

Egyptian Arabic transcript:

المُقابِلة: مصر إلهما مكان معين في البلاد العربية ليه؟

المرأة: هي مصر فعلا كان ليه دور سياسي قوي جدا، بالذات أيام جمال عبد الناصر، لأنو عمل محطة عربي، صوت العرب، وطلع أفكار كثيرة عشان تجمع العرب ويعمل وطن عربي واحد. بس إحنا بنشوف أنو الفكرة دي يمكن منجحتش ميه الميه، بس فضلت حلم. زي ما قلنا إن محطة صوت العرب جمعت الدول العربية كلها، والشعوب حوليها، ومصر كان لها دور رائد أو دور مهم جدا، في الأغاني العربية، فالأغاني المصرية عمت في الوطن العربي والأفلام المصرية كمان، فكان في مغنيين ويغنوا بالمصري وأفلام كثيره بالمصري، فكانت هي هوليوود الوطن العربي، مصر. طبعا دي الوقت اختلف، لأن الدول العربية دي الوقت تقدمت، وبنت تعمل هي كمان، ليه أفلامها ولها فنها، وفكرة إني الإنترنت والساتلايت والحاجات إني بتبث في العالم كلوا خلت إني كمان بنسمع أغاني وأفلام لبناني وسوري ومغربي وكده. كان الأول أكثر.. يعني مصر هي ليه دور جامد في ناحية الفنون دي، خلا إني اللغة المصري بتتفهم من كل الدول العربية. المُقابِلة: ولسه كده.

المرأة: ولسا كده. بس إحنا ما زلنا كمصريين عندنا صعوبة عشان نفهم أي لكنه عربي غير المصري، يعني بالنسبة لنا مثلا اللكنة العراقي صعبة جدا إنما اللكنة اللبناني بنفهمها لأن الإتصال ما بين اللبنانيين والمصريين كان جامد يعني، اللكنة السوري بنفهمها برضوا، فلسطيني شويه شويه، حاجات، مش كل حاجه. إنما مثلا الليبي، اللكنة الليبي صعبة جدا بالنسبة إلنا، السوداني ما بنفهمهاش أوي، إن مكنوش هم بيتكلموا بلغتنا إحنا ما بنقدرش نفهمهم، كمان كده المغرب والجزائر وتونس، إن مكنوش هم بيتكلموا مصري، إحنا منقدرش نفهمهم. فأنا شويه لما قعدت أفكر داه كان عيب عندنا، يعني هم بيفهمونا ويعرفوا حاجات كثيره عن ثقافتنا وعن حياتنا وكده، وإحنا ما بنعرفش حاجات كثيره عن الدول العربية، لإني فضلنا حاسين إنا إحنا الموجودين وإن الناس فهمانا، فهم إني بيعملوا المجهود وإحنا ما بنعملش أي مجهود من ناحيتنا. يمكن العهد الجديد إني جاي حيخلينا نضطر إن إحنا نفهم اللغات، اللكنات العربية المختلفة يعني. وبعدين ما ننساش إني في اللغة العربية بتجمعنا برضوا لما بنلاقي إن إحنا مش فاهمين بعض ممكن نستخدم اللغة العربية، فساقتها الكل بيفهم بعضوا يعني، لأنو اللغة العربية بتعتبر مفهومها، حنقرأ عربي حنهم، بس طبعا دا محتاج مستوى ثقافي معين، مش حيبقي لكل الطبقات يعني.

English translation:

Voice: Egypt has a special place among Arab countries. Why?

Woman (Beige shirt): Yes, Egypt, in truth, had a very strong political role, especially during the days of Gamal Abdel Nasser, because he created an Arab radio station, “The Voice of the Arabs,” and he came up with new ideas to unite Arabs, and to create one Arab nation. But we can see that, possibly, this idea did not succeed a hundred percent, but it remained a dream. As I said, “The Voice of the Arabs” station brought together all of the Arab states and its [their] people. Egypt also had a pioneering role, or a very important role, in Arab songs. The Egyptian songs spread to the Arab world, along with Egyptian movies, so there were singers who would sing in Egyptian dialect, and a lot of movies in Egyptian dialect also -- so we can say that Egypt was more or less the Hollywood of the Middle East.

Naturally, the situation has changed now, since Arab states have developed, and they now produce their own movies, and their art ... and things such as the internet, the satellite, and these things that develop all over the world enabled us to hear Lebanese songs and watch Lebanese movies, and Syrian, Moroccan, and such

At the beginning, Egypt had a crucial role in these arts, which led the Egyptian dialect to be understood by all people from Arab countries.

Voice: And it still is like that!

Woman (Beige shirt): Yes, it still is like that, but we, as Egyptians, still have difficulties understanding any Arab dialect other than Egyptian. For us, for example, the Iraqi dialect is very difficult. But we understand the Lebanese dialect, because communication between the Lebanese and Egyptians was strong. We also understand the Syrian dialect, the Palestinian dialect just a little -- some things but not everything. But, for example, the Libyan dialect ... the Libyan dialect is very difficult for us. Or the Sudanese dialect ... we don't really understand it. If they didn't speak our language, we would not be able to understand them. It is also the same with Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia: if they did not speak the Egyptian dialect, we would not be able to understand them. So I am a little ... when I sat and thought about it, I found that this was a shame. I consider them ... they understand us and they know a lot of things about our culture, our life, and such, and we don't know much about Arab countries because we remained, thinking that we were the ones present, and that people understand us. So they are the ones who are making the effort, and we are not making any effort on our side. Perhaps the new age that is coming will force us to understand languages, the different Arabic dialects. And we must not forget that the formal Arabic language also brings us together, when we find that we do not understand one another, we can use the formal Arabic language, and, at that moment, we all understand one another. Since the Arabic language is considered understood, we will all read Arabic and understand. However, this naturally requires a certain level of culture, so it won't be for all social levels.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2007-2010 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated