

“What Countrey’s This?
And Whither Are We Gone?”

**“What Countrey’s This?
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Papers presented at the Twelfth International
Conference on the Literature of Region and Nation
(Aberdeen University, 30th July – 2nd August 2008)

Edited by

J. Derrick McClure, Karoline Szatek-Tudor
and Rosa E. Penna

**CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

J. DERRICK MCCLURE

In August 1986, a group of scholars convened at Aberdeen University for the first International Conference on the Literature of Region and Nation. Thus was initiated a series of biennial conferences of which this collection of papers represents the twelfth, the thirteenth will have taken place by the date of publication, and plans for the fourteenth are in hand at the time of writing.

The premise on which the first conference was founded was the decline and disappearance of a central literary tradition stemming from metropolitan England against which the rest of the world had to measure itself. As Ronald Draper, who chaired the conference, wrote in the introduction to the proceedings volume:¹ “In artistic, if not in political and economic, matters there no longer exists the kind of prevalent certainty which stems from the self-assurance of a culturally dominant group whose standards are implicitly accepted even by those who rebel against them.” Twenty-four years and eleven conferences later it is no longer necessary even to remark on this; but as the literary traditions of areas where the writ of “the cheils o’ London, Cam an’ Ox”² no longer runs continue to burgeon and flourish, so too does the conference series.

In the years between the first and the twelfth, the conferences have ranged widely. Since the opening meeting in Scotland, not only England and Wales but Luxembourg, Slovakia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, South Africa, the United States and Japan have hosted memorable gatherings, with Hungary and Italy first in the queue for future events. This impressive widening of the geographical net is also reflected in the composition of individual conferences: the fifty-odd delegates who assembled, again at Aberdeen, in 2008 included representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, England, Germany, Hungary, Italy,

¹ Draper, R.P. ed. 1989. *The Literature of Region and Nation*. London: MacMillan. 2.

² “The fellows of London, Cambridge and Oxford”. Allan Ramsay, “Answer to William Hamilton”, 1.49.

Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, Spain (Galicia, to be precise), Ulster and the USA;³ and if scholars resident in lands other than their own can be considered as representing their host countries, then Norway and the United Arab Emirates must be added to the list. Concomitantly, the scope of the series has widened greatly: at first focusing principally (though never exclusively) on the British Isles, national and regional literatures from not only the rest of the English-speaking world but Europe and Asia now receive regular attention. As with all long-running conference series, each successive RNLA conference is now an eagerly-awaited event, in which both newcomers and veteran attendees, both young post-graduate students and *éminences grises* of scholarship, present papers and participate enthusiastically in the discussions.

Aberdeen's five hundred year old University is, on any showing, a highly fitting venue for a conference of this kind. As within both Europe and the English-speaking world Scotland is a strongly individual culture area, so within Scotland is the North-East, with its proud awareness of a distinctive identity (still maintained in spite of the decline of the farming and fishing communities which were historically its backbone) and determined upholding of the richly expressive dialect of the Scots tongue in which this culture is embodied: for this see the song with which Sheena Blackhall, one of the most accomplished in the dialect's long procession of fine poets, entertained the Conference at one of the social events. The University itself had in 1986, and had greatly developed and enhanced by 2008, an international reputation as a centre for Scottish and Irish studies in the fields of literature, language and folk culture. The two topics chosen as keynote themes of the conference, "Local voices: dialect and folk-speech in regional literatures" and "Exile and homeland: the preservation of identity in diaspora literature", were directly suggested by features of the local cultural identity. No more than at previous conferences, however, were those suggested topics intended to exclude others — nor did they, for the content of both plenary and section papers ranged as widely as attendees at these conferences have come to expect.

The present volume contains twenty-two of the papers delivered at the conference. All have been peer-reviewed, and some substantially revised. Though the figure represents only half the number of papers actually presented, their combined scope is as noteworthy as their individual quality. In accordance with the approach which has characterised the

³ The alphabetical ordering is more appropriate, in this context, than the order in which I first wrote the list: starting with Scotland, the host nation, and arranging the countries in order of geographical distance from this assumed centre!

RNLA conferences throughout, for this volume the papers have been arranged thematically, under headings which reflect their general focus.

“Literature of Region and Nation” is, in the broadest application of the phrase, the theme of the entire conference series; but more focused discussions of what precisely it implies are to be found in the first three papers. David Clark examines three areas of Europe’s Celtic fringe, and shows that though in Galicia, unlike Scotland and Ireland, the original Celtic language is long extinct, not only does the indigenous minority language share with Scots and both Scottish and Irish Gaelic a long resistance to neglect and active oppression, but the Galicians have learned much from the Scots and the Irish in their endeavours to develop a literary tradition reflecting and proclaiming the distinctiveness of their cultural identity. Christopher Whyte focuses on Scotland, a multi-regional nation in which the complex inter-relationship of language, culture (including literature) and politics is both fascinating and infuriating; and subjects some prevalent assumptions to searching and critical scrutiny. Finally in this section, Katharina Mewald, through her examination of an iconic Scottish text, finds evidence that its intimate focus on a small, self-contained and disappearing community is in itself the root of its universal appeal: the universal as a transcendence of the local.

Anne McKim’s paper in the next section, “Representations in Art and Writing”, is introduced by a quotation which has suggested the title for the entire volume: “What Country’s this? And whither are we gone?” Another possible epigraph for this section might be chosen from Robert Burns, one of the greatest of all examples of a poet whose appeal is at once local, national and universal: “O wad some Pow’r the giftie gie us, / To see ourselves as ithers see us!”⁴ The papers in this section explore various aspects of constructed identity, through literature alone or, as in the paper which opens the section, the interaction of literature and visual art. The central concept of Johan Jacobs’ paper is that of *ekphrasis*, “the literary description of a work of art”; and his detailed study illuminates the complex and multifarious ways in which verbal and pictorial artistic works have been made to interact in the development of a post-colonial identity in South Africa. Donna Potts finds an intriguing link between the traditional (and deliberately contrasting) literary personifications of Ireland and England, reflecting the historical antagonism between the nations, and the contemporary environmental movement which seeks to preserve the rural landscape for cultural as well as ecological reasons. The peculiar case of Scotland in the colonial period, abroad an energetic

⁴ “To a Louse”, l. 43-44.

colonising power and at home the victim of an insidious form of cultural colonisation, is examined by Carla Sassi through an analysis of some recent Scottish fictional presentations of the Caribbean colonies. Anne McKim focuses on the eighteenth century, illustrating the changing response of successive English travellers in Scotland as the country became both less unfamiliar and more assimilated in reality to their expectations; and Kirsty A. Macdonald takes up the story of literary imaging of Scotland in an examination of some recent works in which traditional romantic portrayals of the Highlands and Islands are effectively undermined. Reiko Aiura-Vigers draws on a chronologically and geographically wide range of individual manifestations of a cultural universal, the human response to animals, to examine the many ways in which animal imagery has been used to comment on the human condition.

The theme of exile has frequently arisen as a topic for discussion at the RNLA conferences; and the recent emergence of “diaspora studies” has found a ready application in the worldwide distribution of people of Scottish and Irish descent. Iain MacPherson chooses his examples from the remarkable (in scale and quality) poetic output of the community of exiled Gaelic-speaking Scots in Canada, and relates the poetic expression of contrasting experiences of and attitudes to the New World to the social history of the Highlanders both before and after their emigration. Susan Cowan draws on material from another destination for Scottish exiles, and shows how a selection of novels written and set in Australia address the maintenance of Scottish identity in a country where its distinctive nature is often disregarded. The applicability of colonial theory to a nineteenth-century novel is tested in Wolfram R. Keller’s analysis of *Jane Eyre* as an “Ovidian” or counter-imperial text.

The “English” language, now of course the property of many peoples besides the English, is far from uniform even in its homeland; and if non-metropolitan English authors have often used dialect to add local colour to their scene-setting, it is to be expected that authors in countries which owe no homage to the London standard would do so with even greater ease and confidence. Manfred Malzahn examines Hardy’s use of Dorset dialect in one of his Wessex novels; and shows how the literary implications of the device, in the many-layered interplay which it sets up between character, narrator and reader, go far beyond simple realism. Two papers with a Scottish linguistic focus then follow. The fact that Hugh MacDiarmid, the central figure in the twentieth-century revitalisation of Scots poetry, drew extensively on John Jamieson’s monumental dictionary for memorable words and expressions is well known; but Yuko Yoneyama’s discussion argues for a confraternity in aims and outlook between the lexicographer

and the poet by which they are connected more closely than by the mere fact of one's providing a source for the other. A poet with a radically different approach to Scots speech, Tom Leonard, is discussed by John McKay in a paper which illuminates the radical disagreements, even (or especially) among Scottish readers and scholars, on the range of reference of *Scots* as a linguistic term. Related issues of language and its implications are examined in a different setting, the Caribbean, by Claudia Marquis, whose examination of the use of Creole by George Lamming and other Caribbean writers reveals its literary value as a symbol of the oppression of the poor and the blacks in West Indian society. Esterino Adami takes as his subject a recent post-colonial novel set in Pakistan, and considers both the unusual narrative structure and the disorienting shifts of viewpoint achieved by linguistic devices.

The last section, headed "Culture", opens with a paper which explores cultural roots from a perspective different from the others in the volume, Elizabeth Dodd's evocative description and interpretation of the Colorado mesas with their haunting remnants of Anasazi culture. Kylie Murray focuses on a semi-legendary Scottish seer (whose *floruit*, coincidentally, was roughly at the time when Anasazi culture was approaching its end) and his importance in the developing perception of Scottish national identity. The next two papers examine issues of cultural interchange and interaction, the first in a peaceful and the second in a tense and fraught context: Marie-Anne Hansen-Pauly uses the example of a remarkable multilingual and multicultural family associated with multilingual Luxembourg to explore the intriguing question of how songs can and do traverse barriers of region, culture and even language; and Lynda Chouiten discusses the manifestation of racial, cultural and linguistic antipathies in Algeria in the novels of Mouloud Féraoun. A paper on a familiar cultural variable, attitudes to truth and falsehood, concludes the volume: a methodical analysis by Piers Vigers of lies in the Narnia stories of C. S. Lewis, in which he exposes the deceptively simplistic nature of the concept of lying.

The success of the conference was due not only to the enthusiasm of the delegates but to the hospitality of Aberdeen University, whose Old Senate Room, at once imposing and comfortably intimate, proved an ideal focal point. Invaluable practical help was given by the administrative and secretarial staff of the University's School of Language and Literature. The conference was generously subsidised by the School of Language and Literature and by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. To all of these we record our grateful thanks.

A SONG FOR THE CONFERENCE

SHEENA BLACKHALL

Sheena Blackhall, the first official Makar (Poet Laureate) for Aberdeen and the North-East, performed this song during the informal literary and musical evening which was part of the Conference's social programme.

Advice Tae Veeditin Scholars

Tune: The Dundee Weaver

Ye delegates frae aa the airts convened in Aiberdeen,
It's planned tae takk ye towrin aroon the local scene.
The whisky at Glenlivet beats a tequila slam,
An kittles up yer speerits, sae be sure tae takk a dram.

Syne aff tae Cawdor Castle far Macbeth wis eence a thane:
Ye'll see it in the sunshine, bit aftener in the rain.
An weir an Afghan Burkah tae keep the midgies oot.
An pray the anely bites will be upon yer een an snoot.

Culloden Muir is dowie far the flooer o Scotlan fell,
An ilkie man that stauns there, maun face its ghaists himsel.
There's nae a single kintra, that hisna felt the stoun
O war an confrontatioun, o skaith an battle woun.

An fin ye reach Kildrummy ye nicht hear a skreich or twa:
The blacksmith traitor Osborn, bit mair nur he could chaw.
The English gaed him gowd tae reward his treachery:
They meltit it an poored it doon his thrapple for a fee.

Ye canna come tae Scotlan an nae jyne a Ceilidh daunce,
As weel drink Earl Grey in the Moulin Rouge in France.
They'll birl ye an kerfuffle ye, in eichtsoms reels an knots:
They fairly like their jigs an jinks, the contermacious Scots.

Sae aa ye furreign delegates come listen here tae me:
Ye canna come tae Scotlan an nae gyang on a spree.
Oor howf'll gar ye hooch wi their firey usquebaugh.
Sae here's tae lear an fellowship, guid confiers, *slainte mhath!*

PART I:

LITERATURE OF REGION AND NATION

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF BREOGÁN: SCOTTISH AND IRISH INFLUENCE ON GALICIAN LANGUAGE LITERATURE

DAVID CLARK

Scotland and Ireland have had what would seem to be a disproportionate influence on writers in the Galician language. Since the great national poets of the Galician Literary Revival (*rexurdemento*) in the second half of the nineteenth century, through the great nationalist writers who debated between modernism and nationalism in the 1920s and 30s, up to the younger writers who so successfully use the language in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Scotland and Ireland have provided a constant point of reference, and the perceived literary, cultural and, more speculatively, historical links between the three nations have acted as a source of stimulus and, at times, polemic, as Galician writers seek to define their relationship with their country, their language and their relationship with the rest of Europe.

Despite the fact that Galician is the most widely spoken of the three languages (Catalan, Basque and Galician) which share co-official status with Castilian Spanish in their native communities, Galician literature has traditionally been limited to a subordinate level with a low production and a status which in no way reflects the extent to which the language has been spoken. As we shall see, this is largely due to the negative connotations ascribed to the language because of a series of historical situations which have produced a rupture between the hegemonic ruling classes whose cultural vision has always been directed towards Madrid, and the largely rural Galician masses who have maintained the use of Galician as the everyday language, despite the loss of prestige this has entailed. In comparison with Catalonia, where the landed classes first, followed by the urban bourgeoisie, have historically defended and participated in the Catalan language, Galician has traditionally been a language which has been forced to defend itself against the onslaught of its powerful neighbouring tongue, Castilian Spanish. It is therefore, perhaps, surprising to those not familiar with the language that there has been a strong influence of both Scottish and Irish literature on a number of key texts

written in Galician. This influence can be traced from the beginning of the *rexurdimento* – the revival of Galician as a written language which began in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, through the *Nós* Generation which developed Galician nationalism in the 1920s and 30s, and up to the contemporary writing of the post-Franco period in the new, autonomous Galicia of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Galicia is an area in the extreme north-west of the Iberian peninsula with a current population of some two-and-three-quarter million inhabitants in an area of almost 30,000 square kilometres. The Roman conquest of the indigenous tribes was late and relatively slow, and Roman Gallaecia, which included part of what is now northern Portugal and parts of modern Asturias and León, developed into a kingdom under the Suebi and later the Visigoths. In the eighth century the latter retreated eastwards and created an Asturian successor state which in the eleventh century, after the death of Ferdinand I of León, gave rise to the Kingdom of Portugal; but lost most of its political power after the independence of Galicia and Portugal. The division of this kingdom in the twelfth century saw an imposed distance created between Galicia and Portugal, with the former moving towards independence and the latter increasingly under the auspices of the monarchy of León and Castile. The creation of the large, hegemonic Spanish state under Isabella and Ferdinand left Galicia in a political no-man's-land, which would affect her future position in terms of the balance of power within the peninsula as both Spain and Portugal were to grow and prosper with their backs figuratively turned towards Galicia, isolated in the extreme north-west. The “union” has never been good for Galicia, a region which has suffered the blight of poverty, famine and enforced emigration. The relationship between Galicia and Madrid has often been compared to that which existed between Ireland and London before Irish independence, and the situation of Galicia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not unlike that of Ireland. After Ireland, and before other nations such as Italy, Scotland and Russia, Galicia had the highest rate of per capita emigration from Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century; and only the diversity of Galician small-holdings (reliant on other basic foods such as cabbage and turnip, and not just the potato) avoided a hunger of the proportions of the Irish Famine in mid-century. Indeed, until relatively recently, Spanish references to the supposed indolence of the Galician people has echoed the ethnic stereotypes famously directed towards the Irish from Britain.

The Romans arrived to find an indigenous language which now can be seen only in certain place names, but which, from these, is believed to have been related to some of the Celtic tongues of Western Europe. The

suffix with *-brig*, for example, is of obvious Celtic resonance, and there exist numerous toponyms which “can be taken as a strong indication of the presence of Celts” (García Alonso 2006: 693)¹. Balboa Salgado makes a strong case for the survival in modern Galician of numerous Celtic place-names, personal names and names given to specific features of the landscape. Be that as it may, however, the language spoken today in Galicia is a Romance language which has much in common with modern Portuguese, with which it shared a common history. The political independence of Portugal saw a linguistic separation which was accentuated with Portugal’s colonial growth and political and cultural proximity to France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Galician-Portuguese did, nevertheless, share a literary golden age between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Since the creation of the Spanish state and the encroaching growth of the power of the Castilian language, Galician was relegated to the position of a spoken language. Official documents and literature were written in Castilian, and the aristocracy, the church and, in time, the urban bourgeoisie would use the Spanish tongue, considering Galician to be the language of the poor and the rural. Fortunately, however, for the survival and development of the Galician language, Galicia is and was a predominantly rural country, in which the smallholders and peasants form a vast majority of the population. Galician survived as the language of the people, the language used in the day-to-day interaction of Galician life, and in the popular traditions (songs, poems and tales) which would later influence the revival and rehabilitation of the language.

The influence of the enlightenment in the eighteenth century saw the works of two Benedictine friars, Martín Sarmiento and Benito Feijóo, who believed that the *de facto* restriction of Galician to domestic use was one of the main causes for the backwardness of Galician society. Both advocated the use of Galician within the education system and the according of a greater respect to the language. In the same period, the ideas of the first eighteenth-century theorists of the idea of the “Celtic nations” started to filter through from France. The works of early “Celticists” such as Pezron were adopted in the Iberian Peninsula by the Franciscans Pedro and Rafael Rodríguez Mohedano, and later by the Jesuit priest Masdeu (Ricón 1981: 95). By the early nineteenth century, inspired by the liberal ideals generated within the first half of the century, and using the groundwork set out by Sarmiento, Feijóo and the naturalist, geographer and humanist Xosé Cornide, historians in Galicia started to adapt the Celtic ideals, hitherto given a peninsular dimension, to the area

¹ All translations from Galician or Spanish language texts are mine.

of Galicia. In 1838 José Verea y Aguiar published his *Historia de Galicia* in which he affirms the Celtic origins of the Galician people. Verea was supported by the revolutionary journalist Antolín Faraldo, who by 1843 had gone one step further by seeing Galicia as a Celtic nation, and by the romantic novelist Benito Vicetto who endorsed the idea of a Celtic past for Galicia. The most important figure among the ideologists who supported the supposed Celtic roots of the Galician people was Manuel Murguía (1833-1923), who would attempt to bring the tools of scientific historiography to the erstwhile speculative accounts of Galician pre- and proto-history, and in so doing would invoke the presence and influence of Scottish and Irish culture.

Murguía, born in Arteixo (A Coruña) of a Galician father and a Basque mother, was, during his long life, the most influential figure in Galician letters. Although he had studied medicine, his early fictional output was soon outshone by his historical writing which would change the face of Galician culture over the next century. Murguía's thought was prominent in the movement of Galician national awareness through the movements of provincialism, regionalism and finally nationalism. In his *History of Galicia*, published in five volumes between 1865 and 1911, Murguía created what Ramón Maíz calls "a historical and theoretical construction of Galicia as nation or nationality" (1997: 174). Although his concept of "nation" is almost a literal transcription of that of Mancini (ibid.: 177), Murguía's originality lies in his confirmation of the differential nature of the Galician people, determined by Galicia's belonging to a specific people, the Celts, and having its own language and its own geographical situation. The fusion of "Celticism", language and territory provided the basis on which Murguía built a project for hope for the future of the Galician nation, with political autonomy and the economic and cultural regeneration of the country (Iglesia Diéguez 2000: 22). For Vicente Risco, the Catholic nationalist who formed part of the "Nós Generation" in the 1920s and 30s, Murguía's work revolves around a specific system, which can be resolved into three points. Firstly, he starts from a central idea of the existence of Galician nationhood. Then he attempts to provide ethnical, geographical, linguistic and historical evidence to prove this idea. Finally, and as a "corollary", Murguía points towards the political, economic and cultural renaissance of Galicia (Risco 1976: 27-28). Self-taught as a historian, Murguía was influenced by Herde, Thierry, Vico and, perhaps most importantly, by a Scot — Thomas Carlyle. Through his historical analysis, Murguía presented Galicia as a Celtic nation with her own history, different in all respects to the centralised Spanish state which had acted as colonial overseer to an oppressed Galicia. While Madrid looked

towards the Mediterranean for its foundational myths, Galicia would look towards the Atlantic and most especially to the sister states of Scotland and Ireland, with whom, according to Murguía's historical readings, Galicia shared a past golden age. This Celtic connection, as it were, proved for Murguía that Spain was not a pluri-national state; and Galicia's assumed Celtic past provided "a foundational myth central to the national community, and with continuity up to a contemporary presence" (Maíz 99: 41).

If Murguía's historical reading was important for the development of Galician nationalism, his influence on the most important writers of the *rexurdimento*, the first Galician literary renaissance, was also significant. The three great poets of the movement were directly influenced by his thoughts and ideas in a way which might bring to mind the influence of Yeats on the Irish Literary Revival, or of MacDiarmid on the Scottish Literary Renaissance. Rosalía de Castro, Curros Enríquez and Eduardo Pondal all encompassed features of Murguía's ideology within their works, although the emphasis, as we shall see, was appreciably different.

Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885) was Murguía's wife, and is widely considered to be the national poet of Galicia. Roa White (2004) compares Castro's influence and importance to that of Thomas Moore in Ireland, and stresses how both poets reflect the "common experience of dispossession, subjugation, oppression, hunger and emigration" (ibid.: 93) and how through Moore's *Irish Melodies* and Castro's *Cantares Gallegos* "Ireland and Galicia were able to express this difference and separateness while validating their own tradition" (ibid.: 94). The difference, as Roa White notes, lies in the fact that while Moore looked towards the past with a melancholy sense of loss, Castro seeks to redress the wrongs committed towards her people with a "Murguian" optimism in a better future. Her use of the Galician language helps to vindicate the fact that "although her land had been oppressed and undervalued for centuries, its culture and language had been preserved" (ibid.: 103). Although both Rosalía and Moore were influenced by Macpherson's Ossian poems, Castro's radical critique of Castilian heavy-handedness and her defence of the rights and dignity of the rural poor in their own language tends to remind the reader more of Burns. Certainly the status afforded to Rosalía de Castro within Galician culture is akin to that of Burns in Scotland – with all the attendant polemic and criticism arising from the iconic status to which each poet has been elevated.

Castro, like Manuel Curros Enríquez (1851-1908), another poet supported and influenced by Murguía, used the Galician language as an arm with which to fight against the hegemony of Castilian. Murguía was

fundamental to the writing of both, in the case of Castro to such an extent that “without Murguía’s encouragement *Cantares Gallegos* might never have been written; without his acquaintance with publishers it might never have been published” (Roa White 2004: 22). The *gaita* – the Galician bagpipes – present in the work of both Castro and Curros gives, however, but a slight Celtic echo in comparison with the rampant “Celticism” of Eduardo Pondal (1835-1917), the third great poet of the era.

Pondal was unique in Galician and indeed in European poetry, in his single-minded attempt to create his own unique literary tradition. While Rosalía de Castro tried to give voice to a Galician tradition through popular song and lyric, Pondal invented a whole literary landscape based on his belief in a Celtic golden age which, in his poetic imagination, would help to regenerate the political future of the descendants of these ancestral Celts, the contemporary Galician people. Through his reading of Macpherson, and his adaptation of Murguía’s interpretation of Celtic history through the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (literally *The Book of the Taking of Ireland*, though it is commonly known as *The Book of Invasions*), Pondal’s work provides a creation which encompasses a series of mythical characters made up of warriors, bards, pilgrims and shepherds against a physical backdrop of pines, mists, snows and winds “as the centre of a poetic system and to an oeuvre dedicated to the enrichment of a past which gave a distinctive personality to the Galician people” (Ricón 1981: 53). Like the other two great poets of his generation, Pondal came to use the Galician language, and in so doing, by placing the common tongue on the lips of Bards and warriors, conferred upon it a dignity to which it had hitherto never attained.

Pondal’s debt to Macpherson is enormous, and has been traced by numerous scholars, most notably Howard Gaskill, over the years. The influence of the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (in modern Irish *Leabhar Gabhála Éireann*) had been compiled by an anonymous scholar in the twelfth century, and reached the hands of Murguía and Pondal by means of a French translation. Pondal uses one of the characters in the *Leabhar Gabhála Éireann* as his central representative of Galician values. In the *Leabhar* the first king of the Milesians who had settled in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula was Breogán, who, it is said, founded the town of Brigantium (popularly believed to be modern A Coruña) where he built a Tower from which his son espied the distant island of Erin. Breogán, peripheral to the *Leabhar* as a whole, becomes a central figure in Pondal’s oeuvre. Evoked in many of the poems, Breogán is the link which binds modern Galicia to an ancient past in which an “idea of ancient ethnic values of Celtic people continued in modern Galicia” (Ricón 1981: 97).

According to Forcadela (1992: 93) “even though Breogán is dead and the supposed political conditions of his age have disappeared, race, land and language remain the same, and as such the mere mention of his mythical name gives [the Galician people] the right to dream of political emancipation and self-government”.

Pondal uses the allegedly Celtic place-names of his native countryside alongside characters plucked from Macpherson and Scottish and Irish mythology to create, in his body of work, a foundational myth so strong that even today the Galician national anthem takes as its lyrics verses from Pondal’s *Os Pinos* which evoke the “land of Breogán” and which Pondal himself had originally thought of entitling *Breogán* (Ferreiro 2007: 79). From his early verse in Castilian up to his mature work in Galician, Pondal makes constant reference to Scottish and Irish sources. An early Castilian verse, with its evocative use of both Gaelic and English, points the course the poet’s work was to take:

El *croimlich* del celta, el canto perezoso
Del *highlander*; su hoguera rutilante,
Dando su cabellera de humo errante:
El *dolmen* gigantesco y misterioso ...

(The *croimlich* of the Celt, the lazy song
of the *highlander*; his glowing fire,
His hair of wandering fire,
The giant, mysterious *dolmen*...)

(From “El Gontón” Ricón 1981: 135)

The political note in Pondal’s pro-Celtic stance is even more apparent in his Galician language verse. In *A Fala* (The Language) he equates the contemporary Galician tongue with that spoken by the mythical king in an attempt to dignify the language: *Fala nobre, armoniosa,/ ¡Fala de breogán!* (“Noble, harmonious language/ Language of Breogán”) (Ricón 1981: 248) while in *Virxen Santa das Suidades*, he evokes his Celtic ancestors, the “heroic sons of the mists” (ibid.: 144). *Os Pinos* calls on the “children of Breogán” to arise from their slumber, because “*os tempos son chegados*” (ibid.: 161), the time has come for a change in the destiny of the Galician people.

Pondal gives poetic voice to Murguía’s “scientific” reading of the Galician past. The three main pillars of this early Galician nationalism (race, language and land) would continue to have political relevance to the next generations of Galician nationalists of the twentieth century. It must be stressed that both Murguía and Pondal, along with Castro and Curros,

belonged to the “liberal” wing of Peninsular politics of the nineteenth century. Their support for a revival of the Galician language was coupled with a desire for the repossession of Galician land by the people who worked it. In hindsight, and after the terrible events of the twentieth century, the concept of race is difficult to justify in terms of progressive political ideas. It is, nevertheless, tempting to see their conception of “race” as being little more than a definition for a group of people sharing the same history, culture and geographical space. Nowhere in Murguía can one find the élitist proto-fascist physical description of race to be found in other writers from other cultures of the same period. The exclusivity of the Basque nationalist leader and founding father Sabino Arana is absent from the works of these Galician writers.

Towards the end of his life, Murguía saw the rise of the new generation of Galician nationalists who were grouped around the influential journal *Nós* (“ourselves”), which contained a number of intellectuals who would fully embrace the concept of Galician nationalism or, at the least, that of an independent Galicia within an Iberian Federation. The movement from “provincialism” through “regionalism” to full-scale nationalism took place within the lifetime of Murguía, and by the second decade of the twentieth century the number of writers and intellectuals expressing their ideas in the Galician language had increased dramatically. *Nós* attracted some of the most brilliant and inspiring advocates of the ideas that were being termed *Galeguismo* – “Galicianism”, ideas which would flourish during the 1920s and ’30s and which would only be silenced by the frontal attack of fascism in the shape of the Franco coup in 1936 and its bloody aftermath. The *Nós* generation articulated a basis for Galician nationalism which would once again rely heavily on the “Celtic” model, in this case using in a prime position the example of Ireland. This was apparent in two principal aspects; aspects which would coincide remarkably with those expounded by the writers of the Scottish Literary Renaissance, and in particular with those of the main ideologue of this movement, C.M Grieve or “Hugh MacDiarmid”. Although no contact can be traced between members of either movement, they shared almost exactly a period of operation, an ideological commitment (that of providing the cultural groundwork in order to pave the way for their respective nations, Galicia and Scotland) and a respect for both the political and the literary achievements of the Irish people in the first quarter of the last century. Firstly, Ireland had been a stateless nation in a situation similar, or so Galician and Scottish nationalist intellectuals perceived, to that of Galicia and Scotland. For MacDiarmid and the *Nós* writers, Ireland had shed the shackles of colonial enslavement and had reclaimed her position on the

international stage as an independent nation. Secondly, Ireland had set a literary example which had received world renown, with writers such as Yeats and Joyce among the key figures of universal letters during the period.

Ireland was seen by Galician nationalists as a sister nation which had achieved political independence after a long period of colonial rule. While MacDiarmid saw the parallels between the situation of Ireland and that of Scotland, Galician writers such as Otero Pedrayo (1888-1976) and Daniel Castelao (1886-1950) saw Ireland's political victory over Britain as a model for a potential Galician response to Castilian hegemony. The political events in Ireland were quickly reflected in *Nós*, and the death through hunger strike of the Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, was commemorated in December 1921 when *Nós* dedicated its issue number 8 to the Irish politician (Toro Santos 2007: 18). Both Ramón Otero Pedrayo and Vicente Risco used the perceived relationship between Galicia and Ireland to develop their theories of "Atlanticism", an attempt to adapt the nineteenth-century concept of Celticism to a "scientific" twentieth-century context. For Otero Pedrayo "the Roman conquest, more than the sea, had displaced Galicia from her community with the other Atlantic Celtic countries" (1935: 21). Galicia, as it were, had been denied her historical position as part of an imagined Celtic community of nations: had been cast out of history, echoing Cairns Craig's title for his 1996 book in which Scotland is *Out of History*, outwith, that is, the historical process.

While Otero Pedrayo adapted Murguía's exaltation of the Celtic nations to a theory of "Atlanticism" calling for a cultural alliance of the Atlantic countries to act as a counterforce to the alleged degeneration of Mediterranean culture, Risco took these ideas to their perhaps logical conclusions, adopting a racist stance which, along with his deep-rooted Catholicism, meant that he would be the only member of the generation who would be able to adapt comfortably to Franco's brand of fascism. Risco saw the decline of the Mediterranean – and by extension, of Madrid, landlocked but culturally and ideologically tied to "Mediterranean" values – as an opportunity to create a new order based on the countries of the Atlantic rim. For Risco the "Celtic" countries and areas to be included in this project were the Scottish Highlands, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, Galicia and, perhaps surprisingly, Portugal. To these countries, according to Risco's world-view, it befell the task of saving European civilisation; and such a task should be led by Galicia. Portugal, he argued (Rodríguez González 2002: 160) was too contaminated by Iberianism to take an effective leadership, and Galicia with her mixture of Celtic and

Germanic (making use of the Suebic past) peoples provided an ideal model.

Risco's racism was in line with that of other contemporary European nationalisms, but not supported by his colleagues in the *Nós* group. Otero Pedrayo, for example, was in agreement with Risco's basic hypothesis, but fell short of the latter's proclamation of the racial and moral superiority of the Galician people. For Otero Pedrayo, Galicia possesses an "original consciousness" which was "created" in the Celtic period and has lasted through successive changes in civilisations (the Romans, the Suebi, the middle ages, the Spanish Empire) but which, through all, had remained intact. Galicia did not, unlike the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, participate in what the writer saw as the defining characteristic of the Spanish state: the influence of Moorish non-European aspects on the autochthonous culture, or as Otero Pedrayo termed it, *mudejarismo* (Casares 1981a: 135).

For Otero Pedrayo, Galicia was more truly European because of her Celtic, Atlantic and Western roots, and as such was given a differential status within Iberia. In 1931, during the Second Spanish Republic, when the Spanish Parliament (the *Cortes Generales*) was debating the possibility for Home Rule for the Basque Country and Catalonia, Otero Pedrayo warned that if a similar status was not granted to Galicia she would be forced to look to her Portuguese "brothers of race" to help fight against Spain (Quintana and Valcárcel 1988: 125). For Risco and Otero the parallels between Ireland and Galicia "included the colonisation and repression by a neighbouring country, the precarious status of the mother language, the revival of interest in and the need for preservation of culture, the loss of natives due to emigration, a common faith in Catholicism, and struggle for independence" (McKevitt 2006: 660). Their views, however, were those of the Catholic right. The more liberal positions of Murguía and the anti-clericalism of the earlier nationalists were to find other voices, such as those of Castelao and Plácido Castro.

Alfonso Daniel Rodríguez Castelao (1886-1950) largely disagreed with the race-based theories of Risco and Otero Pedrayo. Castelao supported Galician nationalism from a left-of-centre federalist position, and although he agreed with the theory of a basic Celtic past for Galicia, his interest in Ireland was more that of a political activist who admired the struggle which had led to Irish freedom and the creation of the Free State. Indeed, apart from Risco and Otero Pedrayo, the majority of Galician nationalist writers grouped around *Nós* and other nationalist publications of the period avoided the racial question and used the contemporary situation in Ireland more as a political example than any more dubious philosophical benchmark. Antonio de Toro (2007: 41-42) lists the large

number of articles which appear in Galician journals of the period with Irish politics and culture as their subject matter, with titles such as “As in Ireland”, “History of Nationalist Movements: Ireland”, “The Irish Question during the War”, “On the Victory in Ireland”, by writers such as Antón Villar Ponte and Ramón Cabanillas. One member of the generation, Plácido Ramón Castro, was sent to school in Glasgow. As a young adult he travelled to the Blasket Islands off the coast of Western Ireland, and his memoirs of the trip were published on a weekly basis by the Vigo-based newspaper *El Pueblo Gallego* in the summer of 1928.

Ireland, as noted above, also provided a clear literary example for the nationalist writers of the 1920s and 30s. McKevitt (2006) stresses the importance of the translation into Galician of three books of the *Leabhar Gabhála* in *Nós* in 1931, even though the basic context of the myth had been commonly used by Galician writers during the previous century. Toro Santos (2007), on the other hand, sees in the translations of Yeats and Joyce in the 1920s the major influence of Irish letters on Galician writing. While the translation of the *Book of Invasions* helped to re-affirm Murguía’s vision of a shared Celtic past, the translations of Yeats and Joyce attempted to point to a future path for Galician literature. While the translations of Yeats’ poetry and theatre strived to provide a model for Galician-language poets and playwrights, it was Otero Pedrayo’s groundbreaking translation of fragments from Joyce’s *Ulysses* which would help writing in Galician to confront modernity. As Toro Santos points out, this was the first translation of Joyce’s masterpiece into any of the Peninsular languages which, although imperfect and incomplete, offered a first taste of the work to Galician readers. This, he argues, was important because “the success of Joyce’s work in Spain meant the triumph of the Atlantic movement” (Toro Santos 2007: 48). Otero Pedrayo’s own fiction would also show the mark of Joyce, and his better novels such as *Devalar* (1930) and *Arredor de sí* (1935) are both heavily influenced by the Irish author. Similarly, Vicente Risco evokes an imaginary visit by Stephen Dedalus to his own study in Santiago de Compostela. The resulting text, *Dedalus in Compostela: A Pseudo-paraphrase*, was published in *Nós* in 1929 and offers a hypothetical conversation between the protagonist of Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* with the Ourense-born Risco. The conversation, or debate, touches on a series of metaphysical issues, before culminating in what Rodríguez González terms a “harsh attack against large part of Galician people for their passivity” (2002:164).

It may seem paradoxical that a writer such as Joyce, far from being anywhere near a nationalist political stance, should prove such an

influence to the Galician writers of the *Nós* generation. Such circumstances can also be seen, however, in Scotland, where both Hugh MacDiarmid and Neil M. Gunn defended the relevance of Joyce as an Irish (hence fellow-Celtic) writer who had successfully merged the tradition of his people with the exigencies of modernity (Clark 1999: 8). As Gunn states, commenting on Eliot's defence of the Irish writer, Joyce, despite his revolutionary status, was a writer who formed an integral part of the Irish literary system, and who used "a prose distinguished above all else by its Irish rhythm" (Gunn 1977: 69). Similarly, the Galician writers of the period saw Joyce as a kindred spirit, and a prominent influence to be taken into account. The fact that the works of the great Irish writers were produced in the language of the oppressor simply gave more credence to the Galician position. They, it was argued, were in a position to reclaim their language in a way the Irish or the Scots could only dream of. The political and literary relation between the writers of the *Nós* generation and Ireland was summed up by Rodríguez Sánchez:

Before, during and after the Independence of Ireland, this nation represented a model for Galicia, even though its best known and admired literature was written in English (...) and even had a certain anti-nationalist bent (the case of Joyce himself)" (1996: 26).

The fascist uprising in 1936 effectively meant the disintegration of the *Nós* generation. While some, like Alexandre Bóveda, were summarily executed by Franco's forces, others such as Risco embraced the Francoist cause, seen as a defence of Catholic values against Bolshevism (Casares 1981b: 116-118). Otero Pedrayo, at first outlawed by the Franco regime, was eventually accepted as a critical presence, largely thanks to the intervention of Risco. Others, such as Castelao, went into exile. The Americas, especially Buenos Aires in Argentina (often known as the "fifth province" of Galicia) and Montevideo in Uruguay, became the new home for the part of Galician nationalism in political opposition to the Dictatorship. For Rivas this became Galicia's "redemption", like that of the Irish and the Jews, in her diaspora: the main nursery of Galician culture after the debacle of 1936 was "situated in the Buenos Aires-Montevideo axis" (2008: 114). During the years of Franco's rule – perfectly summed up by Celso Emilio Ferreiro in his poem *Longa noite de pedra* ("Long Night of Stone") – the Galician language was persecuted, and many Galician writers, more or less in conformity with the regime, wrote their works in Castilian. Such writers were generally reviled by the Galician nationalists who saw such use of the oppressors' tongue as capitulation, although as Reigosa (2007: 65) points out, Camilo José Cela, writing in Spanish, was the first Galician Nobel Laureate, and his *Pascual*

Duarte is the second highest selling Spanish-language novel of all time, only after Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and before such works as García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad*. The Irish and Scottish connection was maintained during the Franco period through writers such as Alvaro Cunqueiro, who, writing in both Spanish and Galician, continued with the Galician tradition of appropriating the Arthurian mythical cycles for a Galician context. Until the *apertura* – the timid opening up of the Franco regime – in the early 1960s, Galician language books continued to be edited mostly in South America.

The death of the dictator in 1975, however, saw a dramatic rise in the amount of Galician language literature published. Indeed, Galician literature written over the last thirty years represents more than 90% of all Galician literature (Toro 2008: 292). Many of the new generations of Galician writers, born during the fascist regime or after Franco's death, recognise the historical importance of the Irish and Scottish influence on their country's literature. Suso de Toro, one of the most influential and highest-selling Galician-language authors of the post-Franco period, has frequently expressed his debt to James Joyce, whom he describes as "a paradigm" (Pedrós-Gascón 2005: 127). In Pedrós-Gascón's volume of interviews with De Toro, the writer mentions Joyce a total of twenty-two times, more than any other writer of any other nationality. De Toro's *O país da brétema* (*The People of the Mist*) is a non-fiction account of the history of the Celtic peoples. Similarly, another best-selling Galician language writer, Manuel Rivas, has made constant use of the perceived relationship between Ireland and other Celtic nations, especially Scotland, in both his fictional and non-fictional output. Xosé Luis Méndez Ferrín, one of the most politically active of the contemporary writers in Galician, uses a recognisably Celtic, mythical literary landscape which he denominates *Tagen Ata* in many of his works, as well as recreating parts of the Arthurian myth within this fictional territory, where the Dagda, one of the gods from the Tuatha Dé Danann, helps Arthur (Méndez Ferrín 1982: 31). Nacho Taibo's novel *A Ponliña Irlandesa* (1997) portrays a spirited post-modern voyage obsessed with Irish, Galician and Brazilian history, while both Darío Xohán Cabana and Xoán Bernárdez Vilar regularly incorporate features of a Celtic world view in their fiction. One of the most daring young writers in Galician, Xosé Cid Cabido, published a novel in 2006 which revolves around a single day in the life of its protagonist. The title of the novel, *Blumsdei*, is the phonetic transcription in Galician of "Bloomsday", explicitly acknowledging the influence of Joyce in a new generation of writers. Among the many works of fiction published in Galician in 2008 (the year of the present conference), one is of particular

interest. James Salter, a young Scottish writer, while living in Vigo, published his first work, a collection of short stories written in Galician. The collection, *A idade da auga (The Age of Water)* is daring and imaginative, and Salter's decision to publish in Galician would seem, to provide a fitting way to underline the living relationship between Scotland, Ireland and Galicia.

Although the Celtic theories espoused in the early nineteenth century were often based on eager speculation and wistful romanticism, in the first decade of the third millennium a considerable number of Galician writers still look towards the literatures and legends of Ireland and Scotland as something which forms a part of their own cultural heritage. As Murado states, "'Atlanticism' has been one of the clichés which has most been abused by Galician culture, but this does not make it any less true" (2008: 13). Similarly, for Carlos Reigosa, Galicia has "chosen" a Celtic identity, and "in such a 'choice' (...) the authenticity of our being Celtic is based" (2007: 181). Scotland and Ireland have left an indelible mark on some of the most prominent texts in the Galician language and, as such, have helped to leave a lasting imprint on Galician culture at all levels.

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