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Leaping with Duende: Triangulating Dionysian Aesthetic and Spanish Surrealism in the Selected Poems of Federico Garcia Lorca

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores selected poems from Federico Garcia Lorca's two poetry volumes, *A Poet in New York* and *Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias,* from the perspective of his poetic thesis expounded in the lecture titled *Theory and Play of Duende*. The available scholarship on Lorca fundamentally focuses on the socio-politico-cultural undertones in his poetry. By bringing a fresh perspective to his poetry through the technique of Duende, this research challenges pre-existing notions popular in the available critical scholarship. A robust creative force that artists' work exudes without their control on it, Duende leaves a trance-like effect on the spectators/audience (and readers in case of poetry). Understood by many cultural critics and writers as an artistic inspiration deeply rooted in Spanish soil, Duende has long been riddled with mystical abstractions and subject to scholarly misconceptions. The current study makes it accessible through Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of Dionysian Aesthetic from his book *Birth of Tragedy*. Inspired by the Greek god Dionysus that stands for orgiastic energies, dance, and transgression, Dionysian Aesthetic is the manifestation of creative energies in art. This investigation also employs a Spanish concept called "Leaping" that bridges the gap between Duende and Dionysian Aesthetic, as this paper illustrates by reading Lorca's selected poems. Having its origin in Spanish poetry, Leaping is a technique characterized by associative jumps from subject matter to the unconscious mind keeping in perspective the emotions emanating from the poem. This essay triangulates Duende and Dionysian Aesthetic as theoretical props with Leaping technique in order to analyse Lorca's poetry, and this is how it intervenes in contemporary scholarship on Lorca.

Keywords: Duende, Leaping poetry, Dionysian aesthetic, Triangulation

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Most of the scholarly research on Lorca's poetry has focused on the socio-political upheaval in Spain, which was exacerbated by the fascist policies of the Franco regime in 1939. This limits scholars from analyzing his poetry without a pertinent epistemic framework and attempts to study Lorca on a tangent. Conversely, his essay on the *Theory and Play of Duende* is a tour de force to decipher Spanish culture and its rich artistic tradition that also enables readers to trace Lorca's poetic works.

The body of research on Lorca predominately employs external frameworks to study his poetry. The foremost methodical approach to Lorca comes from French Surrealism, which taints Lorca's poetry to remain singular and not capture the creative impulse that the poet aimed at. It also leaves his poetry unable to reach past the confines of surrealist precepts used to understand a work of art.

David F. Richter's (2014) work *Lorca at the Edge of Surrealism* studies the poetry of Lorca by engaging with the debate on Surrealism pertinent to the study of Lorca's poetry. It dates to argumentation which sprang from a rivalry between Andre Breton and George Bataille who were devoted scholars of the school of Surrealism. As Breton is known to have pioneered the French Surrealist School, he celebrates the unconscious influence on the production of the work of art. He popularized surrealist techniques such as "psychic automatism" to study the "formlessness" in any work. Bataille, Richter argues, believed that Breton's technique espoused in his *Surrealist Manifesto* fell short of explaining many artists and writers of regions other than France. At this critical juncture, Breton and Bataille's disagreement ended their friendship and critical domains. Bataille situated the trajectory of his arguments around the loopholes in Breton's work and popularized the Spanish Surrealist School. Richter (2014) explores the relationship of the Spanish Surrealist School with Lorca's work and emphasizes various vital arguments. Proving beneficial to our study, he writes:

> For reasons ranging from politics to aesthetics, Spain's relationship with surrealism during the 1920s and 1930s was complex, as evidenced by the varied critical assessments of the movement and the difficulty in assigning clear-cut labels to the work of that era. (p.7)

Undoubtedly, it is an essential point because Bataille's study of the literary movements of Spain explores the diversity of thought and experimentation revealing an almost different account. Bataille also critiqued Breton's readiness to describe everything in terms of formlessness and surrealism because it undermined the richness of the Spanish experience and their art. Moreover, on studying Lorca's literary contribution, Bataille argues that Lorca is the poet with whom French Surrealism has done much worse. Richter (2014) notes:

> Lorca's many letters and declarations maintain the multilayered nature of his work and therefore suggest that it does not conform entirely to conventional surrealist thought. Like others, Lorca resisted the lack of

> control in artistic creation and claimed an adherence to a conscious "poetic logic," and he is explicit that this "logic" denies the spontaneity inherent to Breton's surrealism. (p. 28)

Surprisingly, Bataille's first contribution to the study of Lorca situates him vis-à-vis the French surrealists and attempts to find a literary position that enables the subsequent scholarship to explore Lorca objectively. Similarly, Richter makes a strong case from Bataille's argument that the formlessness in Lorca's poetic works is a "conscious effort" and does not spring from the trance-like poetic effusions of which he is held accountable. Richter argues:

> Lorca departs from a rethinking of traditional Spanish themes and forms and proposes a violent critique of established discourse. Rather than a mere regress to prevalent (or even modernist) forms and aesthetics, a position which many critics have assumed, I contend that Lorca's poetry and drama constitute a significant departure from such forms and even their vanguardist revisions. (p. 11)

However, Richter's argument for Lorca's "conscious effort" falls short of explaining why Lorca chooses to indulge in conscious formlessness. Richter's analysis makes the case for political atmosphere being the reason, but it is again viewed from an external framework of Spanish Surrealism that is forced on Lorca's work. He does not include the methodological application of its respective theorization of George Bataille's Spanish Surrealism on Lorca's poetry. It traces the historicity and philosophy of literary movements underpinning the Spanish Avant-Garde and *Generation '27 Poetics* in the shape of Bataille's Surrealism and vacillates between Andre Breton's "automatism" and Bataille's addition "inform":

> . . . in the poetic expression of Spain's Generation of 1927, artistic creation and philosophical inquiry do, in fact, intersect and inter-penetrate one another as art and praxis meld, and that the elaboration of Bataille's dissident surrealist and other aesthetic and political theories amplify our understanding of a period in Spain which is varied in its interests and forms of representations. (2007, p. 7)

In addition, Richter's approach restricts Lorca to a particular movement in Spanish tradition and does not let it speak to readers of his originality. This results in delimiting Lorca's artistic genius and diminishing its stylistic wonder. Richter (2007) goes at length to provide a detailed philosophical argumentation marked by the socio-political milieu of the time and cultural nuance. Richter notes: "The interest in death for both Lorca and Bataille, along with the inspiration derived from *duende*, takes shape in light of Nietzsche's writings as both thinkers appeal to the primitive Dionysian drives of marginalized cultures." (p. 75). However, the intention behind this is not to situate Lorca into his regional epistemic system, i.e. Duende, but to apply an extension of Surrealism, which is essentially an external framework.

Furthermore, Richter (2007) alludes to similar terminology such as "Spanish Surrealism" and "Dionysian Tradition" in Lorca's work upon his critical investigation. Richter argues: "Art forms conceived by and through the *duende*, then, are much more than just manifestations of a source of artistic inspiration since they provide the active and "live" styles ("estilos vivos") which are opposed to other styles or forms based on calculation ("geometría") (p. 76). However, it is noteworthy that the writer refers to these terminologies to highlight that both are present in Lorca's work that the poet himself reads into his poetry. In contrast, I triangulate both to make the concept of Duende more palpable for critical scholarship, which Richter also alludes to but without effect.

However, Robert Bly (2008), in his book *Leaping Poetry,* explores Spanish poetics from the concept of "leaping." He describes leaping as: "my idea . . . of leaping is that the great work of art has at its center a long floating leap, around which the work of art in ancient times used to gather itself like steel shaving around the magnet (Bly, p. 4). Also referred to as "associative jumps" or "wide associations," leaping is a critical indicator that helps us read the motion and metaphors in Lorca's poetry, which has otherwise led many critics and scholars to varied obscure frameworks. Bly's conception of leaping is essential because it provides the reason for Lorca's unique poetic style and facilitates the systematic application of Duende to read Lorca.

After surveying the body of research available on Lorca, it is crucial to highlight that in all the works listed above, there is a solid research gap regarding the study of Lorca from his own regional framework. This article situates Lorca into his regional episteme by first building a theoretical framework and then analyzing his selected poems from two books of Lorca's poetry *Poet in New York* and *Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* selected and translated by Robert Bly and Martin Sorrel respectively. Moreover, by triangulating Duende and Dionysus, this article intervenes in the Lorcan canon by foregrounding the poetic technique of "Leaping" as it bridges the gap between theorization and application of this study.

Duende, Dionysus, and the Spanish surrealism

This section traces Duende by triangulating Dionysian Aesthetic and Spanish Surrealism to highlight how they benefit the critical appreciation of Lorca as a poet and become a pertinent framework for studying his poetry. In 1930, Federico Garcia Lorca (2007) presented a lecture in the Academy of Buenos Aires titled *Theory and Play of Duende* as a treatise to his worldview on art and the Spanish literary tradition. He aimed to distinguish between his poetic genius in the Spanish canon and the western perception of poetry. In the lecture, Lorca expands a kaleidoscopic view on the workings of "Duende" and its role in nurturing the creative process. It embodies a Spanish experience through the eyes of the poet to encompass the socio-political, philosophical, and cultural undertones in Spain. Lorca draws his inspiration from the remote folksingers of the Moorish times to the

contemporary bullfighters and dancers in Spain to demonstrate how they exhibit the creative energies and the spirit of Spanish art in their performances. By referring to common saying Spanish people use, "This has much duende," Lorca amplifies a celebrated Andalusian singer who says: "You have a voice, you understand style, but you'll never ever succeed because you have no duende" (Lorca, p. 1).

It has always proven cumbersome to understand Duende due to its elusive nature. Lorca (2007), however, attempts to explain it by borrowing Goethe's commentary on the famous Italian artist Paganini as "A mysterious force that everyone feels and no philosopher has explained" (Lorca, p. 2). Nevertheless, his endeavor is far from explaining the true nature and the spirit which energizes "the very substance of art" (Lorca, p. 2). He supplements this artistic "substance" by a spirit that runs in the veins of a singer and says: "The duende is not in the throat: the duende surges up, inside, from the soles of the feet" (Lorca, p. 2).

Etymologically, the word duende comes from the Spanish folk tradition "duende de casa," which loosely translates to an entity that mischievously "stirs up trouble in the household" (Hirsch, 1999, p. 13). However, in the tradition of Andalusian singing, it means "the ineffable charm of certain gifted people, especially flamenco singers," to which common listeners resoundingly say, "this [singer] has much duende" (Lorca, 2007, p. 1).

Edward Hirsh (1999), an American poet and critic, in his article on Lorca titled "The Duende: A Column," puts the concept in perspective: The Duende rises up through the body. It burns through the soles of dancer's feet or expands in the torso of a singer. It courses through the blood breaks through a poet's back, like a pair of wings (p. 13). Similarly, Lorca (2007) draws an analogy between Arabic music and dance with Duende and says that within a performance arrives a point when the spectators charge with the "vigorous cries" of "Ole! Ole!" in Spanish that is close to capturing "Allah! Allah!" in Arabic. This happens when the audience in the bullfight cries out when they see a matador piercing the last sword in the bull's neck after eluding its horns (Lorca, p. 4).

Through death, Lorca explains, Duende finds its course. As the "spirit of the earth," the contemplation and realization of death is a deciding factor in relaying the creative energies in the Spanish tradition. He says: "Duende won't appear unless it can see the possibility of death" (as quoted in Hirsch, 1999. p. 13). This stark fascination with death is grounded in the work of a Duende artist unless he has a "mortal panic" towards death. To circumvent it, he can reach the heights of his creativity and achieve consolation. Lorca (2007) says: "if he [the artist] does not know he can haunt the death's house, if he's not certain to shake those branches we all carry, that do not bring, can never bring, consolation" (Lorca, p. 13). For example, in a ring, the bullfighter makes a spectacle out of his play to reduce his life to a "ridiculous" level in the immediacy of death. In that delicate moment, when the bull charges in deadly zeal at the bullfighter, the sheer danger permeating in the excitement is where Duende exists. Lorca says that: "the toreador (bullfighter)

who is bitten by the duende gives a lesson in Pythagorean music and makes us forget that he is constantly throwing his heart at the horns" (qtd. in Hirsch, 1999, p. 14).

Moreover, Lorca (2007) argues that the spectacle of death is omnipresent in Spanish culture. Traditional Spanish artists are the notaries of exhibiting a "dance with death" to reach Duende (Lorca, p. 5). He distinguishes such extreme creative labor from the rest of the world by calling Spain a "country of death, a country open to death" (Lorca, p. 5). Unlike many countries in the world, where the contemplation of death is melancholic and pathological, Lorca believes, "Spain is a country where the curtains are flung open, the ropes are cut, and death is invited in the room" (qtd. in Hirsch, 1999, p. 13). He further says, "A man in Spain is more alive when dead than anywhere else on Earth" (Lorca, 2007, p. 5). Spanish poets, artists, and performers all are fascinated with death, which cultivates the extraordinary energy in their crafts and bears the fruit of the 'spirit of the Earth" (quoted in Hirsch, 1999, p. 13). To quote Pablo Neruda's verse, like his numerous contemporaries, who set a mortal challenge to death in their poetry: "Death is coming in and leaving the tavern/death leaving and coming in" (Hirsch, 1999, p. 14).

After foregrounding death as an essence in Spanish tradition, Lorca (2007) sketches the two fundamental poetic inspirations in art: Angel and Muse. These two, Lorca asserts, are crucial in the formal side of every art form. The angel inspires the artists to make a symmetrical effort in their exhibition. It guides them in preferring the "order" of things painted on the canvas. However, in his poetic outpour, Lorca does not shy away from abstractions when describing the angel's doing. He says: "The angel guides and grants, like St. Raphael defends and spares, like St. Michaels proclaims and forewarns, like St. Gabriel" (Lorca, p. 2).

Moreover, allusions to Biblical references are a fair strategy that Lorca (2007) incorporates to represent a pious appeal, symbolically of the Angel with disciplinary and controlling connotations. The Angel artists, inspired by the angel, seek perfection and control over a work of art. Lorca comments: "The angel dazzles, but flies over a man's head, high above, shedding its grace, and the man realizes his work, or his charm, or his dance effortlessly" (p. 2).

On the contrary, Muse artists look at the world from the perspective of an imaginary color palette. The inspiration provokes their tendency to seek contentment in the limitations of the world. As Lorca (2007) comments: "[The muse] is distant and so tired that you'd think her heart half marble." It also tricks their imagination and raises it into the "bondage of aristocratic fineness" – a dangerous position for the poets because they lose the contemplation of death and think that their trajectory on the muse's wing will spare them from mortality and decay. It has a hallucinatory effect on the poets who forget that "he might be eaten, suddenly, by ants, or that a huge arsenical lobster might fall on his head" (Lorca, p. 3).

However, it is critical to note here that these two inspirations belong to the external world. The two collectively overpower the artists. Due to its external nature, Lorca (2007) discards them because he says, "the true struggle is with the duende" (p. 3). He further argues that the Duende "has to be roused from the farthest habitations of the blood" (qtd. in Hirsch, 1999, p. 13).

From Spanish culture, Lorca (2007) relates an example of a meeting of Flamenco singers in a tavern in Andalusia. The lead singers were Pastor Pavon and La Nina de Los Peines, who played one after the other. After Pastor Pavon had strummed his Flamenco guitar, the audience was silent, and no one had felt the emotion he was conveying. On observing the silence, La Nina de Los Peines got up and started singing in a fashion unique to the Andalusian tradition. "Like a madwoman, trembling like a medieval mourner," Lorca says, she got up and sang with "scorched throat, without voice, breath, color, but . . . with duende". The exuding appeal of the performance was highly off-tune because she had managed to "tear down the scaffolding of the song". Lorca argues that her performance had stripped the Muse and Angel inspiration as it was then ideal for Duende to appear. "She had to rob herself of the skill and safety," he says, and contemplate the immediacy of death (Lorca, p. 4).

Lorca (2007) concludes his essay on Duende by giving us a principle with the following lines: "The arrival of duende presupposes a radical change to all old kinds of form, bringing totally unknown and fresh sensations, with the qualities of a newly created rose, miraculous and almost religious enthusiasm" (Lorca, p. 4). The "radical shift" that Lorca explains which is crucial for setting the stage for Duende is an agent that lets the artists escape the boundaries of form. He further argues: "Reject the angel, and give the Muse a kick, and forget our fear of the scent of the violets that eighteenth-century poetry breathes out, and of the great telescope in whose lenses the Muse, made ill by the limitation, sleeps" (Lorca, p. 3).

The discouragement toward the twin forces of Angel and Muse and the rejection of form in the creative process lay down another important philosophical binary, which Friedrich Nietzsche (1999) popularized in his book *The Birth of Tragedy* as "Apollonian" and "Dionysian" in a critical study of the Greek tradition of tragedies.

Commenting on the philosophical foundations of Greek tradition, Nietzsche (1999) argues that the Grecian culture interlaced the essence that made the Greeks overcome the meaninglessness of existence in the tragedies. "Attic tragedy was a public spectacle in which poetry, music, and dance were essential constituents" (p. 10). Their cultural inclination and openness towards the arts brought them the sense of fulfillment that the "spectacle" warranted. By contrast, modern societies are structured where the "ills of industrialization and materialism" have clogged the culture of "spectacle", because of which human beings extract a momentary respite to contemplate and rethink their existential worth. It further removed us from getting in touch with our true nature, argues Nietzsche, which

was the essence of the Greek tragedies (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 10). For instance, Aeschylus's mortal and horrific drama of Agamemnon, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex,* and *Antigone*, and Homer's Epics represent the tragic scale of human suffering at their own hands, which ultimately was a cornerstone of meaning-making in the Grecian culture.

Moreover, the mythical tradition was of fundamental importance in the Greek tragedies. Invoking the gods of the Delphic temple and the prophecies of the Sphinx, the mythical resonance in these tragedies created a religious effect and eclipsed the spectators with a desire to give control of their affairs to the gods. However, in *The Birth of Tragedy,* Nietzsche (1999) views another critical factor that contributed to how these tragedies were written and their essential concern in the lives of human beings. He traces the spirit of creative inspiration for tragedies in the "stylistic opposites" of the two deities of Apollo and Dionysus.

Viewed and understood as an aesthetic lens, Nietzsche (1999) attempts to chalk out the creative inspiration found at the roots of Greek tragedies before establishing. He notes that for Greeks to achieve their cultural grandeur, they succeeded in solving the riddle to human contentment by mapping out the "binary of delight" in the "Dream" and "Intoxication." These twin factors further elaborated their understanding of the idea of "Will," which is present at the root of their cultural prosperity. The binary of "Dream" and "Intoxication" puts into perspective the artistic rejuvenation one feels at creating art. The "Dream," Nietzsche says, "is the father of all arts of image-making, including an important half of poetry" (p. 119). In a dream world, human beings possess the quality of situating their dreamscapes in semblance to the real world; in doing so, "all forms speak to us; nothing is indifferent or unnecessary" (p. 119). Within this sensational world of art, there is another emboldening spirit that sheds a "pervasive" cast on the semblances of reality. Because of its unbridled streaks, the dreams become gloomy and present bleak "pathological effects set in whereby the dreams no longer enliven and the healing natural energies of its states ceases" (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 11). Nevertheless, Nietzsche believes a "complete sense of comprehension" is possible in these psychological tropes of creativity (p. 11).

After establishing the binary of delight in the Greek tradition, Nietzsche (1999) indulges in the essential part of his work in *The Birth of Tragedy.* Drawing from "Dream" and "Intoxication," he lays the foundation for "Apollonian and Dionysian art". Inspired by the Greek god of form and beauty, Apollonian art tends to the "dream-representations" (p. 119). This art can make everything symmetrical and proportionate. Nietzsche comments: "He [Apollo] is the luminous one through and through . . . Beauty is his element, eternal youth his companion" (p. 120). The Apollonian spirit recognizes the boundaries of "self-control and limits" and attempts to inculcate the artist to embody individuality and distinction in their work (p. 10). The Apollo-inspired artists celebrate their individuality through the embellishment of images and creative labor. Nietzsche argues: "His eyes must be

'sun-like' and calm; even when it is angry and shows displeasure, the consecrated aura of lovely semblance surrounds him" (p. 120). The Angel and Muse from Lorca's framework connect with Apollonian art because it relates to the Dream, as Nietzsche argues, which credits symmetry and form.

On the contrary, "Dionysian art" heralds the play of Intoxication. Nietzsche (1999) argues that the Dionysian spirit revels in the ecstatic, orgiastic, and transgressed drives, ultimately resulting in the formlessness of experience. Conversely to the Apollonian spirit, Dionysian art "disrupts the limits" and "dissolves the boundaries" (p. 11). It also resolves a strong tension between fellow human beings, alongside the deep-seated realization of a relationship between man and nature. The Dionysian art ultimately corresponds to the spirit of Duende due to its formless nature.

Nietzsche (1999) explains that initially, the Dionysian spirit expels all forms of divisions that incarcerate human beings in terms of their hierarchies. The aristocrat rejoices with the slaves and vice versa, in their collective feeling of fulfillment. Similarly, it also welcomes the animalistic tendencies in human beings. Such a collateral appeal, through the spirit of Dionysian, evokes the sense of "universal harmony" where the "slave is a free man, the aristocrat and the man of low birth unite" (p. 120). To illustrate the outcome of this spirit, Nietzsche says: "Freely the earth brings its gifts, the fiercest beasts approach one another in peace; the flower-decked chariot of Dionysus is drawn by panthers and tigers" (p. 120).

In addition, the Dionysian spirit cannot stand alone. It is always in tension with the Apollonian spirit, and they overshadow each other. The synthesis of the two, reflected in the Greek tragedies, exhibits the coping mechanism in human beings to fight "against the pessimism and despair which is the natural existential lot of humans" (p. 11).

The Dionysian artists rise from the confines of human beings by accepting their "animal-ness". They realize that they are empowered because it feels "as the animal can now talk and the earth gives milk and honey, something supernatural now sounds out of form within man" (Nietzsche, 1999, p. 120). The effects of such realization set them on the pedestal of the gods, as Nietzsche writes: "[What] previously lived only in his imagination . . . [is now] in his own person" (p. 120). As a result, when all confines and boundaries are blurred, reality prefers not to be challenged and to be represented in any image or a work of art. Interestingly, the Dionysian artist sheds its artistry and becomes the work of art itself (p. 120). Nietzsche further argues: "A nobler clay, a more precious marble is kneaded and chiselled here: the human being" (p. 121).

Furthermore, the Dionysian spirit also demands the artist to have a functional relationship with reality and oneself when experiencing intoxication. Such an enhanced consciousness stands at the root of the Dionysian experience. Nietzsche argues that the Dionysian state is a complex and incomprehensible

reality that can only be understood from an analogy of a person dreaming. However, he says: "it is rather like dreaming and at the same time being aware that the dream is a dream." He further argues that the Dionysian artist can coexist in the "alternation of clear-mindedness and intoxication," and through this coexistence, the spirit of Dionysus permeates the work of art (Nietzsche, p. 121).

These dual states of consciousness, as described by Nietzsche (1999), are the bedrock for welcoming another critical aspect, namely Surrealism. Termed as "beyond real" by *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory*, Surrealism explains the world beyond the strict confines of cause and effect (Cuddon, 2012, p. 170). It lends insight into the introspective and unconscious essence of the world, which results in the endeavour to go against the predominant understanding of things and welcomes a more formless perspective of the world. Surrealism as a literary movement is a consequence of the French cultural renaissance in the twentieth century with the arrival of Modernism (Cuddon, p. 172). However, it is critical to note that Lorca's poetry and the Spanish tradition do not qualify for the French Surrealist precepts espoused by Andre Breton and his contemporaries. On the other hand, Spanish Surrealism offshoots into a different branch that represents the world in a diverse setting. It constitutes an attempt to witness the world in a new and defamiliarized light as the Spaniards see it. The defamiliarization occurs when the specter of death as emotion is invoked. Although the French surrealists also have keen regard for associative techniques in literature, the Spanish tradition has a different take highlighted in the concept called "Leaping."

Essentially, the Leaping tradition in Spanish poetry is what proves the triangulation of Duende and Dionysus because it provides a literary grounding to the content and encompasses the "formal" side of the theme, viz. the result of emotion as captured by the Duende and Dionysian elements.

Leaping in the Spanish tradition

This section explicates the Spanish poetic tradition by primarily focusing on the leaping technique. It also illustrates how the selected poems of Lorca can be understood by triangulating Duende, Dionysus, and Spanish Surrealism.

In his book, *Leaping Poetry*, an American poet and critic, Robert Bly (2008) attempts to discuss Leaping in poetry and explains how it has been employed by various Spanish poets. He defines the concept as follows:

> The Leaping is the ability to associate fast. In a great ancient or modern poem, the considerable distance between the associations, the distance the spark has to leap, gives the lines their bottomless feeling, their space, and the speed of the association increases the excitement of the poetry. (p. 3)

Strikingly different from the French "symbolist" poets, the Spanish poets, often characterized as "surrealists," take liberty in wielding their traits for poetry. The Leaping, crucial for the French as a form, is an essential element in the Spanish

tradition (Bly, 2008, p.7). The Spanish poets blur the lines between the "form" and "content" to justify that both are inherently interchangeable. Unlike the French perception, the Spanish poet cannot choose whether to employ the Leaping or not. It is the subject matter that defines it. Once the verse leaves the poet's heart, he only gives the content a direction through form.

Almost all Spanish poets who created a poetic representation of Spain have used the association technique in their verse. Described under the emblem of *Spanish Leaping*, the Spanish poets have contributed a significant chunk of associative techniques in the Spanish canon. Poets such as Antonio Machado, Juan Ramon Jimenez, and the like – the seminal poets of nineteenth-century Spain – took a keen interest in shaping a vision of poetics and considered Leaping as the "roads" to the unconscious matter of the mind. These "roads" were the harbingers of the Spanish spirit that was deeply rooted in their geography and culture. Machado believes the fear of "sinking" or "drowning" impeded canonized Western poets from treading these roads. He famously says in one of his earlier works:

> Mankind owns four things
> that are no good at sea.
> Anchor, rudder, oars,
> and the fear of going down. (qtd. in Bly, 2008, pp. 1-4)

Similarly, Machado's "calmness" regarding the subject springs from knowing that "he does know the secret roads" (Bly, 2008. p. 20). He realizes that these "roads" are a solid alternative to the "old railroads." It suggests the old pathways of thinking that look promising to the untrained eye and lead nowhere, whereas the simplicity of the roads, dissimilar to the experience of the Western mind, have opened vibrant and diverse realms in Spanish poetry.

On the other hand, Jimenez's contribution to the Spanish tradition is his ability to broaden his poetic canvas by introducing "wider associations" and "has a powerful image for the discovery of new associative depths to the mind" (Bly, 2008, p. 20). In his earlier poems titled *Oceans* Jimenez says:

> I have a feeling that my boat
> has struck, down there in the depths,
> against a great thing.
> And nothing
> happens! Nothing . . . Silence . . . Waves . . .
> Nothing happens! Or has everything happened,
> and are we standing now, quietly, in the new life? (qtd in Bly, 2008, pp. 1-7)

Jiminez leaves his readers with a strong mark of ambiguity with the "new" at the poem's end. His ambiguous suggestiveness can accommodate numerous meanings, such as "a new life, or the new association, or the new depth, or the new spirituality—in Spanish he [Jiminez] refuses to be specific" (Bly, 2008, p.21). Such

ambiguity is pertinent to understanding the possibility of the association present in the Spanish tradition.

However, with a slight exception, Lorca stands in the Spanish tradition incorporating "wild associations." Unlike the canonized poets of Spain, Lorca's judgment in Leaping is swift, and he possesses the ability to fill his poems with a feeling "piled up behind him as if behind a dam." To read his poem, one has to confront the "heavy river that rolls over you." Bly makes a comparison of French poets with Lorca and thinks "the French [poets] often long for the leaps without any specific emotions". The "powerful feelings," as he describes, make the "poet enter the poem excited, with the emotions alive; he is angry or ecstatic, or disgusted" (Bly, 2008, p. 40). In another instance, Bly (2008) describes the "wild association" of Lorca in the following words:

> Powerful feeling makes the mind associate faster and evidently the presence of swift association makes the emotions still more alive; it increases the adrenaline flow, just as chanting awakens many emotions that the chanter was hardly aware of at the moment he began chanting. (p. 40)

The discussion under the previous subheading established the correlation of Duende and Dionysian and how the two are made applicable in Spanish poetry through Leaping. Thus, it is pertinent to recap the discussion on the "powerful feeling" of Lorca from the prism of Duende. As Duende eulogizes the feeling of death in arts and creates the other-worldly effect on the reader, so does Lorca when "he brushes past death with every step, and in its presence associates fast" (Bly, p. 41). Similarly, Lorca's poetry is replete with "wild association," or Leaping also makes it Dionysian because he, in these fast associations, endeavors to break the boundaries of form. Bly (2008) comments: "The magical quality [dionysian] of a poem consists in its being always possessed by the duende, so that whoever beholds it is baptized with the dark water" (p. 41). The baptism that Bly describes is the emotion that separates Lorca's poetry from Homer or Machado and quite rightly could be called "poetry of flying" (p. 43). I now turn to analyse two poems from each of the two anthologies by Lorca.

In his poem "Rundown Church (Ballad of the First World War)" from his anthology *A Poet in New York,* Lorca (1973), details how "content" becomes the "form" and the powerful feeling that relays wild associations in the poem. The poem reflects the expanse of death in the First World War and what it is like for a father whose son is martyred on the battlefield. It is important to note that this poem can be critically distinguished as a Duende poem because death as a concept and the destruction of form is evident: "I had a son and his name was John. /I had a son. /He disappeared into the vaulted darkness one Friday of All Souls" (Lorca, 1973, p. 146).

The poem has a simple beginning and recounts the retrospective emotion of a father who begins to lament the loss of his son. However, the word "disappeared" increases the complexity of the experience because Lorca attempts to disregard death from its established meaning to simply a disappearance. The "established meaning" and "assumed meaning" are reversed to cement the unresolved emotion that comes from the disappearance of a son for his father. Alongside, the "Friday of All Souls" is another Lorcan feat wherein he bridges death with the assembly of the souls. The effect of this makes the simplicity and the complexity of the experience more evasive:

> I saw him playing on the highest step of the Mass
> throwing a little tin pail at the heart of the priest.
> I knocked on the coffins. My son! My son! My son!
> I drew out a chicken foot from behind the moon and then
> I understood that my daughter was a fish
> down which the carts vanish. (Lorca, 1973, p. 146)

These poignantly bleak verses are where the complexity arises. Lorca begins with the father remembering his child "on the highest step of the Mass." The war that the son is fighting has taken the guise of a religious and moral duty that he fulfills. With the quick jump, Lorca brings the image of a coffin. However, the real difficulty arises when Lorca paints an uncanny image of a "chicken foot" with the "moon." According to Christian symbolism, the chicken foot denoted a practice in witchcraft where it was used to cast a spell on someone, whereas the symbol of the moon conveys the occurrence of a cosmic event (Alexander, 1950, p. 253). In the poem, the two images are embedded to highlight the wicked conspiracy of an event that cast a dark spell on the child who dies on the battlefield. The suggestiveness reflects that the father holds the universe accountable for his loss. Similarly, the actual Leap in the poem lies here when Lorca associates the two different categories of images next to each other, which are impossible to understand otherwise. Moreover, in the following line, "my daughter was a fish" is another association that Lorca makes per the Biblical tradition: the symbol of fish as it denotes the resurrection of Jesus, which is the primal tenant of Christianity (Alexander, 1950, p. 252). In the poem, Lorca embeds the imagery of fish to mean the resurrection from death to life and, in turn, qualifies a perfect Leap. Ultimately, the underlying emotion of the poem reaches these associations, and the experience of the father mourning a martyred son is made tangible through these wild leaps. If we look further into the poem, we notice how the form breaks down into the content, and the experience of death is made doubly accessible:

> I had a son who was a giant,
> but the dead are stronger and know how to gobble down pieces
> of the sky.
> If my son had been a bear,
> I wouldn't fear the secrecy of the crocodiles

and wouldn't have seen the ocean roped to the trees
to be raped and wounded by the mobs from the regiment. (Lorca, 1973, p. 146)

The effect of the emotion dissolves the content into form by stretching the images. After reminiscing about the martyr, the poem shows the powerful feelings intact within the loss of life and creates a world where the father, amidst his recollections, starts comparing the son with a "giant." Alongside, Lorca integrates a leap by making the dead "gobble down pieces of the sky." These lines are swift in their imagery as every image is stretched to the experience of death, which is impossible to express. The "secrecy of the crocodiles," "ocean roped to the trees," and "raped and wounded by the mobs from the regiment"— all of these extended images are pertinent instances where Lorca has the power to transcend form, step into the valley of Dionysus, and revel in the mysterious force of Duende by still making sense of the world.

On the other hand, his poem "New York (Office and Attack)" is also filled with wild association. Lorca writes: "Beneath all the statistics/ there is a drop of duck's blood." (Lorca, 1973, p. 321). In this poem, the first line consumes the reader by a leap. Lorca brings "statistics" and juxtaposes it with "a drop of duck's blood." Going back and forth between the concreteness of "statistics" and the crudeness of "duck's blood" is playfulness with death itself because in the biblical tradition, the duck symbolizes enlightenment and prosperity (Alexander, 1950, p. 250). Lorca embeds the symbol to mean that the rising cosmopolitanism is detrimental to the harmony of a civilization. It is like the example Lorca quotes in his essay on Duende where a bullfighter mocks death that looms around to take him. The immediacy of death in the verse is tantamount to a poetic leap. In another instance, Lorca re-imagines the geography of New York on the pedestal of death:

Beneath all the totals, a river of warm blood;
A river that goes singing
Past the bedrooms of the suburbs,
And the river is silver, cement, or wind
In the lying daybreak of New York. (Lorca, 1973, p. 321)

He qualifies the scene to be the result of the capitalistic exploitation of the innocent and then reverses the river's image. A river that carries "warm blood" is the river that now "goes singing past the bedrooms of the suburbs." That is to say, blood is on the hands of all those who occupy the bedrooms of the suburb. Moreover, in the last line, the poet's ability is undermined because the powerful feeling of the emotion downplays him. He leaves the choice for the river to either be "silver, cement or wind." Later in the poem, Lorca further employs a difficult turn of images:

There is a whole world of crushed rivers and unachievable distances,
in the paw of a cat crushed by a car,

and I hear the song of the worm
in the heart of so many girls. (Lorca, 1973, p. 322)

The "paw of a cat" vividly coincides with "crushed rivers" and "unachievable distances," but Lorca directly brings the image of the cat carcass "crushed by a car." This physical and emotional reaction to the urban experience makes the experience of death is intensified, and results in the distortion of the imagery which trespasses the boundary of our perception. Lorca's reaction, which till now, is to tiptoe past the experience of death, ultimately sheds all its images and brings out the truth in its clarity:

What shall I do, set the landscapes in order?
Set in place the lovers who will afterwards be photographs,
who will be the bits of wood and mouthful of blood?
No, I won't; I attack,
I attack the conspiring
of these empty offices
that will not broadcast the sufferings.
.....
I offer myself to be eaten by the packed-in cattle,
when their mooing fills the valley
where the Hudson is getting drunk on its own. (Lorca, 1973, p. 322)

Through the end, Lorca deliberates on the choice at hand to "set the landscapes in order, but he robustly says that he chooses to "attack the conspiring." He clarifies the thematic concern of the poem, which demands a sacrifice to attack and be "eaten by packed-in cattle." In a similar light, Lorca creates a tension between death and sacrifice, and the interplay of the two creates the desired effect of wild association, which is replete in the poem.

The poem "Goring and Death" from *Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias*, Lorca (2007) picks at death with the demise of his beloved friend Ignacio. The loss remains a personal one, and Lorca undergoes the emotion of death with a different sensation:

At five in the afternoon,
Five on the dot after noon.
A boy fetched the white sheet
at five in the afternoon.
A basket of lime waiting
at five in the afternoon.
After that death and only death
at five in the afternoon. (Lorca, 2007, p. 157)

The poem gradually rises, building on the scraps of disconnected images such as "five and the dot afternoon," "a boy fetched the white sheet," and "a basket of lime waiting." These images reflect the experience of death in the last verse,

where "death and only death" brings it to the center of the stage. Similarly, the repeating "at five in the afternoon" creates the effect of the harrowing appearance of the hour of death.

The second part of the poem directly addresses the traumatic experience of death by throwing a variety of images that, singularly seen, do not have much semblance with the event but collectively speak to the reader of the psychological pattern that the poet undergoes:

> The wind blew cotton scraps
> *at five in the afternoon*.
> An oxide sowed crystal and nickels
> *at five in the afternoon*.
> Dove and leopard battle
> *at five in the afternoon*.
> A thigh with a desolate horn
> *at five in the afternoon*,
> .....
> A coffin on wheel is the bed
> *at five in the afternoon*.
> Bones and flute sounds in his ears
> at five in the afternoon.
> In his face the bull bellowing
> *at five in the afternoon*. (Lorca, 2007, p. 157)

In the second and last part, the poem juxtaposes unexpected and incongruous images, such as "cotton scraps," "oxide," "dove and leopard," and "a thigh with a desolate horn." These images disrupt our sense of reality and create a sense of unease. The poem takes a surreal turn when it begins pouring stretched images, extended metaphors, and the uncanny representation of the world, all of which are made possible with the lurking idea of death. In addition, Lorca's representation and invocation of death become more substantial than life in the spur of the moment. The flight from the gradual increase of feelings compliments his style when he leaps. For instance, the journey from "the wind blew cotton scraps" to the "dove and leopard battle" is so spontaneous that it resembles the quickness of reaction in a fight or flight situation. Moreover, "at five in the afternoon" is repeatedly used as a central metaphor, but now becomes a recurring motif as it reflects the emotion. It suggests a cyclical nature to the world, a constant repetition of strange and disturbing occurrences. The repetitive "at five in the afternoon" is also a melancholic relapse that harkens to the loss and trauma associated with the death of the poet's friend and comrade.

In his poem "Spilled Blood," Lorca mourns the idea of not seeing more of his friend. The poem has a gradual incline towards the arrival of death similar to the last poem, but different essentially, as it takes at the cunningness of time in forgetting his friend:

The cow of the ancient world
passed her sad tongue
over a snout of blood
spilled on sand,
and the bulls of Guisando,
death almost, stone almost,
bellowed like two centuries
tired of treading earth.
No,
I will not see it! (Lorca, 2007, p. 161)

We can observe that this poem is replete with emotion and irrational imagery that embodies duende. The imagery of "cows of the ancient world" establishes a connection with history, mortality and the earth. Similarly, the "sad tongue" and the "snout" of blood also speak of the same. "No, I will not see it!" expresses a refusal to face the reality of suffering and death. This refusal is part of *duende* that struggles to fight the inevitable. Secondly, we see chaos, life, and death that specifies the Dionysian Spirit. This is shown in the poem through the imagery of the blood and ancient bulls and cows. As the bulls are known for sacrifices and rituals, the bull's "bellowing", compared to centuries of fatigue, reimagines chaos, exhaustion, and the breakdown of order.

Moreover, a leap happens with the inability of the poet to remain present. The speaker oscillates between ancient and mystical imagery of sacrifice and a modern voice reflects a leap. For instance, the poem's surreal imagery: "animals of stone almost" and "death nearly" challenges the reader to bridge this gap between the haunting, primitive symbols and the raw emotional truth that they convey. An essential component of duende, leaping creates access to emotions that cannot be expressed in a linear fashion.

In the foregoing sections, I discussed how triangulating Duende, Dionysian Aesthetic, and Spanish Surrealism allows critics and scholars to identify the common ground, making Duende more relevant and less abstract in studying Lorca. I analyzed Lorca's lecture on the theory of Duende, narrowing down its essence to the artistic inspirations of Angel, Muse, and Duende. The Dionysian Aesthetic provides a philosophical base to theorize Duende, while the Angel and Muse correlation falls under Apollo concerning form and boundaries. The relationship between Duende and Dionysus exhibits death and transgression as quintessential qualities in form and content.

Additionally, to understand Leaping as a technique, I tried to discuss Spanish tradition from the interplay of imagination and psychology in Spanish art. The broad scope of the Spanish canon narrowed down Lorca and his poetic aspirations in the framework of Duende, Dionysus, and Leaping for the study of his

poetry. Examining Lorca's selected works, centered on the theme of death, stylistically enables readers to find influences and Leaping techniques under the guise of the Wild Association. All in all, this article concludes discussion on the Spanish Leaping tradition by illustrating Lorca's poetry in the light of Duende and Dionysus.

This article also expands poetics of Lorca by extracting him from the external frameworks used in the scholarship to study his poems. Previously, scholarship on Lorca focused primarily on the socio-politico-cultural undertones in his poetry and elements of resistance against totalitarian forces in the Spanish Civil War, leading to a predominantly political understanding of Lorca. By providing a fresh literary perspective, this article situates Lorca in the poetic view he expounded in his lecture on Duende.

In essence, this article illustrates Lorca's poems by choosing a framework that dissolves the complexities arising from existing scholarship on the poet. It presents a different avenue for both readers and scholars of Lorca, offering an impartial and objective account of what Lorca thinks about his poetics. Moreover, it addresses abstractions and intangible conceptions of Lorca, providing a perspective focused on Duende.

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