

CREOLES, DIASPORAS AND COSMOPOLITANISMS

THE CREOLIZATION OF NATIONS,
CULTURAL MIGRATIONS, GLOBAL
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

DAVID GALLAGHER

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14. RE-IMAGING THE CONCEPT OF BORDER

Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz (UACM Ciudad de Mexico)

The idea behind the configuration of such a model based on comparative studies lies in the possibility of isolating a formal aesthetics in the border narratives (taking into account the discourses as well as narratives on the social and literary subjects) bringing to the front the ‘social imaginary’ of people on both sides of the border.³⁷³ From a cultural point of view and its relevant concepts (migration, minority, identity, representation, etc.), basing my research principally on power relationships (dominion and exclusion), other aspects of the relationship between borders subjects also come to light.

My research hypothesis consists of de-constructing the dichotomies which are integral to the concept of borders and which has inhibited research and solutions which could clarify the real needs of subjects who cohabitatem border regions. I have placed an epistemological emphasis on the border relationship within/ and from the specific realities of the subjects living at borders.³⁷⁴

In order to proceed I need to de-construct five cultural phenomena (they are not exclusive) which are the result of a ‘premature normative state’. The term belongs to Seyla Benhabib and it is defined as ‘the expedited reiteration of group identities, the failure to question cultural identities and the omission of these in

the historical and sociological literature dominated by the constructivist methodology'.³⁷⁵ This theme also applies to the conformation of the cultural identity of the subjects who inhabit the US-Mexican border. The cultural phenomena I am interested in analyzing consist of:

1. the process of conformation of a cultural identity of the people who inhabit the border (Mexicans from the northern states; migrants; Chicanos; Mexican-Americans)
2. the way they represent themselves (particularly in literature)
3. the type of socio cultural and power relationships which they establish on both sides
4. the language they use in order to refer to themselves and the other
5. the conformation of sub cultures which are seen on the political borders (for example, on the US Mexican border we can distinguish a *maquila* subculture).³⁷⁶

Taking into account these elements I have divided this paper into three parts: the first is about the socio cultural relationships and power relations, which are established at the border. The second deals with the self representation, in the literature, of the border inhabitants. The third deals with de-constructing the interdiction of language at the border, not only based on literature but also on the cultural identity of the border subjects.

How does the process of becoming a border subject imprint itself in the creation of a literary subject? Etymologically the word 'subject' comes from *subjectus* (*subjicere*) which implies submission, subordination, and subjection; a subject then responds to the authority of the one who names him as such and his actions implicate subordination. Nonetheless this definition of a subject is lacking since, as seen in the actions of the Mexican-Americans, subordination is a process or state which can be reversed.³⁷⁷ The Mexican-American subject is aware of his subordinate role *vis à vis* the American community and the pressure it exerts on him to acculturate; but he also fights it through different processes of integration-

adaptation which include the juxtaposition of two cultures (the Mexican and the American). The same happens with trans-border subjects: they are part of a Mexican culture but as border citizens of a border region they are subjects that must also create for themselves another culture or subculture.³⁷⁸ The border subject moves in the realm of the power that subordinates him and allows him in return certain margins for actions and autonomy in order to construct a conscious ‘functional dependency’ to that power.

This was prevalent in the passive resistance which the Mexican migrants exhibited towards the American community during the middle of the past century. This changed when the Chicano Movement came into force and the Mexican-American community gained presence and influenced political decisions. Today this type of subordination has been reverted and the Mexican-American community is empowered and has become a true political force.³⁷⁹

The Mexican-American subjects and the trans-border subjects, like many other subjects in history, have found in literacy a way of giving meaning to existence because it allows them to de-construct decolonial, macho, Eurocentric discourse. It is also a way to self expression and a way to be heard. Nonetheless, for centuries, the subject was only a concept imported from other disciplines like philosophy or psychology; in some cases the concept of a subject had only the status of the ‘inspired’, ‘genius’, ‘original’ or ‘creator of a work of art’.

During the sixties some thinkers, like Lacan or Foucault, basing their theories on Freud or Heidegger, begin to conceptualize the subject as ‘a systematic component of literary theory’,³⁸⁰ focusing on the corporal subject, the receptor of worldly sensations, the body that motivates literacy and cultural activity. The subject, since then, acquired the characteristic of mediator and translator of reality through literature since ‘reflection and sublimation initiate within and by the dynamics that occurs between the subject and the world’.³⁸¹ That is, the social subject is immersed in various social networks and narrative networks (family discourses, social imaginary discourses) through which he

represents his culture.

One of these networks, specifically, is literature. The literary subject (call him a writer or story teller or actant) also moves within the power relations, which constitute and subordinates him. The writer is subordinated to the power of the discourse that constitutes him; the storyteller is constituted by the point of view of the writer and the actant by the plot's actions. In any of these instances the subject 'becomes a sign, in a realm where other signs appear – and make themselves felt'.³⁸² In literature the subject plays the role of the 'begetter of reality' by transmitting messages whose content is generally idiosyncratic because the subject struggles with what is real and what is not. For the literary subject, then, 'reality is not a dialogue' since reality as such cannot be transcribed, so he proceeds to transform it into a discourse. A discourse that on one side constitutes the subject as social being and, because of the form it takes, it also differentiates him. He is a subject that is cause and effect at the same time. The discourse of the literary subject is known as a narrative since it functions as 'a complex language device which gives form to narratives, discourses and dialogues', with indications to the social or literary role of the subject within his community.³⁸³

To distinguish between the context and theme chosen by the subject in the literary work it is indispensable that we isolate it as a border literature and make a comparative analysis between Chicano literature and border literature. The context of the subject consists of the subject as 'author-creator' who composes an 'axiological coherent universe which is referable to a subjective context in cognitive expansion'.³⁸⁴ The context of the Mexican-American subject aims at an original voice within the US community while the context of the trans-border subject is his confrontation with the changes in urban and production settings which assail him.

The theme of the subject consists of his manner of mediating and manipulating 'the esthetic, cultural and literary codes' as well his search for self-identity (of his self and his intimacies as well as his subconscious), a process that

involves both the Mexican-American and the trans-border subjects. The Mexican-American subject construes his identity based on multiple socio cultural elements and it is indistinguishable from the rhetoric of the self *vis à vis* the other. The trans-border subject, with a flexible and adaptable identity, evolves in an open space thanks to multiple factors which he must deal with on a daily basis. They transgress limits to the self and also the genre which norm these narratives. In consequence, the idea of literature as a unitary system is relative to the literary subject because 'there is no poetry nor novel, only a discourse of the subject in the novel or the poem; as such 'literature is always 'in the making under the influence of the subject whose discourse is remade each time'³⁸⁵

The representation of the subjects, which inhabit the border, is the product of a dominant discourse or is it the result of a border transgression? Avoiding being a relativist, the answer depends on how it is analyzed. For example, when dealing specifically with literature we cannot talk about border literature in general since we must define if we are referring to literature from the southern states of the US (Chicano Literature) or literature produced in the northern states of Mexico. Each has to be analyzed separately and only then can we state that Chicano literature is the result of a dominant discourse while trans-border literature is the product of border transgressions.

Chicano literature at the border status of the US is known as 'border literature or border writing', following Socorro Tabuena, since 'the majority of the time it refers more to concepts than to a geographic region'.³⁸⁶ This is literature created mainly by Chicano writers which have caused substantial changes in the social articulation of their communities within US society. It is part of an effort to preserve their origins and denounce xenophobic attitudes, creating paths towards respect and equality. On the other side, the border literature came into existence around the seventies in border cities like Tijuana, Mexicali and Ciudad Juárez. Border literature contributed to the cultural conformation of the north and testifies to the historical development of the region (there is a direct

relation between the work of the artist and the region he lives in – not necessarily his birthplace). In this sense the writer re-invents space and region and ‘privileges the recreation of daily life without turning into genre writing of past times’.³⁸⁷

In order to reach this conclusion I took into consideration several variables. For the Chicano literature I took into consideration those factors which are related to the construction of the Chicano subject and the psycho social and linguistic factors which impact the way they represent themselves to others. A representation can be theatrical because the Chicano subject is perceived through insults, violence and oppression by the dominant culture.³⁸⁸ On the other hand the trans-border subject (the subject who lives in the north of Mexico and crosses the border constantly for work, study or shopping) does not incur in the identity process with such complexity. The variables, which I analyze in the border writing, refer mainly to the urban phenomena, the characteristics of liminal space, the configuration of the social role of women and their body as an active agent in the economy.

It is not an accident that Chicano literature is cemented on an ideological realm since in this manner an identity can be construed slowly, through daily practices in which the Chicanos engage. The performance of this identity, as seen in the analysis of the texts, systematically recur to the use of remembrances, mythic places, inherited Mexican traditions and customs which create an ideological discourse which singles them out as a minority community within US society.

On the other side, even if the northern border states of Mexico can also be seen also as minority communities due to the highly centralized Mexico society, the realm of literature refers more to the urban setting. From this emphasis the literary subject can denounce the abnormal economic development of the border, and its social consequences; the performance of this discourse has no nostalgia for a lost paradise but on the contrary denounces the inhuman living conditions in which many migrants find themselves when they leave their place of origin

looking for their share of the ‘American dream’. Many get stuck at the border, finding jobs at *maquilas*, bars, whorehouses, restaurants and other transient places.

It is a mistake to make any effort to try and homologize differences between neighbouring subjects and their distinct aesthetics because these are subjects with different needs for cultural expressions. The differences between Chicano literature and border literature are considerable and they refer not only to the way they approach their work, its objectives and goals but also to the different cosmologies of the writers. I have also avoided judgmental references on border literature in general and only aim at deconstructing separately Chicano and border literature in order to point out what makes them original, in the realm of writing, in the narrative style and in the characters depicted.

The Chicano writers expound an ideological discourse with which they attempt to make themselves heard and some of them build bridges between cultures with the intention of not losing genre ties with their Mexican heritage. They are full of voices which verbalize stories of remembrances full of chromatic images.

On the other hand the border writers have made denunciations a form of discourse and in the majority of cases, ironically, their aim is to put emphasis in the ungovernable situation, which constitutes living at the border; at the same time they construe an original culture distancing themselves from the centre. In this way the border writers are beginning to have their own voice, different from the centre and with a distinct view of border life. The border is not seen as a hostile place where cartel drug lords (*narcos*) reign free but a place full of possibilities for the ones who are able to see it through literary or artistic expressions.

The Chicano writer’s texts as well as the border writers, stylistically, are full of rhetoric, which exhibit the sensation of a close interaction with textures, tastes, colour and images. They differ only in the way they approach it: the

Chicanos writers cement their representations with critical theoretical posturing, like feminism, minority and postcolonial rhetoric, making blatant their political positioning not only *vis à vis* Academia but also before the whole literary community of the United States. Even if it is true that Chicano writers live at the margins of their self identity because they have found that this non-cultural self definition is complacent to their surroundings it is also true that this lack of self identity is a powerful rhetorical tool that allows them to construe an original discourse, charged with symbolic elements which open doors towards their Mexican origins, camouflaged as genre writing, and from there they develop their ideologies. This allows the Chicano writers an identity that gives their lives meaning while they search for their lost Mexican identity and their mother tongue which in some cases is long forgotten. Their literature is not as fluid as the border writer's because they are more concerned in construing an anti racist or feminist discourse which impedes the development of an original style.

On the other hand the border literature recreates the daily arbitrariness of recently created urban centres that allows the writers to consolidate an ironic discourse that transcends Mexican reality. This literature also has the impact of modern critical theory, especially of feminist ideology, but it does not affect the interpretative assertiveness of their work because it usually is just the personal leanings of the writer and not a discourse that speaks of the social movement of a minority community. Perhaps the Achilles heel in the border literature is the postmodernism of the style. In the attempt to break borders, including literary borders, the writers explore unusual paths for the common reader and he also loses himself in the intersections within the dialogues; or when he juxtaposes actions within their narrative. The original path is weakened in this manner and sometimes a lack of rationality and sense is evident when certain rhetorical formulas or typography are introduced.

With respect to the psychological make-up of the characters the Chicano writers are meticulous in their exaggeration due to their need to construe them as

subjects with their own voice and vote within a society that has always insulted or exploited them. This leads them to reconstruct their indigenous Mexican origins; also to certain myths and traditions that are not always genuine but have become part of their idiosyncrasies and which allow them to become an analogous community within US society.

They also recreate the language, as with the creation of *spanglish*, which allows for the identification between language and political posturing. This language is also existent among border writers and it is a tool of subversion of their reality but with a different intent: it is more a reflection of uses and customs of a people accustomed to daily crossing at the borders.

The characters are also very distinct in the work of border writers. They are non complacent with stereotypes; they aim to represent a post modern society, non politically correct characterizations, characters that are more comfortable in a post national setting. They distance themselves from genre writing and in this sense the urban sprawl is not only the scenery for the narrative but, as is the case with the poetry of Caballero, the scenery is another character in the narrative and it intervenes in the recreation of the postmodernism of space and time in which the writers find themselves.

It is impossible to speak of border literature in generalities. Different variables must be taken into account, such that privilege the historical, social or cultural circumstances because we are referring to two neighbouring literatures that share some characteristics (like language, places or traditions) but speak of distinct political, cultural and stylistic identities.

The importance of doing research based on this stylistic distinction between Chicano and border literature lies in the questioning – as I mentioned at the onset of this paper – of certain colonial practices, which annul artistic expressions and ideologies existent in minority communities. It brings forth also a new debate on the way we approach the borders as well as questioning our preconceptions. In this manner we can study complex social reconfigurations,

identity issues and representation of the social imaginary in which the subjects are presently immersed. It also pertains to the problematic of migrations which afflict many countries which have not been able to cope with dominant practices in their communities because they continue to privilege the intervention of the State-Nation, individual and national identity issues instead of assuming the responsibility of committing to mechanism (political, economic, social and educational) which give precedence to intercultural relations; mechanisms that do not turn differences into exclusions but foment communion.

In what language do we write history when there is no authorized mother tongue? In order to address this question I refer to Derrida's experience when he mentions his own mother tongue (French) and the relation to other languages during his infancy, especially with Berber or Arabic:

The optional study of Arabic remained, of course. We knew it was allowed, which meant anything but encouraged. The authority of National Education (of 'public education') proposed it for the same reason, at the same time, and in the same form as the study of any foreign language in Algeria! As if we were being told – and that, in the end, is what we were being told: 'Let's see, Latin is required for everyone in sixth grade, of course, not to speak of French, but do you, in addition, want to learn English, or Arabic, or Spanish, or German?' It seems that Berber was never included.³⁸⁹

The same situation can be found at the US-Mexican Border, especially within the Mexican-American community (or Chicanos) where Spanish is spoken at home and English outside (no other languages). Spanish is an optional language or 'authorized' today even though in the 1950s it was not permitted in American schools. However, this situation is different with the Northern Mexican community, where this phenomenon is non-existent, although emphasis is placed in learning English as a second language (or first language).³⁹⁰ In this sense, deconstructing the power of language allows me to analyze the 'interdictions of language' which result from racism, gender, class and ethnic differences, as well

as others.³⁹¹

As Derrida mentions: 'The interdiction is not negative, it does not incite simply to loss' (Derrida, 31), so we must deconstruct the power of interdiction (even if this sounds tautological) in the formation of the identity of subjects who live at the border (and its repercussions on both sides). As well as the social relations, which are established between communities: 'when access to a language is forbidden, nothing – no gesture, no act – is forbidden. One forbids access to speech [*au dire*], that is all, a certain kind of speech. But that is precisely the fundamental interdiction, the absolute interdiction, the interdiction of diction and speech' (Derrida, 32).

Following this reasoning I will refer to the *Monolingualism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin* (1998) because through the deconstruction of some premises it becomes plausible to carry out a similar exercise with the maternal tongue of the Mexican-Americans and the Northern Mexicans (wherever they are) in order to reach some consensus about the identity of the other, that are represented in their narratives. The premises that I have selected for this analysis are:

1. 'Yes, I only have one language, yet it is not mine.' (Derrida, 2)
2. We only speak one language – or rather one idiom only.
We never speak only one language – or rather there is no pure idiom. (Derrida, 8)
3. We only ever speak one language – and, since it returns to the other, it exists asymmetrically, always for the other, from the other, kept by the other. Coming from the other, remaining with the other, and returning to the other. (Derrida, 40)

In the first case, 'Yes, I only have one language, yet it is not mine,' Derrida explains that we can be wrong in thinking that it lacks logic; even though it may be a 'performative contradiction'. It can sound that way if it is taken out of context; if we omit a particular geographical location and give no socio-political and historical factors for the integration-adaptation process of a community *vis à*

vis the other. As is the case at the southern border of the US, where different and diverse subjects interact, and where a policy of acculturation imposed by the dominant culture takes place. In this case we can ascertain that there is only one language and that it is not the mother tongue, it is not mine because the policies of the American State have inhibited the development of the traditions and native language of the communities which are part of the border population (specifically the Mexican-American community). Those policies promote a homogenous and mono cultural discourse.

As for the second premise, we only speak one language – or rather one idiom only. We never speak only one language – or rather there is no pure idiom, Derrida makes no attempt to define language, idiom or dialect but rather insists that there must be certain ‘internal and structural features’ that distinguish one from the other. As examples we can take some phenomena ‘that blur these boundaries, cross them, and make their historical artifice appear, also their violence, meaning the relations of force that are concentrated there and actually capitalize themselves there interminably’ (Derrida, 9).

Phenomena which are defined by external criteria (quantitative phenomena such as demographics, history, border conformation) as well as by ‘political-symbolic’ criteria (legitimacy, authority, dominion of one language over the other) which we can observe in the southern states of the US where the dominant language is English (imposed by public policies and its commercial, technological and scientific use); while the spoken language of the majority is Spanish which points to the fact that in border situations no one language exists and least of all in any pure form.

The phenomena I have referred to are insufficient to understand the relationship between Mexico and the US, mainly because Mexico was never colonized by the US, as was Derrida’s Algeria. But we can start with these general premises in order to research into the interdiction of the language of Mexican-Americans and the Northern Mexican population.

Following Derrida's arguments, he reaches a crucial point when dealing with the identity issue (or the subverted identity issue) when he asks what is a Franco-Maghrebian? What does Franco-Maghrebian mean? Who is a Franco-Maghrebian? These are essential questions in order to define what has more weight in the conformation of his identity, as Derrida affirms: 'To be a Franco-Maghrebian, one 'like myself', is not, not particularly, and particularly not, a surfeit or richness of identities, attributes, or names. In the first place, it would rather betray a *disorder of identity* [*trouble d'identité*]' (Derrida, 14)

The same questions can be applied to the Mexican-American. These questions would seem irrelevant if we consider the concept of citizenship, as Derrida states, because 'As we know, citizenship does not define a cultural, linguistic, or, in general, historical participation. It does not cover all these modes of belonging. But it is not some superficial or super structural predicate floating on the surface of experience.' (Derrida, 14-15)

If we apply the concept of Mexican-American citizen the situation changes and so does the question: Does the Mexican-American want to be more Mexican or more American? Especially when one of these citizenships endangers the other, as is the case when Mexicans voluntarily adopt US citizenship. The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty of 1848³⁹² set the rules for new policies between Mexico and the US after the invasion of Mexican territory in 1846, which followed by the secession war of Texas in 1836. Afterwards, Texas became an independent state and the Rio Bravo became the aquatic border between the two countries.

Nonetheless the people living in these territories were not legally recognized until 1889 when the International Commission on the Border was constituted.³⁹³ After 1889 the Mexicans who lived in this territory were no longer independent citizens but neo-colonized citizens under American domination.

I will now present a literature example that refers to this point: 'Mericans' a story from Sandra Cisneros, a Chicana writer, consists of a logical-description

story that refers to the *disorder of identity* that a Mexican-American girl experiences while visiting the Basilica of Guadalupe, which is an important church in Mexico City, with her grandma and her two brothers. At the end of the story, meanwhile Micaela-Michele is waiting outside the church for her grandma to finish her prides, a lady approaches Junior, one of her brothers, and asks him ‘in a Spanish too big for her mouth’ if she can take a picture of him – ‘Por favor’ says the lady. ‘¿Un foto?’ pointing to her camera – because she thinks that Junior is a Mexican-indigenous child. And she does not realize that they speak English, so when she hears them speak, she surprisingly affirms:

‘But you speak English!’
 ‘Yeah’ my brother says, ‘we’re Mericans.’
 We’re Mericans, we’re Mericans, and inside the awful grandmother
 prays.³⁹⁴

According to this, Derrida mentions that there are a great many communities or groups of people who have to give up one citizenship in order to adapt to a new one; but research has not delved into the situation of people who do not adopt voluntarily a new citizenship but are abruptly denied the choice as it happened with the Mexican community at the border at the end of the nineteenth century:

No, I am speaking of a ‘community’ group (a ‘mass’ assembling together tens or hundreds of thousands persons), a supposedly ‘ethnic’ or ‘religious’ group that finds itself one day deprived, as a group, of its citizenship by a state that, with the brutality of a unilateral decision, withdraws it without asking for their opinion, and without the said group gaining back any other citizenship. No other. (Derrida, 15)

Northern Mexican population does not imply citizenship, nor native language or idiom either. In this sense it points to a social and cultural situation where ‘depropriation’ of the language is the case and the identity issue is not based on natural rights or rights to the land. These subjects, unlike the Mexican-Americans, have a specific origin and citizenship; they come from different states in Mexico

and are adapted to the realities of a global world. This phenomenon of de-propriation of the language allows us ‘to analyze the historical phenomena, above all, the reconstitution of what these phantasms managed to motivate: ‘nationalist’ aggressions (which are always more or less ‘naturalist’) or monoculturalist homo-hegemony.’ (Derrida, 64)

The tip of the iceberg of the interdiction of the language at the US-Mexican border is possibly the creation of a third language, the one known as *Spanglish*. This third language is the result of the fusion of two cultures and it is rapidly becoming institutionalized and its symbols demand philosophical, aesthetic and cultural translations. These translations entail the interchange, discarding and adopting, of cultural elements. When Spanish is exchanged for English, certain words in Spanish are kept and incorporated; a more expressive and functional language is the result. In the worst case scenario *Spanglish* could point to the colonization of one language at the expense of the other. Or vice-versa.

This brings us to Derrida’s third premise: ‘We only ever speak one language – and, since it returns to the other, it exists asymmetrically, always for the other, from the other, kept by the other. Coming from the other, remaining with the other, and returning to the other.’ Especially when we refer to the relation between the Mexican-American and Northern Mexican community.

Contrary to popular views *Spanglish* is not the instrument of a passive rebellion; it is neither a language nor a way of preserving origins. Its meanings and symbols have no specific origin and are not immutable. *Spanglish*, in the sense of a language of representation and action comes into view or disappears, as it is needed. However this action needs translation simply becomes it was created at the border. Not just a literal translation, but also one that includes all customs, behaviours and narratives that take place there.

For example, in the story ‘Sabaditos en la Noche’ (‘Little Saturday Nights’) from Luis Humberto Crosthwaite, a Mexican northeast border writer, the

protagonist of the story, who is a non-citizen, with no name and no past, is standing at the corner of one of Tijuana's streets watching the time pass and asking himself why does there have to be just one language, one language to teach others, and why does it have to be English:

Estoy en mi trabajo, carnal, en la faquin escuela donde daba las faquin clasecitas a los niños enfadosos del barrio, ganándome el pan de cada día, enseñándoles el faquin inglés porque se supone que solo el faquin inglés pueden hablar en mi país de mierda, land-of-da-faquin-fri. Nada de español, ¿ves?, nada que se le parezca. Por eso he decidido, que de hoy en delante, mi lengua será el spanich, ¿qué te parece? El spánich and ay guont spik enithing els.³⁹⁵

As I have tried to argue, research at the border brings forth a new debate on theories and paradigms. On a specific geographical setting such as the border different theories interplay. It is important to set precedence on research done so far at the US Mexican border so we can juxtapose different assessments and disciplines in order to understand present reality as well as deconstruct the dominant discourse; we can avoid, in this manner, historical racism or the advancement of a homogeneous mono cultural process at the border. In this sense it is important to rethink the concept of borders so as to speak of our limitations and from here restructure the notions that have permeated contemporary research into border (whatever these may be). From this perspective it is important to develop new models and concepts so that they can, on one side, guide future actions and policies towards the border population and, on the other, allow us an epistemological approach within and from the border and into their own process of cultural and identity conformation.

³⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 177-78.

³⁷² Orr, Gregory, *Poetry as Survival* (Athens: University of Georgia, 2002), p. 132.

³⁷³ The term 'social imaginaries' is taken from to Charles Taylor (2004). From my perspective it's important to venture into novel possibilities, which could allow us to construct new relationships, beneficial to migrants and border communities, in order to dispel xenophobic and exploitative attitudes as well, and exclusions that characterize present social relationships on the US-Mexican border.

³⁷⁴ It is important to define the model for a trans national or trans-border concept in order to come to grips with the theoretical concepts, which dominate research in border regions since 1990. Norma Ojeda writes 'the trans national is understood as the multiple links and interactions which tie people and institutions across borders within specific geographic areas and especially people living near borders between State Nations' (Ojeda: 2009:17). The trans national process accelerates certain patterns already existent and it even promotes new forms of human interaction as in the Mexican-American community. On the other hand the trans-border process is the result of a trans migration movement which 'corresponds to a social phenomenon particular to the border regions and it realities in the daily life for the co-joined communities on both sides of the border; it is also a concept that responds to the asymmetrical economic and social conditions as well to their ability to impact international politics; it also takes into account the cultural differences that exist between México and the US'. (Ojeda: 2009:12).

³⁷⁵ Seyla Behabib, *Las reivindicaciones de la cultura. Igualdad y diversidad en la era global* (Argentina: Katz, 2006), p. 9.

³⁷⁶ On the first theme (process of identity formation), the fourth (language) and the fifth (conformation of sub cultures) I have already presented papers: 'Cultura e identidad migratoria en la frontera México-Estados Unidos. Imediaciones entre la comunidad mexicoamericana y la comunidad transfronteriza (Culture and Migrant Identity and US Mexican Border. Immediacies between the Mexican-Americans and the trans-border community)', *Antiteses*, Jan. 2010. 'Deconstrucción de la frontera: Interdicción de la lengua materna. (Deconstructing the border: Maternal language interdiction)', in print. And 'La comunidad transfronteriza: la subcultura del reciclaje y la reconfiguración de la mujer en el norte de México. (The Trans-border Community: the sub culture of recycling and the reconfiguration of the social role of women in northern Mexico)', in print.

³⁷⁷ On this matter I think it necessary to establish the difference between the term Chicano and Mexican-American when we refer to the sons and daughters of Mexican migrants who live in the United States. For practical reasons it must be clear that Chicano is a pejorative term coined around 1930-40 which refers specifically to characteristics attributed to Mexicans (bean pickers, drunks, lazy) who cross the border to go and work as cheap labor in the US; it also applies to

first and second generation of Mexicans, born in the US, and part of a political and social movement during the seventies, who opposed the dominant cultural homo-hegemony. The term Mexican-American is a politically correct term with reference to ethnicity as with other minority communities in the US (AfroAmericans; Chinese Americans; Italo Americans; etc etc). Children of migrants of a third generation are now appropriating the term of Mexican-American for themselves. Sandra Cisneros titles one of her stories, 'Mericans', in her book *Woman Hollering Creek and other stories*. I will refer to 'Chicano' literature (not Mexican-American literature) and I will use the term Mexican-American when dealing with cultural identity or ethnic subjects.

³⁷⁸ The trans-border subjects are those subjects who inhabit the northern Mexican states, specifically the ones on the border with the US and who are accustomed to crossing from one country to the other. As they do also with the language. These subjects, unlike the Mexican-Americans, have a specific origin and citizenship; they come from different states in Mexico and are adapted to the realities of a global world. They act out of personal interest and from the necessities of survival with little regard to acceptance or rejection from the other. The Trans-border subjects assimilate one or more cultures and they conform a sub culture of their own to emphasis on change in their communal identity, productive process, social relations and artistic expressions.

³⁷⁹ One example of the empowerment of the Mexican-American community today is that, 130 years later (the last time a Mexican was voted into public office was in 1870), on the first of july of 2005 a 'latino' has became mayor of Los Angeles. His name is Anotnio Villaraigosa and he defeated James Han. He is a product of the political force which today constitutes the Mexican-American community within the American territory.

³⁸⁰ Wladimir Krysinski, 'Subjectum comparationis': Las incidencias del sujeto en el discurso, in *Teoría literaria*, Siglo XXI, ed. by Marc Angenot, Jean Bessiére and Douwe Fokkema (México: País Edición, 2002), pp. 270-86 (p. 271).

³⁸¹ Ibid. p. 274.

³⁸² Ibid. p. 280.

³⁸³ Ibid. p. 283.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 286.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 286.

³⁸⁶ María Socorro, Tabuena Córdoba, 'Aproximaciones críticas sobre las literaturas de las fronteras', En *Frontera Norte*, vol. 9, núm 18, julio-diciembre de 1997, pp. 85-110 (p. 87).

³⁸⁷ María Socorro Tabuena Córdoba, 'Las literaturas de las fronteras', in José Manuel Valenzuela Arce, ed., *Por las fronteras del norte. Una aproximación cultural a la frontera México-Estados Unidos* (México: FCE, 2003), pp. 393-427 (p. 414).

³⁸⁸ I am applying the theory of discourse performance to which Judith Butler (1997) refers when she states that verbally, it become violent and insulting to third

parties, be they women, homosexuals or transsexuals; but it is precisely this verbalization which brings to the front these subjects and represents them within the community that excludes them: 'the word can be given back to the one who speaks but in a different manner, against their original purpose it reverts its effects' (Butler; 1997:35). In this sense I am applying the same method as Butler to the Chicano community since I have observed the same performance-taking place in the evolution of the term Chicano and its socio historic repercussions in the conformation of the border. Other authors, such as Derrida and Levinas, also refer to the verbal as a form of violence. I have further developed these ideas in my PhD thesis 'Alegoría de la frontera México-Estados Unidos: Análisis comparativo de dos escrituras colindantes'.

³⁸⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 37-38. All further references to this volume will be given in parentheses in the text followed by the page number in Arabic script.

³⁹⁰ The trans-border subjects are those subjects who inhabit the northern Mexican states, specifically the ones on the border with the US and who are accustomed to crossing from one country to the other. As they do also with the language. They act out of personal interest and from the necessities of survival with little regard to acceptance or rejection from the other. The Trans-border subjects assimilate one or more cultures and they conform a sub culture of their own to emphasis on change in their communal identity, productive process, social relations and artistic expressions.

³⁹¹ I have borrowed the term interdiction from Derrida: 'Today on this earth of humans, certain people must yield to the homo-hegemony of dominant languages. They must learn the language of the masters, of capital and machines; they must lose their idiom in order to survive or live better': Derrida (supra), p. 30.

³⁹² The name of this treaty is 'Tratado de Paz, Límites y Arreglo definitivo entre la República Mexicana y EEUU de América' signed in Guadalupe, Hidalgo on the 2nd of February in 1848. The Treaty also obliged the Mexican government to sell one and a half million square kilometers of national territory to the US government, territory which included Arizona, California, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and parts of Colorado. The sale of this fertile land, rich in oil and mineral reserves, apt for cattle raising and agricultural exploitation, was the price Mexico paid to end the war. The US government, on its part, agreed to respect lands owned by Mexicans and to give them citizenship. The payment was agreed to the sum of 15 million pesos.

³⁹³ Other social, economic and political factors contributed: the Mexican Independence generated great instability in Mexico which influenced Texas to seek its own independence in 1836; the Mesilla Treaty signed in 1853 was also a factor: Mexico sold this territory in northern Chihuahua to the US; not until 1889 with the International Commission on Borders the separation of the two countries became officially established.

³⁹⁴ *Woman Hollering Creek and other stories* (New York: Vintage, 1992), p. 20.

³⁹⁵ Luis Humberto Crosthwaite, *Estrella de la calle sexta* (México: Tusquets, 2000), p. 41.

³⁹⁶ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York, Routledge, 2004), p. 41. Butler also argues against a narrow understanding of gender as masculine and feminine, warning that the very 'regulatory apparatus that governs gender is one that is itself gender-specific,' namely that gender 'institutes its own regulatory and disciplinary regime' (pp. 41-42).

³⁹⁷ 'Remote Sensing: An Interview', *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 24.1/2 (2002), 1-11 (p. 2).

³⁹⁸ 'Remote Sensing: An Interview,' p. 5.

³⁹⁹ Trafficking statistics of the type Biemann offers here are hard to come by and are usually considered unreliable by scholars and immigration specialists. According to the UNESCO Bangkok office, trafficking statistics circulated in media and scholarship are 'false' and 'spurious': 'When it comes to statistics, trafficking of girls and women is one of several highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties. Numbers take on a life of their own, gaining acceptance through repetition, often with little inquiry into their derivations. Journalists, bowing to the pressures of editors, demand numbers, any number. Organizations feel compelled to supply them, lending false precision and spurious authority to many reports.' ('Trafficking Statistics Project'). In addition, in a 2009 publication, the International Organization of Migration addresses the fraught issue of trafficking statistics, this time with reference to the Republic of Moldova: 'It is impossible to give a total number. The full scale of trafficking from/in Moldova remains unknown as many victims are not identified in the destination countries or in Moldova due to changes in trends in trafficking, fear of stigmatization, low level of self identification, limited knowledge of human rights/trafficking issues, as well as the inability or unwillingness of some victims to report their trafficking experiences to the authorities' ('Frequently Asked Questions,' p. 3).

⁴⁰⁰ The current feminist discourse on women's trafficking is an acerbic contest of hostilities over the right definition of women's trafficking, appropriate legislation, and the righteousness of the sex industry. Not unlike the sex wars of the 1980s, the current debate about the social status of the prostitute or sex worker divides feminist groups and has led to uncanny alliances among anti-prostitution feminists (the so-called neoabolitionists), the religious right, and state organizations. Neoabolitionists, such as Donna Hughes, Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, Kathleen Barry, and Janyce Raymond, among others, equate trafficking and prostitution, arguing that the abolition of prostitution will put an end to the traffic in women. They also rally behind 'end demand' programs that punish sex workers' clients, while perceiving prostitutes as victims of patriarchy.

⁴⁰¹ Donna Hughes, 'The "Natasha" Trade: Transnational Sex Trafficking', *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 53.2 (2001), 625-51 (p. 628).