

**Revisiting Early Modern Spain:
The *Manifiesto por una lengua común* of 2008
and Its Ideological Precedents**

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The *Manifiesto por una lengua común* was presented in the Ateneo in Madrid in June 2008. The text, published in June 23 in the Spanish newspaper *El País* had been signed by several personalities such as the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa and the Spanish philosopher Fernando Savater among others. In July 7, 2008 *El País* published the reactions of some intellectuals as well as “Un manifiesto contra España” by Professor Albert Branchadell. The *Manifiesto* supports the idea of a Spanish national essentialism that should be reflected by a linguistic hierarchy in Spain in which Castilian is the common and superior language. Branchadell, on the contrary, indicates that Spain is a construction and that the new chapter of this creation was the Spanish Constitution of 1978. The Catalan Professor adds that those who conceive an essentialist monoglossic view of Spain need to come to terms with the fact that Spain is, after the Constitution, a multilingual state.

The purpose of this essay is to show that, at least from a linguistic ideological point of view, not only can we not help reading sixteenth century texts from a twenty-first century perspective, but also sixteenth century texts can help us discover and understand the possibilities of our present. As José del Valle and Luis Gabriel-Stheeman explain, the contemporary linguistic ideology in Spain is best understood as a reaction to the corresponding ideology of the nineteenth and twentieth century so called founding fathers of the Spanish nation such as Valera, Unamuno, Pidal and Ortega (Valle & Gabriel-Stheeman 194-95). Without disagreeing with this statement, I intend to demonstrate that the study of the political linguistic ideology in sixteenth century Spain may also help understand the contemporary linguistic ideological conflict described in the *Manifiesto* and in Albert Branchadell’s response. Benedict Anderson explains that the creation of the printing press in Western Europe in the middle of the fifteenth century constitutes a key moment in the development of the nation as an “imagined community” (Anderson 47). In other words, Renaissance Europe or Renaissance European pre-nationalism represents a precedent of modern nationalism, especially as far as language is concerned, since the printing press was, above all, a linguistic revolution. Certain languages became more important than others from a capitalist point of view because books printed in some languages were more successful in the market, as more people would be able to read them and, therefore, buy them. Anderson indicates that this phenomenon was not planned, that is, the speakers of a particular group of languages did not use their power consciously to make their languages more marketable than others. It simply happened as a result of the laws of the market. The most important aspect was that this linguistic, cultural and

economic event could be interpreted and “exploited in a Machiavellian spirit” (Anderson 48). As a matter of fact, there was going to be a reading and an interpretation of a textual historical situation. The different interpretations would reflect deep ideological agendas. My thesis is that in sixteenth century Spain there were at least three different readings. I will demonstrate that these readings appear again as different criteria to analyze the twentieth and twenty-first century Spanish linguistic situation, in particular the Spanish Constitution of 1978.¹ The three different approaches that I am going to analyze are: first, essentialism, understood as the natural superiority of some languages over others and the need of only one language for a state or monarchy. Second, twoness and cooperation, in which the uncanny feeling of dislocation can create a space with the possibility of cultural solidarity and cultural hybridity. Finally, absolute mixture. These approaches will compete with one another to become part of the linguistic culture of the moment.² These three different readings result from three different conceptions of linguistic hierarchy and multilingualism in Spain as I will explain.

1. Natural linguistic hierarchy and monoglossia

On May 18, 1570 Benito Arias Montano writes a letter to the Duke of Alba, who at that time was in charge of the Province of the Netherlands trying to contain a revolt.³ Arias Montano’s linguistic ideology appears in this passage:

Y después del hecho de la religión, no hay cosa que más concilie los ánimos de los hombres de varias naciones en amistad y conversación, y que más los domestique y aficione a imitar y seguir las costumbres de los que los rigen, que la unidad y conformidad de la lengua, cuya ignorancia los enajena, y tiene en sospecha a los unos de los otros, como los sordos que siempre recelan y sospechan mal de las palabras que se hablan delante de ellos que no entienden bien. Esta fue una de las cosas que principalmente procuraron los romanos para conformar su Imperio en la tierra, y conciliarse los hombres de todas naciones, ordenando que por todas partes, o de uso, o de lección, se ejercitase la lengua latina, y tanto pudieron y ejecutaron en esta parte, que a mucha naciones trocaron sus antiguos lenguajes en la suya latina, como a franceses y españoles que todos vinieron a hablar latín o palabras las más ellas latinas, como hasta

¹ Certainly, I am not trying to prove that the writing of the *Manifiesto* was based on the reading of sixteenth century linguistic texts. However, the ideas and criteria to value languages are extremely similar and, therefore, the comparison is useful from a history of ideas point of view.

² I am using José del Valle and Luis Gabriel-Stheeman’s definition of the term: “Linguistic culture refers to a relatively abstract and supposedly universal set of beliefs about general concepts such as language, speech, speech community, literacy, etc” (2202b, 10).

³ The letter was printed in Anvers on May 18, 1570.

hoy permanecen, aunque se corrompió después por los bárbaros la pureza de ellas [...] Y puesto que muchos en Flandes saben lengua española por conocer la necesidad que tienen della así para sus cosas públicas como para la contratación, con todo esto la estimarán más viendo que el Rey, y sus Príncipes, y Ministros la estiman y han en grado que se deprenda [...] Y pues la francesa con ser más familiar y más vecina, está honrada y ayudada con lección para ello instituida, y por ver que la estiman tanto, la pretenden todos entender y hablar, más razón será que la española se favorezca y ayude por serles a los desta tierra más propia la conversación con los españoles que con los franceses a causa de tener un mismo Señor y Rey. Siendo V. E. servido de instituir lección de nuestra lengua, y mandándomelo, diré mi parecer acerca del modo que se puede tener para que favorezca y deprenda y ejercite la lengua, y los libros que se han de leer en ella. (Arias Montano 163-64)

The text is an example of a monoglossic vision of the Spanish Empire. It supports the view that languages are in permanent conflict and that languages themselves are the best criterion to value the political power and importance of an empire. A unified and powerful language is the highest proof of a strong political power. The language that represents a political power is in constant conflict with the languages used by other political powers.

Arias Montano has received the task of both spreading the use of the Spanish language among the inhabitants of Flanders and increasing the prestige of Castilian in the area. Apparently, French is the language that seems to be competing with Spanish in the Netherlands. French is the language of a neighbor power, France, and people from Flanders are more familiarized with French than with Spanish, not only in the French-speaking area but in the Netherlands as a whole. In fact, French had had an important presence in the Netherlands since the Middle Ages. Inside the Netherlands, the county of Flanders owed allegiance to the king of France since the tenth century, although the majority of this county spoke Dutch. Bruce C. Donaldson states that the written Dutch first appears in cities in the county of Flanders such as Bruges and Ghent because they were the centers of the cloth industry. The county of Flanders was also a county where part of the population was originally French-speaking. It is said that the nobility of Flanders and “many of the up-and-coming middle class were undoubtedly bilingual” (Donaldson 21). Yet, French gained political and economic strength when there was a union of the county of Flanders first and then all the provinces of Netherlands with Burgundy in 1430 that lasted until 1477. Brussels became “the seat of the French-speaking Burgundian rulers in the Netherlands”, although Brussels belonged to the Dutch speaking area of the duchy of Brabant. Therefore, French had become an important language of political power in the Netherlands before “the Burgundian Netherlands passed to the House of Habsburg in 1477 and thus ultimately became part of the great European empire of Charles V”

(Donaldson 23). The Duke of Alba was sent by Philip II (1556-98) to Flanders in 1567 to contain an intense and long revolt opposing the Spanish dominion. He remained in his post until 1573. The revolt of the Netherlands, which started in 1566, forced Philip II to make a decision about how to organize the Spanish Empire. The King had two choices: the Castilian centralist nationalist position, supported mainly by the Alba and Zapata families, against the federalist position supported by the Mendoza family. The Mendoza faction was represented at Court by the Prince of Eboli, Ruy Gómez de Silva (Cortijo Ocaña, Cortijo & Gómez Moreno). The beginning of the rivalry between these two factions is difficult to determine but it was especially intense in the second half of the sixteenth century during the Revolt in the Netherlands. As Elliott explains, the imperial provinces were worried about the situation in the Netherlands because “the problem of the Netherlands was ultimately the problem of the Spanish Monarchy as a whole –of its future direction and constitutional structure” (Elliott 258). Philip II decided to try the Castilian centralist position by sending the Duke of Alba to the Netherlands. Therefore, the linguistic policy and ideology displayed in the Netherlands would be not only an example of the linguistic policy supported by the extreme centralists, but also, if it turned out to be effective, the one used in the areas of the Iberian Peninsula whose native language was not Castilian.

The monoglossic linguistic position is clear throughout the text: First of all, there is a linguistic hierarchy: the main languages in the Netherlands are Spanish and French. The native language of most of the population, Flemish or Dutch, is not even mentioned. This linguistic absence corresponds to the idea that some languages are by nature better than others (Sozzi xlix). From a history of ideas point of view, this means that when trying to improve a language by means of human will some languages have already a clear advantage over others and human will is limited by this natural hierarchy. Human will is, therefore, not unlimited when trying to improve a language. Consequently, as far as human determination was concerned, in relation to language improvement and hierarchy, Machiavello and Arias Montano are closer to Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) than to Pico della Mirandola (1463-94).⁴ The former believed that the power of human will was due to its position in the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being, whereas the latter was convinced that humanity had been created after the establishment of the hierarchy of beings, which made human will capable of reaching every single level of the hierarchy.⁵ According to Arias Montano, there is no

⁴ Other authors who believed in the natural equality of languages, the absence of a natural linguistic hierarchy, and the unlimited power of human will in language improvement, were Spero Speroni in *Dialogo delle lingue* (1542), and Joachim Du Bellay in *La déffence et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549).

⁵ Pico della Mirandola describes the creation of man like this:

Taking man, therefore, this creature of indeterminate image, He set him in the middle of the world and thus spoke to him: ‘We have given you, Oh Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and

possibility of comparison between languages such as French and Spanish, and others like Dutch because they belong by nature to different layers in the linguistic hierarchy. Even if human will tried with all his resources to improve languages that belong to inferior strata, nature will always defend its hierarchy. In fact, the best proof of this natural linguistic superiority of French and Spanish is the political power associated with these languages. This is ideologically an early example of Social Darwinism. Arias Montano describes the linguistic situation in the Roman Empire indicating that the French and Spanish nations, when they were conquered by the Romans, ended up giving up their native languages and adopting Latin. The same way that Latin was naturally superior to the ancient languages of Hispania and Gallia because it defeated them in the battle for survival, Spanish is superior to the native language of the Netherlands because this area is under Spanish rule. French would be also superior to Dutch because it had been the language of political power even in those areas of the Netherlands where French was not the native language, starting at least in 1430 with the union of the Netherlands and Burgundy. This is a sign of natural superiority, which is expressed by means of the absolute lack of any particular reference to Dutch or Flemish. On the other hand, there is an aspect that should not be forgotten: it is no coincidence that the two languages that are considered superior in this particular case are two Romance Languages: French and Castilian. They are descendants of the language of the Roman Empire and they are its continuators. Arias Montano states that these two languages are still “latinas” despite the degree of corruption caused by the Germanic invasions. This opinion corresponds perfectly to the idea expressed by Lorenzo Valla in his *De linguae latinae elegantia* (1471) that the Latin language remained alive in the Romance Languages and with this linguistic survival the Roman Empire still existed. However, the question is which of the two superior languages is going to win in the Dutch battlefield. In this case, it is a question of language planning, that is, there is a need to impose a linguistic culture on the inhabitants of the Netherlands. The best way to make people believe in the natural superiority of the Spanish language over French is education and this is the Duke of Alba’s main objective. Here we witness a confrontation not only between two languages, but especially between the human will associated with each one. French has the advantage of being more familiar than Spanish in the Netherlands, besides being the native language of part of the population. Yet Spanish is the language of the power that occupies the province. It is understood that because the French language has been a symbol of political power in the Netherlands in the past and represents an important European monarchy, which is France, it will always constitute a threat. Consequently, the Spaniards need to convince the population of the Netherlands that Spanish is much more useful than French and this way they will start imposing a pro-Spanish linguistic

possess through your own judgment and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature.’ (6-7)

culture. In fact, a similar pro-French linguistic culture had been taking place at least since 1430. As we can observe, when comparing French and Spanish, Arias Montano is now adopting a Neoplatonic perspective that corresponds to Pico della Mirandola's conception of human will that can achieve everything, even linguistically. The superiority of Castilian over French will not depend on a natural superiority *a priori*, but on the will of the Spaniards. Of course, this only happens when comparing languages that belong to the same level in the natural linguistic hierarchy. The main objective will be convincing the speakers that, ultimately, Spanish is the winner language in the Netherlands because it is the real imperial language and it is superior to French by nature. This is a clear essentialist view that paradoxically is achieved by hiding the natural intrinsic lack of hierarchy that exists between French and Spanish.

Another crucial aspect is, according to Arias Montano, that this language that is superior by nature, Spanish, should be the only one used because uniformity in language brings friendship, peace and a lack of the suspicion associated with people who are using a language that is not understood by everybody. Again the example of the Roman Empire supports this idea because Latin was imposed in every province of the Western Empire. The implications are that Dutch and French will have to stop being used. Arias Montano is following Machiavelli's advice: when a province that has been conquered has different customs, laws and a different language the government of the new territory becomes very difficult (Machiavelli 34). Consequently, the best option is to impose the customs, laws and language of the conqueror. The date of the text, after three years of Alba's arrival in the Netherlands and three years before his departure, shows that linguistic uniformity had been thought fundamental to achieve peace in the Netherlands. This could be done by imposing Castilian as the only language. Monoglossia could be an instrument of peace.⁶

Another example of a linguistic culture that supports a natural linguistic hierarchy, and the need for a political unit to have only one language appears in the Iberian Peninsula beyond the Castilian borders. I am referring to the Valencian historian Pere Antoni Beuter (1490-1554). In his *Primera parte de la corónica general de toda España y especialmente del Reino de Valencia* (1546) Beuter indicates: "El mismo tiempo requiere que sea en todos una común lengua, como solía en la monarquía primera de España en tiempo de godos."⁷ However, the Valencian author admits almost immediately that Castilian is "lengua extraña para Valencia" (Rafanell 240). The main linguistic idea that appears in the text is the need of a monolingual Spain, that is, monoglossia. Beuter recalls the mythical Visigothic past when, according to the author, the whole Iberian Peninsula was united politically and linguistically under one king. Here we find an example of the circular aspect of nationalist thought. The

⁶ Yet the result of the Eighty Years' War left the area approximately of Belgium in Spanish hands in 1648. "After the break with the north, the place that Dutch had as *cultuurtaal* in Holland, was occupied by French in the south." Contrary to the situation in the north, there was not a strong dialect of Dutch in the south that could become the basis of a standard language. (Donaldson 24)

⁷ Quoted in August Rafanell 240. Beuter's work had been previously published in Catalan in 1538.

political and linguistic unity appears as a prestigious, legitimate objective that implies the return to a mythical past, which is a return to the source. Derrida explains that the nation is a homogeneous essence but it must be constructed, that is, it must return to its pure origins (Derrida 12). This source situated in the past, which is an example of the nationalist essence or authenticity, would be the center of nationalist thought. Arias Montano had used the Roman Empire as an example of an ideal monolingual society that had accepted the language of the conqueror. Beuter refers now to the Visigothic Monarchy. As we know, there was a historiographic conflict in Spain about which Iberian kingdom was the real heir of the Visigothic Monarchy.⁸ It seemed that the Castilian proposal had been accepted by Beuter and this acceptance had a linguistic consequence: Valencians as well as the rest of the Provinces of the Spanish Empire would have to adopt and accept the superiority of the Castilian language because it was the language of the Emperor. This acceptance implied the gradual elimination of the minority languages. Joan Fuster explains that cosmopolitanism carried with it the elimination of minority languages and this is exactly what had been happening in the European monarchies since the end of the fifteenth century. The unifying power of the Absolute Monarchy plus the administrative apparatus that made possible the existence of these monarchies constituted a linguistic unifying force that in time would eliminate the minority languages that some of the population was still using (Fuster 221). However, it should be taken into account, as Elliott indicates, that the Spanish Monarchy had not achieved the level of unity and centralization of other Western European monarchies such as France or England (Elliott 77). As I explained earlier while analyzing Arias Montano's linguistic ideology, both the political and the linguistic organization of the Spanish Empire could be either federalist or centralist. It was a question of convincing certain parts of the society in order to create a linguistic culture with the appropriate set of beliefs. Beuter supports a linguistic culture in which a unified political power should correspond to a unique language. The language of the Spanish Empire should be Castilian.

The Valencian historian cannot help indicating that Castilian is still a foreign language in Valencia, especially if the word is used to refer to the whole kingdom, since the capital had suffered the pro-Castilian linguistic policy of viceroys such as the Duke of Calabria (1526-50) and the archbishop and viceroy Juan de Ribera (1569-1611). The monolingual ideal of the Spanish Empire required that the Kingdom of Valencia not only eliminated the use of dialectal Arabic or *algaravia*, but also Catalan, also known in the region as Valencian. This point of view implies the existence of a linguistic hierarchy in which the strongest language will end up succeeding. Beuter's tone is slightly less aggressive than Arias Montano's because the statement that Castilian is not the native language of the area indicates that Beuter believed in what José del Valle and Luis Gabriel-Stheeman call the principle of convergence, which "assumes that the verbal behavior of the members of a community tends to become

⁸ Tate explains this topic in his book.

more and more homogeneous with time. Multilingualism is assumed to slowly disappear as people acquire the dominant language” (10).

In the Catalan-speaking region an essentialist linguistic view opposes the belief that Castilian is the appropriate language for Spain. The linguistic penetration of Castilian in the Catalan-speaking area is, therefore, dangerous, negative and extremely political. In 1557 the Catalan noble Cristòfor Despuig indicates with a clear apocalyptic tone that, as far as Catalan linguistic and political identities are concerned:

En Aragó tant com afronta lo regne ab Catalunya y València, no parlen aragonés sinó català tots los de la frontera, dos o tres llegües dins lo regne, que dins de Catalunya y València, en aquesta frontera no y à memòria de la llengua aragonesa [...] y de aquí ve lo escàndol que yo prenh en veure que per a vuy tan absolutament se abrassa la llengua castellana, fins a dins Barcelona. (Despuig 63)

According to Despuig, the consequences of adopting a foreign language like Castilian is the loss of identity, especially if it starts being used regularly in conversation. In fact, this would mean that the Castilians have conquered the land (Despuig 63). This conception of *pàtria* in which the concept of nation is identified with language is scholastic and clearly influenced by Saint Thomas Aquinas (Lledó-Guillem 275). Despuig states that if the Catalan language is abandoned the Catalan identity will also be lost. It is important to remember that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the association between language and nation was not always the case. Torres i Sans explains that often the same language could refer to many nations because the so-called *pàtria* or nation responded to the territorial privileges of a certain area. As far as The Catalan-speaking area was concerned, the Valencian “nation” was as far away from Castile as it was from the Principality of Catalonia, because the Kingdom of Valencia had its own *Furs* and Catalonia had its own *Constitucions*. Nevertheless, Despuig associates language with political and national identity and considers that the Catalan-speaking lands constitute a nation. If a foreign language like Castilian enters the land the identity associated with the Catalan language will be lost. Despuig agrees with Machiavelli and Valla on this issue. In this language battle the winner will bring with the language the political conquest. The difference between Despuig and Arias Montano is that whereas Arias Montano sees a brighter future for Spanish as the symbol of the Spanish power in the Netherlands, Despuig can only refer to a linguistically idealized Medieval past in which Catalan was the most important language in the Crown of Aragon. This brilliant past should be the force that supports the opposition to the establishment of Castilian in the Catalan-speaking lands. Despuig puts Catalan and Castilian at the same level, that is, the victory of one of the other will depend on human will because there is no natural superiority *a priori*.

On the other hand, Despuig supports Arias Montano’s opinion that there has to be only one language because the possibility of several languages being used in the

Catalan-speaking lands with a similar degree of power and prestige is out of the question. Language contact is dangerous because it brings with it the loss of purity. Despuig expresses his point of view by means of the Valencian character that appears in his work: Don Pedro. He comes from the Kingdom of Valencia, a political unit that was characterized by multilingualism immediately after the Christian conquest in the thirteenth century. There were three languages in the Kingdom: Catalan, Aragonese and *algaravia*. The contact with Aragonese would have affected the purity of Catalan and later on, especially after the Revolt of the *Germanies* in the second decade of the sixteenth century, the contact with Castilian would have increased the level of impurity. Valencia was also the route used by many Castilians to travel to Italy. Don Pedro explains with a bit of shame that the Catalan language spoken in Valencia comes from Catalonia but because of the close contact with Castile the language has been transformed (Despuig 61). However, the Catalan language used in the Balearic Islands has kept the original purity because there has not been any contact with other languages (Despuig 62). According to Despuig, languages are symbols of identity. If a language is lost the political power that it represents will have been conquered too. Multilingualism is not possible in a political unit because it produces a loss of purity in language and therefore, a loss of purity in identity.

In the *Manifiesto por una lengua común* we find the same concepts of linguistic hierarchy and monoglossia as the ideal linguistic status of Spain. The superiority of Castilian over the rest of the Spanish languages appears as the first premise of the document:

Hay una asimetría entre las lenguas españolas oficiales, lo cual no implica injusticia (?) de ningún tipo porque en España hay diversas realidades culturales pero sólo una de ellas es universalmente oficial en nuestro Estado democrático. Y contar con una lengua política común es una enorme riqueza para la democracia, aún más si se trata de una lengua de tanto arraigo histórico en todo el país y de tanta vigencia en el mundo entero como el castellano. (Quoted in *El País*, 23 June 2008)

The reason why Castilian is superior to the rest of the Spanish languages is that it is more universal. The connotations of this statement are clear: Castilian is more universal because it has been able to expand all over Spain, whereas the rest of the languages are simply regional languages. What is more, Castilian is advancing worldwide to the extent that it has become one of the most important languages in the world. Following Social Darwinism the superiority of Castilian becomes natural because it has been victorious in the battle against the rest of the languages in the Iberian Peninsula. This point of view reminds us of Machiavelli, Arias Montano and even Despuig's linguistic ideology. The difference in the twenty-first century is that the supporters of Castilian as the only language of Spain can recall a historical tradition of linguistic hegemony that dates back at least to the sixteenth century. There

is an idealization of the past of which the present should be a continuator. Certainly the lack of a uniform linguistic ideology in the Early Modern Period is not mentioned but the final outcome by which Castilian became the best representative of the Spanish Empire, and was therefore called Spanish, is extremely useful.

Monoglossia is so positive that it supports democracy and, at the same time, it represents a return to the source, to the idealized period of Spanish history definitely before the Constitution of 1978, which made the threat to the Castilian linguistic hegemony possible. This support of Castilian monoglossia is made clear in two requests of the *Manifiesto*:

Las lenguas cooficiales autonómicas deben figurar en los planes de estudio de sus respectivas comunidades en diversos grados de oferta, pero nunca como lengua vehicular exclusiva [...]. LOS REPRESENTANTES POLÍTICOS, tanto de la administración central como de las autonómicas, utilizarán habitualmente en sus funciones institucionales de alcance estatal la lengua castellana lo mismo dentro de España que en el extranjero, salvo en determinadas ocasiones características. (Quoted in *El País*, 23 June 2008)

There is no doubt that by mentioning the question of the *lengua vehicular*, that is, the language used to teach subjects such as Mathematics or History, the supporters of the *Manifiesto* were expressing their fear and disagreement with the Law of Education proposed by the Catalan Government that was approved one year after the *Manifiesto*, on July 2, 2009. It was supported by 80% of the Catalan Parliament (*El País*, July 2 2009). This Law supports Catalan as the *lengua vehicular*. There will be four hours of Catalan language per week, three hours of a foreign language and only two hours of Spanish per week. The Catalan Government or *Generalitat* is free to create the *plan de estudios*. This Catalan Law of Education represents a direct threat to the Castilian centered linguistic hierarchy, which is precisely what the *manifiesto* defends. It can be argued that the Catalan attitude is a response to the attempt to establish a Castilian monoglossia in Spain since at least 1939. At the same time, the *Manifiesto* is the reaction to a Law of Education in which Spanish is taught less than other languages such as English or French. This constitutes a vicious circle with a clear lack of solidarity from both sides. In fact, Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman already warned that the supporters of the regional languages in Spain have a language planning that is as monoglossic as the Castilian one ('Codo con codo' 194). These conflicting linguistic points of view are very similar to the ones described in Arias Montano and Despuig's works. In both cases, monoglossia implies the elimination of multilingualism and the survival of the strongest.

The exclusive feature of the twenty-first century situation is that, apparently, the Catalan government has been able to put Catalan in the hegemonic position, at least as

far as education is concerned.⁹ This phenomenon after July 2, 2009 is already a fact. The supporters of the *Manifesto* consider the linguistic situation in Catalonia a threat to the position of the Castilian language. Here we find the first example of dislocation that takes place when the features that had been hidden for a long time are now uncovered. I am referring to the fact that Spain is a multilingual country. According to Homi Bhabha, when aspects of our identity that have been hidden are brought to light, the feeling of dislocation, of lack of centrality of our identity is such that there is a feeling of unhomeliness very much related to the Freudian concept of the uncanny (Bhabha 295). The request that politicians from bilingual regions should use Spanish when they are abroad is extremely significant because we find here the question of linguistic hierarchy and monoglossia altogether. In other words, Spain needs to compete with other countries such as France, for example, under the condition that Spain is monolingual and has a unified culture. Spain needs to conceal, in the middle of its progressive and continuous national narrative, “the zone of occult instability where the people dwell” (Bhabha 303). This continuous national narrative is based on the idea of a natural linguistic hierarchy by which Spanish can compete with languages of other political units that have themselves a certain reputation and a historical narrative. This implies that these languages are at the same level. The other languages that are spoken in these unified countries are naturally inferior. Therefore, when a language like Catalan substitutes Spanish as the language of power, especially when being used abroad, the natural hierarchy that the essentialists had internalized in their set of beliefs is destroyed, or at least questioned. This phenomenon not only causes a feeling of dislocation, but also the uncomfortable impression that Spanish has become inferior to the rest of languages such as French or English with which it used to be able to compete or compare. This idea is very similar to the sixteenth century Neoplatonic debate about the natural equality of languages as we have explained above. Yet this uncomfortable position of dislocation can also bring the possibility of solidarity, although this is not the idea either of the *Manifesto* or of the new Law of Education of the *Generalitat*.

2. Twoness, lack of hierarchy and multilingualism

I will analyze two texts written in the margins of the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century: *Concejo y Consejeros de Príncipe* by Fadrique Furió Ceriol (1527-92), published in Antwerp in 1559 and the anonymous *Gramática de la Lengua*

⁹ That Castilian is threatened in Catalonia has been contested in several occasions. For example, the Catalan journal *Avui* published an article indicating that the social use of Catalan in Andorra, the only country in the world where Catalan is the official language, was under 30%, which is the percentage accepted by the UNESCO to consider that a language is in danger of disappearing. According to Carme Junyent, the author of the study, a linguist and president of the Group of Study of Threatened Languages, the situation in Catalonia is even worse than in the Valencian region (*Avui*, 30 August 2008).

Vulgar de España published in Lovaina by Bartholomé Gravio in 1559. The first text supports a Federalist configuration of the Spanish Empire that opposes a natural superiority of the Castilian language and the sociolinguistic project of a Castilian monoglossia. The second text also rejects the natural superiority of Castilian in Spain and considers that Spain is a multilingual political unit, although the federalist ideology is not present. In both cases there is a possibility of twoness in which solidarity is possible and the totalization of identity, as an essence with a clear content and center, is impossible.

Furió Ceriol wrote his book as a model for a Spanish Federalist Monarchy and as a possible solution to the tension that had been developing in the Netherlands (Cortijo [Fox Morcillo]). The Valencian author indicates that the King's adviser should know all the languages of the different regions of the Empire: "la tercera calidad, que muestra la suficiencia del alma en el Consejero, es, que sepa muchas lenguas, i principalmente las de aquellos pueblos que su Principe gobierna" (Furió Ceriol 124). The King's adviser should ideally know all the languages spoken in his territory, and no language should be considered superior to the others. I believe that Furió Ceriol describes a Federalist Spanish Empire by means of a synecdoche in which the ideal description of the King's adviser is also a depiction of the King himself and the whole Spanish Empire. The King's adviser would represent not only the King but also the population of the Empire. The qualities of a good adviser for the king are good qualities for the King himself. Furió Ceriol shows in the figure of the King, or at least in the King's adviser, the possible experience of the population of the Kingdom of Valencia. The King in Valencia would be Valencian and Spanish and his languages would be both Castilian and Valencian. The King would be part of two different systems of meaning and, therefore, he would not have a fixed identity. Both languages would be his and none of them would be superior to the other. They would be simply parallel cultures and parallel languages. This reminds us of DuBois' notion of "multiple belongings, plural identities with none more standard or normal or appropriate than the other" (Rivkin & Ryan 854). The presence of this "twoness" in the figure of the King would be the model that Valencians should follow, that is, they should face their multiple political and linguistic belongings and their unstable identity with a spirit of collaboration. My interpretation of this possibility is that the margins are going to redefine the identity of the center because once the King goes back to Castile, he will appear as a multilingual King, with multiple and parallel belongings and identities reflecting the spirit of collaboration that the King himself represents. The influence on the population will be considerable, especially if we remember Arias Montano's linguistic project to impose Spanish on the population of the Netherlands: "la estimarán más viendo que el Rey, y sus Príncipes, y Ministros la estiman y han en grado que se deprenda" (Arias Montano 164). When the population observes that the King and the advisers respect and value the peripheral languages of the Empire, they will also respect those languages as their own. Furió Ceriol is describing a King with an unstable identity that can be redefined in a collaborative way. This is the basis of

the Federalist model for the Spanish Monarchy. Furió Ceriol describes it best by saying that the King should learn the different languages of his dominions. By redefining the King linguistically, Ceriol is also redefining and constructing the identity of the whole Spanish Empire in which there is no linguistic hierarchy.

The next author that I am going to analyze rejects both the natural superiority of Castilian and the idea of a monolingual Spain: “A esta, que io nombro Vulgar, algunos la llamaron lengua Española, en lo qual, a mi parecer, erraron, pues vemos que en España hai más de una lengua; i otras más antiguas, que no es ésta, i de más lustre, por los más escritores que han tenido” (“Gramática de la lengua Vulgar de España,” 160). Soon after, the author explains that, when referring to Castilian, he will use the term *Vulgar* “porque siendo la más vulgar, la más usada, i la que más tierra ocupa en toda España, fue necesario hallarle un nombre conforme alo que ella es, para que se diese acadauno lo suio, quitando todo perjuicio i contienda” (161). This is an example of an author that gives a different interpretation to both the economic supremacy of Castilian in the market of the printing press and the fact that it is the language of the King of Spain. According to him, it is not the most ancient or the one with the best literature but it is the one that is used all over Spain. This means that it needs a name that should not connote superiority. However, he admits that this language has expanded all over Spain and, from this point of view, it has an advantage. Yet he explains that Basque is more ancient, and that Catalan and Arabic have a superior literature. Nevertheless, he considers Catalan a French language. In any case, hierarchies are eliminated. Every language has a reason to be superior to the rest and Spain is still multilingual. Therefore, the possibility of twoness, of multiple identities and languages that coexist at the same time is possible in the text, although it is not as clearly stated as in Furió Ceriol’s case. However, the anonymous text is an example of a clear opposition to the ideals and values that seem to have been naturalized in a society. In this case, the anonymous author would oppose the natural superiority of Castilian in relation to the rest of the languages used in Spain. The twoness may not be as clear as in Furió Ceriol’s case but the “Gramática de la Lengua Vulgar de España” represents a stronger and more direct attack to the ideological linguistic establishment. It shows that grammar and literature in general can be fields of political and ideological opposition.

The response to the *Manifiesto* carried out by Professor Albert Branchadell in “Un manifiesto contra España” (*El País*, 7 July 2008), reflects the same ideas: Spain is a multilingual state where no language is better than the others. Supporting a monolingual state, or a state where Castilian is clearly the hegemonic language, goes against the Constitution. In fact, Branchadell explains that, after the Constitution of 1978, Spain is a new entity:

España es un país plurilingüe. La mayoría de los españoles tiene el castellano como lengua maternal o lo ha elegido como vehículo preferente de expresión, comprensión y comunicación, pero existen también otros

españoles que tienen o han elegido otra lengua. Ésta es la realidad que la Constitución de 1978, los estatutos de autonomía y las llamadas leyes ‘de normalización lingüística’ han pretendido acomodar en los últimos 30 años. (*El País*, 7 July 2008)

In other words, Spain is not a stable essence but a construction. His reading of the Constitution implies that languages should try to reach an agreement. This can only be achieved by collaboration, by accepting the instability of national identities and accepting the possibility of parallel belongings and parallel languages. Castilians are not the only ones who are responsible for the situation. Branchadell warns The Catalan Government that having less hours of Castilian than of another foreign language is “un grave error político.” Furió and the anonymous author would agree with Branchadell because the Catalan reaction against Castilian essentialism is itself an example of counter-essentialism and implies a lack of collaboration. It goes against the very concept of Spain in the Constitution.¹⁰

3. Linguistic mixture

Nevertheless, lastly, there is another possibility in the discussion that appears in Medieval and Early Modern Spain but it is absent in the twenty-first century debate in Spain. In this particular case the study of this ideology can offer a new way of interpreting the linguistic conflict. In 1499 the municipal authorities of Valencia supported the linguistic thought expressed by Francesc Eiximenis (1340?-1409?) in 1383: “Aquesta terra [valenciana] ha llenguatge compost de diverses llengües que li són entorn, e de cascuna ha retingut ço que millor li és, e ha lleixats los pus durs e los pus malsonants vocables dels altres, e ha presos los millors.”¹¹ The language that represents the Valencian community is the result of the dialectal process of linguistic mixture. When different languages are present in a community there is always the possibility of mixing them to create a superior language that has the best things of every language. It is a linguistic synthesis. Of course, this is a very different kind of collaboration because it represents the end of the previous linguistic identities. They do not live together in a collaborative, parallel non-hierarchical way, but they need to transform themselves to create a monoglossic society that is, supposedly, the result of linguistic contact and linguistic progress. Yet, can this be considered progress? Is this

¹⁰ Authors such as Ross Poole would consider this reading of the Constitution a fantasy because “the integrity of the body politic, and more especially of a liberal polity, requires the existence of a preferred *public culture*, and this will inevitably occupy a privileged position with respect to other cultures.” Poole indicates that although it is dangerous to identify language and culture, language “is clearly a crucial constituent” (121-22). Therefore, according to Poole, a cultural and linguistic hierarchy is needed in a multilingual and multicultural state so that it can exist.

¹¹ August Rafanell indicates that the municipal authorities supported this view (238), but he does not mention that Francesc Eiximenis was the author of this quotation in 1383 (Eiximenis 19).

a realistic alternative to the linguistic-national conflict?¹² Unfortunately, the idea of linguistic synthesis can also be manipulated politically in the context of monolingualism, whereas the collaborative, parallel co-existence of different languages, in which identity is never an essentialist concept, seems to be more promising.¹³

The *Manifiesto por una lengua común* (2008) and the reactions that the text caused, represent an example of how certain ideas have been accepted as natural for a long time. In this linguistic debate it is easy to distinguish two ways of constructing Spain linguistically: first, essentialism, that is, either a monolingual Spain or different monolingual regions with their own language. The main feature of this essentialism is the belief in the hierarchy of languages, the difficulty of coexistence, and the natural association between language and political unity and identity. The other possibility would be the parallel coexistence of languages without any kind of hierarchy, which implies that the concept of nation is a construction and a nation can be multilingual. This is definitely, from my point of view, the most promising option for nowadays, although it has been said that this is just a utopia. In this article I have shown that these two possibilities had already been described in the sixteenth century and even earlier. Therefore, although, the *Manifiesto* was not written as a conscious continuation of the sixteenth century linguistic ideology, the similarities make us realize that the study of the sixteenth century linguistic texts can help us understand the present. What is more, sometimes, the past can even provide a new option that did not seem to appear in the debate, as I have explained when describing the possibility of a linguistic synthesis that had been described by Francesc Eiximenis in the fourteenth century. At the same time, when studying the past we will be influenced by the present. This is not necessarily a negative aspect because the study of the past and the study of the present can be used in a collaborative way.

¹² As an example of linguistic mixture in the Hispanic World, Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman mention *Spanglish*. They consider it a “hybrid linguistic behavior” (203).

¹³ In fact, it can be argued that Eiximenis’ description of Valencian as a mixed language responds to the objective of emphasizing the independence of the Kingdom of Valencia in relation to Catalonia. Therefore, it has a profound political significance, especially if we compare Eiximenis’ comment with Don Pedro’s description of the Valencian variety (Despuig 61).

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