

**DIASPORA AND HETEROCULTURES:
SPANISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES IN THE U.S.**

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"Certain tenets of postmodernism, such as the rejection of metanarratives and the reduction of power to language games always will be anathema to anthropology's mission; still, the postmodern focus on how power is generated and diffused through dislocation and difference and through space-time disjunctures is essential for understanding the global transformations that are rapidly unfolding". (Annette B. Weiner 1995: 14)

In the chapter entitled "The Question of Cultural Identity" (1992) Stuart Hall provides a sharp observation of five great advances in social theory (Marx, Freud, Saussure, Foucault and feminism) "...whose main effect, it is argued, has been the final de-centering of the Cartesian subject". (1992: 285). Of course, as Hall himself notices, these five great advances linger unevenly in this second half of the 20th century, also known as 'late-modernity', and "few would deny their deeply unsettling effects on late-modern ideas and, particularly, on how the subject and the issue of identity have come to be conceptualized". (1992: 291) In certain instances, as part of the lame impact of the unsettling effects, identity needs to be further problematized as it is closely related to language, a cultural marker that lends a society its intangible dimension of providing an element of agglutination. Although, the term 'late-modernity' illustrates an influential process, that of decentering the Cartesian subject; it appears that the term 'late-modernity' is inapplicable to areas or situations that stubbornly continue to

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be culturally 'modern'. In other terms, Hall's epistemological observation although true, will need some time to set foot outside the academic discourse, contributing to achieve a full decentering process; academic discourse that helps interpret societal development encounters entrenched 'modern' referents. The epistemological breakdown that social theory has provided us with finds rather than decentering processes, *recentering prerogatives*. The distance between thinking and a given reality (or circumstances) clashes, providing a space for contestation that, in several cases, it has been mediated by violence due to ethnic, religious, or gender assertion.

By observing cultural debates over language performance in societies where bilingualisms, or multilinguisms challenge dominant, or 'official' languages considered mechanisms of integration, one can interpret nation-state sentiments and policies regarding homogeneity and, by default, difference, i.e. bilingualism or multilinguisms seen as divisive of society's 'linguistic (as well as cultural) homogeneity'

Language is a socio-symbolic system, and not an individual endeavor, "it preexists us... To speak a language is not only to express our innermost, original thoughts, it is also to activate the vast range of meanings which are already embedded in our language and cultural systems". (1992: 288) Late-postmodernity, thus seems, at least in certain cases, pulled back by strong modern anachronisms and languages become, once again, menacing systems, rather than only systems, in places often perceived as (or assumed to be) postmodern and postcapitalist. In this sense, language, and Saussure's assertions remain true: "We can only use language to produce meanings by positioning ourselves within the rules of language and the systems of meaning of our culture". (Ibid) The background of this exercise, however, does not flow as easy as it seems. "To produce meanings" takes risks in a time when, we, as a society thought ourselves liberated from (monolingual) modernity: "Notice the analogy here between language and identity. I know who 'I' am in relation to 'the other' whom I cannot be". (Ibid)

In this paper, I reflect on the United States and, in particular, on the category 'language performance' as it pertains, not English, but Spanish. The historical relation English-Spanish in the U.S., is not a recent one. It as a matter of fact, precedes the mythical foundation of the

thirteen colonies. But since official U.S. history is narrated from the East to the West, rather than from the West to the East, the previous Spanish presence has been practically deleted from U.S. foundational narrative. When cultural processes are looked at from the West, and even from the Southwest of the U.S., obviously a mythical English origin overwhelms in a continuous take over of the 'wild' West. In this sense, the foundational westward saga immediately racializes the remnant territory demonizing it, first, as 'wild or empty' (the Indigenous peoples territories), and second as 'inefficient' rancho owners of fandanguero Spaniards. The U.S. as a nation-state inspired in its 'manifest destiny', spreads out but despite the Mexican-U.S. war of 1848 an ethnic-state continues to seek its origin in the earlier incursion of Spanish conquistadors. Not only that, the U.S., inevitably maintains, throughout its history, an economic relation with the Spanish and English Caribbean area, as well as Latin America being Mexico itself 'the' border of such encounter. Naturally, when dealing with historical processes we shall add here the experience of fluctuating bilingualisms, but above all the Spanish-English bilingualism which is the main concern of this paper.

Rather than looking at the way Spanish recedes, allowing an English-only construct of the U.S., I shall look at how Spanish, instead, repossessions its presence despite ancient and recent, direct and indirect, legalistic maneuvers to halt its use. This seems to be a case where identity and language go hand-in-hand, for behind the language as a system, a dissonant cultural presence is perceived as rupturing a monolithic and monolingual English-only construct of dominant [postcolonial?] society.

I shall address the persistence and strengthening of the Spanish language in the U.S., and the role media plays in this process. Throughout this paper, I problematize the question of identity correlated with language use, but also with the racialization of the Spanish language within a neoliberal dominant Anglo culture (Zentella 1995: 55-65). Given that Spanish is seen as an intruder, I shall also illustrate instances where its racialization coincides with the question of language identity and even citizenship. The broader context of this inquiry has been delimited within recent economic agreements established by NAFTA signatories, the U.S, Mexico and

Canada. NAFTA is an open market-oriented agreement to regionalize the economy, answering to former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's aim to "push Mexico to the 21st century no matter what". This wishful thinking, however, was interrupted on January 1, 1994, by the Zapatista Uprising in the southern state of Chiapas (Mexico). After two years, NAFTA is increasingly troubled by the terms of the agreement itself. At least two Californian reactions to NAFTA prompted exclusionary, and above all racialized politics. One, has been the elimination of Affirmative Action (California universities) in behalf of minorities and women and, two the passage of Proposition 187 against undocumented immigrants (read Mexican or Latin American origin). The Affirmative Action program's initial intention was to integrate minorities and women to the benefits of society. However, Prop 187 will, curtail resources, and eventually eliminate services that were once delivered to promote and produce the social integration of previously disenfranchised ethnic minorities. Proposition 187, in particular, *de facto* eliminates, among other services, transitional programs (bilingual programs) that enabled a better process of assimilation with language (Spanish) retention.²

In order to further problematize this area of language performance which seems immune to rules or regulations for it has survived previous official policy that attempted to curtail its use, I would like to briefly remind us of a discussion relevant to the early 80's, when research on media and language-use illustrated the assimilationist and/or the pluralist debates. Assimilation meant that immigrant families would become amnesiac, forgetting about their cultures and languages. On the other hand, sympathetic pluralists thought that cultures and languages did not constitute a menace, being that the U.S. is a nation shaped by immigrants, and it was a multi-ethnic culture that contributed to define the "American" spirit. In the 90's, some academic institutions experienced the rise of multiculturalism, opening a space to promote ethnic as well as gender promotion and coexistence. The pluralist assertiveness resulted in broadening the curricula to offer a liberal education by complementing rigid Western canons

² See: Carmen Silva-Corvalán (1994) *Language Contact and Change. Spanish in Los Angeles*. Oxford: OUP. Silva-Corvalán conducted an intergenerational sample of Spanish-English bilinguals in Los Angeles County.

with recently acknowledged contributions by 'minority' writers and intellectuals. Indeed, formerly excluded authors writing in English and belonging to a variety of 'ethnicities' and 'gender oriented groups' have received recognition. They have become, in a sense, an integral part of main stream society in the process of redefinition (Tony Morrison, Amy Tan, Alice Walker, Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, June Jordan, Richard Rodriguez, Julia Alvarez, Rubén Martínez, Leslie Marmon Silko, and others.).

According to Schaeffer assimilation implies: "the process by which a subordinate individual or group takes on the characteristics of the dominant group and *is eventually accepted as part of their group*". (my italics, 1979:37). Pluralism, by contrast, leads to sustained ethnic differentiation and continued heterogeneity. It implies cultural retention in which "ethnic, national, or minority groups in general may practice their own cultural traits *and still participate in the dominant society*". (Op cit., 1979:45). The problem with both definitions is that, regarding Spanish-speaking related cultures in the U.S., language performance seems to supersede assimilation, while simultaneously it is further reinforced by pluralist claims. If we look at the reasons that are behind the endurance of Spanish, rather than those for its continuity and/or disappearance because of English, we must consider then linguistic history as a factor that makes Spanish language perseverance a unique case. The written tradition of the Spanish language, and its continuous practice, explains its pervasive agency (Klahn, personal communication). On the other hand, writing is complemented by an oral tradition that parallels fluctuating patterns of Spanish speakers migration, assisted by access to available communication technology, and the means to transmit in Spanish, further reinforcing language reproduction. Studies on ethnic change or language retention, yet rarely consider "the overwhelming powers of media over immigrant children".

Media, in this particular case, is closely related to both English and Spanish. As noticed by Alfred Arteaga: "The history and contiguity of Spanish of the [U.S.] Southwest is denied in history books, popular culture, and through language laws" (1994: 26). This argument would lead us to believe that English language media, being highly technologized, has occupied the last

corner of 'ethnic' communities, pressing them to assimilate or to, at least, displace Spanish. Arteaga observes a coincidental case: "A correlative of the displacement of Spanish is the illiteracy of the Chicano. Chicanos are depicted as non-writing subjects who did not produce literature until taught English by Anglo Americans" (Ibid). Evidence to the contrary exists, however, in the rich popular, cultural, and literary circles (cf. Americo Paredes) of the Spanish Southwest that links them to the Spanish language, or for that matter to the earliest examples of bilingualism by default, as a linguistic accommodation to the imposition of a politicized U.S.-Mexico border way before the organization of the Chicano movement of the sixties.

For example, the presence of the *corrido* alone, both written and transmitted via oral tradition in this area, links Spanish to Mexico as it has been demonstrated by Chicano and Mexican scholars. Manuel Peña in particular illustrates this case when he studied the history of recording, producing, broadcasting, marketing, and promoting *Conjunto Music*. This recording industry, in hands of 'mejicanos' first, eventually was swallowed by larger Anglo recording industries. Language in this case being intangible, survived, tying itself to a broader tradition of cultural practices that criss-cross borders, but also by offering the first precocious bilingual practices. An electronic invention helped Spanish to remain tuned and aired.

Broadcasting, in this case, helped Spanish subsist, and radical ethnic change or assimilation to Anglo culture was never a full process; Mexico is too close, the border too long and Spanish too old. Likewise, "studies of ethnic change or persistence are oriented toward assimilation and social integration as the norm or eventual outcome" (Cohen 1984: 1029) Rarely is the so-called 'ethnic media' considered "as vehicles for immigrants ethnics to learn about and accommodate to the adopted land"; and similarly, few studies focus on the retentive capacity ethnic media plays regarding language use and performance. To this last example, we could add Battistelli's study on media's dual roles: "assimilation regarding the dominant group's sociopolitics, but pluralism regarding ethnic's culture" (1975), with the difference that Battistelli's sample, constituted by Canadian-Italians, strives to maintain language (Italian) performance. This sample, where distance from place of origin affects language retention,

clearly adds additional stress over linguistic performance, which weighted by time, is not always the case of overlapped diasporic communities of Spanish speakers within the U.S. As a matter of fact, Suberbi-Velez states that: "Some analyses of the structure and content of the Spanish language broadcast media in the U.S. reinforce this dual role perspective. These media have been found to provide entertainment for Latinos but limited help enhancing Hispanic sociopolitical agenda and development (1986: 73-74). Nevertheless, in the first part of the 90s, Latino businesses in the U.S. are recognized to have achieved a high level of capital accumulation and strong participation in the market. If socio-politically they seem to be peripheral (although, not unimportant) to U.S. mainstream politics, economically Latino businesses flourish. According to the World Demographic Research Institute (Impacto 1995:8) Latino businesses in the U.S. could reach as much as 90 billion by the year 2000.

In 1995, a one-hour a week observations of discussion-sections demanded by undergraduate Spanish speakers students, ages 19-20, conducted for ten weeks at the University of California, Santa Cruz, I found that bilingual-bicultural individuals consider *Noticias Televisa*, a Spanish-speaking TV news program, to be their major source of information regarding Latino America. Indeed, fully broadcasted in Spanish, *Noticias Televisa* reaches younger generations of undergraduate Latinos and Latinas attending UCSC, providing news about their communities in the U.S. but making them part of a larger entity called Latino America. Indeed Spanish-TV broadcasting, as well as AM-FM radio programs, play an important role standardizing language-use, and reproducing it. To such extent its influence reaches, that the academic program at UCSC has shifted its focus answering to this current globalization trend that considers Latin American culture as being present in the United States as well. Globalization, and the assertiveness of Spanish language media in the U.S. facilitated and academic variation that answers to this on-going process, abandoning a traditional Area Studies-Cold-War view of Latin America, and taking it beyond its former foundational etiology.

largely defined by realpolitik and Anglo-European 'latinoamericanists',³ "...area studies as commonly understood is being freshly examined, even questioned, on a number of campuses, among funders, and not surprisingly, by the ACLS [American Council of Learned Societies] and the SSRC [Social Science Research Council]". (Prewitt 1996: 10).

Anthropologist Leo R. Chavez, examined "contemporary notions of community in relation to international migration" using logistic regression. He conducted a seminal study to suggest that Mexican and Central American "undocumented immigrants imagine themselves belonging to more than one community". (1994: 52-53,56). A fixed place, in Chavez's example, is no longer a marker of social identity. As part of his snowball sampling methodology Chavez conducted 300 interviews in Spanish "in the safety of the interviewee's home" (58). Chavez assumed, or maybe avoided to illustrate, a closer correlation between "community" and "language", but conducted his extremely valuable research in Spanish. Central Americans and Mexicans, especially those belonging to the first generation tend to reproduce a closer sense of community by also reproducing Spanish as a mean of communication. Also, language performance, can be seen as a mean of widening a definition of 'community' accordingly. Despite the fact that 'chauvinistic nationalism', or 'regionalism' would tend to undermine the undocumented; Spanish, spoken under stressful situations, would tend to reinforce their sense of community providing them with a larger notion of communality.

Nowadays, assimilation as well as pluralism, has been further complicated by the emergence of active ethnicities, the renaissance of neonationalistic agendas (e.g. the English-Only movement), the recognition of long time rooted Spanish-speaking cultures in the U.S., the recent revitalization of diasporic Spanish speaking communities in the U.S., and the function of media (both in English and Spanish) within this openly verbal, and written presence of language

³ The absence of records showing Afro-American or Afro-Latin-American authors interested in Latin American research is appalling. A prominent example was provided by Afro-American scholar Leslie B. Rout Jr., who studied the Chaco War Peace Conference of 1935 at the National Archives in Sucre (Bolivia) in the early 60's. Historian Franklin W. Knight, an Afro-American himself constitutes another example. The 'Latinamericanist' concept was largely an Anglo-European as well as a Cold War invention.

within a globalized world. Not long ago, Mexican cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis said that "tomorrow's nationalism will be bi-lingual". Echoing this observation, Charles Husband's research reverberates: "Given the mobility of populations and the transnational nature of much of our contemporary media, this concern has not remained within the domain of the Nation-State" (1994:31)

If we look at the history of the Spanish-language media in the U.S., antecedents of active interaction throughout this century are overwhelming. Beginning with the first press imported from Spain to Mexico in 1545, to the early 1920's publications of Spanish-language broadcasting, and newspaper publications in New York, California, New Mexico, Texas, and Chicago, the active and uninterrupted presence of a language that could not be erased in the history of the U.S. becomes evident. As Carlos Cortés stated: "pre-US press developments in northern Mexico established a Latino media tradition for the post-US annexation Latino press" (Cortés 1987).

However, I will concentrate only in the recent ten years. The increasing number of Spanish speakers have surpassed the twenty million in the U.S. In California alone the state's Department of Finance has projected that by the year 2020, the state will have 14.9 million Hispanics or 37.6% of the population. This number is seen by Anglo neonationalists as a menace to a supposedly homogenous population that communicates only through one language which is English. Over a hundred languages are spoken in the U.S., yet it has been Spanish in particular, which has been targeted as divisive and conflictive. Also, because the dynamics of recent Spanish-speaking generations living in the U.S., differ from previous Spanish-speaking communities who have experienced 'radical language extirpation' pedagogies practiced in public schools before multiculturalism. Spanish, excepting this chapter of a hidden presence amidst English monolingualism often found amongst the urban Chicano culture of the sixties, continues to be a functional language with a strong written historical and literary presence.

Racialized reactions similar to those against Spanish in the U.S., have been observed in the performance of Indigenous languages in Latin American countries. Historically, intolerance

seems to enclave and discriminate communities of speakers of native languages other than Spanish or Portuguese. However, population displacement a twentieth century phenomena, is also creating new spaces where people negotiate linguistic interactions. For comparative purposes, I would like to mention the expansion of Portuguese into Spanish speaking areas in the Amazonian frontier, as well as the introduction of pockets of Spanish speakers in Portuguese speaking areas. The current use of Quechua in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and southern Colombia, where long time ago it was thought about as disappearing; and the restitution movement of the Aymara language in Peru and Bolivia have ruptured monolingual images of Spanish speakers in that area. A similar situation is observed among Kuna speakers in northern Colombia and Panamá, and of course, the current expansion of the Mayan phylum amidst Mesoamerican Orinary nations. Having rapidly indicated comparative examples of language repositioning, and negotiation, I will continue to discuss media and the Spanish language agency in the context of the U.S. In general, one could say that languages draggle their histories in their attempt to regenerate themselves. Their splendor, as well as their desolation, correlates with great cultural transformations in which humans are merely links.

The current history of large massive displacements, naturally, has also meant the dispersion of languages and their speakers. New phenomena need to be studied, both of languages disappearing, and languages being reinforced in areas where previously—as in the case of Spanish in the U.S.—they have been consistently undermined by an official exclusionary policy. Yet, a whole generation of Chicanos/as have also demonstrated that their achievement by choice had to be in mastering English (e.g. Richard Rodriguez, Ana Castillo). Spanish for the 60's generation of Chicano/as is a second language, if any, "the language of adult kin, who used it when speaking of things they wanted hidden from the children—unfortunately *a common occurrence under conditions of language repression*". (my italics, Zavella 1991)

An ideal area to observe recent progress in the formation of linguistic spaces gained by the presence of spoken Spanish has to do with active access to means of communication, mainly: AM-FM radio, TV broadcasting, print media (newspapers), the film industry, videos,

cassettes, CDs and access to the Internet, which tend to reinforce linguistic competence and performance at a fast pace. This access is active rather than passive. For example, ten years ago, in 1984 a joint U.S. and Latin American discussion on media flows in the region, focused on the structural conditions for and the catalytic actions of the international flow of television products in Latin America. The following was observed: "the fact that Brazil, Mexico, and other Latin American countries are now exporting cultural products weakens or refutes the argument that the region is culturally dependent and indicates that the flow of information is now more equitable." Yet media-professionals in Latin America continue to struggle for national communication policies, of which Mexico and Cuba "are possibly the only Latin American countries that present a highly structured and regulated policy that includes the bureaucratic and legal tools for making their guidelines effective" (Orellana and Rodriguez 1984). On the other hand, U.S., communication policies, bear a strong foundation on *Freedom of the Press* concept, which by default is also applicable to Spanish-language media. The U.S. has had a love-hate history regarding Spanish, for *La Voz de America*, was built by the U.S. government to encourage Spanish-language broadcasting following Cold War geopolitics. Radical university students of the Latin American sixties labeled it "The Cold War Radio, the voice of the Alliance for Failure". The role of Radio Martí, expressly built to undermine Mr. Castro's regime in Cuba, is still a point of contention in the nineties! To measure its degree of obsession (is the Cold War over?) Radio Martí has, for example, a Department of Research.

Spanish, has a dynamic mechanism of itself and poses a challenge to the orthodox image of one nation, one-language phenomena. Never ending debates over the public use of Spanish triggers racialized opposing movements. The one-language, one nation Anglo-Saxon image continues to reject other languages that distort such a homogenous image, several of which—on their own—continue working as a means of concrete communication among lively cultures who share them. "The State, while remaining actively engaged in seeking to moderate and exploit the media institutions operating within it, is no longer in a position to assert its will" (Husband op cit 3). In this case, and almost stubbornly, we must say that culture *is a shared experience* as long

as the use of Spanish language persists. Without looking at intralinguistic differences, a more universalized spoken Spanish continues to create an oral space, allowing a de facto bilingual Spanish-English, English-Spanish culture (Valdés 1995: 25-42) that bargains its realm of influence on a daily basis. (Castañeda 1996: 201-214)

In 1989, Felix Gutierrez counted "500 Latino newspapers by 1984", and "more than 600 radio stations airing Spanish language programs by 1987". In 1990, John Downing in his article "Ethnic Minority Radio in the U.S." claims that "one major strand in the history of ethnic media in America has been their operation as lateral resistance media" (137) and observed that, "technically, there are no differences in the ways Latinos use media". The same author in his 1993 article "Spanish Media in the Greater NY Region during the 1980's", pays attention to Spanish. He acknowledges the continuous immigration from Puerto Rico as one determinant of language retention, although preference over English or Spanglish use is observed (1993:257-58). Downing, of course, seems unaware about the existence of other Spanish-subgroups-in the area, e.g. recent larger diasporic communities settled in New York that share Spanish as *lingua franca* (Dominicans, Mexicans, Puertoricans, South Americans). Criticism of Spanish-only media, however, seen from the perspective of Chicano/a authors, report on a trend that could be seen as "intra-discrimination" from the part of "Hispanic TV stations" who have gained popularity among Spanish speaking communities. Aguirre and Bustamante (writing in 1989) have been the first scholars who argue that: "The Spanish language TV industry, its programming and the standard Spanish used alienates Chicanos in so far as it is "neither linguistically nor culturally relevant to the Chicano audience". (1993: 128). They both, also state that Chicanos are not active participants in the programming aspects of Spanish-language TV in the U.S." (Ibid).

These recent studies, however, tend to situate themselves within stagnated considerations, as if cultures closely attached to the history of Spanish-use cannot, or are unable, to supersede daily frontiers. In fact, the history of displacement in recent decades has contributed to enhance language use, regardless of how that language helps, or undermines,

previous notions of cultural assimilation. With new debates related to cultural rights, or even residency, Spanish-language TV networks answer to cultural politics such as Proposition 187 and the role played by Spanish-language TV networks over Proposition 187 issues. Here, a mere means of communication that, by default, re-instituted language use before, suddenly also becomes politicized and racialized. After all, Univision, for example, is a conservative enterprise where Mexican as well as Miami-Cubans reflect concerns with respect to Mexican-Americans and Mexicans in the U.S, and by default Spanish. Here, the use of Spanish reveals a homogenous image of an on-going globalized world tied together through language. Technically, formats are patterned on English language programs, but the message comes out in Spanish. This twist has been labeled "American posturing", but it does not negotiate Spanish.

Carlos Cortes in his article "Power, Passivity, and Pluralism" (1993) advances media research by looking at the reaction Latino culture has about the "media curriculum" and the "pseudo environment" media constitutes. Cortes is aware about "the power of media" and how "it can distort the truth or reality, or provide coherence to a complex world" (19). He suggests a belief in a politically and cultural pluralistic society where Latinos are entitled to and able to assume a more assertive role, overcoming majority dominance and own passivity, inflicted or self-imposed.

Although, the reproduction of language has been reinforced by raising its status in the global village (e.g. the translation and broadcasting of particularly Latino-American soap operas in Russia, or Asia) due to access to technology in its diverse forms that simultaneously allows the reproduction of language and culture. This fact alone, globalizes a community that for the first time "shares" a culture, rather than atomizing itself into unrelated diasporas. It is not a coincidence that linguistic phobias against Spanish speakers, or communities of speakers, re-signifies opposing entities trying to articulate a discourse of fear of linguistic atomization (e.g. "English Only" movement). In this case, it seems that communication technologies seem to justify phenomenological diversity. But rather than producing tolerance or increasing democratic practices in dominant, or hegemonic countries such as the U.S. in relation to Latin America, fear

is expressed precisely because of unintended results which, in the case of Spanish, has meant a radical increase of spaces that it gives the impression that formerly English-only spaces are loosing. "One indicator of the strength of Hispanic media is the restraint of their English-language counterparts in servicing Hispanic viewers. The amount of Spanish-language programming on English-language stations has increased." (Foisie 1990:74)

New generations of speakers, not necessarily tuned to the history of Spanish in the U.S. ignore its subalternity, but ignorance of such history has helped, or at times, when acknowledged, reinforced the need to raise its status, or to maintain language competitiveness against the English monolingual public condemnation expressed in daily struggles over Spanish use. The experience of discriminated orality has been transformed into a transcommunal experience where, language i.e. Spanish, becomes an articulator that allows entering into areas otherwise distinguished by former nationalistic spaces, and even social class markers. Douglas Massey, a sociologist at University of Chicago, believes "the profoundly distinct nature of immigration under way now will change the process of assimilation itself, making Spanish all the more attractive in the long term. Unlike previous waves of immigration, the current wave is much more geographically and linguistically concentrated, with Spanish speakers accounting for almost 40 percent of all immigrants to the U.S. Large communities of Spanish speakers will emerge, lowering the economic and social costs of not speaking English and raising the benefits of speaking Spanish." (in Garza 1994:161)

Scholars that observe the current transnational phase of capitalism that universalizes and transnationalizes culture, are aware of its verticality and its atomizing effect on society. However, this cannot completely be applicable to the case of Spanish for we must consider a new kind of communication space that has been carved, and remains deeply carved. Thus the concept of "alternative communication" does not one have and agreed upon definition: "Marginal communication, group communication, popular communication, and horizontal communication are encompassed by the widest definition of alternative communication, which must refer as well to the relationship between alternative communication and the dominated:

the oppressed sectors of society at the national level, and the dominated countries at the international level" (Reyes Matta 1986:190). The spectrum provided by Spanish, nevertheless, supersedes the constraints of a simple "alternative communication" definition for, to a large extent, transnationalization and universalization (i.e. appropriation) of technology and culture, also means to abandon the "alternative communication" status, to become another viable system of communication that enforces a global image of Spanish speaking cultures, bringing it in horizontality vis-a-vis otherwise dominating languages, i.e. English.

The market phenomena, has also been redesigned by the visible "invisible hand" which, paradoxically, does not distinguish commodities and market regulations regarding Spanish, for it has been absorbed (or convinced) by the need to also commoditize it. An extreme example of this process has been recent incursion of pop icons singing in Spanish, The Three Tenors, Madonna, Nana Mouskari, Willie Nelson and the legendary Flaco Jimenez, Linda Ronstadt, Los Lobos). And, as such it needs to be integrated into the circuit of the transnational and universalizing current phase that it is known as globalization. A sample of this, is the Spanish-language translation of programs into other languages for cultures that need to be entertained with the expression of human cultural variety that indeed surpasses borders. If the TV series "Dallas" captivated Latin American cultures in the eighties, with the availability of communication technology, there is nothing to stop new generations of Latinos attuned to the future, to be able to jump into the cyberspace, and onto the global market, commoditizing Latino American culture as well. Little by little, communication allows horizontality, rather than verticality. This experience of communication in Spanish has orality and transcommunality as its main components.

Obviously, a parallel community of consumers of these same means exist. These do not constitute a new phenomena. What is new, is the fact that it exists in spite of a historical process of discrimination against the presence of Spanish within the borders of the U.S. El Paso Times publisher Tom Fenton told a group of Associated Press news executives in San Diego in 1990: "What we learned was extraordinary in the sense that the data collected told us

that some of the time-honored assumptions concerning Hispanics are false". (Stein 1990: 18) In the last twenty years, new generations of displaced Latin American inhabitants poured into the U.S. due to long-term militaristic regimes in countries that made life unbearable for a considerable number of individuals and families. Militaristic dictatorships, as well as left-oriented regimes, prompted by default the formation of diasporic communities within the U.S.. What is of relevance to this paper is the fact that displacement has meant also the migration of language, because this is the target population for business. As Melita Marie Garza states in her article "Hola, América": "In newspapers, as in condiments, demographics and dollars speak louder than words, no matter what the language. Between 1990 and 1993, the nation's Latino community gained more numbers than any other group, jumping from 22.4 million to 25.1 million...So it's little wonder that the major media developed a mania for the Spanish-language market." (1994:153)

Without taking a hard look at the politics of displacement (ie. the push and pull factors of migration) it , nevertheless, provided an image of a Latino America that was so subdivided into nationalistic feuds. The experience of exile and migration disrupted Latin American nationalism politicizing, at the same time, a redefinition of Latino America otherwise ruled by closed clasisms, racisms and nationalisms. True national diasporas were built, reproducing sometimes endogamy and endofocality, shortly to be troubled by the process of cultural assimilation of a second generation that opened up to the possibility of intermarrying and indeed becoming exogamous, and nuclear, going beyond diasporic and nationalistic identity and behavior. Language in this experience was reinforced by the criss-crossing of Spanish speakers, promoting the resurgence of language use, that connected to the retrieval of Spanish and culture by other groups that were working on ethnic and language identity. The Chicano/Latino interaction of the early seventies contributed to the Latinoamericanization of Chicanos (in the U.S. Southwest, and California), which at the same time contributed to the Chicanoization and Latinoization of Latin Americans, except in those areas where Spanish in the U.S. has ports of entrance other than Mexico (the Caribbean area). Both abandoned their closed diasporic

communities and were open to see themselves—ourselves—as part of a larger community open to share, revalue, and redefine some aspects of Latino culture now inevitable interacting among itself in Spanish. U.S. media, for example, throughout 1992 aired educational programs about "Hispanics" in the U.S., providing for the first time a comprehensive perspective of the extremely complex culture that has Spanish as its main commonality. That same year a subject that seemed incoherent, was coherently problematized by new researchers of Latino, and no longer only Chicano or Latin American, issues.

One of such aspects has been the insistent retrieval of Spanish by encroaching speakers beyond "the border", reaching by way of Spanish: "Little Havana", the Puerto Rican and Dominican communities of Brooklyn, Boston and Chicago, the Central American communities of Spanish speakers in the Latino Adams Morgan of Washington D.C., Maryland and New Jersey. The States of New Mexico, Arizona, Oregon and California each had and continued to receive their share of Spanish speakers, and great changes were experienced in the occupation of urban space. One has been the mejicano shift from the famous Mission District of San Francisco, where Central Americans entered to settle it. They also wake up to the tunes of Norteño conjuntos, "quebraditas", and salsa from El Caribe. Of course, new generations of Spanish-language speakers reinforce the linguistic practice of traditional mejicano settlers who trace their origins to the passing-by of Cabeza de Vaca at nowadays "the border" in Texas. This whole linguistic experience is jamming all airwaves with a same linguistic code: Spanish.

Likewise, and talking about markets, but not necessarily Human Rights it is already famous, Willie Nelson's recordings with Flaco Jiménez, both singing in Spanish, along with Little Joe and La Familia. Linda Ronstadt and even Madonna have recorded *en Español*. Yet, they have been following localized artists and speakers that keep renewing the language, carrying it on the *Corrido* traditions in the voice of *La Alondra de El Norte*, la malograda Selena, echoes that keep resounding in known areas of Mejicano/Chicano communities.

Talking of luminaries: Linda Ronstadt, Selena, Gloria Stefan, Gloria Trevi and their male counterparts (Juan Luis Guerra, Vicente Fernandez, Maldita Vecindad, Luis Miguel, Ruben

Blades and others), shaded of their "nationalisms", reinforce an already well rooted language that through unstoppable and uncontrollable waves enter the most distant and isolated community of Spanish speakers in the U.S. as well as Latin America making them relevant and tied to one history. At times, I think about other processes that in Latino America forced relevant cultural producers to fight against the pervasive presence of "imperialistic music" during the sixties, when nationalism and chauvinism was indirectly fed via militarism.

If movements such as *La Nueva Canción* and *Tropicalia*, (in Latin America) or the impact of *El Teatro Campesino* (in California), Puerto Rican *Areito* in New York, *El Centro de Arte* in Washington, D.C. or *Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center* in San Antonio (Texas), turned cultural guts inside out, soon they played a similar role, reinforcing spaces otherwise isolated in the experience of Latinos in the U.S. To this period we must look at as a space of redefinition; at the time it seemed marginal, but when one looked at the large picture, indeed a process of reinventing culture was happening, a culture that had language as a common thread. Latino-Americans ran to their backyards in order to retrieve what seemed to have been forgotten, the experience of the rural, marginal and exiles not so-marginal and not so-rural cultures, but above all Spanish speaking. And through an outstanding process, musicians and language brokers reintroduced cultural movements that found adherents in all Spanish speaking communities in the U.S., and opened a path in Anglo-Saxon U.S. to become reeducated about things *Latin*. If the 1940's Walt Disney's delusion of Latin America during the Cold War movie depicted in "South of the Border" suddenly came into being, today, but redefined, thrown together ("juntos", and "revueltos") sharing language and culture that met in the U.S. Likewise, the presence of Latin American intellectuals in the U.S. has contributed to enhance a closer relation with Anglo America, but also with Spanish speaking communities. Whereas in the 70's Octavio Paz, Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, would exclusively address university audiences, in the 90's, Carlos Fuentes, Eduardo Galeano, Elena Poniatowska, Carlos Monsiváis, Isabel Allende, and the emergent Latino and Latina writers, follow a Latin American tradition, closer to a lay public, speaking to them in Spanish, ... or in English.

Neither assimilation, pluralism, nor culture are static concepts. The concept of assimilation does not seem to be problematic from a Spanish-speaking perspective (that is an English discussion), and the nation-state cannot restrain linguistic overflow. Both oral as well as written Spanish (educated or not) are increasing, and market wise the future encompasses a de-facto bilingualism and intense population migration. The 'dual role perspective' of media studied by Battistelli (Op cit.), has relevance because it has found in the Hispanic media experience a viable example whose result is the enhancement of the Hispanic economic clout.

Nonetheless, this enhancement is not value-free. We must add, that this same process of linguistic assertiveness triggers 'modernist' backlashes. California, specifically, promoted the elimination of Affirmative Action because there is also a language in between, an important element that once more it challenges the concepts of assimilation and pluralism. Bilingual programs have at their core language, and because of the dismantling of Affirmative Action it is probable that such programs will disappear forcing "English only" policies on Spanish monolinguals, and/or bilingual and bicultural individuals. In any case, Spanish is, by default, in the middle of all this structural neoliberal racial rearrangement. When the "English Only" racist moorings in the U.S. push this anachronistic agenda it is directed at the Spanish language, and it should be read as "English Only, No Spanish". The impact is to be seen in the future⁴. In fact, language policies should read "English yes, but not only", or "Not only English spoken here". The geographical proximity of Spanish that now, economically and culturally, overlaps the US enhanced by NAFTA constitutes a new feature overlooked in the past. Spanish media business, and the commoditification of subordinated Spanish is at the core of a new concept that neoliberalism has labeled "Market Democracies". In the same direction Latin America (including Brazil) has made spaces where business in English is conducted 'as usual'. Yet, the Spanish media in the U.S. is insular, bented to answer the internal Latino market demands.

⁴ "Twenty-one states have recently acted to make English the official language, with most provisions being essentially symbolic". (Greenhouse 1996: A14). Yet, Greenhouse seems to underestimate the long lasting effects of the symbolism of rejection which in turn takes the English Official monolinguals to indirectly encourage acceptable language racialization of, in this case, Spanish.

In conclusion, there is evidence to make valid Suberbi-Velez's assertions stated in 1994: "Regardless of NAFTA, the media industries in the Americas and the communication flows between them are likely to expand through the next century. The demographic changes, and the profitability of media will continue to have numerous channels of communication directed especially to Latinos". What is downplayed in this succinct finding is that Spanish might well be the means that allows the expansion of flows Suberbi-Velez talks about, but we must make an effort to link language performance and its commoditification process with the promotion of speakers cultural rights by *deminoritizing* Spanish. In the U.S. Spanish has ceased to be a *foreign* language.

In this paper, I problematized the question of identity correlated with language use, but also with the racialization of Spanish within a dominant neoliberal Anglo-Saxon culture. Despite the fact that academic debates seem to have surmounted modernist discussions, Spanish in the U.S., incites hidden passions and brings back discussions regarding "one-language-one-nation" images, "militarization of the border", "neonationalism", and inspires race-baiting from English monolinguals. On the other hand, resurgence of Spanish and a new phenomena linked to *language identity* might well be an indirect answer to the on-going process of the neoliberal racial project instated by the so-called Reagan revolution that, unaware of the changing nature of U.S. society's ethnic composition, downplayed racial inequality and identity politics.

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