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Mobilities and Human Possibility

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Both creativity and culture are areas that have experienced a rapid growth in interest in recent years. Moreover, there is a growing interest today in understanding creativity as a socio-cultural phenomenon and culture as a transformative, dynamic process. Creativity has traditionally been considered an exceptional quality that only a few people (truly) possess, a cognitive or personality trait 'residing' inside the mind of the creative individual. Conversely, culture has often been seen as 'outside' the person and described as a set of 'things' such as norms, beliefs, values, objects, and so on. The current literature shows a trend towards a different understanding, which recognises the psycho-socio-cultural nature of creative expression and the creative quality of appropriating and participating in culture. Our new, interdisciplinary series Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture intends to advance our knowledge of both creativity and cultural studies from the forefront of theory and research within the emerging cultural psychology of creativity, and the intersection between psychology, anthropology, sociology, education, business, and cultural studies. Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture is accepting proposals for monographs, Palgrave Pivots and edited collections that bring together creativity and culture. The series has a broader focus than simply the cultural approach to creativity, and is unified by a basic set of premises about creativity and cultural phenomena.

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For Constance, Alice and Zoé,
who fill my life with movement, joy, and possibility.

Preface

It feels ironic to write a book on mobilities in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. At the moment of writing, countries around the world are in different degrees of lockdown and many of them struggle to reinforce social distancing among their citizens. Airplanes, trains and buses are either reduced in number or stopped altogether as people are strongly encouraged to stay at home. Meanwhile, concerns for the mental health, well-being, safety and economic situation of those who do self-isolate abound. There is increasing talk of 'unnecessary' or 'unessential' travel and even jobs and workers. What we collectively come to realise, however, is that some forms of mobility and contact are not an extravagance, but a *basic necessity*. And, indeed, there is plenty of movement going on within confined spaces and even more in online, virtual environments. With restricted mobility, new spaces of solidarity, creativity and human possibility open and flourish.

It might be, paradoxically, that such a tragedy of global proportions gives us the perfect opportunity to reflect on (im)mobility, its causes, conditions, processes and impacts at many levels, from the intimately personal to the macro-economic, political and environmental. With each inquiry, we discover that movement, be it of people, ideas, objects or online content, is a phenomenon with deeper, more wide-ranging consequences than we normally realise. It is natural to theorise human mobility in a day and age when globalisation is in full swing and more people

are able to travel, further and faster, than at any other time in history.[1] But it is only when these taken-for-granted movements, that make up our everyday life, stop (or are made to stop) that we can fully grasp their value and bearings—both positive and negative—on our existence.

And yet it is not the pandemic that brought me, personally, to this topic. In fact, at the time this book was conceived, the world was merely intrigued by the emergence of a few cases of a new 'flue' virus in Wuhan, China. Little did we know, then, that COVID-19 will come to radically change our lives, everywhere, in just a matter of months. Rather, my interest in mobility was sparked by more than a decade of research on creativity and a recent, in-depth exploration of the notion of the possible.[2] And this is not because I studied before topics like the migration of creative people or the possibilities afforded by new forms of transport. My work included many keywords—e.g. difference, position, perspective and perspective-taking, dialogue, reflexivity—but mobility was not one of them. Not explicitly, at least. The sociocultural theory of creativity I have developed over the years is based on the simple idea that interactions with others and the use of cultural tools are at the heart of creative action.[3] And that such action expands our experience of the world from the *here-and-now* of sensation and perception to the *elsewhere*, *not-here*, and especially *not-yet-here* of imagination, wonder, and of the possible.[4]

Here, there, nowhere; the perspective of self and other; position exchange and dialogue—these 'places' and processes all involve movement, of the body, the mind, of society and of culture. Creativity takes us, metaphorically and sometimes literally, on the journey from a problem to its solution. Movement is a condition of possibility for the possible itself. To understand this, we just need to return to the current pandemic. It is not only the case that restrictions on physical movement close down a number of possibilities, they also open numerous others. It takes a moment on social media to see that people's creativity doesn't decrease but actually experiences a renaissance, at least when it comes to connecting, showing support and making light of the situation in spite of its seriousness (those who are reading this long after the pandemic has,

[1] Robertson (1992).

[2] Glăveanu (2020); see also Glăveanu (in press).

[3] See Glăveanu (2014).

[4] See also Jovchelovitch et al. (2017).

hopefully, ended, are invited to look up memes about stocking toilet paper or being stuck with children at home). These are not, as we might hastily assume, the outcomes of imposed immobility. They reflect new mobilities that cut across the psychological, the geographical and the cultural.

My main argument in this book is that *movement begets possibility* and that, in turn, experiences of the possible *guide* our manifold, multi-faceted, mobile lives. From the start, some conceptual clarity is in order. I am aware that, according to the new mobilities paradigm (that will be discussed at length in the first chapter), movement and mobility are not necessarily one and the same. The former can be mechanical or accidental, while the latter is infused by both meaning and purpose.[5] For the scope of this book, I will refer to the two interchangeably, however, given that movement represents, for me, the smallest unit of analysis for anyone interested in mobilities in the same way as agency ultimately underpins all acts of creativity. By possibility, I mean here the process of becoming aware of an expanded field of alternatives for our thinking and action and exploring it. Awareness and exploration don't always go hand in hand, as the COVID-19 situation illustrates once more—we are all certainly aware, these months, of many more possibilities than we can actually enact. But, unless I distinguish between becoming aware of and exploring the possible, I likely refer to both when I use the notion of (engaging with) possibility.

At a more concrete level, my main assumption, the one that will be developed and supported throughout the book, is that possibility-related phenomena such as imagination, creativity and innovation depend at an *ontological* level on mobility. This means that their very nature implies movement—physical, psychological, social—and thrives on it. This is not to say that every instance of mobility will lead to increased creativity or to more innovation. Indeed, we can think of many instances, from forced migration to wandering aimlessly, that can reduce rather than open up possibilities, at least in the short term. But, as I mentioned above, movement is always *a necessary (even if not sufficient) condition* for such phenomena to occur. Processes like imagination, creativity or wonder ultimately involve moving between different positions and, in this way, adopting new perspectives on both self and world. Much more about this dynamic in the chapters that follow.

[5] Jensen (2013, pp. 3–4).

One immediate conclusion from this set of assumptions is that mobility and possibility should not be studied separately from each other. And yet, if we consider the vast literature on mobilities (in sociology, geography, anthropology and archaeology, for example) and on the possible (in fields such as philosophy, psychology, cultural studies and creative industries), the two notions rarely intersect. Mobilities scholars tend to focus more on issues like gender, power, technology and globalisation, while possibility research is grounded either in psychological and neuroscientific accounts of the mind or societal studies of utopias and dystopias, anticipation and the future, and so on. Current points of intersection concern primarily the interplay between migration and imagination[6] or the socio-geographical study of the creative class, its concentration and dispersion in space.[7]

I consider this scarcity of analyses of the mobility–possibility nexus a major missed opportunity for both areas. At its core, the universe is mobile. Even those living organisms that look immobile, display internal forms of activity just like any material entity is, ultimately, grounded in the constant movement of particles at a subatomic level. The reason I focus here on living beings (in particular on humans and only occasionally on other organisms), is that their development and existence is marked by the possibility of moving around and, in this way, getting to know the world they live in, its constraints and its possibilities. Life itself is *emergent* and this property grounds the possible and is grounded, in turn, by various forms of mobility. Conversely, a perfectly immobile existence—which, if we rely on knowledge from the natural sciences at least, is imagined rather than real—would be one of perfect impossibility. This is why the absolute absence of movement and possibility belongs to the realm of non-existence rather than the order of our universe.

But here one can reasonably raise the objection that, if everything is both mobile and open to the possible, then we have nothing to demonstrate and nothing to study. Talking about everything means, after all, talking about nothing. As such, we do need to make analytical distinctions between levels, modalities and intensities of both mobility and possibility. Fortunately, we are spoiled for choice in this regard by both literatures. Distinctions are commonly made based on who or what moves, how mobility occurs, and what its consequences are. In this

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[6] Salazar (2011).

[7] Ozgen et al. (2011).

book, I will adopt a temporal perspective to unpack the assumed relation between movement, on the one hand, and imagination, creativity and innovation, on the other. *Time* is a crucial category for both classes of phenomena. Movement necessarily unfolds in time and creative people, for example, essentially use the past in the present in view of a specific future. This volume is structured around four intertwined temporalities: the phylogenetic (the development of the species), the sociogenetic (the development of society), ontogenetic (the development of the person) and microgenetic (the moment to moment development of thought and action).[8]

The book starts with a conceptual discussion of mobility and possibility, expanding some of the points made in this preface. Then it presents in more detail the growing area of possibility studies which, despite its old roots, is the newest of the two fields. The temporal distinctions mentioned above are used to explore, each in a separate chapter, issues related to *Homo movens*, ideas on the move, mobile lives and the wandering mind. In all these cases, it is the continuity between temporalities and mobilities rather than their strict segmentation that comes to the fore. The book ends with a consideration of what joining mobility and possibility could generate, including the study of mobile possibilities and possible mobilities. A particular feature of these chapters is that they start and end with stories from different fieldworks I conducted over the last 15 years, (re)interpreted here through the combined lenses of mobility and possibility.

There are many people to be grateful to for making this book possible, too many than I could ever thank in such a short preface. From the participants in the studies I reference to the many mentors I was fortunate enough to meet along the years, my own journey, both personal and academic, has been always shared with others—people who offered me their time generously, their opinion, who listened to my ideas and knew how to discover new possibilities even in the most outlandish of them and make me recognise this potential as well. A journey that started with highschool classes in psychology and the invaluable guidance of late professor Maria Gansari, the best mentor a young mind could possibly hope for. I am particularly grateful to all the colleagues from Palgrave—including Grace Jackson—who supported me

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[8] See also Engeström (1987).

relentlessly, from my very first handbook on creativity and culture to creating the book series this volume is part of, to giving me the chance to edit a whole Encyclopedia of the Possible. Last but never least, I want to thank Constance, Alice and Zoé for being the best travel companions a husband and father could ever wish for.

Morges, Switzerland   Vlad Petre Glăveanu

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Contents

Mobility and Possibility

Abstract This first chapter serves as an introduction to the two main topics of mobility and possibility and their relation. It reviews, briefly, the literature on mobilities and connects it to the one on human possibility. It makes the overall argument that mobility begets possibility and discusses the structure of the book in light of it.

As a master student in London, I had the unique opportunity to join an international study of children's representations of the public sphere.[1] At the time, I remember being intrigued by how one could 'access' such representations especially since, in many cultures around the globe, the participation of children in the public sphere is either reduced or discouraged. The project was based on a triangulation of children's drawings and stories about the world they live in and the way they experience it. When I had joined this research, data had already been collected from Germany, Mexico and Brazil. As a Romanian, I enthusiastically accepted to collect new drawings and stories from back home. I expected children not to

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[1] For details and outcomes see Jovchelovitch et al. (2013).

engage with too much of the public world given a generalised distrust in others and fear about the dangers lurking outside the house, the gloomy legacy of decades of communism followed by years of hardships during the transition period.

What my research found was quite surprising.[2] Romanian children aged 7 and 10 did depict in their drawings a lot of the world outside of their homes, even at the younger age. They portrayed the street, buildings, the park, banks, flowers, benches, garbage bins, the school, even ice cream trucks that don't really exist in Romania but must have been seen in movies or books. This was unexpected because, in the other three countries, 7-year-olds especially focused on the family home, on parents, pets and the self. The self wasn't present as much in drawings from back home, suggesting perhaps a lack of intersubjective bonds with and within public spaces. The outside world was there to be observed, walked through, shown to others, but not really interacted with—at least in pictorial depictions.

One of the most interesting findings came, however, from children placed in institutions of care. Each country included in the public sphere project didn't treat culture, rightfully, as a homogenous environment. In fact, every country holds a myriad of cultural settings, each one with its own specificity and contribution to overall patterns. This is how, for example, it would have been misleading to assume that all Romanian children live similar lives or have the same experiences growing up. We had to pay attention to those factors that might impact their understanding and exploration of the outside world.

Growing up in an institution of care leaves a deep mark on one's development and relationship to self, others and society. Romania has a particularly grim reputation in this area, considering the horrific video footage that emerged after 1989, reflecting what was happening with children in orphanages during communism. Malnourished, mistreated, left

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[2] What we aimed with this study was to 'trouble' Piagetian and linear views of the development of intelligence that typically assume that children move, as they grow, from 'less' to 'more' knowledge of the world and especially more accurate or logical knowledge. We were interested in how culture comes to disturb this neat assumption and how growing up in different communities and countries around the world necessarily exposes children to different values and patterns of interaction. And it is through social interaction that intelligence and knowledge actually develop and are channelled towards particular situations and events. Our coding frame for drawings thus included categories such as 'subjective' (self and family), 'objective' (the outside world without any trace of self or family) and 'intersubjective' (including elements from both).

to die—these images shocked the world at the time. Conditions have certainly improved but, in any case, the reality of living in a care centre, as a child, is that both your mobility and accompanying sense of possibility can be severely reduced. The orphanage is halfway between an institution and a home, without ever being either of them.

One could see in these children's drawings and constructions (because I added a task in which participants were asked to build their world from a set of toys and wooden blocks) the signs of restricted mobility. The institution and its playground were often depicted, as well as the family home which was either rarely visited or simply imagined by the child. Any opportunities to see other places, like going to the park or the seaside, were celebrated in colourful drawings. Unlike their counterparts growing up with their families, the presence of other friends or other family members at the orphanage was emphasised—those human contacts that made the place feel safe and familiar. Special moments in the year when they could see their parents, in case they were alive and willing to receive their visit, were also shown: the Easter holiday, the birthday party that either took place or was intensely desired, the place where the rest of the family lived.

It is heart-rending to talk to children growing up in an institution of care and to see their drawings, hear their stories and know that what they wanted most is a home. This is not to say that the institution itself was hated or made them feel unsafe. Many drawings and constructions focused on the life there and its small joys, like playing football with others in the yard or exchanging gifts. And many of them also illustrated the power of the imagination to transform difficult conditions through anticipation, hope and the desire for a different future. One of the constructions that I remember struck me the most belonged to a child who included a lot of people and several houses in it. When asked who those were, he identified himself and his brothers, living together at the centre. The adults in the construction were still them, years later, each one married, having their own children and their own homes. Moving away and moving on are, in this context, both examples of mobility *and* possibility. Especially when not every dream or hope can be realised, the fact that they can still be envisaged changes the self, the place and the everyday.

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The interest in mobilities is both old and new. We have always been fascinated by movement, our own, that of nature and of the universe. Our travelled trajectories helped us find other places and people, flee dangers, locate new resources, discover more of the world and marvel at it. The flow of water and currents of wind, the spread of fire and the occasional shaking of the earth guided our practices and inspired the first religions. The slow motion of celestial bodies and their intersections made us reflect on the connection to events happening on earth, to our destiny and place in the universe. In all these cases, movement didn't only change the world, but changed us with it. As the pre-Socratic Heraclitus famously said, 'no man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man'.[3] Mobility means transformation, moving leads to becoming. But what we become exactly remains open and rests in the realm of possibility.[4]

It is important to note here though that the Heraclitan notion of *Panta rhei* or 'everything flows' was in contrast to the philosophy of other thinkers of the time, most notably Parmenides of Elea. For him, the true nature of things was immovable, eternal and unchanging. He is credited, for example, with saying that 'whatever is is, and what is not cannot be' and that 'out of nothing, nothing can come'. In other words, existence is already complete and *being* reigns supreme, at the expense of *becoming*. In fact, it is our senses that trick us into believing everything is in movement and constantly changing; what Parmenides calls the way of opinion. If we were to use reason, we would notice the way of the truth: that reality, beneath it all, is one, uniform, necessary, timeless and static. No movement means seeing things more clearly, perhaps, but it also means no possibility.

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[3] Heraclitus of Ephesus, c. 535–c. 475 BC.

[4] Georg Simmel in his seminal essay 'Bridge and door', originally written in 1909, notes that: 'The people who first built a path between two places performed one of the greatest human achievements. No matter how often they might have gone back and forth between the two and thus connected them subjectively, so to speak, it was only in visibly impressing the path into the surface of the earth that the places were objectively connected. The will to connect had become a shaping of things, a shaping that was available to the will at every repetition, without still being dependent on its frequency or rarity. Path-building, one could say, is specifically human achievement; the animal too continuously overcomes a separation and often in the cleverest and most ingenious ways, but its beginning and end remain unconnected, it does not accomplish the miracle of the road: freezing movement into a solid structure that commences from it and in which it terminates' (Simmel 1994, p. 6).

While the recent surge of interest in mobility and everything associated with it claims its roots in the thought of Heraclitus rather than Parmenides, we should consider the deeper issues at stake here. These are the relationships between stability and change, mobility and immobility, possibility and impossibility. As any dialectic pair, the two 'terms' need each other. How could we even identify movement if nothing ever (seemed to) stand still? What would happen to change, if it couldn't come out of stability and lead to another version of it, even if temporary? What possibilities out there emerge other than against a background of impossibility? There is, thus, an important place for immobility in the study of movement,[5] for the impossible in our theories of the possible.[6] More than this, increased movement and increased possibility are not always better or desirable. A teenager who has travelled with her family since birth and lived in six different countries already, might yearn for stability. The refugee escaping war would give anything not to have to leave. The child who is told in class that he can paint whatever he wants and given no guidelines, will miss such constraints on the possible. And then there are also those movements that lead us to danger and possibilities that, once explored, put us in trouble. There is, therefore, more to stability and constraints (and to Parmenides) than meets the eye.

Today, migration is one of the paradigmatic examples of human mobility even if, as we will see in this chapter and in this book, it is certainly not the only one. The 2020 World Migration report[7] by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that there are currently 272 million international migrants worldwide. Global displacement is also at a record high, with internally displaced people reaching over 41 million and the number of refugees at nearly 26 million. These are staggering numbers, especially if we consider them in a historical perspective. In the year 2000, for example, the same report appreciated that about 150 million people lived outside of their countries of origin and this was a doubling of the number from 1965. More than this, we need to make an effort of imagination to comprehend these figures. Basically, almost the same number of individuals living today in Indonesia, the fourth most populous country, is that of migrants. And this doesn't

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[5] See Khan (2016).

[6] See Glăveanu (2020).

[7] See https://publications.iom.int.

count the internal movement of people, from daily commutes to annual festivities. For instance, close to 3 billion trips are made within China for the New Year, in February.

Whether such levels of migration are desirable or well received is another matter. Places like the European Union are based on the principle of free movement of people and goods and believe in the social, economic and political benefits of such mobility. On the other hand, Brexit—arguably still not 'done' and remaining so for years to come— shows the power of populist rhetoric to use migrants as scapegoats for national problems. I will review later in this book evidence as to the connection between migration, innovation and economic growth. For now, it suffices to say that we should not romanticise this century as one of unleashed mobility, openness to diversity and realisation of global possibilities. Humans have migrated throughout their history and have often done so much more easily than today, when the existence of passports and the use of technologies to monitor border movements can raise formidable barriers.[8] Besides, there are many 'dark' sides to people's mobility that need to be acknowledged. These range from human trafficking and displacement due to war, famine or poverty, to the increase in inequality[9] and the environmental impact of the estimated two billion cars that will congest roads by 2030.[10] In the end, just like any other phenomenon, migration has both positive and negative effects, and the rather extreme reactions to it nowadays make this point painfully clear.[11]

The new mobilities paradigm in the social sciences tries to account for all these consequences in its study of the movement of people, objects, images, information and wastes and, above all, their interdependence.[12] This goes beyond issues related to migration, transport and globalisation,

[8] Macková and Kysučan (2016).

[9] Ohnmacht et al. (2009).

[10] Adey et al. (2014).

[11] "Mobility can indeed lead to heightened tolerance of difference and an intensified awareness of the mingled inheritances that constitute even the most tradition-bound cultural stance, but it can also lead to an anxious, defensive, and on occasion violent policing of the boundaries. The crucial first task for scholars is simply to recognize and to track the movements that provoke both intense pleasure and intense anxiety" (Greenblatt 2010, pp. 6–7).

[12] Urry (2010, p. 348).

and proposes a new way of looking at human society. Instead of the still, bounded, disconnected conceptions of the past, we are presented by mobilities scholars with an image of ebbs and flows that not only characterise but *constitute* our existence. It is because of the scale and implications of this new way of seeing the world, that mobilities are referred to as the paradigmatic 'turn' of the early 2000s, on par with the cognitive, narrative and socio-material turns of the 50s, 70s and 90s, respectively. This novel paradigm builds, of course, on older developments such as complexity theory, socio-technical transitions theory and social practice theory.[13] Today, new mobilities are a flourishing academic and research field with multiple centres, especially in Europe, dedicated handbooks and journals[14] and even a few manifestos.

One of the founding figures of this relatively recent trend is the late British sociologist John Urry.[15] His 2000 book, *Sociology beyond societies*, made forcefully the argument that our understanding of society is shaken to its core by expanding mobilities. For him, mobility is much more than a geographical phenomenon, it is a social one and, I would add (see also Chapter 6), a psychological one as well. This insight transforms sociology from a science focused on groups, institutions and a rather static view of society, to a discipline 'organised around networks, mobility and horizontal fluidities'.[16] Rather boldly, Urry claimed that we entered with the new millennium into a 'post-societal phase' in which nation states are necessarily open, global, and interdependent. As I mentioned above, the death of the nation state might have been too hastily pronounced.[17] Discourses about building walls and taking back control, mostly from foreigners and foreign powers, dominated the politics of the past five years and will probably continue to do so in the future. But there is

[13] Sheller and Urry (2006).

[14] For example, *Mobilities* started in 2006 and *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* in 2011.

[15] See Urry (2000).

[16] Urry (2000, p. 3).

[17] 'As the new century unfolds, it has become increasingly clear that the bodies of the deceased have refused to stay buried: those who thought to have bid farewell once and for all to the heavily guarded borders of the nation-state and to the atavistic passions of religious and ethnic identity find themselves confronting a global political landscape in which neither nationalism nor identity politics shows any intention of disappearing. While the older conceptions of rootedness and autochthony seem intellectually bankrupt, the heady theories of creative metissage have run aground upon the rocks of contemporary reality' (Greenblatt 2010, p. 1).

something appealing in Urry's call to conceive of the social in terms of mobility rather than society and of the metaphor of gamekeeping rather than gardening.[18]

What does he view as socio-spatial practices of mobility in this paradigm?

> I consider corporeal mobility and especially walking, travelling by train, car-driving and air travel; object mobility as objects are constituted through mobilities and are themselves mobile; imaginative travel through radio and television and its effects in reconstituting the public sphere; and virtual travel and its connections with communities and corporeal mobility.[19]

In subsequent works,[20] Urry and his colleagues distinguish different categories, including the *corporeal travel of people*, diverse in terms of its purposes and duration, the *physical movement of objects*, from gifts to services, the *imaginative travel* occasioned by seeing far away people and places in print and visual media, the *virtual travel* forming communities at a distance, and the *communicative travel* of messages, postcards, letters, faxes, calls and social media posts. With this range and variety, we can see how the scope of new mobilities extends well beyond the geographical and the societal and it addresses the psychological, the technological and the political realms as well.

New paradigms require new vocabularies. And, indeed, scholars working on developing this perspective, across disciplines, were happy to propose key concepts and think of suitable methodologies to study them. Urry himself initially focused on networks and flows, adding scapes as an overarching frame.[21] Others preferred to refer to movements, networks and motility, the first capturing the geographic dimension, the second integrating the first and the third focusing on the capacities of an actor to move socially and spatially.[22] Last but not least, there is also an emerging focus on how mobilities are being staged, and not just how they happen.

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[18] For details, see Urry (2000, p. 5).

[19] Urry (2000, p. 6).

[20] Grieco and Urry (2011), Larsen and Urry (2016).

[21] "*Scapes* are the networks of machines, technologies, organisations, texts and actors that constitute various interconnected nodes along which the flows can be relayed" (Urry 2000, p. 35).

[22] See the book edited by Canzler et al. (2008).

In this sense, there can be a staging 'from above', oftentimes meticulously designed and planned by collectives and institutions, or 'from below', initiated and guided by individual actors themselves.[23] Among the proposed methods to study such dynamic and relational phenomena, various authors refer to mobile ethnographies, time-space diaries, cyber-research of imaginative and virtual mobilities, the study of memory traces such as photographs, letters, souvenirs and of transfer or in-between points such as cafes, lounges, arcades, parks, hotels, stations, etc.[24]

Until now, I covered mostly scholarship on mobilities emerging in sociology but, as noted before, this paradigm is necessarily multi-, even transdisciplinary. One of the main other contributors to research in this tradition is certainly geography. In a series of reports, Tim Cresswell differentiated this approach from existing work done in transport geography, considered its methodological impact, and focused on special areas of interest such as the study of waiting, stillness and being stuck, critical mobilities, animal mobilities and the general importance of logistics, off-shoring and outsourcing.[25] In anthropology, Noel Salazar famously studied the interplay between culturally rooted imaginaries of mobility and real-life physical movements.[26] Last but not least, in archaeology, different researchers built on an older interest in the diffusion of artefacts (see also Chapter 4) to articulate the relation between migration and cultural change,[27] dispelling the pervasive myth of the static past.[28] Surprisingly—and disappointedly—there isn't much of a contribution from psychologists, a discipline that is yet to understand the mind in less abstract and universalistic terms, related as it is to the body, context and movement.[29]

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[23] For details see Jensen (2013).

[24] See Sheller and Urry (2006).

[25] See Cresswell (2011, 2012, 2014).

[26] Salazar (2010).

[27] Heitz and Stapfer (2017).

[28] Knappett and Kiriatzi (2016).

[29] Except for sociocultural psychological approaches, see Zittoun (2020).

There is much to commend within the mobilities turn.[30] First of all, its commitment to a dynamic, process-based understanding of the world and its constituents. Second, a study of mobility touches upon a variety of important topics today from transport and globalisation to gender, inequality, power and climate change. Third, the multidisciplinary nature of this approach fosters new types of dialogues within the social sciences and between them and the natural sciences, humanities and the arts. Fourth, new vocabularies and methodologies that capture movement at all its levels and in all its dimensions are badly needed. To the lists discussed above, I could add as future, important topics of study pathways, rhythms and projects. Pathways call our attention to the repeated and collective nature of human mobility—while individuals can and do construct their own trajectories in the world, their movement is also 'pulled' by the gravity of socially and historically fashioned channels that capture their energy, interests and desires. Rhythms bring to the fore the temporality and patterns of movement, placing people 'in sync' or 'out of sync' with each other, speeding up or slowing down their individual and/or collective mobility. Finally, projects are social and motivational constructs, such as imaginations of the future, that motivate and guide human action and its incessant movement.

What about possibility? Besides movement, the second key theme of this book is the possible and, as I started arguing in the preface, I believe there are profound and yet to be explored connections between human mobility and human possibility. It is also surprising to see that, except for some isolated connections among migration and imagination, for instance, the multiple ways in which movement both opens and constraints possibilities for thought, action and ways of being, rest

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[30] First and foremost, the way in which it changed and continues to change the social sciences. 'Social science has largely ignored or trivialised the importance of the systematic movements of people for work and family life, for leisure and pleasure, and for politics and protest. The paradigm challenges the ways in which much social science research has been "a-mobile". Even while it has increasingly introduced spatial analysis the social sciences have still failed to examine how the spatialities of social life presuppose (and frequently involve conflict over) both the actual and the imagined movement of people from place to place, person to person, event to event. Travel has been for the social sciences seen as a black box, a neutral set of technologies and processes predominantly permitting forms of economic, social, and political life that are seen as explicable in terms of other, more causally powerful processes. As we shall argue, however, accounting for mobilities in the fullest sense challenges social science to change both the objects of its inquiries and the methodologies for research' (Sheller and Urry 2006, p. 208).

under-theorised and under-researched. In particular, in what theory is concerned, the hypothesis that *mobility is the engine of possibility* remains to be formulated and 'demonstrated' (for as much as highly theoretical relations can be). My purpose in this first chapter is to sketch the conceptual basis for this hypothesis and then, after a detour through possibility studies, 'test' this broad assumption at different temporal levels, from phylo- and socio- to onto- and micro-genetic, and across realms of experience, from physical and social to cultural and psychological.

In order to understand the fundamental role played by movement beyond the physical and towards our social and psychological lives, we need to start from a much more basic notion, that of position. As embodied organisms, we all occupy a certain spatial and temporal position in the world.[31] Put simply, this is where you are at the moment, in a particular place within the material and social environment. Importantly, we *relate* to this environment *from* our position. Our sense organs are directed to it and perceive it from where we stand. Our thinking is also shaped by the positions we occupy and the bodily states these facilitate. Finally, we relate to other people from our location in the world and in view of their location. In other words, we are positioned *at once* in physical (spatial and temporal), psychological (perceptual and conceptual) and social (self vis a vis other) terms.

The relations that bridge a given position and a given reality—which can be external to our bodies or internal to them, since we perceive both events happening around us and pay attention to our own states, physiological and mental—can be defined as perspectives.[32] A specific physical position, for instance sitting at the head of the table, will give us a unique perceptual perspective on the dinner and the other participants to it. Conversely, each guest will have his or her own perceptual perspective on the scene, similar to that of those sitting nearby yet never identical. But these physical positionings are, in the case of human beings, *at the same time* symbolic and social. Socially, the person at the head of the table

[31] This understanding has a pragmatist origin, particularly in the work of George Herbert Mead (1934).

[32] 'A perspective is an orientation to an environment that is associated with acting within that environment. Perspectives both emerge out of activity and enable increasingly complex forms of activity. All perspectives reflect relationships between individuals and the world. Because the human world is a social world, all perspectives arise and are employed within interpersonal interactivity' (Martin 2005, p. 234).

might be the host or the oldest person or someone who is being celebrated. Symbolically, in any of the cases mentioned before, this person would have a different perspective on the situation and understand his or her role in entertaining others and paying attention to their needs (as a host) or enjoying oneself and being the centre of attention (as the person being celebrated). In this sense, there is an intrinsic connection between the physical, social and symbolic positions we occupy in the world and the perceptual, conceptual and affective perspectives we take due to our positioning.

A couple of observations before moving forward. First, even as I use a rather cognitive language to refer to perspectives, this doesn't mean they are constructed 'in the head' and in abstract terms. On the contrary, perspectives emerge and develop (i.e. they are differentiated or consolidated) through action. It is in the course of activity that we move from position to position and experience them in physical, symbolic and social terms, thus necessarily adopting new perspectives or refining existing perspectives on our activity (including on material settings, other people and so on). Perspectives are thus best defined as action orientations,[33] bringing together cognition, motivation and affect in navigating our environment and acting within it. Second, positions don't determine perspectives in a linear manner, with one perspective relating necessarily to one position, and vice versa. Going back to the example of sitting at the head of the table as someone who is being celebrated, the person can develop an action orientation (or perspective) of talking more and guiding the interaction but also one of helping the host of the dinner party, whenever needed. Equally, the perspective of helping the host can be adopted by anyone else at the table, independent of their physical positioning and social role.

What these observations call our attention to, and what is precisely the crux of the matter here, is the fact that we can move between positions, either exchange them[34] or adopt several positions in turn and, in doing

[33] Gillespie (2006).

[34] For details about Position Exchage Theory see Gillespie and Martin (2014). In their words: 'Position exchange, we suggest, is a general developmental principle operating across the lifespan (Martin and Gillespie 2010). Infants are moved from one context of interaction to the next. Toddlers begin to move themselves from one context to another. Young children explore social positions in play, games, and discourse. (…) Children become adults, parents become grandparents, and employees

so, diversify and integrate various perspectives. *It is because we are not bound to one position in the world, which is the very premise of mobility, that we can develop multiple perspectives on reality and, in this way, open up new horizons of possibility for our action, thinking, and being.* Of course, these new possibilities come to impact our movement in turn—the fact that we prefer one perspective rather than another encourages us to either return to or hold on to a given position (for example, the celebrated guest might be reluctant to declare the dinner over if he or she had a great time). It is thus acts of positioning and repositioning, reflecting the mobility of the self, that create new situations for us, situations that come with their own constraints and their own opportunities for action. This is not to say, again, that more movement between positions necessarily means more possibility or that every type of movement to a new position will have this 'effect'. If someone is moved from their home to jail it is certain that many possibilities for action will close down for that person. But, even in prison, other forms of mobility (from physical, in a more constrained sense, to social and symbolic) will emerge, each one with its own horizon of (im)possibility.

In this book, my aim is to examine the constitutive role of mobility of all kinds, from physical to social and symbolic, for possibility and possibility-related phenomena, including creativity, imagination and innovation. Instead of considering mobility and possibility as related but also somewhat independent of each other, my argument is that possibility *depends* on mobility at a deeper, ontological level. Tania Zittoun and colleagues[35] thoroughly outlined in a recent special issue the interplay between different forms of mobility, on the one hand, and different types of imagination or symbolic experience on the other. As they concluded, the relation is variable: mobility can reduce but also enhance possibility, new possibilities can do the same for mobility. In trying to break the circularity, I posit here that *movement between positions grounds all our*

become employers. But equally, at a micro resolution, within the course of a single day, people alternate between talking/listening, asking/helping, giving/getting, buying/selling, leading/following, winning/losing, teaching/learning, reading/writing, and so on' (Gillespie and Martin 2014, p. 74).

[35] See, for example, the recent special issue 'Exploring the interplay between (im)mobility and imagination', published in *Culture & Psychology* and co-edited by Flavia Cangià and Tania Zittoun.

explorations of the possible. Before unpacking these movements, however, it is useful to dwell some more on the possible.

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It is undeniable that children growing up in institutions of care, like the one I collected data from many years ago, in Romania, can and do explore possibilities, even if many of them remain in the realm of the imagination. As I mentioned at the start of this chapter, they envision how it would be or how it will be to spend holidays at home, to have a birth party, and to have a house and a family when growing up. In the meantime, their physical mobility, restricted by the strict norms of the care centre, is certainly not absent. As I visited the institution, children were moving around inside, going out in the yard, playing with each other. They also told stories about going out into the public sphere with their friends and people from the orphanage, fond memories depicted for me in lively drawings and constructions. Restricted mobility and, to some extent, possibility, doesn't mean complete immobility and absolute impossibility. Constraints don't eliminate movement or the imagination, but certainly shape both to a great extent. The family home is imagined based on what they know, see, and do daily at the centre. Conversely, any visits outside help children decide what they want when they are back with their friends. In the end, all movements, both great and small, place them in new positions from which to think, feel and experience the world. And, for most, also imagine a time when they will be in a position to change it.

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Possibility Studies

Abstract Given possibility studies is the 'newer' paradigm compared to new mobilities, it deserves a separate chapter. This paradigm has, in fact, equally old if not older roots, bringing together fields as diverse as futures studies, creativity research, the psychology and philosophy of imagination, utopian thinking, wonder and wondering, etc. The sociocultural theory of the possible that places movement between positions and perspectives at its core is presented here as a key bridge to mobilities.

Keywords Possible · Imagination · Creativity · Innovation · Wonder · Sociocultural psychology

As a doctoral student in London I exercised my own mobility and spent three months at a laboratory in Paris.[1] This might not sound like the longest of journeys, but it certainly offered me a new position from which to develop fresh perspectives on my topic of research—creativity. The social science approach taken at the LSE made me acutely aware of the role of society and culture in creative work. But it is colleagues from the Sorbonne, investigating individual differences, who opened up the possibility of focusing on personal profiles and domains of activity.

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[1] For which I am grateful to Todd Lubart and his colleagues.

In Paris, I became part of the team for a project called CREAPRO.[2] It examined creative expression in five domains—art, design, science, film scriptwriting and music composition—and studied, with the help of a variety of methods (including interviews, questionnaires and diaries), the processes of both eminent creators and students in each area. The goal was to notice similarities and dissimilarities in creative activity depending on individual differences and professional context.

All the creators in the study, one way or another, explored new possibilities and tried to make the most out of them in a creative manner. In achieving this, they developed new perspectives on their area of study or expression and placed these perspectives in dialogue with each other. For scientists, these dialogues took the shape of comparing formulas, for designers, they became embodied in prototypes and objects, artists played with different artistic visions and musicians had to choose between various scores, rhythms and instruments. The main difficulty of the project was how to capture patterns within this incredible diversity. I proposed at the time to take inspiration from John Dewey's seminal work on art as experience.[3] He usefully postulated a process that articulates doing and undergoing, in other words, action on the world and perceiving the outcomes of our action. With my current vocabulary, I would translate these into two positions: that of the actor and the observer. Indeed, Dewey himself noted that creators constantly move between these positions and, in doing so, gain original perspectives and valuable insights.

The task my colleagues and I had was to describe what we learnt from interviews with professional creators in terms of this action-based model and note the similarities emerging within as well as between domains. Our findings are too numerous to review here, but one conclusion was that how creative people expand their horizon of possibility rests in their *doing*. Do they normally start from a more or less clear perspective of what they want to achieve and then work to embody this perspective into a creative outcome? Or do the reverse, letting practical work reveal a new perspective worth following? The idea–work–idea dynamic was widely found in the data and yet, there were still notable differences, particularly between scientists and the others. Understandably, scientific work is always firmly grounded in previous scholarship and new ideas or perspectives have to relate to it. Artists, designers and musicians, on the other

[2] For details about its findings see Glăveanu et al. (2013).
[3] See Dewey (1934).

hand, often start from a 'vision' of the work to come. But this vision is necessarily incomplete and only perfected through practical action with their hands, clay, paint, prototypes or technological tools.

One other overall conclusion was that Dewey's notion of *undergoing* is vitally important for understanding creativity. It is what the creators perceive as they prepare for their work, as they are involved in it, and as they finish, that guides the entire process. And this involves more or less explicit forms of mobility. Without taking a step back, physically or symbolically, creators wouldn't be able to have the distance needed to develop a new perspective.[4] This is, at once, an embodied distantiation (e.g. walking back and looking at an unfinished canvas) matched by a symbolic one (i.e. turning into an audience for one's creation and adopting different points of view to evaluate it: what can we see in it? how does it make one feel? why might there be differences of perception?). Movements are at the heart of creativity. Without them, there is no exploration of the possible, not even an awareness of it through sudden insight. The latter, for glorified as it is as pure mental illumination, can only come out of doing, of moving, of undergoing.

And the creators interviewed in the French project had plenty of examples of the above. They all talked about the importance of being receptive to one's world, to conversations, to the findings of others, to life contexts and situations, books, movies and exhibitions; it is more from the environment rather than the self that creativity arises or, better said, from their *encounter*. And the environment can only be known by moving around in it: standing up and walking in circles, manipulating objects and seeing them from different positions, going to the park, being on to the bus or visiting museums, taking longer trips to places that inspire or help one incubate ideas. As one artist mentioned, creators are 'sponges' that get impregnated with the views, beliefs and experiences of others. And, in order to be impregnated, they have to be mobile—physically, mentally, both at the same time. To reveal such 'hidden' mobilities, though, we need first a clearer understanding of the possible and its intimate relation to everyday life and practice.

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[4] I documented such processes in a later study of artistic creativity, for details see Glăveanu (2015).

Just like the universe is intrinsically mobile, human life is necessarily lived, at once, in the realm of the actual and of the possible. The latter is in no way disconnected from the former, in fact, it grows out of it and transforms it altogether. It is because we are not 'trapped' within the here and now of our existence but we can remember the past, imagine the future, think of options, create as if and what if scenarios, and even conceive what is unlikely to happen, that possibilities define who we are, what we do, and where we are headed. And, just like mobility gains meaning in relation to its contrary—immobility—the possible requires an opposite. As I argued elsewhere,[5] this is not the impossible, that can still be imagined and, in many ways, comes to motivate further acts of exploration, but the non-possible, a space of no dialogue and no alternative perspectives. As I began mentioning in the previous chapter, the sociocultural theory of possibility I propose is based on the movement between positions and their corresponding perspectives. The lack of multiple positions and physical and/or symbolic movements closes down the possible. Sameness and immobility are, after all, the defining features of the non-possible.

Our capacity to become aware of possibilities, explore and enact them is underpinned by a wide range of phenomena including creativity, imagination, innovation, agency, counterfactual thinking, wonder, awe, serendipity, hope, utopian thinking and so on.[6] Each one focuses on a certain facet of the possible and, in this chapter, I will examine the particular contribution of some of the processes above. What is important to note before is that, ultimately, our capacity to engage with new possibilities is due to the *symbolic function* and, in particular, to *distantiation*.[7] In other words, through the use of signs and symbols we create meaning about our sensorial experience and these meanings come to direct action and to mediate it (i.e. instead of action being determined, directly, by immediate or automatic reactions to stimuli). This is why, for instance, in case of fire, most people don't run as far as possible—the unmediated, biological reaction—but, once at a safe distance, look for a fire extinguisher or call the firemen. Knowledge that an extinguisher might be there or that firemen exist is not present in the immediate environment

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[5] For details, see Glăveanu (2020b).

[6] For a comprehensive review see the *Palgrave Encyclopedia of the Possible* on SpringerLink.

[7] See Valsiner (2014).

in the sense that none of these are in sight. But the symbolic existence of both and the meanings associated with them (e.g. I can stop this fire with a tool or professionals can do it with better tools) expand our possibilities for action in that specific situation. Symbolic distantiation means, thus, being able to metaphorically take a step back from one's context and (re)interpret or (re)signify it with cultural means. As we will see here, this metaphor actually builds on very concrete forms of mobility.

Let's take the example of 'what if', 'as if' and counterfactuals thinking.[8] These are forms of reasoning that explicitly invite us to explore alternative versions of reality. They are all grounded in a basic capacity, again enabled by the symbolic function, which is *pretence*. Pretend play emerges in early childhood at a time when children start using language to organise their activity. Unlike physical play, that is based on repetitive acts, pretend play builds on the separation between the material and the symbolic and it is premised by the movement between the two.[9] It is because a chair can be given other meanings (and, thus, uses) than that of a chair—for instance, it can become a small house to hide inside, a mountain to place toys on, or a wall defending the land—that children are free to engage with it 'as if' it were a house, mountain or wall. Moreover, they can propose 'what if' rules to playmates and, using language, communicate their new meaning. All the while, there is physical movement within the play to enact these conventions and also symbolic movement between different meanings whenever, for example, children negotiate whether the chair is a house or a wall and, if is a wall, how tall it is supposed to be.

Counterfactual thinking reveals a new dimension of considering possibilities, this time not so much regarding the meaning of objects but the course of events. Counterfactuals designate scenarios that, as the name suggests, counter the facts; they envision alternative versions of past or present outcomes.[10] And there are important consequences for being able to imagine the world differently. On the one hand, whenever we find ourselves in a bad situation, we can be comforted by the thought that things could have been worse. On the other, we might also picture the many ways in which the bad situation could have been

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[8] All of them expressions of what Dewey (1933) would call reflective thinking or thinking that considers, at once, what is actual and what goes beyond it and exists in the realm of the possible.

[9] Smolucha (1992).

[10] Roese and Olson (1995, p. 1).

avoided, an exercise that can make one feel sad, angry or desperate. We also imagine counterfactuals for happy events and occurrences, and these serve other functions, for instance, being relieved with how things turned out or learning how to make them go even better. In the end, there is symbolic movement here at play between reality as we know it and different versions of it, positive or negative. Finally, the consequences of exploring such possibilities for our mood, health or future action range from positive to negative,[11] a reminder that engaging the possible comes with its own risks and opportunities.

Up to this point, I have used the notion of *imagination* sparsely to designate how thinking processes—as if, what if and counterfactuals—venture into a new realm beyond the here and now of concrete experience. Instead of imposing a sharp distinction between thinking and imagination, we need to acknowledge that the two 'collaborate' in opening up new possibilities for both thought and action. Imagination is usually defined as the psychological process by which we expand current experience by bringing into it the past, the future and what is potential rather than actual.[12] It thus offers the basis for all the phenomena discussed above while requiring, in turn, different types of thinking to guide its course and turn it from spontaneous daydreaming into an adaptive behaviour (during play, at work, when interacting with others, etc.). One of the important lessons of studying human imagination is that it is far from disconnected from 'what is'. In fact, we wouldn't be able to imagine the 'not here' or 'not yet here' without being immersed into what already exists, and further, without having encountered a wide range of it. This is how one of Vygotsky's laws of the imagination is that it becomes richer the more material, social and cultural experiences the person accumulates.[13] And these experiences necessarily come out of moving around, getting to know more of the world, of other people, places and institutions. Mental freedom is grounded, once more, in physical forms of mobility.

This is all the more obvious when passing to *creativity*. According to Vygotsky, imagination is at the root of creative action. More recent scholarship in this area points to the fact that many more processes contribute

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[11] Roese (1997).

[12] See also Zittoun and Gillespie (2016).

[13] In Vygotsky (2004).

to creative expression, from forms of thinking (e.g. combinatorial, divergent), types of motivation (primarily intrinsic, but also extrinsic), kinds of affect (both positive and negative emotions, for instance) to social and cultural variables such as open communication, supportive interactions and novelty oriented cultural values.[14] This is because creating involves practical action, above and beyond imagining. Although a lot of our metaphors for creativity revolve around creative ideation—e.g. the image of the lit lightbulb that reduces this phenomenon to 'getting the idea' or the moment of insight—to create means to engage in *doing* or *making* things that usually end up being evaluated, used, and recreated by other people.[15] Creativity is, thus, a form of action, and any action is unimaginable in the absence of movement. When creating, we manipulate things, use tools, move our bodies, interact with others, travel longer or shorter distances in order to get resources or gain a new understanding of things. As we briefly saw in the opening segment for this chapter, creative people are highly mobile: physically, socially and/or psychologically.

Turning creativity into innovation is premised on such forms of mobility. *Innovation* is often paired with creativity in lay discourses even though the two are distinct phenomena. Generally, the latter tends to be associated with getting creative ideas while the former concerns their implementation.[16] But, as I noted before, this division doesn't really hold. Creativity as represented by acts of making and innovation is certainly not devoid of new, creative ideas. A more compelling difference has to do with their level of implementation. While creative action is specific for individuals and groups, innovation tends to be discussed at the level of organisations and society. To innovate means to update, improve or altogether change social practices and institutions. One consequence is that innovation tends to be more 'conservative' or less radical than creativity. For example, an artist might want to break all conventions in his or her new installation work, but a manager won't take the same risks with the company and its employees. Innovations expand the possible most often in an evolutionary rather than revolutionary way. And, as we will see later on in this chapter and, indeed, in the book, innovations emerge and

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[14] For a review, see the handbook edited by Kaufman and Sternberg (2019).

[15] For a distributed account of creativity see Glăveanu (2014).

[16] For a broader discussion see Anderson et al. (2014).

spread because of the contact between people, organisations and societies. The more mobility is embedded in the social system, the greater the chance of creativity and innovation to occur.

It might seem from the discussion up to this point that human possibility follows a linear path starting from thinking and imagination to creative action and, finally, to innovation, at least for those ideas that 'make it' till the end. In reality, the picture is much more dynamic and complex. To start with, these processes are intertwined with each other rather than sequential—innovators create, creators imagine, thinkers innovate and so on. Then, they all depend on the relation between individual and environment and, as I argued here, the movement of individuals within their environment. These moves take place at different levels—physical, psychological, social and cultural—and, in most cases, all at once. Third, there are other important phenomena connected to the possible that take place throughout this movement and within the person–world encounter. Take, for example, *serendipity*.[17] This is the process in which the 'prepared mind' makes the most out of chance, randomness or accidental events. The spark of imagination, creativity and innovation often comes from the unexpected and from our capacity to be open to it and receptive. There is less intentionality in creative work than we might imagine, and one important role played by movement is to create conditions for the unexpected to occur. State of minds like *wonder*[18] also become useful to cultivate possibility by helping us relinquish our need for certainty and enjoy, even temporarily, dwelling into the unknown.

This is a small sample of the 'vocabulary' associated with the possible and the kinds of questions and issues this topic raises. Issues that have been and continue to be of interest for a wide range of disciplines, particularly within the humanities and social sciences. These broad fields have always been concerned with our defining characteristics and with trying to understand human agency. In recent decades, a range of such disciplines took on board explicitly possibility-related themes. In philosophy, for example, a traditional focus has been on theorising possible worlds and their relation to what is actual.[19] What is the ontological status of such

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[17] Copeland (2019).

[18] For details, see Glăveanu (2020a).

[19] See Rescher (1979) and his notion that 'the domain of the possible is the creation of intelligent organisms, and is a realm accessible to them alone' (p. 171). And, conversely, that 'unactualized possibility is not something that we can meaningfully postulate objectively of a mindless world, that is, a world from which all mind-involving conceptions have been abstracted' (p. 173).

non-existent possibilities? Are they independent of conceiving minds? Or are they mere productions of language and thought? But it is through Martin Heidegger's work on 'being' that the notion of possibility became firmly related to the self.[20] For him, 'being' is by necessity open-ended and, as such, it is not as distinct from nothingness as we typically assume given that nothingness is the origin of all possibility. In his view, beings are not made up by what is visible or actual in them but, first and foremost, by what is yet to come. It is the nothingness intrinsic to them that resists necessity, closure and finality. Possibility is, thus, more fundamental than actuality.[21]

Many social sciences are nowadays taking seriously this premise. In anthropology, Arjun Appadurai called for research that recognises humans as future-makers and the future itself as a cultural fact.[22] In other words, an increased focus on the work of imagination, anticipation and aspiration. He also made an interesting distinction between possibility and probability and the kind of ethics they are associated with. In sociology, Iddo Tavory and Nina Eliasoph aimed around the same time to develop a theory of anticipation.[23] Their invitation was to consider how any interaction includes a relationship to the future and especially a coordination of orientations towards it by different people and groups. Their proposed typology outlines several modes of future orientation such as protentions, actor trajectories and temporal landscapes. The first refers to moment-to-moment anticipations that we are often not even aware of, i.e. anticipating the next move, uttering the next sound, and so on. Trajectories concern episodes of action that explicitly have a beginning, middle and end, a certain emotional tone and a cast of characters. Finally, temporal landscapes are those unavoidable—or perceived as unavoidable—stages actors are supposed to go through, for example, grades in school or months in the calendar. These orientations can be aligned with each other or clash, and their interplay is exactly what should be studied by social scientists.

Psychologists have also joined these calls especially over the past ten years.[24] Kenneth Gergen stated, for example, that the aim of research

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[20] See Heidegger (1962).

[21] Yanchar (2018).

[22] See Appadurai (2013).

[23] Tavory and Eliasoph (2013).

[24] Even if, on the whole, psychology is still 'not on the move' (see Glăveanu 2020c).

should not be to illuminate what is but what can become; in other words, that research needs to have a future forming orientation.[25] Drawing on a different tradition, Martin Seligman and his colleagues formulated a prospection theory that ambitiously aims to redirect the discipline from a primary focus on the past to one looking towards the future.[26] Their theory is excessively cognitive, however, and rather mechanistic when it comes to the phenomenon of prospection.[27] While it is useful to take into account evaluative representations of possible future states, future-making cannot be reduced to cognitive processes alone. Other people, cultural tools, emotional states and social institutions all participate in this process. At the same time, reducing the role of the past to a set of resources from which individuals selectively extract information doesn't recognise the integral link between past and future and their joint bearing on the present. Besides, the realm of the possible is not restricted to the future alone. Just as we imagine the future mainly with the help of past experience, the past itself gets to be reimagined based on present conditions and future orientations.

A more compelling attempt to theorise the possible in psychology comes from scholars working with the sociocultural tradition. The reason why this approach is particularly successful has to do with its emphasis on time, on the one hand, and culture and meaning-making, on the other. In this way, the person is understood as more than an information processor operating in a largely decontextualised and a-temporal manner. In contrast, in sociocultural psychology, the person is located, at once, in a material, social, psychological and temporal world. More than this, the possible and the actual, past and future, self and others are better articulated in an effort to transcend unproductive dichotomies and study, in exchange, interdependencies and processes of co-evolution.

It is within this tradition that I ground my own theory of the possible[28] and, in particular, the notions of difference, position, perspective and dialogue. As I began to explain in the previous chapter, the basic assumption is that we open up new possibilities whenever we can relate

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[25] Gergen (2015, p. 294).

[26] See Seligman et al. (2013).

[27] That becomes formalised as: expectation → observation → discrepancy detection → discrepancy-reducing change in expectation → expectation →. A process that is continuous and often not conscious.

[28] See Glăveanu (2020b).

to the world from a new position and thus develop new perspectives on it.[29] These differences in position and perspective, once perceived, foster dialogues between conventional actions and their alternatives. Such dialogues of perspective, taking place within and between people, are essential for the possible and, in fact, substantiate it. And what enables, in turn, these dialogues are different forms of mobility. To start with, we develop a new perceptual perspective on the world—literally a new point of view—whenever we move physically from position A to position B, whether these are geographically far apart or as close as seating on a different chair at the table. These moves reflect other forms of mobility as well, for instance social. We adopt various roles throughout our life, from child to parent, from student to worker, from employee to manager, and so on. Most of them require us to move office, institution, even country. But we also enjoy 'micro' forms of mobility in which we become, in turn, speakers and listeners during a conversation, for instance. Physical movement here is more subtle, yet always present. And, with each one of these changes of positions and moves, new horizons of possibility are opened (while others are necessarily closed), including for new mobilities.

The connection above between movement and possibility has been elaborated by Alex Gillespie and Tania Zittoun[30] in their discussion of bodies and minds moving through institutional and semiotic structures. Their main idea is that, as our bodies move, we get to develop new experiences (what I discuss here as perspectives) and, in particular, become able to bring in distal experiences, like memories of the past or imaginations of the future, into the present of immediate or proximal experience. One issue with this conceptualisation is the rather sharp separation between bodies and minds, distal and proximal experiences (see also Chapter 6).

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[29] There are resonances, here, with other sociocultural thinkers who worked on possibility, for example Jerome Bruner. He notably stated in one of his last writings, related to knowledge construction, that "In a word, one always knows the world in the light of the perspective one has chosen (or has had imposed upon one!). There are always other ways of knowing (even of seeing) it. Those 'other ways' constitute the realm of possibility. I want to end by insisting that this point of view toward the possible forms of knowledge and of knowledge seeking is as relevant in kindergarten as it is at the Institute for Advanced Study or at All Souls. It is what I mean by 'cultivating the possible'" (Bruner 2007, pp. 8–9). I have come across this passage, however, long after formulating my own framework of the possible, a model indebted to the pragmatist writings of George Herbert Mead (and neo-Meadean scholarship) and the dialogism of Mikhail Bakhtin.

[30] See Gillespie and Zittoun (2013).

As noted above, I consider here positions, in the case of humans at least, as *simultaneously* material, social and symbolic. The two authors argue, rightfully in my view, that movement leads to both the differentiation and integration of experiences but how exactly it achieves this remains unclear. Moreover, there is a danger of creating hierarchies between the material/embodied and the symbolic/imaginative. Physical mobility, especially past occurrences of it, becomes a repository of experience that the self can then use to 'free' itself from the here and now. The role of such movements *in* the here and now, as the self imagines and engages with new possibilities, needs further exploration.

In this book, my basic proposition—which is generally in line with proposals outlined before by Jerome Bruner, Tania Zittoun, Alex Gillespie and Jack Martin—is that *mobility begets possibility*. Not in a linear way, in which more mobility necessarily leads to more possibility, or a romanticised way, in which any form of mobility is seen as having a positive effect on our engagement with the possible. Some kinds of immobility foster, to an extent, new possibilities, especially when they are not overwhelmingly restrictive. But, in most cases and for most purposes, movement—physical, social, symbolic—does open up the possible in our individual and collective lives. I operationalise the possible here in terms of imagination, creativity and innovation, phenomena we can more easily observe and study. If my assumption is 'correct', then, various mobilities will be a driver of human possibility at the level of the species, of society, of the person and of the human mind.

And there is accumulating preliminary evidence in this regard, much of which will be reviewed in the following chapters. For example, we know that increased levels of human interaction, which necessarily require mobility, foster creative thinking and technological innovation.[31] In turn, it is also mobility that leads to the spread and selection of creative outcomes, a topic of research for the thriving field of geographies of innovation.[32] There is particular interest to unpack the relation between migration and innovation in social, political and economic structures such as the European Union. Given that the growth of member states is premised on the principle of free movement, is there evidence that migrants fuel creativity and innovation? The answers to this question are

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[31] Elias (2012).

[32] See Bathelt et al. (2012), Shearmur et al. (2016).

mixed, inviting us to focus on how we define innovation, which segments of the economy we refer to, and where the migrants come from.[33] But, overall, (a) great diversity in skilled professions correlates with higher levels of knowledge creation and (b) cultural diversity increases innovation performance in Europe.[34] And the more diverse the backgrounds of migrants, the better.[35] It is debatable, however, whether countries who lose skilled workers later benefit from their innovations in other places, including through their activity in other parts of the Union. In summary, mobility leads to diversity which, in turn, leads to more possibilities, personal, social and economic. And the feedback loop is present as well. Places deemed as cultivating human possibilities are more attractive to migrate to.[36]

It is not my intention to advance here an economic argument. This is merely one facet of the complex relationship between mobilities and the possible. My aim in this still introductory chapter was to propose the latter as a domain of knowledge in its own right—*possibility studies*. This not only 'incorporates' interdisciplinary work on counterfactual thinking, imagination, creativity, innovation, serendipity and wonder, among others, but builds on our human, ongoing fascination for anticipation and for the future.[37] Will all these developments lead to a 'possibilities turn' in the social sciences similar to the one triggered by mobilities in the early 2000s? Only time will tell. My hope with this book is to show, at least, that a *newer* new mobilities paradigm must take possibility seriously.

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Like all creative individuals, the French professionals I referred to at the start of the chapter were engaged in different explorations of the possible. At the same time, they enacted various forms of mobility. Scientists

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[33] See Venturini et al. (2012).

[34] Bosetti et al. (2012). And some analyses include the US, see Jensen (2014).

[35] See Ozgen et al. (2011). They also propose five mechanisms through which immigration might boost innovation: the population size effect; the population density effect; the migrant share effect; the skill composition effect; and the migrant diversity effect (p. 1).

[36] Mihi-Ramirez et al. (2016).

[37] See, for example, the relatively recent proposal of 'anticipation studies' building on the much older and richer ground of Futures Studies; Poli (2017).

talked about different labs and workspaces, scriptwriters moved between authors and producers, artists travelled to their studio, exhibition space, to museums and parks. Each change of position offers the possibility, at least, of a change in perspective. When moving 'towards' potential users, designers learn something important about users' point of view (i.e., their beliefs, needs, concerns and desires), something that expands their own horizon of understanding and fuels their creative production. Music composers undergo the same experience whenever they take the time to discuss with people who play different instruments and those who make instruments themselves. In time, physical forms of mobility become 'internal' in the sense that no new visit to a fellow musician is needed to take his or her perspective on a certain score into account. But—and this is an important qualification—physical mobilities never stop. Even when they involve taking a small step back to look at a canvass from a distance and gain a new perspective on it—that of a viewer—embodied moves are there. The symbolic, the social and the material are as intertwined in our creativity as they are in our mobility. And the history of the latter is at least as long as that of the former.

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Homo Movens

Abstract This chapter reviews evidence concerning the development of our species and its prehistoric migrations. By relating these acts of migration to the emergence of innovations and their initial accumulation—in what would become the first human forms of civilisation—the chapter brings phylogenetic examples of the connection between mobility and possibility.

Keywords Prehistory · Migration · Technological innovation · Human civilisation · Phylogenesis

The notion of 'refugee crisis' is used whenever a large number of people are forcefully displaced from their homes and have no other choice but to migrate. These acts of migration often put an already vulnerable and dispossessed population at further risk. Dangers range from human traffickers and dying along the migration route to a hostile reception in host countries. Starting from 2015, Europe witnessed such a grave humanitarian crisis. According the UN's Refugee Agency,[1] in 2016, an estimate of 362,000 people risked their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea, with

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[1] https://www.unhcr.org/europe-emergency.html.

181,400 arriving in Italy and 173,450 in Greece. The first half of 2017 saw over 105,000 refugees and migrants entering Europe. The death toll was also staggering. Over 2700 lives are believed to have been lost or gone missing while attempting the perilous sea crossing. The oftentimes inhumane conditions awaiting those who did manage the journey are shameful for all Europeans, not only those living in countries directly affected by the crisis.

I am not going to get here into the technicalities of who is supposed to be labelled as a refugee and who is a 'mere' migrant. There are international conventions in this regard and, for as debatable as their interpretation and especially their application is, they usually serve their purpose. The core of the matter is that, in the context of this particular crisis that saw people flee war and poverty in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and many African countries, the right thing to do was first to help and then to investigate. Helping can include creating humane conditions for migrants to live in until claims are processed, allowing them to keep their few possessions, not separating family members, etc. Instead, many refugees and migrants were gathered in unsafe conditions, including for their health, unlawfully detained, sometimes had close members of the family denied access, were forbidden to work for a number of months or years and, in too many cases, were subjected to vicious forms of discrimination because of their ethnicity, religious beliefs and, more generally, because of being non-white and non-European.

A lot of the complex social, economic and political failures involved in receiving or handling migrants find their origin in simple social psychological mechanisms concerning identity, group membership and belonging. Just as migration is a universal and fundamentally human phenomenon, so are, unfortunately, the symbolic and oftentimes physical boundaries we construct to reduce, stop or prevent the movement of people. Our perception of differences and understanding of the perspective of the other are crucial in this process. Those we consider 'like us' tend to be more easily welcomed and their perspectives are taken more swiftly than those perceived as different, especially radically different. For the later, their actions, beliefs, motives and fears seem alien or, at least, we find ways to make them feel alien to us and our community. The other, when incomprehensible, is feared or loathed, or both. And, as a consequence, the movement of these others into 'our' land and 'our' society causes terror and can incite violence.

It was therefore interesting, in this context, to understand more about the social representation of migrants and particularly about perspective-taking—or its lack—when it comes to this category of people. My curiosity was sparked, in fact, by a meme circulating online around Christmas time in 2016, depicting the holly family and writing 'Don't forget to hate refugees as you set up a nativity scene, celebrating a middle eastern couple desperately looking for shelter'. For a creativity researcher working on dialogue, this was a great example of trying to stimulate viewers' reflexivity by making them aware of a potential clash of values and perspectives—many eagerly claim a Christian ethics prefaced on loving thy neighbour, especially those in need, while actively opposing refugees. Moreover, the meme also pointed to a more fundamental link between current migrants, many of them from the Middle East, and the specific case of Mary, Joseph and Jesus who presumably fled to escape persecution in the same region more than 2000 years ago. Granted, the latter were Jewish, while the former are predominantly—although not exclusively—Muslim, and yet the persecution of both these groups cuts across history.

Together with colleagues,[2] I designed a study of social media responses to memes like the one above, expanding the scope to include both pro- and anti-refugee forums (it is to be remembered that creative messages aren't always pro-social). We used for the analysis a new model of *perspective-taking* that distinguishes between four main categories: essentialism, situationalism, repositioning and identification.[3] Each one of these categories involves a different way of constructing the perspective of the other, has implications for how this perspective is included in further dialogues, and triggers (or not) some reflexivity about one's own initial position. Unfortunately, we couldn't find many examples of repositioning, identification and, especially, reflexivity in online forums. This was to be expected, given the fact that, often, participants in these conversations are rather attached to their own point of view and rarely recognise having

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[2] For findings from this study see Glăveanu et al. (2018).

[3] For details, see Glăveanu and de Saint Laurent (2018). Basically essentialism derives conclusions about the perspective of others by formulating judgements about who they are ('people like these…'), situationalism by where and how they live ('people in this situation…'), repositioning by trying to place oneself in the situation of the other ('if this happened to me…'), and identification by trying to become the other ('if I were him or her…').

changed their minds. Still, the memes and associated comments offered internauts a good opportunity for understanding migrants in a new way, whenever there was openness to this.

It was interesting to notice the strategies some users employed to foster reflexivity and perspective-taking in others. These included, for example, one of them pointing to the username of someone who displaying an anti-immigrant rhetoric and the fact that it had the word 'Irish' in it. The argument was that, historically, the same fears about Middle Eastern and African migrants—that they have an unwanted cultural background, a lower level of intelligence, that they form big families and will change, over time, the entire society—were at some point raised about Irish migration. The presumed ethic group of the user who was today against resettlement was defined by historical acts of mobility and by persecution. The position of the strange, different, dangerous 'other' was thus, long ago, the position of the 'self'. And, as we will see in this chapter, it is the position of us all.

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Migration is one of the paradigmatic forms of human mobility. And, as any other human activity, it has both positive and negative effects for those migrating and for those who receive migrants. And yet, unlike what populist and nationalist politicians have argued over the past years more and more vocally, migrants don't steal jobs from locals or depress the economy. On the contrary, as Brexit Britain for example is discovering—and what many people in Britain knew already—the economy *needs* migrants, including low skill ones, to maintain itself and to flourish. The economic case for migration goes beyond the scope of this book,[4] but another observation is key: compared to previous historical times, we don't only live in a period in which migrants and refugees tend to be more easily demonised, we also hear more discourses about how migration is 'unnatural'.[5] As we will see in this chapter, the situation is quite the opposite. Human beings have *always* migrated, and migration has been the means through which we developed communities, cultures, and

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[4] For more details about this you can check the OECD documents 'Is migration good for the economy?', available on OECD migration (https://www.oecd.org/migration/).

[5] See Macková and Kysučan (2016).

built great civilisations. Moving to new places is a not a feature of hunter-gatherer societies that vanished after the development of agriculture and gamekeeping. People continued to migrate driven by the need for new resources, the drive to meet others and exchange with them, and simply because of the curiosity and wonder that make us human.

What changed considerably in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are the scale and means of migration. We rarely had at our disposal such varied and fast means of transport to carry us, individually and collectively, from place to place. The scale of wars and of environmental challenges is unprecedented as well. We also have other ways of getting news about such phenomena. The distribution of media outlets and their politisation is equally exceptional. And there is another key factor thrown into the mix—social media. We don't only get to connect with others much faster online, people we would have had no chance of being in touch with just a few decades before, but we start getting our news and information from such channels. High-quality journalism is under threat in a world in which people prefer to learn about world events from Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. While there were initial hopes that such connectivity would also help us understand others better, take their perspective and embrace diversity, what we actually notice is almost the reverse. Many people go online to participate in closed communities, create 'echo chambers' and spread misinformation, willingly or unwillingly. And, as it turns out, a lot of this information and conspiracy theories revolve around migrants and migration.[6]

By *de-naturalising* the act of migration, different political actors and (social) media outlets relate it to the field of ethics. If we are supposed to be sedentary and live where we were born, irrespective of how terrible or oppressive that place might be and the role of other countries in making or keeping it so, then one's reasons to leave are questionable. Wanting a better life and even fleeing danger tun into options one can but should not exercise. If it goes against human nature to move, then what kind of people are those who accept to do this? A series of unethical motives are attributed to them: coming to steal jobs, wanting to leave off welfare, being dangerous and able to plot terrorist attacks and, finally, taking over one's society and changing its culture forever. It's interesting to notice, in the above, how these accusations are paradoxical, portraying migrants

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[6]See de Saint Laurent et al. (2020).

as un-agentic and lazy (e.g. not wanting to work but profit from the work of others, being uneducated and incapable of a productive life) *and* highly agentic and threatening (e.g. taking jobs, marrying people from the community, plotting attacks, destroying culture). Either way, the migrant becomes someone who is hard to understand, to relate to, and to include.[7]

The reality of human mobility is radically different. Not only migrations, big and small, defined our species' evolutionary journey, but the roots of each one of us, without exception, have been shaped by such forms of mobility. The 'we are all migrants' slogan that emerged in support of refugees during the crisis and in its aftermath, captures an essential truth about human nature. A quick glance at our distant history will help make this case.[8] We know much more today about the Palaeolithic movement of modern humans out of Africa[9] and the Neolithic spread of farming across Europe through what specialists call spatial displacement. The closer we get to our times, the more we understand the communities and sometimes even the specific individuals who migrated. In Antiquity, for instance, we have well documented migrations by people such as the Greek and Phoenicians as early colonisers of the Mediterranean. The historical record helps us recognise the names, artefacts and ancient cities founded by these travellers and settlers. The Middle

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[7] I don't want to ignore or downplay here the many people who don't think like this and who are not only open to migrants but eager to help them. During the refugee crisis, some of these people risked fines and even their own freedom to aid migrants, to offer them transport and shelter and, today, many more are actively fighting anti-immigration discourses, including on social media.

[8] For more details see Knappett and Kiriatzi (2016).

[9] 'Human evolution may be divided into two phases. During the first phase, the earliest representatives of the human subfamily diverged from the African apes, roughly 6 million years ago. The divergence probably was triggered by a shift from quadrupedal to bipedal locomotion, which was likely tied to a change in foraging strategy. The extreme poverty of the fossil record for this time period obscures the earliest part of the human story. For more than 3 million years, humans remained small-brained "bipedal apes" in the tropical zone of Africa. During the second phase of human evolution, which began 2.5–2.0 million years ago, the larger-brained genus *Homo* appeared, along with stone tools and evidence for meat consumption. Roughly 2 million years ago, or shortly thereafter, representatives of *Homo* emigrated out of tropical Africa into the northern parts of the continent and also into Eurasia – as far as latitude 40 degrees North. This was followed by several more migrations of various forms of *Homo* out of Africa, culminating in the global dispersal of modern humans or *Homo sapiens*, beginning roughly 60,000 years ago' (Hoffecker 2015, p. 394).

East offers even older examples of this process. Importantly, the material record is not silent. It comes accompanied, in the case of the Greek migration, by stories such as the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* in which timeless heroes tell of their adventures and help us imagine, for a moment, what their life and their journeys might have looked like.

What concerns me here is not the historical migration of people per se, but its articulation with human possibility. In other words, how because of movement, and through its dynamic, innovations were generated and spread. One big area of study for scholars working on early migration has in fact to do with technological innovation given that tools are more easily found and traced. However, most of the literature in this field focuses on how technological innovation emerges out of demographic concentration and how it is diffused with the help of the movement of groups. But how exactly does this movement contribute to the creation and recreation and technologies in the first place?

It is commonplace to note that *demography* has an important part to play in cultural evolution because of its impact on creativity and innovation.[10] The assumption is that small and isolated communities have lower rates of innovation because, in small populations, technological developments can be more easily lost due to random factors or incomplete transmission (what is known as the Tasmanian effect). Larger populations tend to have stable social structures and elaborate systems of interaction, thus reducing losses by chance. Besides, the likelihood of having more inventors is greater in bigger rather than smaller communities. And it is also likely that, the more groups become innovative, the more they attract people and support inward migration. This connection between demographic growth and innovation is, however, nuanced by several other factors.

For example, researchers note that in late Pleistocene large-brain hominins existed for around 150,000 years with little signs of technological innovation. It is the more sophisticated societies of the last glacial period that display higher rates of invention. The reasons for this difference are complex and go beyond demography and biological evolution. For instance, climate changes could have affected the balance between humans and their predators. The overharvest of prey might have also contributed to a collapse in early populations and, consequently, in their

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[10] For details, see Richerson et al. (2009), also Shennan (2001).

invention rate. In other words, acts of innovation could have flourished at different times, as populations grew in size and complexity, but changes in living conditions prevented their long-term transmission.

One constant in this dynamic landscape remains, however, the importance of *contact*, both with people living already in the same community and between them and newcomers. Contact leads to *exchanges*, from gifts to ideas and technologies.[11] But there are still only few authors who explicitly discuss these possibility-expanding contacts and exchanges in terms of movement. This is partially because, when it comes to creativity and innovation, both current and ancient, we have various ways of explaining its occurrence. Some of these explanations are individual-based, considering the neurological and psychological make up of people, others are more contextual in nature, pointing our attention to society and the changes in physical environment. When focusing on early technologies, Steven Kuhn takes into account, for example, population and species-specific cognitive developments, that are more universal, as well as particular patterns of movement and interaction that give innovations their unique and situated character.[12]

If we zoom in on prehistoric hotspots of innovation, we can find *golden ages* of creativity and, by extension, *golden places* associated with it. The work of paleoanthropologists is made difficult in this regard by the fact that they necessarily have to study aggregates of material objects over the course of centuries or millennia instead of being able to investigate creative people and actions as they unfolded in a short time span. Instead of unique individual outputs, they are left with knowledge about often mundane and repetitive acts, often unevenly distributed across time and space. At this time scale, golden periods often look like multiple and local renaissances rather than unitary 'creative explosions'. In the end, the two main factors identified by Kuhn apply, biologically based cognitive capacities and conditions that facilitate wide diffusion and persistence. The first is essential for coping with new things in the first place, the second with keeping and expanding them. Ultimately, paleoanthropological findings can only spot those innovations that already benefited from good enough transmission. And there is always the risk of considering as innovative only

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[11] Fischer (2003).

[12] See Kuhn (2012). As he notes, 'the phenomenon of a particularly creative period or place is an emergent property of the thoughts and actions of a great many different individuals; it is a consequence of interactions more than individual characteristics' (p. 69).

the periods that left behind more artefacts, usually more 'recent' times for which we have richer data.[13]

There is as well an obvious temptation to infer psychological traits and even intentions based on scattered material evidence, to reconstruct an image of our early relatives' innovative abilities based on the diversity of the things they produced (or, to be more specific, that we have found from them). Creative processes and human possibility, however, are not reduced to objects alone. As I argued in the previous chapter and we will see in the next ones, creativity involves a whole system of relations and interactions that go beyond both individual minds and individual products. Based on the material record, Kuhn concludes—like many of his colleagues—that the potential for creativity was not evenly distributed among the first humans and that the rate of innovation varied, both geographically and chronologically.[14] The earliest technologies, dating between approximately 2.6 million years ago and one million years ago, tended to change very little while new inventions popped up at great intervals of hundreds and sometimes thousands of years. This rhythm matches, to some extent, the slow pace of biological evolution. The temporality changed especially during the Palaeolithic where a big difference in the rate of innovation can be seen from the Middle to the Upper eras. Migration is recognised to have played a part in this. In the Middle Palaeolithic, humans reached those parts of northern and eastern Europe that were not covered in glaciers. This suggests an increased ability to cope with new environments which correlates with the ability to innovate. It is hard to conclude, however, on whether such abilities led to big migrations or were a result of them—it is possible for both these causal links to have been in place.

An interesting distinction made in the literature focused on technological advances is that between mutation and innovation. The former tends

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[13] 'Early products of individual genius are both uncommon and very limited in their distribution. Prior to about 70.000 years ago, there were very few objects that stood out as emblematic of the individual creative process. Even after this time such objects are far from ubiquitous. For example, during the Upper Palaeolithic (ca. 45–12 ka), iconic phenomena such as cave paintings and finely decorated tools are – with some notable exceptions – confined to limited pockets within Western, Central and Eastern Europe. These phenomena constitute a fascinating and rich subject for research, but concentrating too much attention on them leaves out most of the globe and the largest part of human prehistory' (Kuhn 2012, p. 70).

[14] Kuhn (2012, p. 70).

to be unintentional and random; the latter involves goal-directedness and preparation. And yet, these categories are usually challenged by Palaeolithic archaeologists who rightfully point to the fact that what might start as an error in transmission (e.g. copying a behaviour) could end up being perceived as valuable and continued or further developed. In order for such carryover to take place, other people had to observe the initial change and recognise its utility. Any mutation and innovation, if they were to be kept, had to be convincing and easily replicable. Frequency of exposure and skills of copying mattered as well. They especially impacted the fidelity of transmission and the act of transmission itself (as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter) required a *network* and *connectivity* between people, including those living far apart from each other. Golden ages for creativity and innovation depended thus both on population density and, equally, on demographic expansion.[15] In this regard, instability in a given population increased the chances of innovation not being kept or passed on. But another important factor was the existence of networks or the way in which individuals and groups got connected within a wider society. These networks depend on mobility rather than size and we can imagine smaller but better connected groups being more innovative than larger yet fragmented communities. In the end, it is mobility that increases the size of a population and shapes its stability over time.[16]

Many factors contribute to the formation and dynamic of networks. Kuhn mentions here population density, the intensity of social interactions within and between groups, and the structure of the physical environment (e.g. the existence of material connectors or barriers) and its richness (e.g. the range of subsistence choices). Ultimately, it was the availability and distribution of resources that prompted people to move and first got them in touch with each other. And it was, in turn, the complexity of their needs and interactions that led to the constitution of networks. The exchange of ideas and innovations became an intrinsic

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[15] Kuhn ([2012](#), p. 74).

[16] 'The density and structure of connections among nodes (individuals) can influence the rate at which information (or anything else) propagates across geographic and social space. As such, the formation of social networks and their structures could have important consequences for the dispersal and retention of novel behaviours, and so for the appearance of innovation in the Palaeolithic cultural record' (Kuhn [2012](#), p. 76).

part of these networks, potentially overriding the initial quest for environmental resources. These resources and their density did shape, however, the kind of distances early travellers had to cover and the likelihood of meeting other travellers and groups on the way (e.g. hunters probably needed to make longer journeys that communities whose existence depended on fishing or early forms of farming). This is how one's horizon expanded beyond the local group and its familiar faces and artefacts. And, with these small and big moves, an array of new possibilities opened up.

There is evidence of how anatomical developments linked to higher mobility in ancestors such as *Homo erectus* coincided with the emergence of new tools and technologies, for example, more complex stone artefacts, and their distribution. The latter in particular required a constant exchange of information between local populations. Strategies for creating and maintaining ties with other individuals and groups must have developed as well. Small world networks, characterised by close ties within local groups and weaker but still existent ties with more distant ones, aided the rapid spread of ideas and the adoption of innovations. And these networks are all based on human mobility. It remains an open question though whether connectedness, networks and movement were the *main* determining factors in the golden age of creativity and innovation that is the Upper Palaeolithic, but the evidence is strong and it continues to grow.[17]

There are multiple sources today that discuss the link between migration and innovation in later prehistory, both technological[18] and artistic.[19] The latter is also interesting given that it is not only tools

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[17] 'It is reasonable to postulate a causal connection between strategies of social alliance formation and the cultural dynamism of the Eurasian Upper Palaeolithic and late MSA in Africa (Stiner and Kuhn, 2006; Powell et al., 2009). But simply contrasting these long time intervals with earlier periods makes it difficult to disentangle the effects of networks from the influence of demography and the appearance and dispersal of a new hominin, *H. sapiens*; that is, it leaves open the question of whether the rapid innovation during the late MSA and Upper Palaeolithic was due to new kinds of social networks or simply new kinds of hominins. Dynamics within the Upper Palaeolithic may point more directly to the consequences of networks for cultural change and diversity. More specifically, cultural homogenisation and turnover within the Upper Palaeolithic could well be related to the increasing interconnectedness of human populations' (Kuhn 2012, p. 79).

[18] See Hamilton et al. (2011).

[19] See Granito et al. (2019). Interestingly, they discovered that styles of pictorial representation are shaped by intergroup contact in the direction of becoming more figurative and transparent to outsiders, compared to those groups lacking such contacts and where the style is abstract and opaque.

that travel with people, but also pictorial forms of representation. A fascinating example of both and of their interplay with migration is offered by *pottery*.[20] Interesting to note, it was primarily semi-mobile or mobile foraging societies that engaged in creating the world's oldest ceramic vessels. Second, it is a widespread assumption, dating back to the early nineteenth century, that pottery styles represent specific cultures or ethnic identities, a notion that gives the impression of stability, continuity and cultural homogeneity in different groups. This narrative doesn't account for the transformational effect of mobility, intergroup and cultural contact, acculturation and cultures mix in the creation of pottery, at least from the Neolithic onwards. The fact that vessels were primarily created by people who migrated, one way or another, increased the possibility of gaining new knowledge from establishing new networks. Pottery in particular had an important role to play in intergroup contact as items of exchange and gifts. This, in turn, accelerated the possibility of innovation in materials and style of depiction.[21]

It is primarily nationalistic narratives specific for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that favour sedentarism over migration in retelling our history, especially the history of one's national or ethnic group. The reason is quite straightforward: if one 'demonstrates' the old roots of an unchanging people within a territory, then the claim to that land becomes undisputable. In addition, if competitors can be argued to have migrated or been through extensive cultural hybridisation, this discredits their potential claims for territory and cultural 'purity'. Of course, these ideological positions should not be allowed to guide scientific research. And they should also not make us oblivious to the fact that, at most times in history, different populations were happy to be recognised as coming from somewhere else. In *Antiquity*, for instance, except for the Athenians who famously saw themselves as 'autochthons', almost all other ancient people regarded themselves as migrants: Spartans were Dorian invaders under the direction of Hercules and, most famously, the Romans were Trojan survivors of the war against the Greeks (this is how Rome could be called, among others, the 'new Troy').[22] And there were also numerous opportunities to travel in Antiquity, most notably for athletic events like

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[20] For more details, see Heitz and Stapfer (2017).

[21] For more examples see Cochrane (2008).

[22] I am very grateful for these observations to Luuk Huitink.

the Olympic games, a festival during which native Greeks and Greeks from the colonies could celebrate their togetherness[23]; it was, beside sports, a vivid reminder of how migration can separate but also unite people.

Fast forward across time and the early modern period offers us fresh examples not only of mobility but of its clear connection with innovation. We can think here, for example, about the almost one hundred thousand *Calvinists* who were driven out of the southern Netherlands between 1530 and 1590 and resettled in many other parts of western Europe.[24] Because they included many skilled craftsmen, entrepreneurs and businessmen, these migrants became a major force of development and economic modernisation in their new host countries, even if socially isolated. It's interesting to reflect on whether their protestant, Calvinist religion helped them become precursors of capitalism or, rather, if it was their social and political isolation that led to strong family networks and the pressure to innovate in order to survive and thrive. Minority status, often a consequence migration, can lead to marginalisation but, when other cultural and economic resources are present, it can also be the best place from which to challenge the status quo and to open up new possibilities for one's group and for the wider society.

This is one of the presumed benefits of the globalisation era we are living through. More connectedness, easier means to travel and to migrate, more opportunities to innovate. But, of course, this is again an ideological extreme similar to its opposite, those hyper-nationalistic discourses I just mentioned before. Globalisation is revered by some, despised by others and its accompanying multiculturalism proclaimed as dangerous and presumed dead or in need of radical transformation.[25] If the very long history discussed in this chapter teaches us anything, it is the fact that migration has always been part and parcel of human history—we are, perhaps above all else, *Homo movens*. So, rejecting this phenomenon or denying its role for oneself and one's national, ethnic

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[23] Blecking (2008).

[24] Schilling (1983). As nicely noted, 'in early modern Europe, unlike present times, the propagation of innovations and their interregional penetration did not come about primarily through books or technical and professional journals. It took place rather through the migration of skilled craftsmen, financiers and entrepreneurs, settling voluntarily or in consequence of expulsion from foreign countries' (pp. 7–8).

[25] See Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010).

or cultural group is futile. What is important, then and now, is to question the different *consequences* of migration for both those who move and those who receive migrants. Romanticised accounts and xenophobic reactions are equally harmful. My argument here is that such mobility led to more innovation and expanded our horizon of possibility, individually and collectively. Whether the resulting innovation was beneficial for everyone or had unforeseen negative consequences in the long term is also something to be examined. What is certain is that movement—big and small, chosen or imposed—transformed and continue to transform societies and individual lives, the two topics I will cover, in turn, in the next chapters.

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The Internet is a living depository of reactions to migrants and refugees. These dialogues, just like the act of migration itself, could lead to new insights and even to innovations, but only for those people who know how to gain from taking the perspective of others. Being closed-minded, similar to building walls to 'protect' one's country, makes us miss plenty of opportunities to learn, to understand, to create. It was acts of reflexivity that we were especially interested in our study of social representations of migrants and refugees mentioned at the start of the chapter. These are, ultimately, the best examples of productive dialogues—being able not only to take a perspective, but to see one's initial position in view of this new perspective. We didn't find many such cases on the discussion forums we studied (and they were, admittedly, very few). But the examples we did find gave us hope. For instance, one user realised how harmful it can be, as a man, to travel to a place and be immediately labelled as dangerous and as a 'military aged male'. Is this fair to happen to anyone else? And why would migrating be so easily seen as a form of invasion? Do we all *invade* others when we move abroad?

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Ideas on the Move

Abstract While the previous chapter was necessarily concerned (given the absence of recorded history) with the movement of things, this chapter engages with the history of ideas and recent theories regarding cultural transmission and the circulation of representations. It is again demonstrated that movement and interaction open up new possibilities for thinking for both individuals and society.

Keywords Cultural transmission · Diffusion of innovation · Memes · Representations · Sociogenesis

Painting eggs is an ancient tradition. Given the egg's deep symbolism as a container of future life and, as such, of possibility, many peoples included it in their mythologies, often relating the egg to the beginning of the world.[1] More than this, ancient people took it as a reminder of rebirth and the regeneration of nature. These old meanings fuelled the Christian

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[1] "This ancient idea of a primeval egg which hatched the sun god occurs frequently; the sun myth took various forms in Egyptian thought" (Newall 1967, p. 4). In ancient India we find the image of the egg (a Cosmic Egg, the egg as a totality, as One) related to stories about the beginning of the world and the genesis of cosmos out of Chaos, for example in Mahabharata. Marian (1992) traces the image of the egg in other mythologies as well: Chinese, Tibetan, Phoenician, Persian, Greek, and so on.

symbolism of the Pascal egg. An old legend tells of how eggs brought to the cross by Mary were coloured red by the blood of Christ. The colour red is also highly meaningful when it comes to birth and to resurrection. As the colour of blood, it has been found, for instance, from prehistory onwards, on painted rocks placed in tombs, an equivalent of red eggs given that the latter have often been used in new year and funeral ceremonies. Their everyday uses go, however, beyond death and renewal in folk traditions across the world.[2]

In countries like Romania and its neighbours, who follow the Orthodox Christian rite, decorating eggs for Easter is a cultural institution. Its practice is widespread and, while people living in urban spaces merely paint eggs in one colour, typically red, or use leaves to create shapes on the shell, those living in villages, especially in the north of the country, employ elaborate motifs and forms of decoration. First of all, they use melted wax and special instruments to draw on the egg. The decorating principle is that whatever is covered in wax remains of that colour when the egg is immersed in a new colour bath. In this way, decorators actually work on a 'negative image' of what the egg will look like once all the wax is removed by a heat source. This requires many years of practice, given how difficult it is to draw on an oval and to remember where to place which line and colour. In addition, the patterns of decoration can be extremely complex. In older days, the motifs were mainly figurative, representing body parts of common animals or tools used around the house. With the passing of time, most of these became geometrical, including a variety of crosses, stars, rhombuses and nets. And each one of them carries particular meanings, for instance, the net is often considered to stand for the separation of good from evil.[3]

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[2] "The egg occupied an important position in the customs and beliefs of many nations (…). They appear on practically every major occasion in human life – at birth, courtship, marriage, the building of a new house, in sickness and in death, as well as on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Day and Easter Monday, when they are enjoyed as a strengthening food or given in return for holy water. Eggs are offered as gifts, paid as a due, and ornamented as a favourite decoration on festive occasions. They have been used in magic spells and in foretelling the future, in love potions and medicine, and have been thought effective in promoting healthy and fertile crops and animals" (Newall 1984, p. 21).

[3] For details see Zahacincshi and Zahacinschi (1992), Gorovei (2001).

This complexity was very appealing for me as a sociocultural researcher of creativity. Not only growing up in Romania made me very familiar with this craft and its aesthetic, but it also illustrates best what we don't normally talk about when it comes to creativity, and we should—the value and role of traditions, repetition and community. I thus embarked on a four-year doctoral project on the creativity of Easter eggs, a highly original (to put it this way) thesis for a psychologist. I chose to collect data mainly from a small village in the north of the country, Ciocănești, in a region that was part of historical Bucovina, now split between Romania and Ukraine. This village is renowned in Romania for its distinct decoration style, for example, the fact that the general background colour is black, a symbol not of death but stability and permanence, and for hosting an Easter egg museum and organising an egg decoration festival each year before Easter. In addition, Ciocănești village is labelled an 'open air museum' given that the houses themselves are ornamented with geometrical motifs. In this way, decorators live immersed in a unitary symbolic environment that finds resonances on houses, eggs, clothes, tablecloths, etc.

It is beyond the scope of this short book to get into the details of what I found in my doctoral project.[4] Suffice to say that creative expression is much more intertwined with culture, tradition and community than we usually believe. It is easy, some might say, to make the case for this using the example of craft, but each domain of creative expression—from the arts to design and science—does have its own traditions, professional culture, and builds distinct communities of practitioners. Just like in the case of eggs, it takes years of practice to be socialised within these domains and different forms of apprenticeship. In the end, *creativity is a craft* we learn with and from others in a specific cultural context.[5]

What is relevant here is the fact that all the creativity involved in decorating eggs and its astounding combinatorial dynamic—in the end, no two Easter eggs are completely alike—is rooted in various forms of mobility. Craftsmen or, rather, craftswomen, get most of their ideas by moving around, seeing the work of fellow decorators, going to the museum and the festival or simply riding one's bike through the village

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[4]Those interested can find it online in the LSE thesis repository: http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/415/.

[5]For more details, see Glăveanu (2017).

and observing new elements on the pattern of a house. Often their travel takes them even further, when they go to show and sell their craft in other parts of the country or at international fairs. There, they encounter the work and ideas of others and get inspired. There is no exact copying and ideas are never stolen but 'borrowed'. And so, the custom goes on. Keeping tradition is immensely important, but no tradition is possible without creative renewal.

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The discussion of tradition, above, is informative for our understanding of culture. Is the latter static and self-contained or, on the contrary, in constant movement and transformation? In late nineteenth century and early twentieth century the former view prevailed. Anthropologists and archaeologists at the time operated primarily with a theory of culture as a complex but unitary whole, comprising beliefs, morals and customs that don't change much across time. After all, how could we otherwise identify a cultural system and distinguish it from others? Needless to say, contact, exchanges and mobility played a minor role within this paradigm as the focus remained on fixed properties and stability.

In contrast, *diffusionism* offered a radically different view of culture, from the same historical period onwards. Its main idea was that cultural forms are invented and innovations 'travel' from place to place, from group to group, and are transformed in the process. Culture is as mobile as people are and the spread of cultural traits depends on the kind of contact and power relations between groups. One of the great benefits of diffusionism is, thus, the fact that it recognises the social and historical constitution of culture and, therefore, its variation. But even this approach has limitations, for one the practice of still assigning one culture to one person or group in order to see how it evolves. More recent social practice theories focus on human agentic action when it comes to acquiring, modifying, transmitting and abandoning cultural elements.[6]

In this chapter, I will examine diffusionist as well as agentic accounts of cultural transformation as it takes place primarily *in and through* movement and migration. However, if the previous chapter focused mainly on prehistory and on the movement of objects and people, I am concerned

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[6] For more details about these paradigms see Heitz and Stapfer (2017).

here mostly with the 'migration' of ideas, inventions and cultural practices. This doesn't intend to create a sharp division, of course, between the material and symbolic aspects of artefacts. Ultimately, ideas are embodied within objects, objects inspire people, and it is all these elements together that make up society and culture. Focusing on ideas and, more generally, on the beliefs and types of knowledge individuals and groups build and rebuild as they engage in social practice, does add new dimensions to our discussion of movement. In the end, beliefs and knowledge often reach much further than people can travel, including across time. For instance, key philosophical ideas developed by Greek ancient philosophers shape our thinking to this day; and this is one of many examples.[7] As Arthur Lovejoy wisely noted in 1940, ideas are the most migratory things in the world.[8] How and why this is the case concerns me here.

One of the oldest accounts of the diffusion of ideas and social practices comes from the work of the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde.[9] Especially in his *Laws of Imitation*, Tarde outlined a theory of society that revolves around individual behaviour and the interplay between invention and imitation. His basic interest was to understand social change through acts of invention and the diffusion (or penetration) of inventions with the help of imitation. For him, imitation had a wider meaning than simply copying the actions of someone else or using the same things as others.[10] In fact, people imitate beliefs, desires and motives also, and it is because of this that imitation offers the basis for the formation of personality, for intersubjective exchanges and, ultimately, the constitution of society.

Interestingly, Tarde postulated over a century ago that it is increased human *interaction* that makes it more likely for innovations to appear and to spread. Even if he didn't directly address the issue of mobility, movement is implied in any form of interaction given that the latter involves

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[7] "'Migration of ideas' opens up a vast field of study—how Indian and Arabic knowledge reached Medieval Europe; how Christianity, hand-in-hand with colonization, spread across the globe; how Marxism spread and adapted to different conditions; how technical innovations and scientific discoveries spread and get taken up in different contexts; how conquerers force their views and practices on the conquered; more recently how global capitalism and 'McDonaldism' has resulted in a depressing homogeneity around the world and so on" (Porter and Poerwandari 2008, p. 64).

[8] See Lovejoy (1940).

[9] See Tarde (1962, originally published in 1903), also Kinnunen (1996).

[10] Tarde also considered imitation part of a much broader, universal law of repetition, found widely in nature.

changing one's initial position. In his theory, elites had a key part to play as they are often the source of invention and have the power to diffuse it more widely. Tarde made the analogy with waves emanating from a centre, the point at which an object hit water. But he also noted that this is not a linear process and many factors can change its course. He wondered why, for example, out of one hundred innovations, only ten spread while the other ninety are forgotten. To answer this, Tarde outlined several logical and extra-logical laws of imitation. The first assumes that the rational aspects of a culture diffuse more readily so, for instance, inventions that are too intricate or simplistic don't spread as well. But he also wanted to account for social phenomena with the second group of laws, postulating that imitation starts with the individual, it moves from superior to inferior, and transitions from custom to fashion.

Important for our discussion here, Tarde realised that innovations are modified and sometimes reinvented in the process of diffusion and that they are made to fit different cultural contexts. Conflict and opposition, not only cooperation, are essential for transmission and social conflicts take place when groups come into contact with others who support different inventions. These insights are still seminal today for a wide range of researchers, across disciplines, interested in the diffusion of innovation. Some of them have been expanding the list of factors shaping diffusion to include (1) information content, (2) attributes of the individual entity and (3) social and environmental contexts[11]; others focused on proposing new typologies such as local diffusion, proximity diffusion, distance diffusion and global diffusion.[12] Over the years, the exact definition of this phenomenon has been refined to include a series of specific elements:

> The process of diffusion is defined as the (1) acceptance, (2) over time, (3) of some specific item – an idea or practice, (4) by individuals, groups or other adopting units, linked to (5) specific channels of communication, (6) to a social structure, and (7) to a given system of values, or culture.[13]

[11] For more details, see Amati et al. (2019).

[12] See Hossain et al. (2016).

[13] Katz et al. (1963).

One of the most elaborate accounts of the *diffusion of innovation* remains, to this day, the one proposed by Everett Rogers.[14] His thinking in this regard was inspired by early diffusion models coming out of US agricultural research from the 1950s. In this research, conducted by Bryce Ryan and Neal C. Gross,[15] the focus was on the rate of diffusion of the hybrid seed corn which was not as rapidly adopted as expected (it took about 13 years in the two communities being investigated and typical Iowa farmers took 7 years between planting the first hybrid seeds and planting only such seeds). This was curious given the economic benefits associated with this innovation. So what other, non-economic factors might have impacted the diffusion rate?

Their first explanations focused on the farmers' perceptions of the risks associated with this change and the kinds of sources of information they considered overall to be trustworthy. Then there was one's attachment to old and familiar practices. In order to study this slow dynamic of change, Ryan and Gross used retrospective survey interviews with farmers who had been through the process. They formulated, based on their data, the famous S-shaped curve of adopting innovation, including a slow start, a rapid increase and a plateau. And, also based on their research, they concluded that one of the key sources of influence was the information obtained from neighbouring farms. In other words, contact, exchanges and (micro)mobilities are at the heart of diffusion processes.

Rogers picked up these initial findings, in particular the S-shaped curve, and 'checked' them against a variety of other cases, from the diffusion of kindergartens and driver training to the spread of an antibiotic drug among doctors. And he observed great similarities. Furthering the idea of mobility—although his work doesn't use this particular term—he found that innovators and early adopters tended to travel and read widely, and they also generally had a cosmopolitan orientation. Most of all, his main contribution was to argue that diffusion was a general process, more or less independent of the kind of innovation being studied or the place and culture of the adopters. He also emphasised the concept of innovation, not initially used by Ryan and Gross.

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[14] See Rogers (2003, 2004). In his definition, "diffusion is the process through which an innovation, defined as an idea perceived as new, spreads via certain communication channels over time among the members of a social system" (Rogers 2004, p, 13).

[15] See Ryan and Gross (1943).

Over the years, the now *generalised diffusion model* diffused—literally—among a range of social and behavioural sciences including geography, political science, marketing, business and management, and public health. In the many re-editions of his original *Diffusion of Innovations* book, Rogers added new concepts to his already rich vocabulary, such as critical mass, networks, reinvention[16] as well as the uncertainty–information–innovation triad.[17] By emphasising the role of peers on subjective evaluations, he constructed diffusion as a fundamentally social, communicative, meaning-making process. However, heavily influenced by the cognitive approach, he reduced at times the whole phenomenon to 'innovation-decision' acts based on information-seeking and its processing.[18] His research oscillates, thus, between analysing social interactions and individual differences (e.g. the profiles of the five main adopter categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards), the perceived attributes to inventions (e.g. relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability) and the possible outcomes of diffusion (e.g. adoption, rejection and discontinuance).

Rogers' theory is certainly not without criticism. What he himself admits, for instance, is a pro-innovation bias in the sense that innovations are considered to be somehow intrinsically good and desirable. They should be diffused and adopted by all members of society in a speedy manner, not reinvented and especially not rejected. Also, the methodological dependence on self-reported recall data can be problematic, especially

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[16] "The *critical mass*, defined as the point at which enough individuals have adopted an innovation that further diffusion becomes self-sustaining. A focus on *networks* as a means of gaining further understanding of how a new idea spreads through interpersonal channels. *Re-invention*, the process through which an innovation is changed by its adopters during the diffusion process" (Rogers 2004, p. 19).

[17] "*Uncertainty* is the degree to which a number of alternatives are perceived with respect to the occurrence of an event and the relative probabilities of these alternatives. Uncertainty motivates individuals to seek information, as it is an uncomfortable state. *Information* is a difference in matter-energy that affects uncertainty in a situation where a choice exists among a set of alternatives (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981). One kind of uncertainty is generated by an *innovation*, defined as an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or another unit of adoption. (…) individuals are motivated to seek further information about the innovation in order to cope with the uncertainty that it creates" (Rogers 2003, p. xx).

[18] The five main steps of these processes are: (1) knowledge, (2) persuasion, (3) decision, (4) implementation (and potentially reinvention), and (5) confirmation.

for determining causality. Despite the fact that Rogers' book does include a chapter on the generation of innovation, this aspect of the theory remains underdeveloped, as well as the role and value of user innovation (besides the rather generic idea of reinvention). Diffusion is not really seen for what it ultimately is: a mobility-based, creative process.

Mobilities in particular are largely invisible or, at best, left implicit in Rogers' approach to diffusion. This is strange to some extent given that diffusion networks have been central in his research. These communication networks are supposed to consist of interconnected individuals linked by flows of information. Rogers rightfully assumed that an individual's place in the network and especially an increased flow of information will favour innovativeness. But how information and people actually *move*, physically, socially and symbolically within a network remains opaque.

It is historians and geographers of innovation who started asking more directly about this issue. They made the claim, for example, that throughout the ages, the main channel for the diffusion of innovation has been the migration of people.[19] More than this, migration expands the field of the possible for a given society and, conversely, being competitive means not allowing people with special skills and knowledge to leave.[20] And it is also the case that, through history, the most innovative societies tried to create those pull mechanisms that attracted talent and innovation.[21] These phenomena not only brought new people and new ideas to a different land or country, but they also transformed, at a deeper level, the cultural and political environment of host societies.

Classic diffusion models are also limited in that they rarely engage the possible or take into account the *intrinsic* creativity of cultural transmission. The whole process is segmented into rather distinct phases such

[19] Cipolla (1972, p. 48). See also Coenen and Morgan (2019).

[20] "Governments and administrators were perfectly aware of the situation; they also knew that the loss of able craftsmen had ominous consequences for the economy. Decrees forbidding the emigration of skilled workers are not uncommon in the late Middle Ages as well as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Cipolla 1972, p. 49).

[21] "A number of circumstances could 'pull' craftsmen into a given area: a satisfactory level of effective demand, political peace and/or religious tolerance. Quite often there was also a conscious policy on the part of governments. Administrators busied themselves not only with menacing emigrants but also with devising ways to attract foreign craftsmen, especially those who could bring with them new industries, and/or new ways of doing things" (Cipolla 1972, p. 50).

as invention or the discovery of new technological possibilities, innovation or the first enactment of these possibilities, and diffusion or the gradual replacement of the old with the new.[22] These neat categories obscure the fact that there is invention and even innovation *within* diffusion. This is ensured, once more, by mobility and the reality that, as the invention moves from creators to users, the latter try out the position of the former. The field of user innovation[23] is full of examples of such *distributed possibilities* and acts of creativity.

The mobility–possibility nexus I am exploring in this book has a lot to tell us about the movement of ideas beyond particular objects or innovations. And, indeed, in recent decades, a substantial literature has emerged in cognitive science around the circulation of representations. This line of work is relevant here because it takes us to a more basic level: that of units of cognition and culture and the issue of how they 'travel' in-between minds. The cognitive sciences went through their own transformation in order to get to this question.[24] From both internalist and externalist accounts of representations, locating the latter either completely within the mind (and its assumed innate functions) or in external objects of perception, social approaches started to develop, most notably the *meme theory* of Richard Dawkins and the *epidemiology of representations* by Dan Sperber.

For Dawkins, memes are identifiable units of cultural transmission or units of imitation.[25] While most of us would be familiar with the concept of Internet memes, at the time Dawkins wrote his *Selfish Gene* book, his reference points ranged from catchy tunes to religious ideas and scientific theories. For him, these memes have a tendency to replicate—they are ideas that evolve in a manner that makes their transmission easier.

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[22] For a concrete example: "The invention of the automatic bottle machine consisted of the conception, experimentation, and model-building activities of Michael J. Owens; the pioneering efforts of the entrepreneurs at Toledo, Ohio, to demonstrate that the new production function was both practical and economically feasible constituted the innovational phase; and the gradual replacement of hand-blown and semiautomatic machine methods by the new process in both American and foreign markets involved diffusion" (Scoville 1951, p. 347).

[23] For a classic account and numerous practical examples see von Hippel (1988).

[24] See Pléh (2003).

[25] Dawkins (1976, p. 206).

His talk of cultural fitness and the survival of ideas certainly reminds one of evolutionary accounts which were a great inspiration for Dawkins. But the gene–meme connection, like any use of analogy, has its benefits and its shortcomings. For example, memes are believed to resist change and to restructure a human brain and mind.[26] Not only such accounts risk anthropomorphising memes, but they make us lose sight altogether of the person 'behind' the mind or the brain in question. All that matters for researchers within this tradition is the meme itself. It is all the more disappointing, then, from a mobilities perspective, to read Dawkins' notes on the process of transmission, for instance, the fact that 'memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation'.[27] What exactly does 'leaping' mean here? And how can imitation involve the brain alone?

Many of these blind spots are carried over into Sperber's epidemiology of representations.[28] For him and his followers, cultural evolution can be better explained through the metaphors of *infection* and *contagion* (rather than gene selection). Sperber started from the premise that humans are hosts to representations, that these representations are tied to social communicative systems, and that humans presuppose that their communicative partners also carry representations.[29] He admittedly built an individualistic, reductionist and cognitive based social science; a science in which reductionism and radical individualism are surpassingly taken as virtues. What distinguishes this account, however, is more openness to the change of representations as they are communicated and exchanged by people. Communication processes play a greater role here than in Dawkins' meme theory and, as a consequence, more 'movement' is embedded within the epidemiology framework. Disappointingly though, this is the constant move of representations between their individual and

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[26] "The memes that proliferate will be the memes that replicate by hook or by crook. Think of them as entering the brains of culture members, making phenotypic alterations thereupon, and then submitting themselves to the great selection tournament – not the Darwinian genetic fitness tournament (life is too short for that) but the Dawkinsian meme-fitness tournament. It is their fitness as memes that is on the line, not their host's genetic fitness, and the environments that embody the selective pressures that determine their fitness are composed in large measure of other memes" (Dennett 1998, n.a.).

[27] Dawkins (1976, p. 206).

[28] Sperber (1996).

[29] Pléh (2003, p. 23).

public forms, between mental and overt performance. Change accompanies such moves, a change that is amplified by contagion and favours the spread of the most 'contagious' ideas.

In summary, if for Dawkins the transformation of memes was the exception and their replication the rule, for Sperber reproduction means change. But change that occurs between the private (mental) and public realms. What about transformations taking place *within* the mind and *within* society? The individualism intrinsic to both meme and epidemiological models ignores the context surrounding a person and how this context—material, social and cultural—already participates in the constitution of individual minds. This is a lesson that other leading figures of diffusionism were well aware of.

Sir Frederic Bartlett built in the first half of the twentieth century a theory that articulated the cognitive, the social and the cultural.[30] He saw culture as fundamentally dynamic in its transmission and evolution over time. Instead of focusing on representations or the mind in isolation, his approach embedded both within social systems and cultural practices. For him, cultural elements hold significance and require interpretation, processes that are at once psychological and social. His early work on the dynamics of culture considered how folk stories persist over time with relatively small variations within a group, until they are transmitted to another group, particularly one with a very different cultural system. Inspired by early diffusionists, he postulated a rather radical thesis: that almost all cultural transformation comes from the outside, that it requires contact, exchange of ideas and practices and, I would add, movement. Mobility leads to transmission *by contact*, when a group reaches another, or *by borrowing*, when an individual travels elsewhere, acquires new cultural elements, and then returns.

Using his method of serial reproduction, Bartlett was also able to unpack the processes involved in transmission, namely *elaboration*, *simplification*[31] and *conventionalisation* (the latter is based on the efforts to

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[30] Bartlett (1923). See also Kashima (2000), Wagoner (2017).

[31] As Kashima (2000) explains, "by elaboration, he meant an increase in complexity of cultural forms. For instance, various cultural elements may be integrated together into a complex whole. Bartlett also suggested that a greater complexity can be achieved by reduplication, that is, recursively repeating the same pattern, by unconscious inventions, or by conscious analyses of cultural elements. Alternatively, transmitted elements may undergo simplification. One form is assimilation in which one element may absorb

make familiar something initially foreign and unfamiliar). Either studied in the 'laboratory' or 'in the wild', these three processes involve meaning-making and grow out of social relations, including relations of power between different groups. Intergroup connections become thus important, especially for cultural transmission by contact. For instance, the dynamic is different in the case of comradeship compared to dominance and submissiveness. Assimilation, rejection and the mixing ideas will greatly depend on the above. In the case of individual borrowing, what will matter most is not personality but also the social institutions of the borrowing culture, relations between subgroups and the individual's position in these subgroups.

The importance of social context has been carried over into the more recent theory of *social representations*. Serge Moscovici[32] formulated this as a theory of social knowledge based ultimately on the mobility of people and ideas. His premise was that a social representation is forged in the interaction between communities and the object of representation. Moreover, as people move within the social system, social representations meet and clash, leading to new ideas and sometimes highly creative outcomes. Channels of communication matter a lot here and they depend, ultimately, on the relations between groups and communities. For instance, the diffusion of ideas is relatively neutral while propagation carries more pressure to conform and propaganda is deliberately aiming to persuade. Resonating both with Sperber and especially with Bartlett, Moscovici considered that knowledge transforms as part of its transmission. Perhaps more than any of them, his focus becomes less the knowledge itself and precisely its (creative) transformation.

How mobility underpins this transformation and how it leads, in turn, to new possibilities for the person, for the group and for society are all issues that require further investigation. The works of Tarde, Rogers, Sperber, Bartlett and Moscovici offer some valuable suggestions in this regard. But they also share one major blind spot: a lack of attention towards individual lives and trajectories. We don't know much about the life context of innovators, adopters and users, little less about the 'hosts'

the other elements to dominate the overall structure. Other forms of simplification may include the loss of cultural elements when their reproductions are less than perfect, when interests of the group change over time, or when a group holding the cultural elements is cut off from its surrounding community, thereby losing its vitality" (p. 389).

[32] See Moscovici (2001).

of memes or representations and even about the members of groups who come to share a given social representation. And yet, it is at the individual level, that mobilities more directly meet (im)possibilities, an articulation that will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

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Easter egg decoration practices can certainly be read in terms of the diffusion of motifs, techniques and tools across people, geographical spaces and historical time. Their circulation in a wide area, in this case Eastern Europe, takes place alongside the movement—and, sometimes, forced displacement—of different ethic and national groups. Every time contact occurs, though, decoration techniques are not copied as such or 'replicated' but adapted, 'made one's own', in the words of the craftswomen I interviewed years ago. This broader pattern is also observed in how children and young people learn to decorate, respecting some common rules while bending others and introducing new, personalising elements. Many of these additions will not be kept by the person or by the group, but they are a testament to the creative nature of imitation and, ultimately, of tradition.

The fact that egg decoration traditions themselves are not unitary helps rather than hinders their diffusion. It is what makes them, after all, flexible enough to adjust to new circumstances, new customers and new social structures. The 'movement' of traditional crafts keeps them alive, just as it keeps groups in contact, ready to learn from different experiences and to share their own. In the end, every tradition is a *neo-tradition* as seemingly stable bodies of knowledge and social practice reflect only an instant in time, of longer or shorter duration, and should not be reduced to it. Just like decoration can never be fully understood by focusing only on the moments in which craftswomen work—how they got to do such work, and do it so skilfully, is of vital importance.

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Mobile Lives

Abstract Unlike the previous phylogenetic and sociogenetic focus, this chapter considers a different timescale: the life-course. By reflecting on how movement and migration define life trajectories, an argument is made that mobile lives are, at once, agentic lives. Even when personal mobility 'fails', its role in expanding our horizon remains. Forced and traumatic migration are discussed as extreme cases that illustrate the delicate balance between movement, possibility and impossibility in the life-course.

Keywords Migration · Forced migration · Life course · Agency · Possibility · Impossibility

After taking up my first academic position, in Denmark, I also attended my very first international conference outside Europe—a qualitative research congress in Champaign, Illinois. There I had the good fortune of meeting Zayda Sierra, a colleague from the University of Antioquia in Colombia. She was familiar with some of my work on the sociocultural theory of creativity and excited to collaborate on issues related to sustainability and community mobilisation among rural and indigenous populations in her country. The topic sounded extremely interesting but, initially, it was hard for me to see how my research and expertise—for instance, the Easter egg decoration study I mentioned in the opening

of the previous chapter—could shed any light or help in any way the processes Zayda was talking about. I guess the main challenge was moving from the sphere of theoretical ideas about culture, creativity and tradition to understanding how they play out in actual, marginalised communities. And, also, how any social and cultural view of creativity necessarily has political implications in the sense of promoting an agentic view of human beings and fostering their creative participation and empowerment.[1]

In the end, I had ample opportunities to reflect on these issue,[2] and took part together with a group of colleagues from Colombia and Canada in running a large project focused on creativity, sustainability and leadership in rural, indigenous and Afro communities primarily located in Antioquia. I got, on this occasion, not only to travel several times to Colombia and discover its amazing beauty, but to understand the many problems a country as beautiful and rich in resources as Colombia has to deal with. The aftermath of colonisation left a living legacy of exploitation and inequality, especially of rural communities, exacerbated by the series of neoliberal policies and new forms of exploitation brought about by globalisation. Meeting community members and leaders and learning, first-hand, how they are getting mobilised and oftentimes creative in organising peaceful protests and defending local rights and territory was more than inspirational.[3] It made me see, for the first time, perhaps, the dark sides of globalisation.

As someone who was born behind the Iron Curtain and grew up in a society in transition, desperately wanting to belong to the world of Western democracies, I exercised my right to travel, study and leave abroad the moment I finished my bachelor's. Mobility, democracy, human rights—these were all things I took for granted as already achieved after a long period of oppression. But this is not the reality of most people around the world, particularly in the Global South. More than this, the wide range of possibilities I and many others enjoy in the rich West are built, to a great extent, on the exploitation of countries like Colombia and the depletion of their natural resources. The human costs of new kinds of colonialism are often hidden, but the climate price we all pay for is visible.

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[1] For more on this, see Glăveanu and Clapp (2018).

[2] For an example see Glăveanu and Sierra (2015).

[3] For another example, see Glăveanu (2015).

After all, the right to travel needs to be matched by the one to *remain*. There is a lot of displacement of population taking place in Colombia due to the ruthless exploitation of both land and labour. Some communities get to lose their ancestral territories in the battle against government and corporations, others gradually disappear because of the lack of opportunities. Young people are driven to move to already overpopulated cities in order to make a living and they often struggle in the process. It is naïve to blame this all on globalisation, of course, as we have to consider the corruption of local and national governments and the illegitimate power international corporations have been given over the past two decades. Mobility itself is not the villain, forced mobilities and inequalities are, and the people and institutions who push for them need to be exposed and stopped.

The project I worked on had many wonderful examples of how community activism and grassroot movements led to social change and successfully defended people's rights to remain in their land. Creative forms of protest and the writing of manifestos raised awareness and built a strong case for the local community.[4] They involved, in all cases, a wide network of collaboration, including NGOs as well as the University of

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[4] To give an example of a manifesto published in a local journal, *El Arriero*, by community leader Luis Evelio in defence of the river Dormilón and against the construction of a hydroelectric power plant that would have depleted its waters:

> *We are the sons and daughters of the river Dormilón who, by making use of our legitimacy and the rights inscribed into the Constitution, today present ourselves in front of the competent environmental authority, to ask a reconsideration of decisions that affect our community interests in the PCH project (Pequeña Central Hidroeléctrica/Small Hydroelectric Plant) on the river Dormilón.*
> *The river is a fundamental part of our cultural identity and, as such, without it we would lose our connection to the water, the forest and the earth. At the same time, many of our roots and ancestral values like solidarity, peaceful coexistence and dignity, would risk being harmed through ruptures and processes not well understood. We, the inhabitants of San Luis and of this region, who love our river, are bound today by spiritual and cosmic unity, a superior value that has no comparison with what is intended for our river.*
> *In addition, today the river Dormilón is a structural axis around which the "social economy" of San Luis is organized. How many people come month after month to San Luis looking for the tranquillity and recreation possibilities offered by the river? Was this benefit taken into account before replacing it with other alternatives and economic interests? We see that the river Dormilón moves a great part of our local economy and will do so even more in the future if we keep our dreams clear and act to offer locals and visitors services of rural tourism in accordance to our values.*

Antioquia and its international partners. In the end, empowerment and new possibilities came out of collaboration and collaboration, in turn, was supported by various forms of mobility.

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Human lives are undoubtably mobile. Even the most sedentary of us, people whose entire existence is spent in close proximity to the place they were born in, are still defined by movement and exchange of various positions—physical, social and symbolic. In this way, any human life is constituted by its engagement with and exploration of the possible. Highly mobile individuals will necessarily be confronted with an expanded range of positions and possibilities, but this doesn't mean that they will always be aware of them, enjoy these choices or have the agency to act on them (think, for example, about forced migration). Conversely, people who never move from a given place can still engage with a wide variety of positions, situations and possibilities from within their context. Immanuel Kant, for instance, is said never to have travelled away from his native town of Königsberg. In the end, the relation between mobility and imagination is *not* one of linear causality. More mobility doesn't automatically lead to more imaginative exploration. But every form of imaginary exploration depends on *enough* mobility to allow the person to acquire various experiences, including diverse social relations and cultural resources.[5]

A second important point is that living mobile lives can be very exciting, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. For one, not everyone is encouraged or allowed to exercise their mobility. There are great discrepancies around the world in terms of who can and who should move depending on age, gender, ethnicity and economic status.

> *We emphasize this because we are sure that, in this way, we will keep alive our possibilities of development and public and communitarian alliances for the harmonious coexistence of all.*
> *We only ask for just and responsible decisions regarding our community and offer, in advance, our gratitude.* (my own translation from Spanish, in Glăveanu 2015, pp. 196–197)

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[5] Vygotsky's 'first law of the imagination' states in this regard that: 'the creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person's previous experience because this experience provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed. The richer a person's experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to' (Vygotsky 2004, pp. 14–15).

Mobilities researchers focus on this *unevenness* by researching both the movements of the super-rich, or the 'kinetic elite', as well as those of people who are silenced and marginalised, including the poor, women, the young and the old.[6] Then there are many forms of prejudice and discrimination affecting people who do move, either willingly or unwillingly. Nomadic populations, for example, like some Roma communities, have historically been oppressed partially because of their mobile lifestyle.[7] Those who travel constantly puzzle and even threaten those who don't. There is an intrinsic difficulty in taking the perspective of migrants and nomads and understanding how they see and experience the world (see also the previous chapter). In many ways, this is because they come to unsettle some of our most basic assumptions about place, identity, citizenship, belonging and our sense of self.

It is interesting to note that, before mobilities come to shape human possibility, they actually constitute the *self* by locating each one of us within the world, vis a vis other people; at the same time, they allow us to relocate and, in doing so, redefine the relation between self and others. I will come back in the next chapter to the importance of symbolic repositioning for the emergence of the self but, for our purpose here, we can agree that mobility is much more than movement from point A to point B[8]; it is a process through which we get to understand the world we live in and define our own place and role within it. My focus in this chapter is represented by *personal mobilities*. And, as Aharon Kellerman points out, this category is extremely rich in examples and possibilities:

> Personal mobilities constitute self-propelled movements, which include, first, the natural corporeal (physical) non-technological self-moving, more simply known as walking, and obviously those physical mobilities extended by technologies (driving automobiles and bicycling and motorcycling). Personal mobilities further include virtual mobilities through fixed and mobile telephones and the Internet. Self-propelled mobilities exclude, by their very nature, the use of public transportation and communications, in which movements are mediated, though comparisons between automobiles, on the one hand, and buses and trains, on the other, as well as

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[6] See Adey et al. (2014).

[7] See Fraser (2003).

[8] Jensen (2013, p. 3).

between telephones versus telegraph and postal services, have been made, and some will be made later on.[9]

Virtual forms of mobility and communication deserve a bit of reflection. At the moment of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic confined half of the wold population in their homes, drastically reducing physical forms of personal mobility[10] but making *online and virtual mobilities* flourish. Many people found ways to take classes or to work online and most managed to connect with family and friends remotely several times a day. This new reality not only confirms our dependence on the Internet and various types of social media—it is expected to lead to their impending upgrade.[11] And then there is also the mass phenomenon of watching movies and shows on multiple streaming channels that transport most of us, even for a little while, to a different universe (funnily enough, many chose actually to watch pandemic inspired content,[12] proving that reality can sometimes beat all other cinematic alternatives). But in which way are these forms of mobility?

Inasmuch as movement involves occupying different positions, in time, then online and virtual environments foster plenty of such moves, even when, physically, we almost stand still. For instance, in online (and offline) conversations, we move between different social roles (e.g. speaker and listener, supporter and being supported, accuser and accused, and so on) as well as between symbolic universes (e.g. discussing what happens at home, at work, on holiday, at school, in alternative versions of reality, etc.). These mobilities foster new perspectives and, thus, new possibilities—of understanding something differently, learning a new way of doing things, gaining inspiration from others, etc. This was, after all, the hope associated with information and communication technologies. As a creativity researcher who believes that dialogues of perspective constitute the creative process, it's easy to see how online participation could favour

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[9] Kellerman (2006, p. 2).

[10] Although people did get very creative even in this regard with accounts, for instance, of a man who ran an entire marathon on a 7 meters balcony or another one who trekked to Everest base camp by climbing stairs at home, both stories reported in the Guardian.

[11] See the article *Why the coronavirus lockdown is making the internet stronger than ever* by Will Douglas Heaven in Technology Review (7 April 2020).

[12] See the article *Movies and TV shows about pandemics and disasters are surging in popularity on Netflix* by Travis Clark on Business Insider (20 March 2020).

such dialogues and the exchange of perspectives.[13] However, this ideal often fails in practice. We have at our disposal all sorts of opportunities to reach out to different people who might hold very different perspectives than ours, but often prefer to inhabit more comfortable 'information bubbles' online and be surrounded by similarity rather than difference.

And yet, there are some encouraging signs that dwelling in virtual environments and changing one's position—in terms of avatars, activities, settings or roles, for example—can foster creative expression. Todd Lubart and his colleagues recently completed an ample project called CREATIVENESS that examined, in an experimental manner, the possible uses of virtual worlds such as Second Life to foster creativity and innovation. Their findings generally support the basic premise outlined in this book, that new opportunities to move in online spaces are associated with the discovery of new possibilities for thought or action.[14] Of course, this is not a linear relationship and it does depend on a variety of factors including personality profiles, task characteristics and situational demands. But, overall, one great opportunity offered by online space is that of 'inhabiting' truly new positions in the world (e.g. choosing an avatar that is highly discrepant with who we are, exploring imaginary roles and characters, interacting with others who take up various roles) and moving fast between these positions (e.g. trying to solve creatively a problem related to transportation in the city in a virtual room and then, in the next moment, be in the middle of a traffic jam, within immersive virtual reality). These positions and these moves come with their own range of perspectives, affordances and (im)possibilities.

One of the most paradigmatic forms of personal mobility remains, however, migration. If in the previous chapters the discussion of migration referred to entire populations, inventions, social practices or ideas (including memes and representations), the focus here is on *individual migration* which has, unsurprisingly, a variety of forms.[15] The scale and complexity of human migration—going much further than the categories

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[13] For some reflections on how the Internet impacts creative expression, see Literat and Glăveanu (2016, 2018), also Glăveanu et al. (2019).

[14] See, for example, Guegan et al. (2017, 2019).

[15] As noted by Fortier (2014, p. 64), 'asylum seekers, refugees, displaced and forced migrants, so called "economic" migrants (which include migrant workers, skilled migrants, migrant investors, migrant professionals), spousal and family migrants, undocumented migrants, retirement migrants, "return" migrants, "trafficked" migrants, "queer" migrants.

of refugees and economic migrants—reveals, especially in today's globalised world, the need to question old assumptions about citizenship. Authors like Peter Nyers raise, in this context, the notion of migrant citizenship.[16] This might sound like an oxymoron given that the whole premise of citizenship is belonging to a certain place, defined in terms of national boundaries. Against the static and oftentimes discriminatory uses of the concept of 'citizen', migrant citizenship is a subversive category, "illustrative of how citizenship involves a creative process that is generative of new worlds, identities, and models of belonging".[17] While these transformations are yet to fully take place, we also need to acknowledge settled lives and many people's preference for them. These are typically individuals who have been for a long time in one place and whose house ownership, family commitments, networks of friends and/or permanent employment attach them to it.[18]

Besides any pragmatic reasons why people either stay or move, we should recognise the fact that migration in particular triggers certain *imaginaries*. These might include, for some, the prospect of change and adventure, the capacity to leave things behind and start anew, or the romantic vision of a place in which life is better for oneself and for one's family. These are what I would call bright imaginings. The dark imaginary of migration, on the side of the migrant, includes fears of losing one's life or that of close family members, of being always treated differently and excluded, or never being able to grow roots, gain an income, or become a 'citizen'. On the side of the host society, there might be even more anxieties associated with receiving migrants, many of them referred to at the start of Chapter 3. The fact that any act of migration is accompanied by one of imagination has been widely discussed by cultural mobilities scholars like Noel B. Salazar.[19] For him, these imaginaries go well beyond individual actors—they are historically laden and socioculturally constructed. Moreover, people don't only acquire or enact a kind of

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There are migrants who temporarily reside in the place of immigration, others who stay permanently, others who move between two or more places of residence'.

[16] See Nyers (2015).

[17] Nyers (2015, p. 34).

[18] See, for example, Fischer and Malmberg (2001).

[19] For example, Salazar (2011). See also a recent special issue on the topic of (im)mobility and imagination that will be published in *Culture & Psychology*, co-edited by Flavia Cangià and Tania Zittoun.

imagination but appropriate and respond to it, creating co- and counter-imaginaries (for example, refugees finding creative ways to tell their story to others or to integrate).

In other words, imagination is both a prerequisite of migration and is triggered by personal mobility, an important point supporting the deep connection between mobilities and human possibility. Even in the harshest conditions of forced migration, and for the most vulnerable of populations (e.g. women and young children), there is still at least a *potential for agency* and for *re-imagining one's life* in a new place. Letitia Trifanescu offered such an example with the case of precarious feminine migration paths.[20] Despite perilous travel conditions and facing an uncertain future, the women she studied, all African asylum seekers in France, made an effort to turn their migration experience into acts of *empowerment*. Migration is often, and in particular in these cases, the site of struggles for power and domination, both ethnic and gendered, that mark collective and personal histories. Against predestined trajectories and life-courses, these women are faced with the choice of submitting to oppressive ideologies or breaking the repetitive logic of submission.[21] Reflective, decision-making processes leading to empowerment are involved every step of the way, for as minor as they might seem, from deciding to leave, choosing a migration path, to arriving in Europe and projecting into the future. A long-term history of oppression is often what motivates asylum-seeking women, becoming the incentive for learning and personal transformation.[22] There are many challenges ahead and the outcomes are uncertain, but Trifanescu proposes an optimistic view of migration as a decision that is the 'first act of empowerment for individuals who until then seemed to endure life events helplessly', a first step in a continuous "process of resistance".[23]

There is considerable literature out there focused on migration stories, both 'successful' and 'unsuccessful', concerning not only women but also

[20] For details, see Trifanescu (2015).

[21] Trifanescu (2015, p. 91).

[22] Trifanescu (2015, p. 92).

[23] Trifanescu (2015, p. 93).

men[24] and asylum-seeking children.[25] In particular in the case of children, migration leads to important issues related to home and belonging set against expectations of 'residential fixity'.[26] Migration from Africa has also been extensively studied, demonstrating the need to listen to and learn from the testimonials of migrants.[27] These life stories remind us that clashes between cultures, hopes and forms of imagination are common in personal migration, and they can't always be solved creatively or satisfactorily.

One of the best ways to capture the intricate relationship between possibilities and impossibilities, imagination and its deficit in the experience of migration is to study them using a *life course* approach.[28] This approach, illustrated also by Trifanescu's study, is characterised by the imperative to situate acts of migration within the broader context of a person's life and this, in turn, within the frames offered by the development of society and culture. For as focused as this chapter is on personal mobilities, they can only be made sense of as part of individual and collective histories. After all, the possibilities embedded within these histories (or their absence) emerge out of a system of social relations, cultural norms and material circumstances rather than individual actions alone.

A good example of using the life-course approach to understand how someone is *recognised as a refugee* is offered by Anja Weiß's sociological research.[29] For her, seeking refuge is not only a legal status but a defining moment in one's life trajectory. The 'move' from the condition of migrant to that of refugee is exemplified with cases of university educated migrants entering Germany and the complications raised by the institutional implementation of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. Her study shows

[24] See Datta et al. (2008).

[25] See Hopkins and Hill (2008).

[26] See Ní Laoire et al. (2010).

[27] 'The living testimonies of these migrants reveal the continued significance and reinterpretation of African cultures and the values and practices between the country of origin and the newly adopted country. It explores the impact of migration on the lives, expectations and agency of people who have migrated and their descendants focusing on citizenship, belonging and intergenerational relations. Importantly, it embeds our understanding of migration firmly within the lived experiences and personal perspectives of African migrants' (Roos et al. 2012, p. 65).

[28] For more arguments and empirical examples see Womersley (2020).

[29] Weiß (2018). For another life-course approach see McHugh et al. (1995).

that people who have better resources and a higher degree of autonomy, social and spatial, can find alternative options to claiming refugee status. The fact of being persecuted doesn't automatically guarantee the success of such claims and their recognition is ultimately based on administrative frameworks in the host country and the socio-economic position of the individual migrant. Not to mention the possible contestation of the validity of this status leading to the further traumatisation of an already vulnerable group. Paradoxically, the label of 'refugee' is also used by nationalist groups to exclude other categories of migrants who might be in equally precarious conditions. Weiß calls, in this context, for the need to question the intent and consequences of legal categories and consider the life trajectory and experiences of all categories of vulnerable migrants.[30]

What we can see from the above is that the types and range of possibilities migration can open depend considerably on the position and resources of the person migrating, as well as on the characteristics of the home and host societies. We should avoid *romanticising* migration as always leading to more agency, imagination and empowerment since, for many people, moving to another place or country reveals an array of barriers and impossibilities: of being allowed to stay, of integrating, of getting a job, of forming a family, of following one's passion, of leaving the past behind, and so on. The existence of unequal power relations between immigrants and locals, and even between different categories of migrants, is recognised by what is called 'critical mobilities'. This orientation examines in particular the intersections between mobility, fixity, ethnicity, gender and class.[31] It also interestingly points to how not moving can be of interest as it can also be forced, free, or a mixture of both.[32] There is, finally, intrinsic value in telling *stories of hardship* during

[30] 'Comparative case studies of these migrants under duress confirm that the category of "refugee" is shaped by legal and administrative regimes following hidden agendas of protecting few refugees and excluding most of them. Against this background, we then highlight cases of migrants who shied away from using the refugee category even though they did experience violent persecution and a loss of protection' (Weiß 2018, p. 115).

[31] 'Critical mobilities studies both focus attention on connections between mobility–fixity and structural inequalities and provide a more nuanced account of individual subjecthood that militates against caricatures and stereotypes that can themselves contribute to experiences of inequality and oppression' (Rogaly 2015, p. 541).

[32] Rogaly (2015, p. 530).

migration beyond capturing possibilities for post-traumatic growth. In fact:

> undocumented people and their family members deploy their hardship stories to foster sociality, legitimize their experiences, promote political consciousness, and demand social change. These practices take place along a spectrum of politicization, from stories shared in closed social spaces to foster validation and friendship, to public stories utilized in campaigns for immigration reform. As they share stories, personal experiences of hardship can become a critical resource in movement building, as organizers find possibilities for social and political change within practices of story revelation and exchange.[33]

Stories of impossibility, therefore, can help create a space of dialogue and critique from which new possibilities come about. Undocumented migrant experiences can be used to speak truth to power and demand recognition from the state as well as humanising discourses about migration from the host society. These are not primarily acts of individual agency; they are expressions of collective agency and community building. There is an expanding literature today dedicated to creative *activism* surrounding migration, often engaged in by migrants themselves. The aim is to portray dispossessed migrants and refugees not as passive objects but active agents within their life-course and within society. These possibility-expanding acts of creativity are 'dangerous in the best sense of the word', defending more than the cause of migrants—they help us all question the foundations of the state, of citizenship, and the fact that citizen rights are often placed ahead of human rights.[34] And there is more to be done than acknowledging the experience of migrants and refugees and defending their rights. We should also set up the social and professional mechanisms that allow them to use their expertise, express their talents and

[33] Gomberg-Muñoz (2016, p. 743).

[34] 'Human creativity that gives voice to the layered experience of a particular displacement is "dangerous in the best sense of the word" as displaced playwrights, artists, theatre troupes, journalists, poets, or groups of refugee-ed women intervene on any report that normalizes displacement (…) They are dangerous in that they challenge unquestioning adherence to official stories; they complicate news media sound bites that pass for authoritative reports. (…) As they articulate and give voice to the nuances of displacement, refugee-ed and internally displaced people subvert, for example, notions on which established laws for immigration are based, which render them invisible, passive, and speechless people' (Coleman et al. 2012, pp. XXX–XXXI).

innovate. There is some recent concern, in this regard, for refugee innovation[35] and, more generally, for bottom-up innovation emerging from crisis-affected communities.[36]

All these efforts show that, when we take the notion of mobile lives seriously, we need to be aware of how mobilities impact human possibility and to acknowledge the fact that *human dignity* is tied up with both. We are not only doing a de-service to migrants when we don't recognise their potential for creativity and innovation, we are also making our societies poorer, more uniform and more intolerant. The fact that the act of migration itself can and should unleash new possibilities has been widely documented, including by research reported here. The natural consequence of this is that more tolerant and open societies are more innovative and have been so throughout time. And this note from an early modern historian might be the most cheerful thought to end on:

> Throughout the centuries the countries in which intolerance and fanaticism prevailed lost to more tolerant countries the most precious of all possible forms of wealth: good human brains. On the other hand, the qualities that make people tolerant make them also receptive to new ideas. Inflow of good brains and receptiveness to new ideas were among the main sources of the success stories of England, Holland, and Sweden in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It is gratifying to be able to say that tolerance pays off.[37]

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What does all of this tell us about the struggle of Colombian rural, indigenous and Afro communities for recognition of their rights to land and to remain? It does make us aware of the fact that there is immense human

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[35] And, in particular, how to avoid the dangers of thinking always in terms of 'humanitarian assistance' and develop participatory approaches and pedagogies that empower beneficiaries as co-designers of solutions (see Moser-Mercer et al. 2016).

[36] 'Key elements of a positive enabling environment for bottom-up innovation include: a) a permissive environment with the right to work and freedom of movement; b) access to connectivity including the internet and telecommunications; c) access to education and skills training; d) good infrastructure and transportation links; e) access to banking and credit facilities; f) transnational networks. We need to rethink the humanitarian system in order to provide a better enabling environment for innovation by crisis-affected communities, including refugees' (Betts et al. 2015, p. 3).

[37] Cipolla (1972, p. 52).

creativity involved in *both* mobile and immobile lives. And that the latter are only seemingly immobile. In fact, the reason some of these community actions succeed is the fact that their leaders know how to build networks of collaboration—local, national and international. They might not themselves travel, but their collaborators do. And they share the concerns and struggle of these communities, giving them voice and presence in many places and on many stages, including in short books on mobilities. There is much more work to do in order to really address their challenges and mobility is not the only or ultimate answer. But, through its connection to human possibility, it does participate in creating solutions and not only problems. The neoliberal drive of globalisation has betrayed these and many other local communities. Can new understandings of what it means to be global, mobile and creative help them?

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Wandering Minds

Abstract This final chapter, before concluding, takes us to the intra-individual level and considers the ways in which embodied moves connect to psychological ones. The examples of mind wandering, wonder and acts of imagination as looping in and out of the here and now are offered to support the general claim that mobility leads to psychological development through the exploration of the possible.

Keywords Imagination · Wander · Wonder · Creativity · Possibility · Mobility

I first used subjective cameras to study creativity during my doctoral studies dedicated to the creative processes of craftswomen. These cameras are tiny devices, placed at eye level, recording video and audio human activity from the perspective of the person engaged in it. This placement offers a unique opportunity to understand not only what is happening within the situation, but to grasp how the creator might perceive it. In order to achieve this, follow-up interviews are needed, based on the recording, in which researcher and participant develop together an account of the motives, thoughts and feelings that animated creative

action.[1] Such a mixed use of methods is particularly important when studying the decoration of objects as small as eggs because 'external' cameras wouldn't be useful here at all.

Beyond this, though, subjective cameras are best equipped to examine the creative process as a *dialogue* between different positions and perspectives. They necessarily capture the embodied position of the person and his or her perceptual perspective in the environment and, by discussing the videos, they also allow us to capture something about the conceptual perspectives involved. Acts of movement and repositioning become obvious and, with them, the new perspectives that emerge and the uses they are put to. This seemed like a great methodology, then, to use in further research, including of a different creative domain.

While still in London and having the technology available,[2] I decided to contact artists and see who might be willing to wear subjective cameras while painting for a couple of weeks. Another advantage of this technology is that it's much less intrusive than the constant presence of the researcher who takes notes, asks questions and sets up recording devices. Subjective cameras can easily be used by the participant him or herself and they only require occasional recharging. This type of research is also in line with ethical requirements as participants are the first to review the material and therefore give back to the researcher what they want to be viewed and analysed and nothing else.

I was lucky to find David in this context, a middle-aged artist whose work had been exhibited several times and for whom art was the main professional activity. David had developed over the years a highly personal way of painting. He generally worked on big canvases and depicted landscapes that were not figurative or representational. In essence, his focus was not on representing something specific or recognisable, but on capturing the dynamic between land and sky, light and darkness, lines and colour. His creative process was highly experimental and well-adapted for this aim. For example, he would never start from a clear idea of what should be in the painting, but let the colours and shapes already depicted guide him. In his own words:

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[1] For more details about the use of subjective cameras as part of a Subjective Evidence-Based Etnography (SEBE) of creative action, see Glăveanu and Lahlou (2012).

[2] At the time, these small recording devices had to be tailor-made at the London School of Economics. Today, there are many commercial versions used for leisure activities, for example Tobii Pro Glasses.

When I begin a painting there is no image, no image at all. (…) And then I would start, I would put on my palette a few colours that I would like to start with. And very loosely with a big brush I would just start to paint, very loosely. (…) And I work just very quickly for probably 20 minutes and cover the canvas as much as possible, then I'll sit back and stare at it (…) and then things will start to appear. It would be, possibly, just a shape, which I like the look of, which I can then develop, it could be a ridge of a hill or it could be a whatever, it could be a certain cloud that is starting to form, and then I'll start to build on that and see where it goes. And after a few days of building on that I would look at it, I am always looking at it, but I would look at it quite in-depth and then I'd stare at it again and then I might see something else that [makes me] want to go into that direction or I might keep going in the same direction. But it is just a creative process that starts to build with actually nothing set in stone.[3]

This passage reveals not only the general openness of his approach and how David invited perspectives into the painting rather than pre-constructed them; it also points to the intrinsic value of *micro-mobilities* and changing position and perspective in relation to the developing artwork. He regularly took a step back, both physically and psychologically, in order to gain some distance from the canvas and let new insights guide future action. Without this basic movement, his work process would have been 'trapped' by initial impressions or the necessity of having a vision beforehand, both things he desperately wanted to avoid.

In fact, one of the interesting conclusions for David coming out of his participation in research was that perhaps he wasn't standing back enough at key moments in the process. Because of this, he lost valuable new perspectives and opportunities to redirect the entire process.[4] For me, it was a valuable lesson as a creativity researcher who studied Easter egg decoration and saw how important knowing beforehand what you can and want to do is, to observe an entirely new type of process.

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[3] Glăveanu (2015, p. 174).

[4] Again, in his words, "Now I am analysing the way I work because you are telling me the way I am working so I am thinking to myself 'maybe I should wait more before I continue' because I might have done something at that point [that] when I am standing back I can say 'I like that' but I missed it because I haven't stood back and looked at it. (…) It's been very interesting for me because listening to your comments has made me analyse the way I work more and possibly your comments might change the way that I work" (in Glăveanu 2015, p. 175).

There is certainly improvisation within egg decoration, and craft activities more generally, but in art (at least in David's art), improvisation becomes a way of working and being open and receptive to what is there and what can happen next became the rule. The painter might seem, from the outside, almost immobile, always working within the small studio and barely moving from canvas to colours and taking a step back once in a while. It turns out, though, that this small step is essential for the entire process and, behind this micro-mobility, lies a world of 'inner' movement between memories, thoughts, emotions and roles, including that of the audience. The body might not go far in those moments, but the mind does wander.

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The focus of this chapter is on a special type of mobility, one that many would perhaps miss or not even consider as such. It is *psychological mobility* or the movement between symbolic rather than physical positions. This doesn't mean that there is absolutely no materiality in psychological mobility; in fact, I will argue here that the concept of action helps us integrate mental and bodily functions and movements into a more unitary concept.[5] Ultimately, there would be no possibility of psychological movement without bodily mobility, an idea that developmental psychologists are all well familiar with.

For example, it is not without any reason that Jean Piaget started his well-known theory of the development of intelligence from the *sensorimotor* stage.[6] Through this, he recognised that intelligent behaviour finds its roots in movement and the manipulation of objects. Without it, the child would miss the practical means to understand the world and

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[5] And, thus, overcome the famous 'Cartesian split'. Descartes, the founding figure of modern philosophy, distinguished between mind and body two types of 'substances' (see Descartes 1984/1644). The former is characterised by its extension in space (*res extensa*), while the latter captures the essence of human as thinking beings (*res cogitans*). For as inspiring as it was to proclaim that we can only be sure that we are thinking beings (*cogitans ergo sum*), Descartes' radical dualism between mind and body created a deep divide in our thinking about both and reverberated into a series of other domains such as education, work, politics, and so on. For mobility scholars in particular, this distinction poses a serious challenge.

[6] Piaget (1972).

the consequences of his or her actions. Even if we often consider intelligence as a rather abstract process, taking place fully 'within the head', its origin and general functioning are highly embodied. The same applies to other seemingly ethereal entities such as emotions, the self, and certainly creativity and imagination. The latter possibility-enabling phenomena will be discussed at length in this chapter and the argument will be made, once more, that (psychological and embodied) mobility grounds (human) possibility.

Before unpacking this argument further, it's important to reflect for a moment on the title notion of wandering minds. It is inspired by a phenomenon that has been of concern not only for psychologists but medical doctors as well: *mind-wandering*. In essence, mind-wandering refers to those moments in which our thoughts take us away from the here and now of immediate experience and action and towards unrelated ideas, images and events. From this definition we can also see how common this process is (in fact, you are most probably engaging in microforms of mind-wandering as you read these very lines). Some research estimates that we spend about half of our waking hours in this way, letting our mind wander about while our body remains still or almost still. It's no surprise then to hear that a lot of studies have been dedicated to understanding how, when, where, and with what consequences mind-wandering happens. Some proclaimed because of this the beginning of an 'era of the wandering mind'.[7] This goes very well in line with a resurgent interest in mobilities; however, the link between the two literatures is rarely made. And this despite the fact that the phenomenon of wander is certainly mobilities related. But, as we soon discover following this line of inquiry, wandering is primarily studied in people with dementia and it designates a common and dangerous behaviour through which people can easily get lost or harm themselves.[8]

In fact, these negative connotations have been transported into psychology and research into mind-wandering.[9] The biggest concern here is that people find it difficult to perform their tasks if they let their mind

[7] Callard et al. (2013).

[8] Lai and Arthur (2003).

[9] Where we can find titles such as 'A wandering mind is an unhappy mind' (Killingsworth and Gilbert 2010).

wander and, again, could even put themselves at risk by not paying atten-tion to what they are doing.[10] Many authors try, in any case, to adapt a more balanced approach and discuss both the costs and benefits of mind-wandering.[11] The costs include deficits in performance related to reading (both reading comprehension and model building), to sustained attention and demonstrating aptitudes (including on tests of working memory and intelligence). As such, some see this phenomenon as a sign of failure of our cognitive control and waste of executive resources and, thus, find little benefit in it. But others do suggest some benefits particularly related to autobiographical planning and creative problem-solving. In other words, 'there may be a host of possible functions of mind-wandering that may help, in part, mitigate its costs. These include but are likely not limited to: planning for the future, enabling creative incubation, allowing disha-bituation, and relieving tedium'.[12] This view led to new waves of research focused on the positive aspects of this phenomenon[13] and the realisation that it can be both useful and adaptive to not be constrained, at all times, by the here and now. If our mind moves away from what is, it becomes able to explore other possibilities.

If we consider this literature from the standpoint of *daydreaming*—an almost perfect synonym—and the *imagination*, then the association with creativity and envisioning alternatives becomes highly plausible. In fact, Alex Gillespie and Tania Zittoun expanded the importance of such mobilities to our entire mental life as social and cultural beings.[14] They postulated that human bodies and their movements are embedded within social situations and institutions and that, as our bodies travel from one to the other, our minds learn to do the same, even in the absence of phys-ical movement. The mind, unlike the body, moves within and between fields of meaning represented by narratives and other complex semiotic structures (e.g. scenes from books, movies), including ideas and argu-ments. And indeed, we can all agree that we access, with the help of

[10] And there are some laboratory findings that link mind-wandering with reduced task performance, especially when the participants lack meta-consciousness of what they are doing (see McVay et al. 2009).

[11] For more details see Mooneyham and Schooler (2013).

[12] Mooneyham and Schooler (2013, p. 16).

[13] And illustrated by titles such as 'Not all minds that wander are lost' (Smallwood and Andrews-Hanna 2013).

[14] See Gillespie and Zittoun (2013).

memory and imagination, many more 'spaces' than we physically come in contact with, including put ourselves in completely fictional situations that never happen or never can happen (e.g. fighting a dragon or living three centuries from now). Importantly for the two authors, the co-ordinated movement of bodies and minds leads to integrating and also differentiating our experience of the world. This is because embodied mobility helps us connect to our environment from different positions and to accumulate the experience of each position while mental mobility enables us to link, separate and multiply such experiences.[15]

We can certainly appreciate in this account the fact that mobilities gain a central role in our psychological functioning, one of the few accounts to recognise this in psychology. However, the whole premise of separating 'minds' and 'bodies' falls into the trap of Cartesian dualism. Claiming that mobility is precisely what connects the two is insufficient when, in fact, the movement of the body is at least partially disconnected from that of the mind. This weakness is best evidenced in Zittoun and Gillespie's account of the imagination.[16] Building this time on the distinction between proximal and distal experiences,[17] they propose that acts of imagination can be conceived of as looping out of the immediate of our sensation and action and into different spheres of meaning. The issue is what happens to the body while the mind is looping in and out. And if imagination reflects a high degree of psychological mobility, isn't it still an *embodied* form of activity?

[15] 'Bodies move within society, accumulating societally patterned experiences, which in turn provide the resources for cultural and fictional experiences. These cultural and fictional experiences are also characterized by movement; the movement of the mind between differentiated experiences; and the narrative structure, just like the structure of an institution, also provides the mechanism for integrating these experiences and perspectives into a meaningful whole' (Gillespie and Zittoun 2013, p. 528).

[16] See Zittoun and Gillespie (2015).

[17] '"Proximal experiences" are primarily anchored in the experiencing body, in a given here-and-now moment, and take place in the paramount reality: they take place there where one is physically located, and that location (the material and social setting) demands attention and impinges upon the senses. (…) "Distal experiences", in contrast, include all the experiences which transport our experience out of the immediate setting, to the past, to the future, to abstraction or to worlds of science fiction. In distal experiences, people can explore events independently of their bodily location, beyond the laws of time and space, and also, independently of logic and causality. Distal experiences are relatively independent from material constraints' (Zittoun and Gillespie 2015, p. 9).

The challenge comes, again, from the strict separation between the proximal and the distal. While it is true that I can be imagining a summer holiday in Spain while freezing in my armchair in the north of Europe, during winter, this doesn't mean that my mind and body are 'relatively independent' from each other. It is not only a physical experience of cold that made me phantom holidays somewhere warm in the first place, but the probable smile and involuntary gestures enjoying the imaginary sun *are all* part of the *same* experience. Mind-wandering or daydreaming can make me ignore, temporarily, some aspects of my context, but they won't remove me altogether from it. Memories of past experience are better integrated with(in) the present in all acts of imagination.

The root of the problem comes from considering mental and bodily experiences as two different spheres that are articulated with each other but not integrated. This is where the concepts of *action* and *activity* come in useful in psychology, sociology and philosophy. While there are many possible definitions of action,[18] they tend to share an understanding of the unity between mind and body, the psychological and the behavioural. An action theory of imagination, for example, would consider its embodied nature and integrate it within broader activities with their own goals, motives and physical and symbolic tools. Most of all, a focus on action has a lot to tell us about psychological forms of mobility. This is because actions necessarily unfold in time and they describe trajectories that cut across the physical, psychological, social and cultural. Human activity coordinates the 'internal' aspects of thoughts, emotion and motivation with the 'external', behavioural dimension.[19] Within this framework, thinking, remembering and imagining are all part of action and not categories distinct from it. This is also a point forcefully made by James Wertsch in his seminal book *Mind as Action*. There, he notes that mediated action:

> is a natural candidate for a unit of analysis in socio-cultural research. It provides a kind of natural link between action, including mental action, and the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts in which such action occurs. This is so because the mediational means, or cultural tools, are inherently situated culturally, institutionally, and historically.[20]

[18] See, for instance, Edwards (2000).

[19] See also the psychology of conduct of Pietter Janet (1938).

[20] Wertsch (1998, p. 24).

What the above recognises is the fact that individual actions cannot be separated from their material, social, cultural and historic context. In other words, in order to make sense of human action and activity, we need to consider the social practices, institutional frames and cultural tools that enable them. This is not a form of sociological determinism as actions themselves reflect our agency in sharping sociocultural contexts. But, if we are considering human movement as a form of action, then this invites us to reflect directly on how psychological processes stand *interdependent* with their cultural-historical context.

This idea was especially present in the social psychology of George Herbert Mead.[21] His premise was that, at all times, we are positioned in the world in physical, psychological and social terms. And that, from these positions, we develop relations to the world called perspectives. Perspectives are not merely ideas or mental constructs, they are rather 'perceptual and conceptual orientations to a situation with a view to acting within that situation'.[22] This is a crucially important formulation as it basically states that any perspective we hold, comes out of a course of action and guides it, even when we don't immediately get to act on it.

For example, I can imagine eating at a castle tonight and this is a conceptual action orientation that will never come to be, especially during a pandemic. And yet, it is a way of relating with my current situation—in this case, being largely confined at home—that builds on both biological needs (e.g. hunger) and cultural meanings (e.g. how fancy it would be to eat at a castle). The action of imagining relates thus my current position at home with a past and potentially future position as a visitor at a castle and someone who ate in such places on a couple of past occasions. I might not act on it, leaving home to break into a nearby castle—and, luckily, here in Switzerland there is one 20 minutes away by foot—but the perspective that I *could* does relate to other perspectives about what I can actually prepare for dinner, i.e. how to feel fancy eating at home, and they will *all* shape a course of practical action. And, who knows, when the pandemic is over and the castle reopens, I could inquire into the possibility of dining there, probably at a prohibitive price.

The interesting part about Mead's thought was that he not only gave us an action account of positions and perspectives, but also a thoroughly

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[21] For details, see Mead's influential 'Mind, self and society' (Mead 1934).

[22] Martin (2005, p. 231), see also Gillespie (2006a).

social one. He considered that the positions we occupy in the world always relate to those of others and our perspectives can be shared with and 'taken' by others, just as we sometimes adopt their point of view. The capacity to move between positions and perspectives was so important that he considered it the true marker of a human self. In his well-known theory, we emerge as human selves when we become capable of taking the attitude (i.e. the perspective) or others upon ourselves; in other words, when we get to see and understand ourselves as an other person would.[23] This primary act of psychological mobility, moving between the positions of self and other, is made possible by embodied forms of mobility.

Consider, for instance, children's *play* and how players are guided, from early on, to adopt different physical positions and attitudes within the situation. Young children are first positioned and then start positioning themselves in ways that make them understand and articulate different perspectives: the one who takes and the one who gives, the one how moves a car and the one who stops it, the one who hides and the one who seeks, and so on.[24] It is by physically moving between positions and using different props in the process (e.g. a stethoscope to become a doctor or a gun to be a cop) that children are aided to develop and enact the perspectives or action orientations of others (e.g. the need to examine a patient or catch a burglar). The same level of physical mobility might not be needed, later on, as children place themselves mentally in the social and psychological position of the other, but perspective-taking remains embodied all the same.[25]

Movement between position is the basis of what Alex Gillespie and Jack Martin formalised as *Position Exchange Theory* (PET).[26] Building on Mead's initial ideas, they postulated that, in fact, positions exist in dyadic relations to each other, for example, doctor–patient, parent–child, giver–receiver, seller–buyer, and so on. As such, it is not any movement between

[23] 'The self is something which has a development; it is not there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process' (Mead 1934, p. 135).

[24] For more on the development of the self through play and games see Gillespie (2006b).

[25] Just like our imagination is embodied. For example, there are well documented relations between imagining movement and muscular activity; see Guillot et al. (2012).

[26] For details, see Gillespie and Martin (2014).

positions that matters, but especially exchanges or those movements in which the person takes, successively (and, in time, simultaneously) two different positions. To take a concrete example, in social interactions we are often in the position of the person who speaks and the person who listens. In order to hear what has been said, these positions are kept separate and only one person speaks at a time. And yet, the speaker and listener need to be in these two positions *at the same time* in order for the conversation to take place. If the speaker wouldn't listen as well and be able to take the perspective of the one listening (e.g. picking up on signs of wanting to intervene, of not understanding, of disagreeing, etc.) this act of communication would be a monologue rather than a dialogue.

The issue with PET from a mobilities standpoint is that, if two positions become unified, there is no more movement between them. Also, if we can occupy the position of the other by remembering situations in which we had their experience, then physical movement is downplayed and we are left, in the present, with psychological mobility alone. Last but not least, it is questionable whether positions are necessarily dyadically related with each other. The two authors, inspired perhaps by the importance of antinomies in dialogism, propose that institutions tend to organise positions in pairs. And yet, most social situations involve a *multiplicity* of positions and perspectives. For instance, a medical appointment includes a doctor and a patient but also, potentially, nurses, administrators, visitors accompanying patients, and so on. It might be argued though that, ultimately, the relation is between those seeking care and those offering care, and yet, even considered this way, we can conceive of other positions such as: those refusing care, withholding care, managing the offering of care, so on and so forth. Moreover, there is no single perspective associated with a single position and the other way around. In the example of being in the position of a doctor, this invites multiple perspectives or action orientations beyond taking care of the patient; e.g. being mindful of the resources of the hospital, exchanging information with fellow doctors and building relations, etc.

What is at stake here is precisely the relation between mobility and human possibility. Because Gillespie and Martin are ultimately concerned with intersubjectivity, the emphasis is often placed on unifying positions and perspectives in social acts of 'becoming other'. While similarity and identity are important for the dynamic of the possible, *differences* of position and '*gaps*' between perspectives are the actual engines of imagination

and creativity.[27] Movement between positions and their exchange expands thus our horizon of possibility in two ways. On the one hand, they can bring different positions together—particularly the position of self and other—and build new bridges of mutual understanding. On the other, moving between positions changes the perspective of the person and can lead to new and surprising goals, intentions, emotions and thoughts. If the doctor puts him or herself, for a moment at least, in the position of the patient, he or she can become better at offering advice and treatment. But, if the doctor 'moves' to the position of those taking care of the patient in the family, he or she might discover a completely new way of understanding the situation (for instance, the fact that medical treatment is only effective if applied correctly and, for this, everyone in the household needs to be on board; so a new question arises: how to convince people who are not ill?).

In fact, the two authors had a clear view that position exchange is a possibility-enabling process when they discussed its connection with *agency*.[28] Our capacity to conceive alternatives and decide (more or less freely) between them, rests in the possibility of taking some distance from a given position and perspective and entertaining new ways of seeing and relating to the world. Position mobility and exchange are, therefore, primary mechanisms of agency[29] and, I would add, of creativity. A few years ago, equally inspired by this neo-Meadean approach to the self and agency, I proposed a *perspectival model of creativity*.[30] This framework suggests that the creative process is fundamentally rooted in our capacity to reposition ourselves vis a vis a problem or issue of concern

[27] For a more detailed discussion see Glăveanu and Gillespie (2015), also Glăveanu (2019a).

[28] See Martin and Gillespie (2010).

[29] 'All organisms are in a perspectival relation to their environment (Mead 1932). Mead describes how grass is food in relation to the stomach of the cow, how places reverberate with the smell of recent goings on in relation to the finely tuned olfactory capability of a dog, and how a wooden table is food in relation to the woodworm. In each such case, the organism is not only in a perspectival relation to the world, but, trapped in such a relation. The cow cannot see the grass as anything but food. Humans, on the other hand, are at the intersection of more perspectives and accordingly are more able to distanciate from any one perspective. Indeed, humans, are unique in the extent to which they can distanciate from any one perspectival relation to the world, and this, Mead argues, is the basis of human agency' (Martin and Gillespie 2010, p. 256).

[30] For more details, see Glăveanu (2015).

and, in doing so, develop new perspectives on it and place these perspectives in dialogue with each other. The key here is not only movement from one position to the next, but the articulation of these positions through the insights and the actions they enable. The case of David and his artistic work, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, illustrates well the perspectival model by connecting physical changes of position (in this case, taking a step back) with psychological mobilities (gaining a new understanding that either aligns or clashes with his initial perspective) and, both of them, with new horizons of possibility for the creator (here, guiding further creative actions).

More recently, I became fascinated by episodes of wondering, initially as part of creative work[31] and, later, as a type of phenomenon on its own.[32] This interest comes from the fact that, in wonder, we are actually placed in a *meta-position* in relation to the world. In other words, we occupy a psychological 'place' from which multiple positions and perspectives become visible, at once, and we are trying to understand what else might be there, what else could be possible. These are, after all, the questions at the heart of wondering, pointing to processes that ultimately relate it to mind-wandering. Indeed, the experience of wonder often alternates between a state of being transfixed (wonderstruck) and restless (wandering), often at the same time.[33] It is the state in which our minds are, at once, immobile in the face of endless possibilities and highly movable in exploring them one by one, psychologically and physically. Both mobility and immobility have a role to play in our engagement with the possible and it is precisely their back and forth that opens up new possibilities, closes down others and, generally, makes us aware of and excited about what we can think, do, imagine or create next.

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David's stepping back from the canvas is a gesture that can easily escape a creativity researcher. Indeed, it is something he himself wasn't fully aware he was doing or that he needed to do more of. Mobility is often invisible in creative work, particularly the physical kind. Creators and researchers

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[31] See Glăveanu (2019b).

[32] See Glăveanu (2020).

[33] 'We can think of wonder as frozen paralysis, but also as restless vacillation' (Llyod 2018, p. 16).

are typically more concerned with and interested by psychological mobilities—the way in which artists like David move from one idea to the next, from an initial perspective to an entirely different one. How these mental acts are actually embodied and basically depend on movement, from the small step back to big journeys that inspire and transform the self, is understudied and, as a consequence, poorly understood. Movement is seen as a potential resource, for example, past moves are said to have acquainted us with new positions and experiences of the world. Present movement is often exclusively mental, distal, looping us out of the here and now. Considering mobilities and possibility together challenges these and other common assumptions. But to what end?

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A New Paradigm

Abstract The concluding chapter considers the nexus between mobilities and possibility studies as potentially leading to a new paradigm within social science. This paradigm considers 'possible mobilities' (i.e. new forms of movement of people, things and ideas) and 'mobile possibilities' (i.e. the contribution of movement to all our engagements with the possible) as two sides of the same coin. Ongoing research in this direction is discussed, as well as future perspectives.

Keywords New mobilities · Possibility studies · Possible mobilities · Mobile possibilities · Scientific paradigm

The premise of this book has been that there is an intrinsic connection between mobilities, in all their forms, and human possibility or the way in which we become aware of and explore what is possible in our existence and in society. This doesn't mean to imply that more mobility, for example, travelling more often or even migrating, will necessarily lead to more possibility. The relation is not linearly causal and, indeed, we can think of many cases in which movement restricts rather than expands what we can do or think in a given situation. But the *ontological fact* still holds that there would be no possibilities to explore in the absence of any kind of mobility. Both these scenarios—perfect immobility and absolute

impossibility—belong to the realm of thought experiments than actual states given that, to be alive (and to be alive as a human being) is prefaced on movement and open, at all times, to the future. And yet, it is a useful thought experiment because it shows us what occupying a unitary, unmovable position in the world would result in. According to my theory of the possible,[1] it would mean developing a single way of relating to self and world, in other words, a single perspective. And it is this singularity that is the very antithesis of possibility which fundamentally thrives on difference, multiplicity and polyphony.[2]

In this book, the relation between mobility and possibility has often been discussed in terms of *position* and *perspectives* and especially *repositioning*, *position exchange* and *dialogues* between perspectives. This is because movement, at its most basic, involves the transition between multiple positions, a transition that can be described in many ways, depending on the nature of these positions; for instance, we could talk about a life-course, about the path taken through a supermarket, about the trajectory of an idea, or the development of society. Each one of these expresses different 'levels' of mobility, from societal and historical to personal and psychological. People and objects moving between physical positions describe acts of migration and transportation. Ideas moving from one mind to the other can be read in terms of diffusion or transmission. Minds moving from one idea to the next enact daydreaming and possible acts of imagination. Last but not least, entire societies on the move make up the history of human civilisation.

In each case, there is a *horizon of possibility* associated with every change of position. When we physically move from one place to the next, we get to see and experience the world at least a little bit different. When we adopt a new idea, the rest of our knowledge can be reconsidered (the process of accommodation Piaget discussed in his work[3]) and lead to new insights. Finally, when society adopts a new paradigm, the whole world is restructured and there is great potential for innovation. A change of position, then, means a change of perspective and, with it, the possibility of reflectively considering one's old position and perspective through the lenses of current ones. And it is precisely this space of dialogue and

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[1] See Glăveanu (2020).

[2] See also Bakhtin (1975/1981).

[3] Piaget (1977).

reflection, being opened by movement, that is at the heart of possibility-expanding phenomena such as imagination, creativity and wonder. This doesn't mean, again, we will always take advantage of these opportunities to reflect and create for a variety of reasons.[4] And yet, the principle holds that novelty can only emerge out of differences, and differences are perceived through movement and position exchanges.

Is there no place for *immobility* in the story of human possibility after all? There certainly is and this role is mirrored by the interplay between possibility and impossibility. The impossible, I argued elsewhere,[5] is not the opposite of the possible as long as we can conceive it. When we construct images or visions of what cannot be done, either because of a lack of resources (e.g. building now a spaceship, from scratch, to go to the moon) or because of logical and natural impossibilities (e.g. seeing a square circle or a dragon in real life), we basically still build new perspectives on the world. And we can use these perspectives to actually expand the realm of the possible—humanity was, in the end, able to achieve its millennia long dream of getting to the moon[6] and, even if we don't have dragons around, we still enjoy them immensely in shows like *Games of Thrones* or movies like *How to Train Your Dragon*. In the end, there is a position from which we develop 'impossible' perspectives—often that of a child, an artist or a movie director—and they fuel our imagination and spark our creativity. The same can be said about immobility. The act of standing still physically doesn't exclude psychological mobilities; it might even foster them.[7] Conversely, absent-mindedly doing an activity while in a state of flow can increase the speed of our movement and its enjoyment.[8] However, this is all premised on the fact that there is *never* a state of absolute, pure immobility (in the same way as the lack of all possibility means death or, at least, the death of being[9]). Instead of

[4]We might, first of all, not notice the differences opened up by the act of movement or changing position. Then, even if we are aware of them, we might not value or appreciate the new perspective(s). Finally, even when this is not the case, it doesn't mean that differences will be acted upon in a creative manner (for a discussion of these 'steps, see Glăveanu and Beghetto 2017).

[5]Glăveanu (2020).

[6]For a broader discussion of this see Zittoun and Gillespie (2015).

[7]See Zittoun (2020).

[8]See Czikszentmihalyi (1990).

[9]See Heidegger (1962).

asking, therefore, if no movement means no possibility, we should focus on the interplay between the possible and the impossible, mobility and immobility as productive, dialogical states and processes.

The thesis I aimed to support throughout the book has been that *mobility begets possibility*, the former understood at four different levels and timeframes—species level and phylogenetic time, society level and sociogenetic time, individual level and ontogenetic time, and psychological level and microgenetic time—and the latter conceived in terms of possibility-expanding phenomena such as agency, imagination, creativity and innovation. In other words, the assumption was that engaging in various forms of mobility opens up new possibilities for minds, people and communities across evolutionary and historical time. Of course, this is not a 'hypothesis' that can be easily tested or confirmed, and it is not my ambition to have demonstrated it in this book. What different chapters do is survey a wide range of evidence, coming from a variety of disciplines, that supports the assumption above. For instance, I tried to show that some of the earliest innovations made by our ancestors in prehistory were connected to group mobility and large-scale migration (Chapter 3); that the spread of inventions and ideas, more generally, depends on movement and intergroup contact (Chapter 4); that possibilities emerge in the life-course whenever people travel or move (Chapter 5); and that psychological or symbolic forms of mobility, matched with physical ones, are the foundation of creativity and imagination (Chapter 6). This, once more, doesn't exclude cases in which movement restricted possibilities or innovations were produced by sedentary individuals and groups. What is discussed here are general tendencies that never hold for each and every individual instance.

The paradigmatic case for each one of these levels remains human *travel*. Interestingly, as Feiwel Kupferberg argues, we are dealing here with multiple states including migrants, strangers and travellers.[10] His starting observation is that we are experiencing nowadays increased levels of travelling from academics and that universities around the world are encouraging visiting fellows and recruiting talent abroad in order to maximise their chance of making breakthrough discoveries. Scientific mobility is not a new phenomenon, as noted elsewhere in this book, but we are witnessing today unprecedented levels of both travelling and

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[10] See Kupferberg (1998).

innovation. How does mobility lead to creativity? This is where the three 'models' act as an interpretative frame. The migrant model stresses institutional mobility for researchers either within or between countries. The stranger model emphasises how refugee scientists and other marginalised groups can shed new light on the host society and revolutionise its way of understanding the world. Last but not least, the traveller model refers to temporary forms of mobility that impact creative production in different ways than migration and marginality, oftentimes weaker:

> One of the main reasons why we live in an age with many small discoveries but few large ones, might be that scholars and scientific institutions today prefer another kind of travel than the one we associate with the great intellectual innovators like Marx, Darwin and Levi-Strauss. By not giving themselves the time necessary to make long-lasting experiences which might originate new ideas and help protect them in their original, most vulnerable state, the tendency is to promote migration between different institutions, hoping that inspiration from a different intellectual milieu will bring forth the new and unusual combination or 'synthesis' as it is mostly called in the language of academic bureaucracy.[11]

It is by not reflecting deeply enough on how exactly mobility fosters creativity and innovation that we pay lip service to their connection and cultivate only shallow forms of collaboration between people and institutions. If we are to translate Kupferberg's typology into the language used here, the position of the academic traveller (or any traveller for this matter) is so temporary that there is no time to develop truly new perspectives on the self (as a migrant) or on society (as a stranger).[12]

And there is a deeper value to be found in the relating migration and creativity that goes beyond scientific discoveries and economic progress. This rests with the *transformation of the person* in and through the act of migration. In her analysis of refugee victims of torture arriving in Athens during the migration crisis, Gail Womersley argues for the bidirectional

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[11] Kupferberg (1998, p. 203).

[12] In Kupferberg's words, 'Migration, the role of the stranger, and travelling are acts involving human agency and encounters. These are in different ways attempts to escape the destiny of being supported but also restrained by institutions, cultures and home communities. The emphasis is not who we are but who we become by our encounters. Creativity abroad is a transforming experience, for different reasons; it is not a mere repetition of inherited models of thinking' (Kupferberg 1998, p. 203).

connection between travelling and imagination.[13] She points to the fact that the power to imagine (especially the future) is one of the first capacities to be lost due to traumatic experiences, including migration itself, while being also the necessary resource to overcome trauma, heal and even grow based on this experience. As she rightfully notes, 'migration is inherently imaginative, in the sense that the actualisation of migration begins with individuals imagining their destination'[14]; and, we can add, imagination equally depends on movement and the positions, perspectives and experiences it makes possible. She also writes that what we are dealing with here are often collective imaginings that testify, once more, to the social and cultural construction of both (im)mobility and (im)possibility across the life-course. One's imagination requires the view and recognition of others not only to become reality, through collective action, but in order to gain 'reality' at a deeper level, that of acknowledging the dignity of the migrant as an agentic and imaginative human being. Trauma blocks the imagination, then, also because it separates the person from other people, from addressees, witnesses and travel companions. Instead of an open future, the person experiences a fragmented past, closed onto itself, or becomes isolated within an alternative, un-shareable reality.

The final question to be raised in this chapter and, indeed, this book, is what a focus on human possibility can add to mobilities studies, and the other way around. If my proposal that mobility involves movement from one position to another (in physical, social and/or symbolic terms) stands, and that this act of repositioning comes with a new set of possibilities (affordances and constraints), then there is at least room for counting the possible as a *topic* of research by mobilities scholars. In this way, lists of principles like the one proposed by Ole Jensen, would add an 11 (or a 0) for 'Mobility begets human possibility':

1 Mobilities must be thought of in the plural
2 There is no singular discipline for understanding mobility
3 Thinking mobilities does NOT turn everything into flows
4 Think relationally about place
5 Rehabilitate and politicise the armature
6 Encourage mobilities potential thinking

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[13] See Womersley (2020).

[14] Womersley (2020, p. 1).

7 Understand the "dark sides" of mobilities
8 Explore "mobilities design"
9 Mobile pragmatics
10 It all comes together "*in situ*".[15]

Or Cresswell's now familiar equation 'mobility = movement + meaning + power' could certainly be updated to include a '+ possibility'.[16] But is this sufficient? Certainly *not*. This is because the possible is not a kind of principle or element to just be added along—its inclusion fundamentally transforms our conception of the other elements, especially the core issues of movement and mobility. Equally, for a possibility studies researcher the addition of a mobilities focus doesn't simply bring a new, popular term nowadays, to the already full list of agency, creativity, imagination, innovation, counterfactual thinking, anticipation, serendipity, utopia/dystopia, and so on. Mobilities cuts across these notions by being a way of looking at the possible itself as movement, dialogue, as a pathway into the world.[17] There are two sides, at least, to the coin of conceptually reuniting these broad phenomena: one is the concept of 'possible mobilities', the other of 'mobile possibilities'.

Anyone interested in *possible mobilities* would explore old and new ways in which people are mobile, often against all odds. This can comprise the agency involved in finding a home and refuge in a new country,[18] the imagination required to explore different lands and landscapes, including fictional ones[19] and the innovation that underpins the development of more diverse, powerful and sustainable forms of transport.[20] It is a lens through which to look at existing forms of mobility, discovering their 'aura' of possibility (and also impossibility), and especially to look towards the future, to what movement can bring to individuals and communities, and to what movement itself may become. It is also a way to shed a new light on traditional concepts used by mobilities scholars such

[15] Jensen (2013, pp. 203–204).

[16] Cresswell (2006).

[17] See Tanggaard (2016).

[18] Bakewell (2010).

[19] Reijnders (2016).

[20] Nilsson et al. (2012).

as 'negotiation in motion', 'scenography' and 'choreography'.[21] What would it mean to understand this negotiation as creative or as holding creative potential? What would it change to recognise the artistic nature of scenography and choreography?

On the other hand, we have the idea of *mobile possibilities*. This might sound oxymoronic given my general premise that all possibility builds on different forms of mobility, but its emphasis on this aspect is welcomed. It helps us, for example, to think about new life possibilities arising from acts of migration,[22] creative ideas coming out of visiting new places and talking to different people,[23] and about those innovations that increasingly require international collaboration.[24] Most of all, this notion makes us aware of the fact that the possible in our existence 'moves' as we move and opens up, as well as closes down, horizons of understanding, of imagination and of action. The focus on trajectories of (im)possibility would change, in this context, the way we think about a series of critical topics, from the life-course[25] to classrooms and practices of education.[26]

It might be over-ambitious and perhaps idealistic to talk about a *new paradigm* for the social sciences at the intersection between mobility and possibilities. But since we are (still) in the realm of the possible, let's imagine in the end what such a paradigm would look like. It would give a space for theorists, researchers and practitioners across disciplines to inquire into the deeper role of mobility and possibility for the constitution of a human self and life. It would equally make students of mobilities

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[21] 'The notion of "*negotiation in motion*" [describe] the dynamic interaction that takes place when we perform mobilities in a busy transit space or when the "mobile with" is engaged on more or less explicit decision-making concerning routes or modes of transportation. (…) As I speak of staging from above, I want to propose the metaphor of "*scenography*", as in the sense of creating "scenes" within a manuscript or a play. To capture the staging from below I propose, in a similar vein, the metaphor of "*choreography*". Obviously, choreography may also be created from the vantage point of a disengaged director. But here the immediate embodied and sense-oriented dimension is what makes me prefer this metaphor for the bottom-up and embodied acts of self-choreography that individuals perform as they create "mobilities in situ"' (Jensen 2013, pp. 4–7).

[22] De Maio et al. (2014).

[23] Whiting and Hannam (2014).

[24] Narula and Duysters (2004).

[25] Zittoun and de Saint-Laurent (2015).

[26] Leander et al. (2010).

acutely aware that their topic goes beyond the movement of people, goods, ideas, technologies, waste, and so on. Movement means occupying new positions in the world from which to view, know and act in a different manner. It is in these differences—big and small—that possibility lies. What we make of it depends on us, on context, and on the paradigms that guide us.

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