

Pilar Somacarrera, ed. 2013. *Made in Canada, Read in Spain: Essays on the Translation and Circulation of English-Canadian Literature*. London: Versita. 231 pp. ISBN: 978-83-7656-016-8.

NATALIA RODRÍGUEZ NIETO

Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)

nrodriguez@madrid.uned.es

The English Patient (1992) by Michael Ondaatje seems to be the work of Canadian literature (Canlit) in English most easily identified with Canada in Spain. Spanish canadianists often have to turn to this writer and work when trying to illustrate part of what Canadian literature is. Situations like these epitomize the weak knowledge of Canadian literature in English among Spanish readers that Pilar Somacarrera also suggests in the introduction to this work. The Prince of Asturias Award given to Margaret Atwood in 2008 and the Nobel Prize awarded to Alice Munro in 2013 made Canlit more visible in Spain, and this is what *Made in Canada, Read in Spain: Essays on the Translation and Circulation of English-Canadian Literature* (2013) focuses on: the different factors involved in the transnational transfer of Canadian literature in English into Spain up to current times. As a compilation of essays, *Made in Canada* offers a well-informed examination of the socio-cultural, editorial and institutional agents, like literary prizes, that have shaped the circulation of Canlit among Spanish reading audiences. Through manifold viewpoints, these different essays offer a global picture on what currently constitutes Canlit in Spain and thus play a fundamental role in understanding who and what has been translated, and thus circulated, read, reviewed and taught at universities. In this way, new strategies to strengthen and/or diversify this presence can start to be designed.

Focusing on different aspects, the four first essays address the presence of Canlit in Spain from broad perspectives such as the publishing and institutional trends in both countries, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism as branding strategies in connection to South Asian Canadian fiction, and Catalonia's literary framework. In the first of these essays—"Contextual and Institutional Coordinates of the Transference of Anglo-Canadian Literature into Spain"—in order to explain who and what from Anglo-Canadian literature has been published in Spain, as well as when and why, Pilar Somacarrera offers a crucial analysis of Spain's literary publishing sphere with respect to Canadian works, as well as an insight into the cooperation of Canadian institutions in promoting the country's literature in Spain.

Focusing on Canadian women writers and cosmopolitanism, publishing houses and critics are regarded as agents to create the necessary background for alien texts to be welcomed in translation in Nieves Pascual's chapter: "Cosmopolitans at Home: The Spanishness of Canadian Women Writers." Her engaging insight makes clear that Margaret Laurence, Michael Ondaatje, Carol Shields and Margaret Atwood's works are some of the most widespread in Spain. Pascual also examines youth, modernity (or a fantasy of it), anti-canoncity, marginality, europeanizing strategies, a global vocation as well as Canada's similarity to Spain as some of the cosmopolitanizing resources used by publishers and reviewers to encourage Spanish readers to welcome Canlit. Particularly significant is Pascual's comment on the fact that modern Canadian women writers published in Spain have been introduced as if they were pioneers in their country; as if there was no female writing tradition behind them, and as if Frances Brooke, Susanna Moodie and Joanna E. Wood, to mention just a few, had never existed.

Together with cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism is also considered one of the two main selling points of Canlit abroad as Belén Martín-Lucas explains in her examination of the presence of South Asian Canadian fiction in translation as a nation branding strategy of Canada's cultural diplomacy: "Translation, Nation Branding and Indochic: The Circulation and Reception of South Asian Canadian Fiction in Spain." This institutional construction has not been left untouched, but it is consistently challenged by Smaro Kamboureli, who maintains that it has actually brought along tokenism and marginality (1996, 4); or by Marlene N. Philip, who criticizes the still hegemonic position of white European authors (1992, 182). Michael Ondaatje, Shani Mootoo, Rohinton Mistry, Anita Rau Badami, Shyam Selvadurai, Shauna Singh Baldwin, M.G. Vassanji and Neil Bissoondath are best known, as a consequence of the phenomenon known as *Indian boom*, *Indofrenzy* or *Indo-chic*. They exemplify the commodification of ethnic Canadian literatures in support of multiculturalism in Canada, Spain and elsewhere.

South Asian Canadian fiction is one of the five main groups of Canadian works in English translated into Catalan, together with children's literature, renowned Canadian writers, best-sellers and what Isabel Alonso-Breto and Marta Ortega-Sáez call "emerging Canadian authors" (106). In spite of deviating from the Anglo-Canadian focus of the compilation, Alonso-Breto and Ortega-Sáez examine in "Canadian into Catalan" the "disconcerting" similarities between Catalonia and Quebec (90), and offer an in-depth analysis on translations into Catalan of a wide variety of genres. Canadian children's literature seems unbeatable within Catalonia, together with Margaret Atwood, Carol Shields and Alice Munro, who also hold prominent positions. Although not so much attention has been paid to male authors such as Robertson Davies, Leonard Cohen and even Douglas Coupland, who still have only one book translated into Catalan, there is paradoxically an increasing interest in new Canadian writers so that "perspectives for the future seem optimistic" (107).

Except for the last essay, the rest of the articles examine the specific cases of Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro and Douglas Coupland as paradigms in Spain of the circulation of Canada's most internationally transferred authors. In "A Prince of Asturias Award for the Queen of Canadian Letters: Margaret Atwood's Texts in Spain," Pilar Somacarrera analyzes the translation of Atwood's works into Spanish, the reviews of her books, the consequences of the Prince of Asturias award, and offers hints into future consideration and circulation of her writings. In accordance with Somacarrera, I would also like to point out the fundamental drive that institutions like the Spanish Association for Canadian Studies, thus increasing the visibility of Atwood and Canlit. Today, all of Atwood's novels except two, are translated and published in Spain as well as her poetry, essays, children's books and non-fiction. It is quite meaningful that Atwood contests Spanish reviewers' insistence upon her feminist standpoint as a writer, just as Munro does; in an interview in 2001 the latter explained that, although at the beginning she used to affirm she was, she neither practiced nor knew anything about feminist theoretical approaches (Feinberg 2001, n.p.). Munro is indeed the axis of the next chapter also by Somacarrera—"A Spanish Passion for the Canadian Short Story. Reader Responses to Alice Munro's Fiction in Web 2.0"—with an up-to-date source of feedback: entries from blogs from major publishing houses about literature—such as Santillana—and written by renowned Spanish writers such as Javier Marías or Antonio Muñoz Molina. Responses to such entries open up a free online appraisal on Munro's works between experts and readers that has fascinating consequences. On the one hand, part of "Munro's peculiar Spanish canonization" is developed (144), while on the other, literary criticism finds in Munro a paradigmatic literary figure in so far as literary scholars, experts and writers need to find a balance between academicism and readers' responses. No matter how erudite literary comments are, passion is what this author imbues in critics and/or readers, thanks to which there seems to be a renewed enthusiasm in Spain for the short fiction genre she masters.

Specially instructive is Mercedes Díaz-Dueñas' analysis of the circulation and influence of Douglas Coupland in Spain and the country's *Generation X* (1991) syndrome: "Douglas Coupland's Generation X and its Spanish Counterparts." Published in 1993 in Spain, its impact was so wide that it was reprinted every year until 1999 and fostered the translation of other fiction works by Coupland, although mainly those in line with *Generation X. Historias del Kronen* (1994), by José Ángel Mañas, is perhaps the clearest example of that generation in Spanish literature, as well as Lucía Etxebarria and Ismael Grasa, who also received that "X" label although none of them identifies their fiction with Coupland's. What is certainly challenging is what their works demand from critics: a renewed perspective where literature, visual elements and popular culture merge. Although three of his novels remain unpublished in Spain and only one of his non-fiction writings saw the light of day in Spanish, Coupland's relevance is indisputable for he laid the foundations of a new way of writing.

The last essay—“*Home Truths: Teaching Canadian Literatures in Spanish Universities*”—focuses, first, on the struggles to introduce Canlit in Spanish universities as an independent field back in the late 1990s; secondly, on the obstacles canadianists faced in order to be able to teach Canlit since specific courses on it are still very scarce within university curricula; and finally, on how it has been taught. Darias-Beautell’s reflection on the racialized contradiction of the currently overruling postcolonial approach (177), as well as the positive signs she sees for Canlit to spread outside university and academic Spanish circles are particularly interesting.

The relevance of this compilation is clear since, given the fact that institutional support has been decreasing in recent years, *Made in Canada, Read in Spain: Essays on the Translation and Circulation of English-Canadian Literature* (2013) brings awareness to canadianists from Spain and elsewhere of the socio-cultural, editorial and institutional intricacies that led to the present circulation, and subsequent inclusion in academic curricula and canonization of certain Canadian authors, works and genres. Furthermore, this critical work leaves a crucial door open; that of those writers, works and genres still silent. Early Canadian literature in English and the literary production of some of Canada’s multi-cultures, for instance, are not yet so transnationally present, which poses other very significant questions, like whether this situation is indeed a consequence of their previous status within Canadian literary boundaries. In this sense, more such well-informed critical works as *Made in Canada* are still needed in order to reconsider old and current approaches to the translation, publication and even teaching of Canlit in English in Spain so that Canada’s real literary diversity can circulate. All the experts of this critical work agree that prospects for the future are positive and that is already an excellent omen.

WORKS CITED

- FEINBERG, Cara. 2001. “Bringing Life to Life.” *The Atlantic Unbound*, December 14. [Accessed online on September 5, 2013].
- KAMBOURELI, Smaro, ed. 1996. *Making a Difference: Canadian Multicultural Literature*. Toronto: Oxford UP.
- PHILIP, Marlene Nourbese. 1992. *Frontiers: Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture, 1984-1992*. Stratford, Ontario: Mercury Press.

Received 1 January 2014

Revised version accepted 17 February 2016

Natalia Rodríguez lectures at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED). Her main research areas are English Canadian fiction and the topic of identity, focusing mainly on ethnic and female novelists before the twentieth century. Recent publications include the book *The Novel in English as Paradigm of Canadian Identity: From Frances Brooke to Sara Jeannette Duncan* (2013).

Address: UNED-CUID. C/ Raimundo Fernández Villaverde, 32. 28003, Madrid, Spain. Tel.: +34 914203912.