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**THE MANY FACES OF JULIO IGLESIAS:
“UN CANTO A GALICIA,” EMIGRATION AND THE NETWORK SOCIETY**

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In 1993, the Spanish-born international singing star Julio Iglesias paid a visit to his father’s native Galicia. Iglesias, born in Madrid in 1943 and resident in Miami, the Dominican Republic and Marbella, was in Galicia to accept 300 million pesetas in return for his agreement to become an Ambassador for Galicia, and in particular for the celebration of the Ano Xacobeo (Franco; Dunn & Davidson, xiv; Saez). The irony of this transnational, multilingual Latino icon being appointed ambassador for a peripheral national culture strongly identified with both Celtism and a single, minoritized language is not insignificant. From the very beginning of his career (he released his first album in Spain in 1969), Iglesias has exceeded national boundaries, releasing records in over 30 countries, achieving number one hits in almost as many, and singing in at least eight languages (“Julio Iglesias”).ⁱ His four decades of global commercial success, particularly in the Spanish-speaking world, have attracted the attention of scholars who have tried to explain his appeal. For Nestor García Canclini, the singer is emblematic of a “multilocalized imaginary,” who within a world characterized by “segmented participation in consumption” personifies a transnational popular consumerism (44-45). Meanwhile, for Blanca Muñoz, he is “a product elaborated for the middle classes of a consumer mentality [who] represents a continuity between the [Spanish] national, the Latin-American and the US Chicano markets” (185). Iglesias has attracted the attention of fellow Spanish artists also: as Marvin D’Lugo has observed, Iglesias (and especially

his ballad “Por el amor de una mujer”) was used by the Spanish director Bigas Luna in his 1993 film Huevos de Oro to signify “certain cultural ambitions of Spaniards ... namely renown as a lover and an achiever of international artistic celebrity.” Significantly, however, as D’Lugo demonstrates, the film sets Iglesias up as an icon only to reject him, in the end, as a “crass commercial [icon] ... recast for the spectator in [the] final moments as the [signifier] of the persistent memory of loss and failure” (69). In a clear demonstration of his status as an object of both consumer and sexual desire, Iglesias was the subject of a highly ironic and bestselling novel by the Spanish writer Maruja Torres, ¡Oh, es él! (1986, translated into English as Desperately Seeking Julio).

In this context, Iglesias’s appointment as ambassador for the (at least notionally) anti-consumerist events of the Xacobeo may seem incongruous. Nevertheless, it makes perfect sense in the context of the electoral politics at play in Galicia in 1993. The conservative Partido Popular (PP) administration then in power in Galicia under Manuel Fraga – a former minister under Franco – was promoting a nostalgic, celebratory version of Galician culture and identity, based on constant invocation of Galicia’s rural culture and directed in particular at the potential voters of the Galician emigrant communities in the Americas (Hooper “Galicia”; Núñez Seixas). In this context, the appointment of Iglesias – responsible for one of the bestselling expressions of Galician emigrant nostalgia of all time, the anthem “Un canto a Galicia” (1971) – was a masterstroke. Not only did Iglesias’s involvement succeed in raising the profile of the Xacobeo and bringing it to a wider audience, but it also connected the event specifically with the Galician diaspora and their descendants and, in so doing, reinforced the administration’s vision of a Galicia defined, as Iglesias sings in “Un canto a Galicia”, by landscape (“ribeiras”) and melancholy (“ollos tan tristes”).ⁱⁱ

“Un canto a Galicia” has been one of Iglesias’s hardest-working songs since its release in 1971 as a single (by Columbia in Spain, Roda in Portugal, and Bayly in Mozambique).ⁱⁱⁱ Now, in 2008, 37 years after the song’s original release, and four years after the Fraga administration lost power in Galicia, largely thanks to its over-reliance on the emigrant vote (Hooper “Galicia”), we have an opportunity to consider the role that the version of “Galicianness” promoted by Fraga and embodied in Iglesias might play in the forging of a 21st-century identity for Galicia. It is especially interesting to consider how this version of “Galicianness” might interact with the newly hegemonic Galician nationalist version, based on language, culture and territory, to which it is often considered the diametric opposite. In the following essay, I take Iglesias and the reception of “Un canto a Galicia” as a window onto the afterlife of the Fraga administration’s exploitation of emigrant (and conservative) nostalgia for a particular vision of Galicia. I begin with a brief consideration of the connection between popular music and cultural identity in Galicia, in the light of existing work by Xelís de Toro and Eugenia Romero, among others. Next, I explore the connection between the transnational dimension of Iglesias’s persona and the multiple transformations of “Un canto a Galicia” for his international audiences. Finally, by considering the song’s most recent manifestations in cyberspace, I consider the changing meanings of Iglesias and “Un canto a Galicia” in the light of what Manuel Castells has called “a historical shift of the public sphere from the institutional realm to the new communication space” (238).

Popular Music and Cultural Identity in Galicia

Popular music is a useful area from which to examine expressions of cultural identity because of its capacity to transcend the personal and the public spheres and its combination of sensual/aural experience and the written word (lyrics). The role of music, recorded and live, in the formation of both individual and collective identity has been widely recognized; as José van Dijck observes, “shared listening, exchanging (recorded) songs, and talking about music create a sense of belonging, and connect a person’s sense of self to a larger community and generation” (357; see also Lipsitz, Middleton). In 20th-century Spain, as José Colmeiro has demonstrated, the sense of connection provided by music is crucial to the transmission of collective memory in difficult circumstances: “moving against the grain of hegemonic official memory, the task of maintaining historical memory has frequently relied on forms and traditions on the margins of high culture, such as popular songs” (31). Enlarging on this, Colmeiro argues that for Spaniards coming of age during or shortly after the Franco regime (1939-75), popular music was “a key ingredient in the process of a generation’s ‘educación sentimental’, a repertoire of lived emotions and experiences, defining who they were, and therefore an integral part of their cultural identity” (36).

Colmeiro’s observation that popular music is “an integral part of cultural identity” (36) holds especially true for Spain’s peripheral cultures, among them Galicia, where music has played an important part in the construction of modern Galician identity and in the maintenance of Galician cultural memory. This is partly because of Galicia’s roots as a rural society where a low literacy rate privileged non-literary forms of culture such as music, so that the first literary work published in Galician, Rosalía de Castro’s Cantares gallegos (1863), was in many ways a literary-musical hybrid. More recently, however, the absence for so many years of Galician national institutions and a

Galician public space means that the cultural sphere has had to carry a particularly heavy load. While elite, written culture has gone through peaks and troughs as socio-political conditions have in turn restricted and promoted publication and circulation, music – as a performance-based cultural form – has not depended on the often restricted cultural and economic capital of publishing houses for its circulation.^{iv} As Colmeiro and others have shown, regional musical traditions survived in Franco's Spain where regional literary traditions, in many cases, did not. In Galicia, however, this survival came at a price.

Scholars including Xelís de Toro and Carmen Ortiz have demonstrated how the co-option by the Franco regime (and later by its ideological successor, the Fraga administration of 1990-2005) of popular musical forms, especially bagpipe music, have led to a continued ambivalence about these forms in modern, democratic Galicia (Toro "Bagpipes" 243-244; Ortiz). Furthermore, as Mercedes Carbayo-Abengoza points out in her discussion of the Spanish copla, "for a cultural artefact to be popular during the Franco regime, it needed to come across as 'neutral' and correct" (433). The Francoist strategy of neutralisation was most efficiently employed with regard to regional cultures by placing their most characteristic representations at the service of centralist ideology, as typified by the rebranding of the Galician bagpipe with the colours of the Spanish flag (Toro "Bagpipes" 243). As Toro observes, this strategy was further appropriated and dressed in pseudo-nationalist colours by Fraga, with the massed bands of bagpipers (or "gaiterada") gathered to celebrate his 1993 and 1997 election victories (Toro "Bagpipes" 239). Fraga's appropriation of the most traditional manifestation of one of Galicia's most essential cultural forms thus reflects his regime's adherence to a form of Galician cultural identity which, according to Toro, "rejected

innovation and sought to maintain a concept of Galicia as it had been traditionally understood" (Toro "'Negotiating" 349-350). As Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas has shown, folk music in particular was essential to the nostalgic, celebratory discourse of galeguidade (Galicianness) employed by the Fraga administration, whose power "lies in its emotional appeal." As Núñez Seixas goes on to explain, "to awaken childhood memories among emigrants by instrumental use of tradition, folklore and customs is considered the most efficient vehicle for maintaining their attachment to the mother country" (244).

The tension that arose in Galician music during the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the political appropriation of cultural (especially musical) forms, in connection with the ongoing debates over Galician identity, has been well studied by Toro ("Negotiating"; "Bagpipes"). Although Toro does not explicitly say so, this appropriation was not only the preserve of Fraga and the PP. As in other areas of Galician culture, the development of music in the period after 1975 has often been judged not only by aesthetic, but also by utilitarian criteria; if cultural normalization in literary terms means the development of a strong and diverse narrative tradition alongside the existing poetic tradition, the development of Galician-language rock music to counter the existing folk tradition was, during the 1980s, considered equally vital. As in literature, however, it might be argued that the limitations of the focus on normalization (often filtered through language) lie in the hypervalorization of cultural forms seen as "national" and the rejection, or oblivion, of those not considered useful to the nationalist project. We can see this in the attention devoted by the Galician media to the twentieth anniversary of the rock song "Galicia Caníbal," whose history provides an interesting counter case study to Iglesias and "Un canto a Galicia." "Galicia Caníbal," written by the

polymath Antón Reixa and first released by Reixa's band Os resentidos in 1986, has been explicitly co-opted into the teleological narrative of Galician national culture and identity, as part of the movida galega of the 1980s, of which it might be considered the anthem. The dossier on "Galicia Caníbal" published by the Galician website Vieiros in May 2006 includes interviews not only with Reixa, but also with a number of Galician musicians and personalities remembering the impact the song had on them ("20 anos").^v In a demonstration of how the song has been absorbed into the collective (nationalist) cultural memory, the dossier is completed by a section called "Que faciamos no 1986?", which situates "Galicia Caníbal" in terms of the cultural developments of that year in Galicia:

No ano no que Galicia caníbal soaba nas ondas, Galiza fervía en actividade cultural. Xa estaba agromando unha nova cultura, contemporánea, transgresora e con ganas de estar no mundo ("Que faciamos").

In the year in which Galicia caníbal was on the airwaves, Galiza was bubbling with cultural activity. A new culture was emerging, contemporary, transgressive and anxious to be out in the world.

Significantly, however, the authors are equally keen to show the song's place within the Galician political narrative:

Xa levabamos oito anos de democracia e cinco cun Estatuto de noso. Aquele ano, España e Portugal entraron na entón CEE, e Xerardo Fernández Albor era presidente da Xunta ao fronte de Alianza Popular. Un ano despois, cunha moción de censura, sería substituído polo socialista Fernando González Laxe, no comezo do tripartito" ("Que faciamos").

We had already had eight years of democracy and five with a Statute of our own. That year, Spain and Portugal entered the then EEC, and Xerardo Fernández Albor was president of the Xunta and leader of Alianza Popular. A year later, after a vote of no confidence, he would be replaced by the Socialist Fernando González Laxe, thus beginning the tripartite [government].

Within Galicia, then, the importance of popular music in the construction of collective identities can be seen as both folk and rock music came to be appropriated for

different political ends (although this appropriation does not always reflect the views of the groups themselves).^{vi} In Galician communities abroad, however, the same criteria have not always applied. As is the case with literature and other cultural forms, the musical production of Galicia's emigrant communities often transcends narrowly utilitarian criteria, particularly in terms of language. The simultaneously "Galician" and "not-Galician" status of Galician emigrants is reflected in their musical production; as Eugenia Romero has observed with reference to Argentinean-Galician groups such as Os Furafoles, Xeito Novo and A Chaiva da Ponte, "with time the musical proposals of Galician descendents have resulted in the synthesis of Galician and Latin American influences" (162-163). Perhaps more significant, however, is Romero's argument that such groups use the Celtic trend in Galician music as a means to undermine the narrowly utilitarian, strongly bordered nation and resituate their music (and thus Galician music) beyond those borders: "this position – Celtic music as universal – erases, according to some of these groups, geographical borders and constructs an identity, through melodies and musical instruments, that is more global than local" (163). As we will see now in the case of Julio Iglesias and "Un canto a Galicia," the position that Romero identifies can be adopted in multiple ways, and for diverse means.

"Un canto a Galicia": a transnational, national anthem

Julio Iglesias's impact in Galicia and among Galicia's emigrant communities, especially in Latin America, cannot be separated from his position as simultaneously Spanish, transnational and "Latino." The Galician (and Spanish) political situation of the early 1990s, however, gave the singer's admittedly tenuous links with Galicia certain political

capital. As I noted above, Manuel Fraga's conservative vision of Galicia and Galician identity, based on constant evocation of Galicia's rural culture and heritage, was fundamental to his courtship during the 1990s of the sizeable Galician communities in Latin America, in which his control of social and cultural institutions (and thus the forms of culture associated with them) was a powerful tool (Hooper "Galicia" 171-175; Núñez Seixas 237-239). From the early 1990s, as Camilo Franco remembers, Iglesias and his music entered the service of Fraga's administration:

Caprichos da memoria. Lembrei un feito fotografable no que Manuel Fraga e Julio Iglesias pechaban un trato. O trato era que o cantante sería embaixador de Galicia a cambio de 300 millóns de pesetas. Aforrándolles o cálculo, 1,8 millóns de euros máis ou menos (Franco "O mercado").

Flights of memory. I remembered a photographable event at which Manuel Fraga and Julio Iglesias were closing a deal. The deal was that the singer would be ambassador for Galicia in exchange for 300 million pesetas. To save you the calculation, 1.8 millions euros, more or less.

M Dunn and LK Davidson, in the introduction to their edited collection of essays about the history of the pilgrimage to Santiago, explain Iglesias's involvement simply as a means of raising interest in the Xacobeo: "Both the Spanish government and the Catholic Church made great press about the anniversary, holding grand celebrations, aiding in providing lodging and ... helping to mark the routes leading to Compostela. Popular singer Julio Iglesias was the celebrity representative, in an effort to reach out to a wide audience" (Dunn & Davidson xiv). Nevertheless, as the historian Sebastian Balfour shows, Iglesias's connections with the PP strengthened after 1993. For Balfour, Iglesias's participation in the 1996 Spanish election campaigns on behalf of the PP was emblematic of the politicization of culture in 1990s Spain:

The two parties mobilized their own media stars and organic intellectuals; for example, Julio Iglesias crooned for the Popular Party, while the actor Antonio Banderas appeared for the Socialists, each symbolizing perhaps a

different conception of art, as privatized mass entertainment, on the one hand, and as state-subsidized high culture, on the other (276-277).

As Flora Saez – writing in *El Mundo* back in 1996 – noted, the relationship between Iglesias and the PP brought benefits to both sides, calculated in quantitative rather than qualitative terms:

A sus 50 años, Iglesias, que no es el cantante más guapo ni el que tiene mejor voz, pero sí uno de los que más discos ha vendido -por encima de los 200 millones-, un viejo dinosaurio algo acartonado con residencia fija en Miami y estatuas de cera en Los Ángeles y París, ha apostado por el poder emergente.^{vii}

Iglesias's status as a representative of "privatized mass entertainment" (Balfour 276) or "product elaborated for the middle classes of a consumer mentality" (Muñoz 185) intensifies his separation from the mainstream of Galician cultural production. As I have argued elsewhere ("Importance"), the utilitarian-utopian model of Galician culture has led to a stratification of Galician culture between prestigious, elite forms such as poetry and popular, traditional forms such as folk music and dance. The absence of autochthonous, Galician culture for the emerging, consumer-orientated middle classes means that only part of their cultural and consumer needs are met from "within" Galician culture – for the rest, they must turn to (Spanish) state or international venues. In this context, Iglesias's oeuvre may perform a supplementary function in which his Galician connection – tenuous as it is – takes on a more substantial significance, focused on the small number of his songs that deal directly with Galicia, notably "Un canto a Galicia" (1971) and "Morriñas" (1980).^{viii}

"Un canto a Galicia," written by Iglesias himself, was first released in 1971 in both Galician^{ix} and Spanish versions. It has subsequently been included on over eighty

different albums in at least five languages (“Julio Iglesias”). The original Galician lyrics are the most frequently reproduced, and fit very neatly into the tradition of emigrant writing based on nostalgia and paisaxismo, or identification with the land that began with Rosalía de Castro and Manuel Curros Enríquez (albeit without the earlier authors’ customary irony or focus on the economic and social contexts of emigration). In the Galician (and Spanish) version, the first quatrain sets the song up as the singer’s love song to an ancestral homeland with which his connection, it seems, has been severed: “Eu quéroche tanto / e aínda non o sabes [...] terra do meu pae” ‘I love you so much / and you still don’t know ... land of my father.’ Signalling the connection between land and emotion, the second quatrain personifies Galicia, with its “ribeiras” ‘river banks’ that bring back his memories (although of what is never mentioned) and its “ollos tristes” ‘sad eyes’ that make him cry. The chorus continues the personification in familial terms, identifying Galicia both as the homeland of the singer’s father (“terra do meu pae” ‘land of my father’) and as his motherland (“miña terra nae” ‘my motherland’).^x The final quatrain introduces the two central structuring concepts of Galician emigrant culture: “morriña” (homesickness) and “saudade” (longing/nostalgia). In other words, the original lyrics of “Un canto a Galicia” express a very simple idea – the emigrant’s longing (albeit at one generation’s remove) for his homeland – and they do so by calling on the central structuring concepts of the traditional discourse of Galician emigration that would be mobilized once again during the 1990s by Fraga and the PP: separation, the family, “morriña” and “saudade.”

Musically, the original version of the song is also very simple. After a short introduction on guitar and drums (which form the backbone of the orchestration throughout), Iglesias enters (0.12), singing the first verse without backing singers. The

second verse (0.32) sees the addition of a counter melody, while the first iteration of the chorus (0.45) introduces full orchestra with string section and a backing chorus. The third iteration of the syncopated second half of the chorus (beginning “teño morriña, teño saudade,” 2.27) is performed a capella by Iglesias and the backing chorus, with the syncopated beat marked out by handclapping – evoking traditional Galician musical forms such as the pandereitada, which ironically are often performed by women. A new counter-melody is introduced at 2.42, and the full orchestra returns for the final iteration of the chorus (3.0) before fading out over approximately 15 seconds (3.59-end). The tempo is relatively brisk at approximate 112bpm and there is little or no improvisation.

The simple, emotive song certainly caught the imagination of listeners. However, when we look at subsequent versions of it, released in different languages (and therefore for different audiences), it begins to seem less simple and rather deceptively calculating and culturally relativistic. The cultural relativism is especially evident when we pay attention to the lyrics of the different versions as far back as 1972, when – almost immediately after the original release – a Portuguese-language version appeared.^{xi} In this version, the specific markers of Galician emigration are removed: the direct allusion to separation or failure of communication that appears in the first line of the Galician version (“Eu queroche tanto / e aínda non o sabes”) is replaced by a more general statement of Galicia’s unforgettable beauty: “Quem olhou teus campos / Não esquece mais” ‘Anyone who has seen your fields / will never forget.’ The connection between land and emotion in the second quatrain of the Galician version here becomes a (more) banal utopian or celebratory vision: “Nesta terra existe / Muito amor e paz” ‘In this land there is / lots of love and peace.’ Furthermore, the personification of Galicia

(“os teus ollos tristes” ‘your sad eyes’) is here simplified as Galicia becomes simply a location for love, rather than the personified object of longing: “Nesta terra existe ... Certos olhos tristes / que eu ameí demais” ‘In this land are ... a pair of sad eyes / that I loved so much.’ In the final quatrain, “morriña” is excised, while “saudade” (as characteristically Portuguese as it is Galician) is retained; the final quatrain now states that the singer was happy in Galicia, but, now far away, is suffering from “saudade.” In other words, the Portuguese version minimizes the specific markers of the discourse of Galician emigration in order to intensify the song’s relevance to a Portuguese (or, more likely, Brazilian) audience, in the process transforming it from the specific expression of a particular experience localized in place and, implicitly, in time (the “second wave” of Galician emigration to the Americas in the mid-20th-century), to a more generalized expression of longing and admiration.

In musical terms, the biggest change to “Un canto a Galicia” came in 1998, with the release of a reconceived Galician version of the song known as “Un canto a Galicia ’98,” on which the majority of subsequent performances have been based. This version, at 4.30, is some 15 seconds longer than the original and is musically more complex. It begins with a one- or two-bar introduction played on what sounds like a solo pipe (evoking Galicia’s disputed Celtic heritage), before drums, choir, keyboards and orchestra kick in. At approximately 96bpm, this version is markedly slower than the original, and it is also characterised by greater improvisation from Iglesias, in terms of both tempo (use of rubato, especially at the ends of phrases) and pitch. Interestingly, where in the original Iglesias used an approximation of Galician phonology – for example, pronouncing the first phoneme of “chorare” as hard “ch” [tʃ] – the new version is closer to Portuguese phonology, with the first phoneme of “chorare” pronounced as

soft “sh” [ʃ]. This change may well reflect the song’s huge popularity in the Lusophone world; it certainly emphasises the shift away from the original context of Galician emigration.^{xii} So too does the innovation, in this version, whereby the syncopated a capella section (2.27 of the original) with accompanying handclaps is replaced by a fully orchestrated section sung only by the backing chorus (2.58), with Iglesias joining in (3.16) just before the final iteration of the chorus (3.36). Perhaps the most significant musical difference, and one that underscores how this version is driven by performance, is the ending: whereas the original faded out over approximately 15 seconds, the new version builds to a musical climax through the repetition of “a miña terra” (4.13) against a harmonically and dynamically rising countermelody from the choir and orchestra, before the performance resolves decisively on a tonic chord.

The protean nature and transnational potential of “Un canto a Galicia” reaches its peak in the most recent French version of the song, “Un chant à Galicia,”^{xiii} released in 1998 with lyrics translated/adapted by the French writer of Catalan origin Etienne Roda-Gil.^{xiv} Musically, this new French version is very similar to the Galician version of “Un canto a Galicia ’98.” The first half of the song is more or less a direct translation of the original Galician version, although as in the Portuguese version, the “land of my father” becomes the “land of my parents,” perhaps diminishing the autobiographical resonance of the song for those familiar with Iglesias’s back story. The second half of “Un chant à Galicia,” however, takes a sharp turn away from the original closing quatrain, with its “morriña” and “saudade,” replacing this with an entirely different quatrain and following it with a completely new octet. The penultimate quatrain, far from an evocation of the melancholy of emigration, is now a celebration of familiar stereotypes of Galician men (“terre de quel seigneur / eut du courage [*sic*]”) and hard-

faced women (“terre ... de femmes graves”). More significantly, this version of the quatrain introduces the idea of Galicia’s Celtic heritage in the “pierres levées” or “standing stones.”^{xv} The final octet is quite outrageous in its representation of a so-called “Celtic Galicia” peopled by dour but courageous men (“Des hommes sombres / Et leur courage”), beautiful, medievalized women (“Des femmes belles / Dans leur corsage”), and stones dancing in celebration of the solstice (“Des pierres qui dansent / Pour le solstice”). Importantly, this is no pastoral idyll: an undercurrent of violence, or even barbarism, is conveyed through the image of dancing women “qui chantent / Le sacrifice.” The drama is intensified through the orchestration and the performance: the middle section (from the verse at 1.20) is sung in a half-murmur with greatly reduced orchestration; after the choir has sung the syncopated section at 2.58 (as in the Galician version), the new octet is sung by Iglesias only, starting very quietly and crescendo-ing throughout to a climax on “sacrifice.” The closing bars of the French version give more emphasis to the rising harmonics and dynamics of the choir’s counter melody, with polyphonic choral entries of “miña terra” leading up to the satisfying tonic resolution.

The fantastic vision of a timeless, pagan Galicia that appears in the 1998 French version of “Un canto a Galicia” taps into a longstanding tradition of representing Galicia which today is largely restricted to advertising agencies and certain types of performers, for whom it provides a shortcut to the acquisition of external cultural capital. By employing this fantastic discourse, Iglesias is evidently seeking to appeal to an audience for whom Galicia is likely familiar precisely through the discourse of Celticism. At the same time by relocating the emotional core of the song (“Je t’aime, comme je t’aime, terre de mes pères”) away from the severed connection with the homeland (severed both by time and by distance) and into the fantastic space of myth

and legend, he seeks to transcend the localized space of the original version of the song and return himself to the transnational space he more usually occupies. A more cynical reading, furthermore, might consider the shift from the nostalgic into the fantastic (and the concomitant severing of the memory connection between singer and subject) as representing the ultimate consequence of the Fraguista discourse of a Galicia(n emigration) located outside time and place.

“Un canto a Galicia” in the network society

The previous section showed how Julio Iglesias is marketed – and markets himself – as a transnational performer whose markers of identity shift according to context, and whose interpretation of Galician cultural identity (located in emigration) is placed at the service of external forces. In the final part of this essay, I examine recent responses to Iglesias and “Un canto a Galicia” in cyberspace, considering them in the light of what Manuel Castells has called “a historical shift of the public sphere from the institutional realm to the new communication space” (238). This is not as big a leap as it might seem. Castells’s vision of a shift of emphasis away from the institutional control of identity and information has much in common with recent moves in Galician Studies to articulate new ways of reading Galician cultural production (Hooper “New Cartographies”). These new readings, enunciated from a point beyond (or “post”) the teleological narrative of nationhood, seek to decentre (but not destroy) the hitherto privileged but largely abstract lens of the nation. More than “transnational” readings (which emphasise relationships between entities – literally, “nations” – that transcend spatial limits), these new readings call attention to the existence both within and beyond the national space of other, hitherto marginalised categories and locations of identity (gender, class,

ethnicity, sexuality), whose intrinsically embodied agents are also, inherently and inevitably, consumers (Hooper “Importance”).

Castells’s new communication space, based on “horizontal networks of communication: what [he calls] mass self-communication” (239), is valuable in this context, because its accessibility, immediacy, and relative anonymity facilitates communication and consumption across geographical, generational, social, cultural, and (to an extent) linguistic borders. Furthermore, new spaces such as blogs, YouTube and other open access forums create endless possibilities for the circulation and interpretation of popular music (and other cultural forms) that could never have been anticipated even a decade ago. My reading of “Un canto a Galicia,” its development and reception thus develops in the light of wider discussions about who and what is authorised as “Galician,” and about how that authorization is negotiated, affirmed and contested, especially where such negotiations take place beyond established institutional spaces. In particular, I am interested in the way that people – these embodied, consuming subjects – have reacted to this popular song and its connotations. More specifically, I ask, how might the way they articulate this reaction in the new communication space outlined by Castells contribute to the project of countering the dominance of institutionalized national culture and thus of creating a new kind of Galician public sphere –understood in this context as a place where people can come together for more or less free discussion on aspects of social and political life (Habermas)?

The potential of Castells’s “new communication space,” typified by the internet, for a renewal of Galician civil society has already been a source of discussion in Galicia (Hooper “Forum”). Silvia Bermúdez, in her analysis of the internet-based grassroots

organization Redes Escarlata, argues that the group “contribute to the creation of a ‘new’ Galician public sphere by participating in the network of communicable information and ideas that affect public opinion” (130). For Bermúdez, the importance of Redes Escarlata lies in their use of the internet to conflate identity and difference “through the language of poetry and its dissemination on the World Wide Web” (130). In particular, she notes the collective poem denouncing Manuel Fraga, which exploits the interactive function of technology to invite viewers “to become co-authors of the collective poem and participate in the act of defiance and contestation by going to the sign-up link” (130). While the point of articulation of the Redes’ collective poem is explicitly Galician nationalist, and the sense of solidarity it engenders connected to its expression of opposition to Fraga, Bermúdez observes how its location on the web opens it up to the rest of the world, implicitly creating “a globalized Galicia that values difference” (130). In what follows, I look at another set of responses to an existing text, in which “Galicia” and “the [Latin] world” are juxtaposed, but from a very different perspective, taking into account Van Dijck’s observation that: “Specific cultural frames for recollection, such as Internet forums or radio programs, do not simply invoke but actually help construct collective memory” (358).

The ambiguous role of “Un canto a Galicia” in the construction of collective identity and collective memory for both Galician nationalists and Galician emigrants is clearly demonstrated on the electronic media-sharing site YouTube. YouTube was described in 2006 as “the fastest growing site online” (O’Malley); the same article identifies the 12-17 age group as the most likely to visit the site, giving it a predominantly youthful demographic (which is of interest in the case of “Un canto a Galicia,” given that the song was first a hit more than thirty-five years ago). Since its

foundation in 2005, YouTube has developed from a primarily English-language site into one with a multilingual and transnational reach (although English still dominates): the original homepage (www.YouTube.com) functions as a central hub, from which radiate twenty national sites in a variety of languages, including both Spanish (Mexico, Spain) and Portuguese (Brazil), but not, unsurprisingly, Galician. A search on the main page for “canto a Galicia” brings up 34 videos, submitted between October 2006 and June 2008. Of these, around 20 are either audios with a single visual (usually a still of the album cover) or videos of performances by Iglesias, while the remainder include a variety of user-generated content, including karaoke versions, amateur versions, and slide shows with the song (usually, but not always sung by Iglesias) as soundtrack. The Iglesias performances range from the early 1970s to 2008 and include both studio and live performances, usually in Spain, Portugal and Latin America. The posted performances are almost exclusively of the original Galician version of the song.^{xvi}

What is especially interesting about the presence of “Un canto a Galicia” on YouTube is what the responses it receives reveal about its meaning – and that of Iglesias more generally – for different viewers and listeners. The community-building function of a site such as YouTube functions at various levels, from social network to simple repository (Lange), but in the case of “Un canto a Galicia,” we can see how this function is intrinsically connected with the preservation, shaping and, in some cases, defence of collective memory. As Van Dijck writes regarding the use of technologies in the transmission of music, “Technologies and objects of recorded music are an intrinsic part of the act of reminiscence” (Van Dijck 364). Furthermore, according to Van Dijck, “[e]very new medium authenticates the old ... Paradoxically, sound technologies are concurrently aspects of change and of preservation” (Van Dijck 366). We see this

clearly on YouTube, where clips of very early Iglesias performances screencaptured from TV or video sit alongside user-generated sequences created using Microsoft PowerPoint, Groove and other creative technologies. A key feature of YouTube is that it not only allows individual users to upload video clips, but also allows other individuals to rate those clips, to add them to a “favourites” folder, and to post comments. Helpfully, the site makes available a brief statistical analysis of each clip, including times viewed, times added as a “favourite” and the number of ratings, with an overall rating of up to five stars.^{xvii}

The most viewed clip of Iglesias, and the one I take as a case study for the purposes of this essay, is a performance dated by the submitter to 1970. Uploaded in January 2007, it has received 549,874 views to date (or approximately 32,000 per month), 405 comments and 710 ratings (at the time of writing, it is the third most viewed Iglesias clip, after “El amor” and “Ni te tengo ni te olvido”). The 4.03 minute clip opens with a still from a television music show, and then proceeds to show an early black and white studio performance of the song. Mid-way through the video (2.24), the picture fades into footage of Iglesias on location in the centre of Madrid. He emerges from between the statues of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza in the Plaza de España and is seen walking in a nearly-deserted Plaza Mayor, joshing with a traffic policeman by the Cibeles fountain, and finally at Real Madrid’s Santiago Bernabeu football stadium (where he had played as a junior), where after moving amongst some enthusiastic crowds (including soldiers in uniform), he strides out alone on to the pitch. The video ends by fading back into the studio performance for approximately ten seconds.

Of the more than four hundred comments posted beneath the clip, a small number are facetious or critical of Iglesias, but the overwhelming majority are admiring

and supportive. Most of the latter group of commentators identify as emigrant Galicians or descendants of Galicians – that is, they are the intended audience of the original version of the song – and they write principally in Spanish, with a minority in Portuguese, Galician English, French, Dutch, Turkish, German and Polish. A constant theme in the comments is the connection of the song with either the individual or collective Galician emigrant experience. Sometimes this is achieved through dedication (“Pra todos os galegos k viven no extraneiro, nunca nos olvidaremos [sic] de nosa querida terra”). At other times it is an opportunity for personal testimony: “Cuando era emigrante me hacia llorar, me encantanba [sic] cantarla y sentirla, ahora también. Siempre he estado fuera da miña terra, pero siempre ha estado en mi corazon. Son esas raíces que nunca se perden con miña terra e con miña xente!” Other posters appropriate the lyrics for their own experience (albeit not always entirely accurately): “eu querote tanto e o que mais me doe e ter que estar a 2300kms da terra meiga ... desos teus lares desos teus lares..... [...] un galego mais polo mundo que chora o escoitar este tema.”

Intertwined with the many similar testimonials to the song’s meaning for one particular sector of the audience, however, are a significant body of comments that seek to highlight the irony – or hypocrisy – of Iglesias’s ambiguous identification with Galicia. A number of posters on the clip’s comment thread point out the irony of a song about Galicia being illustrated with shots of some of the most iconic of Spanish nationalist landmarks, such as the Galician-language poster who writes: “Unha canción pra sempre, que non esqueceremos. Moi boa sí, aínda que non sei que fan esas imaxes de Madrid nun canto a Galicia...” Several months later, two other posters have a brief exchange: “Si la canción es un canto a Galicia... ¿Por qué ponen imágenes de Madrid? // Es verdad! La Plaza Mayor de Madrid, está ahí. Creo que este video esta hecho para la audiencia

internacional que no saben identificar los monumentos o las ciudades de España.” A fourth poster takes the dissonance between lyric and visual as a sign of Iglesias’s own lack of feeling for Galicia: “yo soy galego, y muy orgulloso qe estoy de mi comunidad! y decir qe la canción esta bien, pero el videoclip.. me parece auententicamente patetico qe no salgan imagines de Galia!!en fin...yo no me creo mucho qe julio I. quiera mucho a galicia pero por lo menos lo intenta!!” Another poster, referring to iconic figures of the Spanish centralist right (and the current leader of the PP, Mariano Rajoy), expresses their sentiments regarding Iglesias’s political affiliations in the starkest possible terms: “Viva Rajoy, Fraga, Franco y Julio!!” What this shows us very clearly is the power of the new communication space to empower new generations to produce political readings of a song such as “Un canto a Galicia” that would have been unthinkable in its original context in the 1970s.

The longstanding identification of Iglesias (within Spain at least) with Spain’s centralist right, sets him up in opposition to Galician nationalism, and a considerable proportion of commenters articulate their criticisms of Iglesias and the authenticity of the sentiments expressed in the song through the question of language – of course, one of the key foundational elements of Galician cultural identity. Members of Iglesias’s international audience who post about the song and refer to it as being in Spanish or Portuguese receive one of two responses: either the responder takes the opportunity to educate the questioner about the Galician language (“You won’t find any of these words in a spanish dictionary because it’s actually galician, which is a language spoken in a region of Spain,. The form and structure of Galician is more closely related to Portuguese than it is to spanish, but phonetically it sounds just like spanish”) or they unleash a stream of invective (“que coño dices! haber, piensa un poco, " UN CANTO A

GALICIA" esta en gallego no portugues"). A number of posters take issue with Iglesias's use of non-standard Galician ("que alguien le enseñe gallego, por favor!!"), which leads to a series of discussions about specific aspects of the language used. For example, when one poster reprimands Iglesias about the word he uses for "father" ("q mal falas o galego xuliño, dise pai non pae!!"), another observes that "El pronuncia pae pero escribese pai, o galego-portugues ten mais de 5 vocales. Enterate!!!! LISTO!!!" The first poster then tries again, this time linking Iglesias's non-standard Galician with that of the Galician-born (but Spanish-identified) leader of Spain's PP: "o falas mal de carallo xuliño, dise lonxe non leixos!! inventas mais o idioma q o subnormal do rajoy!" but again the response is a short but sweet lesson in the nuances of language: "lonxe e cando estas lonxe pero dentro da terra e leixos e cando estas leixos pois eso leixos fora da terra esta ben dito."

Conclusions

"Un canto a Galicia" is an example of a song that plays a strong role in a specific collective memory (that of the Galician emigrant community), while simultaneously being open to remarketing and reinterpretation either by listeners or, as Iglesias's own involvement in the Portuguese and French versions of the song demonstrates, by the performer himself. The prevalence of comments about the language of "Un canto a Galicia" and its connotations in the YouTube comments reveals the contradictory nature of Iglesias's significance for different groups of listeners. On the one hand, for Galician emigrants and their descendants, the song is constructed from markers of their cultural identity – morriña, saudade, ribeiras, ollos tristes – of which the Galician language is one

additional example; the song's importance for this group lies in its evocation of their own or their family's experience. For international listeners, meanwhile, the language and other markers of identity are almost irrelevant – viz. the number of commenters who are unaware of whether it is Spanish or Portuguese, or the radical changes to the Portuguese and (especially) the 1998 French versions of the song. For these listeners, Iglesias's significance may even signal a break from Spanish cultural roots, as one YouTube commenter notes:

Julio Iglesias es una figura fundamental en la formación de identidad de todos los hispanoamericanos. Es más importante, para colocar las cosas en perspectiva, que el propio Miguel de Cervantes para nuestro [sic] cultura. Técnicamente puede no ser el mejor cantante, pero lo cierto es que no hay nadie, ninguno, que le llegue a los talones al Sr. Iglesias.

For Galician nationalists, however, Iglesias's political history and lack of overt identification with Galicia make his use of the Galician language suspicious – either a calculated marketing move, or, perhaps (and more sinisterly) a marker of his known affiliation with the Franquista/Fraguista vision of Galicia based on constant evocation of the emigrant experience, and of Galicia's rural culture and heritage.

The importance of all three groups posting together in a single location should not be understated, particularly given the paucity of forums for public debate and discussion between them. To put it another way, the forum provided by YouTube is essentially transnational in that it exceeds the boundaries of language (despite the desire of some posters to enforce use of a particular language or form of a language), citizenship and cultural history, and also provides a kind of public sphere where posters can get together for more or less free discussion on aspects of social and political life. While this case study does not demonstrate conclusively the emergence of a new public sphere away from the institutional realm (Castells), it raises the question, for future

researchers, of the extent to which the multiple public appropriations of popular songs such as “Un canto a Galicia,” seen in conjunction with the public debate and discussion provided by forums such as YouTube, might contribute to the project of countering the dominance of institutionalized national cultures and thus of creating a new kind of public sphere.

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ⁱ Julio Iglesias is perhaps the archetypal example of a transnational star; born in Madrid, the son of a Galician father and Andalusian mother, he is known internationally, with audiences throughout Europe, America, North Africa and Asia ("Julio Iglesias"). His official website is available in 21 languages. The default language is English, followed by Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, German, Romanian, Indonesian, Chinese, Russian, Dutch, Japanese, Danish, Swedish, Greek, Arabic, Hindi, Turkish, Hungarian, Hebrew, and Persian (Galician, however, is nowhere to be seen). The lyrics to his songs can be searched in fourteen languages or language varieties, including both Galician (only "Un canto a Galicia" comes up) and the Argentinean-Spanish argot known as Lunfardo.

ⁱⁱ It should be noted that Iglesias's ambassadorial talents have not been confined to Galicia. In 1997, El País reported that he stood to earn over 500 million pesetas for his role as an ambassador for Spain's Valencia region (Esquembre). It has subsequently emerged that the arrangement may not have been entirely above board and that a number of payments made to Iglesias by the Instituto Valenciano de la Exportación were being investigated as part of the so-called "caso Ivex" (Garrido; G del M).

ⁱⁱⁱ All three singles are sung in Galician, with the Spanish-language song "Como el álamo al camino" as a B side. An EP issued by CBS in Argentina in the same year contained four tracks, including both Galician and Spanish versions of "Un canto a Galicia." The following year, the single went Europe-wide: Decca released versions in Belgium (3 different versions), the Netherlands, France and Germany; Roda released a version in Angola, and Melody Plaklari released the Spanish-language version in Turkey. The single has been rereleased across Europe at various times in various guises, most recently the three versions that appeared in 1991 in Belgium with Columbia Records and the Netherlands with Sony (2 versions). The album of the same name, first released in Spain in 1971, was reissued by Columbia Records in 1982 and 1988; versions were also released in Belgium by Decca (1972); the Netherlands, also by Decca (1973, 1975); Germany by Philips (1973); Portugal by Roda (1973), and Venezuela by Palacio (1972). The most recent reissue of the album was by Musicplus in China in 2003 as part of a 2 CD Digipak. The song, in various versions (Galician, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German)

has also been included on over eighty of Iglesias's compilation albums not only in Europe and Latin America, but also in Japan, the USA, Canada, Australia, South Korea, Taiwan, China, South Africa, Indonesia, Russia, and Hong Kong ("Julio Iglesias").

^{iv} It might be argued that the equally restricted Galician music industry and its economic interests have limited the development of a healthy Galician commercial music sector, but the plethora of opportunities for performance – now complemented by electronic media – have meant that music has been accessible to audiences in a way that written texts, perhaps, have not.

^v Those interviewed, other than Reixa himself, include Julián Hernández ("Eu estaba alí cando naceu 'Galicia caníbal'"); Xosé Manuel Pereiro ("Sementaron unha das árbores máis vizosas da actual música galega"); Xavier Valiño ("Galicia caníbal é o himno por excelencia do rock galego"); Belén Regueira ("Descubríronme que non todo era folc e lirismo choromicas"); Fanny+Alexander ("O que moitos grupos experimentaron despois xa o fixeran Reixa e os seus anos antes"); Martin Wu ("quizais foron o mellor grupo galego da historia"); Silvia Penide ("Algo tan simple como 'Fai un sol de carallo' é moi identitario"); and Toñito de Poi ("Escoitouse música en galego en todos os lados").

^{vi} For example, Julián Hernández – the lead singer of the Galician rock band Sinistro Total, contemporaries of Os resentidos, who released a cover version of "Galicia Caníbal" – observed in a recent interview that his band's use of Galician was not always driven by ideology: "La verdad es que Sinistro Total era tan de Madrid como de Vigo [...], solo que explotábamos el rollo de Galicia porque, a fin de cuentas éramos de allí y de allí salían nuestras canciones" (Turrón & Babas 48).

^{vii} Although Saez also points out that Iglesias had spent much of the 1980s cosying up to the newly-installed PSOE administration under Felipe González: "‘Tú eres un triunfador como yo’, dijo [en 1983] a un presidente casi recién estrenado."

^{viii} **MORRIÑAS [Spanish, 1980]** (Julio Iglesias / Ramón Arcusa / Rafael Ferro): Aires de mar / nostalgias y morriñas / Una canción, una melancolía. // Lejos de ti / sueñan que llegue el día / para volver a su tierra querida. // Dicen que lloran tu ausencia / aquellos que un día / fueron buscando otras tierras / buscando otra vida. // Dicen que nadie ha llorado / con más alegría, / Dicen que aquellos que han vuelto / de nuevo a Galicia. // Sueñan por tí. / Viven con el recuerdo / de aquel lugar / de cuando eran pequeños. // Hablan de ti / quieren parar el / tiempo. / Y su cantar / se hacen muñeira y verso // Dicen que lloran tu ausencia / aquellos que un día / fueron / buscando otras tierras / buscando otra vida ("Julio Iglesias").

^{ix} **UN CANTO A GALICIA [Galician, 1971]** (Julio Iglesias): Eu queroche tanto, / e aínda non o sabes... / Eu queroche tanto, / terra do meu pai. // Quero as túas ribeiras / que me fan lembrare / os teus ollos tristes / que fan me chorare // [CHORUS] Un canto a Galicia, hey / terra do meu pae [sic]. / Un canto a Galicia, hey, / miña terra nae [sic]. // Teño morriña, hey, / teño saudade, / porque estou leixos / de esos teus lares ("Julio Iglesias").

^x "Pae" and "nae" in this context are non-standard forms of the Galician "pai" (father) and "nai" (mother).

^{xi} **UM CANTO À GALICIA [Portuguese, 1972]** (Julio Iglesias/Marcelo Duran): Quem olhou teus campos / Não esquece mais / Eu te quero tanto / Terra dos meus pais. // Nesta terra existe / Muito amor e paz / Certos olhos tristes / Que eu amei demais. // [CHORUS] Um canto a Galicia, hei / Que eu amo demais / Um canto a Galicia, hei / Terra dos meus pais. // Pois lá eu tinha, hei / Felicidade, estou tão longe, hei / Tenho saudade ("Julio Iglesias").

^{xii} At the same time, however, the non-standard Galician word "leixos" (a hypercorrect appropriation of Spanish "lejos") that appeared in the 1971 version is replaced in the 1998 version by the standard Galician "lonxe" (although see below for further discussion of this).

^{xiii} **UN CHANT À GALICIA [French, 1998]** (Julio Iglesias/Etienne Roda-Gil): Je t'aime, je t'aime, / Je suis de ta graine / Je t'aime, comme je t'aime / Terre de mes pères // J'aime tes rivières / Où se noient mes rêves / Et tes grands yeux tristes / Comme ceux de ma mère // [CHORUS] Un chant à Galicia, hé / Un chant pour la terre / Un chant à Galicia, hé / Mère de mes pères. // Terre de quel seigneur / Eut du courage / Terre de pierres levées / De femmes graves // Des hommes sombres / Et leur courage / Des femmes belles / Dans leur corsage / Des pierres qui dansent / Pour le solstice / Des femmes qui chantent / Le sacrifice ("Julio Iglesias").

^{xiv} There is also a more literal French version, dated to 1972, which appears to have circulated in the 1970s ("Julio Iglesias"). In the earlier version, the final quatrain is translated literally: J'ai le mal du pays, hé / J'ai la nostalgie / Parce que je suis loin / De tes foyers (so that "mal du pays" is equated to "morriña" and "nostalgie" to "saudade").

^{xv} I am grateful to my colleagues Ian Magedera and Lyndy Stewart for their assistance with the French version.

^{xvi} There is also a clip of the German version, "Wenn ein Schiff vorüberfährt" (When a Ship Goes By) and a search on the German title brings up a total of three videos.

^{xvii} "Un canto a Galicia" is not the only part of Iglesias's work to have been reinterpreted by a new generation of consumers and/or performers. Colmeiro briefly analyses the experimental cantautor Javier Álvarez's sampling of "one of the old signature songs of Latin crooner Julio Iglesias ("soy un truhán, soy un señor")" in the song

“Padre” which “offers a deconstruction of patriarchal mythologies of the past, in the ironic form of an irreverent religious confession... and a coming out manifesto” (Colmeiro “Canciones” 43-44). Álvarez’s use of Iglesias, embodiment of the Latin lover and thus closely connected with stereotypical images of Hispanic masculinity, within a musical form that undermines such stereotypes in both form and message, underlines the power of new cultural forms to help us to examine stereotypes.