

## Reviews

**Siles Artés, José (2006): *Antología bilingüe de la poesía angloamericana (Siglos XIV-XX)*. Ajuntament de L'Eliaana (Valencia): La Torre del Virrey. 226 pp.**

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*La Biblioteca de la Torre del Virrey* has just published in 2006 *Antología bilingüe de la poesía angloamericana* (Siglos XIV-XX). The first consideration that comes to my mind is to congratulate the Valencian *Ajuntament de L'Eliaana* for this happy enterprise, which is unquestionably a firm step towards the backing and support of true advances in minority cultural movements. These initiatives are most welcome, and should accordingly be openly acknowledged.

*Antología bilingüe de la poesía angloamericana* (2006) is apparently the second part of Siles's *Poesía inglesa: Antología Bilingüe*, published in 1979. The ardent fire of Siles's vocation for the challenging enterprise of translating English poetry into Spanish has fortunately not been extinguished at all. On the contrary, it has rekindled, developing into a greater skilfulness, a more refined linguistic elegance, and a fruitful conceptual maturity.

The 1979 *Antología* was a smart thin book containing a beautiful bilingual selection of some of the most significant pages of English poetry. It was an outstanding translation. I enjoyed reading it slowly. I cannot help doing 'close reading' with poetry, as I have always relished the analysis of substance and form in a poem. Siles's 1979 *Antología*, besides providing me with the pleasure of reading bilingual poetry, served me two purposes: (a) it allowed me to give a second review to some of the canonical poems of English literature that I had read, first in the United States as a high school student, and later in Spain during my university years; and (b) it provided me with very useful material for the teaching of literature.

Now, nearly thirty years later, Siles offers us a new *Antología bilingüe de la poesía angloamericana* (2006) in a 226-page book, presented in a stylish horizontal format, containing 170 Anglo-American poems. The book consists of six parts, all of which are worth reading; (a) a foreword, (b) a historical outline of the five historical periods of the poems of the book, (c) the poems, (d) a biographical sketch or *semblanza* of each poet, (e) cultural notes, and (f) an index. Twenty-seven out of the 170 poems of the new *Antología* belong to his previous *Antología*, but as, Siles claims in the Foreword to the book, he has introduced changes in the old versions, which, using his words, "espero que para mejor".

As a critical reader of both works, the 2006 *Antología* displays, to the best of my knowledge, a greater maturity and grace in the mastery of a most appropriate diction of Spanish words, the difficult task of maintaining rhyme and rhythm in Spanish verses, and the not easy task of converting English images into Spanish, always preserving the original meaning and intention.

Although Siles Artés has evidently been guided by his likes and preferences in the selection of the poems, he has also taken into consideration, as he points out in the foreword of the book, those poems that, in his opinion, set new directions in the past towards

successive movements and schools in the poetry written in the English language. However, I am sure that Siles's experience as a University professor for many years will have likewise oriented him in the careful selection of this *antología*.

With this idea in mind he has arranged all the material into five parts: (1) Chaucer and the Renaissance, (2) The Civil war, the Restoration and Neoclassicism, (3) The Transition and Romanticism, (4) the Victorian Age, and (5) the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the authors of this anthology are British. However, we also come across some American poets, not only in 20<sup>th</sup>-century poetry, but in previous periods as well, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson or H. W. Longfellow, who have been included respectively, according to chronological criteria, in the Romantic period (1798-1830) and in the Victorian Age (1830-1900). The historical outline, the biographical sketch or *semblanza* of each poet and the cultural notes should not be overlooked at all. They are essential, and constitute a part of the whole work. It is obvious that they have been written by an experienced university teacher who is aware of his students' needs. They are like a checklist of the most relevant points.

From my point of view, the audience or readership that could benefit from this book is quite broad. I can see, at least, three groups of readers that will undoubtedly gain a great deal from entering this selected assortment of Anglo American poetry: professionals, university students and the public at large. The first one is formed by professional (or amateur) writers and readers of Spanish and English poetry; university scholars are also included in this group. The second one would consist of university students. Here I make two groups: (1) students doing English Studies in Spanish-speaking countries, and students of Spanish Studies in English-speaking countries; and (2) those doing Translation Studies. The third group, which is the largest, is the general public.

None of these groups will be disappointed after reading this *Antología*. The professional writers and readers of Spanish and English will find pleasure in re-reading a careful selection, both in English and Spanish, guided by the scholarship of doctor Siles's work. They will discover or re-discover, for example, the topics of love, beauty and *carpe diem* of Renaissance poets, the thoughts of Restoration and Neoclassical poetry; the values of freedom and of love of nature, found in the poets of Romanticism; the inventiveness, the defence of strict moral values and the inspired imagination of the so-called Victorian poets; and finally, the multicoloured themes and topics of the troubled 20<sup>th</sup>-century poetry.

For university students doing English Studies or Spanish Studies, this book will be a very helpful tool, as it provides the canonical milestones of Anglo-American poetry. With this book they will be able to understand English poetry in depth, as they discover, from a contrastive point of view, the linguistic devices that carry meaning and produce beauty in two different versions. Students doing translation will have the opportunity to verify in this dual version all the translation techniques that they have learned (thematisation, passivisation, modulations, transpositions, etc.) in their courses. Here are two illustrations of the many examples that can be found in the book:

1. Modulation:

depart to see → *se juntan* (George Herbert, page 37)

As flowers depart to see their mother-root  
*Como las flores se juntan con su madre raíz*

2. Transposition:

verb (pattering) → noun (*golpes*)  
 The chestnut pattering on the ground  
*Golpes de castaña sobre el suelo*

Both university groups of students will also have the opportunity to improve their learned vocabulary (sway: *mecer*, roar: *bramar*, flit: *revolotear*, etc.) presented in the context of beautiful poetic utterances.

The fourth group, the public at large, will enjoy not only the pleasure of a beautiful language but will learn as well the wisdom and the sensitivity of these visionary human beings called poets.

In order to attempt an assessment of the value of the translation of the Anglo-American poetry carried out by Siles, we can select as many categories as we wish, which will direct us in our analysis. For my purposes, I will choose only one, faithfulness, which in my opinion embraces many others. The dictionary gives, among others, the following connotations of the word 'faithful': true, loyal, accurate, reliable and credible. Siles has been faithful to the Spanish language and to the original spirit of each poem, as he says "sin desvirtuar sensiblemente el espíritu del original". To this effect, it is very appropriate to appeal to what he says in the foreword: "As I was gaining more self-assurance and confidence, I became more faithful to the Spanish language than to the English language". In my analysis of faithfulness I include both meaning and vividness. When I say vividness I am implying two things at least: the correct diction or appropriate choice of the words, and the successful exploitation of figures of speech in both languages.

If I were an American reviewer I would probably close my assessment with a complimentary sentence stating that this book is worth more than its price. I would also add my admiration for Siles's mastery of both languages and distinguished sensitivity, and for his masterly dexterity in turning the complex and intricate into easy, accessible and enjoyable things.

My warmest congratulations to doctor José Siles Artés for this beautiful gift that he has offered us as a fruit of both his scholarship and his refined aesthetic taste and valuable literary experience as a writer.

**Johnston, Bill (2003): *Values in English Language Teaching*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.**

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With a skilful integration of theory and practice, Johnston extends an invitation to readers to enter the world of values, identities, and ELT classrooms. His work is in many respects