Regional Autonomy and Cultural Policy

Some Perspectives on the Nation-State and Autonomies in Spain

ANTONIO ELORZA

Inspired by an extreme brand of Spanish state nationalism, the Franco regime sought to eradicate every last trace of cultural difference, including the use of the vernacular in the supposedly 'separatist' regions—predominantly the Basque Country and Catalonia. Paradoxically Basque nationalism, though less politically developed, proved more resilient, cocooned inside Church and family. Catalan nationalism less so, since it customarily found expression in more overtly political forms which could be more readily repressed. But already by the 1960s the failure of the Francoist project was evident. Moreover, in the Basque case, state repression had only served to bring to the fore a radical form of nationalism in the shape of ETA,* employing terrorist methods, diametrically opposed to the political passivity of the PNV.* Indeed ETA came into being as the response of young Basques angry at the PNV's seemingly complacent policy of biding its time (in the full knowledge that it had no serious political challengers inside the Basque Country) and of looking to external democratic aid rather than becoming actively involved in the anti-Franco struggle. The founder of Basque nationalism, Sabino de Arana, once described Euskadi
the Basque Country] as a nation militarily occupied by Spain—which was manifestly untrue until the Franco regime turned this occupation into a reality. Indeed, the sheer immensity of the state repression at its height (1965–75) legitimized ETA and its violent counter-response in the eyes of very large sectors of Basque society, which, through a kind of collective complicity, provided a very real social support base for ETA. Basque terrorism is, thus, the most problematic element of Francoism’s legacy to Spanish democracy. Indeed, even the very idea of Spain became tainted by its connection with the dictatorship’s attempt to obliterate every vestige of regional cultural difference. With the transition, it was necessary to find a rapid solution to the problem of nationalist demands, in order to avoid repeating in an intensified form the sort of tensions and frustrations which so damaged and destabilized the Second Republic. In the mean time, the economic development of the 1960s had finally laid the foundations for a Madrid-based Spanish state nationalism which fused political authority and economic power. But even though the economic pre-conditions for the peripheral nationalisms no longer existed, the cultural/historical fact of nationalist consolidation in the regions, and especially in Catalonia and Euskadi, meant that no simple centralizing solution was feasible, still less politically defensible. Spain’s new democracy had to respond positively, fostering the means for diverse cultural traditions to affirm themselves and develop.

The Constitution of 6 December 1978 sought to offer a solution to the myriad demands for self-government which had intensified across the transitional process, all the while retaining such unitary or centralist elements as could serve to dispel the anxieties of the Crown and of the so-called ‘de facto powers’ (*poderes ficticios*)—namely the army. Thus Article 2 begins by affirming ‘the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation’, as the premiss for then recognizing ‘the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed’. The primacy of the ‘Nation’ does not, then, exclude acceptance of the idea that beneath its unifying mantle there coexist a number of nationalities and regions, each with the same rights as all the others. Spain is not a multinational state, nor a unitary one in the sense that the Second Republic was. Indeed the latter’s successes and failures doubtless informed the decisions of those who drafted the new Constitution. Its defining feature is the inclusion of this new, second level of self-government which any centralist state model would explicitly exclude. The ‘state of the autonomies’, as the new democratic Spain is called, is also explained in the Constitution which establishes different levels of ‘national/regional identity’, and, accordingly, two possible routes by which regions could acquire autonomous status. The first, a more rapid route which envisaged a greater degree of self-government, was designed particularly for the ‘historic nationalities’, i.e. Euskadi and Catalonia, although it did not exclude other regions from applying. (The case of Andalusia, which also acceded via this first route, is an example of the potential for democratic mobilization offered by the Constitution.) Overall, this part of the constitutional process went smoothly, the only obstacle being the deadlock with the PNV.
which, taken together with the opposition from the more radical Basque nationalist sector, tends to give the impression that Euskadi was an exception to the wide national consensus over the new form of state organization. In fact, at the beginning of the 1980s the chief opposition to it derived both from the political right, linked to sectors of the military, and also from the centralizing ambitions of the national (i.e. state-wide) parties who, together, tried in vain to enact legislation (LOAPA*) which would have curtailed the autonomy process.

The 'state of the autonomies' has certainly experienced some technical problems, but in some fifteen years of existence, it has overall been a notable political success. One major shortcoming has been the fact that the Senate—by definition the 'chamber of territorial representation' (Article 69.1)—has so far failed to function as such. In consequence, there is no institutional mediation between the autonomous governments and central government. This has meant all sorts of tensions which have pitted Basque and Catalan nationalists in particular against the Madrid administration—with the nationalist politicians as usual loading the blame onto 'Madrid'. But their proclaimed persecution rings a little hollow, given that these self-same Basque and Catalan nationalist formations (PNV and CiU* respectively) are in fact allied with 'Madrid' in the form of the PSOE* government and its general political programme—including here its autonomy policy. Indeed, for the past seven years in Euskadi the PSOE and PNV have been governing in tandem. Nevertheless, in both the Basque and Catalan cases, the accusations of political abuse levelled against Madrid undoubtedly serve a useful purpose in distancing the PNV and CiU from the PSOE and allowing political discontent to be channeled safely towards the latter. Other criticisms of the practical operation of the 'state of the autonomies' concern the increase in bureaucracy and thus public expenditure involved. While this was tolerable in the boom years of the 1980s, this now constitutes another facet of the state's financial crisis.

Nevertheless, these disadvantages have to be weighed against a series of advantages which more than compensate. For the 'state of the autonomies' has achieved a workable division of powers between the central and regional governments. It has, moreover, had a salutary effect on public perceptions and has managed to balance centrifugal and centripetal tendencies in Spain. The scale of the achievement is evident in the fact that the plural reality of Spain is now part of mainstream national political discourse. So too is the ambiguity of her status as a 'nation of nations'. This results from the convergence of two distinct projects of national construction: first that of the Spanish nation, once the difficulties originating in the nineteenth century had been overcome, and, second, that of the Basque and Catalan nations, channelled via their respective political subsystems. An example of this new, relatively harmonious coexistence would be the joint public affirmations of Spanish and Catalan national identity made on the occasion of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona—something which would have been unthinkable not so long ago. Again, the major obstacle remains ETA's enduring terrorist activity in Euskadi, backed by a deep-rooted radical nationalism of populist protest.
is a political culture which, like other populist nationalisms elsewhere in Europe, directly expresses the socio-economic malaise of a society in crisis.

To speak of a positive political balance-sheet for the new constitutional order is not, of course, the same thing as a definitive solution. In particular, it is crucial that the autonomous governments are made to feel that they have a greater stake in the viability of the central state. To take just one issue (though a vital one) as an example, one could cite the way in which the central government made transport policy in 1992 virtually a *golpe de feria*, by taking unilateral action to prioritize its 'show-case' developments connected with the Barcelona Olympics or Seville Expo, such as the AVE (Madrid-Seville high-speed train link). This *ad hoc* manner of proceeding revealed the total lack both of an integrated national transport plan and of any concerted consultation between central government and the regions. Such *ad hoc*-ness is inappropriate in an advanced industrial democracy. Moreover, it is also irresponsible in a country like Spain which still has serious defects and inequalities in the fabric of its transport network. The lack of consultation between centre and regions brings us back to the point made earlier about the failure of the Senate to function as a 'chamber of territorial representation'. Yet a better integration of the component parts of the 'state of the autonomies' is essential to the consolidation of the state fabric as a whole. If this is not achieved, it augurs ill for Spain's political future. The central state will be placed under increasing strain as the autonomies become rebellious forces competing with each other for a 'slice of the state'. The recent Italian débâcle ought to provide the Spanish polity with a salutary warning here.

The current fluidity of Europe's borders will inevitably have repercussions in Spain, lending credibility to the aspirations to independence of some nationalist sectors in Euskadi, especially after the example of Slovakia striking out alone and with recent negotiations over Ulster's future. Economic and cultural trends may operate in the same direction. But it will be a good while before we know the consequences of the education systems in Euskadi and Catalonia which foster vernacular culture and contribute thereby to a distancing from the rest of Spain. The increasing integration of Catalonia into the Mediterranean axis of European development and the Basque economy's lengthy crisis, characteristic of those regions whose prosperity was based on heavy industry and iron and steel in particular, is another factor to be kept in mind. In Catalonia's case, the strength of nationalist feeling is generated by the optimism of potential growth—which could lead to her incorporation into a supranational network of economic production and distribution. In Euskadi, by contrast, nationalism is being fuelled by economic discontent. (Deindustrialization has meant a population shrinkage which has already seen Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa lose two parliamentary deputies in the 1993 general elections.) A prolonged crisis would see Basque society fragment further, allowing the entrenchment in the most economically blighted and thus politically dispossessed sectors of a radical nationalism favouring independence and prepared to employ terrorism to achieve it. For though ETA has come increasingly to be
the target of critical public opinion in the Basque Country, the continued popularity of Herri Batasuna, the radical political party closely associated with it, should be noted.

Once again, nothing is certain about the outcome for Spain. The solution adopted during the transition of a 'state of the autonomies' was possible because of the process of economic growth (or 'modernization' in official—i.e. PSOE—terminology) begun in the 1960s. It was this process which effectively integrated the economic interests of Spain's various regions, facilitating thereby the articulation of previously disparate and often antagonistic political perspectives. In the last analysis, economic integration made possible the reciprocal concessions on which the new constitutional order is based. Precisely because of this, the Spanish state, unlike its French counterpart, played the Maastricht card for all it was worth. The process of European union was gradually resolving the internal tensions between nation-state and peripheral nationalisms in Spain, by defining for both a common European framework envisaged as a source of material support to promote further economic growth. Conversely, the blocking of European union and a prolonged economic crisis in Spain could operate in the opposite direction. We need also to remember the sheer velocity of change in Spain since the transition; from economic crisis to boom and now to recession again. This see-saw effect could have dangerous political consequences. As we can readily see elsewhere in Europe, nationalism has many potentials, not all of them positive. Tensions could intensify, thereby increasing the likelihood of Spain's disintegration as a nation-state. For this has been exactly the process (i.e. that of economic crisis eroding the legitimacy and fabric of existing political structures) which, since 1989, has led to the real or virtual breakup of several states on our European continent.

Further reading
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Solé Tura, J., Nacionalidades y nacionalismos en España (Madrid, 1985).

The Politics of Language: Spain's Minority Languages
CLARE MAR-MOLINERO

Article 3 of Spain's 1978 Constitution has been heralded as a radical new recognition of linguistic rights and cultural pluralism by many commentators. However, careful analysis of this article suggests that the politics of language in Spain remain contentious and ambiguous, in part because of the very language of politics itself.
This essay will look at the pull between consensus and ambiguity underpinning the present linguistic legal framework in Spain, and at how, as ever, this represents the tensions between the core and periphery of the Spanish state in its efforts to define nationhood and collective identity. It will emphasize, too, the fact that there exist many differences between the various minority language groups in terms of the successes or failures in their language planning efforts. Additionally, all such discussions have to be seen against the backdrop of so-called European unity and its possible effects on the promotion of linguistic minorities and their relationships with dominant language groups.

The first clause of Article 3 states: 'Castilian is the official Spanish language of the state.' The use of the term 'Castilian', and not 'Spanish', makes an important statement acknowledging the existence of various 'Spanish' languages, a statement that has been bitterly disputed by many not only on the political right. It is significant, too, that 'state' and not 'nation' is used, given the delicate and complicated relationship between language and national identity which is only too evident in the Spanish context. Political boundaries of a state are more easily defined than those of a nation. This clause, however, goes on to say: 'All Spaniards have the duty to know it [Castilian] and the right to use it.' Immediately the radical tone of the first sentence is counteracted with a starkly prescriptive directive in the second. It is difficult to find any national constitution worldwide which prescribes the duty to know a language. And what is meant by 'know'? Something purely passive requiring no active competence? How can it be demonstrated that a citizen does or does not 'know' a language? This is highly ambiguous and awaits legal interpretation and clarification.

Clause 2 declares that 'The other Spanish languages will also be official in the respective autonomous communities in accordance with their statutes.' Once again a refreshingly enabling definition of Spain's minority languages, never tolerated in the previous forty years, is qualified by the highly prescriptive constraint of limiting their official status to their own territorial space. This clear geographical limitation means realistically that the future role of the minority languages will always take second place to Castilian. It could even be argued that it contravenes the spirit of later articles of the Constitution which claim equality for all Spanish citizens. Those Spanish citizens whose mother tongue is not Castilian could argue that they do not have equal linguistic rights to those who are Castilian mother tongue speakers. A native Catalan speaker cannot insist on the right to use Catalan in official contexts in, for example, Madrid. Native Basque speakers cannot expect the Spanish state to provide Basque teaching to their children if they happen to live in, for example, Seville. On the other hand, throughout the Spanish state Castilian may be used and must be provided for. What seems a benevolent policy to promote linguistic pluralism in fact creates linguistic reservations and supports the subordination of the peripheries to the Castilian core.

As if to counter the potentially negative sense of the second clause, the third one confirms a belief in linguistic plurality when it states: 'The richness of Spain's
different linguistic varieties is a cultural heritage which shall be the object of special respect and protection. Fine words which may facilitate real action but which are unhelpfully vague: legal interpretation of such concepts as ‘respect’ or ‘protection’ is needed.

However, it is probably fair to say that this final clause has permitted a new and imaginative understanding of Spain’s linguistic map. It allows autonomous communities to define their local linguistic variety and, even when this is not considered a discrete language separate from Castilian, its own particular features can be recognized and protected. This has inspired work on lexical and phonological features in, for example, Andalusia and the Canary Islands in order to draw up guidelines on what constitutes these regions’ respective language varieties. The implications of this for education and the media in particular are highly significant, raising issues of standard versus local language varieties, and of forms of acceptable literacy: issues which have constantly plagued educators and language planners, not to mention politicians.

Despite these ambiguities in the constitutional framework, there is no denying the substantial advances that have taken place since 1978 in the promotion and status of Spain’s minority languages. It is notoriously difficult to agree a definition for the term ‘language’ but, most usefully for this discussion, it can be equated with the linguistic code of a speech community of a significant size and with, therefore, some political influence. In this sense it is generally accepted that Spain contains four such ‘languages’: Castilian, Catalan, Basque, and Galician, although arguments in favour of Asturian and Aragonese, for instance, or for Galician to be a ‘dialect’ of Portuguese, will always remain. Significantly Francoist ideology termed Catalan and Galician ‘dialects’ in a clear attempt to downgrade their status to a category normally considered inferior to a language.

It is in the regions where the three non-Castilian languages are spoken—the so-called ‘historic’ communities—that the greatest activity in terms of language planning is taking place. These efforts are supported not only by Article 3 of the Constitution but also by the relevant Autonomy Statute and, in particular, by the local Linguistic Normalization Laws. There are many similarities between the various regional legal frameworks and the areas of linguistic activity through which they are being implemented, but there are also important differences, which is not surprising given that the various autonomous communities display marked differences.

By far the most active and apparently successful language promotion programmes are taking place in Catalonia, the largest and wealthiest of the three relevant communities. The autonomous community of Catalonia has more than 6 million inhabitants, of whom approximately 90 per cent claim to understand Catalan, whilst over 60 per cent admit to speaking it in some form. As in the Basque Country and Galicia, the local government has set up a directorate to coordinate language promotion programmes and is encouraging the teaching of and through the medium of Catalan, the development of modern terminologies in

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Catalan, and the use of the local language in all government, administration, and official public use, as well as in the media. The results are spectacular: the rise in the number of schools offering some or much of their curriculum through Catalan is sharp; most public notices, street names, menus, bank cheques, entrance tickets, etc. are in Catalan (sometimes exclusively, sometimes bilingually). There are two daily papers in Catalan in Barcelona and one in Gerona, two television channels solely in Catalan and a third offering some programmes in Catalan, plus numerous Catalan local radio stations. Theatre, cinema, and publications flourish in Catalan. Significantly, much of this includes translations from languages other than Castilian (Neighbours or The 'A' Team dubbed into Catalan: Marx or Proust translated).

Catalan has always been the language of the whole Catalan population including, significantly, the upper and middle classes; in this sense, it is different from Basque and Galician, and in fact from most comparable socio-linguistic situations. As a result, the language can serve as a symbol of social mobility and acceptance, producing consequently favourable attitudes to its use and teaching. This has undoubtedly helped overcome the single greatest obstacle, which is the large non-native-Catalan-speaking economic migrant population now resident in Catalonia. This has obviously diluted the spread of the language, especially in the urban industrial areas where these immigrant groups are concentrated. However, unlike Basque but like Galician, Catalan's accessibility to Castilian speakers has provided a very high incidence of passive knowledge of the language by the region's population.

At the same time, like Basque and Galician (and many other minority languages), Catalan faces the challenge of mass communications in modern technological societies. Satellite television, international travel, computer technology, multinational business creating the so-called global village inevitably weaken the role of lesser-used languages and strengthen the position of world languages, above all English. Castilian is, of course, a widely spoken world language, and to compete with it or aspire to equal bilingualism (as stated in the declaration of aims of the respective autonomous communities' language laws) is arguably an impossible goal.

With less than 2.5 million inhabitants, the Basque community is the smallest of the three autonomous communities in which a minority language is being promoted. Fewer than 25 per cent of this population claims to speak Basque, reflecting the inaccessibility of the language which—unlike Catalan, Galician, and Castilian—is not part of the Romance language continuum. The language has considerably less prestige and status than Catalan within its community, and significantly has not until recently been seen as an essential core value of Basque nationalism. Although during the 1960s and 1970s the language was given an increased symbolic status by the nationalist movement ETA, another positive development dating back to the 1960s was the introduction of Basque schools, teaching Basque and providing a curriculum through the medium of Basque.
identity, originally as largely clandestine groups, then increasingly in the 1960s and 1970s as private organizations, often working as non-profit-making parental cooperatives. However, there is no strong literary tradition in Basque, and the codification of the language and selection of a standard variety from various competing dialects is very recent. All of this has made the teaching of Basque and the use of it in public life very much more difficult. The Basque Country also has an important non-Basque immigrant population which has been slow to want to learn Basque, particularly since, unlike Catalan, it has been associated with rural areas and backward traditionalism. There have been improvements and successes as Basque is promoted through the education system (there are now state-funded ikastolas) and used in local government wherever possible. But the obstacles to the learning of Basque create the sense that its promotion is more symbolic than practical.

Galicia, like the Basque Country, contains a small population (just under 3 million), but by contrast has not been affected by immigration; thus a very high percentage of the population—90 per cent—speak the language. However, Galician lacks status and as a result does not serve as an instrument for social advancement, and is used for more educated literate purposes only by a tiny minority of middle-class intellectuals. The language planning activities, similar in conception to those in Catalonia and the Basque Country, are attempting to counter these attitudes. Another important difference in the case of Galician is the tradition of large-scale emigration, tending to produce a conservative 'holding' mentality, particularly with womenfolk waiting for the return of the perceived head of the family. In such a predominantly rural society, belief in cultural independence and confidence are not strong. The changes now taking place as a result of the new language policies must also be seen in the context of a counter-movement by the so-called 'reintegrationists', a small but vociferous group who romanticize the need to return Galicia and Galician to the fold of Mother Portugal. Neither the reintegrationists nor the isolationists (those who see Galician culture and language as separate from either of their larger neighbours) are able to counter substantially the influence and dominance of Castilian.

Clearly issues of national and group identity are present in all these activities to promote and protect minority language rights in Spain, as they are also in the Castilian centre's determination to allow linguistic independence only up to a certain point. By limiting the promotion of non-Castilian languages to discrete geographical areas, the continued domination of Castilian as 'national' language is ensured. The minorities' cultural identities are acknowledged only when they are linked to territorial identities. In a world of increasingly mobile populations this is a questionable principle.

In analysing the linguistic map of Spain, two further factors need to be borne in mind: the role of an increasing variety of immigrant groups; and the effects of a more closely integrated European Community. On the one hand, likely changes
Political power structures within the Community seem to point to the emergence of a 'Europe of the regions', in which direct links between the supranational European power centres and the local regional centres will increasingly bypass the central administration of the nation-state. This is seen by Catalans, Basques, and Galicians as a real chance to strengthen their particular cultures and languages, and to some extent is backed up by Community resources such as regional aid or initiatives like those of the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages and the Mercator Project. These last two projects aim to improve knowledge of and research into Europe's minority languages, to sponsor the teaching and learning of these languages, and to foster relations between the groups using them.

On the other hand, a major premiss of the European Community is the encouragement and right of the freedom of movement of persons within the member states. This policy is bound to have language implications, above all challenging the notion that linguistic and cultural identity can be tied to a particular geographical space. Added to this is the situation of significant numbers of non-European immigrants, many of whom do not speak as their mother tongue the language of any member state. Spain has only recently begun to experience the social and cultural effects of such immigration, largely with groups from North Africa and Latin America. In the case of the latter, language is obviously not an issue, but it is becoming a very serious one in the case of the former. If Spain is to honour the spirit of the EC's 1977 directive encouraging all member states to provide at least some mother tongue education for the children of immigrants, this will put a strain on the delicate balance reached between the present national language and the minority languages: a balance which not everyone sees as ideal, and which highlights the fraught relationship between language and constructions of national identity.

Notes
1 See e.g. G. Salvador, 'Lenguas de España, autonomías y fronteras lingüísticas', in Lenguas española y lenguas de España (Barcelona, 1987).
2 e.g. Art. 14 states: 'Spaniards are equal in the eyes of the law, with no form of discrimination being allowed to prevail for reasons of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion, or any other condition or personal or social circumstance.' (Translations of all quotations from the 1978 Spanish Constitution are the author's own.)
3 For statistics on who speaks or understands what in six different regions of Spain and in Spain as a whole, see the 1990 EC Commission report, Linguistic Minorities in the European Economic Community, 8.

Further reading
Jardon, M., La 'normalización lingüística', una normalidad democrática: el caso gallego (Madrid, 1993).
Becoming Normal: Cultural Production and Cultural Policy in Catalonia
JOSÉP-ANTON FERNÁNDEZ

To understand developments in Catalan cultural production in the post-Franco years and cultural policy in this period, it is crucial to remember that military defeat in 1939 meant the practical disappearance of the cultural infrastructure that had been created over a century. As part of the victors’ attempt to return Catalonia to the fold of the ‘true Spanish soul’ (reespañolización), the Catalan language was banned from public use and from education, and practically all signs of Catalan identity were outlawed. Most of the intellectual elite was forced into exile or was repressed and silenced, and all Catalan-identified cultural activity had to go underground. As Albert Manent has pointed out, the underground cultural resistance managed to maintain a precarious yet effective network of activists which enjoyed the support of some sectors of the Church and the bourgeoisie.¹ However, it was not until 1946 that books in Catalan could be legally published; even then no translations from foreign languages were allowed (this prohibition would be lifted in the early 1960s), and in any case all publications were subjected to severe censorship. It was also in 1946 that, for the first time since the end of the war, plays in Catalan could be staged; this renewed public presence of Catalan culture was followed in 1947 by the institution of the first post-war literary prize, something that would later become a successful formula for the promotion of Catalan books in times of political hardship. Throughout the 1950s the readership was slowly increasing, and with the regime’s modest liberalization in the early 1960s some expansion was possible: new publishing houses were founded, as well as associations for the promotion of culture and the teaching of the language, and the songwriters’ movement of the nova cançó achieved important popular success. All these initiatives involved significant growth, but the impossibility of teaching the Catalan language in schools (or Catalan literature and history, for that matter) and the virtual absence of the language from the press and audio-visual media, made it impossible to rebuild a proper, functional cultural market; most cultural enterprises, especially those in the publishing sector, were heavily sponsored by sympathetic sectors of the bourgeoisie, or financed through popular subscription. The aims of such efforts in the 1960s and early 1970s were mainly political: to
maintain the prestige of Catalan as a language of high culture, to prepare the ground for expansion in the post-Franco period, to maintain a minimum level of cultural production and consumption, and to guarantee the visibility of Catalan culture.

The precariousness of this situation is clearly shown by the fact that it was not till 1976 that the number of books published in Catalan per year reached the same figures as in 1936 (around 800 titles), and that the first newspaper in Catalan since the end of the war, Avui, appeared. However, the presence of the language on radio and television was limited to a few hours a week; and, most importantly, the great waves of immigration from other parts of Spain between the 1950s and the 1970s meant that almost half the population could not speak Catalan, while the ban on education in Catalan during the dictatorship had made most of the Catalan-speaking population illiterate in its own language. This situation was widely recognized as 'abnormal'; and, with the advent of democracy, there was a consensus among the democratic forces that a state of linguistic and cultural 'normality' (normalitat) was essential to the full recovery of Catalonia's national identity. This was the conclusion reached by the Congrés de Cultura Catalana (1976), which set the agenda for subsequent years. The Congrés—which created an impressive popular mobilization over the whole of Catalonia and achieved a broad political consensus—argued in its mission statement that a return to self-rule was necessary in order to 'normalize' the use of the Catalan language and restore its official status, and in order to re-institutionalize and promote Catalan culture.1

The creation of the Departament de Cultura of the Generalitat* de Catalunya after the first elections to the Catalan parliament in 1980 was the first major step to implementing this programme, and has been central to the dramatic growth of the Catalan cultural market since then. The promotion of Catalan culture is inseparable both from the policies of 'linguistic normalization' undertaken by the authorities, and from the discourse of political nationalism. 'Cultural normalization', the cultural policy of contemporary Catalan nationalism, aims at constituting Catalonia as a 'normal' society: that is, a society in which Catalonia's own language would be hegemonic, in which citizens would share a common sense of (Catalan) national identity based on their cultural traditions, and which would be comparable to any other modern European society in terms of cultural infrastructures, habits of cultural consumption, and the balance between high and mass culture. The specific goals of 'cultural normalization' are the institutionalization of Catalan culture and the construction of cultural infrastructures, the consolidation of a media industry in Catalan, and the extension of habits of cultural consumption in the Catalan language. The final goal of this process is to reach a situation of de facto cultural independence, the old aspiration of nationalism; as Joan Guitart, Culture Minister of the Generalitat de Catalunya, has claimed: 'in cultural matters Catalonia should be equivalent to a state.'2

The efforts invested in the audio-visual field have met with by far the greatest success. The demand for mass media in Catalan headed the cultural agenda in the
early years of the democratic regime, and became a priority of the autonomous government. As Josep Gifreu argues, the creation of an audio-visual space in Catalan has been vital for the "reconstruction" of national identity, and indeed for the progress of 'linguistic normalization'. The regional centre of Televisión Española in Catalonia was already broadcasting in Catalan in the 1970s, but only for a small number of hours a week, outside prime time, and the schedule did not include foreign films or series dubbed into Catalan. Likewise, in 1976 the state radio company, Radio Nacional de España, created a station in Catalan, Ràdio 4, but it could be heard only in parts of Catalonia. This situation changed in 1983 with the institution by the Generalitat of the Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió (CCRTV), the body responsible for public broadcasting in Catalan. CCRTV controls four radio stations—one of which, Catalunya Ràdio (1983), has the biggest share of the overall Catalan audience—and two TV channels, TV3 (1983) and Canal 33 (1989). TV3 has had a tremendous impact on Catalan society; it broadcasts entirely in Catalan and from the start was designed to compete directly with TVE1 and TVE2, the Spanish public television stations. Although it has never overtaken TVE1, by 1990 TV3 had achieved a 40 per cent share of the overall Catalan audience, and has been largely responsible for the significant increase in knowledge of the Catalan language in recent years. In Valencia, Canal 9, the public television channel owned by the Generalitat Valenciana, broadcasts partially in Catalan. A lively movement of local TV and radio stations, usually run as co-operatives, also exists.

The publishing market has also experienced spectacular growth: from just over 800 books published in 1976, the figures for books in Catalan have rocketed to almost 4,500 in 1990. This increase has been favoured by the extension of Catalan language teaching, and by the official policy of financial support for publishing in Catalan. The former has boosted the production of textbooks and children’s literature, whilst the latter has made it possible to publish costly works such as dictionaries, and to start collections devoted to western literary classics or philosophical texts, for example. During the 1980s Catalan publishing houses, most of them small-scale, turned to popular genres such as crime fiction or erotica to increase their readership; they also set out to compete with their Spanish counterparts by publishing contemporary foreign narrative.

The poor reading habits of Catalan society, however, constitute a major drawback which also affects the press. Six daily newspapers are published entirely in Catalan—two of them, Avui (1976) and Diari de Barcelona (1986), based in Barcelona—but their circulation amounts to a mere 12 per cent of the overall daily press available in Catalonia. Of the four weekly news magazines launched in the 1980s, only El Temps (1983), published in Valencia, has survived. There are also a number of specialized journals and magazines covering high culture or academic writing (Serra d’Or, Els Marges, L’Avenç) which, despite their small circulation, have a well-established readership.

Cinema and popular music have perhaps been the most problematic areas of
cultural production in recent years. Catalan cinema shares the structural problems of the Spanish film industry as a whole, compounded by the Catalan authorities' lack of a clear policy towards the film industry. As Miquel Porter i Moix points out, despite the financial support of the Spanish and Catalan authorities and the collaboration schemes between television and film producers, the presence of the Catalan language and of Catalan films in cinemas is minimal. This is due partly to the fact that watching films in Catalan has never become a habit, but especially to the attitude of the commercial distributors, who regard the Catalan language as a marketing handicap; there is also a generalized feeling that the Catalan film industry has not succeeded in attracting viewers' interest.

Popular music suffered a serious decline in the 1980s, but it has recently seen an important recovery. Of the singer-songwriters of the nova cançó who in the 1960s and 1970s, following the prestigious model of the French chanson, combined literary and musical quality with political resistance, attracting large audiences, only a few managed to survive the climate of political disenchantment in the 1980s. This, together with the Catalan authorities' apparent lack of interest in popular music, turned cultural production in this area into a virtual wasteland, despite the success of the new TV and radio stations; the only two labels publishing music exclusively in Catalan disappeared. The late 1980s, however, have witnessed a blossoming of pop and rock music in Catalan, which has been able to create an audience for itself.

The process of 'cultural normalization', as this account shows, is far from harmonious, and there are several good reasons for this. Catalan culture has to face the objective limitations of its reduced dimensions and its minority status; as the most recent attempt at modernizing Catalan culture, 'cultural normalization' is taking place in an international context marked by globalization. Young intellectuals have pointed this out, and have started to develop an analysis of Catalan cultural dynamics which is highly critical of the present situation. The Catalan government has also been criticized for imposing a traditionalist version of national identity through its subsidization policies (hence, among other things, its failure to support contemporary music). Other problems derive from the collision of two cultural markets (Spanish versus Catalan) in the same territory, which places Catalan products in a position of inferiority; this has been aggravated by the introduction in 1989 of the three private television channels, which broadcast exclusively in Spanish. Finally, the conflict between Spanish and Catalan nationalisms remains, leading to hostility on the part of the Spanish state towards the development of an audio-visual space common to the Catalan-speaking territories in their entirety.

Notes
3 See A. Balcells, El nacionalismo catalán (Madrid, 1991).
Negotiating Galician Cultural Identity

XELIS DE TORO SANTOS

Torrente Ballester’s classic novel La saga/fuga de J.B. (1972) provides an apt image of the ambiguous position of Galician identity in the contemporary period: the mythical city of Castroforte de Baralla levitates and disappears into the clouds, in response to the collective anxiety of its inhabitants. This image can be used to illustrate two points. First, that Galicia has in some senses been obliterated from the cultural map, due to the failure to create a cohesive and integrated national identity. As a result, Galicia continues to be characterized in the rest of Spain by a series of clichés and stereotypes. Second, the image can be taken to illustrate the marginal position of Torrente Ballester’s work within Galician culture, as ‘a Galician who is a writer but not a Galician writer’, having written exclusively in Castilian.¹ Yet the works of Torrente Ballester have created the most complex and positive literary representation of Galicia during the Franco period.

Historically, there have been various attempts to resolve these issues. The most
was made by Galician intellectuals in the 1920s, who created a definition of Galician cultural and national identity based on the language and Celtic roots, elements of which could be used to distinguish Galicia from the rest of Spain. In this essay, however, I wish to argue that Galician culture and identity constitute a historical process in which definitions and parameters have always to be renegotiated. Galician intellectuals and artists after Francoism have attempted to put Galicia on the map by offering new perspectives on its culture and identity.

The major feature of the transition from dictatorship to democracy was the recognition of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia as historic cultural entities. The introduction of the Autonomy Statute following a referendum in 1981 meant a radical change in the relationship between culture and politics in Galician society. The defence of Galician identity had played an important role in the resistance to Francoism, focusing opposition to centralization and asserting Galicia's position as a distinct cultural entity. However, Galician culture is no longer a culture of resistance since it has become an official culture in its own right. This change in function has given rise to contradictory and sometimes uneasy relationships.

On the one hand, Galician culture was institutionalized for the first time. Hopes that the lack of cultural infrastructure would be overcome were raised by the inauguration of Radio and Television Galega (RTVG) in 1985; the promotion of the Galician language through its introduction into the curriculum at the same time as it became the official language used in the regional government administration; and the beginnings of a policy to support culture and the arts. On the other hand, the success of these policies is highly questionable. The number of Galicians who use Galician as their mother tongue continues to fall and the media available for disseminating the language are minimal.

With the final removal of censorship, Spain in the 1980s saw an explosion in the arts marked by the attempt to break with the past, projecting the idea of a new young Spain closer to Europe. Galician culture played an important role in this period. During the first half of the decade, Galician artists were a constant focus of attention in the Spanish media. In consecutive years film-makers such as Villaverde and Reixa were awarded the most important prizes for experimental film in Spanish competitions. The work of fashion designers such as Adolfo Domínguez received international recognition, paving the way for the emergence of new designers; and bands like Siniestro Total and Os Resentidos suggested new forms of expression in pop music, influencing new bands in the rest of Spain. Other artists who received important prizes were: Pepe Barro for graphic design, Miguel Anxo Prado for the design of comics, and Luisa Castro for poetry. We could further mention innovative magazines such as Tintimán and La Nabal, and the recognition achieved by the visual arts group Atlántica. This explosion of the arts in Galicia was known as the movida* galega. Behind this label, coined by the Spanish media, lay many different phenomena and ideas, and a broad range of artists with differing aesthetic aims and viewpoints. In its totality, this cultural explosion created a new image of artistic vitality and innovation challenging the
stereotypical view of Galicia as a cultural backwater, reinforced for decades by the Spanish media.

Although it is difficult to identify groups or artists with a clear agenda regarding new representations of Galicia, I shall try to outline some ideas and positions emerging and becoming established during this period. These fall into three main groups.

The first position could be characterized as an attempt to link Galician tradition to the new circumstances. The idea that Galician culture could survive only if it was able to modernize was common. Modernization was understood in two senses: first, as an attempt to incorporate new aesthetic tendencies; and second, as the production of work in fields such as film which till that time had remained virtually virgin territory. The terms 'tradition' and 'modernity' were the keywords of the major intellectual debates in the mid-1970s and throughout the 1980s. The first clear statements of this position were made at the Encontros de Sargadelos, a series of summer conferences organized by the Laboratorio de Formas de Galicia. These were forums intended to encourage debate about the future of Galician culture. To some extent, this position has been incorporated into Xunta de Galicia policy. It is summed up by a quotation from the graphic design group Re-vision:

In Galicia, a small but significant cultural sector is working doggedly and consistently to re-invent this old country [...] Re-vision is conscious of its task: to invent [...] the new images needed by a Galician society that will see out the twentieth century and face the twenty-first.

A second position emerged through youth and urban culture, promoted through magazines, pop music, and experimental film-making. This clearly rejected Spanish stereotypes while affirming a Galician identity; but it did so by exploring and challenging the contradictions and limitations of traditional forms of identity. Full of self-criticism and irony, it played with juxtapositions of those traditional images and symbols of Galician identity that had found their roots in the Celtic heritage, Galician language, and rural tradition. The attempts to project Galicia as avant-garde and innovative were also satirized. A quotation from the catalogue of the visual arts exhibition held during a week dedicated to Galicia at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo Summer School at Santander provides a useful illustration:

A pitiless country needs a pitiless flag. Thirty Galician artists are taking part in this first encounter aimed at re-designing the present Galician flag, with its white, spiritless ground and thin, pale diagonal which seems to have been conceived more to separate bilingual texts than to provide a powerful representation of our national obsessions.

It is in this spirit that phenomena such as the magazine La Nabal, the song 'Miña terra galega' by Siniestro Total, the lyrics of Os Resentidos, and the work of film-makers such as Reixa have to be understood.

A third position rejected innovation and sought to maintain a concept of Galicia...
26. Design for an 'alternative' Galician flag by Antón Reixa, from the exhibition *Semana de las fuerzas atróces del Noroeste* held at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, Santander, in 1986. The design provides a witty comment on the pursuit of an essentialist national identity, by proposing as Galicia’s national symbol the cow that reproduces the region’s traditional image as a rural backwater devoted to dairy production, but representing this in a form obviously reminiscent of the label of a well-known brand of French (i.e. foreign) processed (i.e. not natural) cheese (La Vache qui rit; i.e. a joke, we are invited to laugh too).
as it had been traditionally understood. For those who adhered to this position, the debate centered on national oppression, with the aim of revealing the 'essential' nature of Galicia. The cultural explosion of the 1980s was interpreted as an artificial product of the Spanish media, unrepresentative of the 'true' Galicia. The main target of such criticisms was the marginal role that Galician language and traditional culture played in this explosion.

To turn now to Galician literature: broadly speaking, we can accept the criteria used in current Galician studies which define Galician literature as literature written in Galician, but there are some issues that require discussion. First, it must be stressed that the precise standardization of linguistic norms remains contentious. The position held by the majority and supported by the Xunta is that Galician should be regarded as a language in its own right within an Iberian context. The alternative ‘lusiista’ position asserts that Galician should be located within a Luso-Brazilian framework and emphasizes the linguistic parallels with Portuguese. This latter version has been less widely disseminated because works published in lusiista have not received official subsidies. Second, one cannot dismiss the fact that Galicia has contributed significantly to Spanish literature through the work of Galician authors writing in Castilian. While such writers have started to receive recognition in Galicia, for example through the newly established Cela Foundation and Torrente Ballester Prize, to include them in the concept of Galician culture would require a redefinition of the parameters used to describe Galician culture and identity. However, the vitality of the publishing world in this period must be stressed. The number of books published in Galician increased greatly. In 1972, 78 books were published; in 1980, a year before the Autonomy Statute was introduced, the figure had gone up to 303; and in 1989 it had gone up to 637. Publishing houses headed by Edicións Xerais have launched new collections of popular literature, including detective novels and new journalism. At the same time, the work of new young writers such as Antón Reixa and Suso de Toro, have addressed from a radical and controversial viewpoint questions of identity, representation, and the function of literature, seeking to incorporate strains of postmodernism.

To conclude, the first half of the 1980s saw a powerful upsurge of creativity which put Galicia back on the cultural map. A flood of new ideas challenged stock images of Galicia as well as the basis of traditional Galician identity. This cultural explosion was encouraged by the Xunta’s policy of cultural subsidies. The Xunta’s cultural policies have not, however, been conducive to the creation of a long-term cultural infrastructure; the ambiguity of such policies is exemplified by attitudes towards the film industry: almost all of the film and TV series broadcast on TVG are imported and dubbed, leaving little space for domestic production. The second half of the 1980s was marked by a decline in artistic production. Neither the attempts made by the Xunta to project an image of Galicia, nor the policy of providing support for the arts, can disguise a fundamental lack of vitality in current Galician cultural production. As the concept of Galician identity becomes increasingly part of an institutional culture, there is a progressive loss of self-awareness and se
and self-criticism. Once again, the image of Castrofente de Baralla levitating into the clouds provides an insight into the current uncertainty of Galician identity, still searching for a way to ground itself.

Notes

2 RTVG was inaugurated on 25 July 1985. Galicia’s National Day, though it started transmitting a year earlier. It consists of a TV channel and a radio station broadcasting exclusively in Galician, thus showing a commitment to the normalization of the Galician language.

3 Until 1993 the only press published in the Galician language was the weekly A Nosa Terra. In Jan. 1994 the first daily paper in Galician was launched.


6 See M. D. Cabrera, 'Un negocio editorial e o mundo do libro', in M. Rivas and X. López (eds.), Informe de comunicación en Galicia (Coruña, 1993).

7 e.g. three exhibitions of Galician artistic production—Galicia no tempo, Galicia: tradición e derecho, Bienal de arquitectura española—mounted to present Galician culture to a wide audience both inside and outside Galicia.

Further reading

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The Promotion of Cultural Production in Basque
JESÚS MARÍA LASAGABASTER

In 1976, 95 books were published in Basque (euskara); by 1992, the figure had gone up to 980, of which 755 were first editions and 225 re-editions, with 459 written originally in Basque and 328 translated into Basque. Even more spectacular than this quantitative leap is the qualitative advance over this fifteen-year period. Of the 95 titles published in 1976, 22 were in literature and literary criticism, 15 in children's and teenage literature (including comics), 12 in linguistics (including grammars and language primers), 8 in geography, 7 in religion, and 7 in history. Only 1 or 2 were scientific texts. Of the 23 subject areas listed in Unesco's classification scheme, only 14 were covered (in comparison with 4 in 1961, and 10 in 1974). The subject areas not represented were in the main those
corresponding to science, philosophy, medicine, law, government, and political science. In other words, in 1976 book production in Basque was concentrated mainly on literature (adult and juvenile) and the teaching of the language. Public life and science were largely alien territory. One could almost say that the Basque language was confined to the private sphere.

In 1992 not only had the number of books published in Basque increased tenfold, but practically all the Unesco subject areas were represented; more important still, books in Basque now had a firm footing in education (at all levels), scientific research, government, and politics. Of the 980 titles published that year, 134 related to literature, 75 to the Basque language, and 372 were textbooks in practically all subject areas, from primary through to university level, which gives the lie to those who persist in regarding euskara as an archaic, rural language, incapable of representing the modern cultural and scientific world. It is true that Basque emerged late as a literary language—the first known literary text is dated 1545—and that it was slow to gain currency in the cultural, scientific, and political spheres. But literature, the media, the performing arts, and education provide abundant evidence that the Basque language today has the status of a normalized educated language, despite the obvious socio-linguistic limitations to its usage.

Crucial to the changes that have taken place over this fifteen-year period are the Spanish Constitution of 1978, the Autonomy Statute of 1979, and the Linguistic Normalization Law approved by the Basque parliament in 1989. As the official language—jointly with Spanish—of the Basque Autonomous Community, euskara has legal access to all areas of public life, education, government, political institutions, research, sport, and cultural production. Institutional support for the euskaldunización [Basquification] of Basque life continues to be important, and is channelled mainly through the Secretariat for Linguistic Policy, responsible to the Presidential Office of the Basque government.

Publishing was the first and most obvious—but by no means only—area of cultural production affected by the Basque language's new legal and socio-cultural status. The impact was less strong on literature—literary texts had been available, if not exactly abundant, since the 1950s—than on scientific, educational, and technical book production (law, the professions, etc.), which previously had been virtually non-existent in euskara. There was an immediate and sustained increase in the issue of Basque texts—including oral forms of reproduction—right across the spectrum.

Nevertheless, literature remains the paradigm of cultural production in Basque. Not so much because writers are writing in Basque as because of the institutionalization of literary life stemming from euskara's new status. Although literary quality is not directly related to quantity, the normalization of literary life obviously tends to normalize writers' working conditions, indirectly affecting the quality of what is written. This 'normalization' includes an increase in the number of publishers for works of literature (these have recently been hit by economic recession), the appearance of literary magazines (some short-lived), the emergence and
government, and political representation; more impor-
tant, education (at all levels), and the public distribution of the language. Public almost say that the Basque language is important, and is represented; more important are the subsidies, writers' bursaries, and literary awards offered by various Basque institutions (the Basque government, provincial and municipal governments, savings banks) in a somewhat hectic literary fair that sometimes seems to have more to do with publicity than with culture.

As the official language of the Basque Country, euskara is basic to an individual and collective sense of Basque identity and is not negotiable. As for the press, with the transition to democracy the Castilian-language dailies started to print a small but growing number of columns in Basque, and one newspaper—Euskaldunon Euskal Herria (Basque People's Newspaper)—publishes entirely in euskara, with average sales of 15,000 copies. Although a few radio stations broadcasting in Basque already existed under the dictatorship, these were of necessity privately owned and reached only a very restricted, highly localized public. The creation of Euskadi Irratia (Radio Euskadi), transmitting entirely in euskara throughout the whole autonomous community from its studios in San Sebastián, has established radio as a major cultural force, not only because of its news coverage and current affairs programmes but also because of its contribution to science and the arts.

The award of the 1989 National Prize for Literature to the Basque writer Bernardo Atxaga for his book of stories Obabakoak not only shows that, in this case at least, Basque literature can produce writing of the highest quality, but also that literary creativity, publication, and consumption have become relatively stabilized. Yet the language's minority status necessarily makes literary production precarious, despite the subsidies, writers' bursaries, and literary awards offered by various Basque institutions (the Basque government, provincial and municipal governments, savings banks) in a somewhat hectic literary fair that sometimes seems to have more to do with publicity than with culture.

Also crucial to cultural production in Basque are the mass media, and of course television in particular. Basque Television (Euskal Telebista) has two channels, one of which—Euskal Telebista 1—broadcasts entirely in euskara, providing its own news bulletins and sports coverage, and producing (as opposed to buying) an increasing percentage of programmes. The second channel broadcasts solely in Castilian; paradoxically, this justifies the existence of an all-Basque channel against arguments that the ratio of Basque to Castilian on television should be proportionate to the respective number of language users. For the Basque government—or rather for the Basque Nationalist Party currently forming a ruling coalition with the Socialist Party of Euskadi—a TV channel in euskara is basic to an individual and collective sense of Basque identity and is not negotiable.

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Finally, the performing arts. Cinema is, beyond any doubt, the flagship of recent Basque culture, with directors and films receiving awards in Spain and abroad, to the point that the existence of a 'Basque cinema' is frequently talked about. Established directors like Pedro Olea and Imanol Uribe, or younger ones like Juanma Bajo Ulloa and Julio Medem (with films like La madre muerta and La arzilla roja, to mention two recent examples), demonstrate the importance of Basque cinema within the overall framework of Spanish film production. Or perhaps one should say 'films by Basque directors' since—with very few exceptions—Basque
films are made, distributed, and shown entirely in Castilian. But this has not stopped people using the term 'Basque cinema'; language has not been felt to be the key criterion, as it has in literature where hard-liners have argued that Unamuno, Baroja, Celaya, Otero, and other major figures cannot be called Basque writers—despite the fact that they were born and saw themselves as Basques—because they wrote or wrote in Castilian. This restriction of Basque literature to that written in Basque is now less prevalent, and the two literatures produced in the Basque Country—that in euskara and that in Castilian—coexist without undue friction.

In the theatre, by contrast, the Basque language is much more in evidence. Independent theatre groups put on a considerable number of productions in euskara; however, these are mostly works translated into Basque from other languages. In this sense it has to be admitted that drama in euskara is still sadly lagging behind poetry and fiction, in terms of quantity and quality. There are practically no playwrights writing in euskara, and when authors who have made their name in another genre—Gabriel Aresti in poetry or Atxaga in fiction—have ventured into the theatre, the results have been disappointing. Several of the literary prizes offered by Basque institutions are open to all genres—plays as well as novels, short stories, poetry, and essays—but the dramatic entries are the least impressive. Drama prizes are frequently not awarded for lack of sufficiently high-quality entries, and the few plays that do receive awards are often undistinguished.

Any discussion of cultural production in Basque must include mention of the role played by translation, particularly in book form. Generally speaking, translation has been practised particularly in literature and is especially common in children's and teenage literature, understandably since the publication of literary works in Basque has always had the educational aim of furthering knowledge of the language. (There is also now a substantial output of children's and teenage literature written in Basque, and many established authors contribute to the genre, often for financial reasons since this kind of book, for the educational reasons mentioned above, is the most likely to sell.) The Basque government is currently supporting a major translation programme, with the aim of translating into euskara the major or most representative works of world literature, plus classic philosophical and scientific texts.

A further issue that needs raising here is that of the standardization of the language. Until relatively recently, the Basque language was geographically fragmented into five leading dialects and a proliferation of local variants, with no standard form to provide cohesion and act as a model. If Basque was to become a means of public and private expression for all Basque speakers, allowing them to 'live in Basque', there was an urgent need to create some kind of linguistic uniformity, even if this meant sacrificing the wealth—often more apparent than real—of dialectal and local varieties. This process of linguistic standardization—through the development and promotion of euskara batua [standard Basque]—has been championed by the Academy of the Basque Language [Euskaltzaindia], particularly thanks to the efforts of the eminent linguist Koldo Mitxelena. In 1968 the...
The Basque Academy drew up a standardized linguistic model, based mainly on the Guipuzcoan dialect (the most widely spoken) with elements drawn from other dialects, intended at least for written usage. *Euskara batua* has been—and still is—criticized by hard-line defenders of the various dialectal forms, but in practice it has been accepted by virtually all writers and all the mass media (printed and spoken). This does not mean that the problems of linguistic standardization have been resolved. Languages are not made by academies. The success of the Basque Academy’s initiative depends ultimately on those who speak the language, and here writers and cultural workers can play a vital role.

The opposition between standard Basque and its dialectal forms raises the issue of a possible split between two parallel cultural forms: that of a popular culture which continues to express itself in the various dialects, and that of a more restricted elite culture which uses the standardized model. In practice, it is more a matter of two forms of cultural expression which may be different in the sense that a literary or scientific text written in *euskara batua* differs from a deeply ingrained, highly popular cultural phenomenon like that of *bersolarismo*, but which nevertheless coexist unproblematically in the minds and cultural practice of all Basques. The conflict is not between two forms of cultural expression but between those who defend and those who reject the notion of a standardized model of the language. The latter are increasingly less vociferous as the reasons for attacking a necessary and irreversible cultural process prove unfounded. For linguistic standardization does not—and must not—mean the death of the Basque dialects. The Academy of the Basque Language is fully aware of this and, while encouraging standardization in written usage, continues to defend traditional dialectal forms.

Notes

1. Euskara, the eastern dialectal form of the word, is regarded as more authentic than the alternative *eukera* and is now more common, particularly in written and educated usage; *eukera* is, however, still frequently used orally.


3. Improvisations in verse, customary at popular festivals or other celebrations, and today frequent on television shows and in competitions organized in theatres or in courts where the Basque ball game pelota is played.

Further reading


--- (ed.), *Euskal-Herria. I: Historia y sociedad. ii: Realidad y proyecto* (Mondragón, 1985) (collective volume; most of the contributions are in Basque, some are in Castilian).


The magazine *Jakin* publishes an annual list of all books published in Basque during the year, with critical commentary (in Basque).