Ex-sistere

Ex-sistere:

Women's Mobility in Contemporary Irish, Welsh and Galician Literatures

Edited by

María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Ex-sistere:
Women's Mobility in Contemporary Irish, Welsh and Galician Literatures

Edited by María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia

This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-8700-5
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8700-7

To the memory of my mother, a Galician poet herself

CONTENTS

Welsh Literature

FOREWORD

To write has always been a metaphor for going into exile. And going into exile has often been a precondition of being able to write. To write without disappearing has often proved difficult, especially for women writers who in traditional communities were expected to hold their peace about controversial topics. Many strong-minded women may also in the past have adopted the simple alternative of disappearing without writing. Recent research by oral investigators among emigrant female communities across the world suggests as much—a wealth of untranscribed experience, much of which is being saved by new kinds of feminist historians.

As far back as the sixth century in Celtic countries, books were linked to an exilic tradition. Saint Columcille was sentenced to deportation (a less fancy word for exile) as a punishment for transcribing the content of a sacred book. Like many future migrants, he often yearned for the old country, while regretting its intolerances---but his travels brought the culture of his origins to other places.

Today, women as migrants often know the same experience. Even as they come to their years of adolescence in communities unable to provide guaranteed jobs, they sense that they may live out many years of their subsequent lives in some far-flung place. This gives an unsettled, provisional quality even to the years of bildung and growth. People who know the splendor of the countryside in childhood learn not to love it too much, because they know that they may end up in a crowded district of a great city. Forced urbanization in the earlier decades of the twentieth century often led to the creation of pastoral, evocations of a landscape loved and lost; but, with the spread of urban values even in the countryside and with the widespread understanding that cities are getting bigger and bigger, that kind of writing has made way for a less yearning model. Indeed, it is sometimes the case that even young children in rural places conduct much of their dream-life in urban settings.

It used to be assumed that men were more nomadic by nature than women---more likely to pull up roots and move on (if only because they were expected to be the main bread-winners). Nowadays, the reverse may be true---women, shouldering ever-heavier burdens on behalf of their families, often seem to take on these responsibilities. The lives of so many people are disrupted by economic challenge, as long-term relationships

come under extreme stress. The ensuing nomadic quality of lives has been distressing and liberating in equal measure. People who might have been constrained by the restricted thought and practices of traditional communities discover exhilarating new forms of freedom, but may also become fretful and unsure about the main relationships in their lives.

Those who stay in their communities of origin are almost as marked by the effects of migration as those who leave. They may even feel a strange sort of survivor-guilt, along with a frustration about their confined landscapes. And those who leave, because of the ease of modern travel, often feel more like commuters than old-fashioned emigrants. Frequent returns to the source-community can be as challenging and unsettling for them as for those who have remained. At both ends of the equation, there is a lack of the old feeling of rootedness which once helped people get on with the lives they were given. But there can also be a heady sense of pluri-identities, of being aware, in submitting to one kind of experience, of many other kinds of experience one might have had.

The oral research among women migrants in European countries suggests that they have often adjusted more easily and more fully to the culture of their host-people than did men. This may arise partly from a traditional involvement, through children or through religious practice, with the wider receiving community; but it may also be connected with a greater willingness to master new languages and codes.

Such adjustment can be exhausting as well as exhilarating—so much energy may be consumed in attuning oneself to a new society that there is little left with which to record the experience. But contemporary evidence suggests that more and more exiles and migrants and commuters are willing and able to narrate their experiences in fiction, memoir, film and drama. As many of the fine essays in this collection demonstrate, it seems as if women are the main agents (as well as subjects) of a new phase in the culture of travel and resettlement.

Declan Kiberd
September 2015

INTRODUCTION

MARÍA JESÚS LORENZO-MODIA
UNIVERSIDADE DA CORUÑA

This collection of critical essays addresses literary discourses on the mobility of women writers in various Atlantic regions of Europe. These countries experienced significant levels of migration in the nineteenth century, due both to being peripheral in relation to centres of power and to the effects of crop failures upon their agriculturally based economies. Today, in the so-called Age of Austerity, migration is on the increase, and from it old and also new issues for women arise, these being transmuted into literature. The literary works discussed here share a number of common features. They are expressions of their respective peoples, in that they reflect the well-known diasporas in countries historically without a state of their own. As noted in Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland* (1995) and *The Irish Writer and the World* (2005), these literary systems (Ireland, Galicia and Wales) have experienced a rebirth in the second half of the twentieth century through this production of literatures of modern nations, and the first decades of the present century have seen new research exploring emergent literatures in Europe (Walshe 1997), new European identities on the move (Domínguez and O'Dwyer 2014), and even the dialogue between the various cultures of the Atlantic archipelago (Norquay and Smyth 2002).

The act of being born entails emerging from the maternal womb. Etymologically the word 'exist' (Latin 'exsistere') itself draws on this notion of coming out, but also embraces meanings associated with movement and travel (Maffesoli 1997). In the Western World, from the Classical period onwards, living has entailed travelling, and the same can be said of monotheistic traditions, in which travel commonly involves a pilgrimage towards final redemption. However, in historiographies, both religious and otherwise, women have been almost entirely excluded from narratives of voyages, other than as company for male group members.

The three countries mentioned above all have diasporas in various parts of the world, and these diasporas write back or find their way into literature in various ways. On the one hand, new migratory flows are

reflected in literature and comparisons made with the experiences of earlier ones. On the other hand, new literary texts are filtered not only through psychological, social and cultural changes, but also through comparative studies. Hence, this analysis of the literary work of women in Ireland, Galicia and Wales is approached following feminist, postcolonial and post-structural critiques of traditional narratives of travel writing. In recent years, sociologists including Morokvasic (1984), Kearney (1986), Smyth (1993), Gray (2004), Hernández Borge & González Lopo (2008), Liñares Giraut (2009) and Rodríguez Galdo (2009) have produced studies on the subservient roles of Irish and Galician women in contemporary migrations. Consequently, whereas various analyses of Irish, Galician and Welsh (and also Scottish) diasporic writers have emerged (for example, Meany 1993, Kiberd 1995 and Cagiao Vila 1997, Fogarty & Attridge 2012), these have focussed on male writers, and therefore a study on mobility with a gendered perspective seems pertinent.

Following Hooley (1985) and Donovan (1995), this book centres on women writers and how they deal in their work with the issue of mobility. Authors and critics have tended to analyse travel by focusing on the transgression of patriarchal models of Western societies based on white, middle-class women, these mainly being restricted to the private sphere (Newton 1981), as well as on postcolonial issues with ethno- and Euro-centric slants (Blunt & Rose 1994, Anzaldúa 1987). Notions of the construction of otherness are at stake here, in that even white women may be considered as belonging to a different ethnic group when they are migrants, thus showing how vulnerable and dependent women can be when isolated in a different environment (Butler 2005). The narrative of history as progress may also be challenged in the twenty-first century by visions of nomadic women at risk of being displaced, both in their homeland and abroad (Braidotti 1994, Kaplan 1996).

The comparative analysis presented here is far for being reductive and does not aim at homogenization. It acknowledges the dramatic history of diasporas and migration as the result of populations existing on the margins of their respective colonial metropolises and of their dependent economies (Mac Laughlin 1997, Rodríguez Galdo 1993), and tries to explain the various responses that these non-hegemonic countries gave such conditions in their different stages of development. The fact that they all belong to the European Union, albeit in peripheral regions, may account for their similar modern histories. Rather than considering them as separate, individual societies, this study explores possible intersections between their literary systems, as well as their various political and linguistic discontinuities and divergences.

The present book is divided into three sections, looking at Galician, Irish and Welsh literature. In the first section, the opening article, by María López Sández, analyses women's mobility in contemporary Galician literature. This is a pertinent issue for writers in this land. Rosalía de Castro, the foundational writer of modern Galician literature, had already paid considerable attention to the impact that migration had on women through the second half of the nineteenth century. It could not have been otherwise in a geographical area where this phenomenon had taken a very heavy toll, with more than 500,000 people from of a total population of less than three million migrating in just a few decades. Throughout the twentieth century, Galicia underwent dramatic economic and social changes, but migration continued to be a major issue, as depicted in *Historias de emigrantes* (1968) by Xosé Neira Vilas, reaching its peak in the 1960s. The topic has permeated Galicia writing, but in recent decades the role of women has changed dramatically, since they have actively joined the many people leaving. Xohana Torres' line "eu tamén navegar" (" I too wish to navigate"), which challenges the classical role of Penelope, left at home to wait for Ulysses' return, shows the ambivalence that women's migration acquired: it assumed a positive connotation in relation to gender discourse while retaining the problematic stance of social loss which migration entails. In this article López Sández explores how current Galician literature depicts migration by women, including such formats as blogs by women writers travelling abroad, for example *New York, New York* by Inma López Silva (2007), along with more traditional literary forms (Xohana Torres 1965, Dora Vázquez 1996 and Manuel Losa 2009, among others). This topic is interwoven with another, very important one in Galician literature and thought: how to build individual and collective identity and the relation between nationalism and feminism.

María Xesús Nogueira Pereira's contribution considers how foreign place names are used in the titles of works by Galician women poets between 2000 and 2009, including María do Cebreiro, Chus Pato, Yolanda Castaño, Eli Ríos, Dores Tembrás, María Reimóndez and Luz Pozo Garza. The analysis of these paratexts reveals a significant inclusion of foreign toponyms, which is seen as reflecting the process of modernization which Galician poetry has been experiencing since the 1980s, as well as with other ongoing debates in this poetic world. The titles of the poems represent connections between Galicia and other places, due either to physical mobility or to a desire to establish a dialogue with diverse cultural and geographic realities. Additionally, these far-off place names provide information about the representation of foreignness in contemporary Galician poetry.

The following article, by Olivia Rodríguez, examines travel as a literary motif that may carry various meanings. These include travel as a metaphor, as an allegory of access to a phase of illuminating perfection, as a postmodern topic of encounter with alterity, as an example of artistic learning, and as migratory arrival/departure from an original Galician diasporic space scattered around the world. Through Eva Moreda's latest work of fiction, the short novel *A Veiga é como un tempo distinto* (2011), Rodríguez focuses on the lives of two Galician characters forced to emigrate to London in the 1960s during the Franco regime. From the very title of the novel, the chronotopical issue is established, to be developed further in the narrative, particularly by means of the chronotope of emigration, in that "the place that is abandoned and thought of from distance, remains frozen in the psychological time of the character".

Finally, in Xesús Fraga's autobiographical text, he describes a number of bittersweet events in the lives of female migrants from his own family. It includes his own history "ab ovo", in which he describes how his mother had to keep her pregnancy secret when passing through UK border controls, since regulations in force at that time did not allow pregnant women to be accepted as foreign workers.

Moving to Irish literature, José Francisco Fernández examines the English writer Honor Tracy, who lived in and wrote about Eire. In her first two books about Ireland, *Mind You*, *I Have Said Nothing* and *The Straight and Narrow Path*, and also in her first two travelogues about Spain, *Silk Hats and No Breakfast* and *Spanish Leaves*, both countries are depicted as peculiar and at the same time appealing, in that they are still on their way to modernity. Fernández also analyses Tracy's description of Galicia, a part of Spain with particular idiosyncrasies, and where the type of mental framework that Tracy has used to explore the rest of Iberia cannot be applied.

María Dolores González Penas and María Amelia Fraga Fuentes examine the discourses of identity and emigration in *Tea in a China Cup* by Christina Reid. This playwright belongs to an Irish Protestant working class family and her background is clearly portrayed in the play. Reid became a professional playwright when she was almost forty, and *Tea in a China Cup* was written at that time (1983). It is a memory play that places women and their experiences in the foreground. Beth is the main character, and what the audience sees on stage through her memories is not only the history of her family but also her own development from childhood to womanhood, with special reference to a critical moment, that of the death of her mother. According to Anthony Roche, the action of the play centres on the time when "the mother is dying, and the daughter is

struggling to come to terms with her own identity" (2009, 169). Beth's process of identity formation is seen mainly through her conversations with her mother Sarah, and with her best friend, the Catholic Theresa, as well as in moments throughout the play when she addresses the audience in her other role as narrator. The analysis here also focuses on discourses of emigration, particularly on female emigration, contrasting the migrant Theresa with the non-migrant Beth, in an attempt to establish possible connections between the issues of religious identity and migration.

María-Jesús Lorenzo-Modia writes about migration in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, a time when exile to the Republic, the United Kingdom or other countries was a constant feature in the lives of the inhabitants of Ulster. Self-imposed or forced expatriation was felt as the only way out of an unbearable situation for the people, including teachers, intellectuals, artists and writers. However, others, specifically the poet Medbh McGuckian, decided not to leave Belfast, conceiving of this position both as a private decision and as that of the bard who cannot live far from the people and the land who make her life and her poems possible. Mobility –or rather the lack of it– is therefore explored as a symbol of resistance.

In chapter eight, Manuela Palacios González presents a number of descriptions by Irish female writers of photographs depicting migrating. Ireland has experienced massive emigration over the last two centuries, but the role of women in these migratory flows remains under-examined, as does the reciprocal relevance of this experience for both communities. Apart from the sociological value of photographs as records of both personal and collective experience, Palacios is particularly interested in the intersection of creative writing and visual representation: the confluence of fact and fiction, objective visual recording and subjective interpretation, verbal and visual accounts of migration and of the role of women in it, past experience and present recreation through memory and writing. The Irish writers' descriptions of photographs are followed by a discussion of their most relevant features with regard to women's mobility and the importance of such personal documents. Palacios includes images and texts by Paula Meehan, Rita Kelly, Celia de Fréine, Evelyn Conlon, Lorna Shaugnessy, Máighréad Medbh, Catherine Phil MacCarthy, Mary O'Donnell and Lia Mills.

The final section, on Welsh literature, is the shortest and includes two very different studies. The first of these, by Kevin Mills, deals with mobile identities as seen in Nikita Lalwani's first novel. *Gifted* (2007) is the story of an Indian family transposed to Cardiff during the 1980s. The heroine's cultural alienation is mixed with her extraordinary mathematical ability. In

this essay Mills analyses the various family conflicts provoked by the transnational experience of moving from India to Wales. These tensions are pervasive, not only between the protagonist's parents, due to their drive to accept (Menresh) and reject (Shreene) their own mobility. There is also a speculative function of their teenage daughter, who highlights the conflict and amplifies it, being unable to avoid her own hybrid identity in that her family models are both conflicting and diverting.

The second contribution is by the poet Chris Kinsey, who writes on mobility, migration and settling in her homeland, Mid-Wales. The author offers several instances of her own poems in which she explores issues of nature, such as rivers and streams, as symbols of an eco-critical communion with the environment. Enjoying nature is something to be wished for, particularly in old age, when mobility is more and more restricted and experiencing the countryside becomes almost impossible. Migration is also relevant for the poet when she explains how she visited her German relatives and the differences in nature and human behaviour experienced there.

Overall, this book encompasses various approaches to the issue of women and mobility in different Atlantic countries, all of which share theoretical frameworks that go from gender studies to postcolonial criticism, as well as cultural approaches in order to delve into literature, culture and the arts.

Bibliography

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Books.

Blunt, Alison and Gillian Rose. 1994. "Introduction". In *Writing Women and Space. Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, edited by A. Blunt & G. Rose, 1-25. New York: The Guilford P.

Braidotti, Rosi. 1994. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Butler, Judith. 2005. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Cagiao Vila, Pilar. 1997. *Muller e emigración*. Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia.

Domínguez, César and Manus O'Dwyer, eds. 2014. *Contemporary Developments in Emergent Literatures and the New Europe*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Donovan, Katie. 1995. "Hag Mothers and New Horizons." *The Southern Review* 31(3): 503-514.

Fogarty, Anne and Derek Attridge. 2012. "Eveline at Home: Reflections on Language and Context". In *Collaborative Dubliners: Joyce in Dialgoue*, edited by Vicki Mahaffey, 89-107. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Gray, Breda. 2004. *Women and the Irish Diaspora*. London: Routledge.

Hernández Borge, Julio and Domingo L. González Lopo, eds. 2008. *Mujer y emigración*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Hooley, Ruth. 1985. "Introduction". In *The Female Line. Northern Irish Women Writers*, edited by R. Hooley, 1-2. Belfast: Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement.

Kaplan, Caren. 1996. *Questions of Travel*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kearney, Michael. 1986. "From the Invisible Hand to Visible Feet: Anthropological Studies of Migration and Development". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15: 331-61.

Kiberd, Declan. 1995. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. London: Jonathan Cape.

—. 2005. *The Irish Writer and the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Liñares Giraut, X. Amancio, coord. 2009. *El protagonismo de la mujer en las corrientes migratorias españolas*. Vigo: Grupo España Exterior.

MacLaughlin, Jim, ed. 1997. *Location and Dislocation in Contemporary Irish Society: Emigration and Irish Identities*. Cork: Cork UP.

Maffesoli, Michel. 1997. *Du nomadisme: Vagabondages initiatiques*. Paris: Livre de Poche, Biblio-Essays.

Meaney, Gerardine. 1993. "Sex and Nation: Woman in Irish Culture and Politics." In *Irish Women's Studies Reader*, edited by Ailbhe Smyth, 230-244. Dublin: Attic P.

Morokvasic, Mirjana. 1984. "Birds of Passage Are Also Women". *International Migration Review* 18 (4): 886-907.

Newton, Judith Lowder. 1981. *Women, Power, and Subversion*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Norquay, Glenda, and Gerry Smyth, eds. 2002. *Across the Margins: Cultural Identity and Change in the Atlantic Archipelago*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Roche, Antony. *Contemporary Irish Drama*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009.

Rodríguez Galdo, María Xosé. 1993. *Galicia, país de emigración*. Colombres: Archivo de Indianos.

Rodríguez Galdo, María Xosé. 2009. “Lugar y presencia de las mujeres españolas en la emigración exterior”. In *El protagonismo de la mujer en las corrientes migratorias españolas*, edited by X. Amancio Liñares Giraut, 17-38. Vigo: Grupo España Exterior.

Smyth, Ailbhe. 1993. “Introduction”. *Irish Women’s Studies Reader*, edited by A. Smyth, i-vii. Dublin: Attic P.

Walshe, Eibhear, ed. 1997. *Sex, Nation and Dissent in Irish Writing*. New York: St Martins.

GALICIAN LITERATURE

WOMEN'S MOBILITY IN CONTEMPORARY GALICIAN LITERATURE: FROM "WIDOWS OF THE LIVING" TO "I TOO WISH TO NAVIGATE"[1]

MARÍA LÓPEZ SÁNDEZ
UNIVERSITY OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Mobility, in any of its possible forms – from a simple voyage to full-blown migration – is a crucial phenomenon in cultural history and an important topic in literature. From the picaresque, adventure novels and the *Bildungsroman*, to travel fiction, geographical displacement is at the very heart of many genres. The voyage is one of the most powerful and enduring existential metaphors, and in Galician culture is also a metaphor for the construction of identity.

Migration and travel, both real and fictional, have a long and complex association with gender issues. The geographical imaginary itself has tended to employ anthropomorphic metaphors, with spaces marked as either masculine or feminine, and there has also been a tendency to differentiate between the ways in which men and women relate to mobility. In this study we will explore how the relationship between gender and mobility has evolved by looking specifically at the field of Galician literature, from the beginnings of its modern period, with the work of Rosalía de Castro, to the present, with women writers "on their way"[2] (Nogueira 2014, 166). We will also consider the ways in which Galician territorial identity and its geographical imaginary were constructed, where once again gender issues are a relevant factor.

[1] This article was completed as part of the "Ex(s)istere: la movilidad en las mujeres de la literatura gallega e irlandesa contemporánea" [Ex(s)istere: Women's Mobility in Contemporary Galician and Irish Literature] research project, financed by the Ministry of Economy and Competitivity and FEDER (FFI2012-35872), and co-ordinated by Manuela Palacios.

[2] This expression is used by María Reimóndez on a recent work by María Xesús Nogueira (2014, 166) to describe a way of inhabiting the world.

1. Cultural Renaissance and the first mass migration: women as guardians of identity and memory

The beginnings of contemporary Galician literature are closely linked to migration and gender, both directly and indirectly. After three hundred years without any significant literary production because of historical and political circumstances, Galician literature emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century with the work of a female writer, Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885). She would become both a founding writer for Galician literature and the national poet, quite an unusual achievement for a woman writing at that time. Her work was produced during the most important decades of the constitution of modern Galicia, when migration became a major topic owing to its volume and sociocultural relevance. Indeed, it was the subject of much debate in the press at the time (Barreiro 1986, 362-363). Rosalía de Castro's work, which clearly sought to dignify Galicia and to construct a positive Galician identity, dealt directly with the problem of migration, analysing its psychological effect on the individual and also in terms of its social impact. She addressed the theme of mass migration from Galicia and the resulting acculturation of this in Galician society, and in doing so never overlooked gender issues as a significant parameter in understanding migration.

A huge population drain took place in Galicia during the final decades of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. At this time, it was mainly Galician men who migrated, while women stayed in the homeland. In *Follas novas* [New Leaves] (1880), the collection of verse considered to be the pinnacle of Rosalía de Castro's work, the fifth section is entitled "The Widows of the Living and the Dead". In this book, polyphonic in more than one sense, there is a repertoire of attitudes towards migration: the fear of the migrant faced with the abyss and the emptiness beyond the ocean; the illusion of adventure and challenge. Yet the poetic voice stands in solidarity with the women who remain at home and who, once the men have been lost to that abyss and emptiness, become the guardians of identity and memory.

Rosalía de Castro's approach to migration is not limited to poetry. In fact, the presence of this theme throughout her literary production is testament to the importance in which she held it, as indeed she states explicitly in her short story "El cadiceño" [The Cádiz Man]:

> Mucho más pudiéramos añadir sobre este tipo tan marcado y que tanto prepondera en las aldeas de Galicia, trayendo a ellas todo lo que han aprendido en tierras más civilizadas y nada de lo bueno que allí existe, pues su ignorancia y el ansia ardiente de hacerse ricos en poco tiempo,

> arrastrándolos a la humillación, las penalidades y la bajeza, no les permite modificar sus malos instintos ni aprovecharse de las excelentes cualidades que le son propias. Pero es forzoso que concluyamos, atendiendo al corto espacio de que podemos disponer, aun cuando procuraremos no olvidar, en más propicia ocasión, el extendernos sobre un asunto que, según creemos, es de alguna trascendencia para el país (Castro 1866, 82).[3]

As opposed to the emotional tone of the poetry, here we find a more intellectualized analysis of the effects of migration on the society that suffers the population drain, through the image of the migrant that returns to the land. The description of the returning migrants' social and linguistic attitudes, and also the attitudes of those who interact with them, cast the whole process into a very negative light. Taking John Berry's (1997, 9-11) terms to classify the different possible outcomes of acculturation, in "El cadiceño" "marginalisation" comes forth; that is, a process of double loss, in which integration into the host culture is not achieved – the characters here return after having achieved little economically or socially – while there is also a loss in terms of their own culture, seen in the rejection and self-contempt they experience upon their return. In this way, far from becoming positive elements of cultural mediation, the migrants' role is destructive for the community. This is conveyed through satire, because humour is the only defensive strategy left to a humiliated society against the false pride of the returning migrant.

The two key elements of Rosalía de Castro's approach to mass migration are a reflection on the effects of migration on Galicia's own culture, and a sensibility towards the gender issues at stake in the process of migration.

Rosalía de Castro did not travel much, although she did move more than the norm for a woman of her time. At a very young age she went to Madrid, probably intending to pursue an artistic career as a writer or an actress. During the summer of 1861 she travelled through several Spanish regions with her husband, Manuel Murguía, whom she also joined during part of his stay in Simancas as an archivist. The impression of those lands

[3] Much more could be added on such a marked type as this which so prevails in the villages of Galicia, bringing to them everything they have learned in more civilized lands and none of the good that exists there, because their ignorance and burning desire to get rich in short order, dragging themselves through humiliation, hardship and lowness, does not allow them to change their bad instincts or to take advantage of the excellent qualities of that place. But it is necessary that we conclude, considering the small amount of space that we have, even though we will try not to forget, at a more propitious time, to dwell on an issue that, we believe, is of some importance for the country.

she visited in the summer of 1861 is reflected in the preface to *Cantares gallegos* [Galician Songs] (1863), one of the founding works of the Galician literary Renaissance. It is remarkable for its rhetorical construction and accomplishment, and succeeds in its aim to dignify both Galicia and its people. In order to do this, Rosalía de Castro draws on a full range of comparisons, both negative (Castile, Murcia, Valencia) and positive (Switzerland and Italy, landscapes embraced by Romanticism, with its strong appreciation of the sublime).

Yet the most interesting point of intersection between gender and the land in the work of Rosalía de Castro is undoubtedly the fact that she established a territorial imaginary, building an image-type of Galicia as essentially feminine, one which is still at work in today's perception of the place, both in art and tourism. Even during the reconstruction of Galician literature in the 19th century, another influential poet, Eduardo Pondal, tried in a very different way to build such imaginary, drawing on the geographical area of Bergantiños and its harsh, naked landscape in order to promote identification with male values in a kind of epic choice of such values. Hence, there is at that moment of cultural re-enactment a double attempt to build a perception of Galician landscape–one of the "symbolical conditions" of the nation (Bazco 1984, 16) – with each author choosing an anthropomorphic metaphor of a different kind: female for Rosalía de Castro, and male for Eduardo Pondal. It was the former who succeeded, as has been previously analysed (López Sández 2008), and the consequences of this can still be felt at the present time.

2. The Nós Generation: from migration to voyage. The incorporation of travel literature into the Galician repertoire

Just as Rosalía de Castro is the milestone for the reconstruction of Galician culture in the 19th century, embodying a strong association with both gender issues and migration, the so-called We Generation is responsible for the theoretical and intellectual establishment of Galician nationalist thought. In the work of this group, travel plays an important role in connecting Galicia with Europe and in helping to build identity.

With the We Generation, travel literature is incorporated into the repertoire of Galician literature (Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián 2006), particularly the kind of travel literature which exists somewhere between fiction and non-fiction, with works such as *Pelerinaxes I* [Pilgrimages I] (1929) by Ramón Otero Pedrayo, *As cruces de pedra na Bretaña* [Stone Crosses in Brittany] (1930) by Daniel Castelao and *Mitteleuropa. Impresiós d'unha*

viaxe [Mitteleuropa. Impressions From a Journey] (1934) by Vicente Risco. Carme Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián (2006) analyses this phenomenon by looking at the functions that such texts fulfilled within the context of an emerging nation: they contributed to a delineation of the borders; they set out a list of elements of identity; and they presented landscape as an essential trait in the understanding of nationhood. At a similar time to the publication of these texts, several pilgrims and travellers, among them George Borrow, Fialho de Almeida, Anselmo de Andrade and Ruth Matilda Anderson, left testimonies of their stays in Galicia, thus providing a view of the land from the outsider.

The We Generation represents in Galician culture the fulfilment of travelling in the sense of what Denis Porter (1993, 54) called "the dream of travel", although more in terms of cultural and collective relevance than in a strictly individual one. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the highpoint of travel literature, the idea emerged that places exist in the world where the secret of a free, happy, authentic and more satisfying life can be found. Such an idea contributed to the popularity of the Grand Tour, conceived as a formative journey through the most notable cities of Europe, especially for British young men.

Castelao's Brittany, Risco's Germany, plus the many places in Europe that they visited in both a literal and a literary sense, acquire very significant meaning in Galician literature, due in part to Galician's condition as a subaltern literature and culture in the process of developing a national identity. Travel outside Spain's borders, therefore, becomes a means of constructing Galician identity in the European context. Travel also serves as a bridge that helps to avoid Castile, a culture which somehow stands in between, as if every connection with the outside world had to come through this other language and culture. In other countries, Galician writers find models with which they can establish links and affinities that make it possible to circumnavigate the interposed Castilian-Mediterranean culture. By doing so they try to put Galicia at the centre of an Atlantic geography, rather than at the periphery of a Mediterranean cultural complex.

Castelao's times in Brittany, and Risco's in Germany, are closer in nature to the current mobility of university students than to migration. In their literary texts, too, the characters that travel are land owners and members of the lower nobility, and their reason for embarking on journeys are not bound up with with economic survival, as was the case for the masses of people migrating in the 19th century, but are related to knowledge and learning, to self-fulfillment and towards collective identity, since knowledge and experiences acquired abroad are brought back home

to be used for the benefit of the nation, and also because when they travel they are on a personal quest which is also an expression of the national need for definition. Travel becomes a formative tool, and thus these works can be seen as *Bildungsroman*. This intellectual elite played a leading role within the Galician cultural movement and introduced the notion of formative travel as a metaphor for an opening up to Europe, in particular fostering relations with Atlantic and Central European countries.

The work of this generation of writers focused for a few years on an optimistic belief in the possibilities of the national project. Travel books by these authors were published between 1929 and 1934; that is, the years before the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship, a positive moment for Galician nationalism. In terms of migration, it is a moment of inflection between two major waves of migration: the first, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, was reflected in Rosalía de Castro's work and had America (predominantly Cuba and Argentina) as its main destination; the second, during Franco's dictatorship, in the 50s and 60s, took emigrants principally to European countries (predominantly Switzerland and Germany). In this context, there arose the possibility of the dream of a Galicia with a voice of its own within the European framework, just as Ramón Otero Pedrayo proposes in *Arredor de sí* [Around Oneself] (1930) through the main character, Adrián Solovio, who embodies the aspirations of a whole generation. This work, the most fictional of the group, has recently been seen as a *Bildungsroman* (Rodríguez Fontela 1996), but had previously been considered by the members of the We Generation themselves as representative of their personal quests.

Due to the composition of this group of writers, and also the treatment of the topic of travel within their texts, the perspective is a conspicuously and starkly masculine one. The writers of the We Generation are men as are the main characters of their works. The anthropomorphic metaphors that are used in these books employ the kind of processes that would later be identified and deconstructed as such by post-colonial theory. Meanwhile, the role of women remains that of staying at home, keeping and taking care of the land, traditions and identity until the sons of the land return.

> As figuras femininas da obra de Otero ostentan, moi frecuentemente, un alto valor simbólico: son o símbolo da unión coa Terra, o sinal da caste e, polo tanto, son as representantes da tradición e da unión da familia co pasado. Personifican a noción de continuidade, tanto da vida (pois son elas, na súa función de nais, quen a perpetúan nos fillos e fillas) como da casa e da memoria. Esta é a imaxe que o autor nos oferece reiteradamente através

> das súas arquetípicas fidalgas: nais, tías, avoas que, sempre abnegadas, sacrificadas, prudentes e silenciosas, agardan a volta dos homes que retornan buscando as certezas que elas custodian (Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián 2003, 177).[4]

Studies of *Arredor de sí* [Around Oneself] have noted the link with the *Odyssey*, identifying the character of Adrián's mother with Galicia and Penelope: "Na súa odisea, o lazo de unión de Adrián con Galicia son as cartas da nai e, precisamente, na estructura da novela, a nai vai simbolizar a Galicia: a nación, a terra nai e a terra de nacemento" [In his odyssey, the bond of the union of Adrian with Galicia are the letters from the mother, and, specifically, in the structure of the novel, the mother will come to symbolize Galicia: nation, mother earth and the land of birth] (Blanco 1990, 238). Indeed, the tendency to fuse landscape and women reaches a peak in the work of Otero Pedrayo. Feminine characters become symbols of their respective cultures and their landscapes, and for this reason men and women are so very different in his narratives regarding their evolution: while men, as tends to be the case in the *Bildungsroman*, change and evolve, women remain the same throughout, with no psychological evolution (Noia 1990, 260). In relation to this, and once more with reference to the intertextual relation to Homer, Carmen Blanco (1990, 250) synthesizes the argument and the circular movement of the novel through feminine landmarks and the places that are visited therein: "Adrián deixa Ítaca e a Penélope, pasa pola mala experiencia de Circe, a muller castelá, e entretense na pracenteira illa de Calipso da muller cosmopolita, para acabar regresando á súa Penélope: Galicia" [Adrian leaves Ithaca and Penelope, endures the bad experience of Circe, the Castilian woman, and entertains himself on the pleasant island of Calypso of the cosmopolitan woman, only to end up returning to his Penelope: Galicia].

[4] The female figures of Otero's work very often exhibit a high symbolic value: they are the symbol of the union with the Earth, the sign of caste and, hence, are the representatives of the tradition and the union of the family with the past. They embody the notion of continuity both of life (because it is they, in their role as mothers, who perpetuate it in sons and daughters) and of house and memory. This is the image that the author gives us repeatedly through his archetypal noblewomen: mothers, aunts, grandmothers who, always selfless, sacrificial, cautious and silent, await the return of the men who come home in search of the certainties that they guard.

3. De-constructing Penelope: mobility in contemporary Galician women writers and the construction of territorial identity

The second major wave of Galician migration took place during Franco's dictatorship. At this time migration was already assumed to be an endemic problem, a consequence of political and economic factors related to Galicia's role within the Spanish state. Migration and the personal experiences associated with it became an important topic in Galician literature, as in *Historias de emigrantes* [Migrants' Stories] (1968) by Xosé Neira Vilas.

At this time, with so many people leaving Galicia to work in other European countries, a poem appeared which, following the semiotic tendency to fuse space and woman, is entitled "Penelope", by Díaz Castro (1961), but which in fact refers to Galicia itself. In the poem, which has a circular structure and nostalgic tones, Galicia weaves and un-weaves, goes forth and back, never moving too far; at the last line it remains where it was at the start. However, it is a poem by Xohana Torres which, by deconstructing the myth of Penelope, the woman who waits patiently for the hero to return after his long trip through the Mediterranean, becomes a sort of gender manifesto, a vindication of the desire to take part in life and adventure, in travel and the collective enterprise.

In the light of the current circumstances, Xohana Torres' poem can be considered a premonition or a declaration of intent on the part of a woman, almost, one might say, on the part of Women. The current situation, if not of the whole female population then at least that of women writers, in relation to mobility, reveals a stark contrast with the times of Rosalía de Castro or Otero Pedrayo.

Today migration is still a problem in Galicia, as shown by the data recorded by the IGE (Galician Statistical Institute[5]). It decreased in the early years of the 21st century, and for a time there was even an increase in population as a result of the arrival of immigrants for the first time. However, the economic crises of 2008 marked a turning point. The peculiarity of the new wave of migration is that for the first time emigrants tend to be university students and graduates, and they go to other countries in search of work and a career. The "brain-drain" is certainly not exclusive of Galicia, but it has become particularly significant here. In stark contrast to what happened at the time of the We Generation, more than half of the current waves of migrants are women.

[5] www.ige.eu/

The proportion of young people studying at a university in Galicia is above the Spanish average; to take the University of Santiago de Compostela as an example, 60% of students are women. This leads to a real boom of women writers in all genres. In poetry, the genre that was traditionally practised most by women, there was an increase in the number of women from the 80's to the 90's; in narrative, where male writers have traditionally been far more numerous, recent years have seen a move towards a more balanced representation of the sexes, with the emergence of some outstanding female voices (Teresa Moure, Rosa Aneiros, Anxos Sumai, Begoña Caamaño and María Reimóndez). Even in the field of non-fiction and essay there has been progress, as we can see from the number of women winning the Ramón Piñeiro Essay Prize, for example.

For current Galician women writers, mobility is a circumstance which has been a continued presence in their life perspectives throughout history (the only exception being that of political exile, which was of great importance in Galicia after the Civil War); looking for work abroad, study periods, voluntary service, socio-political activism, tourism and leisure trips are all forms which mobility now takes. Mª Jesús Nogueira has recently examined the role of travel in the work of nine Galician women writers. As a vital source of artistic inspiration, travel for Susana Sández Arins becomes the "room of one's own" that Virginia Woolf talked of (Nogueira 2014, 164), whereas for María Reimóndez it is a way of inhabiting the world "on the way" (Nogueira 2014, 166).

Once the myth of Penelope has been de-constructed, as if Xohana Torres' poem has worked as a sort of oracle, it is time to wonder if the existence of so many women writers "on their way" in contemporary Galician literature has led to new ways of constructing and perceiving Galicia; that is, whether it has effected a change in geographical imaginary.

Alain Roger (1997, 176), the French theoretician of landscape, used the expression "l'érotisation du paysage" to explain the tendency to project aesthetic values of the feminine body onto the land. This narrow connection between how the land and women's bodies are represented has frequently been noted by those who have studied landscape and its literary descriptions. Helena Carvalhão Buescu (1990, 143) analysed how in literary descriptions, nature tends to adopt feminine traits, and in this way is described as open to male desire. A decade before her, Louise H. Westling (1985, 4-5) pointed out that colonial narratives turned the land into an "immense geographical body ripe for conquest". The images of the conquered woman and that of the motherland (Löwy 1998) were useful

both for colonial enterprise and ecological discourse. The tendency for anthropomorphism goes back to mythological narratives, and recurs throughout history. This semiological trait is rendered natural through repetition, becoming codified, in a kind of grammar, with language, the primary system of modalisation, thus used to establish values and ideas in the social imaginary, these values carrying a high ideological burden in relation to gender. Westling (1996, 5) stresses how in such descriptions there is a combination of "eroticism and misogyny".

In studies on social imaginary, metaphor has been considered as "the point of departure for all activity of nomination, of all work of the imaginary" (Pageaux 2003, 22). The massive use of anthropomorphic metaphors to describe the land has projected onto the territory aesthetic values coming from a much more codified field in Western society, that of the human – especially female – body. Although there is a tendency to feminise every space (whereas time, for example, is invested with masculine traits), this tendency is perhaps sharpest when we refer to natural spaces. In fact, urban spaces are often described with the clash between masculine/feminine desires, projecting the duality of civilization/nature that forms part of the traditional symbolism of gender patterns. Urban imaginary, both the positive neoclassical construction (cities as places of progress, rationality and order) and the negative romantic one (cities as places of chaos, destruction and despair) connect with traditional values of masculine gender, rationality in the former, sublime and Dionysus-like in the latter. Given that industrialization and urban development took place quite late in Galicia, the strong rural character of this region enhanced the construction of a geographical imaginary closely linked to femininity.

This femininity of Galicia was established through cultural production both within Galician literature itself (as in Otero Pedrayo's *Arredor de si*) and through foreign works (for example *Por tierras de Portugal y de España* [Through Portuguese and Spanish Lands] by Miguel de Unamuno). As early as the 17th century, the poems that Góngora wrote about Galicia presented dirtiness and ugliness as traits shared by Galician women and the land's geography, intimately blending these together. In a similar way, but with a very different intent, Rosalía de Castro celebrated the landscape and its people and tried to dignify Galicia and its inhabitants, especially its women. Her representation of Galicia, which would become an overwhelming success, was based on associations with feminine traits. The fact that Rosalía was a woman and that she became the national poet and a symbol of the nation also played a role in strengthening the image of Galicia as feminine.

The effect of these metaphoric associations was ideologically powerful. In Western culture feminine beauty is associated with submission and works very much as a compensatory tool, similar to what happened with the exotic image of the Orient (Said 1978). This was, most probably, the reason why Eduardo Pondal, a poet contemporary with Rosalía de Castro, chose a very different imaginary, drawing on masculinity (a hard, sublime, epic landscape). But it was certainly the feminine, beautiful and agreeable image that prevailed. Dominant discourse used this to downplay the strength of Galician nationalist thought, and therefore Galicia became a passive, submissive Penelope who, as in Díaz Castro's poem, could not break the impasse.

Great changes have taken place in relation to feminine mobility, women's access to universities, participation in the labour market and literary production. So it is perhaps pertinent to ask how this influenced spatial representation and, more specifically, the use of anthropomorphic metaphors and the association of Galician geography with feminine gender patterns. The profile of the female Galician writer at the beginning of the 21st century is that of a young woman with a university education, who is or has lived abroad for study, teaching or research, is likely to take part in international conferences, is interested in cultural interchange, consciously chooses to write in a subaltern language and understands this gesture as a way of defending global cultural diversity, and who is explicitly feminist. As a result, the current Galician literary scene as written by women is more diverse and polyphonic than it ever has been. Postmodernity fosters a kind of kaleidoscopic fragmentation that renounces, in each author and each work, a global construction of meaning. The result is rich and diverse: multiple spaces of a global imaginary, from New York (Inma López Silva) to Tokyo (Branca Novoneyra 2012), spanning extreme spaces such as Patagonia or the South Pole, as well as imaginary spaces that evoke faraway places (as in *O derradeiro libro de Emma Olsen* [Emma Olsen's Final Book], by Berta Dávila). Yet beneath this multiplicity lies the amazing survival of the values of a geographical imaginary that was established in the 19th century, maybe because the simple choice of language, the voluntary and even stubborn ascription to the Galician literary system, implies an ideological gesture, the survival of identity that marks out, from the act of reading, a centre from which to approach any kind of geographical otherness.

Many female Galician writers have worked as language assistants in foreign university departments (Olga Novo and Antía Marante among many others). The geographical distribution of many such posts reflects spaces with historical links to Galician culture (Brittany, Wales, etc.). The