

# FOREVER IN GALICIA? CASTELAO AND THE HOMELAND MADE IN EXILE

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## ABSTRACT

*Sempre en Galiza*, by Alfonso Rodríguez Castelao, is an idiosyncratic text that both spans and erodes the traditional genres of memoir, political treatise, historical essay, revisionist analysis and constitutional programme for an imagined community. This article assesses the changes in timbre in Castelao's political and cultural outlook according to the geographical and psychological stages of his long journey into exile. It analyses the range and depth of metaphor and symbology employed by the Galician writer in his continually revised map for a post-Civil and post-Second World War Galicia and Iberia. In particular, through careful reference to diaspora and postcolonial theory, it identifies the constants of Castelao's relationship with his homeland and contrasts these with the inevitable modification of his ideas brought about by events on an international scale. It also examines the diasporic trauma that conditions the exile's relationship to the complex matrix of nation, territory and culture. It concludes that as a result of exilic experience, Castelao departs from essentialist notions of Galician identity, and moves towards acceptance of a broader notion and more flexible paradigm of Galician identity that is similar to what is today regarded as the 'global'.

*Keywords:* Galicia; Galician Studies; Castelao, Alfonso Rodríguez; exile; diaspora; Xeración Nós; Hispanic Studies; postcolonialism; travel literature

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## Introduction

ALFONSO RODRÍGUEZ CASTELAO (1886–1950) was the charismatic leader of the Galician campaign for political autonomy before the Spanish Civil War. In 1895 he emigrated with his mother to the Argentinian pampas in order to be reunited with his father. The family returned to Galicia in 1900. The Spanish Civil War forced Castelao to leave Galicia and subsequently Spain, and he spent the final years of his life in Buenos Aires. His journey into exile, along common routes of Galician emigration, provided him with the material and critical distance to compose the work that is most commonly associated with him today: *Sempre en Galiza* (1944–1961).<sup>1</sup> This article assesses the changes in Castelao's political and cultural outlook according to the geographical and psychological stages of his long journey into exile as documented in *Sempre en Galiza*. Through reference to diaspora, exile and postcolonial theory, it analyses the constants of Castelao's relationship with his homeland, contrasting these

with the inevitable modification of his ideas according to events on a wider international scale. It also considers the trauma that conditions the exile's ongoing assessment of the complex matrix of nation, territory and culture.

*Sempre en Galiza* comprises micro-texts that have their origin in articles, notes, speeches and conferences, and in rallies aimed at a wide audience and readership, such as the Galicianist readers of *A Nosa Terra*, the Galician Republicans and Galicians in exile in the Americas, as well as Galicianists and Spanish Republicans in Argentina and Uruguay. The text both spans and erodes the traditional genres of memoir, political treatise, historical essay and revisionist analysis, and is a constitutional programme for an imagined community. The staggered nature of the work's composition and its many revisions lead to multiple instances of repetition in argument and exposition. It is unsurprising, therefore, that *Sempre en Galiza* has been criticized for not being a coherent, polished work.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the text being a diachronic collage, to quote Bermaendi and Maiz, there are theses, cases, strategies and motifs that are endlessly reiterated or defended by Castelao, and a clear unity of argument can be identified. These concern language, territory, the political thesis of federalism, and the challenge to centripetal and authoritarian accounts of Galician, Spanish and Iberian history.

#### *Exile and the revision of Galician identity*

The decisive way in which the exile experience changes Castelao's vision of Galicia and Galician history can be detected immediately in chapter two of the second book of *Sempre en Galiza*. This consists mostly of the well-known section in which Castelao revises the ideas, figures and motifs evoked by the pre-Spanish Civil War generation of Galician nationalists, the Xeración Nós, in their construction of Galician identity.<sup>3</sup>

As well as introductory and concluding paragraphs, the section contains a series of intermediary paragraphs which open with the emotive phrase '¡Qué importa...!'. These address Galicia's supposed Celtic past; the defeat of the ancient Galicians by Rome; the legacy of Priscillian; Galicia's contribution to the lineage of Roman emperors and Popes; Galicia's Suebian heritage; the consolidation of Santiago de Compostela and its role in the flourishing of medieval European culture; medieval dynastic struggles and revolts; Galicia's contribution to the Enlightenment and Romanticism; and Galicia's legacy of emigration and exploration. Here is an example of Castelao's deliberately dramatic scrutiny of Galician historical superstructure:

¡Qué importa que os proxenitores da nosa caste chegaran a Irlanda e formaren alí un acorro inespuníable das esencias celtas! Galiza soportou en silencio a política castelán, que cortou as relacións que viñamos sostendo cos Fisterres atlánticos, até perdermos o posto que nos correspondía no concerto misterioso da nosa raza. (I/II/245)

After the initial interrogative and exclamation at the opening of each paragraph, Castelao inserts a sober reminder of less glorious outcomes in Galician history, which acts as a counterweight to core identitarian models by calling into question their absolute relevance and value amidst the immediate internecine drama of 1937–38. Castelao labours his point: that mythical aspects of Galicia's imagined, sublimated past have not prevented Castilian hegemony and domination, or allowed Galicia to attain greater linguistic, political and cultural autonomy. His tone evokes the Yeats poem 'September 1913' in its implication that a Romantic Galicia is dead and gone, and a new radical focus is required for cultural survival. The deconstruction of Galician history and its accompanying dose of realism is remarkable if we take into account that it chooses to discard the subjective histories of Galicia produced since the late Romantic period and into the twentieth century, from the Romantic revival of the *Rexurdimento* to the Modernist, cultural nationalism of the Nós generation. Exile is the catalyst for that deconstruction.

In *The Dialectics of Exile: Nation, Time, Language and Space in Hispanic Literatures*, Sophia McClellenn offers a theory of exile-writing that accounts for the persistence of the dual impulses that either produce creative freedom or trap the writer in restrictive nostalgia. She observes that:

For the exile, a sense of both nationalism and national identity are necessary. Without the belief that there is a connection between an individual and a place, exile has no meaning. Yet, the exile's nationalism is usually contrary to the versions of nationalism and national identity fostered within the nation's borders. [...] The exile commonly provides an alternative to [...] official positions. Because exiles are forcefully cast out of the nation, their concept of nationalism argues that the connections between people and land should be constructed differently from their current state under authoritarianism. So the exile's nationalism is constructive of an alternative: it is active.<sup>4</sup>

Castelao's active construction of an alternative is all the more striking given that he situates this at a remove from the very bases upon which his friend and colleague, the moderate Catholic scholar Ramón Otero Pedrayo (1888–1976), had built a relatively objective account of a distinctive Galician identity in his *Ensaio histórico sobor da cultura galega* (1933). Although critical of certain aspects of, and figures from, Galician history, this text never loses sight of its aim to produce a peripheral and sympathetic approach to the subject of Galician identity in contradistinction to the dominant centripetal narrative of Spanish historiography. In his construction of a new epic discourse for Galician history, and of an historical account in opposition to one focused predominantly on Madrid and Spain, Otero was himself a full revisionist. Castelao's approach is therefore to revise an outlook that can be associated with Otero's writings from the 1920s and 30s: this is a critical overview, therefore, not just of centripetal positions, but also of those that have informed the discourse of the cultural and political movement that Castelao helped to construct before the Spanish Civil War.

In *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction*, Rosemary Marangoly George examines the relationship between ‘home’ and the ‘nation’ that informs modern fiction and cultural theory written in English, and concentrates on what she refers to as the ‘immigrant genre’.<sup>5</sup> Although *Sempre en Galiza* cannot be classified as fiction, its author does demonstrate the tendency to view the present overtly in terms of its distance from the past and future, to disregard national schemes, to use a multigenerational cast of characters from Galician and Iberian history, and to reveal a narrative tendency toward repetitions and echoes, as Marangoly George points out. According to these paradigms of the postcolonial and exilic experience identified by Marangoly George, the Galician is an exile responding to the distance imposed upon him as a writer. He is a contributor to the immigrant genre of literature.

*Sempre en Galiza* also displays features that are associated with postcolonial exile narratives. While Castelao’s experience is typical of the Galician one, it is certainly distinctive, though not unique or radically different from those from other cultures that have experienced degrees of exile, movement and diasporic trauma. Given that Galician culture and language have minority status within the Spanish state, it is important for the universal nature of that relationship to be identified and investigated.

In 1937, Castelao expresses in unequivocal terms his wish to jettison any overt preoccupation with Galician history that detracts from the immediate struggle to secure a Republican victory in the Civil War and Galician political autonomy following the conflict:

Renego a historia de Galiza, porque o pasado sóio nos deixou desilusións de vida e nin tansiquera sabemos cál foi o seu mellor propósito. Eu sóio confío no poder máxico da terra e no porvir que presentimos a través da nosa fê. (I/II/245)

Exile within Spanish national territory and the expediency imposed by war leads Castelao to adopt a position that reduces his outlook to an expression of variations upon the supernatural vagueness of *Volksgeist* and faith in an uncertain future. Previous outlooks are now considered redundant, as Castelao summarizes in one of the short paragraphs that close the same chapter:

Estamos asistindo agora a un parto sanguíñento e dooroso de novas ideaias, e os feitos pasados non poden roubarnos o pensamento e aición que necesitamos para construírmos a Galiza do futuro. (I/II/252)

Early exile experiences therefore lead Castelao to urge his readers to look towards the future, rather than a supposedly chequered historical past of squandered opportunities and the endurance of colonial exploitation by the Castilian-dominated power of Spain; from the viewpoint of his exile, the past may not be a prologue and is certainly not a prescription. Castelao ends this second chapter with an emphasis on supposedly Galician qualities which he terms ‘tradition’: the Galician language; her ‘spirit’, culture, art, lifestyle and outlook; a transcendental awareness of life and death; the inclination of

Galicians towards both universality and specificity; their affectionate identification with the land, love of justice and suitable patterns of co-existence; the hope for a better world, and the predisposition to poetry. These are many of the classic tenets of European cultural nationalism which, as McClennen explains, play an important role in the cultural production of exiled intellectuals. Insofar as exiles are challenging the official culture of their nation, they must argue for an alternative cultural nationalism – the ‘active’ alternative identified above as Castelao’s approach. This position typically maintains that there is a story being suppressed by official versions of cultural identity, and which must be told by the exile.<sup>6</sup>

In order to disseminate and frame this alternative account, Castelao introduces the dichotomy between tradition and history that serves as the central narrative theme for the remaining twenty-nine chapters of the first book of *Sempre en Galiza*:

A guerra civil a que asistimos non é máis que unha loita entre a tradición e a hestoria. Eles representan a hestoria; nós a tradición. Pero é que os galegos temos unha tradición propia e inconfundible, moi diferente á do resto de Hespaña. (I/II/253)

Castelao’s approach once again coheres with identifiable features of exile narrative writers, who attempt to counter official versions of their nation’s culture by including stories that are no longer told within their countries, and which the exile hopes will reach their compatriots. Throughout *Sempre en Galiza*, Castelao reflects on two important strategies by which exiles challenge official versions of national culture. Firstly, he provides an alternative or counter-national culture to that of the centripetal (in this case Spanish) tradition, and critiques that centripetal concept of national culture. The second strategy attempts to deconstruct the hold on identity that cultural nationalism exerts in the exiles’ home countries, and elsewhere, by exposing the repressive connections between the self and the state. This can be seen in Castelao’s ‘rejection’ of Galician history. Such a position suggests that the construction of any national culture is highly problematic and always involves a restriction of identity. This is made manifest in Castelao’s text by recurring and metaphorical references to the shackling, obstruction and limitation of Galicia by ‘imperialist’ Castile. Furthermore, exiles seek the means of breaking the bonds that are restricting their national culture, and often conclude that the notion of national culture must be abolished for cultural freedom to be experienced. The attempt at that abolition in *Sempre en Galiza* lies in its obsessive promotion of a federal Iberia, an idea that Castelao begins to express precisely within the context of the work’s second book.<sup>7</sup>

Marangoly George observes how the concept of ‘home’ in the immigrant genre is a fiction that one can move beyond or recreate at will. The association between an adequate self and a place to call home is scrutinized and then surrendered. She suggests that postmodern and postcolonial subjects are surprised at their detachment from what they were taught to be attached to.<sup>8</sup> In Castelao’s *Sempre en Galiza* there is a postmodern and postcolonial approach to

history and Galician history in particular. It can be detected in that conscious detachment from the certainty and safety of previous models of identity and is prompted by the early stages of exile following the Civil War, the corresponding physical and psychological geographies of those stages, and how these impact upon Castelao's outlook.

*Exile and Galician identity*

By 1940, Castelao had come to the end of what he regarded as his first year of exile:

Decorreron tres anos de guerra, que parecen tres séculos, e decorreu un ano de desterro, que nos permite descubrir a incapacidade dos homes máis representativos e responsables. (II/I/370–71)

At the beginning of Book Two of *Sempre en Galiza*, he emphasizes his reluctance to experience exile, discusses the hardships endured by the exiled patriot, and underlines his resolve to focus solely on Galician concerns:

Liberteime da morte e agora ando, coa vida a costas, por camiños que endexamáis coidei percorrer. Vai connigo a Santa Compañía dos mártires galegos, e ando con eles a seguir a estrela do galeguismo. Non hai sufrimento mellor para un patriota desterrado, e ninguén pode eisirme que cangue con doores alleas. Abóndame con ser galego. (II/I/371)

Non quero máis que unha lembranza e un anxeio: a lembranza e o anxeio de Galiza. (II/I/372)

A new tone of unsentimental realism is detectable in his proclamation of independence from patriotic identification with Spain, on the premise that the events of the Civil War have rendered all former political institutions and agreements null and void:

Eu proclamo a miña independencia de ideaes e de sentimentos patrióticos, porque xa se cancelaron os convenios políticos que me obrigaban a calar. (II/II/372)

The experience of political exile overlaps with the more familiar one in the Galician cultural and collective social experience of emigration,<sup>9</sup> and the lines between these two categories are blurred in the context and the composition of *Sempre en Galiza*, where Galician diaspora, long-term Galician emigration, civil war and ensuing political persecution coincide. It is important to remember Castelao's dual experience as both emigrant and exile. In an intimate and moving passage, he recalls his childhood journey to Argentina 45 years earlier, in 1895, and how a Galician sailor had showed him the southern cross whilst they passed through the Gulf of Santa Catarina en route to Buenos Aires and the Argentinian pampa. Accompanied by his mother in 1895 and then his wife in his present of 1940, Castelao sees his life as existing between symmetrical extremes, bound first by emigration and then by exile. He experienced

emigration as a child, and now regards himself as a political refugee deprived of citizenship by his home state of Francoist Spain. In both cases, he reminds the reader, he had no choice in the matter, although he clearly harbours a deep desire to return to die in Galicia:

Vai para coarenta e cinco anos que un mariñeiro galego me amostrou, ao navegarmos por esta mesma roita e n-este mesmo lugar (golfo de Santa Catarina), o ceo do Sul, con estrelas noviñas para os meus ollos de neno; máis eu d-aquela sóio arelaba chegar a Bós Aires a ver o meu pai – un pai que nunca vira – e pouco se me daba do resto. Hoxe o ceo está *emponchado*, como din os *gauchos*, e non podó alviscar o ‘cruceiro do Sul’, que descubríron os navegantes portugueses. Agora non veño coa miña nai; veño coa miña muller, a nai do meu fillo morto. I en ningún intre puđen ver con máis claridade as estrelas da miña vida, que me semellan simétricas. Fao coarenta e cinco anos era un emigrante, sen máis anxeio que o de atopar a meu pai; agora son un refuxiado político, a quén lle negaron toda carta de cidadanía. En ámbolos casos non interveu a miña vontade; máis agora traime ás Américas unha fada descoñecida. Creo que veño a envellecendo onde me creí. E xogallá que retorne de novo algún día, por estas mesmas augas, para morrer onde nascín! (II/XXVI/487–88)

This acknowledgement is crucial to understand Castelao’s approach to exile, emigration and ultimately Galician identity in its widest context: his perceived lack of any control over the forces that led to his emigration and exile informs the character of his postcolonial and exilic response.

He echoes the familiar defiance of the political exile when he states that exile represents ‘unha venturosa salvación’ when compared to life under dictatorship (III/XXXII/647). Although this is not Castelao’s ideal scenario, it allows the projection of a future Galicia from within a democratic society abroad. During the transatlantic crossing which serves as the narrative continuum of Book Two, Castelao refers to the leg of the journey from New York to Latin America and his imminent reunion with ‘the ideal Galicia’, the best country (‘Patria’) at his disposal:

Hai tres días que deixei a Nova York e vou cara o Sul, ao encontro da Galiza ideal, que é a mellor Patria que hoxe se me pode ofrecer. (II/XX/465)

There is a dramatic decisiveness to the manner in which Castelao revises the qualities of home and belonging according to the circumstances of exile that he experiences: ‘Eu troncei as amarras, e declárome incorporado, dende agora, á Galiza emigrante’ (II/XXII/473). Seven years later, in the fourth and final book, Castelao reviews his changing fortunes and sentiments as an emigrant and exile. Before becoming a separatist, when he could still live in hope in Spain, he tells us he felt less exiled in Madrid than he would do later in Buenos Aires (IV/I/676). However, he is well aware that a return to Franco’s Spain would meet with insult, incarceration or even death, and the Spanish state including Galicia is now ‘un abismo insalvable’ (IV/I/676). The situation in Buenos Aires, however, is radically different for Castelao:

en Bos Aires sentireime novamente incorporado a unha Galiza libre, representada por moitos miles de compatriotas, que manteñen, a tanta distancia xeográfica, os elementos moraes da nosa nacionalidade. Nada de extrano ten, pois, que un patriota galego prefira vivir en América a vivir como un lacerado en Galiza, e que renegue d-unha Hespaña que lle impide respirar en paz os aires da súa propia terra. (IV/I/676)

In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, James Clifford studies the complex modernity that comprises 'postcolonial' and 'tribal' identities in contexts of domination and globalization. Clifford argues that for the subject of diaspora,

decentred, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return. And a shared, *ongoing* history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as the projection of a specific origin.<sup>10</sup>

Those lateral connections and ongoing history are precisely what are evoked in *Sempre en Galiza* during the later stages of exile as a continuing development of his active alternative to Galician internal exile under Franco. This alternative increasingly focuses upon Buenos Aires, popularly referred to as Galicia's fifth province because of the large number of Galician emigrants who settled there. Castelao highlights the important role that the city has played in reflecting Galician identity beyond the Iberian peninsula. For him, Buenos Aires represents a 'free' Galicia, a democratic repository of the moral elements of Galician nationality, an idea explored and reiterated in the fourth and final book.<sup>11</sup>

On 25 July 1947, celebrating the feast of St James, the most important event in the Galician cultural calendar, Castelao comments:

Así da comenzo a Festa Maor de Galiza, a festa de todol-os galegos; pero ninguén pode sentila coma nós os emigrados, porque en tal día coma este reviven as nosas lembranzas acumuladas, e na moita distancia agrándase o prodixio da Patria. (IV/I/668)

Castelao makes careful distinctions and suggestions: it is a celebration for all Galicians, but a greater ability to experience its significance is conferred upon Galician emigrants. Furthermore, esteem for the home country is increased and intensified by the physical distance of exile and emigration. Castelao reveals himself to be not just an exile and emigrant here, but also the classic subject of a diaspora culture, mediating what Clifford refers to as a lived tension, the experience of separation and entanglement, of living in one place and remembering or desiring another.<sup>12</sup> Castelao makes this comment directly after reciting from memory a speech made by Ramón Otero Pedrayo, on the same day sixteen years earlier in Vigo, in 1930. The speech, entitled 'A sinificación espiritual do día da Galiza', is a panoramic evocation of Galicia and her territory by the Ourense geographer and historian of ideas. In reciting such an evocative text within Galicianist tradition, Castelao accentuates the sense of distance, nostalgia and homesickness experienced by Galician emigrants and exiles, and suggests that Galicia consists of much more than the confines of her geographical boundaries in the northwest of the Iberian peninsula. In short, he

moves beyond an essentialist or territorially restrictive sense of Galician identity to encompass a postcolonial and global sense of belonging to a migrant and exiled community.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond the confines of *Sempre en Galiza*, there is further evidence for this interpretation of Castelao's thought. In one of the four notebooks in which he jotted down ideas for the text, he writes that 'Bos-Aires debe ser para-a libertade de Galizia o que fora New York par-a libertade de Irlanda' (Caderno A [78], p. 843). This succinctly demonstrates that Castelao saw Argentina and the Galician communities in Latin America and elsewhere as playing a decisive role in the struggle to attain greater political autonomy, if not independence, for Galicia. James Clifford reminds us that the association with another nation, region or continent gives added weight to claims against an oppressive national hegemony.<sup>14</sup> Positive articulations of diaspora identity reach outside the normative territory and temporality of the nation-state in the form of myth or history:<sup>15</sup> this can be equally applied to the stateless nation of Galicia, or the repressive 'other' of the Francoist Spanish state. Castelao's approach is a shrewd one in the political long-term. It highlights the important role that the Galician community in Buenos Aires will play in favour of the defence of Galician cultural identity during the Franco dictatorship, a role which Castelao largely helped to shape and determine before his death in 1950.

Because of Castelao's experience, *Sempre en Galiza* reveals a consistent awareness of an emerging world of broader human, cultural and political networks, and of a shifting axis of influence from Europe to the Americas:

os centros civilizadores da humanidade non son tan fixos com-os Polos xiados da Terra. Permitamos, pois, que as Américas sexan o novo Ocidente e que nos transatlánticos de mañán se celebre con ledas mascaradas o paso do meridiano divisorio. (IV/V/700)

In its anticipation of the global networks of today, Castelao's vision is not purely Galician-centric, but expands to include Spain and the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in the connection that he makes between the need to encompass new territories within a broader concept of identity and the failings of the Second Republic: 'Eu perdín toda confianza nos homes da Segunda República cando vin que non emprendían o camiño das Américas, onde Hespaña podía atoparse con Hespaña' (II/XXII/473). However, it is precisely by focusing on Galicia and her cultural and socio-economic history that Castelao, as early as 1940, anticipates or expresses a trend in Galician cultural awareness that only today is being actively consolidated and employed as a decisive feature of Galician cultural discourse. There is no suggestion in Castelao's work that he regarded emigration as a wholly positive experience, although this does not prevent him from referring to the Galicians' supposedly greater capacity for geographical and cultural displacement in a point-scoring exercise against the centre, the Castilians, the 'other' within the cultural nationalist mindset of pre-Civil War *galeguismo*.<sup>16</sup> Castelao never loses sight of the destructive, human cost of emigration; yet what is different in his case is the awareness

of, or willingness to identify, positive aspects which emerge from that historical and social negative.<sup>17</sup> In Chapter XX of Book Two, recounting a voyage from New York to Buenos Aires, he recalls a conversation shared with an Andalusian artist on the waterfront in Vigo as they watched Galician emigrants board a steamer bound for the Americas. Castelao remarks that rather than economic refugees, those embarking resemble tourists in third class who have no doubt of making the return journey one day. In response, his southern interlocutor compares the Spaniards to trees, putting down fixed roots in the earth, and contrasts this with the Galicians and their supposedly elastic roots so flexible that they allow them to span the globe. On the basis of this image, Castelao then launches into a dichotomous comparison of Castilians and Galicians and their attitudes to, and experiences of, emigration. Although this addresses some of the harder experiences endured by Galician emigrants, it is couched in an altogether more balanced tone that reflects positive as well as negative attributes of emigration according to context (II/XX/468).

Until Castelao's reflections on emigration, its previous representation in Galician culture had been predominantly negative, and indeed Castelao's portrayal of the phenomenon is normally couched in a discourse which condemns its causes and effects. However, in Galician political and artistic culture since Castelao and especially in the early 21st century, there has been a distinct change in how emigration is represented as part of a wide and diffuse initiative to engender a notion of a global Galicia, to embrace the post-national where the stigmas and problems of the past are depicted as virtues and a source of pride, as well as a basis on which to re-appraise existing identitarian paradigms. Despite national boundaries and coercively legislated national autonomies, history and geography are transposed onto new maps, within new and far less stable entities, with new connections, as Edward Said observed of the characteristics of exile literature:

Exile, far from being the fate of nearly forgotten unfortunates who are displaced and expatriated, becomes something closer to a norm, an experience of crossing boundaries and charting new territories in defiance of the classic canonic enclosures, however much its loss and sadness should be acknowledged and registered. Newly changed models and types jostle against the older ones.<sup>18</sup>

According to the Galician historian Núñez Seixas, emigration from Galicia held back collective social action and progress in Galicia itself.<sup>19</sup> Yet from emigrant Galicians, and especially from the Americas, came money, encouragement and ideas to vitalize the political life of Galicia. In turn it was from and via Galicia that the unification of the 'sociedades galegas' in America took place, so augmenting their political influence.<sup>20</sup> This underpins the vision of the American manna falling upon Galician villages, the beneficial effects of emigrants sending money across the Atlantic and creating social or economic advantages for families back home.<sup>21</sup> This is of course the material and not identitarian facet of emigration as a social phenomenon, although it reinforces the historical validity

of Castelao's approach rooted firmly in the political worldview of Galician cultural nationalism.

### *Conclusions*

Castelao is one of the first, if not the first, writer of Galician culture to articulate alternative public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time and space. He expresses this through a discourse that can be associated today with that of diaspora and post-colonialism, and does so in order to re-negotiate a reading of Galician identity; or as Clifford suggests, to live inside that national time and space but with a difference.<sup>22</sup> In *Sempre en Galiza*, that 'inside' is incorporation into a nebulous, global Galicia constructed out of the ashes of civil war, diaspora, long-term emigration and exile, while the 'difference' resides in the tentative optimistic tone with which Castelao depicts an alternative Galicia.

It is not surprising that Castelao reflects ideas, ideological and psychological positions, and sentiments that cohere with models and norms of exile, emigration and diaspora that have now been identified by cultural theory (Clifford, McLennen, Marangoly George). Castelao's experience and writings occupy substantial common ground with exile histories as expressed in other cultures, literatures and traditions. The recognition of this is important for Galician culture in that it supports the argument that Galicia has been a colony and displays characteristics of a postcolonial reality, a contention that I intend to investigate in further research. However, in his response to the imperial-colonial dialectic from a combination of transit and distance, Castelao derives from the exilic experience a new and original perspective on Galician emigration; in his re-writing of home he assumes a unique position as spokesperson for Galicia and the Galician diaspora. There is a tension in his exile writings between the essentialist paradigms of the pre-Civil War generation of Galician writers and scholars, and that broader awareness of an emerging globalized world of transcultural and transnational identities more easily observed along byways of international commerce and transport, or from the reluctant viewpoint of the exile. Although he does not succeed in moving fully beyond restrictive essentialism, his texts reveal an awareness of times to come and new models of belonging that are more flexible.

Exile also prompts Castelao to adopt positions that can be associated with diaspora cultures, as has been argued in this article, particularly where the social and cultural space of Buenos Aires is seen as utopic, and that of Franco's Spain and Galicia as dystopic. The lengthy, fractured period of the composition of *Sempre en Galiza* reflects the many transitions in cultural and political history that its gestation encompasses, from the 1930s to the 1940s, from the theoretical transition from Modernism to Postmodernism, from the international to the global, from national to transnational. There are other examples in *Sempre en Galiza* of Castelao's awareness of, and response to, these changes in discourse

that could have been explored; however, the most significant are his vision of Galicia's role in an emerging global reality of shifting economic and political power, and how such a process would enable Galicia to attain greater political, economic and cultural freedom. Castelao was therefore the first writer and thinker in the Galician intellectual tradition to glimpse the existence of a global Galicia. He began to articulate a discourse that transcended the negative portrait and consequences of exile and emigration that had prevailed in Galician culture. The same discourse that chooses to recognize diaspora over emigration will dominate Galician culture and society over the course of the twenty-first century, and will continue to confirm and assert that Galician reality coheres with a postcolonial context to the extent that a dedicated and critically independent reading of Galician cultural production through that theoretical framework becomes increasingly imperative.<sup>23</sup>

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Prologue was written in Badajoz from April to the autumn of 1935; Book One in Valencia and Barcelona during the latter months of 1937; Book Two in New York and aboard the liner *Argentina* from January to July, 1940; Book Three in Buenos Aires during 1943; Book Four aboard the packet boat *Campaña* during July and August 1947. *Sempre en Galiza* was first published on 10 March 1944 in Buenos Aires, although this edition included only Books I–III of the version regarded as definitive. Book IV was added in the second edition of 1961, and incorporates texts written by Castelao between 1947 and 1948 (these later instalments echo his disillusionment with the Giral government and focus on the case for a federal Iberia). It is the 2000 reprint of the definitive edition of *Sempre en Galiza* which is referenced in this article (Santiago de Compostela: Parlamento de Galicia, 2000) in a book/chapter/page format.

<sup>2</sup> Justo Beramendi and Ramón Maiz, 'O pensamento político de Castelao', in *Actas Congreso Castelao* (Santiago de Compostela, 24–29 November 1986), ed. by Justo G. Beramendi and Ramón Villares (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1989), pp. 69–143.

<sup>3</sup> As well as Castelao, the grouping included Ramón Otero Pedrayo, Vicente Martínez Risco and Florentino López Cuevillas.

<sup>4</sup> Sophia A. McClennen, *The Dialectics of Exile: Nation, Time, Language and Space in Hispanic Literatures* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Rosemary Marangoly George, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> McClennen, *The Dialectics of Exile*, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this paragraph, I paraphrase the ideas in McClennen, *The Dialectics of Exile*, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Marangoly George, *The Politics of Home*, p. 200.

<sup>9</sup> According to Xosé Manuel Núñez Seixas, Galicians made up 55% of Spaniards who emigrated to Argentina between 1850 and 1930; see P. Cagiao Vila and X. M. Núñez Seixas, *Os galegos de ultramar. Vol. 2: Galicia e o Río de Prata* (Corunna: Arrecife Edicións Galegas, 2007), p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> James Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (London: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 255.

<sup>11</sup> In the later books of *Sempre en Galiza* Castelao does not comment on the strong conservative manipulation of power in Argentina or the role of the military.

<sup>12</sup> Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation*, p. 255.

<sup>13</sup> Whilst disagreeing with Ana Carballal's affirmation that Castelao 'no es en ningún modo esencialista, ni tampoco suscita ese enfoque en su obra', I share her view of Castelao's rejection of 'el esencialismo del pueblo gallego'. See Ann I. Carballal, 'Hombre, gallego y emigrante: la emigración y el exilio en la obra de Alfonso Rodríguez Castelao' (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2004), p. 190.

<sup>14</sup> Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation*, p. 255.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250–51.

<sup>16</sup> Following a gloss upon Galician emigration in the Americas from New York to Cuba, Castelao refers to the complexity of the problem in no uncertain terms: 'O grave problema da emigración seméllame hoxe un sarillo de moitos fios. [...] A nosa emigración paréceme o erro máis terrible que cometeu Galiza, si é que se trata d-un movemento conscente e non d-un impulso involuntario e fatal' (II/XXVI/487).

<sup>17</sup> Castelao's approach can be contrasted with that of his *Nós* colleagues. Vicente Risco (1884–1963) is highly critical of moral and social effects of emigration on Galician life; see 'El problema político de Galicia', *Obra Completa, I: Teoría nacionalista* (Madrid, 1980), p. 157. Otero is more restrained but still critical of the effects of emigration on village life back in Galicia, particularly with the return of emigrant Galicians; see Ramón Otero Pedrayo, 'A aldea galega no seu decorrer histórico', *Grial* 8 (1965), 133–50.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 384.

<sup>19</sup> Xosé Manuel Núñez Seixas, *Emigrantes, caciques e indianos. O influxo sociopolítico da emigración trans-oceánica en Galicia (1900–1930)* (Vigo: Xerais, 1988), pp. 14–15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation*, p. 251. One example of where this idea is seen as influential is Ramón Piñeiro's writings on Galician emigration: 'Agrandou o noso ámbito social e convertíuse en forza universalizadora da nosa espíritoalidade xenuína.' See Ramón Piñeiro, 'A emigración, vista desde Galicia', *Olladas no futuro* (Vigo: Galaxia, 1974), pp. 83–94 (p. 90). Similarly, Olga Nogueira and Xurxo Souto (email correspondence between Olga Nogueira and the author) confirm that the popular song 'Aí vos quedades, aí vos quedades, entre curas, frades e militares' was sung by emigrants to those who bade them farewell as they left Corunna bound for the Americas. This has been documented as early as the 1940s, although its practice almost certainly has origins prior to this. The negative image of emigration in Galician culture is just one, but not exclusive, vision of the phenomenon.

<sup>23</sup> This is most clearly and accessibly visible in some of the many websites that have sprung up around the notion of a global Galicia. Examples include: <[www.fillos.org](http://www.fillos.org)>, <[www.galiciaaberta.com](http://www.galiciaaberta.com)>, <[www.galiciantunes.com](http://www.galiciantunes.com)>, <[www.emigracion.fiestras.com](http://www.emigracion.fiestras.com)> and <[www.fundaciongaliaciaemigracion.es](http://www.fundaciongaliaciaemigracion.es)>.