

# Finding Galicia in Europe: European Travelogues of Early Galician Nationalists

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## Abstract

Given the importance of travel for Galician national identity, symbolised by Otero Pedrayo's description of the Galicians as 'un pobo en camiño', relatively little critical attention has yet been paid to the link between travel writing and the construction of Galician identity by early nationalists. This article therefore focuses on three travelogues by early Galician nationalists: one fictionalised (Ramón Otero Pedrayo's *Arredor de si*, 1930) and two autobiographical (Vincente Risco's *Mitteleuropa*, 1933, and Alfonso Castelao's *Diario 1921*), offering a critical examination of the relationship between journeys and identity formation. Moreover, in the light of Galicia's current position within the European Union, this article considers the impact of Europe – both the abstract idea of 'Europe' and the experience of specific European countries – in the development of Galician nationalism. It analyses how encounters with other Europeans engendered an increased sense of Galician distinctness from Spain and similarity with central Europe (in both cultural and ethnic terms), as well as providing examples of successful nationalism to emulate. Finally, this article asks how the reality of Europe today compares with the historicist ideal of Europe based on co-operation between distinct peoples shared by the three authors.

**Keywords:** travel writing; Galician identity; *Xeración Nós*; Otero Pedrayo; Risco; Castelao

## Resumo

Tendo en conta á importancia da viaxe para a identidade nacional galega, simbolizada pola definición dos galegos coma 'un pobo en camiño' feita por Otero Pedrayo, tense prestado relativa pouca atención á conexión entre a literatura de viaxes e a construción da identidade galega na obra dos primeiros nacionalistas. Este artigo céntrase en tres obras deste período que xiran en torno á viaxe: unha viaxe ficticia (*Arredor de si* de Ramón Otero Pedrayo) e dous textos autobiográficos (*Mitteleuropa* de Vicente Risco, e *Diario 1921* de Alfonso Castelao). Ofrecerase unha análise crítica da relación entre a viaxe e a formación da identidade. Ademais, dada a posición actual de Galicia dentro da UE, este artigo considera o impacto de Europa – tanto a idea abstracta como a experiencia en países concretos – para o desenvolvemento do nacionalismo galego. Examinarase como os encontros con outros europeos fortaleceron un sentimento de diferenza respecto a España e semellanza con Europa Central (no sentido cultural e ético), e proporcionaron exemplos exitosos de nacionalismo para poder ser emulados. Finalmente, o artigo analiza a maneira

na que a realidade da Europa de hoxe se pode comparar co ideal historicista dunha Europa baseada na cooperación de xentes diferentes compartida polos tres autores.

**Palabras clave:** literatura de viaxes; identidade galega; Xeración Nós, Otero Pedrayo; Risco; Castelao.

In ‘Nós, os inadaptados’ (1933), Vincente Risco writes:

Despois de tantas voltas e revoltas, despois de tantas viravoltas e trasvoltas, polas lonxanías do espazo e do tempo, en procura de algo inédito que nos salvara do habitual e vulgar, viñemos dar na solprendente descuberta de que Galicia, a nosa Terra, oculta a noso ollar por un espeso estrato de cultura allea, falsa e ruin, vulgar e filistea, ofrecíanos un mundo tan esteso, tan novo, tan inédito, tan descoñecido, como os que andabamos a procurar por ahí adiante.

As this citation encapsulates, travel and subsequent return home were of fundamental importance for the personal and political formation of the fathers of Galician nationalism, the *Xeración Nós*.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly evident in three works: Ramón Otero Pedrayo’s semi-fictionalised *Arredor de si* ([1930] 1994) and two autobiographical texts, Vincente Risco’s *Mitteleuropa* ([1933] 1994) and Alfonso Castelao’s *Diario 1921* ([first published posthumously in 1977] 2000). While studies of these texts range from simple descriptions (e.g. Pedrosa Rúa, 1972, on *Arredor de si*), through agreement with the author’s moral judgements (e.g Vazquez, 1978, on *Dairio*

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<sup>1</sup> Castelao, Otero Pedrayo and Risco are best known as the leaders of the *Xeración Nós*, named after the *Revista Nós*, which published 144 issues between 1920 and 1936. The magazine was founded to prove ‘a capacidade do idioma autóctono para ser vehículo de transmisión de alta cultura’ (Beramendi and Núñez Seixas 2006: 135). Risco was the editor and ideologue, Otero Pedrayo the historian, geographer and literary writer, and Castelao the artistic director (García Sendón and García Sendón 1994: 12). For a detailed history of the group, see Beramendi and Nuñez Seixas’s *Historia do nacionalismo galego* (2006).

1921), to analysis of the texts as examples of the diary as a literary genre (Rodríguez González, 2006, on *Mitteleuropa* and *Diario 1921*). What is missing, I argue, is a re-examination of these texts through the lens of travel writing theory.

From 13-16 September 2010, a conference was held on the topic of ‘Viaxes e construción do pensamento: viaxes e viaxeiros na Galiza anterior a 1936’, co-organised by the Universidade da Coruña and the Fundación Vincente Risco. In the words of conference secretary Carme Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián (2011: 7), the event and resulting book are ‘una primera contribución’ to a field deserving much wider critical attention. This article therefore builds on the work of Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián et al., proposing a detailed reading of these three works as travel writing, particularly in relation to the effect of travel on identity (re)construction, and on the concept of traveling to accumulate knowledge. In this way, I aim to contribute to what Kirsty Hooper calls the ‘urgent project to re-examine the foundations of Galician cultural nationalism’ (2011: 2).

While notably heterogeneous texts – written in diverse styles for different purposes – *Arredor de si*, *Mitteleuropa* and *Diario 1921* all narrate journeys by Galicians around Europe. The impact of specifically European travel on Galician nationalists should be stressed, because, as Kathleen March notes, ‘the [Nós] group focused on defining Galicia by placing it squarely in a European context’ (2008: 237). Moreover, in *A Nosa Terra* (1918), for example, Risco declares ‘Querennos castelanizar, nos queremos europeizarnos’ (1920: 12). It is therefore instructive to examine what these founding fathers of Galician nationalism learnt from their European travels. What does ‘Europe’ mean for them? Would being part of a broad European body benefit Galicia and if so how? What does Galicia share with other European countries and not with the rest of Spain? What can the Galician nationalist movement

learn from its European neighbours? These questions will inform this reading of the three texts. In addition, it is interesting to compare the meaning of Europe as synonymous with the institutions of the European Union to the historicist ideal of Europe shared by the three authors.

### **Travel and the Roots of Galician Cultural Nationalism**

The link between nation and narration is a long-established one. Irma Llorens, for example, invokes the Foucauldian idea of the nation as a ‘discursive formation’, maintaining that a homeland ‘se construye en el acto mismo de narrarse y [su] unidad no tiene realidad más allá de la literatura’ (1998: 74). Moreover, Timothy Brennan, also with recourse to Foucault’s ‘discursive formations’ argues that the nation is ‘not simply an allegory or imaginative vision, but a gestative political structure, which the artist is consciously building or suffering the lack of’ (1990: 46-7). The need to analyse the link between literature and national identity is arguably even stronger in a stateless nation such as Galicia. As Kirsty Hooper observes, ‘In Galicia, the absence of institutions of state throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries means that, with a few rare exceptions, the cultural space has functioned as the only public space’ (2007: 124). Consequently, it was mainly through literature that Galician nationalism gained legitimacy, with authors such as Otero Pedrayo, Risco and Castelao producing a national consciousness through their writing about the, in their words, distinct culture and spirit of the Galician people. As Craig Patterson observes, ‘[While] the *Xeración Nós* was instrumental in the growth of political nationalism, [...] its greatest success was the consolidation of a collective notion of cultural nationalism, particularly in the field of literature’ (2006b: 415). John Hutchinson explains that for cultural nationalists ‘the glory of a country comes not from its political power but from the culture of its people and the contribution of its thinkers

and educators to humanity' (1994: 124). This is certainly true of the *Xeración Nós*, who believed in the utmost importance of fostering a Galician culture.

They produced a new definition of Galician specificity based not on folklore or race but on a whole definition of what Galician culture was. For them, a People, a nation, cannot exist, and are empty concepts, without a culture. (Patterson 2006a: 15)

The *Xeración Nós* were well aware of the potential power of their writing for propagating a sense of national identity among the Galician people. As Xosé Antón Castro notes, Castelao envisioned his works as 'axitadores de consciencias adormecidas' (2000: 8). He wanted to use his writing and his pictures to make Galicia's problems plain to the people and inspire change (2000: 9). In this regard, travel writing was particularly useful to the *Xeración Nós*. Francisco Salinas Portugal explains that 'a viaxe é utilizada como vehiculo privilexiado para dar forma literaria a unha preocupación ideolóxica esencial: construír a patria' (2011: 180). This is in part because travel writing appeals to the Galician people who are, according to Otero Pedrayo, 'un pobo en camiño' (cited in Patterson 2006a: 62), or to use Hooper's terms, a 'community marked by constant movement' (2011: 3). It also gives a sense of cosmopolitanism and legitimacy to Galicia, which for so long was the butt of colonial Spanish humour as a 'backwards' periphery. More significantly, as Carme Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián proposes, travel writing

Permite desenvolver doadamente determinados núcleos temáticos a través dos cales se expoñen certos aspectos básicos do proceso de construción nacional de maneira, teóricamente, máis accesíbel para un público amplo. (2011: 8)

Travel writing is an ideal vehicle for nation building as it allows the author to create an 'us' and a 'them', defining a nation against an outside 'Other' while at the same time

highlighting characteristics shared by those within the nation. As Susan Sontag has highlighted, this often takes the form of ‘us good, them bad’ (1984: 699).

James Duncan and Derek Gregory note that ‘the closing decades of the twentieth century have witnessed a double explosion of interest in travel writing’, in both commercial and academic sectors (1999: 1), which has since remained strong. Most of this academic attention is focused on the historically most common form of travel writing, that of colonialists visiting their conquered territories and the power relations inherent in this writing. I suggest a very different approach to travel writing, taking the viewpoint of minority nationalists (from a region which can be considered colonised itself – see, for example, Álvarez: 1980; Flitter: 2000; Angueira: 2011; García Negro: 2011), visiting countries which are much more powerful politically and economically than their own homeland. Similarly, most travel writing features an ‘escape’ from the modern, urban world to places reminiscent of pre-industrial times (Duncan and Gregory 1999: 6), whereas Galician travellers left a relatively rural homeland to visit some of the most industrialised metropolises of the time. Nonetheless, much of the theory of travel writing can be applied to these Galician travelogues, both in terms of the personal effects of travel on individual subjectivity and the wider consequences of this writing on the definition of Galician national identity.

### **Travel and Identity (Re)Construction**

Inma and Manuel García Sendón (1994: 13) describe the *Xeración Nós* as:

Mozos intelectuais e moi cultos desapegados de Galicia, dos seus problemas e da súa cultura, [que] chegarán alá polos trinta anos, despois dunha revolta interior ás veces dolorosa, a se converter en afervoados nacionalistas e se comprometer integralmente coa súa Terra.

This interior revolt is, to a large extent, the result of their travels and the experience of

confronting their identities with ‘Others’. As Jacques Rancière claims, ‘the paradox of identity is that you must travel to disclose it’ (1994: 33). This seems to be a two-part process, although both parts recur throughout the journey: on the one hand, breaking down the traveller’s established ideas of himself; on the other hand, constructing an identity through interaction with others. Trinh T. Minh-ha explains that ‘travelling can therefore turn out to be a process whereby the self loses its boundaries [which is] disturbing yet potentially empowering’ (1994: 23). Boundaries are lost because bases of identification, like people and places, are left behind, and because travellers face unfamiliar situations. As Robertson *et al* argue, journeys force travellers to reassess their beliefs and customs, creating ‘new ways of seeing and being’ or at least problematising the old ways (1994: 2). At the same time, they bring travellers into contact with others in comparison to whom an identity is constructed. Jane Conroy calls this the ‘dialogic nature of identity’ (2003: xvi), whereby identity cannot be constructed in isolation, but only as, to use Madun Sarup’s words, ‘a consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices’ (1994: 102). In reference to the *Xeración Nós*, Anxo Angueira explains that they travel ‘para acabar batendo con eles mesmos, coa súa identidade negada, disimulada ou mascarada’ (2011: 71).

This is exemplified in *Arredor de si*. On his travels in Europe, ‘Adrián afundiase na selva humana con gosto de se perder e descubrir’ (Otero Pedrayo 1994: 141). He must first break down his preconceptions about Galicia and his origins to then create an identity in contrast with the ‘Others’ he encounters on his travels. At the beginning of the novel, Adrián Solovio is highly depreciative of Galicia. He is ashamed of being Galician, to the point of telling himself ‘Terás que disimular o acento’ (49). As Patterson observes, Solovio suffers from a ‘sense of cultural and social inadequacy’ when faced with the – in his eyes at least – much more refined Castilians (2006b: 433). He blames his own

perceived inadequacies on coming from what he views as a backwards region while looking up to both Castile and cosmopolitan Europe as naturally superior. Through the course of his journeys, however, Solovio realises that he does not belong to the other cultures he encounters, but instead to a distinct Galician culture. He states: ‘Comenzo a decatarme do que hai de diferente en min e nos galegos’ (172).

This dual process of questioning and (re)constructing identity is also particularly evident in *Mitteleuropa*. Unlike the fictional Adrián Solovio, Vincente Risco as the autobiographical subject of the travelogue is committed to the Galician cause before his journey. Nonetheless, his time in Europe has a profound effect on the way he identifies himself. Risco is an outsider who does not quite belong in central Europe. This feeling of alterity has a striking effect on his sense of self, as he faces some uncomfortable truths. Risco starts his journey with an idea of himself as a confident man of the world, which turns to self-doubt as the differences between him and his surroundings overwhelm him. He admits, ‘Endexa mais me sentín tan estranxeiro nin tan badoco, dorosamente badoco desta volta, polo feble que me achaba de espírito’ (Risco 1994: 312). This situation is exacerbated by the language barrier. Finding himself unable to communicate, Risco admits, ‘Sentín de súpeto toda a miña inferioridade’ (328). He is so uncomfortable that he wants to give up and go home, exclaiming:

No instante, desazooume e avergonzoume punxente, esconsoladamente [sic] aquela revolta, aquel “non quero” do *homo rusticus* contra dun tan sinxelo experimento, que me viña matar o goce da descuberta. (284)

Although he is ashamed of himself at the time, this is a pivotal moment for Risco, in Minh-ha’s terms. While he loses the conception of himself as a fearless traveller, he reaffirms his deep and powerful connection to his homeland, which becomes the cornerstone of his identity. Risco can hence be seen as the embodiment of Madan Sarup’s



affirmation of the indivisibility of home and identity (1994: 95). Faced with severe homesickness, Risco maintains ‘Compénsame unha cousa: o ver como as miñas ideas se van afirmando e confirmando experimentalmente’ (314). Even though it is painful for him, the journey is indispensable as it reinforces the ideas about Galicia he had already expressed thirteen years earlier in his foundational text *Teoría do nacionalismo galego* (1920). This process is equally visible in *Diario 1921*. While studying art is the motive behind Alfonso Castelao’s time in Europe, the very process of travelling affects Castelao’s own sense of self and relationship with Galicia as it did for Solovio and Risco. Again, time away from home reinforces the link between home and identity of which Sarup writes (1994: 95). *Diario 1921* is full of complaints of loneliness and missing home, such as ‘Penso na miña Terra e canto teño de querido nela, penso e choro sen saber a razón’ (66). While this experience is difficult for Castelao, it is ultimately empowering as it reaffirms his connection to Galicia and desire to fight for the place he loves.

As well as the perspective acquired with distance from their country of origin, the necessity of having to be viewed by and present themselves to others while abroad has a profound effect on the way the authors identify themselves. In *Mitteleuropa*, Risco notes, ‘Canto máis lonxe un está de Galicia, máis galego é’ (287). With this simple observation, Risco encapsulates how travel heightens a sense of national identity. When surrounded by foreigners, travellers tend to accentuate national traits to distinguish themselves and thus feel more secure in their identity. Janis Stout’s concept of the increased introspection of the travelling self who is ‘both a considering subject and a considered object’ (1983: 14) is evident in Castelao’s writing, for example. He seems hyperaware of how others view him - as rural and therefore backwards - but this only reinforces his Galician patriotism as a kind of self-defence. In Bruges, for instance, he asserts passionately:

Non hai nada como a nosa Terra. ¡Nada! ¿Sabedes, burgueses flamengos? Porque todo canto hai eiquí podíamolo ter nos e nós tenemos o que eiquí non haberá endexamais. (Castelao 2000: 241)

Despite espousing the incommensurability of different cultures and the need for peaceful tolerance of one another, Castelao is reminded over the course of his journey that he esteems Galicia above everywhere else. Contrast with other places consequently makes travellers more aware of the specificities of home and their emotional connection to it. María Pilar García Negro observes that ‘No decurso da viaxe, toda a paisaxe, a paisanaxe e máis a novidade son contemplábeis e analisábeis desde a Galicia, nas súas virtudes e nas súas limitacións’ (2011: 67). Throughout the three texts the travellers constantly compare what they encounter to what they are familiar with in Galicia, thereby constructing dialogically both a Galician identity and an identity for each of the places they visit. In Adrián Solovio’s case, this turns him towards a sense of being Galician which he had never felt before, whereas for Risco and Castelao it consolidates the commitment to Galician nationality they already felt before their travels.

### **Galician Values in a European Context**

Corey Blanton suggests that in twentieth century travel writing ‘sights and vistas may not be as central to the narrative as issues of religion, politics and social behaviour’ (2002: 4). This is certainly true of the three texts, which place far more emphasis on these issues than on descriptions of the locations visited. This is unsurprising given the commitment of all three authors to Galician nationalism. Blanton also notes the tendency of travel writers to ‘carry with them the unexamined values and norms of their own culture and to judge foreign cultures in the light of those habits of belief’ (2002: 7-8). With regard to Galicia, Patterson highlights how ‘the Galician observer interprets the outside world in terms of the cultural specificity of the Galician outlook’ (2006a: 95-6). The travellers

consistently judge the new locations, customs and beliefs they encounter based on their own values and norms carried with them from Galicia. Of these values, there are three which are fundamental to the authors' definition of Galician identity: ruralism, religion or morality, and a rejection of cosmopolitanism.

While travel literature usually portrays a journey to unspoilt countryside or untamed wilderness fuelled by nostalgia for a lost past (Duncan and Gregory 1999: 8), the journeys narrated in these three texts, by contrast, lead the travellers from Galicia, perceived as a rural idyll, to industrialised, modern cities. The result is a marked ruralism and increasing distaste for the urban. Beramendi and Núñez Seixas stress that the concept of 'amor á terra' has been considered an essential part of Galician identity by nationalists from Murguía to Piñero (2006: 36, 204). This is particularly true of the *Xeración Nós*, whose works feature a 'reiteration of the importance of the land' (March 2008: 239), which is striking throughout these three texts. All three authors express their sense of being linked to the land as a defining characteristic of their Galician identity. Otero's Herderian belief in the organic link between people and place, for example, is evident throughout *Arredor de si*, such as when Solovio considers how the people of Northern Europe 'sentiron o chamamento do Polo como a Iberia o chamamento dos mares do coral e dos bosques de canela e do alcanfor' (Otero Pedrayo 1994: 165). This link with the land must be preserved through the rural way of life, and protected from destruction by massive industrialisation. Architecture, for example, which Risco calls 'o símbolo dos pobos' (1994: 441), must therefore reflect this ruralism. The distaste for modern architecture that Risco and Castelao exhibit in their travelogues, as well as Castelao's praise of the rural Flemish style, are cited by José Ramón Iglesias Veiga and Jesús Sánchez García as an example of the ideological basis of Galician 'regionalismo

arquitectónico'. Iglesias Veiga and Sánchez García explain that through these texts 'el ruralismo había adquirido un valor de identidad' in Galicia (2002: 125).

This attachment to a rural society is heightened by the disgust that the three authors feel when faced with the, in their words, immorality and decadence which proliferates in cities. They see this as a symptom of industrialisation and urbanisation, which makes people less accountable for their actions, as they are not part of a close community that watches over them. Castelao expresses his revulsion at the decadence of the city-dwellers, which he calls 'noxento' and 'afrentoso' (2000: 174). Suggesting that the women of Paris should wear chastity belts, he declares 'Se a civilización, se o progreso pode traer tanta inmoralidade, eu prefiro que non chegue endexamais á nosa Terra' (126). Consequently, the authors, displaying their overriding conservatism, insist on religion as an antidote to this unacceptable behaviour. Inspired by the repulsion he experiences in the cities he visits, Risco avows: 'Estou pasando unha crise, non de misticismo, mais de exaltación relixiosa' (1994: 357), and urges Christians to unite 'en defensa de la Relixión, da Moral, do Matrimonio, da Familia, da verdadeira Cultura' (362). As well as protecting the Galician people and culture, religion can provide a solid foundation for Galician identity. Risco observes that 'a relixión é unha das grandes forzas de efectividade histórica dos bascos' (262), which encourages him to use religion to unite the Galician people. In this way, religion becomes one of the key principles on which their Galician nationalism is based, as both a distinguishing feature of Galicia and a way to preserve traditional Galician society. These authors thus conform to Paul Fussell's assertion that 'Inside every good travel writer there is a [...] often a highly moral pedagogue struggling to get out' (1987: 15).

Equally, the authors completely reject cosmopolitanism, as their journeys have shown it to both cause immorality and decadence, and destroy unique, national cultures.

In *Arredor de si*, it is Solovio's contact with the Marquesa Florinda and her bourgeois society that turns him against the cosmopolitan lifestyle to which he had once aspired:

¡Cosmopolita! Adrián sufría co oco significado desta verba que nos beizos da Florinda escumaba como o viño triunfal e superior da cultura [...] Toda unha superficie de feitos e de ideas cocktail, adquiridos sen esforzo, sentidos sen febre, privados de esperanza. (Otero Pedrayo 1994: 160)

While Otero paints cosmopolitanism as vacuous, Castelao highlights its inherent flaw: 'Se todos nos fagüemos cosmopolitas, é decir parisinos, o cosmopolitismo, é decir París, xa non eisistirá, porque o cosmopolitismo é a mesturanza, a convivencia de xentes de pobos diferentes' (2000: 134). Such interrogation of cosmopolitanism, according to Allegue Leira and Fernández Pérez-Sanjulián (2014), contributed to a debate among young writers carried out in the journal *El Pueblo Gallego*.

### **The 'Booty of Knowledge': Lessons Learned from Europe**

Stephan Bann explores the concept of travel not only as a way of constructing one's own identity, but as a means of collecting the 'booty of knowledge' which will be useful upon return to the place of origin (1994: 155). He explains that this knowledge is 'a factor of contact with, and appropriation of, that otherness' which travellers encounter (1994: 156). The three texts must therefore be considered in terms of what the travellers – Risco, Castelao and Otero's fictionalised persona Adrián Solovio – learn from their journeys around Europe and how this is useful for Galician nationalism. As well as confirming the foundations of their Galician national identity, their European journeys provide the three authors with many positive examples of successful nationalism, self-determination or decentralisation to aspire to and take lessons from. I shall cite only one from each text, although there are countless more.

One of the most important lessons that Risco learns on the journey documented in *Mitteleuropa* is the need for a widespread and powerful national consciousness. He notes that for Galicia to become as advanced as the Basque Country, it is first necessary to unite the people to work together for the good of their homeland.

Soamente despertando a conciencia galega poderemos facer xurdir a arela de melloramento e o espírito de sacrificio preciso para crear e soste as indispensables pequenas cousas adxetivas. (Risco 1994: 256)

He observes that while the Basque Country's technological advances are commonly believed to be the secret to their success, none of this would have been possible without the base of their strong national identity.

Os bascos teñen limpeza, cartos, instrucción, crianza, belas cidades, teléfonos, estradas con asfalto; máis fixémos ben en que teñen unha conciencia nacional moi forte, unha soberbia de raza primixenia e un idioma que ninguén entende non sendo íles. (257)

Consequently, time spent in the Basque Country imbues Risco with a desire to spread and strengthen a Galician national consciousness, of which the travelogue, as a tool for educating and persuading the Galician public, is one result. In terms of language specifically, Risco admires how 'tódolos bascos teñen o orgullo do seu idioma' (262). By contrast, *galego* is considered common and vulgar. Hence, for Galicia to be successful as a nation, the language must be revaluated. He adds: 'Incluso pode haber un alcalde que fala mellor unha lingua estranxeira que non a lingua oficial do Estado. Se isto non nos ensina algo, é que somos parvos' (268). This proves to Risco that *galego* could realistically function alongside Castilian. *Mitteleuropa* therefore serves to convince the Galician public, as Risco's intended audience, to support the use of *galego* as a co-official language. Risco's use of the travelogue as propaganda is unsurprising given his

involvement in the campaign for a Galician Statute of Autonomy which was underway at this point.

In *Arredor de si*, Solovio learns the value of the Atlantic as a strategic advantage which allows a small nation to thrive. At the port, Solovio admires Belgium's place in the world, as products come and go to and from every part of the globe.

Non lle daba a Adrián a sensación dun poder cosmopolita. Polo contrario afirmaba a vitalidade dunha pequena patria, lucente do espírito, necesaria na economía do mundo. Só nas beiras atlánticas poden vivir os pequenos pobos, ceibes, quizais, precisamente por estar no centro das correntes do mundo. (Otero Pedrayo 1994: 172)

This Belgian example proves that Galicia does not have to rely on Spain as a gateway to the rest of the world, but can instead communicate and trade directly with other nations. Once again, the inclusion of this example, and many others like it, in Otero Pedrayo's novel illustrates how *Arredor de si* is intended to convince Galician readers of the potential strength of Galicia and the resulting need to fight for Galician interests.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of *Diario 1921* is its illustration of how Castelao's journey confirmed his belief in the power of the arts to both create a national identity and to promote that nation throughout the world. The primary reason for Castelao's journey is to study European art in order to learn the styles and skills which would then aid him in the creation of a Galician art. Castelao firmly believed in 'a necesidade de crear unha arte galega enxertada nas raíces do pobo' (Noia 2010: 243). That is to say, a strong, independent Galician identity needs more than just politics and literature; it needs a vibrant, well-rounded culture. Castelao expresses this faith in the value of an artistic tradition while admiring Flemish art, asserting that 'cunha tradición como isa non hai posibilidade de matar un pobo' (1977: 198). Bann's notion of travel as a means of acquiring knowledge to enrich both the traveller and his nation on his return home is evident throughout *Diario 1921*. Castelao notes, 'Estou adquirindo un poquiño

de *cultura* para mellor entender as cousas. Xa levo feito moito pra poder meditar cando chegue á miña Terra’ (104). With this newly acquired knowledge, he plans to hold lectures and conferences in Galicia to educate his compatriots (104). In this way, Castelao hopes that Galician art will not be his preserve, but will flourish throughout the region. Moreover, Castelao’s travels convince him that Galicia should share its culture with the world proudly to prove that it has a unique value. Watching a Ukrainian choir in Paris, for example, he considers the possibility of sending Galician choirs out to other countries to showcase Galician folk music. Witnessing this successful example of other nations increases Castelao’s faith in ‘a nosa Galicia que cada día que foxe paréceme máis grande en posibilidades’ (Castelao 2000: 120).

This is a particularly important aspect of the three texts to note, as I believe that it is this experience of Europe which provides the authors with the confidence in the possibility of success for the Galician nation that is essential for their leadership of nationalist movements. Castelao, for example, affirms:

Eiquí, en Europa, canto vín, canto observei, canto pasei trocoueme nun home máis forte de pensamento, máis seguro nas miñas afirmacións, e as miñas negacións de artista enraizado na Terra e no espírito. (341)

Similarly, Risco takes personal encouragement in Czechoslovakia from the example of Jungmann, Palacky and Safarik, ‘os tres grandes patriotas checos’ and founders of the Narodni Museum (1994: 488). Through their determination, the Czechoslovakian culture was preserved and the nation won itself a State. Risco declares ‘Gran exemplo e gran espello para os homes de pouca fe, e para os que teñen moita présa’ (488). Thus Risco’s time in Czechoslovakia reinforces his faith in the *Xeración Nós* and their ability to protect and promote the supposed Galician nation. Otero, too, expresses a faith in the possibilities



open to Galicia, acquired over the course of his journey, ending his novel with a message of hope for a better future for Galicia:

[Os galeguistas] renunciaban ás glorias da moda e do tempo. O seu reino non era o deste mundo presente e fuxitivo, senón dunha Galicia que pola derradeira xustificación dos tempos debía lucir nun futuro quizais non tan lonxano. (1994: 181-2).

In this way, all three travelogues are powerful illustrations of how time spent in Europe was transformative for the authors, driving their commitment to the Galician cause and their faith in the eventual success of their actions.

### **Finding Galicia in Europe: but What Europe?**

Finally, given the ambiguity of the term ‘Europe’, which can be defined politically (today’s European Union or European Economic Community), geographically, culturally, or ethnically, it is instructive to consider what the three texts reveal about the authors’ conceptions of Europe, and how these were shaped by their experiences of traveling. Castro highlights that Castelao’s ideology before his journey is ‘entre o europeismo e o tradicionalismo’ (2000: 8), and that he wishes to ‘abrirse a Europa e confrontar Galicia co mundo’ (9). However, until this journey Europe is only an abstract concept to him:

Será durante o traxecto cando chegue a ter unha dimensión real do que en verdade significa para el a chamada Europa, pola que tanto clamaban os nacionalistas galegos, e entón adquire plena consciencia das grandes diferenzas existentes entre os países visitados. (Noia, 2010: 240)

It is therefore necessary to ask what image of Europe the writers are left with following their travels.

Firstly, the three travelogues demonstrate how the journeys in Europe confirmed to the authors that Galicia shares characteristics with other European countries which it does not necessarily have in common with Castile. This both distinguishes Galicia from the rest of Spain and proves to the authors that Galicia is not an isolated periphery but rather part of a wider community. The most important of these characteristics to consider is Celticism, which for Beramendi and Núñez Seixas is ‘expresamente diferencialista e fundamentadora da especificidade’ (2006, 30). Celtic roots were supposedly unique to Galicia within Spain, setting the region apart in binary opposition to the rest of the country, whose culture was instead rooted in the legacy of Moorish rule. What differentiates Galicia from the rest of Spain simultaneously links it to others in Europe. In *Arredor de si*, for example, hearing Welsh singers confirms the Celtic link to Solovio:

Chegaba un coro estraño, nunha lingua non oída, esgreva e ruda máis tamén estrañosamente doce e lonxana como se fose unha lingua bañada na orixe lonxana e mitolóxica de algo que vivía na alma de Adrián. (Otero Pedrayo 1994: 172)

Hearing the Welsh sing in their own language, Solovio becomes conscious of a shared cultural foundation, which both distinguishes Galicia from the rest of Spain and unites it with other nations such as Ireland, Wales and Brittany. Similarly, in *Mitteleuropa*, Risco notes that Czechoslovakia was once Bohemia, from the Celtic tribe of Boios (1994: 513) and takes their use of the *gaita* as a sign of cultural affinity asking: ‘¿Por qué razón os homes destas terras seguiron apegados [á gaita]? ¿Non pode isto indicar certa semellanza psicolóxica?’ (512). This supposed cultural affinity with other European nations allows Otero Pedrayo, Risco and other nationalists to propose analogues with these nations, who have asserted their own culture against colonisation and imperialism successfully.

Europe is therefore a place for Galicia to express itself beyond Castilian hegemony, collaborating culturally with other nations, while, as the example of Solovio

at the port in Belgium cited above illustrates, also offering a prospect for Galicia to operate economically, bypassing centralised Spain. For the three authors, relations with other European nations are above all a means of promoting Galician culture rather than a tool for acquiring more political autonomy from Spain. Instead of a supranational political entity, they envisage Europe as an opportunity for mutual support between distinct nations, an ideal based on their historicist belief in the incommensurability of cultures.

Risco expresses his virulent objection to supranational entities in *Mitteleuropa*:

A min, tódalas creacións de valor internacional do noso tempo: Sociedade de Nacións, Oficina Internacional de Traballo, Instituto de Cooperación Intelectual etc, etc parécenme novas manifestacións da megalomanía, do delirio de grandezas do home occidental moderno, chegado a un punto adiantadísimo de senilidade e de decadencia. (1994: 460)

Instead, Otero Pedrayo puts forth in *Arredor de si* that the secret of Europe's enduring success would be as a fertile ground for the flowering of national identities; a space where the true spirits of unique peoples could flourish free from the restraints of centralising states.

A novidade de Europa, a que ela agarda, a que xustificará para sempre no mundo, non é nin a fórmula política aplicada en grande senso, a mesma de XIX, senón o descubrimento e maioría de idade de tódolos pobos que a compoñen, a xurdimento de tódalas almas colectivas, nacionais. (1994: 186)

The travelogues thus serve to convince Galician readers to unite behind this vision of Europe, a Europe in which Galicia can reach its full potential.

In conclusion, travelogues are particularly fecund documents of the construction and propagation of a Galician identity by the *Xeración Nós*, which can be explored fruitfully through the lens of travel writing theory. The three texts illustrate how Europe becomes a space in which Galician identity can thrive, both on a personal level and on a

national level. On the one hand, travel in Europe crystallises ideas about what being ‘Galician’ means, as the authors compare themselves and their homes with what they encounter abroad. On the other hand, travel provides the authors with examples of successful self-determination to aspire to and imbues them with the confidence in their nationalist project that they need to lead the nationalist movement. Moreover, the travelogues are an instructive example of the fundamental role of literature in the construction and promulgation of national identity, as both Otero Pedrayo and Risco used their accounts of their journeys as propaganda for their Galician cause.

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