

Solita Salinas Marichal

Publications

1. "Rafael Alberti" in The Poem Itself, Stanley Burnshaw ed., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1960, pp. 252-259 (several paper reprints here and in England).
2. El mundo poético de Rafael Alberti, Gredos, Madrid, 1968. (I am enclosing copies of reviews of this book.)

Supplementary Biographical Data

I was born in Seville, Spain, the 18th of January of 1920. My father, Pedro Salinas, a Spanish poet, was then Professor of Spanish Literature at the University of Seville. My mother, Margarita Bonmatí de Salinas, had been born and educated in what was then French North Africa and that is why I have always been bilingual. We moved to Madrid and there I attended the Escuela Internacional until the start of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. I came to this country in 1937 (after a year spent with my mother and maternal grandparents in Algiers) and attended Dana Hall School, graduating in 1938. The next four years I was a student at Wellesley College, class of 1942. I graduated with honors in 1942, having written my Honors' paper under the direction of Professor Jorge Guillén, the well-known Spanish poet. I was then appointed a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Spanish of Vassar College where I spent the academic year 1942-43. My father, who was then Professor of Spanish at the Johns Hopkins University, accepted a Visiting Professorship at the University of Puerto Rico and I joined him there. Two years later, in 1945, I received a Master's degree in Hispanic Literature from that University, having written a thesis on traditional elements in contemporary Spanish poetry under the guidance of Professor Margot Vázquez de Arce. I went back to Vassar College in 1945 as an Instructor in Spanish, remaining there until June 1947 when I married Juan Marichal (today a Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University). My husband was appointed an Associate Professor of Spanish at Bryn Mawr College in 1953 and I resumed my Graduate studies there that year. I took courses with and worked under Professors Margaret Gilman, Manuel Alcalá, José Ferrater Mora and Vicente Llorens. I passed the Preliminary Examination for the Ph.D. in 1956: my Major was Spanish Literature and my Allied Subject was French Symbolism.

"EN EL PRINCIPIO ERAN LAS ALAS": LA PRIMERA FASE
(1924-1929) DE LA LIRICA DE RAFAEL ALBERTI

Abstract of doctoral dissertation on the early poetry
of Rafael Alberti (1925-1929)

There is no doubt that the first five books by Rafael--
Alberti -- Marinero en tierra (1925), La amante (1926), El
alba del alhelf (1928), Cal y canto (1928) and Sobre los ángeles
(1929) -- established his lyrical place and image in Spanish
literature. Other Spanish poets' ascent to their creative
summits has been deliberately slow (as in Guillén's long-range
planning of the towering years of his Cántico) or involuntarily
discontinuous (Salinas' case, for instance). But Rafael Alberti
"jumped" suddenly into the already crowded arena of the 1920's
Spanish lyricism: and his original achievement was at once
recognized by the award of the 1925 National Prize for Litera-
ture. The four years and books that followed Marinero en tierra
(1925) saw Alberti's voice move from the Spanish traditional
domains of the joyful folkloric song to the innovating terrain
of the Surrealists and their despair. Alberti's Sobre los
ángeles (1929) was thus the conclusion of a brief but highly
representative poetic journey from lyrical innocence to the
disarray of the late 1920's European mind. Towards the end
of 1929 Alberti breaks away from what he had come to see as the
soul's void and looks for ideological and emotional assertive-
ness: he will find it in Communism and he will consider his
previous marvelous four years as a closed phase of his biogra-
phy, his "inescapable contribution to bourgeois poetry". The

main assumption of this study agrees with the poet but with a Communist view of his own lyrical past: the half decade between 1924 (when he began to write Marinero en tierra) and 1929 is indeed a well-circumscribed lyrical field containing Alberti's main traditional themes and personal obsessions.

This study has four chapters (one for each book, except the first which covers both Marinero en tierra and La amante) that correspond to the four stages of Alberti's trajectory from 1924 to 1929: from paradise regained to paradise lost, from the underwater eden to the crumbling realm of the angels. And that is why Alberti's journey is most probably unparalleled in the history of Hispanic lyrical poetry: because in his five early books there is a sort of assonance between the utter voice of anguish and the zestful outcry of the mermaid. Of course, it could be maintained that Alberti was simply a resounding mirror of the polar extremes of the Spanish-speaking lands of poetry in the 20th century: and this study has precisely avoided that undeniable fact -- Alberti's representativeness -- because it has aimed at portraying his originality. This scholarly intention led the author to look beyond the Pyrenees for conceptual orientation since she felt that Alberti's vast stride could not be properly described by using exclusively Spanish approaches. The writings of Gaston Bachelard provided the way to Alberti's inner poetic recesses: though the author (being aware of Bachelard's logical propensity to put similar masks on different poets) has used rather deviously the Frenchman's methodology. In short, the author is no doubt a bachelardienne (to the extent

that she could claim with some legitimacy to be the first in world Hispanism) but with a certain degree of historical attenuation. This study has pointed out, for instance, how the splendor of Spanish poetry in the 1920's is partially linked with French Symbolism. The author has sketched behind Alberti's work of 1928-1929 his general European surrealist background. Not that she would define Alberti as essentially surrealist but she hopes to have contributed to a kind of horizon enlargement when viewing Hispanic poetry of this age. But this thesis, in its first chapter, starts as Alberti's own poetry within traditional Spanish grounds: it has shown how the Andalusian's originality is deeply rooted in the inherited soil of the Cancioneros. In conclusion, the author believes that she has been faithful to her subject as much in thematics and chronology as in methodology: and she has somehow tried to fuse what could be called the ancient innocence of Menéndez Pidal with Bachelard's studies of the power of the "elements" in the creation of poetry.

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Statement of your plan for the year at the Radcliffe Institute: Describe your proposal fully and give details of its scope and importance to your field. Give the facts of your work on the project (when you began, your progress to date, and the approximate time needed for completion), or if your proposed plan represents a new interest or project, describe your qualifications to undertake it and your reasons for doing so. Although it is understood that specific descriptions cannot always be given in advance for creative endeavors, it is hoped that applicants in the creative arts will give as many details as possible of the work they would expect to accomplish under an Institute grant. Describe the facilities which might be required in your work. If you have specific vocational goals for which your proposed study at the Radcliffe Institute would equip you, please describe them.

My project is to write a second book on the poetry of Rafael Alberti. I had not wanted to go beyond the year 1929 in my study El mundo poético de Rafael Alberti (Gredos, Madrid, 1968) because the poet's main work published that year did mark both a literary culmination and a biographical turning point. His first five books established his lyrical place in Spanish literature and saw the poet's voice move from the traditional domains of the joyful folkloric song to the innovating terrain of the Surrealists and their despair. Alberti's Sobre los ángeles (About angels, 1929) was thus the conclusion of a brief but highly representative poetic journey from lyrical innocence to the disarray of the late 1920's European mind. Towards the end of 1929 Alberti breaks away from what he had come to see as the soul's void and looks for ideological and emotional assertiveness: he will find it in Communism and he will consider his previous marvelous four years as a closed phase of his biography, his "inescapable contribution to bourgeois poetry". Thus began the second phase of Alberti's poetry (1930-1939) which is quite inferior in my view to his great period of 1925-1929. But the outcome of the Spanish Civil War made of Alberti an exile and though he did not abandon his political commitment he recovered in South America the poetic strength of his early years. My book will be therefore more about this "third" Alberti (1939-1969) than about the "parenthesis" of 1930-1939.

I am asking therefore for an Institute grant to allow me to be free from teaching the entire academic year 1970-71: as I indicated before I'll be on sabbatical leave (with pay) the first half of 1970-71.

Signature: Solita MarichalDate: November 3, 1969