EDUCATION, THEATRE, AND FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA: AN ANALYSIS OF LA BARRACA

A thesis submitted to the
Kent State University Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for University Honors

by
Andrea Malys

May, 2015
Thesis written by

Andrea Malys

Approved by

Advisor

Chair, Modern and Classical Languages

Accepted by

Dean, Honors College
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .......................................................................................iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENT .............................................................................................v

CHAPTER

| I. Introduction .................................................................................................. 1 |
| i. Lorca ............................................................................................................ 1 |
| ii. La Barraca ................................................................................................. 4 |
| II. Was La Barraca Good Theatre? ................................................................ 9 |
| i. The Changing Tide .................................................................................... 9 |
| ii. The Church and La Barraca .................................................................. 10 |
| iii. Making Art Above All Else ................................................................. 13 |
| III. Logistics .................................................................................................. 20 |
| IV. The Messages ........................................................................................... 22 |
| i. Lorca’s Message ....................................................................................... 22 |
| ii. The National Theatre ........................................................................... 24 |
| iii. The Second Republic’s Message ......................................................... 28 |
| V. Conclusion ................................................................................................. 31 |

WORK CITED ...................................................................................................... 33
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1. “Cartel de la compañía teatral La Barraca”

Illustration 2. “La Vida Es Sueño Y La Barraca”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would sincerely like to take the time to thank a few people that have helped me a lot through this process. First, Professor Pat Gallagher for agreeing to help me in this endeavor and for being honest with me when I had a lot to change and fix. Second, the rest of my committee for agreeing to read this and help me make it the absolute best it can be! They are Dr. Olga Rivera, Dr. Anne Morrison, and Dr. Natasha Levinson. I would also like to thank my aunt Peg Kowalczyk for also reading this and helping me edit as well! Without them, I surely would still be lost in the editing process.

Next I would like to thank my parents for helping me go to college and sending me to Spain where I was able to surround myself in the culture and the literature enough to find the amazing works of García Lorca. They have been there for me through a lot of difficulties and I feel like I never really thank them as much as I should. I would also like to thank Profesora Emilia who was my literature professor in Spain and who was so incredibly helpful while I was muddling around trying to figure out where to focus myself in order to write this paper and helping me to do some last minute research.

I am also grateful to my boss Dondrea Brown who dealt with all my frustrations while researching and starting this paper. He helped me to focus and really gave me the motivation to try my best and finish what I had started. Also, Ericka Alexandres who let me complain to her and who could truly sympathize with me as she writes her own thesis. Also, a thank you to Kelsey Holcomb for helping me figure out how to format this!
Federico del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús García Lorca was born on the fifth of June, 1898 in the outskirts of Granada in Andalusia, Spain. The prolific writer, however, was known to claim that his birth was in 1900 so as not to coincide with the year that Spain lost its empire in the Western Hemisphere. As a child, Lorca was energetic and enthusiastic in nature and ceaselessly creative. He was much more inclined to play pretend than tag or other running games which led to his later success in theatre, art, music, and writing (Gibson 13). His family was Catholic, and young Lorca faithfully attended church every Sunday morning. This ritual inspired him to use the low wall in the family’s backyard as an altar. A favorite game of his was saying Mass and the servants, his family, and friends would all be invited for an “obligatory” service (15). He decorated his altar with a statue of the Virgin Mary and roses and then, with great conviction, he gave his sermons. He had only one condition for his congregation: to weep during the sermon. In either 1905 or 1906, Federico saw a puppet play performed – his first – around the same time as the Fuente Vaqueros fair, and he was so enthralled that he refused to return home until the performance was finished (17). The next day, he replaced his altar with a puppet stage. This was an ordeal for the servants of the García Lorca household as they were all required to help the young boy make puppets, paint the
stage, sew clothing, or prepare some other aspect of the show. Vicenta Lorca even purchased an authentic puppet theatre for her theatrical son from the best toy shop in Granada.

Lorca’s experiences as a child influenced his later success in playwriting. As an adult, he learned to gauge what would be successful on stage after his first production was a miserable failure in 1920. However, Lorca was not known merely for his plays. He also gained fame as a musician playing the piano and singing, a poet with numerous volumes successfully published, a writer of a film script and an opera, and an artist who dabbled in painting and drawing. He was not an immediate success, though. A lot of publishing companies turned him down after reading through his original works. In fact, his father financed the publication of his first volume of poetry, *Impresiones y paisajes* (*Impressions and Landscapes*), which was distributed throughout Spain. Friends who were critics for national newspapers helped to create the initial illusion of Lorca’s success. It took much dedication, effort, and time for him to eventually become well-known and well-respected. Although his parents, specifically his father, had tried to encourage Federico to choose a practical vocation such as a lawyer, Lorca pursued the arts. He attended one of the only liberal non-Catholic schools in the country to perfect his abilities in writing and the arts. During this time he became more aware of his surroundings and the politics of the country in which he lived as well as himself and his sexuality. By becoming a better writer he was able to join a literary movement called the Generation of ’27, where he became an active socialist using his writing as a tool for change. After years of disappointment and rejection, he was eventually successful.
The initial embarrassment and the struggle to establish himself as an artist, coupled with his open homosexuality and political views led Lorca to sympathize with the Second Republic. This new democratic government was born of the peoples’ desire to have more of a voice in their country’s politics, and the vast majority of its followers were blue collar citizens. The Second Republic was a democratic regime that took over Spain in 1931 after King Alfonso XIII offered the citizens an election and was forced to give up his throne. This new government wanted to ensure their power for years to come and thought that providing the country with a better education would be the way to do so. With thirty to fifty percent of the Spanish population in 1931 being illiterate, making education a priority was a large endeavor for the new government (Wade Byrd 18). It would not only be hard to do, but would also take a long time for them to accomplish completely. A push for a major education reform was headed by Manuel B. Cossío, a great art critic and biographer. Cossío, a major advocate of the Second Republic, was quoted as saying, “For this we have been fighting for fifty years!” (18) He dreamed of bringing traveling libraries, art exhibits, theatre, and any other cultural projects to the poor and isolated settlements of Spain. The Republicans overwhelmingly agreed with Cossío’s idea for educational opportunity and adopted an ambitious program that promoted educational reform. The government was so ambitious that its Ministry of Education allocated a subsidy of 100,000 pesetas to a project that was a part of the educational reform that they were not sure would even work: La Barraca (32).
1.2 La Barraca

Government officials developed the Misiones Pedagógicas (Teaching Missions) that aimed to bring culture and education to the countryside. The Second Republic’s officials had to be realistic in their goals. The working class in Spain was young and fast-growing, having doubled in size between 1910 and 1930, though still only a quarter of the working population (Hore 6). People could not afford to simply leave their jobs to get an education. In July 1931, January 1932, and January 1933, the workers organized strikes to try to improve their working conditions and demand higher wages. A “traditional” education was not possible for such workers, so the government encouraged unconventional didactic solutions. This created a call for creative people to find ways to educate the people without entirely disrupting their lives. Through the Misiones, two traveling theatre groups, a traveling puppeteer, 5,522 libraries as well as traveling libraries, and painting museums were born, which enthusiastically, if not a little naively, aimed to better the lives of the poor and working classes by bringing them culture and books (Guerra). The traveling puppeteer was called “El Retablo de Fantoches” directed by Rafael Dieste (Roith). The first traveling theatre troupe was called the “Teatro del Pueblo” or the theatre of the town and was directed by Alejandro Casona which was a couple groups of students who traveled by truck through the countryside (Guerra). The other, La Barraca, was organized and directed by Federico García Lorca.

Lorca had attended the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (Free Institution of Teaching), the school on whose principles the government was modeling its new
programs. Founded in 1876, this alternative school was the brainchild of Francisco Giner de los Ríos and produced graduates that were well-known for their artistic talents (Wade Byrd 17). It was not a part of the Catholic schooling system and had a greater tendency to encourage liberalism in its students. It allowed them to practice the arts, think freely, and explore the world through their creative practices. Having been a student there, Lorca was familiar with the institution’s teachings and beliefs. He had also had the idea of a traveling theatre for a long time, although it originally was conceived as a traveling puppet theatre. He was determined to revive the Spanish theatre because it had meant so much to him as a child and he felt he could use it to enlighten the masses. “Llevaremos La Barraca a todas las regiones de España; iremos a París, a América…, al Japón…” [We will bring La Barraca to every part of Spain; we shall go to Paris, to America…, to Japan] (Maurer). He was convinced that the upper and middle classes were throwing away theatre and that the lower class could revive it; therefore, he used his friendship with Fernando de los Ríos, nephew of Giner de los Ríos, to procure government money for his project and created La Barraca.

It is not known whether Lorca contacted the students at the Institución Libre de Enseñanza or vice versa, but in early November 1931, the project took off. Lorca inspired the students with his vision for the group and all those he worked with have said that he was the group’s catalyst. La Barraca consisted of students from the Institución who were just as excited as Lorca to bring this concept of cultural education to the masses. The group found its basis in the tradition of the farándula, a type of traveling entertainment that put on light and humorous shows that started in the sixteenth century
and lasted into the twentieth century. “At that time in Spain, groups of strolling players traveled from village to village, presenting their entertainment in the public plaza on the hastily improvised stage. The cart that carried the players and their rudimentary equipment through the country was known as the farándula” (Wade Byrd 34).

La Barraca was set up and taken down for every performance by the entire troupe as they traveled through the countryside in vans. Their insignia was a wagon wheel with twelve spokes with two masks superimposed on it, one mask facing forward and the other’s profile cutting across it diagonally. This was drawn for them by Benjamín Palencia, a Spanish painter who would become the troupe’s artistic director (35) (see Illustration 1). The students felt that it reflected their artistic spirit in that it was uncommon and showcased their inspiration.

The troupe strove for inclusion and education for all, even amongst themselves. Equality was foremost, and Lorca did not want any particular student to be the star of the show (Gibson 322). Thus, he created a uniform of dark blue coveralls for the men and matching suits with white blouses for the women. “This working garb was chosen to establish the status of the members as laborers, having a common bond with the rural, peasant populace” (Wade Byrd 35). Students who acted were also involved in making the sets, painting, lighting, and everything else that is a part of a theatrical production. Even Lorca himself was known to walk around with a hammer, making quick fixes to the set. Thus, this venture was just as educational for the students as it was for their audiences.
The variety of works that the students performed was impressive. Lorca transformed outdated works of many once-famous, but forgotten, Spanish writers and made them relevant. Starting in July 1932 until the fall of 1935, the troupe performed thirteen works\(^1\). According to Huerta Calvo, what Lorca did was “quitarles el polvo de los años y ponerlos al día” [take off the dust of the years and update them] (“La Barraca o La Utopía” 17). This was during a time when even one of the most prestigious and artistic theatres of Madrid lacked any production of classics. Between its opening in 1885 and the year 1917 the María Guerrero theatre did not put on a single work of Lope de Vega, and only one of Calderón (Doménech Rico 37). That is to say, Lorca’s students performed shows that not even the professionals were performing, and he was making them culturally relevant for audience members in the process.

García Lorca did not always succeed, but La Barraca definitely was a success. His success with the traveling troupe far outweighed his failures. This may have been due to the array of dramaturgy that Lorca used in his theatre. By delighting his audience, Lorca was able to educate and influence the people of Spain in a way that kept his name and practice alive long after his death on August 17, 1936 (Olmedo). Federico García Lorca was successful with his own goal of bringing cultural enlightenment to the people of Spain and showing the world what Spanish theatre could do, but was unsuccessful.

---

\(^1\) La vida es sueño (Calderón de la Barca), Entremeses, La Cueva de Salamanca, La guarda cuidadosa, Los dos habladores, El retablo de las maravillas (all by Cervantes), Fuente Ovejuna (Lope de Vega), La fiesta del romance (which included La tierra de Alvargonzález by Antonio Machado and Las almenas de Toro by Lope de Vega), La tierra de Jauja (Lope de Rueda), El burlador de Sevilla (Tirso de Molina), Égloga de Plácida y Victoriano (Juan del Enzina), El caballero de Olmedo (Lope de Vega), Retabillo de don Cristóbal (García Lorca) (Doménech Rico, 35-36)
with the government’s goal of education being the gateway to a complete democratic future.
Was La Barraca Good Theatre?

2.1 The Changing Tide

Theatre in Spain started at the beginning of the fifteenth century as entertainment for the royals and the Church. Jesuit schools adapted theatre for their students to enact in Latin to promote religion (Dixon 409). The dramaturges centered on two main types of theatre: comedy and tragedy. The playwrights rarely wrote pure tragedies, though. “Pure tragedies were rare, and even in these the public expected at least one clownish gracioso; but Golden Age dramatists were by no means precluded by their Christian faith in ultimate justice from evoking terror and pity by their depiction of human guilt and anguish” (410). Such were the times in a world that was heavily influenced by the religious zealots who strove to maintain their power. From this period of time came the majority of the works that La Barraca performed.

The nineteenth century brought with it major changes for the artistic world. German Marxist poet, playwright, and theatre director Bertolt Brecht had “a central interest in the theatre as an instrument of social and political action” that was similar to that which Lorca held (Carlson 1357). They may not have known each other, but there is a definitive similarity in the thinking and goals they pursued. He believed himself to be an “ardiente apasionado del teatro de acción social” [passionate devotee of the social action theatre] (García Lorca). Theatre was now being used as a tool to create better
citizens by giving them alternate views. This new Romanticism attempted to challenge existing systems. The theorists and artists (not limited to theatre) specifically linked their artistic experiments to their political endeavors. Lorca himself said in a chat about theatre that “en vez de homenajes yo organizaría ataques y desafíos” [instead of homages I would organize attacks and challenges]. Lorca admitted his belief that theatre is a way to change perceptions and truly impact the audience and influence them to think for themselves. This conscious choice to challenge the government made artists and intellectuals dangerous to those in power. Thus, it was beneficial to the new government that La Barraca was state sanctioned as it ensured that the students would not present a political challenge to them in the future.

2.2 The Church and the Barraca

Many of Lorca’s personal works were critical of contemporary Spanish society, including the influence of the Catholic Church. These theatre pieces, poetry, and artwork created by Lorca were only part of the reason the Roman Catholic Church had such a problem with him and the Barraca. The Church had started to feel as if it were losing its grip on the country. From the time that the moors were defeated in Granada in 1492, the country was strictly Catholic as the rulers King Ferdinand V and Queen Isabella the Catholics were devout believers. The Church had kept its power until King Alfonso XIII was voted out in 1931. The Church was not fond of this new government because they felt threatened and the Second Republic did not hide its disdain for the highly influential
Church. The government began to remove the privileges and power previously enjoyed by the Church.

The historic privileges of the Roman Catholic Church were attacked. Priests were no longer paid by the state. Their salaries now came out of the Roman Catholic Church’s purse. The government and the Roman Catholic Church were made two separate entities. Jesuits – seen as hard line Roman Catholics - were expelled from Spain – ironically the country that had founded the movement. Religious education in schools was stopped. (“The Causes of the Spanish Civil War”)  

What this meant for the Barraca was not that the Church did not approve of theatre, but that it did not accept a theatre that was being paid for by and a part of the new government. The Republic had taken the ideals of a school that was not religion-based to educate the lower classes of Spain. On October 8, 1931, Fernando de los Ríos, now the Minister of Justice, gave a speech to Parliament that was aimed directly at the Catholics that were present. “We are…the descendants of those whose dissident conscience was stifled for hundreds of years” (Gibson 319). He went on to remind them of all their injustices, starting with the Inquisition. De los Ríos also stated that the Republic must not do as the Catholics had done and exile their non-supporters, but be firm in the assertion of its rights. He wanted a bloodless change of power, but he was in the minority that held this view. The Left saw his speech as a half-measure and the Right was displeased with his assessment that the Church played a dominant and murderous role in Spanish history. This speech was proof of the naïveté under which the Republic
was operating. The Catholics would not soon forget the insult. Whenever a minor problem would occur for the troupe, the right-winged press would twist the incident in an attempt to discredit not only the Barraca, but anyone associated with it who held any power. “Gracia y Justicia, the ultra right-wing satirical magazine, went further and … made blatant insinuations about Lorca’s homosexuality” (333). After these attacks, it was obvious that Lorca and his troupe were seen as enemies of the inquisitorial mentality that still existed in Spain.

The Church also took issue with the works that Lorca chose. One specific play was La vida es sueño (Life is a Dream) by Calderón de la Barca; the group’s most controversial work. The government was curious how a “Marxist” group would dare to perform a “sacred” play, and the church questioned why a Republican company that was being funded by the government would put on a “Catholic” work (Gibson 323). However, when he introduced the show, Lorca explained that “Cervantes and Calderón represent the two sides to the Spanish temperament: the earthy, human side is the terrain of the author of Don Quixote, the spiritual that of Calderón” (323). He chose to present the works of these two authors to represent the “Norte y Sur del teatro” with his troupe and tried to flee from the emphatic recitation that was typical of the romantics without forgetting the baroque accent of the original works (“El ejemplo de La Barraca”). These two playwrights represent the baroque period of Spain’s literature. Thus, they have distinct phrasing and acting styles typical to that time. Lorca did not get rid of those characteristics. He merely cut scenes from the plays that he felt were not extraordinarily
important to the plot line of the piece. He kept the heart and the action of the shows to keep the attention of the audience and still be able to teach the morals of the playwright.

2.3 Making Art Above All Else

Lorca’s choice of a mixture of older and newer theatre gave their educational endeavors a solid foundation as it allowed the people to be exposed to what theatre had once been and its evolution. The majority of the older theatre pieces were from the Siglo de Oro (Golden Age) and then Lorca included a few pieces that he had written himself. This gave the students and audiences a mixture of the different movements in theatre. Lorca trimmed the shows so that they would be less lengthy and focused on the most important parts of the dramas (in his eyes). Lorca specifically chose the overtly Catholic Life is a dream because “the miracle plays of Calderón’s day had been produced in the public squares, exactly what the Barraca had in mind” (Gibson 323). Also, the play is full of musical pieces and would easily allow the students to fit in another type of performance: dance. Lorca was concerned with “haciendo arte por encima de todo” [making art above all else] (Aguilera Sastre 124). He also believed that “[u]n teatro sensible y bien orientado en todas sus ramas…puede cambiar en pocos años la sensibilidad del pueblo” [a theatre sensible and well organized in all its branches can change in little time the sensitivity/awareness of the town] (García Lorca). The question is, then, why not include more modern works instead of those from older generations? The answer to Lorca was simple: because modern theatre was almost non-existent in Spain, he told interviewer Aguilera Sastre. What they did have was a lot of propaganda
and bad shows (126). He wanted to represent shows that were “tan actuales y tan vivos” [so current and so alive] and had a true cultural meaning. What he did was not just have his students perform these works, but he updated them so that they were easier to understand. He wanted his theatre to be different than what would otherwise be available to them. He said that

[Los teatros están llenos de engañosas sirenas coronadas con rosas de invernadero, y el público está satisfecho y aplaude viendo corazones de serrín y diálogos a flor de dientes; pero el poeta dramático no debe olvidar, si quiere salvarse del olvido, los campos de rosas, mojados por el amanecer, donde sufren los labradores, y ese palomo, herido por un cazador misterioso, que agoniza entre los juncos sin que nadie escuche su gemido. [The theatres are full of deceiving mermaids crowned with conservative roses, and the public is satisfied and applauds watching hearts of sawdust and dialogues from the flower of teeth; but the dramatic poet should not forget, if he wants to save himself from the oblivion, the fields of roses, wet from the dawn, where the laborers suffer, and that dove, hurt by the mysterious hunter, agonizes between the reeds without anybody hearing his wails] (García Lorca)

The plays and the controversies surrounding them made a great story and drew audiences to either jeer the students or to celebrate the triumph of a possible new reign in Spain that would rival that of the Church’s. Perhaps, though, the majority of the audience members truly were not interested in the politics, but the possible enlightenment and
entertainment that the shows could provide. During one performance in the town of Almazán, it began to rain shortly after the performance had begun, “but the audience, mainly composed of peasants, was entranced and stayed on, even refusing to put up their umbrellas so as not to block the vision of the people behind” them (Gibson 332). A reporter from Madrid who was at this performance wrote that the people “looked as if they were dreaming with their eyes open” and that “[r]ow upon row of peasant faces, smiling, in ecstasy, above all expectant, fearing and desiring what was going to happen next on stage” (332). If the students were not creating the magic that is theatre, audience members would not have been so entranced by their performances.

All good theatre starts with a concept. Lorca had many people working to make one cohesive show that was both traditional and ground-breaking. Lorca himself was known to be overly dramatic and had ideas for scenes that were completely unrealistic for their time period. For such instances, he had his co-director Eduardo Ugarte to keep him grounded and realistic. Lorca said once in an interview that “…the truth is that it is I who directs, and Ugarte is my control. I do everything; he observes everything and tells me if it is good or bad, and always I pay attention to his advice, because I know that he is always discerning” (Wade Byrd 35). Both Ugarte and Lorca were very exacting people. They were intentioned in what they were doing from the moment they began their journey. “From its inception, Lorca’s student theater took upon itself the aura of nationalization” (38). This meant that they were always very professional and thought of what part of the Misiones they could address through their medium. According to Lorca in an interview with José María Salaverría in 1932, in order to be able to know what
exactly they needed to do, “it is necessary to have, along with the vocation, the literary culture and the deep professional understanding of these university youth” (40). The specific students that Lorca chose were put through a rigorous three-round audition process. The first two rounds are not described, but what we know of the third offers a suggestion that they were difficult. Auditioners who made it to the third round studied one work in depth and chose a role to perform as one portion of their audition. “Then we have them perform, one by one, all the roles from one work. And soon after this, they are definitely selected and set down in our theater’s files, which are most unusual” (41). In those files, the directors wrote descriptors to document each student’s abilities for possible character types, such as “Leading man,” “Seducer,” “Dangerous woman,” “Tender lover,” “Unhappy man,” “Traitor,” “Despicable person,” “Monster”.

After Lorca chose his scripts and actors, they had to become the essence of the theatre. They had to walk, speak, and think in an extremely specific rhythm on the stage. On Lorca’s stage “all qualities of stage presence were of equal importance” (Wade Byrd 39). His novices had to speak in a natural voice, without bombast, without complacency. They must move freely about the set, with each gesture, from head to foot, in conformity with the character represented. His actors must show no affectation nor mechanical manner of response. They must literally transport the spectator into the world of the drama enacted.

Each entrance, exit, and line was meticulously timed by Lorca himself. He knew that he was being rigorous with his troupe, but he was aiming for nothing short of perfection. He
likened dramatic works to a symphony. The actors could not be one second late as that sort of error causes a “deplorable effect” on the entirety of the performance (39). The scripts themselves have no concept of being late; therefore, the characters (and the actors depicting them) could not either.

However, acting is not the only important part of the theatre. According to Aristotle, six elements make up good theatre: action, character, thought, language, pattern, and enactment. Aristotle referred to theatre as an “organic whole” that depended on each element both separately and together in order to work (Laurel 57). Lorca shared this concept and utilized it in order to raise his expectations for his troupe. The six elements are still part of the criteria today for theatre. The enactment (or spectacle) is that which is seen and performed. The pattern (or melody) is everything that is heard, but especially the melody of speech. The language is the selection and arrangement of words and the use of language. The thought is the inferred internal processes leading to choice: cognition, emotion, and reason. The character is the bundle of predispositions and traits inferred from the patterns of choice. The action is the whole action being represented; theoretically, this is the same in every performance (58). Every performance must have the same action or it ceases to be a play and becomes closer to the art of improvisation.

With his choice of works, Lorca carefully selected shows that had a theme that exemplified something he thought was important for the Spanish culture. *La vida es sueño*, for example, is a philosophical allegory that explores the human situation and the mystery of life, addressing free will and fate, dreams, and the importance of striving for goodness (“La vida es sueño: Summary”). It is also the most controversial of the works
that the troupe put on because of its heavily Catholic lessons. This play has a definitive plot that builds until a resolution. Act III is full of complex actions and decisions for the characters, especially Rosaura and Clotaldo. Segismundo, having found out that he is the heir to the throne, plans to wage war against his father. Clotaldo, a guardsman, had found out that not only does he have a bastard child, who at first he thought was a man, but a daughter who had been dishonored. In this act, he tries to find a reasonable solution to regain his daughter Rosaura’s honor. Rosaura is seeking her honor after being told that she would wed Astolfo, a prince, but was then abandoned. The resolution is one that is surprising. The stars that predicted the fall of Basilio, the king, did not predict that Segismundo would also pardon his father and kneel before him. Rosaura’s honor is restored when Segismundo also obliges Astolfo to marry her and he takes Estrella, the princess to whom Astolfo was betrothed, as his own wife. The characters are all distinct and well defined in that each has their own set of values, personalities, and desires. Each character is being shaped by their own set of quandaries and needs. The language of each work was written for the wealthy and/or the clergy and performed in either the great ballroom of the castle or in churches; the word choice of the playwright and enunciation of the actors elucidate the theme of the play and help advance the plot. This is something that Lorca’s directing practices were particular about in that he required each actor to be nearly mechanical in their actions and recitation of lines. Each work has a certain musicality both in the language and the actual music. The music also helps to develop characters, plot, and themes according to the Aristotelian motif. Finally, there is the spectacle or performance: all the work that goes into a performance which includes the
scenery, costumes, and any special effects. The spectacle is defined by how well the audience is drawn into the performance. Lorca had fantastical sets, costumes, actors, and scripts. Benjamín Palencia designed the sets for *La vida es sueño* with a surrealistic element, but was also very interested in the geometry of it (Bonet 79). He incorporated the stars that foretold the rise of Segismundo, the phases of the moon, and various other elements that not only are basic geometric shapes, but also profound symbols in the work (See Illustration 2). The amount of detail that Lorca and his *barracos* put into this show is the same as they put into every other show. This particular show was their most controversial and showed that people will always have a choice, no matter what their stars say. It is a highly Catholic piece because it is based on the ideology of the fall and gives importance to the salvation. It also promoted the idea that everyone has a say in their future and how they choose to handle the problems of their lives. However, the last element of theatre is the audience, which a director can never account for during rehearsals. Just how many people was Lorca able to reach and affect with his great theatre?
**Logistics**

According to Navarro de Zuvillaga, Lorca was able to reach a good number of people throughout the Barraca’s run (July 1932 until April 1936). The troupe consisted of thirty people, of which seven were women and all were students (87). In their troupe alone he was able to influence and show his vision of theatre to the thirty students plus the artists that helped. Musicians, painters, and architects worked with the troupe to ensure the productions represented the current arts: Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism (88). In 1932 the troupe traveled to Burgo de Osma, San Leonardo, Vinuesa, Soria, Ágreda, Almazán, La Coruña, Santiago de Compostela, Vigo, Bayona, Pontevedra, Villagarcía de Arosa, Ribadeo, Grado, Avilés, Oviedo, and Cangas de Onís – seventeen towns with four different shows to perform. In 1933, the troupe ventured to Valencia, León, Mieres, Santander, Pamplona, Huesca, Tudela, Estella, Logroño, and Burgos for a total of ten towns and they added one show to their repertoire. In 1934, the troupe visited Santander and Palencia, this time adding two shows. In 1935, the group visited the International University of Santander and the Theatre of Comedy in Madrid where they added two shows. La Barraca visited a total of thirty-one towns, which increased its reach and connection to the masses. Unfortunately, there are no definitive logs of the number of people in attendance to each show. However, there is certainty that each performance had an audience. Of course, not all of the towns gave favorable reviews, but nonetheless, there was an audience.
In general, the performances were free to the public to encourage a larger, more economically and demographically diverse audience. Government-funding guidelines required the shows to be free, which was occasionally challenged. In Soria, on July 13, 1932 the production was forced inside because of bad weather. The students were set to perform twice outside in the main square, but the weather did not cooperate and the performances were taken inside. The Principal Theatre where they performed insisted on charging for tickets which led to many patrons deciding not to attend the show and claim that they had been lied to. The right-wing took advantage of the situation to attack the group. They were government-funded, how could they justify taking money while pretending to be for the people who were turned away due to inability to pay? “It was a scandal!” (Gibson 331). The students, who had not received even a peseta, offered a free show outside the next day. This, too, was threatened by the weather, so the students moved the performance to a church in San Juan. They attempted to organize a bus service to the nearby performance, but it was too disorganized for the people of Soria. Unfortunately, once the show did manage to start, they had hecklers. The students were stopped various times throughout their first ever performance of *La vida es sueño (Life is a Dream)* and Lorca raised the lights to ask for silence. During the scene where Lorca took to the stage as the Shadow, the hecklers interrupted the show once more and started to cause a ruckus. “Finally it seems that the electricity failed, perhaps due to sabotage, plunging the already irate audience into darkness and bringing the show to a disastrous end amid jeers and a hail of stones fired by invisible hands” (332). This specific town had been sabotaged in order to shake the performers, but they would not be stopped.
The Messages

4.1 Lorca’s Message

The message that Lorca was personally trying to spread was a little different than that which the government was trying to spread. Lorca’s ultimate goal with this project was to revive an interest in the Spanish theatre and make it more accessible, more popular, more for the people, and more impressive than ever. He wanted people to truly love the theatre as much as he did. “This basic concept of the Spanish drama as a precious possession, belonging to the people themselves, is the ideal that underlies the creation of Lorca’s theatre” (Wade Byrd 16). He wanted audiences to truly be a part of their theatrical experience and be able to understand what it was that he was bringing to them: culture and education. Lorca influenced those who came to see him to enjoy theatre. He believed that “teatro es uno de los más expresivos y útiles instrumentos para la edificación de un país y el barómetro que marca su grandez o su descenso” [theatre is one of the most expressive and useful instruments for the construction of a country and the barometer that marks its greatness or its descent] (García Lorca). By bringing more people to his plays, he hoped to rebuild and strengthen the Spanish theatre and thereby the country.
According to Wade Byrd, reports and editorials in the newspapers and periodicals of Spain indicate the nationalization of the Spanish theatre, which began in 1940 during Franco’s dictatorship, was a culmination of the endeavors undertaken by Lorca and his students. “La Barraca es algo que está en el pasado pero cuyas consecuencias han perdurado a lo largo del siglo XX…” [La Barraca is something that is in the past but whose impact has endured throughout the twentieth century] (Bonet 71). Lorca truly piqued the country’s interest in theatre and was also being noticed abroad. Margarita Xiru’s depiction of his works in Argentina brought him fame and a small fortune that he was able to share with his parents, but he continued to be involved in La Barraca. He had hoped to share his love of theatre and its importance to the Spanish culture to his countrymen and his way of doing that was through La Barraca.

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’ [A town that does not help and does not foster its theatre, if it is not dead, it is dying; like the theatre that does not gather the social heartbeat, the historic heartbeat, the plight of its peoples, the genuine color of its countryside and of its spirit, with smiles or with tears, does not have the right to call itself theatre but game room or place to do that horrible thing called killing time] (García Lorca).
People attended his shows and were drawn into his world because it was evident that he truly cared for his country and was interested in their way of life. This is exactly what he had set out to do; bring the theatre to all of Spain, Paris, America, and Japan.

4.2 The National Theatre

The most surprising aspect of Lorca’s success was that the National Theatre that he had inspired was founded during the regime of Francisco Franco that lasted from 1939 until the dictator’s death in 1975. Nearly one hundred years earlier in 1847, the country’s first attempt at creating a national theatre was a complete failure. This original national theatre mimicked the style of the French Theatre (Aguilera Sastre 121). It successfully had performances without a problem for two years. In April 1849, the government gave the rights of the Teatro Nacional (National Theatre) to the Madrid municipality with the condition that the theatre would remain dedicated to the best dramatic art of the time and area by sponsoring one specific theatre troupe in the city. However, Madrid did not keep its word and the theatre bounced unofficially between various private theatre troupes. It continued to worsen until its inevitable close. “El teatro español…fue sumiéndose en un deterioro imparable hasta su cierre por reformas en 1924” [The Spanish theatre… was plunging in an irreparable deterioration until its close for reforms in 1924] (121). The next efforts for a national theatre were the two traveling theatre troupes that were started for the Second Republic. La Barraca was the more influential and substantial of the two. Its success and popularity inspired other similar troupes such as El Búho valenciano.
Aguilera Sastre cites Víctor Fuentes as referring to the “Teatro del Pueblo de las Misiones Pedagógicas y a La Barraca de un ‘Teatro Nacional popular’, en contraposición al ‘Teatro Nacional fascista’ inspirado por el franquismo” [Town theatre of the Teaching Missions and the Barraca as a “popular National Theatre”, as opposed to the “fascist National Theatre” inspired by francoism] (127). This new government of 1939 was unsure it wanted to take another such risk. So, when Franco’s government decided to try to create a National Theatre it was a surprise to those involved in the artistic world. It was less of a surprise to find that it was less art than propaganda.

The man responsible for this, Dionisio Ridruejo, was the general director of Propaganda from 1938 – 1941. This nationalization of the theatre was one of the many reasons that he was let go. Theatre was not supported by the Franco regime unless it was their own “National Theatre” and that was even something they were hesitant about. He was too ambitious and his ideas were too close to those of García Lorca. The rest of the theatre companies were still in the midst of a volatile market and censored. Therefore, nothing critical or thought provoking was being produced by these independent theatres. Ridruejo openly admitted that he had wanted to follow in the steps of the success of La Barraca and have students performing works in the open air to towns throughout Spain. However, Ridruejo did not want to stop there. He wanted to create experimental centers, universities, and other organizations for the actors, artists, etc. that were involved in the shows. He did not want to be limited to just theatre, either. He wanted to expand to film, the new massively popular pastime. All of which was incredibly adventurous and naïve and he never achieved these goals.
This “National Theatre” that he managed to open would not dare to approve anything critical of Franco to be staged. The people were being shown exactly what Franco’s government wanted them to see no matter what theatre they attended. “The theater of Francoist Spain intentionally erased the line between education and propaganda, and the new regime saw itself charged with the obligation of moral and political education” (Kasten 7). In this sense, the “nationalization” of the theatre merely meant that Franco’s government had even more control over what was being staged at the time. They manipulated the educational portion of the theatre that they advertised to make it into a propaganda piece for their new government by saying that it was meant to educate the people of the traditional values by which the new government was abiding. Lorca believed that the theatre crisis that had been talked about during his time was due to bad organization. The actors and authors were in the hands of businesses that were absolutely commercial and the theatre itself was being plunging every day and would be without salvation (García Lorca). This manipulation and censorship was exactly what Lorca was talking about in that talk, but he could not have possible imagined how far it would go.

However, at the same time that this Francoist theatre was happening, there was a second National Theatre that was prevalent. It was of the “Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas” [Alliance of Antifascist Intellectuals] that was led by María Teresa León and Rafael Alberti and was called the “Theatre of Art and Propaganda” (Aguilera Sastre 131). This group was explicit as to what they would be providing the people with their
theatre. Thus, there were two National Theatres in Spain which was something that had not been anticipated.

As the war went on, all the intellectuals were slowly eradicated. “…cuando no borrado[s] por la muerte, quedaron condenados en la mayoría de los casos a la cárcel o al exilio” [when not erased by death, they were condemned in the majority of cases to jail or exile]. Meanwhile, the Falangist theatre took on the role of the now-dead Barraca “siguiendo fielmente el modelo de la Barraca, algunos de cuyos miembros… se integraron en él” [loyally following the model of the Barraco, some of whose members became part of it] (132). This was more of what Lorca had envisioned, but still more of a propaganda piece than actual theatre. However, what the Spanish government has in place today as a National Theatre is exactly what Lorca had envisioned. “Arte por encima de todo. Arte nobilísimo. Y vosotros, queridos actores, artistas por encima de todo” [Art above all else. Art most noble. And you all, dear actors, artists above all else] (García Lorca).

Today the Centro Dramático Nacional (National Dramatic Center) is operated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport (“Centro Dramático Nacional”). It was reopened by the Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (National Institute for the performing arts and music) in 1978 to consolidate all the various schools of contemporary theatre. A succession of eleven directors and more than three hundred productions over nearly four decades contributes to its history. The María Guerrero Theatre and the Valle-Inclán Theatre perform a variety of works that highlight multiple
types of theatre. They also tour both throughout Spain and abroad. The evolution of the National Theatre is something that Lorca would be proud to have influenced.

4.3 The Second Republic’s Message

While traveling with La Barraca, however, Lorca was also expected to follow the guidelines and expectations set forth by the *Misiones Pedagógicas*.

The aim of the Missions was to take the message of the new democratic Spain out to the underprivileged people of the country’s lonely, isolated and often appallingly poor villages, putting on plays, performing concerts, helping the local teachers, organizing art exhibitions and talks, setting up public libraries, showing films and in general striving to bring hope to folks who in many cases still lived almost in the Stone Ages. (Gibson 319)

According to these guidelines, Lorca was barely successful because he did not bring the kind of education they had hoped would bring them continued power in a democratic Spain. The Second Republic wanted the libraries, museums, and theatre troupes that were created to bring education, culture, and democracy to the far edges of the country. They wanted to show the people their government was interested in them. They thought that “es preciso matarlos con libros, no hay otro remedio: la cultura modifica la sensibilidad, y cuando estos jóvenes sean inteligentes, ya no podrán ser malos, ya no se atreverán a destrozar un corazón con un chiste, ni a amargar una vida con una broma” [it is necessary to kill them with books, there is no other remedy: culture
changes sensitivity, and when these young ones are intelligent, they will not be able to be bad, they will not dare to destroy a heart with a joke, nor embitter a life with a prank] (Huerta Calvo, “La Barraca o La Utopía” 15). Unfortunately, the Second Republic was naïve in thinking that education would fix all of Spain’s political problems and keep them as a democracy. They were not able to circumvent the impending civil war that spanned nearly three years, from July 1936 until April 1939 through bringing the people cultural enlightenment. The mounting pressures and dividing ideas were too great. No amount of education would have been able to stop it. In this light, none of the projects that came from the *Teaching Missions* were completely successful.

Education was, however, a threat to the right-winged Franco regime. Federico García Lorca was an intrinsic member of the group of poets called the Generation of ’27. Their first meeting was in Seville in 1927 to commemorate the tricentennial of the death of poet Luis de Góngora. The poets of this group utilized visionary images, free verses, and impure poetry. “… [T]he Generation of ’27 is considered the richest and most admirable moment of all the Spanish poetry” (“The Generation of ’27 overview”). This made them a huge threat to the war agenda because they were not only influential, but they were able to analyze what was going on around them and create art to help the general public understand it as well. Each member was ultimately either killed, jailed, or exiled. García Lorca was killed in August of 1936 at the age of thirty-eight.

Evidence that was released on April 24, 2015 flooded Spanish media about a document from July 9, 1965 that surfaced regarding the government’s involvement in the murder of Federico García Lorca. Olmedo claims that a police official went to visit
Lorca the night before his death and spoke with the poet. Another article says that he was detained, killed, and buried “a flor de tierra” [without digging deeply] (“Un documento franquista”). Constenla asserts that the death was a political crime that weighed heavily on the dictatorship during the thirty-six years that Francisco Franco was in power.

Whatmore, Constenla quotes Ian Gibson (famous biographer of Lorca) as saying that “[e]l informe que piden es contundente. Demuestra que no fue un asesinato callejero, que fue sacado del Gobierno Civil para asesinarlo” [The information they asked for is blunt. It shows that it was not a stray killing, that he was taken out by the civil government in order to kill him].

What each article quotes directly from the released document is that García Lorca was killed with one other person (contrary to what was previously thought which was a small group of three to four others) and in a very shallow grave in a ravine situated some two kilometers to the right of the Fuente Grande (“Big Fountain”) in a place that is very difficult to find. They all also cite the three main reasons that the civil government had to kill Lorca: he was a socialist poet, he was a freemason of the Alhambra lodge, and he was homosexual ("aberración que llegó a ser vox populi" [aberration that became the beliefs or opinions of the majority] (Olmedo). His murder was carried out by the civil government because he was different: a freethinking, homosexual, socialist poet.
Conclusion

Federico García Lorca and La Barraca created a magical way for the people who were able to experience their theatre to view the past and present culture of Spain. Lorca was exceptionally successful in bringing theatre to the masses for both entertainment and education because he influenced an entire generation and helped to set standards for the future national theatre of Spain. Although the Misiones endeavored to add culture and education into the lives of the poor and thereby boost the general populace’s feelings toward the Second Republic, those involved were unsuccessful in preventing the war. This fall of the democracy signified the end of freedom. It would be easy to merely lump La Barraca in with the Misiones, and claim that Lorca made no significant contributions to enrich the peoples’ lives with culture, but that is not true.

Lorca’s contributions brought the Spanish theatre to all of Spain and even to some other countries. He shared his passion for theatre with his troupe and audiences. Unfortunately, his passion and his ideas threatened the war agenda by being socialist in nature, and he was taken from Granada to be killed. Had he not been so popular, so influential, he would not have been targeted by the anti-republican government rebels. By murdering him, the fascists acknowledged Lorca’s political importance and the possibility that Lorca’s influence could have spurred a significant rebellion against them in the future. The ultimate goal of Federico García Lorca was to show the world just
what Spanish theatre was capable of. He could enlighten people by showing them what they would otherwise not see, such as flaws in the government and society. He was therefore a threat to those in power. He brought the world an opportunity to be exposed to culture and the history of the theatre as it pertained to Spanish culture. The precocious child who passed his days by entertaining his household became an extremely influential artist who made enough of an impact on the people that he was murdered to be silenced.


