

Introduction

Galicia on the move

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If migratory processes inform and construct global imaginaries, discussions of the societal impact of Galician mobility remain as pertinent as ever. The Galician community has been characterized by the intranational and transnational movement of a significant portion of its people since the nineteenth century, a key period in the revitalization of Galician language and culture contemporaneous with the Western consolidation of national identities and nation states. The historic role of Galician diasporas in shaping cultural consciousness has been well documented but constantly demands reappraisal in the so-called age of globalization, as heterogeneous waves of migrants continue to leave in search of opportunities elsewhere. Whilst scholarship on the lasting impact of emigration during the late 1800s and early 1900s abounds, more recent migratory processes during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in particular demand further scrutiny.

This special issue will interrogate the decisive role of movement and dislocation in the Galician cultural repertoire of recent times, keeping in mind how this relates to notions of ‘space’, ‘place’, and ‘home’ through a diachronic analysis of the ways in which the mobility of people, ideas, and their representations have evolved.¹ We adopt an historical, transnational and spatial approach to the discussion of the role of mobility and migration in Galician cultural production through exploration of some of the most representative debates concerning the displacement that has historically defined and continues to define Galicia. The present articles encompass a range of genres, locations, and time periods, bringing fresh insight into the textual renderings of both canonical and lesser-known cultural producers whose work correlates with distinct waves of Galician migration

– intranational migrants or non-migrants who engage with migratory processes, as well as first- or second-generation diasporic subjects based abroad. The essays offer multidisciplinary approaches to the topic of study, including ecofeminism, queer studies and postmemory, which respond to the critical consensus that demands reconsideration of the often-restrictive discourses of traditional cultural nationalism. A number of interrelated questions are posed: in what ways have intranational and transnational migration informed Galician cultural production? How have expressions of mobility evolved in response to changing social, political, and economic landscapes, and how much do issues such as economic necessity, rural to urban movement, and archetypal tropes of sentimentality continue to be relevant? To what extent do Galician migrants express competing allegiances to national and transnational spaces, and how does the discourse of mobility and migration reconfigure interpretations of the nation more broadly?

Drawing on a framework informed by theories of transnationalism, mobility, and space, we press for the need to reconsider the way in which established paradigms in migration and diaspora studies have evolved in the Galician context in recent years, seeking to engage with and expand upon current research avenues in the rich and multifaceted body of criticism on Galician migration. A priority here is the examination of the extent to which social hierarchies relating to the intersections of nation, gender, sexuality and class are reproduced or debunked in distinct spaces through transnational as well as intranational dispersion. Although greater social liberties may serve as a ‘pull’ factor for migration, they are not necessarily realized in migrants’ experience, as Danny Barreto, Iolanda Ogando, and Carmen Pereira-Muro highlight in their contributions.

As a ‘satellite culture’ that is linked to its many diasporas, Galicia is commonly conceived of in relation to its history of transnational migration, which we understand as ‘the process[es] by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement’ (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1995: 48). Cultural manifestations of mobilities fundamentally allow us to ‘examine the international contexts through which nations are created’ (Aguiar, Mathieson, and Pearce 2019: 12). Heeding the call of Kirsty Hooper and Helena Miguélez-Carballeira for ‘critical approaches to the nation’ (2009) as presented in their special issue of *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* on Galician studies over a decade ago, we revisit the sustained impact of Galician mobility on dialogues of identity construction both at home and abroad, interrogating James Clifford’s claims that ‘whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. They are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to host countries and their norms’ (1994: 307–308). Álex Alonso

Nogueira highlights the potential of migration to subvert purist notions of culture in his application of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* to the Galician context:

migration and diaspora opened up the possibility of reenacting collective identity and its potential value as a narrative of redemption in both the political and the spiritual sense of the word, but without falling into exclusionary meanings or mere nostalgia for the past. (2017: 52)

For her part, Doreen Massey, in her influential work on space, has argued that the impact of external flows and influences is often ignored by more stringent notions of home and nation, for 'the identity of a place does not derive from some internalized history. It derives, in large part, precisely from the specificity of its interactions with "the outside"' (1994: 169), a situation encapsulated in Gustavo San Román's interpretation of *posmorriña*, a form of inherited nostalgia, in one of the essays included here.

Moreover, as a diasporic non-state nation located on the fringes of the Iberian Peninsula and the European continent, Galicia defies territorial constraints to become what Cristina Moreiras-Menor describes as:

un país sin fronteras, con señas identitarias propias y diferenciadas, sin geografía cerrada, donde sus límites territoriales fluctúan al paso de los movimientos imparables de sus pobladores, haciendo imposible marcar las fronteras exteriores – sean con Portugal, España, Latinoamérica o Estados Unidos – o las interiores, que se borran ante la presencia siempre constante de viajeros tramontanos. (2011: 155)

[a country without borders, with its own distinguishing marks of identity, without a closed geography, where territorial limits fluctuate according to the incessant movements of inhabitants, making it impossible to mark exterior borders, be they with Portugal, Spain, Latin America or the United States – or internal ones, which disappear due to the constant presence of travellers passing through]

Diasporas have historically been envisaged as 'suggesting displacement from a center' (Durham Peters 2010: 20), and in the Galician case, as the present studies demonstrate, diasporic movements inform and are informed by that centre. Manuel Forcadela interprets from a Lacanian perspective the lack of a sense of place experienced by migrant subjects, suggesting that the Galician emigrant usually suffers a 'castración da presenza do territorio' ['castration from a territorial presence']. The critic connects this 'castration' with an implicit development of

saudade, the stereotypically Galician-Portuguese nostalgic state of mind, describing it as a

construto cultural dunha colectividade e dunha época [que] fala do pobo galego e fala da súa época. E o pobo galego fala, a través da saudade, dunha época. A saudade é o falar desa xente nesa época. E a saudade di: non ao desarraigo. (2013: 53)

[cultural construct of a community and of a time (that) speaks of the Galician people and speaks of their time. And the Galician people speak, through *saudade*, of a time. *Saudade* is the speech of these people at that time. And *saudade* says no to uprooting]

Indeed the concept of *saudade* relates to *morriña*, the sense of longing for home or the past that is said to define the Galician psyche, epitomized in the melancholic poetry of Galicia's poet laureate Rosalía de Castro, and explored by some of the essays included here. The migrant experience fundamentally entails both material and psychological gain as well as loss, leaving a significant mark on individuals – those who travel and also those who remain behind – shaping identities in both source and host communities, as Barreto shows in his work on queer subcultures in Galician rural spaces, and Ogando highlights in her essay on Antón Villar Ponte's corpus on Galician emigration.

José Colmeiro (2009, 2017, 2018) argues that past and present diasporas contribute to the Galician community's distinctive sense of a 'glocal' identity, related to its unique location as a contact zone of competing forces of the local and the global. Victor Roudometof, drawing on Robertson and White, has theorized glocalization as a symbiotic tension between micro (local) and macro (global) processes, suggesting that it 'offers the means to bridge the divide between the space of flows and the space of places' (2015: 777). Whilst globalization represents a sizeable threat to local cultures, the amalgamation of the competing elements of the local and the global can be seen, for example, in how migration can provoke an attachment to home traditions that is informed by a globalized outlook, as some of the essays in this issue show. The prism of the transnational has the potential to interrogate the influence of diasporas and global processes more generally by contextualizing identity beyond geographical limits, encompassing the exchange of people, technologies, goods, and ideas across national boundaries and through abstract spaces. As per Steven Vertovec's definition of transnationalism as 'a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders [...], certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified' (2009: 3), the diverse, competing, and interlinked modes of social organisation, mobility, and communication can serve

to counteract persisting essentialist identification strategies. Indeed, migration today continues to shape the political sphere at a global level, as evidenced by the discourse surrounding border politics in the United Kingdom and the United States and the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe. The macro processes of interaction between communities can, however, overshadow what has been termed ‘transnationalism from below’ (Guarnizo and Smith 1998), which includes, for our purposes, the textual manifestations of the everyday practices and social formations that are informed by global flows.

In light of this, consideration of the spatial dimension of intranational and transnational migration is crucial to the analysis of its impact in both source and diasporic communities (Sheller 2017). When considered in relation to the spatial, facets of the transnational model can nonetheless serve to re-evaluate the established internal social order, be it in terms of nation, gender, class, ethnicity or sexuality, in spaces constructed in both source and host communities.² Indeed, Barreto’s essay underlines the subversive potential of rural spaces in non-metronormative LGBTQ narratives. Michael Kearney, drawing on Basch, has shown how transnational processes transcend but nonetheless remain tied to nation states; ‘a deterritorialized nation-state may extend its hegemony over its citizens who, as migrants or refugees, reside outside of its national boundaries’ (1995: 553). This point is illustrated in the present issue in David MirandaBarreiro’s exploration of the invisibilization of Galician migrants who become subsumed into Spanish or Hispanic identities in the United States. As Hooper has warned, ‘the problem of models that seek to inflect the national, whether post/trans/intra or whatever, is that they facilitate the dominance and naturalization of an essentialist version of cultural nationalism’ (2011: 33). She does, however, favour the spatial emphasis of the transnational. Arguably, a spatial focus can serve to contest the abstract tenets of transnationalism, as well as the extent to which the prefix ‘trans’ potentially denies the enduring relevance of national identities, for ‘home appears through specific places yet also transcends them; it is an experience that simultaneously is rooted in a particular, familiar, meaningful place and yet opens into wonder at the differentiation of the world’ (Relph 2008, preface to reprint edition), as Ogando and Miranda-Barreiro suggest through the dual identities of Galician migrants.

Transnationalism can theoretically account for abstract conceptions of ‘home’ that are not located in a set space, for as Avtar Brah (1996) posits, migrants maintain an ambivalent relationship to this very concept as they negotiate allegiances to more than one place. Building on this abstract interpretation of space, we can evaluate the extent to which Galician cultural production is informed by Galicia’s evolution as a result of its transnational condition into what Brah calls the ‘diaspora space’. This is understood as a location, be it imaginary or real, that is historically characterized by the departure and/or arrival of diasporic

communities and configures the identity of the migrant, as shown by a number of the articles included here. For Brah, it represents an intersectional, liminal, and multifaceted contact zone consisting of axes of power informed by autochthonous as well as migrant discourses, the formation of which demands nuanced evaluation, as ‘all diasporas are differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces, even as they are implicated in the construction of a common “we”’ (1996: 184). Migration can lead to a fragmented sense of identity and loss of a sense of place, yet spaces are ‘multiply inhabited and constantly reworked by different actors at different times’ (Sheringham 2010: 61), contingent on external (in many cases transnational) influences and processes. Mobility presents opportunities for dynamic cultural products that transcend territorial constraints. In the case of Galician migrants, this can challenge cultural bias to produce ‘counter narratives’, following Brah’s extension of Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ (1983). Indeed, the influence of diaspora spaces can be found in the work of many Galician writers and artists who did not themselves emigrate, as we will see here in studies on the work of Antón Villar Ponte and secondgeneration immigrant to Uruguay Ángel Rama, or those whose mobility is specifically intranational, such as Emilia Pardo Bazán. Fundamentally, the fluid parameters of the diaspora space can be understood in the way Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman conceive of space and place more generally:

places and landscapes are continually practised and performed through the movement and unfolding of a myriad of people and things. Rather than think of places or landscapes as settings, surfaces or contained spaces through and across which things move, it is perhaps more useful to think about the ongoing processes of ‘shaping’, ‘placing’ and ‘landscaping’ through which the world is shaped and formed. Space, place and landscape are best approached as ‘verbs’ rather than as ‘nouns’. (2011: 7)

This dynamic conception of space facilitates interrogation of the role of intranational and transnational migration in the Galician imaginary.

The so-called ‘waves’ or flows of emigration from Galicia in the past two centuries have historically been conditioned by a number of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors (Lewis 1990), most notably poverty, conflict, and, during the Franco era, political oppression. With the dismantling of the Spanish empire during the nineteenth century, which culminated in the Spanish-American War of 1898, severe economic decline notoriously led to extensive transnational movement, with *émigrés* setting out for colonial hubs such as Havana and Buenos Aires in search of a better life. Travel had become more accessible with advances in modes of transport such as the transoceanic ships that significantly reduced journey time, coupled with the permeability of national state borders open to an immigrant labour force. As Pereira-Muro demonstrates in her article on Emilia Pardo Bazán

(whom Joseba Gabilondo [2009] posits as a transnational writer due to her conflicted role in Galicia and Spain), intrastate migration was also common at this time, as many Galicians headed for other regions of Spain; often, though not exclusively, from remote rural areas to industrialized urban centres.³ During this earlier period of emigration, a larger number of men travelled abroad to seek their fortune whilst women often remained at home maintaining the household and working the land (as represented in stereotypical images of this time), although entire families also left in search of a better life, which led to a rapid decline in Galicia's population. Pereira-Muro notes that Pardo Bazán subverted traditional perceptions by dealing with the displacement of a female protagonist that is not motivated by economic factors. The rural communities of Italy and Ireland experienced similar diasporic phenomena, though there is evidence to suggest that emigration from Galicia began earlier than in other European regions, and followed a more intense and structured pattern (Vázquez González 2013). Antón Villar Ponte was a prolific commentator on this wave of emigration, as Ogando shows. The parents of Ángel Rama, the Uruguayan writer whose work is here studied by San Román, emigrated to Uruguay at the turn of the twentieth century.

The severe political and economic ramifications of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and Franco's ensuing dictatorship (1939–1975), further exacerbated in Galicia by the systematic oppression of Galician language and culture, ensured another lengthy period of emigration *en masse*, not to mention countless cases of forced exile.⁴ Much of the emigration during this period was to European countries open to foreign labour, as well as Mexico (which was ideologically committed to welcoming Republican refugees) and the United States (Taboadela Álvarez 2007). The gender dynamics of migration at this point had shifted somewhat from the stereotypical image of the male *émigré*, as Alexandre Vázquez González (2013) affirms that by the 1960s, 50 per cent of migrants from Galicia were female. The second half of the twentieth century, in turn, was characterized by migratory flows to industrialized destinations within Europe, such as Germany, France, Switzerland, and Belgium, and to other big cities within the Spanish territory such as Barcelona, Madrid and Bilbao. This new wave of migrants were in many cases qualified professionals, which allowed them to occupy better-paid jobs (Taboadela Álvarez 2007: 104).

The transition to democracy and entry into the European Union in 1986 ensured increased mobility across Galicia's borders. Triggered by the global economic crash which hit Galicia in 2007, coupled with the erosion of the Spanish welfare state, emigration once again reached startling rates.⁵ As María Alonso Alonso (2017) comments in her discussion of the plight of contemporary migrants, the most recent migratory wave contrasts with preceding eras in that it consists of individuals who are more often than not highly educated, forced to look elsewhere for job opportunities and improved standards of living as a result

of widespread youth unemployment. This ‘brain drain’ of the educated elite underlines the enduring constraints of social class on migration, which mean that it is not always an accessible alternative, even in times of widespread economic downturn. Official figures from the Galician government’s Secretaría Xeral da Emigración [General Secretariat of Emigration] suggest that the number of Galicians living abroad has doubled from 280,000 in 2003 to 519,646 in 2019, meaning that one in five Galicians lives outside Galicia.⁶ These statistics do not account for the impact of other migratory phenomena on Galicia, namely the influx of immigrants from diverse corners of the globe, whose contribution to Galicia’s global outlook must not be overlooked, as well as emigrant returnees.⁷

The rise of low-cost travel, coupled with relative political stability, has meant that today return migration, or at least mobility between home and abroad, is not as difficult as in previous decades. Globalized economic networks, high-speed travel, instantaneous telecommunication, and advanced digital technologies have come to play a key role in shaping the postmodern experience in so-called ‘developed’ societies in particular; ‘a new and violent phase of “time-space compression”’ (Massey 1994: 157) has reformulated the very concept of mobility, so that it differs substantially from the experience of Galician emigrants in the past. Indeed, mobility tends towards the creation of fluid and dynamic identities which become superimposed upon each other, but also runs the risk of fragmentation. This is especially palpable in contemporary societies, as Arjun Appadurai has warned: ‘the story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is hardly a new feature of human history. But when it is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities’ (1996: 4). The components of Galician mobility and its relation to space have shifted significantly due to numerous socio-historical factors, and the heterogeneity of Galician migrants throughout history, in terms of generation, class, gender, sexuality, language, and ideology, is exposed in the following pages. The multifaceted and fragmented nature of diasporas is encompassed by the countless individual stories that have emerged from Galicia, so that the continued impact of displacement on the cultural legacy of the community cannot be overstated.

Carmen Pereira-Muro (Texas Tech University) opens this special issue with an article entitled ‘Struggling with the “Rosalian myth”: Galician migration, gender, and nationalism in *Morriña* by Emilia Pardo Bazán’. She analyses the novel, published in 1889, through the issues of gender, class, and regional identity that affect Esclavitud, the Galician protagonist who emigrates to Madrid to work as a maid. Pereira-Muro draws on ecofeminist theory to interrogate Pardo Bazán’s eroticization of the female migrant body through the Galician landscape, examining the discourses of nostalgia that inform the regionalist representation of the migrant subject in the literature of the late nineteenth century.

The contribution of Iolanda Ogando (Universidad de Extremadura), ‘Emigration in Antón Villar Ponte’s Theatre: Foundations and Projections’, turns to pre-1936 theatre, examining the work of Villar Ponte, the renowned Galician playwright and member of the Irmandades da fala [Language Brotherhood], whose play *Almas mortas* (1922) addresses the factors which contributed to migratory movements. Drawing on the concept of imagology, Ogando shows how this particular play relates to many of Villar Ponte’s essays in its often-contradictory treatment of both emigration and return migration and their effect on Galician identity.

In ‘*Posmoriña* in Ángel Rama’s *Tierra sin mapa*’, which centres on second-generation Uruguayan literary critic Ángel Rama, son of Galician emigrants, Gustavo San Román (University of St Andrews) proposes the concept of *posmoriña* as a counterpoint to Rama’s postcolonial and poststructuralist views of literature. *Tierra sin mapa* is one of Rama’s lesser-known publications, a book of vignettes set in rural Galicia where the protagonist is Rama’s mother, Carolina Facal, as a young girl. The text describes a number of elements traditionally associated with rural Galicia and with the feeling of homesickness or *moriña*. San Román suggests that due to the fact that this experience is refracted via the child of the person who emigrated it can be usefully related to the notion of ‘postmemory’ proposed by Marianne Hirsch and other cultural memory theorists, in a process that may well apply to other writers, especially in the River Plate area, descended from European immigrants and craving external roots.

Galician migration to New York is the focus of David Miranda-Barreiro’s (Bangor University) article “‘Little Spain’ or ‘Little Galicia’? Cinematic representations of Galician migration to New York and New Jersey’. Miranda-Barreiro draws attention to the invisibilized condition of the Galician migrant in the United States, often overshadowed by the umbrella term ‘Spanish migrant’, despite the fact that over half of Spanish immigrants there are of Galician origin. His essay considers three of the most recent cinematic representations of the Galician diaspora in the United States: the documentaries *Little Spain* (2014) by Artur Balder and *Os 15000 de Newark* (2017) by Anxo Fernández, together with the feature film *Little Galicia* (2015) by Alber Ponte.

Finally, in his article entitled ‘Returning to Rurality: Queering Rural Spaces in Galician Literature’, Danny Barreto (Colgate University) draws on diverse examples of textual production and cultural activism to vindicate the rural as a site of queer resistance, challenging traditional notions of LGBTQ rural to urban migration. Barreto shows how rural queerscapes subvert the implicit hierarchy of the urban over the rural that has come to characterize Galician culture in recent years, examining associations of the heteropatriarchy with the rural and challenging the extent to which LGBTQ discourses can overlook the potential of rural spaces.

These essays fundamentally respond to Colmeiro's timely insistence on the need for the 'deperipheralization and deterritorialization' (2017) of cultural media and explore the 'counter narratives' (Brah 1996) that have emerged and continue to emerge from within and beyond Galicia. By navigating the complex issues surrounding Galician migration and mobility in terms of nation, ideology, identity, and space, as well as gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, they build on productive recent developments in Galician studies, highlighting the enduring relevance of this phenomenon to the Galician cultural imaginary.

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Notes

- 1 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, make reference to the way in which diasporas, transterritorialization, exile, or any other migratory movement appear to promote 'a valid and active sense of self [which] may have been eroded by *dislocation*, resulting from migration' (2004: 9). For them, 'dislocation' implies a deconstruction of identity and a subsequent reconstruction of it in the form of a new hybrid sense of self.
- 2 Hooper (2012) has influentially proposed the alternative of what she terms 'lecturas relacionais' ['relational readings'], drawing from Glissant's 'poetics of relation' as a means of reading Galician literature beyond the essentialist boundaries of language and nation, an approach which encompasses the role of migratory processes in Galician culture.
- 3 For further reading on migration within the Spanish state, see for example Acuña's (2014) work on Galicians in Madrid.
- 4 The 2016–2017 Special Issue of *Galicia21*, 'Galician identity in motion: Approaches to displacement in the 20th century' edited by David Miranda-Barreiro, is concerned with literary production stemming from the dictatorship and post-transition period.
- 5 For a sociological analysis of contemporary emigration resulting from the economic recession, see Domingo and Blanes (2017).
- 6 Information taken from the Instituto Galego de Estadística, available at www.ige.eu.
- 7 For further reading on immigration and return emigration in Galicia, see Fernández-Suárez (2017).

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