



THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN

Karsten Xuereb

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**The Impact of European Influence on Cultural Relations in the South
Mediterranean**

DOCTORAL THESIS

Supervised by Dr. Enric Olivé Serret

Departament

d'Història i Història de l'Art



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CERTIFICO

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DEDICATION

Lil Serena, tant bikrija fil-vjaġġ tagħha, tant għaqlija f'dak li tgħallimni.

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Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the moral universe of the colonized, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relation to the world.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986)

The Impact of European Influence on Cultural Relations in the South Mediterranean

Section One: Introduction of the Main Themes and General Discussion

The Scope of the Research

In the wide geopolitical context encompassing local as well as regional and international dimensions, what the research aims to do is provide a modest yet novel and required contribution to the analysis of the dynamic between cultural influence and cultural relations across the South Mediterranean. It will do this by focusing on the impact of primarily British and French influence on cultural relations in four cities and their respective countries, namely Algiers in Algeria, Beirut in Lebanon, Casablanca as well as Rabat in Morocco and Valletta as the cultural capital of Malta.¹ The research focuses on Britain and France because of the dominant imperial roles they held in the Mediterranean as well as beyond and the influence they still yield in cultural affairs on the basis of this past.²

In contemporary terms, France and the United Kingdom still exert a strong influence on the South littoral of the Mediterranean. As the research aims to show, it is difficult to distinguish between where European influence starts and where it stops in relation to local cultural relations, production and expression. The pervasiveness of this influence runs across all levels of society, including the business sector, education, pop culture, design and eating habits. An observation of this pervasiveness has led the author to engage in an assessment of related trends, with particular attention paid to creative cultural expression. In turn, this gives rise to the question of what is working for and what is failing the societies involved. It is important to state at the outset, given the ethic context of colonialism, that this assessment is not intended as a moral judgment. Rather, it is intended as an examination of how shortcomings may be addressed and resolved. The research aims to assess this influence across several levels by posing the following questions:

- Is foreign influence assisting local culture operators?
- Is it displacing locally-generated activities and stunting their development?
- Does this influence strain local relations?
- Does it contribute to raising the standard of productions in terms of quality?
- Does it support local infrastructure in its development?

In order to achieve its aims, the research takes the following three matters into consideration.

- i. Firstly, it is important to note from the very beginning that the sectors of the populations in the South Mediterranean, as well as in Europe, the author targets,

¹ Reference will also be made to Egypt and Tunisia that experienced dramatic social and political change in 2011.

² Throughout the text, both the terms Great Britain and the United Kingdom will be used, depending on the context. Colonial contexts will call for the former, or Britain, while contemporary ones, such as those related to the British Council, will refer to the latter. This is in line with conventional references to different historical and cultural contexts. www.geo.ed.ac.uk (accessed 30 March 2012).

namely artists, cultural operators and diplomacy staff whose work relates directly to culture, and audiences who are generally still limited in numbers, are only small segments of the larger populations they belong to and idiosyncratic to themselves. Therefore, they cannot be taken as representative of the population in general. However, it is also true that while bearing great differences among themselves, these people may be representative of a particular class of people, on occasion elitist in the way they enjoy access to educational and cultural means which others in the same population do not frequent. As pointed out and expanded upon later, many Arab artists contacted or upon whom the research has been conducted live and operate amidst an indifferent Arab population, at best.³ The same, to a certain extent, can be argued for Malta. On the other hand, these individuals and the groups they operate in enjoy and seek contact with foreign organisations and are open to collaborations across the Mediterranean. Artists and cultural operators also tend to reach out to their own populations, particularly in terms of engaging with young people, marginalised individuals, outcasts or people at odds with society, within the contexts of out-reach programmes, education initiatives and audience development. In order to undo simplistic approaches toward different communities, the research will focus primarily on areas of interest and practice artists and members of the general public share in common among themselves. These include mixed lineage and personal and social relations which tie individuals to more than one territory and across the Mediterranean space;

- ii. Secondly, while the research looks at the fields of influence between different populations of the Mediterranean along the North-South axis, it will do this in order to bring to the fore the actions which the Southern Mediterranean people engage in for their own benefit. The aim is not to develop a practice of cultural particularism or protectionism, but to analyse where the potential for local development lies. Furthermore, internal and South-South action will lead to a better understanding of the impact and role of vertical relations (North-South);
- iii. Thirdly and finally, the research addresses the following concern squarely: given its limitations, as outlined above, the research strives to shy away from making too much of a general assessment while analysing the impact of foreign organisations and operators in the South Mediterranean. While showing that there is a wealth of material to engage with, the author's main challenge lies in making sense of this information, deciphering it in a meaningful context, and working towards a set of conclusions with which to identify a way forward within a structure of recommendations for sustainable common action.

The Plan of the Research

As a final point in this introduction, the following is an outline of the plan for this text according to all its sections. The discussion on the Mediterranean and the influence of European cultural

³ REDALIE, Cléa; LAUFER, Anne; FARRE, Maurici (2005): *Territoire Méditerranée*, Labor et Fides, Genève, page 122.

relations on the Southern shore will be developed through an analysis of several cardinal points, as follows.

Overview of the Structure

Section One: Introduction of Main Themes and General Discussion: Chapter One: Cultural Expression in the Mediterranean 1.1.a. Introduction, 1.1.b. Cultural Expression and 1.1.c.i. Three Interpretations of the Mediterranean will identify the key concepts laying the foundation of the research. The author will clarify the scope and use of these concepts against a historical and contemporary framework. The Mediterranean will be approached in light of three ways of interpreting this social and geographical space, namely in terms of the Mediterranean being i. a construct; ii. in terms of metaphorical approaches; and iii. as a project. Sub-chapter *1.1.d. Common Aspects in the Mediterranean* provides a deeper analysis of what contributes to the sense of commonality in the Mediterranean space in order to identify and adopt a framework within which to work and address the matters related to cultural expression, while sub-chapter *1.1.e. Perceptions* deals with prevalent representations and perceptions among Mediterranean actors. This section will do this against the theoretical and practical background to the concept of cultural expression. The literature identified during the desk research phase will be used to acknowledge the existing extensive corpus of writing and reflection on the Mediterranean. In turn, and more importantly, these will be used to show how firstly this vast resource contributes to generating what may be termed a Mediterranean cultural expression in its own right of a predominantly academic nature. Secondly, it will be shown how this wealth of material points us towards recognising and engaging with *artistic* cultural expression which also shares in common its reflection on the Mediterranean and greatly contributes to our experience of this space.

Chapter Two: Cultural Influence in the Mediterranean: 1.2.b. Power Relations: Theory lays the theoretical framework for the discussion on cultural influence. Sub-chapter *1.2.c. Colonialism* brings on board the complex elements related to the colonial project in relation to cultural actions. Both sub-chapters foreshadow important thematic elements which are discussed in detail in the analysis of the fieldwork.

Chapter Three: Cultural Relations in the Mediterranean 1.3.a. Cultural Diplomacy focuses on the important action of cultural influence across the shores of the Mediterranean, especially from the North to the South and with a focus on cultural diplomacy. Sub-chapter *1.3.b. Cultural Cooperation* deals with the related yet distinct aspects of cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean domain. Sub-chapter *1.3.c. Festivities and Tourism* addresses in brief the more recently growing role of foreign audiences.

Section Two: Case Studies and Analysis will discuss the results of the qualitative research carried out with selected individuals in the cities which act as venues for the research: *2.1.b. Algiers; 2.1.c. Beirut; 2.1.d. Casablanca/Rabat; 2.1.e. Valletta/Malta; and 2.1.f. Tunisia*. This discussion will include an assessment of the outcomes: sub-chapter *2.2. Outcomes*.

Section Three: Policy Paper and Way Forward considers the main findings of Sections One and Two and on this basis constructs a policy and proposes a way forward to address the main shortcomings identified and strengthen the main positive elements in existence: *3. 1. b. Policy Paper Key Recommendations*. This will be achieved within the framework provided by the following thematic areas: *3.1.b.i. Networking and Mobility; 3.1.b.ii. Supporting Structures; 3.1.b.iii. Audiences; 3.1.b.iv. Intercultural Dialogue*. The key recommendations will be schematically represented in tabular form in *3.2. Policy Paper Matrix*. This section will be concluded by an assessment of limits encountered during the research (*3.3.a. Recognition of Limits*) and a proposal for adopting unconventional approaches to cultural relations in the Mediterranean rooted in local realities (*3.3.b. Thinking and Acting "Outside the Mediterranean"*).

This text will conclude with *Section Four: Conclusions 4.1. The Mediterranean: Re-visited, Re-thought and Re-enacted* that will sum up the main proposals in a way that promotes sustainability and the building of a legacy.

The annexes consist of the list of questions which where possible were sent to interviewees beforehand; the list of interviewees; the transcripts of the full interviews in the language they were held in; a copy of the manifesto of the Algerian Aouchem arts movement which will be referred to later; and the paper presented in Tunisia in April 2011 which will also be referred to.

Extrait de texte

L'impact de l'influence européenne sur les relations culturelles dans les pays méditerranéens du sud

L'objectif de cette recherche

Dans le vaste contexte géopolitique englobant les dimensions locale, régionale ainsi qu'internationale, cette recherche vise à apporter une contribution modeste mais inédite et nécessaire à l'analyse de la dynamique entre l'influence culturelle et les relations culturelles dans les pays méditerranéens du sud. Pour ce faire, l'étude se concentrera essentiellement sur l'impact des influences britannique et française sur les relations culturelles dans quatre villes ainsi que leurs pays respectifs, à savoir: Alger en Algérie, Beyrouth au Liban, Casablanca et Rabat au Maroc, et La Valette en tant que capitale culturelle de Malte.⁴ La recherche se focalise sur la Grande-Bretagne et la France en raison des rôles impériaux dominants qu'elles ont joués dans la Méditerranée et au-delà ainsi que de l'influence qu'elles exercent encore sur les affaires culturelles dans les pays méditerranéens au vu de ce passé.⁵

De nos jours, la France et le Royaume-Uni exercent encore une forte influence sur la côte sud de la Méditerranée. Comme tente à le montrer cette recherche, il est difficile de déterminer où l'influence européenne commence et où elle se termine en termes de relations, de production et d'expression culturelles locales. L'omniprésence de cette influence s'étend à tous les niveaux de la société, y compris le milieu des affaires, l'éducation, la culture pop, le design et les habitudes alimentaires. C'est l'observation de cette ubiquité qui a mené l'auteur à s'aventurer dans l'estimation des tendances connexes, en portant particulièrement l'attention sur l'expression culturelle créative. Cela pose également la question de savoir ce qui fonctionne pour les sociétés impliquées et ce qui les fait échouer. Il est important de spécifier d'entrée de jeu, vu le contexte éthique du colonialisme, que cette évaluation ne se veut pas jugement moral mais qu'elle a pour vocation d'examiner comment aborder et corriger les lacunes. Cette recherche a pour but d'estimer cette influence sur plusieurs niveaux en posant les questions suivantes :

- L'influence étrangère aide-t-elle les opérateurs culturels locaux?

⁴ Nous ferons également référence à l'Égypte et la Tunisie qui ont connu des changements sociaux et politiques considérables en 2011.

⁵ Tout au long du texte, les termes Grande-Bretagne et Royaume-Uni seront utilisés suivant le contexte. Les textes coloniaux emploieront le premier, tandis que les dynamiques contemporaines telles que celles liées au British Council utiliseront le dernier. Ce choix est conforme aux référentiels de différents contextes historiques et culturels www.geo.ed.ac.uk (page consultée le 30 mars 2012).

- Remplace-t-elle les activités endogènes et empêche-t-elle leur développement ?
- Cette influence détériore-t-elle les relations locales?
- Contribue-t-elle à améliorer le niveau des productions en termes de qualité?
- Soutient-elle les infrastructures locales dans leur développement?

Afin de parvenir à ses fins, cette étude tient compte des trois points ci-dessous.

- i. Tout d'abord, il est important de souligner d'emblée que les secteurs des populations des pays méditerranéens du sud ainsi que d'Europe ciblés par l'auteur, à savoir les artistes, les opérateurs culturels et le personnel diplomatique dont le travail est directement lié à la culture, ainsi que les publics généralement limités en nombre, ne représentent qu'une infime partie de populations plus larges auxquelles ils appartiennent et auxquelles ils sont bien particuliers. C'est la raison pour laquelle on ne peut les considérer comme représentatifs de la population en général. Cependant, il est également vrai qu'alors qu'elles présentent des différences considérables entre elles, ces personnes peuvent être représentatives d'une catégorie particulière de gens, parfois élitistes dans la façon dont elles jouissent d'un accès à des milieux éducatifs et culturels que d'autres au sein de la même population ne fréquentent pas. Comme cela sera signalé et développé plus tard, beaucoup des artistes arabes contactés ou à la demande de qui cette enquête a été réalisée vivent et travaillent au sein d'une population arabe indifférente, dans le meilleur des cas.⁶ Dans une certaine mesure, on peut dire la même chose de Malte. D'un autre côté, ces personnes et les groupes dans lesquels elles travaillent apprécient et recherchent le contact avec des organisations étrangères. Elles sont ouvertes à la collaboration à travers la Méditerranée. Les artistes et les opérateurs culturels ont également tendance à entrer en contact avec leurs propres populations, surtout en matière d'engagement avec les jeunes, les marginaux, les parias ou les gens en rupture avec la société, dans le cadre de programmes d'assistance, d'initiatives d'enseignement et d'élargissement du public. Afin de renverser les approches simplistes envers les différentes communautés, cette étude se concentrera sur des domaines d'intérêt et de pratique communs aux artistes et au grand public. Cela comprend les origines mixtes et les relations personnelles et sociales qui attachent les individus à plus d'un territoire et ce, dans toute la Méditerranée;
- ii. Deuxièmement, si cette étude analyse les domaines d'influence entre plusieurs peuples de la Méditerranée le long de l'axe Nord-Sud, c'est dans le but de mettre en avant les actions dans lesquelles les habitants des pays méditerranéens du sud s'engagent dans leur propre intérêt. L'objectif n'est pas de développer une pratique de particularisme ou de protectionnisme culturels, mais bien d'analyser où se trouve le potentiel de développement local. En outre, les actions internes et Sud-Sud aideront à une meilleure compréhension de l'impact et du rôle des relations verticales (Nord-Sud);
- iii. Troisièmement et pour terminer, cette recherche aborde de front le problème suivant : étant donné ses limites, comme exposé ci-dessus, cette étude s'efforce d'éviter de faire

⁶ REDALIE, Cléa; LAUFER, Anne; Maurici (2005): *Territoire Méditerranée*, Labor et Fides, Genève, page 122.

trop grand cas d'une appréciation générale lors de l'analyse de l'impact des organisations et opérateurs étrangers dans les pays méditerranéens du sud. Tout en montrant qu'il y a une profusion de données à analyser, le principal défi de l'auteur consiste à donner un sens à ces informations, à les déchiffrer dans un contexte pertinent, et à travailler pour aboutir à un ensemble de conclusions qui permettront de trouver comment aller de l'avant au moyen d'une série de conseils pour une action commune durable.

Voici le sommaire de ce texte selon ses différentes sections. La question des pays méditerranéens et de l'influence des relations culturelles européennes sur la rive méridionale sera développée au moyen de l'analyse de plusieurs points fondamentaux établis comme suit.

Présentation du plan

Section I: Introduction des thèmes principaux et discussion générale: Chapitre Un: Expression culturelle dans les pays méditerranéens 1.1.a. Introduction, 1.1.b. Expression culturelle et 1.1.c.i. Trois interprétations des pays méditerranéens identifieront les concepts clés jetant les bases de cette recherche. L'auteur précisera la portée et l'utilisation de ces concepts en fonction d'un cadre historique et contemporain. Les pays méditerranéens seront abordés selon trois manières d'interpréter cet espace social et géographique, à savoir, en termes des pays méditerranéens étant i. une construction; ii. en termes d'approches métaphoriques; et iii. en tant que projet. Le sous-chapitre *1.1.d. Aspects communs dans les pays méditerranéens* offre une analyse plus approfondie de ce qui accroît le sentiment de communauté dans l'espace méditerranéen afin d'identifier et d'adopter une structure avec laquelle travailler et de traiter les aspects liés à l'expression culturelle. Le sous-chapitre *1.1.e. Perceptions* traite, quant à lui, les représentations et les perceptions dominantes chez les acteurs méditerranéens. Cette section fonctionnera selon un cadre théorique et pratique du concept d'expression culturelle. Les ouvrages identifiés durant la phase de recherche documentaire seront utilisés afin de reconnaître l'existence du vaste corpus d'écrits et de réflexions concernant les pays méditerranéens. Le moment venu, chose plus importante encore, ils seront utilisés pour montrer comment cette énorme ressource contribue tout d'abord à générer ce que l'on peut appeler une expression culturelle des pays méditerranéens comme le veut sa nature essentiellement académique. Ensuite, il sera montré comment cette richesse de documentation nous pousse à reconnaître et étudier l'expression culturelle *artistique* qui partage également la même réflexion sur les pays méditerranéens et participe énormément à notre expérience dans cet espace.

Chapitre deux: Influence culturelle dans les pays méditerranéens: 1.2.b. Relations de pouvoir: Théorie place le cadre théorique pour le débat sur l'influence culturelle. Le sous-chapitre *1.2.c. Colonialisme* ajoute les éléments complexes liés au projet colonial par rapport aux actions

culturelles. Ces deux sous-chapitres annoncent d'importants éléments thématiques qui sont examinés en détail dans l'analyse du travail sur le terrain.

Chapitre trois: Relations culturelles dans les pays méditerranéens 1.3.a. Diplomatie culturelle se concentre sur l'importante action de l'influence culturelle au large de la Méditerranée, surtout du Nord vers le Sud et en mettant l'accent sur la diplomatie culturelle. Le sous-chapitre *1.3.b. Coopération culturelle* parle des aspects liés à la coopération culturelle tout en étant différents dans le domaine méditerranéen. Le sous-chapitre *1.3.c. Les festivités et le tourisme* explique brièvement le rôle de plus en plus important des publics étrangers.

Section II: Études de cas et analyse évoquera les résultats de la recherche qualitative réalisée auprès de personnes choisies dans les villes où se déroule la recherche: *2.1.a. Introduction; 2.1.b. Alger; 2.1.c. Beyrouth; 2.1.d. Casablanca/Rabat; 2.1.e. La Valette/Malte; 2.1.f. Tunisie.* Cette analyse comprendra une évaluation des résultats: sous-chapitre *2.2. Résultats.*

Section III : Document de stratégie et marche à suivre examine les principales conclusions des Sections I et II et, sur cette base, élabore une stratégie et propose une marche à suivre pour remédier aux principales lacunes identifiées et renforcer les éléments positifs majeurs existants: *3.1.b. Recommandations clés du document de stratégie.* Cela sera fait selon la structure fournie par les domaines thématiques suivants: *3.1.b.i. Mise en réseau et mobilité; 3.1.b.ii. Structures de soutien; 3.1.b.iii. Publics; 3.1.b.iv. Dialogue interculturel.* Les recommandations clés seront représentées schématiquement dans un tableau dans *3.2. Matrice du document de stratégie.* Cette section se terminera par une évaluation des limites rencontrées lors de la recherche (*3.3.a. Reconnaissance des limites*) ainsi que par une proposition pour adopter des approches peu conventionnelles des relations culturelles dans la Méditerranée (*3.3.b. Penser et agir "en dehors de la Méditerranée"*).

Ce texte se conclura par la *Section IV Conclusions: 4.1. Les pays méditerranéens: revus, repensés et rétablis* qui résumera les principales propositions de manière à promouvoir la durabilité et la création d'un patrimoine.

Expression culturelle dans les pays méditerranéens

Le 6 mai 2011, le Fonds Roberto Cimetta, représenté par son conseil d'administration, son comité d'experts et ses partenaires institutionnels et de la société civile, a publié un communiqué dans lequel il réitérait son soutien à la mobilité artistique dans la Méditerranée. Ce qui a ouvert la voie à cette action, ce sont les changements social et politique capitaux

menés par ce que les médias occidentaux ont appelé le “Printemps arabe”:⁷ à la moitié de l'année 2011, ce phénomène avait renversé les régimes tunisien et égyptien et défié, à des degrés différents, la plupart des autres états arabes, dont ceux considérés comme pays méditerranéens. Non seulement cette déclaration a été publiée par l'un des plus vastes réseaux européens soutenant activement la mobilité artistique transméditerranéenne, mais en outre, cela s'est fait avec le soutien du Ministère français des Affaires étrangères, du Ministère français de la Culture et de la Communication et des ambassades françaises à Madrid et à Rome.⁸

La présente recherche ouvre le chapitre d'introduction de cette thèse en faisant référence à cet exemple d'engagement européen dans des questions culturelles méditerranéennes pour proposer un regard particulier sur ce qui suit: à savoir, alors que des déclarations formulées par d'autres initiatives de nature politique plus évidente comme la fragile Union pour la Méditerranée (également appuyée, ou plutôt inspirée par la France) ou le service extérieur de l'Union européenne récemment créé, le Service européen pour l'action extérieure (SEAE), ont tendance à n'être respectées qu'avec scepticisme par beaucoup des deux côtés de la Méditerranée, les positions prises par des organisations s'occupant essentiellement de la culture, comme le Fonds Roberto Cimetta ou encore la Fondation Anna Lindh, qui travaillent dans un fort contexte politique, en ce qui concerne le secteur culturel dans la Méditerranée, sont perçues de façon plus neutre, voire positive. Cette recherche a l'intention d'analyser cette impression et d'évaluer un nombre de questions liées à l'intérêt européen à soutenir activement les relations culturelles dans la Méditerranée. Voici les principales :

- i. Quelle est la perception de la plupart des parties intéressées, c'est-à-dire, quelle perception du rôle joué par les Européens les artistes et les opérateurs culturels des territoires de la Méditerranée du sud ont-ils ?
- ii. Quel est l'impact de l'influence européenne en matière culturelle dans la Méditerranée du sud ? Afin de dépasser les jugements moraux faciles, notre intention est d'estimer la valeur des actions auxquelles les Européens contribuent sensiblement par leur présence et leur participation, ainsi que le coût d'opportunité de cette présence dans les relations Sud-Sud et le renforcement des capacités (compétences en matière d'infrastructure et humaines); et
- iii. Quels sont les résultats d'une telle recherche en termes de développement d'une vision pour des relations culturelles positives et durables dans la Méditerranée et de sa mise en application à travers une politique et des stratégies capables de mettre en place une marche à suivre réalisable ?

⁷ DABASHI, Hamid (2012): *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*, Zed Book Ltd., London, page xvii. Selon Dabashi, les Arabes et les musulmans ont fait du Printemps arabe une expression de ‘provocation en retard’ après une période postcoloniale qui a perpétré les injustices de l'ère coloniale.

⁸ E-mail ‘Statement/Déclaration - Roberto Cimetta Fund - Fonds Roberto Cimetta’, 13 septembre 2011 à 11h13.

Afin d'aborder ces questions, deux concepts fondamentaux doivent être clarifiés. Le premier est le concept d'expression culturelle. Il s'agit de la principale catégorie d'action humaine étudiée, parce qu'elle comprend les moyens d'expression les plus importants dans un cadre culturel et qu'elle noue des relations étroites avec la Méditerranée, qu'elle l'exprime et l'aborde de façon très proche. Le second concept est celui de la Méditerranée en elle-même. Il permet de développer les dimensions mentale, sociale et géographique de cette étude, nourrissant l'analyse de cet espace à travers le temps, avec l'époque contemporaine comme période vers laquelle tous les débats aboutissent.

L'expression culturelle

Le cadre ici choisi pour analyser différents discours sur la Méditerranée et différentes représentations de celle-ci est celui de l'expression culturelle. La Convention sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des expressions culturelles de l'UNESCO constitue un des forums les plus récents et les plus importants lors duquel ce concept a été utilisé. Elle a inspiré son utilisation dans cette recherche et fournit à l'auteur les références sémantiques nécessaires. Cette Convention de 2005 s'engage à revendiquer la double nature, culturelle et économique, ainsi que la spécificité des produits et services culturels. Pour ce faire, elle reconnaît et soutient le besoin pour les états d'adopter des mesures liées à la politique culturelle ainsi que le besoin d'une meilleure coopération internationale.⁹ Une des principales fonctions de la Convention de 2005 est celle d'être un outil conçu pour répondre au besoin de protéger la diversité culturelle. Dans un contexte méditerranéen, le rôle que la France jouait pour contribuer à son développement et l'influence qu'elle a encore dans sa promotion sont d'une importance capitale. Dans un cadre méditerranéen plus vaste, la Convention de 2005 n'est pas à la mesure de ses ambitions à cause des régimes despotiques arabes qui s'opposent à son application, ou du moins ne la soutiennent pas activement. Il faut également noter que les défis auxquels est confronté l'espace euro-méditerranéen dépassent les moyens et les possibilités des structures régionales existantes pour s'occuper sérieusement de la diversité et des relations culturelles.¹⁰

Le choix du titre de la Convention est le résultat de longues discussions entre les négociateurs de l'UNESCO. Il y avait d'importants différends en ce qui concerne le terme 'protection', ainsi que pour ce qui est intéressant pour cette section, à savoir, 'l'expression culturelle'. Les premières ébauches rédigées par les experts indépendants affectés à ce poste par l'UNESCO parlaient de '*protection de la diversité des contenus culturels et des expressions artistiques*'. Ainsi, 'la diversité culturelle' au sens large du terme était évitée. Toutefois, le texte faisait de

⁹ RICHIERI HANANIA, Lilian (2009): *Diversité culturelle et droit international du commerce*, La Documentation française, Paris.

¹⁰ REZK, Leila, *Créer une Image de Soi dans le Machrek Arabe: Un Parcours Semé d'Embûches*, Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth, 2010, page 77.

nombreuses références à cette expression et on les trouve encore dans la Convention.¹¹ L'article 4.1 formule une bonne idée de ce que l'on entend par expression culturelle, en faisant référence à la 'diversité culturelle' en termes de son expression par des modes de création artistique, de production, de diffusion, de distribution et de développement par tous les moyens de communication et par toutes les technologies possibles. La dernière nuance reflète le lien stratégique avec les moyens commerciaux de production et les services. D'un autre côté, l'expression culturelle est également liée aux connaissances et compétences traditionnelles ainsi qu'aux modes traditionnels d'expression liée au folklore.

L'expression faisant référence à la '*diversité des contenus culturels et des expressions artistiques*' qui fait partie du titre de l'ébauche n'a toujours pas réussi à convaincre toutes les parties. Une discussion concernant le terme 'culture' a judicieusement été évitée puisqu'il a été reconnu qu'aucune définition complète ne satisfaisait toutes les parties et que la culture faisait partie de beaucoup d'instruments de l'UNESCO sans qu'un tel exercice soit nécessaire. D'un autre côté, alors que 'les contenus culturels' et 'les expressions artistiques' faisaient référence à 'la culture', c'était dans un sens plus restreint qui évoquait 'l'expression culturelle' et les étapes de la création, de la production, de la distribution et de la diffusion des contenus culturels sans en mentionner autant. Les négociateurs se sont mis d'accord sur l'utilisation du terme 'expression culturelle' pour faire référence à la fois aux contenus culturels et aux expressions artistiques. Bien que le terme ait également soulevé des problèmes dont on ne s'est pas chargé de manière satisfaisante avant la deuxième session intergouvernementale, il a été maintenu pour le titre de la Convention. Le texte consolidé a lié le terme de manière plus étroite au domaine commercial en soulignant que de telles '*expressions se transmettaient par les activités culturelles, les biens et les services résultant de la créativité des personnes, des groupes et des sociétés qui possédaient des contenus culturels.*' Les pays qui souhaitaient éloigner la Convention du domaine commercial autant que possible, comme les États-Unis et le Japon, se sont fortement opposés à l'utilisation de ce terme.

Le terme 'expressions culturelles' a finalement été défini comme les '*expressions résultant de la créativité des individus, des groupes et des sociétés, ayant un contenu culturel.*' À son tour, le terme 'contenu culturel' a été défini par la Convention comme '*renvoyant au sens symbolique, à la dimension artistique et aux valeurs culturelles qui ont pour origine ou expriment des identités culturelles.*'¹²

¹¹ UNESCO, *Convention sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des expressions culturelles*, Articles 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, 14(d) et 18.

¹² Ibid. Article 4.

Pour les besoins de la présente recherche, l'expression culturelle est considérée comme étant tous les moyens de communication que les individus et les groupes utilisent pour entamer une discussion à l'intérieur et à propos de l'Europe et la Méditerranée. L'analyse de l'expression culturelle commence par l'enquête bibliographique entreprise. Cet exercice met en lumière la Méditerranée et, ce faisant, préfigure et planifie les événements qui contribuent à l'expression culturelle à l'œuvre. C'est l'analyse de cette expression à l'œuvre qui fournit la dimension pratique des observations de l'auteur à partir de la *Section I Chapitre trois* jusqu'à la fin du texte. Elle est homologue de l'analyse de la dimension théorique exprimée dans la *Section I Chapitre un*.

Gros plan sur les entretiens

D'un côté, les entretiens arrangés pour cette recherche fournissent une forte impression de détermination basée sur le travail créatif ayant pour but d'explorer de nouvelles possibilités de collaboration avec les artistes et les opérateurs culturels aux origines diverses et avec différentes expériences aux niveaux local, national et international, y compris dans la région méditerranéenne. D'un autre côté, cet enthousiasme se heurte à des limites, des frustrations, ainsi qu'un nombre d'obstacles dus au manque de ressources et aux mentalités étroites qui ne soutiennent pas l'expression culturelle.

Leila Rezk (Beyrouth) attire l'attention sur le fait que les pays arabes, et surtout ceux du Moyen-Orient, qui ont en commun l'héritage de l'Empire ottoman, trahissent un sentiment de manque de réalisation dans tous les secteurs de la société. Le malaise qui existe a enclenché une spirale de négativité qui influence d'autres pays et d'autres régions en dehors de la zone méditerranéenne du sud :

*'Les analyses politiques les plus éclairées estiment que la crise quasi endémique qui sévit dans le Machrek arabe depuis la chute de l'Empire ottoman, avec une portée politico-idéologique aux imbrications multiples, représente une menace réelle pour la stabilité mondiale. Mais le fait qu'elle contrecarre essentiellement le développement des pays concernés et altère le rapport de leur peuple à eux-mêmes et au monde est largement occulté.'*¹³

Toutefois, selon Rezk, la dimension culturelle est l'aspect essentiel de cette réalité, dans laquelle s'étendent la majeure partie du conflit et l'inactivité décrite, qu'il s'agisse du communautarisme à Beyrouth, du spectre des émeutes à Alger, ou encore du semblant de développement à Casablanca. Les répercussions de ce conflit ont une influence sur la représentation et la perception du monde européen et du monde arabe réciproquement:

¹³ Rezk, page 11. Entretien avec Leila Rezk en novembre 2011.

'C'est néanmoins la portée culturelle de cette crise qui en est le point névralgique. Ses ferments déchaînent des antagonismes et opposent indûment l'Orient à l'Occident et, de ce fait, le monde musulman au monde chrétien, suscitant de part et d'autre des replis identitaires. Le conflit donne lieu à une perception impropre de l'Occident, accusé de tous les maux par les populations arabes dans un amalgame lapidaire et sans nuances avec l'État d'Israël, alors que l'Occident néglige, par trop souvent, les conséquences néfastes de la situation d'un Machrek arabe devenu le "terreau qui nourrit et accentue l'antagonisme entre l'Islam et l'Occident.'

De plus, les relations entre les pays du sud de la Méditerranée et l'Europe suscitent encore des réactions et des idées toutes faites basées sur un ensemble de représentations des différents participants qui renforcent les préjugés et les craintes.

*'L'exemple le plus éloquent de la falsification des objectifs de la mondialisation culturelle est probablement celui de la méfiance mutuelle qui caractérise aujourd'hui les échanges culturels entre l'Europe et le Machrek arabe.'*¹⁴

Comme nous l'avons souligné lors des entretiens, les pays méditerranéens du sud ne peuvent pas être regroupés sous le titre générique de monde arabe. Il y a différentes sortes d'Arabes, et pas uniquement des Arabes, dans cette partie de la Méditerranée. Cela signifie qu'il existe plusieurs publics qui ressentent et expriment la culture de différentes manières selon les communautés ainsi que selon les personnes, même si c'est une chose plus difficile à percevoir et à aborder au moyen d'une politique. En ce qui concerne le colonialisme, sa pratique a conduit à un changement d'influence dans l'art des classes sociales privilégiées ainsi que dans leur production. Les élites locales ont été confrontées à un dilemme au moment de promouvoir la culture locale alors qu'elles avaient des références occidentales, chose qui est toujours d'actualité.¹⁵

Dans des domaines de politique générale, les structures postcoloniales ont seulement semblé perpétuer les modèles coloniaux d'hégémonie et on peut en dire de même en termes de politique et de pratique culturelles.¹⁶ La politique culturelle, qui est plus implicite qu'explicite, a servi d'outil pour de nombreux buts différents dans l'histoire moderne. À l'époque de la décolonisation ainsi qu'à l'ère de la guerre froide, une politique culturelle panarabe s'est dessinée, elle a promu la langue arabe particulièrement dans le secteur de l'éducation. Comme indiqué dans le texte intégral de la recherche comprenant des références à Cassano, "l'adaptation à la modernité" par les sociétés arabes signifiait être brutalement introduit à la

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ CULTURE RESOURCE/AL MAWRED AL THAQAFY (2010): *Cultural Policies in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia: An Introduction*, European Cultural Foundation/Boekmanstudies, Amsterdam, page 17.

¹⁶ Dabashi, page xix.

modernité et subir les conséquences de cette rupture aujourd'hui. Cependant, celles que l'on nomme 'guerres culturelles' vont au-delà des tendances esthétiques et culturelles puisque les causes plaidées ou attaquées sont politiques et politisées, avec des groupes d'opposition au régime utilisant la culture comme arme morale contre les régimes considérés comme décadents et se pliant aux valeurs occidentales.¹⁷

Jusqu'aux révolutions du Printemps arabe, et dans ces pays où le changement était limité, un aperçu des politiques culturelles dans les pays arabes nous montre que le contrôle centralisé des politiques culturelles, là où elles existent, reste important. D'un autre côté, les ONG et les fonds venant de l'étranger jouent un rôle plus important dans la détermination de l'action.¹⁸ Le rôle des ONG dans l'établissement des ordres du jour est encore limité. On peut cependant remarquer une évolution commune chez les ONG des pays méditerranéens du sud, y compris Malte, en ce qui concerne la manière dont elles se sont développées depuis leurs débuts qui, pour beaucoup d'organisations indépendantes, signifiaient fournir un espace et faire progresser l'éducation et la formation. Le Centre d'art dramatique de Malte a connu un développement similaire.¹⁹ La dernière étape semble être le rôle croissant de la gestion culturelle par rapport au renforcement des capacités et celui de la collaboration avec des organismes étrangers.²⁰

Un rapport récent et complet des différents types de politiques pratiquées dans le monde arabe identifie quatre concepts culturels comprenant des expressions officielles et non-officielles, concernant les systèmes publics / gouvernementaux ainsi que l'espace culturel auto-généré. Il s'agit de: i. la culture en tant qu'espace crucial pour la réflexion et les doutes, *'développer des systèmes culturels et artistiques allant d'une culture de résistance de l'époque coloniale à une culture contemporaine de contestation dans des états autoritaires'*; ii. la culture au sein du mouvement panarabe, en tant que moyen de développement de la conscience panarabe; iii. la culture en tant que marque nationale, pour construire et représenter les spécificités ethniques et l'identité nationale; et iv. la culture en tant que divertissement, avec la production artistique dirigée par des producteurs privés et les demandes du marché.²¹

À bien des égards, la situation culturelle de Malte est différente de celle de ses voisins du Sud. En comparaison, sa culture s'est aussi considérablement améliorée ces dernières années. Néanmoins, les relations entre voisins ainsi que le soutien au développement des sociétés au moyen des arts ont encore des progrès à faire. De plus, vu sa taille et sa position, Malte peut

¹⁷ Culture Resource / Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, page 19.

¹⁸ Ibid. page 25.

¹⁹ BOUQUEREL, Fanny; EL HUSSEINY, Basma (2009): *Towards A Strategy for Culture in the Mediterranean Region*, EC Preparatory document: Needs and opportunities assessment report in the field of cultural policy and dialogue in the Mediterranean Region, EuropeAid, Brussels, page 78.

²⁰ Culture Resource / Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, page 278.

²¹ Ibid. page 255.

également profiter du fait qu'elle est influencée par les comportements et les actions qui l'entourent. Une des caractéristiques principales du développement actuel de Malte est l'UE à laquelle elle appartient depuis 2004. D'un autre côté, comme l'ont fait remarquer plusieurs observateurs dont fait partie Mohammed Barrada (Tunis / Bruxelles), les états arabes comptent 300 millions de personnes qui ont des éléments en commun dans leur religion et leur langue, mais qui sont affaiblies par la force que représentent le contrôle et la censure qui rendent difficiles la communication et la coopération à travers le monde arabe. En revanche, l'UE est composée de 27 états, de 23 langues officielles et de 450 millions de personnes très différentes, mais est ouverte à la communication et travaille avec ses partenaires mondiaux. Barrada déclare que même le concept d'industries culturelles et créatives n'est pas possible dans le monde arabe puisqu'il n'y a pas '*d'unité dans la diversité*' pour permettre les développements du marché commun qui se basent sur une société et un marché libres.²²

Dans cette sous-section, les résultats des entretiens analysés dans le texte intégral de la recherche seront présentés de manière thématique et seront analysés. Cela nous mènera à la section suivante du texte intégral de la recherche qui développera une série de recommandations pour une marche à suivre concrète, suivie de commentaires en conclusion.

La Méditerranée

Les entretiens menés ont souligné un point commun: la volonté de chercher la valeur de la Méditerranée et de lui attribuer. Ce point se trouve au cœur de cette recherche, qui essaie de trouver le sens que cet espace peut avoir pour les artistes, les opérateurs culturels et leurs communautés. Nous avons interviewé une petite partie d'entre eux, néanmoins représentative.

La Méditerranée est perçue de différentes manières. Elle est considérée comme un cadre pour les projets bilatéraux ou multilatéraux qui n'a pas de valeur particulière en soi. C'est très ironique puisque les efforts administratifs et d'organisation pour soutenir les développements politiques, sociaux et culturels dans la Méditerranée, qui sont immenses, semblent être devenus une valeur en eux-mêmes et créent un exemple de moyens devenant la fin.

L'intérêt de la Méditerranée semble être affirmé et confirmé sur base des discussions qui se sont tenues lors des entretiens. Les avis divergent quant à la signification, mais le but de cette recherche n'est pas d'essayer de résumer différentes opinions en un ensemble de significations cohérentes. Comme le fait remarquer Adrian Grima (Malte), Herzfeld affirme que pendant que nous discutons de la Méditerranée, elle existe.²³ Ce que l'on en dit varie, mais certaines réflexions artistiques et spirituelles contribuent à la réalité et à l'importance de la Méditerranée pour ses habitants.

²² Entretien avec Mohammed Barrada à Bruxelles en octobre 2009.

²³ Entretien avec Adrian Grima à Malte en décembre 2010.

Chaque témoignage faisant allusion à des questions d'identité liée principalement au langage, à l'image de soi, à la représentation et au conflit survenu entre des identités divergentes, est profondément ancré dans des circonstances géographiques particulières, riches de par leur différents niveaux de significations politique et sociale. Les expériences échangées sont propres aux personnes qui les relatent, elles donnent de bons aperçus des situations de leurs communautés. Toutefois, conformément à l'objectif de cette recherche, nous sommes en quête des aspects d'intérêt commun dans ces différents témoignages, ce qui nous permet de construire, d'analyser et d'utiliser une expérience partagée de la Méditerranée comme base solide à partir de laquelle il est possible de rédiger une politique visionnaire dans le but d'aborder différentes réalités, néanmoins liées, d'une manière positive et tangible. La grande diversité du sud de la Méditerranée, qui complète celle du nord, doit être nuancée par le besoin commun d'un travail de réflexion, de consultation et de dialogue concernant les politiques guidant et réglementant l'expression culturelle.²⁴

La présence de l'influence coloniale sur l'expression et les relations culturelles se fait encore sentir fortement actuellement, comme en témoignent les nombreux artistes et opérateurs culturels interrogés. Les aspects négatifs sont décrits, tout comme ceux qui envisagent des scénarios plus positifs actuellement, surtout lorsqu'ils sont liés à des scènes artistiques et culturelles. Beaucoup d'entretiens ont permis de découvrir un dilemme très fréquent, qu'il soit exprimé consciemment ou, ce qui est peut-être plus révélateur encore, inconsciemment: le passé colonial de la Méditerranée a amené un nombre de déséquilibres et d'injustices entre le Nord et le Sud. On pourrait également mentionner le faible investissement européen dans l'appréciation et l'expression culturelles par crainte de promouvoir les identités locales, qui pourraient s'élever contre le régime colonial, mais on pourrait aussi évoquer un désintérêt général sauf dans le cas de l'éventualité d'un profit.

En outre, le Sud essuie encore les coûts structurel, économique, politique et humain en général de l'imposition du Nord. D'un autre côté, les personnes interviewées témoignent d'autres réalités qui sont liées à l'héritage colonial et qui caractérisent les territoires du Sud jusqu'à aujourd'hui. L'une représente les résultats probablement positifs du régime colonial, comme les infrastructures et les conventions culturelles qui ont contribué au développement du Sud, que ce soit dans le domaine des arts, des médias ou de l'éducation en général. L'autre, c'est la tendance au comportement subversif, ou celle qui permettait et permet encore aux autochtones de s'approprier d'Europe les tendances, les structures et les manières de gérer et de communiquer les expériences afin de créer un espace où raconter leur propre histoire, avec leurs propres moyens d'expression, leur propre message et de générer des moyens de développement adaptés à leurs besoins.

²⁴ Bouquerel; El Husseiny, page 17.

L'espace créé peut-être considéré comme un espace tiers, différent de l'espace intermédiaire permettant aux différentes cultures de rester intactes. C'est plutôt une nouveauté qui interagit et se manifeste dans le dialogue interculturel et les projets et processus de coopération et collaboration culturelles. On retrouve cet espace sous différentes formes, dont le langage, ce que les personnes interviewées venant de tous les territoires visités expliquent longuement.

Pour les personnes en contact avec des réalités appartenant à la Méditerranée, l'importance de s'ouvrir aux dimensions européenne et méditerranéenne et de collaborer avec elles est marquée. Nombreux sont ceux qui, parmi les personnes interrogées, considèrent ces deux dimensions comme étant potentiellement très bénéfiques l'une pour l'autre et intimement liées suite à l'histoire des peuples qui les ont habitées et se sont croisés en tissant un réseau d'expériences et d'identités culturelles mélangées. Ils critiquent également les limites politique et bureaucratique imposées aux habitants de cet espace, qu'ils s'agissent de problèmes locaux comme ceux dont est touchée la Palestine, ou plus régionaux comme la mobilité des visas dans le cadre de la collaboration arabo-méditerranéenne.

L'apparition et le développement du Printemps arabe ont pris beaucoup d'observateurs par surprise en raison de leur vitesse et de leurs effets considérables. L'ouverture de certains régimes arabes évoque des aspects tels que l'éducation, l'emploi, la communication et le nouvel espace public.²⁵ Certains commentateurs ainsi que certaines personnes interrogées ont souligné l'importance des médias sociaux qui ont permis aux citoyens des pays arabes de canaliser de vieux sentiments de frustration et une passion pour le changement pour en faire un plan d'action. Quelques personnes interrogées, comme Nadim Tarazi (Beyrouth), sont sceptiques quant à la trop grande importance que l'on prête au rôle des médias sociaux dans ce changement.²⁶ Cependant, l'opinion générale concernant ce rôle, c'est qu'il a été déterminant, ce qui suggère que les gens associent le changement aux nouveaux moyens de communication et d'interaction, ainsi qu'à la collaboration culturelle. De plus, comme le fait remarquer Driss Ksikes (Rabat), le rôle des médias sociaux ne se limite pas à son lien avec le Printemps arabe, puisque l'importance du développement de la communication dans la société s'est manifestée dans plusieurs moyens de communication comme la pratique du darija ainsi que son utilisation dans les médias sociaux, chose qui est suivie avec intérêt par beaucoup, y compris certains instituts culturels.²⁷

Il est apparu que les artistes et les opérateurs culturels du sud de la Méditerranée, comme c'est également le cas dans le Nord, ont de nombreux rôles et qu'ils les assurent. Grima mentionne la liminalité qui touche beaucoup de personnes dans ce milieu, ce qui leur permet d'atteindre des

²⁵ Dabashi; LYNCH, Marc (2012): *The Arab Uprising*, Public Affairs, New York.

²⁶ Entretien avec Nadim Tarazi à Beyrouth en novembre 2011.

²⁷ Entretien avec Driss Ksikes à Rabat en septembre 2011.

personnes en marge de la société. Il est possible que leur orientation diminue leur impact sur les autorités centrales, mais une dynamique stimulante pouvant donner lieu à un changement positif pourrait les encourager. Ces artistes et ces opérateurs culturels tissent également des rapports avec des artistes étrangers et s'engagent dans un dialogue interculturel à un niveau individuel.

Les instituts culturels et les institutions internationales

Les institutions, comme la Commission européenne, la Fondation Anna Lindh et l'Union pour la Méditerranée, sont généralement et ouvertement critiquées comme étant trop bureaucratiques et pas assez pratiques dans ce qu'elles essaient de promouvoir et réaliser. Toutefois, elles permettent plus de communication et de collaboration au sein des citoyens grâce à leur organisation et à leur mise à disposition de fonds et de programmes qui permettent aux citoyens de s'engager dans une collaboration plus importante, même si le changement qu'elles encouragent a tendance à manquer de réalisme par rapport à une approche un peu trop à court terme. Les critiques s'accordent en général à dire qu'il faudrait plus de travail orienté vers le citoyen, et moins de travail bureaucratique. Cela a donné lieu à une série de questions essentielles, telles que: Est-ce possible? Les structures actuelles permettent-elles la concrétisation de ce changement? De nouvelles structures sont-elles nécessaires? Si tel est le cas, quelles seraient-elles? Comme cela a été évoqué avec Hassan El Ouazzani (Rabat), chose plus importante encore, quelle devrait être la relation entre les organismes culturels et les communautés locales pour permettre une situation dans laquelle les communautés et le public peuvent parler de la possibilité de changement de l'expression culturelle dans un contexte politique et social plus vaste?²⁸

De nombreuses pressions locales pèsent sur les artistes et les opérateurs culturels et elles sont difficiles à supporter. Comme y ont fait allusion certaines des personnes interrogées, les commentaires de Mroué sont très pertinents pour cette recherche, puisqu'ils semblent suggérer que le rôle des opérateurs culturels étrangers n'est pas le souci principal, mais que cela passe au second plan par rapport aux problèmes locaux et à la dimension nationale de la pratique et de la production culturelles. Cependant, ces deux problèmes sont intimement liés, et le rôle des organismes culturels européens empiète sur le développement et le cours de l'expression et de la production culturelles locales.²⁹ Beaucoup de personnes interrogées, telles que Ben Soltane (Tunis / Paris), critiquent la manière dont les partenariats entre les agences locales et européennes et les artistes sont recherchés en raison du déséquilibre culturel qui caractérise de telles relations.³⁰ Cependant, comme il l'a été dit, le sentiment général semble

²⁸ Entretien avec Hassan El Ouazzani à Rabat en septembre 2011.

²⁹ Redalie et al, page 102.

³⁰ Entretien avec Ben Soltane en décembre 2011.

être que la marche à suivre n'est pas de restreindre l'action des instituts européens, mais plutôt de soutenir davantage les communautés locales; cela pourrait améliorer le rôle des instituts culturels eux-mêmes.

En ce qui concerne la coopération culturelle en elle-même, Mroué signale l'impossibilité de se trouver au "bon" endroit s'agissant de chez soi / à l'étranger puisque l'on semble être entre les deux, sans sentiment de stabilité permanent. Travailler à l'étranger ou s'engager dans la coopération culturelle internationale semble apporter aux participants un sentiment de libération et un espace "nouveau" ou plus libre, que l'on peut également qualifier d'espace tiers. Les personnes interrogées ont demandé si les opérateurs culturels étrangers représentaient un détachement des contraintes nationales ou s'ils offraient au moins la possibilité de les dépasser. En même temps, il faut se demander, "À quel prix ?".³¹

On constate également que les instituts culturels s'engagent dans la collaboration avec les pays de manière subtile. Une des raisons est que ces mêmes instituts collaborent avec les opérateurs culturels et la société civile, contestant parfois les positions prises par les pays. Par conséquent, il s'ensuit un exercice d'équilibriste pour les instituts culturels entre, d'un côté, l'influence et le soutien du pays dans la mise en œuvre de ses politiques en matière d'innovation, et de l'autre, la collaboration directe avec les opérateurs culturels qui sont quelquefois opposés à l'État ou lui portent un regard critique.

Développement

La relation entre l'influence externe et le développement local est difficile, comme cela est mentionné dans le texte intégral de la recherche dans le contexte des observations fournies par Verhelst. Les personnes interrogées montrent qu'il y a encore beaucoup à faire pour améliorer les affaires culturelles et sociales au niveau local, et que la présence des agences européennes et de leur argent favorise le développement de ce domaine. D'un autre côté, les avantages à long terme de telles mesures sont discutés, on soulève la question des coûts d'opportunité de l'intervention et la valeur en termes de réel développement est mise en question. Cependant, la vraie responsabilité semble revenir aux autorités nationales et locales puisque ce sont elles qui décident s'il faut poursuivre des partenariats ou entamer de nouvelles formes d'investissement culturel ou pas.

La présence de l'UE dans la Méditerranée est déterminante et ne doit pas être considérée comme acquise. L'UE, en tant qu'union politique et économique différente de l'identité géographique, historique et culturelle de l'Europe, façonne le paysage culturel de la Méditerranée d'une telle manière que l'on pourrait difficilement imaginer s'en passer. Comme il l'a déjà été dit, Malte est différente des autres territoires analysés dans cette recherche, à la

³¹ Ibid.

fois dans le sens où elle est européenne et principalement chrétienne et où elle a été influencée par les forces européennes différemment que les pays arabes, et également parce que c'est un État membre de l'UE, ce qui signifie qu'elle utilise un ensemble de systèmes politiques et économiques qui influencent également la manière dont l'expression culturelle est gérée en termes de politique et de financement.

Il est aussi intéressant de constater comment l'UE contribue à une plus grande distinction entre les états de la Méditerranée sur base des niveaux et des types de développement culturel et des structures de financement au profit de la culture. Dès lors, nous pouvons examiner trois niveaux de pays acteurs liés à la culture, à savoir:

- i. les plus grands États membres de l'UE, tels que la France, qui agissent en tant que développeurs d'idées, catalyseurs de l'action, distributeurs des produits et des influences principales et acteurs du changement;
- ii. les États membres de l'UE moins influents mais importants et potentiellement riches, comme Malte, qui sont européens, mais qui sont encore en train d'améliorer certains aspects tels que les industries culturelles; et
- iii. les pays méditerranéens ne faisant pas partie de l'UE qui, du point de vue de l'UE, collaborent "de l'autre côté de la frontière" avec des critères à remplir et des défis à relever, tels que soutenir la mobilité des artistes dans l'UE.

Depuis son adhésion en 2004, Malte s'appuie fortement sur l'UE comme référence dans son but de développer l'infrastructure culturelle nécessaire au niveau national. Cependant, à l'exception du patrimoine construit qui est relativement bien soutenu, l'expression culturelle des artistes interprètes et de la société civile a encore beaucoup d'avantages à récolter, surtout en termes de professionnalisme et d'internationalisation. Cela découle en partie de ce que durant la période qui a suivi l'indépendance, les autorités nationales ont très peu investi dans cette infrastructure culturelle qu'elles sont en mesure et, sans doute, qu'elles se doivent de développer.³² Par conséquent, les acteurs culturels ont peu d'expérience en ce qui concerne la manière d'exploiter le potentiel disponible grâce à l'adhésion à l'UE. En outre, ils ont eu très peu l'occasion d'essayer et de tester ce qui fonctionne et d'adapter les modèles connaissant un succès ailleurs dans l'UE.³³

L'octroi du titre de Capitale européenne de la culture (CEC) à La Valette en 2018 offre à Malte une excellente occasion de se consacrer à sa situation culturelle. Les préparations sont à leurs débuts et suivent les tendances des autres villes et États membres.³⁴ Cela implique la

³² MC GUIGAN, Jim (2004): *Rethinking Cultural Policy*, Open University Press, Berkshire.

³³ GOUVERNEMENT OF MALTA (2008): *Together for a Sustainable Future: Pre-Budget Document 2009*. Malta.

³⁴ INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMISSION FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN MALTA 2018 (2009): *Report of the 1st meeting of the ECOC IMC*, Malta.

conception de projets ambitieux pour parvenir à l'excellence dans les activités culturelles et l'infrastructure de soutien nécessaire, ainsi que l'encouragement de la relance des industries culturelles comme stratégie pour le développement économique. En agissant de la sorte, Malte espère apprendre des initiatives entreprises par les autres villes lauréates du titre de CEC.³⁵ Afin de saisir cette occasion, Malte a besoin d'investir dans une infrastructure qui soutient la culture et dans la relance des industries culturelles alors que, pour le moment, très peu de choses ont été mises en place.³⁶

Les entretiens ayant eu lieu à Malte reflètent les mêmes préoccupations que celles exprimées dans les autres villes où est organisée cette recherche, ce qui collectivement fait la lumière sur le manque de ressources en place, et suggère d'éventuelles marches à suivre. Au vu de l'investissement culturel et des ressources économiques limités, un plan réaliste est nécessaire afin d'établir un système de soutien culturel durable. Il nous faut trouver un juste milieu entre l'investissement dans une infrastructure basée sur la construction et les projets phares sans négliger le renforcement des capacités avec les artistes et les citoyens. Il faut également trouver un équilibre entre les approches basées sur le marché et celles basées sur la communauté, comme cela est décrit en faisant référence à Owen-Vandersluis.

Moyens

Il convient de noter que les médias sociaux, qui jouent un rôle toujours plus grand dans la dynamique de communication de la société civile, peuvent être mieux exploités en termes d'éducation. Les personnes interrogées, comme El Ouazzani, soulignent que le problème très répandu de l'illettrisme est un lourd défi à relever. Cependant, l'illettrisme n'est pas le seul type d'obstacle empêchant la communication efficace, l'autonomisation des citoyens et le développement social. D'autres obstacles peuvent être observés dans la manière dont plusieurs sociétés analysées abordent différentes questions telles que l'intégration sociale, la diversité culturelle, y compris les diversités linguistique et religieuse, les mécanismes politiques et les structures sociales. Elles s'y attaquent d'une façon qui n'aide pas l'apaisement et la résolution des tensions mais qui, au contraire, les renforce et les aggrave. Dans la pratique, les problèmes dus au manque de ressources, surtout liés à la pauvreté de la connaissance, touchent des zones telles que les cadres législatifs, les compétences de financement, le renforcement des capacités et l'infrastructure.³⁷

³⁵ IMPACTS 08 (2008): *Tourism and the Business of Culture: The views of small and medium sized tourism enterprises of Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008*, Liverpool.

³⁶ MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (2001): *Cultural Policy in Malta: A Discussion Document*, Malta; EVERITT, Anthony (2002): *National cultural policy in Malta: report of a European group of experts*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

³⁷ Bouquerel, El Husseiny, page 20.

En termes de moyens d'expression disponibles pour la communauté, un exemple intéressant est celui fourni dans les entretiens, concernant la manière dont les tensions sont renforcées par les médias traditionnels et sociaux dans différentes communautés. En effet, cet exemple offre un aperçu des problématiques existantes et rassemble des possibilités de résolution.

Cette réflexion a une signification particulièrement poignante du fait de la manière dont les ressources limitées sont toujours recherchées par différentes communautés. Ces dernières tracent des lignes de démarcation entre elles sur base de groupes exclusifs et identifiables en opposition à d'autres qu'elles considèrent comme concurrents souhaitant le même ensemble de ressources. S'agit-il d'un bon argument concernant l'appartenance lorsqu'il souligne que les récits d'intégration et ceux de recherche de soi dans un ou des groupes sont indispensables dans le développement des identités et dans le soutien de ces identités dans l'adversité sur la voie de la poursuite du développement, même si, ou plutôt surtout si c'est aux dépens de quelqu'un d'autre, probablement un concurrent, que l'on perçoit donc comme une menace.³⁸ En outre, comme proposé par Sen, il est également important de regarder à l'intérieur des frontières d'une communauté et de rechercher ceux qui ne correspondent pas à l'idéologie générale et causent des fissures dans l'identité d'un groupe qui semble uniforme au premier abord.³⁹ De tels sous-groupes, ou individus, peuvent être victimes d'exclusion, d'isolement et de discrimination au sein de leur grande communauté, mais se sentir plus proches d'autres communautés se trouvant à l'extérieur, et avec qui des affinités déjà existantes peuvent être développées afin d'utiliser des ressources qui pourraient soutenir leur propre développement ainsi que celui de leurs relations. Plusieurs personnes interrogées ont souligné les liens avec des artistes et des opérateurs culturels actifs à l'étranger tels qu'entre Alger et Marseille, Beyrouth et Paris, ainsi que Malte et des opérateurs britanniques. La création de groupes en dehors de son groupe le plus proche peut donner lieu à des conflits intercommunautaires de natures religieuse, politique et culturelle, comme ce fut le cas avec les Imazighen algériens et les Arabes durant la domination coloniale française, les affiliés italiens et britanniques à Malte il y a un siècle et les opérateurs culturels qui se sont fâchés avec l'État à cause du soutien européen dans les pays arabes où nous nous sommes rendus dans le cadre de cette recherche. Dans de tels cas de figure où l'appartenance relève du défi, la remarque de Chambers concernant le retour au pays s'avère encore plus pertinente: hormis les réflexions théoriques qu'elles entraînent, les difficultés d'ordre pratique engendrées par ces deux questions fondamentales font la lumière sur l'importance de la manière dont la volonté politique et la vision culturelle déterminent l'existence des ressources et influencent les dynamiques de collaboration selon les résultats auxquels on veut parvenir, ou que l'on veut éviter.

³⁸ SAID, Edward (1994): *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, London, page xxxi.

³⁹ SEN, Amartya (2006): *Identity & Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, Penguin, London, page 15.

La remarque ci-dessus illustre le fait que la meilleure utilisation des ressources revêt une importance fondamentale dans l'amélioration des conditions pour que les relations culturelles aient lieu et que l'expression culturelle s'épanouisse dans un environnement positif et durable. Cela amène également un point crucial: une discussion concernant les ressources ne doit pas nécessairement traiter des ressources financières et de la concrétisation de plus d'investissements qui serviront à entreprendre des projets. Une analyse des ressources devrait se concentrer sur l'utilisation des ressources existantes de façon à reconnaître ce qui existe et ce qui peut-être utilisé par les artistes, les opérateurs culturels et la société en général. Une telle prise de conscience peut mener à des efforts concertés afin de maximiser ces ressources sur base d'une philosophie qui encourage la collaboration et le développement des synergies, plutôt que la division, la reproduction et la concurrence négative. Une telle prise de conscience ainsi que la volonté de travailler ensemble peut également permettre une meilleure planification stratégique, ce qui pourrait éviter d'agir par le biais d'interventions sporadiques et réactives et ainsi planifier à long terme et exécuter.

Cette observation importante qui nous vient des entretiens ne remplace pas celle concernant les besoins financiers. Au lieu de cela, elle la renforce, en montrant que lorsque les moyens financiers font défaut et sont nécessaires, c'est parce que toutes les autres ressources ont été identifiées et mobilisées, et que l'apport financier est un élément que l'on ne peut éviter plus longtemps. L'importance de la ressource financière est telle qu'elle rend possible la mise en œuvre d'une tendance à travailler ensemble et transforme cette tendance en volonté. Cette réalité vaut également pour de nombreux niveaux de la collaboration culturelle, allant des projets de base immédiats qui touchent la vie des communautés aux projets internationaux et aux protocoles culturels bilatéraux qui, comme l'a souligné Caldon Mercieca (Malte), ne valent pas grande chose à moins d'être soutenus financièrement.⁴⁰ Comme l'a fait remarquer Grima, les dynamiques de courtage et de troc sont essentielles à tout type de collaboration culturelle, et fonctionneront si les parties impliquées veulent transformer la volonté de travailler ensemble en action concrète.

Conclusion

Cette sous-section réunit les principaux résultats provenant de l'analyse des entretiens avec pour objectif de servir de base pour la section qui formulera des recommandations pour une marche à suivre ambitieuse mais raisonnable. S'il arrive que les comparaisons soient odieuses, elles peuvent également aider à créer un paradigme auquel se mesurer. Les nombreuses références aux situations problématiques, surtout structurelles et faisant partie de l'héritage colonial, dans les pays sur lesquels nous nous sommes centrés, permettent deux types d'exercices de comparaison. Le premier, est de nature spatiale. Cette dimension est essentielle

⁴⁰ Entretien avec Caldon Mercieca à Malte en décembre 2011.

à la recherche que nous menons, puisque l'attention est portée sur un espace géographique particulier ainsi que sur les relations humaines qui y sont développées. À titre de comparaison, au vu des différentes références faites lors des entretiens tels que ceux de Driss Ksikes (Rabat), Nadira Laggoune (Alger) et Leila Rezk (Beyrouth), le développement récent des pays du Golfe, non seulement économiquement et politiquement, mais également culturellement, constitue un bon exemple de ce que la Méditerranée du sud n'est pas, et sans doute de ce qu'elle espère ne pas être malgré l'essor économique et politique de ce groupe de pays.⁴¹ On constate que l'influence des pays du Golfe s'est accrue grâce à la production des pétrodollars et aux relations étroites avec les USA. Cela a attiré une grande partie de l'influence européenne, y compris de type culturel. Par exemple, on peut citer les collaborations entre Paris et Abou Dabi au moyen de Arts Paris, un salon d'art moderne et contemporain d'ampleur internationale; de l'antenne de l'université de la Sorbonne implantée en tant que partie d'une plateforme d'universités internationales en 2012; et du projet du Louvre. Toutefois, Rezk évoque les tensions existant entre l'intérêt des investisseurs ainsi que d'une partie de la population d'Abou Dabi à se rapprocher de l'Europe et de l'Occident et le régime de censure sévère, ainsi que l'autocensure, qui contrôle la créativité en général. Si l'on constate une forte reprise du Golfe en terme de développement culturel, on lui reproche d'être sans âme. À titre de comparaison, les pays arabes méditerranéens peuvent être considérés comme étant faibles et manquant de structure unificatrice. D'un autre côté, le modèle que nous offrent les pays du Golfe ne plaît pas à la plupart des personnes interrogées, et n'est peut-être pas le meilleur modèle duquel tirer des leçons.⁴²

Le second est de type temporel, ce qui, avec une analyse du passé, permet à la présente recherche de se lancer dans un exercice de réflexion prospective: alors qu'elle se base sur des contextes difficiles actuellement, cette approche identifie au sein de ces réalités les bases pour l'ouverture de scénarios qui annoncent des développements positifs.

⁴¹ Entretien avec Nadira Laggoune à Alger en octobre 2011.

⁴² Rezk, page 45.

Chapter One: Cultural Expression in the Mediterranean

1. 1. a. Introduction

On 6 May 2011 the Roberto Cimetta Fund, represented by its Board of Directors, its Committee of Experts and its institutional and civil society partners issued a statement in which they reiterated their support to the mobility of artists in the Mediterranean. What prompted this action were the momentous social and political changes driven by what has been termed by the Western media the “Arab Spring”: by mid-2011, this phenomenon had toppled the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and challenged, to various degrees, most other Arab states, including those considered as Mediterranean countries. This statement was issued not only by one of the largest European networks that is actively supportive of trans-Mediterranean artist mobility, but done with the support of the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and the French Embassies in Madrid and Rome.⁴³

The research begins the opening chapter of this dissertation with reference to this instance of European involvement in Mediterranean cultural issues to put what follows in a particular light: namely, that while statements issued by other initiatives of a more clear political nature like the beleaguered Union for the Mediterranean (UpM in its French title acronym, also French-supported, or rather instigated) or the recently set up Foreign Service of the European Union, the European External Action Service (EEAS) tend to be met by many, on both sides of the Mediterranean, with scepticism, positions taken by organisations that deal primarily with culture, like the Roberto Cimetta Fund or even the Anna Lindh Foundation, that operates within a strong political context, with regard to cultural matters in the Mediterranean, are perceived as more neutral, or even in a positive light. The research intends to analyse this impression and assess a number of issues related to European interest in actively supporting cultural relations in the Mediterranean. These primarily are:

- i. What is the perception of the main interested parties i.e. what perception do artists and cultural operators of territories in the South Mediterranean have of the role played by Europeans?
- ii. What is the impact of the European influence on cultural affairs in the South Mediterranean? In order to go beyond facile moral judgments, the research will assess the value of those actions that Europeans significantly contribute to by their presence and participation, as well as the opportunity cost of that presence on South-South relations and capacity building (infrastructure and human skills); and
- iii. What are the outcomes of such research in terms of the development of a vision for positive and sustainable cultural relations in the Mediterranean and its implementation through a policy and strategies that can put into place a workable way forward?

In order to address these issues, two important concepts need elucidation. The first of these is the concept of cultural expression. This is the main type of human action being studied because it encompasses the most important means of expression within a cultural framework and

⁴³ Email ‘Statement/Déclaration - Roberto Cimetta Fund - Fonds Roberto Cimetta’, 13 September, 2011 11:13.

engages with and addresses the Mediterranean on very close terms. The second concept is that of the Mediterranean itself. This provides the mental, social and geographical dimensions of this study, supporting a discussion of this space across time with the contemporary serving as the period to which all debate leads to.

1. 1. b. Cultural Expression

The framework chosen here against which to analyse various discourse on and representations of the Mediterranean is that of cultural expression. One of the most recent and important fora within which this concept has been used, which has inspired its use in the research and which provides the author with the necessary semantic referencing is that of the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The 2005 Convention commits itself to asserting the double nature, cultural and economic, and the specificity of cultural products and services. It does this by recognising and upholding the need for states to adopt measures linked to cultural policy and the need for greater international cooperation.⁴⁴ One of the main functions of the 2005 Convention is as a tool devised to respond to the need to protect cultural diversity. In a Mediterranean context, the role France had in propelling its development and the weight it still has in promoting it is of central importance. In the larger Mediterranean framework, the 2005 Convention falls short of fulfilling its ambitions due to the despotic Arab regimes that resist or at the least do not actively support its implementation. It is also to be noted that the challenges faced in the European-Mediterranean space outstrip the means and possibilities of existing regional structures to address cultural diversity and relations meaningfully.⁴⁵

The choice of the title of the Convention was the result of long discussions between the negotiators at UNESCO. Important differences existed with regard to the term 'protection', as well as with regard to what is of interest to this section, namely 'cultural expression.' The early drafts prepared by the independent experts appointed by UNESCO referred to the 'protection of the diversity of cultural content and artistic expression.' In so doing, 'cultural diversity' in the larger sense of the term was being shied away from. Nevertheless, the text made multiple references to this expression, which are still found in the Convention.⁴⁶ Article 4.1 provides a good idea of what is meant by cultural expression, referring to 'cultural diversity' in terms of its expression by artistic means of creation, production, broadcasting, distribution and development by all communication and technological means possible. The final nuance reflects the strategic link to commercial means of production and services. On the other hand, cultural expression is also related to traditional knowledge and skills and traditional means of expression linked to folklore.

The expression referring to the 'diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions' that forms part of the title of the draft still failed to convince all parties. A discussion of the term 'culture' was sensibly avoided on the basis of the recognition that no comprehensive definition was acceptable to all parties and that culture formed part of many UNESCO instruments without requiring such an exercise. On the other hand, while 'cultural contents' and 'artistic

⁴⁴ RICHIERI HANANIA, Lilian (2009): *Diversité culturelle et droit international du commerce*, La Documentation française, Paris.

⁴⁵ REZK, Leila, *Créer une Image de Soi dans le Machrek Arabe: Un Parcours Semé d'Embûches*, Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth, 2010, page 77.

⁴⁶ UNESCO, *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, Articles 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, 14 (d) and 18.

expressions' did refer to 'culture', they did so in a narrower sense which evoked 'cultural expression' and the stages of the creation, the production, the distribution and the broadcasting of cultural content without stating as much. Negotiators agreed to use the term 'cultural expression' to refer to both the cultural content as well as the artistic expression of it. While the term also raised problems that were not satisfactorily addressed till the second Inter-Governmental session, it was maintained for the title of the Convention. The consolidated text tied the term to the commercial domain even closer by noting that such '*expressions were transmitted through cultural activities, goods and services resulting from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies which had a cultural content.*' Those states that wished to distance the Convention from the commercial domain as much as possible, such as the United States and Japan, strongly opposed the utilisation of this term.

The term 'cultural expressions' was finally defined as those '*expressions resulting from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content.*' In turn, the term 'cultural content' was defined by the Convention as '*referring to the symbolic meaning, the artistic dimension and the cultural values that originate from or express cultural identities.*'⁴⁷

For the purposes of the research, cultural expression is conceived in terms of all the means of communication that individuals and groups use to engage in a discussion in and about Europe and the Mediterranean. The analysis of cultural expression begins with the literature review. This exercise throws light on the Mediterranean and in so doing prefigures and maps out the events that contribute to cultural expression in action. An analysis of this expression in action provides the practical dimension of the author's observations from *Section I Chapter Three* onward till the end of the text and acts as a counterpart to the analysis of the theoretical dimension expressed in *Section I Chapter One*.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Article 4.

1. 1. c. i. Three Interpretations of the Mediterranean

In spite of the extensive research it has enjoyed over the centuries, the Mediterranean is still a challenging concept to engage with. This is partly because of its complex nature. However, this is also true because of the various inter-related layers of interpretation which the Mediterranean has been subject to.

Cultural expression in the Mediterranean consists of various elements, not easily reconcilable and often producing conflicting interpretations. The author's aim is not to resolve the conflicting narratives. Rather, it is to draw out these different interpretations in order to contribute to the discourse on the Mediterranean through an own assessment based on previous assessments and first-hand analyses held on the ground in the Mediterranean space. The author also aims to provide a novel view by carrying out an exercise of analysis through the lense of cultural policy and interpreting material observed in terms of cultural expression.

In this sub-chapter, the author proposes to approach the Mediterranean from three different angles that complement one another and help provide a holistic perspective for the study to adopt and build upon. The first approach being proposed is that of conceiving of the Mediterranean in terms of interpretations that contribute towards constructs of realities.

The second approach tackles the Mediterranean in terms of metaphors. These metaphors are used to envision realities in ways that are different to conventional interpretations that reproduce contexts for contemporary problems Mediterranean societies experience without offering alternatives. The aim of this is precisely that of addressing this shortcoming and identifying possible scenarios that do offer alternatives.

The third approach being proposed assesses the Mediterranean in terms of projects. Constructs and metaphors may find tangible form in projects the value of which varies both in terms of who they are beneficial to and what their aim is. Attention will be paid to the context of these projects and particularly to those projects which are developed in reaction to other ideations which may have fallen short of the ambitions or goals they had set themselves.

It is important to point out that the perspectives discussed are in the main related to the modern era: they focus on particular effects of the process of the birth of nation states in Europe, particularly with regard to the ripple-effects of the cultural shock that followed Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt at the close of the eighteenth century, up till this day.

1. 1. c. i. i. The Mediterranean as a Constructed Reality

Various writers on the Mediterranean have qualified this space as a constructed reality. Iain Chambers describes the Mediterranean as an *'imaginatively constructed'* reality in light of writings by Edward Said particularly with regard to Orientalism and the self-referential construct based on the paradigm of domination by the North of the South he describes.⁴⁸ Both writers will be engaged with at length in this text since their means of cultural expression and their portrayal of cultural expression in the Mediterranean are of fundamental importance to generating a thorough understanding of existing discourse and producing a vision for the future which is comprehensive.

Other writers, like Michelle Pace, aim to *'conceptualize the social construction of this area (as a holistic 'region') and the underlying assumptions of such imaginings.'*⁴⁹ Pace's approach is interesting and promising since this conceptualisation may be a theoretical exercise as well as a means to lead to the development of a method which allows action and a framework for work. Key to Pace's endeavor is the question of whether the Mediterranean is a region or a meeting of regions.⁵⁰ Concluding that neither view is satisfactory, she momentarily puts the concept of regions to one side and locates the core of her research in the concept of identity and notes that the Mediterranean brings together several identities which also overlap. The relationship between the Mediterranean and the identities which contribute to its make up is a dynamic one, as will be explored in further depth below. From this perspective, the construction of the Mediterranean is a continuous process, where it develops on the basis of a set of identities which are themselves in the making thanks to different discourses and perspectives. Returning to the regions, Pace notes that their relationship with the Mediterranean too is a dynamic one, since *'regions are themselves products of processes of identity construction'* and *'[r]egions are not natural entities but rather social constructs.'*⁵¹ However, as will become evident in this sub-chapter, the difficulty in applying theory to practice is tied to the complexity of the constructs themselves. From a regional sub-level to the larger Mediterranean regional dimension, one of the main challenges lies in reconciling the differences between European territories both within the European Union (EU) and outside, particularly the Balkan states, Turkey, the Middle Eastern Arab countries and Israel, and North Africa.

With direct relevance to the research, the partial selection of Mediterranean territories with which to engage is determined by the challenges faced in trying to reconcile different cultural realities across the space in question. The choice of territories aims at achieving coherence and

⁴⁸ Orientalism will be dealt with in detail in 1.2.c. *Colonialism*.

⁴⁹ PACE, Michelle (2006): 'Rethinking the Mediterranean: Reality and Re-Presentation in the Creation of a 'Region'', <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/ramses/pace.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2010), page 2.

⁵⁰ This research chooses not to use the loaded term region with reference to the Mediterranean, unless when it is indicated otherwise with regard to specific contexts. While the term is arguably acceptable geographically, social and cultural realities, as discussed by Pace, render any assessment attempted complex. The term 'space' will be used instead to describe the area referred to and generally known as the Mediterranean in order to keep the reference as neutral and inclusive as possible.

⁵¹ Ibid. page 4.

practicality in terms of the research undertaken and the accomplishment of the aims set. This means limiting a fully-inclusive observation about the whole Mediterranean space by clearly defining the remit of the research.

Mediterraneanism

A key concept in the construction of the Mediterranean reality is that of agenda-driven and competing interpretations of this space, with the aim of skewing a narrative in a particular way and therefore purposely not in another, with the ultimate goal of drawing advantage from it. Presenting and discussing Mediterranean discourse which builds itself through reference to other forms of expression may become very powerful over time and gain a dimension of naturalness and truth. While discussing the constructed realities related to this space, the research will try to expose the gaps between ruminations, observations, analysis and policy on the one hand and occurrences, events and policy implementation on the other.

An important type of discourse identified as having a dominant role in shaping the consciousness of many people with regard to the Mediterranean is Mediterraneanism. Michael Herzfeld uses this term critically and in close combination with Orientalism. Herzfeld calls for a critical reading of Mediterranean discourse, or Mediterraneanism, which he criticises for acting like Orientalism in reinforcing stereotypes and trying to win back lost empires by re-creating a postcolonial Mediterranean.⁵²

In his introduction to *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, W. V. Harris levels his criticism at Mediterraneanism which he describes as *'the doctrine that there are distinctive characteristics which the cultures of the Mediterranean have, or have had, in common.'*⁵³ He notes how Herzfeld has implied that this doctrine is now outdated, as per his paper in this volume. Harris notes how this further implies that *'concentrating on the Mediterranean may not only be a romantic delusion or a piece of Eurocentric cultural imperialism – thoughts which we have grown rather accustomed to – it may, worse still, be a recipe for boredom.'* Harris adds that Mediterraneanism can be used to compare Mediterranean societies, and in so doing argue in favour of certain societies and against others. It is therefore related to Orientalism, as well as to touristic nostalgia. At the other end of the spectrum, historian Aziz Al-Azmeh criticises anti-Orientalism for *'auto-orientalising'* and turning the Arabs, among others, into the subject of multiple layers of stereotyping application particularly by stressing the uniqueness claimed by and for Arabs.⁵⁴

When considering facts as the construction of reality, it is important to ask *'who makes them and why'*, the Mediterranean being one such fact. With reference to his criticism of Mediterraneanism, Herzfeld notes that *'whatever else we may say about its utility, the idea of a*

⁵² HERZFELD, Michael, 'Practical Mediterraneanism: Excuses for Everything, from Epistemology to Eating', in Harris, W.V. ed. (2005): *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

⁵³ Ibid. page 1.

⁵⁴ Rezk, page 52.

*vast Mediterranean culture has frequently served the interests of disdainful cultural imperialism.*⁵⁵ Such was the case of influential political systems from Ancient Rome to Fascist Italy. In relation to cultural expression, as will be expanded upon later, chief representatives of *l'école d'Alger* like Gabriele Audisio and Albert Camus were critical of the revival of the centralising and aggrandising illusions of former regimes through contemporary ones because of the alarming partiality and imposition such a vision led to with an overall impoverishing and damaging effect on the diversity of cultural expressions in the Mediterranean.

With reference to the apparent naturalness of Mediterraneanist discourse which leads to imperialist ambitions, Herzfeld refutes this and notes that claims that the Mediterranean exists are '*performative*' and are part of a constitutive act. He notes that '*attributions of Mediterranean culture*' should be treated in a way that identifies the creation of '*the realities that people perceive*'. Herzfeld notes that such a focus allows one to deal with issues of power and hierarchy. One such issue relates to the '*political moves aiming to unify weaker countries behind a strong regional leader such as France*'. The choice of France is doubly interesting: not only is it recognised as a catalyst of action aimed at the Mediterranean, a point that is explored in detail later, but also because in his own description France is Mediterranean and yet may be perceived as not Mediterranean or *more* than Mediterranean and belonging to another, i.e. better, category of countries than what one may generally identify as a Mediterranean country.⁵⁶

In terms of power relations and constructs, the Mediterranean abounds in layers of discourse. Herzfeld comments on the '*dynamics of humiliation*', the appropriation of stereotypes and use of them in ways which enhance one's position as victim against the perpetrator, and the tense relationship between unequal powers. In an interesting section dealing with the trans-temporal effect of hierarchical power, Herzfeld speaks of visiting the sins of the children upon the fathers.⁵⁷ Influence, including that by means of and with an effect on cultural expression, travels both ways in time: current perceptions of and reactions to the past recreate or reshape the same past in ways which tie the two time-frames closer together.

Other writers, like the cultural operator Alessandro Stillo, adopt the use of the term in a neutral-to-positive fashion by using it in the plural ('Mediterraneanisms') to describe in general discourse on the Mediterranean.⁵⁸ Stillo argues that part of this discourse includes inspiring texts such as those by fellow Italians Danilo Zolo and Franco Cassano, as well as Fernand Braudel and Predrag Matvejević.

⁵⁵ Harris, page 48.

⁵⁶ Ibid. page 52.

⁵⁷ The aspect of legacy in terms of transference of burden will be tackled in more detail in 1.2.b. *Power Relations*. At the moment, suffice it to say that current ills are both traceable and blamed on previous generations. The pattern is also perceived to work in terms of cultural influence.

⁵⁸ STILLO, Alessandro, (2010): *Mediterraneismi, plurime identità del mare bianco interno*, unpublished Masters of Arts thesis, Università del Salento.

Braudel has a particularly important place in Mediterranean studies for Stillo as well as many contemporary writers who find in him an evergreen source of curiosity towards the Mediterranean and a means of looking at the space in a detailed yet holistic way. The value of his contribution to the construction of the Mediterranean space lies in the picture he creates of the Mediterranean as a rich and varied place that is multi-layered and that at the same time comes together in a common framework. Stillo notes how Braudel studies the self-contained and self-sufficient Mediterranean world before it was re-sized or re-dimensionalised by the New World when the proportionate concept it had of its identity and the measured relationship it enjoyed with its own space and others around it were radically changed. Stillo notes that Braudel, as well as other writers, seeks to look beyond the multi-faceted Mediterranean space to find the 'horizon of meaning' (*'orizzonte di senso'*) in order to bring the whole together.

The Braudelian vision

Braudel gave to the Mediterranean a status it had not yet enjoyed until then.⁵⁹ The historiographical view of the Mediterranean as a '*regional and intra-cultural entity*' was influenced by Braudel's 1949 thesis and the inter-disciplinary approaches of the *Annales* School. This approach developed in light of the emergence of the space in the North African campaigns and the invasion of Sicily in 1943.⁶⁰ Fabre notes that Braudel gave the Mediterranean a retrospective legitimacy in terms of an '*ensemble historique*' (historical ensemble). Jacques Rancière puts it well when he reflects upon the Mediterranean not being united through natural means, but through writing, including Braudel's. That writing, as noted before, generates a strong backbone to the Mediterranean as a constructed reality. As has also been noted earlier, the influence acts both ways in time, and it is worth noting why a figure like Braudel, considered as outmoded by many, is still held in high regard and referenced by others, including this author.

Writing before and after World War II, Braudel promoted a view which brought people together and aimed to overcome divisive ideologies and nationalisms in a quest for unity before divisions and domination. Oswyn Murray comments on why and how Braudel fell out of favour with the 1968 revolutionary movement as well as Pompidou's government powers as he was considered to be concurrently both too reactionary and too radical, too resistant to change and too challenging to the Sorbonne and traditional academic institutions and methods.⁶¹ At the same time, Braudel's perspective on history, mainly identified with the '*longue durée*' and a holistic approach to history, came in for criticism by Michel Foucault and the poststructuralists: the historian's standing as neutral, objective and standing away from history was discredited; rather, the historian was seen as an 'interpreter' in shaping history in relation to the present. On the other hand, the relatively late translation of Braudel into Italian which took place only in the 1970s meant his views got introduced in neighbouring Italy and his influence re-ignited at

⁵⁹ FABRE, Thierry; IZZO, Jean-Claude (2002): *La Méditerranée française*, Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, page 106.

⁶⁰ FREUDO, Henry (2012): *Europe and Empire: Culture, Politics and Identity in Malta and the Mediterranean*, Midsea Books Ltd., Santa Venera, page 18.

⁶¹ BRAUDEL, Fernand (2002): *Memory and the Mediterranean*, Vintage Books, New York, page xviii.

the moment when ironically, in France, he was falling out of favour. However, French authors like Thierry Fabre still refer to him as an important figure.⁶²

In the period since World War II, which coincides with a longer period during which the Mediterranean has been suffering a downturn in terms of enjoying an international sway over international affairs, the original input and subsequent re-discovery of Braudel have seemed to provide the space with a renewed lustre through the re-evaluation of its past in relation to a global standing. In contemporary terms, both politically and culturally, the Mediterranean seems to have gained some of the importance and centrality in wider affairs it lost. One particular instance of this is the social upheaval accompanied by promising economic and political prospects opening up in relation to the Arab Spring. Nevertheless, the Mediterranean's role seems to be still confined to the receiving end, with larger or extra-Mediterranean powers shaping main developments. For Mediterranean communities to be more in control of policies which affect their lives, novel ways of thinking and moving forward are needed; furthermore, as will be discussed later, actions aimed at supporting cultural expression may play a key role in achieving this.

One way of shifting the Mediterranean as a construct away from the idea of a backwater to a more central position is by relocating it to a more internationally significant territory. Braudel proves worth referring to especially in this regard, where he may be inspirational. For instance, on the Mediterranean's relation to the global dimension he challenges us to consider whether:

*'since this human history was in perpetual motion, flowing down to the shores of the Mediterranean where it regularly came to a halt, is it any wonder that the sea should so soon have become one of the living centres of the universe, and that in turn it should have sent resonant echoes through these massive continents, which were a kind of sounding-board for it? The history of the Mediterranean lent an ear to the distant sounds of universal history, but its own music could be heard from far away too. This two-way flow was the essential feature of a past marked by a double movement: the Mediterranean both gave and received – and the "gifts" exchanged might be calamities as well as benefits. Everything was in the mixture and [...] the brilliant arrival of the earliest civilizations in the Mediterranean can already be explained as the coming together of different elements.'*⁶³

While this reference is to the past, the 'two-way flow' mentioned need not be restricted to spatial movement; it can also apply to connectedness across time. As will be argued later in *Section Three: Policy Paper and Way Forward* in relation to finding a way forward in terms of internationalisation and breaking out of a closed sea deadlock and opening out to the world, the importance of recognising the close bond between the revival of cultural expression in the Mediterranean and the global scenario as a means of rediscovering its relevance to humanity globally may be an important means of a well thought-out strategy.

⁶² Ibid. page xvii.

⁶³ Ibid. page 16.

Within this image of the Mediterranean, it is always important to avoid eliding over the stark differences and the deep conflicts these differences may give rise to. The Mediterranean is far from being a seamless construct of harmonious history and matching identities. The same is true for its relation to peoples from outside this space. Acknowledging this fact is important, as it allows one to identify the strength of diversity. Braudel reiterates a point which is recurrent throughout his writing, namely that of the importance of the existence of difference since this allows for levels of imbalance that create the need for communication and exchange, where different parties seek each other to address the lacks or surpluses in themselves in relation to others. Taken from a resources perspective, the importance of sharing best practice, experience and know-how will be argued later on in the text *Section Three*. A related key matter that will also be addressed in detail later is that of mobility. Sharing and exchanging are direct results of human mobility: these elements will be discussed in light of Braudel paying great importance to nomads and early mobility along the Mediterranean shores and across the sea in the development of humanity and Mediterranean societies.

The Mediterranean Construct as a Conflictual Entity

Vazquez Montalban and Gonzalez Calleja provide a series of reference points regarding how the Mediterranean formed, over history, into a homogenous entity. While not engaging in an argument for the assimilation of a Mediterranean identity through a simplification of various identities, the examples given are well-known and widely referred to as fundamental in developing an identifiable Mediterranean construct. There are:

- i. historical and political factors, with a few highlights such as the Mediterranean being shaped into a Roman lake, defined as an Ottoman territory, and bearing the domination of Great Britain and France with particular interest lying in the links it provided to Asia and particularly India;
- ii. cultural factors, that allow for a reflection on the common spaces generated through trade and communication and the ways these contributed to the Mediterranean's diverse constitution; and
- iii. ideological and idealising factors, with contrasting features that can be nevertheless generalised. These include the fear of others on the one hand and the awareness that the Mediterranean is in itself a place of passage and others in the form of travellers or visitors, therefore threatening but also full of potential. The authors note that in the Renaissance the Mediterranean re-draws itself along Greco-Latin lines, thus generating a stage of idealisation and selectivity. Orientalism contributed to another stage in idealising the Mediterranean, not innocent of supporting plans and actions of domination through knowledge and representation. In this particular period in history, expressions of art and exploits of science are not unrelated to achieving imperialistic aims.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ VAZQUEZ MONTALBAN, Manuel; GONZALEZ CALLEJA, Eduardo (2000): *La Méditerranée espagnole*, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, page 9.

These representations that contribute towards the development of unitary constructs of the Mediterranean harbour within them elements of a split and divided space. In spite of the holistic vision of the Mediterranean emanating from Braudel, as discussed above, this was, like many other interpretations which believe they are building that vision on the basis of total or near-total inclusivity, partial and exclusive. It is important to note that in this early modern re-appraisal Braudel constructed, he considered Islam as the anti-West and as a Mediterranean unto itself ('another' Mediterranean) extended by the desert. This view will be challenged below with reference to Iain Chambers. Braudel's contact with Henri Pirenne is fundamental to the way both men developed their thinking about the Mediterranean. Braudel met with Pirenne in Algiers in 1930. Pirenne's vision of the Mediterranean is already found in the early editions of *Les Annales*. Pirenne believed the Islamic presence in the Mediterranean cut off the earlier communication maintained up till the Byzantine Empire. In *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (1935), the vision becomes sharper. According to Pirenne: '*l'arrivée de l'Islam a eu pour conséquence de séparer définitivement l'orient de l'occident, en mettant fin à l'unité méditerranéenne.*'⁶⁵ For him, this division has dire consequences: '*Le Méditerranée occidentale, devenue un lac musulman, cesse d'être la voie des échanges et des idées qu'elle n'avait cessé d'être jusqu'alors.*'⁶⁶

According to Pirenne, following the rupture in trade and communication in the Mediterranean, the main historical developments of the Mediterranean shift north. Chambers outlines the main theses arguing for division as well as unity in the Mediterranean, and which abound in historical theses including Pirenne's and Braudel's. Thus:

- i. he notes Pirenne's thesis of Mediterranean division due to the spread of Islam in the 7th century A.D;
- ii. he refers to the counter-thesis of the reuniting of the Mediterranean thanks to the Arab spread;
- iii. he notes the falling behind of the Muslim/Arab world which falls on the wayside of European progress. This historical reflection will be picked upon later.⁶⁷

Jean-Louis Triaud follows Pirenne's lead by noting that while the Islamic forces accomplished 'la seule fonction historique qui lui est reconnue', Europe develops northwards, while Islamic lands stagnated.⁶⁸

A related yet different construction of Mediterranean unity is provided by the contemporary writer Predrag Matvejević. One main difference between Braudel and Matvejević lies in the way one approaches the Mediterranean holistically while the other opens it up for what it is, reflecting a '*differentiated vision*' of the Mediterranean. This construct includes negative elements, as Matvejević sees the Mediterranean as being dominated by interpretations of its

⁶⁵ MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES ET EUROPÉENNES DE LA FRANCE (2008): *Actes Des Etats Généraux Culturels Méditerranéens*, Marseille 4-5 novembre, page 45.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ CHAMBERS Iain (2008): *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*, Duke University Press, Durham, page 147.

⁶⁸ Fabre; Izzo, page 109.

past over visions of its future and suffering representations of its reality which are mixed up with what is real itself. It is important to note that, as argued by Matvejević, while the Mediterranean and the discourse on the Mediterranean are inseparable, discourse on the Mediterranean has sometimes been damaging to the Mediterranean in terms of the rhetoric used which has served ulterior and negative motives.⁶⁹

An important element towards the construction of the concept of the Mediterranean is that of identities, as already mentioned in relation to Pace. The plural term, rather than the singular 'identity', is being used, because communities, even within a larger social unit that encompasses these identities, are never homogenously made up of identical individuals or social groups. The research takes heed of Amartya Sen's warning against 'unique categorization' and the tendency to identify and describe people in connection with others and in opposition to others still.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, bonds between individuals and groups allow for a degree of generalisation such as that practised here. Identities in the Mediterranean have been argued to both differ widely as well as converge towards a sense of unity on the basis not of single characteristics but rather on those of general common trends and values.⁷¹ John Baldacchino makes positive use of the term Mediterraneanism in relation to a '*discussion of Mediterranean identity [that] revisits the political mystification and instrumentalization of art and society and how it impacts on the development of an artistic genre that claims national borders.*'⁷² The attempts to explain or categorise the complexity of identity through strict schema are contrasted to the wide-angle approach adopted by Braudel. Baldacchino finds in Braudel a source for a deep reflection on the intertwining of a Mediterranean character that is identifiable with the diversity that composes it:

*'The Mediterranean's character "is complex, awkward, and unique. It cannot be contained within our measurements and classifications. No simple biography beginning with date of birth can be written of this sea; no simple narrative of how things happened would be appropriate to its history.'*⁷³

The construction of a Mediterranean reality as an exercise in narrative is developed by Baldacchino who goes on to grapple with the difficulty of telling a story which is however more than one:

'Braudel's questions run across the very character of the Mediterranean and the lands and cultures that define it. More importantly, one must not forget that any history of the Mediterranean would have issues with the sense of universality that is implied in one's being

⁶⁹ Stillo; page 23.

⁷⁰ SEN, Amartya (2006): *Identity & Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, Penguin, London, page 10.

⁷¹ IEMed (2011): *Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors*, Barcelona, <http://www.iemed.org/publicacions-en/historic-de-publicacions/enquesta-euromed/euromed-survey-of-experts-and-actors-2011> (accessed 29 May 2012).

⁷² BALDACCHINO, John (2010): *Makings of the Sea: Journey, Doubt and Nostalgia*, Gorgias Press, New Jersey, page 10.

⁷³ Ibid. page 12.

Mediterranean – that is, one’s identification with this sea as an inhabitant of a land or country that forms part of this region. This raises many crucial questions. Does the history of the Mediterranean (as a sea, a geo-political region, and a meeting of peoples) leave us with a semblance of a common ‘humanity’ that could in one way or another describe those in whose drastic diversity claim to ‘share’ such a history? But then again, how common a ground is history?’⁷⁴

Indeed, history provides a rich sea bed for stories of confluence and conflict in the Mediterranean. In ‘Les racines historiques de la notion de ‘méditerranéisme’ en Égypte’, Mohammed Afifi highlights the way the Mediterranean has over the ages created the impression it belongs to many different peoples who at times, and depending on societal configurations, share elements of that space together. Afifi turns to the various names by which the Mediterranean has been referred to across space and time, including those from Rifa’at Rafi’ al-Tahtawi’s *Takhlis al-ibriz* narrating his momentous and cross-cultural trip to France, in order to stress the point that Arabs like al-Tahtawi saw the Mediterranean as a Roman Sea, noting this perspective stressed the conflictual existence of both sides of the sea. On the other hand, Afifi contrasts this view with another fellow Egyptian writer, Taha Hussein, who was a firm believer in a Mediterranean consciousness and a shared mentality among its peoples; because of this, among other things, his views clashed with postcolonial sentiments in favour of a more narrow nationalism. Afifi quotes Hussein (1938) as follows:

‘Il n’existe pas de différence de mentalité ou de culture entre les peuples qui ont vécu autour de la mer des Roum et qui ont été influencés. Ce sont les circonstances politiques et économiques qui différencient le peuple de ce littoral du peuple d’un autre littoral. Ce sont aussi les circonstances politiques et économiques qui advantagent un peuple et désavantagent un autre.’⁷⁵

Hussein stresses the circumstances, political and economic, as factors in causing differences between different peoples of the Mediterranean, and notes that divisions rise from such external differences rather than from internal ones inherent in the people themselves.

While the issue of commonality in the Mediterranean and its relation to cultural expression will be developed at greater length under *1.1.d. Common Aspects in the Mediterranean*, it is worth exploring here the human element which often seems to be caught up in the larger narrative exploring the clash of cultures in the Mediterranean space. Expanding on the historical trail, David Abulafia notes that the concept of unity in the post-classical Mediterranean is problematic due to the Islam-Christendom conflict and the difference in economies in the East and West. However, he notes that conflict often did not preclude trade, for instance at the time of the Crusades, and commercial unity was present. The common denominator, as well as the main actor from a perspective which is mainly concerned with the human factor (as opposed to

⁷⁴ Ibid. page 13.

⁷⁵ AL-KHARRAT, Edouard; AFIFI, Mohamed (2002): *La Méditerranée égyptienne*, Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, page 3.

larger historical or political movements), is man. By referring to Abulafia's focus on the human dimension of the Mediterranean, arguably missing from the *'Braudelian Mediterranean'*, Baldacchino develops his observations on the particular characteristics of a Mediterranean aesthetics in the context of any existing commonality. Like Harris, he refers to the performative act of declaring a Mediterranean reality, and notes:

*'Don't we all tell stories about history? Don't we tell such stories from our own interested positions? Is not this telling of a Mediterranean history just another act of making? This is akin to the individual poetics of the Mediterranean women and men's stories that belong by implication to the politics that concerns the aesthetic construction of a history commonly claimed from everyone's relative interests. As we speak of these stories from the context of a 'Mediterranean aesthetics' the juncture between history and story appears more "complex, awkward and unique."'*⁷⁶

Baldacchino seeks to understand the roots of the feeling of commonality in the Mediterranean:

*'As we seek to affirm a semblance of a common humanity that marks out the Mediterranean from other regions, we also stumble on facts and acts that flatly refute this distinction. And yet, Mediterraneans would tell you that in their experience, the notion of feeling at home – a sort of a Mediterranean heimlich – across this region transcends language, religion, colour or custom. Maybe this sense of familiarity also explains the ferocity by which the Mediterraneans have fought each other on the pretext of language, religion, colour or custom. This is what makes it more difficult to approach the myriad questions that ensue in trying to disentangle what seems to be the paradox of a Mediterranean aesthetic imaginary.'*⁷⁷

Baldacchino raises a number of important points about identification with the place one calls home as well as with regard to the immutability of such places and our relation to them over time. He also hints at issues regarding the degree of control *'Mediterraneans'* have over the stories they tell about their space, the sharing of territory and stories, and what role others, from "outside" the space, have.

The thorny issue of narration and representation is explored further by Gérard Chastagnaret and Robert Ilbert who focus on demythifying the Mediterranean. They note that literary exploits and aesthetic as well as historical appraisals of the history of the Mediterranean or positive cultural aspects of the Mediterranean may create the illusion that all is well in this space. Chastagnaret and Ilbert support an objective analysis of history and politics in order to destroy such an illusion. For example, the multiplication of international institutions may make one believe that in themselves these institutions stand for the positive picture of the Mediterranean. Oddly, the means seem to become the ends. The authors contrast this illusory interpretation by referring to particular situations in recent history that go against such idyllic constructs. For instance, they refer to the Gulf War and the early 1990s as a rude awakening to

⁷⁶ Baldacchino, page 14.

⁷⁷ Ibid. page 15.

the fact that the Mediterranean was first of all a frontier, meaning that Europe did not look at the Mediterranean as a place of significance in itself and was in fact more intent on looking eastwards; furthermore, with the North detached from the South, all the Mediterranean could aspire to was being a sanitary cord. Fabre comments on the French writers' position and notes they are engaged in the deconstruction of the Mediterranean ideology, exposing the contradictory views of the Mediterranean ranging from the idealisation of Al Andalus to the reality of boat people.⁷⁸

The Camusian Mediterranean

The complexity of relations in the Mediterranean, with humanity at the centre of attention, reaches a peak in Camus' analysis of this space. For Camus, the Mediterranean has a deep reserve of strength which finds its source in the people of the Mediterranean who strike an important balance between their strong characters and a will to be together. However, this strength is nothing to be complacent about. Rather, it is to be mustered to overcome various challenges, including internal ones, it constantly faces and which threaten the unity of the people of the Mediterranean.

Camus' essay '*La Culture indigène, la nouvelle culture méditerranéenne*' is of seminal importance in this case. Camus, writing and active in the cultural scene in Algiers in the early 1930s and very concerned at the rise of Fascism on the opposite side of the Mediterranean and next door to his homeland, France, sets his contemporaries a sense of mission towards protecting and promoting what he felt was the genuine character of the Mediterranean in the face of those who wanted to warp this and turn it to their own advantage.⁷⁹ He writes:

*'our task is "to rehabilitate the Mediterranean, to take it back from those who claim it unjustly for themselves, and to prepare it for the economic organisation which awaits it."*⁸⁰

Camus' concern with justice has reverberated ever since his early death and is still popular with various cultural figures and generations of readers. This is so in spite of the growing number of critical re-assessments his writings have undergone in light of his political stance on French Algeria following Edward Said's critique in *Orientalism*, which will be explored later in 1.2.c. *Colonialism* in relation to the context of colonialism and culture. Camus' positive outlook finds echoes in today's world and has proved to be inspirational to the activists and writers who struggle with the injustice and turmoil of their social circumstance. Two such examples include the collection in the series of *La pensée de midi* called *Beyrouth XXIe siècle* wherein, as Fabre comments in the introduction, the spirit of Camus still inspires the Francophone

⁷⁸ Fabre; Izzo, page 113

⁷⁹ DAVISON, Ray (2000): 'Mythologizing the Mediterranean: The Case of Albert Camus', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 & 2, pages 77-92. Davison notes how this essay, published in the first issue of *Jeune Méditerranée* but first presented as the inaugural lecture at *La Maison de la Culture* in Algiers in 1937, proposed a 'Third Way' between European Fascisms and Russian collectivism and as the embryo of a new international humanism', page 78.

⁸⁰ Baldacchino, page 137.

Mediterranean⁸¹; and Jean Daniel's *Avec Camus: Comment résister à l'aire du temps* which reflects on the spirit of resistance to accepted trends and conventions that Camus' writing and persona still inspire people with.⁸²

Although, as we shall see, he may not always be correct in his choice of and the arguments brought forward to justify a particular position, Camus is not afraid to take sides and argue in favour of the position he believes in. This applies to the Mediterranean as much as it applies to French Algeria. Camus' construct is a politically-committed one, with people at its centre, and change, rather than the maintaining of a status quo, as its goal. Baldacchino quotes Camus as follows with regard to the alignment of his vision close to the diversity he experienced everyday in Algiers and opposed to a dominating attitude that at the time gave rise to growing concern in Fascist Italy:

*'Our task is to discover what is concrete and alive in it, and, on every occasion, to encourage the different aspects of this culture. We are all the more prepared for this task in that we are in immediate contact with the Oriental civilization which can teach us so much in this respect. We are, here, on the side of the Mediterranean against Rome. And the essential role that towns like Algiers and Barcelona can play is to serve, in their own small way, that aspect of the Mediterranean culture which favours man instead of crushing him.'*⁸³

Baldacchino comments on Camus' stance against a totalising and compartmentalising approach towards Mediterranean realities and highlights his commitment to humanity as the main motivator and the arts as the main means by which to allow humanity to express itself and envision a better world:

*'In contrast to the dystopias of totality, what characterizes the Mediterranean politics of aesthetic is the sheer presence of the arts and the wider spectrum of feelings, heresies, tragedies and hopes that entertain any possibility of freeing the epics, spectacles and stories by which men and women seek to make sense of the world. In the fallacy of a Mediterranean-as-a-common-entity, we find that epic, story and spectacle are compartmentalised, and this is what terrified Camus.'*⁸⁴

While Camus' vision of the Mediterranean is centred on the human dimension, it is a perspective which has great expectations of man and does not limit him to a small part on a larger political/social canvas. Camus expresses a great belief in man, and hence places on him a great responsibility. As in a play from Classical Greece, which Camus was inspired by and defended on aesthetic grounds against the usurpation of Rome, man is called on to play a major role even if it metaphorically means contending with the deities and paying for it. As

⁸¹ FABRE, Thierry ed. (2007): *La pensée de midi, Beyrouth XXIe*, Actes Sud, Paris, page 4.

⁸² DANIEL, Jean (2006): *Avec Camus: Comment résister à l'aire du temps*, Gallimard, Paris.

⁸³ Baldacchino, page 137.

⁸⁴ Ibid. page 143.

Aquilina rightly notes, the Promethean image, as well as Sisyphus, carry great importance in Camus' construction of the Mediterranean man and his role in its well-being.⁸⁵

Aquilina also comments on the way Paul Valéry reflects on the "Mediterranean man", with references to balance and proportion, his link to his environment, and the proportionate relationship between man and sea. Valéry describes the Mediterranean man as a skilled and skilful navigator between life's contrasts. Valéry, like Camus, perceives man as having the capacity to play a large role which stretches beyond the mere mortal figure and encompasses the space and time that his environment bestows upon him. Aquilina quotes Paul Valéry thus:

*'Dire que l'homme est la mesure des choses, c'est...opposer à la diversité du monde l'ensemble ou le groupe des pouvoirs humains; c'est opposer aussi à la diversité de nos instants, à la mobilité de nos impressions, et même à la particularité de notre individu, de notre personne singulière et comme spécialisée, cantonnée dans une vie locale et fragmentaire, un MOI qui la résume, la domine, la contient, comme la loi contient tous les actes qui nous sont possibles.'*⁸⁶

Aquilina notes that: *'En termes simples, il s'agit ici d'une médiation parfaite entre le monde et l'homme.'* Paul Valéry's perspective is very important and will be further opened up in this sub-section with regard to the Mediterranean as a project.

However Aquilina also comments on the way Europeans betrayed Mediterranean values. These are summed up by the triple set of *'femme, famille, l'identité nationale'*, which colonialism attacked:

*'Ces trois valeurs constituent, à notre avis, la véritable fierté de l'homme méditerranéen. Donc, il n'est pas étonnant qu'il n'ait pu s'empêcher de considérer la colonisation de ses territoires comme une tare, un affront à ses revendications de liberté, d'autant plus que c'était grâce à l'esprit méditerranéen inculqué aux colonisateurs européens, que ceux-ci ont pu modifier 'le monde tout entier'. Par une ironie du sort, cet homme bercé dans la lumière et baigné dans l'eau limpide de la Méditerranée a fait naître une civilisation qui devait être celle de l'avenir pour finir lui-même enchaîné, esclave de l'Histoire.'*⁸⁷

Noucentisme

Individuals or groups of individuals who contribute towards constructing realities of the Mediterranean have been many in the sea's history. As has been commented on and will be explored further, observers and activists in France and Italy in particular have been active in engaging with the Mediterranean in theoretical and academic terms. These efforts have not been limited to France and Italy: Spain, another European country on the northern shore, has

⁸⁵ AQUILINA, Anthony (2007): 'Les Aspirations d'Albert Camus à l'égard des Méditerranéens', *Symposia Melitensia*, 4, University of Malta, page 92.

⁸⁶ Ibid. page 94.

⁸⁷ Ibid. page 96.

contributed significantly to this exercise. Vazquez Montalban explains that Noucentisme was a Catalan movement, inspired by reflections on the Mediterranean at the beginning of the twentieth century and following Modernism, supporting the idea of a Mediterranean super-structure and also based on the image of the Mediterranean man who is represented as being full of eternal values.⁸⁸

Noucentisme dates back to the reign of Isabel II and the '*Renaixança*'. It can be traced back to Catalan interest in the Mediterranean in the late 19th century expressed through Modernism. One of the key figures of Modernism, Gaudí, viewed the Mediterranean as an optimal place for balance and equilibrium. At the time Catalonia was aware of its and other Mediterranean urban spaces' backwardness in technology especially in relation to the North of Europe. It promoted efforts to assert the Mediterranean's art and life and aimed for equilibrium between addressing the technological and the political gap with Anglo-Saxon tradition while supporting Mediterranean values in education, culture and city life. It is interesting to note that Eugenio d'Ors supported the development of a Southern structure to match the Northern European one but was ironically inspired by models set in the North. This fact still rings true today, when initiatives for the development of elements of Mediterranean structures in fields as diverse as education, research, communications or transport use Northern models as their reference.⁸⁹ It is also interesting to note that the references Noucentisme makes to the Mediterranean are nevertheless limited in particular since Islamic influence is not taken into account.⁹⁰

In spite of its good intentions, Vazquez Montalban notes that there are dangers in Mediterranean approaches of this kind when they tend to recreate an environment that is distanced from fact and risks constructing an interpretative model which is far removed from reality. He calls for the need to establish a balance and to be true to circumstances as opposed to developing an ideology that is detached from reality. Gonzalez Calleja's assessment is very harsh. He notes the movement was nostalgic, idealising the Mediterranean and being selective in doing so. Noucentisme is judged as a reactionary programme couched as modernist:

*'En tant que programme esthétique, le noucentisme ne chercha pas à décrire la réalité telle qu'elle était, mais à élaborer une fausse réalité, capable d'être de nouveau élaborée sous forme d'un mythe restaurateur.'*⁹¹

Inevitably, in the context of the first thirty years of the twentieth century, Noucentisme is linked to Fascism.

⁸⁸ Vazquez Montalban; Gonzalez Calleja, page 14.

⁸⁹ <http://www.unepmap.org/index.php?catid=001017002&module=content2> (accessed 29 May 2012).

⁹⁰ Vazquez Montalban; Gonzalez Calleja, page 72.

⁹¹ Ibid. Page 87.

Joan Mirò

Within the same historical and political context it is worth making a brief reference to one of the major visual artists of the time whose work remains particularly related to the Mediterranean dimension. Joan Mirò felt deeply that his national identity was a matter of personal importance and enjoyed great clarity from the very beginning of his expression as an artist, namely in being first and foremost Catalan rather than Spanish.⁹² He intrinsically felt himself to be a Mediterranean artist and in so doing related to the Mediterranean set of values that one could associate with in Catalonia at the time, which in their proximity to the climate, the people and a generally positive and colourful perspective on life, inspired him in his work and way of living. Although Noucentisme was a dominant influence at the time of his artistic development, he was opposed to the movement's selective judgement. He felt that Catalan artists should be as open as possible to influences from abroad. Although he never travelled beyond Catalonia, not even to Madrid, he followed the artistic avant-garde scene from Catalan and French publications. This open attitude allowed Mirò to establish a balance between a strong sense of regional belonging, which in reality stemmed from a very strong local sense of self, and an international approach to cultural influence.

An Egyptian Perspective

Other interesting perspectives are provided by considering views on the Mediterranean and on Mediterranean-related issues from an Egyptian stand-point also in the 1930s. One of the issues which commanded most attention was the role of Mussolini in the build up to World War II. However, even with regard to internal affairs, in a period of fervent intellectual debate towered over by Taha Hussein, one notices a marked growing sentiment of Egyptian nationalism generating opposition to Great Britain in particular and the West in general. Within this context, it is worth mentioning the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 in Ismailiyya and its move to Cairo in 1933.⁹³

Taha Hussein uses the Mediterranean to try to balance Egyptian nationalism and Arab/Islamic orientations with others promoting the maintaining of good and open relations to the West. Hussein interprets the 1936 Britain-Egypt accords in this context and hence positively. He is in favour of political independence but also in favour of cultural ties with the West. Stretching back across the ages, in what was a common intellectual exercise in the inter-wars period in the first half of the twentieth century, he linked Pharaonic Egypt to Ancient Greece. Hussein does acknowledge the fact that for him, the Mediterranean is a tool to promote liberalism.⁹⁴

A number of other intellectuals marked this particular age and the years following it. While Salama Moussa supports Hussein's views, Sateh al-Husri opposes Hussein and is one of the main organisers of Arab nationalism. Hussein Moenes was a specialist on Andalusia and his

⁹² MINK, Janis (2000): *Joan Miró: 1893-1983*, Taschen, New York, page 7.

⁹³ Al-Kharrat; Afifi, page 34.

⁹⁴ Ibid. page 38.

work inspired Afifi to note that *'L'Andalousie présente le meilleur exemple du méditerranéisme avec ses rêves et ses espoirs'*. Moenes raises a number of important issues related to Egyptian and Mediterranean identities by asking *'Sommes-nous de l'Orient ou de l'Occident?'* Moenes believes Egypt was Arabic/Oriental by geographic and political circumstance but culturally open to the Mediterranean and the West. Due to his views, Moenes was later not in tune with Nasser's regime and the sweeping force of pan-Arabism around the time of the revolution in 1952. Arguably the most perceptive and influential observer of Egyptian society at this time, Gamal Hamdan, considers the Mediterranean with scepticism and tries to assess its worth in relation to, but not above, other dimensions of Egypt. Finally, in an important development which marked Egyptian society in the 1990s, the majority of opposition parties were not keen on a return of Mediterraneanisms as these were interpreted as going against Arab identity and playing in favour of the West's interests.⁹⁵

A British Perspective

The British Empire was the last political force of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to influence as well as control the Mediterranean space as thoroughly as it did. Although Britain did not belong geographically to the space, in the course of the nineteenth century it became the most influential power there, rivalled only, intermittently, by France.⁹⁶ An interpretation for the continuance of British domination lies with what might be termed cultural power, argues Brian Stoddart, or *'the set of ideas, beliefs, rules, and conventions concerning social behaviour'* that was carried throughout the Empire by such British servants as administrators, military officers, industrialists, agriculturalists, traders, financiers, settlers, educators, and advisors of various kinds.⁹⁷ The significance of these ruling cultural characteristics is that they were consciously maintained within governing circles and were fostered within carefully selected sections of the colonial populations more through informal authority systems than through formal ones such as the bureaucracy or the military. The success of this cultural power rested with the ability of the imperial system to have its main social tenets accepted as appropriate forms of behaviour and ordering by the bulk of the client population, or at least by those important sections of that population upon whom the British relied for the mediation of their ruling practices, objectives, and ideology.⁹⁸

Stoddart argues that one obvious agent in such an informal authority process was the English language itself: as well as a conveyor of information between otherwise differing cultural groups, it was a medium for the exchange of moral codes and social attitudes. Attaining command of the "proper" English language, accent as well as vocabulary and syntax, became the goal of many people belonging to the Empire. Stoddart shows how the works of various writers may have differed in form and content from country to country and continent to

⁹⁵ Ibid. page 48.

⁹⁶ Frendo (2012), page 17.

⁹⁷ STODDART, Brian (1988): 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4, Cambridge University Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178928> (accessed 27 March 2012), page 650.

⁹⁸ Ibid. page 653.

continent but shared an awareness of and a respect for the force of literature as a sentimental bond between imperial power and colonial territory. The strength of these shared values is demonstrated by the widespread current interest in postcolonial Commonwealth literature schools and by the efforts of such scholars as Edward Kamau Braithwaite in Jamaica and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in Kenya to create or revive national languages that may undercut the inherited and pervasive cultural strength of English language and literature. However, other important agencies in the process of cultural transfer from Britain to its territories in the Empire also involved the arts as well as particularly effectively sports and games.⁹⁹

An Italian Perspective

As noted by Cassano, Italian relations with the Mediterranean are inextricably tied to its historical dimension and the various roles different parts of its territory and other territories it has influenced have played over the ages.¹⁰⁰ The Roman Empire marks a high point in Italian recollections of the Mediterranean and still plays an important interpretative tool of Italy's sense of participation in the Mediterranean dynamic. Recent examples range from the guiding principles of early twentieth century Fascism to contemporary cultural productions including audiovisual productions and video games which hark back to Roman times.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, the relatively late date of the unification of Italy (1861) following centuries of struggles held against foreign forces led Italy to leap from being a dominated territory to seeking domination of other territories within a short span of time. While many of these ambitions were directly related to a Mediterraneanist expansion, particularly with regard to territories like modern-day Libya, the Balkans, Greece and, unsuccessfully, Malta, Italy was for a long time, and arguably still is, engaged in an internal struggle to reconcile its North with its South in a prolonged 'Southern Question' that will be discussed later.

In spite of widespread opinions supporting Italian colonial expansion with regard to what was still referred to as the *mare nostrum* by high ranking individuals like Giuseppe Mazzini and Francesco Crispi who envisioned the development of a Third Rome following those of the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church, Italy did not fully recover from its marginality in Mediterranean issues and did not manage to address the vacuity of much its vision, particularly when compared to the stronger and more influential forces of France and Great Britain.¹⁰²

Cassano notes that while Fascist illusions of grandeur led early twentieth-century ambitions for the Mediterranean to a dead-end, the dominant Atlanticist agenda in the second half of the century favoured by centre-right governments that sought support from the US and NATO allowed neither a strong and independent external policy to develop nor a positive disposition

⁹⁹ Ibid. page 660.

¹⁰⁰ CONSOLO, Vincenzo; CASSANO, Franco (2000): *La Méditerranée italienne*, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, page 23.

¹⁰¹ MONDELLO, Andrea; GRANELLI, Andrea (2008): *Experience Roma*, Camera di Commercio di Roma, Roma.

¹⁰² Detailed discussions on the visions and actions of these two countries follow and act as central features of this research.

to Mediterranean cooperation to develop. The space to the south of Italy and arguably its own South suffered from a perception of corruption, decadence, backwardness and anti-modernism that went against what the newly industrialised reconstructed state committed itself to.¹⁰³

Concurrently, trends which challenged this view and proposed alternative ways of viewing and engaging positively with the Mediterranean emerged slowly, as typified by the strong critiques of capitalist development to the detriment of local and regional cultures as expressed by Pier Paolo Pasolini through criticism in various media, Fabrizio de André in music, the left-leaning association ARCI, which also conceived the Biennale of Young Artists of Europe and the Mediterranean that will be discussed later, in the field of cultural activism and the Community of San Egidio in terms of regional support and development. This reaction and counter-action is far from being unitary and is unjustly grouped together in this brief overview that however attempts to highlight the important contribution that recent Italian members of the cultural and social spheres have made towards the well-being of the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Cassano (2000), page 32.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. page 35.

1. 1. c. i. ii. The Mediterranean as Metaphor

The Sea

In relation to the Mediterranean construct, reflections on time and change do not seem to limit themselves to a linear progression. The past, the present and the future are perceived as being able to share the same space with ease, and actors of this space seem able to move back and forth in time as need be or as circumstance will have it. One key metaphor used by thinkers to come to terms with the Mediterranean is that of the sea. Reflecting upon the need to write and read the Mediterranean in a more *'fluid and fluctuating composition'* than in the static and monolithic ways of the past, Chambers aptly uses the metaphor of the sea to explain the changes, the currents and the flows that mark history and Mediterranean history in particular.¹⁰⁵

The image of the sea is extensively used by Cassano, who approaches the vast body of water which is commensurate with the people it connects through exchange and means of communication and influence. As will be discussed later (*Section 1.2.b. Power Relations: Theory*) Cassano notes the use of the same metaphor by a variety of thinkers and writers, from Albert Camus to German philosophers Hegel and Nietzsche, in order to emphasise the proportionality of the Mediterranean space and the way it allows its people to connect to each other. Danilo Zolo traces this relation back to Carl Schmitt's reflections on Ernst Knapp who identifies water as a fundamental element in the development of cultures and civilisation; this allows Schmitt to reflect on the ideal geographical and spatial conditions of the Mediterranean in terms of the development of cultural diversity and human identities.¹⁰⁶ In a way that is related to the connecting principle of the sea, Chambers also presents the interesting view of Europe as a series of archipelagos bridged together rather than as a block of land.

In contrast to the connecting features sought for in the sea, the same metaphor gives rise to another which signifies division. Harris notes that *'seas divide as well as link'*.¹⁰⁷ Chambers notes that *'the border is not a thing but, rather, the materialization of authority'* with reference to the southern border of Europe which, in the aftermath of colonialism, has shifted up from bordering the Sahara to the Mediterranean Sea. Writing before the Arab Spring began he writes that the space belonging to the independent Arab states is now *'transformed into a virtual space by European legislation'*.¹⁰⁸ Following the Arab uprisings, the space is up again for negotiation.

¹⁰⁵ CHAMBERS Iain (2008): *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*, Duke University Press, Durham, page 18.

¹⁰⁶ ZOLO, Danilo (2005): 'A Dialogue between the Mediterranean Cultures' in *Tradition et modernité dans la culture méditerranéenne*, Università di Firenze: Centro Jura Gentium, <http://www.iuragentium.org/topics/med/tunis/en/zolo.htm> (accessed 22 May 2012).

¹⁰⁷ Harris, page 20.

¹⁰⁸ Chambers, page 21.

The Myth of Progress

The exercise which engages with building a vision *of* the Mediterranean can lead to one which builds a vision *for* the Mediterranean. Metaphors used in the elaboration of a construct may lead to a deep understanding of what type of change is being experienced and envisaged. Chambers refers to Italian modern writers and politically engaged figures Antonio Gramsci and Pier Paolo Pasolini in the way they distinguish between what constitutes real development from actions and trends that are a waste or detrimental to society. In doing so he recalls Pasolini's efforts to separate '*progress*' from '*development*' and '*uncouple them and set them in a critical relationship which strips them of their purely instrumental and economical logic.*'¹⁰⁹

Writing in 1975, Pasolini notes the two terms were key elements in contemporary discourse. He attempts to awaken public consciousness to the relation between them by inviting the public to consider whether the two terms are synonymous of each other; if not, whether they describe different moments of the same phenomenon; and if not that either, whether they describe separate phenomena which however came together; or else, whether they describe '*opposite*' phenomena which only seem to coincide and reach out one to the other. Pasolini is adamant that one needs to clarify both terms in order to understand everyday reality and life.¹¹⁰

Within the particular social context he inhabited, Pasolini relates the term '*development*' to the Right, not in political or ideological ways, but in economic ones. He believes the owners of industrial means supported a '*practically unlimited industrialisation*' thanks to existing technology, in terms of the application of science. On the other hand, consumers are duped into contributing to the production of '*superfluous*' goods, while turning their backs on traditional values associated with poverty, hard work, frugality and religious-inspired ethics.

In contrast to this, Pasolini identifies a different group of people as wanting '*progress*'. These are the workers, the farmers and the intellectuals of the Left. These people are generally exploited and not after immediate gain in terms of pragmatic and economic results that preclude important aspects of well-being. Pasolini feels close to the varying positions taken by this latter group, who he described as '*adorable*' in view of its members not pursuing and asserting their own rights and rather seeking to support those of others before their own.¹¹¹

Although the use of terminology varies, and at times even clashes, these concerns are shared by a number of other thinkers and writers, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, which is sometimes perceived as the catalyst for the head-long rush into economic development that is detached from other social, environmental and cultural realities. Kirkpatrick Sale is one such contemporary writer who critiques the compromising stance in favour of '*progress*'. He refers to other writers who, already in the early decades of the twentieth century, expressed similar

¹⁰⁹ Chambers, page 52. A discussion on development will be held in *Section One: Chapter Two*.

¹¹⁰ PASOLINI, Pier Paolo (1999): '*Sviluppo e progresso*', *Pagine corsare: Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, Meridiani Mondadori, Milano http://www.pierpaolopasolini.eu/saggistica_sviluppo-progresso.htm (accessed 27 April 2012).

¹¹¹ PASOLINI, Pier Paolo (2003): '*Il progresso come falso progresso*', *Lettere luterane*, Einaudi, Torino <http://www.italialibri.net/opere/lettereluterane.html> (accessed 28 April 2012).

concerns.¹¹² One such writer is e.e. cummings who calls progress a ‘*comfortable disease*’ of modern ‘manunkind’. Sale notes that at any time since the triumph of capitalism only a minority of the global population may be said to be really living in comfort, and that comfort, continuously threatened, is achieved at considerable expense.

Another writer worth referring to is Leopold Kohr, the Austrian economist. Sale argues that his seminal work, *The Breakdown of Nations*, is an essential tool for understanding the failures of political progress in the last half-millennium.¹¹³ A particularly striking image is used by Kohr to illustrate the state of affairs he feared was taking shape:

‘Suppose we are on a progress-train [...] running full speed ahead in the approved manner, fueled by the rapacious growth and resource depletion and cheered on by highly rewarded economists. What if we then discover that we are headed for a precipitous fall to a certain disaster just a few miles ahead when the tracks end at an uncrossable gulf? Do we take advice of the economists to put more fuel into the engines so that we go at an ever-faster rate, presumably hoping that we build up a head of steam so powerful that it can land us safely on the other side of the gulf; or do we reach for the brakes and come to a screeching if somewhat tumble-around halt as quickly as possible?’

*Progress is the myth that assures us that full-speed-ahead is never wrong. Ecology is the discipline that teaches us that it is disaster.*¹¹⁴

Conflict and Cooperation

Paul Balta notes that history books and memory tend to be selective and stress the occurrence of conflict before that of cooperation. He notes that exchange has never been lacking and that exchange itself is never shameful or to be condemned – rather, it is the ‘terms of exchange’ which can be so. Balta also notes that conflict has never stopped the exchange from taking place:

‘Dans cette mer presque fermée, berceau des trois religions monothéistes révélées et foyer de multiples civilisations, les conflits – qui ont l’âpreté des querelles de famille et se règlent comme elles – n’ont jamais empêché durablement navigateurs, commerçants et hommes de science de circuler.’¹¹⁵

Balta interestingly points out that the islands in the Mediterranean ‘*sont le point focal de ce double mouvement d’affrontements et de rencontres.*’ For example, with regard to Malta he notes: ‘*Libérée des Arabes, Malte la catholique a repoussé miraculeusement l’assaut des*

¹¹² SALE, Kirkpatrick (1999): ‘Five Facets of a Myth’, *Resurgence*, Issue 192, <http://www.primitivism.com/facets-myth.htm> (accessed 30 April 2012).

¹¹³ Published in 1957, arranged and foreworded by Sale in 1978.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ BALTA, Paul ed. (1992): *La Méditerranée réinventée: Réalités et espoirs de la coopération*, La Découverte/Fondation René Seydoux, Paris, page 21.

*Ottomans, mais elle a adopté comme langue nationale un dialecte arabe que les vicissitudes de l'histoire ont truffé de mots italiens et anglais.*¹¹⁶

Also from a French Mediterraneanist perspective, Edgard Pisani raises a fundamental question about the space's present and future: he asks whether the Mediterranean is a dividing place or a common basin and whether its populations will keep fighting themselves or try to complement and complete one another. In a very strong image, the Mediterranean is envisioned as surrounded by a circle of fire and blood.¹¹⁷

Home and Nostalgia

The history in which the Mediterranean is engulfed gives it a special and powerful quality when this space is perceived and its stories narrated. Giovanna Tanzarella, Déléguée générale of the Fondation René Seydoux, describes it thus: *'La Méditerranée est un mythe porteur'* thus suggesting that it is pregnant with possibility, ripe with potential and a carrier of history as well as being a bearer of the future.¹¹⁸

Balta uses mythology to focus on two important aspects of Mediterranean development, namely those of conflict and cooperation. Referring to the characters of Ulysses and Sinbad, two products of great civilizations, the Greeks and the Abbasids, he notes that: *'Depuis des temps immémoriaux, la Méditerranée est zone de confrontations et carrefour d'échanges.'*¹¹⁹ Another metaphor which is not specific to the Mediterranean but very relevant to it is that of home. While the image of home-coming is often related to Homer's narrative of Ulysses' exploits in the Eastern basin of the Mediterranean, writers like Chambers write of *'the certitude of home'* which is undercut.¹²⁰

The concept of home is related not only to space but also to time. As has been suggested earlier, the relation of people to time in the Mediterranean is a complex one. John Baldacchino quotes from Paul Theroux and refers to the particular ways in which people of the Mediterranean may invoke the distant past with pride while avoiding going deep into the recent past. Theroux himself notes: *'There is a book to be written about Mediterranean notions of time.'* Theroux also notes that there were not *'clear divisions between the dead and the living, between the mythical and the real'* either.¹²¹

Some observers perceive the Mediterranean as being infused with the sense of a present which is vacant in comparison to an overwhelming past. Tanzarella notes that the Mediterranean is charged with nostalgia: *'La Méditerranée est un haut lieu de nostalgie.'* This observation reflects a view shared among a number of cultural operators and political activists at the beginning of

¹¹⁶ Ibid. page 15.

¹¹⁷ Fabre; Izzo, page 131.

¹¹⁸ Balta, page 9.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. page 13.

¹²⁰ Chambers (2008), page 127.

¹²¹ Baldacchino, page 11.

the 1990s when the Mediterranean dossier in the framework of European and Mediterranean discussions seemed not to be progressing and suffering from a sense of void. Tanzarella suggests that the existence of the Mediterranean seems to be confined to a sense of feeling (*'perceptions subtiles'; 'une façon d'être et de sentir'*) rather than vision and action.¹²²

¹²² Balta, page 5.

1. 1. c. i. iii. The Mediterranean as a Project

While Balta, among others quoted in the preceding two sub-sections, claims that a homogenous Mediterranean does not exist, Fabre goes further and asserts that the Mediterranean itself does not exist. This powerful claim allows the author to identify the need to invent one. Fabre envisions a Mediterranean that goes beyond the conflicts that it serves as a frame to, hosts and is the reason for. Fabre notes that the peoples of the Mediterranean need such a space; therefore, such a Mediterranean needs to be invented.¹²³

This sub-section presents and discusses the importance of a number of initiatives or engagements that will be assessed from the perspective of a project. The use of the term project implies motivation, purpose, planning, a beginning and an end in terms of accomplishing the aims set. The examples discussed here do not adhere strictly to this framework of meaning, but do include various elements thereof.

For the purposes of the research, the most striking element may be that of close-endedness, or in other words, the fact that the periods of history which correspond to the particular projects discussed have come to an end. However, their effects are not restricted to the past. Rather, the consequences of actions that happened outlive the period when they took place and still shape mentalities, perceptions and behaviour today. Therefore, while historical in content, they are being cited in the context of being very relevant to the present of cultural relations in the Mediterranean.

West meets Orient: Napoleon Bonaparte's Expedition to Egypt

One of the projects which has had most impact on the peoples of the Mediterranean is the French expedition to Egypt at the close of the eighteenth century. Authors perceive and describe this as an event of great significance for Europe which was then in the process of discovering its modernity also in relation to what it would term the 'Orient'. On the other hand, Egypt and other territories of the Ottoman Empire were discovering new facets of European ways of life which included the technological and scientific means that allowed for development, influence and dominance. The impact still has repercussions on relations today, and at a distance of more than two hundred years is perceived as a line of demarcation between the pre-modern and modern eras in the Middle East in particular and Arab countries more generally and an on-going source of discussions related to development and progress which go with it.¹²⁴

Chambers refers to Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt in 1798-9 by noting that this enterprise has woven a history where '*modern, "progressive" Europe has taken possession of the rest of the world.*' This episode has great relevance for the study of contemporary cultural relations since it still provides a reference point for people on both the North and South shore of the

¹²³ Fabre; Izzo.

¹²⁴ Rezk, page 41; LAURENS, Henry (2004): *Orientales I: Autour de l'expédition d'Égypte*, CNRS Editions, Paris.

Mediterranean in terms of a coming together of different cultures and ways of living that was not neutral but skewed in favour of one side and led to a variety of repercussions for the other. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Mediterranean, thus depicted, is an aesthetic and cultural backwater, a *'lost world of antiquity, uncontaminated nature, and pristine 'origins'*. The Mediterranean was thus *'safely consigned to the margins of modernity.'* Chambers also notes that the subsequent nineteenth century view of the Mediterranean was dominated by a *'Greco-Roman figuration'* of a *mare nostrum* linked to a Latinised ancestry, a European past and leading to an *'increasingly disciplined colonial project.'* Therefore, the study of archaeology, anthropology, and historiography connected the Mediterranean to Europe and depicted it *'as an integral part of Europe'* in a *'deliberate act of recovery and resurrection.'*¹²⁵

The relationship between France and the Mediterranean is a long and important one which greatly affected the people of this space all around its shores. Interestingly, even in today's political terms, France is seen as a leading force in the shaping of the Mediterranean, however not necessarily perceived as (only) Mediterranean. As Joseph Muscat notes, one needs to ask how far *'one can classify France as a Mediterranean country.'*¹²⁶

The strategic appreciation by France of the Mediterranean stretches a long way back. Balta prefigures the incursion into Egypt by going deeper and further into Europe's discovery of Arab culture and the South shore of the Mediterranean, following the interactions in the Middle Ages and the development of the Renaissance inspired by scientific and philosophical developments in Arab lands up to the first millennium A.D. In fact, Balta identifies three main events which contribute to the modern contacts of Europe with the Arab lands:

- i. The first such event identified is the Enlightenment, more about which will be said later;
- ii. The second is Bonaparte's incursion into Egypt which includes the production of the 22-volume *La Description générale de l'Égypte*;
- iii. The third is the interest displayed by the Saint Simoniens in developing science, industry and a meritocracy, which will be expanded upon later. Balta notes that the result of these events was the *Nahda* in Egypt in collaboration with Syrio-Lebanese intellectuals, which will also be expanded upon later.

In 1798, a strategic vision of the Mediterranean is developed that supports the invasion of Egypt. Talleyrand, at the time Minister for foreign affairs at the Directory, noted that the Mediterranean should be exclusively a French sea and that France should dominate its commerce against its British rival. The French invasion of Egypt was a key element in actualising this vision. François Charles-Roux notes that under Louis XVI the idea of conquering Egypt to dominate the Mediterranean already existed. Emma Spary notes how the Egyptian campaign was *'at the root of the invention of the Mediterranean'* in the nineteenth century as well as that of the Orient.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ CHAMBERS, Iain (2004): 'The Mediterranean: A Postcolonial Sea' *Third Text*, Vol. 18, Issue 5, page 424.

¹²⁶ MUSCAT, Joseph (2011): 'Less hysteria, more listening', *Culture Report EUNIC Yearbook 2011*, EUNIC, Stuttgart, page 128, http://www.ifa.de/pdf/kr/2011/kr2011_en.pdf (accessed 27 April 2012).

¹²⁷ Fabre; Izzo, page 25.

Fabre notes that the concept of civilisation, born in the Enlightenment, drove this campaign and its supporting vision.¹²⁸ As so many conquering forces did before and have done since, with the most glaring example in contemporary history being the American-led invasion and occupation of Iraq at the start of the present century, France portrayed itself as freeing Egypt from the yoke of the Mamelouks and extending the light of civilisation from Europe to the Orient. Henry Laurens notes the exercise of justification for the campaign, noting that Napoleon invented the idea of the '*civilizing mission*', from then on the '*main theme of the European colonial undertaking*.' The civilizing mission had been an important concept in the historical development of Europe up till then; it was now '*essential*' in the West's relationship with the Orient. This spirit is clearly defined in the preface of the *La Description générale de l'Égypte*, edited by Fourier and Champollion-Figeac and Napoleon himself. Fabre effectively terms this driving force '*sens-puissance*' ('*culture-might*') in promoting French interests and giving France ample room to manoeuvre and achieve its goals.¹²⁹

One way of achieving those goals was through the construction of an unequal relationship between Europe and the Arab lands on the basis of power relations. Important elements like weaponry, technology and the development of new concepts through innovation were unequally enjoyed. The dawn of modernism, argues Balta, seems to have created a gulf between the two sides. Balta also points out how what started off as a project which could have harboured a lot of potential and beneficial outcomes for all sides started to go wrong as European ideals came up against serious limitations. These limitations included the corruption of the 1789 French Revolution ideals and European double-dealings in promoting liberation from the Ottoman Empire while seeking colonial benefits through the establishment of new power structures. The European powers started to invest heavily in the commercial and transportation infrastructure of the Middle East but did so for their own benefit.¹³⁰

The North and the South are closely linked in a relationship of imbalance up till today. Balta argues that the North bears part of the responsibility, but so do the South leaders, especially '*the self-fashioned Bonapartes*'. In terms of a project, the French incursion into Egypt has had far-reaching consequences by allowing for an intercultural confrontation across various levels of cultural life on both sides of the sea. As commentators and historians note, the mix and exchange of experiences were great, but the scars left are many.

Division or Encounter: The Latin Lake vs. the Muslim Domains

Writing in 1943, André Siegfried contrasted the European model of life, including the value of family life, based on Mediterranean values and the American style of industrialisation. Siegfried supported the European and Mediterranean way of life and saw in the Mediterranean a unity

¹²⁸ Hamid Dabashi notes that since the inception of the 'European entrapping of humanism', it is only with the Arab Spring that 'the Arab' and 'the Muslim' are now exiting that trap.' DABASHI, Hamid (2012): *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*, Zed Book Ltd, London, page xxi.

¹²⁹ Fabre; Izzo, page 27.

¹³⁰ Balta, page 25.

which he did not see in other regions worldwide.¹³¹ Adopting this perspective, Siegfried did not subscribe to Pirenne's theory of Islam having divided the Mediterranean, as has been discussed above. Interestingly, Siegfried mentions the proportionate element and the feeling of being close to humanity which the Mediterranean enjoyed and the values it had enriched Europe with, in contrast to the Atlantic forces, echoing other writers like Camus and prefiguring others like Cassano. However, underlying this perspective lay a very partial view of who represented the Mediterranean and its values. Siegfried believed Europe was essentially white and what the Mediterranean had contributed to Europe and was worth retaining was also white. It is good to note that in the wake of World War II he was aware that things were changing on a global level with the growing force of the US and greater industrialisation.¹³²

Chambers also adopts a view that subverts Pirenne's regarding the Muslim/Arab conquest of the Mediterranean having split the space. Chambers believes this event brought Europe back into the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The Arab conquest of the Mediterranean has significant relevance to and important repercussions on European-Arab relations today and attempts at forging intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. Interestingly and controversially, Chambers suggests "illegal" migrants are perpetuating this influence and '*revitalizing*' Europe with new blood from the South and East.¹³³ Chambers draws telling connections between migration in the past and in the present (emigration turned to immigration in Italy), colonialism (Italy's dreams of Empire in the nineteenth century) and Naples' sense of identity in Europe and the Mediterranean, which like that of other cities is rather monolithic and closed off to observations of interconnectedness of the type Chambers makes. Chambers refers to Walter Benjamin to note that even if the '*disciplined repression of the past were to be recognized, cultural closure would continue to be popularly enforced in the name of national unity and cultural autonomy.*'¹³⁴

Chambers poses some important questions about European identity and how the interpretation of Europe's history and its present identity tends to exclude multiplicity and favours hegemony and a monolithic view. In practice, Chambers argues that Europe perceives and represents itself as Christian, removing the Muslim and Jewish elements from the common history to a safe distance with which Europe can engage, but not belong to. Chambers notes that Europe has had issues with the Muslim and Jewish faiths for a long time, being represented as both the external and the internal enemy at different times. Nowadays, the Muslim and Jewish faiths are still seen as radically (literally, from the roots) different from Christianity; this can be seen in the way European discourse on intercultural dialogue, for example, places the

¹³¹ Fabre; Izzo, page 123.

¹³² Ibid. page 126.

¹³³ It is interesting to connect comments made by the former Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi in August 2010 during an official visit to Rome with regard to the impending North African and Muslim invasion of Europe by illegal migrants which he warned would have taken place unless Libya had been supported by EU to fulfil its guardian's role protecting Europe.

¹³⁴ Chambers (2008), page 128.

three religions at a clear distance from each other, with the Muslim and Jewish faiths belonging outside Europe or, if within Europe, mostly belonging to the migrant communities in Europe.¹³⁵

The integration of Islam in European consciousness has been problematic for centuries. The migration and attempted assimilation of Muslim communities from North Africa in French mainland society faced and arguably failed a particularly tough test between the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth. While attempts at controlling the Muslim presence in North Africa by the European colonial masters followed general guidelines (although one cannot speak of structured policies, as in the case of the *'myth kabyle'* in Algeria and Morocco), migrants to *l'hexagon* experienced resistance and disorientation, particularly due to the existing perception of believers of the Muslim faith.

Here as well lies the distinction which European discourse in general makes between Europe and the Mediterranean. This distinction helps distance Christianity on the European side from Islam and Judaism on the Middle Eastern side. It could be the case that if general discourse spoke of the Mediterranean more wholly, such distinctions between the religions could be more difficult to sustain and may be challenged to reflect reality more closely.

As a case in point with regard to the disharmonious relationship which Europe engages in with the Mediterranean, Chambers refers to Cassano's comments on Italy's *'unhealthy relationship'* with a *'repudiated Mediterranean'* that is linked to the way Europe and the West have tried to impose their wants and their image on the Mediterranean. However, Chambers notes that the Mediterranean offers *'a space, a sea, that is irreducible to (their) design'*.¹³⁶

As commented on earlier and will be discussed in greater depth later, a great deal of imbalance in the Mediterranean was sown by Europe through its practice of colonialism:

'From the French expedition of Bonaparte in Egypt, the seizure and colonisation of Algeria, and the opening of the Suez Canal to the English occupation of Egypt and the Italian occupation of Libya, the Mediterranean is violently transformed into a European lake'.¹³⁷

The modern development of the concept of a *'European lake'* found its roots in the Classical age and ironically purported itself as an attempt to be inclusive and unify, rather than divide the Mediterranean. As pointed out with reference to comments by Balta earlier, European humanism inspired by the Enlightenment betrayed its own ideals by managing to restrict the interpretations of the Mediterranean and its relationship with Europe. Chambers quotes Jean Desthieux who in 1935 noted that:

'humanism, as generally understood, has contributed to restricting an understanding of the origins of civilization, to the degree that it has largely overlooked the Semitic, Christian and

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid. page 148.

¹³⁷ Ibid. page 144.

*Islamic contributions in its over-valuation of its Greek-Latin baggage. This means that we have arrived at any antigeographical and unjust sense of the Mediterranean reduced simply to the dimensions of a Latin Lake.*¹³⁸

By the early 1930s, when this concept had generated a more popular feeling towards its value, the Académie méditerranéenne, established in Nice in 1926 and which later moved to Monaco, while having unclear aims, mostly focused on the Greco-Latin heritage. It is worth noting that Louis Bertrand, who will be commented on later at greater length in sub-chapter 1.2.c. *Colonialism*, was associated with this movement. André Suarès was also attracted to the concept of who saw Latinity as an ideal, not as a reality.¹³⁹

However, to return to Braudel, Chambers notes that he still reflected *'a restrictive appreciation of the historical and cultural space that he did so much to elaborate'*. Chambers notes that Braudel and Pirenne both view the Mediterranean in terms of the *'French lake'* of 1800-1945 and fail *'to register and work through the subsequent "loss" of that world, compensated in their writings by a self-assured possession of the historical space represented by the Mediterranean.'* Chambers believes this lack reflected *'an unwillingness to come to terms with a once racialized rule of the world.'* One needs to acknowledge the disquieting realities of the Mediterranean and the impact of colonisation and division which led to its fragility and *'hidden'* unity. In order to move forward, Chambers believes the colonial past and its repercussions on today need to be fully acknowledged.¹⁴⁰ Chambers provides his own view as to what brings the Mediterranean together, and does this by relating the Mediterranean history to its shared sea border and to the common past shared by different parts of the Mediterranean lands surrounding the sea.

Acknowledging and Bridging the Gap

The first step needed by all sides and stakeholders involved in the development of relations in the Mediterranean is the acknowledgment of the divisions brought about by the imbalances and injustices which the people of this sea have experienced and still experience. Past and present evaluations of the history of the Mediterranean are useful in understanding the dynamics of this space, and this understanding may clear and generate a vision for a better way forward in terms of the quality of relations to be practiced by all those involved.

Charles Coutel, writing at the time at the Université d'Artois, and the author of an important paper dealing with relations in the Mediterranean, notes that at the Civil Society Forum in Barcelona in 1995 it was noted that *'dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are a necessary contribution to the bringing closer together of peoples'*.¹⁴¹ He notes that in 1996 in

¹³⁸ Ibid. page 140. With regard to humanism, it is worth noting that the concept does not exclusively belong to the Western tradition. Ziauddin Sardar argues that Muslim thinkers like him hail from a tradition far older than the Enlightenment, which is Adab literature (Adab meaning etiquette, how to be a sophisticated human being): this gave rise to the very idea of humanism and criticism. BBC World Service 'The Strand', 12 January 2011.

¹³⁹ Fabre; Izzo, page 97.

¹⁴⁰ Chambers (2008), page 141.

¹⁴¹ Ministère des Affaires étrangères, page 44.

Bologna, the intangible heritage of the Mediterranean was highlighted, but unfortunately, in situations that recall the prioritising of politically and economically sensitive issues over cultural ones, it was eventually relegated due to security issues. Coutel refers to Giuseppe Sacco, the Italian researcher, who notes the Mediterranean has two challenges which may be summarised in the following way:

- i. Firstly, a strategy needed to be developed against fanaticism and integralism; and
- ii. Secondly, and in relation to the first point, the theory of the “clash of civilizations” by Huntington needed refuting. Coutel links Pirenne’s theory on Islam having divided the Mediterranean to Huntington’s own.¹⁴²

Coutel notes that well-meaning references to Braudel and André Siegfried do not suffice to challenge such theories, even though they do provide sound frameworks from which to start doing this. Coutel refers to Siegfried who writes: *‘In spite of the fact that the Mediterranean still benefits from the image of being a traditional cradle of civilization of cultures and religion, it is also true that it remains a source of conflicts and tensions’* (Mare nostrum, L’Harmattan, 2000).¹⁴³

The research will follow Coutel’s lead in the exploration of the issue of how to bridge a divided sea not by being naïve or well-intentioned but through a careful analysis of the existing fault lines and by engaging in a serious attempt at addressing them. Coutel proposes doing so by looking at the works of three intellectuals to find a way forward:

- i. The first of these is Jeanne Ladjili-Mouchette, a Tunisian jurist. She looks at the epistemological and legal frameworks of the Mediterranean, with the Latin system on the one hand and the Islamic one on the other, and seeks the common links between the two. In other words, she seeks for a commonality which addresses the Mediterranean itself. Ladjili-Mouchette tries to challenge the obscuration (*‘occultation’*) of the Mediterranean that promotes a clash between Christianity and Islam. Coutel supports Ladjili-Mouchette’s thesis with reference to Rémi Brague and his views on a *mare nostrum* that do not allow a division of cultures between West and the rest: Brague argues that the Latin *mare nostrum* is a reference point to be sought and a source of inspiration for today’s interested parties. He argues that this concept predates the Christian-Islam division, and still today feeds the Mediterranean identity, transcending this later division. However, while finding it intellectually appealing, Coutel admits to finding serious limitations with the foundations and the framework of this approach which he finds too heavily set in semantics.

- ii. Next, Coutel refers to Paul Valéry, encountered earlier. Coutel makes reference to Valéry’s description of his *‘expérience méditerranéenne’* and quotes him as follows:

‘Combien de choses se sont développées sur les bords de la Méditerranée, par contagion ou par rayonnement. Ainsi c’est constitué ce trésor auquel notre culture doit presque tout, au moins

¹⁴² SAID, Edward (1994): *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, London, page 108.

¹⁴³ Ministère des Affaires étrangères, page 40.

*dans ses origines; je puis dire que la Méditerranée a été une véritable machine à fabriquer de la civilisation.*¹⁴⁴

Valéry notes the communication and exchange of ideas, of influence and of trade that happen in the Mediterranean, a sea bordering lands and in between lands. The sea allows for a '*philosophie de la mer*' to develop and the emergence of '*possibles futurs*'. In 1933 Valéry's reflections on a philosophy of the sea led him to found the *Centre Universitaire méditerranéen*. He set up the centre in Nice together with Maurice Mignon, professor at the *Université d'Aix-Marseille*, and the centre's director.¹⁴⁵ From there he promoted the idea of the Mediterranean lying at the basis of European development and encouraged research into the various elements of the Mediterranean and not simply the Greco-Latin heritage. One important aim was to contribute to the building of a Mediterranean, humanistic identity. He projected a universalistic vision of the Mediterranean and promoted the *système méditerranéen*, echoing the work of the *Saint Simoniens* and Michel Chevalier. He also believed in the constantly broken, and then re-established, Mediterranean equilibrium, as can be seen throughout history (*'équilibre méditerranéen [...] tantôt rompu, tantôt rétabli'*). He also believed he had found a *système méditerranéen* which allowed for a poetic level as well as a political and institutional one.¹⁴⁶

Coutel regrets the short life of the University and notes it could have challenged the grotesque caricature (*'caricature grotesque'*) of the *mare nostrum* which Mussolini created through the Fascist perversion of Rome (*'dégredation fasciste de la romanité'*). Coutel believes this perversion contributed to the decline of the humanist concept of the Mediterranean and its Roman heritage. Conversely, one could argue one led to the other and one ought not to be surprised, as critics of the *mare nostrum* creed and Latinity found fault with the over-identification of the Mediterranean with the Romans at the expense of other cultures.¹⁴⁷

iii. The third figure Coutel refers to is Paul Ricoeur. Coutel refers to Ricoeur in order to establish a stronger and more tangible way forward for the re-appraisal of the Mediterranean also with reference to the framework of the UpM. In '*Quel ethos nouveau pour l'Europe?*' Ricoeur proposes to overcome the divisions within Europe by adopting three integrating models (*'modèles intégrateurs'*) of the historical, religious and political diversity of Europe and the Mediterranean. The starting point is this diversity itself. The three models consist of:

1. The model of translation: this is needed in order to generate the respect of the Mediterranean languages. Coutel refers to Alexandria as the symbolic centre of such an enterprise;
2. The exchange of memories. Ricoeur calls '*échange de mémoires*' the effort that each European and Mediterranean partner should make to review one's own history with the eyes of others. The aim is to really acknowledge the situation of the other, and go beyond facile apologies or explanations for the situation of others and their view of us. The importance of

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. page 50.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. page 83.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. page 86.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. page 90.

exchange through narration/story-telling is emphasised as this process allows the different parties to deal with their pasts, separate and common, and look to the future together. Coutel quotes Ricoeur from *Imaginer l'Europe*:

'Le passé [...] est vivant dans la mémoire grâce aux flèches de futurité qui n'ont pas été tirées ou dont la trajectoire a été interrompue [...]. La délivrance de ce futur non accompli du passé est le bénéfice majeur qu'on peut attendre du croisement de mémoires et de l'échange des récits.'

3. The model of forgiveness: this is based not on religion but on ethics. Ricoeur calls on all sides to feel the others' pain in order to understand each other better. Coutel argues that this allows one to transcend stereotypes and judgements in favour of creating a common space and a common heritage. The importance of forgiveness to move forward is emphasised: *'Sans le signe du pardon, le coupable serait tenu pour coupable d'autre chose que de ses délits et de ses fautes [...]. Tu vaud mieux que tes actes.'*

Coutel finds Ricoeur complementing and completing the views of Valéry with regard to the University Centre and what should be its ethos. Coutel hails the efforts of the *Etats Généraux* which fit this reasoning and describes these combined efforts the *'nouveau Mare nostrum'*.¹⁴⁸

Al Andalus

The cultural flourishing based on rich cross-fertilisation and tolerance reaches impressive levels of admiration and nostalgia in recent and contemporary writers in the context of *Al Andalus*. Beyond the objective assessment of these historical and geographical constructions one notices enthusiastic interpretations of the past. These interpretations contribute to the creation of near-mythological periods of time related to particular places which contrast greatly with depictions of a divided Mediterranean in the wake of the Arab conquest.

Al Andalus has been inspirational to the role the *Cahiers du Sud* played in the debate on the Mediterranean in Provence in the early twentieth century. *Cahiers du Sud* was born of an encounter between Jean Ballard, its director, and Marcel Pagnol. Its vision is of a *'Mediterranean, humanistic man'* who enjoys a significantly encompassing perspective of Mediterranean cultures (*'notion considérablement élargie de la culture méditerranéenne'*), according to Ballard.¹⁴⁹ He expresses the rich voyage engaged in by referring to the following of a river to the sea, this being the Mediterranean.

This period of *Al Andalus* flourished before the *Reconquista* by the Spanish Kings completed in 1492. Stillo notes how it is no coincidence that the Spanish opening up of the New World was accompanied by the *Reconquista* in 1492. Writing during the darkness established by General Franco in the first half of the twentieth century in Spain, Gabriel Garcia Lorca perceived the

¹⁴⁸ The proceedings brought together a number of important thinkers and activists addressing the Mediterranean during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Fabre; Izzo, page 79.

Catholic Kings' destruction of *Al Andalus* and the fall of Granada in 1492 as a '*historical disaster*', particularly in the wake of events in 1936. Lorca reserved harsh criticism for Franco's regime and expressed his views also in the context of the passing away of this historical period of excellence:

*'Lorca's mourning over the fall of the splendour of science, poetry and philosophy in Granada sustains its validity by remembering while never calling for some absurd reversal of history. This is why Lorca's work continues to attract the contemporary imagination with some force. This attraction is not found in the temptation to romanticize the Arab conquest of the Mediterranean. What attracts us to the work of Lorca and others like him who perceive the Mediterranean as a plural event, is the need to reassess (now more than ever) the European perception of the South and the East of this sea.'*¹⁵⁰

Baldacchino notes that Lorca's views resonate with today's cultural operators who challenge the concept of the divided Mediterranean and envisage the opportunity to establish a project that aims at establishing equal relations between the North and the South. Baldacchino notes that Lorca's beliefs expose current resistance to any such project based on equality and solidarity:

*'This is also where the colonialist perception of the South as being 'subordinate' to the North must be seen for its absurdity and irrelevance. Yet as the fallacy of colonial perceptions are seen for what they really are, one cannot forget that we live in a time when Islamophobia has become an excuse to denounce terrorism, and where the vehement intolerance of a woman wearing a burka in the streets of Paris, Rome or London is becoming increasingly common.'*¹⁵¹

While a European critical voice like Baldacchino or Chambers subscribes to such views which criticise the attitude of the North toward the South on the basis of a Mediterranean project which is fraught with imbalances, a voice like Kahena Abbes, from Tunisia, provides a reflection on the freedom of expression and the liberal way of life that encouraged the arts and sciences to develop in the Alhambra in Andalusia in contrast with the subsequent decline suffered by Arab-Islamic culture which persists till today. *Al Andalus* is described as a type of globalised world of the time. He draws a parallel with the awakening experienced by today's Tunisians thanks to their revolution but warns against the encroachment of Islamic extremism which may block progress. He challenges the extremists' view of themselves as having the only correct answers by noting that it is man's duty to fulfil God's will by being creative rather than by being fossilised (*'Quel est le sens de cette mission si ce n'est, entre autres, créer, inventer et réfléchir?'*).¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Baldacchino, page 146.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² ABBES, Kahena (2011): 'C'est l'Alhambra que je pleure aujourd'hui', *La Presse de Tunisie*, 18 April 2011, Tunis.

The Mediterranean as a Project of Your Own Choice

In envisioning the Mediterranean as a project, one needs to ask oneself what is the contribution of culture to a Mediterranean identity. Elias Khoury asks whether a Mediterranean enjoying a cultural dimension exists, or whether one speaks of the Mediterranean only because of the conflicts and political circumstances linked to the region which make such observation and analysis necessary. Khoury uses a powerful image to identify the touch points where Mediterranean cultures interact but also suffer from situations which give rise to conflict. He refers to the Straits of Gibraltar and Palestine, which act as the hinges of the Mediterranean, as the geographic contact points between North and South and which are still closely tied to colonial memory and suffer from conflicting interests with no resolution in sight.¹⁵³

By attempting to *'re-think'* the Mediterranean, Omar Barghouti and Adrian Grima attempt to dis-place conventional views of the Mediterranean in order to re-contextualise the space in ways that open up new possibilities and positive prospects. Such re-thinking may go far and range from political and social observations to pragmatic suggestions for energy and trade. By allowing this re-positioning, new ways of perceiving and addressing the main issues marking the Mediterranean open up. As noted by the authors, the Mediterranean is *'representing a conflict mired in myths and misunderstanding; but it is also from the Mediterranean that new paths can emerge.'* Barghouti and Grima want to explore new possibilities by engaging in *'reclaiming the Mediterranean as a cultural bridge'*.¹⁵⁴

Reflecting on recent political initiatives addressing the Mediterranean, Stillo argues that in spite of the fact that the Mediterranean is high on the political agenda in Europe, the great number of colloquia and events dedicated to it do not lead to any results which can bring about much needed change. He argues that of the three sides of the Mediterranean namely Europe, the Arab countries and the Balkans only Europe seems to have a holistic vision of the Mediterranean. This is mostly based on its own beliefs of what the Mediterranean should be, rooted in interpretations of the Roman Empire's *mare nostrum*. While Europe seems to perceive the Mediterranean project as a necessity, the South and Eastern (Balkan) shores see the Mediterranean project as crafted, forced and imposed upon everyone by Europe.¹⁵⁵

Having assessed the shortcomings of high-level political initiatives, Stillo proposes what seems to him to be a possible and strong way forward, with reference to Danilo Zolo's concept of the *'pluriverso'*, which will be developed later:

'L'ipotesi che si fa strada è allora diversa: il Mediterraneo, il Mare Bianco Interno, come viene chiamato in lingua araba, si deve considerare portatore e formatore di plurime identità, fluide

¹⁵³ KHOURY, Elias and BEYDOUN, Ahmad (2002): *La Méditerranée libanaise*, Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, page 9.

¹⁵⁴ BARGHOUTI, Omar; GRIMA, Adrian (2005): *Re-Thinking the Mediterranean*, http://www.adriangrima.com/alternative_bridging_project_barghouti_grima.htm (accessed 10 September 2010).

¹⁵⁵ Stillo, page 58.

*come lo è la sua superficie, profonde come lo sono i suoi abissi, frastagliate come si presentano le sue coste.*¹⁵⁶

From this perspective, the Mediterranean is a choice, not a given. This means developing an acknowledgement and use of diversity and contamination which does not find one's home in a unitary Mediterranean but builds a home as a '*collective*'. Pointing out a paradox, Stillo notes that the differences lie in the starting points, while the common base lies in the will to work together.¹⁵⁷

The Euro-Med Partnership

In order to develop the concept of the Mediterranean further along the lines of a project of one's own making, but reeling it back in with projects which have been undertaken with various degrees of success, it is worth looking at two more processes which are important parts of recent history as well as contemporary politics with direct impact on the Mediterranean. The two examples discussed deal with projects which have been founded on a will to manage things differently and foster change and are motivated by a strong vision to address gaps and mismanaged relationships of the kind already discussed. Nevertheless, these visions are driven by agendas that are at best not unrelated to *realpolitik* and at worst fail in their implementation due to the lack of clear communication, poor intercultural dialogue, assumed or imposed common goals and far fewer resources than is really needed. The first of these examples is the Euro-Med Partnership (EMP). The second, though arguably difficult to distinguish at times, is the French political vision for the Mediterranean.

An interesting overview of the process dealing with relationships in the Euro-Med area is provided by Federica Bicchi who refers to previous literature and critiques it in order to identify how the European Community (EC) and later the European Union (EU) has, since the 1970s, tried to influence and even shape the Mediterranean in a '*civil*' or '*normative*' way by influencing the politics in the region '*by making use of three means: conceptualisation, institution engineering and agenda setting.*' In other words, Bicchi looks at how the European community has: i. actively used its powers to build a concept of a Mediterranean region through political means; and ii. done so by using its own European experience, with mixed results. Bicchi compares the EMP with previous efforts of the EC/EU to address the southern Mediterranean. The EC/EU has pursued its aim of region building in the Mediterranean by adopting a number of strategies:

- i. First, by adopting the Global Mediterranean Policy within which the concept of a "Mediterranean region" came to be enshrined in European external relations;
- ii. Second, it set up the multilateral institutional framework created by the EMP;
- iii. Third, the EMP has changed since 1995, particularly in light of the fall of the Soviet threat. The change has involved different approaches to security issues and the

¹⁵⁶ Stillo, page 11.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. page 56.

development of non-European Mediterranean states on the basis on bilateral cooperation frameworks.¹⁵⁸

In the period leading up to the Barcelona Process and its inception in 1995, the EC developed a more unitary approach to non-EC countries in the Mediterranean following the Global Mediterranean Policy developed in the early 1970s. This was followed by a changing political background at EC level highlighting the shift towards a coherent Mediterranean policy mostly in terms of trade in the 1970s-1980s. The subsequent southern enlargement of the EC in the early 1980s effectively split the Mediterranean in terms of development policy and trade and the Global Mediterranean Policy lost much of its value. In its stead, the EMP tried to redefine Euro-Med relations in the early 1990s. A number of tools were designed for this purpose, not only of a commercial nature, and these included the setting up of the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly.¹⁵⁹

Therefore, it may be argued that the EMP primarily sought political ends through economic means. It may be worth asking whether EU policies promoting democracy through trade did contribute to the Arab Spring, even if it may have done so indirectly by contributing to, rather than challenging, the gap amidst the population in economic terms and doing nothing but helping preserve and consolidate the democratic divide among those who had power and those who did not. In retrospect, the process of economic liberalisation in the Mediterranean non-European states may be perceived as having aimed at sparking a process of development that not only addressed important European security concerns linked to migration but also triggered a diversification of Arab societies and a process of political liberalisation. Israel's participation to this process was arguably meant to highlight the political benefits deriving from economic cooperation. In other words, the opening of markets was intended to cement political integration and security in a way that resembled the history of European integration, a key component of which was seeking a solution to security problems via economic relations.¹⁶⁰

In light of such an assessment, there exist numerous critics of the EMP process who argue that EMP practices were strictly related to EC/EU internal practices. For instance, Bicchi warns that '*downloading*' from EU cooperation history with little adaptation may have missed the point in the diversified and fragmented Southern Mediterranean societies.¹⁶¹

It is also worth commenting on the latest step in the long road of European interventions in the Mediterranean outlined above. Rosa Balfour notes that the Union for the Mediterranean (UpM) was '*[m]otivated by domestic politics and rooted in national foreign policy priorities*' and was '*tainted [...] by a postcolonial discourse*'. The UpM in practice is of puny intellectual prowess compared to earlier French-inspired visions by the likes of Valéry and Ricoeur, discussed earlier. However, the visibility has been arguably greater as has been the impact on a political level,

¹⁵⁸ BICCHI, Federica (2004): *The European Origins of Euro-Mediterranean Practices*, Institute of European Studies, UC Berkeley, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8c44c395> (accessed 1 October 2010), page 4.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. page 10.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. page 17.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. page 18.

though not practical at the level of the citizens of the Mediterranean area. It is debatable how much should be invested in such a project rather than attempt to start afresh by taking the salient points of such visions, mostly French-inspired, and attempt to practice them on the ground. In spite of stressing the point of 'co-ownership' in order to redress a weak aspect of the Barcelona Process, the involvement and the feeling of ownership by the citizens of the various countries belonging to the Mediterranean has been very poor.

One of the limitations inherent to the process from the very beginning comes from the weakness of non-state direct participation:

*'the UfM is clearly dominated by intergovernmental politics, where the role of national governments is strengthened at the highest and most centralised level, whereas the multilateral institutions also formed by parliamentary participation and the dense network of sub-state and non-state actors that the Barcelona Process cultivated barely deserved any mention.'*¹⁶²

Balfour notes that even at inception stage, the potential of the UpM was going to be severely curtailed:

*'Co-ownership is thus extremely limited in nature to the government level, which will shape the direction of EU–Mediterranean relations. NGOs' participation, mentioned in the July declaration but not in Marseille, will be circumscribed to their role in presenting project proposals to the Secretariat. The roles of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and of the networks of local governments were considered in Marseille, but without any clarification regarding their role in the UfM.'*¹⁶³

Therefore, in commenting on the possible debilitating effects of the UpM at planning stage, mainly with regard to issues of exaggerated centralisation as a means of strengthening security and control and the marginalisation of the non-official spaces and actors, Balfour prefigures, if not completely, the true shortcomings the process would be coming up against in its early implementation stages, more of which will be discussed later in 1.2.c. *Colonialism* and, more generally, also in 1. 3. b. *Cultural Cooperation*.

The French Project

The development of an important set of constructs that help define various projects aimed at addressing and developing the Mediterranean has been a key concern of France for a number of centuries. This reflection will receive greater attention in later sections, particularly 1.2.c. *Colonialism*. However, it is already worth noting that reflecting particularly on France, Jean Carpentier and François Lebrun note that the *mare nostrum* has come to an end and that the traumas and conflict accompanying decolonisation have not been accompanied by the

¹⁶² BALFOUR, Rosa (2009): 'The Transformation of the Union for the Mediterranean', *Mediterranean Politics*, 14: 1, page 5.

¹⁶³ Ibid. page 6.

necessary process of grieving (*'le travail de deuil'*) by France with regard to Suez and Algeria, for example. The way forward, not once shorn of its postcolonial burden, was the construction of a European economic and political union, which involuntarily but inevitably entailed turning its back on the Mediterranean (*'un long désengagement culturel et scientifique autant que politique et économique à l'égard de la Méditerranée'*).¹⁶⁴ Echoing Cassano and Zolo, they ask whether Mediterranean societies, deprived of their centrality, following the discovery of the New World, which is never recovered, and further hindered by European union and the growing international dimension of the United States, are condemned to get to grips with globalisation of the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific type. It is also worth asking whether French initiatives addressing the Mediterranean have helped counter this long process of marginalisation.¹⁶⁵

By means of focusing on one particular element, to be developed and expanded on later, the Saint Simoniens represent an intellectual high point in the French project for the Mediterranean. They accompany the French campaign by developing the first sustained *'global representation'* of the *'Mediterranean system'*. This term is used by Michel Chevallier in 1832 in the newspaper *Le Globe*. Chevallier dreams of an alliance between the West and the Orient with the Mediterranean as the *'point de ralliement'* (common ground). Chevallier envisions the Mediterranean as a *'vast forum'* which addresses all the issues which impact upon its divided populations, and the space is described as the potential *'bridal bed'* of the West and the Orient. Chevallier also uses a number of important visionary terms such as *'Mediterranean nations'*, *'the Mediterranean territory'* and *'Mediterranean confederation'*. In a similar vein, in 1833 Père Enfantin calls for a *'great communion'* of the Mediterranean. As pointed out by Emile Barrault in 1835 France drives for the recognition of the *'Arab empire'* in opposition to the Ottoman one, but with one's own gain as the final aim.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Fabre; Izzo, page 116.

¹⁶⁵ Fabre identifies three stages of French engagement with the Mediterranean, namely colonialism; decolonisation; and finally partnership.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. page 31.

1. 1. d. Common Aspects in the Mediterranean

The aim of this section is to provide a deeper analysis of what contributes to the sense of commonality in the Mediterranean space. This is done in order to identify and adopt a framework within which to address how cultural relations and cultural expression have been influenced by this sense of commonality. The research also aims to identify the ways in which cultural relations and cultural expression have contributed to the formation of a common space. While Fabre notes that historians of the Mediterranean following Braudel and Georges Duby focus less on the unity of the region and more on the complexity and conflict in its make-up,¹⁶⁷ this section aims to refer historical analyses forward to contemporary issues and show that, as Harris comments on Marc Bloch's views on unity, only disorder and difficulties provide a sense of unity or centre since these are the elements which are common to everyone. This sub-chapter will also argue that while diversity is not unique to the Mediterranean region, its 'connectedness' is. How the Mediterranean came together and developed its characteristics is more important than the fact that it is fragmented and diverse.¹⁶⁸

Cultural expression and commonality

Cultural expression, introduced earlier, is one of the means by which one can trace elements of commonality among Mediterranean societies. The Mediterranean is rich with multiple expressions of culture which cannot be subsumed under a unitary concept of Mediterranean expression of culture. Nevertheless, the diversity of cultural expressions allows for common elements to be identified between different societies and communities in the region.

It is worth noting that Adnan Husain discusses religion as one of the most important features the Mediterranean has in common, and notes that although there is not one religion, the systems of beliefs accompanied by traditions and whole ways of life, including cultural expression, provide a wider sense of commonality within the Mediterranean. The research acknowledges its debt to Husain's approach, and adopts it by adapting it to an analysis of cultural expression itself serving as a basis of commonality in the Mediterranean.¹⁶⁹

The research aims to look at cultural expression as a means of revealing socio-historical circumstances. The expression of culture through the arts, in terms of production and creative collaboration is an area of the Mediterranean which necessitates a deep and clear analysis in order to establish the relationship between a society or a community and its socio-historical circumstances. The analysis of cultural expression undertaken by the research aims to reveal the situations that circumscribe the producers and users of such expression. The comparative analysis of a small number of different societies will contribute towards bringing to light the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. page 115.

¹⁶⁸ Harris, page 20.

¹⁶⁹ HUSAIN, Adnan A. ed. (2007): *A Faithful Sea: The Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean 1200-1700*, Oneworld, Oxford.

characteristics of particular societies in such a way as to bring out what socio-historical elements underlie and contribute to the formation of contemporary cultural practices.

The value of the past

While not wanting to be guilty of charges of immobilism which as pointed out by Harris are prevalent among views on the Mediterranean that promote the lack of change and safeguard qualities which are believed to have been carried on from the past, it is worth considering interesting questions used to identify elements of the ancient Mediterranean that have great importance for today. Among these is one which discusses the extent of cultural unity in the Mediterranean. Harris asks '*whether the Mediterranean environment, and the immediate human reaction to it, brought about any noteworthy commonalities of culture.*'¹⁷⁰ This perspective provides a strong foundation to the research in contemporary cultural settings and a sense of continuity between the history of the Mediterranean and its current realities. In order to resist diluting different elements to the status of an immense, but insipid, soup, it is worth heeding Harris' critical perspective regarding unity being linked to distinctiveness. It is also worth taking note of Harris' argument noting that discourse in favour of '*cultural continuity*' between the ancient and the recent Mediterranean are to be regarded with suspicion.¹⁷¹

Colonialism

One of the key elements of commonality in the Mediterranean is the colonial heritage that, taking note of the particular ways it has influenced different people, has been shared among many people of the Mediterranean. Searching for commonality is not an end in itself, but rather a means through which the research can identify common traits in cultural expression, including challenges and opportunities, with which to address the space as a whole. The same applies for its analysis of colonialism and the effect of colonialism on today's Mediterranean societies. The research does not aim to provide a historical analysis for its own sake: rather, it aims at referring to history and social and political circumstances in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of cultural expression today and the challenges different societies in the Mediterranean face and tackle also through cultural expression.

Fabre outlines much of current debate regarding the Mediterranean in terms of its colonial past and postcolonial present. The past's shadows on the present are heavy, memories are in conflict, legacies struggle to assert themselves, interpretations clash, and work in favour of clarity is needed. In terms of the research, part of this work is related to observing and analysing the realities on the ground, and included in these realities are the work and developments, on social, economic and cultural levels, which cultural operations bring with them. The cultural milieu today is closely linked to the colonialist practices and colonialism in the Mediterranean and the steps ahead proposed by the research in *Section Three: Policy Paper*

¹⁷⁰ Harris, page 20.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. page 27.

and Way Forward take into consideration this past. Fabre asks with what means and how should we assess the legacy of colonialism on, among others, the cultural sphere, and the research addresses this question in the context of contemporary cultural relations. It is also important to note that a major tenet of colonialism, namely the concept of the civilising mission that will be discussed later, is a tainted one, having compromised cooperation, plans for development and the trust needed to promote joint action.¹⁷²

Constructs of commonality

Zolo puts himself an important question which is significant to all research about the Mediterranean, including the present one. He asks whether, given all this research and wealth of knowledge and experience, one can nonetheless speak of a Mediterranean in terms of a recognisable construct. And if so, what is it that justifies this construct being treated with such importance. Zolo himself offers four points in answer and in this way argues why the Mediterranean “comes together” the way it does:

- i. The first is the holistic concept the Mediterranean offers due to its interlinked cultures and geographies that contributed to its shared stories and developments in the past, and still do;
- ii. The second is its particular climate and the lifestyles this gave rise to, from trade to cultural expression, in spite of the evident differences and conflicts which exist;
- iii. Thirdly, Zolo mentions the intensity of the human relationships, including clashes, over the centuries - the Crusades are mentioned as one example; and
- iv. Fourthly, the construction of ‘*greatness*’, as described by Braudel, in terms of the civilisations of the Mediterranean, their inter-connectedness, their cross-fertilisation, their pervasiveness (also outside the Mediterranean space) and their persistence.¹⁷³

From a contemporary perspective, and on a level that serves as a further reality check for idealised interpretations of the Mediterranean, Charlotte Huygens provides a powerful take on the space by making use of contemporary art that addresses problems in the Mediterranean and tackles issues that show up the fragility of lives looking for survival through the sea, but sadly find death instead. Huygens does this by referring to an impressive installation called ‘*ID: A Journey through a Solid Sea*’ related to a refugee tragic accident off Malta in 2006.¹⁷⁴ Huygens notes that the creators portray the Mediterranean Sea as an unassailable frontier, ‘*the largest Mediterranean cemetery since World War II*’, confronting the public with the assertion that: ‘*No*

¹⁷² FABRE, Thierry ed. (2004): *Colonialisme et postcolonialisme en Méditerranée*, Editions Parenthèses, Marseille, page 8.

¹⁷³ CASSANO, Franco; ZOLO, Danilo ed. (2007): *L’alternativa mediterranea*, Feltrinelli, Milano, page 16.

¹⁷⁴ HUYGENS, Charlotte (2002): ‘Multiplicity: Euro-Med relations in contemporary artistic creation’, <http://www.eurocult.org/uploads/docs/671.pdf> (accessed 24 April 2011); ‘*ID: A Journey through a Solid Sea*’ (Stefano Boeri et al, 2002, Documenta, Kassel).

*longer a vivid place of the blending of cultures and traditions, the Mediterranean territory has become solid, a place for the trafficking of fixed identities’.*¹⁷⁵

In discussing how to define common ground in relations between Europe and the Mediterranean, Huygens notes that there are multiple elements in people’s forays beyond one’s own border which identify a common urge to do so. These include wanting to discover more of oneself against territory which is unfamiliar, as well as the straightforward discovery of the Other. Huygens believes that artists and arts operators play a big role not only in defining common ground, but also in *‘designing’* it.¹⁷⁶

In contrast to the more unifying vision of the Mediterranean discussed earlier and referred to again in this sub-section particularly with reference to Coutel and Balta, Thomas Demmelhuber notes that today the Mediterranean symbolises a frontier between the secular/liberal Northern shore, to a certain extent subsumed within the label of *‘Christian civilization’*, and the illiberal/authoritarian Southern shore, generally linked to the *‘Islamic civilization’* of the Mediterranean. Demmelhuber claims that the great legacy of the Mediterranean throughout history remains undervalued. He notes that for centuries the Mediterranean was *‘the bridge between the actors on both sides, acting as a historic crossroads for various ethnic, cultural and religious traditions.’* Demmelhuber notes that it is more than odd *‘that only in modern times the Mediterranean clogged the flow of ideas’* and stopped to act as *‘a vehicle for philosophies and cultures’.*¹⁷⁷ He also notes clearly that any unity identified or sought within the Mediterranean framework should not rely on stereotypes or assumptions. He notes that:

*‘the Mediterranean does not constitute a truly common identity. The same accounts for the much larger Euro-Mediterranean space. Its members do not share one cultural tradition, language, religion or recent history of administrative unity. Its political systems cover a wide range from liberal democracy to authoritarian rule.’*¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, he does not intend to do away with the Mediterranean reality. Rather, he wants to re-discover and establish foundations which are much stronger than mere tradition and nostalgia. He argues that in spite of the various divisions, elements which bring together the common space between Europe and the Mediterranean do exist. In tones which recall a vision for a renewed establishment of the Mediterranean in a framework that develops the space as a new, positive project, Demmelhuber claims that:

¹⁷⁵ Contemporary art has been increasingly addressing issues of high importance and global resonance related to or rooted in the Mediterranean, as discussed by Christian Höller *‘Imag(in)ing Globalization Or: How can something be made comprehensible, when there are contradictory images of it?’*, http://www.republicart.net/disc/mundial/hoeller01_en.htm (accessed 9 February 2012).

¹⁷⁶ Huygens, page 2.

¹⁷⁷ DEMMELHUBER, Thomas (2006): *‘The Euro-Mediterranean Space as an Imagined (Geo-)political, Economic and Cultural Entity’*, C159, Center for European Integration Studies, www.zei.de (accessed 12 December 2010), page 1; *‘Clash of labour – immigrants’ struggle in Europe’*, in *The Egyptian Gazette*, No. 40, 850, December 6, 2005.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. page 8.

*'the Euro-Mediterranean identity still has to be invented, to be established based on an existing small common denominator, the feeling, the idea and the awareness of a specific Euro-Mediterranean entity [...] is existent.'*¹⁷⁹

Demmelhuber explains this idea serves a very precise purpose, and was developed by the European side. He notes that *'the idea of such an entity was an absolute prerequisite from the EU's perspective to launch a common approach to the Mediterranean in the early 1990s.'*¹⁸⁰ However, he takes the argument forward by taking a step back when he describes the Mediterranean as *'transnational'*, predating nations, cutting across them and possibly outliving them. Demmelhuber notes how, as observed by Ernest Renan, in order to enable people to come together in one entity they need common elements to help them forge that entity.¹⁸¹

Zolo traces back the historiography of the Mediterranean in modern researchers to Pirenne and Braudel, contrasting Pirenne's belief in the divisionary power coming from the Islamic conquest of the Southern Mediterranean and Spain with Braudel's appreciation of Islamic culture and its contribution to the richness (and possibly unity) of the Mediterranean. Zolo also makes reference to the work of Horden and Purcell who follow in Braudel's steps to analyse the unity in the Mediterranean composed of its different, and sometimes fragmented and fragmentary cultures.¹⁸²

Henry Frendo tries to explain that both division and unity in the Mediterranean exist, possibly equally, and presents the following argument. He does this with reference to Camus:

*'Albert Camus may have been dreaming when he saw the Mediterranean as a role model for co-existence, because clearly this sea has been as much of a divider as it has been of a unifier. In a partial critique of Braudel's more holistic thesis, Horden and Purcell would argue that in the twentieth-century modernization has had a disintegrating effect. On the other hand, however, the absorption of new methods and techniques need neither demolish the peculiar characteristics noted by Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers, nor otherwise make the region seem backward and exotic, as feared by Herzfeld and Pina-Cabral, precisely because in certain particularities it remains distinct. Even in dissonance, there is a curious unity.'*¹⁸³

Frendo notes that religion plays a crucial role in the definition of the Mediterranean identities. However, he also gestures ahead:

'The three competing western-moving religious cults to which the Mediterranean gave birth always meant to adore the same one God; alas how many misdeeds have been committed in his name. They are all, according to the Koran, people of the book (ahl al-kitab), all pledged

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. page 10.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. page 16.

¹⁸² Cassano; Zolo, page 15.

¹⁸³ FRENDO, Henry (2005): 'Coexistence in Modernity: A Euromed Perspective', *The European Legacy*, Vol. 10, No. 3, page 12.

*religiously to do good and to shun evil. However important it may still be in varying degrees, religion is by no means its sole defining socio-cultural quality.*¹⁸⁴

This is why cultural expression is a valuable lens through which one can assess the Mediterranean and seek common strands which may provide enough of a framework for a comparative approach between different experiences supported by a holistic approach to the region.

In terms of geography, Fabre mentions Elisée Reclus, author of the monumental *Géographie Universelle*, which also focuses on the Mediterranean region following Candolle's lead. The Mediterranean is presented as a sea that joins three continental masses, a great mediating agent which brings their peoples together. The Mediterranean is presented as the cradle of European civilisation due to its strategic position of contact between Western, Southern and Eastern civilisations.¹⁸⁵ Within a French perspective, it is also worth referring to Reclus who quotes Plato on the commonality of the Mediterranean in the following way: *'Comme des grenouilles autour d'un marais, nous sommes tous assis au bord de la mer'*. Fabre notes that Reclus emphasised the commonality of the Mediterranean: a *'mer de junction...entre les Aryens, les Sémites et les Berbères'*. Anne Ruel positively evaluates Reclus and notes that: *'avec lui, la Méditerranée devient une valeur.'* Fabre refers to Paul Vidal de la Blanche and Louis Gallois who emphasise the power of the Mediterranean to generate richness in civilisations bordering it. Fabre notes the *'power of attraction'* and the *'assimilatory power'* of the Mediterranean. Fabre emphasises one phrase reflecting on past acts of conquering, which is full of omen in light of coming colonisations: *'les populations indigènes ont été obligés plusieurs fois de recommencer leur travail, mais la supériorité de leur culture leur a toujours permis de civiliser leurs vainqueurs.'*¹⁸⁶

Balta notes that historically Mediterranean societies strove for difference and asserted their characteristics, even though they could not help sharing identities and copying one another. In spite of the strong urge to differentiate oneself from the other, *'few regions in the world witness such a mix of races and blood and cultures mutually bred.'* Balta calls the capacity of each people to maintain its identity the *'Mediterranean miracle'*. Identities have changed over time, but persisted. Balta stresses the historical links in civilisational and cultural expression with reference to the Ancient Greeks being tied to Pharaonic Egypt, and on to Byzantium and Islam. In his analysis, Balta also shows how the Mediterranean is tied to three strands, not simply two: therefore, there is the Greco-Roman element; there is also the Judeo-Christian element; and thirdly, the Arab-Muslim element. This applies to both Europe and Arab lands and cannot be compartmentalised since their influence not only cuts straight through but infuses all peoples albeit in different ways and to different degrees.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Frenco.

¹⁸⁵ Fabre; Izzo, page 45.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. page 46.

¹⁸⁷ Balta, page 22.

John Baldacchino provides a good reflection on the commonality of the Mediterranean with regard to it providing a home to many people, both from within and outside the space. Baldacchino comments on the perennial need for *'homecoming'* which characterises people with links to the Mediterranean, be they both outside as well as inside, and draws a common thread among them:

*'Before the longing for a lost past, nostalgia gets from nóstos the notion of homecoming, where what animates the journey is the return – knowing, as Constantine Cavafy tells us in his poetry, that we want to keep the journey going as much as we can, because any sense of return always remains with us. In this we could assume that the narrative of the journey and the polity of doubt come together as the nostalgic return to an end that is historically postponed.'*¹⁸⁸

Baldacchino notes that the journey is more important than actually making it home, and the journey which feeds the idea of "going home" needs to be maintained in order to inspire the feelings related to return; the end is postponed, otherwise the sense of returning is ended through completion. Therefore, the home-bound traveller postpones the arrival to postpone the end of the journey and thus keep fuelling the nostalgia (for home) and the related experiences and creativity bound to this particular time/space positioning. Regarding the concept of homecoming in the works of artists, Baldacchino notes:

*'In Cavafy, Seferis and Angelopoulos – not to mention Agamemnon and Odysseus – homecoming remains a perennial attachment to the Mediterranean's aesthetic representation. Yet the image of the exiled is not aesthetical, but profoundly ethical.'*¹⁸⁹

While the Mediterranean may provide many with a home or a sense of a home, no one home is like the other. The differences which mark the space are important as they provide a resource to the people who inhabit it. Baldacchino invites the reader to consider how the narratives of modernity have *'inhabited'* and defined the Mediterranean as a common cultural horizon founded on difference. He does not harbour any illusions on how the space is *'shared'*. Instead, he recalls Camus' reflections on how he identifies 'the light' that Mediterranean men and women *'have been able to keep.'* We are reminded that Camus' statement is further qualified with a desire that becomes admonition: *'just as the Mediterranean sun is the same for all men, the effort of men's intelligence should be a common inheritance and not a source of conflicts and murders.'*

Baldacchino comments on the definition of the Mediterranean in relation to boundaries and with reference to Braudel notes that even when he writes with the precise intent of the historian focusing on a specific period, his *'work presents the 'Mediterranean World' as a story that transcends the boundaries of particularity, whether this has to do with geography or the story of 'events.'*¹⁹⁰ Baldacchino goes on to argue that:

¹⁸⁸ Baldacchino, page 4.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. page 63.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. page 19.

'[t]o look at history's horizon is to engage in a continuum that presents itself as a permanent race between Achilles and the tortoise where any argument for a closure of history's meaning proves to be a fallacy. When it comes to the Mediterranean, the lesson is further radicalized at source: "If the Mediterranean has done no more than force us out of our old habits it will already have done us a service."

Turning to current practices, Baldacchino also provides an insight into Mediterranean commonality in terms of common behaviour. He argues that *'the grammars of blasphemy, prayer, history and story alike attest and in turn create a presence where one stands in awe of the vastness of those horizons by which human beings have made their history.'* In these cases, minor details in the cultural imagination, for instance *'an octopus being dried in the sun to soften and made palatable'*, or the way the Mediterranean peoples share similar lifestyles without necessarily ascertaining a *'common origin'*, bear considerable significance to the *'overall horizons of the making of the historical imagination.'*¹⁹¹

One seems to revolve around the same dilemma with regard to commonality in the Mediterranean and made to ask whether it is united but not the same. Geography and history, as described and analysed by Braudel, resulted in making the Mediterranean world:

*'long divided into autonomous areas, only precariously linked. The entire globe is today far more united as between its constituent parts than the Mediterranean was in the age of Pericles. This is a truth one should never lose sight of even when contemplating the apparent tranquillity and unity of the Pax Romana. The plural always outweighs the singular. There are ten, twenty or a hundred Mediterraneans, each one sub-divided in turn.'*¹⁹²

Braudel goes on to say that different areas in the Mediterranean have their own particular ways of farming, vining and dressing up. While this may reflect more truthfully on life thirty or forty years ago than it does on today, this combination of the past which enjoyed a great deal more of difference and the present which bears much more homogeneity within itself in terms of the means of transferring knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial endeavours may also be extended to the case of cultural expression.¹⁹³

The third space

Returning to the point of difference which can contribute to a strong sense of Mediterraneanness, but considering this within a framework which looks at the present and the future, rather than the past, it is worth referring to Homi Bhabha and his arguments about hybridity. As Bhabha notes, the identification of difference provides the right opportunity and space from where to bridge gaps and exploit the possibility of working across differences and bringing such elements closer together without compromising their particular characteristics. Bhabha writes:

¹⁹¹ Ibid. page 20.

¹⁹² Ibid. page 14.

¹⁹³ Braudel (2002), page 50.

*'Hybridity, where new meaning is located, emerges in cultural crossroads, such as the borderland, emanating from this "third" space that opens up in the dynamic interaction of cultural contacts based on difference.'*¹⁹⁴

Applying the concept of third spaces to the multicultural landscape in contemporary France, particularly in relation to migrants of North African roots in metropolitan France, Sylvia Nagi-Zekmi notes that:

*'Many critics utilize the concept of the "third space" [...] to deconstruct the prescribed notions of culture. In this heterogeneous space Beurs can recuperate their agency affected by the shared memory with the Maghreb, and by the continuous cultural influence of France and by extension, Europe However [...] in the global borderlands "composed of historically connected postcolonial spaces" it is difficult to scrutinize frontier identity, because theories today are not conceived from a "critical distance" but from a similarly 'in-between' space where subjectivity is being created as a form of resistance.'*¹⁹⁵

The identification of the Mediterranean with a space which gives rise to the possibility of developing these in-between spaces for cultural expression to give a voice and a location outside traditional structures to previously un-identified or simply unheard sectors of the Mediterranean is an exciting prospect. Nagi-Zekmy notes that:

*'The quest for an idea that expresses this "third space" of enunciation that would be able to circumvent the stalemate of binary oppositions is embodied in the idea of hybridity, a form of resistance to the homogenizing forces of colonialism, and to the equally Eurocentric ideologies of the nation-state.'*¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ NAGY-ZEKMI, Sylvia: 'French Figs or Figues de Barbarie: Hybridity in the Beur Imaginary', http://www19.homepage.villanova.edu/silvia.nagyzekmi/cultural/French_Figs1.pdf (accessed 21 March 2011), page 5.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. page 15.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. page 16.

1. 1. e. Perceptions

This sub-chapter will develop a number of perceptions about the Mediterranean while highlighting the way they identify cultural expression as one of the key defining features of the space. As is the case with other aspects discussed till now in relation to the Mediterranean, the perceptions of the space are both numerous and contradictory. For instance, these range from those promoting sun-sea tourism to others painstakingly reporting episodes of seemingly endemic conflict. Baldacchino notes that:

*'The same Mediterranean sun worshipped by the thousands who annually flock to the coasts of Spain and France; of Italy, Greece and Turkey; of Malta, the Balearics and the Aegean; of Morocco and Tunisia, also shines over a region that remains besieged, in one part or another, by the plagues of ethnic and religious hatred, war and oppression. To discuss the Mediterranean is to open oneself to a sense of paradox and contradiction, especially when the discussion dwells on the arts and politics.'*¹⁹⁷

There are negative views of the South which can be applied to the Mediterranean which are often generated from the inside. In contrast to a longing for homecoming as described earlier, the urge to escape this space is also evident: *'Le sud, avec sa vieille racine méditerranéenne est une bataille perdue, un lieu destiné à pourrir. La fuite est l'unique thérapie.'*¹⁹⁸

Fabre and Jean-Claude Izzo comment on the aspects related to the perception of origin and authenticity with regard to the Mediterranean. They note that *'the'* Mediterranean, so to speak, cannot be captured in terms of a search for its *'assumed authenticity'* or its *'mistaken essence'*. They note that the search for the origin is accompanied by *'a distance from the origin'*. They note they are not searching for an *'illusory'* identity. Fabre uses the image of genealogy in referring to his search for the multiple *'Mediterraneans'* and the multiple origins of the Mediterranean. Fabre also refers to the issue of *'representation'*, of which there are many of the Mediterranean, all based on fusions of history and fiction, narrative identities and texts/words. Interestingly, Fabre notes *'the'* Mediterranean did not always exist in terms of references and representations. In terms of references he traces the birth of the term in the French language not before somewhere between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁹⁹

Çiçekoglu notes that categories people use to divide geographical and political space, such as West and East, may sound naïve. The same goes for labels such as those applied to the Mediterranean e.g. blue, and the identification with thyme, olive trees and wine. This does not mean they are not valid, but they are certainly not representative enough and are convenient when hiding more challenging aspects of the sea.²⁰⁰ The Mediterranean encompasses both

¹⁹⁷ Baldacchino, page 1.

¹⁹⁸ CONSOLO, Vincenzo; Cassano, Franco (2000): *La Méditerranée italienne*, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, page 34.

¹⁹⁹ Fabre; Izzo, page 16.

²⁰⁰ ÇİÇEKÖĞLU, Feride, ELDEM, Edhem (2000): *La Méditerranée turque*, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, page 27.

misery and tragedy and the opportunities to overcome the challenges through critical analysis.²⁰¹

To return to Edward Said, in *'Islam as News'* (1980) he notes that representations on a large scale ride on equally large generalisations which, in spite of the lack of precision, strike a chord with the audiences they address. He notes that:

*'Labels purporting to name very large and complex realities are notoriously vague and at the same time unavoidable. If it is true that "Islam" is an impressive and ideologically loaded label, it is also true that "the West" and "Christianity" are just as problematic. Yet there is no easy way of avoiding these labels, since Muslims speak of Islam, Christians of Christianity, Westerners of the West, and all of them about all the others in ways that seem both convincing and exact.'*²⁰²

Said is of the opinion that one should acknowledge these representations' existence and rather than hide them from our view, face them directly and consider what to do about them:

*'Instead of trying to propose ways of going around the labels, I think it is more immediately useful to admit at the outset that they exist and have long been in use as an integral part of cultural history rather than as objective classification [...] For that reason, we must take the labels seriously.'*²⁰³

This line of perception and critical approach recalls Herzfeld's proposal for a practical way forward:

*'To Muslims who talk about "the West" or to an American who talks about "Islam", these enormous generalizations leave behind them a whole history, enabling and disabling at the same time [...] And we must note immediately that it is always the West, and not Christianity, that seems pitted against Islam. Why? Because the assumption is that whereas "the West" is greater than and has surpassed the stage of Christianity, its principal religion, the world of Islam – its varied societies, histories and languages notwithstanding – is still mired in religion, primitivity, and backwardness. Therefore, the West is modern, greater than the sum of its parts, full of enriching contradictions and yet always "Western" in its cultural identity; the world of "Islam", on the other hand, is no more than "Islam", reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics...'*²⁰⁴

Taking the right approach towards the role of religion in society is complicated. It seems to leave one in a tangle whatever one does. If one tries to move away from, or past, religion, in order to discuss other issues, for instance the central role of culture, as done by Ziauddin Sardar through the publication *Critical Muslim*, one can be accused of exchanging one's beliefs and

²⁰¹ Vazquez Montalban; Gonzalez Calleja.

²⁰² BAYOUMI, Moustafa; Rubin, Andrew ed. (2000): *The Edward Said Reader*, Vintage Books, New York, page 174.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

culture for “foreign” values. In the case mentioned here, Sardar has been challenged to show that his belief in the central role of culture, rather than religion, in Muslim society, is not a way of acquiescence to Western models. On the other hand, if one does defend the role of religion, one is an easy target for accusations of being extremist and non-modern.²⁰⁵

The superior stand point of the West with regard to Arab and Muslim societies has a long tradition. As Said points out:

‘Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as Islamic nationalism in Asia and Africa increased, there was a widely shared view that Muslim colonies were meant to remain under European tutelage, as much because they were profitable as because they were underdeveloped and in need of Western discipline.’²⁰⁶

Frendo points out that clashing perceptions and categorisations in culturally conflicting terms have been prevalent throughout history. Frendo notes how the spectres of the past do not really go away, and that neither is the present worse than the past.²⁰⁷ For example, he notes how the battles fought in the contexts of the two World Wars, colonialism and the Cold War, did not give way to stability and peace. In terms of the mutual influence, but unequal means of influence, between Europe and the Arab countries of the Mediterranean, Frendo draws a parallel between al-Jabarti’s particular Arab reaction to Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 which expresses a realisation of the importance of being open to the new ways of the French in terms of research and learning and Peter I of Russia and his similarly open disposition towards Europe:

‘Not unlike Peter I, Jabarti realised that if Arabs hoped to resist a Western advance, checking or reversing the earlier Arab one, they had to emulate it, to pull up their socks and modernise, even westernise in their own ways. Alternatively they could only retreat within themselves, seeking their potential strengths there.’

Frendo notes that there existed a positive potential to the rapprochement between the West and the Orient, but this was consistently betrayed:

‘Any tentatively positive, willing dispositions to European inquiry and endeavour often would be let down by Western Europeans, who in the nineteenth-century came to pretend they were superior, irreproachable, or who confused science and industry with natural selection on a racial scale.’²⁰⁸

Frendo also refers to Renan and Jamal ed-din al-Afghani who clashed with each other in their views on the backwardness of Islam.

²⁰⁵ BBC World Service 'The Strand', 12 January 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00mrj8h> (accessed 12 January 2012).

²⁰⁶ Bayoumi; Rubin, page 174.

²⁰⁷ Frendo, page 1.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. page 15.

Fathia Baccouche provides a controversial and challenging interpretation of conflict in the Mediterranean, particularly for this research that deals with culture in particularly positive overtones. She identifies culture as the source of misunderstanding, lack of communication and strife:

*'The gulf - or wall - of misunderstanding, or of suspicion and rejection between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean and between Europe and the Arab world is largely a cultural one and only cultural dialogue will ever reach across it.'*²⁰⁹

Therefore, interestingly, while the problem lies with culture, it is due to a lack of cultural skills, and only mastering such skills may address these challenges effectively. Therefore, in saying that *'the major problem between the two sides of the Mediterranean is a cultural one'*, Baccouche also identifies the way forward by recognising the importance of culture to deal with fundamentally cultural problems that have repercussions throughout society. In a related manner, but within an approach which is distinct, Gema Martín Muñoz notes that the West did focus on religion and culture in judging Arab and Muslim behaviour, but did so restrictively and unavoidably through a Western mindset, in so doing excluding considerations of socio-economic import that would have been beneficial to both.²¹⁰

Baccouche argues that Arab Muslim countries have tended to resist modernity and its technological advancements since these have been closely related to the colonial conquests of Europe:

*'The West and its values broke into our traditional societies and to this day its violation still sullies modernity, which is strongly suspected as amounting to some form of "collaboration with the enemy", even though it has accelerated modernisation, which is in fact nothing more than the consumption of technologies and ideas which we do not produce.'*²¹¹

Writing in 1996, Baccouche complains about Arab countries missing the more recent developments in technology, and in so doing not being able to respond to Western representations of Arabs. As shall be discussed later (in *Section 2.2. Outcomes*) things have changed in the last decade in terms of representation through the media and have reached a peak in relation to the Arab Spring in terms of the role of social media in society. Keeping a contemporary perspective on trends in the Muslim and Arab worlds and particularly keeping a look out for the diversity that characterises them helps one appreciate a further observation by Martín Muñoz. He notes that Islam is not a fossil:

'What we should obviously be doing, contrary to [stereotyping and categorizing Islam according to perceived ideas], is scrutinising social realities, in the knowledge that, as the Lebanese

²⁰⁹ NORTH-SOUTH CENTRE; COUNCIL OF EUROPE (1996): *Intercultural Dialogue Basis for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, Lisbon, page 23.

²¹⁰ Ibid. page 24.

²¹¹ Ibid. page 26.

*sociologist Halim Barakat points out in his “Enquiry into contemporary Arab society”, society is not a complete or finished organism but rather a body in constant evolution, transforming its identity, its conceptions, its culture and its institutions as new circumstances and situations arise. It is not a “star” turning on its own axis within its own firmament in accordance with immutable internal laws, in contradiction with the past and present visions of some orientalists vis-à-vis Arab realities.*²¹²

Generally speaking, impressions of the decline of secularism in the Arab world are linked to the failure of Arab nationalism to deliver true progress. The search for and consolidation of one's own identity finds resonance in the view of Salah Stétié that in discovering what's new to oneself one re-discovers one's traditions and core values.

North-South relations in Europe

Perceptions of Arab and Muslim communities by Europeans are not simply based on observations and experiences that take place in the South littoral of the Mediterranean. Rather, and this is particularly more true in recent history, in light of the phenomenon of the migration of large numbers of people from the South to the North, such perceptions are generated in Europe itself. Such impressions travel long and far, and influence the way general perceptions are developed.

Makram-Ebeid notes that in the 1990s European countries were not inclined to attribute great importance to the cultural dimension with the Arab countries due to its link with religion in the Arab and Islamic countries and its being seen as tied to the emergence of Islamic extremism. He argues that France and other European countries that seemed then unable to evolve towards multiculturalism still view Islam in its Islamist form and as a threat to the European order. Therefore, they *prefer that exchange be limited to the flow of money and goods but have reservations in terms of people.*²¹³

Intercultural interaction between the North and the South in Europe is not the focus of the research, but will be referred to because of the insights into general North-South relations in the Mediterranean it provides. With specific reference to Marseilles, Chambers notes that the Third World is no longer maintained at a distance *‘out there’* but has begun to appear *‘in here’*; the encounter between diverse cultures, histories, religions and languages is not restricted to the peripheries or the *‘contact zones’* as Mary Louise Pratt calls them, but are emerging at the centre of our daily lives, in the cities and cultures of the so-called *‘advanced’* or *‘First’* world. Chambers notes that when this occurrence is accompanied by our recognition of it, *‘then we can perhaps begin to talk of a significant interruption in the preceding sense of our own lives, cultures, languages and futures.*²¹⁴

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid. page 83.

²¹⁴ CHAMBERS, Iain (1994): *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, Routledge, New York, page 2.

Chambers notes that: *'such differences are not always and inevitably instances of division and barriers. They can also act as hinges that serve both to close and to open doors in an increasing global traffic'*. Chambers refers to Said, for whom migrancy and exile involve a *'discontinuous state of being'*, a form of *'picking a quarrel with where you come from.'* Said notes that migrancy has been transformed *'into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture.'*²¹⁵

The Mediterranean is a space of migrancy and marginality. In other words, it is not that migrancy and marginality are parts of the Mediterranean and exist on its edges, adding to its sound and complete identity as a stable region of states that establish and enjoy established means of communication, transport, trade and cultural exchange. On the contrary, the Mediterranean is greatly defined by migrancy and marginality; it is official state positions, texts, past as well as current representations of the Mediterranean (including of its past and therefore the re-representation of history) that present the Mediterranean as a region with a well-structured set up and only marginally disturbed by people living in contexts of marginality and migrancy. The latter seem to be well controlled, and are only allowed little room for any *'illegal'* or *'irregular'* activity.²¹⁶

Since migrancy and marginality are essential to the Mediterranean, speaking of the North and the South cannot be in tones of stable blocks, or at least, not in terms of a stable North versus an unstable but easily identifiable South which cannot be mixed up with North. Since the Mediterranean is essentially in flux, so are its North and South. Therefore, generally speaking, it is to be expected that the North influences the South and pursues certain agendas; on the other hand, the South engages with the North in various ways that may not seem structured to the North, but are important characteristics of how the South deals with the North e.g. migration legal and illegal; mobility in spite of visa challenges; compromising or "selling out" or "putting up" with the North as necessary ways to achieve certain goals from economic survival or well-being to artistic quality and exposure.

References to cultural expression provide important theoretical points for reflection based on practice regarding how Western and non-Western artists can see each other's works as much as possible in positive, aesthetic, neutral and objective ways without too much (or too little) acknowledgement of political and cultural factors. In some cases the context is known to have taken over the art work/artist and overshadow the artistic element itself rather than contribute to it and its understanding. With regard to the positioning and presentation of non-Western artists, it is also worth noting that the grouping of these artists may result in their *'ghettoisation'*.²¹⁷

Following the dictum *'on est toujours l'autre de quelqu'un'* (one is always the other of someone else), it is worth noting that a number of artists and cultural operators actively resist easy and false divisions along identity lines in order to allow for more open communication. Khaled notes

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ 'Le Courrier de l'Atlas', numéro 45 février 2011, page 47.

²¹⁷ Redalie et al, page 40.

that editors of this publication and its contributors were keen to avoid an “us-them/here-there” divide with participants “looking at” each other rather than expressing their experiences of working together. Editor Sebastian Körber, while noting that the cuisine seems to be the only thing the Mediterranean has in common,²¹⁸ also notes that following Huntington’s thesis, Mediterranean dialogue has been reduced to dialogue with the Arab world and even dialogue with Islam in an ironic twist of what may have set out to be a positive means of approaching tensions and clashes between different communities, but which with time and practice seems to have enclosed individuals within clearly identifiable groups that are difficult to break out of.²¹⁹

Like Chambers, Christine Tohmé and Rashi Salti, exponents of the Lebanese plastic arts organisation Ashkal Alwan, note that with regard to arguments of resistance to essentialisms about identity and the re-appropriation of one’s own representation there is no clear-cut “us-them” world. They critique the concept of the ‘other’ Mediterranean used in this publication since there is one, multi-faceted, Mediterranean and there is no distinct ‘other’.²²⁰ The concept of identity is problematised:

‘Ce dont il s’agit ici, c’est justement de problématiser des notions comme “autre”, “identité”, “nationalisme” et “culture globale” (...) à savoir s’il existe une identité culturelle arabe en dehors de celle imaginée et imposée par les dogmes nationalistes, surtout à l’ère actuelle d’une culture globale.’²²¹

The field of artistic creation itself is not free from employing representation techniques to envision and approach reality. Orientalism, introduced earlier and to be analysed further later, serves as a prime example of a system which included artistic means in dealing with novel circumstances and shaping new relations. The influence of Orientalism on representations and perceptions of the non-European Mediterranean have long outlived the period and is pervasive till today. For instance, Christian Geffroy, Dorian Rossel and Barbara Schittler from the field of theatre describe the Western fantasising point of view of Beirut which they almost naturally adopt before visiting the city, and which contributes to wanting to visit the city, that is shattered by the mundane reality they encounter that is shorn of all Orientalising images. They comment that this served as part of the exchange and learning process that encounters, particularly of the artistic and cultural type, make possible.²²²

Representations of the self

As hinted at above, one’s perceptions of the other are heavily influenced by the representation one gives of oneself. These impressions are built on a number of elements, including carefully crafted or haphazard stories one develops through the different historical periods. Eldem notes

²¹⁸ Fabre and Izzo add poetics to cuisine.

²¹⁹ Redalie et al. page 44.

²²⁰ Ibid. page 48.

²²¹ Ibid. page 80.

²²² Ibid. page 104.

that representations of oneself or others do not necessarily lead to positive interchange of experience and collaboration when they are built on identity rather than purpose-oriented. Eldem argues that representations which are self-centred, inward-looking and that seek what is fixed rather than what is carry out a disservice to attempts to build meaningful relations both within but especially across communities. An emphasis on existing realities and the way identities shift and change to address them leads to a focus on purpose, which results in behaviour, including cultural expression, that is less interested in preserving beliefs and representations of identities, and more focused on addressing topical issues and communicating openly with the other. Nevertheless, purpose-oriented representations depend on the value of the purpose, since this may vary from serving utilitarian or exploitative goals to positive and community-oriented ones. For instance, the Mediterranean as a door for the West to the East was one of the space's chief purposes in the past. That perception still has influence on today and on the general way in which Europe, as well as the US, look at the Mediterranean as an issue to be controlled and managed in terms of security and commerce.²²³

Hobsbawm and Ranger note the insights on the development of self-representation that historians derive from the study of the invention of tradition. They argue that:

- i. tradition and its invention may provide indicators of problems existing in a certain time;
- ii. such a study throws light on the '*human relation to the past*'; and
- iii. the same study may be highly relevant to the study of the nation, a '*comparatively recent historical innovation*'. Discussions of nations and states have to be related to historical contexts and not pre-dated naively or intentionally. Nations and states link the past with the present through innovation and the invention of their traditions.²²⁴

Such efforts at constructing representations and perceptions are common and important for the research to consider. In 1.2.c. *Colonialism* below, the influence of the North on the South will be analysed, particularly in the context of colonialism. However, alongside considerations of this influence, the research will be looking at representations that the local cultures themselves developed, partly in reaction to the foreign influence, partly preceding that influence, and that render the scenario of cultural relations and cultural expression being studied through the vivid representations that have developed over time.

Perceptions of the Mediterranean

Eduardo Gonzalez Calleja reflects on the constitution of a Mediterranean imaginary and notes that the Mediterranean does not exist as a negative representation in itself; rather it depends on what one makes of it. The general perception of the Mediterranean has changed with the development of modernity. The term 'Mediterranean' is used in a wider way than in the past: from historical and geographical references in antiquity it has gone to being used as an

²²³ Çiçekoglu, Eldem, page 29.

²²⁴ HOBBSAWM, Eric; RANGER, Terence eds. (1983): *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, page 12.

adjective in modernity. The North, as a colonial, controlling and determining power, has had a role in this.²²⁵

The perception of the Mediterranean within itself is worth reflecting upon. This is so because, as part of the invention of tradition and the negative ripple effects that can be created on relations between one another, the perception and the impression different people from the same space have of each other has a lot to say about the discourse on commonality and solidarity in the Mediterranean. People from different parts of the space may look at people in other areas in order to emulate them. However, this disposition may be very particular and may not extend to other areas. The lands most admired, particularly from a southern perspective, are France, and to a lesser degree Italy and Spain. Particular issues also colour these perceptions, since the image of Italy on migration is not a positive example and, like much of southern Europe at the time of writing, the political, financial and economic situation is a shambles.²²⁶

Europe and the Mediterranean have a determining role in the way the lands they encapsulate and the relations they hold are perceived within and outside themselves. An open attitude, rather than a closed and restrictive one, is preferred. Manuel Vazquez Montalban notes that in relation to the Other in the form of migrants from the South or also from outside the European and Mediterranean parameters, which are very dear to legislators and law enforcers due to issues of security already hinted at above, it makes no sense to attempt to distinguish between “us” and “them” in an exercise which becomes xenophobic. He makes particular reference to the image of the Barbarians, and notes that without us realising, the Barbarians have occupied the Mediterranean since its origins, and this is the way things will stay. He calls on us to accept this as a fact.²²⁷

Vazquez Montalban notes that the debate about how to establish the existence of the Mediterranean and its importance is gaining the foreground in people’s minds. He notes that imaginary spaces can be treacherous and warns that the constructs of Europe and the Mediterranean need to remain in touch with global reality. While a thorough reality-check may cause disorientation, particularly because it is said that it is never the right time to adopt drastic changes due to harsh economic, financial and political climates of the day, such a process may lead to efforts at re-orientation and the representation of Europe and the Mediterranean as indeed existing in relation to a global reality. He argues that Europe and the Mediterranean can

²²⁵ Vazquez Montalban, Gonzalez Calleja, page 33.

²²⁶ Çiçekoglu, Eldem, page 34.

²²⁷ Vazquez Montalban, Gonzalez Calleja, page 27. The approach of Vazquez Montalban does not problematise the reference to the ‘Barbarians’ which he assigns to the North and the disastrous Northern approach to the Mediterranean. He does not qualify or reflect on the term ‘Barbarians’ in light of recent qualifications of this term in relation to the negative connotations assigned to it by the winning side of conflict (e.g. the Romans in Ancient Rome as explained by Terry Jones and Alan Ereira in *Terry Jones’ Barbarians: An Alternative Roman History* (2006), Random House, London). This is a minor point yet ironic, since it perpetuates the stereotype.

choose to be metaphors that stand for nothing worthwhile, masks for injustice and imaginary places that represent unrealised ambitions. On the other hand, they may decide to tackle the North-South issues they tend to hide. He notes the need to peel back the veils of falsity and expose the truth to achieve a process of *'aletheia'*. One way to start off, very interestingly, is with regard to the use of the terms North and South themselves, that the research adopts in order to achieve a relatively straight-forward understanding of the geographical and political regions being referred to throughout this text. He notes they may sound better than *'exploiter'* and *'exploited'* but hide the negativity of these terms and the negative connotations and act as euphemisms.²²⁸

²²⁸ Vazquez Montalban, Gonzalez Calleja, page 23.

Chapter Two: Cultural Influence in the Mediterranean

1. 2. a. Introduction

In its efforts to explore the impact of the cultural influence of France and Britain on the South Mediterranean, the research tries to explore a number of key concepts and observations through an extensive literature review related to cultural expression in the Mediterranean before analysing the first-hand research carried out in its second part. Therefore, in the first chapter of this section the key terms and concepts related to discussing cultural expression in the Mediterranean space were introduced and analysed. This was done in relation to a historical framework which led up to and threw light on the contemporary realities of this space. References to academic reflections and studies on the Mediterranean were made, and aspects of theory were introduced to sustain the research carried out.

Chapter Two expands on issues related to cultural influence in order to go deeper into the theoretical and practical dynamics an analysis of which may help us achieve a stronger understanding of cultural expression in the Mediterranean. It does this first by discussing theoretical approaches to power relations, through which the research aims to develop a deeper analysis of cultural influence. It will then focus on colonialism, referring to the period in relation to the practice of colonisation and power relations in order to assess the characteristics of cultural relations in the third chapter.

1. 2. b. Power Relations: Theory

Power struggles and the implementation of cultural policies

In his discussion on identity, Cassano refers to Maalouf, Bhabha and Chambers wherein the latter speaks about the *'postcolonial sea'*: this allows Cassano to invoke a Mediterranean as it should be. He claims Chambers sees the Mediterranean as *'postcolonial'* meaning free from orientalist perspectives and not as a division between the North and the South any longer. However Cassano qualifies this perspective, which he does share, with a critical element. He notes that the presence of hybridity, discussed earlier in connection with Bhabha, which relates to the mixture of cultures and the forging of new ideas, and the acknowledgement of them, does not signify equality among cultural powers. Cassano quotes Braudel to back this up, since from a geo-political perspective Braudel notes that civilisations do battle each other for geographical gains, and the more powerful colonise the weaker.²²⁹

Cassano makes an interesting point related to the Mediterranean being more than a representation or a playground of division between land and sea, community and society. This is refreshing, as other parts of Cassano's text play out an oppositional situation between the Mediterranean and the Atlanticist agenda. Indeed, Cassano expresses a confrontational attitude, thus echoing Camus, in critiquing Sen, whom he finds as being too timid and accepting of Western hierarchy. As hinted at earlier, for Cassano, the Mediterranean is plural and diverse, and its strength is in accepting this and using it as a force.²³⁰

The research carries out a dual function. Together with its analysis of cultural expression through cultural influence and cultural relations, it develops a proposal for the development of elements of cultural policy which aim to assist in the analysis of the same cultural expression. In terms of cultural policy, Jeremy Ahearne opens up the ambiguity of such policy as a ministerial portfolio, balancing itself between grand utterances and displays and the very real limits of its direct reach in terms of general policy. Ahearne provides an interesting description of cultural policy which opens up the term beyond that of setting strategies for the cultural and arts sector in society. This wide view of cultural policy may be of use in relating cultural policy and other areas like external relations and postcolonial relations.²³¹ Ahearne writes that his approach:

*'takes cultural policy to constitute not simply a predefined object for cultural history, but also a particular 'lens' through which cultural history more generally can be approached. This lens tends to foreground questions that might be discussed in other contexts in terms of ideology and 'governmentality' by bringing into focus actions directed at art and culture by agencies looking to modify the behaviour of populations.'*²³²

²²⁹ Cassano; Zolo, page 91.

²³⁰ Ibid. page 97.

²³¹ AHEARNE, Jeremy (2009): 'Cultural Policy Explicit and Implicit: A Distinction and Some Uses', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 2, page 2.

²³² Ibid.

When related to this wider interpretation of cultural policy in *'other contexts'*, such as efforts by the UK and France towards influencing Mediterranean cultural relations, Ahearne's views provide interesting insights. These range from historical perspectives such as French cultural policy as a tool of colonisation in North Africa, particularly Algeria, to British imperial presence in Malta during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the work of the *Institut français* and the British Council in the contemporary Mediterranean. This point is not new in itself as it evokes historical realities that link cultural policy with the politics of culture already in Carolingian times as expressed by Régis Debray who explains how the two go together in such highly political and cultural systems.²³³

British cultural analyst Tony Bennett provides an analysis of cultural influence in the Mediterranean with interesting tools derived from a field that is distinct yet related in that it predates cultural policy studies and in many ways has contributed to its development and definition. This is the field of cultural studies. As Bennett writes:

*'cultural studies is concerned with the analysis of cultural forms and activities in the context of the relations of power which condition their production, circulation, deployment and, of course, effects.'*²³⁴

Bennett makes arguments useful to the research with particular reference to French poststructuralist Michel Foucault as discussed in the series of essays on and by Foucault himself collected in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*.²³⁵ The essays *'share an acceptance of those aspects of Foucault's work which point to the increasing governmentalisation of social relations as a necessary and inescapable horizon of contemporary social and political life.'* Bennett notes that *'the field of culture is now increasingly governmentally organised and constructed.'*²³⁶ This links to the shift, since the 1980s, in government policies towards giving less space to cultural policies *per se* and more in combination with, or subsumed under, other public policies, in the spirit of implicit cultural policy as will be seen below.

The platform of thought provided by Bennett allows for a comparative analysis addressing the analyses of Gramsci and Foucault. Bennett describes the main differences in perception and analysis of society, knowledge and power in the framework of cultural relations between Gramsci and Foucault. While Gramsci believes in a strong division between a clearly identifiable state, which may include other aspects like civil society and the subservient actors who are encompassed by the limits of the state thanks to the ideological state apparatuses, the later Foucault which Bennett focuses on is a believer in a liberal government which is less centralised and unitary and of agendas that are less driven by will and more pervasive.²³⁷

²³³ Ibid. page 3.

²³⁴ BENNETT, Tony (1998): *Culture: A Reformer's Science*, SAGE Publications, London, page 60.

²³⁵ Ibid. page 61; BURCHELL, Graham; GORDON, Colin; MILLER, Peter eds. (1991): *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

²³⁶ Bennett (1998).

²³⁷ Ibid. page 66.

The main interest of the research in this discussion relates to the possible repercussions this discussion has on the analysis of the influence of foreign (namely, French and British, but also European in general) cultural actors on Mediterranean relations: the starting point is one of an awareness of power, with foreign cultural institutes and actors having more know-how, skills, technology, access to quality means and productions, mobility etc. than local actors, and also their coming from countries that colonised or benefitted from the colonisation of the Mediterranean countries on the Southern shore. However, this approach raises an important point which relates to Gramsci, Foucault and even de Certeau who is discussed later on: do these foreign actors have more power? What power do the locals have? How is this power, in terms of cultural relations, expressed?

Bennett describes the historical shift which saw the upper/stronger class/sector of society described as the central state take a greater interest in the ways of the lower class/peripheral sectors, in order to gain more power through knowledge. This raises interesting possibilities for reflection related to the research that will be tackled in the following sections and chapters. For instance, one can ask whether this approach may help reflect on the change in policy the French adopted in Algeria. One can also ask whether it may be linked to the interest foreign actors have in Arab countries, and whether this interest enables a display of power. Importantly, what is done with that power – do good intentions drive this thirst, or curiosity? Are benefits shared? Are lessons shared and outcomes that may be re-invested in local productions actually ploughed back? Does this line of thinking reflect that of European cultural institutes like the Institut français or the British Council?

While going into more detail later in *1.2.c. Colonialism and Section Two*, it is important to relate this discussion to the distinction between *'a modern government's explicit cultural policy (what it proclaims that it is doing for culture through its official cultural administration) and its implicit cultural policy. The latter includes the effective impact on the nation's culture of its action as a whole, including educational, media, industrial, foreign policy, etc.'* One should include the commercial element in implicit cultural policy.²³⁸

Another aspect of cultural policy worth referring to is cultural diplomacy, which will be expanded upon later in *1.3.a Cultural Diplomacy*. Ahearne quotes Nye on what soft power is:

*'If I am persuaded to go along with your purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place – in short, if my behaviour is determined by an observable but intangible attraction – soft power is at work. Soft power uses a different type of currency (not force, not money) to engender cooperation.'*²³⁹

²³⁸ Ahearne, page 2.

²³⁹ Ibid. page 6.

Power relations renegotiated

Migration opens up opportunities for redrawing cultural maps and renegotiating power structures within particular territories. In a postcolonial world that has become globalised, influence is mutual and relations are in a state of flux. This sub-section aims at taking into consideration how migration has brought about cultural changes, how these changes impact on relations in periods of colonialism, more of which will be said in the next section, and relate these states of flux to a theoretical approach to power relations in culture. Chambers opens an interesting debate on issues of power in relation to representation in situations of imbalance and inequality. He notes that with regard to the issue of speaking and being spoken for, *'in breaking into my own body of speech, opening up the gaps and listening to the silences of my own inheritance, I perhaps learn to tread lightly along the limits of where I am speaking from.'*²⁴⁰

As hinted at earlier, the harsh realities of migration are worth studying in research of this kind. This is so because this phenomenon is directly related to the postcolonial realities not only Europe and the Mediterranean but the whole world faces today. Chambers locates the hardship of migration and *'living between worlds'* with reference to both the Rio Grande and the Mediterranean which territorially offer boundaries to be crossed, challenges to be faced as well as human and particularly political limits which are to be endured.²⁴¹

With reference to Stuart Hall, Chambers notes that *'[m]igration is a one way trip. There is no 'home' to go back to.'* In relation to the aftermath of the colonial period Chambers notes:

*'[p]ost-colonialism is perhaps the sign of an increasing awareness that it is not feasible to subtract a culture, a history, a language, an identity, from the wider, transforming currents of the increasingly metropolitan world. It is impossible to 'go home' again.'*²⁴²

This reflection seems to suggest that through globalisation, home has become everywhere. At the same time, home is nowhere. The upheaval brought about by colonisation and the ensuing processes of trying to come to terms with and overcome it leads to an important reflection regarding the authenticity of identity:

'What, then, does the de-colonisation of culture actually mean: the recuperation of an essential culture that existed before the historical moment of colonisation, or the idea of admitting different histories to a complex and syncretic present composed of cross-cultural transfigurations? Does there even exist the possibility of returning to an authentic state, or are we not all somehow caught up in an interactive and never-to-be-completed networking where

²⁴⁰ Chambers (1994), page 27.

²⁴¹ Ibid. page 6.

²⁴² Ibid. page 9.

both subaltern formations and institutional powers are subjected to interruption, transgression, fragmentation and transformation?’²⁴³

Therefore, Chambers links the issue of there not being an authentic, uncontaminated, untouched identity which one can go back to with the image of no home to go back to. Furthermore, in our globalised world, migrancy is to be considered as a two-way affair: the South in the North, as well as the North in the South. As shall be seen, this also applies in terms of cultural actors and audiences. Migrancy is a cross-cutting affair that may influence all territories, especially where cultural interaction takes place and cultures influence each other through change. With a “northern” location like Marseilles or Barcelona in mind, one finds relevance in Chambers’ words:

‘Considering the violent dispersal of people, cultures and lives, we are inevitably confronted with mixed histories, cultural mingling, composite languages and creole arts that are central to our history.’²⁴⁴

At a particular conference on European integration, one current challenge identified in terms of cultural policy was the need to adapt to the transnational nature of many contemporary migrants, and the sense of belonging they share with more than one country. In cultural terms, this means that migrants may have cultural affiliations to more than one country, be it their country of origin, the country of their family’s origins, a country they might have migrated to earlier, one they have come from, or the one they live in. As Kevin Robins points out, many migrants who have travelled to Europe since the 1990s do not share the pattern of earlier migrants. Many of the latter group may have travelled either to the homeland of the coloniser or close to the “imperial centre”. More recent migrants try to travel to those countries that are more likely to accept them and hence patterns are far more arbitrary. This has led to a *‘new kind of dispersed and crossborder migration pattern’* giving rise to migration flows, connections and networks that are very flexible and diverse.²⁴⁵ Developments in communication technology have made building or maintaining relationships across most borders relatively cheap and easy, and have been crucial in facilitating this phenomenon.

With migration, power relations are open for negotiation. This applies both to space, in relation to different territories, as well as to time. Migrant identities have been with us a long time, pre-dating modern nations. Chambers notes that *‘[Edgar] Morin suggests that this represents an identity that is anterior to the subject-citizen of the modern nation state;’* Chambers goes further, linking this *‘anterior’* element with a *‘posterior’* one:

‘we might add that, together with the African-American experience of exile in slavery and racism, it also suggests a possible posterior sense of identity with regard to the narrow confines

²⁴³ Ibid. page 74.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. page 17.

²⁴⁵ XUEREB, Peter G. (2003): ‘Euro-Med integration and the “ring of friends”’, *European Integration: the Mediterranean’s European challenge*, Volume IV, European Documentation and Research Centre, University of Malta, <http://cide.univ.szczecin.pl/mec4/>, page 25 (accessed 21 September 2010).

*of modern nationalism. One foot is here and the other always elsewhere, straddling both sides of the border.'*²⁴⁶

The 'border' mentioned here refers to modernism and the formation of modern nations which migrant identities both pre-date and post-date. Chambers notes that movement and marginality do not only refer to geography, but also to the cultural element. He notes that:

*'The Guyanese writer and critic Wilson Harris has recently pointed out that the experiences of movement and marginality do not merely refer us to geographical locations – just as the word 'Europe' implies more than a physical place – but, rather, provide a critical angle or perspective on cultural formations and emerging cultural capacities.'*²⁴⁷

He goes on to note that: *'The migrant's sense of being rootless, of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated present, is perhaps the most fitting metaphor of this (post)modern condition.'*

Chambers also speaks of *'places whose symbolic and real alterity provide another chance, a further question, another opening.'* In light of this, and in connection with the provocative comments by Harris regarding the relevance of trying to identify a space known as the Mediterranean, one cannot dismiss the Mediterranean as a space which means something, though not necessarily the same thing to different people, since it has a strong, trans-border, imaginary appeal, together with its physical/geographic location. In terms of opening up the spaces already exposed as porous by migration and mobility, Chambers refers to Jacques Derrida, *'a voice from the periphery (Algiers), from a diaspora (Jewish)'* and notes his work operating by *'[o]pening up the gaps in language'* and *'offer[ing] the chance to break a historical silence and query the ethnocentric conclusion intent on a truth that invariably leads to some domestic benefit'*.²⁴⁸

The development of open spaces, which can be new as well as common, recalls Bhabha:

*'...if [...] the act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given originary culture, then we see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge.'*²⁴⁹

The conditions that contribute to the development of such spaces are ones of domination and colonisation. This is ironic, since these spaces for new identities and possibilities to develop act in opposition to those which engendered them, though unintentionally. As Chambers points

²⁴⁶ Chambers (2004), page 17.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. page 27.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. page 29.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. page 67.

out with reference to Said, empire *'enables'* the development of concepts and discourses which *'resist'* or problematise the power structures of empire itself. The West has provided the *'enabling condition'* for such action, as have colonialism and North-South cultural relations which have also enabled many elements to rise against the dominant order, such as cultural subversion, assertion or collaborations which somehow favoured the group in submission.²⁵⁰

There are various reactions which the imbalance of power generates, and various interpretations which these reactions can take. One of these is *'nativism'* as described by Said with reference to Leopold Sedar Senghor. Chambers comments on how the latter's writings:

*'however powerful and poignant their appeal, curiously mirror the prejudiced stereotypes of Europe. This deliberately adopted black 'other' reconfirms the position already prescribed for him and her and reinforces the binary opposition between a completely separate black reality and that of the white world, as though the history of the last four hundred years had not had a profound impact on all cultures and their composite sense of identities.'*²⁵¹

Chambers, like Said and Bhabha, finds this sharp opposition unreal, since identities are migrant and mixed, and have been for a long time. He goes on to note that:

*'The binary logic of imperialism (and Western thought) is here continued and extended through the reproduction of dominant structures in subordinate languages, thereby recreating the hierarchical mechanisms that first put the native in her and his place.'*²⁵²

Said believes nativism does nothing to challenge the unequal power relations established by imperialism:

*'Nativism, alas, reinforces the distinction by revaluating the weaker or subservient partner. And it has often led to compelling but often demagogic assertions about a native past, history or actuality that seems to stand free not only of the colonizer but of worldly time itself...to accept nativism is to accept the consequences of imperialism too willingly, to accept the radical, religious and political divisions imposed on places like Ireland, Lebanon, and Palestine by imperialism itself.'*²⁵³

The map of power relations has been redrawn following the colonial period and through the influence of imperialism and ensuing globalisation. Going back to a fictitious starting point or blank slate from which to re-start establishing relations between the North and the South is spurious. For example, Chambers comments on the difficulties which arise in writing about world music, in terms of issues raised earlier regarding authenticity, and which will be discussed later in relation to T.W. Gallant regarding opposition and Tony Bennett on Foucault and de

²⁵⁰ Ibid. page 72.

²⁵¹ Ibid. page 73.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

Certeau with regard to governmentality and resistance respectively. Chambers quotes Elisabeth Grosz writing on the Third World intellectual:

*'such a person cannot afford politically to accept the 'truths' provided by colonial history, for this is a history written by oppressors from the First World; nor is there any longer an indigenous, native discourse and intellectual position, given the history and impact of colonialism on the colonized, and given that the Third World is now a resistant and resisting effect or projection of the First World. The problem is how to speak a language of the colonizer which nevertheless represents the interests and positions of the colonized? If the subaltern can speak, what language is able to articulate, to speak or adequately represent the subaltern's position?'*²⁵⁴

International Relations

Philippe Urfalino refers to Mexico 1982 and the UNESCO discussions on cultural difference and the cultural exception in the field of world trade. The French position expressed through the then Minister of Culture Jack Lang was one of condemnation towards American cultural imperialism. It is pertinent to note that in that particular environment of international relations, France was criticised for this position, also because of its concurrent silence over Soviet policies both within and outside the USSR in the Cold War era. Urfalino claims that the French position against American cultural domination was not primarily intended to promote French culture; rather, it was a position taken in response and as an act of resistance to what it felt was American imperialism and aggression against other and economically and politically less powerful cultures.²⁵⁵ This is a very partial and Francophone way of looking at things, but it shows the way the French position was presented. It is important to stress that, as another layer to the assumed nobility and selflessness of the French position, its irony cannot be overlooked given the French historical role as a colonial power. Interestingly, Urfalino comments directly on the issue of Europe's colonial past. In another interpretation that cannot be taken at face value he notes that: *'Le droit aux différences et la lutte contre un "colonialisme" culturel ne relève pas davantage d'une mauvaise conscience occidentale qui teinte souvent le tiers-mondisme.'*²⁵⁶

While distancing the French position from European remnant feelings of guilt in relation to colonialism, this link can precisely serve as an entry point into recent and current French interest, as well as other which is more generally European, including through the European Commission and the EU, in developing collaborations with territories that were their colonies for their own and their markets' benefit. At the close of the twentieth century, France already called for a stronger collaboration between the countries of the Mediterranean to oppose cultural imperialism which was strongly related to commercial interest, such as in the field of audiovisuals. These efforts gain particular poignancy in light of future developments such as the

²⁵⁴ Ibid. page 78.

²⁵⁵ URFALINO, Philippe (2004): *L'invention de la politique culturelle*, Hachette Littératures, Paris, page 354.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

Union for the Mediterranean discussed in *Chapter One*. It is also worth interpreting these affairs of international relations in light of the later discussions at the beginning of the twenty-first century held in the framework of the UNESCO debates on cultural diversity, both related to the 2002 Declaration and the 2005 Convention as discussed earlier on.

Does the empire strike back? Bennett on governmentality and resistance

Issues of empire and dominance may be easily related to the recent past, particularly in relation to colonialism, but less so in relation to contemporary contexts. This is done out of a belief that today's cultural influence and relations are less polluted by overflows of imperial agendas and cultural dominance. However, the research, through its reference to extensive theoretical analyses of cultural influence in this section, and observations it makes in relation to practices in the Mediterranean in *Section Two*, will show that it is the passage of time and the skilful and strategic use of that passage of time which create the impression, and a very strong one at that, of living in a present where cultural influence and relations are transparent and intended for the benefit of all those involved. While not wanting to demonise any particular side or victimise any other, the research aims at exposing conveniently hidden agendas and exploring the motivations and the operations of cultural influence in the Mediterranean.

Referred to earlier through Bennett, Gramsci offers powerful, if dated tools, to follow this exploratory course. Gramsci notes the state and civil society use their means to engage with the population and activate the population to achieve set projects. Although Gramsci's model is very binary and seemingly rigid, and the research agrees with Bennett who suggests that one can think more and do more with Foucault's analysis of power which is discussed below, Gramsci's point throws light on the function of institutes like cultural institutes by the mere existence of them. Bennett notes that the '*Gramscian tradition within cultural studies has accordingly been little concerned with the specific properties of particular cultural institutions, technologies or apparatuses*' preferring to look at the process with which they generate consent for the aims of the dominant group.²⁵⁷ On the other hand, Foucault's analysis does away with the hegemonic struggle. While Gramsci focuses on the issue of political obedience, Foucault focuses on modern and liberal forms of government, which may include private associations and organisations. In certain ways, these are not dissimilar to Gramsci's conception of civil society. However, Foucault focuses on:

*'knowing, regulating and changing the conditions of the population in potentially limitless ways, the logics of which, depending on circumstances, may or may not tend in the same direction, may or may not correspond to and further class interests, and so on.'*²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Bennett (1998), page 70. This reflection recalls Bennett's own comments on the need to focus on the actual existence of museums and their significance and not only their function from the nineteenth century up till today, page 135. The argument is developed at length in BENNETT, Tony (2004): *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolutions, Museums, Colonialism*, Routledge, London.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

Therefore, for Foucault, agendas may not be harmonious and purposes and outcomes may be circumstantial.

An important concept hinted at before, and developed now, is that of governmentality. Defined by Foucault in his essay *'Technologies of the self'* as the *'contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self'*, technologies of domination are defined as concerned to *'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends of domination'*. Technologies of the self are defined as permitting *'individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality.'*²⁵⁹ This observation is very interesting as it fits in with the cultural dynamics being observed by the research, particularly with regard to the dynamics between foreign and local actors in terms of the North and the South as adopted by the research, but also within the local scene itself, where 'technologies' can refer to the institutions and mechanisms regulating contact and collaboration. Further to this, with reference to the technologies of the self, it is the integration of means of regulation which is being discussed, and the work of cultural institutes does enable this self-control to take place. This is achieved by instilling a moral order, an elevated state of being, which is related to the arts, education and foreign ways of being and lifestyle and expectation, in local sectors of the population. A high regard for what is foreign, considered as better, plays a key role in the development of one's mental perceptions of oneself and of others. Therefore, there are at least two elements at play: that of culture, considered as a means of self-improvement; and foreignness and one's desire for emulation or at least, influence. Both may contribute to self-control or at least contribute to achieving a change in behaviour to become what one may believe is better to one's past or current state.

Gramsci includes civil society in the state, which is *'not only the apparatus of government'* but also *'the "private" apparatus of "hegemony" or civil society.'* As Bennett elucidates, according to Gramsci civil society fits in the state, and when civil society lies outside the state it is acted upon by coercion. On the other hand, if it is inside the state, then consent takes place.²⁶⁰ Conversely, Foucault does not blur the distinction between state and civil society. Rather, he analyses the distinction. Foucault notes how liberal government is not *dirigiste*, does not allow for autonomy and *'governing at a distance'*. Civil society can manage itself (*'self-management'*) within the limits set by the government.

With regard to the *'governmentalisation of the state'*, Bennett explains that this takes place when:

'techniques of governing aimed at shaping and directing the conduct of individuals that were initially developed in a range of non-state organisations (professional bodies, cultural

²⁵⁹ Ibid. page 73.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

*institutions, voluntary associations) come to form a part of state-based programs of government.*²⁶¹

Therefore, Foucault's views portray government in a much more fluid and non-unitary way than Gramsci, allowing for what Colin Gordon terms *'modes of pluralisation of modern government'*.²⁶²

With reference to culture, in Foucault's perspective, this is not used by government (state or civil society). Rather, it permeates the whole government system, serving no particular coordinated agendas. Bennett notes that in this perspective:

*'culture emerges as a pluralised and dispersed field of government which, far from mediating the relations between civil society and the state or connecting the different levels of a social formation, operates through, between and across these in inscribing cultural resources into a diversity of programs aimed at directing the conduct of individuals toward an array of different ends, for a variety of purposes, and by a plurality of means.'*²⁶³

Following Foucault's lead, it is worth referring to Robert Young and a postcolonial theory perspective on culture and struggle. While culture seems to permeate into different forms and undertake different functions, the concept of culture does this by always taking a side in a clash between two sides, or end up being split in two. As Young states, culture *'must paradoxically always take part in an antithetical pair or itself be divided into two'* since *'the externality of the category against which culture is defined is gradually turned inwards and becomes part of culture itself.'* From such a perspective, Bennett notes: *'culture is to be understood as a crucial conceptual operator in the history of difference.'*²⁶⁴

Young insists on the role of the dynamics of colonialism in the formation of the concept of culture:

*'Culture never stands alone but always participates in a conflictual economy acting out the tension between sameness and difference, comparison and differentiation, unity and diversity, cohesion and dispersion, containment and subversion (my italics). Culture is never liable to fall into fixity, stasis or organic totalisation: the constant construction and reconstruction of cultures and cultural differences is fuelled by an unending internal dissension in the imbalances in the capitalist economies that produce them.'*²⁶⁵

In his interpretation of culture Young adds that it *'has always marked cultural difference by producing the other.'* Indeed, the modern concept of culture has always *'carried within it an antagonism between culture as a universal and as a cultural difference, forming a resistance to*

²⁶¹ Ibid. page 76.

²⁶² Burchell et al. page 5.

²⁶³ Bennett, page 77.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. page 78.

Western culture within Western culture itself.' Reverting to Foucault, Bennett counters this view by Young with one based on the perspective of Foucault on governmentality. Bennett argues that rather than this '*splitting*' of culture resulting from a '*general historical dialectic of othering and integration*', the cause may be found in the:

*'construction of a number of different fields of government and the relations these establish between, on the one hand, culture as a set of resources for governing and, on the other, culture as the domain(s) to which those resources are to be applied with a view to enacting some change of conduct.'*²⁶⁶

In this interpretation, rather than a historical conflict '*rooted in the dynamics of western civilisation*', the '*different oppositions or antagonisms which have governed the construction*' of culture result from '*the establishment of different targets for different programs of government and from the different ways in which cultural resources are deployed in pursuit of those programs.*' This reads much less grand and much more technical, and undoubtedly it proves to be more challenging to apply to the analysis of cultural influence the research has set out to provide. However, by going a bit further one may achieve a significant observation, particularly with reference to what Bennett has to say:

'What matters most about these antagonisms [...] is that they group together, within the same field, the object of government (working-class culture, the colonised) and its means (high culture, western culture).'

From this perspective, different kinds of culture seem to be connecting '*within a particular field of government.*'²⁶⁷ This analysis tries to show that the issue is more about power co-opting areas and populations it can control and exercise control on, rather than direct clashes. Control and power seem to be exercised more subtly in Foucault's analysis than in other observations. The point of connecting, grouping, and executing programmes within the government schema may be applied to cultural relations, particularly in relation to North-South power relations in a postcolonial setting. In fact, Bennett notes that within this perspective, the clash between high and low culture would not simply be viewed as a clash, but rather as a means for government to connect the two and have high culture reach into low culture. Within the scope of the research, it is pertinent to apply this perspective and ask how do foreign cultural operators, including the government systems which support them or of which they are part, act upon the cultural milieu in the South of the Mediterranean, in a way which essentially substitutes the high-low culture division as discussed by Bennett with that of, for instance, European-local. Furthermore, in light of issues related to North-South collaboration and the questions, doubts and challenges surrounding it, it is pertinent to ask what government (in the sense used by Foucault) means are used to connect the cultural expression in the South Mediterranean to the policies and strategies of the North. On the other hand, this dynamic may also be interpreted in terms of Gramsci, therefore hegemonically, between a clearly identified North with its agenda

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. page 79.

and power, and the South, as well as Young, in terms of the *'splitting'* of culture in the struggle between different cultural positions and priorities.²⁶⁸

Furthermore, Bennett helps put important questions about the relationship between culture, power and the concept of resistance. He discusses these issues with reference to Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Bennett notes that there is:

*'much to value in these accounts which have enriched our understanding of the processes through which subordinate groups are able to use the resources of dominant cultures to fashion their own enclaves within them, to render the space of 'the other' habitable in affording a means of escaping it without leaving it.'*²⁶⁹

Bennett however notes that de Certeau's approach to resistance has limits. Bennett challenges the mild criticism which de Certeau has been submitted to, which generally respects the accepted *'rote litany'* of cultural studies i.e. *'culture is always on the side of power, and yes, of course, the subordinate always resist socially dominant forms of cultural power.'* Bennett notes that cultural studies have banalised the issue of cultural struggles and resistance by doing this, especially in the 1980s. Bennett notes that while the concept of resistance needs to be maintained, a *'fuller and richer cartography of the spaces between total compliance and resistance'* is needed. As Clifford Geertz notices, one needs a *'thicker'* description of the *'complex flows of culture which result from its inscription in differentiated and uneven relations of power.'* This also means starting off by acknowledging that there are different types of resistance to reckon with.²⁷⁰

Bennett provides a classic definition of resistance: *'an essentially defensive relationship to cultural power that is adapted by subordinate social forces in circumstances where the forms of cultural power in question arise from a source that is clearly experienced as both external and other.'* Resistance is a *'conservative practice that is orientated to the defence or strategic adaptation of the subordinate culture in question in a hostile and threatening environment in which the continuing viability of that culture is placed in question.'*²⁷¹

De Certeau engages with the term resistance but Bennett criticises his very wide and undefined use of the term, which suffers from a *'poetics of the oppressed'* and an *'essentially aestheticising strategy'* which make the concept and his analysis of it unclear. Bennett insists on the different forms of resistance, the different scenarios where acts of resistance take place, and the different types of actors involved including the rich field of who *'the other'* is in relation to who the subject is. Bennett criticises de Certeau for dissolving the tensions which could be explored under the last point by adopting a *'single rhetorical figure.'* However, de Certeau's

²⁶⁸ Ibid. page 100.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. page 167.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid. page 170.

main contributions to the discussion on resistance, which is also of particular relevance to the research, are:

- i. his bringing the concept of resistance to the heart of cultural studies; and
- ii. his identification of the term 'strategy' with the political/economical power which enjoys administrative ability to accomplish its projects, which is contrasted with 'tactic' which is '*an art of the weak*' and the basis of acts of resistance by the powerless, or, as de Certeau describes them, '*those who, lacking the power to secure a definite place for their own actions, are obliged to act constantly in the space of the other, undermining that space.*' In this context, tactic '*is determined by the absence of power.*'²⁷²

Bennett contrasts de Certeau's concept of resistance with two different concepts by Foucault. While the earlier Foucault speaks about panoptic power, which fits de Certeau's perspective of the subordinate having no space outside the place of power in which to live/operate (panoptic power being ubiquitous), Foucault's writings on governmentality allow for spaces within the place of power for counter-elements to be present. Foucault's later views open up his earlier ones as well as de Certeau's, gaining Bennett's support since more can be thought and done with this perspective.²⁷³

Bennett also criticises de Certeau's contrast of strategy with tactics, since he criticises the idea that the subordinate has no space within which to act at a remove from the dominant force. Bennett seems to suggest that it does not always have to be a case of strategy versus tactics, and it can be that strategy is countered by strategy. This may be especially true of subordinates who are natives or long-standing locals of a particular territory, and whose claim to culture is strong and alive, albeit threatened. As an example of this Bennett refers to the case of Australian Aboriginals. However, as will be shown in *Section Two*, the same concept may be applied to North African and Arab populations caught up by European territorial domination.

Very interestingly, Bennett concludes his critique of de Certeau by noting that the subordinate may also seek '*both to understand and to educate, the cultures that subordinate them.*' Bennett's critique of de Certeau is also of value since he points out that there are various ways of expressing resistance, since the situations and the actors vary. Bennett's perspective provides deep insights into exploring how the South does influence the North. The South is not in a passive position or prone to influence without giving anything back or influencing the agendas of the North. This is where the power of the analysis put together by Bennett in his observations on Gramsci, Foucault and de Certeau comes together.²⁷⁴

Cultural influence in the arts: globalisation, centres and peripheries

In light of these observations, the linear perception of cultural influence, from North to South, is made complex. It is also not realistic to simply add an inverse influence, making the process a

²⁷² Ibid. page 176.

²⁷³ Ibid. page 178.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. page 188.

two-way one, which remains rigid and one of limited exchange. The extent of cultural influence in recent history, particularly because of the phenomena of colonialism and globalisation, has been akin to a web of interactions that leaves no participant unchanged. This recalls Bhabha's concept of hybridity and developing identities. In a way it also recalls Anne Laufer's comments on Jean-Luc Godard, film maker, that his images work in such a way that one image with another give rise to a third.²⁷⁵

The basis on which cultural influence can function in a way that is enabled by cultural relations which are dynamic and positive is very important. Alaa Khaled, co-director of the *'Amkenah'* journal, notes that reciprocity is needed in communication between cultures and it should be based on the common ground provided by a shared idea, for example, a shared concept of justice. However, reciprocity is at risk when cultures feel superior to others.²⁷⁶ Cultures believe in "progress", but this concept is problematic, as will also be discussed in the context of writings by Thierry Verhelst. Cultural influence and relations are seldom neutral, and economic and political pressures have led to the exaltation of "alterity" and "dialogue" which may be positive in terms of expressing an intention, but may exaggerate the values being expressed. Such is the political necessity leading to the valorisation of intercultural dialogue, for example.²⁷⁷ In a similar vein, Dragan Klaić noted that while the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008 was based on good intentions, the concept it expressed and the action it supported were weak and hollow.²⁷⁸

Karim Boullata notes that in today's contemporary art world a key element to reckon with is how cultural influence and relations that are woven across the globe have developed the concept of 'belonging'. He stresses *'how art produced today outside the bounds of mainstream cultural circuits is responding to the challenges posed by the central forces of globalisation.'*²⁷⁹ Boullata addresses the issues of belonging and 'home' inversely to Chambers. For Boullata, *'feeling 'at home' is no longer confined to a place of origin.'*²⁸⁰ With reference to another type of social behaviour which may be linked to resistance he notes that *'collective memory has been insulated in traditional as well as modern societies by an emerging tribalism that is firing back at the lightning changes of our globalising world.'*²⁸¹

In discussing the term 'belonging' in the context of its English and Arabic etymological significance, Boullata interestingly draws parallels between the language of globalisation, namely English, or derivatives of it, and the main language of the South Mediterranean, though not the only one, namely Arabic. By referring to Frederick Bohrer, Boullata shows that the

²⁷⁵ Redalie et al, page 29.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. page 37.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. page 41.

²⁷⁸ <http://www.budobs.org/dragan-klai-c-seeking-to-make-sense-of-intercultural-dialogue-year-2008.html> (accessed 4 April 2012).

²⁷⁹ BOULLATA, Kamal, ed. (2008): *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art & Culture*, SAQI, London, page 9.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. page 11.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

original English meaning of the sharing of something significant and the Arabic meaning of *intima*, implying *'an activity that unfolds over time'*, seem to have converged towards meanings of shared possession and developing a sense of ownership.²⁸² Interestingly, Brazilian professor of sociology Laymert Garcia Dos Santos looks at belonging as an issue of exclusivity and in terms of spatial belonging which is mutually exclusive and strongly related to power relations. Dos Santos asks: 'Who has the right to belong to the future of humanity, and who is condemned to disappear'?

Boullata refers to the extremes of globalisation and tribalisation, the latter as a form of reaction to the former, in a group's attempt to rally people round symbolic references of identification. Achille Bonito Oliva, art critic and curator notes that: *'globalisation threatens identity in that it eliminates any attempt at personalising one's existence. The counteraction is tribalisation, a frequently reactionary and regressive response.'*²⁸³

Bonito Oliva argues that contemporary artists tend to favour the trends which are enabled by globalisation, like *'their right of diaspora, their freedom to wander across the boundaries of various cultures, nations and media forms.'* However, this disposition is not without a complex relationship with belonging and tribal identity. Nicolas Bourriaud, art critic and curator, agrees: artistic activity does not involve obeying a tradition or belonging to a cultural community, but rather *'learning to detach oneself, at will, to reveal something that has never been displayed.'*²⁸⁴

Once again, as has been noted before, the extent of globalisation and nomadism have raised the question of whether there is a North and a South one can speak of. One needs to consider the porosity of these geo-political and economic assumed blocks, their existence as a manageable way of identifying the differences in the Mediterranean, and the apparent cracks in their stable and solid division.

With regard to contemporary visual art, Gerado Mosquera, art critic and curator, notes that the *'signs of change'* belong to the *'peripheries'*, which *'have developed a culture of resignification out of the repertoires imposed by the centres.'* Mosquera's reference to the way the creators of cultural expression on the global peripheries, when compared to those who belong to the traditional centres of influence in the Western world, have brought about change in the way this expression is carried out and in how it reaches others through a re-crafting of signs and significance, is important. Boullata emphasises the role of relationships in the function of being, with reference to Jean Fisher, art writer, who emphasises the existence of art in relation to community.²⁸⁵

There are a number of examples of initiatives linking art and the community in terms of bridging the North and the South. One such initiative is the Biennial of Young Artists from

²⁸² Ibid. page 12.

²⁸³ Ibid. page 19.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. page 22.

Europe and the Mediterranean.²⁸⁶ Fisher notes that the close and growing relationship between the aesthetic, the social and the ethical with the political is *'already inscribed in the aesthetic.'* Fisher also raises another point which has been discussed earlier, related to whether the West is indeed "in charge" of globalisation and the *'dissolution of borders'*. Fisher notes that while Western dominance has been brought into question, the non-West may be having a much harder time to be mobile and exploit the advantages of a globalised over a localised world.²⁸⁷

As will be discussed in *Section Two*, this point will be addressed at length with regard to the artists of the North and the artists of the South and any differences which exist between them in the way they experience and make use of the tools of a globalised world. Issues which will be explored further include mobility problems for artists; forced mobility for artists from the South who may feel obliged to go to the North; political constraints in the South; and infrastructural limits in the South.

Identities are the building blocks of what makes cultural influence and cultural relations possible and act in the ways they do. As discussed earlier, identities are plural and changing, which means that neither the influence and the relations themselves nor their analyses are simple to deal with. Bohrer expresses himself on identity, with reference to Stuart Hall: *'we should think [...] of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.'*²⁸⁸ Bohrer notes that identity is *'something more to be made and played out than recaptured'* (in the sense of a cultural heritage) and that identity *'emerges in the making, not one designed to correspond to some prior, exterior condition.'* The North and South imaginary communities are challenged by contemporary art and globalisation in ways which undermine traditional perceptions and interpretations which favour static entities. Traditional conceptions of blocks such as the North and the South are strong and not shaken off easily. They provide familiar and safe reference points that however hamper the flexibility of adaptation to real circumstance. Bohrer refers to Said quoting Auerbach's reference to Hugo of St Victor who had expressed himself on approaching the world as a foreign land and staying away from too much attachment to any single place. This reference is very apt to this discussion, even when the places one attaches oneself to are constructed or imaginary.²⁸⁹

On the sense of flux commented on above in relation to the North and the South, Bohrer notes that concepts like *'a unitary national identity, an unproblematic place to belong to'* are challenged by the emergence of a *'transnational state [which] might be located within as well as without the nation.'* Bohrer notes that while the acknowledgement of dislocation and the longing for *'an unproblematic past'* it may give rise to is important, this is really the easier part; on the contrary, *'the important question is what, through art, we make of the current situation,*

²⁸⁶ BJCEM by its French acronym which stands for la Biennale des Jeunes Créateurs d'Europe et de la Méditerranée.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. page 62.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. page 29.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. page 30.

*and conversely, what, in the current situation, we make of art.'*²⁹⁰ With regard to the effect on Western art, Bohrer notes that *'[i]ncompleteness, uncertainty and indeed disenfranchisement'* leave an impact. With regard to the perception of social and political realities in the West and the rest of the world, Bohrer notes the new way that this new dislocation makes us look at the *'global map'*: *'[i]t is not a map of what political leaders want us to accept as reality, but a much more complex one of what really exists for the citizens of the world.'* Therefore, if one adopted this perspective, whether migration were legal or not would become irrelevant, were it not for the extreme and added hardship suffered were it not illegal.²⁹¹

Bohrer refers to Mona Hatoum, a well-known Mediterranean-born but North-bred artist, and Emily Jacir, Palestinian American, as examples of contemporary artists who subvert the old divisionary conceptions of the art world. By interpreting the North as including the US and as lying within a global context, Bohrer notes that the work of these two artists is related to the West and Western art, but produced "from the outside in", as it were. There is an element of "resistance" to be identified: *'this activity can be conceived not just in contrast to supposed Western norms, but also in connection with the West itself.'*²⁹² Contemporary art, with its ironic and possibly humorous approach, exploits the seemingly straightforward and sensible, and plays on the complexities and cultural differences between what is expected or presented, and what is. Bohrer gives the examples of Pacific art undermining mainstream tourism campaigns. One can also mention contemporary Maltese artists like Pierre Portelli and Norbert Attard and their recent irreverent or subversive dealing with religion.²⁹³

Mosquera discusses some problems faced by contemporary art that impact on cultural relations between the North and the South:

*'Contemporary art is being affected, to a considerable extent, by lack of meaning, by extreme professionalism ('smart-art-scene' production, marketing of works skilfully executed to fit demands and expectations, and so forth), by flat cosmopolitanism or by repetition and boredom, among other problems.'*²⁹⁴

While conceding that changes are *'unprecedented in scope'*, Mosquera makes a critical point of other trends such as biennials, which keep sprouting around the world, in spite of various failures. On a more positive tone, Mosquera notes how together with the *'dramatic expansion of international art networks, there is a new energy and activity going on locally where, for historical, economic and social reasons, one would not expect to see interesting art.'*²⁹⁵ He notes that a lot of the activity is *'local'* and *'the result of artists' personal and subjective reactions to their contexts or the consequence of their intention to make an impact – cultural,*

²⁹⁰ Ibid. page 32.

²⁹¹ Ibid. page 33.

²⁹² Ibid. page 35.

²⁹³ VELLA, Raphael ed. (2008): *Cross-currents: Critical Essays on Art and Culture in Malta*, Allied Publications, Valletta.

²⁹⁴ Boullata, page 86.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. page 87.

social or even political – in their milieus.’ He also notes that these artists are not limited in their vision, references and connections, and *‘are frequently well informed about other contexts and mainstream art or are also looking for an international projection.’* Their language is not limited to nationalistic modernism or traditional styles, even though may be rooted in vernacular culture or specific backgrounds. He emphasises the *‘agency’* of these artistic efforts that are directed at providing *‘the challenge of mutating a restrictive and hegemonic situation towards active and enriching plurality, instead of digested by mainstream or non-mainstream establishments.’* He uses a captivating image of cutting the *‘global pie’* not only with a variety of knives, but also of hands and sharing it accordingly. He goes on to refer to the *‘peripheries’* and the challenge they pose to established channels of art production and consumption. Mosquera notes *‘we are witnessing signs of change in the epistemological ground of contemporary artistic discourse based not in difference but from difference. This transition could be epitomised as the gradual turn of direction in cultural processes that used to go mainly from the ‘global’ to the ‘local’ and from the local to itself.’*²⁹⁶

Nicolas Bourriaud offers a contrasting and sanguine reaction on the limits of globalised contemporary art. He reflects on the fact that artists from the margins rarely enjoy and exploit the benefits of globalisation by staying in the margins. These artists need uprooting, towards the centres of creativity. Globalisation seems to allow for more communication between the margins and the centres, but these two different places seem to have been preserved in spite of rapid technological and economic changes. Bourriaud reads more soberly than other writers who observe and proclaim the collapse of geographical differences. Indirectly, Bourriaud also points out how certain marginal regions are moving “in”, so to speak, while others are not. While mentioning Moscow, China and Black Africa, he asks *‘where is North Africa?’* Having said this, others do mention Lebanese and Palestinian artists like Hatoum and Jacir (one may also speak of superstar design-related artists like Zaha Hadid, Anglo-Iraqi architect), but these artists also leave their home country and native culture, and the region itself does not easily get mentioned. The periphery, be it called the South or by another descriptive tag or term, seems to be identified as such for good reason, in spite of the rapid changes brought along by globalisation. Bourriaud provides an interesting qualification of contemporary art in the context of globalisation by relating location in terms of importance to the level of economic development: *‘contemporary art is above all contemporary with the economy that envelops it.’* Globalisation is not the same everywhere, and neither is contemporary art, Bourriaud seems to suggest, since contemporary art relates to the economy that it thrives in.²⁹⁷

Bourriaud also comments on what makes art contemporary. He makes an important link to reality and therefore to the means it uses to produce itself. He criticises the bland, safe, artificial way in which multiculturalism deals with art, which promotes an *‘ideology of the naturalization of the Other’* and *‘presents the Other as a putative nature reserve.’*²⁹⁸ Bourriaud comments on the limitations which multiculturalism places on art, by opposing the artist from

²⁹⁶ Ibid. page 89.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. page 103.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. page 104.

the margins to those from the *'mainstream'*. While such an artist has to maintain his/her *'difference'* and live up to his/her status by *'produc[ing] imagery based on his or her alleged difference and on the history of his or her country'*, the same artist is expected to base his/her work on *'Western codes and standards'*. Some of this pressure stems from audience expectations that are based in the specific levels of audience interpretation of the works. Bourriaud refers to Paris-born Yto Barrada and the interpretation of her *'Straits project'* in Morocco and notes that the aesthetic dimension of the work may be misunderstood if the audience may expect more of *'art'* i.e. *'art in the grand manner'*.²⁹⁹

Contrary to this, Bourriaud believes the distinction between mainstream and margins should be challenged and one is to observe a growing *'multitude of streams'*. On the other hand, he looks at *'interculturalism'* as a more dynamic interpretation, *'based on twin dialogue.'* Bourriaud discusses the strictures which local environments place on artists, particularly economic ones, but also of the *'means to escape or elude that formatting.'* In this context, he quotes Sartre as a means of providing a way forward: *'The important thing [...] is not what people have made of you, but what you yourself make of what people have made of you.'*³⁰⁰

To conclude this reflection on theoretical approaches to issues of centrality and the periphery, Baldacchino provides an interesting interpretation through reference to the Italian North and South, which extends to the Mediterranean. Marginality in space relates, one may even state is rooted, in the temporal dimension. As noted earlier, Baldacchino notes that nostalgia plays an important role in the way people define and perceive the Mediterranean space. He notes that the word is etymologically linked to the Greek *nóstos*, referring to a perpetual homecoming. He links this notion to his own earlier work on the subject (*Avant-Nostalgia*, 2002), where he coined the term *avant-nostalgia*. *Avant-nostalgia* reverts *'nostalgia into a force that looks forward'*; it is therefore a *'nostalgia that acts as a vanguard'* and *'distances the idea of a return away from an image of linear regression.'*³⁰¹

In terms of art, that produced in the South may be perceived as a laid-back follower of its Northern counterparts, a kind of waning of artistic strength in a region that lies on the peripheries of the avant-garde movements and places associated with the development of modernism in the twentieth century. Baldacchino argues that such an assessment of the South would probably place an artist like Sicilian painter Renato Guttuso in a category of artistic misfits: a maker of anachronistic pictures that may look reactionary when compared to a progressive aesthetic that looks suspiciously at any move that transports art away from the sort of teleological drive espoused by so many modernist critics and theorists. Yet, Baldacchino challenges this reading by seeking Guttuso's political critique precisely in the painter's defiance of the myth of progress.³⁰² Rather than seek Guttuso's *'truth'* within some political grand narrative, one must seek it in the small narratives of his subject-matter, its cultural specificities

²⁹⁹ Ibid. page 115.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. page 116.

³⁰¹ Baldacchino, page 120.

³⁰² Ibid. page 117.

and *'banal'* details of everyday life. Baldacchino extends these reflections to the field of literature by engaging in an analysis of Leonardo Sciascia's *Il giorno della Civetta* and the *'devious nature of the real State'* and *'the politics of involution.'* One may extend these views on the relation between Sicily and Italy to that between the South and the North of the Mediterranean. Baldacchino notes that in Sciascia's narrative, *'the margin prevails.'* The matter is not one of a straightforward *'Jacobin definition of revolution.'* It is more complex than the *'taking over'* in a Hegelian sense, *'when antithesis transforms the thesis via synthesis.'* The matter is one of involution, where opposites are not that because they are enmeshed, and where *'in effect the margin does not exist as a margin.'*³⁰³

The concept of involution suggests that different entities are not so different after all, and while separable for the sake of analysis and to maintain popular distancing, one lives in the other and even gives life to the other. Ironically, this too contributes to the series of common characteristics which the Mediterranean is identified with. Baldacchino notes that:

*'North and South are a matter of geographical relativism. To understand Sicily one must look at Italy, but likewise all Italy becomes Sicily. Often Sicily is seen as the margin of Italy. But here the margin is not an actual or rational residue of a larger context. Nor is it the backyard of some sound edifice. It would not help if one were to simply equate Sicily with a negative image of the Industrialized or Enlightened mainland. Sciascia reveals how actually, the margin is also the mainland. Sicily and Italy do not respond to each other but within each other. They are each other.'*³⁰⁴

This perception gains further weight in relation to observations on conflict and resistance. Baldacchino comments on Gramsci's discussion of popular chant in order to argue that struggles are more complex than what they may seem following a superficial or official analysis which does not acknowledge the inter-relation of conflicting elements in society:

*'Gramsci argues that as a form of expression popular chant is not a microcosm of a grand narrative, but is a "way of conceiving the world and life in contrast to official society." One must not read this contrast as a counter-narrative that directly resists official culture, but as an alternative form that takes its distance from official society, while not necessarily confronting it.'*³⁰⁵

Baldacchino connects these observations to Gramsci's on the question of the south of Italy (*'la questione meridionale'*) wherein he notes that the South is not *'simply an extension, or a poor version of the cosmopolitan metanarratives of the industrial North.'* The way North-South influence and relations are inter-linked recalls the Italian expression related to design, among others, *'incastrato'*, or the Maltese term loaned from Sicilian and used for furniture design, *'interzjat'*, which refers to the tight and inter-locked design which brings together elements

³⁰³ Ibid. page 82.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. page 149.

which are different yet closely related to each other and of determining influence on one another.³⁰⁶

Culture and Development

Further to earlier observations made about development, this sub-chapter will be concluded by referencing theory that addresses the relationship between culture and development. The critique of development policies by Thierry Verhelst explores how these can act as an instrument which encourages the emulation of foreign models to the detriment of local ways and may lead to the replacement of one's own identity and cultural expression with dependency, a growing sense of inferiority and cultural impoverishment. This approach throws interesting light on the situation of arts communities in various locations of the South Mediterranean, including Malta, which, after having suffered through previous negligence or sheer disinterest by national and local authorities and having had to fend for themselves are now faced by models which may be damagingly out of touch with their needs. The current trend of adopting models of creative industries based on the capitalist system may be a contemporary version of the vain belief in 'catching up' which was popular in the early stages of development policy.³⁰⁷

The effects of practices that stem from the realities of Maltese artists and civil society can be further assessed by adapting Sarah Owen-Vandersluis' approach on the adoption of market-based approaches at the expense of community-based ones in the Mediterranean; the former may finally benefit those who have long lobbied for a serious investment in the cultural industries and would be ready to take advantage of such investment, but not others for whom culture is more than a vector of business and a '*consumption choice*.'³⁰⁸ Focusing on traditional and neoclassical concepts of economics while not considering enough its close relation to the cultural aspects of society may be harmful. Doing this may hinder a comprehensive view of the impact of development on culture outside strictly economic terms by not taking into account other aspects of human well-being.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ VERHELST, Thierry G. (1990): *No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development*, Zed Books Ltd, London, page 78.

³⁰⁸ OWEN-VANDERSLUIS, Sarah (2003): *Ethics and Cultural Policy in a Global Economy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, page 65.

³⁰⁹ AMIN Ash; THRIFT Nigel, eds. (2004): *The Blackwell Cultural Economy Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford; YUDICE, George (2003): *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era*, Duke University Press, London, page 24.

1. 2. c. Colonialism

Introduction

This sub-chapter looks at the cultural repercussions of colonialism and the colonial experience with particular reference to Mediterranean societies both in the North and in the South. Following the theoretical approach to power relations that addressed the development and the impact of cultural influence on creative expression, this sub-chapter will look at the role colonialism played in shaping these relations by assessing different analytical approaches towards colonialism. While paying due attention to the historical dimension of colonialism, the main aim of doing so is to reflect on the present and contemporary issues the Mediterranean faces.

The colonial experience of Mediterranean societies, particularly the Southern shore and islands, is a characteristic which, while being particular to the populations of different cities, towns and villages, offers aspects which are common to these societies. Right from the early colonisation experiences in the Ancient Era, Mediterranean societies have undergone a development of their own identities and practices due to the waves of change and adaptation brought by foreign and colonising forces. While contributing to the adaptability and richness of diversity in these societies, the colonial experience has also deprived these societies of certain expressions of their way of life (e.g. religious practice, languages, music or cuisine) and enforced obligatory changes to people who while adapting, have had to give up or compromise their particular cultures.

The relationship between Europe and the Mediterranean

Sophie Bessis argues that contemporary relations in the Mediterranean are relations '*after Empire*'. While the great empires are dead, the influence of the ancient empire-holders is still alive.³¹⁰ In order to move forward, Europe needs to disconnect the political and cultural units from each other. In contemporary terms, the paradigm associated with the Euro-Med dimension is marked by '*dissymmetry and subordination*'. Ironically one needs to embrace the past in order to move forward together in novel ways. Kalypto and Dimitri Nicolaïdis echo Cassano and Zolo in taking a position against EU neocolonial practices in the Mediterranean towards the Arab partners, while displaying more diplomacy than Cassano and Zolo by speaking of European '*pragmatism*'. Nevertheless, the authors do note that the Euro-Med process is a matter of neocolonial practices wrapped in postcolonial discourse.³¹¹ The authors also ask whether the Euro-Med can be seen as '*one*' process as opposed to the reality of the two shores. They consider this question as one existing between '*colonial nostalgia and integrative utopia*'. Europe's search for "universal" values is also guilty of a neo-imperialist attitude. Most European countries see the Mediterranean as a space where to further their influence and capabilities,

³¹⁰ FABRE, Thierry; SANT-CASSIA, Paul, eds. (2007): *Between Europe and the Mediterranean: The Challenges and the Fears*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, page 143.

³¹¹ Ibid. page 169.

not as one with a shared common destiny. The Mediterranean is seen as an *'interface'*. On the other hand, the Southern shore does not see in the Mediterranean a common identity either.³¹²

Bessis notes that Europe has been trying to re-establish relations with the Mediterranean following the collapse of the USSR over the past two decades and trying to renew them along positive and open lines. Europe is searching for a new, pro-active and trustworthy role, especially through trade, development which is mutual, training and investment. As will be argued by the research this influence also spreads through culture and cultural institutes and actors. Bessis puts part of this action down to nostalgia and wanting to reclaim lost empires and lost dominance and affluence. However, there is also the need to compete and try to balance out actions by the US as well as developing economies such as those known as the BRIC namely Brazil, Russia, India and most of all China.³¹³ Bessis argues that European attempts at universalism, while seeking a balance between rediscovering its Mediterranean roots and its ties with the US, follow Atlanticistic tendencies as argued by Cassano and Zolo with regard to the South Mediterranean. Bessis concludes by emphasising the need Europe has to re-define itself by engaging with the Mediterranean and not identifying itself as the *'West'*. This is an interesting point with possible indications as to why Europe may *not* want this in terms of relevance, power, dominance, affiliation, a "safe" distance from the Mediterranean's ills and close links with the US as well as China and others. While Europe may want a strong role in Mediterranean, it does not seem to want to be burdened with the Mediterranean to an extent that shackles its global ambitions. Europe seems to want to distinguish itself from the problems of the Mediterranean: one may consider the tragic issue of migration across the Mediterranean and the cumbersome and non-humanitarian strategies implemented through Frontex missions and the other "solutions" it offers Member States to deal with asylum-seekers.³¹⁴

Bessis expresses her belief in that the South Mediterranean seeks a future in the Euro-Med paradigm. While agreeing that the South does not consider the Mediterranean as its home, the research argues that the South seeks to make its home in Europe while often by-passing the Mediterranean to which there seems to be little contemporary real connection, as will be further discussed later.

Cassano and Zolo immediately set out their project to offer an alternative for the Mediterranean based on the idea of a *'pluriverso'* (*'pluriverse'*) of civilisations, cultures, languages, expressive and symbolic universes to set against the globalising fronts that are described as *'oceanic'*, *'Atlanticist'* as well as *'Western'*. The research finds ironic the fact that while at several points of the collected essays issue is taken with the concept of the *'clash of civilizations'* and the *'imposition of one front (political, geographical and cultural) over another'*, the duality or binarism of such a situation is repeated and reinforced by the perspective and the

³¹² Ibid. page 174.

³¹³ FABRE, Thierry ed. (2004): *Colonialisme et postcolonialisme en Méditerranée*, Editions Parenthèses, Marseille, page 144.

³¹⁴ Ibid. page 148.

interpretation of the situation by Cassano and Zolo themselves. In so doing, the clash is not challenged enough.³¹⁵ With reference to another instance of binarism which is inadvertently supported rather than challenged and ironically assisted by initiatives implementing good intentions, Raffaella del Sarto criticises the intercultural dialogue structure for perpetrating this binarism.³¹⁶

The research finds that what Cassano and Zolo and others do in this collection is *move* the frontier of the clash, or the fault line, towards the west so to speak, out of the Mediterranean, and in so doing attempt to re-unite the Mediterranean on the basis of arguments that support the pluriversalist Mediterranean made of intercultural dialogue and cooperation that spans centuries. The fault line is not resolved but shifted and placed at the Atlantic border between the US-UK sphere of influence and the Southern European/Mediterranean area. The repercussions of the Bush era and the Iraq War heavily mark the perspective adopted. However, and fortunately, the perspective has dated in relation to this point in time, where Europe seems less shackled by US policy and less divided amongst itself than in the early 2000s. In retrospect, Nye's *Soft Power* reflects on what was a turbulent yet short-lived negative influence of the US on Europe during the years 2000, about which Nye notes that the Bush administration overrated its dividing influence on Europe, and the classification of 'old' and 'new' Europe which was clumsy and unfruitful to the US.

It is pertinent to note that the argument made by Cassano and Zolo in favour of the unity of the Mediterranean or the strength of the main actors in the Mediterranean that comes from their interaction with each other is overstated. In contrast, the Mediterranean does suffer from serious divisions and South-South cooperation and a sense of regional solidarity are weak. On the other hand, arguments put forward by Ferdinando Riccardi, publishing editor of '*Agence Europe*', that highlight the weaknesses inherent to Euro-Mediterranean structures which aim at developing common programmes and combat inequalities between all stakeholders, gain weight when set against this unpromising scenario.³¹⁷

Nevertheless, one particular point where Cassano and Zolo's thesis is very interesting and gains in power is where they focus on the great influence "foreign" forces have on Mediterranean peoples that can be seen as a continuation of colonialist and imperialist agendas creating fissures in the Mediterranean along "divide and rule" policies – in this sense, they refer to Camus and his dislike of the Romans of Ancient Rome which championed such policies. This research into the role of European cultural institutes and actors in the Mediterranean ties in with and relates to this position that is critical of the "foreigner" and attempts to offer alternatives for the Mediterranean through self-reliance, creativity, trust in oneself and solidarity. Nevertheless, the approach is critical and as will be shown attempts to achieve a balanced and objective assessment of analyses addressing cultural influence and cultural

³¹⁵ Cassano; Zolo, page 7.

³¹⁶ DEL SARTO, Raffaella A (2005): 'Setting the (Cultural) Agenda: Concepts, Communities and Representation in Euro-Med Relations', *Mediterranean Politics*, 10: 3, page 325.

³¹⁷ <http://www.agenceurope.com/EN/index.html> (accessed 13 February 2012).

relations are made. The points tackled, while debatable in their effectiveness and practical validity, offer a strong basis for constructing an analysis of European influence and possible alternatives on both local and wider Mediterranean bases.

Zolo makes reference to the Barcelona Process and the importance paid to civil society and the cultural dimension within the ideation of the process. The Barcelona Process, as the precursor of the Union for the Mediterranean, had already addressed the work of European operators in the Southern Mediterranean. The role of European cultural institutes and actors within the cultural relations developed and the cultural expression produced has direct impact on cultural operators and artists on the ground, be they locals or foreign.³¹⁸ The extent of this influence varies and will be assessed particularly with regard to what Mawrad al Thaqafy refer to as the independent sector. This is an important point as it allows the research to field questions such as: How determining are European cultural institutes in achieving quality and access in relation to Mediterranean culture? In their absence, what scenarios may one envisage, and what would the repercussions be? Without them, what would happen: low quality, government propaganda and high levels of censorship? Are European players catalysts for change and innovation? Zolo makes a point about conditionality as the basis of European collaboration with the Southern Mediterranean. He notes that the Barcelona Process 'reproduced the colonial model' when it came to interpreting and actualising the European role in the Mediterranean and having Arab states conform to European ways of organisation, even in matters of civil society. These dynamics seem to provide the basis of recent Mediterranean realities and the framework of European and Mediterranean relations over the past few decades. While Zolo may be too critical and one-sided against the European involvement, the stringent position developed provides for an interesting framework within which to assess cultural influence and relations in the Mediterranean.³¹⁹

Zolo reflects on European-Islam relations in the modern era, and with reference to Islamic critics and history, notes the close relationship between Europe and the Arab world. This relationship has changed both sides dramatically, with Europe taking the upper hand and dominating the Arab world which appears to have slid backward. A turning point is the French expedition into Egypt which has been discussed earlier.³²⁰

The same argument is developed by Armando Salvator who addresses clashes, conflicts and dialogue in the Mediterranean, particularly with regard to the role of Europe to the rest of the Mediterranean. Salvator believes Europe does have an important role to play, but what it is doing now, i.e. a continuation of dominance, is not the right way forward. In acknowledging that Europe is an important actor, one is forced to ask how best should it fulfil this role. Salvator notes that Europe is '*off-axis*', and should re-align itself. With reference to Rémi Brague who believed Europe's axis is on Roman heritage, Salvator calls for a shift to '*Greco-Hebrew*' roots which should be sought. Interestingly, Salvator concludes by noting that Brague claims that

³¹⁸ Cassano; Zolo, page 36.

³¹⁹ Ibid. page 39.

³²⁰ Ibid. page 41.

since Islam remained close to Greco-Judaic roots, Europe moved away and thus estranged itself from the Mediterranean. He admits to not having a solution to improving Europe's way forward in terms of intercultural dialogue but looks at Greco-Roman – Judaic-Christian differences as providing examples of how to overcome the impasse.³²¹

The influence of the (colonial) past on the present

The research, in itself, is an example of putting the acknowledgment of the importance of the past on the present into practice. It tries to do this by looking at the colonial heritage, namely the effects of the past on the present, and the way the present is shaped by the past, to map out a plan for the present and the future. While the forward-looking aspects of the research will be developed in the final part of this text, this sub-chapter will focus on the contemporary aspects of how colonialism has shaped cultural influence and cultural relations within the framework of cultural expression. It is interesting to point out that European relations with the Mediterranean are strong and on the rise, also in terms of collaboration and culture, raising the issue of whether this relationship leads to less, or actually more, dependence of the South on the North.³²²

One of the chief purposes of dialogue lies in the need to revisit the past and divisive memories in order to unearth the roots of conflict. A big part of the common past of the Mediterranean lies in colonial history related to European colonisation as well as the Ottoman Empire. Several authors call for greater awareness and acknowledgement of this commonality together with the structural repercussions still felt today from the North to the South in terms of trade, culture and infrastructure and from the South to the North in terms of culture, economic relations and migration.³²³ As Fabre points out, this approach relies heavily on a lot of 'memory-work', or 'travail de mémoire'.³²⁴

An important element which plays a big role in analysing cultural expression in the Mediterranean involves the recognition of mental spaces:

*'Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.'*³²⁵

The legacy of colonialism

Many other issues need to be raised in relation to the impact colonialism has had on cultural influence and cultural relations in the Mediterranean. Colonialism has left a legacy which has impacted on the national make-up of European states. It is interesting to refer to this point with

³²¹ Ibid. page 463.

³²² Ibid. page 544.

³²³ Ibid. page 179.

³²⁴ Ibid. page 190.

³²⁵ Said (1994), page 6.

regard to what the research considers as “the other side” and the receiving end, namely the Mediterranean. It is important to ask, and indeed the research will ask, what makes up the agenda of British and French cultural institutes and other European influences, since these are not monolithic (e.g. white) but very mixed (racially, historically and socially) and closely tied to the populations and artists in the various territories. The research will focus primarily on France due to this country’s great influence across the Mediterranean. Great Britain will also be paid serious attention due to its impact on Malta and other territories around the Mediterranean Sea.³²⁶

Fabre asks whether intercultural dialogue can contribute to overcoming the framework developed by Huntington’s clash of civilizations or whether it is just a smokescreen. The research will argue that enquiries into the hegemonies of power, often not easily acknowledged in spite of their being very visible, tangible and influential (e.g. cultural institutes), is needed to make any real progress in intercultural dialogue practices. The structures of power need to be acknowledged in order to realise that intercultural dialogue is not possible between participants who are not really partners because they are of unequal strength and influence and parties have more of a hold on others than these do on themselves.³²⁷ With reference to a particular colonial territory, Fabre reflects on the cultural influence and relations in Algeria, the country colonised for the longest time in the Mediterranean. Fabre raises questions such as what future is possible for France and Algeria, on what basis and on whether a postcolonial history (in-the-making) is possible?³²⁸ More generally, Fabre asks what relations between the North and the South of the Mediterranean are possible “after empire”. These observations lead to a number of key questions which the research poses, such as whether we are “after” or still “in” empire but in a new form. Fabre raises a series of questions that serve as hooks in addressing a number of queries such as:

- What does Europe want out of the South: security and economic development?
- What does the South want: markets?
- Within these general thematic lines, where does the analysis of cultural relations fit?
- What role do European cultural relations with the South play in the greater scheme of things and interests?
- How are European agendas furthered by cultural actors?
- And, seeing it from the other side, how are European agendas challenged by cultural actors – including Europeans?

Hassan Hanafi decidedly turns the focus on how we in the present are in dealing with the colonial past, and raises the question of whether today’s artists and cultural actors deal with colonialism directly, or in any way address issues related to colonialism.³²⁹ The past is always part of the equation, and a key moment at the beginning of the era of colonialism is 1492 which witnesses both the fall of Granada to the Spanish kings and the “discovery” of America by

³²⁶ BENNETT, Tony (2001): *Differing Diversities: Transversal Study on the Theme of Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, page 17.

³²⁷ Fabre (2004), page 9.

³²⁸ Ibid. page 10.

³²⁹ Ibid. page 15.

Columbus. Hanafi relates this discovery to the important realisation that knowledge justified the existence of both the subject as subject and of the object as object and gave and validated power to who held the knowledge.

With reference to more recent and established forms of colonialism, Hanafi makes an excellent point regarding a particular feature of French colonialism: this aimed at expanding France, not just at taking resources or establishing dominance over territories and markets and trade routes, more in line with England, Spain, Belgium and other European traditions. Expanding France also meant, or especially meant, *'cultural colonialism'* and particularly through the spreading of the language. Hanafi argues that in some ways the real military service was the cultural service as it was most difficult to uproot because of its being pervasive and persistent. Hanafi re-affirms the key of knowledge to colonial power: *'Je pense donc je suis'* crystallises his portrayal of the position of European dominance over the colonised world. In the contemporary world, knowledge is still of key importance and has added value to the maxim equating knowledge with power.³³⁰

Self-interested investment by colonial powers in the territories they occupied was a strong tool in colonial management that extended to the cultural field. Mohammed Kenbib observes the infrastructural investments of France in Morocco at the time of General Lyautey, the first resident general of France in Rabat, and reflects on the financial, territorial and organisational price the Moroccans paid for the modernising investments which benefitted the Europeans and a relatively small number of locals. His questions give rise to others about cultural investments and interests currently, as reflected in the questions targeting supporting structures in the list of questions found in the annex.

Colonisation and colonialism

Robert Ilbert provides a good explanation of the difference between colonisation and colonialism. Colonisation speaks of the technical measures and of the mechanisms of territorial control which extend over its population and their resources. Ilbert notes that colonisation is a sort of norm in the Mediterranean, with powerful neighbours extending their control over other territories. On the other hand, colonialism is described in terms of colonisation that is part of a political and systematic expansion of a power, and a much larger, complex and complete picture is included here.³³¹

Ilbert draws an interesting parallel between colonialism and globalisation on the basis of the free market that both helped promote. The areas of common and free exchange championed by liberalism in both cases are not identical but are closely linked and certain groups tend to be more powerful at the expense of others. Ilbert notes that colonialism was not only about occupying territory, but more importantly about opening up markets for economic liberalism. He traces the thread between trade, commerce and subsequent military occupation,

³³⁰ Ibid. page 19.

³³¹ Ibid. page 33.

accompanied by cultural means. These same cultural tools have changed and been updated over time, yet still exist and fulfil a purpose today.

Ilbert concludes by noting that globalisation sets the way for development internationally, as did colonialism before and in ways borrowed from colonialism.³³² Ilbert's reflections lead to important questions such as:

- How does cultural influence fit into the picture of globalisation particularly with reference to markets and international and liberal exchange, e.g. EU collaboration agreements and protocols that link trade with culture?
- On a different yet related note, what impact does the 2005 UNESCO Convention attempt to have on trade relations and cultural industries in relation to culture, global governance and trade?

In contrast to Ilbert, Daniel Rivet looks at colonisation less as a system and more as a process with a beginning, a development, and an end. Rivet also believes colonialism as a system took over towards the end of the colonisation process as things got progressively worse and the coloniser lost touch with the colonised. Rivet concludes by noting that the essence of '*le fait colonial*', a term he prefers to colonialism as he believes it is more encompassing of the whole colonial process, is in preventing the colonised from making their own stories, as indicated by Memmi.³³³

Jocelyne Dakhlin reproduces a stereotypical perspective on colonialism in Algeria as she describes how Algeria was a European melting pot at a time of sharp divisions and submission. In contrast, Andrea Smith's research on the Maltese in Algeria refutes and considers this perspective as naïve, if not purposely misleading. Algerians were subjugates or kept at a distance from the portal towns developed for the Europeans, while the Europeans did not "melt" into a European or even French identity, although that is what the French aimed to do. Smith argues and shows that national identities and community identities remained strong and created classes within the European settlers' structures as, for example, with the Maltese.³³⁴ However, Dakhlin argues that the Maghreb, the European Mediterranean and even Europe itself (the North) were forming this pot in one place. She notes how the interconnectedness through cultural as well as ethnic and family links ran long and deep. Interestingly, Dakhlin distinguishes between the colonial circumstances which led to this situation and the act of and the negative conditions brought about by colonisation itself. Therefore, seemingly distinct from the other more positive phenomena described, she notes that colonisation in the Mediterranean usurped and exploited the historical relations described, and notes how dominance of one side over the other was established, and whole relationships and balances were shaken.³³⁵ By addressing colonisation separately from the socio-cultural circumstances intrinsically related to it, Dakhlin argues that colonisation pretended there was no such story

³³² Ibid. page 39.

³³³ Ibid. page 48.

³³⁴ SMITH, Andrea L. (2006): *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

³³⁵ Fabre (2004), page 54.

preceding the colonial chapter: a negation (*'négation'*) and a denial (*'denegation'*) brought about a *'table rase'* (clean slate). Ironically, the subtle distinctions attempted between circumstances lying just outside colonisation recreate, rather than attack, the model of selectivity.

In pursuing this subtle division, Dakhlin addresses a very difficult point, namely the need to evaluate the heritage of colonialism (for instance, she makes reference to architecture) but without justifying colonialism itself. Dakhlin refers to this aspect of cultural influence and transference in a context predominantly of North effecting the South. However, the influence is mutual. What is worrying about this pursuit of assessment is the need to invoke the element of justification, even if rallied against. The consideration of this aspect reflects the real duality of the heritage left us by colonialism, and sheds light on recent efforts to reclaim what was described as the positive aspects of colonialism.

Daniel Lefevre notes that few events in history are charged with as powerful negative connotations as is colonisation, with the exception of the Nazi dictatorship and the Shoah. Lefevre plays on the element of perception, hence the earlier use of the term connotation, and notes that colonisation tends to be perceived as an enterprise of pillage and exploitation, and criticised on these grounds, rather than perceived, first of all, as an encounter. Lefevre goes on to highlight the positive aspects of colonisation: he notes that i. he does this in spite of the vigorous criticism doing this generally provokes; ii. he notes the experiences of colonisation differed greatly from territory to territory; iii. and he claims that following the initial violence related to the conquest of territory, one of the main benefits of colonisation was putting an end to the regular wars and revolts ravaging the conquered territories. He emphasises the benefits of this *'paix coloniale'* which included security previously unknown to the natives.³³⁶

Lefevre notes that colonisation stemmed from eighteenth century industrial policies and expansion, as well as the French Revolution of 1789. He notes that the French of the new Republic believed they had a mission, based on the values of the Revolution, to share with the rest of the world. This interestingly ties in with the influence, in terms of wanting liberty and national value, which the French transferred, in spite of themselves, to their colonial territories, as commented upon by a number of writers including Camille Rislé (as will be seen later) and Lefevre himself. Lefevre does this by referring to Montagnon: *'Effet boomerang des idéaux propagés, 'liberté, égalité, fraternité', l'école française était une pépinière excellente pour les esprits révolutionnaires.'*³³⁷

Lefevre notes that this civilising mission should not be reduced to a hypocritical masquerade attempting to guide economic interests. Lefevre is apologetic and defensive about this perception of the colonising mission, which he understands can be criticised. However, he defends those participants who believed, sincerely, in what they were doing. What is so upsetting is the fact that Lefevre believes it is worth separating the good intentions of some

³³⁶ LEFEUVRE, Daniel (2009): 'Une mission de civilisation', *Historia*, octobre, No. 754, page 16.

³³⁷ *Ibid.* page 17.

from the injustice of the whole enterprise and the ravaging effects on millions. Lefevre goes on to highlight the *'benefits'* of colonisation to the colonised people, namely liberty (without irony), education and health care. He does admit this may sound paradoxical. However, he notes that while colonisation did contribute to *'la traite négrière'*, it also served to liberate people, as in the case of the Jews in Algiers in 1830 and later in relation to European efforts to outlaw the trafficking of black slaves.³³⁸ In a similar vein, Marc Michel in *Essai sur la colonisation positive* also argues that colonisation should be assessed for both the bad and the good which came out of it.³³⁹

Gilles Manceron raises interesting points on civilisation and the related mission that Europe took upon itself to elevate the colonised. Therefore, while the civilising mission aimed to raise the level of culture and life of indigenous people, this was doomed to fail, as the colonised were ultimately always inferior for the coloniser.³⁴⁰

With regard to contemporary versions of the civilising mission, Manceron shares Dakhlin's views on cultural appreciation and the reinforcement of colonial paradigms. Manceron notes that the take on culture and the arts should not lead to a 'new superficial exoticism' which acts as an *'alibi for new ignorances'*.³⁴¹ Such trends would confirm his fears and those of Algerian writer Rachid Boudjedra with regard to the strengthening of colonialism's power to keep the colonised in a backward state and to be marvelled at.³⁴²

J.P. de Brito argues that archaeology and museums are prime tools of Orientalism. The Other is *'constructed'*, plastered, encased and displayed in ways which mark him as different yet easily *'comparable'*. The Other is *'simplified'* and made safe. He argues that the exercise of archaeology was an exercise in identifying oneself and exploring oneself by applying one's superior knowledge of others. De Brito raises interesting points about the legacy of museums and how they are still exploited today. In various ways and as will be done later, cultural institutes and operators can also be assessed similarly.³⁴³

An episode referred to often by commentators about empire and referred to specifically by Edward Said in *Orientalism* is that of Balfour answering questions about Britain's presence in Egypt in 1910 to note how soon afterwards, with the two World Wars and independence movements, the British Empire would crumble. There were a number of British economic and political considerations which led to a gradual re-dimensionalising or downsizing of empire partly through the self-government of dominion territories. It is noted that *'[t]his political dismantling did not immediately extend to imperial cultural influences [...].'* This is an interesting point the research will look into in order to explore how the cultural influences continued and

³³⁸ Lefevre, page 16.

³³⁹ MICHEL, Marc (2009): *Essai sur la colonisation positive*, Perrin, Paris.

³⁴⁰ Fabre (2004), page 59.

³⁴¹ Ibid. page 57.

³⁴² Ibid. page 56.

³⁴³ Ibid. page 74.

took different forms to keep the European/West influence going, particularly in the Mediterranean, even after the various empires and mandates ended.³⁴⁴ As is noted:

'All postcolonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved the problem.'

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin comment on *'writing back'* and re-inscribing works of literature into the critical colonial narrative. The research will try to look at how Mediterranean cultural operators do that through their various means of cultural expression, re-appropriating their histories, their stories, their cultural resources, expressions and audiences.³⁴⁵ Said refers to Vico and his observation on man creating his own history. While this can apply to European cultural institutes and actors and their histories, it can also apply to the Mediterranean cultural operators who may be consciously, or unconsciously, reacting against that part of the institutionalised narrative which binds them within the official, Western, *'orientalising'* story.³⁴⁶

Nicholas B. Dirks throws interesting light on the relationship between colonial practice and cultural practice in the context of European nationhood and dominance and influence over the colonised:

*'Colonialism not only has had cultural effects that have too often been either ignored or displaced into the inexorable logics of modernization and world capitalism, it was itself a cultural project of control. Colonial knowledge both enabled colonial conquest and was produced by it; in certain important ways, culture was what colonialism was all about. Cultural forms in newly classified "traditional" societies were reconstructed and transformed by and through colonial technologies of conquest and rule, which created new categories and oppositions between colonizers and colonized, European and Asian, modern and traditional, West and East, even male and female.'*³⁴⁷

He concludes by noting that: *'Culture was also produced out of the allied network of processes that spawned nations in the first place.'* This reflection primarily refers to colonised territories lying outside the motherland. However, it can also relate to one's own territories, as is the case with Southern Italy in relation to the North. Pino Aprile reflects on Italian unity and the nation-builders from the North who displaced the Kingdom of Two Sicilies and Borbonic rule to impose their own. The shift was not only political in terms of rule and government, but also cultural in terms of building the image of *'Southerners'* (disparagingly referred to as *'terroni'*) for outsiders and especially for the people of the South themselves.³⁴⁸ This point of building self-images and self-perceptions for the colonised, by the coloniser, is still relevant today.

³⁴⁴ ASHCROFT, Bill; GRIFFITHS, Gareth; TIFFIN, Helen eds. (2006): *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Routledge, Oxford, page 1.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. page 10.

³⁴⁶ Ibid. page 25.

³⁴⁷ Ibid. page 58.

³⁴⁸ APRILE, Pino (2010): *Terroni*, Piemme, Milano.

T. Serequeberhan comments on Lyotard's definition of 'post-modern' as the 'incredulity towards narratives'. These narratives refer to those of modernity and therefore those of nationalism and colonial domination. This interpretation makes it interesting to contrast these discourses of modernity with those of post-modernity which in spite of post-modern incredulity still exist, for instance in the narratives of globalisation and capitalism on a global scale, as well as in anti-globalisation and anti-capitalism. Lyotard ties 'modernity' with 'empire and colonialism', and gives rise to the possibility of tying these narratives to those propagated by European cultural actors and institutes.³⁴⁹

Following the earlier reference to Gramsci, Thomas W. Gallant helps open up the concepts of hegemony and resistance since he finds 'the antinomial pair of resistance and accommodation too constraining for a deeper understanding of the colonial experience.'³⁵⁰ The reaction of the colonised to the coloniser is too simplistically classified between resistance and collaboration, as also argued by Toynbee regarding mimesis and resistance, more of which will be discussed later. Gallant wants to see the more complex and fine details lying behind the relationship between coloniser and colonised and how together they formed a particular world. He notes that '[n]ot all actions of the ruling groups, either foreign or domestic, are hegemonic, and not every response by the subaltern constitutes resistance.' Gallant wants to 'move the discussion away from an emphasis on a simple polarity between hegemony and resistance, and instead to focus our attention more on the shared interaction between colonizers and colonized, rulers and ruled, foreigners and locals.'³⁵¹ Gallant is not fond of grand theories which try to decipher and help work out colonial relations and instead urges a focus on actual dynamics based on observations of a more practical nature. In his work on the British in Greece, Gallant studies how locals tried to, and at times succeeded, to appropriate the tools of the colonisers, often very imaginatively, for instance with regard to the justice system. The research will follow the lead of this approach and discuss similar scenarios in the framework of cultural practices: it will be looking at whether the work of the foreigner and of the cultural institute has been used creatively and subverted and profited from by the locals.

French influence in Tunisia

While Tunisia is not one of the main territories where the interviews of the research are held, the research did engage with elements of the country in the wake of the popular revolution which deposed the old regime of Ben Ali early in 2011.³⁵² Tunisia is a wealthy environment with regard to cultural influence and cultural relations in a Mediterranean context and its colonial

³⁴⁹ Fabre (2004), page 89.

³⁵⁰ GALLANT, Thomas W. (2002): *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, page ix.

³⁵¹ Ibid. page x.

³⁵² This contact took most concrete shape between 14-17 April 2011, three months after the 'Jasmine Revolution' succeeded in its intent of liberating the country from the dictatorship of Ben Ali, when participating at the conference entitled "Regards actuels sur les Arts visuels en méditerranée: L'inter-territorialité culturelle en question" organised by l'Institut Supérieur des Arts et Métiers de Kairouan, l'Institut Supérieur des Arts et Métiers de Gabes, l'Institut Supérieur des métiers de la mode de Monastir and held in Sousse.

narratives still have great impact on the development of cultural expression today. Driss Abbassi notes that politically, Tunisia underwent a shift from *'Arab nationalism'* to *'Mediterranean imaginary'* after the 1970s and particularly with Ben Ali taking over from Bourguiba in 1987. Tunisia has favoured a *'long-term'* point of view on history, in Braudelian terms, which starts from antiquity and Carthage and leads up to contemporary Tunisia. It also emphasises the open nature of the country, as a bridge between Europe and the Arab world. Abbassi notes that this shift may be linked to a distancing from Arab nationalism but also to a *'colonial identity imaginary'*. For Abbassi, *'imaginary'* is used in the stilted and stultifying sense of the word.³⁵³

Abbassi's angle is useful regarding the approach of southern Mediterranean nations toward Europe/the West as well as the attention given to cultural tourism-related policies. The point made by Abbassi on *'openness'* and *'colonial'* identity relates to those on cultural influence raised by Cassano with regard to Toynbee about mimicry and reacting oppositionally to the foreigner. Abbassi notes the importance of the Mediterranean identity and the projection of its self for Tunisia, which he links to *'patrimonialisation'* where heritage overrides memory.³⁵⁴ This also links in to Smith's research on Maltese Algerians although the context is different; there, the context is one of communities perceived and perceiving themselves as "outsiders", in spite of efforts at integration, while Abbassi reflects on how a community at national level views itself.³⁵⁵

Interestingly, Abbassi notes that it was the French themselves who promoted the *'Mediterranean agenda'* for Tunisia to further their own grand operations after colonialism. This aspect gains added importance in light of French policies and strategies aimed at asserting cultural influence in the Mediterranean region and in neighbouring regions (Europe, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa) through the Mediterranean. As will be argued later in connection with observations on the Union for the Mediterranean, such influence at political and national levels went and still goes a long way in allowing for cultural influence both within and outside cultural relations.³⁵⁶

A further turn in Abbassi's analysis is very revealing of the subtle and complex ways in which the Mediterranean concept can be weaved from within cultural and political narratives which are hard to capture at face value. He argues that the *'Mediterranean identity'* force in Tunisia was very strong and seemed to overshadow the Arabic nationalism of the independence era. He also notes that France actively supported this "weaving" of the Mediterranean identity, since it maintained French influence in the Maghreb. This conceptualisation of the Mediterranean and the uses it is put to challenges attempts to deal with the Mediterranean in a neutral or objective sense. The impact of France and Europe on the Southern Mediterranean is real and still strong. It inspires and supports a vision of the Mediterranean as discussed by

³⁵³ ABBASSI, Driss (2009): *Quand la Tunisie s'invente: Entre Orient et Occident, des imaginaires politiques*, éditions Autrement, Paris, page 8.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. page 9.

³⁵⁵ Smith, page 25.

³⁵⁶ Abbassi, page 9.

political planners from the *Francophonie* which extends colonial power, albeit in different guises, rather than breaks with the colonial influence. While taking full note of this, the research will seek to find examples of and assert an alternative policy for the Mediterranean which reacts to and engages with European influence in ways that give the South dignity and the beginnings of a road map for a more democratic and equal way forward. Therefore, the research will argue that:

- i. the Mediterranean is not only the French Mediterranean as perceived by the *Francophonie*; it is also a matter of exploring and developing further South-South collaboration; and
- ii. the Mediterranean should seek a place which is somewhat free or more free from colonialism, that favours South-South relations and promotes collaboration based on equality. The realisation of the concept of the third space starts from the Mediterranean itself.

Abbassi notes that one needs to understand what lies underneath the French exercise of 'cultural colonisation' to understand the Maghreb. The research will try to extend this observation to other territories in the Mediterranean, and assess the impact of influence, also in terms of neocolonialism, on today's cultural relations. The educational system lies at the heart of this assessment. The research does not focus on education, but on culture. Nevertheless, since an important operation of European cultural institutes is that of running language courses as well as other types of education programmes and training, this commentary is apt.³⁵⁷

Abbassi exposes a presentation of the history of colonisation which is partial to France by emphasising the link between the benefits brought by the French and homogeneity in the Mediterranean. The ancient past helps support this link, since the Roman era is related to France for their civilising missions in a clear example of heritage outdoing memory. From this perspective, one which gives value to a widely varied heritage which therefore encapsulates rich diversity and is common to many, the links to other territories, such as Malta, become pronounced. They get even stronger with reference to the rich cultures that contributed to Malta's diversity, its geographic uniqueness, its strategic position and an identity which is distinct from its neighbours. In so doing, Malta, like Tunisia, distances itself from the Arab states. This approach also serves to propel an agenda of '*tourism propaganda*'.³⁵⁸ In the aftermath of Ben Ali's ascent to power in 1987, Tunisia experienced a shift from '*nation*' to '*fatherland*' with emphasis paid to heritage and the renewal of the valorisation of heritage. This reinforced a shift towards the opening up of the Tunisian identity, from Arab and Amazigh to Mediterranean which had, as a consequence, the sidelining of Maghrebi commonalities. This is an example of how the Mediterranean can be used as a tool to address aspirations and build new political contexts which are convenient for particular agendas. With Tunisia sidelining the Maghreb in favour of a wider reference, Tunisia is presented as '*peripheral*' to North Africa but central and '*not marginal*' to the Mediterranean. References of the time to '*strategic*

³⁵⁷ Ibid. page 15.

³⁵⁸ Ibid. page 23.

importance' recall Malta's external communication campaigns highlighting what is purportedly a unique and essential characteristic.³⁵⁹

Abbassi concludes that ironically, the Tunisian drive to raise its Mediterranean profile at the expense of the Maghrebi ties reinforced the colonial identity, linking the Roman to the French paradigm while shifting attention to glorified and common pasts which are claimed to be '*enriching*' to Tunisia's own identity, as is also the case with Malta. Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson claim that nationalism uses the heritage left to it by history, particularly the cultural richness and proliferation of cultures, in ways to benefit from it, even if this means selecting and creating its own traditions and rehabilitating aspects but not others. An important element in the development of such trends is '*tourism branding*' that in the age of globalisation, relatively easier travel and common markets, has become common globally. The build up of Mediterranean identity described earlier and promoted post-1987 was the prelude to stronger relations with Europe and its business.³⁶⁰ Arguably, these are strategies which former colonised or marginal territories use as ways of, in Gallant's perspective, appropriating the heritage imposed and left by the foreign forces. The impact on the relationship created between individuals and the state is interesting to observe. Abbassi notes that rare survey results reflecting the status of Tunisians' bonding with identity references a few years ago show that the Mediterranean and the Maghreb scored low, while Arab and Muslim identification scored high.³⁶¹ Another striking means of self-identification and projection to others comes in the form of generic metaphors with the aim of using any positive connotations the metaphors may have to the benefit of the state. Abbassi refers to Morocco's government's way of looking at the Mediterranean which is by figuring itself as a tree with its roots to the South and the East and growing up into the North, namely targeting the Mediterranean and particularly Europe.³⁶²

French influence in Lebanon and Syria

Language is a fundamental identity marker with regard to choices one makes involuntarily or voluntarily. That is why education is a key area of influence. Throughout the history of the French mandate in Lebanon and Syria, cultural and educational standards were of high level and open to French influence. Literature is another important area which accompanies the development of identities belonging to particular nations. Marie-Thérèse Oliver-Saidi reflects on the significance of Lebanese and Syrian writers who choose French as their language or get their work translated into French: while being Lebanese or Syrian texts, the writers link themselves to the French literary tradition. As the research will show, the glamour gained

³⁵⁹ Ibid. page 35.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. page 99.

³⁶¹ Ibid. page 129.

³⁶² Ibid. page 128; Just as heritage plays an important part in the portrayal of identity in Malta, particularly with reference to the Knights of St John in communication aimed at tourists, so does the image of the tree recur in the Maltese imaginary ('Imagine 18' public preparatory session for the European Capital of Culture, Malta, 22 June 2011).

through degrees of “exoticism” is exchanged for stereotyping and cast-typing by Westerners and ostracism by people at home.³⁶³

Oliver-Saidi believes the *‘imaginary’* includes multiple elements and should be studied in its richness, to discover its impact on *‘us’* and *‘them’* without censure. From this perspective, the term imaginary does not carry negative connotations but rather positive ones. Oliver-Saidi voices her criticism to what she terms 1970s positions against the imaginary and wants to ‘cleanse’ this from the colonisation period and its heritage.³⁶⁴

As noted, *‘l’imaginaire’* in this case is different to the negative interpretation given by Abbassi. The definition is more neutral, referring to what the French made of the Levant, therefore the territories today identified with Lebanon and Syria, between 1946-1991, from the end of the French mandate and independence, through conflicts with Israel and changes in French-Arab (including Suez) and Israello-Arab relations, till the Gulf War when Lebanon supported the West against Syria a year after the end of 1975-1990 civil war. The French mandate in the Levant was very different and much less traumatic than the colonisation of Algeria and the French influence and subsequent pull-out from North Africa. However, Oliver-Saidi refers to the *‘ignoble end’* of the mandate, and to the rivalry of France and Great Britain and their unpopularity with the Arabs. France did not manage to establish a clear strategy as there was no clear plan. She makes interesting reference to a lack of a plan for the whole Mediterranean where experts in Algeria and Morocco seemed to try to transfer their knowledge from one situation to the other unsuccessfully. Nevertheless, in spite of the disastrous end of the mandate, the influence of France on Lebanon and Syria has remained strong, and of particular interest to the research are the cultural influences. The cultural influences are mutual and take different forms, as will be seen, also with reference to l’Institut du Monde Arab which opened in Paris in 1987.³⁶⁵

Oliver-Saidi notes that the political moulding of Syria by France was much less than that of Lebanon. Syria remained more isolated and oppositional in response to France; Lebanon based itself more on community-management according to religious ethnicities. Lebanon is still more open to the West and France than its neighbour partly because of its Christian community which France used to justify its presence at first. Furthermore, the Maronites wanted France to help with controlling politics in Lebanon against the Muslims, eventually contributing to the civil war.³⁶⁶

From a more general, yet very personal and impassioned perspective, Aimé Césaire notes, angrily and critically, that colonisation put people *‘in touch’*, *‘in contact’*, *‘together’*, but queries the value of this contact, doubts it has any redeeming feature and sees it devoid of all human value. This is interesting as cultural relations and development thrive from contact and

³⁶³ OLIVER-SAIDI, Marie-Thérèse (2010): *Le Liban et la Syrie au Miroir Français (1946-1991)*, L’Harmattan, Paris, page 98.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. page 12.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. page 28.

³⁶⁶ Ibid. page 214.

discovery of new ways and mutual influence, but colonisation allowed for destructive influence and unequal relations.³⁶⁷ Neila Akrimi notes the impact is also contemporary, and that the effects of decolonisation and economic and social differences in the Mediterranean are two of the main causes of Mediterranean's ills.³⁶⁸

Orientalism

At this point in the development of the research, it is worth focusing a bit further in detail on the analysis on Orientalism as developed by Edward Said. As he notes, Orientalism mostly deals with nineteenth century French and British relations with the Middle East and beyond. It is therefore very pertinent for the research to engage with these observations that help throw more light on this critical time in the development of cultural influence and cultural relations between France, Britain and the South Mediterranean. As noted by Gramsci one would need to compile an inventory of the traces left on us by history in order to attempt to fully understand the impact of phenomena like colonialism on our present.³⁶⁹ In this vein, one can realise that Orientalism is arguably still practised today, in terms of romantic, illusory and exotic ways in which Westerners still see the Middle East and North Africa in spite of the challenges life there presents on a daily basis. Ironically, this same strife and hardship seems to act as a form of attraction in a naïve or even perverse manner. The same attraction seems to lure cultural operators to hard-stricken territories in terms of cultural festivals in the framework of a particular brand of tourism.

Said is very categorical in claiming that Orientalism is not only an exercise of Western imagination but rather it is the product of domination and hegemony. He notes that the power of cultural hegemony has made Orientalism durable. The hegemonic element of Orientalism belongs to the predominance of ideas over others in civil society. Orientalism made it possible for the hegemonic cultural power of Europe to dominate the Other and tells us a lot about how Europe sees itself as superior to the Other.³⁷⁰ Said describes Orientalism as a self-referential system which is self-reinforcing and closed. He refers to Henri Pirenne as an example of how Orientalism worked in relation to the fixed way in which Europe depicted its relation to Islam and more particularly to how it resisted and built itself in opposition to Islam which is in turn depicted as an 'outsider'. Said goes on to say that:

*'the Orient, when it was not merely a place in which one traded, was culturally, intellectually, spiritually outside Europe and European civilization [...]'.*³⁷¹

³⁶⁷ CESAIRE, Aimé (2004): *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Présence Africaine, Paris, page10.

³⁶⁸ BERGER, Maurits; VAN DER PLAS, Els; HUYGENS, Charlotte; AKRIMI, Neila; SCHNEIDER, Cynthia (2008): *Bridge the Gap or Mind the Gap? Culture in Western-Arab Relations*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', The Hague, page 35.

³⁶⁹ Said (1995), page 25.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. page 7.

³⁷¹ Ibid. page 70.

The impact of French texts on the cultural imaginary as well as, ironically, the critical analysis that tries to come to terms with phenomena like Orientalism, is huge. The research recognises the fact that most of the texts referred to are French, thus providing a predominantly Northern representation of the Mediterranean. This corpus of intellectual dominance was established at the time of Bonaparte's voyage to Egypt which set off a tradition of French texts on the Mediterranean and the Orient which is very rich still today. Said notes that this vast depository of written information which transformed itself into practical knowledge and a means of power belies a *'textual'* attitude of trusting texts more readily than direct experience to judge reality with.³⁷² This draws a parallel with the propensity to valorise heritage over memory, as commented upon by Abbassi.

France and the Mediterranean

Eugene Rogan notes that the West has a history of invading Arab countries pretending to be liberating them. He recalls Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798, but one may refer back to the Crusades in terms of liberating the Holy Land and its Christian populations, and forward to the Iraq War in 2003 and the Allied occupation. Rogan also mentions Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Maude's *'hollow echo'* of Bonaparte's 'reassurances' when the British invaded Baghdad in March 1917, pretending to liberate the Arab lands from the Ottomans. Rogan notes that although the French invasion of Egypt led to cultural consequences and was presented as cultural in intention, *'Napoleon's real reasons for invading Egypt in 1798 were geostrategic, not cultural.'*³⁷³

Emile Barrault notes that the need of France of the Orient is reciprocal; furthermore, France is to regain its glory, its *'crown, which it can never abdicate'* in the Orient. Fabre uses the term *'rayonnement'* to describe this position, which he carefully notes does not really fit the colonial project as yet. Barrault addresses the Orient with respect and notes that while it needs France, it needs to engage with France on its own terms. The West would indeed be brash in imposing itself as a model. He hopes for a coming together which leads to a rejuvenated civilisation which is not Western or Oriental, but *'human'*. Barrault describes the West's contact with the Orient as paying a debt, in terms of science, industry and art, for the heritage Europe has gained from the Orient. He states clearly that while Europe has always shown its respect towards Greece particularly at the time of the Greek wars of independence, it has *'also sucked the milk of the Orient'*. Barrault, like other Saint Simoniens, viewed European heritage not as divided and only belonging to the Greco-Latin strain against the Jewish-Arabic one, but rather as belonging to both foundations.³⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Fabre notes that Barrault is quite exceptional in projecting a very egalitarian vision of how the relationship between Europe and the Orient should be established and

³⁷² Ibid. page 92.

³⁷³ Ibid. page 78.

³⁷⁴ Fabre; Izzo, page 33; FOXLEE, Neil (2010): *Albert Camus's 'The New Mediterranean Culture': A Text and its Contents*, Peter Lang AG, Bern, www.books.google.com.mt (accessed 18 May 2012), page 82.

worked out noting that: *'Cependant si l'Orient appelle à la France, il faudrait bien se garder de voir en lui le monde colonial de l'Europe.'*³⁷⁵

On the other hand, it is worth noting that other *Saint Simoniens*, including Chevallier and le Père Enfantin, promoted the colonial project. Fabre raises some very important questions about the Saint Simoniens and asks what their true intentions and what their effects were. He asks whether the cultural awareness and the vision of an alliance were a *'mask'* for domination. Fabre does not resolve the question noting there still exists a *'deep ambiguity'* in this regard; he notes that their vision was mostly utopian and not *'directly subordinated to politics'*. He also notes that their views and some of their projects were re-appropriated by the South shore such as by Mohammed Ali in Egypt.³⁷⁶

Colonial expansion was the aim of many European powers in the nineteenth century. As pointed out by Enfantin in *La colonisation de l'Algérie* (1843), written following his participation in the *Commission scientifique d'exploration de l'Algérie* (1839-1842), France did not want to be left behind. Fabre draws interesting parallels between developments which happened concurrently in the fields of botany, geography, science, culture and politics, together informing the French political dimension addressing the Mediterranean and its strategy. Knowledge was developed while cultural and national identities were constructed. With regard to the French colonial project for the Mediterranean, Fabre notes that this project went through various cycles, phases, political configurations and ideologies expressed in different discourses. Algeria witnessed the strongest presence of the French colonial enterprise, where the project was pushed furthest. France needed to justify the appropriation of territories and the terms of reference for a long-term stay which operated on a clear distinction between Europeans and the locals. This enterprise gave rise to a whole series of discourses on the Mediterranean in connection with the colonial project. The first references to the Mediterranean can already be traced in 1863, in the writings of Louis Veuillot, but are not part of an ideological strategy yet. Clearer ideological expressions can be found at the end of the nineteenth century: Philippe Lucas describes the Mediterranean as France's chance to rediscover itself, its roots, its past and its position internationally, with Algeria as *'la chance résurrectionnelle.'*³⁷⁷

As noted earlier, this vision of the Mediterranean, one serving French interests, seeks its roots in the Greco-Latin heritage, which it extends to North Africa (*'l'Afrique romaine'*) and uses to pre-date Islam. Fabre quotes Philippe Lucas and Jean-Claude Vatin with regard to this quest for re-discovery and re-appropriation of the past and heritage:

'Relever les plans des monuments antiques, relancer l'épigraphie latine, ouvrir des campagnes de fouilles, c'était rendre l'Afrique du Nord à sa latinité originelle. C'était surtout fournir un lignage, un arbre généalogique au melting pot algérien. C'était substituer aux ancêtres réels des nationalités différentes un ancêtre mythique commun, digne du grand rêve que Louis Bertrand,

³⁷⁵ Fabre; Izzo, page 36.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. page 37.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. page 54.

*par exemple, décida de prêter à tous ces Européens de la Méditerranée, venus coloniser ce qui devient dans la logique du raisonnement leur propre terre, l'Algérie.*³⁷⁸

Louis Bertrand is a key figure in the development of the vision promoting French dominance in the Mediterranean, also described in terms of his being an *'intellectual organique'*. Bertrand believes in and promotes the idea of the Latin Mediterranean, and sees himself as the initiator of the idea. Bertrand believes in a particularly strong tie between French African territories and France based on the past: *'l'Afrique française d'aujourd'hui, c'est l'Afrique romaine qui continue à vivre, qui n'a jamais cessé de vivre, même aux époques les plus troubles et les plus barbares.'*³⁷⁹

Bertrand notes he is not hostile towards the Arabs. He believes he was making it possible not only for Europeans to connect to North Africa through the Latin lineage, but also for North Africans to discover their Latin heritage which preceded Arab imposition (also *'l'Arabe usurpateur'*). The guiding light, acting as a misguiding lie but one which was very much believed in, was always Rome:

*'En rentrant en Afrique, nous n'avons fait que récupérer une province perdue de la Latinité [...] Héritiers de Rome, nous invoquons des droits antérieurs à l'Islam [...] 'L'Arabe ne lui apporta que la misère, la guerre endémique et la barbarie [...] Eh bien! la France est, en Afrique, l'héritière de Carthage, comme elle y est l'héritière de Rome. Aussi loin que s'étendit l'empire punique, aussi loin doit s'étendre l'hégémonie française.'*³⁸⁰

Bertrand highlights the importance of justifying France's reason for occupying Arab territories on the basis of being there to provide a service which led to a better standard of living. Referring to the civilising mission he notes:

'La civilisation doit prouver sa supériorité par sa bienfaisance. Nous ne devons pas nous borner à empêcher le barbare de nuire et de se nuire à lui-même, nous devons essayer aussi de le rendre moins misérable. Nous ne pouvons justifier notre présence sur cette terre ennemie qu'en faisant du bien.'

Ironically, the civilising mission is used as an excuse to explain the existence of colonialism itself. In different ways, yet not completely unrelated, current European efforts aimed at supporting neighbouring territories are still shackled by these self-interested strategies. Fabre quotes Barrault to show how different Bertrand's view is, how much more exploitative and unfortunately closer to reality:

³⁷⁸ Ibid. page 54.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. page 55.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. page 57.

'l'Orient n'est point à l'état de table rase ou à raser. Il n'est ni sauvage, ni barbare, ni enfant, ni vieillard, ni eunuque. Il a conscience de ce qui lui manque et il le demande; mais il a conscience de tout ce qui est en lui, et il ne s'en dépouillera point.'

Bertrand is the complete opposite, and also takes a snipe at artists:

'Depuis la franc-maçonnerie jusqu'à la littérature, en passant par les entreprises capitalistes et les agences touristiques, des légions de naïfs, de malins et d'imbéciles, sans parler de quelques artistes de génie, s'évertuent à entretenir et à faire flamboyer à nos yeux le vieux mirage oriental.'

The disingenuous, if not perverse, warping of reality to match colonial intentions, is palpable. Bertrand argues that natives are inferior to Europeans and that, if that were not so, the French would have no business in staying there: *'Mais si cet éloge de l'indigène était vrai, nous n'aurions plus qu'à nous en aller! Ce serait un crime d'asservir une race qui serait notre égale [...]'*³⁸¹

Fabre notes that 1930, which marked the centenary of French rule in Algeria, marks the zenith of colonial rule and thinking such as Bertrand's but also inevitably the beginning of the decline. He deftly contrasts Bertrand to Edmond Charlot, Albert Camus and Gabriel Audisio who marked the 1930s with their writings addressing the Mediterranean in more inclusive and positive tones.

The Mediterranean of the post-Saint Simoniens: Camus and Audisio

Frendo qualifies Camus' seemingly naïve and dated Mediterranean vision rooted in French Algerian post-war experience. He is not biting though, or critical in the way Said is. He stresses the historical and geographical circumstances which shaped him and offers a more approachable take than adopting an atemporal view. By providing him with context, Camus' voice is not reduced, but sharpened. Frendo notes that:

*'What Camus envisioned for "la nouvelle culture méditerranéenne" remains meaningful if his context is re-drawn. He was a Frenchman in "French" Algeria, an anti-Fascist, a Communist. He saw "la pensée de midi" as a third way between European Fascism and Russian collectivism. Both have lost out.'*³⁸²

Frendo goes on to critique his vision for the Mediterranean, once again making an understanding of his vision more accessible:

³⁸¹ Ibid. page 59.

³⁸² FRENDO, Henry (2005): 'Coexistence in Modernity: A Euromed Perspective', *The European Legacy*, Volume 10, No. 3, page 163.

*'A central flaw in his Euromed vision, influenced as it was by "algerianité," was that it largely excluded the Arabs [...] Camus tried to group together the Maltese, Spanish, Italian and French settler populations, hoping for an eventual miscegenation, the hybrid becoming a standard.'*³⁸³

According to Frenedo, Camus' neo-Homeric fascination by the common shores of a Middle Sea—Paul Achard spoke of *L'Homme de la Mer*—inspired the name of the journal *Rivages*. Camus' unifying Mediterranean, Eurocentric and anti-Nordic though it was, was based on man and human values and not on Christianity or the papal Rome of the Holy Roman Empire, creating an accord between the peoples and the countries of its shore-lines. Camus' Mediterranean could be a *terrain de rencontre* where the most diverse spirits, starting from the great writers known and unknown, by means of numerous translations of texts, would rediscover their youth. This idealised vision was more poetic than historical because even the similarity of lifestyles—Camus mentions the Spanish siesta for example—hardly reconciled the European Mediterranean to the Orient. However, Frenedo argues that any attempt at motivating an ongoing cultural *rapprochement* today and within a regional policy framework could do worse than dismiss Camus' words:

*'L'Afrique du Nord est un des seuls pays où l'Orient et l'Occident cohabitent . . . le génie méditerranéen jaillit peut-être de cette rencontre unique dans l'histoire et la géographie née entre l'Orient et l'Occident . . . A des hommes méditerranéens, il faut une politique méditerranéenne . . . Une nouvelle culture méditerranéenne conciliable avec notre idéal social est-elle réalisable? Oui. Mais c'est à vous d'aider à cette réalisation.'*³⁸⁴

Camus believes that in this endeavour, some core values would still have to be respected: the quality of form and of thought, an ordered and harmonious miscellany *'sans laquelle rien de vivant ne se trouve être communicable.'*³⁸⁵

In this vision, not only Camus but the post-*Saint Simoniens* in general including Robert Randau, Sénac and Audisio who express their bond to Algeria clash with the likes of Louis Bertrand. Camus' vision distinguishes itself for the importance it pays to the luminosity of the project he has for the Mediterranean, by referring to the sun as a beacon of inspiration and the source of energy bringing together the West and East in the Mediterranean. Claude Liauzu notes that Camus attempts to re-align Europe's axis (*'rééquilibrer l'Europe'*) towards the Mediterranean following its extreme focus on the Atlantic and the North. An important element in this strategy is the sun, and the *'nouvelle culture méditerranéenne'* he envisages does not subscribe to the Latin cult which he sees exploited by the right wing in Algeria and European Fascism. As noted, Camus believes that:

'L'intérêt de l'Afrique du Nord tient à ce qu'elle est un des seuls pays où l'Orient et l'Occident cohabitent. Et à ce confluent il n'y a pas de différence entre la façon dont vit un Espagnol ou un

³⁸³ Ibid. page 165.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. page 173.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. page 174.

*Italien des quais d'Alger, et les Arabes qui les entourent. Ce qu'il y a de plus essentiel dans le génie méditerranéen jaillit peut-être de cette rencontre unique dans l'histoire et la géographie née entre l'Orient et l'Occident.'*³⁸⁶

A strong image which helped bring together this vision of mixing and blending of identities is the Mediterranean melting pot which is often attributed to Gabriel Audisio. In describing the '*creuset méditerranéen*' Audisio celebrates the mixing of ethnic groups and relates this notion to anthropological and historical tradition which highlighted the unity of the Sea before its divisions, invoking the links maintained and even created during periods of cultural and religious strife such as the Crusades. Like Camus, Audisio resists the notion of Latinity used by the colonialist and anti-semitic camp in Algeria and Mussolini intent on re-establishing the Italianate *mare nostrum*. Audisio supports a multi-cultural cosmopolitanism based on the unity of the Mediterranean sprouting from the common elements of the space. Audisio comments on the:

*'peuple hétérogène, fait de Languedociens et de Provençaux, de Catalans et de Corses, d'Andalous et de Napolitains, de Mahonais et de Maltais, d'Arabes et de Berbères (ils) constitue un mélange en train de se fixer, qui sera l'Algérie, une synthèse des races méditerranéennes cimentée par la culture française.'*³⁸⁷

Audisio believed that this creolised Algeria represented a true cultural opening and presented Europe with a chance to recognise this potential for better living together by gaining awareness or the development of a: '*conscience d'une particularité ethnique et mentale (...) n'hésite pas à trouver en soi quelque chose d'arabe, et je connais des Algériens qui n'ont pas peur de l'avouer, mais le Berbère habille mieux, à, pour lui, le préjugé favorable.*'³⁸⁸

Audisio, in *Le Sel de la mer*, expresses himself very eloquently regarding the bastardisation ('*bâtardise*') which he considers has an advantage over any pretence of homogeneity or legitimacy ('*légitime*'). Audisio presents a captivating picture of children growing up in the shadows of their ancestors and as a result of the multiplicity of parents who engendered them, far away from any false sterilised and sterile notion of purity.

With regard to Algeria, Liauzu notes how Audisio's vision is limited to the Algerian coast and pre-dated the great resistance by the colonialists towards entertaining any idea of change which threatened their dominance. On the other hand, Camus did not show an interest in learning more about the Arabs of Algeria. Therefore, Liauzu contrasts him to Audisio who did follow some studies. Camus' indifference extends to Islam and its culture since for Camus the

³⁸⁶ LIAUZU, Claude (2000): *Gabriel Audisio, Albert Camus et Jean Sénac: Entre Algérie française et Algérie musulmane, Confluences Méditerranée*, No. 33, Printemps <http://www.confluences-mediterranee.com/IMG/pdf/04-0096-0033-017.pdf> (accessed 17 July 2011), page 4.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. page 10.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

Mediterranean meant Greece. Liauzu notes that: *'C'est que Camus était profondément pied-noir, que l'Arabe était refoulé aux limites de son monde.'*³⁸⁹

Liauzu further contrasts Camus to Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in terms of the position of each on the Algerian question and to Sénac, who ended relations with Camus and even stayed in Algeria.³⁹⁰

Amadou Falilou Ndiaye focuses on Camus in the context of end of empire. He notes how Camus' critical and fictional views are produced and informed by the culture of end of empire. Soon after receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, Camus had declared his close relationship with French Algeria: *'Je suis simplement reconnaissant au comité Nobel d'avoir voulu distinguer un écrivain français d'Algérie. Je n'ai jamais rien écrit qui ne se rattache, de près ou de loin, à la terre où je suis né. C'est à elle, et à son malheur, que vont toutes mes pensées.'*³⁹¹

Ndiaye traces Camus' lineage and inheritance of his literary formation particularly with reference to Bertrand. As noted Bertrand was a believer in a Latin Mediterranean, which Camus was a critic of. However, Ndiaye notes certain continuity between the two writers' discourses, the former justifying colonialism on the basis of the Latin past presence in North Africa and the superiority of the Europeans, the latter in a non-confrontational but far from egalitarian mode. By noting Camus' views as follows: *'Voici ... un peuple sans passé, sans tradition et cependant non sans poésie (...). Le contraire d'un peuple civilisé, c'est un peuple créateur'*, Ndiaye notes that the issues of peoples, race and civilisation remain unresolved in Camus' paradigm.

Ndiaye also notes that in *Noces*, the Francophone mythologies of the Mediterranean and Algeria in particular which were initiated by the likes of Bertrand and Robert Randau are given new life. He notes this influence was present also in other writers like J. Déjeux and Gabriel Audisio. He stresses the fact that interpreting Camus's reflections and writings needs to be done in light of previous colonialist expression and literature:

*'Quand donc nous interprétons l'œuvre d'Albert Camus, notamment en ses propositions et illustrations sur la Méditerranée, la culture méditerranéenne et l'Algérie française, nous devons garder à l'esprit, en dépit du tact et de la mesure du propos, l'idée que toutes ces notions découlent d'une mythologie de l'empire dont l'objectif a toujours été de conquérir, exploiter et garder, ad vitam aeternam, ces terres et ces ressources dans le giron de la métropole, la France en particulier.'*³⁹²

Ndiaye connects Camus' position against the Latin Mediterranean as expressed at the *Maison de la Culture d'Alger* in 1937 to the rise of Fascism and Camus' position against this

³⁸⁹ Ibid. page 6.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. page 9.

³⁹¹ NDIAYE, Amadou Falilou (2006): 'Albert Camus et l'Empire', *Ethiopiennes* No. 77, 2ème semestre, <http://ethiopiennes.refer.sn/spip.php?article1522> (accessed 1 July 2011).

³⁹² Ibid.

phenomenon. Camus stresses the point that addressing the Mediterranean and serving the cause of Mediterranean regionalism may look outmoded. He also notes that a tradition is a past which belies the present and affirms his interest lay in the present of the living Mediterranean. He challenges the obsession with Latinity and notes that Rome was praised for what in fact started in Athens. Camus claims that the Mediterranean was the negation of Rome and the Latin genus. He notes that Mussolini was a proper continuation of Roman Caesars who sacrificed truth and grandeur to soulless violence. Camus promoted the idea of a Mediterranean based on an alliance between West and Orient.³⁹³ On the other hand, Ndiaye notes that Camus, like his contemporaries, is mired in an imperialist discourse. In his speech, Camus appears to give in to Latinism, although of a reformed type, and points out the basis of the Mediterranean along Greco-Latin lines in terms of language and origin:

*‘Substituant la Grèce à Rome, réhabilitant - le latinisme, tantôt récusé, il déclare : ‘Cette culture, cette vérité méditerranéenne existe et elle se manifeste sur tous les points : 1) unité linguistique - facilité d’apprendre une langue latine [...]; 2) unité d’origine - collectivisme prodigieux du Moyen Age - ordre des chevaliers, ordre des religieux, féodalité ...).’*³⁹⁴

Ndiaye criticises Camus for building a *‘mythe méditerranéen’* on pagan and hedonistic images of the Mediterranean, in relation to the sun, the sea and women. This vision crashes down tragically when confronted by the Algerian War (1954-1960). Camus’ humanism is caught up by reality and shown up for what it is: cut off from Algerian reality. Rather than rooted in it, this vision can connect to a larger reality where attempts at addressing the Mediterranean positively are ironically and tragically negative for the Mediterranean and its people. Ndiaye notes that the wars of independence were also showing up Western humanism for the hypocrisies it suffered from, and contributed to the erosion of the myth of imperial France in terms of values as well as administration and military strength. Ndiaye refers to Camus’ writings in *L’Express* to show his imperialistic outlook which did not acknowledge Algerians and Algeria as forming their own nation. For Camus Algeria was French: Arabs did not have a claim to Algeria; if they did, so would ‘Jews, Turks, Greeks, Italians and *Berbers*’ (my italics; *Chroniques algériennes* 1939-1958). Ndiaye focuses on Camus’ *‘denial of the legitimacy’* of the Algerian claim and defines Camus’ position as one in defence of *‘l’exception algérienne’*. Ndiaye provides a very strong and clear conclusion which tallies with Said’s in *Culture & Imperialism*:

‘Telles sont les sources, les mamelles nourricières de la mythologie de l’Empire dont l’Algérie française’, la ‘patrie méditerranéenne’ sont des avatars les plus manifestes. Cette trame de l’imaginaire, de Louis Bertrand à Albert Camus, est certes différemment illustrée d’une génération à une autre, mais elle reste d’une présence et d’une puissance certaine dans la littérature française d’Alger. Fascinée soit par l’exotisme enchanteur de ce roman algérien, soit par l’hédonisme de ces héros camusiens de l’absurde - Meursault, Sisyphus, Rieux -, la critique littéraire est souvent restée enfermée dans l’effet d’illusion de cet imaginaire [...] Or, il

³⁹³ Fabre; Izzo, page 62; Foxlee, page 82.

³⁹⁴ Ndiaye.

*reste indéniable que le référentiel idéologique de cette fiction est immergé dans le projet de la France impériale. Le projet de conquête de possession et de domination de la terre, de toutes les terres, qui est au centre du conflit colonial et impérial et qui revêtira ces formes tragiques avec la guerre d'Algérie.'*³⁹⁵

Aquilina qualifies Camus' view of the Mediterranean man and notes that Camus mixes the Mediterranean people with the '*pièds-noirs*'. The common link of these Mediterranean people is the fact that they are Latin or in the process of becoming Latinised. Algiers as a cultural capital of the Mediterranean is Latin in so far as it serves the French/Latin populations. Thus, the Mediterranean envisaged is an exclusive and undemocratic Mediterranean which is selective in its diversity.³⁹⁶

As also noted earlier, Audisio has a positive outlook towards the Mediterranean. Audisio employs a good image of various currents uniting the internal sea, specifically with reference to the western and the eastern basin of the Mediterranean which make up the sea together. He notes that '*Le rôle de la mer fut toujours non pas de séparer mais de joindre*' (*Le Sel de la Mer*). Audisio notes that while others interpreted the differences which lie within the Mediterranean as weaknesses and reasons to subdue the other, he believes they provided the strength of the Mediterranean. Audisio's view is very opposed view to Bertrand's which is influenced by and follows the main work by Gobineau: *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*.

In a broad way, the positions of Camus and Audisio are critical of the dominance by Latinity and Rome over the Mediterranean identity. In certain ways, they pre-date the arguments by Cassano and Zolo with regard to the Atlanticist domination of the Mediterranean. However Audisio goes further than Camus. He notes that '*Rome est peut-être ce que la Méditerranée a produit de moins méditerranéen*' and draws a contrast between '*la Rome provisoire*' and '*l'éternelle Méditerranée*.' Audisio claims that Mediterranean civilisation developed alongside, and not thanks to, Roman influence. Audisio criticises the link made between humanism and Latinity. He asserts his belief in a '*Mediterranean race*' which is impure and cuts across national boundaries. He notes that Rome gave its laws to the world, but not its blood. Audisio establishes a Utopia of the Mediterranean, recalling Paul Ricoeur who contrasts the concept of utopia with that of an ideology: '*Si l'idéologie preserve et conserve la réalité, l'utopie la met essentiellement en question. L'utopie, en ce sens, est l'expression de toutes le potentialités d'un groupe qui se trouvent refoulées par l'ordre existant.*'³⁹⁷ Audisio believes in '*une internationale des peuples de la mer*'. With regard to utopian thinking, he writes: '*l'utopie du jour, c'est l'oxygène de l'avenir. Je crois à l'avenir de la Méditerranée, parce que je crois à sa jeunesse, parce que je crois à son génie qui est une valeur éternelle, éternellement créatrice.*'³⁹⁸ As commented earlier by Barrada, the element of creativity is important.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Aquilina, page 102.

³⁹⁷ Fabre; Izzo, page 67.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

Said draws close links between geography and its related culture in terms of territories that are thought about, gained knowledge about and colonised.³⁹⁹ Said notes that acknowledging this tight link leads to important reflections on the civilising mission. He notes how domination through knowledge and control supported theories of fulfilling a duty towards those considered as lesser people. Doing this he engages in a complex and insightful critique of Camus who, as noted, is a reference point for humanistic thought in and for the Mediterranean up till this day. Said calls on readers to remember that Camus is a Western writer and that when he wrote he did so *'with an exclusively Western audience in mind, even when [he] wrote of characters, places, or situations that referred to, made use of, overseas territories held by Europeans.'*⁴⁰⁰

In his analysis on cultural influence and the way the West dominated and irrevocably changed the Orient, Said reflects on the figure of Camus as an important and complex element which, if analysed closely and critically, says much more than is usually expected about the colonial condition. Said reflects on the French imperial framework which determined, and as the research argues, still influences, French and European approaches to the Mediterranean. Said refers to Delavigne and Charles André Julien, compilers of *Les Constructeurs de la France d'outre-mer*, to note that although France's empire was as interested in profit and territories as Britain, it was energised by *'prestige'*.⁴⁰¹

Said notes how Algeria, following 1830, and in spite of being inconsistent with French government policy, became progressively French. He notes how *'the land was taken from the natives and their buildings were occupied'* and how the Algerians were displaced in general.⁴⁰² He notes that while France reproduced itself in Algeria, Algerians were relegated to marginality and poverty. He also notes how Camus, born in Mondovi, was a product of this encroachment and displacement.⁴⁰³

Said notes how Camus, like Orwell, underwent a post-war transformation *'with less than happy results'*. He notes how *'Camus's narratives of resistance and existential confrontation, which had once seemed to be about withstanding or opposing both mortality and Nazism, can now be read as part of the debate about culture and imperialism.'*⁴⁰⁴ Said is clearly critical of Camus and more so of the somewhat naïve interpretation of his figure with regard to colonialism which does not take into account his Western self and his Western narrative which discounts *'native'* (i.e. Arab, as well as Amazigh) society. Although Said does not state so, he seems to suggest that Camus made the French feel better about themselves in relation to Algeria, who found inspiration in and supported his humanistic/universalistic views. Said argues that by discounting the Algerian reality of the natives, Camus participates – knowingly or unknowingly, wilfully or unawares – in *'France's methodically constructed political geography of Algeria.'* Said

³⁹⁹ Said (1994), page 93.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. page 76.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. page 204.

⁴⁰² This reality is powerfully captured by the opening sequence of *Hors la Loi* (2010) by Rachid Bouchareb, which acts as the premise of a family's violent confrontation with the French mainland.

⁴⁰³ Said (1994), page 206.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. page 208.

does not claim that Camus is to blame for not writing about the native Algerians' reality, and does not mean the criticism 'vindictively'. However, building on Conor Cruise O'Brien's 'agile demystification' of Camus in the *Modern Masters* study of him, Said goes further than O'Brien to argue that Camus was not merely representative of 'Western consciousness and conscience in relation to the non-Western world', 'but rather of Western dominance in the non-Western world'.⁴⁰⁵

Said also refers to Conrad's essay 'Geography and Some Explorers' wherein Conrad reinforces a perspective of marginalising the colonial exercise of Europe to 'the frontier of Europe', in order to criticise this perspective and argue colonialism back into the centre of Europe. As argued earlier, Europe's colonial past, its relation to colonised territories, and the phenomenon of migration today are not marginal to Europe, but at its heart. Said says that '[t]he Western colonialism that O'Brien and Conrad are at such pains to describe is first a penetration beyond the European frontier and into the heart of another geographical entity, and second it is specific not to an ahistorical Western consciousness in relation to the non-Western world.'⁴⁰⁶ Said criticises Camus' texts for being silent, and for silencing the Algerians' side of the story, and by making believe that, because the narratives centred themselves on stories of seeming universality, existential being and individual moral struggles, this story did not matter to his philosophical approach, these stories said it all and were human and universal at the same time. Said argues that just because they were left out of the limelight, or totally, in Camus' stories, the Algerians' plights was still very real, and in this context, unjustly left out, playing a universalistic background to a French-centred narrative. Said aims to claim the foreground back for the colonised and the dominated, and end the silence. By doing this, Said does cut down Camus' figure to that of a particular man in a particular time, or 'a moral man in an immoral situation'. Said refutes the claim that Camus' novels should be read as 'parables of the human condition' and instead he insists that 'one finds in Camus' novels what they once were thought to have been cleared of – detail about that very distinctly French imperial conquest begun in 1830, continuing during Camus's life, and projecting into the composition of the texts.' Therefore, Said argues that one can 'see Camus' fiction as an element in France's methodically constructed political geography of Algeria.'⁴⁰⁷

In spite of Camus being championed as a writer and a thinker who defended freedom and revolt, Said situates Camus 'contrapuntually' in his actual historical context, both culturally and politically. By doing this, Said situates his discourse within the French imperial and anti-Algerian nationalism context, and very distant from Pierre Bordieu's 'Sociologie de l'Algérie' (1958) which 'refutes Camus's jejune formulae and speaks forthrightly of colonial war as the result of two societies in conflict.'⁴⁰⁸ Said argues that:

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. page 209.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. page 197.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. page 213.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. page 217.

'we must consider Camus's works as a metropolitan transfiguration of the colonial dilemma: they represent the colon writing for a French audience whose personal history is tied irrevocably to this southern department of France; a history taking place anywhere else is unintelligible.'

Said criticises the basis which Camus' *'social and literary reputation still depends on – his plain style, his unadorned reporting of social situations'* and notes that his *'limitations seem unacceptably paralyzing'*.⁴⁰⁹ In the context of European artists, not only writers, reflecting new ways of grappling with other cultures slipping the grasp of their empires, Said notes that modernism, particularly through irony, set in. Said also notes that Europe engaged in *'a desperate attempt at a new inclusiveness'*: this observation is very telling with regard to the ways in which colonial powers, on the wane, began engaging with their colonies in new ways even on the level of cultural outreach and cultural influence, particularly through cultural institutes and actions.⁴¹⁰

This brings us back to the Mediterranean today. Cassano calls for a double-action to be engaged in. This includes a cutting-off, a division (*'scissione'*) together with an act of mediation or bridging (*'mediazione'*). The schism is needed to separate the values of the South from falsity, false neutrality and universality which lead to a dominating representation by the North of the South. On the other hand an act of mediation between the different and sometimes conflicting voices of the South is needed to bring out their value and diversity. This observation finds the support of the research as separation is needed from the West/Europe in terms of dominance and subjugation, while mediation is needed between local actors to try to come to terms with internal strife, with an aim of developing further positive relations with external actors such as Europe. However, in what is a less radical stance than Cassano's, the research will call for a *'third'* action i.e. a fair and just collaborative action between the North and the South which is respectful and empowering for all. It is important to stress the position of the research, less drastic and more conciliatory, than Cassano's anti-Atlanticist position.⁴¹¹ Nevertheless, with reference to Cassano, there is a strong element of balance that is conveyed and that is important for the research. Cassano echoes Camus in *L'homme révolté* and this text's aim for balance: Camus aims for balance, though not necessarily harmony, in the context of revolt and struggle. Cavicchia Scalomonti comments on the interesting point of finding sense in oneself by *'being'* for others.⁴¹² This sense of mission and communitarianism is linked with Camus' idea of *'revolt'* as well as the Sisyphus myth in terms of the arduousness of the task that sees brave people engage in challenging circumstances.⁴¹³

Cassano recalls directly Camus by noting that *'misura'* (measured action, which Camus refers to in *L'homme révolté*) can only take place after a big shake. Cassano attributes this point of view to Pier Paolo Pasolini: a big shake is needed to find again, or anew, a sense of balance or re-

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. page 224.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. page 228.

⁴¹¹ CASSANO, Franco (2010): *Il pensiero meridiano*, Editori Laterza, Bari, page vii.

⁴¹² BREVETTO, Gianfranco ed. (2003): *Albert Camus: Mediterraneo e conoscenza*, Ipermedium, Napoli, page 73.

⁴¹³ Ibid. page 76.

equilibrium (*re-‘equilibrio’*).⁴¹⁴ This big shake-up described is important to the research since it will look at possible innovative ways of managing cultural and arts relations in the Mediterranean through a shake and through an openness to re-balance things. As argued by Cassano, the South is not a *‘not-yet’* (*‘non-ancora’*) waiting to be *‘made’* by the North in some future. It is not a vacuum waiting to be filled, or a degraded mass waiting to be worked upon. Importantly, the first step towards achieving autonomy is realising that the future is not about, or may not be about – if one chooses – chasing eternally and inconclusively and thus constructing an eternal failure.

Cassano refers to Walter Mignolo on *‘border thinking’* and de-centralising and making peripheral what was central to itself, as well as Chakrabaty on the need to redress this action and put the South back in the heart of its own schema. The “Southern thought” attempts to do this and think in/from/with the South ‘at heart’. Cassano speaks clearly and convincingly of the need to re-evaluate the South not only theoretically but most of all emotionally. One needs to rediscover and rebuild the emotional link to the South. Cassano places great emphasis on location and on re-establishing a healthy relationship with the places and the public good which belong here. In relation to the research what should be emphasised are the cultural element, the resources and the cultural expressions which belong there. A re-evaluation is called for since the public goods, the *‘pietas’*, are vehicles of identity, solidarity and development.⁴¹⁵ The *‘marginality’/‘marginalization’* needs to be overcome by a sense of pride which fights the passivity which dominance/subjugation may induce. Cynicism is another pitfall which needs care and energy to overcome, or pull oneself out of. Tellingly, cynicism is another element prefigured by Camus in *L’homme révolté*.

Cassano refers to Said’s *Orientalism* and notes that the problem of the South goes beyond being *‘orientalised’*: the South is still depicted and perceived as an *‘unaccomplished’/unfulfilled* North (*‘forme incompiuta di nord’*). Cassano may be splitting hairs when making this critique and not acknowledging that Said does note that colonial discourse differentiates the Other, and puts the Other in a *‘worse’* perspective. Said’s thesis also acknowledges the *‘worse’* point of view in comparison to *‘us’* which *‘they’* try to emulate, while being fully aware that this is both impossible and undesirable. This is where the civilising mission comes in, and where it can be best challenged in terms of European influence on the Mediterranean.⁴¹⁶

While Cassano warns against settling on the periphery and becoming dependent on those at the centre, he notes that re-discovering a *‘multiplicity of times’* and the value of slowness (*‘lentezza’*) is different from wallowing in nostalgia. It is about asserting one’s own rhythm. This item is related to a rich quality of life and learning to listen to oneself rather than slavishly copy or try to emulate others.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ Cassano (2010): page viii.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. page x.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. page xiii.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. page xvi.

Cassano engages in a detailed explanation of the sea and how it differs from the land, but also how the interaction of both defines each, and gives a human dimension, and a measured and balanced form to both. Once again, the elements of balance and the interaction between two elements which gives rise to a third, is important. Cassano refers to the way Greece was perceived by various thinkers and writers such as J. Toynbee, Deleuze and Guattari and Hegel as achieving a dynamic combination of different and contrasting elements important to life. With Hegel, Cassano argues, one finds the appreciation of measured controls and a contrast to the unbridled expanse of the ocean, which dwarfs man.⁴¹⁸ Cassano clearly connects the exaggeration of the ocean with the Atlanticist domineering influence on the Mediterranean. He does this also through reference to a second German philosopher, Heidegger, and the way Heidegger connects a third, Nietzsche, and the latter's view of the expansive ocean as enormous and overwhelming to man, and to Nietzsche's further reflections on the desert. Cassano does this to connect two seemingly opposite, yet related forms and forces: the ocean and the desert i.e. the huge water space and the huge land space, where man cannot live comfortably, in contrast to what Hegel proposes as an antidote to the ocean-desert, which is the land, and opposes them to the more "human" Mediterranean. Furthermore, by doing this, Cassano is able to present a body of German philosophy to which he can oppose a southern, more manageable, Mediterranean perspective through references to Camus and Pasolini.⁴¹⁹ In so doing, Cassano creates, or rather develops, connections between elements which can be described as "extreme", such as the oceanic dimension and the overdrive in favour of technology which has marked humanity and human relations. An overarching principle in Cassano's perspective is that of achieving balance as a result of searching for ways to challenge the status quo, and not through caution.

From this perspective, the limits, borders and boundaries of the Mediterranean are interpreted as means to learn to have respect for others and live with others on the basis of sharing, seeking compromise and finding mutual understanding. One important means of achieving this dynamic is through mobility, which features prominently in the research and the way forward it proposes later. Mediterranean cultural actors are to develop themselves and their commitments to each other by being physically yet also intellectually mobile.⁴²⁰ The issue of European cultural actors in the Mediterranean is doubly ironic, and hence cruel, since it enforces North to South mobility, yet controls South to North mobility, and arguably does nothing to help South to South movement.

Cassano's vision for the Mediterranean is closely related to Camus', to which it owes a great debt. Camus is presented as a great believer in the human being, and as one who does not place any trust in the great narratives of history or religion. Camus believes man is on his own, and therefore has to be responsible without depending on other exterior forces. Camus, in his opposition to Hegel, is also against the belief in disproportion (*'dismisura'*). Closely linked to this

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. page 23.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. page 43.

⁴²⁰ Ibid. page 60.

concept is Camus' point on revolt in *L'homme révolté* and Camus' polemic against history as well as religion and the complicity between the two.⁴²¹

Cassano notes that Camus' perspective teaches a lot about how to approach life, particularly in a space as politically charged and historically and culturally dense such as the Mediterranean. Cassano argues that it is good to know one's limits, in a humble, not a despairing way. This reflection leads to Cassano developing particular schema which allow him to distinguish between positive and not so positive forces which play a role in shaping relations in the Mediterranean. On the one hand, one finds the Mediterranean, the South, nature, the sea, "human" dimensions, solidarity, proportionality in terms of measured, human nature, life and the heritage of Ancient Greece. With reference to Greece, Cassano notes the "Greek" dimension of the humanistic Mediterranean thought in contrast to Hebrew and later (chronologically) Germanic thought. On the other hand, one finds the North, the West, the European land-mass, Germanic philosophy, Hebrew roots (in opposition to Greek/Christian heritage), the spirit, history, technology, God and an overwhelming sense of disproportionality. Cassano makes an important point out of proportionality: he argues that it is not the result of balance, or caution, but of passion and contradiction, conflict and '*in spite of*' situations.⁴²² A similar perspective is adopted by Gianfranco Brevetto, who recalls Cassano in *Il pensiero meridiano* and reiterates putting humankind before nationhood and believes in living by a sense of proportion.

The value of poverty, equated with simplicity, appreciating life and what is valuable in it, is also stressed. Apart from being closely linked with Camus, this vision reflects values which are very related to the New Testament and Christian philosophy that Cassano does draw parallels with in terms of Greek/humanistic approaches, as opposed to Judaistic and Old Testament traditions. The value of tradition does not lie in facile nostalgia and the political exploitation of the past, but rather in a return to and a rediscovery of oneself with an aim to impact, in a positive way, the future. Cassano emphasises the point of re-asserting oneself through a rediscovery of one's own dignity. He notes that for this to happen, revolt as envisioned by Camus is needed. Cassano holds Camus in high esteem and considers him to be a person of action as well as thought, one who translates his thoughts into acts. Once again, the reference to Christianity is clear, as is the power of example which Camus admired in Christianity.⁴²³

Cassano explores the concept of honour as a key element of freedom, which is however put at risk if compromised or weighed down by power and corruption. The result is opportunism that guides actions instead of a clear code of honour. Such a reflection does lead to further considerations with regard to the opportunism lying behind and motivating the actions of both Europe and local actors in the cultural field.⁴²⁴

⁴²¹ Ibid. page 83.

⁴²² Ibid. page 94.

⁴²³ Ibid. page 100.

⁴²⁴ Ibid. page 102.

Hélène Rufat traces the rise of a 'new Mediterranean culture' in the 'between the wars' period that is still inspirational to contemporary writers, with Camus, Valéry, Audisio and Charlot presenting works and collaborating on projects that spoke of the Mediterranean. The trend is one of re-discovery and re-acknowledgement of the '*Southern culture*' and a way of life that is closer to nature and more humane, against the '*Northern culture*' which is perceived as more aggressive, dominating and bellicose. That view in part lay with the threatening posture of Germany during the first half of the twentieth century. However, one may not elide over the irony linked to this position: countries like Portugal, Spain and Italy, all three developing into dictatorships, as well as France, were running their colonial systems in the Mediterranean and Africa, while Great Britain had been trying to gain more power in the Balkans and Turkey as part of the Great Game at the time of the demise of the Ottoman Empire it was itself contributing to. In this light, claims of the South being politically and socially more sound than the North ring hollow.⁴²⁵

The Euro-Med Paradigm

Sébastien Abis notes that Europe seems to be detaching itself from the Mediterranean in terms of political and economic influence:

*'Vue du Sud de la Méditerranée, elle ressemble à cet étranger proche, avec qui les relations socioculturelles et économiques sont ancrées par l'histoire et la géographie, mais avec qui l'avenir ne doit plus être exclusif.'*⁴²⁶

Abis asks why we persist with the idea of the Euro-Med. He notes that while the Mediterranean is not at the centre of globalisation it is still important in terms of trade and politics. However it is also true that the Mediterranean actors seem to perennially react to actions initiated from outside the space but which have direct consequences on the people of the Mediterranean.⁴²⁷ Traditionally, references to the West have included the acknowledgement of the sway Europe and the US have held over Mediterranean affairs. While they still do, as is witnessed by regime change in North Africa achieved with the support of the EU and the critical role the US has in relation to trade routes and military plans, other areas of the world have developed their means of diplomatic persuasion through commercial and military means, as well as cultural ones. For instance, the propagation of Confucius cultural centres in Arab states since 2004 is just one way of saying that China is fast becoming the new global power and very influential in African countries including the Mediterranean and Arab countries around it. Lionel Vairon mentions Chinese cultural centres as tools for communication to combat misunderstandings and the lack of communication. They have also boosted a growing interest in Mandarin in the Mediterranean. If observers are to be believed when they note that the North and South

⁴²⁵ Brevetto, page 92.

⁴²⁶ CONFLUENCES MÉDITERRANÉE (2010): *La Méditerranée sans l'Europe*, 74, L'Harmattan, Paris, page 10.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. page 12.

Mediterranean are each going their way, the opportunities arising for China to become more influential are growing.⁴²⁸

Echoing Cassano, Abis notes that EU bilateral relations with single Mediterranean states hamper efforts to build a Euro-Med space which is coherent. Abis argues that the EU supports a differentiating policy which encourages Southern states to go it alone rather than collaborate. Abis makes this point clearly and arguably more effectively than Cassano since he does not get bogged down by the confrontational agenda. To succeed, both sides need to put their best foot forward, and while Arab states do have their faults and hold on to their grievances against one another, the EU exploits and increases these divisions. Abis notes that the Union for the Mediterranean (UpM) will do nothing to stop this: it has too wide a remit to be effective and give results. At the same time, by excluding the Balkans, the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf in much of its work, it is also incomplete. Change will come, and is coming, from other sources, and while political change is slow in the South Mediterranean, it is not true to say there is no change. As things stood and still stand, the Euro-Med is more of an idea than a vision. Geographical proximity and historical links are not enough to boost this idea. Abis makes a good point of relativising, rather than diminishing, the importance of the Euro-Med area. He notes that nothing is exclusive to the Euro-Med and this area has to see itself as part of the larger global picture. This realisation is important as it would make the Mediterranean increase, not diminish, in importance, since it would understand more its weight on the global scene and understand its relations within itself and with others outside it better.⁴²⁹

Stillo refers to Cassano to note that because of what it has been through, the Mediterranean can regain its importance on a global level. This is an example of the link between the Mediterranean and globalisation which give this space a global dimension. Colonialism increased the contamination and hybridisation of the Mediterranean, not a negative repercussion in itself.⁴³⁰ However, cultural contamination has been used to develop the 'imaginary folklore' which has contributed to sweetening the Mediterranean realities which include domination, submission, poverty and suffering. Other negative influences have persisted over time over the space referred to as the '*European pool*' due its colonised past and compromised present. This perspective still reigned up till the eve of the Arabic Spring when hopes ran high for serious and sustainable political change. The '*deeply unequal*' basis of the Barcelona Process which does not reflect the *pluriverso* as envisaged by Cassano and Zolo is, or was, also part of this heritage.⁴³¹

Where does cultural expression feature in all this? Mohammed Barrada confesses to mixed and contrasting feelings towards Europe, ranging from his refusal to the politics of domination to observing a correspondence and reciprocal influence in terms of art and culture.⁴³² Stillo points out that art and culture allow for a bridge between the North and the South, also with

⁴²⁸ Ibid. page 51.

⁴²⁹ Ibid. page 18.

⁴³⁰ Fabre; Izzo, page 11.

⁴³¹ Stillo, page 35.

⁴³² Ibid.

reference to regional initiatives like the Biennale of Young Artists of Europe and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it is worth asking, as will be asked later, how much of art and culture is also part of the postcolonial framework and the relations which Europe has a dominant role in shaping?

Jamila Mascat notes the lack of consistency between EU policies for supporting the Mediterranean and the UpM and the Fortress Europe mentality against migration. She describes the latter as an example of the '*neocolonial vocation*' of Europe. While arguably overdone, this is an example of a general critical position towards the EU. Mascat refers to E. Balibar who turns the image of the Mediterranean as a fault line to one of a meeting point and a negotiating space. Mascat suggests the present needs to be acted upon in order to differentiate it from the past and direct it into a positive future. The discourse of a '*Mediterranean alternative*' should be saved from slipping into another kind of Orientalism. To do this, Mascat calls for the rehabilitation of the Mediterranean as a '*pluri-cultural*' space which is truly postcolonial due to political and cultural changes. She also calls for an increased awareness of neo-colonial practices shaping Mediterranean relations in order to move forward. Mascat refers to practical obstacles to this happening: there are those of the immaterial kind, such as the persistence of stigmas related to open discussions about colonial and neo-colonial strictures and a rejection towards engaging with such issues; and material ones such as tools of political and economic domination and interference. Both kinds need addressing. In explaining why many Arab lands did not follow through with Western progressive measures, Frendo highlights the growing disillusionment felt towards the West and its more overt colonial project, the fear of being overrun in terms of culture and religion and the will to resist.⁴³³

A number of commentators have observed the weakness of the third pillar of the EMP, namely that dealing with culture and education. Fifi Benaboud notes that civil society found that the third pillar had not only attracted the least attention from politicians and various authorities responsible for its implementation, but was the most difficult to implement. Benaboud shows the importance of the "human" aspects to the EMP by highlighting the bond between security and intercultural dialogue and economic development and free movement on the basis of awareness and communication among shores. She notes that fear and suspicion hamper all development, and intercultural dialogue may be a tool with which to tackle such problems.⁴³⁴

Salah Stétié, writer and poet, Honorary Ambassador of Lebanon and Former Secretary General of the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, makes an interesting point about how the traditions, values and cultural markers of whole populations' identities had to survive, head down, through the colonial age, to burst forth and assert themselves with independence and the formation of new nations. In language that is very flowery he notes that:

⁴³³ Frendo (2005), page 8.

⁴³⁴ NORTH-SOUTH CENTRE; COUNCIL OF EUROPE (1996): *Intercultural Dialogue Basis for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, Lisbon, page 5.

*'the state of subjection and neglect that native values were kept in by the West allowed these values to survive, sometimes intact, in the darkness to which they had been consigned, like a preserved Roman fresco emerging in all its original glory once its covering has been removed.'*⁴³⁵

Stétié believes that local cultural expression survived the ravages of colonialism, in certain cases even intact. He notes that while 'everything that had been plunged into the dark night by the direct and often violent actions of colonialism - which sometimes took the more insidious and subtle form of internal colonisation', these expressions were '*dazzlingly projected into the broad daylight of the nation restored by the reaction against this colonialism*' and '*these values were suddenly unfurled in the strong wind like the brand new national flag*'. In spite of the positive perspective of the purported survival of local forms of cultural expression, the research aims to challenge, and at least qualify, this very strong and assertive political view. This research is trying to understand the limits of independence from colonialism and the persistence of colonial influence through postcolonial means. Rather than accept that traditional values survived intact, this research is looking at how they did adapt in order to survive in the cases they managed to do so, and how they are still expressed today.

Stétié explores the tension which exists in the young independent states between holding on to the best qualities of the former coloniser and establishing a new identity thanks to a clean break with this dominated past:

*'torn as they are between the desire for a genuine separate cultural identity and the shadow cast upon them by a culture which, though foreign, appears to have achieved so much that it cannot fail to exert a certain power of fascination.'*⁴³⁶

The solution, if there is any, as can be expected, lies with intercultural dialogue: '*This is a tangle which is difficult to unravel and, for there to be any hope of doing so, what is required is trust and understanding, which, as we know, are rare qualities in international relations.*' He notes that trust and understanding are needed to overcome the inequalities of the past and forge a present and a future based on equality. The approach taken is very political, referring to national identities, which may be interpreted in the Lebanese communitarian context.

Mona Makram-Ebeid seems to suggest that the EMP and other Euro-Med political and cultural initiatives have failed to extend their impact because partners have not been equal; Arab partners have historically, and up to recently, always been the lesser ones, mere instruments in Europe's plans to make the Mediterranean more secure for itself.⁴³⁷ Twentieth century initiatives by France aimed at developing its influence as well as its control over the Mediterranean feature a number of times. These include the plan for *La Communauté méditerranéenne de Défense* by Félix Gaillard in 1958 in the midst of Cold War developments

⁴³⁵ Ibid. page 11. The ironic reference to the art of the imperial power of the ancient Mediterranean is worth noting.

⁴³⁶ Ibid. page 12.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. page 82.

which impacted directly on the Arab countries. Following the French retreat from the Mediterranean following the Algerian War and independence (1962), Georges Pompidou and Michel Jobert, foreign affairs minister in the early 1970s, plan the 'rentrée française en Méditerranée' as from the beginning of that decade. Jacques Fauvet also comments on the shift in the EC, with the entry of Ireland and the UK, and the growing influence of the US, towards the north and away from the Mediterranean. Fauvet notes that France was not left with many options to assert itself and extend its influence except south, therefore into the Mediterranean; France encouraged a particular aspect of Mediterranean relations under its influence, namely European-Arab relations. The same trend is developed further under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing who states clearly that France is to redress the 'imbalance' in European orientation towards the north-west. This approach curiously pre-figures Cassano's discourse on North-South contrasts and clashes. However, intentions were not selfless, and France has tried to redress this imbalance since the 1970s. The irony of this approach to the Mediterranean should not be lost. The benefit sought is for France itself rather for the Mediterranean. Therefore, while practical steps have been taken and still are, we are far from witnessing real improvement on a mutual basis.⁴³⁸

During the presidency of François Mitterrand, the 5+5 initiative, also known as the Mediterranean Forum, was established in the late 1980s. Jacques Huntzinger is the initiator of the initiative and responsible for important elements of the Mediterranean mission in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Huntzinger asserts the existence of a 'Mediterranean identity' on the basis of overlapping cultural and social circles, and the development of this identity into a geopolitical presence. Euro-Arab relations are a key concern, related to security and prosperity.

Fabre points out that in this context culture becomes subservient to geopolitical strategy. It is also worth pointing out that as noted earlier, in the late 1980s culture seemed to gain more value in terms of policy but in ways subservient to other means. As pointed out by Urfalino, the subservience of culture to public policy and public diplomacy allowed Government to make a statement in ways in which culture became more instrumentalised and exploited. Under Mitterrand and his Minister for Culture, Jack Lang, one noticed two inter-related things: i. culture needed to justify its support by Government; and ii. Government realised more the social, political and economic dimension of culture.

The early 1990s saw a particular general turn towards French policy that became a wider European policy, namely in terms of the EMP. In the 1990/1991 Gulf War, France was marginalised in the diplomatic work involved in resolving the conflict. France reacted, together with Italy and Spain, to set up the Partnership under the French and Spanish Presidencies of the Council of the European Union in 1995. The EU itself was now keen to balance its late-1980s/early 1990s interest in the East by addressing the Mediterranean more. The EMP was built on three pillars, namely:

- i. peace and stability;
- ii. the consolidation of a free trade zone; and

⁴³⁸ Fabre; Izzo, page 133.

iii. the development of human resources, intercultural dialogue and a strong civil society.

The EMP allowed France to regain political weight in an international dimension through its influence in the Mediterranean. The same trend and growing emphasis on Euro-Arab dialogue take place under President Chirac. In Cairo in April 1996, Chirac's speech includes the following appeals: *'Après avoir détruit un mur à l'Est, l'Europe doit désormais construire un pont au Sud'*; and *'L'espace euro-méditerranéen ne nous est pas donné. Il est à construire.'*⁴³⁹

Xuereb notes the comments on the expected impact of the accession of Cyprus and Malta to the EU in 2004 on the EMP; fears of dilution of the EMP were expressed, and calls were made on all parties to maintain the EMP strong in face of the enlargement of the EU south, as well as east. Xuereb notes that fears were expressed that the integration drive would encourage further North-South collaboration and economic relations at the expense of further South-South developments.⁴⁴⁰

The latest initiative which takes the EMP up to our days is the Union for the Mediterranean (UpM). The Arab Spring only exposed further the fault lines of the UpM. Apart from having its own faults in concept and management, the UpM ended up being challenged by the Arab revolutions which changed Euro-Med relations completely. Arguably, the UpM did contribute to this change in some ways in terms of its contribution to dialogue and networking and political pressure, in the wake of previous work carried out within previous structures.

Fabre notes that the vision and discourse of many French intellectuals and policy-makers addressing the Mediterranean shifted, over time, from one mostly focused on the Greco-Latin heritage to one encompassing *'two shores'* (*'la Méditerranée des deux rives'*). Fabre mentions Louis Gardet, one of the founders of the journal *Études méditerranéennes*: the journal's aims included encouraging a *'coming closer'* (*'rapprochement'*) and a *'knowing one another in reciprocity'* (*'connaissance réciproque'*) between Europeans and Arabs. A key concept, already in 1957, is intercultural dialogue.⁴⁴¹

Gardet notes that the Mediterranean is not all the same and that the differences complement each other and contribute to an environment of mutual understanding and solidarity:

'Je dirais donc volontiers qu'il n'y a pas une mais des cultures méditerranéennes. Mais que cette pluralité même devrait être, pour les hommes de bon vouloir, une occasion d'échange et d'amitié. En dépit de la diversité des langues véhiculaires, une communauté d'expression demeure, née d'influences historiques similaires. Bien plus, les cultures religieuses en présence s'enracinent en un fonds sémitique commun ou apparenté.'

⁴³⁹ Ibid. page 140.

⁴⁴⁰ XUEREb, Peter G. (2003): 'Euro-Med integration and the "ring of friends"', *European Integration: the Mediterranean's European challenge*, Vol. IV, European Documentation and Research Centre, University of Malta, page 4, <http://cide.univ.szczecin.pl/mec4/>, (accessed 24 November 2010).

⁴⁴¹ Fabre; Izzo, page 143.

The environment of exchange exists, but it is up to its people to exploit the circumstances and aim towards meaningful communication and processes of discovery and dialogue, rather than artificial commonality and chimeric union which, arguably, political frameworks to date have been guilty of:

'Il ne s'agit pas d'opérer une unification artificielle, qui ne pourrait apporter, à brève ou longue échéance, qu'animosités et luttes faiseuses de mort. Reconnaître le fait d'une vitale complexité et les interpénétrations nécessaires, c'est cela au contraire qui peut-être facteur de compréhension mutuelle et d'épanouissement.'

Gardet is reacting to Pirenne's thesis by focusing on the existence of two shores and all the historical, cultural and social factors which act to bridge them. He expresses the classic dilemma regarding the Mediterranean as a frontier and whether it is open or closed: *'[...] il serait nécessaire qu'une sorte de coupure culturelle n'existât plus entre Orient et Occident. Les pourtours méditerranéens seront-ils une frontière fermée, ou au contraire un lieu de passage ouvert et un lien?'*⁴⁴²

During the 1970s and 1980s Jacques Berque, who also experienced Algeria as a student of Braudel, expressed his belief in a United States of the Mediterranean headed by France and the Arab states. Other important elements in Berque's vision of the Mediterranean include the myth of Al Andalus; the process of decolonisation allowing the rise of an Arab/African-Asian axis to work together with the Greco-Latin one; solidarity to build an *'original construction'* on a cultural basis; the building of a cultural entity; opposing an obsession with the past (*'passéisme'*): *'[...] il faut que la Méditerranée cesse d'être cette Eurydice toujours perdue des peuples méditerranéens'*; interest and research into roots and authenticity that deal with modernity and thus "come of age" rather than obsess with the past; and a belief that the Mediterranean is both harmony and strife (*éris/éros* in Greek, showing how linked they are).

In the 1990s Paul Balta edited *La Méditerranée réinventée* and expanded on the idea of the Mediterranean with two shores. He identifies the triple heritage of the Mediterranean, namely the Greco-Roman strand influenced by Egypt and the Orient; the Judeo-Christian strand; and the Arab-Muslim strand. Balta is a firm believer in moving forward by being grounded in the present and well aware of the past: *'[...] il n'y a pas de bonne prospective sans rétrospective'*. The key phrase *'l'avenir du passé'* reverberates with importance throughout his work. His contemporary Edgard Pisani, who among other roles was the president of the Institut du Monde Arabe between 1989 and 1995, notes that the Euro-Med association cannot be expected to act like the EU. However, it can do other things, mainly those of developing into an *'inter-region'* emphasising inter-dependence and collaboration on the lines of mutuality and reciprocity; overcoming and mastering its tensions; communicating and aiming to overcome challenges together to reach common goals; and making full use of the cultural element which

⁴⁴² Ibid.

characterises it through its people. In a similar vein, Edgar Morin stresses the need to overcome the frontier image and promote a transnational union of intellectuals.⁴⁴³

On the other hand, Sami Naïr comments on the fact that the Mediterranean was never united or a single entity. He comments on the conflict in the Mediterranean and notes that most of it is interpreted, collected and somewhat explained away from a Western perspective, losing out on the details of issues and real understanding. Western culture dominates, especially in terms of capitalism and the dominant trends of the way of being in terms of lifestyles, interests, concerns and solutions. Naïr notes that the conflict between the North and the South is not civilisational, but cultural. He argues that the conflict lies within a common civilisation, which is the the dominant Western and capitalist one. He also notes that the tension between the South and the capitalist model is greater than that between the North and the capitalist model.⁴⁴⁴

Identities in the South Mediterranean – the Maghreb

Mohamed Salah Hermassi sets himself the difficult task of trying to explore ways of opening Maghreb countries further to modernity and democratic ways while valuing their identities and values. He underlines another tension which exists between allowing the common features of Maghreb countries to unite the region, and accepting the differences rising from the specificities of each country. The tension between the encompassing characteristics of Arab-Muslim identities and the specificities of the different Maghreb states lies at the heart of many of the challenges of developing positive cultural influence and cultural relations across the Mediterranean.⁴⁴⁵

Hermassi notes that the issue of Arab-Muslim identity was strongest during the fight against colonisation. However it weakened and was exploited after independence because of two main reasons. Firstly, the elite powers started using Western political models for their development in ways that clashed with their own traditions and movements towards the assertion of their identities. Secondly, nationalism was stronger than energies mobilised in favour of regionalism. Hermassi argues that while being bad news, the social crises that have struck the Maghreb countries, including economic ones but also in terms of values, have highlighted the fact that they are closely related and that their cultural roots are intertwined. Hermassi emphasises the potential that lies in this situation, suggesting their problems are common, have common roots, and should be faced with common solutions in solidarity one with the other. Hermassi refers to authors who are clearly championing Arab-Muslim identity and feels it is under threat from a wide range of areas, from globalisation to regional identities, Mediterraneanism included. In adopting this position Hermassi displays a clear mentality of feeling under siege, which other commentators, both from the South and the North, have observed. Hermassi describes the difference between the state on the one hand, in terms of the correspondence between the

⁴⁴³ Ibid. page 148.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. page 150.

⁴⁴⁵ HERMASSI, Mohamed Salah (2004): *'Une approche de la problématique d'identité'*, Islamocident/L'Harmattan, Paris, page 9.

territory and its people, and the nation on the other, including history and cultural identity, by noting that authors of an *'extreme nationalistic'* view believe that the Arab nation is divided into separate states and that this is harmful to the development of Arab people. Hermassi is less extreme and believes that the identity of citizenship, linked to the state, can support the development of the Arab identity. Hermassi defines identity according to an interesting set of divisions or components of identity, from stable ones such as religion and language to changing ones such as trends and artistic expression. Nevertheless, Hermassi believes in the worth of the Arab nation and speaks of it as something that will develop and come into being. In contrast, he criticises authors like Mohamed Charfi for focusing on state nationalism in education.⁴⁴⁶

With regard to the period of French colonisation of North Africa, Hermassi comments on the *'divide and rule'* attitude of the colonisers towards the local populations. While it may make for strange reading from a "Mediterraneanist" perspective, Hermassi's comments may be understandable from an Arab perspective: he claims that in light of the French having supported the Berbers against the Arabs, the claims to Berber national identity are summarily dismissed as are claims of having made much of a contribution to the modern Arab nation. He comments on how French support to the Berbers drove a wedge between Islam and the Arabs including Arabised Berbers. Hermassi argues that French colonial efforts to separate Arab unity by attacking language and religion markers especially in Algeria and Morocco and exploiting the Berber factor, while defeated, still have an effect today. He also criticises postcolonial elite politicians, and especially the Francophone elite, for prolonging French colonial thinking.⁴⁴⁷

Hermassi looks at how religion and language were celebrated in defiance of colonial rule, as well as after independence, and strictly linked to the Arab-Muslim identity. He chimes in with Risler on the colonial attempts at uprooting Islam and weakening local culture while encouraging assimilation to the French one.⁴⁴⁸

Hermassi believes Islam is fundamental to the cultural identity in North Africa and was a key weapon against colonialism. He asserts the importance of religion and culture in managing a state, in spite of Western efforts to have Arab states separate politics from religion. Hermassi reflects a very critical and suspicious attitude towards movements in favour of the modernisation of the Arab state along Western lines. He notes that the agenda behind these efforts aims at weakening religious resistance to Western ways. He identifies a conflict between the political and Westernised elite and the general population in terms of culture and general influences including the Arab and Islamic elements. Globalisation does not seem to have brought true inter-dependence since powers are not equal and some still exploit others. The history of colonialism still skews the playing field in favour of past colonising forces.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. page 29.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. page 79.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. page 112.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. page 151.

Hermassi stresses the value of acknowledging ones' identity as a source of pride and worth which leads to assertion rather than submission to foreign models or rejection in terms of opposition against the West. Postcolonial political elites are criticised for doing both these things and failing their people and their future. Arab citizens of the various states do not want to copy Western models but in so doing do not reject modernity. Arabs can be Arab-Muslim and seek modernity, working both elements out in their own way.⁴⁵⁰

Cultural expression and colonialism

Oliver Barlet notes that for the South to move forward independently of the North, the South needs to acknowledge its past and the consequences of colonisation up till the present. Unless this is done, envisioning and working out a future is impossible. The need to acknowledge the past recalls Aprile's *Terroni* and the introductory chapter reflecting views on the need of the South to face reality and recognise the ills it has suffered and reject both ignorance (including history as narrated by the North) and the role of the impotent victim.

Barlet notes that the recent series of fiftieth anniversary celebrations for the independence of many African states were a sham and France conducting them was just a deceiving show. France has kept influencing African states over the past fifty years, not only economically and politically, but also culturally. Today, the cultural domain allows France to keep its 'soft' influence present, as well as maintain a high and international profile. Barlet is not interested in blaming France, and notes that the relationships between the different parties are very complex: the aim is to analyse and understand.⁴⁵¹

Barlet stresses the close link between culture and economy. Culture and artists cannot be truly independent or emancipated as long as the economic system supporting them, or in some cases exploiting them, is caught in a 'context oscillating between hegemony and cooperation'. Artists are caught between trying to assert themselves and develop their own sense of validation, and trying to match up to Western expectations and their markets. He refers to articles by Florent Mazzoleni on music and Sylvie Chalaye on theatre to note that African artists need to see themselves as more than 'African' artists or, in other words, as an Orientalist's object. Ironically, it is by claiming their position in the global art world that they can assert their true identities, and do so beyond neo-colonial strictures. Western markets shape and control the image and presentation of African artists thus still controlling the development of African art and culture.⁴⁵²

With references to theatre, Sylvie Chalaye notes that colonial cultural hegemony has remained strong in African theatre thanks to the exporting and adoption of Western structures of representation. It is very difficult to identify an art form which is independent when its formation belongs to the colonial heritage and is still linked to the colonial cultural hegemony.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. page 166.

⁴⁵¹ AFRICULTURES (2010): *Indépendances africaines: chroniques d'une relation*, L'Harmattan, Paris, page 13.

⁴⁵² Ibid. page 13.

Theatre in Africa is described as wearing a Black dress for a White concept and form of expression. This is also true of other art forms.⁴⁵³

The use of *'shared'* tools, e.g. cultural institutes or means of communication that are official or semi-official, allow for a strong colonial presence. Chalaye refers to a hybridity of a special kind in the means of cultural expression that answer both national and colonial agendas. The image of the *'Trojan horse'* is still fitting in certain cases, although it goes beyond the surface meaning of trickery or a hidden agenda. The West has remained a reference point for South production but there is a growing field of areas for which the North refers to the South. Nevertheless, economic dependence in general in terms of society, but also specifically in cultural production and distribution, limits real independence of means, of thought and of expression.⁴⁵⁴

Achille Mbembe notes that the way forward for decolonised countries to be really independent passes through taking into serious consideration the colonial past. However, he warns that things have to be worked out for the future in a globalised framework and calls for a good balance to be struck between dealing with the past as it happened, and being smart, innovative and adaptable – by acknowledging the processes of the past – for the present and the future. While arguably sounding easy and glib, Mbembe's observation is honest and truthful and full of potential. With regard to Europe, it is worth noting that parts of France make it close in on itself, not allowing France to acknowledge either the past in which it was a perpetrator, or the new situation where it is no longer a colonial force or an empire. Ironically France has not decolonised itself yet, with reference to persistent institutionalised racism. The French renewed relationship with Africa may point towards new avenues which may lead to opening the country up. Echoing critical discourse on governmentality Mbembe identifies the role artists and intellectuals have to play to contribute to the added value of civil society and the state in order to change African societies for the better through their creativity. Mbembe identifies three main foci for development to be achieved: i. enabling mobility; ii. supporting emerging creative people; and iii. tapping potential for change. Africa's main challenges in terms of colonisation seem to be related primarily to a case of self-colonisation: *'[...] aujourd'hui il ne s'agit plus tant de lutter contre un occupant étranger que contre soi-même.'* Lamko notes that development is not measured in GDP, buildings or space conquests. Rather, it's about the dynamics which allow people to solve the problems which they face in the framework of creating general well-being.⁴⁵⁵

Musanji Ngalasso-Mwatha notes that African dependence on Europe includes political, diplomatic, economic, financial, technological, commercial, food-related and health-related domains. However, one can add the cultural too: for instance, school, languages, publishing, artistic production, media and scientific research. Africa needs cultural emancipation to have real societal development. Culture does not hold back economic development. On the contrary, to be truly independent one needs cultural emancipation since cultural dependence has been

⁴⁵³ Ibid. page 18,

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. page 20.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. page 121.

too high. Brain drain is another challenge to be faced. It is not only the case of young skilled people leaving their mother countries, but of intellectuals selling out to politics for personal benefit – or the public perception of this, which is strong since it is based on experience. Regarding cultural productions, in the South targeting foreign audiences may be alluring and seem to be more profitable, while local audiences and the development of the audiences is not. Ngalasso-Mwatha makes a strong negative assessment on the cultural and creative industries when he claims that '*[i]l n'y a pas d'industries culturelles en Afrique.*'⁴⁵⁶

Hervé Youmbi uses the powerful Louvre image to argue that the South should counter aspirations to be validated by the North by creating a structure of self-validation. One should not aspire to exhibit in the Louvre, but to build a Louvre of one's own and exhibit there. The dreams of the Southern artists to find consecration of their work and careers in the North are powerful. However, there has been a change in the tide, with more Southern artists wanting to develop themselves and their communities and artistic structures in the South; but to do this, some artists have to come down from their high aesthetic horses and become operators too.⁴⁵⁷

Ngalasso-Mwatha provides an important reflection on the historical legacy of colonialism as a burden and which is needed in order to acknowledge the heavy yoke of colonisation. Traces of colonial mentalities run deep. Africa is assumed to have only entered history recently, discounting the value of pre-colonisation cultures. Approaches towards cultural division reflect the separation of colonial spoils following the 1885 Berlin agreement. With regard to the particular case of language, a strong observation is put forth in relation to European language differences acting as demarcation lines between the different territories. Ngugi wa Thiong'o is critical of artists who accept this 'linguistic encirclement' with regard to the choice of writers to write in colonial languages, Ngalasso-Mwatha wonders how they are not bothered by who they are, or whether they have changed too much to realise the situation of injustice they face. If thinking and creating one's own identity and expressing oneself are related to thinking in a particular language, colonial languages supplanting the indigenous ones spell an estrangement from oneself.⁴⁵⁸

The roots of this problem lie in the ignorance of the self starting from schooling age due to the system in practice. Problems include the lack of clear national programmes for social development and education systems that are modelled on European systems but function as pale and inefficient copies. This is partly due to the fact that European systems can make use of comparatively better economies as well as a lesser language diversity. Interestingly, European educational establishments are facing new challenges with regard to language and cultural diversity in view of increased and varied migration to which they need to adapt. Economic and education failures are related to the limited attention that is paid to culture in terms of the poor valorisation of identity and languages, the scarce local possibilities to meet local needs and regional South-South collaborations that are slow to develop. Education and schools need

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. page 163.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. page 155.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. page 167.

changing to improve their possibilities to assist society to grow, also in terms of the *modèle bilingue*: while spoken of in terms of languages, the idea can be applied to other areas of culture, because of the sense of balance promoted between local, regional and the European/global levels. It is interesting to explore, also in terms of how two means of expression may give rise to a third element, thus hybrid.⁴⁵⁹

Without one's own culture, one has little of oneself to hold on to. It is important to seek a balance between local and exterior realities. The process of decolonising mentalities aims to strike a balance between being neither insular and too protective nor too self-exposing. The South needs to be less in awe of Europe and decolonised states need to develop decolonised mentalities to engage with the North and have something of their own to contribute. They should also aim to be able to shape or change the rules of the globalised game of influence and relations. The South needs to find its own ways since Western ones do not necessarily work.⁴⁶⁰

Georges Corm, the Lebanese economist and politologue, provides an interesting reflection on the economic dimension of empire. The Mediterranean acts as the birthplace of 'founding myths' and a place of excellence in terms of exchange. However, in relation to identity, Corm asks whether the identity of the people of the Mediterranean belongs to the continents they form part of and to the powers that conquered them, or whether it is the commonality of the Sea, shared among the people, which is the shaping factor of their identities. Corm invokes the Prometheus figure in order to refer to the carrying out of exchanges. He notes that exchanges make the Mediterranean what it is: the diversity of the Mediterranean, up till the nineteenth century, kept exchange alive; however, with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the Great Game and the Cold War, exchange became more controlled and limited. The decline in mutual exchange and enrichment already started in the eighteenth century, when Napoleon's team in Egypt already documents the growing gap between North and South. Corm notes the further change in the fortunes of the Mediterranean by highlighting the spectacular rebirth of Mediterranean ports in the nineteenth century; the *Nahda*, or rebirth of Arabic and Islamic cultures in open, modern ways; and the investment which industrially-led Europe puts into the Orient, with an aim of developing the Orient's markets and its own through trade and the control of routes. Corm notes that in nineteenth century the Orient held the West in admiration but also contempt, repulsed by European ambitions, greed and controlling powers. Arab society is split among itself in supporting the West's clientelism and asserting self-identity. The early appearance of laicism is a thorny issue. The cultural interest is also very present, with a search for European roots in the Orient and the growing sciences of the study of humankind including science, technology, history and its development (e.g. archaeology) and the idea of nationhood which are the hallmarks of European modernity. The economic dimension is worthy of scrutiny, since European investors indebted Arab governments through investment and controlled the industry, communications and development in general. European interest in the Orient is exposed for what it is, namely in terms of having the economic and military ambitions fulfilled. The promised cooperation is a mirage and, according to Balta, a betrayed cultural possibility.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. page 173.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. page 174.

Bitterness remains and is not forgotten by independent Arab countries in the twentieth century. The multicultural cities of the nineteenth century also fail to live up to their promises. The Saint Simoniens and the Young Turks, for instance, who dreamt of improving on what they inherited and doing so in practice, failed in fulfilling their positive ambitions for the Mediterranean space.

The dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and spreading French influence in Arab lands did not help communication but rather seemed to parcel up areas of influence in a situation where many new states came into being (including in the Balkans and Middle East) under the influence of greater political powers (European, soon to be American and Soviet). Corm stresses the point that the loser of these developments is the Mediterranean and the exchanges that enriched it before. Corm also notes how political and economic rivalry set the stage and action for both World Wars in the twentieth century. Further limits on Mediterranean exchanges followed World War II with Jerusalem and Beirut split (1948, 1975), the prolonged decolonisation process, Egyptian nationalisation (1956) and the Cold War. Corm notes how the Mediterranean is a part of a larger whole, influenced and shaped by larger, international economic and political influences. The Mediterranean in the twentieth century seems to have been carried away by exterior interests, and cultural exchanges were out of touch with the bigger developments.⁴⁶¹

Outliving Empire?

To conclude this section, a brief reflection on the persistence of colonialism will be formulated. Simon Smith explains how British presence and influence in Malta outlived independence achieved in 1964. He notes how: *'[i]n this sense, the example of Malta supports the growing recognition that decolonisation could be an open-ended process, with traces of empire outlasting its formal demise.'*

Smith goes on to say that: *'[i]ndeed, a study of Malta in the era of decolonisation supports Stephen Ashton's recent observation that 'Historians of the British empire have long debated the question of when empire began. Equally open to interpretation are questions of when it ended or whether it continued in a different form.'*⁴⁶²

Baldacchino comments on the relationship between empire and the use of identity by colonialism:

'As one considers the politics of identity from the context of the myth of Empire that works in and out of artificial political boundaries, one cannot forget that the use of identity by colonialism is an enforced form of mediation between the culture of Empire and that of the

⁴⁶¹ Balta, page 47.

⁴⁶² SMITH, Simon C. (2008): 'Dependence and independence: Malta and the end of empire', *Journal of Maltese Studies*, 1, page 1.

colony. Mediterranean history is marked by the construction of regional knowledge as a selective exercise.'

Baldacchino further emphasises the synecdoche which empire building infused visions of, or better *for*, the Mediterranean with:

*'Whether Carthaginian, Roman, or Hellenic; Spanish, British, French, or Ottoman; Norman, Byzantine or Islamic; a formalized kind of Mediterraneanism is invariably characterized by an outstanding plurality of myths, each leaving an indelible historical mark on its diverse forms of cultural and historical self-definition. In its most recent history of such forms of imperial myth the region found itself depicted as a selective doctoring of national interests, excluding what does not fit the interests of Empire. In the framework of the grand colonial project – best epitomized in British and French Imperialism – the ultimate targets of cultural and instructional attainment were centred on the construction of a local knowledge expected to extend from the Empire's universal ambitions under the pretence of 'common sense'.'*⁴⁶³

Through this sub-chapter, the research has tried to illustrate the determining conditions through which colonialism has shaped cultural interaction and cultural relations, and the influence this period in history still has on today's cultural expression. The next sub-chapter will focus on two particular vehicles for cultural expression which bear the strong influence of colonialism and the different ways in which they allow cultural interaction to take place, namely cultural diplomacy and cultural cooperation.

⁴⁶³ Baldacchino, page 144.

Chapter Three: Cultural Relations in the Mediterranean

1. 3. a. Cultural Diplomacy

One of the main tools through which cultural relations may be built or influenced is that of engaging in cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy has been traditionally and is still mainly practised by states with other states by promoting the use of cultural expression as a means of building partnerships, addressing political tensions and identifying market opportunities. However, cultural diplomacy is also employed by the private sector and non-state actors to further mutual comprehension and the attainment of common goals. Cultural diplomacy has also influenced cultural relations in the Mediterranean. As this sub-chapter will attempt to show, it is one of the principal means employed across its shores and is inextricably linked to the issues of power and colonialism as discussed earlier. This section will also attempt to assess recent examples of and reflections on cultural diplomacy with the aim of identifying a positive way forward in *Section Three*.

Diplomacy and cultural relations

One of the cornerstones for the success of cultural relations is trust. Recent developments in global politics have changed both the nature and the extent of cultural relations and with them cultural diplomacy. Such changes include the First Gulf War, the events of 9/11, the American invasion of Iraq and most recently the Arab Spring. These recent changes in geopolitics have arguably contributed to what is described as *'the slow ebbing of trust'*. Trust is described as *'rationally calculable danger and rationally incalculable chaos'* and is closely tied to working together across cultural differences. Over the past decades, the international framework marking modern society has changed and has given way to a more diverse and arguably less systematic arrangement or series of arrangements. This global political arrangement is often described as multi-polar. Partners in the growing number of cultural exchanges are not always equal and the divisions between the "haves" and the "have-nots" have been re-modelled.⁴⁶⁴

Relations between Europeans and Arabs have been through many changing circumstances throughout the centuries. Many observers of contemporary geopolitics tend to emphasise the negative relations marking recent history and the present. They also tend to point towards culture as a means of addressing and improving the damaged relations. However, they tend to focus on the present at the expense of the historical context, which has never been easy and harmonious. Cultural exchange has been part of humanity throughout its existence, and while resorted to in order to improve relations, it has not resolved conflict definitively for any long period. Nevertheless, formalised or at least structured cultural relations in the form of cultural diplomacy have been consciously used to address difficulties among groups with different agendas and priorities. It is important to note that strong political powers have generally resorted to such means in order to communicate and deal with powers of equal or similar

⁴⁶⁴ ASPDEN, Peter (2010): *Selling Democracy? The past and future of western cultural relations and public diplomacy*, British Council, London, page 5.

strength while looking for ways with which to avoid the escalation of challenging situations. In relations that are imbalanced, such as those shaped by colonial contexts, cultural relations tend to reflect the imbalance and betray elements of dominance and submission, as has been illustrated in the previous section. Cultural diplomacy is a different way of relating culturally, and has become more practiced across the shores of the Mediterranean only after colonialism officially came to an end and Southern states came into being.⁴⁶⁵

Against this backdrop, calls by Western observers to use cultural means to reach out to developing nations and tackle mistrust through culture ring hollow. For instance, Maurits Berger recommends using culture to break the contemporary deadlock in Western and Arabic relations. Such an approach is well meaning but faulty on two counts. Firstly, Berger seems to suggest the main cause of this deadlock is Arab suspicion of the West based on prejudice. However, one needs to consider Western shortcomings and misgivings which are not based on prejudice but real. Berger also calls for culture to be explored as an inroad, since it is a *'relatively unknown field of co-operation vis-à-vis the Arab world'*. However, such an approach tends to ignore the history of the Mediterranean and limit oneself solely to contemporary politics without taking into account all that history has to say.⁴⁶⁶

Cultural diplomacy has not only temporally followed colonialism but arguably benefited from it. Peter Aspden argues that the way Europe relates to its global partners, particularly those it considers to be potentially dangerous to its stability and safety, is through the development of global cultural relations shaped by colonial experience. Aspden refers to this phenomenon as *'the sobering wisdom'*. While agreeing with this perspective of the maturing of cultural attitudes and the building of relations by Europe since colonialism, who has benefitted from this new scenario is debatable. European powers, through their ministries of foreign affairs, cultural institutes, embassies and professional diplomatic corps, have crafted a strategy to allow for the maximised influence of their old colonial territories. The recently independent states have a younger infrastructure and resources to engage in such relations, and there is still a long way to go to shift the use of these means from being reactive to being proactive.⁴⁶⁷

From a Western perspective, engaging in cultural diplomacy may address a number of different objectives. Cultural diplomacy may be utilised to change the perceptions of others towards oneself by influencing the means of communication and the messages relayed. However, such diplomacy may also be used to confirm an image of oneself, if this is deemed as positive. In reality, one's perception of oneself has a big role to play, and this may not always match what the other party thinks. As in an analysis based on a Johari window exercise, and as outlined earlier in *1.1.e Perceptions*, there is no one version of oneself, and knowing how one is perceived is of vital importance. Cynthia P. Schneider provides an excellent insight into the differences which exist between Western and Arab/Middle Eastern values and systems which

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. page 3.

⁴⁶⁶ Berger et al, page 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. page 27.

provide a sense of belonging and support to the community. She quotes Rami Khoury of Beirut's 'The Daily Star' to note that while:

*'increasing understanding and establishing trust have always been fundamental to cultural diplomacy, campaigns to discover common values between the United States and other countries and cultures can obscure legitimate differences in perspective.'*⁴⁶⁸

Differences are real, and attempts at covering them up or simply ignoring them do create backlashes. For instance, Khoury notes that the interactions between individuals and their communities are very different in the United States and the Arab and Muslim worlds. He argues that people in most countries of the Middle East, Asia and Africa give up personal freedom in return for the benefits they get from belonging to a unit such as the family, the tribe, the religious group, the clan or the ethnic group. These benefits include enjoying a sense of meaning, protection, a sense of hope for the future and all of those things American citizens get as individual citizens in a country run according to the rule of law in which there is a mechanism for the redress of grievances and the adjudication of disputes through the law. Khoury notes that:

*'We don't have that system in most of the third world and the Arab world, so you don't get these things from a sense of security or a sense of identity or sense of well-being for the future. You don't get them from your status as a citizen in a state of law or land. You get them from your family, your tribe, your religious group, whatever. By contrast, the classic American hero, in art and in life, from Huckleberry Finn to Rosa Parks, is the individual who fights the system. This difference in roles given to families and individuals has precipitated some of the misunderstandings between cultures. If cultural diplomacy helped to illuminate such difference between our cultures, then perhaps it could begin to help us to understand one another as well.'*⁴⁶⁹

Khoury makes a very strong and clear point which is of fundamental importance. Cultural diplomacy is to serve a function which goes beyond publicity and propaganda in favour of making new business partners: cultural relations may go further and address obstacles, such as preconceptions and prejudice, and contribute to true understanding.

A cultural institute which is also an institution like the British Council is prides itself on a number of characteristics that define it as such. One is its longevity, having been established to promote public diplomacy and cultural relations since the 1930s, with Western democracies being called upon to compete with Western and Soviet dictatorships with their own positive propaganda during the Cold War. However, a more important reason is its focus on its communicative quality and openness to others in order to make 'mutuality' possible. Mutuality is a key concept which drives the work of the British Council and which has been given

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. page 47.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. page 52.

particular attention in recent years.⁴⁷⁰ It is described in terms of engaging in cultural relations with a commitment to fairness and establishing shared control and power over the communication process as it is developed. In other words, the message is effective only so far as the tools and the attitude are too. The development of trust, discussed above, is dependent on mutuality.⁴⁷¹

Berger notes that it is fundamental to distinguish between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. The latter favours a multilateral approach, as opposed to the former's unilateral approach. Cultural diplomacy is not about promoting one's national culture. Nevertheless, the two approaches are related. Practitioners of cultural diplomacy need diplomatic skills to be honest and open to others' cultures while resisting cultural relativism and stereotyping. Rod Fisher notes how some cultural institutes such as the British Council but also the *Goethe-Institut* have in fact over the past decade preferred the term *cultural relations* over *cultural diplomacy*.⁴⁷² Nevertheless, he also points out that public diplomacy may be getting back in fashion since it goes beyond cultural affairs and into civil society, business and diaspora diplomacy.

Cultural diplomacy between North and South

National policies encouraging cultural diplomacy can promote a series of initiatives which favour cultural practitioners, particularly artists and cultural operators, as well as their surrounding communities. When such cooperation emphasises the potential of cross-border cooperation, the results can be very positive. Such policies support the mobility of cultural practitioners which 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. However, traditional approaches seem to be out of step with the changing and more international practices of artists and cultural professionals (for example, traditional bilateral cultural agreements). Such limitations become apparent even between states of similar economic means and political approaches, where more opportunities are called for in order to allow practitioners to develop their own research and exploration ambitions that are not tied to meeting diplomacy or other political and economic agendas. However, outside the Western sphere, it is important to delve deeper into the cultural differences which mark European cooperation in the Mediterranean and which ways could be successful in addressing positive cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ A detailed analysis of the concept of mutuality will be held below.

⁴⁷¹ Aspden, page 22.

⁴⁷² FISHER, Rod (2008): 'Recognising the Significance of Culture in Government and EU External Relations', page 2, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/ericarts/culture_gov_EU_extern_relations.pdf (accessed 25 September 2010).

⁴⁷³ WIESAND, Andreas John (2007): 'National Policies Influencing Cultural Cooperation and Mobility in Europe', European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research, page 2, www.ericarts.org (accessed 23 October 2010).

Conventional cultural diplomacy approaches by Europeans to developing countries tend to focus on gaining trust through a positive attitude and portrayal of oneself and providing aid and means for further development. However, as noted earlier, as developing countries do develop, the latter-day missionary zeal by Europeans is met with scepticism and a greater sense of independence. Andreas Wiesand notes that apart from the element of dialogue that is practised by cultural institutes or intermediary agencies another important aspect in contemporary cultural diplomacy is the *'tightening of control'* i.e. away from the cultural institutes and toward the direct funding of specific events, which may be interpreted as a sign of efforts at regaining control by central governments through their ministries responsible for foreign affairs. Two examples of such control consist of the shaping of legal and political frameworks which shape cultural exchanges and the contract funding based on new public management techniques. The point of financing is also of great importance, especially at this time of economic and financial crisis, when much of the resources dedicated to the function of cultural diplomacy focus on the benefit of one's own national citizens or institutions even, ironically, in contexts supporting dialogue. By considering these practical elements in relation to recent developments in cultural diplomacy, Wiesand allows for a more in-depth analysis of how cultural influence works which accompanies the theoretical observations. This approach also allows the research to analyse the information gained from the interviews in *Section Two* in light of a variety of conditions, as well as identify a way forward that encourages dialogue and exchange which is truly mutual. Such a perspective also allows the assessment of another important observation by Wiesand, who notes that cultural cooperation depends less on *'notions of "common history" or even "identity"'* and more on *'the interests of national governments and "political, security and economic motivators which dominate"* and which regard culture as a tool to achieve ulterior aims, rather than as an end goal. Wiesand is correct in noting that national governments encourage cultural cooperation on the basis of two points: firstly, such cooperation creates space for further influence, this time in a *'soft'* way, and secondly culture is a good tool with which to accompany political and economic projects.⁴⁷⁴ As is well known, the description of cultural diplomacy in terms of *'soft power'* owes its existence to Joseph Nye. This term contrasts the *'hard'* approach of political and military threats and interventions to the *'soft'*, persuasive and enriching approach through culture, the arts and positive elements in society. In a similar vein, Gianni Vattimo refers to this approach as *'il pensiero debole'* (the weak, or soft, way of thinking).⁴⁷⁵

With regard to relations between Europe and the Mediterranean, Demmelhuber echoes the opinion of Cassano and Zolo regarding the disintegration of the Mediterranean identity and of the European identity in relation to the Mediterranean due to efforts by the EU to focus on issues other than "common history" or even "identity" (referred to above), mainly dealing with security and economic expansion. Demmelhuber is right in noting that even the countries of the South Mediterranean have contributed to this. This is so because every national government will seek to meet its own interests and not a common good. Furthermore the Mediterranean

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Aspden, page 9.

and the so-called Euro-Med space itself are not the destinations countries from the South aim for: they want more Europe by having better access to it, and not more Mediterranean.⁴⁷⁶

Arguments about the development of a European Institute of Culture are interesting in light of comments about the growing role of national governments and the control they seek on cultural relations, ironically, or purposely, at a time of greater European cooperation and unity within the EU and other bodies such as the Council of Europe. The case of the European Union Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) is important. On the one hand, its development over the past few years may betray the way national governments or institutes have been *'tightening'* their control over cultural affairs internationally. On the other hand, the structure that allows institutes to come together and cooperate on a network basis which is spread globally encourages de-centralisation and direct participation by a number of stakeholders the world over.⁴⁷⁷

Arguably, cultural diplomacy is still understood as a *'strand of public diplomacy'*, with nation states playing the major role. Writing in 1999 and addressing a meeting in Krakow, the framework of an address by Rod Fisher is provided by the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the end of the Cold War. At this pivotal moment in modern history, he asks whether one could talk of a shift in international cultural relations from cultural diplomacy to cultural relations:

*'A subtle, but important, change has been evident in the policies of some of the cultural institutes and agencies in recent years. Their role for many years was inextricably linked to cultural diplomacy, an instrument of foreign policy in which efforts are directed to presenting positive images of a nation state through its culture (and, it has to be said, with a view to obtaining advantage in a country and facilitating diplomatic operations).'*⁴⁷⁸

This has been the subject of increasing attention in many international debates which noted that *'cultural diplomacy has come to include a complex set of relations'* involving a variety of agents who consider that cultural values and resources are a central tool to promote their identities, exert influence in the international sphere or build spaces of understanding and dialogue with other individuals and peoples. Therefore, cultural diplomacy can be distinguished from traditional diplomacy, and this can be done on the basis of the agents involved, the subjects addressed, the publics targeted (often a broad audience, as opposed to public institutions only) and the resources used.⁴⁷⁹

John Holden is reported as saying that in the past *'cultural diplomacy was seen as a part of the broader field of public diplomacy, and politics were believed to generate the necessary space for cultural exchange.'* He argues that nowadays *'it is culture which can generate the operating*

⁴⁷⁶ Wiesand, page 8.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. page 9.

⁴⁷⁸ FISHER, Rod (1999): 'Beyond Cultural Diplomacy. International cultural co-operation policies: whose agenda is it anyway?', page 2, <http://www.circle-network.org/activity/cracow1999/beyond.htm> (accessed 19 January 2011).

⁴⁷⁹ INTERARTS FOUNDATION (2009): *Cultural Diplomacy: A Perspective from Catalonia. Final Report* <http://www.interarts.net/en/articles.php?p=502> (accessed 30 October 2010).

conditions for politics. Culture is no longer simply perceived as a tool for the exercise of power and is being interpreted in terms of mutuality and respect. However, as will be argued here, politics still has the lead, and although culture plays a growing role, culture serves as a tool for the political aims of nation states.⁴⁸⁰

French policy

One of the nation states which has best harnessed the potential of cultural means and used it for its own as well as others' benefit, is France. Here the state shapes views on culture and cultural production and distribution directly through its highly experienced and active administrative structure which also has a strong impact on cultural relations internationally.⁴⁸¹ There is a long and steady history of French cultural production and promotion abroad. Tocqueville himself noted the continuity of such cultural and promotional projects which France enjoyed and which it needed to sustain.

As noted earlier in the context of colonialism, France has for a long time perceived culture and its promotion as an important element in developing its own identity and, on the basis of that identity, engage with others and improve relations globally. In this way, culture seems to serve a precise function, and hence can be said to be instrumentalised. This tone is also established through the UN Convention on Diplomatic Relations signed in Vienna in 1961, which calls for the development of friendly relations to the benefit of economic, scientific and cultural fields.⁴⁸² Seen from this angle, cultural diplomacy brings culture and diplomacy together in an unequal relationship, where culture is subservient to diplomacy for political ends. Gerbault Loïc refers to the definition of culture by the former Minister of Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, as an *'antidote to violence'*, a generation of tolerance and an eye-opener to others' cultures. In such a context, cultural diplomacy may be perceived as another framework through which contemporary conflicts and international relations can be assessed. Loïc notes that in today's world, where international conflict calls on nation states' full resources, culture is a *'new process of exaltation and expression of the national feeling.'* It is interesting to point out that culture described in this glowing way may apply to France, but rarely for others on the receiving end of the *'expression of national feeling'* in the framework of colonialism or cultural imperialism.⁴⁸³

The development of French cultural policy targeting its international relations has followed a very interesting path. The international dimension of culture is managed by the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs, unlike "arm's length" organisations as is the case in the UK or Germany. While serving national interest directly, and ensuring more direct communication and even tighter control of foreign cultural policy, this approach also serves certain situations in developing relations with countries in the South of the Mediterranean, where institutional

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid. page 4.

⁴⁸¹ LOÏC, Gerbault (2008): *La diplomatie culturelle française: La culture face à de nouveaux enjeux?*, unpublished Masters thesis, IEP de Toulouse, page 11.

⁴⁸² http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf (accessed 21 April 2012).

⁴⁸³ Ibid. page 7.

bodies such as ministries or schools, for example in Lebanon, require a state European partner, and find it harder working with one not directly related to the central government.⁴⁸⁴

It is often observed that the French strategy towards expanding the influence of France internationally through culture was drawn up in response to a rising feeling of cultural decline which coincided with the loss of military might across Europe and the Mediterranean. In the first instance, early nineteenth century losses to Britain urged France to take stock and look for new ways of establishing itself outside its national confines. This meant identifying ways of expanding those physical borders to include newly colonised territory. More localised losses towards the end of the century at the hands of the Prussians fuelled this approach of expansionism. Finally, France's gradual loss of its empire following World War II provoked a deep urge to re-define itself and its identity within and outside national borders and drove it to assert itself anew by establishing strong external relations on the basis of the protection and the promotion of its identity through culture in relation with other cultures.

Therefore the decline of empire for France as well as for its major imperialistic rival, Great Britain, led both to devise alternative ways of maintaining influence on a global scale. One of the most important structures to develop was that of the Commonwealth for Great Britain: through this organisation of more than sixty states Britain keeps in touch with national issues and attempts to generate debate and projects in all of its previously held territorial conquests. Another significant tool to gain access to populations worldwide is the BBC on TV, on radio and online. In 2011 the global corporation celebrated its 75 years, having been established in the critical inter-war period in support of the seemingly ever-expanding British Empire. In terms of cultural institutions, the British Council is still considered as an autonomous body that challenges the status quo and defends human rights regularly. With regard to France, a number of structures will be discussed below. However, the over-arching vision that drives these is made of culture, France's contribution to culture and its support for the propagation of culture. This is no easy task since France has had to deal with a messy decolonisation process and the loss of image and economic power globally.⁴⁸⁵

Loïc notes that such a burden may have inhibited other countries, but not France. France persists in pursuing positive instances of its past domination of other territories and recalls the civilising mission which led to the establishment of education through schools and healthcare through hospitals. A recent instance of positive interpretation is the parliamentary attempt in 2005 which sought to emphasise the positive role of French colonisation in Algeria, but which risked breaking off diplomatic relations with that country.⁴⁸⁶ An even more recent example of imbalance between French pride in its defence of human rights and its colonial past found expression in a case of cultural and diplomatic maladroitness when it was declared by French

⁴⁸⁴ Author's interview with Farid Majari, Beirut, 17 November 2011: the Director of the *Goethe-Institut* makes reference to the situation wherein the *Goethe* is autonomous from Government thus limiting opportunities for partnership.

⁴⁸⁵ Loïc, page 21.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid. page 22.

Interior Minister Claude Gueanton in February 2012 that in his view not all civilisations are equal, thus betraying a deep sense of ignorance and a great sense of partiality.⁴⁸⁷

Although not always used appropriately, French cultural diplomacy has developed a number of powerful tools with which to perform its perceived mission. Over time, it has enjoyed a number of bodies representing culture abroad. These have included the *Centre culturel français* and Institut culturel français as well as the *Alliance française*. These bodies have implemented French policies for the protection and promotion of French culture, the Instituts more directly than the *Alliances*. The *Fondation Alliance française* integrates the Alliance squarely into French policy and the Foreign Affairs, while *CulturesFrance* has also been funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rather than by the Ministry of Culture. *CulturesFrance* has established a support policy for development in the cultural field. Since the state does not impose its guidelines, this has made *CulturesFrance* more autonomous than the other organs. At the same time it has developed more diverse partners in the form of patrons and foundations.

It is not the intention of the research to draw comparisons between different institutional set-ups. However, if one had to relate the recent and contemporary cultural relations means of the two previous imperial powers, one can solicit an interesting conclusion: compared to the British Council, the French set-up is ‘*cacophonous*’, less well organised and slow to change and maximize synergies.⁴⁸⁸ Furthermore, French organisations do not seem to be politically engaged, in contrast to the British Council, arguably because politics is out of their hands and directly in Government’s. Either way, since culture is in various degrees instrumentalised by diplomacy, the changing global political scene changes cultural interests accordingly. This has been the case since the inception of such institutes: the focus of the British Council, established in 1934 with its first office in Cairo, has shifted according to the priorities of the day and political circumstances, while the Alliance française was established even earlier, in 1883, with a rich European presence which spread to its colonial territories. In tune with recent developments, a revamped presence of cultural institutes in Eastern and Southern Europe at the turn of this century has given way to renewed concentration to the borders of the EU, namely Ukraine and Turkey, the Middle East, Asia and particularly China.

It is not only political circumstances which shape the priorities of cultural diplomacy. Market concerns have always accompanied political interests, and in recent times observers have shown how cultural diplomacy today belongs to the age of the cultural industries and mass culture and has a close relationship to these realities. The framework of globalisation and the rise of the arts market have changed the perceptions and practices of cultural diplomacy. Since art and culture have increasingly taken on marketing functions, cultural diplomacy has reflected that development. With regard to France, a main concern with the defence of its culture through the market has driven external cultural policy over the past few decades: as discussed earlier, US global dominance of cultural products, particularly cinema, led to a strategic French

⁴⁸⁷ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/02/201225162625127900.html> (accessed 27 February 2012).

⁴⁸⁸ Loïc, page 41.

response through the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)* based on the concept of cultural exception, in turn linked to that of cultural diversity in more recent years.⁴⁸⁹

Ahmed Moatassime provides a very critical reading of these French initiatives. He notes that together with the 'Europeanisation' and 'globalisation' forces, 'francophonism' offers a particularly ambitious and forceful presence in the Mediterranean. Moatassime argues that in spite of internal conviction, the Francophone discourse on cultural diversity and the cultural exception is not convincing to others and copies, though less efficiently, the model of globalisation while carrying its own agenda. He harshly criticises the institutional set-up of *la Francophonie* worldwide, which he notes is built on the ruins of the French empire. It is indeed ironic that the one-time colonial enterprise now poses as the champion of diversity and the answer to US cultural imperialism.⁴⁹⁰

British policy

In an approach which seems to be less nationally oriented and more nuanced to international relations, the British Council has since the 1990s stressed the concept of dialogue, understanding and mutuality, in a subtle drive towards the definition and identification of values and ideas which different people may have in common, or not, and which may be opened up for dialogue and as a basis for cooperation. The role of Counterpoint, the cultural relations think tank established by the British Council in the mid-1990s to develop this novel approach, has been crucial in adopting a sensitive and in-depth analysis of cultural relations on a global level. While both organisations are closely related to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in terms of budget as well as furthering national interests, they do operate with a degree of autonomy which allows them to adapt to changing circumstance, develop effective reactions and take the lead in proposing change.⁴⁹¹ As stated in a recent joint publication by Counterpoint and the Foreign Policy Centre, 'it is very important that the British Council is seen as being British, but not governmental.'⁴⁹²

It is important to keep in mind the social and cultural circumstances which witnessed the development of this approach. Multiculturalism debates and practices had expressed a renewed urgency with a reality which had become topical in Europe since the 1960s with varying results in different countries and social settings. The European Commission defined multiculturalism as the acceptance of immigrants and minority groups as distinct communities whose languages and social behaviours and infrastructures distinguished them from the

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid. page 60.

⁴⁹⁰ MOATASSIME, Ahmed (2006): *Langages du Maghreb face aux enjeux culturels euro-méditerranéens*, L'Harmattan, Paris, page 41.

⁴⁹¹ ELVIRA, Marco (2008): 'Una mirada al sistema británico de relaciones culturales internacionales: acción cultural exterior y diplomacia pública', Real Instituto Alcano, ARI Nº 34/2008, <http://www.interarts.net/en/articles.php?p=502> (accessed 23 September 2010).

⁴⁹² LEONARD, Mark; SMALL, Andrew; ROSE, Martin (2005): *British Public Diplomacy in the 'Age of Schisms'*, Foreign Policy Centre, London, page 49.

majority.⁴⁹³ Moreover, multiculturalism advocated members of such groups should be granted rights equal to each other and, more importantly, to members of majority groups. With regard to citizenship, the 1990s saw a growing realisation that the classical aspects of citizenship in terms of the civil, political and social dimensions as identified by T.H. Marshall in 1950 may have needed to include cultural entitlements. Turner argues that there rose the recognition of the value of cultural empowerment and participation of citizens, including migrants, within diverse, yet strongly national, cultural life.⁴⁹⁴ Within the discourse on multiculturalism, traditional liberalism promoted the idea that individuals should be viewed as equivalent to each other, irrespective of ethnic, religious, sexual or other characteristics or affiliations. In light of this equating perspective, which may have had a negative impact by homogenising different individuals, the ensuing decade saw the reappraisal of the liberal view of cultural difference. Liberal multiculturalism tends to focus on the relationships between state, groups and individuals, and provides the theoretical background for group rights. However, whether cultural communities can be viewed as groups with their own special rights or as citizens with particular cultural characteristics whose rights and duties are part of those of the larger community remains unclear. This is mostly due to the complexity involved in defining concepts that deal with issues of cultural difference and cultural identity and, as noted above, the changing relationship between migrant members of the community and the state.

While discussions of multiculturalism have allowed for development in addressing intercultural dialogue, cultural policy should not simply promote multiculturalism and celebrate difference. The dangers of doing so include the development of *'parallel societies'* that neither share close intercultural communication nor try to transcend difference and achieve integration through mutual dialogue.⁴⁹⁵ As has been seen in various European states such as the Netherlands, France and the UK to mention but three, multiculturalists approaches may lead to having people who resent the rapid cultural change and call for assimilationist and possibly racist policies, on the one hand, and on the other reactionary and extremist behaviour among migrants that has become a major unsettling and confrontational feature of various European societies. Rather, policy should encourage the acceptance of cultural difference in order to transcend divisions with an aim to create a community whose members can work closer together. One of the main problems caused by multiculturalist policies that stop at promoting ethnic and cultural multifaceted societies is the occlusion of power differences that do not allow different cultural groups and individuals within those groups to have an equal opportunity to contribute to the outcome of society's policies.

Much of the inspiration for the approach adopted by the British Council towards cultural relations stems from Ziauddin Sardar, a British Muslim thinker and writer, and the way he looks at social structures. His writing lies within the field of cultural relations, and stresses the need

⁴⁹³ MEINHOF, Ulrike Hanna.; TRIANDAFYLLIDOU, Anna (2006): *Transcultural Europe: Cultural Policy in a Changing Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, page 8.

⁴⁹⁴ ROBINS, Kevin, (2006): *The challenge of transcultural diversities: Transversal study on the theme of cultural policy and cultural diversity*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, page 31.

⁴⁹⁵ SCHIFFBAUER, W. (2005): 'Parallel Societies and Integration: German Turks and their Communities in Germany', *Kulturjournal of the Goethe-Institut*, Volume 1, page 30.

to keep relations across different cultures open to change in a process that is more equal and mutual. Sardar states that contemporary cultural relations *'is as much about building the future on a specific set of core values as it is about understanding the past and present of people other than ourselves.'*⁴⁹⁶ In order to promote the values he supports, based on the concepts of 'transmodernism' and 'mutually assured diversity' discussed further below, Sardar challenges the double-bind created in the West as a result of narrow-visioned modernism and self-satisfied multiculturalism. Sardar refers to Martin Rose and Nick Wadham-Smith's definition of mutuality, which is described as the quality of a two-way relationship, with overtones of benefit distributed between the two parties, and of ownership shared. It implies equality and a two-way relationship where:

*'trust arises not from unequal relationships and conversations based on asymmetrical distribution of power, but from relationships built on respect, openness, and a preparedness, where appropriate, to change one's own mind.'*⁴⁹⁷

However, Sardar is also aware of the limits of mutuality, which cannot work if a culture has accepted its "backwardness" in relation to modernity and postmodernity and if it is ambivalent and hostile to both new influences (as in the 'host' country's culture) and possibly even its own tradition. Yousri Nasrallah has a valid point in expressing preference for 'insight' over 'mutual understanding' as it is less presumptuous and more accepting of human identities. He argues that:

*'[a]rtistic collaborations should not proceed from some abstract (or concrete) post-modern curiosity to "know" the Other – which can result in one imagining knowing what's best for the Other – or an effort to alleviate postcolonial guilt.'*⁴⁹⁸

Sardar goes on to say that mutuality can be unconditionally good in its own right, but wonders what good is it when faced with *'a culture of resistance whose very reason to be is to disengage itself from dominant modern forms of cultural expression?'* Within a European context, a cultural policy should try to engage with (and "bring on board") all those who it is supposed to be working for and influencing, meaning both established citizens and migrants, irrespective of the groups' cultural identities or attitudes towards the cultural scenario, and with a great deal of sensitivity. In discussing European cultural policy matters it is important to widen the focus from the policy-setting side of things to include the migrants' responses and identity structures themselves.⁴⁹⁹

Sardar finds great fault with the postmodernist model of multiculturalism, which he believes 'fetishes difference' by emphasising and celebrating it for its own sake while dismissing

⁴⁹⁶ SARDAR, Ziauddin (2004): *Beyond Difference: Cultural Relations in the New Century: A lecture for the British Council's 70th Anniversary*, British Council, London, page 5.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. page 10.

⁴⁹⁸ EUROPEAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION (2008): *An Alternative Gaze: A shared reflection on cross-Mediterranean cooperation in the arts*, page 53, <http://medreflection.eurocult.org> (accessed 1 September 2010).

⁴⁹⁹ Sardar, page 10.

inequality based on identity. Equality is seen only as *'equality before the law and the delivery of homogeneity within a capitalist framework [...] in other words, we assume that there is only one and the same way of being human.'* He goes on to say that multicultural relations that emphasise difference and promote sameness are not conducive to mutuality, which is not about difference for the sake of difference; or about promoting a western framework of sameness. Mutuality must be about acculturation – where both sides of the cultural relations equation change, transform and transcend their own limitations.⁵⁰⁰ Susan Bassnett echoes Sardar's point about challenging the notion that all cultures can be subsumed within the dominant culture (and treated the same). She adds a warning against feelings of superiority while promoting the message of cultural difference in a positive manner, in a way that abandons *'the misleading idea that all cultures are fundamentally the same, but not falling into the trap of claiming the superiority of one cultural system over another'*.⁵⁰¹

In contrast to postmodernism, outlined above, Sardar proposes his view of transmodernism, which sees: *'tradition as dynamic, amenable, capable of changing and eager to change; and it sees traditional cultures not as pre-modern but as communities with potential to transcend the dominant model of modernity.'*⁵⁰²

In words that recall Maalouf's description of vertical and horizontal heritage, Sardar says that transmodernism encourages Western cultures to see non-Western cultures *'on their own terms, with their own eyes (ideas, concepts, notions) and as (part of) the common future rather than the past of humanity.'* Transmodernism *'focuses one's eyes on the signs of change, and attempts to make visible what is often shrouded from the gaze of the outsiders.'* Sardar gives the example of contemporary Islam, which might not seem to be changing much from a Western point of view, when in fact it has gone through several changes partly due to events like the attacks in, among others, New York, Madrid and London, the outcry over the cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed in European newspapers and general misgivings about the link between terrorism and the Muslim faith. Sardar challenges multiculturalism's limits with his concept of mutually assured diversity. Once again focusing on what different human beings have in common, Sardar points out that:

*'[w]hat is mutual is that the human condition is a cultural condition and that culture is an essential relational attribute, an enabling feature of knowing, being and doing [...] It is the acceptance that for all people everywhere identity is not formed in a vacuum but within a cultural realm that comes with values, history, axes to grind and a variety of perplexities, conundrums and perennial questions.'*⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. page 14.

⁵⁰¹ BASSNETT, Susan, 'Intercultural dialogue in a multicultural world', in Rosemary Bechler ed. (2004): *Intercultural Dialogue*, British Council, London, page 61.

⁵⁰² Sardar, page 14.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. page 21.

In contrasting one with the other, Sardar states that while multiculturalism is ready to acknowledge that everyone has their own history, mutually assured diversity is nourished by the vision that all identities have futures. In this case, identity is envisioned as a:

*'cultural aptitude to seek a better future fashioned out of all the possibilities and predicaments European cultural policy and migration offered by contemporary times and circumstances and in the light of histories that shape those circumstances.'*⁵⁰⁴

Such a complex envisioning of identity cannot easily inform a cultural policy that can deal with issues of migration and integration effectively. However, the views expressed by Sardar are earnest, and seek to establish an open and inclusive framework for cultural interaction between people of different cultures. In spite of historical and practical obstacles that lie in the way of the implementation of policies inspired by such visions, policies that are informed by a quest for inclusivity, both in formulation and implementation, are to be pursued since they have the potential to contribute greatly to more integration among the citizens of Europe. This is so especially at a time when social dynamics are changing rapidly and reactionary policies are limited in the social cohesion they may lead to.

The major cultural institutes face a tough challenge in trying to balance the need to address government and national requirements with being autonomous and engaging in open dialogue with global partners. The complex nature of being a cultural institute is hinted at when Rose and Smith note that:

*'[...] in the world of a national cultural institute agency like the British Council every relationship based in mutuality must ultimately be instrumental. We are not philanthropists: the British Council has its ultimate purpose in the national good.'*⁵⁰⁵

In their discussion on what and how mutuality works, they note how it is important to distinguish between the institute's operations and government's, the mixing of which remains a big problem in clarifying the role of the British Council to partners and in managing to get its message across. Matt Knowles points out that the political agenda which an institute operates within and the cultural relations it promotes and deals with first hand need to be kept separate in order for them not to compete against each other, but rather complement each other. It is also opportune to refer to Jurgen Habermas' distinction between *'strategic'* and *'communicative'* action in order to note that while the former has its utilitarian purpose, cultural institutes should invest in and seek more out of the *'communicative'* action since this aspect deals with the *'search for an understanding of the truth.'*⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. page 23.

⁵⁰⁵ ROSE, Martin; WADHAM-SMITH, Nick (2004): *Mutuality, trust and cultural relations*, British Council, London, page 15.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. page 19.

With reference to striking a balance between such actions, this may be more impossible than challenging. It is intellectually stimulating to argue and acknowledge that mutuality goes much further than action aimed at mutual benefit. However, in practice, cultural institutes fail to supersede issues of stability and security with others related to intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding as ends in themselves. The belief that cultural institutes can transcend the suspicion which governments face and breed by creating a breathing space between themselves and state policy by pursuing mutuality and open communication rings hollow. As well-intentioned as they may be and as committed to autonomy as they may present themselves to the public, cultural institutions do not operate independently and in ideal conditions. They have their agendas to respect, even if they are not linked closely to government as the British Council claims to be, and all cultural action is taken within a very narrow space of autonomy. Within this corridor of autonomous action, Western cultural institutes try to maximise their global presence and experience, without repeating past mistakes while distinguishing themselves from earlier manifestations which were more closely linked to the imperial or colonial powers. However, they also have to do this in a race against time which is closing down further on remaining possibilities for positive and effective action. This is so because the power of Western diplomacy, when compared to that of emerging economies which are accompanied by global political clout, such as those collectively known as BRIC, but also Muslim states such as Turkey and increasingly Qatar, is on the wane.⁵⁰⁷

Diplomacy and domestic policies

The concerns addressed by British efforts at cultural diplomacy are shared by their European counterparts. Ben Hurkmans notes that in the Netherlands the national scene influences the external relations of the country as set by government policy. While in the past public diplomacy and international cultural relations ran parallel to each other, the issues of migration and the local effects of globalisation have brought the two areas closer together. Hurkmans suggests that what is happening at home is having a growing effect on decisions on how to behave on the international stage. Therefore, he correctly argues that together with the financial imperatives in terms of accountability and self-sustainability which cultural institutions have to live up to, issues of policy coherence are other areas they have been made responsible for. Inversely, external relations are being used to explain domestic policy, especially when this deals with socially important and even volatile issues like religious expression, social integration and migration. Therefore, cultural diplomacy can be seen not only as a means of enabling the interaction of one's culture with others, but also as allowing one to explain one's own culture on an international stage.⁵⁰⁸ Awareness of this multiple function of cultural diplomacy is essential in order to understand its use and realise its potential. A good understand of such tools also allow one to grasp the changing nature of cultural relations, and that change is not

⁵⁰⁷ 'A whole new world: Martin Jacques on the future of cultural relations', Eve Jackson, <http://www.counterpoint-online.org> (accessed 1 July 2011).

⁵⁰⁸ HURKMANS, Ben (2008): 'Still a World to be Won: An Outline of Today's Cultural Diplomacy in the Netherlands', Real Instituto Alcano, ARI No. 88, <http://www.interarts.net/en/articles.php?p=502> (accessed 23 September 2010).

the exception which cultural relations should try to resist, but the norm which relations on a cultural basis needed to address as well as drive.

Diplomacy and foreign policy

Another way of describing a country's international approach towards cultural relations is by referring to it in terms of a foreign cultural policy. Rod Fisher explains that such a policy is comprehensive and includes a number of aims. These consist of promoting cultural diplomacy; developing cultural relations; supporting the export of a nation's cultural products and creative industries; underpinning the development of beneficial new trading arrangements; attracting tourism and inward investment; enhancing programme aid in developing countries; and creating an informed and primarily favourable picture of a country to the outside world.⁵⁰⁹

Fisher exemplifies this holistic strategy with reference to efforts by the UK to shore up its reputation, image and relations with the Arab world after the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 which it supported. Following the fall-out of the occupation, the UK needed to work on its relationships on an international level in ways which depended on persuasion, soft power and the ability to portray itself as a *'trustworthy and principled partner'*. Authors show how this was more urgent for the UK than it was for the US since the UK did not have the economic and military power which the US had and which protected it in part from the adverse reaction. Authors admit the task to do this was hard and is arguably still incomplete and further complicated due to other situations of conflict in the region. The British Council, like the BBC, has its role to play in staying close to the general public, as discussed in the 2002 coordination strategy issued by the Public Diplomacy Strategy Board. The Iraqi invasion played out a struggle between the powerful and the powerless, which is common to most major global schisms. Unfortunately, the results contributed to the recreation of this opposition which, in the perspective of the research, is not part of the equation of imbalance, but the crux which brings about all difficulties.⁵¹⁰

If one agrees, as the research does, that economic and political reasons are at the heart of such conflicts, then it is difficult to believe in the efficacy of diplomatic efforts practised by governments the image of which has been seriously damaged by particular actions. However, apart from what government public diplomacy does consciously to assist the image building of their country, the impact of such actions needs qualification due to the much larger and persuasive role of the media and popular culture in doing this:

'[...] because most ideas that people absorb about a country are beyond the control of national governments – books, CDs, films, television programmes, or brands and consumer products with national connotations – governments can only have an impact at the margins by seeking to clear paths for the most positive messages to reach mass audiences while working directly to

⁵⁰⁹ Fisher (2008).

⁵¹⁰ Leonard et al, page 4.

*influence the opinions of niche audiences. We need to be clear that the efficacy of these positive messages aimed at mass audiences, in contexts of popular hostility, is dubious [...].*⁵¹¹

EU cultural diplomacy

The ways cultural diplomacy is practised today both inside Europe and by the EU globally is directly related to its modern development around a century ago. World War I saw the creation and rapid adaptation, among the principal combatant nations, of government departments of political propaganda, designed to make a contribution to the war effort by impressing upon public opinion in other countries a sense of the rightness, and of the efficacy, of the political aims and military methods of the propagandising department's governments. Britain had neglected cultural propaganda in the belief that British prestige was universally recognised and needed no ulterior support, but soon made a powerful effort in the field of political propaganda to address the efforts of France and Germany who maintained their pre-war cultural activities abroad alongside this new political adjunct to their respective war efforts.⁵¹² The development of the various national efforts on general political terms has also been reflected in the approach to culture and cultural diplomacy, with the EU today squarely addressing the need for coordinated actions that support not only national, but also European cultural values and identities. Such efforts were already present in the early years of exercises towards European unity such as those championed by the Council of Europe and the European Communities, which together supported various research and cultural programmes including those in the framework of the Council for Cultural Co-operation, formed in 1961.

Efforts aimed at '*obtaining benefit for the people of each participating country, to the collective advantage of all*',⁵¹³ as envisaged in new approaches to cultural diplomacy in the 1970s, have come across various challenges and discussions on how to improve '*citizen participation*' and have increased in intensity.⁵¹⁴ With reference to today, Fisher argues that what in the EU is described as a democratic deficit is related to a cultural deficit suffered by its citizens. He argues that many citizens do not feel European, do not relate to European visions and do not feel part of larger European narratives. These observations shine the spot light on a particular dimension of cultural diplomacy in the framework of international relations in general and the EU in particular, namely that of practising cultural relations *between* nation states but *within* the common EU structure. This is a particular role of cultural diplomacy in that it is international by being cross-border yet internal to EU affairs. Fisher argues that a great deal of work remains to be done to foster a sense of awareness and appreciation of European expression:

'It is increasingly accepted that if the European Union is to work well as a system of governance and if the frequently repeated mantras of a Europe 'united in diversity' are to have any meaning, the mission must be underpinned with a set of shared values. Arguably, the arts are

⁵¹¹ Ibid. page 7.

⁵¹² HAIGH, Anthony (1974): *Cultural Diplomacy in Europe*. Council for Cultural Cooperation, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED102067.pdf> (accessed 29 April 2012), page 26.

⁵¹³ Ibid. page 246.

⁵¹⁴ NAMUR, Mahir, 'A union of double standards', *Culture Report EUNIC Yearbook 2011*, page 63.

*great value carriers. They can contribute to the process of strengthening cohesion and sense of belonging to our imagined community of Europe.*⁵¹⁵

Going one step further, achieving this level of internal cultural acknowledgment and dialogue is essential to convey extra-European partners, such as those in the South of the Mediterranean, a clear message regarding what the EU stands for and on what basis it intends to develop cultural relations. At the moment, the perception of what the EU represents is still confused and reflects the disparate ambitions and priorities of the different members of the EU within the respective national as well as regional and local levels. Fisher refers to Douglas Alexander, a former Minister for Europe at the FCO, who asserted that *'the EU must confidentially assert its own identity as neither a nation state nor a super-state, but a distinctive institution that adds value to the lives of its citizens.'*⁵¹⁶ It is suggested that only after EU citizens have made sense of the group of states and the diversity which exists within the structure that the EU can proceed to portray a clear and understandable identity to its international partners. This is currently not the case.

As is illustrated throughout this text, the EU employs diverse means to support programmes that encourage cultural cooperation among its and other states: the international collaboration strands within the Culture Programme, association agreements and protocols that focus on cultural cooperation are two examples of these efforts.⁵¹⁷ Frequent reference has also been made to non-state organisations hailing from civil society or arts community associations that actively seek innovative and sustainable ways of engaging in common projects across the EU's border. However, the outcomes of such collaborations, even when successful in delivering the main objectives of the projects involved, do not always contribute to a strong and clear sense of what the EU stands for and how relations between participants reflect mutual understanding and a greater sense of partnership firstly between the people involved, and secondly among their larger populations.

The difficulties involved in developing and sustaining a strong cultural element in the EU's external relations are real and contribute to the tensions that characterise attempts at devising ways of engaging in cultural diplomacy that are different and positive for those involved. For example, from an internal perspective, Fisher recommends that *'EU actions should complement, not compete with, the actions of Member States'*; however, many of the latter have strong networks that are centred on bilateral relations rather than European ones. On the other hand, from an external perspective, Fisher recommends *'[t]he EU role should be primarily as a facilitator or initiator, not an organiser of cultural action'*. While laudable in intention, action following this recommendation may be criticised for engaging in covert cultural participation, whereby EU interests, through EU funds, are channelled to support certain cultural projects, and not others, according to the EU agenda, but doing so through local actors.

⁵¹⁵ FISHER, Rod, *Recognising the Significance of Culture in Government and EU External Relations*, (2008): http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/culture_gov_eu_extern_relations.pdf, (accessed 27 April 2012), page 3.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. page 4.

⁵¹⁷ The Culture Programme together with the MEDIA Programme will be restructured under the title of Creative Europe as from 2014; <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/> (accessed 29 June 2012).

As will be commented upon later at interview stage, this may lead to the development of a suspicious and divisive climate among local actors including the state itself.

A recent report by the European Parliament on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions assesses the difficulties being faced by the EU in devising and implementing a successful strategy that supports the presence and influence of European cultural diversity on a global basis.⁵¹⁸ In her report for the Committee on Culture and Education, Marietje Schaake foregrounds the challenges Europeans face with direct reference to the 'ever fiercer' competition established by China which is described as '*establishing 100 Confucius Centres to practice cultural diplomacy*' as well as '*the rise of emerging powers such as India.*' Schaake recommends a response that makes use of traditional as well as innovative means that emphasise and exploit Europe's strengths such as '*the inclusion of a DG Cultural and Digital Diplomacy in the organisation of the EEAS*' (European External Action Service) which, she notes, '*does not include any positions relating to cultural aspects*'. She also recommends '*the appointment of an EU ambassador-at-large*'; the EEAS '*to focus on coordination and strategic deployment of cultural aspects, incorporating culture consistently and systematically into the EU's external relations and contributing to complementarity with Member State policies*'; and the EEAS '*to encourage third countries to develop policies on culture and to systematically call on third countries to ratify the UNESCO Convention*'. The recommendation that had attracted particular attention was that to nominate one representative in each European representation to deal with the coordination of cultural programmes. In Schaake's words, this team would practise cultural diplomacy making full use of digital means, particularly the internet, in ways that suggest the need for '*a new strategy on digital diplomacy*'.⁵¹⁹

Diplomacy and technology

This sub-chapter will conclude with a look at the growing relation between actions of cultural diplomacy and the influence of technology, and the way this has changed traditional approaches to diplomacy. Charles Leadbeater comments on the rise of public diplomacy in the early 1990s and describes it as an approach to public relations and conflict resolution based on top-down targeting of individuals through traditional media. He contrasts that with today's technologically interactive and more democratic reality which allows young populations which are conversant with technology to exploit its pervasiveness in society and its ease of use for

⁵¹⁸ SCHAAKE, Marietje (2010): *Draft Report on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions* (2010/2161(INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, European Parliament
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-450.904+04+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN> (accessed 27 April 2012).

⁵¹⁹ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (2010): 'Cultural diplomacy: To sell European culture and values globally', Reference No.20101203STO05908,
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/content/20101203STO05908/html/Cultural-diplomacy-To-sell-European-culture-and-values-globally> (accessed 29 April 2012).

political purposes. The resulting process may be said to be contributing to an open source type of diplomacy.⁵²⁰

The idea of public diplomacy rose to prominence in the 1990s as governments came to terms with an international environment that had become more complex and less stable. Governments had to interact with a multiplicity of international actors – regions, cities, NGOs, corporations and radical political groups. State to state diplomacy became just part of a game involving many more players and ever-shifting sets of rules. A widespread response was to invest more in public diplomacy in order to attempt to manage the international environment and promote national interests by engaging directly with foreign publics; to ‘*win the battle of hearts and minds*’ was done, for example, through dedicated television and radio channels, education and cultural initiatives. Yet public diplomacy retained an important continuity with the past in that it was the projection of power, albeit by soft means, to persuade and attract foreigners to buy into a state’s goals and values, rather than through the hard power of military action and economic sanctions. Therefore, it may be argued that public diplomacy was a different tool to do the same job. The soft power of public diplomacy was a license for brand building to be applied to nations much as it was to international products.

This kind of top-down branding approach, which treats people as targets rather than participants in an exchange of views, does not meet its objectives easily in the era of cloud culture, when people have many more sources of information, places for debate, the means to have their say and an expectation that they will be engaged with rather than lectured at. Leadbeater argues that a more fruitful model sees diplomacy as an opportunity with which to build cultural relations and construct links between people through culture. In echoes of utopian societies closely linked to the development of the internet in the US in the 1960s, Leadbeater notes that the best way to understand how that might be done is to adopt an approach inspired by open source software.

⁵²⁰ LEADBEATER, Charles (2010): *Cloud Culture: the future of global cultural relations*, Counterpoint, London, page 31.

1. 3. b. Cultural Cooperation

As has been seen, efforts undertaken within the sphere of cultural relations are intended to promote mutual understanding and extend into the field of cooperation, rather than aim for one-sided advantage. Consequently, such policies aim at being more neutral in their impact. This is an important distinction. Agencies such as the British Council continue to promote high quality and diverse UK arts to audiences overseas, strengthening the arts community and cultural industries in the process. However, the emphasis has shifted to the development of sustainable, mutually beneficial, international partnerships in the arts. Some of these agencies also compete for EU contracts to promote the expertise of their nationals and generate income. They are also using the arts to reinforce development aid projects, thus impacting directly on the progress of third countries, such as those on the South coast of the Mediterranean. Fisher argues that despite these significant policy shifts and an emphasis on multilateral rather than bilateral relations, it is often difficult to *'desegregate policies for international exchange and co-operation from ambitions to enhance the diplomatic efforts or trading opportunities of countries.'*⁵²¹

This sub-chapter looks in detail at cultural cooperation in full knowledge that the field of external cultural action is replete with ambiguity in terms of definitions and overlapping action serving multiple agendas. It is the intention of the research to highlight a few characteristics of cultural cooperation due to the increasing importance of such action across the Mediterranean space, as well as the global North-South, and due to its relation with, in spite of the clear distinctions to, colonial relations. When Fisher notes that *'[c]ultural co-operation is not only about the flow of cultural goods and services; it is also about the exchange of ideas'*, it is important to look deeper into these ideas in order to identify what they refer back to, and what they point towards. Finally, it is important to note that rather than distinguishing cultural cooperation from cultural diplomacy, this section focuses on the practical actions developed within the former, in full acknowledgment of the fact that diplomatic actions often instigate cooperation on the basis of culture. The role of cultural institutes and other agencies provides the ensuing analysis with the overall framework.

Ridha Tlili identifies cultural cooperation as the main tool with which to contribute to the development of the Mediterranean. She expresses the belief that *'communication among the various Mediterranean cultures is very much part of the quintessence of a Mediterranean awareness, without which there will be no overall political project.'* While sounding like a clarion call to engage in further collaboration, this enthusiastic expression raises important questions with regard to the conceptualisation of the essence of Mediterranean being, and how cultural cooperation has contributed, and still contributes, both to perceptions of what the Mediterranean is, and to how cultural relations are in practice.⁵²²

⁵²¹ Fisher (1999), page 2.

⁵²² North-South Centre; Council of Europe, page 68.

The heritage of colonialism

The colonial age has given way to a postcolonial period which is ongoing and developing in the shadow of the previous age. The postcolonial reality faced by communities on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean does not lie outside past colonial practices, which continue in other forms of influence from the Northern shore. The means of influence from the North have changed shape, and straightforward governance through colonialism has given way to cultural diplomacy and its agents including governments, national institutes of culture, municipalities and arts associations. Cultural expression in the Southern shore and the islands of the Mediterranean is not free from such influence, and this expression is closely related to the heritage of colonialism, as well as its contemporary reach through the more subtle means of cultural politics.

The experience of foreign influence is not always tangible or very clear, and not easily comparable across different societies. While noting that it is not the intention of the research to engage in an exercise of comparison, it is important to note that the particular characteristics enjoyed by different societies make such a comparative analysis challenging. This is so because often the process is not confined to a one-way approach; it necessarily takes two to make cultural diplomacy function and the local stakeholders may indeed play a very active part in sustaining it through collaboration (e.g. through the promotion of art which fits foreign criteria or is tourism-related). At other times, such cultural and political practices may come up against resistance. Such observations will be critiqued in light of the two main ways in which local communities may react to foreign influence as described by Cassano, namely imitation and integralist defence. Furthermore, Thomas W. Gallant's observations on a third way and the creative appropriation of foreign ways and means will also be applied to the context of cultural practices. The aim of this research process is to provide the communities involved and the policy-makers with a wider picture which enables a vision for change (to be set out in *Section Three*). Such a vision will be based on a policy which is rooted in contemporary realities and an analysis that may lead to a different way of developing current cultural practices.

Majid Rahnema provides a powerful reflection on the ways the heritage of colonialism found a new form and a renewed function with which to influence the current day realities of previously colonised territories. He argues that the disintegration of the colonial empires brought about a strange and incongruous convergence of aspirations. While the leaders of the independence movements were eager to transform their devastated countries into modern nation-states, the general populations were hoping to liberate themselves from both the old and the new forms of subjugation. Unfortunately, this did not happen since new forms of domination took root particularly through despotism and corruption. As to the former colonial masters, they were seeking a new system of influence, and Rahnema notes that in this context the *'myth of development emerged as an ideal construct to meet the hopes of the three categories of actors.'*⁵²³

⁵²³ RAHNEMA, Majid; BAWTREE, Victoria eds. (1997): *The Post-Development Reader*, Zed Books, London, page ix.

Francois Zabbal agrees with this critical perspective which should be adopted towards seemingly well-intentioned interventions by governments, both within one's own country as well as outside it. He notes how the social ends of government-led or supported arts are rarely met. Quoting Urfalino he notes that: *'l'idée selon laquelle l'État peut transformer ou améliorer significativement la société en utilisant le levier des arts est fausse.'* He also reflects on reverse actions within North-South cultural cooperation such as the value of the social aims of having foreign productions (from developing countries) in Europe. He argues that while this may be laudable, they are not worth much. He suggests that the social justification is needed as 'simple curiosity' and may be interpreted as akin to 'voyeurism'.⁵²⁴ In a similar vein, Rabih Mroué asks why Europeans have an attraction for the Orient. He asks whether this attraction stems from a sense of curiosity, a search for new forms and languages, or nostalgia for a mythical Orient. In relation to artists and cultural operators in the South, he comments on the 'interior' and 'exterior' dimensions of the self and the pressures suffered which emanate from religious and nationalistic thinking and wonders where all this leaves the authenticity of the self. These comments throw light on the local pressures which besiege artists and cultural operators and which are very hard to withstand. Mroué's comments are very relevant to the research as they seem to suggest that the role of foreign cultural operators is not the main issue, but rather secondary to the local problems and the national dimension of cultural practice and production. However, both issues are very closely intertwined, and the role of European cultural agencies impinges upon the development and course of local cultural expression and production. With regard to cultural cooperation itself, Mroué notes the impossibility of being in the "right" place in terms of home/abroad since one seems to be straddling both, with no permanent sense of stability. Working abroad or engaging in international cultural cooperation seems to provide participants with a sense of liberation and a "new" or freer space, which may also be referred to as a third space. In terms of the research, it is important to ask whether foreign cultural operators represent this freedom from national constraints or at least provide the possibility of reaching beyond them. At the same time, one has to ask, "At what price?"⁵²⁵

This perspective has great relevance from a cultural point of view. It may be argued that cultural institutes let colonial masters back in, or rather, never saw them leave. Following a logic which shares some things in common with non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs), cultural institutes presume to leave behind national political agendas and in some cases actually attempt to challenge these agendas. It is worth recalling the time when the British Council adopted an openly critical stance towards the British Government in the wake of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and further distanced itself from official Government positions more recently with regard to Iraq as well as Afghanistan and other Arab/Muslim countries. There are at least two ways of looking at these instances of disagreement between the policies of cultural institutes and their governments: one may argue that they are simply exceptions to the rule, and few and far between; on the other hand, one may emphasise their value on the basis of their being exceptional (in both senses of the word). What cannot be argued away is that the arm's length is still connected to the main body and remains to a degree subservient to

⁵²⁴ Redalie et al, page 88.

⁵²⁵ Ibid. page 102.

its main source of direction and funding. It may be worth asking whether the apparent objectivity of operations is more dangerous than if organisations like the British Council were directly and more clearly linked to government, such as is the case with the French model. It is also worth asking, as will be done in the following section, what local communities make of this presence.

The role and influence of cultural institutes can also be illustrated with reference to cultural associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in particular. Dominique Temple, in *Les ONG comme cheval de Troie*, uses the image of the Trojan horse to describe the apparently well-meaning shell which such organisations may serve while harbouring dangerous effects. Temple's point is mostly related to the economy and about Western NGOs '*disassociat[ing] the indigenous population from their economy based on reciprocity*' and opening it up to their own market systems. This perspective has particular relevance to the cultural industries and the way local actors are "advised" and "shaped" to fit the West's market demands and needs. The contexts for such action are many and include advisory sessions geared at programmes supported by the EU as well as long-standing initiatives by public as well as private entities in a number of countries. The advisory and consultatory role of foreign organisations, and their effect, will also be discussed in detail in relation to the field research.⁵²⁶

The false neutrality of culture

A strong aspect of the work of cultural agencies and of the pervasiveness of their operations is linked to the general impression that cultural matters are not political or urgent, but on the contrary secondary and safe. Culture still seems enjoy this '*protective enclosure*' which, while limiting its importance, allows operators to achieve a great deal in subtlety. Culture may provide a neutral façade for cultural institutes and their involvement in local politics. Said comments on the power of this influence in colonial times, and on its persistence ever since. He notes that:

*'scarcely any attention has been paid to what I believe is the privileged role of culture in the modern imperial experience, and little notice taken of the fact that the extraordinary global reach of classical nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European imperialism still casts a considerable shadow over our own times.'*⁵²⁷

It is worth relating this cultural influence to the North-South axis which determines the nature and intention of such action. Said does so by referring to an essay by Gramsci entitled '*Some Aspects of the Southern Question*'. Said describes it as the only sustained piece of political and cultural analysis written by Gramsci and notes that while rooted in the political realities of 1926 it transcends them by addressing the '*geographical conundrum*' in '*geographical terms*' which describe '*the peculiar topography of the south*'. Gramsci believes intellectual work, particularly the intellectual work that can contribute to cultural change and hence changes in cultural

⁵²⁶ Rahnema; Bawtree, page 202.

⁵²⁷ Said (1994), page 3.

formations, take a long time to develop and need strong bases to act upon. Said considers Gramsci's work very highly since he is able to open up the *'universalising discourses of modern Europe and the US [which] assume the silence, willing or otherwise, of the non-European world and the sovereign and unchallenged authority of the allegedly detached Western observer.'* Such a text enables us to become aware of the *'hidden tools'* of imperialism, which seem natural, sometimes God-given, but are not and are indeed clever in creating that illusion. Gaining awareness of and holding discussions on cultural influence through agencies in the Mediterranean is important since the centuries-long development of hegemony is still active as a seemingly objective force in spite of the very foundation and *raisons d'être* of this influence. It is also interesting to note that while Western conceptions of development and the cultural industries may have displaced other local and alternative ways of considering improving and sustaining well-being, the new globalised reality has opened up established mechanisms of influence to be challenged by others which may be considered to both pre-date as well as post-date them. One of these very challenges comes from the study of power relations, discussed earlier. With reference to colonialism, Said states:

*'The important point – a very Gramscian one – is how the national British, French, American cultures maintained hegemony over the peripheries. How within them was consent gained and continuously consolidated for the distant rule of native peoples and territories?'*⁵²⁸

This observation has great relevance to today, where power relations in or through culture are unequal. Said further asserts that:

'cultural practice and intellectual activity carry as a major constitutive element, an unequal relationship of force between the outside Western ethnographer-observer and the primitive, or at least different, but certainly weaker and less developed non-European, non-Western person.'

This statement also holds true in today's environment of Western and European cultural influence on the Mediterranean. It is also true that culture is presented as a comfortable and safe area for different parties to engage in, through which significant political action takes place. Said claims that: *'culture is exonerated of any entanglements with power, representations are considered only as apolitical images to be sensed and construed as so many grammars of exchange, and the divorce of the present from the past is assumed to be complete.'*⁵²⁹

Rather, culture and its expression need to be put in their *'full political context'*, something which European/Western actors rarely do. In this context, it is intriguing to read a recent report of the first Arab cultural policy conference held in Beirut which only hints at the negative repercussions of European influence in Arab lands, and remains generally silent about *'the elephant in the room'* the research is interested in (and not the one described by Moukhtar Korache about local government representation and funding, which is important but a different

⁵²⁸ Ibid. page 59.

⁵²⁹ Ibid. page 67.

issue).⁵³⁰ The report does not ask questions about the role of the organisers themselves which include the European Cultural Foundation and the British Council. This aspect of collaboration points back to Said's observations about false neutrality and participation in an '*act of complicity*'. The role of foreign players seems to be accepted and unquestioned in light of the local situation which is so poor. This poverty ranges in social and artistic terms: in Malta, it is challenging to be innovative and invest and have the right curatorial expertise; on the other hand, in large areas of the Maghreb, the tough political climate as well as the limited infrastructure have hampered free expression. What is also striking is the silence on the role of foreign agencies on the websites of local organisations such as Al Mawrad al Thaqafy and the Arab Culture Fund. This silence suggests this subject is beyond discussion and that only someone harbouring extreme suspicions would dare discuss. However, the list of supporters on these websites cannot but help raise such questions. This is so especially in light of Said's references to '*institutes*' as part of the '*persuasive means*' deployed by the '*hegemonic structure*' to shape the local institutional set up and its cultures and sub-cultures (including architecture, schools and other educational institutes).

The resulting dynamic of exchange has also not been neutral. Cultural exchange between the West and the non-West has led to the weaker side suffering from the difference of imbalance. With reference to the 'Oriental Renaissance' i.e. the rooting of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Persian and Islamic culture at the centre of European awareness and culture between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, Said disagrees with Raymond Schwab and focuses on '*the net effect of cultural exchange between partners conscious of inequality*' which is '*that the people suffer*'. It is important to acknowledge that '*[i]n modern times [...] thinking about cultural exchange involves thinking about domination and forcible appropriation: someone loses, someone gains.*' Nevertheless, while maintaining a focus on how cultural relations are effected by a dynamic of loss and gain the next sub-section entertains the idea of what can develop as a by-product of this context.⁵³¹

As a final note to this sub-section, it is worth reflecting on the relationship between politics and culture which is a sensitive one. On the one hand, cultural operators as well as many policy makers advocate a close relationship between the two when cultural action can be supported and facilitated through political means. Political figures also look for opportunities to interact with the arts and cultural affairs because of the positive and practical profile these may offer. On the other hand, there are limits to the relationship sought. This becomes apparent when artistic figures resent the exploitation of culture by politics or when political officials are irked by the arts when these are perceived as a burden or put them in compromising situations.

Pascal Brunet, the Director of Relais Culture Europe that acted as the EU Culture Contact Point for France in 2007, stresses the importance of North-South networks in supporting artists and promoting their mobility. This type of North-South collaboration obviously raises questions

⁵³⁰ http://www.babelmed.net/Countries/Mediterranean/1st_conference.php?c=5842&m=9&l=en (accessed 4 April 2012).

⁵³¹ Said (1994), page 235.

regarding influence, mutuality and political agendas. Furthermore, Brunet himself states the following:

*'A de facto alliance can arise between networks and the European cultural diplomatic services. For example, when the network of the French cultural centres supports the Conference of Euro-Med Mobility in Fez organised by the Roberto Cimetta Fund (2006), they are participating in the emergence of a space of free expression in the public sphere of the South.'*⁵³²

Brunet also notes that: *'The artists' concerns remain rather the same (to seek, elaborate, propose, show work...) and don't correspond to political priorities in the Mediterranean.'* It is important to note that artists' concerns do not match political agendas; however, one needs to assess why and in what circumstances are political means sought in order to support artists, their mobility, their expression, and the fora and networks that encompass them.

Exploiting the colonial influence

Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes notes that cooperation in the Mediterranean is burdened by numerous factors including the *'implicit fear of re-colonisation'*.⁵³³ Local populations in previously colonised territories like the South of the Mediterranean have had their cultures and the ways they practise their cultures changed and re-modelled by colonial influence and force. The research argues that this influence has not died out, but has rather changed and adapted to postcolonial realities and contemporary circumstances, achieving vested or declared interests more subtly and without the use of direct force, also by making use of cultural ways. However, local populations have not been passive through this process and the different stages of experiencing this influence. This section will argue that local populations have been actors and have contributed to the shaping of the cultural relations and influence which is under focus. By expanding on an earlier reference to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity in terms of the development of a third space, the research is not interested in proposing the creation of a space between the North and the South. Rather, in seeking to develop an alternative, third space between experiencing European influence passively and resisting it to a large, possibly isolating or damaging degree, the research is focusing on the experience of cultural influence and the ensuing relations and how a positive, creative and meaningful space for cultural expression is possible to achieve. As with Said in *Culture & Imperialism*, the research is interested in what happens when cultures meet and not in the monolithic existence of cultures. In the 2007 Communication on globalisation and culture the European Commission speaks of *'culture as a vital element in international relations'* because *'[a]ny culture is born in mixing, in interaction, in confrontation. Conversely, it is in isolation that civilization dies.'* The words *'interaction'* and *'confrontation'* are important and reflect the real, sometimes unplanned,

⁵³² ROBERTO CIMETTA FUND (2007): *Made in the Mediterranean: The Challenges of Artistic Exchange in the Mediterranean*, <http://www.cimettafund.org> (accessed 11 January 2011), page 14.

⁵³³ EUROPEAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION (2008): *An Alternative Gaze: A shared reflection on cross-Mediterranean cooperation in the arts*, <http://medreflection.eurowcult.org> (accessed 1 September 2010), page 68.

unmanaged and unsafe development of cultures.⁵³⁴ The third space envisioned by the research will be sought in a balanced and measured way, as identified by Camus and re-proposed by Cassano, which can refer cultural actors in the Mediterranean to a combination of possibilities offered by the North and full awareness and use of the South's own local resources and strengths.

This third space also refers to the fact that between the colonised and the coloniser there are not only the extreme reactions of accommodation and resistance: rather, there is also the possibility of creatively working together. Toynbee provides a sharp distinction between the two extreme reactions towards imported novel cultural models in the form of '*mimesis*' or slavish admiration which leads to copying, and '*defiance*' through '*defence and closing in on oneself*'. These too can be overcome by a more inclusive analytic and practical approach.⁵³⁵

Amin Maalouf's observations on the different types of influence are noteworthy in this context, especially when applied to arts communities and cultural actors whose exchanges and channels of communication go beyond geographical and temporal conventional confines. Artists in one place will be influenced by their immediate and local environment, but also very much by their contacts and by trends abroad. In order to explain the concept of influence in terms of heritage Maalouf says that '*we are all infinitely closer to our contemporaries than to our ancestors*', in so doing recalling historian Marc Bloch's words that '*[m]en are more the sons of their time than of their fathers*.' He goes on to write that each one of us has two heritages, a vertical one that comes to us from our ancestors, our religious community and our popular traditions, and a horizontal one transmitted to us by our contemporaries and the age we live in. For Maalouf, the horizontal dimension is the more influential of the two. However this fact is not reflected in our perception of ourselves, and the inheritance we invoke most frequently is the vertical one. The approach of the research supports this view and indeed finds inspiration in it: while in favour of defending the development of local culture through local means, it notes that cultural development thrives in "open" contexts. Therefore, once again, a call for balance between foreign influence and local awareness is solicited.⁵³⁶

External actors who hail from outside the local territory sometimes take on the role of mediators, thus contributing to the development of a third space dedicated to profitable collaboration to all sides concerned. One needs to question whether mediators can really stay objective and above the subjective agendas of action on the ground, and whether they can take on a disengaged and neutral position. In way of an image, a "bridge-maker" is not only "between" two sides, but contributing to the whole process itself.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁴ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2007): *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world*, COM (2007) 242 final, Brussels, page 10. Quote attributed to Octavio Paz.

⁵³⁵ Cassano (2010), page 68.

⁵³⁶ MAALOUF, Amin (2000): *On Identity*, Harvill, London, page 58.

⁵³⁷ Cassano (2010), page 75.

The role external actors have is very important in the way cultural cooperation is shaped. However, local actors have an equally, if not more important, role. Locals need to learn the “home” truths rather than try getting a short cut from the “outside” and trying to improve through foreign influence at the expense of experiencing their own realities. In other words, when one does one’s own homework one is in a stronger position to know what one has and what one needs and does not need. A strong local basis is very important in channelling efforts towards development in the right way and avoid putting locals in a box which may define them as being lesser than others and *‘not yet’* (*‘non ancora’*) with reference to the game of catch-up which is doomed to fail. Serge Latouche captures the negative outcome of such an unfortunate dynamic by using the term ‘deculturation’ to signify the imbalanced coming together of cultures.⁵³⁸

Thierry Verhelst notes that the relationship between culture and development is *‘complex’* and that anyone who tries tackling it emerges *‘confused and surrounded by contradictions’*. He describes the process of development also with reference to the Trojan horse image, noting that Westernisation in developing countries may be presented as the package of a good deal which brings benefits and no ills, when in reality the opposite may be true. He notes that peoples or cultural communities outside the West have their own social, economic and political aspirations which may be different to the West or have *‘similar aspirations but different ways of attaining them.’* Verhelst notes that *‘[a]ny consideration of the cultural dimension of development must take into account the external and internal mechanisms of economic and political domination.’* This point is relevant to this discussion since while the focus is not on development, the issue of the cultural dimension of development plays an important role in understanding cultural relations in relation to cultural cooperation. From a negative perspective Verhelst notes that the analyses of communities’ resistance to development need to factor in the cultural dimension and the need to *‘safeguard their identity’* in their own ways.⁵³⁹

As commented on by a number of observers, the value of poverty and ironically, the wealth of poverty, is not a resource to be discounted. As noted by Hernando de Soto with regard to using the *‘richness’* of the poor in terms of their knowledge and skills to move up the social ladder in economic terms, local populations are not on the receiving end and somewhat defenceless against the Western onslaught.⁵⁴⁰ Recalling Paulo Freire it is important to note that *‘no one can free anyone else’*; this can be done by oneself and by using creatively and to the full one’s own means. Engaging in cultural expression and exploring one’s cultural potential is a strong means of self-development. As is being discussed with reference to a variety of authors and will be done later with reference to the field research, it is important to refer to Vincent Cosmao’s concept of *‘recourse to sources’* in order to tap one’s roots, sources of life, being and energies. Furthermore, efforts towards *‘inculturation’*, namely *‘when an indigenous culture profoundly influences a culture of foreign origin’*, are also part of the cultural influence equation.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁸ Ibid. page 67.

⁵³⁹ Verhelst, page 16.

⁵⁴⁰ DE SOTO, Hernando (2008): ‘Il faut faire fructifier la richesse des pauvres’, *Le Monde* 2, No.247, 8 novembre.

⁵⁴¹ Verhelst, page 53.

Odile Chemal observes that the European role in European-Mediterranean cultural cooperation has not drastically changed things for the better, as South Mediterranean regimes still dominate in a number of important cases and their heritage offers local populations a formidable challenge to assess. Therefore relations remain imbalanced. However, the fact that European actors are at least present may be positive, as that of them providing a context for collaboration. While being aware of the agendas Europeans may be carrying, the field research reinforces the perspective that this scenario is preferable to one without their presence. The potential benefits of efficient mechanisms dedicated to capacity building should be exploited further: these should not be exclusively directed at South Mediterranean actors but rather be mutual and engage Europeans in the process of development and change. Unfortunately, as will be seen, political inequalities complicate matters.⁵⁴²

Dialogue across colonial borders

It is generally believed that engaging in cultural dialogue can help individuals, organisations and even whole countries overcome obstacles and divisions among the people involved. However, in situations which are still scarred by colonial realities, it is very difficult to observe and nurture the experience of such a positive break-through. Maurits Berger opens up Els van der Plas' concept of culture as a functional means which provides one with *'identity and a place in the world.'* However, he does not problematise the idea, and argues that this is so because *'if one has a more confident image of oneself, it is easier to understand and respect the other'*. In spite of its apparent simplicity and positivity, this statement needs reflecting upon as it is gravely ironic with regard to those societies that do not enjoy self-confidence precisely because the imposition or the influence of others' cultures on them has brought about this loss of confidence. Such a reflection addresses a Western audience which is indeed ironic as this audience is not the one suffering self-image problems (or if it does, of a different kind). On the other hand, this loss of confidence is definitely a problem for the societies which suffered the imposition. On a direct reading of van der Plas' text, one notices that his comments are more insightful and conscious of the wider context. However, he stills holds a positive interpretation of culture and the effect of cultural heritage on man since he believes one's awareness of oneself is beneficial all-round. It is important to adopt this interpretation with care, since cultural heritage and cultural history may be used to and may lead to the development of a sense of superiority, arrogance and ignorance, rather than openness towards others; examples related to colonialism, as well as Nazi/Fascist dictatorships, abound.⁵⁴³ As he himself admits, *'[c]ultural activities and expressions do not always results in positive change.'*⁵⁴⁴

Further naivety is expressed when Berger discusses the *'missionary policies'* lying behind Western intentions in *'bridg[ing] the gap'* between the West and other populations. While this hints at the civilising mission of colonial times, it is not referred to directly in relation to colonialism and postcolonialism. This lack is significant. By providing a clear and in-depth

⁵⁴² European Cultural Foundation, page 65.

⁵⁴³ RICHARD, Lionel (2006): *Le Nazisme et la Culture*, Bruxelles, Complexe.

⁵⁴⁴ Berger et al, page 14.

analysis of the political and diplomatic scenario surrounding cultural cooperation, but by leaving out the colonial framework, Berger sounds partial and naïve. This is so especially when he speaks of Westerners' identities and wanting to change the '*wrong[s] in Arab world*'. This lack or silence/blindness is indeed interesting and provides one with an interesting (and ironic, due to title of this publication) '*gap*' to study and open up.⁵⁴⁵

For cultural cooperation to be positive and flourish cultural communication needs to be based on a willingness to be honest and open to one another as already noted with reference to Sardar. Berger notes that in certain cases the importance of who is speaking is greater than that of what or how it is being said. Neila Akrimi stresses the need for a '*culture of dialogue*' rather than a '*dialogue of cultures*'. Anything short of this reinforces the '*lopsided relations*' between Europe and the non-European Mediterranean countries, emphasising the greater importance of power relations than that of the messages created. For cultural relations to be conducted on a basis of equality, as well as enable those conditions to develop, all sides need to ascertain their cultural identities with confidence. The concept of '*cultural security*' is worth invoking: it refers to Jean Tardif's idea of '*the capacity of a society to conserve its specific character in spite of changing conditions and real or virtual threats.*' Tardif identifies '*equal dignity*' as a prerequisite for dialogue and real exchange. He further believes that '*for culture, more than in any other area, we must assume an obligation to decentre oneself as essential to understand problems of identity and security.*' Huygens comments that '*[n]o cultural dialogue can succeed when inequalities are too great or when it is controlled by the most powerful.*' The final aim is '*creating more balanced relations*' in order to enable true dialogue.⁵⁴⁶

The value of cultural expression and its functionality is a constant issue with regard to the uses it is perceived to have and is put to. It is interesting to note that different circumstances change the way it is perceived, and different actors seem to validate such perceptions. For instance, Huygens extols the virtues of the arts in contributing to positive cultural relations. At the same time, she adds that the arts should not be instrumentalised especially in terms of promoting government policies. While this is arguably naïve and unrealistic given the driving role that states and related agencies have in shaping cultural relations (as will be discussed in the next sub-section), it also contributes to the sense of dealing with two weights, two measures, with regard to the previous discussion about art enabling dialogue. Huygens' argument suggests that while art enables dialogue, it should not be aimed at doing that purposely. This amounts to wanting to reap the benefit of the arts without wanting to direct the gains and be honest about this (akin to Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth he is ready to be king but not ready to kill for it, but less dramatically). On the contrary, the arts are indeed very beneficial for dialogue, and should be honestly and fairly directed towards allowing this favourable purpose to fulfil itself. The process is not a straightforward one, but this fact does not diminish its value intrinsically and in practice. As argued earlier with reference to Said, culture and the arts are not neutral, be they expressed by previous colonial forces that have become strong states, or expressed by cultural operators. The position taken by Huygens, which is fairly popular, is disingenuous about the

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid. page 6.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. page 18.

neutrality of the arts in order to support a particular agenda for the instrumentalisation of the arts after having argued their apparent purity.⁵⁴⁷

Cultural cooperation and Mediterranean state policies

The role of states in promoting cultural relations in the European and Mediterranean contexts is of central importance. However, one's perception of states needs to go beyond seeing them as *'fixed geographical entities'* and increasingly as spaces that allow for *'transcultural dialogue along flexible, thematic lines.'*⁵⁴⁸ In order to achieve this wide perspective that allows for porosity, it is important to maintain the individual citizen together with his or her community at the centre in a sort of counterpoint fashion. The opening up of states, as opposed to their constriction, is closely tied to the wider geo-political context which we need to be aware surrounds them. In so doing, we realise that *'[r]egional and multilateral cooperation are important'*. We should also realise that one cannot reduce states, or groups of states, to single entity blocks: by doing so, one moves away from a subtle understanding of cultural differences in expression, and towards facile stereotyping. Therefore, the authors of an important report on cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean are right in saying that *'we should stop treating the Arab world as a single entity'*. The authors make reference to recent events in Iraq as well as the situation in Palestine which colour European perspectives which tend to homogenise the Arab world. Europeans themselves have to challenge this naivety regarding *'current geopolitical discourses'* and *'stereotypes they labour under'*. However, one also needs to define the *'we'* and break it down to allow for a perception of cultural relations which allows for meaningful cultural cooperation which balances large scale with small scale.⁵⁴⁹

Cultural cooperation in the European-Mediterranean context is a common means of engaging with various sectors related to the arts, cultural expression including the media and the general population. However, the context for the exchanges that take place may be stifled with convention and an obsession with building on safe dynamics. On the other hand, action undertaken may be over-zealous, and out of place. One of the problems encountered lies in the fact that:

'[c]ultural cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean region is repeatedly hampered by artificially-coined strategic orientations and artificially imposed geopolitical and geographical demarcation lines.'

What may be needed is a revisitation of these parameters around which European-Mediterranean cultural cooperation is organised. Hanneloes Weeda quotes Marlous Willemsen, at the time Deputy Director of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World in Leiden, who calls for the development of *'alternative orientations'*. Weeda notes that this call:

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Berger et al., page 17.

⁵⁴⁹ European Cultural Foundation, page 18.

'presupposes a shift in mindset, and a fresh openness towards the Mediterranean region, leaving behind the preconceived European political and cultural 'gaze', and seeking anew the local context in which the contemporary arts really function today.'

Weeda notes that European cultural operators are often *'unprepared'* when entering the Mediterranean in terms of partners, audiences or cultural goods.⁵⁵⁰

A good preparation comes from time dedicated to becoming familiar with the ways other peoples live their lives, and a great deal of humility and patience with which to be ready to observe and learn. An angle that European individuals or organisations seeking to support cooperation with the South Mediterranean often adopt is that of genuinely wanting to help the development of cultural expression of their intended partners. European cultural actors may be aware of operating in contexts which are challenging to them. As the authors of this report state *'[t]hey need to feel that we are committed to helping build a firm ground for this genuine cooperation to flourish.'*⁵⁵¹ Nevertheless, good intentions cannot make up for a gap in preparation and a willingness to learn and collaborate.

The responsibility of achieving positive cultural cooperation lies with both sides. The issue of self-perception and awareness from the side of the South Mediterranean is raised with reference to Adila Laïdi-Hanieh and Zeina Aida: the latter is quoted referring to a lacking sense of *'symmetrical cooperation'* between Europeans and South Mediterranean artists which tips the balance of power in favour of Europeans. Referring to Turkey Aida notes that cultural organisations *'need to be more critical of what Western organizations put on their agendas, and how they push their priorities forward.'*⁵⁵²

An important challenge lies in the identification of means through which all parties may be in a position of strength and in such a position as to make the most out of possibilities of cultural relations, exchange and cooperation. A way forward is proposed by Weeda in terms of the recognition of a *'common ground of operation'* which undermines *'stereotyped, orientalist oppositions'* and urges us to look for *'the right spaces for dialogue.'* This dialogue ought to aim to be more consistent with the grand utterances and grand gestures made in favour of the Mediterranean. Ayse Caglar notes that European policies towards its neighbours vary from the *'hard political language used for border and security issues'* to the *'softer, family language of "neighbourhood policy"'*. This paradox shapes the relations between Europe and Mediterranean cultural operators. For instance, South Mediterranean and European partners try to target the political realities of the day, sometimes reaping short-term benefit results. Europeans also enjoy funding events, brief and safe, which leave little legacy.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. page 16.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. page 13.

⁵⁵² Ibid. page 18.

⁵⁵³ Ibid. page 20.

Non-governmental funding for cultural cooperation projects, as well as interventions by European states, try to fill a gap left open by the state. The state remains an important player in the development of cultural expression and cultural relations. In fact the state releases a great deal of money for the arts, but often attaches to it a certain number of 'expectations' or 'requirements'. Without state support, however, the maintenance of the cultural infrastructure would be highly problematic. The authors of the European Cultural Foundation report refer to an interviewee from Algiers who notes that:

'In less than twenty years, this [the role of the state] has been completely transformed. Omnipresent, omnipotent, it was once the principal employer and source of revenue for the economy as a whole, compared to which the barely tolerated private sector was a poor relation. Today, it is attempting to disengage itself from this position in favour of market economics, through a series of financial mechanisms. And if there is an area in which the disengagement process has been particularly spectacular, it is that of culture. In a market economy, and without public funds, how was this unorthodox merchandise to be financed? The State, paradoxically, has continued to be the main financial backer of cultural activity through commissions, subsidies and, in recent years, major commemorations that mobilise the entire cultural apparatus for extended periods, e.g. the Year of Algeria in France, and Algiers 2007, Capital of the Arab World. And these, admittedly, have provided new sources of funding for cultural objects.'

Many a time these sources are related to foreign funds which, because of their sporadic nature, do not invest in a legacy. The same authors refer to the way French funding shapes publication projects in Algiers by sustaining them while keeping them short-term. It is noted that for the local operators Hanan Kassab Hassan and Sofiane Hadjadj of *Éditions Barzakh* the following is true:

'The support of the French Cultural Centre for Francophone Publishing (CCF) was very important for us. It provided our business with an injection of money that we used to finance other publishing projects. But this support had obvious limitations. It could only be sporadic, and for this reason, it did not permit us to develop our publishing house. (...) The inherent risk in this kind of financial support is this: it makes us more economically comfortable and, as a result, we risk turning away from the principal objectives of any publisher—reaching a precise readership, helping to develop public reading, and promoting the national book business, etc. We risk only publishing the books that we love, but ones that don't correspond to any public expectation—real or imaginary'.⁵⁵⁴

Faced by the reduced role of the state in funding culture cultural actors have had to manage the greater risk with lessening funds. Nevertheless, the state still plays an important role. Alternatives to state funding are not solid and collaborations with public and private funds are being sought. The effectiveness of interventions and the fruitfulness of the cultural cooperation

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid. page 21.

engaged in are to be analysed and debated. Whichever sources are utilised, local commitment is always needed to support and make foreign input fruitful.⁵⁵⁵

Cooperation projects in practical terms

With regard to the purpose of foreign assistance in terms of cooperation projects that involve European partners and particularly rely on European funding, numerous observers note that the main aims of this type of involvement are not the arts themselves and by themselves but rather the support to '*secondary criteria*' like '*peace and reconciliation, intercultural exchange or social integration.*' Ahmed Polat notes that as a result 'an artistic grey area' develops 'where artistic practices are not valued and supported in their own right, but judged in terms of their social and political impact.' Indeed, Henrik Placht calls on European funders to be more honest and upfront with their South Mediterranean partners in terms of their priorities and goals.⁵⁵⁶

The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), founded by the EU together with its Arab partners in the mid-1990s as a means of responding to the perceived failure of intercultural dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean, is often perceived as an opportunity for Arab cultural operators to redress their structural limitations by making use of regional collaborations with European partners. A number of initiatives promoted by the ALF aim to help local communities challenge conventional and limiting patterns to cultural expression by engaging in cultural relations with the aim to develop fruitful cultural cooperation. However, agendas can be fairly directed at fulfilling European objectives that may not be in tune with local priorities or ways of managing cultural and social affairs. While acknowledging the benefits of introducing and engaging with foreign models and concepts due to their innovativeness and ability to offer a possibility of alterity and change, rather than because of their foreignness in particular, a degree of these interventions may be lost at best, and antagonise the local population at worst. For instance, projects which largely pertain to information technology (IT) developments, with the support of new income streams other than government, can be positive. The interest in the Arab world from the West and worldwide has been growing consistently, and foreign players, not only European and increasingly Asian, have developed a keen eye for new independent cultural spaces. On the other hand, economic, political and social problems persist, even in those states where IT has played a crucial role in challenging despotic regimes. For instance, general rates of literacy and literacy of cultural codes are still low, general education levels needs boosting, and a greater relation between education and employment and productivity needs to be developed.⁵⁵⁷ While aiming at change, this dynamic has reinforced traditional models and perpetuated the influence of the North on the South.⁵⁵⁸

Societies on the South shore of the Mediterranean are often perceived as being reactive to European initiatives for cooperation. For instance, Basra El Hussein asks why the Arab world

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. page 23.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid. page 31.

⁵⁵⁸ European Commission (2007), page 7.

does not take the initiative to engage in intercultural dialogue with Europe, mostly waits for Europe to take the first step and limits itself to receiving assistance, funds and expertise from Europe. A tentative answer is because Arabs content themselves with taking from Europe and do not ask themselves what Europe wants from them. It is argued this is possibly part of the psychological conditioning due to centuries of subjection to imperial and colonial systems. While there may be some truth in this observation, there is also something naïve about it. If Arabs truly did not know, it would be a serious failure. Rather, it seems clear that Europeans and Arabs want the same thing: influence, development, security and image improvement, to mention just a few issues related to the national and international dimensions of states. One significant difference lies in the fact that states in Europe work together through EU structures and have relatively good coordination techniques and synergies with which to influence Mediterranean agendas markedly. On the other hand, Arab states work rather separately and therefore in reaction as well as in opposition to Europe's common agenda.⁵⁵⁹

It is opportune to recall the colonial context to note that contemporary relations need to be interpreted in relation to what has shaped them into their current forms. Nat Muller provides useful observations about the dynamic of *'collaboration'* between sides which carry burdensome pasts. He notes how Maria Lind connects collaboration with both positive and negative elements in human relationships and relates them to the tensions inherent to the contemporary arts world which evoke the *'power dynamics [...] in the field of cross-Mediterranean cooperation'*. Within this perspective, a number of important questions are raised, such as *'how can meaningful and horizontal artistic exchange on equal footing take place when scars from colonial pasts still mark the political and emotional landscape?'* and

*'[h]ow is such cooperation hindered when mutual projections and prejudices can taint perspectives, when technical and financial infrastructure, education and professionalization and reciprocal mobility (the capacity of both parties to travel to one's another countries) might hamper projects, when a convoluted relationship with the state might become a straight jacket for censure, when freedoms are curtailed or other agendas pushed to the forefront?'*⁵⁶⁰

With particular reference to intercultural dialogue, it is worth asking whether projects initiated on the basis of addressing issues stemming from the lack of dialogue or more directly aimed at stimulating intercultural dialogue as a shared European and Arab value can be backed up theoretically and in practice. A reflection on what intercultural dialogue means in practice, as experienced and expressed by artists, raises the following comment:

*'Aujourd'hui le 'dialogue interculturel' est cuisine à toutes les sauces: comment donc réfléchir sur le sens de ces échanges sans tomber dans la complaisance bienveillante, dans la platitude des lieux communs ou dans le silence gêne d'un échec, d'une expérience de 'non-dialogue'?''*⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ European Cultural Foundation, page 36.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. page 52.

⁵⁶¹ Redalie et al, page 9. The context is provided by the Swiss foundation *Pro Helvetia* that initiated a project of cultural exchange between Switzerland and the south shore of the Mediterranean (1998-2005).

A number of events which spring from cultural cooperation are also perceived critically. Among these are relatively big orientalist shows which may serve to throw the spot light on cities of the South Mediterranean cities but arguably do little more than play to the interests of European and South Mediterranean elites. A case in point are biennales, which together with a number of positive outcomes in relation to artistic and PR-related goals, feature a number of negative ones, particularly in relation to the lack of engagement of local populations and its spaces. These cities seem to host the events, but contribute and benefit from little else.⁵⁶²

Such venues also relate to the interest European cultural actors have curiously developed in conflict zones. A case in point is the renewed interest in Lebanon after 2006 following the resumed conflict with Israel. Muller expresses concern about the *'sustainability'* and the *'long-term partnerships'* which are put at risk by this type of media-induced interest in conflictual areas of the Mediterranean, where territorial conflict is rife. Muller stresses the need for *'reciprocity'*, and raises the interesting point that *'Fortress Europe'* can hardly allow that to happen and reinforce the one-way West to East/North to South mobility trend.⁵⁶³

The European community is engaged with the Southern shore of the Mediterranean in practical ways. Following its 2007 Communication on culture and globalisation, its long-standing interest has intensified on the basis of a policy which prioritises practical action and commitment with regard to a definition of culture as *'a resource in its own right, [where] access to culture should be considered as a priority in development policies.'* The specific objectives the EU sets itself include developing political dialogue in the field of culture and promoting cultural exchanges with third countries and regions; promoting market access through agreements, preferential treatment or trade-related assistance measures; and providing technical and financial support to protect and promote cultural diversity. The European agenda for culture in a globalising world acknowledges *'local culture'* and commits itself to *'increase people's access to culture and to the means of cultural expression, including people-to-people contacts.'* Nevertheless, the relevant subject areas which surround this local aspect, like production, networks, independence and the autonomy of the arts community are not mentioned. Furthermore, the interpretation of local culture is rather static while defining culture as something fixed and very particular. Finally, in true European institutionalised fashion, with regard to the working methods, reference is made to *'structured dialogue'* with practically all levels of society.⁵⁶⁴

Commenting on the impact of the EU on cultural exchanges and cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean, Judith Neisse claims an important lesson is being learnt i.e. cultural policy developments should not be tied to political agendas. This is interesting since, on the other hand, developments in political agendas are being tied to those in culture, thus engaging in *'mainstreaming'* both EU-wide and also internationally. What was until recently a major complaint by European cultural operators, namely with regard to European involvement in terms of cultural cooperation across borders (trans-national) which was felt was not given

⁵⁶² European Cultural Foundation, page 55.

⁵⁶³ Ibid. page 56.

⁵⁶⁴ European Commission (2007), page 63.

enough importance by the EU and national decision-makers, is finally changing in light of more emphasis being paid to culture. Practical examples include the European Commission's Work Plan for culture and its relation to the international dimension for example through EUNIC and the European External Action Service (EEAS).⁵⁶⁵

The practical engagement also manifests itself in the form of research projects. In the framework of the decision by the Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership taken at their meeting in Athens on 29-30 May 2008 to launch a process leading to the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture consisting of two main dimensions - dialogue between cultures and cultural policy – which was to be adopted by 2010 but is still pending implementation, the European Commission entrusted two experts, Basma El-Husseiny and Fanny Bouquerel, to draw up a needs assessment report to cover the South Mediterranean countries and address both public authorities and civil society. The exercise was conducted on the basis of a series of questionnaires for public entities and NGOs. It aimed at mapping the actions of the state and civil society in the field of culture on a wide, horizontal basis, exploring with which means this is done, what types of policies and schemes exist to support their work, what challenges they face, and what suggestions do they have to improve their situation.⁵⁶⁶

In order to achieve its aim of designing a regional framework for culture in the Mediterranean area by addressing the issues of dialogue between cultures and cultural policy a series of questions looking into various Mediterranean cultural characteristics were identified. The questionnaire starts by trying to understand the specificities and the diversity of the Mediterranean. It proceeds to try and understand cultural policy as a political vision for culture as well as a set of public measures with which to implement this vision. In relation to this, it asks about how one can elaborate a strategy which is regional and that can meet the needs of the cultural field in each country and be complementary to national public policies considering the great diversity of political systems and the cultural environment in this space. It encourages a reflection on how best to combine interventions at the regional and bilateral levels and ensure a European added value. It does not elaborate on what is meant by this added value in terms of beneficiaries and content, which would have been beneficial in terms of the research project. It asks how once a common strategy is identified, how are the public, civil and the private sectors defined. Furthermore, it tries to understand how the different levels of intervention are defined when in some cases the distinctions between all these sectors tend to be blurred and are subject to various interpretations. It asks respondents to explain how they promote inclusive partnership when the field is particularly fragmented and how they try to enhance balanced partnership when there is a strong discrepancy in terms of capacity between the players based around the Mediterranean rim. Very importantly, respondents are asked how they promote intercultural dialogue and regional collaboration in an area where political constraints do not allow the possibility for some citizens to meet and travel freely. On an

⁵⁶⁵ Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes de la France, page 156.

⁵⁶⁶ BOUQUEREL, Fanny; EL HUSSEINY, Basma (2009): *Towards A Strategy for Culture in the Mediterranean Region*, EC Preparatory document: Needs and opportunities assessment report in the field of cultural policy and dialogue in the Mediterranean Region, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-south/documents/strategy_culture_final_report_en.pdf (accessed 11 January 2011).

institutional level, participants are asked how they take the European *acquis* into consideration and enhance possible synergies among various programmes implemented through various instruments, following different priorities, and addressing different beneficiaries. Finally, acknowledging the difficulties faced when trying to achieve a deep understanding of the cultural field due to the lack of information through documentation and research about cultural policy and cultural practices, the researchers try to understand how respondents design a sensitive and efficient overall strategy that can meet the needs of the sector.

The report provides a wealth of information on the basis of which cultural operators of all levels in the Mediterranean can take efficient action towards improving their actions in the field of cultural policy implementation and engaging in intercultural dialogue. It first looks at the political, legislative and financial frameworks of the cultural environment. It then looks at the contribution of the cultural field to society, both at the economic and social levels. Finally, it gives an account of the situation in terms of regional collaboration and international dialogue and identifies some obstacles and opportunities to develop balanced partnership. The report identifies an important role being played by foreign cultural bodies; it is noted that:

*'international organizations play a major role and should be aware of their responsibility in defining their agendas. In all countries there are a considerable number of European centres, international donors, and regional organizations that encourage and support regional collaboration, including south/south, as well as collaboration with Europe.'*⁵⁶⁷

It is further noted that in some countries there is a degree of coordination among these bodies which thus maximise their significant quantitative and qualitative resources in terms of human, financial and technical supplies. Particular reference is made to the *Goethe-Institut*, the British Council, the *Centre culturel français* and the Ford Foundation. For the younger independent generation, these organisations are the primary partners they approach to support their projects. These international organisations are in contact with both the public authorities and the independent sector, and facilitate connections in the cultural field in a triangular scheme which joins public bodies, the arts sector and foreign organisations. These experiences are discussed in the field research below, together with the difficulties the role of foreign cultural agencies give rise to which are not reflected by this report.

With regard to the legislation aspect the authors of the report refer to the difficulties faced by artists and members of civil society in setting up NGOs in certain countries in the South of the Mediterranean. The alternative or complementary approach of registering one's organisation in a European country under that country's and EU legislation (many times in Belgium because of Brussels' central role in European policy making), mirroring the local organisation, is also mentioned. However, the ways in which South Mediterranean cultural actors seek European partnerships for support and interventions are various. First and foremost, because public funding of the independent sector in the South Mediterranean is difficult to achieve, the cultural sector looks to foreign bodies for collaboration and assistance. On the other hand, the

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid. page 28.

report notes the stiff challenges faced when applying for EU money. The report notes that the preference of international donors and foundations to fund definite projects they can assess comprehensively rather than engage in long-term collaborations is an organisational disadvantage. A number of important points are made in relation to the human resources aspects and it is noted that EU technical assistance in relation to capacity building of the cultural sector is gaining importance as is the foreign-based higher education, training and vocational training of key cultural operators. However, the support of European organisations and the EU in these terms has not successfully addressed the dearth of specialised staff for event organisation which still leads to dependence on European sources.⁵⁶⁸

The report provides a thorough assessment of the economic and social dimensions of cultural development and notes the great influence of the EU as well as France in a bilateral capacity on the audiovisual sector. The Euromed Heritage Programme is also highlighted in terms of Euro-Med assistance given to valorise South Mediterranean heritage. Most projects of this kind which are based on long-term engagement rather than one-off collaborations include a strong element of sustainable development monitored by the EU and supported by European countries and organisations. Such monitoring also applies to arts programmes which consciously tackle issues related to political and religious extremism. This element throws light on political preoccupations of European funding which are high on national and EU-wide agendas, sometimes detached from the realities on the ground and the true scale and relativity of extremism.⁵⁶⁹

The report concludes by considering regional collaboration and intercultural dialogue and particularly the benefits of intercultural dialogue to raising awareness of the Mediterranean identity and fostering understanding. The report does not problematise the numerous issues related to the Mediterranean identity as discussed earlier and again in *Section Two*. On the other hand, it provides a very pragmatic look at intercultural dialogue by focusing on the means which allow such dialogue to take place. It highlights the existence of structures of research, databases and the sharing of information, which is assessed as being weak in the South Mediterranean. The report argues that this weakness does not facilitate and at times even allow for collaborations.⁵⁷⁰

It is worth concluding this sub-section by reflecting upon the particular role which the *Institut du Monde Arabe* (IMA) has had and its ambiguous mission since its inception as an example of North-South cultural cooperation. It has always faced various challenges which include taking into consideration the Arab political context, particularly in view of its sources of income and its role in representing the Arab world. Another challenge exists in the limitations of temporal and spatial representation it faces in terms of past empires as opposed to recent formations of nationhood. This concern includes balancing and respecting the richness of the past against the poorer modern era divided along national lines rather than under general banners, for instance

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. page 43.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. page 54.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. page 106.

with regard to the Ottoman Empire and contemporary Turkey. The IMA has difficult answers to provide since it is straddling two worlds and prone to political and diplomatic manoeuvres and realities affecting its policies or programmes. The IMA also comes in for criticism with regard to it being more of a French rather than an Arab institute and suffers criticism for the poor coverage of contemporary Arab art in France.⁵⁷¹

Markus Luchsinger notes that many times in projects developed on the basis of North-South cultural cooperation the context of the art work of South Mediterranean partners looms larger than the work itself. A policy for Mediterranean cultural cooperation should not only aim at not emphasising the context of one shore over the other, but pay most attention to the creativity and the production of artistically and culturally significant works that resonate among Mediterranean populations. The policy recommendations will be gone into detail in *Section Three*. To conclude this section (*Section One*), the assessment of cultural cooperation will include a very brief overview of the way local productions have been engaging with foreign audiences in relation to particular festivities through a product aimed at the tourism market.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Redalie et al, page 93; 'Le Courrier de l'Atlas', No. 45 février 2011; No. 46 mars 2011 'L'IMA à la dérive.'

⁵⁷² Redalie et al, page 111.

1. 3. c. Festivities and Tourism

Foreign audiences have become a major target for the production of local cultural expression. Visitors and tourists, over the past forty years, have not just influenced local cultures, but in many cases shaped them irrevocably. Such interaction with the local communities has ranged from revitalising lost traditions to corrupting them. While aiming to refrain from moral judgements, this brief and concluding reflection on cultural cooperation aims to highlight how local cultural expression has changed through direct contact with foreign consumers of their expression in ways which make the return to an idyllic and imaginary authenticity impossible.

The revitalisation of customs, festivals and religious celebrations in the Mediterranean has taken place in strong relation to the development of tourism and the cultural industries. Such a trend may be described as '*endogenous*' in terms of the implications it gives rise to in relation to the ironic dependence on the foreign audience targeted.⁵⁷³ The basic forces driving the expansion of tourism and cultural consumption are similar and it is not surprising that mass tourism and mass cultural consumption have coincided as from the late twentieth century.⁵⁷⁴

The two areas of culture and tourism are closely related and feed off each other, with concerns about balance, a sense of being genuine and over-development being raised. The context of culture has changed, leaving the private/community/sacred sphere and entering the economic one. Local economic growth for Mediterranean regions attracting tourism has been making growing use of culture. Jeremy Boissevain looks at the revival of celebrations in relation to economic gain and tourism, which they target, as well as the renewed and implanted celebration of local identity and to what point one can speak of '*newly invented celebrations*'. This development has attracted criticism against the drive to capitalise on cultural tourism, being described as '*a new form of reification or essentialism*'. Such criticism is also directed at the way culture is portrayed in terms of immobilising and stereotyping cultural expression and using it as a tool for economic and political strategies. The celebration of heritage is a strong means with which to portray oneself in an exciting and appealing light to tourists. The process of giving meaning to one's cultural heritage by adding, or removing, layers of one's heritage comes across the interesting term '*heritigization*' which suggests a more planned and structured use of heritage as well as its analysis to meet the demands of the tourist market. The dominance of heritage over memory, or the shift from '*memoire*' to '*patrimoine*', is one way of achieving this.⁵⁷⁵

In terms of intercultural dialogue, it is debatable to what extent this can be achieved. Relations within the context of tourism do not generally allow for meaningful relations to develop in such a way as to develop positive and sustainable personal change on a community. The financial transaction which underlines the experience of tourism may allow for the exposure to high

⁵⁷³ European Cultural Foundation, page 65.

⁵⁷⁴ RICHARDS, Greg ed. (1996): *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, CABI, Wallingford, page 17.

⁵⁷⁵ FOURNIER, Laurent-Sébastien, 'Festivals, Games and Ludic Performances as a New Potential Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean World', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies: History, Culture & Society in the Mediterranean World* (2008): Volume 18, No. 1, page 5.

quality and diverse manifestations of cultural expression but does not easily allow for close collaborations and exchanges to take place.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁶ BOISSEVAIN, Jeremy ed. (1996): *Coping with Tourists: European Relations to Mass Tourism*, Berghahn Books, Oxford.

Section Two: Case Studies and Analysis

2. 1. a. Introduction

European cultural institutes operating on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean perform different roles in political, social and economic contexts which vary greatly from one to the other. In spite of the similarities commented on and those common trends which will be elaborated further throughout this second part of the text, the various territories offer particular challenges based on the different expectations of local communities and their expectations of building cultural projects together with their European counterparts. While projects may aim at developing partnerships, the starting points may vary and colonial elements may still shape their relationships in particular ways.

The interviews carried out with artists and cultural operators in Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Malta aim at gaining insights into the local realities experienced by the people interviewed while using these experiences to reflect on the wider Mediterranean context. The people contacted are engaged on both local and international levels; this fact allowed for a fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences. The main contacts are colleagues as well as friends belonging to the network of the Association of the Biennial of Young Artists of Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM), *'one of the veteran artistic initiatives in the region'*, with which the researcher has worked over the past few years.⁵⁷⁷ In turn, they opened up further avenues through contacts with active participants in the cultural field of their cities and countries as well as the Mediterranean and European dimensions.

The realities of different Mediterranean territories offer particular experiences of cultural expression and cooperation in the wider regional context. However, while respecting these particular characteristics, the research aims at extracting those indicators of common challenges and opportunities faced by people within these different territories, with an aim to provide reflections, and later recommendations, which cater for local realities within the Mediterranean context. By doing so, the research aims to propose a framework of common action based on a greater understanding of how such an approach may benefit the different communities around the Mediterranean in a better way than if each city or local authority had to operate separately from one another or collaborate on the limited level one finds today.

With regard to the South of the Mediterranean, which is the main area of focus of the research, the interviews show that while one often refers to it as the Arab world, this is a gross oversimplification of the complex realities which exist. Nevertheless, common trends do exist, and will be used as reference points in the generation of the accompanying analysis. In writing about common cultural challenges faced by the Arab world in the Mediterranean context, the reflections offered by Ahmed Moatassime are of particular assistance. He notes that issues of identity mainly related to language, self-perception and representation are important focal points for any research dealing with cultural relations in the Mediterranean. All three aspects

⁵⁷⁷ Bouquerel; El Husseiny, page 70.

feature prominently in the interviews carried out, together with the way contemporary interpretations of identities interact with traditional ways which still have a strong presence. In ways which recall observations by Toynbee and Cassano on power struggles in cultural relations, Moatassime notes there are many geo-political and geo-social elements at play. In so doing, he identifies two general lines which provide an axis for this analysis:

- i. the '*cultural resistance*' which favours the '*specific*' in the expression and study of personal and collective identity; and
- ii. the wider, more encompassing perspective which is connected to the overarching thematic issues. Within the context of the research, this framework is provided by the Mediterranean and the cultural relations engaged within.⁵⁷⁸

Two other important elements which shape Arab cultural expression in relation to the European and Mediterranean dimensions are highlighted, namely:

- i. the North–South divide represented in the Mediterranean in terms of who is dominant and who is in a dominated position; and
- ii. the role of European influence and culture and the general influence of globalisation. He notes that Francophony, Europeanism and globalisation (which he links very closely with the US, but also with emerging powers such as China and Brazil) can be described as '*extra-Mediterranean*', but over time, they have enmeshed themselves in the Mediterranean fabric.⁵⁷⁹

Moatassime's analysis is again useful in mapping out the distinctive elements in the research by distinguishing between different groups of the Arab people of the South Mediterranean by identifying them as:

- i. Europhiles (or those putting foreign cultures before their own);
- ii. local culture supporters; and
- iii. those at ease with both cultures.

As a final point, it is worth reflecting on the outcomes of these interviews, which will be discussed following the analysis of the interviews below, in the current context of democratic revolutions in Arab states. As written by Marc Lynch already a few years ago and again more recently, the development of the Arab public sphere has been an organic part of social change and included the cultural and artistic expressions together with the political ones. At the moment of protest, many fused into powerful tools for change. As Lynch notes with good foresight, the emergence of a transnational public sphere was driven in part by domestic repression and in part by the existence of political entrepreneurs able to take advantage of the new media opportunities to invoke a shared identity.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid. Moatassime, page 17.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. page 18.

⁵⁸⁰ LYNCH, Marc (2006): 'The Structural Transformation of the Arab Public Sphere', Chapter 2 (PDF), *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera and Middle East Politics Today*, <http://findarticles.com> (accessed 15 September 2011), page 2. Also LYNCH, Marc (2012): *The Arab Uprising*, Public Affairs, New York.

Before proceeding with an assessment of the changes the Arab public space has gone through in recent years, it is good to refer to the discussion Lynch holds with regard to this term. The term is broken down in the following way:

*'What makes a public sphere is the existence of routine, ongoing, unscripted arguments before an audience about issues relevant to many [...] What makes the new Arab public "new" is the omnipresent political talk shows, which transform the satellite television stations into a genuinely unprecedented carrier of public argument. What makes it "Arab" is a shared collective identity through which speakers and listeners conceive of themselves as participating in a single, common political project. What makes it a "public sphere" is the existence of contentious debates, carried out by and before this self-defined public, oriented toward defining these shared interests.'*⁵⁸¹

The Arab public sphere has undergone drastic changes throughout the Arab revolts. An idea of these changes comes forth when one considers the perceived limits of the Arab public sphere just a few years ago:

*'The Arab public sphere can mobilize public outrage, pressure leaders to act through ridicule or exposure, shape the strategic incentives for rational politicians, and even incite street protests. But it cannot, in and of itself, act. As Khaled Haroub argues, the new public gives Arabs a chance to talk about the reality of the problems of the Arab world, but no opportunity to offer any solutions.'*⁵⁸²

Drastic change can also be witnessed with regard to the sceptic views of Lebanese journalist Hazem Saghiyeh on the recent Arab public sphere who noted that public opinion, considered positively, was not truly represented by mass opinion considered as a negative quality. For Saghiyeh, public opinion, made of the educated, progressive class, was limited, while mass opinion urged the state to take action on national and religious bases. Since the latter was conservative and powerful, it greatly influenced the traditional media which was and arguably still is reactive and deeply embedded in political convention, reflecting the repressive climate in the 1970s and 1980s.⁵⁸³

Lynch notes that the Arab public sphere has been forming and developing into a strong presence which politicians have been paying attention to since the late 1990s. The importance of the internet not only in disseminating news but also in enabling the unofficial exchange of less-censored information emerged to the fore. Such new tools of communication developed the role of diaspora networks in ways which extended the Arab audience globally. Lynch also notes that 'transnational Arab communities' have formed around satellite TV, which allows for a feeling of commonality to develop around the discussion of national issues discussed against a broader canvas.' Augusto Valeriani invokes Arjun Appadurai's idea of 'global cultural economy'

⁵⁸¹ Lynch (2006), page 4.

⁵⁸² Ibid. page 26.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. page 3.

to describe the *'transnational relationship'* which has been forged among Arab communities and media operators in relation to Arab satellite TV and other media and means of communication. It is also noted that the emergence of the satellite television networks was *'necessary, but not sufficient, to create an Arab public sphere.'* While arguing that it was the political arguments within those media that made the difference rather than the media themselves, in terms full of foreboding, Lynch notes that *'the new media has not noticeably changed the Arab state's desire to control information, but it has clearly eroded its ability to do so.'*⁵⁸⁴

The sweeping changes brought about by the Arabic revolutionary movements are appreciated further in contrast to the bleak outlook most commentators subscribed to only a few years ago. At the same time, they reinforce the sense of cautious optimism that accompanies the great hope that such changes will lead to sustainable results. Eugene Rogan makes reference to interesting comments on the *'Arab malaise'* by Samir Kassir, a writer and *'one of the leading voices'* of the anti-Syrian March 14 movement in Lebanon. He was killed on 2 June, 2005 in Beirut. Shortly before that, he had published a piece in *'An-Near'*, the Lebanese daily, exploring the *'Arab malaise'* of the twenty-first century. He reflected on the disenchantment of Arabs with their corrupt and authoritarian governments. He noted that *'a deep disquiet pervades the Arab world.'* He recalls that before this negative period, Arabs had enjoyed two positive periods: first, in the first five centuries after the emergence of Islam (seventh to twelfth centuries); second, in the nineteenth century: this was the *Nahda*, the cultural renaissance, which was influenced by increased contact with Europe, particularly France, at the end of the eighteenth century, and ironically influenced Arab politics in the twentieth century, particularly in relation to the transition from colonialism to independence. Rogan refers to the analysis of the bad state of Arab countries presented in the *Arab Human Development Report (2002-2006)* and the identification of three challenges: good government; good education; and the empowerment of women.⁵⁸⁵ Through references to the very recent past, one realises that change does not come easy, and that it needs a great deal of persistence, dedication and effort to establish new ways of behaviour and relating to one another. As will be shown, cultural expression and the various tools people have at their disposal are enmeshed in this social change, and provide the means to engage in a thorough reflection as is attempted here.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid. page 13.

⁵⁸⁵ ROGAN, Eugene (2010): *The Arabs: A History*, Penguin, London, page 624.

2. 1. b. Algiers

Introduction

The role of the artist in Algiers is not an easy one. It would be fairer to the artists, and indeed the cultural operators, who were interviewed over five days in Algiers between 20 and 24 October 2011, to say they have multiple roles. While this will be analysed in detail later, suffice it to say here that the artist in Algiers is multi-tasking and resourceful. It can be argued that this is so because taking on multiple roles is a sustained reaction to an equally sustained lack of sufficient and well thought-out investment by national and local authorities in the cultural infrastructure of Algiers and as well as secondary cities whose artists seek the capital in the hope of a better cultural milieu which only exists in part. The five artists and cultural operators who generously shared their time and experiences for the purposes of the research had different stories to tell but came together in expressing the difficulties and unpredictability faced when developing their skills and exploring their paths.

With regard to the influence of the North on the South, it is worth noting that French cultural policy during colonialism was particularly explicit and strong in Algeria. The European settlers there felt like it was living in an extension of Europe. French rule towards the local population was harsh, and cultural policy was used in ways as to dominate further. The French attempted smart ways at capitalizing on cultures in Algeria and clashes between Berbers and Arabs.

Part of the policy encouraged France to build also literally on Roman heritage in order to forge a connection and root its colonisation model in glorious antiquity. Rome also gave France a reason to conquer: the *colons* consciously tried reconnecting North Africa to this period in history in order to present this territory as having Latin roots which pre-dated Arab ones.⁵⁸⁶

A specific strand of this policy gave rise to '*le myth cable*' whereby Berber history and identity were manipulatively supported by the French against the Arabs in terms of favoritisms on the basis of discriminatory practices. In turn, some Berbers did support the French against the Arabs thus contributing to the impression of being favored and instrumentalised. Far from engaging in scientific research which focused on reality, colonialism developed the stereotypes of Berbers and Arabs to its own advantage by portraying the Berbers as more closely related to the Europeans and hence better than the Arabs. The French tried to overcome the mainly Arabic resistance in Algeria by favouring the Berbers and looking at their mission not as a conquest but as a re-conquest in light of the Celtic/Germanic/Christian/Aryan roots they sought to see in the Berbers who resisted whole assimilation to Arabic ways. While the main tools which the colonial force used in this context were cultural, in the same vein what seemed to bind the people of Algeria against the invader were culture and religion, which are no mean

⁵⁸⁶ RISLER, Camille (2004): *La politique culturelle de la France en Algérie: Les objectifs et les limites (1830-1962)*, L'Harmattan, Paris, page 24.

elements of one's identity. Eventually, Muslim culture and identity provided a strong force of resistance against the imposed process of Frenchification.⁵⁸⁷

During the nineteenth century, French policy towards the Algerians went from assimilation, particularly of the Berbers, to one which was more subtle and more divisive in order to rally Berbers against Arabs. This is where association and the creation of a Francophile/elite class play a part in the change of strategy, which however remained somewhat confused. Algerian independence, following the messy French withdrawal at the end of the bloody Algerian war, helped re-assert the Algerian identity, but not without further complications which still effect society today as is seen below. Former President Bouteflika had described this plight in terms of a 'genocide' practiced by the French on Algerian identity and its history.⁵⁸⁸ Unfortunately, what can be witnessed today in terms of the general negative social as well as cultural and creative conditions lends support to this terrible vision.

Cultural institutes

Many Algerian artists find respite and opportunity in the physical and human resources foreign agencies provide. Of particular importance is the *Centre culturel français* (CCF) which, due to the tight schedule of my visit and the unavailability of the director in Algiers, I did not manage to visit and whose staff I did not interview. Nevertheless, a Skype interview with Gaëtan Pellan, the Director of the CCF in Oran, who had previously also served in Palestine, was held. He noted how specific programmes aimed at the European-Mediterranean space did not exist, since most efforts were run on the basis of bilateral collaborations between French and Algerian cultural operators, one case in point being the participation of Algerian artists in the *Marseille Provence 2013* European Capital of Culture programme. The CCF also supports local actors to collaborate with French cultural operators on projects aimed at local communities. He notes how cultural institutes are not eligible for EU-funded programmes. While this keeps opportunities open exclusively to local organisations, this is unfortunate since a great deal of work initiated by European cultural institutes for the benefit of local communities has to be redesigned and local bodies, which may not have the capacity to run a project, need to be identified in order to access these funds. Pellan notes how this was an even bigger problem in Gaza when he was CCF Director there for four years. There, programmes set up to assist the population were difficult to put to use and were approached with ingenuity and creativity by organisations, apart from the usual big organisations who knew how to do so, to access these funds. Pellan also notes that in territories like Gaza micro-efforts are useful, but macro-efforts aimed at the larger region are essential to develop coherent programmes over the long-term.

The role of institutes like the CCF is complicated. Their attitude towards the past emphasises a clean break which however takes into account the history of their presence and the way people today still perceive their occupation of local public and political, as well as cultural, space in light of colonialism. On the other hand, collaborations aimed at improving local cultural

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. page 38.

⁵⁸⁸ Moatassime, page 164, as quoted in 'Le Figaro' of 21 April 2006.

expression and raising the quality of various elements in society ranging from education and job prospects to international collaborations in business as well as culture are what they strive for, and what a sizeable part of the population, especially the young and students who want to climb the social ladder and perceive their world as going past temporal or physical limitations related to tradition, seek. Speaking to the poet and cultural operator Samira Negrouche during our first encounter in Brussels and Mohammed Barrada, a retired academic and Tunisian émigré to the Belgian capital, engendered the feeling that in spite of the ills of colonialism, one should not simply condemn all of its ramifications and do away with its entire heritage even if a lot of it is burdensome.⁵⁸⁹ Negrouche comments on how the CCF has for a long time acted as an oasis for creative people and individuals who in the CCF recognise a space which allows free thinking, expression and communication without the same degree of risk they face in public spaces for trying to be more themselves. Negrouche notes that many people seek the CCF and its services. Unfortunately, it is those who never frequent it that hold it in mistrust and seek to criticise its role in Algerian society.

Veteran visual artist Karim Sergoua, my main contact in Algiers, provided invaluable insights into the impact of European cultural agents in Algeria in the context of Algeria's colonial relations with France. Sergoua is a veteran of contemporary visual arts expression in the Mediterranean. Born in 1960 in Algiers, he collaborated with stalwarts of the revolutionary Aouchem visual arts movement like Tarik Mesli and Denis Martinez (*'ils ont dit le signe, le signe berbère, significat d'Aouchem, est plus fort d'une bombe'*).⁵⁹⁰ He worked together with other artists in the group Essebaghine in the early 2000s and has exhibited his work and curated exhibitions all around Europe and the Mediterranean. Tahar Djaout has this to say about him:

*'Mais Karim Sergoua n'abdique pas devant le risque et la confrontation [...c]ette manière quelque peu irrespectueuse, qui n'est en réalité qu'une façon de réagir à la destruction et à la consommation effrénées, suscite à la fois la malaise et l'interrogation.'*⁵⁹¹

From a perspective of cultural production, Sergoua believes one cannot speak of cultural influence without risking being partial and therefore irrelevant. Artists are sponges of influence and therefore a map of what inspires and effects artists has to be global. Sergoua also takes issue with references to nationalising art and artists when analysing influence, since he believes that art cuts across national borders and using categories like 'Algerian artist' recreates artificial yet powerful North-South divisions (*'Nous nous écrivons dans l'universel'*).

On the other hand, in terms of material and institutional influence, it is important not to overlook the fact that like many territories colonised by political and military regimes which were strong and have left a somewhat indelible mark, the way artistic thought, conception, formation and expression developed in Algeria has been heavily shaped by French experience.

⁵⁸⁹ Both informal interviews took place in Brussels in October 2010 on the fringes of the second European Cultural Forum.

⁵⁹⁰ A copy of the original manifesto of Aouchem, provided by Sergoua at his studio in Algiers, is in the Annex.

⁵⁹¹ DJAOUT, Tahar (1990): *Karim Sergoua sur le sentier de la guerre*, Alger.

This experience is one of France itself, of France in Algeria, and of the world in general mediated through French means. One such means which should not be taken for granted is language.⁵⁹² Furthermore, as noted by modern visual art critic and curator Nadira Laggoune, this French influence in visual art, born of colonial rule, ushered Algerian visual expression into the modern age. This had an effect on both the art produced, as well as the means of production. Teachers of art were formed in pedagogical systems based on French structures, many a times directly in France, and taught their students in education systems embedded in French culture and developed according to French norms. The whole learning system was oriented towards France. This scenario existed for all students and teachers of art from the 1960s up till 1985. Up till then, the French government made scholarships available to Algerian students to study in France. These came to end in 1986 when the national *École des Beaux-arts* was developed in Algiers, where Sergoua and many of his colleagues who benefitted from a formation in France or through French support went on to teach future generations of artists. At the same time, the opening of the CCF brought with it conference centres, libraries, media libraries, exhibition spaces and the possibility of accompanying exhibitions with catalogues. Sergoua says that '*unfortunately*' this was done by the CCF, meaning that the local artists had to rely on a foreign organisation to provide these services in view of the incapability of their own authorities to do so.

There are also serious downsides to the way cultural institutes operate which betray a sense of being deeply out of touch with local realities and their complexities because each would be working on their own different priorities; these may be viewed as well-meant but superficial from a local perspective. For example, Negrouche offers an earnest critique of a joint project between the Hay Festival and the British Council involving a number of young authors in Arab cities including Beirut and Algiers. She laments the fact that many authors were selected on the basis of them being popular media figures at home or familiar with European-oriented projects as well as having been born and bred in Europe yet capable of reflecting upon local realities in some sort, rather than good writers. Negrouche feels cheated in these situations, also because writers like her see precious local and European funds diverted into such projects. Negrouche is also angry at the fact that potential local supporters of local projects are absent: the press flocks to events which are initiated by European organisations, but desert local ones. She interprets this behavior as betraying a colonised mentality, for which not the foreigner but they themselves are responsible (*'Ça nous ramène dans la situation de colonisé. C'est nous qui sommes colonisés'*). Something similar happens in terms of towards whom local authorities or organisers turn to and employ when a big or important event is to be held: Negrouche notes that it is much more common for French operators to be contracted than the admittedly few, but existing, qualified locals. Such individuals, like herself and her colleagues, have a hard time in seeking and securing funding for projects they believe in and are not necessarily about themselves; she further complains that after many years of trying to establish a structure which is sustainable and reaches beyond a small group of individuals by involving the state and other local players, such efforts seem to have been mostly in vain. Negrouche expresses a tiredness of trying, and a fear that earlier persistence she possessed is running out.

⁵⁹² This point is developed later in this section.

Djalila Kadi-Hanifi, coordinator for the cultural organisation *L'Association Chrysalide*, sees relations between Algerian and French artists as being very difficult to establish and maintain, but sounds hopeful in terms of the way they may give rise to strong collaborations and frank exchanges based on intercultural dialogue in the near future (*'Comme j'ai dit, ce n'est pas la France et l'Algérie mais des français, qui vient pour travailler avec des algériens. On veut restaurer ce type de rapport. Il y a pas mal d'opportunités avec des groupes européennes, c'est magnifique'*).

The roles of artists

I met with Negrouche in her apartment in Algiers during my visit there in October 2011. I had met her for the first time in Brussels a year earlier. Interviewing her informally together with Alessandro Stillo, it had become clear that she was walking a tight rope between an identity which was locally rooted and proud to support cultural expression and a border-less perspective and an attachment to the arts which often put her at odds with her immediate social context.

A further complication in the life of artists who are also cultural operators, like Negrouche, stems from the multiple roles they may take on within their cultural milieu. Due to a number of reasons, including a limited cultural infrastructure, not enough human resources of enough experience or calibre, and the nature of the creative field itself, being culturally engaged may entail playing a number of different yet complementary roles, such as artist, manager, publicist, fund-raiser and curator. Individuals who take on any number of these roles gain immensely in experience, and contribute in the same measure to their society. However, members of that society may resent individuals for stepping up and taking on multiple roles, due to the contacts they build, the trust they nourish and the ensuing projects they are commissioned or entrusted with. Those individuals or organisations who feel threatened by what may be perceived as a web of contacts they may not be part of, may turn on the individual who is a multiplier of creative acts and oppose them through alternative networks. The hats which a cultural operator may wear and cause offence with are not restricted to the arts sector. These people may also be activists for a number of societal issues including politics, gender issues, homosexuality or minority rights. The case of Algerian writer Djamel Amrani comes to mind: while having been a hero of Algerian resistance against the French, he was an outcast to his family and society because of his homosexuality. Apart from beautiful and touching literature, his life was marked by what Adrian Grima describes as *'liminality'* i.e. an existence spent living on the edges of different, even conflicting, societal groupings, which one never seems to find oneself at home with.

Thriving on or gravitating towards the border puts one in an advantageous position to seek out, become interested in, learn more about and engage with whoever lies beyond that confine. Such is the case of intercultural dialogue and how it may flourish between different generations of migrants, members of minority groups and the underprivileged. Unfortunately, arguing this is so implies accepting the fact that those individuals and organisations which are comfortably situated at the centre, quite safe from the edges and occupied with preserving their stability,

and very often wielding power over the rest of society, may be more inward-looking and less interested in reaching out towards and taking chances on the peripheries.

Cultural operators who extend their collaboration to foreign cultural institutes, embassies or academic establishments tend to exacerbate the negative perception they may be judged by. Such is the case of Negrouche with a number of foreign agencies in Algiers, particularly the CCF because of the special connection and relevance this centre has in Algeria to the historical, colonial and contemporary political relations between Algeria and France. The relation between local artists and foreign cultural centres is far from being based on naivety or forgetfulness. Rather, it involves an understanding of the context, willingness and possibly a need to survive by adapting, seeking and accepting change, which is difficult to explain.

The South and the North

From a global perspective, for instance, of the visual arts, the South appears to be traditionally consigned to the periphery while it attempts, in vain, to capture the centre dominated by the North. The relationship between Algeria and France on a cultural basis can be discussed in the context of broader artistic relations, even on a global scale. For a previously colonised territory not to turn its back completely on its past coloniser, like Algeria with France, in spite of several moments when a diplomatic break threatened to take place (the most recent being in 2005), suggests that territories that lie in or make up the South see an advantage in maintaining such relations. As discussed earlier with reference to Boullata, the South may seek a way away from the periphery and into the centre in building and sustaining relations with the North. This relationship can take various shapes, including exposing oneself to artistic influence, as is the case with Algerian artists and educational set-ups following Algerian independence from France up till nowadays, to local individuals and organisations seeking collaborations with agencies like the CCF because of the scarce resources they provide on the ground.

Sergoua engages in an insightful observation about the relation between South and North. While being interesting with regard to this relation, it can also appear to be simplistic. On the other hand, it provides great insight into how Sergoua himself sees this relation on the basis of his vast experience as one of the foremost contemporary visual artists in Algeria. Sergoua has worked widely in Europe, particularly in France and especially on the south littoral in and around Marseille. Through his art, teaching and exchanges he has experienced how close the French city and Algeria, particularly the capital, are, in terms of ways of living, reference points, languages used and what may be called an over-arching Franco-Algerian perspective of the Mediterranean. He expresses experiences which are both positive and enriching as well as others which reinforce stereotypical divisions based on mind frames which prolong racist or colonialist perspectives.

Adopting a wide angle, he notes that many creative works produced by traditional communities change in value depending on the context: in other words, funerary or religious sculptures or monuments which had such a purpose in the South become artefacts of artistic and possibly high economic value when transferred to or reproduced in the North (*Donc il y a de côté des*

antiques et des historiens, deux pots deux mesures’). In so doing, a facile division between contemporary art, adopted and promoted by the North, and “indigenous” art, is created. Sergoua questions the use of the term indigenous which he finds contemporaneously restrictive and vacant (*Les grands dictionnaires et revues d’art sont divisés par ça pour dire qu’il est de l’art indigène mais c’est quoi ça l’art indigène, le mot indigène veulent dire quoi ? C’est un sur-juge*’).

Camille Risler reflects on the French impetus to indigenous art as from the beginning of the twentieth century particularly under Governor Jonnart who was very active in supporting the development of local artistic expression. French as well as other European influence on local production was very marked. The development of the ‘cabinets de dessins’, the support given to iconic visual artist Mohammed Racim as “a Mediterranean artist”, and Georges Marçais’ support for the establishment of a ‘*culture associée*’ are telling of French involvement in this way. Risler concludes that in spite of these supporting efforts, the coloniser always had his advantage in mind and supported the creation of indigenous art for his own benefit.⁵⁹³ Nadira Laggoune takes a rather different take, one which is less passive, and more subversive, of French influence on visual art in Algeria in the 1920s. This is ironic, since Camille comes across as being much more critical of the French while Laggoune is less critical by giving more credit to the local artists. She describes how starting from Racim and the first Algerian artists who learnt their trade and travelled to and worked in Europe, including developments in theatre and in particular le *Groupe 51*, up till 1967 with Choukri Mesli, Ben Berber and Aouchem, Algerian artists were not subjected to European influence which they rejected; rather, they interacted with that influence to take what they saw fit for their own art and development (*L’art qui était pratiquée ici c’était mélangée à celle de là et c’est formée un art de résistance parce qu’elle va servir de base pour dire ‘non, nous sommes aussi universelles, nous avons l’arabe chez nous, dans les dessins berbères qui sont nos maisons traditionnelles, et nous sommes déjà là*’). Echoing Gallant and Toynbee, Laggoune notes that the act of imitation in the context of modernism being appropriated by Algerian artists as in these cases was not a submissive one but a subversive one (*On crée un malaise chez le colonisateur, ils les dérangent. C’est dans ce sens qu’on parle de résistance dans l’imitation. Imitation ce n’est pas comme ça; dans les premiers écrits sur l’Algérie, on parle de ça, des copieurs, donc ils sont assimilés dans le sillage, mais ce n’est pas une colonisation sans résistance, qui a commencée, qui va dans génération en génération*’). In a way that supports the views of Nagi-Zekmi on the critical appraisal of frontier identities discussed earlier, Laggoune recognises that her own interpretation of this historical context is a method of resisting through appropriation, thus making a narrative one’s own. However, with regard to contemporary art, the challenge is much bigger because it is of a different kind. She describes the phenomenon of globalisation as the most recent and most aggressive form of Orientalism, which artists from the South resist through appropriation. Artists in Algeria are no different from others in the South who have reacted to an imposed model and context of references and made it their own.

⁵⁹³ Risler, page 103.

Sergoua moves on to explain that what has its roots in the South is somewhat different from what sprouts from the North, and explains this in terms of a richer passion, spirituality and meaning (*'Mais je pense que ça qui vient du Sud est plus honnête, plus émotionnel, plus pur'*). He expresses the belief that the North is aware of this richness in the South, which it follows up by trying to appropriate itself of or at least copy. However, this effort is not enough to solve the myriad social and cultural problems which the North faces. Negrouche notes that Europe is suffering from a serious crisis related to its cultural education and exposure which manifests itself in the dropping standards and quality of life of its citizens. Sergoua believes the North should stop and acknowledge the richness that lies in the South. He also strongly believes that the Mediterranean plays a central role in this dialectic. The South littoral of the Mediterranean is not acknowledged by the North, to the loss of both (*'On oublie tout ça et est récupéré par le Nord, remâché, et récupéré dans le sens de l'action, la recherche, la culture; alors Avicenne, Ibn Khaldun, plein de personnes comme ça qui on a occultées bien sûr. Pourquoi ? Parce que c'est comme cette partie de la carte de la Méditerranée n'a aucune culture, rien'*).

Within the Algerian context, French policy was keen on familiarising itself with local cultures in order to exploit them to its advantage. The *'folklorization'* of Algerians was practiced by the French to keep representations of the locals in their hands and simple and safe. The oral cultures which dominated Berber and Arabic cultures were easy to control and codify. The French employed their own cultural tools in their attempt to undermine the influence of and weaken Islam for instance through photography, alcohol consumption as part of social life and sending girls to school. The French also take over the *madrases* (the Coranic schools for the elite children) and in so doing take hold of the centres of learning of both religious matters and language: in this way, both laic views and bilingualism were introduced. Visual art and architecture are two other areas which France used to its advantage, appropriating the local value and promoting selective appraisal for instance to the benefit of Andalusian art.⁵⁹⁴

Sergoua believes contemporary art has the means, as well as the duty, to address and challenged stereotypes surrounding the art of artists from or based in the South which are still strong today. He consciously challenged conventional interpretations in a half-mocking way through a recent interactive installation called *'Souvenir d'Algérie'* held in Paris wherein he invited audiences to challenge their expectations of art from the South as orientalist by taking photographs of themselves in clichéd settings in a gently self-deprecating manner. Sergoua is keen to break away from facile formats which allow Western audiences to access and digest other artistic expression with false ease (*'Si on reste dans leur ligne quand ils ont fait des programmes format ils nous rendent une expression prêt pour les musée'*). This problem is not restricted to Algeria and Sergoua finds that in effect it is much worse in Tunisia and Morocco where local expression seems more disposed and malleable to fit into French and Western formats. On the other hand, he is happy to note that private initiatives in Casablanca are trying to turn things round and refers to the projects related to the conversion of the old slaughter

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. page 44.

houses, *Les Abattoirs*,⁵⁹⁵ into a creative centre and private art galleries, such as the project based at the reconverted *Sacré Coeur* church, which are challenging conventional ways of perceiving the visual arts. However, by way of a general comparison with Algeria, the development of visual expression in Morocco following independence remained controlled and was steered away from areas of possible social friction. In contrast to Morocco's two schools for fine arts, Algeria enjoyed a number of regional schools, an excellent school in Algiers, and a vast network of collaborations and twinning projects established with a variety of European schools.

In terms of contemporary collaboration, Sergoua's experience with the BJCEM has made him very conscious of the challenges which artists from the South face when attempting to travel to Europe for any period of time in order to participate in festivals, workshops and other events. As many other cultural operators from both sides of the Mediterranean and Europe believe, taxing visa regimes should be revised in order to allow cultural cooperation to take form and not stop at the planning stage because bureaucratic and security systems act as obstacles.

In terms of the North supporting the South, Negrouche notes that while mobility is an issue, supporting it presupposes a number of other elements, mainly related to cultural infrastructure, are already in place. The fact that these are not means that together with mobility, the North and the South together need to address the situation on the ground in the South. Negrouche is very critical about financial resources which are aimed at the development of cultural infrastructure in the South but which are channeled through official state means which are not open in terms of democracy or efficient in terms of management and fail to deliver for the benefit of the artistic community. Negrouche sardonically remarks that this means that artists are supposed to wait for state structures to improve before they can really start benefitting from these efforts from the North (the Roberto Cimetta Fund is referred to as an example) which are squandered by local authorities. Furthermore, when support for projects is accessible to cultural organisations, their participation is seriously hampered by an approach which is very schematic and which focuses on priorities related to short-term social change which are not amenable to an artistic approach to cultural projects (*'Alors on sait très bien que la création n'a pas des thématiques et des artistes ne peuvent pas se forcer parler des thématiques'*). Echoing what Driss Ksikes says with regard to European interventions in the Mediterranean from a Moroccan perspective, Negrouche notes that funders need to realise that artistic expression cannot be managed in the same way economic matters are (*'Il faut comprendre que non, on ne peut pas maîtriser l'art administrativement comme on maîtrise l'économie etc. Ce n'est pas possible. Il faut partir du postulat que l'art ne se maîtrise pas'*). Negrouche is bewildered by the fact that in spite of these mechanisms, quality is many times not ensured. Rather than depending on the reliance on impersonal and strict means, Negrouche prefers building relations based on trust which are upfront about their prioritisation of development projects with those communities who are in need. Undoubtedly, this perspective enjoys a more human dimension, and could be more effective in terms of the

⁵⁹⁵ The reclaimed space and the project were visited together with one of their chief managers, architect Abderrahim Kassou, in September 2011.

communities it could touch; nevertheless, issues of accountability and impartiality, which many contemporary funding structures are tied to, would not make such proposals possible to implement.

Nadira Laggoune develops her assessment of globalisation as being a renewed expression of Orientalism with regard to the way the North manages most of the art which takes place in the South. She refers to a variety of festivals such as African biennales which are run by French people, with very little input by local artists and cultural operators. The same applies to big events run by or in the Gulf states, which have no local expression to put forward in a conglomeration of westernised ideas. Nevertheless, she believes that local artists and cultural operators do well to exploit such occasions to their utmost advantage and use such platforms to compete on a global level. The level is not fair, since commercial interests and budgets shift the playing field in different, unequal directions, and local authorities have a big part to play in this. However, the time to play the victim is over, and an attitude of assertiveness serves young generations in the South well. One clear example of influence interpreted for one's own benefit can be seen with regard to censorship and the successful way political, religious and moral conventions have been challenged through art in a variety of festivals.

In an interesting insight provided with regard to local differences, Gaëtan Pellan notes the differences which exist between operating as CCF in Algiers and in Oran. He notes that being outside the capital offers advantages in terms of the liberties he enjoys, but these are coupled by disadvantages related to the exclusive pull which Algiers has on the larger local, as well as international, events (*'Oui, des grandes différences. Je peux faire des choses que mes collègues là-bas ne peuvent pas faire parce qu'il y a les pressions, les regards. Ici à Oran il y a la possibilité de travailler avec la société civile, les universités, dans la rue avec le théâtre de la rue, choses comme ça, et on peut faire des choses qui à Alger on ne peut pas parce qu'ils sont très sécurisés. On a participé à ces événements, par exemple à la Nuit Blanche organisée de côté de la mairie de Paris, sans problème, la nuit, parce que les choses sont beaucoup plus décontractées et fluide. On constate par rapport que dans l'ensemble que les grands festivals, les grands initiatives, aussi de côté européenne, ceux-ci vont seulement à Alger. Ça c'est une frustration générale de tous les opérateurs dehors de la capitale, par exemple le avec des festivals européennes, qui vont seulement à Alger'*).

With regard to projects that extend beyond national boundaries and involve a regional dimension, Sergoua interestingly refers to the relatively dynamic North-South axis and the relatively poor South-South one in terms of regional cooperation. This lack is ironic given the closeness in religion and language which the shared Arab/Muslim identity provides but which, as discussed earlier, creates a false sense of commonality (*'Une coopération horizontale qui est important parce que ce n'est pas normal pour la Méditerranée de ne pas travailler ensemble. Si on voit le Portugal, l'Espagne, la Suisse, l'Italie, et si on voit nous, les pays arabes, tout ça ont une forme en commun, qui est la langue. Nous parlons la même langue. Et on a la même religion. Et qu'est ce qui on fait avec ça ? Tout les frontières, c'est incroyable, il n'y a pas des unions. C'est lamentable...'*). Negrouche also senses an ironic sense of mistrust which poisons relations between cultural operators hailing from developing countries which can be

destructive and counterproductive to encouraging self-development and South-South relations to develop. She finds in this a colonial residue (*'[...] il y a du mépris entre les pays pauvres. Quand tu vas comme algérienne dans un pays comme la Macédoine tu n'es pas respecté comme si tu étais française. On doit travailler avec qui connaisse la qualité. Pour ça quelque fois je préfère aller dans les pays riche aussi si j'aime chercher la collaboration avec les pays comme nous. Mais on a plus accès à la culture occidentale, pour utiliser cette terme, parce qu'il y a plus des festivals, que dans de pays comme l'Iran, la Chine, l'Afrique. Les rares événements qui se faites sont officiels et tu te trouves dans situations d'abord méprisé: un algérien au Maroc, par exemple. Je ne parle pas d'individus, mais en groupe, les pauvres se méprisent entre eux. C'est la réalité. Le sens de colonisé est profond'*).

Returning to the aspect of developing cultural infrastructures directly in the South by the local and national authorities themselves, Negrouche notes there is much to be achieved. It is about the facilities and the structures, but not only. It is more importantly training people and giving them the right skills, exposing them to the right experiences locally and abroad, reaching out to different generations to develop new audiences, investing in education to sensitise, familiarise and encourage people from a young age to engage with the arts, and plan ahead and long-term and sustainably. Negrouche feels let down by the state in terms of investing sensibly in the arts and most of all in the artists. Ironically, the sense of hope and positivity was greatest during the terrorist nightmare of the 1990s which followed years of neglect towards higher education in both Arabic and French, after which the return of the calm accompanied by the usual disinterest towards cultural life led to disillusionment (*'Donc, ces individus qui ont tous vécus des drames personnels, et bien il n'y a plus d'énergie positif pour créer ensemble. Fin des années 1990 début 2000 il y avait beaucoup plus d'espoir et énergie alors que le terrorisme était encore là et on croyait qu'on voulait faire des choses et aussi à partir de rien. A petit à petit ces gens sont devenus un peu désillusionnés'*).

This is indeed ironic as pointed out by Kadi-Hanifi. In her work on memory and expression through the media, particularly narrative in film, Kadi-Hanifi notes that the impact of the terrorist years on the psyche of ordinary Algerian citizens cannot be underestimated. The negative experience should not be contained and individuals are being supported to come to terms with the trauma and do so creatively (*'Tous que nous avons vécus ces dernières années nous ont marqué et tout ça doit être pris en considération par nous-mêmes. L'acte d'exprimer et sentir notre histoire c'est primordial pour nous. C'est notre vie quoi'*). In terms of the recuperation of memory and the expression of issues which have still not achieved closure, 2012 also marked the 50th anniversary of Algerian independence from France following the bloody Algerian war, and this occasion was used to spur projects and collaborations with which to address contemporary society in light of recent history. Collaborations developed with French artists gain poignancy in this context and throw light on current North-South shared projects (*'Mais on s'ennuie avec un artiste allemand. Je caricature, bien sûr. Mais avec un artiste français on nous provoque, dise des choses qui choque, et nous donnons aussi notre réaction, et ça nous aide. Ça suppose qu'il y a de la sincérité par la part de l'autre, quand ils sont des vrais artistes, et on sait qu'on a des contenus politiques, idéologiques, et d'autres, mais à la limite ça on connaît'*).

Zafira Baba, the founder and manager of Artissimo, a private school for artistic education, notes how her formative experience in the arts helped shape her current efforts for the benefit of today's generation of young children in Algiers. She notes how she received dance and music lessons when young in the 1960s and 1970s when the state provided such education also through agreements with Communist states. She notes that she went on to become a lawyer to find herself a stable job but loved the arts and felt they made her grow. The *decennie noir* during the 1990s destroyed all state education in the arts, which was also free, as she had enjoyed it. This created a vacuum in arts education in Algeria which led to an impoverishment of development in the arts as well as unintended challenges to be turned into opportunities. Following the year 2000 she felt she wanted to recreate the possibility of arts education to children and opened a school in her own home when her aged parents moved out.⁵⁹⁶ The school is aimed at middle class children with affordable prices. Together with her sister who also enjoyed an arts education, she tried producing a system of diplomas with the state, and managed for five years to give two such courses in interior design and graphic communication. However, bureaucracy and corruption made collaboration with the state untenable, since money was expected to be paid to guarantee the students' success. Therefore, she stopped these diploma-oriented courses while remaining an '*école agrée*' and sticking to formative courses. She feels the place is an '*îlot de liberté*' of three hundred and fifty square metres of spacious and well-lit open spaces. The sisters are close to the children and their families also regarding personal, family and social problems, which she feels are very many in Algiers. She emphasises the social mission aspect which has grown in importance. Currently the school hosts children on Saturday morning and adults during the week, but no teenagers whom she misses greatly due to lost energy and creativity. She also notes that immediately following the official end of the civil war in 2000, lots of energy was channelled into opening galleries and setting up foundations. As noted by Kadi-Hanifi, this was a result of the high activity that took place during the war, as a means of dealing with trauma creatively. However, the state gradually killed off any initiative by regulating it, for instance by insisting on individuals having a doctorate in art history to manage arts school and centres. In a short time, the suffocation of the budding sector worked and the state re-established its control.

To return to the aspects of managing cultural expression, Negrouche notes how accessing funding is sometimes a prohibitive task and how the state supports and commissions work from individuals and organisations which do not have the capability and experience to set up something of high calibre. Such trends are very disheartening for talented, resourceful and passionate artists who after years of neglect may be driven away from the field due to being let down and not made use of. Therefore, the issue is not only about investing in the professionalisation of the field, but also about nurturing the development of a professional mentality. The result is an entrenched mistrust of artists towards the Ministry for Culture and other related government entities, and a growing reciprocal mistrust by the state towards artists and operators who adopt a professional approach and, because demanding, are perceived as a threat to the state (*'Et non plus on a compris que le travail d'un fonctionnaire est*

⁵⁹⁶ The school, housed in an elegant residential apartment in downtown Algiers, was visited on a busy Saturday morning.

d'être fonctionnaire, et que le travail d'opérateur culturel est de travailler sur le terrain. Ils n'ont pas compris qu'ils doivent associer tout ça. Ils ont l'impression que chacun qui fais quelque chose d'extérieur à eux est l'ennemi). In contrast, the services of cultural institutes are such as to provide professionalism based on skill and commitment to high quality, and that is why artists and cultural operators like Negrouche are keen to collaborate with them.

On an organisational level where associations and civil society organisations are involved, Kadi-Hanifi notes there is a long way to go here as well. *Chrysalide* is trying to establish a strong enough base of active members with which to engage with schools, which are not easy to enter and collaborate with because of the thematics discussed as well as the priorities of the individuals schools. *Chrysalide* is also keen on working with audiences in order to develop its current base, but often runs across limitations in its organisational resources. Fortunately, the association seems to attract large numbers of young women, which reflects the trend of higher cultural participation by women. Laggoune notes that there is a significant amount of work which needs to be done to invest in and develop audiences, particularly young members of society, who can generate a critical mass both in terms of numbers as well as quality. The terrorism years and the damage inflicted upon cultural behaviour then still needs to be addressed (*'Il n'y a pas 'un publique' chez nous. Je vais dire, ceux qui vont voir des spectacles, aux expositions, c'est délicat. Le grand publique, pour la musique, les festivals, oui. La musique qui nourrit le corps, ça oui. Le raï, c'est la musique pour le corps, n'est ce pas. Il y a d'autre musique pour le cerveau. C'est plus pour le corps, une espèce de catharsis, voilà. Les spectacles de théâtre il y a beaucoup moins de monde. Cette pratique, qui consiste à aller au théâtre, n'est pas suffisamment renseignée. Le théâtre, les cinémas, il y a eu une entière génération qui n'a pas connu cette pratique. Pendant la décennie du terrorisme on a fait marche arrière et on ne savait pas qu'est ce qu'il se passé plus d'ailleurs. La culture était laminée. Tout c'était transformait. Un autre type de consommation, mode de vie, c'est changé presque fondamentalement*). This reality manifests itself most acutely in the case of young women, both in terms of audiences but especially as artists who do not manage to see their skill and passion through major societal obstacles related to conventional ways of limiting women's development.

In terms of support from the state, officially, financial and logistical support from the state should be forthcoming. However, in practice this assistance is monopolised by a few players. This leaves small community-oriented cultural associations with nothing, or with a good enough project to take to foreign cultural institutes or embassies, in particular the French ones (*'Heureusement aussi, on a l'ambassade de France. Malheureusement, pour l'Algérie, c'est terrible*'). Laggoune states clearly that every such agency has its own agendas and cannot be expected to bend them to fit local priorities. By way of example, she notes that the association believes that it should bring up the issue of French colonisation, which however could make the Embassy or the CCF uncomfortable. Pellan at the CCF in Oran notes that cultural operators from both French and Algerian sides, as well as the local communities, want to engage in collaborations and find new ways of doing so to establish postcolonial relations and equal partnerships. He notes this is very challenging, but developments in cultural trends and resources means the population is eager for new projects to take place and expects greater

responsibility to be shouldered by the state (*‘En fait c’est très compliqué par ce que les relations entre la France et l’Algérie ne sont jamais simple mais en tout cas l’impact de la programmation auprès de la population est très importante et montre que les choses sont possible’*). Pellan notes this expectation is driving change, but as will be noted later in the context of Malta, policy measures need implementation and ownership by the state and other local actors to allow actions to take place (*‘Mais il y a un gros demande de professionnalisation et formation et d’autre côté une grande attente du publique pour une diversité de composition artistiques proposée à l’espace de liberté, et la possibilité à comprendre mieux les techniques, la numérisation. Là il y a beaucoup à faire sur niveau de politique culturelle. Ils ne sont pas forcément présent dans les dimensions étatiques’*).

In a curious take on South-South collaboration with the support of European cultural institutes, Pellan notes how the Institut français and the CCF are engaged in across-the-border projects among its various offices on either side of the Moroccan-Algerian border through its different offices in different cities and in collaboration with European cultural organisations (*‘C’est compliqué parce que par exemple, à Jeddah, au Maroc, il y a un Institut français, à Aouchda, mais il y a pas de moyen de transport, même pour les artistes, c’est assez problématique pour circuler et y arriver. Avec Rabat, il y a une collaboration sur le niveau cinéma, et aussi à Tunis. Sur la recherche, il y a des choses qui se mettent en place par le Centre Jacques Berque, avec la participation aussi de Tunis, il y a des conventions qui viennent à se mettre en place. Je constate qu’il y a quelque chose qui bouge dans les trois pays du Maghreb. On essaie à faire des montages des projets transfrontaliers, aussi avec l’Europe, mais c’est difficile parce que chacun a sa façon de travailler et chacun reste dans cette modalité contrôlée par les états par rapport à de politiques européennes’*).

To conclude this focus on North-South and South-South relations, it is worth noting the generally positive reaction to the Mediterranean which Kadi-Hanifi associates with the members of *Chrysalide*, which however is restricted to an emotive level. In practice, the Mediterranean means little, as it is deemed too abstract and removed from mundane practical problems. She envisions further collaborations with countries around the Mediterranean, but even where interest is identified, the funding is always problematic (*‘Quelque fois on voit le financement précéder le concept et la nécessité de travailler ensemble. Le projet, parce qu’il vaut être financé, précède le penser’*).

Identities

By way of introducing the observation made with regard to Berber culture under the following focus on language, it is worth noting that Sergoua draws parallels between the snubbing of the South by the North and the fate of Berber culture in relation to the general perception of North African cultures. Echoing Gabriel Camps, Sergoua, who is of Berber origin and descends from the tribes of Kabylie, notes that Arab culture has supplanted Berber culture and taken all the credit in the interpretation of a lot of societal and cultural development to have taken place in the South Mediterranean but also in European countries like Spain. Sergoua argues that while the warriors who imposed Muslim rule all the way to Poitiers were Arabs, the designers,

architects and artists were many times of Berber origin (*‘L’arabo-musulman était le guerrier, ce n’était pas ni l’arabiste ni le constructeur, ni l’urbaniste, ni le paysagiste. Et ça c’est une injustice historique. C’est un effacement d’un peuple’*). It is important to recall the political context of the recent changes towards the acknowledgement and the inclusion of Berber identities. Selma Hellal, co-responsible for the publishing house *Éditions Barzakh*, draws an interesting parallel between the process of creolisation and Algerian multiple identities. She notes that following independence in 1962, the Arab-Muslim identity supremacy only gave room to the Berber identity in the 1980s following the important event marking the Berber’s position of protest against the power in government in the form of *le Printemps berbère* of 20 April 1980. In 2002 a debate on the national position of the Berber language was held: this led to the language becoming a national language but not an official one. Over the past decade this status has been interpreted in different ways, including that of keeping the Berber language in a *‘state of precariousness’* and ambiguity, open to manipulation.⁵⁹⁷

Commenting on the role of Islam, Sergoua notes he is comfortable with his Muslim identity and society’s respect towards religion. He does not find Algerians’ belief system to limit artistic expression since this is something that nourishes people and which people respect. He is aware that people in the North (and not only) may be sceptical towards societies where religion plays a big part and laicism is not widespread or deeply established. However, he believes many associate the practising of religion with fundamentalism: this only confuses matters and does justice to nobody. The artistic expression of Islam, for example through calligraphy or architecture, also has its contemporary dimensions, which fundamentalists do have problems with. Kadi-Hanifi notes the members of *Chrysalide* do not feel inhibited in invoking religion and discussing it in relation to the context of a contemporary, diverse, laic and doubtful society. Nevertheless, caution is exercised, and when Europeans express mistrust towards members who seem particularly religious, the association tries to open up and defuse the tension in order to allow for all types of communication.

The strength of Algerian society lies in its diversity. Sergoua embraces this diversity and believes members of society like women and young people, who have not been sufficiently valued up till recently, have a great deal to offer and should be at the heart of policies that address the well being of society (*‘Ils étaient et sont tellement opprimés qui on risque un débordement si on n’a pas de politique d’ouverture. Les femmes tiennent les changements en elles’*). He also notes the way digitisation has provided women and young people with new tools for empowerment and participation in society.

Change in society is a subject which offers a very different perspective when discussed in Algeria as opposed to Morocco, Lebanon and particularly Tunisia. In general terms, discussions with Tunisians stressed the need for change and were held with a great sense of hope, expectation and trepidation. Informal conversations with people in Morocco and Lebanon were very open about change, although the agendas were different: in Morocco, more controlled and within the framework of the monarchy, which meant that reform was envisaged as a more

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. page 75.

realistic way forward and arguably preferred than revolution; while in Lebanon, sectarian divisions and foreign interference circumscribed change within clear political priorities and the need for an overhaul was not expressed. In Algeria, the perspective was very sobering: as expressed by Sergoua, but also by numerous other people there was the opportunity to talk with, Algeria has faced not one but many Arab springs which have bled the country, decimated its population, challenged its determination and left it to go through several ordeals with no real support or even interest by the international community. A great sense of bitterness was candidly shared: this results in a degree of fortitude and resilience with which the present challenges are faced. Offence is taken at criticism targeting Algeria for not having supported the revolutions in Tunisia and Libya, for instance, and Sergoua stresses the fact that Algerians practice solidarity with a number of communities in dire straits across the African and Middle Eastern worlds in particular, and have no lessons to be taught on the subject. Sergoua believes Islam provides Algerians with a lasting revolutionary mindset that sustains society even in the present. Finally, from a practical cultural perspective, Pellan notes how the great changes sweeping through Arab states do not answer the questions of what will actually take place, with which resources and with whom (*'Mais il y a la construction de vrais équipements qui vont s'établir, maintenant il y a beaucoup d'interrogation sur qu'est qu'on fait avec ces équipements, et avec quel contenu et informations et professionnels et projets on les remplis. Mais il y a beaucoup d'argent pour les grands festivals non plus'*).

With regard to the colonial context, artistic collaborations with French artists and cultural operators are challenging and therefore potentially very rewarding in terms of the aspects of intercultural dialogue one may attempt to achieve. Kadi-Hanifi notes that young people are more open and honest and less inhibited to tackle cross-cultural relations which may be uncomfortable and lead to challenging contexts due to the history Algeria shares with France.

Languages

Adrian Grima⁵⁹⁸ is a long-time friend and fellow-writer of Negrouche, and when reflecting on her writing and the context in which this developed, notes that her choosing to write in French is a way of choosing to be free. Negrouche is of Berber origin, fluent in Arabic and comfortable with her Arabic identity, but chooses to write in French to make use of the characteristics inherent to the language which allow more freedom and less scrutiny in terms of the themes approached, the style adopted and the voice used. With regard to Grima and the Maltese context, the contrast is quite sharp: he chooses to write in the national and locally-rooted language, Maltese, in order to explore themes in a language which develops and enriches itself through such endeavours and which addresses new audiences who are in the process of discovering the richness of contemporary expression.

Asked about the contemporary use of Tamazight, the Berber name for the main Berber language, Sergoua notes that progress made has to be set against the historical context: before the Berber Spring of 1980, it was illegal to practice Berber. Nowadays, Berber has become the

⁵⁹⁸ Interviewed in Malta in December 2010.

unofficial second language used on its own TV and radio stations, newspapers and can be chosen as a language of instruction at various universities around the country. There are also Berber cultural movements, cultural events, political parties and a commission for Berber rights. Sergoua believes Berbers have a future which is bright because their roots are ancient, pre-dating Arab rule, and romantically linked to nature and a sense of purity and art to be found in nature (*'une culture d'une pureté parce qu'elle vient de la nature comme ces couleurs'*).

With regard to the larger linguistic picture, Yassin Tamlali, journalist, claims that multilingualism in Algeria does not really exist. He argues the linguistic situation in Algeria is more a situation of diglossia between Arabic and French depending on the social groups and the functions the languages are put to. Arabic was greatly popularised thanks to pro-Arab politics post-1962 and in educational programming remains restricted in use mostly to refer to the past and tradition with little contemporary content. On the other hand, it is the main language used in administration, the mass media and basic schooling. French remained strong and regained the second spot due to education and elite classes turning to it. It is mainly used for economics, finance and in important newspapers. Therefore, from an institutional perspective, there is no real dialogue between Arab and French speakers and sectors. Tamlali suggests that it seems that only the Berbers can be said to be the true multilinguals.⁵⁹⁹

The lack of dialogue between languages also marks the arts. French is the main language used by artists and in the fine arts and the only language of instruction at the School of Fine Arts. This reflects the majority of Algerian painters' formation and orientation. On the other hand, in literature, Arabic dominates the Writers' Union as well as the orientation of translation of literature which favours French into Arabic but not the other way round with Francophone writers published in French and not much read in Arabic in Arab countries. Berber texts are mostly translated into French and not Arabic, while only a few Arabic texts are translated into French by publishers like *Barzakh*. Tamlali claims that many of the Francophone intelligentsia still harbour a fear of Arabic writing and circles, reducing them to Islamic movements. This is part of the reason why research on Algerian heritage is mostly carried out by Arabic-oriented researchers. It is also important to take note of the efforts of certain Francophone cultural actors to distance Algeria from other Arab countries by using the "Mediterranean" argument. This is not original, as has been discussed with regard to Tunisian efforts in the 1980s and 1990s, or Algeria itself under French rule with regard to efforts by the *école d'Alger*. Tamlali rightly notes attempts at diffusing the Arab dimension by exploiting the Mediterranean one are not successful since other Arab countries are also part of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, as has been discussed, the Arab collective identity seems to outweigh a Mediterranean one, which seems to capture little imagination outside European circles and even smaller Arab ones.⁶⁰⁰

Attempts at achieving successful levels of intercultural dialogue need to be accompanied by *'intra-cultural dialogue'*. In other words, dialogue between French, Arabic and Berber-speaking elites is not enough to develop real communication between communities as this

⁵⁹⁹ Redalie et al, page 185.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. page 187.

communication has to take place within society as a whole. Furthermore, by improving dialogue within Algerian society, Algeria may finally become a producer of Arab culture, and not just a consumer of more coordinated centres (e.g. Cairo and Beirut) as commented upon earlier. One needs to stop looking at communication with other Arab countries and France and Francophone cultures as an escape from home truths by recognising that Arab and French cultures can complement Algerian culture. The process is bound to take a very long time to accomplish since Arabic-speakers seem to fear the return of French as well as Anglo-American influence or even dominance on their territory and, given their particularly harrowing history, still feel threatened by the possibility of such encroachment taking place.⁶⁰¹

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. page 193.

2. 1. c. Beirut

Introduction

Another insightful set of interviews was held in Beirut between 20 and 24 November 2011. The main contact here was Abdo Nawar, writer, theatre director and audiovisual producer specialising in animation. He spent ten formative years in Canada following the official end of the civil war in 1990. In many ways, he is representative of many of the creative class in Lebanon, who lived through the war, yet sought a better life elsewhere, in Nawar's case, Quebec, during the reconstruction period. The great projects undertaken by the state which represents the different and conflictual religious and political communities in a strained act of balance, by the communities themselves and by private enterprises closely linked with particular power structures, particularly the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's development company Solidere, changed the face of Beirut, for better and for worse, during the decade following the war. In post-war Lebanon, the '*hunger*' for reconstruction is impressive, as Eugene Rogan describes the Hariri-led construction boom.⁶⁰² Impacts on issues of identity have arguably led to new levels of poverty, social imbalances and injustices. When creative people like Nawar returned to Lebanon, Beirut was still their home, but very much changed.

The experiences collected from the nine people interviewed reflect the turmoil the city has been through, the change it has experienced and the opportunities for creative people to interact with others on an international platform which is provided by Beirut's outward approach. Ahmad Beydoun comments on the mixed identity of Lebanon as '*un peuple de mer*', '*un peuple de montagne*', engaged in trade across borders, a migrant people and a receiver of migrants, resulting in a complex reality which has given the Lebanese important negotiating skills which are a must for survival in such a volatile and complex climate. As the architect Bernard Khoury points out, following World War I, Arab identity had to be fit into the European construct of nation states, with inevitable confusion and spilling effects causing strife and conflict. Issues which may seem banal today, like the link to mythical Phoenician roots, came to play an important element in the definition of identities; in this particular case, supporting Christian and European claims to true Lebanese identity. The Mediterranean identity was also used, in opposition to the Arab identity, but tarnished by fantasies of the West and the history of colonialism.⁶⁰³

Khoury asks an important question regarding whether the Lebanese have gone past the complications related to colonialism, the Lebanese civil war and European-Arab negative relations. General political circumstances suggest they have, since the end of the Cold War has suggested a new start. On the other hand, US imperialist support of Israel and authoritarian but anti-Islamist regimes have suggested the contrary. Khoury points out that it is not enough to glorify the past and bask in it, or celebrate the Mediterranean lifestyle; a clear vision of where one wants to go, together, is needed. At the same time, Khoury notes that Lebanon, also

⁶⁰² Rogan, page 1.

⁶⁰³ Khoury, Beydoun, page 56.

because of its civil war from the mid-1970s to 1990, has been shaped by international geopolitical realities which bind it closely to the Mediterranean as a region. Beirut has long established itself as an international place for cultural searching and exchange, with the presence of the American University among other foreign presences and cultural and student movements in the 1950s related to the Lebanese University.⁶⁰⁴

Khoury comments on the difficulty of making clear, simple and coherent plans in and for Beirut. He blames the political, social and cultural environment which is complex and economically incomprehensible. Khoury's perspective is very interesting and innovative in the conventional communitarian context which looks at identities as fixed, definite and directly related to a particular group's history. His focus is on the present and on making history rather than recuperating it. The same perspective is adopted by Christine Burckhardt-Seebass, professor in ethnology whose focus on the present is wary of the *'modern invention of tradition'*.⁶⁰⁵

The retroactive invention of and association with history is by no means restricted to today's Lebanese population and has a history of its own in Lebanon. General Gouraud, on occupying Damascus⁶⁰⁶ at the end of World War I, exclaimed: *'Nous voici de retour'*, thus linking the Crusades to French colonialism in the twentieth century, in spite of the differences between medieval Franks and the French. The link between old and modern invading Western/European forces was clear to see. Khoury also describes Beirut as a ship by means of suggesting skilled navigation, also linked to the Phoenician ancestors, as well as prefiguring a possible shipwreck. Through this image, the relation to the Mediterranean is described as ambiguous and complex, open to the sea and the West, and with its back towards it. Khoury suggests Beirut speaks to the Mediterranean in a double language: the West's and its own, among others.⁶⁰⁷

The issue of duality is also pertinent to Lebanon's relationship with itself. As pointed out by Nawar, different people, according to the different ethnic groups they belong to, perceive Lebanon as leaning towards the West, or towards the East, depending on their political and religious orientation. Nawar notes how the Lebanese identity is also multiple, which makes the role of artists even more complex. His observations are worth quoting at length:

'C'est pour moi vrai que nous sommes un mini-mélange occidental, quand on peut vraiment dire qu'est-ce qu'il y a d'occidental et qu'est-ce qu'il y a d'oriental. Je trouve que je suis un mélange des trois si j'ajoute le Québec avec. Du fait, où s'arrête l'influence française, que j'apprends travers mes études à l'école, avec tous mes profs, il y avait pas mal de français qui vivait ici et après, petit à petit nous comme chrétiens libanais à nier tout ce qui était arabe ou orient, par la force des choses, pas un choix mais ça était imposé. Le Liban était divisé en au moins deux partis, les chrétiens se repèrent plutôt de côté européenne, et les musulmans vers le palestinien, le syrien et après la révolution iranienne vers l'Iran. Mais, c'était imposé. Je n'avais pas choix. Je ne pouvais

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. page 21.

⁶⁰⁵ Redalie, page 175.

⁶⁰⁶ Up till the twentieth century (pre-World War I), Lebanon did not have a clear separate identity from Syria.

⁶⁰⁷ Khoury, Beydoun, page 27.

pas regarder un film iranien côté ouest, c'était presque impossible, et c'était difficile à passer côté est. Je l'ai fait, mais c'était difficile. Après la guerre, on est revenue ensemble, disant dans la façon de vivre ensemble, dans la collectivité, et on vive ensemble dans les espaces publiques mais quand on retour chez nous nous entrons dans nos petits cocoons. Certains, je m'en foute, mais certains ils sont religieux etc., je l'ai dépassé depuis longtemps. Mais je sais que dans mon milieu, de mon côté, mes parents etc., ils ont toujours cet barrière, tout ça qui n'est pas chrétien de l'autre côté, ceci la division en deux, qu'on se sent seul, ça revient un peu, cette méfiance de l'autre qui vient depuis des siècles parce qu'il y a deux grandes étapes: les massacres de 1860 entre juifs et chrétiens, puis en 1958 pas un massacre mais une guerre civile rattrapée par l'arrivée de l'armée américaine, puis supposé s'était calmée sauf en 1975 s'est démarré jusqu'à 1990 officiellement. Officieusement, ça continue, vrai d'une autre façon avec un autre visage. Il y avait la guerre chaude maintenant il y a la guerre froide. En 2006 ça devenait chaud une autre fois, mais c'est toujours de la guerre, elle n'est pas finie.'

Cultural institutes

Beirut attracts the interest of a number of cultural institutes because of a number of reasons. Chief among them is the traditional openness to the West that Beirut has shown: this still is a characteristic feature today that distinguishes it from neighbouring states that adopt a more circumscribed attitude towards Europeans. A second important reason is the high level of professionalism and skill one finds in the Lebanese creative class. This is something that a number of interviewees commented upon, especially Farid Majari, the Director of the *Goethe-Institut* in Beirut. He previously headed the *Goethe-Institut* in Ramallah in Palestine and was also active in Jordan, and compares the big difference which separates his mission in these three countries. He notes that by far Lebanon offers the highest level of skill which allows for equitable partnerships to take place: *'There the Goethe has very much to do with culture and development, mobility of people, skill transfer, skills in place development and then translated in workshops for film directors, country journalists, dancers, and further down you go in the Arab world, like Sudan ... the most important thing is, for the Middle East, is for people to learn skills, e.g. in Sudan on documentary making.'* A similar comment on highly skilled cultural operators is made by Roualla who heads the Lebanese audiovisual company *Beirut DC* as well as the cultural centre *Zico House* together with her husband Zico. She notes that in her engagement with both organisations she witnesses the ease with which foreign operators team up with Lebanese actors in the fields of film on the one hand and street theatre on the other. This fact helps a sense of partnership develop, positive outcomes to result and a balanced exchange to take place which is mutually beneficial to all those involved.

Therefore, Farid Majari notes that institutes like the *Goethe* seek to pursue their agendas in Beirut in collaboration with local actors, knowing that their chances of success are high and outcomes will be positive and long-term. The support they provide is paid back by a high level of skill and commitment they find in the capital. The *Goethe* seeks to develop networks and collaborations, which local actors are enthusiastic about getting involved in and learn from with an aim to develop further themselves and the services they provide. Local actors are also

interested in accessing funding which is made available and further their international work through the networks forged.

The *Goethe-Institut* shares a number of goals with the British Council. Both are more interested in long-term collaborations rather than particular projects which may take up fewer resources but give less of a return in the long run. Also, both institutes note that it is in their interest to promote Germany and the UK respectively and support their work in Lebanon through positive publicity. However, both note that this is best done subtly as this is perceived to improve chances of collaboration and support the work of artists in less obtrusive ways. The British Council in particular prides itself on serving the needs of artists and cultural operators through the organisation of international networks which it does not seek to lead or control but rather gain advantage from by subtly encouraging collaborations to take place with reference to elements from the UK, but possibly without having to be actively present at all times. A case in point is a network like the Cultural Leadership International programme that involves young cultural operators from Europe and the Mediterranean which is supported by various means but without the overbearing presence of British Council officials who are happy to help shape relations but observe from the sidelines. Such an approach is also deemed to be cost effective.

Other institutes like the *Alliance française* and the *Instituto Cervantes* are also well-known for supporting projects over the long-term and approach this support more in terms of partnering local actors rather than providing assistance. Rita Khawand notes that the organisation she works for, *Khayal*, which is the first and most well-organised puppet theatre operating in Lebanon, receives regular support from the two institutes over the long-term to develop new audiences, reach out to them, and pay special attention to children to engage with them in terms of literacy programmes, social awareness, creativity and participation. This foreign collaboration is also essential in attracting foreign partners, as in the case of Roualla with street theatre artists, developing international collaborations, cross-breeding audiences and contributing tangibly towards the development of a European and Mediterranean creative space. The insights provided give a glimpse into the mutually beneficial experience which is generated and the intercultural dialogue which is engaged in. This point is worth stressing, as it suggests that theories of neo-colonial dominance and local subjection come second to observations that stress the active role which actors in the South play, particularly in their home country and city, and the way collaborations and influence are used to their advantage.

While the cultural institutes themselves speak of their support for long-term collaborations, it does not seem that all funding aims at supporting this type of relationship. Majari notes that projects with definite end points do attract his attention since a tangible result, such as a CD recording, is forthcoming and contributes to the legacy one can leave behind. From the local operators' point of view, Nadim Tarazi notes that long-term support is balanced out by short-term initiatives such as the support provided during the 2001 *Année de la Francophonie* which provided financial assistance during that year, but none during the following. Though speaking from a positive perspective, Roualla of Zico House notes how receiving funding two years in succession for its proposal in favour of street theatre from the EU funds dedicated to cultural collaboration with Lebanon was an exceptional thing. This taking place allowed the festival of

street theatre to build on the success of the first year and establish a track-record which has made it attractive to other European partners and develop in the long run. This point is an important one to be raised later in the 2. 2 *Outcomes* section, namely, that long-term support, which can help the sustainable establishment of particular initiatives, is often balanced out with a deadline that stops such support with the aim of making initiatives independent over the medium to long-term. Local operators may find the time frames imposed by foreign agencies as being unrealistic to allow their plans to come to fruition, and may resent the brevity of the periods of support provided.

A note should also be expressed with regard to the particular climate cultural institutes are experiencing. First of all, the tough financial and economic climate has meant funds from the state have been reduced and institutes need to address their priorities in a new light, coordinate among the different offices in different countries to maximise synergies and find the most cost-effective ways with which to support their operations. As Masri notes, the process and the result may actually be positive in terms of making one's work more focused and more efficient. A second very important factor is the democratic awakening of many states in the Arab world. Although Lebanon has not experienced any revolt itself, its strategic position on the Mediterranean coast of the Middle East makes it susceptible to change and keeps it very aware of slight changes in the larger Arab and Middle Eastern picture.

Masri also notes that the role of cultural institutes in Beirut is different to that in other countries that faced harsher colonial rules and provided political climates that required clear policies from foreign governments and cultural agencies: *'The thing is in Lebanon it's very different from other countries. First of all we were a French mandate territory not a British colony and FCO policies towards Lebanon are not strong as opposed to, if you had to ask my colleagues in Palestine or Egypt, never. So here we don't face that. We worked with everybody, from across Lebanon, and all sexes, all political affiliations, and we don't face any... We have, for example, a big project on citizenship in the South, and we talk about global citizenship to underprivileged people, and it's fine.'*

In contrast to Algiers, where French colonial history is still heavy with negativity, most people interviewed in Beirut express appreciation as well as pride towards the French legacy in Beirut. This positive attitude takes practical form in the many projects that French authorities, cultural operators and entities support or are involved in, such as the Khayal puppet project, *La Maison du Livre*, the assistance to numerous Franco-Lebanese productions in a variety of media and even in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, as witnessed by Imad Hashem who is responsible for literature within the Ministry.

Nadim Tarazi, who boasts great experience in the field of publishing and opened his first bookshop in the mixed religious quarter of Hamra in 1976, notes that while French presence was already strong before and during the civil war which officially spanned from 1975 to 1990, following its official conclusion the presence of the *Centre culturel français* multiplied to nine centres and established itself more firmly in Lebanon:

'Avec la France on a un lien très ancien depuis au moins le dix-neuvième siècle. Les français se sont rendu compte dans les années soixante-dix de perdre du terrain face aux anglais. Ils ne pouvaient pas faire la guerre économique aux américains. Ils ne pouvaient pas s'imposer militairement. Alors la seul façon était le culturel. De toute façon avec les institutions culturelles. Après la fin de la guerre, la fin officiel de la guerre, en 1990, la création de Centre culturel français, en toutes le Liban, pas dans les centres chrétiens, conservatrices, mais après 1990, et pendant douze ans, il y avait des personnes pendant la guerre aussi, mais après la guerre on a ouvert plusieurs. Je crois que les français se sont rendu compte que la seule arme était celle culturelle et linguistique. Et maintenant, après quarante ans qu'on considérait les chrétiens, on considère les musulmans. Il y a plus assiduité de côté shiite pour le français, c'est les personnes voilés qui vont aux Institut, pour apprendre le français et la Francophonie.'

While Tarazi reflects on the benefits that French policy identified in having its agencies and operators involve themselves in the Mediterranean cultural milieu in order to boost French cultural and linguistic presence, Imad Hashem notes that Lebanon itself found such involvement to be positive to its own development:

'Bien sûr, les relations ne sont pas vraiment de partenariats d'un pays au même niveau comme l'autre pays. Ce n'est même pas facile et on a besoin de l'aide de la France. La relation est comme ça: la France est un grand pays, qui représente l'Ue, qui était au Liban pendant beaucoup d'années et connais bien le Liban aussi la réalité géopolitique du Liban et ça a permit à la France de rester en contact avec beaucoup de couches sociale au Liban. Alors même si infiltré dans la société libanais, se profitant du partage de la situation politique et social et religieux du Liban. Tout ça a fait en effet que la France participait beaucoup à la vie sociale, économique et culturelle du Liban à beaucoup de niveaux sociaux. De côté français, ça c'est claire. Au contraire, l'influence libanaise sur la France est pauvre. Les relations sont franco-libanaises mais pas libano-français. On commence par la France parce que la France est un grand pays et elle a un politique d'aide vers beaucoup de pays et s'est installée sur toute le Liban et aussi en Afrique.'

Contrary to what Majari and Masri assert, Hashem notes that there is still a long way to go for Lebanese collaborations with foreign partners to be assessed in terms of an equal partnership, and notes that more help is needed before and in order to achieve such a level.

The recent development of EUNIC in Beirut has meant European cultural institutes now formally come together to collaborate in terms of their operations in Beirut with the aim of maximising synergies and being more effective in their operations. While it is admittedly still early days, signs of achieving these aims are promising. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the separate cultural entities related to the different states do not plan to have the umbrella organisation make them redundant. As pointed out by Antonio Prats, the Deputy Head Mission of the Embassy of Spain to Lebanon who is responsible for dealing with cultural affairs, bilateral relations built on trust remain important, as does supporting the mobility of artists and exchange of art works in relation to particular, short-term projects.

Local development

Many interviewees in Lebanon, as elsewhere, comment on the weak involvement of the state which seems to operate with difficulty outside the strong presence of the different communities. The detached and central powers of the state do not seem to extend far, and local actors tend to look for support in other places, including the communitarian representation and the foreign institutes themselves. Rita Khawand and Imad Hashem, the latter responsible for literature and publishing at what he describes as a fairly young Ministry of Culture in spite of it being established since the late 1990s, readily note that in the absence of the state, cultural operators and artists turn to municipalities and local libraries which, in spite of their poor resources and the heavy influence of the communities, help by providing spaces and whatever resources exist to assist potential partners.

The weak role of the state drives it to seek partners in localities, such as libraries and local associations, and encourage them to take on roles which may be larger than what their resources allow for:

‘La société civile joue un rôle très très important. Même quelque fois elle a un rôle plus visible que l’état. Surtout culturel. Nous voyons une société civile bien dynamique, toujours en mouvement. Quelque fois le Ministère essaie de rattraper son propre rôle dans les plusieurs domaines. Alors c’est pour ça qu’on travail beaucoup avec des associations dans plusieurs villes au Liban. Bien sûr le Ministère ne laisse pas ces responsabilités mais toujours fait son mieux pour jouer son rôle dans les projets de livres et artistique dans beaucoup choses. Donc il travail avec les municipalités. Bien sûr aussi avec les bibliothèques publiques, nous qui prouvent vraiment et chargent des centaines de bibliothèques publiques en partenariat avec des municipalités et des associations. En plus le Ministère travaille parce qu’il a un travaille à faire mais pas les moyens pour travailler dans toutes les régions du Liban. Il doit compter absolument sur les acteurs locaux pour vraiment faciliter les projets culturels.’

On the other hand, cultural operators like the members of *Khayal* look at municipalities and local libraries as partners who can go a long way in supporting localised action as distinct from the state, but with a great responsibility in terms of getting things done.

A clear focus for many interviewees is the well-being of children with particular attention given to their education. Masri notes how the British Council is involved in supporting school children and older students with language learning and opportunities to develop a number of skills, as do the Alliance française and the *Instituto Cervantes*, which is an element looked upon positively by a large number of people interviewed. Masri notes that their collaboration stems from a joint project with the Ministry responsible for education which, while short of funds and general initiative, is keen to team up with the Council in assessing local needs as well as infrastructural plans. Masri stresses the subtlety of these collaborations, especially with regard to discussions addressing policy, general infrastructure and governance issues. The British Council is also active in supporting the Ministry and the minister directly with regard to international fora that allow for the exchange of experiences and the transfer of skills.

As mentioned, the communitarian reality in Lebanon is very complex. Khawand notes that the Director of the organisation, Karim Dakroub, who was not available for an interview, had a stiff challenge to face in showing some of the members of certain Muslim communities the benefits of Khayal's outreach programme beyond religious and ethnic sensitivities but without offending interpretations of values which frowned upon the exploration of musical experiences with their children.

On a general level, many associations, including cultural ones, have strong ties with political and religious groups, and only a few are truly independent. The connections may not be clear immediately but associations on the basis of geography or family linkages may expose these links. Being truly independent is a challenging task, and not always fruitful in the long run. The different communities and their religious and political representatives are keen to support grass-roots and community actions and be present in the lives of these communities. The great sense of balance which reigns in Lebanon and the obsession with maintaining that balance allows very few individuals and organisations to stay clear of communitarian politics. If an organisation like Khayal wants to be as inclusive as possible, then it needs to balance this approach with one which avoids exclusion, which is not always easy. This is so because trying to avoid collaborations with closed groups or highly politicised bodies in order to avoid alienating members of the organisation or parents of participating children may result in such actions being considered as trying to exclude such bodies and being criticised for doing so. Along similar lines, when Nawar collaborated with the children of Nahar al Barid in the north of the country following the clashes between the Lebanese army and the *Fatah al Islam* troops in 2007-2008, which he did in collaboration with Swedish funds, he had to be very careful in negotiating spaces for producing an audiovisual collaboration with the children themselves on the basis of trust gained through time, dedication and experience that allowed him, a Christian, to be accepted by the Muslim boys.

Nadim Tarazi, the founder of *La Maison du Livre*, notes that communitarian interests are pervasive throughout all of society, from the President's office down to the most basic level of social involvement, and this does not spare the cultural sector. He comments on his clashes with publishers' unions that exist to serve the interests of particular religious and political groups rather than the publishing sector itself and that actually do a dis-service to writers and publishing houses.

Roualla, in her role as Director of *Beirut DC*, notes that the communitarian divide is particularly strong on media channels like TV stations. This reality hampers the opportunities for challenging documentaries, like the ones her company supports through EU funds and programmes that aim at supporting the development of Arab audiovisual productions and the training of professional operators, to be aired on such stations and engage with the general public. As Roualla points out, the political situation is further complicated by the dire financial situation which is used by broadcasters to justify their aversion to risk-taking:

'Presque tout un contexte sociale, une disposition vers l'artistique, est visé ici. Ici au Liban on a MBD et Manar, par exemple, donc les publiques sont exclusifs, l'MBC sont chrétiens, le Manar

est de Hezbollah. Mais notre travail ne veut pas être exclusif. Il y a la problématique politique, bien sûr, mais c'est plutôt la problématique financière qui est plus importante, et les arguments que les gens ne veulent pas voir ça ou ça. Les télé te dit le publique ne veulent pas ça mais comment est-il possible savoir si on ne passe jamais ça à la télé ? Si l'éducation, si les personnes à la tête ont une vision différente, les choses peuvent bouger. 'Give and take', c'est la vie, eh.'

The Mediterranean

In the work of cultural institutes and local operators in Beirut, the Mediterranean dimension plays a particular role. While most individuals and organisations acknowledge the particular relation of Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea, invoking the Phoenician ancestors and contemporary artists' links with the region and in particular Europe, few tell of any particular action taken in favour of or addressing Lebanese cultural expression in relation to the Mediterranean. Masri earnestly and bruisingly notes that the Mediterranean *'can be more a result of funding'* than philosophical undertakings. Funds made available through EU funding programmes or the Anna Lindh Foundation, for instance, create an interest in engaging with the Mediterranean, which is however not readily sustained beyond collaborations with the North. Masri notes that Lebanese cultural operators have a big role to play in developing a positive climate in Arab states from the Maghreb to the Gulf which is closely related to the relatively small country's aptitude for internationalisation. However, Masri notes that collaborating artistically with artists outside the Middle East has never been easy, and a sense of a common Arab world, let alone a Mediterranean context, is re-dimensionalised by this reality:

'When we started working regionally, it was very straightforward to work with, as long as it was Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan as well. But when we addressed artists and cultural operators with Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, they're very different. Even the language is different. For example, I cannot understand a Moroccan speaking, if I need to speak with them I'll use French. We have people from the Gulf who emerge as one region and there the realities are completely different.'

Academic Leila Rezk notes that dialogue and collaboration across the Mediterranean space are difficult to achieve given the different perceptions of the region the different sides of the Sea have of it. The priorities are different, and hence mutually successful collaboration is very challenging: *'Ca va dire qu'est de part de côté de l'Ue qui a une vision de la Méditerranée, sa vision à elle, qui est une vision de protection, de sécurité, de lutter contre la migration etc. etc. qu'est déjà comme point de départ négatif, défensif, plutôt que constructif.'* Rezk also notes that the way Europe tries to engage with its Southern partners betrays a lack of a coherent cultural policy which gives way to a strategy of convenience and approximation:

'les partenariats bénéficiés et les fameux douze pays qui ont signé l'accord d'association avec l'Ue, ceux-là ont, de mal, n'ont pas de politique culturel, et de mal a déterminer les besoins réels. Pour plusieurs raisons: première, la séparation, la dichotomie, entre l'état et la société civile, qui ont des besoins différents. La société civile, surtout dans cette région, veulent dire, Liban, Palestine, un peu la Jordanie, savent qu'ils veulent, mais en comblant les lacunes de l'état

elles creusent la distance entre eux et l'état. La société civile est identifié par les européennes, acquiers un force d'indépendance, d'autonomie de l'état, que là un fossé est creusait entre la société civile et l'état. Ca c'est un effet perversi, à mon avis.'

Rezk notes that the role European actors take in attempting to build relations on the ground in the South does not help the South-South relations to develop, starting from internal relations that are damaged due to what is sensed internally as opposition between the state and the civil society actors that engage with European forces. As is also the case with other territories, the European presence and support of civil society organisations does lead to the mistrust of the state not only towards the European forces but towards the local organisations themselves.

Tarazi, who has been active in the promotion of published literature for over thirty years, notes that throughout this time it is only over the past three years that sustained references to the Mediterranean have been made. This interest shows a growing concern with the region although, as commented by Masri, funding allocations related to this region are a catalyst for this shift. It is also ironic that most of this attention has been driven through European interest, rather than the South shore of the Mediterranean. Tarazi notes that while novel attention can be promising for new collaborations to take place, his experience of the declaration of Beirut as the Book Capital of the World in 2009 was bitter-sweet. This was due to the fact that the title attracted hordes of opportunists who declared their passion for publishing on the basis of fabricated experience who diverted important funds from the actual sector into short-term projects which were not sustained following the year in question.

In terms of South-South collaborations, Tarazi notes that Lebanon stands out as the most liberal state among its neighbours, in spite of its strong communitarian hold, in terms of both political management and economy. It therefore attracts the interest of European partners, but does not allow for easy collaborations to take place with its direct neighbours. Tarazi would like to see that change in terms of literature exchange and the development of a pan-Arabic book market. However, funding and political will need to be championed and practical solutions sought and found to achieve such plans.

Interviewees also commented on the role of the Gulf states in the development of cultural relations on a South-South basis. However, few had positive things to say. Tarazi notes that their brand of cultural expression is flamboyant but hollow: *'Vous savez que le culturel dépend beaucoup des moyens financières, et donc ont dois vivre de subversion, contributions, et beaucoup n'arrive pas seuls. Certains pays arabe du Golf ont beaucoup d'argent, mais là il y a une culture officielle. Là on fait les choses sous le regard du régime et ce n'est pas la vraie culture. Je suis riche et c'est de la façade.'*

2. 1. c. Casablanca/Rabat

Introduction

The first series of interviews carried out (putting aside the interview with Adrian Grima in Malta in December 2010) was in Morocco. While having been in Tunisia in April 2011, three months following the culmination of the Jasmine Revolution there, the brief trip to Rabat and Casablanca (31 August to 3 September) allowed for in-detail interviews to take place in light of the ongoing political reforms undertaken in various places in North Africa and the Middle East.

The first interview was held with Driss Ksikes, a writer, playwright and former journalist whose investigative, analytical and challenging style has more than once landed him into trouble with the national and monarchical authorities. Asked about the extent of European influence on Moroccan society, Ksikes replies that Morocco has for a long time positioned itself as being open to and eager to exploit to the full its connections with the Western world. This applies particularly to France, which occupied and managed Morocco, arguably with the approval and the support of the monarchy, from 1912 to 1956. France's story of territorial conquest in Morocco was very different, and less tragic, than say Algeria or sub-Saharan Africa. Hassan El Ouazzani, the single officer responsible for literature within the Ministry of Culture in Rabat who was interviewed there, notes he would find it very hard to imagine the state of Morocco today without the French protectorate. He notes that an occupation is always that and therefore imposed and with negative consequences. However, significant and long-term changes were brought about, which lifted Morocco from its slow social and economic development as an Atlantic outpost of the Ottoman empire to modernism and closer ties with the most dynamic countries of the early twentieth century, namely European states. El Ouazzani refrains from making value judgments, but openly admits to the organisational, administrative, cultural as well as artistic benefits which the protectorate brought about.

Francois Xavier Adam, the Director of the *Institut français* in Rabat, believes that Moroccan civil society has outgrown postcolonial hang ups and does not perceive its relation with Europe, and particularly France, through a colonial context. Adam has a very positive opinion of Moroccan citizens who have found their own way and built their own future without blaming history: '*Ici le sujet est dépassé par la contribution forte de la société civile marocaine. Les marocains ont cherchés de bâtir leur propre chemin dans la Méditerranée.*' Adam feels that while the colonial historical context is important and attracts a great deal of academic attention, it should be used as a resource to propel contemporary collaborations and partnerships in research and creativity that allows all parties to be equal partners. The *Institut* does just that, and Adam suggests no one in the cultural field is keen to approach the social and cultural dimensions of the colonial context differently.

Morocco targets France in political, social and most of all economic terms, making France the foremost investor in Morocco. Ksikes notes that this economic importance is supported at the educational level, since Morocco adopts a French educational system within which the bilingual system is practiced, the French language given great importance and the European but

primarily French societal and economic make up is kept in the foreground. Unlike other Arab countries, Morocco still uses French as its business language. The use of English is increasing, but has not replaced French yet as has happened elsewhere, in spite of the growing links with other African states and the Gulf states where English is preferred.

Cultural institutes

Morocco's openness to Europe includes the cultural field in particular, especially with regard to the active and dynamic presence of cultural institutes in a number of cities and particularly Rabat, the capital, and Casablanca, also referred to as the cultural capital due to the large number of festivals and other events which take place in or in close proximity to the city. However, in the case of the *Institut français*, there are ten centres spread throughout the territory as well as three *Alliance françaises*.⁶⁰⁸

El Ouazzani agrees that the European presence in Morocco has greatly shaped the cultural contours of the country. Of particular importance is Spain to the north as well as France in the rest of the kingdom. This influence shapes the way of thinking about and managing culture: '*Il pèse sur la manière de rédiger le penser et les enjeux*'.

Ksikes notes that European agencies are the only structures which guarantee a permanent and continuous cultural activity in Morocco. As noted earlier, this positive aspect of their existence should not hide the colonial context they have developed in. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that as expressed during the majority of all the interviews held, a scenario without their existence would be terrible and very impoverishing for the South Mediterranean today. While, in terms of dignity, many interviewees did express a sense of shame at the fact that their own authorities did not provide the structures needed for a healthy cultural expression and one had to rely on foreign agencies to provide such structures and the services that came with them, the vast majority would rather keep the foreign institutes and develop their relations with them further rather than see them go leaving a vacuum behind. In the case of Morocco, Ksikes notes that the national infrastructure limits itself to a few private art galleries and the state *Centre Mohammed V* for theatre. There have been a few developments, but none to rival the physical structures managed by the foreign centres, including libraries and rehearsal spaces. The permanence of the structures referred to earlier also comes from the provision of these spaces, as is the case of the *Institut français* which provides *Dabateatr* with a rehearsal space which acts as its base.

In interviewing Adam, a great deal of insights were forthcoming from the perspective and the experience of someone who has been for a long time involved and has managed a European cultural institute in the Southern half of the Mediterranean. He notes that the cultural relations that France engages in with Morocco go beyond relations in the artistic domain and include

⁶⁰⁸ The *Institut français* are found in Agadir, Casablanca, Fez, Marrakech, Meknès, Oujda, Rabat, Tanger and Tétouan and the *Alliance françaises* in Algedida, Essaouira and Safi.

other areas addressed by UNESCO namely education and academic research. France's strong presence in Morocco is supported by a conscious prioritisation of their cultural relations which enjoy more than 10 % of France's global budget and staff dedicated to such relations: '*Le Maroc est le pays au niveau des relations culturelles le plus important*'. France and Morocco enjoy a close relationship in terms of high-quality research and culture which is fine-tuned. Adam notes that a large section of the *Institut's* work in Morocco is of the supportive kind in favour of French individuals or organisations which have been established in Morocco or have collaborated with Moroccan actors for a long time. The same applies to research institutes and their Moroccan counterparts. One of the benefits of this long-standing and well-established relationship for Moroccan artists is related to the unsolicited recommendations which French or Moroccan actors with close ties to the Institut make to the directors and staff of the Institut in favour of these artists for commissions or projects to be carried out in their regard.⁶⁰⁹ Adam notes that the *Institut* sees itself as a facilitator of relations and a catalyst for ideas, rather than a gatekeeper to control what activities it should support. Therefore, the outlook and attitude are positive and active: '*On facilite les liens où il y en a déjà pour faire plus fortes*'. The role it adopts is also an engaged one: with time the aim of showcasing French artists has been accompanied, if not overtaken, by that of investing in Moroccan cultural infrastructure with an aim to support its development and sustainability through capacity building programmes. Adam notes that the Institut's efforts in the artistic field are primarily directed at private companies and schools; the state's interest seems to be confined to big festivals due to their international profile and the commercial and diplomatic opportunities they give rise to, at the expense of other areas like education which are less glamorous and politically strategic but of fundamental importance. Adam notes that Moroccan society is very closely linked with Europe and takes advantage of this fact to develop its own cultural capacity; the European institutes, not only the French, are very willing to collaborate in this development. Adam notes that the Institut never works alone and always partners local agencies in order to develop a programme together. In this way, its role is always that of a partner and close to local realities and needs.

The interest of cultural institutes in Morocco has grown, with a wide representation of European ones as well as non-European ones from Brazil and Mexico, which lie across the Atlantic from Morocco, and China, among others. From a European perspective, there is growing collaboration taking root: these include joint projects among French-speaking institutes such as the French, the Wallonie-Bruxelles agency and the French-speaking Swiss as well as EUNIC, the importance of which is growing.

Ksikes notes that structures aimed at exporting Moroccan cultural expression are also in their early stages, and foreign embassies and their cultural centres are mostly the only ones to provide this service. The *Conseil Consultative des Marocaines Etrangères* (CCME) has started to go beyond the representation of hackneyed folkloristic themes, but there is still a long way to

⁶⁰⁹ Visual artist Abdelaziz Zerrou notes how he collaborated with the *Institut français* to work on his installation on top of their old building in Rabat following the recommendation of a French artist and curator who regularly works from the new gallery space located in the old *Sacre Coeur* church in central Casablanca; *dignité*, Institut français de Rabat (2010): Rabat and <http://abdelazizzerrou.wordpress.com/works/dignite/>.

go. Furthermore, in terms of locally exported productions such as literature, there is a sharp divide between the Francophones who target Paris, and the arabophones who look exclusively at Egypt and Lebanon through publishing houses like Al Arabi in Rabat. Unfortunately, as explains El Ouazzani, those who publish in Arabic and find it harder to maximise their readership by internationalising it, unlike those who are successful when writing in French and build strong relations with Paris, many times fund their own publications.

The *Ministère des Affaires étrangères* is particularly active in supporting Moroccan publications to be presented at a number of fairs in France.⁶¹⁰ On a less commercial and visible level, and hence out of the hands of the Foreign Affairs office and into those of the *Ministère de la Culture*, a number of artist residences are supported, in spite of the economic cut backs.

El Ouazzani notes that linguistic output has enjoyed a stage of diversification. He notes that a number of young and emerging writers of Moroccan origin but who share dual citizenship with Dutch (for example Moustafa Mahli) or Spanish identities write from their new home countries in that country's language, but always with Morocco as their first home and reference.

Cultural institutes approach local cultural operators with caution. They are aware that although Morocco is culturally close to Europe and enjoys an advanced status of collaboration, it is not Europe but Muslim and socially different. However, this does not stop them from pursuing their agendas in as subtle a way as possible, driven by a belief that funding cultural projects or supporting cultural operators can bring about social change. Partnering local agents in cultural collaborations remains key, while developing a stronger virtual presence through the social media is also picking up. Ksikes is sceptical of this approach and believes Europeans are deluding themselves in doing so. Ksikes finds culture does change things, but only slowly and in the long run, while many times European participation requires the delivery of change in the short run. He also finds that the contexts within which these agendas are pursued tend to formalise activities to the extent of prioritising bureaucracy and accountability over the process. Ksikes bemoans a utilitarian approach to art and culture which aims at achieving social goals through art and doing so in the short run: '*Ca que me dérange aujourd'hui c'est cette conception un peu "ONG" de la culture*'. El Ouazzani notes that cultural institutes may bring change to the arts scene itself, but real change only takes root and takes place when there is a larger, corresponding change in society in general. This is a very interesting point he makes in relation to local audiences, who may be criticised for not embracing change in cultural expression, when more importantly, the political and social situations do not allow for change to grow.

On the other hand, in the context of the Arab Spring, it is interesting to note how artistic reflections and actions related to the political revolts and revolutions were an active part of change, and hence highly relevant to the context. El Ouazzani reflects positively on the political change sweeping across the Arab world and believes new spaces for cultural innovation and

⁶¹⁰ It is worth noting that French agencies are also very active in facilitating the participation of French publishers of Arabic literature in French at the various book fairs in Morocco.

confrontation will be exploited by the young generations. Foreign cultural institutes have tapped into this wave of change by building on the direct contacts they have been trying to strengthen with various sectors of the general public, beyond the established cultural elites and particularly with young people, with an aim to develop audiences as well as further existing partnerships. Adam is confident that change will be sustained and stepped up, and notes that if one casts their eyes back over the past ten years one notices, for instance, great developments in the cultural infrastructure of the country, which bodes well for the future. Cultural institutes see themselves as maintaining a very active role in this future and supporting further local cultural operators in their work: *'Avec du soutien concrète on arrive à des nouveaux changements importantes.'* For Adam, the European political framework and the importance given to the Mediterranean in general can provide crucial support through the cultural expertise it is able to provide and share.

Languages

Although relations with France have remained relatively positive and the use of the language given great importance, one can notice what seems to be a rather neat division between the spheres of use of Arabic and those of French. There is a narrow space for interaction in the field of translation, but contact stops there and is very limited. Divisions between French and Arabic camps are found in university departments where they are very clear. Instances of overlap are rare and restricted to the celebration of ceremony, such as when a commemoration in honour of Tahar Ben Jalloun, who writes in French, is carried out by the Arabophone part of society. Spaces for debate are restricted and usually up to a few individuals who seek to develop such open spaces.

In Morocco, it is important to take into consideration the "third" language which consists of *Derija*, in other words the local expression of Arabic or Moroccan Arabic. *Derija* is very widespread. The theatre group within which Ksikes works as playwright and director, *Dabateatr*, embraces the multiple languages used in Morocco and when using *Derija* as the leading language, one is sure to find translations (e.g. sub-titles) into and interactions with French and English. Ksikes operates within another creative forum that, while addressing the Mediterranean, does so in full acceptance of all the languages spoken in Morocco first of all, as well as, by extension in the Mediterranean space. This forum is the *Rencontres d'Averroès* which Ksikes coordinates in Rabat. He notes that while many are afraid of the mix in and among languages, it is his and his colleagues' duty to accept the situation and explore on the basis of what they observe, rather than on that of a sanitised, censored or partial version of reality: *'Je pense que cette question de métissage, de mélange, de hybridité, effectivement ils font encore peur. Et les gens ont encore peur de cette zone grise. On n'a pas de positions identitaires en relation avec une langue; on accepte la situation.'* This contrasts with the attitude of other organisms such as the conservative Arabophone *Association des Ecrivains du Maroc*. On the other hand, the PEN in Morocco promotes all languages and allows the mixing of its main means of communication with an eye on representation. If one puts these divisions to one side, one notices that the issue of the use of *Derija* is the real important question. One cannot call it a vernacular Arabic since it has not been codified. Yet, a large part of the population speaks it

and lives by it. While French is the language of the elite used in business, Classical Arabic provides people with a clear identity, an association with the Quran and with the institutions. However, it is through *Derija* that the general population expresses and reflects upon itself. *Derija* betrays the imperialistic and colonial heritage of Morocco and the influence on the people since it incorporates elements from Arabic, French and Spanish together with Berber, among others. Addressing *Derija* implies acknowledging that language belongs to the people who use it and is a marker of constant change, challenging the previously accepted dogmas of the permanence of language in relation to identity, notably that of Arabic as a religious language and Islam as the identity marker for its speakers i.e. Arabs.

Numerous analysts refer to the curious phenomenon that while the Arab world possesses one common means of communication in Arabic, it does not exploit this advantage enough. Ksikes' comments on *Derija* in Morocco and local versions of Arabic throughout the Arab world that are particular to specific territories seem to outweigh such observations which sound theoretical but not practical. When asked whether the development of *Derija* hampers trans-Arab communication, Ksikes hints at the fact that there is no overarching language which allows easy communication. The closest one can come to such communication to take place is via the media and social networks, where dominant versions of Arabic, tied to particular locations, travel more easily than others carrying with them particular ideas and meanings, and then get translated into other versions. Ksikes refers to the strength of Egypt in cultural terms with reference to the broadcasting of TV soaps in Egyptian dialects which are then re-transmitted in other Arab countries. By comparison, Morocco is much more isolated and weak in cultural broadcasting or propagation terms. On the other hand, the use of *Derija* is so well-rooted that TV soaps imported from Turkey, Mexico and Brazil, previously dubbed in Lebanese versions of Arabic, are now dubbed in *Derija*. This development witnesses an autonomy in the Moroccan market which does not mean a detachment from other markets, but a marked assertion in preferences and commercial possibilities. This change also contributes to the realisation of the fact that official culture is dead (*'la mort de l'art officielle'*).⁶¹¹

On a national level, the representation of the people through their own language is changing and exciting. While the status of Arabic and French as the main languages in education is not challenged, an official process is underway to recognise *Derija* as a national language. Ksikes believes educators, the media and all those with a stake in the well-being of society have a role to play in this debate. When asked whether there existed a dialogue in society which discussed the relationship between *Derija* and Arabic, Ksikes interestingly confirms this in relation to the vivid polemic raging between modernisers or observers of current trends and traditionalists who feel innovations in communication and language in particular threaten convention. *Derija* is accused of serving commercial interests, for example due to the role it plays in advertising. *Derija* is also unjustly accused of being inferior to Arabic. The two languages cannot be compared, claims Ksikes, since *Derija* is a functional language without the tradition and corpus

⁶¹¹ Presentation by Ksikes: *'Créativité culturelle et développement socio-économique au Maroc'*, European Commission Workshop, Brussels, November 2009.

of Arabic, which it cannot supplant. Educators, professors and other key figures of the establishment need to sensitise themselves to the issue of *Derija* in order to take the debate forward.

The boom in the use of social media has contributed to the popularisation of language use and the diversity in expression and in the mixing of different registers as well as languages. *Derija* plays a key role in enabling communication which cuts across borders and champions a democratisation of expression: *'les frontières sont brulées et avec ces révolutions nous avons l'expression de quelque chose plus direct, parfois dirigé par le Derija.'* People who in the past may have felt inhibited from participating in discussions in public spaces because they felt uncomfortable using French, feel less marginalised in debates where popularised forms of expression dominate and allow for the form (i.e. which language is used) to play second stage to the act of communication.

The role of *Derija* is widely debated in society and this debate is keenly followed by foreign cultural agencies. In practical terms, the main interest of the Institut français in Rabat lies with the French language and pursues it comfortably because Morocco is a Francophone country where French is used widely even in the creative and artistic fields. However, it also supports theatre works which are in or discuss *Derija*. Ksikes also notes that foreign agencies tend to isolate this phenomenon and locate it specifically within Moroccan dynamics, distancing it from the general Arabo-Muslim context which the development of *Derija* may suggest it lies outside of. He also notes that this communicative revolution is attracting the attention of foreign institutes by making them listen to and observe new ways of engaging in cultural expression in the Mediterranean. The age of acting as transmitters of information has ended, and these agencies are becoming aware of, and excited by the fact that, communication has become multiple and less controlled and predictable. Ksikes notes he is regularly consulted by the directors of the foreign institutes to comment on social changes surrounding them and notes that they are keen to keep abreast with new trends and avoid remaining stuck in old conceptions of social dynamics. Ksikes notes that cultural institutes can now play their role of facilitators of cultural communication with greater ease and there is more opportunity for them to influence dynamics.

The Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is not only a concept but also a reality that is alive and thriving with people from different areas of the region who are keen on collaborating with one another. Ksikes believes it is a pity when the public space related to the Mediterranean is occupied prominently by experts or self-fashioned experts who dissect the region into a stalemate instead of allowing it to breathe in the hands of activists, artists and cultural operators. Ksikes identifies the Anna Lindh Foundation as an example of the failure to deliver concrete projects in the Mediterranean, only flattering to deceive: *'L'Anna Lindh est même l'exemple de la faillite de la Méditerranée.'* In order to improve the situation and make something positive out of such organisations, established bureaucracies and representations of power need to give way to new spaces that bring together academy, training establishments and society in general.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to challenge successfully ingrained systems which tend to resist change and do not go beyond interesting proposals for projects which however do not progress any further: *'Je pense que c'est un peu le syndrome du power-point.'*

From a cultural institutes perspective, the Mediterranean serves a number of important functions. Invoking this space is one of the primary and more positive ways of developing further collaborations between European states like France and Spain and Morocco, for instance. The Mediterranean is seen as a context for bilateral or multilateral projects, and not as having a particular value in itself. Nevertheless, the focus is on improving the well-being of citizens in different localities around the Mediterranean as well as the value of the exchange between the two shores, and the concept of the Mediterranean contributes to achieving this in a significant way.

One important stratum of the Mediterranean which is explored by *Dabateatr* is the influx of migrants in Moroccan society. The group carries out research to produce works with foreign migrants into Morocco to explore their histories and identities and how they contribute to social dynamics. On the other hand, they also work with Moroccan return migrants from Europe to explore what they bring back with them in terms of experiences.

In terms of audiences, El Ouazzani believes one can talk about a common Mediterranean strand which runs across them as it runs across populations bordering the Sea in general. He reproduces popular beliefs about the connectivity which exists between the Mediterranean peoples on the basis of a number of common characteristics; interestingly, Adrian Grima does not deny these are true, but qualifies them to note that they can be overdone, not queried, and taken as absolutes that hide changing trends and nuances. However, he also notes that there are marked differences, one of which is related to how people handle art through religious convention and belief. Since religion can be exploited for political purposes, El Ouazzani warns against allowing religious factions to impose their own agenda for the observance of values which curtail freedom of expression as well as creativity: *'Le pays doivent être basés sur le respect, et sur le droit à la différence. L'uniformité, avec les mêmes valeurs, n'aide pas ce processus de tolérance et créativité.'* On the other hand, religion can provide an infinite stimulus for creative debate and expression and because of this its sanctity and arguably inviolability need to be challenged.⁶¹²

South-South Policies

For a Mediterranean cultural expression to develop, one needs to encourage and sustain as much a diversified production of cultural expression as possible. This applies to the North-South axis, as well as horizontally. Within the South-South axis, El Ouazzani notes that the supposedly common language (Arabic) and the fact that Arab audiences do look out for artists from the

⁶¹² Such a situation exists with regard to the ironic take of religious motifs by Maltese contemporary artists who go against a strong tradition of glorification of the Catholic faith tenets and the conventional mentality in many quarters of society: Vella (2008).

South do not offset structural imbalances which enforce the peripherality of certain territories. A case in point is Arabic literature produced in Morocco which is enjoyed by Arabic readers but not greatly available and popular in book centres like Cairo and Beirut which, on the other hand, support their writers to travel extensively in the Arab world. El Ouazzani explains that the historical background goes some way in hinting at the cause of this dis-balance: the first printing presses were established in Cairo and Lebanon, while the last was set up in Morocco around four decades later. Nevertheless, El Ouazzani notes that Arab artists share a lot in common, and should come together to explore this vault of identity markers that may lead to processes of collaboration.

The aspect of developing the South-South axis is also remarked upon in relation to the financial investment needed to benefit the cultural infrastructure. Asked to comment on how the financial and economic crisis has effected European support of the arts in Morocco, El Ouazzani stresses that his country's priorities were nurturing sustainability with an aim for self-sufficiency and a reduced need for foreign interventions there where the state or local authorities can and should manage on their own to provide the resources necessary to support cultural development.⁶¹³ He points out that for this to take place one needs to invest in education, text books of high quality, a stronger familiarity with and a passion for literature and good libraries, all of which Morocco lacks and which have an effect on the poor state of literature consumption. Interestingly, El Ouazzani refers to Lebanon as a state which has managed to invest in its cultural resources and reap more benefits than Morocco. As discussed in the section dealing with the interviews held in Lebanon, this is only partly true, but the part which is holds important lessons to be learnt and possibly to be applied elsewhere. Also very interestingly, Grima reflects on the dearth of a vibrant literary scene in Malta in terms of reader development, reader interest and events that develop this interest such as festivals and fairs in comparison with the annual Casablanca Book Fair which El Ouazzani himself coordinates: in spite of a commercial representation and a popularist approach to literature and books which may be criticised for "dumbing down", the event is hugely popular and well attended by readers of all ages who relate to literature and publications in what is not a common phenomenon around the Mediterranean basin.⁶¹⁴

In relation to education, El Ouazzani notes that the social media, which play an ever growing role in the well-being of civil society, may be harnessed for better use in terms of literature in particular and cultural expression in general. However, he does point out that the widespread problem of illiteracy does not make the challenge any easier. As in Malta, responsibilities for education and cultural matters fall within the remits of different ministries, which does not make the coordination of related yet on paper separate policy areas easy or successful. The coordination of policies within a larger framework remains a challenge for many national set ups.

⁶¹³ It is interesting to confront this vision with Adam's comments about French support to private companies and schools to develop their infrastructure and capacity with an aim to help them run sustainably and successfully. It is also interesting to recall Adam's negative experience of the state in trying to achieve similar aims.

⁶¹⁴ Grima's comments were made during a meeting discussing ideas for the Valletta 2018: Candidate City European Capital of Culture in February 2012.

To conclude, Ksikes is very critical of the growing role of the Gulf states on Morocco. He mistrusts the petro-dollars paving their way in Moroccan society more than interventions by Europe since he believes the new richness does not sustain any ideology or plan but money itself. He considers their projects to be literally 'built on sand'. Their state of hyper-modernity does not appeal to him and arguably scares him as a sort of *horror vacui* devoid of a sense of history, value and a project for the future apart from enriching itself. Nadim Tarazi, interviewed in Beirut, notes that the rich individuals in the Gulf states do support the arts profusely, but with very little to say except for officialdom which does not stand up to much: *'Certains pays arabe du Golf ont beaucoup d'argent, mais là il y a une culture officielle. Là on fait les choses sous le regard du régime et ce n'est pas la vraie culture. Je suis riche et c'est de la façade.'*

2. 1. e. Valletta/Malta

Introduction

Carrying out research on and in Malta provided this exercise with an added dimension to its original intentions which focused on the Arab states. Malta introduced itself as an extension of the South Mediterranean, on the one hand, but also as a quintessentially Mediterranean territory of sorts. Including this territory meant addressing a space which required definition in terms of political and cultural belonging which goes beyond convention and tradition. In light of Chambers' observations about mobility across borders in the Mediterranean, the position of Malta and its significance to the Mediterranean space needs to be questioned and interpreted in relation to a novel reading of what it means to its citizens and all those who travel to and from it. The relatively recent and high influx of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who seek refuge by targeting Europe, end up in Malta, and then either stay or move on, is one of the latest examples of Malta acting as a Mediterranean hub of movement and of people seeking better ways of living.

In a seminal article written before Malta joined the EU in 2004 Godfrey Baldacchino notes that the Maltese nation lacks nationalism and displayed the need to invent its own nationalism to address that gap, thus leading to an *'imagined political community'*. He makes interesting reference to irredentist movements which over the past 200 years, hence during the modern period developing in the wake of the French Revolution, have always linked Malta to another large state or group of states. Baldacchino argues that while Malta is now a state, its credentials of nationhood need questioning. In light of research by the likes of Benedict Anderson, Shlomo Sand and Eric Hobsbawm that focuses on the invention of tradition in different historical and political contexts, questions raised are pertinent to many modern states. What is peculiar about the Maltese case is the way it did become a state rather than remain dependent on larger countries and achieved its statehood in an environment that clearly displays the diverse cultural elements Malta is made up of which could have destroyed the possibility of that statehood. Malta's experience of its political process revolves around its insularity which is an important cultural element in terms of how the island community sees itself and in relation to other, larger, countries on the mainland. The sense of engaging in a struggle against an external Other is still ongoing. In terms of recent history, the politically divisive debate on accession to the EU contributed to the late development of a national conscience in that the EU as the Other made a discussion about national identity possible in terms of identifying oneself against and in relation to another.⁶¹⁵

Malta's struggle with the Other has also been of a particular kind. The formation of nationalism which often comes from a strong reaction, including a violent struggle, against an exploitative coloniser was missing: rather, irredentism in relation to Italy and integration with regard to Great Britain, the imperial force, were both sought by the influential political figures on both

⁶¹⁵ BALDACCHINO, Godfrey (2002): 'A Nationless State? Malta, Identity and the EU', *West European Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 4, October, page 4.

sides of the political divide: *'The ties with something larger [...] have been and remain strong'*. Furthermore, in various areas such as *'language, tourism, legislation, education and culture, Britain remains magnetic to the Maltese.'* Such a paternalist relationship, described by Baldacchino in such strong terms as *'upside down decolonisation'*, is shared with *'many of the citizens of Britain's non-sovereign overseas island territories.'*⁶¹⁶

On the other hand, language and religion have arguably been the two key formative elements of Maltese identity, of which Carmel Cassar says: *'In Malta language, together with religion, has long been held to be the crux of Maltese identity and is often held to be the main differentiating mark of ethnic identity.'*⁶¹⁷ Cassar also notes how the Maltese language was able to attain the function of a literary language in the nineteenth century but had no standard orthography until 1931 and was only adopted as Malta's official language with independence in 1964. From the very beginning of the formation of a Maltese identity and its language foreign influences were determining, with the effects of the French Revolution and the *Jacobins* in Malta in the dying days of the Order of St John at the end of the eighteenth century being crucial. The role of Mikiel Anton Vassalli in forging the idea of a national language linked to a national identity is very important, and it is worth noting that Vassalli was influenced by the continental authors he read, like Herder, while he was in Rome.⁶¹⁸ Going back further, links can be drawn between language development and identity by tracing the role of the Maltese language from the Arab presence in Malta through the Middle Ages to the European cultural influence closer to the modern era.⁶¹⁹

Following World War II the dominant economic development paradigm was based on a belief in capitalist development structured on export-led and foreign-owned industrialisation. The importance of the foreign element in industrialisation foreshadowed the way things would be even after independence.⁶²⁰ Therefore, like other colonised territories, Malta faced an arduous task in carving for itself an independent space which however remained closely linked with its foreign partners. This applied to Britain as well as other colonial forces. Beyond economics, Ranier Fsadni notes that the UK acts as a 'cultural hinterland' to Malta, whereby its influence, ranging from elite to popular culture, is taken for granted but informs patterns of thought, reference, allusion, humour and much else. He argues that the importance of this influence cannot be exaggerated since: *'The irrigation of the different kinds of knowledge that are important to a 'knowledge society' often depends on cultural hinterlands. And sharing*

⁶¹⁶ Ibid. page 9.

⁶¹⁷ CASSAR, Carmel (2001): 'Malta: Language, Literacy and Identity in a Mediterranean Island Society', *National Identities*, Vol. 3, No. 3, page 1.

⁶¹⁸ 'Mikiel Anton Vassalli, one of the foremost Maltese illuministi, exposed to the intellectual and cultural currents of the Enlightenment in Italy, was a true democrat.' CIAPPARA, Frans (2006): *Enlightenment and Reform in Malta 1740-1798*, Midsea Books, Malta, page 75.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid. page 21.

⁶²⁰ SULTANA, Ronald; BALDACCHINO, Godfrey eds. (1994): *Maltese Society: A Sociological Inquiry*, Mireva, Malta, page 56.

*hinterlands facilitates joint production of such kinds of knowledge.*⁶²¹ Sharon Spiteri shares this view and notes that *'the path to career development is through the UK'*.⁶²²

Finally, while sharing the opinion which assigns great importance to British influence in Malta, Evarist Bartolo adopts a more critical view which aims to challenge, rather than accept, recent and current dynamics. In strong terms, he notes that:

'the colonized are denied the freedom to create and to be active and responsible. All the historical, cultural and spiritual aspirations of a whole people are wiped out and their country is turned into a mere prop for colonial interest. The colonized are denied authentic participation in their history. To become free and equal, they must break away from the colonizer.'

With particular reference to Malta he notes that:

'cultural alienation does not go away with the end of colonialism. Dudley Seers in The Political Economy of Nationalism warns of the harm that can be done in small island nations like Malta if they are run by 'an elite whose minds are stuffed with foreign values and theories and may be unable to understand even the need for national interest, however defined...the roots of an independent strategy may lie...in a culture strong and homogenous enough to avoid alienation – especially dependence on an imported way of perceiving the nation's own needs.'

He concludes by noting that:

*'in our future relationship with the UK, as with the other countries in the world we must still look after our own national interest. We can do this by learning from other countries but always striving to see with our own eyes and think with our own brains and through the proper management of our interdependence with as many different countries as possible.'*⁶²³

The interviews in Malta reflect the development of the general direction the research went in. Following a first interview in December 2010, a longer series of interviews in the three South Mediterranean countries was held. In order to redress the balance between these and the Malta-based research, another two interviews were held in December 2011, thus allowing the whole series to start and end in Malta.

To start off, Dr Adrian Grima supplied a detailed reflection on colonialism and what it means to creative people, as well as society at large, in the Mediterranean today. Reflecting on the significance of colonial rule to contemporary artists, Grima notes that while colonialism is still relevant, it is only so if it is re-contextualised by having the meaning of this context renewed. He notes that in the past local communities could readily identify themselves through their

⁶²¹ BRITISH COUNCIL MALTA (2007): *New Chapters: Maltese Perceptions of the United Kingdom*, University of Malta, page 18.

⁶²² Ibid. page 25.

⁶²³ Ibid. page 14.

difference and indeed their opposition to the foreigner who allowed the exploitation of that difference. Nowadays, that division and opposition have changed, and while historical relations and consequences on the present need to be studied, the traditional split between 'us' and 'them' does not have the relevance it had before. While agreeing with this interpretation, it is important to remain aware of the large number of people who support or are exploited by nationalistic feelings and arguments who reject some people who are different because they are perceived as being completely alien and a threat to the local culture. Grima's argumentation recalls Toynbee's and Gallant's who seek those common spaces which have sprung to life in spite of the ferocious antagonism which may exist between any two sides.

Arguably the most important development in Malta's identity as a nation has been membership in the EU in 2004. In political terms, this has served to officialise Malta's identity as European and validate multiple efforts throughout the island's history to confirm this European bond.⁶²⁴ At the same time, this European connection empowered Malta in its Mediterranean dimension in a variety of ways including financially, economically and politically. Malta's participation in the Barcelona Process and the 5 + 5 initiative developed further through the EU. While Malta's connection with the Mediterranean became closer politically, clear results in domains such as culture have still not materialised to the extent one would wish to see. However, a re-alignment of policy along the lines described below means a pro-active way forward has been identified and the first steps have been taken.

With reference to intercultural exchange and dialogue, under *2.1.b. Algiers: Role of the artists*, it was noted that people on the edge seem to be better placed to engage in this type of activity. While this is also true of Malta, it is worth noting that those individuals who may be described as lying on the edges of society and its standard norms and ways of behaving do have access to certain means of communication and representation through which their experiences, voice and vision is shared with like-minded people and hence disproportionately amplified. Grima notes that such individuals share their experiences through high-circulation newspapers in English and TV and radio in such a way as to over-represent this section of society and give the impression that, for instance, Maltese society in general is constantly collaborating with foreign partners, speaking at international fora and engaging in intercultural exchanges. Grima notes that this exposure leads to the collective imaginary integrating this impression and believing it is representative of the whole.

The Mediterranean

Caldon Mercieca is the last person interviewed as part of the research, a year after having begun. He is the coordinator of the cultural bureau within the Ministry of Tourism, the Environment and Culture, one of the drafters of the National Cultural Policy published in July 2011, responsible for the drafting of new cultural economy strategy together with Toni Attard, also interviewed, a lecturer at the University of Malta in theatre studies and a writer. Like many

⁶²⁴ MITCHELL, Jon P. (2002): *Ambivalent Europeans: Ritual, Memory and the Public Sphere in Malta*, Routledge, New York.

cultural operators in Malta, he wears many hats, trying to muster as many resources as possible to address areas of policy and its implementation. With regard to the Mediterranean, he believes there is an unconscious level which permeates the lives of the Maltese, going from governance structures to the way we relate to each other. On the other hand, we turn it into a conscious experience when we address it through a conscious effort. As an example of this he refers to the drafting of the cultural policy, which through various drafts tried to go from addressing the Mediterranean as a somewhat exterior subject to incorporating it into the very identity of the text.

A policy can be interpreted as a text which chooses to narrate a particular story, not any other, in order to set out its priorities and outline its course of action. A cultural policy that aims at addressing the Mediterranean in terms of supporting collaborations, easing mobility and driving the creative process, to mention but a few, needs to *be* Mediterranean. In other words, one cannot adopt any policy, tweak it to fit the Mediterranean dimension, pepper it with references and expect significant results. In discussing this policy which he translated from English into Maltese, Grima notes that the later drafts addressed the Mediterranean better than the earlier drafts not because they spoke of the Mediterranean more, but because the text re-contextualised itself within the Mediterranean and expressed a vision of Malta as a Mediterranean country aware of and interested in this region and its partners in this region.

The policy is acting as a base for actions shaping cultural, social and economic behaviour, which are all developed within a Mediterranean context. Mercieca notes that while acknowledging the geographical context of Malta is important, over the past years, instances of direct engagement with partners within the region have not been frequent. Mercieca suggests that there is a divide between a renewed policy approach towards the Mediterranean,⁶²⁵ based on the recognition of the region as one of the most important, and arguably overlooked, defining and operating contexts of Malta, and practical engagements.

Issues of representation and communication are crucial to the discussion the research is holding with regard to the Mediterranean. Grima finds that when faced by Maalouf's dual axis of vertical and horizontal heritage, most Maltese people relate the stronger, vertical dimension to their Maltese ancestors who are however sanitised and limited to a partial perception rich in authentic tradition and cultural practices in terms of language use, religious affiliation and single ethnicity. This perception, like with many other peoples, is dominant, and within itself excludes the larger Mediterranean context which over the centuries has determined Maltese identity. Instead, when it features at all, the Mediterranean dimension is ring-fenced within the horizontal dimension, as part of contemporary yet foreign influence. While Maalouf argues that this influence is many times actually the stronger of the two because it is alive, present and changing, the perception is different, and a strong belief in the near-determination of oneself

⁶²⁵ The interest is described as renewed since following independence the Socialist government of the 1970s and early 1980s consciously promoted economic and cultural efforts which aimed at engaging directly with Mediterranean partners, positioning the young state closer to non-aligned Yugoslavia and Libya and further away from old and new imperial powers; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1984): *Peace in the Mediterranean: Malta's Contribution*, Valletta.

through one's idealised ancestors is to be contended with.⁶²⁶ The discussion with Grima brings out the fact that it is different elements within the Maltese population that help assign specific types of relevance to ways of connecting its identity as Maltese with the Mediterranean context. For example, in the inter-war period (1920s and 1930s) the Maltese community in Sousse, Tunisia, published a newspaper which referred to the Mediterranean as a common, vertical dimension, which linked it to its European ancestry through the Mediterranean. Nowadays, the idea of the Mediterranean is readily appealed to in terms of tourism, as other similar destinations do, as well as in terms of the solidarity invoked at a political level in relation to the assistance demanded of the EU in terms of the control of the influx of migrants from North Africa (and the Frontex mission) to the pride felt in helping fellow citizens of the region in fighting tyranny and despotism for liberty (as in Tunisia and especially Libya during 2011). A small number of artists also refer to the Mediterranean context as a larger set of identities and influences within which Malta can find a number of reference points and towards which Malta can develop its potential as a hub and spinner of networks due to its location between Europe and the Arab world. Cases in point are Grima in the field of literature, most vividly through the Malta Mediterranean Literature Festival, relatively young performing artists Jimmy Grima and Toni Attard, as well as musicians Andrew Alamango and Ruben Zahra, who find in the Mediterranean both a source of inspiration as well as a destination with works which weave stories with Mediterranean resonance for Malta. Grima refers to Herzfeld to show that while the Mediterranean is being discussed, it exists. What is said about it differs, but this includes artistic and spiritual reflections that contribute to the reality and the significance of the Mediterranean to its peoples.

What the Mediterranean means to people depends on the choices they make with regard to this space. Invoking Matvejević, Grima asserts his belief that one is not born Mediterranean but chooses to be so. This means people born in the Mediterranean may not be interested in becoming more familiar with the region, while others born outside it may become Mediterranean through their interest for the space. Grima finds the concept of a project to envision and accomplish appealing, as has already been discussed in *Section One*. Grima also distinguishes between the types of projects proposed, and classifies the Union for the Mediterranean as a French colonial project re-packaged for the purposes of contemporary politics.

Grima is also critical of the term Euro-Med and the project such a term represents which suggests one driven by the EU Member States in order to address a European agenda for the Mediterranean while including the remaining states of the Mediterranean. The term betrays this European bias in a way similar to that of the Eastern Partnership aimed at building bridges among the EU and states in Eastern Europe: Europe seems to command centre-stage, while the other countries tag on.⁶²⁷ The way a vision is expressed starts with its title and is developed within the implementation of that vision.

⁶²⁶ Maalouf, page 50.

⁶²⁷ European Commission, Jean Monnet Seminar: 'The Eastern Partnership and the EU2020 Strategy', 8-9 December 2010, Brussels.

Cultural diplomacy and international collaborations

Toni Attard has for a number of years been involved in the cultural scene in Malta through multiple ways. He has driven the new cultural strategy for Malta that is designed to coordinate and maximise all efforts in the cultural and creative fields with an aim of developing a cultural economy which is long-term and sustainable. He is also a theatre director and actor with a dynamic vision and a practical engagement with various European and Mediterranean partners. He notes that cultural diplomacy, an area he has also been very active in promoting through partnerships with the British Council among others, is a very recent development in Malta. This phenomenon coincides with the recent appearance of international collaborations being sought by Maltese artists and cultural operators, generally speaking.

The cultural stakeholders in Malta are highly exposed to the activity held abroad, particularly with regard to the British, Italian and American markets and cultural scenes. This is due to a number of factors, including Malta's small size, geographic location and traditional contact with English-speaking and Italian cultures. However, with the exception of a few artists and cultural operators who have mostly been very resourceful and self-sufficient, most actors find engaging on the international scene very challenging. On the other hand, the high presence of people from other countries who settle in Malta or use it as a base which they visit often has contributed to maintain Malta in a curious position, at once peripheral and central. In terms of audiences, some are still dedicated to traditional sources like the UK and Italy; however, young generations, greater mobility and technological resources seem to be allowing for a more dynamic environment of exchange to take place.

The issue of peripherality and the reliance on a cultural motherland or hinterland, which Boullata and John Baldacchino raise, has not been tackled successfully by Maltese stakeholders. Malta suggests it could capitalise on its strategic role at the heart of the Mediterranean, as so many tourism campaigns and business brochures declare, but confounded policies and the lack of a clear strategy have allowed Malta to slip from a possible central role in Mediterranean affairs to a peripheral one in the European framework. While this observation may be interpreted in a number of contexts, including political and economic, it is here meant to make primarily a cultural point, with clear connections to other domains. Attard notes that Malta has a Mediterranean calling and its role may be discussed in various areas of public space. However, a great deal of focus needs to be achieved in order to transform ambitions into concrete proposals to implement. One also needs to be aware of a number of important social circumstances which impact on cultural expression and consumption.

One example of these circumstances is the following. Attard refers to theatre to explain how Maltese practitioners and audiences experience a split with regard to Maltese and foreign content. While a clearly identifiable section of theatre practitioners works exclusively with Maltese texts for audiences who are equally exclusive about the type of theatre production followed, there is another which works with texts in English and which is followed by a particular audience. Attard notes that the pity lies in the fact that none of the productions belonging to these areas aim at engaging with a foreign audience abroad. Furthermore, co-

productions with foreign companies or operators are limited to a few occasions and small audiences. On the other hand, instances of international collaboration are related to educational programmes, including training, run by state as well as private drama schools. In all such cases, behaviour on the levels of cultural expression and consumption can be addressed through structural means and through a policy which identifies and aims to make available the necessary resources, be they financial or human skills. Unfortunately, these resources are lacking, not enough structures are in place and actions tend to be sporadic rather than planned in a strategic way. The new strategy for the centralisation of cultural authorities and better synergies to be exploited between the various actors under the title of *Malta Kreattiva* (Creative Malta) aims, among other things, to address this gap in planning and implementation, and the first outcomes of this new process are eagerly awaited.

This is where ironically, by looking outwards, one can explore and exploit local dynamics that may contribute to the development of both external and internal environments. The multifaceted identity of Maltese people includes European and Mediterranean dimensions and trying to explore both together, rather than separately, may give rise to cross-border and multi-cultural collaborations involving different elements aiming to benefit multiple actors. Attard notes that as a young practitioner he started overcoming early prejudices inherited by society against Arab people by participating in a Euro-Med Cultural Management training course organised within the framework of the EU and the Cultural Leadership programme managed by the British Council. From such experiences, Attard notes he discovered an affinity with his Mediterranean counterparts, which he has kept pursuing since. He notes that such networks were developed by European bodies and that by acting as catalysts such organisations manage to support cultural operators in areas of the Mediterranean where without state support or structures these operators find it very hard to be effective. On the other hand, Attard reflects upon the Anna Lindh Foundation and, echoing Ksikes in Rabat, notes that while the intention to set it up was positive, its implementation on the basis of a European framework applied to the Mediterranean is superficial and ineffective.

In terms of collaboration, the presence of financial means is crucial in acting as an incentive to action. Mercieca stresses this point to note that, on a state level, while cultural protocols can express good intentions, as in the case of Malta with pre-revolutionary Tunisia, the only protocol to have meant something substantial has been the one with Italy because it is funded on either side particularly with regard to education and training in the cultural field. On the other hand, one other protocol which was successful, but which does not seem to be active in the same way it was before, was with China, which, as Mercieca notes, is both half a world away, far removed from the Mediterranean region, as well as a growing global power.

If opinions expressed in newspapers and in the media, including social media, are anything to go by, many Maltese people seem satisfied with the role Malta has taken in the recent political changes on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.⁶²⁸ The way Malta stepped up to assist

⁶²⁸ <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110925/opinion/Gonzi-s-successful-Libya-policy.386259>
(accessed 25 November 2011).

civilians in Tunisia and Libya, for instance, seems to fulfill a popular concept of Malta as a nurse to neighbouring countries and a safe haven for countries in conflict, which is a notion which was already strong at the time of the Order of the Knights of St John who were a hospitaller order, and revisited later, in the nineteenth century under British rule, during the Crimean War, for instance. Nowadays, individuals like the interviewees for the research believe Malta can fulfill this important humanitarian role while practising its own brand of diplomacy. As noted by Mercieca, Malta practised this role when it observed a neutrality status in the 1970s and should resume this now since it does not interfere with its current status as EU member and peace-respecting country. He refers to the subtle diplomacy practised by other European countries on the periphery like Norway and Finland as an example of what this role could entail. Mercieca believes state officials should be braver and commit themselves to an active engagement to the Mediterranean particularly when matters are volatile and where culture can act as a means to connect. Mercieca also notes that one practical measure adopted by Government which he himself was instrumental in making happen, namely the Cultural Diplomacy Fund managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the benefit of Maltese embassies around the world, has a minimal budget and is quite restricted in what it can support, but hopefully can develop into a powerful means of practising international brokerage through cultural means.

Mercieca does not cast a shadow on developments, even though they could happen at a faster and more coordinated pace. Rather, he emphasises the potential of measures, how they could be implemented better, and how in reality Malta faces challenges and opportunities which are shared by many other, particularly small, territories, within the Mediterranean and outside it. Like Attard, Mercieca feels where Malta stands today in terms of capacity and what it would like to achieve makes it an ideal partner for other states and organisations in other states to collaborate fruitfully in the long-term. Furthermore, with cultural industries worldwide facing constant change, Malta's historical disadvantage becomes less of an impediment to be relevant through innovation.

Attard notes that current ways of managing cultural relations on the basis of international collaborations by cultural institutes like the British Council or the *Institut français* have changed from traditional approaches to showcasing national talent and promoting one's institute to acting as a facilitator of communication and cooperation between different partners with, as in the case of the British Council, very little visibility for the institute itself. As noted by Masri in relation to the British Council in Beirut, the institute is interested in supporting cooperation and building networks which refer to the UK without selling themselves in any direct way. Such actions are not without their challenges: Attard notes how attempts at collaborations by Maltese institutions with artists in certain countries, such as Tunisia before regime change in January 2011, would fail, unless one accepted the decisions of state authorities on who one could and could not work with, or used the channels opened up by European cultural institutes to develop alternative means of cooperation. Attard notes that this role played by European institutes has contributed to the subversive aura they seem to hold in the eyes of the regimes, and have alerted the authorities to the presence of such bodies.

Attard expresses a hope that with political changes bringing social openings in the South of the Mediterranean on the one hand, and small territories like Malta identifying their cultural strengths in the context of the Mediterranean, new areas for positive collaborations, which are based on creativity and respect for one another, rather than heavily politicised agendas, may take place. He recognises a freshness in the approach adopted by such territories which he hopes may lead to new beginnings. With regard to the North shore, as commented by Leila Rezk, the economic and financial crisis may serve as a moment of reflection, stock-taking and re-assessment of priorities and which resources are to be used to achieve which goals. The situation young countries can exploit is one where, while not having the traditions and experiences of more established countries which also benefit from cultural institutes of a certain stature, they can operate without the burden of messy colonial relations and their consequences. In other words, they can participate in regional collaborations as equal partners because they are so, and not because they have to refigure ways of being so.

Cultural institutes

Grima notes that foreign cultural institutes, such as the CCF in Algiers, exist in a charged context and come with a lot of baggage and amidst a great deal of unfinished business. As was discussed earlier including in *2.1.b. Algiers*, their role is not straightforward and cannot be otherwise before lots of issues are tackled and closure is sought. He notes how one cannot envisage successful European institutes in Palestine before the Israeli occupation is addressed directly, nor consider the *Instituto Cervantes* without taking into account the plight of Maghrebi migrants into Spain. It is difficult to consider any European cultural institute working in North Africa and the Middle East without keeping in mind the restrictive visa regimes imposed on locals who want to travel to Europe. It is unjust of certain institutes to defend themselves with high security systems on tracts of land they occupy in their host country which negate access to locals. As was the case with Maalouf, Grima emphasises the importance of acknowledging the role of perceptions: what institutes stand for depends on perceptions developed and transmitted.

The same applies to Malta in the case of those NGOs, such as the literary association *Inizjamed* which Grima coordinates, which collaborated and collaborate still with foreign cultural institutes and embassies. Grima notes how previous collaborations with the British Council, which engaged in such artistic support before scaling down and re-prioritising operations to the Middle East, did raise suspicions and negative comments by members of the association and of the public with regard to the perceived neo-colonial and dominant role the foreign agency had over the local organisation. Grima notes that this particular collaboration was accompanied by a constant discussion with himself regarding the dynamics within the relationship he and the organisation he heads were engaged in. He describes an agency like the British Council as having a quasi-moral authority in the cultural field, and was aware of the leverage its experience, influence and finances gave it in achieving its goals. He had to be very clear and determined in the way he went about developing this relationship in order to achieve the goals he set himself. This situation exposes an imbalance in powers between potential partners and the possibility of the stronger exploiting the weaker for its contacts, good name and grassroots

connections. Grima notes this situation is not restricted to foreign agencies since dealing with government agencies and ministries entails similar dynamics of brokerage and bartering. Interestingly, Grima suggests that the resolution of potential or underlying tension is based on the realisation that if two bodies want to partner each other, they need to find space for each other in their respective agendas. This awareness, and the willingness to explore opportunities for collaboration, may lead to what may also be termed a third space in practice. Grima notes that it is not the little details of collaboration which matter in hindsight, like who opened an event with a speech and who followed. However, he notes that some significant details will contribute to the overall impression which participants and audiences will get from a particular project. One should aim for a joint ownership of a project, which is a real challenge. What is interesting is that a joint project may develop on the basis of different, though not clashing, priorities, which lead to the joint ownership of the vehicle with which to achieve those aims. Once more with reference to *Inizjamed's* collaboration with the British Council, while the UK agency was keen on supporting initiatives by civil society organisations (CSOs) as part of its agenda supporting Malta's (as well as Cyprus' and the Eastern states') campaigns for membership in the EU before 2004, the Maltese association was keen on making use of the brand enjoyed by the British Council through association and showing that the English language could be used to work with and promote other, smaller, languages such as Maltese.

Although colonial history in the Mediterranean shares similarities between different territories, the individual experiences expressed are different, and the subsequent cultural experiences differ greatly between these different lands. Grima notes how Negrouche had narrated how the relationship of the Moroccan writers to the French was different, in practice better, than that of the Algerians. Colonial rule was different, the whole experience was specific to each territory, and the relationship of locals to the languages reflects these differences. While in Morocco the Arabic language was used in innovative ways which led writers to keep experimenting and using it in unconventional ways, this was not possible in Algeria, which meant that ironically, Arabic does not have a strong contemporary presence, while French does.

Social and political contexts which have developed in the wake of colonialism provide elements with which one can explain why foreign cultural institutes play a big part in the cultural scene of the South of the Mediterranean. Their presence fills in serious lacunae in the cultural infrastructure and human capacity of cities such as Algiers, Casablanca, Rabat, Beirut and Valletta. Vicki-Ann Cremona affirms the importance of the foreign element in the foundation of theatre in Malta not more than a century and a half ago and the development of its forms. Such influence remained alive in terms of training received by drama teachers provided by the British Council to develop drama pedagogy in schools in the 1970s, the foundation of the Manoel Theatre of Dramatic Art (MTADA) through a Technical Cooperation Agreement with Britain in 1977 and the establishment of the pantomime, started by the British, and serving as a focus on performative social and political criticism of national issues which grows in popularity on an annual basis.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁹ CREMONA, Vicki Ann (2008): 'Politics and Identity in Maltese Theatre: Adaptation or Innovation?' *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (T200), New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, page 22.

The reasons contributing to such gaps are many, and include lack of prioritisation, political values which do not embrace culture as one of the main dimensions of well-being, limited financial and human resources and the lack of professionalisation in the creative sectors. The colonial chapter has contributed to the way Southern countries have developed and it is ironic that while foreign cultural institutes prove to be essential in trying to redress this gap, they stem from the same political and military systems which enforced colonialism in the first place. With reference to the cultural field, it is pertinent to note that Dabashi may not be totally correct in asserting that, while the tools of postcolonialism have not helped supersede colonialism, they perversely only helped secure its negative legacy in the longer term.⁶³⁰

The deficit in resources dedicated to and developed for the benefit of culture raises a point related to dignity which Grima refers to. Artists without a structure to support them may feel lesser than others who do; not on the basis of their art or person, but in relation to the importance and support given them by the competent authorities. Grima notes that when in 2009 the Malta Arts Fund, administered by the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA), was launched, this started to redress the marginalisation, disorientation and indignity felt by Maltese artists when collaborating with European artists who had the support of their city or state. Grima emphasises the fact that it is not the financial support itself which encompasses the whole of this difference. Rather, it is what the support stands for, which includes recognition and moral support.

Language and identity

Grima, who is also a lecturer in Maltese literature at the University of Malta, is aware of the importance of one's language in the development of one's identity. For an identity to develop, the language or languages that contribute to it need to be recognised in terms of their full potential. With regard to the Maltese language, which is original in the way it combines Mediterranean languages on a basis of Classical Arabic yet uses the Latin script, Grima argues that it is one of the few languages which best represents what being Mediterranean is and what one can do with such means to express being Mediterranean. The recognition of Maltese as an official language of the EU contributed to consolidating the perception of Malta as a European nation. While such a mechanism does not exist in relation to the Mediterranean, both the language and the identity related to being Maltese may greatly benefit from reading them in a Mediterranean light and through a Mediterranean narrative.

⁶³⁰ Dabashi, page xix.

2. 1. f. Tunisia

Introduction

During a visit to Tunis, Sousse and Kairouan in April 2011, three months after the Jasmine Revolution successfully deposed Ben Ali, on the occasion of the international conference held in Sousse entitled *Regard actuel sur les Arts visuels en méditerranée: L'inter-territorialité culturelle en question* organised by the University of Kairouan, informal contact was made with many artists and citizens who shared their experiences of the battle they participated in or suffered and the expectations for change they held before the general elections which were held in November 2011. Official interviews for this study were not planned and carried out. Nevertheless, an interview via Skype was later set up with Mohamed Ben Soltane, artist and curator, who lives and works in both Tunis and Paris, in order to get a recorded contribution from Tunisia.

Ben Soltane reflects upon the changes which Tunisian society was going through and particularly with regard to the cultural scene. He notes that Tunisian artists are particularly keen on developing relations with their European counterparts as a means of experiencing and capitalising on new found freedoms. Therefore, the main aspects of their concern with the wider Mediterranean are almost exclusively related to Europe. On the other hand, certain individuals want to carry the experiences enjoyed during what they call their *Revolution de Dignité et Liberté* across to fellow Arab citizens in order to explore new ways of collaborating.

In terms of the contribution of the independent cultural sector to the social change experienced, the Tunisian example finds resonance with Egypt. In Egypt, the cultural sector which was not an instrument of the state feels strongly it has had a determining effect, over the past 15 years, together with the wider civil society to trigger the Egyptian revolution which brought an end to the regime of former President Mubarak. As affirmed by Egyptian theatre actor and director Nora Amin, culture has an important role to *'applying [change] with consensus.'* She also claims it is *'the work of culture, to help reshape our political future and avoid falling into the same traps.'*⁶³¹

On the other hand, certain issues are more particular to Tunisia. New audiences are developing and new possibilities are opening up in villages like Sidi Buzeid, the cradle of the revolution at the end of 2010, with more interest expressed by the young people who live there and artists from outside Tunisia who visit and exchange experiences and expectations with the local population, especially young people. Art is acting as a means to re-enliven town-life. This is not an easy task since in such villages the perception of artists is not positive: this is because many artists were close to Ben Ali in the past and exploited the opportunities coming from the festivals held there.

⁶³¹ FARRUGIA, Peter: "The power of creative culture", 'The Sunday Times', 10 April 2011. Amin was in Malta as part of Maltese involvement in the British Council-supported Cultural Leadership programme.

The revolution in Tunisia provoked raging debates on the relation between society and culture, both in the traditional media and online through social fora. Kahena Abbes provides a reflection on the freedom of expression and the liberal way of life which encouraged the arts and sciences to develop in the Alhambra in Andalusia, providing plenty of examples of writers of the time. He contrasts this with the subsequent decline suffered by Arab-Islamic culture, even today. He draws a parallel with the awakening experienced by the Tunisians thanks to their revolution, but warns against the encroachment of Islamic extremism which may block progress. He challenges the extremists' view of themselves as having the only correct answers by noting that it is man's duty to fulfill God's will by being creative rather than by being fossilised: *'Quel est le sens de cette mission si ce n'est, entre autres, créer, inventer et réfléchir?'*⁶³²

Cultural institutes

Ben Soltane is critical of the role foreign cultural institutes play particularly because of the cultural shallowness they tend to display with regard to the complex identities of local populations. However, he notes that the social revolution which took place has encouraged people to be less afraid of criticising influential institutes like the French or the British ones, and has also sensitised the institutes to be more perceptive of the local populations. He is keen to see greater numbers of projects that involve both sides as equal partners, but is aware that many artistic proposals by Tunisians fall far from the quality mark established by the French operators, for instance. He hopes new opportunities will come along to help Tunisians invest in their own capacity as artists and cultural operators who can make a valid cultural programme proposal.

Once again, in ways which recall the perspective of other interviewees in other cities, Ben Soltane is critical of the current dynamic between local and European parties, which is unbalanced; however, he believes the way forward is not through lessening the involvement of cultural institutes, but rather improving the work of local actors, and in so doing also improve the cultural institutes' contribution.

⁶³² ABBES, Kahena (2011): "C'est l'Alhambra que je pleure aujourd'hui", 'La Presse de Tunisie', 18 April 2011.

2. 2 Outcomes

Introduction

On the one hand, the interviews carried out for the research provide a strong impression of determination based on creative work which aims at exploring new possibilities to engage with artists and cultural operators from diverse backgrounds and with different experiences on local, national and international levels, including the Mediterranean region. On the other hand, this enthusiasm comes up against limitations, frustrations and a number of obstacles related to the lack of resources and restrictive mentalities which are not supportive of cultural expression.

Rezk notes that Arab countries, and particularly those of the Middle East, which have the heritage of the Ottoman Empire in common, betray a sense of lack of achievement in all areas of society, and the malaise which exists has developed a spiral of negativity which influences other countries and regions outside the South Mediterranean:

*'Les analyses politiques les plus éclairées estiment que la crise quasi endémique qui sévit dans le Machrek arabe depuis la chute de l'Empire ottoman, avec une portée politico-idéologique aux imbrications multiples, représente une menace réelle pour la stabilité mondiale. Mais le fait qu'elle contrecarre essentiellement le développement des pays concernés et altère le rapport de leur peuple à eux-mêmes et au monde est largement occulté.'*⁶³³

Nevertheless, Rezk identifies the cultural dimension as the key aspect of this reality and within which most of the conflict and the stasis described are played out, be they communitarianism in Beirut, the ghosts of unrest in Algiers, or the semblance of development in Casablanca. The repercussions of this conflict influence the representation and the perception of the European and the Arab world in a mutual fashion:

'C'est néanmoins la portée culturelle de cette crise qui en est le point névralgique. Ses ferments déchaînent des antagonismes et opposent indûment l'Orient à l'Occident et, de ce fait, le monde musulman au monde chrétien, suscitant de part et d'autre des replis identitaires. Le conflit donne lieu à une perception impropre de l'Occident, accusé de tous les maux par les populations arabes dans un amalgame lapidaire et sans nuances avec l'Etat d'Israël, alors que l'Occident néglige, par trop souvent, les conséquences néfastes de la situation d'un Machrek arabe devenu le 'terreau qui nourrit et accentue l'antagonisme entre l'Islam et l'Occident.'

Furthermore, relations between the South Mediterranean and Europe keep spawning reactions and preconceived ideas based on a set of representations of the different participants which reinforce prejudices and fears:

⁶³³ Rezk, page 11.

*'L'exemple le plus éloquent de la falsification des objectifs de la mondialisation culturelle est probablement celui de la méfiance mutuelle qui caractérise aujourd'hui les échanges culturels entre l'Europe et le Machrek arabe.'*⁶³⁴

As was noted during the interviews, the South Mediterranean cannot be subsumed under the generic title of the Arabic world. There are different Arabs, and not only Arabs, within this side of the Mediterranean. This means different audiences who experience and express culture in ways which differ between community and community as well as individual and individual although that may be more difficult to perceive and address through policy. With reference to colonialism, its practice led to a change in the influence on the art of the elite classes and its production. The local elites faced a dilemma when promoting local culture while having Western references, which is still of great relevance today.⁶³⁵

In areas of general policy, postcolonial structures seem to perpetrate colonial patterns of hegemony, and up to a certain extent the same can be argued in terms of cultural policy and practice.⁶³⁶ Cultural policy, more implicit than explicit, has been a tool for a number of contrasting aims in modern history. In the period of decolonisation and the era of the Cold War, a pan-Arabic cultural policy took form which promoted the Arabic language especially in education. As argued earlier with reference to Cassano, the *'adaptation to modernity'* by Arab societies meant being rudely introduced to modernism and still facing the consequences of the clash today. However, what are called the *'culture wars'* go beyond aesthetics and cultural trends since the issues championed or attacked are political and politicised, with anti-regime groups using culture as a moral weapon against regimes who are seen as decadent and pandering to Western values.⁶³⁷

Up until the Arab Spring revolutions, and in those countries where change was mitigated, an overview of cultural policies in Arab countries shows that central control of cultural policies, where they exist, remains strong. On the other hand, NGOs and foreign funding are playing a greater role in determining the action.⁶³⁸ The role of NGOs to set agendas is still limited. However, one can notice a common route of progression enjoyed by NGOs of the South Mediterranean, including Malta, in terms of how they developed from their genesis which, for many independent organisations, meant being providers of space and developing towards education and training.⁶³⁹ For instance, similar development trajectory was pursued by the Drama Centre in Malta. The latest step seems to be the growing role of cultural management in relation to capacity building and in collaboration with foreign bodies.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Culture Resource/Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, page 17.

⁶³⁶ Dabashi, page xix.

⁶³⁷ Ibid. page 19.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. page 25.

⁶³⁹ Bouquerel, El Husseiny, page 78.

⁶⁴⁰ Culture Resource/Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, page 278.

A recent and good overview of the types of policies practised in the Arab world identifies four concepts of culture including official and non-official expressions, concerning public/governmental systems and self-generated cultural space. These are: i. culture as a critical space for reflection and expressing doubts, *'developing cultural and artistic systems from a resistance culture in a colonial period to a contemporary culture of dissent in authoritarian states'*; ii. culture within the pan-Arab movement, as a tool for developing pan-Arab awareness; iii. culture as a national brand, to construct and represent ethnic specificities and national identity; and iv. culture as entertainment, with artistic production led by private producers and market demands.⁶⁴¹

In many ways, the cultural situation of Malta is distinct from that of its southern neighbours. It is also relatively one which has dramatically improved over the past few years. Yet, relations with neighbours and the support to societal development through the arts have much room for improvement and, due to its size and location, Malta can capitalise further on its being influenced by behaviours and actions surrounding it. As noted earlier, one of the major defining features of Malta's current development is the EU to which it has belonged since 2004. On the other hand, as noted by various observers including Barrada, Arab states share three hundred million people who have common elements in their religion and in their language, but are faced by a debilitating force in the shape of control and censorship which render difficult communication and cooperation across the Arab world. In contrast, the EU is made up of twenty-seven states, twenty-three official languages and four hundred fifty million very diverse people, but is open to communicate and work with its global partners. Barrada notes that even the concept of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) is not possible in the Arab world since there is no "unity in diversity" to allow common market developments which are based on a free society and market.⁶⁴²

In this sub-section, the outcomes of the interviews analysed in the previous section will be presented thematically and discussed. This will lead to the next section that will develop a set of recommendations for a tangible way forward, followed by concluding remarks.

The Mediterranean

The interviews held raise the common point of seeking and assigning value to the Mediterranean. This matter lies at the heart of the research, which is motivated by a search for the meanings which this space may have for artists, cultural operators and their communities, a small yet representative number of whom have been interviewed.

The Mediterranean is perceived in a number of ways. It is seen as a context for bilateral or multilateral projects which does not have a particular value in itself. This is very ironic, since the administrative and organisational efforts towards supporting political, social and cultural

⁶⁴¹ Ibid. page 255.

⁶⁴² Interview with Barrada held in Brussels in October 2009.

developments in the Mediterranean, which are humongous, seem to have become a value in themselves and create an instance of the means becoming the end.

The relevance of the Mediterranean seems to be asserted and confirmed on the basis of the discussions held during the interviews carried out. There is no single view on what the meaning is, and neither is the aim of the research to attempt to condense different views to a set of cohesive meanings. As Grima notes, Herzfeld argues that while the Mediterranean is being discussed, it exists. What is said about it differs, but this includes artistic and spiritual reflections that contribute to the reality and the significance of the Mediterranean to its peoples.

Each expression touching upon issues of identity mainly related to language, self-perception, representation and the conflict engendered between clashing identities is firmly rooted in particular geographical circumstances, rich in different layers of political and social meaning. The experiences shared are particular to the people who express them, and provide important insights into their communities' contexts. Nevertheless, as aimed for by the research, aspects of common relevance to these different narratives are found, to the extent that a shared experience of the Mediterranean is possible to construct, analyse and use as a sound basis from which a visionary policy can be drafted with the aim of addressing the various, yet related, realities, in a positive and tangible way. The great diversity in the South of the Mediterranean, which complements that in the North, needs to be balanced with the common need for a process of reflection, consultation and dialogue around the policies that guide as well as regulate cultural expression.⁶⁴³

The presence of colonial influence on cultural expression and relations is still felt strongly in the present as testified by the various artists and cultural operators interviewed. The negative aspects are described, as are the ones that give rise to more positive scenarios in the present, particularly when related to the arts and culture scenes. Many interviews give voice to a very common dilemma, be it expressed consciously or, possibly more tellingly, unconsciously: the colonial past of the Mediterranean led to a number of imbalances and injustices taking place between the North and the South, while contributing positively to the cultural scene. This contrasts with past scant European investment in cultural appreciation and expression due to a wariness of promoting local identities which could rise against colonial rule as well as general disinterest except in situations of own gain.

Furthermore, the South is still suffering the structural, economical, political and overall human costs of the imposition by the North. On the other hand, the interviewees testify to other realities which are related to colonial heritage and which characterise territories in the South up till today. One is the arguably positive outcomes of colonial rule, such as cultural infrastructures and conventions which contributed to the development of the South, be they in the field of the arts, the media or general education. The other is the trend of subversive behaviour or that which enabled and still enables locals to appropriate themselves of European

⁶⁴³ Bouquerel, El Husseiny, page 17.

trends, structures and ways of managing and communicating experiences in order to create a space to tell their own story in their own medium with their own message and generate means of development which suit their needs.

The space created can be argued to be a third space which is not the in-between space which allows different cultures to remain untouched. Rather, it is the novelty which comes with interaction and may be witnessed in intercultural dialogue and meaningful projects and processes of cultural cooperation and collaboration. This space takes many different forms including language, which is commented on at length by interviewees from all territories visited.

For people engaged with realities belonging to the Mediterranean, the importance of opening up and collaborating within the European and Mediterranean dimensions is stressed. Many of the interviewees consider these two dimensions to be potentially very beneficial to each other and inextricably linked because of the history of the people who inhabited them and crossed each other's path spinning a web of intermingling cultural experiences and identities. Many are also critical of the political and bureaucratic limitations imposed on the people in this space, be they local problems like those faced in Palestine, to more regional ones like visa mobility around the Mediterranean and Arab collaboration.

The advent and the development of the Arab Spring took many observers by surprise due to its speed and far-reaching effects. The opening up of some Arab regimes touches upon different social aspects such as education, employment, communication and the renewed public space.⁶⁴⁴ Some commentators as well as interviewees stress the importance of the social media in enabling citizens of Arab countries to channel old feelings of frustration and a passion for change into a plan of action. Some interviewees, like Tarazi, are sceptical of assigning too much importance to the role of the social media in provoking the change. However, the general perception of this role is one of having been determining, which suggests that people associate change with new means of communication and interaction, as well as cultural collaboration. Also, as noted by Ksikes, the role of the social media is not only restricted to its relation to the Arab Spring, since the importance of developing communication in society finds manifestation in different means of communication such as the use of *Derija* and its use in the social media which is being followed with interest by many including cultural institutes.

It was noted that artists and cultural operators in the South Mediterranean, as do those in the North, have multiple roles which they fulfill. Grima mentions the liminality which marks many people in this walk of life, which enables them to reach out to people on the peripheries of society. Their orientation may lessen their impact on central authorities, but a challenging dynamic which may give rise to positive change may spur them on. Such artists and cultural operators also enjoy links with foreign artists and engage in intercultural dialogue on an individual level.

⁶⁴⁴ Lynch (2012).

Cultural institutes and international institutions

Institutions, such as the European Commission, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Union for the Mediterranean are generally and roundly criticised for being too bureaucratic and not practical enough in what they try to promote and achieve. However, they do allow for greater communication and collaboration to take place among citizens through the organisation and mobilisation of funds and programmes which do allow citizens to engage in closer collaboration, even if the change they promote tends to be unrealistic when set against too much of a short-term schedule. Critics generally agree that there should be more of the citizen-oriented work, and less of the bureaucratic work. This gives rise to a series of important questions, such as: Is that possible? Do present structures allow for this shift to happen? Would new structures be needed? If so, what would these be? As discussed with El Ouazzani, most importantly, what would the relation between cultural agencies and the local communities need to be to enable circumstances where communities and audiences are able to relate the potential for change of cultural expression to the wider political and social situation?

Many local pressures besiege artists and cultural operators and are very hard to withstand. As hinted at by some of the interviewees, Mroué's comments are very relevant to the research as they seem to suggest that the role of foreign cultural operators is not the main issue, but rather a secondary issue to the local problems and the national dimension of cultural practice and production. However, both issues are very closely intertwined, and the role of European cultural agencies impinges upon the development and course of local cultural expression and production.⁶⁴⁵ Many interviewees, such as Ben Soltane, are critical of the way partnerships between local and European agencies and artists are sought due to the structural imbalance which distinguishes such relations. However, as has been noted, there seems to be a general feeling that the way forward is not through curtailing the action of European institutes, but rather by further supporting the local communities; this may lead to the improvement of the role of the cultural institutes themselves.

With regard to cultural cooperation itself, Mroué notes the impossibility of being in the "right" place in terms of home/abroad since one seems to be straddling both, with no permanent sense of stability. Working abroad or engaging in international cultural cooperation seems to provide participants with a sense of liberation and a "new" or freer space, which may also be referred to as a third space. Interviewees ask whether foreign cultural operators represent this freedom from national constraints or at least provide the possibility of reaching beyond them. At the same time, one has to ask, "At what price?"⁶⁴⁶

It is also noted that cultural institutes engage in collaboration with states in a subtle manner. One reason for this is that the same institutes collaborate with cultural operators and civil society, sometimes challenging the positions of the states. Therefore, a balancing act ensues for the cultural institutes between, on the one hand, influencing and supporting the state in the

⁶⁴⁵ Redalie et al, page 102.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

implementation of its policies in terms of innovation, and on the other, collaborating directly with cultural operators sometimes in opposition to or adopting a critical stance towards the state.

Development

The relation of foreign influence to local development is a thorny one, as already discussed in the context of the observations provided by Verhelst. Interviewees show that a great deal remains to be done to improve cultural and social affairs on a local level, and that the presence of European agencies and their money assists development in this field. On the other hand, the long-term benefits of such action is debated, the opportunity costs of intervention raised and the value in terms of real development questioned. However, as mentioned earlier, the real responsibility seems to be laid at the door of national and local authorities since it is they who decide whether to pursue partnerships or engage other forms of cultural investment, or not.

The presence of the EU in the Mediterranean is a determining one, and not to be taken for granted. The EU, as a distinct political and economic union from the geographical, historical and cultural entity of Europe, shapes the cultural landscape of the Mediterranean in ways it may be difficult to imagine without. As noted, Malta is different to the other territories belonging to the research, both in the sense of being European and primarily Christian and having being influenced by European forces in different ways to Arab states, as well as by being an EU member state which means practising a particular set of political and economic systems which also influence the way cultural expression is managed in terms of policy and funding.

It is also interesting to note how the EU has contributed to a further differentiation between Mediterranean states on the basis of levels and types of cultural development and funding structures for the benefit of culture. Therefore, one can consider three levels of nation-actors in relation to culture, namely:

- i. the larger EU member states, such as France, acting as developers of ideas, catalysts for action, distributors of products and chief influences and actors for change;
- ii. the less influential yet important and potentially rich EU member states, like Malta, that are European, but still developing in certain aspects such as the CCIs; and
- iii. the Mediterranean non-EU countries which, from an EU perspective, collaborate “across the border” with criteria to fulfil and challenges to face, such as supporting artist mobility into the EU.

Since membership in 2004 Malta has relied heavily on the EU as a reference point in its aim to develop the cultural infrastructure needed at the national level. However, with the exception of physically constructed heritage which is relatively well sustained, the cultural expression of performing artists and civil society still has a great deal of benefits to reap, particularly in terms of professionalisation and internationalisation. This is partly so because in the post-independence period national authorities invested very little in that cultural infrastructure

which is within their capability, and arguably, within their responsibility to develop.⁶⁴⁷ As a result, cultural actors have had little experience of how to exploit the potential made available through EU membership. Furthermore, they have had little opportunity to try and test what works and adapt models which have been successful elsewhere in the EU.⁶⁴⁸

The conferment of the title of European Capital of Culture (ECoC) to Valletta in 2018 offers Malta a clear opportunity to address its state of culture. Preparations are at early stages and follow trends set by other member states and cities.⁶⁴⁹ These include devising ambitious projects to achieve excellence in cultural activities and the necessary supporting infrastructure as well as encouraging the stimulation of the creative industries as a strategy for economic development. In so doing Malta plans to learn from the initiatives undertaken by other cities which were awarded the title of ECoC.⁶⁵⁰ To exploit this opportunity, Malta needs to invest in an infrastructure which supports culture and in the stimulation of the creative industries when, currently, there is still very little in place.⁶⁵¹

The interviews held in Malta reflect concerns expressed in the other cities where the research is held, which collectively throw light both on the dearth of existing resources, as well as point toward possible ways forward. Given limited cultural investment and limited economic resources a realistic plan is called for in order to establish a sustainable cultural support system. A balance needs to be struck between investing in an infrastructure based on construction and flagship projects which does not neglect capacity building with artists and citizens. Another balance needs to be struck between market-based approaches and community-based ones, as outlined earlier with reference to Vandersluis.

Resources

It is noted that the social media, which play an ever growing role in the communication dynamics of civil society, may be harnessed for better use in terms of education. Interviewees, like El Ouazzani, point out that the widespread problem of illiteracy is a tough challenge to face. However, illiteracy is not the only type of obstacle to impede effective communication, the empowerment of citizens and social development. Other obstacles may be observed in the way the various societies observed tackle diverse issues like social integration, cultural diversity including linguistic and religious diversity, political mechanisms and social structures in ways that do not help the easing and resolution of tensions but, on the contrary, consolidate and

⁶⁴⁷ MC GUIGAN, Jim (2004): *Rethinking Cultural Policy*, Open University Press, Berkshire.

⁶⁴⁸ GOVERNMENT OF MALTA (2008): *Together for a Sustainable Future: Pre-Budget Document 2009*. Malta.

⁶⁴⁹ INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMISSION FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN MALTA 2018 (2009): *Report of the 1st meeting of the ECOC IMC*, Malta.

⁶⁵⁰ IMPACTS 08 (2008): *Tourism and the Business of Culture: The views of small and medium sized tourism enterprises of Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008*, Liverpool.

⁶⁵¹ MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (2001): *Cultural Policy in Malta: A Discussion Document*, Malta;
EVERITT, Anthony (2002): *National cultural policy in Malta: report of a European group of experts*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

aggravate them. In practical ways, the problems caused by lack of resources, particularly related to the dearth in knowledge, affect areas such as legislative frameworks, funding skills, capacity building and infrastructure.⁶⁵² In terms of means of expression available to the community, the example provided in the interviews of the way tensions are reinforced through traditional and social media in different communities is interesting in that it offers an insight into the problematics which exist and gleans into the possibilities of resolution.

This reflection has a particularly poignant meaning due to the way limited resources are always sought after by different communities which draw demarcation lines between themselves on the basis of exclusive and recognisable groups in opposition to others with whom they see themselves in competition for the same set of desired resources. Said makes a good point about belonging by noting that the narratives of searching oneself in a group or groups and of integration are vital in developing identities and supporting those identities through adversity on the way to further development, even if this means, or especially if this means at the expense of someone else, possibly a competitor and hence what is perceived as a threat.⁶⁵³

Furthermore, as suggested by Sen, it is also important to look within the boundaries of a community and seek for those who do not fit in the general ideology and provoke fissures within the seemingly uniform identity of a group. Such sub-groups, or individuals, may be suffering from exclusion, alienation and discrimination within their larger community, but feel closer to other communities which lie outside, and with whom affinities which exist may be developed in order to make use of resources which may support their own and their bond's development. Various interviewees note the affiliations with artists and cultural operators who operate abroad such as between Algiers and Marseille, Beirut and Paris and Malta with British operators. The forging of groups outside one's immediate group may lead to inter-communitarian strife of the religious, political and cultural kinds, as was the case with Algerian Amazighs and Arabs during French colonial rule, Italian and British affiliates in Malta a century ago and cultural operators who fall foul of the state due to European support in the Arab countries visited for the research. In such scenarios where belonging is challenging, the point by Chambers on homecoming gains further relevance: apart from the theoretical reflections they give rise to, the practical difficulties raised by these two important issues throw light on the importance of how political will and cultural vision shape the availability of resources and influence dynamics of collaboration depending on the outcomes one wants to achieve as well as avoid.

The point above illustrates the fact that the best use of resources is of key importance to the improvement of conditions for cultural relations to take place and cultural expression to flourish in a positive and sustaining environment. It also raises the crucial point that a discussion about resources does not have to be about financial resources and the materialisation of more funds for projects to be undertaken with. An analysis of resources should focus on the utilisation of existing resources in ways that acknowledge what exists and

⁶⁵² Bouquerel, El Husseiny, page 20.

⁶⁵³ Said (1994), page xxxi.

what can be used by artists, cultural operators and society at large. Such awareness may lead to concerted efforts to maximise these resources on the basis of an ethos which promotes collaboration and the development of synergies, rather than division, duplication and negative competition. Such awareness and a disposition to work together may also make possible better strategic planning which could direct action away from sporadic, reactive interventions to long-term planning and implementation.

This important observation gained from the interviews held does not replace the one about the financial needs. Rather, it reinforces it, by showing that when financial means are lacking and required, it is because all other resources have been identified and mobilised, and the financial input is an element which cannot be circumnavigated any longer. The importance of the financial resource is such that it makes possible the implementation of a disposition to work together and transforms this disposition into a will. This reality applies to many different levels of cultural collaboration, ranging from immediate grass-roots projects that affect the lives of communities to international projects and bilateral cultural protocols which, as noted by Mercieca, are not worth very much unless they are sustained financially. As pointed out by Grima, the dynamics of brokerage and bartering are essential to any kind of cultural collaboration, and will be successful if the parties involved want to transform the will to work together into concrete action.

Conclusion

This sub-section has brought together the main outcomes resulting from the analysis of the interviews held with an aim to serve as a basis for the next section which will make recommendations for an ambitious yet sensible way forward. While comparisons can be odious, they also help create a paradigm against which one can measure oneself. The various references to problematic situations, mostly structural and forming part of the colonial legacy, in the countries focused on, allow for two types of comparative exercises to take place.

The first is of the spatial kind. This dimension is essential to the research carried out, since the focus is on a particular geographical space and the human relations fostered there. By means of comparison, in light of various references made during the interviews held such as those by Ksikes, Laggoune and Rezk, the recent development of the Gulf states, not only economically and politically, but also culturally, provides a good example of what the South Mediterranean is not, and arguably of what it does not want to aspire to be in spite of the economic and political rise of this group of countries. It has been noted that there has been a rise in the influence of Gulf states through the generation of petro-dollars and its close relations with the US. This has attracted a great deal of European influence, including the cultural type. For instance, one can mention the Paris-Abou Dhabi collaborations in terms of the *Arts Paris*, a fair of modern and contemporary art of international import; the antenna of the Sorbonne university implanted as part of a platform of international universities in 2012; and the Louvre project. However, Rezk hints at the tensions which exist between the interest held by Abou Dhabi investors as well as sections of the public to grow closer to Europe and the West and the heavy censorship regime, as well as the self-censorship, which controls creative expression in general. While there is

evidence of a strong Gulf take-up in terms of cultural development, this is criticised for being soul-less. By comparison, the Arab Mediterranean may be considered to be weak and lacking a unifying structure. On the other hand, the model offered by the Gulf states does not appeal to many of the interviewees, and may not be the best model to learn from.⁶⁵⁴

The second is of the temporal kind which, together with an analysis of the past, allows the research to engage in an exercise of forward thinking: while based on difficult contexts in the present, this approach identifies within these realities the roots for the opening up of scenarios which presage positive developments. This is what the next section aims to do.

⁶⁵⁴ Rezk, page 45.

Section Three: Policy Paper and Way Forward

3. 1. a. Introduction

This section consists of the core of the research. Building on the observations expressed earlier in the text with regard to the past and to the present, the way forward proposed here is built around a number of recommendations that aim to support what is positive in cultural relations and the way it influences cultural expression, while tackling those trends that have a negative effect on cultural cooperation, dialogue and development. As has been observed, local populations are important actors in the well-being of the cultural field across the Mediterranean and contribute actively to the shaping of the cultural relations and influence which is here under focus.

The way forward proposed, and the policy paper which puts forward the recommendations in a strategic manner, expand on the earlier reference made to Bhabha's concept of hybridity in terms of the generation of a third space. It does not do this by proposing the creation of yet another space between the North and the South in the form of a novel project or a set of diplomatic frameworks that does not help bring the different sides closer together but in fact furthers their separation and their remaining apart. Rather, in seeking to develop an alternative third space between experiencing European influence passively and resisting it to a large, possibly isolating or damaging degree, the proposed way forward focuses on the observed experiences of cultural influence and the ensuing relations and envisions ways of how a positive, creative and meaningful space for cultural expression is possible to achieve.

As noted earlier in *Section One Chapter Three* the European Commission echoes Octavio Paz in addressing culture as '*a vital element in international relations*' because '*[a]ny culture is born in mixing, in interaction, in confrontation. Conversely, it is in isolation that civilization dies.*' It was noted that the words *interaction* and *confrontation* are important and reflect the sometimes tumultuous development of cultures.⁶⁵⁵ It was also noted that the third space envisioned by the research is sought in a balanced and measured way that brings together both the South's and the North's resources and strengths.⁶⁵⁶

With regard to the development of cultural expression in the Southern Mediterranean, the research is looking at the fields of influence between different populations of the Mediterranean along the North-South axis in order to bring to the fore the actions that citizens of the Southern Mediterranean engage in for their own benefit. As noted with reference to Boullata and Bourriaud, part of these actions consists of the way migration and mobility in relation to globalisation have made these terms porous. The aim is not to develop a practice of cultural particularism or protectionism but to identify where the potential for local development lies. Furthermore, it is believed that internal and South-South action will lead to a better understanding of the impact and role of vertical relations (North-South).

⁶⁵⁵ European Commission (2007).

⁶⁵⁶ Cassano (2010).

The differences which lie within different populations belie notions of unity in the Mediterranean space. While commonality is generally sought in the belief that it provides people with a basis on which to construct common projects for the benefit of all, the research identifies strength in diversity, particularly when different experiences can be shared and learnt from in a process of exchange of best practice, as will be suggested by the policy paper presented.

The recommendations put forward build on the observations noted and relate to policy actions already current in the Mediterranean. For this purpose it is worth reflecting on a number of policy models applicable to the Arab world as identified by Milena Dragičević Šešić.⁶⁵⁷ She notes that Arab research into cultural policy emerged only recently but gives rise to interesting reflections about recent history in the Arab countries and the way cultural policies shape and are shaped by the different realities. Following the lead of Dominique Moisi it is noted that postcolonial cultural policies in the 1960s and the 1970s were infused by a sense of hope. The period, marked by the development of a number of festivities held by budding ministries for culture, was fuelled by a positive attitude toward identity politics in the wake of independence from colonialism. However, the 1980s saw the setting of such policies that gave way to a 'culture of fear': this period was heavily marked by the start of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, the Palestinian first Intifada in 1987 and the First Gulf War in 1990. The 1980s also saw the start of globalisation which Alexander Kiossev notes witnessed the start of a process of 'self-colonisation.'⁶⁵⁸ Kiossev uses this description in relation to what happened in the Balkans in terms of the *'trauma which develops when the ideology, or behaviour, used to oppress or weaken a group (ethnic or otherwise), is internalized by its victims and accepted as valid'* with clear echoes with regard to the Arab world and the contribution to a culture of fear. As the 1990s progressed this culture was replaced by one of *'humiliation'*. This term is also used to refer to the Palestinian iconic poet Mahmoud Darwish who encapsulated the way in which widespread social plight ironically inspired a (desperately) vibrant cultural expression scene.

Milena Dragičević Šešić also notes six particular models of cultural policy which characterise different Arab states in different times. These range from a patronage model such as that practised in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan where the royal family acts as a supporter, funder and initiator of public events and governmental policy instruments to a state socialist model such as what has been practised in Syria; from an étatic paternalist model inherited by French colonial powers in the Maghreb to an étatic-market-oriented one which developed under British influence such as in Egypt; and from a market-driven model such as in Lebanon to a non-systemised civil-society-led model such as that developed in Palestine.

The recommendations put forward by this policy paper are based on an acknowledgment of the past, an attempt to try and understand the present and a commitment to work out a future with as many partners as possible. Since the past is severely conditioned by the colonial

⁶⁵⁷ Culture Resource/Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, Milena Dragičević Šešić, 'Opening horizons: The need for integrated cultural policies in the Arab world', page 228-240.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid. page 229.

experience so many people in the Mediterranean have faced and the effects they still endure, the vision proposed stems from the analysis of this phenomenon as carried out by the research. It is opportune to recall the series of questions put at the very start of the research in order to act as a timely reminder and provide fresh focus:

- Is foreign influence assisting local culture operators?
- Is it displacing locally-generated activities and stunting their development?
- Does this influence strain local relations?
- Does it contribute to raising the standard of productions in terms of quality?
- Does it support local infrastructure in its development?

The policy proposals acknowledge the issues raised by these questions and attempt to address them in the way they map a way forward.

As a final introductory point to the policy paper it is important to make reference to the regional potential of the Mediterranean that an inclusive and sensitive set of cultural policies can help make emerge. In light of the earlier discussion on the concept of regionality, the Mediterranean can achieve greater levels of internal communication and coherence if supported by measures that sustain efforts that contribute to achieving such levels.⁶⁵⁹ It is also important to stress the point of developing a set of inter-related policies that together address different aspects of cultural expression in the Mediterranean. This is a point worth emphasising since the Mediterranean is made of many different realities rooted in particular social dynamics related to different territories and the experiences of the various communities who inhabit them. No policy, and no set of policies, can aim to successfully impact in any significant way on the whole Mediterranean. On the other hand, a well-researched set of policies that lie deep in local realities but, to extend the image, sprout up and arch across them with the aim of encouraging regional communication and interaction, can be relevant to many different people and contribute to them coming closer together.

As noted earlier, cultural policy should try to reach out and influence for the better all those who it is designed to work for. As noted by Sardar, mutuality is severely restricted when opposed by *'a culture of resistance whose very reason to be is to disengage itself from dominant modern forms of cultural expression.'*⁶⁶⁰ Therefore, cultural policy should aim not to alienate but fight alienation by trying to reach out and include as many diverse individuals and communities as possible.

Such a purpose is also served by cultural diplomacy: as noted by Khoury, it should go beyond strict concerns with the market and self-promotion and encourage the development of cultural relations that go further and address obstacles, such as preconceptions and prejudice, for the

⁶⁵⁹ See 1. 1. c. i. i. *The Mediterranean as a Constructed Reality*; Pace notes that *'[r]egions are not natural entities but rather social constructs.'* While choosing not to use the term regional in a theoretical and political contexts in the early part of the text, it will be used in the policy paper to refer to the geographical aspect of the Mediterranean in relation to the span of cultural policy and actions.

⁶⁶⁰ Sardar, page 10.

common good. Such an approach can also assist the development of cultural cooperation on a basis of cultural communication which is honest and open to different, also conflicting, views.

It is very important to stress that coherence and cohesion of vision are essential in achieving true and sustainable change and in implementing an ambitious vision. The following subsection will give a general overview of the proposals being made. Following that, in order to achieve clarity and manage to make clear proposals, the policy paper will be presented on the basis of its four components. While closely inter-related, the distinctive features of each area will be exploited to allow for a schematic proposal. The separated focus is developed out of necessity and not because the different items should not be taken together. As noted, in order to achieve results, cohesive action needs to be taken and the separate recommendations will lead to results only if a combined approach which is mindful to all areas is adopted.

3. 1. b. Policy Paper Key Recommendations

The analysis of the outcomes presented earlier has led to the identification of four components, or areas, that between them are inclusive of the observations made but allow specific issues to be dealt with in detail. This allows for a tangible approach to the policy paper which is devised and discussed here. The four areas identified are as follows:

- i. **Networking and Mobility:** policy recommendations in this area will address issues referred to during the interviews and supported by the other research carried out related to regional communication; visa regimes; patterns of communication from local to international levels;
- ii. **Supporting Structures:** these include elements of cultural infrastructure such as museums, galleries, performance spaces and creativity centres as well as buildings with a more general remit such as schools and academies; efficient and open means of communication and legal and financial mechanisms that allow for the development of cultural expression through cultural cooperation; the focus will be on the lack of resources identified in the outcomes, the need to maximise rather than fragment and duplicate and long-term investment which is sustainable;
- iii. **Audiences:** attention will be given to the need to develop relationships with the various communities; the need to support education programmes; the use of multiple platforms and media channels to interact with audiences and potential audiences; build international audiences through co-productions;
- iv. **Intercultural Dialogue:** the focus is on the need to nurture communication and dialogue which is mutually enhancing and enriching; act across borders; make best use possible of diversity through positive interpretation and representation.

The list of recommendations is below:

3. 1. b. i. Networking and Mobility

- Existing North-South networks supporting artists and promoting their mobility should be further supported on the basis of developing self-sustaining networks with local bases and South-South collaborations as a final aim as well as part of the core process;⁶⁶¹
- European cultural diplomatic services should be encouraged to work more closely with their Mediterranean partners less with a view to self-promotion and more with an aim to nurture mutually advantageous cultural programmes;
- The political utilisation of culture should be acknowledged with an aim to subvert that relationship towards a cultural exploitation of political systems, agendas and methods of prioritisation;
- The mobility of artists and cultural operators across the Mediterranean should be supported, with particular attention given to the management of legal issues like visa regimes which hamper movement of people from the South of the Mediterranean; the

⁶⁶¹ Roberto Cimetta Fund, page 21.

aim of encouraging travel and exchange is one of empowering people, enabling the exchange of experiences between artists, cultural operators and communities, the development of new cross-border audiences and the facilitation of long-term collaborations based on intercultural dialogue;

- The mobility of art works should also be supported in the same spirit as people to assist intercultural communication; this dimension includes a number of legal and financial frameworks which need addressing such as insurance mechanisms;
- The mobility of people and their works outside the Mediterranean to geographical spaces beyond should be encouraged to develop the relevance of Mediterranean experience globally and encourage the engagement of people on an international level;
- The growing use of virtual mobility through electronic media should be encouraged through the coordination of means and the greater popularisation of such media;
- The development of a strong structure of distribution of creative works that equally supports the circulation of and access to works from all over the Mediterranean should be encouraged in order to contribute balance to the distribution of works from both sides of the Mediterranean which depends, to a large extent, on structures from the North such as the cultural services of foreign embassies, cultural institutes, European agencies and private initiatives from the North;⁶⁶²
- Special attention to the distribution of works in the South of works from the South should be given;⁶⁶³
- The 'reappropriation' of the discourse of Arab contemporary cultural expression can also be assisted through the greater ownership of the means of communication by the South Mediterranean; this process is directly related to the development of 'a critical mass around artistic creation' which is essential for these aims to be achieved;⁶⁶⁴
- Networking and mobility need to be sustained through training in the various creative fields; such a measure would also address the problems caused by the drain of talent leaving territories in the South and those who renounce their artistic and potentially professional vocation;
- Opportunities for education and training should be sustained through the enhancement of appropriate networks which address both academic qualifications as well as technical skill and the gaining of experience through project work, internships and work placements;
- Policy actions aiming to engage people who have multiple cultural affiliations (e.g. members of a particular diaspora or return migrants) should be encouraged in order to develop existing networks made of people who in some way relate to the Mediterranean;

⁶⁶² Khoury; Beydoun.

⁶⁶³ Ibid. Roberto Cimetta Fund, page 29: Ibid. Balta page 31: '*As to the distribution of foreign productions that one can see here, it generally relies on the choice of the cultural services of the foreign embassies*', notes Tarek Abou El Fetouh, Director of the Young Arab Theater Fund (YATF). He also comments on a fundamental structural problem which emerges: '*it's the North which possesses the keys to distribution... in the South.*'

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. Balta, page 31.

- The means for communication and exchange allowed by cultural diplomacy should be exploited with an aim to encourage opportunities for cultural collaboration that is based on mutuality; such action can also help the development of a number of shared projects that may help foster a sense of regional belonging and cross-border solidarity and creativity;
- The development of '*territorial diplomacy*' should be encouraged to empower local authorities and communities to engage in international relations on strong cultural bases;⁶⁶⁵
- In terms of particular projects, those supporting mobility and networking should receive the legal, administrative and financial backing necessary to turn proposals into practice.

3. 1. b. ii. Supporting Structures

- The lasting legacy of colonial influence on supporting structures, particularly cultural infrastructure like theatres, museums and schools and means of expression such as language and different forms of art needs to be acknowledged; rather than refused, refuted or shunned this influence should be exploited in order to assist the development of local infrastructures and means;⁶⁶⁶
- The development of local languages and means of expression should be encouraged in relation to foreign languages rather than in opposition to them;
- Such development should be done by making full use of traditional and innovative means of communication which can support the learning process and that of expression;
- Tools aimed at communicating with and developing audiences which range from performance spaces to educational programmes and communication campaigns should be sustained by official authorities and cultural stakeholders;
- The restructuring efforts of regional and international organisations which aim at supporting cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean should be encouraged in terms of prioritising direct support to cultural operators in their local operations and especially with regard to their cross-border work;
- The regional restructuring of tools and means of collaboration should be prioritised in order to encourage regional organisations, which are nationally funded (e.g. UNESCO, ALESCO, ALF), to tap into areas for collaboration by emphasising common projects and extended collaboration, rather than national interests;
- The efforts of national cultural agencies and cultural institutes to reach out to international audiences and promote exchanges and cultural cooperation should be encouraged through formal and informal means whereby resources are channelled into priority areas and pooled for the maximum benefit of artists, cultural operators and their communities;

⁶⁶⁵ ROBERTO CIMETTA FUND (2012): 'Mobilité artistique internationale et diplomatie territoriale', <http://www.cimettafund.org/content/upload/file/FRC-PrstnGM.P.Reg.-fr.pdf> (accessed 13 April 2012).

⁶⁶⁶ Culture Resource/AI Mawred Al Thaqafy, page 232.

- Structures dedicated to tourism ends provide great assistance to the cultural field but may be refigured to address culturally vibrant and regionally binding projects that benefit cultural communities in search of challenging stereotypes and exploring identities in innovative ways;
- Supporting structures which aim at including diverse members of society should be aided and consolidated in order to reach out and be accessible to as many members of the various Mediterranean communities as possible, including residents, migrants, travellers, tourists and virtual users;
- The supporting structures in urban centres that are being given greater attention by municipal authorities need further support to do so on a professional level which is inclusive of the different members of their communities; old city centres, including medinas, need particular attention to achieve the right balance between urban development and conservation which respects the natural and inherited landscape and encourages creative interaction with the built environment and the tangible and intangible heritage which infuses it;⁶⁶⁷
- Supporting structures that not only enhance regional communication and exchange but open up Mediterranean cultural cooperation and expression to a wider, inter-regional and international communication should be encouraged, as Mediterranean creative communities can gain new and positive experiences through heightened exposure;
- The development of creative clusters in cities should be supported when devised in close contact with surrounding communities and with the aim of achieving benefits mutually for creative communities and their immediate larger ones; links between clusters should be strengthened and potential for collaboration capitalised upon;
- The use of legal frameworks that regulate intellectual property rights (IPR) should address the needs of the creative community rather than act as a harness on their potential and actual activities; IPR should be used as a tool that regulates to encourage creativity, reward effort, support results and enable the dissemination and distribution of works by ensuring democratic access to all members of the different communities;
- Mentorship and talent scouting programmes existing at national levels should be extended to regional dimensions in order to weave common threads among children and young people who can develop culturally and creatively by addressing intercultural matters;
- Patronage models in national contexts should be encouraged to operate on regional levels.⁶⁶⁸

3. 1. b. iii. Audiences

- The work of European cultural institutes that may have a great impact on the communities they operate in should find ways of complementing the capabilities and

⁶⁶⁷ BALBO, Marcello (2010): *Medinas 2030: Scénarios et strategies*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

⁶⁶⁸ DIAZ SÁNCHEZ, Julián (2009): *Políticas, poéticas y prácticas artísticas: Apuntes para una historia del arte*, Catarata, Madrid page 17.

supporting the efforts of local operators as well as help actualise the potential of local artists and cultural operators;

- Efforts by the local and foreign operators should benefit from greater coordination with the aim of putting the needs of the communities they address at the core of their operations;
- The cultural work of European cultural institutes that is sensitive towards local realities should be supported by local authorities through the development of local cultural capital in order to allow local operators to gain greater advantage from ongoing efforts;
- Local authorities that address the developmental needs of human capacity building programmes that include ongoing education programmes, vocational and technical training and efforts towards professionalisation and making cultural operations sustainable should be supported on a Mediterranean basis by international organisations in terms of advice, cross-border collaborations, sharing of best practice and combination of resources; such efforts should be channeled to address the audiences in a community in terms of engagement and development;
- Programmes aimed at audiences that in particular target children and young people should be supported by combined efforts between the different cultural stakeholders with an aim to make such programmes long-term and sustainable;
- Community leaders involved in the positive development of their societies should be involved in education and outreach programmes aimed at young audiences in order to maximise the benefits to be gained by young people;
- Cultural programmes that nurture cross-border audiences should be supported by developing international co-productions that support the collaboration of artists from all over the Mediterranean;
- Multiple means utilised by cultural operators and cultural agencies to communicate with audiences from both the local and the regional level should be expanded through shared investment in IT and the effective use of channels of communication which should be as interactive as possible;
- A healthy and creative balance should be sought between cultural programmes that address themes central to the well-being of communities and wider topics of regional remit; cultural operators, both local and foreign, should strive to open up their agendas to greater regional relevance while producing work which is built on a local basis;
- The use of common themes, narratives and means of narration, including languages, to build larger cross-border audiences should be encouraged;
- Initiatives like fairs (e.g. book fairs, games fairs), festivals (e.g. film festivals, performing arts festivals), information, education and public relations campaigns that target and engage with real and potential audiences should be coordinated across borders to cultivate audiences with common interests and sensitise different communities to shared challenges and aspirations;
- The meaning that audiences seek in art works through the relevance these may have to their various realities is fundamental to the importance of such works and their success with the public: therefore, art works that address issues that are important to the public should be encouraged and contextualised within Mediterranean realities;

- Programmes identifying individuals and organisations who can champion and act as patrons of particular art works or projects and programmes should be encouraged on both local and regional levels; such involvement should include financial involvement as well as intellectual and motivational support.

3. 1. b. iv. Intercultural Dialogue

- The tools of languages that allow for dialogue to take place should be approached with a wide angle that encourages the creative and innovative as well as the functional (in terms of conveying messages effectively) in terms of diversity;
- Multiple means of communication, therefore including verbal, visual, aural, ritual and others, should be encouraged in the development of dialogue which is open and inclusive;
- Projects that facilitate intercultural dialogue beyond superficial showcasing and celebration should be explored further with an aim to pierce stereotypes and expectations and allow meaningful communication to take place;
- Transnational efforts at fostering intercultural dialogue should be sustained from early stages in education as part of a strategic plan to cultivate curiosity, interest and an awareness of other cultures;
- The exposure to languages of origin for migrant individuals and communities (e.g. Arabic or Tamazight in Europe) should be encouraged with an aim to lead to the appreciation of oneself and one's community also in relation to one's current environment that can be thus more supportive and open to different cultures;⁶⁶⁹
- Centres of literature and translation such as those already found in the Mediterranean and others being proposed (for instance in Algiers, Marseilles and Valletta in connection with the European Capital of Culture projects of 2013 and 2018) should be supported politically and financially with an aim to foster understanding and appreciation of each others' cultures through language and literature and appreciate them as channels to intercultural dialogue;⁶⁷⁰
- Centres and programmes that enable intercultural dialogue through various media including audiovisual means, the performing arts, design and cuisine, for instance, should be supported on the basis of long-term commitments with an aim to make such initiatives sustainable and develop self-sufficiency;
- Institutions and academic programmes teaching the history of conflict in the Mediterranean and reflecting on contemporary aspects of tensions and divisions should be supported and encouraged to reflect on a regional basis to allow for better understanding and the possibility of engaging more in open communication;⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁹ Moatassime, page 133.

⁶⁷⁰ ZENNADI, Samia (2011): 'L'Algérie peut être un centre littéraire en Afrique', *El Watan*, 23 octobre, page 18; MARSEILLE PROVENCE 2013 (2012): *Programme Culturel*, Marseille, www.mp2013.fr (accessed 1 April 2012); VALLETTA 2018 FOUNDATION (2012): *Imagine 18: Final Application for the Title of European Capital of Culture in Malta*, Valletta, www.valletta2018.org (accessed 15 May 2012).

⁶⁷¹ Rezk, page 62.

- Digital media and online tools that attract a variety of users from different generations and cultural backgrounds may be channelled towards addressing topics of a regional nature and wide relevance to present contextually meaningful material to such users (including prod-users);
- Engaging in research to explore the multifaceted identities of European and Mediterranean people may help develop cross-border and multi-cultural collaborations involving different cultural elements with an aim to benefit multiple actors;
- The collaboration of European cultural agencies with local partners on the basis of equal partnerships should be encouraged in order to generate programmes and projects which are of mutual benefit to all participants and their audiences;
- International legal frameworks, both binding and non-binding, such as the 2005 UNESCO Convention on cultural diversity, should be supported and their implementation actively promoted in order to make full use of such tools across different territories;
- The development of intercultural dialogue on the basis of *'intra-cultural dialogue'*, namely through the encouragement of meaningful communication taking place between different communities in the same territory across different social levels (and not just between the elites, such as with French-, Arabic- and Berber-speaking elites in Algeria), should be supported by cultural and educational authorities on a regional level;⁶⁷²
- A key element of intercultural dialogue lies with the development of a register of languages and a sensitivity to different cultures nurtured inside individuals and their communities: this *'plurilingualism'*, which suggests a plurality of languages *'inside a person'* rather than a juxtaposition of languages against each other as suggested by multilingualism, may allow for a deeper understanding and meaningful communication to take place;⁶⁷³

⁶⁷² Redalie et al, page 192.

⁶⁷³ Moatassime, page 195.

3. 2. Policy Paper Matrix

The matrix presented here in tabular form brings together sixty key policy recommendations which variably focus and expand on the points made above.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁴ A number of policy-oriented resources acted as references to the matrix: of particular importance were Bouquerel & El Husseiny; *Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes de la France*; *National Cultural Policy*, Malta 2011, Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism, the Environment and Culture; Culture Resource/Al Mawred Al Thaqafy.

AREA & ACTION	BY WHOM	FOR WHOM
NETWORKING & MOBILITY		
SUPPORT THE MOBILITY OF PEOPLE	NORTH & SOUTH NETWORKS	ARTISTS
SUPPORT SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATIONS	NORTH & SOUTH NETWORKS	ARTISTS
SUPPORT LONG-TERM & SELF-SUSTAINING NETWORKING	NORTH & SOUTH NETWORKS	ARTISTS
EXTEND THE ACTIONS OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY SERVICES TO MEDITERRANEAN	EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AGENCIES	ARTISTS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORIAL DIPLOMACY	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
RE-VISION LOCAL & NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICIES TO ADDRESS MEDITERRANEAN	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	LOCAL COMMUNITIES INCLUDING ARTISTS
DEVELOP IT (E.G. PORTALS & TOOLS) TO ASSIST REGIONAL NETWORKING	EUROPEAN & MEDITERRANEAN NETWORKS	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
SENSITISE & RESPONSIBLISE POLITICAL AUTHORITIES TO MEDITERRANEAN CULTURAL DIMENSION	CULTURAL ENTITIES	POLITICAL AUTHORITIES
MAKE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS TO SUPPORT NETWORKING & MOBILITY BINDING	MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURE	MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ENCOURAGE MOBILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES & ACADEMIES	YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES
RECONFIGURE VISA REGIMES & COORDINATE SECURITY MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE MOBILITY	NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
SUPPORT THE MOBILITY OF ART WORKS (NORTH-SOUTH & SOUTH-SOUTH)	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
ENGAGE WITH EXTRA-MEDITERRANEAN CULTURAL OPERATORS	LOCAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL* AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
ENGAGE WITH MEDITERRANEAN DIASPORAS WORLDWIDE	LOCAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL AUTHORITIES	COMMUNITIES
SUSTAIN TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL SKILLS	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES & ACADEMIES	YOUNG PEOPLE & STUDENTS
RE-DESIGN FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS TO SUPPORT MOBILITY	NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AT CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS LED BY STAKEHOLDERS	LOCAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WIDE-RANGING OBSERVATORY FOR NETWORKING & MOBILITY	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	COMMUNITIES
	* REGIONAL REFERS TO EXTRA-NATIONAL I.E. MEDITERRANEAN IN SCOPE	
SUPPORTING STRUCTURES		
UTILISE COLONIAL HERITAGE IN TERMS OF INFRASTRUCTURE & MEANS OF COMMUNICATION	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
COMBINE LANGUAGE LEARNING TO GAIN ADVANTAGE FROM COLONIAL LINGUISTIC HERITAGE	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES
MAXIMISE & COORDINATE USE OF TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
PRIORITISE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER SUPPORTING STRUCTURES	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
CHANNEL THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORTING STRUCTURES TOWARDS NURTURING CROSS-BORDER AUDIENCES	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS & THEIR MEDITERRANEAN AUDIENCES
COORDINATE TOURISM-AIMED EFFORTS WITH CULTURAL ONES TO ADD VALUE TO TOURIST OFFER	CULTURAL ENTITIES & TOURISM AUTHORITIES	TOURISTS & LOCAL COMMUNITIES
FIRM UP & RE-FOCUS STRUCTURES SERVICING URBAN CENTRES	LOCAL AUTHORITIES	LOCAL COMMUNITIES INCLUDING ARTISTS
COORDINATE DIVERSE LOCAL EFFORTS IN A MEDITERRANEAN FRAMEWORK	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	LOCAL COMMUNITIES
DEVELOP CREATIVE CLUSTERS IN A MEDITERRANEAN FRAMEWORK THROUGH BETTER COORDINATION	LOCAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
RE-VISIT LEGAL, FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS TO ASSIST CULTURAL EXPRESSION	NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL & ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THEIR TRAINING OF ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES & ACADEMIES	YOUNG PEOPLE & ARTISTS
SUPPORT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMMES	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES & ACADEMIES	YOUNG PEOPLE
ENCOURAGE PATRONAGE MODELS TO EXTEND REGIONALLY	CULTURAL ENTITIES & PRIVATE ENTITIES	ARTISTS
DEVELOP REGIONAL MAPPING EXERCISE BASED ON EXTENSIVE RESEARCH OF RESOURCES (EXISTING & NEEDED)	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
AUDIENCES		
PUT AUDIENCES AT THE HEART OF CULTURAL EXPRESSION	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	AUDIENCES
INVEST IN LOCAL CULTURAL CAPITAL TO ENGAGE WITH AUDIENCES	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	AUDIENCES
TARGET CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	YOUNG AUDIENCES
DEVELOP CROSS-BORDER AUDIENCES	LOCAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL ENTITIES	AUDIENCES
ENGAGE WITH AUDIENCES THROUGH FAIRS & FESTIVALS	LOCAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL ENTITIES & AUTHORITIES	AUDIENCES
USE THEMATIC NARRATIVES UTILISING TRANS-MEDIA TO ENGAGE WITH WIDE & VARIED POPULATIONS	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	AUDIENCES
SUPPORT AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES	YOUNG AUDIENCES
ENCOURAGE OUTREACH PROGRAMMES LINKED TO PERFORMANCES & ART WORKS	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	YOUNG AUDIENCES
SUPPORT PATRONAGE OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT	PRIVATE ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	AUDIENCES
ENCOURAGE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT WITH MINORITY GROUPS	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	YOUNG AUDIENCES
DEVELOP LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN ARTS CONTEXTS	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	YOUNG AUDIENCES
ENGAGE IN SYSTEMATIC EXCHANGE OF BEST PRACTICE IN AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT & RELATIONS	CULTURAL ENTITIES, VENUES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS & AUDIENCES
DEVELOP COLLABORATIONS ACROSS DIFFERENT AREAS OF HUMAN EXPRESSION (E.G. CULTURE & SPORT)	CULTURAL ENTITIES & OTHER ENTITIES & LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR COMMUNITIES
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE		
FOCUS ON LANGUAGES AS MEANS OF ENABLING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
SUPPORT MULTIPLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
SUPPORT LONG-TERM COMMUNICATION THAT TACKLES STEREOTYPING	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS, CULTURAL OPERATORS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
DEVELOP INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE THROUGH EDUCATION	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES	YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES
ENCOURAGE LANGUAGE OF ORIGIN LEARNING IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES & THEIR EXTENDED COMMUNITIES	LOCAL & NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR COMMUNITIES
DEVELOP CENTRES OF LITERATURE & TRANSLATION	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
USE DIGITAL MEDIA & ONLINE TOOLS TO ENGAGE YOUNG AUDIENCES IN EXERCISING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	YOUNG AUDIENCES
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN NORTH & SOUTH ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS
SUPPORT RESEARCH INTO UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT & ITS RESOLUTION	ACADEMIC INSTITUTES	ACADEMICS, RESEARCHERS & STUDENTS
SUPPORT RESEARCH INTO WAYS OF ENGAGING & DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE	ACADEMIC INSTITUTES	ACADEMICS, RESEARCHERS & STUDENTS
USE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS TO THE FULL ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITIES	NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	ARTISTS & THEIR COMMUNITIES
ENCOURAGE INTRA-CULTURAL DIALOGUE TO DEVELOP INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE	COMMUNITIES	COMMUNITIES
ENCOURAGE PERSONAL PLURILINGUALISM TO DEVELOP INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES	YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR COMMUNITIES
SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WIDE-RANGING OBSERVATORY FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE	CULTURAL ENTITIES & LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	COMMUNITIES
ENGAGE IN CULTURAL SENSITISATION IN PREPARING PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS FOR COLLABORATIONS	CULTURAL ENTITIES & CULTURAL OPERATORS	ARTISTS & CULTURAL OPERATORS

3. 3. a. Recognition of Limits

3. 3. a. i. The commercial dimension

One main limitation which characterises the research is the relative lack of focus given to cultural expression in terms of its commercial dimension. The attention given to the colonial context and cultural relations has shaped the structure of this text and driven the direction of the research and the outcomes which developed. In turn, these outcomes have led to the recommendations made above. In order to do this in a coherent manner, the commercial aspects of cultural expression in the Mediterranean have not been expanded upon in ways which fairly reflect the importance, often determining, of many cultural exchanges. Nevertheless, the research gains value and internal coherence due to internal argumentations that have sought to combine convincingly the colonial context with that of cultural policy in action also with reference to economic dynamics. The commercial reality, mainly linked to cultural production and consumption, trade regimes and legal and economic frameworks that play a decisive role in shaping contemporary cultural trends, do not go against the observations and the main thrust of the research; rather, it is believed they contribute to the overall interpretation of contemporary cultural relations in terms of collaborations between the different partners of the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, it is worth reflecting on a number of important points that deserve being developed further. As noted in the recommendations, a dearth of data and a lack of research tools with which to tap into the needed data are some of the limitations drafters and implementers of cultural policy face in their attempts to map the real picture of cultural exchange and devise methods of influencing this reality. With regard to the South of the Mediterranean as well as the smaller states of the North, the lack of institutional capacity to support the development of creative industries is of major concern. A number of international organisations have become involved in addressing this lack in relation to areas such as the protection and enforcement of IPR and exploiting creative talent. Such actions are driven by an interest towards cultural development. However, they are also motivated by self-interest in terms of creating opportunities in the cultural market that cultural entities and private enterprise can exploit to their own advantage.⁶⁷⁵

The building blocks of the creative and cultural industries are intertwined with the traditions and cultural expression of particular territories. Therefore, territories which may be described as belonging to developing nations in economic terms or developing culturally in terms of their infrastructure and their markets do well to exchange best practice and learn from partners with more experience with their own advantage in mind. This advantage should not only be calculated in short-term economic gain, but rather in relation to the long-term and sustainable development the communities in the territories of the South can experience. With regard to legal frameworks of international import, the traditional West has been forced to acknowledge the growing role of nations undergoing immense development (e.g. BRIC) and others who are

⁶⁷⁵ UNDP/UNCTAD (2008): *Creative Economy: Report 2008*, Geneva, UN.

now better prepared to capitalize on their cultural identities to their own advantage. Indeed, international agreements such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), association agreements and commercially preferential protocols such as those initiated by the EU with developing countries are receiving greater critical attention by these countries.

3. 3. a. ii. The territorial scope

Another limitation is related to the fact that the research does not deal with the whole Mediterranean. As noted in relation to Pace, one of the main challenges in addressing the Mediterranean lies in being equally inclusive and sensitive to the differences among European territories both within the EU and outside, particularly the Balkan states, Turkey, the Middle Eastern Arab countries, Israel and North Africa. The research does not attempt to address the disparate realities or reconcile the differences between the various territories. However, it does try to root general observations in localised experiences with an aim to provide interpretations and recommendations that become relevant beyond particular territories themselves.

On the other hand, the focus intended for the research to be successful does not allow for an extended engagement with extra-Mediterranean realities to a degree that would have made a comparative analysis possible. The research restricts itself to brief references to these contexts with an aim to illustrate better Mediterranean realities and comment more intently on them.

3. 3. a. iii. The status of the artist

Observations on the status of the artist in countries bordering the Mediterranean are not elaborated beyond the analyses of the interviews due to the particular national contexts such a discussion would have had to engage with in a work which aims at relating observations on local experiences to a wider Mediterranean picture. Discussions on the status of the artist, be it professional or amateur, if at all classified, tend to be very complex, intertwined with the national history of employment and social legislation including the role of unions and the development of work ethics over decades. For the purposes of reaching its objectives, the research refrains from engaging in such a discussion.

However, it is worth referring to the survey that the international observatory set up to research the social status of the artist has developed with the support of UNESCO and the Roberto Cimetta Fund.⁶⁷⁶ This is one of the rare exercises undertaken that attempts to assess the poor framework for the protection of the social rights of the artist in the Mediterranean, although action resulting from the data compiled is still weak. Defining the status of the artist remains vague and efforts to implement and coordinate legal frameworks for the protection of artists are still in their infancy, in spite of a UNESCO recommendation on the condition of the

⁶⁷⁶ www.unesco.org/culture/en/statusoftheartist (accessed 17 April 2012).

artist dating back to 1980.⁶⁷⁷ Such a poor result is not restricted to the Mediterranean but sadly true worldwide. More recent efforts to assess the situation and take action through recommendations and lobbying have been undertaken by few entities concerned with European and Mediterranean affairs including the European Parliament and the Roberto Cimetta Fund. From the South Mediterranean side, Morocco and Tunisia report slow developments in making the registration of artists in order to enable support a reality.⁶⁷⁸

3. 3. a. iv. Censorship

The issue of censorship is another thorny matter when discussing cultural expression. Socio-cultural circumstances in the Mediterranean that are undergoing rapid change both on the South and the North banks have a direct influence on censorship regimes imposed by authorities as well as self-censorship techniques and the means used to evade censorship employed by citizens within their communities. In this context it is worth noting the struggle of Maghreb performers caught between developing their own models against previous colonial or neocolonial ones and resisting pressures by religious extremism that, as noted by Ahmed Brady and José Molson, damage efforts at dialogue and extending one's cultural networks and working relations.⁶⁷⁹

This aspect of cultural realities in the Mediterranean has not received elaborate attention beyond references in relation to the matters in focus. Like other matters not expanded upon significantly in the research, the local and national contexts for censorship are difficult to address by means of general argumentation since they are closely tied to beliefs, traditions and value systems of particular territories and their societies. El Husseiny notes the irrelevance of Western influence in efforts to resolve censorship issues in the South of the Mediterranean since it is the local population that has to deal with this and take action as necessary.⁶⁸⁰ However, as has been hinted at, the influence of cultural entities and operators from the North on the development of cultural activity in the South, especially in cases where material means are involved through sponsorship or other means of financial backing, is an important element which reflects the contemporary relevance of the colonial context studied here. As noted by Seine Farhat, funding agencies do influence cultural policy at the local level in the framework of a '*variable geography*' which presupposes the development of partnerships but safeguards a hierarchical order.⁶⁸¹ Her reflections show that influence may come in many ways, including setting limits on who can be part of a project (for example in relation to adopted terrorist blacklists) to the generation of particular projects.

⁶⁷⁷ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13138&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (accessed 17 April 2012).

⁶⁷⁸ *Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes de la France*, page 145.

⁶⁷⁹ Balta, page 298.

⁶⁸⁰ '*Apart from know-how transfer and sources of funding, we don't need any active role from the West here. You know, censorship is not an abstract concept - it is the people here who have to resolve their problem*'; Roberto Cimetta Fund (2007), page 15.

⁶⁸¹ *Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes de la France*, page 160.

3. 3. b. Thinking and Acting “Outside the Mediterranean”

Cultural matters are not only of importance to the Mediterranean. While this statement may sound obvious, it is worth making since passionate discussions and detailed analyses of cultural expression in the Mediterranean, such as the research is aiming to provide, may give the impression that this space does have a special, if not superior, rapport to culture when compared to other spaces or territories worldwide. This is not the case, and the relevance of the challenges faced by and in the Mediterranean gain weight while enjoying perspective and context by being assessed in relation to the global picture.

Nevertheless, the research has tried to establish global links and relevance by seeking them in local experience. This approach has sought to develop ‘complementary narratives’ belonging to different levels of experience that bring closer together communities from different territories of the Mediterranean as well as outside it.⁶⁸² This approach has been inspired by a number of sources and particularly that of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) that adopted the Agenda 21 for culture in 2004 as a reference document on culture’s relation to human rights, governance, sustainability, social inclusion and the economy with a strong basis in cities and local governments. The strong local base enjoyed by the UCLG that is however spread globally has supported the creation of new policy architecture for local participation, cooperation and coordination in local policies related to culture, with public, private and social actors.⁶⁸³ This inclusive perspective that values the bottom-up approach is important to take note of and adopt as one’s own in devising ways of supporting the development of cultural expression in the territories of the Mediterranean and in the space as a whole.

The somewhat rigid and disparate national contexts structuring a great deal of the way cultural expression is mediated in the Mediterranean are constantly challenged by the very fact of diversity that is ‘*constitutive of culture.*’ As noted by Jordi Pascual diversity:

‘challenges many of the official, mainly national, discourses on culture and cultural policies, especially those that were based on homogeneity and/or have democratic deficits. Diversity provides a new set of conceptual lenses to describe current local policies.’⁶⁸⁴

The main principle of the research, and hence what its main thrust aims towards, is that the paradigms that construct current cultural policies and other related policies in the Mediterranean need to be approached with a fuller acknowledgment of the strong relation which exists between diversity and local and regional contexts in order to enable positive change to take place in ways that are sustainable and meaningful to many different people in different territories.

⁶⁸² PASCUAL I RUIZ, JORDI: *Intercultural Dialogue Challenges Local Cultural Policies*, in German Commission for UNESCO (2010): *Cultural Diversity – Our Common Wealth*, DUK, Bonn, page 216.

⁶⁸³ Ibid. page 218.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

A great deal of work in terms of policy and strategy has been carried out in the Mediterranean milieu, as well as outside it, that one disregards to one's own loss. Rather than re-invent the wheel, the policy propositions made here aim at tackling some of the obstacles to past and current efforts while recognising the limits of these efforts in relation to their particular contexts. The proposed policy measures take these contexts as the priority areas to be tackled since they are at the root of particular challenges to development and not simply problems. The policies and strategies that have been proposed or implemented in the past, however successful or unsuccessful they have been, are part of the solution, and not the problem itself. They do become part of the problem when they give false illusions of solving issues and end up aggravating and adding to the already existing problems. Therefore, the recommendations made here acknowledge this particular relation between social and political contexts, shaped through history and contemporary politics, and policies and strategies that have aimed at tackling them, in order to present a way forward that balances vision with pragmatics for an approach that is as wide and Mediterranean as possible but that aims at achieving global relevance and having an impact on the Mediterranean by linking it to, and not segregating it from, the international dimension.

Section Four: Conclusions

4.1. The Mediterranean: Re-visited, Re-thought and Re-enacted

In the introductory part of the research the matter of the various perceptions that contribute to the construction of the Mediterranean that result in a series of “Mediterraneans” was discussed as part of an early assessment of whether the Mediterranean exists⁶⁸⁵, what it means to its populations and whether the different experiences of this space may be reconciled to produce a number of coherent narratives that could assist cultural policy makers, artists and cultural operators as well as local, national and regional (sic. Mediterranean) authorities address this space together and with the realistic expectation of achieving some tangible results from the exercise. The literature review engaged in was used to show that while a number of distinct interpretations exist, it takes a conscious effort to reconcile differences in experience, perception and expectation through a willingness to acknowledge those that may be very different from one’s own. The theoretical interpretations of historical as well as contemporary affairs in politics and culture go a long way in contributing to the wide and varied landscape that the research has tried to portray in terms of cultural relations and their influence on cultural expression. Admittedly, the research has come up against shortcomings and has displayed failures in doing so in any totalistic way; while achieving totality was not its intention in any way, the field of study engaged in may be better described in terms of a seascape, constantly in motion and engaged in change. It has been the intention of the research not to capture a static moment on the basis of which to provide facile interpretations and solutions, but rather to investigate ways of understanding how and why the change noted takes place and how it can be managed for the benefit of the people of the Mediterranean and their communities on a basis that links the local with the regional.

The different perceptions of the Mediterranean also rise through the direct experience of the cultural field as expressed by the artists and cultural operators, including officials from state entities, in the analysis part of the research. These individuals, some of whom representing small associations while others national authorities, acknowledge the pressures inherent to the relations they engage in with European cultural institutes that need a great deal of effort in order to work out in terms of a partnership which is of real benefit to the local organisation and its community. The analysis of the interviews also notes that the following: while the dynamic entertained with foreign cultural institutes and funding organisations is many times complex and charged with multiple, and sometimes conflicting, priorities, local entities choose to seek partnerships with their Northern counterparts not because they feel they are inferior and hence are ready to accept any terms and conditions presented them as long as they can work together, but rather because given the dearth of resources on the local and national levels, pursuing relations with foreign, especially European organisations provides them with a framework for developing their own work, furthering their own agendas and living up to their own expectations and those of their audiences and communities.

⁶⁸⁵ Harris.

In engaging in these North-South cultural relations, many people interviewed note that while establishing partnerships is not easy and a great deal of effort is demanded of them to ensure their priorities are not compromised out of proportion, artists and entities in the South are no longer in the position of being dependent on or controlled by their Northern counterparts. Many lessons from the colonial era seem to have been learnt, by both sides, and practical ways of building Mediterranean relations on more equal bases tend to have become more commonly experienced. The different perceptions that lead to contrasting interpretations of the influence of European cultural institutions on the South of the Mediterranean contribute to an important tension in the subject matter of the research and in the research itself. The experience of the North-South cultural relationship in the Mediterranean is not unitary but manifold, with those assessments developed in the theoretical framework tending to display a more critical approach that recommends caution in negotiating agendas and priorities on the basis of identified and required resources. As noted by Rezk, the sense of misgiving and mistrust between both sides is strong and contributes to the shaping of the relations themselves:

*'[...] il y a une double méfiance que est celle de l'état vers l'Ue: elle choisit des partenaires qui ne sont pas considérés par les états comme fiable. Plutôt ils sont considérés comme des troubles font etc. Donc au lieu de créer un vrai lien de travail, un vrai dialogue, on crée ce double pêché original de quoi on décide, de qui décide, qu'est ce qu'on finance.'*⁶⁸⁶

It is important to note that these theoretical comments are addressed to the position of states rather than that of artists or cultural operators. However, it is also worth referring to Stephan's comments on the effect of North-South cultural relations on NGOs and the way those that seek the support of foreign institutes are perceived by those that do not:

*'[...] la méfiance que se crée entre les ONG qui sont financés sous des programmes et les thèmes définit et le reste de la société. Par ailleurs, la masse de la population a tendance de se méfier parce qu'il réalise qu'ils travail sur des agendas occidentaux avec rien à voir avec les besoins de la population. Il se sent détachés et méfiants. Parce qu'ils sont des vecteurs du colonialisme, etc. Il semble qu'il y a cette distance entre la masse de la population qui d'ailleurs ne consomme pas ces productions culturels qui sont produit par ces ONG qui se faissent souvent voir dans ce lumière parce qu'ils ont pris cette financement.'*⁶⁸⁷

On the other hand, those assessments resulting from a relatively more direct and sustained experience in the field of cultural cooperation express less fear and criticism and a greater disposition to engage and make up the rules of engagement as one goes along, even if this means learning from the mistakes one commits. This second level of observation is also contributed to by representatives of the European cultural institutes who are aware of the complex relational framework they inhabit in light of the colonial experiences of the Mediterranean which the states they represent were directly implicated in. However, they express a lack of inhibition and a willingness towards drawing up anew the role of their

⁶⁸⁶ Author's interview with Leila Rezk and Maud Stephan, Beirut.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

institutes in the South of the Mediterranean not with an aim to dominate but to facilitate cultural expression and identify ways that enable artists and cultural operators from both sides to benefit together.

The influence of the North side of the Mediterranean on affairs in this space is a growing, if changing one. The involvement and domination of various European states in the political, social and cultural life of the territories to the South has changed drastically from the colonial period but is still related to that long and determining chapter in the development of relations in the Mediterranean. Twenty-seven European states today form the EU that in its own new way has created a number of channels through which to relate to the Southern shore and still play an important role in the Southern side's development. Certain observers note that political relations between the EU and other states in the Mediterranean should be considered separately from matters of cultural cooperation and that while the former should support the latter it should not impede progress in the field of culture.⁶⁸⁸ While agreeing with the intentions of this approach, the results of the research show that this is highly idealistic and not reflective of the complex and intertwined nature of cultural affairs and general politics. The outcomes of the research note that the different relational strands of the Mediterranean cannot be separated one from the other when trying to tackle one area in particular, as culture is in the remit of the research. Doing so may give the dangerous illusion that headway may be made in the single field of cultural affairs when in reality other elements spell a very different general story.

As has been observed, culture is intrinsically related to most other aspects of life. As noted by Mediterraneanists like Fabre and Cassano in going back to go forward one is able to observe the networks built by Mediterranean peoples from antiquity till today in particular with regard to tackling the over-arching fundamental issues, like peace and security, through the lense of culture. Furthermore, due to their intertwined histories and identities, Europe and the Mediterranean also need to be addressed together. Guido de Marco noted that one cannot have peace and security in Europe without peace and security in the Mediterranean, and one cannot have peace and security in the Mediterranean without peace and security in Europe.⁶⁸⁹ The need to address matters of importance to Europe and the Mediterranean in conjunction one to the other is accompanied by a need to act together as noted by Ahmed Badry and José Monleon:

*'La création d'une Europe stable et libre et d'un Maghreb uni, et celle d'un ordre économique international humain, qui ne se limiterait pas à modérer les droits du plus fort, passent aujourd'hui par l'affirmation de la Méditerranée, par la rencontre de ses peuples, par la cohabitation pacifique de ses cultures et de ses religions et par la solidarité dans la construction de ses réalités politiques et matérielles.'*⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁸ Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes de la France, page 152.

⁶⁸⁹ <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20070311/local/professor-de-marcos-lecture-on-mediterranean-diplomacy-at-vienna-academy.23929> (accessed 17 April 2012).

⁶⁹⁰ Balta, page 293.

On the basis of this acknowledgment, one also needs to recognise that positive change in one field can only take place when accompanied by similar changes in the other fields. Anything else is not truly developmental and may set people up for the disappointment of unforeseen failure. It is not being argued that such an approach is easy. However, acknowledging the difficulty of the full picture may allow a thorough analysis of the situation to take place and enough resources to be put into place to address issues holistically and symbiotically rather than separately and in a compartmentalised fashion which is limiting and self-defeating.

The provenance of funding and the purpose of that funding have a significant influence on the types of activities held and by whom they are held within the communities of the South Mediterranean. Most of all, the financial dimension influences the *modus operandi* of local cultural entities and NGOs that may choose to adapt their operations to find an optimal way with which to coincide with the priorities of the funding institution. The compromising effect of this phenomenon has been noted by the research and reported within the framework of regional studies.⁶⁹¹ However, on the basis of the research carried out directly for the purposes of this study it has been observed that funding relations, like all other relations, are made of at least two parties, and never decided upon by one side alone. The parties involved contribute to the aims sought by such a relationship and various degrees of collaboration have resulted from such a process. While confirming the role of institutions from the North as being a strong one and that of organisations from the South, from state entities to small local associations, as often needing to adapt to foreign agendas, it has been shown that the process is by no means dominated by participants from the North. The latter have also been noted to adapt to the requirements of local organisations and partnerships struck, even though not equal or fully satisfactory to both sides, develop following various phases of negotiation and compromise by all parties involved.

The analyses of the research carried out on the ground show that while the colonial framework persists in neocolonial structures that still heavily influence contemporary cultural relations and the means and productions of cultural expression witnessed today, the cultural operators, artists and entities responsible for culture in the South have developed positions of varying strength from which to manage their priorities and requirements and engage in relations of cooperation and collaboration which are to their advantage as well as to that of their Northern counterparts. Furthermore, the once-clear divisions between the North and the South have not survived the colonial age intact: as has been noted, issues of migrancy, long-standing cultural collaborations, markets and audiences that cross borders have contributed in earnest to developing a tangible Mediterranean dimension to the field of cultural expression.

The theoretical and reflective layers that add themselves to this dimension contribute to a deeply rich and complex space of exchange and creation that demands the attention and active involvement of actual and potential partners both within this space as well as outside it: the aim of this involvement is to contribute to the development of relations and methods of

⁶⁹¹ *Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes de la France*, page 163.

approaching cultural expression that seek mutual enrichment, genuine partnership and the generation of a sustained focus on the citizens of the Mediterranean and their communities.

In conclusion, the research aims to provide a thorough reflection on the need to acknowledge better and synergise the energies of the Mediterranean that need to be capitalised upon to promote the development of the positive aspects of this space in as inclusive a way as possible. Edgar Morin notes that individuals and communities in the Mediterranean have a great responsibility in driving change for themselves and for others; however, they also have great means to do so:

'Aujourd'hui nous devons retrouver l'essence profane de la Méditerranée qui est dans l'ouverture, la communication, la tolérance et la rationalité. Nous devons nous ré-méditerraniser comme citoyens de la communication et citoyens de la complexité.'

The envisioning of a positive set of Mediterranean identities that can address the coming to terms with an *'identity-project'* (*'identité-projet'*) lies in the creative actualisation of who the people of the Mediterranean are and who they want to be.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹² CORNU, Lucienne; HASSANALY, Parina; PELISSIER, Nicolas (2010): *Informations et nouvelles technologies en Méditerranée: Vingt ans de coopération en réseau*, L'Harmattan, Paris, page 149.

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ANNEX

List of questions

- i. What do you consider to be the influence of European cultural institutes on local artists and the local cultural scene?
- ii. Which areas of cultural life are particularly and most influenced, especially in terms of artistic forms of expression and market structures (e.g. publishing, visual arts exhibitions, etc.)?
- iii. Does this influence extend itself to other areas, not necessarily arts-related, of society (e.g. in schools, on television, in newspapers)?
- iv. Are you aware of pressure to shape local trade or exchange systems according to Western models of 'creative and cultural industries'? Are values related to 'community'⁶⁹³ and 'reciprocity'⁶⁹⁴ being sacrificed for economic gain?
- v. Is it realistic to envisage and speak about an alternative to this 'foreign' influence?
- vi. Is it correct to assess this influence as 'foreign'?
- vii. Does your approach allow you to operate outside this European influence? Is it possible to do so? Do you consciously resist this influence or do you work with it? If the latter is so, is there a case of collaboration or mutuality, or is the influence mostly unidirectional?
- viii. Do you seek assistance from European cultural operators and institutes?
- ix. Are you aware of any colonial influence in their operations?
- x. Are you aware of patronizing or dominating elements in their attitude towards local operators?
- xi. Are you aware of elements of dependence by local operators on their European counterparts?
- xii. May you provide examples of good practices and bad practices with regard to collaborations undergone?
- xiii. Do such collaborations allow for intercultural dialogue to take place?
- xiv. Do you feel you have a choice with whom to collaborate, if at all? Are you aware of a sense of pressure on grounds of quality, access to funding, marketing etc?
- xv. May you provide examples of good practices where local cultural operators collaborated independently, or rather independently, from European influence?
- xvi. Are you aware of situations where local appropriated the tools of cultural influence used by the European actors to their own advantage? Is such a subversion, which may be more subtle than the more clear-cut oppositional definition of 'resistance' and 'accommodation', possible?⁶⁹⁵ If so, what forms does it take?
- xvii. With regard to the international networks, what do you consider is their impact, if any, on your cultural operations and the resources you have? Are you aware of the existence of any neo-colonial influences here too?
- xviii. With regard to audience targeting, participation, return and reactions (including any feedback), are you aware of any telling signs as to how European actors and/or collaborations with European actors are perceived by local audiences?

⁶⁹³ Following Sarah Owen-Vandersluis.

⁶⁹⁴ Following Dominique Temple in Rahnema and Bawtree *The Post-Development Reader*.

⁶⁹⁵ Following Gallant, Thomas W., *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean*.

- xix. The following four questions are about supporting structures: Which structures which support culture exist, and do they encourage dependence on European actors? How?
- xx. What structures exist to promote independent action?
- xxi. What further structures would be needed to generate autonomous action?
- xxii. Who are the 'independent' local actors supported by?

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Interviews

Interviews in Algiers: October 2011

Interview with Karim Sergoua, visual artist

22 October 2011

KX: Quel est l'ampleur de l'influence française sur les relations culturelles en Alger et dans l'Algérie?

KS: Quand on parle d'influence moi je ne vais pas parler d'influence de production culturelle, parce qu'il n'y a pas d'influence: les artistes sont influencés des part des mouvements internationaux. Je te réponds à propos les trucs matériels et institutionnels. Il faut savoir que nous Algériens parlons le français. Nous étions colonisés par la France. Et donc dans le système pédagogique et dans le système d'enseignement supérieur toutes les facultés algériennes dans certains moments favorisaient la formation supérieure vers la France. Donc un grand pourcentage d'Algériens se sont formés en France, pour poursuivre le cycle dans les années soixante et soixante-dix, début quatre-vingt. Dans ces conditions-là il y avait les écoles de formations de caractère artistique tel que la grammaire ou la musique ou beaux-arts et ils étaient formatés dans des écoles françaises jusqu'à quatre-vingt-cinq. Jusque-là ils ne se sont pas arrêtés de recevoir des bourses de formation à l'étranger quand l'état a ouvert l'École des Beaux-arts à Alger. Donc l'influence il se situe dans la lecture de ce période. A partir de quatre-vingt-seize à partir des achats étatiques, l'ouverture de Centre culturel français était important avec plein des choses qui était important: la création de salles des conférences, bibliothèque, discothèque, aussi salles d'expositions, aussi des catalogues. Avant la CCF, avant le premier directeur du CCF, en 1985, jusqu'à 1993, avec le principe du terrorisme, il y avait pas de catalogue pour les artistes Algériens. Il y avait un catalogue sur 100 expositions par exemple. Quand la CCF a ouvert sa galerie s'est promis d'organiser six expositions par an avec six catalogues. Ça était fait, malheureusement par le CCF qui a mis sur la culture au lieu de l'état. Donc, dans la formation et cadre de collaboration l'Ambassade de France était l'organe diplomatique qui offrait le plus de coopération. Maintenant dans la création artistique: non, l'Algérie était toujours un pays très ouvert dans l'expression donc l'Algérie, avant l'avenir d'intérêt mais elle était branchée sur tout les créations du monde contemporain donc elle était influencée par les italiens, les espagnols et surtout pour certains techniques par exemple dans la céramique d'Espagne, de *design* l'Italie, donc c'était ciblée. On s'est influencé que par rapport à des besoins. Comme on voit faire les japonais qui sont très loin, l'espionnage japonais et chinois avant le grand développement de tout, il capte tout avec les yeux et les oreilles. Quand ils sont revenues chez eux, ils faisaient comme l'éponge et ils faisaient travail sur soi-même, et ils ne se sont sentis pas mal à se sentir dire ils ne sont pas l'Europe ou les États-Unis. Aujourd'hui ils sont une des premières puissances mondiales. Donc l'Algérie, n'était pas dans le mimétisme. L'approche technique ou de compréhension de l'espace...on a une culture maghrébine et une culture africaine...on a une culture urbaine et une culture rurale. Les autres européennes l'ont jugés du moderne et pour nous sont des conditions des quotidiennes. Des actes de vie, du quotidien. Mettre en place une pierre de prière dans le Sud nous appelons ça un lieu de prière mais les américains appellent ça art.

Ça c'est bizarre. Quand ils faisaient des petits totem qui est spirituel pour expliquer la direction de la Mecque, bon, ou juste pour offrir des offrandes dans les cas des rites péans de tout qui sont de côté vraiment spirituel ils sont appelés religieux mais quand ils sont de part d'un plasticien ils sont de l'art contemporain dans les salons et les grands musées. Ça qui monte avec le même ...à Paris ou dans les grands capitales européennes, et les autres traditionnels ou de folklore. Donc il y a de côté des antiques et des historiens, deux pots deux mesures. Ils sont récupérés et exploités par les occidentaux pour faire de l'art contemporaine, mais quand si donne pour l'autochtone soi-même il reste du ... du folklore, de

traditionnel. Ça n'est pas bien. On a voulu avec les aborigènes d'Australie faire la même chose. Dans les années 1980, c'est récent; ça qu'ils ont fait avec les africains, avec les asiatiques, avec les...d'Amérique Latine et les artistes primitifs comme les appellent. Heureusement, avec les aborigènes il n'est pas marché. Les grands dictionnaires et revues d'art sont divisés par ça pour dire qu'il est de l'art indigène mais c'est quoi ça l'art indigène, le mot indigène veulent dire quoi ? C'est un sûr-juge. Les aborigènes sont très colorés avec une expression très belle avec un message, avec un concept, l'acte de peintre est tout un cérémonial. C'est qui cherche l'occidental qui n'arrive pas à trouver, par ce que la copie émotionnelle ce ne peut pas faire, sauf s'il est tenu par un discours esthétique et plein de beaux gestes. C'est comme le football. Je donne l'exemple du football parce que c'est le plus claire. Le geste du Maradona, Maghir l'Algérien, Abidi Pelé l'africain, ou Pelé, du Sud, bon eux qui ont appris à jouer au football dans les quartiers populaires avec les sacs de poubelle et le pied nu et en face de Platini, Rummenigge, Matthäus, plein de jouer qui ont étudiés le football, étudiés la chaussure, le poids du ballon, la vitesse, c'est du professionnel c'est vrai, mais il y a aucune spectacle. Quand Maradona fait un geste, el enlève un milliard de téléspectateurs. Ça c'est du génie. Ça c'est du spectacle, ça c'est de l'art. Et c'est la même chose avec les musiciens, la littérature africain, du Sud, de ces pays qui... parce que ça vient du ventre, ça est ressenti; ça ne va pas dire que...pas de tout. Mais je pense que ça qui vient du Sud est plus honnête, plus émotionnel, plus pur. Et c'est pour ça, j'ai toujours dis et je dis, c'est pour ça que l'Europe, non, le Nord, je n'aime pas dire l'Europe, a des problèmes, jusqu'à présent, plein, d'esthétiques ou d'histoires. Et on revient à ça. A chaque période, un groupe de scientifiques, artistes ...qui vont vers un nouveau continent, vers un nouveau monde, pour chercher qu'est ce qu'il y a de plus pur en termes artistiques et la régurgiter, la rendre accessible a tout le monde. Et la voudrai arriver a la Méditerranée: comment ce n'est pas possible que sur un continent comme l'Afrique, le bassin de la civilisation, on ne doit pas oublier que le Sud de la Méditerranée est parti aussi. Le Sud a amené une grande civilisation qui était l'Égypte. On oublie tout ça et est récupéré par le Nord, remâché, et récupéré dans le sens de l'action, la recherche, la culture; alors Avicenne, Ibn Khaldun, plein de personnes comme ça qui on a occultés bien sûr. Pourquoi ? Parce que c'est comme cette partie de la carte de la Méditerranée n'a aucune culture, rien.

Si comme ça aussi avec les berbères. Prend Séville: Séville est décrit d'être plein d'architecture arabo-musulman. C'est incroyable qu'on oublie les berbères. Très bien qu'avec l'arrivée de l'Islam dans l'Afrique du Nord. Avec les guerres, les Croisades et tout. Qui n'est pas venu est que les gens n'ont pas acceptés toute suite. Et c'était les berbères qui y était uniquement; les combattants venu de la ville et que dans chaque grande ville, le Caire, Alexandrie, Tripoli, Tunis, Carthage, Alger, la c'était un fait le guerriers d'Arabie. Mais à chaque grande cité nous n'avait que des architectes, des constructeurs quoi, que nous appelait décorateurs. Les artistes, les coutumières. Ils construisent l'Alhambra, jusqu'à Poitiers, des merveilles, ils classifient ça comme du travail arabo-musulman. Alors que tous les artisans étaient de berbères. L'arabo-musulman était le guerrier, ce n'était pas ni l'arabiste ni le constructeur, ni l'urbaniste, ni le paysagiste. Et ça c'est une injustice historique. C'est un effacement d'un peuple. Sept siècles avant les arabes ces peuples-là occupaient une grande partie de l'Afrique du Nord. Une culture de construction...on descend en communication parce qu'il existait déjà chez eux et la langue parlée était la langue...Ce n'est pas possible. Il était des siècles. Ils sont dans 2800 dans le calendrier berbère, que on appelle agricole. Alors dans 2011, du calendrier chrétien, et le quinzième siècle au calendrier musulman. Ça c'est important, il y a vingt siècles. On se retrouve dans ...berbère, on doit se denoder parce que le peuple berbère, et une culture comme ça, qui existe avant tout ça; on n'a pas des kabyles, parce que les berbères ont plusieurs groupes. Les kabyles sont un...on fait avec les même matériaux et dans la même façon que des bijoux, les architecture, la peinture, parce que les maisons berbères sont peintes et son très, très beaux. Du design pur.

Il y a des choses coincés, quand on fait des choses comme ça, et quand on voit et dis 'oui, ça j'ai vu dans des livres, des photos', mais c'est quelque chose d'autres. C'est quelqu'un d'autre que te vient et dit 'ah, tu as travaille sur cette truc.' Et tu dis 'non, pas moi, je travaille de non être.' Ça appartient à la culture. Et donc ça pose des questions. Pour cette exposition j'ai utilisé cette forme circuler, comme ça, ça c'était surtout la forme qui m'intéresse, que j'attache dans la salle pour la performance, et le galeriste, qui était anglais, et qui a une contracte avec une grande firme ici a Alger, et il m'a dit, 'c'est très bien, ça que vous avez fait, et surtout la forme circuler est très bien.' Il m'a demande ça qu'est-ce que signifie pour moi.

J'ai dit il compose ma vision. Il m'a dit que 'chez toi, dans le ouest, ça se trouve sur une nouvelle construction, pour chasser le mauvaise œil et il accroche ça à la façade, mais uniquement la roue.' Du coup j'ai fait un tour en...Arabie ? Et j'étais estomaqué et étonné de voir des roues, qui je n'avais jamais vu. Et pourtant je me suis baladé beaucoup. Dans notre patrimoine c'est le cactus qui serve pour chasser le mauvais œil. On croit beaucoup à ces choses ça. Il est un peu païen mais c'est très spirituel pour nous. Dans cette culture il y a aussi, pour les maghrébins, les algériens et en particulier les berbères, la culture de l'oralité. Ce n'est pas le livre qui nous a apporté l'information. C'est le grand père ou la grande mère. Autour d'un feu, à manger une galette, c'était comme ça. Cette culture d'oralité ce pratique jusqu'au présent. Surtout chez les femmes, de mère en fille.

KX: Etant conscient que l'oralité peut-être oubliée et que les choses écrites peuvent laisser plus de marque, aussi si aujourd'hui avec la captation orale et vidéo et l'internet on peut aussi faire ça, il y a eu une stratégie, une politique culturelle, qui aide les berbères à rattraper le temps perdu ?

KS: Oui, il faut dire qu'avant le 'printemps berbère' en 1980 parler berbère était interdit. Maintenant il y a une télé berbère, une radio berbère, des journaux berbères, le berbère est la deuxième langue officielle, il est enseigné à l'université, pas toutes les universités parce que ça c'était un choix, c'est normal, mais, il est enseigné dans plusieurs villes algériennes. Nous avons des partis berbères. Il y a des mouvements culturels berbères. Donc le côté social est là. Maintenant l'identité berbère, qui existait avant l'avenir des arabes et de l'Islam, nous avons une identité première qui était l'identité berbère. Je fais parti des gens qui ont crut toujours que pour faire connaître ta langue maternelle et pour avoir les ressources vers cette culture berbère, une culture d'une pureté parce qu'elle vient de la nature comme ces couleurs. Pour te dire, des artistes anciens algériens qui sont âgés dans les années soixante ont forme une groupe de peinture qu'on appelle Aouchem. Un groupe très important. Mesli, qui habite a Paris et qu'est un peut malade, tellement ils étaient en 1967 en forme pour créer, ils ont dit le signe, le signe berbère, signifié d'Aouchem, est plus fort d'une bombe. C'était fort comme discours ça. Mais il faut tenir compte de ça. Parce que là il avait une autre tentative plus récente.

KX: Pour revenir un petit peu sur la relation étranger et algérien, l'impact de l'influence française cette fois, dans la production, échange, mobilité, spectacle, pour les artistes algériens et les artistes berbères, c'est quelque chose négatif, où on approprie le travail que vous faites, ou il y a aussi l'aspect positif, de l'aide, des l'espaces ?

KS: Non, c'est très positif, mais je reviens sur les mots artistes berbères ou algériens: ça n'existe pas. C'est artiste algérien et à l'intérieur il y a les artistes berbères, arabes, mais surtout artiste algérien. Comme il n'y a pas d'art algérien. Nous nous écrivons dans l'universel. On dira jamais un artiste français ou de l'art français. Non, c'est un artiste français qui fait de l'art. Nous on s'écrit dans l'art contemporain. On travaille normalement dans cette dimension. De côté influence, je dirai plus la côté moyenne. Moyen de diffusion, de communication. Quand ils sont donnés les influences on doit répondre à certain clichés. Dans les années soixante, le publique français ne veulent voir des peintres

algériens que des orientalistes. Des scènes de soleils. Cette a dire des scènes dans le catalogue donne. Il est clair, moi je veux participer s'il y a l'opportunité de collaboration mais je ne vais pas ça. Cette fois j'ai pris avec moi beaucoup des foulards pour les femmes en couleurs diverses comme pour les touristes et j'ai dessiné un immense paysage du Sud sur toile 5m sûr 2m, je l'ai pris a Paris, mis un appareil photographique sûr un tri-pied par les photos, et j'appelai le travail 'Souvenir d'Algérie'. Les personnes était objet de ce mettre en face de la toile, mettre le foulard, rigoler et faire la photo. Les gens ont acceptés qui on faisait ça. En suite la bas on avait les peintures. Et donc l'influence ce fait de côté des moyens matériels français, par exemple, ce n'es pas normal qu'un artiste Algérien est très performante dans le monde, à Paris, mais pour y arriver est très complique parce que il vient d'un pays l'Algérie ou il n'y a pas les trucs. Alors quand il a ... Si c'était question de vents il vend tous, il marche très bien pour les artistes Algériens. Donc on si pose des questions on se dit 'pourquoi le marginaliser sur cette plan là ?' Si on reste dans leur ligne quand ils ont fait des programmes ils nous rendent une expression prête pour les musées. Il marche très très bien avec les Tunisiens malheureusement, mais avec nous c'est tout un peu compliqué. Il y a un format sur les tunisiens, sur les marocains. Il y a la même chose, des paysages etc. ça vient à commencer à changer. Grace a l'activité à Casablanca qui a ouvert les Abattoirs ou qui a ouvert l'église de Sacre Cœur. Aussi pour la Biennale il y a avait des espaces très intéressants. Des galeries privées très intéressantes. Mais avant il n'y a vait rien de tout: deux Écoles de Beaux-arts, un à Casablanca et un à Tétouan. Un programme très rigoureux – il ne faut pas sortir de tout. Sans aller vers des frictions sociales – politiques dans le cadre culturel, c'est ça. En Algérie non: il y avait des écoles régionales des beaux-arts, une super grande école des beaux-arts. On faisait des jumelages avec des écoles françaises, par exemple l'école des beaux-arts à Alger a beaucoup travaillée avec l'École de Beaux-arts à Paris, l'École de Beaux-arts d'Aix aussi. Et travers l'école de Limoges, Madrid et Gênes pour vidéo et photo. Et nous avons beaucoup travaillait avec les Grecs. Il y a eu des coopérations Nord-Sud, beaucoup, mais jamais des collaborations parallèles Est-Ouest. Ça c'est bizarre. Même dans le cadre de la Biennale, quand on a organisé des workshops, pour discuter et organiser, ça a permit d'organiser et s'entendre. Une coopération horizontale qui est importante parce que ce n'est pas normal pour la Méditerranée de ne pas travailler ensemble [*draws political map of the Mediterranean*]. Si on voit le Portugal, l'Espagne, la Suisse, l'Italie, et si on voit nous, les pays arabes, tout ça ont une forme en commun, qui est la langue. Nous parlons la même langue. Et on a la même religion. Et qu'est ce qui on fait avec ça ? Tout les frontières, c'est incroyable, il n'y a pas des unions. C'est lamentable.

KX: La culture, qui est impactée négativement par cette division, peut-être aussi une possibilité pour franchir les frontières ? La culture peut changer les choses, ou doit-on commencer par la politique et l'économie ?

KS: C'est la culture qui peut. Il y a eu des tentatives dans le cas des workshops. Ils ont réglés une énormité de problèmes. Avec on peut dire 'regardez cette workshop avec un budget minime peut régler des problèmes de communication, d'art, de compréhension.' On nous a dit toujours 'oui, très bien', mais après? Nous avons faites un workshop au Biennale à Athènes, dans le rencontre Alger-Marseille-Alger, où, j'étais le coordinateur, avec cinq Algériens, cinq autres : Chypriotes, Espagnols, Grecs et Italiens. On est allé à Alger et pendant deux semaines à Marseille. C'était une expérience multiculturelle et on était dans des quartiers qui était bizarres: on commence par quand on était a Marseille, que je connais bien. Quand on va à Marseille, on dit 'on va à Marseille', et puis on dit on va en France. Marseille c'est proche. J'avais commencé à discuter du projet avec la mairie de Marseille et quinze participants et à leur ai dit 'on va sortir de la ville, on prend avec l'appareil photo, caméra vidéo et tout chose que nous faites croquer mais on doit faire vite'. Et donc on sort de la ville par la Gare de la Port d'Aix, par la côté d'Aix, la Canebière, le quartier chic pour arriver au grande marché de la pleine. Et là on a commencé à prendre de photos et ça. Ça qui était impressionnant c'est qu'on apprit que quand on est arrivé a la friche, la

mairie, j'ai demandé les autres des réactions et les Algériens ont remarqués sur les odeurs, etc. rien nous a fait penser à la France. Rien. Ni dans le comportement, ni dans le costume, rien. Les français ont dit qu'ils ne comprenaient pas la langue utilisée. Qu'est ce qu'était la langue ? En fait c'était l'arabe à Marseille. Après on prend un vol tous vers Alger. On arrive là. On nous amène à l'hôtel. Je prends la parole. Pour gagner du temps, l'École des Beaux-arts c'est à trois kilomètres à pied. Et le chemin est très agréable. On y marchait, et on commençait à travailler directement. Et c'était remarquable que c'était exactement l'inverse: tout le monde parlait le français *[laughs]*. En Algérie on parle le français, à Marseille on parle l'arabe. Ça fait peur mais c'est beau.

KX: Il fait penser à la possibilité du dialogue interculturel. Mais le mode comme tu l'explique il suggère qu'il y a un fief, une forteresse, de l'école de beaux-arts, qu'est différente du reste de l'ambiance.

KS: Oui, c'est fou. J'étais aussi invité à Sarajevo. Là il y a les quatre religions au coin de la rue: l'église, la mosquée, la synagogue et aussi l'église orthodoxe. Dans les quatre chemins comme ça de Sarajevo. Comme ils sont éclatés là les premiers deux guerres mondiales, et on est échappé à la troisième, on sait que c'est avec le multiculturel que ont a les problèmes; mais aussi que c'est avec que les problèmes peut-être solutionnés. On peut voir aussi dans la pédagogie. Quand on voit les écoles comme ça d'Aix-en-Provence qui fait son travail sur le multiculturalisme. La composante de l'école d'Aix-en-France c'est bizarre: des africains et aussi des Maghrébins et des Algériens. Aussi des Asiatiques, des Américains, du pays autres. Cette anecdote est sur les pays africains. Nous Algériens n'avons pas le statut d'Africains. Algériens et maghrébins. C'est incroyable. Juridiquement, dans les papiers de visa par exemple, pour la France, tu as un statut de Maghrébin. Mais pas Africain. Après, tu dis, 'où est la Porte de l'Orient ?' Donc c'est quoi l'Occident? Et les États-Unis sont quoi? L'Extrême Orient? C'est quoi ce positionnement géographique ? Avec ça tu décris les autres. Je suis quelqu'un qui a un caractère très fort dans nos performance, je suis quelqu'un qui ne manche pas ces mots, et je suis anticonformiste, je n'accepte pas les idées établis, les injustices, les idées reçues.

On n'a aucun problème avec les jeunes créateurs occidentaux. Les problèmes sont les politiques qui les font. Voit la Biennale: ce n'est pas possible que les artistes marocains ne vont pas à Thessaloniki, et qu'un membre du conseil ne va pas. C'est lamentable.

KX: Si on essaie d'avoir un secteur indépendant, avec pas d'influence politique, ça c'est trop utopique ? C'est possible d'établir ça dans la Méditerranée, sans compromis avec les régimes politiques ?

KS: Je crois qu'on est parti de la même institution qui a faillit à arriver à ça: la BJCEM. Elle a tous les outils pour arriver à ça. Malheureusement, à Skopje, j'ai dit qu'il y a besoin d'un groupe qui va voir l'Europe, et qui discute sur la circulation des artistes. Il faut que des gens qui sont fondateurs de la BJCEM et obtient leur visas avec difficultés soit aidées. C'est impossible. Les états du Sud doivent faire de la réciprocité [ironic]: ils doivent refuser les visas des touristes et de tous. Là on va vers l'enfermement. L'Algérie c'est le seul pays arabe qui est refusé par tous. Il n'y a pas de pays qui ne demande pas le visa sauf la Tunisie et bientôt la Tunisie va demander le visa. Mais nous, c'est comme ça. Et pendant le terrorisme, beaucoup d'artistes et d'intellectuels ont demandés de l'asile pour avoir critiqués et pour ne pas mourir. Ils sont morts de balles. Donc, le consulat français était implique, mais le processus a pris longtemps pour y arriver à des résultats. On a demandé des visas pour personnes en danger pour quitter, et après longtemps, à la sortie du consulat, ils étaient tués.

KX: C'est le cas de l'isolement que nous décrit et la frustration pour ne pouvoir pas changer les choses...bon. Pour changer thème, l'expression 'amazigh' va-t-il mieux que 'berbère'?

KS: C'est normal, c'est la même chose. C'est question de dire le mot dans la langue soi-même. Mais je pense que ce problème-là, le commissariat pour l'amazigh qui existe, avec des budgets, des festivals, comme le festival du film amazigh au Maroc récemment, et aussi en Algérie...il y a encore des problèmes. La connaissance ce n'est pas a 100% malheureusement mais comme même il y a énormément d'acquis. Samira Negrouche connaisse bien l'ancien commissaire du commissariat à l'amazighité. Il n'y a pas des censures ou obstacles pour faire des choses. Non.

KX: Et de côté islamique ?

KS: On est tous musulmans. Tout ça est culture, on ne refuse rien sauf qui est éteint à la religion. Comme les chrétiens. Ça c'est légitime et normal. Simplement on n'est plus laïque, je ne sais pas si on peut dire ça, on n'est plus laïque dans la culture. Quelqu'onque influence religieuse dans notre manière de penser ou dans notre créativité. Côté spirituel c'est très personnel. Mais l'influence se doit faire. Dans certaines villes où certains gens sont plus faibles que dans autres, on dit que l'Islam interdise ça ou l'autre. On garde l'Islam uniquement comme matière pour les écritures, miniature, calligraphie, et la décoration. Pas de représentations de corps humains. Nous l'école des beaux-arts est une école étatique et tout les écoles d'art n'ont pas subis, appart le modèle nu dans les années 80 qu'il était interdit, tout les autres formes n'ont pas été touchés.

KX: Il y a aussi un rôle positif de la culture islamique ?

KS: Dans l'architecture, dans l'habillement, c'est beaucoup qui est intéressante dans ça qui est musulman que n'est pas la même chose comme islamique. La différence est dans le lexique utilisé par l'Occident. Islamique c'est une position intégriste, cette une dérive du monde musulman. On ne va pas dire d'un chrétien qu'on est un intégriste chrétien. On dit qu'il est chrétien.

KX: Et aujourd'hui dans l'expression artistique ?

KS: Par exemple il y a ces exhibitionnistes qui organise à Dubaï l'art islamique, l'art musulman, et dans une cadre et expression contemporains. Parce que les artistes qui sont venus à se présenter dans le cadre académique sont exemples de la calligraphie font exercice dans une ... contemporaine. Avec des perspectives, des couleurs, des installations. Donc, la calligraphie peut porter à des utilisations intéressantes. Par exemple; cette initiative se centre sur l'écriture du nom Allah que s'écrit comme ici [refers to photo of calligraphy]. C est très beau, comme ça [draws]. C est le nom d Allah en noir écrit sur quatre carrés couleurux. Ils m'ont dit il n'y aucun différence où on écrit le nom. Mais ils refusaient la différence, pour être austère avec le nom de dieu. Il y a aussi la présence de la calligraphe femme. Avant elle n'existait pas. Ça c'est une grosse gifle pour les intégristes.

KX: Parlant de femmes, tu vois des changements dans le traitement des femmes artistes ?

KS: Oui, il y a énormément des changements. La création féminine, je n'aime pas dire comme ça. La création des femmes grandit et se cumule par rapport aux années 1980 en nombre et qualité. La qualité est extrêmement bonne. Elles sont encouragées par les nouvelles technologies. Aussi l'installation, web designers et autres. Les femmes sont une grande richesse. Ils étaient et sont tellement oppressées qui on risque un débordement si on n'a pas de politique d'ouverture. Les femmes tiennent les changements en elles. Un pays comme l'Inde, difficile, mais que toujours a mis une femme en charge, en tête, avant l'Allemagne ou l'Angleterre. L'Occident rigole de nous mais les choses n'étaient pas tant mieux jusqu' a

maintenant. Les femmes tiennent l'énergie. Pour ça on a peur des femmes. Quand elles veulent exprimer des choses elles le font et peut-être mieux. Je suis persuadé de ça.

KX: Les jeunes et les femmes peuvent changer les choses ?

KS: Oui. C'est elles qui peuvent ouvrir la créativité et aussi la coopération. Elles sont très ouvertes au débat.

KX: Pour finir sur le thème de changement: à propos du printemps arabe, on dit que l'Algérie l'a déjà fait et plusieurs fois, et n'attends pas qu'il se fait. Tu penses les printemps arabes des autres peuvent changer pour le mieux les relations et collaborations entre Sud et Sud méditerranéens ?

KS: Oui. Mais je ne vais pas te cacher que je suis mécontent de ce que se passe. Pourquoi ? Par ce que je suis très militant, j'ai subi le terrorisme et j'ai subi la torture de l'état. L'état m'a même torturé. En 1988, dans l'ouverture démocratique, bien sûr. Et personne ne nous a démontré de solidarité. On ne trouvait pas beaucoup de monde sauf quelques communistes et le parti avant-gardiste européen, en Italie avec Flavio (ARCI) qui était à l'écoute, personne et aucun pays arabe ne nous a montré de la solidarité. Dix ans de terrorisme et 300,000 morts. C'est presque un million de familles détruits par le terrorisme. Il y a des gens ne connaissent pas si leurs chers sont vivants ou non. Ils ne peuvent pas faire deuil. Tu peux imaginer comme ils se sentent et qu'est ce qu'ils pensent quand on leur parle sur le printemps arabe ? Et bon, ça que c'est bizarre est que nous avons demandé cette solidarité mais on n'a pas eu. On a avec la presse demandé pourquoi pas l'Algérie mais nous rigolons. Comment pourquoi pas l'Algérie ? L'Algérie a déjà fait souffrir en 1967, 1975 avec beaucoup entre les arabophones et les francophones, et ensuite en 1980 pour le printemps berbère avec énormément de morts et torture et en 1985 en Constantine où on avait le frère du Président qui était préfet. Et en 1988 quand a eu l'ouverture démocratique et la chute du pouvoir. Et ensuite du 1990 au 2000 dix ans de terrorisme: ça ce n'est pas des événements ça ? C'est de la scénographie ? Mais on a continué à travailler. On nous a demandé une forme de solidarité. On n'a pas répondu, on n'est pas parti là-bas. Il y a un très bon texte dans un journal d'un ami qui est Tunisien et était en exil et qui avait vu Ben Ali être arrêté à l'aéroport. Ça c'était une image forte. Il y avait les pilotes qui ne voulaient pas le ramener. Bon, dès qu'ils ont lancé l'idée d'une solidarité, j'ai fait une conférence avec des collègues égyptiens via le web et on a discuté en forum. On doit s'arrêter de dire pas d'Algérie pas d'Algérie. Le président a fait des fautes, on doit l'arrêter. Mais on est fatigué. Le pays était complètement calciné pendant dix ans et seul pendant dix ans. On a aussi averti les États-Unis pour l'11 septembre. Personne n'a écouté. Moi-même j'ai parlé avec le maire de Paris et j'ai dit que 'dans le même quartier vous donnez l'asile politique il y a un grand islamiste tueur reconnu et un gros type de la gauche algérien'. Le jour après l'homme est tué dans la même rue par cette islamiste. On n'a pas cru. En rigolant un membre du Cabinet m'a dit 'tu savais'. Ça c'est ridicule: je ne savais pas mais on n'a pas besoin de sortir du normal pour savoir qu'il y aura des problèmes. Il faut réfléchir.

KX: Pour bouger et faire changer les choses on a besoin de la vraie solidarité et d'empathies.

KS: J'ai beaucoup d'artistes amis Tunisiens et on a participé à leur demande de solidarité en *Facebook* par exemple. Nous sommes en contact avec la Palestine, la Sahara Occidentale, le Chili, même les détourneurs d'avions qui étaient en Libye, ont eu l'appui de l'Algérie. Personne n'a droit de nous donner des leçons de solidarité. Ce n'est pas que nous sommes le bien mais si on connaît l'histoire de l'Algérie on peut nous donner ça. Donc depuis le septième siècle on était toujours colonisé. Les barbares, les

vandales, les phéniciens, les byzantines, les romans, les gaules, les arabes, les ottomans, les français. C'est qu'en 1962 qu'on a retrouvé notre indépendance.

KX: Tu dis 'laissez nous faire notre chemin aussi en faisant notre faites.'

KS: Prend l'exemple de la Roumanie. On a liquidé Ceausescu mais la Roumanie était le seul pays du monde sans un solde de débit. La médecine était gratuite, comme les autres services. L'Algérie était un pays qui a appris de cet enseignement. L'Algérie a beaucoup de problèmes comme autres pays mais il y a la valeur de la famille qui est toujours très forte. Quarante ans et on a toujours le domicile, toujours la famille. On tient à nos racines, à nos valeurs populaires. L'Islam aussi nous est cher: c'est la dernière révolution. Il est pur et propre. Il était mal interprété. Je suis musulman, pas pratiquant. Mais je ne tue pas, je ne fais pas du mal aux autres. Et je vis très moderne. C'est vrai qu'on a les terroristes et les fascistes et tous mais on a su comme répondre à ça et comme travailler. Comme on dit on n'a rendu ni l'âme ni l'arme.

Interview with Samira Negrouche, poet, cultural operator

22 October 2011

SN: ...Ça que me vient c'est quand tu as parlé de la possibilité de faire des choses dans le milieu méditerranéen, il me vient ce programme du Fond Cimetta. Eux ils font quelque chose d'intéressant. De la mobilité, ils ont des axes bien précis qui finalement peuvent beaucoup mieux servir des gens qu'ils sont déjà bien implantés dans les pays où ils aident. Parce que, bon, à la mobilité, c'est toujours bien, mais c'est bien pour compléter quelque chose qui est déjà là. Donc ils posent la question à dire à chaque fois si vous trouvez des partenaires raillés etc. mais le problème est toujours, au niveau du Sud on se retrouve dans la création, pour la plupart du temps, les aides sont tributaires au système officiel. Alors, est-ce que l'artiste il va attendre que le système officiel de son pays évolue pour qu'il peut faire quelque chose ? Parce que de temps en temps on voit qu'il fonctionne mieux mais entre temps, au moment de ses égouts et consolidation comme artiste, il a besoin de l'aide des institutions culturelles, et c'était importante de savoir s'il entre dans une case. C'est difficile, peut-être c'est intéressant par les administrateurs européennes que euro-méditerranéens de créer des fonds d'aides avec des cases pour dépasser des injustices et les déséquilibres etc. Sauf on arrive à une situation où la création ne peut plus servir. J'ai discuté avec beaucoup d'artistes, même ceux qui vivent en Europe, qui ont du mal, je te dis la possibilité d'avoir des aides qui sont tellement compliquées administrativement, tu dois rentrer tout le temps dans des cases. Pour avoir de l'argent du Région Rhône-Alpes par exemple il faut que tu parles des montagnes des Rhône-Alpes. Je caricature un peu. Et par exemple on te dit voilà il y a des thématiques de l'environnement, de la femme. Alors on sait très bien que la création n'a pas des thématiques et des artistes ne peuvent pas se forcer à parler des thématiques. Ça ne fonctionne pas. Il faut comprendre que non, on ne peut pas maîtriser l'art administrativement comme on maîtrise l'économie etc. Ce n'est pas possible. Il faut partir du postulat que l'art ne se maîtrise pas.

KX: Qu'est-ce que tu penses du travail que la Commission européenne, le Fond Cimetta et l'ALF font dans ce sens pour traduire le langage créatif ?

SN: Au moment où était-il créé et des objectifs, parce que il se sent dire, il y a des gens avec les possibilités dans certains pays où les femmes par rapport aux hommes etc. C'est vrai. Mais ça je pense devait être donné à la conscience et au jugement des personnes qui sont dans la commission. C'est à dire il faut choisir les bonnes personnes et faire leur confiance. Je prends comme exemple parallèle la loi. Quand tu te réfères à un juge, il faut que tu fasses confiance au juge, pour ne pas avoir une loi pour tous. Si un juge au moment donné s'aventure, il demande à des créateurs à juger quelque chose, juge...beaucoup plus des femmes, y relativement, quelque fois tu peux aider un petit peu plus ceux qui viennent du pays pauvres, je vois là, une perspective intéressante, qui manque peut-être d'expérience, peut-être de...vie, mais il y a quelque chose. Tu aides ou parce qu'il vient du Sud ou parce que tu as compris que...il aille relativement vers ça qu'il a autour de lui, comme même il travaille sur une idée qui est intéressante. C'est pour ça que tu l'aides. Et pas parce que tu dois privilégier...Je vois dans beaucoup de fonds, si bien des programmes européennes, etc., je vois remonter des choses qui ne sont pas de bonne qualité. Je suis désolé de le dire. Quand je vois des choses de mauvaise qualité qui montent, peut-être, ça parce que tout simplement ce n'est pas les bonnes personnes, qui sont à leur place, ou alors, on veut tellement faire du bien, de l'humanité, on oublie que si on doit soutenir la création on soutient la création. Et il ne faut pas laisser entrer autre chose à l'intérieur. Et moi j'ai été choqué, les personnes à lesquelles on a donné des médailles, comme dans le festival au Macédoine, il y a donc une médaille à un grand poète, quand il y a des médailles pour les jeunes poètes. De cette année et celui de l'année

dernière était mauvais tout les deux. Et ils ont reçus des médailles et des fonds de l'UNESCO. C'est inadmissible.

KX: Le mauvais signal n'est pas bon dans la création de l'art, mais il se fait pour adresser la citoyenneté ou autres thèmes.

SN: Il y a un autre point: la formation ne parvient pas dans les bons cercles de l'art.

KX: Une autre dimension est que cette type de fond tient la tête dans l'humanisme, et ce n'est pas leur intérêt principale et ni leur capacité de distinguer entre qualité et qualité.

SN: Oui; peut-être ça serve à établir un bilan. Pour faire 'ah, il est sympa de avoir cette activité.'

KX: Comme operateur culturel, s'il n'y a pas cette type d'aide, qu'est ce qu'il reste ?

SN: Pour moi de point de vue algérienne il n'y a quasiment aucun alternatif. Quand je réfléchis, si je n'ai pas des invitations à faire des conférences ou des lectures ou course d'écritures il n'y a rien. A dire que les seules moments où je peux être, pas dans le sens de subvention, mais être payée, c'est quand on m'invite. Moi j'ai la chance et j'ai peut-être travaillé pour, à trente ans d'être invitée par tous dans des festivals, mais dans ma construction je n'ai trouvé pas beaucoup d'aide interne. C'est-à-dire quand j'ai eu des micros aides c'était presque un peu ça tombe au moment où j'avais la possibilité de tomber par hasard sur la bonne personne.

KX: Pas structuré, pas claire, avec des critères.

SN: Voilà. Ça va dire que tu dois te battre pour faire des choses. Il y a l'operateur culturel, l'artiste, mais tu dois te battre pour prouver ton pratique, que tu as fait du bon boulot si tu as les moyens. Tu dois te battre pour avoir les operateurs sur place qui sont figés, qui ne veulent pas que des choses se fasse et qui néanmoins commence à faire des gros avènements. On a eu en Algérie une période quasiment silencieuse dans lequel rien ne se faisait plus, du rien culturel, et ils sont revenus à cette période faste où on dépense beaucoup d'argent, et dans lequel tout se fait dans la dernière minute. Et non plus on a compris que le travail d'un fonctionnaire est d'être fonctionnaire, et que le travail d'operateur culturel est de travailler sur le terrain. Ils n'ont pas compris qu'ils doivent associer tout ça. Ils ont l'impression que chacun qui fais quelque chose d'extérieur à eux est l'ennemi. Qu'il faut empêcher les gens de faire. Ça veut dire que tu les adresses, et qu'ils faites, et qu'ils sont les maîtres et qu'ils t'appellent s'ils ont envie. Ils disent oui ou non. C'est méprisant parce que par rapport à certaines personnes, ceux qui entre dans leurs jeux, on va avoir les moyens pour faire ceux qu'ils veulent. Les notes, récupérer l'argent etc. Mais ceux qui travaillent vraiment, non seulement ils ne les paies pas correctement, mais en plus on ne les donne pas les moyens, et parfois ils les disent de trouver le reste du budget toutes seuls.

KX: Aussi si on est établi...

SN: Ça m'a arrivée beaucoup de fois. C'est pour ça que je suis fatiguée. A chaque fois j'organise des choses, ils me disaient que à quelqu'un le plaisait mon projet, qu'ils voulaient mon festival au ministère de la culture. En 2006 j'ai fait un gros festival et en leur disant que ce festival devait vivre sûr cette forme et pas sur une autre comme être établi tous les deux ans et qu'on allait pouvoir rééquilibrer par exemple un événement panafricain qu'ils étaient complètement capable de faire avec thématique africain mais tenant les normes de qualité dans le long terme en soi-même et pas implanté des choses

extérieurs. Mais ça non, ils ont pris le festival, ils ont copié l'idée sans énergie, sans vision, sans créer la thématique et ils ont fait quelque chose avec des écrivains arabes, sous un nom arabe, parce que le mien s'appelait 'festival de poésie', utilisant un mot de l'ère islamique, et ils ont invité des gens, les mis dans les cinq étoiles, ils les ont payés, et ces mêmes personnes qu'ils ont invité disent du mal du partout. En plus, les gens ne sont pas cons. Il voit bien qu'il n'y a pas de lecture, pas de publique, et c'est vide.

KX: De côté du public général, les étudiants, les gens, il y a un rôle pour un public sérieux, critique ?

SN: Il peut y avoir, sauf que ça il entre vraiment dans un autre domaine. A tous les niveaux tu peux le décliner comme ça. Il y a des individualités et des institutions avec lesquels tu peux travailler. Par exemple, un projet que j'ai fait avec la CCF en 2007. J'avais par habitude de travailler avec un prof qui était écrivain aussi mais prof au département de littérature français à Alger. On n'arrive jamais à avoir les autorisations pour faire des interventions dans la classe. Donc on invite les poètes qui intéressent les magisters et les étudiants qui parfois te dit 'retournez vite.' Parfois les autorisations ne s'obtiennent pas. Ils vont détourner ça en disant que le prof a, en temps d'organiser, fais cette rencontre. Donc on détourne la chose. Et quand on arrive là-bas on voit clairement sur le programme qu'il y a l'université...Et alors cette année on l'a réussi à faire et les étudiants étaient heureux et on a rempli une petite salle. Et c'était la première fois pour eux pour avoir ce type de jeun écrivain étranger en chair et en os. Ils y ont fait des questions et même quand il parlait mal le français ils étaient très intéressés. Voici quelque chose de vraiment exceptionnelle. On a fait ça trois matinées de suite et était prévu de faire des rencontres en face d'autres. On arrivait à neuf heures mais jusqu'à treize heures on ne nous voulait pas partir. On ne pouvait pas rester parce qu'on a des rencontres l'après-midi. Ça c'était avec ce prof. L'année suivante le prof a changé d'université. Et bon on essayé d'avoir la nouvelle autorisation pour l'année suivante. Alors que, il y avait la demande, il n'y avait pas d'autorisation. Si tu as prévu de faire ça, et la veille du rencontre on te dit non n'est pas possible, qu'est-ce que tu fais ? Cette même personne a donc décidé d'organiser quelque chose ensemble. On était à la science politique et faisait un rencontre avec cinq poètes. Les étudiants seront exposés à l'engagement politique des poètes. Les étudiants seront exposés à l'engagement politique des poètes. La poésie et l'engagement. On a fait ça. On a ramené deux classes. Soixante personnes dans la salle. Plutôt arabisants mais disons nous intéressés. La même année, quand on avait un poète marocain Mohammed Telbi Je fais ça avec la faculté d'arabe. On a contacté un écrivain arabophone qui est prof au département d'arabe, il a réussi à obtenir l'autorisation. Quand on arrive sur place, c'était un avènement officiel, tu vois, la direction était là pour nous recevoir, très officiel, c'était très rigide. Quand on est rentrée du bureau on s'est retrouvé dans la salle, la vieille bibliothèque de l'université, il y avait que des profs. OK, si les profs veulent être là ça va bien mais nous étions là pour les étudiants. En plus les étudiants étaient en grève. A la limite on pouvait faire leur rencontrer, mettre une info, dire qu'il y a un écrivain. Et était Bernard Noel qui était un poète, et Mohammed Telbi Les deux. Et ils étaient en face de vingt profs. Le recteur, le vice-recteur...on a pris l'impression que chacun vit dans son monde, dans son pays, et tu peux y rien faire. Il y a des choses internationales, françaises, qui mixent avec l'algérien, c'est super passé, mais on ne peut pas. Avec les lycées internationales il y a aussi les possibilités, il y a aussi l'ambassade de France et à l'intérieur il y a beaucoup d'Algériens qui sont intelligents. Bref, en avance je croyais qu'ils étaient les enfants d'étrangères et riches, mais alors il y a aussi une tranche d'enfants qui sont du cadre qui essaye de donner leur enfants une instruction. Et qu'ils veulent que leurs enfants aient une bonne éducation.

KX: Ça c'est pour les enfants.

SN: Tu dois te battre. Et avec le bac...On peut accéder à l'éducation en France, avec le bac général on ne peut pas. Ça coute beaucoup aussi, six mille euro par trimestre je crois. Il y a des parents qui se sacrifie et qui habite dans un village par exemple et envoie leur enfants sans la famille. Et j'apprécie ça après que j'ai leur rencontrés. Même si difficile tu as la possibilité, ils sont vifs, ils sont intéressés, ils parlent bien. Il n'est pas une chose d'élitisme. Ça dérange que il y a des choses qui ne vas pas, mais il n'y a rien à faire.

KX: Tu dois t'adapter et jouer le jeu, et tu prends les ouvertures qui se présentent.

SN: La preuve est avec le temps eh. Au départ tu peux être vraiment inhibé par cette situation. Mais après tout petit à petit tu maîtrise bien le terrain et puis développe où tu veux. J'ai intéressé à développer un festival ? Non. Parce que sur le long terme tu te rends compte que tu te fais détester par les autorités et en plus il y a même de la méfiance des collègues, des copains. Il y a une double injustice. Tu te tues pour organiser un événement. On te dit qu'on le fait parce qu'il y a des énergies qui se rencontrent. Mais ces énergies-là, je ne sais pas s'il est la crainte du pouvoir de voir réussir les choses...Mais en tout cas les énergies ne convergent pas. On n'est pas dans une dynamique positive. Une dynamique où tous les personnes travail avec les autres. Quand je discute ça avec des amis artistes que je ne vois plus parce que il y avait des différences, on disait mais oui, les subventions, ou comme on fait, qu'est-ce que tu as écrit, et tout suite quand tu es dans un environnement inculte, où personne ne comprends rien en dépit de l'argent et des diplômes, tu petit à petit aussi dans les tranches des créateurs même il y a ce côté un peu...c'est un peu pour se protéger un peu aussi. Ils aussi ont vécu d'échecs, des frustrations, et ils n'ont plus d'énergie. Donc, ces individus qui ont tous vécus des drames personnels, et bien il n'y a plus d'énergie positive pour créer ensemble. Fin des années 1990 début 2000 il y avait beaucoup plus d'espoir et énergie alors que le terrorisme était encore là et on croyait qu'on voulait faire des choses et aussi à partir de rien. A petit à petit ces gens sont devenus un peu désillusionnés. Alors il y a le fait personnel, ah, de cette changement: petit à petit il y en plus d'argent dans le pays et peu d'argent pour les gens qui voulait travailler ou créer des projets. Et donc ça crée des frustrations. C'est aussi très claire dans le domaine des arts, dans la littérature moins, parce qu'ils se forment, on se rend compte qu'il y a des artistes, comme celui à qui ont donné l'ouverture du MAMA [le Musée d'Art Moderne d'Alger]. Il y a eu un milliard pour faire une expo, majeur, mais il a fait de la merde. Et il y a une personne que ne peut dire ça. C'est juste une injustice. Et alors dans le milieu de la création qu'est ce qu'il passe ? Il y a de la méfiance et comme on sait dans le milieu de la culture, donc s'il y a un peu d'argent, un jour tous est obligé à avoir accès à cette argent. Sauf que celui qui a eu trois milliard pour faire un bidon et celui qui a eu quatre cents euros pour un billet d'avion ce n'est pas pareil. Sauf que, avec cette méfiance, les relations même se sont quasiment coupées entre les gens. Cette situation a provoqué beaucoup de frustration et arrêté beaucoup des possibilités de travailler ensemble, moins qu'en avant. Une chose pour moi effrayante, mais peut-être pas grande chose pour les gens qui sont allés aux Beaux-arts, c'était quand j'ai découverte des jeunes groupes qui fait de la BD; il y a trois ans le festival de la BD à titre officiel. C'est mal fait, et j'avais un groupe de musiciens suisse amis ramenés de Suisse, avec un budget faramineux, avec l'aide de l'ambassade de Suisse, et ils les ont promis de payer. Ces organisateurs ne savait rien, n'était pas ses bébés tu vois, donc il était foutes. Ils amènent le groupe en face de cinquante personnes pour un groupe du jazz, alors qu'en Algérie ont rempli la salle. Ça vaut dire qu'aucun boulot n'était fait. Les artistes était frustrées de voir ça, venant de l'étranger pour ça. Ils les ont fait jouer dans un centre commercial. C'était amusant mais pas d'animation. Et ils voulaient les faire jouer dans un restaurant, pour un diner de ses copains. Et ils arrivent là, pour jouer comme ça, sans organisation.

KX: L'idée de la professionnalisation n'était pas là, dans la mentalité mais aussi dès système éducatif, dans la formation. Ce n'est pas possible que tout le monde est operateur culturel. On doit adresser ça. Ici, dans la formation, les opérateurs et instituts culturels étrangères joue un rôle important qui touche les personnes ?

SN: Au tour des festivals de la BD, malgré le fait que ce festival est mal organisé, que les gens n'ont pas spécialement accès etc., c'est crée un petit groupe d'artistes autour du festival, et ils ont y cru. Mais il est éclaté il y a un an. Même si cette chose n'était bien fait, il pouvait porter à des choses. Ça crée de l'énergie autour de lui et dans le long terme c'est possible. Si ne crée pas les conditions à l'interne, les structures, les jeunes même qui n'arrive pas à évoluer dedans, laissent rapidement. Et pour les instituts étrangers à propos d'exemple du jazz suisse, l'ambassade s'est arrêtée de travailler avec le Ministère de la Culture. Ils avaient aussi essayé à faire des animations pour les enfants, et l'ambassadeur s'est trouvé tout seul avec ses animateurs. Le *Goethe-Institut*, il a fermé. Quand la nouvelle directrice était arrivée il y a deux ans et demi, elle est arrivée avec beaucoup de projets et aussi devoir trouver un lieu pour l'Institut. Elle a ramenée des BDists pour le festival, un chef d'orchestre pour le festival de musique symphonique, des personnes pour un colloque d'œuvres archéologiques. En face, le Ministère de la Culture ne voulait pas signer un accord de coopération avec l'Allemagne parce que là la culture est gérée par des instituts privés. En Algérie ils disent qu'ils veulent du contact avec les services publics. Les Allemandes ont répondu que la culture est gérée par des fondations, pas le publique. Ensuite, quand le Goethe financé des choses, on se trouvé dans la position où se ne trouvé jamais sûr le programme. Ils étaient venus pour travailler, ils étaient bloqués sûr plusieurs choses, et par les autorisations, et bon les Allemandes ne sont pas des français ou des latins. Ils disent pas 'oui, on fait ça comme ça'. Non, alors ils n'étaient pas flexibles sur la clareté. J'ai parlé beaucoup avec eux sur cette question. Ils m'ont dit 'on ne peut pas garder le Goethe pour toi et quelque personnes'. Ils nous ont aidés pour des festivals des poésies. Pour faire venir les artistes, comme ça. Mais je pense qu'on est ici dans un contexte particulier: si ton travail ici aide quelque individu à se tenir au-dessus de l'eau on déjà fait beaucoup. Mais pas tous voit les choses de ce point de vue et aujourd'hui il reste juste un directeur chargé des affaires linguistiques. L'Institut culturel français quant à lui, le CCF, ils sont en restructuration de janvier 2012 avec des nouvelles directeurs et plusieurs instituts dirigés par la même personne. Ils sont étalés sur le territoire algérien. Ils sont commencés déjà au Maroc. Il y a déjà plusieurs CCF en Algérie, et ils dévient des Instituts françaises. Avant chaque centre avait son autonomie. Ils pouvaient travailler avec les opérateurs culturels qu'ils voulaient. De temps en temps quand le directeur se voyait avec les autres directeurs parfois se faisait des choses communs. Donc maintenant il va devenir plus un réseau. Généralement il y a une médiathèque, une salle de spectacle, et des conférences etc. Donc, de plus en plus, ils étaient obligés de s'enfermer vers l'intérieur parce qu'ils aussi n'avaient plus d'autorisations de faire choses à l'extérieure. Soit du ministère, de la ville d'Alger. Fin les années 1990, il y a eu des choses très belles que s'était faites avec des partenariats locaux par exemple. L'ambassade de France et le CCF avec la bibliothèque Mohammed Dyia dans la banlieue d'Alger ont organisés un festival, une édition. Ils ont aidé, pas organisé. ...Il y a eu des projets avec des artistes Algériens, à l'époque aussi avec le Théâtre National, et maintenant ils sont totalement en froid. Tous que demande le CCF ne peuvent pas l'avoir: les salles des spectacles par exemple. Ils les payés, mais ça est fini. On ne sait pas pourquoi mais politiquement on s'est décidé de ne pas aider les françaises. Il y eu la période de l'Année de l'Algérie en France mais il sensible les déranger que le CCF soit actif et se concerne par exemple, et qu'est suivi plus que le ministère. Le ministère ne travaille pas dans les normes. C'est pour ça qu'il n'a pas de gens. Ils font beaucoup de choses, mais on ne sait pas comment.

KX: Le publique pour ces activités, est-il méfiant des instituts étrangères ?

SN: Il y a toujours de méfiance. Même s'il n'est pas direct. Les gens qui fréquentent le CCF ils y vont parce qu'ils sentent qu'il y a une espace d'ouverture. Quand j'ai travaillé avec des poètes j'ai marqué que tous les jours il y avait des gens, jusqu'à pour aller au café, et jouer de la musique, parce qu'on ne les ferme pas. Tu sentais les gens qui sont là participer, même pas cultivés ou intellectuels, ils se sentent respirer là-dans. Si tu vas dans un musée, ou balader dans un jardin, tu as 15,000 agents qui vient te demander qu'est que tu fais et si tu es avec ton copain. Tu vois, les gens ont beau utiliser les moyens qui ont. S'ils ne changent pas son vision rien ne peut se passer. Le CCF par exemple, il y a de la méfiance par qui ne vient pas au CCF. Ils me regardent avec méfiance parce que pour leur je travaille avec et pour les Français. Alors moi, je travaille aussi avec les Algériens. Sauf que la différence est que quand je décide de faire quelque chose avec les Algériens je commence à ne pas avoir confiance, a ne pas pouvoir inviter des gens, parce que je ne sais pas qu'est ce qu'ils vont faire. Je ne sais pas qu'est-il va passer. Quand je travaille avec le CCF je sais très bien comment les choses se passent. Plusieurs mois en avant on a fixé le programme, obtenu les visas. Avec le Ministère de la Culture on peut faire des choses bien mais ça bloque. Il y a cette méfiance. Parfois, quand je vais au Ministère, ils m'ont donné une aide pour 2006. Je suis allé signer la convention et au départ ils ont promis de soutenir tout le festival. A la dernière minute ils nous donnaient seulement 100,000 euros pour un budget de 180,000 euros. Il y avait 75 artistes de tout le monde, déjà invités, pour une commémoration d'un poète algérien. J'étais obligé de ne demandeur. C'était un miracle comment j'ai fait. Des copains qui m'ont sauvé, qui m'ont dit jamais encore ça. Un mec qui travaillé au service commercial à la télé m'a sauvé. Ils ont payé les cachés des artistes. Puis la société Djezzy, à la dernière minute parce que le directeur était parent d'un invité. Chance de dernière minute. Quand je suis allé à signer la convention on m'a dit 'mais vous êtes algérienne. Vous n'êtes pas française ou habitez pas en France?' Ça veut dire que, par rapport à ta question sur la vision qu'on a des étrangères et des artistes étrangères, parfois, on a l'impression que si tu fais des bonnes choses, tu dois être étranger. Et quand tu leur dit, 'non, je suis algérienne, pourquoi tu veux payer un étranger quand je sais faire bien les choses ?' Aujourd'hui par exemple, le ministère est en train de signer des accords avec le ministre de la culture français. Le ministère de la culture français était à Alger et je l'ai rencontré à l'ambassade de France. Moi, je ne comprends pas, pourquoi s'il y a des accords, pourquoi avoir des personnes qui ne connaissent pas le pays qui vient nous expliquer les choses. Donc nous leur disent comme faire les choses. Et on se trouve entre deux feux comme ça. Tous les temps.

KX: De côté, les personnes que te regarde avec méfiance pour travailler avec 'l'ennemi', et de l'autre côté tu essaie à convaincre des autres comment faire les choses.

SN: Par l'aide des étrangères. Quand tu as un discours comme ça, tu leur dis les difficultés etc. mais ils sont dans un pays où ils doivent ménager. Donc, si déjà ils te permettent de travailler chez eux, tu es déjà content. Donc, eux à l'arrivé, il ne peut pas s'impliquer. Individuellement certains directeurs s'impliquent, mais il ne montre pas officiellement. Mais il n'y a d'autres, par exemple un attaché culturel qui m'a dit 'tu vas inviter des membres du comité international de poètes de Lordeau' et j'ai dit 'bien, mais pourquoi si je suis membre moi-même et représentante en Alger ?' Ils ont amené le dossier au Ministère et ils veulent faire le Lordeau ici en Algérie. Alors, mais les Algériens seront capable de faire un festival. Pourquoi acheter un festival, de l'étranger, fait de l'étrange, lesquels étrangers ne savent pas faire les choses sur place, vont venir me chercher, pourquoi moi je fais les choses à moindre cout pour eux, dans mon pays. Et c'est tout le temps ça. C'est terrifiant. Et on a un nouveau phénomène encore, en plus de l'étranger : je n'ai rien contre la collaboration, il faut qu'il y ait une énergie dynamique, les longues, mais il faut que les choses se fassent avec plus sauvées. Personne ne peut venir de l'extérieur et te dire comment faire les choses. Aujourd'hui la crise culturelle qui existe en France, parce qu'il y a des choses qui ne fonctionne plus comme il fonctionné dans les années 80. Comme Jack Lang par exemple il

était très près de la demande nationale, avec les artistes dans les écoles par exemple, c'est très bien fonctionné à l'époque, mais ils ne fonctionnent plus comme avant. L'école est en crise en France, les enseignants d'aujourd'hui ne sont pas les enseignants de hier, les enseignants des années 80 sont des enseignants 68ards, dont des enseignants qui ont grandi dans une France élitiste, dans une France qui quand tu ouvrais 'Le Monde' tu avais Aragon en première ou Jean Paul Sartre. Aujourd'hui c'est très rare. Il n'est plus un pays culturel. Donc tu es face une génération TF1, même pour les gens qui sont dans le Science Po qui lise Marc Levy, les livres de gare, et c'est une réalité ce n'est pas un préjugé. Et aujourd'hui l'artiste quand il va dans la classe, à l'exception d'un petit pourcentage, qui s'intéresse, les profs sont dépassés, dans la crise de l'école, et ils peuvent être moins intéressés que à l'époque. Alors ce que devait être une époque de création est devenue de l'animation basique. Aujourd'hui on est en train de vendre une culture 'bad gum'. Ce n'est pas ça, au départ. Ça n'était pas l'objectif. Ce n'était pas ça qu'on voulait faire. Non. Quand on se cherche la conscience on trouve l'action culturelle par tout. Dans une autre mesure on dirait ça des prix de l'Unesco. C'est exactement la même chose. On va à la facilité. Donc on est invité à réfléchir à chaque fois et aujourd'hui on ne peut plus faire des modèles.

A propos de Beyrouth, par exemple, ils ont fait une activité qui s'appelle 'Beyrouth 39'. Est un gros festival en Angleterre qui s'appelle Hay Festival et c'est un festival qui est très gros et qu'a décodé avec la participation du British Council d'organiser le même festival dans autre pays. Entre autres, ils ont fait un à Beyrouth. Ils ont choisi de faire une liste d'écrivains arabes du moins de quarante ans. Comme par hasard tous avait trente-neuf ans, il venait du milieu de la presse officielle ou de la télé. Et quand tu as eu des écrivains arabes qui venaient dehors de ça, ils étaient tous immigrés. On est à l'étranger. Pour l'Algérie par exemple, ils ont pris un auteur qui est mineur, mais il a bossé à la télé. Et ils ont pris une fille qui n'été pas née en Algérie. Ça va dire des gens qui sont nés en France et qui sont grandis en France. Qui disent 'non nous ne sommes pas citoyens' mais qui ont de l'aide française et européenne. Et qui en plus, s'installe dans les rares aides qui sont données aux auteurs du Sud. Ils ne sont pas représentatifs. C'est juste que quand on point de doigt aux festivals étrangères d'abord c'est de dire 'tu ne peux pas me dire qu'il y a une inexpérience culturelle et artistique, ils ne peuvent pas dire ça. Il faut des opérateurs culturels sûr place qui travaillent sur le terrain, long terme, qui collaborent à base d'expériences de terrains. Ça nous ramène dans la situation de colonisé. C'est nous qui sommes colonisés. Ce festival anglais qui vient à Beyrouth c'est génial, mais quand un local veut faire quelque chose la presse ne se déplace pas bien sûr. Quand il y a le festival français en Algérie c'est génial, c'est les français qui ont pris le boulot. Les Algériens non, on les écrase. Et c'est qui est malheureux. Non seulement ils sont à côté de la plaque, mais le fait qu'ils sont les dehors. Ils se sont laissé avoir par des manipulations locales, alors tu dis que tu vas dans les pays pauvres pour les aider pour aider le système. Non seulement tu n'as pas de lien avec les opérateurs, souvent dans des pays où les structures n'existe pas. Les européens aujourd'hui pour pouvoir réussir à faire des choses locales ou non ils doivent, je ne veux pas dire qu'ils ne doivent pas réglo, ils doivent réfléchir sur un monde moderne, sauf qu'ils ne peuvent pas utiliser les même repère comme l'Europe. Tu vois ? En Europe tu cherche les associations, celui et celui-là. Ici, les associations n'existent plus. Même si au départ on a créé des associations et on a cru aux choses jamais ont-ils reçus des subventions, rien à faire, et donc, on a continue à faire les choses, en fonction des possibilités, des événements cette année, l'année suivante tu fais peut-être dépend de jeunes qui vient, qui va. Il y a la directrice du Goethe qui est partie; avec le nouveau directeur du CCF cherche de faire des choses et les faits. Aujourd'hui le ministère m'appelle, il vient face à moi avec une attitude sérieuse et un document qui prouve tel et tel prérogative, et j'irai. Mon objectif aujourd'hui n'est pas l'opportunisme. C'est vraiment qu'il faut faire des choses. Les choses-là, il fait les faire quand il peut les faire sur le long terme. Ici j'avais une seule exigence: de m'assurer qu'il y a quelque chose sûr la longue terme, que je peux travailler avec qui je veux travailler. Si les personnes que je veux dit non, je dis non, et s'est arrivé d'ailleurs. Il y a eu des moments quand on m'a demandé de

proposer des projets: de faire des projets avec tel ou tel, j'ai dit je cherche mes personnes, on dit non et je dis non. Je suis un créateur, un auteur, je sais qui sont les gens avec qui je vais travailler, aussi bien pour leur créativité si pour les relations. Finalement on n'a pas envie de faire les choses dans le vide parce qu'il prend beaucoup d'énergie. Comme en 2006 je ne peux pas faire toute seule. On cherche l'argent en trois, quatre et pas chacun tout seul. Et aussi avec les copains que je travaille avec on n'a pas réussi à faire ça. Je crois qu'il le manque de fonctionner aussi en interdisciplinaire. On n'est pas dans un pays qui a des multiplications de théâtres. Nous sommes des individus, dans le même mode d'activité, ce n'est pas parce que tu es peintre, chacun doit se battre tout seul. Ça personne ne le fait. En groupuscule on peut demander les choses ensemble, pour travailler ensemble. Sauf que là il y a tellement des difficultés pour les uns et les autres que chacun se bat pour son truc.

KX: C'est une vision de qu'est que se peut faire pour ouvrir les boites personnelles, ensembles, pour monter le ton et promouvoir l'interdisciplinarité.

SN: J'ai travaillé dans l'interdisciplinarité. Pour travailler ensemble. Mais pour garder cette énergie sur la longue terme, ça c'est difficile.

KX: La professionnalisation et l'internationalisation peuvent aider un l'autre au niveau régional. Malte n'est pas très avancée dans l'UE dans plusieurs domaines. Pour changer, la communauté artistique se met ensemble pour mettre plus pression sur l'état pour changer les choses. Peut-être que s'est encore tôt pour une collaboration Sud-Sud ?

SN: Dans le cas de l'Algérie, par exemple, on se méfie plus des artistes qui ont des réseaux à l'étranger. Ça va dire que cette chose n'est pas prise positivement. Tu n'es pas claire si tu as des relations à l'étranger et on ne te fait pas confiance. De toute façon, ça c'est vrai pour les réseaux avec les européens, et aussi les arabes. On méfie les arabes. On parle politiquement de collaboration entre arabes. Mais si on laisse au ministère les frais des arabes ils finissent dans les hôtels les plus pourri et les européens dans les grands hôtels.

KX: Ça c'est une mentalité colonisé.

SN: Oui. Quand j'avais à faire avec le *Rotary Club*, par hasard, quand ils ont reçu le projet, ils m'ont dit qu'on faisait des vacances. Plus loin à l'étranger, malheureusement il n'y a pas des liens. Avec ce pays-là, comme la Chine ou l'Arabie Saoudite, il y a des relations de dictateur à dictateur. L'Algérie fait des choses avec la Russie, mais c'est toujours du folklore dans les canaux officiels de l'ambassade. Il n'y a jamais rien de la création. Avec l'Inde pareil. De temps en temps il y a des choses de gastronomie, mais ceci les font les grands hôtels. Aujourd'hui je ne pense pas que les Algériens sont conscients de ce qu'est la culture chinoise contemporaine. Déjà dehors de la Méditerranée il y a du mépris entre les pays pauvres. Quand tu vas comme algérienne dans un pays comme la Macédoine tu n'es pas respecté comme si tu étais française. On doit travailler avec qui connaisse la qualité. Pour ça quelque fois je préfère aller dans les pays riche aussi si j'aime chercher la collaboration avec les pays comme nous. Mais on a plus accès à la culture occidentale, pour utiliser cette terme, parce qu'il y a plus des festivals, que dans de pays comme l'Iran, la Chine, l'Afrique. Les rares événements qui se fait sont officiels et tu te trouves dans situations d'abord méprisé: un algérien au Maroc, par exemple. Je ne parle pas d'individus, mais en groupe, les pauvres se méprisent entre eux. C'est la réalité. Le sens de colonisé est profond.

KX: Oui. Je ne sais pas s'il est honte, mépris, de ne pas avoir la confiance en soi-même et les autres.

SN: Et puis on n'a pas la même présence dans nos pays respectifs. L'auteur ici n'est pas respecté comme par l'auteur européen en Europe. Avec le temps, sur dix ans, j'ai accumulé les invitations, mais sur le territoire, si je n'organise pas, il n'y a rien. Ça c'est terrifiante. Quelque fois on est fatiguée de travailler les soirs, les weekends, s'expliquer avec les sponsors, pour dire que tout ça serve à quoi. Avec ce mec intéressé dans mon travail, j'avais trouvés beaucoup d'internes, mais il s'était trompé. Il croyait que j'étais en France, que je vivais là. L'internes s'est évanoui quand il a compris que j'habitais en Algérie. On sent le tout la division entre le Nord et le Sud. Mais un autre sens d'injustice vient de la volonté de nous faire écraser par les Algériens qui viennent de dehors. Nous, nous ont fait un discours sur pourquoi on écrit pour et publie à l'étranger. Puis on nous n'apprécie pas que nous restons en Algérie. Pas de tout. Et si on ne part pas, c'est parce que nous sommes mauvais. Et quand tu as les Algériens de retour de l'étranger, ils sont plus respectés que toi. J'étais au Montréal à donner des lectures et conférences, et il y avait des écrivains qui ne pouvaient pas faire ça. Mais quand ils viennent ici, ils sont bien plus respectés que moi. Ça fait mal. Je reste en contact avec des amis et collègues Algériens pour leur donner des nouvelles mais cette liste devient plus et plus courte. Je suis pour ce brassage, mais aux lecteurs manque les références, pour apprécier la qualité. Chacun doit avoir sa place. Chacun doit savoir comment faire les choses. On a cassés les écoles et les universités Algériens, cassés les ingénieurs Algériens. Pour vingt ans. Et on a détruit la langue française. Je suis d'accord que la situation aujourd'hui est catastrophique. Mais qu'est-ce qu'on a fait. On avait des coopérants dans les 1960s, mais aujourd'hui ? Paradoxalement, l'Algérie refuse beaucoup de programmes d'aide. Par exemple, la Banque Mondiale voulait promouvoir un projet, ils n'ont jamais trouvé le mode comme travailler avec cet argent. On ne trouvait pas de bons partenaires. Il n'y a pas de possibilités d'échanger avec les ministres et les fonctionnaires des gouvernements. Ce pareil avec le quota du thon par exemple. Ce n'est pas de culture, mais symptomatique de la perte d'énergie et d'opportunité, quand on n'a pas de vision et de volonté.

Interview with Djalila Kadi-Hanifi, coordinator of *L'Association Chrysalide*

22 October 2011

KX: *L'Association Chrysalide* c'est quoi sa mission?

DKH: On fait de l'animation culturelle et l'on organise par ciné-club. On organise des rapports littérature et expositions. Et de côté création on est dans le théâtre et le cinéma où on a fait des productions et court-métrages.

KX: Le travail mise sur artistes Algériens ou aussi internationales ?

DKH: Le travail personnel se fait en Algérie. De plus en plus parce qu'on considère qu'il y a une urgence à faire, à créer ici en Algérie. Mais on commence aussi à faire des animations aussi avec les étrangères pour engager les artistes algériens avec des nouveaux modes and modes d'expression. Des artistes françaises, mais aussi les allemands, tunisiens et marocains. On organise de plus en plus des résidences.

KX: Qu'est-ce que 'l'urgence' de quel vous parlez ?

DKH: Tous que nous avons vécus ces dernières années nous ont marqué et tout ça doit être pris en considération par nous-mêmes. L'acte d'exprimer et sentir notre histoire c'est primordial pour nous. C'est notre vie quoi.

KX: Dans cette histoire dans laquelle vous faites la reconnaissance et la récupération, aussi le période coloniale et la guerre d'indépendance sont présent ?

DKH: On approche l'année prochaine le cinquantième anniversaire de l'indépendance de l'Algérie est bon ça est un prétexte mais on réalise de nouveau tous les non-dits, les histoires qui sont en train de ressortir. On est en train de...je pense les gens sont moins dans la sacralisation, de côté algérien. Il y a toute une génération qui n'est pas dans l'indifférence mais est dans une autre forme de gestion. On va casser des mythes. Mais on se continue quand même à s'intéresser. Dans ce sens-là, plus subversive; on est dans cette réalité d'idées reçues pendant cinquante ans. De point de vue des artistes ils cherchent un peu la petit bête; le détail.

KX: Dans cette tranche subversive, y a-t-il de la collaboration avec les artistes françaises ?

DKH: Justement je vous dis par exemple l'Association se tourne vers l'Algérie et ça lève aussi des incertitudes qu'un artiste français peut avoir. On a des exigences des artistes algériens, qui sont une conscience, et une conscience d'être, je ne vais pas dire bêtise, mais, l'artiste français en Algérie, ça peut-être la France en Algérie. Dans cette méfiance que s'installe, l'artiste algérien et dans la recherche tout le temps. Et autrement il y a aussi, quand on a essayé de voir avec les allemands, etc., on a constaté, de côté pratique, qu'ils n'étaient pas concernés par la guerre d'Algérie, et le passé colonial, comme les français, et finalement nous n'intéresse pas. Un paradoxe. Car ce qu'il est...il n'y a pas cette choque, il n'y a pas cette lien, qui est très forte malgré tout, parfois très violent, mais on a besoin de ça pour créer. Mais on s'ennuie avec un artiste allemand. Je caricature, bien sûr. Mais avec un artiste français on nous provoque, dise des choses qui choque, et nous donnons aussi notre réaction, et ça nous aide. Ça suppose qu'il y a de la sincérité par la part de l'autre, quand ils sont des vrais artistes, et on sait qu'on a des contenus politiques, idéologiques, et d'autres, mais à la limite ça on connaît.

KX: Tout ça aide le processus de dialogue interculturel pour franchir les frontières ?

DKH: Je suis persuadé que on peut, oui. Je pense que on peut, oui. Je pense que, de la France en particulier, entre les deux pays il y a, au niveau de générations, il y a beaucoup que reste à se dire. Et compris par rapport à l'histoire. Et il y a moins de soineuserie, et plus de franchise. Ça peut faciliter la confrontation entre nous. Il y a beaucoup de douleur mais...

KX: La communauté artistique est toujours très petite par rapport au reste de la population. Avec ça dans la tête, peut-on avoir des impacts sur la population? On s'engage avec la population plus large, avec l'éducation par exemple ?

DKH: Dans cet instant, on est un peu dans la marge. Dès que la société nous regarde un peu comme des *clowns*, des jeunes à la limite. Mais j'étais surprise par exemple par rapport aux personnes qui vient en Algérie et qui nous cherchent, parce que ça signifie qu'on est visible et qu'on a une existence. Au niveau de la ville d'Alger on a une visibilité, et justement un de nos projets du groupe théâtre de l'Association, est du théâtre dans la rue. C'est le seul moyen pour nous d'engager avec le publique comme ça, direct. On a envie d'élargir un peu comme ça, sinon on a toujours les mêmes personnes autour de soi. Dans le lycée, etc., on a essayé mais on doit être plus agressif peut-être. Il y a trois semaines on a eu la journée sans voiture dans le centre d'Alger et le groupe de théâtre a provoqué un peu la population. Nous a testés un peu aussi.

KX: De côté d'appui, financement, organisation, on trouve ceci dans l'état ou sponsor ?

DKH: Officiellement ce système existe. Normalement il y a les subventions. Mais dans le fait on a deux genres d'artistes. Ceux qui se finance, et autres qu'on abandonne. Et ça c'est une question politique. Si vous êtes dans la ligne du gouvernement OK, parce qu'il y a beaucoup d'argent dans ce pays, ou bien comme nous, on ne reçoit rien. On a l'ambassade de France. Malheureusement on dit mais, au-delà de cette coopération et quelque sponsors à droite et à gauche on méfie de qui on ne connaisse pas, et qui n'ont pas de visibilité comme les résidences. Ce n'est pas comme les matchs du football. Les sponsors ne comprennent pas encore. Heureusement aussi, on a l'ambassade de France. Malheureusement, pour l'Algérie, c'est terrible.

KX: L'aide vient en termes de pratiques et moyens ou aussi en termes de conceptualiser et de discours? Il y a un processus de discussion qu'on entame avec l'ambassade?

DKH: Je crois que l'ambassade a un devoir de réserve. Mais quand on vaut à parler avec, il suffit qu'on soumit un dossier assez solide, et nous a jamais imposés quel que soit. Ailleurs, il y a certains...des choses qui on sait on ne peut pas demander à l'ambassade parce que à la limite ça devait être l'Algérie à sorte. Mais quand il y a des opportunités, on trouve les artistes français pour des créations, pour le cinéma, dans lequel l'intéresse monte énormément. Il y a beaucoup de gens dans le ciné-club avec des films Algériens, récent, à voir. Et les gens vient avec des scénarios, on a du mal à arrêter ça.

KX: On utilise les espaces cinématiques commerciaux ?

DKH: On n'a pas les moyens pour ça. Donc on nous a une salle qui s'appelle filmothèque, comme une cinémathèque, mais est privé et nous fais un bon prix. On partage le billet aussi.

KX: Les gens aiment le cinéma...

DKH: On a perdu l'habitude mais on la retrouve.

KX: Il y a des sujets que l'ambassade français n'accepte pas ?

DKH: Certainement, on n'a pas proposé des sujets qui traitent la colonisation de l'Algérie. En tout cas, l'ambassade de France à ces critères.

KX: A propos de la Méditerranée, dans le travail que vous faites, y a-t-il une conscience de cette dimension ?

DKH: Pour une question sentimentale oui, mais on n'est pas là encore en pratique. Oui, on aimerait retourner vers des autres pays, les pays arabes et aussi les pays de la Rive Nord. La Turquie, par rapport à l'héritage Ottoman, et la France. On est en train de redécouvrir notre histoire et notre identité. Ce n'est pas du nationalisme, c'est juste une méthode pour pouvoir apprendre, expliquer et dire pourquoi on est et pourquoi on pense qu'on est comme ça. Mais il n'y a pas de moyen et pas d'accès pour concrétiser ce désir. On n'arrive pas à être acteur en tout ça. On est déjà acteur et on déjà essaie à ressortir de ses complexités.

KX: Je comprends qu'on est à un niveau très urgent, et il prend plus de temps et d'efforts pour arriver à des autres niveaux, comme les relations méditerranéennes.

DKH: Ça c'est une chose qui on ne trouve pas facile à expliquer quand on a des applications Euro-Med, comme ça. Ils nous dites toujours 'vous devez avoir des partenaires du Sud et du Nord de la Méditerranée.' Et on a vu des équipes qui font ça. Au Maroc on fait ça bien. De notre côté il y a une réticence parce que...il manque de sincérité, peut-être comme de vrai...j'ai travaillé avec des groupes de Bosnie en théâtre, mais ce type de projets sont différents. Quelque fois on voit le financement précéder le concept et la nécessité de travailler ensemble. Le projet, parce qu'il vaut être financé, précède le penser. Et je refuse de faire des choses comme ça parce que nous avons besoin de découvrir nous-même. D'un coup c'est vrai on perd beaucoup de choses.

KX: On est conscient qu'il y a beaucoup de travail à faire sur soi-même pour accéder à autre collaborations...Par rapport au publique: quel relations a l'Association avec son publique? Sont-ils intéressé dans les thématiques et recherche qui vous faites?

DKH: Avant on était plus élitiste, on essaie de canaliser l'énergie vers des thématiques particulières. Nous n'avons pas de sondages et ensuite on a décidé, en temps, de travailler sur soi-même, sur nos éléments dans la société. Nous sommes peu mais aussi parti de cette société alors nous elle la représente en parte. Donc c'est qu'on fait ce n'est pas aussi mauvais que ça. On a rejeté un peu la question du publique et numéro et tout l'aspect que démarrait dans l'aspect éducatif nous intéressait. Sans moyen et sans aides morales, c'était difficile. Travailler avec les gens, les enfants, dans les écoles, n'est pas facile. Mais la question de publique on doit l'aborder en sérieuse. On essaie mais on n'y arrive pas.

KX: Je comprends que c'était difficile avoir un programme avec le publique quand non n'a pas les moyens.

DKH: Malgré les moments de découragement, il y a un bon lien avec ceux qui nous fréquentent. Notre travail est tout volontaire et c'est difficile à gérer. Mais quand on voit les gens intéressés, et que les institutions doivent faire ce travail mais il ne le fait pas.

KX: Qu'est-ce que le rôle des femmes ? Dans le publique, dans la participation artistique ?

DKH: Après les événements en Tunisie on constate un grand changement chez les femmes. Ces pays, qu'est qu'il passe, s'est importante. Chez nous, pour la plupart, les femmes qui nous fréquentent sont plutôt libérées, ce n'est pas toutes les gens musulmanes qui peuvent rester le soir tard, voyager pour présenter des pièces, et la population qui nous fréquente est un peu bourgeoise. On essaie de se mettre côtés des femmes. Quand on a organisé une expo au MAMA [le Musée d'Art Moderne d'Alger], qu'était très positif, il y a beaucoup de visites de femmes. Le MAMA est bon, au centre-ville, ouvert toute la journée, et elles étaient là avec le foulard, elles visitaient, et me cherchait pour me dire qu'est ce pensaient. On a eu beaucoup de débat avec. La même chose avec les stages d'écritures ou les femmes venait au-delà d'Alger. L'écriture était parfois naïve mais, quoi, ça signifie beaucoup pour eux. Les femmes sont moins présentes dans l'action mais très présentes dans la littérature. Inclus les scénarios pour les films. Il va mieux, et elles sont plus libres qu'il y a trente ou quarante ans. Elles sont fréquentes aussi comme volontaires. J'ai l'impression qu'ils ont beaucoup à dire.

KX: Vous travaillez en quelle langue ?

DKH: Normalement c'est tous les deux, arabes et français, mais quelque fois par nécessité, mon choix, c'est plus le français. Ça c'est arbitrairement. Les personnes qui vient à nous généralement parle et écrit plus le français. Entre nous aussi nous ne sommes pas très bons en arabe. Autour de nous, dans le ciné-club par exemple, on utilise et discute en français, arabe et aussi le berbère, mais moins. Beaucoup de berbères à Alger utilisent l'arabe pour se faire entendre.

KX: Pour conclure, l'élément musulman, comme religion et mode de vie, joue quel rôle dans l'expression artistique et culturel à Alger ?

DKH: Entre nous déjà nous sommes en train de découvrir cet aspect-là. Au niveau de l'Association, il y a tous les tendances. Mais il y a beaucoup de discussions et disputes aussi. La religion, on la voit dans la cinématographie, c'est souvent du type douteux. On essaie de ne pas bloquer les questions. Il y a des personnes qui arrivent et qui sont dans une espèce d'angoisse, qui n'arrivent pas à exprimer qu'est qu'ils ont envie de dire. Ils peuvent être mal à l'aise. On n'a pas toujours réussi. On a essayé de débattre et on débat sans arrête. Et quelque fois il sort des productions ou discussions cinématographiques étonnantes. Avec Dieu ici, le whisky là, très étonnant. On essaie de ne pas fermer ça. Par rapport à l'Algérie par rapport aux français et des européennes en général, la question de l'Islam je crois qu'il est traité au niveau de peur et panique de côté européenne. On est plus libre, on les affronte plus, pas objectifs, mais on peut se pencher plus sur la question, on est moins rigide, et avec des français on a eu ce problème. Généralement, les français rejets tout qui sont barbe etc. Nous, au contraire, voyons une opportunité pour nous nous engager dans un débat. Par exemple, avec les immigrés, en Algérie en résidence, qui ont découvertes quelque chose qu'ils ne savaient pas, un vécu paradoxalement plus tranquille, plus sereine, malgré tout ça que nous avons vécus, et les Français étaient dans cette situation. Ils n'ont pas compris toute suite cette histoire. Mais pour nous c'est quelque chose à élaborer et à construire. On peut comprendre comme vivre plus pacifiquement. Là vraiment on est arrivé dans un moment où on veut vivre bien ensemble. On le fait. On sait qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire. On n'a pas encore réussi à l'expliquer à nos partenaires étrangers, sauf quelqu'un mais ça c'est très rare. Ça aussi c'est un

aspect qu'on est en train de rechercher à propos de nous-mêmes. On ne veut pas provoquer, et il ne se traite pas de soumission, c'est un désir de vivre ensemble. C'est très importante pour nous d'élargir cette exploration avec les autres au dehors de nous. Par exemple, l'Association Gertrude II, on travaille avec sur de débats interminable. Elle est à Lyon. Comme j'ai dit, ce n'est pas la France et l'Algérie mais des Français, qui vient pour travailler avec des Algériens. On veut restaurer ce type de rapport. Il y a pas mal d'opportunités avec des groupes européennes, c'est magnifique.

Interview with Nadira Laggoune, academic and visual arts curator

23 October 2011

NL: ...C'est la modernité en Europe, c'est la preuve de la notion de la modernité, qu'est arrivée avec la colonisation française. Là on était dans quelque chose qu'était traditionnel. Et c'est qui viens avec nous, c'est la modernité. Donc à partir de là on a une traditionnelle et l'art moderne. Donc déjà, c'est difficile de parler de ça. Avant ça il n'y avait pas quelqu'un qui était pratique sur les pratiques artistiques existantes. C'était sûr, dès qu'on a découverte ça, on a commencé à penser, avec les outils dès la modernité. Pas modernisation, parce que c'est autre chose. La modernité c'est l'esthétique. Donc on a commencé à parler avec les outils de ce concept dans l'art algérien. Et on a commencé à dater l'art algérienne, quand on dit les arts plastiques, parce que j'ai cette formation, à partir du moment des que les Algériens ont commencé la peinture avec les outils de l'art moderne françaises, européennes et donc françaises. Et on a commencé à dater de là l'histoire de l'art, dans cette période, nous disons, dans les années '20, '30, période de colonisation. Il y a avait une très forte arrivé de peintre à partir d'un certaine mouvement. C'était eux qui faisaient l'aventure pour des raisons militaires, avec la cartographie, et puis ensuite les peintres, grands voyageurs, avec l'ouverture des grandes territoires orientaux, africains, venu pour découvrir un peu et qui se sont mis à peindre l'Algérie pacifique, les bateaux authentiques, le voyage vers l'Orient qui ouvrait la porte à tout le monde mais aussi aux artistes en général. Et puis ensuite les civilisations de cette pratique avec les villas à la manière de la *Casa Velázquez* à Rome, pour offrir des résidences ici aux artistes français, européens bien sûr, avec aussi des bulgares, des polonais, ici et au Maroc, inclus l'artiste du grand monument couvert aux morts français, Paul Landowski. On a eu des peintres algériens qui ont commencé à développer. Et c'est partir de ça. Les premières peintres en suite ont commencé à avoir accès et avec la grande École des Beaux-arts on s'ouvert au petit département pour les arts indigènes, ces thèses algériens pouvait entrer, ou une partie de cette génération sont engagé pendant les années cinquante. Ils vont partir en Europe et ils vont entrer dans l'indépendance avec une nouvelle vision. Ils leur permettent de situer leur langage nouveau de la peintre algérienne. Comme les français on l'a utilisée justement pour construire une façon de voir.

KX: Dans les années cinquante ce petit département était au principe et à fait possible le développement du langage algérienne.

NL: Oui, de toute façon ils ont créés les écoles d'art indigènes déjà dans les années '20. On commence à voir qu'il y a une pratique local et on va à créer des ateliers. Ça est parti d'une politique, comme on dira, de 'rapprocher' les communautés entre guillemets, parc qu'avec les écoles d'art indigènes on ne rapproche pas les communautés. On isole. Mais, disons que quand les écoles de beaux-arts sont érigés, parce qu'ils étaient tout petit avant, ils vont construire cette grand école, mais on va ouvrir un petit département d'art traditionnel, indigène, et arts appliqué. Ça va dire que dans ce département ils vont entrer, mais ils vont appliquer leur propre idée. C'était la décoration sur bois, les coffres traditionnels berbères, la aluminure, avec le premier instructeur qui va être le miniaturiste algérien Mohammed Racim. Certains pionniers de cette engagement, ils vont enseigner, mais autre ne vont jamais à l'école, et ils sont partis en Europe. Là ils vont découvrir la liberté, de l'art mondial, et ils vont être initié, ils vont pratiquer tout ça. Ils sont en plein sorti d'abstractation dans une sorte d'un expressionisme parisienne. Ils reviennent qu'ils sont changeait... on est jamais celui qu'il était. Donc avec ces bagages là c'est fini, et ils reviennent avec une autre de bagages. L'art qui était pratiquée ici c'était mélangée à celle de là et c'est formée un art de résistance parce que elle va servir de base pour dire 'non, nous sommes aussi universelles, nous avons l'arabe chez nous, dans les dessins berbères qui sont nos maisons traditionnelles, et nous sommes déjà là.

KX: Cette ouverture et conscience était possible parce que on est allé dehors pour retourner chez soi. C'est un paradoxe.

NL: C'est ça. Comme on voit il y avait aussi la montée du nationalisme. Dans les années '50 on a déjà, avec Mesli, le théâtre, le Groupe 51, des petits endroits, de la musique, de l'art plastique, qui voulait changer les choses. Dans le '51 c'était encore un peu difficile, mais on voit la montée du nationalisme. Ça était des actions pour la liberté, dans le cas du théâtre, c'était commencé en France mais continué ici, à faire les cartes postales pour l'indépendance, la libération, et aussi en Allemagne, et partout. C'est paradoxale mais je dirais c'était de l'engagement construit dans des soucis aussi bien, ça rend une revendication historique, engagement historique, et en même temps romantique; ces choses-là sont confondues car c'est le cas de l'histoire général pas seulement en Algérie.

KX: Quand les mouvements historiques, culturels, esthétiques vient ensemble, c'est bon.

NL: En 1967 un grand mouvement c'est formé, le groupe Aouchem, c'était très dans cette lumière, et même là on trouve le travail sur les signes de la calligraphie arabe, et pour Aouchem c'est le signe du tatouage des femmes, chez Mesli, chez Ben Berber, mais c'est là vous trouvez la croyance que 'le signe est plus fort que la bombe.' Il y a toujours un lien avec l'euro péenne, parce qu'il y a une harmonie. Ils ne renient pas, les mouvements en Europe, il y a de la conciliation, et on est dans l'universalité.

KX: Dans la contemporaine, y a-t-il toujours ces confrontations avec l'art global ?

NL: Oui. C'est déjà parti, du moment quand, on a parlé sur la modernité, on a essayé déjà; on parle de résistance et imitation; il y a toujours eu des éléments de résistance; parce que aussi imiter pour mieux c'est une mesure quand on ressemble au colonisateur mais on dit 'moi', c'est moi le réceptacle de la modernité, ou les autres à ces places, c'est bien. On crée un malaise chez le colonisateur, ils les dérangent. C'est dans ce sens qu'on parle de résistance dans l'imitation. Imitation ce n'est pas comme ça; dans les premiers écrits sur l'Algérie, on parle de ça, des copieurs, donc ils sont assimilés dans le sillage, mais ce n'est pas une colonisation sans résistance, qui a commencée, qui va dans génération en génération. On voit que c'est intégré dans le dessin, les cabinets de salles de musique et ça. Malgré tout, dans la miniature, que n'était pas algérien à l'origine. On a introduit ça des Turques, des Mongols et Racim va créer la miniature algérien.

KX: Il approprie ça.

NL: Absolument. Parce qu'il n'existait pas dans la pratique actuel. On faisait de décorisme, de l'illustration, ceci existait aussi en Europe. Et dans les Qourans on faisait aussi de l'illumination. Mais dans la figuration comme ça il était le premier tout en s'inspirant de ces écoles anciennes, persans etc. mais il a introduit ce dessin de miniature et des pratiques et techniques européennes. Vous savez les miniatures qui appartiennent à un style et il a introduit tout ça. Et moi je vais dire que c'est comme un moyen de résistance parce que c'est produit dans ce choc artistique européen ici à Alger, un nouvel forme comme ça, c'est une manière de dire aussi 'tiens, j'ai quelque chose de dire de ma façon algérien.' C'est un moyen de résistance. Tout comme le mouvement Aouchem qui a fait de la résistance avec la rupture, qui est allé à rompre avec la culture orientaliste. Ils n'avaient rien à voir avec les orientalistes.

KX: Ces mouvements de résistance et rupture sont liées à la reconnaissance que vous faites aujourd'hui. Quand vous faites cette analyse, c'est aussi ça qui est une action de résistance ?

NL: Absolument. C'est de la résistance et appropriation. Par ce que la résistance aussi signifie réappropriation. Pas seulement de choses et de gens. Qui n'était pas facile. Quand on arrive avec l'art moderne on n'arrive pas seulement avec ça. Il est arrivé aussi une culture pleine à s'affronter à une culture qui existait déjà. C'est une forme de choc. Donc tout ça c'est fini, c'est l'histoire. Mais dans la contemporaine et la mondialisation le problème se pose un peu différemment. On a eu cette mondialité de façon importé. On a eu le moderne algérien qui est aussi fini avec beaucoup de peintres, mais on est fini. Et c'est la même chose qui passe aujourd'hui. Le monde contemporain est entré un choc avec des artistes algériens. J'estime qu'il n'y a pas de problème. Pourquoi ? Par ce que pour moi l'art contemporaine est l'art vivant aujourd'hui. Et les jeunes artistes d'aujourd'hui sont les artistes de leur temps. Ils sont exactement, pratiquement comme les artistes en autres lieux.

KX: Vous ne voyez pas de distinction entre centre et périphérie ?

NL: Oui. Avec la mondialisation, le problème, moi, je parle d'occidentalisation. Parce que qui a des moyens pour imposer ces images: c'est l'occident. C'est nous qui arrivons à imposer notre image ? Non. Peut-être d'autre manière, avec des moyens, petit à petit mais en même temps qu'on s'habille, qu'on se voit, pour être aussi dans le changement. Mais sur le plan de l'image, comme a dit Bill Gates, qui a le pouvoir de l'image à le pouvoir du monde. Cela. C'est l'orientalisation. Mais la question se pose différemment: je pense qu'il y a un problème. Je parle dans un grand colloque que je prépare sur les biennales et festivals du Sud et l'échange inégale de la possibilité qu'on a ou n'a pas d'imposer sa vision. Est-ce qu'ils ont les moyens de s'imposer? Sur le circuit de l'art contemporain et mondial ?

KX: Vous prenez les pays du Golf dans la perspective du Sud ?

NL: Non c'est un autre monde. Le Sud, signifie l'Afrique, l'Asie, le Moyen Orient, l'Amérique Latine. C'est ça le problème. Quand tu es à la Biennale de Dakar, entre directeur et tous les participants sénégalais, quelle est l'identité et la nationalité de la Biennale de Dakar: c'est française. Entièrement. On rencontre les visions à Bamako: ils sont maliens ? Non, ils sont français. Tant mieux, je dis, tant mieux, s'ils servent à faire connaître l'art. Mais ce n'est pas malien. Mais il y a quelque chose...

KX: La pensée, la gestion, ce n'est pas autochtone mais français.

NL: Aussi les intellectuels qu'y participe. Au Maroc c'est comme ci, comme ça un peu. En Algérie la chance, peut-être pas de chance qu'était de chance, les institutions sont ceci qui a les moyens, comme le MAMA [le Musée d'Art Moderne d'Alger], qui est une institution publique, de côté du Ministère de la Culture, qui a l'argent, et est indépendant assez pour faire ces propres expositions. Donc la situation algérienne, les acteurs algériens, existent, comme la Panaf qui on a fait ici. Le Panafricain était africain, algérien, donc africain, pour l'argent, pour tout, de l'a à z. L'indépendance est difficile. On a besoin d'argent, non faire les choses. C'était une vraie question parce que c'était un vrai problème. Donc ce colloque s'axe sur ce débat.

KX: C'est très importante parce que l'impression est que s'il y a des choses qui sont gérés par les Européens, et autres qui sont développés par les Algériens, la vision et l'influence c'est quoi, à la fin, seulement esthétique ou aussi dans le développement des personnes soi-même ?

NL: Le problème esthétique je le mets au premier plan. Parce que ces artistes d'aujourd'hui, entre 40 et 30 ans, jusqu'à 20 ans, ils ne se posent pas cette question-là. Ils produisent des choses de leur temps et ils font des vidéos, plein forte, c'est fini. Mais la question d'indépendance, entre guillemet, cette

indépendance, pour faire des choses, les biennales, il n'y a pas que le facteur européen. Les Français travaillent et on travaille avec; j'ai moi-même travaillé avec le CCF. Moi je le fais. Tant mieux qu'il y a la coopération. C'est fini. Mais ces questions qui se posent aujourd'hui à propos de l'échange inégale ne se posent pas seulement ici, mais en général avec toutes les manifestations dans les pays du Sud. Il y a d'autres questions. On parle d'argent. Si on n'a pas les moyens on ne peut pas. On n'a pas les moyens pour payer l'assurance énorme, pour rattraper les grandes stars. Il faut faire ça. J'ai invité Mona Hatoum. Elle est une grande star de l'art contemporaine. Si elle ne vient pas, c'est dommage. Comme même, bon, c'est le cas aussi pour les autres pays. La Biennale de Chargent il y a l'argent dedans. Je pense c'est autre chose.

KX: La censure est toujours un problème dans les pays du Golfe, n'est pas ?

NL: Ecoute-moi c'était la première fois que j'étais allé à la Biennale de Chargent et je ne sais pas comment il s'est passé là-bas. Je ne sais pas. Il y avait des travaux un peu érotiques, avec des dessins très évocateurs, personne n'a rien dit. Je n'ai pas très bien compris qu'est-ce que c'est passé là-bas. Il y avait une grande installation dans l'espace dédié à l'artiste, en façon très traditionnel, par exemple avec les artistes égyptiens représentant la perspective égyptienne en façon très traditionnelle, mais avec une différence: il y avait des modèles de personnes plus larges que les personnes et sans tête, en devis de football. Et sur le maillot derrière il a mis ce texte: c'était sur le plan politique, sur le plan, eh, il parle de sexualité, de tout. Et surtout sur les murs il y avait des slogans inspirés de la révolution tunisienne: 'dégagez' et tout ça. Il y avait une chanson aussi un peu vindicatrice. Lire le texte je ne sais pas si on peut dire s'il était de l'art arabe ou français ou autre: la langue usée c'était l'anglais. Il y avait les œuvres d'autres importantes artistes qui produisent des événements importants. Je ne sais pas. L'exception peut-être liée à la mosquée. Quand il y avait l'appel à la prière on arrête la musique, c'est tout. Mais je ne sais pas.

KX: On a plus de défis ici avec la censure ?

NL: C'est très paradoxal chez nous. On peut avoir beaucoup de expo et publicité, j'ai vu en personne, toujours avec des rapports politiques liées à ces artistes africains. Pendant le Panaf par exemple. Cet artiste zimbabwéen avait tout un truc sur le président et ça. J'ai vu ça. La délégation zimbabwéen a écrit un article, n'était pas content, mais c'était tout là. Je n'ai pas vu des nues. Mais je n'ai eu pas l'occasion de voir pour quoi on utilisait de nues. Si un artiste travaille et a un bon concept, pourquoi pas ? Cette exposition que j'ai montée pour *Chrysalide*, il avait des photos avec des dos nus, ça n'a embêté personne. Franchement. Mais, c'est vrai, si on expose des nus, on peut avoir des problèmes. On ne peut pas ignorer. Il y a toute une culture, toute une façon de voir le monde, et qui peut être partagé. Tout le monde à sa manière de voir et comprendre les choses qui sont vécues de manière diverses. Certaines sont offensées par des aspects par convictions religieux etc. C'est sûr. Je sais que chez les artistes on travaille dans cette culture-ci, et avec cette culture-ci. Peut-être que les analyses européens sont trop, pas simpliste, mais réductrice, 'ah oui mais il s'oppose aux nus.' Je crois que toute culture a ses aspects et les artistes qui sont dans la séduction et qui marche. C'est partout la même chose. Ici on a ça aussi.

KX: Il y a aussi les conventions qui les artistes observent. Par exemple en Europe on ne fait pas d'expo sur les juifs, ou mieux, de thème antisémite.

NL: Voilà, mais pour dire, si on faisait la même chose sur les musulmans, c'est plus facile. Galliano – c'est inadmissible ce qu'il a dit, et il est foutu. Moi je crois que s'il avait dit quelque chose sur les arabes sa carrière n'était pas foutue. Je ne suis pas si sûr. Mais je pose la question.

KX: Chaque culture tient ses propres priorités et réalités.

NL: Je ne sais pas si un tel comment sur les arabes en France aurait eu le même résultat.

KX: Comme dernière question: avec référence au publique, après les opérateurs, sponsors, et artistes, ils pensent aux ces thématiques ? Ils donnent une réponse, ils sont informés, et intéressés ?

NL: Ecoutez: c'est un peu complexe. Il n'y a pas 'un publique' chez nous. Je vais dire, ceux qui vont voir des spectacles, aux expositions, c'est délicat. Le grand publique, pour la musique, les festivals, oui. La musique qui nourrit le corps, ça oui. Le raï, c'est la musique pour le corps, n'est-ce pas. Il y a d'autre musique pour le cerveau. C'est plus pour le corps, une espèce de catharsis, voilà. Les spectacles de théâtre il y a beaucoup moins de monde. Cette pratique, qui consiste à aller au théâtre, n'est pas suffisamment renseignée. Le théâtre, les cinémas, il y a eu une entière génération qui n'a pas connu cette pratique. Pendant la décennie du terrorisme on a fait marche arrière et on ne savait pas qu'est-ce qu'il se passé plus d'ailleurs. La culture était laminée. Tout c'était transformait. Un autre type de consommation, mode de vie, c'est changé presque fondamentalement. C'est vrai que c'est reconstitué. Peut-être il y a des choses: l'art plastique, au Musée des Beaux-arts et l'art du dix-neuvième siècle, c'est plus accessible, peut-être. Mais avec la MAMA en plein quartier, c'est formidable. Les gens vont eh. C'est gratuit. Peut-être que personne dit 'ah, ce n'est pas grand-chose.' Mais il commence eh. Les personnes vont là. Et si ça marche, si on va vers les personnes, ça marche. Mais le publique répond d'une certaine manière. Je pense que comment mesurer et gérer son impact c'est difficile. Mais on va voir avec du temps. Je trouve que les gens qui vont au MAMA pour l'art contemporaine c'est formidable. Ça veut dire que les personnes peuvent dire 'oh là-là, ça n'est pas pour nous', mais il y a beaucoup qui prend l'occasion pour voir l'art et les installations. Les gens demandent 'qu'est que cet truc ?' Je vous assure que là-bas tout le monde viens: les vieilles dames, les femmes qui sont pas intellectuelles, qui travaillent aux magasins de côté. Voilà. C'est dans cette recherche qui on découvre des choses. Je pense qu'on ne doit pas avoir des à priori sur le publique. On ne doit pas avoir des préjugés sur le publique. Il n'est pas sans compréhension. On doit donner. Il peut apprécier. Il va se former comme ça, à voir ces choses. Il y a du mépris pour cette forme d'art. On doit continuer à s'en aller du traditionnel. De la femme kabyle, qui monte dans la montagne, etc.

KX: On ne doit pas traiter le publique comme des imbéciles parce qu'il n'est pas.

NL: On doit former le publique avec le regard vers le haut, et pas vouloir les tirer en bas. C'est difficile mais en tout cas c'est de la dédication et du travail. Il y a les gens qui font ça, tant mieux. J'espère qu'il se rend plus en plus nombreux. Dans toutes les domaines. Moi je crois que c'était normal. Tu cherches de changer et c'était bien.

KX: Et l'élément féminin dans l'expression artistique ? Vous voyez là aussi des choses qui bougent: plus d'engagement, plus de présence ?

NL: Ça c'est difficile à dire. Je ne sais pas. Les femmes vit dans la pratique ah. Les artistes qui travaillent, il n'y a pas de femmes. Très peu.

DKH: Dans la littérature il y a un peu plus, et dans le cinéma il y a un début. Ça commence.

NL: Dans les arts plastiques je trouve beaucoup moins. C'est complexe. Quand même c'est la vie eh. C'est la condition féminine. J'enseigne à l'École des Beaux-arts. C'est super. Il y en a beaucoup. Mais en fin de cours elles se perdent dans la nature. Elles se sont mariées, elles sont prises dans une autre vie. Ou bien il y a celles qui viennent d'une autre ville. L'Algérie n'est pas Alger et là-bas c'est très difficile d'exposer. Et voilà. C'est très dur. Je cherche beaucoup, mais c'est difficile donc. Elles sont dans une pratique un peu plus sage. Petit peinture. Miniature. Comme ça. Elles s'arrêt dans cette fonctionnes traditionnelles de la femme. L'aquarelle. Les petites choses. Ça c'est l'histoire de la condition féminine. Ils sont les conditions sociales. Et il y en a plus qui sortes de ce sentier battu. C'est difficile eh. Pour un comédienne encore de plus.

DKH: Tu ne peux pas sortir après 18h. Si tu es mariée. Je vous raconte une anecdote. Pendant les années du terrorisme il y a eu une grande manifestation du parti islamique. Et c'était les femmes qui ont mené ça. Et c'était impressionnant. Au point que la direction du parti lui-même ont dit plus de manifestations avec des femmes. Quelque part elles les embêtent. Elles étaient interdisait de faire ça. Ils ont eu peur.

Interview with Gaëtan PELLAN, Director *Centre culturel français, Oran*

22 December 2011

GP: ...A la question de la dimension méditerranéenne, spécifiquement en Algérie on peut dire que nous n'avons pas de grands projets méditerranéens. Spécifiquement de côté de l'Institut, il n'y a pas de projet euro-méditerranéenne. On a des contacts notamment avec la capitale européenne de la culture Marseille 2013 qui va être en place et la et dans ce cadre-là on a créé des projets et on est en contact avec certains autre villes pour des projets qui se mets en place d'abord et évidemment avec Marseille. Là on peut dire que c'est un projet fédérateur qui nous permet d'être en contact avec d'autre villes portuaires de la méditerranée.

Maintenant, il y a dans la société civile des organisations qui ont bénéficiés des subventions européennes et qui sont en contact avec des associations européennes. Je pense à l'association Le Petit Lecteur qui a des relations dans des réseaux avec des autres associations euro-méditerranéens. Ils montent des projets de formations, avec les enfants, artistique etc. Là il y a du travail qui se fait de côté de la société civile.

KX: Alors l'appui de l'Ue n'est pas très répandu et pas un niveau officiel, Ue-Etat, mais il est là.

GP: Oui, en tout cas il y a deux programmes, et l'Ue a permis à la société civile de monter des projets euro-méditerranéens avec des fonds d'aide pour la société civile. Les instituts culturels ne sont pas éligibles à des projets européens et c'est assez difficile pour nous pour remonter en place. De côté français l'état nous aide à faire focus sur la formation et utiliser les fonds européens et on avec la société civile a essayé et a réussi à utiliser les fonds européennes à monter des collaborations. Mais c'est plutôt difficile. C'est vrai qu'on doit être au courant les méthodes et savoir comment monter des projets. La méthodologie est assez lourde, demande assez d'expertise, de côté des partenaires.

KX: De côté du gouvernement français, l'aide vous vient de côté du ministère des affaires étrangères...

GP: Oui, c'est ça, avec le ministère, est aussi autre source décentralisé, de jumelages, avec Bordeaux notamment, des institutions, des conseils généraux...

KX: Le fait d'être à Oran et pas à Alger, il y a des grandes différences ?

GP: Oui, des grandes différences. Je peux faire des choses qui mes collègues la bas ne peuvent pas faire parce qu'il y a les pressions, les regards. Ici à Oran il y a la possibilité de travailler avec la société civile, les universités, dans la rue avec le théâtre de la rue, choses comme ça, et on peut faire de choses qui a Alger on ne peut pas parce qu'ils sont très sécurisé. On a participé à ces événements, par exemple a La Nuit Blanche organise de côté de la mairie de Paris, sans problème, la nuit, parce que les choses sont beaucoup plus décontracté et fluide. On constate par rapport que dans l'ensemble que les grands festivals, les grands initiatives, aussi de côté européenne, ceux-ci vont seulement à Alger. Ça c'est une frustration générale de tous les opérateurs dehors de la capitale, par exemple le avec des festivals européennes, qui vont seulement à Alger.

KX: Il y a un décalage entre le centre et la périphérie?

GP: Oui on est très centralisé...

KX: Par référence à la Méditerranée, vous avez une perspective différent de Alger. Vous croyez que vous avez plus de possibilités de collaborer dans cette dimension d'ici que de là ?

GP: C'est compliqué parce que par exemple, à Djedda, au Maroc, il y a un Institut français, à Aouchda, mais il y a pas de moyen de transport, même pour les artistes, c'est assez problématique pour circuler et y arriver. Avec Rabat, il y a une collaboration sur le niveau cinéma, et aussi à Tunis. Sur la recherche, il y a des choses qui se mettent en place par le Centre Jacques Berque, avec la participation aussi de Tunis, il y a des conventions qui viennent à se mettre en place. Je constate qu'il y a quelque chose qui bouge dans les trois pays du Maghreb. On essaie à faire des montages des projets transfrontaliers, aussi avec l'Europe, mais c'est difficile parce que chacun a sa façon de travailler et chacun reste dans cette modalité contrôlé par les états par rapport à de politiques européennes.

KX: On est loin d'harmoniser ces travaux entre les états différents.

GP: Petit à petit je crois qu'on voit les choses marcher et être en place. Le directeur du Centre Jacques Berque il n'y a pas longtemps a commencé à travailler très dur sur ces relations culturelles.

KX: Il y a un petit moment d'ouverture avec les changements dans les politiques arabes? Ou c'est trop tôt de parler d'ouvertures ?

GP: Oui, au sens qu'il y a des possibilités qu'on organise des choses, des événements, plus ouvertes, moins rigide, par les questions de sécurité qui font qu'on perd beaucoup des opportunités. Les choses se sont assouplies. Maintenant il n'y a pas de grandes choses chez l'organisation d'un vrai politique culturelle. Mais il y a la construction de vrais équipements qui vont s'établir, maintenant il y a beaucoup d'interrogation sur qu'est qu'on fait avec ces équipements, et avec quel contenu et informations et professionnels et projets on les remplis. Mais il y a beaucoup d'argent pour les grands festivals non plus.

KX: Dans ce changements, les Instituts français, espagnols, anglais, ont un rôle importants en faisant les choses bouger ? Par la formation, la discussion, formel et informel, avec l'état aussi ?

GP: En fait c'est très compliqué par ce que les relations entre la France et l'Algérie ne sont jamais simple mais en tout cas l'impact de la programmation auprès de la population est très importante et montre que les choses sont possible. Il y a l'intérêt, on a besoin des espaces pour discuter, pour les échanges. La société civile est mieux accompagnée dans les projets culturels. Ça signifie à niveau étatique qu'on peut changer et on doit monter les opérations. On est loin d'établir tout ça et ce n'est pas assez pour établir les structures. Mais aussi sur les niveaux techniques, il y a la demande et la possibilité. Il faudra attendre qu'on nous bouge plus et qu'on nous fasse la demande de collaborer plus. Mais il y a un gros demande de professionnalisation et formation et d'autres côté une grande attente du publique pour une diversité de composition artistiques propose à l'espace de liberté, et la possibilité à comprendre mieux les techniques, la numérisation. Là il y a beaucoup à faire sur niveau de politique culturelle. Ils ne sont pas forcément présents dans les dimensions étatiques.

KX: Et de côté du publique, les jeunes, les enfants, les femmes, l'Institut joue un rôle pour eux aussi ? A Alger par exemple les instituts utilise beaucoup la langue pour travailler avec les publiques.

GP: Oui, il y a des activités pour les enfants, et on mit en place des ateliers, ciné-club, et on voie aussi beaucoup d'étudiants voulant leur formation professionnelle, avec beaucoup d'attentes pour continuer leurs projets d'études en France. L'Institut est aussi un moyen pour aborder la France et être reconnue

en Europe avec ces études. C'est aussi un lien avec les jeunes artistes et les artistes européennes et notamment français, sur les techniques nouvelles, film par téléphone portable. On a envie de travailler ensemble par exemple sur un projet de radio web et les jeunes sont intéressés dans ce travail et sure les thématiques dès la société. Par rapport aux femmes je dirai on est dans des projets de société civile mais dans les arts on voit aussi beaucoup des femmes intéressés aux spectacles et concerts etc.

KX: Un dernier mot sur la réalité culturelle et collaboration en Palestine ?

GP: Oui, j'étais directeur à Gaza pour quatre ans. C'est vrai qu'en Palestine la délégation européenne est très importante. Les projets européens sont importants, avec les associations françaises aussi, au niveau du cinéma. Toujours la difficulté était que c'est les Instituts français ne sont pas éligibles au fonds européennes, alors on est obligé de travailler par des associations français ou européens. Mais la recherche au but des projets européens sont très compliqués. L'Europe monte des grands programmes mais quand on est sur le terrain on voit la difficulté de la société civile à mettre en place les projets et généralement se sont les mêmes grandes associations qui accèdent au fonds et on a la possibilité d'y travailler avec.

KX: Il y a la possibilité de clivages entre ceux qui prennent des fonds, et les autres, et entre la société civile subventionnée et le gouvernement ?

GP: Oui, tout à fait il y a des problèmes quelquefois, par rapport, dans le local il y a des ponts importants, et se crée de la suspicion, de la concurrence. Il n'est pas évident quelquefois. La délégation européenne pour Jérusalem aide beaucoup en Palestine et je pense plus de répondre à des projets directs on a besoin des programmes régionaux plus adaptés et plus adaptés à la réalité sur le terrain quoi.

KX: Vous dites, regardez la région, pas les petites villes seulement, par exemple par les relations israélo-palestiniens, par exemple ?

GP: Oui, la situation structurelle est compliquée, et on doit faciliter les relations entre artistes israéliens et palestiniens par exemple qui sont devenues impossibles. Peut-être maintenant ils deviennent possibles. Peut-être avec la situation au Maghreb. Mais c'est très compliqué. La situation de un pays à un autre est très différente. Très particulière.

Interviews in Beirut, November 2011

Interview with Farid Majari, Director of the *Goethe-Institut*

17 November 2011

KX: My main point of research is the impact of European cultural institutes on cultural relations in the South of the Mediterranean. I'm putting Malta a bit in the South, a bit in the North, as we're in the middle. My question here is what is the role of the Goethe-Institut when it comes to shaping, forming, enabling the development of cultural relations here in Beirut?

FM: I would say our work in Beirut is different from other countries in the region. I was in Ramallah in Palestine, before I came here, and things look a bit different here. The same applies to Jordan, and other countries in the region. There the Goethe has very much to do with culture and development, mobility of people, skill transfer, skills in place development and then translated in workshops for film directors, country journalists, dancers, and further down you go in the Arab world, like Sudan. Sudan is also part of our region, the most important thing is, for the Middle East, is for people to learn skills, e.g. in Sudan on documentary making. This does not apply to Beirut, in the capital, where we work, as we do not work on the peripheries, and in the capital we talk about pretty much the same level. Skills-wise, information-wise and so on. It's the other way round when it comes to our partners here who are better informed about cultural life in the West than the people in the West know about cultural life here. That also applies to technical skills like working as producers, camera people and they have pretty much the same standards as we do and the level is equivalent. It has a pretty high level and Beirut is outstanding in terms of industry which only works with top-notch people.

KX: So what is the value added for the *Goethe-Institut* in working here?

FM: For us Beirut is very much like a European capital, ok a couple of things are difficult but we do cultural work and find added value there as we want to be in touch, to understand each other better, we also want to have a dialogue, also to enrich our cultural life to enable German artists, European artists to get in touch with the Lebanese counterparts whoever they are. It's not necessarily that we want clear goals and to achieve that and that. Of course we have a goal for each project but at least when it comes to Lebanon the goal is doing something together, learning something together, doing something better, and diminishing prejudices, increasing the infrastructure, increasing the network between Europe, Lebanese and Arab artists in the region. I would say that adds value.

KX: And from the other end: what is the attractiveness of local cultural operators to work with you?

FM: For them it's interesting of course for funding. Which is legitimate in a way: artists need funding. But it's also, it's not like countries asking for money for a project; it's more like artists looking for a project. We are on the market here. Of course we are partners to be addressed. In Germany I happened to be a film maker before I came here and I was running after funds myself. That's what very much our partners do here and they run after funds and they would run after funds just like European funds, or funds of companies. We are however not a grant-giving organisation. We are not such an organisation. We are for cooperation, we work on equal, level, on one high level, we do things together, give money to other people to do things, we want to be part of it, to be part of the creation process, of the invention, evaluation processes, part of the whole product. And we claim partly ownership. So this discriminates our situation from people like the European Commission or the Norwegian Fund or others.

Either we're part and we're clear up-front that we need some German bearing from Germany. A German artist, a German film being shown, whatever, there needs to be a certain relevance from Germany.

KX: Does this ambition extend to leaving a legacy?

FM: Legacy...maybe, but for us more important I think is to be visible, to make Germany tangible, to do things together which bring us a level higher and which brings them on higher ground. That's what we need. Increasing our knowledge, our productivity, our creativity, like doing things together.

KX: When you say 'our' it's an inclusive thing.

FM: I talk about everybody.

KX: In this 'our' can we figure in also the audiences?

FM: The audiences fit in however, we show movies, we address the public, that's from the public diplomacy side and you know as you're from the trade, but while that's public diplomacy in a way, more important we do things together; we do show our audiences and they benefit, but most of all, honestly speaking, we reach less and less direct audiences and more audiences through projects that other people do with us. There was a time when we did concerts very often or showed movies very often. But while this is nice, and needs a limited amount of money, we must use it in the most effective way. The feeling is that if we do co-productions for a lot of money it makes more sense than spending it on smaller concerts which are not really a co-production. Very often we did things like having a jazz band, a quartet, and they came and did a token workshop for half a day, or a day or two days, with local jazz players; it's not convincing, because such a workshop does not result in anything. You impress, you meet people, but in the end? I'd rather work on a two-month workshop to have at the end a CD.

Interview with Rita Khawand of *Khayal*

17 November 2011

KX: Pour les bénéfices de mes études et mes recherches je demande cette question: qu'est-ce que l'ampleur de l'influence européenne sur les relations culturelles de côté des opérateurs culturels libanais, de Beyrouth soi-même, comme vous. Pour commencer vous croyez qu'il y a une influence tangible de côté européenne sur les relations et les productions ?

RK: Je crois de côté, il y a la programmation qui se fait directement avec les instituts comme l'Alliance française, le *British*, en particulier: ce sont les deux plus actifs, disons, avec les espagnols qui sont actifs, et de l'autre côté pour nous comme association le cofinancement qu'on peut avoir à travers ces instituts. Alors quand on a un festival comme maintenant qui s'appelle 'Caravane', on a eu le support de l'ambassade espagnol pour faire venir un artiste espagnol et ça couvrait aussi ces dépenses. En fait 'Caravane' est étendue sur un période très longue.

KX: Ce n'est pas un projet court-terme mais un projet à long-terme.

RK: Oui parce qu'il y a cette idée en 2002 de s'étaler légèrement pour pouvoir ce décentraliser de Beyrouth. Parce qu'on ne peut recueillir toutes les compagnies et les faire tourner dans les villages dans une semaine. Alors maintenant on accueille chaque compagnie seule pour pouvoir faire le tour dehors de Beyrouth.

KX: Les compagnies sont tous espagnols ?

RK: Non: il y a des espagnols, françaises, une co-production libano-danois et maintenant on a la semaine prochaine une compagnie coréenne. On aurait aussi huit spectacles libanais: cinq de nos compagnies qui faisaient des marionnettes et trois autres locales.

KX: L'idée de travailler avec ces instituts étrangères pas seulement européens mais aussi coréens, vient d'où ? Qu'est-ce que la motivation de faire ce travail international à Beyrouth ?

RK: La motivation c'est quoi? C'est, on fait du théâtre pour les enfants, et la plupart des spectacles sont spectacles de marionnettes, et tout par les pays de la Méditerranée comme le Sud de la France ou l'Espagne ont intéressé à ça, on donne l'opportunité aux enfants libanais de voir le travail de plusieurs pays. Aussi par ce que la marionnette dans cette région-là a des racines communs. Donc c'est intéressant de voir comme on se ressemble. Pour la Corée c'était une opportunité parce qu'on avait un contact et c'est intéressant pour eux de découvrir le spectacle libanais.

KX: Vous mentionnez le publique. Le vôtre est très particulier ou ça change ?

RK: Nous avons...il y a une partie du publique qui on peut appeler notre publique. Chaque fois il vient, nous suit. Et toujours on a des nouveaux publics à Beyrouth. Dans les autres villes c'est très variées: il dépend. Il y a des villes qui sont accueillantes: à Tripoli on a joué cinq fois la 'Caravane'. Il y a des régions qui on visitait pour la première fois. Donc à Beyrouth il y a un publique et dans les régions il dépend. C'est après près de vingt ans qu'on a fait la compagnie et donc il y a des gens qui étaient dans notre publique comme enfant et aujourd'hui ils amènent leurs enfants.

KX: La réaction du publique c'est quoi ?

RK: Oui, ça dépend. Il y a des enfants qui à fois désignent des choses à base sur les caractères d'une pièce de nous. Et quand ils reviennent c'est un signe positif.

KX: Vous avez dit que Khayal a été fondée en 2004.

RK: Oui, mais le théâtre libanais de marionnette c'est fondé en 1992.

KX: La relation du théâtre de marionnette et *Khayal* avec le publique, mais avec la population en générale, c'est quoi ? Vous sentez un sens de mission dans votre travaille, pour bouger et faire changer les choses et penser dehors de la boîte ?

RK: Oui, bien sûr, c'est pour ça qu'on a décentralisé notre festival en fait. Les trois premières éditions 1999, 2001, 2003, c'était des festivals classiques d'une semaine ici à Beyrouth. Puis en 2009, après un arrêt depuis 2005 pour la situation grave politique, Beyrouth était la capitale du livre, et donc Karim [founder and coordinator of *Khayal*] voulait collaborer avec les bibliothèques publiques parce qu'il y avait un vrai besoin de décentralisation et donc c'est comme ça qu'on a commencé et rebaptisé le festival comme 'Caravane', un festival itinérant, et qu'on a commencé à jouer dans les bibliothèques publiques ou dans les salles publiques. Donc on n'est pas figés. On voit les besoins et les écoles.

KX: Si on voit dans cette mission de changements aussi le niveau de divertissement bien sûr, mais y-a-t-il aussi de l'éducation sur le théâtre ?

RK: En général on organise les stages de formation dans le cadre des festivals ou dehors. Surtout à chaque fois on a des ateliers qu'on conduit en personne, et on a des ateliers. Spécialement quand on a une compagnie d'Europe ou d'ailleurs de fois on demande aux artistes de donner un stage. Aussi comme Khayal nous avons des formations pour les éducateurs et les animateurs des gens, animateurs sociales etc. Khayal a fait plusieurs projets dans le cadre de l'animation sociale ou psycho-social. Il y aurait toujours une forme artistique soit le vidéo, ou les marionnettes etc. de façon interdisciplinaire, avec les enfants, les gens, les éducateurs, les femmes, il dépend s'était très variés.

KX: De côté étrangères, le financement c'est important, de côté des instituts et des fonds, ça c'est important. Ça vous donne le seul moyen de financement ou y-a-t-il aussi un financement local ?

RK: Il y a peu de financement local. Il y a peu exemple ça du Ministère de la Culture qu'est plus pour des avènements ponctuel. Par exemple, quelque fois ils achètent des spectacles pour représenter dans des bibliothèques. Donc c'est très ponctuel. Ils ne financent pas une partie du projet pour dire, 'nous voilà, nous payons pour faire un spectacle là-bas.'

KX: C'est un type de commission de travail.

RK: C'est comme ça mais pour exemple cette édition du 'Caravane' est financée du Fond Arabe pour la Culture. Donc c'est une institution arabe: elle n'est pas locale, pas libanais, je crois peut-être avec un siège enregistré en Belgique, mais...ça fa peine un fond arabe mais, des fois il est plus facile enregistrer ailleurs. C'est beaucoup plus difficile trouver les fonds ici. Pour le mécénat, encore, plus difficile. On collabore des fois avec des bibliothèques et des municipalités. L'année dernière on a fait ça beaucoup. Ça commence à meilleure les choses.

KX: Les municipalités aides avec le financement mais aussi avec le rôle du publique ?

RK: Ils ont accès au publique, bien sûr. Mais il dépend. Des fois, la municipalité et la bibliothèque organise ensemble une pièce. Et là c'est la municipalité qui paie et la bibliothèque qui fait la communication. Des fois c'est seulement la municipalité et il y a quelqu'un de la municipalité que fait la communication avec ou sans l'aide des associations locales.

KX: Par rapport au communautarisme au Liban, la situation complique votre travail sur tout le territoire libanais? On doit adapter beaucoup? Le Liban est un pays très complexe avec plusieurs identités. Quelque fois ils sont en conflictuel les uns et les autres. Un projet comme le vôtre trouve des difficultés à travailler dans une ambiance aussi complexe?

RK: Oui, au début quand la compagnie était fondée en 1992, Karim trouvait beaucoup de difficultés avec, des fois, des musulmans, disons, parce qu'ils ne voulaient pas de la musique. Il a pris beaucoup de temps pour être en confiance avec. Maintenant, ça va, et dans les endroits on essaie toujours d'avoir des partenaires locaux. On ne va pas dans un endroit, pas de tout. Toujours on a une personne, une association, une municipalité qui connaisse bien le terrain. Ils peuvent dirent 'ça va, ça ne va pas; c'est comme sujet est délicat etc.'

KX: Ils connaissent le territoire. On fait confiance à eux. Mais, les défis principaux avec lesquelles Khayal doivent combattre, sont quoi? A part le financement.

RK: Je crois que le défi principale pour les associations à but non lucratif c'est le financement. Parce qu'on n'a pas de financement du gouvernement pour couvrir les *running costs*. Toutes les associations sont dans la même situation. Tous sommes dans la course à trouver des financements pour les projets. On n'a pas le temps de s'organiser et faire un plan stratégique parce qu'on est toujours lié au fait que si on n'a pas de projets, l'association va disparaître. On n'a pas d'autre possibilité. Pour couvrir les frais de gérer l'association il n'y a pas d'options. C'est le plus grand défi. Plus grand que les conflits. Bien sûr chaque fois les choses changent, mais on s'adapte. Le plus grand défi c'est comment on peut trouver le financement pour l'infrastructure, le nécessaire pour meilleure le travail dans le même temps sans un financement régulier.

KX: Vous utilisez le volontariat comme source d'organisation ?

RK: Avant, non, on n'avait pas la volonté de faire ça. Mais il y a deux ans nous sommes engagés dans les projets européens pour l'envoi et l'accueil. On a eu des françaises. On ne l'a pas fait au début avec l'intention de nous aider, on a juste reçu des demandes. On n'est très prête à travailler avec les volontaires parce que ça prend de l'énergie: on n'a pas de sources suffisantes pour s'occuper des volontaires, pour guider, les former. On envoie aussi – je suis la première qui était allé en France. Après on a envoyé trois autres, deux en Belgique et un en Angleterre. Tout ça dans le programme Jeunesse en Action. On fait des échanges dans ce cadre, pas beaucoup mais c'est significatif.

KX: Khayal se présent comme organisateur indépendant, pas confessionnel, pas du parti. Au Liban y a-t-il beaucoup d'associations comme ça ou c'est difficile d'être vraiment indépendant ?

RK: Il y a beaucoup, beaucoup d'association au Liban parce que c'est beaucoup plus facile de faire des associations que dans autre pays arabe. Il y a déjà beaucoup d'associations et beaucoup qui sont

indépendants des partis politiques. Au moins, dans l'apparence. Après, c'est différent. Il y a beaucoup de ça.

KX: Pour les libanais c'est facile distinguer ça ?

RK: C'est plus facile que pour les étrangères. Si tu connais les personnes de sa région et avec qu'il travail.

KX: Je ne peux pas faire un jugement moral sur ça à propos de manque d'indépendance. Mais tu trouves des différences entre l'opération d'une association qui est indépendante et une autre qui ne l'est pas ?

RK: Oui, parce qu'il y a des associations qui reçoivent des fonds des partis religieux, d'une église. Mais ça ne signifie pas qu'ils s'adressent seulement aux chrétiens. Après s'il y a des groupes qui limitent leurs groupes cibles, une partie particulière de la communauté, parce qu'ils sont financés ou soutenus par un parti religieux ou politique, oui, il y a ça. Il y a les deux. Il y a qui essaie de recevoir toute l'aide qu'ils peuvent et travaille à façon ouverte.

KX: Ça crée des frictions entre organisations indépendantes et non ?

RK: Non, pas ça, parce que les associations culturelles à Beyrouth n'ont pas d'identité politique très claire. Mais par exemple quand on veut collaborer avec un centre de jeunes, s'il y a un centre qui va nous accueillir nous voulons savoir qu'est-ce que le fil conducteur de cette organisation. On essaie que ça soit le plus objectif, le moins politique possible. Nous ne pouvons pas échapper à ça, mais on essaie.

KX: Et la raison d'éviter ça ? C'est pour éviter plus de complexité avec le public ?

RK: Oui, on ne veut pas qu'un enfant ne vienne pas parce que ses parents sentent que c'est pour un parti ou une confession. Donc on essaie de collaborer avec des lieux et des gens et associations qui sont les plus neutres possibles pour garder l'équilibre et l'objectivité.

Interview with Fatmé Masri, Director British Council

17 November 2011

KX: To start off, there is one question which I'm trying to address, which is what is the impact of the influence of European cultural institutes like the British Council within the Lebanese cultural reality, which is diverse, built on a number of strata, with a very complex history and a very complex present?

FM: I can start by giving you a bit of background. You already know about the British Council: we're the UK's cultural relations organisation and we, around the world and in Lebanon of course, we work under programme areas through cultural relations. We have education, education and society, education being more rounded: you're dealing with people, with teachers' training, skills for teachers, links with independent schools and the UK. So we have awards, like the International School Award. We have local schools which have an international dimension to their curriculum. They work on joint projects between here and the UK and this has direct impact on the development of young professionals and also the students and all the projects which the students work on are focused on challenging stereotypes, it could be something as simple as sharing how Lebanese live and how they spend their days. This is all on material sent by the UK. So you are developing with it. In English we teach English and also have a big portfolio of professional development for teachers in English so basically through the language courses the UK is highlighted with a lot of examples in the UK that make students familiar with UK culture, the ways of doing things, teaching methods. So it's bringing the expertise of educational English to Lebanon. And the second programme area is English. The third one is arts. One may think it is more straightforward, engaging in cultural relations through arts but I think compared to other cultural centres here, European cultural centres, we work very differently. We don't do just like events, you know, just like a UK play or film, showcasing in Lebanon. We run long-term opportunities for arts people and cultural leaders in Lebanon.

KX: With a focus on long-term.

FM: And sustainable because, I know that everybody will tell you that 'that we have sustainable' but here we really do. It's about providing a platform for artists and cultural leaders, that is someone who may have a cultural organisation, be it the Beirut arts centre or the Metropolis film, or publishing company, so we provide them with a network to platform with people in the UK through arts projects, so it would be on a specific project we work on. After we start directly working with this person, this person would already have established contacts in the UK and they would do the work.

KX: Would this be like the CLI project, in which Malta is involved?

FM: Yes, for example here cultural leaders do not have what we call a creative economy, so we have been running a programme for young people, an international programme for entrepreneurs, an award, and this is the sixth year. We have around twenty alumni in all kinds of fields. It's an international competition. Lebanon, it's a very small country but we won three international awards, in arts, visual arts and publishing. So the publishing candidate, as a concrete example, was a senior editor, then out of the programme she did an internship at Bloomsbury and she had a lot of people meeting her.

KX: One thing led to another...

FM: Exactly. Without us even being present financially or physically.

KX: Do you see the impact going full circle? Does the process affect society in Beirut?

FM: Yes for example like the creative publishing entrepreneur what she's been doing is that out of a series of programs she was involved in with the British Council now she decided she's really focused on children's literature. She developed this portfolio at the publishing house where she works which didn't have children's books and she managed to buy the rights for *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* to be translated into Arabic. So this is kind of a direct success story of someone. We stress the right choice of people we get involved in. We are not going to be there forever, of course we have changing priorities, projects come and go, but people stay.

KX: It sounds like you're trying to establish a legacy.

FM: Exactly. I can tell you that the difference is, I think, and I've had feedback from the arts community here, we're not as visible for example as the Institut français because it's not like we have a booklet we produce every month showing what we do because we don't have so much to showcase. For example last March we had the International Dance Festival with the Mediterranean Platform of Dance and Akram Khan, who is one of the biggest dancers in the UK contemporary dance scene. We showcase his latest show called *Vertical Road*. With this after the performance we had like a discussion with Akram and the public about the work mainly. *Vertical Road* was about the topic of Islam so it stirred a bit of a debate with a topical issue and the audience had the chance to discuss this. Then we had the dance workshop with the dancers and a talk with Akram Khan's director and how he set up his company because they started by mortgaging his house. So we shared this experience and some of the others were not even related to dance. This inspired them a lot, the arts managers and leaders, since they think that in the UK things are much easier, there's support of funding for the arts, which is not always the case, especially now with budget cuts. So I think now also benefits the UK from learning how we work here.

KX: During my stint with Counterpoint we talked about mutuality and this seems to be mutuality in practice.

FM: It is and in education here also there is a stereotype that schools are great and all teachers are qualified etc. When we have a delegation of UK teachers visiting Lebanon they're very impressed by the fact that 'OK you have students at the age of three who learn three languages at the same time; how do you do that, in your curriculum?' And this is a moral boost for teachers here who see UK teachers impressed. And the other way round too: when teachers go to the UK sometimes if it's a small local school it may not be impressive.

KX: Are you talking about public, private, community-religious groups?

FM: Yes all three. We work through the Ministry of Education. They choose the schools they want to involve in our projects but their priority is definitely public schools which, I'll be honest, is way more challenging than...first, you have to go through the bureaucracy of the government to be able to access public schools with the necessary permissions, generally three months in advance, the authorisations, and they need to be completely aware from A to Z of what you're going to do in these schools. Now we have a solid track record it's easier. We also work with private schools. In Lebanon you need to take into consideration, including the various local areas.

KX: What is the motivation of the British Council to invest so much in young people, children, education and culture? Is it a matter of developing audiences for British productions or does it go beyond that?

FM: Education is very straightforward. English, it's important. Our strategy for the MENA [Middle East North Africa] region, I think 80% of the population is between 18 and 25 so this is the main drive for our work. To be able to give young people opportunities. As well as showcasing what the UK has in various areas, it's about providing opportunities for young people. Whether it's involving them in arts programmes, working with civil society in Lebanon, we've done that also in the past and now after what has been happening in the region our role is increasingly more important.

KX: In relation to audiences you have today and the ones you have been developing, would you say there's a particular profile of people who already know UK culture, speak English, is there such a profile or is it a mixed one?

FM: I think that more and more we're trying to move away from the elite audience of Lebanon. Our education programmes are really, your teacher teaching at the end of nowhere, really underprivileged areas in rural villages in Lebanon. And we reach out to these teachers. It's not your elite school, international college, it's the grassroots. In our work with society, by which I mean everyone at all levels, the British Council will not have access to...I refer to one of our projects of last year, with underprivileged communities in the South, it's not us who has access to these, it's through the local partners that we choose we can train the NGO but they take it from there. We support them through expertise, training and all that and financially.

KX: Have the cuts you mentioned before greatly changed the implementation of the strategy and do you have to be more creative in what you do with your budgets?

FM: Yes, strategically it has changed. Financially, the cuts are between now and 2013 so it won't be abrupt. We re-adjusted our priorities in the sense that in the past we used to have many more projects. We have two different levels: one is through global projects which here would be delivered through all of MENA which before was only NENA [Near East, North Africa] and now includes the Middle East, and the other bit is local cultural relations where we have more flexibility in local projects and with local contacts but which of course address the larger context. In the past we used to have many large scale projects and two years each country in MENA, with the theme, assessed its projects and how we ran them and out of seven or eight projects we needed to minimise them to four. Of course at the beginning it was 'what am I going to do with this project and these audiences?' but after the exercise on the priorities for Lebanon we realised we worked better by doing this. Rather than having more projects and not focused on one area it was time to assess and in Lebanon we decided to remain present in all areas in education, arts and cultural relations but do it better having one bigger project as opposed to many smaller ones.

KX: What was the response of people you engaged with?

FM: We didn't let anybody down of course. It was more like we sat with our partners, explained our strategy in the different areas and found new common ground to continue with and we did have flexibility in our local budget so whatever was not really working in some project we tailored it more to our local budget.

KX: Are there any specific criteria for projects you initiate or people you decide to engage with? For example in Malta certain issues related to religion, censorship, are often not raised because they're seen as not worth the hassle. One may be for challenging stereotypes but one may not go on a crusade to change things at any cost. I wonder here, in relation to communitarianism, religion and the general cultural reality?

FM: We are for powerful debate and tackling issues and being controversial so to speak as long as we're open to this and discussing this. If it's just to provoke...if it's under a wider programme that we run, yes. For example, three years ago we had a play written by a Scottish playwright and it was entitled *Damascus*. He worked in a project we had with the Royal Court Theatre in London, did a series of workshops with playwrights from the region about writing skills which was called 'New Writing for Theatre'. They were able to focus on their text and have plays from the Arab world developed. The playwright had a series of workshops in Damascus and fell in love with the city. He decided to write his own play about it. Following that we decided to showcase it. It was more awkward here, having a play written by a British playwright about your own city, if you were from Damascus, so there were immediate counter-reactions. People are very familiar with the city of Damascus so they reacted to it whether it was an Orientalist depiction of Damascus or not and we had a debate about the Other in theatre. People are courageous, especially when they want to express their views and this was under a wider programme. In the press we had a lot of reviews of the play, not necessarily being the best play which has showcased here but it was a platform for discussion.

KX: It was the general press, French, English, Arabic?

FM: Definitely: and it was a challenge. You can't have a play called *Damascus* without it raising a discussion. This was three years ago and the Syrian troops had just pulled out of Lebanon. We had a discussion about whether the time would be appropriate or not because it was a very tough year for Lebanon during that time: not long after the President was assassinated, so we knew there would be no escape for Lebanese people to associate...to express their views. These were also theatre practitioners in the discussion, also from Syria, British and Lebanese. I think it's how you present the issue and how you facilitate the discussion, who will lead the discussion, understanding what we're here to talk about. People believe in freedom of expression but as long as you make sure it leads somewhere.

KX: What are the main challenges of working in Beirut? While you're talking about the local reality, there's also the regional one. Is it a tough balancing act to pull?

FM: In Lebanon, anything to do with ministries is challenging. In all our arts programmes we try, many times, to involve the Ministry of Culture. In other countries this is not the case. There, the Ministry of Culture is present and is a partner. Here, no. I'm sure my European institutes' colleagues would agree on that. However, the Ministry of Education is straightforward for us to work with. Whereas in the region it's not that straightforward. You have pros and cons.

KX: It seems every situation is particular. You can't just generalise about ministries and which ministries. Does it depend on personal relations?

FM: Definitely, but also on political will. You can say that the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education do not have funds. One of them we're over-active by working partners while the other can tell we can do nothing with no funds. So yes, it's political will as well, it's not only relations, but like we foster a lot over relations with the Ministry of Education; every year we invite the Minister to a big

education conference in London, with all ministers of education from around the world. We do include tackling policy change in all our programmes, and this is for sure.

KX: Is there any resistance or scepticism from the side of ministries and parts of the general population towards work that you do, as European, foreign, Western, in the context of your history, being present in the Middle East, not as British Council, but through Empire?

FM: Yes. The thing is in Lebanon it's very different from other countries. First of all we were a French mandate territory not a British colony and FCO policies towards Lebanon are not strong as opposed to, if you had to ask my colleagues in Palestine or Egypt, never. So here we don't face that. We worked with everybody, from across Lebanon, and all sexes, all political affiliations, and we don't face any. We have, for example, a big project on citizenship in the South, and we talk about global citizenship to underprivileged people, and it's fine.

KX: The attempt at inclusivity, from the British Council side, does create problems for participants themselves? Do you see that people may be happy with the way you treat issues and the way progress is made about certain things but can't overcome the frictions between themselves and their neighbours? Does this come up within your structures?

FM: Not really. All the people who are in charge of our projects on the ground are Lebanese. They would know better, their situation, tackle all the issues in Lebanon. But talking about schools would mean schools from different affiliations who partner together in our projects and there's never friction between them. Activists, people from the communities, also, present the same case: the purpose of the programme is to discuss issues of the moment. People are professional, they know better than having frictions between them. It never happened. This is not our mission either, to solve Lebanon's problems. It's more like, I see it, as a facilitation of dialogue, and in specific areas, fine-tuning skills in specific areas or exposing people to theatre or film from the UK.

KX: Talking about skills also in relation to education and training, do you have a role when it comes to building a cultural infrastructure? Apart from the people, if a discussion can lead to policies set for locally training infrastructures, or performing spaces, or resources for research and archiving, does that ever come up?

FM: It does. All the policy change that you've described we, in every project, we have a strand, like a red line policy and for example, our creative economy project allowed us to organise a seminar last year which studied investing in the Lebanese creative economy. First of all if you need to talk about creative economy you need to talk about infrastructure. Something like fast internet, or reduced challenges for communication, since mobile telephony is very expensive. So these are infrastructure changes we have nothing to do with. But we can raise awareness about them. Basically we would have one day raising awareness about creative industries themselves, and then we'd have participants raise recommendations as to how to achieve this, and the following day we'd have a work force for different sectors, as much as we can, involving all industries, so we would be people from the education sector, artists, arts organisations, discussing these changes. So the British Council is like a facilitator for that. We raised recommendations and you have something like bridging the gap between investors and entrepreneurs. This we can organise workshops and put them together. But when you're talking about the actual measures we can't really. It's on the agenda, or the proceedings of the conference, in the sense that this should be done. We work on the professional development of teachers basing ourselves on the reform plan from the Ministry. So they have a new five year reform plan which we base ourselves

on. If the policy speaks of introducing computers to assist teachers we don't do this, but we follow it and once they sort out computers we have all kinds of measures on training and how to use these resources in class. So I think that stakeholders have different objectives. And then the Minister goes to the national conference where he can network with Microsoft, big computer companies, who he can work with. So in a way we do contribute to that and making change possible.

KX: Do you feel you're enabling change to happen also by enabling more of an independent cultural sector to establish itself? Not necessarily tied down to a community, faction, or a government. In a recent publication by the *Boekman Foundation*, also supported by the British Council, it was said more people seemed to want to go it alone, thinking independently and doing things. Do you think the British Council supports this and will keep doing this?

FM: Yes, when we do teacher training, it's the teachers who run things. When we work with artists, we engage a similar approach. Especially those who are business-oriented, and it's their drive to expand their business. But maybe for the not-for-profit organisation it's a bit more difficult since funding in Lebanon is difficult and a big percentage of funding is international, specifically like EU, Ford Foundation Swedes and Danes.

KX: Is there a direct link between these channels of funding or do funding streams happen to overlap sometimes?

FM: Of course all of the institutes and funders have their own priorities. But as with the EUNIC cluster, established over a year ago, we have been meeting regularly through a formalised channel and we discuss our individual programme and find ways of working together. But at the end every centre has its own objectives.

KX: But you collaborate.

FM: Yes, through EUNIC clusters we've had two successful events. Now we have the European film festival next week and that's a joint venture.

KX: Taking it from the local, to the European, to the Mediterranean dimension, do you feel that in the way culture is done or managed locally, the Mediterranean is thought about? Is it a concept which is alive? Does it make any difference conceiving of the Mediterranean in any way or is it just a pretty add-on?

FM: I think it depends on who you ask this question to. So, applying to ALF funds or Euro-Med funds will address this issue as they need to take the Mediterranean into consideration. If you're talking about your average man or woman on the street I don't think so. Lebanese identity is very complex. To start with, we may need to be Lebanese first, before looking to the region, then reach out through layers to the Mediterranean.

KX: Do you find artists may be more open about thinking about working on a Mediterranean dimension?

FM: Am I wrong in thinking that 'Mediterranean' can be more a result of funding, more than a matter of identity?

KX: That's an interesting perspective, and very tangible. It's about how you get things done. Funding, mobility programmes...

FM: Superficially this is a ...we know there are many countries in the Mediterranean. But an interesting question could be whether cultural operators here feel Arab anyway? First, there's Lebanon; then the region; then the Mediterranean, with different countries like Italy or Spain who have different realities.

KX: I find the Gulf States have a presence here, with Lebanese people and their families working there.

FM: And the arts sector is booming there...

KX: So within the MENA, does that include the Gulf states?

FM: No, it's the Maghreb, Middle East.

KX: So in your region you have part of the Mediterranean, but not all, but rather the Muslim part.

FM: Yes. When we started working regionally, it was very straightforward to work with, as long as it was Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan as well. But when we addressed artists and cultural operators with Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, they're very different. Even the language is different. For example, I cannot understand a Moroccan speaking, if I need to speak with them I'll use French. We have people from the Gulf who emerge as one region and there the realities are completely different. But if I focus on Lebanon, Lebanon has a big role to play in anything regional, North Africa, Middle East or the Gulf countries. We have a track record of doing this. I think that all this change in the region, countries can benefit from this, especially civil society. In Lebanon civil society is developing, maybe we haven't achieved all the change we want to achieve but we've been through the processes to achieve.

KX: The way you speak you put forward very clearly that there are challenges, but the way things have gone and are going there is a lot of optimism in relation to young people, females, and others.

FM: Yes, to be simplistic, if you want to have a programme around film-making in the Arab world, there is no chance there won't be a Lebanese film-maker there. Or in the performing arts, any field, there will be a representative from Lebanon. While other countries may be getting there, they may be not there yet. In spite of all our problems.

KX: It seems the more challenging the context, the more vibrant exchange of ideas, possibly. If you take a quiet, calm, country, although I can't really think of one, you may not have that spark.

FM: And if you look at Western countries who address the Arab Spring, you will find we were part of this anyway. People recognise this, that Lebanon is part of the region.

Interview with Nadim Tarazi, cultural operator

18 November 2011

KX: Ma recherche vise les relations culturelles entre le Nord et le Sud de la Méditerranée particulièrement dans les villes de la Méditerranée suivantes: Malte, parti Sud, parti Nord, Casa et Rabat, Alger et Beyrouth. Je voulais vous demander qu'est-ce que vous pensez de l'ampleur de l'influence des relations culturelles européennes sur la vie culturelle à Beyrouth en relation au publique, aide, appui à la conception culturelle ?

NT: Vous savez que l'histoire du Liban est témoin de l'influence conflictuelle, considérée comme conflictuelle, entre Occident et arabe. Et pour très longtemps il était divisé entre ces deux pôles occidentaux et arabes. C'était avant la guerre il y a un quarantaine d'années. Maintenant c'est plus mélangé. C'est évident que le Liban est mélangé par toute la culture occidentale et toute la culture orientale. Nous avons des bon relations, voir privilégiées, avec les pays européennes comme l'Italie ou la France, et beaucoup pays. De point de vue culturel je constate que, ça fait trente-cinq ans que je suis dans le domaine du livre, je constate que, en particulier pendant vente-trois comme bibliothécaire travaillant u libraire avec livre en français, ma dernière librairie était à cette librairie avant que j'ai arrêté il y a dix ans, et puis j'ai créé La Maison du Livre, et c'est seulement pendant les dernières trois ans que je sens constamment, dans les propositions qu'on fait, parler d'Euro-méditerranéen. Avant c'était l'Europe. On ne mentionnait pas particulièrement la Méditerranée. Maintenant on parle constamment dans les projets de Méditerranée. Il y a une volonté, affichée claire, de faire rencontrer l'Europe et la Méditerranée et la côté Sud de la Méditerranée.

KX: Ça c'est de côté français ?

NT: Ça c'est de tous les projets qui viennent de l'Europe. Alors c'est toujours un Euro-Med.

KX: Ça signifie quelque chose dans le sens tangible, réelle des choses, ou c'est seulement un mot ?

NT: Moi je crois que les vrais projets intéressants, culturels, n'ont pas besoin de ce mot. Les gens prends l'attitude, les associations prends l'attitude, jusqu'à tous devient officiel. Ça à côté peut-être forcé, faussé et artificiel. Ça n'empêche pas que ça permet d'avoir de finesse que permet d'avoir des projets euro-méditerranéens ais bons.

KX: Mais en fait vous ne voyez pas de grande différence après et avant qu'on utilise le mot Euro-Med ?

NT: Personnellement pas mais ça a permis, si voulez, qu'est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose à ce niveau que peut être exploité dans ce bons sens.

KX: Pour les personnes dans le champ culturel libanais, pour les libanais, méditerranéen...signifie quelque chose ?

NT: Dans le milieu culturel oui. Vous savez les libanais sont des grands voyageurs depuis toujours. Et les libanais étaient des premières à traverser la Méditerranée, inclus Malte, et donc pratiquement on est conscient qu'il y a beaucoup des pays arabes autour de la Méditerranée et aussi des pays comme l'Italie et la France avec des longues histoires en commun avec le monde arabe, aussi l'Espagne. C'est comme quelqu'un qui a pris conscience de quelque chose qu'il a toujours fait. Certain c'est très positif de se

rendre compte de quelque chose qui on a fait toujours. Mais le handicape de ça c'est que là où le projet devient conscient de son nom, les institutions s'emmêlent avec des résultats négatifs et ça est qu'est-ce qu'on a eu avec Beyrouth capitale mondiale du livre en 2009. Je travaillais depuis plus de trente ans dans le domaine des livres et j'avais beaucoup des idées et contacts. Quand Beyrouth était déclaré capitale du livre ils sont arrivés des hordes, des gens, je ne sais d'où, qui ont déclarés à la presse qu'ils étaient les pionniers du livre, il y a eu un bagarre pour l'argent et ce n'est pas comme ça, ce n'arrive pas à se défendre contre ce genre de chose.

KX: Le champ culturel, en général, attrape l'attention des partis politiques ?

NT: Bien sûr, il y en a beaucoup d'organismes et organisations qui dépendent directement des partis politiques. Des partis politiques qui créent des associations, des organismes, pour maîtriser la situation politique et confessionnelle.

KX: Ça vous le voyez dans divers moyens d'expression ?

NT: Je vous donne l'exemple du syndicat des éditeurs, avec lesquelles j'ai eu beaucoup de problèmes. J'ai représentait beaucoup des organismes du livre au Liban, et pour plusieurs années dans des expositions internationales du livre libanais. Donc on demandait la participation des éditeurs pour se faire reconnaître par les éditeurs étrangers. Et un jour le syndicat a décidé que ça suffisait parce qu'il y a un côté religieux. Vous savez que tous au Liban est divisé par communauté religieux. Du Président de la République au plus petit il y a la division communautaire. Du maronite au grec orthodoxe etc. Il y avait un syndicat, je ne me rappelle pas si était sunnite ou shiite, et ils ont établi un autre soi-même. Donc, ils étaient une maison du livre fictif pour pouvoir décider où l'argent se passé.

KX: C'était artificiel pour avoir une représentation.

NT: Oui. Je vous donne cet exemple parce que j'ai eu des problèmes personnels avec eu et pas par ça. Tous les syndicats au Liban sont confessionnels et partisans.

KX: Il y a des situations quand on peut surmonter ces difficultés ou c'est une impasse, c'est bloqué ?

NT: Moi, je l'appris à mes dépenses. Je n'ai jamais eu l'esprit partisan, j'ai eu des amis de toutes les religions et ce n'est pas un élément que joue dans mes choix. Mais j'ai été contraint par la force des choses...je vous voulais raconter, quand vous rencontrez un libanais, que vous ne connaissez pas, la première question est 'quel est votre nom ?' et il l'aide savoir de quel religion vous êtes. Donc le nom détermine si vous êtes chrétien de cette côté politique là. J'ai appris après quelques années de ne travailler qu'avec quelque associations et je travaille avec ceci sauf quand je connais les individus, que je sais que j'aurai des rapports professionnels, correctes, compétentes, c'est la seule chose que compte pour moi. Tu peux faire plusieurs années avec le Ministère de la Culture, pour dire...tu vas voir Imad Hashem là, c'est la seule personne qui s'occupe de la lecture publique avec conscience.

KX: La leçon que vous avez appris est garder les relations avec les personnes compétents, être engagé avec les juste personnes et avoir contrôle sur ce que vous faites.

NT: Par exemple, les deux derniers années, après la capitale du livre, qu'était très bien partie, c'était l'occasion de populariser, pendant plusieurs années il y avait tant des initiatives à bas de Beyrouth, il était temps de prendre ces initiatives et travailler avec les associations du livre de Marseille,

dernièrement, la figuration de la bibliothèque en Italie qui sont des personnes qui j'avais rencontré aux séminaires et tables ronds et on a parlés de choses Euro-Med et on est en train de travailler avec.

KX: Dans le dialogue euro-méd....et interculturel avec les autres pays arabes, du rive Sud, sont-ils facile d'aborder et travailler avec ?

NT: Le Liban est le plus facile je dirai. C'est le seul pays qui a une situation d'économie totalement libérale, qui est loin de la dictature. Tous les systèmes dans les pays arabes sont des dictateurs. Le Liban est le pays avec le système plus démocratique. On essaie de travailler avec les pays arabes: quand j'ai commencé ma librairie en 1978, je voulais travailler sur le français, l'anglais et l'arabe. Je ne pouvais pas travailler avec les arabes: j'avais contacté toutes les éditeurs libanais que je connaissais et ils ne se intéressaient pas à travailler avec les arabes. Je parlais avec les éditeurs et ils m'expliqués qu'il y avait un problème: ils voulaient se débarrasser du libraire, de la chaîne qui porte le livre au lecteur. On voulait travailler directement avec les écoles, les universités, dans les salons du livre. Pendant vente ans, et avec la Maison du Livre, j'ai travaillé avec des amis professionnel pour consolider la chaîne du livre. Aussi dans des course qu'on donne à St Joseph nous insistons a laisser vivre toute la chaîne. J'ai expliqué aux étudiants que chaque métier est indispensable. L'université est privée, fondé par les jésuites, et ils ont des relations privilèges en France. Pour retourner aux éditeurs arabes, en 1978, avec ma librairie, j'abritais à Hamra. Je suis chrétien, mais c'est un quartier chrétien et musulman. Quand j'étais jeune je vivais à Tripoli qu'est très musulman. J'ai créé ma librairie là-bas.

KX: Ca était un moment critique pour le Liban.

NT: C'est toujours un moment critique au Liban...Mais, jusqu'à 1982, quand la situation politique c'est transformée avec l'invasion israélien et puis l'Hezbollah a pris le pouvoir officiellement et je devais quitter le lieu pour la situation à cause de ma femme et mes parents jusqu'à 1986 quand je suis venu m'installer ici. En même temps j'avais contacté les éditeurs français et ils m'ont facilité de façon incroyable le jeu. L'idée de spécialiser dans les livre de jeunesse m'été facilité de manière incroyable, et c'était fondamentale, et ne valait pas la peine faire d'autre.

KX: Dans la situation contemporaine, il y a encore des problèmes de vision et intéresse avec les éditeurs arabes pour qu'ils ne s'intéressent pas à la collaboration régional-international ?

NT: C'est très important de savoir pourquoi on fait quelque chose. Il y a un problème de vision parce que je vois que depuis les éditeurs libanais, avec les arabes, n'imaginaient pas qu'est-ce qui on pourrait faire demain. Par avoir les solutions à l'immédiat on n'a pas le temps de penser à autre. C'est pour ça que nous sommes dans une situation générale très difficile depuis quarante ans. Je moi voit avec des personnes, certains éditeurs, publicateurs, je ne suis pas le seul, ce n'était pas une vision miraculeuse. Nous étions dans un temps où nous recherchons de faire des choses, avec le Ministère, avec des associations. Où moment où nous ne laissent travailler comme ça, où ils veulent maîtriser comment ils les convient, ça touche sa fin. C'est pour ça que la plupart des actions pour le livre sont de côté de l'ambassade de France et l'Institut culturel, qui a aussi ces intéresse, mais au moins on laisse de travailler, parce que ces idées sont appliquées en France et en Europe. Ils ont ses intéresse aussi. L'application de la Maison du Livre vient avec l'aide des français.

KX: Pas seulement financière mais morale aussi.

NT: Bien sûr. Il peut venir de se sentir très seul ici.

KX: Vous mentionnez les intérêts de côtés français. Qu'est-ce qu'ils sont ces intérêts: politiques, culturels, d'avoir un lien plus fort avec un territoire stratégique qui était une fois occupé par les français ?

NT: Bien sûr. Avec la France on a un lien très ancien depuis au moins le dix-neuvième siècle. Les français se sont rendu compte dans les années soixante-dix de perdre du terrain face aux anglais. Ils ne pouvaient pas faire la guerre économique aux américains. Ils ne pouvaient pas s'imposer militairement. Alors la seule façon était le culturel. De toute façon avec les institutions culturelles. Après la fin de la guerre, la fin officiel de la guerre, en 1990, la création de Centre culturel français, en toutes le Liban, pas dans les centres chrétiens, conservatrices, mais après 1990, et pendant douze ans, il y avait des personnes pendant la guerre aussi, mais après la guerre on a ouvert plusieurs. Je crois que les français se sont rendu compte que la seule arme était celle culturelle et linguistique. Et maintenant, après quarante ans qu'on considérait les chrétiens, on considère les musulmans. Il y a plus assiduité de côté shiite pour le français, c'est les personnes voilés qui vont aux Instituts, pour apprendre le français et la Francophonie.

KX: Y-a-t-il une raison historique récente pour ça ?

NT: La raison c'est de côté français. Ils se sont rendu compte que de côté maronite n'était pas la meilleure chose il été mieux avoir plusieurs cartes. Les shiites, depuis longtemps, était considérait comme les mauvais, c'était très important pour leur d'avoir contact avec, depuis trente ans avec la montée du Hezbollah; ils sont très actif au niveau social et culturel. Et c'est un groupe, catégorie de personnes très volontaire, dynamique, structurés, organisés, qui a le seul projet clair.

KX: Avec des instituts on a parlé de l'importance de la flexibilité et d'être prêt à changer en relation aux circonstances. Le 'printemps arabe' peut avoir répercussions sur le monde culturel libanais ?

NT: Je ne sais pas dire. Quand le 'printemps arabe' a commencé officiellement au début de cette année moi j'étais très sceptique. Sur Facebook, etc. On sait qu'au principe il peut-être populaire mais vite il peut être récupéré et manipulé. Ce qui ce passe en Tunisie et en Égypte. Ou ça que ne passe pas. Les choses sont comme ça. Mais il y a une chose qui peut-être vraiment changé est c'est le peuple n'a plus peur. Le peuple a renversé cette peur. Le peuple arabe et le peuple musulman en générale ont surmonté ça. Peut-être vous savez que le terme Islam originalement signifie s'abandonner, au destin, a la fatalité. Là, même s'il se passe comme en Syrie, on continue à se battre pour changer. Donc, le fait de savoir qu'on peut changer les choses est peut-être le seul changement important. Politiquement, ceux qui était de côté de Moubarak ou Ben Ali ont les moyen de revenir comme démocrates, comme dans le bloc communiste il y a vingt ans, on a fait la révolution, on s'est débarrassé des communistes, et maintenant, je ne sais pas exactement, mais les communistes se sont reconverti. Je ne sais pas beaucoup mais il y a une dynamique dans le champ artistique aussi, ça il y a un influence bien sûr. Vous savez que le culturel dépend beaucoup des moyens financières, et donc ont dois vivre de subversion, contributions, et beaucoup n'arrive pas seuls. Certains pays arabe du Golf ont beaucoup d'argent, mais là il y a une culture officielle. Là on fait les choses sous le regard du régime et ce n'est pas la vraie culture. Je suis riche et c'est de la façade.

KX: Une personne égyptienne, une artiste, dit que le champ culturel n'a pas seulement bénéficié du changement politique, mais il a contribué à ça. Des autres sont un peu sceptique de ça, il trouve ça est exagérée.

NT: C'est comme se dire que avec se passant un message sur *Facebook* c'est assez pour avoir le changement. C'est devenu presque drôle. 'Cliquez ici et vous êtes en train de faire la révolution.' C'est un petit peu infantile. Dans le monde culturel beaucoup de gens ont une tendance de dire 'je suis jeune, malheureux, je vais changer tout.' Je l'ai fait. Mon fils, il a dix-huit ans, il m'avait dit qu'il voulait faire du cinéma en France. Avant de partir, avec tout préparé, il avait pris peur. Il m'avait dit 'je ne sais pas qu'est que je peux faire et si je peux réaliser mes rêves.' Moi, je lui ai dit deux choses: qu'il tient beaucoup à ses rêves pour y aller, et ne pas croire qu'on fait les choses d'inspirations et talents seulement. Quatre-vingt-dix-neuf pourcent des efforts était la persistance. Le vrai culturel et le vrai artistique font la propre révolution. Maintenant peut-être que les situations comme ceci on les appelle le 'printemps arabe', savait favoriser certaines choses que sont en train de changer. Mais ne serait pas le 'printemps arabe' qui va créer le changement. Il y a des choses qui peuvent profiter de ça.

KX: De côté européenne, vous croyez que on partage la vision de changement, on est plutôt exploitante de ça, par association, aussi dans le champ culturel ?

NT: Il faut demander à l'institution culturelle ça. Mais je ne suis pas d'accord avec ceux qui disent que ça qui se passe dans le pays arabes est le travail des occidentaux. Je ne crois pas qu'ils ont les moyens de faire tout ça. Il commence à s'intéresser à la situation pour y profiter, oui. On peut aimer à voir l'encouragement de changement, avec des ressources, et des armes.

KX: Le rapport avec le publique, en général, est aussi en particulière. De côté européenne, ils peuvent sembler comme des cases: les femmes, les enfants, dans la société civile. Il y a une valeur ajoutée en visant directement des groupes particuliers ?

NT: D'abord, au niveau de mon travail, même si je n'ai pas recherché ça, avec la littérature, pour jeunesse, la science humains, je peux dire qu'il vaut la peine faire ça. On entre dans les problématiques en fonds, de côté pratique. Le fait de cibler aide, ça permet de focaliser les efforts. Maintenant, de côté négatif, c'est si on exclut. Si on fait, par exemple, des actions pour les femmes, ça peut exclure les hommes. C'est bon pour distinguer sur eux, mais pas bien aussi de leur exclure du contexte plus mélangé. C'est bon distinguer le publique, mais ça doivent être fonctionnel pour eux, et pas au détriment d'eux-mêmes et des autres. Il y a tendances, ces dernières années, qui se déclare féministes, je suis féministes, mais pas pour dénigrer les hommes. Il n'y a pas les beaux et les méchantes.

KX: Vous avez un système de réponse du publique ?

NT: Pendant la capitale du livre, on a ralenti ça; ces derniers deux ans je rencontre toujours les personnes qui regrettent toujours des projets que j'arrêtais. Parce que j'ai fait avec des partenaires, un festival s'appelant les Festival Itinérant de Livre pour la Jeunesse, donc on se placé dans une ville particulière hors Beyrouth, parce que on savait que quatre-vingt-dix pour cent des activités culturelles se font ici, et donc on a décidé de faire cette exposition et prends avec les illustrations et écrivains. Puis on va faire un camp de littérature avec des enfants des régions, et des enfants que pendant la guerre, leurs parents disent que cette région était dangereuse, et donc ils allaient dans une région qu'ils ne connaissent pas pour rencontrer des professionnels. Avec des associations on avait parlé de faire la même chose en Méditerranée. Parce que parallèlement, on faisait le '*Qari Zghir*', ou 'petit lecture', et c'était un revue de littérature, spécialisé dans la jeunesse dans la littérature arabe. Ils occupaient principalement sur la littérature libanaise mais on avait fait des numéros aussi sur l'égyptien, palestinien et pour la littérature d'adolescents c'était une grand-chose. Il se distribuait avec un journal préminent, '*An-Nahar*', comme hebdomadaire. Donc son succès était bon. Des journalistes qui me connaissent

depuis trente ans étaient très contentes à l'âge-là et ils regrettaient que je l'aie arrêté. Bon, il y avait des problèmes financière, et moi je ne pouvais continuer à financière de ma propre poche. Deuxième, tu ne trouves pas toutes les personnes de lesquels tu as besoin pour travailler en bénévolat. Ces sont deux exemples parmi plusieurs sur qu'est-ce que ne marche pas. Je vous envoie des matériaux sur ça.

KX: Et à propos de étaler ça dans le Méditerranée ?

NT: C'était une idée, ça serai un grand projet, ça implique une douzaine de pays et on doit travailler au fonds dans la littérature de chacun des pays, rencontrer les professionnels, s'organiser bien, organiser le déplacement de plusieurs personnes. Surtout, dans l'intellectuel libanais, il n'y a pas de moyen à faire ça. L'édition libanais et l'éditeur égyptien son très importants, ils produisent des choses fabuleuses, mais j'ai participé à des séminaires sur la traduction et il est claire que des versions arabes sont très mal traduit. D'un autre côté, les producteurs et les éditeurs même n'ont pas la connaissance de comment se fait. Et ils ne vont pas dépenser un sioux. Ils veulent que nous fassent le travail pour eux.

KX: C'était toujours à propos de la littérature en arabe ?

NT: Oui, quatre-vingt-dix pour cent, on jusqu'à quatre-vingt-dix-huit pour cent de la littérature au Liban est en arabe. Très peu en français ou anglais. La production libanaise est dans les trois langues, mais principalement en arabe. Ces dernières trois années j'ai travaillé sur un site internet pour la littérature arabe : une base de données sur la littérature arabe avec détails de toute la chaîne. Il y a besoin de beaucoup d'information dernière-minute et de façon régulier et on veut faire ça de façon local et régional. Nous ne voulons pas faire ça commercialement. Nous avons eu beaucoup de contact de côté privé mais ils veulent de la commercialité. Moi, je ne veux pas que le projet fin être commercial. Nous voulons que c'est ouvert tous. Pendant la première deux ans, la personne qui faisait la structure n'a pris un sou. Ça ne peut pas continuer. C'est difficile convaincre des personnes pour soutenir avec beaucoup de conditions. On essaie de trouver le financement, mais il y a encore des problèmes. Il peut être immense, mais il y a beaucoup à faire.

KX: Pour conclure, quand j'étais à Bruxelles, je trouvais beaucoup d'écrivains libanais en français, romanciers et écrivains de romans et collections, avec les maisons d'éditeurs français et souvent avec l'aide du Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Ces livres sont destinés exclusivement au marché français ou belge, ou aussi au Liban et le monde arabe?

NT: Un auteur qui est libanais et qui écrit dans la langue français n'a pas intéresse d'être édité ici. C'est se limiter à mil exemplaires avec une mauvaise distribution. Les problèmes de distribution sont complexes et déprimant. En France c'est facile de choisir qu'est-il marche. Il y a beaucoup d'auteur libanais en France ou au Canada qui peuvent publier pour le marché français. Les producteurs français connaissent le jeu et ils connaissent les éditeurs libanais pour publier ici. Même pour les auteurs à gros tirage, il arrive le prix spécial au Liban. Un livre qui se vend €25 ou €20 en France peut être vendu à €15 ou moins ici. Il y a des accords de coéditions et l'éditeur libanais imprime ici ou achète trois mille exemplaires avec son logo dessus est ça marche. Ça est devenu systématique. Tous les auteurs sont mis dans le même sac.

KX: C'est comme il y a deux système parallèles qui aboutit au même résultat.

NT: Exact.

KX: En fin, en dépit des défis que vous décrivait il y a toujours les espaces pour meilleure la production et l'infrastructure de la chaîne de production du livre au Liban et avec la Méditerranée ?

NT: Rien n'est impossible. C'est dire, il faut d'abord la volonté, et le travail. Mais ce n'est pas le première souci dans le monde culturel: ça c'est le survit. La côté économique. On doit faire l'agent pour continuer. On a besoin de pris de connaissance de côté du secteur culturel et les associations sans but lucratifs de faire le nécessaire pour créer des infrastructure qui font le nécessaire pour appuyer les choses. Mais après trente-cinq ans dans le métier je sais que le long terme n'est pas la priorité. On pense au court-terme, deux à trois ans. En 2001 la Maison du Livre avait bénéficié de l'Année de la Francophonie. Tous que était Francophonie était valorisait. Dans le 2002: rien de tout. Le risque de ce cas de situation est réel. Les priorités politiques change. L'unique solution est d'avoir collaboration régionale et méditerranéenne, qui fait le pari sur la longue-durée. Penser à dix ou quinze ans, et n'être pas à la merci de n'importe qui dans la politique.

Interview with Idam Hashem, official responsible for literature at the Ministry for Culture

18 November 2011

KX: Aujourd'hui, dans les relations culturelles, dans la production culturelle, dans le monde du livre par exemple, que sont importantes pour Beyrouth, qu'est-ce que l'impact de l'influence européenne sur le Sud de la Méditerranée ?

IH: En général, il y a beaucoup d'influence, surtout si on parle de la Rive Sud de la Méditerranée parce qu'on est en contact constante avec l'Europe et l'autre monde. On commence par le Maroc, l'Algérie et la Tunisie qui sont largement influencés par les français. Après le Liban, la Syrie, la Jordanie, la Palestine, et tout ce qu'est influencé par les britanniques ensemble à la France, on compte plus qu'un siècle d'influence. On était influencé par les plus grands pays de l'Europe. Ces influences, si ont mis à part la vie politique, on a toute la vie culturelle, économique et sociale. Surtout au Liban, à part les autres pays le Liban a continué à avoir des relations très étroites avec la France. Ils ont eu beaucoup des relations bilatéraux, des Centres culturels français ici au Liban, la langue français aussi officiel après l'arabe, des milliers des libanais qui sont partis vers la France pour faire des études et travailler. La France n'a jamais fermé sa collaboration. Les libanais considèrent toujours la France comme lieu de refuge, d'où chercher de l'aide; ça pour dire que les relations était toujours bons et excellent avec l'Europe.

KX: Vous voyez qu'avec l'Europe et la France on a une relation égale de partenariat? Quelque fois même dans l'Ue il y a le cas qu'un pays petit comme Malte se sent désavantagé par rapport aux pays plus grands. Et on se trouve dans une situation d'étudiante en face du professeur, essayant de rattraper le retard.

IH: Je comprends ça. Bien sûr, les relations ne sont pas vraiment de partenariats d'un pays au même niveau comme l'autre pays. Ce n'est même pas facile et on a besoin de l'aide de la France. La relation est comme ça: la France est un grand pays, qui représente l'Ue, qui était au Liban pendant beaucoup d'années et connais bien le Liban aussi la réalité géopolitique du Liban et ça a permis à la France de rester en contact avec beaucoup de couche sociale au Liban. Alors même si infiltré dans la société libanais, se profitant du partage de la situation politique et social et religieux du Liban. Tout ça a fait en effet que la France participait beaucoup à la vie sociale, économique et culturelle du Liban à beaucoup de niveau sociale. De côté français, ça c'est claire. Au contraire, l'influence libanaise sur la France est pauvre. Les relations sont franco-libanaises mais pas libano-français. On commence par la France parce que la France est un grand pays et elle a un politique d'aide vers beaucoup de pays et s'est installée sur toute le Liban et aussi en Afrique.

KX: Ce fil conducteur de la France part tout inclus dans la Méditerranée œuvre des collaborations avec des autres pays de la Méditerranée ?

IH: Le Liban est un pays ouvert. Bien sûr il y a des collaborations et relations avec beaucoup de pays dans le monde. Mais le libanais sont part tout. La migration libanaise a fait que le Liban tient des relations avec beaucoup de pays. Et aussi avec les pays arabes, mais pas forcément les pays francophone de la Méditerranée mais plutôt les pays du Golfe. Le Maroc, l'Algérie et la Tunisie, oui, on tient des relations, mais pas plus forts que avec les pays du Golfe. Ils sont plus proches.

KX: De côté pratique en termes de collaboration et coopération, je sais que vous êtes dans le monde du livre. On voit des résultats tangibles dans les relations avec la France, l'Europe, et autres territoires. On voit la traduction des projets du livre dans des champs pratiques?

IH: Surtout avec la France oui, mais aussi avec l'Espagne et la Grand Bretagne et la Suisse, par exemple. Alors, surtout avec la France, on fait beaucoup des échanges culturels, des projets culturels, pendant plusieurs années. Dernièrement, on avait un grand projet qui tractait le livre et la lecture au Liban qui nous a aidés à développer le secteur bibliothécaire. C'est à la demande du Liban par exemple que la France a monté ensemble un projet pour soutenir le livre jeunesse. Soutenir aussi les bibliothèques publiques, informatiser les bibliothèques, animées aussi. Bien sûr, la coopération toujours existait par les Centres culturels français, au Liban, il y a neuf au Liban. Je pense se sont les plus nombreux dans un petit pays comme le Liban. Il y avait beaucoup d'échanges d'artistes de tout deux les côtés, inclus beaucoup d'écrivains libanais qui écrit et édite en français. Il y avait une politique de traduction du français au arabe et du l'arabe au français. Alors il y avait pas mal de mouvement. Mais le plus récent était ça autour du projet de la solidarité qui fait la France dans ces anciennes colonies. On a profité de ça pendant plus de trois ans qu'était un peu vaste. Aujourd'hui on regard plus à l'impact linguistique. Ça inclus le Ministère de la Culture qui va gérer ces projets. Qui envisage promouvoir la langue française sur le niveau administratif et culturel et dans le système éducatif aussi.

KX: Le patrimoine français au Liban est vivant, ce n'est pas une change de pensé. Et on semble être plutôt fière d'être dans la Francophonie. C'est différent du sentiment dans des autres territoires qui essaient de se détacher de l'influence français. Ici il y a beaucoup d'attitude positive et énergie à renforcer cette relation. Il y a des secteurs dans le champ culturel qui peut penser qu'il est temps de changer ce cours, et que peut-être on doit élargir ou changer la relation étroite avec la France, ou pas vraiment?

IH: Je crois que l'ouverture des librairies vers l'extérieure ne se traduit pas seulement dans les besoins pour cet extérieur pour pouvoir avoir plus de la richesse. Et d'abord parce que les libanais sont ouvertes vers autres cultures et autres civilisations et trouvent dans la langue français et la Francophonie pas seulement un poids économique mais aussi par les valeurs humaines, culturels et les deux civilisations, arabes si on prend le Liban comme représentant et l'europpéenne, si on prend la France comme représentante, sont unis. Les libanais ont trouvés dans cette civilisation humaine et philosophique si on veut qui peut vraiment porter des changes et en plus, les relations avec l'autre côté de la Méditerranée précède ce période-là et ils datent des longues années. Ils sont des relations, même avant de la Francophonie, on est sur la même rive et pas très loin, nous sommes proches et pour tourner là ou là on doit passer par ces peuples-là. Je pense les libanais admire aussi cet approche réciproque entre les civilisations. Je pense que le Liban n'est pas obligé à avoir des relations étroites avec la France ou la Francophonie. Par leur présence par tout dans le monde les libanais facilement font des relations étroites. Même l'anglais, ici au Liban, c'est la langue du commerce, avec la Francophonie on a une présence dans le cœur et ça reste importante parce qu'on garde la Francophonie pour ces valeurs, sociales et culturels, plus que les valeurs commerciales.

KX: Vous me faisait penser qu'au Liban si on doit faire un choix dans les relations culturelles, sociales et économiques, on parlerait d'internationalisation. Avec la France cette relation est privilège parce que cette vision de rayonnement existe depuis longtemps. Et on se trouve bien travaillant ensemble.

IH: Ça c'est vrai aussi. On cherche l'autre. La France était là, on connaît la langue, le peuple connaît la civilisation, on était là, et ces raisons-là ont poussée plus. Maintenant on a, nous, à cause de ça, le pays

de France, on n'y pense à la même façon qu'on pense l'Allemagne ou les britanniques. Nous avons des relations avec tous les peuples mais on a un sentiment différent. Pourtant nous entendons bien avec les allemands, les anglais, les espagnols, tout le monde, pas de problème. A cause de tout ça, ça aide à se rapprocher. Il y a autres facteurs aussi mais ça aide. Il faut faire aussi des démarches. Avec les français les relations se renouent pour avoir ça.

KX: De côté du public, cette sentiment de familiarité avec les collaborations franco-libanais, il y a une réponse ?

IH: A propos des livres, au Liban il y a pas mal de maison d'éditions. Parce que le public demande pour le livre, aussi en français et français. Il y a beaucoup des livres francophone qui sont vendus au Liban parce que nous vendons pas mal de livres et les auteurs utilisent la langue française. Ça aussi c'est question ...les gens vont les choses, ils choisissent...prends les écoles, ils ont le droit et le choix de choisir les écoles où on enseigne le français ou l'anglais. Plus de soixante pour cent des écoles privées enseignent le français. Même si les écoles publiques enseignent aussi le français on trouve toujours que le français est demandé plus que l'anglais. Puis l'anglais est plus forte parce que les gens cherchent le travail, c'est toujours la chose plus importante qu'on va utiliser. Même si les gens pratiquent l'anglais, le français prend la place de troisième langue dans leur éducation. Le livre, et le public: on a commencé à viser les bibliothèques et on a commencé avec un accord avec la Francophonie. On a installé au début des quinze centres au Liban moitié arabe moitié francophone. C'était même dans les régions où on n'attendait pas beaucoup une réaction assez favorable au français, c'était quelque chose plutôt nouveau parce que il y a la demande pour le livre arabe bien sûr, mais aussi pour le livre francophone, plus que les livres d'autres langues comme l'anglais.

KX: Vous n'attendez la réponse positive, pourquoi ?

IH: Oui, ces années de guerre, après, le français, spécialement dans le public, le gouvernement, était un peu faible, on a senti il y avait pas une place avancée dans l'occupation, les gens, les parents, se sont orientés vers autres cultures, autres langues, le français a reculé un peu. Pendant toutes les années de la guerre jusqu'à l'an 2000. Vraiment la présence de projets avec la France et la Francophonie peut aider même si la population aime la Francophonie elle a besoin de trouver les médiums à apprendre où appliquer ce qu'elle connaît. Les livres sont fondamentales pour donner l'opportunité de contact. Alors c'était un enjeu pour nous de faire cette expérience de Francophonie dans la vie de la population.

KX: A part la relation avec la Francophonie, le Ministère de la Culture a aussi des autres objectifs sur le livre, et la lecture, dans sa relation avec la France, sur l'éducation, la numérisation etc.? La Francophonie peut être utilisée comme véhicule pour atteindre des autres objectifs culturels comme l'infrastructure culturelle?

IH: C'est une question un peu délicate. Sur tout on parle de numérisation, des objectifs scientifiques, de la société culturelle, bon, je pense que nous cherchons comment faire l'équilibre entre le besoin critique de nos objectifs et préserver la Francophonie comment il est comme langue et identité française. Après dans nos projets comme ministère cherchons toujours dans les relations avec la Francophonie, un potentiel culturel à protéger notre démarche culturelle. Mire, simplement, je n'ai pas de moyen financière, mais si tu mire, si tu veux, quelque chose culturel qui nous aide dans nos stratégies, dans la demande du livre...

KX: Je vous demande ça parce que à Malte par exemple il y a des relations très étroites avec le Royaume-Uni, et dans ces dernières cinq ou six ans nous avons utilisés leur expertise pour démarrer une politique culturelle, qu'on n'avait pas avant, les industries culturelles et créatives, des projets de numérisation pour les études, et le Royaume-Uni est là comme un partenaire qui a fait beaucoup de choses culturelles avec facilité et a aidé à échanger des idées et des expériences et maintenant pas pour nécessairement et directement promouvoir le Royaume-Uni, mais aussi dans la langue maltais, dans la littérature, et nous les avons utilisés pour avoir des formules qui nous avons adaptés à nos circonstances.

IH: Il y a plusieurs facteurs au Liban. Nous devons étudier et réfléchir sur les facteurs qui ont d'abord anéanti et gaspillé la vie culturelle et ralenti beaucoup la vie culturelle et son avancée. Par-là, le ministère culturel n'existait pas avant, c'était un milieu nouveau, toujours pas structurée, qui a même d'organigramme dans le Ministère. Je dis ça parce que la structure du Ministère de la Culture c'est une réalité qu'on ne doit pas vraiment négliger. La réalité des moyens de la France et la Francophonie ont baissé ces dernières années, ça à dire qu'on n'a pas les mêmes moyens d'intervenir comme avant.

Deuxième chose, ou troisième chose, l'instabilité au Liban qui n'aide pas beaucoup à monter des projets culturels même en partenariat avec la France ou autre pays, je parle en général, ça fait que notre avance des politiques culturelles ici au Liban, il y a beaucoup d'entraves, nos structures en vie culturelle nous comme Ministère figure comme un chapeau qui doivent normalement chapoter toutes l'art mais ce n'est pas très simple, les moyens faibles, par l'Ue, tous, l'instabilité depuis des années alors qui fait vraiment que des projets ne sont pas prioritaire au Liban. Le comparé avec Malte ou autre pays est difficile. Vous avez faites beaucoup de progrès dans ce domaine. Mais ça n'empêche pas de changer les choses. Mais ça entrave un peu le progrès dans la vie culturelle.

KX: Si je comprends bien à voir les choses comme ça n'aide pas à planifier à long terme.

IH: Voilà. Troisième. A ce facteur-ci, est important ouvrir la bibliothèque. La bibliothèque nationale joue un rôle importante dans le développement de la culture, préserver le patrimoine culturel du Liban est toujours un projet, depuis longtemps, et jusqu'à ces dernières années pas bougés. On commence à reconstruire et rehabiter un bâtiment qui peut-on change en bibliothèque nationale. Il y a trente ou quarante ans que cet jouer de la vie culturelle du Liban est absent. Ça aussi c'est un facteur à non négliger parce que pour la structure, la vie nationale, il peut vraiment structurer des choses avec nos partenaires.

KX: Pour conclure, de façon régions, et les villes au dehors Beyrouth, le Ministère travail en partenariat avec les municipalités, bibliothèques, associations locales ?

IH: Bien sûr. On doit dire la réalité. La société civile joue un rôle très très important. Même quelque fois elle a un rôle plus visible que l'état. Sur tout culturel. Nous voyons une société civile bien dynamique, toujours en mouvement. Quelque fois le Ministère essaie de rattraper son propre rôle dans les plusieurs domaines. Alors c'est pour ça qu'on travail beaucoup avec des associations dans plusieurs villes au Liban. Bien sûr le Ministère ne laisse pas ces responsabilités mais toujours fait son mieux pour jouer son rôle dans les projets de livres et artistique dans beaucoup choses. Donc il travaille avec les municipalités. Bien sûr aussi avec les bibliothèques publiques, nous qui prouve vraiment et charges des centaines de bibliothèques publiques en partenariat avec des municipalités et des associations. En plus le Ministère travaille parce qu'il a un travail à faire mais pas les moyens pour travailler dans toutes les régions du Liban. Il doit compter absolument sur les acteurs locaux pour vraiment faciliter les projets culturels.

KX: Il a un rôle de facilitateur, d'aider le boulot.

IH: Voilà, à aider ses acteurs, quelque fois pour faire le rôle que le Ministère ne peut pas faire. Pour aider adresser les besoins que se créés toutes le temps.

KX: Merci, pour ça. Pouvez-vous juste me dire quand le Ministère était fondé ?

IH: La création date de 1992 mais en réalité il a commencé à avoir un local 1995. Il y a quinze ans, pas beaucoup.

KX: A Malte c'est le cas où aussi le Ministère est jeune, est pas seule.

IH: D'abord il y avait le Ministère de l'Education et Haute Education qui avait les responsabilités culturelles. Souvent on réfléchit à supprimer le Ministère mais chaque fois on décide de le tenir. Les associations culturels dits qu'est-ce que voulez que nous faisons sans? Avec le petit budget qu'on a et le minimum de personnel, avec deux personnes par département, ça nous empêche vraiment d'achever des projets puissants. Il n'y a pas seulement les livres mais aussi le cinéma, la musique, l'archéologie. Vous avez demandé au début de la capitale mondiale du livre, c'était assez mérité. C'était une occasion qui on n'a pas raté mais on n'a pas beaucoup profité ou préparé. C'est dommage parce qu'on a consacré un budget assez énorme, autour de six ou sept million dollars, pour le Ministère de la Culture c'était énorme, et on n'a pas profité de ça.

KX: C'était les *stakeholders* principaux qui pouvaient faire mieux ?

IH: Oui.

KX: C'est comme nous avec la capitale européenne 2018 que vient une fois et on veut établir quelque chose pour le futur.

IH: Parce que vous maintenant déjà commencé à préparer pour 2018. Nous avons commencé deux ou trois mois avant. Non été pas de tout assez. Peut-être on peut tirer les leçons, pour le futur. On a eu pas le cadre au Ministère pour gérer un projet énorme comme ça. On a appellait aux personnes du secteur privé mais on n'a pas compris l'ampleur de quelque chose comme ça. Sur la scène locale on n'a pas vu l'opportunité mondiale de l'occasion.

KX: C'était quand qu'on vous a informé ?

IH: En 2008. Mais il y avait un changement de Ministres. On a dû commencer à avril puis en juin on avait commencé à monter un petit comité. Mais le Ministre est parti, un autre est venu, le comité était changé et on était déjà à décembre. Le comité a préparé la stratégie en janvier 2009 et on a commencé en février avec la société civile qui a préparé aussi des projets.

Interview with Leila Rezk, academic, author and cultural operator; Maud Stephan, academic and cultural operator

18 November 2011

KX: Je sais que vous avez travaillé dans le champ culturel et interculturel et je voudrais savoir votre expérience et vue sur l'ampleur de l'influence européenne ici au Liban.

LR: Je vous suggère de regarder mon livre sur ce thème à propos du Liban, la Syrie, le Jordan et la Palestine sur la façon avec laquelle on essaie à modifier, changer l'image à travers le cinéma, le théâtre, et sur la présentation et la représentation de l'autre et de soi. L'autre était l'Europe et les autres partenaires arabes. Il étudies la collaboration culturel et l'influence de la pensée; pas uniquement de la coopération mais aussi en général.

KX: Merci. A propos de ça, quelles sont les influences tangibles au Liban, de côté de relations culturels et production culturel avec les européens ?

MS: Tout ça est très vaste. Je ne vois rien que tombe à dehors de cette influence, qu'est très large. Si on prend la peinture par exemple.

KX: Moi, je vise la production contemporaine, et aussi les relations et la conception de la culture.

MS: Un point très important est le financement. C'est à travers le financement que la production culturelle se fait et peut-être soulignait l'importance et la relevance avec autres thèmes d'influence.

LR: En matière du cadre de financement de côté de l'Ue et le financement bilatéral des pays européennes parce qu'il y a la France effectivement, l'Italie, l'Espagne, l'Angleterre, l'Allemagne qui finance à bas de ses propres politiques. Les vrai choses importants aussi sont, il y a l'échange, l'effort vers l'interculturel, l'appui des européennes dans le cadre du cinéma à travers les festivals par exemple, le programme MEDA du cinéma de toute la région méditerranéenne. Ça, ce peut dire. Mais c'est rien de tout comparé avec les moyens dont dispose l'Ue et mis à disposition par Barcelone, etc. Le volet culturel est minimum, et il y a un problème fondamentale, à mon avis de celui en fait de manque de dialogue réelle entre les financières et les partenaires bénéficiant. L'erreur est de deux côtés. Ça va dire qu'est de part de côté de l'Ue qui a une vision de la Méditerranée, sa vision à elle, qui est une vision de protection, de sécurité, de lutter contre la migration etc. etc. que est déjà comme point de départ négatif, défensif, plutôt que constructif. Ça c'est le premier point. Le deuxième point: les partenariats bénéficiés et les fameux douze pays qui ont signé l'accord d'association avec l'Ue, ceux-là ont, de mal, n'ont pas de politique culturel, et de mal à déterminer les besoins réels. Pour plusieurs raisons: première, la séparation, la dichotomie, entre l'état et la société civile, qui ont des besoins différents. La société civile, surtout dans cette région, veulent dire, Liban, Palestine, un peu la Jordanie, savent qu'ils veulent, mais en comblant les lacunes de l'état elles creusent la distance entre eux et l'état. La société civile est identifié par les européennes, acquiers un force d'indépendance, d'autonomie de l'état, qu' là un fossé est creusait entre la société civile et l'état. Ça c'est un effet pervers, à mon avis.

KX: Alors, malheureusement, ils contribuent à un élément de méfiance ? Et cette méfiance est mutuelle.

LR: Oui. Deux, il y a une double méfiance que est celle de l'état vers l'Ue: elle choisit des partenaires qui ne sont pas considérés par les états comme fiable. Plutôt ils sont considérés comme des troubles font

etc. Donc au lieu de créer un vrai lien de travail, un vrai dialogue, on crée ce double pêche original de quoi on décide, de qui décide, qu'est-ce qu'on finance.

MS: Aussi, la méfiance que se crée entre les ONG qui sont financés sous des programmes et les thèmes définit et le reste de la société. Par ailleurs, la masse de la population a tendance de se méfier parce qu'il réalise qu'ils travaillent sur des agendas occidentaux avec rien à voir avec les besoins de la population. Il se sent détachés et méfiants. Parce qu'ils sont des vecteurs du colonialisme, etc. Il semble qu'il y a cette distance entre la masse de la population qui d'ailleurs ne consomme pas ces productions culturels qui sont produit par ces ONG qui se fassent souvent voir dans ce lumière parce qu'ils ont pris cette financement.

KX: Quand on dit la population, il n'y a pas une population.

LR: C'est vrai eh, les européennes, ils font les bilatéraux soit en concurrence directe avec autre partie de la société qui sont les pauvre idéologisés, idéologiques, les islamistes par exemple où une autre politique c'est-à-dire, donc il y a une juxtaposition d'ONGs, juxtaposition d'actions, qui ne se rencontrent pas et c'est à la fois géographie territoriale, des régions, et thématiques. Et donc ils sont en concurrence. Alors, en général les ONG, les politisés ou les idéologisés sont appuyés en partie par l'état, alors les autres sont les communs. Par rapport aux forces politiques et idéologiques. Alors effectivement c'était extrêmement composite, une situation de mosaïque plutôt négatif parce qu'il n'y a aucun lien entre les différents parts de la société civile.

KX: Il semble d'avoir des communautés qui marche en parallèle sans avoir vraiment ce dialogue ni au niveau international ni au niveau national, non plus à niveau local et communautaires.

LR: Exact. C'est vrai. Et en plus il y a un autre problème, une autre lacune, qui est à la fois structurel et endémique, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de lien ou peu de lien entre les ONG où l'action culturel est au terrain et les ONG arabes. Elles ne passent pas par le financement européen. On peut identifier en quelque projet, très petit, qui permet des différents ONG à travailler ensemble. Mais aussi les structures de l'état. Par exemple, l'Ue appui un demain qui est l'héritage, le patrimoine. Là il y a eu les nations concertées, la Liban, la Palestine, la Syrie, la Jordanie, ils ont créé un site s'appelle 'Qantara' qui a les moyens. Mais là cette coordination était possible parce que l'Ue a mis l'argent et gère les différents pays. Et les différents pays méditerranéens travail ensemble. Donc on arrive sur le problème du fond que c'était que c'est l'Europe qui décide et les partenaires sont réactifs et pas producteurs d'idées. Et ce problème est lié au problème de la politique de Barcelone. Qui est un problème de base et qui représente l'échec du processus de Barcelone.

KX: Le financement est un incitatif de travailler ensemble. Mais en réalité, il y a des *strings attached*, des conditions, qui fait le vrai travail ensemble difficile à achever. Si on enlève l'incitatif de financement, ça peut aider l'initiative arabe à se préparer mieux ?

LR: Non, parce que la Ligue Arabe...il y a des structures...qui sont la Ligue Arabe, qui est entre guillemets, guillemets, guillemets, l'équivalent de l'Ue; n'a aucun politique culturelle réelle. Il y a l'ALESCO, qui est l'équivalent de l'UNESCO, qui a un bilan, qui pourrait mais en réalité a un bilan plutôt négatif, dans les rapprochements, dans l'initiative, des vrais projets. Sauf dans quelque domaine.

MS: Dans certains domaines il y avait les collaborations mais depuis la paix de l'Égypte avec Israël, on a perdu du pouvoir, quand le siège est allé de l'Égypte vers la Tunisie. On a fait des projets sur les

bibliothèques et la numérisation mais, depuis le déménagement de l'Égypte, on a perdu sa présence. En tout cas les priorités ont changés et ils semblent très immobiles.

LR: L'autre problème structurel est le fait que les arabes ne réussissent pas à développer des structures de dialogue.

KX: Vous avez dit qu'ils sont toujours réactifs, en attente. Ça veut dire que c'est difficile dire que c'est l'Ue que s'impose.

LR: L'Ue s'impose bien sûr parce qu'il paie. Si par exemple la Ligue Arabe avait un fond qui permet de la mettre en égalité avec l'Ue là il y aura un vrai dialogue. On a les moyens financière de faire ça, mais ils ne le font pas. Il le fait pour le propre benefit. On n'est pas arrivé au vrai politique qui a développé l'Ue en matière de culture etc. Pour l'instant nous sommes trop jeunes. Mais surtout parce qu'il y a un problème plus grand, fondamentale, qui est la manque de démocratie dans les pays arabes. Quand il y aura une vrai démocratie, toujours entre guillemets, peut-être qu'on aura la Ligue arabe faire des choses plus structurés. Je suis très critiques vers les arabes leur-mêmes.

MS: Oui, on ne peut pas remarquer la disparité en moyens financières de certains états par rapport a des autres dans le monde arabe qui fait que qui paie veulent une plus grande visibilité. C'est l'exemple, par exemple, de la Foire du Livre du Francfort. Quand les pays arabes étaient les invités, le projet au départ fallait avoir la culture arabe gagné de visibilité par la production de chaque pays arabe mais il y avait peu de ça parce que chaque pays voulait sa propre visibilité, avec un petit peu relativement à mettre dans le projet.

KX: Le processus de changement interne, là il y a aussi un rôle pour les européens ? Ou c'est un boulot que les arabes doivent faire eux-mêmes ?

LR: Cette est une question délicate: il y a la théorie, et ça que je pense, n'est pas?

MS: La participation des ONG dans la diffusion de la démocratie et la transparence, je crois qu'aide d'avoir d'appui, parce que ça fait des taches d'huiles. Mais je pense à un projet, par exemple, panarabe, c'est le projet Anna Lindh, sur la littérature de jeunesse, qu'était une initiative Anna Lindh, mais qui voulait que le travail se fasse entre pays arabe. Mais il est arrivé un point quand la littérature jeunesse a commencé à démarrer. Là il y a eu une perception d'un besoin, pour lesquelles les européens ont aidé le développement.

KX: Les européens ont aidés à identifier ça.

MS: Oui, c'était un bon moment. Nous sommes très catégoriques quand nous disons qu'il n'y a pas d'échanges.

LR: Je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir bien compris la question.

KX: Si on a besoin de prendre ses propres responsabilités pour démarrer les projets ensemble dans le monde arabe, on doit changer les fondamentaux et viser la démocratie. Mais l'Europe a toujours un rôle à jouer ou non ?

LR: Il y a une question avant ça: quand tu parles de monde arabe, on parle de trois régions, le Maghreb, le Machrek et les pays du Golfe. L'influence européenne n'est pas forte dans la même façon dans les trois régions. Par rapport au Maghreb, c'est claire, c'est vrai, il y a le financement, et le Maghreb, dans des termes de dance sont dans un tango très compliqué, chouette s'approche à l'Europe. Le lien avec la politique culturelle de la France est importante et depuis longtemps. La France est liée par des investissements au Maroc, et est très important en matière culturel. Le Machrek, à part le Liban, la Palestine, où l'Europe a investi plus que ailleurs, sont les deux principales pays, les autres pays beaucoup moins, parce que la Syrie n'a pas signée l'accord d'association, l'évolution politique peut changer toutes choses; la Jordanie est un pays qui certes travaille beaucoup avec l'Angleterre, mais en fait est beaucoup plus attiré et intéressé par les américains. Et les pays du Golfe, s'est enfûte complètement. Sauf, ces dernières années, c'est-à-dire récemment, il y a eu un investissement importante par une population qui n'a pas le même impact comme l'Égypte ou la Jordanie et l'impact du Qatar et les autres ne commence que dès le pays et une minorité que c'est ouverte très tardivement vers l'Europe. A une volonté de renvoyer une image de soi vers l'Europe qu'est très positif pour se rapprocher vers l'Europe culturellement, je crois. Là, on a des différences importantes et on ne peut pas parler du monde arabe comme une unité. Si on part du douze pays qu'a signés l'accord avec l'Ue on peut faire le bilan de ça. Les pays du Golfe n'ont rien fait ou ne s'intéresse pas directement; les autres on doit voire. Mais même l'Égypte ne s'intéresse pas beaucoup dans l'Europe. L'Égypte est intéressée beaucoup aux américains. D'ailleurs le rêve des enfants, des familles c'est de s'en aller aux États-Unis et ça se sent plus que s'en aller en Europe. Au Syrie, au Liban, en Palestine, c'est plus l'Europe, parce qu'elle est plus proche. Le Levant, sont traditionnellement plus proche de l'Europe, par façon de vie, eh.

KX: Ces pays cherche d'avoir un rapprochement avec l'Europe...

LR: Et si demain il y a une vraie démocratie, ou en tout cas, un semblant de démocratie, des pouvoirs qui répondent aux besoins du peuple, il y aura la possibilité de nouvelles relations entre l'Europe et ces pays. Quand on parle d'Occident, c'est plus les Etats-Unis que l'Europe. Politiquement. Paradoxalement, les gens qui sont les plus contre, sont les plus qui envoie ces enfants aux écoles là-bas. Ça c'est un paradoxe. Ils les envoient parce que l'anglais, l'américain, se voie comme une langue neutre comparé avec les autres langues, voire le français, l'espagnol, qui sont aussi les langues de culture etc. Il y a une chose intéressant qu'il faut signaler quand même, c'est qu'aujourd'hui l'Europe est en concurrence directe avec la Chine. Avec tous les centres Confucius qui développent.

MS: Ici au Liban il y a deux, à l'Université américain et l'Université Saint Joseph. La Chine, on ne doit pas oublier que ces gens sont principalement des commerçants. S'ils font comme en Afrique du Sud...le nouveau pôle économique sera intéressant à suivre. Elle a éloignée toutes ces gens de l'Europe. La Chine a une vrai politique culturelle et c'est récent, non plus de cinq ans. Avec les caractéristiques de mouvements et commerçants au Liban, il y aussi une affinité.

LR: On ne doit pas aussi oublier l'intéresse de la Chine dans les territoires stratégiques. Le Liban est stratégique pour ce position au Moyen Orient est proche du pétrole.

KX: De côté du publique, quel rôle a-t-il dans toutes ça ? Vous croyez le publique s'intéresse à ce type de changement ? Il peut voire des changements dans les rapports culturels ?

LR: Il peut être intéressé a voir qu'est-ce qu'il y aura du neuf. En tout cas, une coopération avec la Chine, peut ressembler, comme était avec le Japon, une coopération culturelle importante. On sera intéressé

aussi à voir l'Europe comment réagit-elle à ces changements dans les pays arabes. La Chine et le Japon n'ont jamais eu du rôle coloniale et mandataire, bien sûr.

KX: Je demande ça, sur les sentiments du publique vers l'Europe, parce qu'en Algérie il n'y avait pas des simples relations avec la France; et ici au Liban il y a aussi une certaine fierté du passé français.

LR: Je crois que à propos de l'Algérie, contrairement aux croyances populaires, en dépit de la guerre et la colonisation la plus dure, il y a un file la entre l'Algérie et la France très importante, contrairement à toutes les discours officiels. Ici c'est plus compliqué. Ça pour la présence d'Israël, et la réaction vers les européens pour avoir créé une greffe toujours compliquait les choses. Ils subissent au quotidien cette présence.

MS: Le conflit avec la France par part de l'Algérie est une chose du passé. Ici est actuel, parce qu'ici est toujours actualité avec la présence d'Israël. Ce conflit avec l'Occident reste, et toute est interprété comme le retour de colonialisme, de l'impérialisme, c'est pour ça que j'ai dit qu'il y a toujours une méfiance de côté du publique vers les activités culturels des instituts culturels étrangères. Il y a toujours cette crainte d'un retour impérial.

LR: D'où l'échec du Processus de Barcelone.

MS: Et d'où la vision complexe du pays.

LR: Mais au même temps, on doit regarder au loup. Schématiquement. On peut dire que la communauté chrétien est la plus ouverte et proche des européens. Et si on regarde la communauté chiite, dire qu'ils sont contre. Mais en fait, il y a énormément de liens entre les chiites et la France et les enfants chiites sont les plus numéraux à étudier dans les centres français. Les centres français sont là dans la région à la demande des parents. Ce n'est pas un bloc, du noir et blanc. Il y a le gris un peu part tout. Il faut comprendre qu'est-ce que le discours officiel et le discours réel. Il y a des zones grises toujours.

MS: Et ça va revolver, cette méfiance vers les choses européennes, côté parents, et un grand intéresse chez les enfants. Et s'ils sont les enfants qui cherchent la Francophonie, parc qu'ils ont déjà étudiés en français, en Algérie ou chez nous, ça change.

KX: La complexité donne la possibilité aux changements, au développement de la zone grise.

MS: Il y a deux niveaux: le niveau officiel, politique, et l'autre plus réel. Par exemple, sont les étudiants, de business et autre choses, qui ont donné la victoire à Hezbollah. La politique aussi culturelle de Hezbollah est efficace et très marquée. Les jeunes, culturellement, sont ouvertes à ces expériences. Ces ouvertures créés, quelque fois, des réactions, et donc aussi des pas en arrière et des méfiances.

LR: On doit aussi voir l'évolution du discours du *Hezbollah*. Le discours est toujours forte, intransigent. Mais on doit voir s'il tient ce discours, s'il change, et en fonction de ça, voire comment il interprète la situation. Vont-ils continuer ce discours, ou changent-t-il dans les communautés? Les gens près de Hezbollah peuvent y en aller, ou changer le parti. C'est là où l'Europe peut jouer un rôle intéressant. Si elle sait négocier le virage, avec une évolution en transit que peut par nécessité voir l'islamisation de la politique. Ca peut-être un passage obligé, et je trouve plus positif que négatif.

KX: Donc l'Europe peut risquer être réactionnaire et défendre le statu quo mais elle peut aussi appuyer et suivre les changements. L'Europe doit vraiment apprendre à négocier. Et si on prend la Ligue arabe, qui n'a jamais pris une position comme elle a fait vers la Syrie cette semaine [sanctions gains Syria, November 2011], ça va dire qu'il y a une vraie révolution politique ou qu'il y a la peine d'une réaction contraire. C'est intéressant aussi dans le forum de l'UNESCO avec le vote sur la reconnaissance de la Palestine [recognition of the state of Palestine as UNESCO member, November 2011].

LR: C'est vrai qu'avec qu'est-ce qu'il passe avec le vote sur la Palestine est très changé. Les États-Unis et Israël ont reçu un claque, une gifle réelle, qui montre que la force sur le niveau international n'est plus la même. Et qu'il y a douze pays seul avec la politique américain. Mais les autres, soit s'ils se sont abstenus, soit s'ils ont votés en faveur, c'est intéressante.

Interview, with Roualla, cultural operator

19 November 2011

KX: De côté de collaboration, coopération, mais aussi financière, il m'intéresse savoir votre expérience de travail avec les institutions européennes.

R: Je vais parler de deux choses. Je vais parler de *Beirut DC*, comme manager de *Beirut DC*, et en même temps que j'étais à *Zico House*. Je commence par *Zico House*, il fait chronologiquement sens. Nous avons le support de l'Ue, deux années de suite, pour le festival qu'on fait toujours. Le festival fait la promotion de spectacle de la rue dans Beyrouth et un Liban. Le fond de soutien local, pour le Liban, était utilisé. C'est un fonde structuré pour le Liban. On a postulé pour la première édition, et on a pris des subventions pour deux ans. On peut dire que sans le soutien de l'Ue ce festival probablement ne pouvait se faire. Est-ce qu'est très importante pour les européens est qu'il y a des européens qui participe au festival et on travaille sur relations européens. En 2002, on devait avoir des artistes européens, et pour moi ça a donné beaucoup au festival. La présence des européens y le fait qu'ils ont travaillés avec les libanais c'était vraiment super. On a fait ça dans un moyen d'avoir des éléments des grands compagnies de rue, qui si non, couterai très chères. Ils sont des compagnies qui font un grand travail. On a mise sur la qualité mais au lieu d'avoir toute la compagnie on a ramené des éléments de ces compagnies pour travailler avec des libanais et pour les libanais. Ceci était intéressant sur beaucoup points de vue: les participants libanais, les européens qui ont travaillés avec les libanais sur l'espace publique, parce qu'il y avait deux points de vue différents, même si les libanais connaissaient la rue, le fait d'avoir quelque un externe pour travailler dans la rue ensemble, c'était du travail libanais avec quelque chose en plus. La participation publique c'était bon: le publique était enthousiaste. Ici on n'a pas la culture de la rue, et avec les français qui on a amenés la première fois, qui travaille dans la rue depuis longtemps, on a travaillé bien. Au première temps les libanais on a eu du mal à travailler dans la rue. Pour eux c'est quelque chose un peu dégradante, c'est hors la norme, ils ne sont pas habitués à ça. C'était plutôt dans les théâtres, les music halls, où les gens viennent pour voir.

KX: Le processus de changement a abouti à des bonnes relations ? On peut parler de dialogue interculturel même ?

R: Là où il n'y a choc de tout, il est normal pour eux de travailler avec le publique dans la rue. Nous avons eu des performances libanaises où ils ont pris un peu de temps pour s'habituer, mais ce n'était rien. Pour les gens qui, côté européenne, ont demandé de travailler ici, il les a rassuré de savoir qu'il y aura les libanais avec eux, et le contraire c'était vrai aussi. Ca a produit une grande demande de côté libanaise de faire leurs programmes avec nous.

KX: Le contact avec les artistes libanais était facilité par ce programme et les contacts avec les européens. C'était un bon résultat et vous avez travaillé comme facilitateur entre les artistes et motivation pour les libanais.

R: Tout à fait. Notre première édition, quand on travaille avec les grands compagnies, ceux-ci connais les autres grands compagnies, et on parle et on donne une bonne impression de travailler à Beyrouth et au Liban. Donc l'année prochaine c'était plus facile travailler. Ils étaient aussi enthousiaste du publique qu'était intéressé par tout. De côté de l'Ue c'était de grand bénéfice qu'ils ont vu la potentialité d'aider cet idée à se faire réalité. Nous assuraient qu'il y avait des artistes arabes variées, et aussi les européens. Avec les arabes ont a les contactés pour travailler dans le festival, même avec des personnes qu'on ne

connaissse pas. A Syrie on a fondé une compagnie, ils sont venus ici pour la première fois, ils ont fait le spectacle, ils sont rentrés chez eux, et ils ont commencés à faire des choses là-bas. Maintenant, elle existe. Ce qu'on a essayé à faire aussi était de travailler avec Francesco Barbaro qui travail sur la rue, tous avec la rue, et il a travaillé avec un jeune libanais qui l'a accompagné dans le travail. Pour nous c'est important d'avoir de la continuité. Ce n'est pas assez de faire un workshop de dix jours et en aller. Mais, c'est vrai que c'est très difficile parce que ce n'est pas leur *job* et ils ne peuvent pas le faire en quittant leur travail. C'était un peu compliqué. On a essayé de travailler pendant un chemin de trois ans. Ensuite des personnes nous ont contactés pour des soirées privées. Ça est passé avec des compagnies privées, par exemple une compagnie de pharmaceutiques, pour une soirée de fin année.

KX: Alors il y a aussi cette côté de *business* privé.

R: Oui. On nous a vous dans la rue, et ils ont pris les artistes libanais pour le spectacle. Les libanais ont travaillé avec des personnes de haut niveau européen et ils peuvent avoir ses propres compagnies et spectacles avec succès. C'est ça que tout le monde recherche. Surtout, il est qu'est-ce que les gens cherchent ici. Ils veulent les libanais, en même temps avec une haute qualité. Mais, *we aim high*, et il y a tout ça et on propose le meilleur formule, le libanais avec l'expertise européen. L'Ue normalement ne donne pas pour le même projet deux ans suivants, mais ça doit avoir les convaincu. Dans le cadre de la coopération entre la Commission européenne et le Liban pour la culture.

KX: De votre côté, il y avait une partie de finance ?

R: Bien sûr, on devait aussi trouver des autre fonds pour régler. Par exemple, le *Goethe-Institut* aide toujours, et on a toujours travaillé aussi avec l'Institut français et le *British Council*.

KX: Et de côté locale, du Ministère?

R: On a cherché et trouvé des sponsors, toujours, des petits soutiens on les a eu toujours. Par exemple de côté des banques et des assurances. On a essayé combiner aussi le travail avec des sponsors particuliers. On a eu pendant toutes les années du festival travaillé sur le patrocinat du Ministère de la Culture. On ne parle pas d'utile, mais on nous a toujours aidés.

KX: Si on laisse pour un moment la mobilité d'artistes et la formation, pour parler d'infrastructure. Il y a des développements d'appui pour l'organisation, dans le long terme? Par exemple, il y a eu l'idée d'une école pour les étudiants de cette discipline? On va vers cette direction avec les petits financement, ou pas encore?

R: En fait, on n'a jamais proposé ça. Je ne sais pas si on le propose aujourd'hui. On n'a pas passé à ça. Les programmes et les sponsors te donnent pour des événements et pas pour l'administration, seulement pendant le développement du projet. Depuis ces deux subventions on n'a pas epistulé. On a travaillais sur des autres financements. C'est aussi beaucoup de travail pour remplir l'application, pour un très petit montant qui ne couvre même la moitié de ce que tu vas faire. Le formulaire prends un mois pour remplir, beaucoup d'énergie, il ne value pas la peine. On a travaillé avec des universités, des ONG, avec la *Hamde Schul Foundation*, avec Danemark, plein, même pour les événements plutôt locales. On fait beaucoup de résidences avec artistes européens et ils s'installent à *Zico House*. Ils demandent à nous et nous contactons à eux.

KX: Vous sentez que vous travaillez au même niveau, entre égaux ?

R: Oui. Franchement, on a senti un sentiment de différent au début peut-être, mais maintenant non plus. Ils sont d'accord de travailler avec nous, et nous travaillons ensemble. C'est réglé ouvertement, on voit sur quoi on travail, on se mit d'accord. Même avec c'autres organismes on a toujours de l'indépendance. On est d'accord sur le projet et on y travail.

KX: Et ici, *Beirut DC* ?

R: *Beirut DC*, je suis avec depuis janvier. Il y a avez avant travaillé sur Euro-Med II sur un grand projet MedScreen et on a eu une subvention de l'Ue pour faire un projet. DocMed qui est une formation pour producteurs arabes. Donc *Beirut DC* avait travaillé sur beaucoup de choses depuis 1999 et le but de l'association et de développer le cinéma arabe. On a réalisé que manque, dans la structure du cinéma, la présence d'un producteur. Il y a les réalisateurs qui font le producteur, tout le monde est réalisateur, pas de monde est producteur. Le projet s'étend sur trois années, chaque année on choisit dix producteurs du monde arabe, et on lui dit qu'ils peuvent travailler sur leurs potentialités. Les participants fait ça travaillant sur leur projet, pas sur l'idée d'une production. Chaque année il y a trois parties: le développement du film, travail sur *budget* et *pitching* et *packaging*, et le *pitching* avec les potentiels partenaires. En fin, la production est destinée au marché européen. La deuxième session se fait avec un panel d'EuroDoc de Montpellier, bien sûr avec des producteurs européens, pour former les producteurs arabes. Les co-productions sont possibles parce que les producteurs européens peuvent être intéressés. On veut des producteurs qui peuvent avoir succès dans l'Europe mais aussi partout. On vise l'Europe parce qu'on a tout le système et l'expression et le fait d'aller comment ça passe et se confronter avec ces gens c'est très importante pour leur carrière. Qui sachent comment se passe. Ça peut aider aussi les collaborations arabes. Ça aussi c'est très intéressante. Les fonds européens sont bons, mais on a besoin aussi des fonds arabes pour développer nous-mêmes.

KX: Vous présentez une vision de collaboration dans la Méditerranée qui est très tangible. Le cadre méditerranéen est vivant.

R: Pour le cinéma, le fait d'être dans des pays qui n'ont pas des structures, c'est un défi. Je n'ai pas dit qu'on parle de documentaire créatif, ce n'est pas le documentaire reportage, régulier qu'on passe à la télé. C'est un travail d'auteur, plus créatif. Pour ça le publique est très importante, quoi se soit acheté par des télé...il y a beaucoup de travail à se faire, dans les pays arabes. On n'est pas habitué à ça. L'effet d'aller vers l'Europe c'est parce que ça existe, la structure est là. On peut voir comment ça fonction. Il peut beaucoup aider à voir comment ils peuvent fonctionner ici.

KX: L'utilisation du modèle européen, et son adaptation au marché libanais et arabe, peut changer les façons de regarder la télé et les dynamiques de publique face aux productions et les stations.

R: Bien sûr.

KX: Ce n'est pas seulement un truc artistique mais ça peut changer beaucoup.

R: Les documentaires peuvent être une réflexion, une source de débat, sur des sujets très liés aux lieux de présentations.

KX: Ce processus a déjà donné des résultats? Ils sont étaient à la télé locale ?

R: On vient de commencer, en janvier 2011, et on n'a pas encore fini la première année. Les producteurs maintenant vont dans les marchés. On verra. On souhaite deux ou trois films *out of ten* qui passe à la télé.

KX: Si on à la télé est très tangible, il peut être le cas qu'on trouve des obstacles à rechercher certains thématiques ?

R: Non, écoutez, chaque pays est différent, particulièrement dans le monde arabe. Il n'y a pas de cas de généralité. Au Liban chaque chaîne est propriété d'une partie. En Égypte, c'est autre chose. Le problème ce n'est pas de trouver l'endroit. Tout le monde est subjectif, même le producteur. Ça dépend aussi du *marketing* stratégie, du publique. Pour ce genre de film n'est pas assez commercial, et ils ne peuvent pas porter l'argent de façon traditionnelle. Chaque pays a ces problèmes, ses propres problèmes, et c'est difficile apprécier ce type de film. Donc la télé elle existe, il y avait toujours une télé que veux un close et pas l'autre, et il y aussi la compétition entre les télé. Ce n'est pas ça. Presque tout un contexte sociale, une disposition vers l'artistique, est visé ici. Ici au Liban on a MBD et Manar, par exemple, donc les publiques sont exclusifs, l'MBC sont chrétiens, le Manar est de *Hezbollah*. Mais notre travail ne veut pas être exclusif. Il y a la problématique politique, bien sûr, mais c'est plutôt la problématique financière qui est plus importante, et les arguments que les gens ne veulent pas voir ça ou ça. Les télé te dit le publique ne veulent pas ça ma comment est-il possible savoir si on ne passe jamais ça à la télé. Si l'éducation, si les personnes à la tête ont une vision différente, les choses peuvent bouger. 'Give and take', c'est la vie, eh.

KX: Pour conclure, quel rôle à la numérisation et la diffusion digitale dans votre travail ?

R: C'est le période de faire ça, mais notre forme de producteurs est la base, et la numérisation vient après. Cette phase n'existe pas, mais elle doit être adressée. Qu'est-ce-que le *video-on-demand*, comment faire le trailer, il y a plein chose qui entre dans le *marketing*, et la recherche du publique. Les *tutors* du monde arabe et les producteurs du monde arabe sont présent aussi, aussi si on n'a pas de système et on fait référence à l'Europe. On doit adapter les modèles. Aussi les européens ont expérience du monde arabe. Il faut prendre compte du contexte. Ce n'est passé assez de dire le Centre National du Cinéma de France te donne l'argent. On essaie de donner au producteur un horizon pour voir et comprendre comment ça se fasse dehors, avec les coproductions, et viser les productions de façon totale. Nous sommes un petit équipe, trois, mais on est en bon compagnie pour réussir à faire des pas en avant techniques, artistiques, sociales et économiques.

Interview with Abdo Nawar, writer, theatre director and audiovisual producer

19 November 2011

KX: Tu connais déjà les thématiques de ma recherche: quel est l'ampleur de l'influence étrangère sur le milieu culturel dans le Sud de la Méditerranée et particulièrement ici à Beyrouth ?

AN: Ecoutes, l'influence est là, et elle ne diminue pas. Mais il y a aussi les perspectives de cette influence. Il y a les gens qui nie cette influence et réagissent en favorisant tout ce que est oriental, disons plutôt ils vont vers l'Iran, comme extrémisme non plus parce que nos racines non sont non plus dans la Perse mais ils vont dans cette côté-là. Il y a d'autres qui vont à l'autre extrême, ils vont vers chaque chose européenne, voire la plus part des gens vers les choses françaises. Moi je peux parler de moi-même, l'influence que me touche. Je ne pense pas que, il y a des gens qui savent qu'est-ce qu'un libanais pur, pas par racisme mais, quand on est libanais, en générale, on est fier de l'être et nie le mélange occidental. C'est pour moi vrai que nous sommes un mini-mélange occidental, quand on peut vraiment dire qu'est-ce qu'il y a d'occidental et qu'est-ce qu'il y a d'oriental. Je trouve que je suis un mélange des trois si j'ajoute le Québec avec. Du fait, ou s'arrête l'influence français, que j'appris travers mes études à l'école, avec tous mes profs, il y avait pas mal de français qui vivait ici et après, petit à petit nous comme chrétien libanais à nier tout ce qui était arabe ou orient, par la force des choses, pas un choix mais ça était imposé. Le Liban était divisé en au moins deux partis, les chrétiens se repères plutôt de côté européen, et les musulmans vers le palestinien, le syrien et après la révolution iranienne vers l'Iran. Mais, c'était imposé. Je n'avais pas choix. Je ne pouvais pas regarder un film iranien côté ouest, c'était presque impossible, et c'était difficile à passer côté est. Je l'ai fait, mais c'était difficile. Après la guerre, on est revenue ensemble, disant dans la façon de vivre ensemble, dans la collectivité, et on vive ensemble dans les espaces publiques mais quand on retour chez nous nous entrons dans nos petits cocoons. Certains, je m'en foute, mais certains ils sont religieux etc., je l'ai dépassé depuis longtemps. Mais je sais que dans mon milieu, de mon côté, mes parents etc., ils ont toujours cet barrière, tout ça qui n'est pas chrétien de l'autre côté, ceci la division en deux, qu'on se sent seul, ça revient un peu, cette méfiance de l'autre qui vient depuis des siècles parce qu'il y a deux grandes étapes les massacres de 1860 entre juifs et chrétiens, puis en 1958 pas un massacre mais une guerre civile rattrapée par l'arrivé de l'armée américaine, puis supposé s'était calmée sauf en 1975 s'est démarré jusqu'à 1990 officiellement. Officieusement, ça continue, vrais d'une autre façon avec un autre visage. Il y avait la guerre chaude maintenant il y a la guerre froide. En 2006 ça devenait chaud une autre fois, mais c'est toujours de la guerre, elle n'est pas fini.

KX: Le rôle des opérateurs culturels, des instituts et les ambassades, c'est quoi, en relation à cette division communautaire ?

AN: Ecoute, tous les ambassades en général, quand nous approche, ont des bon intentions de travailler ensemble et travailler pour tous les libanais, pas un libanais. Les chrétiens, les shiites, etc. Ça sont les associations culturels aussi il y a toutes le bon intentions du monde. Pratiquement, ils essayent et essaie, parce qu'il y a beaucoup de français au Liban, ils ont les centre culturel partout dans le Liban, pas comme le Goethe ou le British Council, à mon sens. Ils ont sept, huit, et dans chaque ville où ils sont-ils essaie de démarrer des relations avec la population. Beaucoup de fois ils n'essaient pas d'imposer la Francophonie et la culture française, il essaie d'aider ces gens-là. La meilleure façon de collaborer c'était de se présenter. D'essayer de dire qu'est-ce qu'on est. Moi je suis tout à fait d'accord avec la plupart des choses qui on fait. La problématique se sent plus que chez l'ambassade plus chez les artistes qui ne connaissent pas le Moyen Orient et va avec l'aire ou l'impression qu'on vient comme maître et l'autre

est un novice, et cette intention je la vois dans beaucoup des artistes. Pas tout ne le monde, on est ici pour collaborer mais quelque fois ils arrivent. Ça dépend des artistes et ça dépend du spectacle ici. Si tu viens donner un spectacle et tu pars le lendemain, tu vois le spectacle, le lendemain tu l'oublies. Et ces ateliers marchent beaucoup plus. Les ateliers avec les contacts directs. Les ateliers avec les français qui travaillent avec des libanais pour les libanais dans un cadre international. C'est beaucoup mieux parce que pour moi le meilleur bénéfice c'est pour les chefs d'ateliers. Plus que pour eux qui suivent le workshop. Ils s'exprimaient et voyaient comment guider un workshop. Il n'y a pas une seule façon de travailler alors ils font le mélange. Et ça aide cette collaboration va loin. Il y a toujours l'étonnement, je parle du Liban, mais quand ils viennent ici les européens ils s'étonnent parce qu'ils se sentent en Europe. Ils peuvent être en Europe. Dans quelle façon? S'ils vont dans un resto, tu peux toute suite servir en français. C'est une habitude. Les américains se sentent chez eux aussi. Généralement, les arabes du Liban savent parler au moins en français ou en anglais. Là il y a les nouvelles relations qui s'intéressent beaucoup à l'Espagne. Je ne sais pourquoi. La plupart de mes étudiants parlent l'arabe, le français, l'anglais et comprennent l'espagnol. L'espagnol est méditerranéen, mais intelligemment l'espagnol œuvre le port à toute l'Amérique Latine, presque. Et plusieurs pays d'Afrique.

KX: L'influence française et européenne, tu me fais penser à ça, peuvent ouvrir le système communautariste, sans emphatiser la relation interne et refocalisant sur les dynamiques internationales ?

AN: Ecoute, tu sais, le racisme, ou le communautarisme comme tu veux l'appeler, n'a jamais l'intéresse du peuple. S'il y a un *leader*, que posent ces idées, s'il y a des idées racistes, on trouve un *leader*, et les gens commencent à l'avoir comme guide. Quand et jusqu'où je ne sais pas. Il peut y avoir quelque petit choses; quelqu'un qui l'applaudit, mais quand tu as des massacres organisés c'est un *leader*. Il y a un *leader*, il y a de la politique, la politique peut être influencée de l'étranger certainement, les plus fois dans les cas du Sud c'est influencée par le Nord. Dans ce cas le Nord peut-être dans la position où il donne et ils veulent. Pendant la guerre du Liban, toutes ces années, quinze ans, il y avait quelqu'un qui donné des armes parce que on ne les achète pas, il n'y avait pas de pétrole. Ils ne les achetaient pas, les libanais. C'était comme un pont entre le Liban et l'Europe, tu vois et pourquoi la guerre est finie je ne sais pas. J'ai beaucoup de doutes, à mon avis elle n'a pas finie, officieusement elle n'est pas finie je ne sais pas. Elle a commencé comme ci et elle est finie comme ça. Toutes les problèmes sont toujours là est la guerre est arrêté, pourquoi? Ce n'était pas comme les grands guerre, la deuxième Guerre Mondiale, où il y a quelqu'un qui gagne sur l'autre, il y a pas quelqu'un qui a gagné sur l'autre. Il y a eu les désignés par quelqu'un, mais pas de vainqueurs.

KX: Le réseau culturel a-t-il quelque effet sur le politique ? Les artistes, les opérateurs culturels, on travaille ensemble pour y essayer à voir du changement ?

AN: Toutes les personnes qui font de l'art ici le font, ils utilisent l'art pour réagir à des divisions culturelles. Mais pour moi ils ne vont pas trop loin. Si je vais regarder une pièce de théâtre ou un film, les gens-là sont déjà ouverts à ce genre-là, plus ou moins. Ils ne sont pas complètement débarrassés de ses racines racistes ou communautaires. Ils sont ouverts à ça. Ils sont à peine prêt de tolérer ça, plus loin que ça ils acceptent, parce qu'ils se sentent mieux que l'autre. Moi comme chrétien par exemple je pense d'être plus bon que le chiite, le chiite pense d'être plus bon que le chrétien. Et moi je suis bon parce que j'accepte le pauvre chiite et le contraire aussi. Il y a beaucoup cette idée-là, nous sommes marqués par ça parce qu'il y a beaucoup de gens dans le milieu culturel quand ils parlent ils parlent qu'ils sont ouverts et tu as l'impression qu'on est ouvert, mais on ne l'est pas. On accepte l'autre, mais on ne l'est pas. On accepte l'autre, mais ça c'est le minimum.

KX: Ça c'est de la tolérance, pas autre grande chose.

AN: Même la tolérance, c'est une obligation après. Ce n'est pas que tu dis 'je le fait parce que je suis tolérant.' C'est un devoir, et ça ne marche pas. Et si on retourne aux villages, je peux imaginer la problématique les Instituts français dans le village, dehors les salles de Beyrouth, ils font les représentations, ils font pas mal de stages, de *workshops*, et c'est dans les stages qui on peut travailler, ouvrir les portes, mais il est beaucoup de travail. Et dans les communautés, dans le Nord par exemple, certains des communautés, dans le Nord par exemple, certains des communautés à lesquelles j'ai donné des *workshops*, le seul lien d'internet est dans l'école du village et l'intérêt est guidé par le directeur de l'école et il laisse voire des pages vraiment spécifiques. Tu pet pas faire des recherches comme ça comme tu veux. Parce que l'intérêt et le diable qui te porte n'importe des mauvais choses. On est au vingt-et-unième siècle mais...

KX: Quand on fait des *workshops*, quand tu as le contact direct avec le publique, et des groupes spécifiques, les jeunes ou les enfants, tu as des possibilités d'avoir du *feedback* pour savoir qu'est qu'ils pense de ton travail ?

AN: Dans les spectacles, ou toute autres formes de représentations, le *feedback* et là; tu ne peux pas conter sur le *feedback*, parce que quelque fois on ment, les amis c'est bon, tes ennemis te vont critiquer fortement. Les uns qui critiquent vraiment sont rares, ou des amis qui s'en foute s'il dit ça ou ça on est amis pour la vie. Dans mon travail personnel j'évite la problématique réelle et références à la guerre pour discuter les racines de la condition humaine en gros, et pas la politique. Et la plupart des gens n'aime pas mon travaille parce que ça ne touche pas directement et ils veulent qu'il touche directement leur problématique. J'ai beaucoup de réaction comme ça dans mon travail et mon travail 'Requiem for the Arts' c'est la question principale c'est questionner la raison de l'art, la problématique de l'art avec la politique, l'art et les conditions sociaux. Et à mon avis il y a beaucoup l'eux qui pense qu'ils ont réglés les problèmes parce qu'ils ont dit ça sur scène, et les personnes sont d'accord parce qu'ils ont vu ça sur scène, et après il ne coûte pas beaucoup. Je connais un artiste que parle beaucoup des droits de la femme etc. et tu penses il bat sa femme. Il va précaire tu vois. Et si tu lui parle il te dit de ne pas t'emmêler. Ça chez nous ou en Égypte où il est comme tu vas à la police, te dit tu dois régler ça avec ton mari. C'est, ils vont ne pas arrêter, si ce n'est pas exagéré. Si tu supportes ça, ils ne vont pas intervenir. Mais dans les ateliers, c'est là que je prends mon *feedback*, c'est là où j'ai fait avec les enfants, c'est des films qu'on a fait avec cette association qui s'appelait Masar et cette association qui est géré par un monsieur qui travaille beaucoup sur conflit résolution, dont partout. Et son idée était de se pas arrêter après Nahar al Barid, c'était une guerre au Nord du Liban entre l'armée libanais et le Fatah al Islam, en 2007-2008. L'idée était de faire des *workshops* avec des enfants des villages libanais dont la plupart des gens était dans les armées libanaises et beaucoup sont mort pendant sa guerre-là et alors un *workshop* avec les palestiniens. En principe c'était l'armée qui avez attaqué les maisons, et dont dans les *workshops* on a commencé par l'attitude très froide de leur part et on a fait qu'on ne voulait pas quitter le camp. On a changé beaucoup. La première chose, qui était un choc pour eux, était que je n'étais pas musulman, mon prénom ce n'est pas d'un côté ou l'autre et il marche les deux, et à ce moment c'était un méchant. On accepte mais il était un méchant. Parce que là on a beaucoup de méfiance. Parce que là on a beaucoup de méfiance. Ils s'étonnaient qu'on puisse être un *guy* normal. Si tu étais palestinien et tu critiquais l'armée libanaise c'était choquante. Petit à petit les choses était interdit avec eux, mais ils se sont dit beaucoup de choses devant la caméra et beaucoup plus derrière la caméra. Ce type de *workshop* était très intéressant et il y avait beaucoup de culturel et de dialogue interculturel dedans. Même ils étaient difficiles avec des arabes qui se parlaient même presque la même langue. Si on imagine l'européen mêlé à ça, quand il arrive à un *workshop* ici, aussi avec les palestiniens, dans les

camps palestiniens au Nord, et puis avec une représentation à Beyrouth, nous étions choqué parce qu'il est tombé dans le folklore et en essayant de régler le problème, il est tombé dans des cadre spécifique occidentales, qui donné une idée fausse de qu'il essayait de trouver. A chaque fois que je vois des films libanais dirigé pour l'étranger, comme ceux-ci d'Ahmad Marouad, mais c'est du folklore ça tu vois. Ils sont des histoires très générique et qui ne marche pas.

KX: Les personnes regardent ça et le redonnaient comme libanais sans l'être.

AN: C'est une vision très étroite d'être libanais. Il y a une autre chose aussi, le contraire, qu'il y a beaucoup de libanais qui ont une idée très folklorique de l'Europe. Il y a beaucoup qui pense l'Europe est le paradis, sans racisme, même pas pauvres. Mais il y a aussi ceux-ci qui regardent l'Europe comme malheureux, sans valeurs, sans famille.

KX: Ça vient aussi di côté européenne, et une représentation de bastion de valeurs. Les programmes aussi viennent avec un sens de mission, et cette représentation donne cette représentation fausse, trop positif, de soi-même. Tu vois qu'il y a ce problème?

AN: Je ne vois pas qu'il y a une faute avec les européennes...C'est plutôt la faute à l'Orient que des décennies est toujours pris avec des guerres, des dictatures, que je commence à filmer j'espère et quand tu vois un européen venant d'Europe, avec les moyens, quand la classe moyen ici n'a pas les moyens, et ils pensent il est riche.

KX: Le secteur culturel libanais est varié dans soi-même. Les personnes qui on contacte dehors du Liban, tu penses qu'ils sont plus ouverts à des idées différentes?

AN: Ils ont la chance d'être plus ouvertes à ça qu'il y a dehors. Il y a beaucoup qui ne sont pas ouvert et qui méfie du l'Occident quand il vient faire des choses. Si tu mets un bon vin sur la table et je peux dire sans intéresse ou préjugé qu'il est bon, je dis ça. Mais si je ne veux pas accepter ça, même s'il est bon, je le critique. Quand je regarde des films américains sur la *mafia*, ça signifie qu'ici on devient comme ça, parce qu'on regard ça? Tu connais le film *Amélie Poulaine*, qui les gens ouvertes à l'Europe on bien aime, des autres pas ouvertes à l'Europe ont dits 's'est quoi ce film sur cette fille qui va autour du monde?' C'est ça cette problématique. Il y a des gens qui se massacrent au Sud du Liban et tu veux ne parler de quoi ça, d'une fille qui va chercher sa-même à travers des images qu'elle trouve dans le métro? Pour des autres, il était très forte. Prend *Caramel*, c'est très folkloristique. Bravo Nadim, il a pris beaucoup d'argent chez les européens, il a fait bien. Il y a ces films qui prennent beaucoup d'argent des sources européens, et il croche les cases de beaucoup des intéressés aux marchés européens. Moi, mon avis, ça c'est de l'art aussi – des autres crois que non- mais je trouve que oui, elle a sa place. C'est très populaire.

KX: Si on fait un exercice de politique culturelle, et vois si des choses marche ou pas avec les gens, tu vois des choses qui marchent avec les libanais, les arabes, qui peuvent donner des dynamiques plus créatif ?

AN: Ecoute, les éléments contemporaines sont plusieurs, et quelque fois ils se contredisent. La contemporaine sort de la vision de la société authentique. Au Liban, la plupart des fois les pièces au théâtre parlent de guerre, il y a le personnage du mauvais politicien, qui est l'autre et pas le nôtre, et les gens aiment voire ça. Les gens, toujours, quand il comprend qu'est ce qu'il voit, parc qu'ils sont intelligent, ils aiment bien. Quand on ne comprend pas, ça non n'aime pas. Parce qu'on ne veut pas se montrer ignorant. Ça c'est typique dans le monde arabe. Je généralise, bien sûr, mais en Europe c'est au

contraire, on essaie de comprendre. Quand c'était ambiguë, les gens dit 'ah, ah, c'est moi', et ils cherchent, en Europe. Ici, non, on jette.

KX: Pour changer ça, la réponse facile et de toujours c'est éducation.

AN: Oui, bien sûr, mais pour éduquer on doit être éduqué. La plupart des problématiques que j'ai c'est au niveau d'essayer de comprendre, de pas s'imposer, d'être ouvert à l'autre, d'écouter. Les jeunes gens sont plus ouverts et peuvent écouter aussi. Au-delà de vingt-cinq ans, ça devient plus difficile. Quelque fois je vois des ex-étudiantes et leurs productions, et on jamais cherche des avis. On dit 'on apprend de ses fautes', oui, mais on peut apprendre dans autre moyens aussi. Au Canada, je trouvais qu'on écoutait. Ici, non.

KX: Tu dis qu'on te cherchait parce qu'on est prof mais pas dans le sens de professeur seulement, mais parce qu'on est professionnel.

AN: Oui, c'est ça. On n'a pas des bon modèles des adultes, les politiciens, les *leaders* qui se lance des verres d'eau et s'arrache les sièges, à la télé, et les parents qui ne peuvent pas gérer la maison bien par plusieurs problèmes politiques et sociales. Ici au Liban je crois je nous voyons comme arabe 'haute gamme' parce qu'on parle et se fait sentir. Dans les autres pays on est opprimé, et j'espère qu'on peut se libérer de ça, sans tomber dans des autres problèmes de confessionnalismes et dictatures d'agents.

KX: On attend trop de la politique culturelle pour changer tout ça ?

AN: Eh, on voit que les choses ne change pas grand-chose. Mais, on essaye. Avec les guerres, toutes les guerres des Moyen Ages, les Croisades, puis l'Inquisition, on se rappelle de blague que si Jésus Christ n'a même réussi à arrêter ça, comment peut un opérateur culturel faire ça? Si on ne croit pas on ne peut pas faire. 'On essaie.' C'est très important pour moi pour être à une représentation ou un *workshop* et être aimé pour ce qui je sois, pour un chrétien, même si les gens ne le connais pas, on s'il en foute. Il y a des gens qui sont ouvertes, qui on se demande si les choses qu'ils écoutent sont vraies. La migration est importante, Nord-Sud, Est-Ouest, parce qu'on peut trouver sa place dans un autre lieu, peut-être à Montréal.

Interview with Antonio Prats, Deputy Head Mission, Embassy of Spain to Lebanon (dealing with cultural affairs)

20 November 2011

KX: What is the role of the Spanish Embassy here in Beirut?

AP: In Beirut we have two main institutions: the *Instituto Cervantes* and the Embassy. The *Cervantes* is the main institution in Spain for teaching Spanish and to promote Spanish culture. The Embassy of Spain tries to promote Spanish culture and foster collaboration between Lebanese and Spanish artists. Both of us work together and coordinate ourselves. The *Instituto Cervantes* receives its money from the main HQ in Madrid. The Embassy receives its money from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also in Madrid. We try to make a single programme of activities for everything. What do we do? We promote the Spanish language and there are 3,000 students per year at the *Instituto Cervantes*, which shows the popularity of Spanish here in Lebanon. We promote cultural activities.

KX: And why do Lebanese cultural operators, artists, young people here have an interest in Spain and Spanish artists?

AP: Spain is popular. I think football helps! Lebanese people are close to Spain. We are not Arabs but we share a love for dance and music and life. Many Lebanese have travelled to Spain. Many love *flamenco* and Lebanese artists promote it locally with local artists. They like to improve their capacities. What we try to do in terms of cultural cooperation is trying to create things together like having a Spanish play with Lebanese artists or support artists mobility both ways. We try to know both countries better and do things together since this helps cultural understanding and global understanding.

KX: Spain, together with France, greatly promotes ideas of intercultural dialogue also through the Alliance of Civilisations and work in the Mediterranean. Would you say Spain is particularly interested in Lebanon due to its strategic position between Europe, the Arab countries and Asia?

AP: This is part of Spain's international strategy, not in particular about Lebanon. We cannot address all countries at the same level. We address Latin America, and also Arab countries since we had seven centuries of Arab rule directly in Spain. We also try to address Asia, particularly China. Last year was the year of Spain in China. Department for culture at the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] is important and addresses Spanish and non-Spanish speaking countries.

KX: A number of cultural institutes have started to work together rather than work in competition with each other. For example through EUNIC. How important is it to develop a European cultural relations approach?

AP: It is important because if you work together you can do more things or the same things better. But EUNIC or European cultural action will not replace totally bilateral action because on top of European collaboration there is also bilateral collaboration. The governments want to be part of Europe but also want to present their own culture and not have their image sidelined but a European image, reflecting many different nuances and realities in Europe.

KX: I find that many people here associate Europe with France.

AP: Because of the history, since Lebanon was under the French.

KX: I see also a strong link between France and the Mediterranean as a whole, due to colonial history and European involvement in the Mediterranean. However, Spain is also there: the Barcelona Process, the reviewed Euro-Med approach...

AP: Yes, also the Peace Process in Madrid in 1991 with Arab countries and Israel...

KX: So how important is the Mediterranean for Spain?

AP: According to foreign policy, the Mediterranean is very important. We have three main objectives: Europe, South America, and the Arab countries. These have been so for many years.

KX: Between Europe and the Arab countries is the Mediterranean – common. So is there a joint approach by Spain toward the Mediterranean?

AP: It's Europe, and the Arab countries. Although there are many EU-funded projects in the Mediterranean in which we take part. When I say Europe and the Arab countries it's because there are three Secretaries of State for the three regions. This goes back to the 1940s and reflects our history of very good relations with the Arab countries. We have more than 3,000 expressions from Arabic in our language, have had seven centuries of Arab presence and we are still very close. Asia is further away, though the Philippines were part of the Spanish empire.

KX: To conclude, in your work here in Lebanon and in other countries, do you see a role beyond cooperation in the field of cultural expertise? In know-how, skills and education?

AP: We are crossing a very difficult time of troubles in all of Europe so it's becoming more difficult. But when we have the money we try organise workshops for Lebanese artists to explain or transfer our know-how in what they want us to help them with. It's not only about promoting ourselves but helping them promote themselves.

KX: Is there a similar relationship with the State?

AP: Yes, we have the Ministry of Culture, the autonomous governments, and the MFA. It's the MFA which deals with the external project of culture in Spain. The Ministry works with Spain. But they also coordinate together with other countries. The MFA leads the work with foreign countries through us, the Embassies.

Interviews in Rabat: September 2011

Interview with Driss Ksikes, playwright, theatre director and writer

1 September 2011

KX: Quel est l'ampleur de l'influence européenne et française dans le domaine des relations culturelles ici au Maroc et principalement à Casablanca et ici à Rabat? L'entretien je l'ai voulu avec toi parce que tu es praticien de la culture (écrivain/théâtre) et aussi chercheur and penseur et pour ça j'imagine que tu peux me donner une vision particulière mais aussi générale.

DK: D'abord d'un point de vue générale je pense que le Maroc est engagé dans une logique libérale et cherche à attirer les investissements, vu qu'il a des appuis politiques en Europe et principalement en France qui est le premier investisseur au Maroc et avec qu'il a une politique très forte. Aussi le système éducatif au Maroc, dans lesquels les écoles ont un système français et donc le système bilingue et donc le français reste important. Vu le fait que le français reste la langue des affaires. L'arabe ce n'est pas la langue des affaires. L'arabe est une langue de droit et une langue de discours – pas des affaires. Ça c'est interne au Maroc. Avec les autres pays arabes la langue des affaires est l'anglais, et aussi l'arabe, mais au Maroc le français reste la vraie langue des affaires économiques et financières. Vu tout cela, je trouve que le Maroc est plus tourné vers l'Europe, vers le Nord dans la verticalité. Aujourd'hui il commence à prendre conscience de l'importance de l'Afrique. Il y a des internes stratégiques avec les pays du Golf. Mais la disposition générale est tournée vers le Nord. Ça c'est le premier point.

Le deuxième point c'est que d'un point de vue culturelle les seules structures qui permet d'avoir une activité culturelle constante, permanente au Maroc sont les instituts culturels de l'étranger. Principalement l'Institut français mais aussi le *Cervantes* espagnol, le *Goethe*, le *British Council* qui a réduit ses activités etc. Bon, ces centres constitués le seul moyen, sont les seules, j'emphaise, à organiser des activités culturelles permanentes. Il y a de côté les galeries privées des arts, mais il n'y a pas de théâtre sur base permanente sauf le Centre Mohammed V de l'Etat. Il n'y a pas d'autres théâtres, espaces indépendantes, à base de programmation culturelles régulières avec accès aux langues, avec accès aux bibliothèques, avec accès aux activités culturelles. Les instituts étrangers sont le seul à le faire. On commence aujourd'hui à voir des petits choses ailleurs mais en termes de volume et en termes d'importance et en termes de constance sont les instituts culturels étrangers. Ils sont assez fondamentaux. Les instituts culturels françaises sont les premières à promouvoir l'activité permanente. Ça c'est le deuxième point.

Le troisième point important par rapport à ça c'est que l'expression culturelle et les diverses structures qui permet l'expression culturelle ici de voyager sont des structures qui sont tournées vers l'extérieure. Donc les ambassades, les structures qui sont liées à ça qui permet aux structures de voyager et d'aller aux extérieurs. Il y a une faible capacité des autorités marocaines pour accompagner la création vers l'étranger, sauf pour des représentations un peu folklorique. Il y a aujourd'hui la CCME qui est le Conseil Consultative des Marocaines Etrangères qui commence à aller un peu plus loin que ça. Mais en générale il y a peu. En générale il y a deux directions : il y a les arabophones tournés vers l'Égypte et le Liban, et les francophones tournés vers Paris.

KX: Il y a des relations entre les deux directions ?

DK: Très peu, très pauvre.

KX: La raison pour les deux directions ?

DK: Le marché de la culture au Maroc est faible, le nombre de lecteurs n'est pas très élevé, très peu de débat sur ce que se produit. Par contre quand dans les autres pays arabes on publie en arabe, il y a les maisons d'éditions qui, par exemple Al Harrabi, à Rabat, est tourné vers Beyrouth, vers l'Égypte, et qui donne une dimension internationale dans le monde arabe. Ça qu'est produit en français donne une dimension internationale qui passe par Paris.

Donc il y a deux forces d'attractions parallèles. S'ils se croisent en matière de traduction c'est très rare et il y a peu d'occasion d'avoir les arabophones et francophones ici que se retrouve pour discuter de qu'est qu'il faut.

KX: Et quand il y a ces rares occasions, ils sont fait par des individus, par des académiciens, par des chercheurs ?

DK: Généralement dans les universités, mais aussi dans les universités il y a les divisions entre les départements de français, le département d'arabe, qui organise séparément. Il y a des territoires séparés, sauf pour des issues et des choses qui les amènes ensemble par cérémonie. Si non il y a parfois des associations et des initiatives mais même les associations ils sont parfois prise par les références idéologiques. Ils vont dans la direction de ne vouloir pas travailler dans le domaine français etc. On a de temps en temps des petits actions par exemple un hommage à Tahar Ben Jalloun qui est francophone mais sont les arabophones que les font. Mais il reste au niveau de la cérémonie et il n'y a pas d'espace de débat. Donc on a seulement des initiatives individuelles très limités.

KX: Ces initiatives ont une fonction, qu'ils font, et ils se ferment là.

DK: Oui.

KX: Dans ton expérience, aussi avec Dabateatr, tu sens que tu et le groupe cherchent de changer tout ça dans la longue perspectives ?

DK: Il y a deux choses que je fais et dans lesquels on cherche d'aller plus loin. A Dabateatr par exemple on utilise et discute le *Derija* qui est l'Arabe marocain. J'écris en français, je le traduis en *Derija* pour ce que soit joué en *Derija*. Moi je fais l'effort de travailler d'une langue à l'autre et les gens apprécient le fait qu'on l'adresse en *Derija* en mettant le sous-titrage en français. Donc nous travaillons avec les langues et nous n'avons pas de problèmes avec ça.

Pour nous, il y a une richesse ici au Maroc et le pays traverse beaucoup de choses. L'autre chose est les Rencontres d'Averroès qui sont ici à Rabat et que j'organise. Donc il y a qui parle l'arabe et qui parle le français. Là aussi il y a un mélange qui va ailleurs. Je pense que cette question de métissage, de mélange, de hybridité, effectivement ils font encore peur. Et les gens ont encore peur de cette zone grise. On n'a pas des positions identitaires en relation avec une langue; on accepte la situation.

KX: Il semble que les personnes en générale, dans les ministères, dans les médias aussi, ne prends pas position par ce qu'il est plus facile.

DK: Oui, nous sommes dans un période de confrontation à base de ce qui est différent. Mais, il y a aujourd'hui l'institutionnalisation de ce qu'on dit dans le texte, dans ce qu'on voit. Il y a des associations qui essayent de défendre ça avec force dans un sens ou l'autre. Mais il y a la structure en Maroc du PEN club qui est plutôt mélangé. Les arabophones et les francophones qui se mélangent. L'Association des Ecrivains du Maroc reste une chapelle de l'arabophonie. Mais il sert plus de boutique et il n'y a pas assez de débat dans la société.

KX: Quels rôles jouent les audiences et les jeunes dans ce tableau? Ils veulent un changement?

DK: C'est difficile de dire. Il y a dans le même temps une banalisation de cette question, et une résistance avec des gens qui ne parlera pas l'arabe par exemple. Mais ce n'est plus la question centrale.

KX: Ça c'est parce qu'il y a autres questions importantes ou parce que il y a l'épuisement du sujet?

DK: Il y a l'épuisement du sujet: à propos du *Derija* et la langue à utiliser, c'est plus important que la question entre arabe et français. La question de l'arabe vernaculaire, du arabe marocaine, c'est plus important. C'est comme tu compares l'hébreu classique et l'hébreu moderne. Justement, le maltais est un exemple d'une langue vernaculaire. En Maroc il n'est pas encore langue vernaculaire parce qu'il n'est pas encore codifié. Ça c'est une question important. La question du français aujourd'hui forme part de la discussion sur la langue de l'élite, des hommes des affaires. L'arabe classique est une langue identitaire, la langue du Coran, des institutions. La langue du peuple, de l'échange permanent, est le *Derija*. La particularité de la question de la *Derija* c'est que le résultat ça quelque chose de mélangé. Nous sommes des arabes, qu'avons la colonisation française, l'influence espagnol, donc tout ça se trouve dans le *Derija* ou se trouve l'arabe, le français, l'espagnol. Tu retrouves nos origines berbères dans la morphologie des mots. Donc la question de *Derija* aujourd'hui elle est posée parce que comme tu te vue dans une monde arabe nous sommes dans un retour national. Un retour à l'espace national. Bien entendre c'est un débat qui abord la sacralité de l'arabe parce qu'il y avait beaucoup de sujet hors-jeux.

KX: Qu'est-ce le rôle du *Derija* face au monde arabe? Il contribue à un dialogue plus riche avec le reste du monde arabe? Aussi, il aide la communication ou c'est plus difficile à pas mettre tout sur l'arabe commun mais avoir aussi cette langue particulière?

DK: Il dépend qu'est-ce que tu cherches au niveau culturel. En Égypte par exemple a développé et imposé l'arabe égyptien par l'industrie de téléfeuilleton. Et la communication c'est forte avec le reste du monde arabe. La force de diffusion et la force culturelle font la différence. Le Maroc est encore faible est n'a pas cette ampleur de diffusion culturelle.

KX: Il y a peur de regarder à la face la situation locale liée à l'identité ?

DK: On peut le faire en discutant les expressions d'aujourd'hui. Le téléfeuilleton, turc, mexicain, brésilien, qui sont passés à la télé marocain sont doublé en *Derija*. Ça c'est nouveau et il n'existait pas. Parce que avant ont les recevait en libanais. La question de la langue est un passage dans l'espace d'une autonomie. Mais c'est une autonomie où nous ne sommes pas détachés du monde arabe. Il y a la singularité de ce qui permet, de ce qui est inaudible par des gens arabes, à la limite de la communication qui te pose le moyen de communication et de diffusion. Mais on a l'usage de l'arabe moderne comme moyen de communication entre arabes.

KX: Pour arriver à une situation comme ça il y a du boulot et du temps. Il y a aussi la participation du privé.

DK: Il y a besoin de la maturation que ce fait avec le temps par les acteurs d'abord parce que c'est quelque chose que se fait par leur. Ce n'est pas une question de *top-down*. C'est une chose qui d'abord doit se renforcer dans la société par les acteurs qui prennent la mesure et l'ampleur de ça. Par exemple à propos de la réforme de la constitution il y a un débat au sein de la Commission pour reconnaître le *Derija* comme langue nationale. Alors c'est la reconnaissance de parler marocain. L'arabe classique reste la langue des écoles, ensemble au français.

KX: On ne parle pas seulement une langue, on y pense avec aussi. Qu'est que l'influence du français sur la conceptualisation de l'expression culturelle? Et du *Derija*? [Here was not clear enough so gave example with Maltese and English and how language shapes thinking e.g. on the Mediterranean].

DK: Le *Derija* n'est pas comme le maltais parce qu'il n'est pas codifié. Donc les gens doivent comprendre qu'on peut utiliser le *Derija* pour s'exprimer sur des matières sérieuses. On doit se battre pour faire ça possible.

KX: Qui doit se battre?

DK: Les éducateurs, les media, les forces de sensibilisation dans le domaine publique.

KX: Et les instituts étrangers ont un rôle dans ce débat?

DK: Oui ils sont très intéressés au débat sur le *Derija* et ils le suivent. Ça signifie que le débat est dans l'âme de la société et viens de la société. Bien entendu, l'espace européenne se dise que ce sujet appartient au Maroc et n'est pas pollué par des traditions arabes et arabo-musulmanes dans le sens large et c'est encore mieux parce que la société est dans sa complexité et pas dans sa représentation à partir de l'espace arabo-musulman. Qui parts des réalités actuelles. Par exemple l'Institut français abord des représentations qui utilise et discute le *Derija*.

KX: Il y a un dialogue entre la réalité de *Derija* et les aspects plus traditionnels ?

DK: Oui, entre le *Derija* et les défenseurs de l'arabe il y a de la polémique. Entre le *Derija* et le monde arabe et ceux qui vise l'évolution et qui ne le veulent pas dans la société. Ce qui dise que c'est une affaire commerciale et qui voit de la publicité en *Derija*. Et que finalement ce n'est pas quelque chose de profondeur et historique comme l'arabe. Au niveau du corpus, entre l'arabe et le *Derija*, ce n'est possible de faire un paragone. Le *Derija* laisse les personnes s'exprimer et de faire des choses actuelles et factuelles etc. D'abord on doit élargir ça et avoir les professeurs parler le *Derija* parce que c'est une polémique qui doit être établi.

KX: En ce moment on n y a pas ça ?

DK: Oui, il y a des professeurs qui parle le *Derija*, mais pas encore banalisé.

KX: Et le rôle des réseaux sociaux ?

DK: Je suis, je fais un travail actuellement sur ça. D'abord les réseaux sociaux ont simplement aboli les frontières entre les langues. Les réseaux sociaux le français, le *Derija*, l'arabe, toutes les langues utilisées dans la même page Facebook. Et les frontières sont brûlées et avec ces révolutions nous avons l'expression de quelque chose plus direct, parfois dirigé par le *Derija*. Il y a une expression plus directe. Il est aussi le cas de démocratiser l'expression. C'est parce que il y a des personnes qui n'ont pas accès au français. Plutôt on le fait par le *Derija* ou par le mélange. La question de communication est plus importante que la forme. C'est en train de changer les choses.

KX: L'intérêt des instituts étrangers est facilité par tous les changements sociaux ? Ils observent et participent aussi ?

DK: Ils prennent courage, ils sont à l'écoute. De ma connaissance de ce qui se passe l'européennes sont en train de repenser l'expression culturelle de la méditerranée et aujourd'hui l'époque d'être uniquement des diffuseurs de la culture est passée. C'est un rôle insuffisant pour continuer à travailler entre cultures. Aujourd'hui ils sont à l'écoute de ça. J'ai été convoqué par plusieurs directeurs d'instituts étrangers ici à Rabat et on a discuté un peu pour voir comment la société et la dynamique culturelle ont-ils changés. Je pense qu'ils ont compris qu'il y a quelque chose qui s'est passée. Par rapport à la question centrale de l'héritage de Lumière et de l'Europe, la liberté, aujourd'hui il y a quelque chose dans l'expression qui leur échappe. Donc soit qu'il soit ce changement il est important de ne pas être en décalage avec ça.

KX: Dans la diplomatie culturelle, coopération culturelle, ici les changements ont un rôle très important. On ne peut pas faire de la vitrine de côté français au Maroc. Ils doivent avoir plus de dynamisme.

DK: Il ne faut pas oublier que la diplomatie culturelle ce n'est pas comme avant. Les ressources ont changés. Donc les défis ont changés. Il y a toujours les éléments historiques dans ces changements. Ils ont aussi pris conscience de quelque chose qui a changé aussi si je n'ai pas les mots pour le dire. C'est la réalité et il y a une nouvelle logique vers le présent. Cette logique aborde le culturel pour voir la dynamique et le nouvel espace dans lequel on vive. Ils sont vraiment dedans. Il y a plus participation et conscience de relevance.

KX: Il y a un élément de se mêler plus ?

DK: Il n'est pas une situation de se mêler ou non. C'est plutôt le rôle de facilitateur qu'ils cherchent.

KX: Je comprends, mais il y a du réel dans des sentiments populaires qu'ils se mêlent des affaires locales ?

DK: Oui, il essaie d'encourager certaines choses. Et s'ils ne le faisaient pas il n'y avait d'autres pour le faire. Il y a beaucoup d'initiatives comme Dabateatr: nous par exemple sommes appuyés par l'Institut français qui nous donne une résidence. Cette résidence ni le ministère de la culture là nous donnerai ni autre organisation.

KX: De côté national et de l'état c'est difficile de ne pas être critiqué n'est-ce pas (am referring to foreign institutes)?

DK: Il n'est pas toujours dirigé dans cette manière par ce que le Maroc est pays non-européenne, avec statuts avancée mais non-européenne et musulman. Donc il montre beaucoup de prudence dans la manière de mettre en avance les valeurs de l'Europe. Il y a vigilance dans le choix de projet.

KX: Tu as eu l'expérience quand tu es allé avec un projet et on a dit 'non'?

DK: Par rapport à les européennes il vient de refuser des projets.

KX: Et on fait quoi? On en discute?

DK: Non. On ne le fait pas avec. La plupart des temps c'est parce que les européennes sont trop procédures. Quand tu répons à un appel d'offre et ils retiennent qu'il y a des critères que tu ne communique pas on peut refuser.

KX: Et tu as entamé des projets avec l'Ue?

DK: Non, même raison, avec la Représentation européenne au Maroc. Et aussi parce que ce type de projets sont plus visé sur le social, et quand il y a la culture, c'est plutôt comme un outil de citoyennes etc.

KX: Oui je comprends: les dernières *association agreements* mise sur la citoyenneté. Mais to crois que il y a l'espace pour plus culture dans la collaboration avec l'Ue?

DK: Ils sont en train d'aller au-delà dans le culturelle mais ce n'est pas encore clair.

KX: Tu es enquête par ça: une forme d'encroachment peut-être une mauvaise nouvelle?

DK: Je ne sais pas. Le problème est que tel problème se forme par l'Ue et ne se favorise assez la création. Il favorise des choses qui vont dans leur jargon. Ils vont à changer quelque chose dans la société: ça c'est une illusion. La culture ne change pas les choses rapidement. Elle change les choses sur la longue durée. Donc ça signifie que tu es amené à remplir de choses des cases, et bon.

KX: Oui, ça aussi c'était la critique visé à l'année 2008 pour le dialogue interculturel.

DK: Oui. Je ne sais pas l'efficacité de ça. On a besoin toujours de remplir les formes, mais l'important c'est l'orientation des formes, comment penser les choses. Il faut réviser un peu les choses, quels sont les priorités etc. Ça que me dérange aujourd'hui c'est cette conception un peu 'ONG' de la culture. C'est-à-dire on fait de l'art mais l'art il serve à quoi? En fait l'art peut servir, bien sûr, mais quelque fois il est conçu dans des modes qui n'existent pas. C'est une question qui est au-dehors de cette impostation.

KX: A propos de capitale européenne de la culture, c'est un projet culturel, mais ce n'est pas un projet culturel, dans le sens que tu dis. On fait des compromis. Mais si dans ça on essaye à introduire l'élément méditerranéen pour ouvrir la perspective Nord-Sud aussi à Ouest-Est? Il est trop compliqué? Elle existe cette dimension? Et dans le contexte européenne, y-a-t-il espace pour la Méditerranée?

DK: La Méditerranéen existe beaucoup. Encore une fois, c'est le cercle d'experts et les restrictions des formes. La Méditerranée existe, est vrai. Moi je pense que le concept réel, la Méditerranée en particulière on sait que reste un peu une boutique d'experts.

KX: Comme par exemple de ça je pense à la Fondation Anna Lindh.

DK: Oui, la Fondation Anna Lindh est un exemple précis dans lequel tu te confronte à qu'est-ce que la Fondation veut faire des choses. Par rapport à l'Anna Lindh, c'est très décevant. L'Anna Lindh est même l'exemple de la faillite de la Méditerranée.

KX: Et par rapport de politique et stratégie politique on peut changer quelque chose dans l'Anna Lindh, dans la vision et la conceptualisation? Pour redémarrer?

DK: On peut réformer l'Anna Lindh mais, on doit revoir comment et pourquoi. Le problème est que, par exemple dans l'espace académique, il n'y a pas un vrai espace académique. On doit aller vers des liens qui fondent les frontières entre l'académie, la formation, la société. Des lieux où on peut communiquer. Au lieu de lieux on produit les mêmes choses dans la société. Ça c'est mon problème. Sur ça il y a beaucoup de travail. Ils sont conscients. J'ai discuté avec Azoulay et on a discuté sur ce point et il m'a dit oui tu as raison. Mais on n'arrive pas encore à trouver les bonnes personnes. Il y a des bonnes personnes dans l'Anna Lindh et millier d'associations qui sont dans chaque pays mais la même raison du blocage existe toujours.

KX: Oui, on part avec des bon idées, bien recherchés, et plans qui peuvent faire la différence, mais après maintes consultations et négociations avec ministères ou autorités, on finit avec un projet dilué qui est le même comme le précédent. Le résultat peut-être frustrant.

DK: Je pense que c'est un peu le syndrome du *power-point*. J'ai l'impression que il y a des projets que semble intéressantes quand présentés, avec des plans et projections, mais quand tu regardes bien, quand tu vois qui sont les *middle-managers*, qui s'occupe de ça, et la manière dans lequel on applique les idées, les résistances au changement que tu as planifié et prévu, devient plus claire.

KX: Y a-t-il la possibilité d'utiliser les obstacles comme des possibilités à aller au-delà de ces mêmes obstacles par exemple les *mid-managers* – les mentalités, les niveaux de collaboration? C'est intéressant penser que si on mit la chose ensemble, plutôt que séparer, on crée des opportunités. Tu as fait ce geste avec tes mains parlant de créer des opportunités pour communiquer (les mains ensemble, créant un lien dynamique) et ça symbolise beaucoup. Tu connais des situations quand les frontières sont devenues des opportunités pour ouvrir les frontières?

DK: [Tired] Je connais des situations mais chaque fois la promesse n'about pas à un résultat.

KX: Les pays du Golf, sont-ils un espace intéressant pour y travailler avec? Dans le contexte Méditerranée – pays arabes?

DK: [Very critical] Moi je ne connais pas beaucoup ce monde, et généralement je n'aime pas le Golfe, par question que je considère le Golfe comme espace d'hyper modernité artificielle. Basés sur culture très archaïque y très réactionnaires. Avec l'argent, on a construit sure cette idéologie qui est très limitatrice. Donc je n'aime pas l'argent que viens du Golfe, et je me méfies plus que l'argent que vient de l'Europe.

KX: Le Golfe dont l'impression de vouloir changer les choses sans vraiment les changer. C'est comme construire la culture sur le sable, et ça va aussi métaphoriquement et pas seulement littéralement.

DK: Il est très artificiel parce qu'ils n'ont pas un point de vue archéologique ou anthropologique.

'Construire sur la sable' c'est dans la société soi-même. Aujourd'hui ils sont dans l'hyper modernité.

KX: Pour clôturer, l'issue de la migration dans le contexte de l'hybridité et l'échange. Quel rôle, dans la réalité culturelle marocain, joue cette mixité culturelle liée à la migration et le mouvement? A Casa et à Rabat j'ai vu une grand mixité, que ressemble aussi à Malte.

DK: Oui à Dabateatr on a abordé ce thème important. Un truc qui s'appelle 'Migrensene' avec les sub-sahariens pendant les dernières années mettez ensemble le théâtre et la danse et des audience sub-sahariens qui nous ont dit qu'ils étaient très émus parce que c'était la première fois qu'ils étaient considérés comme des êtres humains et qu'ils avaient trouvé un espace où ils pouvaient échanger leur expériences. Je pense qu'il y a un racisme latent dans la société qu'il faut combattre. Le marocains sont aussi des migrants vers l'Europe – Pays Bas, France, Italie, Espagne – et ces sont des jeunes qui se sont enrichissais par là et en retournant ou repassant ils passent très rarement par les voix culturelles. Nous voulons échanger des expériences avec leurs et leurs familles. Ils sont des possibilités. On doit faire ça pour connaitre la société, pour qu'elle ne coule pas. Nous avons un néo-patriotisme au Maroc, un nationalisme plutôt agressif, et donc on doit chercher les expériences profondes et complexes comme ça.

KX: Ça c'est la richesse de la diaspora, une richesse très grande.

DK: Ils créent des espaces qui peuvent bousculer les choses. Il est encore un espace très marginale.

KX: Dans vingt ans, tu vois des changements graduels, ou plutôt dramatique, dans la société?

DK: C'est difficile prévoir. Nous sommes dans une société qui est très précaire, en transition, qui se pose des questions, qui n'a pas beaucoup des réponses. Dans lesquelles il y a un système très autoritaire. Il y a le réformisme, le paternalisme, le conformisme, et aussi de la patience. Les choses peuvent bouger plus rapidement que prévu. Mais on ne sait pas. L'espoir est là. Le vrai changement vient si on a des espaces pour débattre, la multiplication des espaces dans lesquels il y a un vrai contact. On doit adresser un vrai problème avec les médias publiques, qui sont très au-dessous de ce qu'ils doivent faire dans une société libre. On doit bâtir des espaces pour respirer et les avoir multiplier. Sans ça, la société peut imposer, mais elle peut aussi aller vers le chaos parce qu'il n'y a aura pas de structure et de direction.

Interview with Hassan El Ouazzani, official responsible for literature at the Ministry for Culture

1 September 2011

KX: De ton expérience, récemment au Ministère (deux ans) mais aussi avant dans le domaine de la littérature et de la publication, l'influence européenne et particulièrement français, sont-ils signifiant sur la conceptualisation et le développement des expressions culturelles ?

HEO: Bien sûr. Evidemment. La présence européenne pèse sur la scène marocaine. D'abord, il y a le facteur historique, l'Espagne dans le nord et la France dans le reste du pays. Il pèse sur la manière de rédiger le penser et les enjeux. Ils font partis des défis marocains. Ils vont forcer la réalité marocaine et influencer le niveau de production marocain. En termes des idées, de présence, de influence sur les auteurs, et les nouvelles générations qui écrit en français. Il y a des liens directs. Il y a aussi la tendance vers une diversification de l'usage linguistique. Des jeunes écrivains qui écrivent en néerlandais, espagnol, et pas seulement en français. Par exemple Moustafa Mahli qui est respecté en Hollande. Ces écrivains ont une citoyenneté double mais ils sont marocains, leur repères sont marocains, même au niveau de thématique, il y a la présence du Maroc. La dialectique est là.

Au niveau du marché, les écrivains qui écrit en français ont plus de possibilités d'être connus et publiés parce qu'ils y a des maisons d'éditions à Paris qui est le centre littéraire par rapport aux autres pour les publications en arabe. Si on compare par exemple, la grande partie des auteurs qui publient soi-même au Maroc publie en arabe. Ce à dire, ils ont moins de possibilité d'avoir des éditeurs parce qu'ils écrivent et publie en arabe.

KX: Les lecteurs dans les autres pays arabes lisent les écrivains marocains dans quelle langue principalement ?

HEO: Ils les lisent plutôt en arabe mais au niveau de littérature moderne il y a un grand déséquilibre visé la littérature orientale. D'abord, les orientaux ont le sentiment qu'ils sont les meilleurs, et il y a le facteur industriel: les marocains n'arrive pas en termes de productions. Les virages marocains sont bas, distribués au Maroc. Au Liban, par exemple, il y a des maisons qui arrivent à couvrir toutes les marchés. Les maisons au Maroc vivent pour le Maroc. Il y a un grand déséquilibre dans l'exportation du Maroc des livres. Les statistiques officiels trouves que les marocains, en comparaison avec le Liban, export beaucoup moins. Ça n'a pas à voir avec la qualité mas aide à être respecté en Orient.

KX: Beyrouth est le trampoline pour les écrivains arabes en Europe, n'est pas ?

HEO: Oui, il y a des raisons historiques. Le Maroc était le dernier pays arabe ou s'est introduisait la imprimerie. Presque quatre décennies après le Liban.

KX: A propos des écrivains et publications marocains, en relation avec le marché européenne, il y a des appuis comme échange et résidence ?

HEO: C'est limité. Au niveau des solutions de livre, il y a le soutien du bureau du livre français qui est part du Ministère des Affaires étrangères français. Mais après la crise, le fond est diminué. Pour les résidences, il y a seulement un contrat avec les français, qui lie le Ministère de la Culture avec quatre ou cinq artistes marocains qui attends des festivals et font contact.

KX: Il y a des possibilités de changer ça ? Ou c'est bon comme ça pour ne pas avoir trop influence étranger ? Peut ça aider le Sud-Sud ?

HEO: Ça c'est trop idéale. D'ailleurs, les marchés arabes sont liés parce qu'on a la même culture. La différence d'expériences est moins entre arabes. On a besoin de s'ouvrir sur autres langue et cultures.

KX: C'est intéressant d'écouter dire que les pays arabe sont très similaires, et que la culture français est toujours étranger. N'est-il pas le cas de ne pas avoir ce blocus, mais plus un mélange moins fixe ?

HEO: Oui c'est vrai, mais les similarités entre les artistes arabes sont là. On a besoin de balance entre les types des ouvertures.

KX: Comme maltais, je vois une grande relation entre la culture marocain et celle française.

HEO: Oui, il y a ce lien, mais ils ne sont pas la même chose. La langue est utilisée, mais la culture marocaine ce n'est pas forcément française. Il y a plutôt une influence, un mixage, qui produit un résultat marocain dans sa mixité.

KX: La Méditerranée, de coté de votre participation dans festivals et collaboration, tu crois qu'elle existe ou qu'elle est un grand invention/évasion? Qu'est-ce que la valeur ajouté de la dimension méditerranéenne dans des festivals littéraires de la Méditerranée, par exemple?

HEO: Je crois qu'il y a des valeurs qui sont partagés, oui, qui sont un peu différent que dans des espaces américain ou indien. Même dans le moyen d'interpréter la vie, c'est un peu particulier.

KX: Quel rôle joue l'audience dans le contexte méditerranéenne, en relation avec les artistes et organisateurs culturelles?

HEO: Il y a des valeurs partagées, mais aussi des différences entre les audiences méditerranéenne. Par exemple la religion peut faire la différence.

KX: Les audiences marocaines réagissent aux influences/références français/espagnol/autre méditerranéenne? Il y a un contexte qui on doit utiliser pour aborder les audiences mieux?

HEO: Les spécificités des pays doivent être prises en considération. La référentielle politique, religieux etc. est important à prendre en considération.

KX: Il y a des thèmes et circonstances qui n'aident pas la communication avec les audiences (par exemple la religion, la censure). Comment aborder cela? Par défi? Par prudence?

HEO: Oui, on ne peut pas faire des changements dans l'art sans un correspondant changement sociétale. C'est un processus qui risque d'être longue parce qu'il y a des identités fortes.

KX: La crise financière a diminuait le niveau d'appui aux arts méditerranéens de coté de l'Europe en certaines instances. Ça ouvre des nouvelles opportunités de collaborations et financement?

HEO: Oui, nous essayons de changer nos sources. Mais pour nous, l'autosuffisance sera plus importante, pour le long terme, pour la soutenabilité, pour avoir une industrie au Maroc. Au Liban par exemple, on a

l'industrie autonome. Au Maroc, non – le soutien français ce n'est pas autochtone et visé à construire une industrie. Ils sont les marocains qui doivent faire ça.

KX: D'où viens leur changement?

HEO: Beaucoup de travail se doit faire au niveau de l'éducation, dans les écoles où il n'y a pas de qualité dans les textes scolaires – en fait il n'y a pas de textes scolaires, visant la littérature. Les bibliothèques sont pauvres aussi.

KX: La technologie peut aider?

HEO: Oui, si on utilise les nouvelles technologies pour aider l'éducation, les bibliothèques, la promotion des livres. Dans la veine des réseaux sociaux, on doit trouver un modèle pour la littérature et sa promotion. La nouvelle technologie ont fait beaucoup pour les sociétés arabe, et on peut les utiliser encore plus.

KX: Il y a une stratégie commune entre ministères (entre éducation et culture, par instance). À Malte c'est difficile.

HEO: Au Maroc aussi, il y a trop peu. On prépare des projets pour les projets scolaires, mais on peut faire plus. Le privé n'est pas invoqué, mais il y a place pour eux. L'incitation, malheureusement, n'est pas claire pour eux. Un autre problème est l'analphabétisme.

KX: A propos de changement aux infrastructures, on parle de plus collaborations entre ministères; l'investissement du privé/maison d'éditions/ petits compagnies; l'analphabétisme; et le développement de l'audience.

HEO: Oui, c'est ça.

KX: Aussi, les collaborations long terme entre artistes locaux et étrangers, au-delà des échanges court terme. À Malte ça pose un problème. Et au Maroc?

HEO: Les festivals et foires aident ça, ce n'est pas un grand problème. Les initiatives permettent d'être passagers, mais on a besoin de concrétiser aussi.

KX: Et le dialogue interculturel?

HEO: On doit aborder ça aussi.

KX: A propos des communautés et sensibilisations dans les communautés sur les issues de culture/arts au Maroc, quelle est la situation? Comment on regarde la société civile, les médias, les débats?

HEO: En générale, il y a de participation des associations et ONG dans les communautés des grandes villes du Maroc (Casa, Rabat). Mais pas centralisé sur ces villes. Un grand parti du Maroc souffre grand alphabétisme, peu bibliothèques, et est occupé par la vie quotidienne. Le Ministère de la Culture essaie d'adresser les régions marocaines, avec ces seize divisions et délégation, mais le budget (0.3% du GDP) et ressources humaines sont faibles. On a quarante-huit personnes en générale, vingt-sept

techniciens, mais le numéro et la qualité/profile/formation ne sont pas assez. Patrimoine, Arts, Livre sont les trois groupes administratives.

KX: Si on pense à une Maroc sans influence française, sans période coloniale, comment sera-t-il aujourd'hui?

HEO: Il sera très différent. Je ne peux pas imaginer le Maroc sans le période du protectorat. Le Maroc ne sera pas aussi moderne. En 1912, il était archaïque. Pas de systèmes administratifs, organisatifs, industrielles artistique, culturelles, c'est pour ça que les français ont occupé le territoire. L'occupation est occupation, mais les changements était grandes et de longue durée. Aussi la culture 'nationaliste' est grandie en réaction à l'occupant.

KX: Quel rôle a-t-il l'Islam dans les renouvellements des industries culturelles et les arts?

HEO: Les gens sont tolérants, en générale, mais certains éléments/groupes utilisent aussi l'Islam politiquement. Ils forcent les autres à adopter certaines valeurs. Le pays doivent être basés sur le respect, et sure le droit à la différence. L'uniformité, avec les mêmes valeurs, n'aide pas ce processus de tolérance et créativité.

KX: C'est un grand enjeu de balance.

HEO: Oui, certes: respect de l'autre. Avec les changements dans le monde arabe, on a tendance d'être plus ouvert, plus actif dans les domaines politiques et de citoyenneté, avec les jeunes en premier file, et au avantage de la politique culturelle et créatif. On n'a pas de choix.

Interview with François Xavier Adam, Director *Institut français*

2 September 2011

KX: Combien des Institut français il y a au Maroc?

FXA: Il y a neuf Institut Français, à Oujda, Tétouan, Tanger, Fez, Meknès, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech et Agadir, et trois Alliance pour l'instant à Algedida, Essaouira et Safi.

KX: Et que ce que la différence entre le travail de l'Institut et le travail de l'Alliance?

FXA: C'est la même chose. Les structures administratives sont différentes. Les Alliances sont réglées au niveau local. Tout qui est juridique, financière et administrative est lié au droit marocain mais aussi lié au droit français. Les Instituts sont directement avec Paris.

KX: Et est-il toujours avec le Ministère des Affaires étrangères, et pas le Ministère de la Culture, qu'ils sont liés?

FXA: Oui. On a une structure type British Council ou Goethe pour l'Institut Français qui est bien centré.

KX: J'ai choisis d'étudier l'influence français et britannique en méditerranée parce qu'ils sont des influences historiques, et pas seulement contemporaines. Alors, quel est l'ampleur de l'influence française sur les relations culturelles à Rabat e au Maroc en général?

FXA: Les relations culturelles au sens large vont au-delà des relations artistique, dans le domaine artistique, c'est au sens UNESCO quoi, donc éducatif et universitaire aussi. On a des relations extrêmement fortes entre la France et le Maroc. Je suis ici pour représenter la France. Le Maroc est le pays au niveau des relations culturelles le plus important. Au niveau culturel, au sens large, universitaire, éducatif, scolaires, artistique, au sens du UNESCO, la France a investi dans le Maroc et avec le Maroc plus de 10% de tout son budget, en nombre de personnes qui travail, etc. Le Maroc a une concentration de relations politiquement fortes et très proche depuis toujours. Le système est très efficace et il y a des personnes étroitement liées au les coproductions. On recherche toujours, et il y a un niveau culturel très haut. On rencontre beaucoup français et marocains pour y travailler ensemble.

KX: Il n'est pas un dialogue des sourdes mais il y a un échange mutuel.

FXA: Moi c'est comme ça que vous je le dit.

KX: Il y a des sujets qu'on abord plus facilement que des autres pour faciliter ces relations?

FXA: Je crois que tous les sujets s'abord aussi facilement dans ces relations bilatéraux entre institutions étatiques. C'est le cas que des artistes français ou des institutions de recherche française ont déjà des contacts ici au Maroc et nous les aidons à collaborer. Ils sont des relations qui vont extrêmement loin.

KX: L'Institut ce voit comme facilitateur des communications ou plutôt comme *gatekeeper*?

FXA: Facilitateur. Comme générateur d'idées. On facilite les liens où il y en a déjà pour faire plus fortes.

KX: L'Institut est passé de la phase de la diplomatie culturelle et des échanges culturels du *showcasing*?

FXA: Evidemment il y a toujours l'élément artistique français, et l'artiste qui vient ici pour montrer qu'il fait. Puis il y a aussi le retour de l'artiste marocain. Il est assez important. Il y a l'élément de soutien, premièrement. Deuxièmes, le *capacity building*, soutenir les infrastructures marocains dans leur développement.

KX: Pour vous dire ça signifie qu'il y a des structures locales avec lesquelles vous pouvez travailler?

FXA: Oui il y en a.

KX: Ils sont des structures privés ou de l'état?

FXA: Côté artistique ils sont des compagnies privés. Uniquement compagnies privés et écoles.

KX: L'état joue un rôle ou pas de tout dans les domaines artistiques et d'éducation?

FXA: De ma côté, je juge que le rôle est assez limité. Les moyens sont minimaux. Les moyens sont mis sur les grands festivals. Le profil international de ces festivals est important et il y a plusieurs enjeux.

KX: Vous voyez les instituts, français et autres comme le *Cervantes*, comme support, supplémentaires au niveau local, et possiblement à lieu des supports de l'état?

FXA: Oui. Il y a l'état et les choses se font. Mais nous participons. Les marocains sont connectés avec l'Europe, avec la France, l'Espagne et l'Italie, et ont participé à ça.

KX: Vous êtes aussi des instigateurs, des *drivers*?

FXA: Oui, des temps en temps on commence l'action, mais toujours avec quelqu'un d'ici.

KX: Il n'est pas un cas d'implantation?

FXA: Non, sinon il ne marche pas. L'action est toujours avec des partenariats ici. Il n'y a pas d'action sans partenaire qui déjà existe. S'il y a un partenaire ici, c'est parce que il est réussi à s'imposer grâce à l'aide et le support ici. On est un plus, on n'est pas incontournable, c'est vrai, on est un plus qui aide à faire, à rendre possible. Il y a beaucoup de nous, les institutes portugaises, néerlandaises, de la Wallonie-Bruxelles, les Suédois, il y a la plupart des institutes européennes.

KX: Il y a aussi des autres, au dehors de l'Europe?

FXA: La Chine aussi, avec le Confucius, est à Casablanca. Les États-Unis aussi. Les mexicaines et le Brésil ont aussi des petits structures pour des petits activités. Rappelle-toi qu'ils sont en face d'une côté à l'autre du Atlantique.

KX: Il y a une collaboration entre les instituts?

FXA: Entre européennes oui, et souvent, pas toujours, mais souvent, avec l'Institut dedans, par son ampleur, par la langue, par des projets francophone qui intéresse aussi la Wallonie-Bruxelles et partie de la Suisse.

KX: L'EUNIC joue un rôle?

FXA: Oui aussi, l'Alliance est président du *network* ici. Pour les français c'est important de côté de *networking* et visibilité et collaborer avec les collègues.

KX: On ne veut pas réinventer la route, n'est-ce pas?

FXA: Non, on ne veut pas perdre de temps, on veut collaborer entre pays et décider rapidement.

KX: Vous parlez de Méditerranée aussi ici. Cette dimension est-il important au Maroc?

FXA: Dans les relations artistiques et culturelles, je pense que oui. La Méditerranée est importante. La dimension de la Méditerranée est importante parce que ça couvre les relations avec l'Europe. A propos de relations avec le monde arabe, là aussi c'est une question de Méditerranée.

KX: Et pour la France?

FXA: Effectivement oui, la Méditerranée est importante. L'UpM est une initiative française et donc c'est important. Dans notre travail, dans l'Institut, c'est très importante dans nos relations avec les autres instituts européennes. C'est plus facile de parler du Maroc avec la France, l'Espagne ou Malte, qu'en parler avec l'Algérie. Principalement on parle de Maroc Nord, mais aussi de Maroc Sud, parce que le Maroc est bien connecté. Plutôt c'est le Maroc Est qui est encore problématique.

KX: Et l'Égypte, le Liban?

FXA: Oui on parle aussi avec lui et la sphère francophone aide à faire ça. Mais avec la Tunisie, aussi depuis janvier, il y a des petites actions locales, mais pas grand-chose.

KX: Et il y a des Instituts français dans tout le monde arabe?

FXA: Oui. Partout.

KX: La deuxième question parle de représentations, spectacles, et vos collaborations dans ce domaine.

FXA: Oui, on est très engagé. C'est important. Il y a les gros festivals et les industries culturelles qui sont nos priorités. Ça qui est importante aujourd'hui sont les arts plastique, le cinéma, les arts performative beaucoup moins. C'est beaucoup plus difficile travailler dans ce champ...

KX: Par rapport aux audiences?

FXA: C'est parce que on les voit dans les festivals, mais les festivals sont la musique. Donc c'est plus compliqué.

KX: Et la question de la langue? L'Institut français a une politique générale vers le français, l'arabe, le berbère, le *Derija*?

FXA: D'abord, c'est la langue française, aussi parce que on est dans un pays francophone.

KX: Exclusivement?

FXA: Non, ce n'est pas exclusive. On arrive à produire ou coproduire des spectacles qui sont en arabe ou en berbère, voir le *Derija*. On trouve tous les langues. C'est vrai que le français est le plus important pour nous. Ici au Maroc le français s'utilise beaucoup, aussi dans l'écriture. C'est la langue utilisée pour publier, écrire, communiquer, dans des activités.

KX: Vous facilitez aussi des traductions?

FXA: Oui. De l'arabe classique.

KX: Et comment-il votre présence sur internet?

FXA: Oui, il est là, est il y a des projets prévus. Nous sommes présents sur tous les réseaux sociaux, il est commencé il y a trois ans. On a des programmes, des publications qui on vise la numérisation. On essaie aussi à engager avec des nouvelles audiences, pas seulement les francophones.

KX: Ça marche pour avoir un publique jeune et pour avoir *feedback*.

FXA: Oui on utilise les meilleurs moyens qui corresponde au publique. Par rapport aux arts, on applique le même principe. On va de la musique actuelle a autres choses pour chercher le publique. On a déjà un publique francophone qui vient aux activités.

KX: Ma dernière question est peut-être la plus difficile à aborder...

FXA: [Laughing uncomfortably] Oui, oui...

KX: Je parte, comme base, de la réalité que je connais, donc celle maltais, où il y a les divisions entre amateurs de la langue maltais, autres qui favorise l'anglais, et ça pour des raisons historiques et sociales. Pour le Maroc, le sujet de l'influence contemporaine française dans un cadre postcolonial, est-il un thème difficile, à aborder avec sensibilité? Ou si le sujet est dépassé?

FXA: Oui peut-être que le sujet est dépassé au Maroc. Il s'abord très differentement en Algérie. Pour les français je ne sais pas comme il se passe en Tunisie. Ici le sujet est dépassé par la contribution forte de la société civile marocaine. Les marocains ont cherchés de bâtir leur propre chemin dans la Méditerranée. La société civile est son rapport avec soi-même aide beaucoup à dépasser le sujet et travailler sur de nouvelle dynamiques. Dans les pays arabes l'influence français est importante, d'accord, mais c'est avec un partenariat marocain. La question est assez juste parce que elle cherche dans la croisette de recherche, le mélange, l'histoire coloniale, les institutes, les réseaux publique, les institutes culturelles, la société civile. Ça intéresse beaucoup en France. Dans le cadre de collaboration on entame des recherches complémentaires. Un français, un italien ou un maltais peut aussi y travailler. Je pense que si aujourd'hui il y a le fardeau colonial, on doit plutôt parler d'un partenariat, un échange en égalité. Je pense que ça c'est la même chose comme entre Malte et la Tunisie.

KX: A Malte ont poussé la collaboration internationale. A propose des institutes culturelles, Malte était colonisé par plusieurs forces étrangères et il reste toujours la mentalité de être sous siège. La peur de perdre sa propre identité peut-être très forte. Donc il y a encore des secteurs de la population maltais qui regarde avec suspect les productions de production ou en coproduction des forces étrangères. Au Maroc, on a dépassé ce sentiment?

FXA: Oui, le Maroc est plus grande, et les marocaines ont largement dépassé ce sujet.

KX: Et finalement, l'Institut travaille-t-il avec plusieurs strates de audience marocain, et pas simplement avec les élites. C'est plus difficile, par rapport à l'identité arabe, berbère, mélangé?

FXA: Je ne pense pas qu'est plus difficile. Je crois que à l'époque de la coopération entre les deux pays on ne donne pas d'assez attention à ce que amené l'action français. Aujourd'hui ce n'est pas vrai. Il est plus difficile parce qu'on choisit de travailler avec un partenaire marocain, toujours. Je crois que aujourd'hui le contact entre audience et producteur s'élargie. Dans partie du pays, il y a seulement l'élite artistique. Mais on cherche toujours d'élargir son propre audience. Le rapport avec la dimension locale est très important. Je crois qu'on a vraiment des bonnes opportunités.

KX: Dans les prochaine dix, vingt années, vous voyez des changements significatifs?

FXA: Oui, dans le domaine artistique en particulière on voit des gros changements, et on espère de les voir aussi dans les infrastructures. On a des relations élevées dans le domaine de la Méditerranée et c'est vrai qu'ici il va oui. Le développement se fait un niveau local et passe aussi par le partenariat européen. Il y a pas beaucoup d'opérateurs culturelle aujourd'hui, mais il y en a, on veut voir leur développement. Quand on pense à aujourd'hui est pense dix ans en arrière on voit que les choses bouge. Avec du soutien concrète on arrive à des nouveaux changements importantes. Ça inclut le financement, l'expertise technique. Le niveau européen facilite ça. Les choses bouge petit à petit. On voit et participe comme facilitateur à la création de nouvelles structures avec Marseillais 2013 par exemple.

Interviews in Valletta: December 2010/December 2011

Interview with Dr Adrian Grima: poet, senior lecturer in Maltese Literature at the University of Malta, co-founder and coordinator of *Inizjamed*

21 December 2010

AG: ... Le imma Samira, din hi l-impressjoni li għandi tagħha u saqsejtha xi darba: anke l-għażla li tikteb bil-Franciz, hija għażla li ttiha l-libertà. Hi bl-ebda mod m'għandha kontra l-Għarbi jew kontra l-Berberu. Hi fil-fatt Berbera, in-nisel tagħha. Però hadt l-impressjoni li għaliha l-preżenza Franciza fl-Alġerija kemm iċ-ċentru kulturali tal-Alġier jagħtiha ċerta libertà. Fejn m'għandhiex irbit minħabba s-sesswalità.

M'għandhiex irbit minħabba t-temi li tiddiskuti. M'għandhiex irbit minħabba l-kwestjonijiet marbutin mar-religjon u mal-politika. Hi dejjem bejn ħaltejn għandhiex tibqa' l-Alġerija jew tmur Franza u naħseb fil-verità tibqa' għax għad għandha dawn l-iżbokki. Tista' ssiefer meta trid. Tista' tuza ċ-ċentru. Hi stess iżzomm ħafna kuntatti mad-dinja arabo-frankofona. Le: irrid ngħid ma' dik arabofona. Hi tikteb bil-Franciz allura l-kuntatt li trid tistabbilixxi hu mad-dinja arabofona. Però hi għandha rispett kbir ma' dawki li jiktbu bl-Għarbi.

KX: Jien niftakar li kienet semmiet li haddieħor iħares lejha b'mod suspettuż. Hi tikkollabora ma' numru ta' artisti, anke għax tieħu r-rwol ta' kuratur, u dik haddieħor jeħodha kontriha. Tikkollabora wkoll maċ-ċentru Franciz. Però fl-istess ħin hadt l-impressjoni li għandha sieq hawn u sieq hemm. U trid iżzomm l-identità tagħha marbuta ma' minn fejn hi u min hi u fl-istess ħin tħoss li hu importanti li tħoss il-preżenza tal-Franciz.

Jien sib t-interessanti din l-idea: mhix li l-element tal-kolonjalizmu hu irrelevanti, imma li għandu bżonn ...

AG: Aġġornament?

KX: Iva. Tiġdid. *Re-contextualisation*. M'għadniex 'aħna u huma'. Huma ġew hawn biex jisfruttawna. Aħna nistgħu naħdmu magħhom għax hemm vantaġġ x'nistgħu nieħdu. Din l-impressjoni importanti għax iġġiegħlni naħseb kif ser taħdimha did-dinamika ta' preżenza Ewropea u ta' min kien il-kolonizzatur u ta forma lil dan il-pajjiż b'mod qawwi u issa preżenti. Hadt impressjoni mingħandha, mingħand Barrada u nies li kellimt u li qrajt u li jigu min-naħa t'isfel tal-Mediterran li hemm element ta' 'ejja ma narmux kollox' għax hemm elementi pozittivi li għandna nżommu. Però fl-istess ħin hemm dik l-iskumdità li ma tistax teħles minna. M'intix indipendenti għal kollox.

AG: Eżatt. Bla dubju.

KX: Jiena, fuq Malta, issa l-mistoqsijiet ngħaddu minnhom...

AG: Ħa ngħidlek xi haġa zghira fuq Samira. Hi tħobb ħafna awtur jismu Djamel Amrani. Kien imbarri għax kien omosesswali. Imbarri per eżempju mill-familja tiegħu. Però fl-istess dan kien eroj tal-gwerra tar-reżistenza kontra l-Francizi. Jien naħseb li s-sitwazzjoni tiegħu hija tipika ta' din il-*liminality*. Kien fit-tarf tal-poter kolonjali imbagħad fit-tarf tal-poter soċjali imbagħad fit-tarf tas-soċjetà li kien jgħix fiha hu stess u fit-tarf tal-*establishment* letterarju. Hi żgur konxja ħafna tal-kwistjonijiet tat-tortura u hekk għax niftakar li konna għaddejna minn quddiem iċ-ċentru fejn il-Francizi kienu jittorturaw b'mod aħrax ħafna

lill-membri tar-reżistenza Algerina fosthom lil Djamel Amrani. Jiġifieri hi assolutament mhix naïf. Anzi hi tgħix b' mod ħaj ħafna dawn il-...qas tgħidilha djalettika, għax huma kunflitti fil-verità.

KX: Qed issemmi dil-ħaġa ta' figuri li huma marginali u fakkartni f'xi ħaġa li qrajt fuq djalogu interkulturali: ħafna drabi d-djalogu interkulturali isir minn nies li qegħdin fit-tarf. Ma jsirx mill-*core* tal-popolazzjonijiet. Isir minn dawk li għandhom sieq 'l hawn u sieq 'l hemm, u li għandhom interess fl-iehor. Migranti, tfal ta' migranti jew jaħdmu magħhom u rajtha tagħmel sens din. Jekk int 'square' jaf ma tantx ser jinteressak id-djalogu interkulturali. Però jekk int fit-tarf tħares lejn ħaddiehor. U l-punt kien: però min hu fit-tarf kemm għandu influwenza fuq dawk li huma fin-nofs? Jiġifieri jekk tgħid li l-NGOs u s-socjetà civili huma nies interessanti u qegħdin fit-tarf imma jippruvaw jinfluwenzaw lil dawk li hemm fil-qalba. Fil-verità nafu li dawk li jkunu fil-qalba ma tantx ikunu lesti jkunu miftuħin għal influwenzi għal tibdil politiku, per eżempju. Ma ppreparajtx dil-mistoqsija, imma interessat x'taħseb fuqha.

AG: Jien naħseb li assolutament veru u li veru sabiħa din l-idea. Mhix sabiħa fiha nfisha għax idealment ikollox djalogu interkulturali iseħħ mill-magħġoranza tas-socjetà. Per eżempju fil-kuntest ta' Malta, il-kuntatt mal-barranin isir fit-turiżmu, li kif jgħidu l-istudjużi kollha mhuwiex il-lok ideali biex ikollox djalogu interkulturali għax hemm relazzjoni kummerċjali; il-bqija l-kuntatti qabel ma dħalna fl-UE kienu l-biċċa l-kbira ftit fuq ix-xogħol jew ma' refuġjati bħal mal-Islavi jew mal-Indjani, jew mal-Għarab. Imma il-fatt li d-djalogu interkulturali jsir fit-truf dejjem kwazi, mhux jikkunslani, imma, ngħid, mela aħna fl-aħħar mill-aħħar m'aħniex differenti minn popli oħra. U d-destin tagħna mhuwiex differenti mid-destin ta' popli oħrajn li huma wkoll jiddjalogaw ma' kulturi oħrajn fit-truf tal-komunità jew tas-socjetà tagħhom.

Naturalment, minkejja li ħafna drabi dawn huma fit-truf ħafna drabi dawn huma nies li jissugraw li jagħmlu dan il-kuntatt, illi joħolqu atmosfera, li għandhom aċċess għall-mezzi tax-xandir, li jiktbu fil-gazzetti, li jintervistaw fil-*magazines*. Malta żgur li hu hekk. Jekk xejn dawn jipprezentaw idea ta' Malta li mhix magħġoritarja. Fis-sens li jekk taqra t-'Times' taħseb li l-Maltin il-ħin kollu jithalltu mal-barranin. Is-'Sunday Times' per eżempju jkollok il-ħin kollu intervisti ma' Afrikani, ma' Ewropej, imma fil-verità m'għandekx daqshekk taħlit kulturali.

KX: Qed tgħid li mhemmx rappreżentanza vera għal kolli ta' dak li jiġri.

AG: Iva, jiġifieri l-marginalità ta' din ir-realtà kulturali tinheba fl-istejjer kbar, fil-*full pages* tas-'Sunday Times'. Min-naħa l-oħra però, dan juri wkoll li jhallu effett fuq l-immaginarju kollettiv. Jiġifieri illum il-Maltin jgħidu 'aħna sirna kultura, pajjiż fejn hawn ħafna barranin'. Speċi din l-impressjoni, din l-idea tagħhom tar-realtà hija influwenzata mill-*full pages*, artikli u intervisti.

KX: Fis-sens li n-nies jgħidu 'issa aħna wkoll sirna multikulturali'. Fit-tajjeb u fil-ħażin tagħha.

AG: Iva. Ħafna nies jaraw problemi serji. M'ilux kont qed nitkellem ma' bniedem veru matur, kbir fl-età, rtira mix-xogħol, bniedem verament mill-aħjar, Malti, Malti jiġifieri, intelligenti, attiv, impenjat fil-ħajja tiegħu ta' kuljum mhux komunitarja, jgħix ftit fid-dinja tiegħu imma qalli li l-Awstralja m'għogbitux għax hemm wisq kulturi, hemm wisq taħlit. Qalli mhux bħal Malta: speċi Malta, ried jgħid, etnija waħda, ġens wieħed, fil-waqt li l-Awstralja hemm ħafna. U dik ma setgħax jidraha. Għalih dak il-ħafna taħlit huwa taħwid. Iddizorjentah, fil-waqt li ibnu jgħix l-Awstralja issa. U għamel l-għażla li jmur l-Awstralja. Interessanti li ibnu għamel din l-għażla. U missieru bniedem imdawwal.

KX: Biex induru lejn il-mistoqsijiet, jien għamilt erba' settijiet, erba' partijiet. L-ewwel waħda tħares lejn il-Mediterran. It-tieni waħda lejn Malta. L-oħra l-operaturi barranin f'Malta. Imbagħad speċi konklużjoni ġenerali. Xtaqt nagħmillek imqar waħda minn tal-Mediterran anke minħabba l-isfond tiegħek u x-xogħol tiegħek f'dal-qasam. Xtaqt nagħmillek waħda partikolari għalik. L-aħħar parti tat-teżi tiegħi tikkonsisti minn proposta ta' x'għandu jsir. Xi ħaġa li diġà tappellali hija proposta biex jinlaħaq bilanċ bejn l-apprezzament u r-rikonoxximent tar-rizorsi u l-identitajiet li int għandek diġà – ħa nkun ftit sempliċi fiha – imma miftuħ għall-influenzi barranin. Jiġifieri mhux qed ngħid li nemmen li hemm xi 'aħna' u 'huma' distinti u monolitici, li hemm aħna lokali u huma barranin. Però f'xi mument ser ikolli nagħmel *baseline* tal-influenza lokali u dik li tiġi mill-mhux-lokali. Anke jekk fil-verità hemm bżonn li jigu ddibattuti dawn it-termini.

AG: Le imma mhux dibattibli li Malta, il-maġġoranza tan-nies huma Kattolici u għandhom kultura Kattolika u li l-maġġoranza tat-Tuneżini għandhom kultura Musulmana. Jiġifieri veru aħna nitkellmu fuq ir-relattività ta' dad-diskors imma fil-verità hemm distinzjonijiet.

KX: Ejja nieħdu did-distinzjoni bħala bazi. Ridt nistaqsik, jekk fuq naħa għandek il-lokali, u fuq naħa għandek il-barrani, u l-lokali tista' anke tespandih għall-Mediterran, għalkemm aktar tard nsaqsik dwar kif niddifenixxu l-Mediterran, jekk nieħdu l-assi ta' Maalouf, fuq il-wirt vertikali u l-wirt orizzontali, jista' jkun li dak lokali u Mediterran huwa l-wirt vertikali tagħna mentri dak barrani, anke globali, huwa l-orizzontali?

AG: Il-wirt vertikali huwa dak li jigi mill-ġens tiegħi. Dak li jimxi minn ġenerazzjoni għall-oħra. Jiena għalija hija kwistjoni kbira kbira ta' perċezzjoni. Fil-perċezzjoni tagħnal-idea li bigħulna fis-sistema edukattiva tagħna u meta tisma' l-politici eċċ l-idea hi li dak il-wirt vertikali, dak li kienu jagħmlu l-Maltin mitt sena ilu, anke jekk forsi ma kenux jagħmluh imma ngħidu li kienu jagħmluh, dak huwa aktar awtentiku, dak huwa aktar jien minn dak li qed tagħmel Samira llum fl-Alġier jew minn dak li qed jagħmel Ouazzani f'Rabat. L-argument ta' Maalouf hu li din hi perċezzjoni, li din hi parzjali ħafna. Aħna magħmulin mit-tnejn fil-verità. Jien naħseb li nipprova noħloq bilanċ bejn it-tnejn. Bħalissa qed naqra ħafna l-gazzetti Maltin tas-snin '20 u '30 u affaxxinawni anke minħabba l-idea tal-Mediterran. Qed nipprova nara ftit kif jipproponu l-idea tal-Mediterran. U hemm tiskopri li kienet gazzetta Maltija li kienet toħroġ Sousse it-Tuneżija li kienet titkellel l-aktar dwar il-Mediterran. Għal raġunijiet ovvjii. Għax dawn Maltin f'komunità Franciza fil-prattika Ewropea, f'pajjiż Għarbi fl-Afrika ta' Fuq. Allura l-bżonn li titkellel dwar wirt komuni, dwar spazju komuni u spazju lokali u wirt vertikali f'dak il-mument huwa aktar importanti għalihom.

Jien naħseb li fil-każ ta' Malta ma tistax tgħid li l-Mediterran fil-perċezzjoni tan-nies huwa l-wirt vertikali tagħna. Bl-ebda mod naħseb. Qed nezaġera. Imma għall-maġġoranza tan-nies il-wirt vertikali tagħnahuwa Malti imbagħad inzertajna qegħdin f'dan ir-reġjun u influwenzati minn dan ir-reġjun u gew ħafna nies minn dan ir-reġjun f'pajjiżna u influwenzawna u tawna l-lingwa tagħna u tawna l-ġilda tagħna u probabbilment id-DNA tagħna. Imma fil-perċezzjoni tagħna m'aħniex Mediterranji. Ma nitkellmux fuqna nfusna bħala Mediterranji. Jekk mhux biex inbiegħu, kif jgħid Hertzfeld, lilna nfusna jew f'oqsma verament speċifiċi bħall-idea tagħna li aħna passjonali u li aħna ngħajtu u li aħna nitkellmu ħafna u li ma nzommux il-ħin u li aħna impulsivi. Jiġifieri lil hinn minn dawn l-isterjotipi aħna ma nħarsux lejna nfusna bħala civiltà komuni Mediterranja imma nħarsu lejna nfusna bħala Maltin. Fil-fatt meta kien sar studju fost il-Maltin li fih saqsew lill-Maltin għal xiex jappartjenu l-maġġoranza qalu 'jien nappartjeni għar-raħal tiegħi'. Imbagħad kien hemm numru li qalu li jappartjenu għall-Ewropa. U l-Mediterran kienet mill-inqas, xi 1%.

KX: Jigifieri tara qabza mill-kbir għal-lokal anke fil-kuntest politiku illum li hu dak Ewropew.

AG: Dan kien qabel ma Malta daħlet fl-UE, jidhri fid-’99. Imma jagħtik idea aħna kif naraw lilna nfusna.

KX: Fil-kuntest tat-Tuneżija, Driss Abbas jikteb dwar is-snin ’70 u ’80 u jgħid li l-Mediterran kien dejjem *construct* użat fejn kien hemm bżonn. Jigifieri kien użat biex it-Tuneżija toħroġ mill-Magreb fejn għandha biss l-għeruq imma l-friegħi li jirrappreżentaw il-vokazzjoni tagħha jiftu fil-Mediterran. Dan biex tagħmel kontrapiz għall-fatt li t-Tuneżija hija pajjiż Għarbi u biex ma tkunx marbuta biss mal-pajjiżi ta’ ħdejha. Imma jkollha speċi aktar ftuħ lejn l-Ewropa prattikament. It-Tuneżini ma jistgħux jgħidu ‘aħna Ewropej’ mela minflok jistgħu jgħidu ‘aħna Mediterranji’. U ergajt sibt din l-immagna f’test Marokkin. L-għeruq ta’ sigra huma fl-Afrika ta’ Fuq imma s-sigra tikber lejn l-Ewropa. U dan ifisser li int Mediterranju.

AG: U din f’liema qasam kienet?

KX: Fit-turiżmu, fl-edukazzjoni, fil-fatt Abbas għamel studju anke fuq il-kotba tas-sekondarja użati mit-Tuneżini bil-Franċiz imma għat-tfal Tuneżini.

AG: Hemm ktejjeb fuq hekk jismu *La Méditerranée Tunisienne*.

KX: Iva. Jien qed ngħidlek din fil-kuntest ta’ ‘mhux Malta biss’ bħalma qabel tkellimna fuq id-djalogu interkulturali. Il-Mediterran huwa *construct* li nuzaw skond il-bzonn.

AG: U rajtu l-artiklu ta’ Herzfeld fuq hekk fuq ‘*Mediterranean excuses*’?

KX: Iva iva. Ridt insaqsik mistoqsija provokatorja fiha nnifisha: il-Mediterran jeżisti? Jew jeżisti biss f’dan l-opportuniżmu li semmejna fejn pajjiżi juzaw il-Mediterran biex jipromwovu lilhom infushom fit-turiżmu jew biex jaharbu u jistabilixxu identità jew vokazzjoni oħra?

AG: Aħna f’Malta nagħmlu l-istess. F’dak l-artiklu Herzfeld jgħid hekk: ladarba n-nies jibqgħu jitekellmu fuq l-Mediterran jeżisti żgur. U per eżempju din il-moda kbira tad-diskors dwar id-dieta Mediterranja qabzu fuqa anke l-Barilla per eżempju bħalissa. Kien hemm artiklu fuq *ilmediterraneo.it* fuq hekk. Kemm l-ikel Mediterranju kif ukoll l-istil ta’ hajja Mediterranja. Issa għandek ukoll id-diskors dwar il-klima fil-Mediterran. Jigifieri l-maġġoranza kbira tan-nies kieku kellek tgħidilhom, f’Malta, ‘il-Mediterran jeżisti?’ jgħidulek ‘x’ mistoqsija hi din? Mela għajnejk mhux f’wiċċek?’ U inti imbagħad tagħfashom u tgħidilhom ‘Imma jeżisti bħala reġjun, bħala baħar, bħala artijiet imdawrin mal-baħar, fis-sens fiżiku, jew jeżisti wkoll bħala stil ta’ hajja?’ Jien naħseb li l-maġġoranza kbira tan-nies jgħidulek li t-tieni jeżisti wkoll. Il-Mediterran spiritwali aktar mentali, artistiku u psikoloġiku. Jgħidulek li jeżisti. Kontinwament isir dan id-diskors dwar il-karattru Mediterranju. Ma nafx kemm inkun f’sitwazzjonijiet fejn f’daqqa waħda xi hadd jispjega xi haġa billi jgħid għax aħna Mediterranji.

KX: Fit-tajjeb u fil-ħazin...

AG: Sikwit fil-ħazin. Imma mhux biss. Tipo, qagħdna bil-qiegħda, ħadd ma beda jitekellm, skiet perfett, aħna l-Mediterranji kieku, tieħu pjaċir mal-mejda. Apparti li ma nahsibx li hu veru, imma insomma.

KX: Fuq din li qed tgħid hemm żewġ affarijiet li rrid insaqsik. Ġieli f’affarijiet tiegħek qrajtha naħseb anke f’*‘Rethinking the Mediterranean’*. Il-ħaġa tal-għażla Mediterranja.

AG: Ta' Matvejević dik.

KX: X'differenza hemm bejn il-percezzjoni ġenerali li hemm il-Mediterran u l-fatt li tagħzel? Li tkun Mediterranju, li tipprattika il-Mediterran?

AG: Matvejević hekk jgħid: inti ma titwilidx Mediterranju imma tagħzel li tkun Mediterranju. Hu jgħid hekk għax hu jemmen li l-Mediterran hu għażla li tagħmel inti. Jekk jiena nitwieled fi Sqallija imma m'inix interessat f'dak li qed jgħri madwari, m'inix interessat fil-baħar, m'inix interessat fil-portijiet, m'intx interessat fiz-żebbuġ, m'inix interessat fl-istorja ta' taħlit u kummerċ u taħwid u letteratura li għex dan ir-reġjun jien ngħix fih imma m'għaziltux. Għazilt li nitbiegħed minnu jew li ma nkunx fih. U fil-fatt jgħid ukoll tista' ma tkunx mir-reġjun imma tagħzel li tkun Mediterranju. Issa għalkemm tinstema' idea dibattibbli hu jgħid hekk għax għandu din l-idea li l-Mediterran huwa proġett, huwa programm kważi ta' ħajja, anke għazliet kulturali, għazliet fil-ħajja ta' kuljum, politiċi, għazliet ta' stili ta' ħajja, kollox, jgħifieri aktar minn... kif taqbad tgħid... il-Mediterran tara li huwa konstruzzjoni per eċċellenza. Għax allura niltaqgħu u ngħidu 'aħna għalina mhux il-Mediterran x'inhu imma x'irriduh ikun jew x'ser ikun'. Imma ser ikun proġett li ser jiltaqgħu fuq numru ta' nies u li fl-aħħar ser joħorġu b'xi tip ta' programm. Bħalma għamlu Zolo u Cassano meta għamlu *L'alternativa Mediterranea*. Tonino Perna il-ħin kollu jitkellem fuqha, fuq programm, fuq proġett, jien togħgobni din l-idea ta' proġett Mediterranju. Għax imbagħad ma nqbadtx fl-isqaq li qed tipprova tiegħu ritratt kemm jista' jkun fidil, realistiku, preċiż tal-Mediterran imma qed titkellem fuq dak illi tara u li jista' jintuża biex tibni Mediterranju aktar ġust aktar sostenibbli u l-bqija. Il-Francizi jgħidu 'un devenir': *it's a becoming*. Togħgobni ħafna din. Naħseb Fabre juzaha. Huwa verb, bħal 'iseħħ', li jsir nom. Jibqa' verb, imma vera sabiħ. Il-mod kif jitkellmu fuq il-Mediterran il-Francizi sabiħ wisq. Anke t-Taljani imma mhux daqs il-Francizi naħseb jien. Hemm tradizzjoni aktar rikka.

KX: Xtaqt niftahlek fuq dak li qed tgħid fuq żewġ affarijiet. Waħda: f'dal-proġett, biex nipprova nidhol fil-qofol ta' dan li qed nagħmel, x'inhu r-rwol tal-operaturi u l-istuti mhux minn dak il-post ħa ngħidilhom hekk? Jgħifieri l-Francizi huma Mediterranji però l-fatt li hemm dad-diżlivell u hemm relazzjonijiet li mhumix ugwali fil-kuntest kolonjali u post-kolonjali, kif tista' taħdem fuq proġett meta s-šhab mhumix tal-istess poter u mhux ugwali?

AG: Il-problema taċ-ċentri kulturali, kif naraha jien, hi li mingħajr ma jridu dawn deħlin f'relazzjoni li diġà hi mmarkata ħafna. Diġà hija magħgħuna ħafna. Diġà fiha ħafna ħama. Hemm ħafna ħafna ħama. Jien ma naf xejn fuqha u qed nitkellem mill-ftit li qrajt u meta tlajt hemmhekk darbtejn, imma fil-każ tal-Alġerija u Franza, ċentru kulturali f'nofs l-Alġier diġà huwa mimli, il-bagalja hija mimlija diġà b'ħafna *unfinished business*. Jgħifieri l-Francizi li jibqgħu ftit jew wisq ma jirrikonnoxxux id-dnubiet ħoxnin tagħhom, id-dnubiet mejtin biex nużaw terminoloġija tradizzjonali. Jgħifieri jkollox il-president attwali ta' Franza li jitkellem dwar il-kolonjalizmu li kellu l-ħażin u *t-tajjeb* tiegħu u jagħmel id-diskors prinċipali tiegħu fuq din l-idea, fuq dan il-kunċett ta' Franza bħala innovattriċi anke fi żmien kolonjali u kif wera Thierry Fabre il-proġett tal-*Union pour la Méditerranée* li huwa fl-aħħar mill-aħħar jekk trid tkun ċiniku u ftit dejjaq riproduzzjoni tal-proġett kolonjali jew neokolonjali. Naħseb fil-każ tal-UPM tista' tgħidha dik. Li huwa proġett illi għandu t-timbru ta' Franza li tagħzel min jidhol u min ma jidholx. Huwa proġett li jmur ferm lil hinn mill-kliem sabiħ. Għandu l-għan li jzomm it-Turkija barra, illi jzomm il-kontroll ta' Franza fuq il-pajjiżi tal-Afrika ta' Fuq u l-bqija. Però ridt ngħid ukoll li dawn iċ-ċentri kulturali diġà għandhom il-bagalja tagħhom mimlija. Jien naħseb li qabel ma taffronta l-kwistjonijiet il-kbar...per eżempju kif jista' jkollok ċentru kulturali fil-Palestina jew fil-Lvant Nofsani illi jinjora jew jevita milli jidhol fid-djalettika mal-kwistjoni tal-okkupazzjoni tal-Palestina. Ma tistax. Hemm bagalja nazzjonali, hemm bagalja bilaterali, storika, imbagħad hemm bagalja reġjonali, jgħifieri l-fatt li ċertu pajjiżi ma jeħdux sehem jekk ikun hemm

I-lżrael, jiġifieri dawk problemi realment reali. Il-problema enormi tal-viżas, tal-aċċess għall-Ewropa: jiġifieri kif jista' jkollok ċentru kulturali kbir imdawwar bil-ħadid, bil-bollards biex jipprotegi ruħu minn xi attakk terroristiku, imbagħad bniedem wieħed Alġerin jidħol f'ambaxxata ma jstax iġib viża biex imur f'pajjiż, f'dak l-istess pajjiż li okkupa ċ-ċentru jew parti miċ-ċentru tal-belt tiegħu b'dik il-prominenza kollha. Kif tista' tħares lejn iċ-ċentru kulturali *Cervantes* u ma taħsibx fil-problemi tal-immigranti Magrebini li qed jipprovaw jidhlu fit-territorju Spanjol fl-Afrika stess? Ma tistax. Diffiċli naħseb jien ħafna. Jien niftakar li anke meta ħdimna mal-*British Council* hawn Malta kien hemm ħafna nies li kellhom problema biha din. Speċi ta: 'għaliex qed taħdmu mal-*British Council*? Dawn għad għandhom idea kolonjali. Dawn għandhom arja ta' superjorità.' Jista' jkun li kellhom raġun b'dan il-perċezzjonijiet. U dawn il-perċezzjonijiet 100% hemm kienu. Anke fostna kienet *issue* speċi ta' 'isma' dawn qed jikkmandawna, qed jgħidulna x'nagħmlu, lil min għandna ngibu, min ser jittellem fit-tnedija, min mhux ser jittellem, x'ser jgħid, b'liema lingwa?'; jiġifieri dawn kienu kwistjonijiet li kienu jqumu kontinwament. U l-pajjiżi individwali għandhom storja differenti. Per eżempju Samira [Negrouche] tgħid li r-relazzjoni tal-Marokkini mal-Franċiżi hija differenti minn dik tal-Alġerini mal-lingwa Franċiża. Għax il-Marokkini żviluppaw lingwa indiġena, l-Għarbi, bħala lingwa kontemporanja u innovattriċi u sperimentali mentri fl-Algerija dan ma kienx possibbli allura ħafna jew uħud mill-aktar kittieba promettenti kienu jiktbu bil-Franċiż għax l-Għarbi ma kienx lingwa żviluppata letterarjament. L-irbit huwa akbar fil-każ tagħhom.

KX: Għax il-piż f'pajjiż minnhom għaffeg, fl-ieħor inqas.

AG: U jkun hemm anke proċessi storiċi li jeffettwaw.

KX: Semmejt meta ħdimna mal-*British Council* f'Malta anke rigward l-użu tal-lingwa użata f'Malta. Semmejt in-nies fl-udjenza, ma' min ikkollaborajna, li ħassewhom ambivalenti jew esprimew riżervi. Inti personalment kellek mumentu fejn kellek diffikultà jew ħassejt li kellek tagħmel kompromess? Jekk kellek diffikultajiet, kif solvejthom?

AG: Diffikultajiet dejjem. Mal-*British Council* kien hemm diffikultajiet anke ġo fija. 'Jien għandi naħdem magħhom? Dawn qed jiprovaw jimmanipulawni? Dawn qed jipruvaw jimponu l-aġenda tagħhom fuqi? Dawn qed jibbuljawni? Dawn qed jużaw is-saħħa finanzjarja, l-awtorità kważi morali tagħhom fil-kultura biex jieħdu dak li jridu huma mingħandi mingħajr ma jagħtu lili dak li nixtieq jiena?' Dawn kienu mistoqsijiet li l-ħin kollu saqsejt. Però din l-iskumdità u diffikultà ssibha wkoll meta taħdem ma' aġenzija tal-gvern, jew ma' ministeru, ma' ministru, ma' ufficju tal-ministeru. Jiġifieri anke hemmhekk ser issaqsi mistoqsijiet dwar min għandu l-eġemonija, min għandu l-poter, min qed jiddeciedi. Naturalment hemm elementi differenti. Dawn humiex qed jinqdew bik biex imexxu aġenda li mhix l-aġenda tiegħek bl-ebda mod. Dawn huma problem li jinqalgħu f'kull relazzjoni bejn individwi u bejn istituzzjonijiet. Bejn għaqdiet u bejn gruppi. Dejjem jinqalgħu. Fil-każ tal-*British Council* jiena iva dawn kienu kwistjonijiet li kont naħseb dwarhom il-ħin kollu bla dubju. Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar hassejt illi għax...kif solvejthom: fl-aħħar mill-aħħar il-kwistjoni kienet 'jekk aħna ser naħdmu ma' organizazzjoni oħra ħa naħdmu magħha.' Jiġifieri la jista' jkun hemm l-aġenda tagħha u l-anqas l-aġenda tagħna. Jekk ikun biss l-aġenda tagħhom mhux ser taħdem magħhom. Jiġifieri b'xi mod trid issib spazji, mumentu, fejn l-aġenda tal-*British Council* u l-aġenda ta' Inizjamed jiltaqgħu. U jibqa' dejjem biss dak li jkun sar. Jiġifieri jien nemmen li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar m'intix ser tiftakar fil-proġett Klandestini skond jekk, ha nivvinta kunflitt possibbli, ħaġa li tista' tigri, fil-bidu tal-festival tkellimx Adrian Grima f'isem Inizjamed jew Ronnie Micallef [previous Director] f'isem il-*British Council*. Mhux dak ser tiftakar. Min-naħa l-oħra jista' jkun li dawn huma mumentu mimlijin sinjifikat illi jittimbrawlek il-proġett kollu. U allura veru li l-proġett ma kienx dwar min ser jittellem imma inti titlaq minn dak il-proġett, minn dik is-sena dawk is-sentejn ta' proġett bl-impresjoni li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar dan kien proġett tagħhom u li qabdu lili biex inwettqu, lilna biex inwettquh. Jien ikolli ngħid li ma

ħassejtux dan. Jew għallinqas ma ħassejtux dejjem, li l-proġett inħataf minn min kien qed jiffinanzjah, f'dal-każ il-*British Council*.

KX: Jew fil-każ tagħnali konna għodda f'idejhom...

AG: Marjonetti f'idejhom, pupazzi f'idejhom...

KX: Speċi, huma għandhom pjan, dawn qegħdin hemm u jridu jaħdmuh, permezz tagħhom ser inwettag il-pjanijiet tiegħi. Ma kellekx dak is-sentiment biss fl-aħħar...

AG: Le l-anqas idea. U ma naħsibx, sinċerament, li kienet l-impressjoni li ħadu ħafna nies. Naħseb ħafna nies ħadu l-impressjoni li fil-proġett kien hemm it-Taljani, il-Griegi, iċ-Ċipriotti miz-żewġ naħat ta' Ċipru...

KX: Din ħaġa li laqtitni wara, b'mod pjuttost naif, u mhux qabel: li parti minn dawn l-attivitajiet tal-*British Council*, kemm magħna kif ukoll ma' gruppi oħrajn, kienu parti mill-aġenda li waslitna fl-aħħar mill-aħħar li nħarsu lejn l-UE, nindirizzawha u ngħidu iva għax hemm dan in-numru ta' opportunitajiet...speċi kien hemm *drive*, kampanja warajha, li qed tgħidlek ara kemm jaqbillek, minħabba l-edukazzjoni, l-opportunitajiet, tidħol fl-Unjoni.

AG: U l-*British Council* kien qed imexxi din l-aġenda? Apertament?

KX: Għalija ma kenitx apertament imma niftakar nitkellem ma' xi nies wara li gegħluni nikkonkludi li kelhom aġenda, kellhom il-fondi ddedikati b'għan, il-*British Council* ried jinvesti f'Ċipru u f'Malta b'mod partikolari biex nidħlu fl-Unjoni billi jkun hemm sentiment pożittiv li jaqbillek tkun fl-Unjoni...

AG: Jien dan ma jiskantani xejn. Fis-sens li kulhadd għandu l-aġenda tiegħu. Per eżempju Inizjamed kellha tagħha. Per eżempju wieħed mill-elementi fl-aġenda ta' Inizjamed kien illi turi illi l-Ingliż jista' jintuza' biex jitmexxa 'l quddiem il-Malti jew lingwi oħrajn li huma meqjusin bħala iżgħar jew inqas mifruxin. Inizjamed kellha l-aġenda forsi anke b'mod inkonxju li ninqadew bl-isem tal-*British Council* f'għajnejn in-nies niksbu aktar kredibbiltà għax qed naħdmu magħhom. Naħseb f'dan is-sens użajna l-*British Council*. Naħseb pjuttost normali f'dan is-sens.

KX: Interessanti dan għax hemm kittieb li jikteb dwar l-Ingliżi u l-Greċja, T.W. Gallant, u jikteb fuq kif ir-relazzjoni kolonjali jew postkolonjali jew neokolonjali mhix *one way*, hija *two way*. In-nies tal-lokal, mhumiex passivi u użaw dawk l-opportunitajiet u l-ispazji kif għidit inti, favur tagħhom. Ma tistax titkellem biss qisek eġemonija minn fuq għal isfel. Għax min hu isfel jaf kif juża s-sistema kollha a vantagg' tiegħu.

AG: Naturalment, fir-relazzjoni kolonjali, min qiegħed isfel jista' jinqeda bis-sitwazzjoni, imma fl-aħħar mill-aħħar qiegħed isfel, qiegħed taħt, irrid ngħid. Jien ma naħsibx li konna f'dik is-sitwazzjoni meta ħdimna mal-*British Council*. Ĥassejt li ma kellniex is-saħħa li nimponu fuq il-*British Council* u l-anqas kienet fuq l-aġenda tagħna. U jien naħseb li kieku ma ħassejniex li r-relazzjoni ma kenitx tagħti l-frott ma konniex nibnuha dik ir-relazzjoni.

KX: Ĥaġa li dak iż-żmien kont konxju minnha u llum il-ġurnata aktar u aktar minħabba x-xogħol tiegħi huwa l-element mhux tad-dipendenza imma li f'Malta, anke llum, nfittxu, anke f'pajjiżi oħra, fejn m'hemmx infrastrutturi, li ilhom hemm, bit-Taljan tgħid *collaudato*, ippreparat, dak huwa element li tfittex f'ma' min ser taħdem. Għax jekk m'hemmx wisq finanzjarjament hemm in-nies, l-

esperjenza...kemm iweggħak il-fatt li m'għandniex l-infrastrutturi li għandna bżonn? Bħala operatur kulturali Malti?

AG: Vera għandna problema. Jien għalija t-twaqqif tal-Fond Malti għall-Arti, per eżempju, mhux stabbiltà, jew serħan tal-moħħ, jagħtini ċerta dinjità, dik il-kelma li qed infittex. Jekk pajjiżi stess tant ma jagħtix każ u tant ma jirrispettax l-artisti u l-kittieba tiegħu u l-kreattività tagħhom li l-anqas lest li jinvesti l-flus b'mod organizzat u b'mod trasparenti fihom jien inħossni f'it bla pajjiż, diżorjentat u emarginat. Imma l-fatt li lest li johloq fond bħal dak bil-limiti straordinarji tiegħu, il-fatt li waqqfu dak il-fond huwa sinjal, huwa messaggġ, ċar. Naturalment meta tiltaqa' mal-barranin u meta tiltaqa' ma' l-istituti internazzjonali jew anke l-British Council, minkejja li ovvjament kulhadd xorta jgerger, jew aktar u aktar mal-Latvjani li għandhom centru importanti ta' promozzjoni tal-letteratura tagħhom, tħossok zgħir u tħossok li xi haġa fil-politika kulturali ta' pajjiżek, xi haġa serja, hija nieqsa. Dika inevitabli. Naħseb dik ma tgħinx ir-relazzjoni ta' għaqdiet zgħar bħal Inizjamed minn pajjiż pjuttost diżorjentat kulturalment bħal Malta, meta Inizjamed imbagħad tiltaqagħlek ma' organizzazzjoni kbira bħall-*British Council* jew iċ-centru kulturali Franciż, li għandu gvern importanti warajh, speci t-tieni l-aktar gvern importanti fl-UE.

Tgħid kemm tgħid, Inizjamed m'għandniex is-saħħa li għandha l-*British Council*. Imma l-anqas għandha s-saħħa taċ-centru għall-promozzjoni tal-lingwa u l-letteratura Latvjana. Int bil-fors tħossok ċkejken jew li qed tittallab jew li qed tirkeb fuq il-ġenerozità ta' haddieħor. Dik mhix sabiħa. Ma tħallix tagħzel b'mod liberu ma' min ser taħdem.

KX: Forsi nibda nikkonkludi. Issa qed nitkellmu fuq il-livell nazzjonali meta qed nitkellmu fuq il-politika kulturali nazzjonali. Biex insemmi l-punt ta' x'jiġri issa, x'tista' tipproponi? Hemm żewġ livelli ċari, wieħed nazzjonali, wieħed Mediterranju? Jiġifieri jekk għandna politika kulturali nazzjonali fuq il-karta, biex tiġi implimentata, u hawn niftakar il-kummenti tiegħek fil-*launch*, rigward il-Mediterran, kif taħdem il-ħaġa: trid iżżid aktar Mediterran fil-politika kulturali nazzjonali jew hija xi haġa ħafna aktar fundamentali?

AG: Ħafna aktar fundamentali, bla dubju. Fil-fatt, in-nuqqas ma kienx...il-problema ma kenitx li ma kienx hemm biżżejjed platti differenti fuq il-mejda. Il-problema kienet li l-platti ewlenin x'fihom, kienu qed jeskludi d-dimensjoni Mediterranja, l-għarfien tal-ġirien, li fih, f'dan l-għarfien verament neqsin. Imma vera tal-mistħija. U b'mod li huwa veru tal-mistħija. Le, il-problema kienet fl-ingredjenti bażiċi tal-politika nazzjonali mhux fid-deżerta, fit-tielet kors, platt, imma fil-platt ewlieni. U r-referenzi kienu vera superfiċjali, kienu tradizzjonali: Ewro-Mediterranju per eżempju, terminu li ħafna nies speċjalment fin-naħa t'isfel tal-Mediterran m'huma xejn kuntenti bih. X'jiġifieri Ewro-Mediterranju? Fil-verità t'fisser il-membri tal-UE u pajjiżi 'oħra' li qegħdin fil-Mediterran. Imma mhux terminu sabiħ. Huwa Ewro-ċentriku. Jiġifieri dokument konċettwali u programmatiku bħal dak ma jistax ikollu dawn in-nuqqasijiet fundamentali fejn tidhol ir-relazzjoni ta' Malta mar-reġjun tagħha. Imbagħad, naħseb jiena, l-azzjoni nazzjonali, u lokali, fis-sens ta' lokalitajiet f'Malta, tal-bliet u rħula, u dawk internazzjonali, kollha jridu jkunu integrati mal-kwistjoni ta' Malta bħala parti minn reġjun, apparti minn parti minn blokk politiku ekonomiku. Jien dejjem nirrakkonta li l-ewwel darba li mort konferenza tal-*ARCI* kont kwazi ħadt xokk minkejja l-ideologija u l-ħbiberiji tiegħi meta pprezentawlna tliet dokumenti li wieħed minnhom kien dwar il-pajjiżi tan-naħa ta' fuq u tan-naħa t'isfel tal-Mediterran. Malta poġġewha man-naħa t'isfel tal-Mediterran. U niftakar x'qatgħa ħadt u ngħid 'hawn għamlu zball'. Imbagħad niftakar qgħadt naħseb f'it u ngħid 'speci aħna qegħdin man-naħa t'isfel', ġeografikament, aktar 'l isfel minn Tuneż. *Iktar 'l isfel minn Tuneż*. Jien ngħidhiehom l-istudenti biex nara r-reazzjoni tagħhom. Ara l-perċezzjoni tagħna tar-reġjun u tal-post tagħna bħala pajjiż fil-Mediterran u fl-Ewropa mhix zbaljata imma parzjali. Għax ma tistax tiċħad li aħna Nsara u li għandna sekli ta' kunflitt mal-Għarab. Imma ma tistax tiċħad li għandna sekli ta' kunflitt ma' Nsara oħrajn, ma' Kattoliċi oħrajn, ma' kolonizzaturi. Jiġifieri tista' wkoll tirakkonta

n-narrattiva mod ieħor. U tispicċa b'rizultati pjuttost differenti naħseb jiena. Imma naħseb qed nitbiegħed...

KX: Importanti dan għax minn banda tkabbar l-istampa u mill-oħra tidhol fil-fond f'kif nipprattikaw jew ma nipprattikawx ċertu affarijiet. Qed nipprova ngħaqqad ħaġa għall-aħħar mistoqsija. Semmejt din tal-istudenti tiegħek dwar perċezzjonijiet tal-Mediterran. Inti bħala edukatur li tara ħafna nies fis-snin formattivi tagħhom, fl-istess ħin inti li taħdem bil-/għall-Malti bħala lingwa, u mill-aspett Mediterranju: il-lingwa Maltija użata fil-letteratura, anke kif inhi mgħallma, fil-letteratura, x'inhum sehemha f'li jtkabbar l-għarfien li l-Malti huwa parti mill-identità tagħna Mediterranja? Il-Malti ma jagħmilniex biss Maltin. U ufficjalment Ewropej, għax il-Malti wiehed mil-lingwi ufficjali tal-UE. Din xi ħaġa li tolqotni kuljum. Kif jikkontribbwixxi għall-għarfien Mediterranju?

AG: Inti immaġina narrattiva le? In-narrattiva dominanti hi li l-Malti jagħmilna Maltin, il-Malti issa tant hu tajjeb li saħansitra sar lingwa ufficjali tal-UE, imma speċi qed tgħid din hija lingwa essenzjalment Mediterranja. Jekk hemm lingwa 'Mediterranja', probabbilment hija l-Malti. Almenu waħda minnhom żgur tkun il-Malti. Bl-ament ma nistax ngħid fiċ-ċert, imma niddubita hemmx lingwi oħrajn...żgur mhux lingwi ufficjali u lingwi nazzjonali li tista' tqishom bħala Mediterranji fis-sens li jgħaqqdu familji differenti, fergħat differenti tal-lingwi li jeżistu fil-Mediterran. Naħseb li l-Malti huwa lingwa Mediterranja per eċċellenza. Aktar mil-lingwi komuni Mediterranji li kienu jtkellmu fil-bliet portwarji u l-portijiet. Il-Malti huwa l-eżempju per eċċellenza. Issa immaġina inti kieku minflok tinsisti fuq l-idea li l-Malti jagħmilna Maltin u sebaħ u dalam u dan hu kollu minnu u naraha fil-gazzetti tas-snin '20 u '30 li kienu qed jiġġieldu kontra l-idea li kien it-Taljan li kien il-lingwa nazzjonali ta' Malta li kienet idea kurrenti u b'saħħitha, minflok tara biss dik id-dimensjoni tara dik Mediterranja li hija fattwali, assolutament u empirikament vera, digà tibda tibdel in-narrattiva tiegħek tal-Mediterranji. Ta' Malta fil-Mediterran, ta' Malta mal-Mediterranji, ta' Malta għall-Mediterranji, tal-Mediterranji għal Malta, u l-Mediterran x'jista' jfisser għal Malta, u l-bqija. Imma, jekk id-dimensjoni u l-għarfien tal-Mediterran mhumiex parti mill-ingredjenti tal-ikla tiegħek, mintix ser tasal.

KX: U l-valur li fih il-Malti mintix qed tirrikonoxxi.

AG: Eżatt.

KX: Jibqa' biss fuq il-livell ufficjali...

AG: Jibqa' biss bħala parti min-narrattiva nazzjonali. Ikun sabiħ per eżempju jkollna ċentru kulturali Malti f'pajjiżi differenti – naf li impossibbli jkunu fil-pajjiżi kollha tal-Unjoni jew tal-Mediterran – imma jkollok ċentri rappreżentattivi li jkollhom fergħat marbutin mal-letteratura, mal-arti viżiva, u li per eżempju jkollok iċ-ċentru Malti Mediterranju, per eżempju, anke jekk ikun l-Awstralja, insejjaħlu hekk. Hawnhekk iċ-ċentru tal-Alliance française huwa ċ-ċentru Malte-Mediterranée, skoprejt mindu qed immur. Tagħmel sens hux. Jien għal raguni differenti. Malta qegħda fil-Mediterran. Mhux inzerta li dan iċ-ċentru kulturali Franċiz qiegħed fil-Mediterran. Imma *why not?*

KX: Interessanti anke minħabba d-diskors li qed isir rigward ikun hemm ċentru kulturali Malti li però minn dak li qed tgħid inti...

AG: M'hemm xejn...

KX: Għax il-ħsieb huwa konfuż, wieħed ibbażat fuq id-diskors tal-Ministru tal-Affarijiet Barranin, ftit min-naħa tal-Kultura, għax ukoll ftit hemm komunikazzjoni bejniethom. Imma l-idea konfuża hi li istitut kulturali Malti jkun hemm għad-dijaspori u meta taqra d-diskors jirreferi għal affarijiet folkoristiċi u sterjotipati li għalija li llum nara x-xena Maltija u Ewropea u x'għandna bzonn, iva b'viżjoni Ewro-ċentrika, qed titkellem b'lingwa tas-snin '50.

AG: passé...

KX: U dwar il-Mediterran, l-element hu folkloristiku...

AG: Pittoresk, ta' *peagantry*...

KX: Fil-kuntest Nord Afrikan qrajt din: '*heritage takes over memory*', il-wirt kulturali, inkluż li qed tgħid inti, jieħu *over* minn dak li jiftakru n-nies. Każ klassiku fil-każ tagħna huwa l-Kavallieri...

AG: Fihom qed naħseb. Jien kont, meta kienu qed jiċċelebraw xi haġa tal-UE, nara l-istands kollha tal-pajjiżi tal-Unjoni, quddiem il-Bieb ta' Brandenburg, u aħna kellna Kavallier. Jitkellem man-nies, u jippreżenta s-siti turistiċi tagħna. Kien hemm ukoll element ta' żfin kontemporanju, għall-inqas. Ma kienx partikolarment *engaging* imma għalmenu sar sforz biex nuru li f'Malta kienet fl-2005 mhux fl-1570 biss.

KX: Naħseb nidhol aktar fiha li semmejt inti tat-turiżmu. Li huwa partikolari ħafna. Qed tagħmel xi haġa biex tbiegħ u mmirata. Mhux qed titkellem b'mod ta' kollaborazzjoni miftuha.

AG: Joe Inguanez għandu xi haġa fuq hekk. Jgħid li ma jistax ikollok skambju kulturali fit-turiżmu u jikkwota studju magħrufin. Il-ktieb editjat minn Boissevain ikunlek utli, dwar it-turiżmu, u fih hemm *paper* ta' studjużi Amerikana dwar il-Mellieħa u kif ir-raħal bena l-ispazju privati u pubbliċi. Fl-ispazji privati veru jithalltu l-Maltin bejniethom. Fl-ispazji pubbliċi għandek qisek *receptions* tal-hotels, *counter*, fejn ma tithallatx ta' veru.

Interview with Toni Attard, theatre actor and director, cultural economy advisor to the Government of Malta

15 December 2011

KX: X'qed jigr Malta fil-kuntest Mediterranju, imbagħad anke x'inhu dak il-Mediterran? X'inh n-natura tar-relazzjoni bejn l-operaturi kulturali Maltin u l-barranin?

TA: Il-kultura ta' kollaborazzjoni, fuq livell artistiku, ma nħossx illi għandha kultura twila ta' kollaborazzjoni, anki fuq termini istituzzjonali. Ħaġa reċenti ħafna dik li fil-fondi tagħna ninkoraġixxu l-kollaborazzjoni internazzjonali. Tgħid, għandek għalfejn tmur barra? F'Malta, tant tista' tingħalaq fik innifsek, li hemm lok fejn tiftaħ għal dinja oħra hemm barra. Ħafna drabi wkoll, fil-każ tiegħi, bdiet meta qattajt żmien barra. Jekk taħseb, jekk f'Malta ma jgħux ħafna artisti int biex jgħixu, biex jaħdmu, biex jirrapreżentaw xogħlhom, mela hawnhekk digà għandek relazzjonijiet limitati għalkemm int espost. Imma ħafna drabi dan tagħmlu jekk tkun barra. Fit-teatru, per eżempju, dan hu limitat ħafna. Fit-teatru, għandek element qawwi ta' teatru bil-Malti, li jħares lejn dak li hu 'veru' Malti, il-farsa, id-dramm Malti, u dak Inġliż, li jagħmel referenza għall-Inġliżi jew l-Amerikani. Allura mmorru minn estrem għall-ieħor: minn xogħol li huwa tagħna, bil-Malti, għal udjenza Maltija, għal xogħol impurtat, *far removed* mir-realtà tagħna u wisq aktar mir-regjun tagħna. Bħalissa qed naħdem fuq dil-play, *9 Parts of Desire*, miktuba minn kittieba Iraqina, bl-Inġliż, imma fih kliem bl-Għarbi, biex ittix xejra Għarbija ħa, Iraqina. U jien għidt 'imma dan mhux kliem bil-Malti?' Allura għaliex nidhak bl-udjenza tiegħi, nagħmlilhom *text* bl-Inġliż, imbagħad nuża' kliem Għarbi li ser jinftiehem. Allura t-test ser nagħmlu bil-Malti, u bl-Inġliż, skond il-karattru. Ħassejtni ser immur 'hemm' biex nerġa' niġi 'hawn' meta tant hemm komuni. Il-kostum huwa wieħed Għarbi, allura għaliex għandi nlibbisha libsa oħra? Dan jaffaxxinani, dal-fatt. Ħafna nies li jiġu hawn jgħidu 'intom veru Għarab.' Għall-bidu, meta kont ħafna iżgħar, għall-fatt li politikament dejjem nuru li aħna Kristjani, demokratiċi, Ewropej, allura dak kollu li seta' b'xi mod jew ieħor juri li għandna xi relazzjoni mal-Għarab...anke għaliex ċittadini Libjani li kienu jgħixu Malta u ma jagħtux isem tajjeb lil pajjiżhom, u lid-dinja Għarbija. Imma fil-ġenerazzjoni tagħna aktar evoluta l-istorja. Nara *mismatch* u xorta nħoss li llum li għad hemm differenza llum xorta nara li r-relazzjoni jew mal-ex-kolonji allura ma' Franza u mal-Ingilterra, mhux ser nestendi għall-Amerika għax inkun qed inġebbed ir-referenza għad-diplomazija. U realistikament, mill-pajjiżi kollha Ewropej aħna l-egreb. Għalija aħna d-dar naturali. Meta nkunu f'festivals per eżempju u niltaqa' ma' nies mill-Alġerija, mil-Libja, inħoss affinità, inħossni parti integrali minn dak li jstimulana, kif naħsbu...meta jien kont dispost li nikkollabora ma' nies mill-Afrika ta' Fuq, l-ewwel darba kien il-Euro-Med *Cultural Management Training* u l-*Cultural Leadership Programme*, fejn ikkonsolidajt il-bżonn ta' ħidma Mediterranja.

KX: Il-fatt li dawn iż-żewġ eżempji ġew instigati min-naħa Ewropea, minn fuq u mhux minn isfel, mhix newtrali, mhix oġġettiva fiha nnifisha. Dik il-ħaġa taħseb kellha impatt fuq it-tip ta' kollaborazzjoni li qed ikollna?

TA: L-inizjattivi li qed jippruvaw jagħmlu per eżempju fil-qasam tal-*cultural policy*, l-Egittu per eżempju, illi qed jippruvaw li jġibu flimkien...min-naħa tiegħi wkoll, kien hemm il-*British Council*, bħala instigatur.

KX: Il-fatt li huma jridu jaġixxu biex aħna nirreagixxu, kieku kellhom jinbidlu l-affarijiet, taħseb li l-affarijiet jinbidlu fil-Mediterran, bejn artisti, operaturi?

TA: Ma naħsibx illi, ħu l-*British Council*, jew l-*Istitut français*, ma naħsibx li jieħdu pjaċir b'dik l-idea, għax tara li jaħdmu u joħorġu ħafna flus imma ma jippreżentawx ruħhom fuq ta' quddiem, pjuttost jieħdu l-

back burner, on the back end, fis-CLI Programme per eżempju, ġieli nkun jien il-Malti ma' ieħor Olandiż, ma' ieħor minn Tuneż, ieħor mill-Eġittu, u stajt ngħid 'dawn ma jidhru mkien', għax veru ma jidhru mkien. Imma għalihom il-fatt li jiena issa *in first contact* jew *my first reference* għal proġett internazzjonali ser ikun il-*British Council*, huwa l-frott tal-investment li qed jagħmel biex jintervjenu indirettament. In its *subtlety it's succesful*. Min-naħa l-oħra, jien tikber problema li dejjem kelli, u hemmhekk ukoll fejn skoprejt dinja totalment differenti, ir-relazzjoni bejn l-artist u l-istat. Jiġifieri l-fatt meta jien kont *St James [Centre for Creativity]* per eżempju, nibda proġett ma' Tuneż, mal-Libja, kienet tkun impossibbli għax l-ambaxxata tintervjeni, u l-proġett artistiku tagħmlu hi u dak li jrid ir-*regime*, hemm għandek problema. Ma tistax tagħzel l-artisti. Darba kont għamilt ġimghatejn *training* l-Eġittu fuq Euro-Med, tiskopri li l-kuncett ta' *independent artist*, li jfendi għal rasu u jitlaq, ma jeżistix...*through the official channels, contact can't take place*. Allura mhux ta' b'xejn li f'dal-pajjiżi jħarsu lejn il-*British Council* b'lenti naqra kerha. Huma jaraw li biex taħdem mal-Ewropa ma tistax teħdilhom artist li fil-pajjiż huwa ċelebrat bħala istituzzjoni meta fil-fatt artistikament m'għamilt xejn. Tmur għand l-ambaxxatur u tgħidli 'le jien dan irrid' mingħajr ma nirrealizza li dan mhux bħal meta tmur l-ambaxxata Ġermaniża u jgħidulek 'ha naraw min huma.' Dan tara li wieħed li tkeċċa' mill-pajjiż...Hemm realitajiet li huma totalment differenti.

KX: F'din l-aħħar sena, fid-dawl tar-Rebbiegħa Għarbija, x'tara li seta' jinbidel?

TA: Naħseb huwa kmieni wisq. Fuq livell dirett, irrid nara n-nies li kont naħdem magħhom għadhomx ħajjin. Hemm l-element uman ħafna f'dan kollu. Li naf hi li Nora Amin, per eżempju, kienet involuta, u kienu saqsewha biex tintervjeni fuq il-politika kulturali. Hemmhekk għa' interessanti ħafna l-fatt li hemm demm iż-żgħirażgħir li kien barra mis-sistema li sa ċertu punt huma jridu jibdn u l-identità għida tal-pajjiż. Min-naħa l-oħra, anke hi ddiżappuntat ruħha per eżempju, ma kenitx rebbiegħa daqs kemm veru stennwha jew għadha ġejja għax għadha ma ġietx.

Inħossni eċitat ħafna u għalhekk inħoss li qegħdin norqdu fuqha din il-biċċa xogħol. Bħala Malta. Kieku jien, Vicki [Ann Cremona, Ambassador of Malta to Tunisia] ma nafx qaltlekk b'li għamlu Tuneż, il-Franċiżi ma' Tuneż. Il-Franċiżi qalu, 'ħadt ma ċelebralkom is-suċċess tagħkom mela aħna ħa nagħmlulkom kuncert.' Għaxart elef ruħ, biljetti b'xejn. Kantanti famużi Franċiżi, fuq *TV5 Monde*, biex jiċċelebraw il-libertà eċċ, imbagħad ġie Sarkozy, biex iwittu t-triq għall-kummerċ u hekk. Jiġifieri l-intervent kien permezz tal-kultura. Tgħidli, 'intużat b'mod tajjeb il-kultura?' Mhux daqstant daqs kemm nixtieq. Imma dawn fetħu bieb ta' kollaborazzjoni kulturali kontinwu fuq livell politiku għoli.

KX: Il-kultura kienet użata bħala għodda importanti, ma kenitx imwarrba. Tara li Malta tista' tagħmel xi ħaġa simili, jew b'approċċ aktar sottili ? Biss biss m'għandniex l-istess rwol determinanti fil-Mediterran bħall-Franċiżi.

TA: Hemm żewġ rwoli possibbli. Waħda fuq l-iżvilupp ta' politika u *expertise* f'termini ta' *policy making, creative economy, let's start now* f'dawn il-pajjiżi. U aħna m'aħniex aħjar mill-Franċiżi imma nistgħu nkunu magħhom dawn il-pajjiżi tal-Afrika ta' Fuq. Din il-mod kif narah jien...il-fatt li r-relazzjonijiet ma' dawn il-pajjiżi, l-Ingilterra, Franza...ħdejhomm Malta tista' toffri ħafna, fil-mod kif inħarsu lejn soċjetà differenti, komunitajiet differenti. Il-fatt li aħna l-unika pajjiż fl-Ewropa li f'termini lingwistiċi nistgħu relattivament nikkomunikaw. Kulturalment, dejjem ngħid, u missni nagħmilha, kif għadu ma sarx, proġett teatrali, fejn nużaw il-Malti bħala lingua komuni, kif ukoll l-Għarbi. Hemm potenzjal qawwi, anke fuq livell ta' *business*, f'dawn il-pajjiżi. Fl-użu tal-Ingliż, per eżempju, bħala *theatre training*, min-naħa tal-università, mit-taħriġ li tista' tagħti, qed nara aħna x'nistgħu nagħtu lilhom. Jekk tinduna, anke jien qed naddotta l-perspettiva ta' aħna x'nistgħu nagħtu minflok ma kif nistgħu nikkollaboraw. Imma naħseb li

artistikament nistgħu niżviluppaw ħafna. Dejjem qegħdin nużaw in-naħa ta' fuq bħala referenza filwaqt li...dan f'kull livell. Ara l-*arts festivals* kollha li għandna Malta, privati, pubbliċi, NGOs, għajr il-*Mediterranean Literature Festival*, fejn hi l-preżenza ta'...qed ngħid preżenza, mhux kollaborazzjoni: *artist residencies*, fejn ingibu awtur Tuneżin joqgħod hawn xahrejn jaħdem ma' awtur Malti. Qed ngħidlek l-ovvju. Li taqbad telefon, tara żfin minn xi mkien, u gġibhom. F'termini ta' *mobility* tista' taħdem mal-*Foreign Affairs* biex toħroġ viża eċċ.

KX: Ħafna *lobbying* li jsir fl-Ewropa stess fuq mobilità huwa għall-Ewropa, kif ser naġevolaw il-mobilità minn isfel għal fuq. Imma teħel. Hemm *regimes*, anke ta' viża, li jagħmlu l-ħajja diffiċli. Imma ridt insaqsik, aħna qbadna diskors fejn donnu qed ngħidu li bħala Malta donnha naqbd u idea mill-Ewropa, nagħmluha tagħna, u nifirxuha mal-Mediterran. Huwa mudell lineari. Fl-istess ħin int qed tgħid li dak il-mudell trid tkissru.

TA: Naħseb li l-Anna Lindh Foundation hija prova ta' dan. Qisna ppruvajna naddottaw mudell Ewropew u nimponuh f'regjun, u minix konvint li hu mudell li jaħdem.

KX: Hija kritika komuni, anke min-naħa tal-pajjiżi Għarab. Jammettu li jiġi minnhom ukoll, imma mhumiex kuntenti bih. Taħseb li tista' titgħallem minn dawn l-iżbalji u noperaw mingħajr l-aġendi neokolonjali ta' ħaddieħor?

TA: Ikun ħażin kieku ma nevitawhomx. Per eżempju, bejn Malta u l-Libja, m'għandniex issa mmorru u ngħidulhom li la għennihom issa għandna ngħidulhom kif għandhom imexxu. Inħoss li għandna ħafna x'nitgħallmu. Irridu proġett kollaborattiv *at the end of the day*. Imma l-aktar li tinkwetani hija l-preżenza fizika. Anki jekk tara l-mobilità tal-artisti jew fejn isiru l-proġett, f'pajjiżi Għarab, ħafna drabi 'ejjew immorru Ruma, Londra, Pariġi, Brussell.' Il-punt ta' referenza huwa dejjem hemmhekk. Allura tgħid, 'dan huwa veru? Kieku kelli l-possibiltà li nkun fiż-żfin Pariġi jkun aħjar milli kieku qiegħed il-Libanu?' Iva u le. Għandek swieq differenti u udjenzi differenti. Jiġifieri nippreferi kważi kważi nintervjeni f'suq li għadu jikber. Inħoss li peress li għadna fil-bidu ta' żvilupp fis-settur kulturali fuq livell organizzattiv u amministrattiv, ilkoll qegħdin *at an initial stage*, f'politika kulturali. Għalhekk irrid nissieħeb ma' min qiegħed jizviluppa. Biex flimkien nikbru u nitgħallmu minn min m'għandux *institutional baggage*. Smajt kumment interessanti mill-*EU Secretaries* il-bieraħ fejn qalulna kemm hu sabiħ tkun f'kuntest fejn qed tibda mill-ġdid. Għax m'għandniex sebgħin sena ta' *British Council* li rrid inkisser, bit-tajjeb u l-ħażin tiegħu.

KX: Aħna fil-kuntest tagħna m'għandniex dawk il-*hang ups* li rridu neħilsu minnhom. Fuq livell tekniku, rigward riżorsi, ix-xogħol tiegħek fuq *creative economy* imiss ma' dan l-aspett. Tara li nistgħu niżviluppaw flimkien ma' min qiegħed fuq livell bħalna?

TA: Ir-riżorsi li għandna nistgħu nimmassimizzawhom. Jiġifieri, biex naħdmu ma' Tuneż, l-Alġerija, għandna bżonn ta' aktar nies? Naħseb diġà bl-istrutturi eżistenti nistgħu nimmassimizzaw ir-relazzjonijiet li għandna. Per eżempju, il-festivals, nista' ninkoraġixxi biex għal kull festival li għandu jkollna, bħala politka kulturali li diġà għandna, nużahom il-festivals bħala pjattaforma biex nesponi dawn ir-relazzjonijiet differenti. Min-naħa l-oħra nista' wkoll nirreċiproka u ngħid nimmassimizzaw ir-repertorju li għandna u din toħroġ fl-idea tal-istitut tad-diplomazija marbuta mal-istitut tad-*diplomatic studies*, il-MEDAC [Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies], Malta, li twettqet b'suċċess. Aħna, nħoss, *committed* lejn ir-regjun, imma fil-verità, l-entuzjażmu li kien hemm, immaterjalizza f'xi ħaġa aktar konkreta? Jekk int ser toħloq akkademja ta' *cultural management training* fil-Mediterran f'Malta, hemm pajjiżi li lesti jagħtu *sponsorship, partnerships*, li jkunu interessati f'dan it-tip ta' taħriġ. Hemm

pajjiżi oħra, bħal dawn tal-Golf, li telqu jiġru. Issa hu xi hadd minn Tuneż li ser jagħzel lil xi hadd bħala *reference point*, biex jibni mużew, ser jagħzel lil Malta, jew anke lill-Ingilterra, jew imur fil-Golf u jara xogħol Zaha Hadid! Għal min irid ikun ambizzjuż, qed ngħidu jista' jmur barra mill-Ewropa. In-*niche* tagħna għandha tkun dejjem dik ta' skambju, ta' ideat żgħar, organiċi, u finalment jistgħu jikbru u jmorru Dubai, Abou Dhabi u Pariġi. Naħseb għalissa għandna nieqfu hemm. Tant hemm istituzzjonijiet żgħar, NGOs, li għandhom l-opportunità li jgħidu li jeżistu, li għandhom, nassumi, din l-opportunità, min-nies li kellim, u milli rajt.

KX: Toni, biex ngħaddu għall-aħħar punt tal-udjenzi, taħseb li jgħaddilhom minn moħħhom dal-kunċett?

TA: L-udjenzi Malta mhumiex esposti għax-xogħol internazzjonali. Kemm Ewropej u mhux. Hu mill-film. Il-maġġoranza esposti għall-film Amerikan. Ġa l-kunċett li ser tara film Franciż huwa barrani, fil-fatt insejħulu 'foreign film'. Fil-letteratura naraw li l-maġġoranza jaqraw bl-Ingliż. Bil-Malti qed jizjedu, imma għalissa l-Ingliż. Fit-teatru ara l-ipprogrammar barrani: in-nies jgħidu 'din' bit-Taljan, bl-Ingliż? In-nies mhumiex daqshekk esposti. Il-livell Ewropew ġa llimitat, lil hinn mill-Ingliż. Imma 'l barra minn hekk diffiċli. Issa erħilha li t-Turkish Ballet meta ġew is-sena l-oħra b'rabta mal-V.18 [Valletta 2018 Foundation] u r-reazzjoni x'kienet, jiġifieri tajba, għalkemm ħassejtha statali u patrijottika ħafna. Ma naħsibx li l-udjenzi tagħna jagħrfu...għax mhux esposti.

KX: Taħseb li qatt ma kienu esposti, jew zied id-djuq?

TA: Naħseb li għadna mhux f'pożizzjoni li naraw ir-rabta bejn il-lingwi, li ngħidu li l-baži tal-lingwa tagħna hija Għarbija, u magħha għandek lingwi oħra. Hu films, St James ukoll, films Għarab, l-udjenzi huma xettiċi, sakemm ma jiġux, imbagħad, l-Għarab li jgħixu Malta! Dik hija żvilupp ta' udjenza le? Il-perċezzjoni tal-Maltin hija dejjem eżotika, per eżempju, tal-Marokk, ta' Casablanca, u jitkellmu fuq kif ippruvaw jixtru l-mara bil-ġemel, u mbagħad fuq il-ħmieġ u t-tallaba.

KX: Taħseb li hija r-responsabbiltà tal-politika kulturali li tindirizza l-imġieba tal-individwi u l-perċezzjonijiet tagħhom? Naħseb ġieli li qed nagħmel żball li ma nħaresx lejn l-individwu nnifsu u l-konsum individwali anke fid-dar, *magazines*, *online*. Taħseb li l-politika kulturali tista' tasal s'hemm?

TA: Il-politika kulturali hija numru ta' principji, le? Dawk li nħossu li l-pajjiż jemmen fihom. Imbagħad b'mod strateġiku tibda tindirizza dawn l-affarijiet. Inħoss li kieku kelli nikteb l-aħħar kapitlu llum, fuq 'Internationalisation', kien ikun kompletament differenti. Dan minn sitt xhur ilu, meta ġie ppubblikat. Kieku jien nipprioritizza r-relazzjoni bejn Malta u l-Afrika ta' Fuq. Kwaži kwaži l-politika kulturali ta' Malta tkun kif aħna nħarsu lejn il-Mediterran, jiġifieri f'isem il-Mediterran Malta qed tipproponi dawn il-principji. Bħalissa qed nipprova nara dal-*business delegations* kollha li telgħu Tuneż jew Tripoli, naqdbu balla artisti u nagħmlu *parallel programme*, u idealment nirreċiprokaw ukoll. Il-politika kulturali diġà tħares lejn ir-reġjun Ewro-Mediterranju u kif tista' tiżviluppa l-viżjoni tagħna. Aħna qed nindirizzaw l-imġieba tal-bniedem. Naħseb li hija responsabbiltà ta' min jaħdem fis-settur li jindirizzahom b'mod strateġiku. It-*television*, x'jaraw. Jekk irrid nestendi l-argument u ngħid li xi series li tkun fuq it-TV Malti u dak Għarbi, jixtiebħu ħafna, anke fil-*humour*, fil-*filming*, fl-espressjoni fizika. Mhux bħala insult, imma l-ġeneru tal-farsa Maltija, ġejja wkoll mill-*Comedia*, mit-Taljani, imma wkoll mill-kultura Għarbija. Differenti ħafna minn dak Ingliż, mimli wit, ibbażat fuq il-kelma. Niftakar fis-Sena tad-Djalogu Interkulturali, mingħalija qed nippromwovi d-djalogu kulturali, imma jekk hemm *mismatch* bejn l-interessi, anke dawk politiċi, jew l-entuzjażmu, jew l-għarfien, li mmexxu 'l quddiem, dan ħa jinfluwenzalna kolloxx.

KX: Taħseb li wieħed min-nuqqasijiet tas-Sena tad-Djalogu Interkulturali kien nuqqas ta' sensitività, li ma jkollokx djalogu bejn il-kulturi imma bejn in-nies?

TA: Iva. Anke għalfejn inghata l-proġett lis-*St James*. Għax ma kienx hemm istituzzjoni thares lejn id-djalogu interkulturali, fir-*remit* tagħha. Fil-politika kulturali giet miktuba, djalogu interkulturali, imma ma kenitx titfaċċa qabel. Fil-fatt, meta l-*Commission* talbu lil Malta tissottometti l-*policy* tad-djalogu interkulturali tagħha ma kellhiex, u ktibtha jien, *copy and paste* mit-teži li kont ktibt fuq id-djalogu interkulturali, u din saret '*Malta's Policy on Intercultural Dialogue*'. U imbagħad giet estiża għal proġett ieħor tal-MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] tal-*Alliance of Civilisations*, u tibda tgħid, prijoritarjament, biex ikollok aċċess għall-komunitajiet minoritarji f'Malta, l-Indjani, l-Egizzjani. U x'jigri wara, *continuity*, għoti ta' viżas per eżempju. Ridna niżviluppaw *website* għall-komunitajiet. L-MFA ma setgħetx tlaħhaq, *St James* spicċalu r-*remit* u fondi ma kienx għad baqa'. *There was a loss of continuity. Legacy*, x'kien hemm, f'termini reali? Jien personali, għandi kuntatt ma' dawn l-assocjazzjonijiet, imma b'mod pubbliku?

KX: Biex nagħlqu, xi haġa oħra li giet instigata mill-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej, u Malta tipparteċipa għax membru, li hi dik tal-Kapitali Ewropea tal-Kultura. Taħseb li dik tista' tkun veikolu li taħdem fuq dawn il-binarji?

TA: Naħseb li l-aktar *bid* viċin tagħna hi ta' Marseille. Interessanti tara min innegozja l-*bid* u għaliex sabu *counterpart* mill-Mediterran, imma mingħajr ma jsibu kuntatt Malta. Għalija, jekk ma tistax toffri das-servizz, b'ambaxxata, jew b'xi haġa, dawn ha jagħmlu *bypass* u ma jagħtux kasek. Waqt is-CLI kelli kuntatt Pariġi imma xejn, *out of the radar*, fuq livell Ewropew, jekk tara l-*collaborations* li għandna. F'sitt snin, nafu li jekk nibdew issa, nieħdu eżempju bħal ta' Marsilja u nibnu fuqu. Irridu nibdew minn issa, niżviluppaw il-mudell tagħna. Jekk fl-2018 ser nipprogrammaw teatru minn Tuneż, irrid nibda minn issa. Nixtieq nasal fuq livell kollaborattiv, għalkemm għalissa qegħdin fuq livell ta' prezentazzjoni. Għax aktar faċli. Imma wara li pprezentajtlek, jekk hemm ma' min taħdem, tibda tibni. Nies bħal Ruben Zahra, Renzo Spiteri, Jimmy Grima, ikkollaboraw fuq livell personali. Imma l-programm jibda minn issa jrid. Fuq livell politiku, fuq livell istituzzjonali, fuq livell li jinvolvi l-artisti fi process fuq il-livell tagħhom fejn jagħrfu l-bżonn tal-kollaborazzjoni. Dawn iridu jaħdmu b'mod parallel, mhux *top-down*. Fuq livell personali ilha ssir, min ried jaħdem mat-Tuneżini ħadem, eżempju tajjeb ħafna l-Għanafest, Ruben bniedem li għaraf il-bżonn artistikament li ma tistax taqta' l-Mediterran f'nofs reġjun, u b'hekk in-nies li jiġu huma interessati f'dik il-mużika, jiġifieri trid tibni. Trid ħames, sitt, seba' snin. Jiġifieri jekk tieħu t-tfal llum jaraw wirja, din issir normali biż-żmien. Trid tkun espost u tagħraf l-estetika sabiħa. Biex tibni dik l-estetika trid *mind-frame shift* kbira. Jekk tmexxi fit-tul, għandek *legacy* garantita sa ċertu punt. Trid tagħmilha *across the board*. Hu l-mużew tal-arti kontemporanja. Jekk dan ma jissejjaħx tal-Mediterran, naqbd u ma nagħmlu xejn. Ikun fotokopja tat-Tate. U t-Tate qed jaraw x'xogħlijiet jixtru...hemm ir-rwol ta' Malta bħala *intermediary*, tant ovvju, opportunità kbira.

KX: Biex nergħu għal li għidna fil-bidu, hemm komunitajiet u swieq madwarna, u qed niżviluppaw flimkien.

TA: U peress li hemm pajjiżi li għandhom sebgħin, mitt sena ta' esperjenza li jistgħu jibnu fuqha, *they can bulldoze their way*. Fl-istess ħin, meta titkellem mat-Tate, dan mhux interessati li jibnu Tate Tripli. Anzi huma jridu joħolqu struttura ta' *networking* mal-mużewijiet żgħar, intermedji u kbar biex isaħħu r-reputazzjoni u l-kollezzjoni tagħhom. L-*approach* hu jew ta' tmur tixtri, jew tibni relazzjoni mal-artist. Ir-relazzjoni tista' tkissirha, imma diffiċli meta tibniha bil-mod u sew. Hemm bżonn *nurturing* sew. U rridu nibdew ninkoraġġixxu 'l-artisti jibdew jaħsbu hekk.

Interview with Caldon Mercieca, writer, academic, coordinator of the Culture & Audiovisual Unit at the Ministry for Culture

21 December 2011

KX: Kemm hi importanti d-dimensjoni Mediterranja?

CM: Sa ċertu punt l-biċċa l-kbira tad-dimensjoni Mediterranja li tinfluwenzani fix-xogħol hija xi ħaġa li nirċiviha b'mod passif. Jiġifieri dak li f'diskorsi komuni u kultant banali, imma li jintuża l-ħin kollu, jagħmilna Maltin. Mhux f'termini ta' identità kulturali Romantika imma anke kif jitmexxi l-gvern, kif nirrelataw ma' xulxin, nimmanigġjaw il-proġetti tagħna...hija l-arja li nieħdu u l-ilma li ngħumu fih. Nirrelataw mal-Mediterran kważi kważi b'mod inkonxju. Isir konxju meta tagħmel sforxi konxji ħafna bħall-kitba tal-politika kulturali, li tieħu l-baži ta' kif nikkomunikaw bħala valur kulturali, soċjali u anke ekonomiku. Biex tbiegħ dik l-esperjenza jew tippakkeġġja l-prodott kulturali. Qed insemmiha għax jekk għandek komunità Maltija New York jew Toronto jew l-Awstralja dil-ħaġa ma tistax teħodha *for granted* għax l-ambjent ta' madwarhom mhux hawn, u mhux Mediterranju. Tajjeb toħroġ din għax id-dimensjoni ġeografika importanti. Min-naħa l-oħra, meta niġi biex nikkonsidra xi kollaborazzjonijiet konkreti u min huma n-nies li għandi kuntatt magħhom fil-qasam Mediterranju u x'tip ta' *give and take* teżisti, f'dan il-kuntest stess, ma narax ħafna. Litteralment nipprova naħseb l-ismijiet, l-individwi. F'dawn l-aħħar sentejn, kuntatti fiżiċi mal-Mediterran, ma' pajjiżi oħra fil-Mediterran jiġifieri, huma meta delegazzjoni Maltija telgħet Tuneż fuq organizzazzjoni tal-ambaxxatrici hemmhekk biex isservi ta' baži għall-kooperazzjoni kulturali ġdida. Dan baqa' ma ġiex iffinalizzat għax ġara li ġara. Imma naħseb kien xi ħaġa unika fin-negozjar u l-iffirmar ta' kollaborazzjonijiet kulturali. Dan għax normalment dan il-ftehim isir a baži ta' dokumenti ffirmati u l-iffinalizzar tagħhom fi proċess formali li m'għandux snien, m'għandux obbligi marbutin miegħu. L-iskambji jissemmew, il-miżuri jissemmew, imma m'hemmx finanzi marbutin magħhom. Obbligi m'hemmx. L-uniku każ li naf fejn kien hemm il-finanzi fuq il-mejda kien il-ftehim mat-Taljani. Kellek kuntatt qawwi permezz tal-istudenti li jtilgħu l-Italja, jistudjaw l-aktar il-forom artistiki, jiġifieri l-mużika u l-arti viżiva u skultura. Mat-Taljani għandna kuntatt tajjeb u hemm ammont sostanzjali ta' nies li gawdew minn din ir-relazzjoni. Hija *policy* tal-Gvern li jkun hemm formazzjoni għolja ġejja mill-kuntest Taljan. Hemm kontinwità li tmur lura deċenji u li tgħaqqad mal-kuntest kulturali Taljan. Ħalli li lllum l-influwenza hija aktar dinjija għalkemm iffiltarjata mill-Italja imma xorta tibqa' l-influwenza. U hemm il-kuntest Mediterranju peress li t-tnejn li aħna fil-Mediterran. U dan hu l-uniku ftehim b'raba finanzjarja. Ftehim ieħor li kien jinvolvi l-finanzi għalkemm ma nafx għadux validu jew le, huwa maċ-Ciniżi. Jiġifieri tmur in-naħa l-oħra tad-dinja. Fl-istess ħin, aktar b'inizjattiva tagħhom milli tagħna, iridu li jagħmlu preżenza kulturali qawwija hawnhekk bħala parti mill-inizjattivi globali tagħhom ta' *soft power*. Dan kollu biex inpoġġi fil-kuntest l-istrordinarjetà ta' delegazzjoni Maltija li tmur tipprepara kollaborazzjoni. Naf li minħabba x-xogħol tal-ambaxxatrici hemmhekk dan kien possibbli. Hija pjuttost attiva, u aktarx tagħti l-frott fi ftit żmien u 'l quddiem.

KX: Rigward it-Tuneżija u l-Afrika ta' Fuq, tara tibdil li qed isir u jista' jsir artistikament u b'mod kreattiv liberu?

CM: Niftakar sitt xhur qabel ma bdiet ir-rivoluzzjoni konna rċievejna direttiva mill-Gvern Tuneżin, mibgħuta lilna mill-Affarijiet Barranin, li kull artist magħżul kellu jkun approvat. Is-sikkatura kienet qed tiżdied, mal-Afrika ta' Fuq u t-Tuneżija in partikolari. Meta l-avvenimenti kienu qed jisplodu ġurnata b'ġurnata, kont iddiskutejt internament fil-Grupp għall-Kreattività, imbagħad bghatt anke *email* lil-Ministeru tal-Affarijiet Barranin u d-*desk* għad-Diplomazija Kulturali hemmhekk, biex nara kenux interessati illi f'dan il-kuntest jagħmlu konferenza żgħira b'tnejn jew tliet rappreżentanti, jew aħjar

operaturi kulturali, kittieba, *film makers*, diretturi tat-teatru, minn kull pajjiż Għarbi, konna ġejna xi għaxar pajjiżi, biex niddiskutu l-kultura u d-demokrazija. Waqt it-taqbliba. Kif l-attività kulturali tista' tikkontribwixxi lejn il-bidla li qed issir, u li l-bidla twassal għal ċertu destinazzjoni u mhux għal oħra. Għax il-bidla jista' ma jkollha l-ebda valur, għal xiex twassal li importanti, mhux ir-rivoluzzjoni li għandha valur, imma l-bdil *vis à vis* dak li kien hemm qabel, hux aħjar jew agħar. Jekk trid, fl-Iraq kellek bidla kbira, imma mhux bilfors għall-aħjar. U forsi anke kif issir dik il-bidla hija konsegwenza ta' kwalità. Jekk il-bidla hi imposta mod, jekk hi ġenerata internament, mod ieħor. Kienu kollha temi x' niddiskutu, mhux f'diskussjoni dwar il-Mediterran, imma fejn il-Mediterran stess kien ser jiddiskuti x'qed jiġri. In-nies stess forsi attivi u implikati fil-bidla setgħu jiddiskutu flimkien. Per eżempju, xi hadd mis-Sirja fejn it-tibdil kien għadu ma bediex seta' jitkellem ma' xi hadd it-Tuneżija fejn it-tibdil kien sar fis-sens tal-ewwel fażi tal-bidla. Il-mod tagħna, u hemm fejn nagħmlu aktar parti mid-dinja tal-Punent minn dik Afrikana, hija li nħarsu lejn il-bidla bħala monolitika ukoll. Qabel konna nħarsu lejn *ir-regimes* kollha bl-istess mod. Issa naraw it-tibdil isir kollu bl-istess mod u mill-istess naħa għall-istess naħa. Però hemm diversità enormi.

KX: Interessanti din l-idea ta' Malta sservi ta' pjattaforma għal diskussjoni komuni, fejn jiġu flimkien operaturi differenti mill-Mediterran.

CM: Malta kienet taqdi dar-rwol meta kienet newtrali. Ma narax għaliex m'għandhiex taqdiha issa li bħal pajjiżi oħra fil-periferiji, bħan-Norveġja jew il-Finlandja, li jagħmlu diplomazija moħbija, ma narax għaliex aħna le. Maħniex il-Ġermanja jew l-Italja li għandha interessi ekonomiċi enormi. Għandna interessi ekonomiċi importanti għalina. Imma mhux fis-sens li jimponu fuq kif ingibu ruħna biex napprofitaw ruħna minnu. Irrid noqgħod attent kif ngħidha. Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar l-istabbiltà, u l-kelma stabbiltà, hija problematika ħafna, l-istabbiltà fir-regjun għandha interess enormi għalina wkoll. Aħna implikati. Nara funzjoni qawwija li nistgħu naqdu.

KX: Fid-distinzjoni li qed tagħmel bejn pajjiż kbir bħall-Ġermanja jew l-Italja, pajjiż Mediterranju, u Malta, hemm l-interessi tagħna, però minħabba l-istorja tagħna u r-relazzjoni mal-kolonjalizmu differenti minn min kien imexxih, u l-interessi differenti politiċi u ekonomiċi, kif bniedem barra minn Malta jħares lejn Malta, huwa differenti minn kif iħares lejn il-Ġermanja.

CM: Però għall-istess mistoqsija tiegħi lill-Ministeru tal-Affarijiet Barranin, ir-risposta kienet simili ħafna għal dik ta' xi gvern Taljan jew Germaniż, jiġifieri l-bdil għadu għaddej, ma nafx x'ser jiġri, irridu noqogħdu attenti għax għandna relazzjoni ma' dawn il-pajjiżi, mar-regimi eżistenti f'dan il-pajjiż, u ma nistgħux nidhru li qed nieħdu pożizzjoni favur ir-ribelli, l-estremisti eċċ. Naraw x'ser jiġri u nagħxu jekk naraw li hemm bżonn nagħxu. U waqfet hemm. Dik kienet idea, u la naħdem fil-Gvern u naħdmu f'dawn l-oqsma differenti, ma rajt xejn ħażin b'li nleħhinha u nsaqsi dwarha. Trid ċertu *back up* però, finanzjarju, imma speċjalment politiku. Jekk ma jkollokx dan tista' tagħmilha imma fuq livell indipendenti, per eżempju sar il-festival tal-letteratura Settembru fejn ingiebu artisti mill-kuntest letterarju varju. Hemmhekk kien lok għall-idea li kelli jiena. Il-letteratura, fil-verità ma tistax iżzommha milli titkellem b'mod aktar wiesa'.

KX: B'estensjoni ta' dak li qed tgħid, fl-aħħar *budget* kien hemm vot għal Istitut Kulturali Malti u l-idea tidher ser tiegħu forma. Tara aġenzija li tista' tkun aktar kuraġġuza li tista' tmur lejn il-limiti ta' dak li hu permess? Permezz ta' diplomazija aktar innovattiva? F'moħħi għandi l-Istitut franċais jew il-*British Council* li wkoll huma marbutin mal-Gvern tal-pajjiż, imma peress li qegħdin fil-kamp kulturali xorta jkun hemm dawk l-isfumaturi fejn diskors inqas ikkontrollat jista' jsir, anke fl-interess tal-pajjiż, l-Ingilterra jew Franza, li qed isir minnu. Hekk jista' jkun hemm appoġġ indirett, sottili imma effettiv għat-tibdil li jsir.

CM: Nixtieq inwiegħbek imma l-biċċa hi, il-fond li ngħata mhux għal Istitut Kulturali imma fond għad-diplomazija kulturali ta' €75,000. Essenzjalment ser imur għal attivitajiet kulturali organizzati jew li fihom ikunu involuti l-ambaxxati Maltin u li jkunu ta' natura artistika jew kulturali. Bażikament l-Ambaxxata tal-Ġermanja tixtieq ittella' kittieb imma m'għandhiex flus. Ma kienx hemm *budget* għal dawn l-affarijiet, u l-ambaxxata interessata kellha tara kif tagħmel biex iġġib *sponsors* eċċ. Jiġifieri dal-fond ser ikun qed jgħin lill-ambaxxati Maltin imexxu proġetti li jxerrdu l-kultura Maltija barra minn Malta. Għadna pass 'il bogħod milli jkollna l-Istitut Kulturali. Idealment ikun hemm Istitut Kulturali. It-tir huwa li xi darba jkun hemm xi haġa ekwivalenti, ta' *network*, ta' uffiċji, li jistgħu jużaw ir-rizorsi tal-ambaxxati, jew l-MTA [Malta Tourism Authority] jew Malta Enterprise, numru ta' organizzazzjonijiet. Sena ilu konna evalwajna dan, li jkollna preżenza strateġika, pero għadna 'l bogħod milli jkollna preżenza fiżika ta' rappreżentazzjoni. Li qed isir bħalissa hu li nimmassimizzaw il-ftit rizorsi li ġew allokat i jekk tiela' artist Pariġi, għaliex ma jtlax anke Berlin, Amsterdam, u jitturja. Mod ieħor, jekk jitle' kittieb, għaliex ma jitlghax meta jkun hemm fiera tal-kotba? Inti timmassimizza l-preżenza tal-kultura Maltija barra minn Malta, anke biex tkabbar l-għarfien tal-preżenza Maltija barra minn Malta. Mañniex bħall-Ġermanja fejn ngħidulhom fejn wasalna illum, imma ngħidulhom li aħna neżistu, u l-oħra biex nesportaw il-kultura. Dak l-artist li jista' jgħix mill-prodott kulturali li jipprovi. Dawk huma ż-żewġ oġġettivi prinċipali. Li minix konxju ħafna minnu kemm din it-tip ta' kollaborazzjoni hi relevanti għall-pajjiżi Nord Afrikani. Bħala pajjiżi Mediterranji, anke dawk Ewropej, aħna aktar frammentati minn dawk tal-kontinent. Aktar naħseb huwa faċli li tivvjaġġa minn Brussell għal Amsterdam, fiżikament, milli minn Ruma għal Madrid, jew għal Atena, għax trid tagħmel vjaġġ ieħor, trid ittir. Allura *networking* fil-Mediterran, taf tinstema' paradossali, imma jaf ikun aktar diffiċli milli fil-pajjiżi fin-nord.

KX: U dan qed nitkellmu fuq it-tramuntana tal-Mediterran, għax fin-nofsinar jidhlu problemi ta' mobilità oħra bħall-viża u hekk.

CM: Għadni ma nafx jekk vera hix prattikabbli dil-haġa minn Tripli għal Algiers eċċ. S'issa, il-kuntatt fiżiku, li tmur b'karozza minn post għal ieħor, jew b'ferrovija, ma kienx daqshekk faċli. Anke għax ippruvajtha jien, ninvestiga l-possibilità li tinzel l-Alġerija, tgħaddi mil-Libja u tmur l-Eġittu, u dan qabel ir-rivoluzzjonijiet. Irrid nanalizzaw x'inhu l-potenzjal li dat-tip ta' skambji b'Malta ma' punt ieħor u punt ieħor hemm barra iħallu lill-artist jimraħ. Trid tohloq *network* bejn ħafna punti, mhux biss bejn tnejn u tnejn separatament. Però xorta tiddependi mil-livell ta' relazzjonijiet bilaterali għax tinfluwenza ħafna.

KX: Qabel għidt li għad baqa' ħafna x'isir. Però saru ħafna passi 'l quddiem. Nara strumentali l-kuntatti li l-Maltin għamlu mal-barranin matul is-snin. Per eżempju, fis-snin ta' qabel Malta ma ngħaqdet mal-UE, bis-saħħa ta' organizzazzjonijiet barranin. Però dak ir-rwol inbidel, inħoss jien. Hemm element akbar ta' partenarjat. Għandek l-istess esperjenza? Intik eżempju żgħir, ta' meta Itqajna mas-CCP [Culture Contact Point] jumejn ilu, u semmejt li kontu mortu tiltaqgħu ma' Creative Scotland sena ilu. Qisu illum qegħdin aktar fuq livell ta' partenarjat.

CM: Hija hekk, l-esperjenza meta tlajna l-Ingilterra u Glasgow u Edinburgh, tinduna kemm il-problemi huma l-istess. Għalkemm il-Gvern hemm għandu ħafna aktar rizorsi, aktar esperjenzi, aktar kuntatti, il-fatt li s-settur qed jinbidel ifisser li kemm aħna kemm huma qed niffaċċjaw l-istess realtajiet. Minkejja n-nuqqas ta' tradizzjonijiet hawnhekk u d-diffikultà li għandna biex nibdew niffaċċjaw l-isfidi fil-qasam kreattiv. Huma għandhom ċertu mod li m'għadux relevanti u jridu jbidduh. Allura qegħdin ftit jew wisq fl-istess sitwazzjoni. Per eżempju, l-problemi li sibna l-Iskozja fis-settur edukattiv, bin-nies mħarrġin fid-dixiplina partikolari tagħhom, għalliema u r-rizorsi li għandhom, u għandek differenza anke fil-kwalità meta mqabbla magħna, imma jinvesti f'dal-qasam, imma mbagħad il-formazzjoni ta' intrapriża ma tingħatalhomx, allura hemm bżonn li jkolluk *re-training* jew *top-up* ta' dak li jafu biex jissopravvivu fid-

dinja kontemporanja bħala *freelancers*. L-istess is-sitwazzjoni tagħna. Ikunu tħarrġu lokalment jew barra, jiġu lura, u jridu jaraw kif ser jirreġistraw mal-VAT [Value Added Tax], mal-ETC [Employment & Training Corporation], mal-Inland Revenue, il-qasam soċjali li qed jgħixu fih. Hemmhekk irrealizzajna li sa ċertu punt qegħdin fl-istess dgħajsa. Aħna xtaqna naraw kif nistgħu nikkollaboraw fuq dal-livell ukoll fuq livell Mediterranju, u għalina b'mod partikolari dejjem naħsbu fil-Libjani u fit-Tuneżini. Sa ċertu punt ma nafex għalfejn u dejjem naħsbu li l-Alġerini viċin il-Francizi u jekk iridu jagħmlu skambji jagħmluhom ma' Franza, aħna ftit nistgħu nżidulhom xi haġa. L-Eġittu pajjiż kbir u b'saħħa interna u jieħu ħsieb l-affarijiet tiegħu b'mod partikolari. Meta kellna lil Nora Amin mistiedna hawn fuq seminar Marzu li għadda, ir-rabta kienet mas-sitwazzjoni politika viventi, imma naraw rabta akbar mat-Tuneżija u mal-Libja. L-impressjoni li ħadna dwar il-Libja, sena wara sena, minn min ikollabora magħhom biex iwaqqaf ftehim kulturali, hi li huma neqsin mill-qafas strutturali. Li jfisser li għandna opportunità ta' kollaborazzjoni hemmhekk. Min-naħa tat-Tuneżija l-impressjoni li ħadt hi li l-istruttura hija b'saħħitha, u hemm fejn nitgħallmu u fejn nikkollaboraw.

KX: Jidher li f'dan il-mument ta' bidla, ħafna kuntesti jixtiebhu.

CM: Minħabba li trid tibdel struttura kbira, taf tpoġġik ukoll fi żvantaġġ, u lilna f'vantaġġ. Haġa wkoll li ttik messaġġi kontradittorji hija marbuta mal-aspett teknoloġiku tad-dinja kulturali. Dan l-aħħar konna qed naħdmu ma' Gordon Calleja l-Università ta' *Copenhagen* fuq *digital games*, b'potenzjali qawwi fil-qasam kulturali, b'input minn *software engineers* u l-aspett artistiku, u l-input kreattiv, ta' kitba, ta' espressjoni artistiku transmedjali. L-aspett teknoloġiku qawwi, imma dak artistiku rridu nsaħħuh. Fl-istrategija ppruvajna naraw il-valur reġjonali tagħna, fejn naraw lil Malta bħala *hub*, fejn nistgħu nikkomunikaw u nesportaw lejn ir-reġjun. L-esperti Ingliżi b'esperjenza globali, il-potenzjal li raw fl-Afrika, raw limitat, *in the short to medium term*, minħabba infrastruttura teknoloġika baxxa, penetrazzjoni baxxa tal-internet, b'żonn ta' ħlas għal ċertu servizzi. Naħseb li hemm b'żonn naraw *approach* raffinat lejn l-Afrika, bħala reġjuni u bħala komunitajiet. Nara paradoss fil-fatt li r-rivoluzzjoni li grāt kellha kontribut qawwi mit-teknoloġija. Id-demografija tal-pajjiżi juru wkoll li hemm ħafna żgħażaġġ, u allura hemm potenzjal fis-suq. Barra minn hekk, qed inħarsu lejn *digital games* biss mill-perspettiva ta' intratteniment, u għallinqas mill-kuntatti li għamilt ġimghatejn ilu l-Ġermanja fuq *digital games*, bniedem li kellimt li kien fil-karozzi u mbaġħad mexa fuq *digital games*, u karozzi fil-Ġermanja huma *cutting edge*, dil-persuna kienet interessata f'*serious gaming*, li hija *misnomer* għax qisek qed tgħid li qed toqtol il-pjaċir. Però din tintuża għal *demos*, imma anke fl-edukazzjoni, fil-medicina, il-*buzzword* hija *gamefication*, fejn mhux biss ngħallmek imma qed intik ukoll pjaċir. Dak li qabel kienu jgħidulu *edutainment*. Din importanti tat-*transmedia*, għax filwaqt li n-narrattiva tiegħek hija waħda, il-mezzi biex tinnarra huma plurali, huma ħafna. Fil-verità, tinteressani immens l-idea tal-*augmented reality*, fejn tuża strument teknoloġiku biex iżżid saff ġdid ta' realtà fuq dak li qed tesperjenza b'mod fiziku. Mhix xi haġa li qed nara fiha potenzjal jiena. Meta kont Udine fuq film, id-diskors li sar minn Bruce Sterling, kien dwar dal-potenzjal ġdid ta' *augmented reality*, fejn għandek dimensjonijiet oħra ta' esperjenzi li jżidu ma' dawk li għandek. Dan jista' jiġi applikat għall-patrimonju, għat-tempji, b'mod ta' logħba, fejn qed tipprova tara fejn u kif hemm elementi oħra. Mhumiex invażivi, mintix qed tintervjeni, pero mill-aspett ta' immaġinazzjoni, ta' interattività, ta' interess li tista' toħloq f'persuna li mhix riċerkatrici jew akkademika, hija tajba ħafna.

Il-pajjiżi tal-Mediterran għandhom elementi qawwija komuni ta' patrimonju, li minħabba l-istorja reċenti tagħhom ta' kolonjalizmu, u forsi kien oġġettiv tal-kolonjalizmu, li jaljenahom mill-aspetti komuni tal-patrimonju tagħhom, bħal per eżempju l-pajjiżi Għarab li kienu marbuta mat-Turkija, mal-Imperu Ottoman, mal-Ħajja marittima, fejn kien hemm elementi komuni. U komuni anke fuq livell mikroskopiku, bħall-ikel, il-platti, materjali tal-bini, minn Spanja sal-Lvant Nofsani. Dan il-patrimonju li jagħmilna min

aħna jista' ma jkunx qawwi fil-ħajja ta' kuljum illum, imma jista' jissahħaħ b'mod li nerġgħu niskopru permezz tat-teknoloġija min aħna, permezz ta' saff ġdid, li fil-verità qed joħroġ saff li kien hemm imma kien moħbi bil-kolonjalizmu. U issa qiegħed hemm mhux biss f'forma ta' *revival* nazzjonalistiku, imma biex ikollok it-turiżmu, l-edukazzjoni, rispettt reċiproku ibbażat fuq l-għarfien tagħna nfusna u ta' ħaddieħor, lil hinn mil-lingwa, reliġjon, u affarijiet nazzjonali li jifirdu.

Interview with Mohamed Ben Soltane, artist, curator, Tunis/Paris

23 December 2011

KX: Vous vous adressez au concept méditerranéen?

MBS: Il faut que je me présente un petit peu tout d'abord. Je suis artiste et je travaille dans les arts visuels. Au même temps je travaille avec une association espagnole qui fait des échanges dans la Méditerranée. Elle s'appelle Jasaf. Et aussi je participe à un projet d'art contemporain en Tunisie. A la fin, je suis commissaire d'exposition et artiste. Ils sont deux choses différentes plutôt, et maintenant avec du travail institutionnel, de participation dans un centre d'art, le contact que j'ai avec les centres culturels est différent. Je représente une institution et c'est différent de quand l'artiste se représente tout seul. Avant c'était plus facile critiquer, aujourd'hui c'est plus compliqué. Donc si je parle comme artiste, par rapport à mon travail, la Méditerranée est un peu floue, parce que la Méditerranée est grande, avec les pays du nord, les pays arabes, il y a la Turquie, la Grèce, et en général quand on pense méditerranée on pense France, Espagne, Italie. Par exemple, la Tunisie, même l'Égypte, c'était les pays arabe qui on pense si on disait pays méditerranéens. Et comme artiste, je m'intéresse beaucoup aux inspirations locales, et m'adresse la plupart des fois aux gens qui ne se sont pas des publics réguliers. Ils ne sont pas très intéressés à l'art, ils ne regardent pas l'art comme un secteur avec beaucoup de prestige. Quelque fois on a aussi des expositions internationales, quand je dis internationales je veux dire le nord de la Méditerranée. Dans ces expositions là je pense aux expositions locales qui peuvent intéresser là-bas. Donc je ne crée pas du travail qui est prête pour le publique méditerranéens, et dans le travail que je fais, il y a la sélection qui pourra être plus intéressante présentée dans cette contexte-là. J'étais en Égypte il n'y a longtemps, c'était le première pays méditerranéens pas du nord et au dehors d'Istanbul, et aujourd'hui il y a un grand intérêt dans la Tunisie et dans les pays de la Méditerranée. Avec les pays arabes et avec le contexte méditerranéen il y a des nouvelles possibilités.

KX: Vous croyez que c'est partie des effets du printemps arabe?

MBS: Oui, il n'est pas seulement ça mais oui, on peut invoquer le printemps arabe, aussi si nous parlons de révolution de la dignité et de la liberté. En fait ça qui était passé a cassé les barrières, les barrières presque physique parce que les gens qui était très connectés et pleins de projets ne pouvais pas venir ici en Tunisie et donc politiquement c'était très fermé. Il y a des choses négatives du monde arabe mais nous aussi avons les stéréotypes sur les autres arabes. Et maintenant on commence petit à petit à découvrir les moyens de collaboration. Avant tout était institutionnalisé, c'était l'état qui géré tout, ont envoyé qu'ils voulaient. Avant nous étions intéressés aujourd'hui encore plus. Je suis très intéressé de collaborer avec l'Égypte que les pays nord de la Méditerranée. Même s'il n'y a pas d'exclusions on a soif de collaborer avec le Sud de la Méditerranée.

KX: De côté du publique, vous croyez qu'il a eu des changements aussi de côté de l'appréciation, la sensibilisation, l'éducation et la participation?

MBS: Oui, les tentatives pour le moment sont timides, mais il en a eu. Comme dans la ville de Sidi Bouzid, la ville où toute la révolution est partie. En fait pour quelque mois après la révolution la ville était fermée. Il y a eu beaucoup de problèmes et les gens ne voulaient pas sortir de chez eux. Donc il y avait beaucoup de délégations qui venait mais personne ne réussit à voir la société démarrer des peurs, de la violence et tout mais il y avait des artistes qui sont venus. Personnes ne voulait les accueillir mais ils sont restés au centre-ville pendant plusieurs jours faisant des peintures dans la rue et les petits

enfants sont petit à petit commencé à sortir et à parler aux artistes. Donc les artistes était l'essor qui ont fait possible que la ville a commencée à vivre. Ils ont eu un rôle très importante à jouer. Pour la population qui était très marginalisée l'image de l'artiste n'était très positif, aussi en général avec les chanteurs qui s'était vendus au ancien régime, qui se sont gagnés beaucoup d'argent avec le Président et sa famille. Voilà, les artistes ne sont pas ceux-ci, sont ceux-là qui était très résistantes, avec certains journalistes et avocats et il faisait partie d'une opposition assez radicale. Donc le publique ne connaît pas cette côté des artistes et ils voulaient conquérir cette image. Mais il y a beaucoup de nouvelles perspectives parce que comme était les choses avant la révolution on n'avait pas les autorisations à faire de l'art dans la rue, si tu faisais du street art c'était très très dangereux, on ne pouvait pas présenter un travail théâtral dans un espace publique. Donc il y avait plusieurs quartiers qui ont fait de la pression, mais les projets ils mettent un peu de temps pour apparaître. Il y a une dynamique mais il faut qu'elle devienne plus.

KX: Quel est l'importance des instituts européens et étrangers dans la Tunisie ? Il y a toujours une relation qui n'est pas égal?

MBS: Il y a des changements qui on est en charge d'opérer, les personnes qui attends leurs visas pour aller en France devient plus et plus énervés, mais de mon côté il y a deux opérations. En tant qu'artiste je suis très critique sur les bureaux de collaborations. Les projets qu'ils font manque de consultations. Par exemple, l'attaché culturel français qui est ici dans ce moment, je trouve qu'il est assez dynamique, il veut faire du bon, mais en tout cas la politique culturelle actuelle est pour trois ou quatre ans et il faut beaucoup de plus. Ce rentre dans le cadre de tous les problèmes politiques. Il n'a pas d'un mandat assez large pour faire des changements. Et donc il doit faire des choses spectaculaires qui n'apportent pas beaucoup de changements. Par rapport au réfléchi de supériorité à lequel tu as fait accent oui ça existe et sans un peu d'effort ça ce ne lève pas très forte. Il faut cette volonté intérieur qui te dit que tu peux faire mieux que leur et il faut les forcer un petit peu. Je connais un Tunisien qui travaille dans la collaboration qui me dit c'est très chaud. Il y a la volonté de créer une collaboration plus égalitaire mais en fait ici les structures n'existe pas et en fait on a besoin du travail du fond pour changer les choses. Par exemple la collaboration française ici au Tunisie essaie de trouver depuis quelque temps des partenaires qui sont vraiment affidable et qui sont bon mais il n'y a pas ces genres d'institution. L'Institut français met beaucoup d'argent, on a l'argent, on a le pouvoir, et on peut faire qu'est ce qu'il voulait. Donc, il n'est pas assez de critiquer les européennes et l'Institut français, il faut critiquer aussi ce pays-là qui ne font pas assez pour vraiment établir l'égalité. Mais ça bouge lentement aussi, après la révolution on a plus de critique vers les anciens pays colonisateurs, par rapport à la France, à l'Angleterre; en même temps il y a peut-être plus l'écoute de leur côté pour voir comme adresser la situation. Et c'est ça qui manque, ça peut changer les choses. Ils travaillent toujours avec les mêmes personnes et ça ne peut pas changer les choses.

KX: On essaie de faire deux choses au même temps: travailler sur la perception de la Tunisie et des Tunisiens, aussi comme artistes, chez les Européens, et les cercles qu'ils maintiennent et qui on doit casser. Dans le même moment, vous travaillez sur vous-même pour changer l'infrastructure, la mentalité, pour aborder des relations plus égales.

MBS: Oui, c'est ça, renforcer soi-même et donc les relations pour avoir des vrais partenaires. On peut dire 's'il vous plaît, donnez-moi de l'argent, parce que sans argent on peut rien faire', ou on peut dire 'nous a des projets, ils sont comme ça, on a ce financement, et on voudrait que vous participe à cette projet par partageant l'expérience technique ou par financement.' Ça n'existe pas. Les français font des appels aux projets et les soumissions tunisiens sont très mauvaises. Ils ne sont pas bien écrits etc. et

donc eux aussi vont créer un partenariat pour développer les potentialités chez les opérateurs culturels tunisiens. Donc ça c'est important. Seulement critiquer ne change rien.

KX: Ici à Malte je fais la même consultation et dans le même temps je coordonne la candidature de La Valette pour le titre de capitale européenne de la culture 2018. On propose de regarder les collaborations européennes avec les pays arabes de façon nouvelle, dépassant l'ancien Euro-Med et ses aspects néocoloniaux du modèle européennes. On voit Malte comme pays européenne mais bien sûr tout proche des pays arabe. On essaie de voir Malte comme un pays qui peut collaborer bien dans les cadres culturels et éducationnels.

MBS: Oui, on n'a pas beaucoup d'info sur Malte. Il y a beaucoup de touristes, aussi d'ici, et les clandestines qui partent d'ici pour arriver là. Mais on connait très peu de la culture de Malte et ça serait intéressant découvrir plus pour pouvoir collaborer. Et c'est vrai que Malte pourrait jouer un rôle intéressant, comme la Turquie, c'est une configuration assez importante. Ils peuvent être des pays décalé qui se présente comme modérateurs.

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***Aouchem* manifesto**

///) MANIFESTE DU GROUPE " AOUCHEN " .

Aouchen est né il y a des millénaires, sur les parois d'une grotte du Tassili; Il a poursuivi son existence jusqu'à nos jours, tantôt secrètement, tantôt ouvertement, en fonction des fluctuations de l'histoire; il nous a défendu et subsisté malgré toutes les conquêtes intervenues depuis la Romanisation. Sous diverses formes, le signe magique a manifesté le maintien d'une culture populaire, en laquelle s'est longtemps incarné l'espoir de la nation, même si par la suite, une certaine décadence de ces formes s'est produite sous des influences étrangères. Ainsi, de tous temps, à travers les oeuvres des artistes-artisans une rigueur intellectuelle, caractéristique de notre civilisation, du nord au sud, s'est maintenue, exprimée notamment dans des compositions géométriques.

C'est cette tradition authentique qu'Aouchen 1967 affirme et retrouve, non seulement dans les structures des oeuvres mais aussi dans la vivacité de la couleur. Loïn d'une certaine gratuité de l'abstraction occidentale contemporaine, qui a oublié les leçons orientales et africaines dont était ceint l'art roman, il s'agit pour nous de définir les véritables totems et les véritables arabesques, capables d'exprimer le monde où nous vivons, c'est-à-dire à partir des grands thèmes formels du passé algérien, de rassembler tous les éléments plastiques inventés ici ou là, par les civilisations, écroulées hier et aujourd'hui renaissantes, du Tiers-Monde. Il s'agit d'insérer la nouvelle réalité algérienne dans l'humanisme universel en formation, de la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle.

C'est pourquoi le groupe " Aouchen " s'engage aussi bien en reprenant de grands thèmes mythologiques toujours vivants, en symbolisant l'explosion lyrique individuelle, qu'en s'opposant avec une violence des provocations que les drames actuels, d'Afrique ou d'Asie, jettent au visage de l'artiste.

Nous entendons montrer que, toujours magique, le signe est plus fort que les bombes. Nous avons cru discerner des préoccupations similaires de langage chez certains poètes algériens.

Visionnaires réalistes, les " Aouchens " peintres et poètes, déclarent utiliser les forces créatrices efficaces contre l'arrière-garde de la médiocrité esthétique.

- NESLI - ADANE - SAIDANI - MARTINEZ - BAYA - BEN BACHDAD
ZERARTI - DAHMANI - ABDOUN

Texte original du Manifeste d'Aouchen

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Malta : between vanishing point and 'third space' of the Mediterranean

I would like to thank l'Institut Supérieur des Arts et Métiers de Kairouan, l'Institut Supérieur des Arts et Métiers de Gabes, and l'Institut Supérieur des métiers de la mode de Monastir for the opportunity to address you.

This paper is part of doctoral studies I am pursuing with Professor Enric Olivé Serret at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, Spain. The subject is the influence of European states like France and the United Kingdom, and that of cultural operators from these states, on the development of the means of cultural expression and the management of cultural relations in the South shore of the Mediterranean. In this paper I will make particular reference to my home country, Malta: its presence in the middle of the Mediterranean, at the bottom of the European continent and the political entity which is the European Union, also means it is at the top of the African geographical space, sharing many identity and cultural traits with the Maghreb.

i. Introduction: From history to the present and the process of becoming, and not becoming

Therefore, allow me to base my observations on North-South relations in the Mediterranean visual art scenario in an analysis of visual art in Malta.

The Mediterranean, and the people who populate the Mediterranean coasts in the different and separate states which surround it, experience the relationships they have among themselves, and with each other, as they have been shaped by past events and circumstances. The relations that the South shore has within itself, and the North-South relations we have been discussing here, have been formed by tremendous historical episodes. Under the single term of colonialism, one can subsume a large part of what is still experienced today. The same can be said of the way the future may be shaped. This is an aspect I will refer to again in my conclusion.

In the recent and rare publication on contemporary art in Malta called *Cross-currents: Critical Essays on Art and Culture in Malta*, Dr Raphael Vella notes that blaming history is convenient, since it allows for finding an easy scapegoat which cannot answer back.ⁱ However, he argues that eulogising it is usually worse. Unfortunately, Maltese history has been extensively eulogised: the many tourists from Northern Europe are told about the oldest free-standing structures in the world, and Caravaggio is presented as the most popular artist in Malta, even though he was not Maltese, and only lived there for around a year, four hundred years ago.

Eulogising history can be convenient, as it allows us to ignore aspects of the present with which we are not satisfied, as well as do away with identifying the past with current shortcomings; this, in turn, limits our understanding of how we come to be who we are, and how we can overcome the challenges we face presently. In terms of visual art in Malta, and elsewhere in the South Mediterranean, some of the main challenges include: poor infrastructure; limited human resources; and a strong desire for both the possibility of expression, and the subsequent validation which, failing to develop receptive and constructive

spaces at home, spurs many creative people and artists to seek them in the North. As I would like to discuss now, the phenomenon of globalization has further encouraged artists to look for means of expression outside their immediate environments – generally finding inspiration in the North, though, interestingly, not exclusively.

ii. Globalization: North-South relations in the Mediterranean

Issues related to the constant development of identities and to the ephemeral nature of authenticity are central to discussions on globalization. In *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, Iain Chambers refers to Homi K. Bhabha's observation on 'the act of cultural translation', both as representation and as reproduction, which 'denies the essentialism of a prior given ordinary culture' and which shows that 'all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity.'ⁱⁱ Bhabha's further observation that the important thing about 'hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges' but, rather, that hybridity is the 'third space' which 'enables other positions to emerge' allows important reflections to be made on the Mediterranean. This is because it is interesting to observe how the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean interact in the creation of hybridity, and how contemporary visual art has changed our concept of the North and the South.

However, if it is true that, as Chambers argues, the return 'home' to authenticity is impossible, does the way ahead provide for a more equal and just relationship? I would argue against that, and observe that what Serge Latouche termed 'deculturisation', or the unbalanced coming together of cultures, is still a marker of our Mediterranean region. As Nat Muller argues in *Alternative Gaze: A shared reflection on cross-Mediterranean cooperation in the arts*, in the framework of a 'collaboration' between sides which carry 'burdensome pasts', there are many tensions inherent in the contemporary arts world as well as in 'the field of cross-Mediterranean cooperation'.ⁱⁱⁱ Muller poses an important question, namely that of: 'How can meaningful and horizontal artistic exchanges on equal footing take place when scars from colonial pasts still mark the political and emotional landscape?' She goes on to list other complicated areas, such as: 'How is such cooperation hindered when mutual projections and prejudices can taint perspectives, when technical and financial infrastructure, education and professionalization and reciprocal mobility (the capacity of both parties to travel to one's another countries) might hamper projects, when a convoluted relationship with the state might become a straight jacket for censure, when freedoms are curtailed or other agendas pushed to the forefront?'

One may extend these concerns with the means of production to the tools of expression. When Chambers refers to Edward Said, regarding how empire 'enables' the development of concepts and discourses which resist it, or which problematize the power structures of empire itself, one is to consider how the 'enabling condition' may relate to how colonialism and North-South cultural relations have enabled many elements to rise against the dominant order: as noted by T.W. Gallant, instances may include cultural subversion, assertion or collaborations which somehow favoured the group in submission.^{iv} However, since discussing this issue further would go beyond the remit of this paper, I will leave this section on globalization to continue developing my analysis on Malta by asking the following: is it the case that, both on a political and on an artistic level, Europe has enabled the South Mediterranean to develop its own tools and language in visual art, and the means to communicate them, and by doing that, has enabled the South Mediterranean to assert itself significantly in the development of hybrid identities and spaces?

iii. Visual art in Malta: optical illusion or real development?

With regard to Malta, the analysis of the transition from the colonial era to a globalized one offers mixed results.

After extended periods of slow development in the field of visual art in Malta, conceptually, theoretically and practically, the 1990s saw fresh starts take place. Art in Malta began to develop into areas of media and theory that have brought it closer in spirit to the international scene. This happened despite obstacles local artists and arts operators have had to face and, to a lesser but significant extent, still face.

One such obstacle is Malta's 'restrictive history': I understand Vella's term to refer to Malta's colonial mentality which developed throughout its long colonial history, promoting a dependency, a despondency and a resignation that have left their mark on the ambitions Malta sets itself; ironically, this is to be contrasted to the enterprising and audacious spirit which Malta has shown on occasion e.g. in critical moments under foreign rule, for instance during the French and British occupations, and more recently in rising up to the challenge of European Union membership.

Another serious obstacle resulting from the first is the 'absence of a serious infrastructure for the arts'. With reference to the colonial context, colonial rulers in Malta did very little to value or promote Maltese artistic or cultural expression; subsequently, the nonchalance or, worse, abdication of responsibility by the authorities which have ruled since independence, may be traced back to that earlier lack of interest and support. The Knights of St John may be perceived as an early prototype of the European Union, bringing together different European military and political powers under the protection and patronage of one crown, that of Spain, in their defence of the Christian bastion of Malta. Artistically and architecturally, they invested heavily in Malta – though not in the Maltese – by maintaining strong relations and establishing continuous channels of influence between continental Europe and the island. However, following the presence of the Knights, and the relative lack of political, economic and cultural development for most of the early nineteenth century under British rule, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw what at best may be called 'fluctuations'. In terms of visual art, Malta kept suffering from a delay in artistic influence from Europe, and watered-down versions of modernism were the most the artistic scene could produce. Malta did not enjoy any salons, any permanent exhibitions and any public collections, as happened in European centres.

This has contributed to today's situation, where spaces for visual art in Malta are very limited, and do not cater for contemporary art on a long-term or sustainable basis. The two spaces which are used are both in Valletta. One is the Museum of Fine Arts, opened in 1974 when Malta became a republic ten years after its independence. The other is the St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity which opened in 2000 as part of the initiatives undertaken by government to mark the millenium. Both were turned into art spaces following former use for political and military purposes. It is worth noting that up until very recently St James hosted the Malta Contemporary Arts galleries, the curator of which, Mark Mangion, is a relatively young, though established, artist, who managed the galleries with little state support but thanks to a wide range of international contacts. Unfortunately, this arrangement has been suddenly ended, denying Malta of its only real space dedicated to contemporary art, as well as the presence of Mangion, who has returned to Paris. As a final point, one may mention the sparse presence of

private galleries of modern and contemporary art, which operate on the basis of individual artists or arts operators who exploit their networks and promote their enterprise as a business.

One of the serious consequences of the poor infrastructure and investments in contemporary visual art in Malta is on emerging visual artists. Generally, working in and from Malta is very hard, and many young talents seek education, training, exposure and artistic development in Europe, possibly not returning to Malta much or at all. The same is true of young people pursuing careers in design, technology-related creativity and the performing arts. Vella points out that travelling has always played a significant part in the development of Maltese art. For centuries, many of Malta's most promising artists and architects studied in Rome. In the twentieth century, Perugia, Florence, but also the UK and France became more frequented. Significantly, Mangion does not identify the sparse arts climate exclusively with Malta. Interviewed on babelmed.net, he notes that: 'Living in Malta surrounded by its natural and architectural beauty knowing that we are in a time of great potential change excites me.' However, '[w]hen the frustration at the slowness of embracing change sinks in, the reality of the Mediterranean problem creates the urge for departure.'

In *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art & Culture*, Nicolas Bourriaud notes the limits of globalized contemporary art. He reflects on the fact that artists from the 'margins' rarely enjoy the benefits of globalization in the same way as those in the 'centres'. Bourriaud suggests that such artists may feel they have little choice but to leave their country of origin to replant their roots towards the centres of creativity. Globalization seems to allow for more communication between the margins and the centres, but these two different places seem to have preserved their distinctiveness in spite of rapid technological and economic changes. Since even technology seems to have its limits in helping artists from the peripheries bridge the gap with the centres of contemporary art, Vella notes that it may be more likely that technology gives the 'illusion of equality on the margins.' Bourriaud concludes that these limits exist since 'contemporary art is above all contemporary with the economy that envelops it.'

On a positive note for Malta, one should note that advances in the economy have led to much-needed investments in higher education, including at the University of Malta, and capital projects for arts infrastructures within the medium-to-long term which are promising. These actions are being envisaged more and more in the framework of the next six to seven years, at the end of which Valletta is aiming to be awarded the European Union title of European Capital of Culture in 2018. In this particular instance, investments in visual art and cultural infrastructure in general, which should have been supported by almost fifty years of independence, but which were not, seem to be taking concrete form particularly because of a foreign, and decidedly Northern structure, has now established its own operating frameworks and time-tables on its smallest Member State. Herein lies an important dilemma: on the one hand, there is the feeling and the belief that such developments are positive, their objectives laudable, and the aims they are trying to achieve noteworthy; on the other hand, there is a sense of shame at the fact that rather than invest in Maltese identity-building and culture on the basis of national pride, or on a strong sense of value-drive identification with local culture, Malta is once again following, or worse, made to follow, a structure set by others, and arguably, for other, territories, which already enjoy a self-made level of quality and excellence.

This dilemma leads to another, which lies at the core of the observations I share here with you and which drive much of my research and work in the cultural field: what are the choices for

a small territory which is its own state but severely under-developed in terms of cultural infrastructure and the support mechanisms it can and should provide to its artists, in terms of seeking inspiration and adapting models from others and forging partnerships with others in order to contribute successfully to its art scene? Do the options face exclusively the North? Which alternatives lie to the South? And what are the local sources which one should nurture and be nurtured by?

iv. Conclusion

At the start of this paper, I noted that colonialism has not only heavily influenced our present, but that it also conditioned our future, including the seemingly new basis provided by globalization. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the possibility of change. While that may still seem difficult, it is mostly because we have not, as yet, fully witnessed which serious changes in power relations may be caused by the re-balancing of power between the peoples of the Mediterranean.

Hopefully, further economic change will be driven by the type of political change which will impact positively on the development of society, including culture and the arts in Malta as well as the South Mediterranean. Hopefully, the South Mediterranean will elude current practices determining what development should consist of, and act out an alternative to the catch-up game with the North which Franco Cassano, in *Il pensiero meridiano*, sees the South inflicted with.^{vi} Hopefully, a strong and dynamic third space will materialize soon.

ⁱ Raphael Vella ed. *Cross-currents: Critical Essays on Art and Culture in Malta*, Allied Publications, Valletta, 2008

ⁱⁱ Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, Routledge, New York, 1994

ⁱⁱⁱ European Cultural Foundation, *Alternative Gaze: A shared reflection on cross-Mediterranean cooperation in the arts*, ECF, Amsterdam, 2007

^{iv} Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2002

^v http://www.babelmed.net/Countries/Malta/malta_contemporary.php?c=5967&m=24&l=en, accessed 8 March 2011

^{vi} Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano*, Editori Laterza, Bari, 2010

