Madarat

Exploring mobility
around the Mediterranean
Research papers and selected articles

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بيت الخَطَّابة

House of the Matchmaker

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Introduction

We work, travel, learn, seek, reflect, dialogue, visit, discuss, and create a convivial atmosphere: this is our life story at the Arab Education Forum in general, and the Safar program in particular. This is also how the story of this book started, with a seminar that was to be held 4 months prior to the actual date of its convening in Alexandria, a city that was to witness overwhelming changes. The Egyptian uprising against injustice and oppression had a bittersweet taste: sweet because we felt the hope and pride in the eyes of the Egyptians, just like the people of Tunisia gave us a sense of dignity a few days earlier, and proved to us and the whole world that we were right to believe that the Arab people, unlike what all the human development reports say, truly do have all that it takes to be a viable community: dignity, a strong will, and solidarity… On the other hand, it had a bitter taste because we had to postpone our meeting. However, and even though the seminar itself was "mobile" in a way, and moved in time and space to Amman in June 2011, the participants were very happy to converge in this city and meet each other after connecting through email and their writings. This, it seems, is exactly what travel means: not the travel bag or the plane or train or car or crossing borders: it is the actual meeting and making acquaintance with lifelong friends whom we have always known but have never met yet.

The idea of this seminar, and this book as well, arose from our noticing an evident shortage of literature and knowledge about mobility as a tool for learning, dialogue, and artistic exchange and as a new-old paradigm around the Mediterranean basin. Since the establishment of the Roberto Cimetta Fund 12 years ago and the Safar youth mobility fund 7 years ago, there has been a marked increase in the number of mobility operators for social entrepreneurs and artists in the region. This growth has come as a response to the urgent need for resources to support the mobility of social entrepreneurs and artists around the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, available travel opportunities are still much less than the increasing demand, and artists and socially active individuals and groups are still lamenting the shortage of available resources for travel, in particular between the Arab countries, which limits the opportunities for artists to travel, learn, and interact with their audiences. Mobility between "golden" cities is also still predominant over travel to other less fortunate cities, though the latter might be richer in terms of learning and cultural opportunities, however they do not have the same capacity to attract visitors. In addition of course to the challenge of convincing organizations and influencing policies with regard to the impact of mobility and conviviality as a tool that results in growth of individuals and initiatives in general, and as a learning tool in particular.

Within this context the Istikshaf program evolved which aims, through various tools including this Symposium, to expand on and develop a renewed understanding of contemporary mobility by bringing together people able to think mobility in its widest sense. This collaborative program started between two of the most prominent mobility operators in

the Euro-Mediterranean area, namely the Arab Education Forum/Safar fund and the Roberto Cimetta Fund, and the collaboration expanded to include I-Act, Studio Emadeddin, Tamasi network for performing arts, Al Balad theatre, the Drama Institute – Stockholm Academy for theatre arts, and the Arab Theatre training center, with partial support from the Anna Lindh Euro-mediterranean foundation for dialogue between cultures. In 2011 and with support from the European Union, Istikshaf phase II was launched in cooperation between the Arab Education Forum, The Roberto Cimetta Fund, and I-Act.

During the first phase of "Istikshaf" project, the Symposium was organized over two days, bringing together more than 45 participants from 8 Arab countries and 11 European countries to discuss the different concepts relating to mobility around the Mediterranean, based on individual and instutitional experiences, in addition to research conducted to explore the meanings of mobility, its obstacles, its benefits, its importance, and how it can be disseminated as a culture within a given society. The symposium also focused the discussion on key areas such as concrete needs in relation to artistic mobility and mobility for long life learning around the Mediterranean.

The Symposium program reflected the main themes that the Istikshaf platform aimed to highlight, namely, the need for in-depth research on the implications and impact of mobility on the art scene and community development combined; and the kinds of policies that are needed on the governmental, para-governmental, NGO, and community levels to promote mobility for learning and community development. This book is a compilation of the full papers presented at the Symposium as well as key research papers relevant to the issue of mobility around the Mediterranean.

Mais Irqsusi & Serene Huleileh

Istikshaf

The Mobility Platform of the Mediterranean

Istikshaf is an interactive platform for the questioning of and reflection on artistic mobility around the Mediterranean, as well as providing mobility opportunities for artists across the Mediterranean divide.

Istikshaf's main areas of focus are:

Influencing policies

Develop and manage an advocacy campaign around mobility; To bring mobility funds together (or other kinds of organizations supporting mobility) in order to find common actions and tools; to use and develop the complementarities; increase efficiency; exchange good practices and challenges; develop a better understanding of the context; and set up an innovative scheme to support mobility embedded in lifelong learning and local development.

Enhancing communication and mutual learning through knowledge building amongst various stakeholders

Mobility is a long term process, thus measuring the impact and outcomes of mobility is always a challenge, especially that the Istikshaf platform and partners view mobility as a tool for development and growth. Istikshaf aims to research and discuss what quality mobility is. Mobility operators need to share their know- how as well as enhance their evaluation tools (quantitative and qualitative indicators.) On the operational level what are the tools and resources that can be shared to reach better cost effectiveness: Technical assistance;

Enhancing mobility opportunities for artists and young social entrepreneurs

Providing travel opportunities; sharing resources and knowledge between mobility operators; integrating alumni databases; ensuring consistent and valuable communication with the alumni in particular and the community in general; and explore ways in which mobility experiences are shared/ Multiplied/ transmitted.

Community involvement and mainstreaming mobility

Developing and enhancing a common "Mobility Alumni" and local travel funds, as well as develop local projects that support and enhance mobility.

Chapter I
Research and Studies

A Report on Mapping Mobility Funds in the Mediterranean

Commissioned by
The Arab Education Forum in cooperation with
The Roberto Cimetta Fund for the Istikshaf Platform

Supported by
the Anna Lindh Foundation

Researched by
Lamia Raei

February 2011

Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Arab Education Forum/Istikshaf Programme with the objective of exploring mobility networks/programmes operating within the Arab world or extending across the region. For the purpose of this mapping, 32 organisations were contacted. Fifteen have responded, though one of them was not relevant due to its limited geographical proximity to two European countries.[1] One organisation that was found relevant was added, but it did not fill in the required form.[2] This report is based on data collected from 15 relevant mobility operators working within the North-South region.

The mapping exercise was conducted to explore the existence and work of mobility operators: their vision behind adopting mobility, as well as needs and gaps which impact mobility, with the overall objective of exploring how to best improve the impact of artists' mobility in the region. The analysis of this report depends primarily on the data submitted by 18 mapped organisations.

The exercise has adopted an e-mapping methodology which was conducted by both the AEF and the Roberto Cimetta Fund, whereby the AEF covered mobility funds in the Arab region and the RCF contacted those in Europe. Additional data on relevant operators was collected through website reviews.

Thirty-two mobility funds were identified and contacted as part of this study. They were defined as "Mobility operators who support the mobility of artists around the Mediterranean among other beneficiaries." The results of the mapping will be communicated to other mobility operators, donors, and applicants who benefit directly from mobility funds.

The process of collecting data took place according to the following time line:

A. Mid-January 2010: There was a review of organisations funding artists' mobility.

B. Mid February 2010: A data collection tool was designed by the AEF and reviewed by all the project partners: Al Balad Theatre, Dramatiska Institute, Roberto Cimetta Fund, Studio Emadeddin.

C. March 2010: The data collection tool was translated into English and French.

D. March 2010: The e-mapping was uploaded on Safar's website to make it accessible to any mobility fund online.

Fourteen written responses were received from mobility operators out of the 32 who were contacted. One was researched electronically.

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1   Pépinières Européennes pour Jeunes Artistes operates from France (Midi-Pyrénées and Aquitaine regions) and Spain (Aragon region). Thus, despite filling in the mapping form it was classified as outside the scope of the study.

2   This organisation is the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). It awards scholarships to foreign post-graduate students and young researchers from all over the world to carry out post-graduate studies, do research, and teach in Finnish universities.

The data collection process lasted for nine months, and despite a clear deadline, data continued to be received. Thus, this report will be based on information received until early January 2011. Any additional data will be annexed and shared with partners.

Research questions addressed

This report attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do mobility operators define their operations—i.e., the various definitions of mobility by various organisations?

2. How do mobility operators achieve their goals operationally?

3. Who benefits from mobility funds/organisations?

4. How can gaps and services be identified?

5. What tools are used to address the beneficiaries? How is the application process facilitated?

6. What are the requirements detailed in the application of each mobility fund/organisation?

7. What is the purpose behind funding mobility?

8. How do various organisations/funds measure the achievement of their goals (qualitatively)?

9. Is there a long-term follow-up of mobility results/impact?

10. How are grants distributed according to age, gender, and geography?

The overall objective of this report is to produce a descriptive and analytical account that addresses and contextualises the results of the research above in order to provide recommendations on how to improve the quality and outcome of mobility funds, with special focus on the Euro-Mediterranean (in particular the Euro-Arab) context. Finally, it can be used as a tool for knowledge-building and sharing.

Overview of Mapping Data

Definitions of mobility

In examining the definitions presented by mobility operators, it is important to highlight two main findings:

The first is that, considering the small sample of organisations reviewed, it was clear that even though a concentration of mobility funding was noticeable in the 1990s and gained momentum after the year 2000, mobility operators have been active since 1923 (the Culturesfrance Association) – keeping in mind that the definition of "mobility" has changed over time.

The second observation is one of numerical significance. A total number of 4,813 grants (reported) have been awarded by 10 respondents during the 2-decade span beginning in 1990. This can mean redefining mobility needs through the systematic demand for it by various categories of applicants.

Findings reveal that mobility operators have adopted 5 main definitions of mobility as detailed below:

Mobility as a policy instrument is used to facilitate particular policies and certain cooperation within a wider political context in a certain region. Accordingly strengthening cultural ties with certain countries is part and parcel of a policy development endeavour. Mobility operators who adopt this definition view art as a catalyst for enhancing "political relations" and promoting particular policies or cultural experiences within certain regions, such as the European neighbourhood, French-speaking countries, Development Assistance Countries, or the Mediterranean. In that sense culture and arts are a means of presence and influence. This is a two-pronged approach in which mobility takes place within particular countries and vice versa.

Mobility as a means for learning is a particular approach to learning that targets cultural regeneration projects that spring out of indigenous knowledge and experiences within a particular context. From this perspective, individuals and youth play the role of a catalyst based on the premise that their contact with international interlocutors "can build national capacities through exposure to particular fields and sectors."

Mobility as a contributor to an emerging art scene emphasises the support that can be lent in various ways, such as providing mobility grants "to create an artistic and cultural community" within certain countries. This aim is achieved through providing funds for young artists to meet external counterparts, youth initiatives, and opportunities for shared exposure through: "exchange, internships, and apprenticeships."

Mobility as an opportunity to build artistic careers focuses on those mobility operators who address purely the aesthetic and artistic need of individuals/artists, especially independent ones, to help them build careers in order to create a platform for cultural exchange and knowledge sharing.

Mobility as a means for asserting cultural identity and creating a platform for its expression applies specifically to the Arab region, where both intellectuals and writers are invited to the Arab world to present their work or to work on a project. This definition responds to the "cultural drain," as we may call it, of artistic and cultural talent resulting from Arab artists leaving the region. Other operators function along the line of moving the process of learning and knowledge-sharing to become an inter-Arab experience through residencies, joint projects, or attending an event.

Operational aspects of mobility funds

Data gathered from the e-mapping indicates that the 15 organisations have received 3,430 applications within the following ranked categories:

- Young artists and cultural operators

- Journalists, researchers, or lobbyists

- Established artists, writers, curators, and experts

- Students and local professionals from various sectors

- Youth

- Women

The number of accepted applications is 742 out of 3,416, which constitutes 21.73 percent of the overall applications. Meanwhile, and in terms of cost coverage, artists receive grants ranging from 100 percent (by organisations which are solely targeting artists) to 15 percent (by organisations where arts mobility is a component). It was observed that 7 out of the 14 organisations presented data related to the percentage of artists funded.

The distribution of other variables, such as age, gender, geography, and grants is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Grants according to Intended Age, Gender, and Geographical Distribution according to Data Provided by Respondents

Operator	Target age	Gender Statistics 2008-2009	Geographic area covered	Average grants per year	Grants of 2008 - 2009
ECF	0–35	-	EU-EU neighbourhood	150	-
AMA	Youth aged 9-100 years and women	-	Africa-Africa	10	-
KAFD	18–30 years	60% females 40% males	International	50	-
Al Mawred al Thakafy	All ages	18% females 82% males	All countries-Arab region	13	-
FF	All ages	-	Arab region-Arab region	30	-
Naseej-Resources for Community Youth Arab Development	Youth aged 18-35	50% females 50% males	Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, and Palestine.	50	-
Roberto Cimetta Fund	All ages	50% females 50% males	European countries, Mediterranean countries, Arabian Gulf countries	50	88%
YATF	All ages	30% females 70% males	Arab world-Arab world	10	-

Operator	Target age	Gender Statistics 2008-2009	Geographic area covered	Average grants per year	Grants of 2008 - 2009
Culturesfrance Association	All ages	-	French, African, and Caribbean artists-internationally	-	-
International Organization for French-Speaking Countries	All ages		French-speaking south countries–international	100	-
Prince Claus Fund	All ages	-	DAC listed countries1	30–40	-
Safar	Youth aged 15–35 years	2008: 32% females 61% males 2009: 41% females 59% males	22 Arab countries	114	-
CIMO	-	-	From all over the world to Finland	-	-

Tools and Requirements of the Application and Selection Process

All beneficiaries have access to mobility operators' grants electronically. Once they fit into the various criteria defined by operators, they can apply online or via e-mail and send their applications. The languages used by the organisations mapped are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Targeted Population and Language

Operator	Geography	Application language
ECF	EU- EU Neighbourhood	English
AMA	Africa-Africa	English/French
HOME	Everywhere	English/Slovene languages
KAFD	International	English/Arabic
Al Mawred al Thakafy	All Countries-Arab Region	Arabic
FF	Arab region-Arab region	Not filled in
Naseej- Resources for Community Youth Arab Development	Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, and Palestine.	Arabic
Roberto Cimetta Fund	European countries, Mediterranean countries, Arabian Gulf countries	English/French
YATF	Arab world-Arab world	Arabic/English French
Culturesfrance Association	French, African, and Caribbean artists- international	English/French
International Organization for French-Speaking Countries	French speaking south countries- international	French
Prince Claus Fund	DAC-listed countries2	English/French and Spanish
Safar	22 Arab countries- 22 Arab countries	Arabic
CIMO	From all over the world- Finland	Finish, Swedish, and English

The majority of respondents (42.85 percent) receive applications all year round— 28.57 percent annually and 28.57 percent receive them quarterly. Administrative procedures follow the internal regulations of each organization.

Three types of selection-process categories exist:

1. a selection process in which decisions are taken internally within the organisation without a need for a selection committee but according to internally defined criteria

2. a selection process in which boards or committees advise/recommend possible eligible applications yet, the final decision is taken by the organisations' management

3. a selection process in which a "specialised committee" makes the decision (used by 40 percent of operators)

It was observed through the data collected and the information displayed on operators' websites that the internal procedures by which the selection process takes place were not always clear to the outside audience.

Table 3 details the mobility operators' selection processes in terms of committees, their cycles, their members, and who forms these committees.

Table 3: Mobility Selection Committees

Operator	Who selects	Committee members	Duration of committee cycle	Composition of committee
ECF	Final decision ECF	6	2 years	On the basis of balance regarding geographical scope, background, gender, etc.
AMA	Selection Committee	5	2–4 years	Journalists, university lecturers, consultants, and researchers
HOME	Management			-
KAFD	Management	-	-	-

Operator	Who selects	Committee members	Duration of committee cycle	Composition of committee
Al Mawred al Thakafy	Selection committee	Jury of 3	One evaluation cycle	A committee from the general assembly board and the artistic board of Al Mawred Al Thakafy
FF	The programme officer recommends candidates, while the supervisor approves the final selection	-	-	-
Naseej-Resources for Community Youth Arab Development	No committee	-	-	-
PEJA	Selection committee	20	2 years	A committee of partner residencies and invited personalities
Roberto Cimetta Fund	Selection committee	14 volunteers	Not specified	Board of directors of the fund
YATF	Selection committee	5	2 years	Multi disciplinary professionals and artists
Culturesfrance Association	Selection committee	variable	2–3 years	Administrative teams working at Culturesfrance select the experts (no further information)
International Organization for French-Speaking Countries	Selection committee	Unknown number	3 years	-

Operator	Who selects	Committee members	Duration of committee cycle	Composition of committee
Prince Claus Fund	Internal selection process involves: the concerned department, funds' programme coordinators, and director	-	-	-
Safar	Selection committee	8	1 year	Youth/culture activists
CIMO	Internal: by host university	N/A	N/A	Academicians

2.Analysis

Gaps and services [3]

The analysis of the above data will adopt an approach that perceives mobility as a means for expanding culture and art that develops in a source area and remains strong there, while also spreading outward to other areas through the temporary relocation of individuals and groups. The ultimate aim of this approach is to initiate an ongoing process of learning, exchange, and creativity.

The mapped sample of mobility organisations indicated the following significant findings:

1. Mobility in the arts and culture scene has been a sustainable activity during the last ten decades. Nevertheless, the vision of its operators, whom it targets, and expected outcomes have changed within the context of political, social, and cultural changes in the world. Hence, it is important to point out that a considerable increase in mobility activity has been witnessed with the emergence of new information technologies and the flow of information under globalisation.

2. Mobility—regardless of various definitions adopted by its operators—is increasingly in demand. Yet services meet 21.73 percent of this growing demand. Moreover, they tend to concentrate on mobility within Europe, or post-colonial regions. The emergence of Arab mobility funds is a new development.

3. Fifty percent of mobility funds tend to target the mobility of artists; namely, four categories:

   a. Young artists and cultural operators

   b. Journalists, researchers, or lobbyists

   c. Established artists, writers, curators, and experts

   d. Artists in poor countries

4. A closer look at the distribution of the target population across gender and age indicates that mobility operators tend to target youth and women. In the meantime, gender gaps are clear either in the data provided regarding the beneficiaries in recent years or in the total lack of addressing gender as a cross-cutting theme, especially for women in poor countries and in the South who can face mobility restrictions, particularly in conservative contexts.

5. Language issues limit the access of some mobility funds when they tend—indirectly—to address their message in a language which is foreign to their

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3   This section will be followed by a section on recommending how to move forward addressing each gap.

target population. Some geographic areas, such as the Gulf and regions of mixed populations—e.g., the EU neighbourhood and DAC-listed countries—in addition to Arab countries in Africa, are not addressed in the Arabic language. This situation limits the access of Arab artists to mobility and learning.

6. The age limit in a few cases raises another issue, particularly in countries where "off-mainstream" artists can be at the lower end of the income spectrum. This situation is not just limited to lower or middle-income countries. A good example nowadays is Italy, where the cultural industries are in crisis and artists are not paid well, even those who are highly qualified. Many established artists in the world have had their best art production after the age of 45.

7. There is a lack of clarity on how the calls for applications are disseminated to ensure that they reach the widest audience. According to respondents it is mostly through electronic communication; this is where access issues resurface again. The investigation would question if there are other means for introducing mobility funds to wider audiences/circles. Are there any outreach programmes targeting new beneficiaries? It was not clear if there were medium-term strategies (3–5 years) to tackle issues of addressing the increase in demand for mobility and the constant change in cultural and artistic contexts/climates.

8. An approximate 57 percent of mobility operators have indicated the existence of some sort of an advisory/consultative body with independent artists or cultural activists. Nevertheless, the rationale or criteria for selecting committees or juries—particularly those who are independent—are not very clear except in very special cases. The other question that needs to be addressed is how far is the process of selecting the advisory committees/jury shared with partners, e.g., donors or the public.

9. Upon reviewing the data related to services provided to artists by mobility operators, an important issue emerges: How are priorities to be set, both operationally and financially, when the decision for funding is taken? Data provided does not mention evaluations or assessments of the sectors served, with the exception of Safar Fund, which has conducted two formal evaluations in a five-year period.

Measuring long-term achievements: The Impact

The cumulative statistics provided by 12 mobility operators covering several decades indicate that grants have reached approximately 4,813 applicants.[4] In terms of validating the output, all operators request a minimum of narrative and financial reporting and documentation of the activity, which is usually uploaded on a website or published in a

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4   This number is the total shared by partners in the templates received by AEF and RCF. Some organisations did not provide numbers.

newsletter. Meanwhile, only two organisations have required more of a qualitative input by grantees, which included an evaluation and a reflection on the mobility experience as part of the administrative requirement for closing a grant, on the output level. Thus, it is apparent—in most cases—that there is no systematic institutional effort to evaluate the output of mobility beyond checking that the actual travelling and encounter has occurred.

As for long-term follow-up, alumni are contacted mainly through the following means, which are ranked below:

1. E-mails, e-newsletters, and informal meetings or attending activities

2. Narrative reports/stories and reflections that are uploaded onto websites or cyber social networks such as Facebook

3. Formal networks linked institutionally to mobility operators, such as Safar's Ambassadors

The third is least common among the respondents mapped. This can explain why there was no information on the qualitative aspect of measuring the achievements of mobility or its impact.

One can conclude that mobility operators are in need of tools to assess the long-term impact of their programmes and to indicate how mobility contributes to further inform the artistic scene in a particular context and enforce learning to improve the artistic quality through exchange. Desk research has reflected a lack of data on what indicators can measure the impact of mobility.

How to move forward: Recommendations

1. There is a need to advocate for further mobility funding in light of an increasing demand that is met by less than 25 percent. In light of the current global crisis (like-minded) mobility operators need to formalise a system of cost-sharing or creating a consortium of donors to fund mobility activities in order to distribute the cost burden.

2. As for the Arab world (Arab-Arab), mobility funds are of special importance as an independent venue for non-mainstream artists to gain further exposure and learning opportunities and to regenerate the growth of local culture in the region.

3. There is a need to standardise the process of "administrating mobility," that is, the selection criteria, the committee selection, and the articulation of the expected long-term impact. This point is applicable for both Arab-Arab mobility funds as well as Arab-European funds.

4. Impact assessment indicators need to be defined to improve the outcomes of mobility and to argue its significance regardless of the geographical destinations.

5. Systematic knowledge-sharing is a crucial need to enhance the artistic experience and further collaboration across borders and lessons learnt. New technologies would enable this process at a minimal cost for mobility operators, such as video conferencing and creating interactive cyber forums to keep abreast of developments related to mobility and their impact on the creative projects generated by experiencing it. Sharing content would require a commitment to be open about information.

6. Examples have been cited where mobility experience has been reflected in artistic output, such as the artistic productions of Safar Ambassadors, ECF alumni testimonies published for public sharing, or spaces supported by the Ford Foundation. The documentation of the previous experiences would provide operators with knowledge on the programmatic level of what mobility alumni's tangible achievements are.

7. All of the above require strong advocacy activities to facilitate and remove obstacles for mobility.

VISAS - the discordant note
A White Paper on Visa Issues, Europe, and Artists' Mobility

Published
October 31, 2008

FREEMUSE
ELMF
ECA

Introduction

The increased challenges facing tour and concert organisers, artists, agents, management companies, and others involved with cultural exchange in an international context has emerged as one of the main areas of discussion within the music industry and its wider community.

During the international trade fair WOMEX 2007; an emergency session focused on complex visa and work-permit regulations for artists. The session discussed lack of competence and perceived cynicism at consulate level and time-consuming Schengen procedures that result in huge financial expenditure and great frustration for the arts sector and ultimately hampers cultural exchange and the expression of cultural diversity.

FREEMUSE - an independent international organisation which advocates freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide - offered to collect and process case histories from the participants and present the results to relevant authorities and institutions in the EU, in particular the EU Commission, the European Parliament, and national and European Artists' Associations.

The initiative was immediately joined by ECA - the European Council of Artists, representing organisations of professional artists, authors, and performers in 26 European countries and ELMF - the European Live Music Forum, representing a number of live music communities such as the International Music Managers Forum (IMMF), the Agents Association, the European Arenas Association EAA, the Production Services Association (PSA), among others and EFWMF - the European Forum of Worldwide Music Festivals, a network of world music festivals.

These organisations share common concerns regarding administrative procedures that hinder cultural exchange between Europe and the rest of the world. The organisations equally regard the strong EU support for the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity as an important reference to a practical change of administrative procedures regarding visa and work permit procedures for non-EU artists visiting Europe.

The Convention calls upon ratifying countries to "adopt measures in developed countries with a view to facilitating access to their territory for cultural activities from developing countries."

This White Paper sums up some of the problems and challenges of bringing international artists into Europe, or from one country in Europe to another. It is hoped that this will clarify why the EU must change its procedures in order to live up to its obligations under the UNESCO convention. It should also be noted that European artists suffer by virtue of similar procedures applied by the United States of America and others.

Executive summary

The European Community, on December 18, 2006, ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions along with Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Since then, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom have also ratified the Convention. In total, 92 countries have now - according to their national law - ratified, approved, accepted or acceded to the Convention.

The ratification - hopefully - paves the way for enhanced cultural cooperation at the international level, notably through exchanges of views and best practices in public policies to promote cultural diversity.

However, many tour, concert and festival organisers, agents, management companies, cultural organisations, and others face increasingly non-transparent, time-consuming and costly application procedures at EU embassies overseas and work permit or immigration offices in Europe, when they organise concerts and tours in Europe with artists from non-EU countries. European artist trying to tour the US face many of the same problems.

Some festivals have stopped inviting artists from particular countries due to the unpredictable nature of their visa application procedures. Others continue to struggle but experience huge financial losses.

European tour organisers have two things in common: they provide Europe with great artistic presentations from non-EU countries, enriching the cultural diversity of Europe, and they ensure that the European market is kept open for artists from less developed countries thus implementing the principles of Articles 14 and 16 of the Convention. The same, with the addition that it also applies to European artists, applies to tour organisers in the US market.

This White Paper sums up some of the major problems faced by artists, organizers, and organisations. The problems identified focus on administrative procedures, lack of transparency, lack of harmonisation, costs, and ineffective information systems.

The implementation of some of the solutions suggested may seem complex; others may be easily adopted provided there is a willingness to do so. Other reports have suggested a "one- stop system" within the EU; such a system would definitely make life much easier for all involved if this could be introduced within the EU and at EU representations overseas.

As the system works today it has a negative effect on cultural relations and often very deep negative effects on the human soul. There is a vast distance between the intentions

of the new UNESCO Convention and the reality faced by artists and organisers.

Oceans divide the political ambitions expressed in calls for cultural mobility and the harsh consequences of the present visa and work-permit procedures.

Mobility, Cultural Diversity, and Visa Issues

Culture is the prism through which we can see ourselves, our world, and its people not only today, but also yesterday, tomorrow, and far into the future. Cultural exchange can contribute to mutual understanding and respect, ultimately defusing anxieties and fears stemming from encounters with what might at first appear different and at times frightening. In this context, however, there is no need to expand on the values of culture; it suffices to hold these as self-evident truths along with the inalienable rights of cultural expression and access to culture in all its shapes and forms.

Nor does this seem to be the time and place to expand on the role of politics. Whereas, at its best, politics can improve human lives, defuse conflicts, and uplift spirits, at its worst moments, it can do exactly the opposite.

The significance of arts and culture, in particular, as regards forging identities and bringing people together, is recognised by the European Union. Article 151 of the amended EU Treaty not only clearly states that the Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States but also that "the Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture" and take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.

Furthermore, on December 18, 2006, the Community ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions along with Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Since then, all but three of the EU's 27 member states have ratified the Convention.

In recognition of the vast problems that many tour, concert, and festival organisers, agents, management companies, cultural organisations, and others face when presenting artists from non-European countries, the European Parliament in May 2007 called on the EU Commission to "reflect on current visa and work permit arrangements applicable to artists and begin to draw up Community rules in this area which could lead to the introduction of a specific temporary visa for European and third-country artists such as already exists in some Member States."[5]

5   European Parliament: Session document, FINAL A623.5.2007 - 2007/0199- Report on the social status of artists (20062249/(INI), Committee on Culture and Education, rapporteur: Claire Gibault, section: Visas: mobility and employment of third-country nationals.

The Parliament stressed the "need to take account of the difficulties currently being encountered by a number of European and third-country artists as a result of visa requirements with a view to obtaining work permits and the attendant uncertainties," and the Parliament pointed out that "artists with short-term employment contracts currently find it difficult to fulfil the conditions for obtaining visas and work permits."

Problems regarding mobility for artists from non-EU countries coming to Europe and non-EU citizens residing in Europe as artists have further been dealt with by several other organisations, e.g., the EU commission funded the "Study on Impediments to Mobility in the EU Live Performance Sector.[6]

Cultural exchange and mobility are, however, not solely a concern from the idealistic perspectives on quality of life, human interaction and development of understanding, and respect between various and varying communities. It must also be recognised to be an area for the conduct of legitimate business.

According to a recent study prepared for the European Commission [7], "The cultural and creative sector is a growing sector, developing at a higher pace than the rest of the economy. The same applies to employment. Indeed this sector provides many different and often high skill job opportunities, and again the sector's growth in terms of jobs outperforms the rest of the economy."

The same report states that "In 2003, the turnover of the cultural & creative sector in Europe amounted to 654,288 million. In terms of value added to the European economy as a whole, it represented 2.6% of Europes GDP." It also states that "In 2004, at least 5.8 million people worked in the sector, equivalent to 3.1% of the total employed population in Europe.

Accordingly, the European Live Music Forum (ELMF), representing many of the business stakeholders in European music industries, has established a working group on Cultural Diversity, Visa and Work Permit issues involving both artists and production services- incoming and outgoing to and from the European Union including emerging practices of additional regulation by establishing requirements for work certificates. The working group notes that the accumulated effects of the various problems related to visas and work permits now affect all segments of the live music industries.

As mentioned in the introduction of this White Paper, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions specifically addresses measures that are relevant to mobility and cultural exchange.

6   Study on Impediments to Mobility in the EU Live Performance Sector and on Possible Solutions, Author/ Researcher: Richard Polaek, Consultant - European Affairs, Gdansk, Poland Editor: Pearle* (Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe) -Sainctelette square 196/ - B-1000 Brussels.
7   The Economy of Culture In Europe; October 2006,

Article 14 - Cooperation for development

- (ii) facilitating wider access to the global market and international distribution networks for their cultural activities, goods and services;

- (iv) adopting, where possible, appropriate measures in developed countries with a view to facilitating access to their territory for the cultural activities, goods and services of developing countries;

  http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-'documents/doc873 en.htm

Article 16 - Preferential treatment for developing countries

- Developed countries shall facilitate cultural exchanges with developing countries by granting, through the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, preferential treatment to artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as cultural goods and services from developing countries.

The question "To what extent current legal frameworks of visa and work permits of EU and the individual Member States facilitates _preferential treatment to artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as cultural goods and services from developing countries'" need hardly be asked. The answer is all too obvious. It doesn't!

In fact, it places artists and all service providers involved at a severe disadvantage to the extent that cultural exchange and the conduct of business involving artists from developing countries is rapidly diminishing and in some instances has almost come to a standstill.

It is the aim of this White Paper to address issues that are relevant to political fora such as the European Commission, The European Parliament and Council of the European Union.

We would like to point out; however, we would like to point out that it is essential that the visa issues are also resolved at national levels in Parliaments and relevant Ministries. We have therefore included a selective list of national initiatives dealing with visa issues.

Current Rules and Procedures

To understand the problems that arise for artists and tour organisers it is essential to point out that whereas most festivals operate within national territories, tours operators work on a transnational basis. A tour can, for example, include concerts in France, Denmark, Germany, the UK and Spain. As the principle of Schengen visa for visitors travelling in several Schengen countries is based on "application at point of entry," the organisers of tours during one year of work may have to deal with embassies/consular offices representing several EU countries and in this process, to their great misfortune, experience the lack of harmonisation and service provided.

When tour organisers present several concerts in various countries, they occasionally come up against the fact that certain embassies will apply the principle of "application for visa at the embassy or consulate of the country which is the main destination" regardless of the general principle of "point of entry." To give an example; if a touring band is entering Europe through Frankfurt and has three concerts in Germany and later five concerts in France, the German embassy in the country of the applying artist may request that the artist apply at the French embassy. Thus applicants and concert organisers find themselves experiencing a "Kafkaesque" situation.

In practice, the Schengen countries often apply rules and procedures that differ from country to country. As an example countries apply different rules to documentation. When a Schengen country, Denmark for example, has not established a visa office in the country of the applicant, another Schengen country can represent Denmark. In this case the applicant (and the concert organiser) will now have to understand the rules and procedures of the representative country, as the country representing Denmark does not apply the Danish procedures. The country representing Denmark, for example, the Congo, can request types of documentation from the applicant other than what Denmark would not request and vice versa.

Bona Fide/Multiple Entry

Some embassies granting Bona Fide visa (entrance to applicant country only) seem hesitant to grant multiple-entry visas for artists although the tour promoters can provide evidence of contracts of several concerts in Europe during a six-month period. These concerts may not always be organised in sequence but may have some intervals when the artists return to their home countries or tour outside the EU. If the artists were granted multiple-entry visas for Schengen they would not suffer numerous and repeat visits to Schengen embassies and the embassies would avoid duplicating their work.

Consultation period

In some countries embassies are not allowed to grant Bona Fide visas without consulting other Schengen countries. This prolongs the period of processing by several weeks.

Documentation

On their websites embassies and consular services often provide lists of documentation that can be requested. Some countries, however, do not specify which documents (bank accounts, national ID, etc) are demanded. For organisers dealing with several countries, the paper work is immense.

Period of processing

The time factor is very important for all parties involved. Applicants often find it difficult to track down the staff dealing with an application and the time frame involved in processing is extremely unclear. One ministerial survey shows that processing of visas for business visits in some countries can take up to 69 days.[8], Whereas international freight companies operate electronic registration systems with a tracking number, it is impossible for applicants to electronically track their visa applications in the systems.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

In addition to studying various reports on conventions, mobility, and visa rules, correspondence has been entered into with embassies, administrators have been engaged in conversation, and case studies have been collected from European tour operators, festivals, and artists. The case studies reveal how the respondents experience the current situation. It has not been within the framework of this Whiter Paper to challenge the embassies and Consular Offices with the descriptions, neither have we had the resources to verify the responses to the questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire give a very nuanced and informative insight into how the current system is understood and experienced by some of the principal operators in Europe.

The respondents were requested to describe briefly how they analyse the structural problems in terms of obtaining visas and work permits for artists coming to the EU and/or to Schengen membership nations, or within and between EU countries.

Further, the respondents were requested to describe not only their experiences of visa processing but also the financial consequences of the current system.

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8   Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs: Report from the working group regarding visa administration, business and tourism, December 2007 As a result, administrators as well as applicants find themselves engaged in several expensive and time-consuming phone calls and repeated visits to embassies or consular offices.

Case-history observations

The following are among the most frequently mentioned problems and procedural challenges related to visas and work permits for artists coming to EU and/or Schengen countries:

- Lack of harmonised visa and work permit application procedures at (EU/EC) embassies and consular services across the world, especially when dealing with cultural groups, artists and performers applying for visas/work permits for Schengen/non-Schengen countries.

- Schengen embassies or consular services, in spite of the provisions of the Schengen acquis, often seem to avoid taking overall responsibility for the entire Schengen area. This results in applicants being forced to deal with a number of agencies.

- When artists are faced with a refusal, consulates apparently consider that they have no obligation to explain their decision. This effectively excludes any possibility for appeal. Yet on many occasions, refusal has turned out to be due to simple misunderstandings or mistakes by either the applicant or often, by the consular staff. It has been reported that sometimes when entry has been refused to one of the Schengen countries, the denial has been noted in the Schengen Information System (SIS) categorising the applicant as a third-country national declared ineligible to enter national territory. When this occurs it is difficult, if not entirely impossible, for the artist to obtain entry through other consulates.

- Some embassies or consular services represent other Schengen member states and other countries. Local staff often deal with these issues without knowing the country-specific visa procedures--if any--for cultural groups and performers. Even when staffed with cultural attaches, organisers often find that the attaches have little or very limited knowledge of all the country specific rules/procedures for cultural groups and performers.

- That it is extremely costly and disruptive when, for example artists, agencies or managements need to revise an issued Schengen visa, due to tour-extensions, changes of dates and/or venue et cetera. Artists are required to leave the Schengen area and return home to re-apply or renew the visa at a Schengen representation in their home country.

- The distance often necessarily travailed in accessing embassy or consular services in the artists'/performers' country of origin (or neighbouring country) entail a disproportionate amount of time for travel and are extremely costly for artists. The visa application process is often very time-consuming and expensive, and the outcome is always uncertain.

- The requirement for biometric information (digitalized photos, finger prints, and more) means that artists need to go through the entire application process, including biometrics, EACH time that they travel abroad, despite being frequent travellers. This is further complicated when biometrics have to be done at embassies or consular services in neighbouring countries.

- Problems arise from the non-harmonisation of categories and "status" definitions of "artists" or "cultural performers". The complexity of the application and granting of visas is greatly increased, as country representations seldom deal with all of the mentioned "statuses". Differences between the Napoleonic system and common Law further complicate the issue as countries historically affiliated with the former tend to perceive artists as employees, while countries more comfortable with the latter generally regard artists as being self-employed. Both systems generally fail to relate to actual business practices whereby artists- whether employed or hired as self-employed - are contracted by an agency, a management company, or other service provider within the framework of the Service Directive.

- There is no single information system advising applicants on the procedural differences between Schengen countries.

Compounding the problem is, of course, the fact that not all EU member states are signatories of Schengen. The United Kingdom, for example, requires an entirely different set of procedures making a mockery of the concept of a "European tour."

Case Histories

In order to understand how current procedures are particularly disadvantageous for touring artists, tour organisers, concert promoters, festivals, and many other businesses in the field of music, a few case stories might be illuminating.

Case A - File reference VQ001

In early 2007, the German embassy in Kinshasa refused to issue visas for a group of seven musicians- no explanation was given. The band, which has existed for twenty-five years, had previously toured Europe, including Germany, on several occasions in 2005 and 2006. As the first performance of the spring tour 2007 was scheduled to take place in Berlin, the Schengen visa applications were submitted to the German embassy. Following the visa refusal by the German embassy time restraints did not allow for new visa applications to be submitted to an embassy of another Schengen member state. In addition to the cancellation of performances in Germany and the UK, a number of scheduled performances had to be canceled in other European countries, which, although not signatories to the Schengen Agreement Application Convention (SAAC), participate in the Schengen co-operation under the terms of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Adding to the problem was the fact that the European tour itinerary included a brief intermission for a number of US appearances by the band. Accordingly, in order to secure the band's availability for the US dates, flight tickets had been bought and paid in full based on a departure from and returns to Europe. As the European tour had to be canceled, new flight reservations at great expenses had to be secured from Kinshasa to the US while no refund could be obtained for the tickets already bought from Europe to the US. The arbitrary nature of visa procedures was evidenced when the Swedish embassy in New York, after intervention by the Icelandic government, during the band's US tour eventually issued visa documents which allowed them to fulfil their commitment to perform in Reykjavik, which was part of the otherwise canceled European itinerary. Again, of course, this had severe economic consequences for the Icelandic promoter with regard to the band's travel costs.

The arbitrary nature of current visa procedures was further illustrated when the band was eventually granted visas for extended European tours in June and October 2007, including performances in Germany, in addition to finally being allowed to return in November 2007 for the performance in Berlin for which visas were originally refused.

Case B - File reference VQ002

A group of Sufi musicians and dancers from Gujarat in western India were scheduled to perform in Germany, the Czech Republic, and France in October 2007. The group had previously toured Europe extensively in 2004, the US and Canada in 2005, and the UK in 2006. As the first concert on the scheduled tour was to take place in Paderbom, Germany, visa applications were submitted to the German embassy in Mumbai, India. The German embassy, however, would not issue Schengen visas because France required work permits. They therefore offered the group German-only (non-Schengen) visas that were valid for the German date only, and referred them to the French embassy for Schengen visa applications.

The French embassy, on the other hand refused to issue Schengen visas because Germany was the first country of entry. The UK-based tour organiser managed, after numerous contacts with the various embassies including three personal visits to the German embassy, to secure Schengen visas that were only valid for the German and Czech dates while the concerts in France had to be cancelled.

Case C - File reference VQ006

In 2007 a leading exponent of Ghanaian music and his three backup musicians applied for multiple-entry Schengen visas to the German Embassy in Ghana and separately to the Swiss embassy for a Swiss visa. The applicant is an artist of international stature and former president of the Musicians' Union of Ghana, former president of the Copyright Society of Ghana and was 1998-2000 professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA, followed by a similar position at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He has also been granted the distinguished title of National Living Human Treasure, as advocated by UNESCO under the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, by Ghanas Ministry of Chieftaincy and Culture.

After five personal appointments with the German embassy, the artist and one of the backup musicians obtained the required visas. Visas for the two other musicians were refused, which was noted in their passports. No reason for rejection was given to the applicants. After several contacts with the cultural attach of the embassy the German-based tour organiser eventually explained that the embassy did not approve local documentation of their artistic work in Ghana and the fact that both were married, residing in n Ghana was deemed to be an insufficient indications of their intent to return after completing the tour. The embassy required further documents from abroad to prove that two musicians are rooted in Ghana and willing to return back to Ghana after the tour.

After numerous discussions, and possibly due to the fact that the planned tour of twenty-four concerts and six lectures was sponsored by the Minister President of North Rhine Westphalia, the German embassy finally agreed to accept renewed applications from the two musicians with new and supplementary documentation. These applications were then accepted and visas accordingly issued.

All in all the process required the bandleader to make a total of nine trips from Kumasi in Ghana's Ashanti region to the coastal capital Accra. While the distance is manageable--approximately 300 kilometers-local transport conditions mean that the trip requires one full day of travel in each direction and an overnight stay in a hotel. The backup musicians each had to make between four and eight similar journeys. The quartet in total spent 54 working days travelling to and from the German embassy in order to secure visas for one-month duration. The cost to the tour organiser for visas, travels, accommodation, and other expenses soared. The inconvenience to the artist and musicians was immense as was the perception of indignities suffered.

Case D - File reference VQ006

A group of Gnawa performers, represented on no less than nine CDs distributed in Europe were scheduled to perform in Germany with a brief intermission in the tour for a few performances in Armenia. The tour itinerary called for flight transportation from Morocco to Germany, from Germany to Armenia and back with a later return from Germany to Morocco. The ensemble, assisted by the German tour organiser, applied to the German embassy in Morocco for multiple-entry visas to the German embassy in Morocco. Required documents of invitations and more were submitted with the applications including detailed tour itineraries with exact travel arrangements, dates, and ticket references. For unexplained reasons the embassy eventually issued single-entry visas. As the applicants were only able to read Arabic and no verbal communication of this fact was given when they collected their visas the unfortunate circumstance was not brought to the notice of the tour organiser.

Having completed the first part of the German tour and having proceeded with the performances in Armenia the ensemble was refused boarding on the booked return flight to Germany because they did not have multiple-entry visas.

Only after several days of negotiations with the German embassy in Armenia, the German embassy in Morocco, the visa department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Germany and between both embassies in Yerevan and Rabat was the ensemble finally issued new transit visas. The tour organiser had to pay the full costs of the second set of visas, including supplements for express handling of the same, extra fees for changing the dates of the return tickets, and the cost of hotel accommodation in Yerevan while the situation was resolved.

Case E - File reference VQ009

One of Mozambique's most revered bands resides in Lichinga, the capital city of Niassa Province in the northern part of the country. They regularly perform abroad, often in the UK. The UK Visa Application Centre- where visa applications have to be submitted and biometric data will be collected - is located in Maputo in the very south of Mozambique, a distance which cannot be covered by road and for which air travel is the only viable option.

Accordingly the eight band members have to fly to Maputo each time they need to submit applications and supplemental documentation for UK visas are required, supplemental documentation and have their biometric data collected. The visa applications are then transported to the British High Commission in Pretoria, Republic of South Africa for processing. As this processing normally takes two to three weeks it is not an option for the band to be accommodated in Maputo for the duration. They therefore return to Lichinga to await approval of the applications. The cost of the journey from Lichinga to Maputo and return is approximately 2,600 each time added to which should of course be visa fees at approximately 2,200 for the group. The last time they had to apply for UK visas one band member was initially denied a visa without explanation. The UK tour organisers had to fly the entire band to Maputo for a second time, as all the required biometrics had to be done at the same time. Once all visas were granted the band naturally had to fly for a third time to Maputo to get on their international flight to the UK, which of course, at this point had had to be re-scheduled at additional expense, and two UK performances had to be cancelled due to the delay in arrival.

Case F - File reference VQ016

A Malian duo has, for the past three years, toured internationally with great success. Their French tour organisers report more than 350 concerts in this time period and record sales in the region of 500,000 copies. Current UK regulations require that work permit visas be submitted in the applicant's country of citizenship or legal residence. Since there is no UK embassy or visa application centre in Mali the artists are obliged to go to Dakar in Senegal in order to apply for UK visas. As both artists are blind they are unable to travel unaccompanied, which naturally further adds to travel and accommodation costs.

The fact that a number of special event appearances, festival performances, and other opportunities come up with relatively short notice and, at times, when the artists are already on tour elsewhere adds to the problems related to the requirement that applications must be submitted in the country where the applicant is a citizen or legal resident or, in this case, in a neighbouring country since there is no UK representation where they live.

Raed Asfour

Case G - File reference VQ

A revered Gambian Kora player and "Jali"- a storyteller also known as a Griot in the Mandinka language - was invited to Sweden in 2007 to perform at an international conference attended by, amongst others, His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, former US President Bill Clinton, and a number of other statesmen, politicians, academics, and international industry leaders. The Jali is also a respected scholar and founder of West Africa's first school of traditional music for children.

As there is no Swedish embassy in Gambia, the Jali had to travel to Dakar in Senegal to submit a visa application, a journey involving one day of travel in either direction in addition to one day in Dakar to visit the Swedish embassy. The Swedish promoter contacted the embassy in Dakar prior to the Jali's visit and sent all appropriate documentation, including flight arrangements, proof of insurance coverage. In accordance with current Swedish legislation - specifically that performing artists, their technical staff, and other tour staff contracted to work temporarily in Sweden for no more than 14 days during a 12-month period do not require work permits - a written invitation from an established organiser was also attached. Adequate funds to cover visa application fees, the Jali's travel and accommodation costs for the visit to Dakar and other expenses were transferred to the Jali by Western Union.

The staff at the embassy in Dakar was unaware of current Swedish legislation. The Jali was obliged to submit and pay for an application fee for a work permit in addition to the visa. When the Swedish promoter was informed about this upon the Jali's return to Gambia a number of contacts took place with the Swedish embassy. Eventually the situation was resolved but the Jali had to return to Senegal once more to fill out a renewed visa application as the first had been administratively tied to the un-necessary work permit application. The Jali then had to return to Senegal a third time to collect the visa when it was finally approved two weeks later. All in all three visits to Senegal, each requiring three days of travel, in order to make the one scheduled performance in Sweden. The costs of travels, accommodation and other expenses in addition to the visa application fees - it should be noted that the fee for the unnecessary work permit was non-refundable even though it had been submitted at the express demand of the embassy staff - were of course in the end substantial.

A pattern is clearly discernible.

Consequences

Most respondents point out the financial losses incurred when visas are rejected or are not provided in time.

Others state that they have stopped working with artists from non-EU countries/developing countries due to the time-consuming visa procedures and additional risks of financial loses. Some US organisers in a similar manner have reduced, or have entirely stopped, working with artists who reside outside of North America.

Almost 80 percent of the respondents feel that the current visa procedures are damaging the music sector in Europe and collaborations with visa offices in developing countries are neither flexible nor efficient.

Creative companies working with artists from non-EU/non-Schengen countries are often very small. Therefore the extremely time consuming visa procedures may prevent cultural projects from being realised, and several respondents point out that this leads to a significant decrease of the cultural diversity on the European cultural scene.

Seen from the perspective of artists from these countries, they lose an important market and essential networking options. As one respondent reflects: "The rejection of visas reduces the opportunities for artists, and sometimes their families and even whole villages, in less-developed countries to rise above poverty and thus lead better lives."

It is equally important to understand that visa-issuing offices - and hence the EU countries - are judged by their attitude to artists. Several European countries wish to improve their cultural and public diplomacy, but many artists are treated with a lack of respect. They experience the paradox of being invited by mayors of European city councils, govemment-financed cultural bodies in the EU, and respected cultural organisations, and the on-the-ground reality once they enter our embassies and are looked upon as potential illegal immigrants. One respondent reflects: "Visa application procedures have huge human costs. Artists are subject to pointless queuing, often in disgraceful conditions and subject to disrespectful treatment by embassy staff."

Recommendations

If European countries are serious about honouring their ratification of the UNESCO convention - specifically article 16 - they need to actively make visa / work permit procedures and access to the European market more flexible, transparent, and homogenous. An example would be implementing the exemption of work permit requirements for artists, under certain conditions, such as - granted with different set of rules is - currently used in Sweden, the United Kingdom and others on an EU basis. Turkey, although not an EU member, can also be seen as an example.

Another would be the creation of a specific category of short-term, multiple-entry visas for touring artists and the development of guidelines for dealing with such cases in the Common Consular Instructions on Visas for the Diplomatic Missions and Consular Post. As artists, and for that matter athletes, are treated as special cases in other matters - withholding taxation based on article 17 in the OECD Tax Model being a case in point - this would seem to be logical.

In order to do so it is extremely important that ministries dealing with immigration, work permits, and visas coordinate their administrative procedures in collaboration with relevant ministries administering the EU and national cultural and development policies.

Regarding Schengen, it is obvious that the current lack of transparency of rules and procedures is a cause of great frustration and additional costs. The establishment of a unified information system for applicants and administrators alike is required. Further, the development and introduction of a tracking number and a system of electronic registration would add to the transparency and efficiency of the current system.

One-stop entry points (where one office, irrespective of entry point to Europe, could handle applications for the whole Schengen area) in combination with multiple-entry permits would be an obvious improvement; particularly if the visas/work permits were to be valid for a prolonged period.

Coordinating whatever solutions or improvements that can be created within Schengen with non-Schengen signatories such as the United Kingdom seems to be of equal importance from a EU perspective.

Negotiating reasonable, if not reciprocal, procedures between the EU and the US in order to safeguard equal market access for artists from each area is another urgent priority.

While long-term solutions are being created, the following suggestions, based on feedback from the questionnaires, can help to improve the current system:

- Ensure that all embassies, consulates, or other representations are well-informed, service-minded, and follow harmonised procedures, guidelines, standards, documents, etc.

- Ensure that procedures are clear and that explanations be given for visa refusal in cases where all procedures have been respected, in order to make it possible to enter an appeal in due time.

- Ensure that visa matters for artists are handled exclusively by the cultural attaché at the point of application, not by receptions centers in the regular visa department.

- Investigate the possibilities of "worldwide recognition" of touring artists' passports.

- Advocate for the introduction of harmonised biometric data collection for all Schengen and EU countries.

- Advocate for the implementation of a system that does not require biometrics to be renewed more than every four years.

- Introduce a system that does not require the applicant to apply in person once biometrics are established in a central database and that allows representatives of the artists to deliver and collect artists' passports and visa applications.

- Advocate for the formulation of a policy that benefits artists and performers who have worked and/or performed within the EU/Schengen area before so that they do not have to repeat the application procedure each time.

- Initiate a certification system for European festivals so that tour organisers can ensure that the proposed events are well-established and credible in order to ensure respectful and fast handling by visa officers.

- Finally, the organisations behind this White Paper would like to urge all relevant EU bodies to establish a forum involving practitioners, agents, and relevant organisations in order to develop quick and practical solutions.

ANNEX 1

Respondents		
BELGIUM	Divano Production	Production, management and world booking
	ACV Transcom CULTUUR	Union for artists
DENMARK	Roskilde Festival & Global CPH	Music Programming and booking
FRANCE	Marc Antoine Management	Global touring African artists
GERMANY	Alba Kultur	Festival and Tour Organiser Manager, Producer, Consultant
GHANA	Nyanla Creation Production	(Okeyman Records) Music Production
ITALY	Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica	International Foundation
	Tour de Force	Management and Booking Agency
SPAIN	El Caiman Producciones	International Booking and Promotion
	Producciones Artisticas Serrano	Artist Production
	Levinson-concerts	Booking agent and management
UNITED KINGDOM	Adastra	Music Admin
	KAPA Productions	Tour Production and artists management
	Poo Productions Ltd	Record label, artist management and film production
	Roots Around the World	Concert Promoters and Booking Agency

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION	
ECA	European Council of Artists
EFWMF	European Forum of Worldwide Music Festivals
ELMF	European Live Music Forum
Freemuse	The World Forum on Music & Censorship

Annex 2

National Initiatives Regarding Visa Issues

In several European countries, music-industry stakeholders, promoters, artists, and others have initiated national campaigns to address the increasing problems related to visa and work permit issues. So far, however, a website or "a pan-European office" where all relevant and updated information on rules is available has not been created.

Neither has a pan-European summit-including all relevant partners been organised to exchange and discuss experiences, strategies, and suggestions.

It is not within the mandate of this White Paper to investigate all national rules and procedures, but we would like to mention a few campaigns and initiatives and suggest that relevant European political and administrative bodies consider how they can improve the current situation for artists and organisers.

AUSTRIA

Under the banner of Abgesagt [9] (Cancelled), the IG World Music Network is addressing visa issues in Austria. The network consisting of artists, management companies, booking agencies, promoters, venues, journalists, and festivals working in the world-music genre has, since 2006, campaigned for less bureaucratic visa procedures and more transparency in decisions; the network has also publicised the negative effects of the current systems.

Abgesagt has further initiated online petitions with the purpose of changing the cultural climate which is described as "hostile and inhuman to foreigners"- (kulturfeindlichen and unmenschlichen fremdengestzes).

FRANCE

Zone Franche (ZF) is a large network of professional musical organisations (festivals, records companies, producers, artists' organisations, etc.).

In May 2008, ZF organised a meeting about "artists' circulation" during the festival Musiques Metisses, in Angoul6me. The meeting included a

representative of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and festival directors.

The festival directors presented a number of cases where visa procedures had led to cancellations of artistic presentations and huge financial losses to organisers and artists.

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9   See www.abgesagt.net

The meeting presented some of the regulations and procedures that prevent a free flow of professional cultural presentations and some of the obvious paradoxes of official cultural policies. [10]

One of the paradoxes of current policies was pointed out: on one level French organisations such as SACEM and official institutions such as CulturesFrance support artists in these countries. French cultural institutes even promote their art, but when the very same artists are invited to tour France they face several problems regarding visa and work permits.

During the meeting, Didier Le Bret, adviser to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recognised that, indeed, parts of French policies could be seen as "schizophrenic" and that there was a need for close collaboration between legislators and culture event promoters.

A few European states have changed some of their procedures as a result of these campaigns. Some initiatives are linked to linguistic/former colonies zones e.g. francophone.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Comite Generation Afrique: At the initiative of (now former) French Minister Jean-Marie Bockel, Secretaire dEtat charge de la cooperation et de la Francophonie, a committee of 10 African and French artists was created in October 2007, under the name of Comite Generation Afrique.

The committee consisting of well-respected artists and personalities such as Manu Dibango, Yann Arthus Bertrand, Youssou N'Dour, and Jane Birkin have put forward various suggestions regarding investment in the arts and culture sector.

As a consequence of discussions regarding mobility of African artists, the French Government at the initiative of Minister Bockel and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner – issued new instructions to its African visa offices in order to make procedures simpler and more efficient.

The instructions were issued as:

Delivrance des visas aux ressortissants africains ayant une activite professionnelle a caractere artistique, culturel, universitaire ou de recherche (19 fevrier 2008). [11]

According to the instructions the visa offices abroad shall distinguish between African

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10   See www.zonefranche.com/pdf/synthesedebatllmai.pdf

11   Delivery of visas to African nationals engaged in professional artistic, cultural, academic or research activities (19 February 2008) - http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr

artists who have already has performed several times in France/resided in France -and are regarded as professional artists- and newcomers.

The initiative allows established African artists to receive multiple visas and work permits for France and has been welcomed by artists as well as organisers.

However, the initiative is also criticised by several organisers and managers presenting "new talents" as they find the rules discriminatory.

The initiative, according to its critics, opens up the possibility for French embassies and French cultural institutes in Africa to become "judges of taste and talent," a role that the organisers feel more qualified to play.

United Kingdom

A vast number of artists and music industry organisations have been involved in various initiatives regarding visa issues. Some of these initiatives have primarily been focusing on visa issues for artists from so-called non-visa countries such as America, Canada and Australia.

At a certain stage, there was a fear that new strict visa rules would require artists from these countries to supply biometric data in person at a registered office. However after consultations and lobbying and campaigning, the Home Office made a U-turn. Therefore artists coming to UK from a non-visa country for less than three months will not need a visa or permit, but merely a sponsorship certificate.

The process for artists who come from countries that require visa procedures, however, continues to be complex and costly.

Some of the UK organisations that are involved in campaigns, lobbying, and consultation include the following:

National Campaign for the Arts, NCA

Arts & Entertainment Task Force

Musicians Union

Agents Association

Concert Promoters Association

Music Managers Forum

The UK Border Agency under the Home Office, introduced a new points-based immigration system in 2008. The planned policy for the creative and sporting sub-category within Tier 5 of the points-based system is scheduled to be put into place at the end of the year. The system is explained on the home page of the Agency at www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Ireland

Visual Artists Ireland (VAI)

Barriers to international mobility for artists:

VAI in spring 2008 hosted a public consultation addressing how "immigration rules are creating difficulties for artists requiring visas to enter the UK and the Republic of Ireland."[12]

VAI expressed concern that:

"Immigration policy and procedures may be compromising our independent decision making around programming and selection of artists we want to work with."

The public consultation agreed that:

"…A generally inhospitable atmosphere of suspicion and closure …suggests that artists and cultural workers, particularly those born in parts of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, are being regarded with suspicion and required to provide evidence of artistic credentials that many of us simple regard as unrealistic and inappropriate."

The consultation also noted that:

"Application systems lack clarity and transparency and with the introduction of outsourcing to commercial agencies such as World Bridge, official departments are increasingly difficult to contact and are unaccountable."

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12   The Visual Artists News Sheet, Issue 4, 2008, Pauline Hadaway: "Barriers to international mobility for artists."

Artists Moving & Learning
European Report

This report was prepared by the following authors from PACTE-CNR, DEUSTO and Mediana:

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This report was drafted on the basis of 10 national reports prepared by researchers from the following institutions:

Budapest Observatory on Financing Culture Eastern-Central Europe, Hungary; Centro Internazionale per la Promozione e la Ricerca Teatrale (Inteatro), Italy; Fondazione ATER Formazione, Italy; Joint Research Unit, PACTE – UMR 5194, France; Mediana sprl, Belgium; Centre of Professional Training in Culture, Romania; and Universidad de Deusto, Spain.

Executive summary

Project Background

"Artists Moving & Learning" is a two year project financed by the European Commission under the framework of the Lifelong Learning Program, Accompanying Measures, Key Activities 1: Research. "Artists Moving & Learning" analyses the impact of artist mobility in Europe from an educational and lifelong learning perspective. By "artists", we refer to the UNESCO definition[13] of artists, supported by or associated with such public structures as national theatres, opera or choreographic centres, and independent artists in the private sector unconnected to any structure and , thus, difficult to identify.

This project was carried out between November 2008 and November 2010 and led by the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres /European Network of Higher Educational Institutes and Training Organisations for Cultural Management (ENCATC), and coordinated by Mediana sprl. Further project partners are Universidad de Deusto in Spain, Politiques publiques, Action politique, France PACTE /French Joint Research Unit PACTE, Centro Internazionale per la Promozione e la Ricerca Teatrale (Inteatro) in Italy, the Budapest Observatory, a regional observatory on financing culture in Eastern-Central Europe, Hungary; the Centre of Professional Training in Culture, Romania, and Fondazione ATER Formazione, Italy. This partnership represents a complementary mix of academic and technical institutions, as well as public and private bodies from eight European Union (EU) Member States, all with extensive experience in EU projects and research.

Research conducted under the auspices of this project focuses on educational and lifelong learning (LLL) - rather than social or artistic issues. The following main questions are addressed: Do cross-border movements of artists generate LLL processes? Do they boost creativity and innovation? How do they affect learner-teacher dynamics? Can non-formal learning resulting from artistic mobility be formalised? To examine these questions, the project partners conducted interviews with professional artists from the performing and visual arts in ten EU Member States: Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. A total of 144 artists residing in 10 European countries have been interviewed for this project.

For each country included in this study, a national report was drafted, reflecting the main findings of interviews carried out with a limited number of professional artists. The ten national reports and a comparative study were published in the summer of 2010 (http://www.encatc.org/moving-and-learning/). The reports and recommendations embedded

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13   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1980, Recommandation concerning the Status of the Artist, Twenty-first Session of the UNESCO General Conference, Belgrade. Available at: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13138&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

within them are designed as a tool for policy makers and for providers of initial and continuous art education.

The mobility of an artist can be understood from different angles: from one working statute to another, from one artistic sector to another, or from one domestic or regional geographic area to another. The nature of artistic work, the way in which the sector is structured, and the dynamics of globalization encourage the artist to be more flexible or mobile.

Alongside the "basic freedom" of mobility of persons, works and services enshrined in European treaties, transnational mobility of artists and culture professionals has been a priority of European cultural policies since 2000, for the purpose of promoting creative performance in Europe. Mobility is at the heart of the European agenda and of most community development programmes. For example, 2006 was declared the "Year of Mobility" by the European authorities. It is a topic regularly discussed by Member States in cultural debates regarding sectorial priorities, in both national and European frameworks.

Findings

Although there have been several studies on the mobility of artists in Europe since 2002, this study differs in that it focuses on the impact and benefits of moving for artists. This study both observes the ways in which European artists are mobile and describes how their spatial moves impact their learning patterns.

The study relies exclusively on data from interviews with professionals – the artists– and not from secondary bibliographical resources. The following aspects of mobility patterns can be outlined:

Gender: Fifty-eight per cent of the artists interviewed were male, and 42 per cent were female, reflecting a bias towards male artists in spite of efforts to interview an equal number of female and male artists in the countries included.

Age: Four age categories have been established and explored: between 20 and 30 years old, between 30 and 40 years old, between 40 and 50 years old, and over 50 years old. All groups have been represented in the sample, with a predominance of artists aged between 30 and 40 years old.

Education level: The majority of artists interviewed completed university level education (72 per cent having completed first, second and third cycles) with a significant proportion (14 per cent) either self taught or having experienced such "other" education options as art academies and conservatories.

Artistic activity: Although more cases of performing arts were registered (87 cases

including dance, music and theatre) than visual arts (66 cases), artists resisted being placed in a defined, closed category, preferring to situate themselves in more than one artistic sector, or opting for more interdisciplinary, less traditional categories.

Destinations: Europe, and more specifically, the European Union, has been a favoured destination for many of the artists interviewed, although mobility experiences have not been limited to the European continent.

Duration: The length of the mobility experiences of the interviewees ranged from three days to twenty months. The shortest periods of participation, of less than one month, were connected to travel for performance in festivals or participation in exhibits. Longer periods were related to artist residencies and teaching opportunities.

Frequency: The frequency of periods of mobility in the lives of artists varied, depending on age and former experience.

Types: The type of mobility experience depended on the art field; visual artists mostly participated in artist residencies, spending time abroad for personal development, while performing artists (primarily musicians) participated in festivals or went on tour.

Employment status: The greatest number of individuals identified themselves as self-employed. This category was followed, in size, by students, and by those on leave for their health.

Contacts: The majority of artists interviewed indicated that they had private or professional contacts in the host country before travelling. However, prior contacts have not been identified as a reason for choosing a specific destination.

Information sources: The Internet and professional contacts were the most important sources used by the artists to gather information about destinations and programmes. On the Internet, such dedicated websites as Transartis were the most useful.

Support mechanisms: Most of the interviewed artists received some kind of financial or logistical support for their stay abroad.

Support Mechanisms			
Level	**Public**	**Private Enterprises**	**Private NGOs**
International	European Union, EU Culture Programme (grant), Trans Dance Europe Network Organization, Maska and Icelandic Dance (grant), Iamas Institute, Japan (grant), Grotowski Institute, Poland (grant)	Pál Frenák Company, France (support for diets), Management Agency, Scotland (contract)	Switzerland Institute (scholarship), Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Italy (grant), Nomad Dance Academy, (culture 2000 supported, grant)
National	Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (job), Singapore Philharmonic Orchestra (job)	Keller Gallery, Paris (invitation)	Solo Dance Theatre Festival, Stuttgart (scholarship for competition.)
Regional	Cooperation between Zpa Theatre, Zagreb, Croatia and En-Knap Company, Ljubljana, Slovenia		Skvc Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia (grant)
Local	City Council Of Marseille (grant), Pépinières Européennes Pour Jeunes Artistes		Family friends in Weinfelden (free use of an apartment)

The main finding of the analysis is that mobility experiences, whether formal or informal, of long or short duration, favour learning. The intensity of the experience appears to be determined by the personal predisposition of the artist, their capacity, openness, curiosity or habitude to move during childhood and their desire to overcome intellectual and cultural barriers, rather than the specific type of mobility. However, the age of artists at the time of mobility seems to play an important role, allowing for repetition and broader moves. All types of mobility tend to create a "snowball effect."

How does mobility create favourable learning conditions for artists? What do artists learn? Does mobility encourage a classical approach of learning, in linguistic or technical terms, or does the learning that takes place as a result of mobility have a secondary, unintended effect on creativity and culture? Do artists experience mobility on a financial or personal level? Do specific forms of mobility and/or learning exist? How does learning take place? Our methodological choices have been determined by the need to tackle these core questions, leading to the choice of a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one, and the elaboration of a three-step methodology:

- Factual data analysis
- Thematic analysis, providing evidence of "learning effect categories"
- Systematic discourse analysis through language corpus analysis with the help of ALCESTE software.

Four learning patterns linked to mobility experiences have been identified:

1. Hyper-mobile world artists, whose paths have roots in multi-facetted mobility

2. Portfolio artists, who move in order to increase their skills

3. Creative artists, who move to stimulate their creative process

4. Gap artists, whose mobility is informal.

This typology was constructed by observing the impact of mobility on learning (before, during and after mobility) through thematic and discourse analysis.

Surprisingly enough, all types of mobility are shown to favour learning. The discourse analysis, through ad-hoc software, reflects a remarkable homogeneity of tendencies throughout the 10 countries selected for the study. All artists stressed the effect of their mobility, not only on their creative process, but also on such other aspects of their lives as their earning potential, civic competence, social networking, cultural awareness and spatial knowledge. The following benefits were identified:

- Moving experiences comprise an important component of personal and social capital
- Experiences of mobility increase an artist's potential for having an impact on their environment, both in the host country and place of origin.

The mobility of an artist has the potential for having a broad impact both in their hosting and departing environments, thus expanding the idea of a "creative city" to include a wider theory of artistic territorialisation. Although artists may have experiences similar to other mobile people, what they do with their experiences of mobility differs. The impact of their moving is strong, not only for them. Learning becomes an essential component of moving that artists can share through their creative output with their social and cultural environments.

This research has led to the creation of an operational referent of capacity building through learning, which distinguishes between the following aspects of learning that take place as a result of artists moving:

1. Productive interrelations:

Economic competencies; opportunities for inclusion in promotion and production networks and knowledge of financial situations of artists in other countries;

Social competencies; creation of social and intercultural networks, increased capacity in the transmission of knowledge;

Organizational competencies; enhanced funding research and administrative skills, as well as better professional networking.

2. Territorialities (of changing and crossing):

Spatial competencies; knowledge of other places and networks, the development of nomadic art practices;

Cultural competencies; language and multiculturalism.

Analysis of the European corpus reveals five types of learning. The first lexical field of educational and technical learning shows the importance of the quest for technical competence, and for complementary education. The words associated with this lexical field are "change", "influence" and "learning", showing the decisive impact of mobility. Northern-European artists exhibit this tendency, perhaps due to different learning trajectories which favor mobility as a part of their initial education, through networks of conservatories and such ad-hoc foundations supporting the education of artists as the Gulbenkian Foundation. These learning processes, occurring early in the professional lives of artists, encourage cosmopolitism and the learning of languages, leading to a life course which includes movement.

The second lexical field, comprising more than 22 per cent of occurrences, is the social and spatial learning associated with mobility. The Romanian and Slovenian experiences reflect this orientation. Strongly correlated words are "technical support" and "opportunities", but also "love" and "new exchanges", showing the importance of links emanating from mobility. Generally speaking, among Europeans, mobility choices appear to be significantly determined by the artist's emotional and life experiences. A gender difference appears, in that women artists express themselves in organizational terms (with supporting arguments), while men evoke more relational and sentimental contexts. What is important is the ability of an individual to develop links with others. Acquiring

these social competences allows artists to adapt their position within stakeholder games, notably towards the public.

The three other lexical fields are equally represented by about 15 per cent of correlations in the body of research.

The lexical field associated with networking, project-building capacity and entrepreneurship (17 per cent) appears strongly linked to social and economic learning. This distinct posture describes a very different position in Northern Europe, where the artistic project is defined in managerial terms as opposed to, for example, the French corpus, representing an interface between public and private operators and inhabitants, and strongly correlated with the notion of place.

Last but not least, the aesthetic value of learning is identified, in 13 per cent of occurrences, as the major motive for and benefit from moving among French interviewees.

The same level of learning about institutions and funding mechanisms was reached in all countries, exhibiting a link between institutions and the funding of mobility. This is negligible in the Romanian corpus, reflecting the internalization by these artists of the lack of institutional support for mobility. The importance of residencies is recognized by all artists, as providing a privileged place to work and the time required to connect to an atmosphere, an environment and to economic opportunities such as galleries.

The main finding of analysis of the types of moving experiences is that all types, formal and informal, of long and short duration, seem to favour learning. Indeed, learning effects and their intensity seem to be determined by the personal predisposition of the artists, their capacity, openness, curiosity and habitude to move during childhood, and their desire to overcome intellectual and cultural barriers, rather than the types of mobility themselves. The age of artists at the time of their mobility, however, seems to play an important role, allowing for repetition of the experience and moves of greater distance. All types of mobility tend to create "a snowball effect".

This report clarifies how the mobility of artists, as expressed by their creations, narratives and aesthetics, reflects identitary, cultural and spatiotemporal intersections and how they generate territorialities based on moving and crossing. It provides evidence that the artist constitutes a multidimensional figure, at times informal, subversive, but always creative, finding themselves acting as vectors, relating to urban spaces, in terms of space, time and identity.

Recommendations

The present study is the first research of its type undertaken in the European Union. The fields explored and data collected with the help of people and institutions encountered, allow us to make an initial analysis of the lifelong learning effects of artists mobility in 10 EU Member States. This process merits development and extension to other EU countries, with the inclusion of such other variables as political and institutional impact, and economic and financial effects, in order to study all aspects of the mobility of artists having consequences for the moving person and their environment.

The objective part of the questionnaire used in interviews with artists in the 10 Member States focused on two main factors:

1. Mobility patterns and their learning impacts

2. Mobility conditions favouring learning.

Recommendations related to mobility patterns

The study has shown that destinations can vary for mobile artists. For many artists, an initial mobility experience can have a snow-ball effect for later mobility (the more that an artist has travelled in the past, the greater their chances are of moving again). Based on these conclusions, we recommend:

*   Promoting mobility during initial education, especially at university and conservatory levels

*   Providing ECTS credits at art schools and universities in the home countries of the moving artists to help disseminate the very concept of lifelong learning, central to building an ever-growing cultural and social European integration.

Recommendations related to impact of mobility patterns on learning

The study has identified four learning patterns linked to mobility experiences:

1. Hyper-mobile world artists, whose paths have roots in multi-facetted mobility

2. Portfolio artists, who move in order to increase their skills

3. Creative artists, who move to stimulate their creative process

4. Gap artists, whose mobility is informal.

Surprisingly enough, all types of mobility are acknowledged to favour learning. A remarkable homogeneity of tendencies was observed throughout the 10 countries covered by the study. All artists stress the effect of their mobility on their creative process, economic abilities, civic competences, social networking, cultural awareness and spatial knowledge. Based on these conclusions, we make the following recommendations:

- The mobility of artists should be recognized as an investment in human capital for the EU economic market and as providing increased competences for the labour market by both EU and national policy makers.

- National, regional and local governments and linguistic communities should cooperate with other governing bodies of the EU to arrive at a common understanding of the beneficial impacts of mobility for artists, in order to better accommodate their needs.

- The learning process engendered by the mobility experience should be promoted through the creation of a referent of acquired competences which could help to more thoroughly evaluate the benefits of mobility.

- Validation procedures should be established to assess mobility experiences.

- The impacts and benefits of moving artists on the economy, and on society as a whole, should be further analysed.

Recommendations related to conditions favoring learning

Although no absolutely recurring patterns have been found, artists strongly emphasize the interaction between personal experience and the context in which they are situated. They do not necessarily need to be informed about moving, or to receive funding, but all have an opinion about how funding and supporting could be enhanced in order to benefit a wider number of European artists.

Based on these conclusions, we make the following recommendations:

- National, regional and European policy makers need to make the link between mobility, LLL and mobility funding schemes more evident. Funding schemes linked to LLL of artists should consciously and visibly identify and recognise the learning benefits of mobility experiences.

- National and regional policy makers, together with professional training establishments, need to integrate mobility in initial training schemes to help artists maximise their learning experiences later in their career.

- Artists should make more use of the mobility opportunities provided in their sector to increase their LLL.

- The distinction between formal and informal arts should be suppressed, since all are eligible for European funding and promotion.

- More resources should be available from mobility funders to include open residencies (artists residencies with no previously agreed outcome), as they are highly appreciated by artists in terms of exploring new ways of working and issues/topics to work on.

- Professional networks and organisations for artists should continue providing extensive information about mobility opportunities and help artists in preparing for their mobility experience in order to help them maximise learning.

- Access to information on mobility processes and funding institutions should be enhanced.

Final Word

Our research suggests that the very concept of mobility should be applied not only to the individual artists themselves, but also to the institutions that are supposed to support and promote the artists. The mental mobility of policy makers is paramount for the development of lifelong learning processes and for the wellbeing of the arts in any country. Projects such as "Artists Moving & Learning" can be instrumental in reinforcing the notion that mobility is a value, in that it constitutes an environment, and that networking and researching are tools that no art can prosper without. Networking and researching are key benefits that can help place the mobility experience and the lifelong learning in a more valued perspective. They are not by-products of mobility experiences, but are, rather, the fundamentals.

Information Systems to Support the Mobility of Artists and Other Professionals in the Culture Field: A Feasibility Study

Final Report

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Study commissioned by the DG- Education and Culture of the European Commission

Knowledge Systems for Cultural Mobility

Executive Summary

Objectives

Mobility is the lifeblood of artistic and cultural activity. The exchange of ideas and techniques between people from different backgrounds has been central to the flowering of culture within Europe and also to the development of understanding between peoples. For certain individuals the ability to move freely across Europe has been central to their careers and their artistic endeavours. In some cases mobility has changed the course of artistic history.

In the era of globalisation and easy travel, the European Union provides an historical opportunity for such exchanges and cross-fertilisation to take place on an unprecedented scale. But important obstacles remain. This study commissioned by the European Commission and conducted by ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd, examined one of these obstacles-one, indeed which arguably plays the pivotal role in enabling cross-border mobility to happen: the uneven and inconsistent availability of information.

Until this point little has been known or understood systematically about where cultural operators source the information that enables mobility to take place and how it might be improved to overcome the information obstacles that exist. This study aimed to address these gaps and develop practical solutions to how they could be tackled.

Although the terms of reference for the study spoke of "information," it became clear during the course of the work that what artists need for their mobility is structured knowledge, not just information. They need to know when they travel that "the following forms need to be submitted to this agency by this time and in this language"

(information), "and this is how you do it" (knowledge) . Knowledge, which is information structured into a form where meaningful action can be undertaken, often through the intermediation of experts, is therefore a key theme that runs throughout the findings.

It also became rapidly clear during the study that one of the key defining features of the current ways in which mobile professionals source and use information is the use of complex networks, in which both formal and informal knowledge and information play key, and often complementary, roles.

A number of consequences flowed from these findings for the solutions that were being developed. First, it was plain that any attempt to build a single integrated information system would not only be hugely expensive and probably doomed to failure, but more

importantly, if would not be able to "store" the knowledge and action practices that artists and networks use already to facilitate their mobility. Secondly, it was clear that any solution needed to be organic, working with the grain of current practice, and developmental, building capacity over time to generate and share knowledge.

The method

Building on an initial review of the literature relating to the mobility of cultural workers, we undertook 85 interviews involving cultural operators across the cultural spectrum (making visits to four cities across Europe and carrying out telephone discussions in a further two), pan-European stakeholder organisations, and Cultural Contact Points (CCPs). We also carried out a review of formal information provision, covering 65 providers in total and 28 in-depth. Our team participated in a number of events where the issues were discussed, and we organised three workshops, two in December 2008 (with professional sector organisations and CCPs) and one in early February 2009 with a diverse range of stakeholders. We also made a presentation to the "Expert Group on mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural sector, established under the open method of coordination in culture" in February 2009. Here we were able to obtain the views of Member- States on the emerging solutions. Sustained interaction with people and organisations involved in the culture sector was therefore central to our methodology. Whilst the conclusions and recommendations remain our own, the emerging options and final model were in no small part developed and tested with organisations most likely to be affected by the findings, should they be implemented.

What stakeholders and cultural operators told us about their needs and potential solutions

Our review of the current ways in which mobile cultural professionals obtain and use information revealed a number of important issues. Four broad and distinct areas of information needs were identified:

Main information topic areas for mobile professionals in the cultural sector:

1. Regulatory issues, including rules on taxation, social security, visas and work permits (including for non-EU nationals), intellectual property rights

2. Funding opportunities for cross-border projects and to cover the costs of cross-border mobility

3. Job and training opportunities abroad, including employment opportunities, co-production, touring, and project opportunities

4. Country and region profiles explaining the structure and profile of the cultural sector

The types of mobility information that are needed relate to: the types of mobility (short-term mobility/long-term mobility, individual mobility/group mobility); the status of the mobile artist or cultural worker (employed, self-employed) and of the mobile operator who is employing or hiring a professional (e.g., profit-oriented undertaking, not-for-profit organisation or association)

The division between the "demand" and "supply" sides in relation to cultural mobility information is by no means clea-cut. Indeed, a number of the stakeholder organizations interviewed are active both in representing members' views and in providing them with information.

Overall, the diverse and complex characteristics of the cultural sector mean that is difficult to consider a single information system approach to solve all the needs. The sector has a high number of atypical forms of employment (project work, short-term contracts, and voluntary or very low-paid activities), diverse forms of undertakings (e.g., not-for-profit organisations) , complex intellectual property rights, and the frequent employment of non-EU country nationals and their participation in mobile culture projects.

Stakeholders highlighted a number of messages to inform potential solutions to information problems.

- Finding solutions to the problems of understanding national regulations affecting mobility is the most critical issue for the sector.

- One size does not fit all, so develop customised mobility information, involving both online information and access to expert advice in "one-stop shops" (websites are not the solution, only a means of helping better solutions to be developed).

- Reinforce and enrich the information sources currently used by mobile professionals in the cultural field which include formal and informal, commercial and personal sources (a "bottom-up" approach).

- Raise the information-handling skills of cultural workers and of employers' organisations, trade unions, professional education and training establishments, and public authorities.

- Enable the exchange of good practices amongst professionals and public authorities.

Lessons from existing information provision

Generally, our review of existing information provision found that it does not address the comprehensive needs of cultural workers. Some provision is available through online portals such as EURES and MISSOC, but it is general in nature, and in the case of MISSOC, targeted at professionals rather than the general public. It is also not structured to respond to the specificities of questions such as "I am a Latvian dancer and I want to travel to France. What should I know?" In relation to non-electronic sources of information, CCPs exist but for a different purpose than to act as mediators between professionals and information providers.

Existing sources do nonetheless provide useful operational models, or could be adapted to address some of the key needs. From a review of information resources and services in general (for example, some commercial services such as travel booking, and some information resources supported through EU funding, e.g., EURES, MISSOC, EURAXESS) , and more specifically of resources that are developed to meet the needs of cultural workers, it needs to be acknowledged that:

- Providing accurate, real-time, and targeted information is an expensive task, and cannot easily be done by integrating information into single databases. There needs to be consideration of "interoperability," where systems can communicate in real time with the official information sources; for example, in tax authorities.

- Information services deliver value to the customer by integrating information not just providing raw information. For example, a database that has information about tax rules does not, in itself, a cultural worker to understand the process or to fill in the relevant forms.

- Information changes in real time. Taxation rules can change rapidly in each country, visa requirements also can change at short notice, and the difficulty of being up-to-date is, more than anything, where so many information projects fail.

- Centralised information is seldom "complete." The overhead cost of checking and revising information means that database updates occur over longer time periods than the actual change in information.

Further, we found that in all cases, effective knowledge networks, whether at the European, national or regional level, benefit from similar features.

- They are driven by real needs in the user constituencies.

- They utilise a network of agents in all participating countries.

- They Locate control of content with experts who can understand and interpret sources.

- They utilise a secretariat which is a service agency for its network.

- Benefit from European Commission facilitation that helps bring national interests together, and injects knowledge and experience, but without interrupting the free flow of dialogue, network control, and the evolution of practice.

In relation to the possible roles and responsibilities that might be played in any solution, three levels emerged as critical:

The EC, which has an important role to play in improving information provision and coordinating and supporting information provision at all levels.

National authorities which could configure information provision to match the national (or regional) situation; commit strongly to improve information provision; and support existing/create appropriate structures for information provision for cross-border mobility in the cultural sector (national/regional mobility contact points).

Professional organisations which could develop dialogue and cooperation within the cultural sector; engage in dialogue with the EU and national authorities on mobility and information provision; and target support to raise the sectors capacity to deliver mobility information.

The recommended solution

In order to develop a solution to the problems and issues set out above, it was important to establish some guiding principles based on what we had found out about the demand for and supply of information. From the research and workshops, we concluded that any solution should:

- Build on the rich landscape of information that already exists, including the strengths of the sector as providers of their own information

- Te decentralised to allow -and take advantage of- the vast heterogeneity in the sector so that solutions can be tailored, within an overall framework, to national or regional circumstances

- Take into account the core differences between the types of information needed

- Invest in the people component of the system as much as the technical electronic element

- Incorporate networking opportunities for professionals as an integral component.

Our recommended solution is a Serviced Knowledge Network in which activity on two levels is critical: the Member State level and the pan European level. The solution draws inspiration in particular from the EURAXESS network.

The role of Member States

The main focus of activity is placed on Member States, where Cultural Mobility Knowledge Centres (CMKCs) would act as the hubs of the networks that would develop. (Member States may decide to have more than one CMKC depending on their national administrative organisation or size.) In this decentralised model, Member States would have discretion to select organisations to act as hosts for their own CMKCs within a farmwork of guidelines, protocols, and quality standards agreed and owned by the network as a whole. Professional organizations or CCPs as well as public bodies might therefore act as hosts.

Each country would have its own particular configuration of players making up its network of information providers. Different countries would be starting from different points and some countries are clearly in a position where they have a head start on others. Sharing of good practice is thus an important element of the model.

CMKCs would have responsibility for:

- making and maintaining working relationships with other CMKCs to provide the backbone for effective functioning of the network, through exchange of information and good practice
- making and maintaining relationships with national authorities with regard to regulatory matters in order, in particular, to provide the mediation required between authorities and individual mobile professionals, enabling queries to be answered efficiently
- bringing into their networks relevant sector organisations that can contribute to overcoming information obstacles and to improving the supply of information, especially in areas where there is strong sub-sectoral variation in information needs, e.g., health, safety, insurance, commercial law, qualifications, and intellectual property rights, along with jobs, training, cross-border projects and co productions and funding (e.g., through the provision of guides, resources, and networking opportunities)
- maintaining national databases that interoperate with a European-level portal
- preparing country and regional profiles of the culture sector in partnership with national authorities and professional organizations

The European level

Activity at the European level is essential to complement and support the work at the Member State/ regional level.

- The first of two primary responsibilities of the European Commission would be to provide a secretariat to service the network which would:

    - Service the network as a whole; for example, through directly supporting the development of CMKCs.

    - Coordinate the consistency of the "brand" by setting design and other standards for the portal, and for national websites that are built by CMKCs.

    - Facilitate networking and exchanges of experience among the CMKCs

- The second responsibility is to host (probably, like EURAXESS, through a contracted service provider) a Web portal to provide a gateway to other services where there is information of relevance, which also has a resource of information specifically targeted to the mobility needs of artists and cultural workers, and which also supports communication mechanisms among users (blogs, discussion forums, and structured best practice). The facility could:

    - Provide a general introduction for those wishing to undertake cross-border mobility in the sector (and hence be targeted principally at professionals new to the field and/or mobility)

    - Host central resources for the network of CMKCs

    - Link into relevant -and quality- controlled -provision, which might be provided by sector bodies.

Implementation

In order to implement the model, a number of factors need to be taken into account:

- the need for full backing and commitment from Member States: without it, the model will not succeed
- the fact that some countries have farther to travel and will therefore need the support of others in the network
- the typically low levels of funding for cultural activities (which are likely to be under pressure during the current economic downturn) and the need to use

existing funding mechanisms at Member State and EC levels, although the proposed solution is essentially a low-cost approach in which funding is treated as an investment that prioritises the human rather than the electronic dimension (though both are important)

- the opportunity to draw on the lessons that will emerge over the coming months from the four pilot projects currently being funded, and especially the PRACTICS project

- The cost implications: EURAXESS provides a highly relevant comparator. Each participating country received 200,000 start-up funding for the setting-up of the service centres and there is ongoing support for training and networking. The EURAXESS portal has cost 1.6m since 2002 (including feasibility study, development, maintenance, external support and revamping), with the maintenance contract, for example, costing 230,000 in 2008

- the potential synergies with existing information systems at EC level (e.g., EURES, EURAXESS). This is most likely to take the form of CMKCs utilising existing infrastructures and information sources when providing advice and support to cultural workers, rather than technical modifications

A range of steps need to be taken to implement the proposed model. The most critical condition is to ensure the political commitment of Member States to the establishment of the network and its financial implications (especially the co-resourcing principle) since without this the proposals cannot be achieved.

It is difficult to propose a definite timeline for the actions since they depend on so many issues. However, a natural structure to events is provided by three factors:

- the rhythm of funding opportunities provided through the cycle of the Culture Programme

- the development of the next Culture Programme

- the milestones of the currently funded pilot projects

Lessons from the pilot projects will start to become available from 2010 onwards and these will provide valuable experiences to feed in to the development of the network. The new Culture Programme will commence in 2014 and work will begin in 2010 to define its focus in order that it can be accepted by the College of Commissioners in 2011.

All these factors point to a process in which Member State commitment is developed and a way forward agreed during 2009 and into 2010, with lessons from the pilot projects being fed in during 2010 and 2011 to fine-tune the way forward.

Depending on the rate of progress and degree of Member State commitment, some limited funding under the current Culture Programme could potentially be made available to support activity from 2011 or 2012 up to the end of 2013, with funding then being available through the new Culture Programme from 2014 onwards.

Much will depend on the pace at which Member State commitment is secured, but this timescale would appear to be realistic and reasonable. The following actions are recommended:

Member States

Establish o working group to take forward the recommendations and examine potential models for national networks with CMKCs as the key information hubs. Since Member States are already working on this topic through the Expert Group on mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural sector[14], we recommend that this be used as the nexus for this activity. This group could develop guidelines, protocols, and quality standards for the network in cooperation with the Commission, including performance indicators for CMKCs, using the existing operational model of EURAXESS as the basis. Ideally, the charter and the guidelines for the network at national level could be one of the outputs of the OMC for the end of 2010 to coincide with the end of the triennial Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010.

Cultural organisations

Optimise existing funding streams- Cultural organisations should make use of the existing opportunities under the Culture Programme and at national level to take forward the objectives embodied in the model. Sector bodies could explore ways of jointly developing appropriate provision; organising networks at European level that might underpin the development of communities of practice; sharing practice and reflecting on learning within the sector; and finding ways to structure experiences into good practice.

Member States, European Commission, and stakeholders'

Use the experiences of the pilot projects- The PRACTICS project will seek to establish its four CMCPs during 2009 and agree a common framework, with activities starting during 2010. An interim evaluation will take place in mid-2010. Lessons learned should be drawn upon in order to provide valuable insights into how parts of the model might be operationalised.

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14   Established under the Open Method of Coordination in culture.

European Commission

Ensure that information for mobility is a priority in the next Culture Progromme- A strong mobility dimension should be incorporated into proposals (and into the impact assessment process) for the next Culture Programme that will run from 2014. Consideration should be given

- To whether and how the new programme might support the model recommended here. Depending on the progress made, the new programme should be used either to complete construction of the network or to add value through additional services. (The proposal would of course need the support of the Member States and the European Parliament in the decision-making process). Depending on the progress and results of the PRACTICS project, and the necessary commitment and support from Member States, the Commission should examine whether any adjustments to the calls for proposals in the framework of the existing Culture Programme are necessary and possible to avoid a funding gap in 2012-2013. The financing would have to be planned and agreed in line with the committee procedure for the programme.

- Establish the secretariat and online portal- The European Commission should consider ways in which an online portal and secretariat services might be established to support a network.

- Ensure quality- A system of quality awards for provision of mobility-related information should be set up. A system of high-level awards has run successfully where DG INFSO supports an EU-wide competition for excellence in eGovernment and eInclusion where awards are made during ministerial conferences every two years. The awards receive substantial numbers of applications, they promote the activities politically at the highest level, and they maintain political buy-in to eGovernment and eInclusion. A similar scheme could be considered for innovative projects and services being developed in Europe to support and facilitate the mobility of artists and cultural workers.

If these actions are executed successfully, it should be possible from 2014 onwards to establish a fully operational network with complete EU coverage, which could include launching the next Culture Programme with a strong mobility component either to complete the network or to add value through extra services (depending on the rate of progress).

Mobility Matters

Programs and Schemes to Support the Mobility of Artists and Cultural Professionals in Europe

European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research - ERICARTS

Executive Summary

1. Approach to this study

With the support of a team of six key experts and national correspondents in 35 countries, the ERICarts Institut e carried out a six month study for the European Commission between April and October 2008 on mobility incentives in the culture/creative sector. This was not intended to be an audit of all mobility related schemes in Europe, but rather a survey and analysis of the range and scope as well as motives and results of such programmes.

During the course of the study, ERICarts collected information on mobility trends in different regions of Europe, on recent debates taking place within individual countries, on existing mobility schemes (their objectives, kind of support, target beneficiaries, eligibility conditions and the nature of benefits), on the main motives for funding bodies to support mobility and on the main sources where professionals can find information about mobility incentives or barriers. The team developed a classification of the main types and objectives of mobility schemes and tried to assess, on the basis of a rather limited supply of comparable data, the ir impact/effectiveness.

The results of the study are presented in a final report with extensive annexes including case studies. The report is divided into five sections:

1. Background, methodology and conceptual issues;

2. A diverse mobility environment: trends, drivers, restraints;

3. Mobility schemes for cultural professionals;

4. Assessing the impact and effectiveness of existing mobility schemes; and

5. Recommendations: towards more balanced and productive cultural mobility programmes

Recommendations for action are targeted to mobility funders within Member States and call for complementary action on the part of the European Commission, which respects the principle of subsidiarity for EU action in the cultural sector.

2. Defining mobility

The ERICarts study recognises mobility not simply as occasional movements across national borders that may be useful to gain professional experience required for career advancement, as well as advance artistic endeavour, but more as an integral part of the regular work life of artists and other cultural professionals. The study focused on the mobility of the individual, but also examined mobility in the sense of the touring of arts organisations.

At the outset, three groups of professionals could be distinguished:First, there are those seeking to become mobile and for which mobility schemes can be of particular importance. Mobility may be their free choice, e.g. to gain new inspirations or engage in artistic endeavour, but could also be a matter of professional survival. In the latter case, mobility is often tied to the issue of (public) provision of funding and infrastructure within the country, including incentives for local market developments.

1. A widespread concern of those cultural professionals who are already mobile or where mobility is a regular part of their professional practice is how to deal with 'red tape' or how to overcome other impediments to mobility caused mainly by social, tax and, for nationals from third countries, visa regulations.

2. Finally, there are some who do not really see an urgent need for trans-border mobility

(e.g. artists living in 'hot spot' cities or specialist staff of regional arts institutions), particularly if this would mean separation from their families and friends or learning a new language. Providing intelligent motivations to encourage cross-border mobility may be the main policy challenge.

Reliable and comparable data that would present a clear picture of the size of these different groups, of their actual mobility flows and of their potential mobility needs do not exist. This calls for empirical surveys and other research efforts at the EU level.

3. Assessing mobility support schemes for cultural professionals in Europe

Data on 344 mobility schemes from 35 countries across Europe was collected through a project questionnaire. These include schemes or funds offered by national, regional or local governments, transregional bodies, arms-length or semi-public bodies, cultural institutions, foundations or other private sector actors. The mobility scheme examples served as a basis to identify a number of meaningful cases in the diverse world of mobility funding for artists and cultural professionals.

On the basis of the information gathered, a typology of mobility schemes was developed that comprises nine main types of measures. These are:

- Artists / writers residencies;

- Event participation grants (e.g. at international festivals);

- Research grants or scholarships to live and work for a certain time abroad;

- 'Go and see', 'come and see' or short-term exploration grants for individuals;

- Scholarships for further/postgraduate training courses or similar forms of capacity building;

- Market development grants (e.g. scouting and other cultural export schemes);

- Project or production grants, e.g. to support translations or participate in film co-productions;

- Support for trans-nationa l networking of professionals;

- Touring incentives for groups, e.g. for music or dance ensembles.

A further distinction can be made between outgoing schemes i.e., those which provide support to the mobility of nationals/residents cultural professionals to travel and work in other countries and incoming schemes i.e., those designed to attract foreign cultural professionals to visit/work in their country.

In addition to distinguishing various types of schemes, the study identifies seven main objectives underpinning mobility programmes and schemes: improving foreign relations; career enhancement; creativity / new production opportunities; international market development; talent development; intelligence / information gathering / sharing; and project cooperation / coproduction. Evidence suggests that mobility is not always an explicit objective, but is often an implicit outcome or a means to an end.

An assessment of the schemes made against the se objectives shows that, in many countries,

mobility continues to be an important component of international and regional cultural cooperation agreements, be they multilateral or bilateral. In this context, activities involving mobility are often seen as tools to promote the image of a country abroad and to export culture. Traditional bilateral agreements, where they exist, are seen as outdated and out of step with the changing, but definitely more international practices of artists and cultural professionals. The study suggests that more opportunities are needed for practitioners to develop their own research and exploration ambitions that are not tied to meeting diplomacy or other political and economic agendas.

The results also indicate that there is a shift taking place towards the introduction of new mobility schemes aimed at promoting creativity and productivity through e.g. production/ project co-operation, as well as career enhancement schemes aimed at enabling artists/ cultural professionals to participate in major festivals or other events; fewer countries offer 'go and see exploration grants' or 'networking grants'. Support for pan European networks is considered, in many countries, a responsibility of the EU Culture programme. Schemes which introduce artists and cultural professionals to emerging cultural markets in other regions of the world, e.g. Brazil, China or India, have been newly introduced by some Member States.

In recent years, the objectives of mobility schemes of governments, arts agencies and foundations have begun to reflect new political objectives and national priorities such as promot ing the creative industries, cultural diversity or intercultural dialogue; priorities also identified in the European Agenda for Culture (2007). Such schemes are found within, for example, creative industry export strategies, international job placement schemes, or capacity building programmes.

4. Identifying gaps in provision

While the study revealed a diverse landscape of cultural mobility schemes, gaps and imbalances in provision remain.

There appears to be a continuing mismatch between resources and demands from a growing number of artists and new groups of cultural professionals who want to travel abroad. Although there is evidence that financial resources for mobility have increased in some countries, the general message emerging from national correspondents and experts involved in the study is that, with some exceptions, mobility funds are insufficient to cover the full range of expenses associated with a mobility experience. It is argued that the levels of mobility funding set limits on the choice of country an artist or cultural professional can travel to, whether within Europe or to new destinations such as Brazil, India or China.

There is a significant imbalance in the number of schemes promoting nationals to engage internationally compared with the smaller number of schemes supporting inward visits of creative people from other countries. This gap in provision perpetuates East-West imbalances (in Europe) and North-South imbalances (globally). The main challenge identified in many countries is the lack of funds, programmes or infrastructure to receive artists from other countries. Rectifying the balance of incoming-outgoing schemes could be encouraged in the spirit of commitments made by governments when ratifying the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

It was to be expected there would be imbalances between different regions of Europe, with Central and Eastern Europe in particular not offering the range of mobility opportunities to be found in many Northern and Western European countries. This in itself is not surprising, but it does remind us that despite the developing European cultural space, opportunities for cultural professionals to travel, make contacts, build partnerships, conduct research etc., will depend to a great extent on where they live in Europe.

5. Recommendations: towards more balanced and productive cultural mobility programmes

5.1 Adopt a developmental approach to mobility

The study recommends maintaining the plurality of actors and funding sources for cultural mobility. It also calls for the adoption of a developmental approach that recognises mobility not simply as an adhoc activity or as a one-off experience but as a longer term investment in a process leading to specific outcomes (not outputs) over a period of time, e.g.in the course of a career.

Five key building blocks or pillars were identified on which this developmental approach could be based: intelligence – exploration – resources – fairness - sustainability. In short, artists/cultural professionals need intelligence, not just information, to ascertain what opportunities are available for them to explore the creative process with their peers in other countries and make produc tive contacts; but this is dependent on the availability of financial and human resources and the appropriate capacity to engage in mobility; it is also dependent on fairness in having access to mobility opportunities. Finally, productive engagement internationally often needs to be sustainable if it is to be effective in the longer term; one-off grants make it difficult to achieve sustainability or leave a legacy.

The following recommendations are built upon these five pillars and are addressed to the European Union and also to governments, regional bodies, NGOs and the research community in EU member or applicant states.

5.2 Adopt a cultural diversity dimension to the overall mission and activities of mobility programmes and grants

Bodies and organisations promoting mobility could :

a. recognise social and cultural differences through more targeted measures to empower those who want to engage in mobility activities. Such activities can promote genuine dialogue;

b. work to ensure that open mindsets that appreciate diverse experiences and cultural expressions are nurtured through artistic and educational activities. Culture can help to stimulate curiosity and instil empathy, as well as provide a basic stock of knowledge about other cultures and about one's own ne ighbours; and

c. develop joint programmes and projects to increase language capabilities needed for cross-border cooperation and co-productions especially those spoken in border regions. This could involve not only educational institutions and related activities, but also activities of the culture/creative sector.

5.3 Pursue mobility programmes and schemes that support productive mobility experiences

Mobility funders could:

a. endow residencies and travel grants with adequate funding in order to increase the number of 'incoming' artists or cultural operators from different parts of Europe and the world;

b. give priority to foster individual professional advancement, capacity building and exploration through intellectual encounters, artistic innovation and creative engagement across borders, without an imposed ma ndate;

c. offer additional support which could help optimise mobility experiences by providing professionals with the time and resources to engage in dialogue with the local community, interact with other artists/cultural professionals, lead workshops or training opportunities, etc;

d. support direct, productive encounters and project initiatives of cultural professionals from all parts of Europe, including in new member states/candidate countries; e) target the typical, i.e. small-scale arts institutions/organisations and culture industry companies to enable them to participate in international co-productions;

e. encourage sustainability, networking and legacy building in mobility processes with, for example, follow-up funding, post-production funds, and dissemination aids. Post-mobility workshops for cultural professionals to share their experiences with peers could also be considered in this context, as much of the valuable expertise is not always put back into the sector;

f. introduce evaluation processes that focus on the outcomes ('impact') rather than the outputs of mobility schemes; and

g. provide additional support to intermediaries as instrumental actors providing 'intelligence' (advice, guidance etc) needed to enhance the effectiveness of cross-border mobility.

5.4 Re-examine cultural diplomacy / international cultural co-operation programmes

The European cultural space is both common and diverse. When cultural professionals are sent abroad by e.g. national cultural institutes to participate in events or programmes, they are often regarded as ambassadors of a particular country. The public in other parts of the world, however, often see them as Europeans influenced by Europe's cultural diversity. This in mind, governments or cooperation agencies and EU bodies could:

a. increase the number of joint European activities by national cultural institutes and by other cultural diplomacy actors outside of Europe, which could mean an extension of existing forms of collaboration e.g. in the EUNIC network or in cooperation with international bodies such as the Asia-Europe Foundation to which EU states belong. Similar cooperation initiatives could be created in other world regions such as Africa and South/Central America; and

b. encourage trans-regional bodies to introduce cultural mobility programmes, where they do not currently exist, and to foster cooperation between the various larger regions in Europe.

6. Concerted efforts to address mobility at the European level

The mobility of cultural professionals figures as a strategic objective of the European Agenda for Culture (2007) and in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. The Commission's increased engagement with mobility responds to demands from networks and cultural operators for other financial opportunities to support their work in addition to that which is provided for trans-national cooperation projects through the Culture Programme 2007-2013. Therefore, the following recommendations are directed to the European Union:

a. Initiate action through pilot projects aimed at artists/cultural professionals in 2009, with a possible focus on:

    • the creation of a matching fund for mobility to strengthen existing funds and provide incentives for trans-regional, national, local and independent bodies in order to implement a developmental approach to mobility funding;

    • improving the transfer of mobility experiences through support for cross-border training modules targeted to different user groups, i.e. funders, intermediaries, professionals seeking to become mobile, in order to ensure a more lasting impact. The involvement of artists / cultural professionals as 'trainers' is key and would enable them to share their experiences with others; and

    • the development of online mobility toolkits that provide intelligence, not just more information, by synthesizing good practice. Such kits could be developed with the help of agencies, foundations with a European scope, mobility information providers, regional bodies, sector associations and independent experts.

b. Introduce additional activities into the various strands of the current EU Culture programme 2007-2013, as well as in the next generation of the Culture programme:

    • Multiannual cooperation projects: introduce support for the building of trans-national cultural links and project cooperation between cultural operators, networks and institutions whose programme priorities are aimed at promoting the visibility and mobility of artists/cultural professionals from more diverse cultural backgrounds;

    • Support for cultural action -cooperation projects: through this programme strand strengthen the capacity of the informal infrastructure for mobility, which is sustained by underfunded or non-funded independent artist-led initiatives that either house vis iting artists or provide them with work spaces. This could be done through a call for structured cooperation projects lasting two years; and

    • Support for analysis and dissemination activities aimed at: -collecting data on the mobility flows of artists and cultural professionals ; -developing an impact assessment scheme of cultural mobility programmes

that focuses on the 'outcomes' of mobility rather than the 'outputs'; and -designing a SCOREBOARD to monitor how governments address the obstacles to mobility in the cultural sector.

c. Make use of the open method of coordination (OMC), the new working method in the field of culture, as a means of strengthening policies on mobility at the national and European level. In particular, encourage the expert working group on improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and culture professionals, which was created for the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Culture 20082010, to:

   • promote policy development on mobility through the exchange of succesful practices in Member States;

   • engage in a regular dialogue with all stakeholders i.e. culture sector platforms, European networks, art councils, national age ncies and local level organisations ; and

   • initiate reflection on cultural mobility indicators and establish a working relationship with the new Eurostat working group on culture and explore synergies with other bodies that have competence in mobility research to discuss indicators on the impact of mobility funds/programmes.

d. Use the possibilities offered by the EU Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes to improve the mobility and exchange of professionals working in arts institutions/administrations and training facilities;

e. Address the imbalance of mobility flows both inside and outside of the EU through new strands in Structural Funds or the INTERREG IVC Programme and through its Neighbourhood Policy;

f. Encourage international mobility and project driven cooperation. Key to this are efforts to support the development of better market conditions for the creation, production, distribution or exhibition of artistic and literary works in other countries, as well as the strengthening of local infrastructure such as artists' residencies. This could be accompanied by support for technical, financial and managerial capacity building activities such as those foreseen in the EU-ACP Cultural Industries Support Programme. Such initiatives could help address the problem of 'brain drain' and strengthen dialogue and encounters with cultural professionals on an equal footing;

g. Building on the experience gained in the context of the EU-Europe for Citizens programme 2007-2013 explore the development of new mobility schemes with a view to nurture a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding.

While the team considers the recommendations above to be realistic, it is important to

point out that the ir intended outcomes could remain aspirational rather than achievable unless continuing obstacles to mobility are seriously addressed. According to in-depth expert studies and to recent proposals made by the European Parliament and culture sector networks, such obstacles are often due to inconsistent visa, tax and social regulations in the Member States.

To overcome these barriers and to support the healthy development of a diverse creative / culture sector, it seems important for European and national authorities to:

- gradually harmonise definitions, procedures and application forms in fiscal / social matters;
- simplify procedures and reduce costs of visa and work permit applications;
- enhance the capacities and collaboration of existing online information systems; and
- introduce or support training workshops on legal and social regulations in different countries.

The study on mobility information systems currently being undertaken by ECOTEC is to address such issues.

Chapter II:
Articles and selected Papers

Mobile yes, migrants no?

Young Moroccans on the move

Elsa Mescoli

Introduction

My first ethnographical experience in Morocco, of which this paper is resuming certain elements and reflections, took place between 2007 and 2008, for a period of almost six months. During my staying in this country, I focused my attention on migrant projects of young inhabitants of Khouribga, who followed Italian courses in town. I could contact and interview them through the school that organized the courses. A lot of families in this city have relatives living in Italy and all the young inhabitants of Khouribga seem to have the 'reputation' of willing to leave their hometown. I so asked myself what the personal and social background of this 'desire' was, and how they tried to realize it.

Considering the proliferation in Morocco of political and humanitarian discourses on migration, it was at the same time necessary to analyse the social actions and projects that were put into place locally to discourage and sanction migration. As a matter of fact, these acts contribute in a fundamental way to the discursive formation of the characters of legality and illegality attributed to the actions undertaken to migrate.

The study of this ethnographical and bibliographical material made me reflect on the relation between the concept of mobility and migration. I questioned myself about the different practices related to both concepts, and the blurring of the boundaries between them, thanks to the actions undertaken by the youngsters considered.

The concept of departure and the desire to emigrate

Khouribga is a city of about 152.000 inhabitants, situated 120 km South-East of Casablanca, on the Ouardigha plane in the region Chaouia-Ouardigha. Khouribga is known as the world's leading center for the extraction of phosphates. It belongs to the group of contemporary mining towns created in Morocco during the period of the Protectorate, in the regions rich in economic potential (those that form what is known as the "Maroc utile"). The O.C.P. (Office Chérifien des Phosphates) was created in 1920 and its headquarters were set in 1924 on the area which corresponds to the actual city of Khouribga[15].

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15 Its name stems from the Arabic root "kha-ra-ba" which means "ruin". The term was used by the nomadic people who periodically stopped in the area to indicate the condition of the ground, perforated with holes.

The history of the city is linked to the policy of the O.C.P.: the Office launched a campaign to attract manpower from other Moroccan villages and regions, and in order to stabilize this workforce apartments and other infrastructure were built. The Office was also taking care of all public services (schools, warehouses, sanitary structures, spare-time activities). It was a monopolistic organization acting on the economic, social and cultural level of the city, managing it in a way that responded more to the tendencies and necessities of the global phosphate market rather than taking into account the intrinsic needs of the population.

Already at that time, many European expatriates were living in Khouribga, where public structures were locally settled, like police, postal and tax offices. The centers of public administration (both communal and provincial) came gradually in charge of the management of the city, taking distance from the O.C.P. rules. This happened because of the growing incapacity of the enterprise, facing economic crises, to absorb the local workforce, which rose in proportion to the demographic growth. Gradually new forms of economy developed, which were no longer related to the exploitation of the soil[16], but which consisted of small commercial activities. From a social point of view, the rise in unemployment lead to a strong hierarchization of the population, whereby the agents of the O.C.P. and their relatives were considered to be privileged [17].

The perception of the city of Khouribga, paradoxically from the moment when the population gained more autonomy, was one of a deep urban crisis that influenced the economic, social and administrative levels. This fact seems to have resulted in an extraordinary proliferation of informal markets and into the emigration of the population to foreign countries, in particular toward Italy, also due to the perception of nepotism in regulating economic and social questions in the country and of a lack of a fair distribution of resources and revenues. The people interviewed underlined that economic difficulties not only have an effect on the capacity to survive, but also make it difficult to be recognized as an "human being", who – in the eyes of most of them – is in the first place a "sidi", a man with economic and social prestige.

Migration is an action born out of the crisis described here, an act which allows people to gain the economic and social status which is necessary to improve one's own life conditions and those of his family. Durkheim states that "collective representations (…) once established become partially autonomous realities"[18] : this reading key, whether it is applied to the perception of the crisis of the city of Khouribga or to the imagination

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16   The modern mining techniques destroyed the arable potential of the land.

17   This hierarchization reflected in the physical organization of the city, divided by the train tracks into two parts, North and South, the first one being made up of executives' villas, surrounded by green gardens, and of some social organizations' and local council offices; the second one, named free medina , formed by public and private buildings, shops, cafés, etc. Besides this area a shantytown rose, as well as new buildings housing retired people and migrants back from abroad (on holiday or permanently).

18   Durkheim, E. 1924 in Chattou, Z. 2005 : 88.

of escaping from it by migrating, does not mean to deny the existence of such problems or that they cannot be overcome trough migration; in fact it allows the assertion of a discursive formation that fixes it, that becomes so corporal and embedded to determine a precise and concrete agency, which performs over and with the construction of an imagined life elsewhere and of successive different returns to the "bled"[19].

The role of the imagination and the performed mobility

The aspirant migrants[20] interviewed were simultaneously experiencing three spaces and times: "here", "there"[21] and "in between"[22]. "Here" and "there" converge in a third dimension where a mobility is already performed, where the actor and the elsewhere converge. Messages and images of Italy presented by medias, expatriates and foreigners (tourists, researchers, cooperation workers etc.) constitute an ethnic landscape[23] experienced and reinterpreted by everyone concerned. In the words of the youngsters interviewed, people of Khouribga "have grown up with Italy", creating a precisely defined image of this country as a place and culture. The perception is that of a nation where the inhabitants are not racist, they are 'good people' (mzianin)[24]. It is a country easy to enter and where it is possible to find a job (whether regular or not). Italians are endowed with humanity (insanîa), as Noura[25] told me, referring to the caretaking of her brother who suffered from a kidney disease, because they respond to the needs of a human being.

However, this imaginary Italy is also composed of some fears, concerning the fact of leaving behind one's own origin, based on "memories, childhood, friends, the home where you have grown up, your parents, your culture"[26]. So, in the imagination of this elsewhere comes in the perception, which already seems real, of "el-ghorba", a feeling which goes

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19   This term generally indicates Morocco in its entirety, even if in some cases it can mean "countryside".

20   That is to say the young people who announced their will to go to Italy and who were involved at different levels in the preparation of departure. Some of those who were following the Italian class did not have that desire and were learning the Italian language for their work or to be able to communicate during their holidays with members of their family living in Italy.

21   These concepts of "here" and "there" must be understood as fuzzy, because they change in relation with the actor's perspective, because in the everyday life that which comes from far is not always considered foreign, whereas some local productions may be seen as new, and even because local and global continuously interlace.

22   Tarrius A. (2000), in Arab, C. 2005 : 6.

23   Ethnoscape, theorized by Arjun Appadurai (1996) is the landscape of people inhabiting the changing world in which we are living, that is to say tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiled people, seasonal workers and other groups and individuals in motion.

24   An adjournment of these reflections would probably be interesting at the present time, nearly three years after that first enquiry, period in which the Italian legislation, that settles the questions about "foreigners", has become stronger and several episodes of protest have showed the uneasiness in which a lot of migrants live in their country. It would be interesting to analyse how those information arrived to the new potential migrants and how they have been interpreted in their own life project.

25   Noura is a 27 year-old woman, graduated; she followed a post-degree class of two years in computing. She wants to leave to Turin where both her sister and brother live and where she would like to continue her studies.

26   Those are Raed's words, a 27 year-old young man, graduated, born and raised in Khourigba, who works in informal business (he "buys and sells"). A lot of young people interviewed had an occupation but were willing to change it.

beyond the concept of nostalgia, seen that in Arabic it means "exile"[27]. In the context of this research it has been defined as "feraq", i.e. separation from mother and family. The "kharij", the elsewhere, in this case the European space, with its "images of wealth, abundance, freedom, social rights, democracy, realization of one's own dreams, absence of frustration"[28], is incorporated in the "barrani" - the stranger who comes from outside, "barra" means "out" -, the "nsrani", the "gauri", the white man, occidental, Christian, all words that recall the fears of these youngsters. Thus leaving means sacrifices, ruptures, risks. It also means challenging the elsewhere and the other, overcoming one's own limits.

These complex representations of Italy also act on the imagination of the aspirant migrants concerning their return to Morocco. The experiences of other migrants are lived by these same youngsters through the gifts brought back from Italy[29] and above all by the investments into the construction of houses[30] or by the starting up of professional activities[31] – since returning from Europe also means, for the youngsters interviewed, bringing with oneself particular skills and new technologies. Some of the youngsters interviewed had the idea that they would get in Italy the possibility to accumulate a lot of money in a short period of time, but most of them referred to economic questions as survival issues (and wishing a gradual improvement of their own conditions). Moreover, we cannot omit that this visibility of migrants who come back from abroad can also be characterised in a negative way, since they can be blamed for behaving in a way which does not correspond to Islamic values. The ostentation of material goods can be interpreted in the same way, even if it seems there is not necessarily a correspondence between someone's behaviour and his individual morality.

Migration also determines a replacement in the community of origin; moreover, it seems to be the only way to "become a man"[32]. In this context the migrant becomes a sort of "hero" who has been able to overcome misery and poverty showing his courage and pride. The elsewhere is so represented as the place of the alternative[33], where it is possible to make a change[34]; but most of the youngsters interviewed, like Hamoud[35], confirmed

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27   The root "gha-ra-ba" is the basis of other words amongst which those that mean foreigner, strange, far, west and Morocco. It is related to "sunset", "darkness", "distance" and "isolation". [Chattou, Z. 2005: 70].

28   Chattou 2005: 70.

29   It is not unusual that those gifts are bought during the migrants' way back toward Morocco or even in this same country. However they keep a symbolic link to Italy thanks to their typology or to the way in which they have been made.

30   A migrant building his own house in Morocco is often seen and described by literature as someone willing to show his wealth off. Therefore other simple and possible reasons are not considered, as, for example, the need to stay somewhere when being in Morocco.

32   A local saying states: "Qt'a al-bahr bach toulli rajl", cross the see to become a man.

33   Chattou, Z. 2005 : 88.

34   A change that does not always refer to a particularly precarious situation but that could involve people who are in relatively favourable positions. For example, this is the case of Amr, a 32 year-old man who works in the computer products market, who has a degree and who likes his job but wishes to "change his life", to modify his everyday existence and who believes, or at least he so told me, that it could happen only with a departure to Italy.

35   Thirty years old.

that the inhabitants of Khouribga are absolutely aware of the nature of the "show" that is performed by the migrants who in summertime come back to their country, a show that hides suffering.

These representations, in their complexity, interlaced with the personal reasons of each youngster considered, determine concrete actions performed by these aspirant migrants, who act both in a local context and in a global setting. While programming their migration project, the youngsters interviewed position themselves in an intermediary space between Khouribga and the elsewhere[36] and act to make their project become reality ("tahaqqaq"). The youngsters interviewed followed, as said before, their Italian courses in a local language school[37] and this engagement represented their journey to the country which they have programmed to migrate to. As a matter of fact, learning this language allowed them to gather different sorts of information about Italy, for example about rules regulating migration. This knowledge lead them to all the actions necessary to give their migration project a legal character, to make it "qanuni"[38] : this means "travelling" inside the Italian system of regularisation for foreigners, and buying a contract[39]. The contract will be obtained thanks to a middleman staying in Italy (often someone close to the family, sometimes not) and the youngsters interviewed were aware of the fact that, despite its high price, this contract could not correspond to a real job, and even if it did, it would only cover a short period of time. But this awareness did not prevent these youngsters from believing to be undertaking a real trip, and while analysing them, these acts cannot be reduced to a simple projection.

Moreover, the actions concerned many people around the individual, because the family of the aspiring migrants, living in Khouribga or already in Italy, was often involved into this journey in many ways: in supporting the youngsters at the economic level (through the payment of the contract, of the first needs once arrived in Italy, of the costs of the

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36   In the literature on migration, it is not unusual to find the interpretation of migration act into a ritual key, assigning at each phase of the path one of the three spaces of the initiation rite, thus considering the migrant as irreparably placed in the preliminary phase, separated (physically and psychologically) from his initial context and never completely joined to that of destination (please refer to De Genova, N.P – 2002 - for a criticism to this interpretation). In my reflections in this context, I do not necessary want to use this reading key; I am eager to demonstrate here that in spite of the apparent lack of a definition of these young people status in this phase of their life, their actions attest of a precise "agency" and have considerable effects on their existence.

37   At least two language schools exist in Khouribga and each one provides Italian lessons certified by a final test at the Dante Alighieri Institute of Casablanca, connected to the General Italian Consulate.

38   For these young people, the definition of a migration path that respects the law does not correspond to that provided by the states involved, and this fact shows how the same concepts of "legal migration" and "illegal migration" have to be analysed in their complexity and in the variety of their possible declensions.

39   The Italian legislation on migration (law n. 189 of July 30, 2002 – which replaced the "Testo Unico delle disposozioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero", that is to say the decree n. 286/1998 - and its successive modifications in 2008 and 2010 known as part of "Pacchetto sicurezza") forecasts that the only way to have a residence permit as a worker in Italy is to be "called" by an employer who signs a contract with the migrant after having showed that the required specific skills cannot be fulfilled by the local offer (this through a preliminary searching amongst the national services for employment). Concerning the Moroccan regulation of migration, the referring law is n° 02-03 "relative to the entry and stay of foreigners in Morocco, to irregular emigrations and immigrations", law that, among others, punishes with a fine of 3000 to 10000 dirhams and an incarceration of one to six months, or one of these two penalties, (...) every person who leaves the Moroccan territory in an illegal way" (Art. 50).

courses and of the trip itself, of the expenses for the acquisition of documents[40]) and at a moral level through the encouragement to leave. The accomplishment of a migration project is a collective action embedded in the individual, and those who do not leave or who do not do it immediately, are equally placed into mobility, and they find themselves into this third universe created between here and elsewhere. This is for example the case of 'Abd-el-Karim, the young owner of the shop "Porta Portese", located in the medina: he started his business when his family left Khouribga to go to Rome and decided that his destiny was not to follow them. In exchange, a shop was created for him to sell clothes and other stuff coming from Italy, and this fact repositioned 'Abd-el-Karim in the local social context, situating him in an intersection of "cultures" that the both material and imagined trip draws.

The blame for migration

These complex dynamics regarding migration projects interact with the discourses and actions undertaken by multiple development agencies (local and international, often cooperating among them). Migration is described by NGOs, like in most of the literature on this subject, like a scourge which determines victims[41], depopulation of villages, a loss of working force, bad living conditions in the "host" country, accidents, alcoholism, destruction of collective and personal identities (especially in second generations), impossibility of integration etc. That is why agencies try to prevent migration or to guide it in "useful" directions. The secretary of the "Association d'immigration et de développement" of Khouribga confirmed that "migration" is always synonym of "suffering", hidden behind the ostentation of wellness. Paradoxically successful migration - which exists - and the related transfers of money[42] are the active protagonists of programs set up to promote reinvestment of capital accumulated abroad into local activities, in an attempt to give an impulse to the economic development of Morocco[43]. This development, once accomplished,

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40 David McMurray writes that in order to collect the required documentation for a passport and a three month visa, three things are essential: a family support, to be related to someone in Europe and to know someone amongst the authorities (McMurray, D. 2000: 48). About this last factor, it seems that the first emigration of Morocco (which concerned the Beni Meskine group), was determinate by the support of Ben Bassri, the powerful minister of internal affairs, who belongs to Beni Meskine himself.

41 It is interesting to say that, as reported by Mohammed Khachani (2003), the Spanish and Portuguese migrants were described in the past as victims of "smugglers", who exploited their desire of leaving their original country in search of wellness and who let them die crossing the Pyrenees. Furthermore, the author quoted an article of the newspaper Al Alam dated June 24, 1951 reporting of a "patera" - makeshift boat - drowned in the Mediterranean sea off Salé, near Rabat, boat that was carrying Spanish people trying to enter illegally the country. The studies of Khachani estimate that 85% of "illegal" migrants travelling towards Spain enter the country through its ports and airports, while only the 15% do it by crossing the straits.

42 The Italian region of Tuscany, for instance, supported a project coordinated by NGO COSPE in collaboration with Microfinanza Srl, for the creation of a simplified sending system to transfer money to Morocco and for the allocation of microcredit at local level.

43 As an example, please refer to the program of the Italian organization NEXTIA, dealing with the "productive returns" of seasonal migrants from the Italian Emilia Romagna region, carried out from 2004 and financed by the Emilia Romagna Region; or to the program of COOPI and PUNTOSUD "The migrant as development agent in his original community" 2003-

will avoid migration: a vicious circle is created, whereby the resources out of migration are themselves the instruments to prevent it.

These programs are part of a broader conceptualization of "intelligent migration", whereby the final goal seems to be to discourage the aspirant migrants, and to produce a mobility which does not entail a departure from the country. The journey should be, in the opinion of these agencies, one that is made possible thanks to the new opportunities offered in the local area. We can for example refer to a cartoon that was made after consultation and collaboration among different local associations that operate under the umbrella of the Moroccan NGO Tanmia, in the context of a project called "Support to initiatives to prevent illegal migration of unaccompanied minors", a program of the civil society (PASC) promoted by the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) in partnership with Italian Cooperation and the Italian NGO CISS. This cartoon is part of a "pedagogical kit" which contains two cartoon stories (translated into four languages: Moroccan Arabic, French, Amazigh and Italian) and two comics, which are used in social programs to prevent youngsters to migrate. The cartoon called "I am entitled to my country", shows how a young man is persisting in not yielding to idealistic and illusory calls from abroad, and how he finally obtains the help of local services, which ensure him an economical and social success in Morocco itself[44].

Migration from Morocco might be conceived as possible by the NGOs of which I have analysed the material, but only for a short time and in a controlled way, with the purpose of benefitting the departure context. This view shows how the act of positioning migrants in host countries at "the border between being and non-being"[45], starts in Morocco, where aspirant migrants are allowed to get closer to Italy using its images, objects, its language etc., and being recipients of NGOs' actions, but where at the same time they are prevented from leaving to this country, except in exceptional cases and under strict conditions. Italy becomes something that can be taught and learned, as Hamoud told me referring to the program called "Migration Resource"[46] that he was attending. The aim of this program was to train future migrants, to give them qualifications, so that they could integrate in a positive way in the country of destination, and then return to Morocco and contribute to the development of the country. The program consisted of seminaries concerning Italian laws as well as the country's "culture", and it included a language course. At the end of this training, the aspirant migrants involved could eventually be "sent" to Italy for a six-month stage, before coming back to Morocco. These projects and others[47], put into place

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2005, financed by the European Union and the Emilia Romagna Region; or even the MIREM project, "Migration and return to Maghreb" financed by European Union and carried out by the European Academic Institute from 2005.

44   Confrontez http://podcast.tanmia.ma/article464,464].

45   Charaf, M. 2003: 7.

46   He refers to the project "Migrations and Return - Resources for development", concluded in 2009 and carried out by the International Organization for Migration, together with the Hassan II Foundation, the Center of Studies and Demographic researches of Rabat and the Italian NGO CERFE.

47   Please refer as a case in point to the two following projects, carried out by Italian NGOs: "Support to the promotion of

for the "development" of the local community, were thought to deter migration and to keep home youngster who wish to leave the country. These programs address learning as an instrument to avoid migration, the goal of this teaching is to prevent the spontaneous movement, and the paradox is that often NGOs offer these programs to people, like Hamoud, who were not necessarily interested in migration before they got in contact with them. Nevertheless in the actions of the youngsters it is exactly this training – through these programs and in an individual and familial context - which allows them to be mobile, like we have pointed out before.

The imagination about Italy is fed by these NGOs, which try to prevent departures outside a precisely established journey. However this does not implicate that a mobility is not performed by these youngsters, because, like we have analysed, they travel in the progressive definition and realisation of their migration project, which can be called a "concrete imagination", that engages practices and objects. Consequently, in spite of the physical crossing of borders, on which this paper does not focuse, a mobility is exerted as described here, determining the need of a deep reflection on what migration means nowadays.

Challenges of Interaction between Host and Guest through Artistic Mobility

Isin Onol

"The history of human migration was shaped by what we call 'natural frontiers' (rivers, oceans, mountain ranges). These frontiers haunted the imagination as humanity colonized the continents. The first frontier was the horizon. Originating in voyages of discovery, a mysterious Orient, a boundless overseas or a far west, there has always been a frontier to occupy the western imagination".[48]

Today, parallel to the circulation of funds within the international market, and information through networks of communication, art objects are also very much in global circulation. While various forms of enforced and voluntary migration and travel, motivated by business, research or tourism expands mobilization around the globe, motives of artistic and cultural meetings promote another form of mobility. As the number of international art and culture events rapidly increases, actors in these fields are required to be constantly mobile. This fact obviously creates significant opportunities for encounters and exchanging knowledge among like-minded individuals in large groups, as well as on a personal basis, which is crucial to taking steps towards constructing transnational platforms for examining global issues collectively. However there are certain challenges and perhaps responsibilities concerning interconnection between the visiting and hosting art actors, in terms of their superficial, but currently unavoidable status as national representatives.

To focus on issues pertaining to the Mediterranean region is to analyse the power struggles of the globe on a condensed scale. Being the meeting point of Europe, Asia and Africa, the Mediterranean region contains the dichotomies of the West and the Middle East; South and North, colonised and coloniser, black and white, Christianity and Islam, Judaism and Islam, Christianity and Judaism, as well as a few recently-solved and several lasting conflicts involving the former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel, and issues pertaining to Cyprus, Turkey and Greece. Despite these ongoing concerns, the word "Mediterranean" has been rather romantically identified with tourism, natural beauty and cuisine. However, struggles pertaining to democracy, national identity, racism, ethnic nationalism, several kinds of terrorism, sexism, gender, immigration, poverty, corruption and degeneration increasingly persist in each Mediterranean country; not detached from the rest of the globe, but rather as a small microcosm of the overall picture. Although there have been seemingly well-intentioned efforts to create dialogue between these nations, state-based attempts are not convincing to their respective communities due of the lack of democracy. With respect to our contemporary societies, the notion of democracy is apparently seen as

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48   Augé, Marc, 1995, Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity, London: Verso, p. XIV.

ubiquitously problematic, and the practice of representative democracy is simply reduced to oligarchy. Consequently, the citizens of nations are not, in fact, able to be fully involved with the legislative, executive and judiciary processes of their legal systems, not to mention the actions of their shadow states. For this reason, visualizing the Mediterranean region as a condensed version of the global power struggle is crucial for art actors, who are subsequently able to examine the possibilities of going beyond governmental and official versions of history and comprehend concepts on a transnational platform.

For mobile actors of art and culture to be able to function sincerely in locations they visit, political awareness and an historical understanding of the local issues in relation to global affairs is crucial. Considering the international cultural events that are organised out of the usual hubs, one recognises the neo-orientalist appetite of the visiting researcher for exotic, but not too local art to be found at these outer places. Organisers do visit the working spaces of many artists besides mainstream art events; however, their expectations of individual artistic approaches seem to be based primarily on global artistic values, disregarding local art practices that do not correspond to global trends. Contradictorily, artistic concerns should be as local as possible to be meaningful and gain global acceptance. In order to be selected by visiting organisers and consequently gain international recognition, artists try hard to fulfil these expectations by distancing themselves from local aesthetic values while boldly stressing the expected local concerns, in a form of "self-orientalisation", a term used by Edward Said.

Said presented his critical view of Western perception and representation of non-western cultures in 1978 with his well-known book Orientalism and subsequent articles. Said perceived orientalism as a constellation of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes towards the East.[49] With the book Orientalism, the already existing term "orientalism" gained further meaning. While it previously indicated Western study of the East, through Said's critical approach, it came to be understood as an ideological concern about Western hegemony over, and vision of, the Orient. Although Western perception and misperception of the East throughout Oriental studies seemed to be his main focus, it was only a venue for Said to describe the concept of "otherness" and prejudice formed about the "other". He showed how misleading information can become "real" itself and how further misinformation and misperception can be built upon it and perpetuated throughout history.

Said often argued that political self-justification, in the discursive construction of the Orient, was too strong even to convince the other, where "the modern Orient participates in its own Orientalising."[50] The self-orientalisation of the Orient became one of the most significant issues addressed by post-colonial theory which does not only concern the

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49   Said, Edward W. 2003, Orientalism, London: Penguin Books, (Reprinted with a new preface), pp. 329-354 .

50   Ibid, p. 325.

Middle East but considers the issue in a larger context. This issue is related to the social, political, economic and cultural domination of the colonized, who perceives itself as the other through the perspective of the colonizing power.

Said's contribution is significant today as he goes further and analyses current American involvement within the Middle East. He reviews the myth of Arabic and Islamic culture as "other", created by the United States in the twentieth century, and compares it to the colonial approach of Franco-British involvement in Egypt, Africa, India and other regions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In subsequent years he focused more and more on the foreign policies of the United States toward the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Expanding Said's argument, in Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order[51] Timothy Mitchell reviews the history of exhibitions in the nineteenth century and describes the normalisation of colonialism. He argues that "the global hegemony of the West, economically and politically, can be connected not just to the imaginary of Orientalism but to all the new machinery for rendering up and laying out the meaning of the world"[52] through the exhibitionary order and knowledge production. In this article Mitchell widely interprets the birth of museums and international exhibitions as "the new apparatus of representation" that "gave a central place to the representation of the non-Western world" and played an important role in the "construction of otherness to the manufacture of national identity and imperial purpose".[53] He looks at colonial exhibitions to analyse the ways in which the ideology of colonialism was promoted through visual culture, then goes further and explores the issue through the accounts of non-Western visitors to nineteenth-century Europe. He examines the connection between the "world-as-exhibition" and Orientalism, "through a rereading of European travel accounts of the nineteenth century Middle East."

Mitchell analyses the writings of the members of the Egyptian delegation to the Eighth International Congress of Orientalists, which was held on the occasion of Exposition Universelle of 1889, organised for the one hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution. This exhibition covered a 0.96 square kilometre area, and was visited by 32 million people. The main symbol of the fair was the Eiffel Tower, which was completed in the same year. The main attraction of the exhibition was the "Negro Village" where 400 indigenous African people were displayed. The event aimed to show the power of French colonialism and imperialism. By looking at the accounts of Arabic scholars, where they described their experiences during their stay in Europe, Mitchell uses the opportunity to examine not only how the West represents the East, but also how the West structures itself as an exhibition.

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51 Mitchell, Timothy, «Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order,» reprinted in Preziosi (ed), The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., pp. 455-472.

52 Ibid, p. 455.

53 Ibid, pp. 455-456.

As well as the Exposition Universelle of 1889, Mitchell focuses on other examples of colonial exhibitions that use the same method of creating representations of the other that he calls "European mischief". For him, what matters is that "such a notion of real, such a system of truth, continues to convince us."[54] As Said's thesis of otherness is valid under the social, political and economic conditions of today, systems of truth are continuously being constructed by current institutions. Mitchell concludes:

"Orientalism is not just a nineteenth-century instance of some general historical problem of how one culture portrays another, not just an aspect of colonial domination, but part of a method of order and truth essential to the peculiar nature of the modern world."[55]

The beginning of Orientalist studies starts with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. From that point until the 1940's, the colonial act was something to be proud of. Many events, conferences and publications took place, exhibiting this sense of pride. As well as the Orientalist writings that were widely analysed by Said, Orientalist art of the nineteenth century played a great role in constructing an image of the other by artists who either visited the East, or only fantasised and depicted the imaginary Orient. International exhibitions went further. Rather than exhibiting images of the other, they directly exhibited the other itself, together with artefacts of their production, culture and art, as Mitchell discusses in his essay, constructing artificial cities, architecture and market spaces of human size. Following the French Industrial Exhibition in 1844 and London's Great Exhibition in 1851, the first Paris Universelle took place in 1855 according to the will of Napoleon, and returned through many other versions until the start of first Paris Biennale. The Paris Colonial Exhibition took place in 1931, selling 33 million tickets. As well as France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Portugal also staged colonial exhibitions. From 1866 to 1948 there were more than 20 colonial exhibitions, some of which not only exhibited products, culture, art and objects, but also people from the colonized countries, in the form of a human zoo. After the Paris Colonial Exhibition of 1931, an anti-colonial counter-exhibition was organised, entitled "Truth on the Colonies" by the French Communist Party.

In her essay Self Orientalize: Iran Inside Out[56] published recently in Manifesta Journal, Yulia Tikhonova gives a critical account of "Middle Eastern and geographically bound exhibitions" that show "art from 'exotic' locales marketed for Western Society". Quoting from the essay of Brian Wallis, "Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy", Yulia Tikhonova claims that the strategies of exoticising visual codes have been deployed in the practices of both artists and curators. She argues that "self-orientalisation is not about cultural empowerment, but rather economic gain."[57] Her text is a critical review of

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54   Ibid, p. 472.

55   Ibid, p. 472.

56   Tikhonova, Yulia, "Self Orientalize: Iran Inside Out", Manifesta Journal: Journal of Contemporary Curatorship, No 8, 2009/2010.

57   Ibid, p. 88.

a very recent exhibition taking place at the Chelsea Art Museum in New York,[58] which is just one example among many exhibitions claiming to represent a particular culture or a nation. Yulia Tikhonova is exceptionally critical about this very populist approach that fulfils the expectations of both market and museums by appropriating Western clichés and local references. She criticises the artists for this market-oriented production, as well as the curators who "deliver art that reflects the ways the West imagines the Orient."[59] Tikhonova describes this act with the term "ethnic marketing" and critiques the structure of "geographically-bound" exhibitions, reinforcing Western clichés, serving geographically oriented market discoveries, providing "platforms for practices of self-exoticising, and self-orientalising, in other words, using forms of self-impersonation to play the market game."[60]

For the self-orientalising approach, the problem is not simply about being absorbed by the consequences of power struggles and naively accepting oneself as the other, but going further and using the opportunity given by the market economy to supply what it demands. Any exhibition aiming to represent a country, a culture, a nation, or identity falls into the politics of orientalisation and self-orientalisation, or serves to construct the idea of otherness.

The notion of otherness is still relevant in the cultural, political, economic, intellectual and consequently artistic climate of today, and the Mediterranean region provides a clear frame to focus on this issue. This argument, although also criticised widely in terms of its failures, opened up a great field for post-colonialist, post-modernist and feminist thinkers to address in re-reading and re-writing history. The violence between nations and the foreign policies of countries has been constructed on this ideology of otherness, which is constantly expanded, cultivated, and, through the wide range of media, normalised and justified. The international exhibitions and other cultural events of today are playing a great role, either in revealing or in supporting these normalisations and justifications. As soon as an exhibition is organised in relation to national identities and cultural differences, it positions itself within these power struggle patterns. Without being fully aware of post-colonial theory and the history of international exhibitions, curators and artists, as well as such other cultural producers as the hosts or guests of international events, fall into the trap of taking part in the construction of "systems of truth" and misleading knowledge production.

The mobility created by the mainstream art market and alternative international art events provides a significant opportunity for various forms of encounters for the actors of art and culture, and therefore should be supported and expanded. However, without the efforts of creating alternative and effective platforms, these events will only serve existing

58   Iran Inside Out: Influences of Homeland and Diaspora on the Artistic Language of 56 Contemporary Iranian Artists, Curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, 26 June – 5 September, 2009.

59   Tikhonova, op. cit. p. 90.

60   Ibid, p. 91.

knowledge-production systems, functioning as a continuum of misleading historical facts. Encounters on an individual basis between the hosts and guests of such organisations are crucial for avoiding the superficiality of the idea of national representation and its reflection through art appreciation.

Build Me a Bridge: Why a disconnected literature marketaffects the way people travel

Amr El Beleidy and Pakinam Amer

A legacy lost: The scarcity of travel books

From Bard's Tales detailing journeys into the unknown to ancient manuscripts and intricate maps of the world, the legacy of travel narrative in this region is magnificent—at least it was hundreds of years ago. Then again, because of the nomadic origins of many of the tribes that roamed or settled in the area, whether in the Arabia, in countries such as Libya or Tunisia, the culture of movement and the lore associated with it was once prominent.

Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan traveller, is one of the most celebrated adventurers in medieval times, and accounts of his trips were translated into numerous tongues and still change hands today by both Arabs and foreigners. During the golden age of Islam, mobility for the seeking of knowledge was encouraged. Pilgrimage was one form of travel "for the sake of the journey"—a tradition that existed for followers of monotheistic faiths in the region. Hardships encountered, possible routes, and personal stories were documented and can still be found today in libraries. The collective pool of experience, from which those who wander could draw, was deep.

In modern terms, travel narrative was the "it" thing.

Our world is getting more prosperous, and more people are able to travel. In some parts of the world, there is a decrease in red tape, borders have opened, and mobility has improved, thus creating a movement of travel.

But sadly, and because of a combination of factors unique to our region which include levels of illiteracy, persistence of bureaucracy in some countries, lack of resources, local travel writers and literature markets, among others, we have not come far since Ibn Battuta's times in terms of exploration and journeys that conquer the small worlds within our region or elsewhere—despite a surge in the travel culture elsewhere in the world.

The paper before you does not offer by any means a scientific examination of the situation but more a personal study of a phenomenon that has affected us as travellers, mainly the scarcity of literary travel accounts which merge experiences of past travellers and explorers, in addition to the absence of a local voice in travel literature.

Ancient traditions and tales have taught us that travels require a stimulant; something that clicks inside a person precipitating the desire to travel. One of the main drivers or sources of inspiration for travellers has always been to read what others have done.

"Say you're an explorer in Egypt and you're looking to discover a place. Wouldn't you want to read about what has already been discovered so you build on that?" said Mahmoud Mohareb, an explorer and owner of a company that organises deep-desert expeditions in Egypt.

Upon observation and with the help of anecdotal evidence and interviews with some experts in the field of publishing and travel writing, we have been able to come to the rough conclusion that such stimulants in our region—mainly the Middle East and the Arab Mediterranean cultures—are not in abundance. An overview of modern available travel literature quickly shows that the industry is and has been dominated by "foreign" writers and publishers, from Orientalists to modern-day European and American travellers who publish and blog incessantly about our own countries, seen through their own lens.

Mark Linz, the director of the American University in Cairo Press, agreed. In an interview with us, he said that, in general, foreign travellers have been "criticised for having slanted 'the Orient' in the last 200 years." But they still remain the leading authority on the region.

"Most of the [travel] books are by European and foreign travellers. Very few Arab travellers travel through Arab countries and write about it. Very few come with a book to publish in travel," he said. "The best books written about the desert and camels are by a Dutch woman who lived for years in the desert among camels."

He added that Arab travellers seldom keep diaries of their trips.

"No Egyptians write about Egypt, it's a scandal," added Sara Abu Bakr, owner of the small Cairo-based publisher Saray, in another interview.

The travel cycle

Travel can be used as both a means and an end, and in both cases the travel cycle, or the dynamics of the trip, become completely different. In this paper we would like to focus more on travel as an end in itself, or travel for travel's sake. In this case, travel stops becoming about moving from point A to point B and is more about the path from A to B.

In a rather simplistic view of how this type of travel comes about, there are three phases to the process. The first phase starts with the decision to travel (the inspiration or the drive), the second phase is the actual traveling (the journey), and the third phase is the post-traveling phase (the lessons learned, discoveries, successes, failures, and the contemplation of the experience).

Depending on the motivation behind travelling, it can be seen either as a logistical exercise or as a transforming experience. Business travellers, for example, care about reaching point B from point A, the path becoming irrelevant and the focus is on getting there faster and

cheaper. This type of travel is not discussed in this paper.

We're looking into the type of travel where the act of travelling itself becomes the objective. The reason for travel ceases to be something external and lies in the act itself and the transformational powers it holds.

A simplistic model of the travel cycle that we look at here consists of three steps. In order to travel one must first decide to travel, and this decision does not come out of nowhere. There is therefore a precursor to the travel decision, the traveling itself, and then the after-travel documentation and sharing.

Many, however, skip the "documentation and sharing" phase, return home from their trips with photos, videos, and stories, and their only audience would be relatives, friends, and co-workers. It all stops there. Even among some local explorers, Mohareb had told us, it can be the same: most people travel like adventurers but document their trips like tourists.

The experiences that come out of journeys, in whichever form—digital, paper, or simply memory—could act as that needed precursor that pushes others to make the decision to travel. It thus completes the cycle and keeps the travel momentum going.

For some, this part of the cycle becomes more developed than the rest. Those are the travel writers who share the juice of their experiences in formats such as travelogues that are read by many more than their circles.

Guidebooks and travelogues

At this point we should emphasise that there are two very distinct types of travel writing. The general, more abundant format is the travel guide. A travel guide is a logistical aid that is aimed at tourists specifically and travellers at large to help them save time and money in finding the best places to sleep, eat, drink, etc. in a new country. These guides may also offer advice on transportation, key words in the local language, and a list of sites to see. They're mainly "touristic" and often commercial. Travellers who use the same guides often have near-identical experiences of the same place.

Guidebooks are a good aide when travelling, especially for beginners, and their lack might even stop some of the less adventurous from leaving their countries since many could be discouraged by risks and inconveniences related to finding proper accommodation or clean eateries in a foreign or exotic place. The chances are, however, that you have already decided to travel to a certain country before you have bought its guidebook.

This brings us to another type of writing and the focus of this paper: the travelogue. The travelogue is a personal account of the experience of the travellers. It is different in the

sense that it describes what they saw, what they heard, how they felt, and who they met—they can choose to angle their account differently than others who've visited the same place, and the accounts are mostly subjective, colourful, and highly personalised. The interpretation of events and the observations give insight not only into what the writers see but also into the writers themselves.

Writer Colin Thubron put it beautifully in an introduction to a travelogue recounting his stories in Lebanon. He said that the journey and the search he had decided to embark upon "will entail being led astray, demanding as it does, a long walk down the corridors of time and thought. The conclusions will be personal, and the quest may be satisfied, as pilgrimage are, as much in its journey as in its end."

In a nutshell, because of its nature, the travelogue not only depends on the place of travel but on the person travelling.

Reading a travelogue therefore is an exploration on two levels: the trip undertaken and the person taking the trip.

The purpose is to make the readers believe that the writer's adventure could have been theirs and that if the writer can do it so can they. This confidence and surge of excitement comes when people with abilities similar to yours go through a transformational travel experience that is transmitted to you. This means that you are less likely to be deterred from taking this step yourself.

The local and the foreigner

Going back to the idea that reading a travelogue is not only an exploration of the trip undertaken but also of the writer, one can imagine that the reader of a travelogue is interested either in the country travelled, the writer, or both.

It therefore becomes essential to enjoy both while reading in order to continue and be inspired. For this reason, the writer's trials and tribulations, pains and joys, and reflections through the journey must be relatable. The writer's voice must echo that of a friend.

In short, the writer must be someone whom the reader can easily and perhaps immediately identify with.

Psychologically, people identify with others more easily if they share aspects such as nationality, race, religion, or gender. Freya Stark, a British travel writer, was credited for encouraging women to travel alone. Herself an adventurer, she used to go on dangerous treks to such countries as Iran, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula, unaided by the company of men. Sometimes, she even went where no Western explorers had dared go—her accounts

are still fascinating and popular among women who equally dream of and fear solo travel.

When such identification takes place between the reader and writer, then whatever happens to the traveller becomes feasible in the eyes of the reader. The reader immediately sees a possibility of what the journey could become.

The classification of "local" or "foreigner" does not restrict itself to the political borders between countries, but could be applied at many different levels such as national regions, cities, or even districts within large cities if we wish.

Reading a local author's travelogue could be a very good inspiration for travel that will get people moving; however, there are two main impediments that restrict the circulation of travelogues. As mentioned earlier, the first is the general lack of local travel authors and the second is the disconnected literature markets.

The underdeveloped and disconnected literature markets

The southern and eastern sides of the Mediterranean regions share a lot in common. Languages and religion are not that far off from each other, and this holds the region together. They are still different enough, however, to create an interest and be a topic of exploration in themselves.

Robert Twigger, British traveller, author, and co-founder of the Explorers' School, told us that the lack of literature here could be due to the fact that "this kind of information [about travel] is not given freely … This region has seen a lot of upset and turmoil recently. It's not settled as [are] other areas."

In a sort of egg-or-chicken situation, the lack of Arab travel writers could be one reason why the culture of travel and exploration has not taken off in the region, while the lack of this culture could explain the lack of travel writers.

There is always an exception to the rule, however, and there are Arab travel writers out there who do document their own experiences within the region. A possible reason for not having as big a movement as would befit the region is that the markets themselves are disconnected.

Publishers we have interviewed have said that the region lacks a unified structure for distribution networks on par with those in Europe. "It's a pretty fragmented market here," said Linz. "In Europe, distribution is very unified, very clear."

Apart from some underdeveloped networks, there are book fairs every year; however, this is a relatively basic form of connection and is not giving the required results.

This means that the few books that are produced by writers from the region about the region remain in their countries of authorship and are difficult to spread to other countries. This breaks the last state in the travel cycle and stops the snowball effect from taking place.

A cross-region grassroots solution?

When we interviewed Twigger, he pointed out that the culture of reading is not as big here, as in Japan, for example, or his home country, the United Kingdom. And that it is difficult for books to spread when there aren't that many people who are reading. Mark Linz reiterated the popular saying, "Books are written in Egypt, printed in Lebanon, and read in Iraq."

A possible preliminary solution to start helping spread ideas and writing is the Internet— through blogs, travel networks, social networking sites, and online travel magazines and e-zines. Internet penetration rates have reached significant numbers within the literate populations of the region and can play a vital role in spreading the information, through documentation and providing access to those interested in hearing about the region from its own inhabitants.

This doesn't solve the problem but lowers the barrier to write about trips and travels as writers do not need to go through the ordeals and hassles of pitching to publishers who demand stellar literary quality and months-long commitment to writing and re-writing.

"Blogging is very good and it's free," said Twigger. "What's the point of publishing if not for vanity?" he added humorously.

The online format automatically rewards the good writers who will be encouraged, through feedback and increased readership, to continue, and possibly then to publish books.

It also provides an easy way for readers to gain access to the information and not depend on the underdeveloped and currently disconnected literature markets.

Rai Music

Travelling the Whole Mediterranean

Said Khateeby

Rai music has been able, in a relatively short time, to gain mass popularity and to assert a widespread presence throughout the Arab world, the Mediterranean, and the world. It has managed to overcome a number of political and social obstacles that threatened to bury it alive during the second half of the 1980s. It was transformed from a mere musical experiment, born and developed in Algeria, into a language used by young people all over the Maghreb to speak out, debate, and communicate with each other. A number of specific qualities distinguish Rai music: the topicality of its lyrics, addressing current popular concerns and engaging with people's actual worries, and its ability to fuse musical elements borrowed from various areas of the Mediterranean basin—including Morocco, Egypt, Syria, France, Spain, Lebanon, and Italy. Historically Rai is considered as the offspring produced by the union of two musical genres which appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century in the west of Algeria: badawi (Bedouin) and al-aghnania al-wahrania (Oranian song, from the city of Oran). Badawi is a genre that was famous at the beginning of the last century for its performance of malhoun colloquial dialect works by poets from the suburbs of Mustaganam, Oran, Mouaskar, Sidi Bel Abbès, and Tlemcen—poets such as the venerated Mohammed al-Sanossi, Welad al-Manawir, and Welad al-Zwawi. Badawi music is based on the performance of a colloquial dialect poem and on a light rhythm played on the reed pipe and the gallal or nay (Arabic flute). The most famous songs of this genre are distinguished by two elements: enthusiasm and virility, with a tendency to stress the emotional and the romantic. The songs draw on the traditional Arabic poetic mode of ghazal—lamenting lost love and the pain of separation but celebratory of love nonetheless—as well as stories taken from real life, often of the poet.

Many poets began performing in this genre. One name stands out among them and is still frequently talked about and preserved in the collective memory—the poet Sheikh Hamada (1886–1968), especially known for his songs "Girls of El-Bahdja" (1930), "Greetings to the Kohl of the Eye" (1931), "Patience, Oh Heart of Mine" (1933), and others. He won prestige as the first Algerian badawi singer to use the oud (Arabic lute) in his work, after a chance meeting brought him together with the well-known Egyptian singer Mohamed Abdel Wahab (1907–1991) in Berlin. They ended up improvising a duet together, which Sheikh Hamada talked about.[61] After this the oud was absent for some time from badawi music, which continued on its own path with female voices known as "eulogists," such as Sheikha al-Ramiti (1923–2006) and Sheikha al-Jania (1954–2004).

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61   Unfortunately he did not live long enough to invite Mohamed Abdel Wahab to visit Algeria and, especially, to sing in Oran and Mustaganam.

Some people believe that the oud was only introduced into badawi music via improvisation, but it was met with enthusiasm and began to be demanded. The proof of this can be found in its presence in some Oranian songs and in its incorporation, during the 1950s, in the work of the colloquial dialect poet and singer Belawi Hawari. Now 84 years old, he has the composition of over 500 songs to his name. The status of the oud became more established with the intimate duet performed by Ahmed Wahbi (1921–1993)[62] and Farid al-Atrash (1915–1974) in a concert hall in Marseille and then in Paris, where the relationship between the two men was cemented, and Ahmed Wahabi's tendency to give Oranian songs a Middle Eastern flavour began.

The Rai music project, in the form it is known today, really began to crystallise right after Algerian independence in 1962, with the arrival of a new generation known as the Rai-Pop generation. Key figures of this generation are Bilqassim Bouthalja, Boutiba al-Saghir, Younis Benfisa, and the colloquial poet Masoud Balmu, who introduced the trumpet into Rai for the first time in the early 1970s. He then did ground-breaking work introducing flamenco-influenced melodies.[63] His interest in Spanish music stayed with him and was made manifest tangibly at the end of the eighties with the emergence of the Rai Love scene. At its head was the late Cheb Hasni (1968–1994), along with Huwari Benshanat, who was nicknamed "Algerian Julio" because of his tendency to imitate the Spanish singer Julio Iglesias.

The name of the Syrian singer George Wassouf also stands out in the list of artists who were influenced by the Rai Love experiment. Cheb Hasni had already talked about Wassouf a lot, and he rearranged the melodies of some of his famous songs, such as "What People Say." Cheb Hasni said of Wassouf that he was "an Algerian born in the Mashreq."[64]

In the early eighties Rai tried to carve out a path for itself according to the specifics of its own individual experience. The leading names of the genre were adolescents such as al-Zoudj Fadila and Sahrawi, Cheb Hamid, Cheb Tahar, and, of course, the duo Khaled and Mai. Two important composers stood out for their genius during the eighties—the late Rachid Baba Ahmed and Asafi Boutela. Cheb Khaled, who was born in Oran's Lekmeen neighbourhood and is now 50 years old, is known for having begun the Rai music experiment. But the most important and enduring influence was the trend for working with Moroccan songs—as represented especially by the group Nass al-Ghiwane,[65] whose songs have continued to be listened to and sung, a little, even until now. Two other bands were also influential: Jeel al-Jalala and Limushahib. It is worth pointing out that the

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62   One of the stars of Oranian singing, whose song "Wahran Wahran" ("Oran Oran") was one of Cheb Khaled's huge hits, which he performed throughout the nineteen nineties.

63   Due to the geographical proximity of western Algeria to Spain, in addition to the historical relationship between them dating back to the time of the Andalus Caliphate, it has become normal to find mutual cultural influence and communication between the two countries.

64   The Mashreq is the area often called the Middle East in English (as opposed to the Maghreb, which is North Africa).

65   Formed in the early seventies in the Moroccan city of Casablanca.

Moroccan groups mentioned above had a clear influence on the work of many Rai singers, such as Cheb Bilal, who became the star of the new generation of Algerian youth. He didn't hesitate to replace the lyrics of famous songs with lyrics based on famous Moroccan work, as was the case with the young star al-Zahawania.

From the middle of the 1980s and the early-1990s Rai music entered the most important section of its trajectory, directly linked with Algerian politics slipping out of control and the country entering the dark valley of civil war. There was increasing pressure from Islamist groups[66] and a constant stream of fatwas calling for the elimination of Rai singers. This led to one of the extremist groups assassinating Cheb Hasni, Cheb Aziz, and the producer Rachid Baba Ahmed.

A state of chaos reigned in the country and drove other Rai singers into exile, most prominent of whom was Cheb Khaled who, like other fellow Rai musicians, found refuge, security, and the road to commercial success, in France. He benefitted from the experience of the French musician Jean-Jacques Goldman, who composed one of his most famous songs, Aicha (1992), which contains the lines, "I desire you, Aisha, I'm dying for you… this is the story of my life and my love… you are my life and my desire… I only want to live with you." Parallel to Khaled's experience was Hajj Ibrahim, who also set out on his artistic path in the early nineties and whose work was distributed on all shores of the Mediterranean, beginning in Marseille and reaching as far as Beirut. He became especially known, and gained a significant public following, after his album From South to North came out in 2003. The album included a duet between the Italian rock singer Zucchero and the Moroccan singer Samira Said called "Day After Day," which had a very popular video. At the beginning of the millennium a trend was established for Rai to go back to embracing the wider Arab world, as we can observe in the numerous duets that began to be recorded between Algerian and Mashreq artists: Cheb Khaled with Amr Diab, Cheb Mami with Kathim al-Sahir, and then Cheb Mami with Aliza, Cheb Fadil with Amal Hijazi, Hamid Barouzi with Mohamed Mounir, and finally, Cheb Khaled with Diana Haddad.

The duet form put down firm roots and generated media interest in the Arab world and a new sensitivity and positive reaction from within Rai circles. Many Rai singers began to mix their lyrics with melodies and arrangements by Mashreq singers, especially those from Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. This orientation can be seen in the work of Cheb Radwan, Cheb Abbass, and Cheb Kadir al-Jabouni. It is true that Rai began in Algeria, spreading from Oran in the highlands to the Mediterranean coast; but it distinguished itself, developed, and crossed the threshold into superstardom thanks to borrowing from and cross-pollinating with the music of the neighbouring countries, as well as looking out across the Mediterranean basin. Rai travelled across the Mediterranean; it leapt around

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66   As represented especially by F.I.S, which stole the election in 1991 before halting the electoral process and declaring a state of civil revolt.

all over it; and it soaked up and synthesised some authentic Mediterranean musical components. It gathered up and brought back into currency various musical ghosts that each express an aspect of the collective memory connecting the individual peoples of the Mediterranean. Rai also tried, over the following years, to preserve its own rich and distinctive features, and to defend its status, despite what appeared to be the beginning of its decline. Transformational developments posed a threat to Rai's position, especially the emergence of new genres which began to find mass appeal in the Mediterranean basin—chief among them R'n'B.

Contemporary Nomads

Independent Art and Culture Workers in the Eastern Mediterranean

Charlotte Bank

Introduction

Exploring mobility around the Mediterranean points to a tradition that dates back many centuries and at the same time addresses very contemporary concerns. The Mediterranean region was historically a region of exchange and co-existence; the division into a privileged zone along the northern coastline (EU countries) and an underprivileged, problematized zone on the southern and eastern coastline is a considerably new phenomenon.

What is new is not the presence of conflict between several regions (conflicts do not necessarily present a hindrance to exchange), but the hierarchy in power relations. The Mediterranean was rarely a peaceful region; it was a region whose wealth often gave rise to jealousies and violence. But even so, exchange of ideas as well as material culture was flowing freely in this region since an antiquity much older than the Greek and Roman high cultures. Mobility, in other words, has a very long tradition in the region. In this context, the attempt to shut out parts that are deemed undesirable (the so-called "Fortress Europe") seems to run counter to the nature of the region. The Mediterranean was not an insurmountable obstacle in history but rather a link between peoples, languages, and ideas, something that is summed up in the Latin name mare nostrum (if we disregard its Roman imperialist connotations). In this way, exploring mobility in the region is very much a "search for the roots" and a necessary step towards ensuring exchange between the peoples of all shores of the Mediterranean.

In the present paper I will be exploring cultural mobility in the eastern Mediterranean, using the specific case of independent, non-institutional art and culture professionals. I will draw upon my own experiences in this field and on those of some of my colleagues whose work I respect and who have shared some of their ideas with me. I will sketch out the specific problems related to this particular work situation and discuss how a free flow of culture and art in the region can be ensured in the twenty-first century. Thereby I will highlight some of the existing hindrances to this free flow. I do not distinguish between nationalities of the curators/art workers, as this is not relevant to the questions I will discuss. The problems faced by this professional group are, in essence, the same whether the curator/art worker is European or Arab.[67]

To conclude, I will present some discussion points for future art and culture programming

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[67]   A discussion of visa restrictions, which are severe for Arab professionals, does not form part of this paper.

that could strengthen non-institutional projects and thereby offer a greater variety in the representation of art and culture from the region. I am not presenting a final, academic analysis, but rather an experiential report. It is my hope that this can serve as a starting point for a creative and critical re-thinking of how art and culture work is defined and conceptualised, how power relations in the arts field can be re-shuffled, and how obstacles to independent work can be further reduced.

Independent art professionals in the institutionalised art world

The title of this paper, "Contemporary Nomads: Independent Art and Culture Workers in the Eastern Mediterranean," was chosen for a number of reasons: Nomads with their non-settled lifestyle have, throughout history, often been in conflict with the settled population. Admired, even envied for their freedom, resented because of their unpredictability, feared due to their otherness, they have also been the subject of romanticised narratives of adventure.

To a certain extent, some of this applies to the professional group that stands at the centre of this paper. Independent curators and art professionals have a freedom and flexibility that professionals affiliated with a specific institution do not have. This is one advantage of their position and also one of the main reasons to choose this professional itinerary. They are often supposed to have a particularly adventurous, mobile existence that is more exciting than a settled job in an institution. In 2002, Paul Schimmel, chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, described the role of the independent curator as "a kind of journeyman curator or wandering global nomad" who does not have the shell of a museum for protection.[68] And with the role as "crowned kings of the art world" still attributed to curators in post-crisis 2009,[69] one would think that being an independent curator is the key to "fame, wealth, and happiness."

The reality is slightly different for most of the people concerned, however. In the slimmed "post-crisis" world economy, the willingness of institutions to bring in freelancers is decreasing considerably. While the importance of fresh ideas from outside and the expertise characteristic of independent curators is still recognised by people such as Hans Ulrich Obrist, director of the Serpentine Gallery in London (and a former independent curator), and Emma Lavigne of the Centre Pompidou in Paris,[70] others are beginning to downplay just those qualities. Jens Hoffmann, director of the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, recently dated the revolutionary quality of freelance curating back to the 1990s and asserted: "All those ideas are now completely part of the mainstream system, so that you don't actually need

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68   http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/24/arts/behind-the-scenes-independent-curators-have-art-will-travel.html,   accessed December 20, 2010.

69   http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/curators-crowned-kings-of-the-art-world-1802817.html, accessed December 20, 2010.

70   http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/16/arts/16iht-rartfreelance.html?pagewanted=1&_r=2, accessed December 20, 2010.

freelance curators anymore in order to make radical statements."[71]

How do these attitudes translate to the case of independent curators and art workers working in the Arab world? Unfortunately, the special expertise possessed by these professionals has only rarely been highlighted. Since the international art world "discovered" Arab and Middle Eastern art around the year 2000, almost all major art institutions in Europe have hosted at least one large show of contemporary art from the region. This new interest was paralleled by a growing interest in non-European artists from other regions and opened up opportunities for a new generation of Arab artists to receive a degree of international exposure unknown to earlier generations.

The representation of these artists was in many cases questionable, however, and most institutions did not invite independent professionals from outside who might have had more in-depth specialist knowledge but preferred to send their own curators. These typically had too little time to conduct thorough research and so only managed to "scratch the surface" of the art scenes in the countries of their focus. However, in-depth research preceding the actual exhibition planning could have been highly beneficial to the final outcome, if not essential, given the strongly Eurocentric character of most European art institutions and of art historical curricula at European educational institutions, from where these institutions draw their curators and staff.

As a result of this approach, a pattern emerged of "city-hopping" between Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, and possibly Ramallah with only a few days spent in each place and a practice of institution-based selection of artists. Typically, Western curators rely on local, internationally well-connected institutions to introduce them to artists that these institutions deem relevant for the respective projects. This means that artists and projects who are not affiliated with these institutions rarely have the chance to be "located" by the foreign curators, as have artists living in cities other than the art capitals. This is highly unfortunate, since some of the most innovative projects tend to be found in small, non-profit off-spaces and not in the larger institutions.

Engaging independent art professionals who have relevant knowledge of the artistic landscape of the region, based on thorough research throughout a longer period of time and extended periods of residence, could have offered a valuable alternative and could have presented a more truthful image of the multifaceted complexities of the art scene(s) of the region. And this would have resulted in more diverse exhibition projects than what was often the case. What we have seen were modes of representation that often tended to reinforce stereotypes of the Arab world/Middle East, rather than counter them.

Although we are witnessing an increase in more diverse projects, this "institution related"

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71   http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/16/arts/16iht-rartfreelance.html?pagewanted=1&_r=2, accessed December 20, 2010.

practice, where a curator from a Western institution visits institutions in a host country, selects artists, and works from their portfolios, remains the norm. Several reasons add to this state of affairs: Funding institutions have long been favouring larger, established institutions over smaller, independent spaces and individual researchers/curators. Indeed, for independent art professionals, access to funding remains very limited since many funding programmes are designed for institutions. Adding to this are often rigid rules, e.g., stressing the nationality of the researcher/culture worker rather than his/her place(s) of work and experience/expertise.

Conclusion: Models for the future

As outlined above, important obstacles for a free flow of artistic ideas remain in the Mediterranean region, notwithstanding a certain improvement in recent years. As a rule, artistic and cultural collaboration between the countries of the region still depends heavily on institutional involvement. The entire field could benefit substantially from a greater openness towards projects involving independent freelance art professionals and non-profit, alternative art spaces. Some of this could be achieved through a re-thinking of funding procedures that would involve the following principles:

- To facilitate and encourage collaboration between established institutions and independent art professionals.

- To facilitate and encourage collaboration between smaller non-profit art spaces and independent art professionals. Often this is complicated due to lack of financial means on both sides, condemning interesting and innovative projects to remain unrealised.

- To facilitate inter-regional exchange projects in the eastern Mediterranean.

- To introduce project-related selection procedures rather than rigid rules on curators'/art workers' and researchers' nationalities, meaning that each project should be individually reviewed independently of the involved persons' nationalities. At present hybrid life and work situations still complicate access to funding and can occasionally even make it impossible.[72]

Art and culture have always prospered through creative exchange, and the Mediterranean region has a long tradition of mobility, inter-connectivity, and shared culture. To revive this tradition, to offer visibility for multiple voices and views in order to ensure its existence in the twenty-first century is a challenge and an opportunity not to be missed.

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72   A typical situation would be: a professional originally from country A, based in country B, working in countries B, C, D, etc.

Mobile, Therefore Free?

Mobility Paradoxes of Nowadays Societies

Cristina Farinha

Mobility is an opportunity to cross borders of various sorts: geographical but also social, political, and cultural. It is a means to meet, interact, discuss, reflect, learn, share, and work in between these boundaries. It is therefore a powerful tool for inspiration and emancipation, incorporating several hopes and dreams, notably that of a global citizenship. For all of us, and particularly for artists and cultural professionals, it constitutes a potential that many are eager to explore.

Mobility, however, is a very transversal and controversial issue as it contains many fears and paradoxes, too. Several obstacles, old and new, material and mental, hinder access and circulation of persons across the globe. For those holding the right resources and status, mobility can be an ordinary, acquired, and laidback routine, for others, though, it represents an extraordinary, risky, and burdensome enterprise.

In contemporary societies, as mobility has become essential to access not only goods and services but also social relations, education, and work opportunities, it needs to be rephrased in terms of equity and social justice. Mobility is a great resource but it also requires specific capitals—financial, social, educational, and cultural—and imposes challenges and barriers.

Migrations become circular and communities transnational

Nowadays human movements are gradually changing. New faces take the lead, directions get diversified, migrations become circular and temporary, and purposes overcome traditional economic and political motivations. Within these new trends, we find:

- women alongside men, young students, and retired elderly, highly qualified and manual workers, all taking their chances alone or with their families in new lands

- movements towards less common destinations; even though mobility remains unbalanced, as many more still head west and/or north

- flows in search of sun, new sceneries, freedoms, relationships, and/or inspirations, along with others who move to study and receive specific training in order to simply get a job

- a growing number of people circulating and living between several homes for short-term periods and/or at irregular intervals, side by side with all those who

leave their countries to settle in another land on a permanent basis

- individuals making use of information and communication technologies (ICT), hopping from one community to another, staying in touch and connected to their homeland and living within multiple, transnational, and digital groups and identities.

Mobility trends going in opposite directions

Growing economic globalisation, developments in transports and communications, and the internationalisation of some political institutions have diminished distances and allowed for immediacy in the circulation of capitals, goods, persons, and ideas, as well as made social life more interdependent across borders.

The development of the European Union (EU) is a unique process, especially where mobility is concerned. The EU promotes its citizens' and workers' internal mobility in view of the creation of the common market and further advancement of its integration course. The free circulation is precisely one of the basic pillars of the EU project as set in the Treaty of Rome (1957). Intra-European migrations, however, have stayed rather insignificant since its foundation—though figures have started to rise slowly in the present decade—given that for most of those entitled to free movement, the nation-state remains the predominant way of organising their social and political lives. Paradoxically, on the other side of the EU borders, and despite increasingly heavier restrictions on immigration, a growing number are willing to move in.

As a matter of fact, the European population is ageing, and authorities are assuming the need to welcome immigrants to fill in the demographic gap and supply job markets with adequate labour force. Still, in the various countries regulations are getting tighter and public opinions more and more concerned and divided, instead of reflecting and taking seriously this urge.

In addition, at the same time that cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are celebrated officially and cultural cooperation slowly gets into the diplomatic agendas, the fear of the stranger and the other grows within the very heart of European societies, and nationalistic movements are on the rise.

Yet other paradoxes related to further dimensions of mobility are being nurtured in European societies and worldwide. Actually side by side with legal, political, and economic frameworks that contribute to facilitating mobility and aim at its promotion, there are also parallel trends that push in opposite ways. The growth of the risk society, increasingly preoccupied with safety, is hardening travel security measures and making it more complex and lengthy to move. Growing environmental concerns are questioning current

ways and means of travelling and trying to impose restrictions on carbon emissions while creating alternatives that will necessarily slow down the pace. Climate change and other unexpected natural incidents are putting into question our acquired schedules and making us remember that we cannot control all factors. In the same way, social movements and contestations, such as strikes, are also showing how mutually interdependent and connected all these mobility systems are.

The case of artistic mobility: Between choice and need

Within this intricate and paradoxical thread, artists and cultural operators may have a very specific story to tell. They are seen as examples of mobile professionals and carriers of an intercultural dialogue message, yet in reality they face the same obstacles as any other worker/citizen on top of their already fragile social condition.

Artists were pioneers of mobility long before labour markets became global and ICT turned into a commodity. Artistic professions are subject to very little regulation by national and/or organisational frameworks and are thus more flexible and adaptable to various work contexts and partners. In addition, artists are quantitatively few and generally highly qualified so not usually considered a problem or a threat to their host societies.

Yet in the arts, too, increasing mobility expectations and the channelling of funds towards mobility and international collaborations are changing artistic practices and professional profiles, and questioning the role of art and artists in contemporary societies.

Artists' proclaimed dynamism and mobility are ideal for developing experimental productions and allowing creativity to increase. Yet on the other side it constitutes a risk for artists as workers and for the sake of diversity and freedom of expression and creation. Flexibility implies several costs as it is up to each artist to assume the responsibility of being permanently on the scene. If nationally, in most countries, artistic professions do not benefit from a specific social status when moving on to the international stage, their social and working conditions become even more complex and fragile.

For all those professionals who live in regions where economic and political conditions are not favourable to artistic creation, however, mobility seems the only way out. As for those from the Mediterranean basin, the lack of social status, inappropriate working infrastructures, (possible) absence of freedom of expression, and an incipient international scene push artists away. They leave in search of better conditions and adequate means for career development. Above all, as free movement remains an EU citizen's privilege, the need for visas and work permits considerably hinders circulation, and mobility frequently means a one-way ticket. Financial and legal obstacles make travelling and international cooperation expensive and burdensome. The vulnerability of these professionals and their already fragile and atomised condition becomes amplified, thus very few can make it successfully.

I argue, therefore, that mobility should be addressed in terms of accessibility. Mobility—or the ability to work internationally—is a potential composed by aspirations and competences, and both are conditioned by individual backgrounds and qualifications as well as institutional and sectorial circumstances. Mobility is a strong learning and working tool, yet it also demands previous financial and educational resources, notably strategic, managerial, and communication skills. In this scenario, mobility comes out as a resource accessible to those already resourceful and in possession of the adequate capital.

Capacity to access and manage information and the ability to speak foreign languages, to cite two examples, are crucial competences that have a determinant impact not only on the decision to move but also on the actual success and benefit taken from mobility experiences. In the absence of these capacities, most people are not even able to aspire to and nurture dreams of an international career. Others, in their quest for a better life and a better art, try out their chances despite fears and obstacles and end up learning by doing at their own costs and risks.

Building up an international community

Civil society, personified in the sector organisations, can and are already playing a fundamental role in supporting the mobility of artists and culture professionals. Digital means and the international agenda are gradually allowing the field to organise socially and politically. Individual professionals recognise their lack of scale to cope with the vast dimension and extreme competitiveness of the international market. In this mission, formal and informal international cultural networks have been key through aggregating and giving some unity to a sector that is traditionally scattered and not very collectively orientated.

Networks offer informal settings for getting together and sharing experiences, and provide a stage on which to learn from each other and to inspire common enterprises. Many run mobility funds, provide information and guidance, promote research and reflection, organise training sessions, and put forward advocacy initiatives to defend the sector's right to move and its specific social needs. By channelling information and knowledge to the sector in view of its capacity building, these organisations are feeding mobility aspirations and competences of professionals.

In effect, competence gaps and lack of resources are being diminished by sharing know-how and joining efforts via economies of scale. The international market also stimulates professionals to meet and share artistic processes by engaging in joint creations, co-productions, and networking. While artists are coming together to meet, discuss, create, and perform across languages and professional profiles, geographical frontiers as well as disciplines' boundaries and cultural hierarchies are becoming blurred.

Ultimately, international mobility and the interaction with different territories and cultures are also contributing to strengthening political awareness in the arts sector. In this process, artists are recognising their belonging and need to engage with economic and political frameworks and are starting to dialogue with other sectors of society and various communities.

Notwithstanding, to maximise network sharing and keep up international contacts, relational and cross-cultural skills are required in the first place. Efficient communication competences can reduce the lack of time and trust that characterise long-distance, multilingual, and trans-disciplinary interactions. Involvement in artistic projects with a social and/or political target demands a good articulation of artistic, strategic, and social abilities as well as fine-tuning individual and collective interests. On the other hand, participating and benefiting from these international networks are also dependent on the possession of economic capital that conditions the concrete access to organisations and the capacity to pay fees and travel to events in order to maintain connections.

Again, mobility may accentuate economic and geographical inequalities as professionals from less developed or peripheral countries have additional costs to participate in these international circuits. Digital means may be of great help—for all those who can actually access and master them—and face-to-face meetings continue to mark the difference between those who can (afford to) travel and those who haven't got the adequate resources.

Towards a global citizenship

The development of a global citizenship, in which mobility would be a clear cultural right, might be uncertain at this stage in face of all the paradoxes and opposite trends taking shape.

Alongside civil society, public authorities as well as the private sector ought to provide individuals/societies with the effective material, legal, and educational means and a favourable environment to be mobile so that they may contribute to fair development and become an enjoyable choice.

Firstly, arts and culture operators would need to see stronger support for their social and financial conditions, capacity building, and joint interaction. This recognition would contribute to strengthening the sector's own sustainability, enabling diversity of exchanges and art works freer from market constraints. Structural support would give its initiatives a longer-term vision as well as allow a more stable ground for a steadier development of artistic careers. Only in this way can arts and artists fully assume their social role and be carriers of a message of cultural understanding.

Another important step would be to contribute to re-balance mobility flows that remain highly uneven. Most art professionals' linkages cross borders and relate to territories and initiatives internationally regardless of administrative and political frames. States worldwide would need to work together—within notably the framework of the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions—on facilitating the circulation of artists and art works across frontiers making the visa and work-permit procedures for these professionals more flexible, transparent, and homogeneous.

Rather than demanding a distinct status for artists, this claim could be shared with all other intellectual and creative professionals, including researchers, as nowadays these profiles and working conditions are becoming similar. In reality, the building up of a global artistic community and citizenship is dependent on an increasing dialogue across all fields of society.

Tourism, Culture, and Walking on Shifting Sands

Kamel Riyahi

The suicide plane attacks of 11 September on the World Trade Center were none other than a symbolic suicide for the freedom of travel. Travel, which had been a vehicle for freedom and life, became a criminal act and a vehicle for terror that brought only death from distant, unknown countries. The "other" on board was now only that hell described by Jean-Paul Sartre. When the symbol commits suicide, it kills itself and others. This is what the planes did when they committed suicide to kill the meaning itself. Not far off from this, Jean Baudrillard interpreted the fall of the two towers as a symbolic suicide.

Today we live a new reality created by the events of 11 September, which have not only transformed the geopolitical map but have affected the course of human culture in general. Their effect has been felt in sensitive areas, such as the freedom of movement and travel—a right that has had profound consequences in the building of dialogue between cultures and civilisations across history. But despite this, the idea of travel remains in place as an essential pillar of human existence.

 "If a man wants to change he has only to leave home, to change his position, to go west like the sun." ('Abdelfattah Kilito)

At first, there seems to be a clash or lack of harmony between the terms tourism and culture in that the first refers to an economic, material, and pragmatic activity, as well as the phenomena of travel, movement, and openness. The word's significations also bring us to the meaning of travel, the meaning of luxury, peace, tolerance, and communication; while the term culture places us on more solid ground with the concept of identity: collective and individual identities, which can form a philosophical and intellectual outlook. Identities, according to the Lebanese, Mediterranean author Amin Maalouf, are "murderous." Except that anyone who reflects on the components of identity will find that it is not absolutely determined; rather it is formed through time and experience. It is also the product of encounters and contact between civilisations and the distillation of long travel experience.

Cultural identity is formed through experiences that are lived as a land and a nation, people—individuals and communities who travel and roam the wide earth. Here we return to the first relationship, which we proposed as a relationship of paradox and hostility, as though it were either a matter of the touristic or the cultural! Let us approach it anew as a relationship of sympathy, communication, and harmony. In doing so we will have achieved, in principle, a space for peace between the two terms and disarmed them.

It seems to me that tourism is a principal aspect of the cultural act in general because tourism has a commercial dimension that is one of the major incentives for interest in cultural heritage. Trade also has its conditions, the most important of which is the quality and rarity of the product. And because tourists/travellers spend their money on specific commodities—knowledge commodities, i.e., an acquaintance with other worlds and climates and a culture different from their own, this is an incentive for governments, private companies, and businessmen to invest in the culture sector.

A country's cultural heritage stands as a treasure like gold mountains, oil wells, and gas fields. As Jacques Attali has written it in his Dictionnaire du XXIe siècle, culture will be: "the first mine for the creation of wealth and the last barrier to the equalisation of commodities." This is if it is handled well, and there is a suitable climate for investment. The most important preconditions for investment in this stock/cultural heritage are: peace, security, and tolerance.

Attali predicts that tourism will become the premier global economic sector from 2010 and that the Mediterranean will occupy first place among the tourist-attracting regions. But he does not forget that this is all dependent on the condition of peace. Tourism, therefore, is a delicate flower that grows and flourishes only in the season of peace and security, whereas it withers and perishes in the season of war where cultural heritage counts among the victims. Lebanon, Iraq, and Afghanistan are telling illustrations of the fate of cultural heritage during times of war.

Tunisia represents one of the important Mediterranean countries that some time ago took note of what is known as "cultural tourism," which has led it to expand the scope of this activity that for decades remained subject to coastal tourism during the summer. This concern with the cultural sector has led to an almost even distribution of the annual tourist influx into the country. Cultural tourism in Tunisia can be divided into two categories:

Archaeological and historical tourism—archaeological sites and museums: the Roman and Greek ruins: Carthage; the Berber: the Matmata houses; and the Islamic: Al-Zaytuna Mosque and the Uqba Mosque.

Cultural tourism has a carnival character. It is represented in the investment in cultural heritage spaces to present global, contemporary cultural phenomenon that attract a particular type of tourist, for example:

The Carthage Film Festival
Carthage Theatre Days Festival
Tabarka Jazz Festival
El-Jem International Symphonic Music Festival
International Festival of the Sahara at Douz

Coral Festival of Underwater Photography at Tabarka

Festival of Palaces and Folk Customs

Festival of Fine Arts at al-Mahras

There are other trends towards what is called desert tourism, a form of culture presented to tourists uninterested in typical beach tourism. There is also a type of tourism we can call the imitation of cultural heritage. By this we mean the tourist towns and sites that have been erected by private investors and built according to a heritage architectural model like some of the tourist complexes in Tunisia based upon the Islamic or Andalusian model—I will avoid their mention as I do not wish to advertise them. Tunisia has been able to transform everything into a tourist commodity, even to the point where Tunisian customs and traditions have been marketed as tourist spectacles through museums and festivals.

Sport too has become a source of tourism due to Tunisia's contribution to a number of international, African, and Mediterranean sports events. It might be asked what is the connection between sport and culture? The answer is that sport, like culture, only prospers in times of peace and in secure environments. We would also point to the historical relationship between sport and philosophy from the Greeks with the Olympics to Friedrich Nietzsche who famously said: "All great thoughts are conceived while walking. Man does not think great thoughts while sitting. We must put a stop to the philosophy of the weak and those who sit defeated."

The Greeks distinguished between the strong and the athletic. This has been explained by Regis Debré in his book Journal d'un petit bourgeois entre deux feux et quatre murs when he says: "The difference between the strong and the athletic is that the first can become athletic out of necessity, through natural development and the effects of manual labour. As for the second, he has become athletic freely, for the joy of the effort… and the love of the art. The strong man is the man of the fields and the athletic man is the man of the city."

This interest in the tourism sector, or the cultural tourism sector to be precise, makes it one of the most important investment sectors for manual labour in Tunisia where around 350,000 workers are employed.

Tourism, however, as we have already mentioned, remains a fragile sector that cannot be relied upon as a main muscle in the national economy because this exposes the economy to convulsions. Even when there is peace and security in the country tourism can still be affected by international events. This is exactly what happened during the first and second Gulf wars when the tourism sector in North Africa was affected by what was happening in the Middle East.

Also, tourism as a source of material gain can pose a threat to cultural heritage when

it is treated as a consumable and the necessary protection is not in place. Many sites, manuscripts, sculptures, and movable artefacts have been damaged by tourism. Therefore this sector needs guidance, especially in its cultural aspect.

I finish by pointing out that cultural heritage will become the real source of wealth and the dynamic force for tourism in the age of globalisation, whose proponents seek to standardise culture according to the American model. This leads us to demand greater protection of cultural heritage, for to preserve it is to preserve our cultural identity, our history, and a space in which to enjoy and become acquainted with the other. For there is no meaning in exchanging cloned goods, places, and experiences like the products of multinational companies, which produce global markets according to the same measures and standards.

The protection of cultural heritage should not become an excuse to create what might be called "backward human reservations" instead of developing them. Many governments in the developing world have justified this policy of neglect in these remote communities under the pretext of preserving their character.

The human person remains a travelling being in every sense of what it means to travel. This is what has taken root in the eastern imagination on the basis of religious and imaginary texts. Human beings are creative beings and, not content with travel being free of charge, they work to leave their marks on the places they pass through. They are communicative, social beings, which pushes them to form relationships with others. They are also explorers and lovers of places. Between the desire to attain perfect tranquillity and human nature, which is disposed to refusal, movement, and migration, the characteristics of human beings are formed. Travel literature stands as absolute proof of the relationship of travel with culture and knowledge, where travel does not mean a cutting off or a desertion and denial of origins. We end on the words of Kilito in his book Literature and the Strange, which we cited partially above:

"If a man wants to change he has only to leave home, to change his position, to go west like the sun. However, the absence of the sun is not its loss or non-existence: it rises on another people for whom its appearance is a source of joy, then it returns again to the people it left."

Why Don't We Roam Around the Mediterranean?

Najwan Darwish

First

The primary aim of this article is to address the question of mobility in the Arab Mediterranean countries and, specifically, travel by Mediterranean Arabs. Their mobility around the Arab Mediterranean countries is restricted by various sanctions and penalties; and their journeys towards the European shores of the Mediterranean are rationed and limited to such an extent that arriving there is as good as forbidden. Any attempt to travel to the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea is enough to remind us of the harsh, crude border, and the latent violence in the relationship with the West. As soon as we even approach a European embassy or consulate with the idea of obtaining a visa, the high-security environment of these consular departments makes us feel that we are under suspicion. Merely beginning the visa transaction, with its rude and invasive interrogations and all the evidence, documentation, and guarantees it demands—in many cases paralysing the application process completely—is enough to make the applicant feel like a criminal.

This is to say nothing of these consulates' fundamental failure to recognise the notion of mobility—a word which seems not to be in their dictionaries. Their concept of the traveller—as opposed to the migrant, whose intentions they are obliged to thwart—is someone with a clear reason for travelling. So neither travel for travel's sake, nor a voyage of discovery born of an existential wanderlust, are valid reasons for moving around. As far as the consulates are concerned, the traveller is someone with a known destination and a clear goal, such as someone trading with the country in question, studying in its universities, getting treatment in its hospitals, or being a tourist. Tourism, in the contemporary sense of the word, is the antithesis of mobility—it can be considered as a mode of consumption rooted in the capitalist paradigm, which cannot admit that anything has value without transforming it into a commodity. In contrast, mobility, by its nature as movement in time and space, resists the conditions enforced by the market and defies the one-dimensional vision of a person's movement, their being, their humanity, and even their imagination, which is presented by the authorities.

The Western visa regime to which non-Westerns are subjected provides a legal framework for the splintering of the global North from the global South at the level of the individual person. It is a manifestation of the core mentality underpinning this chasm between them and also of the relationships of superiority and subordination it engenders, whereby the Earth's inhabitants are not seen as human beings all equally entitled to travel around their planet. The policies of the European Mediterranean states are no different from those of

their counterparts in the rest of the global North, in terms of their emphasis on the border between North and South. Their assertion is that this South—whether it is actually referred to as "the South," "the East," or "the Third World"—must know its place and stay where it is.

So our mobility is subject to North-South and East-West relationships. The situation in the Mediterranean basin is, quite simply, a distillation of the historical power relations and complexes that the region's long historical trajectory has created for its peoples. Any investigation into the reality of mobility in the Arab region will automatically lead us to examine our relationship with the West: no matter how we try to avoid dealing with that topic, we always find it lurking around every corner. Hasn't the current reality in the Arab countries, including the nation-state-based identities within them, been forced on us to some extent or another by the Western colonial division of the area in the first half of the twentieth century? And haven't our countries' politics, until now, always been modelled on our relationship with the West?

Second

Among the simplest preconditions of mobility are a certain degree of freedom and a certain level of equal opportunity. There is also the need for an open-mindedness to the common human experience represented, fundamentally, by the Earth we travel around on, with its collective inheritance and its collective probabilities. So when mobility is not feasible it is an indication that these conditions are absent. We don't need to make a very great effort to identify the absence of these preconditions; what is harder is to understand it and to transcend it. The paradox is that the main obstacle to mobility can be found in the concept of the Mediterranean itself, which the Romans considered to be their sea and called Mare Nostrum, "our sea." The notion of the Mediterranean is based on more than just the long history of struggles for control over it, as Europe has constructed its current identity around its relationship with this sea and with its peoples. And as it is the place which has known the longest and more extensive history of Western dealings with Arabs and Muslims; the Mediterranean seems to be the primary location for the construction of the West's stereotypical myths and legends about "the East", for regenerating them, and for perpetuating them by re-injecting them into the tissues of contemporary Western life and politics.

It is truly depressing to look around us and realise that we have not come very far since the time of the crusades, and that we have not truly emerged from the colonial era—and that in order to be mobile we are obliged to go right back to the beginning and unravel the whole tangle. Perhaps the historical factors, combined with current Western policies towards the Arab region—especially the Western position on "Israel"—are what make Mediterranean political initiatives unacceptable to the peoples of the Arab region. This is precisely what happened in 2008 with the Union for the Mediterranean. It can be

said that there is an Arab sense of pride in their Mediterranean element, and a desire to present it as a supranational human space. But that sentiment does not imply recognising the Mediterranean as an alternative to Arab identity and the pan-Arab civilisation project. There is also a great sensitivity to any use of the notion of the Mediterranean as a way of normalizing the existence of "Israel" in the Arab region.

Third

"You say: this morning I will leave my heart asleep and dreaming that it is in Haifa that the sea is not under occupation and that the boats come and go from Tyre and Tartous and Cyprus, 'the Star of the Fertile Crescent'... and the ferrymen at sea are calling out to me in the people of Alexandria's dialect So I laugh in disbelief, and say: invitations of seafaring ferrymen, indeed..."

Fourth

The shortcomings and glitches in the concept of mobility do not end, however, at our relationship with the West—nor do the sanctions it faces. What is it that prevents us from wandering around in the Arab Mediterranean countries, and between the Maghreb and the Mashreq? And what is it that prevents the movement of cultural and artistic product between them? The obstacles in the path of the individual traveller or the group, in the Arab Mediterranean countries, also stand in the way of the cultural and artistic output of these countries. In the absence of an effective pan-Arabic or pan-Mediterranean cultural scene, the arts are condemned to an asphyxiating nation-statism. If we take the publishing scene as an example, we find it trapped, drowning daily in its locality—it is a challenge to find a newspaper which is distributed and read in half or even a quarter of the Arab countries, and things are no better in magazine publishing. The Arabic publishing scene in general—which is an indicator of the ability of ideas to travel freely—seems, with limited exceptions, to be weak and confined to single nation-states, unable to move beyond the political boundaries imposed on it. On the other hand, as part of the mechanism of substitution, the free movement of cultural and artistic product—and sometimes travel in general—is substituted for by the illusion of the Internet, which is presented as an alternative means of travelling. No matter how important the channels of the virtual world are, they cannot replace travel in the real world, nor meet the needs it generates.

The reality of the political, legal, and economic situation on the ground in the Arab region leads to an increasing cultural isolation. Attempts to distribute cultural output come up against the harsh reality of borders, censors, bureaucracy, unreliable postal systems, and, in some countries, the state's complete monopoly on the means of distribution. At issue here is not only the narrow margin of state expenditure on culture and artists, and the unwise allocation of this rare provision. Crucial, also, is the fact that cultural and artistic product gets caught

between meagre and arbitrary authoritarian state expenditure on it, and foreign funding. The latter, usually from a Western source, implies a whole set of symptoms and problems, debates about which have taken up huge amounts of time over the last two decades. This takes place in the vacuum where the domestic national companies' concept of social responsibility should be—given that they are supposed to constitute a basic support for cultural and artistic production. And obviously, in the absence of a common Arab economic policy and of appropriate regulations, the movement calling for artists' and arts' mobility will remain weak. This does not only apply to the Arab region but also to the mobility and reception of these arts in the European Mediterranean countries, where the cultural and artistic output of the Arab region, in terms of visual and performing arts and literary output, is not received as an equal. Artists' mobility here serves as a metaphor for civic activity and a dialogue that is meant to happen in the complete absence of its necessary conditions.

The question is not only how to resolve the complex of the relationship with the West, but also how to solve the whole puzzle of emancipation, in its broadest sense, and to implement a convincing formula for social justice in the countries of the Arab region. Isn't social justice one of the conditions necessary for mobility? Without it mobility itself becomes a marker of class privilege, as tourism already is. So the poor do not travel, except for gruelling migrations, or for employment in inhuman conditions—work that is in some aspects more akin to slavery. Images of desperate clandestine migrants burning their documents, and the flimsy and frequently lethal vessels used to cross the Mediterranean, are haunting.

And here we cannot fail to observe the negative popular connotations that tarnish the

culture of travel in the Arab Mediterranean—for example, the defamation of boats, and of travel in general, in Arabic songs. These negative connotations of travel may have their root in the deadly voyages in the days of the Ottoman Empire and the ships of the colonisers— from Napoleon's invasion to the colonisation of the Arab region and the occupation of Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century. All this must surely have contributed to the cultural discourse of travel being shaped in the way that is has been. Perhaps in popular songs there is fertile ground for studying the negative image of travel—songs with references as old as the First Suez Offensive (1915) and the young men who never returned from the wars of the Ottoman Empire. Travel began to be seen as abandoning the homeland. Hence the Palestinian folk song "Zerif al-Toul" that assures the traveler 'Your country's the best place for you...'

Fifth

How can we liberate mobility? There's no tried and tested method that can be prescribed. But surely resisting the sanctions placed on mobility is a basic task that serves the well-being of societies that are pushed, by various forces, towards suicide and forsaking their formative values. Perhaps the first step towards liberating mobility is to understand what restricts it and to launch a range of types of initiatives, on all levels, in its interests. It is possible for arts to play a central role in liberating mobility, as artistic discourses have the ability to refashion culture. Their influence in the collective consciousness of the region means that they can contribute to establishing a new concept of mobility, with new connotations.

From another angle, pressure groups must be formed with the aim of changing the laws that restrict mobility. This could implicate national laws in individual countries (the visa laws, censorship, customs, and even economic regulations) or regional laws concerned with people's movement (visa laws). So, by way of example, pressure needs to be put on the European Union so that its laws respect the mobility rights of non-Western people. This legal and intellectual effort would certainly contribute to fertilising travel culture with notions of free movement and moving away from the current limitations on it. It is constrained by the dogma of direct destinations and clear aims, or the ailing concepts of "tourism," which have begun to classify the world, dumb down its inhabitants, and ruin their relationships with each other. Instead, it needs to move towards mobility being an epistemological act that broadens the horizons of societies and enhances their humanity.

Despite the nightmarish reality of mobility around the Mediterranean, let us contemplate these words so charged with the power and the hope of the voyage, written by one of the poets of this sea, Constantine P. Cavafy, in Alexandria, and published exactly 100 years ago:

> Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
> Without her you would not have set out.
> She has nothing left to give you now.
> And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
> Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
> you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.[73]

Sixth

And why don't we roam around the Mediterranean?

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73 Translated by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard. (C.P. Cavafy, Collected Poems, translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, edited by George Savidis, revised edition, Princeton University Press, 1992.)

Travel Literature and Travel Journals
A Bridge between East and West and;
between the Arabs and the World

Nouri Al Jarrah

First

In a short text, the Greek traveller and historian Herodotus (b. 484 BC) relates a wonderful anecdote in which he describes a novel form of contact between the Venetian traders who came from the Mediterranean and the Berber inhabitants of the Atlas Mountains. The story goes that the Venetians would load their boats with goods and anchor them close to shore, before returning to their ships and withdrawing to the middle of the sea where they would drop anchor and wait. The inhabitants of the nearby mountains would come down and inspect the merchandise. If they liked what they saw they would leave payment in exchange and return to their positions in the mountains. In turn, the traders would come back to the boats. If they were satisfied with the payment they would leave the goods and depart, if not, they would withdraw again and wait for the locals to increase it. This would continue until the traders were satisfied with their payment, which was usually in the form of gold, goods, or local produce. If this unique form of commercial contact tells us anything, it is that the contact between the people of the Mediterranean and the Atlas Mountains was based on trust, prosperity, and the existence of innovative customs. Perhaps this goes back even further than is accounted for by the written record.

From the details of the travels of the fifth-century BC Carthaginian king, Hanno, across the length of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, we know that he founded a number of cities at the height of Carthaginian civilisation and the expansion of its trade and colonies in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Hanno built around seven trade colonies, one of which was on the Sebou River in the city of Thymiaterion, known today as the Moroccan city of Kenitra, another at Thamusida, and a third at the Pillars of Hercules, near Tangier. Hanno's influence reached deep into the Iberian Peninsula, which would be known a thousand years later as Andalusia.

On the other hand, "The Journey of Namun," an important functionary (priest) of ancient Egypt, to the Syrian coast tells us something important about Egypt's relations with the eastern shore of the Mediterranean basin, where the Canaanite and Phoenician states were founded. Egypt had deeply rooted customs in its commercial and diplomatic relations with its neighbours. From the account of this journey, it is clear that the Pharaohs frequently obtained cedar wood from the Syrian coast to build boats and for other uses. According to the papyrus that relates the events of the journey, Namun came to Syria "for the wood needed for the boat of Amun-Ra, the great and proud King of the Gods."

This text was discovered in Egypt in 1891 on a piece of papyrus that was bought by the Russian scholar, Golenev, before finding its way to the Museum of Moscow. According to the text, Namun was sent to Lebanon during the days of the 12th Dynasty to acquire cedar wood. The papyrus relates the events and difficulties of the journey which provide an insight into Egypt's political situation at the time and the state of decline into which it had fallen. The journey was most likely made towards the end of the 12th Dynasty. The last of its strong kings was Amenemhat III, who ruled the country for 50 years and died in 1801 BC. He was buried in the Dahshur pyramids. His successors were weak kings, their rule not lasting more than 12 years, at the end of which the 12th Dynasty's 213-year rule came to an end.

Second

Just as was the case with these journeys and others in ancient times, the following periods witnessed important developments for cultural, commercial, and political contact across the Mediterranean, from its east to its west, from its south to its north, and visa versa. If we disregard the military campaigns, including the Crusades, which we do not consider as travel, and stay with the positive episodes for peaceful and civilised contact, then we can say that there has not been a single journey embarked upon between Asia and Europe and between Africa and Europe (especially those beginning in North Africa) in which the Mediterranean has not played a part.

Thus the early journeys that were begun from North Africa between East and West were all made across the Mediterranean, including the journey of al-Hassan al-Wazzan or Lio Africanus (b. 1500 AD), the journey of al-Idrisi (Abu al-Hassan Muhammad bin Idris al-Hamawi, al-Hasani, al-Talibi, 493–560 Hijri), the journeys of Abu Hamid al-Gharnati, from the tenth century AD, and Ibn Jabir from the fourteenth century AD, and likewise all the many journeys that began from the countries of the Arab Maghreb and followed different courses, some to Europe and others to the holy places of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem.

If we were to count the numerous Arab journeys made to Europe and which created a form of contact between East and West over the centuries, particularly the last four, then, at the same time, we could also count the many travellers who described the seas of the Levant and Alexandria and the ports spread across this side of the Mediterranean, such as al-Abdari in the thirteenth century AD, Ibn Battuta and Ibn Khaldun in the fourteenth century, Al-Tamjruti in the sixteenth century, al-Ayyashi in the seventeenth century, al-Maknasi in the eighteenth century, Al-Tahtawi in the nineteenth century, al-Wartatani, al-Duaji, Mustafa Faroukh, and even Taha Hussein and Nicola Ziada in the first half of the twentieth century. Through their travels they have written highly important pages in the description of the Mediterranean, its shores, its coasts, its ports, its commercial activities, and the major powers across the ages. There are Arab and Muslim travellers, characterised

by the particular circumstances of their journeys, who passed through the Mediterranean, including al-Muriski Ahmad al-Hajari, nicknamed Afuqay, who wrote "Journey of the Shooting Star to the Meeting of the Loved Ones" between 1611 and 1613. He travelled from Andalusia to Egypt seeking aid from its elite to help him return to the homeland from which he had been expelled: Andalusia. There is also the famous Jewish Andalusian traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, whose itinerary lists the ports and cities of the Mediterranean which he visited between 1165 and 1173 in order to make a census of the Jews residing in those cities stretching from Andalusia to Antioch.

The tradition of Arabic travel literature, as we know from personal experience, provides us with tens of other examples in addition to these travellers. All have pages of fascinating stories and anecdotes about the shores, ports, and cities of the Mediterranean. These pages describe people, their circumstances, their sciences, their cultures, their customs, their commercial activities, and everything that roused the travellers' interest and piqued their intellectual curiosity on the shores of the Sea of Rome or the Levantine Sea, according to the various names that were used for the Mediterranean.

What we say about the travellers of the Islamic West, Andalusia, and North Africa, can also be said of the travellers of Egypt and the Levant whose journeys have had an important influence on Arab culture, from al-Maqdisi al-Bashari in the eleventh century, whom the Orientalists consider one of the greatest Arab Muslim travellers, to Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801–1876), Ahmad Faris Shidyaq (1804–1887), Francis Marrash al-Halabi (1836–1874), Ahmad Zaki Basha (1867–1934), Hassan Tawfiq al-Adl (1889), Muhammad Kurd Ali (1876–1953), and Anbara Salam al-Khalidi (1902–1986), at the end of the twentieth century, through to Fakhr-al-Din al-Ma'ani who fled from Sidon in the sixteenth century and took refuge with the princes of Tuscany on the west coast of the Mediterranean from his political opponents, the princes of the Levant. He stayed in Tuscany from 1613 to 1618. There is also Matran Elias Hina al-Mawsuli in the seventeenth century, who made the earliest journey to the India of the West, i.e., South America and Mexico, between 1664 and 1668, and others such as the large constellation of travellers, diplomats, pilgrims, and adventurers (Arab, Turkish, and Iranian) who crowded the roads and were known by the ports of the Mediterranean, writing pages and pages in their journals about the sea as a confluence of different cultures, and the most important point for movement, conflict, and thought in the ancient world through to the Middle Ages. It is the restoration of this heritage that concerns me here and in my daily work on travel literature and the texts of travellers who traversed the Mediterranean.

Needless to say after this quick jaunt, the Mediterranean Sea, which knew travel between East and West, was the most creative maritime environment for travel in the ancient world, and continues to be so to this day. It has also played an important role in the great faiths, cultures, philosophies, and even the great wars, disasters, and tragedies of our present

day. Look at the Palestinian issue; the Mediterranean is the stage of the contemporary Palestinian tragedy.

For Greek, Phoenician, and even Pharaonic travellers, the Mediterranean Sea has been a starting point and a road. Its maritime traffic has known creative cultural and commercial activity between the peoples and nations inhabiting its shores. Often has the crossing from the east of the sea to its west and visa versa, provided an amazing form of contact between Muslims and the West.

From time immemorial, the shores of the Mediterranean Sea have witnessed continually renewed contact between the peoples and ancient, living cultures occupying its lands. Day after day, we see how dialogue develops and the trajectories it takes. But at the same time, we find that travel between these shores and these worlds, and the movement traversing the Mediterranean between East and West, means that we have to devise creative means and projects to provide greater opportunities for contact and interaction, breaking the barriers of ignorance towards the other. Despite everything the impressive developments in information technology have brought, there remains something that cannot be achieved except through direct contact between peoples. Travel, with its customs and numerous means, provides those rare opportunities that no other form of contact between people can. Let us recall the silent bartering and commercial exchanges between the Venetians and the inhabitants of the Atlas Mountains, and imagine new generations of travellers and merchants. At the very least, they possess different voices; they are the voices of the contemporary Mediterranean.

Third

Describing our work in 2003 on the Explorations Prospects Project dedicated to travel literature, I wrote what I consider the general outlines of a manifesto relating to the idea upon which the project was founded. That day, as from the very beginning, I believed that an ambitious project of this nature, with its specific aims and strategy, could not translate into daily work with productive and tangible outcomes without the exceptional diligence generated by the team of specialists on travel literature and a profound belief in the richness of Arabic culture and its ability to address the self and the other through travel literature.

From the outset, our concern as a team on this project has been to resume the work and research begun by the great Arab luminaries who entered the same arena from the end of the nineteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth century. We are driven by a desire to resume what was abandoned. The blood of adventure flows within us, driving us on to rediscover the works of our learned men and women and innovators in the field of geographical literature; to restudy it and present it to the readers ourselves before the

neo-Arabists do, or before we are beaten to it by the international organisations concerned with cultures. We believe that this is a cultural and moral duty, an intellectual necessity.

We wanted this project to establish a bridge between different worlds and geographies and, more specifically, to be "a bridge connecting the East with the West, and connecting the Arabs with the world." Essentially, it is a bridge that connects the various genres of geographical literature and unblocks the channels between it and other aspects of the Arab and Islamic cultures in their endeavour to establish a cultural situation that does not limit globalisation to Western experiences, as globalisation has been understood and explained by the Eastern elites. We are talking about Arab culture, and what we continually have in mind is a sort of continuation of the exceptional importance of geographical literature within the achievements of this culture across the ages of its prosperity.

East-West

Through our daily work on travel literature we have come to appreciate the special importance of the cultural Maghreb based on its geographical location, whether in terms of its proximity to Europe or the pioneering efforts of its countrymen in producing travel texts, not to mention what the adventures of its researchers and academics have added to the production of critical and historical discourses pertaining to this genre of literature.

The researcher can easily see that the geography of the Maghreb, when considered in terms of the relationship with the other, and in particular the European other, has unique advantages. Let us recall here the noteworthy undertakings across the generations of travellers, ambassadors, and delegates from the Maghreb and their travels to Europe, especially from the seventeenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The modern movement of academic study in the Arab Maghreb provides us with information about the journey to Europe that, in studies as well as texts, reveals characteristics and qualities different from those we find in the Arab Mashreq. This is due to the solid experiences that have resulted from the direct contact of the Islamic Maghreb with the other and its desire to sustain a relationship with it. It is also thanks to the modern methodologies adopted in the reading of geographical literature in Maghrebi academia, and the exploration and deconstruction of the relationship with the other and with the self through the other.

Here I am referring to the journeys to Europe made during the last three centuries. The successive texts left by these journeys have had varying degrees of influence on the Arab perception of the other and express the different ways in which the other has been reflected upon. In particular, they have revealed the nature of the response or refusal on the part of some Arab travellers in their attitude towards various aspects of European modernity. Arab travel literature on the West, as it becomes clear to the student, "has

focussed essentially on observing the features of the scientific and industrial renaissance, urbanism, and various manifestations of modernity, represented by modern developments in lifestyle, construction, social life, planning, administration and law." As is well known, as is made clear, time and time again, in the project's literature.

It is from the urgent need to uncover the treasures of travel literature and what has been overlooked in the context of the relationship with the other, Eastern and Western, the near and the far, that the Arabic Geographical Literature Project was born. It was born through personal efforts with no thought given to material gain or loss, and with the great aspiration to do the Arabs and Muslims justice, removing the distortion from their image, which has been tarnished on numerous occasions in the West and throughout the world. As intellectuals who follow current events, we would not deny that there is a strong anti-Arab, anti-Muslim media that gives rise to a distasteful intolerance borne from racist ideas and ignorance of difference.

But what about the ignorance of Arabs towards themselves? What of the ignorance of the Mashreqi towards the Maghrebi,[74] and the Maghrebi towards the Mashreqi or the Easterner towards the Easterner, or the Westerner towards the Easterner, and the Arab and the Muslim?

For example, it has become apparent to us that the ignorance of those living in the Maghreb towards Maghrebi travel literature and their ignorance even of the Maghrebi perception of the other, as manifest in the works of Maghrebi travellers to Europe, is not an act aimed against Arab culture in the Maghreb alone. In the Mashreq we find a similar neglect directed towards Mashreqi travel literature itself. There are tens of great, influential works in the history of travel to the other undertaken from the Arab Mashreq that today are considered unknown works, even by the Mashreqi scholars themselves.

I could give a list of important names and titles, but they have never entered the discussion about the other nor have they ever been relied upon as sources. In fact, researchers in the greatest cultural centres of the Mashreq—Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad—have never even considered them. These capitals were once the starting points for the journey to the other and a hub for the movement of ideas, experiences, and writings.

Parallel to the ignorance of the traveller al-Muriski Afuqay and his journey from Andalusia to Paris and the Hague in the sixteenth century, Al-Ghasani al-Andalusi and his journey from Meknes to Madrid in the seventeenth century, al-Maknasi and his trips to Europe in the eighteenth century, al-Saffar, al-Fasi, al-Umrawi, al-Kardoudi, al-Jaidi and their European travels in the nineteenth century, al-Hajawi, al-Ghassal and al-Saih and their European travels at the beginning of the twentieth century… Parallel to the ignorance of

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74 The 'Mashreq' refers to the Arab countries east of Egypt and North of the Arabian Peninsula, while the Maghreb includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania.

these names and works and many of their contemporary Maghrebi travellers, we find in the Mashreq a similar ignorance of the names and works of many Mashreqi travellers, such as Elias Hina al-Mawsuli and his journey from Baghdad to America, the Patriarch Makarios and his journey from Damascus to Moscow in the seventeenth century; Salim Bustros, Ahmad Zaki Basha, Hassan Tawfiq al-Adl, Muhammad Tantawi, Francis al-Marrash al-Halabi, al-Batnuni and Muhammad al-Baghdadi and their travels to Alexandria, Damascus, European Beirut, and America in the nineteenth century; Mar Athanios Agnatios Nouri and his journey from Baghdad to India in the same century; Muhammad Ali and his journey from Cairo to Japan, America, the Balkans and South Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century, and many others.

The long neglect of these works from the Mashreq to the Maghreb has created a strong motive and good grounds for the undertaking of an umbrella project that links the geographies of travel literature and its writings, and reconsiders them through their study and presentation within the broadest context possible. This is what we have worked towards for a decade, and on more than one level, as will be seen in due course. This is also what has made the project a bridge between East and West, preparing the way for a bridge between the Arabs and the world, where the texts of Arab travellers from the Maghreb and the Mashreq are to be found side by side. The project also aims to provide greater opportunity for the consideration of the similarities and differences in the journeys of the travellers and their works.

This aim has shaped our mission and aspirations throughout the past years on the Exploration Prospects Project and given us the determination to not allow the travels of Ibn Battuta, or Ibn Jabir after him, to be left orphaned in the wilderness, and for our Egyptian traveller, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi and the Syrian, Ahmad Faris Shidyaq, to remain without peer or parallel and all we have as Arabs, in terms of journeys in search of the self in the space of the other. Especially when the store of Arab culture of the last thousand years contains hundreds of manuscripts that belong to travel and geographical literature, from Ibn Fadlan, al-Muqaddisi a-Bashari, Abu Dalaf al-Masa'udi, and others who penned their pioneering texts in the tenth and the eleventh centuries, right up to the modern journeys of the twentieth century.

Thanks to the efforts of the great Maghrebi scholar, Ibn Tawit al-Tanji, thousands of people have read Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah, although very few of them will have considered him as a traveller. But who will revive the heritage of the scholars who have departed from our world? There needs to be overarching frameworks and spaces for discourse. Until now, the view of travel literature in the Mashreq has been presented separately from that in the Maghreb, as though the organising principle of travel to Europe and the world were severed between the two wings of the Arab nation. Although this is not categorical, I cannot escape the impression, even if it does need further investigation. This issue is of concern to us as our work endeavours to clear confusion and bridge the gaps. However,

there is something very positive here that can be built upon. By this I mean the existence of illustrious names such as Ibn Battuta, Ibn Jabir, and, to a lesser extent, al-Abdari, considered cornerstones in Arab travel literature in general. After all, it was not until the fall of Andalusia that the break in the chain occurred.

A Hundred Arab Journeys to the World

In 2001 we gave this title to a series of classic Arabic travel manuscripts that we had set about to edit and publish. The first of these works was published in the middle of the same year. When we launched the series we stated that its aim was to revive one of the oldest genres of writing in Arab culture by presenting the classics of travel literature and uncovering previously unknown texts by Arab travellers and Muslims. These travellers travelled the world and recorded their experiences and impressions to provide a picture of what they saw and learnt in its regions, near and far, especially during the last two centuries, which saw the birth of an interest in the Western experience on the part of the Arab intellectual elite, and their attempt to familiarise themselves with the societies and peoples of the West. The fact of the matter is that it is not possible to isolate the Arabs' interest in the other from the phenomenon of Orientalism and the Orientalists who crowded the roads of the East and drew pictures of it that would fill countless books, especially in English, French, German, and Italian. This they did from their position of strength on the world map and in science, and from the perspective of someone laying claim to things and prepared to spread images of "the East of the Arabian Nights," feeding the minds and imaginations of Westerners, and preparing public opinion for the military and intellectual invasion of this East. Perhaps Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, with all its military and intellectual implications for our culture, is the perfect example of this. The Arab press entered Egypt on the back of a wagon behind the French canon establishing the phenomenon of colonialism in its military and ideological manifestations. Although the Western phenomenon in the understanding and explaining of the other was a motivating factor with regard to the Arab intellectuals who found themselves faced with Western depictions of their societies which were new to them, it is also what stimulated the cultural nerve. For these intellectuals found themselves in possession of the motives and reasons to encourage travel to the other, as a journey of exploration, from which they would return to relate, exhibit, and talk about their experiences of its civilisation, its way of living, and its circumstances. All of which stirred up an intense intellectual debate for the first time in Arab society, attracting its vital forces, between the supporters of the West eager for its ideas and formulations, and those against the West, who rejected it and were ready to fight against it.

If Western travel literature was able to stereotype the East and Easterners, by depicting them as inferior, with an imagination hungry for the magical, the titillating, and the fantastic, as was the case with the writings of Flaubert in Cairo and Marco Polo before him in his

vision of Easterners, then Arabic travel literature on the West and the world, as will become clear through the texts of this series, focussed essentially on the features of the scientific and cultural renaissance, urbanism, and various manifestations of modernity, represented by modern developments in lifestyle, construction, social life, planning, administration, and law. The Arab travellers feasted their eyes on images of the new renaissance in those societies, motivated mainly by a thirst for the new and a deep, burning desire, not only for discovery born from intellectual curiosity but essentially to seek knowledge and learn from experience, to adopt the givens of modern development and follow in the footsteps of the other in order to emerge from the state of cultural paralysis to which the Arabs found themselves prey. Here we find one of the key sources for the East's amazed view of the West and its civilisation, a view that regards civilisation and its modernity from an inferior position on the margins of modern civilisation, while mourning its own time-honoured past and hankering to return to the heart of dynamic civilisation.

Anyone who considers the matter closely, will see that the books of Arab travellers provide an opportunity to explore the perception of the other which has been formed through travel, and the ideas that have seeped in through the lines of the travellers and the observations that have characterised their view of nations, people, and ideas. On another level, travel literature forms a great wealth of knowledge and a store of stories and ideas, not to mention its function as a form of gripping prose that contains the curious, the strange, and the amazing picked up by roaming eyes and individuals moved by what they see and a consciousness that surveys and analyses things, observing and contemplating phenomena.

Contemporary Journals

It is well-known that the body of travellers' journals and their personal writings in European cultures forms a library in its own right. The books of travellers are considered amongst the most entertaining and enjoy high circulation regardless of their literary merits and the variety of subjects tackled by their authors. This leads us to ask: Is there a new Arabic travel literature with features and qualities that distinguish it from the travel writings that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century? Ten years ago the answer was unclear. Writings in this field were not encouraged. Hence we felt the need to encourage contemporary writers to write their own travel journals, to describe their movements and their travels in a new literary language that benefits from all that came before it. The accumulation of the experiences and literary traditions of the travellers of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries enables an expression of contact with the contemporary world, and thus presents contemporary models of Arabic travel literature.

"The New Sinbad"

From this perspective we launched "The New Sinbad" series and "The Ibn Battuta Prize for Contemporary Journeys," which embraces contemporary Arabic travel literature, as well as texts by Arab writers about place and literary texts that take their inspiration from travel. The main purpose of this was to encourage writers to become closer to this genre of literature, drawing from personal experience in their relationship with place and movement through it as well as a contemplation of nature, people, urbanism, and what modern life holds in different geographies in terms of different circumstances for humankind; its cultural, social, and economic activities, its tendencies, customs, traditions, and spiritual life. In the space of a few years this series and the prize have succeeded in making travel literature a genre of some standing in our Arab culture. I will not list all the praises of this literature or the various reasons for its importance, but suffice to say that one aspect of the importance of these contemporary travels is that they open many doors, such as allowing for a comparison between the view of the contemporary Arab traveller, with his or her modern capabilities, the Arab travellers of old, and those in-between who braved the hardships of travel to reach the other, equipped with far simpler means. The nature of these travels renews the desire to connect with the other and its cultures and fill the great gap between Arabic travel literature until the beginning of the twentieth century and the writings of the present which have reappeared after an absence of this genre of literature that continued more than half a century, and to strengthen the aesthetic and intellectual ties between modern travel literature and the writings of the renaissance travellers which have bequeathed the Arabic library a number of writings from the likes of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, Muhammad Abdullah al-Saffar, Muhammad al-Hajawi, Abu Jamal al-Fasi, Francis al-Marrash, Salim Bustrus Ahmad Zaki Basha, Edward Bek Elias, Muhammad Labib al-Batnuni, Jurji Zaydan, Muhammad Rashid Reza al-Amir Yousef Kamal, Muhammad Thabit, Lewis Shaykhu, Taha Hussein, Muhammad Taymur and others.

We believe that among the reasons for the lack of travel literature and its disappearance for almost half a century was Arab culture's preoccupation with intellectual examination and ideological writings in the heat of the Arab political and social struggle, in addition to the appearance of the novel and its spread during the second half of the same century. Thus Sinbad dozed off, travel literature disappeared, and writing in this field no longer formed a noteworthy literary phenomenon. But the last decade, the first of the twenty-first century, reveals a renewal of the Arab passion for travel literature and the writing of travel journals. I can say that what has been produced up until now, at least through the Ibn Battuta Prize for Contemporary Journeys and the New Sinbad series, heralds a renewed and significantly important level of writings that have the qualities of modern prose and a contemporary, international outlook, along with an Eastern flavour and a spirit open to the world which does not fear contact with it on all its five continents. The writers of this new series consider themselves inhabitants of a star that is our planet and have

a passion and purpose to visit every patch of it, connect with its people, embrace their distant spaces, and dive into the beautiful unknown.
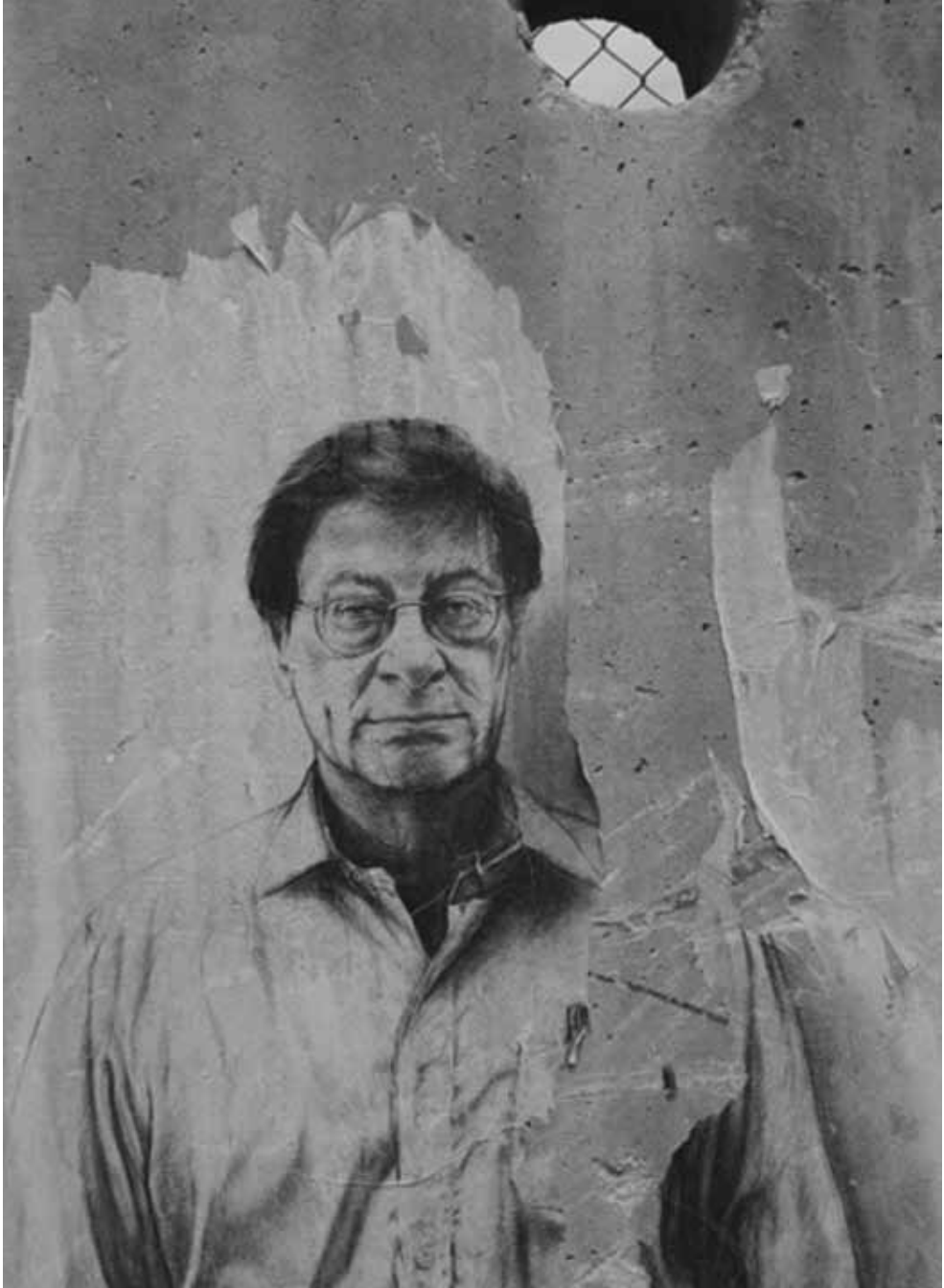
Breaking the Frame: Connecting through Creativity

Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio

The concepts of social transformation and intercultural dialogue are deeply rooted in artistic practice. In the new global context, art and creativity offer a different way to think about the community, with its local connections and intercultural relations. In a situation where plurality and complexity are dominant, elements such as mobility, encounter, connection, intercultural exchange, and dialogue become increasingly necessary and somehow inevitable in order to compose new ways and new forms of coexistence. "Art," as Nicolas Bourriaud said, "is a state of encounter."

Artistic and curatorial practices in the Mediterranean are more and more focused on the social interstices: nowadays, the presence of creative people is required in fields once unimagined. Why should artistic mobility contribute to a responsible transformation of society? How can it help to transform people, their vision, and their perception of the environment?

"Breaking the frame" means that today artists, curators, researchers, art critics, and cultural operators are changing the way they connect themselves, constantly moving into different fields and tasks.

Moreover, people related to the artistic and cultural fields are increasingly expanding their horizons and interacting with the most diverse fields: science and technology, communication and economy, political and social issues, etc.

As suggested by Michelangelo Pistoletto: "Artists must not be only in art galleries or museums—they must be present in all possible activities. The artist must be the sponsor of thought in whatever endeavour people take on, at every level, from that of the "masses" to that of "command."[75]

"Breaking the frame" means, above all, the need to cross at least three different borders: the disciplinary, the geographical, and the cultural .

In the inter-Mediterranean context of mobility and cultural and artistic exchange it is necessary to take into account different aspects. First of all, we need to encourage the mobility of various professionals linked to the world of culture and art. If artists seek inspiration for their creations and form themselves through international experiences, the same will happen for other important professionals, such as curators and researchers. In that sense we could say that an interdisciplinary dialogue is as necessary as intercultural

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75   Michelangelo Pistoletto, Art's Responsibility—Artist as Sponsor of Thought, Philadelphia Museum of Art, July 2010. Online: http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/414.html?page=2.

dialogue; to work together in a collaborative and creative way is a current need that is spreading in different sectors such as universities and academic areas, museums and art centres, theatres and cinematheques,[76] creative spaces, groups, and residencies, etc.

 Is it clear that interdisciplinarity, which is no longer a new concept but a twentieth-century vision,[77] can still transform our way of dealing with many issues. If we would try to answer the first questions, we could say that artistic mobility provokes a natural interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue, which transforms the perception of our environment and reality. Crossing the three "borders" allows meeting with diversity, building new perspectives, developing new consciousness, practising what we could describe as a "mobility thought," and finally connecting through creativity. In this sense, the contribution of artistic mobility to a responsible transformation of society is evident and essential.

One of the main examples of art as a tool for dialogue and social transformation, as an engine of exchange and mobility, are the activities that come up in the context of Pistoletto Foundation. To keep our reflection in the Mediterranean area and in this "frame's rupture narrative," I think it is important to mention three examples: the Mediterranean Cultural Parliament, the workshop "Methods," and the UNIDEE residency programme.

In the first example, art, society, and politics meet. Developed by Love Difference—Artistic Movement for an InterMediterranean Politic, the project has the aim to use art as an instrument to inspire social and cultural transformations and as a language that can unify the Mediterranean diversity. The artistic action looks for social and political targets and generates what is known as Artivism: "By way of our ARTIVISM, Art as the source of a new humanism, we propose to rehabilitate the intrinsic values of the Mediterranean, a place of cultural diversity that embodies a forceful premise for the establishment of a citizens' parliament. This new citizen-centred entity will draw upon human and Mediterranean values to transform current practices, for it has become urgent to develop a common language that rests upon responsible choices, be they ethical, cultural, social, economic, or political. This is the sense of the experimental proposition of a Mediterranean Cultural Parliament—a process that intends to strike a partnership among individuals, cultural organisations, institutions, and all the other actors who, in different ways, strive to vest reality with art and creativity, fundamental tools of responsible social change. (…) The time is ripe to contribute through art to a new Mediterranean civilization that will draw upon all the cultures of the basin. The Mediterranean Cultural Parliament will express the themes of its political involvement publicly thanks to a presence of art at the heart of all areas of the governance of the society."[78]

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76   Check the example of The Cinematheque de Tanger that proposes itself also as "a platform for cross-cultural exchange and dialogue." Online: www.cinemathequedetanger.com.

77   See Julie Thompson Klein, Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice, Bloodaxe Books, 1991.

78   Michelangelo Pistoletto, "The Birth of the Mediterranean Cultural Parliament," in Dialogues, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Parlement Culturel Méditerranéen, Apollonia, Échanges Artistique Européens, Estrasburgo, 2009, p. 53.

So we have to understand art as a very important source of communication which can help to share visions and to develop experiences of collective and personal growth. Actually, as Bourriaud said: "Giving news of the world, registering changes in our environments, showing how individuals move around in or form part of those environments: must so-called auteur films fulfilled these tasks, some more diligently than others. In the past, that is, cinema brought us information about the world around us; now, it seems, this role is for the most part entrusted to contemporary art."[79]

"Methods" is a research project that explores the potential of various methodologies applied in the context of artistic and creative processes for responsible social transformation. Exchange, dialogue, and co-creation are the central parts of this process, where a network of various personalities from the cultural and creative world meet and participate in an intensive and active workshop for several days. In the last edition of the project—the fifth one—the organisers made a further step: they extended the research about methods to disciplines that go beyond the artistic context. Participation, interdisciplinarity, experimentation, transferable possibility of methods from/to other contexts, innovation, sustainability, and co-creation are some of the aims of the project: "The objective of the workshop is to compare and share methods from different disciplines that facilitate processes of transformation both collectively and individually, with particular attention to the methodologies with participatory, interdisciplinary, and experimental characteristics, and those that set "the human at the centre" produce a growth in the individual."[80]

Another interesting example developed by Pistoletto Foundation is the UNIDEE residency programme. People from various places of the world gather in Cittadellarte in Biella and work there during a period of four months. The concept of "breaking the frame" is very well connected with this programme: "Here art abandons the conventional cannons and places instead to integrate itself with society and with other disciplines: communication, production, economics, politics, architecture, design, literature, music, spirituality, ecology, and nourishment."[81] The UNIDEE residency is a worldwide programme, but there are different partnerships with Mediterranean art centres, such as the Palestinian A.M. Qattan Foundation, the Maltese Saint James Cavalier, or the Catalan Hangar. The programme provides a combination of diverse activities where the mix of perceptions and points of view from people who move, travel, and come from various places is extremely fruitful.

From these examples I would like to highlight some key elements for our reflection:

- Mobility and exchange are some of the most basics tools for communication, dialogue, and analysis on the topic of art and social transformations.

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79   Nicolas Bourriaud, The Radicant, Lukas & Sternberg, 2009, p. 31.

80   See online: http://www.lovedifference.org/eng/network/studies/methods/methods10/methods10.htm and http://methodsprocessesofchange.wordpress.com/.

81   http://www.cittadellarte.it/progetti.php?prog=28#sub.

- There is a need to establish dialogues beyond disciplinary framework of origin.

- There is also a need to turn art into a critical tool—artivism—which situates itself in the places of power to activate consciousness and generate new critical positioning.

- It is equally important to share paths and go beyond geographical and cultural borders to develop shared experiences and approaches and open up spaces for reflection.

So the new contexts of mobility and cultural exchange in the Mediterranean area precipitate several questions and doubts, which are obviously necessary in order to analyse in a deeper way the social and cultural transformations of this era.

How does it change the practice of curating, researching, and exhibiting in the era of mobility? Is mobility a tool for intercultural learning? How do we understand and consider the experience and the increase in artistic residencies and exchange programmes?

There are no simple answers, and these questions open up debate platforms that are very useful today.

There are several projects—we have already pointed out some—which aim to respond to these questions, thus creating a shared vision and inviting various people to the table to open up new dynamics of relationship and collaboration.

I strongly believe that the intensification of residency programmes is basic to building bridges between cultures in the Mediterranean and to producing artistic projects not only for exhibition but also for critical reflection and social transformation purposes.

Nonetheless, in order to create a transversal politics of mobility and to develop an exchange poetic, the contribution of many institutions and organisations becomes necessary.

The effort and the role of the university are, in this sense, fundamental. Erasmus, the European mobility programme, will have its natural extension to the Mediterranean area. This programme is a hit among young people and is a path that continues beyond the university, contributing to the creation of dialogue and deeper communication between people and territories. The university should be an essential platform to support and improve training through exchange and mobility. It should receive, send, and develop welcome spaces for artists and researchers. In addition, it should put together arts and sciences in the same space to provoke creative impulses. The universities in the southern Mediterranean should encourage the involvement of the faculties of art and media to participate in exchange programmes that provide infrastructure, accommodation, and other facilities.

In order to improve the mobility and exchange mechanism there should exist some specific organisation to support artists and researchers looking for funding for their projects, and we should create new devices such as virtual platforms to provide continuity for projects that have already started. Like Practics[82] in Europe—a project that aims to facilitate the provision of information about EU cross-border mobility in the cultural sector—we need an inter-Mediterranean project or organisation that can not only provide information about artistic and cultural mobility but also work as a mediator between the different spaces and persons in mobility. Link collectors and or fund providers are extremely useful but not sufficient.

Finally, art and cultural mobility are valuable for the following reasons, among others:

- They help to increase interconnection points that multiply the production and dissemination of the "other" narratives in opposition to the dominant discourses.

- They provoke a new form of negotiation among different people and spaces.

- They transform creativity through a cultural translation effort.

- They formulate a new knowledge flow.

Advocating for a culture of networks and supporting the creation of an interdisciplinary centre for contemporary art and creativity in the Mediterranean should be another of the primary objectives of the cultural policies in the region. In this global era, the Mediterranean should symbolise a new notion of local, where mobility represents the new way of common understanding.

"So has global capitalism confiscated flows, speed, and nomadism?" asks Bourriaud. "Let's be even more mobile then global capitalism."[83]

Exhibitions, research projects, art events, seminars, workshops, exchange programmes, and various creative meetings about and around the Mediterranean space are constantly increasing and provoking new, interesting challenges.

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82   PRACTICS, http://www.practics.org/.

83   Nicolas Bourriaud, The Radicant, Lukas & Sternberg, 2009, p. 52.

Chapter III:
Personal Experiences
and Reflections

Exploring Travel in the Mediterranean

Tahseen Yaqeen

Introduction

The man who loves his homeland is still a tender beginner; the man who loves every part of the earth as if it were his native home has come a long way; but only the man for whom the whole world has become a foreign land is truly mature.' – Hugh of St Victor, Christian theologian (c. 1097-1141)[84]

I have followed the shores of the Mediterranean in my country, Palestine, from here in Jordan, Alexandria, Antalya, Morocco, and from above on the several occasions I've flown to the West. On its shores, I've always felt close to my country, close to the people who live on its banks. When I was here for four summers, I was there in Palestine, too, because the water is a bridge that does not separate one land from another as I used to think as a child. My heart sank when, while in Antalya, I suddenly realised that opposite lay Alexandria where I'd walk from Maamura to the Fort and Anfushi. While in Morocco, I would reach out my hand to touch both East and West through the lapping waves of the Mediterranean.

Why does my longing for the countries of the Mediterranean and others I've visited endure? Is it because I've read about them in books and seen them on television? The truth is, it's because I've lived the details of these countries; I've lived among their people, listened to their music, sung and danced with them, eaten and drunk with them. I know their cares and concerns. In this sense travel is a book like no other, and there will never be another like it even if the whole world were placed before us.

Travel is connected to trade, pilgrimage, and the pursuit of knowledge. This has been the case historically and remains so today. The history of the region is replete with examples, from Ibn Batuta, al-Muqadisi, and al-Ghazali, through to Rifa'at al-Tahtawi, Taha Hussein, Tawfiq al-Hakim, and the pilgrimages of the faithful to Mecca and Jerusalem.

Travel literature doesn't only have to be about distant countries; it can also be about one's own country, just as there is internal tourism. It deepens one's familiarity with one's own country in a practical way that fosters a sense of belonging and love for the nation and deepens one's appreciation of diversity and respect of differences.

The importance of benefitting from the experience and knowledge of others is lost on no one. It is a crucial factor in bringing the human race closer together. Focusing on what is true and positive can challenge negative stereotypes. All of this serves the interest of peace and international cooperation.

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84   Ilija Trojanow, "The Art of Travelling," Fikrun wa Fann, Issue 89, 2008 (http://www.goethe.de/ges/phi/prj/ffs/the/rkt/en4375936.htm).

Travel writing

I believe that my own experiences may provide an insight into my understanding of writing and teaching in this field. It was during childhood that the seeds of my love of travel were sown. I grew up in the political and social context of the 1970s, i.e., in the wake of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which saw the imposition of travel restrictions. Young people longed to travel. On the one hand, they wanted to be free from the restrictions of the occupation; on the other, they wanted to test the limits of social freedom and modernity.

I started at an early age when I would write a few paragraphs about the cities and places I visited on school trips. I used to describe everything I saw, creating a connection between myself and those places, assuring myself that I'd return to see them again one day.

It was a wonderful, joyful time when the coloured papers took me from the pastures of childhood play and amusement with sticks which we used to ride pretending to be knights, and stones with the old game hadar badar,[85] hide and seek, hopscotch, al-qala,[86] al-seeja,[87] al-kharita,[88] yilli bitihli,[89] and ball, when the poor children of a remote village were able to lay their hands on one.

It was evening or morning when I first became fascinated by Al-Arabi magazine, which had articles on various countries. Through the eye, it found its way to the heart, leaving my limbs to abstain from play and chasing the wind, to tie me with love to the earth of its pages, to transform the running of my limbs to the running of my eye, my imagination, my ear, and my other senses.

The magic of touch played its part in the enchantment: how fine the pages were and how soft between my fingers.

For a child to remain sitting arouses wonder: it is not easy for a child to play while sitting down. But I remember that I sat down as soon as I saw it, and even now its magic continues to exert its power over me…

As for the other children, they continued to play in protest, but when they came over to take a look, they were enchanted by the colour photos and hung with innocence onto

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85 A traditional Palestinian game played with a sock stuffed with clothes or rags. If a player is struck by the sock he is out of the game.

86 A traditional Palestinian game played with stone counters.

87 A traditional Palestinian game played by two players with counters from either small stones or olive stones.

88 A form of hide-and-seek played by two teams. A member of one team draws a large square on the ground in which he draws a map to show where the members of his team are hidden. The other team must use the map to find them.

89 A game in which two children stand facing each other some metres apart. They begin to approach each other by placing one foot in front of the other so that the back foot is brought forward and placed down with the heel against the toes of the other foot. The winner is the one whose foot is the first to press down on the toes of the opponent.

the photos of people. At the time I was flicking through the pages of an article on another country. That was on a day in the mid-1970s or a little later, when I devoured the beautiful pictures of a distant land whose name we'd read in the geography books. We expressed our amazement with the country, not with the pictures. How beautiful it was! Would we travel there one day when we were grown-ups?

I didn't know then that three decades later I would be a writer of those articles and for the self-same magazine, Al-Arabi, which has been a constant source of pleasure from childhood until now.

I quickly flicked through the pictures and then I looked at them again, this time slowly and thoughtfully. After some time satisfying sight and imagination, trying to penetrate the secret of those pictures, I found no escape from reading the accompanying text. So I began to read, unable to stop my eyes from returning to the pictures.

I read and looked until I found myself totally immersed. I read and read, page after page, oblivious to the passing of time. To be immersed in reading was a great pleasure that competed with the pleasure of the pictures. Reading soon came to dominate, despite how much I enjoyed gazing at those wonderful images.

True, as a child I read other more frivolous material, but I was most attracted to Al-Arabi. Before long, I was wishing that another issue of the magazine would drop into my lap.

My brother, who was studying medicine in Egypt, loved travel journalism and reading about other countries. Every summer he would bring back a number of books on culture, some of which focused on different countries. When I read them I'd remember my first magazine, innocently looking for coloured pictures that I would not find… especially in the books of the Egyptian travellers… There was only the cover picture, which was just not enough; but that's all there was!

I read, for example, about the travels of Mufid Fawzi in He Washes Dishes in London; I read Jadhibiya Sidqi on Japan; and Anis Mansour. I read novels and short stories, which could be described as autobiography in a literary mould and were not so far from travel writing, such as A Bird from the East by Tawfiq al-Hakim.

At primary school, we had a few issues of Al-Arabi which the teachers would talk about with respect and veneration: This, children, is Al-Arabi magazine which transports you to distant countries to teach you something about them!

I had also begun to write, sneaking into places in Palestine, especially the part occupied in 1948—into Palestine from Bab al-Hubb and out through Bab al-'Ilam and what remained of place and people there! During most of my wanderings I didn't have an entry permit…

This motivated me to continue writing about places and travel—Jerusalem to be precise. My writing career was crowned with the Ibn Batuta Award for Travel Literature in 2007, granted by the Center for Arabic Geographical Literature - Exploration Prospects.

Throughout my career I've written about my travels. I've written about Switzerland, Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the United States, France, and Korea. I benefitted from the accomplishments of others when I realised that discovery is not limited to travel in other countries but can also take place within one's own country. In fact, travel outside can expand the heart and mind of the writer and make him think more about his own country.

I've come to realise that from ancient times travel literature has been one of the most important means to bring peoples closer together. Although an ancient genre that flourished in Arab civilisation thanks to its travellers and geographers, travel writing continued to prosper in later centuries and right into the twentieth century with European travellers.

Travelling between teaching and media

Understanding travel literature

Travel literature, as the critics see it, is the only literature that almost rises above its stated aims and intentions. It reveals the marginal and the obscure and questions the obvious.

For the traveller does not view details and scenes mechanically, and does not see them as visions of the ordinary and the familiar; rather he practices a visionary and enlightened perception. He relies upon the third eye, the fourth and the fifth, which penetrate the visible to see what lies beyond, neutralising the effect of mystery and nullifying the spell of the strange and the unknown.

In the past, travellers would travel and write over a period of months or years, like those who made the pilgrimage to Mecca or Jerusalem. There was a space for writing, and, perhaps, once home again the writer would return to it.

But today, thanks to the speed of transportation, our writing can be fresh; we can send the text quickly to newspapers and magazines via e-mail, the fastest in history.

I will now turn to examining the possibilities of education and media as two tributaries for travel and travel literature. This is my field of work, as a writer, an explorer, and a traveller.

Teaching and travel

In order for us to complete the picture, mainstream education curricula do not tackle this distinctive literature, which has the potential to attract children, except in a cursory manner, with a mention here and there. That is to say that by the time a university student graduates, he or she has not sufficiently been exposed to this literature of discovery.

The teaching of geography, for example, relies upon memorisation and revision. The student learns how to memorise, not how to see and not how to describe and analyse. Everything that students know about the Arab traveller is Ibn Batuta, and it's good if they know this!

The traveller is a writer who has visited countries and written about them. As for what he or she has written, why and how, those questions are irrelevant. That's not all; I would claim that teaching travel literature today does not focus on place in a way that prepares the student to understand how to tackle its literary genres, other than a brief mention of the duality of place and time, especially in teaching the short story and the novel.

The school student and the university student graduate are incapable of describing the place they live in. In fact, they are not even capable of seeing it with any real discernment or perception.

So where will innovation come from?

Practical experience in teaching and travel

The experiences of travel and teaching have become merged within me. I first worked in teaching, then in educational media, curricula, and gender. In education, the approach to place is general and rigid, and does not raise awareness or motivate students to benefit from knowledge in comparative fields and understand the human context. It fails to deepen their appreciation of diversity in the world, which can prepare them to accept pluralism in their own country.

If you were to consider what are called the themes of literary construction, for example, in our schools, and study the writings of children about their country and the place they live in, you would quickly find that our students are not trained to see small places and describe them; you would also feel that there is a problem here relating to the issue of belonging, which is achieved through slogans and not through sentiment. You would see that the students' information about their countries is limited and that it comes from the requirements of compulsory examinations, not from optional studies.

They do not see their place, except in a particular context. The situation is worse in terms of how teachers direct their writing, where they encourage literary imitation. So you see students struggling to imitate Jahiz instead of innovating, which depends upon ordinary description for an ordinary place in an ordinary language, too.

Thus, we have a problem with the teachers and the curricula, which fail to make sense of places and pass over them quickly, failing to give them the attention they deserve. Instead, they prefer to pick out the elements they want and which later define the way students imagine and envision place. Naturally, students are not encouraged to explore.

During my work as a teacher, I trained children and young people to discover place and express the experience in writing. When I taught creative writing the students would go out of the lecture theatre into the village, the city, or the arms of nature. I focused on teaching them how to describe and explore place, to reflect and experience it through the senses.

When I was given the opportunity to author and edit textbooks in Palestine, I became more convinced that academics and educationalists suffered in this respect. They were fixated on teaching things that alienated the students for their lack of relevance.

In this context, I understand how the intellectual structure of the mind is constructed here, which neglects place as one of the fundamental elements and dimensions of humankind. This renders students incapable of feeling surprise and discovering the earth, nature, customs, and things around them. In fact, they cannot even discover themselves. Thus, we have failed in education, collectively and individually.

Place is lost like its aimless inhabitants who remain unaware of the beauty of their land and those rich elements, ripe to begin an extraordinary, original discourse, a discourse relevant to the times.

Teaching literature, geography, history, and media is conducted through imitating Jahiz and rote memorisation. There is no time for detail that develops awareness and feelings.

Media and travel

Since 1994 I have worked in media as a writer, editor, and art and literary critic. During this time I have discovered an absence of places and countries in the media, contrary to what I'd hoped for as a lover and reader of travel literature. I began to struggle to improvise a writing that benefits from literature. My writings were about my travels in Palestine and outside. As for my activities as a literary critic, despite the Palestinian place being an attractive topic, I found that novelists and short-story writers did not present place as it should be presented by a novel or short story whose events unfold here. I would claim that those literary works that are firmly fixed in place remain limited.

If we include Arab media with education, then the state of written and audio-visual media is still unaware of this literary genre, despite its having been featured by international media, which has brought us some of the best works ever written.

If we take a look at the satellite television channels we find their coverage of travel is limited to a few programmes here and there or to seasonal programmes motivated by flattery and advertising.

Teaching and media are dry in our countries. They are repellent and rely upon generalisation. So how do we create an audience for travel literature when it is not rooted in education and media?

From where will travel literature be reborn in our lives? How will it be revived when the new generation does not even understand its own place, let alone take an interest in the place of others?

Travel literature between the news story

and the literature of place

Let's talk about the media, which plays an important part in the forming of ideas, feelings, and awareness.

Anyone familiar with the reports and programmes presented by Arabic television and newspapers knows that they are "desiccated," there's no water in them to shed light on place and its various elements. They barely show the features of place except fleetingly and unintentionally, with the exception of a programme presented by Dana al-Khatib on MBC, a programme on Stars7, and a few exceptions here and there.

If you look at most reports, you'll find that they are hastily prepared and that the eye of the photographer and the eye of the journalist are capable of seeing only what they were expecting from the statement of the official, which suits the limited minutes within which the news is published. There is no person, no land, no nature; the programme is focused rigidly on the famous and the dominant as a supposed proof that it is transmitted from a particular place. Here, for example, the situation grew even worse when the picture of Al-Aqsa Mosque became the background of the news bulletin.

Things are no better with print media. Despite the fact that print media allows for the inclusion of details and description of place as background or a primary element in the coverage, we hardly ever read a news story. The newspaper report is capable of firmly establishing the literature of description and analysis, of hearing the voice of the ordinary citizen, seeing his or her place, the details of life, and humankind's discourse with reality in a journey that affirms the self in place and time.

The role of the media in the furtherance of travel literature

I would claim that raising awareness of travel literature by the media would see its writers working to this end, requiring them and correspondents covering an important event, for example, to write something about the country they are visiting.

Through print and visual media we can spread a new genre that might contribute to a revitalisation of our media. For in this world there are things that deserve to be seen.

I believe that the exploring writer and the inquisitive journalist who want to write in this field should take note of the following:

Begin by reading the experiences of others and then write and experiment, and if you enjoy it, continue.

When your writing and interviewing skills develop, use what you can of the information you've learned in a way that does not render the text overburdened with information on the one hand, and on the other, uniformed and badly written.

Develop your prose and descriptive style and learn the techniques of the novel, the short story, and the newspaper report.

The journey should be conveyed through multiple levels of description subject to the narrator's emotional and intuitive reactions to the scenes that unfold.

Be poetic in your description sometimes, using a language of high aesthetic value to make the reader feel your sense of wonder, your amazement, your excitement, your sadness, your anger, your hope, and your aspirations for what you see.

Constantly follow the observations of readers on what you write, to see and evaluate to what extent you have affected them and how appealing the text was. Connecting with readers helps to develop your style.

As an Arab traveller you are not divorced from your heritage, you have been preceded by the first innovators who experienced the hardships of the road. Go back to their texts and see how they wrote and about which subjects, and whether they tended towards myth or exaggeration.

Look to foreign travellers, as writers they possess refined descriptive styles that shun generalisation and focus on detail. All these skills are necessary to create strong texts that add to the history of Arabic literature.

Conclusion

Our knowledge and discovery of places will enable us to discover our own place, just like someone who acquaints himself with others in order to know himself. Knowledge of the self gives us an energy and vision to see what we could not see before. We see with our own eyes instead of through the eyes of authority. For this reason dictatorial states place restrictions on the movement of their citizens!

The Indian religious man Aitareya Brahmana, said:

"There can be no happiness for the person who does not travel. In the company of humans, even the best will become a sinner … so take to the road. The feet of the wanderer are like a flower: his soul grows, bears fruit; his efforts purge his sins. So take to the road! If you rest, so too do your blessings; they rise when you rise, they sleep when you sleep, they move when you move. God is the friend of the traveller. So take to the road."[90]

And I say that if you want to educate within a humanitarian framework and combat racism and intolerance, then knowledge is in travel… Take some young people and travel with them. Walk with them… Walk, even if outside the country a little…

When we go out we not only love others, but we allow the love we have for the people we live with to grow.

Travelling within a place complements travel outside. Both of them lead to the self!

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90   Ilija Trojanow "The Art of Travelling." Fikrun wa Fann, Issue 89, 2008 (http://www.goethe.de/ges/phi/prj/ffs/the/rkt/en4375936.htm).

An Experience of Travelling in the Mediterranean Redefining the Concepts of Travel between Reality and Imagination

Jihad Shuja'yeh

Travelling in the Mediterranean is an experience beset with dangers for a young Palestinian. It is more like an adventure that must be embarked upon by all who wish to travel. Why? I'll explain why in detail through three personal stories. They tell of the difficulties faced by young Palestinians when they decide to travel or to participate in a conference, a workshop, or a training session outside Palestine. Everything written here relates to the West Bank, not to the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is another experience in itself. The least that can be said on travel from Gaza to the outside world is "impossible"! I don't want to talk in detail about the Gaza Strip here because I haven't lived there. It's something I've heard about from acquaintances. So, I'll leave it to them to talk about that.

As for my own experience of travel, I shall begin with my first story: "We want an airport." This experience left me stripped of my feelings after I tossed them onto the rubbish heap of the occupation. My pen has begun to drag my sufferings across time's worn pages in an attempt to convey my sorrows. Our sorrows begin with the welling of joy in our hearts. My sorrows began when I thought I'd defeated the monotony that fills my life. I didn't know that an even fouler fate lay in store. The winds of change came with the wings of the plane that would carry me to Cyprus airport to attend a human rights conference. My travel companion remained parked in a corner of oblivion in my room with the ray of hope that would carry us to places we'd never been. Our joy at news of the invitation was indescribable, perhaps because we had never experienced anything like it before; news of travel to other places that hold a different type of monotony.

That day, a flock of birds announced my readiness to take off with them in the morning with the sunrise with which they would begin their day and with which I would begin my journey. I went out at sunrise to begin a journey of suffering with the wall of silence that I demolished upon my time-worn pages. Ramallah is my city. I left it and crossed many of the barriers that deform and violate the roads of my country before arriving at the oldest city in history: Ariha (Jericho). From there I continued to what is called the "Rest" bridge. This is where your suffering begins, as though you were faced with a complex novel in three chapters.

The first chapter holds thousands of travellers clutching pieces of paper on which are written numbers that determine their exit from its pages. I took a number and left my

suitcase to enter the conflict imposed upon it, to go through the worst universal carnage. I sat and despair remained by my side in the face of the horror of the scene, the hellish heat, the crammed hall that wanted to be rescued, and the suitcase that entered a universal carnage! I took myself away from this turmoil to be alone. The despair left me in shame. I reached an atmosphere of peace and spiritual ease, which caused the corpses buried in memory's cemetery to float to the surface, for me to see 'Atifa al-Sidaqa mourning Farouq al-Sadiq who squatted behind the occupation's bars, from there to a love that broke its wings and could fly no longer, a love whose letters became worn, their joints rusted. A love that awaited the moment of death to be free of the pain of its broken wings. This loneliness, this place overflowing with suffocating sadness reclaimed my memory faded with the fog of monotony and I was no longer aware of my surroundings.

Only the voice that blasted my number brought me out of this troubled state and the vortex of memories. The voice permitted me to leave only to prohibit me from retrieving what remained of memory's corpses. Upon entering the second chapter of the novel, you enter another whirl of interrogation, searching, degradation, insult, and provocation that does not leave memory space to disperse its fog. A second chapter and other fates to weave my tale. With the second chapter, I begin my story with my name, where I am the centre of ridicule for an Israeli soldier with a round of questions intended to humiliate, not me, but the symbolic resistance drilled into the hearts of my people.

The soldier's flood of questions begins:

What is your name?
Jihad Shuja'yeh.
Are you an Islamic jihadi?
I didn't feel much like answering, so I said: No.
Hamas?

I said with the same irritated reticence: No, no.

Fatah then.

Returning his sarcasm I replied: No, Hizbollah.

And I laughed.

My tongue pronounced two words in scorn of his sarcasm and won me a crust of respect, because we are not entitled to speak, in fact, we must submit to their sarcasm in abject defeat.

Time passes and the clock hands burn. As it passes the departure time draws nearer. But in this chapter, there was something to ease the heat. It was that invention called air conditioner. An equation was formulating in my head on the crossings: as the temperature decreases waiting time increases in an inverse relationship. How wonderful to see time pass despite its heavy footsteps. We have now reached the final chapter.

I continued on my way to check on my travel companion. I entered a place full of mountains of suitcases, the scene left me utterly dismayed. Only the thought of the waiting plane brought me out of my bewilderment. I searched for a long time to find it sitting in the arms of despair, its tears flowed from all that it had suffered in its devastating war. I plucked it from the arms of despair and delivered it to the arms of hope that waited at the end of its dilemma: the Palestinian – Israeli – Jordanian bridge.

I wiped its tears and carried it as I unconsciously raced against the hands of time. I ordered a car to the airport immediately. Naturally, the drivers, consumed by a greed for money, contributed their share to my suffering. Each demanded a price higher than the other, as though they were in some Manhattan stock exchange. I decided on one of them unaware of the time. My concern was to reach the airport regardless of the moral and material losses that left me exhausted.

The suitcase and I reached the airport. I began to race to the departures hall. My suitcase suddenly began to cry again. I said to it: "Don't cry. It's almost over, there's just a little way to go now." It said to me: "We're late for our flight." I didn't believe it and I began to ask the airport workers, but they only confirmed what it had told me. I sat beside it and began to cry too.

At that moment, at the entrance of the Queen Alia Airport, I said to myself: "My God, don't we have an airport?" From that day I decided to leave my feelings on the rubbish tip of the occupation that had prevented us from having an airport. At the top of my voice I said: "We want an airport."

After this bitter experience I was not broken as is usually the case with a people who have loved to struggle against the hands of time, which have not ended the occupation of an entire people. But less than a year later, I corrected my conceptual map when I discovered that we as Palestinians need an entry permit as it is called in Egypt, an entry stamp as it is called in Kuwait and Iraq, and a non-refusal of entry paper to the Lebanese territories, as it is called in Lebanon! While we in Palestine call it a visa as they do in the West. During the past few days I've learnt why we don't share any one of these numerous terms used by our Arab brothers, and why we have chosen the closest name to us, a Western name. It is because obtaining a visa to enter any European country is easier for us as Palestinians than entering many of our beloved Arab countries, including our sister state, Kuwait.

I set out upon a journey more like a perilous adventure to cross the Palestinian bridge, the bridge of the occupation and then the Jordanian bridge, to stay at Illusion Hotel for a whole night in Amman before catching the morning flight that would take me to the Fikr 8 Conference. At the airport I hoped to see many of the friends waiting for me there: 'Ali al-Sharafi, how I miss you… Nawfal Hamoumi… The Moroccan nicknamed Ibn Batuta…

Samar Baghari, who possesses the power of words, Razan, the Palestinian who lives outside the homeland, and many of the youth of the Arab nation who I consider amongst the elite. I wanted to meet them together on the beloved soil of Kuwait.

But the definition of travel for the young Palestinian is always different in terms of form and content. Travel to Kuwait for me was to see the plane that would take me to Kuwait without boarding it! Travel for me was to meet Bayyan, an acquaintance of mine from Jordan, who would participate in the same conference and to say goodbye to her eight minutes later because she could board the plane whereas I could not. Travel for me, meant to return from the airport to myself with a number of painful memories about myself! To be able to stay out of network coverage for a few minutes… To take a visa into the unknown!

Is it not an injustice to deny young Palestinians and Iraqi youth activists a visa to enter Kuwait and participate in the Fikr 8 Conference? The reason for this goes back to the first Gulf War and the position the PLO took on the invasion of Kuwait. After 19 years, we're still paying as young Arabs for decisions we had no part in!

Imagine leaving Amman and returning to Palestine without knowing what you are going to say to those around you. Imagine leaving in your car and finding yourself in an accident you are not responsible for, but you are still required to foot the bill. So I decided to give up on the idea of forcing the occupation to build us an airport in Palestine. First we need to convince our wonderful Arab nation to provide us with entry permits, entry stamps, and non-refusal of entry papers… Therefore, I say we want a visa… khalas, enough. We want a visa… Enough deportation rooms… Enough arrests and searches… Enough entry stamps… Enough, enough, enough.

A little time after, the third story happened to confirm my previous findings (we want a visa), but this time it came in its Saudi form! In my e-mail inbox one morning, I received an invitation to attend a meeting of the consultative board of the Fikr Foundation. Nice, and where is the meeting? In Saudi Arabia… Great, I said to myself. This time I tried to get over it and not think too much about the visa, as usual. Fikr Foundation, they're all princes and well-connected people, they're never going to be able to issue me a Saudi visa… Impossible… These were my thoughts, especially when I heard from the Foundation that I hadn't been refused… I mean I had not been refused a visa, in principle!

I picked up my suitcase and left my concerns behind in Occupied Palestine to cross the Palestinian – Israeli – Jordanian border on a journey that felt like a slow death during the first days of Ramadan, in a heat I'd never experienced before. I reached Amman late for breakfast by four hours. But visiting Saudi Arabia was still the main motivation for me to participate in the meeting. On the morning of the second day after my arrival in Amman,

I made several attempts to contact one of the Foundation's employees before she finally answered my call: Darling, put my mind at rest, has anything happened with my visa? No, Jihad, I swear! I haven't heard anything yet. I ended the call and found myself in a state of shock on the second day of Holy Ramadan. The heat grew with an incredible intensity.

My heart stopped… Was it reasonable that I should take a holiday and travel to Jordan and exert all this time, effort, and money and there not be a visa at the end of it? I remained in a state of readiness as I waited for the call from Lebanon which would inform me that my visa had been issued. But time began to abandon me, only a short while remained… The Saudi Embassy in Amman closed its doors for an hour at three o'clock and it was already two o'clock. The woman at the Fikr Foundation had not called and the flight was due to depart at 5pm.

The picture became clear. It was the same story I'd experienced with Kuwait a year before. There is no visa for the Palestinian passport, or for the Iraqi passport, my friend languishing in Baghdad. So why do you invite us, gentlemen! Why do you do us the honour of being members of the advisory board in your esteemed foundations? Why do you employ us as ambassadors for your revered foundations to the youth of our countries? Why do your embassies refuse to stamp the Iraqi and Palestinian passport with entry permits for your great countries? Do passports (Palestinian and Iraqi) suffer racial discrimination when it comes to the Arab visa? Honestly, my good Sirs, my life's dream is now to travel among the Arab states without those permits that have taught us as young Arabs to distinguish between the nations of the Arab world. You supply the oxygen of non-unity to our exhausted bodies. Let us learn from Europe, O friends of politics in the Arab homeland, where the European citizen can enter most of the states of the European Union with only a driver's license!

Love Helps Make Distances Shorter

Raouf Karray

In this article I will talk about my experience of travelling, which has preoccupied me ever since I was a child and which I consider to be a whole, wide-ranging culture and an important means of learning and intellectual blossoming. It helps us to discover the Other, and to acquire life experiences that being settled in one place might well not provide.

I have never known why I was possessed by this persistent desire to travel and explore other worlds, far away from where I lived and full of different cultures, traditions, social customs, and even histories. I never knew that travelling would change much of how I think and how I look at life, and would play an important role in making me grow up, determining my attitude towards things. But I did know that if there was anything in my personality that satisfied me, it was caused by a joyful experience that started at an early stage of my life.

- I was very shy. With travel, I became courageous and respectfully naughty.
- I used to feel a lot of pain inside for the wrong done to my mother in our masculine world. With travel, I became a vigorous fighter, standing up for women and the oppressed.
- My father had planted in me a fear of everything. With travel, I became brave and fearless.
- I did not know about sleeping in the rain—so I slept in the rain.
- I did not know the taste of strawberries—so I tasted them.
- I had never before visited a museum—so I visited them.
- I did not know the meaning of self-reliance—so I relied on myself.
- I did not know how widespread people's ignorance of Africa and Arabs was—so I learned.
- I did not know that healthy diets existed—so I became a vegetarian.
- I did not know that challenges also offered the joy of discovery—so I chose to be challenged.
- I did not know that dreaming is, on some level, a reality and a truth without borders— so I dreamed and I carried on.

When I was a child, I used to stand by the side of the road in front of my grandfather Ibrahim's house and watch the few people who travelled down that road using various means of transport. In those beautiful moments I was filled with a strong desire to know where that transportation took them and whether there was an endpoint to their journey. Was there something beyond that endpoint? What was it?

Over time I grew up, and so did the desire to know where that road might take me if I followed it in the opposite direction, away from the city of Sfax. Would it accept me as a traveller, like that young man I had seen standing by the side of the road? I had watched with admiration and childish curiosity as he signalled to the few passing cars that were heading for Tunis, in the hope that they would stop and give him a lift.

My first attempt to explore the worlds of that road was at age fourteen, when I decided to ride my new bike as far as I could. At sixteen, the desire to travel and explore the overseas worlds grew stronger in me, so I crossed the Mediterranean on a ship that carried me to the coast on other side of the water, facing Tunisia's green shores, and dropped me in Marseilles, France. My first adventure with long and joyful travels had begun.

I started hitchhiking on board the ship, and it was a successful beginning, and encouraged me to carry on travelling this way – as I have done ever since then, every time I pack up and leave, whether heading eastwards or westwards.

During my travels I did not draw drawings as such but wove the string of age into its most beautiful images, moment by moment, and shaped the dream of a reality rich in events and surprises. Travelling is, to me, the pulse of life and the source of unlimited pleasure. It symbolises freedom and liberation; a door open to the worlds of magic and beauty; the movement of body and spirit in different spaces without borders. It is a change from the boring sense of time and its cessation in a moment of feeling the pleasure of searching and exploration. Were we not all, once upon a time, always travelling?

Travelling is also the constant, continuous act of dreaming, in which I calmly taste the richness and diversity of the world's cultures, and through which I paint the most beautiful and colourful paintings. The characters in these paintings are those I meet in each country I go to, and the scenes are their ways of living and behaving, their houses welcoming strange guests with such simplicity and spontaneity, sometimes for a few hours, a day or two, or even a week or more. I carry with me the sweetest memories of the sweetest drowsiness that tickled me, as I slept in various unusual places. Maybe wrapped in a bed with soft, pleasant-smelling sheets; maybe in front of a cosy fire burning logs from the nearby forest, a fire which keeps us company until the last black beam of the night on a long, sandy beach; or perhaps inside a heap of warm yellow hay. I carry with me the sweetest memories of the most delicious meal, unknown in our cuisine, and of sitting and chatting over coffee, its smell redolent of my grandmother. She used to gather the women and children of the household around her in the yard after afternoon prayer, the big tray in front of her loaded with the coffee cups and the coffee and sugar containers, while the charcoal stove that burned the coffee spilling over the edges of the pot spread the smell of burned coffee across the yard. I learned how to respect people who disagree with me in opinion and attitude, and how to defend something I believe in.

My travelling was of a special kind. I did not travel in a rush, for tourism or business, but for the sake of travel itself. This is travel as exploration, and as a way of absorbing noble human values; a voyage of relationships with the people and places I visited. And so I chose to hitchhike as a way of moving around, so my travelling stretched in space and time without ruler-drawn borders and predetermined destinations, leaving the door open for coincidence and surprise.

Hitchhiking is a simple way of moving around, and it is, to me and others who have lived this experience, a philosophy that reflects a certain mentality and culture, and a different outlook on people and the world.

I would stand by the side of the road that stretched on with no end and signal to passing cars with an outstretched arm and a closed fist, the thumb held up. It is the signal for those of us who use this method to ask drivers to stop and take us with them, if they feel like it, to some point further down the road.

Hitchhiking also gives us plenty of time to reflect in different ways on what we usually think about, and examine the stuff of our everyday lives with a questioning mind. Having got some distance from these things we are more enlightened than we were before. We are able use our new perspective to explore what had not been clear to us when we stayed in one place or moved around with the usual means of transport.

When we hitchhike we move across spacious space and liberated time, having ridden adventure and risk to live through them with realism, enthusiasm, and great emotional satisfaction. Even when the circumstances are very tense, they are always new and fresh. They cultivate an awareness in us of what surrounds us, and provoke strange and beautiful feelings we have not experienced before in our cold and frozen everyday world.

Yes, travelling by hitchhiking is all this and more. It is adventure itself, which draws on earth the most beautiful colours and gives life back its lost meaning. It stifles the world's noise to find its lost music among the noises of fake civilisation. It creates events and helps bring the freshest and most beautiful moments of life into being.

Sometimes, however, this method does pose problems and dangers and leads to accidents, which have occasionally spoiled our pleasure in travelling and given hitchhiking a bad name. Therefore I would say that it is very important to take care and be cautious, especially when we know that many ill-intentioned people have exploited this method and caused trouble for passengers and car owners alike.

Some practical advice for travelling

- It is important to choose the right place to hitch from: stand by the side of the road on the outskirts of the city or even beyond the city limits, where civilisation almost ends. The residential density and urban movement become less intense here, and roads open up to long distances amid vast fields. I spent three days and nights in one place outside Milan, Italy, which enabled me to get to know many young people, including Gerard and Jean-Paul from France. We cooked and slept together in a corner of a field by the side of the road; we rotated between hitchhiking for part of the day, resting, and chatting. We talked about politics and culture, about our travels, our countries, and the people we'd met during our travels, about the girls that had us under their spell, and so on—the story has nice ending.

- Whenever you stand by the side of the road outside a city to start hitching, give priority to those who have already been standing there before you arrived. Stand at the end of the row, leaving enough distance between you and them, so that they get the first chance of a lift. Sometimes, however, luck would be on the side of those who arrived last. I remember the car that took me from Italy straight to Romania, or the truck that took me from Sofia in Bulgaria all the way to Afghanistan, despite being the last one to have arrived. The reason could have been that the driver was reluctant to stop, or was speeding up and could not stop for the first hitchhiker.

- Whenever you meet someone who has already been standing there, greet them and introduce yourself and tell them about your destination. It sometimes happens that you and the other person will get a lift for part of the journey in the same vehicle if you share the same destination. In fact, I have very rarely gone long distances on my own.

- Stand by the side of the road in an open space to allow drivers to see you from a distance and enable them to slow down to pull over without causing a traffic jam.

- All means of transport are available to hitchhikers: cars, trucks, buses, horse-drawn carts, motorcycles, bicycles, boats, walking… I remember the story of a bus in Afghanistan, the story of a truck in Aswan in Egypt, getting a boat with Jean-Paul, the story of an ox-drawn cart in Yugoslavia...

- Use a small cardboard sign that bears the name of the city or place you want to reach so that drivers will know your destination before pulling over. I remember the story of a sign saying "Tokyo"...

- Be very cautious with any driver you do not feel good about. A car picked me up at one o'clock in the morning one cold and windy night, only to drop me after 10km when I'd made up some story to get rid of the driver, who seemed to be plotting something bad. I also remember being in a truck that took me from Iraq to Amman, Jordan, across the desert, where I had to spend the night on top of the truck with my eyes half open.

Money

I always had some money in hard currency on me. I would only change a very small amount of that into the local currency of the country I entered. I kept my money under my clothes, in a small cloth bag, or money belt, round my neck on a string. I remember spending one night half-asleep in a public park in a big European city with a fellow traveller I'd travelled with for some distance. Some of his belongings were stolen from his money belt that night.

What to put in your backpack

Essentials that are important but not expensive:

- Some light underwear: T-shirt, underpants, socks—two pairs of each; one to wear and one to have in the backpack
- One heavy, warm coat to protect against sudden cold weather
- A small towel
- A packet of tissues
- A sleeping bag
- A small cloth bag containing the following items: a needle and thread to mend clothes when necessary; a toothbrush and toothpaste; a piece of green soap; small scissors; some essential medicines for first aid
- A small notebook and a pen to write down your thoughts or creative "flash prose"
- An address book
- City and road maps

Sometimes it happened that we were in a place where it is difficult to get what we needed in terms of food and drink, so it is advisable to carry some basic things:

- A water bottle (preferably plastic, so that it's light and doesn't break)
- A small bottle of olive oil (also plastic)
- Some dates or dried figs, almonds, and the like
- Barley flour—a simple, nutritional Tunisian meal that people usually have for breakfast and does not need cooking (prepared as follows: one or two spoonfuls of barley flour, one spoonful of olive oil, a little bit of water, some dates or dried figs, all mixed together to get a soft dough, which can be eaten immediately)
- A small, light metal pot
- A plate, glass, spoon, fork, and knife (preferably made of plastic, too)
- A small camping gas stove
- A small tent (if possible)

Note: the average weight of the backpack should be around 13kg.

Travel, a Journey of Learning

Nessma Goueili

The person who travels grows with the journey

A narrow tunnel between creation's three veils of darkness[91] into the light... Unconsciously we cross. The world welcomes us with its first stimulus... Pain. The hand that greets us as naked bodies now of the world. With this first contact we let out a gasp, the gasp of life, a gasp begun by the mother and ended only by death. Eyes remain closed. The naked body is clothed in life. It knows nothing of the world except the scent of its mother, the scent of security.

He doesn't know that his mother will remain there for him and that a cord of love stretches between his and her existences. He measures his security according to the strength of her scent: her proximity, her distance, and her absence. He learns to respond to her absence with tears and to her presence with sleep and feeding.

From the first moment of our existence, the world surprises us with a host of stimuli to which we respond according to our level of physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Our early awareness of place is relative to the mother. With the development of our senses, place comes to be associated with family members and the vocabulary of our movement within it. Our first movements are random. Then they become more organised as we develop an understanding of the things around us, their significance and how they are used.

With our first movements we begin to absorb the culture of place. Bit by bit. What to eat and what not to eat. What rooms we are allowed to enter within the house. The various functions of place: the school, the club, the homes of relatives, and the street. Every place has its own code which we absorb and which governs our behaviour within it.

Throughout our lives, we learn though exposure to different stimuli to which we react with certain responses. When our responses to these stimuli meet with success we develop habits. Habit involves a time element. Memory gives meaning to time. Days lose their meaning without memory. They become like unstrung rosary beads: all alike and without a thread to tie them together.

The thread is the meaning.

Humankind's journey through life is the search for meaning.

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91 Refers to the Quranic verse: "He creates you in the wombs of your mothers: creation after creation in three veils of darkness. Such is Allah your Lord" (Al-Zumar, Chapter 39, verse 6).

Meaning for its own sake, for its existence, for the here and now, for its happiness and its sadness, for its success, for what distinguishes it, for love, for sharing, for friendship, for faith, for the earth, for the sun, for the seasons, for the flowers, for art, for literature, for connecting with one another. For existence.

Memory holds the meaning within us. We learn from experience. We keep it within us and contemplate it. We develop visible and unseen responses, and when the response succeeds in creating meaning, habits are formed.

To return, to come back, to return to something, to repeat something… habit: all that is practised habitually until it is done without effort.

The point here is that life in its essence is emergence. In the beginning was emergence. Habit involves a kind of lifelessness: the lifelessness of repetition, the death of questioning, endeavour, and surprise. Stimulus and response are repeated. Habit forms, learning disappears, and memory ceases to grow for some time. Day follows day, with nothing to distinguish one day from the next. Once again we lose meaning.

With the loss of meaning we lose part of our existence.

The Arabic word malal means "boredom" and is derived from the root malla, which means "to become bored, weary," etc. From the same root we have imtalla, which means "to embrace a religion, enter a faith." Also from this root is the word tamallul, meaning "to be restless, fidgety."

To become bored is a verb of long adherence, like adherence to a faith or religion. Adherence is an act of stillness. Stillness brings us back to restlessness, to emergence, to searching for a meaning to enrich us once again. It is a little different with faith because religions in general strive to give meaning to life. We never tire of meaning, but perhaps we tire of its manifestation as obligations when we empty these of meaning. But that's another story.

Safar means "travel." Derived from the same root, the verb safara means "to unveil, to become clear." Also from this root is the word sifr—a book or one of the scriptures. And finally, safeer, an ambassador, an emissary, which brings us to the idea of a message or communication.

The great Elias Khoury says in his novel Gate of the Sun: "The horizon is a natural extension of the human being."

Travel involves emergence: emergence from the space of the familiar, to cross a greater distance outside ourselves and outside of place. We discover a more welcoming space.

The universe extends like a chapter from the book of Genesis. Through travel, the senses awaken. Enough of the familiar remains to allow for love and longing. The stimulus changes with the number of steps and experiences. Experience now is a way of life, unique and unwritten. Experience is I, my glance, the foreign air upon my skin, the shivering of the body, the awakening of the heart, the sense of freedom, the illumination of mind and soul, peace.

Through travel, borders collapse, the borders of the human person and place. Place expands. It takes you from one surprise to the next. It tests your limits, what you love and what you fear, what you believe to be true and what has been revealed to you... What was within you all along and the hidden talents you suddenly discover.

Travel is a space of doubt.

Shakk means "to connect two things together." It can describe the stringing together of pearls, and also means "to pierce" and "to be suspicious."

Doubt is the expanse of uncertainty that pains us somewhat. It urges us on to search for answers. When traveling, every place has its own code, the code that the culture of the place imposes. Our moving between one place and another means we learn a new code for a different culture. The meaning of doubt is connected to the ordering of things in sequence, knowledge next to knowledge and experience next to experience.

Questions begin with doubt and meaning begins with questions.

Travel is a tool for free learning because we experiment and learn from experience. The most important thing travel gives us is experience. And the most important thing education strives towards is life experience.

To make travel an important learning experience for young people, we should provide them with different experiences through which they can grow and which will later help them choose who they want to be. When we travel, each of us carries his or her own mirror, far from our community's conceptions of us… We are open to life, have a dialogue with the world, with the other… Our outlook grows more beautiful with each new relationship that springs up within us, with place and people on a humanitarian basis… We test our ideas of right and wrong… We live a reality far from what was determined for us at the beginning.

Hence, our people fear travel, especially in Arab societies and conservative families. We're afraid of stepping outside the picture and leaving our place as a memory of what we were and what we were raised upon. This fear is not an indication of backwardness or narrow horizons. I believe the answer lies in the degree of freedom we are given from childhood,

the freedom to think, believe, and act, the freedom to make our own contribution even within the home. This outlook does not imply neglect or the abandonment of direction.

The other, more important matter connected with travel as a learning experience is the making of connections. To connect one thing with another, to connect people together, to give the possessors of different skills and shared interest the opportunity to meet, exchange, and work together. This movement of resources from between countries adds a degree of variety to people and work.

When God created Adam, He created all races of humankind from Adam's loins…

When God created the earth, He created it as a single, undifferentiated mass. Later the mountains, oceans, and continents were formed. The human race settled on every shore. Natural barriers partially separated the human race and formed our features according to geography, history, and blood, as though life had splintered off from Adam and the world, and each piece had settled in a different place and community.

When we travel, we live in different places with other people. Perhaps this is what truly helps us to piece together and make sense of the different parts of existence in our short lives.

Biographies

Elsa Moscoli obtained a Master's Degree in "Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences" at the University of Milan-Bicocca (Italy) and is at the present time a PhD student in "Anthropology of contemporaneity: ethnographies of differences and cultural convergences" at the same university. Her research project concentrates on Moroccan migration with a focus on every day practices and material culture.

Isin Onol was born in Turkey, and lives in Vienna and Zurich. Onol is an independent curator and art critic, and a DPhil candidate at the Institution of Cultural and Intellectual History, University of Applied Arts, Vienna, simultaneously pursuing Postgraduate Studies in Curating at ZHdK, Zürcher Hochschule der Kunst, Zürich, Switzerland. She received her MFA in 2003 at Sabanci University, Istanbul, and worked as the managing director and curator of Proje4L/Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul from 2006 to 2009.

Pakinam Amer is a Cairo-based reporter and writer. She studied communication, investigative journalism, and psychology in Cairo and London. She headed the travel section of Al-Masry Al-Youm's English portal in 2010. She blogs regularly for www.pakinamamer.com and tweets @pakinamamer.

Amr El Beleidy finished his studies in London to the level of a Masters degree. After a spell of different jobs in different countries, he has returned to Egypt to work within his field of passion - travel. He co-founded touringa.com which connects travellers with locals to provide more authentic travel experiences. He has also published numerous articles about his travels in Egypt and other countries. Visit him at www.amrelbeleidy.com and follow him on twitter: @beleidy.

Saïd al-Khatibi was born in 1984 in Bu Sa'adeh in Algeria. He has a BA degree in nature and life sciences and a degree in the French language and literature. He worked as a reporter for the «El Acil» and «Al Watan" French dailies, in addition to several Arabic newspapers in Algeria. His most recent book published in October 2010 is entitled «Weddings of fire… the story of Rai».

Charlotte Bank is an independent researcher, curator and writer living and working between Berlin and Damascus. Her work focuses on contemporary cultural and artistic practices in the Arab world and diasporic communities. She has curated exhibitions and film and video programs in Europe and the Middle East and publishes regularly in international media.

Cristina Farinha was born in 1973 in Porto, Portugal, and is a sociologist, specialized in arts, culture, communication and labour law. Ms. Farinha works for empowering the arts sector social role and employment status, and is interested in how mobility along digital means changes artistic practices and professional profiles. Currently: researcher at Institute Sociology Porto; Managing Director

ADDICT - Agency for the Development of Creative Industries Portugal.

Kamel Riyahi is a tunisian writer and journalist born in 1974. He worked as a correspondent for several Tunisian, Arab, and international newspapers and magazines. He worked as a director of the translation division at the High institute for Translation in Algiers, before returning to Tunisia to work at the Ministry of culture as director of programs at a cultural center in Tunis. In 2007 he received the Comar d'Or prize for the best novel in Tunisia and in 2009 he was recognized in Beirut as the best Arab writer in the less than 39 years category. He has published several novels and critical literary texts.

Najwan Darwish is a poet from Jerusalem-Palestine. He is the Editor-in-Chief of Min Wa Ila magazine, and a columnist at Al-akhbar Lebanese newspaper. In 2009, he was selected by the Beirut39 Festival as one of the finest Arab writers under the age of 39. Darwish is active in diverse media, education and art projects, most recently the Palestine Writing Workshop.

Nouri al-Jarrah: born in Damascus in 1956, Al- Jarrah is the director of the Arab center for Geographic literature – Irtiyad al Afaq. He was the editor of a monthly Lebanese literary magazine entitled "Fikr". He left Lebanon and lived in Cyprus for two years before moving to London in 1986 where he worked in several literary journals and magazines, some of which he founded. Jarrah has several collections of poetry and has written and edited several books of travel literature published by the Soueidi publishing house.

Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio is a PhD Candidate in "History, Theory and Criticism of Arts" and a scholar of the department of Art History of the University of Barcelona. He works also as a critic and independent curator, interested in the interactions between artistic, media and cultural practices in the Mediterranean.

Tahseen Yaqeen worked as a teacher and founder of The Educational Network, and is also an author and editor at the Palestinian Curriculum center and currently manages the gender unit at the Ministry of Education. He worked as an editor and critic and a columnist and has been awarded several prizes. Amongst his publications are: One Orange for Palestine (literary criticism), as well as travel literature and writings in arts and education.

Jihad Shuja'yeh is a young activist born to a Palestinian family in 1982 in Amman, Jordan. He moved with his family back to the Occupied West Bank in 1999. He obtained a B.A. degree in sociology and psychology in 2004, and an MSc degree in social statistics and quantitative research in 2006, from Birzeit University. Jihad worked for nine years as a facilitator for youth groups at a number of refugee and youth camps. He participated in several international, regional and local conferences and meetings focusing on youth and development issues. Jihad also participated in a training program on sustainable development of youth, held in Cyprus in 2006, and in a preparatory meeting for 'Fikr' Eighth Conference in Beirut in 2009. He is also an active member of Safar Alumni.

Raouf Karray was born in Sfax (Tunisia) in 1951. Karray is a graphic designer and illustrator of children's books. He works as an associate professor at the Higher Institute of Arts and Crafts in Sfax. Karray lived for 10 years in Rome, Italy, where he worked in journalism and teaching graphic arts. He had many exhibitions and published special books for children and was awarded several international awards in recognition of his work.

Nessma Gweili is a writer and social activist in Cairo, Egypt. Gweili works in social media and trains a group of youth from Al Moqattam neighbourhood to use digital media to express themselves and their community through the Stories from Moqattam blog: http://rising.globalvoicesonline.org/mokattam and her own personal blog: www.3lasafr.blogspot.com. She has twice received a travel grant from Safar youth mobility fund.

Photo Credits

p. 3   Art work from the Shatana art workshop, Irbid, Jordan.

p.10   Khaled Diab, regional Safar meeting in 2010, Aswan, Egypt.

p.26   Saad Darwazeh, Jenin camp, Paletine.

p.37   Areej Ghazwi, Safar regional meeting 2011, Rasoon camp, Jordan.

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p.39   Usama Hilmi, Safar regional meeting 2010, Aswan, Egypt.

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p.92   Rami Taha, Safar regional meeting 2011, Wadi Rum, Jordan.

p.101   Khaled Diab, regional Safar meeting in 2010, Aswan, Egypt.

p.107   Dalia al Koury, scene from "Banat baballah" film which was shot during a visit she made to Tunisia through a travel grant from Safar Fund.

p. 117   Saad Darwazeh, Bethlehem, Palestine.

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