From the Local to the Global: Feminist and Postcolonial Approaches to the Relationship between the Antipodes (Galicia and Australia)

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1. Introduction

The title *From the Local to the Global: Feminist and Postcolonial Approaches to the Relationship between the Antipodes (Galicia and Australia)* shows in some way that the predominant methodology used in this article will be that of hypothesis. Thus, starting from the exploration of the common features related to a postcolonial and feminist analysis, I will attempt to establish new relationships and to open up new perspectives within the cultural exchanges between the two nations, Galicia and Australia, within a global world. On the one hand, these will be new relationships in favour of a non-sexist language which contributes to overcoming gender discrimination; and on the other hand, new relationships which favour a re-evaluation of voices which have been silenced by hegemonic and centralised discourses.

In spite of the fact that both proposals are intimately related, in order to make the presentation simpler, I will deal with the postcolonial aspect first and later move on to the feminist part, to conclude by joining both perspectives which, when applied to the relationships between Galicia and Australia, will allow us to take a journey from the local to the global.

2. Postcolonial Theories

The application of a postcolonial focus on nations such as Galicia and Australia may seem, at first sight, somewhat risky, because neither one nor the other usually identifies itself with post-colonialism in the strict sense of the term, which defines it as something which was preceded by explicit colonisation. Nevertheless, as the field of postcolonial studies started to gain prominence, with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), and with the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, new, more flexible meanings of the term started to appear. The concept of post-colonialism was therefore seen to be useful in order to refer to ex-colonies which are now independent, but which have to face the neo-colonial forms of subordination by means of the expansion of capitalism and of globalisation, that is, those countries which celebrate a nominal independence but which continue, in the words of Simon During, under foreign control by means of the laws of the market. It was likewise considered to be a useful term to refer to the poor countries in the First World, which are in a minority, and also to refer to the study of the interaction between European nations and the societies which they colonised in the modern period, or, in even more general terms, of any position against imperialism or Euro centrism. In such a way, these new approaches mean that this category is perfectly applicable to the reality of both Galicia and Australia.

2.1. Postcolonial Australia

Despite the generalised tendency (albeit a tendency which is being questioned more and more) to omit Australia from the category of postcolonial, adducing its relatively short struggle for

independence and its tendency towards "loyalty" towards the metropolis, it is currently considered to be a country with a margin/centre relationship with its metropolis, the United Kingdom, resulting in sufficient motive for the Australian experience to be relevant for a wider understanding of colonialism. When talking about Australia we must place the country inside the long list of former colonies of the European powers, within the sub-section of "settler" countries (with colonists, such as, for example, Canada), in contrast to other "non-settler" colonies (without colonists, such as, for example, India, Jamaica, Cape Verde or Senegal).

In this context it is possible to identify in Australia a certain tension between the processes of colonisation and decolonisation within a framework of contemporary globalisation, as these processes possess an integrating complexity which operates on different levels: it does not refer only to the constitutional rupture between contemporary Australia and its metropolis, but rather also of the possible recognition and establishment of an Aborigine "nation-state" within Australian borders or even (and taking the widest possible definition of the term postcolonial) of the consideration of Australia itself as a metropolis with respect to the overseas territories which it currently administrates.

The first level of analysis implies an analysis of the possible open "struggle" with/against the British metropolis. Australia is currently (along with Canada, New Zealand, India, South Africa and other former British colonies) a member of the *Commonwealth of Nations* and the system of government is that of a constitutional monarchy which recognises Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain as head of state, represented in Australia by the Governor General designated by her.

The existence of studies such as that by Alastair Davidson, alluding to the problematic term of belonging and pointing towards the existence of a "New Nationalism" which is attempting to recreate the foundations for Australian national identity through the use of the idea of "exclusion of those who do not belong" (185), allows us to state that at present Australia is still trying to define itself in relation to "other" entities in the North. This affirmation was evident during the negotiations towards constitutional reform in 1999, in which the primary concerns consisted in the renegotiation of the constitutional

links between Australia and the monarchy and with the possibility of choosing a President as Head of State (cf. Robert Grant). The process ended with a referendum which gave the possibility of the transformation of the current monarchy into a republic, and the results meant that the proposal was finally rejected.

The concern about redefinition with respect to other Western nations should not hide the fact that in this debate the role of the Australian Aborigine population was absolutely marginal, and in spite of representing 2.2% of the then population (440.000 persons from a total of 20 million inhabitants). We are, therefore, within a second level of analysis of the relationship between Australia and post-colonialism, based on the postcolonial Aborigine struggle with/against the present "British" Australia. The start of this conflict must be placed in the year 1788, when the white/British colonisation of Australia actually began, in spite of the fact that already in 1770 Lieutenant James Cook claimed part of the lands of the South, *Terra Australis*, for England, informing his superiors that this was land without owners.

In any case, this colonisation brought with it a cultural clash between the European population and the Aborigine communities. On the one hand, the Europeans arrived with certain ideological bases sustained by the enlightened principles of rationalism, capitalism and universalism which they understood in terms of modernity and civilisation and which they materialised through the possession of property, and on the other hand, the Aborigine community was highly heterogeneous and each tribe (Koori, Murri, Yamatji, Nunga, Arangu, Yapa, etc.) had its own peculiarities, although in general they shared the fact that their lives were dictated by pre-political laws of nature based on collective spirituality, as described by John Tomlinson. The different views of the world and idiosyncrasies led the colonists to identify and classify the Aborigine population as pre-modern and uncivilised, which without doubt constituted a first step towards their discrimination as inferiors who lacked the advances of the modern era, and a second step which would materialise this discrimination either through extermination or through forced assimilation

The imposition of European principles of civilisation and modernity found its two greatest forms of expression in language and the ownership of land. With respect to languages, when the Europeans arrived there was an immense linguistic richness in the country (between 200 and 300 languages), of which only around 70 still survive, and of these 20 are in serious danger of extinction. Colonisation also meant that the country adopted de facto English as its official language (the variant of Australian English) which is nowadays the only language spoken by the vast majority of the population. On the other hand, the lust for property led the first British colonists to declare Australia *terra nullius* (land of nobody), which gave them the right to issue their own deeds of ownership of Australian land and thus to expel from their own lands the indigenous inhabitants.

In order to illustrate concisely the dimensions which would be reached by this fact, it is necessary to refer to the well-known Mabo case. Eddie Mabo was an Aborigine who belonged to the Meriam people, traditional owners of Murray Island and the reefs surrounding it, in the Torres Strait, which ceased to be their property when new property deeds were issued. In 1982, Mabo took on a court case in the Australian High Court in order to obtain a declaration over his traditional rights to the land. The hearing ended in 1992 with a High Court decision that stipulated, for the first time ever, that Australia was not *terra nullius* before the British invasion, that the Australian territory did not belong to the British crown (even though crown sovereignty still prevailed), and that the British invasion did not withdraw the Aborigine ownership of the land, decreeing, therefore, that the Meriam Aborigine people had the right of ownership and occupation of the territory in which they lived. The Mabo case thus changed the means of understanding the right of property in Australia and, as a consequence, the Federal Government was forced to include this topic in its political agenda and to pass, in 1993, the Law of Native Possession.

All things considered, if the current objective is the renegotiation between the Aborigine population (resisting colonisation) and the rest of the society ("happily" colonised), the first step implies some recognition that the question is not one of cultural difference, but rather one of a greater difference, based on epistemological foundations which are very different with respect to the understanding of territoriality and property (cf. Paul Patton).

Furthermore, it must be stressed that such understanding is marked by the imperatives of globalisation, the logic of which is to turn everything into a market place and to assimilate all under the totalising umbrella of a fierce and exacerbated consumer society. This tendency has a clear consequence in the relationship under analysis, because if, at one point, Aborigine identity was compact and marked by resistance to colonial domination, nowadays the identity of the Aborigine community is fragmented precisely by contemporary market relations, resulting in the fact that there a group of Aborigine people which is even more marginalised (than those who continue to resist), and yet another group who have assimilated into the global market in order to take advantage of the lucrative incomes and businesses (Boris Frankel 235). In the current debate, the effects of the rupture in Aborigine identity mean that the most marginalised group emphasises its demands for authenticity in a more "desperate" way, even though in a global context it is becoming more and more difficult to define the term "authenticity" (Elisabeth Povinelli 590).

Finally, the bionomy Australia-post-colonialism demands a third level of analysis which perceives the Australian power as being itself a possible coloniser of overseas territories. Thus, apart from taking as its own six island states (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia), the Commonwealth of Australia administers external territories such as the Ashmore Islands, the Australian Antarctic Territory, Christmas Island, the Coco Islands, the Islands of the Coral Sea, the Heard and McDonald Islands and Norfolk Island.

2.2. Postcolonial Galicia

The application of the concept of (post)colonialism to Galicia must be taken in the widest possible sense of the word: countries in the First World which live in a minority, having at one time been colonised by another nation. In the case of Galicia, this is a case of linguistic and political colonialism by Castile, a situation which must be placed under revision given the vast divergences between many of the official historiographical studies from the Peninsula (which interpret history in a partial way, presenting Galicia as a subaltern and subsidiary kingdom of the kingdoms of

Asturias, Leon or Castile), and other studies which make a more contrasted global analysis base on medieval documents, which leads to the character of a hegemonic kingdom of Gallaecia during this period, a Christian territory with a great presence in Europe which would become the only alternative to Muslim Hispania, recognised in such in Arabic documents of the period and in the very papal institutions (cf. Colin Smith, Martin Veiga Alonso, Xesús Ferro Couselo).

Similarly, since the composition of Galician as a language differentiated from Latin in the eighth and ninth centuries, and the resulting growth o a Galician world view, the use of Galician as an important and prestigious language is well documented and is, indeed, predominant in the field of Peninsular lyric poetry. With respect to its usage within its own territory, Henrique Monteagudo Romero has carried out an exhaustive study of ecclesiastic, civil and private documents written in this period and has concluded that he found evidence of correspondence in Galician on 1029 occasions, against only five occasions in which the correspondence was in Castilian. These figures demonstrate, therefore, that at this time Galician was the normal and "official" language for the inhabitants of Galicia.

The political and linguistic decline of Galicia can be put down to the separation from the original "Galaic" trunk through historical reasons in the two states which currently make up the Peninsula. The separation of Portugal meant a political weakening of Galicia and a progressive loss of its earlier cultural importance, which slowly moved towards the South. On the other hand, the separation of Castile gave rise to the political annexation of Galicia and the margining of the original kingdom, more and more connected to the throne of Leon and Castile (cf. Camilo Nogueira Román). Within this loss of identity, the popular revolts which faced the Galician masses against sectors of the Galician nobility in the "Wars of the Irmandiños" were of fundamental importance, because "a derrota dos irmandiños significou sobre todo o fracaso político da burguesía galega, por canto aí se truncaron as súas posibilidades de acceder á dirección do país" [the defeat of the *Irmandiños* meant above all the political failure of the Galician bourgeoisie, in that it was there that they lost the possibility of obtaining the leadership of

the country] (Anselmo López Carreira 198). As a result, the colonisation by Castile was further favoured by the victories won over the pro-Galician kings by the Castilian aristocracy. An example of this can be seen in the victory, in the late fourteenth century, of the pro-Castilian Henry II of Trastámara over his brother Peter I supported by the Galician nobility, given that this victory allowed the arrival in Galicia of a new aristocracy speaking a foreign tongue, Castilian. The terrible consequences for the future of Galician were increased, in the late fifteenth century, with the victory of Isabella the Catholic in her struggle for the Castilian throne, against the wishes of the Galician nobility. Under the reign of the Catholic Monarchs the definitive imposition of Castilian culture and the extermination of Galician culture would be carried out, as Xosé Ramón Freixeiro Mato states:

> Os nobres galegos deberán derrubar os seus castelos e disolver os seus exércitos, sendo substituídos pola "Santa Hermandad"; Galicia convértese nunha provincia case tan remota como as ultramarinas; economicamente vai ser saqueada, tendo que soster as cada vez maiores necesidades dunha nobreza estabelecida na corte e duns bispos maioritariamente foráneos e absentistas; e ademais de ser vítima periódica da fame e das pestes, a súa poboación será castigada pola leva de soldados e a emigración. [The Galician nobles had to destroy their castles and disband their armies, which were substituted by the "Holy Brotherhood". Galicia was turned into a province almost as remote as the overseas territories; economically it was plundered and forced to maintain the ever-growing needs of nobility established in the court and bishops who were mostly foreign absentees. Moreover Galicia was a periodical victim to famines and plagues and her population would be chastised by enlistment and emigration]

With this oppression of Galician rights, the language would enter the long tunnel of the dark years. As such, in spite of the fact that the Galician people continued to live their lives speaking Galician, in a situation of almost total monolingualism as of the sixteenth century a focus of diglossia personified in the gradual establishment of a nucleus of foreign nobility whose objective was to

substitute the Galician nobility. Thus, in this way, by using the enormous power available to them, they managed to impose Castilian as the official language (although not, at this stage, the real language) in Galicia, against the will of all Galician social classes. Galicia, from being hegemonic, would become dominated and colonised by Castile, with the imposition of a dominant ideology which, for Francisco Rodríguez Sánchez, was "castelanista primeiro, e españolista máis tarde" [at first Castilian centred, to later become Spanish centred] (63). After seven centuries of linguistic normality (Galician monolinguism), the unnatural coexistence of two languages in the territory means that at this moment the phenomenon of "glotofaxia" (Louis-Jean Calvet 7) as we have already undergone five centuries of a process of linguistic substitution of the autochthonous language for a foreign one.

2.3. From the local to the global: new postcolonial relationships between the Antipodes

Understanding post-colonialism as a group of experiences of a community whose voice has been silenced by the oppressive colonial power, producing within the colonised people a submission of its cultural manifestations up to the point in which the colonised community begins to see its own forms of expression and identity as foreign, the parameters of Postcolonial Theory are wide enough to mean that their application to the cases of Australia and Galicia is especially attractive and useful.

Attractive, in the sense that it allows us to explore the shared parallelisms in both cases, in which there occurs a situation where there is an imbalance of cultures, with one of these forced into a minority and abnormal situation within its own territory while the other becomes hegemonic. This, as long as we respect the peculiarities of each situation, allows us to define Australia and Galicia as colonies of expansionist which imposed new cultural and linguistic models on the local communities.

It is also useful, because through a series of exchanges and experiences between both cultures which influenced and start to constitute a cultural achievement and opens up to us an interesting field which expands our reference frameworks, "uns marcos de

referencia dende os que analizar a nosa situación e dende os que ir atopando solucións ás nosas realidades" (María Reimóndez Meilán 146) (reference frameworks through which to analyse our situation and through which we can find solutions to our realities).

We must, however, remember that the key to the interpretation of these frameworks is situated in cultural confrontation within the global context of multiculturalism and of the interculturalism in which the societies are immersed. Nonetheless, within the current reality, this should be interpreted as a false multiculturalism in which there is no place for difference, for under the focus of Western hegemony, multiculturalism is understood as being synonymous with single-minded thought in the global village; as the single dominant culture which only accepts what is within its own margins and which rejects what is different. Thus, in order that the new reference frameworks yet to come have a full and satisfactory development, it is first necessary to question and overcome multiculturalism (in the economic, political and cultural practices within the society which is termed postcolonial) as a synonym for hybridisation, alienation or purging; and it is also necessary to qualify the fact that the construction of a multicultural society should be something else and "comeza por afianzar e normalizar todas as culturas existentes, pois a riqueza desa sociedade pluricultural radica na diversidade e non no uniformismo" [start by consolidating and normalising all the existing cultures, because the richness of such a multicultural society is base on diversity and not on uniformity] (Manuel F. Vieites 88).

3. Feminist Theories

The patriarchal model of society is that which regulates the planet, causing by such means and on a word-wide scale, an oppression of women as a gender, and this of course constitutes a primary link between Galicia and Australia. It must be taken into account that this global discrimination is manifested in different forms at a local level, depending on the culture and society to which each woman belongs.

On the one hand, the fact that the patriarchy is universal means that feminisms surge with this same feature of universality, a current of theoretical thought and practical policies both plural and

transversal, whose objective is to overcome the oppression suffered by all women, and as such must be inclusive and plural, leaving room for difference as a procedure by which to comply with equality. On the other hand, however, the fact that patriarchal oppression acquires its own peculiarities means that there appear pluralities of feminist currents each with their own methodologies which arise to face the different types of oppression. Precisely from this plurality there emanates the use of the plural form feminisms,[1] always remembering that diversification is not a synonym for disintegration, but rather that two of the main characteristics which define feminisms are complexity and unity.

Indeed, within diversity there feature certain guiding lines which are always present, and one of these is the constant concern of feminisms to localise oppression and to make explicit the mechanisms which produce and sustain it. In this way, "one of the basic principles of feminism is that society has been constructed with a bias which favours males; one of the basic principles of feminists who are concerned with language is that this bias can be located in language" (Dale Spender 14). It is therefore necessary to tackle how and up to what point gender is relevant when it comes to negotiating the interaction and construction of socio-cultural identities, and to what extent language is (or is not) a feminist affair.

3.1. The Role of Language in the Construction of Reality

In order to deal with the role of language within the construction of reality, post-structuralist criticism has questioned the supposedly non-mediated relationship between language and reality (defended by the traditional theory of Saussure), supplying the bases for the most recent sociolinguistic theories, defenders of a moderate version of Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis, concluding that language "like other forms of representation, language does not simply mirror reality, it contributes to it" (Sherry Simon 9). This implies that our minds, anchored in the here and now, only accede to imagining the reality of things through language, and despite the non-existence of any direct and one-to-one correspondence between reality and the signs used to denominate it, such correspondence is produced between the signs used to talk about reality and the images which are

created in our minds as an answer to such denominations (Mercedes Bengoechea 71).[2]

In such a way, it is recognised that linguistic gender does have an important repercussion in the (in)visibility of the sexes, given the strong relationship between the biological category of sex and its representation in languages by the linguistic category of gender. This sex-gender relationship is easily appreciable in languages like English, with a natural system of assignation of gender based on semantic criteria, that is, in the biological characteristics of the referent: feminine is used when the referent is a woman and masculine when it is a man, the rest of realities belonging to the neutral gender, in such a way that linguistic gender and sex of the referent always coincide. On the contrary, in languages with grammatical gender such as Galician it can be more complicated to understand that the gender has a relationship with real life, due to the fact that masculine or feminine gender is granted not only to sexed beings, but also to inanimate things: all objects and persons obligatorily possess a feminine or masculine grammatical gender. The simplicity of this analysis led some analysts such as Álvaro García Meseguer to state that, in grammatical languages, gender is arbitrary and that, as a result, it does not reflect reality. The French linguist Greville Corbett, however, explained in his reference *Gender* how the criterion of arbitrariness failed as the only criterion which is valid to explain linguistic gender in grammatical languages, demonstrating that the feminine/masculine classification of names in language follows semantic, morphological or phonological principles which are more than arbitrary, both in the case of inanimate/asexual referents and in that of animate/sexed ones. But it is above all in this latter case of animate/sexed beings where semantic criteria are imposed in the organisation of grammatical gender, and it can be stated that "if generic references and so-called epicene nouns[3] are not taken into consideration, feminine and masculine nouns referring to human beings in the majority of cases reflect the distinction between females and males" (Uwe Kjær Nissen 254). Thus, when referents are persons, the assignation of linguistic gender is mainly based on semantic criteria; both in languages with a natural and with a grammatical system, given that in such cases sex and linguistic gender converge.

3.2. Linguistic Sexism

As such, beyond material and practical structures, the oppression of women also exists in the authentic bases of the logos, of reason and of articulation, and these embrace the subtle linguistic procedures and the logical processes through which the signified itself is produced. Bearing this in mind, from the 1970s feminists realised that "if Feminism is the final cause—and I believe it is—then language is the first necessity" (Maike Engelhardt 166), and thus started to develop a critique of language in order to analyse the treatment and linguistic representation of women, leading them to claim that the language which the patriarchy puts at our disposition is sexist, and later, to conclude that the exclusion of women in language is a phenomenon which is based on their social exclusion. Language, never innocent, becomes a powerful determinant of reality through which thought and culture are transmitted, and the key by which patriarchal society becomes dominant is in the control of the symbolic order by the masculine group by means of verbal sexism and androcentricity, the true instrument of the perpetuation of male supremacy.

Linguistic sexism can be defined as all types of sexist attitudes and behaviour which are verbalised and expressed by means of language. Languages are sexist when representing and naming the world from a male point of view and in accordance with stereotypical beliefs regarding women, men and the relationships between them, and moreover, defining terms and uses which exclude women, ignoring them and making their presence and achievements invisible. More specifically, I will give examples of some common uses of linguistic sexism which, despite being so evident, often go unnoticed (cf. Olga Castro Vázquez, Eulàlia Lledó Cunill). To start, languages are sexist through the dependence and subordination to which the female gender is submitted (the use of suffixes derived to form the feminine from the masculine such as *tradutor>tradutora* [translator], or sexual criteria instead of alphabetic criteria in dictionaries in *neno, -a* [male child, female child], the masculine ruling the concordance of gender *unha muller e un rato atropelados* [a woman and a rat were run over], or women used as possessions and complements of men in *abono familiar para marido e cónxuxe: 100 euros* [Family season ticket for husband and spouse]); as well as,

through the denomination of reality from a male point of view (in expressions such as *cojonudo* [awesome] or *vaya par de huevos* [what a pair of balls] which acquire positive connotations in contrast to the negative connotations in words such as *coñazo* [drag] and *putada* [dirty trick], or in the us of *home* [man] and "man" to refer to humanity in *érase una vez el hombre* [once upon a time there was a man]). Thirdly, by means of lexical gaps which leave as the only alternative the inclusion of women in male linguistic references (for example, the naming of the sex act from a male viewpoint with expressions such as *penetrar* [penetrate] or "screw," and the non-existence of feminine forms for jobs of work now carried out by women), and fouthly, through the use of pseudo-generic masculines (which falsify the reality in sentences like *el 75% de los españoles aceptaría un hijo homosexual* [75% of Spanish people would accept a homosexual (male) child], and which cause linguistic problems for women by demanding a double effort in trying to work out whether or not the masculine being used has a generic function or is exclusively masculine). Similarly, through two epicenes which reproduce the image of the masculine subject (suffice to think about the interpretation we make of surnames in bibliographical indexes, which make it difficult to solve the enigma "Pérez has a brother. But Pérez's brother has no siblings"). Sixthly, through asymmetry (in expressions like *Señor* vs. *Señora*, *Señorita* and "Mr vs. Mrs, Miss > Ms," as well as the use of the patrilineal system of the passing on of surnames which follows a traditional tendency to mark the eternal dependence on the father and/or the husband); and finally, languages are sexist through the stereotyped appearance of women (as passive beings and sexual and dependent creatures, on physical beauty and sickening sensibility) and men (active beings and rational creatures, of great physical strength and intellectual superiority).

3.3. Reform
These samples constitute sufficient arguments which critically value the need for a reform in favour of non-sexist language through which to visualise the presence of women in society. Should it, though, be a linguistic or a social reform? That is, by instigating social change, will these changes be reflected in the language, thereby producing linguistic reform? Or, on the contrary,

by instigating linguistic change, would there be a subsequent social reform? In my opinion, there is a need to work simultaneously in a parallel way in both directions (social and linguistic) in favour of a change which I term "sociolectal."

From the first direction, society should change in order to be receptive to the changes promoted by linguistic reform and these changes should prosper in such a way that they become behavioural models which act as unconscious organisers of action: "while sexist language clearly reflects social structures, the continuing existence of such social structures throws into question the possibility of successful language reform" (Susan Ehrlich and Ruth King 165). Thus, it is not sufficient just to implement social reform, because there are women currently working in the bricklaying industry who lack a specific word to denote their profession and, above all, because social reform on its own is not enough to force an evolution in mentality because, as I earlier stated, we think through words.

From the second direction, language must also be transformed to represent reality in a different way from that which is seen as being "normal," drawing society's attention to linguistic sexism, to raise questions about what is said and how this is said, as a first step towards the raising of the public awareness, the change in social attitudes and behaviour, and the evolution of mentalities, which will lead to social change. Being aware of the linguistic choices obliges us to control and watch over our thought process and "will gradually enable us to UNlearn [sic] patriarchal ways of thinking" (Julia Penelope 21); in such a way that linguistic reform will become a powerful source of *empowerment* for women. The potential of the social transformation of language, the change from it being an oppressive feature to its being a liberating one, passes through the concept that language

> although a vehicle of meaning that is always driven by will to power, is also a means of social change. The use of an inclusive language, at the level of parole and discourse, entails changes in perspectives, which in turn act as stimuli to changes in human action and reality. (Michaela Wolf 137)

Linguistic reform, therefore, on its own is not sufficient either, because what is at stake is not changing words but rather meanings, as Deborah Cameron rightly puts it: "the point of non-sexist language is not to change the forms of words for the sake of it, but to change the repertoire of meanings a language conveys. It's about redefining rather than merely renaming the world" (161).

Society should change in order to be receptive to the changes promoted by linguistic reform, while language should also be transformed to represent and translate the (redefined) reality in the most precise way possible, as Anne Pauwels summarises:

> In my opinion, the majority of feminist languages critics and language planners opting for 'linguistic intervention' can be aligned with this view: they do not assume that language holds the key to women's liberation nor do they believe that taking linguistic action alone will have a drastic effect in reducing discriminatory practices and oppressive situations in other aspects of life. They believe, however, that linguistic action may give women an opportunity to express their perspectives and experiences, and that linguistic action can increase people's awareness that language is not a neutral medium for transmitting ideas and values. (92)

At this point, as well as the necessary strategies for social reform, it is also necessary to apply strategies which lead towards the possibility that sexist language, once it has been identified, can be rewritten and translated into non-sexist language. And this should be done with the prior knowledge that actions against sexist language from feminisms are not uniform, given that the manifestations that sexism acquires in language are different for some and for others. As such, the variety of strategies represents the discursive wealth and reconciles its use concomitant with the function of the language, of the context, of the objective of every statement and of the type of linguistic and social sexism to be kept in check.

In an attempt at systemisation, one feminist current vouches primarily for a focus of linguistic equality, thus supposing the adoption of two strategies. The first of these is that of the neutralisation/generalisation, which implies the substitution of the sexist term for a neutral one to avoid explicitly indicating the gender

(*veciñanza* [neighbourhood], *mocidade* [youth], *persoal docente* [teaching staff] or *non tiveron descendencia/crianzas* [they had no offspring/children] instead of *veciños* [(male) neighbours], *rapaces* [kids], *profesores* [teachers], and *non tiveron fillos* [they had no (male) children]) with the aim of converting in time the gender markers in truly neutral. However, in my opinion, this measure should be applied with care, as the existence of expressions without gender markers in a language does not mean that these are necessarily used and interpreted in a neutral way. As I argued, there exists a wide tendency to understand neutrals and epicenes as masculine. The second strategy for equality is that of the feminisation/specification consisting in making women openly visible within language, thus stimulating certain explicit and symmetrical when human referents are designated (if it is a man, masculine; woman, feminine; both (amb@s), both (amb@s); unknown, both (amb@s)) in such a way that women are given a presence in such a way as to change mentalities, and which can be given a material presence through the use of brackets, slashes, hyphens, strokes, "@"s and square brackets, which in practice are transformed into phrases like *son boas actrices e actores* [they are good actresses and actors], *os e as atletas* [the (male) and (female) athletes], *as/os nais/pais* [the mothers/fathers], *tod@s @s alumn@s* [all of the (male and female) students], *o/a tradutor(a)* [the (male or female) translator], *ola a todas e todos* [hello to all (females) and all (males)], *benvidas e benvido* [welcome (to females) and welcome (to males)] , *quérense moito a unha ao outro* [they love each other (female to male) very much], etc.).[4]

In the other part of this dichotomy stand the feminist currents who believe, in general terms, that it is neither functional nor productive to carry out small reforms or modifications to a language invented by men, because they will never be enough to transmit women's experiences. For this reason these feminist currents call for a libertarian language which, among many possible variants, seeks to draw attention to the presence of women through linguistic disruption (semantic alterations, neologisms, linguistic innovations like "herstory," "herricane," "wimyn," "she," "the colonisErs," etc.) or otherwise in the creation of a totally new language centred on feminine experience (using the genetic feminine).

3.4. From the local to the Global: New Feminist Relationships in the Antipodes

The arguments I have presented allow me to state that language is a feminist subject with a common global dimension for both Australia and Galicia, and with numerous specific local dimensions for every society on the planet. In each of these we must bear in mind that linguistic reform is an essential part of social reform, and in this sense I believe that the TEaGIRL[5] project (*Transcultural Englishes and the Gender-Inclusive Reform of Language*) carried out in Australia provides an important starting point towards linguistic reform inclusive of gender in Galicia, given its potential for the amplification for our reference frameworks for the implementation of a non-sexist language.

TEaGIRL is a research project which was carried out between 2003 and 2006 the researchers Anne Pauwels and Jo Winter, from the Department of Linguistics at the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, in the University of Western Australia (Perth), centred on research into non-sexist linguistic reform and subsequent social change in the English of Singapore, the Philippines and Hong Kong.[6] Their objective consists of examining the relation between the level of implementation of social reform in gender and the linguistic and discursive mechanisms which contribute to the representation of the sexes, in order to be able to conclude at which level linguistic reform is at and to what extent this influences the social; what are the linguistic strategies which have a most fruitful function; and what characteristics define the communities and groups of speakers which help make and spread the changes, and the other groups which hinder this. With this objective in mind, they gathered data through the linguistic corpus and through an online questionnaire which was available on the project's web page, and then they examined the linguistic representation of women and men through the analysis of the non-sexist oral and written language from these communities.

The possible applications of the TEaGIRL project to Galician have various levels, and as such I will look in more detail at the features of the project carried out at the University of Western

Australia. Firstly, the TEaGIRL project deals with linguistic reform in minority or non-standardised varieties of English from the *outer-circle* (Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines) to later spread this to the *inner-circle*. At the same time, Galician is currently a language with a conflict of standardisation and with minority status which obviously lies within the *outer-circle* at a European level, and so the parallelisms with the TEaGIRL invite us to start with a language such as Galician in order to study the possibility of linguistic reforms later applicable to other majority or *inner-circle* languages which, for one or other reason, are not willing to take up this important challenge that they face.

At the same time, the TEaGIRL project analyses the degree of implementation of present day linguistic and social reform, evaluating which strategies work best for the English language. As I stated above, the behaviour of linguistic gender in Galician is very different from its English counterpart, given that our language is a language with a grammatical system. This peculiarity means that we must assess the current degree of implementation of non-sexist language in our tongue, as well as to re-examine the functioning of the different strategies applicable to the different types of linguistic sexism prevailing in languages with a grammatical system. For this reason, and in the same way as the TEaGIRL, it is necessary to start research on the groups of speakers which potentially facilitate and bring about linguistic change in Galician as a means of guaranteeing a correct application of the strategies; and it is also necessary finally to work in cooperation with people from the world of politics and education.

Thirdly, the TEaGIRL project proposes research into both global and local practices in order to understand the relationship which exists between the various varieties of the same language in the world. To extrapolate this study to the Galician context allows us to understand and to spread the implementation of linguistic reform from a local to a global level, applying it to languages like Portuguese and Castilian which, if at present these cannot be seen as varieties of the same language, they can be seen as languages with a relevant idiomatic and geographical proximity.

Moreover, the TEaGIRL project proposes an examination of the contact which exists between speakers of the different varieties of

English in relation to inclusive linguistic reform, exploring questions of linguistic hegemony and imperialism as well as notions concerning the centre and the periphery. Such explorations are particularly relevant in the case of English, because as well as talking about the *inner* and *outer-circle*, it enjoys an outstanding application in the *expanding-circle* (English as a foreign language) for global communication, which at the same time offers an interesting opportunity to research into whether it is the non-sexist version of English which is being taken up and spread, in the knowledge that, in agreement with David Graddol, the number of bilingual people who speak English outnumbers the number of speakers of English as their mother tongue and "increasingly will decide the global future of the language" (10). With respect to Galician, it is important to point out its important tendency towards international expansion which has been taking place over the last few years, both towards the Portuguese speaking world and the Spanish-speaking and towards other worlds which were, until recently, more distant. At this point, I consider that our language ought to know how to face the challenge of taking the initiative and not to remain non-fructiferous positions of comfort which lead to it queuing up behind the hegemonic Castilian and Portuguese. If we accept this challenge, all the international projection which our language is currently getting[7] will have the important function that people who learn Galician will also learn how to be aware of the need for non-sexist language in all the tongues of the world, to cast off the linguistic practices which have been internalised by patriarchy.

It is necessary to understand all of these proposals within the context which defines Galician as a minority and minoritised language which, towards its process of normalisation, needs to increase its number of speakers. Within this framework, I defend the belief that the sociolectal reform of gender, with the introduction of non-sexist language strategies, will contribute towards the linguistic normalisation of the language. This belief causes an amount of reluctance amongst certain agents of linguistic planning who are concerned about the promotion of minoritised languages within heteroglossic communities and thus, for example, defend their arguing that subordinate languages are the standard-bearers of tradition and of strong resistance against outside impositions

(especially if these impositions come from the dominant language with which they compete for their survival), and non-sexism is seen as an imposition coming from outside. Similarly, they are reluctant to see the implementation of non-sexist language which they regard as a real and original linguistic threat, and they state the need to advance with caution in order to guarantee the maximum amount of "natural manner" for new terminology in order to avoid linguistic insecurity (already rooted) in native speakers, and to avoid the withdrawal of speakers to a dominant language in which they might feel safer despite the fact that it is not their mother tongue (cf. Neal Baxter).

After all has been said, I can see that the ability to attain a non-sexist Galician language would have important convenient aspects which would contribute to obtaining new speakers, a key aspect for the survival and normalisation of the language. The first advantage is that linguistic planning of gender for subordinate languages incites us towards the exploration of the relationship between subordinate and dominant languages respectively. Secondly, linguistic planning can perfectly well go hand in hand with gender planning for a subordinate language, as both types of planning are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The underlying question when examining the need for reform in favour of non-sexist language in subordinate tongues is not whether a language should be saved or not, but rather what language should be saved and for whom. It is important that this type of planning works towards attaining a living language, a language which moves forward at one with the times in which it lives, and which becomes an instrument of communication in accordance with the needs of the modern age. This means that, in order for Galician to be a fully fledged language and not to remain a museum piece anchored in the past traditions and condemned to die, it must develop a language which takes in all speakers equally and which does not exclude women. I this way, gender becomes a trans-disciplinary feature which Galician Studies, and the Galician language must bear very much in mind. If the agents for linguistic normalisation wish to see Galician as a living language with a future, the Galician people must have at their disposal a language in accordance with the needs of modern times.

4. Conclusions

4. Conclusions

As we stated in the introduction, throughout this article I have tried to outline, in the form of a hypothesis, new enriching perspectives of our reference frameworks for the analysis of cultural interchange between Galicia and Australia. I would therefore now like to take advantage of the conclusions in order to reach the powerful, symbolic level and, taking as a starting point the "common" past and of the interactions which will come, establish certain parallels between two nations in the Antipodes which are situated between the extremes of the centre and of the periphery.

Our present is marked by the centre/periphery dichotomy, in which the centre is configured by the rules of the patriarchy (in so far as gender) and of imposed languages and cultures (in terms of postcolonial analysis). The periphery, for its part, is made up of the feminisms which try to subvert patriarchal oppression and of the autochthonous languages and cultures which at one time were hegemonic.

Before such a situation, it should be stressed that both feminisms and post-colonialisms have a close relationship, as they both criticise universal values which are globally accepted and which are articulated from a point of view of the domination of oppressive metropolises and andocentric discourse, as well as their close relationship in terms of the construction of a person's identity. In this way, we have before us a future in which postcolonial analysis allows us to widen our frameworks for an understanding of reality and in which feminist analysis, and more specifically sociolectal reform, allows us to understand our different existence from a more equalitarian point of view.

Without leaving the symbolic level, it must be stated that the promotion of the future of two local, peripheral nations in the Antipodes demonstrates that both postcolonial and feminist theories make sense at a global level. And thus we take a fascinating journey from the local to the global, which will carry affairs which are currently relegated to the periphery to their legitimate place in inevitable central axes.

Notes

[1] What is more, by speaking in plural we show that other feminisms exist apart from western feminism, which frequently becomes hegemonic and which hides and simplifies into a single model of woman the rich and wide variety of feminine experiences (cf. Chandra-Talpade Mohanty et al.).

[2] See Celeste Biever's study on the behaviour of the Brazilian Pirahã tribe, whose language only contains words for numbers one and two, and which consequently is unable to explain the difference between four objects in a line. Consider also the examples of "terrorist murderers" and "freedom fighters"; "women were granted the vote" versus "women obtained the right to vote"; "García won first prize" versus "María García won first prize".

[3] Epicene is the name belonging to a class of animated beings which, with a single grammatical gender, can designate members of one or the other sex (baby, the victim, the person, the human being), and is also frequently used to refer to collective nouns (infancy, medical staff); while generic is the noun which does not possess a determined grammatical gender and which is constructed with articles with a gender suffix to refer to persons.

[4] Commonly accused of such a strategy of perverting orthographic rules thus creating an anti-natural language (in spite of the fact that @ signs, strokes, hyphens etc cannot create an artificial language, as language is never natural, it is always a social construct and a question of habit), and of opposing the principle of linguistic economy (despite the fact that we regularly use statements in which such a principle is not respected when describing an object as "blue, orange, white, yellow and purple" instead of using the synthetic term "coloured").

[5] The TEaGIRL project is available at <http://www.teagirl.arts.uwa.edu.au>

[6] The reason for choosing these three nations for the project is based on the fact that the status of English is different, the level of the use of English also varies greatly, and finally because postcolonial history links them to different metropolises.

[7] Such an expansion of Galician can be seen, for example, with the growth of Centres for Galician Studies in universities throughout the world, and for the continued increase in the activities of the AIEG.

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