



To The Winds Our Sails. Irish Writers Translate Galician Poetry, edited by Mary O'Donnell and Manuela Palacios. County Clare, Ireland: Salmon Poetry, 2010

The title of this latest innovative volume edited by Manuela Palacios and Mary O'Donnell is only comprehensive under the image of the winds that reach Galicia's shores all year-round and that have always created the perfect environment for the sails to set journey along the seawaves, in endless movements of search for other lands; movements of dispersion and dislocation, where Celticism has been more than an influence, it has become a signal of sisterhood (and not just, brotherhood) as the volume highlights women poets, yet not exclusively. The link between Irish Celticism and that found in Galician territory goes far beyond the cultural artefacts, such as music and the everlasting sense of diaspora, felt in a people whose recognized autonomy came only in 1981, and still struggles for its own linguistic and social freedom. This volume of translations of poems, from and to English and Galician, ends up locating the marginal language of Galicia into the centre of discourse, thus, breaking frontiers of centre and periphery, as it rethinks not only linguistic issues, but also religious and social ones. Moreover, transgression in *To The Winds Our Sails* goes back to tradition and memory, as is the case of María Do Cebreiro's poems which allude directly to memory and to the literary tradition of Thomas Stern Eliot with the poem "A Terra Devastada" ("The Waste Land"). This recently published book, while exposing and dealing with the very particular case of linguistic and social dislocation as felt in Galicia, puts into practical terms the issue of hybridity as coined by Homi Bhabha through the spectre of a substantially representative selection of Galician poems translated into a commercially central language (English) and another far from central one (Irish) and by the lenses of other poets, speakers of English and Irish – reasons enough for the book to be considered innovative.

In fact, *To The Winds Our Sails. Irish Writers Translate Galician Poetry* proves translation to be a vivid example of what Homi Bhabha has pointed out as *cultural politics*, as it gathers poets and translators in their communal task of re-inscribing their own cultures, legitimating their own life modes from different geographies and cultures intertwined, as these are juxtaposed in negotiation. Also, the cultural translation to which this volume pays tribute allows for transformation, in the deconstruction of the traditional power relations between the (central) English speaking world and the (*marginal*, bilingual) Other (which is Galician and Irish, in this case). Within the sphere of two contaminated cultures, the selection of poems by various Galician writers (Marilar

Aleixandre, Xiana Arias, María Do Carme Kruckenberg, María Lado, María Do Cebreiro, Chus Pato, Luz Pichel, Luz Pozo Garza, Xohana Torres and Ana Romaní) deals with topics that vary from violence towards women and the excluded to Galician society and its ways regarding politics (as in the continuous acts of forgetting and remembering, for example, amongst others). More intimate themes of belonging, such as those verified in María Do Carme Kruckenberg's poems, translated by Anne Le Marquand Hartigan, and Xohana Torres's, translated by Celia De Freine, are also revealed. The set of poets-translators quoted above are examples of how the choices of the poets' binomials seem to have found precise correspondence in style and thematic preoccupations – the Irish poet Celia De Fréine, who has been initially awarded for her writings in Irish, for instance, pairs with Xohana Torres, whose first poem's translation in this anthology appears in Gaelic. Furthermore, the order in which the one Irish version appears (out of each group of five poems) may possibly suggest the different levels with which the Galician poets involved in the project refer to in their own personal politics/poetics. María do Carme Kruckenberg translated by Anne Le Marquand Hartigan attests to the depth of cultural correspondence the editors applied to the case, for both poets seem to have expressed having lived a life “to the full” (to quote Manuela Palacios in her introductory words to the volume, 22).

The intermingling of both cultures (Celtic and Galician) is creatively weaved, as one can notice along the diverse reappropriations of both form and content of the poetic structures, such as the words added to Luz Pozo Garza's translated verses into English or in the innovation with which Anne Hartigan interprets Kruckenberg – as in the word “patrimonio” translated as “possession” and “caridade” that turns into “failure of love” (50-51) or, yet, when Maurice Harmon reinterprets Ana Romaní's poems, an occasion in which the term “roupa” becomes “part of me” in English (110-111). In conclusion, one can say that from the selection to the distribution of the poems, as well as the translations themselves, *To The Winds Our Sails* goes deep into the proposal of cultural translation as reappropriation, in spite of the book's unique process: Irish poets (re) translated Galician poets from an initial English version, whose responsibility is attributed to Minia Bongiorno García. More than a transposition of culture and language, as a means of validation, O'Donnell and Palacios' attitude is particularly notable these days when knowledges must include *new epistemologies* and happen in constant, mutual dialogue. For this reason, *To The Winds Our Sails* travels far, as it crosses the previously unimaginable oceans of unstable waters: poetry, politics and reappropriation. What is left, after *Bonegal* and *percebes* – translatable in footnotes in the book? New perceptions of/for further epistemologies: poetry, politics, identity and the transdisciplinarity of areas – the academic and the literary ones, to mention just the most immediate couple of them – along with history and sociology, as scholars-poets transcreate other poets for something beyond the pleasure of reading Poetry, the betterment of society.

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