

Foreword

The first section of the volume now in your hands is meant to provide you with information about the current state of research in Spain in three main areas: Literary Theory, Postcolonial Studies and Cultural Studies. In this section, the reader will find, accordingly, three pieces offering an overview of the origins, development and debates in these three fields accompanied by a juicy selected bibliography.

José Ángel García Landa gives a somewhat ironic account of the past and future fate of Literary Theory in Spain, which certainly deconstructs an area of knowledge he knows very well from the inside. His main worry is that the Literature scholars working in Spanish Departments of English seem to be conditioned by trends and circumstances outside their experience of the Spanish university. They address their work, thus, to the larger international scholarly community, in which they occupy a marginal position at best, rather than build a solid discipline of Literary Theory marked by Spanish pre-occupations.

Felicity Hand proposes an informed review of the main steps taken by Postcolonial Studies in Spain, where a number of specialists like herself have turned this discipline into one of the most popular among Literature and Culture research students. As she shows, Spanish researchers working simultaneously in the many diverse geographical areas included in Postcolonial Studies have successfully managed to integrate multiculturalism into the fabric of 'Filología Inglesa'.

The editor of this volume offers a succinct view of the peculiar situation of Cultural Studies in Spain due to their accidental introduction into the Spanish university mainly through departments of English Philology. In these there is a small corner for 'Cultura', understood mainly as a history of the English-speaking world, but this is quite different from what is usually meant by Cultural Studies. A change of mentality is, therefore, needed to adapt the Anglo-American definition of Culture to English Philology in Spain.

This initial section is followed by an interview with Fernando Galván, current President of AEDAN, which, hopefully, will interest all readers, whether

they are language, literature or culture oriented. In it Galván reminds us of the enormous progress of English Studies in Spain since their beginnings in 1952, exactly 50 years ago. It seems, therefore, a good moment to reconsider what has been done so far, which seems satisfactory enough, and to look forward to the future as Galván definitely does.

This interview is followed by three pieces meant to vindicate the work done by Spanish researchers in English Studies and covering, roughly, the popular canonical, the canonical and the popular extra-canonical in Literature (and film). Pedro Javier Pardo García offers a new reading of the popular classic by Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, claiming that its problematic ending is better approached by emphasising the fruitful cross-breeding between the myth of the American Adam and the Spanish traditions of the quixotic and the picaresque. Laura María Lojo deals, on her side, with a short narrative piece by Virginia Woolf, «An Unwritten Novel» that certainly deserves more attention. Lojo's paper considers the metafictional characteristics of this text, and how Woolf mocks in it the conventions of realistic fiction, pointing out as well the relative neglect of the genre of the short story in Literary Studies. Isabel Santaulària introduces the reader into the world of contemporary adventure heroes and heroines. As she argues, the evolution of the genre from its heyday in imperialist Britain to the contemporary cultural market dominated by cinema signifies a nostalgia for old, traditional masculinity together with a need to adapt – at least, on the surface – to the demands of modern feminism. The heroes are more sensitive, the heroines less dependent, yet the gender roles have not significantly altered.

Finally, the volume is closed by seven reviews of volumes written or edited by Spanish scholars working in English Studies, which will hopefully invite the reader to go on reading.

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