

Chapter 1

Contextual and Institutional Coordinates of the Transference of Anglo-Canadian Literature into Spain

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1. *A terra Incognita* Becomes Known

In 1992, when Nino Ricci's novel *Lives of the Saints* was released in Spain by publisher Seix Barral with an impressive coverage by the Spanish press and a book tour by the writer, an article published in a local newspaper commented on the "miniscule cultural role that seemed reserved for Canada, since the reviewer [and her friends] could not mention a single renowned Canadian writer, musician, artist or journalist of that nationality." (Prieto 1981) Twenty years after, this comment seems strangely dated and odd in light of the recent upsurge of Canadian literature written in English – or, rather, a selection of English-Canadian texts and writers- in the Spanish cultural system. Alice Munro's books, published in the first years of the twenty-first century have been reprinted, and the backlist titles of Robertson Davies - a writer published in Spain in 1996 for the first time - have been reprinted again with great acclaim both from critics and the reading public. As several chapters of this volume will illustrate, these writers, along with Margaret Atwood, enjoy a considerable reputation among Spanish cultural – and even political – institutions: the Ministry of Culture, the Office of the Vice-President of the Spanish Government, the Prince of Asturias Foundation, the Cervantes Institute, and the literary supplements of national and local newspapers. Several renowned publishers and members of the Spanish cultural elite have also expressed their admiration for these Canadian authors, including the Academy Award-winning film director Pedro Almodóvar and the writer Javier Marías. Alice Munro received the Kingdom of Redonda Award in 2005, and Robertson Davies obtained the Llibreter Award of Catalanian Booksellers in 2006, a Prize given for both aesthetic values and sales figures. Most prominently, two Canadian writers have been recipients of the Prince of Asturias Award for Letters (the most important Spanish literary prize for non-Spanish speaking authors): Margaret Atwood in 2008 and Leonard Cohen in 2011, while Alice Munro was shortlisted for the same prize in 2009 and 2011.

2. Translation, the Literary Field and the Marketing of Culture

It is easily forgotten that Canadian literature would have received none of the aforementioned honours if the translations of the works by those Canadian authors had not been undertaken. Often neglected and invisible, translation is a crucial factor in the process of transference, circulation and reception of texts in a culture and in the establishment of comparative literature as a discipline. As the Montreal-based Canadian poet and translator Erín Moure recalls, critics from Raymond Williams to Jorge Luis Borges all agree that the circulation among different languages via translation is the very lifeblood of literature (Moure, 2009). Furthermore, the importance of translation goes far beyond the sphere of culture. As Emily Apter (2006) rightly observes, translation and global diplomacy never seemed to have been so mutually implicated. Translation before 9/11 was deemed primarily an instrument of international relations, education and culture. Today, it seems more than ever a matter of war and peace.

In Canada, as Jane Koustas (2002) argues, translation remains politically and socially charged. It hardly seems necessary to stress the role that it has in Canada's political, social and cultural life, as institutions such as the Canada Council for the Arts, Foreign Affairs Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage are becoming more and more interested in it (Schneider, 2005). Melanie Rutledge, head of the Canada Council Writing and Publishing Section, acknowledges that "[translation] is part of the zeitgeist right now, in a lot of conversations we are having." (quoted in Schneider, 2005). However, it is often forgotten that Canadian translation is no longer an exclusively internal affair or a conversation between the two major language groups (Simon, 2008). Erin Moure (2009) also denounces this situation: "talk of a Canadian context for a translation, for the reception of literary text from a foreign language, is not common here, and the work of translating foreign literatures –other than Quebec or Canadian French into Canadian English, or vice versa –scarcely exists publicly in Canada". In addition, until recently there has been little interest in the translation of Canadian Literature into other languages and cultures and how it has changed Canadian literature's perceptions of itself.

As a deliberate and context-bound act, eminently social and historical, a translation translates a reading practice which is a historically and culturally determined codification /decodification (von Flotow, 2005). Translation is not an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002). As such, as André Lefevere (1992) points out, it is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting and ... potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author and or his or her works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin.

Lefevere (1992) describes the literary system in which translation functions as being governed by three main factors: first, professionals within the literary system (critics and reviewers, teachers and translators themselves); secondly, patronage outside the literary system, like publishers, the media, and a political class or party in power in a particular country; and thirdly, the dominant poetics of a culture, which includes the concept of the role of literature in the social system in which it exists. These are factors that we shall return to throughout the different chapters of this volume.

Lefevere (1992) developed this argument from the well-known translation theory of polysystems, influenced by the ideas of the Russian Formalists (Even-Zohar, 1978) in the 1920s, which argues that literatures work as systems in the way that the target language selects works for translation, and in the way the translation norms, behaviour and policies are influenced by other co-systems. Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) define the polysystem as a heterogeneous, hierarchized conglomerate of systems which interact to bring about an ongoing, dynamic process of evolution within the polysystem as a whole. This “dynamic process of evolution” is vital to the polysystem and explains why the position of translated literature changes throughout the history of a literary system, occupying at times a primary or a secondary position. Even-Zohar (1978) gives several cases when translated literature occupies the primary position. Two of these cases are especially interesting when studying the position of translated English-Canadian literature: first, when there is a critical turning point in literary history at which established models are no longer considered sufficient; and, second, when there is a vacuum in the literature of the country (Munday, 2001).

The polysystem model tends to focus on abstract models rather than on the real-life constraints placed on the texts and translations (Munday, 2011), but translations occur in a social, economic, and political situation, with parties that have vested interests in the production and reception of texts across linguistic cultural boundaries (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002). Following this line of thought, our study also draws on the ideas of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, inasmuch as they claim that the apparent hierarchy of texts in a culture depends on its position in the literary field, which is the site of power struggles between participants or agents. As Randal Johnson observes, with the concept of *field*, Bourdieu grounds the agent’s action in objective social relations (Johnson, 1993). In Bourdieu’s words:

The literary or artistic field is a *field of forces*, but it is also a *field of struggles* tending to transform and conserve this field of forces. The network of objective relations between positions subtends and orients the strategies which the occupants of the different positions implement in their struggles to defend or improve their positions, strategies which depend for their force and form on the position each agent occupies in the power relations (Bourdieu, 1993).

Two forms of capital are important in the field of cultural production. *Symbolic capital* refers to the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration, or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (*connaissance*) and recognition (*reconnaissance*). *Cultural capital* concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions (Johnson, 1993) and it is always unevenly distributed.

More recently, Bourdieu's concept of field has been expanded and adapted by other critics. In his adaptation of Bourdieu's notion of field, John B. Thompson adds three other forms of capital: economic capital, which is the accumulated financial resources; human capital, which is the staff employed by the firm and their accumulated knowledge; and finally, social capital which means the networks of contacts and relationships that an individual or organization has built over time; and, finally, intellectual capital, which consists in the rights that a publisher owns or controls in intellectual content (Thompson, 2010). From postcolonial studies, Graham Huggan has elaborated on Bourdieu's influential notion by adding that cultural capital is transmitted, acquired, and accumulated through the interaction between producers and consumers of symbolic goods (Huggan, 2001). With the rise of cultural studies, the concept of cultural capital has also been invoked in the identification of the literary canon, a question which came to the fore in Anglo-American and Canadian literary criticism in the late eighties and early nineties, and resulted in the publication of studies like John Guillory's *Cultural Capital: the Problems of Literary Canon Formation* (1993) and Harold Bloom's well-known *The Western Canon* (1994). In Spain the canon debates did not start until the late nineties and the first years of the new millennium, as demonstrated by the belated translation in 2002 of Harold Bloom's emblematic volume, which has had an impact on the selection of English-Canadian books that were to be translated into Spanish.

As David Thorsby (2001) observes, cultural production and consumption can be situated within an industrial framework, and the goods and services produced and consumed can be regarded as commodities in the same terms as any other commodities produced within the economic system. In a neo-liberal economic system such as the one we live in, cultural goods –including, of course, books- need to be marketed. Although some Spanish publishers and critics seem reluctant to accept this reality (and we shall provide some examples), marketing, as Claire Squires (2007) argues, is, in a very real sense, *the making of contemporary writing*.

3. The Spanish Context: Politics, Publishers, Readers

The local context - the local reading space - which according to the polysystem theory selects and translates the elements it needs from a foreign literary system, is probably the most important factor in the process of importing a literary text through translation. Ironically, this context is beyond the control of any official

culture and may have little to do with national identity (von Flotow, 2008). In fact, as Lawrence Venuti points out, translation is fundamentally ethnocentric, and most literary projects are initiated in the domestic culture, where a foreign text is selected to satisfy different tastes from those that motivated its composition and reception in its native culture (Venuti, 1998). Therefore, a presentation of the Spanish publishing scene seems in order before I discuss the transference of Anglo-Canadian literature into Spain. Recent data from the Spanish Ministry of Culture describe Spain as one of the most active countries in the world in translation, given that approximately 25% of published books are translations. These figures illustrate the size of the investment of the publishing sector as well as the interest of Spanish readers in reading books published originally in other languages (Dirección General del Libro, 2008). However, it should be pointed out from the outset that the number of readers in Spain does not correspond to the size of the Spanish publishing industry.

The market for books in Spanish is thought to be the second-largest in the world. It is the biggest for books in translation, which account for about a fifth of the 120,000 Spanish titles published each year. In the context of the Spanish-speaking market, Spain occupies a privileged position, as demonstrated by the fact that the Association for the Export of Canadian Books (now known as “Livres Canada Books”) published a leaflet titled “Selling Canadian Books in Spain,” which recommends Canadian publishers approach Spain not as a national market, but as international one, that is, as the gateway to the Latin American market (Association for the Export of Canadian Books, 2004).³

In one of the interviews granted on the occasion of receiving the Prince of Asturias Award, Margaret Atwood mentioned Spain’s capacity for reinvention and regeneration: “Spain is an amazing country which has learned to reinvent itself many times” (Rojo, 2008), a statement that can be applied to practically every realm of Spanish life. In only thirty-five years, Spain has changed from being a dictatorship ruled by General Francisco Franco (1939-1975) to a thriving, effective European democracy which became a member of the European Common Market in 1986, and whose government is a constitutional monarchy led by King Juan Carlos I. After the death of the dictator, Francisco Franco, in 1975, a democratic regime which incorporated a system of universal suffrage

3 Although several Spanish publishers have branches in Latin America or have an aspiration of accessing the Latin American market, this study will limit itself to the publication of Anglo-Canadian books in Spain, in peninsular Spanish and the other co-official languages. However, we occasionally refer to reviews from Latin American media. The increasing impact of books in Spanish in the United States, which has resulted in the creation of imprints in this language by the world main publishing houses has recently been analyzed in the Spanish press (Aguilar 2012).

was set up in Spain. Subsequently, the central government started delivering a degree of self-autonomy within different areas of government to the so-called *comunidades autónomas*, or autonomous communities. The autonomous communities with a distinct language of their own and a historical singularity are considered "historical," a category in which the two most relevant examples are the Basque Country and Catalonia. These communities would be similar to Canadian provinces in terms of political attributions and cultural idiosyncrasy. Thus, the Spanish system of government is not dissimilar to that of the Canadian Federation.

Under the government of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party presided over by the elected president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero,⁴ Spain has implemented some of the most advanced social policies in the world, including the opening of a Ministry of Gender Equality, a legal framework designed to deal with violence against women, and same-sex marriages. The passage of Spain from a dictatorship into a liberal democratic state between the years of 1975 and 1978 – the year when the Spanish Constitution was sanctioned by the Spanish people in a referendum – is known as the "Transition" (*Transición*). Usually considered a model of how a country can peacefully undergo such a dramatic political change, this historical period is currently being submitted to revision by political sectors who argue that the peaceful change was possible at the cost of burying the crimes and brutal repression of the Franco regime. After a decade of economic prosperity, based mainly in the construction business, Spain is currently undergoing a profound recession, one of the worst in Europe. Furthermore, the unemployment rate has risen to almost 5,000,000 and the economic crisis is affecting every aspect of Spanish life, including cultural production.

Cultural production was precisely one of the realms in which the Franco regime exerted the strongest repression, with the intention of isolating Spain from "subversive" external influences. Imported films and books from foreign countries were subjected to censorship, a process which continued under different names, if only as a formality, until 1985 and may have delayed the publication of certain English-Canadian books. However, as publisher Jorge Herralde (2012) explains, between 1965 and 1975 – despite the reigning political repression – there was a favourable climate for publishing because of the external agitation provoked by the May 1968 protest, the Cuban revolution, the Vietnam war, the anti-imperialist movements, and because of internal events like the *Ley de Prensa e Imprenta* (Press and printing act), promoted in 1966 by

⁴ Zapatero was president of the Spanish Government between 2004 and 2011. At the time of revising this chapter (December 2012) the conservative party (Partido Popular) governs in Spain, having won the elections in November 20, 2011 and its leader, Mariano Rajoy, was elected president.

the then-Minister of Information and Tourism, Manuel Fraga, which implied a real opening up of the regime in terms of publishing.

After Franco's death, translations started to multiply in reaction to the cultural xenophobia imposed by the dictatorship. In fact, the book-publishing sector has grown in the last thirty years in ways parallel to the development of the Spanish democracy. As stated in "Selling Canadian Books in Spain" (2005), the early 1990s was a boom time for Spanish publishers and bookstores. The increase from the 4,000 titles published in Spain in 1958 to over 70,000 released in 2007 gives an idea of the development of this sector ("Apunte para la memoria," 2008). The year 2008 registered a record in the publication of books (Dirección General del libro, 2008). In 2009, presumably because of the recession, the production went down 13.7%, and 74,521 titles were published, which, despite the decrease, is still the second highest in the decade ("España registró," 2010). In 2010, publishing in Spain rose 3.9%, with electronic publishing as the sector undergoing the highest growth, up to almost 50%. ("La edición electrónica de libros," 2011). Recent appreciations on how the e-book has fared in Spain, however, state that it has still not been launched to its full potential because of frequent illegal downloads, unfavorable tax conditions and the fear that the new format may threaten the market for print books, which still forms the economical basis of the sector (Del Corral, 2011).⁵

One frequent complaint among Spanish publishers is that too many books are published for the meagre number of readers, which does not seem to be increasing in any significant way.⁶ According to Beatriz de Moura, editor of the publisher Tusquets, there is a disproportion between the reading capacity of Spain and the amount of newly published books. The result is that, the greater the quantity, the lesser the quality of the product (Quoted in Azancot, 2008). A study undertaken in 2007 by the Federación de Gremios de Editores de España (Spanish Federation of Book Publishers, 2011), evinced that 43% of the Spanish population admitted that they hardly ever read, although the reading rate has gradually improved in the last years and reached 56.9% in 2007. But, the recession has not had a positive impact on the number of readers in Spain, since in 2008 the rate went down to 54.6 % and the population who admits they never read a book rose to 45.4 %. The profile of the average Spanish reader has stayed the same, however, being that of a young woman holding a university degree who reads in Castilian at home for the purpose of entertaining herself.

5 The latest data evince that in 2012 the production of books in Spain went down considerably (60,218 volumes were published) and sales also decreased 20%. (Azancot, 2013b).

6 120 years ago, the prolific Spanish author Emilia Pardo Bazán (1981) complained, along with numerous others, about the lack of a general reading public in Spain.

Another active reading sector of the Spanish population is that of children. In 2008, children between 10 and 13 were the group who read the most, reaching the figure of 81.9 ("Los españoles que más leen," 2008). Publishers have learned to take advantage of this fact, so that children's literature is "characterized by a massive and commercial production which includes a handful of good books" (Puerta Leisse, 2008).

Over 3,300 publishers in Spain—as opposed to the much smaller size of Canada's 600 professional editors (MacSkimming, 2004)—provide books for this fluctuating readership. As described by von Flotow (2007b), Spanish publishers share the fate of the German ones in that, unlike Canadian publishers, they do not receive government subsidies if they are privately owned and therefore need to rely on expected sales and deploy aggressive marketing strategies. Speaking for *El Cultural*, Jorge Herralde, director of the emblematic press Anagrama, blames these marketing and commercial practices for what he calls "the trivialization of culture," leading to the transformation of the book into a mere commodity (quoted in Azancot, 2000). However, Herralde (2000) seems to contradict himself because, next to his statement, the literary supplement published a half-page advertisement for the newly published books of his publishing house.

Diatribes against the commercialization of literature have, of course, been around as long as the capitalist markets themselves. In 1932 Q.D. Leavis argued that works reaching "a very small minority audience," what she called "highbrow," yield "a very small proportion of gold" (1979). In Bourdieu's terms (1993), cultural value or "cultural capital" is the opposite of economic worth or audience size, and the distinctive characteristic of an autonomous and successful cultural work is its disinterestedness, that is, its degree of independence from the economy. However, in the global Spanish-language market of the twenty-first century, Spanish presses who care about producing quality literary books cannot turn their back on traditional and new forms of promoting literature.

Because of this tough competition to control the market, in Spain the publishing scene is dominated by several mega-groups which own numerous imprints and affiliates throughout Spain and Latin America. The gradual globalization of the economy has caused smaller imprints to be subsumed by large companies which control the elements of the publishing chain, from content to points of sale and finally media. The bulk of Spain's publishing activity—roughly two thirds—takes place in Madrid and Barcelona. Generally Madrid focuses on school and reference titles, while Barcelona is more targeted to books for the general trade, notably literature, including international authors (Association for the Export of Canadian Books, 2004).

As Isabel Alonso-Breto and Marta Ortega-Sáez point out in their chapter about the translation of Anglo-Canadian authors in Catalonia, Barcelona represents a

paradoxical case on the Spanish publishing scene. Barcelona is, in the words of Anik Lapointe (2011) - editorial director of the Spanish press RBA - "a capital of the publishing world," a site of the most prestigious literary publishers of the country, targeting the rest of Spain and Latin America but, at the same time, the centre of publication in Catalonia's co-official Catalan language. In addition to Catalan, two other co-official languages co-exist with the Spanish state's official language (Spanish or Castilian): *Euskera* or Basque language in Euskadi (Basque Country), and Galician in Galicia.

The translations between these Spanish official languages form a significant part of the total amount of translations (almost 25% of the total translating activity), but each of these languages also becomes a target language for the translation of foreign literatures. Most English-Canadian writing has been translated into Spanish, which is clearly the hegemonic language, but some books have been translated into the other co-official languages, Basque and Galician, and, above all, Catalan, in which we have found 75 translations alone as of April 2010. As Alonso-Breto and Ortega-Sáez point out, one of the literary genres that predominates in the translations of Canadian literature into Catalan is children's literature, since the educational system in Catalonia is in need of juvenile books to be used as textbooks or reading materials in Catalan language classes. The Spanish literary system does not seem to provide enough of these texts, so they are sought in another culture, in this case Canadian culture, where children's literature occupies a primary position. In his 2008 report about the state of children's literature in Spain, Gustavo Puerta Leisse (2008) notes that many of these books are translated, a fact which reveals a lack of talented native writers to accompany an excellent generation of Spanish illustrators.

As Belén Martín-Lucas (2011) points out, the Basque and Galician literary systems, publishers do not usually publish works which have already been released in Castilian. Out of the four titles of Canadian literature I have traced in Basque translation, three belong to the category of children's and youth literature: Joyce Barkhouse's *The Witch of Port Lajoye / Port Lajoyek sorgina*, Kevin Major's *Dear Bruce Springsteen / Bruce Springsteen adiskidea* and Eric Wilson's *Murder on the Canadian Express / Canadian Express eko hilketa*. The last title was released by publisher SM twelve years after the Spanish version came out in 1985, probably with the intention of addressing the needs of the teaching of the co-official languages of the autonomous regions. In 2010, a translation of Alice Munro's short story collection *Too Much Happiness (Zorion Hondiegia)* was released in the Basque language by publisher Meettok with a site in San Sebastián, thus opening a new trend in the realm of publishing in the Basque language.

Rather than a commercial initiative, the case of the two existing Galician translations of English-Canadian literature is the outcome of institutional and

academic collaboration: Erin Moure's *Little Theatres*⁷ (Editorial Galaxia, 2007) was translated as *Teatriños ou autuxos calados*, and Rachna Mara's short story cycle *Of Customs and Excise* was rendered into Galician as *Entre o costume e a ruptura* (Edicions Xerais de Galicia, 1998). The translator of both books is María Reimóndez, a Galician poet and former student of Belén Martín-Lucas's Canadian literature course. Neither *Little Theatres* nor *Of Customs and Excise* are available in Spanish.

As I recalled before, although publishers are patrons outside the literary system, they govern the literary system in which translation takes place (Lefevere, 1992). The role of literary publishers in the dissemination of Anglo-Canadian literature in Spain deserves some attention in a study like this. The main editorial groups who are – or have been - involved in the publishing of English Canadian books in Spain are Grupo Planeta, Grupo Random House Mondadori, Grupo Zeta and Grupo RBA. To start with the largest, family-owned and based in Barcelona, Grupo Planeta is, because of its economic and social capital, the first editorial group in Spain and the seventh in the world. Planeta sponsors one of the most financially substantial awards in the world: the Premio Planeta, worth over 601,000 euros, the second highest amount for a literary prize after the Nobel. It owns one of the most important book-selling chains, the emblematic Casa del Libro ("House of the Book"), with its mythical establishment located in downtown Madrid and is now aiming at opening 12 selling points in different Spanish cities in 2012 (Geli, 2008). It owns more than twenty publishers and imprints, like the prestigious literary-oriented Destino and Seix Barral. Destino, founded in 1942, during the darkest years of the Spanish dictatorship, created the Premio Nadal, the oldest and one of the most prestigious awards for writing in Spanish, which strongly contributed to the dissemination of Spanish post-war writers like Carmen Laforet, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Carmen Martín Gaité. It owns the rights to canonical Spanish writers like the Cervantes Prize⁸ winners Miguel Delibes and Ana María Matute, next to best-selling foreign ones like Stieg Larsson. As far as Canadian authors are concerned, it has launched authors of prestige such as Robertson Davies, Michael Ondaatje and Douglas

⁷ Finding out that she had a Galician ancestor excited Moure's curiosity about the North West Spanish region and led her to learn its language and culture, which, gradually, became part of her poetry: "I exist in Galician: a language that, as Galician writer Manuel Rivas said once to me, belongs to those who love it" (Moure, 2009).

⁸ The most prestigious literary prize given to a Spanish-language writer, awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Culture after consultation with the Academies of Spanish language in all the countries in Latin America.

Coupland.⁹ The last Canadian author they have published in Spanish is Joseph Boyden, of Irish, Scottish and Métis heritage, whose war novel *Three Day Road* was published in 2010.

Whereas the capital of Planeta is Spanish, Random House Mondadori, the world's second largest Spanish-language publisher, was established as a result of the merging of the German publisher Bertelsmann and the Italian Mondadori. They incorporated the best-selling Spanish imprints Plaza y Janés, Grijalbo and the book club *Círculo de Lectores*. Random House Mondadori owns the prestigious literary imprint Lumen, which has ventured to publish, for the first time in Spain, Margaret Atwood's essays in a collection titled *La maldición de Eva* (2006, a selection of essays from *Curious Pursuits*), followed by the collection *Érase una vez* (2007) (a selection of short stories from *Good Bones* and *Dancing Girls*). Lumen, a Barcelona-based publisher founded by the family Tusquets¹⁰ in 1960, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2010 with the launching of its new collection "Futura," featuring authors like Antonia Byatt, Linn Ullmann and, most significantly, Alice Munro. The current literary editor of Lumen is Silvia Querini, who promoted the publication of the aforementioned Atwood's titles, as well as of Mavis Gallant's *Selected Stories* in 2009.

Ediciones B, which belongs to the editorial group Grupo Zeta, has published most of Atwood's books in Spain as well as some by a few other emblematic Canadian writers like Leonard Cohen (*Beautiful Losers* and *The Favourite Game*), Douglas Coupland (*Generation X*, *Microserfs*, *Shampoo Planet* and *Girlfriend in a Coma*), and Bharati Mukherjee (*Jasmine*). This choice of authors and works evinces a preference for the avant-garde, the multicultural, and alternatives to the traditional canon. Atwood's most recent publications in Spain (*Moral Disorder*, *The Door*, *True Stories*, *The Year of the Flood* and *Payback*) have been released by Bruguera, a mythical literary imprint owned by Grupo Zeta. Bruguera, one of the oldest publishers in Spain, was founded in 1910 by Juan Bruguera under the name of "El Gato Negro" ("The Black Cat") and, after decades publishing non-canonical literature (comics, children's literature, detective novels and westerns)

9 Destino published Robertson Davies's last novels *Murder and Walking Spirits* and *The Cunning Man* in 1996, Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* in 2001 (in Spanish and Catalan), Douglas Coupland's *All Families Are Psychotic* (also in Spanish and Catalan) in 2002 and Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* in 2003. Martel's book has been republished and has hit the best-seller lists after the launch of Ang Lee's film based on the novel in December 2012.

10 Lumen originally was a small independent publisher founded in 1960 by the Tusquets family of the high Catalan bourgeoisie. For further details about the history of this publishing house, see Tusquets' memoirs *Confesiones de una dama indigna*.

shifted its catalogue to “great literature” in the sixties.¹¹ Bruguera was bought by Grupo Zeta in the early eighties but could not overcome its financial problems and was shut down in 1986, passing over its comics and children’s literature titles to Ediciones B, the new editorial imprint created by the group in 1986. Ten years later, Ediciones B was the second bestselling publisher in Spain and owned the rights of Nobel-Prize winning authors like Nadine Gordimer and Toni Morrison. Its description of Margaret Atwood in 1996 as “an editorial bet for the future” that “they would continue to publish” illustrates of how mainstream Canadian authors have continuously been presented in Spain as young and as literary novelties (Massot, 1996).

Twenty years later, in 2006, Grupo Zeta decided to resurrect the imprint Bruguera and its black cat logo under the expert hands of the writer Ana María Moix, which added human capital to the firm and strengthened the reputation for publishing great authors it once had in the sixties. The imprint intended to specialize in “high brow” literary texts (essays, fiction and poetry) which, next to Margaret Atwood, included authors like Tennessee Williams, P.D. James, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer and Alberto Manguel. However, Bruguera’s new literary venture was not successful and, ironically, in the year of its one-hundredth anniversary Bruguera became, once again, the victim of another recession. Grupo Zeta shut it down in the spring of 2010 and fired its literary editor Ana María Moix, who pessimistically declared: “Everyone knows the future of literary collections at present” (Niéspolo, 2010). Given that Ediciones B has also been seriously affected by the crisis, it is unclear who will continue to publish Margaret Atwood’s books in Spain, although the cultural critic Juan Palomo in his weekly column of *El Cultural* expressed his faith that Bruguera would be resurrected for a third time, full of good literature and imagination (Palomo, 2010).¹² Palomo’s words were prophetic as the imprint was re-launched as “Nueva/New Bruguera” in 2012 albeit with a more mercantile orientation: “Bruguera is now re-launched with the will of bringing the commercial spirit with the literary vocation.”¹³

A special case in the brief history of the publication of Canadian books in translation in Spain is Grupo RBA. According to their web page, it is an independent multi-channel company whose capital is 100% Spanish and presents itself as a leader in the area of magazines, collectibles and editorial promotions who has now consolidated itself in the book-publishing area (RBA

11 Among the general public Bruguera is still associated with juvenile books and comics, but as Ana María Moix mentioned in the first relaunching of the imprint, its former collection *Nuevos Narradores* (“New Narrators”) had already released authors like Cesare Pavese, Juan Carlos Onetti and Gabriel García Márquez in the seventies.

12 Palomo, “Aptitud cultural,” 6.

13 See presentation of Nueva Bruguera on Ediciones B webpage.

website). RBA is especially interesting for our concerns because its editorial director is the Montreal-born Anik Lapointe, who came to Barcelona in her early twenties to study the connections between Quebecois and Catalan writing, and stayed to pursue a fruitful career in the Catalan editorial world, which includes working with the Catalan publishers Quaderns Crema and Edicions 62 and, since 2000, with RBA.¹⁴ Her philosophy is to “fill in gaps and to promote the coexistence of the classics with the findings of the new generation” (Lapointe, 2011). The result of this formula is that Lapointe’s choice of authors and texts is diverse in category and thematics. She is particularly fond of detective novels and has imported some of the best crime fiction writers into Spain -Dennis Lehane, Philip Kerr and the Canadian Giles Blunt among the English-speaking ones. In the early years of the new millennium she launched Alistair MacLeod and Alice Munro in Spain and was not deterred by their, at the time, relatively modest sales.¹⁵ Now that Munro is better known in Spain, as I shall illustrate in Chapter 5 of this collection, her rights have also become more costly and RBA has lost them to the multinational corporation Random House Mondadori, a fact which has been bemoaned by some cultural journalists.¹⁶

Next to these great publishing corporations, there are also smaller publishers who have participated in the dissemination of the Canadian literary word in Spain. One interesting example is Libros del Asteroide – who was awarded, jointly with six other small publishers, the national prize for best editorial work in 2008. It is an independent publisher set in Barcelona whose aim is to publish “fundamental books of twentieth-century literature which are not available in Spanish.”¹⁷ Therefore, it was “looking for a classic,”¹⁸ and it was not with the intention of publishing a Canadian book that they rediscovered Robertson Davies for the Spanish readership. They first imported the *Deptford Trilogy*, with its three novels *Fifth Business / El quinto en discordia*, 2006, currently in its sixth edition; *The Manticore / Manticora* 2007, currently in its fourth edition, and *World of Wonders/ El mundo de los prodigios*, 2007, presently in its third edition.

14 The magazine *Qué leer* dedicated an article to Anik Lapointe authored by Antonio Lozano (“Anik Lapointe, la mirada canadiense/the Canadian view”) which includes some details of her biography. The title erases Lapointe’s Quebecois origin subsuming her under the tag “Canadian.”

15 Their sales, as she acknowledged in an interview were “limited, but correct” (Unpublished interview of Anik Lapointe with Pilar Somacarrera, Barcelona, 5 July, 2007).

16 The columnist of *Babelia* and Munro supporter Manuel Rodríguez Rivero (2010) considers the disappearance of the Canadian author from RBA’s catalogue “a great mistake.”

17 See webpage of Libros del Asteroide.

18 Unpublished interview with Luis Miguel Solano (Director of Libros del Asteroide) by Pilar Somacarrera (4 July 2007).

The first novel of the trilogy, *Fifth Business*, obtained the prestigious Llibreter Award 2006, an independent prize awarded by the Association of Book Sellers of Catalonia intended to promote lesser known, quality writers, and it was subsequently published in the Catalan language. Libros del Asteroide has so far reached sales of over 15,000 books with the Spanish edition of *Fifth Business* and 3,000 with the Catalan edition, as well as 5,500 of *The Manticore* and 3,000 of *The Rebel Angels*.¹⁹ According to Concha Cardeñoso, the Spanish translator of four of Davies's books, the clue to Davies's Spanish success is not Canadianness, but his universality. Cardeñoso describes Davies's style as elegant, perfect, and fluid and labels him as one of the best writers of all times and languages.²⁰

Other Spanish publishers will be discussed in the other chapters of this volume, but I would like to emphasize from the outset that Canadian writers have been fortunate to have as their publishers some of the most culturally and politically committed presses in Spain. In the sixties and early seventies literature was one of the few realms of resistance against the Franco regime and Spanish publishing houses had a crucial role in importing foreign authors, stigmatized as "subversive" by the censors of the regime.

4. The Role of Canada's Institutional Support

Although I have argued that the local context is decisive in the penetration of a foreign literature in a target culture, it is also true that institutional support from the Canada Council and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has been an incentive for some publishers to undertake translations of Canadian writers into the different peninsular languages and for academics to develop courses on Canadian literature and write academic articles about it. The impact of the DFAIT Canadian studies programs (Faculty Research and Faculty Enrichment Awards) in Spanish universities has been impressive. Thanks to these programs, hundreds of Spanish academics have been able to undertake four-week research stays at Canadian universities, producing countless monographs, articles in Spanish and international academic journals and conferences papers. They have also designed and taught courses about Canadian literature at many institutions

19 At the time of revising this chapter (December 2012), Libros del Asteroide has released the complete Deptford (published in a one-volume edition in November 2009) and Cornish trilogies. The first title of the Salterton trilogy (*Tempest-Tost*) has recently been translated, and the other two titles of the trilogy are in preparation. Thus, since 2006 Libros del Asteroide has been publishing Davies's books at the rate of one volume a year.

20 Response to the questionnaire for translators of English-Canadian literature sent by the editor of this volume. Cardeñoso has translated the three volumes of the Cornish trilogy and *Tempest-Tost*.

of higher education, a topic which is addressed by Darias-Beutell in Chapter 8 of this volume. Unfortunately, in May 2012, Foreign Affairs and International Trade decided to “phase out the international Canadian studies program” (FAIT, 2012). The consequences of the decision to cancel the Understanding Canada Programme for the survival and expansion of Canadian Studies throughout the world are still to be measured.²¹ I hope, however, that this edited collection sheds some light into its results in Spain so far.

The International Translation Programme of the Canada Council, subsidizing approximately half of the total translation costs of a Canadian book into a foreign language, has contributed to the publication of approximately 100 books since 1991²² and has even been praised in the Spanish press for its efficiency in the promotion of reading (Lasheras, 2008). However, over two-hundred titles of Canadian literature in English have also been published in Spain without the subsidy, just on the basis of their potential commercial success. Other publishers have considered that the grant required too much bureaucracy for the reduced sum it provides and therefore have decided not to apply for it. Therefore, if the role of the International Translation Grants cannot be dismissed, often the decision to import a text into a target culture relies more on an estimation of the readership favour, and readers, as von Flotow (2008) rightly points out, cannot be institutionalized.

The other institutional initiative which has launched Canadian literature in Spain has been the establishment of Canadian Studies, first in Canada, and then, internationally. The International Council for Canadian Studies was established in 1981 as a federation of national associations of Canadian Studies. The Spanish Association for Canadian Studies (Asociación Española de Estudios Canadienses, AECC) was not founded until 1988 and joined the International Council for Canadian Studies in 1990. The Association was founded thanks to the enthusiastic initiative of Spanish professors from different universities and academic disciplines who first joined together as a research group in 1986. Two years later, during a conference which took place in Madrid, they decided to found the Association. Its first president was Bernd Dietz, at the time Professor of the University of La Laguna in the Canary Islands. Dietz founded the first Canadian Studies Centre in Spain at that university in 1991, and it was followed by another one in Cáceres, hosted by the University of Extremadura, and one in Barcelona in 1996. Of the three centres, the one in La Laguna, which offers a one-year course on Canadian Studies, has the strongest literary emphasis.

21 However, the financial aid provided for the cultural exchange between the United States and Spain seems to have increased, as witnessed by the numerous grants provided by the Instituto Franklin (Research Institute of American Studies) of the University of Alcalá in Madrid.

22 Data provided by Catherine Montgomery, officer responsible for this program.

The Spanish Association for Canadian Studies was most active between 1988 and 2004. It released, in collaboration with various Spanish Universities, a number of significant literary publications which are too numerous to quote here, although I will mention three examples: under the initiative of the Centre of Canadian Studies of the University of La Laguna a translation of Gwendolyn MacEwen's poem *Terror and Erebus*, by Dulce Rodríguez and the anthology *Sealed in Struggle: Canadian Poetry and the Spanish Civil War* (1995), edited by Nicola Vulpe and Maha Albari, an impressive anthology of Canadian poetry about the Spanish Civil War. Both Dulce Rodríguez and Nicola Vulpe were faculty at the English Department of the University of La Laguna and members of the Spanish Association for Canadian Studies at the time, which proves the narrow collaboration between the Association, the University and the Centre of Canadian Studies. Vulpe's anthology, as Jacqueline Hurlley (1996) noted, filled a gap in several fields: Canadian Studies, Comparative Literature and studies in English-language poetry in general.²³ From the many conferences which were organized at Spanish universities with the financial support of DFAIT and initiatives from the Spanish Association, a few yielded publications of selected papers, like *Visions of Canada Approaching the Millennium*,²⁴ which was reviewed by Neil ten Kortenaar for the journal *Canadian literature*. Kortenaar confesses to having "found an unusual pleasure in the outsider's perspective brought to bear on Canada (Kortenaar, 2002). Between 1991 and 1998 the AEEC published the *Revista Española de Estudios Canadienses* (Spanish Journal of Canadian Studies),²⁵ Unfortunately, and partly because of the reduction of funding from DFAIT, these initiatives are now frozen.²⁶

It is mainly the Foundation of Canadian Studies (Fundación Estudios Canadienses), established in 1998, which now promotes knowledge about Canada in Spain, although following the direction of DFAIT, literature is not one of its priorities. Supported by the Government of Canada as well as by private entities, like Nortel Networks and the Catalan bank La Caixa, the Foundation

23 These two publications (Dulce Rodríguez's translation of *Terror and Erebus* and *Sealed in Struggle*) were released in non-profit limited editions with no ISBN number, a fact which considerably restricted their dissemination.

24 Piñero and Somacarrera (Eds.), *Visions of Canada Approaching the Millennium*. The volume contains the proceedings of the I International Symposium of Canadian Studies held at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in November 1997.

25 About the history of the Spanish Association, see Marisa Calés and Bernd Dietz (eds.), "X Aniversario de la Asociación Española de Estudios Canadienses," a booklet issued to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Spanish Association for Canadian Studies in 1998.

26 The current Conservative Federal Government policy seems to be the reduction of funding for the Arts in Canada and consequently, a reduction of funding for "cultural capital" as well, outside Canada. Several Canadian artists, including Margaret Atwood, have complained about this policy. See her article "To be creative is, in fact, Canadian."

manages the Caixa-Canada scholarships, given to Spanish graduate students of high academic achievement interested in studying in Canada.

5. Between the Market and Aesthetic Value: Reviewing in Spanish Literary Supplements

Canadian institutional support undoubtedly planted the seed for English-Canadian literature to develop in Spain. However, it has also grown spontaneously, following random tendencies determined by the tastes and emotional affinities of Spanish readers and, most importantly, by the necessities of the market and the Spanish literary system, in which agents and factors like publishers, the media, cultural and political institutions have much to say. According to Edward Said, the visibility of a literary text in a culture depends on the status of the author, the historical moment, and the conditions of publishing, diffusion and reception (Said, 1983). In this context, publishers and reviewers have a very important input. These agents are often unpredictable because their first concern is not the promotion of the foreign country and its literature but, rather, their focus is on the home market (von Flotow, 2007). As recorded in the 2010 *Libro Blanco de la Traducción Editorial en España*, Spanish publishers have three main priorities: first, best-sellers over classics; second, contemporary, consecrated authors over emerging writers; and third, new genres like self-help books or books on general trends of knowledge (Ministerio de Cultura, 2008).

Reviewers and the literary supplements in newspapers are as important as publishers in the dissemination of Canadian literary works. Although von Flotow's statement about the "considerable weight of the review as a discursive form in Germany" (2008) cannot be extrapolated to the Spanish situation, it is accurate to say that many middle-class Spanish readers use the feuilleton pages or literary supplements to keep abreast of recent publications by the latest authors. According to Fruela Fernández, literary supplements are an interesting area of study because they are situated at the intersection of different fields: the press, which produces a certain version of "reality," always infused with political, ideological and economical tenets; the academic world;²⁷ authors and their

27 In the highly competitive academic field of English Studies in Spain, there are very few academics who are regular contributors to literary supplements. Several reasons can be found, but one of the main ones is that writing this kind of "general criticism" (in Spanish, *divulgación*) for newspapers or literary supplements is looked down on, and not valued in the periodic assessment of their research to which Spanish university teachers can voluntarily submit themselves every six years.

groups of influence and, of course, publishers, with their own economic interests and their networks of influence in institutions, distributors and, obviously, in the literary supplements themselves (Fernández, 2007). These supplements attract our attention as an appropriate territory in which to explore one of the main obsessions of the humanities today: to analyze how the “value” of artistic works *is created* (Fernández, 2007), a preoccupation which lies behind Bourdieu’s seminal notion of “cultural capital.”

According to the directors of Spanish literary supplements María Luisa Blanco (former director of *Babelia*²⁸), Blanca Berasátegui (*El Cultural*), Fernando Rodríguez Lafuente (*ABC Cultural*) and Llätzer Moix (*La Vanguardia*), interpretation together with selection, information and criticism are the tasks assumed by literary supplements (Berasategui, 2011). During their debate about the market needs of the book industry and literary value, the four directors take up similar stances, making a clear distinction between the cultural market and what really *has* cultural value. Moix points out that while the multiple products offered by cultural industry cannot be ignored, they must be filtered and ranked according to their aesthetic value.²⁹

The literary supplements that these literary critics work for (*Babelia*, *ABC Cultural*, *El Cultural* and *Culturas*) are published jointly with national newspapers and on the internet. *Babelia* is published by *El País*, which likes to refer to itself as “the global newspaper in Spanish.” Ideologically close to the Spanish Socialist party, it belongs to the media group PRISA which owns several publishing houses, like Alfaguara, as well as one of the main radio stations of Spain, SER. *Babelia* often includes reviews of the Canadian authors released by the publishing houses of the group. *ABC Cultural* is published by the more conservative *ABC*, affiliated with the media group Vocento. *El Cultural* is published by *El Mundo*, affiliated with the media group Unidad Editorial, and clearly sympathizes with right-wing political tendencies, tending to be critical of the socialist party. Its journalistic style recalls that of British tabloids,³⁰ sometimes verging on the sensationalistic approach. *Culturas* is distributed with *La Vanguardia*, a Spanish-language newspaper published by the Grupo Godó. One of the oldest newspapers

28 María Luisa Blanco was fired as the director of *Babelia* in 2004 because of defending critical independence: she allowed the publication of a negative review of a novel by an author published by a press from the group. There are numerous web pages about the case, but see, for example: “El caso Echevarría-*Babelia*.”

29 A more recent and extensive account of literary criticism in cultural supplements can be found in a special issue of *Babelia* (26 November, 2011) titled “Radiografía de la crítica literaria.” It includes the results of an interview held with 22 critics and directors of literary supplements.

30 This kind of newspapers do not exist in Spain.

in Spain (founded in 1881), it is ideologically situated in the centre and is supportive of Catalan nationalism.

In charge of the filtering and ordering of books for the readers of the literary supplements are reviewers, whom von Flotow defines as professional target culture readers who tell their audiences what to think of a new book in the daily or weekly feuillets of newspapers (von Flotow, 2007). They can be university professors, well-known writers, people connected in one way or other with the literary world, or simply members of the staff of the newspaper in charge of the cultural section. In fact, as Susan Janssen (1991) notes, reviewers are strongly inclined to stress their own autonomy and the exclusive or decisive role of artistic criteria in their choices and value judgements regarding a literary work. Along the same line of argument, Bourdieu (1993) observes that in reviews not only the status of artistic products and their makers is at issue but also the status of the critics themselves: "Every critical affirmation contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it, which is thus designated as worthy object of legitimate discourse [...], and on the other hand an affirmation of its own legitimacy. According to Linda Hutcheon (2009), book reviewers are taste makers.

The Canadian critic expands Bourdieu's view by saying that book reviewers throughout the centuries have seen themselves as arbiters of public taste who could create an informed and intelligent reading public for the authors of their age. The Spanish critic Ignacio Echevarría suggests, contentiously, that the role of educating readers belongs to the publishers, not to the critics, quoting literary editor Consantino Bértolo to support his statement: "According to Bértolo: 'Contrary to the general belief, critics are not intermediaries between writers and readers. This role corresponds to publishers, whose work consists in making proposals to the reading community or market about those books which - according to their editorial criteria - may satisfy their needs [of the reading community]. The critic analyzes and values these proposals and, therefore, his work situates him between publishers and readers (Echevarría, 2010).

In Spain, unlike what happens in English-speaking countries, literary supplements have a set list of critics who are in charge of the reviews. They also tend to specialize in genres or the literature of a particular country or a certain period. This explains why we shall encounter the same names of critics in the different chapters of this volume: José Antonio Gurpegui writes reviews of English-language fiction for *El Cultural*, María José Obiol reviews of Canadian women writers for *Babelia*, Javier Aparicio Maydeu reviews the work of contemporary fiction writers for *El País*, and A. Sáenz de Zaitegui writes about women poets for *El Cultural*. Throughout this survey of the Spanish reception of Canadian literature, we shall also see how some critics sometimes write a negative review when the writer concerned was barely known in Spain, and then a flattering one once the author has become consecrated.

Literary supplements are a part of the newspaper and, therefore, a review is the result of a specific reading process which attempts to cover newly published texts as pieces of news, worthy of reader consideration and attention. As such, they often have titles that are striking and attract the readers' attention, even using literary devices like ambiguity, puns or deliberately shocking metaphors. In the case of Spanish reviews about Canadian books, we shall show examples of how they often seem less concerned with Canada and its literary context and tradition, than with those aspects that might apply to be useful for the home culture, omitting social, political or cultural facts that might have been relevant for understanding the reviewed text. One of the most hackneyed strategies - if the intention is to consecrate a Canadian writer in the Spanish literary system - is to find a Spanish equivalent for the Canadian writer who is being reviewed, or to compare the author with other British or US counterparts.

In addition, reviews about Canadian literature often include allusions to Canadian stereotypes or illustrations of stereotypical Canadian landscapes. One of the most recurrent of these is to relate Canada and/or its literature and its attractiveness because of its unexplored nature. In a review entitled "Narrativa 'made in Canada,'" which inspired the title of our book, Javier Aparicio Maydeu invents yet another metaphor for the unexplored territory of Canadian literature, that of the "narrative cosmos." In the light of this metaphor, he writes: "A certainly attractive planetary system, fascinating but barely explored, featuring many other names like Robertson Davies ... Nancy Huston... and Elizabeth Smart (Aparicio Maydeu, 2009) Accompanying the article is a picture of a lake with two persons in a canoe and the Rocky Mountains in the background.³¹

Beyond stereotypes, which may be a media technique aimed at capturing wider audiences, reviews often are a loop of imprecise opinions which provide little information to the readers and to the professionals related to the literary world. One of Fernández's complaints is that critics tend to write about the "beauty" and the "style" of a book without taking into account that they are reading a translation (2007). Solid assessments about the quality of the translation are, in fact, very scarce in the corpus of reviews of Canadian literature that we have dealt with. If the translation is valued, there is often no reference to the characteristics which make it successful or subject to improvement. A final feature of reviews is that they can be derivative, a carbon-copy of other reviews,³² restricting themselves to paraphrasing the plot.

31 Interestingly, the photograph is not very different from the ones published by Canadians themselves in a photo competition organized by *The Globe and Mail* and Facebook for the occasion of Canada Day (2 July, 2010). See Facebook Canada, "Share Your Canada."

32 This practice is less frequent now because of the easy dissemination of information through the internet, but it still happens in local newspapers where the readership is less educated.

As Linda Hutcheon (2009) argues, a preliminary list of expectations about reviewing would probably include the assumption that the process will be fair, impartial, responsible, open and objective and, I would add, also minimally informed. In an interview held with 22 literary critics and directors of literary supplements by *Babelia*, most of them agreed that the practice of criticism should be revised, since it lacks independence, courage, engagement, rigour and depth, which are the qualities of good reviewing (Manrique Sabogal, 2011). Naturally, these qualities are at odds with the commodification of culture currently undertaken by the media corporations who are responsible for the publication of literary supplements. Everyone involved in cultural criticism of some kind – academics included – should be concerned about the kind of reviewing disseminated in these publications because of its potential influence on a “middlebrow” readership which deserves to be taken seriously.

6. Whom and What Has Been Translated?

Over three-hundred English-Canadian books have been published in Spain in the last four decades. Figure 1.1 shows the development of the publication of CanLit books in Spain:

After a slow beginning, the publication of Canadian books underwent its first rise in the late 1970s as a result of the decadence and end of the Franco regime and the subsequent popularity of Leonard Cohen’s songs, which led to the publication of some of his collection of poems. After 1986, the predominant

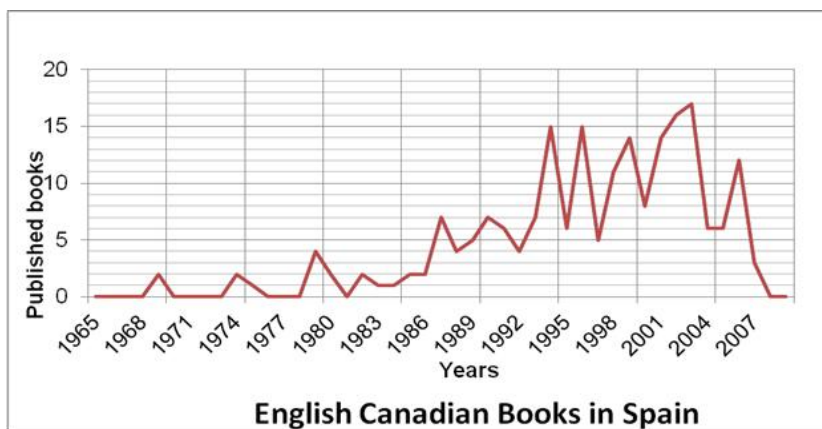


Fig. 1.1 English-Canadian books published in Spain (1966-2008) (Sources: Spanish International Book Number Database and Spanish National Library Catalogue).

trend was a constant increase in the number of publications, reaching its peak in 2003. Following that year, numbers started to decline, reaching their lowest point with the beginning of the current recession in 2008-2009.³³

If we look at the authors who have been published, some clear trends can be perceived. The first is the predominance of contemporary authors, with the interesting exception of two books by Stephen Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* and *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*. Leacock's works were translated under the initiative of the literary editor of the publishing house 451 (Javier Azpeitia) in 2007 and 2008 because he had read a translation of Stephen Leacock published in Spain in the forties.³⁴ The second trend is the prevalence of mainstream authors, like Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen and Michael Ondaatje. Next to them, we find emerging literary celebrities with an increasingly prominent profile in Spain and the rest of Europe, like Alberto Manguel.³⁵ English-Canadian names (Eric Wilson, Pauline Gedge) are also visible in alternative literary genres, like children's literature and romance. With 47 entries in the Spanish ISBN database, Pauline Gedge is the most frequently published Canadian author in Spain, surpassing Atwood, Munro and Ondaatje, even if, ironically, she was born in New Zealand, not in Canada. It is also ironical that her historical romances, which have become a best-selling phenomenon in Spain and which are distributed even in fascicles, are set in ancient Egypt and not in contemporary Canada. She is followed by Margaret Atwood with 25 titles, Alberto Manguel³⁶ and Eric Wilson in a draw with 17 titles, Leonard Cohen with 12 titles, followed by the rising success of Alice Munro with 10 titles, four of which were reprinted in 2009.

The "top-6 list" of Canadian writers in translation in Spain illustrates that, unlike countries like Germany, Italy and Sweden, who will go for the emerging and more multicultural authors (Rutledge, quoted in Schneider, 2005), Spanish publishers are still very traditional in their choice of writers, and often do not

33 Only 7 and 6 titles were published in those years, respectively. Despite the scarcity of published titles, 2008 and 2009 were very important years for CanLit in Spain because Margaret Atwood received the Prince of Asturias Award in 2008 and 2009 saw the beginning of the "Munro boom," with the reprinting of four of her back titles.

34 This information was provided by Tamara Gil Somoza, the Spanish translator of Leacock's books, on the questionnaire I distributed among members of the Spanish Association of Translators of Books.

35 Alberto Manguel, who is not usually recognized as a Canadian, but as an Argentinian in Spain, is a regular contributor for *El País* and *Babelia*.

36 I am counting only the titles which have been translated from English.

include racialized authors in their catalogues.³⁷ As Belén Martín discusses in her chapter, a small group of Indo-Canadian writers have been published in Spanish, like Rohinton Mistry, M.G. Vassanji, Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin and Shani Mootoo. The most successful has been Rohinton Mistry, with six of his titles translated into Spanish and Catalan. His popularity has even led his publisher (Random House Mondadori) to venture to release his short-story collection *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987) / *Cuentos de Firozsha Baag* (2007), twenty years after its original Canadian publication, in spite of the limited popularity which short-story collections still have in Spain.

In a study of the transference of the literature of one country into a foreign culture, omissions are sometimes more meaningful than presences. Two notable absences in the catalogues of Spanish publishers are East Asian-Canadian and First Nations writers. Books which occupy such a pivotal position in the Canadian literary system as Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* are still not available in Spain. And, whereas in Germany translations of First Nations writers are scarce, curiously, in spite of the German fascination with "things Indian" (Gruber, 2007), in Spain it is almost impossible to trace publications by First Nations Canadian authors writing in English or in French. Names as representative as Tomson Highway³⁸ or Thomas King are still not available in Spanish versions. Only two titles by Aboriginal authors have been traced in the Spanish ISBN database: Ruby Slipperjack's *Honour the Sun* (1987) / *Honrar al sol* (2007) published by Takusan Ediciones twenty years after its original publication in Canada,³⁹ and Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road* (2005), translated into Spanish and Catalan in 2010. The Spanish version was published by Destino, one of the imprints of Grupo Planeta.

In terms of genre, the most noticeable gap in the transference of English Canadian writing into Spain is English-Canadian drama. As Albert-Reiner Glaap (2000) argues for Germany, the interest in Canadian plays stems from the now universal concerns of the Canadian dramatic texts and their innovative dramaturgical concepts and approaches. Glaap also explains that the cultural section of the Canadian Embassy in Berlin was particularly instrumental in publicizing and promoting Canadian playwrights and plays (Glaap, 2007).

37 During the nineties, a series of articles commissioned from Spanish journalists by the Canadian Mission in Spain, multiculturalism was presented as "the" characteristic of the Canadian society (Bayón, 1990).

38 A Spanish translation of Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* by Pilar Somacarrera will appear in the autumn of 2013, published by the imprint Fifth House, owned by Highway's Canadian publisher Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

39 It was Kathleen Firth, a professor of Canadian literature at the University of Barcelona, who took the initiative of proposing this book for translation to the publisher.

Presumably, the same characteristics which have captured Germans would make English-Canadian playwrights attractive to Spanish audiences, but academic impulse and institutional support similar to those in Germany has not occurred in Spain yet. In fact, the export and translation of theatre is affected by many more problems than those that confront books of fiction (von Flotow, 2008). These include accessibility and information, royalties and performance, publication, even film, CD and DVD rights. There are very few publishing houses in Spain which specialise in drama, and often plays have to be published in theatre journals which are not always able or willing to pay the rights of Canadian authors who, though they may be considered novelties here, are well-known and established in Canada.

Albeit beyond the scope of this study, the case of certain Quebecois playwrights has been an exception in the transference of Canadian drama into the Spanish cultural system, and I will deal with it briefly because of the great impact it has had –and still has– on the Spanish theatre scene. Three of Michel Tremblay's plays – *Albertine en Cinq Temps*, *Les Belles Soeurs* and *Encore une fois, si vous permettez* (*For the Pleasure of Seeing her Again*)– have been translated and performed in Spanish theatres, although only the last two have been exploited commercially in conventional stages: *Les Belles Soeurs/Las Cuñadas* launched in the Teatro Español⁴⁰ in the spring of 2008, and *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, which toured Spain in 2009– 2010 and continued to be performed until the fall of 2011. The keys to the success of this play can be traced through the popularity of its protagonist Miguel Ángel Solá, an Argentinian actor who has often appeared in television series in Spain, and in the emotional identification of Spanish audiences with the content of the play, a tribute to Tremblay's dead mother.⁴¹

Equally impressive, though perhaps less surprising because of his unique cross-cultural and global appeal, has been the success of Robert Lepage.⁴²

40 "Albertine en cinq temps"/"Albertina en cinco tiempos" was translated by Rosa de Diego and published in the Theatre Journal ADE Teatro (July-September 2001). It was performed in a dramatized reading at the Casa de América with the financial assistance of the Spanish Association for Canadian Studies. The Teatro Español is a public theatre owned by the Spanish Ministry of Culture which publishes the plays it performs in a collection titled "Cuadernos del Teatro Español." The Spanish version of *Les Belles Soeurs* was published in this series in June, 2008. A Catalan version (*Les Cunyades*) had been published by Edicions Bromera in 1998.

41 The promotional blurb for the play published in the free magazine *Teatros* distributed in Madrid theatres is headed by the phrase "A las madres..."/"Dedicated to the Mothers" ("Por el placer de volver a verla," 2011).

42 It should be pointed out, however, that Robert Lepage's plays have always been performed in their original versions in Spain, albeit including some scenes in Spanish for his Spanish-speaking audiences.

Constantly praised for “his innovative and transgressive stage techniques” (Lafont and Torres, 2009). Lepage’s dramatic productions have been performed almost every year at the Festival de Otoño, a festival of the international stage arts organized every fall by the cultural department of the autonomous government in Madrid. This kind of participation in international festivals and global touring is very typical of Lepage’s productions. In the case of his Spanish tours a key institutional contact has been former director of the Festival de Otoño, Pilar Yzaguirre.

7. Translators’ Corner

As mentioned in the second section of this chapter, the translator’s role in the process of transferring a foreign literature has traditionally been neglected. In keeping with this line of thought, Peter Bush and Susan Bassnett (2006) state that with the written text, read individually, or the performed play, seen by an audience, the illusion of the unmediated word has traditionally been maintained. Given the hardships of the profession of translator (lack of social recognition, low rates of remuneration and unacceptable working conditions which include sometimes translating without a legal contract, among other abusive practices), why do translators continue to translate? Ramón Sánchez Lijarralde (2010), translator and former President of ACETT (Spanish Association of Literary Translators) responds by declaring that he is involved in translation because of literature, because translation has been his main way of participating in it. Through a recent interview with five Spanish translators, the cultural journalist Sergi Doria (2012) has shown the impact of the economical recession affecting the Spanish publishing scene on the crucial but often meagrely paid work of literary translators.

The following information about Spanish translators and their work has been obtained from a survey distributed among translators of English-Canadian literature through the list of the Spanish Association of Literary Translators.⁴³ The number of responses received (seven) represent a very small sample which, clearly, cannot be taken as representative of the large corpus of translations available, but nevertheless reveal some interesting data. First of all, six out of seven of the translators who answered the questionnaire were women living in Barcelona, which confirms the trend described in the *Libro Blanco de la*

43 My thanks go to Roser Berdagué, Concha Cardeñoso, Carmen Francí, Tamara Gil Somoza, Magdalena Palmer, Mónica Rubio and Dolors Udina for kindly responding to the questionnaire.

traducción editorial en España 2010 ("Official document on literary translation") that the majority of literary translators who have joined the profession in the last seven years are young women living in Catalonia holding a university degree, and which indicates a feminization and professionalization of the translation activity (Ministerio de Cultura, 2008). Three of these women translators (Roser Berdagué, Mónica Rubio and Concha Cardeñoso) had read and enjoyed Canadian authors (Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro and Margaret Atwood) before they started their translations.

The Spanish translators who responded to my questions had various opinions about how publishers dealt with the corrections once they had sent in their final version. As Bassnett and Bush (2006) observe, translators have to negotiate with editors good and bad; both have to transform imaginatively images, metaphors or points in grammar that pass uneasily from one language into another. Whereas one of the interviewed translators voiced her frustration about how her version was changed without her consent, another told about an excellent collaboration with her proof-reader. In some cases, the title chosen for the Spanish version by the translator was changed by the publisher without consultation, presumably for commercial purposes. One striking case is that of the translation of Neil Bissoondath's *The Soul of All Great Designs* as *Falsas Identidades* ("False Identities"), a title chosen by the publisher after the translator (Mónica Rubio) had carefully proposed of another title which was closer to the meaning of the original.⁴⁴

The difficulties encountered during the process of translation naturally vary from author to author. Tamara Gil had to undertake an impressive task of documentation to translate Stephen Leacock into Spanish. She also had to struggle to bridge the distance between the world portrayed by Leacock and that of the Spanish contemporary reader. Magdalena Palmer, the translator of *Late Nights on Air* by Elizabeth Hay, had difficulties with some Canadian place names and the names of plants and animals in the area around Yellowknife where the novel is set. The Canadian origins of Coupland were irrelevant for Carmen Francí, translator of *Microserfs* because the novel is set in California. However, she had problems in reproducing the informal register of the novel, as well as its technological language, including two pages written in computer binary code which she had to translate into English with the help of a computer expert, then into Spanish and, finally, back into the computer binary code. Dolors Udina, translator of more than one-hundred books, including Atwood's *The Blind Assassin* into Spanish, refers to the difficulties she encountered transferring "the

⁴⁴ Mónica Rubio had provisionally proposed "El alma de los grandes diseños" ("The Soul of Great Designs"), which is more faithful to the meaning of the original title and to its sonority. However, the word *diseño* in Spanish does not have the double meaning of *design* in English, as "purpose" and "artistic pattern."

simplicity of Munro's style" into Catalan. She confesses that *Too Much Happiness* is one of the books whose translation has required the most revisions precisely because of the apparently "easy" style of the original.

Translating Margaret Atwood also poses special challenges for translators. The Catalan translator Roser Berdagué, who rendered *Cat's Eye* into Catalan, and highly values Atwood as a writer, remarks that she is a writer with a most personal style, "of superior quality to the average," which it is necessary to reproduce as faithfully as possible. The difficulties become naturally greater when the challenge is to translate her poetry. According to Luis Marigómez (2000), translator of her poetry collection *Interlunar* into Spanish, poetry allows Atwood an immediacy that has to do with photography. Her poems are moments of illumination, which sometimes are developed into novels. His personal technique when translating Atwood's poems – a task which he has thoroughly enjoyed – is to allow the reader to see the poem at a first reading, which will require further readings in order to fully appreciate its worth (Marigómez, 2000).

I also have had the privilege of translating Atwood's poetry into Spanish and share in her other translators' enjoyment of the experience. My guiding principle has been that suggested by the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset (1937) in his essay about translation: "It is only when we force the reader from his linguistic habits and oblige him to move within those of the author that there is actually translation." I have thus tried to bring the Spanish reader to Atwood's voice. Atwood writes in free verse and her poems present a bareness and immediacy of expression which is almost laconic and definitely alien to the more verbose nature of the Spanish language.⁴⁵ However, in *The Door*, Atwood evokes the regular rhythms of traditional English poetry and rhymes are used for comic effects. These aspects had to be reproduced in my translation. I also strived to be respectful of Atwood's punctuation, especially her use of the hyphen, which recalls that of other North American poets like Emily Dickinson and Adrienne Rich (Somacarrera, 2008).

Given that a translator is the agent of the literary system that gets the deepest knowledge of a literary text – even more than readers or even critics – the fact that all the interviewed translators admit as to having had much intellectual pleasure in translating CanLit authors must be indicative of the quality of Canadian writers. As for the result of these translators' work, it remains an object for future studies. But, from my knowledge of their translations and the assessment which has been published about them in reviews, most of them have been successful in bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps between the CanLit texts and the Spanish reader.

⁴⁵ For a fuller account of the difficulties I encountered and the techniques I used when translating Atwood's poetry collection *Power Politics*, see Somacarrera (2005).

8. English-Canadian Poetry in Translation in Spain

As the Spanish poet, translator and publisher of poetry Jesús Munárriz points out, poetry seems to have a paradoxical status in Spain. ⁴⁶ Munárriz explains his point as follows: “What happens with poetry is a very strange thing. There are very few poetry books in bookstores, but there are lots of prizes, and thousands of internet pages devoted to it” (“La poesía disfruta de un ‘boom,’” 2011). However, despite the poetic revival on the internet, the vitality of poetry prizes, poetry festivals and new poets, the genre suffers from the same problem as the rest of the literary sector of the Spanish book industry: lack of readers (“La poesía de hoy”, 2009). The publication of poetry books in Spain remains in the hands of a few select, small, independent publishers, among which I will highlight Hiperión (Munarriz’s publishing house), Bartleby, Visor and Pre-Textos because they have published most of the available titles of Anglo-Canadian poets.

In Spain, academics began reading Canadian poetry from the vantage point of Northrop Frye’s *The Bush Garden* and Margaret Atwood’s *Survival*, two works which, now being over 40 years old, seem somewhat dated in the context of the current “urban turn” in Canadian Studies. In the introduction to his 1985 anthology of English- Canadian poetry, Bernd Dietz (1985) writes that, as would happen with any young literature, one of its most obvious problems is the parochial exaltation of its own literary deficits. As for literary influences, Jordi Doce (2003) more recently argues that Canadian poetry is affected by the fractures and tensions of modernism, which “they could access very soon, thanks to the extraordinary vitality of their US colleagues.” The point that can be elicited from all these comments about Canadian poetry is that the Spanish literary establishment (critics and academics) have traditionally considered Canadian poetry as “young” (in spite of the age of some of some of its most significant practitioners) and “derivative” and, therefore, not worth publishing, which could partly explain why so few books by English-Canadian poets have been published in Spain.

The list of English-Canadian poets who have been published is reduced to only twenty titles by seven authors, all of them mainstream,⁴⁷ and only

⁴⁶ Without looking further into the past, we can recall the “Generación del 98” and “Generación del 27,” some of whose members were among the most outstanding poets of the twentieth century, like Antonio Machado and Federico García Lorca.

⁴⁷ Once again, racialized and First Nation writers are not in the catalogue of published poets, a fact which mirrors the same absence in the Canadian literarysystem.

one bilingual anthology of poetry in book form published in 1985 selected, translated and with an introduction by Bernd Dietz.⁴⁸ The only other Spanish anthology of Canadian poetry in English in translation I have been able to trace is the one compiled and translated by Fruela Fernández, “Pequeña antología canadiense,”/ “Little Canadian Anthology,” a contribution to the Asturian literary journal *Clarín* in 2001. In his introduction, Fernández draws on the usual stereotypes about the young and “unknown” nature of Canadian literature. In fact, the journal describes itself as “a journal of new literature.” It contains eleven poems by Earle Birney, Ralph Gustafson, Louis Dudek, Raymond Souster, Elizabeth Brewster, Pat Lowther, Margaret Atwood and Joe Rosenblatt. The “youth” and “newness” of most of these poets is more than questionable: Birney and Gustafson were born in the first decade of the last century and died in the 1990’s. Dudek lived from 1918 until 2001, and even Atwood, one of the youngest in the list, is now seventy-three years old. No new names of Canadian poets have been added to the Spanish list since the publication of Anne Carson’s first book in 2007. Even the publication of the rest of Atwood’s poetic titles is uncertain in the light of the aforementioned closure of the former version of the imprint Bruguera led by Ana María Moix and its recent reorientation as a more commercial venture.

Browsing through the list of the English-Canadian verse translated into Spanish, it is easy to perceive a tendency to select writers who are novelists as well as poets, and whose novels had been published earlier than their poetry collections. Margaret Atwood, Anne Michaels and Michael Ondaatje fit this category. Anne Michaels’ first novel, *Fugitive Pieces*, was published in Spain in 1995, and the first Spanish translation of her poetry, *The Weight of Oranges/El peso de las naranjas*, appeared in 2001 followed by *Skin Divers/Buceadores de la piel* in 2003, both published by Bartleby. In the case of Ondaatje, introduced through the translation of *The English Patient* in 1995, his poetry was transferred into Spain in 2000 thanks to the voice of the poet and translator Justo Navarro. The project was undertaken by Ediciones Hiperión, who also published *Power Politics/Juegos de poder* by Margaret Atwood that year. Both poetry collections were published with the aid of the International Translation Programme of the Canada Council.

48 Dietz includes his own translation of the following Canadian poets in his anthology: Earle Birney, Irving Layton, Al Purdy, Raymond Souster, James Reaney, Phyllis Webb, Alden Nowlan, Joe Rosenblatt, Leonard Cohen, Joy Kogawa, George Bowering, John Newlove, Patrick Lane, Margaret Atwood, Bill Bissett, Gwendolyn MacEwen, David Solway, Michael Ondaatje, Seymour Mayne, Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, Mary Di Michele, Robyn Sarah, David Satherley, Susan Musgrove, Kevin Irie. They all gave permission to publish the poems at no cost.

Hiperión has also published three other Canadian poets: an anthology of Irving Layton's poetry titled *Love Poems / Poemas de amor* (1983), *As Close as We came/Lo más cerca que estuvimos* by Barry Callaghan (1989), and *The Raven Steals the Light/ Cuentos del cuervo* (1998) by Robert Bringhurst and Bill Reid. Jesús Munárriz, director of Hiperión, may have been influenced by Bernd Dietz in his decision to publish Canadian poets. In his own anthology of Canadian poetry, Dietz (1985) hails Layton as "the most influential Canadian poet of the century." Robert Bringhurst, also a writer of prose and non-fiction, as well as a translator of Haida myths, has had a fruitful connection to the Centre of Canadian Studies of the University of Laguna, which he has visited several times, and where he has also been interviewed for the *Revista Española de Estudios Canadienses* (Llarena, 1997). The circumstances of the publication of Layton's and Bringhurst's poetry illustrate the vital role which the networking between academics and publishers has had in the dissemination of Canadian poetry in Spain.

In the next section, I will briefly examine the different circumstances which have conditioned the translation and reception of three Canadian poets (Leonard Cohen, Margaret Atwood and Anne Carson) in Spain, in the order in which their works have been published in the country. If academic or institutional support was behind the publication of Layton's, Bringhurst's and Atwood's poetry, Leonard Cohen started to be published as a result of social and political changes in Spain. Dietz (1985) warns the reader in the introduction to his anthology: "to speak about Leonard Cohen in Spain implies reminding fans of his music that he is a profoundly lyric poet in the traditional manner of his Elizabethan precursors." Cohen's books entered Spain after his music in a historical moment – the years immediately preceding and following Franco's death - when the country was receptive for his poetic message of erotic and political freedom. Another factor which has influenced Cohen's success among Spanish audiences is that he has often acknowledged Federico García Lorca as one of his favourite poets. He named his daughter Lorca, in homage to the Spanish poet, and his song "Take this Waltz" is a transformation of Lorca's poem "Little Viennese Waltz" into a song of intense and dark sexuality (Manzano, 1989).

As Alberto Manzano, translator and friend of Cohen, recounts, it all began in 1974, when Cohen himself gave concerts in Madrid and Barcelona during the last throes of the Franco regime (Manzano, 2007). In less than a year, two poetry books and two novels were published: *Selected Poems* and *The Energy of Slaves*;⁴⁹ and *Beautiful Losers* and *The Favourite Game*.⁵⁰ In 1974,

49 *Selected Poems* was translated by Jorge Ferrer-Vidal for publisher Plaza y Janés in 1974 and *The Energy of Slaves* was translated by Antonio Resines for Visor in 1974.

50 *The Favourite Game* was translated by Susan Hendry and Blanca Tera, (Fundamentos, 1974) and *Beautiful Losers* by Javier Sainz and Susan Hendry (Fundamentos, 1975).

Cohen's music became even better known in Spain because his album *Songs of Leonard Cohen* became the soundtrack of the film *McCabe and Mrs Miller* (translated in Spain as "Los vividores") by Robert Altman. Even a translation of Leonard Cohen's biography in French (Vassal, 1974) was published. *Let us Compare Mythologies*, published for the first time in 1979 and subsequently reprinted in 2002 and 2007 by Visor. *Flowers for Hitler* (1981), *Parasites of Heaven* (1982), *Death of a Lady's Man* (1983) and *The Energy of Slaves* (1988) were also published by Visor. Alberto Manzano was in charge of the Spanish version of *The Spice Box of Earth* in 1999 and of most of Cohen's songs for a series of translations of pop songs published for the first time in 1979, followed by a sequel ten years later.⁵¹ Cohen has been fortunate to have been rewritten in Spanish by the same translators, most prominently Antonio Resines and Alberto Manzano, the latter having recently published a book about Leonard Cohen in Spain. Having been awarded the Prince of Asturias Award for Letters in 2011, we may speculate that Cohen's works will continue to be disseminated in Spain.⁵²

Next to Leonard Cohen, whose verse has become known in Spain thanks to the popularity of his music, the Spanish literary system has also imported the poetry of Anne Carson, which has reached a smaller and more select group of readers. Her books *The Beauty of the Husband/ La belleza del marido* (Lumen, 2003)- most probably transferred into Spain as a side-effect of her receiving the T.S. Eliot Prize in 2002 - and *Men Off Hours/Hombres en sus horas libres* (Pre-Textos, 2007) have been translated into Spanish by two prestigious translators, Ana Becciu and Jordi Doce, who are poets themselves. Reviews of Carson in the conventional press do not abound, even if Alberto Manguel (2010) recommended her as one of his favourite writers in *Babelia*. In Spain, it is in web pages specializing in poetry that she has received the attention she deserves. The blog "La manera de recogerse el pelo" ("The way to pin up your hair") which is related to a book titled *Generación Blogger* (Bartleby, 2010), a collection of women's poetry published in blogs, includes a poem from *The Beauty of the Husband* translated by the Argentinian poet Ana Becciu. *The Beauty of the Husband* is classified as an "indispensable book" by

51 See Leonard Cohen, *Canciones*, (1979) which has been reprinted eight times, the last one in 2008; and Leonard Cohen, *Canciones. Volumen 2* (1989, reprinted three times, both published by Fundamentos.

52 At the end of 2011, clearly because of the commercial impact of the Award, two more books by Cohen appeared in Spain: *A mil besos de profundidad. Canciones y poemas(1956-1978/1979-2006) / A Thousand Kisses Deep: Songs and Poems*, and *El libro de la misericordia / The Book of Mercy*, both published by Visor and translated by Alberto Manzano.

writer Alberto Infante in his blog *albertoinfante.es*. Some Spanish readers who subscribe to a conventional notion of poetry may be discouraged because her poetry has been described as not having “a lyrical sense” (Moga, 2008). Critics writing about Carson on the web particularly value the way that the Canadian poet breaks the conventions of form and genre by interweaving her poems with essays, quotations, fragments of letters and typographical games. Another additional difficulty in Carson’s poetry resides in her numerous intertextual allusions, many of them coming from classical literatures, which have disappeared from the Spanish high-school curricula. Given the already reduced circle of poetry readers in Spain and the linguistic and cultural challenges posed by Carson’s lyrical work, her books will probably appeal to a very select and minority readership and, therefore, we may expect that their publication will be discontinued.

Despite her position as an author who has won the Prince of Asturias Award for Letters in 2008, Atwood’s poetry also needs to be reappraised in the Spanish literary system (Somacarrera, 2005). The extent to which her poems –and essays– has been overshadowed by her novels has been recognised by cultural journalists and critics (Moix, 2008; Somacarrera, 2008). *Power Politics* was finally published in Spain in 2000, almost twenty years after its original publication in 1971, which is revealing of the delayed penetration of feminist ideologies in Spain, in spite of the fact that the poems clearly mean much more beyond their possible feminist content (García, 2001). However, other critics, mainly male ones, argued that during the sixties her “militant feminism” resulted in her poetry being overvalued (Dietz, 1985). Echoing Dietz, Doce (2003) claims that “her profile as a poet has been diluted by her work as a novelist and the possessive and reductive readings of a certain undercurrent of feminist criticism.”

However, beyond her alleged feminism or her position as a novelist, some of her Spanish critics, and not only the male ones, are to blame for her fragile reputation as a poet in our country. In a bizarre review of *The Door, A*. (Ainhoa) Sáenz de Zaitegui, who is usually in charge of reviewing Atwood’s poetry for *El cultural*, defines her as the Canadian-feminist-protocologist-political activist, a fiction narrator version of Henry David Thoreau (Sáenz de Zaitegui, 2009). Even more disturbing than this anachronistic comparison with the nineteenth-century American author is the ambiguous tone of the review. Sáenz de Zaitegui does not seem to value Atwood as a poet but instead of providing solid reasons for her judgement, her evaluation verges on the sensationalist. In her piece about *True Stories*, published only a year later, this critic continued her litany of epithets for Atwood: “Iron Lady,” “goddess of possible worlds,” “*Atwood Rainbow Warrior*,” and “*saint Margaret of our feminisms*” (Sáenz de Zaitegui, 2010). Referring to the collection as “a book of the old times” because it was originally published in 1981, the review does not situate the poems in

Margaret Atwood's *oeuvre* or place them in their Canadian or North American literary context.

Once again, it is in the blogs of readers outside the literary system that we find some of the most informed appreciations about Margaret Atwood's poetry. Reviewing *The Door* in his blog, Francisco Casoledo (2009), a lawyer and amateur writer, does what most professional critics fail to do, establishing connections between Atwood's poetry and her prose fiction and locating her main themes and preoccupations - her uneasy contemplation of nature and her interest in political and gender issues. "Amateur" readers and Atwood aficionados in their blogs and web pages are more likely to promote Atwood's poetry than professional critics, but as we can infer from Casoledo's blog, they are often much more discerning about her work than the professional reviewers. But while amateurs have the option and leisure to read and write about the writers they enjoy, professional critics are constrained by the needs of media corporations which demand, almost every week, that they review a new book which has already been selected for them, and that they do it in ways that capture the largest possible readership for the book they are dealing with. The squalid panorama of the Canadian poetry in translation may be attributed to this lack of informed, responsible, and objective reviews which has possibly had an impact on publishers selecting a Canadian poet or poetry book for translation, or on readers deciding to buy them.

Slowly but steadily, English-Canadian literature is taking off outside the academic circles and starting to have a visibility in Spain, a country which cannot boast of a very high index of readership or a marked inclination for sophisticated literature. However, Canadian writers are gradually penetrating the journalistic media (print and online) and, most importantly, the blogging and social network spheres are currently disseminating them. This is due, in part, to the joint efforts of several institutions and individuals, but also due to the favourable conditions of the Spanish target market which has promoted the rewriting and rereading of many English-Canadian texts through translation in the last twenty years. We can no longer ignore the fact that in our consumer societies literary texts are commodities like any other goods and, as such, they are subject to market needs. It is precisely these market concerns, rather than institutional or literary interests, which capture direct the attention of the publishers and reviewers who are concerned with CanLit in Spain.