

Second Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops

Woman's speech and the figure of the tyrant, 26 October - 9 November 2000, in Marrakech (Morocco)

Organised by: Transeuropéennes / Réseaux pour la culture en Europe (Paris), with The European Foundation for Culture (Amsterdam), The Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud Foundation (Casablanca), The Toledo School of Translators (Toledo), and in partnership with The King Abdou Al-Aziz Foundation (Casablanca), The Chouala Association for Education and Culture (Casablanca), The Diwan Al Adab Association (Marrakech) ; with the support of The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The European Foundation for Culture, The French Embassy in Rabat, The Cultural Affairs Delegation of the Moroccan Ministry of Culture and Communication (Marrakech), and the participation of The Marrakech Museum.

Programme Intentions and Objectives

Europe is not a monolith. And neither is the Mediterranean world. Yet the perceptions the two have of one another tend in both cases to grossly oversimplify the complex reality of the other.

The fifteen countries of the European Union appear to their Mediterranean neighbours as an often arrogant fortress, while many Europeans see the countries on the south shore of the Mediterranean either as a potential threat in terms of immigration or as their privileged zone influence...

Today, in both day-to-day reality, and in State policy, interdependence remains a largely neglected reality, and scant effort is made in terms of mutual enhancement between cultures. What prevails, instead, is identity-oriented discourse, a national or community-based fragmentation of a shared cultural heritage, the closing off of disciplines from one another, difficulties in establishing the free circulation of people and ideas.

The watchword of a "war of civilisations" and identities, which some commentators have painted as ineluctable, has made headway on both shores of the Mediterranean, drawing upon cultures to justify political ends.

Artists, researchers in the humanities, writers and translators, involved in the dynamics of translation between cultures, and the flux between different languages and fields of imagination, are well aware of the power of bridge-building in the pursuit of the other, in his or her difference and sameness. The Euro- Mediterranean Cultural Workshops are designed for such people, inviting them to grapple with the realities of meeting and working together, whatever the challenges this may entail.

The will to create this programme thus stems from a double necessity: put the Mediterranean dimension squarely and tangibly at the heart of European concerns;

create an informal space of cultural cooperation and exchange for those men and women who, in their societies, are bearers of a new field of imagination, of a new élan. In asserting a cultural approach through the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops, Transeuropéennes and its partners are wagering that, in the Euro-Mediterranean context, culture, the arts and the humanities are together factors of mutual understanding and dialogue.

Translating cultures today: a common thread

Whether in deciphering terrains of crisis, either merely potential or already operative, or in the analysis of supposedly preestablished antagonisms and the blockages which they engender, as well as in the gaze cast on the contemporary world and its fissures, translation - and reflection on what it means to translate - is of particular relevance. The expression “translating cultures” should be understood not as translating in the technical sense of the term, but rather in terms of a bridge fostering reflection on identity, reference, representations of the other, or the forms of cultural relations between the opposite shores of the Mediterranean. The Workshop’s title thus takes for granted going beyond strictly literary issues, and implies thinking about the passages between the different forms of art and/or expressing thought.

Working on translating cultures entails not only questioning why we translate, what we translate and how we translate. It also entails questioning the untranslatable, the tales of the untranslatable in the Mediterranean, and thereby throwing into question the theme of the irreconcilable, the question of modernity, the question of origin and originality, of translation and treason.

This sort of questioning also necessarily entails thinking about the relationship between the writer and/or the artist as person and locus of the collective imagination (of a people, a society, etc.).

It is thus truly an issue of civilisation that is at stake in the task of translating cultures, particularly in an era of introspective tendencies toward identitybased discourse.

Programme Objectives

On the basis of the cultural, social, economic, political diversity of the different countries around the Mediterranean, as well as their difficulty in establishing a meaningful dialogue, the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops consequently intend: 1. to create, through mobility and meetings, the conditions for exchange and collaborative work; 2. to develop in conjunction with young researchers and creators, who are subsequently destined to play the role of opinion-makers, a culture of civility as opposed to a culture of war, by means of imagination and thought, and not through petitions of principle; 3. to establish in the Mediterranean an informal network of cultural and associative structures, of actors from the cultural and associative world, who, by setting themselves apart from the discourse of closed identities, want to set up sustained co-operation and to recognise the value of common references.

In the interest of greater mobility, both in minds and space, and to avoid any definitive geopolitical anchorage, the Workshops have been conceived as an itinerant programme, drawing upon the intermediary of various associated cultural structures. From 2001 on,

it is comprised of three types of events:

1. *The Workshops themselves.* The ambition of the Workshops is to bring together, over a two-week period, some thirty doctoral candidates or students at the end of their studies, both men and women, in the fields of comparative literature, philosophy, linguistics, translation, theatre, film-making or photography, from all the countries of the Mediterranean area, recruited independently of any institutions, in order for them to work together freely in the framework of workshops and seminars. Their travel and living expenses for the duration of their stay are covered by the organisers. Inter-disciplinarity is one of the foundation stones of this collaboration effort. Each participant accepts this rule, just as he or she accepts that of transnationality.

Bound up with works of imagination and thought, the work to be undertaken focuses on sign, image and language, on the relations between tradition and modernity, on representations of women in contemporary societies and so on, all of these issues making it possible to avoid any sort of museifying approach.

Their short-term objective is to give way to artistic productions and common research, taking their inspiration from a still unconstructed heritage. Their intermediate-term (three-year) objective is to create an informal network of cultural actors (individuals and structures) concerned with linking their references and practices.

2. *Follow-up to the Workshops: shared production.* Thanks to the partner and associated cultural structures, participants will, as of 2001, have access to the necessary conditions (residencies) to carry out and disseminate (production) their collaborative projects: theatre pieces, video films, photography exhibitions, joint translations, joint research in the field of the humanities, and so on.

3. *A Biennale of journals of critical thought.* Once every two years, the journals of critical thought from the Mediterranean area will meet and work together. These journals of critical thought work in a systematic way, at confronting contemporary thinking with works of the imagination and thought, and engage in reflection on the contemporary issues in our societies (relationship between tradition and modernity, etc.). Isolated from one another, only rarely finding the occasion to engage in exchange with artists and researchers beyond their country's borders, they will meet in the framework of this programme to confront their respective analyses and to question members of the Transeuropéennes network on the issues of contemporary thought.

Their function is to be double:

- to mobilise the Workshops' network around the issues of thought and create a permanent and open forum for reflection and confrontation, also providing perspectives for publication;

- to establish links of solidarity between the journals themselves, able to culminate in joint publishing projects; to activate by means of this network of journals a current of ideas working toward the sharing of the still unconstructed common heritage of Europe and the Mediterranean basin, by setting into motion the texts and people involved.

The Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops 2000: Assessment of Activities

General overview

From 25 October to 9 November 2000, the second Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops were held in Marrakech at the initiative of Transeuropéennes, the European Foundation for Culture and the Toledo School of Translators, in close partnership with the King Abdou Al-Aziz Foundation and the Chouala Association. Financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Foundation for Culture, the project enjoyed a noteworthy level of support from the Delegation of Cultural Affairs in Marrakech, which provided the Workshops with one of Marrakech's most beautiful palaces, Dar El Bacha, and significant support from the French Embassy in Rabat.

The Diwan Al Adab Association in Marrakech was also a Workshop partner, as was the Marrakech Museum. The publishing house Al Quobba Zarqua contributed as a service provider.

Given the difficult combination of tradition and modernity, sketched out through these partnerships, certain pitfalls were obviously not avoided, particularly in the extent to which the Workshop's interdisciplinary character and work objectives were truly shared by all. At the same time, the variable levels of involvement and the differing modes of association with the project better made it possible to appreciate the contemporary realities of Morocco, to grasp both the social and cultural issues of today as well as the history, narratives and traditions of the city of Marrakech.

Twenty-five young researchers and artists took part in this session. They came from almost all the countries of the Mediterranean area, with the exception of Greece, Libya, Syria (lack of candidates with the requisite profile), Portugal (last-minute cancellation) and Israel. The mode of recruitment of the participants, by means of a network of individuals (academics, researchers, artists, artistic directors of theatres and other cultural centres, translators, and so on) and through a rigorous selection on the basis of the applications submitted by the candidates proved worthwhile. The high level of competencies, the participants' thoroughgoing commitment, their sense of communication and their willingness to engage in exchange, their openness to the interdisciplinary approach must all be emphasised. Made up of exceptional personalities, intellectually and artistically committed, the group of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops 2000 was able to tackle with exceptional talent all the contradictions linked to their being together, all the doubts stemming from working together, and to come together in common action and reflection.

The speakers came from Morocco, various other Arabic countries, as well as France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. Aside from one last-minute cancellation, everyone scheduled in the programme came - some for a short stay, others for a more extensive period either of theoretical work or studio work. Their high level of motivation, their interest in the project - some having shared its ambitions and inspirations right from its inception - were positively perceived by the participants, and the quality of the exchange which was established shows to what extent a genuine multifaceted scientific and artistic community took shape in the course of the work.

Amongst the practical difficulties encountered, two major factors should be pointed out: - The Euro-Mediterranean partnership has changed nothing with respect to the difficulties of moving between the East and West of the Mediterranean: the high cost of

travel, like the absence of direct connections are typical problems in trying to travel from the Eastern Mediterranean (Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, in particular) toward its Western shores. A routing via the North (Rome, Paris) is often unavoidable.

- While Marrakech corresponded perfectly to the desire for the openness of a space of imagination and reflection, the city did not offer all the facilities necessary for those Workshops requiring more technical support: thus reprography, photographic printing, repair of video equipment, access to high-quality audio-visual material were all problematic.

Lastly, it is regrettable that a lack of time and an inadequate level of financing did not allow for a real preparatory effort prior to the workshops, drawing attention to this important initiative in Morocco.

The Israeli-Palestinian context

The absence of Israeli participants in these Workshops, noted above, is related to the extreme deterioration of Israel-Palestinian relations since 2000. It was the object of lengthy discussions prior to the project and was commented on - and discussed - by the participants. More broadly, what it is euphemistically known as the Israeli- Palestinian conflict cast a dark shadow over the Workshops, and led both the participants and the speakers - who were not necessarily prepared for it - to deal with the reality of the situation. Sometimes deeply moving discussions took place, which were essential for all. They always took place in the respect for the other, in the refusal to conceal what was at stake politically behind the ethnic and religious discourses, with the concern to tackle the most delicate questions. The dignity, the coherent position established as a collective of intellectuals and artists as the days went by, will remain for everyone a crucial experience.

Conclusions

The work of languages; languages at work

The mosaic of languages was not the least of the Workshops' sources of enrichment, and it never ceased to nourish the participants' thinking and work: Arabic in its plurality, Berber, Spanish, French, Italian, Turkish, German, Dutch and English were all present. Arabic, French and English were the languages of simultaneous interpretation for the lectures and debates. But one can only celebrate the fact that there was no single dominant language, but rather several, and several types of relationships with each of these languages, which, moreover, were often the object of comments. As a consequence of this mosaic, inter-translation and self-translation were abundantly practised by the participants as well as by certain speakers, with both humour and deftness.

The dispute between tenants of classical Arabic and tenants of the dialects was particularly interesting, and raised the question as to whether the Euro- Mediterranean

Cultural Workshops should “impose” classical Arabic on Arabophone participants in order to facilitate mutual understanding... This “dispute”, carried out in distanced and benevolent fashion, nevertheless pointed out to the Arabophones to what extent they can be confronted within their own language with moments of foreignness. A foreignness that some referred to as “dizzying”. More delicate, on the other hand, was the bilingualism debate, for it brought an ideological conflict into play. Many of the speakers, and some of the Arabophone participants, chose to express themselves either in French or in English, during their exposés. For some young participants not sharing the experience of bilingualism of their older counterparts, this choice often appeared as a “betrayal” of the Arabic language, of “belonging” to a given community, etc. The paradigmatic experience of a process of multiple identifications, this deliberate bilingualism, this play between languages triggered reactions of incomprehension which sometimes went as far as aggressiveness, even amongst bilingual or trilingual participants. The generation gap, divergence of practices between the Arabic East and West, the ideological developments of the past ten years: such are some of the lines of to be taken into account in the careful analysis that needs to be done as to the causes of this misunderstanding.

From mosaic to dizziness, from dizziness to the wealth of polyphony, the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops sought to find their way and their voice; and they found it thanks to a remarkable rough version of a video performance done in the participants’ residence building - a modern site if ever there was - and which recomposed the Jemaâ El Fna Square as well as its polyphony and theatricality into a symbolic space, even as it bordered this symbolic space with five narratives by women in different languages.

Thousand and One Nights and Sophocle’s Antigone

The common thematic of these two crucial works was a woman’s resistance through speech to the figure of the tyrant. The work carried out on the four selected tales from *Thousand and One Nights*, and on Sophocle’s tragedy not only made it possible to closely analyse the texts, and to compare them, but also to initiate a polemical reflection on reading and interpretation that was particularly fruitful. Very quickly in the course of the collective project, proposals for comparing Antigone and Shahrâzâd, as well as Creon and Shâhriyâr were raised - which was largely done in the Workshops - but which also structured a good many of the discussions. Indeed, inserted by the participants into their contemporary experience - notably because of the bitterness of events in the Middle East - the two figures were perceived as archetypes of modes of presence in the political - though not without contradictions. Thus, early on in the session, Shahrâzâd embodied for some the figure of submission, for others a figure of political cunning, but in any case a figure for bypassing tyrannical violence. Antigone, on the other hand, represented citizenship, the idea of human rights as opposed to the arbitrariness of the law, or, a *contrario*, defended in the eyes of some the logic of filiation against the logic of the political.

As the days went by, these initial, relatively immediate interpretations were questioned, elaborated once again in the sense of a greater complexity, and often turned out to reveal paradoxes. The interpretative issue arose in the heart of the theoretical work as

that of the suspension of partisanship. "Where is the tragedy," one of the participants asked, "if we have already taken Antigone's side?" It was thus necessary to "reconstruct Creon's reasons", as well as Antigone's. The works had to be approached like two texts of a literature of the extreme, of an experience of limits. The reading of Shahrâzâd had to be taken to its veritable limits.

Through both these works the issues of civilisation came to light. The question was raised as to whether *Thousand and One Nights* could be read as an attempt to "overcome the deletion of women in Arabic- Islamic culture" (F. Benslama), on the basis of a double issue: psychological - caring for the mad king at the foot of his bed - and political - freeing the city threatened by the destruction of women undertaken by the king. A divergent reading would be that *Thousand and One Nights* ultimately upholds the state and that it is Shahrâzâd who reestablishes the law (R. Benchemsi), by "bringing the degeneracy of the state back to reason". She enabled the state to reassert itself as a "being- in-becoming". This reading is open in particular to the argument according to which the Arabic-Muslim world "cannot move toward thinking of being-inbecoming". Site of experiences of the limit, and of transgression (see A. Kilito, for a tale of Jaoudar), the *Thousand and One Nights* put references to the Koran and the laws of Islam to work; structured by an imaginary geography which is open from East to West, they are at the same time, through the very history of the text, "a creation of the West" (Kilito). The *Thousand and One Nights* is the story of a work between orality and writing, between translations and censorships, whose fame is most often built upon apocryphal tales (R. van Leuwen).

Clearly identified as a figure of reference in Greek literature and political philosophy within western thought, Antigone eliminates the possibility of closure within the *Oedipus Rex* cycle. Oedipus lived in transgression, which shook the place assigned to everyone through filiation, because he had been the plaything of the gods. Antigone endeavours to put an end to the cycle of damnation by the law, which assigns everyone his or her place in the society. Antigone raises the question of the basis of the *nomos*, of the law (N. Saadi). Antigone is the "fundamental conflict at the heart of the law", the passage between the symbolic law and the law of the city, which has to be founded on moral conscience. Antigone is the precursor of the notion of imprescriptible and inalienable human rights. And that is why she disobeys the law, whose arbitrary foundation she refuses to accept. By proclaiming her right to disobedience, she precedes and contradicts what is to be a moment of achievement of the law with the death of Socrates: "A happy city is a city where the laws are respected." This reading - upon which is founded a whole current of thinking in the western philosophy of law - runs up against an antithetical approach. For some, Antigone can be interpreted as defending the archaic code of family law against the reason of state in the century of Pericles. Antigone goes against the civilised Greek concept of the citizen's rational relations with the city. Antigone refuses the law and refuses the city (R. Assaf).

Above and beyond this interpretative tension, Antigone is nonetheless full of a whole wealth of other complexities, and has on the Arabic side of the Mediterranean world a number of sister figures (R. Benslama). *Antigone* is an ambiguous work, whose particular force and universal scope reside in the fact that a woman talks politics directly with the tyrant himself.

Grasping the very concept of tragedy and its contemporaneity is at the project's

core. Tragedy comes about when there are insoluble problems and unanswerable questions, when man falls prey to error (J.Risset). And *Antigone* expresses “the history of the world permanently”, in a permanent space. The characters in *Antigone* are in a transitory state or “zone”, which is why the crisis can occur. (A. Torrès).

Why do the Arabs not translate the Greek tragedies (or poetry for that matter)? This question, which cropped up again and again - and was at the core of the Cultural Workshops - received three different types of answers, which deserve to be linked together: to avoid paganism, but also through fear of running into competition with the gods in terms of creation (R. Benslama), or through fear of dealing with the conflict with the gods, which is raised by tragedy.

Given the interdisciplinary character of the work done - despite the lack of film and pictorial references regarding the selected works - the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops were able to bring out a sphere of freedom for the literary work: that of critical distance, thanks to which the literary text ceases to be seen as a mirror.

A laboratory of openness

The notions of method which underpin the Cultural Workshop’s project respond to the concern with creating a place that is free from pressures of all kinds, where everyone can engage in intellectual and artistic experimentation free from all self-censorship. Interdisciplinarity and the permanent criss-crossing of perspectives is the very condition for setting ideas and imaginations into motion. At the same time, the concentration in space and time of a project dealing at once with thought and the imagination produces an effect of distance with regard to the urgency of the action that some experienced as being extremely beneficial (“a country where the imagination gets lost in the urgency of action is no good”, as one of the women participating put it), whereas for others it was painful.

Relatively set in their form, the lectures and ensuing debates were simultaneously translated, such that everyone could express themselves with ease and as precisely as possible. Centred on the works on the programme, proposing overlapping and contradictory readings, they led to in-depth, often passionate discussions. As the days went by, on the basis of the lectures, interpretative groups formed, inflecting the work being done in the workshops.

The workshop groups - which will be discussed further along - were based on self-organisation and the freedom of action. While the first steps in these group dynamics were difficult, means were found to unite participants around a common project so they could work together. These means largely had to do with the participants’ exceptional ability for listening and translating one another, both literally - inasmuch as the workshop sessions took place without simultaneous translation - and figuratively. Both during the lecture sessions and in the workshops, the participants experienced a shift from an often suspicious aloofness to interaction and then common action. The inevitable tensions related to the situation of violence in the Middle East - very present in everyone’s mind - but also stemming from the in-depth discussions on issues of cultural and social interpretation, were able to create, over the course of the two-week programme, a community of artists and researchers, grappling with the real and open to the risks of disagreement.

Imaginary geography, a real place

Travelling - as a multiple experience of shifting, as a time of hospitality and for dealing with difference, as the experience of openness - revived here the excellence of its tradition, as it is embodied by the great travellers, from Ibn Battûta to Nerval or Nicolas Bouvier. For it is also in the permanent coming and going between imaginary geography and the real place itself that the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops grappled, bolstered in that respect by the choice of works.

Morocco, as the extreme western point of the Arab-Muslim world, feeds the imaginary geography of the great Mediterranean works, from the *Odyssey* to travel tales, via the *Thousand and One Nights*. This explains the choice of the tale "The City of bronze" - referring to a Moroccan city which no longer exists - as operating a link between contemporary travel and imaginary geography.

The choice of the city of Marrakech made it possible to embroider onto this dialectic in almost hectic fashion. Indeed, there is no lack of threads linking the city of Marrakech as an imaginary space and the works on the programme. All the participants emphasised to what extent the city influenced both their individual and collective work.

Of course, and in obvious fashion, Jemaâ El Fna Square, now classified as an oral heritage site of humanity by UNESCO, was called upon to play a central role in the programme. Presented by Juan Goytisolo in the course of his lecture as "a gallery of voices", as a site of corporality, where oral cultures blend, where identities are in flux, where the thematics of the sacralisation of literature, of faithfulness to the text, are given a veritable pounding, Jemaâ El Fna Square is not only the place where, amongst others, the *Thousand and One Nights* are told, but where the interdependency between oral and written literature is at work. For whereas the written codified the oral, the oral infiltrates the written. This interdependency, finely analysed by Richard Van Leuwen in his talk, is moreover one of the reasons the *Thousand and One Nights*, with its unstable textual corpus, was considered, within the Arab-Muslim corpus, to have been a minor work.

Jemaâ El Fna is the square of the storytellers - and of exchanges. *The Thousand and One Nights* stages a woman whose work emerges from her storytelling. Meanwhile, the women are missing. Several participants, both men and women, set off to look for them, guided by the erudition of the Moroccan poet Dalila Hyaoui. In the results of the appended work, a number of different figures of women appear, one playing a founding role in the city's history, the others symbolic of moments in its social history. The workshop participants, in a previously mentioned video performance, chose to recompose the space of Jemaâ El Fna, its "gallery of voices", by introducing the tales of five women, at the edges of the harangue, the (masculine) speech of the merchants situated in the centre.

But Marrakech cannot be reduced to Jemaâ El Fna Square, and in the participants' efforts to "translate the city", both in the photography workshop led by Gilles Abegg, and in the other work groups, other inscriptions, other traces came to light. Thus the comparison between the city's souk and the *Thousand and One Nights* as a maze was more than a mere figure of style, given how the participants' different ways of looking at it were able to compose plural and complex narratives - from Shahrâzâd's bed of iron

and cotton, imagined by one of the participants and on which were projected the images of men standing about talking at the edges of the palm grove, near the medina, to the photographs in the exhibition catching the absences - presences in the souk or grasping the strange border between the modern city and the old city, demarcated by its walls, and comparable to the city of Antigone, and not overlooking the figures of the children of the medina, which lead back to that intercessor of the imagination in the person of Shahrâzâd's little sister in the *Thousand and One Nights*...

Who would have imagined that one day Glaoui's old palace (whose reputation as a tyrant lives on in the city) would serve - thanks to the generosity and kindness of the Marrakech Delegation of Cultural Affairs - as a meeting place on the theme of women's speech in the face of the figure of the tyrant? And more striking still, that theatre performances on the theme of this confrontation would be done in this space? Inventing for the magnificent Dar El Bacha Palace a new function - that of an extraordinary stage space in the central patio, breaking with the traditional relation between the stage and the audience, by putting the audience at the centre of the patio and by acting in the multiple stage spaces offered by the open salons and aisles - the theatre workshop brought about a translation of the city, by "appropriating" its heritage constructed in a spirit of modernity, in the most successful possible way.

Beyond the theatre workshop, it was the Marrakech project as a whole which was borne up by this site.

Tradition and modernity: the impossible return to the source

As an integral part of the Euro- Mediterranean Cultural Workshops' project, the links between the pre-existent heritage and works of the imagination and thought showed themselves to be highly relevant for thinking through the question of tradition and modernity. Thus the theatrical experimentation at Dar El Bacha showed that is not the predetermination of some historical monument to be reproduced in fixed forms, and that invention is also a powerful force for renewing relations with tradition.

In the debates that followed the presentation of the erudite works of the Diwan Al Adab Association, a cleavage was clearly visible between those close to the association, concerned with a return to the source, the need for inscription "in the continuous flux" of traditions, to "restore what has been lost" (both in terms of the unity between community life and urbanism and in terms of literary production), and the group of artists and intellectuals of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops. The latter insisted on the urgency of putting the issue of origins behind them, of thinking - both in literary, philosophical and urbanistic terms - on the basis of an impossible return to the source - in order to avoid forever "prowling around a black hole" (R. Benslama).

Cropping up again in relation to the question of the role of women in contemporary Moroccan society, in the course of a debate organised by the Chouala Association, this cleavage between tradition and modernity appeared at the very heart of the group of participants, with truly surprising virulence, and which notably pitted the young women from the Middle East against their young male colleagues. Coming to the fore in the public sphere in Morocco in the course of the year 2000, the debate on women's rights in the Arab- Muslim sphere was perceived by some as questioning the very foundations of Arab- Muslim identity. This gave way to vigorous debate on the potential for the

reform of Arab-Muslim societies within their own tradition, and on their compatibility with any significant social change in the status of women. No clear answer was arrived at in the course of the three-hour discussion, where the bilingualism of the woman who gave the talk - and her decision to give her theoretical exposé in French - was itself not appreciated (see above).

And yet tradition itself does not lack spaces of transgression, of restoration of the figure of the woman, as shown by the songs of the Melhûn. Though generally sung by men, the Melhûn give voice, in their magnificent *qâssida*, to the speech of women. The double pictorial and musical encounter around the Melhûn will remain for many one of the Workshops' more intense and elegant moments. It was through the visual arts that the participants first discovered the Melhûn, along with its circular universe and erotic dimension, through the cycle of works that visual artist Farid Belkahia has devoted to it. Tribute must be paid to the artist's generous hospitality in his studio, for once the gaze focused in on his work, and the participants got used to the site where the work was produced (for many it was the first time in an artist's studio), a real exchange came about. The concert which followed in the Marrakech Museum, with two of the great voices of Melhûn, was to lead everyone toward the circularity and theatricality of the song - and toward the extraordinary wealth of its texts.

A project breeding-ground: the work groups

The great success of the Euro- Mediterranean Cultural Workshops is due entirely to the work of the participants, to their intellectual and emotional involvement in the proposed issues. Both the collective and individual results which were shared amongst the participants at the session's end constitute invaluable paths for future work.

1. The theatre workshops

Almost half the participants were involved in theatrical work: there were, amongst them, people from the theatre (actors and directors), but also other participants having had no previous theatrical practice. Given the diversity of the artistic personalities present, as well as their respective visions, three projects were developed and presented one evening on the patio of the Dar El Bacha. The play took place in the midst of the audience members, seated on both sides of the centre of the patio, and the staging took best advantage of the space of the cross-shaped aisles and the nooks around the edge of the garden. Three performances or partial sketches - there was not enough time for the plays to be entirely finished - were given in Arabic, French and English, and there were an equal number of theatre projects which deserved to be finished. All three took up the figures of Antigone, Creon, Shahrâzâd and King Shâhriyâr, ironically crossing their paths or having them dialogue in the intimate conditions of a bedroom. Playing with the literary figure in this way was in keeping with the central concern with apprehending the very nature of their speaking out. These projects henceforth call for further elaboration, over the long term, on the basis laid down in Marrakech. One of the priorities in the follow-up to the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops is making sure this happens.

2. The video workshop

The same goes for the video performance, already mentioned above, which brought

together video film, theatre, music and storytelling. Conceived as a crucible, as a space of orality, underpinned by writing, a space of improvisation and play, the site was a *mise en abîme* of Jemaâ El Fna Square. The coherency of the conception, and its multiple levels of reading, indicate that with adequate time, further work on this project would culminate in a marvellous project. There too it is important that the means be found to bring this project to fruition.

3. *Theoretical workshop*

In a difficult articulation between the individual and the collective, the theoretical workshop created a space of interaction between the critical readings of the proposed works and a far broader, more philosophical reflection, on speech, power and the feminine, as well as on translation as a means of thinking through the other. A collective project was born, the success of which relies entirely on the spirit of continuation of those who proposed it. It may constitute a focal point of thought on what is at stake in the contemporary translation of cultures - an initiative deserving full encouragement.

4. *The “translate the city” photography workshop*

Led by the photographer Gilles Abegg, whose keen sense of both urban space and stage space is well known, the photography workshop brought together primarily novices, while nevertheless making room for camera and film professionals. Like in the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops in Toledo in 1999, all the participants, including the most experienced, were treated in strictly equal fashion, everyone receiving three disposable cameras for their photographs. Of the five-hundred or so pictures taken in the course of long trips through the city, some twenty were selected for the exhibition hung in Dar El Bacha, on the white walls of a small room. Placed right on the floor, the parallel montages offered a more detailed, more autobiographical reading of the city, requiring multiple interpretation.

The art of constructing space and that of stretching time assuredly characterised what was done in these workshops. This reality should truly give us pause, for it is the outcome of a shared intelligence of the situation and of a freedom accepted by one and all. It is on that basis that the continuation of the projects must be envisaged, and from which the élan of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops in the coming years must stem.

Speakers

Gilles Abegg, Photographer (Paris) ; *Roger Assaf*, Theatre director (Beirut) ; *Barbara Azaola*, Toledo School of Translators (Toledo) ; *Farid Belkahia*, Artist (Marrakech) ; *Jamal Eddine Benhayoun*, Professor of English Literature at Tetouan University, poet, former participant in the 1999 Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops (Tetouan) ; *Rajae Benschems*, Writer (Marrakech) ; *Fethi Benslama*, Writer, psychoanalyst, director of the journal *Intersignes* (Paris) ; *Raja Benslama*, Assistant professor of Arabic literature at the University of Tunis ; *Mohamed Beriz*, Storyteller, Jemaâ El Fna Square (Marrakech) ; *Mohamed Charfiq*, Linguist, Chouala Association (Marrakech) ; *Dalila Hyaoui*, Poet

(Marrakech) ; *Rachid El Houda*, Architect-urban planner (Marrakech) ; *Juan Goytisolo*, Writer (Marrakech-Paris) ; *Mourat Al Kadiri* (Salé) Poet, general secretary of the Chouala Association, former participant in the 1999 Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Workshops ; *Jaafar Kansoussi*, Publisher, essayist (Marrakech) ; *Abdelfatah Kilito*, Writer, professor of Arabic literature at the University of Rabat (Rabat) ; *Richard van Leeuwen*, Historian and specialist in Arabic studies, Dutch translator of *Thousand and One Nights* (Amsterdam) ; *Abdelmaksoud Rachdi*, Researcher in sociology, president of the Chouala Association for education and culture (Casablanca) ; *Jacqueline Risset*, Writer, professor of literature at the University of Rome (Rome/Paris) ; *Nourredine Saadi*, Writer, professor of law at the University of Douai (Algiers-Paris) ; *Tijania Sertat*, Professor of philosophy, representative of the Ministry of Education (Casablanca) ; *Abdelilah Tabit*, Traditional music expert (Marrakech) ; *Anne Torrès*, Theatre director. Academic advisor : *Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes*.

Organisers

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Notes
