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The Space of Africanness: Gnawa Music and Slave Culture in North Africa

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There are at least three overlapping periods and focuses through which we can investigate how West African slaves and their descendants are a part of the history of North Africa. The first of these considers the long duration of inter-regional migration and interaction with particular focus on slave trade, and the approximation of populations and their origins. The second addresses how practices of slavery functioned within societies of the Maghrib, what socio-economic patterns took place, what possibilities of communal life existed, as well as questions of agency, such as how Maghribi slaves made meaningful lives for themselves, as well as how they resisted social control mechanisms. A third is concerned with relationships beyond slavery, including the historical contexts in which freedom and slavery were expressed, how slave trade ended, and what legacies and power relations endured beyond the various forms of domination and inequality. The paper, in the context of these approaches, thus aims at developing a working orientation to facilitate the use of Gnawa music and other West African derived religious associations of North Africa, as historical artifacts. Of these periods and areas of

inquiry that have been suggested, the first two are given much attention. Although the post-slave trade social order and contemporary historical concerns, such as the commodification and travels of the Gnawa music, offer fascinating and important areas of research, our concern has been to analyze how Gnawa music throws light upon the historical background of slavery in Morocco. Following a cursory description of the form and its traditional contexts of audition, a theoretical framework is introduced and illustrated through the critical discussion of a series of relevant examples. This is followed by a brief conclusion, which focuses on the further applications that can emerge from this orientation and the possible ends to which such work might contribute.

Introduction

Across the Maghrib, there has long been what is often referred to as 'black brotherhoods' of musicians, traditionally understood as being comprised of descendants of 'African' slaves.¹ In Algeria, such associations have been described as devotees of Sidi Bilal (also referred to there as 'Usfan', an Arabic word meaning slaves). In Libya and Tunisia, they have been known as 'Bori cult' musicians (as well as being known as the 'Stambali' or 'Sudani' in Tunisia).²

The largest and most active of these associations is in Morocco, where Gnawa music is well known. Despite the fact that these associations and their musical forms are readily acknowledged in the Maghrib and by generations of western academics, travellers and musicians, to date their existence has received only indirect historical research and scanty scholarly attention from the social sciences and ethnomusicology.³ In fact, sustained critical consideration of Gnawa music as a form of evidence of North Africa slavery and slave culture remains to be initiated.

It seems that there are three overlapping periods and focuses through which we can begin to approach how West African slaves and their descendants are a part of the history of North Africa. The

first of these considers the long duration of inter-regional migration and interaction with particular focus on slave trade, and the approximation of populations and their origins. The next nexus of related questions address how practices of slavery functioned within societies of the Maghrib, what socio-economic patterns took place, what possibilities of communal life existed, as well as questions of agency, such as how Maghribi slaves made meaningful lives for themselves, as well as how they resisted social control mechanisms. A final period and area of interest is concerned with relationships beyond slavery, including the historical contexts in which freedom and slavery were expressed, how slave trade ended, and what legacies and power relations endured beyond these forms of domination and inequality. This paper thus aims at developing a working orientation to facilitate the use of Gnawa music and other West African derived religious associations of North Africa, as historical artifacts. Of these periods and areas of inquiry that have been suggested, the first two will be given attention here. Although the post-slave trade social order and contemporary historical concerns, such as the commodification and travels of the Gnawa music, offer fascinating and important areas of research, our concern will be to analyze how Gnawa music throws light upon the historical background of slavery in Morocco. Following a cursory description of the form and its traditional contexts of audition, a theoretical framework will be introduced and illustrated through the critical discussion of a series of relevant examples. This will be followed by a brief conclusion focused on what further applications can emerge from this orientation and the possible ends to which such work might contribute.

Traditional Contexts

An initial working conception of Gnawa history has been advanced in a brief ethnomusicological article by Philip Schuyler (1981), who writes that, 'The beliefs and practices of the Gnawa religious brotherhood represent a fusion of Islamic and West African ideas.' While not precluding a consideration of the presence of West African Muslims as slaves in the Trans-Saharan trade, it is reasonable to speculate that indigenous West African

sacred beliefs and practices were given 'practical and ecumenical' integration with the practices of Islam within Moroccan communities (Schyler, 1997). Gnawa musicians consistently consider themselves devout Muslims, claiming as their patron saint Sidi Bilal al-Habashi.⁴ Sidi Bilal, an Ethiopian freed from slavery by the prophet Mohammed, became the first muezzin of Islam. In many of the Moroccan cities in which the Gnawa are most active, there are xaouia (temples or sanctuaries) in Sidi Bilal's honour.⁵

In organizational respects, the Gnawa musicians are often considered a tariqa or 'brotherhood', related to organizational practices of Sufism. However, as Philip Schuyler (1997) notes,

*While it is true that women rarely if ever play instruments in Gnawa ceremonies, a large percentage (perhaps even a majority) of the devotees are women; female spirits figure prominently in the pantheon, and, most importantly, many of the most respected officials, mqaddem or mqaddema, are women.*⁶

Thus, 'brotherhood' is actually an inadequate term, given that women are intimately involved in this religious association.

Significant places for Gnawa performances in the north of the country include Tangiers, Rabat, Meknes, Fez, and Casablanca. The most active centres in the country are toward the south. Particularly well known are Essaouira, Marrakesh, Tamsloht (a village near Marrakesh where there is an annual Gnawa pilgrimage), and Tafilalet.⁷ In cities such as Essaouira and Marrakesh, where the tradition is often held to be most 'African' and strongest, there are several notable 'houses' and families involved in perpetuating the form.⁸ In public performance, Gnawa musicians have long appeared as buskers, itinerant street musicians playing for remuneration in informal settings, or in public areas such as the widely known Djemaa el fna in

Marrekesh. At Djemaa el fna, Gnawa performances can be found daily, including singing, gembri and qraqeb playing, and dancers whirling the long black tassels fixed to the tops of their caps by rapidly turning their heads around and around.⁹ Much acrobatic dancing accompanies the t'bel t'boela, which is often played with qraqeb. Throughout such Djemaa el fna performances, a collector walks among the audience seeking contributions. In another common setting, a gembri player seated in a calm public area (often urban or town centre), may or may not be joined by qraqeb players, and aside from a costume (or elements of costume), minimal visual attention is involved. In what is actually the most common public setting for Gnawa, often a single qraqeb player will wander across an urban centre or residential area, and after having captured a prospective contributor's attention, may follow him and play, sing and dance.

The moussems (religious festivals) held at various times and places throughout the country provide a more formalized public forum of Gnawa performance. While several moussems are shared with other associations of musicians, during the month prior to Ramadan the feast of the Sidi Bilal provides a particular Gnawa outlet. Gnawa music's most personal performances and experiences during these festivals (and at private functions) take the form of the highly structured Leila or Derdeba (which has often been translated as 'big noise').

For a Leila, several arrangements are required. A suitable house will have to be chosen for the performance, which generally begins around ten o'clock at night and can last for an upward of eight hours. At the house, an animal (typically a sheep) must be available for sacrifice and eating. There are also additional food and drinks for guests, many of who will be uninvited. From the musical end, the right number and calibre of musicians must be chosen and gathered to suit the performance and its funding. Adequate arrangements (and necessary alterations) are made, and the general procession gradually begins after a sacrifice, with t'bel t'boela and qraqeb playing in the street or environs of the

house. This announces the occasion to both the human and djinn communities within hearing range. Between the sacrifice and the meal, the Fraja or entertainments are performed; these include music, games, dances, mimes and songs', which are called 'Bambara' songs.¹⁰ It has been suggested that the words and gestures of these commemorative performances refer to ancestral life and enslavement. Of particular interest is the suggestion that the words of these songs are of more than 'Bambara' origins; they include 'Songhai, Sokole, Hausa and Fulbe' languages (Vuylsteke, 1993). Following a meal, the component seven dances and colours of a full form of Leila are performed.¹¹

A Working-Model of Spatial-Temporal Structures and Experiences

In a basic way, the object of the analysis of this study is West Africa as a reconstituted group. In order to use the unit of analysis of the Gnawa form as evidence of the history of this group-which might address the full range of questions which the object and its unit raise, such as who they are within society? Where they are from? And what worlds did they create and produce? – a working theory will have to be developed and employed. This working theory should allow for a clear, integrated consideration of the possibilities of this evidence. Again, this study is concerned not only with the structure and function of this heterogeneous group or its expressive culture, but with calling on cultural practices, and artifacts and in reconstructing processes of historical transition.

In a broad sense, historical diffusionism is a counterpoint from which this study will significantly borrow. It is precisely not any *a priori* essence of pure continuity that is being sought here, but rather patterns of change and continuity within and among the structures and strictures of the migratory background of this history.¹² One hybrid possibility towards this end is to critically borrow from structural functionalist attention to the workings of 'groups' and deconstruct the 'functions' which define 'groups' as loose patterns of values and related practices, while

simultaneously exploding across the scope of this Diaspora the tendency towards a temporal, singular and strict equilibriums and ideals.

In 1954, Edmund Leach's 'Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure' challenged functionalism from within its assumptions and premises, with suggestions of an unsuitable equilibrium and a dynamic flux between ideal models and lived realities. The present critical-borrowing from this theoretical context proposes a total shift from efforts to describe a complex equilibrium in group identities in relatively limited spaces and times, to trans-regional possibilities of continuity and change without presupposing any variety of model group identity, while striving to illuminate the history surrounding a group. Structure in this case can be understood in its widest sense as the structural limitations of slavery and ethnic-based inequality. These patterns of values being sought would concern not only the analysis of multiple musical and cultural objects within and surrounding Gnawa music, which seem to have been derived from West Africa musical contexts. These include an holistic understanding of music as spiritual communication, use of a pentatonic scale, interdependent polyrhythmic overlapping and clapping patterns, call and response structures, variations of rhythmic groupings and 'playing around the beat', acrobatic dance soloing, and the material culture of decoration and instruments.¹³ Rather than objects in themselves, an examination of these elements might under-gird a comparative project aimed at historically analyzing expressions and values in different diasporic spaces and times. Thus, we are compelled to consider what people think within, and perhaps in subversion of structures without reifying a sealed, overarching culture object.

In order to proceed with the proposed aims (or counter-aims) of analysis, an overall organization or mapping is needed. The beginnings of such a theoretical apparatus can be drawn from the work of several scholars who have attempted to explain the ways in which social relationships occur in, and reproduce space and

time.¹⁴ Such efforts, consciously or not, owe a great deal to Albert Einstein's mandate of a provocative and compelling rethinking of these dimensions, not as discrete absolutes but as partners in a continuum, an inextricable interrelation of space and time. Perhaps our understandings in the social sciences and humanities have only begun to assimilate such considerations. A focal point in elaborating the present theoretical mapping is a distinction drawn in Henri Lefebvre's work, *The Production of Space* (1991), between a social and representational space, a mental, conceived representational space and a spatial practice which is performative, sensory, and tactile.

The following theoretical outline picks-up with and extends David Harvey's usage of Lefebvre's spatial distinctions:

- (1) *Real space-time, centrally material, concerning spatial-temporal practices and experiences, interactions with the physical constructions of spaces and places.*
- (2) *Representational space-time, centrally social and symbolic, concerning organized perceptions and the interactions between perceptions and signs, signifiers, knowledge and values.*
- (3) *Conceived or imaginary space-time, centrally mental, concerning the interaction with and transcendence of the limitations imposed by material and symbolic practices. (see Harvey, 1990).*

This critical-borrowing from Harvey's project to describe the condition of postmodernity, ironically returns us to the bountiful complexities of a pre-modern context, or at least to a context well rooted in the fringes of the modernity he signals a shift in. Where Harvey has used Lefebvre to suggest a bridge between cultural change and political economy, this study entails no massive background of capitalism with which to fuse cultural expression.

It should be noted that these spaces are not isolated, discrete, fixed categories to be imposed upon historical structures and experience, but rather fluid points of emphasis useful towards charting complex historical interactions. These working-distinctions in themselves are not the present object of discussion; rather what is in discussion is how they might contribute to this area of study, and how this study's proposed theoretical orientation might contribute to historical knowledge and innovation. Rather than an elaboration of these thoughts in the abstract, we turn to several specific contexts.

A Regional Comparison

A spatial-temporal analysis is of great use in reconstructing a Diaspora culture, because it allows for a clarifying and suggestive consideration of multiple dimensions of historical processes and experience across greatly unequal power relations. To illustrate this capacity, we turn to an interregional comparison of functions and values. The expressive spaces¹⁵ of Gnawa music compare with and depart from West African griotic traditions in numerous significant ways, which upon consideration reveal a loose pattern.¹⁶ It seems that the greatest degree of departure between Gnawa music and West African griotic traditions concerns precisely those functions and identities challenged by slavery, as well as by Islam (although in less clear ways).

In addition to being musicians and composers, the Gnawa are discreet keepers of a body of knowledge, particularly history and historical experiences. This role necessarily entails teaching, though not as extensively as has been portrayed of griots. While not naming children as griots might, the Gnawa are commonly involved in the initiation rite of circumcision. Also, they are praise singers in a narrow sense, limited to exalting Allah, various saints and earlier Gnawa musicians, but nevertheless similar to praise singers in the wider sense of audience manipulation. Through the use of Muslim saints the Gnawa are genealogists in a limited manner, yet they differ from griotic practices in that they do not maintain a tradition of elite lineages. Furthermore.

underscoring the contours of limitations imposed by slavery, they are not advisers, spokesmen, diplomats, oral historical libraries, translators, warriors, or witness; neither are they consistently involved in courtships, marriages, political installations or funerals. These broad, broken parallels are not noted to suggest any specific historical links between griots and the Gnawa as such, but rather to trace the contours and limitations of expressive spaces and possible historical processes in the North African context, as well as to refer to values identifiable both North and South of the Sahara.

The power relations operative in slavery seem to register into this loose pattern as follows: although arguably encompassing West African agency, the expressive spaces of the real (i.e. controlling labour to use land and build cities) and of representation (i.e. establishing the dominant social standards of piety), are far less approachable spaces within which to directly claim and exert authority, than the marginal spaces of imaginary (i.e. the creation and reproduction of an influential ritual form). The larger working conception relevant here is that the history of this religious association of the musicians entails an ecumenical fusion between the cultures of North African Islam and West African traditions, within and surrounding the contexts of slavery. Unable to acquire and hold overt forms of political power, imaginary forms envisioning a nebulous spiritual world became a domain of identity articulation, representational assertion and real expertise. This creation, stemming from vital diasporic imaginary space, allows for symbolic and even physical spaces to be claimed and exerted authority upon. In fact, the Gnawa are most famed in Morocco as spiritual workers, using their music to heal illness and infertility, to appease spirits and to celebrate.¹⁷ Although not valued and sanctioned into the places of diplomats or political advisers, the Gnawa can be seen as mediators of the metaphysical for the Moroccans, an interpretive role at the spatial boundaries of Islam.

Rethinking 'Bambara' as a Continuum of Interplaying Identity Spaces

Spatial-temporal analysis allows for critical rethinking of the received historical categories concerning the Gnawa form. In what follows, the working theory of the interaction, or continuum of the spaces represented above will be used to suggest a new conceptual consideration in this field. Spatial theory will be shown to clarify the complex dynamics of slavery and identity evidenced in the Gnawa form, including spatial limitations imposed by the dominant society, and their possible re-appropriation.

Although slavery in North Africa predates the introduction of Islam, the Trans-Saharan system, which dispersed enslaved West Africans, was expanded and enhanced with the momentum of Islam into West Africa. The current most referred to estimate of the trade suggests that between three- and-a- half to four million were enslaved over twelve centuries (Austen,1997).¹⁸ In a recent groundbreaking study of nineteenth-century slavery in Morocco, Mohammed Ennaji estimates the very provocative figures of seven to eight thousand slaves being sold annually in Morocco in the 1890s.¹⁹ Though Ennaji focuses much on domestic workers, concubines and soldiers in his efforts toward outlining how slaves were a part of the society, he does concede briefly that ,

These figures offer indirect proof that slaves purchases, reputedly a luxury, were not limited to the rich but were linked to overall production levels. These figures cover only the official market; other sales took place elsewhere, under the table. (Ennaji, 1994:109).

Reconstruction of the extent of this history remains to be undertaken, amidst practical difficulties that include a reluctance to address and facilitate research of the topic from the dominant society in Morocco (perhaps for geopolitical as well as national

reasons), 'the lack of a constituency within such societies that would press for an investigation of its past history and present condition,' as well as a shortage of scholars capable or interested in such work (Hunwick, 2002).

General and uncircumspect notions about this history are widespread among Moroccans; Gnawa musicians often represent an innate 'Africanness' emerging from a hazy past of slavery.²⁰ Much of the existing scholarship of some relevance or directly related to the Gnawa echoed this loose understanding, occasionally suggesting regional parallels and possible African Origins.²¹ As this music has been commodified and prepared for travel through the world market in the last decades, a range of contemporary forms of information and marketing describe the Gnawa's past with recurrent references to Bambara people, slavery, and a specific historical event in the late 16th century.

The central account that this received references refer to goes as follows: in 1591, Moroccan monarch Ahmad Al-Mansur Billahi Al-Dhahabi of the Al-Saadi line of rulers ordered a military expedition in the South through the Sahara, where they are held to have conquered the Songhai Empire, tumbling the famed West African intellectual and economic centre, Timbuktu. This victory is then considered to have initiated a significant northward migration of West Africans, including the Abid (a slave army) comprised of peoples from the 'conquered' Songhai Empire (Babour, 1965; Abun-Nasr, 1987). Standing challenges have been made to this widely held marker in the history of West Africans in North Africa. The scale and significance of this 'capture' has been called into question, with at least one historian suggesting that the battle was a great economic and strategic loss for the Sa'adian dynasty, initiating its decline (Kaba, 1977). Of particular interest is a questioning of Abid origins, which has been forwarded, suggesting that the Abid army was drawn from within Morocco rather than from Songhai migrants (Meyers, 1977; Konare Ba, 1991; Kotker, 1992). Alan Meyers has further underscored the doubtfulness of a single sweeping moment of

migration by drawing attention to Morocco's marginal Haratin population.

Leila performance lyrics provide a provocative aperture into the received historical reference of 'African', 'Bambara' and the 1591 military campaign. Recurrent references within Leila performances thus focus on the Bambara. For instance,

Mallem: ... Waye waye Bambara Bambara
Chorus: Waya waye Bambara Bambara
Mallem: Wa Allah Akbar Bambara Bambara
al walidin Bambara Bambara
Chorus: Waye waye Bambara Bambara
Mallem: Al Musawi Bambara Bambara...

Mallem:... That's right, That's right, Bambara Bambara
Chorus: That's right, That's right, Bambara Bambara
Mallem: And Allah is the greatest, Bambara Bambara,
the ancestors, Bambara Bambara
Chorus: That's right, That's right, Bambara Bambara
*Mallem: The descendants of Moses, Bambara Bambara*²²

However, in the same component of Leila performances, particularly in the opening Fraja (meaning, literally, entertainment), multiple references are to other peoples and identities. For example:

Mallem: ... Aye lalla yumma
Chorus: Sudani lalla yumma
Mallem: Fulani lalla yumma Bambari lalla yumma...
Mallem: Uled Sudan Uled Kuyu
Chorus: A sidi rasul Allah...

Mallem:... Oh saint mother
Chorus: Its the Sudanese oh saint mother
Mallem: Its the Fulani oh saint mother
Its the Bambara oh saint mother...

Malle: Children of the Sudan children of kuyu
*Chorus: Oh master messenger of Allah...*²³

This variety of references, including Islam and various African peoples, calls into question the feeble, ideologically driven notion of the Gnawa being descendants of captives from the Saadian Empire's expansionism of 1591.²⁴ If the Gnawa were descendants of Bambara ancestors somehow brought into slavery and perhaps military service with the fall of Timbuktu, why would their repertory overtly concerned with the remembrance contain references to people of enormous region of the Sudan and the nomadic Fulani people?²⁵ In fact, the need to rethink the received categories concerning slavery in Morocco is made resoundingly certain when we consider pre-Songhai Moroccan historical references to slave armies of the Almoravids and Almohads, dating from the eleventh century, as well as the *déjà vu* of another contested west African conquest, that of the Almoravids defeating Ghana.²⁶ The 1591 'conquest' remains a widely perceived central marker in the relations between the Maghrib and West Africa, yet in itself offers no compelling explanatory force concerning the history of 'sub-Saharan Africans' in North Africa.

An alternative spatial explanation for the consistent use of 'Bambara' seems to be that the term is an artifact of a sort of multifunctional historical category and identity. In addition to referring to real Bambara people, 'Bambara' seems to have been a widely and variously used designation for multiple peoples, ranging from a projected category legitimizing bondage through playing-up and projecting non-Muslim status to possible self-identification within Maghribi societies. Rather than a true/false dichotomy too often employed in history, 'Bambara' might be understood as a spatial continuum of interacting realities, representations and identities.

Adding a fascinating dimension to this suggestion, Meyer's analysis of European sources asserts that eighteenth and nineteenth century writers embellished earlier sources, and

provided our first record of the claim that the slaves of Moroccan Abid army were originally 'Bambareens' or from 'the Coasts of Guinea'. Such an embellishment will coincide with the prevalence of these and other terms and categories of the trans-Atlantic system. In fact, clear historical parallels, if not potential connections, can be drawn from works that consider the multiple uses of 'Bambara' in West Africa and in the New World. Peter Caron (1997) has developed a series of possible readings of 'Bambara' functioning as an 'Ethno-label' across context from Senegambia to colonial Louisiana. These continuums include multiple factions, encompassing various raiders, traders, owners, and slaves who reappropriated usage of the term for distinct purposes within the slave trade and in life beyond. Key to the unraveling and usage of historical evidence referring to such spatial categories (including the similar examples of Igbo, Mina, and Cong) is our recognition of widespread diasporic transformations in which some degree of historical misrepresentations in imaginary space enter into the spaces of histories as very real and representational identities.

It has been suggested here that 'Bambara' associated with and employed within the Gnawa form is misleading if read as a reference to a single heritage, but warrants further ethnographic and historical consideration as a received category, perhaps in interplay with the Atlantic system. By the same token, the common broad descriptions of 'African' or sub-Saharan African' origins are needlessly vague, as present evidence suggests concentration on West Africa.²⁷ The usage of a spatial continuum to examine the recurrence of generalized and essentialized identity in this context points us very rapidly to the complications and ambiguities concerning the Haratin population across Morocco, especially their concentration in communities in its southern region (Sundiata, 1978). It has been noted that,

(they) ... are associated with slavery and have been characterized as relatively dark skinned and relatively endogamous; they were either landless

farmers or specialists in such crafts and trades as metal-smithing, butchering, and mule driving; they had no ethnic affiliations; and were scorned by the free, lighter-skinned peoples among whom they lived (Meyers, 1997:435).

In short, the working concept of a spatial continuum in this context requires stretches across space, time, power, culture and colour.

In Tangiers in April 1990, the late American novelist, composer and 'cultural intermediary', Paul Bowles, wrote a brief introduction to what became the first successful, by the dominant industry standards and interests, international release of recorded Gnawa music. He begins:

Sixty years ago, when I first came to Morocco, the Gnawa were almost uniformly black, and many still spoke their native tongue, Bambara. Today most of them are considerably lighter in colour, and have replaced Bambara with Darija Arabic. Fortunately, the music remains the same... (Bowles, 1990)

Quite contrary to Bowles' orientalist permafrost and projection of the ethno-category, Bambara, Gnawa music certainly has changed, and the form of historical transformation he suggests is misconceived. In the southern Moroccan city of Marrekesh, there is a city gate named Bab Agenaou, which Almohad Sultan el Mansour ordered to be built in 1185. This name, Bab Agenaou, which can be understood as 'the door of the Blacks' or 'the door of the slaves' signifies Marrekesh's bond not only with the Bambara and the Timbuktu but with the trans-Saharan system and its human commodities from various regions.²⁸ Again, it is clear that some continuum of enslavement, forced migration and assimilation coincided with this network, leaving an elusive yet monumental background against which to reconstruct slave lives

and cultures. A spatial theory applied to Gnawa music allows for a rethinking of 'Bambara' which supports the suggestion that rather than 1591, or any other specific large-scale population movements from West Africa to the greater region of Morocco, it is necessary to conceptualize and elaborate the dynamics of regional interaction over a long period of migration and forced migration.

Space of Africanness: Social Control

It can be hypothesized that this form and the authority in spiritual healing it brought are reflections of responses to the needs stemming from the conditions of existence of Afro-Maghribi life, and that the historical process through which Moroccans have commonly turned to a West African syncretic religious form of spiritual assistance has taken place within a spatial tension.²⁹ At the core of the history of West African descendants in the Maghrib, from slavery to the contemporary commodification of Gnawa music, is the charged spatial conflict defining and maintaining Africanness, an identification transcribed upon the lived realities, imaginations and bodies emerging from slavery. In this context, Africanness resides in the tension of interests at play between what the dominant society will sanction and consume and what strategic use of limited spaces can be made by musicians through cultural production. On the one end of this continuum, the Gnawa reveals the history of the West African slaves' agency and 'cultural production' through creating associations and cultural identities for themselves within the dominant Islamic social order. A prime example is the identification with the core Islamic figure of Bilal the Ethiopian. On the extreme of the continuum, there looms the restrictions of the dominant society's spatial control mechanism: in the realm of the real relating to the proclivities of cultural consumption; in the realm of representation, expressing interest in defining and ordering Africanness within society. Illustrative of this tension, a European traveller to Tangiers in the 1890s took note of

...an old Negro in rags from Timbuktu, with hair plated with fine leather thongs adorned with shells ...beating cymbals, making hideous grimaces, twisting his body into every shape and form...³⁰

More likely than this, the street musician having journeyed from the real space of Timbuktu to represent its performance arts, had become attuned to the representational space of received notions and local stereotypes of his origins and character, so that he might play upon these for what remuneration they might bring him.

Thomas Hale notes a fascinating instance of being strategic within the limited spaces of Africanness sanctioned for consumption by 'the Moors' in which an eighteenth century European administrator named M. de Brisson, who was shipwrecked, kidnapped and enslaved in West Africa, began imitating griots as a tactic toward enhancing his station. Brisson recalls,

I faked these clowns that are called Egeums. This kind of farce had pleased my master so much that he used to have me repeat it whenever he found it appropriate... No sooner had he realized my talent for imitation of Egeums than I was surrounded by men, women and children who repeated to me "ganne", "sing on". As soon as I finished, they made me start all over again, and I was obliged to do it as much to amuse them so as to obtain for myself (why shouldn't I admit it) a few drops of camel milk, the reward for this bad clowning (Brisson, 1984: 36 in Hale, 1988:98).

Aside from the historical uniqueness of this public caricature and crude imitation of a griot and of Africanness, what is most important here is the social and representational space within which such performances occurred and were given meaning by

outsiders. Another European traveller's account notes 'public entertainers' for hire:

Of these, none amused us more than the itinerant half-Negro half-Arab musicians from Sus and the desert. These generally go about in pairs, got up in the most fantastic fashion, with rags, skins, bands of cowries, and iron bells about their legs and ankles. One performs with a drum, the other with curious species of iron double cymbals. Their antics are of the most absurd description, and sometimes irresistibly comic. Their appearance and performance, however, had an added interest to me in bringing vividly to my memory entertainments of similar character in the Sudan, where I had first formed the idea of visiting Morocco.³¹ (Thompson, 1889:380).

What these audiences, presumably including North African and Saharan people, recognized and responded to recalls the limited social, conceptual and tactile spaces in the dominant social order, which practitioners of Gnawa music and Maghribi slave culture were forced into, but nonetheless endured and managed beyond mere functioning to reproduce spaces and meanings not determined solely by the limitations imposed on their existence.

Beyond the realm of public parody, the intimate sphere of spatial work also functions within the tensions of Africanness. In her short story, 'Mina the Rootless', Fatmia Mernissi recounts a childhood relationship with a woman who was taken from the Sudan as a young girl and began her life in Morocco as a slave. She writes of an annual occasion at which she would observe Mina dance:

Sometimes, someone would spot a white drummer in Sidi Bilal's supposedly all-Gnawa black orchestra, and then the honorable ladies who had

*paid for the ceremony would complain, 'How can you perform Gnawa music, and sing genuine Gnawa songs, when you are white like an aspirin tablet!' they would shout, furious at the lousy organization. Sidi Bilal would try to explain to them that sometimes, even if you were white, Gnawa culture could rub off on you and you could learn its music and songs. But the women were adamant - the orchestra had to be all black and foreign. The blacks in the orchestra had better speak Arabic with an accent too; otherwise they might be nothing more than local blacks who could play drums. Thanks to centuries of travel and trade across the desert, there were hundreds of local blacks living in the Fez medina who could have posed as distinguished foreign visitors from the prestigious Empire of Ghana. Local blacks simply would not do, either, because if they could fool the women, they surely could not fool the foreign djinnis. And that would have defeated the entire ceremony's goal, which was to communicate with the djinnis in their mysterious language.*³²

This excerpt highlights the aesthetic and political assumptions of the dominant social order and demonstrates the way in which the assimilation of Leila is blocked by the categorical and spatial expectations of the dominant society. In spite of the force of Islamic ideological principles of universality, as the form gains a wider base of practitioners across Moroccan society, it loses its authenticity and spiritual efficacy from the dominant perspective. Thus we can discern a convergence between the interests in reestablishing the hierarchical spaces of a rigid social order and maintaining these mystifications and representational spaces rooted in projected expectations of 'Africanness', 'Bambaraness', etc.

Spaces of Africanness: Meaning Making

Spatial analysis can allow for the consideration of not merely how these historical subjects are understood and acted upon, but taking these constraints into full consideration, we will consider the possibilities of the Gnawa form of reflecting West African slaves and their descendants' understanding, values and actions. This will entail relocating imagined and marginalized spaces in their relocation with the dominant order. In striving to get closer to the historical perspective of the West African descendants working with this form, within and among the notions and practices of the dominant society, several themes related to slave and Afro-Maghribi culture can be outlined. These include memories of separation and the Trans-Saharan slave system, references to the conditions of slavery and beyond, and reverence for ancestors.

In 'Ya Sudan Ya Imma', we find the following oral history:

*Ah Sudan ya Sudan
Ah jabuni jabuni
Ah jabuna min as-Sudan
Ah duwzuni 'ala Bambara
Ah duwzuni 'ala Timbuktu
Wa min Sudan l-Fes l-Bali*

*Oh Sudan, oh Sudan
They brought me, they brought me
They brought me from the Sudan
They brought me by the way of Bambara
They brought me by the way of Timbuktu
From Sudan to Old Fez (Fuson, 2001).*

The piece reveals clear and certain historical places, the Moroccan city of Fez and Timbuktu, respectively at the Northern and Southern ends of the Trans-Saharan system. But it also reveals a deeper historical knowledge in the other two less clear references. Here the entire broad space of the Bilad al-Sudan,

Arabic for 'land of the Blacks', is referred to as an area of historical origin, preserving a geographical and cultural referent beyond Bambara and Timbuktu. Behind this small referent stands an enormous loose end, a 'cultural riddle' or latent historical question of Diaspora.³³ Critically, this journey is remembered to have taken place 'by way of Bambara and Timbuktu'. Perhaps another subtle historical artifact is evidenced in this instance of ambiguous or ambivalent reference to Bambara as a place and/or a language of culture that is travelled through.

In another song, Khali Mbara Meskin, two common names associated with black slaves Khali Mbara (Uncle Umbara), and Khalti Mbarka (Aunt Mbarka) are referred to in a song depicting inequality.³⁴

*Ye Sidi yakul l-hayma
Lalla takul ash-shhayma
Mbara igeddad l-'adima
Khali Mbara mahboul,
Hada wa' do meskin*

*Sidi sherbu shororo
Lalla sherbu shororo
Mbara yakul l-'iqama
Hada wa' do meskin
Hada wa' do meskin*

*Ye Sidi lebsu belgha
U Lalla tlebsu belgha
Mbarka telbes henqara
Rja f-Llah Ta' ala
Hada wa' do meskin*

*My Lord is eating meat
My Lady is eating fat*

*Mbara is gnawing on a bone
Uncle Mbara is crazy
That's his lot, poor guy*

*My Lord is drinking tea
My Lady is drinking tea
Mbara is eating a mint leaf
That's his lot, poor guy
That's his lot, poor guy*

*My Lord is wearing slippers
My Lady is wearing slippers
Mbarka is wearing old sandals
Hope is God most High
That's his lot, poor guy*

If we consider these names an historical pivot, the memories of the past in this song can be seen as an ongoing, even contemporary critique of the conditions of poverty and the overall social order before or after slavery. In this case, humour is used; God is appealed to; sympathy with fate is recognized; but what propels the piece is the social critique, the clever, persistent return to images of inequality rather than an acceptance of the answers, or justifications provided in the song itself. The song allows for a very tactical critical space for reflection focused on the condition of Mbarka and those she represented.

An overarching spatial contrast can be made between the Gnawa and other religious associations in Morocco, including the 'Aissawa and Hamdasha, which are modelled on a tradition after a founder similar to Sufi orders variously found across the Islamic world. Each of these Moroccan musical practices is meant to facilitate trance and healing; for the Hamdasha and Aissawa, this is structured around references to their patron saints and respective namesakes and founders, Sidi Ali ben Hamdush and Mohammed ben Aisa. Tim Abdellah Fuson has succinctly described the contrast concerning the Gnawa,

Although Gnawa practitioners claim Sidna Bilal as a spiritual leader, they do so as an act of spiritual identification, not because he was the historical founder of the Gnawa as a Sufi order. In the opening section of the Leila, where song text is most prominent, it is not Bilal that the Gwana recall to express their identity and their relationship to spiritual authority. Rather, they recall the slave forbears of the Gnawa tradition. Bilal is not mentioned at all in this section. Moroccan slaves were disempowered, displaced and dispossessed, and many of them were unlettered, having no direct recourse to the unusual sources of Islamic spiritual authority, namely the lettered traditions of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Although Gnawa practitioners do not dispute these sources of authority, they situate themselves in relation to them not by identifying with learned, spiritually empowered predecessors and their poetic texts, but rather by recalling the lived experience of their own disempowered slave forbears (Ennaji, 1998:68).

In addition to the recognition of Leila as a generative site for spatial interaction (drawing on various recollections of Maghrabi slavery and a powerful healing practice of slaves and non-slaves sanctioned by the dominant order), spatial analysis allows for the investigation of a deep and subtle continuity of values, considering how the Gnawa form in distinction to other Moroccan Sufi orders, is structured to facilitate and reinforce the familiar African diasporic values of reverence for ancestors.

Conclusion: Space and Diasporic Reflections

An attempt has been made here to illustrate this working theory as a useful tool toward an historical analysis of the evidence of a Diaspora within a form of music and its related associations. The practical methodological applications which can emerge from this

spatial orientation, and the possible ends to which such work might contribute, can be understood within a reworking of the historical use of cultural evidence in studying West African diasporas. It has been suggested that this working tool contributes to our ability to conceptualize and trace multiple dimensions of change in contexts of unequal power relations, to rethink the historical interaction of identity and social controls, and to better understand the spaces of Africanness. It seems that a working theory of space and specifically an analytical space of Africanness can be a promising organizational tool in helping to reconstruct the complexities of subaltern historical identities within North Africa, the New World and beyond.

In order to move beyond our present limited historical knowledge of West Africans in Morocco and the Maghrib, a series of practical, conceptual and theoretical problems must be addressed. This will entail examining and reappraising received academic as well as local historical knowledge constructs and forming new questions. Spatial thinking raises new questions through integration and synthesis, and shifts questions away from a fixation on the truth or falsehood of cultural identity. Rather than producing the Fraizer-Herskovits debate in another context, this study follows the impulse within George Brandon's work on Santeria (Brandon, 1993) which pursues the continuity and change of a cultural object of inquiry within communities across space and time rather than an evaluation and description of the object in itself. Where Brandon has worked with a variety of trait mappings, this study has proposed examining three spaces and their interactions.

If we can consider the Atlantic middle passage and New World slavery a womb through which Africans travelled into forms of reconstituted nationhood in a process that transcribed 'blackness' into social and physical realities, the diasporic continuum into North Africa offers other models, rich with similarities and differences, and perhaps some connections. In addition to parallels concerning the long term, widespread absorption of Gnawa music among Arabs and Berbers, the assimilation of these people among the Gnawa

musicians, and the degree of assimilation across the fabric of larger Moroccan history, this research suggests the following study objects within a methodology of comparative diasporic spatial analysis: the historical dynamics at play in the creation and maintenance of ethno-organizational 'houses', forms of subaltern religious and musical authority, the evidence entailed in the [re] constructions of African-inspired national identities, linguistic work intent on reconstructing various spaces at play (such as has been suggested for the history of the ethno-category, 'Bambara'), material culture examinations which could encompass instruments and decorative arts, the processes of marginalization within nationalizing projects, and the commodification of cultural production.

In present day Morocco, the visible agents of the state and economy reveals widespread asymmetrical power relations involving colour- it can be generally observed that darker Moroccans are more consistently found in positions of low social status and income than their lighter compatriots. In contrast to many contexts of the New World African Diaspora, there has been a notable lack of socio-cultural organisation and political interest articulation of African descendants in the Maghrib. Reflective of this, national and international population statistics sometimes have categories of 'Jews' and the increasingly recognized national assertions of 'Berbers', yet despite its widespread historical recognition in daily life, 'African' or Afro- Maghribi' category represents an ethnic identity of West African descendants or heritage in Morocco or elsewhere in North Africa. In understanding this lack of formal recognition and descriptive vocabulary within which the various recreations of the Africanness of Gnawa musicians and music have taken place, further comparative attention must be given the power relations and the endurance of cultural constructions which recreate ethnic inequality for African descendants in the Maghrib and beyond. Regardless of whether the concept of racism is an unwelcome Western import, this history of ethnic inequality waits to be named and described. We should not be satisfied with the insistence that Maghribi contexts of slavery and ethnic relations differ beyond any fruitful comparison with those of the New World.

Rather, comparative scholarship and critical-borrowing stands to extend our understanding of unique features of Maghribi history now cloaked in obscurity.

If beyond anything else, this theoretical discussion has proposed a series of daunting tasks, we should recall the brick-by-brick legacy across which our curiosities about the African Diaspora now travel. The recent publication of a teaching source book titled *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*, edited by John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell, is an effort and invitation to expand our path. Certainly the explosive commodification of Gnawa music over the last decade has extended recognition of a black cultural presence in North Africa. Perhaps, this superficial familiarity can be enriched by borrowings and critical-borrowings from the twentieth century's prolific and forceful historical recovery across the New World Diaspora and within Africa itself. Surely, this intellectual ancestry is an indication that lengthy journeys into what are ironically 'new' historical areas begin with initial steps, and of much importance is the matter and manner of beginning.

Notes

1. African descendants in the Maghrib may be regarded among the other neglected areas of the African Diaspora. The 2001 African Studies Association was themed around the African Diaspora, reflecting the present expansion of this inquiry, for a recent overview see African Studies Review special issue on Africa's Diaspora, Vol. 43, No. 1 April 2000.
2. Herman Vulsteke notes these Tunisian terms. Herman Vulsteke, *Hadra Des Gnaoua D'Essaouira*, Ocora C560006 Liner notes, 1993.
3. Perhaps this will change with the recent surge in commercial, and to a lesser extent, intellectual interest in the Gnawa. At least three American scholars, in anthropology and ethnomusicology, are currently undertaking research relevant to the Gnawa.
4. In the context of Mandingo oral tradition in what is present day Mali, David Conrad has noted an interesting 'adaptation' of collective ancestors 'borrowed directly from Arabic tradition', including 'a character named Bilali Bounama'. However, the survival of 'the essence of certain elements of pre-Islamic West African culture', needs further articulation.
5. Paques (1991) attributes a mystique to Sidi Bilal not having a tomb, at least one other scholar reports a tomb 'standing in Damascus'. (Johnson, 1992: 109).

6. 'Gnawa Leila: M&A Review', at www.2milo8.com/gnawa 1997. Berkeley Ph.D. candidate in Ethnomusicology, Tim Abdellah Fuson has researched a highly exceptional female Gnawa musician and performer. Also there is a female dominated lore and healing practice called 'Tagdawit' which is associated with the Gnawa.

7. Concerning the limitations of the category 'Gwana' it should be noted that 'there are rural or small-town Gnawa in the high atlas, but they apparently do not use the *sintir/hajhuj*, may not practice the *leila/derdeba*, and may not even use the name Gnawa'. (Communication with P. Schuyler, 12/6/96).

8. Two such families in Essouria are the Ghania's and Akarezz's.

9. To Western audiences a *gembri* may resemble a small square form of our guitar or lute. It has a frame with skin from camel's neck stretched across it, out of the frame box extends a two foot long neck onto which three strings made of goat intestine are fastened with cloth or leather straps. At the top of the neck is a removable piece of metal onto which numerous metal rings are hung. The *gembri* is actually three components of instrument at once, a *membraphone*, in that its frame is played for accent as a drum by the figures of their strumming hand; a stringed instrument, in its use for one sympathetic and two active strings, as well as another form of percussion, in the sympathetic distortion provided by the resonating *sistrum*-like metal piece at the end of the neck. To a jazz listener a *gembri* sounds like a slapped double bass with more elasticity and rhythmic range. There is an interesting parallel to research between the development of the *Gembri* and the banjo, for which Cecilia Conway's *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia* (1995) is valuable. Another signature component of Gnawa instrumentation is the *qraqeb* (or *kakobars*), once described by a Marakeshi salesman as the 'African mother of castanets'. *Qraqeb* are two pairs of approximately foot-long twin concave metal segments each joined with a metal ring at one of their ends. They are brought together by opening and closing the thumbs and fingers, one hand following the other, and produce a very full and distinct metallic rhythm. An additional form of percussion used by the Gnawa is *T'bel t'boela*. These are large two sided goatskin bass drums. They are struck with a curved 'sahla' (a fig-wood stick) to play deep notes from the centre, and a flexible olive branch termed 'tarrach' for rapid snare sounds.

10. Tim Abdellah Fuson has noted that the *Fraja* is comprised of two sections, the *Ouled Bambara* or 'sons of Bamabara', and *Negsha* a term of uncertain meaning. See Tim Abdellah Fuson, ' "Where are you, Children of the Sudan?" The Recollection of Slavery in the Leila Ritual of the Gnawa of Morocco' presented at the conference 'Slavery and Religion in the Modern Era', Essouria, Morocco, 15 June 2001.

11. *Leila* has been interpreted as 'a musical liturgy' of healing. (Philip Schuyler, 'Gnawa Leila: M & A Review', at www.2milo8.com/gnawa, 1997). The musical performance of *gembri*, *qraqeb*, sometimes *derabuka*, clapping and song singing is ordered around seven 'melodic-rhythmic cells,' for each of which there is a specific incense burned and an associated colour of fabric (often in the form of

veils) displayed on those present and dancing. A Ma'leem (or master musician) plays the gembri and sings throughout Leila guiding the song selections, improvisations, overall tempo and timing with the aim of bringing listeners through trance to mental, physical and spiritual responses to their predisposed affinities. There is similarity to be noted here with the Santeria liturgy or 'oru' in which the specific bata drum patterns or 'togues' comprise the order of the service and are readily distinguishable 'calls' addressing deities.

12. 'Critical-borrowing' is use here to refer to conceptual and theoretical borrowing predominantly through opposition and fundamental re-working, while retaining an interest in and commitment to the question(s) understood to be driving a theoretical orientation toward knowledge.

13. Elements of West African aesthetics are recalled in the plentiful use of cowry shells, which appears on musician's clothing and instruments. Of the musical instruments played by the Gnawa, the principal instrument, the gembri, also known with various transliterations as 'hag', 'houge' or 'sintir' (a term apparently related to the Persian santur), has clear antecedents among West African instruments. The khalem and hajhour are used extensively by the West African griots, and appear as smaller, curved versions of the gembri.

14. Of particular stimulation in this undertaken has been the interdisciplinary work of geographers and social and aesthetic theorists: Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), David Hervey (1990), Henri Lefebvre (trans., 1991), and Gaston Bachelard (1994).

15. From here forward, 'space' or 'spatial' will refer to the various space-times in consideration.

16. In a recent work, Thomas Hale has considered some twenty-one functions and sub-functions of griots. These provide the fulcrum for the present consideration. See *Griots and Griottes: Master of Words and Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

17. Barbour (Barbour, 1965: 109) notes Gnawa performances at the opening of a new house or a child's birth. West African cultural and religious influences are often described in the musical socialization of values concerning healing involved in the trances included through Leila. See Paul Stoller's *Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger* (c1989).

18. Paul Lovejoy (2002: 25-26) has discussed the tenuous nature of Austen's estimate.

19. Mohammed Ennaji, *Soldats, Domestiques et Concubines: L'esclavage au Maroc au XIX^eme siecle* (Casablanca: Editions Ediff, 1994), now in translation as *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in the Nineteenth-Century Morocco* (U.S.A: St. Martin's Press, 1999) p. 108. Ironically, Ennaji's figures raise the questions about our present estimate which are far from new. Norman Bennett's 'Christian and Negro Slavery in Eighteenth Century North Africa', *Journal of African History*, 1, 1960, cites John Buffas's *Travels through the Empire of Morocco* (London: 1810) p. 135: 'it is estimated that during the European Middle Ages at least twenty thousand blacks were sent yearly to North

Africa from West Africa. This would yield a figure of at least two million per century.' pp 74-75. It is clear that much work remains to be done.

20. Ennaji (1999) contends that slavery was legally abolished in Morocco prior to French 'protectorate colonialism'. However, it continued in practice to a small extent for several decades. Ennaji suggests that ultimately slavery was ended by circumstances causing scarcity rather than law and enforcement. Indeed, the colonial protectorate initiated legal reinforcement of the 1922 Circulaire de L'Administration Francaise, allowing slaves to sue their owners, and supports this view.

21. Interestingly, among western scholars the uncertainty concerning the history of the Gnawa is coupled with a wide agreement as to their tremendous influence on the music and ritual of religious orders throughout the country. See Crapanzano (1973), Paques (1991), Welte (1990), Rouget (1985), Schuyler, (1981) and Vulsteke, (1993).

22. From Viviana Paques' *La Religion des Esclaves: Recherches sur la Confrerie Marocaine des Gnawa* (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali editorial, 1991). My translation from Arabic and French. P. 269 This Moses or 'Musa' figure deserves further research; the figure is part of the symbolic repertory bearing little resemblance to the monotheistic patriarch, other than a possible connection concerning water.

23. (Paques, 1991) p. 265-266. Hausa are commonly included as well. See another version of Lalla Imma ("Lady Mother") recorded and transcribed by Tim Abdellah Fusion, *ibid*.

24. It is fitting that Abun-Nasr (1987) has suggested this period as the consolidation of Moroccan nationalism.

25. The mention of Kuyu, a name for a dancer in Leila, in an uncertain term, it is unlikely to refer to the name of a subgroup of central African forest dwellers, and has been mistranslated as 'remembrance' in Herman Vuylskete's liner notes to 'Maroc: Hadra des Gnaoua d'Essaouira Ocora' compact disc c560006, 1993.

26. These debates seem to reveal aged ideological tensions between West and North Africa involving geopolitics and Islam. See David Conrad and Humphrey Fisher's 'The Conquest that Never Was: Ghana and the Almoravids', *History in Africa*, vols. 9 and 10, 1982, 1983.

27. These shortcomings suggest that further wide-scale linguistic research, perhaps modelled along the lines of Winifred Vass's *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Centre for Afro-American Studies, University of California, 1979) stands to contribute greatly to this area.

28. See Hale (1998) p. 332-336. Bab is Arabic for door; Agenaou is a Berber derived term for 'black Africans', or slaves.' This 'door of the slaves' reveals a fascinating parallel to Goree Island's subsequent *Porte Sans Retour*. Hale proposes an ambitious linguistic theory, in which the African term 'Ghana' travels through a Berber language(s) as aganaou, then into guineo in Spanish, and griot in French, thus giving the term griot an African cognate. While provocative in problematizing the assumed European origins of the term, this

European, Berber and Arab and West African interaction assumes the transition from Ghana to agnawou to gnawa, which is inconclusive.

29. It has long been assured that North African slavery operated in contrast to plantation centred modes of the New World, thus suggesting an historical paucity of slave and West African –descendant only audiences for forms such as Gnawa music. However Ennaji's trade estimates for the end of the nineteenth century present different possibilities. Further work on the extent of the trade would help us to reconstruct the possible spaces of Afro-Maghribi performance and community.

30. Georges Montbard *Among the Moors: Sketches of Oriental life* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1894) pp. 6 In some cases, such informal public performers practice personal praise singing, occasionally aggressively, in order to gain an offering. A similar use of announcement and praise singing to press for contributions is well known in West Africa. See (Chernoff, 1979).

31. Joseph Thompson's *Travels in the Atlas and Southern Morocco: A Narrative of Exploration* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889) p.380.

32. Fatima Mernissi, *The Harem Within: Tales of a Moroccan Girlhood* (Great Britain: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1994) p. 174. The context of this passage appears against the nineteen-forties background of nationalists opposing hadra dancing. J. Spencer Trimingham mentions in his *The Sufi Orders of Islam*, "The French had encouraged the orders in Morocco, recognizing their leaders and festivals, as part of their attempt to maintain a balance between the different forces in the country, especially opposing them to the orthodox, reformist, and progressive. Muhammad V (reg. 1927-61) supported the Salafis and prohibited the processions and mawasim of the isawiyya and hamdaushiyya, as well as sacrifices (naha'ir) offered to saints and other prohibited practices. The relationship between Moroccan religious associations and state power throughout the transitions of colonialism and thereafter deserve further attention.

33. A fascinating and promising recognition of the multiple uses of Diasporic 'cultural riddles' buried within and surrounding songs can be seen in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977) and in Paule Marshall's *Praise song for the Widow* (1983), which represent in fiction, journeys from Diasporic memories and imaginary space into present and future representational and lived realities. Consideration of this continuum of interaction between spaces is vital for moving scholarship further beyond an over-simplistic acceptance or rejection of survivals. Clearly the history of the ongoing reinvention of identity is an historical topic vital toward a fuller understanding of the dynamics of Diasporic cultural change and continuity.

34. These two widely appear as folk characters. For example, see Mohammed Ennaji, (trans. Seth Graebner), *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in the Nineteenth-Century Morocco* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 1998, p. 68.

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