinks of marriage as a duty, and not a particularly pleasant one, which must be carried out to live in harmony with society. However the lovers have to defy it, such is the power of their passion. Correa explains the necessity of their act:

> La armonía entre el hombre y el cosmos supone entonces una adecuación entre el impulso de la naturaleza hondo y vital de renovarse y el mandato de la inclinación. Cuando esta armonía se rompe surge el choque contra las fuerzas tradicionales de la sociedad. Con todo, el no obedecer a los dictados de la inclinación constituye una tragedia interior, cerrada, mucho más funesta que el propio derramiento de sangre ... [62]

As the Mendiga states: "Así fue; nada más. Era lo justo!" (p 1266); their action and deaths were inevitable, due partly to fate and indeed partly to the reaction of society against natural passion. Delgado Capéans voices the traditional criticism of the evils of nature which strive to throw man off his correct path to heaven:

> el hombre siente las rebeldías de la naturaleza; las pasiones desordenadas le arrastran al mal; titubea ...., vacila,...., ¿Por qué? ¡Ah! ¡Es que siente también una inclinación al bien, una tendencia a la virtud! Dios lo atrae el cumplimiento del deber, le impulsa hacia arriba .....; la pasión lo inclina hacia abajo .... Sus destinos eternos, la gloria, Dios, lo solicitan; pero la tierra, el polvo, el placer lo arrastran hacia abajo. Si resiste, si la razón y la voluntad imperan, entonces con la repetición de estos actos se robustece, se fortifica la naturaleza, y la virtud arraiga en el corazón ....[63]

Obviously, the more violently passion and society clash, the greater the destruction will be and significantly the Novia is blamed as the source of the disaster - the evil woman. The Madre rails against her:

> Pero cuando sacrifica el deber a la pasión, y rompe la armonía del universo al negar a Dios el amor y la obediencia, fuerza es reconocer con la Biblia que "en la mujer está el principio de hilo pecado y por causa de ella todos morimos." 64

Adela is the one character in Lorca's tragedies who appears to be acting in accordance with her calculated desires. Unlike Pepe, she is unprepared to compromise with social conventions. He is courting Angustias with the clear intention of marrying her for her money while at the same time participating in a sordid affair with her sister. In some ways her affair with the man is the outward manifestation of the independence in body and mind she is determined to achieve from the regulations imposed on her by her mother in the same society. In the last scene she symbolically breaks her mother's stick - in the open revolt against tradition. Her outburst of contempt for the prison regime maintained by the older woman illustrates how the depth of her indignation and the force of her sexual appetite combine to explode against social mores:

> Ya no aguanto el horror de estos techos después de haber probado el sabor de su boca. Seré lo que él quiera que sea. Todo el pueblo contra mí, quemándome con sus dedos de lumbre, perseguida por los que dicen que son decentes, y me pondré la corona de espinas que tienen las que son queridas de algún hombre casado. (p 1528)

If a way out of her predicament could have been found, society would have prevented it: Adela would have been completely cast out of society if she had been free to live alone and openly receive her lover; Yerma's embryonic love for Víctor is prevented by her obedience to social convention; The Novia and her lover could have been left to love together if society had accepted the sincerity of their passion.

Characters such as Bernarda Alba and Juan, who are incapable of being swayed by the strength of passion hounding their subordinates, are, so they believe, the upholders of order and indeed of unnatural relationships, where love and passion have no role to play. What Lorca has achieved by describing their rigidity and setting them in a clearly defined social environment is an expose of the harsh codes set down by tradition, which are unable to bend for individual cases. The individual cannot go against society without incurring disaster.

In Lorca's tragedy it is essentially the male who is the destructive element in his relationship with woman. Juan opposes Yerma in his greed for material success, Pepe and Leonardo are going against the social laws they have helped to maintain - the former's courtship of Angustias, and the latter's marriage were both regarded as good. They have been apparently unable to accept what in Freudian terms is the sacrifice civilized 'sexual' morality places on individuals "especially if we are still so enslaved to hedonism as to include among the aims of our cultural development a certain amount of satisfaction."[65] Again the Freudian argument coincided with Lorca in its belief that only"the oppressors of sexual repression stand to gain from this imposition, for it is only they who share in the benefits of civilisation."[66] The psychologist's view of the relationship between love and society is as critical as the artist's: "In the course of development the relation of love to civilisation loses its ambiguity. On the one hand love comes into opposition with the interests of civilisation; on the other, civilisation threatens love with substantial restrictions."[67]

Lorca certainly entertained no hope of man obtaining the freedom which he felt was necessary to pursue passion under the present social system.

However, he gave no alternative to the extremely gloomy picture of marriage he illustrated in his plays, except to hint at a desire to return to a completely natural state untrammelled by man-made conditions. In this respect, he was in accordance with the anarchists and other left-wing groups who championed el amor libre. La revista blanca did much to promote a searching examination into the antiquated state of marriage and to put in its place a new freedom:

> Hoy el amor no es más que un reflejo, puramente económico. Esta manera de amar no me hace reír, como la romántica, pero me empacha, me repugna y me da asco. Soy materialista, pero no positivista.
>
> Puesto que el hombre necesita, necesariamente, amor, ¿Porqué no dejarle amar libremente? ¿Por qué ha de estar sujeto a las condiciones económicas y a las tan descabelladas condiciones eclesiásticas? Este ideal brota espontáneamente en el ser, pero en manera alguna para toda la vida como quiere, exige, impone la Iglesia y aun el Estado. 68

Jiménez de Asúa had earlier declared himself a supporter of free unions, such as the Novia and Leonardo, Pepe and Adela would have desired, and which would have made even more shocking the marriage between Yerma and Juan and the Zapatero and his wife:

> Aspiro a las uniones libres, que no sólo se compatibilizan con la monogamía y la perpetuidad, sino que hallan en ellas su fórmula más noble. Debemos pretender en la vida muy pocos amores, un solo si es posible, pero intensamente sentido y libremente practicado. 69

He went on to defend the right of homosexuals to be free to love without restrictions - a proposal which would have shocked the religious middle classes.

Passion demands ideals which cannot be merged into a society that refused to consider natural inclinations. The poet hoped for a society based not on arbitrary, restrictive norms, but on standards based on

the natural world - on other words he wanted to see fertile, harmonious relationships rather than sterile ones. Society must no longer be based on fear and repression but on love and freedom.

CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI

Motherhood

The Natural Mother

> We all exist for the sake of our possible offspring; but this final end of the individual is more obviously woven into the structure of women. The interests of woman may therefore be said to be more closely identified with Nature's interests. Nature has made women more like children in order that they may better understand and care for children.[1]
>
> Havelock Ellis

This biological interpretation of woman's role points to the fundamental duty of woman which man has used over the centuries to keep her in the house and to maintain his authority. It is an attitude that Lorca was to consider in several of his plays. The so-called instinctive procreative urge of woman has been the anchor keeping her firmly placed in the home through the force of tradition and convention as well as nature. The pious commonplace statement - "las mujeres son más que los ángeles, porque son madres"[2] - points to the sickly sentimentality with which every woman is regarded as a future mother and which was as strong as ever in many people in Spain during Lorca's lifetime. The Madre in Bodas de sangre wants her son to produce many grandchildren for her in his marriage. As happens with Bernarda and the mother in El amor de Don Perlimplín and Retablillo de Don Cristóbal, her status gives her a certain authority as a mature woman who has done her duty to society and to nature too, and who can now rule her children. She has created life and her job is to maintain it - a duty which she finds extremely difficult, if not impossible, for she, like others in Lorca's plays, is left to mourn and survive her children.

Steinbeck also leaned towards the procreative quality of woman in his writings, but he also coloured her with pessimism, for Rose of Sharon in Grapes of Wrath loses her newborn baby; but she is able to escape from the uselessness the Madre in Bodas de sangre feels by saving the life of a stranger:

> For a moment Rose of Sharon sat still in the whispering barn. Then she hoisted her tired body up and drew the comforter about her. She moved slowly to the corner and stood looking down at the wasted face, into the wide, frightened eyes. Then slowly she lay down beside him. He shook his head slowly from side to side. Rose of Sharon loosened one side of the blanket and bared her breast "You gotto-", she said. "There." Her head moved behind his head and supported it. Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together and smiled mysteriously. [3]

She has retained her life-giving role and reaffirmed her usefulness to man. However, Lorca does not seem so positive in his assessment of woman. He repeats through the aggressive mother figures and those who are left to mourn their dead sons that motherhood does not automatically mean happiness and fulfilment. On the other hand, his women are possessed by such a strong creative urge that they become frustrated and unhappy if they are unable to conceive. This is due not only to social pressure which is maintained by woman's restrictive role, but also by the force of nature on them, which in turn is mirrored by their country surroundings.

Lorca underlined how country folk believe in the naturalness of fertility by assimilating popular songs and beliefs into the fabric of his plays. There exist strong sexual connotations in many of the songs, which place woman in her traditional role of childbearing by pointing to her normal occupations of sewing, washing and cleaning. Yerma begins with a lullaby while the dreaming protagonist sits with a sewing basket at her feet:

A la nana, nana, nana,
a la nanita le haremos
una chocita en el campo
y en ella nos meteremos. (p 1273)

The audience can immediately recognize the harmony between maternity and nature,which, as it will soon learn, Yerma cannot achieve and which forces her to seek fertility in the countryside. On the other hand, the sad lament the Suegra and the Mujer sing in Bodas de sangre exudes fear and melancholy. Indeed the lullaby is not at all restful, but full of despair. This strain is indicative of the Spanish folk tradition. In his lecture Las nanas infantiles Lorca declared that the aim of the lullaby was to put something into the child's mind. He was first made aware of this in Granada and became so interested that he made a study of many regions in the country:

> Hace unos años, paseando por las inmediaciones de Granada, oí cantar a una mujer del pueblo mientras dormía a su niño. Siempre había notádo la aguda tristeza de las canciones de cuna de nuestro país; pero nunca como entonces sentí esta verdad tan concreta. Al acercarme a la cantora para anotar la canción observé que era una andaluza guapa, alegre sin el menor tic de melancolía; pero una tradición viva obraba en ella y ejecutaba el mandado fielmente, como si escuchara las viejas voces imperiosas que patinaban por su sangre .... todas las regiones acentúan sus caracteres poéticos y su fondo de tristeza en esta clase de cantos, desde Asturias y Galicia hasta Andalucía y Murcia, pasando por el azafrán y el modo yacente de Castilla. (p 93)

He went on to explain to what extent the temperament of the Spanish people and the geography of the land have created the clarity and melancholy of traditional verse. Indeed such was Lorca's interest in the character of the Spanish lullaby that he wrote to Melchor Fernández Almagro in January 1928 giving his proposed lecture the title "patetismo de la canción de una

española". Yerma's songs to her unborn child offer this intriguing mixture of anguish and hope blended in a popular manner. Lorca has recreated the "patetismo" of the mother's song in her burning desire to bear a child:

¿De dónde vienes, amor, mi niño?
De la cresta del duro frío.
¿Qué necesitas, amor, mi niño?
La tibia tela de tu vestido.
(Enhebra la aguja.) ¡Que se agiten las ramas al sol
y salten las fuentes alrededor!
En el patio ladra el perro,
en los árboles canta el viento.
Los bueyes mugen al boyero
y la luna me riza los cabellos.
¿Qué pides, niño, desde tan lejos?
(p 1277)

Lorca also made a drawing of a mother nursing a child (photo no. 6), about which Prieto quotes this traditional verse:

Duérmete, niñito mío
que tu madre no está en casa,
que se la llevó la Virgen
de compañera a su casa. [4]

The child is dressed in black and the natural grace with which the mother tightly holds the child suggests a deep relationship between the two based on sadness. It is also worth noting that many popular songs are addressed to the madre, a popular figure going back to the religious symbol of the mother of Christ. A poem in Blanco y negro in 1931 repeated the union between the Saintly Mother of Christ with the earth's procreation:

De la palabra divina
brota el sol; nos ilumina
despertando entre arrebol.
Y de Ti, Madre sublime,
nace el que al mundo redime.

FEDERICO



Eres sol, muy más que sol.[5]

The Lavanderas' songs, and also the songs exchanged by the Macho and Hembra, express the joy of woman in lovemaking and her fertile relationship with the earth, against which is contrasted the dry state of the barren wife. Woman is constantly associated with earth and water symbols. Feal Deibe recalls that the sea is a symbol of maternity[6], so when the Ama says in Doña Rosita that she would like to throw the Sobrino's ashes onto the sea, he is in fact returning to his mother. He goes on to state water's significance: "El agua es una figura materna, y el ahogo equivalente de una devoración."[7] When the horse refuses to drink water, it is because, Feal Deibe claims, he is afraid of women. I consider that to over-emphasize such Freudian observations is to lose sight of the more straight-forward popular symbolism that water is the physical demonstration of the force of fertility, of which Lorca would have been aware. For example, Dolores gives Yerma proof of her magical powers by telling her that a woman whom she helped bore two children in the river because she did not have time to get to a house. The Vieja refers to the natural fertility of the earth and woman in a simple statement: "Los hijos llegan como el agua." (p 1288) And in a further piece of advice to Yerma she describes the loving state she and her husband should feel: "Los hombres tienen que gustar, muchacha. Han de deshacernos las trenzas y darnos de beber agua en su misma boca. Así corre el mundo." (p 1290) The sterile women walk barefoot on their pilgrimage in order to achieve full contact with the earth.

As I have already shown, the Pastor is the symbol of male virility and life. Víctor is the one person who can arouse Yerma to a physical response (her warm reaction also proves that she is not frigid). In a religious context, he is capable of taking care of the lost sheep, and that lost sheep



MUY MÁS QUE SOL

Santa Madre, gran Señora,
más que estrella brilladora
en matutino arrebol,
eres sol.

Eres sol que al mundo guía
y en la dolorosa vía
muestras el ígneo crisol.
Más que estrella entre arrebol,
eres sol.

De la palabra divina
brota el sol; nos ilumina
despertando entre arrebol.
Y de Ti, Madre sublime,
nace el que al mundo redime.
Eres sol, muy más que sol.

M. R. Blanco-Belmonte.

(DIBUJO DE CLIMENT)

is Yerma, increasingly an outsider because of her sterility. In this play Lorca centres the audience's attention on the shepherd rather than the sheep as in La casa de Bernarda Alba. Why is this? Yerma needs the complete experience of motherhood; she needs the producer as much as the product:

YERMA (Listening to Víctor's song)
¿Por qué duermes solo, pastor?
En mi colcha de lana
dormirías mejor.
Tu colcha de oscura piedra,
pastor,
y tu camisa de escarcha,
pastor,
juncos grises del invierno
en la noche de tu cama.
Los robles ponen agujas,
pastor,
debajo de tu almohada,
pastor,
y si oyes voz de mujer
es la rota voz del agua.
Pastor, pastor. (p 1295)

Lorca cleverly slips in the fact that the woman's bed is stuffed with wool; she knows the shepherd figure is able to give her comfort. The fourth Lavandera likes the smell of sheep as flocks pass her by; in other words she likes the responsibility of her maternal instincts.

Somewhat differently, María Josefa carries a sheep in La casa de Bernarda Alba as a symbol of maternity. Like the Zapatera prodigiosa, she is more interested in the fulfilment of her desires than in the method of achieving it. Her madness removes the need for the dramatist to justify her actions:

Ovejita, niño mío,
vámonos a la orilla del mar.
La hormiguita estará en su puerta,
yo te daré la teta y el pan. (p 1523)

She wants the physical experience of giving her milk (Rose of Sharon was filled with a mysterious contentment when she fed the starving man). The Zapatera watches a flock of sheep go by and immediately takes the part of a weak lamb and calls to the shepherd to protect it for her. It is not surprising that she is only sincere and gentle to the Niño who visits her; perhaps with a child she would have found the peace she needs.

Lorca has indicated elsewhere the link between milk and fertility; Preciosa drinks a glass of milk given to her by the English Consul rejecting the offer of gin, and in the same collection of poems the cruel punishment inflicted on Olalla brings her martyrdom, for she is full of potential motherhood:

> Por los rojos agujeros
> donde sus pechos estaban
> se ven cielos diminutos
> y arroyos de leche blanca. (p 459)

San Gabriel provides Anunciación with a child in her womb, and she expresses her contentment by stating how she feels her breasts filling with milk. Lorca sharpened this symbolism in his plays, for the visual quality is immediate: thus, when in La doncella, el estudiante y el marinero the girl offers to quench the student's thirst by giving him milk from her breasts, she is boasting of her fertility. Yerma wants her husband to drink a glass of milk; she is attempting to mother him, to build him up, giving him some of her excess fertility and thus make him virile.

Throughout the work of Lorca, woman is linked to the earth by her capacity to conceive. Alberich gave his impression of the author's personal philosophy of life:

> Realidad significaría para él escapar del ámbito de su conciencia a un mundo esencialmente otro, al ámbito sin límites de la Naturaleza, donde la Mujer, siempre misteriosa para el hombre, personifica la Vida y la Fecundidad, y encierra también la semilla de la Muerte.[8]

Lorca always felt a strong affinity with the earth, for it recalled to him the life of the peasants in and around his native village, and of those he met in his journeys around Spain. He was also conscious of the influence it unconsciously held over these people:

> Sin este mi amor a la tierra, no hubiera podido escribir Bodas de sangre. Y no hubiera empezado mi obra próxima: Yerma. En la tierra encuentro una profunda sugestión de pobreza. Y amo la pobreza por sobre todas las cosas. No la pobreza sórdida y hambrienta, sino la pobreza bienaventurada, simple, humilde, como el pan moreno. (p 1755)

Turning to Bodas de sangre, we see that the effect of the earth on its characters is especially marked on the female protagonists. The Mother associates herself with fertile land for she has proved herself fertile, while the Novia on the other hand should be about to illustrate her fertility and perhaps cultivate the dry land on which she lives. It is the Mother who voices many of the allusions in the play to the relationship between man and the earth. She calls her menfolk flowers and wheat; she reminds the young couple that marriage is the roturation of the land and her son's duty is to sow seed. She is well aware of the example set by nature which must be followed by man. She also refers to the place in nature man occupies on his death and the play infers that the death of healthy men is almost essential to maintain a fertile earth. Adela, too, loves and admires the natural world, but it is Yerma who feels to the fullest the tensions exerted by the countryside around her. Indeed, nearly all the other women from the village are all imbued with the fertile spirit given by Nature, only she and María are at odds with the earth. Even the Vieja who has watched her men

and sons killed does not harbour resentment, for she has fulfilled her role and she even admits to her enjoyment in life:

> Pero ¡ca! Yo he sido una mujer de faldas en el aire, he ido flechada a la tajada de melón, a la fiesta, a la torta de azúcar. Muchas veces me he asomado de madrugada a la puerta creyendo oír música de bandurrias que iba, que venía, pero era el aire. (Ríe.) Te vas a reír de mí. He tenido dos maridos, catorce hijos, cinco murieron y, sin embargo, no estoy triste, y quisiera vivir muchomás. Es lo que digo yo. Las higueras, ¡cuánto duran! Las casas, ¡cuánto duran!, y solo nosotras, las endemoniadas mujeres, nos hacemos polvo por cualquier cosa. (p 1287)

Her determination to enjoy life while one can, which can be related to the traditional carpe diem theme, also suggests that unless Yerma can make the most of her existence she will be unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion to it. The Vieja has wisely taken no notice of the traditional view adhered to by Yerma that woman's function is solely to breed children and she has gained happiness with infinitely more ease than the young bride. She devotes that nervous energy of which Bok writes to the sexual pleasures of life, and motherhood comes as its natural product not as its motive force:

> A woman, by her very nature, is a personification of nervous energy or sentiment. That nervous energy and emotions whre given her for expression in her natural channels - that of motherhood. 9

Yerma is drawn as the true rrepresentation of earth rather than the land Juan works; that the Vieja calls her a "flor abierta" (p 1290) implies that the open ripeness of her body is ready to bear fruit. Finally, Lorca intended the seene between the Macho and Hembra to be full of earthy beauty; he regarded the freedom of natural passion to be the only true condition between man and woman.

Lorca makes Yerma focus on her belly and breasts to indicate how she needs the physical experience of conception almost as much as the child. As time progresses, she realises that she must lose blood by childbirth, for if she does not, the excess blood she has in her body will turn to poison, such is the strength of her obsession. The way in which she, like the other villagers, measures and classifies motherhood reveals single-mindedness: "Cada mujer tiene sangre para cuatro o cinco hijos, y cuando no los tienen se les vuelve veneno, como me va a pasar a mí." (p 1283) For countryfolk, giving birth is a very easy natural process, part of man's link with an earth that gives life with great abundance. So Yerma frequently compares herself to barren land, while the earth around her produces even too many weeds. By Act III she realises that her desire is impossible to satisfy: "Yo soy como un campo seco donde caben arando mil pares de bueyes." (p 1345) So she is barren while her husband frantically works the land to make it as fertile as possible.

Yerma compares the dry hardness of rock to her own condition when she appeals against the unnaturalness of her state: "Roca que es una infamia que sea roca, porque debía ser un canasto de flores y agua dulce." (p 1314) It is only when the Vieja, in a cruel outburst of scorn and ridicule, tells her what she has so long been afraid to voice herself that Yerma realises how irremediable is her sterility, and the excessive strain she feels due to Juan's behaviour:

> VIEJA (Fuerte) Pues sigue así. Por tu gusto es. Como los cardos del secano, pinchosa, marchita.
> YERMA (Fuerte) ¡Marchita, sí, ya lo sé!..No es preciso que me lo refriegues por la boca. No vengas a solazarte como los niños pequeños en la agonía de un animalito. Desde que me casé estoy dándole vueltas a esta palabra, pero es la primera vez que la oigo, la primera vez que me la dicen en la cara. La primera vez que veo que es verdad. (p 1345/6)

Yerma needs to be germinated just as flowers do; she feels part of a fertile Nature whose doors are however closed to her by the rock which, like their social equivalents, prevent her from finding satisfaction.

> Pero ¡ay de la casada seca!
> ¡Ay de la que tiene los pechos de arena! -
> (p 1310)

she is childless because her husband guards his seeds. His dry character desiccates his wife, but unlike this typically sentimental poem found in Blanco y negro, her story does not have a happy ending:

> ¿Por qué lloras, mujer? - interroga el esposo -
> ¿Qué amargura te aflije y te roba el esposo?
> ¿Qué tristeza consume la color de tu tez?
> ¿Qué veneno te infiltra su mortal acidez?
> Aná nada responde. Y un día y otro día
> va limando su pecho honda melancolía,
> la pena inconsolable, de su esterilidad;
> su entraña está maldita; no hay para ella bondad.
> Es roca del desierto donde el musgo no crece,
> fuente ciega, gris yermo que jamás reverdece,
> mientras se quema el alma en inefable ardor
> y se derrite en aristas de un infinito amor.
> "¡Dame un hijo, Señor! ¡Dame un hijo que sea
> la razón de mi vida, que en tu gracia se emplea,
> dame un hijo que alegre mi anhelante camino,
> aridez remediada por la flor del espino!
> Dame un hijo, Señor, que es tu don más precioso;
> acerca tú agua pura a mi labio ardoroso;
> mi soledad enjoya con un lirio celeste .....
> Dame, Señor, un hijo, por mucho que me cueste."
>
> Las pupilas en extásis, los labios temblorosos,
> implorantes las manos de nardos olorosos,
> eleva sus plagarias al Señor de Israel.
> Su oración es la pura de amor que va hacía Él.
> Y el Señor de Israel de su duelo se apiada
> y le envía ese hijo, que la esposa angustiada
> entre sueños ha visto como flor de un persil ....
> En el páramo seco cae un llanto de Abril.
> Y las madres felices de Juda y de Sión
> no despiertan su envidia; ya sintió el corazón
> traspasado del néctar de la maternidad,
> ya vive para un hijo y para una verdad.
> El llanto que ahora vierte es un llanto dichoso.
> "Oh, Señor de Israel, por tu don generoso,
> recibe en holocausto mi dolor de mujer;

el dolor de ser madre es excelso placer."
Y las manos cruzadas como en un triste día
y los ojos en extásis, ahora santa alegría,
y el alma rebosando de dulzura de miel,
su oración dice Ana al Señor de Israel. 10

I have reproduced the whole poem, entitled "El amor de los amores", to show that while the basic elements of dryness, pain and frustration are present, there exists a world of difference between Lorca's play and this poem. Indeed, it is to his credit that, brought up as he was in an atmosphere of bourgeois conventionality, the author could have written what is an understanding and intuitive interpretation of one woman's pain, and not succumbed to the sentimentality of grief nor to the temptation of a happy dénouement. Instead he combined physical pain with emotional anguish and illustrated them through word and action.

Robert Bristein's interpretation of the play after its performance in London by Nuria Espert and her company in the spring of 1972 fails to take into account the examination of the marital relationship which is central to the plot.

> Now if there is nothing wildly improbable about this story, there is nothing absolutely inevitable about it either. I don't find it a dilemma in which many women will immediately recognise their problems. Lorca works diligently to restrict Yerma's alternatives - divorce is impossible under the law of the church; adoption is unsatisfactory since she wants her own child; adultery is unacceptable because of her code of honour. Still, one is overly conscious of the author's labour in closing off escape routes, as well as considerable contrivance in his character's relentless pursuit of tragedy. Yerma is virtually alone among Lorca's passionate heroines in resisting the call of the blood. And while it is important not to underestimate the repressive power of Spanish society and religion, Yerma seems curiously reluctant to consider the options, especially when her desire for children is consuming enough to issue in murder. 11

It is not the author who is "closing off escape routes", but society, for the pressures the critic finds contrived did exist to a very large extent

during that period, as I have tried to point out. And what of the Zapatera prodigiosa who cannot physically break the ties which bind her and her husband together? What of Doña Rosita, who is left to live with her dreams? Surely the critic cannot claim that these two women satisfy their desires? They resist, like Yerma, the call of the blood because they are too closely controlled by external restrictions.

Lorca's deep concern with the plight of the barren woman began in the first years of his career. 'Elegía' laments with sympathy the lot the woman has to bear. She suffers emotional stress which has to be kept within herself, with the result that, in order to relieve the pressures both she and society have created, she escapes into a fantasy world:

> En tus manos blancas
> llevas la madeja de tus ilusiones,
> muertas para siempre, y sobre tu alma
> la pasión hambrienta de besos de fuego
> y tu amor de madre que sueña lejanas
> visiones de cunas en ambientes quietos
> hilando en los labios lo azul de la nana.(p 201)

The maternal urge, which is so strong in Lorca's female characters, dominates her existence to no avail. She is born to play the creative role nature has given her and which man has made definitive. The Maniquí in Así que pasen cinco años, represents a stage further in the author's preoccupation with the mother figure. She is in fact no more than the physical reflection of the Joven's desire to father a child. In some aspects then, the Joven is Yerma's male counterpart for the Manikin, like Juan, is only an object, a means of attaining the goal. The song between the Maniquí and the Joven precedes Yerma's and María Josefa's laments. The Maniquí represents the physical experience of motherhood for the youth, who in turn associates the unborn child with the manifestation of nature's fertility:

MANIQUÍ (Enseña un traje rosa de niño.)
Las fuentas de leche blanca
mojan mis sedas de angustia
y un dolor blanco de abeja
cubre de rayos mi nuca.
Mi hijo. Quiero a mi hijo,
Por mi falda lo dibujan
estas cintas que me estallan
de alegría en la cintura.
Y es tu hijo.

JOVEN Sí, mi hijo:
donde llegan y se juntan
pájaros de sueño loco
y jazmines de cordura.

(Angustiado) ¿Y si mi niño no llega?
Pájaro que el aire cruza
no puede cantar. (p 1102/3)

In the Joven's anxious desire to create he gives the child cosmic importance. The Maniquí is the voice of the present who urges him to face up to life and take his chance now instead of continually postponing it. Like Yerma and Doña Rosita, he will watch the years go by in increasing frustration. After their song, the scene takes on a more normal light: what had passed was a dream. Knight compares this section to the opening one in Yerma: "the scene between the Joven and the Maniquí was a dream, like that at the beginning of Yerma. The dialogue was really between the Joven and his ansia de maternidad."[12]

Lorca reached the climax of his prolonged treatment of maternity in Yerma. He adds a further dimension, one hinted at in the preceding works, by concentrating not only on her physical but also on her psychological state. She makes her life pivot around an unborn child until the creature gradually drives out all other considerations. She is possessed by the idée fixe of motherhood. Of course, this disturbed emotional state increases her physical tension, ironically making her less likely to conceive, which in turn makes her even more tense. The vicious circle is self-perpetuating.

In her mind, she is the potential ideal mother; she gives advice to a country girl, telling her not to leave her baby alone in the house. In theory she is already a mother; in practice she is not, for, as the Vieja acutely observes, if she did have a real child she would not be so concerned about his safety. As time passes she becomes increasingly neurotic: "Si sigo así, acabaré volviéndome mala." (p 1282) The Vieja refuses to advise her because she is not a balanced personality; she knows how easy it would be to provoke her into an argument. The Lavanderas discuss the oddness of her behaviour, for they report that she sits outside her house all night. Implicitly Lorca is suggesting that she does so in order to come into contact with nature and to escape from the prying gaze of her two sisters-in-law whom Juan brought to the house to guard her. Gradually she fails to see the difference between her once balanced personality and the obsessions which have taken control of her; she tells her husband: "Yo no sé quién soy. Déjame aandar y desahogarme. En nada he faltado." (p 1315) As she becomes more wrapped up in her private world she loses her appetite, stays still without talking and takes on the physical appearance of her mental state. She feels hammers beating at her breasts instead of the mouth of her baby. Indeed she has drawn so close to the mental vision she has created of the child that she identifies herself completely with him, and in turn pays less attention to conformity with society:

> Acabaré creyendo que yo misma soy mi hijo. Muchas noches bajo yo a echar la comida a los bueyes, que antes no lo hacía, porque ninguna mujer lo hace, y cuando paso por lo oscuro del cobertizo mis pasos me suenan a pasos de hombre.
>
> (p 1318)

In other words, she is prepared for her body to be both male and female to be self-sufficient and produce a child. If she faces up to the true situation and recognises that her chances of conceiving are very slight,

she rejects reality totally. This deliberate rejection of reality is opposed to the teachings circulated by the Catholic press, where resignation is taught and prayers offered after consultation with a Catholic doctor.[13]

It is worth noting that the images she uses come from the world of nature. She opposes bulls, a well known symbol of fertility, to stones, whose sterility is complete:

> A veces, cuando ya estoy segura de que jamás, jamás ...., me sube como una oleada de fuego por los pies y se me quedan vacías todas las cosas, y los hombres que andan por la calle y los toros y las piedras me parecen como cosas de algodón, Y me pregunto: '¿Para qué estarán ahí puestos?' (p 1328)

After a short space of time, Yerma gives a concrete example of the hallucinatory state in which she finds herself: "Cuando salía por mis claveles me tropecé con el muro. ¡Ay! ¡Ay! Es en ese muro donde tengo que estrellar mi cabeza." (p 1334) She has to face the barricade of her husband, which she must breach or accept defeat. Lorca, who has already indicated in the title of the play her complete sterility, emphasises by her declaration the violent end. The child has grown so indispensable to Yerma that, like the unseen Pepe in La casa de Bernarda Alba who influences all the daughters in the play, he cannot be destroyed but will on the contrary destroy. Thus she murders Juan and at least is sure that her son will never walk the earth. Rejecting Juan's only attempt to inject some kind of heat into their relationship, she spurns him as a macho, a passionate male:

YERMA: ¿Qué buscas?
JUAN: A ti te busco. Con la luna estás hermosa.
YERMA: Me buscas como cuando te quieres comer una paloma.
JUAN: Bésame ..... así .....
YERMA Eso nunca. Nunca.
(YERMA da un grito y aprieta la garganta de su esposo. Este cae hacia atrás. Le aprieta la garganta hasta matarle. Empieza el coro de la romería.) Marchita, marchita, pero segura. Ahora

> sí que lo sé de cierto. Y sola. (Se levanta. Empieza a llegar gente.) Voy a descansar sin despertarme sobresoltada, para versi la sangre me anuncia otra sangre nueva. Con el cuerpo seco para siempre. ¿Qué queréis saber? ¡No os acerquéis, porque he matado a mi hijo, yo mismo he matado a mi hijo! (p 1349/50)

Her grief and her tranquillity, attained at long last, are centred on the death of her son and not of her husband.

Alberich makes an interesting suggestion which extends Yerma's final act beyond maternity into the wider realm of marriage:

> pocas mujeres se entregan a un amor ilícito con el solo fin de procrear. El amor maternal no es enteramente separable del amor conyugal; el bienestar psíquico de la familia normal descansa en un sutil equilibrio de relaciones eróticas complejas, y basta que falle una de ellas para que todo se venga abajo. Este es el caso de Yerma, que no mata a su marido por creerlo estéril, sino por creerle 'culpable' de haber envenado la atmósfera familiar. [14]

Indeed the relationship between man and wife must be of equal importance to the theme of maternity in the play, for the one depends on the other. Considering the unhappy marriages in other plays, it is hardly surprising that theirs is unsuccessful. The author has again cast a pessimistic shadow over the role of marriage and its validity in society. Instead of achieving procreation, it has denied it and thus broken the link between man and nature. Yerma, like the Novia and Adela, has by instinct a deep and intimate relationship with the earth. The females identify themselves with the earth as a life-giving force; in all three plays, however, this indication only serves to bring about disaster, because the stronger the pull of natural passion is, the stronger is the pull of society.

Motherhood - A Duty to Society

Woman's social role is to be a mother, and it is this role that has traditionally won respect. Fray Martínez Alonso de Córdova firmly stated that woman "fue hecha que fuesse ayuda al varón, para engendrar et multiplicar los hombres."[15] Unamuno's admiration for woman's ability to create a new being influenced his attitude to all members of the opposite sex:

> Toda mujer tiene algo de madre desde su nacimiento. Es siempre madre aunque muera virgen. Sucede en todas partes, y acaso más que ninguna en España, donde tan honda y entrenada está la maternidad, que hasta estas mozas son familia ... tienen el sentido del pudor maternal. [16]

His respect for woman can clearly be seen in his female characters in Niebla and other novels. During the second Republic all the media, except perhaps several sections of the left wing, repeated that woman's mission in life was to bear children. In Blanco y negro, in 1933, Beatriz de León published an article, entitled 'Madres', which urged woman to pursue the role laid down for her by society, which the author felt was being corroded by certain social propagandists:

> La misión más sublime de la mujer es la de ser madre. ¡Madre! La figura más grande, más noble y más hermosa de la creación; ella es la que anima, la que sostiene, la que consuela, la que sobre todo ama y perdona. [17]

Motherhood was for many the major reason for marriage, and this motive was praiseworthy in itself, whether it involved woman's subjugation to her husband or not:

> Instinctivamente, siempre será el matrimonio el que atraiga más a nuestro sexo, por la maternidad legítima. Digna y hermosa misión, cuando las leyes igualan en derecho a los

> esposos; pero indigna y de un bajísimo egoísmo, cuando se entra en él, ... del tirazo de un perdido, por ambición o afán matrimonial; cuando se convive con un hombre que falta a la fidelidad conyugal y criminal, cuando a sabiendas, se ha aceptado a un enfermero. 18

Leonardo, Pepe and Juan can all be described as husbands who do not live up to their marriage vows. Today such views persist; in a recent interview, the well known columnist Evelyn Home discussed on her retirement the constant maternal urge:

> What the majority of women desire, from the most rarefied intellectuals to the earthiest squaws, is a marriage in which their husband is content, so that they can get on with the prime job of bringing up babies without having to bother too much about anything else. 19

The pressure exerted by these and other pundits of social tradition is tremendous, for it unconsciously influences not only readers but the general climate of the period in its organisation of social conventions. Even Evelyn Home urges in a much more subtle way than the priest that woman should associate herself with the home and live up to her reputation as a competent organizer within the limited sphere of the house. The Zapatera indignantly defends her maternal capabilities:

> NIÑO: Mi madre lo ha hablado el otro día, diciendo: 'La zapatera no tendrá hijos,' 'y se reían mis hermanas y la comadre Rafaela.
>
> ZAPATERA (Nerviosamente.) ¿Hijos? Puede que los tenga más hermosos que todas ellas y con más arranque y más honra, porque tu madre,..es menester que sepas.... (p 914/5)

Not only should the wife produce a child, but, as the critics imply, many children; quantity as much as quality is the essence. Certainly Rosita has the characteristics of a good Spanish mother, as she gives birth to

four children in rapid succession in El retablillo de Don Cristóbal; and El público includes another example of maternal prowess when one of the female characters has four or five offspring in one labour. Lorca has deliberately exaggerated woman's ability to bear children in order to underline the fertility of her character, in contrast to man's comparatively small participation. Maria Pineda frequently alludes to her children and the duty she has towards them and she is only a young widow of 28.

Other female characters who do not fulfill their role nevertheless show their potential maternal qualities. Belisa calls Perlimplín by the diminutive form of his name - only one example of the protective manner in which she speaks to him. The Madre too in Bodas de sangre is dominated by the fear of extinction of her family, she wants her fertile instinct passed on through her son. Although the Vecinas point out that the Zapatera will never bear children because her husband is too old, she illustrates in her conversation with the Niño a strong maternal instinct.

Yerma is surrounded by neighbours who believe in the easiness of child-bearing (of which Rosita is a good example). María and the fourth Lavandera make very similar remarks, casually stating that anyone who wants children can have them. Yerma is even willing to endure severe physical pain in childbirth:

> Tener un hijo no es tener un ramo de rosas. Hemos de sufrir para verlos crecer. Yo pienso que se nos va la mitad de nuestra sangre. Pero esto es bueno, sano, hermoso. Cada mujer tiene sangre para cuatro o cinco hijos, y cuando no los tienen se les vuelve veneno, como me va a pasar a mí. (p 1283)

She wants to bear a child even if he hates her, for the deed of bearing a child and looking after him is more important than his character and is

the only way of dispelling the ghost which constantly accompanies her. The force of her will to have a son contrasts strongly with Angustias in La casa de Bernarda Alba. Although Bernarda has shown overwhelming proof that she can bear children, she has given birth to five girls, when traditionally Catholic and Moorish convention and also economic and practical necessities advocated woman's true use as a breeder of sons to help in the fields and carry on the family line. Perhaps, it is because of her implicit failure to be the perfect mother that she takes vengeance on her daughters by inflicting on them a reign of terror. Ironically, as the maintainer of social convention and tradition, she herself has failed to comply with its principal demands and thus finds herself stuck with five daughters who are of no practical use.

Yerma's statement "Los hombres tienen otra vida: los ganados, los árboles, las conversaciones, y las mujeres no tenemos más que esta de la cría y el cuido de la cría." (p 1313/4) reflects the social law which has made woman execute the duties of a mother. Indeed this is accentuated when woman lives in the country; Yerma's bleak remark that "La mujer del campo que no da hijos es inútil como un manojo de espinos, y hasta mala, a pesar de que yo sea de este desecho dejado de la mano de Dios," (p 1317) starkly highlights how she is a social outcast because of her inability to bear a child. Even so, as Concepción Arenal pointed out in the last century, woman still had time on her hands which ought to be channelled towards social involvement and not towards the home.[20] She argued that if a woman lived on average 60 or 70 years, even though she rears children she will only dedicate herself wholeheartedly to their care for a quarter of her life, so why is she left to maintain the role of mother for the whole of her married life? Marañón also gives a damning description of the wife's lot in his efforts to arouse woman from the long, drugged lethargy in which she

immersed herself over the centuries, in the hope that she will participate actively in bringing about the social reforms members of the new Republic wanted:

> ¿Qué es la maternidad? Si preguntamos a la mujer occidental todavía no liberada, y en este caso están la casi totalidad de las mujeres españolas, la repuesta será la siguiente: Maternidad es educarse en la más atroz incultura, aprendiendo en el hogar, junto a la madre ignorante y heroica, las reglas elementales de manejo casero, y el resto del tiempo esperando la llegada del futuro marido tras una reja oyendo a capturarle a los paseos y a los tés de moda: la técnina varía según las latitudes. A veces, la espera se prolonga inútilmente, hasta que la juventud se marchita. Otras, llega el matrimonio, y entonces la ley de Dios se cumple: él, el hombre, trabaja o lo disimula con sus diversiones y deportes, y ella, la esposa, concibe y pare cada año un niño. Al llegar a los treinta y cinco de su edad, la pobre mujer, envejecida por el agobio creador, por los cuidados de la casa y por las penas y las muertes, no puede más. Está triste, doliente y sin curiosidad para nada. Su único horizonte espiritual es la rutina de una religión sostenido por fórmulas exteriores más que por una tensión ideal y ferviente. Y entretanto, el marido es cierto, quizá, que trabaja con el sudor de su frente; pero entra y sale y se distrae de la obscuridad del hogar con la actividad de su quehacer y con la sociedad de los amigos; va al círculo o a la taberna; y se siente, en suma, enrolado en el gran mecanismo vital del mundo.... [21]

What was being done in the Republic to change the deeply embedded attitudes of women, their families and husbands? Certainly, there was a certain amount of vigorous campaigning by such people as Nelken, the Martínez Sierras, Marañón and left-wing periodicals to draw woman out of the household into society. Of more practical value, associations were set up to aid the poor mother who had to work to provide enough food for her child. One organisation "La Protección de las obreras madres", provided legal safeguards for these women and several factories did set up nurseries and rest rooms. The advocates of woman's rights concentrated on the plight of the child; for the first time in many years co-education was being piloted as one way to prevent discrimination and begin girls on the road to greater freedom and responsibility

in society.

As I have already examined, Yerma's barrenness may well be due to her and her husband's sexual ignorance. Traditionally sex was a subject which was never broached in conversation. Her remark that "No soy una casada indecente; pero yo sé que los hijos nacen del hombre y de la mujer. ¡Ay, si los pudiera tener yo sola!" (p 1329) and her revelation that their bed is very rarely the place of sexual relations indicate that the couple do not understand each other sexually nor do they know how to change that state of affairs. She gives herself to Juan simply to bear children; she has been brainwashed by society and the Catholic Church to believe that a woman's job is to be a good mother not a good lover. Their relationship is a terrible contrast to the ideal sexual love defined by Aza y Díez in 1928: "El orgasmo florece siempre en la mujer en las uniones pasionales cuando la mujer quiere y estima al hombre."[22] The new régime saw a new frankness in sexual matters among left-wing intellectuals and artists which did little more than shock the traditionalists and entrench them deeper than ever in silence. In 1930, before the Second Republic came into being, La revista blanca published an article condemning the sexual ignorance of woman:

> ¡Ay! Quedamos petrificados de extrañeza al constatar la falta absoluta de enseñanza en este sentido, tanto en la escuela como en la familia. En nombre de una moral estúpida, la más nefasta y que se apoya en el obscurantismo, hijo de la más vergonzosa hipocresía, se ha impedido hasta ahora que la educación sexual se desarrollase, y, más particularmente aun, que se extendiese la iniciación sexual de la juventud.[23]

In the middle thirties it contained articles which discussed venereal disease, sex education and advocated free love. A woman was proved feminine if she bore a child and the more children she bore the better woman she became.

M. Martínez Sierra relates a conversation she had in a village with the local woman; the pride they had in their fertility was a reflection on their obedience of the precepts of the Catholic Church and a convincing confirmation of the theory that woman needs children to keep herself occupied:

> - ¿Tiene usted hijos? - pregunto a una mujer, cuya edad no puedo adivinar.
> - Sí, señorita. Veinte he tenido.
> - Veinte - repito con espanto.
> - Doce me quedan .....
> - ¿Estoy en este mundo?
> - Yo he tenido catorce, dice otra.
> - Yo doce ..., y me quedan ocho.
> - Yo diez .... y lo que venga.
> - Yo 'entavía' no tengo más que cinco.
> - Mujer, aún tienes tiempo.
>
> Hablan con naturalidad, casi con buen humor.
>
> - Pero ..... -me decido a decir - ¿cómo es posible... con tanta pobreza..., traer tantos hijos al mundo?
> - A ver qué va a hacer.
> - ¿No comprendéis que es condenarles a morirse de hambre? ¿Cómo tenéis el valor?
> - Como los hacemos a oscuras - replica una riéndose -, no llevamos la cuenta.
> - Pues encended siquiera una pajuela - protesto apasionadamente.
> - Los críos los manda Dios - afirma una vieja sentenciosamente.[24]
>
> Ante tal argumento, inútil proseguir la discusión.

So their sexual knowledge is limited and intimacy is confined to silent moments in the dark. Martínez Sierra's husband hinted in Cartas a las mujeres de España that birth control was necessary for the health of both mother and child and for the economic future of Spain, a practice to which the Church, of course, posed the strongest of objections: "Porque, señoras, matar a un niño que todavía no ha nacido, cerrarle las puertas de la vida en las mismas fuentas de la vida, es un asesinato en el sentido bíblico de la palabra."[25] Jiménez de Asúa adduced powerful arguments for birth control, comparing the capacity of woman to breed like an animal, and, even more interesting as far as Yerma is concerned, examining the effect over-fertility will have on a marriage:

....Hoy el azar decide el número de hijos y hasta es una desgracia poner nuevos seres en el mundo. Con la regulación de nacimientos, el matrimonio alcanzará una nueva fase, mucho mejor y mucho más feliz. La vida sexual y la procreación deben separarse por completo. El temor al embarazo y a las enfermedades ha arruinado a la sociedad. Es de suma importancia para la mujer decidir por sí misma si quiere tener hijos y cuántos desea parir. 26

This was a matter Lorca was to touch on in the lecture he gave on lullabies.

He certainly sympathised with the poor mothers he saw in his travels over

Spain, overburdened and physically ill by repeated childbirth:

> No debemos olvidar que la canción de cuna está inventada (y sus textos lo expresan) por las pobres mujeres cuyos niños son para ellas una carga, una cruz pesada con la cual muchas veces no pueden. Cada hijo, en vez de ser una alegría, es una pesadumbre, y, naturalmente, no pueden dejar de cantarle, aun en medio de su amor, su desgana de la vida.
> Hay ejemplos exactos de esta posición, de este resentimiento contra el niño que ha llegado cuando, aun queriendo la madre, no ha debido llegar de ninguna manera. (p 95)

Marañón's statement that there must be a campaign for conscious motherhood in an atmosphere of well-being[27] reflects in a more direct way Lorca's plea. Indeed, Bravo Morata's statistics in La dictadura 1927-1930 point to the ignorance and sickness prevalent among the poor community:

> .....Lo verdaderamente curioso es la discriminación del coeficiente de natalidad por barrios o distritos, comparando un sector poblado por gentes de las llamadas de buena posición, esto es, un distrito bien nutrido, con otro sector poblado por familias obreras, o lo que es lo mismo, mal nutrido.
>
> En el barrio de Salamanca - bien nutrido -, los datos son siguientes:
>
> En 1920 nacen 46 por 1.000; mortalidad infantil: 11 por 1.000.
> En 1929 nacen 29 por 1.000; mortalidad infantil: 1 por 1.000.
> En el barrio de la Plaza de Toros - mal nutrido -, los datos. son los siguientes:
>
> En 1920 nacen 43 por 1.000; mortalidad infantil: 22 por 1.000.
> En 1929 nacen 108 por 1.000; mortalidad infantil: 58 por 1.000.
> (Fuente: Dr. Huro, Congreso de Eugenesia.) 28

Until the last few years of the Republic the efforts of the social reformers were of no avail, but now, in spite of the Pope's denunciation of the pill and other artificial methods of birth control, the Spanish birth rate has fallen in the last decade. Perhaps at last the aims of those concerned with the condition of women have begun to be realised.

CHAPTER VI

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CHAPTER VII

The Ambiguity of Lorca's Woman

Dream/Reality

> No es sueño la vida. ¡Alerta! ¡Alerta! ¡Alerta!
> Nos caemos por las escaleras para comer la tierra húmeda
> o subimos al filo de la nieve con el coro de las dalias muertas.
> Pero no hay olvido, ni sueño:
> carne viva. Los besos atan las bocas
> en una maraña de venas recientes
> y al que le duele su dolor le dolerá sin descanso
> y el que teme la muerte la llevará sobre sus hombros.
>
> (p 493)

Lorca states that love is not a happy experience; it is vicious, for it lives on the loved one. Neither can pain be avoided for it will occur at the most crucial moment and death cannot be postponed indefinitely. So the harsh note reality imposes must be accepted even though it brings pain and torture. That is the artist's message and it is one that was frequently repeated, although in a less strident tone than employed here.

Lorca expressed in a letter to Sebastián Gasch his fear of the power of illusion, not in art where he felt intimately tied to reality, but in everyday life. He was aware of the false escape route fantasy could provide so insidiously, and therefore kept up a vigil to ensure that he would not succumb:

> He cercado algunos días al sueño, pero sin caer del todo en él y teniendo desde luego un atadero de risa y un

seguro andamio de madera. Yo nunca me aventuro en terrenos que no son del hombre, porque vuelvo tierras atrás en seguida y rompo casi siempre el producto de mi viaje. Cuando hago una cosa de pura abstracción, siempre tiene (creo yo) un salvo conducto de sonrisas y un equilibrio bastante humano ...

Mi estado es siempre alegre, y este soñar mío no tiene peligro en mí, que llevo defensas; es peligroso para el que se deje fascinar por los grandes espejos oscuros que la poesía y la locura ponen en el fondo de sus barrancos. Yo estoyyme siento con pies de plomo en arte. El abismo y el sueño los temo en la realidad de mi vida, en el amor, en el encuentro cotidiano con los demás. Eso sí que es terrible y fantástico. [1]

Such was his suspicion of the effect fantasy could have on the life of the individual that the contrasting relationship between dream and reality became a constant thread throughout his work. I wish to show how sexual or amorous fantasy had a disastrous effect on the character involved. Indeed, he was intent to present the destruction of family life and marriage by fantasy. Usually too, it is the woman who is most affected by the insidious world of dream, probably because she is tied to the home and does not possess the interests which man can enjoy. Of course, the oppressive atmosphere of the Granadian gardens gave their inhabitants little opportunity to look beyond the confines of their home environment and caused some to focus instead on a dream situation. In the prose work Granada the author revealed how people live through their fantasy because they are scared of the outside world of the senses.

Woman's plight is developed in great detail in La Zapatera prodigiosa. Lorca warned the public of the purpose behind the play in a lecture given in Buenos Aires in 1933:

> Yo quise expresar en mi Zapatera, dentro de los límites de la farsa común, sin echar mano a elementos poéticos que estaban a mi alcance, la lucha de la realidad con la fantasía (entendiendo por fantasía todo lo que es irrealizable) que existe en el fondo de toda criatura.
>
> La Zapatera lucha constantemente con ideas y objetos reales porque vive en su mundo propio, donde cada idea y cada objeto tienen un sentido misterioso que ella misma ignora. No ha vivido

> nunca ni ha tenido novios nunca más que en la otra orilla,
> donde no puede ni podrá nunca llegar. (p 132/3)

Fantasy is discussed in the very prologue of the play, so that the audience would be fully receptive to the effect of the imagination on the wife's relationship with her husband. Clearly the dramatist is stressing that incompatibility in marriage brings serious problems, causing illusions and then bitterness. The fault lies in a social system that permits the existence of arranged marriages, especially between men and women who belong to different generations. When Lorca calls her "un mito de nuestra pura ilusión insatisfecha", (p 132) it is because she is the product of contemporary Spanish society:

> El autor ha preferido poner el ejamplo dramático en el vivo ritmo de una zapaterita popular. En todos los sitios late y anima la criatura poética que el autor ha vestido de zapatera con aire de refrán o simple romancillo, y no se extrañe el público si aparece violenta o toma actitudes agrias, porque ella lucha siempre, lucha con la realidad que la cerca y lucha con la fantasía cuando esta se hace realidad visible.
>
> (p 911/2)

He has concentrated on placing her in a clearly defined setting of village life to show how tradition, in the form of popular verse and superstition, still retains a vice-like grip on the community. The Zapatera escapes into a world of her own due to the frustration her life causes in her. Thus the suitors she dreams up while the Zapatero is with her become ideal men who belong to the aristocracy or the higher classes. She forgets, however, that the cobbler married her when she was penniless and when he was relatively well off. When her husband 'escapes' and the suitors become reality in the ridiculous figures of the Alcalde and Don Mirlo, she rejects them and in turn creates a hero out of her husband, for he is absent and therefore unreal:

ZAPATERA: Yo me miraba en sus ojos. Cuando le veía venir montado en su jaca blanca....

NIÑO (Interrumpiéndole.) ¡Ja, ja, ja! Me estás engañando. El señor Zapatero no tenía jaca.

ZAPATERA Niño, sé más respetuoso. Tenía jaca, claro que la tuvo, pero es ...., es que tú no habías nacido.

NIÑO (Pasándole la mano por la cara.) ¡Ah! ¡Eso sería! (p 945)

Innocently she speaks to her husband disguised as a puppeteer of his merits, she declares her undying love and admiration for him and cannot comprehend that when the disguised husband describes his wife it is to her that he alludes:

> Ella soñaba con un mundo que no era el mío, era fantasiosa y dominanta, gustaba demasiado de la conversación y las golosinas que yo no podía costearle, y un día tormentoso de viento huracanado, me abandonó para siempre. (p 967)

However, when he declares himself to be her errant husband, her love for him, the ideal fantasy husband, disappears as suddenly as it came and in a violent defence against the slanderous gossip of the neighbours, she returns to her aggressive self, relegating her husband to his previous role:

> ¡Qué desgraciada soy! ¡Con este hombre que Dios me ha dado! (Yendo a la puerta.) ¡Callarse, largos de lengua, judíos colorados! Y venid, venid ahora, si queréis. Ya somos dos a defender mi casa, ¡dos!, ¡dos!, yo y mi marido. (Dirigiéndose al marido) ¡Con este pillo, con este granuja! (p 978)

In spite of some critics' attempts to see in these final phrases a happy ending,[2] it clearly indicates a return to their former relationship. In all probability, the Zapatero returned to his house for the same reason that he wed, for food and physical comfort, with the proviso that his honour had not been slighted during his absence. His disguise provides the means of testing his wife's behaviour. It seems that their relationship will

never be a harmonious one and that the Zapatera will have to resort to her dream world in order to tolerate a reality which has proved incapable of fulfilling her desires. Implicitly the dramatist is blaming society as much as the strong character of the wife.

Belisa, in El amor de Don Perlimplín, is another woman who is unable to find satisfaction within reality. The play is set within a framework similar to that of the last work. The couple have the same age difference as the cobbler and his wife; and they too are the victims of an arranged marriage. Perlimplín and his wife want different things out of their marriage and cannot find a middle course to reach some kind of compromise. Yerma begins with a dream which shows the audience immediately the importance of the heroine's mind. Her world of fantasy becomes more and more real to her as time goes by. The vision of the Pastor is the one symbol of the virile force her husband does not possess, but which Víctor potentially has. However, dreaming can only foment her desire to conceive a real child and does not provide relief but accentuates her frustrations. She could not substitute, as María Josefa does, an imaginary child in place of one she could actually produce. The grandmother's simple question why the lamb she holds cannot be a baby shows how the fusion of dream and reality is completely interwoven. Her fantasy succeeds in becoming an escape from the real world and provides some kind of alleviation of her plight. The pictures on the wall are also the outward representation of the dream world the girls want to enter. They portray a make-believe world of freedom where the girls will never tread except through their illusions.

Doña Rosita is, like so many of Lorca's heroines, prone to dreaming her way through life. If the outside world, in the shape of her aunt and servant, had not intruded to force upon her the fact that her fiancé had

forgotten her, she would have been content to fill her days with the illusion of his love and devotion:

> Me he acostumbrado a vivir muchos años fuera de mí, pensando en cosas que estaban muy lejos, y ahora que estas cosas ya no existen sigo dando vueltas..por un sitio frío, buscando una salida que no he de encontrar nunca. Yo lo sabía todo. Sabía que se había casado; ya se encargó un alma caritativa de decírmelo, y he estado recibiendo sus cartas en una ilusión llena de sollozos que aun a mí misma me asombraba. Si la gente no hubiera hablado; si vosotras no lo hubierais sabido; si no lo hubiera sabido nadie más que yo, sus cartas y su mentira hubieran alimentado mi ilusión como el primer año de su ausencia. (p 1428)

The Tía summarizes the character of her niece in a short phrase which reveals the harm fantasy had done her: "Te has aferrado a tu idea sin ver la realidad y sin tener caridad de tu porvenir." (p 1429) Her life has been ruined because of her inability to face the reality of a situation. But it is not just Rosita's weakness that is to blame; the Sobrino's callous behaviour and society's confidence in man's supremacy must take an equal share in the fate of the heroine.

Lorca created characters afflicted by mental imbalance to reveal how the strain of living within a rigid social code brought about other problems. Of course, some of these characters then had the excuse of saying anything they wished, without having to justify themselves. Thus they can express, ignoring all the inhibitions of the sane, general frustrations and desires which ordinarily would never be spoken. The reactions of 'ordinary'people to anyone who steps out of line is to conveniently label them <u>loco</u> and so dismiss them as talking nonsense. Yerma's behaviour becomes increasingly different: she stays out all night, she cannot sleep, she sits as though in a trance, she talks to her unborn son. All these details add up to show

the tremendous strain she is suffering and this impression is clarified when the Muchacha calls her "loca", and Juan used the adjective "alocada" to criticize her conduct.

It is in his last play that Lorca develops most explicitly the theme of madness to illustrate the tensions caused by frustration and society's control over the individual. María Josefa acts as the unrestrained voice of the daughter's emotions. Her lack of ordered thought and the apparently unconnected ideas which flow from her emphasize the strength of her will to break out of her prison:

> Bernarda, ¿dónde está mi mantilla? Nada de lo que tengo quiero que sea para vosotras. Ni mis anillos ni mi traje negro de "moaré". Porque ninguna de vosotras se va a casar. ¡Ninguna! Bernarda, dame mi gargantilla de perlas. (p 1470)

The captured lamb she holds gives visual power to her songs of strongly erotic fantasy. In contrast to the highly emotive passions which the grandmother reveals, her daughter treats her with callous indifference, influenced only by the fear of what the neighbours would say if they saw María Josefa at the well. So Bernarda has her mother locked up like a prisoner, allowing her out only occasionally:

> CRIADA — Tuve durante el duelo que taparle varias veces la boca con un costal vacío porque quería llamarte para que le dieras agua de fregar siquiera para beber, y carne de perro, que es lo que ella dice que tú le das.
> .....
>
> BERNARDA — (A la Criada) Dejadla que se desahogue en el patio.
>
> CRIADA — Ha sacado del cofre sus anillos y los pendientes de amatista; se los ha puesto, y me ha dicho que se quiere casar. (Las Hijas ríen.)
>
> BERNARDA — Ve con ella y ten cuidado que no se acerque al pozo.
>
> CRIADA — No tengas miedo que se tire.
>
> BERNARDA — No es por eso..... Pero desde aquel sitio las vecinas pueden verla desde su ventana. (p 1452/3)

Fantasy and reality have reached their most bitter struggle in this play. Reality, in the form of Bernarda Alba, conquers externally, but it cannot prevent the freedom of the imagination, which, as Lorca suggests, will become stronger and more obsessive the more rigidly society demands total conformity.

Malaise

Lorca was a restless figure. From his first confession in 1921 that he wishedto get away from his family and become independent, he frequently wished to escape family ties. He found Spanish life stifling on the one hand and on the other he could not do without it. His early confession reveals this ambivalence:

> Yo este año estoy inquietísimo; yo no puedo soportar ni un minuto más estar aquí y necesito volar, volar muy lejos ...., y, sobre todo, actuar de una manera digna en ese cachupinesco y absurdo Madrid. [3]

When he was in the town he felt a longing to get back to the peace and beauty of the Granada countryside, but once there he immediately longed for the noise, bustle and activity of city life, for he was soon suffocated by the traditions and conventions maintained in his home town and in any small town or village in Spain. It is perhaps only during the final years of his life, from the beginning of the thirties when he associated himself more and more with the general social ideals of the left, that he felt more purpose in his life.

Tranquility, or the lack of it, is not solely an individual quality, it is a highly valued social quality too. Aceves discusses its importance

in a country community:

> .....Little attention has been paid to the high value placed on tranquilidad (tranquillity). All classes, age groups, and both sexes seem unanimously agreed upon the need for peace and order and the avoidance of trouble.
>
> Tranquillity is achieved by avoidance behaviour; that is, one is tranquil if he avoids trouble.... Trouble is viewed as being always present and latent in every social situation, it is inherent in the social system. Thus, one achieves tranquillity by role behaviour designed to avoid troublesome relationships. One achieves tranquillity with one's fellows by not engaging in any behaviour which may activate the troubles always latent in human interaction. The formality, dignified bearing, and often elaborate language and social rituals in part can be understood as a set of devices designed to minimize potential conflict. The Castilliam peasant is not the so-called 'volatile Latin', he is a very rational, cautious and prudent man, and frequently a very worried one.[4]

In his plays Lorca is reflecting not just an individual characteristic, but the effect this quality has on society. If tranquillity is a social necessity, then his own intranquillity would have marked him out even more than his reputation as a poet would have done. He and many of the male protagonists show the anguish which induces in them a life of feverish activity and restless movement.

The male protagonists in some of the poems, the boy in 'Romance sonámbulo, the wind in 'Preciosa y el aire', the protagonists in 'Reyerta' clearly foreshadow certain characters in Lorca's plays by showing that intranquillity is an essential part of life and freedom and intimately linked to love and passion, as this popular verse declares:

> Entre la tierra y el cielo
> Se oyó una voz por el aire:
> -Quien quiera vivir tranquilo,
> No ponga su amor en nadie.[5]

Certainly, the male figures in Lorca's plays, and Leonardo in particular, possess the intranquillity which makes them collide with society. In Bodas de sangre, both the Novio and Leonardo are true followers of their species, for like all men they are restless. Barnes describes their actions:

> The Bridegroom and Leonardo also speak, and are described by others in terms of action. They are always in movement - going; talking; leading; riding; loving; fighting; killing; realising, not merely anticipating. [6]

The Novia herself is not free from the torment of restlessness. On her wedding day she pleads a headache and is nervous and irritable. Juan and his wife are described as intranquil for they cannot realize their very different ambitions. The trouble is that they want tranquillity at the other's expense and so both are destined to suffer anguish. In both of these plays not only the male but also the female is intranquil, and this is, according to some scientists, an unnatural state:

> El principio generador masculino parece ser, por lo tanto, el representante y el transmisor del movimiento en el mundo creado visible, y así como es el que da para ello el primer impulso, lo renueve por constante repetición de su acto. El principio enérgico de la Naturaleza aparece a la vez como causa del movimiento .... El falo es alado; la mujer, reposo; el hombre es principio del movimiento, y la mujer principio de la tranquilidad; la fuerza, origen de los sempiternos cambios; la mujer, imagen de la eterna calma, y por eso se ha representado casi siempre sentado a la madre Tierra. [7]

However, the Zapatera, Adela, the Novia and to some extent Bernarda Alba seem as intranquil as their male counterparts, Is Lorca deliberately diminishing the traditional gap which exists between man and woman by giving each sex some of the other's characteristics?

Tranquillity only comes with death. Juan and Yerma attain some

kind of peace on his death; the male antagonists in Bodas de sangre rest only at the expense of their lives. The Madre can breathe freely on the death of her son, for she has no other menfolk to care for. In this way the tranquillity these characters yearn for can only exist when a certain part of them is destroyed: Yerma can live with the certainty that she will never bear a child; the Novia will live alone as a widow; the family of Bernarda will resign themselves once more to a kind of living hell. All the time society has laid down rules which must be obeyed in order to achieve peace; but the social structure cannot bend to accommodate individual cases. Thus conflict is inevitable and the defeat of the individual an inevitability. Freedom cannot flourish in a society that is rigid and tyrannical.

Lorca's own malaise is reflected through the anguished characters of his plays. They cannot realize their desires, neither can they control their passions. This induces in them an overwhelming frustration. In particular, it is the female characters who are most afflicted. Why was Lorca so concerned with the emotional problems of woman, rather than those of his own sex? Apart from social factors which underlined woman's subordinate role in society, he felt, and this is confirmed in his drama, a deep sympathy for woman. His childhood was greatly influenced by his mother and other female figures. According to Mora Guarnido, his mother told him many stories concerning the frustrations of women. Indeed he suggests that she may not have been entirely happy with her own way of life and that these anecdotes were a way of giving vent to her emotions:

> Víctima acaso de alguna ignorada peripecia sentimental, aguantada con resignación y conllevada posteriormente con decoro, dio escape muchas veces el comentario apasionado - como el caso de Amparo Medina - ante las injustas evidencias de amores desgraciados que con frecuencia percibía. [8]

The same critic is convinced that Señora García Lorca's preoccupation with the unfair lot of women must have been transmitted to her son. Lorca ensured that most relationships between man and woman are doomed to failure and he does not attempt to show a happy marriage. He knew that woman's wish, enhanced by social conditioning, to live most of her years with a man brought in its wake many problems, not least of which was her sexual appetite. A decent woman, and here Yerma is apparently the prototype, is sexually passive and does not possess an erotic force; in other words, she is a dummy, a convenient object for man's pleasure. But Lorca was aware that many women (symbolized by Adela, Belisa, the Zapatera prodigiosa and even Yerma) have a strong sexual appetite which needs to be satisfied by other means than the husband's clumsy technique and marital duty. Barea sees Lorca's treatment of sexual problems as a direct result of the effect of Spanish morality:

> Lorca felt and expressed the problems of sex such as they had been, shaped and transformed by the complex conventions of his people. He felt the emotions at the root of the Spanish sexual code so deeply that in his art he magnified them until traditional values stood out with a perturbing significance. [9]

Lorca used popular symbolism and imagery and pagan earthiness to ebho the emotional force which lies at the depth of many women. Indeed as Barea goes on to say, the protagonists have "not so much the joyous freedom or the physical delight, but rather the frightening, ruthless forces of lust."[10]

Lorca's obsession with the sadness caused by woman's unfulfilled desire runs not only through his poems and plays but also through his drawings. One of these, entitled Amor and drawn in 1927 (p 1859) shows

what seems to be the double image of a girl and sailor figure. Both faces present a deep melancholy which the word amor affixed to the band of the hat can do nothing to prevent. Perhaps he is implying, in this deliberately mysterious sketch, that love brings two individuals so closely together that theylose their own identities to become merged into one expression of their passion. Evidently, love can bring not happiness but anguish.

In a prose composition, 'Amantes asesinados por una perdiz', the two lovers are killed; again the relationship cannot last. Throughout his work, Lorca emphasizes two major points: firstly that an individual is unhappy if his love is unreturned; secondly that an individual is unhappy even if his love is returned because it cannot last. His early works concentrate on the first aspect: 'Madrigal de Verano' and 'Madrigal', both in Libro de poemas, treat unrequited love. 'Elegía', as I have already indicated, highlights the frustration which lies behind unfulfilled desire. It contains an atmosphere of overt sensuality and passion. Poeta en Nueva York produces a depressing picture of the failure of love to survive in a hostile world:

> Pero el dos no ha sido nunca un número
> porque es una angustia y su sombra,
> porque es la guitarra donde el amor se desespera,
> porque es la demostración de otro infinito que no es suyo.
>
> (p 532)

The very titles in the collection Diván de Tamarit, published in the year Lorca died, reveal the imperfect state of love he found so depressing: 'Gacela de la terrible presencia', 'Gacela del amor desesperado'. These poems were written years earlier, but they were not published until Lorca gave permission for El público to be performed; this collection, then, was dealing with the poet's own emotions and intimate problems.

Apart from the puppet play Los títeres de Cachiporra, when Rosita marries Cocoliche in spite of Cristobita's bullying intervention, love never runs a smooth course in his drama. Mariana Pineda contains a love triangle which will be repeated in Bodas de sangre; just as Mariana and the Madre, both widows, find themselves alone, the spinsters Rosita and Bernarda's daughters are in a similar situation.

In contrast to the sexually aggressive figures of some female characters, several male protagonists lack the attributes of virility and vigour thought normal in man. The Joven in Así que pasen cinco años lives in a fantasy world and puts into second place his relationship with the Novia. Schonberg's impression that El amor de Don Perlimplín is simply a farce written in the puppet tradition misses the deliberately pathetic character of the hero:

> Car Perlimplín n'est comme toute qu'une farce, c'est-à-dire tout pur comique de situation. Les personnages stylisés, deshumanisés, mécaniques, vont même jusqu'à laisser une impression de guignol qu'accentuent ces vols d'oiseaux en papier qui traversent la scène. [11]

Perlimplín is ridiculed and mocked to show how he simply cannot face up to the strain of being married to a sexually voracious young woman, who addresses her husband in the diminutive form of his name, emphasizing his small timid figure. He is afraid of the sexual power of his wife and too innocent to hide his fear. It is striking that, in contrast to the normal freedom allowed to bachelors(La Poncia's description of her son is a good example), he is completely inexperienced, while Belisa appears to have had several love affairs or at least flirtations. So there exists a reversal of the socially established roles between man and woman. Lorca takes care to underline this throughout the play; Perlimplín speaks of his wife in a

whisper of awe, while she replies in veiled tones of condescension.

Lorca's fear of women is echoed, according to Feal Deibe, by Leonardo and also by the shadowy male figures in La casa de Bernarda Alba. In the latter play, the grandmother wishes to escape because "ya aquí los hombres huyen de las mujeres." (p 1470) The critic's argument concerning the first play centres on the fear of the Novia and her lover:

> La Novia parece indicar que la razón de no haberse casado con Leonardo es el temor a éste, temor a que la destruye, ... De todos modos, el argumento es de mucho más peso que el anterior del dinero. Sólo que el temor no pertenece exclusivamente a la mujer, aunque aquí, como en otros casos, aparezca proyectado sobre ella. 12

He does not state why they both fear each other; it is surely not fear of the individual but fear of the passion felt for the loved one and their own lack of control. The poem 'Es verdad' from Canciones reveals how deeply love can hurt; in its pessimism it is a forerunner of the lovers' unhappiness in Bodas de sangre and in a different context in Yerma and La casa de Bernarda Alba:

¡Ay qué trabajo me cuesta
quererte como te quiero!

Por tu amor me duele el aire,
el corazón
y el sombrero.

¿Quién me compraría a mí
este cintillo que tengo
y esta tristeza de hilo
blanco, para hacer pañuelos?

¡Ay qué trabajo me cuesta
quererte como te quiero!

(p 380/1)

Lorca made several drawings of women who visually revealed their frustration. La Maja de la Mantilla de Madrinas, as Prieto calls her, is a typical Granadian beauty with huge eyes and lashes; but she looks sad and lonely. Lorca is suggesting that this pose was common in girls from his home region. Another drawing illustrates a girl wearing a romantic long dress; she carries red flowers and represents the visual equivalent of Doña Rosita down to the colour symbolism (red and white) found in the play. She is surrounded by an idyllic setting of flowers and fountain and yet her eyes are downcast. She appears to be waiting at the end of a road for someone. The parallel with Rosita seems obvious now. She too is afflicted by the tragedy of an unrequited love. In the play it is man once more who is incapable of returning love, for his voyage to America is no more than an escape route. Time goes by and her hopes and illusions fade and her bitterness gradually increases. Popular verse has often treated the theme of frustrated love and this rhyme implies that love is only true if it is unhappy:

> Querer por sólo querer
> Sin esperanza de premio;
> Es un querer desdichado,
> Pero es querer verdadero.[13]

As in Yerma and even to a certain extent in La casa de Bernarda Alba, the essence of the drama lies in the fact that very little happens, but that fantasy keeps up the pretence that something will pass. The song sung by the Solteras echoes the girls' longing for sexual fulfilment which, as usual, has its home in the countryside:

> Porque mujer te vi
> a la orilla del mar,
> tu dulce languidez
> me hacía suspirar,
> y aquel dulzor sutil
> de mi ilusión fatal
> a la luz de la luna
> lo viste naufragar. (p 1411)



The girls in the final play Lorca wrote will never attain freedom, for they are victims of traditional Spain, those victims sensed by Laurie Lee:

> I remember walking the narrow crowded Sierpes, the serpent street of various temptations, listening to the hot voices of the youths undressing their fabulous and imaginary mistresses. Or exploring the dark, shut oriental side streets, where the locked-up girls gazed out at the world through heavily barred windows. 14

It is ironic that when the Criada loses sexual encounters on the death of her mistress's husband, Adela finds a kind of escape in snatched moments of passion with Pepe. These moments do not help her to conceal her hostility to the oppression of the mourning period imposed upon her and her sisters:

> ADELA Pienso que este luto me ha cogido en la peor época de mi vida para pasarlo.
>
> MAGDALENA Ya te acostumbrarás.
>
> ADELA (Rompiendo a llorar con ira.) No me acostumbraré. Yo no puedo estar encerrada. No quiero que se me pongan las carnes como a vosotras; no quiero perder mi blancura en estas habitaciones; mañana me pondré mi vestido verde y me echaré a pasear por la calle. ¡Yo quiero salir!
>
> (p 1466)

Cobb's comment on the extent of her passion which he regards as a mania is only a radically different way of facing up to the same problems as those faced by her sisters. It should also be noted that the cruel, unbending domination which Bernarda exercises to maintain authority is a façade to protect herself from the frustration she is suffering: now widowhood and perhaps earlier an unhappy marriage, for she speaks of her dead husband with no affection, and even unwilling maternity for a woman who might have wanted other things with her life. The idea is not so wildly capricious as it first

sounds, for Bernarda is a product of the society in which she lives. Her blind acceptance of its values could unconsciously be an act of vengeance for the frustrations of her past life. Adela's wilful rebellion against the laws imposed by her mother shows a strength of mind which her sisters are unable to emulate. She knows that Martirio's love for Pepe cannot be successful:

> ADELA — Por eso procuras que no vaya con él. No te importa que abrace a la que no quiere; a mí, tampoco. Ya puede estar cien años con Angustias, pero que me abracé a mí se te hace terrible, porque tú lo quieres también, lo quieres.
>
> MARTIRIO — (Dramática.) ¡Sí! Déjame decirlo con la cabeza fuera de los embozos. ¡Sí! Déjame que el pecho se me rompa como una granada de amargura. ¡Le quiero! (p 1527)

The frustration which Martirio feels and knows that she will never be able to banish is typical of the lot of Lorca's female characters. Even Adela, the most rebellious of his heroines, cannot break free from the noose society has placed around her neck. Trias Monje concludes in his examination of woman in the dramatist's work that "Casadas o solteras, desleales o leales, fértiles o estériles, las mujeres de García Lorca son una en el fondo; estremecida carne, angustiado sentir, objeto delicado de poesía y tragedia."[15] They are generally that, but they are more than mere creations of fantasy, they are poetic translations of the women who were trapped, even without realising it, in society's destructive grip. They also reveal an extremely strong sexual urge which the majority of male characters cannot satisfy. Lorca's elegy to 'Doña Juana la Loca,' written very early in his career, states the common anguish of Spanish woman:

> Tenías la pasión que da el cielo de España.
> La pasión del puñal, de la ojera y el llanto. (p 186)

The Aggressive Woman

Although there are, especially in his traditional puppet plays, male characters who are dominant,[16] it is Lorca's female protagonists who display an aggressiveness which lend to his portrayal of woman a more ambiguous tone than is first realized. An aggressive quality is especially noticeable in his mothers or women with a strong sexual urge such as Belisa, the Doncella and the Novia.

Mothers, of course, traditionally held a place of authority next to their husbands, but in practice they held their own against their 'masters':

> In the ideal pattern of husband and wife relationship the husband's distinctive role is that of the authoritarian head of the family who makes all the decisions; the wife's role is to be submissive, retiring, frugal and uncritical of her husband. Though there may be certain discrepancy in practice between the ideal pattern and real behaviour, it is precisely the unquestioning acceptance of the ideal relationship that makes for a highly-knit family stability and the sanctity of the home.... From the ideal pattern one may well suppose that the husband is the key personality of the real power behind the thrones. The Church fully realises this and depends on its domination over the women for eventual control of the family. It is true that the majority of women are seemingly submissive and dominated by their husbands - "lo que tú quieras" .... is the natural cry of outward submission, but in some cases it is a question of keeping small rules so that the breaking of big ones will not be noticed. Wives are nevertheless careful to perpetuate the myth of the all powerful father in their children's eyes, because it tends to stability, and, of course, to discipline in the home.[17]

In addition to being socially dominant, woman's natural emotions incline her to overrule all else. Bernarda and the Madre in Bodas de sangre are guilty of the charge with which Neumann criticises woman:

> .... in the clinging, ensnaring function of the woman we already discern a will to release nothing from her domination, but in the function of diminution and devouring this will is still stronger and is seen to be aggressively negative. [18]

The Zapatera prodigiosa is the first of Lorca's heroines who emphatically emphasises the aggressiveness of her emotions. Shawn in The Playboy of the Western World (1907) and the Zapatero are related by the ferocity of the women they choose:

> SHAWN (in terrified earnest) She wouldn't suit you, and she with the divil's own temper the way you'd be strangling one another in a score of days. (He makes the movement of strangling with his hands.) It's the like of me only that she'll out for; a quiet simple fellow wouldn't raise upon her if she scratched itself. [19]

The Doncella's sexual appetite is equalled by that of Belisa, whose headgear gives her the appearance of a mythical deity (p 988) and who appears condescendingly maternal in her attitude towards her husband. Her mother's eagerness to have her married to an old but rich man is at least more subtly hidden than the mother's desire in Retablillo de Don Cristóbal. She outlines her assets and needs as coldly as if her daughter were an animal she were trying to sell at market:

> Yo soy la madre de doña Rosita
> y quiero que se case,
> porque ya tiene dos pechitos
> como dos naranjitas,
> y un culito
> como un quesito,
> y una urraquita
> que le canta y le grita.
> Y es lo que yo digo:
> le hace falta un marido,
> y si fuera posible, dos.
> Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja. (p 1029)

The way in which the Madre in Bodas de sangre exerts considerable influence on her son is typical of the authority mothers and in particular widows retained in Spain. Lisón Tolosana quotes from Machado to describe how woman affects home life:

> Donde la mujer suele estar como en España .... en su puesto, es decir en su casa, cerca del fogón y consagrada al cuidado de sus hijos, es ella la que casi siempre domina, hasta imprimir el sello de voluntad a la sociedad entera. El verdadero problema es allí el de la emancipación de los varones, sometidos a un régimen maternal demasiado rígido. La mujer perfectamente abacial en la vida pública es voz cantante y voto decisivo en todo lo demás ..... matriarcado español. [20]

The Novia is equal to man in her physical strength; when she grips her maid's wrists the Criada cries in pain: "Tienes más fuerza que un hombre".(p1204) She certainly is not the passive woman of convention. Yerma tries to remain passive and cold in her relationship with Juan. However, she wants to assert herself more and more, indeed to play the male and female role in order to bear a child. Traditionally woman's sterility is encircled by fear of her never-ending demand for the man; the Bible contains a frank warning:

> There are three things that are never satisfied,
> Yea four things say not; 'It is enough'
> The Grave; and the barren womb;
> The earth that is not filled with water;
> And the fire that saith not; "It is enough". [21]

The Maniquí, in Así que pasen cinco años, like Yerma so desires a child that she tries to arouse her partner from his normal state. When the model calls the young man "dormida laguna", she is implicitly criticising his lack of virile power. Nóvoa Santos' discussion of the strength and constancy of woman's sexual drive gives further proof of the reality of these characters' behaviour:

Es la mujer un organismo pansexual. Al paso que la actividad sexual del macho tiene sólo un valor esporádico y, en cierto modo, secundario en cambio, todo el conjunto del organismo femenino está estructurado para la función de la maternidad - función característica y eminentemente altruísta, según la expresión de Lombroso y Ferrero -, obligada consecuencia de la fecundación. Poco importa que a consecuencia de variados accidentes, o a causa de especialísimas situaciones de la vida (morbos, soltería, claustración, etc.), no desarrolle la mujer su función maternal, porque, a pesar de todo, no deja de ser un hecho biológico sobresaliente el carácter pansexual del organismo femenino. 22

Even the long married couple, Rosita's aunt and uncle, have their moments of unhappiness. It is the aunt who, despite appearances, maintains her authority:

TÍA Pero¿es que conmigo no se puede hablar?
TÍO Se puede, pero prefiero callarme.
TÍA Aunque te quedes con tus palabras de reproche.
TÍO ¿Para qué voy a decir nada a estas alturas? Por no discutir soy capaz de hacerme la cama, de limpiar mis trajes con jabón de palo y cambiar las alfombras de mi habitación.
TÍA No es justo que te des ese aire de hombre superior y mal servido, cuando todo en esta casa esta supeditada a tu comodidad y a tus gustos.
TÍO (Dulce.) Al contrario, hija. (p 1385/6)

It is the aunt and servant who effectively rule the household and take care of Rosita, while the uncle is pushed very much into the background, his hobby of growing roses being tolerated as a diversion which keeps him occupied. He dies first leaving the resilient Ama to look after his widow and niece.

La Poncia reveals in humorous fashion woman's tyranny in La casa de Bernarda Alba. She tells the daughters how she used to control her husband by hitting him:

LA PONCIA ¡Yo pude con él!
MARTIRIO ¿Es verdad que le pegaste algunas veces?
LA PONCIA Sí, y por poco si le dejo tuerto..
MAGDALENA ¡Así debían ser todas la mujeres!
LA PONCIA Yo tengo la escuela de tu madre. Un día me dijo no sé qué cosa y le maté todos los colorines con la mano del almirez. (Ríen.) (p 1477)

Magdalena's statement that all women should follow La Poncia's initiative shows how they have been brought up to consider man as a stranger, almost as an enemy. It also reinforces the aggressive streak to be found in many of the dramatist's female protagonists. In this sense, then, the maid is an echo of Bernarda's domineering cruelty, her refusal to think things out and her belief in her right to order all her household. Huxley points out the qualities essential for an efficient dictator: "To rule efficiently one must have 'faith', i.e. an irrational conviction of one's own rightness and of other people's wrongness; one must be intolerant; and one must be able to presecute with equanimity."[23] Bernarda meets these requirements. She rules through fear and not respect not only by the harshness of her words but also by the violence of her actions. She roughly removes powder from Angustias' face and she strikes Martirio. Her rigidity becomes almost ridiculous as time goes on. The callousness with which she treats her servants and her fanatically high standards turn them into enemies: "Menos gritos y más obras. Debías haber procurado que todo esto estuviera más limpio para recibir al duelo. Vete. No es este tu lugar." (p 1445) The absolute firmness of her intention to keep guard over her daughters reflects a maniacal need to exert power and authority until her death, even if she has to use force to achieve the outward appearance of order. Her spinechilling warning that "Una hija que desobedece deja de ser hija para convertirse en una enemiga" (p 1507) is a declaration of war on any of her daughters who disobey. She is in fact, as Honig implies in his assessment of her character, the reversal of the procreative image of

woman,for she is sterility itself:

> She is not consumed by the tragedy - she consumes it. It would be easy to identify her as an incarnation of evil, but one ought to be prepared to say first of all of which evil she is the body. Most obviously she is a force of repression on which she survives behind various masks - family pride, inverted tradition, honor, religious piety. But she does not sincerely represent these, her action as repressor of life force becomes the most feasible means of identifying her. 24

Although she seems to distrust and even hate man, she, like many Spanish women, had been forced into marriage perhaps for the mere reason of escaping spinsterhood. It is also possible to gain more insight into the character of Bernarda when one considers her age. She will have passed through the menopause - a transition which can leave its mark on many women. Indeed in 1929 Jiménezde Asúa remarked on the effect it could produce:

> En la menopausia ocurre una transformación morfológica heterosexual, que se caracteriza por la aparición en la mujer de ciertos signos sexuales masculinos, como la robustez general, la voz grave, el vello de la cara y del tronco, etc. El estado psíquico se transforma en igual sentido, adquiriendo la hembra una energía, a veces una agresividad que no tuvo, y que la acerca a la norma psicológica del varón. 25

Bernarda possesses some of these physical traits; again Lorca has instinctively sensed woman's qualities and faults. Adela's suicide sets the final damning seal on her mother's life and is the tragic outcome of woman's misspent energies.

The demands which woman places on man, be it sexually or socially, can only partly be explained by the influences social traditions have exerted on her. Increasingly, feminists were urging women to be as aggressive and frank in their

behaviour as their male counterparts. To find another motive for Lorca to have drawn such a revealing and even frightening portrayal of woman, it is necessary to look not outside to society, but inside, within the dramatist's own personality.

A Personal Viewpoint of Woman

"It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman manly or man womanly." Virginia Woolf[26]

Lorca showed in some of his poetry and plays a malaise which pointed to emotional disturbances. He never explicitly revealed what it was that caused him such distress, although in letters written around 1927 and 1928 he did refer several times to the pain he was suffering. He told Sebastián Gasch in 1928: "Estoy muy baqueteado y maltratado de pasiones que tengo que vencer; pero me empiezo a encontrar libre, solo, en mi propia creación y esfuerzo" (p 1649) and in the same year, he repeated to Jorge Zalamea that he was enduring a grave crisis: "Y teniendo conflictos de sentimientos muy graves y estando transido de amor, de sociedad, de cosas feas, tengo y sigo mi norma de alegría a toda costa. No quiero que me venzan." (p 1666) It becomes apparent that the happiness Lorca mentioned is a façade, a kind of barrier behind which he could protect his private feelings. Three years later, he returned to the subject, guardedly comforting Carlos Morla Lynch and his wife on the death of their child with the words that he understands their pain: "porque te entiendo y porque..también estoy acostumbrado a sufrir por cosas que la gente no comprende ni sospecha." (p 1677)

Did the pain and anguish the poet tried to keep hidden from the gaze

of the public penetrate his work? It is present, as happened in his own life, in an ill-defined, general impression in many of his works; only occasionally does it occupy a prominent position. Stripping some of the events in the Romancero gitano of their glitter and colour, there lies at the base violence and often a sordidness which make an uneasy contribution to the generally accepted opinion of the poems. Antonio el Camborio is involved in a brawl, no more; his strutting, pompous figure makes him less of a hero and more of a señorito. The violent reactions of the Guardia Civil to the gipsies are sadistic and cruel in the extreme. Poeta en Nueva York most openly expresses the fears and confusion of the poet, which are heightened by his loneliness in a foreign land. He is assassinated by the sky in 'Vuelta de paseo'; 'Poema doble de lago Edem' reduces him to a "pulso herido", while he loses his identity in 'Luna y panorama de los insectos'.

Elsewhere in the collection de describes himself as armless, unable to fend off the attacks launched on him. In short, the world is for him only:

Agonía, agonía, sueño, fermento y sueño.
Este es el mundo, amigo, agonía, agonía. (p 525)

He is essentially alone in a hostile environment: perhaps for some mysterious reason a highly ambiguous way of revealing his alienation from society? As early as 1925 Lorca revealed in Mariana Pineda the general malaise he shared with some contemporary poets. His heroine's lament: "Esta angustia de andar sin saber dónde voy" (p 829) could well be a line taken from Cernuda or even Alberti. Certainly the author experienced at a relatively early age the anguish which found its way to the fore in his experimental drama. When the Desnudo dies in El público, he is deserted by his fellow men. Perhaps the most open cry of anguish comes in the filmscript Viaje a la luna. The simplicity of the sign "help" emphasizes how much he wanted to be helped.

What exactly was the poet trying to hide? It seems evident not only from the reports of some of his contemporaries but also from the veiled and often ambiguous allusions in his own work, that Lorca had homosexual tendencies which threatened to divorce him from the circle of friends he admired and loved unless he made a strong effort to hide his inclinations from all but the very closest of friends. 1928 was the year, according to Schonberg, when he broke off a close and allegedly intimate relationship with Dalí. Clearly the social pressures must have been extremely heavy at that time, for homosexuality was regarded with scorn and contempt by the majority of people. Kenny examines the general attitude of the Spaniards to sexual matters:

> For a man is a creature of action and passion; he demonstrates courage and strength and has 'spunk'. To be accused of 'not having testicles' carries the slight of cowardice, and a man who does not take up the challenge will be dishonoured. There is little homosexuality in Spain, and the word <u>marica</u> has a contemptuous and ugly ring.[27]

Only the bravest and even the most foolhardy of individuals would have openly admitted what would have been considered sexual deviance by a rigidly conservative society. Indeed, contempt or at least distrust for homosexuals has been part of social and literary custom for many centuries. There is, however, in Barea's book an opposing view to the one proposed by Kenny, which must carry some weight. Taking account of the authority of the Church and society on sexual matters, outwardly the individual was forced into a straight-jacket of conventional behaviour which would obviously create problems: "....the same atmosphere helps to breed an astonishing great number of sexual introverts, extroverts and perrerts, of sadists and masochists, and an even greater number of people who come near to being one or the other."[28] This is reflected to a certain extent in Lorca's treatment of his characters' sexual inclinations: Amnón rapes his own half-sister; Preciosa flees from the

symbolic male; the Guardia Civil out off Rosa la de los Camborios' breasts; Martirio is scared of men; Yerma cannot be made to relax; the Novia does not wish to settle down to 'normal' married life; Don Perlimplín cannot consummate his marriage; the Doncella, Belisa and Rosita have voracious sexual appetites and the list could go on. Lorca was certainly aware of the sexual beauty of women, but it seems that this was not enough for him. In any case the perhaps stronger than normal 'female' part of him which Virginia Woolf deemed necessary in an artist gave him increased perception into woman's plight in its social and physical aspects, even though he was fearful of woman's aggressively fertile capacity. Klein quotes the declaration of Paul Bousfield on the social revelance of sexual attitudes:

> Masculine and feminine traits are discovered not only in members of both sexes, but in the same individual, and the fact is expressed by saying that individuals are bisexual; that is, each individual possesses qualities of both sexes .....One may say that all men have a potential woman in them and all women a potential man, and that under present conditions what we may call the 'masculine' side of woman and the 'feminine' side of man are repressed, at a sometimes great cost to the personality as well as a loss to society of a part of the psychic energies of individuals. [29]

So the author has acutely noted the danger to society in the middle twenties when the natural urges were repressed in the name of decency. Salvador de Madariaga echoes Woolf during a discussion of the values of the poetess Rosalía de Castro: "Todo artista ha menester de los dos sexos en su espíritu; el genio masculino, para fecundar; el talento femenino, para dar forma y cuerpo a la obra."[30] It is not surprising then that Lorca understood women, perhaps too well for the picture he

draws of her to be entirely flattering. As a homosexual, and thus unable to take part in a productive relationship with woman, he would have been extremely conscious of her power and perhaps unknowingly jealous. Certainly marriage would have been impossible: this he admits in 'Trasmundo':

YO: Voy a sentir en mis manos
una inmensa flor de dedos
Y el símbolo del anillo.
No lo quiero. (p 402)

The frustration caused by the homosexual's inability to participate in a fruitful alliance is veiled by a slightly mocking tone in the poem of 'Juan Breva':

Juan Breva tenía
cuerpo de gigante
y voz de niña.
Nada como su trino.
Era la misma
pena cantando
detrás de una sonrisa.
Evoca los limonares
de Málaga la dormida,
y hay en su llanto dejos
de sal marina.
Como Homero cantó
ciego. Su voz tenía,
algo de mar sin luz
y naranja exprimida. (p 320)

The bitter sense of being dependent on woman for life becomes stronger in the more strident Poeta en Nueva York. The poem 'Oda a Walt Whitman' cries out in anger against homosexuals who tarnish the world with their effeminate exaggeration, defending only those who feel that the strength of their emotions must be satisfied in private, and that only spiritual brotherhood can be praised:

Puede el hombre, si quiere, conducir su deseo
por vena de coral o celeste desnudo.
Mañana los amores serán rocas y el Tiempo
una brisa que viene dormida por las ramas.

Por eso no levanto mi voz, viejo Walt Whitman,
contra el niño que escribe
nombre de niña en su almohada,
ni contra el muchacho que se viste de novia
en la oscuridad del ropero,
ni contra los solitarios de los casinos
que beben con asco el agua de la prostitución,
ni contra los hombres de mirada verde
que aman al hombre y queman sus labios en silencio.
Pero sí contra vosotros, maricas de las ciudades,
de carne tumefacta y pensamiento inmundo,
madres de lodo, arpías, enemigas sin sueño
del Amor que reparte coronas de alegría. (p 525)

His 'Sonetos del amor oscuro' now mark the final step in his developing homosexuality. Whitman is the ideal; his beauty provokes Lorca's admiration but the poet is still tormented by baser passions and self-doubt; Aleixandre describes his reaction on reading the sonnets:

> Me leía sus <u>Sonetos del amor oscuro</u>, prodigio de pasión,
> de entusiasmo, de felicidad, de tormento, puro y ardiente
> monumento al amor, en que la primera materia es ya la carne,
> el corazón, el alma del poeta en trance de destrucción. (p 1831)

Turning to Lorca's plays, I find, in spite of some rather wild suggestions by Cobb,[31] no <u>real</u> indication of his sexual attitudes until the experimental plays at the beginning of the thirties. <u>Así que pasen cinco años</u> contains several complex characters. The Joven's timidity and his desire to close all doors and windows cast him not as the dominating male but more like the frustrated females in <u>La casa de Bernarda Alba</u>. His virginity is viewed with suspicion by the virile Amigo, who indulges in physical horseplay with him as if to shake him out of his lethargy, and so turn him into the sexual athlete he himself is:

JOVEN: Déjame. No tengo ganas de bromas.
AMIGO: ¡Huuy! ¿Quién era ese viejo? ¿Un amigo tuyo?
¿Y dónde están en esta casa los retratos de las
muchachas con las que tú te acuestas? Mira:
(Se acerca.) te voy a coger por las solapas,
te voy a pintar de colorete esas mejillas de cera,
.....o así, restregadas.
JOVEN: (Irritado.) ¡Déjame!
AMIGO: Y con un bastón te voy a echar a la calle. (p 1056/7)

The Amigo is in effect doubting the young man's masculinity and this theme is picked up again when the Niño thinks that the cat is male and not female. In other words, the dramatist is blurring the clearcut division between male and female until he has only one distinction left: maternity. The Maniquí is the Joven's projection of his frustrated desires, but he cannot face up to present reality and thus loses the opportunity to become a father. Once again in El público male/female identity is confused. The real Juliet is played by a man, for he is the perfect being - too perfect for a woman:

MUCHACHO 1° : El acto del sepulcro estaba prodigiosamente desarrollado. Pero yo descubrí la mentira cuando vi los pies de Julieta. Eran pequeñísimos.

DAMA 2ª : ¡Delicioso! No querrá usted ponerlos reparos.

MUCHACHO 1° : Sí, pero eran demasiado pequeños para ser pies de mujer. Eran demasiado perfectos y demasiado femeninos. Eran pies de hombre, pies inventados por un hombre. (p 1159)

This opening scene of the play concentrates on the relationship between a Vine figure and a Bell figure, both men. However, one is prepared to play the female and the two argue and swap roles, being alternatively dominant and meek, until the audience is completely confused as to who is meant to be the male and who the female figure. While they quarrel they are performing a kind of ballet, obviously meant to be between male and female. Finally, the fifth Estudiante states his willingness to love anyone, disregarding social

barriers. What is the point of this deliberate confusion? Lorca is implying that the individual should be free to love whom he pleases in whatever manner he wishes. He is in fact proposing a radical alteration in sexual and social customs. In this play at least (which, one must remember, he was unwilling to see performed until 1935) his frankness is explicit and intended to shock. It is also worth noting that while Lorca was advocating sexual freedom in his play, he could not refrain from pointing out the repulsiveness of the naked body of the Viejo and the Pámpano who is "blanco de yeso". (p 1153) The rebellious stance he was preaching could be more theoretical than practical; Lorca was trying to keep away from the physical aspect of homosexuality and to revel instead in the fraternal, idealistic concept he shared with Whitman.

On the surface Bodas de sangre seems a play concerned with the unreasoning passion of the Novio and Leonardo in the face of social opposition. However, Lorca, was according to Cobb, worried about the reception of the play: "Lorca himself was uneasy before the premiere, not about how the play would be received, but about how it would be interpreted."[32] Leonardo is capable of giving up his home and children in order to satisfy his passion, even though this step leads to death, the ultimate sterility. This is perhaps, for Lorca, who was preoccupied with death, one of the crucial symptoms of his torments. Could it be that, although he sincerely felt homosexual inclinations, he could not reconcile his passions to the fact that he would never be able to cheat death, as it were, by creating new life?

Yerma treats the theme of sterility and the protagonist's inability to face up to it. Generally the theme can be broadened to include man as well as woman. Juan reflects the homosexual's inability to produce a fertile result of his marriage; consequently he, like the homosexual, is unable to carry on his line and thus attain a kind of immortality. Hayes discusses in a general manner the productive gift of woman and its effect on man:

> Weston La Barre suggests: "A woman can give proof of her femaleness in a very simple and irrefutable way - by having a baby - but a male must always prove something, his manhood within the group. What reason indeed, would press women to create poetry, music, art - when they can do better than that and make real human beings".
>
> The argument that men really envy women because of their ability to produce a child and are therefore spurred on to cultural creativity is a new one, carried even further by Ashley Montagu, who writes, "Men have been jealous of women's ability to give birth to children and they have been jealous of their ability of menstruate, but men have not been content with turning these capabilities into disabilities for they have surrounded the one with handicapping rituals and the other with taboos that in most cases amount to punishments". [33]

Lorca has laid bare the second part of Montagu's statement by using his plays to criticize old conventions, but he has, in addition, constantly come up against maternity as the one means of creation which as a homosexual he cannot achieve. Yerma's final act, that of killing her husband and therefore her unconceived child, could well echo Lorca's knowledge that he would never be able to take part in a fruitful relationship. Indeed,

there must be a parallel between the timid, non-fertile male characters such as the Joven, Juan and Don Perlimplín and the heavily maternal figures of the Zapatera; Yerma and Rosita. Yerma's wish to engender a child by herself is doubly poignant and significant if one takes into account Lorca's frustrations. She is then the most personal and revealing of all the dramatist's characters, and similarly the play is the most deeply imprinted with Lorca's emotions, for it contains the problems of sterility, especially in terms of water and dryness, and the obsessive longings of the wife coupled with Juan's inability to satisfy her.

In spite of Auclair's and other critics' denials of Lorca's homosexuality[34], it is clearly reasonable to interpret his plays and poems with reference to his own experiences. Having read Oscar Wilde and having been acquainted with Freud's philosophy, he gradually became more open in his opinions until he was moving in a direction of radical frankness. Cobb is right in asserting that:

> Lorca went beyond Spanish tradition at least approaching the ancient problem of the artist with a homosexual attitude and his responsibilities to his culture ..... Certainly García Lorca at the time of his death was hesitating on a more open approach to the problem. [34]

The frustrations and bitterness from which nearly all his characters suffered mirrored the intensity of his own anguish, which, it must be added, proved exceptionally creative in literature if not in life.

Epilogue

Pero no quiero mundo ni sueño, voz divina,
quiero mi libertad, mi amor humano
en el rincón más oscuro de la brisa que nadie quiera.
¡Mi amor humano!

Poeta en New York (p 499)

The progress Lorca made in his relatively short literary career reflects not only the increasing tensionsof his own emotions but his attitude towards the mood of the social environment. He was influenced by his personal feelings towards society rather than by the many fashions passing with extreme rapidity through the artistic life of Spain. However, several themes persist from the very beginning of his work and evolve gradually, taking a more prominent position in his personal philosophy. This is certainly the case with his desire to see social change and his obsession with women. Whether Lorca agreed with or even understood Freud's reasoning why women acted as they did or not, his portrayal of them shows how well he instinctively understood them and their position in society. How many of the attributes described here by Freud do we find in Lorca's plays? As Klein has written,

> Experience with female neurotics has taught Freud that there is among women a widespread, in fact a general dissatisfaction with their sexual role. It is expressed in inferiority feelings, in contempt for their own sex, in revolt against their passive role, in envy of man's greater freedom, in their ambition to equal man in intellectual or artistic achievements, in strivings for independence, in tendencies to domineer over other people, in all sorts of devices to make up for the social disadvantage of not being a man. 35

All the types of women Lorca examined - spinsters, wives, widows and mothers - are dissatisfied with their lot, although they show their frustrations in

different ways. There is one constant factor, however: it is always man who plays a destructive role in their attempt to find happiness or at least to reconcile themselves with their lot. In Bodas de sangre, La casa de Bernarda Alba and Yerma man contributes to the ultimate disaster by the importance he attaches to the eminently social preoccupation with money and social status. Time and time again too Lorca treated small details of social convention and tradition with the purpose of revealing their defects.

We must remember that the radical social changes which many people wanted to take place were mostly conceived and implemented in the cities and towns only: in many cases villages had no idea of what was happening in these centres. As Aceves points out, improvements in the social system, apart from complete revolution, take time:

> The problem of El Pinar illustrates the truism, pointed out by Ogburn in his theory of 'cultural lag' that social changes take much longer to be accepted than technological ones. For the people of El Pinar, the new alternative will not be of any use until the older norms are changed or done away with, a process that they have ever come to realize is not necessarily as simple as it sounds. 36

What Lorca was trying to emphasise was how little village life had changed in contrast to how quickly it needed to be changed. To assert, as critics such as Barea, Busette, Mora Guarnido, A. del Río and Carlos Morla Lynch have done, that Lorca's plays are not concerned with society, is to ignore the dramatist's declaration and, more to the point, the content of his own work.

I have shown that in the overwhelming majority of his plays Lorca has inserted, even in the smallest detail, a glimpse of the ills prevalent in the rural society of his day. Most of all he concentrated on challenging

the taboos surrounding sexual matters which put both sexes into a straightjacket of convention. Lorca's ábility to appeal to his audiences by sympathy and understanding of his characters' dilemmas unconsciously gave them the opportunity of assessing the true worth of hitherto blandly accepted social norms. Barea does note the potential power of the poet to touch the heart of Spaniards:

> in the sense of touching his people as though with the full charge of their half-unconscious feelings, intensified and transformed through his art. The emotional forces he released became part of the shapeless revolutionary movements of Spain whether he intended or not. 37

Although Lorca's plays are couched in a very Spanish style and are obviously concerned with the plight of woman in a society that had previously regarded them as little more than slaves and mothers, the urge to throw off the insidious influence of social restrictions and the choked cry for freedom are universal. He especially wanted the liberation of woman from her traditional role, for he believed that on achieving this society would automatically change for the better. He felt what Germaine Greer was to express some forty years later:

> If women liberate themselves, they will perforce liberate their oppressors: men might well feel that as sole custodians of sexual energy and universal protectors of women and children they have undertaken the impossible, especially now that their misdirected energies have precluded the ultimate weapon. 38

To simply overlook the fact that Lorca was frequently involved with the ordinary people of Spain is to treat the artist in a vacuum. Cernuda's outline of the true essense of a poet finds in Lorca a near perfect example:

El poeta no es, como generalmente se cree, criatura inefable que vive en las nubes (el nefelibata de que hablaba Darío), sino todo lo contrario; él acaso esté en contacto más íntimo con la realidad circundante. La realidad cambia, la sociedad se transforma, ya de modo gradual, ya de modo brusco y revolucionario, y el poeta, consciente de dichas transformaciones, debe hallar expresión adecuada para comunicar en sus venas su visión diferente del mundo.[39]

Lorca was a member of society as much as an artist: he knew that to make a character human he had to set his creation within his environment and against a web of social traditions. To do this, he used his own experience of Spain. Lorca was a poet of life not of illusions.

CHAPTER VII

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