

Subjugation, Honour, Violence, and Death in Lorca's *The Blood Wedding*

Shubha Vats and Sejal Talgotra

Assistant Professor, The Law School, University of Jammu, Jammu, India. (Corresponding Author)

Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Jammu, Jammu, India.

ABSTRACT

Feminists believe that males have suppressed women either knowingly or unconsciously, giving them little to no influence in societal decisions that affect their political, social, and economic well-being. Men have stifled the female, defined what it is to be feminine, and as a result, devoiced, undervalued, and trivialised what it means to be a woman by refusing to give women's opinions, replies, and writings importance. Women's progress and advancement are mostly hampered by patriarchy. To fight for women's development systematically, it is vital to comprehend the system that maintains women's dominance and subordination as well as to unravel its workings. The human rights of women are somewhat constrained under patriarchal societies, which provide males unlimited precedence. *The Blood Wedding* explicitly addresses the subjects of love, marriage, and upholding family honour. The customs have such a strong hold on the individuals that the codes they uphold drive them to catastrophic ends. The drama explores how women are physically imprisoned in a small space. The toughest marriage and honour standards must be followed by women in Spanish society, especially in rural areas.

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Culture has been a major factor in the creation of literature throughout history for a variety of reasons. Federico Garcia Lorca, a Spanish playwright, had a lifelong obsession with Spanish music and tradition, which had a significant impact on one of his most celebrated tragedies, *The Blood Wedding*. The protagonists' yearning to live in the raw, emotive condition of nature is frequently juxtaposed with the oppressive social conventions of the rural village. In the rural areas of Lorca, history and violence are intricately interwoven. Therefore, the little, constrictive town might be understood as a reaction—and an overreaction—to the tumultuous, hopeless fate that man encounters in nature. When approaching the play, we should be aware of the many different cultural elements that were used, especially the dramatist's experience with Greek tragedy, classical music, flamenco, and traditional Spanish music. They all worked together to elevate a historical event to the level of great art. The drama is incredibly passionate, tragically beautiful, and full of love. The play's core is so forcefully and profoundly driven by the concept of the inevitable nature of love and death, which is present at the very centre of Spanish society. This article makes an effort to identify the role that rural Spanish culture and folklore played in the tragic drama *The Blood Wedding* by Federico Garcia Lorca.

The Blood Wedding, by Lorca, is a fictionalised description of a true story that took place in America in 1928. The play's narrative is simple yet old, and it centres on the conflict between two men for a lady who is torn between following her heart and marrying the man her parents want her to marry. The concept is developed by Lorca to the point that he portrays a rural Spanish community where women must deal with several mental and physical issues. In his outstanding depiction of the psychologically and physically affected women as a result of the social and political structure that predominates in the rural society of Spain, where men are portrayed as egocentric, violent, and honour-loving and possess large farms and estates, and women are willing to give up their happiness for the family's honour because they are suppressed and subjugated. The majority of Lorca's female characters are modest and meek, and they despise war and violence.

At the very beginning of the play, Mother appears to dislike the people's behaviour of preserving the horrific symbols of violence, such as pistols, knives, and shotguns, which shows that males are cold-blooded and unsympathetic to women. She has lived through war and brutality, and as a result of losing the people she loved the most during her family's feud with the Felix family, she feels a growing feeling of repugnance.

The play's study reveals the resulting collapse of the patriarchal social framework that Lorca portrayed in rural Spanish culture. It is meant to depict the different play examples that show how men's control over women affects society as a whole. On a tragic note, the drama comes to a close. It also analyses *The Blood Wedding* in the context of prominent existentialist feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, who by her profound comprehension of women as individuals—from femininity to personhood—unveils the layers of patriarchy.

The drama explores how women are physically imprisoned in a small space. The tightest norms of honour and marriage are required of women in Spanish culture, particularly in rural areas. The theatrical portrayal of the Bride gives her a low, subdued voice in addition to her passivity in accepting her status as a Bride rather than her choice to live independently. Chapter V of Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* opens with these opening sentences: The destiny that society traditionally offers women is marriage. Even today most women are, were or plan to be married, or they suffer from not being so. Marriage is the reference by which the single woman is defined as whether she is frustrated by, disgusted at or even indifferent to this institution. (451)

The female leads of Lorca's works are forced into marriage. Always, and ideally by their father, their parents are forced to choose a suitable bridegroom for them. And even if she engages in an illicit relationship with a guy, which is against societal conventions, as she does in this play, only a man's initiation may turn it into a marriage. Before he marries the Bride's cousin, Leonardo had an affair with her. Living in a remote location away from the bustle of village life, the bride and her father reside in a rural home. The Bride is forced into a form of restriction on her freedom of movement. Her union with the bridegroom has been prearranged. Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex* said, "A girl's free choice was always highly restricted." (452)

Ample evidence of Lorca's artistic excellence in capturing their essence on the one hand, and the cruelty of male dominance on the other, can be found in the Bride's confused state of mind at the play's beginning, her inability to act by her own will, her lack of solidarity in matters of taking strong decisions about her life, or her unsureness in following her true passions. On the day of the bride's wedding, Leonardo attempts to convince her to elope with him, and she says the following in response:

BRIDE. A man on his horse knows a lot, and he has the power to squeeze the life out of a girl stranded in a desert. But I have pride- that's why I'm getting married! And I will shut myself up with my husband, whom I must love more than anything! (25)

The bride's freedom of choice in marriage is constrained. A contract between the parents of the bride and the groom confirms the marriage while taking into account all external factors. The bride's preferences are irrelevant in marital problems. She is taken for granted as a suitable commodity to be traded for the advantage of others.

The women in Lorca's stories are occupied with housework. They are given tasks to complete at home. They are occupied with cooking, cleaning, and various forms of needlework, which sets them apart from the male members who, in contrast to women, are free to do whatever they like and to move around as they choose. Even at the expense of their preferences, choices, and lives, males have the right to reign over women and expect them to respect them. A mother discusses the bride's responsibilities after her marriage with her when they meet at the bride's house.

The play's female characters engage in both cerebral and physical actions, which are depicted by Lorca. In the male-dominated rural community of Andalusia, he exposes the struggles and disappointments they are experiencing within their heads. This drama features women and their resulting disappointments and suffering, much like his other plays do. The entire play is devoted to a wedding, and the Mother and the Bride are the focus of the action. The play's two main protagonists are transformed into two opposing forces: one stands for outdated dogma, while the other represents freedom of choice.

The themes of love, marriage, and family honour are obvious in *The Blood Wedding*. The severe concept of vengeance, specifically an eye-to-eye form of vengeance, for the code of honour that society has placed on these individuals, is one of the traditions that predominates the drama. These customs have such a strong hold on the individuals that the codes they uphold drive them to catastrophic ends.

The play is dramatic from start to finish due to the Mother's anger and overwhelming sadness. The play's topic is presented in all its gravity at the opening thanks to the mother's powerlessness in the face of her family's unfortunate circumstances. Mother first gives off the impression of being quite irritable. In a conflict with the Felix family, she lost her husband and a son. She has painfully lived through the effects of violence and conflict. She currently only has one son to ensure her existence. Her expectations for her son are very high. She would do anything to avoid losing him. She has enormous hopes for her boy, who is the final vestige of her hope.

She undergoes such circumstances that she has developed an obsession with the past. She remembers the past as a vital period in her life. There is only bitterness and hatred in her mind about the past and now present. When the Bridegroom insists his mother leave the present house in favour of living with him and his would-be wife, she refuses at once by saying.

Both of the primary female characters in *The Blood Wedding*, Mother and Bride, struggle with indecision. Mother had been hesitant to give her son's marriage to the Bride her blessing from the very beginning of the play. Similar to how inner conflict plays a significant role in the life of the Bride, who experiences intense inner struggle until the play's latter phases of development or until a precise grasp of the real nature of the social system. Later on, though, she decides to live her life as she sees fit. The mother has decided to return to her lonesome home at this point. However, Leonardo flees with the Bride before she has a chance to leave the gathering.

The mother decides to go for her own home and dwell there in her old vacant rooms in the hopes that the marriage and joining of the two families will foretell a bright future. She was told that the Bride had eloped with Leonardo, the man she loves, but she was unable to do so. She now destroys any future optimism and acts right now in support of death. This is due to the double standard of morality, which has separate standards for men and women and produces havoc in society.

In Act III Scene II, when the scuffle between Leonardo and Bridegroom occurs, Mother loses her son, her only hope. Now she is comforted by the repugnance for a war that she has been possessing for many years. She has nothing left of her dynasty, her hopes, or her fertility. Now she realises that she is left with nothing to lose or to gain to save her family's honour imposed on her by society. Now, for the mother, there is only lamentation, sorrow and peace.

Mother cannot be moved into action by the Bride or her aspirations for death. She first accuses and insults the bride, but she quickly concludes that she decides her son's life to uphold society, not because this girl is to blame for her son's passing. To carry out her decision to marry and live with the person she loves, the Bride defies all social mores and rules. The Mother instantly suspects the Bride because of her connection to Leonardo Felix. Even Leonardo, her previous suitor, has some reservations about the Bride and her character.

The Bride's desire could never be completely extinguished, even if she was forced to remain in the little space to preserve family honour. However, when seeing the bride for the first time, one is left to question whether or not she will be a loving wife to the young man she will soon wed. She behaves solemnly, formally, and quite laconically while the Bridegroom and his mother are present. She doesn't show any pleasure or joy in the first scene about getting married to the Bridegroom. She is disrespectful to her servant as well and refuses to acknowledge that Leonardo has been calling her in the early mornings at her bedroom window. Leonardo is a symbol of her freedom, her love, and her liberty. She brilliantly imitates him, going against all social conventions. Everything looks meaningless to the bride because she has recognised the futility of the earthly world. The Bride tends to be sensitive in the future since she has lived her entire life in terrifying circumstances. She is surrounded by images of the dark and wicked, and she has become gloomy. She is always aware of the potential negative effects if she expresses her love for Leon physically expresses her love for Leonardo of Lorca is not completely subservient. They must endure a protracted conflict with both the outer world and with themselves. The Bride acknowledges her love for Leonardo a bit later in the same scene. They part ways and promise to never see one other again. They also promise to keep their word even if it means going against what their passions would have them do. The Bride understands, however, that she is still frail and may easily turn to Leonardo again. She wants to head to the church as soon as the Bridegroom arrives, thinking that the law and her dignity would shield her from this abnormal longing once she becomes a bride.

Another outstanding example that demonstrates how these standards of honour have nothing to do with males may be found in Leonardo's relationship with his wife. Only women are meant to preserve the family's honour. Leonardo never seems to be bothered by his obligations to his wife. As a man in society, Leonardo has no moral obligation to uphold the reputation of his family since he wants to remarry the Bride. His interaction with his wife demonstrates that he struggles to control his ardour for the Bride. As much as these two young people would desire, the code is not as strong. The Bride is portrayed to be more resolute in her decision to follow her heart rather than accept the traditional marriage that her father had planned for her. Leonardo is still there, supporting her and giving her more bravery, which interferes with her focus and her obligations to her future spouse. The Bride is having a hard time getting past the issues she has been dealing with for a long time. She is choked up. She has to go through an internal conflict between her love and her feeling of obligation to her family. She feels utterly powerless to respond to Leonardo's persistent requests to leave the wedding with him.

The Bride retires to her chamber for a short period of relaxation. She poses as if feeling unwell to get the visitor's consent. However, a few guests immediately begin hunting for the bride following this. Leonardo's wife arrives back at the scene and breaks the news of the couple's elopement while they were still looking for her. The bride has made her choice at this pivotal moment, well aware of the implications. She defies convention, and now she must get ready for whatever occurs as a result. Instead of being constrained by a code that is unacceptable to her as a person, she pursues her love and passion. There is no longer any doubt in anyone's mind, with the possible exception of the bride herself, regarding the bride's honour and integrity. The moral rule for her as a female is to demonstrate her virginity. She is aware that she hasn't compromised her honour and that she is still a virgin.

The Bride finally turns after a protracted fight to hear her own heart. She begins to prioritise her love for Leonardo and her devotion to him. She disregards the menial obligations that society has placed on her. She then acts on her passion. She attempts to explain to the Mother that although knowing that the Bridegroom would provide her stability, children, honour, and status, she is being pulled along by her passion and burning need for freedom and won't be able to resist. The Mother, who has no desire to know whether the daughter is being true or not, hears the Bride reiterate her purity. Now that the Mother has lost everything, her main concern is her sadness. Robert Lima in his book *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca* said:

This rule is accepted by the girl herself. She knows that she did wrong in following the other man whom she could never marry, and in wanting to live with him. She accepts the law that the honour of the family and her honour is safe only if her virginity is left intact for her husband to convert into maternity. (38)

Men have oppressed women in rural Spain, giving them little or no say in social, political, and economic matters. His mother's ideas on marriage are not given much weight in the conversation between the bridegroom and his mother. The Bride has two options for how she will live her life: either she will select the path taken by her mother, get married, and live an unchanging life, or she will pursue her passion and pass away with her lover. Women do not have the freedom to select their life mate under social norms. When a lady chooses the first path—the way her mother lives—she is seen as respectable in Lorca's society. The father of the bride wishes his daughter wouldn't deviate from his expectations.

According to feminist writers, marriage is an economically restrictive and exploitative relationship that maintains sexual inequity and ties women to domesticity. Marriage is viewed solely in terms of sex in Spanish society as well. Women are reliant on males and they do not treat women with the appropriate status. They do not receive fair and equal treatment. The life that Leonardo's wife is enduring is unpleasant. She adores her spouse, but he doesn't feel the same way. He has a crush on the Bride. She patiently endures everything. Leonardo views her wife as little more than a means of gratifying her sex needs. As the mother counsels her son on how to handle his bride, males are seen as dominant while women are seen as subservient.

The Bridegroom's battle with Leonardo Felix, however, is *The Blood Wedding*. The generational tension between the two families contributes to the catastrophic events in a subtler and more pernicious way. The Bride openly defies the social norms; her behaviour might be seen as a reaction to her sense of being entrapped by the few opportunities available to women in society. Because he must defend himself to his mother, the Bridegroom is under the same restrictions as the bride. His mother decides for him to risk his life and wed the bride. He tries to integrate Mother into his life by letting her live with him and the Bride, but she rejects and clings to him.

Garcia Lorca gives numerous different perspectives on what women should be doing in society in *The Blood Wedding*. Mother and the mother-in-law both support keeping women sequestered behind high walls after marriage to protect their safety and maintain their frail mental faculties. Garcia Lorca gives numerous different perspectives on what women should be doing in society. The Bride is compelled to wed the Bridegroom against her will, and although she doesn't love him, she is aware that, from the perspective of society, he would be a decent husband and provider. However, she finds it uncomfortable to marry for either financial gain or pure sexual desire. The Bride's valiant attempt to find a middle ground ultimately fails, and her agonising predicament is emblematic of many other unworkable circumstances.

The Bride's seclusion serves as a stark illustration of the way of life that Mother and Leonardo's mother-in-law promote. They adhere to the notion that women need to be shielded from society's sinful tendencies, just as the Bride has. The Bride's farm's isolation mirrors her feeling cut off from the world. She is torn emotionally between wanting to wed the bridegroom or Leonardo. The play's female characters' physical seclusion parallels their emotional seclusion—in Mother's case, as a result of the death of her husband and son, and in the Bride's case, as a result of the demands of marriage.

The Mother stresses that a woman should put her family's and her physical safety first. Her worldview, which associates homemaking with a form of timidity, encourages women to isolate themselves from society by building high walls around themselves and concentrating on their families. The Bride, on the other hand, is annoyed by the pressure to be married and is not interested in dating either Leonardo or the Bridegroom. She yearns for more independence and the power to make her own life decisions, even though she lacks a consistent political philosophy or worldview.

By neglecting to depict Leonardo and the Bridegroom's bloody demises, Lorca deprives the spectator of the spectacle and instead concentrates on the damaging effects it has on the town's residents, both those who are close to the Bridegroom and the Felixes and outsiders. The use of the girls as a framing device highlights the fact that misogyny and violence against women affect everyone, not just the very unlikeable Bride. The young ladies who stand in for the village's future are also included, which is very sad. Although some interpretations of *The Blood Wedding* imply that the Bride would be punished or perhaps killed by the populace, Lorca's inability to explain causes the attention to shift to the suffering of the young woman. The Bride is portrayed by Lorca as an uncaring, detached woman, and she emphasises the idea that women's rights should not be predicated on appearances of virtue or purity but should instead be unqualified.

The constricted lives of women in a society created and ruled by strongly patriarchal principles are made apparent in Lorca's *The Blood Wedding*. The woman knows, or at least should know, what will happen to her when she gets married since the gender roles in this culture are entrenched and the societal pressures are so strong. Her fate is to join a regimented, lonely existence after marriage, where the wants of others come before her own. She is arguably made to feel like a prisoner as she is imprisoned and metaphorically boxed in by pressures and the four walls to which her life is inadvertently constrained. A sad stage in the bride's life is reached when she consciously selects the harsher alternative. When her feelings of isolation, alienation, and pessimism are concentrated, she appears to have a pervasive awareness of her existence and frailty.

The play's two final voices—the Mother's and the Bride's—appear to combine at one point as their emotions start to mimic one another. The ability of men and women to live more fulfilled lives according to their preferences is made possible by their collective voice.

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