Transculturality and interdisciplinarity

Challenges for research on media, migration and intercultural dialogue

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INTRODUCTION: RESPONSIBILITY OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

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This publication, entitled "On intercultural dialogue and transcultural research", aims to transmit to a wider public the content of the interventions and the debates which arose during the training workshop "Challenges for Research on Media, Migration and Intercultural Dialogue", organised by CIDOB on 27 November 2013, in collaboration with the Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility of the United Nations University in Barcelona (UNU- GCM).

In this workshop, we wanted to question the responsibility of research and knowledge transfer in relation not only with media and migration but also when dealing with mobility, identity and diversity, which are common topics in relation with media and migration.

First of all, we must mention a link between theory and practice in order to reformulate answers and refer to frameworks and methodologies based on new questions. Solutions that are sterile in practice often emanate from confusing and ambiguous formulations. Secondly, a link between disciplines where the interdisciplinary, in its moment of interconnection, widens the horizon of comprehension and could include irregularities and exceptions into the inflexible frames of strict disciplinary structures. Another link would be the one between cultures, not as closed, restricted areas (identities), but rather as processes (identifications) with their multiple causes and effects. Finally, a link between people, which goes beyond disciplines or specific cultures where the 'absents' speak and where we listen to the 'silences' while trying to understand and share our different trajectories.

Accordingly, we need strategies which take into account mobility, identity and diversity. First of all, in relation with mobility, we need strategies which will be adapted to new changing, open and fluid forms, where individuals are a part of society and, at the same time, society is present in each individual. In the actuality, mobility could be a new social figure with flexible scenarios for action and during the action.

In relation with diversity, we need strategies which take into account the simultaneous perception in multiple places of images, ideas and messages, as well as the actors of this perception and its effects. Some research

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programmes are speaking about intervisuality, intertextuality and interethnicity, where our vision, our opinion and ourselves are just one more part of the moment or the event. As a third point, in relation with identity: it is our responsibility to curb the tendencies towards exclusion present in all collective identity constructions, because in today's global culture, marked by plurality, change and displacement, any fixed position is unsustainable. It is a political responsibility to consider conflict as not to be denied but recognised as part of a common and shared process; this means entering the political dimension. This point is important, especially in relation with intercultural dialogue because it is in this political dimension that the media have a responsibility. Some questions for the debates: Can we interculturalize research? Is there a real interdisciplinarity or is it only a multiplication of imposed conditions in obedience to regulations and authority? Is mobility alone enough for knowledge transfer? The final objective of this workshop was a conversation in which we committed ourselves to questioning our responsibility as researchers, forgetting for one moment the limits of our research and placing our doubts on the table, to make the conversation useful for everyone.

This present publication aims to continue the dialogue beyond the training workshop with a wider audience, starting from the lectures in the morning session and a review of the highlighted topics during the open discussion session in the afternoon.

Iain Chambers, in his lecture "The Mediterranean as method: fluid archives", invites the audience to look at the Mediterranean as a "fluid archive", in which one should not take identities or fixed positions as starting points. Chambers points out that "Each and every culture depends on other cultures. If cultures are not fixed or stable blocks, but the result of intertwining historical processes that are always at work, then the very sense of culture migrates to a terrain characterized by mobility, mutation, and *métissage*…".

Furthermore, Chambers rejects the idea of a single modernity, and instead suggests thinking about different manifestations or modes of modernity that take place in different places at the same time. He argues for a space of *translation* since "the 'interruption' proposed by the movement and mobility of language itself" obliges us to review the categories that sustain our world. In this space of *translation*, "beyond an obvious sense of the unfamiliar, it becomes possible to renegotiate one's sense of identity".

Kevin Robins, in his consideration of "Transcultural Research as Encounter, and a Possible Creative Modality of its Dialogue", proposes leaving aside traditional concepts such as identity or diaspora, and focusing on dialogue. Through research on Turkish and Kurdish migrants in London, he prefers to speak about the cultural "repertoire" as an approach to individual experiences, rather than "identity" as a previously fixed element. Robins speaks about *dialogue* and *encounter*, questioning "the abstract metaphysical system" (identitarian and communitarian) in which encounter takes place, as well as the obstacles to encounter as a creative interaction during the research process. To illustrate this kind of interaction, he proposes a *cinema-vérité* film by Jean Rouch and Edgard Morin: "Chronique d'un été", where the process of encounter, in the words of Edgard Morin, is dialogical –by way of dialogues, disputes, conversations. In an appendix we can read a dialogue from the movie, a moment in which

"something new has been enabled to emerge, concerning prejudice and ignorance; concerning proximity and dialogue; concerning vital embodiment and solicitation by the face of the other".

In the third article, "Discussing Media, Migration and Intercultural Dialogue", Isabel Verdet and Hala Elhefnawy focus on the main points of the open discussion with the audience. It is not a complete transcription, but rather comments touching on the most-discussed topics, with the aim of sharing experiences and concerns about research on Media, Migration and Intercultural Dialogue, and by highlighting some challenges such as: how to deal with the bias that the representation of migrants by the media entails; the role of media and migrations in the context of globalisation; and the impact of technology on social, cultural and political representation.

We hope, in this way, to draw the readers into the debate and allow them to carry on with the reflections during this open discussion.

A FLUID ARCHIVE

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The Mediterranean as method

Why the Mediterranean? Why, despite its seeming marginalisation in the overarching narrative of modern politics and culture, does it persistently return to the discussion? To raise this question is to touch a profound tension that lies at the heart of a contemporary debate. If the Mediterranean is overwhelmingly claimed as the site of the 'origins' of Western culture, at the same time there is also an increasing reluctance to be associated with its present-day realities.

Somehow, in order for it to be modern, the existing Mediterranean has to be repudiated. Sunlit sloth, civic chaos and corruption all represent the distasteful underbelly of a heritage that the incisive management of modernity north of the Alps and along the Atlantic shore has apparently overcome. Reduced to the leisurely pace of a time-out in which to entertain the senses with food, wine, sea, sun, sex and antiquated cultures, the rationality of modernity is apparently exercised elsewhere. However, if this is the repressed side of Occidental modernity, it can never really be kept at a distance; it is always destined to return and disturb the procedures of a purified rationality.

So, apart from signalling a banal escape into pleasure, the Mediterranean as a repressed alterity *within* modernity can also be re-routed into a further, and altogether more disturbing, groove. As a line of flight into another unauthorised critical space, the present and past histories of the Mediterranean propose a radical revaluation of the very processes and powers that have led to its contemporary subordination, marginalisation and definition. Rather than simply clinging to some purported authenticity being threatened by modernity, there lies the altogether more complex issue of the latter being worked out, lived and proposed in transit and translation.

Instead of the template there is transformation; the model is mutable and comes to be modified. Modernity is not an object to be possessed, defended and imposed, but the being and becoming of a dense network of shifting, interconnected, historical processes.

Working in a Mediterranean web of trans-national histories suggests that the conceptual landscape peculiar to one of its shores, in particular its northern, hegemonic European one, can be exposed to very different understandings and unsuspected variations

Over the last few centuries the Mediterranean has come to represent a symbolic space against which Europe and its associated modernity has often elaborated its self-identity: if it apparently came from these shores, today both Europe and modernity are considered to have escaped that space. Yet, as the site of a Greco-Roman philosophical and juridical inheritance, of the cultural and historical formation of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, of the clash of the early modern European and extra-European empires of Charles V and Suleiman the Magnificent, and as testimony to the initial exercise of modern, systematic colonialism on its African and Asian shores, the Mediterranean is culturally and historically central to the structures and languages of European modernity. Suspended between the Orient and the Occident, and today increasingly between the North and the South of the planet, these multiple coordinates threaten to suck in and drown all attempts at arriving at a neat descriptive filiation.

This suggests that, beyond its geo-political and morphological definitions, the Mediterranean is, above all, a contested discursive space; that is, the political and cultural struggle for its definition and semantics reveals something about the present world order. The Mediterranean hosts a variety of cultural and historical regimes of truth, and sustains not only a desire for definition but also the perpetual elaboration of a problematic. Furthermore, if we consider the historical archive of this space as it has been elaborated by Euro-American historians, that is if we consider the heritage of Fernand Braudel, Shelomo Dov Goitien, Marshall Hodgson and the connective historical eco-systems of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, we are all the time dealing in matters that trouble the prevalent historical place holder of the modern nation state.

What precedes and exceeds the conceptual limits of the nation state inevitably queries what has come to be considered as the *natural* form of historical formations. History, however, is not only lived and narrated through the nation. To query the national narration is to question both a political order of knowledge and its direct inscription in the disciplinary protocols of modern sociology, political science, area studies, anthropology and historiography. Working in a Mediterranean web of trans-national histories suggests even more: the conceptual landscape peculiar to one of its shores, in particular its northern, hegemonic European one, can be exposed to very different understandings and unsuspected variations. If, for example, we choose to study the present-day European preoccupation with Islam, we inadvertently find ourselves tracing a critical boomerang that ultimately reveals Europe's *own* deep obsession with religion and the latter's precise historical centrality to Europe's political and cultural formation.

It is in this space that the question of non-national communities and so-called minorities acquires its critical edge, cutting into the presumptions –inherited from European nation-building– that culture, history and identity provide a perfect, homogeneous fit with the confines of a geo-political unity. Ethnic and religious minorities, along with refugees and mass migration, cross and confuse such boundaries, proposing other, unauthorised spaces of belonging and becoming.

The dissemination of the Roma people in Europe, Coptic Christians in Egypt and Muslims in the Balkans (as well as in Bradford and Berlin), are not simply the symptoms of the past: histories that have been brushed

aside or seemingly swamped in the unfolding wave of the national narrative. On another scale of belonging, neither Arabs nor Muslims mirror the immediate concerns of a national community, whether in the Maghreb or in Europe. These are all disturbing reminders of deeper connections negated in the violence of the modern state formation which exacted (and seemingly still exacts) cultural and historical exclusion. From the programmed expulsion of ethnically and religiously identified minorities, such as the Jews and Muslims from Spain in 1492, through persecutions, pogroms and population exchange across borders and continents (between Europe and Anatolia in the 1920s), and the culmination in European genocide and the Shoah, we come today to confront the return of the repressed composition of a Mediterranean modernity that precedes and exceeds its national (and nationalist) procedures and perspectives.

Nowhere is this more sharply exposed than in the present-day migrant's body, whose juridical 'illegality' exposes all the bio-political force of the European nation seeking to negate the unruly constitution of the planetary present. On the migrant's body, in her clandestine histories and cultures, there is inscribed a repressed colonial past that is daily distilled into the metropolitan mix of the modern European city. By preceding and exceeding the protocols of national subjectivity, these communities and minorities propose heterogeneous combinations that anticipate an altogether more complex sense of political society and democratic participation than that confined within the abstract legalities of formal citizenship.

The suggestion at this point is that these minor, subaltern and clandestine histories, these refused accounts of modernity, find in the Mediterranean a critical focus of unsuspected potency and significance. Where Africa, Asia and Europe overlap and intertwine in a profound historical and cultural mix, the critical view from the margins produced by the modern nation state re-opens the archive, and brings into contemporary pertinence not only the neglected shores that have been consigned to the past. Under the bright light of the Mediterranean we can now perhaps also learn to narrate a modernity that is neither simply multiple nor, as its tri-continental formation underlines, merely a European matter.

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Splicing cultures and rerouting histories

If the Mediterranean is the mythical-poetical space traversed by Ulysses, homeward bound, it has also hosted those such as Polyphemus and Circe, or Caliban and Sycorax in the Mediterranean imagination of Shakespeare, who have challenged that *logos*. In particular, the Mediterranean of Shakespeare, although proposed some four centuries ago, remains dramatically actual. In the 'tempest' of the modern world, Caliban returns as the illegal immigrant, and Prospero's island, midway between Naples and Tunis in the 16th-century drama, today becomes the island of Lampedusa. Then there is the challenge of Cleopatra and the Orient that challenges the unilateral rationale of empire. The language that frames the world always remains susceptible to appropriation by monsters, slaves, blacks, women and migrants; that is, by the excluded who speak of overlooked, unexpected, displaced and non-authorised matters. Here, the ghosts of history travelling along poetical routes cre-

ate potent and complex images that remain difficult to absorb or annul. In this simultaneously real and imaginary geography, where it becomes possible to feel and, at the same time, rethink the limits of the world and the Mediterranean that we have inherited, it also becomes possible to discover the openings into another.

It is only in the open and vulnerable space sustained by the arts, where aesthetics sustains an ethics, that it becomes possible to temporarily touch the experience of a shared equality

There clearly exists a poetics that inhabits the languages of theatre, literature, dance, cinema, music, poetry and the visual arts that proposes a fluid and flexible transmission of Mediterranean diversity and communality. Such languages propose a journey elsewhere, in the elsewhere. It is only here, in the open and vulnerable space sustained by the arts, where aesthetics sustains an ethics, that it becomes possible to temporarily touch the experience of a shared equality: that instance of displacement before the unexpected in which the other, the stranger, is recognised as a part of our selves. This interruption, induced by the metamorphosis of politics into poetics, promotes another Mediterranean and a diverse modernity. As the great Syrian poet Adonis suggests, perhaps it is only here that it is possible to install a real dialogue between partners as equals. Here, in the dislocating excess of poetics that slips the established frame of comprehension, in the perpetual migration of language, there already exists the critique of a contemporary condition. In living language to the full lies the perpetual passage of transit and the subsequent translation that opens on to the future.

Today, rather than think of how to defend and sustain the unilateral journey of Ulysses, perhaps it is more to the point to collect the multiplicity of historical routes and cultural reasons that compose a multiple Mediterranean, one that is irreducible to a single understanding of 'home'. The seemingly sharp distinctions between Occident and Orient, North and South, modernity and tradition, now come to be dispersed in the fluid complexity proposed by the sea itself. Abstract differences, along with cultures that pretend to be clearly separated from each other, find themselves afloat in a lived materiality that bends and complicates such dualisms and the blunt reassurance of a 'clash of civilisations'.

To snap the logic of the Mediterranean as a *unicum*, as *mare nostrum*, means to disseminate differences that are sustained by currents washing an archipelago of varied histories and cultures: islands of belonging that are certainly diverse but are at the same time joined by the languages that arrive on their shores. Those Greek islands, perpetually evoked as the sites of European origins, might also suggest the geo-poetics and geo-philosophy for a new set of departures, leading us not only into the West, but also south and into the Orient. Landings are made where it becomes possible to re-negotiate the historical and cultural sense of the exclusive European route, its modernity and its version of the Mediterranean. As Massimo Cacciari has suggested:

"The idea of the Archipelago is not one that proposes a return to the 'origins', but rather a 'new beginning', or counter-blow to the history-destiny of Europe" (Cacciari, 1997: 35).

With this idea of a 'counter-blow' I would like to suggest that we liberate a sense of the past into a history that is perpetually at work in our lives, casting its shadows over the present, interrupting and interrogating it. In particular, this is a lesson drawn from the arts –from theatre to music,

from cinema to dance– that allows us to journey, both critically and imaginatively, in those spaces that are invariably excluded from the institutional narrative that believes itself capable of rendering all transparent to its reason.

Each and every culture depends on other cultures. If cultures are not fixed or stable blocks but the result of intertwining historical processes that are always at work, then the very sense of culture migrates to a terrain characterised by mobility, mutation, and *métissage*… Historically, cultures manage to survive and live on through a continual series of borrowings from elsewhere, drawing on resources that lie beyond their immediate borders. The borders themselves turn out to be porous, flexible and often illusory. In a profound, but rarely acknowledged sense, the history of modern Europe, of its rationalist cultures, its scientific organisation –that is, simply put, the overarching parable of Occidental modernity– would be inconceivable without the Arab and Muslim world. From the 8th century onwards it was the latter that transformed and translated into Europe not only the texts of Greek philosophy, but also innovations in the fields of irrigation and agriculture, in diet and medicine, along with the experiments in literary poetics and music, and the elaboration and transmission of modern mathematics. Perhaps there is no such thing as a relation *between* Islam and the West: rather, Islam is a component of the very formation of the West. Instead of the usual reference to the Judaeo-Christian roots, it might historically and culturally be more honest to speak of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim origins of the Occident.

We can begin to think in terms of the deployment of a historio-graphy and geo-graphy, a writing of time and territory, radically diverse from habitual understanding

Following this route, we can begin to think in terms of the deployment of a historio-graphy and geo-graphy, a writing of time and territory, radically diverse from habitual understanding. Employing a cartography that proposes an open and inconclusive elaboration of space and its temporal coordinates, we can here, for example, open up the multiple senses of the Mediterranean sustained in the concept of 'migrant landscapes' and a migrating modernity. Alongside the more obvious landscapes inhabited by the migrant, there are the rarely acknowledged landscapes set in movement and migration under the impact of mutations induced by planetary processes in which today (and perhaps for the last 500 years) the migrant is a symptom and, above all, the principal actor.

Faced with contemporary immigration, there remain few who are willing to listen to the ghosts of the past that constitute the links in a historical chain that extends from Africa five hundred years ago to the coasts of southern Europe today. This brings together the hidden, but essential, histories of migration in the realisation of modernity. To negate the memory evoked by the interrogative presence of the contemporary migrant suggests an incapacity to consider one's own past, and its role in the realisation of the present. Among human rights perhaps it is also the case to recognise the right to migrate in order to improve your life prospects; after all, the poor of Europe –without papers, documents and passports– exercised this 'right' for several centuries. We now live in a world where for the majority migration is a crime. All of this suggests that we re-think the Mediterranean, and re-think modernity, in the light of the Freudian concept of *Unheimlich*, the uncanny, the return of the repressed, the disquieting doubling of the present in the light of the past. From here, there emerges the intertwined figure of the migrant and the colonial past, and their centrality to the formation of modernity.

When one considers modern colonialism and European imperialism, the gaze invariably travels far afield: towards Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is easily forgotten that the beginnings of colonialism –understood as the systematic military, economical, juridical, scientific and cultural appropriation of the rest of the planet– began in the Mediterranean with Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt in 1798-99, and concludes here with the French withdrawal from Algeria in 1962. From my house in Naples, I can walk a few minutes to have a coffee in a historic bar: Gambrinus, on the corner of Piazza Plebiscito and Piazza Trieste e Trento. Here I can verify Hannah Arendt's observation in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* on how the interiors of the European metropolis –the square, cafés, streets, housing clothes and food– depend upon an external that was once colonial and today is global: all that coffee, tomatoes and chilli, all of that Baroque art. In other words, the spaces of modernity are always at the same time colonial spaces.

In the refusal to recognise that our interiors depend on a colonial exterior lies the refusal to register the complex and disquieting history of modernity itself. In a hidden but profound sense, modernity is at war with itself: this is its 'heart of darkness'

In the refusal to recognise that our interiors –the substance of our cities, houses, histories, cultures and language– depend on such an exterior lies the refusal to register the complex and disquieting history of modernity itself. In a hidden but profound sense, modernity is at war with itself: this is its 'heart of darkness'. Hence, both the 'toleration' and the repression of immigration are forms of resistance; they are part of the refusal to fully accept a realised globalisation in which every story and culture is exposed and rendered vulnerable. If the violent legal, political and cultural clarity in the face of immigration reinforces the unilateral sense of identity required by the modern nation state, it also reveals, in the very same instance, the refusal to interact with the interrogation posed by a seemingly foreign body. In the best of cases, it is a case of tolerating and not repressing this body, and anyway of always regulating its presence through *our* laws and *our* political, economical and cultural needs. Here, the integration or assimilation of the foreigner requires the public abolition of all signs of identity: historical, cultural, traditional, religious. Reduced to *bare life* as Giorgio Agamben (1998) would put it, the stranger is required to strip herself of all those signs that might transmit a diversity and would disturb the culture that pretends to tolerate and eventually integrate her. It is implicit that there exists a unique reason, a unique logic: *ours*.

At this point, it becomes possible to revaluate modernity –and with it a Mediterranean that has been framed, disciplined and explained in recent centuries by a northern gaze coming from modern Europe– in the light of those histories that have been negated and repressed in order to permit its triumphal passage. This particular framing has invariably reduced the Mediterranean –from the moment of the Grand Tour to contemporary mass tourism– to the sites of the mythical origins of Europe, now overtaken by progress and reduced to a garden of earthly delights. Perhaps the only manner in which to break this subordination and confinement is, as the Italian sociologist Franco Cassano suggests, to think less of the Mediterranean and the South, and rather to think *with* the Mediterranean and *with* the South (Cassano, 2011).

The power to design and discipline the world according to a unilateral point of view is, once again, the true 'heart of darkness' of *our* modernity, which lies neither in Africa nor in the periphery of progress, but precisely at the centre, in the so-called First World. It is here that Walter Benjamin's

insistence that every document of civilisation is simultaneously a document of barbarism acquires all of its dramatic weight. It is at this point that we can begin to consider a different Mediterranean: a Mediterranean that has historically and culturally always been creolised and hybridised in its complex formation. Here, in an interdisciplinary cartography, literary, cinematic, musical and culinary 'texts' provide testimony of another history and of another critical modality. The drift of poetics often threatens to leave politics speechless. Unfolding the artistic configuration of time and space, of our being and becoming, allows us to harvest the essential truth of the complex ambivalence of a historical constellation that does not merely mirror our passage. It is the oblique gaze, sustained in the excessive and errant languages of art, that also allows us to travel beyond the rational conclusions of the human and social sciences.

The 'interruption' proposed by the movement and mobility of language itself, this crack in the wall of our 'house', can also open up an interval in our time, and from there we can consider how the categories that sustain our world might be radically reviewed. Here, beyond an obvious sense of the unfamiliar, it becomes possible to renegotiate one's sense of identity. Such a space inaugurates the space of *translation*. Everything that is located, identified and explained in the subjective field of vision also contains the signs and symptoms of some 'thing' that potentially exists beyond the subject, elsewhere in time and space: translation introduces the possibility of *alterity*. For we encounter not only the translation produced by the subject in order to domesticate the world and render it familiar, but also the sense that the subject is transported elsewhere and becomes translatable.

This recognition of the perpetual translation of the world takes us far beyond a simply adjustment of the critical picture. Here we change direction, and abandon a route that rests on the idea of a modernity guaranteed by the linear spirit of 'progress', in order to enter the multiple routes and currents of a historical constellation that proposes perspectives that for some of us are largely unknown. This means abandoning a discourse sustained by a unilateral modernity that continues to insist on a relationship between *tradition* and *modernity* (and with it, of a relationship between *development* and *underdevelopment*, along with all the other hierarchies of truth that follow) and substitute it, as Antonio Gramsci suggested, with the connection between *hegemony* and the *subaltern* in the struggle for the sense, the direction, the becoming of the world (Gramsci, 2011).

This is a prospect that is articulated within a historical formation where for a long time, and not only recently with so-called globalisation, there coexist a proximity of differences that continually creolise and contaminate languages, and which sound out and suggest a different Mediterranean and a diverse modernity. Here we can touch and travel with poetical languages –music, literature, cinema– that exceed the cage of nationalist myths and the rationalising frameworks of politics: from the Algerian writer Assia Djebar to the music of flamenco, from the hand that writes to the voice that sings: that ambiguous truth disseminated in works of art that, as Adorno once put it, "provide the unconscious historiography of their epoch" (Adorno, 2004). It is this ambiguous truth that carries us elsewhere, into the elsewhere, and allows us to "cultivate the atrocity of doubt" (Pier Paolo Pasolini).

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The languages of modernity, of its cultures, no longer belong solely to the Occident. We are dealing with a syntax of belonging and becoming that is now *uprooted* as far as *origins* are concerned. These are languages that are able to speak of histories, cultures and prospects that are not necessarily authorised by 'us'. It is, above all, via the uprooting inducted by such languages that it becomes possible to enter into a state of vulnerability: the only state appropriate for a critical practice that desires to respond to the challenge of the Mediterranean and a modernity that is multiple, open, composed of languages that flee institutional arrest. In the words of the Sephardic-Algerian-French-European philosopher, Jacques Derrida, this is a language that will never simply be mine, and perhaps never ever has been. We are now exposed to a diverse Mediterranean: one still to be narrated.

If the desire for rational transparency was itself often pioneered at sea –after all this is where much of Occidental modernity was charted and exercised– we now learn that maps are unable to contain what they apparently explain

The method of the sea

What these previous considerations have tried to propose is precisely a diverse modality for critically thinking the modern Mediterranean. The method employed is clearly a disposition that emerges in the journey and encounters through the historical, cultural and conjunctural formation of a problematic that shapes and disciplines lines of thought. The methodologies employed are themselves part of the problematic. How and where are we placed? What are the conditions that authorise our voice and its pronouncements? If modernity is the world today, and if 80% of the world (which accounts for only 25% of world income) does not live in New York, London or Tokyo, then the majority (not the hegemonic) version of modernity is experienced and exercised elsewhere, in the gaps between our points of reference and coordinates of explanation. As Dipesh Chakrabarty has so effectively explained, in a world contracted to asymmetrical relations of power, the recognition of limits, including our own, simultaneously provincialises and sharpens the discourse (Chakrabarty, 2007). Moving in a world that does not simply mirror our concerns and obsessions impacts directly on what we might understand to be a critical method and its accompanying methodologies. When the presumed universality of 'scientific' protocols is exposed to questions the paradigm has not authorised, it finds itself at sea. If the desire for rational transparency was itself often pioneered at sea –after all this is where much of Occidental modernity was charted and exercised– we now learn that maps are unable to contain what they apparently explain.

So, the method and methodologies are also about choosing a language that responds in the most appropriate fashion to the problematic. Its very rigour forces it to sail close to the wind, running a critical course close to capture. The shield of neutrality is no longer available, the critical distance that constructs the object and protects the observing subject from contamination is annulled. Ultimately, the critical truth cannot be measured and quantified, for it is always in process and underway. This is the reality we seek to explain while it escapes our will. Still, the passage can be narrated in the ambiguous languages of apprehension, of which the conceptual is only a part. Set loose from our habitual anchorage in disciplinary protocols and their guarantee of a conclusive homecoming, this is finally the cut, the epistemological cut, operated on the body of knowledge. This, in turn, brings us to a Mediterranean and a modernity still to be narrated.

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TRANSCULTURAL RESEARCH AS ENCOUNTER, AND A POSSIBLE CREATIVE MODALITY OF ITS DIALOGUE

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TRANSCULTURAL RESEARCH AS ENCOUNTER, AND A POSSIBLE CREATIVE MODALITY OF ITS DIALOGUE

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In every attitude toward the human being there is a greeting – even if it is the refusal of a greeting.
(Emmanuel Levinas, 1998: 6)

- I -

I want to talk here today about methodological issues –and beyond– as they emerged in the course of a research project that I was involved in, a project concerning the significance of transnational Turkish media for Turkish and Kurdish populations living in Western Europe. To be brief, we may say that the research was located within an agenda that has been characterized under the rubric of 'media and diasporas' (and I will later address what I consider to be the problematical nature of this terminology). What difference, we were asking, was the availability of Turkish satellite television (which became available from the early 1990s) having on the everyday lives of migrant Turkish populations now living in Europe?

But first, let me make a preliminary and general observation –and it seems to me that it is of the greatest significance– concerning the rationale according to which research –of whatever kind– may be undertaken. Broadly, we can identify three modalities –and motivations– of investigation. 1) In some cases, the investigation may represent a strategy of 'administrative' intervention, of policy-driven research, that is to say. Thus, much of the work on migrants turns out to be concerned with the 'integration' of those who are classified as national 'minorities'. The minorities are regarded as a 'problem' for the 'host' community, and the research is consequently concerned with how to manage this problematical presence –this perceived challenge to the nation state and to its imagined cultural integrity, that is to say. 2) Another kind of researcher may aim to take a more 'scientific' stance, projecting the possibility of a value-free investigation, and aiming at some kind of objectivity or impartiality. I suppose that this is a classic paradigm in the academic world, aspiring to some kind of scientific neutrality, detached or semi-detached, not wanting the presence of the researcher to distort or bias the 'data' to be garnered from out there (and I will later have some things to say indirectly concerning this academic social-scientific approach). 3) A third modality of investigation has been

termed 'action research', where the researcher is somehow actively involved with the people or groups he or she is working with. The research is therefore engaged; it is 'critical', rather than 'administrative'; it is invariably motivated by radical and egalitarian social concerns. But this is not to concede that it is biased, or even, I would argue, that it is unscientific. It is probably to say that the agenda is made explicit, and consciously taken into account, rather than being implicit, or covert, or disclaimed.

Notwithstanding the efforts of disavowal, there is always going to be a self, a self in the research encounter, to be dealt with, to be taken into account, to be somehow factored into the equation

Let me also add here that, in addition to these three basic modalities of research, there is always also an idiomatic dimension to be addressed: the way in which we as individual researchers express ourselves through our projects. It is, no doubt, most apparent in the third modality; in the first and second, there are, for sure, instrumental, or scholarly mechanisms that seek to control, or to diminish, the self of the researcher, and thereby the idiom of personal direct engagement. But, notwithstanding these efforts of disavowal, I would argue, there is always going to be this self, this self in the research encounter, to be dealt with, to be taken into account, to be somehow factored into the equation –and this issue of encounter will constitute the core theme to be elaborated upon in the main part of the discussion that follows.

The research project that I will now briefly discuss falls very much into the third of the categories listed above. It was developed in part to challenge the prevailing idea –I would go so far as to call it a social-scientific mythology– that has proliferated, particularly in Germany, around the significance of transnational Turkish media.

In Germany, it has been claimed that the watching of Turkish television is deeply problematical for the national integration project: that Turkish migrants –imagined in the image of 'the Turk'– have chosen to retreat into their own 'private media world' and, consequently, that they are becoming 'dissociated from the social life of everyday [German] society' (Marenbach, 1995). The most extreme and objectionable version of this argument has been elaborated in the alarmist research of Wilhelm Heitmeyer, once featured in *Die Zeit* newspaper as one of its 'thinkers of the modern' (Hofmann, 1998). Here the discourse has been centred upon anxieties concerning cultural ghettoization (the dangers of an audiovisual Turkish ghetto, no less). This discursive logic then segues into the dangers of 'Islamic fundamentalism', and then, of course, into the marking out (as in the 'clash of civilizations' rhetoric) of new 'lines of ethno-cultural confrontation and conflict' (Heitmeyer *et al*, 1997: 30-31). Heitmeyer invokes a condition of *verlockender Fundamentalismus*. His stance is essentially one of fearfulness before the Turkish migrant presence in Germany. 'Turkishness' is astonishingly –but, sadly, I cannot say surprisingly– directly associated with 'Islam'; and this seemingly inevitable association then gives rein to a basic fear –a panic even– with respect to the imagined prospect of a national cultural *disintegration*. And thus we have rapidly, and remarkably, moved from the banal practice of watching television to the disturbed mental state of anxiety in the face of some kind of looming and catastrophic scenario of national cultural dissolution

Heitmeyer's is, of course, an extreme expression of a panic that was aroused through the creation of a new Turkish media space across Europe. But even among other, more tolerant commentators, I would suggest, it is possible to discern similar concerns, and similarly-grounded responses. Even in these more liberal discourses, and albeit in a more sympathetic way, what is at

issue is still the maintenance of national cultural integrity and the cultural integration of minorities. In most responses to transnational Turkish –and, of course, other– media, what seems to be at issue is how best to domesticate or to acculturate migrants, who are always perceived as problematical, constantly threatening to create their own separate cultural order. And the fundamental point, I guess, the fundamental point of what I am trying to say here, concerns the sheer force of the national imagination: how it informs the way that people think; how it can saturate the way they may feel; and, regrettably, in the case of all too many European national citizens, how it can so forcefully direct and drive the way they choose to conduct themselves, to act politically, in their vaunted national public spheres. In reflecting upon the possibilities of transcultural developments, we cannot afford to underestimate the active force of the national mentality, the constant fearfulness and agitation at its heart, its antipathy toward other cultural modalities (notably, in the context of the present discussion, those of the migrant other), and the consequent logic of divisiveness in its imperative to rule.

My contention is that research on the issues that we are concerned with here –issues of transcultural communication– is severely impeded and disabled by this insular, often verging on autistic, mentality. It is simply impossible to think constructively and creatively from within this national condition of mental internment and confinement. How to move beyond this limiting paradigm? It is surely a question –to use Christa Wolf's compelling image (applied in the German context)– of 'parting from phantoms'. Can we recognize and acknowledge the phantom relations and the phantom interactions that national cultures and national identities implicate us in? And can we contemplate exorcising these phantoms that our imagined communities have become? Can we, as Wolf (1997: 302) puts it with deceptive simplicity, 'get real'? Phantoms are *abstractions*: they involve us in abstract relations to cultures –most crucially, to those of others– but, of course, the point is that this is a consequence of an abstract relation to 'our own' culture. To 'get real', I want to suggest, would be to address and confront the possibility of *encounter*, of encounter in its 'real', immediate, and therefore often difficult and painful senses. In her reflections on her novel *Cassandra*, Christa Wolf writes of how Cassandra came to "to position herself outside her own people", to actually recognize "that 'her people' are not her people", and therefore to experience "the pain of becoming a knowing subject" (Wolf, 1984: 152, 238, 230). To move beyond abstract and closed systems of thought, and toward the recognition of the "manifoldness of phenomena" (ibid: 287) –let it be the diversity and complexity of actually existing cultures, the insistent reality of their plurality.

- II -

Let me now say a little about our own transcultural research project, initially in terms of our methodological thinking at the time; and later, as the argument develops, I will move on to retrospective considerations, through reflections and further thoughts after the project's completion. I will shift between different levels: very practical and mundane matters, on the one hand; and conceptual and theoretical issues relating to the methodology of research, on the other. My focus will be very much on the theme of encounter, in terms of direct face-to-face encounters 'in the field', as they say, but also with respect to the contemporary theoretical and political agenda concerning engagements and negotiations across cultures (minority rights,

intercultural dialogue, transnational affiliations, transcultural communications, and so on).

1) I should begin at the street level, and with how we first embarked on the basic empirical issues to be addressed in the project. So, how to encounter, in an everyday practical and meaningful sense, the Turkish television audiences that we wanted, in some way, to talk with? Well, it's certainly not possible to just walk the streets of the Turkish districts in the city looking for satellite dishes, and then knocking on doors. So, how to make this possible? The only practical way to start was to make contact through friends and acquaintances (at that time we were living in one of the Turkish districts of London), through community associations, mosques, political organizations, social venues, and so on. Often, as in the case of Kurdish refugees, for example, it is a case of developing a relationship of trust, by way of a 'sponsor' or 'guarantor'. At this most basic and preliminary stage of the research, then, the nature and meaning of social –or, maybe more exactly, human– encounter must already be a fundamental concern.

The issue of encounter –and, most significantly, the political dimension of the particularity of encounters– has been overpowered by the disciplining force of contemporary social theory

2) At this point, too, one discovers the imperative to reflect in categorical terms, let us say, on the category 'Turk'; to critically reflect on what it is that might actually constitute the entity commonly referred to under the category of 'the Turkish community' (a term invariably mobilized in the same depreciating way as the stereotype of 'the Turk'). For, in reality, the considerable differences within 'the community' are perhaps more evident and significant than assumed commonalities. In London, the term that is generally used is the moderately pluralizing one of 'Turkish-speaking communities', which accommodates Turks, Kurds and Turkish-Cypriots. But even that is too diminishing. There are secular migrants, who can be leftist or nationalist, or neither; religious persons (Sunni or Alevi); men and women; young and old; migratory 'generations' ('first' to 'third', or now even 'fourth'). One confronts a very heterogeneous population, people who have migrated for different reasons, and who live under different conditions of existence. There is, then, a complex range of people, of individuals, to be encountered (one should also note the striking disparity between actual Turks and the figures often written about in more general texts of cultural and media studies –in terms of hybridity, diaspora-as-exile, being 'between cultures', 'third space', and the like). At this point, it is the (nation-centric) logic of cultural categorization –the mobilization of reductive classifications– that may stand in the way of the possibilities of meaningful encounter. Consider this in the light of Hannah Arendt's (1998: 7-8) radical assertion concerning human plurality: "the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world (…) Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live". This is a vital political principle, but, of course, it is one that proves difficult for the generalizing logic of the social sciences to take into account. Not 'Man', not 'Turk': against any such essentialism, anthropological or national, the significance of the social plurality must be upheld.

3) Ultimately, it has to be said, the issue of encounter –and, most significantly, the political dimension of the particularity of encounters– has been overpowered by the disciplining force of contemporary social theory; that is to say, by its –for the most part– national-parochial disposition and bias. It concerns the way in which a certain culture and identity, and thereby certain inclinations and certain motivations –a certain imputed nature even– have

been projected onto migrants. This projective preference and choice derives from the frame of national culture –of imagined community– which is the frame that has been mobilized in most of the research that has been undertaken on migration and media. And, through this mobilization, the actual and distinctive existence of migrants has been effaced. Their historical situation and presence are subordinated to a metaphysical scheme, a scheme according to which *all* migrant populations are imagined to conform.

In one version of this projective imposition –which is that of the migrant-as-minority– the ideological bias is fully apparent. Here I come back to Wilhelm Heitmeyer and his fears about the German integration project. Heitmeyer has invoked what he sees as the prospect of German national dis-integration. Among Turkish youth living in the country, he maintains, there is now an 'identity crisis', a crisis that arises because these young people are increasingly caught in "a balancing act, a conflict of loyalties, between the norms and demands of 'their' culture, or at least the culture of their parents and grandparents, on the one hand, and the values and expectations of the German majority and of their German peer group, on the other" (Heitmeyer *et al.*, 1997: 17). Turkish popular culture –including television and popular music– is listed among the factors responsible for the 'acculturation stress' among Turkish youth. The basic assumption is clearly that loyalty, in the case of migrants especially, can only be singular. Thus, in choosing to watch Turkish television, Turkish migrants give evidence of their essential Turkishness. By the same token, they seem to be making it quite clear that they do not, and can never, really belong in the German cultural domain. Heitmeyer's alarmist discourse mobilizes the image of parallel societies, societies in disjuncture. But what we have here is mythology, not sociology. What kind of encounter or dialogue could ever be possible under these conditions of discursive assault?

Heitmeyer's may clearly be seen as a research offensive against Turkish migrants in Germany –and since its ideological bias is on the surface, it is relatively easy to criticize. But the issue that I am addressing here is more pervasive, and perhaps even more significant when it comes to what might appear to be more sympathetic research. Much of this research begins by actually signalling the novel processes associated with cultural globalization –processes associated with transnational connectivity and the progressive erosion of national borders. And yet, as the narrative proceeds, the envisaged new transnational order actually turns out again to bear a fundamental resemblance to the old national one. What quickly begins to emerge is the claim that diasporic communications enable the sustained existence of re-imagined communities. Benedict Anderson's famous concept is again mobilized, in what becomes an obstinate concern with long-distance nationalisms in the transnational era. The expectation is that transnational media will help globally dispersed groups to articulate new forms of solidarity and cohesiveness (a basic premise is that this kind of belonging must necessarily be the primary aspiration of any and every such detached and distanced 'ethnic community'). Thus, it has been claimed that, with the tools of developing communications technology, diasporic groups are now working to maintain their identities, whether they are defined by religious fervour, ethnic pride, or national attachment. New communications technologies are primarily valued, then, in so far as they may work to sustain cultural cohesion and solidarity –the ties of imagined community– affiliations to 'communities of origin'–over extensive global distances. They are being discussed in terms of the rich possibilities they offer for sustained belonging –for

The envisaged new transnational order actually turns out again to bear a fundamental resemblance to the old national one. What quickly begins to emerge is the claim that diasporic communications enable the sustained existence of re-imagined communities

transnational bonding– among migrant communities anxious to maintain their identification with the 'homeland'. Any kind of immediate empirical or descriptive engagement is simply overwhelmed by the metaphysical force of the intransigent 'nation' and 'community' mentality.

If the interlocutor is aware that you are aware of the issues, and also engaged in what is going on, then the whole basis of the encounter can be different –and on a more equal and reciprocal basis

My simple point here is that this entrenched metaphysics stands entirely in the way of any kind of meaningful experience of encounter and dialogue. For where, under these conditions –these transcendental conditions, let us say– is there the possibility space for a consequential encounter between researcher and 'diasporic community'? From the point of view of the professional, the specialist, the responses of the ethnic informant are, invariably, always already foreseen, anticipated, expected –in short, they are unsurprising. They are unsurprising because the informant belongs within a category whose logic and contours the professional is already familiar with. The expert already knows what the answers of the diasporic entity, collective or individual, must surely be (that's why he or she is an 'expert'). The encounter is encased within an abstract metaphysical system that is both identitarian and communitarian; imagined, outside of the historical moment, outside of all of its contingencies and unanticipated possibilities. The migrant informant is subordinated through the mechanisms of cultural –actually, culturalising– projection. There is nothing at all propitious or productive in the process of coming together. No possibility to change the ways in which we can be together, or the ways in which we might think about our togetherness. The encounter and the encounter's dialogue have been effectively neutralized: there is no reciprocity, no meaningful engagement, no dialogue –and therefore no possibility of change, and of change's gift of surprise.

- III -

I have considered obstacles to encounter in the research process, from street level, to classificatory and conceptual issues and problems, and then on to theoretical restriction and shut-out. Now I will change tack somewhat, moving on from critique, to reflect briefly upon passage out, and beyond. Where might we turn now? What paths are open to us? What resources might we call upon? I want to say, from the street level, as it were, the researcher's *stance*, the researcher's *disposition* has to be a significant factor in the making of encounter. If the researcher approaches Turkish migrants from an official or policy-related perspective, well, that's one way of doing it, but potentially it will be a distancing or even an alienating one. To go in as a 'value-free', or uninvolved, interviewer, in search of 'data', that is another way of going in, but a sterile one, in my view. In our case, we wanted to relate to Turkish migrants as *interlocutors*, which means that one already has to be well informed, and able to enter the research on the basis of ongoing conversation and debate. If the interlocutor is aware that you are aware of the issues, and also engaged in what is going on, then the whole basis of the encounter can be different –and on a more equal and reciprocal basis. I use the term 'interlocutor' in a radical sense. As Jacques Rancière has rightly emphasized, an interlocutor cannot be a 'partner', that is to say a 'like-minded' person; an interlocutor can never be a potential ally, co-opted and consensualized. "The advances of democracy," Rancière (1995: 103) goes on to argue, "have always been due to improvisation by unprogrammed actors, by surplus interlocutors: a noisy crowd occupying the street, a silent crowd crossing

their arms in a factory, and so on". And also, we can say, improvisation by actively present, but uncontainable, transnational migrants establishing their livelihoods –over many decades now– in our metropolitan centres. Rather than conceiving them as minorities to be integrated or assimilated, what if we were to regard migrant populations such as the Turks as being such kinds of unprogrammed actors in the new European space? What would that do? What if we were to welcome their cultural presence of the interlocutors, and to anticipate the possibilities they have brought, as ones among the many and multiple surplus interlocutors in Europe now?

Chronique d'un été – a *cinéma-verité* film– takes the experience of the encounter further. It proposes an active intervention in life: a *vérité provoquée*. It sets out to unsettle, to disturb the routines of life

From the street level, as it were, then, I want now to go on to say something about a film that I first saw after our research project was completed; but a film –a *cinema-vérité* film– that has made me subsequently and retrospectively think a great deal about methodological issues from the perspective of encounter. This inspiring film is *Chronique d'un été* (1960), crafted and improvised by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin. Ethnographic and, at the same time, existential, it bridges the worlds of social research and ordinary, worldly everyday life. *Chronique d'un été* is a film of radical and questioning empiricism –far beyond what we might call the cold interview– engaging with the living detail, the complexities, the fragility, the uncertainties, the inconsistencies, the spontaneity, the unsettledness, the openness, of people's lives, as they are daily lived (these, and many more qualities that cannot be captured by, and reduced to, such categories as identity and belonging).

But first –just to get on to this street, by way of a small diversion into a side street– let me briefly refer to the book by Martin Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf: On Sitting for a Portrait by Lucian Freud*. This book, Gayford (2010: 216) writes of it, is "the result of a meeting (…) It's a record of all those hours of conversation, and of just being silently together in this room". "Perhaps the true object of a portrait is the interchange between the painter and the subject," he comments, "what the sitter consciously or unconsciously reveals, and the artist picks up. Out of the sitting comes, with luck, a new entity: a picture that succeeds and fails (…) By observing me, LF [Lucian Freud] is altering my behaviour. I am, in the studio, behaving slightly differently than I do anywhere else" (ibid: 20). The process is one of human interchange, it involves some kind of transindividual experience. And out of this process –which is necessarily a process of metamorphosis– there emerges some new entity, something created, and beyond what was previously imaginable.

Chronique d'un été takes this experience of the encounter further. It proposes an active intervention in life: a *vérité provoquée* –a provocation-test. It sets out to unsettle, to disturb the routines of life. What excited Rouch, particularly, was "not to film life as it is, but life as it is provoked" (quoted in Freyer, 1979: 441). Diving serves as one available metaphor for fieldwork: the 'filmmaker-diver' who plunges into real-life situations. The film was to be "a creative interaction in which the film-maker is no longer passive observer but catalytic figure who progressively brings certain individuals together, asks specific questions, encourages collaboration…" (Forsdick, 1997: 315). And who could tell what kind of truth the process of catalysis would produce? Morin refers to a communication from Clara Malraux: "On ne peut pas avancer que lorsqu'on ne sait pas où on va" (quoted in Forsdick, 1997: 309). Something unexpected, unforeseeable, original, something surprising, should emerge from the provocation.

What that dialogical commitment opens up are complexities and depths of encounter, which is always encounter by way of improvisation. Edgar Morin writes of the film's 'interrogative virtue', by which he means its capacity to make feelings come into existence

But the film project also aspired to be an egalitarian, even democratic encounter between the filmmaker-researchers and the subjects of the film project. Its avowed objective was to break down the boundaries separating the investigator and the object of investigation. "Exchange is our key value", claimed Morin (2002: 158): "The authors themselves mingle with the characters: there is not a moat on either side of the camera but free circulation and exchange (…) The research does not aim to describe; it is an experiment lived by its authors and its actors" (Morin, 2003: 233, 232). The point was to establish "a climate of conversation, of spontaneous discussion" (ibid: 233). "On our side, we felt embarrassed at making the interview a captive operation: The fact of having an interviewee who disliked letting himself be manipulated and an interviewer who disliked manipulating drove us to introduce dialogue as the final stage of the interview" (ibid: 156). And, on the other side of the camera, "the interview succeeded from the moment the speech of the interviewee was freed of inhibition and embarrassment and became communication (…) It appeared to us that the interviewee was fully satisfied with having talked to us only when he could himself ask questions, either to get to know his observer or to learn something from a 'scientist'" (Morin, 2002: 156). The process of encounter is dialogical –by way of "dialogues, disputes, conversations" (Morin, 2003: 252).

And what that dialogical commitment opens up are complexities and depths of encounter, which is always encounter by way of improvisation. Edgar Morin writes of the film's 'interrogative virtue', by which he means its capacity to make feelings come into existence. The fundamental interest of Rouch and Morin is in an encounter with life as it is lived, with people's existence, including in this experience "all the confusions of life" (ibid: 259). And, especially, it is to encounter the others, the 'players' in the film, as "human beings who *emerge from their collective life*" –the endeavour is always "to make each person's reality emerge" (ibid: 252, 234, my emphasis). The filmmakers were aiming to provoke participants to talk about subjects they would normally be unwilling or unable to discuss. The 'dives' into the lives the interviewees sought to bring to the surface "the secret dimension of lives that seemed two-dimensional at first sight" (Morin, 2002: 156).

The stated intention was to "extract a truth which hides or disguises itself or remains below the surface of appearances". And what constitutes the truth? Truth "is a shuttle which moves ceaselessly between the observer and the observed" (Morin 1962: 5). To present the problem of the truth: "truth is that which is hidden within us, beneath our petrified relationships" (Morin, 2003: 232). Most importantly, it should, says Morin, be "a *new type of truth* consisting of a dialogue between observer and observed, with the observer asking the observed to reveal something which could not emerge without the meeting" (Morin, 1962: 4, Morin's emphasis). Rouch and Morin hold fast to "the principle of the open door to the unexpected" (Morin, 2002: 159).

An open door to the unexpected… a door open to something that could not emerge without the meeting of observer and observed. The principle is well illustrated in a scene from the film that was shot in Saint Tropez, a scene that is centred upon a discussion by some of the 'players' on contemporary issues of colonialism and racism (see Appendix below for a transcription of the conversation). Morin tries as best he can to focus

on the colonialism issue, whilst the capricious Rouch seems to have quite other intentions. To begin with, Rouch's provocations are directed particularly against poor Marceline ("So you don't find blacks attractive", "You're racist at a sexual level", and so on). The viewer's sympathies are pushed towards the young African men participating in the discussion. But then, at a crucial point, Rouch turns things around completely and dramatically, when the question of anti-Semitism arises, and he asks Landry whether he knows what the tattooed number on Marceline's arm signifies. He does not recognize it as a serial number from the concentration camp in which she had been interned. Suddenly, in the face of the Africans' ignorance, the viewer's emotional identification veers and swings towards Marceline, and away from the –now seemingly naïve– young men we had just been warmly and humanely commiserating with. The tables have been turned. The sudden meeting between the issues of racism and of anti-Semitism has produced a new and more complex approach to (or understanding of) both, through their encounter and confrontation. Something new has been enabled to emerge, concerning prejudice and ignorance; concerning proximity and dialogue; concerning vital embodiment and solicitation by the face of the other.

Against the hegemonic national paradigm that stubbornly continues to prevail in media and cultural research, I have placed the emphasis on the importance of cultural encounter, trans-action, and dialogue

- IV -

I have been highly critical of the prevailing agenda concerning new forms of transitional communications for its reductive concern with community, identity and cultural enclosure –essentially, that is to say, for its failure, in an increasingly transcultural context, to transcend the diminishing national way of knowing and engaging with the world. In both intellectual and policy terms, this way –stretching from cultural confirmation (through the acceptance, and invariably assertion, of cultural bondings and sovereignties) to cultural protectionism, at the extreme end of the spectrum– can offer no serious or meaningful way forward in the complex contemporary European context.

Against the hegemonic national paradigm that stubbornly continues to prevail in media and cultural research, I have placed the emphasis on the importance of cultural encounter, trans-action, and dialogue. And, after all, hasn't there in fact been some apparent interest in something vaguely, albeit ineffectually, invoked as 'intercultural dialogue' in the European cultural policy scene for more than a decade now? Indeed, indeed there has… But –and this surely isn't a surprise to us– both 'intercultural' and 'dialogue' both remain taken-for-granted terms, unexamined, unexplored, trivialized. The key question, of course, must concern what it is that constitutes dialogue: what are the conditions under which dialogue becomes possible? What, to put it in a nutshell, is the point of dialogue? What is it that might happen in meaningful dialogue between interlocutors? The essentially national imagination of even European-wide policymaking has no real appetite for even beginning to think about the phenomenon and experience of encounter.

In concluding this discussion –though it can only be an indicative conclusion– we ought to rise a little above the street level of the research encounter –or, far better, we have to look to find an articulation between the street happenings and a philosophical or theoretical frame of reference which might help to make sense out of them. The long step

from a culturalist notion of side-by-side and passive coexistence to, let us say for now, an existential conception of encounter is a very radical one –and, in the darkening Europe of today, it feels as if it is an unlikely, and maybe even an impossible step to accomplish. What is it, this human experience called encounter? "I've said 'encounter'," writes Milan Kundera (2010: 83-84), "not a social relationship, not a friendship, not even an alliance: an encounter, which is to say a spark, a lightning flash; random chance". This possibility, this way of being in the world, this chance of a lightning flash, and of what a lightning flash might accomplish cannot, of course, be assimilated into the system-building discourses of the social sciences, which have always been discourses of the regular and the predictable, immune to astonishment, unavailable to the experience of wonder.

And so –if our interest is not in the maintenance and consistency (and grievous solipsism, too) of a conforming attribution and interpellation that we have, all too amenably, learned to call 'identity'– we would have to make a radical diversion, and look elsewhere to find a way to make sense of encounter and its value. Following upon the reflections above on *Chronique d'un été*, there is surely a need to pursue a quite different line of thought, in search of a different kind of understanding of the event that is encounter. And, since these last words of this text are not conceived as a conclusion in the conventional sense, but rather an indication of where to possibly move forward, let me suggest that one conceivable path might be through French phenomenological thought, both recent and contemporary, and in all its diversity –I am thinking here of such philosophers as Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas, and then, in the subsequent generation, Claude Romano and Emmanuel Housset.

Within this philosophical mode of thinking, there is acute regard for what Levinas (1998: 4) calls "the density of our being", and of a density in the other that has to be approached otherwise than through the reductionist and appropriating analytical concept, but rather in terms of the other as interlocutor, and through the relational sociality that may entail –for Levinas, it is a relational ethics of interlocution and of dialogue. Levinas refuses the paradigm of knowledge as assimilation. "The other", he argues, "is not first an object of understanding and then an interlocutor. The two relations are merged. In other words, addressing the other is inseparable from understanding the other (…) In our relation to the other, the latter does not affect us by means of a concept. The other is a being and counts as such" (Levinas, 1998: 5, 6). "My understanding of a being as such", says Levinas (1998: 7), "is already the expression I offer him or her of that understanding". This shift from a politics of cultural identity to a philosophy of the person and the event of being is a radical one. And what is at stake? It is a shift from a supposed knowledge of an always abstract other to a sense of "responsibility for the other (…) the possibility of one-for-the-other, that constitutes the ethical event". Levinas calls it purely and simply the "shattering of indifference" (ibid: xii). Well, how does that sound in the context of contemporary social research on migrants in the European space? Is actually existing sociological theory now capable of reflecting on the kind of knowledge it has always prioritized –and which must, of course, have significant ethical implications, for it is a kind of knowledge that has always carried with it the disciplined refusal of a greeting?

"To think is no longer to contemplate", says Emmanuel Levinas (ibid: 3), "but to be engaged with, merged with what we think, launched –the dramatic event of being-in-the-world" (ibid: 3). He signals an entirely other way of being, thinking and telling in-the-world. Emmanuel Housset –who is an immediate philosophical descendent of Levinas– takes this further in his account of what it means to be a *person* –to be an embodied person, in capacious singularity, and not some abstract and evacuated categorical entity enclosed and confined forever within the containing space of a meager thing called 'identity'– in this world (to be implicated in the event of being, the adventure of being, as Levinas expresses it). Housset, too, draws attention to the relational nature of being, our consciousness and our awareness –to our essential and indispensible relatedness to others, and our radical exposure to the world in which we all live, to encounters and to events, to which we will strive to respond. The person is essentially "a movement of transcendence, and only can only understand itself in its movement" (Housset, 2007: 23): "I am there where something calls for me, and that is why the person cannot be characterized by a consistency that it attributes to itself (…) but should be understood in terms of the invocation of its being, of its vocation" (ibid: 416-417). The *vocation* of a person: infinitely exposed to, and called upon by, that which exceeds the person; the event, that which is in excess, and which always demands a response from that person; a response in order to make space for new possibilities, which were hitherto inconceivable; to make a way for the surging forth of new, and yet always provisional, experiential realities. "I learn to know myself through my response to the unknown", says Housset (ibid: 460), and this will be a response that will necessarily distinguish and singularize my selfhood.

I think about why mainstream research can only concern itself with more simplistic and diminishing questions (of identity, nation, belonging, etc.). And why do even such questions seem always to be so aporetic, so frustrating, beyond satisfactory resolution

As to where we might find more creative ways of thinking about encounter, this brief indication can suffice. And, of course, to follow this line of thought would represent nothing short of a sea change. And you will surely want to ask, won't you, what possible relevance this could have to transnational migration and to the issue of media and migration, the topics that initiated the present discussion? Is it at all meaningful to think about migration from this perspective? Can we go so far as to regard the migrant as far more than just a generic identity? Could we ever conceive of our research encounter as an encounter with another embodied and singular person? In the present text, we have moved away from the concept of identity, and on to the more complex phenomenological conception of the person. We have shifted from the closed and stifling space of imagined community and national identity, to the far more open and radical possibilities inherent in existential encounter, interlocution, and the relational involvement and commitments of the person. We have progressed in our thinking to the dramatic event of being-in-the-world. And I find myself asking why it is that conventional social-science research is not at all interested in the migrant's way of being-in-the-world. Would there not be a great deal to be learned from this? From my side, I think about why mainstream research can only concern itself with more simplistic and diminishing questions (of identity, nation, belonging, etc.). And why do even such questions seem always to be so aporetic, so frustrating, beyond satisfactory resolution. Yes, in every attitude toward the human being there is a greeting –even if it is the refusal of a greeting. Perhaps the most fundamental research question, because it is also the most fundamental existential question –and should it really have to be said here that migrants are human beings too?– concerns the quality and the spirit of this act of greeting.

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Appendix

From Rouch, Jean. *Ciné-Ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, which contains a full transcription of the dialogue of *Chronique d'un été*.

Racism in Question

The same restaurant terrace [in Saint Tropez]. *Another day. Another table. Rouch, Morin, Marceline, Nadine, Jean-Pierre, Régis. And also Landry and several other young Africans*.

MARCELINE: Personally I would never marry a black.

ROUCH: Why?

NADINE: For the children?

MARCELINE: No, not at all, absolutely not… not at all…

ROUCH: Why?

Medium close-up from Marceline's profile and point of view. In the middle ground, turned toward her, are Rouch and Landry.

MARCELINE: Well… why… Because for me it has nothing to do with… I'm not racist. I understand perfectly that one can love a black.

VOICES OFF-SCREEN: But… But…

JEAN-PIERRE: But! ... But! ... You don't like Negroes…

MARCELINE: No, no that's not true…

ROUCH: You're racist at a sexual level…

MARCELINE: No, I'm not racist in matters of… It's not racism. I cannot have… I can't have sexual relations with someone I don't find… I can't do it with someone I don't find attractive.

ROUCH: So you don't find blacks attractive…

Insert close-up of Landry.

MARCELINE: For a long time I thought it wasn't possible, and I still think so… only because I don't want to… that's all… it's a question of desire… only, I remember, two years ago, on the fourteenth of July…

Laughter.

ROUCH: Ah, Ah…

VOICE OFF-SCREEN: A weakness?

MARCELINE: No, I don't have… No, not at all… But I remember that for the first time…

JEAN-PIERRE: Be brave.

MARCELINE: No… for the first time at a fourteenth of July ball, I danced with a black.

JEAN-PIERRE: And were you moved?

MARCELINE: And… the way he danced was extraordinary…

ROUCH: Come on, go ahead,… go on… go on… (*laughter*).

The framing favours Landry.

LANDRY: Fine… well, here's why I don't agree… you see, the… for example, the blacks who are in France, in general when they go to a dance, people like the way they dance… But I wish they'd like blacks… for other reasons than the way they dance…

MARCELINE: But I agree completely.

Close-up of Morin in profile, looking toward the others from the far end of the table.

MORIN: But we're basically getting on to the question that we're here for… I mean we're here to discuss the Congo… among our African friends… But before we discuss that… I wonder… in spite of the fact that for days now the press has been talking about these events in large headlines whether we in Paris… uh… whether we really feel concerned about this… I'd like to know whether Jean-Pierre, for example… whether Marceline… or Régis… feel concerned, and how they're concerned, about this…

Medium shot of Rouch and Régis from Jean-Pierre's point of view.

JEAN-PIERRE: I know that I felt concerned one time, quite physically because I was watching the TV news. And after the speaker showed a couple of pictures, announced a couple of events, he concluded by saying in a dry tone, "We can see what these people are doing with their independence".

Medium-shot of Landry, with Jean Rouch and Nadine.

LANDRY: The Belgian arrived in the Congo… he said to himself, "Okay, fine… money to be made". No, he didn't even say that. First of all, he said, "No elite, no worries" (*laughter*).

Close-up of Nadine, to two-shot of Nadine and Landry.

ROUCH: And you, Nadine, what do you think?

NADINE: I agree with Landry.

ROUCH: You've been to Léopoldville…

NADINE: Yes I've been to Léopoldville.

ROUCH: For how long?

NADINE: For one year. I was a boarder with those nuns who were raped. (She smiles, then is serious). No, it was horrible, I mean, because it's, the fact is that there the Africans were completely caged in. They were not allowed to come into certain areas. It was really horrible.

Profile close-up of Régis.

REGIS: Does a native of the Ivory Coast feel involved in this, as a black, because a black from the Belgian Congo is doing… I mean… Is there really a racial solidarity? Do you feel responsible, or not?

Close-up of Landry.

LANDRY: Oh, yes… I feel responsible.

REGIS: Really?

Raymond, one of the young Africans, intervenes.

RAYMOND: It's true that you can reproach them for violence… but it's a question of anger…

Close-up of Landry.

LANDRY: It would be another story between a Congolese and Ivorians… A Guinean, for example, would not feel engaged. But as soon as it's a white mistreating a black… you understand… I mean, all the countries, you see, all the states of Africa were colonized… as soon as they see a country mistreated by the whites… Well… immediately it's as if it was them who were suffering the pain of the others… so right away, it's like that!

Close shot of Marceline in profile.

MARCELINE: I understand that very well, because while the example is not completely, completely a good one… but if there is a manifestation of anti-Semitism in any country of the world… well, then I'm involved… I can't allow it… whether it be a German Jew or a Polish Jew… a Russian Jew… an American Jew… it's all the same for me.

Medium close-up of Jean Rouch, panning to a two shot with Landry.

ROUCH: We're going to ask Landry a question… Landry have you noticed that Marceline has a number on her arm?

LANDRY: Yes.

ROUCH: What is it, do you think?

LANDRY: No, I… I have no idea…

ROUCH: No idea… Okay, and you, Raymond… what do you think?

RAYMOND: Well, I don't know exactly… I know that there are sailors who usually have numbers on their arms… and since she's not in the navy…

ROUCH: Why? So what is it that… Why? Do you know more or less what it means?

REGIS: Affectation…

ROUCH: Affectation?

RAYMOND: Maybe, yeah…

REGIS: But why a number, anyway?

MARCELINE: I could have put a heart?

JEAN-PIERRE: It could be her telephone number…

MARCELINE: I could have put a heart.

RAYMOND: That couldn't be a telephone number because it's too long… 78-750.

Close-up of Marceline's arm, then medium close-up of Marceline with Régis in the background.

MARCELINE: Well, first of all the… This isn't a V…it's a triangle that is half the Jewish star… I don't know if you know the Jewish symbol that's a six-pointed star… And then the number… uh… I was deported to a concentration camp during the war, because I'm Jewish, and this is a serial number that they gave me in that camp…

Quick pan to close-up of Landry, who lowers his eyes.

ROUCH: So?

RAYMOND: It's shocking…

MARCELINE: Raymond, do you know what a concentration camp is?

RAYMOND: Yes… yes… I saw a film… a film on them… on the concentration camps.

Close-up of Marceline's hand, stroking a flower.

REGIS: *Nuit et brouillard, Night and Fog*…

RAYMOND: I think *Night and Fog*… yeah…

Freeze-frame of Marceline's hand.

DISCUSSING MEDIA, MIGRATION AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Isabel Verdet Peris and Hala Elhefnawy

DISCUSSING MEDIA, MIGRATION AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

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These open discussions were set up in the framework of the Training Workshop on "Methodologies for Research, on Migration, Media and Intercultural Dialogue". The title for the first discussion was "The Role of Media in Interdisciplinary Research on Migration"; while the second was entitled "Intercultural Dialogue and its relevance to policy formation on Migration". In accordance with the work traditionally carried out by CIDOB's Intercultural Dynamics Programme, the aim of these two open discussions was to provide a meeting space where ideas and concerns about methodologies could be pooled together, by people who are actually dealing with these specific challenges in their everyday research work.

The first session was introduced by Dr Parvati Nair, director of the Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility of United Nations University (UNU-GCM), who reflected on the connections between migration and media, with special regard to the implications of this relation for research. The second session, meanwhile, was presented by Dr Tendayi Bloom and Dr Valeria Bello, both Research Fellows at the Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility of United Nations University (UNU-GCM). They presented some of the methodological problems they encountered when, within UNU-GCM, they were asked to look at intercultural dialogue and, more specifically, to give some policy recommendations on intercultural dialogue[1]. In both cases, after the brief introduction of the topics, the floor was given to the audience for them to contribute to the discussion from their own research experience.

What follows is a summation of the main ideas raised in the discussions. They have been structured in an attempt to build a coherent whole, even

1. The findings of this research are published in Series 01 of UNU-GCM Policy Reports, on Migration, Media and Intercultural Dialogue. Available online at: http://gcm.unu.edu/index.php/publications/policy-reports/125-migration-media-and-intercultural-dialogue-unu-gcm-policy-reports-series-01

if it must be acknowledged that the ideas offered multiple possibilities of organisation. The article is organised into six thematic chapters, which are very much interlinked: 1) methodological approach and interdisciplinarity; 2) policy vs. politics; 3) the power of language; 4) media as data source for research; 5) the relation between media and migration, questioning the "third space"; and 6) a sort of conclusion on some possible trends in the future of intercultural dialogue. The aim of this article is not to thoroughly develop very specific ideas, but rather to stay true to the discussion and give some food for thought on a broader range of topics.

The combined use of different methodologies and interdisciplinarity are distinctive features of research on topics that may fall into the category of intercultural dynamics

Methodological approach and interdisciplinarity

Some considerations might be made prior to explaining the ideas that were discussed in these sessions. First, the fact that –as it is usual when talking about intercultural dynamics– the audience's composition was very diverse, not only in terms of topic, but also with regard to disciplines and methodologies employed in the research. More specifically, the disciplines of the participants in this open discussion ranged from linguistics to sociology, art history, international relations and communication. Given this diversity, the issues touched upon were also very varied. In the case of the second discussion, for instance, what was presented as a policy-oriented debate ended up taking its own path and becoming a discussion that went beyond policy to tackle issues that might not be directly related to policy but which are equally necessary for a broader approach to intercultural dialogue.

There seemed to be a wide consensus that the combined use of different methodologies and interdisciplinarity are distinctive features of research on topics that may fall into the category of intercultural dynamics (intercultural dialogue, the relation between media and migration…). Among the audience, there were young researchers working on varied topics from very different disciplines: universal patterns of language evolution; Chinese contemporary Art; inter-faith Israeli-Palestinian marriages; Brazilian foreign policy; integration of minorities –Copts in particular– in Egypt; and lesbian representation and visibility in the media, among other topics. What is more interesting is that, despite this variety, they all considered that intercultural dynamics were somehow involved in their work, even in the cases in which this relation does not seem so obvious.

In practice, all the participants were using a varied range of methodologies and some of them also included an interdisciplinary approach in their research. Apart from this diverse methodological and disciplinary reality among the audience, the methodological approach was explicitly mentioned at certain points in the debate. It was stated that "there are no bad or good methods or methodologies; there are only methodologies that are a useful tool to examine one question". With respect to interdisciplinarity in research, it was described as "1) using practice and experience in different areas to understand what questions needed to be answered and 2) just using methodologies as tools, the best tools to answer the particular problems that seemed to be presented". Thus, the multi-methodological and interdisciplinary approach is not only a reality for the students who took part in the discussion, it is also a matter they consider it is worth reflecting upon.

Policy vs. politics

As previously mentioned, the question of how theory and practice can be analysed to influence policy was raised in one of the open discussions as a specific way of examining the relation between theory and practice, which is considered part of the researcher's responsibility. The point was that sometimes researchers have to "analyse their concerns but in terms of how may they be relevant to policy makers and in terms of understanding ways in which they need to be framed to become relevant to policy makers". In relation to that, it was also pointed out that, when advising (or trying to advise) policy makers, it is crucial to know who they are making those policies for (for the UN, a specific State, the European Union, an NGO, etc).

At this point of the debate, the issue was raised of to what extent researchers on Intercultural Dialogue should be concerned about policies. In other words, the question was: "why do we focus so much on policies, which are top-down solutions, instead of looking more into bottom-up solutions", that is to say, "things that people propose to respond to the problems that affect them". There were some different viewpoints regarding this issue.

On one hand, some believed that "there has to be a policy framework which allows this kind of organic process [people's self-organisation in the face of a problem] to happen". The case of Brazil, which just had a discourse about what demonstration means, was mentioned as an example of the different policy frameworks in place to allow these bottom-up processes. From this perspective, those processes could not "just happen". The opposing position to this one considered that it is not a policy question, but a politics question; since "there are many policy elements in place designed to suppress what is real politics, the intelligent politics of people", as could be seen in the protests that took place in Turkey during summer 2013. According to this viewpoint, this is a question of cultural politics and not simply of cultural policy and, therefore, not everything can be fitted into policies.

Bringing this issue of policy vs. politics into the intercultural dialogue arena, a misleading reading of this last argument is considering that states have nothing to say when it comes to intercultural dialogue; that it is something that happens between people, individuals, and not states. That was more or less the position of the United States in the UN Security Council documents that had been analysed and were presented at the opening of the second discussion. This way of understanding intercultural dialogue might be perceived as "a way to sort of move the issue to societies", so that states do not assume their responsibility. The United States' perspective –it was argued– is a very liberal one, "based on the idea that there is no civil society, but civil society is made up of individuals negotiating among themselves".

However, taking into account and acknowledging this liberal inheritance, there might be mediation between bottom-up and top-down approaches with regard to intercultural dialogue. For that intermediate position to be possible, "it is necessary to be aware of the way in which political problems are talked about" and, in the case of intercultural dialogue, recognising the "different power relations in play and the asymmetrical nature of a

dialogue". The case of Israeli–Palestinian relations was brought up as an example of the unequal positions of two partners in a dialogue. This leads us to consider "poverty as a structured reality, not as an individual failure", as the United States position may suggest; to put it bluntly, "thinking about policies is bringing the issue into a political problematic because it is touching the problem of how the developed world has rendered the rest of the world poor". The mediating position would be the recognition by policy statements regarding intercultural dialogue of those asymmetrical relations of power. This would completely change the approach: "It is not simply about coming up with policy statements to meet the world, but thinking about how political problems are talked about, and this can sometimes be translated into policy statements".

"It is not simply about coming up with policy statements to meet the world, but thinking about how political problems are talked about, and this can sometimes be translated into policy statements"

Power of language, framing discourse and ideology

On a different note, the power of language was also a recurring issue in the debate. That is particular visible in the case of the concept "intercultural dialogue" itself, where –as shown in the analysis of the use of the concept in UN documents – "the framing of the discourse is affecting the way in which international policy is being developed". More specifically, in one of the reports analysed, "the words used to describe intercultural dialogue seemed to be different in the different linguistic versions of the document. The word 'dialogue', used in all languages that come from the Greek word *dialogos*, has the meaning of 'talking across' but also the baggage of Socratic or Platonic dialogue, which is a pedagogical process of reaching truth, the knowledge of one bringing the other's to truth. In the case of the Chinese word for dialogue, 'duì huà', it was originally used in theatre to mean the discussion between actors on stage before a traditional theatre piece begins". With such different cultural baggage behind the words, it does not seem pertinent to assume that the concept is simply understood in the same way everywhere.

Not only a word or a set of words may have different meanings in different languages, but a concept also evolves and, therefore, the meaning of words changes: "while between 2000 to 2007 intercultural dialogue discourses were very much linked to the issue of racism, after this, and particularly after 2005, they started to be very much linked to the issues of security and terrorism".

The use of words can be a determining factor when conducting a research study, too. One of the participants in the open discussion explained the problems she encountered during an on-the-ground research study on businesses and cities that worked together to help migrants in different cities (Nairobi, Kuala Lumpur…), when trying to explain the locals what they wanted to find out. This takes us again to the idea of "the importance of words to be used and how different people may interpret how we speak". On some occasions the words may even entail a given mindset that conditions the very research work. That was the challenge, by way of example, for one of the participants, who was researching on Chinese Contemporary Art: "What I am kind of dealing with constantly is the use of Western concepts to describe something Eastern. (…) It is kind of difficult because there is no Eastern way to describe them. For example, recently I read a book, it is called 'Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History' and it was a very interesting book because basically

what it says is that we apply Western Art History to other types of art being Arabic or Mediterranean or Chinese. But, can we really do this? And actually there is not solution to it because for example in China there is no Chinese Art History that can be applied to Chinese Art".

The ideology behind the use of words is also particularly visible in the field of research on Migration. In this regard, the differentiation between *migrants* and *expats* was pointed out: "British people living or working abroad are not *migrants* but *expats*; in Malaysia, *migration* entails a sense of settlement, so they are called *foreign workers* or *expats*. Behind this differentiation lies the idea of the desirable and the undesirable people". Within the field of Migration, the use of the word *diaspora* is also significant, since it is always linked to developing countries and not often applied to other contexts of people moving from one place to another. In the same way, migration is often studied in its relation with development, so that migrants are considered as *walking wallets*, as a factor that mobilises economic resources; however, this approach disregards the fact that "not every migrant can be an investor", and that there are many other possible reasons or motivations behind a person's decision to move from one place to another.

The ideology behind the use of words is particularly visible in the field of research on Migration. In this regard, the differentiation between *migrants* and *expats* was pointed out

Media as an essential source of information

The role of media in research on intercultural dialogue has multiple dimensions. On the one hand, media are seen –and so it was noted in the discussion– as a valuable source of data; especially when, due to the topic's nature, there is not much bibliography on it: "in the case of Israeli-Palestinian marriages, I have not a lot of bibliography because it is a controversial issue that is usually hidden, so people do not talk about it. So I suppose that I will have to use some tools or non-official documents [such as media] to get the information".

Nevertheless, media as a source of information also presents some limitations. One of these limitations is linked to the issue of media property and production and the interests at stake, which may influence the audience/public opinion in a given direction. By way of example, it was mentioned that "if the owner of a media is against a certain nationality or identity –due to ideological or religious beliefs, to economic interests or to any other reason–, that media may represent that particular group negatively". In this regard, it seems that researchers should always bear this in mind: "whatever media you are working on, you always have to consider the issue of sponsorship, because money never comes for free. There is always a larger agenda, sometimes it's a very simple one, sometimes it is more complex. Knowing where a media is coming from, how it has been created and why it is being made… all of them are important initial questions to give you the full picture of what you are studying".

Media may also, on some occasions, help to spread a one-sided view of the world; thus reinforcing the already-mentioned assumption that the messages are received and interpreted in the same way everywhere: "TV series and films are produced in very specific regions, and then circulated elsewhere and received elsewhere, which may lead to cultural problems of intercultural dialogue". This is an issue of major concern for researchers, since it may condition the research itself.

"As researchers working in the field, we need to be aware of the centrality of the media, the reliance on it, and also the contingencies of the media; as well as of the different media and different languages"

With regard once more to the limitations that the use of media as a data source entails, one of the participants argued that "It is very tempting to use media as a source for research because now with digital media you have a huge amount of data, just by looking into a social media. However, it is risky because it might leave out those who are not connected to that particular social network, and take those who are as the whole". Then the question about where to place the focus as a researcher –on the production or on the reception– was discussed, since some considered that a research study that looks only into production "may not be representative".

Some researches have been recently carried out from this perspective, that is to say, by focusing on the reception, on the audience's experience. One of the participants in the Training Workshop, in particular, was approaching the representation of lesbian women on the media from the viewpoint of the watchers of a given TV series. The interviewees –which included men, women, homosexuals, heterosexuals....– were asked about their identification with the characters. The results– preliminary since the PhD research is still ongoing at the moment of writing this summation– show that "Identification depends on the characters' personality, regardless of their sexual orientation; people identify with characters when they feel as the characters do. The audience understands that the most important element in characters is the way they act in terms of morality (if they are good, bad…); that is what makes the audience identify themselves with the characters or not. They are able to empathize with characters if the character is a good person. It depends on how the character acts, not on her sexuality".

Last but not least, media can also help to increase the visibility of minorities and, therefore, to raise awareness about their rights. As one of the participants pointed out, that is the case, for instance, of the lesbian community: "We started looking at lesbian representation because we thought that it was important to analyse the visibility of minorities in the media, so that we could find ways to improve this in a positive way. The problem is that minorities are always represented in the same way on TV and on the media in general; but if you have more visibility with a positive representation, you can get rights".

In the following quote, one of the members of the discussion mentions some elements that a researcher has to keep in mind when using media as a source of information: "As researchers working in the field, we do not need to know only about the role of the media in migration, we actually need to be aware of the centrality of the media, the reliance on it, and also the contingencies of the media; as well as of the different media and different languages".

Media and migrants representation: Is there a "third space"?

The relationship between media and migration, it was argued, "Begins with the fact that all thoughts/knowledge come to us through media". Consequently, key attitudes towards the 'others' are highly influenced by the construction of this 'other' in the mainstream media. Indeed, the issue of representation very much affects the migrant's inclusion/integration potentials; it influences the way in which audiences perceive and

then interact with the newly-arrived migrant community. As someone stated in the discussion, "There is a very important role that the media plays in terms of migration, which affects the attitudes to the 'others'; this construction of the 'other' in mainstream media is very important in order to establish or confirm a sense of a collective self".

The interaction between migrants and the host population has been also tackled by many scholars from the immigrant's perspective and in relation to intercultural communication. One of the PhD students depicted, in the open discussion, how this communication manifests in immigrants' actions "On two levels of communication or through two channels: one is interpersonal communication, and the other is through mass media communication». Basically, that particular research showed that, "In order to avoid cultural conflicts, immigrants tend to choose two options: cultural integration or compartmentalization. If the migrants are integrated into the local culture, they can avoid the cultural conflict. If they cannot, or immigrants feel that it is not necessary, they would choose to compartmentalize. In this context, the mass media work as an obstacle for immigrants' integration, because if the migrant community is largely settled in the local environment, migrants may choose to stay away from the local culture. Apparently, this phenomenon is something contrary to the functioning of mass media, because we would normally think that mass media contribute to the global cultural integration".

"I do not know if the 'third space' exists and, even if it does, I am not sure if I like the concept or not. It is not so easy to say that one person is Catalan or Spanish or a 'third space'. The fact is that identities are individual in the end, they are persons, and you cannot really categorize them"

At this point, a methodological issue was pointed out: how to measure compartmentalization? In response to this question, some variables used –focused on the concept of cultural identity– were indicated: "Democratic, social, economic variables, like gender, class, occupation, social status… but specially the sense of identity, the sense of belonging and, what is more important, personality variables and media usage".

Talking about compartmentalization led to a questioning of the existence of space between these 'compartments'. This question seemed to be very much debatable. Some may argue that the third space really exists, especially among the second generation who feel "neither Oriental nor Occidental". However, considering that identities are in a constant process of change, some of the participants found it difficult to define what this third space would be. In response to the question "Does the third space exist?", one of the participant's answer was: "I do not know and, even if it does exist, I am not sure if I like the concept or not. It is not so easy to say that one person is Catalan or Spanish or a 'third space'. The fact is that identities are individual in the end, they are persons, and you cannot really categorize them".

What future for intercultural dialogue?

While 20 years ago intercultural dialogue –or interculturality– was seen as something exotic that simply happened when two people from different 'cultures' encountered each other –especially if the dimension North-South was involved– the phenomenon experienced a boom when, in 2008, the European Union celebrated the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The topic became suddenly a priority for many governmental and non-state actors, which saw in this event an opportunity for gaining funding. "It was really a fashion, there were intercultural festivals and events organised everywhere", one of the participants pointed out.

Considering the importance of the use of words, it might be taken into account that the idea of dialogue has been used and abused, so that its initial signification is sometimes forgotten: "When talking about dialogue, the pre-condition is that there is a disagreement and both parts have to reach a consensus (…) Maybe previous to the dialogue we could enter into conversation: because in conversations there are common elements, and that makes you get engaged in something. Conversation listens to difference, not considering it as a form of pollution, without the obsession of assimilating it and, at the same time, committing yourself to the other's experience: from a shared something (something that we know) and with a certain degree of curiosity for what we ignore".

Research is certainly a way to encounter the 'other', and this encounter is particularly conditioned by the sense of identity developed within the nation-state paradigm. Iain Chambers connects this identity construction to "The refusal to interact with the interrogation posed by a seemingly foreign body" (p. 18 of this same publication). Kevin Robins, meanwhile, suggests addressing and confronting "The possibility of encounter (…) in its 'real', immediate, and therefore often difficult and painful senses" (p. 27 of this publication).

Considering the different approaches to the encounter with the 'other', as well as reflecting on the meaning of intercultural dialogue, the elements behind the words we use, and on the potential and limitations of communication, they are all crucial issues for researchers to escape from the dynamics that try to impose a single and biased look on media, migration and intercultural dialogue.

PROGRAMME: TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR PHD STUDENTS

09.30h **VENUE AT CIDOB** (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
Elisabets, 12, Barcelona

10:00h **MASTERCLASS**
The Mediterranean as method: fluid archives
Professor **Iain Chambers,** Professor of Cultural and Postcolonial Studies and Coordinator of the PhD programme in 'Cultural and Postcolonial Studies of the Anglophone world', Oriental University, Naples

11.30h Coffee Break

12.00h **MASTERCLASS**
Transcultural Research as Encounter and a Possible Creative Modality of its Dialogue
Professor **Kevin Robins,** Independent researcher working in Istanbul. Previously Professor of Sociology, City University and Goldsmiths College (London), and Media and Communications, Goldsmiths College (London)

13:30h Lunch

15:00h **OPEN DISCUSSION 1**
The Role of Media in Interdisciplinary Research on Migration
Professor **Parvati Nair,** Director UNU-GCM
Q and A with audience

OPEN DISCUSSION 2
Intercultural Dialogue and its relevance to policy formation on Migration
Dr **Valeria Bello** and Dr. **Tendayi Bloom,** Research fellows, UNU-GCM
Q and A with audience

17:00h **CLOSING REMARKS**
Parvati Nair, Director UNU-GCM
Yolanda Onghena, senior researcher in Intercultural Dynamics, CIDOB