

Review

**GARCÍA
MARTÍNEZ, Pablo**

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*Un largo puente
de papel:
Cultura impresa
y humanismo
antifascista en el
exilio de Luís Seoane
(1936-1959).*

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Based on his doctoral thesis (CUNY 2018), and endorsed by some of the foremost scholars of Spanish Republican Exile, Pablo García Martínez's study places at its centre a figure who might at first glance appear marginal: Galician artist, poet, writer and cultural activist, Luís Seoane (1910–1979). Seoane's exile in Argentina from 1936 onwards, along with his commitment to a radical leftist version of Galician nationalism, have made his work less familiar to Iberian cultural historiography than he deserves, in spite of recognition of his importance in funding core heritage projects in Galicia from 1970 onwards, among them his sponsorship of the Fundación Sargadelos and creation of the Editorial Renacimiento, which continues to publish key Republican exile texts today (albeit from a new location in Seville). While Seoane's work has merited previous study, and he has received attention from within Galician literary and artistic historiography, in particular regarding his poetry, theatre and visual artistic

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production, this book helps us to more amply contextualise his creative trajectory by placing it in dialogue with the particular geographies and, often displaced, temporalities which he navigated from his beginnings as an anti-fascist, left-wing Galeguista in 1930s Galicia to his contact with different intellectual and artistic currents and social circles in Buenos Aires from 1936 onwards, and the connections these in turn made with other transatlantic movements and spaces, from the anti-fascist currents in Europe and the Americas in the 1930s and 1940s, to the newly burgeoning abstractionist epistemologies of the post-war period, and internal resistance and recovery of Galician culture on the Iberian Peninsula from the 1950s. On the one hand, this is a study that reminds us of Seoane's multiple dislocated positioning, as a Galeguista who was actually born in Argentina, child of the nineteenth-century Galician diaspora; a subject who had dual Spanish/Argentine nationality, and was ultimately displaced in both territories; a figure who moved comfortably between Spanish and Galician, while nevertheless maintaining a commitment to an emancipatory Galician cultural history; and who is both Marxist and a Galician nationalist, even though for many Spanish communists in exile these positionings would have been incompatible, or at least insufficiently internationalist. But most importantly, García Martínez reads this dislocation not only through Seoane's own writings and reflections on his political positioning, but by carefully tracing his reception and interaction with a wide range of different networks both in Galicia and in exile, attending to relations with other cultural production of his time.

The genuinely innovative part of this book is the way it traces Seoane's voice via his collaborations with a series of collective projects, inspired by the focus in recent studies of Modernism on the role of the magazine (see especially the multivolume *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*). In the first part — 'Encuentros de la cultura antifascista' — the focus is on *De Mar a Mar* (1942–1943), read in relation to antifascist praxis from the 1930s and 1940s; in the second — 'Modernidades divergentes' — the focus is on reception of Seoane's artistic production in *Ver y estimar* (1948–1955), and the light this sheds on the political repositioning of the avantgarde in this period; whereas the final part — 'En busca de lo nacional-popular' — scrutinises the alternative vision of a Galician (trans)national project represented by *Galicia Emigrante* (1954–1959). In all three cases, the study is characterised by careful material contextualisation of these Modernist magazines alongside their intertextual relationship with other works by Seoane and others, from his internationally celebrated *Trece estampas de la tradición* and *Homenaje a la Torre de Hércules* to poetry collections like *As cicatrices* and the plays *A soldadeira* and *O irlandés astrólogo*. We are given access to a rich pool of primary data from which to be able to observe, understand and breathe the wider context in which the magazines are inserted and the worlds they seek to create. Furthermore, the inclusion of examples of Seoane's work, as well as particular indices of reception, help us not only to understand the changes in his aesthetic preferences but to attest to the continuities: primarily his commitment to a particular political positioning, which for him means a Gramscian version of humanism and a radically inclusive vision of Galician nationalism that forefronts social justice.

Because of all this, it is a study that enters into greater dialogue with key voices in recent political re-readings of Spanish Republican Exile, especially Mari Paz Balibrea's collective venture *Líneas de fuga* (2017), than

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with recent Galician historiography. Combining insights from a range of different disciplinary and methodological frameworks, drawing particularly on cultural history, cultural studies, and neo-Marxist historiography (as in the work of Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams and Enzo Traverso), it is a study that will be of interest to scholars of Iberian Studies, as well as Argentine literary movements, and above all Spanish Republican exile studies. It honours a figure without whom a large part of the recent recovery of Spanish Republican voices would not have been possible either in degree or in character, and whose capacity to maintain a critical perspective on his era, while nevertheless moving with the times, always attentive to the need to open and preserve spaces for dialogue, is inspirational. In this and other ways, García Martínez identifies completely with Seoane's project, in spite of the fact that he simultaneously presents it as a failed or residual one, which had to be recovered —by his own efforts— from the archive, as hinted in his reproduction of the following quotation from the original published version of *O irlandés astrólogo*:

Alguien vendrá que recogerá esos nombres que ahora evocamos nebulosamente. Seleccionará fielmente hechos y datos, controlará fechas y contará con toda verdad sus vidas. Serán los niños del país gallego del futuro los que querrán imitarles, igualar su dignidad, su desinterés, sus muertes. (219)

From a materialist perspective, this is a study that would not have been possible without Seoane, thus reminding us of the many invisible figures that underlie contemporary scientific research, discovery and academic achievement.