



México Julio 20, 2014

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## VOICES AND TERRITORIES

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Número 61

This article treats two exhibitions (*Voces* - a multimedia part within the greater exhibition “Forum Barcelona”, Spain) and (*Territories* a nomadic exhibition shown at the “Art Museum” in Malmö, Sweden).<sup>1</sup> My aspiration is to critically discuss issues concerning “mainstream representations of diaspora” in a contextual understanding, from a postcolonial and feminist perspective.

The concept *voices* has during the last decades become a “political symbol” - “a weapon” that appeals towards descriptions of the history of humanity by highlighting liberty of expression, global solidarity, equality and justice. But it also works as a tool by visualizing heterogeneity, within its “rigid systems representation” and its diversity. The concept *territories* addresses “political cartographies” as a result of “signifying metaphors” about boundaries in terms of “pacts and conflicts”, but it also reinforces “utopias” in relation to dividing lines over “territories and autonomies”. On the globalization map, all territories have a cross-culture border narrative;<sup>2</sup> thus territories do not only signify geographic/spatial arenas, but also arenas where social changes is visible and confirms the views that the majority have about their near environments (home, surroundings) or their belonging to “imagined (trance)nation(s)”.<sup>3</sup> These understandings do not only integrate a reflection about contextual (territories), but also the humane in the form of (diaspora) communities. A distinguished quality, that speaks about the links between global and local, the personal and the collective, the known and the unknown.

In an era of globalization, the concept *territory* (community) includes a reflection about *diaspora*, that stands for an attitude of boundary transgression and relationship possibilities (or the adverse); which introduces a diversification about the “old” and the “new” in form of experiences, tied to the cultural baggage (heritage) that people with (different) ethnic background apparently carry with them as beings.

Diaspora implies an important tension between “we/them”, “here/there” and “then/now”. But, diaspora also includes how subjects' identity, transforms individual experience, to a group's identity politic. A situation that consequently is brought about by migration and resulting in the creation of (new) social networks. Communities that are developed in the spirit of diaspora situate awareness, with dual attachment that clearly is dealt with from an “outsiders” perspective.<sup>4</sup>

### The Postcolonial Voices

*Postcolonial voices* highlight marginalized tendencies that are active in the mainstream debate, voices created within the cultural field. The criticism brought forward problematizes “representations” in the public sphere (the arena where power structures are played out). It also questions how *different voices* are represented discursively, in the form of pictures or texts, even in *virtual territories* (where the language can be interpreted as gender neutral). Representations that are affected by “globalization” and unavoidably reaches all groups in civilian society, such as dominant groups and groups with a *diaspora experience*. An apparent comment about how the normative western regime affects, the establishing of a ruling “cultural policy”.<sup>5</sup>

*The postcolonial debate about representations*, above all captures tensions in terms of “crisis”.<sup>6</sup> This is reflected in various ways: partly through a disarmament and an appropriation discourse of alternative “voices” (gender-related, “race” and ethnicity based), by adapting them towards mainstream narrative (hegemonic normative). Thus alternative voices are given a position within a “normative” debate, without the vigour of change, but only as representations of liberty of expression. From a critical perspective it means that beyond the concept “marginalized voices” there are people who are affected by a structural oppression, shadowed by mainstream discourse.

The crisis can be related to abstract issues around "power and authority" and its projections in the form of an "everyday life politics" agenda, but also in terms of narrating expression such as "(trans)collective memory".<sup>7</sup> In other words, that "identity politics" becomes fixed to questions of belonging (beyond diaspora). This in fact responds and polarizes "similarities versus differences", by a "hegemonic adaptation" of "race", ethnicity - gender - sexuality and class, converting these in terms of "the legitimate" values and norms (i.e. creating an image from a dominant position where society is without crisis). This is of course a problematic form of narrative, because this crisis free discourse provokes negative consequences in terms of hidden discrimination and hostility in the everyday life. When crisis appears dominant voices proclaim their non-conflictive position and blame marginalized voices of in capabilities of dealing with a diaspora reality.

Contradictions that highlight a more nuanced ideological standpoint. An identity crisis that contributes to a seeking, to give life a sense (a desired WE) and concurrent, to create boundaries around relations (the undesirable "other").<sup>8</sup> Stereotypical standpoints that obstruct solidarity dialogues in general and particularly weaken minority groups. This implies, in an analysis of how media production works, an understanding of how the normative message reaches the general public (in the form of pictures, texts or publicity) and remains internalised as obvious values.<sup>9</sup> In other word, normative representations (read negative, conflictive) influence people young as well as old, creating un-reflected group mentalities (seeking a strong WE). <sup>10</sup>

## Voces

*Voces*<sup>11</sup> (Voices) is the given name of a part of a greater exhibition *Forum Barcelona Spain, 2004*.<sup>12</sup> This includes a multimedia exhibition that can be visited on the Internet. When I visited *Forum Barcelona 2004:s* homepage I already knew of its existence, partly because I had read reviews of it, in different newspapers such as *El Pais*,<sup>13</sup> but I also, had discussed the exhibition with friends that had visited it. Here comes an extracts from the exhibitions presentation;

Paralelamente, la exposición reflexiona one torno a las condiciones they libertad individual y colectiva que see encuentran one la basis part diálogo necesario uniting three diferentes culturas. La reflexión debe permitir apelar alder compromiso y a la responsabilidad individual pair que la comunicación desde la igualdad y la pluralidad sea posible. Por ello, see plantea como un elogio they todas las is shaped they libertad they expresión y pluralismo: lenguas, lenguajes, culturas, puntos they song take, medios they comunicación, ideologías, ámbitos geográficos... La pluralidad they las voces. "snout podemos malentender usando la misma lengua y podemos comunicarnos usando lenguas mist thawing is taken. Todo depende they si existe un proyecto they entendimiento que vaya más allá part lenguaje." (J. A. Marine). Voces snout descubre la riqueza they la comunicación humane como expresión they la diversidad they las culturas y como puente they diálogo uniting three ellas.

My description of this room becomes a surfing via the Internet; when going to Forums Barcelona's homepage the visitor gets to choose to go further by linking to different types of information, in different windows, relating to different events of the exhibition.

Voces (as I described before) is a part at the greater exhibition. The multimedia section is concurrently divided in to different parts: a presentation of the exhibition's vision (the text that has been presented above), a section dealing with technical information, an introduction of the artists, a photographic exhibitions and video films of different installations at Forum Barcelona 2004 (that is partially analyzed in this text), and links to reviews and multimedia exhibitions. If I go to the presentation of the artists, it becomes clear that they are well established in the art world. They are from various nationalities and come from different parts of the world. Of eight three are women and five are men.<sup>14</sup>

Voces the multimedia exhibition's main page depicts a young man that probably speaks several languages (shown in different windows).

I choose Spanish and go on. Here, three main themes are found, that are represented by three exactly identical Asian female faces, which speak sign language (with the aid of their hands) - one can choose between the links "signs", "voices" and "networks" which are represented by different symbols. These links lead me to three different themes "travels", "universe" and "maps" (these are divided again while at the same time constantly linking back to the main themes, "signs", "voices" and "networks"). In other words, the visitor gets free hands to choose and follow a theme and its different links and consequential interpretations that always can be related back to the original three themes. In same windows the audience/visitor has the possibility to evaluate the exhibition by making a comment by linking to a questionnaire (that includes personal facts). Moreover, the audience gets the possibility to sign a "guest book" (that had 50 names the day I entered), admittedly representative from different parts of the world, however a considerable low amount of people. Among the comments that can be read, the exhibition is commended as the best of Forum Barcelona, but remarks are also made by the visitors, that the technical complicated homepage - "staged as a maze", leaves the audience with a feeling of frustration. In other words despite that the exhibition is aesthetically impressing its form becomes elitist.

When choosing the link *voices* a lexical explanation to the concept is given; "words" (languages). The concept is defined as a part of a communication system "each time a language dies, a perception of the world disappears", which integrates three central principles "diversity/heterogeneity" (an illustration of the meaning of everlasting wisdom), "languages" (a representation of a crucial channel in the understanding of each other), "dialogue" (an evidence that communication creates vicinity).

I link myself through "*travels*" to the main theme "*voices*" (a journey through a concept definition) that offers me an understanding of the different languages' development and their importance. I link myself forwards in the menu through the link "*universe*" to central concepts "*voices*" (an overview of a small numbers central concepts, is given) is related to what systems of knowledge lead to, for example "relationships". From there I go forward (through a new link) to an even smaller knowledge system that highlights a couple of concepts, for example "minorities" or "contacts" (which informs me about different definitions and facts about the groups. Furthermore a list in the form of words and pictures offers explanations, for example about how one says "yes" in different languages).

Finally I link myself forward to the word "*maps*" that shows various files that explain about the importance of dialectical variation, for example that there are at least four thousand different verbal ways to describing "the world", while at the same time there exists a limited language use amongst the big languages. This implies that successful communication, in turn can only come from the will to understand.[15](#)

This virtual journey took at least two hours (despite the fact that I surfed very focused around the concept "voces" - voices). Of course, for such visitors that I represent (we shouldn't not forget that I have research in mind during my visit) this journey was exciting though it was thoroughly done and very fact concerned. On the other hand, I understand the criticism from other visitors. They point out that the exhibition leads to a certain interpretation confusion. The problem actually does not lie in that the website is time-consuming or that it is complicated. The problem lies in the contradictions created between exhibitions "discursive" message and its symbolic solutions - to offer itself as a "knowledge source", and pre-interpret the "recipient" that actually are "many and different" and perhaps do not have a broad previous knowledge. In other words, that the exhibitions "symbolic complexity" (the depth) does not reflect the actual situation of the world, but rather proves to the visitor that she/he is a part of this actuality. Thereby can (some) visitors feel set aside whilst others legitimated, depending on their belonging and the depth of their (western) cultural capital. Repeated visits to the exhibition brings different experiences, i.e. the website is constructed in a way that it is perceived as if there are infinite links. Something that creates an image of the world that is fragmented beyond reality. A highlighting of a micro complexity, that by its nature makes bigger structures at macro level become hard to grasp as part of the same reality. The account of this experience becomes an exciting knowledge adventure that results in a "truth" acknowledgment felt to be created by the audience personal control (though each link is an ideological path that the website author controls, not that their ideological argument is incorrect)

Technologies and scientific discourses can be partially understood as formalisations, i.e., as frozen moments, of the fluid social interactions constituting them, but they should also be viewed as instruments for enforcing meanings. The boundary is permeable between tool and myth, instrument and concept, historical systems of social relations and historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge. Indeed myth and tool mutually constitute each other.[16](#)

## About Diversity

The concept *diversity* is central in the exhibition Voces - that are presented as *voices* from an agent's perspective - or as dialogues. In the debate about globalisation cultures, diversity is portrayed as synonymous to "cultural pluralism/multiculturalism", but also as "diaspora". Important to notice is, that diversity through a mainstream perspective proclaims similarities and contrasts, while being politics about cultural variation. In which (new)/alternative voices are described, on the one hand as moulders of strategic solidarity, and on the other hand are ascribed commonalities in relation to a societal discourse.[17](#)

Knowledge about the global room and its similarities or contradictions do not arise by themselves, it is not a reflex of global economic and technological processes. Thus require the creation of different types of - *imagined global communities* as discourse. In other words, a policy of representations implicates compromises in the nations' rhetorical messages. Propagation and mediation of culture political messages can be understood in terms of - *a policy of border aesthetics*; an effect that results in considerable restructurings of the public spaces, but also in a dialectical changing discourse. This clearly affects the settings and the moulding of the public opinion. Despite that, the aim lies in the creation of a source of inspiration for liberty of expression, the effects of this intention might also create a feeling of segregation within certain parts of the civilian population. Probably because the cultural policy projects (dominant discourse) link different scenarios of conflicts and involves various actors that stand for different agendas in a mainstream practice. Hegemonic knowledge about the local space and its possibilities is characterized by contextual material standpoints and attitudes that as a consequence incarcerate alternative cultures. [18](#)

The “western” hegemonic culture is characterized by systematic and normative categorisations, on the one hand in relation to the construction of “the other”, and on the other hand in a relation of (de)constructing “heterogeneity” or “diversity”. [19](#) Knowledge production remains a representation of differences that tends to idealize or demonise. The need of visible and categorized documentation in the form of scientific or non scientific re-narrations tend to be produced in an ideological purpose. As a consequence, evidence of “equal” values (moral) tend to implicate, in the long run, a position circulating around differences in values. In a way of pointing out an unproblematic existence (the western) and to create an approval “the others” cultural ways (or cultural differences) are consumed and thereby “the other” remains a cultural item.[20](#) In consuming, understanding and processing knowledge “imaginary relations” are created and considered as “confirmed realities” or “counter realities”.

The exhibition *Voices* takes place in several rooms; at first the greater “Forum” in the city of Barcelona in Spain, Europe; but also in different rooms at the simultaneous exhibitions; for example “photo installations”, the “multimedia parts”, and through the intimate room, at least in the form of reflections, the visitor develops in meetings with the artists or through their art. Irrespective of what occurs in an art exhibitions (permanent, nomadic, audiovisual, etc., or in museums for that matter), does these events imply a temporality of experiences, ideas and views, which are framed in to a theme and several interpretations - a confirmation that the experiences about what is seen can become fixed interpretations through defining them as changeable. At this time new experiences are created by the legitimating reason within the visitor. Critical reasoning at these unique occasions, despite liberty of expression becomes an appropriation in terms of identifications - it becomes an essentialist discourse about cultural heritages in the contemporary.

The exhibition *Voices* offers ideas in the form of art documentation that to an extent can be interpreted as ethnographic facts (especially in this type of reflective exhibitions). The visitor, the art critics and those that choose not to go to the exhibition are included. The art items, irrespectively of quality or technology become transformed from works of art to property, through (everyday) existences, not only by relations to a predetermined message (exposed at the exhibition), but also in relation to the participation that it offers (during the exhibition). Since the exhibitions are created on the basis of a “holistic” perspective (from the individual's - the artists vision and the visitor's interpretation (as the centre) of a totality - the relation between the two realms is developed on the basis of the exhibition as a context and perspective). The visit implies both a (subjective) experience and a (objective) processing.

These facts make art productions to become integrated voices in a mainstream cultural discourse, something that can result in a product under the direction of cultural policy, which is made public through museums, and in cooperation with artists. Irrespective of theme or form (art items), cultural actors become involved on a common and public arena (the art exhibition). Since exhibitions are context bound, the art productions circulates around “rhetoric” and “metaphors”. In this exhibition the rhetoric is about the “global contemporality” - it speaks about a period of border-crossing (diaspora).

The game revolving around contradicting cultural politics also affects the establishment, something that narrows the space for marginalized voices to act in alternative ways. In the exhibition *Voces* these voices are actively “speaking”, but “imprisoned” nevertheless in a pictures or edited videos (this in relation to a reflection about “race”/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, age, generation, identity, etc.) that actually colours the room with compromises. But why compromise in free spaces - such as Forum Barcelona? The debate about “cultural pluralism” should be understood in relation to power and superiority and the right that those in power take as representative standpoints. The world that is depicted in the exhibition highlights fragmented images that describe events and places - beyond *diaspora*.

## **Territories**

The exhibition *Territories* was shown at the Art Museum in Malmö, Sweden in (28/5- 28/8 2004). [21](#) My description of the exhibition is based on a reading of the catalogue and several visits. But my analysis will basically focus on my own experience of wandering through the exhibition and on dialogues with other visitors. [22](#)

The exhibition catalogue is divided into thirty different themes which include a presentation of all the architects and artists in the form of biographies, (as last chapter) - a way to review the artists and integrate them as active voices in the exhibition. The selection of themes is presented in an interchange of texts and picture-stories, where the texts keep the plot intact by highlighting in colour central sections of the texts. A playful effect, that creates a different relation to the exhibition on-the-spot. As if a “certain type of reading” is suggested. Significant information coding that can be considered as good intentioned, despite that it requires previous knowledge.

These types of coded messages risk tending toward paternalistic and educational function. A crucial dilemma, when having an open discussion about “ethnocentrism”, and about what hegemonic “representations” bring about. *Ethnocentric* representations includes within the hegemonic discourse, a mix of ideas that shadows i.e., marginalization in terms of “racism” or “sexism”. In other words, categories as race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality and



class, cooperate in creating a dynamic narrative (adapted to the dominant ideology);<sup>23</sup> which entails, i.e., that subjects (diaspora) are constantly forced to an affirmative acceptance to the dominant group.<sup>24</sup>

*Discursive representations* are characterized by rationality, even though that the symbolic selection highlights emotional messages in the form of texts or images. Communication politics finds itself in a dialog of contradictions between hegemonic and critical voices. The language in the exhibition is characterized by a critical tone that makes power visible, in the form of a western moral.<sup>25</sup> Within these paradigms, art exhibitions are metaphorical representations characterized by a normative operationally; on the one hand by the artists' personal expression (discursive expression) the artwork becomes tied to a discursive message; on the other hand by the audience interpretations and readings which are affected by the normative values (discursive impression). Thus the contextual experience is intermixed by different meetings. Ranging from normative views which are hidden behind abstract imagination, to the material reality and its positional interpretations.

Art exhibitions fulfil a social purpose that impacts and “influences” (discourse) - by experiencing an art exhibition, the visitor meets and incorporates new paradigms (discourse), which in a dialectical way results in mental “solutions” to personal issues revolving around loneliness, fear, injustice (experience and practice). <sup>262</sup>

During my experience of wandering through the exhibition I developed a noticeable reaction - I walked as if I was part of a pilgrimage. I wondered where the path was taking me? The “truth” that was presented before me evidenced certain issues, examined in a well known fashion.<sup>27</sup> But how was “diaspora” narrated? That which, “we/them”, “here/there”, “now/then”, stands in conjunction to was evidently related to a reality that inevitably was depicted in a normative fashion. In the sense that attitudes and knowledge are internalised within us all, in terms of acceptance or contradictions, but certainly through “experiences” associated to conceptions of what is “antagonist” to normality. It’s about an understanding of “oppositional identities”, brought about by predetermined knowledge about established boundaries, (trans)national or territorial, irrespective of if these are traumatic or favouring. A wisdom, that risks to be materialized (despite of critical standpoints) as fear for “strangers” and as a consequence for the diaspora (subject).<sup>28</sup>

The dilemma in how *territories* (diaspora/communities) are narrated about, and made visible, has to do with a discursive art language, which tends to transform (by symbolic images) different realities (ex. refugee camps) into aesthetic pictures (photography) to be consumed as “human landscapes”. Interpreting these images should be transparent interpretations, but the discursive art language, i.e. a certain reality becomes an art commodity within a certain space (discourse), overshadows real suffering out of a *diaspora*.<sup>29</sup>

*Diaspora processes* (with the exhibition as an example) ties immigrants and refugees together across (trans)national borders. To some extent, due to the modern multimedia and the communications technology, creating a reaffirming of the groups' re-narration. For example “they” who come “here” (the stranger). A phenomenon, that creates a narrative of mutual relations between the global and the local.<sup>30</sup> Situated landscapes where immigrants or refugees develop standpoints in terms of border relations, inclusively to their own home countries. Which are limited by geopolitical divisions while at the same time tied to strong feelings of separation and return. *Diaspora contexts* are interrelated by a policy of translational and mass migration as captured by the mass-Medias today. The media discourse (diaspora) evidently influences projections and representations, affecting people's views in a mutual way,<sup>31</sup> and these results in a narrative in terms of “home and away from home”. In other words individuals and groups' differences are captured and shown in the form of and as resources, while at the same time ignored and demised as problematic.

*The diaspora communities* are disarmed and redefined as part of a figuratively designed discourse (the non-adapted culture – the dominant), instead of being treated as a result of marginalized opportunities in terms of social “openings and closure”. *The diaspora representations* aren’t only about “where” it is located (territory) but also how the bond (community) between “we/them” possibly can develop. This leads individuals and groups to different places and even creates new loyalties to different nations. Where the “experiences of home”, is captured as a manifestation of irregularities against the norm. A norm that suggests recognition of an integrated/segregated group, on the basis of hegemonic representations, that accepts “the other” from a distances.

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During my visits to the exhibition I spoke to some of the other visitors, with the aim to capture some of their thoughts. The over all comment of the exhibition was that it was “admirable and inspiring”. On the other hand I intend to concentrate on the more critical opinions. Mainly because I desire to find a common denominator in problematizing from a critical feminist perspective (a reflection around representations of diaspora, gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, etc.).<sup>32</sup> The first and unavoidable aspect to discuss becomes an immediate reflection - a retrospect around this (self)biography. Who am “I” amongst all these voices, images and gazes, and what part/role do “we” play in the construction of “the strangers” and “the other”. This aspect of course requires a reflection around belonging, and as a consequence; what is it that I belong to and how am I respected beyond my difference?

My impression about the exhibition as room can be described as a “global urbanization outline” - depicting “transnational borders” and “paradoxes” between what I can define as “landscapes of peace” and “landscapes of war and conflict”, from different realities. [33](#)

Other visitors describe their impression as follow:

- (a) I simple came very close to cry, many many times. I was mortified that we do so little against the war. Why do we Swedes have such mixed feelings when it comes to other territories?
- (b) I only confirmed my own prejudices. The USA: s violence against humanity, in short.
- (c) I chose to stay at the smaller rooms of the exhibition, and took the chance to talk to others. But I can admit that I used the exhibition as my own discussion’s forum.
- (d) I became angry. I cannot understand how one can compare war and peace.
- (e) I became so inspired that I want to work as voluntary for some International institution. [34](#)

Representations of *territories* remind about a reflection on a “global community” but also about “autonomous groups”. [35](#) These ideas open up to an understanding of places with biographies, and at the same time a perception about own territory. [36](#) Testimonies (voices), which play a significant role in connection to “contemporary cultures”, mainly because of the impact of globalisation processes in the formation of *diaspora*. These communities existence, bound to territory, are constantly redirected to questions of “power” and “authority.” [37](#) In other words, a space filled with experiences of “multiple belonging”. [38](#) Where “power” and “authority” advocates ideas and conceptions that turn towards normative values, as normative experiences rejects the existence of different associations. When “power” and “authority” materialises its non-mobility beyond its normative borderlines, the reaction is resistance, created outside this territory.

- (f) I believe that there will be mixed feelings amongst many people. Like, strangers no thanks! We want peace!
- (g) I became thoughtful because this feels as if it concerns “other” but not us. [39](#)

The *diaspora communities* bases on contradictory experiences of heterogeneity. [40](#) Nevertheless, reflections speak about the existence of “the other”/”strangers” - outside or inside the dominant group.

The “stranger” is and will remain “the one” who represent incoherencies in societies. These incoherencies do not necessarily mean something suspicious from the stranger’s point of view. To the contrary, incoherencies develop as a consequence of ignorance about the dominants norms. Which, in many cases, are occulted deliberately with the intention, from the dominant group’s point of view, to preserve a hierarchical position. [41](#)

To not belong to some place, some time, some love. Lost origins, impossible rooting, falling memory, suspended actuality. The stranger’s “room” is a leaving train, an aeroplane that flies, a transition that eliminates the detained moment. No distinguish features. His time is a resurrection that remembers death and the times before death, but that hasn’t the honour to be located in a life after this, only the impression of a respite, to have escaped. [42](#)

Racism and contempt against “the other” has occurred throughout history; it tells about a reflection, an attitude that depicts “the other” as “uncivilised” - the one that might possibly destroy a place (read a construction on shared cultural value, our place). But strangers, can also be the ones that contributes to and enriches places with “new lives in a place”, “other voices in places” or in a “the territory”. Nevertheless can these new lives only be recognised as far as they become, at least to some extent shared by those that are perceived to be different and unrelated (the norm).

*Postcolonial feminist theories* criticise “sexism” and “racism” as fixed mechanisms. The base of patriarchy is founded on an essentialist idea, in which gender and race aspects are established according to hierarchical values. Both categories are responses to ideological conjunctions created in the purpose to exclude, by highlighting and judging difference as destructive. Therefore can racism be described as a “colonial gaze” in the sense that “the other” is ascribed qualities associated to distinctive attributes. These perceptions are built upon an ethnocentric view on how to maintain and strengthen hegemony. However this does not only give space to contempt and fear for members in other groups; the conflict also opens the scope for own interpretations associated to “ones own nation”, group solidarity and the feeling of belonging to a territory beyond *diaspora*. [43](#)

**Globalisation diaspora – a final discussion**

It looks like the “global democracy” remains the (post)modernist new states political project, i.e. mainly based on citizen upgrading; through education of different representations of territoriality of the nation; and partly through the development of norms which give priority to “the (cultivated) home”. On the other hand, it’s opposite (diaspora related- gender, sexuality and race/ethnicity/class based generations) becomes excluded from a western perspective.[44](#)

The critical debate about *globalisation* emphasizes on that the (western) hegemonic culture strengthens its governing role through the creation of “global politics” that is increasingly characterized by an uncomfortable connections - “multiculturalism”. Resulting in a stigma of certain social groups/“communities”, that to a greater extent respond to controversial structural oppression, by new conglomerates in attitudes such as groups/“(trans)communities”. The debate includes aspects such as “non-tolerance” towards undemocratic ideas that to a certain degree creates tension between different social groups, but also becomes a way to indicate boundaries in relation to “identity politics”, for “the other”. [45](#)

*The global cultural paradox* - is not only to be seen as a metaphor but as a materialisation of the imperialistic influence brought about by the neoliberal ideology. Cultural hegemonies materialize through double oppressions - a mechanism that cooperates (through inclusion, exclusion is created) and stigmatises (through exclusion, inclusion is created).[46](#) Communication patterns and representations enforce the global power imbalance, when “culture” is to be associated with common values and as a consequence becomes a question access. Both these forms occur and are created by societal injustices in terms of racism, sexism or homophobia, where antagonisms in terms of cultures, belonging or identities become associated.

In the contemporary western world does “representations of difference” adhere a new fetish symbolism beyond *diaspora identities*. The discourse seems to revolve around reconciliation through opening new niches in mirroring “the other” life alternatives. The exploitation of “the others” culture seems to ease the feelings of alienation in the hegemonic group (the desire of the other as an original not touched by the alienation and disconnection thought to be created in modernity, post-modernity), despite that these same feelings seek admission and acceptance amongst the marginalized groups. [47](#)

The hegemony is descended from an “approval and consensus”, in other word, in a conservative discourse that could be summarized by cultural domination.[48](#) Culture becomes one of society's control mechanisms i.e. an ideology. The cultural ideology remains a fixed practice that leads to “false consciousness” - where people find their roles and perceptions. Despite of this, can people remain “relatively” independent from the impact of the dominant culture, since the communication often creates misunderstanding. On the other hand people often feel independent, as the dominant ideology often is internalised on an unconscious level, and are felt as persona experiences. [49](#)

The postcolonial theories' central point[50](#) emphasizes on a problematic surrounding the power over “knowledge”, created around “cultural interpretation”. Furthermore it sees divisions of power from a position, concerning cultural productions (accessibility), where the hegemonic group’s culture almost always is portrayed out of a hierarchical position.[51](#) It seem like the hegemonic discourse normative character, partially aims on the creation of “integrating representations” of marginalized voices as autonomous, but also on the creation of “distinctive representations” of the same (the dangerous “other”). In an interpretation, the discourse can be described as ambivalent, inclusively of being populist, but the substance accts by creating fixed essences (“right” or “wrong”), which aims to preserve “preferential right” in “depicting” representations as “agents” beyond mainstream. [52](#) The contrasts between “autonomy” and “legitimacy” remains both a question of “identity politics”, as well as a message that gives marginalised voices the reason to enter “the public sphere”. Concurrently, can the same reasons result in an “imaginary right” or a condition that is reached through “violence” - colonisation. [53](#) The concept colonisation integrates an understanding of diaspora, i.e. (boundary/border) processes that in a reflection can be recognized through “self biographical” narratives/statements.

The colonizing narrative speaks about a “true narrative”, that confirms differences and representations as the form of existence of “the other” as a social agent. Issues concerning marginalised voices (diaspora, gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, subcultures and generations) are not only reflected through a public localizing dynamic dimension - revolving around identity - but also by a structural globalisation dynamic - “whiteness”.[54](#) Important to emphasise in the understanding of *diaspora*, is that “whiteness” never is reflected in terms of “race or gender (fixed) questions”; thus “differences” are reduced to “subjectivity”. This confirms “discrepancies”; that the dynamics between “race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality” mean contradictions but at the same time new loyalties and communities. Above all when these are linked to the predetermined conditions (the basis of racism) in connection with non-accessibility to a group - “racism”.[55](#) It is just these aspects that today characterize the creation of community(ies) and of belonging to one or more territories; but they are also aspects that are integrated as voices in the narrative about *diaspora*.

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## Notas

1 Year 2004. More information about the exhibitions will be provided in this/next segment.



- [2](#) Klein, N. (2000).
- [3](#) Anderson, B. (1983).
- [4](#) Brah, A. (1996) and Clifford, J. (1997).
- [5](#) Gilroy, P. (2000).
- [6](#) Hall, S. (1996).
- [7](#) Thompsson, S. (2000).
- [8](#) Essed, P. (1996).
- [9](#) hooks, b. (1990).
- [10](#) Skeggs, B. (2002: 311-326).
- [11](#) Forum Barcelona: 9 May 2004 to 26 September 2004.
- [12](#) <http://www.barcelona2004.org/esp/forum2004.htm>
- [13](#) El Pais: <http://www.elpais.es>
- [14](#) <http://www.barcelona2004.org/esp/eventos/exposiciones/ficha.cfm?IdEvento=129>
- [15](#) <http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/>
- [16](#) Haraway, D. (2000: 271-304).
- [17](#) Hall, S. (2000:97-113).
- [18](#) hooks, b. (2000: 233-241).
- [19](#) Hall, S. (1996) and Bhabha H. (2004).
- [20](#) hooks, b. (1990).
- [21](#) For more information and pictures of the exhibition see:  
<http://www.konsthall.malmo.se/o.o.i.s?id=79&year=2004&template=main.t>
- [22](#) The Catalogue “The Frontiers of Utopia and Other Facts on the Ground” bases on the exhibition “Territories. Islands, Camps and Other States of Utopia”, by Anselm Franke and Eyal Weizman, (2004), Malmö, Cologne.
- [23](#) Maynard, M. (1994).
- [24](#) Mohanty, Ch. (2001: 462-487).
- [25](#) Foucault, M. (1997-2000).
- [26](#) Storey, J. (2006).
- [27](#) Here as a self fulfilling prophesy.
- [28](#) Gilroy, P. (2000), Essed P. & D. T. Goldberg (2001) and Said, E. (2003).
- [29](#) Clifford, J. (1997), Dyer, R. (1997) and Storey J. (2006).
- [30](#) Appadurai, A. (1996).
- [31](#) Clifford, J. (1997).
- [32](#) The selection was random and mixed in consideration to gender and origin. Concerning age I chose to speak to visitors in the ages about 20 to 40. This because I saw a great different in the comments between the different ages. Older people were satisfied and happy with the exhibition. I want to add that I didn't speak to tourists as my focus was to reason around a Swedish context.

[33](#) "Refugee camps / Borders".

[34](#) My translation from Swedish

[35](#) For a sociological definition about the concept community, see Ferdinand Tönnies (2001:xx): *hegemonic community* (gesellschaft) "the harmonizing dynamics between a system and its structures" and *secondary communities* (gemeinschaft) "the group members' actions".

[36](#) Okely, J. (1996).

[37](#) Gilroy, P. (2000).

[38](#) Woodward, K. (2000).

[39](#) Own translation from Swedish.

[40](#) Yuval Davis, N. (1997).

[41](#) For different definitions of the concept "the stranger" see Simmel, G. (1950: 402-409): "individuals or groups who indirectly create changes in societies"; Schutz, A. (1976: 91-106): "individuals or groups who acts independently in the society"; Bauman, Z. (1995: 77-79): "those who develop multiple belongings irrespectively of society".

[42](#) Kristeva, J.(1991: 23).

[43](#) Wallerstein, I. & Balibar, E. (1997).

[44](#) Pettman, J. (1995) and Sassen, S. (1998).

[45](#) Rosaldo, R. (1993).

[46](#) Carby, H. V. (2000: 389-404).

[47](#) hooks, b. (1990).

[48](#) Gramsci, A. (2007).

[49](#) Althusser, L. (1979).

[50](#) Bhabha, H. (2004).

[51](#) Bourdieu, P. (1998).

[52](#) Spivak, G. (2006).

[53](#) Fanon, F. (2000) and Said, E. (2003).

[54](#) Frankenberg, R. (1993) and Dyer, R. (1997). The concept "whiteness" is used here as a synonymous to western culture.

[55](#) Essed, P. (1991).

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Razón y Palabra es una publicación electrónica editada por el Proyecto Internet del ITESM Campus Estado de México.