

This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 26 Sep 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

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The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies

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The Poetized Peopling of Nineteenth-Century Spain/s

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315709895.ch27>

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Published online on: 28 Mar 2017

How to cite :- Ronald Puppo. 28 Mar 2017, *The Poetized Peopling of Nineteenth-Century Spain/s from: The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies* Routledge

Accessed on: 26 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315709895.ch27>

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THE POETIZED PEOPLING OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN/S¹

Ronald Puppò

The social and spiritual dislocation concomitant to the political and industrial jolts of nineteenth-century Spain ushered in a multilingual polyphony of poets' voices rising often from Spain's distinct peripheral cultures and language communities. Particularly striking in the poetic statement of peripheral stamp are the groundbreaking works of Galicia's Rosalía de Castro (1837–1885) and Catalonia's Jacint Verdaguer (1845–1902). Rosalía de Castro's landmark poetry volumes in Galician, *Cantares gallegos* (1863) and *Follas novas* (1880), stand as watershed achievements in Galician literature whose impact touches also on the historical, given their decisive role in the recovery of the Galician language, for centuries dormant as a vehicle of written culture. Furthermore, the fact that the foundational voice of Galicia's *Rexurdimento* was a woman's amounts to a quantum leap in gaining ground against a male-dominated discursive network, despite efforts for decades to package the woman and her poetry under a parochial label. In Catalonia, it was the rural-bred Jacint Verdaguer's prolific works of poetry in Catalan – above all, his *L'Atlàntida* (1878) and *Canigó* (1886), foundational epics of Spain and Catalonia, respectively – that would prove decisive in projecting the Catalan language both at home and abroad, laying the literary and, *pari passu*, linguistic groundwork for the recovery of Catalan far beyond the vernacular. Later, amid literary triumph and acclaim, the poet-priest's long, bitter and widely publicized clash with his own Church higher-ups in Barcelona would polarize public opinion, forcing onto discursive platforms of the day sharp debate not only about the man's character, but also about the meaning of Christian faith and practice as well. Verdaguer, for whom the transcendence sought by humankind was unquestionably divine (he was, after all, a Catholic priest), nevertheless turned his poetic attention, as did Castro, also to worldly injustice, producing a number of poems classifiable as *social* poetry.

A peripheral people womanly voiced: Rosalía de Castro

Although Rosalía de Castro stands, unquestionably, as the uncontested foundational figure of the *Rexurdimento*, Rosalian scholarship during the past half-century has argued repeatedly and convincingly that the image of the woman projected for several decades by critics – beginning with her own husband Manuel Murguía (1833–1923) – is one that was intentionally skewed. In her seminal article, Davies (1983) reviews salient

mid-twentieth-century Rosalian criticism while stressing the need for a new approach to the woman and her work, punctuating the social clout of many of her poems and other writings, and pointing out how Rosalía de Castro “was in more than one sense a real danger to Restoration society:”

El sistema se considera obligado a defenderse de una serie de peligros ofrecidos por Rosalía de Castro: novedades formales, imaginación y sensibilidad, la “filosofía” alemana, la mujer compitiendo con el hombre y, . . . el galleguismo frente al centralismo.

(C. Blanco Aguinaga et al., *Historia social de la literatura española* [Madrid: Castalia, 1979], vol. 2, 136 [as quoted in Davies 1983, 218])

Elaborating further on the vital link between the writer and her social context, Bermúdez (2002, xx–xxvi), Davies (1990, 11–16) and Lama López (1995, 11–19) have outlined the turbulent social and political backdrop, which looms all the larger in Castro given her husband’s high-profile role as political and cultural activist:

Murguía asociábase non soamente á causa progresista radical, senón tamén ó provincialismo galego [. . .] Murguía sería eminente historiador e polígrafo e axiña se converteu en líder e primeiro teórico do movemento nacionalista galego en xermolo, responsable máis tarde da fundación da Real Academia Galega no 1906.

(Davies 1990, 8–9)

By the same token, Murguía was to prove instrumental in the publication, dissemination and reception of Castro’s works: “a débeda con Murguía é inmensa no que respecta ás relacións coas institucións e o mercado” (Lama López 2007, 178). On the other hand, Murguía projected an image of his wife’s contribution to advancing Galician letters and culture within a progressive political framework that would nonetheless be tempered by prevailing mores concerning the accepted scope of women writers, thus staking out a critical trend that passed over a more accurate, more complete Castro in all her heterodoxy (I follow Geoffrion-Vinci in referring to the poet and novelist by her last name – despite the prevalence of “Rosalía” in Galician- and Spanish-language reception – since, as Geoffrion-Vinci [2002, 5] points out, calling her by her first name “fails to accurately valorize this important literary figure’s status as a writer and an intellectual”). Thus, tailoring “Rosalía” to fit the gender roles of the day, Murguía “establece as principais liñas de interpretación da súa obra, condicionando a crítica posterior en grande medida” (Lama López 2007, 178). The frequently cited woman-violet comparison speaks eloquently of Murguía’s notion of a woman’s place:

Siempre se dirá de la mujer que, como la violeta, tanto más escondida vive, tanto es mejor el perfume que exhala. La mujer debe ser sin hechos y sin biografía, pues siempre hay en ella algo a que no debe tocarse. Limitada su acción al círculo de la vida doméstica, todo santifica desde que entra en su hogar. Tiene en la tierra una misión de los cielos.

(as quoted in Lama López 2007, 176)

Olga Castro (2012, 209), in her study of Rosalian works disseminated in English translation, finds additional examples of this “motherly” and “saintly” image being paid tribute, exported abroad as paratextual commentary accompanying translations well into the twentieth century:

Son obras que en cierta manera enfatizan el mito galaico construido alrededor del símbolo de la *naiciña*, la *santiña*, la mujer llorona y desasosegada y, en definitiva, la imagen rosaliana mitificada y canonizada que borra completamente su discurso transgresor de género.

This saintly and trivializing distortion of the poet and, by extension, also of Galicia itself as depicted by her, amounts to the disempowerment of both the woman and the land:

converter unha e outra – Rosalía e a Galiza – nunha realidade defunta, inexistente a efectos prácticos e concretos, converté-las a ambas en símbolos inofensivos, en iconos moi grabados en determinados planos de retórica compensatoria, mais descargados de toda forza, de toda virtualidade real e ferinte.

(Pilar García Negro, “A orixinalidade de Rosalía.” In *Rosalía de Castro. Unha obra non asumida* [A Coruña: Xistral, 1985], 34 [as quoted in Lama López 2007, 173])

Paradoxically, this disempowerment stands in stark contrast to Castro’s signal achievement. Alonso Montero (1972, 30, 59–60), for instance, has shown how the publication in 1863 of *Cantares gallegos* marks the end of the prehistory of the *Rexurdimento*, ushering in Galicia’s modern literary history. Underscoring the magnitude of the event, the Real Academia Galega – on the occasion of the centennial of Castro’s 1863 signing of a copy of *Cantares* dedicated to Fernán Caballero – instituted 17 May as the Día das Letras Galegas.

Despite the fact that, seventeen years later, the publication in 1880 of *Follas novas* would mark yet another historic year in Galician letters (Alonso Montero 1972, 62–87; Carballo Calero [1974] 2013, 20–21; Davies 1990, 18–19), the end of the Democratic Sexennial (1868–1874) spelled hardship for Murguía and Castro, with repercussions on the reception of her works – marginal in Spain, yet thriving in Galician communities across the Atlantic:

por estar Rosalía implicada co rexionalismo de Murguía, co reformismo e o anti-clericalismo, por ser a súa unha voz inconformista, a súa poesía publicada despois de 1875 non recibiu en España o recoñecemento merecido. Só as comunidades galegas de La Habana e Buenos Aires aclamaron a Rosalía con entusiasmo e mesmo a axudaron a publicar os seus traballos.

(Davies 1990, 20)

Particularly significant was the role of the Galician community in Havana, where the Real Academia Galega was founded the year before its official inauguration in A Coruña in 1906, with Murguía presiding over the institution from its inception until 1923. The first edition of *Cantares* had sold widely in Cuba, where Galician expatriates were culturally active and supportive of Murguía and Castro, and where the first edition of *Follas novas* was published:

Resulta revelador de la cada vez mayor dependencia del galleguismo cultural de la metrópoli cubana que el segundo libro de Rosalía fuera directamente publicado allí [. . .] De La Habana llega el dinero que funda escuelas laicas en la abandonada Galicia, construye carreteras, ayuda a redimir los campos de los foros, crea monumentos cívicos, etc.

(Pereira-Muro 2008, 121)

This enormous cultural and material support from a far-off Galician diaspora (see, e.g., Folkart [2008]) bespeaks the conditions of extreme poverty, corruption, caciquism, and Spanish

political and administrative centralism to which Galicia was subjected repeatedly throughout the nineteenth century – all magnified by the mid-century famine: “La tremenda hambruna de 1853 es el pistoletazo de salida para una sangría humana, que lleva a la emigración a América, según datos recientes, a más de dos millones de gallegos” (Pereira-Muro 2008, 119). Castro was sixteen when she saw firsthand the horrible toll of famine in the streets of the capital during the harsh winter of 1853. Davies (1990, 14) notes, “As escenas de penuria producidas en Santiago por mor da fame de 1853–54 afectaron a Rosalia profundamente,” and Alonso Montero (1972, 19–20) – quoting at length Castro’s moving account of the famine – concludes: “probablemente el primer hecho colectivo que incide seriamente en su sensibilidad.” In a good number of her poems Castro does not only bear witness to the suffering, indifference and injustice inflicted on Galicia’s poor; in addition, she foregrounds quite clearly her own sense of outrage in a way that exposes and challenges the prevailing moral complacency.

Poetry with a subversive edge

Castro’s experience of the famine is inscribed in her bold, disturbing and not-so-subtly subversive poem “*Tembra un neno no húmedo pórtico*” (*Follas novas* [henceforth, *FN*] III, 41). The first three stanzas describe a cold, hungry, orphaned boy who lies shivering in a damp stairwell, his face against the stonework; in the fourth, well-to-do passersby see the boy on their way to church, but remain impassive: *van e vén ja adoraren ó Altísimo! / fariseios, os grandes da terra, / sin que ó ver do inocente a orfandade / se calme dos ricos / a sede avarienta*. In the poem’s penultimate fifth stanza, the poet’s voice shifts to first person with a feeling of anguish before the sorry scene of suffering and indifference – *O meu peito ca angustia s’oprime* – then queries the Almighty about why such suffering and indifference should exist: *¡Señor! ¡Dios do ceo! / ¿Por que hai almas tan negras e duras? / ¿Por que hai orfos na terra, Dios boeno?* Finally, in the concluding sixth stanza there comes the one, inescapable form of worldly justice that lies beyond the reach of all human design:

*Mais n’en vano sellado está o libro
dos grandes misterios. . .
Pasa a gloria, o poder i a alegría. . .
Todo pasa na terra. ¡Esperemos!*

The greatest of equalizers – death – will balance the scales in the end. María Xesús Lama López, in an email to me, 19 May 2014, articulates Castro’s stance in the following way: “De acordo, gañádesnos esta batalla (da vida), estamos sen armas nin munición, non temos posibilidade ningunha de darlle a volta á situación, pero non esquezades que isto é transitorio. A nosa arma é a paciencia e só precisamos esperar, e verémosvos caer.” What comes through so clearly here is that the humble solace of religious faith is ruled out – and strikingly so, given the religious imagery in the poem: the appearance not only of the churchgoing passersby but also the poet’s own appeal to the Deity in the penultimate stanza. The only solace comes from the knowledge that the outrageous injustice here depicted will be set right by the eventual demise of the impassive *fariseios, os grandes da terra*.

Significantly, this poem stands in stark contrast to “*Ora, meu meniño, ora*” (*Cantares gallegos* [henceforth, *CG*] 20), where a poverty-stricken mother, while laboring in the fields, must leave her suckling infant alone in their tumbledown hovel pierced by the rain and cold: *e neve e chuvia en ti caen / por antr’as fendidas tellas*. The denouement, however, is a miraculous one, with care and comfort given by a divine hand: *i a Virxen santa, vestida, / con vestido*

de inocencia, / porque de fame non morra / e fartiño s'adormeça, / dálle maná do seu peito / con qu'os seus labios refresca. As also pointed out by Professor Lama López in her correspondence with me (see previously), this wondrous outcome is entirely consistent with the traditional and popular imagination to which Castro had given voice in her *Cantares gallegos* nearly two decades before *Follas novas*. Furthermore, the additional character in the poem – Rosa, who witnesses the appearance of the Virgin – folds a layer of magical perspective into the account, with Rosa herself slipping away into the thick fog after revealing the identity of the infant's benefactor to the returning mother. By contrast, in “*Tembra un neno no húmedo pórtico. . .*” there will be no miracles or disappearing acts – only the direct voicing of the poet's feeling of outrage and her climactic indictment.

Narrowing in further on the question of worldly justice, the dilemma between Christian morality and rightful vengeance is brilliantly encapsulated in the poem “*Para uns, negro. . .*” (FN III, 22). Torn between opposing instructions, first those of his father on his deathbed (*Sé astuto s'é que sabes; / vingate das ofensas s'é que podes*), then those of his mother on hers (*perdoa a quen t'ofenda, / fai ben decote a amigos i enemigos*), the son strikes a compromise that seems to weigh in more on the side of his father's directive: *Ña nai, fareille ben a quen cho fixo. / Meu pai, vinganza piden os teus ósos.* Again, the notion of relying on justice to be done in the hereafter recedes in favor of action calibrated to the measure of circumstances. More forceful still is the hard-hitting statement of “*A xusticia pola man*” (FN II, 25), in which the poem's persona, a woman, tells of how she has been robbed, evicted, vilified and dishonored by those reputed to be *honrados*, and whose exploitation of her has resulted even in the death of her children: *meus fillos . . . ¡meus anxos! . . . que tanto eu quería, / ¡morreron, morreron ca fame que tiñan!* Mocked by the judges – *De min se mofaron* – in her appeal to legal justice, her appeal to the Almighty proves also fruitless: *Tan alto que estaba, bon Dios non m'ouira.* Then, taking the law into her own hands, like a rabid or injured wolf (*cal loba doente ou ferida*), she murders her tormentors swiftly while they sleep: *dun golpe ¡dun soio!, deixinos sin vida*, and sitting serenely beside her victims (*contenta and tranquila*), the murderess awaits the light of day, whereat she concludes in the poem's final two-line stanza: *I estonces . . . estonces cumpreuse a xusticia: / eu, neles; i as leises, na man qu'os ferira* (in Castro's own translation of the poem into Spanish, the final lines read: *Y entonces . . . , sólo entonces se cumplió la justicia / Yo en ellos, y las leyes en mi mano homicida* [Alonso Montero 1972, 160]). In a word, the same laws to which she turned to no avail will be quick in delivering justice on behalf of her victims. The poem's bold step in exposing the failure of worldly justice to set wrong things right, especially where the impoverished and exploited are concerned, culminates in the inevitable; but it is by no means an invitation to, nor an apology for, violence. It is, however, as Alonso Montero (1972, 76) has noted, groundbreaking in that “*hasta entonces nadie había escrito un poema tan implacable sobre la perversidad del mundo y menos un poema sobre la inevitabilidad de la violencia como respuesta.*”

The more somber tone and content of *Follas* with respect to *Cantares* stems largely, as underscored by Lama López (1995, 42), from the failure of the ideal of social reform during the Democratic Sexennial: “*A protesta social faise agora máis elocuente e directa,*” and more broadly:

En ocasións traspasa os límites da situación de Galicia para dirixirse a cuestións de carácter xeral. Nas composicións máis subxectivas mostra a confusión e o fondo pesimismo derivado da perda de confianza nunha posible orde universal.

This lack of universal order so poignantly felt by the poet is frequently expressed through the iconic Rosalian image of *sombra* – widely popularized by the poem “*Cando penso que*

te fuches” (FN II, 20) set to music under the title “Negra sombra” by composer Xoán Montes (1840–1899). In his analysis of the poem, García Sabell (1952, 48) laments the conversion of the poem into song: “Es una pena que tan pura fuerza lírica se haya popularizado a través de una música, mejor o peor, pero, en todo caso, ajena al espíritu del poema.” The lyrical strength of the poem lies in its representation of *sombra* as a vital force: “Esa Sombra no es algo negativo, una ausencia de la luz, sino una fuerza, una capacidad básica del Ser” (52). This *sombra*, this experience of the solitary nature of being, felt deep in the core of one’s self, is ever-recurring, revisiting the poet again and again, in all things: *Cando maxino que es ida, / no mesmo sol te m’amostras / i eres a estrela que brila / i eres o vento que zoa. [. . .] En todo estás e ti es todo, / pra min i en min mesma moras, / nin m’abandonarás nunca, / sombra que sempre m’asombras*. Paradoxically, this essential subjective experience and its expression in intimist poems is the starting point for outward and commonly shared experience in the world, and ultimately, its expression through poems of social significance and even subversive impact on the status quo. Remarking on this fusion of the solitary with the solidary, Lama López writes: “nin sequera as composicións máis intimistas son alleas ó compromiso coa colectividade” (1995, 43).

Of course, separately but inextricably, no small part of Castro’s subversive impact on the status quo lay in her voicing, with universal appeal and effectiveness, the particulars of her and her people’s sufferings and joys in her native Galician language. As Carballo Calero (1952, 27) points out incisively:

Porque n-iles Rosalía elevábase á temática lírica de máis pura intimidade e universalidade. E isto era insólito en galego. O galego era unha fala campesiña. E non debía saír do seu marco rural. Como o galego non fora empregado ate de aquela máis que no ámbito do realismo pintoresco, a inercia esixía que se non pasara de ahí.

Along with the recognition of one’s peripheral language as a proper vehicle for complex and nuanced literary expression, and rooted in the common social life of that language-sharing community, there comes also a strengthening of the sense of a national identity distinct from that imposed by Spanish politico-economic and administrative centralism. Nowhere is the subversion of this imposition more forcefully stated than in Castro’s renowned poem “A gaita gallega” (CG), penned by way of reply to the poem that Salamanca writer Ventura Ruiz Aguilera (1820–1881) dedicated to Murguía titled “La gaita gallega” (*El museo universal*, 26 Nov. 1860), in which he reiteratively posed the question of whether, when Galician bagpipes played, they were in fact singing or weeping: *Hoy si la gaita gallega / el pobre gaitero toca, / no acierto a deciros / si canta o si llora*. Castro’s lyrical reply (taking Aguilera’s original as a formal template, but twenty verses longer) concluded: *E cando a gaita gallega / aló nas Castillas oías, / ó teu corazón pregunta, / verás que che di en resposta / qu’a gaita gallega / non canta, que chora*. More striking still, however, is the Aguilera – Rosalian palimpsest in the opening verses of section IV. Where Aguilera had written:

*¡Pobre Galicia! . . . Tus hijos
huyen de ti, o te los roban,
llenando de íntima pena
tus entrañas amorosas.
Y como a parias malditos,
y como a tribus de ilotas
que llevasen en el rostro*

*sello de infamia o deshonra,
 ¡ay! la patria los olvida,
 la patria los abandona [. . .]*

Castro now writes:

*Probe Galicia, non debes
 chamarte nunca española,
 qu'España de ti s'olvida
 cando eres ¡ay! tan hermosa.
 Cal si na infamia naceras,
 torpe, de ti s'avergonza,
 i a nai qu'un fillo despreça
 nai sin corazón se noma [. . .]
 Galicia, ti no tes patria,
 ti vives no mundo soia [. . .]*

It was this spirit of reasoned rebellion and strong affirmation of distinct cultural identity on the Iberian periphery that caught the eye of Víctor Balaguer (1824–1901), historian, poet and cabinet minister during the First Spanish Republic (1873–1874), who published a Catalan translation of both Aguilera's query and Castro's reply in his own *Esperances i records* (1866), along with "*Castellanos de Castilla*." (CG 28), Castro's portrayal of the degraded socio-economic relations between Castile and Galicia, which as Julià (2013, 5) observes, bears a notable resemblance to Balaguer's "Los quatre pals de sang" (1862): "Tots dos amb una tornada que esdevé molt popular i símbol de la reivindicació de les respectives identitats." Enlarging the peripheral factor, the awards ceremony of Barcelona's 1868 Jocs Florals was to spotlight multiculturalism in literary production. Presided that year by Balaguer (just returned from political exile in Provence) – and attended by Occitan writer Frederic Mistral (1830–1914, Nobel laureate 1904), Teodor Llorente (1836–1911, leading figure in the Valencian Renaixença and one of four Valencian poets to officiate that year [see Roca Ricart 2012b, 205]), and Castilian poets Gaspar Núñez de Arce (1834–1903), José Zorrilla (1817–1893) and Ventura Ruiz Aguilera as well – the ceremony was to include Rosalía de Castro, also invited as an honored guest: "La presència de Rosalía hagués representat la tríade de literatures i identitats 'germanes' que reclamava Balaguer al seu discurs: Castella, Galícia i Catalunya–Provença" (Julià 2013, 11). The reasons why Castro did not attend are not known. Rosalía de Castro's womanly voicing of Galicia embraces an entire spectrum of exceptional contribution, ringing out against social injustice, laying the foundations of the *Rexurdimento* and spearheading innovation in poetic form (see, e.g., Davies [1990, 42, 44–46] and Lama López [1995, 81–83] on Castro's innovative meter), dignifying the use of Galician (shunned by detractors as unfit for all purposes), exploring the solitary self and its solidary potential in the common social life, and exposing Spain's centripetal disdain for her own peripheral peoples. This bold voice – a woman's – arising from both the people around her and from deep within herself, anticipates, as noted by Olga Castro (2012, 205–206), Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) by sixty-five years. Keenly aware of her uncanny role as gender intruder, Castro ironized about womanhood and writing in her Spanish-language essays *Lieders* (1858) and *Las literatas: Carta a Eduarda* (1866); and in her prologue to her first novel, *La hija del mar* (1859), concluded: "Porque todavía no les es permitido a las mujeres escribir lo que sienten y lo que saben." What women might feel and know, in effect, Castro novelized and poetized throughout her twenty-five-year

writing career, perhaps most masterfully in the thirty-one poems comprising the concluding section of *Follas novas* – “As viúdas dos vivos e as viúdas dos mortos” – causing readers also to feel and to know what so many women in her troubled land, in singing or in weeping, felt and knew.

Voicing the Catalan periphery: Jacint Verdaguer

A tale of two epics

It was at this landmark 1868 edition of Barcelona’s Jocs Florals that the nearly twenty-three-year-old Jacint Verdaguer was introduced to Mistral and Llorente (see Verdaguer Pajeroles [2012] on Verdaguer and the Jocs Florals), and though the heartland-bred seminarian had been awarded a number of literary prizes at the 1865 and 1866 Jocs (see Torrents 1995, 138–139), he took none that year for his *L’Atlàntida enfonçada i l’Espanya naixent de ses ruïnes*: the embryo of *L’Atlàntida*, which – following his first bouts with tuberculosis in 1872; nine crossings to the Antilles (1874–1876) as chaplain aboard the ships of transatlantic magnate Antonio López, the poet-priest’s patron (see Pinyol i Torrents [2007] for a brief English-language biography of Verdaguer); and after nearly a decade of expanding and revising the some 2,600-line foundational epic of Spain – would win the “Premi extraordinari” at Barcelona’s Jocs Florals in 1877. Hailed as the cornerstone restoring Catalan literature’s place among the literatures of Europe after a hiatus of three centuries, *L’Atlàntida* melded the destruction of Atlantis (inflicted on the Atlanteans for presuming to rival the gods) with the Judeo-Christian providentialism resulting in Columbus’s first voyage: the continents united once more, the “pattern of cosmic retribution and renewal” (Terry 2003, 7) was now complete; and in the ideological synthesis of the ancient classical and Judeo-Christian worlds into one universe where the latter prevailed, the poem celebrated, as Farrés (2003, 70) points out, “el destí d’Espanya en la transmissió del cristianisme,” or as Torrents (2004, 105) notes, Spain’s role in spreading “la primera ideologia de la globalització,” even as the heroism of classical antiquity cemented the foundational mix in which Hercules, by wedlock with Hesperis (the widowed queen of Atlantis), emerges as the progenitor of a new Iberian people.

By July 1877, two months after the Jocs, Mistral had penned a hearty congratulations to Verdaguer, likening *L’Atlàntida* to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Lamartine’s *La chute d’un ange*, and proclaiming, *Tu Marcellus eris!*—Mistral’s letter in Occitan would close Verdaguer’s own prologue to the first edition of *L’Atlàntida* published the following year, with facing prose translation into Spanish by poet and critic Melcior de Palau (1843–1910). By autumn of 1877, praise for *L’Atlàntida* appeared in literary magazines in Paris and New York, and with the circulation of the bilingual edition in 1878, the work found favorable reception by Spanish-language critics as well, notably Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912), who described the poem as “inverosímil en estos tiempos, rico, vigoroso y espléndido, portento de audacia y de armonía,” and to whom Verdaguer proved “superior en condiciones descriptivas a todos los poetas catalanes, castellanos y portugueses que yo conozco,” and finally: “Gracias al autor de *L’Atlàntida*, nada tiene que envidiar España a los Tennyson, Longfellow, Carducci, Mistral y demás grandes poetas de otras tierras” (*El Fenix*, March 1879; quoted in Farrés [2003, 61]). By the mid 1880s there had appeared a verse translation into Spanish, verse and prose translations into French and Italian, and in the 1890s verse translations into Czech and German, a prose translation into Provençal, and by 1909 also a verse translation into Portuguese (see Farrés [2003, 67–72] for more details on the translations); of the English-language translation, undertaken by the Irish-born *félibre* William Bonaparte-Wyse (1826–1892), only the opening

and concluding sections were completed before the translator's death (Wyse's splendid verses are reproduced with the Catalan text facing in Puppo [2007, 37–51]).

The new Iberian peopling whose epic origins are recounted in *L'Atlàntida* comprises in fact a plurality of peoples – distinct from each other in their respective historical and cultural self-representations, and several in their widespread use and longstanding transmission of vehicular languages other than Spanish: plain for all to see in the Rosetta-like first edition of the poet-priest's homage to Spain. Turning to the periphery, in his foundational epic of Catalonia, *Canigó: Llegendes pirenaica del temps de la Reconquista* (1886), Verdaguer celebrates the particular and distinct historical and legendary mix fueling the Catalan imaginary, drawing from Catalonia's early medieval origins, the reconquest of the Spanish March (Catalonia), and the symbolic conflict between, on the one hand, a powerful folk mythology rooted in the natural geography (in the storyline, the fate of the newly knighted Gentil's countrymen is interlaced with his encounter with Flordeneu, queen of the Pyrenean faeries) and, on the other, the widely institutionalized universalism of Christianity. As in *L'Atlàntida*, it is the Christian order that prevails in the fusion of the two. The poem, remarks Soldevila (2002, 19), is Verdaguer's response to the need for reaffirming Christian values and reflects the moderately pro-Catalan conservative thought later formulated in *La tradició catalana* (1892) by Bishop Josep Torras i Bages (1846–1916) – for whom “Catalunya serà cristiana o no serà” – in contrast to the growing secular progressivism and republicanism articulated in *Lo catalanisme* (1886) by statesman and writer Valentí Almirall (1841–1904). That said, Torrents (2003, 244) shows how Verdaguer's addition of the epilogue, “Los dos campanars,” in the second edition (1901) of *Canigó* recasts the poem's ending, changing it from *hymnal* to *elegiac*: the climactic planting of the cross on Mount Canigó's summit and expulsion of the Pyrenean faeries now gives way to the lamentation personified in the dialogue between the bell towers of the crumbling abbeys of Sant Martí del Canigó and Sant Miquel de Cuixà, lying abandoned below the Canigó massif. Perhaps, as Torrents suggests, the poem's final lines convey a sobering realization that the ingredients of national identity may change with the centuries:

*Lo que un segle bastí l'altre ho aterra,
mes resta sempre el monument de Déu;
i la tempesta, el torb, l'odi i la guerra
al Canigó no el tiraran a terra,
no esbrancaran l'altívol Pirineu.*

The natural monument – the mountain, Catalonia symbolized – endures, with or without the abbeys; transmuting the well-known phrase attributed to Torras i Bages, Torrents allows for a redrawing of parameters: “Catalunya serà, encara que no sigui cristiana” (2004, 132). Thus, concludes Torrents, the poem's final lines posit a “telluric” or geographic identity that is more fundamental than that rooted in Christendom (2003, 245). In any event, Verdaguer's conceptual framework – beyond any particular religious doctrine or denomination – is largely the legacy of Enlightenment deism: in a word, nature, and nature's God, have endowed land and life with vigorous diversity, and Verdaguer's depictions of the life-giving quality of the landscape resonate with a cultural multiplicity that thrives as an extension of nature's own diversity (see Puppo [2010, 276–278] for more on this important point).

Vilardell Domènech (2013) has rigorously catalogued, detailed and assessed the numerous translations (partial and complete) of *Canigó* into Spanish by no less than eleven writers/translators during the fifty-year period following its first edition in 1886 and its critical reception

in Barcelona, València, Mallorca and Madrid; among the translations during Verdaguer's lifetime are, most notably, the 1886 prose version published serially in the conservative Catholic magazine *La Hormiga de Oro* (Barcelona) by writer Jaume Nogués i Tauler (1850–1902), the several cantos in verse translation by writer Constantí Llobart (1848–1893) in various Valencian magazines in 1886 and 1887, and the widely circulated part-verse, part-prose translation by the Castilian historian, author, academician and excursionist Jerónimo López de Ayala-Álvarez, Conde de Cedillo (1862–1934), published in Madrid in 1898; in a long, warm letter of approval and gratitude to López de Ayala dated October 1897, Verdaguer, having read the translation slated for publication, writes: “Me alegro de que mis humildes cantos al Canigó se difundan por los países donde se habla la lengua castellana, despojados de su rudeza nativa y adornados con las galas poéticas de la inspiración de usted y con las preciosas ilustraciones que los acompañan” (in Molas and Cònsul 2003, 1151). Farther abroad, a partial verse and prose translation into Italian appeared in 1888, and Josep Tolrà de Bordas (1824–1890), for his 1889 prose translation into French, obtained Verdaguer's permission to include the epilogue – preceding its appearance in the second Catalan edition by eleven years (see Camps Casals [2013] for a thoroughgoing treatment of translations of Verdaguer's works into French). *Canigó* drew praise once again from Llorente and Mistral, and Menéndez y Pelayo, who compared it with Victor Hugo's *La Légende des siècles*, judged *Canigó* to be superior to *L'Atlàntida*, although Vilardell Domènech has found that most critics asserted the superiority of *L'Atlàntida*, adding that “perhaps if the new poem had been originally published in a bilingual Catalan-Spanish edition, as was *L'Atlàntida*, its echo in both the Catalan and the Madrid-centred press might have been greater” (2013, 391–392).

Solidarity, rebellion, reconciliation

Verdaguer, at age thirty-nine, was at the height of his literary career – and his stature was about to soar with the triumph of his second major epic, *Canigó*, in a year's time – when a devastating earthquake struck, on Christmas Day 1884, the Andalusian provinces of Granada and Málaga. Campaigns for aid to victims and reconstruction were quickly organized throughout Spain and abroad by charitable societies, authorities, the Church, the press and other concerned groups (Vidal Sánchez 2012, 30–38), including initiatives by poets such as Llorente (see Roca [2012a] for details on action by writers in València) and, in particular, Verdaguer. In less than three weeks' time, Verdaguer's collection of thirty poems under the title *Carietat* (several of which had already appeared separately) was submitted to the censor for approval, and by 30 January the volume was available for sale; a second edition came out in May with four additional poems and some revisions, followed by a third edition in 1893 with two more poems. Proceeds from the first edition surpassed the amount collected by the entire diocese of Vic (Cònsul 2005, 289). Two of the poems, “Per què canten les mares?” and “La boira,” depicting poverty-stricken mothers, recall analogous portrayals of social injustice in Castro's poetry. In the first, an ailing husband and father, too sick to work again, asks why his wife sings with such joy to their child: *Per què, esposa del meu cor, / per què tan alegre cantes?* to which she replies, *Perquè el nostre fill no plora*. Her song – and a crucifix – are all they have left, both of which represent acts of charity: the mother through her song follows the example of the Cross. In “La boira,” a young widowed mother must labor in the fields while her infant lies nearby under a hot sun; miraculously, cool mists descend from Canigó's summits to shield them from the punishing heat – recalling the care and comfort given by the divine hand in the Rosalian poem “*Ora meu meniño, ora . . .*” (CG 20).

Still, for Verdaguer the Christian faith, if only observed in appearance and not put into practice, would not measure up. On returning from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Egypt in 1886, Verdaguer began putting his faith into practice more rigorously through more prayer, fasting, almsgiving – encouraging his patron’s wife to contribute more of the family’s money to Barcelona’s poor – and associating himself with a group of radical Catholics who performed exorcisms. The Marqués de Comillas, now anxious to cut ties with his unorthodox family chaplain, enlisted the cooperation of the bishops of Barcelona and Vic to have Verdaguer sent away; confined to a provincial parish, Verdaguer flouted Church authorities by returning to Barcelona without permission, prompting the suspension in 1895 of his priestly duties and functions. The salvo of articles penned by Verdaguer in his own defense over the next two years – published, in Catalan, in Barcelona’s left-leaning Spanish-language daily *La Publicidad* – dramatically polarized Catalan public opinion until the matter was finally resolved in 1897, thanks largely to the Augustinian friars at El Escorial, Madrid, who arranged an agreement that proved satisfactory to both parties (see Torrents 1995, 90–95).

Coda: *Escolta, Espanya*

Verdaguer, despite the perspicacity of his social gaze, proved adamant in his faith in a transcendent universal order. However, for Joan Maragall (1860–1911) – Verdaguer’s turn-of-the-century successor in powerfully poetizing the joys and sufferings of his peripheral people – religious transcendence and solace would fall short of the mark, unable to placate the growing awareness of the need for resolving deep-rooted social ills. For Maragall, it was the men and women of Barcelona who must themselves win back conviviality in the wake of the social turmoil that culminated in the Setmana Tràgica of 1909, just as the men returning from the horror and defeat of the last of the Cuban wars of independence (see Puppò [2012a, 2012b] on Maragall’s important poems and writings on these troubling events) must once again take heart; and these things they must do through a kind of public-spirited love and the celebration of Spain’s diversity on the periphery – diversity to which Mother Spain, in Maragall’s “Oda a Espanya” (1898), seems oblivious:

*Escolta, Espanya, –la veu d’un fill
que et parla en llengua –no castellana;
parlo en la llengua –que m’ha donat
la terra aspra:
en ’questa llengua –pocs t’han parlat;
en l’altra, massa [. . .]*

The question of how preferential and peripheral linguistic communities – Spain’s peoples – are to negotiate, or refuse to negotiate, conviviality; divergent views on historical memory competing for discursive and symbolic space; ideological tensions arising from Spain’s variegated cultural fabric; all these crucial issues confronting the Spain/s of more than a century ago remain, for the most part, unresolved to this day.

Note

- 1 Research for this chapter was funded by a grant from the Spanish Ministry of Education (FFI2011-26367), and conducted by the consolidated research group (2009 SGR 736) “Textos Literaris Contemporanis: estudi, edició i traducció,” Universitat de Vic.

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