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Paul Binding, *Lorca: The Gay Imagination*. London: GMP Publishers, 1985. 238 pp. £4.95. Ángel Sahuquillo, *Federico García Lorca y la cultura de la homosexualidad. Lorca, Dalí, Cernuda, Gil-Albert, Prados y la voz silenciada del amor homosexual*. Stockholm: Akademityck (dist. Almqvist & Wiksell), 1986. 383 pp. 6320 pesetas.

Lorca's homosexuality, and its relevance to his works, can now be openly discussed. The books of Binding and Sahuquillo are quite different: the first is a reading with minimal apparatus; the second reassures one about the value of scholarly training.

Binding's book has little to offer the lorquista, and not much more for the general reader. He examines chronologically the movement toward sexual self-acceptance found in Lorca's works. The whole is done on an undergraduate level. The author is blissfully unaware of the textual problems surrounding some works, such as the corrections in the texts of the *Sonetos del amor oscuro* provided by the 1984 *ABC* publication; he misses the 'Oda al Santísimo Sacramento del altar', fundamental for his topic, because he is using the 1973 Aguilar collected works, rather than a later and more comprehensive edition. There are errors in the use of Spanish, among them the statement that 'maricón', because of the masculine ending, is more dignified than 'marica' (139). Even the titles of Lorca's works are wrong; *Poeta en Nueva York* and *Poema del cante jondo* invariably have an article prefixed to them, and the date '1921-1924' has become an italicized part of the title of *Canciones*. For Lorca scholarship Binding's main sources are the introductions to the editions, supplemented very occasionally by the books of Arturo Barea, Ian Gibson, Gwynne Edwards, and Francisco García Lorca (referred to as 'Lorca, Francisco' in the index, along with 'Lynch, Carlos Morla'). Binding could have used Gibson's classic article on

sexual disharmony in *Libro de poemas* (BHS, 46, 1969, 21-38); the published comments of various of Lorca's friends on the topic, the most extensive of which is Martínez Nadal's discussion, in his *Cuatro ensayos*, of homosexual life in Spain in the early 30's and Lorca's lover Emilio Aladrén; and Gil de Biedma's discussion of homosexuality and the generation of 1927 (in *El homosexual ante la sociedad enferma*, Barcelona: Tusquets, 1978). Binding does not know the constraints on the introductions to the editions, which in some cases are outdated as well, and we thus find him fighting battles already won, campaigning, say, against the folkloric image of Lorca. Readings are simplistic and literal: in 'Preciosa y el aire' Lorca 'enters the mind of a Gypsy girl terrified by the wind' (59); in the 'Ruina romana' scene of *El público*, which Binding knows only under the misprinted title 'Reina romana', we see Lorca's 'Platonist preoccupation with transformation' (155).

The relationship of Lorca's homosexuality to his family, his religious beliefs, his experiences with women, and his assassination is either ignored or disavowed. Such a central and delicate topic as pederasty, which appears explicitly in *El público* and less explicitly elsewhere, is avoided altogether. Rather we have gratuitous references to the legitimacy of sado-masochism (139, 159). In short, Binding tries to make Lorca into a forerunner of American gay culture of the '70s, and Lorca is much more than that.

Sahuquillo's study is deeper, more focused, and far more rigorous. As a prior step to understanding of the authors' works, he begins with a defense of the value of biographical and cultural information in literary interpretation. 'Nuestra tesis es que, aunque Lorca haya escrito los textos que se analizarán, muchos de los sentimientos y situaciones que aparecen en ellos, al igual que ciertos símbolos, ... pueden encontrarse dentro de lo que llamamos cultura de la homosexualidad, y que son un producto y un reflejo de las condiciones en que los homosexuales se han visto obligados a vivir. Sostenemos que el estudio de la realidad social es una base obvia para este tipo de investigación literaria' (21).

A lengthy preface and the first two chapters constitute a history and critique of the reception of the authors in question, showing

attempts to avoid their homosexuality and, when it cannot be avoided, to avoid the authors altogether. Thus García Posada is in error, for example, when he interprets the ‘puro amor’ Cernuda desires for Lorca as nonsexual love: ‘Es evidente que el “puro amor” al que se refiere Cernuda no tiene nada que ver con una espiritualidad sin sexo. La pureza, en Cernuda así como en Lorca, es la integración de la homosexualidad en la vida de la persona. El mundo mejor que Cernuda desea para Lorca es un mundo donde el homosexual no necesite ocultarse y pueda aparecer en fin como él mismo’ (99).

In the remaining chapters Sahuquillo analyzes five poems of Lorca, the sonnet ‘Yo sé que mi perfil será tranquilo’, ‘El macho cabrío’ and ‘Sueño’ from *Libro de poemas*, and ‘Verlaine’ and ‘Suicidio’ from *Canciones*. He provides new readings by illuminating mythological references—Lorca knew mythology well—, reflections of earlier homosexual authors, and common experiences of oppression. The results are hard to summarize but valuable.

Sahuquillo knows the bibliography surprisingly well (although some important items only incompletely: the episode of Philip Cummings; the articles of Cipriano Rivas Cherif in the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*; the longest version of Sáenz de la Calzada’s recollections of *La destrucción de Sodoma*, that published by Suzanne Byrd in *García Lorca Review*, vol. IV). He opens the doors for further studies: the influence on Lorca of dOscar Wilde, for example (a link between ‘Degollación del bautista’ and Wilde’s *Salomé* is suggested, 140-41), and dares to suggest that, *pace* Gibson, the full story of Lorca’s execution has not yet been told. One awaits with interest the application of Sahuquillo’s skills to Lorca’s later works, and hopes that such a valuable study can be reprinted where it belongs, in Spain. In partial compensation for the lack of an index there is a very detailed table of contents, and in the lengthy bibliography each item is annotated by section number.

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