

# Quebec Hispánico

## Themes of Exile and Integration in the Writing of Latin Americans Living in Quebec

Over the past several decades, as Quebec has become an increasingly multiethnic society, Spanish-speaking immigrants of Latin American origin have steadily been creating an ever-larger body of work. The phenomenon of writing produced in immigrant languages is not new, of course, but what characterizes work in Spanish is that it is produced by people from some twenty different countries, all of which have national literatures that are in turn part of a common Latin-American or Spanish-speaking literary tradition.

Latin American writing in Quebec has now reached the point at which it is possible to speak of “une littérature latino-québécoise.” Some thirty different writers, working in the full array of genres—poetry, drama, short stories, criticism, children’s literature, autobiography, and the novel—have published over eighty books. Due to linguistic and literary isolation from the French and English mainstreams, some of these works have been self-published, a fact which in no way diminishes their literary value. Other books have been brought out by one or another of the five Spanish-language small presses now operating in the Montreal area<sup>1</sup> or by larger commercial French and English-language publishers.<sup>2</sup> Lately, an increasing number of works are being published directly in Latin America, especially in Chile.<sup>3</sup>

Latin American writing in Quebec also, of course, forms part of the larger body of Hispanic writing of Canada. Given the high proportion

(about half) of Chileans within this group, one could speak as well of a Chilean-Quebec or Chilean-Canadian literature; likewise, since there are a large number of women writing in Spanish, Latina-Quebec or Latina-Canadian writing might constitute another possible field. Through translation and bilingual editions, there is now increased permeability between Latin American writing in Quebec and the literatures of the two official languages; influences are flowing back and forth between these three poles of literary activity, and such reciprocal osmosis may play an important role as Quebec increasingly defines itself as part of the Americas.<sup>4</sup>

The political and economic upheavals in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s sent successive waves of refugees and immigrants northward. The Chileans arrived first, following the coup d'état against Salvador Allende in 1973. They were followed by a smaller number of Argentines and Uruguayans from the same period and by several waves of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans during the 1980s, as well as by many other arrivals from virtually every nation in South and Central America and the Caribbean.

These groups of refugees and immigrants have included a high proportion of artists and intellectuals. Some of the writers among them had already embarked on literary careers before leaving their native countries; others began to write after arriving here. Most have been strongly influenced by their own highly developed national literatures, yet all share a common interest in Latin American writing as a whole. Many have drawn strength from contacts with fellow Hispanic authors in Quebec and from audiences within the Latin American community, while a few have chosen to distance themselves from their compatriots. A substantial number of authors have gradually become part of the French and English literary worlds of Quebec, and some have even begun to move away from writing exclusively in Spanish; others, however, have preferred to remain on the outskirts of their new reality, continuing to write primarily about their native countries and be more concerned with their reception in Latin America than in Quebec.

Despite the diversity of these writers, certain key themes are common to much of their work. These include political militancy, nostalgia, exile, return to the homeland, and adaptation to the reality of life in Quebec. Writing by various authors may be characterized by one, several, or all of these themes; the general thematic progression is from militancy to adaptation, but this tendency is in no way paradigmatic. The patterns in which

these themes surface reveal both the commonality and the highly individual aspects and trajectories of the authors involved.

For most of the writers who have come North, their first works in Quebec reflect their preoccupation with their homeland; it is only after some time has passed that experiences in their new environment begin to surface in their writings. Early Chilean writing published in Quebec, for example, revolves largely around the theme of political activism, with emphasis on the sub-themes of economic and social oppression, revolutionary ideals of change, the trauma of military repression, mourning for those who have fallen, continuing opposition to the dictatorship, and search for some hope for the future. Themes involving social commitment have a long and complex history in Latin American literature, and in Chile date back to Neruda and other socially committed writers of the 1930s and 1940s. Although such poetry sometimes walks a fine line between literature and pamphletarianism, it must also be viewed within the context of the perceived role of the writer as the voice of the people in Latin America. In the case of writers who had published in their home country, there is often an understandable time lapse involved between the last book to come out in their country of origin and their first published writing in the country to which they have immigrated: several years are usually spent orienting themselves, learning the new language or languages, finding work, and healing psychological scars left by the régime they have fled before they begin to publish again.

The first works of Chilean authors to appear in Quebec have a strong apocalyptic element: the raw nerves left by the coup d'état are still quivering exposed, and images of soldiers, violence, pain, and death are fresh in the mind. However, there is no rule as to when poems of political militancy, and even of trauma, may occur as a writer's work develops. The following poem, "Ahora que el hambre avanza" ["Now That Hunger Advances"], by Nelly Davis Vallejos, the first woman from Chile to publish in Quebec, denounces both the dictatorship and those who passively accept it; yet this poem is from her sixth collection, *El ocaso del reino* [*The Decline of the Kingdom*], which treats a variety of themes and was published over fifteen years after the coup:

Ahora que el hambre avanza  
rápida, implacable,  
dejando sus trazos  
en el cráneo de los niños;

ahora que el hambre  
viene montada en el negro carro  
de la injusticia,  
custodiada por tanques,  
apoyada por las metralletas,  
escortada por los mercaderes,  
extendiendo su bandera de muerte,  
ahora que el hambre sitia al pueblo  
en la ciudad y el campo,  
¿por qué os escondéis  
en el silencio?  
(Vallejos, 55)

---

Now that hunger advances  
swiftly, implacably,  
leaving its traces  
on the skulls of children;  
now that hunger  
comes riding in the black automobile  
of injustice,  
in a convoy of tanks,  
flanked by machine-guns,  
escorted by merchants,  
extending its flag of death,  
now that hunger lays siege to the people  
in city and countryside:  
Why do you hide  
in silence? (5)

The omission of proper names universalizes her outrage.

In contrast, the very first book of poems by the Chilean poet Elias Letelier-Ruz, *Symphony*, is almost solely dedicated to the theme of political activism and contains many direct references to Chilean history and elegies for specific figures fallen in the resistance; his second collection of poems, *Silence*, continues in the same vein by projecting the narrator's combativeness onto Central America and turning his revolutionary fervour to more direct action. Another Chilean, Alfredo Lavergne, author of nine books of poetry, channels the theme of political struggle into a Canadian context in this third and fourth books, which have numerous poems based on his years working on the General Motors assembly line in Ste-Thérèse; in his fifth collection of poems, *Rasgos separados/Traits distinctifs*, written after travelling through Guatemala, he also returns to the theme of revolutionary struggle within a Central American context. Finally, Tito Alvarado's *La luz y*

*la palabra* [*The Light and the Word*] is a fictional anthology of the posthumous work of twelve Chilean poets (all creations of the editor himself), most of whom published clandestinely either in their homeland or abroad. Alvarado has succeeded in creating a different poetic voice, vocabulary, and style for each of the men and women whose “work” is included: though united by their opposition to the military régime, each writes in a personal and often lyrical blend of defiance, longing, and resurgent faith in the future.

Other Latin Americans, aside from Chileans, have also taken up the theme of political struggle, usually with reference to their own nations. Yvonne América Truque, a Colombian poet, has written a series of poems, “Retratos de sombras” [“Portraits of Shadows”], in which the narrator wanders through the rubble of social chaos in Bogotá and meditates on

[...]la blessure qui ne cicatrise pas  
ou la nostalgie de ce qui peut être et que d'autres empêchent  
(Truque, 21)

Another poet, Maeve López, a Uruguayan who arrived in Canada in 1974, takes a more intimate, personal approach to the horror of dictatorship. In a short untitled poem from *Grito con espejo* [*Scream with Mirror*], published in 1988, she personifies her country and defines her agonized relationship to it:

vos sos mi país  
calentura difusa  
pretenciosa llaga  
asfixia lenta de revólveres cargados de  
palabras  
me tiro por el tubo del teléfono  
te asesino con almohadas de silencio  
te apechugo como el loro al tren  
sin otras historias  
(López, 19)

—  
you're my country  
difused fever  
pretentious wound  
slow asfixiation of revolvers loaded with  
words  
I throw myself through the telephone receiver  
I murder you with pillows of silence  
I face up to you like a parrot faces a train  
without a word

On the other hand, Eucilda Jorge Morel, a Dominican who lived in Cuba during and after the revolution, turns the ideological tables in two short stories, “Verde melodía” (“Green Melody”) and “¡Viva yo!” (“Long Live Myself!”), which deal with Cuban characters who long for the freedom to travel to the non-communist world, one of whom is swift to grab the opportunity to do so.

Finally, a Salvadoran poet, Salvador Torres Saso, also touches on several motifs of revolutionary struggle, but typically from a more specifically Central American point of view. In “Uno de mis muertos” [“One of My Dead”], he eulogizes the guerrilla poet Roque Dalton, ironically killed by a faction within his own party, simultaneously celebrating the poet’s intellectual recklessness and idealizing him as the revolutionary hero/saint/martyr of liberation, similar to the image of Che Guevara:

[...] Hijo bastardo de Dios  
-o de quien sea  
y de la dialéctica ramera.  
[...] Poeta con alma de saltimbanqui  
charlatán embaucador de musas  
y sarcástico blasfemo  
en horas atemporales,  
tu verbo incandescente  
fulgura en el renacer  
de la patria liberada.  
(Torres Saso, *Enjambres*, 59-60)

—  
[...] bastard Son of God  
- or whoever -  
and the dialectic whore.  
[...] Poet with the soul of a mountebank  
charlatan swindler of muses  
and sarcastic blasphemmer  
of timeless hours,  
your incandescent words  
flash in the rebirth  
of the liberated homeland.  
(Torres Saso, *Compañeros*, 150)

In contrast to the majority of Chilean writers, the speaker in Torres’ political poems holds real hope for the future, the crisis in this case being an actual war for national liberation rather than a coup d’état. However powerful and pervasive the theme of revolutionary struggle may be in Latin American writing in Quebec, it would be incorrect to assume that it is

shared by all Hispanic authors. Renato Trujillo, a Chilean short-story writer and poet who arrived in Quebec in the late 1960s and therefore never directly experienced either the heady effervescence of the Allende years or the horrors of the dictatorship, has chosen to write exclusively in English and generally avoids overtly politicized themes. His lyrical, precise, and sensuous poetry, which has appeared in two collections, is largely concerned with the more personal, intimate themes of love, abandonment, solitude, ageing, and transcendence, and is thus perhaps more closely associated with the confessional aspect of much of English-Canadian poetry. In “Against an Adobe Wall,” the speaker’s very Canadian enumeration of what he has in life includes some very Chilean images:

I have a friendship  
with the wind and a solid pact  
with the emerald sea. The mountains,  
the sky, a lonesome rooster I keep  
all rolled up in my memory.  
(Trujillo, 40)

Closely tied to Latin American writing that denounces the repression of the revolutionary ideal is the nostalgic evocation of a time that is irrevocably lost and a place to which the narrator may be prohibited from returning. Refugee writers have generally been intensely involved in trying to bring about political change in their homelands, with little thought to emigration abroad. In fact, their choice of a country in which to seek asylum is often dictated more by random factors such as which embassy happens to be closest or have the least police surveillance rather than by personal preference. Even the economic immigrant may only have chosen to leave his or her native land because of extreme hardship, not because of dreams of becoming Canadian. Often, therefore, such writers feel both torn from their own soil and alienated from their new country, whose culture may have been totally unfamiliar to them before their arrival. In the resulting longing for what they have left behind, their past life in the home country may take on the mythical proportions of a paradise lost.

Jorge Cancino is a Chilean filmmaker, poet, and short-story writer who was already in his forties when he immigrated to Canada in the mid-1970s. In his long poem *Juglarío/Jonglerías*, the narrator (“the Juggler”) speaks to himself, relating the course of his life from childhood, adolescence and bohemian youth in Chile through the coup d’état and the uncertainty of the

future; images of the sea, wheat, vineyards, and dawn over the mountains predominate in the lyrical evocation of childhood which soothes the speaker's anguished memory and strengthens his resolve to go on. Edith Velásquez, a Venezuelan, has written a very personal long poem, *Brillo en los tejados* [*Radiance on the Rooftops*], celebrating her native island, Margarita, her childhood, and her ancestors who settled there. The work is practically a neo-classical epic, complete with personification of natural forces and hyperbolic allusions to the world's inherent balance, but the constant references to different types of exotic flowering plants, to sunlight and the ocean and childhood memories, speak overwhelmingly of a lost world of primeval beauty and innocence to which the narrator can never return, but whose mere evocation brings her respite from her longing.

Two Chilean authors in particular offer curious progressions in the development of the theme of nostalgia. Nelly Davis Vallejos published her first collection of poetry, *Ritual*, in Chile just before the coup d'état in 1973. Much of the book is composed of bittersweet portraits of Valparaíso and the small seaports of southern Chile, in which the references to the weathered frame houses, rain, kelp, fog, and winter storms are as evocative as watercolours, yet the poet was still in Chile when she wrote them; viewed in retrospect, the book is virtually a premonition of exile. Nelly Davis returned to Chile permanently in 1990. The thematic sequence in the writing of Francisco Viñuela, however, is entirely opposite. Viñuela was also one of the earliest Latin American authors to publish in Montreal, and his first book of poems, *Exilio transitorio/Exil transitoire*, which came out in 1977, borders on a revolutionary hymnbook, complete with an homage to his political party. Yet the poet's exile was indeed permanent, and his second collection of poetry, *Nostalgia y presencia/Nostalgie et présence*, written the following year, deals with the meaning and relevance of the speaker's Chilean past within the context of his present life in Quebec. It is not until his first novel, *Las memorias de doña Alma Errante*, published in Chile twelve years later, that Viñuela finally immerses himself in a wildly surrealistic evocation of his homeland. *Doña Alma*, narrated in the first person by a Valparaíso octogenarian who is telling her life story to her descendents, is the apotheosis of nostalgia. Filled with all the surprises and caprices of magic realism, Doña Alma's account of her life and of the bizarre and legendary characters that moved through it is in many ways an extended reflection on the history of Chile (which she at first calls the "Platonic" and later the "Thalassocratic



Republic”). The narrative is purposefully vague about time, and makes no mention of the events surrounding Allende, so that the speaker and reader are transported back to a mythical world that exists outside the historical tragedy of modern Chile.

The anguish of exile is a common theme in the writing of many Latin American writers in Quebec, yet it is without doubt the principal concern of the Chilean singer/poet/actor/playwright Alberto Kurapel, who started bringing out songs on his own record label almost as soon as he arrived in Montreal in the mid-1970s. Kurapel’s bilingual theatre, three volumes of which have been published, is relentlessly experimental, employing musical repetition, video, slides, off-stage voices, sudden noise, enigmatic characters, hanged men, transvestism, talking fleas, intransigent mannikins, and blind beggars, all designed to instill a maximum sense of disorientation and displacement in the audience and thus transmit the experience of exile, which Kurapel interprets as absolute homelessness.

**Y**et if exile is disorienting, what of going back? Gloria Escomel, a Uruguayan poet, dramatist, and novelist who writes mainly in French, has published two novels that deal with the theme of return. In the first, *Fruit de la passion*, a Uruguayan woman who works as a photographer in Montreal falls in love with what may be the hallucinated image of an older woman from her past. She subsequently journeys back to Montevideo and the resort town of Punta del Este and (seemingly) finds and lives with her beloved. The novel, written in post-modern style and avoiding political statement, is a meditation on loss, longing, and the power of the imagination. Escomel’s second novel, *Pièges*, also involves a woman from Montreal, this time a journalist, who returns to the invented country of Riomar (which lies between Uruguay and Argentina) during what turns out to be the final months of the military dictatorship to look for a friend who has disappeared. She is eventually arrested, tortured, raped, and almost killed; when at last released from prison, she publicly denounces the military, becomes a national symbol of resistance, and finally resumes her career. Every political event that she experiences ends up ensnaring her in far more complex ways than she anticipated. She has become involved in a life-and-death struggle polarized between a more exalted idealism and vicious duplicity than she had ever imagined; only her openness and courage keep her from being annihilated. Moreover, she finds herself in continual conflict

with a society that is only just beginning to accept feminist discourse and is completely intolerant of her lesbianism. Yet she does not go back to Montreal, where she had previously felt dissatisfied with a life that seemed too safe; instead, she decides to stay in Riomar and search for fulfilment as a political journalist working for social justice.

All Latin American writers in Quebec eventually have to deal in some way with the theme of adaptation to life in their new country. Here the thematic variants, however, are legion, ranging from complete avoidance to acceptance of one's own singularity to the poles of assimilation or alienation. Gilberto Flores Patiño, for example, a Mexican novelist who has achieved considerable recognition both in his native country and in Quebec, has simply chosen not to write directly about Canada. In contrast, the Chilean short-story writer Hernán Barrios has shown a high degree of interest in the theme of acceptance and integration, but not assimilation, into his new homeland. A collection of his stories, entitled *Landed Immigrant* (the actual title of the Spanish edition), was published in Santiago in 1990 and is set almost completely in North America. In one of the stories, "Las noctilucas" ["The Phosphorescence"], a Chilean father meditates on his own gradual assimilation into North American life as he drives back to Montreal with his family after having spent the summer holidays on the coast of Maine. His children are opening up to the world just as he did, but far from his own realm of childhood experience. He recalls the phosphorescent plankton that he and his children found suspended in the sea that very afternoon as they took a last swim before leaving and how he identified with those tiny creatures that adhered to his skin and were "as anachronistic as he was" (Barrios 32). He interprets the plankton as symbols of all the magic that is missing in North America and remembers how their glowing light saved the lives of the Spanish sailors after the battle of Trafalgar (in which, again symbolically, the British under Admiral Nelson destroyed the Spanish fleet). In the last lines of the story, as he drives through the rain with the window partly open, his children point out with a shriek that his arms and beard have begun to glow in the dark as the plankton that had dried on them become wet and turn phosphorescent again, proof that he is indeed in touch with the fantastic and unexpected of his past and that the same natural wonders of his childhood also exist in his new reality.

Another Chilean, the filmmaker and writer Marilú Mallet, brought out two collections of short stories in Quebec in the early and mid-1980s; both

works were published in French and English translation but never appeared in Spanish. The thematic content of Mallet's work shows an almost unbroken progression from a Chilean to a Québécois identity. In her first book, *Voyage to the Other Extreme*, the stories move thematically from satires of the Chilean bureaucracy before and during the coup d'état to tales of flight and torture in Chile, and then to a key story set in Montreal in which two refugee lovers, a Latin American woman who has fled a rightist regime and a Pole who has escaped communism, find that all they really share is their pain. The stories of *Miami Trip*, on the other hand, deal with themes of the isolation of the individual and the difficulty of making intimate contact with other people, and primarily involve either Québécois or European characters. Only two stories involve Latin Americans, both in peculiar roles.

"Affaire classée" is narrated by a Latin American woman who has fled to Quebec from an unnamed country and has successfully assimilated into the new society. Frank, her former boyfriend, immigrated along with her and then lived with her. For him, she "represented Montreal" (Mallet, 39), and though she at first found him comical and imaginative, he later proves to be a psychotic madman who comes back to haunt her like a shadow from her Latin past. She describes him as an alcoholic, slovenly, violent person whose political meetings are sorry excuses for drinking bouts, and whose efforts at poetry consist mainly of vengeful diatribes and descriptions of female dismemberment. The narrator finally changes the locks on Frank and settles down with Pierre, a Québécois, who is kind enough to invite Frank out with them and even reacts with forbearance when Frank later tries to strangle the narrator herself. The difference between the two men shows how much the narrator's attitude has changed toward the opposite sex: she has come to prefer gentleness and understanding, even in the face of an outrage, to empty posturing. Frank ultimately kills himself by crashing into a streetlight in a new car, after which Pierre remarks that the matter is closed. The narrator has adapted; Frank hasn't.

In the succeeding story, "La mutation," the first child born in Quebec to a Latin American couple turns out to be a monster. The parents had found him strange from the beginning, especially since he was fat, with blond hair, while they were both thin and dark. As he grows older, the boy proves unable to communicate other than to make "deep, guttural sounds like a sick beast" (Mallet, 50). Neither parent can understand the child, and the father has doubts as to his paternity. The problem turns out to be that

Pepito has learned to speak from his little Hungarian friend at the day-care centre. Thematically, the story is an paradigm of immigrant fears, especially that of raising a child in a language that is not one's own. Indeed, the parents' alienation is so deep that the child himself is perceived as grotesque and threatening.

Finally, two authors already mentioned as politically inspired, the Salvadoran poet and fiction writer Salvador Torres and the Chilean poet Alfredo Lavergne, reflect the theme of alienation from the new country. One of Torres' recent short stories, "L'antre des égarés," written directly in French, presents the tragicomic world of multiethnic marginals, multiple substance-abusers, drunken philosophers, and would-be artists who frequent a Montreal bar. Unlike Frank in Mallet's "Affaire classée," Torres' characters, though thoroughly burned-out, are dangerous only to themselves; they congregate and exchange tales and polyglot reminiscences.

—Moi, je me tiens pas mal ici, dit soudainement le doyen des habitués, parce que cette boîte me rappelle l'ambiance ineffable qui régnait dans la Babel mythologique. Et aussi parce que je suis un voyageur esseulé, parcourant les heures à l'affût des paysages renversants disséminés dans les mondes éthiliques et les univers stupéfiants... (Torres Saso, XYZ, 50)

One of them, Merlin, chemically reduces himself to a state of total numbness, in which he feels "[rien] pantoute, mademoiselle" (Torres Saso, XYZ, 55) and then falls dead as he walks outside. These characters' adaptation to their new environment is one of denial, withdrawal, or a frantic and doomed effort at transcendence. In Lavergne's poem "Y en la radio... Marjo cantaba" also deals with the marginalized immigrant, this time in his relationship with a *belle québécoise*, in which each takes advantage of the other in an effort to soothe their own particular alienations:

La conocí  
balanceando en el parque  
a su hijo único.  
y a mí...  
con el cliché de macho-latino.

Elevó la batuta de... "Te invito a un café."

Se desnudó en la casa que la habita  
mientras a altos decibeles retumbaba  
la rocker-coca-colera.

Paseó en mi lengua  
e intentó alejarse del "straight"  
de su ex marido.

Y en una de las gotas de la eyaculación  
sentí el timbre tan deseado  
de inmigrante recibido.  
(Lavergne, unpublished)

I met her  
swinging her only child  
in the park  
and I  
with my macho Latino cliché.

She began the overture with  
"Come on over for coffee".

Then took off her clothes in the house that inhabits her  
while the Coca-Cola rocker  
boomed out her decibels.

She roamed across my tongue  
trying to flee  
her straight ex-husband.

And in the spurt of ejaculation  
I felt the longed-for seal  
of the landed immigrant.

What of the future for Latin American writing in Quebec? Although it is possible, as the Chilean poet and critic Jorge Etcheverry has observed (Etcheverry, 308-309), that Chilean or other specifically national literatures in the province may die out with the present generation of authors, Latin American literature as a whole in Quebec is almost certain to flourish as long as new immigrant writers continue to arrive, and many who do come will undoubtedly take up some of the same themes that their predecessors have explored. More established authors, meanwhile, may well increasingly integrate into the literary mainstream, and, as their writing develops, many will move forward to discover and explore new thematic ground.

- 1 Foremost among the small Spanish-language presses is CEDAH (Centre d'Études et de Diffusion des Amériques Hispanophones), which has published a dozen books of poetry and short stories including works by Edith Velásquez, Eucilda Jorge Morel, and Yvonne América Truque. Las Ediciones de la Enana Blanca, a trilingual (Spanish/French/English) publishing concern, has brought out *La Présence d'une autre Amérique*, the first anthology of Latino-Québécois writing in French, as well as the poetry of Maeve López and a book of bilingual (French-Spanish) children's stories by the Chilean dramatist and fiction writer Rodrigo González. Les Éditions Omélic has published books of poetry by Jorge Cancino and an anthology of four Chilean-Canadian short-story writers entitled *Exilium Tremens*; Éditiones Gráfico, now located in Ottawa, has published two Chileans, Jorge Lizama and Pedro Rizzo; and Las Ediciones del Unicornio Verde has brought out half-a-dozen books, including an anthology of Latina writers of Canada, which was published in both Spanish and French editions.

Ediciones Cordillera, based in Ottawa, also has a long list of titles, mostly by Chilean-Canadians living in Ontario. In 1993 Cordillera published *Northern Cronopios*, edited by Jorge Etcheverry, an anthology of fiction by Chilean writers in Canada that included short stories by nine writers from Montreal.

- 2 Among the most active French publishers has been VLB, especially its "Collection latino-américaine," edited by the Uruguayan critic Javier García Méndez, which has brought out six works of fiction by Latin American writers from Quebec and the rest of Canada, as well as from South America. Humanitas has published three collections of plays and a memoir by Alberto Kurapel, as well as bilingual works by Chilean filmmaker Jorge Fajardo and Salvadoran poet and fiction writer Salvador Torres. Les Éditions d'Orphée has been bringing out books of poetry by new and experimental Québécois and English Quebec authors for almost half a century, and has been a key publisher of Latin American work, including four books of poems by Nelly Davis Vallejos. Virtually all of Alfredo Lavergne's work, as well as Tito Alvarado's recent fictional anthology of twelve Chilean writers, has appeared in Orphée's curious back-to-back bilingual (Spanish-French) editions. Boréal's attractively produced and more market-oriented editions have included the Uruguayan novelist and poet Gloria Escomel and the Mexican novelist Gilberto Flores Patiño. Québec-Amérique has published two very well-received books of short stories by Marilú Mallet, but has not gone any further. Finally, Les Écrits des Forges has brought out a semi-bilingual book of poetry by the Salvadoran writer Juan Ramón Mijango Mármol and two collections of poetry by Alberto Kurapel in French.

On the English side, Véhicule Press has published Marilú Mallet's first collection of short stories; The Muses' Company has brought out Elias Letelier-Ruz's two books of poetry; Renato Trujillo has had several collections of poems published with Goose Lane Editions of New Brunswick; and Cormorant Books, of Dunvegan, Ontario (near Montreal) has published *Compañeros* (edited by Hugh Hazelton and Gary Geddes), an anthology of Canadian writing on Latin America by 87 English-Canadian, Québécois, Haitian, and Latino-Canadian writers.

- 3 .In Chile itself, Ediciones Documentas has published a novel by Francisco Viñuela, a book of short stories by Hernán Barrios, and a literary study of Juan Goytisolo by Ariel

Del Barrio, all of which have received favourable, though limited, coverage in Santiago and Valparaíso.

- 4 Cross-cultural literary influences have so far been largely confined to authors themselves. Claude Beausoleil, who is in close contact with Mexican writers and published an anthology of Mexican poetry in 1989, has aided several Latino-Québécois poets in establishing themselves and finding publishers. Bernard Pozier, of Les Écrits des Forges, has reviewed works by Hispanic writers of Quebec in the handbook *La Poésie au Québec (Revue critique)*, which is published annually. Jean Jonaissant, a Haitian-Canadian critic, gave an enthusiastic reception to *La Présence d'une autre Amérique* in *Lettres québécoises* in the summer of 1991, and the *Montreal Gazette* has featured at least three articles on Latin American and Spanish writers in the city. Jean Royer has also published a long piece on Latino-Québécois writing in *Le Devoir* (June 22, 1991). Finally, the indomitable Janou St-Denis has been unstintingly generous in scheduling readings (in French and Spanish) by Hispanic writers of Quebec at least several times a year in her Place aux Poètes, the longest-running series of readings in French in Montreal.

In general, however, little notice is taken in Quebec of literature that is not directly written in French, and bilingual editions are largely ignored (one presumes this will not be the case with two bilingual anthologies of Latino-Québécois writing that will be published by les Éditions de l'Hexagone in 1995 and 1996). Thus Alberto Kurapel, the best-known Chilean writer and playwright in Quebec (and the only Hispanic writer to participate in the latest *Nuit de la Poésie* in 1991), who usually publishes in bilingual editions, has received little notice in scholarly reviews, while Gloria Escomel, who writes in French, has been well-received. No Latino-Québécois writer figures as yet in any dictionary of Quebec literature or appears regularly in any university curricula.

Few literary journals in Quebec have taken much sustained interest in the work of Hispanic writers in the province. This has, however, been offset by the development of two reviews directly in Spanish: *La botella verde*, edited by Jorge Cancino, of decidedly aesthetic leanings; and *Sur*, edited by Tito Alvarado and distributed in Cuba and Canada, which favours writing that is more politicized. Both editors have also hosted popular weekly radio programs on literature in Spanish on Radio Centre-ville, as has Sergio Martínez on Radio McGill. *Boréal*, a trilingual review founded almost two decades ago by the Spanish poet Manuel Betanzos Santos, still publishes periodically, and for the past two years *Ruptures*, edited by the Haitian-Canadian writer Edgard Gousse, has been publishing and translating work from all over the Americas (and beyond) in the principal languages of the Western Hemisphere: French, English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Funding by government sources such as Canadian and Quebec Multiculturalism has served primarily to finance translation from Spanish into French or English, and occasionally to help in printing costs. The Canada Council has also dispersed a few writing grants, awarded by Spanish-speaking judges.

- 5 This, and all subsequent textual English translations, are by the author of the present study.

WORKS CITED

- Barrios, Hernán. *Landed Immigrant*. Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Documentas, 1990.
- Davis Vallejos, Nelly. *El ocaso del reino*. Montreal: Les Éditions d'Orphée, 1989.
- Etcheverry, Jorge. "Chilean Poetry in Canada: Avant-garde, Nostalgia and Commitment." *Literatures of Lesser Diffusion/Les littératures de moindre diffusion*. Ed. Joseph Pivato et al. Edmonton:
- Research Institute for Comparative Literature, U. of Alberta, 1990.
- Lavergne, Alfredo. "Y en la radio... Marjo cantaba." Unpublished in Spanish. Published in French as "Et à la radio... Marjo chantait." *La Présence d'une autre Amérique: anthologie des écrivains latino-américains du Québec*. Trans. Sylvie Perron. N. ed. Montreal: Éditions de la Naine Blanche, 1990.
- López, Maeve. *Grito con espejo*. Montreal: Editorial El Palomar, 1988.
- Mallet, Marilú. *Miami Trip*. Montreal: Éditions Québec/Amérique, 1986.
- Torres Saso, Salvador. "L'antre des égarés." XYZ No. 33, Spring 1993.
- . "Uno de mis muertos." *Enjambres: Poesía latinoamericana en el Quebec*. Ed. Daniel Inostroza and Jorge Etcheverry. Montreal: Ediciones Cordillera/Enana Blanca/El Gallo Rojo, 1990.
- . "One of My Dead." Trans. Hugh Hazelton. *Compañeros: An Anthology of Writings on Latin America*. Ed. Hugh Hazelton and Gary Geddes. Dunvegan, Ont.: Cormorant Books, 1990.
- Trujillo, Renato. *Rooms: Milongas for Prince Arthur Street*. Frederic-ton, N.B.: Goose Lane Editions, 1989.
- Truque, Yvonne América. *Portraits d'ombres et profils inachevés/ Retratos de sombras y perfiles inconclusos*. Trans. Jean Gauthier. Montreal: CEDAH (Centre d'Études et de Diffusion des Amériques Hispanophones), 1991.

