A Radical Concern: Advocacy for an Ingenious Anthropology of Music

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Abstract

In three steps, this paper suggests erecting ingenuity as a tool of investigation: *Ethnomusicology in migration contexts, Strategies and tactics, Categorical assignments*. Ingenuity is not to be understood as a gap in epistemic devices but as an instrument that unleashes the gaze, as a tool that aims to ensure the accuracy of observation reports, and especially as a generator of indignation that may take us out of our "comfort zone." A comfort zone is to be understood here as a knowledge configuration that encourages us to think from established categories that assign people to the place provided for them by existing devices, forgetting to take into account the ways these categories are instituted. This leads us to pay attention to the "categorical service" that ethnomusicology's conceptual frameworks provide to our ways of thinking.

Keywords: Ethnomusicology, Anthropology of Music, migration, music, Epistemology, Eigensinn

Introduction

A radical concern is at the root of this article. I put it abruptly by asking the following question: why is it that the social sciences are unable to counter the initiatives of a world that is rebuilding the walls that the previous generation worked hard to bring down? This question haunts the work of any ethnomusicologist, for the theme of migration is constitutive of the way ethnomusicology has constituted itself as an academic discipline, making it a "discipline of alterity" (Nooshin 2008). I propose investigating this concern in three steps, and I ask the reader to be charitable in accepting that, in this article, ethnomusicology and the anthropology of music are considered lexical equivalents.

Before organizing this return to reflexivity in our profession of ethnomusicologist, I propose to draw up an inventory of the place of ethnomusicology or the anthropology of music in social science studies. This first step will allow us to anchor the reflection carried out here in the field of the musical anthropology of migrations.

Second, I consider ethnographic inquiry as an art of diversion, that is, as an art that allows us to understand the interplay of strategies and tactics actors pursue to thwart the nomological force of the categories that assign them to a particular place in the social system.

Third, I suggest taking seriously the question of the temporal inscription of artistic performances in order to understand what is at stake in those actions that brings us into this mystifying time of a past that cannot be dated, yet which so clearly characterizes the chronicle of migration where harmful narratives of fear and exclusion coexist with forms of status assignment that send asylum seekers back to the eternal past of their supposed ever-lasting cultures (Ortar et al. 2018).

Ethnomusicology in migration contexts

Musical anthropology of migration is an emerging field of research structured in international research programs, international journals, and leading publications. It is customary to consider the pioneering work of Veit Erlmann (1996) and Adelaida Reyes (1999) as the reference works for this type of attention to the migratory question via the analysis of musical practices institutionalized with the international journal Music and Minorities (Vienna , Austria), as well as through the International Research Network entitled "Of what is music capable in situations of Forced Migrations" (*MusiMig*, CNRS) established at Centre Marc Bloch in Berlin and bringing together 10 research teams on a global scale (Laborde 2020). This dynamic should not prevent us from remembering that ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have long studied music in a wide variety of migration contexts. The theme contributes fully to the history of the discipline. I would like to build on perspectives that renew attention to the relationship between music and migration by anchoring it in a multi-disciplinary network. This attitude would enable us to answer the central question: how is it that, despite the expertise it has developed on this theme, both within its own field and, more broadly, within the social sciences, ethnomusicology is reduced to an ancillary status in contemporary debates on mobility, global cities and super-diversity, instead of being treated as "a real turning point in the study of the phenomena of heterogeneity and cultural pluralism" (Doytcheva 2018, 1)? We share a world where the health-related, social, economic, and cultural impacts of the migrant crisis, climate change, and the coronavirus pandemic are shaking up our frames of thought and our ways of making society or even of making science. Social sciences dealing with music must take their rightful place in these social debates, as they have made music a tool for understanding human societies (Aubert 2001, 2007; Nettl 1983; Bohlman 2002; Wade 2000; Baily & Collyer 2006)

The so-called European migrant crisis – which is "emblematic of Europe's ambivalence and fail-

ure to manage forced migrations in the present time" (Zanfrini 2023) – is now shedding new light on the issue of cultural practices in such situations. It also raises issues related to (super)diversity and to the practice of making collectives and individuals visible in the context of a cultural pluralism that is the norm in our societies. Many major symposia and works, most of them exploratory, attempt to identify the issues related to musical practices in such contexts as closely as possible. However, the questioning comes from afar, being rooted in foundations constituted by a set of ethnomusicological studies that deal with the circulation of musicians (Charles-Dominique 2018), musical performances and repertoires mobilized by migrant populations, such as those of Veit Erlmann (1996) and Adelaida Reyes (1999); acoustic landscapes and the link to technological devices (Bronfman 2016); and the construction of public spaces and forms of citizenship through music (Stokes 1994; Damon-Guillot & Lefront 2017; O'Toole 2014). Other studies seek to understand how musical idioms (i) stabilize or, on the contrary, reinvent themselves in diasporic forms that aim at the transnational scale (Chambers 1995; Aubert 2005; Olivier 2012; Ferran 2015), or (ii) mobilize musical experience as an instrument of resilience (Dokter1998; Akombo 2000; DeNora 2013; Kiruthu 2014; Stige, Ansdell, Elefant & Pavlicevic 2016; Ciucci2019, 2022) or as a tool to enhance music's potential to form what Philip Bohlman calls "music's aesthetic agency." In this sense, "music's aesthetic agency" refers to how we become used to paying attention to forms of action that form "complex histories of multiculturalism and [that] are central to the social formations of world music in both the past and the present" (Bohlman 2011b, 148). However, this accumulated knowledge and specific expertise now responds to a significant challenge, namely the responsibility of academic research, and particularly of ethnomusicology as a discipline of alterity to forge appropriate responses to a large-scale social crisis linked to the failure of Europe in managing forced migrations, which constitutes a kind of "elephant in

the room"(i.e. a problem that is so massive that no one notices it or so pervasive in our social worlds that no one wants to talk about it) within the horizons of our thinking.[1]

The Power of Music

This is where the music comes in. Trying to improve understanding of the role that music can play in migration processes – especially for people in situations of forced migration – doesn't mean studying music in the manner of the neurosciences, which seek to decipher, on a subhuman scale, the cerebral mechanisms of the physiological benefits of music (Sacks 2007; Patel 2008; Kringelbach 2009). It is rather a question of assuming a researcher's posture, of finding a place in the device that one intends to describe, and of seizing what music is capable of, that is to say, what the social dynamics carried out in its name produce in cultural environments. In this sense, the power of music is a cultural construction, and we should study it in a situated and contextualized way. And "music's aesthetic agency," quoted from Philip Bohlman above, refers rather to the process of "creating capabilities" (Nussbaum 2011).

If we agree with the ethnomusicologist John Blacking that, since music is "humanly organized sound, it expresses aspects of the experience of individuals in society" (1973:89), it is clear that "what music says" is to be found in the relational form constructed in the utterance, in a contextualized and historicized way, which makes it a cultural form. The history of music is interspersed with themes, melodies, and quotations that bear witness to the misuses, misunderstandings, and polemics associated with what Jacques Cheyronnaud calls "the cultural availability" (Cheyronnaud 1999) of music as a way of indicating all the distinct forms of appropriation to which it can give rise. The history of music is littered with decrees, papal bulls, councils, trials, and fatwas that stigmatize musical statements that are deemed deviant in relation to a norm imposed by a founding exteriority (God, the State, the Sovereign, morality…) and accused of making trouble. This is what, in a previous work, I called "musicoclashes" (Laborde 2002). The uses of music are moral and regulatory issues, including its diplomatic uses. Musical figures such as Yehudi Menuhin, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Daniel Barenboïm, Yo-Yo Ma and Bono of U2 are iconic figures of cultural diplomacy (Laborde 2021). At this point, let us take it for granted that music provides the raw cultural material used by individuals to exercise agentive control over mood, to convey meaning, to experience "virtual" possibilities, and to articulate identity (DeNora 2000). From there, we will try to articulate the question of the migrant artistic practices to the very project of this special issue on "Migrating through the Arts."

The stakes involved

A question enhanced by the "new mobilities paradigm" (Sheller.and Urry. 2006), which intends to account for mobilities as a relational, multiple and context-dependent phenomenon, and which immediately gives a cardinal place to migration studies, could be: How do we approach the analysis of situated actions, especially in light of the multiple identities that are shaping our social worlds? This question establishes a shift in the scale of analysis as an essential element in the very definition of ethnomusicology and refers to our own practices of analysis. This consideration is important to improve understanding of the "scale effect." Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists are used to working on circumscribed

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[1] Borrowed from philosophical discussions between Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein, the syntagma "elephant in the room" is topical in analytically inspired sociological approaches: Eviatar Zerubavel's book *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life* (2006). In the field of music anthropology, the term was coined by Bruno Nettl in his *Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology* (2010). He justifies his title as follows: "I must suggest that the issues emanating from ethnomusicological insights are often the "elephant in the room"" (Nettl 2010, xiv). The book was followed by a polyphonic issue of the journal *Ethnomusicology*: Following the Elephant: *Ethnomusicologists Contemplate Their Discipline* (2016).

units at relatively small scales, which leads them to refer to these observation units as "terrains" and to shape the problem of the relationship between various scales in their descriptive projects. This is particularly important when dealing with local and large-scale migration contexts. The very question is to confront the relationship between the unique and accidental (individuals, events, situated actions, case studies) and both the repetitive and its variations (the observable regularities from which generalization could be inferred). But the change in the scale of analysis is an essential element in the definition of the new studies of musical migration. Our monographs are the depositaries of a documentary coherence. Familiarity is supposed to guarantee a mastery of the object of analysis, as well as a representation of reality that often seems to require that problems be asserted in terms of concrete, tangible, visible units. A monograph is defined in terms of practice, and the description leads to those practices: data and constructed proofs are presented. Those monographs laid the foundations for ethnomusicology. But how can we deal with the proliferation of monographs? Should we regard each monograph as a piece of a puzzle?

It is on these questions that I wish to open the second stage of this paper, which will question our ways of constructing typologies, recurrences, regularities, or any means of building a general science of musical practices in situations of forced migration. It doesn't matter which musical practice it is, it doesn't matter what the styles, the repertoires, the instruments are, it doesn't matter what is the context of musical practice along the migratory route. What counts here is the engagement of the body in a musical action.

First of all, two clarifications. My remarks are inspired by the readings of books that reshape an anarchist anthropology as set out by Pierre Clastres, David Graeber or James C. Scott. They are carried by a concern that can be formulated quite simply in the following way: How is it possible that given the altruism that characterizes our epistemologies – what Benoît de l'Estoile (2007) calls "Le Goût des Autres" (The taste for others) – that the world we inhabit dreams of barriers, exclusion, and segregation? What's at stake here is the place of ethnomusicologists and, broader, the place of social sciences in the public debate.

It is from this interrogation, which is eminently political in the most general sense that refers to the "life of the *polis*" (as a political community of citizens, also called *civitas*), that I approach the last stages of my contribution: 1. an art of detour; 2. a temporal inscription.

An art of detour

Martin Stokes' efforts to "bring the issue of migration back into ethnomusicology" (2020) are of a density that challenges us all. *He argues that "the current moment is one in which the final vestiges of language about migrant culture as adaptive have been swept away and in which the populist evocation of a migrant crisis at our gates has posed unsettling challenges [and] explores the tensions between an emphasis on migrant creativity and survival, mobility and motility, and identity and citizenship" (Stokes 2020, 1).* This position leads us to consider that when Stokes is interested in the Oxford Maqam group (Stokes, This issue), it is not a modest neighborhood group that he is interested in. The musicians here are of a very high level, having joined the band precisely for this excellence. Making music together at such a high level of practice mobilizes the skills of each musician. Doing so, the group enters the contemporary market of musical mobilities, plays all over the world, receives laudatory reviews in mainstream magazines, and makes exceptionality the mark of their commitment. It is therefore a group marked with the seal of exceptionality in a migratory context. And this is a characteristic of many of the cases presented in this issue: many of the musicians we meet are marked by this seal of exceptionality. This brings us back to the dialectical relations mentioned above between the different ways of making our analyses exemplary: how do we construct intelligibility? How do we articulate the singular experience that is the common horizon of our ethnographies and

our fieldwork with the broad scale of migration and analyses of diversity on the global level?

Let's take a little step back. In this context, therefore, what is the relationship between the musical style performed by people in a situation of forced migration, their instrumental or vocal practices, and the modes of writing these repertoires? To put more simply: are migrants condemned to play "their music," or the idea that we have of this music, which would be "theirs" in the name of an essentialized identity? Or are they invited to play the repertoire of the host country at the risk of reactivating, through music, the codes of cultural domination?

Many musicians are involved in NGOs and work in refugee camps. They make music the driving force of their commitment, pledging themselves in the name of music and its properties of resilience (see above), a music able to help overcome the suffering endured in forced exile because it touches the deepest part of the human soul. At this point, the question of musical analysis which we have just discussed joins the social question.

Let's compare the Al Kamandjati project, which founded the Ramallah school in 2005 around a project combining instrument-making and the Arab musical repertoire, to the El Sistema project, which radiates throughout the world, including in the refugee camps in Greece, with the Western Symphony Orchestra as its tool and a desirable horizon. With the Western Symphony Orchestra as a model, including its instruments, its conductor, its spatial arrangement, its chairs, its desks, and its scores, the model of the orchestra situates the five-line musical staff in cultural frameworks where the musical traditions that nourish musical practices which are out of step with the probity of militant mobilizations. The five-line musical stave imposes musical rules that play the role of cultural domestication. Two responses are then possible. On the one hand, we can see this musical practice as a way to escape any form of cultural determinism and to prepare forms of social inclusion through musical practices. On the other hand, we can see it as a way of ratifying

a cultural domination that does not offer the repertoires of otherness a chance to express themselves. "Music" does not inhabit a decontextualized or dehistoricized existence. To choose an instrumental formation or a repertoire is to make a cultural mark.

This, then, is a question of strategy and tactics. To put it with Clea Hance, "Which cultural diversity will survive such cultural policies?" (Hance 2014). This focus on the use of musical repertoires in refugee camps leads us to examine how the cultural richness of human societies is articulated with the question of agency when human beings are plunged into a situation of anomie in refugee camps (Bohlman 2011a). Of course, it would be futile to assign to each person the marks of his or her own culture of origin or to attribute to him or her the desire to live according to the immutable rules of an inherited culture from which no one should deviate. From this point of view, the confrontation with other musical traditions can be assimilated to a form of opening up to a repairing agency, as Awet Andemicael suggests in her report to the UNHCR entitled *Positive energy: a review of the role of artistic activities in refugee camps* (Andemicael 2011). I am not trying to say here that the fact that people in a situation of forced migration can "discover" the symphony orchestra in a refugee camp and play in formations that obey the standards of the Western world would be an aporia to be fought in the name of cultural rights! But it is advisable to avoid postulating the symphonic orchestra as the only desirable horizon in disregard of the remarkable richness of the world, which is also a vector of agency. The UNESCO's preamble to the declaration of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005 Convention) is also relevant in refugee camps, namely "Being aware that cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values, and therefore is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations." Then are the artistic mobilizations that are

expressed in emergency situations tools of resilience, as Awet Andemicael claims in her report, or are they powerful machines of acculturation, or even vicariousness?

How can we not share with many ethnomusicologists today the concern that such questions are not being addressed by today's ethnomusicology? Or more precisely, that ethnomusicology is rendered inaudible within social-science dialogues? Certainly, we know the contributions of Hugo Zemp and Steven Feld on Rorogwela. This Afunakwa lullaby became Deep Forest's Grammy-winning Sweet Lullaby without anyone calling this creation or arrangement a plundering (Feld 2000). Yet it is indeed a process of "cultural extractivism" (Ochoa 2014; Serafini 2020). But then, how can we conceive an "art of the detour" that expresses itself in this way?

In his famous preface to *Essais critiques* (Critical essays), Roland Barthes (1964) notes that, if you want to show sympathy for someone who is mourning, you have to "make sentences" and go through that indirect moment that all forms of writing involve. This recourse to indirect formulation is what he calls the art of the detour. As I conceive it here, the "art of the detour" refers to this capacity to act in a situation. Something can be said that is likely to bypass the coercive hold of social discourse. It is the art of the detour. The question of the detour is a constant in the work of any ethnomusicologist. And here we have our first paradox: ingenuity is the heuristic posture that allows us to grasp the detour as an art, and it does not matter whether it goes in the right or the wrong direction. It is the process that holds my attention.

Many ethnomusicologists have questioned the success of certain artists, while others, with similar artistic proposals, have not managed to make it on the international scene of musical diversity. Sandrine Teixido (2018), studying the case of Jean-Didier Hoareau, or Charlotte Grabli (2019), studying the Katangan artists Bosco Mwenda and Edouard Marenzo, paint them as resourceful artists, which is why they succeeded. They succeeded because they were able to forge

what, through his objective of understanding the mind as a creator of meanings, the psychologist Jerome Bruner would have called an "intercultural personality" (1990), i.e., a personality that creates the forms of social exteriority in its context of existence, while allowing itself to be forged in return by this social exteriority. This culturalist orientation of human cognition helps us to better understand the way artists are adulated (by the colonial administration in the case of the Katangese, by the audience of the great Parisian festival of African music Africolor in the case of Houareau). In reality, however the support is not only "found" in the environment of the artists in question, it is also forged as such by the artists themselves in their capacity to set up the frameworks of international cultural cooperation or private financiers, from Coca-Cola to Bata or Aspro, as resources for their creative and dissemination activities. This is what the psychologist James Gibson calls "affordances of action" (Gibson 1979). I have been able to study this mechanism in relation to the improvisation of musicians or spoken word artists who are able to draw resources for their own improvisation directly from the environment in which they improvise (Laborde 2006).

If we are willing to consider that the implementation of a musical creation in a cultural universe that receives it and makes it its own is analogous to the situation of the musician who improvises, why would we not take the risk of analogy by applying to musical implementation the resources of a pragmatist analysis of situated action (on analogy as a heuristic tool, see Hofstadter and Sander, 2013)? This would lead us to consider this skill of creating the external conditions of one's own fame as a form of competence to turn events that arise or expectations that take shape into resources for an implementing action, i.e., into affordances of action. It is precisely under this description that I consider the agency (or the *Handlungsfähigkeit*) as referring to the capacity for initiative of everyone, including in situations of anomie. It also refers to the ability to treat situations of musical

practice as situations of engagement in diversified forms of social bonding. This is why I place the making of music under this all-encompassing notion of agency as an ability to deal with situations.

By involving the question of affordances of action in the regime of tactics, we treat musicians as authors of their own trajectory and not only as the passive agents of their careers. Here I propose to distinguish between biography, life-course and career, according to the terms presented by Bénédicte Zimmermann (2013). *Biography* is the story of a life made tragic by the violence of forced migration and constructed for an outsider for the purpose of testimony. Here, the subjective aspect draws the auctorial force of the setting in narrative. The *course of life* in exile pays attention to the person, to the private spaces that make up the fabric of the migrant's existence, to life projects, to interactions with the environment (Dewey 1980 [1934]:13), and to life paths. It is here that the forms of affordance are constructed that turn such and such an encounter, such and such an event, into a resource for constructive action. The *career* is a matter of attribute and of statutory attribution: it incites each musician to claim to be an artist above all and to reject any attribute that sends him back to the sole status of a migrant. The confrontation between these three registers of experience – biography, course of life, and career – should allow us to delimit the key situations that make it possible to identify, and then to study closely, the legal, social, policing, administrative, cultural, and family mechanisms the artists encounter. But in addition, such a confrontation should also allow us to improve understanding of how the musicians themselves confront or circumvent these registers of experience and thus allow us to characterize life in a situation of forced migration. We can then analyze the musician's action in terms of turning the mechanisms of cultural domination into resources for inventiveness, which brings us back, as I will now explain, to the distinction made by Michel de Certeau (1990) between strategies and tactics.

Strategy is the mark of detachment. It is the calculation of power relations that becomes possible when a subject can be isolated from an "environment." Tactics are more akin to forms of creative improvisation. They are based on empathy, on this capacity to put oneself in other people's shoes in order to consider a situation "from their point of view." This is what enables each person to adjust his or her own action according to how he or she sees the action of others. In so far as they escape nomological powers, tactics offer a game of actors in which each one invests his or her own inventive capacities. As Michel de Certeau states:

> I call strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of the relations of power that becomes possible from the moment when a subject of will and power (a company, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be circumscribed as a proper and be the basis for managing relations with an exteriority of targets or threats (clients or competitors, enemies, the countryside around the city, the objectives and objects of research, etc.). As in management, any "strategic" rationalization first sets out to distinguish an "environment" from a "proper," that is to say, the place of one's own power and will. A Cartesian gesture, if you like: to circumscribe a proper in a world that is forced by the invisible powers of the Other. A gesture of scientific, political or military modernity (de Certeau, 1990:59).

When, in 2019, A. Aterianus-Owanga, A. Gaulier, J. Menet, C. Navarro, A. Rodriguez and M. Salzbrunn organized an international colloquium at the University of Lausanne entitled *Migrating through the Arts: Rethinking worlds of music and dance through the lens of contemporary (im) mobilities*, Jean-Christophe Sevin explained very clearly how the Massilia Sound System synthesized the meeting of reggae and chats in Marseilles. Doing so, the group drew a universe of strategy through an interpretative calculus aiming at elucidating "the institutionalized world of rap" in order to circumvent it better. But when Jack Dish joins the Marseilles team in the name of "the Mauritian spirit", then it is a universe of tactics that takes shape. How can we deal with this dialectic between strategy and tactics?

By taking into account the fact that this "art of detour" signals the capacity of each person to act on his history?

This is what Michel de Certeau said on tactics:

> I call tactics the calculated action determined by the absence of a proper. Whereas no delimitation of exteriority provides it with the condition of an autonomy. Tactics has for place only that of the other. So it must play with the terrain imposed on it as organized by the law of a foreign force. It does not have the means to stand within itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, of anticipation, and of self-gathering: it is movement "within the enemy's field of vision", as Von Bulow said, and in the space controlled by him (ibid.:60-61).

However, we can see that saying this remains unsatisfactory because we have left aside the whole question and the levers of action. The notional pair strategy and tactics leads us here to open a wider perspective on "control relationships" (Chateauraynaud, 2015). This will be the third step in this paper: "What figures or antifigures do the undisciplinary tactics of the 'defeated of history' borrow to persist and resist vis-à-vis the patterns, figures, and paths imposed by the strategies in which they are caught?" (Mboukou, 2015:3).

Referential actualization

The identification of strategies and tactics is the usual horizon of our field observations. To mention a few well-known cases, we take it for granted when tourism replaces sugarcane to become in turn a monoculture, or when Gnawas musicians adapt to disparate cultural environments that sometimes jostle them, or when negotiations take place on international World Music markets to decide on the value of musical creation to which one does not know how to set a price. But on each of these occasions, we are, like Gérard Lenclud's anthropologist or Paul Veyne's historian, "at ease in the study of behaviors and mentalities only when they have settled, conceptually or not, in the peaceful conviction that the awareness that an individual or a society has of its behavior is the least of things" (Veyne, 1976: 37). From then on, the anthropologist's job

consists in endowing the observed subjects with instrumental rationality, from which a coherence becomes observable. Now, what rationality are we talking about, and what coherence? They are, we believe, ideas of rationality and coherence provided to the observer by his own culture. Isn't any observer actuated by his own culture of belonging? We do not escape this self-referential work of imputation.

But then, aren't we keeping ourselves approximately at a distance from the facts we hope to make intelligible? Indeed, it is not easy to identify the place where these attitudes are situated, the place where face-to-face meetings decide on postures, the place where interactions produce adjustments, conventions, breaks, and conflicts. At the same Lausanne conference, Hélène Neveu-Kringelbach performed a highly virtuoso exercise by managing to narrow the focus of her observation to the point where migration statistics are shifted onto international regulations embodied in visa-allocation mechanisms. As defined in the 2023 World Development Report of the World Bank, "there are globally about 184 million migrants (about 2.3 percent of the world's population)—37 million of them refugees" (Migrants, Refugees and Societies 2020: 1). These are what everyone plays with in face-to-face encounters that demonstrate a complete arbitrariness of decision-making on the part of state officials.

But then, by proceeding in this way, by making the world fit into our categories without having questioned how we are used to constructing the categories, are we not taking the risk of producing a smooth, irenic, consensual world, a world in which we would only see the operational virtue of our concepts, a world whose description would seem to be self-evident? How can we account for the symbolic violence of an entrepreneurial liberalism that imposes the norms of a globalized music market without concretely examining the asymmetry of power relations in interactions? How can we account, moreover, for the enterprising entrepreneurs who only want to bypass the established categories in the spirit of a counterculture?

The call for a form of ingenuity in ethnographic inquiry that I make in the title of this chapter would likely be an incitement to question our explanatory models as well, to propose a case-based thinking rather than nomological thinking that would proceed by collecting examples in a world of Popperian reasoning (see above). In this framework, what place do our epistemologies give to this form of agency that encourages anyone to mobilize cultural resources to make them vectors of innovation, tools that allow for the secretion of agency, i.e. a capacity to play with regulatory frameworks? This is also what the historian Alf Lüdtke calls *Eigensinn*, a modality of assuming individual attitudes that allow one to act on situations to challenge the established order[2]. *Eigensinn* is therefore a form of resistance that is captured as close as possible to the interactions. This reduction in the scale of observation is, according to Lüdtke, the way to avoid finding ourselves in the posture of the logician Nelson Goodman, who, while he tries to describe the world, realizes, at the end of his reasoning, that he never finds in the world more than the tools he has equipped himself with to try and describe it. Would we work, like Nelson Goodman, on a theory of *depiction* where we thought we were producing a theory of *description*? Referencing this, referencing that, existing as such, must point to a reference that does not exist.

Let us question our encyclopedic knowledge for a moment. Any encyclopedic enterprise presents a state of knowledge about some families of objects. Music, the musical traditions of the world, do not escape this form of *libido sciendi*. Every encyclopedia presents a state of knowledge, and in its final editing, the way in which knowledge is constructed counts for much less than the final description of the object of knowledge. Now, unlike encyclopedias, books in the human and social sciences have in common with the art of travelling that "the final destination counts less than the path to arrive" (Lenclud, 1991: 49). To put it more clearly, if we pay attention to the way knowledge is constructed, the fact that a reference exists is less important than the mechanism of actualization that the imputation of the existence of a reference allows. But then, why do we target the reference rather than the dynamics of referential imputation? Why are we satisfied with taking assertoric truths for granted without trying to analyze the mechanisms that make us "take for granted" those assertions that we bring into our universes of discourse? Is it not because, "provided that a world consists of statements, truth may be relevant. But truth cannot be defined or be checked by compliance with 'the world'. Truth is a docile and an obedient servant, not a 'severe master' (Goodman, 1978: 31)?

The question of referencing represents a cardinal issue in our epistemologies because it draws the inscription of traces and reference points in time, the inscription of marks and signposts that establish an identity for each person in time (Lenclud, 2008).

This excursus brings me back to the subject of this article: an appeal to a form of ingenuity in ethnographic practice. A proverb attributed to Lao Tzu draws our attention to the fact that "When the wise man points to the moon the idiot

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2   The word Eigensinn has given rise to a substantial body of scientific literature. It is virtually impossible to translate. In the online journal Docupedia, Thomas Lindenberger has devoted an important article to the presentation of the term Eigen-Sinn, which he does not translate. Some English-speaking users commonly translate it as "stubbornness", others bring it closer to "agency" to designate this capacity to act on one's own, but neither translation is really satisfactory. In the German Alltagsgeschichte (Everyday History) of the '80s, Eigensinn was used to understand individual behavior and its impact on spheres of power and domination, on strategies of resistance and dropping out. As early as 1986, Alf Lüdtke, then active at the Göttingen Max Planck Institute for History, used the word Eigensinn to gain a better understanding of the behavior of factory workers (Lüdtke 1986). Here, I use it in reference to that capacity for initiative demonstrated by people placed in situation of forced migration: they are not only "stirred" by circumstances, situations and institutions, they also act on their own, turning situations into resources for varied repertoires of action. In this sense, I come close to the theory expressed by Vilén Flüsser in his book *Von der Freiheit des Migranten Einsprüche gegen den Nationalismus,* in which he views migration as "eine kreative Situation" (Flüsser 2021).

looks at the finger". One can laugh, of course, at the complexification of the set of references, its designation, and its actualization. However, if one brings the game of observation back to the exercise of the ethnologist's profession, it appears to me that we still tend to look at the moon before all else, that is to say, at the reference rather than the setting to the status of reference that would be the gesture of showing.

Questioning about the truth, the anthropologist Gérard Lenclud shifts the question of the truth "itself" towards the question of the "holding for true," a real enigma in the social sciences because in itself "the truth does not reveal the enigma of the holding for true" (Lenclud, 1990: 11). What is true for "the truth" is also true for the regimes of truth induced in the modes of ethnographic intelligibility in which we work. If we seek to understand the mechanism of referential actualization more than the reference generated in this interpretive calculation, then we are on the side of "the idiot who looks at the pointing finger" rather than "the moon designated as the reference." To consider that a piece of music is what is said about it and that those who carry it are what they are says nothing, indeed, about the commitment to the belief that music is what it is or that musicians are what they are. For this reason, here I advocate a form of ingenuity in the anthropologist's attitude of knowledge so that he or she focuses on the pointing finger rather than on the moon, which is indeed in the place designated by the finger. The institution of reference is worth more than the reference itself. For the whole question is there: aren't the actors of these worlds of music that we want to endow with intelligibility, without our being aware of it, in the place foreseen for them by our universes of knowledge?

Conclusion

If we take into account the art of detour (strategies and tactics) in our descriptions of musical statuses and actions, if we take seriously the question of the temporal inscription of these actions and dynamics of referential actualization,

then we make accounts of observation more complex, not being content to assign to the social interactions that we decrypt "a categorical vocation in the service of descriptions that are generally open more or less implicitly to evaluation" (Cheyronnaud, 2012: 201). We do not ask the interactions to bend to our analytical grids; we grasp them in their complexity and singularity while agreeing not to praise the rise to generality as the ultimate principle of ethnographic investigation.

This idea of reintroducing complexity into our descriptions, of making our analytical frameworks more complex, of making our argumentative models more flexible should make it possible to access spaces of social interaction that reveal what is unnoticed (I do not say invisible; cf. Salzbrunn, 2019, 2016). This would enable us to build an anthropology of music that is concerned to uncover what is hidden, rather than constructing explanatory models based on exteriority.

This posture does not question the high level of intelligibility that characterizes anthropology in its interactions with social analysis. Instead, it aims to examine our capacity to dialogue with other disciplines, in particular with those "sister disciplines" that share the fact of having "music" as their object, so-called in a Promethean symposium of 1997 held by the International Society of Musicology. This resulted in a magnum opus in the musical sciences whose 712 pages were edited by David Greer (Greer, ed., 2000). Such a posture might be an answer to Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose works occupy a canonical place in our libraries and whose *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962) remains within reach on our desks. We want the candid posture we assume here to displace the question of the alternative posed by Lévi-Strauss, who, writing about a lace collar painted by Clouet, proposed to renounce "sensible dimensions by the acquisition of intelligible dimensions" (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 34).

In this contribution, I tried to erect ingenuity as an investigatory tool that enables us to prevent the nomothetic power with which such tools are normally invested. Among other things,

the anthropology of music in migration contexts, strategies and tactics, and categorical assignments are areas in which I have tried to apply this ingenuity. The idea is not that of "discovering" a Weberian axiological neutrality that would be the irenic encounter of our project of knowledge and a reality that is preconstructed in our perception of the world. However, instead, the idea that perceptions of the environment and the events that take place in it are not immune to the constraints of our epistemic activity. In this sense, the problem of the inscrutability of reference, outlined in recent times by W.V.O. Quine, shows that there are no purely descriptive sentences. The factual does not exist independently of what is said about it, and what is said about it links us to that furniture of the world that pre-exists our denotative undertakings.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, at the price of an "art of the detour," i.e., a way of bringing the themes of the anthropology of music to the heart of social debates, we are well aware that musical practices do not appear to be crucial to migration issues. In the emergency situations we work on, the practical issues of reception, safety, food, hygiene, and health in the broadest sense are of prime importance. However, as soon as these situations stabilize, questions of resilience, social interaction, the link with the culture of origin and its concrete manifestations and confrontation with the conditions put in place by the host society confront everyone with questions of cultural practices in which music – like culinary practices, for that matter – plays a cardinal role. In this context, musical practices say a great deal about the place given to cultural memory, about the commitment to the discovery of new repertoires, new alliances and opportunities, and about the power of music which, intelligently invested both by the migrants themselves and by those in charge of welcoming them, can become a tool for social inclusion in the service of building the multicultural societies that are the development horizon of our social worlds.

Nevertheless, we have seen that saying this is not enough and that we need to make room

for the creativity of action in situations of forced migration. Everyone in a situation of forced migration acts. Moreover, to act is to deal with a situation. In this sense, we need to recognize, with Vilém Flusser, the initiative that each person in a situation of forced migration takes to ward off determinations, adapt to the situations they have to face, and act on these situations by relying on what I have proposed to call, after Gibson, affordances of action. They do this by seeking, in the action environment, supports that function as resources for adapting behavior to the situation, i.e. adjusted to both the imperatives imposed by the asymmetrical balance of power (whether administrative, practical, symbolic, legal or affective) and the desires that fuel the individual's project. We have proposed to grasp this link with the creativity of action by thematizing the question of *Eigensinn*, raised by Alf Lüdtke, by arguing that it is more accurate than agency in that it refers not only to a disposition in the person to act freely, but to an action engaged in a situation by a person with a personal goal.

At a time when our social debates seem stuck on the incantatory rhetoric of the danger of immigration and appeals to identity or citizenship, perhaps the time has come to look favorably on the creativity of migrants' actions when situated in a situation of survival. To grasp these forms of creativity, I argue that focusing on cultural practices as spaces of creation can help us see further. In particular it can help us examine how these practices encounter, question, and sometimes modify the spaces of recognition set up by host societies as they strive to make immigration acceptable. Emphasizing these spaces of creativity means abandoning ready-made theories of cultural practices and considering them in the most deliberately candid way possible. This is also a way, it seems, of putting an end to the invisibilization of differences under nomothetic covers and of making the development of these capabilities appear as what they are: the ferment of our multicultural societies, societies in which the attention paid to others does not necessarily mean adherence to their values, but a better

knowledge of cultural behaviors, thanks to which it seems possible to build a habitable world, rich in its diversity and intense in its mutual respect.

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