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*Glocal Galicia: Redefining Galician
Culture in the Global Age*

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MONOGRAPH

GLOCAL GALICIA: REDEFINING GALICIAN CULTURE
IN THE GLOBAL AGE

Issue Editor: José Colmeiro

LOCAL CULTURES, GLOBAL CONTEXTS: REDEFINING GALICIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Today all cultures are border cultures.

NÉSTOR GARCÍA CANCLINI, *Hybrid Cultures*

In the Web 2.0 era, every public institution has already been transformed into a glocal enterprise, local and global at the same time.

JEFFREY SCHNAPP, «Animating the archive»

The image that illustrates the cover of this issue of ABRIU, «Singularidade» by sculpture artist Alicia Martín, located in the *Cidade da Cultura de Galicia* in Santiago de Compostela, seems to encapsulate the tensions of contemporary Galician culture: lodged between the local and the global, tradition and modernity, and a site of interaction between public cultural policy and individual agency, neoliberal politics and acts of communal resistance. The artwork was originally part of a collective exhibit of sculptures entitled «Inside» commissioned by the *Cidade da Cultura* to dialogue with the buildings of the architectural complex, and was singled out to remain as a permanent fixture at the entrance of the Archive of Galicia in the center because of its fitting interaction with the surroundings (Pico). «Singularidade» represents a massive whirlwind of books which suggests both the centrality of language and the excess of information in the information society, resembling a giant compass rose and black hole vortex, readable in any direction as a postmodern sign. The great ball of books evokes a textual globe in a post-textual era, a movable and evolving archive of knowledge, imagination and cultural heritage, as well as an allegorical Aleph reflecting one and all, the individual and the collective, past, present and future. Like many cultural creations of our era, Martín's sculpture has become a global tourist object: a photographable urban landscape against the reflective glass of the building, where visitors visually in-

scribe their own presence in the complex, but also a modern slate for visitors to write their comments and criticisms, to respond, contest, and indeed to dialogue with the complex and symbolically retake the public space. As such, it could be said to embody the essence of a Galician glocal icon.

This special issue is part of the ongoing critical examination of the new cultural realities that are shaping contemporary Galicia in a global context. The conflation of the global and the local, with all the new emerging realities and the tensions and challenges generated by the effects of neoliberalism, is one of the defining aspects of contemporary cultures. There is hardly any cultural, social, economic or political aspect that is not directly or indirectly affected by this dynamic in the age of globalization. This situation is particularly intense in the peripheries, far from the centers of power, like Galicia, where the struggle for survival or affirmation of local cultures and identities often depends on the deployment of new strategies for dealing with the pressures brought by global contexts and neoliberal policies and practices. It is for this reason that it might be more appropriate in this case, following García Canclini, to speak of new *glocal* realities, hybrid formations and practices that reflect the interaction of the local and the global, suggesting also a cultural redefinition of the nation and the traditional parameters that shape it, be it language, territory, borders, markets, etc. A glocal Galicia is a resituated border zone of tensions between the global and the local, which intersect with other border zones and cross-temporalities, between the urban and the rural, tradition and modernity, the ancestral and the digital.

Cultural locations and dislocations are also the result of the conflation of the local and the global (Bhabha). The related issues of location, space, place, routes and landscapes, both urban and rural, are recurring objects of inquiry throughout the articles contained in this issue. As James Clifford has theorized, roots and routes are intertwined in the processes of identity formation. The place of origins intersects, and is intersected by, the places travelled. Localized traditions affect, and are affected by, global mobility. «Local» implies a particular, concrete location, which is near, immediate and culturally identifiable. Traditionally, cultural identities are primarily attached to the local, the city, the village, the region. The appearance of the modern nation state abruptly disrupted local identities, creating cultural dislocations, in a similar way that neoliberal globalization in our day is profoundly altering and redefining the local and the national, with the emergence of supranational forces and the instant flow of capital, labor, travel, and information across the world. This

historical analogy, marking the early birth of the nation state and its current erosion, was astutely explored by Vázquez Montalbán in his novel *O César o Nada*, a posthistorical novel about the Borgias and the new political models shaping early modernity, which offered a metaphorical reading of the great power struggles in globalisation reshaping the modern nation states (Colmeiro 2014). It is thus not altogether surprising that crucial elements that served to construct local and national identity in the Middle Ages, like Santiago de Compostela and the Camiño de Santiago, which were eroded by the emergence of the nation state, among other factors, have re-emerged with great force and now serve as exemplary elements of the new glocal realities in the global age, as analysed by Silvia Bermúdez in this issue.

The relationship of Galicia as nation to a finite territory, a particular geopolitical space, and indeed the affective attachment of the Galician people to the land, and its scenic landscapes, has been particularly strong in Galicia since at least the Romantic era and the *Rexurdimento*. The traditional rural character of Galicia, its physical remoteness, and the great diasporic movement, generated a strong cultural connection to the land, of almost mythical proportions. In the global age, this connection has been deeply affected: the rapid disappearance of agriculture and abandonment of the rural areas, caused by economic and demographic factors, including restrictive UE policies, internal and external migration, cultural urbanization, economic and industrial mobility, widespread virtuality and fast communication technologies, are all redefining the traditional locations of culture in Galicia. As a result, a profound reshaping of the relationship of the land and its people has taken place, creating dislocations, hybridities and new glocal realities. This means that the glocal Galicia of today is multifaceted, not just a finite territory geopolitically marked, a language, an economic market or an enclosed cultural system, but a complex and diverse, deterritorialized crossroads of cultures and subjectivities. Galicia appears, then, as a border culture, a contact zone of migrations, mobile identities and hybridities; with a dispersed, decentralised cultural geography, across oceans and nation states, between the urban and rural, the local and the global, between Spanish and Portuguese languages and histories, and yet still needing to redefine and reaffirm its own evolving Galicianess. The local/global interactive dimension of Galician culture, with its propensity for transnationalism, aims to transcend both the limits of the local as well as the nation state, while still using the filter of the local as a main focal point.

This conflation of the local and the glocal in Galicia has its academic parallel in the ongoing confluence of Galician cultural studies and globalization studies. This interdisciplinary convergence has proven to be a highly fertile ground for research in Galician studies in the 21st century; its impetus has been the driving engine of a number of international encounters, conferences and panel discussions in recent years: Salvador de Bahia (2006), Liverpool-Bangor (2008), Santiago-A Coruña-Vigo (2009), Seattle (2010), Milwaukee (2014), Buenos Aires (2015), and Ann Arbor (2016), among others, which suggests a parallel decentered globalised academic geography. This confluence has already produced in the last decade a substantial body of innovative research outputs in English, which is already transforming the field of Galician studies, such as the volumes by Kirsty Hooper (2011), Kirsty Hooper and Manuel Puga (2011), Eugenia Romero (2012), José Colmeiro (2013, 2017), Helena Miguélez-Carballeira (2014), and Benita Sampedro and José Antonio Losada Montero (2017). This globalised and decentered academic geography, with its drive towards interdisciplinarity and cross-sectionality, and reorientation towards non canonical themes and critical approaches, suggests the parallel issue of the need for «remapping» or «rerouting» Galician Studies—a recurring concern in recent research—and the need for resituating Galicia on the global map. This cultural relocation of the field, and of Galician culture, is another sign of the mutual implications of the local and the global.

As I have proposed elsewhere, «the new horizons of Galician studies in a globalized world have to be approached from different transnational and transversal multidisciplinary frameworks, deterritorialized and deperipheralized» (2017: 62). This monograph issue of *Abriu*, entitled «Glocal Galicia: Redefining Galician Culture in the Global Age», aims to examine the new challenges and hybrid realities of contemporary Galician culture in a global context from multidisciplinary and intersectional perspectives. The essays included explore the modern redefinition of Galicia in the global age through the critical reading of different cultural texts and media, performances, cultural policies and practices. Aiming to illuminate important subjects and questions that are still developing or are underexplored, the articles in this issue bring different decentered perspectives on Galician Studies from Iberian Studies and Global Studies, but they are also informed from current theoretical developments in film and media studies, urban development, public architecture, tourism studies, visual culture studies, migration studies, policy studies, and gender and queer studies. They focus on the establishment of official policies, insti-

tutional cultural projects and textual and artistic archives, as well as the development of new forms of cultural contestation, creativity and hybridity, with particular attention to recent work on the margins of traditional mainstream cultural production resisting neoliberal ideology, such as experimental audio-visual production and queer literature.

In her essay «Digitizing Galicia: Cultural Policies and Trends in Cultural Heritage Management», Ekaterina Volkova addresses the important issue of Galician cultural heritage in the global age. The question of the recuperation, transmission, and preservation of Galician cultural heritage is of paramount importance for its survival in a rapidly changing social environment, defined by new technologies, economic and cultural practices influenced by the expansion of global neoliberalism.

Volkova focuses on the local/global dimension of cultural policies in Galicia, an area of administrative control fully devolved to the Xunta de Galicia, but influenced by cultural policies of the nation state, as well as supranational organizations such as the UE and UNESCO, but also largely influenced by key actors in the private sector within global economic neoliberalism. She examines how governmental agencies and cultural institutions in Galicia have been adapting their policies towards cultural heritage by adopting new approaches and using the new technologies of the global information society that are key for its preservation and accessibility.

Her study presents a thorough journey through a complex field of multi-level organisations and institutions involved in processes of digitization of Galician cultural heritage and the creation of virtual archives and interactive apps and web platforms, as well as the presence of Galician cultural heritage in social networks. Particular attention is paid to public institutions such as the Consello da Cultura Galega, and the contributions of cultural, academic and professional organisations. Likewise, the important role of civic activism for Galician cultural heritage in the global age is emphasized. A case in point is the positive effects of the grassroots campaign for the «.gal» domain, generated from below. The Galician domain was successfully obtained, and subsequently was officially adopted by the Xunta de Galicia for all the websites they oversee.

As Volkova demonstrates in her essay, the private sector has also played a very significant role in the preservation and dissemination of Galician cultural heritage, which has been a bit of a double-edge sword. Under the cloud of neoliberalism, a significant proportion of the artistic treasures and Galician cultu-

ral heritage is in the hands, and under the control, of several private financial institutions, of which two stand out: the ABANCA and the Afundación cultural heritage collections. As Volkova reminds us, these impressive collections, which are the largest collections of modern Galician art in the world, were largely amassed as a result of their original social mission as savings banks, and now are considered economic assets of their respective companies. The dramatic saga in recent years of the Galician banks who own these collections and their different avatars showcases the interplay of the global and the local, provoked by the onset of the global financial crisis and the local corruption of financial elites, and the subsequent forced merger, rescue operation and private sale to a foreign corporation by the Galician neoliberal government.

Interestingly, these «cultural repositories» have become quite controversial politically and socially, as evidenced by the public and political debates about the potential relocation of ABANCA/Afundación collections, and the strong sentiments they generated. After much heated debate, the collections were classified as protected «assets of cultural interest» and will stay not only in Galicia, but in the respective cities of origin, which reveals the continued attachment to the local, in spite of the global forces of neoliberalism. The international dimension of Galician cultural heritage goes well beyond the geopolitical confines of Galicia, as the recent political controversy regarding the legacy of the Galician cultural heritage of the economically troubled Centro Gallego in Buenos Aires, suddenly on the center stage of Galician cultural policy demonstrates (Nespeira). As BNG cultural policy spokesperson Olalla Rodil expressed in the Galician Parliament, one of the provisions of the Galician Law of Cultural Heritage states that the Galician government must «salvaguardar el patrimonio cultural que se encuentre en el exterior, especialmente en Latinoamérica» (López). This controversy also reveals how Galician cultural heritage policy in the global age intersects in complex ways with migrant community organisations, foreign national policies and multinational private corporations.

The intertwining of political, economic and artistic/cultural enterprises in Galicia is ever-present. The development of new cultural policies in Galicia under the aegis of neoliberalism, with the institutional rebranding of its cultural heritage, and the efforts towards *museification* and *park-thematisation* for global consumption, are ongoing concerns for Galician cultural studies. In her essay «Santiago de Compostela and the Spatial Articulation of Power: From the Cathedral to the *Cidade da Cultura*», Silvia Bermúdez examines one of the most

visible glocal transformations of Galician culture, the city of Santiago de Compostela redefined as a monumental heritage theme park for global consumption.

Santiago de Compostela and the Camiño de Santiago are so solidly intertwined in their histories that one would not exist without the other. The Camiño de Santiago is a very powerful and long lasting narrative which has lasted more than a millennium: a traveling route, an international network of connections, and a cultural space that aimed to create a solidified idea of communal identity (Christian, European, white), in opposition to the excluded others (by religion, ethnicity, race). At the same time, without altogether losing the original spirit, its meaning has evolved and been transformed in the global age, acquiring additional cultural, political and economic connotations. Under the forces of neoliberalism, with the intensification of global tourism and consumption, official branding and rebranding campaigns, Santiago and the Camiño became glocal enterprises.

As Bermúdez argues, under the government of Manuel Fraga, the Camiño was rebranded as a multifaceted cultural route that aimed to resituate Galicia as a destination on the global map. Likewise, the city of Santiago underwent a process of «Disneyfication», or conversion to cultural heritage theme park. The transformation of the Camiño and Santiago aimed to deperipheralize the remote location of continental Europe's Land's End, and transform it into a main European destination.

Bermúdez analyses the two largest monuments in Santiago, the cathedral and the *Cidade da Cultura*, as examples of the «spatial articulation of power». The cathedral in the Middle Ages and the *Cidade da Cultura* in the global age, like inverted reflections, exemplify two huge monumental projects that both aim to transform and transcend the local (spaces, places, traditions) and accommodate to a much larger international audience. The study focuses particularly on the controversial construction of the *Cidade da Cultura* in Santiago, a massive undertaking in public architecture and urban development which encapsulates the principles of neoliberalism. The project and implementation of the *Cidade da Cultura*, with all its lights and shadows, as a privileged local space marked by urbanistic, architectural, political, and economic enterprises involved in the transformation and redefinition of Santiago for the global, functions as a symptom and a metaphor of 21st century glocal Galicia. The opportunity is there to redefine the purpose of the complex, to make it a living learning environment and a unique space of creativity, reflection, and observation, as suggested by «Singularidade», rather than a collection of empty signifiers of the neoliberal

spatial articulation of power. What will ultimately happen to the *Cidade da Cultura* will be a reflection of what will happen to Galician culture at large.

The interplay of the local and the global and its influence on Galician cultural identity has multiple ramifications also in literary discourse. From a queer critical perspective, Danny Barreto addresses the multiple intersections in the construction and representation of Galician migrant identities—cutting across past and present, the individual and the collective, the sexual and the political, the local and the global—and the cultural hybridity of subjectivities in flux across traditional divides, of nation, language, gender and sexuality.

In his essay «Far from the Family Tree: Queering Genealogies and Literary Archives in *Outono aquí* by Mario Regueira», Barreto notes the increasing attention to non-hegemonic and marginalized histories in Galician Studies, as well as the growing interest in non-normative gender and sexual subjectivities, although acknowledging the numerous gaps and silences in their history, and the need to deal with the missing links in a queer genealogy of artistic or literary tradition. Barreto's essay focuses on Mario Regueira's queer novel *Outono aquí* (2012), viewed as a conscious effort to challenge those silences imposed by hegemonic histories and normativity. According to Barreto, Regueira stretches the traditional limits of sexuality, language, and nation, to offer a queer Galician narrative rooted in the local, but thoroughly transnational and transhistoric.

Barreto examines Regueira's original concept of a Galician non-conforming and gender-defying «maronda» literature, theorized as resisting mainstream orthodoxy and heteronormativity. Borrowing the term «maronda» from rural Galician, traditionally referring to non-castrated cattle, and pejoratively to men and women non-conforming to gender norms, Regueira appropriates it and redefines its meaning, in a similar vein to what Anglo queer scholars have done earlier with the derogatory English word «queer». In that sense, «maronda» could be seen as a localized formation closely related to the globalised concept «queer», not a simple literal transposition but a translation with the potential to transform. It is a *glocal* hybrid notion at the same time that is a *rurban* concept, a rural word of origin informed by a global and urban perspective, rooted in the local, which aims to circumvent the dominance or Anglo queer discourses.

Barreto sees Regueira's project in the wider terms of a «maronda» literature from the margins, which defies normalization, whether sexual, linguistic or national in nature. For Regueira, redefining Galician identity in the 21st century means the adoption of new perspectives and strategies that subvert normati-

ty, which implies the inclusion of sexual, gendered, linguistic or national minorities. The novel thus highlights the intersections of sexual and linguistic minorities, challenging historical violence, heteronormativity and patriarchy. Barreto borrows from theorist Avery Gordon the concept of haunting of «repressed traumas and silenced histories», which in the novel are challenged by ghosts, to refer to the spectral presence of the violence of family and national histories on marginalized and repressed identities. The resulting overlay effect of the past and the present in a Galician village, as well as the overlap of urbanity over rurality and modernity over tradition, challenges the experience of linear time in a spectral way. In the representation of the evolving Galician landscape in the novel, Barreto establishes a dialogue with the «ghostly landscapes» described by Patricia Keller (also the author of an article on the landscapes of Lois Patiño's films in this issue), which dislodge categorical fixed notions of «past and present, history and event, knowledge and perception» (20).

Place, location, nation, mobility, at the intersection with sexuality, language, are seen as crucial elements in defining cultural hybridity. Barreto concentrates on the issues of migration and translation, as border-crossing experiences, which resituate Galicia's cultural and political condition in a global context. The cultural mobility experienced in the novel, between lands, cultures, languages and nations, and the correlation of the lives of the characters between Galicia and Ghent in Belgium, highlights the diglossic and subaltern status of sexual, linguistic and political minority cultures across national borders.

Regueira's abundant use of references to foreign texts and cultural figures in the novel weaves a Galician narrative that transcends the limits of the Spanish state. Likewise, the interplay of literary and musical discourses, with the use of international songs from different traditions throughout the novel, aims to create alternative genealogies of non-normative forms of expression traditionally repressed and marginalized on political, sexual, linguistic or racial grounds. Barreto ably analyses the use of intertextuality in the novel with popular songs in different languages from the global songbook, where the act of translation transforms a global discourse into a local expression of identity. In Regueira's work, the interaction of literature and music reconstructs the silences and gaps of the past and creates alternative genealogies that challenge patriarchal and heteronormative systems of domination over sexual and gendered minorities. As Barreto admits, this is especially relevant for Galician culture, where literature still occupies a crucial position as a channel for iden-

tity formation and nation-building, in redefining its relationship with the rest of Spain and reaffirming its place in the world.

Following the boom in Galician literature, popular music, and fashion in the 1980s and 1990s, and in the wake of the technological revolution with intermediality, digitization, and Galician animation in the 21st century, the emergence of the new wave of Novo Cinema Galego (NCG), or New Galician Cinema, object of numerous international critical accolades, is perhaps one of the most auspicious developments in Galician cultural production of recent years, and is the object of study of the articles by Sam Amago and Patricia Keller.

A new paradigm has emerged in Galician audiovisual production, characterized by the coexistence of multiple forms of film production, distribution and viewing, from traditional commercial productions and international co-productions, shown in movie houses and TV, to self-produced audiovisuals, viewed by video streaming and other alternative circuits. This transformation has a lot to do with the advent of the avant-garde NCG, since its patterns of production, exhibition and consumption follow non-traditional channels. It is a «peripheral cinema» on the margins of the mainstream, typically marked by experimentation, the use of new technologies, self-production regimes, and non-commercial distribution. The employment of digital tools in particular has been of paramount importance in the ease of production, distribution and viewing of new audiovisual productions. In parallel, the growth of Galician rural film festivals and the presence of NCG films in international festivals, as well as virtual film festivals, has created new networks of production, collaboration and exhibition, and new viewing circuits like internet platforms, virtual depositories and other alternative channels that have increased viewing audience access across the board, creating «microaudiences» for non-traditional audiovisual content. The independence of NCG filmmakers from the limitations of industrial production schemes has provided greater freedom to experiment and a boost to creativity and formal and conceptual experimentation, produced through the hybridization of genres and formats. These new developments have transcended the traditional conceptual limits of national cinemas as well as the industrial and economic limits of the nation state cinemas. It is a new postnational deterritorialized and deperipheralized paradigm that defies neoliberal orthodoxies (Colmeiro 2017).

The experimental and non-traditional bent of the NCG also aims for a profound questioning of normative modes of representation and of the tradi-

tional certainties and taxonomies associated with the mainstream. It thus points towards a new epistemology, a new way of seeing, employing new forms of intermedial self-reflection and consciousness, but also an ontological questioning of the very notion of cinematographic representation, with a continual probing of the traditional definitions of fiction and documentary, instead stretching the boundaries and experimenting in the border zones.

In «Local Landscapes, Global Cinemasces, and the New Galician Documentary», Sam Amago examines these new trends in the Galician documentary associated with the NCG wave, characterised by its innovative experimentalism and hybrid mix of fiction and documentary, narrative and reflection, the conceptual and the symbolic. A key topic of his study is the interplay of the local realities, spaces and landscapes, with global contexts and perspectives. In small peripheral regions like Galicia, the tension between the economic and political pressures of neo-liberal globalization and the pressures to maintain cultural identity are perhaps more intensely felt. Amago notes a basic paradox in Galician documentary: the tension between deliberate conceptual border crossing, questioning traditional binaries and representational models, and a very strong sense of cultural identity, by signposting geographical, linguistic and cultural markers that show a distinctive way of seeing.

Amago's essay focuses on two representative practitioners of the NCG, Xurxo Chirro and Lois Patiño, whose highly acclaimed films *Vikingland* (2011) and *Costa da Morte* (2013) have received ample recognition and prestigious awards internationally, becoming the new image of Galician modernity in the world. It cannot be coincidental that two of the most representative films of the NCG have an evocative location in their title, even if they are not exactly geopolitical descriptors, which highlights the strong sense of location of NCG films. *Vikingland* plays ironically with Galicia's image as a peripheral land, and a past historical connection with Nordic invaders, at the same time that it alludes to a cultural dislocation, the displacement of Galician migrant workers in the North Sea. It can be said that *Vikingland*, as a movie made in Galicia in the 21st century by manipulating the found footage of Galician workers working in the North Sea twenty years earlier, is a metaphor of Galician mobility and transformation in the global age. *Vikingland* is a border zone between lands, languages, cultures, times and histories, like Galicia herself. Likewise, some of Chirro's short films, like *Textil movie*, from the «Movies» trilogy, are exercises in calculated visual manipulation intending to reveal the ambiguous