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The organic nature of Chilean poetry in Raúl Zurita's poems: a concrete
manifestation of Latin American cultural hybridity

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation is based on the work of Raúl Zurita, a contemporary Chilean poet (1950-), and is set in the context of the Pinochet dictatorship. The main purpose of my research is to situate the author's creative style between the coordinates of Chilean national poetic traditions and ethnocultural influences, particularly through poetic representations of local natural elements (such as the Cordillera, the Atacama Desert or Chilean rivers). Along with highlighting intercultural activities inside Chile, this orientation also designates a place within the extraordinarily complex web of twentieth-century and contemporary cultural movements in Chile. Chilean literary studies' increasing awareness of the critical discourse of national literary canonization processes that dominated earlier centuries has been substantially affected by the ethnocultural poetry movement that has taken hold over the last fifty years. It also contributed to the study of assimilation processes, which were formerly the primary means of adopting Western (primarily Western European) cultural patterns.

In accordance with these principles, I am discussing the harmony and unification of man and nature in Chile, while challenging some Western tendencies. My research is based on the notion that different local poetry programs have a common, characteristically "Chilean" ethno-natural flow, or even that Chilean literary and cultural manifestations return to autochthonous origins on a regular and deeper basis. How can autochthonous components enter Chilean national poetry in the aftermath of all the literary traditions left behind by Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, and Nicanor Parra (among others)? How do autochthonous elements mix with European patterns in these poems, and what are the hallmarks that highlight the Chilean characteristics within the issue of Latin-American heterogeneity, which is the fundamental organizing principle of the development of Latin American cultures?

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