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# Way from Home

MISHA MYERS AND DAN HARRIS

The first step of the WAY FROM HOME walking score invites you to make a mark representing a place you call home. Does this unsettle you? Does the mark wander off on the move homing in on multiple places and times at once? Do you see your home as a series of points of origin? Do you see continuity from a single point in time? Do you feel a particular sense of belonging to somewhere called home? Does the mark displace you away from a place to which you felt you belonged? Does the mark transport you? Does the mark ground you? Does the mark deport you?

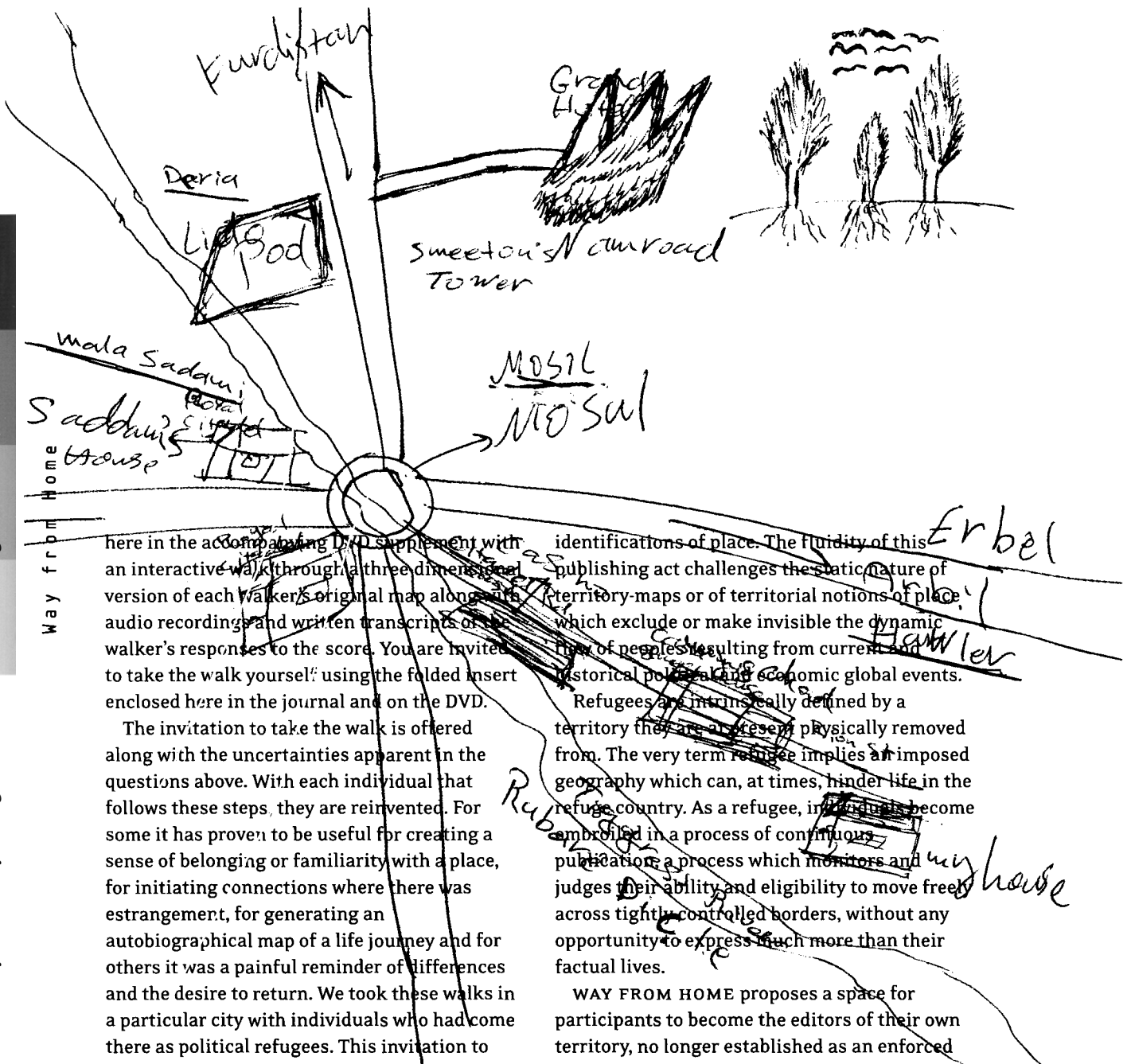
Dramatic changes in how culture, capital, technology and industries are organized have led to a disruption of culture and place in the last century and a transformation of the meaning of 'home' for people displaced in these shifts. As the Western sense of a singular fixed primordial origin has been destabilized and the reference points for collective identification have become unfixed, issues of dislocation and disorientation have been a focus of much debate in contemporary cultural criticism raising questions about how it is possible then to locate identity or talk about cultural location within this contemporary context. The WAY FROM HOME project developed as an exploration of these questions and the different experiences and modes of displacement that are present in current times. A primary intention maintained in the project was the resistance to tendencies that neutralize, universalize or aestheticize states of homelessness and exile or that mystify

all possible points of reference. Rather the project aims to explore new possibilities and strategies which do not further disempower and disenfranchise particular groups.

The WAY FROM HOME score then invites you to make a map from your home to a special place and then take a walk somewhere other than this home, superimposing landmarks of this place over the map of your home. Misha Myers first created the project's walking score in the build up to the war with Iraq and after visiting the refugee support organisation Refugee First in Plymouth, UK with the intention to meet Iraqi artists to initiate collaboration or exchange. There she met a young Kurdish actor, Ramazan Ahmed, who worked at the organisation as a refugee support worker and was a political refugee himself. Myers then developed the score and invited Ahmed to take the walk. The day they agreed to meet was coincidentally the same day the war in Iraq began. Ahmed's walk uncannily superimposed his home in Mosul, which would be bombed in the war two days later, with the Hoe of Plymouth where armed soldiers stood guard at the Royal Citadel and battleships were departing for Iraq from Plymouth Sound.

As the dialogue continued, the walk eventually developed into a collaboration between Myers, Refugees First and Dan Harris of media design team limbomedia. From this collaboration the project developed to extend the invitation to take the walk to other refugees living in Plymouth. Five of these walks are presented

Baghdad  
Bakda



here in the accompanying DVD supplement with an interactive walk through a three dimensional version of each walker's original map along with audio recordings and written transcripts of the walker's responses to the score. You are invited to take the walk yourself using the folded insert enclosed here in the journal and on the DVD.

The invitation to take the walk is offered along with the uncertainties apparent in the questions above. With each individual that follows these steps, they are reinvented. For some it has proven to be useful for creating a sense of belonging or familiarity with a place, for initiating connections where there was estrangement, for generating an autobiographical map of a life journey and for others it was a painful reminder of differences and the desire to return. We took these walks in a particular city with individuals who had come there as political refugees. This invitation to perform your own walk does not assume the possibility of walking in someone else's shoes or intend to simplistically reduce their experiences, but hopefully, will provoke thought and offer a structure for a meditation on different notions of home and displacement.

Embedded with terms of science and mathematics, geographical publications, and in turn notions of territory, have previously rejected any suggestion that they too were interpretive and emotional documents. WAY FROM HOME intends to take these maps and process them as a series of personal

identifications of place. The fluidity of this publishing act challenges the static nature of territory maps or of territorial notions of place which exclude or make invisible the dynamic flow of peoples resulting from current and historical political and economic global events.

Refugees are intrinsically defined by a territory they are no longer physically removed from. The very term refugee implies an imposed geography which can, at times, hinder life in the refuge country. As a refugee, individuals become embroiled in a process of continuous publication, a process which monitors and judges their ability and eligibility to move freely across tightly controlled borders, without any opportunity to express much more than their factual lives.

WAY FROM HOME proposes a space for participants to become the editors of their own territory, no longer established as an enforced scientific image, devoid of history and language, and to express the coexistence of these multiple territories of home and sense of belonging. The process with which participants engage liberates their personal space and extends geography beyond the physical environment and into the realms of memory and emotion. By publishing the re-called, mental landscapes of their origin country as an interpretive layer over traditional state maps, creates new 'diagrams of place'.

To visit the on-line version of WAY FROM HOME go to [www.wayfromhome.org](http://www.wayfromhome.org)