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Review

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known to a wider Latin American reading public. Since Vitier was a longtime friend and collaborator of Lezama in the reviews *Espuela de Plata* (1939–41) and the formidable *Orígenes* (1944–56), no one is better qualified to write such an introduction. More than a prologue, it is also an evocation of the intellectual climate, of the period from which Lezama Lima's work arose, as well as a tribute to the artists and writers who embarked with him on these ventures. In sum, Vitier has wisely focused on *Paradiso* and relates the novel with the poetry and thought of its author.

Despite Vitier's illuminating introduction, the rest of the edition is not on the same high level. That an adequate scholarly presentation and a fair profit are not mutually exclusive is evident from successive printings of the *Obras completas* of García Lorca, or the meticulously researched *Poesías completas* of Rubén Darío organized by Alfonso Méndez Plancarte. But as should be clear from Aguilar's Lezama Lima, the editorial house has not yet seen fit to make the effort and the investment in the Series Biblioteca de Autores Modernos.

Klaus Müller-Bergh  
University of Illinois, Chicago Circle

## Noted

Laureano Alban, Julieta Dobles, Ronald Bonilla, Carlos Francisco Monge. *Manifiesto trascendentalista y poesía de sus autores*. San José, C.R. Editorial Costa Rica. 1977. 193 pages.

Since Costa Rica has been a country that has had continual problems in establishing a national literary tradition, group efforts such as the present one are especially important for the promise they may hold for attracting some means of "continental" attention. Four writers sign this manifesto: Laureano Alban, Julieta Dobles, Ronald Bonilla and Carlos Francisco Monge. The book includes a coupon that enables the reader to become a *Patrocinador-Fundador* of their efforts.

The manifest runs 112 pages, followed by an anthology of the four poets, introduced by a note dated 1974. Composed of fifteen sections, accompanied by appropriate epigraphs from Huidobro, Neruda, Paz, Perse, León Felipe, Shelley, Salinas, Pound, et cetera, the statement stresses the need to return to a humanistic conception of man's experience and the need for his poetry to be, therefore, a "transcendental" expression of that experience. Thus these poets oppose the cynical strain of contemporary Latin American poetry, as typified by the anti-poetry of Nicanor Parra and the agnosticism of Jorge Luis Borges, and preach a return to the neo-romanticism of the thirties and forties. Although I do not know anything about the four poets who introduce themselves, I suspect there is something significant in the absence of epigraphs from and references to the most important contemporary Central American poet, the Nicaraguan priest Ernesto Cardenal, who represents a form of radical Catholic humanism that is anathema to tamer concepts of transcendentalism.

D. W. Foster

Vicente Aleixandre. *Poesie totale*. Roger Noël-Mayer, tr. Paris. Gallimard. 1977. 251 pages.

By a remarkable coincidence, this volume of translations by a distinguished French Hispanist appeared just as the Spanish poet was being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. This fact allowed the publisher to present the book as a major literary event, much talked about by the Parisian press and French magazines.

Undoubtedly these translations were not written in haste. They represent rather a lifetime of dedication, a labor of love. They encompass the whole opus of Aleixandre's poetry, from *Ámbito* to *Diálogos del conocimiento*.

The translations are on the whole clear, faithful, elegant. I have only two reservations: the title is misleading—the book does not offer "all the poetry" but is rather a well-chosen anthology; moreover, a book sponsored by UNESCO should be not merely a translation but a bilingual edition, which would allow the initiates in Spanish to savor the original texts and compare them to their French version. The introduction is both informative and sensitive. A short bibliography enumerates the very few French titles dealing totally or in part with Aleixandre.

M. Durán

José Antonio Bravo. *Un hotel para el otoño*. Lima. El Indiano. 1977. 151 pages.

Bravo's "bag" is the experimental novel: *Las noches hundidas* (1968), *Barrio de broncas* (1971); however, he is usually left holding it. *Un hotel* came out in Lima at almost the same time that Bravo's other recent novel, *A la hora del tiempo* (about the Old and the New World détente-ing each other in a *pensión* in Madrid), came out in Spain (Seix Barral, 1977).

The novelist is professor—or vice versa—of Hispanic-American literature at San Marcos in Lima, his hometown. This shows in *Un hotel*, for the novel rarely gets beyond academic subtleties and into the terrain of *vivencias*. It lacks power of persuasion. According to the book's flap, this is Bravo's third novel and constitutes part of what he calls a "series of four, all of which are independent but sisters among themselves, for they follow . . . in an open structure the events experienced by Miguel, the principal figure of the four books."

Miguel has been ill for a long while and outside of Lima. Now he returns there and looks up old friends and *ambientes*. Both have of course changed. Still, olden and present times affect each other, each underlining the ephemerality of the other, an ephemerality whose acceptance is measured in terms of maturity (hence the "autumn" of the title). The pervading tone is that of a certain sadness, of loss of hope, of resignation and of *demoralization* of the various figures peopling the book. Inevitably, an old girl friend becomes a prostitute; others become rich or go mad. Life is exciting in Lima, but you would not know it from *Un hotel*.

As always in Peruvian books, the typography is lousy, the proof-reading—it can be seen clearly on certain pages—something Bravo might have spared himself, since the printers evidently and traceably could not care less about his indications.

W. A. Luchting

Luis Alberto Crespo. *Costumbre de sequía*. Caracas. Monte Ávila. 1977. 205 pages.

As new poets go, Luis Alberto Crespo exhibits none of the accustomed imagery of younger efforts, but presents a rather striking unity of tone that surprises the reader. His language is intensely colloquial and encompasses the most pedestrian happenings in its vital thematics.

At times overwhelming, the distinctive regional tonality of some texts progresses nevertheless toward a peculiar transparency found in the second part of the book, which includes the best of Crespo's production: *Rayas de lagartijas* (1974) and *Costumbre de sequía* (1976), both previously unpublished. Other poems from *Si el verano es dilatado* (1968) and *Novenario* (1970) are narrower in perspective and not as lyrical as the former, yet supply an adequate drop to the more poetically developed verses: "Empujamos el cuerpo / despidiéndonos."

In its totality, this volume of complete works possibly constitutes one of the most significant contributions of new poetry to current Venezuelan literature.

E. Rivero