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Confronting Rouanet's Colonial Gaze : A Critical Reading

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The arrow of liberation and progress was thus turned against ourselves, and our traditions were represented as 'slavery, backwardness and anachronism', while the colonialists represented 'liberty and progress'.

Munir Shafiq (Abdel-Malek, 1983, p. 239)

Abstract

The ethnographic study of Maghrebi music culture is rooted in the colonialist discourse permeating the literature produced during (and precedent to) the period known as the "Scramble for Africa" (1884-1914). The superior/inferior trope endemic to this discourse sets European culture against local praxis, marginalizing and (mis)interpreting it from the perspective of the *mission civilisatrice* ("civilizing mission") in progress in the region. My reading of Jules Rouanet's text on Maghrebi, and specifically Moroccan, musics in the *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* uncovers problematic ideological and semantic aspects in his account while contextualizing his colonialist narrative within the prevalent corpus of Eurocentric literature. Identifying these contested presumptions and interpretations underscores the imperative for current ethnographers to not only challenge colonialist literature but reassess and ultimately decolonize "Orientalist scholarship" (cf. Laâbi, 2016, p. 67). A concurrent task interrogates the evolving standards within the disciplines of Ethnomusicology and Anthropology concerning Indigenous research which acknowledge native voices as the authoritative source of knowledge in the field setting as well as the Academy (cf. Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021)

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overturning the hegemonic Eurocentric milieu of the colonial era while owning past inaccuracies and injustices.

Keywords : Colonialism, Music culture, Morocco, Orientalist scholarship, Cultural decolonization

Résumé

L'étude ethnographique de la culture musicale maghrébine trouve ses origines dans le discours colonialiste qui qui a exercé une influence sur la littérature produite pendant (et avant) la période connue sous le nom de « La Ruée vers l'Afrique » (1884-1914). La récurrence de la dynamique de supériorité/infériorité dans ce discours engendre une opposition entre la culture européenne et la pratique locale, reléguant cette dernière au nom de « la mission civilisatrice » en cours dans la région. Ma lecture du texte de Jules Rouanet sur les musiques maghrébines, et spécifiquement marocaines, dans l'Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire met en lumière des problèmes idéologiques et sémantiques dans son travail tout en situant son récit colonialiste dans le cadre plus large de la littérature eurocentrique dominante.

En identifiant ces présomptions et interprétations sujettes à controverse, les ethnographes contemporains sont tenus non seulement de remettre en question la littérature colonialiste, mais aussi de réévaluer et de décoloniser « l'érudition orientaliste » (cf. Laâbi, 2016, p. 67). Une tâche simultanée remet en question les normes au sein des disciplines de l'ethnomusicologie et de l'anthropologie concernant la recherche indigène. Cette approche se doit de reconnaitre les voix autochtones comme des sources de savoir faisant autorité tant sur le terrain que dans le milieu académique (cf. Semali & Kincheloe, 1999 ; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021) tout en renversant le cadre hégémonique eurocentrique établi durant l'ère coloniale et attestant les inexactitudes et les injustices du passé.

Mots-clés : Colonialisme, Culture musicale, Maroc, Recherche orientaliste, Décolonisation culturelle.

ملخّص

تتجذر الدراسة الإثنوغرافية لثقافة الموسيقى المغاربية في الخطاب الاستعماري المتغلغل في أدب مرحلة "التدافع نحو إفريقيا" (1884-1914) وما سبقه. تضع الإشارات إلى الأرق والأدنى المتوطنة في هذا الخطاب الثقافة الأوروبية كندّ للثقافات المحلية، مما يؤدي إلى تهميش وتفسير (بل وإساءة تفسير) الأخيرة من منظور "المهمة الحضارية" الجارية في المنطقة. تكشف قراءتي لنص جول روانيه (Jules Rouanet) حول الموسيقى المغاربية، والمغربية على وجه التحديد، في موسوعة الموسيقى ومعجم المعهد الموسيقي (Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire) عن جوانب إيديولوجية ولغوية إشكالية في روايته، كما توضح موقع نصه الاستعماري من النصوص الأدبية الأوروبية الأخرى السائدة آنذاك.

تدعو معرفة وتحديد الافتراضات والتفسيرات الإشكالية تجاه الثقافات المحلية اللاأوروبية باحثي الإثنوغرافيا إلى تحدي الأدب الاستعماري إضافة إلى إعادة تقييم "الدراسات الاستشراقية" وتوضيح طابعها الاستعماري كنشاط لمحاربة الاستعمار (اللعبي، 2016، ص 67). ذلك إضافةً إلى مهمة استجواب المعايير العلمية، قديمها وجديدها، لتخصصات الأنثروبولوجيا وأنثروبولوجيا الموسيقى بما يتعلق بالأبحاث من قبل السكان الأصليين، والتي تقدّر الأصوات المحلية كمصدر مهم للمعرفة في كل من الميدان المحلي والإطار الأكاديمي (راجع كمثال Semali وKincheloe، 1999؛ Tuhiwai Smith، 2021)، حيث تقلب هذه المعايير الكفة ضد مركزية أوروبا الناجعة من الحقبة الاستعمارية إلى جانب إيضاح أخطاء الماضي ومظالمه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعمار، الثقافة الموسيقية، المنطقة المغاربية، الدراسات الاستشراقية، تحدي الاستعمار الثقافي.

In this essay, I revisit Jules Rouanet's entry on Maghrebi music in the *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (*EMDC*) in light of its grounding in colonialist discourse, drawing on the current call in Ethnomusicology and Anthropology for the decolonization of all aspects of the disciplines' endeavors: from fieldwork methodology to reportage. My positionality is that of a diasporic scholar who was born and raised in Morocco, experiencing the system of music education in the French-instituted *conservatoire* network. I claim an identity as an "Oriental" (cf. Said, 1978, p. 26), remaining keenly aware of the indelible imprint of colonialism on Morocco and other countries in the Maghreb. As an ethnomusicologist, I join in the efforts of the current generation of decolonization-oriented Maghrebi specialists who, with the support of their professional organizations and the inspiration of scholars from other regions of the Global South, strive to overturn the colonialist interpretations of the past-replacing, as Marcelo Fernández-Osco exhorts, the old paradigm of "vertical, hierarchical lines" with an "indigenous episteme" based on "a model of horizontal solidarity" (Mignolo, 2010, p. 18).[2]

The sensibility I bring to my reading of "La musique arabe dans le Maghreb" affords particular attention to Rouanet's commentary on Moroccan music culture. While acknowledging the valuable content of his entry in terms of its first-hand observations, transcriptions, and descriptive information on the *nawba*,[3] my critical review—like others in post-colonial scholarship—reveals an unmistakable undercurrent of Eurocentrism, colonialism, Orientalism, and racism evidenced in numerous passages. I examine this entry, then, through the lenses of decolonization: within the powerful context of the imperialist "Scramble for Africa" occurring during this period and informed by the tenacity of a coloniality that had its genesis in colonialist rhetoric and which resulted in the silencing of native voices. My critique begins with an overview of the Western-authored literature of the colonial era from which Rouanet's writing arose, examines key selections and themes from his *EMDC* entry, and concludes with a discussion of his legacy vis-à-vis the decolonizing milieu of current Maghrebi scholarship.

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[2] In according with the usage suggested in APA Style under "Racial and Ethnic Identity," I capitalize "Indigenous" in this essay unless used in a direct quote which does not follow this practice. https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/racial-ethnic-minorities.

[3] The *nawba*, or *nūba* (*nouba*), is a suite of Andalusi music including instrumentals and vocals; originally, often thought to represent each hour of the day. Eleven *nawbāt* are extant in Morocco (cf. Glasser, 2016, p. 211).

A Pervasive Colonialist Ideology

The European agenda for the aggressive colonization which occurred in the 19th Century would function under the guiding concept of the French term *mission civilisatrice* ("civilizing mission"), derived from ideals for improving humanity which emerged during the Age of Enlightenment—coupled with a strong sense of the superior/inferior binary. Jennifer E. Sessions identifies Napoleon's Egyptian expedition (1798-1801) as the genesis of the civilizing mission advocated by French imperialists of the era, writing that this precedent loomed large in the mind of the planners and observers of the [1830] Algerian conquest. Indeed, the phrase *mission civilisatrice* first entered the French lexicon around 1840 to describe colonization efforts in Algeria. (Sessions, 2017, p. 7)

This phrase appears in an S. Dutot's work cited by Sessions, phrased as: "By sending out models of work, of order, of discipline to new nations, France will begin the civilizing mission" (1840, p. 321). During the expansive Scramble for Africa operant during the 19th Century, Europe's imperialist impulses would culminate in a feverish competition for land, resources, and (forced) labor throughout the African continent. Although the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 attempted to regulate the "carving-up" of Africa, negotiate provisions for trade, and resolve issues of effective occupation (Fitzmaurice, 2014, p. 283), the momentum propelled by European advocates for the *mission civilisatrice* could not be halted. Prime Minister Jules Ferry articulated their shared justification of colonial expansion in stating to the French Chamber of Deputies in March 1884 that this expansion was a right of the "superior races because they have the duty to civilize the inferior races" (Fitzmaurice, 2014, p. 276).

Other European powers would echo the rhetoric of the civilizing mission in their quest for colonial domination. Antony Anghie verifies its role in the justification of "extending Empire for the higher purpose of educating and rescuing the barbarian" and cites the concept's "ancient lineage" traced to the Roman empire (2004, p. 96). Paul Tiyanbe Zeleza examines the entanglement of motivations and machinations of the Scramble for Africa, noting a Victorian theory outlined by Robinson and Gallagher which claimed that Britain had no thought of "sordid economic gain" in Egypt and that "resentful France and Germany now sought to carve up their own colonial empires in West and East Africa" (1993, p. 350). With regard to North Africa proper, Sessions writes that after 1850, "France's Maghrebi outpost became a strategic stronghold in the struggle with Britain for geopolitical primacy in the Mediterranean and

the jumping-off point for expansion into Sub-Saharan Africa" (2017, p. 11). The profusion of territorial competitors led to the convening of the Berlin Conference to set protocols for colonizing the continent.

In retrospect, critics have exposed the "veneer" of philanthropy which masked the element of exploitation inherent in this so-called civilizing mission (cf. Fitzmaurice, 2014, p. 294), although contemporary accounts would support the "colonial enterprises of the French in Northern and Western Africa" as purportedly intended to "preserve life and property within the domains of the Sultan" and remedy the "sufferings of the masses under a long rule of misgovernment, corruption and oppression" (Harris, 1913, p. 263).

Colonialist Literature as Context

The phenomenon of the Scramble for Africa provides a potent context for interpreting the corpus of literature produced during this period, with its relentless usurpation of African resources and the concurrent European ideological polarization of allegedly "civilized" and "uncivilized" populations. In addition to natural resources such as rubber and gold, cultural capital was not exempt from the ensuing waves of exploration and appropriation throughout Africa.

In the northern tier of the continent—bordering the Mediterranean Sea and comprised of Egypt and the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya)—the incursions of chroniclers, historians, and explorers such as Guillaume André Villoteau, Edward Lane, and W. B. Harris would be supplemented by a cadre of European musicologists, photographers, missionaries, and other researchers closely connected to the colonizing activities of France, Spain, and Italy. Poornima Paidipaty (2008) notes the "ocular character" of the emergent genre of colonial-era "eyewitness travel writing," which often "featured voyeuristic descriptions of primitive, foreign societies, with their colorful native costumes and spectacular rituals" (p. 260) in describing the cultures and practices of the Other. This "ocular character" would be reflected in the evolving trope of the "gaze" as formulated by Frantz Fanon (1952, drawing on Jean-Paul Sartre), Homi Bhabha (1994), and other scholars.

Colonialist writings objectified Morocco as a geocultural entity and infused the prevailing rhetoric of otherness, inferiority, and savagery into a broader discourse which arguably served as a *de facto* justification of the *mission civilisatrice* initiated by France and adopted by other European

powers during the period of the Scramble for Africa. An early work in this corpus, *Le Maroc inconnu* (*Unknown Morocco*), written by a French missionary, establishes the polarity of Muslim and European religious praxis in referring to the "bottomless abyss of the Mohammedan Soul" and its contrast "with our European civilization" (Mouliéras 1899, p. VI). With this language, Auguste Mouliéras effectively underscores the alterity of Moroccan Muslims, positing "civilized" European culture against this population. His text is replete with the rhetoric which would be reproduced in subsequent colonialist literature, reflecting the formulary of the colonial archive-in-progress (cf. Burke, 2014, p. 6).[4] The book's very title suggests an "unknown" land ripe for discovery, with the subtitles of some editions indicating the author's "explorations in a mysterious country"[5]—conjuring up the type of exoticist imagery cited by Edward Said (1978) as the "imaginative demonology of 'the mysterious Orient'" (p. 26). Joseph Massad (2007) comments on the impact of this pervasive imagery:

> As Orientalism assumed a central place in the colonial campaign, its pretensions encompassed defining who the subject people to be colonized were, what their past was, the content of their culture, and how they measured up to the civilizational, cultural, and racial hierarchies that colonial thought had disseminated. (pp. 1-2)

Against this backdrop of European hegemony, several key figures contributed to the emerging corpus of literature documenting the musics of the Maghreb—not without an infusion of colonialist ideologies.[6] These included Prosper Ricard and Alexis Chottin, officials in the French Protectorate's *Services des Arts Indigènes* in Morocco who engaged in fieldwork and established a network of *conservatoires*; Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, who conducted research in Tunisia and published a multi-volume study on Arab music; and Algeria-based Jules Rouanet, who

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[4] Just seven years later, for instance, Eugène Aubin would comment on Morocco as "a country so hostile to European influences" that his extensive travels would have been "impossible…without the assistance of an Algerian, Si Kaddour ben Ghabrit" (1906, p. vi).

[5] *22 years of Explorations in this mysterious land from 1872 to 1893*

[6] In an intriguing hypothesis, Hassan Rachik points out that the position of ethnographer Edward Westermarck, as a Finnish scholar, "is clearly different from [Edmond] Doutté's position who led his missions as part of the French colonial expansion" (2020, p. 51). In my research, I have found Westermarck's documentation consistently absent of judgmental statements regarding Moroccan culture; rather, limiting his commentary to meticulous descriptions of local customs, important concepts such as *baraka*, and representation of the Moroccan point of view; cf. his account of the Andjra fire ceremony (1899, p. 28).

collaborated on a major preservation project with Edmond Yafil (cf. Glasser, 2016) and in 1922 contributed an entry on Maghrebi musics for the landmark multi-volume *EMDC*.[7]

Unpacking Rouanet's Text

In this section, I examine selected passages from *La musique arabe dans le Maghreb* that focus on music culture in the Maghreb as a whole and Morocco in particular. My intent is not only to identify patterns of language and ideology which contribute to and support the colonialist narrative but also to develop an understanding of how Rouanet, as a representative of one of the colonizing powers, analyzes Maghrebi culture.

Thematics and Vocabulary

In many cases, Rouanet's observations corroborate the spirit of other colonial-era European writers. Chottin, for instance—who cites Rouanet in the bibliography of *Tableau de la Musique Marocaine* (1938, p. 215)—polarizes Moroccan musical genres in juxtaposing the "classical music of Andalusian origin" against "popular music…influenced by Berber song, sometimes even of foreign origin: Turkish in processional music, Negro in certain [Sufi] brotherhoods" (p. 107). He characterizes Andalusian music, in contrast to popular genres, as "courtly art and bourgeois art, complex, learned and refined" (p. 107)—echoing Édouard Michaux-Bellaire's 1908 elaboration of the *bled al-makhzan*/*bled as-siba* "dichotomy" as first articulated by Eugène Étienne in 1904 (Burke, 2014, p. 79), which posited the "land of government" against the "land of insolence," thereby "equating Arab and makhzan, Berber and siba" (Burke, 2014, pp. 80-81). Similarly, Rouanet's hierarchy of the Algerian repertoire places *noubet ghernata*, derived from Andalusian music culture, in the first position and *zendani* ("the popular little verse") in the seventh and last (1922, p. 2845).

This passage from Chottin also hearkens to Rouanet's use of the word "refined" in the Introduction (reinforcing the urban/rural dichotomy)[8] and Chapter I of his entry, where this word arguably signifies a code for

[7] Jann Pasler observes that "Rouanet, Yafil, Chottin, and Erlanger concurred in the need to collect, first and foremost, music the medieval Moors brought from Andalusia, Spain" (2011, p. 57).

[8] Rouanet refers to "the *refined* soul of the townspeople"/"l'âme *raffinée* des citadins" (1922, p. 2813; emphasis added).

"civilized."[9] In discussing the "artistic decadence" of "the indigenous peoples who inhabit the Maghreb," Rouanet refers to the necessary patronage[10] from "a *refined* elite and a mentality always tending toward high aspirations and toward a common ideal" (1922, p. 2813; emphasis added), underscoring class distinctions.

Having established the critical parameters of the social milieu foundational to his discussion, Rouanet anticipates Chottin in his stratification of Moroccan music culture: denoting the Andalusian origins of the *aâla*[11] and its poetic expression of "regrets for the past, the memory of the splendor of the great Arab cities, the evocations of the festivals, of the power, of the civilization of the ancestors" (1922, p. 2883). "On the other hand," he continues, "in the countryside the music has preserved the Berber forms and character; it is more crude and also more energetic, more severe and more rustic" (p. 2884).

The sets of distinctions in Rouanet's narrative—positing townspeople contra countryside, refinement vs. crudity—arguably conflate Eurocentric and elite rhetoric. Further, he appears to disregard the validity of the centuries-old traditional person-to-person transmission of musical knowledge by culture-bearers in Maghrebi culture in citing "the fatal failures of oral tradition" (1922, p. 2875), observing in a subsequent section that "in all Muslim countries, the absence of any semiology has entrusted the repertoire of the ancients to oral tradition alone"—while noting the "pious preservation of this heritage" in Algiers and Tlemcen (p. 2878). He reiterates this argument later in the entry, during his discussion of Moroccan music.

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[9] Eugène Aubin comments on "the *refined* life of the Fasis"[9] [residents of Fès] in describing his sojourn in that city (1906, p. 267; emphasis added), introducing an important internal class hierarchy within Morocco. Rouanet (1922) cites Aubin's book on p. 2828, in reference to the music performed at the annual festival of the *tolba* in Fez during which a university student masquerades as the Sultan. Harvey E. Goldberg points out that the students "represent two different social backgrounds, the city of Fez itself and the surrounding countryside" and that it is those in the latter group, and "not the Fasis," who "select a mock king" (1978, p. 83).

[10] In discussing the viability of the *andalus* genre within post-Independence Moroccan culture, Tony Langlois comments that this genre "requires patronage, either from elites or from governmental structures"—citing the inevitability that "the music is implicated with regimes of power" (2009, p. 214); Jonathan Glasser describes "the patronage of Andalusi music" as "traditionally the purview of a certain sector of the bourgeoisie" (2016, 231).

[11] Variant spelling of *al-āla,* shorthand for *al-alā al-andalusiyya,* the local expression of the Andalusian music tradition which emerged in Morocco, and throughout the Maghreb, in tandem with migrations across the Strait of Gibraltar during the *Reconquista*.

Highly troubling to this reader is the section on "Les danses" in Chapter VIII, "Musique profane dans les lieux publics," with an undisguised subtext of exoticization and racialization which reinforces the stereotypes of colonialist literature. Writing of the scarf dance ("danse des foulards"), Rouanet injects his consciousness of local class hierarchies in commenting on its performance as an "elegant dance, often seen danced in Jewish families by women and girls of a better world," positing this elegance against the "intentions of brutal sensuality without grace nor distinction" among the Kabyles, Riffian Berbers, and Moroccan Djbalas, all rural Maghrebi populations. This assessment is followed by a derogatory and dehumanizing vignette of the dances of "negroes" ("les nègres") in Constantine and Oran, described as "an appalling hub-bub" during which "the women scream with their heads thrown back and their eyes half-closed, with quivering throats that seem like beasts' wails; they exalt the dance, exalt themselves, and in turn this simple and barbarous people reaches the paroxysm of hypnosis" (1922, p. 2832). Rouanet then proceeds to describe an urban dance featuring "the troupes of negro musicians ... beating their primitive instruments like madmen…singing unintelligible words" (p. 2832).

In a study of the Gnawa tradition, Meriem Alaoui Btarny cites a 1924 article by Rouanet in *La revue musicale*, "Les visages de la musique musulmane" ["The faces of Muslim music"], which reproduces the verbiage of his 1922 work in describing "troupes of Negro musicians, covered in tinsel, their faces hidden under a hideous mask" and producing "a terrible hullabaloo" during which "the sound of large bendairs, deffs and big drums mingles with the sharp clash of iron castanets." He reiterates the presence of screaming women and "simple and barbaric people," along with "the paroxysm of hypnosis through the violence and the exasperation of the rhythm, any other musical form being absent" (2016, p. 21).

Uncovering Rouanet's Cultural Ideology

Rouanet's 1922 writing fails to explain the basis for his aesthetic judgments—whether the presumed inferiority of the colonized Maghrebis, his relegation of tribal artistic expression to the "folk" realm, or merely the unfamiliarity of these expressions coupled with their divergence from a Western sensibility. This omission could arguably be attributed to Rouanet's perpetuation of the racialized hierarchical distinctions among Jews, Arabs, and Berbers created and reinforced by colonial ideology. Btarny underscores the impact of these observations and opinions deriving

from the 1924 article vis-à-vis shaping perspectives of a minority culture: "These distant portraits of these mythical musicians and dancers trace the first encounters with the Gnawa." She further draws a correlation between the "ideas and images" and "ideological presuppositions" of these accounts, particularly "the reports of contempt for Gnawa sounds and choreographies" along with their potential to influence "the eyes of future observers" (2016, p. 22).

Coaxing this analysis a step further, it becomes imperative to ask: What, exactly, was Rouanet implying by his equation of the hypnotic rituals of "les nègres" with "la musique musulmane"? That is, was Rouanet in actuality moving beyond the geographic milieux of these practices into a broader—and baldly pejorative—critique of Islam itself? One recalls the phrase of Mouliéras in referring to the "bottomless abyss of the Mohammedan Soul" (cf. note 7 above). Jamil M. Abun-Nasr (1987) indeed makes this incisive observation regarding the alterity of Islam as the key to the binarization of a colonized Maghreb:

> The heterogeneous native groups were further brought together by the realization that regardless of their locality, social background, or educational attainment, they were all treated as different from and inferior to the foreign colonizer. As racial differentiation on the basis of colour was not always possible, and some of the Maghribi Muslims adopted the customs and ways of the Europeans, the distinction between colonizer and colonized came to be based on religion. (p. 324)

Abun-Nasr explains that "Muslim" became equivalent to "indigenous," and "signified backwardness, unprivileged political status, and generally being economically dispossessed" (1987, p. 324). The colonial Protectorates thus operated through schism, division, and polarity, imposing new binary constructs that did not exist prior to their incursions—and, I would add, introducing a new dimension to the extant internal binaries of race and class[12] which Moroccan elites would later mobilize following Independence. As an intriguing side-bar, I gloss Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi's correlation of the elements of content, form, and performance practice of the Andalusian *muwashshaḥ* (sung poetry) which served as embodiments of the Islamic aesthetic, particularly noting the

[12] Chouki El Hamel notes the perceptions of some "Muslim intellectuals" regarding the Gnawa brotherhood as "an inferior form of Sufism—a cult influenced by pagan black traditions and embraced mostly by lower-class people with little or no literacy and learning" (2014, p. 282).

aspects of repetition (*takarrur*) and the symmetry (*tanasuq*) which evokes "a feeling of infinite pattern" along with the arabesque, known as *tawriq*, or "foliation" (1975, p. 12). In other words, the Moroccan musical genre rooted in a culture considered "refined" by Rouanet and later, Chottin, was, in reality, intrinsically bound up with core Islamic aesthetics.

Implications of Rouanet's Colonialist Narrative

Why is this 1922 entry important, how did it contribute to the corpus of the literature of the time, and how has its ideology shaped readers' perceptions of Maghrebi music culture for the past century? Within Rouanet's colonialist narrative, the West becomes the ultimate arbiter of "civilization," constructing a dually stratified schema in which the West is *de facto* superior to the East, urban is superior to rural, and native elites are superior to the peasantry. Rouanet indeed initiates his discussion of Moroccan music[13]—a mere sub-heading in Chapter XIV, "Le répertoire des musiciens de Tunis"—by immediately invoking Michaux-Bellaire's *bled al-makhzen*/*bled as-siba* binary in its polarization of the rural and urban as "two societies, quite distinct" (Rouanet, 1922, p. 2882), concurrently drawing on the colonial lexicon:

> In the countryside is the Berber society, the harsh mountain dwellers rebellious to the authority of the sultans, fantastical and intractable; in the cities, it is a predominantly Moorish society that remembers the ancient splendors and has preserved a kind of aristocratic and contemplative, refined, brilliant and ostentatious life. (p. 2882)

Discerning the extent to which pre-colonial discourse in Morocco presaged this binarism merits further exploration. The echo of Michaux-Bellaire's binary, promulgated by Rouanet and, thereafter, Chottin within the colonialist sphere—positing "refined" classical music against "popular"—would resound decades later in the handbook on Moroccan music written by post-Independence musicologist and Ministry of Culture official Ahmed Aydoun (2014), privileging Andalusian music over "folk" genres. In this regard, Aydoun may arguably be perceived as imitating rather than rejecting the colonialist structure of Chottin's 1938 *Tableau de la Musique Marocaine*—with socio-political repercussions beyond the printed word in as much as the Fassis' cultural/political cachet is perpetually enhanced through its historic connection to al-Andalus vis-à-

[13] "La musique indigène au Maroc"

vis the post-*Reconquista* migrations from Granada to Fès (Davila, 2013, p. 58).

Rouanet's Legacy and the Decolonizing Imperative

The task of re-examining Rouanet's text becomes entangled with the contemporary mandate to discern and critique the impact of the colonialist undercurrents inherent in writings of the era. To this day, students of ethnomusicology and other disciplines routinely consult *EMDC*, which remains on course syllabi as a standard reference in the field. Among the researchers drawing on Rouanet—in addition to Chottin—was Henry George Farmer, a prolific Arabist who opens an April 1932 article by citing "Jules Rouanet, the well-known writer on the music of Maghrib" (p. 379). Referring to the *EMDC* entry, Farmer notes that Rouanet had "lamented" the loss of "the mediaeval treatises of the Western Arabian musical system," especially in light of the fact that, at the current time, "not a solitary practitioner in the Maghrib had the slightest acquaintance with musical theory" (p. 379). Farmer again cites Rouanet in his entry on Maghribí music in the 5th edition of *Grove*, in conjunction with Edmond Yafil (p. 507) and with regard to music culture in Tunis (p. 508). The first edition of *Musiques du Maroc* by Aydoun (2001, p. 43) mentions Rouanet, also related to his work with Yafil. Notwithstanding Farmer's frequent citations of Rouanet's *oeuvre*, Edith Gerson-Kiwi wrote to Farmer in the mid-1940s: "I remember Mr. Reeves mentioning your disapproval of M. [Jules] Rouanet's contribution to the French Encyclopédie. If so, I quite share your opinion" (Katz, 2020, p. 125). Her mentor, Robert Lachmann, had referred a decade earlier to the "superficiality" of "French authors like Rouanet" (2020, 169).[14]

Evaluating the substantial corpus of colonial-era literature within which Rouanet's work is situated remains a conundrum for post-colonial Maghrebi scholarship: valuing the first-hand observations of researchers of that era while interrogating its implicit assumptions about and interpretations of local culture. To what end did these Eurocentric writings ultimately prolong and reinforce the dynamic of superior vs. inferior at the core of colonialist ideology, especially in the absence of the input and insights of native voices?

[14] The complete quotation: "I think that shortness is not the same as superficiality (French authors like Rouanet, but also writers of other nationality, have proved us that superficiality is quite compatible with lengthiness)."

The Eurocentric ideology endemic to colonialist literature would be replicated by Paul Bowles, an American expatriate of considerable celebrity (albeit with an absence of ethnographic training) who embarked on a four-month recording project throughout several regions of Morocco in 1959—a mere three years after independence.[15] In a 1963 memoir essay, "The Rif, to Music," Bowles replicates a colonialist term signifying dominance in writing that his "stint… was to *capture*…examples of every major musical genre to be found within the boundaries of the country" (2002, p. 779; emphasis added).[16] His 122 pages of typewritten field note facsimiles, available on the MIT Archnet Web site (from document #1A on August 1, 1959 in Ain ed Diab to #60A on December 18, 1959 in Marrakech)[17] reveal his manipulative field methodology, inaccurate interpretations, and tacit disapproval of numerous aesthetic aspects of local music culture. His transgressions included a critique of an Indigenous percussion instrument, the *bendir*, as "an instrument [he] could do without" due to its "heavy reverberant sound" and "dull buzz" (1959, #23B). He deemed a song recorded with the Beni Uriaghel in Einzoren as "surprisingly repetitious even for Berber music" (2002, pp. 790-791), and sparked an altercation with a Beni Bouifrour musician in Segangan by insisting on a solo on the *qsbah*, a reed flute (1959, #24A), even invoking the power of the American government with the local caid (pp. 800-801).

Colonialist fieldwork methods and reportage would be supplanted by the ethics and methodologies of the emerging discipline of Ethnomusicology, with the introduction of the participant/observer model and a shift to an acknowledgement of the local interlocutor as the source of knowledge, eradicating the superior/inferior modality of colonial-era ethnography and re-framing cultural narratives from the perspectives of

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[15] A 2-disc vinyl recording was released on the Library of Congress label in 1962. Edwin Seroussi edited music recorded in Meknes and Essaouira for "Sacred Music of the Moroccan Jews," issued by Rounder Music in 2000. In partnership with the Moroccan Ministry of Culture, the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies (TALIM) digitized 72 hours of music recorded by Bowles and housed at the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song as a "repatriation" project in 2010. The collection is now online at Archnet, an initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Toler, 2016). Philip D. Schuyler edited Bowles's field notes for a commercial boxed-set released in 2016.

[16] Schuyler critiques Bowles's unsavory safari allusion in commenting: "Like earlier collectors (and big-game hunters), he believed that his job was to 'capture' the sounds" (2016, p. 26).

[17] The field notes are accessed via a consolidated pdf document on the MIT Archnet Web site (under "Publications"): http://archnet.org/authorities/2872; eight additional pages of notes from recording sessions conducted by Bowles and Christopher Wanklyn in 1960-1962 are included.

those living it. Analyzing the colonialist/imperialist/Eurocentric agendas and methodologies inherent in many "classic" projects and writings can only contribute to fairer and more accurate representations of Indigenous cultures. Even Jaap Kunst, who introduced the term "Ethno-musicology" in 1950 (p. 7) as the field formerly known as "Comparative Musicology" was transitioning to this new discipline, acknowledged the sea-change in academic approaches to non-Western cultures, writing in the second edition of *Ethnomusicology*: "I have taken care to add many particulars from non-European sources, with the result that the book is no longer as Europe-centric as it was" (1959, p. v).[18]

In the decade following Moroccan independence, major works by Maghrebi-based writers would acknowledge the lingering impact of colonialism—with Fanon identifying the "indelible wounds inflicted on our people by the colonialist onslaught" (1963, p. 181) and Albert Memmi lamenting the "wounds which [colonization] has left in the flesh of the colonized" (1965, p. 34). Emerging Maghrebi voices demanded an end to cultural hegemony, with Mohamed-Chérif Sahli calling for a "new Copernican revolution" to oust Europe from the scholastic mindset in his 1965 book *Décoloniser l'histoire* (2007, 119). "Heeding Fanon's call to leave Europe behind" (Harrison & Villa Ignacio, 2016, p. 2), Abdellatif Laâbi wrote in the avant-garde post-Independence Moroccan journal *Souffles* two years later of the ongoing process of decolonization as a dual one: not only reclaiming local culture on a granular level, but rejecting the knowledge base imposed by the lineage of "Oriental scholarship." Olivia C. Harrison and Teresa Villa-Ignacio recall that Laâbi's 1967 essay articulated with renewed urgency the need for "cultural decolonization" in the post-colonial era, denouncing French cultural imperialism and Orientalist scholarship while urging Maghrebi writers, artists, and intellectuals to forge new languages, forms, and genres that were "not tributary to European cultural norms" (p. 67).

To what extent has Laâbi's clarion call been heeded over the past half-century? Hassan Rachik comments on the trend—with its genesis in Laâbi's time period—for Maghrebi scholars to decolonize the "colonial literature produced on their countries" and thus "purge the national history and culture from colonial defects" (2020, p. 43). Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (2009) interrogates the "orientalist, colonialist and nationalist theories" imposed on the Maghreb in an effort to counter impulses by former

[18] This quotation from the second edition is sourced in the third edition, cited in the Bibliography.

colonizers to re-cast the colonial period in a revisionist light, as in the 2005 law passed by the French National Assembly "hailing the 'positive role of colonisation', especially in North Africa" (p. 1227). Challenging the corpus of colonial-era writings—and excising their "defects"—thus requires no less than an infusion of critical re-readings and re-scripting of the Maghrebi narrative by those closest to the source.

This effort does not occur in a vacuum. The task of revisiting and critiquing existing literature, identifying its lexicon of damaging and polarizing colonialist rhetoric, detecting any lingering colonial traces in contemporary scholarship, and formulating a new corpus of literature drawing on the perspectives of Indigenous interlocutors and scholars holds the promise of what Samuel Araújo describes as the "transformation" of ethnomusicology resulting from "new epistemological scenari emerging out of post-colonial situations" (2008, p. 13). Araújo indeed envisions an ethnographic model in which "knowledge will hopefully emerge from a truly horizontal, intercultural dialogue and not through top-to-bottom neo-colonial systems of validation" (p. 13). Revolutionizing this discredited ideological approach carries the potential of overturning the "distorted narratives" which, Beatriz Marín-Aguilera contends, are perpetuated by former colonial powers—citing the case of Spain, which "regulates and promotes a particular heritage discourse that has conveniently been depoliticised" (2018, p. 472). She further maintains that by means of this discourse, "in line with previous colonial narratives," Spain "has silenced the painful history of struggle and resilience of the inhabitants of Chaouen" (2018, p. 472).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith emphasizes the task of the Indigenous scholar in confronting, and overturning, colonialist ideology and praxis, stating:

> "From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism…. It appalls us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce." (2021, p. 2)

Ultimately, these contemporary reassessments—grounded in the lineage of the scholars who pioneered the discipline of Subaltern Studies—carry the potential to contribute to the creation of a new decolonized genealogy of scholarship and critique within the Global South, its practitioners entrusted with the task of interrogating the positionality

underscoring ethnographic narratives: that is, *who* is telling the story, *how*, and *why*?

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