

REFLECTIONS ON THE DUENDE

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An examination of The Theory and Play of the Duende by Federico García Lorca)

Dedicated to María Fernanda Palacios

At first sight, the opening lines of García Lorca's essay, *The Theory and Play of the Duende* (hereafter referred to as *The Duende*) look like an incrimination, but considered at greater length, we realize that they are intended as reflections on teaching, culture and the history of culture in our time, something of vital concern to the life and soul of modern man.

García Lorca begins his talk by recalling how, during his ten years as a student, he had heard "nearly a thousand lectures" in the same elegant salon in which he was then speaking and adds: "longing for fresh air and sunlight, I was so bored that when I emerged I felt as if I was covered with a thin film of ash that was about to turn into itching powder."²

His attack was aimed at teaching, at those thousand meaningless lectures which, like Ixion's wheel, could be repeated in an infinite cycle. A thousand lectures giving us a glimpse of García Lorca's feeling of irritation that comes through to us as a curse of titanic and hellish dimensions. A thousand lectures which at best provide a plethora of information that can never be fully assimilated or experienced, and in practice exists to deepen the abyss between knowledge and that within us: the soul.

In philosophy and the history of scholarship (in this case, they seem to be combined), Nietzsche was the innovator of his age when it came to stating the problem. On the verge of madness, he wrote that the conflict of present-day, man was a very old one. He demonstrated it by way of adolescent intuitions about classical Greece, in such insoluble dichotomies as Apollo and Dionysus. But there is no doubt that he was the first to sound the trumpet and draw attention to that which history had forgotten and pushed out of sight. Nevertheless, we know that this patrimony abandoned millennia ago still exists somewhere in our being. We know that it is there by "disorderly" outbursts, pathology and suffering in their most immediate forms, by misunderstandings, by the effort it costs us to come anywhere near understanding things that have no frame of reference in the life that history has forced upon us. We know it, too, because sometimes we experience these long forgotten feelings as a means of access to our innermost being ... when our emotions are stirred, when a few glasses of wine, good company, the lines of a poem or the rhythmic melody of music, or even a dream, move something within us.

Philosophy could not accept the challenge and make the effort to offer new answers. Instead, it followed other paths, those of the thousand lectures with the attendant exploration of linguistic intricacies, the assertions of science increasing the boundless greed of the titanic and the deification of the economy. Finally, when it came to exploring man, it revealed to us the existential vacuum already found in literature, the void where the Duende can never appear. Scholars did indeed accept the challenge and sensed something that was already in the atmosphere, a kind of need for the man of this century to breathe more deeply, but an "inspiration" that would be like absorbing air, stimuli and images from far beyond the limits of the air which normally reaches our lungs. For what can best sustain our needs has to find its way from the remote regions bypassed by history; what is most precious comes from there – the body.

The initiators of these studies focused our attention on a central geographic problem. They were humanists who lived north of the Alps, Germans steeped in a tradition for which Dionysus had no meaning as a theme until the second half of the 19th century. Moreover, when historical necessity forced them to study it, they did so with the very tools provided by the history of humanistic studies in which they were trained. By this I mean the historical, racial and geographical considerations which today we call Transalpine psychology, though they themselves were not aware that this was the psychic background of their own studies. They were the children and grandchildren of a Protestantism imbued with fantasies of imperialistic dominion which

distanced them from positions more favorable to the personal inner experience of what they were studying. Euphoric and steeped in an incurable optimism, they began to explore the irrational from the incubator of Nazi shame, from that other (Wotan) madness which bore no relation to the one they were studying. In all events, through the romantic agonies of their souls, they handed down to us an erudite tradition and some of them the extremely valuable expression of their limitations. As Walter Otto puts it: "Thus previous attempts to explain the madness of the Dionysian orgies in terms of human needs, whether spiritual or material, have ended in complete failure. Their conclusions are not only unbelievable in themselves, but they are intolerably contradictory of the most important and the most explicit sources."³

These lines tell us clearly how remote these scholars were from the irrational Dionysian complexes, where the incredible and the rejected manifest themselves in a single body, in as much as contradictions are an inherent and essential feature of Dionysus. Otto's words also indicate the boundary lines between academic studies of the humanities and something that eludes them, the territory of the subterranean gods where study, whatever we mean by the word, reaches its limits and lived experience begins. We cannot conceive of Dionysus as belief. He is living experience: emotions, feelings, complaints, cries of grief and bodily expressions: manifestations through which lives repressed by consensus and relegated to the social and geographical sidelines in their constant battle for survival made their attempts at self-expression. I speak of those defeated by history, as was the case with García Lorca's *Duende* which lives on in Andalusia, a region steeped in its Roman, Jewish, Moorish and Gypsy complexes.

Since the turn of the century, other disciplines have tried to tackle the problem. One approach is psychotherapy, the psychic process reflected and accepted as life. Here I should point out that this is a personal point of view that is central to my studies. Psychotherapy cannot dispense with scholarship (the study of culture), the source from which it draws its nourishment. What in scholarship remained mere love of study is carried into life by the talking cure, thus complementing what the last century gave us in its study of culture.⁴

Psychotherapy can initiate processes and healing, always providing we admit that the sick person is the product of a particular history and culture. Thus, a psychotherapy not founded on culture, or a psychotherapist who does not have a cultured view of life and is unaware that sickness has its roots in cultural complexes, is inconceivable. Once we realize that illness is essentially repression, the repression of gods or goddesses, psychotherapy's chief concern then becomes observation and evaluation of the appearance of the gods who favor the reflection of psychic elements, gods whose epiphanies evince a world and life of their own. In our culture, the pagan gods and the forms of life they personify are the most repressed; that is why they are the very gods who trigger our deepest psychic movements.

In talking about repression, I want to rise to a higher cultural level, rejecting the jargon of the age which mandered on about the "repressive" and placed itself outside the historical and religious complexes of civilized life by concentrating exclusively on the personal aspect. A psychotherapy focused on personal systems cannot even approach, much less penetrate, the complexities of a culture. But having said that, the clinic for the mentally ill, the psychotherapist's consulting room and the study of psychosomatic processes may well be understood as observations of the actual world which can, I feel, at times grant us a vision of the irrational as it emerges, leaping over the barriers of repression and trying desperately to come alive.

The total boredom induced by these thousand lectures inspires García Lorca to propose a different, more stimulating knowledge and one more in keeping with the demands of psychotherapy and the studies of modern scholarship. Here I speak specifically and exclusively about a psychotherapy linked to study of the archetypes, where apprenticeship to the psyche begins and becomes possible; where the study of the irrational needs to be seen from within the archetypal forms and limits to which it belongs.

Study of the irrational has already become much more accessible in this part of the century, as numerous contributions on the subject demonstrate. It seems as if scholars were closer to the irrational;⁵ as if from the viewpoint of the age in which they were destined to live and study they had come closer to the realm from which Lorca transmits his *Duende* to us. It also seems as if scholars, driven by historical necessity, have gone more deeply into the interrelationship of theory and play proposed by Lorca: theory and play, to be sure, but a theorizing with all its implications, including the erudite associations and intellectual connections Lorca offers us, much in the manner

of his time, rounded off with his special brand of surrealist wit and charm. The Duende has its forms.

But let us leave all this within the theoretical framework of the scholars and we shall see that the addition of play urges us to embark on deeper, more favorable relations with those theories. This brings us to the consideration of an impressive book on classical Greek themes by E.R. Dodds entitled *The Greeks and the Irrational*,⁶ a splendid contribution to scholarship. The autobiography of the author,⁷ an Irish scholar, also recounted the games with the irrational it was his lot to experience. They included the madness of a world engrossed in political and social conflicts, the psychology of those defeated by historical complexes, by what can never be resolved, and his friendship with great poets (always of capital importance), whose work owes so much to the irrationality of divine intervention, cannabis, parapsychological societies and dreams.

With the publication of E.R. Dodds' valuable work on the irrational, we have the impression that the fields of psychology and culture are drawing closer, becoming more accessible and that scholars are approaching the irrational more intuitively, indirectly giving us backing and taking us even closer to Andalusia, the corner of the world from which García Lorca bequeathed us his masterly essay on the Theory and Play of the Duende.

Here we shall confine ourselves to seeing the possible fusion of the daimon as an immanence with a personal accent and language which comes to us through intuitions. By this I mean something instinctive which appears arbitrarily at times and may even emanate from the so-called absurd and the divine intervention of a god. That is as far as we dare to tread. It would be irreverent to take one step further into the precincts of the mystery because that might be the setting for the epiphany of a god, in that differentiated element of individuation which speaks to us from the unfathomable and which we call daimon. And Lorca, full of Andalusian joy, tells us that the Duende is none other than the descendent of the lively demon of Socrates. Fusion takes place in a state of confusion, and the moments of the 'happening' are lived in confusion. Thus, an attempt to go further with the Duende from where Lorca left it such a necessity of the age, the transformative substance of that which belongs to psyche and psychotherapy - would not only propitiate today's vital interest in the field of classical studies, but make our own studies more worthwhile.

I want to take Lorca's essay as a text, but one with a more vital content than that which scholars have accustomed us to since the second half of the 19th century, although I should point out that today their material has a more appropriate, deeper vision, with historical pressures and interests that transcend the confines of academe. If Lorca's essay is a text, its importance will be enhanced if we realize that the subject of most of the profoundly boring thousand lectures that he attacked was creativity which means that they lend themselves to speculations and digressions whose subjectivity is neither divine nor daimonic: they are simply puerile attempts to prophesy creative genius: promising IQ's, hysterias accepted as divine revelations. It is a creativity conceived in titanic sweat, revolving endlessly like the notorious thousand lectures, and most of it leads to unrecognized exhaustion or irremediable breakdowns. Consequently, if our task today is to teach, to educate with soul, creativity is tantamount to creating soul. Now Lorca's essay has become a text, a source of reference introducing us to new studies, while suggesting that we study the same works, approaching them, however, with a different vision, a vision that is within us and has been veiled for thousands of years. To reach that corner of Andalusia, García Lorca's environment, and to be fortunate enough to sense the Duende is like going to a "reservoir" of ancient Mediterranean initiation, ceremonies where the Duende as initiation is conjured up step by step in a ritual that cannot be learned.

So we see that the appearance of the Duende is studied, propitiated and expected in Andalusia. Thus we now have books like *El Arte del Flamenco*,⁸ a book which is unusual because it was written by D.E. Pophrens, born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, who received the 1970 National Prize awarded by the Chair of Flamencology at Jerez de la Frontera; or we can also read Don Luis Bollain, authority on matters taurine, who writes about the century's bullfighting and who told me about the bullfighting courses given at the University of Seville during the winter terms. Thus, we find that two men of widely different origins, one an American, the other a dyed-in-the-wool Spaniard, are both explorers of the Duende, whose treatises, by dint of "stubborn repetition," as Don Luis puts it, open us to the kind of teaching and education which would give access to the possibility of the Duende's appearance. This leads us to say that flamenco and bullfighting are

studied as an exercise which teaches and prepares us to recognize and withstand the appearance of the Duende within us. In other words, to cultivate our own sensibility to the Duende. What is the Duende if not that very special moment of truth when the soul and a god who appears in his own field are fused in confusion, both in flamenco choruses and bullfighting, reaching the daimon in each one of us? Here we have individuality and the collective in fusion. This alters the concepts of individuation, seeing that the Duende is a highly "individuated" product which is experienced in its own emotion, making us feel our inwardness, though it is simultaneously manifested in a collective framework. Flamencology and the art of bullfighting are treatises on how to gain access.

Lorca says that in bullfighting the Duende appears in the opening veronicas when the bull is still intact or in the final act, when the matador moves in for the kill. In Lorca's day, the Mad Twenties of bullfighting, there were great artists in killing in the manner of volapié - bullfighters who took a delight in it. A public on tenterhooks watched the bullfighter preparing the bull for the supreme thrust. In those days, a perfect volapié was still the most highly prized way of killing. Nowadays it is out of fashion, but this does not mean that one day it will not come back into its own. For the matador to profile himself, hurl himself at the bull from exactly the right distance, with his eyes fixed on the morillo, perform the crossover, thrust his sword in and come out cleanly, slowly, by the bull's flanks, with the horns only inches from his body, is something that defies any imaginable conception of time and space. This is living art, a re-enactment of the primordial image of the bull's death, the primordial mass. Perhaps one day this ritual may reappear in its essential perfection so that, as Don Luis says, we may see with our own eyes the sword entering the bull's neck in exactly the right spot with astounding slowness and the Duende making his appearance there. But we all feel that the bull's death in the ring goes far beyond the virtuosity that a good matador may display at a particular moment. When some bulls die in the ring, in that moment of agony between the final sword thrust and death, time seems to stand still and a temple is created, a space which stirs our senses, because - why not say it? - there are bulls that die magnificently, as if giving a lesson in dying to everyone in the bullring.

As I have already said, today it is difficult, if not impossible, for the Duende to appear during the final sword thrust. However, to give the reader some idea of what I mean, I refer him to the commentaries of the great bullfighting authority, Don José María de Cossío, in his famous encyclopedia, *Los Toros*.⁹ Writing about Diego Mazquirar 'Fortuna,' a great artist of volapié in Lorca's day, he says: "Without a doubt, Diego Mazquirar 'Fortuna' is one of the greatest matadors ever recorded, or who ever will be recorded in the history of bullfighting. Possibly he was the best of his day, which coincided with the glorious period of the two colossi, Joselito and Belmonte, or at least with the best and most important part of that period. 'Fortuna' was a stylist, a virtuoso of the volapié kill. He dominated and executed the suerte to perfection. There was no one to compare with him in the way he observed the tiempos of the act. When entering to kill, he took up his position at the distance required by the qualities of the bull, an undeniable exhibition of his perfect understanding of the suerte, whereas many matadors of star billing had the defect of always placing themselves at the same (long or short) distance from the bull at the supreme moment. All this, and his personal presence, gave an unsurpassable beauty and arrogance to the act and motivated the delirious ovations that were lavished on him."¹⁰

We can take the moment when the bullfighter enters to kill as a propitious frame of reference for the appearance of the Duende. As I have already mentioned, this moment has all but disappeared nowadays, but what remains a possibility is the appearance of the Duende in the bullfight at the other moment mentioned by Lorca. José Luis Vázquez, son of the matador of the same name, made his first appearance as a novillero in the Plaza de las Ventas in Madrid on September 9, 1979. He used the cape on his first bull and gave it six-and-a-half veronicas. Suddenly I shot to my feet; my face was bathed in tears and then, like a spring, I recoiled, feeling I know not what. I don't remember if I shouted: what I do know is that when I turned around, everyone in the crowd seemed to share my delirium. All around me, old aficionados gave way to the same frenzy, their faces covered with tears. The Duende had made his appearance in a series of veronicas which defied description. The next day, a journalist reported what an old aficionado had told him: "Those veronicas made me feel twenty years younger." Here the Duende, as if pointing to a rebirth, catches us from below we know not where, and in touching dormant essences is felt as a rebirth, a reaffirmation of life.¹¹

But let us say a few more words about bullfighting let us try to approach the mystery which makes the appearance of the Duende in the bullfight possible, referring to Don Luis Bollaín and his treatise, *El Toreo*, and reduce a whole book devoted to the essence and aesthetics of tauromachy to the conception of the temple. "I understand *templar* as meaning to harmonize, attune and impart the same rhythm to the movement of the lure (the cape or *muleta* held by the bullfighter) and the charge of the bull so that the bull always has the cloth within reach, but never manages to reach it."¹² A difficult art, infinitely more complicated than can be imagined from the lines quoted here, and a dynamic essence propitious to the Duende's appearance.

I should like to expand on the concepts and intuitions that other writers have expressed when trying to describe the temple. Temple is slowness, but that does not mean that it is uniquely and exclusively slow. I prefer to describe it as an enormously animated slowness, a slowed down state of being, the psyche being adequately prepared. Temple is a slowness of movement that may appear in some bullfighting *suertes*, in singing or dancing flamenco and - why not say it? - in life itself: it pertains to its essence. We can also feel it at times when we are listening to essentially Dionysian music, when the jazz or blues singer or black spiritual choirs sing in those dark sounds to which Lorca refers and with a temple matching the tempo they require to transmit their emotion and their Duende. Temple is the central nerve and its appearance in psychotherapy points to Dionysian constellations, tells us clearly about the psychic element of inner movement and about the classical constellation of the Dionysian body, even more so if we know and accept that tradition has assimilated Dionysus and his wife Ariadne to the couple Eros and Psyche. Thus, when there are a few seconds of temple between patient and psychotherapist during treatment, they are more nourishing, more important and say more to the psyche than the hours of reductive interpretations, inflationary amplifications and endless associations. Genuine aficionados already know this: especially the small minority that goes to the bullring to see if the miracle of those ineffable seconds will appear. Moreover, when referring to it, the metaphor they use is the symbolic attribute closest to the Psyche (the flask of perfume). This kind of bullfighting aficionado can be satisfied with a few moments of greatness, and his usual comment after such moments of psychic intoxication that fulfill all anxious expectation is: "the cork's out of the bottle"! The fact is that the essences of the psyche penetrate through the senses. José Bergamín, poet and aficionado and writer of an important book about the bulls, felt the unheard music of bullfighting.¹³

There was temple, too, in the *verónicas* performed by José Luis Vázquez. Six-and-a-half *verónicas* with temple that made possible the appearance of the Duende and touched the Duende of the spectators as well as that of the old aficionado who felt rejuvenated.

The appearance of the Duende as Lorca presents it, or as I have tried to exemplify it with these and subsequent images, is the way it emerges in explosive, expansive, open ways in extreme cases. But I think that we should not overlook other ways for the Duende to make its appearance, because they happen in the same context and correspond to more intimate emotions, the private affairs of the person who feels them. It happens when, both in bullfighting images and in the image made music in flamenco, we have feelings that affect our inner being, as if something were, stirring inside us so that our eyes fill with tears, although we might manage to retain our composure. As the Andalusians say, what happens is "deep down inside" and accompanying it, we feel our psyche stirring and our soul forging itself. Flamenco offers us more intimate possibilities than revelry does. One occasionally sees two friends sitting at a table with a bottle of wine, singing to each other as if in whispers. And this gives us a very ancient, very Mediterranean image of the beauty of an Eros: a dialogue between two souls through the vehicle of flamenco. There are images in flamenco poetry that can easily be associated with dreams. The image occurs as if in a dream, as if it came from that unknown region whence dreams emerge and reach us, where dream and poetic image become one. There is another appearance of the Duende that should not be excluded. It comes when we are thrown off balance, disconcerted, which is what Andalusians describe as feeling *pasmo*. At such times, we feel as if Dionysus were offering his hand to Hermes. It is a gust of air, an irrepressible instant, rather like a ghost that suddenly appears and then vanishes again just as abruptly. In the same way, the mind is invaded by certain intangible images of death, of an evanescent subtlety that leave us dumbfounded. It is those inner ghosts that are ineffable.

I write these lines in an attempt to bring Lorca's legacy alive by way of annotations, reflections and amplifications, of what the Duende moves and in so doing to propitiate an access to acceptance of his contribution and if possible to expand it. I would like to take from Lorca, or, to put it another way, to rob him hermetically of everything I can, using what is thieved to enrich us. In two meaning-crammed lines, Lorca defines the very core of the art of bullfighting, which, in tauromachy, would require an entire treatise: "The bull has its orbit; the bullfighter has his, and between the two orbits is a danger point where the vertex of the terrible game is."¹⁴ These lines move us to deeper and consequently very mature reflections. In synthesis, they transmit to us the most intimate knowledge of bullfighting, that of the territories and distances in the ring, the only thing which avoids the ugly scenes of the matador being trampled underfoot and the painful mishaps, and makes temple and the Duende possible: something we can steal from Lorca and tauromachy, and which is of value in life itself, not to mention its value in psychotherapy, where missionary inroads into the territories of the patient stifle and do not allow the psychic side to breathe, trampling on it and preventing the psyche from being lived psychically.

On the other hand, what Lorca says about the appearance of the Duende in flamenco cannot be improved upon. There is, however, one image that greatly impressed me and lingers on in my mind, though I read it a long time ago in a treatise on flamenco. A group of flamenco singers (among them, the celebrated Don Antonio Chacon) was having a night out in Madrid, when it suddenly occurred to one of them to summon Manuel Torre from Andalusia. Presumably, Torre arrived in Madrid some time the next day. He walked into the party and sat down in a corner to listen to the other revellers singing. One of them sang a couplet, upon which Manuel Torre stood up and sang a single line of the same couplet, and at once, the madness of the Duende took possession of everyone present. This image of Torre is like the one described by Lorca when the prize for a dancing competition at Jerez de la Frontera was awarded to an old lady of eighty: "for simply raising her arms, throwing back her head and stamping her foot on the boards." That is an image sending us in other directions, because it shows that the psyche of the Dionysian body is present in old age and helps us towards a better, deeper understanding of the meaning of the dance of the two old men, Tiresias and Cadmus, in the *Bacchae* of Euripides. This image obviously demonstrates that the Dionysian psychic body continues into old age. Moreover, and we shall confirm this further on, the deepest Dionysian complexities are disclosed only in old age. It has always impressed me that Euripides wrote the *Bacchae*, the most impressive testimony to things Dionysian, when he was almost eighty and living in Macedonia in exile from his beloved Athens.

There is, however, one thing which I might mention here and that is ritual, the appropriate ritual to the Duende which exists in flamenco. Revelry is propitiated by a spontaneous happening. The soul needs Duende as nourishment, but the soul is nourished by what happens spontaneously: that is how revelry begins. People eat and drink and sing and sing again; they move from one place to another, some drop out, others join in. It all adds up to a propitiatory Dionysian ritual, in the hope that the invocation, the wine, the purpose of the song, will bring about that moment of Duende that revives us and gives meaning to the happening: "The arrival of the Duende always presupposes a radical change in all the forms on old levels, it conveys sensations of wholly unprecedented freshness, with the quality of a recently created rose, of a miracle, producing an almost religious fervor."¹⁵ In both flamenco and bullfighting, this revival and death are not separate. When we speak of a rebirth in terms of revival in our conception of the Duende, experience is linked with the images that specifically pertain to the imagery of death. Thus, rebirth is inconceivable without the imagery that associates us with death.

Experiencing danger in bullfighting or a cante jondo that comes to us from "the dark and terrifying depths" makes us sense that the image we perceive originates in the archetypal realm, from where life acquires meaning and is revived with death. Flamenco dancing, in the ultimate meaning, alludes to death; the image that male or female dancers show us when the Duende appears speaks of a tearing apart, a Dionysian dismemberment, the essence of Dionysian madness. And here we are in the precincts of a madness of death imagery that teaches us to die. That is how we feel those moans, laments and that rending of garments mentioned by Lorca.

The relationships between Dionysian madness and death await exploration, but let us leave this for now as a mere reference and, with Lorca's text, feel the weight of the image of an image in opposition to the thousand lectures. No one has described this better and more boldly than the Venezuelan writer on bullfighting, Carlos Villalba. In July 1976, in the Caracas daily *El Nacional*,

he wrote a splendid article about the death of Heidegger which is extremely apposite to our theme. Villalba tells us that a bull's two horns say more about death than all the philosophers' works on Being and Death. He tells us that philosophers do not know what they are dealing with when they talk about death, that bullfighters, the image-makers of death, are the true masters to impart instruction on the initiation into death: for a single image will tell us more about death than a host of philosophical theories. Villalba writes that the *corrida* also contains a body of "teaching about death," and it seems that the *Duende* haunts his words.

As to the *Duende* and death, allow me to introduce the reader to someone who is a most relevant figure in Lorca's work: *El llanto por la muerte de Ignacia Sánchez Mejías* 16,17 is one of the century's classic poems, and the reading public gets to know Ignacio Sánchez Mejías through Lorca's great poem about a subject which has long been a great source of inspiration for poets - bulls and bullfighting. In order to bring out some elements of the personality of Sánchez Mejías, whose death inspired the poem, I think it is worthwhile to approach the place where the *Duende* and death brush against each other: a lament turned poem, a poem with *Duende*, and in this case with two protagonists, the bullfighter who dies, and the poet. In his *History of Bullfighting*, Nestor Lujan says: "When we come to the biography of Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, we must employ a different tone from that used for any other bullfighter who ever existed. For Ignacio Sánchez Mejías was without equal as a bullfighter and as a man."18 Thus it is by no means easy to trace in broad outlines a personality so complicated "as a bullfighter and as a man," to attempt to bring the reader close to Lorca's innermost being and intuition of the *Duende*.

Ignacio Sánchez Mejías was born into a well-to-do family. He was the son of a doctor, something quite unusual among bullfighters, who nearly always come from the lower classes, "the social outcasts." Lorca calls Ignacio "the well-born." Although he began to fight bulls as a young child in the little ring of the farm attached to his house with none other than Joselito, the greatest bullfighter of all time, who later became his friend and brother-in-law (Ignacio married Lola, Joselito's younger sister), it can be said that he was not born a bullfighter in the usual sense of the word. He had to make himself one, he had to learn the hard way, and every appearance in the ring was a struggle with himself and the crowd, which drove him to attempt incredible feats. "[He was] a rather clumsy bullfighter, with a Dionysian presence and boundless recklessness. He was a *matador* who was dominant in the ring and led an adventurous- and restless life. High-spirited and endowed with great vitality, he dedicated himself to the bulls because in the period when he was born in Seville, bullfighting was the only glamorous and romantic avenue open to a hero. In another age, he might have been a conquistador, a smuggler or a warrior.... He lived a legendary life among dancers, bullfighters and poets, and in addition he was one of the most fervent and effective sources of inspiration of the magnificent generation of poets before the Civil War."19 This alone gives us a glimpse of a personality who made his presence felt, who stimulated and was able to move the soul of poets. A great patron of flamenco, he protected the old dancers and brought some of them back into fashion. As a result, *La Malena*, *La Macarrona* (immortalized by Picasso) and the old, crippled *Fernanda* returned to the boards. His hacienda was a refuge for the purest flamenco where Manuel Torre, the last great singer, in whom flamenco turned into mythology, could be heard. It is said that Ignacio once telephoned Lorca at dawn so that he could hear the brilliant heel-clicking of "*la Argentinita*." He was also a writer and his play, *Without Reason*, was performed in Madrid in 1928. Cossío said of it: "The bullfighter does not tackle a minor middle-class theme that is more or less tangential to the bullfighting milieu. Instead, he deliberately confronts a problem of madness or reason and unfolds the complications of the plot with considerable elegance."20 Here Cossío is telling us that Ignacio was at ease with the irrational. He also wrote a comedy, *Zayas*, which was staged in Santander in the same year. As a bullfighter, he shared the bill with "the best of his time, that is to say, the best of all times." As a *banderillero*, he was exceptional, brilliant. In this *suerte* his personality and courage were stretched to the limit: he complicated it, provoking difficulty, risking himself and creating emotion. Here his *Duende* appeared, bringing us closer to the imagery of death. Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, said those who knew him and saw him fight, "did not know the meaning of danger," as if the equation, "danger=death" did not exist for him. Hemingway, who also knew him, says that a year before Ignacio died, the flamenco Gypsies of the "*Villarosa*" in Madrid could smell the death he carried with him. When his son wanted to become a bullfighter, he flew into a rage and said: "I am the only one who will enter this house killed by the horns of a bull." This not only enables me to trace

the outline of a personality, but also to reflect on the Dionysian from its most exalted and most vital extremes.

García Lorca was Dionysian too. He belonged to a world of poets, bullfighters and flamenco artists. Lorca was a poet, a musician and a man of the theater. His genius was expressed through the Dionysian. He repeatedly sang to death and wrote about the Duende. His actual death is a theme of our time. By this, I mean that it is prime material for study and reflection; to me, Lorca's death is a scene on the stage of the World Theater, the place which makes archetypal reflection possible.

José Antonio Rial, in his play *The Death of García Lorca*,²¹ a stage version of Irish writer Ian Gibson's book, *The Assassination of García Lorca*,²² (the definitive book about Lorca's death by firing squad), suggests an imaginative finale that coincides with what I feel, especially when he makes us see the shooting of Lorca as a bullfight worthy of an ear and a tail, as if death in the ring and death, no matter how, in the Spanish Civil War, were one and the same thing. The praises of the bull's death, turned into a Dionysian, primordial ritual, receive here their greatest expression. Moreover, these words are put into the mouth of the banderillero Galadi (Lorca died alongside two banderilleros, Galadi and Arcollas, and a lame schoolmaster, Dióscuro Galindo Gonzalez; his grave digger was a Gypsy). That is how I feel and this is where my feeling takes me: to see the Spanish Civil War as a great mythological corrida. I do not feel any irreverence in Rial nor extravagance in my attitude. Moreover, in this century's painting, the greatest masterpiece is, Picasso's *Guernica*, where the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War, and Picasso's personal emotions are fused with elements of the corrida, expressed in the drama enacted by the horse and the bull. Besides: "No one can fully understand the history of Spain from 1650 to the present day unless they have rigorously constructed the history of bullfighting in the strictest sense of the word; not the bullfighting fiesta which has existed in one form or another for three millennia, but what we call by that name today."²³ These are the words of a man, Ortega y Gasset, who used to say when he went to the bullfight: "I'm going to see how Spain is getting on." I prefer this madness to the other madness with which the Spanish Civil War has been viewed, since we do not need to step outside the inner world of psyche and divide ourselves into factions in order to refer to what is happening in the world, nor do we need to take sides in order to express ourselves. The curse of taking sides is in choosing and compromising with an easily accessible madness (an accursed, titanic madness); what is difficult is the other madness...

Now let us remember the first lines of the essay on the Duende, of burning importance to me, because they make me feel Lorca's struggle to rid his soul of the titanic sterility of those "thousand lectures" and of everything comprised by what we call ideology, and let us recognize that this too is Dionysian.²⁴ To me, to confine the death of Federico García Lorca within the bounds of the conflicting parties in the Spanish Civil War is utterly simplistic in this day and age. The consciousness of present-day man is sufficiently remote from the political romanticism of the Thirties. Reflection becomes possible at a distance of nearly half a century. Leaving the conflict within the environment of the conflicting factions seems to me at best like pointing out or localizing the madness in a world full of titanic repetitions, a madness that is, as I have said, an arena and stage propitious for killing other madnasses. Archetypally, Dionysus will always be the persecuted and dismembered deity, the most repressed of all the gods (Euripides says that he was even repressed in Thebes, the mythical birthplace of his mother), regardless of the political regime under which he lives; it is part of his essence.

It is in this connection that a topic of our time seems like an historical enactment of an eternal mythologem: the persecution and killing of Dionysus by the Titans echoed by the shooting of a great poet.²⁵ That is how García Lorca's death touches me as an element of consciousness. The historical elements provide me with a frame of reference, a field where the mythological drama is re-enacted. The mythological image of the persecution and dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans makes for a primordial image that stands out for me. And if we were to confine such a fact solely to the sphere of the struggles of political factions, we would be most ingenious, since it would be like confining what are really very ancient conflicts and mythological battles to racial and social conflicts. As we are trying to show in these pages, these are the conflicts that make for the persecution and mortal dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans. From the vantage point of this complex mythologem, and by trying to keep the focus on the images I am discussing, I

attempt to approach intuitively the death of a human being in today's world. We live in a world whose history has stifled the images which would serve as a means of access and nourish and sustain us in the "moment of truth," in that "supreme suerte" which is death. The images propitious for the process of dying are in retreat, devalued, utterly routed (but the Dionysian has always been fleeing, shamefully undervalued, defeated; such are its essential attributes). However, to have any connection with them, we must retire to a corner of our soul, which in the geography of our nature (soul in body and human nature) would be analogous to that corner of the outer world, i.e., Andalusia. There, if we are lucky enough to encounter the Duende, it will, enable us to feel more intensely and enliven our soul as it approaches death, teaching it to die a Dionysian death.

Much theorizing and writing about death is going on in the West. So much so that a recent book, almost a best-seller, deals with the history of that subject.²⁶ When the historians recount the rich imagery of death in the Middle Ages we are amazed; yet in so doing, they are also pointing out the element of dying that has been discarded. Death, as it appeared to western man in the Catholic world, was a passage to a beyond, and a confession, a reassuring rite (the presence of a religious element or guarantee of death at peace with one's conscience), was like a safe passage to the promised happiness of a Christian heaven. All added to that, in the Catholic world, the imagery of passion and death, with the central image of the agony, is also fading, not to mention the Protestant world, where it is conspicuous by its absence. Today death is in the hands of medical technology and we know that technological titanism does not recognize death. The memory of death in the soul is absent. Thus, it seems as if the image of the, agony cannot even be conceived of now and is therefore no longer respected. In religious Christianity, there was no death as such only passage to another world, and in Christian technology, there is no longer even that. Here, death has lost its meaning altogether, including respect for the agony that makes possible the appearance of the Duende. For this reason all the things that Lorca says in his Theory and Play of the Duende are so vitally important for present-day man, in as much as they are intuitions of the soul, of the greatest interest to him and, of course, to psychotherapy. Instead of dwelling on native and uncultured speculations about childhood and the initial trauma (after all, we are born as we are born, we grow up as best we can within the historical complexes that affect us and we function in life with more than one foot in the mystery of our own nature), death and its imagery are valued more highly than the puerilities of birth and childhood. It is a psychotherapeutic vision that makes us feel the efforts of the pioneers as very remote. We have death before our eyes and we feel, and by feeling we know, that our inner relationship with death tells us much more about our psychic conflicts and more still about the obscurity of our psychosomatic complaints than all the reductive dredging up of our childhood in which we may indulge.

If we adapt these reflections, which have much to do with current psychotherapy, to the equation of death=Duende which we have been discussing, we shall open our soul to valuation by feeling: the spectrum of catharsis. It shows great impoverishment of imagination that catharsis in psychotherapy is only accepted for what connects it with the confessional. Cathartic emotions appear in the Duende, as they do in Greek tragedy,²⁷ before the perfection of certain forms. Here I confine forms to the Dionysian. Ivan Linforth, in his excellent book, *The Arts of Orpheus*,²⁸ establishes that Dionysus always the body. In whatever we call psychotherapy, the emotional catharsis is exhibited in the body and has an essential value, because we already know that what we call psychic body is inhabited by the gods most repressed by history. Hence, what comes from there is of capital importance; something which, in terms of the psychology of the opposites, would compensate for the historical repression of the psychic body, which makes for psychosomatic balance, thus facilitating an equilibrium between health and illness.

What matters for present-day man's soul is whether in his death there are a few drops of the Dionysian essences to bring a touch of joy to his dying. And this, mythologically and archetypally speaking, is in irreconcilable opposition to the infernal titanic Promethean machine and its appearance in our times in the guise of technological scientism. Mythologically and poetically speaking, Dionysus and the Titans are two aspects of human nature which exist in irreconcilable opposition and their imagery is that of a Dionysus in constant flight, trying to flee, to hide and defend himself from titanic aggression and excess. Titanic interference in the process of dying, technological dying with medical pretensions to "prolonging life," denies, or in any case, distorts a death which could give meaning to a whole life.

In the Prometheus of Aeschylus, the Titan Prometheus says clearly: "Yes, I caused men no longer to foresee their death." That shows us the Titanic contempt for death. Of course, we are aware of this, because it is a topical theme in the newspapers and in our everyday conversations. And if we try to understand the Titan's interference with, or transgression in, something which does not concern him, the most difficult thing to understand (and the ultimate 'camouflage of horror) is when we start listening to talk about death (in some circles it is fashionable to talk and give lectures about it) with the same boredom as that of Lorca's thousand lectures. Thus, we hear of things that sound like prescriptions for 'how to die' or claiming to teach us how to 'manage' death, as if the aim were to deprive the whole affair of any significance. Alternatively, we are told that we must not be afraid of death. Dionysus is equated with Hades, Heraclitus says, and Dionysus is the only god who is afraid and does not hide the fact. Indeed, he shows his fear, but fear as a tragic emotion that connects and vivifies us, not as a defect or cowardice. It is possible that each archetype has its own conception of and approach to death. I am trying to distinguish between the different religious conceptions of dying, each of which corresponds to the forms of the god ruling it. This implies that we are delimiting the archetypal configurations around death, which would be to disregard the unique conception, feelings and experience of each human being in relation to death.

Let us return to the Duende and Lorca's equation, which states that whoever has Duende is also the bearer of death; because who will deny the fact that the moments propitious to the appearance of the Duende occur during the processes of death or at the critical moment of dying, the supreme suerte? And that this epiphany of the Duende is telling us what belongs to its moment? What tradition and the philosophers call "the meaning of life" is preserved in the deepest of Dionysian initiations, to be felt only at the moment of dying and in a 'State of Duende... " the Duende will not come unless it sees the possibility of death, unless it knows that it has to haunt his house, and unless it is sure that it has to shake the branches that we all carry and that are insoluble now and forever."²⁹ This belongs to the realm of divine intervention: Dionysus making his epiphany at the time that belongs to him, and we are powerless because, faced with the divinity, mortals that we are, we must accept his intervention. And as a mortal, the only thing I venture to say, in bullfighting language, with a hint of Duende and out of the conflict and the fear in the face of that intervention, is that "I'll do my best."

References:

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2. Federico García Lorca, *Ibid.*, p. 109.
3. Walter Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult*. (Indiana University Press, 1965). p. 133.
4. Pedro Lai'n Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity*, trans. L.J. Rather and John M. Sharp, (Yale Univ. Press, 1970).
5. So much so that the latest contributions to the theme of Greek tragedy look upon emotions as the first subject to be dealt with.
6. E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968).
7. E.R. Dodds, *Missing Persons, An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1978)
8. D.E. Pohren, *El Arte del Flamenco* (Sevilla, España: Sociedad de Estudios Espanoles, Finca Espartero).
9. José María Cossío, *Los Toros* (Madrid: Sexta Edic., Espasa-Calpe, 1969).
10. José María de Cossío, *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 575.
11. The reader should not think that my reading of the scholars is literal or direct. I mentioned this on the first page of my book, *Hermes and His Children*. Until recently, Death and Resurrection were associated with tragedy, with ritual, with the cycle of the year and the vegetation rites forming its origins. As far as I am concerned, the psychical element of the experience of death and rebirth refers entirely to the emotional side.
12. Luis Bollain, *El Toreo* (Sevilla: Católica Española, S.A., 1968), p. 173.
13. José Bergamin, *La Musica Callada del Toreo* (Madrid: Turner, Tercera Edicion, 1985).
14. Frederico García Lorca. *op.cit.* p. 119.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 537.

17. Brian Vickers, in his book, *Towards Greek Tragedy* (p. 88) says: "It is remarkable how much of Greek Tragedy - and how much of the greatest poetry - is in essence a lament for the dead."
 18. Nestor Lujan, *Histria del Toreo* (Barcelona: Destino), p. 294.
 19. Néstor Lujan, *ibid.*
 20. José María de Cossío, *op. cit.*, p. 875.
 21. José Antonio Rial, *La muerte de García Lorca*, (Caracas: Monte Avila C.A., 1975).
 22. Ian Gibson, *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca* (Penguin Books, 1983).
 23. Carlos Orellana, ed. (Madrid, Orel, 1969).
 24. It is quite impossible for me to conceive of Dionysus as preaching ideology. His epiphany, when it occurs collectively, takes place among a group of maenads, in drunken revelry, before the Battle of Salamis or during Spain's National Fiesta, in a bullring, or in the soul of the ordinary man.
 25. When referring to Lorca in his autobiography, *My Last Sigh*, Bunuel said: "He was the greatest of us all."
 26. Philippe Aries, *La Muerte en Occidente* (Barcelona: Edit. Argos Vergara, 1982).
 27. There is no doubt that bullfighting and Greek tragedy are essentially related in their forms. Fear and pity are emotions fundamental to both of them (Aristotle).
 28. Ivan Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (New York: Amo Press, N.Y. Times Comp., 1973).
 29. Federico Garcia Lorca, *op.cit.*, p. 117.
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