**La casa de Bernarda Alba – Knowledge Organiser – Context**

**Rural Andalucía of the 20th Century**

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| Land split between few landowners (terratenientes) |
| Illiteracy (analfabetismo) |
| Didn’t yet have all the rights of the constitution |
| Closed society |
| Conservative |
| Highly traditional society |
| Role of women is secondary |
| Religion very important |
| People were very private |
| Tradition and violence go hand in hand |

**Social class at the start of the 20th Century**

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| Zero social mobility |
| Blood and surnames determined social class |
| Social contrasts between well-to-do (pudiente) families and the beggar and the maid are clear. |
| Social classes did not mix |
| Well-to-do families are valued more by the rest of society |
| The rich would look down on the poor |
| Men would court women to gain their wealth |
| Hypocrisy and flattery played a big role in society |

**The role of women in society**

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| Women had to be the ‘angel of the home’, sweet and caring |
| Didn’t have any of the social or political rights of the men and shouldn’t want them |
| A woman must be pure before marriage |
| Obedience was key – they could be disinherited or suffer corporal punishment |
| They must sew and prepare their trousseau and pray |
| Women could be killed for having sex out of wedlock, but men were allowed |

**Courting and marriage in Andalucía**

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| Certain customs must be followed for courting and marriage |
| There must be a courtship where the suitor goes up to her window which would traditionally have bars |
| Fathers would search for and select the best suitor |
| The suitor must ask the father to marry his daughter with a diamond ring |
| The daughter presents her trousseau which she has sewn and the father pays a dowry |
| The window visits were watched by the town and so the man would show his love by handing a rose through the windows or singing |

**Death and Rituals**

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| The body is shown in a wake/vigil for a period of time before burial |
| People pray for their eternal rest |
| Neighbours visit to express condolences |
| Mourning clothes are worn and families don’t participate in celebrations for a period of time as a mark of respect |
| A large number of mourners suggests higher social status |
| Wakes are attended by women crying loudly, sometimes people were paid to do this |

**Religion and Superstition**

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| Religion played a very important role in life |
| Praying with a rosary and saying litanies were rituals that were part of social life |
| Andalucia had undergone lots of religious change with Islamism and Judaism taking over Catholicism at different times |

**Historical, Social, Cultural and Political context**

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| King Alfonso XIII | Supported General Miguel Primo de Rivera in establishing a dictatorship in 1923 |
| The Second Republic | 1927 – economic crisis began |
|  | 1931 – second republic commenced |
|  | King left Spain and went into exile |
|  | Tried to modernise Spain with a new constitution which focused on human rights and social freedoms |
|  | Women got the right to vote |
|  | Purple band was added to the flag to differentiate it from the monarchy |
|  | High levels of unemployment and the lower classes demanded more rights |
|  | Riots, extremist attacks and social rebellions by anarchist movements |
|  | Main parties were the Socialist Party (PSOE), Socialist Union (UGT) and Anarcist Union (CNT). Natioalist parties in Catalonia and the Basque country were also important. |
|  | Catholic church still received privileges and was a target for extremists |
|  | Population was majority Catholic |
|  | Other governments feared Spain’s socialist values and wouldn’t invest |
|  | Conservative right-wing (mainly aristocratic) Nationalists led by Franco fought the Civil War to oppose the move towards democracy |
|  | Many freedoms reversed (until Franco’s death in 1975) when the Nationalists won. |
| Social context | Around 50% of Spaniards worked on farms |
|  | Industrial revolution arrived in Spain later than the rest of Europe |
|  | Many landowners had more advantages in life |
|  | Farm workers were usually illiterate and poor |
| Homosexuality | Before 1932 homosexuality was a crime |
|  | Still regarded as morally unacceptable |
|  | Lorca never openly accepted his sexuality |
| Cultural context | Lorca was part of the generation 27 avant-garde movement |
|  | Many of the group suffered death or exile because of their support of the Republicans |
| Surrealism | One of the characteristics of the Generation of ‘27 |
|  | La casa is not a surrealist work |
|  | Lorca collaborated with Dalí on some work |
| Folk art | Lorca worked on the vocal tradition of Cante Jondo with composer Manuel de Falla in Granada |