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| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Trance Music, Symbolic Interactions and Social Representations in Nass El Ghiwane's Artistic Experience

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| **ABSTRACT**

This article explores trance, therapy and social representations related to the music of Nass El Ghiwane, established in Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca, in the seventies. My objective is to show that the rituals of possession and trance music have been shifted from the zaouia space to the stage scene coinciding with the social change and the political turmoil in the seventies. The structure of rituals and trance music is nourished by everyday life problems and routines such as pain, suffering, poverty, political oppression, and social injustice. Overtly the band and the public are engaged in a dynamic interaction leading some people with a specific spiritual predisposition to achieve a trance state called "*Al-hal*" in Arabic. The Ghiwani song and trance music -mostly seen as a mere phenomenon by many critics- are described here as emerging mainly from the emotions and feelings of the musicians and the public, particularly painful feelings mingled with sociopolitical problems. Thus, rather than trance being something to do with the "mind" and the "brain", it is here stressed that trance is an affective and spiritual experience. This article deals with an objective perspective of the band's musical experience, based on a critic approach highlighting the richness and intensity of trance feelings and emotions. The problem of social representations is questioning here the identity of the Self and the whole society. Superposition of many levels is used to describe trance feelings, unconscious, subconsciousness and social representations. Examining the importance of trance rituals reveals that social representations are the image of collective consciousness and social identity.

| **KEYWORDS**

Trance, music, Nass El Ghiwane, rituals, social representations, unconscious, identity.

1. Introduction

In this study, I will try to show that the state of trance "al-hal" and possession have always been closely associated with the music of Nass El Ghiwane since the band's creation in 1970 in Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca. My analysis of music and trance is based on the contextualization of the junction between trance and music and their possible correlations in the Moroccan society of the era extending from the seventies till now.

Depending on the context of the Moroccan sociocultural system, my study will have a starting point from a corpus of data from the band literature, mainly lyrics and live concerts. To organize this immense store of information, I will focus on the music of trance based on symbolism and external manifestations such as possession, hypnotism, rituals and ecstasy. Music is analyzed in terms of performance on stage, practices, and traditional instruments associated with trance. My goal is to prove that trance music induces the adept to identify himself with his deity and allows him to express this identification. In addition to this, we will discuss the fact that music's physiological and emotional effects are inseparable from patterns of collective representations and behavior and that music and trance are linked in as many ways as there are cultural structures. We will call back the accusations inflicted on Nass El Ghiwane during the era called in Morocco "the *Lead Years*", mainly the years from the early seventies till the nineties (1965-1997). Those alleged accusations are mainly linked with the band's political and sociocultural position seen as a *vox populi*

during the era mentioned above. My defense here is not merely fanatical; it is objectively based on the national context where the band was created. My critical reflection intends to clarify some misleading ideas divulgated by the reactionary upper class in the Moroccan post-colonial era against the band. In order to keep their privileges granted by the Establishment, they have kept up a situation of *status quo* dividing the society into classes yielding implicitly to a social conflict between the poor and the rich.

As long as the artistic experience and its memory are themselves representations, I will try to make a journey to the roots of Nass El Ghiwane's musical heritage amidst the social change and political turmoil in the Moroccan postcolonial era. In other words, my aim is to show that the band's artistic productions can be seen as representations of the *Zeitgeist,* which characterized the late years of the sixties and the seventies. The space-time of such experience is still difficult to deal with because of the critical situation of the social dynamics and the conflicts between the Monarchy and the left-wing political opponents.

Before discussing the subject of my study, I will contextualize in brief the emergence of the Ghiwani style amidst the left-wing movement and political turmoil of the seventies coinciding with the Hippie movement and psychedelic music. My research is essentially empirical based on Nass El Ghiwane's artistic productions and socio-political context, respecting a minimum of adequacy with the theoretical framework I will expose further in this study. My study is focused on how the theatricalization of the Gnawa night of rituals called "Derdeba" can be performed on stage. Trance is viewed as a representation of the public engaged in a specific interaction with the musicians-therapists. The theatrical frame of the trance and the possession rituals is adequate to my analysis of such representations, including the supernatural entities dealing with the possessed, such as "jinn", "meluk", or what is called, in general, the world of spirits or what is called the world of spirits "*ʿâlam al-arwâh* " in the Sufi terminology.

2. Literature review

We will try globally to talk briefly about the amazing story of the Moroccan musical band Nass el Ghiwane related to its leadership in the Moroccan musical scenery in the 70s. First, Omar Sayed's book. The story in his book is backed by accounts and articles by well-known figures highlighting the major aspects of Nass El Ghiwane's border-crossing legend. The ex-member of the band has also collected most of Nass El Ghiwane's songs in a book of lyrics intitled "the lyrics of al-Ghiwan" (*klam al-ghiwan*). Lhoussain Simour, in his book *Larbi Batma, Nass el-Ghiwane and Postcolonial Music in Morocco,* analyses the postcolonial Moroccan culture as it is represented in the writings of the band, mainly in the works of Larbi Batma. At the beginning of the seventies, at Hay Mohammadi, one of Casablanca's most deprived areas, the band aroused enthusiasm and quickly became the "spokesman of the voiceless". Their texts are drawn from the Moroccan literary heritage and express the disenchantment of those dark times through subtle metaphors; their new blend of traditional instruments, their melodies which combine all sorts of popular regional styles, and their voices, both poignant and powerful, tinged with sadness and rebellion, shake the Moroccan musical scene. Despite the death of two symbolic members, departures and new compositions, Nass El Ghiwane still arouses crowds of *hbab el Ghiwane* (friends of the Ghiwane) every time the band steps on stage. The photographs, some of which have never been published, are gathered for the first time to illustrate forty years of this saga. Finally, the book Reda Behassou written in French, is a reference and a glowing homage to the extraordinary artistic experience of Nass el ghiwane, seen as "the rolling stones of Africa."

3. Historical background and methodology

After the independence of Morocco in 1956, the country was forced to continue the restitution of the Saharan territories occupied by Spain. In 1961, King Hassan, once enthroned, was forced to react to a surrounding danger caused by a neighboring enemy: Algeria was eager to create new boundaries and go into the Moroccan Sahara for possible annexation. The king reacted quickly and accurately: In 1962, the "Sands War" was a strong signal that Morocco would not concede any grain of sand to Algeria. The King was once again under another challenge: the constitution reforms in 1963. In 1965, there were demonstrations in Casablanca against the Ministry of Education circular preventing students of a certain age from following their studies at secondary school.

After the "Pioneers of the Scene" and The "Golden Crescent" experience, the band formation hints were clearly linked to the theater activity launched by Tayeb Sadikki in the Municipal Theater in Casablanca in the sixties. In 1968, the members of the band took part in "Al Harraz". It was obvious that their talent as singers and actors was outstanding. After three years of theater activity with Tayeb Sadikki, Boujmiâ has decided to create a new band called first the "New Dervishes". The name was not sounding well in Moroccan society. The band finally found an eloquent name, "Nass el Ghiwane" in 1970. Unfortunately, the failed coups of 1971 and 1972 disturbed the political context of the Monarchy. Repression has become so current in the country. Moreover, the left wing movement has created a huge maelstrom in the cultural and political landscape. After their appearance in the National Theater Mohammed the Vth in 1972, the band became famous and influential in the culture of all kinds of Moroccan citizens. Two of the first band members have left quickly: Moulay Abdelaziz Tahiri and Mahmoud Saâdi. Later on, they created Jil Jilala. In 1973 the band's first album was released with a golden disc; it was a great success. The sudden loss of Boujmiâ on 26 October 1974 was a disaster for the band; they were about to split up, but Allal Yaâla's decision was determinant in the band's continuation and homogeneous progress mainly after Abdurrahman Paco's integration of the band in 1974.

Since that, the band has started its journey to the heart of Moroccan music by exploring all the musical genres of the traditional repertoire. They have experienced their quest for new folklore themes and rhythms in "*Taghounja*", their first cinema appearance

as a band. In this way, there is no need to recall that the band members come from different regions of Morocco: Boujemâ Ahgour (Lmenabha, Taroudant), Abdelaziz Tahiri (Marrakesh), Mahmud Saâdi (Hay Mohammadi), Laârbi Batma (Oulad Al-Bouziri, Chaouia region of Settat), Omar Sayyed (Souss region), Allal Yaâla (Oulad Berhil, Houara) and Abdurrahmane Paco (Essaouira). Such ethnic diversity implies that their culture is almost a perfect image of Moroccan cultural diversity. Their music rhythm includes Amazigh folk songs, gnawa music, sahraoui tones and the âroubi style of Chaouia. Thereby, the most relevant element of their research was the use of different styles shifting from Afrosahrawi influences (Gnawa music and southern Morocco music) to the Sha'bi, Aïta and Malhûn.

Trance music was naturally developed by the global harmony of the gnawa therapeutic method as it is known in the rituals of Derdeba and the subtle tones of Amazigh music of Southern Morocco represented by the banjo style of Allal Ya'la (called Snitra because of the lack of frets) and Hassani culture and style highlighted by the vocals of Boujmiâ. To summarize, the band was a representation of Moroccan diversity, which includes four ethnic groups: Arab, Amazigh, African, and Sahrawi. This mixture of styles and inspirations was backed up by the use of traditional instruments: Guembri, banjo (it was originally shaped by African musicians and then developed by American ones), tbilat, tbal, daâdouâ (harraz), bendir and taârija.

In the following analysis, I will try to examine trance and music therapy linked with the artistic works of Nass El Ghiwane, as well as the emergence of The Ghiwani style called "Al-Ughniya Al-Ghiwaniya", a musical genre leading the public to achieve trance by making shifting from the zaouia rituals to the stage free performance also marked by a symbolic parallel shifting from suffering and marginalization to personal development and socialization.

As long as the artistic performance is always anchored in its social context and conditions that fostered its growth, I will adopt here the *pragmatic* approach meaning two acceptations of the word: First, the epistemological meaning because of the way of analyzing the Ghiwani phenomena *in situ,* in the context not in an abstract way, second the etymological meaning because it deals with the analysis of what the artistic productions do as long as they are *actions* not fixed by their value or their meaning. To make use of this approach, I will try to put into practice adequately the concepts of symbolic interactionism, mainly the concepts developed by Ervin Goffman (1959) in his theory of the *dramaturgical model*, Harald Garfinkel (1967), the critical method of Bourdieu (1989, 1982) dealing with the concepts of *habitus* and *symbolic violence* and the theory of social representations developed by Moscovici (1961, 1973). Thus, for the purpose of my study, I will call out the pragmatic perspective, which includes the theoretical background of three connected complementary disciplines: Ethnography of communication, social psychology, and discourse analysis. Social representations are seen here as a form of knowledge appropriated both by the musicians-actors and the public. In other words, representations are socialized in everyday life interactions based on common sense and cultural background.

The trance music of Nass El Ghiwane was a result of the collective work of the musicians-singers described by Sadikki as "troubadours". Writing and composition were done by the band members in a creative way: they tried to implement the Moroccan cultural heritage by focusing on the harmonization of different styles and polyphonic singing. Even though the lyrics and the melodic shape are simple, they are full of emotional charges and connotations. The archetypes and meanings of the songs were on purpose, hidden by metaphor and allegory style in order to avoid any kind of repression, mainly after Boujmiâ's death.

The trance (called *al-hal* in Sufi terminology) associated with Nass El Ghiwane music can be divided into three levels: the musician's trance, the public and the patient ones. In fact, the band was inspired by the "popular Sufism", mainly the brotherhoods of Gnawa, Hmadsha, Haddawa and Aïssawa. In contrast with the scholar Sufism, the popular one uses a simple discourse towards the people who are in need of spiritual guidance and therapy. The rituals of every brotherhood aim to heal the patient, even in a symbolic way. To ensure the continuum of musical trance, Nass El Ghiwane has explored the substratum of the Gnawa rituals and pentatonic scale, which characterize African music, including the Amazigh one.

4. Definition of trance

According to many researchers' results, trance can be explained as an altered state of consciousness, either spontaneous or induced, bearing some analogy to the ordinary sleep state but differing from it in certainly marked particulars. Trance as a spiritual state has been common since ancient times, used by religious practitioners for demonstrations of paranormal knowledge and therapy. Shamans are the best example of Spiritual mediums. The Altered expression state of consciousness is loosely applied to many varied mental states (hypnosis, ecstasy, catalepsy, somnambulism, certain forms of hysteria, and the mediumistic trance). The main distinguishing feature of the trance is that the subject retains consciousness and gives evidence of normal intelligence or, as in cases of possession and impersonation, some foreign intelligence. In hypnosis, the subject, although indifferent to sensory stimuli, has been known to exhibit a curious sensitivity to such stimuli applied to the hypnotist's body.

In ecstasy, which is frequently allied with hallucination, the subject remains in rapt contemplation of some transcendental vision, deaf and blind to the outside world. It was formerly considered to indicate that the soul of the ecstatic was viewing some great event distant in time or place or some person or scene from the celestial sphere. Today such a state is believed to be brought

about by intense and sustained emotional concentration on some particular mental image, by means of which hallucination may be induced.

Mediumistic trance is recognized as being similar to a hypnotic trance, induced many times in the same subject, and may become spontaneous. It then strongly resembles the trance of the medium. Some Spiritualists have objected to the term *trance* being applied when there is no sign of spirit possession. The entranced medium (who seems able to produce this state at will) frequently displays an exaltation of memory (hypermnesia), of the senses (hyperesthesia), and even of the intellectual faculties. According to ethnology researchers on the trance state, such state of mind deals with three distinct stages: i. the medium is partly conscious of her surroundings but sees things distorted and grotesque; ii. he or she is possessed by spirits and losses contact with the material world; and iii. The possessed gets into a deep trance in which the loss of consciousness is obviously evident. In the next section, I will discuss the possible links between social representations and trance in the band's musical experience *in situ* that is to say that I will focus my analysis of this topic on the Moroccan context, especially during the active years of the band since its formation in the seventies.

5. Trance and social representations

According to anthropological studies, trance is known all over the world with different forms and rituals. As West African rituals were preserved in Latin America and Morocco, trance and possession rituals have appeared in different forms, such as Cadomblé in Brazil, Santeria in Cuba, Voodoo in Haiti and night of Derdeba in Morocco. In the Moroccan context, trance is represented by the rituals of popular Sufism and zawiya brotherhoods and their proper ways of initiation. Social representations have been defined by Moscovici[1] (1973, p. xiii):

"…systems of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history."

In Nass El Ghiwan's experience, trance is represented by the rituals of possession, mainly by Maâlem Abdurrahman Paco as long as he was a gnawi maâlem. In fact, the latter has created a new style which consists of playing gnawa music and performing music on stage. The band members' experience in the theater was very important before the band formation: Paco played with the Living Theater and Ahgour, Batma, and Sayyed with Tayeb Sadikki. The latter has developed a popular style of theater called "*Lbsat*" (A mixture of theater and singing). The social representations of such artistic work were closely linked with the group therapy (*Gestalt therapy*) created by trance rituals which have shifted from the zaouia sacred space to the public stage.

Trance is eventually seen as a therapeutical method for healing the public in the grip of poverty and social problems worsened by the political oppression resulting from the tensions between the Monarchy and the left wing opponents. Moreover, it can yield to healing people who suffer from being possessed by supernatural entities and psychological troubles. Achieving a state of trance is beneficial to the public and the musicians-therapists. It is obvious that trance is a representation of the possessed's psychology and religious beliefs. More concretely, the language used in the band lyrics is inherited from the African languages, such as the way of calling "*wa baba*" (ô father!), for example. Invoking Allah, the Prophet, African divinities, and Moslem Sufi saints is still a component of the trance rituals either in the zaouia or on the stage. In Morocco, Islamic culture is intricately linked with Amazigh and the Afro-sahrawi. In the anthropological approach since Structuralism[2], culture is calling nature (*Natur und Kultur)*. In other words, the cultural diversity of Morocco is parallel with the cosmogony in Islam and the rest of the cultural components. This cosmogony is divided into many levels and structures. In trance music, the possession rituals are based on music, rhythm, dance and incantation. The junction between cosmogony and culture can explain the dynamic interaction between the band performing on stage and its influence on the public reception and, eventually, its therapeutical effect.

In the late 1960s, the American psychologist Charles Tart (1969, 1975) introduced the psychological term "altered states of consciousness" for states that are perceived as different from normal in his *transpersonal psychology* movement within the psychological field. Trance can be understood as an *altered state of consciousness* (ASC) following the results of many researchers who have studied the trance structure in different cultural contexts. The ASC have a different status in every social group. This psychological fact can be understood as a part of what is called "transpersonal psychology" by Tart[3] (1992:18). According to him,

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[1] Serge Moscovici (1973), 'Foreword', p. Xiii in C. Herzlich: Health and Illness. A Social Psychological Analysis.

[2] Cf. Harold W. Scheffler (1966) Structuralism in Anthropology,N°.36/37, *Structuralism*, pp.66-68.,

[3] *Tart, C. T.* (*1992*) *Transpersonal psychologies*: *Perspectives* on the *mind* from *seven great spiritual traditions*, p.18.

this kind of psychology *"Operates in favor of the realization of the Self and the awakening of the spiritual nature and most genuine human qualities in every individual."*

In the Moroccan culture, a key role is attributed to Islam as a system of beliefs, in addition to the local divinities inherited mainly from African and Amazigh paganism. In this way, Nass El Ghiwane has explored Gnawa music as a way of inducing the audience into hypnosis and trance. The spiritual medium, for instance, Abdurrahman Paco, was used to making use of trance music during the rituals of the night of Derdeba. On stage, the gnawi maâlem's aim, playing on his guembri and performing a specific body language in order to maintain the spiritual force of Gnawa music on stage, is eventually to focus people's attention on the music rhythm and yield their physical presence and mental disposition to a state of trance. We can define trance as a spiritual performance shared by the medium and the public interested in being healed and achieving a sort of group therapy by reaching a new state of consciousness, called an altered state of consciousness, by some researchers. In this way, the band has tried to practice trance in music as a method of healing people suffering from psychological and mental troubles. Playing music on stage is the shifting image of the Maâlem playing with his guembri during the night of Derdeba. Meanwhile, the latter is forced to respect the rituals of the possession rituals in the zaouia; the band can make use of trance music in a specific way by helping the public, including the possessed to achieve the state of trance, knowing that the public consists of individuals with interest in social well-being and psychological and mental equilibrium. In the next section, I will show that the study of such rituals must be situated *in situ*, trying to see them in the way of Goffman's "role theory", consisting of social interaction and a dramaturgical model of behavior.

6. Theatricalization of trance and stage performance

In the process of theatricalization, the musicians-actors interact with the public in a real situation of communication. The Sufi trance in the zaouia is now on the stage, even in a symbolic way. From the sacred zawiya space to the public one, the spatial shifting is considerable. In other words, such shifting is concretized by the physical presence of the public in front of the band during a live concert marked by the drifting movement of trance. Thus, the rituals of possession trance are a sort of theatricalization which can shift from the sacred space of the zaouia to the profane space of the stage. It means that the stage performance is not sacred in principle as it used to be in the zaouia, but it is still spiritual and therapeutic as long as the musicians-therapists make use of trance music for healing and socialization.

In the same way, the trance state is associated with the mluk (supernatural entities) especially marked by special colors and melodies. Such traditional chants, folklore, and old musical phrases are performed either in the zaouia or on the stage with a free way of improvisation and spontaneous interpretation. Metaphorically, the mluk is associated with the natural element called "rih" (plur.riah), mainly in the popular Sufi brotherhood. The possessed and the spirit are attached to each other via this natural energy linked with the mluk in a symbolic and spiritual way. Once the possessed is attached to his/her melk during the trance rituals in the zaouia or on the stage, he/she must respect the relationship engaged with the supernatural entities. On the stage, where dancing is mingled with playing music on the rhythm of the guembri and traditional percussions (Tbal, tbilat), the possessed can achieve a state of trance after being induced by music to hypnosis and an altered state of consciousness. The repetition of a musical phrase played by the Maâlem, for instance, Maâlem Abdurrahman Paco, is able to make use of the possessed's psychological and cognitive substratum. While music is played on stage, the dramatization of the relationship is a real performance in itself. The musicians- therapists, and the audience are both actors with different social statuses and cultural backgrounds according to the *dramaturgical model of social life* developed by Goffman[4] (1959). Relationships created by the "actors" on the stage are full of communication, interaction and symbolic language: Moments of silence, anticipation, public nostalgia, and empathy with the lower social class and the political prisoners, for example.

Eventually, the stage performance is yielding to a possible transformation on different levels: First, physically, the possessed can be healed; second, mentally, by achieving symbiosis with the melk, third the possessed finds his/her way to socialization by avoiding marginalization and social exclusion and eventually by achieving a transformation of the Self which means personal development through the transmutation of spiritual state. It is said at the end of the song called "Lbtana'' that everybody who is not affected by the trance will fade away. In "Ahli- al hal", there is a question about the time of clearing: Ahli- al hal, ô ahli al-hal, when will there be a clearing? This question needs an answer which supposes that there is a passage from a negative state of mind to a bright one coinciding with the achievement of a trance and *catharsis*.

On the symbolic level, the trance rituals shift to theatricalization on stage. This spiritual itinerary is a process made of social representations of trance (dramatization) performed on stage. The possessed has moved from the former state of mind marked by negative feelings and bad thoughts to a new spiritual state of trance. The progressive change and temporary modification of the spiritual states lead the possessed to look for the trance benefits and positive effects. From an altered state of mind

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[4] Cf. Ervin Goffman (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

accompanied by a temporary mental condition with loss of <u>conscious</u>ness, the possessed is promoted to a new state of mind after achieving a trance and a possible spiritual purification.

In the same way, different interactions between the musicians-therapists and the audience are described as the different roles played by the actors in their everyday life, for instance, the musicians and the public as a group of people with different psychological and mental problems. This typical interaction where the musicians and the audience engage is not the image of the doctor and his patient in the office. Time and space are different in every situation, but all the actors engaged in the interaction have the same "definition of the situation", meaning that all understand what is meant to happen in that situation and what to expect from the others. Thus, it is obvious that the actors know how they should behave. The concept of performance can also be used in this way to explain how the actors on stage (the musicians-therapists) behave in front of the audience.

A legitimate question can be formulated as follows: Can we talk about a discursive strategy in this special interaction between the actors on the stage and the audience? There is no need to recall that the discourse strategy used by the band is linked with the *pathos* in which different kinds of behavior are displayed, consciously or unconsciously, visible on the stage where the musicians-actors perform in front of the public.

According to Goffman, people are engaged in "front stage" behavior when they know that others are watching. Front stage behavior reflects internalized norms and expectations for behavior shaped partly by the setting; the particular role one plays in it, and one's physical appearance. How people participate in a front stage performance can be highly intentional and purposeful, or it can be habitual or subconscious. Front stage behavior typically follows routine and learned social conventions shaped by cultural norms. I will talk about trance and collective conscious correlations in the next section.

7. Trance and Collective consciousness
In the Moroccan post-colonial era, a specific culture was developed by the poor working class in Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca. It was the blending substratum of popular culture and influences of different cultures, such as European and Oriental cultures. The emergence of the rock music influence was characterized by the formation of the Golden Hands in 1968 and the cultural influence from outside, mainly oriental song, literature and cinema. In that cultural stream, Nass El Ghiwane was first focused on the theater of "Lbsat", supervised by Tayeb Saddiki before the formation of the band in 1970. The social dynamics were mainly linked with social justice and the right to freedom because of political oppression and marginalization. In such a context, collective consciousness can be depicted. According to Durkheim[5] (2004:24), collective consciousness is:

 "*The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average members of the same society forms a particular system with a life of its own life; one might call it the collective or common consciousness*".

In this way, a trance state with emphasis on supernatural entities such as demons and spirits is the social representation revealing various conditions and specificities of the Moroccan collective consciousness during the "Lead Years". First of all, the band was born amidst the social conflict between the poor labour class and the rich upper one. Second, the band's music was seen as a "protest song" during the seventies. Third, the band was the social representation of the cultural dynamics and political tensions since the demonstrations of 1965.

As trance is related to possession rituals in Morocco, traditional society with secular history and culture, the participants engaged in the social interaction between the musicians-therapists and the public spirits are aware of their mental and psychological problems. Looking for being purified by reaching a sort of symbiosis with the supernatural entities which occupy their bodies, the audience finds a need to connect with the holistic world of nature, where mind, body and spirit are one. Every phenomenon is interpreted as resulting from the action or presence of a soul. Rouget[6] (1985: 123) states that:

" *Every phenomenon is interpreted as resulting from the action or presence of a soul. The visible is constantly animated by the invisible.*"

As this argument concerns the attainment of trance states by the interaction between the visible and the invisible, it is often an advantage to utilize the holistic view to link the body with the mind in the cosmos. In other words, consciousness as a function of the body as a whole neuronal and bio-chemical energy system is linked with social representations. Consciousness involves both sensory feedback mechanisms and imaginative practices based in fields of signification which are culturally and socially

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[5] Emile Durkheim (2004) "*The Division of Labour in Society*", p.24.
[6] Gilbert Rouget (1985) *Music and Trance,* p.123.

determined. In this way, the audience experience is full of thoughts and mental images anchored in the social strata. In the next section, I will deal with the unconscious aspect of the trance linked with social representations.

8. Trance and collective unconscious

After analyzing the conscious level of trance related to social representations, I will try to show that the so-called altered state of consciousness is the locus of the unconscious world of the public in need of gestalt therapy and spiritual purification. By developing his theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes, Jung, like Freud, posited the existence of a conscious and an unconscious mind. Jung[7] (1969:3) called it the collective unconscious:

"Personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the collective unconscious. I have chosen the term "collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals."

In comparison with consciousness, the collective unconscious is a group experience that is not congruent only with identity. Things that have become "repressed" would make up the material at this level. The contents of the personal unconscious are available through hypnosis, visions and especially dreams. Although not directly accessible, material in the personal unconscious has a direct link with the whole society, environmentally determined and inherited. It is the part of the mind and the soul determined by heredity and cultural background. The collective unconscious is the sum of the individuals' psyche within the evolutionary process of the environment. Moreover, psychological archetypes- among Jung's most important contributions to dynamic counterparts of the human personality- can help us to explain how the collective unconscious of Moroccan society in the seventies was characterized by the need for freedom and social justice. Trance can be considered as a canalization of such desire for well being and comfort in a society full of symbolic violence and marginalization. From this point of view, I will discuss in the final section how the collective consciousness and unconscious participate in the social representations as they are manifested in the Moroccan identity of Nass El Ghiwane's artistic experience.

9. Trance and identity

In the Moroccan context, identity linked with trance music can be fashioned through the performance of the rituals shifted from the zaouia space to stage one. No need to recall that this spatial shifting is used here as a topos of different manifestations such as politics, culture, economy and praxis. The musicians-therapists are the medium with whom the possessed can achieve a state of trance via spiritual practices and social transactions. The possession and the rituals dimension are representations of the religious system in Morocco. Trance rituals are not only the continuum of the West African religions and sub-Saharan rites and cults; they are also the heritage of different ethnic groups with the cultural and spiritual substratum. The brotherhoods in Morocco, mainly those related to popular Sufism, have a revitalized relationship with the African spiritual entities and oral traditions of their ancestors. Thus the African and the Amazigh spiritual divinities are present along with the incantations of Allah, the Prophet and the Muslim saints. Either in the zaouia or on the stage, local rituals of possession are predominant in a trance but with the demarcation between the sacred and the profane.

Taking into consideration the Moroccan context, social representations are considered *in situ* according to the pragmatic view of this study. In other words, different types of social representations can reveal different dimensions: history, religion, politics, culture… In the possession rituals, even shifted to the stage free performance, the possessed is seeking to be healed. In other words, the possessed is looking for well-being and psychological equilibrium. Fighting against everyday life problems and burdens (poverty, disease, conflicts) is doubled by a spiritual fight against the spirits called jnun or meluk in the Gnawi brotherhood, for example. Trance, as long as it is loaded with rituals and spiritual entities, is assured by the Maâlem's guidance. Group therapy is not only efficient in the intimacy of the zaouia space; it is also possible on the stage once the interaction between the possessed, the spirits and the musicians-therapists attains a degree of climax and spiritual elevation even in a symbolic way. In fact, the medium (the *Maâlem*, the *Moqaddam* or *Moqaddama*) intervenes like a spiritual guide either in the zaouia (substitution of the Shaykh's figure) or in the scene of the stage (theater, stadium) and can induce the public in a state of trance by influencing the adepts' behavior and spiritual state. People with a predisposition to achieve trance or are affected by it are called (*Ahl al-hal*). Such belonging to the group is influenced by the spiritual strength and charisma of the medium.

According to the rules of Islam and popular Sufism, the initiate or generally the people of trance (*Ahl Al-hal*) must respect the instructions of the medium, for instance, the Gnawi maâlem. This procedure can prevent any failure of the therapist's method. Obviously, the adepts who believe in the possession rituals and the religious rules are aware of the natural respect, even veneration

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[7] *Jung*, C. G. (*1969*) *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.3.

to the spiritual master, either the Shaykh or the Maâlem. In this optics, the symbolic interaction between the medium and the group members is manifested in what is called *habitus* in the critical approach of Bourdieu[8] (1991:12):

"The habitus is a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any 'rule'."

In the process of being healed, the initiate must follow the Master's instructions in order to achieve his/her goal in harmony with the universe's energies and symbiosis between the spiritual world and his/her psyche. The initiate is familiar with the spiritual guide's instructions, namely the Gnawi Maâlem: Before the possession rituals, the adept must stay in the zaouia for a period of time in order to know more about the music rhythm, the traditional chants and invocations of the brotherhood, the nature of the spirit domain (earth, water, air) linked with a specific melk or jinn (genie, demons, supernatural spirit) and of course the food which is convenient to the spirit controlling the possessed's spiritual world.

In the Sufi traditions, trance is strongly linked with the purification of the soul. Trance is the stage when the possessed can achieve a certain degree of consciousness, called an "altered state of consciousness" by some researchers in anthropology and psychotherapy. This state is structured by the religious system, the divinities, the sacred music and the dance, which marks the possessed's body and his cultural background. In this way, to explain the reality of trance is possible when the incorporation of a genie (supernatural spirit) in the possessed's body and spirit becomes a kind of *adorcism* manifested via this spiritual state (Al-hal), a sudden change to a new state of consciousness. Thus, social representations are spiritual when the divine presence coexists with the supernatural entities in an organized way across the social interactions and transactions according to ethnometholodogy as defined by Garfinkel[9] (1967:vii):

"An approach to the investigation of the social life whereby the central focus is to describe how people coordinate ordinary social activities in organized recognize- able ways and the "doing" of such activities."

During the rituals of possession, the possessed's spirit is incorporated into the community as a sign of acceptance and integration into society. Physically and mentally, the possessed is seeking to achieve the state of trance (Sometimes called Al-jadb in Arabic), particularly in his/her community and generally in the cosmos. Henceforth, the possessed aims to be healed in the interaction with the group of individuals. Such a method of therapy was known as "Gestalt therapy" in Palo Alto psychiatry doctrine. Art therapy is efficient when the focus of the group dynamics is the whole society, not only some individuals suffering from mental or psychological troubles. . Art as therapy aims to transcend the limits and obstacles erected by illness and psychological problems through the achievement and perception of trance as a healing method in the sociocultural context respectively.

Universal energies and natural forces can be manifested in the possessed body of the adept who follows the brotherhood way of life or the public in need of spiritual purification and social well-being in front of the musicians-therapists. Trance is mainly triggered by external stimuli, mainly the Sufi singing (Qasida, Kalam) in the zaouia and the musical rhythm on the stage; knowing that the traditional instruments such as the guembri, bendir, tbal and tbilat are marked by a spiritual rhythmic force since their use by the band in the seventies till now. Playing sacred music and dancing is the image of the universal incorporation of the spirit in the body, nature and culture, a universal choreography which is the representation of the universe's forces and energies. Human beings and divine entities share that cosmic energy, especially during the rituals of possession, yielding to trance either in the zaouia or on the stage. Moreover, the material world means the physical presence of the possessed in front of the spirits (melouk). Subsequently, we can observe the equilibrium between the material world and the spiritual one during the night of Derdeba or on the stage. The therapeutic method consists in specific conditions and stages which are obligatory for the initiate or the possessed suffering from the hegemony of the spirits, such as Aisha Qandisha linked with fresh water and humid regions. She can help as much as she can kill. The transformation of a bad relationship between the possessed and the spirit to a good one can yield a symbiosis which is both protective and dangerous. This character of the trickster is the image of the moral order and the personality superego in psychoanalysis. There is no need to recall that shifting from the zaouia space to stage one is related to the specific relationship between the possessed and the spirits. The possessed identity is strongly linked to the type of spirit he /she is dealing with. Trance is a part of the identity of the possessed. Looking for a social positioning such as taking part in a social group or class, the possessed's perspective is to be healed and accepted among the group individuals. In this way, the possessed, suffering from the loss of his/her identity, tries to be invested in the process of being promoted to a new spiritual state, even symbolically. To get away from the margin and to be integrated into the group, the possessed finds in the scene of trance either in the zaouia or on the stage a transitory moment before reaching the desired spiritual state of trance. In Sufism, the spiritual positions (*Maqâmât*) are unstable and changing constantly. In the band song "*Taghoundja*", it was said that the degrees (*Lmnazel*) are changing. This is an example of the Ghiwani song loaded with many social representations and Sufi meanings. Metaphorically the song talks about

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[8] Pierre Bourdieu (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*, p.12.
[9] Harold Garfinkel (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology*, p.vii.

social contradictions and conflicts in the post-colonial era and the failure of Arab politics in justice, peace and freedom. It shows clearly that the marginalization of the poor population of Morocco, for instance, Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca, was seen by the band as a huge loss for the youth of the seventies. Their song "Day'în" finishes with the expression "*Day'în yal'arab day'în*" (We are lost. O Arabs, we are lost!).

We need to recall that spatial shifting is parallel to spiritual shifting from unconscious to an altered state of consciousness. The intellectual shifting is obviously present in the band's political views stating that the margin needs equal treatment like the elite closure. One more remark: the possessed is always seeking to attend the trance scene because of that need for social positioning and identification. However, the contradiction between the contingency of trance and the stability of the relationship between the possessed and the supernatural entities results from the nature of the bipolarity of the spiritual world, where pain and pleasure are mingled with fear, danger and the need for protection. The final objective of the possessed is reaching a sort of symbiosis between the material world and the spiritual one. Thus, the possessed tries to feel the change from a harmful relationship with the spirits to a beneficial one.

Trance can be considered as the outcome of a series of stages leading to possible healing of the possessed. Some people can take part in the trance rituals just to experience the ecstasy of trance and consciousness change even at the symbolic level by invoking the divine names, supernatural entities and the local saints. In fact, the trance rituals are evaluated positively by society. To recognize the power of the rituals, the possessed is backed up by the community members. The coexistence of meluk/ jnun and the saints is the source of suffering and pleasure. In any case, trance is sublime, enjoying and fearful. Everybody can be engaged in a relationship according to his or her predisposition: Some people can achieve an altered state of consciousness meanwhile others can be indirectly affected and influenced by the pain or pleasure of trance during the rituals in the zaouia or the musicians-therapists performance on stage.

Unfortunately, the Ghiwani style was not fully understood by the *Establishment*, which means that the band suffered from oppression and subsequently was banned from TV and radio programs for many years. The band was moving towards the creation of a new paradigm called the *Ghiwani song "Al- ughniya al ghiwania"*. In fact, the Ghiwani style was not limited to the national sphere; it dealt with the universe cosmogony where nature and culture meet.

10. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the study has tried to explain how trance was triggered by specific conditions of Moroccan society in the seventies. In fact, the youth of that era was in need of freedom and justice resulting from political oppression, religious constraints and popular beliefs, including superstition and myths. To make a difference, Nass El Ghiwane has made a great journey to the roots of Moroccan folklore and traditions. From old popular songs and oriental ones, the band has created a new style in accordance with social change and political maelstrom. The dynamics of the whole society were based on political freedom and social justice after independence. From silence (Why am I a victim of silence? Excerpt from *Ghir Khoudouni*) to the outspoken need for freedom of speech and social well-being, the band has marked his discourse with a strong sociopolitical dimension which was seen as a *protest song* and opposition to the regime. Shifting from the zawiya space to the stage scene, trance is still a social representation which explains how the Self is engaged in a real interaction within the society or the individuals of a certain community where communication and symbolic interaction are forming a new paradigm produced by Nass El Ghiwane since the seventies till now. We finish our paper with a citation of professor Simour about the artistic experience of Nass El Ghiwane:

"*This growth of meanings of the autobiographical narrative becomes textually interwoven with chronotypes of symbolic and metaphorical interpretations that give the text in its entirety analogical and complex knots of ambivalences and contradictions.*" (Simour, 2016: 25)[10]

In any case, the search for universal properties of sound for healing purposes will continue. Trance, in this optics, is a human, universal ability which is manifested differently all over the world. This study is only a trigger for more studies on the trance music of Nass El Ghiwane. Many ways of approaching this subject are open for future studies.

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." William Faulkner

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[10] Lhoussain Simour (2016) Larbi Batma, Nass El Ghiwane and postcolonial music in Morocco, p..25.

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Appendix

- "Trances" documentary 1981, Ahmad El-Maanouni (Morocco)
- Documentary "Musica del trance" TVE (Spanish TV)
- "Kalam al Ghiwan" lyrics of Nass El Ghiwane, supervised by Omar Sayyed
- Al jazeera documentary Nass El Ghiwane part 1
- AL Arabiya TV, Nass el Ghiwane
- Taghounja, movie.