

Review

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COLMEIRO, José

Peripheral Visions/ Global Sounds. From Galicia to the World

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‘Peripheries are not what they used to be’ (1). This statement opens José Colmeiro’s new monograph, *Peripheral Visions/Global Sounds. From Galicia to the World*, in which he aims to redefine the idea of modern Galicia as a periphery and to reposition its cultural production in the global map through a detailed overview of the developments experienced by the Galician audio/visual sectors since the start of the democratic period in Spain. Colmeiro approaches the study of Galician cultural production through a transnational, interdisciplinary lens, deemed necessary for a thorough understanding of contemporary creative endeavours and modern constructions of Galician cultural identity. Galicia, traditionally a geographical, political and cultural periphery, is now presented as a place of encounter of the old and the new, the urban and the rural, the local and the global, which enables the development of new forms of cultural identity that ‘cross traditional boundaries’ (5) and generate new connections and networks, both within the Galician territory and beyond its borders.

The main body of the work is divided into three distinctive parts and rounded off by a ‘coda’, in line with the musical theme that occupies a significant part of Colmeiro’s analysis. In the first part, ‘Roots and Routes: Remapping Galician Culture in the Global Age’, the author lays out his theoretical and methodological framework and introduces the reader to his definition of the periphery and his emphasis on the need to develop new cartographies for Galician cultural production. Grounding his analysis on the new areas established by modern waves of audio/visual cultural creation and exploring a new conceptual framework for the analysis of the Galician cultural scene based on the ‘deterritorialization and deperipheralization’ (4) of its production, Colmeiro aptly presents a clear focus on the importance of hybridity in the construction of Galician identity.

This modern construction of cultural identity is framed beyond the territory and exhibits an intimate relationship between the local and the global, further explored in Chapter 2, ‘Deterritorialization and Deperipheralization’, in which the dynamic and changing nature of maps and the current redefinition of geopolitical and cultural borders in the global age play a major role in the re-imagination of Galician culture and

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the challenging of traditional centre/periphery dynamics. Emphasis is put on the crucial contribution of researchers from the Anglophone academia to the new post-structuralist paradigms that have expanded the breadth of Galician Studies, traditionally restricted to philological, structuralist schemes. Colmeiro's theoretical approach, based on Habermas's concept of the postnational, acknowledges the negative effects of deterritorialization as a consequence of aggressive forms of global capitalism yet highlights the positive effects of cultural globalization, contact, cooperation, and hybridity.

Chapter 3, 'Sound and Vision: All Roads Lead to Santiago', underlines the relevance of the physical roads of the *Camiño de Santiago* and the influence of the pilgrimage in the construction of Galician identity as hybrid and connected to others. He then goes on to explore more abstract roads of exchange as an 'alternative "imagined geography" not limited by traditional geopolitical, cultural or language boundaries' (96). The global, the local and their interconnections are again the main thread of Colmeiro's argument, in which Galicia is presented as a heterogeneous and hybrid 'border zone' (96), overcoming essentialist ideas of nation and territory. Although trans- and postnational, as well as postcolonial approaches to Galician culture are not new, particularly in the English-speaking context, Colmeiro's pertinent application of these ideas to cinema and music and the connections established between these two fields through his analysis make this work a truly innovative contribution to Galician Studies.

Part two, entitled 'Peripheral Visions' dives into the analysis of the development of Galician audiovisual production during the 20th century, with a focus on the changes undergone by cinema since the start of democracy in Spain. In Chapter 4, 'Made in Galicia: Making the Invisible Visible', Colmeiro illustrates the tension between visibility and invisibility characteristic of cinema, particularly when it operates from the fringes of the nation-state, as is the case of Galicia. Drawing on psychoanalysis, he contends that the film *Raza* (1949) has been the 'primal scene' (106) of twentieth century Spanish nationalism, relegating competing identities from the periphery to invisibility. This had profoundly marked the debates around Galician cinema in the 1970s, which traditionally focused on its very in-existence and its ontological status (Can we speak about 'Galician cinema'? Or 'cinema made in Galicia?'). These questions are thoroughly explored in Chapter 5, 'Reimagining Galician Cinema: Utopian Visions' which provides a detailed examination of the theorizations of Galician film production and the new explorations of its possibilities —best exemplified by the *boom* experienced by the Galician audiovisual sector in the 1990s and the establishment of new communities of creators—, and its challenges, particularly in regards to the lack of support for distribution and the fragmented structure of the sector, still far from achieving complete normalization.

Chapter 6, 'The Galician Magic Kingdom: Nation and Animation from the Glocal Forest' and Chapter 7, 'A Peripheral Focus: The Rebirth of the *Novo Cinema Galego*' focus on two of the most successful areas of Galician film in the past decades. Chapter 6 delves into recent developments in the field of animation, one of the leading sectors in Galician cinema, shedding light on the diverse approaches to the production and distribution of the works undertaken by two major audiovisual companies, Dygra and Bren Entertainment, to then focus on *low-cost*, alternative visions provided by

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peripheral creators and the possibilities they offer for the evolution of the sector. Chapter 7 engages with a new wave of cinema that aims to challenge the centre and remap audiovisual production from the margins. Led by the community of filmmakers known as *Novo Cinema Galego*, these new creators take a very strong ideological position of resistance against the centralised, market-driven film industry. Borrowing from the idea of the new era of post-cinema, Colmeiro convincingly argues that the economic crisis of the late 2000s in Galicia highly contributed to a deep change in the forms of production and distribution of cinema. The *Novo Cinema Galego* represents a new paradigm of filmmakers who aim to offer a much more direct and personal perception and interpretation of reality from the margins, linking them with the idea of the broader vision enabled by the peripheral positioning presented in Colmeiro's introduction. His rich analysis of the challenges and opportunities of Galician cinema both as a periphery within the Spanish nation-state and as a double periphery in a market highly dominated by US productions, his reflections on the 'decentering of Spanish cultural production, the emergence of peripheral cultures and identities, the hybridization of national cultures and the interplay of the local and the global' (121), and the broad range of examples used to illustrate the changes experienced by Galician audiovisual production and its participation in the construction and questioning of Galician identity hugely contribute to the re-definition of this area of cultural production, as well as to its visibilization within the field of Galician Studies, which has traditionally been more focused on literary production.

The third part of the monograph is focused on the 'Global sounds' produced in Galicia and offers a vivid overview of the developments in Galician music from the start of the democratic period. Chapter 8, 'Peripheral *Movidás*: Cannibalizing Galicia', explores a foundational period of modern Galician music and dives into the urban phenomenon of the Galician *Movida* and the use of rock music to develop nation-building projects and new forms of identity. Focusing on influential bands Os Resentidos and Siniestro Total, who represent two opposing poles of the *Movida*, Colmeiro skillfully illustrates the rock music scene of the 1980s and its essential contribution to the deperipheralization of Galician culture and its visibilization beyond the traditional borders of the territory. Chapter 9, 'Smells like Wild Spirit: Galician *Rock Bravú*, Between the Rurban and the Glocal', focuses on the successful phenomenon of *Rock bravú*, which vitally contributed to the diversification of Galician music and to the hybridization of Galician culture once again. Although intimately connected with the bands and themes of the *Movida*, *Rock bravú* musicians go beyond the purely urban focus of the 1980s and re-create Galician identity by breaking the concepts of rural/urban and local/global, in order to create a new *rurban* and *glocal* identity which reconciles Galician tradition with global modernity. The final chapter, 'Bagpipes, Bouzoukis and Bodhráns: The Reinvention of Galician Folk Music', of which a previous version is also available in Helena Miguélez's *Companion to Galician Studies* (2014), examines the redefinition of Galician folk music since the 1970s and its role in the development of the interconnected Galician cultural identity in the global age. Colmeiro's versatile analysis explores the constant creative tension between tradition and innovation, as well as the emphasis on a Celtic connection that is characterised for its extraordinary diversity, encompassing very different musical styles. From the revival of instruments fallen into disuse and the recording of Galician

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traditional tunes to the contemporary international phenomenon of Galician folk music, represented by bands such as Luar na Lubre, as well as the connections with the pan-Celtic music movement best illustrated in the success of Carlos Núñez and new, ground-breaking female performers such as Cristina Pato, Colmeiro's breadth of examples and innovative analysis establishes new fascinating links between different trends of musical production from the 1970s to today.

This work constitutes a very welcome addition to the evergrowing body of critical analysis of the Galician cultural landscape undertaken by scholars in the Anglophone tradition, which has added new, indispensable views to Galician Studies. Colmeiro's monograph foregrounds two areas so far underanalysed in favour of literary studies and provides a convincing argument for a broader, transnational concept of Galician cultural production. His articulation of the ideas of *deperipheralization* and *detrterritorialization* of Galician culture is key for a new understanding of how and where Galician cultural identity is created and the complexity of the networks that enable this creation. Colmeiro's clarity in presenting these concepts and illustrating them with a broad range of examples makes this an invaluable introduction for those new to the field of Galician Studies, while the thoroughness of his research and the versatility of his analysis will be of interest to more seasoned scholars of Galician cultural identity and its expression and development through film and music. Furthermore, this monograph will be relevant beyond Galicia and Spain for researchers of peripheral identities, alternative cultural expression and production, as well as researchers interested in the transnational and *detrterritorialized* connections that music and film productions tend to facilitate, not only through the process of commercial, homogenizing globalization but also in the creation of alternative connections that allow for a broader, peripheral vision. 'Peripheries are not what they used to be' (1) and José Colmeiro has convincingly shown that Galicia's cultural production is lively, diverse, and in constant search for new networks and points of contact, making use of the new possibilities offered by the global era to offer unique and original contributions, as Colmeiro concludes, 'from Galicia to the world' (308).