

## The Dark Side of Matriarchy: Control, Repression, and Tragedy in The House of Bernarda Alba: A Psychoanalytical Study of Motherhood in Lorca's Rural Spain

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**Abstract:** This study examines Lorca's portrayal of motherhood and rural household as an epitome of matriarchal control, a suffocating household and the contagious nature of oppression within a family structure. The central character, Bernarda, exudes the image of hierarchical power which engulfs the freedom of her own daughters in the house, notwithstanding her mother and servants. This attitude of hers brings the family to a tragically heightened stage where the youngest commits suicide and the elder ones live like the dead. This research accentuates the nature of power in both ways; as an active force in the form of Bernarda's dictatorial behavior and as a passive force that has overcast the whole house making the girls no more than puppets in the hands of their irrational despotic mother. Drawing on Jungian theory, this research argues matriarchy can be destructive when rooted in patriarchal values, harming women themselves. The paper does not limit the study to the text of the play as a specimen of the destructive nature of the mother figure, but also includes the feminist strains, cultural implications and the behavioural and psychological patterns of certain characters in specific situations in order to highlight and elaborate on the selected character of Bernarda Alba from multiple critical viewpoints. The paper provides an extensive study of Bernarda Alba's character and household not only as the darker side of the mother figure and female destructive powers but also the household as a politically charged sphere of power, control and repression which ultimately brings forth the tragic confrontations and Adeila's suicide.

**Keywords:** Matriarchy, Repression, Female Authority, Tragedy

### Introduction

This research is inspired by the play's title itself, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, which examines the character of Bernarda Alba, her control in the household, her oppressive dictatorial attitude and the dynamics of political decisions and stances during the course of the action of the play. Bernarda is the central figure and burning force of a dramatic creation that keeps the audience bound to see the catastrophic proceedings. The paper titled "The Dark Side of Matriarchy: Control, Repression, and Tragedy in the *House of Bernarda Alba*" is an exploration of the psychological side of the mother character, her decisions, her comments, and why she behaves in a certain way. What are the effects of her authoritarian figure on her daughters? She is not only despotic in her dealings with her house help, daughters, they would be son-in-law, but her mother also becomes a victim in her oppressive domain. The story of oppression does not end here, it spreads among the sisters, every one of them, in one way or another, becomes a mirror of their mother. Those who do not surrender to this contagiousness of evil face tragic consequences.

The House of Bernarda Alba is not only a revolt against patriarchal norms in society, but also a manifestation of the internalisation of its values. The oppression that is embedded in Bernarda's body is a stark contrast to the romanticised image of a mother present in any literature around the world. The combination of the word oppression and the word mother itself appears to be surprising at first, yet the bitter truth is perfectly portrayed by Lorca in the play under discussion. In feminism, this has been the patriarchy since ever, which has made women a victim to its oppression and societal charge, yet in the play, it is not patriarchy solely, but a shadowed side of matriarchy, the house where the mother has all the

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power and she decides to exhibit in a quite unnatural manner. She does not bother to see her daughters happy and flourishing in their lives. This is the society and the image in the eyes of society that bothers her more. So the authority apparently is in the metronome, yet the reins are in the hands of society, which is, after all, a patriarchal clan.

This study, as a primary focus, comments on Bernarda Alba's place as a matriarch who is not benign and benevolent, but rather oppressive and controlling. An amusing aspect of the study is that the oppression and cruelty are not motherly traits, but these are identified and examined in the character of the mother as a psychological side primarily kept in the dark. This dark side is a result of certain societal pressures, which will be further elaborated in the analysis. The psychoanalytical sphere of the research on this topic is so inclusive that it renders significant points of similarity among the daughters, which appear to be a consequence of the mother's disorder. It would not be wrong to say that all the daughters of Bernarda have internalised the damaging nature of their mother, and they have also lost the compassionate side of their personalities in this adoption. They have become cruel and mean to one another. Compassion, empathy and sacrifice for the siblings or daughters or for any other human relation are absent from their consciousness. The only sacrifice the audience witnesses is that of freedom on the altar of Matriarchy to please the patriarch god, vigilantly watching from the outside. The other sacrifice is that of Adeila's love and child as an act of resistance and noncompliance to the system. Bernarda faces the loss of authority in this way; Adeila's suicide is a symbol of the failure of her control over her household and the circumstances whatsoever. Here, she becomes a ruler who is oppressive, and a victim who is not even able to identify and express her pain in the right way. Lorca successfully blurs the binaries of the victim and the victimiser to bring forth the complex interplay of these societal systems.

Another binary that is blurred by the playwright is that of maternal love and ideological domination. Bernarda thinks it is her right as a mother to control the wishes of her daughter, in spite of being their protecting custodian, she tends to become an oppressive gaoler who distances herself from the ones confined inside the boundaries of her territory. The compromised maternal love and unexpressed emotion and attachment are suppressed into an unspoken pact of authority. Feelings when kept inside and not given vent to, cumulate into powerful emotions which may take a turn in the wrong direction, as happens in Bernarda's case. She tries to be overprotective and wants to select the best matches for her daughters, but forgets that in human relationships, it is a reciprocal exchange of feelings and compatibility which is more important than the extreme best version of each and every aspect of people's personalities. This self-righteousness is crucial to Lorca's portrayal: it is precisely Bernarda's conviction in the righteousness of her authority that makes her so dangerous. Her tyranny is not a distortion of moral order but its logical conclusion within a patriarchal and honour-based society. In this way, Lorca depicts not just a character but a cultural system that permits and even demands such destructive female authority.

*The House of Bernarda Alba* also resonates with the political and cultural context it emerges from. Bernarda is a representative of a conservative, traditional outlook that flickers to shine for the last time, while the resistance among daughters and their pursuit of freedom is an example of modernity raising its head right after the Spanish Civil War in rural Andalusia. Lorca's own position as a gay and modernist in a hetero-normative patriarchal society finds an expression through the representation of women as marginalised. He not only paints a picture of their suffering but also explores their position and the extent of control they can have on their condition in certain circumstances. He presents Bernarda as a victim and an oppressor, highlighting the complex situation women find themselves in while living in society, which itself is going through a revolutionary change. This paper seeks to honour that complexity, arguing that Bernarda's tyranny cannot be reduced to either villainy or victimhood but must be understood within a broader matrix of cultural, psychological, and gendered forces.

Bernarda's failure as a mother is best coded in Adeila's suicide. Her suicide is a big question mark in the face of love for her daughter's honour, asking her to reconsider whether the socially defined honour is more important than her daughter's life itself. She keeps on saying that she died a virgin just to tell herself that she has not failed as a mother in the eyes of society, while Adeila is the one who won by losing her life. She broke the confines of patriarchy and matriarchy and whatever societal structure was to keep her

human instincts intact and live. Lorca conveys the message to the world at large and rural Spain specifically that no social structure is superior to human instinct. And that any system that oppresses the human instincts and the natural desires fails ultimately

Lorca beautifully designs the theatrical representation of the story of a repressing mother with her five resistant daughters. He chooses the white colour for walls as a symbol of sterility and a dome-like atmosphere, as if it is a confinement like a grave from where there is no way out. There are windows in girls' rooms that help them peek into the world, but the doors will lead to the hall in the midst only. The mother is always present there for surveillance, and the surveillance is not only limited to the mother but the whole of the family. The sense of sisterhood becomes a victim of the venomous effects of the despotic presence of the mother. So, this research places *The House of Bernarda Alba* within broader literary and psychoanalytical discourses on matriarchy, authority, and the family. Drawing on theorists such as C.G.Jung, the study explores how a mother figure can be an embodiment of both resistance and repression, how a mother-controlled household can be a catalyst for both a site of empowerment and control. The paper explores Bernarda's character through the lens of a psychoanalytical framework to signify the stance that Bernarda is not simply a mother who exercises power, but a persona through which the ambivalence of maternal authority is made visible. Her house becomes a ring of tussle where the ethics of care surrender in front of the politics of dominance, and where the mother's life-giving and nurturing existence becomes a conduit for social discipline rather than an emotional sanctuary. Lorca's vision thus anticipates contemporary psychoanalytical concerns about the entanglement of love and control, tradition and trauma, motherhood and moral policing.

In sum, by focusing on the dark side of matriarchy, this paper does not intend to demonise female authority but to critically evaluate the role and conditions in which it becomes a handle of the systems of repression. Bernarda Alba tries to protect her daughters from society's eye, which she has become an active ambassador, resulting in the tragic loss of her own offspring. An intensive reading and observation of Lorca's play, complemented by Jung's theory of Archetypal images, provides a critically informed narrative of the underneath an apparently artistic depiction of women's life in the villages of Spain.

## Rationale

The rationale of this study lies in its exploration of comparatively less debated negative aspects of matriarchal power. The traditional view of a mother is that of a benign and benevolent personality that sacrifices her own comfort and life for her offspring. The point of view is that of women's victimisation by patriarchal norms and authorities. Here, the situation is reversed, and the authority is given in the hands of the mother, which provides an interesting entity for examination, who lets the power dominate her inherent nature and bends to be more patriarchal than motherly. This study inculcates the idea of the mother archetype in relation to her daughters as an oppressive and demanding power figure. The paper also comments on the internalisation of noncompliance and emotional indifference among girls as a result of constant exposure to such behaviour of their mothers.

## Research Questions

- i. How does Lorca depict matriarchal authority as a tool of repression in the *House of Bernarda Alba*?
- ii. How does the interplay between repression and social norms contribute to the tragic ending of the play?
- iii. What are the psychological and social consequences of Bernarda's control over her daughters?

## Research Objectives

- i. To examine the character of Bernarda as a representation of authoritarian matriarchal power.
- ii. To investigate how societal expectations, applied by Bernarda's control, create the conditions for unavoidable tragedy in the narrative.
- iii. To explore the emotional, psychological, and social impact of control on the daughters, particularly through the themes of repression and autonomy.

## Literature Review

*The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca (1936) remains the crucial text to understanding the intersections of gender, authority, and repression in 20th-century Spanish drama. While much scholarly work has centred on its critique of patriarchal norms, an emerging body of literature has begun to analyse the darker contours of matriarchal power. This literature review synthesises existing research that examines themes of control, maternal dominance, repression, and tragedy in the play, with a particular emphasis on how female authority, rather than subverting patriarchal structures, often replicates and reinforces them.

Several foundational studies highlight Bernarda Alba as a figure who enacts patriarchal ideology through maternal control. Morris (1979) was among the first to argue that Bernarda functions not as a feminist icon but as an enforcer of traditional patriarchal values. Her maternal authority is linked to mechanisms of silence, honor, and surveillance that mirror the very power structures women are often subjected to. Delgado (2008) studies the play in the same light, presenting it as an indirect reference to Francoist Spain. Rich (1976) and Butler (1990) have provided foundational insights into maternal ideology and gender performance that go with the control practices by Bernarda. Rich introduces the idea of "compulsory motherhood" as a system which talks of motherhood as a tool in the hands of patriarchy. In action, Bernarda does not provide nurturance, but she becomes a watchdog who does not really care for the emotional well-being of her daughters. In the light of Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, Bernarda and her daughters act according to the gender roles by showing repetitive behaviours that reinforce the societal structure of patriarchy.

Spatial dynamics play a crucial role in understanding the play. Edwards (1981) and Allen (1991) have commented on the household as a symbolic prison; an enclosed, strangling space where one's self, personal space and desire are completely denied. The house of Bernarda Alba becomes a microcosm of patriarchal oppression, and Bernarda is its chief warden of this social structure.

Larson (1997) and Coperias Aguilar (2001) shift attention towards the psychological aspect. But they see it through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytical theory. They propose that the repression of sexual desire is so cardinal to the narrative that it results in the demise of the one denied this liberty. Gubar (1979) place the play in the broader literary tradition of female confinement. Their image of madwomen in the attic applies aptly to Lorca's daughters, as they are confined behind the four walls and closed doors and windows of the house. They do not have any way of expression or connection with the outer world.

Contemporary authors such as Ryan (2011) and Delgado-Garcia (2015) further these discussions. Ryan hints at the internalisation of the oppressive system in Bernarda's Household, which is elaborately addressed in this research paper. Delgado-Garcia questions and comments on the oppressive motherhood in rural Spain as a normal way of exerting power.

O'Connor (2014) and Willey (2016) investigate the nature and structure of control and power in the domestic sphere as depicted in Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*. O'Connor says that power as a resort of matriarchy or patriarchy is not the concern in Lorca's play; rather, it is the exertion of power in either of these or any third form as a system of oppression against certain personal and individual liberties of the self. Willey offers a criticism of the motherly figure and motherhood as an institution. He says that this romanticised institution can also get corrupt when mishandled by the improper division of power.

In sum, these studies have provided the groundwork for an understanding of repression, control, and tragedy in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, yet few have satiatingly explored the concept of "the dark side of matriarchy." This study aims to fill that gap by reconsidering Bernarda's authority not simply as a tool of patriarchal norms, but as a different form of matriarchal control that corrupts motherhood. It contributes to feminist and psychoanalytical discourse by challenging the proposition that matriarchal households guarantee freedom; instead, it presents the thesis that matriarchal power, when backed by societal conformity and emotional sterility, can be equally repressive and tragic.

## Research Gap

*The House of Bernarda Alba* has been widely studied for its exploration of gender roles, authoritarianism, and repression under Francoist symbolism; existing literature often emphasises patriarchal oppression or general female victimhood within traditional Spanish society. However, there is a notable gap in critically examining matriarchal power as a source of oppression, as most scholarship frames Bernarda as a product or enforcer of patriarchal norms, but few studies interrogate her autonomous agency as a matriarch and how she actively perpetuates systems of control and repression, independent of male influence.

The literature often views Bernarda's tyranny as an extension of societal pressure. This paper argues instead that her personal wielding of maternal power contributes to the family's downfall, positioning matriarchy itself as a tragic mechanism of control. While authoritarianism is frequently studied in male-dominated political or familial contexts, there is limited exploration of how female-led authoritarian systems function and fail, particularly in domestic spheres. Much of the literature casts Bernarda solely as a villain and her daughters as passive victims. This paper aims to complicate these binaries, exploring how repression is internalised and reproduced by the daughters themselves, especially Angustias and Martirio.

## Theoretical Framework

To explore the repression and violence in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, the theory that appears to be complementary is that of the Jungian Archetype of a mother. In a matriarchal society, when a mother takes up the negative role as defined in Jung's psychological description of the persona and her traits, the character of Bernarda Alba becomes even more interesting and overarching. While talking about the negative dimensions of maternal association, According to Jung, "On the negative side, the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate" (Jung, 1959, p. 16).

This is further elaborated and made relevant by categorising the influences. The exertion of power from a mother works differently towards a son and a daughter. As this study is concerned with the daughters in the house, Jung's "The Mother-Complex of the Daughter" guides the study in a better way. Keeping in view the central matriarchal character of Bernarda, Jung's proposition appears to be shedding light on the inter-textual implications of the plot and setting. He also describes, "Women of this type, though continually living for others, are, as a matter of fact, unable to make any real sacrifice. Driven by ruthless will to power and a fanatical insistence on their own maternal rights, they often succeed in annihilating not only their own personality but also the personal lives of their children" (Jung, 1959, p. 85).

This is exactly what makes *The House of Bernarda Alba* a tragic domestic play. She influences the lives of her daughters in such a negative manner that happiness and bliss appear to disappear from their household. The youngest daughter, Adela, falls in love with a man who is the eldest daughter, Angustias's fiancé, Pepe el Romano, and later kills herself. In such a situation, what usually happens, according to C.G.Jung, is a delusion of self. He explains, "The daughter leads a shadow-existence, often visibly sucked dry by her mother, and she prolongs her mother's life by a sort of continuous blood transfusion. These bloodless maidens are by no means immune to marriage" (Jung, 1959, p. 92).

The desire to have a life partner is always there; if not at the forefront then at the rear of the mind. The type of household Bernarda governs over is basically a home devoid of men. The dead husband, who was once present in their lives, is no longer present and is being replaced by his wife, "the mother" in the hierarchy. The women in the family, including the maids and neighbours, who contribute to the action of the play, are not unaware of the agency of the men. That's the reason that the primarily manless, matriarchal system does not exhibit a single incident of abhorrence or hatred towards the opposite gender. Despite being marginalised in the storyline, men play a central role in the exposition and denouement of the drama. The other gender is depicted playing with the sentiments of the fair sex by loving one and courting others for marriage. Such circumstances, instead of giving power to the ladies in the house, make them vulnerable instead. This all happens due to the barred expression of personal feelings and experiences among the siblings or with the mother. The communication gap between the subjugated daughters and the despotically ruling mother brings misery upon misery to the house instead of affluence and happiness.

Their fragility is caused by the humans of their kind and exploited by the opposite gender. Jung clarifies to add this thought in these words, "They are so empty that a man is free to impute to them anything he fancies. In addition, they are so unconscious that the unconscious puts out countless invisible feelers, veritable octopus tentacles that suck up the masculine projections; and this pleases men enormously" (Jung, 1959, p. 24).

The things that please men in a patriarchal society become an element of pleasure and amusement in a matriarchal one, too. For the head of the clan, it is quite a sadistic practice to keep the other female members of the house away from the fulfilment of their personal, emotional and psychological desires. Such women are a curse for their daughters as well as their spouses. Jung asserts that such authoritarian matriarchal female characters are pathological in nature. In "The Negative Mother Complex", he says, "As a pathological phenomenon, this type is an unpleasant, exacting, and anything but satisfactory partner for the husband. Since she rebels in every fibre of her being against everything that springs from natural soil, however, there is no reason why increasing experience of life should not teach her a thing or two." (Jung, 1959, p. 91).

Though these objections seem to rise up from patriarchal grounds, which the theorist calls "natural soil". The behaviour transforms from mother to daughter and creates certain antagonistic characteristics in their dealings with one another. Rebellion or resistance are not bad things, but the problem arises when these rebelling forces overtake the course of normalcy. In such cases, the resistance from the daughters does not traverse the same path as trekked out by the mother; they rather start strolling on uncanny ways. The youngest Alba sister, Adela, decides to look at the world differently and identifies a person to be cordially associated with. These theoretical propositions and suppositions provide a complementary framework for *The House of Bernarda Alba* to be analysed as a presentation of the dark side of matriarchy, in which the matrilineality and matrilocality (Taterway) both seem to suppress the women themselves and do not appear to be in alignment with the idealistic notions of the clan of mother.

This study adopts Carl Jung's theory of archetypes, specifically the Mother archetype, as the primary theoretical framework for analysing *The House of Bernarda Alba*. This theory provides a powerful psychological help through which to interrogate Bernarda's character, shifting the focus from purely sociopolitical readings of her authority to a universal, symbolic understanding of maternal power and its destructive potential.

According to Jung, the Mother archetype embodies both creative and destructive forces. On one side, the mother symbolises nurturance, fertility, comfort, and life-giving energy. On the other hand, she can manifest as a devouring, suffocating force, often referred to as the Terrible Mother, whose presence inhibits growth, represses individuality, and enforces submission through emotional and psychological control (Jung, 1959).

Bernarda Alba is interpreted as a manifestation of this shadow aspect of the Mother archetype. She is not merely a protector of her daughters or a disciplinarian shaped by patriarchy; rather, she is a psychologically autonomous agent who actively exerts oppressive matriarchal control. The examples of successful matriarchal social structures are also available across continents, as accounted in Abendroth's *Matriarchal Societies: Studies on Indigenous Cultures Across the Globe*, but Bernarda's obsessive concern with honour, silence, and purity reflects the internalised, tyrannical mother who values order over empathy, and tradition over vitality (2012).

This approach is particularly justified in analysing *The House of Bernarda Alba* because the play functions on a highly symbolic level, with characters serving as archetypal figures (e.g., the Virgin, the Rebel, the Martyr). Lorca's poetic and dramatic vision often draws on mythic structures and collective unconscious themes, aligning naturally with Jungian theory and the matriarchal dynamics in the play, which resist simple categorisation into victim/villain binaries, requiring a more nuanced model that can explain both Bernarda's authority and her emotional barrenness as an archetypal force.

Using Jung's archetype of the Terrible Mother clarifies how Bernarda's power is not solely inherited from a male-dominated society, but instead emerges from a deeper psychic and symbolic dimension, one that explains the emotional deadness, psychological fragmentation, and tragic fate of her daughters. This framework also enables a re-evaluation of the play's tragedy, not simply as a political allegory, but as a psychic implosion triggered by the overextension of a single archetypal force; the dark side of the Mother (Jung, 1959).

## Research Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in literary analysis and archetypal criticism, with a specific focus on Carl Jung's theory of archetypes, particularly the Mother archetype, to examine themes of control, repression, and tragedy in "*The House of Bernarda Alba*" by Federico Garcia Lorca. The paper draws upon close textual analysis of the play, using selected passages that exemplify matriarchal dominance, emotional repression, and familial collapse, and interprets these through the lens of Jungian psychology.

Data consists of primary textual evidence from *The House of Bernarda Alba*, including character dialogue, stage directions, and symbolism (e.g., the use of colour, space, and silence). Analysis proceeds by identifying narrative and symbolic instances where Bernarda's behaviour aligns with traits of the devouring mother archetype, then interpreting these moments through Jungian principles of the collective unconscious and archetypal shadow.

Secondary sources, including critical essays, Jung's "*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*", and relevant psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations of the play, are incorporated to contextualise and support the analysis. This multi-layered approach combines psychological theory, literary close reading, and thematic synthesis to illuminate the destructive dimensions of matriarchal power.

Carl Jung's conception of the Mother archetype is central to this analysis. In Jungian theory, the Mother represents a primordial image of nurturance, fertility, and protection, but also carries a darker, destructive dimension, the devouring, smothering, or controlling mother (1954). This duality is essential in interpreting Bernarda Alba not merely as a product of patriarchy but as an active embodiment of the shadow side of the Mother archetype.

The primary method of textual analysis in this study involves thematic coding, a qualitative technique used to identify, label, and categorise recurring patterns in the text. Selected passages from *The House of Bernarda Alba* were analysed and coded according to emergent themes aligned with the study's focus on matriarchal power and psychological repression. Key thematic codes included: Control and Authority (e.g., Bernarda's edicts, silence, spatial confinement), Emotional Repression (e.g., suppression of desire, shame, religious guilt), Maternal Archetype (e.g., nurturing vs. devouring behaviours), Female Solidarity and Rivalry (e.g., interactions among sisters), Tragic Collapse (e.g., buildup to Adela's death and symbolic consequences). This coding process allowed for the organisation of textual evidence into a coherent framework that supports deeper psychological and symbolic interpretation through a Jungian lens.

A comprehensive review of secondary literature was conducted to position this analysis within existing scholarship on Lorca's play, Spanish gender dynamics, and matriarchal figures in literature. Particular attention was given to works emphasising feminist, psychoanalytic, and historicist readings. While previous critics often situate Bernarda within patriarchal structures or socio-political allegories, fewer interrogate her role as an autonomous female authoritarian figure tied to a symbolic shadow mother archetype.

In addition, a comparative analysis was undertaken to briefly contrast *The House of Bernarda Alba* with other literary matriarchs, such as Aeschylus' Clytemnestra (1900). The comparative study of Ibsen's Hedda Gabler also helped to underscore the recurring theme of female power devolving into repression (1951).

The final step in the analysis was thematic mapping, a visual and conceptual technique used to track the relationships among key themes and psychological dynamics within the play. By mapping the interplay

between Bernarda's control and her daughters' repression, a clearer picture emerges of how her maternal authority fractures the domestic space, culminating in Adela's rebellion and death.

### Data Analysis

In *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca, Bernarda's matriarchal figure exercises authoritarian control over her daughters in a way that reflects patriarchal repression, subverting traditional gender expectations while simultaneously reinforcing the domineering structures. Through the close textual analysis, the thematic exploration and contextual evaluation, this section examines how Lorca builds a "dark matriarchy" defined not by nutrition or empowerment but by surveillance, silence and symbolic violence. Through the psychoanalytical lens, this analysis reveals how the Bernarda Rule transforms the domestic space into a psychological imprisonment site, which inexorably leads to tragedy. From the archetype perspective of the Jungian mother, this analysis explores the character of Bernarda as a manifestation of the negative pole of the archetype: the terrible mother, whose control and repression become the catalyst of psychological asphyxiation and tragedy.

Lorca's script is scarce and claustrophobic, as is the house he describes. Language is brief, commands and scenario addresses abound, emphasising confinement. Bernarda's opening lines mark the guideline: "Silence! Less regrets and more work." Its language is not maternal but militaristic. Its use of imperatives "Don't cry", "Costa", "No one is to get out of this house" illustrates his obsession with order, purity and control. While repeated references to thirst and water suggest a long waterless year. The absence of male voices on the stage accentuates even more the fact that women in this work are trapped not only physically but also in narrative; they are denied full participation in a life beyond their domestic sphere. The structure of the work itself, confined in the walls of the Bernarda house, becomes an architectural metaphor for its regime. Lorca's frequent references to doors, windows and walls: "Thick walls, Silence. Huge shadow areas". Turn the house into a fortress. This spatiality emphasises surveillance and isolation, echoing Foucauldian panopticism where discipline is internalised through spatial control (Behroozfar, 2010). Bernarda's monologues work almost as state decrees. She declares: "A daughter who disobeys ceases to be a daughter and becomes an enemy." This line encapsulates its totalitarian maternal ideology: obedience is not only family duty but political loyalty. This theme is well elaborated in the article's name, *The House of Bernarda Alba: Allegory Explained*, accentuating the fact that dissent is not tolerated in the house, as in Spain; it is betrayal. But Bernarda's control is not only physical but psychological. She applies a silent code that eradicates the identity and desires of her daughters. The line "Here you do what I tell you to do! You can't run to your father with your stories anymore. A needle and thread for females; a mule and a whip for males. That's how it is for people born with means", condenses their world vision in a binary argument that leaves no place for liquidity or rebellion. This gender imperative assigns female autonomy, even if it is spied by a woman. The language of daughters is hesitant, elliptical and filled with euphemism, signs of suppression. The growing disregard of Adela is marked by her insistence on physical expression: "I want to go out" Adela announced, "No, no, I cannot be closed. I do not want to close. I don't want my skin to get away like you!" (Act ii), opposes the ideals of directly presenting and emotional restraint. This rebellion of Adela is not only a young disobedience, but an existing struggle for autonomy in a world that does not provide women a valid place for self-realisation. Their sisters, especially Martirio, have a rapid contradiction with the silent language, whose bitter sarcasm is sexual envy and emotional damage. She is portrayed as jealous and well-informed not only about Adela's hidden relationship but also about their mother's past (Harvard, 1985).

The ideology of Bernarda requires self-elimination. As La Poncia warns, "Bernarda is capable of sitting on your heart and watching you dying for a year without closing that cold smile." The image of Bernarda sitting on one's heart is both symbolic and intense: it represents the feelings of sexuality and oppression of personality. This maternal figure becomes an agent of psychological suffocation. The eight-year mourning period applied by Bernarda serves as a metaphor for applied purity and emotional death. Condolences become a tool for control, a suspension of time that denies any opportunity for daughters to develop, freedom or sexual fulfilment.

The daughters use black, symbolising not only pain but also suppression. The colour symbolism is crucial, says Boyd: Adela's act to wear a green dress "I wore green" marks its resistance (2019). The green, associated with life and spring, becomes an act of rebellion against the death imposed on life dictated by his mother. His suicide, then, becomes doubly tragic: even the symbol of life cannot survive within the maternal prison. Virginity is treated as social capital. Bernarda says, "My daughters are made of a different substance." She does not talk about their personalities but their purity, equating the value with chastity. This is aligned with femininity ideals in Francoist Spain. The daughters are evaluated not as individuals, but as honour repositories that must defend themselves even at the expense of their happiness or lives. Another important textual detail to consider is the paradoxical role of the servants, especially La Poncia, which oscillates between sympathy and surveillance. La Poncia warns Bernarda about the dangers of excessive control, saying: "You don't know what is happening in your home. That is your punishment. But you will discover it" (Act II). Despite his conscience, La Poncia remains part of the repressive system, illustrating how even those who see injustice are often impotent to prevent it.

Although Bernarda is a woman, her values are unequivocally patriarchal. She replicates the logic of the same system that historically oppressed women, turning their maternal role into a form of tyranny. Lorca criticises the social structures of Rural Andalusia (Polydorou, 2011), where reputation, marriage and honour dictated female behaviour. The concept of "What will they say?" It is repeated often. Bernarda acts not out of maternal love but out of social paranoia. Her statement, "we are eight women under the same roof, this is a battlefield," betrays her understanding of the house not as a refuge, but as a disputed site where control must be maintained against chaos, desire and scandal. Besides this, the tragedy of Adela's death is not due to the repression of Bernarda, but also to the complicity of other female characters, who have internalised the same norms. Martirio, who also harbours feelings for Pepe el Romano, betrays Adela out of jealousy and bitterness, commenting: "It is better ever to look at a man" (Act II). The internalised misogyny and the emotional frustration of Martirio make her actions an execution of the same system that victimises them. The rivalry between the sisters, exacerbated by their confinement and lack of agency, underlines how systemic repression encourages interpersonal conflict and emotional decomposition.

Pepe el Romano, though absent from the stage, serves as a potent symbol of patriarchal power and sexual desire. His engagement to Angustias, the eldest daughter, is based not on love but on social advantage, as Angustias is the only one with an inheritance. Meanwhile, his clandestine affair with Adela becomes a catalyst for the final unravelling. This paper interprets Pepe not as a character in his own right, but as a projection of the women's repressed desires and aspirations. The secrecy surrounding his presence and the sisters' dependence on fragmented information mirror the broader lack of transparency and communication in a society governed by control and silence.

The overarching perception of the maternal image among Lorca's readers and critics is that it reflects the fascist ideology: disciplinary, hierarchical and obsessed with purity. This is not an enriching mother but a disciplinary general. The tragedy of the work lies in the internalisation of the daughters of this ideology: they defy each other instead of joining. Jung believed that the mother's archetype was not limited to literal representations but extended to any psychic structure that encompasses the maternity function: food, protection, and also possession (1951). In Bernarda Alba's house, the entire environment becomes a projection of the terrible mother. The house, with its "thick walls" and "silence", functions as a psychological uterus locked up, oppressive and deadly. Bernarda governs this psychic space with absolutism. Her infamous statement: "In this house, I do not allow the street wind to enter," symbolises her total refusal to allow life, change or external influence; a distinctive seal of the eating maternal figure. She is not the mother of her daughters as individuals with unique psychologies, but as extensions of her will, whose purity and silence must be maintained. In Jungian terms, the terrible archetype of the mother threatens individualisation, the process by which the self becomes complete. Bernard's daughters are denied this process. Their personalities are suppressed; their wishes are pathologised. Bernarda, like the archetype, is the mother and the monster. Jung identifies the terrible mother with mythical figures such as Kali, Medea and the Sphinx, all powerful female figures associated with death, control and punishment (1951). Bernarda shares key characteristics with these archetypes. Like Kali, it is a death figure who presides over the period of mourning, enforces black clothes and demands silence. Like Medea, she sacrifices the

well-being of her children for honour and control. Like the Sphinx, it imposes repression riddles and forces her daughters to the selections that cannot survive.

The Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone offers a revealing parallel (The Fitzwilliam Museum). Demeter's refusal to free Persephone from the underworld results in the death of nature, without growth, without spring. Similarly, Bernarda's refusal to allow her daughters to get involved with life, love and sexuality results in psychological winter. Adela, the youngest daughter, becomes the modern Persephone. Her descent to death, through suicide, is both an escape and a symbol of the cost of maternal tyranny.

The climax of the work, the suicide of Adela, is read in this study as the culmination of emotional repression, social confinement and the impossibility of women's freedom under patriarchal morals. When Bernarda, after discovering Adela's issue, shoots a weapon at Pepe, Adela believes him dead and takes her own life. Her death is a tragic statement of the agency in a world that does not offer an acceptable exit for desire or rebellion. However, Bernarda's response to suicide reveals to what extent social norms cancel maternal pain: "She died a Virgin. Tell them that. Tell them she died a virgin!" (Act III). This insistence on maintaining appearances, even in death, demonstrates that honour and reputation are valued above truth or love. This moment, to a large extent, offers Lorca's most powerful criticism of social repression.

Lorca's plays in totality as a trilogy follow a set pattern and structure for the execution of an action that is not only individual but also social (Poeta, 1999). The structure of the work resembles classical tragedy. Unit of the place (the house), the time (for several days), and the action (the rise and fall of the Adela resistance) conform to the Aristotelian poetics. However, Lorca modernises the tragedy when locating the fatal failure not in the individual but in the system. Adela is the tragic, passionate, brave and convicted heroin. Her challenge, "Nobody will stop me", is heroic in her statement of desire, but useless. She does not die for a noble cause, but because the structure of repression makes her love indescribable and unnecessary.

Bernarda's final line, "she died a Virgin," is the last act of repression. She rewrites Adela's life posthumously, silencing her challenge even in death. The tragedy is not only Adela's suicide, but the triumph of a mother's lie over the truth of a daughter. Bernarda's representation complicates feminist assumptions about female power as inherently benevolent or emancipatory. In the house of Bernarda Alba, the power itself is corrosive, regardless of gender. The work suggests that any authority, when based on fear, honour and purity, becomes authoritarian. This criticism is aligned with the power theories of Michel Foucault as diffuse and relational. Bernarda does not exercise power alone; it circulates between the daughters through envy, rivalry and complicity. Adela's suicide as a consequence of Martirio's betrayal illustrates how repression reproduces horizontally, not just vertically.

Therefore, the "dark side of the matriarchy" is not simply Bernarda's tyranny, but the internalisation of the daughters. The maternal figure becomes an encryption for a broader social system that wants policing, silencing speech and glorifying the sacrifice. Bernarda Alba's house is a masterful exposition of how the matriarchal authority, when reported by patriarchal values, can be as repressive and tragic as any system dominated by men. Bernarda's home is not an investment of patriarchy, but its mirror, which has become even scarier for the intimacy of maternal control. Through symbolic language, spatial limitations and psychological interplay, Lorca dramatises how the domestic sphere can become a totalitarian government site. The result is a tragedy not of individual failures, but of collective entrapment, a house not mourning but of rebellion.

In Jung's analytical psychology, the Mother's Archetype is one of the most powerful elements of the collective unconscious. It is a primary image, embedded in the human psyche, which embodies nutritional and destructive abilities. As Jung(1951) explains, "the mother's archetype can appear in a variety of forms: the loving and caring mother, the terrible mother, the great mother, the mother as a queen of heaven, or the sorceress and the witch" (archetypes and the collective unconscious). This duality is at the heart of *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca.

## Conclusion

This research paper explores a comparatively less-examined aspect of *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca: the psychological repercussions of a repressive matriarchal system. It seeks to uncover the underlying webs of human relationships and personal agency that significantly influence the politics of power and decision-making within the narrative. To support this exploration, the study draws on Carl Jung's theories concerning the negative aspects of the maternal figure and ideas informed by historical and mythological contexts. Thus, this work is not merely a literary interpretation but also a reflection on ancient societal patterns, enriched by contemporary insights from psychology. This research has opened up a debate on the dark side of matriarchy, which further broadens the horizon of interest in this line. As earlier studies either presented matriarchy as the ideal and desired form of societal institution or presented Bernarda as a puppet in the hands of patriarchal authorities, this paper brings forth a new perspective which demands extensive research and debates among literary circles to highlight and demystify the status of an archetypal subject whether it be patriarchy or matriarchy; leading towards the consideration of an egalitarian social structure for co-existence of men and women in the society.

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