From exoticism to diversity

The production of difference in a
globalized and fragmented world

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Abstract

Difference is a social construction, and as such it needs a discourse to produce meaning and be socially effective. As a discourse is always socially and historically grounded, so it is the meaning of difference. This article proposes that the difference in the contemporary world is dominantly articulated in the discourse of diversity, as the discourse of exoticism was the dominant discourse of difference in the 19th Century. This proposal will be proved as I show that, as diversity becomes the appreciated discourse in the present, the exoticism loses its value. Stating that, I will try to understand the conditions of existence of each discourse. I will argue that the exoticism was founded in the 19th century upon three fundaments: imperialism, the idea of progress and nation. They provided the condition for a discourse that based the production of difference on the stable separation of an internal and an external space. After examining the fundaments and their relations with the discourse of exoticism, I will show that the production of difference is no longer based on stable notions of internal and external spaces. Currently, difference is produced on the basis of fragmented and globalized social relations, which requires a discourse flexible enough to cope with these material conditions. The discourse of diversity is this discourse.
Keywords: diversity, exoticism, exotic, difference, nation, globalization.

Resumo

A diferença é uma construção social, e, como tal, necessita de um discurso para produzir sentido e ser efetiva socialmente. Como um discurso é sempre histórico e socialmente fundado, assim o é o sentido da diferença. Este artigo

propõe que a diferença na contemporaneidade é dominantemente articulada no discurso da diversidade, do mesmo modo como o discurso do exótico foi o discurso dominante da diferença no século XIX. Essa proposta será demonstrada ao se notar que, na medida em que a diversidade se torna um discurso apreciado no presente, o exotismo perde seu valor. Ao dizer isso, busco entender as condições de existências de ambos discursos. Eu argumentarei que o exotismo se fundou no século XIX sob três fundamentos: o imperialismo, a ideia do progresso e a nação. Eles proveram a condição para um discurso que baseou a produção da diferença na separação estável entre um espaço interno e um externo. Após examinar os fundamentos e suas relações com o discurso do exótico, demonstrarei que a produção da diferença não é mais baseada em noções estáveis de espaços interno e externo. Atualmente, a diferença é produzida em bases de relações sociais fragmentadas e globalizadas, que requerem um discurso flexível o suficiente para dar conta dessas condições materiais. O discurso da diversidade é esse discurso.

Palavras-chave: diversidade, exótico, exotismo, diferença, nação, globalização

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Introduction[1]

Diversity is a pervasive discourse in our times. From the consumption of goods to governmental policies, from Argentina to Japan we find diversity branded everywhere. Even nations, historically built under the notion of identity, are now branded under diversity. The Brazilian Ministry of Culture, for instance, promoted the country during the 2006 FIFA World Cup with the slogan "Brazil, the country of diversity" (Paschoal & Odenthal 2006). The Minister of Culture, at that time, Gilberto Gil gave many interviews affirming that the intention of the government was to show the world the "diversity of the [Brazilian] culture" (In Nicolau Netto 2009: 166). In a way or another, under different official offices, many nations do the same, being it Navarre, Slovenia, Hungary[2], etc. What Walter Benn Michaels once said – "diversity has become virtually a sacred concept in American life today" (Michaels 2006: 12) – may be applied to many parts of the world.

In 2005, diversity received its label of globality, as UNESCO dedicated a Convention to the issue: the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (UNESCO 2005). In spite of the many disagreements that surrounded its adoption, the Convention has considerable global acceptance: up to June 2014, 133 countries besides the European Union had consented to be bound to it[3], through the "ratification, acceptance or approval and accession, which internationally have the same legal effect"[4].

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2   See http://www.turismo.navarra.es/eng/porque-navarra/razones/ (access March 19, 2015) for the Navarre tourist board; http://www.slovenia.si/visit/ (access March 19, 2015) for the Slovenia tourism board; http://gotohungary.com/about-hungarian-tourism-ltd/-/article/the-land-of-diversity-and-magic (access March 19, 2015) for the Hungary tourism board. All of them have diversity as a central term for their branding.

3   http://www.unesco.org/eri/la/convention.asp?KO=31038&language=E. Access June 11, 2014.

4   http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/diversity-of-cultural-expressions/the-convention/ratification/. Access June 11, 2014.

In spite of the global and ubiquitous presence of diversity in the contemporary society, it is not right to say that diversity has only been appreciated in our time. In fact, diversity of cultures (more than the term cultural diversity) is an important issue for cultural anthropology, as we can see in the classical work by Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, which has a chapter named "Diversity of Cultures" (Benedict 2005 [1934]). It is also present in the context of the foundation of UNESCO, in 1948. A famous text commissioned by UNESCO to Claude Lévi-Strauss also makes use of "diversity of cultures" arguing for the importance of its preservation and stating that historically "men have tended rather to regard diversity as something abnormal or outrageous" (Lévi-Strauss 1952: 11).

But the pervasiveness of diversity is contemporary. In the Constitution of UNESCO, from 1948, "diversity of cultures" appears twice. In the first article, it is meant as a restriction to the power of the nascent Organization: "With a view to preserving the independence, integrity and fruitful diversity of the cultures and educational systems of the States Members of the Organization, the Organization is prohibited from intervening in matters which are essentially within their domestic jurisdiction" (UNESCO 2012: 7). In the fifth article it is a matter of power balance: "In electing Members to the Executive Board, the General Conference shall have regard to the diversity of cultures and a balanced geographical distribution" (UNESCO 2012: 12).

UNESCO was established under the impression that the World War II was caused by cultural misunderstanding and intolerance, and only the comprehension and respect of other cultures could secure peace, as we can read in the first paragraph of the first article of the Constitution (UNESCO 2012: 6). Diversity was therefore a means to achieve a goal, which was to maintain peace. Diversity as a means and not as an end is also to be understood from Lévi-Strauss' text. For him, what was at stake was the condition of any civilization to prosper, recognizing that "the greater the diversity between the cultures concerned, the more fruitful such a coalition will be" (Lévi-Strauss 1952: 46).

The contemporary account of diversity inherits that preoccupation, but it brings it to a new dimension and a new extension. First, diversity is no longer a means for something, but an end. We fight – or should fight – for diversity because diversity is good, it is a value in itself. Therefore, we should not only be concerned with its protection, but also with its promotion. As value in

itself, diversity was raised within the 2005 UNESCO Convention to the status of a human right. According to the Convention, we should celebrate the document for "the importance of cultural diversity for the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally recognized instruments" (UNESCO 2005: 2). Second, it is not only Anthropology or the institutions informed by Anthropology – as it was the case of UNESCO in 1948 – that praise diversity, but, as said before, its appreciation is ubiquitous in the society. Probably an Anthropologist will have more to say about diversity, but there is no need to be one to be aware of its presence and value. In fact, it concerns everyone.

This article enhances an analysis focusing on a comparative perspective. I propose that diversity is a discourse related to the production of difference. In other words, it is the positivity of difference that characterizes, in principle, the discourse of diversity. If difference, however, is a social construction that needs a discourse to make it socially relevant, the discourse of diversity defines the conditions of the production of difference in the contemporary world. Saying that implies that in other time-space realities other discourses have been used for such a definition. If we look back to the 19th Century we will see in the discourse of exoticism the same regularity we see today in the discourse of diversity: the positivity of difference. I want to compare those two discourses relating them to the conditions of their existence.

Before I do that, let me make it clear my notion of difference and of discourse. In the introduction of the book *Ethnic Boundaries*, Frederick Barth (1969) proposes that the superposing of cultures in the same space may not lead to the diminishing of differences but to their augmentation. This is so because, some elements of a culture may become "socially relevant", as the author says, to maintain the cultural boundaries exactly at the moment when there is a cultural encounter. Therefore, contrary to previous anthropological accounts on the difference, Barth innovates and shows that difference is not to be found in isolated cultures, but in the interaction of cultures. It is so, because there is no *a priori* definition of difference, but only a practical definition of it, since it is in social interaction that some cultural elements will be classified to mark the difference. Therefore, difference cannot be taken for granted and:

one cannot predict from first principles which features will be emphasized and made organizationally relevant by the actors. In other words, ethnic categories provide an organization vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems. They may be of great relevance to behaviour, but they need not be; they may pervade all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity. There is an obvious scope for ethnographic and comparative descriptions of different forms of ethnic organization (Barth 1969: 14).

That is why difference is always a social construction. What may be seen as different for one culture may be imperceptible to others. The idea of Durkheim and Mauss, according to which every classification "is organized according to the model provided by society" (Durkheim & Mauss 2004: 189), may be applied here. It is widely known that the Inuits can see 22 different forms of snow (Hall 1997: 23), far more forms than, for instance, a Brazilian could see. While among the tewa, according to an ethnographic research stemming from 1916, "little differences are noticed" among the plants of the regions, "among the whites, an non-trained individual would not be able to distinguish them" (Robbins, Harrington & Freire-Marreco in: Lévi-Strauss 1997: 20). As well as, as John Blacking (1995: 6) made clear, some individuals may not listen to musical intervals that sound clear to the ears of other individuals from different cultures.

This is so because anything to be perceived as different needs to be signified as different. This is a fairly arbitrary process, as anything may be classified as different or as equal to anything, and it will be language that will give it its meaning as one or another. Difference is, therefore, a matter of language as it only exists – it is only signified as such – if there is a discourse that produces it. Skin colors may seem natural to people, but it is only language that will make them meaningfully different from each other, to the extension that it becomes socially relevant to distinguish people. In fact, every society may differentiate skin colors and simply ignore other tonalities that may be meaningful to other societies to categorize people. Racism may be as creative as one can be.

But if I affirm difference is produced by language I do not suppose there is a separation between language and material relations. In other words, there is here no such a thing as the semiotic idea of free play of signs. On the

contrary, what the sign means is conditioned by social relations and forces. Therefore, I follow Foucault's idea (2007) of a discursive analysis looking for the social conditions for the existence of the discourse that produces difference. I want to show that in our time social conditions give existence to the discourse of diversity to produce difference, as much as other conditions gave existence to the discourse of exoticism to produce difference in the 19th century. To say that is to affirm that I see regularity between the two discourses, which is the positivity of difference. In both discourses, difference is positive, in the sense that it is affirmed and produced, instead of denied and excluded. But it is also to say that we do not produce difference today on the same basis it was produced in the 19th century.

The conditions of exoticism

Exoticism is a word that stems from the end of the 16th century (Beyme 2008), not by chance in a moment of European expansionism and colonization. However, it has not been before the 19th century, in the age of imperialism, that it became widely used. In that long century, various modes of exoticism came to be in Europe. Musicians, such as Bizet, Mozart, Liszt, Rameau and Bártok, painters, such as Manet, Klimt, Ingres and Gauguin and writers, such as Lord Byron and Oscar Wilde, praised "alien" cultural elements and brought them to their work. Decorators influenced by Jugendstil or Art Nouveau filled up European houses and public buildings with exoticism, enchanting people dressed after Chinoiserie, Turquerie or Japonisme. In sum, exoticism became omnipresent in the European modernity.

Let me start this analysis pointing to the fundaments of this discourse. They are three, basically. First, the culture in relation to which the discourse was articulated was seen as the culture of the "Other". It means the discourse presupposes the production of difference. This difference was not denied by any sort of universal discourse, such as progress or reason, which tended to suppress every cultural difference, in benefit of the human nature. On the contrary, under the discourse of exoticism, difference should be appreciated. It is important to notice that such appreciation was to be taken under parameters that had European culture always on top and the exotic culture always as deficient in comparison. Nonetheless, even if exoticism meant the

domestication of an alien culture by the "'civilized' discourse" (Hunter 1998: 54), it was to be affirmed, made present, and not denied or excluded. That is what I mean with the positivity of difference, as mentioned before.

Second, there was a separation between those that discoursed about the exoticism and the cultures and individuals seen as exotic. If the exotic was the Other, the one who spoke about the exotic was the European. The narrator and the narrated were two separated instances. I mean it in two ways. First, I refer to it in the same terms as Edward Said refers to Orientalism (Said 2003), as a discourse produced by Europeans (audience, artists, politicians or intellectuals) and not by those who were referred to as exotic (or oriental to Said). Of course one may not forget the presence of auto-exoticization and must consider *exotic* artists as part of the production of the discourse of exoticism. James Parakilas reminds us, for instance, of the famous Manuel de Falla, who exoticized himself dressing up and playing as a "typical" *Spanish* musician in France, even if he had originally nothing related to that image (Parakilas 1998). Therefore, I am certainly not saying that the narrated is not an agent of the narration, but that he/she mostly reproduces rather than produce a European discourse. The Revue Nègre, starred by Josephine Baker in France in the beginning of the 20th century, had its meaning given by reviews as this, found in Le Figaro the day after a premiere: "The music seems to have captured the echoes of the jungle and to mingle the moan of the breeze, the patter of rain, the cracking of leaves…" (Baker & Chase 1993: 4). And some of the artists accompanying Baker had to darken their skin, because "some in the audience [were] disappointed that the performers are so fair. Because of the word *négre* in the title, the French are expecting black Africans, not American mulattoes" (Id. Ibidem).

The separation of the narrated and the narrator can also be seen in the fact that mainly the European artist could make use of the exotic elements in the most legitimated places for art, in the modern sense of the word. The exotic elements were found in most museums or concert halls, but mainly in paintings and performances executed by European artists. The exotic artists, themselves, were not there, but in places mostly dedicated to entertainment and curiosity, such as Cafés, Cabarets and Vaudevilles (Wicke 2001: 101). The La Revue Nègre, once again, was the second part of a show of varieties. "The first half featured vaudeville – Ski Tayama (Japanese acrobats), the Klein

family on trapeze, Saint Granier (a tenor show impersonated Parisian stars), and strongman Louis Vasseur, who twirled on his head a huge merry-go-round bearing six men suspended on trapezes" (Baker & Chase 1993: 115).

The third fundament of the discourse of exoticism is that it referred to cultural practices that took place in the European space[5]. As Theóphile Gautier wrote in *Voyage en Espagne*, after being disappointed with a Spanish dance in Spain, "Spanish dance exists only in Paris, just as seashells are found only in curiosity shops, never at the seashore" (in Parakilas 1998: 148). Of course there could be an exotic culture outside Europe, but even there, to be considered as exotic (to have the cultural meaning of exotic) it had to be executed in the spaces assumed as European. Therefore, for the colonial or ex-colonial elites the culture around them could be perceived as exotic, as it was distant from the European reference. In other words, the *habanera* was perceived as exotic both in France and in elite groups in Cuba. Nevertheless, the discourse of exotic, to be meaningfully exotic, had to take place in the European space, being it located in Europe or away. At the same time, that culture assumed as European could logically not be seen as exotic. Liszt could execute an exotic music, but he was not exotic; exotic were the elements he borrowed from another culture. In sum, exoticism was a European discourse that addressed an allegedly culture of the Other present in the space of the Self.

If these are the fundaments of the discourse of exoticism, I propose there are two main structural conditions to it. First, there is the need for a clear, recognizable and stable separation of an external and an internal room, both in temporal and spatial terms. The exotic, as in its own etymology, is something that is *ex*terior, as in the past, or as in another cultural space, to something. However, it is more than that: this exterior must be brought to the internal space, and when it does so it must keep the symbolic aspect of its exteriority, which marks the otherness. This way, the Romany music in the 19th century was a cultural practice defined as exterior to the European space – as essentially different – brought to it (as in Ravel's Tzigane) under the condition of keeping its otherness. What is exterior is brought to what is interior (Europe), but the exteriority is symbolically maintained. A song

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5   I should be more precise here. European culture is a too vague term, but I have to keep it here, as I am more concerned with exoticism. Clearly, by European culture I mean an elite culture and a popular culture that have been assumed as a national culture in the 19th century. Both elite and national cultures should be perceived as European, opposed to exoticism.

was still perceived as a Roman song, in spite of the fact it was executed by a European musician.

Second, there was the need for social and historical context that gave the monopoly of the definition of the internal and the external to the European. Jonathan Bellman sees the exoticism (he meant in music, but it can be generalized) as the "borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference" (Bellman 1998: ix). It means that the cultural frames of reference that measured and compared the exotic were European and they were the ones capable of organizing the exotic.

If these are the structural conditions of the discourse of exoticism in the 19th century, we should understand the conditions of their existence. That is, I want to understand the conditions for the separation of the internal and external spaces, in cultural terms, and how the European power undertook such separation. I want to point out that there was an historical context, and two sets of frames of reference that were fundamental for the discourse of exoticism. I do not have the pretension to be exhaustive, but I affirm these are the fundamental social conditions of it. The historical context is the European imperialism, as the sets of frames of reference are the idea of progress and the creation of the modern nation. I will bring nothing new to any of these issues. My originality here, if there is any, is to understand some elements of these issues as the condition for the production of the discourse of exoticism and, more importantly, to show that the changing of these elements in the present partly explains the lack of contemporary legitimacy of that discourse. Bearing that in mind, I start with the social context.

The European imperialism is the context of the discourse of exoticism. It is fundamental for my understanding here for two reasons. First, the imperialism permits an economic and political supremacy of Europe that makes some ideologies (such as progress, an issue to which I will return below) believable. Second, it gave to this discourse its globality. Jack Goody's critique of the eurocentrism is based on the assumption that the elements that are usually given as the fundaments of the European supremacy in the 19th Century should have their *europeanness* revisited. Specific forms of commerce, family and reason are usually assumed (by authors such as Max Weber, Goody's main focus) as the elements that grounded the development of the modernity in Europe. The fact, as the argument goes, that these

elements were only present in Europe is what makes the European case so singular and a parameter that can only be repeated if those elements are imported from Europe. Goody turns the argument inside out by attacking its own ground. The author shows that all these elements are anything but European. In fact, each one of them can be found in many other cultures, especially in those that have developed writing at the same time as Europe. For instance, Goody explains that while "forms of inferential reasoning, logic in the general sense (...), are certainly found in all human societies (though not of course always used)" (Goody 1996: 18), even the formal logic cannot be seen as a Greek exclusivity, but an element present in other cultures of the Antiquity that used the alphabet. The argument goes on for each of the elements that were supposed to be seen as grounds for the European supremacy. According to that, Goody denies that those elements were European, arguing that they, actually, belonged to written cultures. The idea that they were European was, in fact, what the author calls the "theft of History" (Goody 2006). More than that, Goody denies that there is any essentially European element that may explain its achievements, being them related to "rather more immediate, contingent" facts (Goody 1996: 47, 48).

Goody confirms his argument limiting the European achievements to the 19th century, and he shows that, prior to that century, there was no easy way to say that Europe was on the top of the human civilization. "In fact economic activity in Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries does not seem to have differed greatly in its nature from that in the West" (Goody 1996: 121). Eric Hobsbawm confirms Goody's assumption stating that a "estimate calculates that between 1750 and 1800 the *per capita* gross national product in what are today known as the 'developed countries' was substantially the same as in what is now known as the 'Third World'" (Hobsbawn 1994: 15).

In the age of imperialism, however, the contingent achievements of Europe were perceived as an essential part of its civilization. The economic, military and political supremacy grounded the belief that Europeans were "almost another order of beings" (Goody 1996: 2), the apex of the Universal History and, as such, able to produce discourses that ordained the production of difference. Moreover, the expansion of European dominions[6] to the

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6   Including states that were directly administered by foreign states, between 1884 and 1914 the "world's surface controlled by European powers" rose from 67 to 84.4% (Shohat & Stam 2006: 41).

world globalized these discourses, and, from a European belief, the essential-ized supremacy of Europe became part of an international belief.

The idea of progress when it meets the idea of evolutionism finds in the context of imperialism the ground to its legitimacy. By no means it is an idea of the 19th century, but as stated by Robert Nisbet (1980): "during the period 1750-1900 the idea of progress reached its zenith in the Western mind in popular as well as scholarly circles". In this moment two expansions were added to the idea. First, progress became a matter of universal History, a "col-lective/singular" that enclosed every dimension of History into one. "What [was] not progressive, so said Schelling, [was] not the object of History" (*apud* Rapp 1992: 159). The narration of the progress of things or the progress of a nation in a unilinear fashion has always been common. What was new was the fact that progress could be articulated to narrate the development of mankind itself on an allegedly scientific basis. From Turgot in 1750, with his *A Philosophical Review of the Successive Advances of the Human Mind* (2011), to Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (2001), originally published in 1837, passing by Condorcet (2013) and his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, 1795, or Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, 1756, the "human race" became part of a universal and linear history that had always pointed to the amelioration of the mankind. Therefore, the present became the moment of the grandeur of mankind, and not of its decadence, as it was typically assumed before the ideology of progress. A frequent view of such idea of progress is given by Turgot, according to whom "commercial and political ties unite all parts of the globe, and the whole human race, through alternate periods of rest and unrest, of weal and woe, goes on advancing, although at a slow pace, toward great perfection" (Turgot 2011: 322).

Such an assumption was made possible because it was believed that in the Age of Enlightenment reason had reached such a stage of develop-ment, though still limited to some enlightened persons, which could not be retarded anymore. On the contrary, through the integration of every nation in the world – by commerce or political forces – reason would be spread over, and through it progress would be inexorable. Condorcet's closing words of his famous book states that clearly:

 And how admirably calculated is this view of the human race, emancipated
 from its chains, released alike from the dominion of chance, as well as from

that of the enemies of its progress, and advancing with a firm and indeviate step in the paths of truth, to console the philosopher lamenting the errors, the flagrant acts of injustice, the crimes with which the earth is still polluted? It is the contemplation of this prospect that rewards him for all his efforts to assist the progress of reason and the establishment of liberty. He dares to regard these efforts as a part of the eternal chain of the destiny of mankind; and in this persuasion he finds the true delight of virtue, the pleasure of having performed a durable service, which no vicissitude will ever destroy in a fatal operation calculated to restore the reign of prejudice and slavery (Condorcet 2013: 218)[7].

Reason was the measure of an ever-evolving mankind and also its condition of explanation. As stated by Condorcet again, his work would show "from reasoning and from facts, that no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human faculties" (Condorcet 2013: 20). The idea that reason can be the measure of progress and that it also provides the tools to explain that progress (in fact, a modern idea of History) allows one to measure other peoples and to explain their "moments" in the line of the universal History. That is central to the understanding of the discourse of exoticism.

This idea must be completed with the perception that if progress is a timely oriented discourse, one that unites all mankind in one and single line towards the future, it is also spatially conditioned. Hegel proposes, for instance, four successive stages for the human History: The Oriental World, The Greek World, The Roman World and the Germanic World (Hegel 2001). Condorcet argues that the world had already passed by nine ages and the last (he still points to a tenth age, which is in the future) is the one he finds in the French Republic (Condorcet 2013). Therefore, if History became the History of mankind, its highest development took place not only in the present, but also in Europe. Other peoples, even if part of History, were more likely depicted as the representatives of a past without a History of their own.

Such notions will return when I address evolutionism. Now I want to mention the second modern expansion on the idea of progress: not only it was referred to the whole humankind, but it was applied to every sphere of human activity. In fact, the most visible trace of progress in History, which made it a matter of popular belief and not only of intellectual speculation (Hobsbawn 1994: 338, 339), was to be seen in technology. Technology acquired

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7   Translations for Condorcet into English extracted from http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1669.

an importance never noticed before, and the World Expos were the moments to celebrate it. It was in these mega-events that technological developments were presented, such as the elevator (New York, 1853), the telephone, type-writer and telegraph (Philadelphia, 1876), the phonograph and electric light (Paris, 1889), the electric light bulb and kinetoscope (Chicago, 1893), the large screen cinematography (Paris, 1900), the radio tube and flying machines (Saint Louis, 1904) and the mass production of cars (San Francisco, 1915) (Roche 2000: 46; 160).

However, progress was also to be perceived in morality and arts. According to the illuminist notion, "scientific and moral progresses go together" (Hollis 1994: 203), or, as put by Condorcet, "knowledge, power and virtue are bound together with an indissoluble chain" (*apud* Hollis 1994: 204). Art also became progressive. What opposed *les modernes* and *les anciens* in the 17th century was the discussion if art in the present could be considered as of a higher level than the Hellenic one. As Hans Robert Jauss puts it, the moderns "tried to overcome the concept of perfection in the *beaux-arts*, and the concept of perfectibility in the area of science, under the perspective of a continuous and universal progress" (Jauss 1970: 31). If in that century *la querelle* remained unresolved, in the 19th century it was possible and common to see the present European culture as the peak of a progressive History. In fact, it became a common practice in Europe of the 18th and especially of the 19th century the progressive narrative of music in a similar fashion as below, in an example retrieved from the entry "music", found in a dictionary of music of 1873:

> 1) Age of Hubald. The 10th century. 2) Age of Guido. The 11th century (…). 11) Age of Monteverdi (1600-1640). The beginning of the dramatical style. Origins of opera. (…). 14) Age of Leo and Durante, for the protestant Church music, especially Bach and Händel (1725-1760). Neapolitanean School. Reconfiguration of the aria. Opera buffa. Diversification of the instrumental music through the introduction of wind instruments in the opera. Virtuosi. The theory of the Tonkunst receives an upswing. At first in the teaching of harmony. (…). 15) Age of Gluck (1760-1780). Opera seria (…). 16) Age of Haydn and Mozart (1780-1800). Viennese School. Quartet and great symphony. The German national opera blossoms. 17) Age of Beethoven and Rossini (1800-1830). Highest development of instrumental music and of virtuosity. The German song. The German romantic opera. (…) (Paul 1873: 168, 169).

Within this expanded idea of progress – covering the whole of mankind and all spheres of life – a frame of reference was proposed, one every civilized nation should have as parameter: the European model. This model could be applied to every nation, every person, in order to say in which stage of evolution it was.

In cultural terms, this idea gained scientific validity with Anthropology. Opposing the social, racial (as in Gobineau) and geographic (as in Friedrich Ratzel) determinism for the explanation of the cultural difference of peoples, authors such as Lewis Morgan, Edward B. Tylor and James G. Frazer came up with the cultural evolutionism explanation (Schwarcz 1993). According to this explanation, cultures were different because they were in different stages of evolution. It is supposed, therefore, the existence of a linear and universal evolution of cultures, according to which some cultures are in an early stage (they are primitive) and others are in a later stage (they are advanced). The cultural stages of China, India, America, etc., at the time could be seen, therefore, as an early age of the supposed European evolution. This Anthropological assumption defined the way exotic culture was presented to the Europeans, and the museums were the space for such presentation. In the Chapter "Civilization in the Making" included in a book issued by the British Museum in 1911, about the museum itself, it is stated that the "multifarious objects in the Ethnographical Gallery represent so many starting-points in the world's civilization" (in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 21). In fact,

> by the end of the [19th] century evolutionism had come to dominate arrangements of exotic artifacts. (…). The value of exotic objects was their ability to testify to the concrete reality of an earlier stage of human Culture, a common past confirming Europe's triumphant present (Clifford 1988: 228)

Therefore, the idea of progress, together with the evolutionist explanation united and hierarchized the world. The world had now one single History, always evolving to a higher stage, in which Europe was found. The other cultures, instead, were distributed under it. The idea of progress, therefore, gave a first frame of reference to separate cultures between the internal and the external, something to which imperialism gave legitimacy. Nation, my last issue here, created the institutions that gave the support to such separation.

In a famous formulation, Benedict Anderson defines nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1991: 6). I want to stress the idea of limitation. "The nation is imagined as *limited*", so Anderson continues, "because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" (Anderson 1991: 7). In this sense, the nation is opposed to forms of universal communities (i.e. Islamic or Christian communities) and, as such, it is necessarily a space of production of difference. This difference is based on a process that at the same time defines those that belong to it and those that do not. In other words, the limitation of a nation presupposes that people may imagine themselves as similar to people that share the same nation with them and different from those that do not. In many cases this limitation derives into a clear idea of ethnicity. As put by Ernest Gellner: "nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethic boundaries should not cut across political ones" (Gellner 1983: 1). For instance, the Treaty of Versailles "replaced (…) multinational empires with a dozen new states. Apart from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, each was effectively assigned to a dominant ethnicity comprising at least 65 percent of its population. (…). Citizenship was now substantially identified with ethnicity, with minorities in danger of becoming second-class citizens" (Mann 2005: 67).

If the supremacy of ethnicity to define a nation is not the case everywhere some sort of production of identity is necessary to one to imagine him/herself as part of a community. Therefore, nation demands this production, at the same time as it creates the institutions that support and ritualize it: collective memory, national parties, celebration dates, etc. In sum, nation produces and legitimates symbolical references that serve as the separation of the internal and external spaces. These references are of paramount importance to the production of the exotic as something that is external to the national space. Before the formation of the nation-states, exotic was referred both to popular cultures found in European soil and to cultures brought from outside of it. It was common, indeed, to find people stating similarities between the two cultural expressions. For instance, the English writer and public figure Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784) and his biographer, James Boswell (1740-1795), traveled through the Western Scottish Islands in order to collect

popular culture. Observing the Scots, "Boswell has made an observation to Dr. Johnson that 'it was about the same to be in an indigenous tribe', for the villagers 'were as dark and rustic as any American salvage'" (Burke 2010: 32).

However, there was a change in the exotic idea in the 19th century. The nationalist movement – seen in the Romantic and in the folklorist movements – started the process of collection and appreciation of popular culture as essential symbols of the national cultures (Ortiz 1992). It is the popular culture that will be raised to national culture, along with the culture of the elite. It means that, in the 19th century, popular culture found in the European soil became part of the national identities and, as such, was no longer considered as part of the discourse of exoticism. There was a breach in its discourse, and in the 19th century it reaches stabilization: the discourse of exoticism becomes the one referred to the culture seen as originally from "the rest of the world", to use a sadly recognizable expression.

Reevaluating the exotic

In the contemporary moment, as diversity is appreciated, the discourse of exoticism is devaluated. It is certainly not true everywhere, as I will admit below, but it may be confidently affirmed that the discourse of exoticism is a disputable way of addressing other cultures today. The most legitimate international institution dedicated to the defense of cultural otherness, UNESCO, actually condemns it as against cultural diversity. In its *World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, from 2009, the word "exotic", or the variants "exoticism", "exoticization" or "exoticize", is used only five times, in a document of 402 pages of length, and always in a negative light. In fact, UNESCO must find a "way to counter the exoticization of non-Western forms of expression" (UNESCO 2009: 164), because "the range and impact of such influences inherent in globalizing trends is not without its dangers to cultural diversity" (UNESCO 2009: 164).

Some tourists travel looking for exotic places to visit. At the same time, countries make many efforts to create such places, staging some type of authenticity (MacCannell 1973). For sure exoticism is an important element of every country to attract tourists, even for the former imperial power. In fact, as Ellen Strain (2003: 37) puts it, "touristic pleasure was made possible through the creation of a safety zone within which the exhilaration

of geographical proximity with an exoticized stranger could exist without compromising other, less literal, forms of distance". However, rarely there is a country that organizes its promotion by reducing it to the discourse of exoticism. In fact, even countries that clearly create and promote "exotic places" for tourism do not affirm their culture simply as exotic and may, in fact, try to deny this notion when defining the country image. In other words, if exoticism may be an important touristic product for every country to promote its tourism, and other products, it cannot be the discourse to organize the production of its identity or culture. I bring one example to elucidate my point.

Due to FIFA World Cup, held in Brazil in 2014, the Brazilian Tourism Board – EMBRATUR – organized a large range of activities addressing the promotion of the country image, or brand, a more contemporary term. These activities were my object of research – some of the results may be found here (Nicolau Netto 2014) – and for that I interviewed in January 2013 the international manager of EMBRATUR during a promotional action organized in Madrid, Spain. At the occasion I asked him what image the instantiation wanted to promote of Brazil. His answer points to the issue stated above:

> There are some countries that want a total rupture and the building of a new image. In our case, we do not want a total rupture, because we continue to like soccer, we will keep on enjoying Carnival. But we have more to show. So, this is the direction we follow when we talk about diversity, both natural and cultural, and modernity, modernity in the sense of seeking to take Brazil away from that image that still exists in some markets, that Brazil is an exotic destination such as various countries in Asia. Brazil is not an exotic country. ... The idea is to keep tradition, to keep what is known, but modernized, adding new elements to this image.

Therefore, for national and international agents related to the production of otherness, exoticism has become a degrading discourse. Interestingly, as it must have been noticed above, diversity has become a positive discourse for the same agents.

In order to understand that we must start by stating that the instantiations that clearly separated the internal from the external, in cultural terms, are not operative today as they were before. The end of colonial wars – and

the overall assumption that the colonial era was perverse to the former colonies –, along with the general judgment of the World War II, changed the perspective of Europe in History. Its condition to dictate the universal discourses, according to which the world was organized, is not acceptable anymore as it used to be. In fact, what once has been understood as universalism has become merely eurocentrism (Biebricher 2004: 48; Laclau 1996: 50) and the universal became particular, a matter of "ethnocentrism of the white tribe" (Juliano 2003: 35). In sum, the positivity of the universal discourse, found in the 19th century, became a negative assumption, linked to the European domination (Schulte 1993: 181). It means that the idea of progress loses its legitimacy. Many authors realized that, since the last quarter of the 20th century, we are not sure about progress anymore (Latour 2008: 15, 16; Brunkhorst 2000; Lyotard 2009; Rapp 1992). As a consequence, there is no security to affirm the cultural differences as based upon diverse moments of evolution. Therefore, at least in the public space and in the intellectual field, we can no longer calmly use an expression such as "primitive people". There is a rupture in a fundamental separation of the Self (the European) and the Other (the primitive). Now, we all live in the same time, each of us addressing it according to our conditions.

And if we live in the same time, we also live in the same space. The last of those aforementioned instantiations that keep exoticism as the discourse to organize the difference is the nation. Globalization destabilizes this condition and, as a consequence, makes us uncertain about what is internal and what is external. For my concerns here, it is important to think about two processes related to globalization. One is the immigration trend of the last fifty years. Currently, 3% of the world population lives far from their nations of origin (Hobsbawm 2007: 89, 90). It is not an impressive number, but still relevant if we notice that from 1970 to 2005 the number of immigrants went up from 82 million to 191 million (United Nations 2006). However, more important than the number *per se* is how it is distributed. Inverting a trend of two centuries, the migration now flows to the European countries. Between 1800 and 1960, 80% of the migration movement flew from Europe to other countries (Habermas 2009: 147), while now it flows to Europe. And not only that, it flows to the global cities, where it becomes a more visible social fact (Sassen 2007). Thus, in metropolitan France (ultramarine departments

and territories are not considered here) immigrants formed 8.4% of the population in 2008; in Paris immigrants were 17% of the population in 2010 (INSEE 2014). In Germany, the immigrants were 8% of the population in 2009 (Statisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2011); in Berlin they were 13.3% (Gebiet und Bevölkerung 2010); in Frankfurt 24.3% (Frankfurt 2011). In England, persons born away from the United Kingdom formed 11% of its population in 2009; London had one third of its population under this circumstance (Office for National Statistics 2009). Immigration to the United States, on the contrary, is not new and between 1820 and 2003 the country received 69 million immigrants. However, the recent flow is as exceptionally intense as to the European countries, and out of this total 16.5 million persons (23%) immigrated between 1981 and 2000. Such a trend can only be compared, in American History, to the first decade of the 20th century (Office of Immigration Statistics 2004). In 2009, the immigrants formed 11.8% of the American population (U.S. Census Bureau 2010); foreign-born persons formed 37% of the population of New York in 2013 (Department of City Planning - City of New York 2013).

As important as the amount of immigration, and its concentration in the global cities, it is the qualitative aspect of it. It is remarkable that this enormous contingent of immigrants living in the global cities come mostly from countries away from the European space. The same sources used above show that the largest contingent of immigrants in Paris come from Algeria and Morocco; in London, they come from India, Pakistan and Poland; in Berlin and Frankfurt, from Turkey; in New York, from Asia and Central America.

Immigration is important to my analysis because it questions the separation of the internal and the external, as the "Self" and the "Other" came to live in the same space. Therefore, it is no longer possible to consider exotic the culture of the "Other" based upon the assumption that the "Other" is external to the "Self". This way, the difference must be produced upon other bases. The edges imposed by the nation-state, in terms of cultural affiliation, are also questioned by the flow of information. Cultural expressions now circulate the globe in ways and in speeds never imaged in the 19th century, creating what Arjun Appadurai called *ethnoscapes* that cannot be determined by the nation-state alone (Appadurai 1996). Moreover, with the Internet this circulation even suspends the national borders, and now who has access to

a cultural expression does not know for sure where it is executed, if not in the Internet itself. Therefore, cultural expressions become indigenous to territories from where they were alienated in the 19th century. As the so-called Western cultures now inhabit the East, non-Western cultures are part of the identity of Western countries (Veer 1997)[8].

The culture of the Other is no longer external to something. We do not have any stable instantiation to assure these boundaries, as there was in the 19th century. It is, as if, as put by Renato Ortiz, the whole world had been internalized (Ortiz 2003); as what was said in a Congress about the interculturality held in Berlin, in 1988, "Wir sind alle Ausländer" (We are all foreigners) (Barkowski & Hoff 1991), which would be the same as saying no one is a foreigner anymore. Once again, this is not to say that the boundaries have fallen or that we all have the same national condition to operate in the world, but to say that the stable boundaries that separate the internal and external are questioned, while other boundaries are getting into place. Nevertheless, currently "home and abroad", "self and other", "savage and civilized" are not clearly opposed terms (Clifford 1988, p. 14).

There is one last issue that highlights the devaluation of the discourse of exoticism in the present. I mentioned above that this discourse was based on the fundamental difference of the narrated and the narrator. It happens now, when the cultural flow floods globally, that the narrated has a great amount of interest in the narration about itself. I refer here to the commodification of identity that turns it into a value in the international market of symbols. As John L. and Jean Comaroff (2009) show, ethnicity has become a very profitable business nowadays, both for corporations that try to benefit from it, but also for the ethnic groups themselves that try to work with their identity as a brand[9] and, as such, to attract tourism and business. In the research studies I carried out in the music and in the tourist markets[10] investigating the articu-

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8   Clearly, identity is always an arena of conflicts, and certainly cultural expressions seen as non-Western do not have the same condition in Western countries as the expressions seen as traditionally national. That is why we still keep on using the word exotic to address many cultural expressions. I extensively addressed this unbalanced process in two works (Nicolau Netto 2009; 2014b). However, what I want to point out here is the structural aspect that produces difference, and for this matter it is meaningful the possibility of a non-Western cultural expression to be part of a European national identity. Certainly, no country can currently affirm its cultural identity without bringing together cultural elements traditionally seen as "alien".

9   See Melissa Aronczyk (2013) for the issue on place branding.

10   The main results of my research studies on music markets are found in two books (2009, 2014b). My research on tourism market is not yet concluded but some previous result may be found at Nicolau Netto (2014).

lation of identity in the global space I could confirm the assumption herein. In fact, the trade fairs related to these businesses are mainly organized in national pavilions[11] where national and local offices enhance branding efforts in order to build a positive image of their nation, state, ethnic groups, etc., in the market. It means that these offices want to assume the protagonism of the representation of a culture in the global space, basing this claim on a contemporary tendency that sees the self-representation as the legitimate form of representation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). In other words, the difference between the narrator and the narrated is not so clearly given anymore, as the narrated has the interest, and acquires legitimacy to, of narrating itself.

Therefore, exoticism is still present among us. It may be a useful description for small ethnic groups or local regions to promote themselves, as it is the case of Sarawak, a province in Malaysia, that aims to attract tourists looking for "a place for History, mystery, romance and exotic adventures"[12]. It may also be articulated to promote touristic products within a nation, being it an "exotic" or a European nation. In the present exoticism may signify something related to not only India or Turkey (as in the 19th century), but also to a European country or the United States. Thus, currently, it is not difficult to book a tour through "exotic" Paris, "exotic" New York or "exotic" London.

However, and here comes my argument, exoticism can hardly be a useful discourse to produce (or self-produce) broader cultures and identities. In the case of nations – as shown above – exoticism may even become a cursed word. It is so, first because exoticism brings back the past described above, in which the culture of the Other means archaism, primitivism. In the global capitalism, primitivism may become a commodity of high value, but it cannot limit the definition of broader cultures or nations interested in entering in the world of modern businesses.

More important to my argument is that there is no institution in the present that may regulate the production of difference in any broader cultural sphere. As stated by Nancy Fraser (2003:55), today

no single master institution [such as the nation] supplies a template of cultural

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11   Some trade fairs I have visited, due to my studies, that are organized mainly by national pavilions: a) Music market: Midem (Cannes, France, www.midem.com), Womex (various places in Europe, www.womex.com); b) Tourism market: Fitur (Madrid, Spain, http://www.ifema.es/fitur_06/); Fit (Buenos Aires, Argentina, www.fit.org.ar); World Travel Market (São Paulo, Brasil, http://www.wtmlatinamerica.com).

12   http://www.malaysiasite.nl/sarawakeng.htm. Access in February 23rd, 2015.

value that effectively governs all social interaction. Rather, a multiplicity of institutions regulates a multiplicity of action arenas according to different patterns of cultural value, at least some of which are mutually incompatible.

Take the national identity as a case. As stated, nations now make use of their identity in the international market and this fact alone already pluralizes the instantiations related to the production of difference, as at least each nation becomes an agent in the process. However, even within nations identities are not produced by a single master institution, but by disperse instantiations, both located within the nations or abroad. As Tim Edensor (2002: 30) states, "national identity is now situated within an ever-shifting matrix, a multidimensional, dynamic of networks. (...) Within such a matrix, national identity is being continually *redistributed*". A concrete example of this *redistribution* of national identity may be taken from the music market, once again. Since the beginning of the 2000s the government of the state of Pernambuco, in Brazil, sponsors a project called Music from Pernambuco. Government representatives and music producers travel to music trade fairs around the world distributing compilations in order to promote the music of that state abroad. It is of interest for my argument to notice that the idea behind the project is to affirm Pernambuco as part of the Brazilian identity, widening the most traditional account of it. This assumption is confirmed in the first compilation released by the project. We can read in it that what inspired the production of the compilation and its promotion abroad, "is the fact that most international agents, bookers and music promoters have never visited Pernambuco and their knowledge of Brazil is restricted to Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. So, when you hear this compilation, you might have an idea of the richness and diversity of the music produced in Pernambuco" (in: Nicolau Netto 2009). The fact that national identities are now commonly defined as diversity, as aforementioned, lies exactly in productions as this.

Therefore, the production of difference in the present must be carried out with a discourse that is flexible enough to be articulated by various agents, with different cultural elements and interests. The exoticism must fit in in this discourse, but its restrictiveness prevents it from being the one to organize the production of difference. Diversity, because of its flexibility, can be that discourse.

Conclusion

Armand Mattelart says that "the appeal to cultural diversity is a generic interpellation, a trap that includes contradictory realities and positions, open to every contextual commitment" (2005: 13) and concludes that cultural diversity is an "amorphous concept" (2005: 128). Mattelart is worried about the political implications of using cultural diversity instead of other political concepts, such as cultural exception. What interests me about Mattelart's assumption is that diversity is an open discourse, flexible enough to produce difference in a moment of reflexive modernity (Beck, Giddens, Lash: 1994), in which social practices, such as the formation of identity, are no longer assumed as "given" by instantiation, but the result of a negotiation between agents and multiple instantiations. Therefore, currently, difference has become diverse, which means it is never stable and can be continuously produced and resignified.

It means that, in the 21st century, difference becomes the result of daily struggles that never come to an end. Most importantly, all the agents in dispute will strive to produce the difference according to their interests and under certain conditions. These conditions are no longer given by an overarching instantiation, but by multiple ones, such as social movements, market, politics, academia, media, etc., which are operative not only in nations, but in the global space. It does not mean difference is now freely produced. On the contrary, if the discourse of diversity opens up the production of difference, social agents will put their forces into action in order to determine the difference according to their interests. Social movements of human rights and global media corporations, for instance, are both producing difference in the global space, undoubtedly, but certainly they do it in an unequal and unbalanced way and it is fair to say that the images globally produced of, for example, the Islamic culture, is much more a production of those corporations than of the movements. Therefore, it is important for any social analysis to question the forces in power producing difference nowadays. However, to question that is to realize that the difference is ceaseless produced in the discourse of diversity.

That is why difference may be used for discrimination and for politics of recognition, as a meaning of protection and threat for individuals, for oppression and emancipation. And, thus, it is constantly produced, as

the production of a difference is always open to new meanings, but never resumed in the stable internal/external relation. The legitimacy of the discourse of diversity is based on its flexibility to address the difference in the contemporary moment.

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