



Module 7

7.1.3 GARCÍA LORCA AN AVANT-GARDE

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[Transcription video 7.1.3]

When we talk of the links between García Lorca's work and the aesthetic avant-garde, we usually think of the visual poets and of all the magazines to which Lorca contributed, directly or indirectly, which constituted a critical moment in the Spanish avant-garde artistic movement.

But Lorca was also interested in painting, and it's on this topic that we find the lecture entitled 'Sketch on the New Painting: Options among the Modern', delivered in 1928, in which the poet defines what he considers the major milestones in Cubist painting. And it is precisely to Cubism that many of García Lorca's discoveries owe so much.

For example, in 'Romancero Gitano' in 'Reyerta': Una dura luz de naipe recorta en el agrio verde, caballos enfurecidos y perfiles de jinetes.

The poetry of Lorca is a poetry of edges, diagonals, geometry—and anguish, as he observed in his lecture on 'Poeta en Nueva York'— a poetry composed of different perspectives that are superimposed and intermingled.

That's what we see in 'Romance de la Guardia Civil', of which the first lines —'Black are the horses, The horseshoes are black'— introduce a poem in which different perspectives on black are superimposed, like layers of black, one on top of the other.

It would be going too far to say this poem was a source of inspiration for Picasso's Guernica, but certainly 'Romance de la Guardia Civil' owes much to Cubism, as does the book 'Romancero Gitano' overall.

Similarly, around the same time, in 'Cal y Canto' Rafael Alberti wrote poetry that was highly defined and set within clear aesthetic confines, as if placed inside a sturdy white coffret, as he himself described it years later, in 'La Arboleda Perdida'.

The relationship between Lorca and the avant-garde becomes particularly crucial when his poetry is touched by Surrealism. Surrealism constituted a new turning point for Spanish poets, to modernize their forms and verses.

Between 1929 and 1930, for example, we find 'Pasión de la Tierra' by Vicente Aleixandre, 'Un Río, un Amor' and 'Los Placeres Prohibidos', by Luis Cernuda, 'Sobre los Ángeles: Sermones y Moradas', by Rafael Alberti, and Lorca's 'Poeta en Nueva York', which remained unpublished until

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after his death. All of these poems bear witness to what the Spanish poets of 1930 contributed to universal Surrealism, and therefore to a new source of inspiration for poetry and a complete renewal of poetic forms. Surrealism was not so much an end in itself for all of these authors, but rather a catalyst, a turning point, in what were to become the most personal and creative works of that first part of the century, which combined with the new themes they dealt with to form entirely fresh subject matter in the Spanish poetry of 1930.

They were also extraordinarily innovative works, from a formal point of view. And to Cernuda, Alberti, and Vicente Aleixandre we might add Pablo Neruda, with his 'Residencia en la Tierra', one of the seminal works to come out of Spain in 1930.



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