Editorial

Galician Identity in Motion

Mobility and migration are widely considered as key for the understanding of Galician identity. From Rosalía de Castro’s ‘Adiós ríos; adiós fontes’ and ‘As viudas d’os vivos e as viudas d’os mortos’, Castelao’s ‘En Galiza non se pide nada. Emígrase’ and Ramón Otero Pedrayo’s view of Galicia as a ‘pobo en camiño’, to recent texts such as María Alonso’s essay Transmigrantes. Fillas da precaridade (2017), displacement has had a constant presence in Galician culture. The twenty-first century has also seen the publication of a variety of academic studies on contemporary Galicia with mobility at their core, which have provided innovative approaches and re-situated Galicia in the global context. Examples of these are Kirsty Hooper’s Writing Galicia into the World. New Cartographies, New Poetics (2011), Eugenia Romero’s Contemporary Galician Culture in a Global Context: Movable Identities (2012) and José Colmeiro’s Peripheral Visions/Global Sounds. From Galicia to the World (2017). In a similar vein, the present special issue ‘Galician Identity in Motion: Approaches to Displacement in the 20th Century’ brings together a group of articles that revolve around mobility and migration in twentieth-century Galicia, with a special focus on literary representations (in a range of genres: travel writing, the novel and the short story) but also including an anthropological study and a variety of theoretical frameworks (feminism, cultural studies, historiography and sociology, amongst others).

The origins of this special issue go back to the Asociación Internacional de Estudos Galegos 10th conference (‘Galiza alén do Arco Atlántico: unha visión multidisciplinar dos estudios galegos’, Caerdydd/Cardiff 2012). Some of the works presented at the conference were included in the publications Trama e urda: contribucions multidisciplinares desde os estudios galegos (Consello da Cultura Galega 2015) and ‘Crevices Exposed: Blind Spots in Galician Textuality’ (Abriu: Estudos de textualidade do Brasil, Galicia e Portugal 2015), both of them edited by Olga Castro (Aston University) and María Liñeira (Maynooth University). The present collection has had a bumpier journey, and only includes two articles that were presented at the AIEG conference (those by Katie Brown and David Miranda-Barreiro). As editor, I am grateful to all the contributors who agreed to take part in this publication.

The issue opens with ‘Finding Galicia in Europe: European Travelogues of Early Galician Nationalists’, where Katie Brown examines the role played by the encounter with other European countries in the articulation of Galician identity by early nationalists, as shown in their travel texts, both fictional (Ramón Otero Pedrayo’s Arredor de sá), and autobiographical (Vicente Risco’s Mitteleuropa and Alfonso Daniel Rodríguez Castelao’s Diario 1921). Brown offers an original approach by providing a reading of these texts that draws on travel writing theory. Europe also plays a pivotal role in Ana Garrido González’s contribution, ‘O non-lugar na emigración galega. O espazo e o corpo como portadores de memoria en Adiós María de Xohana Torres’. In this case, the focus is on migration and its effects not only on those who leave, but primarily on the family members who stay. At the same time, and as depicted in Torres’ novel, migration to Europe at the end of the 1960s coincided with another form of mobility within Galicia, from rural to urban areas, which
also prompted the need to redefine the identity of those affected by it. Using Marc Augé’s concept of the ‘non-place’, Garrido González argues that such overlapping mobilities create ‘anonymous border spaces without identity’. Also focusing on migration, but to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, ‘A Galician Werewolf in New York: Migration and Transgressive Femininity in Claudio Rodríguez Fer’s “A muller loba”’ by David Miranda-Barreiro offers a feminist reading of Rodríguez Fer’s short story, located in a lesser known destination of the Galician diaspora. Miranda-Barreiro’s article argues for the importance of addressing the migratory movement to New York, while also engaging with issues of gender, globalisation and transnationalism. Moving away from literary studies, in ““Más allá del Gran Sol”: O itinerario transoceánico das pesqueiras galegas desde a perspectiva dos Estudos Culturais (1945–1955)” Esmeralda Broullón studies the strong presence of Galician fishermen in Cadiz and their move from the Gran Sol bank to South Atlantic waters. Combining field work in local archives and interviews with some of the protagonists of this migration, Broullón provides an insight into the conditions endured by crew members and puts forward the view of fishing as a cultural system. The issue closes with Claudio Rodríguez Fer’s guest article ‘Oxford & Cambridge: viaxe a un poema de mil anos’, where the poet and academic describes his experiences in these two English cities in a text full of literary and cultural references, and which complements the account of his travels to Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Ireland included in ‘Meus amores celtas’ (2010).

From the 1930s to the 1990s, from Cantador to New York, the articles included in this special issue of Galicia 21. Journal of Contemporary Galician Studies showcase the importance that movement (often painful, sometimes liberating) has had in twentieth-century Galicia.

David Miranda-Barreiro
Editor
Works Cited


