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Practised Imagination. Tracing Transnational Networks in Crete and Beyond

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Paper for the conference „Alltag der Globalisierung. Perspektiven einer transnationalen Anthropologie," January 16-18, 2003, Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main

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Abstract

The imagination has become a major site for studying transnational cultural flows. Yet it is mainly the mass media that are explored as channels directing the imagination from „the West" towards „the rest". And there is still little empirical „testing" of this field. How do such - and other - imaginary sources work into social practice? And what does such „practised imagination" imply for the practice of transnational anthropology? This article attempts to address these questions from the perspective of fieldwork in progress. In and between Crete and Germany I traced transnational networks based on the reciprocal mobilities of migration, remigration, and tourism. Here, multiple domains of imagination are drawn upon by various audiences, thus effectively contributing to the creation of these relations and the places in which they localise. Anthropological research on tourism and migration has tended to separate the imagination - as being an external impact - from local practice. Yet, transnational ethnography needs to challenge this opposition and is in itself a strategy to do so, in that it perceives the imagination *as* a practice of transcending physical and cultural distance.

Keywords: Imagination, transnational networks, tourism, migration, Crete

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Practised Imagination. Tracing Transnational Networks in Crete and Beyond[1]

The emergence of transnational anthropology has put forth the imagination as one of the major sources of social practice that transcends the local and opens it up to global connections. It is not only the mobility of people and things, but also of ideas that connects places and cultures across the globe. The anthropological interest in such relations created by the travelling of ideas has laid the ground for a new focus on the role of the mass media as channels of imaginary flows (see Herzfeld 2001: 294 pp.). Here, it is mainly the reception of western images by non-western audiences that has been investigated. Yet, imagination also travels from non-western centres to the periphery, as Ulf Hannerz (1995) has illustrated by the use Kenyan women make of Bollywood videos from India (see Fuglesang 1994). Moreover, Arjun Appadurai, in his conceptualisations of „ethnoscapes" and „other modernities" (1991; 1996), has stressed the impact of mass-mediated imagination on local life-worlds. The possibility of „other lives" enters the local scene by way of soap operas and TV-commercials, thus challenging the given repertoire of lived lives and revealing its restrictions. More than before, transnational imagination - or „fantasy" as Appadurai puts it - has become a major engine of social and cultural transformation. In Appadurai's work, especially, „social imagination" is considered a potential source for processes of „counter-globalisation" (Appadurai 2000), when people make use of globally accessible ideas in their own right.

Thus, anthropological research on imaginary flows via the media points to the cultural vitality of social practice. While similar contents and forms may be distributed around the globe, the messages perceived on local grounds may be diverse. Viewers and readers are not just passive recipients of mediated standardisation; they are actively engaged in producing meaning out of the information with which they are provided. Since they do so from their various subjectivities and histories, the meanings processed may differ from those originally intended. Moreover, the categories of media „consumers" and „producers" are not as distinct as usually estimated. Both participate, though from different ends of the hierarchy, in the process of distributing and processing imagination (see Herzfeld 2001: 300 pp.).

It is here, "at the point of conjuncture between local perceptions and practices on the one hand and mass-produced forms of representation on the other" (Herzfeld 2001: 299), that ethnography can contribute to the understanding of how imagination works in social practice. This task, however, entails a more radical shift from researching the media themselves towards exploring their diverse uses by the social actors. And yet, it

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is not only the mass media that serve as sources and travelling routes of imagination. Mass-mediated images contribute to a wider context of social discourses which span physical distance, involving various production sites and audiences. Images also travel with people, be they migrants, tourists, or anthropologists, and thus provide the cultural material to be drawn upon and used for the creation of transnational relations.

  In this article, I want to explore how imagination works within a pan-European field of transnational relations: that of Cretan-Greek-German-European networks based on tourism and migration. In these networks, there is a long-standing imaginary discourse between „north" and „south", „west" and „east" that is incorporated and transformed in transnational social practices. Varied media (including novels, films, and travel literature) and knowledge domains (such as anthropology and archaeology) contribute to that imaginary ground on which diverse audiences get transnationally related. Nevertheless, imagination, as I will try to show, is not simply imposed on the Other in a one-way direction, but appropriated and acted on in terms of co- and counter-imagination. Here, the distinction between „producers" and „recipients" of imagination becomes blurred in a further sense, being not so much organised in a territorial way - i.e. separating local audiences from external production sites - but rather depending on the diverse means of accessing and handling de-territorialized imaginary resources.

  In the first part of the article, I will follow and connect the multiple threads of imagination in order to illustrate how they come to constitute what I would now consider the field of my research. In the second part, I will more generally discuss the place of practised imagination within transnational research. The focus on imagination as a major source of relating people across territorial boundaries can productively challenge basic assumptions of, and the divisions between, anthropological studies of tourism and migration.

Creating a place in Crete

It is Thursday evening in Frankfurt. Inge[2] and myself are sitting around the table with Yorgos, our Greek teacher. But we do not concentrate on the lessons in the book. As so many times before, our conversation has shifted from Greek grammar and vocabulary to Crete – the place to which Inge and I are attached by different though connected ties: hers being the newly built house in an olive grove in southern Crete, mine being the anthropological interest in such ventures and the transnational networks in which they are embedded. Right now, we are looking at a photo showing the passiflora which I planted at the house when I came to assist her with the final decoration of the place. Inge painted the walls inside, and I worked on the soil that was to become a garden. I was not quite sure whether the pathetic stalk that I carefully put in its place would ever manage to survive in the summer heat of the Cretan south. Now, one year later, the plant has proved its vitality; it has spread out along the fence and already covers most of it.

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[2] All names of interlocutors have been altered.

Inge and her husband Jürgen have become what I call tourist-migrants: Whenever they can get off their jobs in Frankfurt, they spend time at their house in Pousos[3] on the Cretan south coast. Working as a design free-lancer, Inge has more opportunities to do so; she even plans to increase her time in Crete by creating herself a second workplace there. When they are not in Crete themselves, Inge and Jürgen rent out the house to German friends. Some of them have helped in financing the building project and now make use of the opportunity to „live off" their investment in terms of Cretan holidays. Still, house and garden are abandoned during those periods when nobody is staying there. Then, not only the garden reverts to wildlife. Inge and Jürgen were shocked when they were informed last summer that someone had broken in the house and left it in a disastrous condition: not only the kitchen was damaged but also personal items, e.g. the cushions Inge had made for the benches all around the house. Definitely, it was not an act of larceny (nothing was stolen) but of purposeful vandalism. The potential perpetrators and their motives have still not been ascertained but the event continues to be discussed by Inge, Jürgen and their German and Cretan friends.

German-Greek imagination

Following our conversation, Yorgos wonders about our being still so enthusiastic about Crete. To him, the destructive event is but one proof of his impression that it is an island distant from Greece: it is „almost Africa", he says. His Crete is full of „wild nature" as well as „wild people". He thinks of the island as possessing „natural" but also „dangerous" beauty. On other occasions, when we meet with other Frankfurt Greeks for a drink after the lesson, Yorgos' friends would contribute their own narratives to this optic: They know Crete for archaic customs like the „vendetta" and for girls being restricted to the house and married off to men they do not choose by themselves.

Yorgos' parents have emigrated to Germany from a village near Drama, a city in the north of the Greek mainland. Most of the Greeks in the Frankfurt area come from Thrace or Macedonia, northern Greek regions next to the Bulgarian, ex-Yugoslav and Turkish borders. The capital of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, was one of the centres from which Greek guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) were recruited to work in Germany from the 1960s onwards. Yorgos, however, does not refer to the village in which he was born but to Saloniki as his Greek place of origin. There, he tells me, he goes whenever he visits his family, and there he would return to – if he were ever to return permanently to Greece. Saloniki is one of Yorgos' favourite subjects. To him, it is the real „cultural capital" of Greece, whereas Athens is the head of economic and political disaster, the stinking Moloch of destructive adaptation to an imposed, alien European modernity. Saloniki, by contrast, is full of history – Jewish, Ottoman, and Greek – contributing to a lively present in which European and global influences intermingle and create an atmosphere of cultural dynamic and the avant-garde. In Saloniki, Yorgos is likely to meet people like him – German-Greek descendants of the *Gastarbeiter* – who returned to invest their transnational knowledge in some urban enterprise. The places Yorgos goes to in Saloniki are indicative of that knowledge: their aesthetics, the people who meet

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[3] The name of the village has been substituted by a pseudonym.

there and their topics of communication are not restricted to the local but incorporate the global pathways of the Greek diaspora. Here, Yorgos feels at home: in places that combine Frankfurt-like urbanism with Greek patina, their design referring to late modern capacities of „reflexive traditionalism" (see Welz 2000). It is from the viewpoint of a transnational experience of modernity, that tradition is perceived as cultural material to be used and re-created. Frankfurt, however, does not know and reflect much of this transnational cultural production of which it is a source. In Frankfurt, Greek restaurants mainly adapt to the taste of established multiculturalism: decorated with the requisites of tourist imagination – Sirtaki, Bouzouki, Souvlaki – they attract German, but rarely Greek customers.

Yorgos' transnational landscape is trans-urban: it blanks out the rural origins of his parents as well as rural Greece in general. Yorgos thus contributes to the cultural production of „second generation" immigrants who create new connections apart from both their parents' cultures and „German" culture (see, e.g., Sauter 2000). These processes contradict official discourses which still construe that „German" culture as the locus of „integration" and perceive immigrants as problematically attached to an ethnically fixed „culture of origin" (*Herkunftskultur*) (see Römhild 2002). After having been to school in both Greece and Germany, Yorgos went to university in Frankfurt, where he studied German. But he never taught that subject, and, because he is still a Greek by citizenship, he could never become a state-employed teacher. Instead, Yorgos has made his living from being a Greek teacher for Greek children in German schools and for German adults interested in the modern Greek language. His social network includes Germans, Turks, Moroccans, and Greeks. With the latter, he feels especially connected through common memories of student life. In the 70s and early 80s they shared their low budgets in the social and cultural confines of the student hostel, engaged in political discussions, and spent the nights out with musicians and intellectuals of all kinds. It was here, in these student scenes of Frankfurt, that Yorgos and his friends entered, developed and established a Greek urban culture that still serves as their social background today.

It is from that viewpoint that rural Greece, and especially Crete, becomes „the Other" in Yorgos' imagination. Islands like Kos or Korfu are potential Greek destinations for holidays. There, Yorgos travels with his German girl friend in the self-declared role of a tourist. Crete, however, is different: its being part of the Greek nation-state is too short (since 1913 only) to render it a „real" Greek island. Other, non-Greek, histories are in the foreground of Yorgos' perspective: that of an especially long time of Ottoman and Turkish rule, and that of the Minoans, whose civilisation flourished long before the Hellenes in mainland Greece ever started to lay the ground for Greek antiquity.

Archaeological sources

Minoan civilisation, however, rendered Crete a specific point of interest for European archaeology. Considered one of the earliest „European" civilisations, it has become the „cradle" of Europe (see, e.g., Badisches Landesmuseum 2000), thus adding to and, at the same time, competing with the Greek claim to represent the ancient foundations of

European identity (see Herzfeld 1982). When Arthur Evans, the excavator of the palace of Knossos in the north of Crete, named the Minoans after legendary king Minos, he indissolubly connected them to that grand narrative in which the ancestor of Greek goddesses, Zeus, himself born in the central mountains of Crete, kidnapped Europa, the princess from Minor Asia, who then became his wife and the mother of half-god Minos, the first Cretan ruler. The legend parallels the archaeological finding that the Minoans were culturally and socially more oriented towards their southern and eastern neighbours, i.e. northern Africa and Minor Asia, than towards the north – the later cradle of Hellenism. These rather African and Asian roots of the early Minoan „Europeans" render them an ambivalent case in terms of Greek national and European identity construction. The Cretans, in turn, pick up these interpretations when discussing their own belonging (or non-belonging) to Greece and Europe. Locals in Pousos– the Cretan village in which I carried out most of my fieldwork - would turn that discussion up-side down, maintaining that it is not a question whether they are part of either Greece or Europe but rather that both of these have to accept that they are descendants of early Cretan culture. Yorgos, instead, holds that the „wildness" he perceives in Cretan nature and culture directly points back to those other roots beyond the Greek and the European universe. At the same time, what he perceives as „archaic" customs – e.g. men wearing moustaches, boots and guns – are interpreted as basic forms of „Greek" tradition, a tradition that is long gone in his late modern Greek world. Yorgos thus parallels the Greek ambivalence of both including and excluding Crete from the cultural landscape.

Histories of hippie tourism

Inge has been a friend of mine for a long time. It was through her and Jürgen that I was introduced to what then became my field research site. Since I met Inge I knew her to be fascinated by the Greek cosmos. From the time she was a student of the arts she has spent many of her holidays travelling all over Greece. Like many others in the 1970s and early 80s, she went there with a backpack and tent, sleeping on the beach or at a camping site. Nevertheless, Inge differed from many other backpackers in that she did not choose that form of travelling as a preference but out of economic necessity. In her backpack she always brought along at least one outfit suitable for going out to a fine hotel restaurant or a dancing bar. Whenever she could afford it, she would then metamorphise from the outdoor look into that of a young stylish urbanite.

Most other young travellers of that time, however, preferred to probe into those pleasures of the „simple life" and the Mediterranean „freedom" they expected from their Greek destinations. Parallel with much of anthropological thought (see Herzfeld 1987), they perceived Greece as the Other of northwestern urbanism and modernity. It became an idealised playground for experiments in alternative life-styles in the context of contemporary critiques of northwestern civilisation. Especially in Crete, the travellers were attracted by the vision of those „archaic customs" that Yorgos defines himself against. They came for the unaffected, „natural", and thus „authentic" lives of local shepherds, farmers and fishermen, hoping to learn from them what their homes in the north seemed to have lost on their way to modernity. Much of that learning, however, took place more

in the form of imaginary inventions of „archaic customs", thus making use of external images of the local people rather than personal confrontations with their lives.

The beach of Matala, next to Pousos, became famous for being occupied by a European, and even global, hippie colony residing in the caves (tombs of Roman times) along the rock projecting into the sea. There, they celebrated their visions of a natural life in ecstatic beach parties at night and nude laziness during the day. The *Lonely Planet* guide to Crete recalls the legend:

> "When you see the dozens of eerie caves speckling the rock slab on the beach's edge, you'll see why 60s hippies found it like groovy, man. The hippies turned the caves into a modern troglodyte city – moving ever higher up the cliff to avoid sporadic attempts by the local police to evict them. Joni Mitchell was among a number of hippies who lived in the caves; she wrote about the Matala moon in her song, *Carey*" (Oliver 2000: 194).

Arn Strohmeyer, himself a former active member of that community, has reported on the Matala experiment in several publications that are sold in all bookstores and souvenir shops along the southern Cretan coast (see, e.g., Strohmeyer 1994). At the times of the hippies, Strohmeyer tells the tourists of today, there was only one small fisher hut at the beach that soon turned into the first seaside taverna. The owners became the main representatives of the locals for the tourist community. Their tolerance of the strange behaviour around them as well as their generous will to share their meals with visitors, even though they often could not pay (enough) for it, fostered the vision of the Cretan as a kindred spirit, an ideal of their own utopian quest.

Other locals, however, preferred to glance at the happenings on the beach only from the distance of the village. Petros, a man in his early 50s when I met him in Matala, remembers his parents to have strictly forbidden him any contact whatsoever with the strangers – they were frightened by stories they had heard about drug abuse and sexual excess. But, of course, Petros and his friends were attracted by these same stories and managed to get to meet the beach people without the knowledge of their parents. The experience with hippies and backpackers was impressive for Cretan (male) youth. To them, the self-declared refugees from western civilisation were harbingers of alternatives to their locally restricted prospects of life. Those Cretan teenagers who had contact with them thus connected to the European youth culture movement of that time.

With his long hair and his preferences for marihuana and Frank Zappa, Petros presents himself as a late defender of that tradition. He dislikes the development tourism has taken in Matala. Today, the legends of the hippies have become local folklore. They attract tourists from the northern waterfront of Cretan mass tourism who come down to Matala by bus on a day trip. On their arrival, they will probably take a photograph of a man with dreadlocks on the beach selling devotional objects from India and declaring himself to be „the last hippie of Matala" in big letters on a sign in front of him. From the beach, the tourists can see the caves in the rock – the former hippie domiciles. The local authorities, however, set an end to that occupation when they removed the psychedelic paintings on the rock walls and transformed the place into a site of Roman heritage. Today, visitors can pass the fence after having paid an entrance fee and climb the

cliff on signposted paths. All the same, they will be as interested in finding traces of more recent as well as ancient history in these caves. Behind the beach, Matala comes into view: a crowded place crammed full with bars, tavernas, and souvenir shops flanked by middle-sized hotel complexes, swimming pools and huge parking areas.

Though the hippie tourists and their descendants have long gone, the presence of their history can still be felt. Those who managed to stay on the island after the cost of living increased due to the spread of more professionalised tourism, retreated to Pitsidia, a neighbouring town a little further from the sea, or – more recently – to Lentas and other places that are still more or less cut off from mass tourism developments because they lack asphalt roads and other necessary infrastructure. Some of the western drop-outs, however, managed to adapt themselves to the possibilities of that fundamental economic, social, and cultural change. Moritz and Ulla, for example, used to live from selling hand-made bracelets on the beach. They were modern nomads, moving around the island with their, finally, four children. But it became more and more difficult to earn enough money to get six people through another day – even given the deliberately low expectations the couple had in terms of their standard of living. Then, a friend asked Moritz, a trained bricklayer, to restore the old house he had bought in a village near Pousos. That was the start of Moritz' and Ulla's new enterprise. Today, Moritz is the man who is asked for help whenever someone wants to buy, build or restore a house in the area. He and his staff built the house of Inge and Jürgen.

Anna, who looks after the house when Inge and Jürgen are absent, is another example of the presence of that hippie history in Crete. Anna is German by birth but spent much of her childhood in southern Crete. Her mother was one of those early western dropouts who tried to escape the northern in favour of their version of a southern life. When it was time for Anna to receive her final school education she was sent back to Germany in order to finish high school there. But Anna never wanted to stay in Germany. Whereas her mother returned to a German life near Frankfurt, her daughter went back to Crete as soon as she got through her final exam. Today, she works in a book-store in Timbaki, the central town of the area. She is about to marry a local young man who works as a gardener at the near-by monastery. When I last saw her, she was sitting at the desk of the store in front of the rack full of Greek life-style magazines, embroidering a Christmas tablecloth for her dowry. Anna thus turns the perspectives upside down. Although – or, probably, because – she was raised in the spirit of her mother's alternative life-style, she decided to live differently. She had much more contact with the locals than did her mother and she grew up with the other kids in the village. She is now about to enter a somewhat „traditional" Cretan family life – a decision that her mother finds hard to understand and to accept.

Travelling images

The advent of hippie tourism in Crete has created many threads that inform and shape the present as it is practised by foreigners and locals. One of its major consequences is the fundamental re-evaluation of Cretan-ness that has laid the ground for the contemporary tourist interest in the island. Henry Miller, on tour to Greece and Crete in 1939, was a pioneer of that new imagination that was then popularised by the following generation

of travellers. The journal of this journey, „The Colossus of Maroussi“ (1941), was translated and published in German in 1965, and it is still on the list of set books for all of today's tourists travelling to Crete beyond the paths of mass tourism.

Miller reports that he did not prepare himself for this trip in the usual way, that is, he did not consult Homer's work or learn about ancient Greece from archaeological readings. To him, Greece "is what everybody knows, even *in absentia*" (p. 156), one of the major, though submerged, roots of all European and Western life. In Crete, more specifically, he was attracted by the vision of a way of life

> "initiated some twenty-five or thirty centuries before the dawn of that blight called Christianity ... which makes everything that has happened since in this Western world seem pallid, sickly, ghost-ridden and doomed" (p. 157).

Henry Miller, however, sought the spirit of these times in today's Greece. In that, he differed from earlier travellers who came to look at the ancient stones but left the people they met there unnoticed. Miller criticises on archaeology to have created „cemeteries of art“.

> "The tourist comes and looks down at these ruins, these scientifically created lava beds, with a moist eye. The live Greek walks about unnoticed or else is regarded as an interloper" (p. 44).

Miller, by contrast, finds the ancient heroes and their stories alive in the people he gets to know during his journey. His meeting with Alexandros, who guides him through Phaistos, the Minoan site near Pousos, has become famous for the intense description of that Cretan archetype that inspired much of the later western imaginary (p. 163 pp.). In Miller's words, Alexandros is a man of simplicity and dignity, knowing and telling of life in its most philosophical terms, while speaking of himself in the third person as small children do. Miller is fascinated by that archaic essence of a Cretan Greek-ness wherever he finds it. By contrast, he condemns all signs of modernity he encounters – e.g. radio and television sets – and, most of all, he condemns those Greek people who opt for that modernity and, therefore, are about to give up their „archaic“ way of life. With this evaluation, Miller laid the ground for the new appreciation of contemporary – but not modern – Crete as the idealised Other to western civilisation.

Another icon in that stream of imagination is Zorba, the Greek. Drawn from a novel of Cretan author Nikos Kazantzakis (1946), Zorba was translated into a film (1964) made by British-Cypriot director Michael Cacoyannis starring the Irish-Mexican-American actor Anthony Quinn as Zorba. Mikis Theodorakis created the music for that film. The main theme and Quinn's danced interpretation of it in the final scene became the *Sirtaki*, today widely believed to be *the* Greek traditional dance par excellence. In the novel and the film, Zorba, *the Greek*, is set against the inhibited British writer Basil who comes to be taught the art of life from his Greek friend. Here, the degenerated, colourless northern „softy“ is contrasted to the vivid masculinity of Zorba who follows his moods unimpeded by the constraints of civilised conventions. At the same time, Zorba is set against the local people in the Cretan village who are presented

as mere products – or victims – of their traditional culture unable to escape its rules of gendered restrictions and violence. To Greek readers and spectators, Zorba offers the vision of a timeless Greek way of life different from both European/Western versions of modernity and Greek traditionalism. In this sense, Zorba is an archaic figure made up for contemporary reading of a specific Greek modernity. Yorgos, for example, likes the film very much; he also insists that Anthony Quinn must have Greek roots. He finds his ideas of Greek-ness represented in Zorba, the Mediterranean artist of life. In this spirit Yorgos contrasts the cold, unsensual materialism in Germany against Greek passion and zest for life. Hence, the product of transnational imagination re-appropriates its object – the Greek – and becomes a major source of identification and self-positioning (see Terkessidis 1998).

Zorba, the Greek, also plays a major role in today's travellers' guides to Crete. It is deemed „'the' book on Crete in general", „a must in every backpack" (Fohrer 1995: 141; my translation). Although a fictional Macedonian, Zorba materialises in Crete (literally, at the film set in Stavros near Chania). His „irrepressible and free spirit" (Oliver 2000: 43) resembles the rebellious, anti-authoritarian Cretan spirit that is considered the essential relic of Cretan history. That history, as it presents itself to northwestern imagination, is full of up-risings and ironic commentaries on occupiers from the early Arabs and Ottomans to the German invaders during World War II. „Even today", the tourist guide informs,

> "the Cretans' attitude towards politics and politicians is shaped by their history which has been, for the most, a history of the oppressed. Cretans disapprove of every kind of domination by the state, every form of authoritarianism or rigid conservatism" (Fohrer 1995: 168).

This image has rendered Crete something of a European Cuba in the eyes of left-wing travellers who come to seek that spirit in the tavernas and kafenia of the villages at the sea and in the mountains. The Cretan, thus incorporating both idealised „primitivism" and nonconformist freedom, has become an idol of northwestern cultural critics, a „perfect servant" to their imagination (see Terkessidis 1998: 74 pp.). This ideal is also present in Cretan - and Greek - self-imagination. Michael Herzfeld's early study of a Cretan mountain village, *The Poetics of Manhood* (1985), explores those social practices that provide the cultural material for designing the Self in terms of virile competition and ego-centred autonomy (see also Herzfeld 1997).

In tourist practice, however, the image travels back to those imagined on transnational routes. The idealised version of an „uncivilised" Other is appropriated as an upgrading of the former version of the backward Other to northwestern modernity. In communication with tourists, the locals, especially men, would often stress their different, authentic and free way of life, their individualism and non-conformism. Thus corresponding to tourist expectations, imagination becomes a common playground for identity constructions. Yannis, a man in his sixties, is an illustrative example. He runs a seaside taverna at the beach near Pousos. Among the regular tourists and the tourist residents his place is communicated as most authentic although – or because – it is simply furnished with wrecked plastic chairs and rickety tables and his wine is served summer warm from plastic bottles. Yannis is said to have two wives – one staying in his house

in the mountains where he owns a flock of sheep, the other one preparing the meals for his guests in the taverna. In contrast with the tourist scene at the beach, Yannis presents himself as a Cretan „original", wearing the obligatory black boots with a black shirt and black baggy pants. He likes to engage in kamaki[4] flirting with his female customers, inviting them for a ride in his jeep to the mountains. One day, when I was sitting on the terrace of a taverna in Pousos with some local people, Yannis stopped by. After some conversation over the terrace he approached our table with a long spit of grilled innards, a speciality called *Kokorétsi*. His eyes flashed when he took out his knife from one of his boots, cut off one piece and offered it to me from the point of the knife. From the spit, a stream of blood poured out on my leg and shoe. Yannis laughed while I felt quite uncomfortable. He then sat down with us for a drink. Everybody, especially the tourists present, had watched the whole scene attentively. Looking around, Yannis raised his glass to the people at the other tables, in full awareness of the impression he had made on them.

Tourist realities

Most of the tourists travelling to the south of Crete are especially keen on such expressions of „authentic culture" as they would have it. What may seem specifically local to them, however, is in fact an invention of tradition that can be observed all over the Mediterranean in similar ways (see Löfgren 1999). In Boissevain's (1996) term such tourists can be labelled „cultural" since they are interested in getting to know the local people and their way of life, thus setting themselves off from both the educational travellers who focus on the archaeological sites of ancient cultures and, especially, the mass tourists with their less place-specific subjects of „sun, sea and sex". The latter play a major counter-definitional role for those travelling to Crete who see themselves as „insiders". The regular tourists who come to the Pousos area at least once a year compete with each other to exhibit their local knowledge, i.e. to show they have the most personal contacts with local people, or have explored the most „authentic" villages, tavernas and kafenia, or that they are able to communicate in Greek, or are literate in Cretan history. The locals in the tourism business, in turn, contribute to that self-declaration with their capacities to figure out those from the ongoing stream of tourists who are likely to come again. They are, then, able to welcome by first-name someone who visited for two weeks a year ago. Theo, who works as a waiter in his parents' taverna, likes to sit talking and drinking with the regular guests, thus taking on the role of a cultural broker. To him, this is part of his business and reflects his competence to know what the people are coming for. Still, it is not done in a mere calculating manner, nor could it be understood as inadvertently currying favour. Theo is fond of his competence in communicating with the tourists, and it is important for him to do so of his own volition. Far from feeling a mere servant to their wishes, Theo is conscious of his power to choose among people and situations, to set conditions and limits of his own choosing. Those guests who get into closer contact with him feel noticed and acknowledged personally

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[4] The Greek word *kamaki* translates to "spear". In the context of tourism, it is used to describe male hunting after female tourists. For an anthropological analysis, see Zinovieff 1991.

which, in turn, fosters their notion of being exclusive insiders compared to others who may still have the role of more or less anonymous „newcomers". „Insider" guests tend to guard their local knowledge and decide carefully whether or not to pass it on, and to whom. Many of them say that they keep Pousos a secret at home so as to not to encourage too many others to visit the village. This attitude, in turn, upsets the locals who are in the tourism business. To them, this means neglecting their economic interests while only exploiting their willingness to invest in personal relationships.

In Crete, as in other parts of Greece and the wider Mediterranean, not only the spread of mass tourism, but also developments on a smaller scale have brought about major changes of economy and social structure. Many of the changes that can be observed in the south of Crete after the advent of post-hippie tourism in the mid 1980s, are similarly explored in Zarkia's (1996) study of the touristic development on a small Greek island. In the Pousos area today, the regional economy depends at least partly on that development. Pousos hosts about twenty pensions („rented rooms") and smaller apartment complexes, all of them family businesses with room capacities ranging from three to ten units. Furthermore, there are three tavernas, three kafenia, six small shops and a car rental agency. Tourism, however, is not the only source of income. As important to most of the Pousos people are the production of olive oil and, more recently, the sale of land and houses to foreigners. Several newly restored houses in the village are owned by Germans and Austrians, and also by Greek people from Athens. Other tourist migrants, like Inge and Jürgen, have built houses in the olive groves around Pousos.

The development of tourism stops many young people from emigrating, as they would very likely have had to do earlier. Up to the 1980s, emigration to mainland Greece, Europe, America and Australia, for education or work, was the main strategy to escape and overcome economic poverty, especially in the villages near the sea. The economic and cultural remittances of the migrants were needed and used to sustain local life as well as to initiate modernisation processes. All families in Pousos have developed long-standing transnational connections through their migrant members. Today, emigrants think of returning to the village because of the new economic prospects. Manolis is one of these returnees. Having lived in Australia for more than ten years he decided to re-settle himself in Pousos and make a living from the apartments he had built on his own ground. From Australia, he imported his unusual preference for jogging and mountain biking, and the spacious atmosphere of the two-level rooms he rents. Others come back at least part-time in the winter and summer holidays to organise the harvest of their olive trees or to look after other businesses. Emigration does not necessarily keep people out of local life. Theo's brother, who has emigrated to the Netherlands with his Dutch wife, regularly comes back to Pousos to look after his apartments that are managed by Theo during the tourist season. Also non-Cretan Greek emigrants or Greeks from the mainland are attracted to Crete by way of the economic and cultural dynamics created by tourism. Vangelis, called „the Berliner" because of his Berlin German accent, has opened an urban-style bar in a nearby village. „Jean", originally from Piraeus, left France for Crete where he rents rooms in a house decorated with columns in a somewhat Parthenon-like style.

As in the case of Pousos, re-migrants - with their specific cultural skills - generally play a major role in creating touristic scenarios appropriate to the transnational imaginary of Graecophile guests. In her study of a Cypriot village, Gisela Welz (2000)

has analysed such skills of „reflexive traditionalism" as the specific cultural capital re-turnees are able to invest in the local tourist economy. And finally, tourists come to set-tle in Crete by way of marriage to local people (mostly foreign women falling in love with Cretan men; see also Welz 1997) or by way of staying there on their own or with their families more or less constantly. All these people contribute to the re-creation of local life and life-styles rendering Pousos a place shaped by transnational connections and mobility. In 2000, the official statistics counted about 600 inhabitants, but, accord-ing to more informal information, only about half of these are definitely permanent residents.

It was this specific „internationality" and the easy way one could get into com-munication with such different people that fascinated Inge and Jürgen most of all when they first came to Pousos. Here, the history of „alternative" tourism is present not only in terms of the other Germans, Americans or Italians whose world views and cultural practices correspond to those of Inge and Jürgen. Also many locals, especially those of the same age, can easily connect to that (sub-)cultural history since it is, at least in part and although from a different angle, theirs as well. Compared to other places, Pousos still looks a lot like a traditional Cretan village, thus differing from the quickly grown resorts situated directly at the sea and from the expedient modernism of the nearby agro towns in the Messara plain. Pousos, instead, offers the proverbial narrow streets, the old houses, casually decorated with geraniums, the church dominating the main platia (vil-lage square), the local pope riding on a donkey and old women dressed in black sitting on the doorsteps of their houses. At the same time, much of this Cretan-ness already is the product of the transnational imagination to which both foreigners and locals con-tribute as co-interpreters.

Touring Pousos

Next to the church and next to some old men sitting and talking in the afternoon shade, you can find the American artist painting in the courtyard of her house. She came to stay and work in Pousos after she retired from her academic career in the States. She and her husband, a photographer and artist as well, contribute to the image of Pousos as an artists' village. Opposite, Lambros who grew up in Germany serves coffee at the tables of his kafenio. Next to his place, another kafenio is run by two young local women. This is the place where local women increasingly tend to go on their own; in the evenings the youngsters meet here before they leave for a night out in Matala. Tour-ists like to sit at the terrace under the flowering bougainvillaea, catching the view on the sea down the hill of Pousos and having a piece of Austrian-style cake – the recipes are an inheritance from former owner Sabine who now runs a handicraft shop on the other side of the platia. With its fully glazed entrance and the mosaic on the floor in front of it, her shop stands out against the more simple buildings around. The old house has been lavishly restored by its owner, a woman from Pousos who now lives in Athens half of the year. Her place and Sabine's shop on its ground floor contribute some Greek urban style to the mixed aesthetics of the village. Further down the narrow street you pass Eleni's mini shop. At her doorsteps is one of the meeting points of the old women in Pousos. They may talk about the number of tourists this year or, probably, about the

coming double christening for which the guests have to be invited from as far as Japan, Canada, and the Netherlands. Eleni, already in her seventies, has decorated the inner walls of her shop with photos showing her with – mostly female – regular tourists, some of whom have meanwhile become part-time residents. Eleni picked up her first German words during the time of German occupation in the war. Later, she learned more from her tourist customers. Still, the local experience of that other, belligerent German invasion is blanked out in everyday communication between „hosts" and „guests", thus paralleling what Susan Buck-Morss (1987: 207) has described as collective historical amnesia of German tourists in Crete.

Still further down the lane, you pass the apartments of Kostas and his German wife Angelika. Kostas was the first in town to restore a small complex of old houses for that purpose. In his forties today, he spent much of his time with the backpackers who were about his age then. Angelika was one of these regular seasonal friends, long before she came to stay with Kostas in Pousos. For years, the couple commuted between Germany and Crete. During the last years of that period, however, it was only Angelika travelling back and forth, since Kostas had decided that he would not stay in Germany with her. There, he knew he could be only one more *Gastarbeiter* – i.e. being subsumed under that imaginary label that still serves to generally categorise all Mediterraneans residing in the German society today. In Pousos, instead, Kostas is the son of the village teacher who was respected not only for his occupational authority but also for his politics of resistance throughout the times of the Greek junta. Kostas also refused to move permanently to Athens, where he had taken courses in business management in the late seventies and the early eighties. Nevertheless, the friends he made and the time they spent together at that time remained important to him. When he began a job as manager in a jeans factory, he was expected to put an end to the unconventional life-style he had come to appreciate, which made him recognise that he did not fit into that business, either in terms of his clothing or his performance. The latter was labelled „Cretan", meaning being too loud, too emotional, too spontaneous from an Athenian perspective. When Kostas decided to move back to Pousos, it was his idea to create a place where he could live and communicate with other people in the spirit that combined both the backpackers' and the Athenian student life's tradition.

Today, Kostas' and Angelika's apartments are highly frequented by the regular tourists, constantly booked out throughout the season. They consist of four small, carefully restored old houses at the second platia of the village, smoothly fit together by natural stone stairs and a lush garden with palm tree, banana plant, and hundreds of potted flowers. It is Kostas rather than Angelika who is responsible for the design of their place. He refrained from using plastic materials or any other sign of Cretan modernisation. Still, the place could not be more (late) modern with its apparently accidental, though conscious arrangements of flowers and amphorae, shells, broken pieces of pottery and other found relics, with the hand-woven blankets on beds and walls, and the old photos in black and white showing members of Kostas' family. Kostas' grandfather lived in one of the houses; there, a bullet hole above the entrance reminds on the days of the Cretan resistance against the Nazi occupiers. Kostas has left this historical accessories as visible as those elements of architecture that point to the impact of Ottoman/Turkish presence on the island. His way of designing, decorating and arranging things reflects his transnational perspective of re-interpreting local/regional tradition

from the view of afar, inspired by his knowledge of different cultural settings. It is from the perspective of modernity that tradition can be understood as material open to reflexive, creative invention (see also Welz 2000). Mobile Cretans such as Kostas and settled foreigners such as Angelika are more predestined than others to communicate to the guests what they create as „Cretan culture" on the grounds of common transnational imagination.

When Kostas started his restoration project the neighbours watched his enterprise with great scepticism. Like elsewhere, in other regions of European modernisation, the people would have preferred to destruct rather than reconstruct the old stones. The final success of the project, however, changed these attitudes into irritated admiration and envy among those local touristic entrepreneurs who cannot as easily draw on corresponding cultural resources to meet the expectations of the tourists. Hence, a new stratifying gap emerges between the alliance of mobile, transnationally experienced actors and those who are cut off from these resources by way of being economically, socially and culturally restricted to the physical limits of the local. It is along these demarcation lines, that new zones of conflict arise. One of the rumours about the vandalism of Inge's and Jürgen's house is that it was perpetrated by people who feel dramatically disadvantaged by the growing power of the transnational elite of both Cretan and foreign stakeholders in the tourism business. At the same time, many try to learn from Kostas and others like him. Throughout Pousos, you can easily detect those unmistakable signs that reflect such creative advice whether they are the amphorae with flowers that have replaced the former plastic pots at the pension next to Angelika's and Kostas' place or the arches and niches which now decorate another.

The taverna on the other side of the platia is run by a couple from Timbaki which was attracted by Pousos's new status as a regional centre of cultural tourism. Further down the lane one passes Gisela's and Christos' handicraft shop, both of whom are drop outs (one from Germany, the other from Athens) who came to Crete for an alternative to urban life. From the shop one can see their apartments glancing into the sun on the other side of the main street entering Pousos. Still further down the hill one finally approaches Inge's and Jürgen's place – a house smoothly nestling in the valley, blending in to the surrounding olive trees on account of its unusual pale green, pistachio-like colour. The couple bought the ground from Kostas who served as their main contact and introducer to the local setting. On the top of the next hill, another house dominates the scene owned by a German known only as „the dentist" since he and his family never show up in the village. Still further up the hill two construction sites point to the ongoing activities of Moritz and his crew. Inge preferred the sheltered situation of the valley. In Pousos, she says, she has finally found a place to be rooted in – a feeling she never had in Germany. Inge compares herself with the olive tree with its roots in the ground and leaves reaching for the sky. For Jürgen, however, Pousos is a place where he can experience the freedom to explore and live other facets of his personality. His life in Germany is dominated by the duties of his job as a manager in a big health food association. Jürgen's favourite place in Pousos is one of the narrow streets opening onto a panoramic view down to the Messara plain. From here, he thinks he once saw an eagle flying in circles.

Inge designed the house by drawing on a whole spectrum of different influences. The cube form is borrowed from the typical local style while the triangle shaped gaps

on the top line are quotations from Kostas' place which give the house the impression of a fortress. With their houses and gardens, the tourist-migrants co-construct the reality they imagine[5]. In Inge's and Jürgen's neighbourhood, a northern-style wooden house has been built next to more Toscana-like domiciles furnished with Ikea fittings which are, meanwhile, also available in Crete. For her wall paintings and the arrangements of decoration and furniture, Inge has, instead, processed new Cretan interpretations of Greek, Minoan, and more general „Mediterranean" or „Oriental" aesthetics inspired by a metropolitan country house style and the colourful glossies of life-style magazines. Hence, Inge's contribution to Cretan cultural reality is a hybrid „ethno-mix" made from global quotations. At the house-warming party, all guests complimented her work, including the local construction workers. Some of them would do so just to be polite. Others, however, showed keen interest in the way Inge, as a representative of the new tourist elite in town, had created a Cretan ambience. In houses such as this the presence of transnational imagination is made materially visible. It is from these stones that the localised power of the new transnational alliances speaks back symbolically to those who are excluded.

Constructing the field

Long before that house was finished, I remember sitting with Inge and Jürgen in my home in Offenbach near Frankfurt, listening to their stories about that small village on the so-called European periphery but connected to the world by the people who are engaged with it. Having done research among Russian German immigrants who are doubly ethicised by German discourses of inclusion and exclusion, I was soon fascinated by the possibility of a research site that seemed to creatively transcend ethnic and national boundaries and in the process to realise the transnational dimension of cultural practice that is often suppressed and made invisible elsewhere. Anthropologically, at that time I knew about Crete only as much as I had read in some of the work of Michael Herzfeld. This interested me in conceptualising touristic and migratory practices of mobility as constituting elements of a local and transnational everyday culture.

My first empirical steps into that field led me to exploring the transnational network of people and practices in which Inge and Jürgen participated. This field was localised in and between Pousos and Frankfurt in the first place, but from there unfolded to other German and Greek places, including the internet as a main source of transnational Greek/German communication (see, e.g., www.kriti-net.de; www.kalamaki.de; www.in-greece.de; www.gotohellas.de; www.greektown.de). In each of these places, however, I ran into different streams of imagination that seemed to not only inform but rather connect the threads of the web I was to research. As histories of co- and counter-visions they serve as the profound basis of communication and practice. Hence, the field enlarged into a de-territorialized ideational space that reached out to detached places and narratives that I would not have included at first sight. Following these threads, however, took me back to the practices I was studying – including my own: I participated and probed into the field as an anthropologist, a tourist, a student of the Greek

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[5] See also Deltsou 1995, for similar observations in northern Greece.

language, a friend, a German woman in her forties, thus being „native" to many narratives and imaginations present in the field. In this sense, it was – and is – also my co-imagination that localised and tied together these threads. When it comes to the research of imagination, then, the anthropologist is thoroughly part of the field she creates (see also Narayan 1993).

Cutting across research divides

One of the major assets of transnational research in anthropology has been to propose that mobility does not cut off but rather creates connections across physical distance. This proposal breaks down the divide between those domains which are traditionally dealing with mobility: research on tourism on the one hand and research on migration on the other. Critical revisions (see, e.g., Abram & Waldren 1997; Bräunlein & Lauser 1997; Pries 1997) show that both domains tend to stick to the ideal of sedentarism, and thus act against their virtual subjects - moving people. In that tradition, tourism is conceptualised as a temporal escape from settled life, and migration is seen as an irreversible change of settlement. In each case, mobility is considered an extraordinary period, interrupting the ordinary state of physically bounded residence: the tourist, eventually, returns to normality back home, and the migrant, ideally, resettles in her new home. Implicitly, these assumptions rely on notions of space as being a „container" (Pries 1997, 22 pp.) of a physically bounded culture and a fixed group of people representing it within given spatial limits (see Welz 1998, 178). From that perspective, mobility must be seen as a disturbance, if not a fundamental irritation of such bounded cultural identities. And, in fact, much tourism and migration research has brought forth corresponding findings: of tourism being a threat to the integrity and the authenticity of local culture, and of migration virtually resulting in identity crisis and cultural rootlessness.

The shift towards the transnational paradigm, however, highlights mobility as a qualitative project in its own right; a project that mediates between spaces and allows for multiple ties to physical and social places. This perspective, in turn, enables us to visualise connections between different modes of mobility rather than handling them as isolated phenomena to be studied in separate research domains. The tourist imagination of the Mediterranean south often creates relationships that last longer than only one summer. Travellers may not only become regular visitors, they increasingly create second or retirement homes all around the Mediterranean sea (see Waldren 1996; O'Reilly 2000; King, Warnes & Williams 2000). Tourism, then, takes on the form of temporary residence when tourists become (part-time) migrants who not only spend their exceptional leisure time, but also parts of their everyday life, elsewhere. And in doing so, their presence also becomes part of the local everyday life in the tourist regions. This holds even truer for the growing number of mixed marriages and families in such areas (see, e.g., Waldren 1998; Welz 1997). All these phenomena cut across the apparently clear divisions between tourists and migrants, „hosts" and „guests", locals and foreigners as well as between „insiders" and „outsiders" of local culture.

The focus on transnational movements and connections has equally challenged the notion of migration as a mere shift from one place of settlement to the other. It was, indeed, common knowledge that migrants continue to be connected to their country of

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origin, that they often commute between their cultural worlds by way of imagination, virtual communication, and physical mobility. However, as long as the low-skilled migrant worker, the *Gastarbeiter*, dominated the perception and as long as the „global players" of today had not yet entered the scene, these multiple bonds were, for the most part, considered an irrational and even pathological outcome of failed resettlement in the new home country. In Germany, whole sectors of intercultural pedagogy and social work dedicated themselves to remedy this defect and assist the migrants in building a new cultural identity rooted and fixed in what was labelled the „host society".[6] These strategies of tying migrants to one place and one culture only changed superficially when referring to the different regimes that, one after the other, began to dominate the discourse on managing immigration: first came the concept of „assimilation", followed by that of „integration", then „multiculture", and, recently again, „integration" (see Römhild 2002).

Today, however, the migration flows within and beyond Europe contradict the notion that their dynamics can be effectively controlled and fixed within the limits of the nation-state. Economic globalisation and flexibilisation mobilises westerners as well, thus adding other types of migrants and movements to the south-north flow of „guest workers". Migrants also come across the former „iron curtain" which today marks one of the main borders between member states and non- (or not-yet-) member states of the European Union. Migration from Eastern Europe, therefore, tends to take on the form of undercover labour mobility, i.e. people travel back and forth as tourists or au pairs, in accordance with visa requirements (see Hess & Lenz 2001; Cyrus 2000). Similar strategies of mobility apply to the northward migration which enters Europe via North Africa and the Mediterranean. These new migrations have altered former emigration countries like Greece or Italy into destinies of immigration and transit (see Greverus et al. 2000), and they are the main reason for tightening the border control at the frontiers of the EU, thus constructing a „fortress Europe" along the lines of the self-reliant nation-state. Moreover, these diverse flows of mobility and the connections they create have rendered migration a complex project comprised of different strategies, competencies and restrictions. In the new concept of the „transmigrant" (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Riccio 1999), the multi-local migrant has, belatedly, come to be recognised in a wider discourse. In that conceptualisation, multiple social and physical bonds are acknowledged as valid and active strategies to mobilise available resources facing the constructive and destructive conditions of migration.

In sum, transnational research has challenged the common notion of physical and geopolitical space as a presumptive requisite for the integrity of cultures and identities. Rather, it is through the mobility of people, goods and ideas that cultures and identities travel as well. This perspective also entails that cultures, and more so transnational cultures, are de-territorialized in that they are the product of many places and many people connected by networks of practised imagination. What is considered „Greek" culture, in that sense, is produced globally, in New York as well as in Iraklion, Pousos, Frankfurt or Athens. And it is not only Greek people who contribute to it but all others

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[6] See, however, Giordano 1984 and 1988 for a different evaluation of multi-local migrant strategies and an early critique of popular, „miserabilistic" interpretations of migrant behaviour.

who are involved in imagining and communicating „Greek" culture, such as tourists, archaeologists, anthropologists, environmentalists, artists, and politicians.

This way of grasping cultural production, however, confronts anthropological premises of cultural agency and authenticity. In tourism research especially, the main demarcation has been between local „insiders" and fluctuating „outsiders", the former representing and practising „authentic" culture, whereas the latter, tourists and their economic as well as imaginary power, represent forces of cultural alienation who are seen as selling out and transforming local culture into sites of „staged authenticity". This creates a cultural split between the „front regions" of cultural performance for tourists and „back regions" of hidden local authenticity (see MacCannell 1989). In migration studies, the „imagined community" has been deemed the source of collective identity – as long as that imagination was held by legitimate actors, i.e. those who claimed to be insiders by way of ethnic and cultural background. Here, the demarcation was between migrants as representatives of ethnic minorities and the „host society" which imposed on them the pressure to assimilate. Very often, then, migration studies tended to focus on the first generation of migrants and their struggle to cope with accommodating to the „new" cultural environment while sticking to „old" traditions of their cultural origin. The ways in which the younger generations confronted and transformed both the traditions held by their predecessors and those held by the „host society" were either interpreted as assimilatory arrangements and, thus, as a final loss of cultural bonds or as resulting in an identity crisis of being torn between two cultural worlds. Both domains, tourism and migration research, tended to split off those streams of imagination not rooted in a pre-defined „authenticity" as non-authorised, „false" impositions on the „real" culture of legitimate insiders.

In Pousos, as elsewhere, however, such delimitations between insiders and outsiders as well as between „authentic" and „false" imaginations as informing cultural practice tend to become blurred. In fact, focusing on an „authentic", „traditional" culture of more or less settled locals would not only split off much of that actually practised local culture. It would also dismiss the ongoing involvement of all locals in the various transnational networks that localise in Pousos. The many facets of tourism as well as of migration are an inseparable part of everyday culture in Pousos, not only for those who are mobile themselves but also for the people who have never left the town for longer. If insiders are defined as practitioners of local culture, then they include Cretan and non-Cretan, Greek and non-Greek actors, migrants, re-migrants and non-migrants, tourists and non-tourists. All have to come to terms with and, thus, contribute to that cultural reality, although from different perspectives, with different interests and prospects of participation.

The question for research, then, is not whether or not imagination „distorts" culture, but how it is culturally incorporated, and to what effect for which people. It is, of course, also by way of imagination, that people exercise power over others. But the stratifications created thereby are not simply oriented to fixed physical (e.g., local – non-local) or ethnocultural (e.g., Cretan – non-Cretan) boundaries. Rather, they tend to criss-cross these categories and create new, more flexible ones. In Pousos, many of the imaginaries that inform and shape cultural practice today are, indeed, of „western" origin, i.e. they reflect the interested ways in which the European „centre" envisioned its „periphery". And as such, they reflect the western power exercised on the Mediterra-

nean south. However, it is also a Greek co-imagination that contributes to designing Cretans as Others. The reality created by these imaginations is inescapable for those who are imagined. Within the discourse of power relations, the imposition of imagination cannot be simply rejected since all reactions have to refer to and, thus, reconstruct that same imaginary cosmos (see Argyrou 2001; 1996).

In that dialogue, however, the former division between the „north/west" as the productive subject and the „south/east" as the reluctant object of that imagination becomes blurred. Replies from the addressees include counter- and, moreover, co-imagination, thus either being made to fit or actively adopting and transforming imposed ideas according to their own interests. Those who are able to do the latter make use of these ideas in order to exercise power themselves, not only on the imposers of the imaginary but also on those who are not able to play an active part in co-imagination on their own behalf. Transnational expertise in communicating Cretan/Greek culture has become a major cultural capital in Pousos since tourists and tourist-migrants are dependent on cultural brokers who connect to the local in terms of their expectations. Cretan return migrants, Greek and northern European immigrants, experienced tourists and younger locals with more personal contacts to foreigners are more likely to have such expertise than those who are culturally and socially restricted to the narrower local context. A new stratifying distinction emerges between those who have the resources to link to and make use of the transnational webs of imagination and those who lack these resources and are, thus, excluded from creative co-imagination.

Consequently, transnational networks not only cut across the classical divides between „west" and „east", „centre" and „periphery", they also provide the resources to shift apparently well-fixed relations of power. In doing so, however, they also create those new types of flexible hierarchies that go with processes of globalisation in general.

Siting the ethnography of practised imagination

The perspective of transnational research has contributed much to shifting the grounds of the culture concept, especially in terms of its de-territorialisation. Still, that does not necessarily entail its dissolution into fragmented individualism, nor does it result in a culturally homogeneous „global village". The detection of other than physically localised spaces in which a plurality of cultures and identities are mutually enacted is another challenging finding of transnational ethnographic research. From that perspective, the significance of the formerly central category of „place" has come under discussion as well.

Migrants and refugees connect and act in cross-border „transnational social spaces" (Pries 1997) which are set and kept up by physical, virtual and imaginary mobility between places and people. However, these social spaces not only connect places over distance but transform and re-invent the locales to which they refer. Transnational social spaces, therefore, take on the form of „imaginary homelands" (Rushdie 1991) in that they owe their existence to the fundamental and constant experience of deterritorialisation through mobility (see Clifford 1994). It is in this sense, that physical

uprootedness is much more than a temporal, surmountable state. Rather, it becomes the main productive source of transnational, diasporic cultures and identities.

The network, as conceptualised by Ulf Hannerz (1992; 1996), stretches the transnational space beyond a more or less distinct „ethnic" group of migrants or refugees spread and connected across physical distance. Networks develop along channels of communication through which the transport and the transformation of cultural meaning is organised. Different people and different cultures may contribute to any such network. What is crucial here, however, is place as the resource and the catalyst of such communicative practice. World cities, with their high numbers of diverse personnel from all over the globe, are predestined to become transnational „market-places" in that they facilitate the availability of cultural material from other locales for the „improper" use of mixing and matching the „authentic" into the „creolised" or „hybrid". Transnational networks literally organise cultural flow from the „periphery" (where ever new material for cultural production is drawn from) to the „centres" of such production, and then back to the „periphery" (where it is imagined as a message from the global and repatriated in the local context).

Appadurai's „ethnoscapes" (1991) are but another attempt to describe and grasp transnational networks of all sorts of moving people and ideas. Here, however, the category of place vanishes into a virtual locality that is maintained more by imagination than by any other form of interaction in/with physical and social environments. It is not by chance, then, that Appadurai tends to de-territorialize ethnography by focusing on the flow of imagination in the media (see 1991, 20 pp.; 1996).

Imagination, however, not only transcends, but also creates places. At the same time, these places are de-territorialized in that they do not represent a single but a plurality of locales. Pousos is made of different Pousoses each connected to another stream of imagination – that of Germans envisioning their authentic Cretan village, that of a Greek modern who perceives that authenticity as a symbol of backwardness, or that of Cretan-Greek transnationalists who would rather consider that new authenticity as the actual expression of a specific Mediterranean European modernity. Each vision results in different, selective ways to perceive, enact and make use of Pousos. Even in this small village, physical neighbourhood does not necessarily mean to inhabit the same „socioscape" (see Albrow 1997). Rather, many of these scapes meet and overlap here, providing for the village's function as a transnational market place. Here, the periphery seems to not only be source and addressee, but also the producer of hybrid, creolised cultural meaning.

Transnational cultures localise in places which then speak of and quote from specific global connections. It is this code inscribed into the materiality that marks the transnational in the local and, thus, provides for the distinction between literate insiders and non-literate outsiders. In Frankfurt, the „Platea" is one of the new stylish restaurants in a former industrial quarter that has been transformed into a highly frequented nightly party zone. Young German professionals like to come here for the range of more sophisticated Greek dishes and for the elegant, though trendy, interior. To them, the Platea may be but one new commodity produced by Frankfurt's multiculture. Other guests, especially those Greek-speaking business people frequenting the bar later at night, are more attuned to reading the aesthetics of that place. With its spacious, minimalist looks and the rejection of any „typical", folkloristic items, the Platea differs from what is usu-

ally (in Frankfurt) held to be a Greek restaurant. Greek-ness, however, is communicated in a range of selected objects, the most spectacular being the huge black-and-white portraits of Maria Callas, Aristoteles Onassis and other icons representing a global Greek upper class decorating the high white walls. Quoting from a sophisticated Athenian Kolonaki or even New York style of urban Greek culture, the ambience marks the conditions of access and belonging to those who are addressed – or dismissed – by this code. Yorgos and his friends were, indeed, once rejected by the doorkeeper. Ever since, Yorgos disapproves of the Platea, considering it a snobby place for Frankfurt Greek furriers. It is here, in such a place, that the transnational proves to be far from being an open, boundless space. Rather, it multiplies into ever more networks along the fine differences of transnational cultures.

In sum, place is needed to practice imagination. It is in the stones of houses and streets, in the distinctive aesthetics of urban clubs and rural tavernas, as well as in the bodily looks and performances of people or in specifically styled spaces of the Internet that imagination becomes real, visible and negotiable. In such places, the common ground for co- and counter-imagination is set, thus also setting the limits of readability for others. The ethnographer must turn to such places in order to study the practical effects of imagination, i.e. the emergence, the sources and the subjects of transnational cultures. The category of „place", therefore, must not vanish in transnational research. Rather, it needs to be re-acknowledged as the productive intersection of imagination and practice. While the ethnographer needs to become mobile like the subjects of her research, while she needs to follow them in multi-sited fieldwork, she also needs to pay physical attention to the places in which these subjects act and thus create the sites under study.

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