

EXPLORING NOOKS AND CRANNIES

OLGA CASTRO
Aston University

MARÍA LIÑEIRA
University of Oxford
Issue Editors

In his influential essay, *The Poetics of Space* (1958), Gaston Bachelard examines images of «felicitous space» (1994: xxxv) among which the house reigns supreme. For him, the house image, which in 20th century Europe had become «the topography of our intimate being» (xxxii), constitutes «a tool for analysis of the human soul» (xxxvii). This fourth issue of *Abriu. Textuality Studies on Brazil, Galicia and Portugal* has been purposely built up upon such a powerful image as it gives us a vantage point from which to examine Galician textuality, not as a finished product but as a work in progress. Yet, unlike him, we focus on the spaces of conflict where tension occurs and secrets are kept. Echoing the comments of the late poet Xela Airas (in Carneiro 1990), we wish to reveal what we were taught to hide, thus exposing the crevices in the scaffolding of Galician textuality and the life that grows in them.

Moving away from the symbolism of the glossy tourist image of the solid granite Baroque cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, we embrace the messy reality of the eternal cycle of construction and reconstruction. The Cathedral was slowly built upon a cemetery full of the bones of strangers. It was at first a humble chapel which later grew not only towards the sky but also towards the depths of the soil. Like a living being grows hair, the Cathedral grows bright green moss and purple flowers between its stones. The scaffolding is an intrinsic part of the building, like glasses and crutches are for the eyes and the legs of those who need them. Old houses, and ours is no exception, have been built layer upon layer and, like tree rings and rock strata, reveal their secrets to the meticulous researcher. This issue is devoted to a recent layer which ranges from the second half of the 20th century to 2010, although its roots are firmly planted in the 19th century.

The five articles included in this issue explore nooks and crannies of textual and symbolic nature. Neil D. Anderson, whose doctoral thesis was entitled *Microgeographies: Galician Narratives of Place* (2004–2012), examines the metaphor of the school ruins in Manuel Rivas's novel *Todo é silencio*. Drawing from Pierre Nora's concepts of *lieu* and *milieu de mémoire*, Anderson explores the interstices between these two types of spaces, teaching us to not avert the gaze from conflictive zones. María Xesús Nogueira explores split and non-normative selves in the poetry of Xela Arias. She is doubly concerned with the margins, firstly, as a poet in-between generations who occupies a blind spot of Galician literary historiography, which is rigidly rooted in the outdated generational model; and, secondly, as a poet interested in exploring disoriented and disorienting poetic voices who place themselves out in the open, at the mercy of the elements.

The last three articles question the margins of national literature, showing how Galician textuality goes beyond the univocity of the national metanarrative. Danny Barreto analyzes issues of origins and legitimacy in Suso de Toro's autobiographical novel *Sete palabras* (2009). In his reading of the novel, de Toro's character is searching not only for his family but also for his literary origins; or, in other words, his identity as a Galician intellectual. Barreto's article builds upon his previous work on 19th century Galician narrative, a corpus which challenges some of the limits of the national literature regarding language and ethnic origin. Antonio Iglesias Mira devotes his article to a long-forgotten theatre project, *Castelao e a súa época* (1969), the brainchild of the Catalan director Ricard Salvat during his residency at the University of Coimbra. A dialogue of cultures conceived under the wake of Brechtian epic theatre, the play was forbidden by the Portuguese dictatorship. We only have access to the blueprint of the project and its remnants in the musical repertoire of the *Balada de Coimbra*. Finally, María Liñeira, who has written her doctoral thesis on *Literary Citizenship and The Politics of Language* (1939-1965), reflects on the disjointed and multilingual sounds of Galician voices and the difficulties of reconciling them in a theoretical framework, that of national literature governed by the linguistic criterion (*criterio filolóxico*) which erases linguistic variability in order to exercise hegemony.

Like Marta Doval and Fins, the detectives of *Todo é silencio*, these researchers survey secret places, searching for the opportunities that arise from imbalance, interruption and tension. As Barreto puts it eloquently, this is a Galicia «which refuses to ignore the discontinuities, traumas and absences in

its own history». Indeed, following in the footsteps of scholars such as the late Xoán González-Millán, Antón Figuroa, Kirsty Hooper, Helena Miguélez-Carballeira and María do Cebreiro Rábade Villar, we hope to contribute to a new understanding of Galician Literary Studies that instead of shying away from conflict seeks to engage with it.

WORKS CITED

- CARNEIRO, Montse (1990). «Xela Arias cuelga en la pared los dramas inconfesables que descubre a través de la poesía». *El Ideal Gallego*, 12 August. Álbum de Mulleres. Consello da Cultura Galega. [Online] [2 April 2015]. <<http://www.culturagalega.org/album/detalleextra.php?id=149>>.
- BACHELARD, Gaston (1994 [1958]). *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press.