

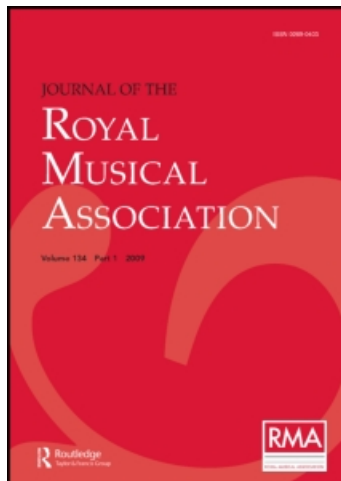
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The Utility of Musical Instruments in the Racial and Colonial Agendas of Late Nineteenth-Century France

JANN PASLER

SYSTEMS for classifying musical instruments have long been understood as relatively neutral forms of analysis, whether based on detailed culture-specific studies acknowledging inter- and intra-cultural commonalities, or on universalist assumptions of shared characteristics worldwide. This article takes a different perspective. In the late nineteenth century, when, as Margaret Kartomi has observed, the classification of instruments began to be investigated ‘in earnest’,¹ these approaches, I argue, had roots in conflicting attitudes toward race and racial origins. Beginning in the 1860s, most members of the Société d’Anthropologie believed in polygenism, a separate origin for each human race, and thought that variations between human populations (and anything they produced, including music) reflected distinct racial characteristics. Those who endorsed monogenism, the idea that all races descended from one, sought to understand universal traits throughout the globe. In the France of the early Third Republic (1871–1940), these conflicting beliefs were embraced by people espousing competing political positions, especially when it came to French colonial policy. Race was used both to rationalize political differences and to insist on their validity.

In this article I examine the role musical instruments played in the debates about race and politics, particularly in attempts to shape French perceptions of Africa and Indo-China during imperialist expansion (see Table 1). To understand

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¹ Margaret Kartomi, ‘The Classification of Musical Instruments: Changing Trends in Research from the Late Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to the 1990s’, *Ethnomusicology*, 45 (2000–1), 283–314. See also *Issues in Organology: Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, 8, ed. Sue Carole De Vale (Los Angeles, 1990).

TABLE 1

MAJOR COLONIAL EVENTS

1624	First French company to exploit Senegal
1834	Algeria becomes a French colony
1857	Initiation of the first native infantry in the French army, the <i>tirailleurs sénégalais</i> (see Figure 5)
1860	Treaty with the king of Madagascar, opening it to French commerce
1864	Cochin China and Cambodia become French protectorates
1874	French treaty with Annam, first stage to becoming a protectorate
1878	Paris, Universal Exhibition
1879	Chinese invade Annam (see Figure 15)
1880	Chambre de Députés votes 1.3 million francs to begin a Trans-Saharan railroad from Senegal to the Niger River
1881	French discover the source of the Niger River
1882	Tunisia becomes a French protectorate
1883	French defeat of the <i>Pavillons noirs</i> at Nam-Dinh (see Figure 1); establishment of a French Department of the Colonies
1884	Annam and Cambodia become French colonies (see Figure 7)
1885	Madagascar becomes a French protectorate
1887	Union of Cochin China, Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin as French Indo-China
1889	Paris Universal Exhibition and International Colonial Congress
1891	Parts of Guinea and French Sudan (Upper Senegal) become distinct French colonies (see Figures 5, 9, 10, 18)
1892	French conquest of the Niger River (see Figures 5, 18); French war with Dahomey (see Figure 2)
1893	Dahomey becomes French protectorate
1894	French Department of the Colonies replaced by a Ministry
1895	French defeat Malagasy at Tananarive
1896	Madagascar becomes a French colony (see Figure 12); Tuaregs defeat the French at Timbuktu (see Figure 11)
1899	Franco-English accord over Abyssinia (Ethiopia)
1900	Paris Universal Exhibition and International Colonial Congress

what instruments can mean, therefore, I am suggesting that we study not only their relationship to similar instruments and the contexts in which they were made and are performed, but also the uses to which outsiders have put them – and not just organologists and museologists. It is important to understand the values ‘observer-imposed’ and ‘downward’ or ‘top-down’ classifications systems may reflect and the implications embedded in their use, not just whether they adequately describe the universe as we perceive it. This article does not pretend to contribute to our knowledge of instruments per se; rather it hopes to shed light on how knowledge about instruments has sometimes been constructed and used, especially when the context is Western imperialism.

Race, politics and music

Soon after Egyptians, Algerians and Tunisians appeared in their first Parisian Exhibition in 1867, François-Joseph Fétis, one of the most respected musicologists and educators in Europe, began a general history of music. In its first sentence, he ties music explicitly to race:

The history of music is inseparable from appreciation of the special properties belonging to the races that have cultivated it. This essentially ideal art owes its existence to the humans who create it . . . it is the product of human faculties which are distributed unequally among peoples as well as individuals.²

Two beliefs underlie this history. First, like many of his contemporaries, Fétis assumed that skull shape and size are links to older times and evidence of intellectual capacity. As he put it, sounds do not affect people the same way because ‘a feeling for music, for nations as well as individuals, is related to the shape of the brain’. For him, that shape determines a person’s capacity to understand relationships between sounds – his definition of music.³ Second, he saw progress, or the ability to develop progressively over time, as characteristic of the Aryan race unlike others.⁴ Through his history of music, Fétis sought to determine the ‘necessary conditions for the creation of this art and its development’, ‘to distinguish the human race that possesses these qualities’ and ‘to study the filiation of peoples descendent from this race, their interbreeding with other less privileged races, the influences from the environment in which they lived, and the circumstances that favoured or retarded their progress’.⁵

Fétis was not the first, nor the last, to tie an investigation of music and musical instruments to a classification of peoples and to see the performance of culture as the performance of intelligence and character. For the time, he was simply the most ambitious in the French-speaking world and perhaps the best known, having served as director of the Brussels Conservatoire since 1833, authored the popular *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835–44), and published numerous theoretical treatises. Full of musical transcriptions and lithographs of musical instruments, his history rapidly grew to 13 books in five volumes (1869–76), even if it was never finished. Most of it concerned music

² François-Joseph Fétis, ‘Préface’ (26 August 1868), *Histoire générale de la musique depuis les temps les plus anciens jusqu’à nos jours*, i (Paris, 1869), i–viii (p. i). Two years earlier Fétis had also published ‘Sur un nouveau mode de classification des races humaines d’après leurs systèmes musicaux’, *Bulletins de la Société d’Anthropologie de Paris*, 2/ii (1867), 134–46 (p. 134). His collection of instruments forms the basis of the instrument museum at the Brussels Conservatoire.

³ Fétis, ‘Avant-propos’, *Histoire générale de la musique*, ii (Paris, 1869), i–vi (p. i); *ibid.*, 11.

⁴ This idea harks back to early race theorists of the 1850s, such as Gobineau, who saw the white race as the model for all humanity, and history (i.e. progress) as the result of contact with the white race. Other music scholars of the period concurred. John Rowbotham began his three-volume study, *A History of Music* (London, 1885–7), with the assertion: ‘The history of savage races is a history of arrested developments’ (i, p. 1).

⁵ Fétis, ‘Préface’, ii–iii.

outside Europe and before the fifth century. His assumptions about 'our art' as 'the most elevated' and even 'the only art' were obviously racist, and his attempt to ally musical scales with race was ultimately unsuccessful.⁶ Still, he was someone who understood the importance of looking beyond the Greeks for the origins of Western music; he showed the contributions geology, anthropology, ethnography and linguistics could make to an understanding of music; and he practised the comparative method. In this sense, he contributed to the beginning of ethnomusicology.

In France after 1870, racial theories played an increasing role in national politics. For monarchists, polygenist ideas seemed to validate historical aristocratic privileges, refuting the idea that man is everywhere equal. At the International Colonial Congress held during the 1889 Exhibition, Gustave Le Bon, who had written extensively on Arab civilization (1884), India (1887) and primitive cultures (1889), presented a new foundation for the assertion of Aryan superiority. In his influential book expanding on this lecture, *Les lois psychologiques de l'évolution des peuples* (1894) or *The Psychology of Peoples*, Le Bon proposed that the soul of a race is reflected in its beliefs and traditions – 'the inheritance of all its ancestors'. The arts not only manifest the soul of a civilization, they change only in accord with its racial predispositions. Le Bon believed that these dispositions are inherited and that the nature of a people – its soul, or its 'forms of thought, logic, and above all character' – is fixed and homogeneous, not alterable by education or intelligence. In this context, he categorized races as primitive, inferior, average and superior.⁷ For those driven by 'la revanche' (revenge) and preferring to concentrate French energy on Germany's return of Alsace and Lorraine, this provided arguments for staying at home instead of developing more colonies.

Le Bon and his colleagues had bitter enemies, especially among Republicans, the majority in government since 1877. As divided as they were on how to accomplish their political goals, most Republicans ardently believed in the potential of the environment to influence people and in the ability of people, through education and reason, to adapt and change. Their democracy hinged on the belief that education would help diminish class differences and ensure more social equality in France – important concepts for the workers, farmers and peasants who elected them and for those seeking a political basis to keep monarchists from returning to power. Whether they agreed with Quatrefages and others who espoused monogenism, Republicans had faith in the environment's capacity to produce racial diversity – which they called human acclimatization. Such a belief was crucial to those who wished to see white settlers thrive in the tropics.

The exotic Other (and everything associated with it) thus was the site of a power struggle within France. Did the benefits of imperialist expansion merit the costs? Could other races ever become assimilated and learn to behave as the

⁶ Fétis, 'Avant-propos', vi.

⁷ Gustave Le Bon, *The Psychology of Peoples* (New York, 1924), 37, 126.

French?⁸ There were Catholic monarchists who, despite Le Bon's arguments, supported the country's 'civilizing mission' abroad. They tended to do so under the pretence of redeeming the unwashed from ignorance while seeking to enhance the power of one religion and the Western patriarchy at its centre. Anticlerical Republicans, from a slightly different perspective, also saw France's role as liberating others from political tyranny and superstition, though underlying this was the desire to extend the reach of French institutions and the French language. For the pragmatic Opportunist Republicans who revived imperialist expansion in the 1870s and built the political majority after 1877, foreign acquisitions were much more. Because the colonies could be exploited for their natural resources, serve as new markets for French products, and expand the influence of France in the world, they provided the potential for an alternative power base and alternative claims to grandeur strong enough to replace those of the aristocratic French dynasties and the glories of the distant French past. Civilization for them involved the recognition of flux as a result of contact with the Other and the potential for change at home as well as abroad.

In a culture that looked to 'the instructive lesson' and turned everything into a system of signification,⁹ music, musicians, musical instruments, performance contexts and images of these, I will argue, were looked to for help in supporting or denying these arguments. Seemingly neutral from a political perspective, these were often associated with race, ethnicity, class, gender and culture, and were sometimes a way of seeing the interconnections between them. These helped people become aware of their own positions in the debates about race, identity and nation.¹⁰

Stereotypes and the comparative method

Republicans believed that what makes us human is our power to observe, define and classify. They considered classification and comparison to be the basis for rational judgment and among the foundations of a democratic society. Widespread Western European interest in classifying peoples by their racial

⁸ My study supports the view of George Marcus and Rey Chow that ethnographies and an interest in the primitive have tended to emerge in the context of cultural crisis and historical change and that they should be studied in the context of larger systems and events. See Marcus, 'Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System', *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley, 1986), 165–93 (pp. 165–6), and Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York, 1995), 22.

⁹ In his *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988), Timothy Mitchell discusses the West as 'a place where one was continually pressed into service as a spectator by a world ordered so as to represent' (p. 13). He suggests that Universal Exhibitions reflected people's general tendency to conceive and grasp the world beyond as if it, too, were an exhibition.

¹⁰ I concur with Stephen Greenblatt who, in his *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1991), writes that 'representations are not only products but producers, capable of decisively altering the very forces that brought them into being' (p. 6).

characteristics – racial ‘types’ – led to study of various customs along with facial characteristics and body types. Cultural activities and artefacts were often used to support theories of physiognomy and phrenology, serving as markers of moral character and intelligence.¹¹ They also created contexts for understanding racial difference through comparison with the West, encouraging the perception of hierarchies within one race or among many races. Le Bon may have dismissed what could be learnt from ‘inferior races’, but he too defined ‘the capacity for associating ideas and drawing conclusions from their association’ as characteristic of ‘superior’ races like the French.¹² Besides showing off French accomplishments to the rest of the world, part of the purpose of the Universal Exhibitions was to give the French public opportunities to make comparisons – to grasp who was weak and who strong – and to study their rivals. Comparison became one of the period’s principal tools for producing a sense of superiority in the French public as well as motivating them to contemplate change.

Faced with a seemingly infinite diversity of species, those using the comparative method often tend to reduce the complexities and contradictions of reality to stereotypes, even if these are merely imaginary. Stereotypes, after all, besides simplifying and positing some form of homogeneity or coherence within a given category, objectify and imply an ahistorical stability. They also make possible and plausible an understanding of the Other as a function of one’s categories, allowing their use for a purpose. While some people may understand stereotypes as erasing and even negating difference, at least within the category they represent, Homi Bhabha’s explanation works best in this context, in part because many French were attracted to exotic difference and took pleasure in the fantasy it encouraged. From Bhabha’s perspective, stereotypes recognize differences, though in a fixed, reified form, as well as disavowing these differences. This ambiguity, he argues, is critical to the function of stereotypes. It ensures their replicability, predictability and thus understandability.¹³ Stereotypes, as understood by Bhabha, were an important part of the ongoing discourse about racial identity, the validity of social Darwinism, the possibility of geographical determinism and the construction of nation, all of which were mapped onto and associated with music and anything related to it.

In this article, I proceed not by studying what was known about musical instruments at the time, but rather by examining the knowledge and attitudes they served to produce: how they functioned as emblems of race and culture, embodied similarities as well as differences within accepted stereotypes, and

¹¹ For example, see articles in *Le petit journal* on the ethnographic exhibitions of foreign peoples at the Paris zoo. To illustrate the text, the newspaper often included sketches of a typical male and female in profile, groups engaged in various activities such as cooking and working, and at least one musician playing an instrument. See my forthcoming study of these ethnographic exhibitions in Paris between 1878 and 1900.

¹² Le Bon, *The Psychology of Peoples*, 29.

¹³ Homi K. Bhabha, ‘The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism’, *Literature, Politics, and Theory*, ed. Frances Barker *et al.* (London, 1986), 148–72.

could be approached through the comparative method and thus understood. Exotic instruments – that is, any instrument from outside the Western classical tradition – allowed the French to come closer to something more authentic in a foreign culture than what was offered to their imaginations by stories, and certainly an experience of difference not possible through language alone.¹⁴ French desire to experience the unknown, the incomprehensible, the impenetrable, possibly the unknowable, undoubtedly created a tension when coupled with their inclination to reduce instruments to stereotypes. While an absence of documentation keeps us from grasping precisely how this was resolved, the usage of instruments in various contexts can be very suggestive. My study leads us to revisit the categories explored by Fétis, racial distinction and racial filiation, from a monogenist as well as a polygenist perspective. In the political climate of the times, exotic instruments, as signs to exotic cultures, could serve as malleable symbols for both advocates and opponents of assimilationist colonial policy, sometimes in ways reflecting specific moments in the imperialist process.

Geography and the utility of musical instruments

The rise of the disciplines of geography and anthropology underlies much of the public interest in exotic instruments. After 1871, many French agreed that their colonial thinking was too theoretical. They did not know enough about the rest of the world. Some blamed French indifference to geography as a cause of the French defeat in the war with Prussia. Others advocated more intense study of geography as a means of helping France to recover from that war. They saw geography as ‘bound up with her commercial and industrial progress’.¹⁵ By persuading the government to increase French presence abroad, geographers helped people to understand the Other as more than a function of their fantasies. Not only did the growing geographical societies sponsor foreign explorations and get the government interested in projects such as the Trans-Saharan Railroad, as early as 1872 they insisted that the Minister of Public Instruction initiate geography courses in the schools. Through press articles by these interested middlemen, the public received a constant flow of information about foreign lands and people. Popular interest in foreign lands was such that the popular newspaper *Le petit journal*, which supported colonialism partly for

¹⁴ Much of what was known came from explorer reports and theories presented in not only Fétis, *Histoire générale de la musique*, but also Oscar Comettant, *La musique, les musiciens, et les instruments de musique chez les différents peuples du monde* (Paris, 1869), Rowbotham, *A History of Music*, and Richard Wallaschek, *Primitive Music* (London, 1893).

¹⁵ Agnes Murphy, *The Ideology of French Imperialism 1871–1881* (New York, 1968), 14 and Chapter 1. See also William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans* (Bloomington, 1980), 264–6. From the French perspective, progress could go both ways as ‘Europeans conceived of civilization as a stage of development in which trade was carried on extensively’ and ‘in Europe life had become gentler since the Renaissance as a result of increase in commerce’ (p. 265).

economic reasons (an 'empire for the masses'), presented articles about West African people on an average of 44.7% of their front pages from 1880 to 1900.¹⁶

In this context, focus shifted gradually to studying differences for their use-value. Some hoped that appropriating foreign ideas and products could lead to innovation, possibly new commodities. At first this meant bringing exotic plants and animals to France – this was the main purpose of the world's first Société Zoologique d'Acclimatation, founded in 1854, and its zoo, the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation, which opened in the Bois de Boulogne in 1860.¹⁷ The titled aristocrats who first made up the majority of the zoological society believed that the influence of food, sun, water, climate and especially soil on racial differences throughout the world reinforced the theory of polygenism; others with Republican leanings, including Albert Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, the founder's son and the Jardin's director from 1865 to 1893, saw these influences as arguments for biological and geographical determinism, and for using acclimatization to demonstrate the mechanism of racial diversity. But this zoo's purpose was not to prove one racial theory or another. Rather it was to determine which species could acclimatize to France and what economic and social utility they could serve, particularly for agriculture and industry.

When it came to the public, the zoo used ethnic specimens to awaken curiosity and generate support. Their idea was not just to promote certain myths about the power of science over the exotic, giving 'lessons' about nature and the power of 'superior intelligence', but also, as *Le petit journal pour rire* once aptly put it, to 'acclimatize the public' to exotic difference within France.¹⁸ The zoo did this by making these specimens seem attractive – examples of 'the beauty, grandeur and diversity' of the universe.¹⁹ They wanted people not only to study them with a view to deciding whether to assimilate them into French culture, but also to buy these specimens – alive or cooked! The point here is that the Jardin focused on the positive aspect of difference even if they did this through stereotypes.

¹⁶ William H. Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses: The Popular Image of Africa, 1870–1900* (Westport, 1982), 40–1; see also pp. 25–51, 77–94. Schneider concludes that even if the newspaper's 'early and continued general support of colonies was indirectly very important', '*Petit journal* did not spearhead mass public opinion to pressure the French government into specific actions in West Africa'; rather, 'government action preceded public opinion' (pp. 44, 51). Moreover, although many of these articles prepared public opinion for government policy decisions later revealed, there is 'no evidence to support any direct governmental influence on the newspaper's editors' (p. 49).

¹⁷ This zoo was planned in 1855 by the animal collection staff of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (the Jardin des Plantes) as an extension of its own activities. It focused on a small number of species, each represented by a relatively large number of individuals.

¹⁸ In his *Nature, the Exotic, and the Science of French Colonialism* (Bloomington, 1994), Michael A. Osborne explains that displays of Algerian animals, for example, 'proclaimed France's ability to use science to subdue, resurrect, and refashion North Africa for the good of both itself and the Africans' (p. xv). For an image of the public at zoo exhibitions, see p. 121.

¹⁹ Henri Marie Bouley, 'Comment l'homme s'est assujéti les animaux domestiques et les a refaçonés pour son usage', *Bulletin mensuel de la Société d'Acclimatation*, 3 (1874), xliii–lxiii (p. xliii).

In a similar spirit, foreign people and their arts became objects of study. Explorers and military expeditions were encouraged to collect artefacts of all kinds and to make drawings or take photographs of people in their natural habitat.²⁰ Inevitably these included musical instruments and performances. An engineer and geographer in the Egyptian expedition, François Jomard, amassed perhaps the first important collection of non-Western instruments. He advocated collecting them because he 'sensed their utility for the study of man, the diverse races, and their degree of civilization'.²¹ As such, musical instruments could be used to suggest a hierarchy in notions of beauty, taste and aesthetic judgment, especially those that make possible racial and ethnic stereotypes. This idea contributed to the founding of a musical instrument museum at the Paris Conservatoire, an idea conceived during the Revolution but not realized until the Second Empire.

The purpose of the Conservatoire's instrument museum was to provide models of instrumental perfection. The idea was that, when seeking perfection, one should come to France. France possessed perfection.²² The museum began in 1861, when the light-opera composer Louis Clapisson sold 230 instruments to the state. After it opened in 1864, not much else happened under Clapisson and then Berlioz as curators until 1872, when Gustave Chouquet became its curator. The director of the Conservatoire asked Chouquet to expand the museum significantly and produce a catalogue. Like Jomard, Chouquet considered instruments 'the fruit of a people's genius and the mark of their civilization's progress'. With this in mind, he organized the collection into four divisions – strings, winds, percussion and 'curiosities'.²³

Underlying this organization was an inherent hierarchy, based on a presumed evolution of musical thinking and a hierarchy of cultures.²⁴ Percussion and wind

²⁰ For a study in sympathy with the notion of using cultural artefacts to help understand the 'cultural formations, attitudes, beliefs, and practices' underlying imperialism, see James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (Chicago, 1997), esp. Chapter 5, 'Photographing the Natives'.

²¹ Ernest Théodore Hamy, *Les origines du Musée d'Ethnologie* (Paris, 1890; repr. 1988), cited in Florence Gétreau, *Les collections instrumentales du Conservatoire de Paris 1793 à 1993* (Paris, 1996), 234. Jomard's collection included instruments from Japan, China, Egypt, Nubia, Algeria, Guatemala, Palenque and Baja California. Upon Jomard's death in 1862, it was bequeathed to the Douai Museum, but it was destroyed during World War II (p. 381). For another perspective on instruments from the Napoleonic exploration of Egypt, see Guillaume André Villoteau, *Description historique, technique et littéraire, des instrumens de musique des orientaux* (Paris, 1812).

²² After the 1878 Exhibition and in an entry entitled 'Instruments de musique', the *Journal de musique* (11 January 1879) asserts that 'the French craftsman is still the first in the world in this industry' and 'if each country can [now] produce inexpensive instruments for their own amateurs, it is still to France that "artists" who care about perfection in the art [of instrument-making] must turn' (pp. 2–3).

²³ Gustave Chouquet, 'Le musée de notre Conservatoire de Musique', *Le ménestrel* (23 May 1875), 197–8.

²⁴ John Rowbotham later referred to the drum, pipe and lyre stages of music, thought to coincide with stone, bronze and iron ages. See his *A History of Music*, i.

instruments were less important, he contended, because ‘man, proceeding from simple to complex’, made these first, and ‘in savage countries all over the world’ people continue to use them ‘to give rhythm to a dance, a warrior march, or a religious ceremony’. In the category of curiosities he placed instruments for which there was no obvious Western equivalent, such as the Indonesian gamelan added by his successor in 1887. Within each section too, Chouquet put the instruments of Europe before those of Asia, Africa and America. He explains this by noting that he wished to give pride of place to ‘instruments that are the highest expression of modern art’ and that in any case ‘Arab and Asian stringed instruments offer few resources and serve especially to support the voice, whereas European ones play the most important role in the symphony and are eminently associated with virtuosity.’²⁵

Chouquet admits that this organization, albeit ‘symmetrical’, is highly biased. In fact, he chooses the very word that colonialists used to refer to the role and place of indigenous people in the colonies – *arrière-plan* (background) – to indicate the role and placement of exotic instruments in the museum. This was meant to imply, as Léopold de Saussure observed in his critique of such an idea, that indigenous people are ‘forever incapable of becoming the maker or principal instrument of development and progress’. Their efforts cannot contribute to progress. In giving as his primary reason for this museum structure the desire to ‘facilitate comparison and instructive *rapprochements*’, Chouquet also uses a term with colonial ramifications.²⁶ Whether he meant to borrow from colonial theory or not, the purpose of the museum is clear: to provide opportunities to understand the West better.²⁷

Before 1872 the Conservatoire museum focused on early and modern Western instruments, with only 15 from outside Europe, collected by Clapisson for their decorative value. In November 1872, Victor Schoelcher offered the museum 41 instruments he had amassed in his travels abroad between 1840 and 1850, many from Africa and some never before seen in Europe.²⁸ That year Pauline and Louis Viardot, also ardent Republicans and friends of Schoelcher, donated 12

²⁵ Gustave Chouquet, *Le Musée du Conservatoire National de Musique: Catalogue descriptif et raisonné* (Paris, 1875; suppl. 1884), 198, 243. See also his ‘Musée du Conservatoire’, *Art musical* (14 November 1872), 356, and ‘Le musée de notre Conservatoire de Musique’.

²⁶ In his important treatise based on a study of Algeria, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes* (Paris, 1874; 2nd edn, 1882), Paul Leroy-Beaulieu used the word *rapprochement* instead of fusion to describe his ideal of race relations in the colonies. By this he meant a ‘specific process of cultural change’ rather than ‘physical union’. He advocated transforming living conditions through the introduction of railroads, hospitals and private property. Cf. Chouquet, ‘Le musée de notre Conservatoire de Musique’, 198, and Léopold de Saussure, *Psychologie de la colonisation française dans ses rapports avec les sociétés indigènes* (Paris, 1899), 17.

²⁷ For an extended discussion of the meaning of such ‘exhibitionary apparatuses’, see Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London, 1995), esp. pp. 80–5.

²⁸ Schoelcher’s collection is described in ‘Nouvelles’, *Revue et gazette musicale* (27 December 1872), 406–7. In 1874 he also gave six more non-Western instruments, mentioned in *Art musical* (18 June 1874). Chouquet notes that his name was associated with the emancipation of people in the French colonies in 1848 (*Le Musée du Conservatoire National de Musique*, 205).

Chinese instruments and a Malayan guitar, while the piano manufacturer Jean-Baptiste Gilson gave three instruments from Madagascar.²⁹ Certainly these acquisitions fed the public's desire for the new and different. Chouquet even imagined French composers using them in strange and wonderful combinations (such as the simultaneous use of metallic and gut strings, certain drums from India and Annam (i.e. middle Vietnam), bronze harmonicas and the Indian *khattali*).³⁰ More important, they addressed the Conservatoire's explicit aim of collecting instruments used by all people since antiquity and in all countries.

Part of this followed from French interest in the history of music, in the various stages of development that instruments have undergone around the world. Part came from the desire to understand mutual influences. In his report to the jury of the 1878 Exhibition, Chouquet notes:

If India furnished Europe with types that inspired our string makers, it's clear that Indians at present feel the influence of an art that has become superior to theirs and are beginning to imitate our bows and certain models of European string instruments.³¹

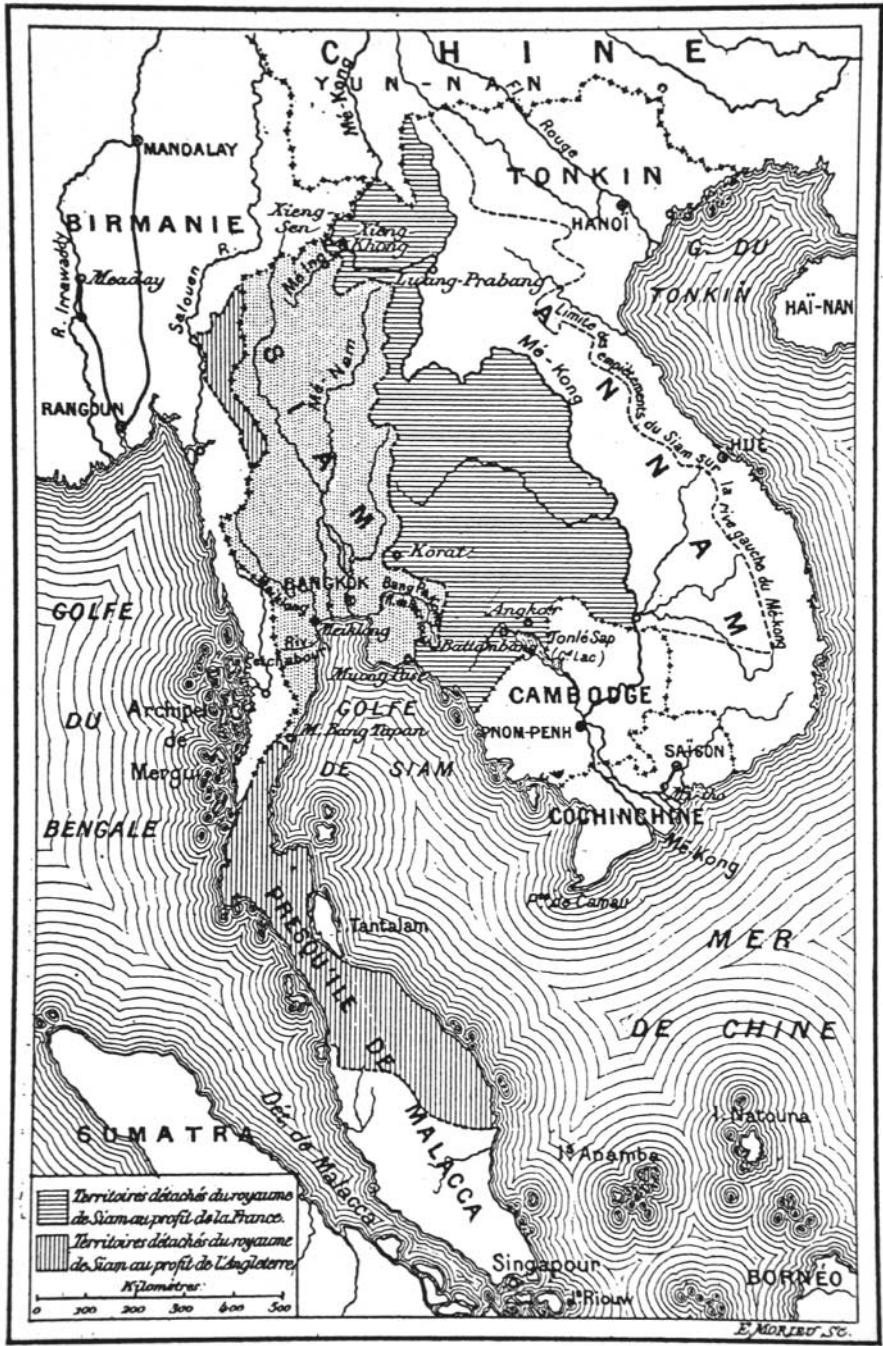
Part also stems from the Republican notion that, at home as well as in France d'Outre-Mer, the French government was supposed to be a protector. Some instruments, such as those from Java and China, were considered rare and expensive, emblems of high culture from other civilizations.³² Being the

²⁹ The most important purchases by and donations to the Conservatoire were made before 1889 and many of the Western instruments displayed today in the museum at La Villette date from this period. In 1873 the museum purchased 105 instruments from outside Western Europe, including an American banjo, a Russian balalaika, a Burmese harp and a Chinese lute. Then, in 1879, Sourindro Mohun Tagore donated 98 more instruments, including 87 from India of which 17 were vinas. (Tagore (1814–1914) also sent 98 instruments to the Brussels Conservatoire, leading to the creation of their instrument museum, and 76 to London in 1884–5.) In the 1880s the Paris Conservatoire also collected a Greek lyre and Persian drums, but most of their acquisitions and donations focused on the Chinese diaspora. These included a Japanese tam-tam, a Chinese gong, a Javanese puppet theatre in 1886, a Javanese gamelan in 1887, four Cambodian instruments from Schoelcher in 1889, and 81 more Indian ones from Tagore in 1889. In 1893 they also added 21 Persian instruments, in 1900 16 Korean ones from Prince Min Lung Chou, and in 1909 61 instruments from Pauline Tarn. Most of these were transferred to the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in 1933. Very few African instruments were added in the 1880s, apart from a xylophone donated in 1888 and some Arab instruments. On the 1886 Indonesian gifts, see *Art musical* (30 April 1886) and *Le ménestrel* (3 July 1887). See also the discussion in Gétéreau, *Les collections instrumentales du Conservatoire de Paris*, 380–2, 395–6.

³⁰ Gustave Chouquet, *Rapport du jury international: Les instruments de musique et les éditions* (Paris, 1880), 61. In Indo-China, Annam, whose capital was Hué, lies between Tonkin, whose capital was Hanoi, and Cochinchina, whose capital was Saigon. See Map 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² As early as 1845, in an extended study of Javanese instruments recently brought to Paris, a French scholar found in Javanese music 'the character of a true art' that 'carried it to a degree of perfection that few oriental nations had attained'. See Édouard Dulaurier, 'Musique javanaise: Notice sur un gamelan, ou collection d'instruments de musique javanaise rapportée de l'île de Java à Paris en 1845', *Revue de l'Orient et de l'Algérie: Bulletin de la Société Orientale* (February 1859), 81–94.



Map 1. *L'illustration* (1896): 'France and England in Indo-China (the division of Siam)'.

'protector' (such as France was in Cambodia from 1864, in Tunisia from 1882, in Annam from 1884, in Madagascar from 1885 and in Dahomey from 1893) was not only a source of pride, it was often the antecedent to something more important – collecting and possessing instruments, like collecting and possessing land, for the day when some Western use could be made of them.

The arrival of the Javanese gamelan and other Indonesian instruments given to the Conservatoire in 1886 and 1887 by M. Van Vloten, Minister of the Interior in the Dutch Indies, brings to the surface other motivations underlying such acquisitions. First, as everyone acknowledged, the gifts had a political purpose – *rapprochement* that some hoped would lead to friendship and perhaps also closer diplomatic and commercial relationships between France and Holland. Second, as the new curator of the Conservatoire Museum, Léon Pillaut, subtly implied after describing the instruments in *Le ménestrel*, the rarity and importance of the gifts drew attention to the power of the colonizer, as if it took a lot to 'dominate' a country which could produce such marvellous things.³³ And third, as Minister Spuller pointed out in his annual speech to Conservatoire students in 1887, the gift of this 'particularly curious' and 'original though a little barbaric' ensemble exemplified a well-known dictum: that anything of value must be in France, or, as he put it, 'Every civilized man has two countries, his own and then France.' In tribute to its rarity as what they thought was one of only two such ensembles in Europe (its value estimated at 6,000–8,000 francs),³⁴ the minister noted that the gamelan would be exhibited next to a 1703 Stradivari recently given by a Russian general, a violin worth over 15,000 francs that Pillaut considered 'one of the most beautiful models of instrumental production in the world'. The minister's punchline: such gifts 'prove that France has not ceased being loved by those who know her greatness, her misfortunes, and the role she has had and that she maintains in European civilization'.³⁵

In his review of instruments at the 1889 Exhibition, Pillaut proposed his own manner of classification, together with his opinion of why European instruments were superior. For him, two elements drive the determination of sound produced by an instrument: its scale (tuning) and its timbre. In contrast to Fétis, who focused more on the former, Pillaut argued: 'It is especially the timbre of an instrument that provides the principal character of its originality.' This statement gives a larger context for Debussy's attention to timbre, such as in his

³³ Léon Pillaut, 'Le Musée Instrumental du Conservatoire National de Musique: Le gamelan javanais', *Le ménestrel* (3 July 1887), 245.

³⁴ Sue Carole De Vale pointed out to me that, besides this ensemble, there were two such gamelans in Holland and two in England by this time. Similar instruments were reported at the London Aquarium as early as 1882.

³⁵ Eugène Spuller, *Discours prononcé par le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, Séance publique du 4 août 1887* (Paris, 1887), 6; Léon Pillaut, 'Conservatoire de Musique: Dons faits au musée instrumental', *Le ménestrel* (27 February 1887), 101. For a recent perspective on this, see Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, 1997).

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (1892–5), as well as another nuance to the association of character with race. Pillaut argued for European superiority in these terms as well, noting that because of Europeans' continual 'search for the new', European instruments can lay claim to the greatest timbral variety.³⁶ Asian instruments in European collections thus could instruct the public as to the relative sophistication of Asian civilization, but for him they also revealed its lack of concern for change and progress, thereby contributing to stereotypes about Asians' limited development. Ironically, some of the Indian instruments that the Indian scholar S. M. Tagore donated to European museums were inauthentic inventions by Tagore himself.³⁷

Chouquet's descriptive catalogues and his and Pillaut's various published essays probably helped shape Parisians' encounters with exotic instruments at the Conservatoire Museum. However, this was not the only place where the public could see exotic instruments and experience such hypotheses. Besides the Universal Exhibitions, after 1880, there were also the new Musée d'Ethnographie and the Musée Guimet. On rare occasions these instruments were brought out for performances, such as in 1883 when, to enhance the realistic decor, the Conservatoire's Indian instruments appeared on stage in *Lakmé* at the Opéra-Comique. Most likely what the general public knew about extra-European instruments, however, came not from museums or the exhibitions, but from travel articles and illustrations in the press, especially when military or diplomatic turmoil drew French attention abroad.

Musical instruments in the French popular press

The best source for learning about musical instruments at the end of the nineteenth century was not, ironically, the music press. Other than the occasional musician's portrait and an anonymous woman at an upright piano (such as on the cover of *Figaro musical* in the 1890s), it reproduced few images of any kind before 1900 except perhaps in advertisements for instruments. The pictorial press, by contrast, reproduced images of instruments regularly and from all over the world. Aiming to serve the tastes of the emerging bourgeoisie for instruction and amusement, it began using woodcut engravings in the 1840s. Illustrated books, such as Fétis's history of music, were very popular, for 'the reader who wants to know everything wants to see everything'.³⁸ Illustrations were particularly important in books about foreign lands and people because they helped people 'realize the dream'.³⁹ Jules Verne's fictional *Voyages extraordinaires* featured an average of 60 illustrations per novel, made by artists who travelled

³⁶ Léon Pillaut, 'Section II, Arts libéraux, 4: Musique', *Exposition Internationale de 1889: Catalogue général officiel* (Lille, 1889), 74.

³⁷ See note 29 above. I am grateful to Allyn Miner for this information.

³⁸ *L'illustration* (4 March 1843), 2.

³⁹ Pierre-Jean Foulon, *L'illustration du livre en France de 1870 à 1918* (Morlanweltz, 1999), 22.

widely abroad and sought exactitude in their drawings.⁴⁰ Wood engravings permitted the simultaneous impression of text and image, rendering them integral to the experience of the book. Even as newer and cheaper technologies such as photomechanical methods in the 1880s and photographs themselves (*similigravure*) in the 1890s were increasingly incorporated by publishers, wood engravings continued in use into the early twentieth century because of their expressive qualities and the association of this time-intensive medium with luxury collectables.

L'illustration, a weekly whose circulation reached 20,000 in France and abroad in the early 1870s and almost 50,000 by 1899, was among the highest-quality illustrated magazines produced in France and the most popular among elites.⁴¹ Engravings took up most of the front page, several middle pages and half of the last page, sometimes accompanied by explanatory texts. These issues were meant to be collected and bound for display in middle- and upper-class homes. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, newspapers too started illustrated supplements, possibly because of the success of illustrated guides to the 1889 Universal Exhibition. *Le figaro* began two monthlies, *Figaro illustré* (1890–1911) and *Figaro musical* (1891–4); and two popular dailies, *Le petit parisien* and *Le petit journal* (with its million subscribers in the 1890s), produced eight-page Sunday supplements. Reaching over a million, these cost only 5 centimes in the 1890s, as opposed to 75 centimes for *L'illustration*. In addition, daily newspapers occasionally included small images accompanying feature articles.

Such magazines functioned like television today, with images bearing the weight of communication. Mass illustrateds, like television serials, included imaginary depictions, often sensational in nature (murders, accidents, bombings). Spectacle was important, pictures of what their readers 'should not see' as well as 'could not see'. They considered images plagiarized from previous publications and depicting literary accounts acceptable sources. *L'illustration* too reported news that lent itself to visual depiction. However, unlike the mass illustrateds of the 1890s and of great importance to my analysis, this magazine had a policy of accuracy and acknowledgement of its sources – as if this orientation would legitimate their perspectives or positions for their middle- and upper-class readers. This resulted in news engravings made from eyewitness sketches or photographs. For anything at a considerable distance, such as the 1890s West-African wars, up-to-date reporting was impossible.⁴² Images *L'illustration* used to attract attention to such places during specific imperialist conflicts tended to

⁴⁰ Arthur B. Evans, 'The Illustrators of Jules Verne's *Voyages extraordinaires*', *Science-Fiction Studies*, 55 (July 1998), 241–70.

⁴¹ *L'illustration* was founded in 1843, a year after the *Illustrated London News*. See also *Le monde illustré*.

⁴² In his *An Empire for the Masses*, Schneider explains that anything happening within Europe could be reported with pictorial representations within ten days, the time for photographs or drawings to be sent by train to Paris and an engraving made. Communications from Africa took far longer, from several weeks to months (pp. 79, 87–92).

come from exploration accounts and background information – culture more than military activity.⁴³

This recourse to culture as a way of interesting readers in French imperialism helps explain not only the popularity of colonial photography,⁴⁴ but also the frequent presence of exotic instruments and performers in *L'illustration*, especially as documented in Robert Cohen's two volumes reproducing the magazine's musical imagery.⁴⁵ Many engravings are taken from exploration accounts about foreign countries. The images in Figures 5, 11 and 18 below, for example, come from multi-installment articles by Félix Dubois, a regular contributor, whom *L'illustration* sent on two expeditions to the French Sudan. Others depict live performances in Europe like those of the Javanese musicians at the 1883 Amsterdam Exhibition or the many foreign musicians at the 1889 Paris Exhibition. Some are made from drawings (Figure 20) or paintings (Figure 17), some from photographs (Figures 3 and 11). More often than not, instruments appear in the hands of a musician, although not always in the context in which they would have been heard. Some musicians, such as the one in Figure 11, clearly posed for their portrait, while others, such as the *griots* accompanying workers building the railroad through the French Sudan (15 April 1899; no. 2929), suggest the function they served. *L'illustration* sent artists and photographers to many locations where music was made and provided access to a wide range of sources about musical instruments.

Even if they appear innocent of ideology, these images, I would argue, were not neutral. Like other forms of literacy at the time, the images in *L'illustration* were interwoven with maps and various kinds of writing to produce a certain sense of reality and to lead the public to make inferences about the exotic Other. As in travel books, and especially the 39 volumes of Verne's *Voyages extraordinaires*, illustrations were meant not just to be beautiful, adding an aura of luxury to the publications, but also to teach, complement and interpret information in the written texts.⁴⁶ They inevitably involved a creative translation of reality, sometimes, as in the case of wood engravings of drawings, multiple layers of translation. Several artists and engravers active at *L'illustration* from the 1870s to the 1890s had previous experience as contributors to the first illustrated editions of Verne's science fiction. Édouard Riou (Figure 18) served as principal artist for seven volumes between 1863 and 1881, including *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. L. Dumont (Figure 17) engraved images for five volumes in the 1870s, including *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and A.

⁴³ The substantial space *L'illustration* devoted to culture in reporting on French imperialism in Africa may have also been influenced by the personal interests of Lucien Marc, the magazine's editor from the late 1880s. While his politics are unclear, he later wrote a monograph on the Mossi people from West Africa.

⁴⁴ Ryan, *Picturing Empire*.

⁴⁵ H. Robert Cohen, *Les gravures musicales dans L'illustration, 1843–1899*, 2 vols. (Quebec, 1982–3). The numbers cited in this article refer to those in Cohen's catalogue.

⁴⁶ Foulon, *L'illustration du livre*, 38.

Bellenger (Figures 1, 10 and 13), known for interpreting 'faithfully, yet freely' the artists whose work he engraved, worked on ten of them in the 1880s and 1890s.⁴⁷ Since *L'illustration* had its own studio for producing these images, the editor also played a role, choosing the images to engrave, the procedures and the engravers (there were up to eight per issue and typically many worked on the same article). Certain artists, such as F. de Haenen, who contributed 36 music-related images to *L'illustration* including Figures 2 and 3, specialized in exotic people and opera sets with exotic subjects. Engravers also had their specialities. Henri Thiriat focused on portraits such as the Guinean *griot* in Figure 9 and Léo Delibes in the same issue. Between 1881 and 1899, Bellenger did the largest number of images related to music, 110 of them, ranging from all kinds of instruments and exotic performers to over 15 scenes from new operas such as *Samson et Dalila*, *Gwendoline* and *Fervaal*. Under the editor's direction, these artisans shaped how readers visualized what they were reading, focused attention on certain details, and promoted a point of view. Charged then both with revealing the natural character of their subjects and with expressing an impression or feeling, engravers sometimes excluded the background or made changes to the original image to reinforce a point.⁴⁸ Photographs encouraged the illusion that Westerners controlled even as they explored exotic locales. However, by the late 1890s, as photography was increasingly practised as an art, it too was expected to express an interpretation, not just to document reality.⁴⁹

What interests me is not how exotic instruments were understood by professional musicians or may have been used to create a nascent ethnomusicology, but rather how they may have shaped a vaguely curious French person's perceptions of foreign lands and people. Did they, like the exhibitions Timothy Mitchell studies in his *Colonising Egypt*, help turn 'ordinary people' into 'tourists or anthropologists' who addressed 'an object-world as the representation of something'?⁵⁰ Certainly the realism of such images depended on an assumption that the sign was fixed and the signifier transparent. Beginning with the first issue (14 March 1843), *L'illustration* promised 'scrupulous' documentation and 'exact, sincere, and at the same time artistic reproduction of all current events'.

⁴⁷ See Evans, 'The Illustrators of Jules Verne's *Voyages extraordinaires*', and Edward Henry Gordon Craig, *Woodcuts and Some Words* (London, 1924).

⁴⁸ In his *Picturing Empire*, Ryan reproduces an 1889 photograph and the manner in which it was retouched and altered when published in 1897, with characters and objects added and the background completely recomposed, thereby changing the focus and meaning of the image (pp. 220–1).

⁴⁹ See discussions about photography's capacity for becoming an art form in Alfred de Lostalo, 'Exposition d'art photographique', *L'illustration* (30 March 1895), 251, and the annual amateur photographic competition reported each October in the family magazine *Lectures pour tous* between 1899 and 1901.

⁵⁰ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 18, 28. See also Joan M. Schwartz, 'The Geography Lesson: Photographs and the Construction of Imaginative Geographies', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 22 (January 1996), 29–35, and Joanna Cohan Scherer, 'Historical Photographs as Anthropological Documents: A Retrospect', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 3 (1990), 133–55.

As scholars of Verne's illustrations have noted, the mass public enjoyed such realism as well as the oscillation between realism and romantic fantasy.⁵¹ Exotic instruments would have fed their taste for the unusual ('l'inédit'), helping to dramatize the distance and difference of foreign culture. At the same time, they put a human face on the imperialist process for a public with a need to know that increased as the French sought to take more and more colonies.⁵²

Or, as Roland Barthes has argued about photographs, is the power of such images one of authentication more than representation?⁵³ This could suggest that exotic images may have functioned as emblems of these cultures perhaps more than as iconic signs. If new knowledge produces new forms of power, as Michel Foucault has pointed out, what kind of power can come from consuming such images, especially when that which is photographed or sketched has no possibility of resistance? To the extent that people looking at such images ignored the complex values and elaborate codes underlying the objects, human poses and social contexts they represent, perhaps such images functioned as a context for projecting late nineteenth-century French interests and preoccupations, for creating meaning more than discovering it.⁵⁴ With the help of the common frame of reference which publication in *L'illustration* provided, was the point to produce a shared culture among its readers, if not also a shared perspective?⁵⁵ In other words, to what extent were such representations, in Pierre Bourdieu's words, 'a totality intended for cognition alone'?⁵⁶

Images of objects brought back from foreign expeditions are a case in point. Musical instruments were among what explorers and military men documented and collected, along with weapons and flags. These were considered emblems of a country's distinction, pride and power. The various weapons in the engravings reproduced in Cohen nos. 2127 (1883; see Figure 1) and 2243 (1886) mix in well with the bows and long-armed stringed instruments. In close proximity, their similar shapes (in the middle of no. 2127 and the upper left of no. 2243) make them difficult to distinguish. Were the engravers merely recognizing and

⁵¹ Foulon, *L'illustration du livre*, 61.

⁵² For more on the use of images to serve imperialist propaganda, see Thomas G. August, *The Selling of the Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda, 1890–1940* (Westport, 1985).

⁵³ Roland Barthes, *Camera lucida* (London, 1981), 88–9.

⁵⁴ In his *The Burden of Representation* (Amherst, 1988), John Tagg notes that photography emerged as a technique of representation to assist in new practices of observation in the late nineteenth century, with the knowledge it produced leading to new forms of power. The assumption that the truths of photographs are transparent, however, can be problematic. 'As with any other discursive system', he writes, 'the question we must ask is not, "What does this discourse reveal of something else?" but, "what does it do, what are its conditions of existence, how does it inflect its context rather than reflect it; how does it animate meaning rather than discover it; where must we be positioned to accept it as real or true, and what are the consequences of doing so?"' (p. 119).

⁵⁵ In her *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Berkeley, 1998), Vanessa Schwartz argues for the power of the press to use representation to 'construct common ground' among its diverse audiences (p. 39).

⁵⁶ Cited in Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 18, 28.



Figure 1. *L'illustration*, no. 2127 (1 December 1883): 'Arms, musical instruments, and flag taken from the *Pavillons noirs* at the fall of Nam-Dinh' (E. Sodard; A. Bellenger). Illustration numbers are those in H. Robert Cohen, *Les gravures musicales dans L'illustration, 1843–1899*, ii (Quebec, 1983). Names following titles are those of artist and engraver.

recording physical or aesthetic resemblances between arms and instruments? More than other engravings in *L'illustration*, these resemble still-life images. Or, in the spirit of Saussure and Le Bon, who contended that 'elements of civilization are external manifestations of a certain mental constitution',⁵⁷ were they trying to signal racial identity?

In trying to address such questions, I do not intend to suggest any monolithic interpretation, nor to prove one interpretation over any other. My aim is rather to situate the choice and placement of these images in contexts readers might have brought to their viewing, including that provided by *L'illustration*. These images, I will argue, did far more than reflect their context. Because instruments were increasingly represented not alone, as they were for the most part in Fétis, but as played by humans and in distinct settings, they could inflect attitudes and beliefs about exotic peoples in concrete and specific ways.

Drums and bugles

What first becomes obvious in *L'illustration* from the 1870s to the 1890s is the overwhelming presence of the drum, usually called *tambour*. Indeed, what Cohen calls *tambour* appears so often in *L'illustration* that he relegates many to mere listing in an appendix. In the magazine, the word appears not only as the caption for many images, but also in the texts the images serve to illustrate. This use of a single term to refer to a category of instrument might be convenient for us and for them, reducing the visual variety and making comparison possible. But, like other modes of realist representation, it also acts as a framework for understanding, working to construct 'standards of the real to which it then referred'. In other words, the constant repetition of certain terms such as drum works to reinforce the system of realism, whose cross-echoes reinforce the sense of reality they help to produce. This points to the hegemonic tendency of the cognitive realm: the Other has been reduced to more of the same. What exceeds language and representation cannot be articulated.⁵⁸ How this hegemonic mode establishes itself and the agendas it serves are interesting to examine.

Table 2 shows that drums frequently appear in images from both the West and the non-West, defying any rigid notion of cultural distinction. In depictions in the West, they are largely associated with the military and war. Each French regiment has two. Whether at sea (no. 2223, 1885) or on the fields, they sound the wake-up call. In provincial villages (no. 2848, 1897) and cities (no. 2051, 1882), they announce the troops' arrival. In European capitals, they assist at military ceremonies (no. 2759, 1895; 2844A, 1897). Drums appear occasionally in non-military scenes, such as accompanying gymnastic exercises (no.

⁵⁷ Saussure, *Psychologie de la colonisation française*, 54.

⁵⁸ Some of the language on realist representations in this paragraph comes from Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, 10–11; Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 99; and Wlad Godzich, 'Foreword: The Further Possibility of Knowledge', Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1986), vii–xxi (pp. xiii, xix).

TABLE 2

IMAGES OF INSTRUMENTS REPRODUCED IN COHEN’S *LES GRAVURES MUSICALES DANS L’ILLUSTRATION*, II: 1864–1899

Note: This table does not include instruments listed in an appendix and not reproduced visually by Cohen. Most of these are *tambours* and *clairons*, and appear in military scenes. They number between 3 and 10 per year.

	<i>total</i>	<i>non- Western music</i>	<i>Western military music</i>	<i>Western folk music</i>	<i>other/Western classical music</i>
drum (<i>tambour</i>)	92	33	21	14	24
<i>tambour de basque</i>	32		2	10	20
<i>tambourin</i>	18	15		1	2
trumpet (<i>clairon</i>)	68	2	27	4	35
trumpet (with valves)	8			3	5
flute	50	12		7	31
<i>flûte de Pan</i>	7			6	1
guitar	42	2	1	23	16
harp	52	7		4	41
piano	156				156
string instruments	(various)				(various)
quasi-violin	23	6		17	
wind instruments	(various)				(various)

2417A, 1889) and gymnastic processions, such as one in Saint-Étienne (no. 2884, 1898) in which they were played by women. In a caricature about ‘the carnival of nations’, the drum stands in the middle of the ‘European concert’, as if shared by all (no. 2657B, 1894).

There are also drums in many images from outside the West. Used in Africa for war, dance and singing, they were considered the ‘king of instruments’, reigning sovereign because they ‘mark the measure’ in cultures where ‘rhythm is indispensable’. Because they are ever-present in African cultures, some called them the ‘piano of equatorial Africa . . . enchanting beasts and people alike’.⁵⁹ In no. 2551B (1892; see Figure 2), *L’illustration* depicts many sizes and shapes of goblet and barrel drums being made in Dahomey. The short article about the engraving gives *ilou* as the generic name for the instrument, describes the way it is made, and explains its various uses. The large one, the *gbédou*, for example,

⁵⁹ Louis Pagnerre, ‘La musique dans l’Afrique centrale (d’après Stanley)’, *Art musical* (15 September 1890), 130. The author cites Stanley as noting that such instruments were also played by enormous chimpanzees, who stole them and could often be heard hitting them in the silence of the night. At the same time, he ends his essay by pointing to the importance of rhythm in ‘the most barbarous nations’ as a tacit criticism of ‘civilized Europe that today is seeking to dissolve and even destroy rhythm’.



Figure 2. *L'illustration*, no. 2551B (16 January 1892): 'In Dahomey: Fabrication of drums' (F. de Haenen; E. Tilly).

sits in temples, is covered in blood when war is declared, and functions for each tribe like a flag. The humans in this image, however, even if they take various positions in playing the drums and use their hands as well as sticks, exhibit little diversity in their heads and bodies. They are thin, though well muscled, and have almost indistinguishable faces. The engraver, strangely, did not take the time to draw in their eyes, so they are unrealistically closed. All wear the same simple fabric either tied around their waists, revealing their chests, or draped across one shoulder. This representation serves to foreground the variety of the drums, but at the cost of denigrating human individuality.⁶⁰

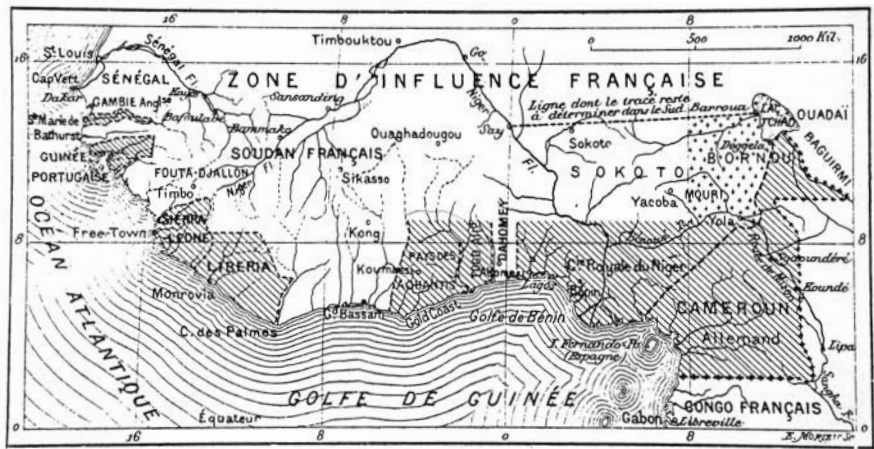
In this scene – published only two months before conflict re-ignited between Béhanzin, the Dahomean chief, and the French military⁶¹ – the effect is one of passivity and boredom. The men present a striking contrast with the women warriors and scenes of human sacrifice that dominated the mass illustrated newspapers during the 1890 French attacks there.⁶² Is the image meant to suggest that these people were not so formidable after all? Later a reviewer for *L'illustration* (22 October 1892) pointed out that the enemy was ten times greater in number than the French, more fearsome and better organized than predicted. Dahomey was important to the French because it provided access from the Gold Coast to the lower Niger River, an area that the French, in competition with the British, were determined to control (see Map 2). In 1893 Dahomey became a French protectorate.

Images of drums in Africa also accompanied other significant political situations. In no. 2593A (1892), from the recently colonized French Sudan (Upper Senegal before 1890; see Map 2), two semi-naked children hold up a small drum, a *bombalon*, for two adults to strike. People are smiling. In the text, we learn that this drum is used to signal the end of a funeral ceremony. Visually, however, the image comes near the signing of a treaty with the French, reproduced two pages later. In Abyssinia (Ethiopia), where conflict with the French had ended with the Franco-English accord of March that year, the scene depicted in no. 2947A (November 1899) is also peaceful. Over a dozen similar, though larger, drums are on the ground, like a silent orchestra. Readers are told they are being played 'to gather the people'. Here again, even with the source a photograph, the variety in drum size is still more salient than any visual differences between the performers. Three conclusions can be inferred. First, although they are often associated with war, it was clear that drums also served other functions in Africa and that the people smiled in times of peace. Second, the rudimentary nature of African drums probably seemed to French readers as evidence of the

⁶⁰ This lack of interest may possibly be explained by an attitude expressed by a French anthropologist in describing Dahomeans exhibited in Paris the following year. He called their physiognomies 'uniformly ugly from the point of view of European aesthetics'. 'Séance du 18 mai 1893', *Bulletins de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris* (1893), 330.

⁶¹ Jacques Thobie and Gilbert Meynier, *Histoire de la France coloniale*, ii: *L'apogée* (Paris, 1991), 154. A second extended campaign in Dahomey began that autumn when, with 4,000 men, Colonel Dodds took Abomey and Béhanzin fled.

⁶² See Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses*, 97–109.



Map 2. *L'illustration* (1894): 'French possessions in western Africa'.

'primitive' nature of African cultures. Third, since these drums come across as more heterogeneous than the performers and their clothes, one could see them as demonstrating an inherent creativity not obvious from looking at the population, or conclude that African objects, albeit primitive ones, were more distinctive than African people, who merited less interest.

L'illustration also reproduced engravings of smaller cylindrical drums, which the French called *tam-tams*, such as those played by Javanese musicians at the 1883 Amsterdam Exhibition (nos. 2113C, 2114A, 1883) and those carved by Tonkinese (north Vietnamese) craftsmen during the 1889 Paris Exhibition (no. 2432A, 1889). Even if the Tonkinese artisans are again faceless, the engraver's attention to ornamental decoration signals an aesthetic sensibility not present in images of African drums in *L'illustration*. For those who may have agreed with Le Bon's differentiation between primitive and inferior civilizations, did this suggest that in Tonkin the instrument was at a higher stage in its evolutionary history? If, according to Chouquet, 'the elegance and the finish' of instruments were among those recognized as the 'master qualities of French instrument makers', then the French public may have derived meaning from these decorative details.⁶³

Regardless of the drum's size, how it is held and performed, and what it is made of, these images document certain similarities in shape and function from one culture to the next. Drums are hollow cavities over which something has been stretched, circular resonators which produce sound when struck. As *L'illustration* points out, they are used to call people together or give rhythm to their movements. These physical and social attributes shared by diverse classes, ethnicities and cultures allude to the existence of a musical universal – sound of a certain nature serving the same basic function virtually everywhere. Something

⁶³ Chouquet, *Rapport du jury international*, 4.

beyond culture, geography and possibly biology, universals illustrate what Saussure called the first principle of assimilation: the fundamental unity of the human race.⁶⁴

For those espousing this belief, the unity represented by the drum is what makes racial assimilation plausible. As France was taking new African colonies in the 1890s, the cross-cultural use of the drum may have given readers back home hope in the possibility of assimilation. For example, among its images of Madagascar, a French protectorate since 1885, the magazine represents two Western-style military drums, snare and bass, played on the hips as in France, plus three Western-style violins (no. 2636, 1893, based on a photograph; see Figure 3). This appropriation of Western instruments for a parade on 14 July 1893, the French national holiday, documents Africans' assimilation of French customs in Nossi-Bé (Nosy Be), a port town on an island north-west of Madagascar. Besides French exploits there in the sixteenth century, in 1860 a treaty opened it to French commerce en route to India. At first the Malagasy king, intent on modernizing his country, supported the Catholic missionaries and French navy who settled there. Later, however, when the queen became Protestant, the French presence turned controversial. That she would take part in this parade despite her active resistance to Europeans in the early 1890s might have suggested to readers latent respect for French customs. Did this encourage the engraver, E. Tilly, to show more interest in the faces and clothes than he had for the Dahomeans in Figure 2?

An instrument often accompanying the drum, the bugle (*clairon*), also appears cross-culturally in these images, especially in the West. In images of battle, it is omnipresent. For example, in 1877 *L'illustration* depicts Cossacks using them while attacking Serbs; in 1883 they appear in a military scene in Tonkin, and in 1892 on the morning of battle in Dahomey. The typical French soldier, dressed for battle and with bugle at his lips (see Figure 4), is featured on the cover of *Figaro illustré* (August 1892).⁶⁵ The contrapposto stance and smart three-quarter profile give the anonymous bugler the resonance of a Roman senator or Michelangelo's David.⁶⁶ As with the *tambour*, the *clairon* also appears in military parades and as a boy's toy. However, outside the West it is almost exclusively associated with the European military, although explorers in Africa found that a *cor de guerre* was the most common instrument after the *tambour* and that its function was likewise to call people to war as well as to accompany singing and dancing.⁶⁷ With the bugle, readers of *L'illustration* would have been

⁶⁴ Even Saussure, who criticized this idea in his *Psychologie de la colonisation française* (p. 31), sees assimilation as based on this belief. Ironically perhaps, the *tambour* exemplifies the French assimilation of a foreign instrument. As E.-M. de Lyden explains in 'Le tambour', *Le ménestrel* (4 July 1880), 241–3, it may have come from India, carried by the Moors through Spain, or more likely have been 'appropriated from Oriental customs' during the Crusades 'to excite troops on the battlefield' (p. 241).

⁶⁵ Cohen reproduces only a few such images, referring to most *clairons* in his appendix.

⁶⁶ I am grateful to the anonymous readers for observations about this image.

⁶⁷ Pagnère, 'La musique dans l'Afrique centrale'.

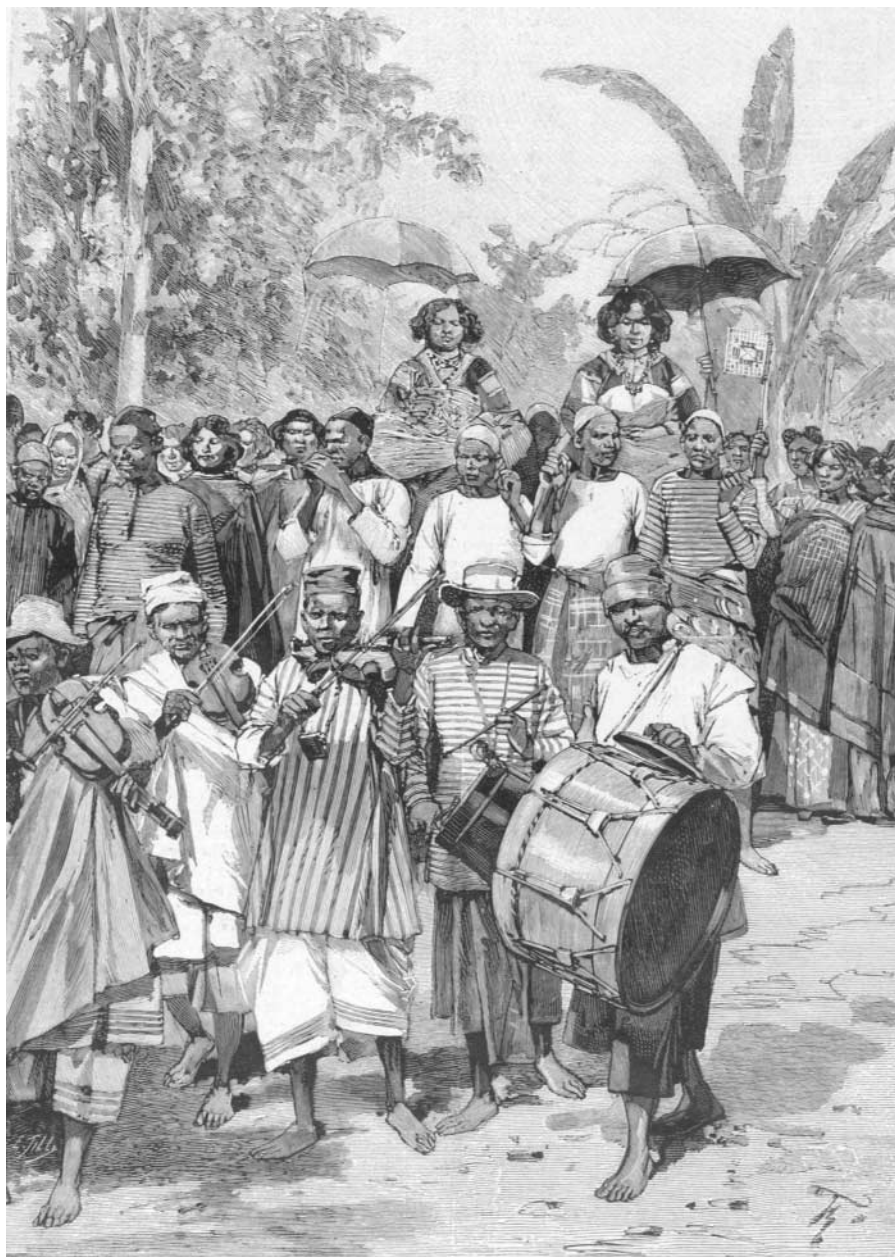


Figure 3. *L'illustration*, no. 2636 (2 September 1893), from a photograph: 'Nossi-Bé: The queen Binao and her sister Kany visiting the residence on 14 July' (F. de Haenen; E. Tilly).



Figure 4. *Figaro illustré* (August 1892), cover.

less apt to infer another musical universal, but could have seen it as documenting assimilation.

One image (no. 2595, 1892, from Félix Dubois's seven instalments of 'La vie noire: Un voyage d'exploration au Soudan Français') depicts a black man, probably a Muslim, playing the bugle in Ouossou, French Sudan (see Figure 5). With his military jacket and stance, he resembles the French soldier in Figure 4, also from 1892. However, he is barefoot and bare-chested, his jacket unbuttoned, as if trying to assimilate French practices but not quite comfortable in Western garb. And whereas in Figure 4 serene horses, seemingly unconcerned at the sound, provide background to the French bugler who has a stick in hand and spurs on his boots, signs of his ability to subdue them, here four dogs baring their teeth surround the Muslim. As the accompanying text notes, 'At the reveille, the bugle makes the dogs howl', as if he is out of place. Still, like the French soldier, he is serving a military function, in this case waking up French soldiers on the morning of their departure having just recently signed a treaty with Sudanese chiefs. Like the cover image for this issue, featuring four Senegalese men in the French army, one of whom resembles the bugler, he undoubtedly reminded French readers of the many black Africans serving in their army. They were known as *tirailleurs indigènes*, indigenous marksmen on the front lines of battle. Created in Senegal in 1857 and known for their bravery, by 1865 they had become the principal military force in the colony. Between 1890 and 1893, these Blacks helped the French push inland from Senegal, subduing other



Figure 5. *L'illustration*, no. 2595 (19 November 1892), from Félix Dubois's 'La vie noire: Un voyage d'exploration au Soudan Français': 'At the reveille, the bugle makes the dogs of Ouossou howl for the last time' (Adrien-Emmanuel Marie).

Blacks during the conquest of the Niger that traversed the French Sudan.⁶⁸ In this issue they are also described as members of the Dahomey expedition.⁶⁹ Even Frenchmen who did not believe in racial assimilation had to admit the Blacks' important role in the French army not only in Africa, but also in the Far East. The bugles played by other *tirailleurs indigènes* – in Indo-China in 1885, in Senegal in 1890 and in Egypt in 1896 – make a similar point, as does that played by the Algerian at the head of a cavalry line-up in no. 2699B (1894), although it was well known that Algerians had long served in the French colonial army. Even in images of insurrection in Algeria in January 1882, *L'illustration* shows a bugle at the man's side.

⁶⁸ In *Histoire de la France coloniale*, Thobie and Meynier note that the French troops began their conquest of the Niger in 1890 with 742 soldiers and 'several hundred indigenous auxiliaries' (ii, p. 150).

⁶⁹ In *L'illustration* (19 November 1892), after a two-page drawing of the Sudanese going off with the French, there is a map of the French military operations in Dahomey in which they were being brought to participate (between pp. 412 and 413).

Family resemblances and their political implications

The imagery reproduced in *L'illustration* allowed readers to see family resemblances among instruments and musicians around the world. These shed light on cultural similarities and differences within three regions – Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe – and suggested the effects of migration and intercultural influences. The Middle East is notably under-represented. Of course, there are images from North Africa, though mostly from Algeria and those associated with the Arab pavilions at the Paris Exhibitions; however, Turkish images appear only three times after 1870. This suggests that after the ‘Orient question’ was resolved by the break-off of the Balkan states from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, public interest shifted to other parts of the world.

Two Far-Eastern ensembles – the ‘Chinese musicians’ of no. 1595 (1873) and the Indo-Chinese playing for the religious ceremony depicted in no. 2174B (1884) – are among the most suggestive for their similarities and differences (see Figures 6 and 7). The plain background of the first suggests that the context is irrelevant. In fact, they are playing an overture before a theatrical performance in an opium den. The engraving appears directly over one of two men smoking opium and playing chess at a similarly shaped table. The juxtaposition implies that both activities are forms of Chinese entertainment. From the short commentary in *L'illustration* (20 September 1873), one is supposed to conclude from the small number of instruments – ‘a flute, guitar, violin with one string, *tambour*, and little harp horizontally on the table’ – that the state of music in China is ‘misérable’. Of the ‘effect produced’, the writer refuses to comment – ‘n'en parlons pas’. However, the image tells another story. The instruments chosen, strings and a woodwind, suggest there was instrumental coordination required in ensemble-playing and special skills needed for correct intonation. The performers likely produced a relatively quiet, refined sound that required close-listening, possibly sophisticated audiences. The message is clear: these people have a certain civilization and the leisure time to enjoy it.

In Figure 7, the context is radically different. The beautiful woodcut engraving with its neat juxtaposition of light and dark, horizontal and vertical lines, appears with four others from the third edition of a popular 400-page book, M. Lemire's *Indochine: Cochinchine française, Cambodge, Annam, et Tonkin* (see Map 1). Together with a view of the river in Saigon, two Cochin Chinese women and a Tonkinese man, it drew attention to Indo-China as the Cambodian king capitulated to the French and Cambodia came under the administration of Saigon.⁷⁰ The choice of this image to represent Indo-Chinese culture is significant. Priests, icons and candles root the performance in Buddhist ritual. The accompanying text explains that it takes place in a Chinese town near Saigon and that the deity in the background is a Chinese Amphitrite. The numerous

⁷⁰ Thobie and Meynier, *Histoire de la France coloniale*, ii, 120. Cochin China had proved itself prosperous and some French envisaged it as the ‘nucleus of an empire’, ideally the French equivalent of England's India. See Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes* (2nd edn), vi.



Figure 6. *L'illustration*, no. 1595 (20 September 1873): 'Chinese musicians' (Henri Dutheil).

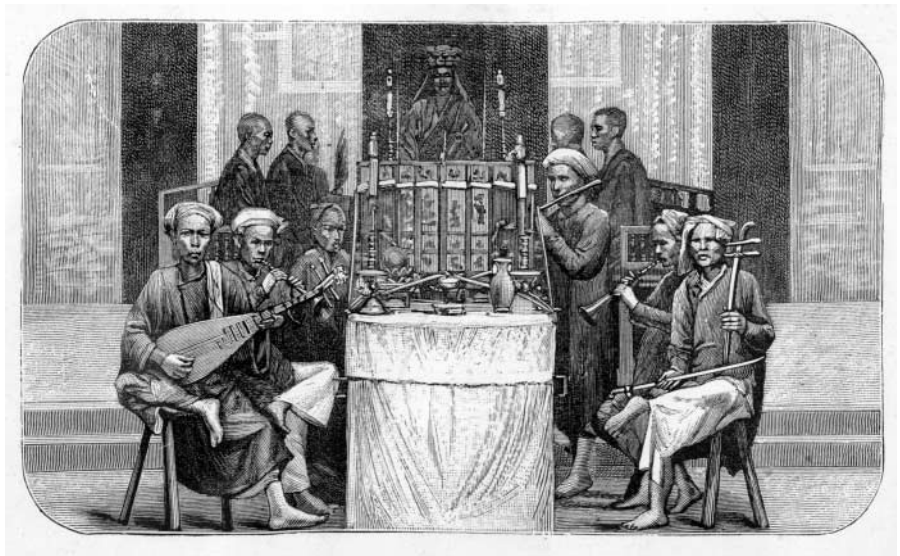


Figure 7. *L'illustration*, no. 2174B (25 October 1884), from M. Lemire's *Indochine: Cochinchine française, Cambodge, Annam, et Tonkin*: 'Buddhist ceremony in the interior of a temple'.

similarities to the Chinese musicians of Figure 6 reinforce this connection to Chinese culture. Both images involve strings and woodwinds, with the former framing the latter. Performers on the far left pluck a string instrument; those at the far right play one with bows. In both, the musicians are male, serious and sober. Nothing suggests the exoticism often construed in nineteenth-century France (characterized by sensuality, femininity, decadence and danger). They are simply but fully clothed, wear discreet hats, and all but one sit around a table. The Indo-Chinese may be thinner and barefoot, suggesting not only that they live in a warmer climate, but also that they are poorer.

The similar instruments and performing traditions suggest close parallels in the two cultures. Moreover, the use of string instruments, traditionally associated with peace, implies a relationship based on peaceful exchange. This supports what was written at the time about the influence of Chinese scales on Javanese and Indo-Chinese scales. And it plants the seeds for Tiersot's observation at the 1900 Exhibition that Annamite theatre resembled classical Chinese theatre much more closely than that of Japan.⁷¹ These cultural resemblances were important for French imperialists, who argued that annexing Indo-China would get them access to China, the oldest and richest Asian culture. The extreme difficulties the French had in trying to assimilate the Indo-Chinese made it important to remind them continually why the land was worth the expense and effort. Articles about contemporary China mingled with news reports on developments in Tonkin throughout the early 1880s. Figure 1 represents the spoils of war taken from the *Pavillons noirs*, Chinese pirates established there, just after the fall of Nam-Dinh in 1883. Figure 7, which shows the use of instruments depicted in Figure 1, coincides with Annam and Cambodia becoming French colonies.

Representations of a popular African instrument, the *balafon* (xylophone), tell another story concerning transcultural similarities, this time in countries some French thought needed more civilization or were terminally 'inferior'. Published to attract the attention of families and music-lovers to the 1889 Paris Exhibition, *La musique des familles* featured a quintessentially primitive image on one of its covers, perhaps imagined (see Figure 8). The muscular black man's upper body is virtually nude, his hair bushy, his mouth wide open, his eyes transfixed and his arms extended as he strikes the instrument. Surrounded by wild vegetation, he inspires fear. Meanwhile, the instrument reflects almost mathematical precision, its 20 keys having identical widths with lengths increasing evenly from one side to the other. In explaining this image, the magazine's editor, Edmond Bailly, begins by criticizing its presence in the Egyptian pavilion of the 1889 Exhibition, calling this 'a heresy' because it is the 'national instrument of Senegal'. After describing its scale and noting 'quasi-civilized analogues

⁷¹ Julien Tiersot, 'Ethnographie musicale: Notes prises à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900, iii: Le théâtre japonais', *Le ménestrel* (2 December 1900), 380. Since a treaty in 1874, there was a direct link between Annam and China, and the prince of Tonkin was invested by the emperor of China.



Figure 8. *La musique des familles* (5 January 1889), cover: 'Negro playing the balafon'.

[*congénérés*]' in Indonesia and Indo-China, he writes that if one hits the keys without using full arms, thus unlike this 'Negro from Besnier', the instrument produces a 'great sweetness' and a distant sound 'appropriate for the frequently melancholic melodies of men still close to Nature'.⁷²

⁷² Edmond Bailly, 'Ethnographie musicale: Le balafo', *La musique des familles* (5 January 1889), 93. A subsequent image on the cover of *La musique des familles* (9 March 1889) features an engraving of a 'Boschjesman [Bushman] playing a gorah', taken from *L'univers pittoresque, Afrique*

The *balafon* in *L'illustration* (no. 2500C, 1891) – this one from Portuguese Guinea – makes similar points, though perhaps more realistically (see Figure 9).⁷³ Again, only a single instrument is featured; however, it has more variations in the size and distribution of its 20 keys and the resonators underneath protrude unevenly. The man likewise confronts the viewer directly, his mouth partly open; however, his arms are closer to his body and he is fully dressed, wearing a hat. He too is sitting on the ground *en plein air*, but on a mat. The skill needed to strike the fixed pitches may not involve complications of intonation or coordination with others. Still, the manner in which the man holds his mallets over the keys suggests the precision needed for the rhythmic complexity of this music. Moreover, the close proximity of his hands to the keys suggests he is producing the softer sound advocated by Bailly. Indeed the voyager's report notes that the *griot*, 'the troubadour of the African continent' well respected everywhere, used the mallet 'lightly', producing a sound that was 'very pure'.⁷⁴

In a sketch of a *balafon* from the French Sudan (no. 2593B, 1892), the scene is unclear, the instrument significantly smaller and more finely crafted, and the man young, handsome, simply dressed and looking down in rapt concentration (see Figure 10). His lowered eyes suggest a respectful attitude toward the music he is playing. Bellenger's elegant shadings and combination of realistic representation with painterly drawing render the image strikingly beautiful. This, together with the dignified nature of the performer and the absence of a background, aestheticizes the image, unlike most involving Africans. Did Bellenger or his editor wish to convey the noble qualities resembling those in a photograph of the king of Senegal, reproduced in *L'illustration* during the 1889 Exhibition (no. 2419B, 1889)? The latter's display of instruments as part of a portrait of the king supports Bailly's description of the *balafon* as Senegal's 'national instrument'.

These *balafons* suggest that the editors of *L'illustration*, unlike those of *La musique des familles*, were not particularly focused on musical questions – what

Australe, this time with two lines of music transcribed under him. Again the soloist is in nature, here on a rock and scantily clothed (though wearing sandals). He is blowing a tiny feather attached to a string on a short bow. Despite the simplicity of the instrument and the man's attire, Bailly's narrative, as in his discussion of the *balafon*, attempts to be serious. He cites heavily from publications by explorers, noting contradictions where he finds them. One explains that this music, which would 'easily please pigs', consists of a 70-second pattern repeated without variation; another said it was 'impossible to follow any tune on this instrument whose tones are a product of chance and the quality of the feather'. Bailly concludes with perhaps the reason his journal published such images: this instrument 'from the most distant antiquity' offers a glimpse of 'the oldest race' and the most 'primitive' of Africa, the Bushmen wanderers. Bailly, 'Ethnographie musicale: Le gorah', *La musique des familles* (9 March 1889), 162–3.

⁷³ A short ethnographic film made in 1905 and shown in the Tate Modern's opening exhibition in summer 2000 featured a performer resembling this one.

⁷⁴ Raoul de Rocheblanche, 'Un tour dans la Guinée portugaise', *L'illustration* (24 January 1891), 83.



Figure 9. *L'illustration*, no. 2500C (24 January 1891), from 'Un tour dans La Guinée portugaise': 'A griot playing the *balafon* on the banks of the Rio Grande' (Henri Thiriat).



Figure 10. *L'illustration*, no. 2593B (5 November 1892): 'Balafon player', French Sudan (A. Bellenger).

were the oldest musical instruments, what did the oldest races play? Even racial origins, as suggested by musical instruments, were less interesting to them than what musical instruments may have communicated about a living people and, I would suggest, their relative status vis-à-vis one another. In 1891, when the rustic *balafon* in Portuguese Guinea appeared in *L'illustration* (Figure 9), parts of Guinea and Sudan became French colonies. Was this image meant to support a rationale for French colonialism? The contrast between the Guinean *balafon* and the smaller, more refined ones in the French Sudan and Senegal implies a hierarchy in West African cultures. Did the tamer image of the *balafon* player in the French Sudan, from 1892, and its resemblance to those in front of the Senegalese king, reflect the 'civilizing' influence of the French? It would have been no surprise to find the Senegalese depicted here as dignified and the most evolved of the region. The French had colonized the region since the eighteenth century and seen commerce there prosper. They used education and laws to influence the Senegalese and the result was the training of indigenous teachers and judges as well as some intermarrying. Many considered it 'the base of operations from which the French could penetrate the centre of Africa'.⁷⁵ When it came to centralizing French West Africa in 1895, the French chose Senegal for its administration, as it was known for its relative success in assimilating French customs. The relative simplicity of the *balafon* and the Senegalese clothes, however, may still have led readers of *L'illustration* to conclude that the Senegalese race was limited in its evolutionary development. Nothing about these images suggests the sophistication readers associated with their own civilization.

String instruments represented in *L'illustration* suggest transcultural influences beyond individual regions. The terminology used by the magazine encouraged such conclusions. Even if ethnomusicologists since then have not considered the violin a generic term, preferring bowed lute or fiddle, editors of *L'illustration* called most small string instruments played with a bow 'violins', and most played with fingers 'guitars'. They seem to have been focused more on the manner of performance than on the instrument's shape or size. In Figure 1, for example, the list points to a violin with three strings and two guitars with four strings in addition to an instrument with two strings, a harp with 16, a bell, and four flutes.

The most rudimentary instrument called a 'violin' in *L'illustration* (no. 2795, 1896), an *imzad* or single-string bowed lute, is played by a woman in Timbuktu, in the middle of the Sahara desert on the Niger River (see Figure 11). She is the only female musician from outside the West represented in *L'illustration*, and she is smiling. Timbuktu had successfully resisted colonization and, after ferocious battles, handed France defeats in 1894 and 1896, the year this image was published. Rather than reporting on the military battles – images of dark-skinned Tuareg warriors already dominating the covers of the mass illustrated supplements – *L'illustration* printed nine articles called 'Tombouctou la mystérieuse', illustrated with photographs of Tuareg culture taken by the author.

⁷⁵ Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*, 400–9.



Figure II. *L'illustration*, no. 2795 (19 September 1896), from a photograph by Félix Dubois in his 'Tombouctou la mystérieuse': 'Violin player'.

In the context of the French defeats, this woman could be seen as smiling in celebration of her countrymen's resistance to French conquest. It is more likely, however, that the image, like that of the passive drum-makers in Figure 2, was meant to suggest that these people were not so formidable. Who, after all, could better represent mystery than a woman, and what better way to dispel French fear? In fact, the author uses her to point out the unusual appeal of Timbuktu, a town worthy of French attention. Not only does it have lively culture and commerce, it also functions as a town of pleasure for Arabs, in part because its women take male lovers outside marriage.

As in the Indo-Chinese and Chinese ensembles discussed above, the lack of specific names for string instruments raises interesting questions of a more general nature. The vertically held Tunisian 'violin' (no. 1838A, 1878), although

played with a bow, visually resembles the plucked, vertically held instrument in the middle of the Bosnian dance orchestra (no. 2701J, 1894). Western-style violins also appear in this scene, as in most depictions of Eastern European music-making, including the Hungarians in no. 2514A (1891), the Russians at the 1889 Exhibition (no. 2433C, 1889), and the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the furthest reaches of 'Petite Russie', the Ukraine (no. 2052, 1882; see Figure 17 below). Western-style guitars, such as those played by the gaucho wagon-drivers in no. 1508 (1872), appear as far away as Buenos Aires. These images suggest a shared culture over a wide geographical area. *Le petit journal* (22 May 1893) called the musician brought by the Pai-Pi-Bri to Paris the year the Ivory Coast became a French colony a 'guitarist'; however, they referred to his instrument as a 'violin'. Cultural confusions aside, these so-called 'violins' and 'guitars' drew readers' attention to possible transnational movement, whether of religion (Islam in Tunisia and Bosnia) or culture (Europe to Argentina and the Ivory Coast). From a monogenist perspective, this would have supported the hypothesis of racial diversity as resulting from human migration and adaptation to milieux.

Like the drum and the trumpet, the presence of violins in the French colonies offered an occasion to document the assimilation of Western practices. *L'illustration* describes performers from Madagascar in no. 2750 (1895), unlike most other African performers, as 'musicians', perhaps because one of them plays a Western-style violin (see Figure 12). Published two years after Figure 3, the context here is different. This time the violin is accompanied not by Western-style drums, but by two indigenous instruments, a stick zither and the *valiha*, a tube zither with 16 strings. Moreover, the player of the *valiha* is smiling, showing personality and liveliness, unlike the Dahomeans in Figure 2 also engraved by Tilly. The text refers to music, along with lace-making, as the two activities these people carry out 'with taste'. This image from the Malagasy capital, Tananarive (Antananarivo), however, appeared after months of imagery documenting the invasion of the country and only six weeks after the French defeated the Malagasy with the help of '8,000 young recruits drafted from the garrisons of the continent'. In 1896, the island became a colony. Showing respect for Malagasy musicians and depicting the coexistence of Western and non-Western instruments may have been directed at counteracting the significant anti-colonialist sentiment surrounding this expedition in Paris, as if the coexistence that was purportedly achieved was worth the cost.⁷⁶

The hurdy-gurdy in the hands of a *kobzar*, a blind musician from 'Petite Russie', the Ukraine (no. 2053, 1882), brings up another important point accompanying these instrumental similarities – social class (see Figure 13). For his portrait, again without a background, Bellenger aimed for an impression diametrically opposed to that suggested by his regal-looking *balafon* player in

⁷⁶ Part of the anti-colonialist sentiment came from the great losses the French had suffered in Madagascar in the 1890s – 40% of their troops, as compared with 6.1% in Tunisia, 7.5% in Tonkin and 22.5% in the Sudan, the last two in 1885. See Thobie and Meynier, *Histoire de la France coloniale*, ii, 175–6.



Figure 12. *L'illustration*, no. 2750 (9 November 1895): 'Malagasy musicians', Tananarive (E. Tilly).

Figure 10. The *kobzar's* dishevelled hair, troubled expression, well-worn boots and position near the ground suggest dire poverty. The context for this image in *L'illustration* (1 July 1882) reinforces this conclusion, since he is juxtaposed with images of a family living in a Russian chateau. And yet the commentary mourns his lost freedom. Whereas the Russian family sings and dances waltzes and polkas, accompanied by a piano, the *kobzar* wanders from village to village, recounting his 'sacred heritage' – the 'suffering and struggle' endured by his people before they were conquered by the Polish and the Russians.

Although string instruments were believed by many to be the most evolved of musical instruments and those most associated with the Aryan race,⁷⁷ string performers outside Western Europe in these images often seem to be people of

⁷⁷ See Rowbotham, *A History of Music*, i, 151ff., on 'the lyre stage' and its association with the Aryan race.



Figure 13. *L'illustration*, no. 2053 (1 July 1882), from Victor Tissot, 'La Russie et les Russes: La Petite Russie [Ukraine]': 'Kobzars and Povodyres' (A. Bellenger).

modest means, judging by their clothes and surroundings as represented in *L'illustration*, whether in the distant reaches of the West – Argentina, Bosnia and provincial Russia – or in Timbuktu and the Ivory Coast. Did such similarities encourage an analogy between poor people in the West and the races of Africa? To understand racial differences, particularly in Africa, did readers look to social Darwinism, the purported survival of the fittest, a factor believed responsible

for social differences in the West? These images imply that inferior peoples of whatever kind may be dangerous and that low classes in the West may have been feared like Africans in the colonies.

Of course, there are limits to what these analogies can imply. First, some may reflect merely physical similarities rather than sonorous ones. After all, the reader cannot hear the instruments being performed. In referring to a Javanese gamelan as a 'piano composed of bronze or wood slabs struck with a mallet', *L'illustration*'s reduction of a non-Western instrument to some imagined Western equivalent is almost ludicrous.⁷⁸ It captures the percussive nature of how the sound is made, but not the materiality of the sound object, the variety of possible tunings, the distinction between individual metallophones and xylophones of various sizes, or the fact that the term 'gamelan' referred to an ensemble of many instruments. Second, except in provincial Russia, rarely is there any attempt to identify the specific ethnic groups using these instruments. Third, these images represent only a selection of those available to the French public during this period, and the differences between those in a major publication read by elites across France and its colonies, such as *L'illustration*, and those with more narrowly targeted audiences of music-lovers, such as *La musique des familles*, suggest some variation in French understanding of them and their intended effect. It is ironic that *L'illustration* reproduces more accurate images of many exotic instruments even if the accompanying texts are often short, while *La musique des familles*, whose rare images are more crudely stereotypical, includes long descriptions of their sound and manner of performance. Fourth, even for the French of that time, there is not enough redundancy (multiple representations of the same instrument over time) to explain the variety in instrumental species, that is, to explain when changes may have arisen, what evolutionary stage the instruments might represent, and whether instrumental variants result from addressing new needs and desires within a given culture or from the migration and acclimatization of people (and their instruments) over time – questions that continue to puzzle ethnomusicologists today. Instrumental similarities, to French readers, may have seemed to transcend racial differences and to suggest that human differences are bridgeable, at least when it comes to music. From this perspective, the images support the hypothesis of a unified human race, and one showing remarkable flexibility over time. However, to the extent that instrumental differences are assumed to reflect racial distinctions, they throw into question the possibility of assimilation. Because it is not clear what determines variations in an instrument's shape, function or manner of performance – intracultural changes or intercultural influences – ultimately these images could have revealed little to them about the origin, nature and mechanism of racial differences.

Still, four conclusions follow from this short study. First, although it is not clear precisely how the public was meant to understand images of non-Western

⁷⁸ Report on the Amsterdam Universal Exhibition, *L'illustration* (1 September 1883), 143.

instruments, their publication often coincided with some political or specifically imperialist context. When Annam and Cambodia were becoming French colonies, the editor of *L'illustration* noted that the engravings he chose from 'the most substantial volume we know on the subject' would provide 'all that one wants to know' about 'where events are currently taking place in the Far East'.⁷⁹ *L'illustration*, which sought to reproduce images 'd'après nature', conveying accurate information with their eyewitness sketches and photographs, probably hoped to shape public opinion about the foreign peoples with whom the French or their allies were in conflict. In referring to the *tambour* as the 'national instrument' of Dahomey a year before it became a French protectorate, and the *balafon* as the 'national instrument' of Senegal when it was displayed with the king at the 1889 Exhibition, the editor also used instruments, even those with broad usage in West Africa, to get readers thinking about nation-states on the continent.⁸⁰ Thus the magazine implied that Africa had not just ethnic divisions with vague borders and fluctuating structures of power, but also distinct political entities that, in the scramble over the continent with Germany, England and Belgium, could be fought over, conquered and administered.

Second, in both museums and magazine images, exotic instruments are often removed from any context that would shed light on the meanings associated with their use. This serves to facilitate comparison according to abstract categories such as their shape and the manner in which they were used in performance. Such a tactic would have served well those making universalist arguments about instruments and their evolution.

Third, when taken in comparison with one another, these images allude to the relative status of various cultures, as if they represent various 'degrees' of civilization, a tenet held at the time by both monogenists and polygenists. Within Africa, for example, the *balafon* and its players represented a range of cultures, the more sophisticated ones associated with cultures having had extended contact with the French. Comparing the African and Asian ensembles depicted in *L'illustration*, the latter appear larger and more diverse, suggesting that the sounds they made and perhaps the cultures that produced them were more complex. And even if the text accompanying Figure 2 comments on the allegorical sculptures ornamenting the large Dahomean drum, the *gbédou*, this visual characteristic does not appear in the engraving, whereas decorative detail is emphasized in depicting the Tonkinese *tam-tams*. The differences implied in representations of Asian and African musicians thus cast doubt on the claims made by scholars such as Paul Greenhalgh, who in his study of the Universal Exhibitions, *Ephemeral Vistas*, assumes that the French considered both Asians and Africans as savages close to 'the animal state'.⁸¹ *L'illustration's* choice of musical instruments follows rather the model of Gustave Le Bon, who proposed

⁷⁹ 'Nos gravures', *L'illustration* (25 October 1884), 267.

⁸⁰ 'Nos gravures', *ibid.* (16 January 1892), 60.

⁸¹ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas* (Manchester, 1988), 97.

four stages of civilization, not two, and who acknowledged a third stage, or 'average' civilization, in Chinese culture. Showing large African ensembles, the full range of African instruments, and the sculptural decoration on them would have destabilized the stereotype of Africans as primitive and suggested more parity between Africans and Asians.

Fourth, because these images intermingled with those depicting the Western European musical world, the exotic Other served to reflect back on Western culture, underlining its difference. In a world increasingly conscious of its diversity, monogenists and polygenists agreed on the importance of asserting Western superiority and, regardless of their attitudes toward colonization, looked to Western progress to rationalize it.

Western superiority

In 1882, Prime Minister Jules Ferry, a fierce proponent of both colonialism and universal education, said his mission was not to fuse the races, but 'to awaken among the other races the superior notions of which we are guardians'.⁸² Clemenceau scoffed at this, pointing out how subjective notions of superiority can be – did the French lose to the Germans in 1871 because they are an inferior race? Still, even those who may have doubted the racial superiority of Europeans would have been hard pressed not to acknowledge the cultural superiority associated with Western music in *L'illustration*, not just its musical instruments, but also its large orchestras, elegant players and sophisticated concert halls. Indeed, these images unambiguously support the second principle of assimilation: the absolute value of all things Western, independent of time and place.

Throughout the 30 years examined, images of ladies attending the Opéra and soldiers vaunting Western military power interweave with those of non-Western performers. Two of them in the 31 May 1879 issue illustrate this. In the first (no. 1892A, 1879) – the Continental Hotel ballroom lined with Greek columns, adorned with chandeliers, and with an orchestra at one end – couples show off their finest clothes in one of the period's most sophisticated settings for dance and music (see Figure 14). Hosting a charity ball attended by foreign ambassadors, generals and aristocrats, the new hotel served as a 'model of elegance, luxury and comfort' meant to satisfy entirely 'those who live on the elevated summits of the social Olympus'.⁸³ Only a few pages later (no. 1892B, 1879), one finds a near-naked Annamite from outside Batruc, wearing only a loincloth, a cape and some jewellery and, with eyes closed, playing an unusual instrument – a bamboo mouth organ, the *khen* (see Figure 15). Juxtaposed here with a bourgeois and his wife, both dressed in long dark coats with long sleeves and a hat, and a *femme du peuple* wearing a skirt above the knee and a halter top (all presented without any background as racial specimens), this image associates

⁸² Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 13.

⁸³ 'Nos gravures', *L'illustration* (31 May 1879), 347.



Figure 14. *L'illustration*, no. 1892A (31 May 1879): 'Paris: Charity Ball given in the Grande Salle des Fêtes, Continental Hotel, to benefit victims of the Szegeidin flood'.

musical performance with the lowest class of Annamite society.⁸⁴ Described as a 'savage' but never discussed in the article in which he appears, 'Le royaume d'Annam et les Annamites', this is perhaps the most primitive image of a musician in *L'illustration*. The author was a military captain who had spent a year there in 1876, and the article appeared soon after the Chinese invaded Annam, leading to the beginning of limited French intervention for commercial and strategic reasons. Since the 'savage' is altogether unlike the Indo-Chinese 'musicians' in Figure 7, featured when the country became a French protectorate in 1884, his presence acknowledges certain realities that perhaps contributed to the arguments for French intervention.

Such juxtapositions associate Western music with great wealth and material progress, non-Western music with poverty and limited civilization. Conklin notes that the French of the time associated bare feet and minimal clothes with 'savagery' and were proud that Africans coming to the 1889 Exhibition left

⁸⁴ Furthermore, in Saigon at the time, Annamites seem to have been the lowest class of Indo-Chinese society, for among domestic servants, cooks tended to be Chinese, gardeners Cambodians, and 'boys' Annamites. See Charles Meyer, *La vie quotidienne des Français en Indochine, 1860–1910* (Paris, 1985), 94. This image strongly resembles a photograph of 'Khas savages' from Laos, published in *L'illustration* in 1903, though again not discussed in the accompanying text.



Figure 15. *L'illustration*, no. 1892B (31 May 1879), from M. Dubreuil de Rhins's 'Le royaume d'Annam et les Annamites': 'Savage in the outskirts of Batruc'.

France 'fully shod', considering this 'civilization in the making'.⁸⁵ Furthermore, scenes depicting imaginary exotic Others on Parisian stages (such as *Lakmé*, set in India, *Aida*, set in Egypt, and *Le tribut de Zamora*, with its slave auction in Africa) suggest that stories about these people can be shaped to serve Western purposes.

Dance performances representing various cultures reinforce these observations, particularly when it comes to differences in the use of the human body. With eyes closed, the 'Aïssaoua' dancers in Morocco (no. 2007, 1881) and Tunisia (no. 2855D, 1897), all male, seem possessed, perhaps drunk or at least completely consumed in the expression of Dionysian-inspired feeling. The unnatural, angular positions of the Moroccans' backs, arms and feet imply erratic, irregular movements. The Tunisian holds a snake in his mouth (see Figure 16). The captions call these 'exercises', not movement dignified by the word dance. Only frame drums, rattles and song accompany as an audience watches. Interestingly, this image was published in a section entitled 'À travers Tunisie' that included an image of military retreat from the region.

The Zaporozhian folk-dancing in Figure 17 similarly has Dionysian elements, perhaps a reflection of these fiercely independent Cossacks and their history of conflicts in Russia.⁸⁶ The musicians, their feet spread apart as if to maintain balance while playing, stand in a semi-circle around two dancers who jump from foot to foot, their swords at their waists. Such frenzy, however, is not true of all non-Western dance. In an article on Westerners' discovery of the source of the Niger River, the performance of the old king himself before the explorers in no. 1980B (1881) is restrained, suggesting how well they were received, even if the women are bare-breasted, the scene is in nature, and the people are on the open ground. In the French Sudan too (no. 2596C, 1892), the dancer is graceful, smiling, clothed, and accompanied by plucked string instruments (see Figure 18). She is performing for a large, seated audience of male warriors and their leader, their antiquated rifles at their sides. As in Figure 5 (reproduced from an earlier instalment of the same series of articles), one wonders whether the point of this image is to suggest the effect of the treaty that made Sudan a French colony. Interestingly, the image is preceded two weeks earlier in *L'illustration* by eight dances of the American dancer Loïe Fuller, popular at the Folies Bergère (see Figure 19). With her skirt undulating in four of these images, these 'serpentine' dances recall that of the Sudanese dancer. It is unlikely that Ms Fuller was influenced by Sudanese dance, but the juxtapositions in *L'illustration* raise this reverse assimilation as a possibility.

Contrast these images with European classical dance, likewise a form of performance transcending the everyday, although more often dominated by the spirit of Apollo than that of Dionysus. Accompanied by an old man playing piano, the ballerina depicted in no. 2360 (1888) is poised, her body almost frozen

⁸⁵ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 14.

⁸⁶ For more on them, see Jean-Benoit Scherer, *Annales de la Petite Russie, ou Histoire des Cosaques-Saporogues et des Cosaques de l'Ukraine, ou de Petite-Russie* (Paris, 1788).

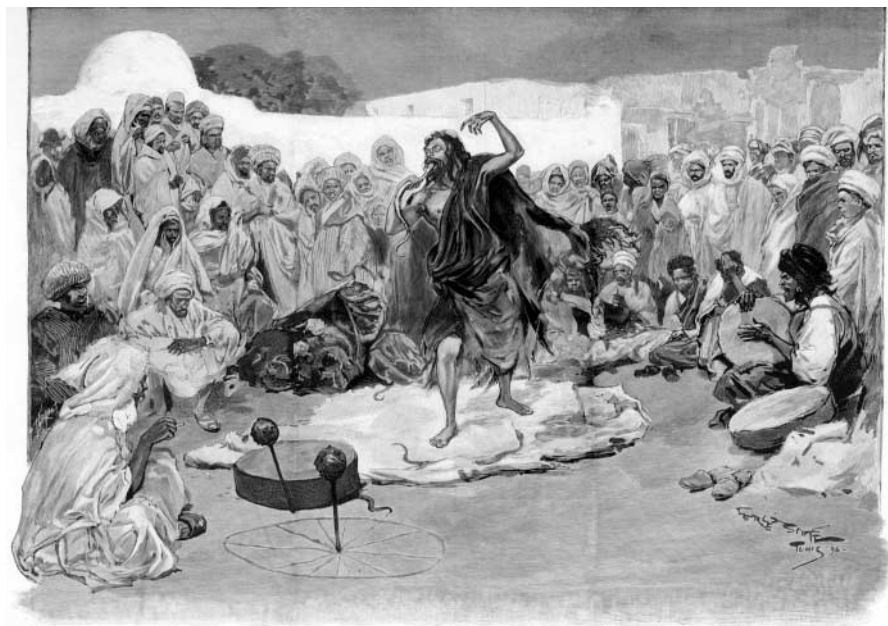


Figure 16. *L'illustration*, no. 2855D (13 November 1897), from a painting by Georges Bertin Scott: 'Exercises of an Aïssaoua', Tunis 1896.



Figure 17. *L'illustration*, no. 2052 (24 June 1882), from Victor Tissot, 'La Russie et les Russes: La Petite Russie [Ukraine]': 'The *Setche* of the Zaporozhians' (L. Dumont).



Figure 18. *L'illustration*, no. 2596C (26 November 1892), from Félix Dubois's 'La vie noire: Un voyage d'exploration au Soudan Français': 'The dance of the *griot*' (Édouard Riou).

in a geometrical position (see Figure 20). Whereas the Zaporozhians seem rooted to the ground on their flat feet, she leaps on one toe, balancing herself in the air with her arms in an oval above her. Graceful gestures alternate with mathematical precision, suggesting a different kind of mastery of the body. Her tutu and smiling face reinforce the image of femininity. The soldier looking on applauds, more engaged than those assisting at the Zaporozhian performance and evidently admiring the control the dancer is exhibiting. In no. 2289 (1887), three couples with wigs and eighteenth-century attire recreate an old minuet. As they move to the music, their joined hands too form graceful arches. This image makes a point that finds no parallel in images of the exotic Other – the West has a past, one that can and should be remembered.⁸⁷ Such stereotypes of idealized dancers in idealized poses suggest that Western formal dance calls for restraint, order and the physical articulation of 'perfect' rational forms.

These scenes display other forms of Western achievement as well. Each takes place in a large elegant salon, far from nature. The imported palm trees suggest Western domination over the natural order. The crystal chandelier, carved wood panelling, and stylish, exquisitely tailored clothes of the audience members as well

⁸⁷ This image, which took up two full pages, was followed by a two-page minuet for piano. The event took place in the Mexican ambassador's salon and was published to signal a return to interest in eighteenth-century fashions among the Parisian elite. See my forthcoming study of this emerging taste.



Figure 19. *L'illustration*, no. 2594E (12 November 1892): Loie Fuller, 'Serpentine dance: The Helix'.

as the performers are evidence of great skill and beauty in other domains. Those attending such performances and able to afford these luxurious forms of beauty are unambiguously white and upper class. The dances they perform project a metaphor for Western ideals of social behaviour.

Furthermore, throughout this period, *L'illustration* reproduces many recurring images of similar-looking theatres, suggesting not only the expansion of an aesthetic, but also the grandeur of European culture and the extent of its power and achievement. Besides those being renovated after fires, including the Paris Opéra-Comique (nos. 2911A–H, 1898), new ones were being built as far away as Constantine, Algeria (1883), Warsaw (no. 2535, 1891) and Odessa (no. 2120A, 1887). Especially in contrast with the outdoor settings for most non-Western performances here represented, the opulence of their interior spaces and the



Figure 20. *L'illustration*, no. 2360 (19 May 1888), from Alphonse Daudet, *L'immortel*: 'Ballerina in a salon' (Émile Bayard).

exterior references to the temples of ancient Greece serve to reflect Europe's self-image of a broadly shared civilization.

Images reproduced in *L'illustration* also seem to argue for the Western value of progress, the result of not just a slow transformation of ideas and customs, but also revolutionary innovations. Interestingly, the focus is not who makes the best or most perfect drums or woodwinds, considered by some to characterize earlier stages of human and social development. In fact, other than in military scenes, drums and woodwinds are usually downplayed in images of Western music-making in *L'illustration*. Instead what appears as distinctive about Western instruments are those aspects that have undergone the most transformation. Keyboards, omnipresent in *L'illustration*, clearly evolved from delicately sounding harpsichords played in domestic settings, as illustrated in nos. 2180 (1884) and 2409 (1889), into pianos such as that accompanying the dance in Figure 20, and into huge Cavallé-Coll organs producing enough sound to fill cathedrals (see, for example, no. 1411C, 1870). The piano, in particular, seems to be understood as reflecting developments specifically encouraged by the Industrial Revolution. Images published in 1870 (nos. 1414A–E), for example, depict the inside of a

piano factory. They point to the technical expertise needed to make a piano, that is, bending wood and metal. These images seem to suggest that man had to master nature.⁸⁸ String instruments too are associated with innovations – not only Pleyel's double piano with two keyboards (no. 2913, 1898), but also the chromatic harp without pedals (no. 2861, 1897) and the Altermann violin-violoncello (nos. 2903A–B, 1898). At the end of the century, *L'illustration* also published many advertisements for the gramophone (no. 2816, 1897) and various phonographs (nos. 2869B, 2893, 2905AA, 2907B, all from 1898), including images of musicians recording for them ('A Factory for Music', nos. 2947B–E, 1899). In contrast to these, images of non-Western instruments in the magazine probably suggested to French readers little dramatic change in recent years.

By providing extreme contrast with what their readers otherwise associated with music, this juxtaposition of Western with non-Western instruments, musical contexts and dance thus served to underline the wealth and material progress of the West and to promote pride in Westerners as well as a sense of cultural superiority. In this sense, their message was addressed not just to the French at home, but also to their subscribers abroad, including those living in the colonies. Unfortunately *L'illustration* published no correspondence or commentary that would have allowed us closer study of their reactions.

Reconsidering exotic difference after 1900

Ironically, then, the use of stereotypes and the technique of comparison, promoted as the best way to encounter difference, often directed people's attention to their own culture and its part on the world stage. They also tended to encourage certain kinds of responses, especially rationalizations for French imperialism and for or against assimilationist colonial policy. Assimilation appeared as a way not only to have growth through accumulation (in the cultural as well as political domains), but also to remove the shock of the unknown or little known, to deny its distinction as well as its capacity for resistance. Yet for all the talk, the images in *L'illustration* suggest little interference by Westerners in exotic musical cultures other than perhaps through certain colonies' assimilation of Western drums, bugles and violins. And despite all those to which the French were exposed, few Western composers in turn assimilated exotic instruments into their music or tried to imitate the timbre of such instruments.⁸⁹ Most remained content to acclimatize exotic modes or to bend

⁸⁸ This upholding of the piano as an advanced instrument is interesting to remember when writers in *L'illustration* describe the Javanese gamelan as a piano. See above, note 78.

⁸⁹ Later examples of composers who did incorporate non-Western instruments are Igor Stravinsky in *The Rite of Spring* (1913) and, of those who tried to imitate non-Western instruments using Western means, Maurice Delage in *Quatre poèmes hindous* (1912). For a study of the latter, see my 'Reinterpreting Indian Music: Maurice Delage and Albert Roussel', *Music-Cultures in Contact*, ed. Margaret Kartomi and Stephen Blum (Basle, 1994), 122–57, and 'Race, Orientalism, and Distinction in the Wake of the Yellow Peril', *Western Music and its Others*, ed. Georgina Born and Dave Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley, 2000), 86–118.

exotic tunes to suit Western purposes like exotic plants at the Paris zoo. As a music critic once pointed out, it was enough of a *tour de force* to accompany these melodies with a 'rational succession of chords'.⁹⁰

By 1900, however, faith in the assimilationist process began to wane. The results of the Spanish–American War and problems in attempting to impose French institutions in Indo-China led to all-out attacks on assimilationist colonial policy as rigid, unscientific and harmful. Building on Le Bon's theories, Léopold de Saussure, in his *Psychologie de la colonisation française dans ses rapports avec les sociétés indigènes* (1899), renewed criticism of the application of assimilation to education, institutions and language. Émile Durkheim, who objected to judging a people's institutions by comparing them with some arbitrarily defined ideal and insisted on the value of indigenous institutions, was also critical.⁹¹ Music critics living abroad also had to admit that 'the Far-Easterner hides his soul not only from a musical perspective, almost never sharing the secrets of his songs, but also in general'⁹² – making even the pretence of influencing them questionable. Meanwhile, when it came to capturing their image for publication, Dahomeans at the 1900 Exhibition refused to be photographed, throwing stones and blocking the camera's lens. And some French sympathized, noting that they needed a law such as existed in Germany protecting victims of 'ridiculous and grotesque' representations.⁹³

The public too had become less curious, if we are to judge by the ticket sales for the exotic events at the 1900 Exhibition. These, as a whole, earned only slightly less than many single events, such as Loïe Fuller's presentations and the Old Paris exhibition, and far less than the Swiss village, which earned five times the revenues from all exotic events.⁹⁴ The public had also grown willing to tolerate charlatanism. When Indo-Chinese dancers were weeks late in arriving at the 1900 Exhibition, for example, organizers substituted Italian ballerinas, members of King Norodom's corps de ballet, and a star from the Paris Opéra, just back from an American tour, all of whom learnt their parts from watching

⁹⁰ Henri Quittard, 'L'orientalisme musical: Saint-Saëns orientaliste', *Revue musicale* (1 March 1906), 9. For more recent writing on this topic, see Ralph P. Locke, 'Constructing the Oriental "Other": Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 3 (November 1991), 261–302, and *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston, MA, 1998).

⁹¹ Durkheim, writing in the *Revue de Paris* (1902), is cited in Raoul Girardet, *L'idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris, 1972), 158.

⁹² Jean Marcel, 'Variétés, musique d'Extrême-Orient', written from Vinh in January 1901, *Le courrier musical* (1 March 1901), 58.

⁹³ 'Notre concours de photographie après l'exposition', *Lectures pour tous* (October 1900), 347.

⁹⁴ According to the *Annuaire statistique de la ville de Paris* (Paris, 1900), ticket sales indicate that, among the exotic performances, the Egyptian theatre was most popular. It earned 94,000 francs, followed by exotic theatre (92,000), Indonesian theatre (48,000), Algerian street theatre (40,000), French Indies theatre (32,000), oriental dances (32,000), Moorish dances (31,000), Algerian dances (11,000) and an Indian concert (20,000), with a total of approximately 400,000 francs for all exotic performances. The most popular events, in order, were: Swiss village (2,160,284), Costume pavilion (1,322,475), Optical pavilion (970,834), Old Paris (936,155), Panorama of the World Tour (692,245), Maréorama (588,000), Loïe Fuller (349,162) and the Paris Aquarium (305,549).

an ethnographic film shown to them in the adjoining pagoda. Not only did the public seem not to care, the music critic Arthur Pougin, never too sympathetic to anything exotic, muttered 'tant pis' ('so what?'), noting that the Indo-Chinese theatre's only originality derived from 'its principal subjects' being Europeans.⁹⁵ Julien Tiersot, who otherwise found the coexistence of 'Javanese dancers, Annamite dramas, lascivious Arab melodies, and warrior songs of African negroes and Oceanic peoples' during the 1889 Exhibition 'a revelation, a complete novelty', saw the incursion of Westerners parading as Orientals as only part of the problem with the 1900 Exhibition. When diversity meant 'an orchestra of women whose bowing one could easily recognize was learnt at the Conservatoire . . . dressed in Arab rags, directed by a conductor in a Neapolitan costume, and playing Viennese waltzes in an *arlésien* village while around them, horrible combination, people consumed American drinks', then ethnic juxtapositions had become absurd.⁹⁶

In this context, the 1900 Colonial Congress unanimously voted that native institutions and customs should be respected and maintained as much as possible. On 19 December the French passed a law granting Algeria a 'civil personality', distinct from that of continental France, and an autonomous budget.⁹⁷ Government officials also began to consider a new colonial policy inspired by that practised in the British Empire. Association, or gaining cooperation and participation by native peoples in their own administration, education and defence, dominated the discourse up until World War I. This was possible in part because there existed by then a generation of French-educated Africans who could interface with traditional chiefs and other indigenous elites. The 1900 History of Music Congress too called for an international society to gather popular melodies in all countries using the phonograph and to notate them, even though, as Todorov and others have pointed out, notating another's music removes the crucial element of difference encoded in oral communication.⁹⁸ They also asked musical instrument museums to provide ways for people to listen to these recordings. At subsequent International Congresses, such as that held in Paris in 1902, papers on native customs and habits abounded in reflection of this shift of focus.

Tiersot's 'ethnographic notes' from the 1900 Exhibition reflect some of these changes. He claimed to be seeking a music not 'contaminated by European

⁹⁵ Arthur Pougin, 'Le théâtre et les spectacles à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900', *Le ménestrel* (24 February 1901), 60.

⁹⁶ In his review, 'Ethnographie musicale: Notes prises à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900, (Suite)', *Le ménestrel* (14 October 1900), Julien Tiersot agreed that this Exhibition was 'very inferior' to the 1889 one, for most of the presentations lasted only 15–20 minutes, passing by 'as if on a film screen', and effects replaced mystery. He too questioned the authenticity of some of the performers, referring to an 'exoticism of the Batignolles' (a Parisian suburb), and admitted that within a tune embellished by a Negro playing in the Madagascar exhibit he recognized a Spanish dance theme he had learnt on the piano in his youth (pp. 323–4). Apparently even the cuisine served at the various exotic restaurants within the Exhibition was a sham.

⁹⁷ Thobie and Meynier, *Histoire de la France coloniale*, ii, 171.

⁹⁸ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 11.

influences' and wanted to study 'exclusively the races most different from ours and the people most distant from us'.⁹⁹ This meant not only interviewing the 30 or so Dahomean musicians at the 1900 Exhibition, but also 'studying the form and mechanism of their instruments'. In three of his articles on Dahomean music published in early 1903, Tiersot still characterizes the *tambours* as their most representative instrument, referring to their character as the 'most warlike' of African peoples. However, this time he recognizes the wide variety of drums that we have seen depicted in Figure 2, 11 years earlier ('some of them two metres long, some played horizontally, some between the legs, some hit with drumsticks in the manner of timpanists in our orchestras'), and he attempts to record their names. He also notes that two gigantic drums played at the 1900 Exhibition were decorated with 'bizarre sculptures' and 'inscriptions designated as male and female' – something not evident in *L'illustration's* images and challenging some of the conclusions readers may have drawn a decade earlier. And he includes a discussion of other Dahomean instruments – a gourd-shaped pot called *han hi*, a horn one metre long and others made of elephant tusks, bells, a bamboo flute, a small guitar and harp, other plucked string instruments and a *balafon* similar to those used in Senegal. With this information, Tiersot sends his readers to see some of them at the Musée d'Ethnologie.¹⁰⁰

Ethnomusicology in France thus began to grow only after a rejection of the Republican faith in assimilation and a return to an acknowledgement of cultural as well as racial difference – essentially the polygenist perspective previously embraced by monarchists. The early history of this emerging discipline, therefore, is intimately connected to the politically charged, imperialist context in which it arose.

ABSTRACT

Throughout the nineteenth century, musical instruments were seen as embodiments of a country's distinction, useful in 'the study of man, the diverse races, and their degree of civilization'. This article, focusing on the illustrated French press between 1870 and 1900, examines popular colonial representations of instruments in the context of the complex racial ideologies and the material as well as ideological struggles underlying imperialism. Images of exotic instruments, I argue, served not only to teach about foreign cultures, but also to shape French perceptions of Africa and Indo-China during imperialist expansion there. As such, they help us to situate ethnomusicology's prehistory within French colonialism.

⁹⁹ Tiersot, 'Ethnographie musicale . . . Suite', 324. A selection of these essays that appeared in subsequent issues of *Le ménestrel* was published together in his *Notes d'ethnographie musicale* (Paris, 1905). Its main chapters concern Japanese dance and theatre as well as Chinese, Indo-Chinese and Indian music. The *Revue musicale* early that decade also published studies of non-Western musical traditions based much less on old explorer accounts and reflecting higher standards of scholarship.

¹⁰⁰ Julien Tiersot, 'Notes d'ethnologie musicale: La musique au Dahomey', *Le ménestrel* (25 January 1903), 25–6; (1 February 1903), 33–5; (8 February 1903), 41–2. These articles also include tunes Tiersot notated during various visits of Dahomeans to Paris as well as notes on their manner of performance.