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Introduction

“The here is shaped by the elsewhere, and culture, once conceived through the image of networks, becomes inseparable from travel”.

(Belghazi, 2005: 276)

This paper contends with a number of terms and concepts with the aim of problematizing the maturity of cultural and artistic texts in the context of the existing convoluted ramifications of today’s technological, political, and cultural changes. We are now geared up to throw into question the premise that culture is an innocent and natural manifestation of an assemblage of cultural signs in a particular society. In this direction, Lila Abu-Lughod argues that "culture" puts into effect divisions that inexorably hold a sense of hierarchy (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 466). As Abu-Lughod tries to work against long-age cultures, she destabilizes their most problematic connotations: homogeneity, coherence,
and timelessness (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 476) In the turn of the twenty-first century we are more likely to view cultural manifestations as constructions, products supplied—given their exchange value—to meet the needs of consumer societies around the globe. The concept of benefit is premised on the modern pressing logic that seeks an added value in everything, culture included. This explains the chatter that ran across the late 90s around the new economy that spoke of a shift from an industrial-minded to a technology-minded economy. We live in what has variously been described as a knowledge-based economy, a post-industrial society, an information society, a new economy, a cultural economy, an economy of signs or a network society (Bell, 1973; Lyotard, 1984; Lash et Urrys, 1994; Castells, 1996; Webster, 1996; du Gay & Pryke, 2002, as cited in Barry & Slater, 2005: 1).

The IT Bubble that has climaxed at the outset of the third millennium with the rise of dot-coms and e-prefixed companies has in one way or another influenced cultural capitals everywhere. In the times that knew less frenetic modes of circulation, culture was mostly a local product consumed locally by locals. Today, cultural artefacts, including authenticity, are the property of none; yet institutional strategies are devised to engage in complex rites of appropriation and commoditization of culture. Interestingly, major efforts are invested to classify cities into recognizable spaces, cultural, historical, spiritual, etc, for touristic purposes, charted elsewhere in detail in travel guides, tourist books and websites. Thus the possibility to substantiate authenticity into conceivable spatial clusters, and the possibility to ‘sell’ it is part of an identity politics, in which distinctiveness is used as a principle for charting territoriality and other physical forms of objectification as a means for the production, promotion and enactment of an unmatched cultural genetics. The creation of commoditized signs, the so called commodity fetish, depends on the production of racial difference (Erlmann, 1999: 92). For Erlmann, spectacle and capitalism, aesthetics and production is indissoluble (1999: 92). Erlmann believes that with late capitalism ‘the spectacle of the commodity’ is linked to the innovation of the myth of the ‘abundant society’ and ‘fantasies of universal progress’ whereby arranged stagings are more an articulation of Western fantasies (1999: 92). While this works in Erlmann’s view through mirror images, that feed the image of the west’s sense of heroism (1999: 181), our concern is to problematize fixed notions of seeing non-western cultural dialogue. Commodities of difference are primarily marked by an inward-looking process in which not only difference has to be seen, put on scene, but also lack of it. Through the Essaouira festival, western pilgrims display their lack of difference, which comes in the form of embracing, consuming, enacting difference. They engage in the ambivalent we-lament-we-don’t-possess-difference, yet, in the process, end up in such home-away delicacy, neither purely western nor purely non-western. The western get “eas-turned” constantly, in the quest for difference, that being similar (to the self) again after the process of being similar to the other, begs into question the extent to which the difference appeases western superiority. Rather, lack of similarity (to the other) in the non-western sociality and spaciality aura of the festival, in which non-western lack of difference is implied through color, language, etc is reconciled a) visually through Rastafarian (nomadic) looks, clothing, behavior (e.g. walking shoeless), b) technically through fusion of non/western tunes on stage, and c) fictitiously through the crowd’s underlying metaphor of harmony. Lack of difference hence is made up for by the act of possessing difference, claimed by the non-western, appropriated by the western. Enactment of difference by the festival and appropriation of similarity by western
subjects mirror matters of choice and priority in adjoining the cultural with the authoritative, more-deserving fetish of circulation.

Deborah Kapchen exemplifies this principle of local cultural appropriation of difference in her discussion of Abdellah El Gourd’s documentation and writing practices in Dar Gnawa, a site for the display of Gnawa culture, which «exhibits not only the process of being possessed by several cultures somatically, but [...] also claims to the possession of culture, objectifying a notion of tagnawit, Gnawa tradition, by representing the specific Gnawa practices in Tangiers in a written and official form (Kapchen, 2007: 230)». For Kapchan El Gourd is possessed more by the creation of heritage, than by mere documentation, for such ethnographic transcriptions make a run at capturing immaterial texts and artifacts, in brief, the ephemeral, (Kapchen, 2007: 226) The possession of culture is crowned in Kapchan’s narrative on the culture of possession, whereby the body as a material form is inhabited by the immaterial, the mluks and saints invoked during Gnawa rituals, spirits that inhabit the body, taking root not only in one’s consciousness, but also in the muscles of one’s fingers, in the surrounding space, «in the fusion of odours they demanded be released into the air” (Kapchan, 2007: 231).

In e-societies, those that are increasingly defined in relation to and acting upon the ethereal world of the internet, culture is represented first and foremost by corporations with medium to high-technology mechanization, digital consumer products, logo-drenched signs where endorsement is replaced by sponsorship, and random preparation is replaced by risk calculation, and cultural events are replaced by cultural services, all of which are situated within complex organizational paradigms supervised by novel generations of media technologies and gadgets, from IPods to twitter. It is thus a valuable study that which is concerned with the understanding of adaptability of popular culture to market norms, technological outbursts, and politics.

Researchers specializing in urban dynamics and popular culture observe different layers of change in the way culture is transmitted over time across continents and try to come to terms with these changes, big and small, and attach meaning to them. Should we, however, conceive of change- that is related to cultural production-as an overarching truth equal in amount and nature, we might lapse into reductionism. Change doesn’t mean the same thing everywhere at any time, and it does not have the same implications for every culture. Some cultures adapt (sometimes give in) quickly to change, while others take time to resist, negotiate and finally accept or accept with a frown or decline change. The wealth of far-reaching research in this field fails at times to make up for the intricacies of the aspect of cultural, religious and economic differences and specificities that render change as a totality a debatable subject matter.

We are also susceptible to and approving of the idea that new technologies are chief movers of change in (the production) culture, which always permits an exploration of the social shaping of technology or the social construction of technology (Bell, 2006: 14). The internet and the mediatization of cultures facilitate the consumption of other cultural products. TV and the internet have compressed time and space and rendered countries visi(t)a)ble. David Harvey’s use of the term compression to account for temporal and spatial convergence rests on the fact that «a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the space of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world seems to collapse inwards upon us» (Harvey, 1989: 40). As we try to think about the music festival here do we think of it as a produit Marocain (Moroccan product) traded through the media across space and time for global
consumption, or should we rather see it through a multi-dimensional scope that takes into account cultural glocalization and the deficiency of (copy) rights? The following discussion tries to analytically reach as many compartments as possible of this question.

1. Recurrents and Exclusives: The Epistemological Problematic of Authenticity

Commentators would mostly agree that we can hardly plead for an uncontaminated cultural authenticity, as we are faced with the reallocations of culture taking place every instance within the bigger process of cultural distribution between and across borders. The major intention here is not to provide a new theory on global circulation, but more unassumingly propose a platform for a therapeutic reading which will permit us to better see the dynamics of global cultural distribution that gives details about and underscores the complexity of cultural dynamics in a country like Morocco where festivals are made and lived, produced and used for different purposes, political, economic, and cultural. The question of authenticity hinges on the argument that the shift into technological management and marketing of cultural products comes at a juncture which highlights the intelligibility of conflict between past and present norms enfolding entertainment industries, cultural heritage, and tourism.

To distinguish this juncture, our discussion links what we could call «recurrents» and «exclusives». Recurrents are those repeatable entities in a particular culture that can be modeled by, witnessed in exemplified ways in many other cultures. We can, for example, locate recurrences -similar features- in many music festivals around the world, related to organizational ethics, economic agendas, technological systems, etc. These are continuing and regular forms and patterns surrounding cultural formations and formations of culture that exist universally, and we can thus call them recurrences. Local and national meanings, however, are distributed as exclusives (e.g. specific cultural heritage and meanings that accompany a festival).

However, in case we agree that recurrences rest on an attribute of correspondence or agreement, like at the level of, say, organizational ethics in orchestrating music festivals around the world (discussing architecture and design for outdoor shows, renting location, hiring of sound and engineering professionals, contacting artists’ managers, hiring the right security firm, etc.), there are still problems with the attempt at holding a universalist dimension of recurrences, because of deficiencies in finding means of accountability for and measuring of similarity. For example, two festivals could use the same organizational methods, but employ different languages like Swahili and Moroccan Arabic. This is one moment where exclusives interfere with recurrences to further disturb any attempt at clear cut categorizations; same thing for exclusives. Many festivals around the world can be organized around the theme of spirituality, inviting musicians who are supposed to sing «holy» songs and perform sanc shows in a city charged with spiritual meanings on the festival program (e.g. the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music). But the festival organizers try to overlook the global face of Fez as a city modernized, which makes it more or less similar to any other city in Morocco or elsewhere (element of recurrence). They focus on a chapter in the history of the city (the element of particularity) to build the whole idea of the festival around the theme and aura of spiritual Fez to ultimately meet a certain organizational ideology. These
complications, however, are helpful as they further stress the element of betweenness inherent in cultural forms, which in turn emphasizes the ongoing processes of participation of recurents in the making of exclusives and vice versa. Indeed, the production of the authentic is contingent on exclusives, which, in the process, are repackaged and reactivated with a renewed task in a trans-border framework, seized into the broader (recurrent) anatomy to correspond to the promise of global cultural production. Knowing exclusives and recurents are charged by a conceptual contrariety that presupposes an imbalance in how they operate and interact, is it possible that a recurrent be turned into an exclusive? We would first suggest that nothing is purely exclusive or exclusively recurrent, as these are informed by their interaction within a sphere of mutual contamination. For instance, blackness is a recurrent, but it is displayed through the festival of Gnawa as an exclusive form of identity. Gestures of representation, a domain of language use defines blackness in the case of Gnawa in relation to its historical, socio-cultural and spatial particularity. However universal, blackness materializes, as a form of otherness (Kapchan, 2007: 230), as an eccentric idiosyncrasy specifying and specified by a particular geography and sociality, in association with certain explicative and particularized narratives and modes of textualization that put it on display as exclusive.

1.1. The Regulation of Popular Culture: Globophobia and the Cultural Imperialism Thesis

The idea that the same music artefacts are being consumed globally, the process further accentuated by local festivals catering for western musical trends, styles and genres, has been used much often by the advocates of the cultural imperialism thesis. Chances are, they argue, we could be driven, carried in a rush by the internet and world information networks, toward a blind alley that inevitably stops at the hazardous danger wall of cultural homogeneity or the otherwise related risk barricade of homogeneity of cultural consumption (Hamlink: 1983). The idea that the same music artefacts are being consumed globally, the process further accentuated by local festivals catering for western musical trends, styles and genres, has been used much often by the advocates of the «cultural imperialism» thesis (see Said, 1993). Chances are, they argue, we could be driven, carried in a rush by the internet and world information networks, toward a blind alley that inevitably stops at the hazardous danger wall of cultural homogeneity or the otherwise related risk barricade of homogeneity of cultural consumption (Hamlink, 1983). Although its charges can’t be dismissed this thesis is obviously a poor guide to understanding the global circulation of music today, (Stokes, 2004: 54-55).

«The Internet is like a 20-foot tidal wave coming, and we are in kayaks» (Grove, as cited in Schlender 1996: 46). At the time of the present writing, the world is living in 2012, and only God knows what happened to these kayaks. But to be sure, the tidal wave has had radical sweeping effects in the way information is being transmitted, shared, and appropriated. Pieterse finds a brilliant way of detracting the imperialism thesis by trying to find a link between globalization and the empire, by asking the question, «What is the difference between contemporary globalization and empire? ». For Pieterse this question could be waved away on the assumption that it is academic hairsplitting or on the argument that contemporary globalization, no matter how it is packaged or phrased, is a form of domination (Pieterse, 2004: 31-32). Many Moroccan festivals (e.g. L’boulevard,
Mawazine, etc.) are now awash with American sub-cultural signs, from hip hop dress codes to punk piercings and hairdos. Should this be read as part of the post-modern tactics of imperial dominance of globalization? American popular culture is so potent that outside the United States some countries now attempt to ration it. [and] [t]he information highway is going to break down barriers and may promote a world culture, or at least a sharing of cultural activities and values (Hedley, 1998: 204). Hedley demands a rephrasing of Grove’s analogy into the following adaptation.

12 The Internet is like an American (or western) tidal wave coming, and the rest of the world is in kayaks.

1.1.1. But where is Morocco from this tide?

Photo 1. Moroccan Hip Hop MCs with NY caps and US flagged T-shirts at a Music event (Music Day), in 2010.

There is a plethora of signs in these images that could generate heated discussions about and interpretations around the impact of American culture on Moroccan cultural production. During two years of official fieldwork I spent tracking festivals and music concerts in Morocco (not including those off record), while doing research on the topic, I have had the chance to collect a good amount of data like this, which might be supportive of the arguments used by the detractors of the standardization of culture, those who might want to speak about the invasion of «western» cultural signs shipped (by net and the media) to Moroccan society. The importation of these signs and adoption thereof of the American culture, according to them, might lead to the effacement of local culture, as the locals would all jump at once hypnotized by the powerful magnetism of American cultural products and might even be euphorically elated to sing after a crowd of
American artists “We are the World”. As they speak about the cultural burden of globalization, they would from time to time make references to young people dressed in American fashion, flag designs and city names patched up all over their clothes, posturing in ways unfamiliar to the common Moroccan man or woman, speaking a language that knows the constant interventions of code switching to and borrowing from American words they have memorized from the many American songs with which their brains are saturated, their hairdos similar to what we see on TV or the net, typically reminiscent of the subcultural belligerent young people of the west. This cheek-tongued description hopes to provide a sarcastic rendition of the cultural imperialism thesis, which is a lot of times shored up by quite a handful of arguments. But although such arguments are persuasive, they supply only one singular shot of a multifarious set of circumstances.

This thesis does not match with the aspect of heterogeneity that marks trans-local events. It does not account for the whole aspects of the picture, as it were, about popular culture, festivals and music in Morocco. We can trace the presence of American trends almost everywhere in the world. But should this be enough reason to be globophobic or Americophobic? One could also observe that the American superhighway doesn’t get much from local life because of the following reasons:

- Local life is dislocated even in the US due to multiculturalism, and we cannot therefore speak of a pure cultural model.
- Culture cannot be replaced, substituted, changed, put off and on like T-shirts.
- Even within a country like Morocco we cannot speak about cultural homogeneity, as the different existing regions and ethnicities still uphold and maintain their cultural specificities.
- There exists unevenness in cultural consumption as these artefacts are not consumed passively.

1.1.2. The regulation of cultural consumption.

The state wants through the main nine Moroccan channels to keep some elements of culture alive, if not for any benevolent reason then just for the sustainment of the economic income generated through the exportation and selling of local art and culture. Festivals enable the state’s exploitation of concepts of the indigenous and the authentic (e.g. Essaouira and Fez festivals), while creating opportunities for exporting these as local products through global media companies. Again, most of these festivals engage in different forms of commercialization via sponsors, seeking of global (media) partners, and selling of tickets and passes, etc. Accordingly, the regulation of the press, given this logic of entrepreneurship, is one strategy to conserve the country’s cultural creativity.
This T-shirt was taken during the Souk at L’boulevard festival in May 2011 in Casablanca. This T-shirts and many others amassed from festival markets are scarce if not out of stock outside the festival, because their producers are always in the lookout for new designs and messages that fit in the current discussions and debates on the cultural, social and political fronts. The T-shirt derives its creativity from wordplay, which therefore becomes its central message. The L’boulevard festival is one event that promotes creativity, and will not allow any commodities whatsoever to be sold at their souk. These commodities need to meet the creative expectation of a highly creative audience.

In meeting with these high stakes of expectation, the designers are always busy with their computers, and logo making softwares, trying to craft good puns, mix-ups, smart rhetorical phrases that have an intended effect, such as CANASA, which comprises two locations, Canada and Casa (short for Casablanca). These two places are not even (geographically speaking) on the map, as one is a country, the other a city. But beyond the humorous effect of the logo, which communicates a more-too-often sense of pride particularly known to Casablancans, for whom the city, given their hyperbolic sense of metropolitan patriotism, encloses the global magnitude and value of a country such Canada (this explains the division that renders Casa detachable into a prefix and suffix), the T-shirt transmits an awareness of the heterogeneity of the metropolitan city of Casablanca, artfully printed on a T-shirt to be sold in a local festival for music. These teasing and mocking signs especially target the cultural imperialism and westernization hypotheses, increasingly and largely adopted and circulated, especially after the syndrome of amplification of the sense of national identity at the wake of the Mena uprisings in 2011. Within such amplifications, designers of these T-shirts, by way of...
transmitting their awareness and appreciation of them existing in local spaces/places with a global taste, underscore the centrality of urban locality and culture, gestures that many times come about in highly patriotic appearances. Far from endorsing the cultural imperialism proposal, the T-shirt, in one of its meanings, tries to argue that ‘here’ you can find (or rather experience) either Canada and Casa or both.

1.2. World Nomadictates vs. the Myth of Universality

Now we are heading for the next level of this discussion, after having seen how the west and western signs (flags, city names, etc) can be used as commodities, and how they guarantee some salability in the festival market that aspires for cross-fertilization of concepts and items. The west as an idea traded across local markets through music and fashion might represent precious opportunities for local cultural economy to thrive and become richer with the time. Given that Morocco lies a few kilometers away from Europe, there is no way imaginable to stop cultural artifacts from travelling into the country. Immigration is one of the aspects of Globalization, and we would concur that it has a lot of growing impact on countries like Spain, France and Belgium where whole neighborhoods are packed up with eastern goods and languages and populations. But this doesn’t allow us to speak of imperialism in reverse. We might want to call both flows world nomadictates (nomadic dictates), as they keep on moving all the time across places, leaving traces, as nomads do, of their presence, without necessarily changing the place or symbolically plaguing it. Yet, they are dictates because they speak their presence aloud, loud enough that we confuse that loudness with an attempt to imperialize.

Globo-boosters and globo-skeptics both cling to statements with some amount of validity; otherwise the debate wouldn’t have been so fierce. As we are not interested to invite industrial economy to the current discussion as the theoretical orientations of our topic do not allow, our concern is mainly to persist at the debate on cultural capital. However, as economists believe, market competition is always on the rise. We might be inclined to see cultural industries, those that produce (and trade in) culture, as competitive market managers with competent marketers, each one trying to sell more to generate more income. This results in a boom of cultural artifacts filling the cultural market without these artifacts claiming universality. We have no statistics as to who sells best, who will thrive, for a how long and where etc, but we know that countries like Japan and China (eastern of course) have lots of shares in the whole game of cultural distribution. I propose the concept world nomadictates precisely because I would like, on the one hand, to come to terms with the term “world”, which has fallen out of favor in discussions on global markets. On the other hand, “global”, though excessively used nowadays, is a term that has accrued negative charges, together with words like “universal”, in debates on cultural imperialism. “World” has always been used carefully in spirited discussions around some forms of injustice and prejudice, the reason why environmentalists and peace makers choose to speak about a pollution-free world, and a war-free world; postcolonial thinkers like Spivak also prefer to exploit the term “world” (see e.g. “worlding”) to put into question the top-heavy western processes of othering. Worlding for Spivak is the prevailing act in mainstream systems of representation to subject the world to measures of “worlding” or “the assumption that when the colonizers come to a world, they encounter it as uninscribed earth upon which they write their inscriptions” (Spivak, 1990: 129).
As we deal with the issue of cultural imperialism, beyond the gory discussions on third world markets and western industrial dominance whereby the term global is highly fitting and useful, world nomadictates will be used to avoid the otherwise one-sided existing concepts on cultural production. This is probably the same reason why David Hesmondhalgh, in his critique against “globalization” and “cultural imperialism”, opts for the term internationalization, to “avoid the problems surrounding the term “globalization” (Hesmondhalgh, 2011: 218). Hesmondhalgh addresses three aspects of internationalization: the internationalization of cultural businesses, the internationalization of cultural texts, and the increasing impact of the global on the local. The first aspect consults the role of transnational businesses and explains how transnational corporations get based in more than one country under companies with no nationality, but with profit that returns to the core country. The second aspect, which is more relevant here, deals with the internationalization of cultural texts that “are originated in one country [and] are seen, heard and so on in other countries” (Hesmondhalgh, 2011: 218-219). In consequence of this increasing circulation of cultural texts, according to him, among other factors, “cultural identities are increasingly complex». Hesmondhalgh argues for a shift in thinking about culture as related to territory. “It probably never was wise”, Hesmondhalgh assets, “to think of culture as being linked to territory in a simple, one-to-one way but more and more the culture of a particular place is comprised of inputs from many other places” (2011: 219). We understand from this that in one country the cultural texts do not address the concerns and interests of one nation but “of a variety of nations, or of sections of people who share a transnational culture” (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 178). Hip hop for example as a cultural text produced in the US can be appealing to Europe as well as Asia and/or Africa, but (strictly speaking) not to the whole society, only to those who have grown liking for and enthusiasm about these types of cultural commodity in that society. Internationalization, however, doesn’t go far away from the other term, “globalization”, which Hesmondhalgh wants to avoid. Internationalism risks holding up a unifying stance towards other cultures. Anti-globalization enthusiasts match globalization with the homogenization of goods, which is thought of as one end product of globalization, though we argue that this thesis is frustrated and cancelled out in point of fact by studies focusing on the social and cultural level. However, if our aim is to avoid the problems that come with the word globalization, we might want to avoid talking about internationalization as well for five of reasons:

• Colonization regimes and colonizers have often tried to sell the myth of universality and internationalization of goods (knowledge, civilization, western education, prosperity) to the colonized, and therefore these are terms which are very close to the concept of cultural imperialism.

• We can still be persuaded to think that internationalization is the same as globalization because of problems of nomination. That’s to say, the decision and final pronouncement that a particular product should (or will get an endorsement to) circulate internationally is always assumed to be in the hand of production-monopolizing societies. However, this assumption overlooks non-western forms of circulation, whereby North African migration is changing the social, linguistic, cultural visual and even culinary life in many western countries. Our concern with western circulation of cultural objects doesn’t come here at the expense of our awareness of South-South cultural globalizations (e.g. Egyptian cinema and music). Yet the urban scene in Morocco is associated less with non-western influence, more with western circulation. Internationalization gives the impression and puts emphasis on
the idea that consuming societies are playing a lesser role, and are thus subordinate to
societies capable of ensuring the internationalization of their products, essentially because
they don’t control the trans-national corporations mentioned by Hesmondhalgh.
• Internationalization approbates that integral irregularities and ‘structural asymmetries’ are
very powerful in the world system, in which case the local recipient, who is a passive subject
to circulation, or ever an active participant in it, doesn’t control the trans-national
corporations mentioned by Hesmondhalgh, and can thus only act upon circulation as a
factual experience.
• Internationalization is a western discursive practice which in the minds of post-colonial
critics is synonymous for the production and exportation of knowledge (of a dominant
trans-national group) for/to other places, lacking the aptitude for critical assessment.
• While dominant countries can afford to be international, other non-dominant countries do
not own the necessary and sufficient power and machinery to go international. This reminds
us of visa issues. Those with no visa problems might want to call themselves international
citizens due to mobility privileges, while others who can’t have the visa are gripped by
cross-border disability.

In view of this, we will be often using the concept of world cultural nomadictates, which
clearly addresses the dictates of cultural circulation:
• Dictates as we know them are authoritative, yet not all people are supposed or willing to
comply with them.
• Although dictates oblige, they don’t coerce because here they are nomadic.
• They don’t have enough power to be fully-established, secure and constant. They oblige for a
short while, and move on.
• World nomadic circulation of goods and individuals is not associated with cultural
imperialism, since these goods and individuals are confined by their rhetorical
marginalization, because they only make it to and have influence on some group sections
and places. Therefore they are minoritarian, not majoritarian, as would Deleuze say
(western human texts and objects have an influence on non-western people and places
(within certain periods), such as the phenomenon of Smurf in the 80s, Tecktonik in the 00s,
which faded, leaving only some traces in today’s urban repertoire.\textsuperscript{8} MC Gamehdi notes in
personal interview in 2010 that the rap scene in Morocco is a Tsunami stopped (by a remote
control) in full action. Yet, in other interviews with Moroccan singers Mohamed El Ghawi
and Said Moskiri in 2011, they both describe the hip hop scene in Morocco as a wave which
will ultimately be followed and replaced by other waves. Tsunami or wave, these artistic
forms are marked by travel and transience. They can still be said within our discussion on
the travelling of cultural commodities to be possessors of marginal mobilities typically
associated with nomadic travelers.
• They don’t claim to be whole. They also function within the logic of disability.
• In practice, they are completely functionalized, in a model which is seeking to shift away
from flexibility/adaptability/creativity towards “fluidity” or even “liquidity”.

2. Trans-cultural Pluralism: Essaouira as a Case in
Point

Essaouira is the melting pot for the encounters with and intersection of world music in a
postmodern postcolonial Morocco. World music becomes only a phenomenon of a brimful
city. Essaouira as a world city now lives on as the site of sustained encounter, an urban
slate that bears the zigzagging writings of world travelers and world music. Music is marked by mobility. Connell and Gibson argue that music, like all forms of sound, is inherently mobile, and that recordings themselves move as objects—as treasured artefacts of lives and places, traded through migrant links across countries, underpinning musical economies or sustaining diasporic connections (Connell et Gibson, 2003: 45). Mobility, as they come to understand it, engenders a sense of dynamism in time and space, a heightened sense of transformation most evident in the contemporary era.

The Essaouira festival is a global event in the most contemporary sense. It is, among other things, local music performed trans-locally, and back. Its coincidences and irregular fusions are postcolonial. If you stride alert enough in the streets, corners and border lines of the city, you will come across tuneful testimonies collected from the four corners of the earth. Young amateurish street musicians try to promote themselves, equipped with their own homemade instruments; they are at times professionals sharing music at a remove from the official stages of the event, in the marginal yet central theatres of the urban space; Moreover, they have the facility and willingness to get a feel for what performance in a multicultural city involves. The important point to make is not that these Afro-western performers are both global and local performers, but they relatively contribute to the blurring of the disparity between the two, and, at the same time, maintain the claim of an illusion that what they are playing something authentic, something which is not incongruous with the character of the city. Such authenticity, as Connell, and Gibson discuss it, is in part constructed by attempts to embed music in place (2002: 19). It is interesting to reflect on how these Afro-western modern and post-modern musicians are the products of unison between minorities and majorities, that is, of their transcultural housing to the city’s world cultural nomadictates. I asked Dj Joseph, an anthropologist, teacher and artist, in a personal interview, about what he thinks of the Essaouira festival as a commoditized space for encounter. “In Essaouira I know a lot of Moroccan hippy people who are alternative, creative and artistic” Says Joseph. “They look forward to this festival all the year, because this is a place where they can be themselves and can connect to other like-minded Moroccans, which I think is difficult for Moroccans”. For Joseph this difficulty can be attributed to the element of seclusion like-minded people at times suffer from. “I spoke to many musicians, and sometimes in Moroccan culture you feel isolated, and so to have a meeting point for many like-minded people is really beneficial for their artistic growth and their personal growth, so the commoditization of Essaouira festival I think is really a positive thing because it gives people the change to come together, as the Beatle song says, you know: “let’s come together”.

These musicians and artists, as described by Joseph, are icons of the trans-local city, yet their symbolic implication keeps incessantly shifting. The entire city, excited about economic and cultural possibilities, participates in this free-of-charge festival attended by people from every corner of the world, and made possible through Moroccan and international sponsorship.

Accordingly, music festivals, and especially youth-oriented festivals have become, at the beginning the 21st century, a factual experience, dominating the soundscape of the city. A striking contradiction, conversely, creeps around in the music rituals of interaction that produce world cultural nomadictates locally. Far from sharing a mosaic platform of music by means of our interaction with it, we practice it in diverse worlds, which, one after another are produced in typically diverse ways due to economic, cultural and racial,
political and historical inequalities. The festival, now fabricated as a 21st century technology to make it possible for nations to consume other nations under the brand name of globalization, makes one wonder whether the festival, as a world technology, eases or confuses interaction.

The sphere of the festival is being persistently twisted. The sphere of the festival’s present cannot for example be fashioned without its past as a traditional local gathering, a past form that still exists in the present (small unmediated festivals), or as an event in progress from past traces of its early versions and manifestations. There is no more an unattainably out-of-the-way cultural sphere of the festival than there are trans-cultural spheres. The festival’s recipe safeguards rather than eradicates diversity. It involves a finely tuned understanding of the festival’s own incorporation of otherness. By mapping (and remapping) this mostly unfamiliar terrain of the festival, cultural stage managers can afford new formulations of power, knowledge, and loyalty to the transcultural services at offer. As the festival of Gnawa music indelibly marks the city, whether during the time of the festival or outside it, the city becomes unthinkable far from the event that has given it the aura it has today. Their identities (both festival and city) get united in the (trans)local imaginary.

Conclusion

To conclude it is of note to re-emphasize that nomadism stipulates constant relocation into non-constant elsewhere. It is grounded on a turtle logic which is advocated by the understanding that a dwelling is not so much in the place where one digs a tent as in the distance that one crosses after the undigging. That is to say, nomads take issue with the culture of belonging, (that we own a place or that a place defines us) which entails a great deal of violence as in tying something up against, pinning someone down to a stable resolute territory. In essence, the idea of quitting one territory towards “non-constant elsewhere” breaks up with the intention to get repositioned firmly somewhere else as the strategic aimlessness of nomadic movements renders quitting oppositional to settlement. Nomadism defies any potential purpose to seek resolution or completion that would lead to a compromise of movement, to the arrangement of a possible home, or marking a signature on a contract of settlement.

Mobility of nomadic individuals and groups, however, differs from that of cultural artifacts. While the former has been subject internationally to the tyranny of borders, whereby movement is regulated by bureaucratically systematic work incongruous with the structural philosophy of nomadic culture, the latter can hardly be immobilized or put out of action by customs or border guards. This explains why flow of culture across borders is determined by other factors such as utility (the extent to which a foreign cultural text could be functional in the host culture), suitability (the possible chances that a foreign cultural text could fit, with much rightness and appropriateness, into the textual body of the host culture), dominance (the amount of authority with which a cultural text travels and survives in a foreign culture, and proximity (the nearness in form and geography to the host culture that renders reception uncomplicated.

These ‘home-and-away’ cultural texts interact with the aim of generating a maximum amount of limited stability. This stability can either be temporally limited (that’s in the time scale it uses) or spatially limited, exploiting a non boundless fraction of social territory. In either way, home and away cultures generate a state of diversity while
making the most of the available technology to continue to be adapted and adopted and to ensure further movement. For instance we cannot rightly speak about a pure Moroccanization of sub-Saharan Gnawa music nor the opposite as both had to adopt and get adapted to one another, which renders the existing thesis of cultural effacement or substitution an implausibly fantastic comprehension.

We acknowledge, though, the presence of an amount of authority that explicably permits to conceptualize the itineraries of movement of cultural texts and individuals (an individual is also a text bearing narratives of self, roots, etc) in their forms as nomadic dictates. However this authoritativeness (the fact that a cultural text can penetrate a new culture and survive in it) is undermined by the very action of movement, from the idea of relinquishment of and movement away from local abode. ‘Relinquishment of and movement away from local abode’ entails an amount of sacrifice of older self and inherent surrender to the new climate. This is entirely understood in the case of the double-case mobility of sub-Saharan Africans into Morocco, developing midway what has been recognized as a Gnawa culture, followed by a third movement elsewhere, producing new combinations, collaborations, fusions, and therefore ulterior selves.

For any nomadictates, there are chances that old roots know the burgeoning of novel additions that facilitate their integration in new conditions and circumstances, without forgoing some of their defining features. This requires repositioning themselves with the endeavor to accept marginality (limited centrality) as they will be reassessed (reassessing themselves) to comply the new environment (regulations of transit). Therefore mobility of world cultural dictates institute new recompositions of self that cannot stay whole all the way, in all directions and passageways. However, nomadic dictates don't grow an intense sense of volatility caused by any possible grinding attentiveness to cultural marginality as their nomadism obliges their movement in a flux. Nomadictates flow at their own risk of identity transformation, yet still lay a wager on replenishing themselves in new territories, renewing emphasis on themselves in the course of establishing visibility on diverse sites. Nomadictates, nevertheless, are not embedded in an urgent need to repeat themselves across time and space, but see themselves through other compositions, divisions, recreations.

Within this context, the nomadism of cultural artifacts across borders constructs, or at least puts the accent on the idea of networking that lack force in the cultural imperialism thesis. How can we thus speak of westernization of Gnawa music without risking to leave without any agency? Cultural artifacts wield power through their openness to pluralism and multiple options of being, instead of operating within the globalization and cultural imperialism theses which impose a sense of uniformity in response to local or foreign pressures. In the case of Gnawa culture, its operation within and interaction with other cultural specificities accentuated its awareness of its identity. Circular itinerary of marginal cultural artifacts and individuals (or groups) maximized their transformation into nomadictates. The aim of this conceptual contribution, therefore, is embedded within an attempt at facing up to and problematizing the idea of a totalitarian, homogenizing and standardizing 'global' culture.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


NOTES

1. Maturity in this context refers to a development of an estabishing seamless character, gained through time and experience. The acquirement of artistic and cultural confidence (as one characteristic of being mature is being confident), gained through experience (that it has been
taking place as social reality for enough time) has to be tested against the premise that experience reflect a particular amount of involvement in ideological practices and discursive forms of existence.

2. Time-space compression is one of David Harvey’s most popular terms. See his book *The Post Modern Condition* for a deeper engagement with this theoretical insight.

3. See Bella Dicks’s *Culture on Display. The Production of Contemporary Visitability* for a detailed discussion of the term visitability.

4. Gnawa are Sub-Saharan Africans from Mali, Sudan, Niger, etc who were sold as slaves in North African countries, including Morocco. Even as Muslims in a Moroccan society, they couldn’t integrate fully yet they hold a lofty spiritual position. Gnawa groups have preserved many of their ethnic dances and tongues, rhythms and signs, which are part of their tradition and can be found in their music rituals.

5. While the Essaouira festival imposes no entrance fee, except on special private *lilat* in Dar Souiri, Zaouia Sidna Bilal, etc, the Fez festival’s passes, which can be purchased online, cost up to 396 $ (see festival pass prices for the 2013 edition on the event’s website).

6. Internationalization is a form of globalization.

7. Globalization invokes economic globalization, collapse of borders (see Hesmondhalgh, 2011), social exclusion,( see Munck, 2005: 22) cultural effacement, religious assimilation, artistic standardization, loss and terrorism of human life (see Brennan, 2003). In their work on globalization in MENA Henry and Springborg argue that globalization is today’s equivalent to yesterday’s imperialism, at least in many of its impacts on non-Western economies, which could enable elites to continue to represent different social forces (is the primary external thesis against which MENA countries are reacting (Henry & Springborg, 2001: 223). However, we contend that these are only parts and episodes of the global trend and that protest against globalization mostly address neoliberal globalization, which has become a global regime (see Pieterse, 2004). We aren’t saying that global is good or bad, for by saying so we can reduce its complexity into monolithic labels. We are trying to put globalization into relief by underscoring circulation as a nomadic factuality.

8. Also consider L’boulevard festival, which flueled and marked the music urban scene in Morocco, and has promoted urban style (hip hop, punk, graffiti, etc) but which has been dwindling in recent editions, in which only the Tremplin was organized (2010, 2011), and the main event and tremplin cancelled (2012).

9. The series of interviews with Jozeph had been made in 2010 over a period of three months from March till May, in Rabat.

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**ABSTRACTS**

The aim of this paper is to study Moroccan music festivals against the existing theories on globalization, while coming up with new concepts aimed at overcoming the problems often facing experts in popular culture and media studies who feel that globalization thesis lapses into fatal gestures of leveling, reductionism, and totalitarianism, especially when it tries to account for current discussions related to the circulation of artifacts and cultural texts. The general consensus has it that modern technologies have hugely altered the meaning and revolutionized the traditional functions attached to art and cultural industries. The grotesque circulation of western cultural artifacts is justifiably judged to be many times agonizing for theorists in cultural
studies, linguistics and political science, etc who want to be sure that the unequal transmissions of products across the world will not harm local cultural, linguistic and economic capital of the less dominant other. Moroccan music festivals for instance are seen to be increasingly governed by a complex whirlpool of the far-too-melodramatic implications of today's world global connections. In view of this, this paper, which borrows from data collected during between 2010 and 2011, will examine cultural industries, music festivals in general and the Essaouira festival in particular, in relation to world flows, while holding the argument that the appropriation of western artifacts locally has always been part of a not-so-novel process of mobility of what we call world cultural nomadictates (nomadic dictates). The paper gives a detailed definition of this concept and develops other new concepts (e.g. recurents, exclusives) related to the «glocal» face of culture and art in Morocco in an attempt to find an escape route outside the impasses of the globalization/cultural imperialism theses surrounding the study of cultural industries. To drive this idea home, we will open up the discussion at hand onto existing controversies around notions of place, authenticity, urbanism, tourism and consumption.

L'objectif de cette recherche est d’étudier les festivals de musique marocains en portant un regard critique sur les théories existantes de la mondialisation et en proposant de nouveaux concepts afin de surmonter les problèmes auxquels les théoriciens de la culture populaire et des médias se sont souvent confrontés. Selon eux, le concept de mondialisation sombre dans le réductionnisme et le totalitarisme, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de la circulation des objets et des textes culturels. Un consensus général semble s'être développé autour de l'idée selon laquelle les technologies modernes ont considérablement altéré et révolutionné le sens et les fonctions traditionnelles de l'art et des industries culturelles. L'insolite diffusion des objets culturels occidentaux est à juste titre source d’angoisse pour les théoriciens des études culturelles, de la linguistique, et des sciences politiques qui veulent s'assurer que la transmission inégale des produits dans le monde ne nuira pas au capital local, culturel, linguistique et économique de l'autre (le moins dominant). Les festivals de musique marocains, par exemple, sont perçus comme étant de plus en plus tributaires des vicissitudes de la mondialisation actuelle. Dans cette perspective, cette recherche, s'inspire de données recueillies au cours de deux années de travail de terrain (2010/2011), et se penche sur les flux mondiaux de produits culturels qui mettent en interface les industries culturelles, les festivals de musique en général et celui d'Essaouira en particulier. Elle maintient l'idée selon laquelle l'appropriation des objets occidentaux par les communautés locales a toujours fait partie d’un processus de mobilité, qui n'est pas si récent, de ce que nous appelons les 'nomadictâtes' culturels du monde (dictâtes nomades). En explicitant la définition de ce concept, cette recherche développe d'autres concepts liés à la notion de glocalité de la culture et de l'art au Maroc. Enfin, elle suggère aussi une issue à l'impasse des théories de la mondialisation traditionnelles et celle de l’impérialisme culturel en particulier dans lesquelles l'étude des industries culturelles semble s'être emprisonnée. Pour ce faire, nous exposons le débat actuel sur les controverses autour des notions de lieu, d'authenticité, d'urbanisme, de tourisme, et de consommation.

INDEX

**Keywords**: globalization, theory, nomadictate, cultural imperialism, music festivals

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