

This article first appeared in the Lambda Book Report in 2000. Used with permission of the Author. Schimel noted in November 2007: "Unfortunately, many of the bookshops mentioned in the article (in Bilbao, Valencia, Malaga, etc.) have closed. There are a handful of new authors, but that's another article."

Letter from Spain

**Lawrence Schimel
finds that Spain's embrace of
"organized tribal gay life" has
created a queer publishing scene**

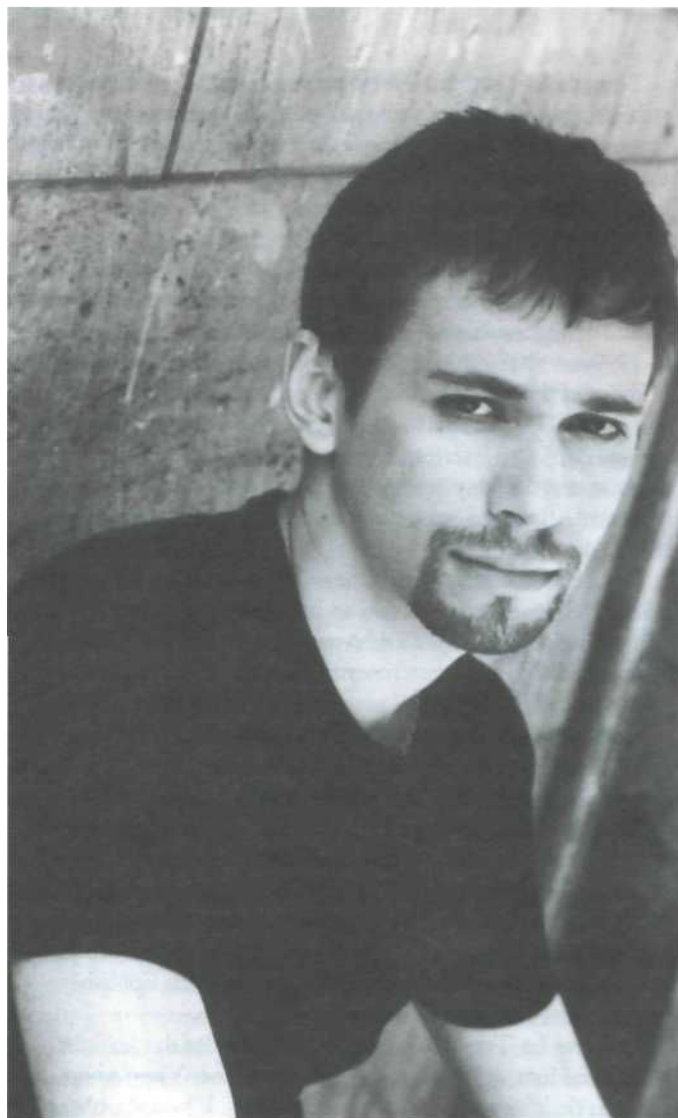
Edmund White recently visited Spain. I've been living here for the past year and was curious to get his opinion of gay life in Spain, since he lived in France for so many years. His response: "I think it's more evolved than in France. I think maybe because Spain had to do so much catching up so quickly after Franco, that they kind of shot ahead in a way."

Although I wouldn't disagree with it I was surprised by this observation. While France has a long tradition of openly-homosexual writers (Proust, Genet, Cocteau, etc.) accepted as part of the general literary tradition, the French have seemed less willing to adopt many of the organized, tribal aspects of gay life which Americans find familiar as part of our modern conception of the homosexual and of lifestyle based around sexual identity. In contrast, the Spanish seem to be embracing many of these ideas, both within the queer subcultures and in society in general. For instance, recent legislation in Catalunya passed a same-sex domestic partnership law, and transsexual operations are covered by social security in Andalucia.

One of the outgrowths of this sort of momentum of queer "culture" is queer media. This past year has seen a new burst of queer presses, magazines, radio programs, bookshops, and the like appearing on the scene, as well as an increase in homophile books from mainstream presses, and attention to gay/lesbian issues in the general media. While the quality varies wildly, in material from the queer or mainstream presses, this volume and diversity is a very healthy tiling and a positive sign for the direction of gay and lesbian writing in Spain.

One of the biggest problems facing gay and lesbian writers in Spain is that books in translation far outsell books by domestic writers. As a result, publishers are reluctant to take on local authors.

One exception to this rule is the book *El Gladiador de Chueca* by



Carlos Sanrue, narrating the life of a hustler in Madrid's gay barrio, Chueca. The novel had the good fortune to come out a few years ago just as the boom of gay establishments in Chueca was reforming the neighborhood. The book's sexual content certainly isn't hurting its sales. Obviously, sales are stronger in Madrid than elsewhere in Spain, but it continues to poke along...

A more recent novel by a Spanish author that has proven popular is *Algún día Te Escribiré Esto* by Luis Algorri. Published by EGALES, this short novel about a twenty three year old man's obsession with his girlfriend's younger brother sold out its first printing in 4 months, and is steadily selling into the second.

In lesbian titles, Carlota Echelecu Tranchant's *Los Ojos Del Ciervo* (also published by EGALES) has sold well. Unfortunately, as in the US, gay male tides tend to outsell their lesbian counterparts. This novella, about a married woman who only discovers the secret of her unhappiness with her life when she falls in love with a woman with "eyes like a deer" as the tide says, won the Carolina Coronada Prize.

Translations of Anglo-American tides, such as Joseph Olshan's *Nightswimmer*, Christopher Brain's *Father of Frankenstein*, or Matthew Rettenmund's *Boy Culture*, outsell their Spanish counterparts by a significant margin. This is not strictly a queer trend, however. It is apparent in other areas of publishing as well, especially within the genres, like science fiction or mystery.

Nonetheless, gay and lesbian presses remain committed to publishing local authors while also publishing translations. Translations are much more expensive. In addition to the cost of buying the rights (the advance) the publisher also has the additional start up cost of the translation. Typical rates are 1100 pesetas per page, or around \$7; thus the translation costs on a thick novel can mount up to well above the monies paid for the advance! This usually means that shorter novels have a higher chance of being picked up for translation, particularly by smaller presses.

1999 saw the birth of a new gay press, Odisea Editorial. An offshoot of the free magazine of the same name, it joins EGALES (Editorial Gay y Lesbiana) and Rey de Bastos (an imprint at general publisher Laertes) as publishers devoted exclusively to queer material. Many mainstream publishers—notably Espasa, Alba, and Anagrama—also publish literary titles with gay and lesbian content.

Rey de Bastos at Laertes is the oldest of the dedicated publishers. Started by Alberto Cardin, an important gay writer and historian during the 70s and 80s who passed away from AIDS in 1992, it is now edited by the heterosexual director of Laertes and suffers from a lack of vision for the program (not to mention ugly covers). Rey de Bastos published some of the first titles about AIDS (a field still too under published in Spain) under Cardin's editorship. Two of their titles of interest by Spanish authors include *De Vidas En Castras* by Rubén Metini, interweaving a historical tale of castratti with a modern-day gay storyline; and *Diario de Una Impostura* by Miguel Martín. Martín's novel focuses on a young man who enters a convent as a way of trying to deal with his homosexuality. Laertes also published my collection of erotic stories, *Bien Dotado*, which does not have an English edition.

La Llave La Tengo Yo is a lesbian imprint of the feminist collective Horas y Horas, run out of the women's bookshop, Librería de Mujeres, on Calle San Cristóbal. Having published a handful of titles in the early 90s, including translations of Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle* and various Naiad romances, they have all but shut down due to poor sales numbers. They were hindered by their lack of general distribution. The few titles by Spanish authors they published include the lesbian romances *Cris y Cris* and *Pasiones*, both by María Felicitas Jaime, and a non-fiction title about Martina Navratilova.

EGALES is the most savvy of the gay presses, and publishes an interesting mix of both popular and literary gay and lesbian titles. EGALES, run jointly by the gay bookshops Berkana and Complices in Madrid and Barcelona respectively, was the first independent queer press in Spain. They have published 21 novels and 3 non-fiction books since debuting in 1994, and have a half dozen more projects in production.

EGALES has published a number of titles by both Spanish lesbian and gay male authors. *Con Pedigree*, by Lola Van Guardia, the pseudonym of a known children's author, is a hilarious potboiler/romp set in the lesbian bar scene of Barcelona. Each chapter ends with a cliff hanger, with plenty of sex and romance thrown in to spice up the intrigue. A second installment in the series, *Plumas de Doble Fila*, is forthcoming soon. Antonio Jiménez Ariza, whose novel *La Sinfonía de los Veleros Varados* chronicling three decades of gay life in Madrid launched the EGALES fiction line, returns to EGALES as well with a new novel, *El Jardín de los*

Fantasma Infinitos forthcoming in the next few weeks.

Odisea's list is much less focused, as the company establishes itself and finds a direction. They began with a very successful erotic gay comic book, *Nacho: Reportero Gráfico*, and have recently published a second installment featuring Nacho's adventures in Brazil. Their first book was the novel *Y así Fue Cada Tarde* by Eloy Rosillo, a veteran of gay politics who's been active since the earliest queer



Juan Vicente Aliaga

publications that started up at the end of Franco's reign in the late seventies. Aggressive in their promotional efforts, Odisea prints up posters to promote their titles, as well as arranging book launches at various discoteques and bars. Odisea also launched a contest for gay novels, with a first prize of 250,000 pesetas and publication of the winner and the finalist. The two novels, still forthcoming as I write this, are the gay novel *El Gran Salto* by Alberto Ciaurriz (whose self-published first novel *Café Taurus* got good reviews in the gay press) and the lesbian novel *Desde la Otra Orilla* by Mabel Galán.

Despite having published only one book under their own name, Odisea also launched a gay erotic imprint under the name Libido Editions with Osvaldo Sabino's *El Jugete Erótico*. The book sold out its (limited) first print run in the first month and has since been reprinted. The next title in the series will be a translation of the French erotic gay vampire novel *L'Autre Dracula* by Tony Mark.

A uniform image for a publishing company is very important because of one of the quirks of how books are sold in Spain. While many bookshops are moving to the American model of arranging books in alphabetical order within thematic sections, most Spanish stores still sell books arranged by publisher. One of the results of this has been the absence of many of the genre and "ghetto" distinctions American readers are familiar with; a book is a book. As in the states, heterosexual women are more likely to buy a book with homosexual content than their straight male counterparts. Among the younger urban set there is little stigma in reading queer titles. If anything, it would be people in the pueblos who'd be disinterested in reading about discos, drugs and fast-paced urban lifestyles, be it a queer or a straight book.

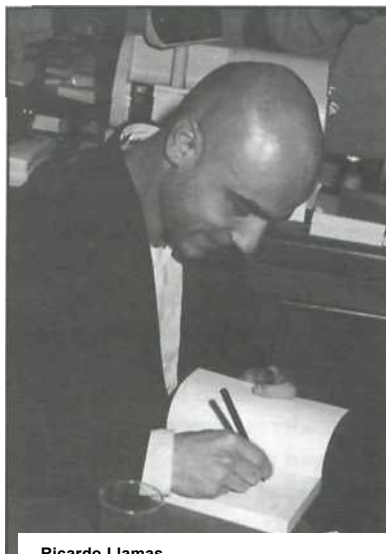
One of the most popular queer novels published by a mainstream house this past year was Espasa Calpe's publication of *Azul Petroleo*. Written by television personality Boris Izaguirre, a staple on the late-night program *Crónicas Marcianas*, his flamboyant (but well-groomed) antics have charmed many a straight woman who wishes her boyfriend/husband/son/whatever had more sense of style and appreciation of the things in life that she, too, appreciated. While often criticized in the gay press of playing up to the worst stereotypes of how heterosexuals view gays, these critics have found little to criticize about his writing.

The relatively new house Alba published *Este Latente Mundo* by Jose Luis de Juan, a thriller with gay content set in Harvard and ancient Rome in a complex literary puzzle. Alba also recently published a translation of Andrew Sullivan's *Virtually Normal*, one of few recent nonfiction books with queer content to be published here in Spain.

Editiones de la Tempestad has tried to develop a small list of Queer Theory cities, with translations of works by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Paul Julian Smith, and others, as well as works by Spanish authors such as *Miss Media* by Ricardo Llamas. Their latest release is the long-delayed mini-encyclopedia of Spanish queer culture *Para Entendernos. Diccionario de Cultura Gai-Lesbico*, which tries to look at world queer culture from a Hispanic and non-Anglo American perspective as much as possible.

EGALES has published few titles of nonfiction thus far, but two important ones, including Juan Vicente Aliaga and Jose Miguel G. Cortes' *Identidad Y Diferencia Sobre La Cultura Gay En España*. Their most recent nonfiction title is the composite biographies of Julia Cela's *Galena de Retratos*, which is organized in biographical essays analyzing particular groupings of lesbian and gay writers, filmmakers, etc. in context with each other and their environment.

The increase in available material from presses large and small has seen an increase in the number of gay and lesbian specialty stores, or mainstream stores in smaller towns which put in a "gender" section. Because a gay and lesbian bookshop also functions as a community center, they are a welcome space in the cities where they've been opening¹. Some are finding they simply don't have the client-base to support themselves. Often, these stores carry a section of books and magazines in English, because many of their customers want to keep up with ideas, literature, and trends that have not yet been translated for the Spanish marketplace. The youngest of these bookshops are



Ricardo Llamas,
courtesy of Lawrence Schimel

Torremolinos and Libreria Rainbow in Malaga, some of which have been around only a few months- Neither city boasts a very large gay population so their futures are uncertain. La Libreria de Babel in Bilbao celebrated its first anniversary in September. It continues to grow thanks to the gay movement in the Basque Country. El Cobertizo in Valencia has lasted over three years. Perhaps the best run of the stores, they unfortunately suffer from the small size of their city. Libreria Jano en Sevilla caters to gays and lesbians in Andalucia. Antinous in Barcelona is a bookshop/cafe with a prime location: just down the street

from the gay and lesbian center Casal Lambda, whose members often stop in to browse or have a drink on their way to or from the center. The older queer bookshop in Barcelona, Complices, maintains its loyal customers from its position higher up in the Ramblas.

And then there is Berkana. The oldest, largest, and most successful of the stores, it is in the heart of Spain's biggest gay neighborhood, Madrid's Chueca. Quite often, when planning to open a gay and lesbian bookshop in another part of Spain, prospective bookshop owners stop in at Berkana to get a working model—and usually a generous heap of advice from proprietors Mili Hernandez and Arnaldo Gancedo! The store regularly hosts book presentations, and is often where local television and radio media turn to when they need a question about gay life answered. The staff at the store are used to this, since people will come in asking about everything from where to find housing to advice on relationships. Some of their customers don't even know about the existence of COGAM, the gay and lesbian center of Madrid, just a few blocks away. Most people think the bookstore holds this position.

The bookshop prints up a free gay map to Madrid twice a year, paid for by advertising from local establishments, and also produces a series of mail order catalogs which are sent to their extensive mailing list of customers across Spain and in other parts of the world.

The US, with over 30 million Spanish speakers comprising a rapidly-growing population, rivals Spain's 40 million inhabitants. A good number of the books mentioned here are available to US readers through gay and lesbian bookshops, many of which in larger have Spanish-language sections, or via mail order to one of the above mentioned specialty shops. (Berkana, for instance, can be reached via email to berkana@ctv.es or by consulting their webpage at <http://www.ctv.es/berkana/index.html>) Most titles from EGALES and Laertes' Rev de Bastos imprint are distributed in the US via Alamo Square Distributors, which also distributes Spanish-language titles from Latin America. Bookazine has recently begun carrying EGALES and other Spanish-language titles of gay and lesbian interest.

The world of Spanish-speaking homosexuality continues to grow closer into a community, and Spanish publishers and writers are certainly doing their part.

LAWRENCE SCHIMEL IS THE AUTHOR OF TWO COLLECTIONS OF SHORT STORIES PUBLISHED IN SPANISH, *MI NOVIO ES UN DUENDE* AND *BIEN DOTADO* (BOTH LAERTES); HIS NEXT WORK OF FICTION, A COLLECTION OF LINKED STORIES SET IN VARIOUS CITIES IN EUROPE, WILL BE PUBLISHED IN CATALAN IN APRIL, 2000, UNDER THE TITLE *EURONIS* (LIBRES DE L'INDEX). HE HAS ALSO EDITED OVER TWENTY ANTHOLOGIES IN ENGLISH, THE MOST RECENT OF WHICH ARE *BOY MEETS BOY* (ST. MARTIN'S PRESS), *THINGS INVISIBLE TO SEE: TALES OF GAY AND LESBIAN MAGIC REALISM* (MAGIC REALISM (CIRLET PRESS)), AND *THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF GAY EROTICA* (CARROLL & GRAF). HE WON A LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD IN 1998 FOR HIS ANTHOLOGY *POMOSEXUALS: CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUALITY*, CO-EDITED WITH CAROL QUEEN (CLEIS PRESS).

Letter from Spain, Part II:

People and Places

by Lawrence Schimel

All Photos by Julio Rosales
(unless otherwise indicated)

One-Woman DyKe Action Machine

Having lived in both the US and London, Mili Hernandez returned to Spain with a vision of possibilities and lots of new ideas, both imported directly (she brought the rainbow flag to



Mili Hernandez

Spain) and those created within a uniquely Spanish environment. In December of 1993, together with Arnaldo Gancedo, she founded Berkana, Spain's first gay and lesbian bookstore, in Madrid. Not content with the amount of gay and lesbian titles being published in Spanish, she began EGALES (Editorial Gay y Lesbiana) in November 1995, together with Complices, a gay and lesbian bookshop which opened in Barcelona in April 1994. EGALES is the first gay and lesbian press in Spain and has thus far published 19 novels and 3 non-fiction books. In 1999, Mili was editor of the lesbian magazine *Nosotras* through its first few issues, until it had successfully launched.

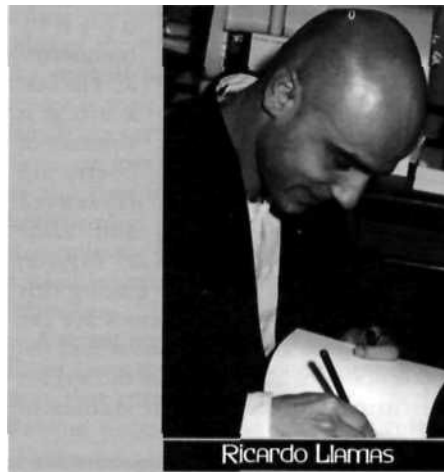
While lately she has been focusing more on these literary activities, she has also been an important voice in queer politics and activism in Spain. She regularly appears in the media as a spokesperson on queer issues. Together with Pedro Zerolo, she was co-president of COGAM (the gay collective of Madrid) and continues working with him on a weekly radio program on gay issues that airs on Radio Voz.

Among all this activity, she still finds time for her relationship with Mar del Griño. They were the first lesbian couple to get officially registered in Madrid as domestic partners.

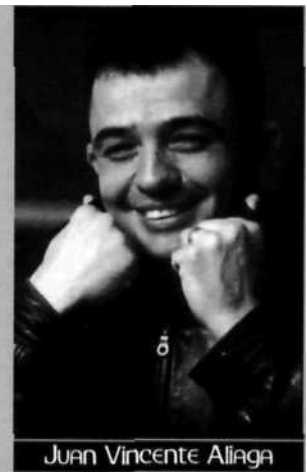
Queer Theorists

Writing from a uniquely Spanish perspective but completely aware of what is happening in Queer Theory elsewhere, are two young author/activists, Ricardo Llamas and Juan Vicente Aliaga. While certainly building upon the work of some earlier Spanish writer, such as Alberto Cardín and Oscar Guasch, Queer Studies in Spain basically begins in 1997 with the publication of *Miss Media* and *Identi-dady Diferencia* by Llamas and Aliaga respectively.

Ricardo Llamas is a sociologist not affiliated with a university. Active in, and a founder of, the Radical Gay in Spain in the early 90s, and a regular contributor to various gay and mainstream media, he is currently the editor-in-chief of *Zero* magazine, the first gay and lesbian magazine to establish itself on a national level. His books include *Miss Media. Una Lectura Perversa de la Comunicacion de Masa* (1997), a collection of his essays analyzing the treatment of homosexuals in the Media (akin to a Spanish version of Bronski's *Culture Clash*) and *Teoria Torcida* (1998). He is also the editor of the AIDS anthology *Construyendo Sidentidades*. Early in 2000 his newest book, *Homografias*, written with Paco Vidarte, will be published by Espasa, tackling not just heterosexual institutions of homophobia but self-criticizing aspects of the gay and lesbian movement. Juan Vicente Aliaga, often writing with University of Valencia colleague Jose Miguel G. Cortes, is primarily an art historian whose work often concerns the intersections of art and sexuality. He is a frequent contributor to art journals such as *Artforum* in the US and *Frieze* in London, *Identidad y Diferenda Sobre la Cidtura Gay en España* by Aliaga and Cortes (1997) gives a historical overview of the gay movement in Spain along with an analysis of homosexual representation in literature and films. The book is written in a tone that is pro-gay identity. Also in collaboration with Cortes, Aliaga is the author of *De Amor y Rabia. Acerca del Arte y del Sida* (1993) about representations of AIDS in, and its impact on, art. His most recent work is the solo book *Bap Vientre: Representaciones de la Sexualidad en la Cultura y Arte Contemporaneos* (1998) on, as the subtitle says, representations of sexuality in culture and contemporary art.



Ricardo Llamas



Juan Vicente Aliaga

The Hit Parade

Some of Spain's best-known literary writers whose work includes homosexual themes include:

Leopoldo Alas is perhaps best known for his journalism and his three volumes of poems (including *Posecion del Miedo*) and the influential literary magazine, *Signos*, he founded and edited. He writes in all different media and genres, having published a novel (*Bochorno*), two volumes of short stories, various non-fiction books, two plays, and even an opera libretto. A columnist for *El Mundo*, one of Madrid's two papers; he also takes part in a daily radio program during the week. His satirical non-fiction book *De la Acera de Enfrente* offers a wry look at the foibles of urban homosexuality in a guidebook format.

Eduardo Mendicutti is one of Spain's beloved literary novelists, and a regular feature on television and radio programs and debates, as well as contributing to



Eduardo Mendicutti,
with Lawrence Schimel, and Leopoldo Alas
(photo by Olga Cambassani)

El Mundo at least once a week. Openly gay in both his own life and many of his writings, he moves back and forth between the mainstream and the gay press equally. His most popular novel *El Palomo Cojo* was filmed featuring Carmen Maura. Employing a style of camp that avoids the pitfalls of that genre, he often writes about transvestites and transsexuals, especially in his last novel *Que Culpa Tengo Yo de Haber Nacido Tan Sexy?* His loosely autobiographical novel *Los Novios Bulgaros* is the story of the love affair between an older gay man and a beautiful young Bulgarian.

Esther Tusquets is widely regarded as one of the most important literary writers of the post-Franco period. Her work is often concerned with careful examinations of the social role played by women in Spanish society. She is known for a trilogy of novels with lesbian content, *El Mismo Mar de Todos los Veranos*, *El Amor es un Juego Solitario*, and *Varada Tras El Ultimo Naufrago*. Her most recent novel, *Con La Miel en Los Labios*, is set among a socially and sexually diverse group of University students in the post-Franco transition period, and how the equilibrium of the group falls apart when one of the women seduces another woman in the group. She is one of few contemporary Spanish writers to be translated into English. In addition to her own writings, Tusquets is the Editorial Director of the prestigious publishing house Lumen.

Luis Antonio de Villena is the polymath of Spanish literature. His position is a combination of Edmund White and Richard Howard retaining the influence of both, yet as prolific as Joyce Carol Oates. He is an important figure in poetry, fiction, biography and essays, and literary translations from the French, Italian, and English primarily.



Luis Antonio de Villena

Published by mainstream houses from an early age, his writings are often openly homoerotic. His best known volumes of poetry are *Hymnica* and *Huir del Inveiro*; among his fiction books with gay themes are the novels *Divino* and *Amor Passion* and the book of stories *Chicos*. He has also written historical novels, critical studies of

Spanish and other authors, and essays about decadence and dandy-ism, among many other subjects and themes. Lauded with awards in almost all of the genres he writes in, in 1999, he won the Sonrisa Vertical prize, a prestigious award for literary erotica with a large cash prize and publication by Spain's literary-equivalent of Farrar Straus, for his book *Mal Mundo*, a pair of novellas about male prostitutes.

Terenci Moix is one of the most popular authors in Spain; his historical novel about Cleopatra *No Me Digas Que Fue Solo un Sumo* has sold an astounding 1,800,000 copies in Spanish! Well known for his cine-mania and Egyptophilia, he has never hidden his own homosexuality or been ashamed of gay sexuality. These themes show up in his novels, especially such early works as *El Dia Que Murio*



Terenci Moix

Marilyn Monroe, and in his popular volumes of memoirs. His earliest books were written in Catalan, although in the past few decades he has written almost exclusively in Castillian. His sister, Ana Maria Moix, is herself an important literary figure and has translated most of his early books from Catalan into Castillian. Many of her early novels such as *Julia* or *Walter, Porque te Fuiste*, portray a veiled lesbian relationship, reserving homosexuality for secondary characters. She came out as a lesbian publicly in 1997.

Cultures and tongues

While most people tend to think of Spain as a monolingual country whose tongue is spoken extensively in the Americas, there are in fact five official languages spoken in Spain: Castillian (Spanish), Catalan, Euskera (Basque), Gallego, and Bable. Under Franco's reign, Castillian was the only permitted language and all others were suppressed; in the past few decades, an attempt has been made to revive these cultures and tongues, and government subsidies support most publishing done in these other languages of Spain. Almost all speakers of these "minority" Spanish languages are bilingual, speaking Castillian as well as their "native" tongue.

Catalan

While the Principality of Andorra is the only place in the world where Catalan is the official language, there exists an extensive Catalan publishing scene as well as such wonderful traditions as the *Dia del Libro* each April 23rd, when the patron Saint of Catalunya, Sant Jordi, is celebrated by gifting a book and a rose to loved ones and friends. There are some political and rhetorical arguments made that consider Valenciano and Mallorquin (the dialects spoken in Valencia and Las Palmas, respectively) separate languages, although the differences are primarily limited shifts in vocabulary from Catalan.

Politically, Catalunya has had more gay activism than other parts of Spain—not without infighting among its participants, resulting in a number of coexisting gay political organizations. One advantage of this has been the increase in gay media, as each group publishes its own magazine; those in Catalan are the monthly *Infogai* put out by the Coordinadora Gai-Lesbico and the bimonthly *Lambda* published by Casal Lambda.

Lluís Fernandez holds an important historical position in gay literary culture in Spain with his novel *L'Anarquista Nu* published in 1978 and openly dealing with homosexual life during the reign of Franco and the transition period following. (published in English as *The Naked Anarchist* by the Gay Men's Press). He has written a number of nonfiction books on various subjects, mostly in Castillian, including a biography of Monty Clift, but

has returned to the novel after twenty years with *Un Prudente Distancia* published in 1999 by Espasa.

Lluís Maria Todó, novelist, critic, and prolific translator from the French, is considered a central figure in contemporary Catalan letters. His three novels, all dealing openly with homosexual themes, explore relationships among different social classes of Catalan society, especially his first novel *Els Placers Ficticis* or concern themselves with the politics of Barcelona as in *El Joc de Mentidider*. His most recent novel is *L'Adoració Perpetua*.

In the world of poetry, Jaume Creus has published a trio of volumes of his verse, which often have blatantly homosexual imagery and situations, especially *Eros d'encesca fletxa*, which won the (mainstream) Vicent Andres Estellés prize for poetry.

My own anthology of gay love poems, *Ells S'estim: Poemes d'amor Entre Homes*, published originally in Catalan by Llibres de l'Index in 1999, is worth mention as it is the first anthology of gay love poems published in any of the languages of Spain, and includes Catalan poets such as Creus, Narcís Comadira, and Jaume Fuster, alongside poetry in translation.

Basque

In Basque, the most interesting book is Iñaki Mendiguren's *Haltzak Badu Bihotzik* published by Elkarlanean. The book revolves around a linguistic trick, impossible to pull off in Spanish and difficult even in English, owing to Basque's lack of inflection for nouns and pronouns. The novel is the love story between a teacher and a student, and at first the reader assumes it is a male teacher and female student, until a third of the way through the novel when the student begins to play soccer. The reader is then led to assume it must be a female teacher and male student, but it is in fact a gay love story, using the very nature of the Basque language to challenge heterosexual presumption. It has been tremendously successful in El País Vasco—a small language population—and is in its 9th edition.

A recent non-fiction book, *Gay Nazi* by Iñigo Lamarca, is a Basque coming-out story that attracted much attention in the Basque press because of its novelty. Written for a heterosexual public, the book

is to be criticized in its portrayal of gay life in the Basque Country for ignoring the existence of EHGAM, the Basque gay and lesbian rights group, which has been active and visible for the past 23 years.

The Bilbao branch of EHGAM publishes the magazine *Gay Hotsa*, and has also published three small informative booklets in Basque/Castillian bilingual editions: a guide to coming out to your parents, a debate on the nature of homosexuality, and a guide to gay antidiscrimination laws.

There has even been an irregularly-published Basque gay porn magazine, *Xut* (which means "erect"), edited by Aitor Arana in the early 90s.

Gallego and Bable

There is very little publishing activity in either of these languages, and what books are published are mostly children's books supported primarily by government subsidies. I haven't yet been able to find any Spanish authors publishing queer material in either language. There are gay journalists writing about queer themes in the Galician press, however, and Joseph Hansen's *Early Graves* was published in a Gallego translation in 1984 by Via Láctea Editorial. There is also a feminist bookstore in Santiago de Compostela, Liberia Maria Balteira, which has a gay section.

Where to Buy

While there are gay and lesbian bookshops in a handful of Spanish cities, and Barcelona and Madrid each boast more than one, there are still many a town where queer books are poorly or not available. As a way of helping to counteract that, and to complement the existing bookshops, in December of 1999 a virtual gay and lesbian Spanish bookshop was launched, Tulibro.com. Founded by a Catalan from a bookselling family, Jordi Bosch, and his American partner, Roger Young, in their first year of operation they've grown to now handle approximately 3000 titles, primarily in Spanish, but also in Catalan, English, and other languages, with shipping available to overseas customers as well as within Spain.

<http://www.tulibro.com>

-LAWRENCE SCHIMMEL