Global Art And Politics Of Mobility: (Trans)Cultural Shifts in the international contemporary art-system

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> Why isotopologics? The questioned ideas are not temporary ones here, but ones to be questioned from the view of temporality. Because racism, sexism, chauvinism and many other forms of the domination are not emerging issues, but they are endlessly discovered in the areas which one cannot imagine. If it is so, then for an artist there is a role of negotiating these issues and to invent 'non-fascistic ways of existence'. The first step to it is producing the recognition of the connectivity between the dominant and dominated and considering inequality from this perspective. Isotopologics is the methodological critique of the existence in equal space by non-equal means.

> Zeigam Azizov

Displacements of individuals all over the face of the earth, as well as transcultural interactions that derive from migratory encounters and disencounters, traditionally have been studied within the realm of both the social disciplines, such as historical demography, sociology and ecology of migration, human geography, social anthropology, sociology of consumption, biosociology, and of economic-statistical disciplines, such as marketing, geography of labour, economic impact studies, international social capital administration or the geo-economy of migration, among others. The positivist, sociological, economist, Marxist or structuralist matrix of these disciplines has favoured the founding of the study of human mobility on the construction of descriptive categories aimed at representing different social groups and their respective movements. Such abstract representations of subjects and their movements are at the foundation of what could be defined (in allusion to the positivist sociology of August Comte) as the *socio-physics* of human displacements, that is, a way of interpreting mobility and its cultural implications, by limiting them to the accumulation of quantifiable data and objectivated descriptions of changes in people's geographical position.[1] Setting out from an abstract reading of time and space (and being related both to Newtonian physics and quantitative demography) these *physico-social* representations of mobility have favoured a lack of consideration in the symbolic and subjective sphere of identities in transit by most social sciences that deal with displacement and cultural interaction.

At present, however, the study of mobility has experienced important changes which put into question such physico-sociological matrixes. The 'decomposition' of capitalism –as a production system pivoting on the economy of time and the organization of the work-place (fordist capitalism)- and its obvious mutation towards more flexible,

[1] The *physico-social* dimension that we here refer to is related to scientific-cartographical proposals like

those put to the fore by the British geographer Ernest G. Ravenstein who, in the nineteenth century, maintained that there was a relationship of mathematic proportionality between distances, migratory frequency, demographic growth and permanence of the migrated groups. From these scientific typologies emerged the association between *social space* and *physico-geographic space* that turned out so costly for the social sciences and twentieth century nationalisms. For a study on nation-states as physical *containers* of identity and of the migratory flows of culturally homogenous groups, we refer to the 2002 article by Ludger Pries "Transnational migration and the perforation of nation-state containers" in Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos (El Colegio de Mexico), Vol. 17, nbr. 3, S pp. 571-597. transmigratory and dislocated forms of (post-fordist) production have pushed the social sciences into expanding their focal points when studying mobility, time perception, and spatial construction (Jameson, 1988), (Soja, 1989), (Unwin, 2000), (Mezzadra / Nielson, 2003). The cultural turn in post-structural anthropology also introduced some questioning as to the relationship between modernity, mobility, and late capitalism. Consequently, several interdisciplinary fields like *global studies, transnational studies, visual studies* or translocal anthropology have increasingly incorporated an approach that we could tentatively define as *the symbolic dimension of human mobility*. Therefore, today it is easy (perhaps too easy) to find allusions to the relationship between imaginaries and the globalization processes of cultural diversity. Geographer, Tim Cresswell, has referred to the presence of this symbolic dimension of mobility as *metaphysics of contemporary nomadism* (Cresswell, 2006). Consequently, and in order to tackle the construction and global legitimization processes of cultural imaginaries resulting in the present migratory processes, it is necessary to do something more than simply describing the way in which transcultural negotiations operate on a symbolic level. To succeed in such an objective, it is essential to set out from a *de-colonizing* rather than from a post-colonialist reading of mobility study (Mignolo/ Tlostanova, 2006:205), (Grosfoguel/Cervantes-Rogriguez, 2002); on the contrary, it would be easy to fall repeatedly both into multiculturalist visions of global society and its planetary flows, and in the mythification of transnational migratory reality.

From our point of view, the symbolic dimension of subjects in movement has little to do with the recovery of memory or intimacy, nor with the individual or collective yearning for a place of origin, or the reconstruction of an identity that is fractured by displacement. In compensation, we find that the symbolic dimension of mobility is inscribed in the very process and cultural context in which (geo-epistemologically) new subjectivities are being negotiated; *other* subjectivities which were not inscribed either in the body or in the memory of individuals prior to displacement; *other* subjectivities which could not have been imagined as future identities or as identitary perspectives before being embodied through movement.

In this sense, there is a tight relationship between the symbolic dimension of human displacement and the construction of a new political space where transcultural interaction as a result of global movements operates as a critical tool in regard to both migratory and identitary politics. Therefore, symbolic mobility not only concerns the positional change of bodies in space, but also the displacement of social representations and the very power of individual self-representation. The symbolic dimension of mobility, then, comes in direct confrontation with the decentring of a number of elements that earlier

seemed fixed and inherent to the subject and to his/her conscription to a certain territory, such as identity, nationality, race, gender, belonging, neighbourhood, etc. This is why the transdisciplinary study of mobility has become an essential tool not simply in regard to the development of social knowledge and the critique of transnational cultural institutions, but also for what Walter Mignolo calls the geo-politics of knowledge (Mignolo, 2003:58), that is for power relations based on the location and transmission of knowledge and subjectivities.

Some of the epistemological approaches that have gained strength after questioning the physico-social matrix of mobility study earlier referred to –and equally as a result of the interaction between global migratory flows and the construction of new transnational public spheres- can be grouped within what is known as *politics of mobility.* At present, politics of mobility constitute a field in which the claim for the right to free movement goes hand in hand with the debate on the negotiation among *differential subjectivities* rather than differential *identities*, that is, among subjectivities that coexist and make sense thanks to (or in spite of) their relation of proximity with a specific cultural context or their synchronicity with a given moment-space. These differential subjectivities therefore change and are modified over time and, in doing so, also modify the contexts in which they attain political power. According to Ernesto Laclau, the central problem of differential identity is that one "cannot validate a differential identity without distinguishing it from a context; however in the process of making this distinction, one simultaneously validates that very context. But the contrary is also true: one cannot destroy a context without simultaneously destroying the identity of that particular individual who carries out the destruction" (Laclau, 1996). For that same reason, relations of proximity between subjects and contexts with a differential cultural burden are, as we see it, a matter that always concerns the broad geo-identitary and transcultural dimension of subjectivity, meaning the dimension by which subjectivation processes imply the construction of a political space and the very politics of mobility. This, in our opinion, is the deep sense of the present global dimension of transitory subjectivities.

This text then aims at problematizing the way in which mobility politics operate within what is known as the international contemporary art system, that is, within the context of the economic, symbolic, and transcultural fabric devised by the new international biennials, the translocal net of galleries, new cultural institutions, museums, specialized foundations and boards of trustees, as well as through the internationalization process of contemporary art that took place over the past few decades. Thus the core objective of this article is to describe, on one hand, the most relevant consequences of the epistemological turn that mobility has taken in the process of production, circulation and reception of contemporary art on a global level and on the other, to criticize the multiculturalist and internationalist discourse of the global exhibition systems. In order to deepen into the subject, I will attempt to provide a detailed description of the perception

Since its publication, Henri Lefebvre's book The Production of Space 1974 (1999e), has given rise to an endless array of interpretations in such varied disciplines as urbanism or social psychology. In the field of social theory of contemporary art, his ideas are strongly linked to two lines of French social thought, namely Guy Debord and Constant's psycho-geographical approach and their theory on the society of the spectacle. For a critical reading of the theoretical vicissitudes proposed by Lefebvre see Tim Unwin's article, 2000, "A waste of space? Towards a Critique of the Social Production of Space" in *Transactions*, The Institute of British Geographers, 25 (1), 11-29

held within these exhibition systems about international mobility (about art works, exhibitions, artists, audiences, curators, etc.) by problematizing the immediate sources on which international art discourse is built. I will also put to the fore some of the questioning that politics of mobility shed on the transcultural cartography of globalized art. And finally, I will analyze the wish for internationality of this new *global art* in the light of *border epistemology* (Mignolo, 1999) and will put it in the context of the globalizing function of a number of concepts like *hybridization, marginality, border and periphery.*

The Mobility Turn and the New Cartographies of Global Alterity in the International Contemporary Art System.

Echoing the anthropological turn –and its impact on such fields as cultural tourism, the new technologies of bio-political control, or the new ethnology of urban imaginaries, as well as on theoretical approaches like spatio-temporal 'compression' (Jameson, 1988), (Harvey, 1990) Or on what is known from Tom Unwin as the critique on the social production of space (Lefebvre, 1974)2- mobility politics have favoured a profound decentring of the way in which it is possible to think geopolitically about present-day subjectivity. If we value the impact of such transformations in its broad dimension, then it is legitimate to think that a genuine change is taking place these days: a *mobility turn*.

In consonance with CeMoRe (the Center for Mobilities Research) at Lancaster University, the magazine *Mobilities*, [3] With regard to the so-called *mobility turn* see Pete Adey, Paul Bevan, "Connected Mobility?" in *International Conference: Alternative mobility futures*, Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, 9-11 January, 2004; this article strongly links to a field of research known as *earth sciences*.

and its director John Ury's research lines , Pete Adey and Paul Bevan have vindicated the presence of this *mobility turn* and have attempted to show two elements that turn out to be of utmost relevance for the analysis of mobility politics and transcultural subjectivity in the field of contemporary art: on the one hand, the overlap between humanistic and scientist perspectives when tackling problems traditionally associated with the 'natural' and physical dimension of movement and, on the other hand, the deep imbrication of mobility of subjects in space with the economic, symbolic, and political elements that most define today's cognitive capitalism, such as the new international labour division, cultural ethno-tourism, the global economy of creativity, the politization of global public spheres, the transnationalization of talent and the

translocal circulation of individuals and subjectivities. "Following the current 'mobility turn'" states Adey, "our subjects of study have widened to include anything that can be conceived of as mobile: from people to things, from animals to data packets […] this mobilisation of research seems to have spawned great interest in the transnational migration of immigrants and refugees, the drifting nomadism of tramps and vagabonds […] Recent trends have also seen the exploration of virtual spaces and the seemingly 'disembodied' mobility of travel through the cyberspaces of the World Wide Web or Computer Simulations" (Adey/Bevan:2004)3.

In the awareness that this is a highly generic and schematic description, it could be useful to state that the cultural dimension of the *mobility turn* consists in putting additional emphasis when making a distinction between the study of mobility and that of movement, and to evaluate from a different angle the implication of the presence of mobility politics on contemporary subjectivity. Consequently, the following critical posits can be deduced from *mobility turn*: the radical questioning of physico-social remnants in the study of mobility and the use of mobility politics to deconstruct the smoothness of the post-colonial map. In this way, while movement can still be understood as the repeatable and abstract displacement of an object (or a subject) in any given quantifiable circumstance, and therefore circumscribed to the radius of perception in Euclidean geometry, -after the *mobility turn*- mobility needs to be conceived as the set of symbolic-social variables of each single displacement (and we therefore are talking about unique and unrepeatable displacements) which are relevant not so much because displacements are always inscribed within a certain social context on which they depend, but rather because such displacements transform the mentioned context, thereby modifying the complex web of levels of meaning woven between 'movement' of bodies, cultural representation of space and politization of transitory subjectivities.

Mobility in this sense is something completely different from movement. As Adey says, "Mobility is understood within social contexts. Rather than a blank canvas upon which mobility takes place, space is understood to be striated by social relationships and practices. Here, mobility is given meaning. Mobility without meaning and significance is simply movement, an abstraction from point-to-point. We can see mobility not just in terms of consumption, but also importantly in terms of production; how movement is given meaning in economic, social, cultural contexts -which can become ideologically bound to place" (Adey/Bevan:2004). Seen from this perspective, and although the emigration of a group of Cubans to Miami in a makeshift boat, that of thousands of workers yearly crossing the border between Mexico and the United States, or that of a community of Tchechenians gaining the Caucasian mountain range towards Georgia, are made up of a certain set of movements, its true

4 On this issue *vid*. Gogia, "Bodies on the Move: The Politics and Poetics of Corporeal Mobility" en: *International Conference: Alternative mobility futures,* Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, 9-11 January, 2004; Noyes, John, "Theorising Mobility: Itineraries, Nomadism, and the Writing of History" en: *Trade Routes, History and Geography. 2nd Johannesburg Biennale*

cultural meaning lies in the symbolic framework of its mobility, or rather in the racial, territorial, transcultural, ethical, economic, political, historical, and epistemological implications of such displacements. The new theoretical contiguities of mobility involve, then, an important change in the way of understanding the relation between geographical knowledge and the –voluntary or involuntary- displacement of individuals over a territory, and also in the relation between processes of hybridization and cultural representation and the transnational structures of production, circulation, exhibition and meaning of contemporary art. Elsewhere I have attempted to define these new epistemological contiguities as the *geo-aesthetic* dimension of contemporary art (Barriendos, 2007) And The Symbolic Transformations Of The New Political Geography Of *Global Art* As A Process Of *Strategic Translocation* (Barriendos, 2006). From such a geo-aesthetic perspective, cultural imaginaries, art-works, global exhibition systems, artists, curatorial attitudes, new contemporary art institutions, etc. cannot only be *geographically located* within the cartography of global culture, but also confer knowledge –and this proves to be crucial in the construction, re-signification, and repositioning of subjectivities in transit– which in turn is *symbolically located*, meaning that it is historically and epistemologically built on a set of geographical representations laden with frictions, disqualifications, disauthorizations, and other forms of hierarchization and cultural transgression strongly linked to cartographic systems of representation as well as to varied strategies to control subjects in space, that is, to colonial and post-colonial technologies (visual, material and discursive) of mobility control. 4

catalogue, 1997; Blamey, D., *Here, There, Elsewhere: Dialogues on Location and Mobility*, London, Open Editions, 2002; Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money,* New York, The New Press, 1998; Verstraete, Ginette, Tim Cresswell, (eds.), *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalized World (Thamyris/ Intersecting)*, Londres, Editions Rodopi B.V., 2003; ver también las actas de los congresos: *Research and Training on Migration and Ethnic Minorities in the Mediterranean Thematic Network on Migrants and Minorities in European Cities,* Centre for European Migration and Ethnic Studies, 1999; en: http://www.cemes.org/; Place and Location: Culture, nature, semiotics: locations *IV,* Research group of Cultural and Literary Theory, Dr. Virve Sarap, Estonian Literary MuseumTallinn–Tartu, Estonia, September 23–26, 2004, en: http://www.eki.ee/km/locations/news.htm; y el International Conference: Alternative mobility futures, Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, 9-11 January, 2004, en: http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/cemore/altfutpapers.htm

In this sense, the arena for debate on aesthetic-cultural representations that emerges from within the present international contemporary art system can be seen as a negotiation and cultural translation ground on which politics of identity, global imaginaries, and transcultural politics of representation of

diversity operate. Therefore, when it comes to analyzing the international contemporary art system, the relevance of mobility politics lies in its capacity to criticize and decentre the foundations of multiculturalist discourse and to remap the net of geo-aesthetic tensions of the so-called *global art*.

Among many other theoreticians, Roman de la Campa (1996), Graham Hurgan (1991), Arthur Robinson (1989) and Homi Bhabha (1997) have attempted to demonstrate that the field of cultural translation as well as that of politics of representation in which the art world operates, are not only strongly linked to the full anthropologizing effort of modern colonial cartography, but also to strategies of symbolic representation of *other* cultures through the geographical production of the social. Thus in order to analyze the field of transcultural negotiations within the international contemporary art system, it is well worth to seriously consider Homi Bhabha's words on the subjective dimension of cartographic relations. "We need to be aware as we draw our maps, spin our globes, weave our narratives of 'home', carry with us the joy and burden of our histories, the blessing and the curse of our communities, that we have to remain conscious of the ethical choice of our existence: to represent the 'other's' difference within my own, to learn the proximity of alien personhood, to be unafraid to see the silver lining in the survivor's song, the dark cloud in my own anthem" (Bhabha:2001). It is in this sense that we attempt to problematize the cartographic function of the new international contemporary art system and to question the global figure of new contemporary and translocal artists and curators, because, as is obvious, their purpose is not exclusively to move transversally throughout the symbolic geography of global exhibition systems, but also to put into circulation new means of reflection about the geography of art and global forms of representation of diversity.

The following questions then arise: What type of cartography of transcultural relations does the international contemporary art system provide? What are the operating politics of in- or exclusion? What is the role of the symbolic dimension of mobility put into circulation by the agents partaking in the global modern art exhibition processes? What substantiates the international character of new global art?

Global Art and the Aesthetic Absorption of Difference: Symbolic Violence, Hybridation and Periphery.

The global contemporary art circuits are complex, as complex are the transcultural politics of representation and the mobility politics of cultural imaginaries. As we have earlier stated, the complexity of the problem of globalization of diversity within the international exhibition systems has presently gained a geo-aesthetic dimension. And it is in this dimension that the mechanisms of global circulation of art intersect with the geo-political negotiations of subjectivity. Therefore, the geo-

[5] For the study of new internationalism in the area of art theory and critique *vid*. Fisher, (ed.), *Global Visions: A New Internationalism in the Visual Art,* Londres, Kala Press, 1994; Grzinic, *Migrants, Hegemony, New Internationalism*, en: Stewart, Rogoff, *et. al*, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, 2003; Mosquera, "¿Lenguaje internacional?" en: *Lápiz*, Madrid, núm. 121, abril de 1996, pp. 12-15; *El mundo de la diferencia. Notas sobre arte, globalización y diferencia cultural*, en: http://www.universes-in-universe.de/magazin/marco-polo/s-mosquera.htm; Amor, "Cartographies: Exploring the Limitations of a Curatorial Paradigm" en: Mosquera, (ed.), *Beyond the Fantastic. Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America, Institute of International Visual Arts*, Londres, Cambridge MIT Press, 1995; Amor, *et. al*., "Liminalities: Discussions on the Global and the Local" en: *Art Journal*, vol. 57, núm. 4, invierno, 1998, pp. 28-49.

aesthetic approach of translocal contemporary art is strongly linked to symbolic displacements in the sense that these displacements affect the way in which symbolic, immaterial, and cognitive capital circulates at present. In this way, the mobility of this kind of capital is directly or indirectly refracted in the internationalization processes of art.

Therefore, in the curatorial context of contemporary art, the globalization of diversity has recently materialized in a theoretical and exhibitional attitude known as *new internationalism*.5 In order to position ourselves, this new internationalism defends the notion of juxtaposition of the local and the global, the peripheral and the central, the legitimate and the subordinate, thereby turning the international artistic language into a kind of new Esperanto. From the perspective of transcultural politics of representation and in view of the analysis of mobility in the international contemporary art system, this idea not only idealizes the global character of art, but also re-essentializes the very autonomy of the artistic.

Only a few decades ago, contemporary art was taken as international when it was exclusively composed of work produced by western or westernized artists. The organizers of exhibitions –strange as it may sound, curators did not exist- all belonged to the western mainstream. Indeed, all cultural institutions that brought about the production, creation, and international diffusion of contemporary art were in the hands of western or westernized managers. Peripheral art was therefore relayed to historical or ethnographic museums, as though the development of the contemporary and the post-modern were located in a restricted area on the visual global map. Labels of *primitive* or *naïf* affixed by the West to all that fell outside the cartography of modernizing progress, became stigmas that the periphery ended up with, due to the supposedly inscrutable character of economic marginality and the alleged predestination to insistently alliterate western avant-garde or neo-avant-garde. In this scenario, the periphery's profitability within the contemporary exhibition circuit was not in a condition to be adequately accounted for.

However, the present situation is decidedly different. In only two and a half decades the geography of contemporary art went from being exclusive and centralized to being omnivorously all-embracing. At every corner, we can see biennials, fairs, round-tables, and exhibitions materializing. Each and every one of them is explicitly international and shows a harmonious coexistence between Maghrebian, sub-Saharan,

south- and central Asian, south- and central American, eastern-European or *chicano* artists and those from North-America and central-Europe. In a very short lapse of time, the mainstream has turned up its limited territory and has gone in search of the periphery. Like in the old days of colonial expansionism, alterity, the exotic, the diverse, or in one word, the Other, aroused the interest of museums, galleries, macro-exhibitions, and commercial contemporary art fairs. Even a group territorially and culturally as far removed as the Innuits gained representation in the new arena of contemporary art which is Documenta 11 in Kassel. In the blink of an eye, the scenification of the multicultural turned into the raw material of every international exhibition. The West was avid of alterity and at its call, the emerging cultures "replied most positively with new peripheral experiences, at all levels" (De La Nuez, 2002). Through this absorption, the marginal, the hybrid, and the peripheral turned into powerful assets of cultural economy. To explain it in some way, by generating an added value to global contemporary art, they reanimated the market and the circulation of contemporary goods that were legitimately exotic, yet potentially international through the capitalization of its most characteristic and stigmatized trait: its marginal peripherality.

With regard to the inevitable integration of the periphery within the internationalization process and the biennialization trends of contemporary art, the study of the symbolic dimension of mobility and the resulting theoretical understanding of concepts such as 'aesthetic proximity' or 'cultural translatability' should therefore be useful to bring to the fore the identitary frictions and geo-political marks that are woven and unwoven around the post-colonial discourse of the international contemporary art system. Consequently, it is the role of mobility politics to remap the new forms of cultural coloniality that operate through transcultural aesthetics and subjectivities (Mignolo, 2007). Paraphrasing Anibal Quijano's posit, this kind of *coloniality of the power of representation* no longer explicitly operates on the physical territory of cultural identity, but rather surreptitiously and within the sign, meaning infra-topographically. Therefore, the openly pluralistic and compulsory 'balanced' fitting together of all cultures within macro-exhibitions, is far from being –as Okwui Enwezor (2002) has put it- a wholesome compendium of voices.

Accordingly, the fetishization of alterity and the aesthetization of what is subordinate or at the frontier are probably the most misleading and contradictory forms of multiculturalism in the internationalization processes of contemporary art. Moreover, they are the most difficult to be reversed, as they operate within the very discourse of vindication and decolonization, being re-created in the very core of the international contemporary art exhibitions.

6 On this issue *vid*. Ch. Taylor, *El multiculturalismo y la "política del reconocimiento"*, México, FCE, 1993; Olivé, León, "Multiculturalismo..." en: Villoro, Olivé (eds.), *Filosofía moral, educación e historia*, México, UNAM, 1996; Villoro, *Estado plural, pluralidad de culturas*, México, Paidós, 1998; Kymlicka, "Immigration, Citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links" en: Sarah Spencer (ed.) *The Politics of Migration: Managing Opportunity, Conflict and Change*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003;

Multiculturalism and its strategies of representational integration are therefore liable to generate conditions of coercion of cultural diversity through the aesthetic discourse of diversity in itself, by substituting the *a priori* disqualification of minorities for a stereotypifying aesthetic (museographic) representation of the subaltern.

Geo-aesthetic Tension of Cultural Hybridization

When dealing with questions of migrancy, we automatically enter undefined or suspended spaces in between cultures. And one of the strategies we saw as important was to claim this space in-between, this interstice, as a cultural location in its own right that needs to be visualized, named and legitimized

Performing the border

Ursula Biemann

Setting out from the critique of post-structural feminist theoreticians on the multiple and paradoxical forms of alienation of alterity and in consonance with the inoculation of cultural essentialism promoted by pluralist philosophies and by theories on political recognition and equality in difference,6 -cultural, gender, racial and disciplinary- pureness tends to be understood as an artificial and academicist construction that does not concur with the heteroglossia of the multiple modernities of today's world. Consequently pureness tends to be perceived as an anthropologized interpretation of identity and difference. As its antipode, all that is *mestizo*, hybrid, heterogeneous, 'in between', or contaminated has been [7] On this issue see the diatribes around the re-edition of Huntington's polemic and prejudiced book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Touchstone, 1997.

reinterpreted, based on the apology of alterity and the celebration of globalized difference, as something positive and operative, as a principle of subsistence and natural strength of interculturality. As Amaryll Canady reminds us "in most of contemporary discourse, the paradigm of hybridity is presented as closer to our reality (in all spheres of human life, but more importantly in cultural practices), while its opposite, pureness, is considered an ideological and anthropological construction. "The French anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle, for example, considers what he calls "mestizo logic" (*logique métisse*) not in the sense of racial mixture, but rather in the sense of cultural hybridity, as the sole paradigm that meets the complexity of human cultures. He criticizes what he calls "the ethnological reason" because of its "discontinuist" procedures, meaning its extraction, purification, and classification of ethnic groups and cultural practices"

(Chanady, 1990).

However, the pragmatic politics of identity and the functionalist and proselitist usage of multiculturalism that we see effervescing in border zones and in places with dense cultural traffic on one hand, and the aesthetization of one's own cultural fringes through the museification of diversity and of the subaltern on the other, make us think that, both outside the art institution and inside its international scene, migration and mobility continue to be seen as trans-border conflicts between national States; that is between *containers* among which fixed cultural groups and categories circulate (Pries, 2004). These new polarizations (in most cases very close to the old ideas of 'culture clash') not only understand mobility in light of the logic of the physico-social that we have referred to at the beginning of this article, but turn what is hybrid into a new hierarchizing category.7 This re-essentialization of the hybrid, then, establishes a pattern in [8] On this issue vid. Chaplin, "Postcolonial Iconization of Borders" en: 2002 Working Paper Series: Contested borders, edges, and spaces, Eighth Conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environment, Hong Kong, December 12-15, 2002, volume 150.

which some cultures are distinguished as more hybrid than others from which, as is obvious, springs a new fetishization of what is *mestizo*: a new objectivated and aesthetized anthropologization of alterity. "In this sense" states Leslie Bary, "the discourse of contemporary multiculturalism repeats the gesture of official miscegenation that functions hegemonically by co-opting the opposition and by creating a new superior being: the hybrid. And if any culture is originally hybrid and if we all breath hybridly , then hybridity is a tautology that as a supposition is more valuable as a starting than as a finishing point in political and cultural analyses" (Bary, 1997).

Therefore, politization of the hybrid is strongly related to the very politics of mobility and to the processes of stereotypification of borders as ambiguous zones of 'clashes' and wealth. The aesthetic practices of resistance by art collectives like NoBorder or Border Arts Workshop, or by artists like Hans Haacke, Michael Rovner or Ana Mendieta, all evidence this fetishization of contiguity.8 Francis Alÿs' work for *InSite 97, The Loop* was an ironic renunciation to once again 'estetizar' the border between Mexico and the United States by going from Tijuana to San Diego without crossing the border.

Nevertheless, the different 'mobilities' that shape the international contemporary art system are generally interpreted in the light of post-colonial discourse, on the basis of which the internationalization processes of subaltern cultures as well as the very globalization of peripheral and marginal aesthetics tend to be overrated (Lidchi, 1997), (Beverly, 1999), (Fusco, 1989). Or in the words of Gerardo Mosquera "supposedly, we live in a world of global exchanges and communications. Every time the word 'globalisation' is mentioned, one tends to imagine a planet in which all points are interconnected in a reticular network. In fact, connections only happen inside a radial and hegemonic pattern around the centres of power, where the peripheral countries (most of the world) remain disconnected from one other, or are only connected indirectly via - and under the control of - the centres. I proved this by experience during the years I travelled around Africa, where the best way to travel, even between adjacent countries,

was by way of Europe. As I did not have enough money to do this, I was disconnected from the system, detained in a zone of silence and precariousness. This structure of axial globalisation and zones of silence is the basis of the economic, political and cultural network that shapes, at a macro level, the whole planet. The to-ing and fro-ing globalisation is really a globalisation from and for the centres, with limited South-South connections. Such globalisation, despite its limitation and controls, has undoubtedly improved communication and has facilitated a more pluralistic consciousness. It has, however, introduced the illusion of a trans-territorial world of multicultural dialogue with currents that flow in all directions" (Mosquera, 1994).

'International peripheral' art, then, complies, wherever one sees it, with the internationality *profile* established by the centralized institutions of the international contemporary art scene which responds to a need to be politically correct in regard to the discourse of the very post-colonial project and the claims for alterity within the mainstream. Thus Asian, African or Latin-American 'art' is international to the extent that a portion of those categories is taken metonymically as representing all of the artistic production of this symbolic-cultural territory which in turn is determined by geographically and symbolically located institutions. The part is taken for the whole. Thus the stereotypification works as domestication of alterity and of the subaltern. And with it, the aesthetization of diversity yields its fruits on the global art market. As we can see, what persists here is a sort of permanent metaphorization of post-colonial geo-political tensions. Consequently, the tropic readings of global mobility develop into fetishized forms of subjectivity that find their reasoning in geographical, cultural and identitary stereotypes. "Metaphor is indeed —states Irit Rogoff— a very limited and comfortable way of understanding sets of conditions and their articulations through the similar which is by definition also the familiar. It is far more on the relations between structures of metaphor and metonymy that a complexly elaborated perception of 'geography' can be played out. The duality of realting both objectivities and subjectivities within one order of knowledge can be found in this twofold concept". (Rogoff, 2000). In a different way, for authors like Kaja Silverman metonymy is more operative than metaphor as it deals with contiguities rather than with similarities: "while metaphor exploits relationships of similarity between things, not words, metonymy exploits relations of contiguity between things, not words; between a thing and its attributes, its environments and its adjuncts […] since things are only available to us cognitively, metaphor is in essence the exploitation of conceptual similarity, and metonymy the exploitation of conceptual contiguity" (Silverman:1983). However (and despite the interest both positions and their respective nuances arouse) when considering the symbolic dimension of mobility as a 'trope,' we should not lose sight of the way in which the mentioned *linguistic movement* resolves, perpetuates and conceals the transcultural tensions that are the result of the link between geography, subjectivity, mobility politics and the location of differential knowledge.

If we take this critique to the area of geographico-curatorial discourse, we will observe how Hou Hanru himself, when talking about the African artist Pascale Martin-Tayou, mentions his transmigratory condition in the following terms: "Pascale Martin-Tayou is one hundred percent African and at the same time one hundred percent non-African. Born and

raised in Cameroon, he is doubtlessly one of the most African of all. At present, he lives and works mostly in Europe, and therefore somehow also remains 'excluded' from the most African aspects of his origin. He, however, regularly visits his native land. And this migratory experience, this going to and fro that makes up his everyday life, is in and of itself a phenomenon that increasingly more Africans share in this era of economic and cultural globalization and of transcontinental migration. In this sense, Pascale Martin-Tayou is a typical African of our times. As I have said earlier, Pascale Martin-Tayou is an artist who is simultaneously one hundred percent African and non-African. His work is focused on this aspect of how to be an African, both in regard to everyday life and to what affects memory, fantasy, and happiness, while living between the West and Africa. In any case, his artistic language is absolutely "global" and resorts to the most contemporary forms of expression, from drawings, installations and performances to cinematography and even poetry" (Honrou, 2001).

From whichever of its angles, this ontological consideration of the artist seeks, through metaphor and metonymy, the pureness of both what is African (and non-African) and what is international under the label of hybridity. In this narrative operation, the 'in-between' becomes something powerful, hyper-resistant, geographically solid and therefore excessively stable. This stability, as it can be deduced, would deny the very resistance capacity of the hybrid as a *non-substance*, meaning that it would annul the political capacity of the impure by placing itself in line with geographically and culturally located contexts. The question is then: In view of the new contiguities between contemporary art and the globalization of cultural diversity, can mobility politics be linked to transcultural subjectivities so as to function as critical tools of the post-colonial essentialization of the hybrid within the international contemporary art system? While it is by no means my purpose to exhaust the possible answers that may arise from such questioning, I would like to close this text with the exemplification of the way in which internationalizing discourse operates and of what I have earlier described as the *strategic translocation of contemporary art* in light of certain *specific global hybridations*. In short, what the new internationalism ends up doing is to obviate that, for example, the work of the (internationally) recognized Mexican artist, Gabriel Orozco, does not get its strength from transcending Latin-American localism, or from the discovery of a very powerful universal neo-conceptualism equalling, as it is often stated, Duchamp's *ready-mades*, or in any other kind of explanation of the mono-culturization of diversity in art or the re-essentialization of the hybrid, but rather in the very postcolonial situation as a result of which his work is demanded and assimilated (*desired*, as Baudrillard would say) by the international mainstream. This absorption allows it (and at the same time conditions it) to be read as just one 'other' work of art, but also –and this is what is truly relevant when it comes to mobility politics- as an apostasy of the colonialist geo-aesthetic representations of the history of European art. In regard to what determines the univsersalizing discourse in global contemporary art, Gerardo Mosquera has stated the following: "a strange stratigraphy is established that classifies works by assessing its value as being either «local», «regional», or «universal». It is said that an artist is important at a «continental» scale, and another one at a «Caribbean» level. It goes without saying that if they are successful in New York they will immediately be universal. The elitary production of the centres is automatically considered

«international» and «universal» and one can only gain access to these categories when one can make it there" (Mosquera, 1994).

Therefore, the true postcolonial strength of Orozco's pieces, should not be rooted within themselves as being universal works of the global mainstream, nor on the fact that they (plainly) corroborate the validity and contemporaneity of the international art circuit, but rather on the possibility that his figure might generate a non-conforming, critical and reflective geo-aesthetic mentality on the basis of which the appropriation of his particular signs and specific symbolic locations in the global scene would allow the articulation of new subjectivities and new 'uses' of transcultural representations as critical strategies to dismantle the politics of understanding 'peripheral art' and of the very peripherality as a transcultural value. In short, his geo-political potential should be rooted in the fact that, through his internationalization, one could explain the interests that support the paradox of being simultaneously heroically universalistic and messianically localistic and also demonstrate the politics of representation, circulation, and commercialization that keep the following oxymoron alive: 'Orozco, the new international Latin-American art'. If this were so, the globalization of diversity through internationalism in art might not automatically become a satisfaction for aesthetic exoticism under the label of multi-culturality; it might not always turn out to be an *Amor Perro* (but insincere) for the peripheral, a fetishization of alterity, a denial of the symbolic dimension of mobility.

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