Program for Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of Spain & The Australian National University

SPANISH POETRY OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY: CURRENTS IN MODERNITY
Presenter: Dr Maria Dolores Herrero, University of Zaragoza
Wednesday 1 September 2010, 4-5 pm, School of Cultural Inquiry Conference Room, 1st floor A.D. Hope Bldg

The purpose of my talk will be to point to the major currents in modernity that can be found in the Spanish poetry written from the beginning of the twentieth century till the years that followed the end of the Spanish Civil War. I will begin by focusing on the 1920s, since it was then that a modernist stance led to an extraordinary flowering of poetry and to the consolidation of what has been labelled as ‘high modernity’. However, the idealistic poetics that dominated this decade in Spain were somehow counterbalanced by a different current, consisting of avant-garde writings which, although marginal when compared with the dominant symbolist branch, nonetheless contributed to the erosion of symbolism, while paving the way for a much later transition from modernity to postmodernity. Finally, I will argue that the economic and socio-political turmoil of the 1930s led to a new aesthetic shift which motivated an interest in overtly political poetry. This shift interrupted the erosion of some of the tenets of modernity that subjective poetry had entailed, just as the Civil War interrupted the cultural development of Spain. This deviation was to affect the path of much Spanish poetry and poetics until the 1960s.

SENSING AND SENSIBILITY: THE LATE RIPPLE OF COLONISATION?
Presenters: Dr Maria Dolores Herrero, University of Zaragoza and Dr Merlinda Bobis, University of Wollongong
Friday 22 October 2010 1-2 pm, Drama Lab, ANU Arts Centre

The Philippines was colonised by Spain for nearly 400 years (1521-1898), then by America for 40 years (1901-1945). As a writer primarily in English, Bobis has always sensed that her sensibility has greater affinity with literatures of Hispanic/Latin-American rather than of English/American origins. Is this literary affinity a late ripple of colonisation? On reading Bobis’ short stories for the first time, Herrero sensed them as ‘so familiar’, evoking Spanish writers. This recognition may well reinforce that late ripple, now a liminal space for productive-subversive cultural production, where the creative arc is both disruptive and expansive. Bobis and Herrero explore this liminal space by collaboratively examining and translating (from English to Spanish) Bobis’ short story ‘Fish-Hair Woman’. This process is a transnational and interdisciplinary conversation where different territories (cultures, languages, disciplines), now of equal agency, extend and disrupt each other. This paper documents that conversation.

Dr Dolores Herrero is Senior Lecturer in English and Postcolonial Literatures (Department of English and German Philology) at the University of Zaragoza, Spain. She is here as part of a sponsored visit by the Ministry of Culture of Spain. She has written numerous articles and book chapters on Australian and Indian authors, and has published various papers on Bobis’ works. Dr Herrero is a member of a research team currently working on the ethics and trauma component in contemporary fiction in English. For more information on this Research Group and Postgraduate Program, see http://cne.literatureresearch.net and www.unizar.es/departamentos/filologia_inglesa.

Dr Merlinda Bobis is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing (Faculty of Creative Arts) and an award-winning writer who has published novels, short stories, poetry books, a monograph on creative research, and plays. Five of her plays have been performed/produced in Australia, Philippines, France, Spain, USA, China, Thailand, and the Slovak Republic. She has used creative writing as an inroad to theorising. For more information on publications and awards, see http://www.austlit.edu.au and the author’s website http://www.merlindabobis.com.au

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