



Lorca, Buñuel, Dalí: Forbidden Pleasures and Connected Lives

Gwynne Edwards

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Lorca, Buñuel and Dalí were, in their respective fields of poetry and theatre, cinema, and painting, three of the most imaginative creative artists of the twentieth century; their impact was felt far beyond the boundaries of their native Spain. But if individually they have been examined by many, their connected lives have rarely been considered. It is these, the ties that bind them, that constitute the subject of this illuminating book.

They were born within six years of each other and, as Gwynne Edwards reveals, their childhood circumstances were very similar, each being affected by a narrow-minded society and an intolerant religious background, which equated sex with sin. All three experienced sexual problems of different kinds: Lorca, homosexual anguish, Buñuel sexual inhibition, and Dalí virtual impotence. They met during the 1920s at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, which cannelled their respective obsessions into the cultural forms then prevalent in Europe, in particular Surrealism. Rooted in such turmoil, their work -- from Lorca's dramatic characters seeking sexual fulfilment, to Buñuel's frustrated men and women, and Dalí's potent images of shame and guilt -- is highly autobiographical. Their left-wing outrage directed at bourgeois values and the Catholic Church was sharpened by the political upheavals of the 1930s, which in Spain led to the catastrophic Civil War of 1936-39. Lorca was murdered by Franco's fascists in 1936. This tragic event hastened Buñuel's departure to Mexico and Dalí's to New York and Edwards relates how for the rest of his life Buñuel clung to his left-wing ideals and made outstanding films, while the increasingly eccentric and money-grubbing Dalí embraced Fascism and the Catholic Church and his art went into steep decline.

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