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Rethinking crisis and change

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Communication, citizenship and Lusophony: Rethinking difference*

By Margarita Ledo Andión

Abstract: After a frame defined by Policies of Diversity and cultural citizenship, this text expresses the pertinence of thinking about `lusophony' from a eurocentric content towards a plural and multicentric place as a new historical subject, as a space-project, where similar and diverse languages and cultures could build up a kind of `Transnational Imagined Community' by the way of sharing cultural goods and knowledge. Exploring differences throughout a intercultural process, Communication would be a key element in the rebuilding of a geo-linguistic area like an active pace within mundialization.

I'm very pleased for the opportunity the organisers gave me to take part in this session and share with the colleagues some arising concepts over a new scenario, the lusophone geo-linguistic area, defined by different countries and communities around the world – from Galicia to East-Timor – who are sharing languages belonging to the same linguistic system. A scenario where communication and citizenship are not a result but an agent to develop a real and virtual space for cultural interaction or, in Eduardo Lourenço's terms, for an *imaginary of plurality and difference.*

Our approach towards and beyond Lusophony lies, on the one hand, on a kind of «Imagined linkage» after Anderson's well-known analysis of *Imagined Communities* as a result of sharing messages and rituals. In this sense, one of the main features in the development of any identity sign, even theoretical, is the exchange of cultural goods and knowledge.

On the other hand, according to the last UNESCO's report (2009), effective diversity policies are interwoven with rights and warranties for linguistic diversity. Furthermore, we are attending to a great transformation within old established territories whose first manifestation is the importance of languages as identity markers to highlight new scenery, the so-called geo-linguistic areas, as the place where exchanges of goods, ideas, and social and cultural transformations can become a relevant aspect of an actual transnational public sphere.

* Translated from the Galician language by Amanda Paz Alencar. Except the notes in the English language, the other ones were adapted from the original languages.

Perhaps the first thing that needs to be done is to search for a workable definition for this word-project, Lusophony, which matches the exchange of research practice - both basic and applied- among different realities, with the reflection and the development of certain modalities of thought in the midst of the contemporaneous communication, a kind of thought which will be recognized around some tangible elements, the linguistic link, actually, but mainly, the ones which will be used to build up this space-project inside a scenery where its cause is not in the historical past but in the course of the globalization and in the place it will occupy in regard with Power.

We are speaking, we know this, about an uncertain and complex space and about many of the notations that at this moment were arising, and we will have to go back.

Besides, the complexity of the lusophone space implies that this is a place where the socio-political and symbolic aspects are not comparable from country to country. Neither we are up to go for a confusing common imaginary, nor we want to hinder this huge cartography to trigger new forms of relation, namely using technology for the development of a new historiacl subject. Having in mind the authors who put forward Castells' ideas of language(s) as tight rope to serve as border sign, we can find it in other areas, namely in the Ibero-american, but also in the recovery of communication role into a hypothetical and globalized public sphere, front of the world domination on the part of an elite without law and land that at the same time takes with themselves the catastrophic mark.

We shall get ahead, in the text, what might be an argued conclusion and we do it to compel ourselves to take a stand over a first idea, the equality one, which although is always formally accepted, does not often appear reflected in the exchange programs, not even in the philosophy about which it supports, for example, and in the scope which represents us, the communication for the development, one of the axis that organizes the map of relationships among different actors who embody this ideologeme which we subsume in the Lusophony.

Because, as far as I am concerned, and beyond the multiple interpretations that from the communication and according to the aims of whom puts him/herself to read, may have Anderson's text, by making us take into account both the novels' and newspapers' structure as technical provided forms to `re-present the kind of imagined community which is the nation (Anderson, 1983: 25) and taking us, in the present, towards the content production, with image and sound, for the network and other circuits of access, consumption, reception, and appropria-

tion, we must not forget that in the collective memory of the nation lives, at the same way, the idea of popular sovereignty – against the monarchy that emanated from God – and, mainly because we imagine it as a community «because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship» (Anderson, 1983: 7).

We shall backtrack, now, to the terminological and conceptual resources of a moving binomial that had been presenting and that in somewhere we present it as space-project to approach it to the debate which calls us. It deals with the contributions following Stuart Hall's and his concern over the identities in formation, but mainly, from Manuel Castells, that have been elaborated since 1990 by the Catalan researcher Rodrigo Alsina about the identity issue plus the so important and productive criticism which in 1999 is made about Castell's by Joan Manuel Tresserras. And it also deals with the reformulation that, from the Cultural Studies inner perspective as seminal school, has been accomplished in regard with the identities in formation previously mentioned (and as a reply to the exclusion strategies) and the role played by the contemporaneous migrations and diasporas not only in the construction of new paradigms but also in Kevin Robins's proposals or, as sheltered by the ultimate generation, in the communicologist Tristan Mattelart'work.

To distinguish from a culture's identity , which would refer to their own characteristics, to cultural identity as «characteristics which are assigned to a person or to a collective in order to make him/her feel part of a certain culture» is one of the quite useful conceptual clearcutnesses that Rodrigo Alsina (2000: 81) uses to anchor identity as a dialectic relation of this 'I do not exist without the other'. Herewith, by approaching Castells (1998: 394) and his hypothesis over our time as the dissolution of the societies since 'significative social system, professor Alsina allows himself to call upon the purpose which Berger and Luckmann (1997: 122) elaborate about the different levels of the production, transmission, and reception research (1997: 122), to wind up in the intermediate institutions as those ones that could establish ties between the `great institutions and the communities, and also the individuals.

Leading its course to Lusophony, or, nowadays, to Lusocom, the Federation of Communication Associations of Angola, Brasil, Galiza, Guiné Bissau, Mozambique, and Portugal would represent one of these 'intermediate institutions' requested to add up this dialectic – and even the possibility of resistance in the network society – where it comes the 'I' , (every association, every society, every his-

torical subject); the 'we' (the lusophone space as new subject) and the others. An idea that leads us towards this knot, the identity-project one, over the one which has developed, namely from Catalunya and also Galicia in the Spanish case, a very significant corpus of contemporaneous debate. It quotes, thus, Castells on the «new historical subjects» and on what this author has anticipated in perhaps one of the most influent aspects in the first volume of his work `The Information Era' which he has precisely entitled 'The identity power' (1998: 89-90): The new identities-project probably do not arise from the ancient identities of the civil society in the industrial era but from the development of the identities of current resistance.

It is not too much to remind that the lusophone space would represent the linked ancient and contemporaneous identities, mostly, of a space that is what it is for being an identity-project.

About the excluding identity, what Jean-Marie Benoist (1987: 15) calls disconnected singularity front the little respectful globalizing unit with the differences, Rodrigo (2000: 97) leaves us this auspicious definition: «If the personal identity arises, basically, from the culture in which we were socialized, the cultural identity is established through the belonging sense to a community of certain characteristics» to vassal with something that would fit like a glove to the lusophony, the proposal of the «right to resemblance» that takes from Hassanain, the resemblance not with the own belonging group but with the other cultural groups, reclaiming, in return, the differences in the own society.

With the support of this long decade of identity thought in the field of communication we will bring out the critical interpretation of the researcher's influential contribution, also Catalan, thrust in Berkley, punctuated by another author, in this case, by the current minister of culture of Generalitat, the professor Tresserras, whom in a memorable work «The restructured capitalism: the information era according to Manuel» collects his contributions about the national act, in this case Catalan presents it as an organized cultural community since the historical partition, in a territory and round about one language, to conclude «Catalunya is not an imagined entity but a historical product constantly renewed» (1999: 155). From the representation of network society not as post-industrial but as of industrial enhancement nucleated by the information processing and the preponderances of the industries of the knowledge and culture sector, the rearrangement issue of the historical subjects or the formation of new subjects comprises, according to the Catalan researcher, all its value and leads us towards the culture, the social construction of sense and the social actions.

On this trail, we place the construction of the lusophone space as part of a new way of belonging, focusing on the idea of cultural citizenship, which would allow us to establish a framework for the public sphere as a non-melancholic-space of equality, of the non-similar equality, as an hybrid space, that is, plural.

It is expected that cultures – with particular focus on the Latin-American ones – recognize themselves as hybrid cultures or, in other words, as inclusive ones. There is a process of self-recognition as well as of a set up by the indigenous cultures and the new technologies through different forms of production and consumption, nationally and abroad. In this context, one optimistic author, García Canclini expects «the globalization to be in charge of the imaginaries with which it works and of the interculturality which it mobilizes». It's Canclini of *La Globalización Imaginada* (*The Imagined Globalization)*, work in which already appear the items that will be developed in 'Different, unequal, and disconnected ones' where the reality will lead him towards positions such as the ones which he had transported only two years to the foundation congress of the Spanish Association in Communication Research, which took place in Santiago de Compostela. Néstor García Canclini then gave the opening lecture «Acknowledgement, knowledge, and information Society» where he claimed/stated:

> «The gap between central and outskirt societies has always been analysed. Notwithstanding, there might be a more complex comprehension over the social and cultural meaning of these processes, not as simple polarization to conceive politics in a different way».

Establishing the dominant paradigm of informational connectivity for the first definition, information society, and a certain relativism which leads to disguise the distinctiveness in verb differences of the second one, knowledge society, he places the knowledge society to be in tune with the proposal of which he titles «intercultural consensus», of which not only both the information and the knowledge but also the globalization and the digital convergence would take part as conditionings, to imagine a passage from the reductionist information society to a knowledge society which, considering the challenges of the interculturality, it also gets to be an acknowledgement society.

At this point, it seems relevant to remind Hector Díaz-Polanco's words in «Tesis sobre la diversidad, identidad y globalización». The author mentions a belonging desire to a complex context according to which the more it develops the more it

transforms the cultures and the identities that makes it exist, and adopts a critical position front the culturalist ideology which uses and makes the diversity visible to unpoliticise all the rest, including information and communities.

The destruction through the absolute denial or the other communities' violent attack is not aimed but its gradual dissolution through the attraction, the seduction, and the transformation (...) the ethnographic project is carried on while the power «shows respect or `indifference against the diversity, or even while it `praises the indigenous values (....) it encourages the participation» (the «collaborative» politics are in vogue since the eighties) of the ethnic groups members, intending even a greater number of these ones to become promoters of the integration «by their own wish». The Indian directors are not prepared to be indigenous intellectuals but ideologists and agents of the new indigenous practices. This is a strategy which operates with the tactic of the fifth column.

Taking into account Kevin Robins's position on cultural citizenship, Lusophony seems to be very representative of certain practices of 'deterritorialization' that come with the disappearance of the nation-state, particularly in Europe, to put in value the processes of 'citizenship in act' as Jacques Rancière claims. So to speak, home and abroad, there is a new kind of movements, flux, and links that are defining new ways of thinking social and cultural policies. As a consequence, a discourse of plural belonging, as the Lusophony, is not contradictory at all with the notation of emerging and even conventional citizenship.

In the vanishing line of new maps, there are other acts and rules of the game for common aims. These aims share the common ground of communication, which has to consider the role to play in the necessary transformations towards what we can call `imagined citizenship'.

Maybe the first thing to do is to check the applicability of that early indication of Raymond Williams regarding the words that had changed their meaning over the last decades. In this vein, a word like Lusophony is changing its meaning from a Eurocentric content towards thinking it as a plural and multi-centric place.

A second aspect to bear in mind is that the Web Generation is more open to linguistic diversity than previous ones.

Thirdly, seeking for an active debate, we should avoid neither conflict nor analysis of some latent ideas. In this context, I'm thinking about the importance of the linguistic policies as policies of representation.

If, as we can see, one of the concerns of the contemporaneous research is the deconstruction of the traditional concepts of national identity and culture, in rela-

tion with the modern State and with its colonial expansion, and which it is stretched until the denominated First World War to return in the confrontation of 1939-1945, and afterwards, to be radically retorted by the critical thought from which emerges a school, the Cultural Studies', that will turn the eyes towards ourselves, towards the media and the reality they work out and towards the new cultural objects as invisible subjects (the labourer class), since the end of the eighties, when the postmodern fever is gone, another return to the Cultural Studies, the dilemma of the research public role is exposed and the "migrations" variable is systematically introduced in the makeup of the aforementioned national cultures to place as an element of rupture the Antillean Paul Gilroy's work «There Ain't No Blanck in the Union Jack» and his criticism upon the exclusion of the others in the British culture, borrowing the consign strength from the polysemy and Anderson's definition that cannot be bypassed, by saying: The niggers are represented in the British contemporaneous cultural and political life as outsiders and foreigners to the imagined community which is the nation (1987: 153) and that, in our case, would approach us, for instance, to the Galician people in Argentinean culture, also, for many times, considered foreigners.

In studying the cultures since the diaspora, Gilroy leads us from the territory as cultural belonging to the culture as a result of the transnational and intercultural encounter, and adjusts it with a new consign, the culture's that goes from `roots to `route , the culture's as a trip towards somewhere from which the «Milky way» is a fruitful and immaterial proof of existence in action, with an aggregation, right towards us, that «roots» and «route» are part of a same process, now intercultural and not of replacement and where the infinite legate and actuality of one Stuart Hall that rethinks the cultural relations in a time of globalization, and the questions of the hybridity stay on and pollinate in an endlessness of spaces, set of themes, and research objects and reasons.

We are entering this scope from the position of someone who makes it relative until the extreme role of the constants, Tristán Mattelart, according to whom the contemporaneous identities and cultures are submitted to a permanent redefinition and by deepening in the crossing between the Anthropology and Cultural Studies the circulation role of the populations is fixed on the images and the sounds, to prepare us for another part of the trip, the one which goes from the "static borders" to transnational belongings.

Taking a stroll in the core of this way of thinking towards a scenery still looking for its meaning as the lusophony's, and with eyes on the communication and

cultural role, it points out that this space-project could be a place both for a theoretical debate and the proposal application which cross the research, the politics and the nets with citizen and group movements. But, once again, the exhibiting facility does not match the complexity of the real. Here is the field to till.

And one of the notations that could not be apart from the field in speaking of transnational belongings is the Diaspora. In its academic definition, the term is applied, mainly, «to people, with or without State, in which the century traditions, that is, millenary, of migration, have not affected the permanence of a collective conscience based on entails with history, land and religion» (Dufoix, 2003: 26-43). Picking as an example the analysis of the European case and, in particular, the documents of the European Council «In front the Margins (1997)» and the «Declaration on cultural diversity» – a basic text to evaluate the cultural exchange as a condition for the development of new representative products of the creative industry –, beyond market reasons, it is Kevin Robins who points out the increasing conscience of the cultural dimension of the citizenship and the diversity even influencing, crucially, on a new discourse about the `cultural rights and the recognition of the culture in the politics life. Thus, this researcher clearly focus on paying attention to the emergency of what he titles transnational diversity: «Cultures are giving way to transcultures, and cultural diversity is increasingly a transnational matter. For many people now, the national cultural space is too circumscribed, and they express the wish to participate in different cultural spaces within (and beyond) Europe» (2008: 251).

That's in these appraisals where we find the echoes that in claiming a transnational cultural politics – with scopes of procedures that go through the state – they will be building a new paradigm and at the same time a potential transnational public sphere in which is inserted a different way of thinking the lusophone project, also beyond strictly commercial reasons. Because there are too many indicators which motivate to think the lusophony as a new historical subject who is defined by interculturalism**,** inner diversity and by a key element: the communication of knowledge and symbolic production and its starting out as piece of learning for a multiple and different citizenship.

Our position is not too far, as you can see, from Kevin Robins' way of thinking about the cultural politics. Considering his observational geography, this author reaches the conclusion he plans about them – and about the social politics – which designates a new type of transnational movements, flows and connections towards Europe, and this fact leads him to rethink the cultural diversity and iden-

tity, to look for certain signs, which he titles innovative vital spaces, transnational operatively, and to speak about *transcultural diversity*, a reality where there's no use for a panoramic, unique discourse, a new place that claims a new way of thinking about cultural policies as an issue of multiple belongings.

Remarking the centrality of the intercultural dialogue, also Isabel Pires de Lima, professor of the University of Porto and former Minister of Culture in the Portuguese Govern (2005-2008), remarked the centrality of the intercultural dialogue at the end of the conference at the Galician Council of Culture on June 17, 2010, to see the Culture as a place beyond policies, where «ideas and movements that change the societies are developed»; social, «because that's in the Culture where the people find their identities» and more economic, regarding it with the creator resource of the innovation, insisted on the function of the Culture not only to know but to interpret and reveal the communication codes of the Other turning him/her into an interlocutor. «The diplomacy recognizes it – she added – and transforms the Culture today into one of the most active pillars in the foreign politics. This is another space of opportunities for the culture, which is already openly designated as cultural diplomacy».

This is a concern that flourished in another place of multiple belongings. We refer to UNESCO and the concerns evidenced by the recommendations of the last Report on Cultural Diversity. From that comes the creation of an Observatory which evaluates the repercussions of the globalization over the diversity, the support to both the webs and initiatives of intercultural dialogues and the creation of virtual and real spaces with means that ease both in the cultural interaction and in the furtherance of the «cultural sensibility» in the production and consumption of the communication contents, until the application of national linguistic policies to protect the linguistic diversity. In this sense, we want to do a small memory exercise:

The General Assembly this afternoon, recognizing that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, proclaimed in 2008, the International Year of Languages.

As a preceding occurrence to this change in the language, in the way of thinking and in the style through which United Nations recognize it in languages and their function not only as a result of the cultural and social bond but as operators of the diversity, a builder role of the international comprehension, we have to focus on the preamble of Declaration of Linguistic Rights of UNESCO (Barcelona, 1996) and its insistence on the fact that the increasing globalization of the economy

directly affects the world of communication and culture and influences the forms of interaction that guarantee the cohesion of the different linguistic communities at the same time that warns against the threatening that are fixed in the centre of these same communities which, with limited or disperse demography, without self-government, submitted to the economical precariousness, will see their capacity reduced to carry out the right to communication in a globalized society.

Ten years later, the diagnosis is confirmed and leads to declare 2008 as the «International Year of the Languages» to alert us from what implies the lost of diversity. Among this situation it was throbbed certain confidence about achieving another change, the one related to the social use of the technologies, to develop webs which contribute to the strengthening of new communicative flows and wind up threading the cultural, the identity and the economical into the same organization which, by its turn, takes part of such knowledge and acknowledgement society.

The net, as a link to scattered societies; the net as a new formulation to relate some societies to others; the technological net as means for certain purposes, which must be defined, as the construction of space-projects.

To build up the diversity... What are we talking about? About something conceived? Perhaps only in a certain monumental-patrimonial perspective which is not the dominant entrance that we will be interested in elaborating. Otherwise, we are entering the diversity as the core which organizes the relation among cultures, as the scenery for the exchange relations – of people, of goods, of news, of knowledge proposals, of projects –, and we are considering identity as an operator in the history, avoiding the relativization that still remains in some of the positions previously mentioned. We understand (the difference) as a constituent factor of the collective subject previously said which is the *comunitas*, which are the societies, which are the geo-linguistic areas as a space – readable and recognizable –; as an ensign of the contemporaneous world.

From here and on, the identity/diversity will be a political category that has to do with the democracy, with the collective rights, with the government, with the otherness, with the struggle against the exclusion, in sum, with citizenship. Economical category, the identity will have to do with diversity production, with cultural industry – with this or another denomination –, with the access to information/formation, creation, diffusion, and reception media and supports.

As an aim, not as something conceived, the construction of a new imaginary over the idea of lusophony would need to take off part of this reductionist historical background – that one which only identifies it with Portugal – to be placed, says professor Eni Orlandi (2009: 222), as standing up for the differences:

> We speak differently. The relationships among our languages arise an intricate frame of distinctions and changes. And this is our current linguistic reality. There's no homogeneous unit which can be called lusophony. This can be the excuse for us to understand ourselves in our singularities. Instead of working an imaginary of linguistic unit which is the colonization inheritance, we'd better make up our concrete differences in the sense of enriching our relationships.

We take this suggesting quote of the genealogical course elaborated by Professor Faraco in the text presented in the First International Symposium ECOLINGUA, in the city of Vigo (Galiza), December 2009, in which he analyses the reasons for the lacking international projection of the lusophony concerning the dilemmas and contradictions that its update represents, and in which Professor of Portuguese Language at the Federal University of Paraná stands up for breaking the limits that were formerly imposed by the political frontiers, «in a happy denomination of the lusophony as multicentric and heterogeneous that, as we have quoted, must include all the cultural-linguistic communities departed from the ancient Galician-Portuguese Romanic nucleus». And here they include Galiza in the eight countries which have the portuguese language as official language, the Special Administrative Region of Macau (integrating part of the Popular Republic of China since 1999), as remaining communities of the Portuguese colonialism in the route of Asia, as in Goa (India) and Malaca (in Malasia) which maintain the lusophone populations, the communities of the ancient portuguese occupation as in the North of Uruguay, the communities of galician, portuguese, brazilian, african, and asian immigrants (the so-called «lusophone diaspora») that is expressive in various places in the world.

Other authors think similarly when speaking about the concept os Lusophony. The philosopher Eduardo Lourenço (1999: 124) appears as background who, after arguing that nothing can be designated as culture or lusophone community, sees as a possibility

> what comes from the imagining that this wide mantle of a common language, referent of similar or diverse cultures, is, in spite or because of its variety, that ideal space where they communicate and recognize themselves in their particularity shared all who the history had approached by chance.

It seems, then, necessary, to check out the positions of different linguists, beginning with professor Faraco's exact position:

> «The Galician can fulfil an important role in the lusophony , as far as it contributes to build up a new conception over this word, more democratic, decisively polycentric, horizontal, and centrifugal» (Faraco, 2009: 4).

This consideration - quoted by Xoán Lagares, Professor of the Fluminense Federal University -, arises from a long reflection over a historical course tagged by the lost of the Galician visibility. It is the idea of being «the oldest peninsular romance» or, as points out F. Venâncio, Professor of the University of Amsterdam, before adressing a pratical proposal, as something having «a great contact of the Galician people with the idiom of Brazil and Portugal (in books, audiovisual, music, films and, obviously, the inter-personal companionship» (2010: 104). Due to the lost of the political power of Galiza, the establishment of frontiers – and their role in the normative centres – besides what the previously said implies in the symbolic representation of the languages, in the distortion of the exact linguistic studies and the determination about the imaginary -in as we see ourselves, in as we make the other see- the result was the reduction of the language in Galiza «and the virtual inexistence of the galician to the most portuguese speakers are not different phenomena but two dimensions of the same phenomenon», explained Professor Lagares, to afterwards evaluate the critical stream and the new visions which in Brazil changed the entrances in the wide scope of the linguistic and that has brought to the academic world a rediscovery process of the galician.

Now, taking into account the great authority of the professor of the University of Lisbon, Ivo Castro whom explains in regard to the origins of the Portuguese: It was not born, as Alexandro Herculano and Leite de Vasconcelos thought, in the centre of Portugal; it is not a language which comes from the lusitan latin but from the galician. Thus, it is fair to conceive it as the symbolic origin of Santiago de Compostela, he makes a critical trip through the lusophony as a concept, concluding, also with Eduardo Lourenço, that the real is «uma comunidade que tem como único elo incontornável a língua» (1999: 171).

The Galician academic and director of the ILGA, Professor Rosario Alvarez Blanco, in dialogue with the previously said, placing herself «in the only acceptable lusophony so that Galicia and the Galician can be partners: the one which integrates and respects identities, the one which evaluates in a positive way the capital of difference...». She finishes by asking: Does it exist? We suppose so or that it can be built, but even this way, the problems which are shown to us are not few.

Beyond a certain cordial pessimism that is vanished from professor Alvarez Blanco's analysis, it might be the moment for the communication studies to the witness, with the language(s) as the link as well as the culture constituent through the book, the newspaper, the products for the net, the songs, the movies...- for a general rehearsal of this multicentric space-project.

Now, I will do a symptomatic approach to the Galician case, departing from this quotation taken from Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997: 33-51):

> [But] if we question a pre-given world of separate and discrete "peoples and cultures," and see instead a difference-producing set of relations. We turn from a project of juxtaposing preexisting differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process.

The Galician culture, the concrete frame in which I will embody these reflections is the culture as constituent of the public space, this political place where we show ourselves as collective and citizen subjects, there where the equality is an ontologic principle. As any social construction in the history, it is a palimpsest, since it is composed by symptoms, by ruptures, by denials (the enactment of `tame and castration in the Galician Kingdom which is applied by the Catholic Kings) and since the middle of the Nineteenth century, following the popular sovereignty principles, of what is known as Renascence. In this sense, and since its origins, one of the elements which distinguishes and represents it, from the celebration to resistance and until the normalization programs, is the Galician language.

If we write, sing, film... If we consider intercultural communication as the exchange of goods that portray us as diverse societies, the visible aim will be therefore to make ourselves visible through communication products in the Lusophony. At the time, the development of this common market makes sense of the Lusophony itself, bearing into mind that, for good or evil, we are immersed in a significant aspect of the globalization process. Following the Colombian Professor and expert in cultural policy German Rey, «Communication is both a stimulus and a global society's construction place».

Taking for granted the basic communicative function of language, I consider here its identity value together with the hypothetical increase of circulation and consumption of cultural products that a near common language can promote, even considering the paradox that there aren't nowadays indicators to measure these values.

Because this is the state of play, it seems interesting to talk about a research in progress right now in the USC that aims to discover the barriers that operate in the circulation of cultural goods, especially for the quite unknown Galician audiovisual production, within the arena of new ways of consumption in the network society.

The project, `Lusofonía: interactividade e interculturalidade , into the frame of a I+D+I programme, will complete the study on barriers -not just linguistic but anthropological or related to communication policies- that slow down the accessibility and the exchange of cultural production into the Lusophony geo-linguistic area.

In the operational level, this research is articulated around an online platform and a programme thought up for this specific aim, a tool that allows interaction of users with samples classified following categories of analysis.

The project attempts to bring new data about comprehension and understanding of Galician as a language and as a culture in a reception study. The `others' who look at us are groups of 15 students, of different gender, age and educational level, from four Portuguese-speaking universities: Universidade da Beira Interior (Portugal), Pontificia Universidade Católica de Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), Universidade Federal da Bahia (Brazil), and a control group from Guinea-Bissau. Taken for granted the historical and institutional reality of the Galiza-Norte de Portugal Euroregion, it is also important to stress that 65% of the Spanish emigration to Brazil is constituted of Galician people.

In short, the reception groups of each university had to watch and analyse extracts from eight audiovisual productions through a specifically created online platform. These productions were a selection taken from Galician cinema fiction and documentaries, animation films and television drama.

Although research is not closed, we count with some rough data that could be of interest for different disciplines. I focus here in four questions of the questionnaire answered by the students:

1. Considering the concept of Lusophony: did you know or use this concept? Did your perception of the term changed while participating in this research? We went further on the relation of Galiza with Lusophony in the case of students who had more knowledge about the topic.
2. Problems in language comprehension: we asked students which films were easier or more difficult to understand in terms of language.

3. Preferences as audience: which were the preferred samples? Which were the most disliked?
4. Need for subtitling or dubbing to show these products to audiences in their countries.

Considering the different ways the term was used and understood, the aim was to elaborate a workable defenition. As a provisional conclusion, I highlight here the relation of the participants of the research with the term Lusophony: Brazilian students showed a general ignorance of its meaning, while in Guinea-Bissau its knowledge was mediated by a certain distrust ruled by the colonial experience. Portuguese participants knew the term but didn't consider Galiza part of Lusophony. Venturing a conclusion, this lack of connection between Lusophony and Galiza could be traced in the so called `myth of origin' of Portuguese language

As the philologist of Universidade Fluminense Xoan Lagares sustain in coincidence for example, with Rosa Virginia Mattos e Silva, `in historical linguistics and philology , disciplines that become hegemonic precisely on nineteenth century, there is an ideological compromise with the processes for the national construction of bourgeois liberalism. By means of this compromise, research about the origin of the language serve for the delimitation of what is understood as national language. In the case of Portuguese, we can perceive that there is a resistance in recognising the role of Galician in the history of the language. Maybe that is the reason why medieval language is known in Brazil as `Archaic Portuguese'.

This research could also provide wider conclusions. It brought the discovery of a close-far `other', Galicia and Galician language in this case, the non problematic share of linguistic varieties, and the interest for everything inside this long and diverse space that we call Lusophony.

Other conclusion of the research, this time positive, is the interest that Galician productions arose in the Brazilian groups, although some students were unable `to place Galicia in the map . It's also valuable the high degree of cultural familiarity for all the reception groups of these products and some difficulties for linguistic comprehension particularly clear in vocabulary, speed of speech and, in a lower level, phonetic differences, which recommend the use of subtitles or dubbing.

In the process of this intercultural research we could also happily recognise something as the character of a Guimarães Rosa' s tale, *Primeiras Estórias*, said: what wasn't, happened (*Aquilo que não havia, acontecia*).

And what is going on, in our point of view, is the setup of a possible model from this new historical subject, the lusophone space, where language, cultural codes and production of goods connect us and take with themselves an operator, an identity vector and the result of different historical experiences, which puts in doub the non-existence of a transnational public sphere.

The «public sphere" is therefore hardly "public" – argue Gupta and Fergunson (1997: 15) – with respect to control over the representations that are circulated in it», and warn off the danger to use the irruption in scene of cultural flows from the outskirts to disguise «the powerful political issues associated with Western global hegemony».

While I was writing this text and while I was getting to know about its unfinished side, about its function as Brecht's `piece of apprenticeship , a thought always hung around my mind, what Freud calls this unsettling uncanny which speaks about yourself-as-other. Getting closer to the end, in reviewing the seminal text «Beyond 'Culture'», with which I want to finish, that's where I found the invitation to explore the cultural difference, specially in the most familiar one, an invitation that Homi Bhabha had made to us in *Emergences* in warning that is in this borderline where «the problem of cultural difference is ourselves-as-others, others-as-ourselves» (Gupta and Fergunson: 1997: 15). It is in this borderline that the Galician researchers place lusophony.

Long life to this new space-project.

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