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The Evolution of Western Colonial Discourse:

An Analysis of the English Language History of Colonialism in Morocco

In 1899, British historian Budgett Meakin stated near the end of a large volume on the history of the Moorish empire, “the historian records experiences of the past to guide in present action, and provides foundations on which others, more ambitious, may build prophecy” (423). The historian may indeed record past experiences, but whose experiences of which events are recorded? How do such records guide actors in their respective presents, and what grounds do such historical foundations provide these builders in their prophecies? Such records do not merely provide foundations in objective accounts of events that have occurred at some point in the past. The manner in which past experiences are documented, as well as the experiences which are both recorded and unrecorded by historians and chroniclers often guide actors in their present socio-historical situations toward building particular types of prophecies, often self-fulfilling and frequently self-interested.

History, then, is not only a compiled record of actual events, but also is a compilation of the subjective interpretations of actual events, with an inherent socio-political and cultural bias of the historian despite any attempts to the contrary. The subjective predispositions in these interpretations of past events become apparent upon analysis of the language used, as well as details that may have been included, exaggerated, excluded or suppressed. Through the lens of time and through the outcomes of these and subsequent events, history becomes predicated on both the actuality and on the records of these past events. Thus the historical record is not a

passive account of events, but like the events themselves, it is an active force that can and often does, change the features of the local and global socio-political-economic landscape.

Histories written by westerners during and about the colonial period provide the world with a record of actual events that occurred, as well as with a record of their subjective interpretations of these events. Such records provide not only an *etic* perspective on the events of the time which often appear to have happened to those who were colonized, but also with an *emic* perspective on the mindset of westerners who often seem to have initiated the events that happened in and to the rest of the world. History is inevitably culturally biased around these interpretations, but is also equally distorted as much by what is unknown as what is known.

The land of *Maghreb el Aksa* – Land of the Farthest West, or Land of the Setting Sun – now called Morocco, possesses a sequence of past events, yet this past prior to its colonization is often far more mystery than history to westerners due to the particulars of historical circumstances. The histories of Morocco written by westerners prior to and during its colonization created a discourse in which a European colonial presence became not only favorable to European interests, but also to Moroccan interests, indubitably from the western perspective. Western historical accounts maintained a certain degree of inevitability to European colonization, even prior to the actual process, which naturally led to self-fulfilling prophecies. As historical events progressed, historical accounts in retrospect began to change and events once deemed unavoidable, became rather the cause of historical actors who initiated events on prophesized historical foundations in seeming self-interest.

Necessarily, this analysis contains its own subjective interpretations, and has also been limited to English language histories of Morocco, with several translations – which despite being translated are nevertheless, a part of the English language history. The English language histories

of Morocco are not as numerous as the French, nor the Arabic or Spanish. Yet they are a valuable resource, if for no other reason than for an often self-perceived or self-stated lack of bias. As none of the English speaking countries appeared to have had colonial plans in Morocco after England evacuated Tangier in 1684 (Pennell 2003), their historical accounts were able to feign a certain amount of detachment from events occurring in the *Maghreb*, or at least affect objectivity. Despite this apparent lack of colonial interest on the part of English-speaking governments, these governments are far from disinterested in Moroccan events and moreover, the citizen-historians of these nations are far from objective scribes.

Though Britain, being the closest English-speaking nation geographically and therefore the most interested, had an interest in maintaining an independent Morocco to avert rivals, notably France, its historians have a strong cultural bias against the Moors and also seem to suggest that French and Spanish rule were in the end unpreventable. Accounts from Americans of the colonial period possessed similar and equal biases. These historical records therefore, contribute as much to the actual events through the discourse of colonial inevitability and even respectability, as do the activities of self-interested historical actors – mainly the governments of France and Spain.

To interpret the histories and events surrounding the Moroccan colonization requires a minimal discussion of the events preceding and including the establishment of the Spanish and French colonial zones and their subsequent effects from present day historical perspectives. Modern historians have the benefit of analyzing both additional historical sources and the effects of these and subsequent events, which are often more revealing than the events themselves. Their accounts therefore may reveal many of the biases inherent in the accounts of earlier historians and chroniclers.

Before European intervention, the Moorish sultans, who provided the international political face of the territory despite a frequently precarious authority within the territory, were notoriously suspicious and wary of outsiders (Cohen 2004, Spencer 1965, Harris 1927). Thus despite its proximity to Europe, a mere thirty miles from the European continent, Morocco was relatively isolated from the West prior to the events leading to its colonization. Oddly, it was this proximity, in addition to the resourcefulness of the sultans in pitting European rulers against themselves, that allowed the area to be the last colonial project in Africa as European rivals failed to agree on the terms of colonization (Porch 1982). As the final area of African colonization, Morocco was a unified entity prior to colonization because “it was virtually the only patch of Africa which had yet to be absorbed” by European empires. Morocco was “a cartographic anomaly, an untidy splash of noncolonial independence” and was a country mainly “because the sultan said it was” (Porch 1982: 5). The territory itself was “fragmented internally into Berber...and Arab tribes differentiated through lineage [and] divided by language” and religious expression (Cohen 2004: 38). What one might have found in Morocco prior to European colonization was a country merely in concept. Various groups and factions existed in a network of intertwined communities, but its status as a unified entity was dubious at best.

Prior to colonization, most of the population of Morocco practiced subsistence agriculture, though Berber and Jewish merchants operated on trade routes and pirates also gained considerable income for the ruling sultan (Cohen 2004). Although the coastal towns had been fought over and ceded back and forth by the European powers and the Moors themselves for several hundred years, the interior “remained virtually closed to European influence” (Cohen 2004: 38). This may account for why most visitors from Europe found that there was “an astonishing difference between the European and the African shores” (Porch 1982: 12). Many

Europeans found the country somewhat backward and many first hand accounts note the exotic and strange nature of the place. Henry Selous in 1910 speaks of “a stench so powerful and nauseating as almost to be possessed of beauty”, while Walter Harris notes the variety of languages with strange accents and guttural tongues (Porch 1982: 13). The Europeans had little knowledge of what lay beyond the immediate shores of this land, and the western historical record prior to colonization is therefore lacking beyond the political events of the ascensions of the sultans whose regimes exercised control over the territory periodically. Hence western accounts tended to exoticize these little known people to the South, and Europeans sought to distance themselves from them culturally, creating an Other which could and should be civilized.

In 1727, British Captain John Braithwaite accompanied the English Consul-General, John Russel, to Morocco. Their stated mission was to free English prisoners under former treaties signed between the two countries (Chaouch 2006). In 1729, Braithwaite published *The History of the Revolutions in the Empire of Morocco*, which he dedicates “To the governors and court of assistants of the Royal African Company of England” signing as “their most humble, devoted, and faithful servant”. Braithwaite’s historical record recounts his experiences and the events that transpire around him. He states

“If others, who pompously call themselves Historians, had set down in plain Words what daily happen’d [sic] in their own Times, instead of...partial political Reflections and Refinements; we might now be usefully entertained and improved by a Collection of undeniable Truths” (vi).

Braithwaite takes his history from the “very Words of his own Journals” collected from the occurrences of each day of his travels. This, he says, allows the reader to “have a clear idea of the Country and Towns he went thro’ [sic], without any of the Fatigue and Danger which he underwent” (v-vi). Superficially, such intentions seem noble – to record objectively the events to

which Braithwaite was a party to on his mission, allowing readers to gain knowledge of these events.

However, Braithwaite's own personal history and the audience for which he is writing undoubtedly influences the events he recounts. His history records mainly political and military events highlighting the socio-political volatility of the region, for a company that had historically been established for and engaged in the African slave trade (PBS Resource Bank). His account focuses mainly on the political instability in the country following the death of Muley [sic] Ismael in 1727. Ismael ousted the British from Tangier several decades earlier and though treaties had since been signed declaring friendship, neither party strictly adhered to them as is evident from this party's mission to free English prisoners. The documentation of socio-political revolutions within the territory from a military perspective accentuated a perceived political vulnerability for an audience engaged in exploitative trade practices, which may surely be perceived as a "partial political reflection", as well as perhaps, an "undeniable truth". Although Braithwaite's account does not lead to any military successes for England, such accounts undoubtedly provided information to his trading company that would later be used to further their own commercial interests throughout the precolonial period. Likewise, the accounts provided information to other interested parties.

A French perspective surfaces in an English language translation in 1788. M. Chenier's two volume work *The Present State of the Empire of Morocco* is deemed by the unnamed translator as "the fullest and most complete, as well as the most authentic" of all historical accounts of Morocco until that time (iii). It might be assumed that the translator is speaking of purely European accounts here, ignoring records in Arabic as well as oral and other accounts by the myriad of semi-autonomous tribes existing in the *Maghreb* at that time. The history of a

people can be and often is maintained orally or through other art forms including glyphs, carvings, carpets and many others – even if it is not written down. Such histories may appear to be less valid, yet provide equally the past experiences of a people, coded for that group of people in a non-literary form.

The translator also notes that people of Barbary seem to be the least known of all peoples to Europeans, which he finds “extraordinary because that their manners, customs, government, and the ignorance in which *they* remain, when we recollect their proximity to Europe, are very remarkable” (i, emphasis added). The choice of the word *they* is odd here as it is in actuality, the Europeans who are ignorant of the Moroccans, not the Moroccans who are ignorant of themselves, regardless of their proximity to Europe. In context, the statement is highly ambiguous and could also be read as though it is *we* who are ignorant of *they*, yet it also projects the type of Euro-centric worldview that is prevalent in the colonial period throughout Europe.

Chenier’s work focuses on the state of social, political, military and economic affairs in Morocco, as well as the political and commercial views of its “emperor” in his present day. France and the rest of Europe are engaging in policies that favor their trade interests at this time and accordingly the commercial views of the sultan are of significant interest. Chenier notes that “the Moors cultivate their lands only in proportion to their wants; hence two thirds of the empire, at least, [I]ie waste” (Vol. 1, 105). The points of inherent cultural bias and self-interest in such statements are several.

The first consists in lumping all the peoples of Morocco as Moors. It has been well documented by Chenier himself that the people in this territory should be divided into “two principal classes...the Brebes [Berbers] and the Moors” (Vol. 1, 117). The Berbers and Moors were often at odds, hence Braithwaite’s earlier documentation of the revolutions in plural, and

this was used by the French to some advantage later in their colonial project. As the Berbers occupy much of Morocco then as now, we might assume that he would say that they also practiced waste through non-cultivation and subsistence practices and modern historians would seem to concur with this (Cohen 2004) – though subsistence farming is no longer considered wasteful by most. Modern scholars note that the Berbers were often pastoral herders of goats and sheep as well (Eickelman 2002). But Chenier states that the Berbers, unlike the Moors, ate swine and often “hunt[ed] lions and tigers and...have a custom of decorating their children with a tiger’s claw, or the remnant of a lion’s hide“ (Vol 1, 120). The absence of lions and tigers in modern Morocco and the lack of subsequent accounts or documentation of such practices would lead one to the conclusion that Chenier had fabricated or at least been duped into recording such information. Such seemingly ill-informed statements contributed to the exotification of peoples foreign to Europeans and created the sense of Otherness necessary to perpetuate the European colonial mindset of civilizing the savages.

The European notion that somehow uncultivated land is wasteful, is not only a point of cultural bias, but also speaks to their conceptions of domination through economics – which was to play so great a role in the colonization process. The practice of maximizing cultivatable land in lands colonized by Europeans and their companies was destined to create trade imbalances and debt while fostering dependencies favorable to European interests. It might have been that the Moors and Berbers did not see an inherent need to cultivate land if they had no use for the food, which would have spoiled without modern preservation techniques, or for the European surplus trade goods they might have received in return for the exportation of their excess food. Chenier declares this himself speaking of “the ignorance the inhabitants have of artificial wants” (Vol. 1, 107). This would change however, as Europe gradually implemented self-interested

economic and trade policies designed to further exportation of their products and other economic interests often at the expense of local industries in future colonized territories. In documenting the customs, manners and character of the inhabitants of Morocco, Chenier is also providing valuable, though sometimes somewhat dubious information on how France might alleviate this ignorance of artificial wants.

As Chenier was appointed Consul by the court of France, it is highly likely that France, who began colonizing neighboring Algeria some 40 years later, already had designs on a large North African colony. The amount of cultivatable land would be valuable information if such designs were in fact being planned, as it would inform the French government of prospective spoils. In Chenier's account there are in fact entire chapters devoted to the agricultural products of the Moors as well as mineral deposits, other sources of wealth, revenue, military forces, customs, trade and so on. Given subsequent events, the tone of his accounts, what he accounts for, and his appointment as Consul by the Court of France, it would be plausible to suggest that the French government may have had economic and colonial ambitions in Morocco some 125 years prior to the establishment of the Protectorate.

The events leading to the colonization of Morocco began with the Spanish-Moroccan War in 1860. The Spaniards reward for victory was a sum of "100 million pesetas on the *makhzan*" or ruling council, to be paid in foreign currency (Porch 1982:18). During that decade, excessive supplies of European products were being imported and used by Moroccans because they were often cheaper than locally made products. Competition between European industries and the dumping of inferior products particularly by German merchants caused prices to drop further, creating a severe strain on native industries. Although the trade in European firearms was legally the monopoly of the *makhzen* in Morocco, European merchants sold them in ample

quantities anyway (Schaar 1966). European merchants and others flooded the northern coastal areas of Morocco in the 1880's in search of wealth and Tangier, the city closest to Europe, was virtually abandoned by the *makhzan* and the sultan except for diplomatic officials (Porch 1982).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the intention of France to colonize Morocco was clear, but the British and Germans were opposed to this, which prevented direct intervention. The French employed several indirect methods to achieve their goals. One was military intervention in Morocco's southeast desert along the Algerian border where the inhabitants of oases were threatened with destruction of date palms and herds if they did not collaborate with the French military. The French also controlled Moroccan police forces at major ports to collect customs revenues and expanded commercial operations throughout the country using Moroccans acting in French interests. These local commercial actors in collusion with the French were, according to treaty, granted the protection of France and were not subject to the same Moorish laws and taxes as other native merchants (Eickelman 2002).

Expanding on the Spanish design of economic domination through debt, the French created the Bank of Morocco in 1907 to control the country's finances and to ensure repayment of forced loans (Eickelman 2002). This drained Moorish currency reserves and inflation ensued along with increased taxation, causing more revolutions in tribal areas. Likewise, the import of cheap commodities from Europe and elsewhere, along with special trade rules granted to merchants acting in French and other European interests put many native craftspeople out of business. Moroccan migration to the northern coastal cities in search of wage labor began, creating a landless proletariat that was to continue into the present day. Thus the information obtained from the accounts of earlier historians and chroniclers concerning the *Maghreb* allowed European interests to dominate the territory indirectly through economics.

In 1899, British historian Budgett Meakin had compiled an extensive history of the Moorish empire. Meakin's accounts are highly significant if only due to the historical period in which he existed and recorded this history. At the turn of the 20th century, the Moorish empire was not to last more than 13 years from the publication of his volume and it has been therefore, given some prominence here.

Meakin was the chief editor of the first English language newspaper in Tangier in the 1880's (Chaouch 2006), the city that had since been abandoned by the Moors to European traders. As a long time resident, speaker of Arabic and the first non-modern historian analyzed here who is not affiliated with a government or trading company, it would seem as though his account might possess less of a cultural bias. Yet Meakin's cultural bias is undoubtedly against the religion of Islam. He states, "Islam has never sought the welfare of the people" (436), noting that when

"The Moors were compelled to recognize their own inferiority, the lot of Europeans in Morocco began to improve, till, within the century, their position has developed from one of sufferance to one which the Moors may well envy, thus affording the best of object lessons as to the benefits which even a leaven of Christian principle confers upon a nation" (275).

Christian principles for Meakin, allowed the lot of Christian Europeans to improve while the non-Christian Moors became enlightened as to their inferiority. If this was indeed the case, Meakin might ask why the Moors had failed to convert to Christianity in large numbers.

Meakin's Christian biases run very deep as he devotes several chapters to atrocities committed against European Christians at the hands of the Moorish sultans. He maintains, "The manner in which they treated Europeans was disdainful beyond measure. Those who had the misfortune to reach their shores were subjected to every possible indignity, and, if slaves, to most inhuman cruelty" (275-6). He incorporated plates in his volume from the Dutch work *Dan of*

1684 depicting Moorish atrocities, which he shows as seemingly directed exclusively at Christians. These included the impaling of Christian slaves, as well as setting their heads on fire and hanging them from hooks on the city walls (293, 281, 285). Meakin also includes a photo of the gate of Fez from his present period, which allegedly contains the heads of Christians placed on spikes, though none are clearly visible from the photo printed in the original edition of his work (219).

Though all or some of this may undoubtedly be true, the prominence he accords such issues in addition to an avoidance of the consideration that these Christians were also Europeans and often Christian missionaries opposed to the rule of the Islamic sultan and thus were more political adversaries than religious ones, exposes Meakin's Christian bias. The same fates had often befallen Muslims and Jews in Spain some 400 years earlier before they migrated across the Straights of Gibraltar, yet this event is far less prominent in Meakin's account. He ends his book defending these missionaries from those who would disparage them stating "the missionaries, of whatever creed, are the noble few who live for the future, and no seed that they sow is lost" (437).

One of the seeds undoubtedly sown by Meakin was as the publisher of the first English language newspaper in Morocco. He begins his chapter *Journalism in Morocco* quoting a writer from the previous century who believed the press was "an engine to move the moral world...to the want of it may be fairly attributed the ignorance, the stupidity, the slavery of the African nations. The art of printing is unknown in Barbary" (533). Accordingly it would appear that Meakin believes that without the publication of daily events, societies such as those in Barbary will consist of ignorant, stupid slaves. Although he was critical of African slavery perpetrated by

European traders, it is highly questionable whether it was the printing press that allowed the Europeans to engage in the trade.

Meakin goes on to document the “difficulty of obtaining trustworthy information as to the trade of this country” prior to the advent of European newspapers due to the absence of the printing press in Morocco (533). As it has been seen that trade in Morocco during this period heavily favored European interests, the difficulty in obtaining trustworthy information was probably a benefit for Moorish interests and may have been intentional. Subsequently, many of these European papers “boldly attacked abuses which abound in this dark land” (537), and the Moorish government sought to stifle them. However, European newspapers in Tangier were, under treaty, autonomous and immune to Moorish objection or control.

With the press established, notably by only French, British, and Spanish nationals acting hypothetically in the interests of Moroccans, “a better state exists...and through its means the outside world is learning of the immense natural advantages possessed by Morocco, and of the great disadvantages under which it labours” (533). By learning of these natural advantages Europeans are being enticed to enjoy them, while simultaneously being told of the disadvantages in this “dark land” perpetuated by an Islamic government unconcerned with the welfare of the people. This is again a recipe for Otherizing Morocco and creating an atmosphere where colonization of this dark place with immense natural advantages will be beneficial not only to Europeans, but to the people of Morocco. But what the outside world is learning from Meakin, does not end there.

Despite being a journalist and historian, Meakin’s ambitious prophetic voice spoke unceasingly of the inevitability of European takeover of Morocco stating, “It is only a question of time before Morocco is added to Algeria” (430). Although it was indeed only a question of

time before his prophecy came to pass, such statements by the media influence the public discourse and create a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. Meakin even goes so far as to outline a plan for how the territory could be colonized militarily noting that “Spain holds the key in its presidios”, while “France has the back door in Algeria” (275). Meakin alleges that “Great Britain would object as strongly to see either [nation] assume control, though [is] unwilling to step in herself, and so things remain as they have been: for how long who can say?” (275).

Though it is certainly likely that the British were not anxious to see a European rival installed across from Gibraltar and Meakin warns against those nations that would attempt to possess Morocco, he also seems interested in some form of European intervention. When exploring the effects of the current Moorish independence on European interests, he notes,

“The consequence is that now, when something akin to piracy takes place on the coast, European statesmen altogether under-estimate the importance of the matter. And since international jealousies prevent any one of the Powers from annexing the country, they are content to accept what they can obtain by way of compensation” (275).

This would seem to suggest that Meakin is anxious to thwart piracy by way of territorial annexation by “the Powers”. Continuing the discussion on the lack of European response to Moorish piracy, he adds that European officials are “oblivious of the moral effect which such unsatisfactory arrangements have on the Moorish nation, and of the danger to which Europeans and their interests are thereby exposed” (275). Clearly he considers piracy a danger to European trading interests, yet it is unclear what the “moral effect” on the Moorish nation is. Presumably he is referring to Christian morals, though why a predominantly Muslim nation should adhere to Christian morality is puzzling.

Meakin speaks somewhat fondly of the aforementioned indirect interventions of the French, which might be deemed of equally questionable Christian morals, saying “France alone

is successfully spinning the yarn for the future weft, and tying political meshes wherewith to secure the spoil” (433). Thus it would seem that Meakin was employing a double standard where the Moors should have accepted European trading interests and the superiority of Christianity, while denying their own political, religious and economic interests. Such statements by both a historian and journalist undoubtedly had an influence on an English speaking audience who likely accepted such statements from one of their scholars and reporters. Such accounts surely allowed the Moors to become demonized in public discourse to a point where the British government and English speaking public accepted French intervention and annexation of Morocco in the interests of Britain, Europe and Morocco itself.

Although Meakin believes “Morocco has been left so far behind it has become difficult to realize the awe she was able to inspire in Europe, even to the beginning of the present century” (275), he admits that the international political situation “is well understood by the Moors, who are not so ill-informed as some fondly imagine” (433). In fact, the Moors were engaging in a political survival tactic that they had learned in their own divided empire in quelling tribal rebellions and revolutions over hundreds of years. “The training of ages in fomenting local feuds for the advantage of the central government...has enabled them to play off Power against Power with complete success” (433). According to Meakin, the Moorish government had used its diplomatic skill in dividing the European powers the same way it had used divisive tactics to control the fragmented Berber tribes and maintain political jurisdiction of its empire.

Though this might be deemed a compliment to the political gamesmanship of the Moorish government on an international stage, Meakin offers a remedy to the situation. “The Moors, like all other Orientals, fully respect only one thing, and that is a just and strong hand, but they must feel it to appreciate it” (275). A strong hand was to come and the manner in which

actual events progressed was eerily similar to Meakin's prophecies, thus actualizing the late 19th century European discourse on Moroccan colonization.

Germany recognized France's interests in Morocco in 1909 (Cohen, Hahn 1966), and all the European powers reached an agreement in 1911 in which the French were allowed direct control over Morocco (Eickelman 2002). Around 1910, Spain began moving troops into the northern regions of Morocco in the zone promised by France in the treaty of 1904 "on the pretext of putting down revolts of tribes in the Rif" (Cohen, Hahn 1966: 20). In 1911, France was entitled by the Moroccan government to occupy any part of Morocco to maintain order and to represent Morocco in foreign relations. France was also given control of government finances to ensure payment of foreign debts. France proceeded to declare that the Europeans in Fez and the sultan were threatened by "anarchistic elements" inside Morocco, though others would later state that few Europeans were threatened. France sent troops from Algeria to Fez and the Protectorate began on March 30, 1912 (Cohen, Hahn 1966: 21).

The details of the establishment of this protectorate vary. According to many French sources the sultan Moulay Hafid asked for their help, but Moroccan nationalists said years later that France stirred up tribesmen against the sultan, even providing them with weapons to do so (Cohen, Hahn 1966). Related to the nationalists' version of events, anthropologist Dale Eickelman alleges "the sultan briefly considered resistance but finally agreed to sign the treaty of the protectorate after six days of being bullied by the French" (2002:330). Despite the difference in perspectives on this event, the sultan abdicated his throne shortly afterward and the Treaty of Fez established the French Protectorate installing a new sultan as its figurehead. This allowed France to initiate internal reforms outside the realm of religion, including military occupation, commerce, consolidation of Moroccan debt and collection of taxes. The new sultan would

announce decisions that had been made by the French under the direction of the Résident-Général Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey to preserve the appearance of autonomy. The treaty also required that France reach an understanding with Spain about the division of the empire and Spain received the northern and far western portions to form its own colonial zone (Cohen, Hahn 1966). The prophecy of European colonization had been completed nearly as Meakin and his predecessors had predicted. Though it may have been coincidence, it may be more likely that the discourse had led to its self-fulfillment.

Histories written during the colonial period did not change much in tone or in content and by 1919, western historians, writers and scholars had already begun praising the French Protectorate. American writer Edith Wharton dedicates her book *In Morocco* to General Lyautey who she considers “a great patriot and a great general” (165). Though Wharton might be merely dismissed as yet another Francophile from the American literati of the early 20th century, she does acknowledge “It is only necessary to see the havoc wrought in Tunisia and Algeria by the heavy hand of the [French] Colonial Government to know what General Lyautey has achieved in saving Morocco from this form of destruction also” (170).

For Wharton, Lyautey’s patriotism is not merely for France but extends to Moroccans as well. She believes that “successful government of a foreign country depends on...the administrator’s genuine sympathy with the traditions, habits and tastes of the people” (170), and asserts that Lyautey had “a sympathetic understanding of the native prejudices...[that] made him try to build up an administration which should be, not an application of French ideas to African conditions, but a development of the best native aspirations” (164). These native aspirations included educating Moroccans for French utilization as Wharton states, “It was necessary at once to use them and to educate them” (164). Education included “adequate commercial or manual

training” and sewing schools specifically for girls (174). Such education undoubtedly aided French domination of economic affairs by creating a skilled labor force for its commercial interests. Later scholars were to add that education also consisted of land seizures to show native populations how European enterprises were run (Eickelman 2002).

Wharton notes the French administration built roads and railroads while doubling total commerce and exports. “But this economic development did not satisfy the Resident. He wished Morocco to enlarge her commercial relations with France and the other allied countries” (168). She relates that when Morocco needed a port due to a lack of roads through the Spanish Zone to Tangier, Lyautey built one in Casablanca, one in Rabat and one in Kenitra. These ports and roads are mainly to the benefit of France as they are in control the finances, taxation and profits from Moroccan goods. Likewise, these exports are often on their way to France from the ports and most major roads and railroads in Morocco lead to Casablanca to this day for this very reason. Wharton also adds that the land, which lay “waste” in Chenier’s 18th century, had been cultivated, stating that cultivated land increased from 21k hectares in 1915 to 1,681K hectares in 1918 – an eighty-fold increase (172). The benefit of this cultivated land for Moroccans is questionable, though it was certainly helpful to French and allied soldiers in the trenches of World War I in Europe, which might explain the dissatisfaction of Lyautey at any economic development in Morocco short of maximum productivity.

It seems in fact that it is the war and Wharton’s intimate relationship with the Protectorate – she traveled by military jeep around the country – and Lyautey – whom she views as almost a protective father figure providing security – that is the source of her overwhelming colonial bias. Wharton writes “it is not too much to say that General Lyautey has twice saved Morocco from destruction” (161). Undoubtedly subscribing to the French versions of events

concerning the establishment of the protectorate, Wharton writes that the first time he saved the country was in 1912 when “Abd-el-Hafid abandoned the country to the rebellious tribes who had attacked him in Fez” (161). It was far from certain that Hafid abandoned the country to the tribes, though some might later suggest he was forced to abandon it to the French. Regardless, the western discourse concerning self-interested French manipulation of the events leading up to the establishment of the Protectorate had not yet begun.

Lyautey saves Morocco again, according to Wharton, from the Germans in 1914. Morocco was “honeycombed with German trading interests and secret political intrigue...The only way to save the colony for France was to keep its industrial and agricultural life going” (166). This was “Morocco’s truest way of serving France” as “not only was France to be supplied with provisions, but the confidence in her ultimate triumph was at all costs to be kept up in the native mind. German influence was as deep-seated as a cancer” (166). The French needed to maintain the façade of strength to prevent any rebellions and even went so far as to put on large exhibitions of French products to strengthen native “confidence in the country that could find time for such an effort in the midst of a great war...It was even said that several rebel chiefs had submitted to the Makhzen in order not to miss the Exhibition” (169).

The Germans harassed the French from what Wharton calls “the disastrously misgoverned Spanish zone” which she believes “has always been a centre for German intrigue and native conspiracies, as well as a permanent obstacle to the economic development of Morocco” (164). Regardless of the fact that the economic development of Morocco by France served France as Wharton herself admitted, and that the Germans in the Spanish zone were therefore an obstacle to French economic development at a time when they were at war with France, the Spanish zone did become an increasingly interesting center of intrigue even after the

allies defeated Germany. And it had less to do with the Germans than Wharton may have imagined.

Walter Harris, correspondent for the *Times* in Morocco was also a noted British historian. Harris was a contemporary of Meakin and Wharton living in Tangier from the 1890's to 1933 and writing several books on Morocco in the late 19th century in addition to his reporting. He also often gained access to areas and information in Morocco many Europeans could not by dressing in native garb and becoming "artificially native" (Chaouch 2006).

In 1921, Harris penned *The Morocco That Was* documenting his personal encounters with the sultan and his experiences at the Moorish court prior to the days of the French Protectorate. Although it would seem that Harris, as one of only a few Europeans to have a relationship with the sultan and access to the Moorish court would have a more favorable opinion of the Moorish government, he does not appear to. Harris sees the end of Moroccan independence as "a matter of congratulation", stating that the sultan "Mulai Abdul Aziz had wasted the revenues of the country and emptied its Treasuries – for the greater part on the most useless purchases of European origin" (1992: 85). Such purchases were according to Harris added to the government debt and so it would seem that according to Harris, Moroccan debt was less the intervention of European trading interests than "a young spendthrift Sultan" (1992: 85).

Harris's writing style and the numerous funny stories in this account lead one to believe that the purpose of this work was more entertainment than history. In fact, James Chandler tells us in his Afterward of the Eland edition of the work in 1992 that "one of Walter Harris's nicknames at Harrow had been the Liar and for the rest of his life he accepted...a reputation for fibbing saying that you should never spoil a good story by sticking to the truth" (233). Though most of the events Harris records in this work have been shown to be based in fact, the truth in

this work is “often deliberately distorted” so that Harris himself would be center stage (234).

Thus with this pension for exaggeration, “it is difficult to imagine him ever sticking too closely to the facts” (235).

Six years later, Harris writes a more serious volume entitled *France, Spain and the Rif*. This work is an extensive and far more scholarly account of the intrigues in the Spanish zone that Wharton had earlier discussed, and their subsequent outcomes. The native rebellion against the Spanish in the Rif Mountains of northern Morocco lasted from around the end of World War I until 1926. During this period, the vast majority of the northern Spanish zone was more than effectively ruled and controlled by the Berber tribes themselves. The French gravitated into this war toward its end and it would take both military forces to finally defeat these tribes. Although his history of these events likewise projects his colonial bias, Harris does give a somewhat equitable, albeit heavily weighted account of the events that transpired between the three parties.

Harris concurs with Wharton and earlier accounts on several points including the French version of events leading up to the Protectorate, alleging that the Berbers had taken over the country and that Moulay Hafid asked for French assistance in 1911 (177). Harris similarly agrees with Wharton that the French colonial projects had gradually improved declaring “Tunis was an improvement on Algeria, just as Morocco has been an improvement on Tunis” (181). Likewise, Harris sings the praises of Lyautey, “There is no need to describe here the admirable work that the French have accomplished under Maréchal Lyautey. It is an achievement that is perhaps unrivalled in the annals of African administration” (13). He is also fond of referring to Lyautey and his administration as sympathetic, declaring “sympathy has been the principle feature which rendered successful Maréchal Lyautey’s administration of Morocco” (192), and that “he had the greatest gift of all the qualities of colonial administration – sympathy” (194). He concurs with

Meakin's assessment of Oriental policy as well noting that Lyautey showed no vengeance toward natives who had "murdered" French officers but "at the same time he let it be clear it was seen that he was the master" (178). Despite the fact that Harris claims Lyautey was the "master" and that he saw Moroccans "as simple, brave, uncorrupted children" (72), he believes "he cannot be accused of any spirit of militarism or imperialism" (200). The theory of the strong hand against the Oriental child was thus alive and well, but by no means was it yet to be considered imperialist.

Harris also agrees Wharton concerning the incompetence displayed by the Spanish in their colonial project stating, "had the Spaniards...shown in their administration...of their zone a skill equal to that of the French, the situation in their zone would have been solved long ago" (13). Still Harris acknowledges later that the Rifis overran French military posts and Fez was in danger of attack, which required the French to send in military reinforcements from Algeria. Thus although the French and Harris himself note Spanish incompetence in governance, Harris acknowledges that a similar fate befell the French in their underestimation of the Rifis. The French were likewise later to admit after an investigation into the matter that "the brutal fact is that we were unexpectedly attacked by the most powerful and the best armed enemy that we have ever met with in our colonial campaigns" (239).

Additionally, Harris suggests that there was collaboration between the natives and the Germans against the French alleging that the Rifis were "profitably employed under the direction of Germans" and given arms and propaganda to revolt against the French (59). Despite this accusation of collusion with the Germans in obtaining weapons, he later notes that when the rebellion was quelled the Rifis were in possession of arms mainly acquired as spoils of war from the Spanish and French themselves (322). Furthermore, Harris is also prone to racist tendencies

and though he is fond of relating the ethnicity of Berbers to the Celts of Europe he adds, “The Negro blood...has tainted certain Berber regions” (24). Thus it is clear that the traditions of pervasive colonial biases and the exotification of the Oriental Other had continued with Harris.

But despite his obvious French colonial disposition and penchant for ethnocentrism, Harris is the first historian analyzed here to offer any extensive native Moroccan perspective at all. He reveals that German suggestions of rebellion and propaganda denouncing the French “appealed to people who had already seen part of their country occupied by the French, and expected later on to witness the rest of it pass into their possession. It seemed an occasion not to be missed to drive the foreigner out of their country” (59-60). He also maintains that the current sultan “and his ministers may be thought to be little more than a gorgeous façade between the governors and the governed, the protectors and the protected” (188-189), and that the public prestige of the sultan had been severely diminished during the Protectorate. According to Harris, many Moroccans saw the sultan as little more than a “French puppet” (180).

Harris also projects some sympathy with the rebellion recognizing that the Rifis “could not be expected to know the treaties, and to them effective occupation was a much more justifiable claim to ownership than the contents of any document drawn up between the two Powers neither of which had ever exerted any authority in the district in question” (198). Moreover, he maintained personal contact and correspondence with rebel leader Abdel Krim and although Harris believes Krim’s motivations were mainly revenge against the Spanish, wealth obtained through German mining interests and personal ambition; he does acknowledge that Krim was to a certain extent, forced into war by the French. He perceives that the French had cut off the food supply to the Rif with troop movements and military installations and states “it was no doubt this forward movement that brought about, a year later, the war in the Rif” (199). Harris

further mentions that Krim was not a party to the European treaty of 1912 and that he and his followers considered it to be an “example of unwarranted interference in the affairs of an innocent and disinterested people” (211). Harris goes on to quote Krim who stated

“Any arrangement the French and Spanish might have come to on the subject of a frontier in a country which they had never visited, knew nothing about, where they had failed to exert authority, and where they had no subjects and no material or moral interests, was a preposterous act of totally unjustified and unjustifiable imperialism” (211).

Although it would be more than difficult to contend that Harris gave an impartial account of events, the inclusion of an extensive native perspective in this work is noteworthy. However, it may well be that the account attempts a somewhat even-handed treatment of events based solely on the fact that the Rifis had been so successful in their campaign against the European military forces. With the military achievements of this rebellion, it became necessary to acknowledge another perspective and add it to the discourse – even if only as a muted voice in a somewhat derogatory account. Nevertheless, the rebellion was suppressed and the Spanish and French continued with their colonial projects. The war did however, alter the course of colonization, and as has so often been the case in the land of *Maghreb el Aksa*, the central authority was not to last very long.

In 1949 Professor Henri Terasse of the University at Algiers published *Historie du Maroc des Origines á L'établissement du Protectorat Français*, which was subsequently translated into English by Hillary Tee in 1952. In a chapter entitled “Morocco: Isolated and Archaic” Terasse speaks of “the conservative policy of the *makhzen* and the xenophobia of the masses” stating they “agreed on only one point, their common and obstinate desire for isolation. A change could only come from a force and a determination foreign to the country” (165). For Terasse, the force

and determination to change Morocco and replace its obstinate isolation and xenophobia with a model more favorable to European interests was of course the French Protectorate.

Terasse believed that prior to the Protectorate, “France wished to respect [the] diplomatic fiction” of the Moroccan government, but that “the tribal revolts led her to develop, for the protection of her own people, the defense of the *makhzen* and the good of the subjugated populations, her diplomatic and military action” which would save the country from “imminent disaster” (168). Though Terasse’s history of Morocco, like those before it, reveals an often turbulent and precarious political situation throughout, he nonetheless advocates saving the Moroccans from themselves. French colonization of Morocco was for Terasse “the logical conclusion of the Moroccan crisis, which had been for so long inevitable” (170). He believed the sultan and *makhzen* “had the unhoped-for privilege, thanks to French protection, of keeping their situation” (170) because “they had not the slightest governmental imagination” (182). Whether the sultan had indeed kept his situation is highly debatable, as it has already been seen that the sultan was in essence merely a mouthpiece for the Protectorate. Terasse mirrors the perspectives of the earlier western historians and chroniclers in both the inevitability of colonization and the “privileges” bestowed upon Morocco by France.

Meanwhile, the Berber tribes were considered by Terasse as “practically inept for great political assemblies and vast tasks executed in common” (173) being as they were “thwarted by ...indiscipline, [and] an invincible bent for anarchy” (215). Thus the tribes “almost always needed foreign will-power” (173) to accomplish these large-scale political and social projects. As Terasse’s history ends with the establishment of the Protectorate, he does not mention the Rifi rebellion so it may be safe to assume that he believes the Berbers were incapable of mass action prior to that event, although it might be argued that foreign invasion was required to unite them.

With the establishment of the French protectorate, Terasse maintains that Morocco had eliminated its problems and became unified, able to “take a place in world economic exchange” (205). Although Terasse’s account does not intend it, it may in fact be true that the establishment of the Protectorate eventually unified Morocco’s many factions against the colonizers, but its place in world economic exchange was mainly of benefit to France through the colonial period and in many ways beyond. Nevertheless, Terasse had stubbornly adhered to these ideas on colonial discourse despite the earlier rebellions and a growing independence movement at the time this work was published.

Terasse’s history, at least in its translated version, includes only the events up to the establishment of the protectorate in 1912. It is therefore relevant here, in that it represents perhaps a final English language history with a prevalent western colonial bias on the events leading up to the Protectorate’s establishment. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz notes sixteen years after its publication that it was the standard history of Morocco but that “it ought not to be” (1968: bibliographic notes). Though Geertz admits “there is much useful information in Terasse and some original and valuable ideas”, he faults the work for “pervasive colonial bias and a...simplistic interpretation of the course of Moroccan history” (1968: bibliographic notes). He saves the harsher critique for the abridged and translated version stating, “its virtues are discarded and its faults concentrated” (1968: bibliographic notes). With Tee’s translation of Terasse, a long line of western historical thought and discourse in the English language on the colonization of Morocco was to pass away to history, and with it the French and Spanish colonial projects.

In 1956 after a prolonged resistance, Morocco gained independence from France (Eickelman 2002). Spain acknowledged Moroccan independence one month later with the

exception of five small presidios and the Spanish Sahara (Howe 2005). However, a month after the Treaty of Fez was abrogated by the French, Prince Moulay Hassan stated “Independence is just the beginning of our problems...We’ve got to start all over and build a nation out of chaos. In forty years, the protectorate succeeded in sapping our national strength and natural resources and left us in a vacuum with only the throne to cling to” (Howe 2005:90).

Predictably, the historical record shifts again in the same year. Rom Landau begins his work *Moroccan Drama 1900-1955* with a discussion of the lack of historical accounts of Morocco in English. Landau notes that many studies have been done in French, Spanish and Arabic but these represent only particular points of view, namely “the colonialist or the nationalist” (13). However, Landau remarks that due to the end of the Protectorate “French experts were bound to acknowledge that one of the causes of the emergence of a Moroccan dilemma was the almost exclusive preoccupation of the French authorities with economic progress and their almost total neglect of political and human development” (15). This assertion refutes nearly every preceding account as to the good-natured intentions of the French and Lyautey toward the Moroccan people in favor of economic progress to the benefit of French interests.

Still, Landau concurs with earlier historians in the inevitability of the colonial project stating, “toward the end of the nineteenth century it became evident that the days of Moroccan independence were numbered” (53). But he also tells of a different history, one in which the sultan borrowed a considerable sum from British, French and Spanish lenders in 1903. Then, “to enable him to pay off this debt, the French persuaded him...to take up a new and bigger loan...[which] carried an interest of five percent” while in addition the French bankers took a nearly five percent commission (61). Thus it was more than the materialist fancies of the sultan

creating the crippling debt which led to the establishment of the Protectorate as earlier accounts suggested. It was a concerted effort on the part of European governments and banks to gouge the Moroccan treasury to further their own interests. Landau further notes that French interest in Morocco extended back to at least the seizure of Tunisia in 1880 and perhaps as far back as the occupation of Algeria in 1830, though Chenier appeared interested in the 18th century as well.

Landau also discloses the self-interest the European governments had in a stable Morocco stating that “it was a source of concern to most European governments” because “trade could not prosper and the safety of foreigners traveling in Morocco could not always be guaranteed” (69). Trade was of considerable importance to France, Spain, Great Britain, Germany and Italy as they received grain and other commodities while selling tea, sugar and manufactured goods. Without a stable political environment “foreign traders could not be assured of a dependable basis for their transactions” (70).

With Landau then, perhaps the first English language history of the area that documents the self-interests of the historical actions of European colonial projects comes to fruition, and decidedly in the same year that these projects were aborted. Still, this likely was its own form of self-interest in that westerners were now negotiating with Moroccans administrating Morocco and diplomacy would require respecting their version of events. Consequently events had influenced the historical discourse, just as the discourse had earlier influenced events.

Later historical accounts of the Moroccan colonial period would continue to become progressively more critical of the colonial projects of France and Spain. The colonial period had ended and with it the colonial mindset of historians. But although the historical discourse of colonialism had ended, the effects of the discourse on Morocco have continued due to its legacy.

Despite independence, indebtedness to foreign banks has remained constant. “External debt reached \$11 billion” in 1983 which was 70% of the gross domestic product (Rhazaoui 1987:141). Further, in order to pay such debts, Moroccan agriculture focused on export crops beginning in the 1960’s. Cash crops used up a majority of the arable land and grain had to be imported to the area for the first time in history to feed the population. By the 1980’s half of all cereals were imported, which were inevitably more expensive than locally grown grain. With the majority of the Moroccan population unable to afford to purchase the imported grain, estimates put malnutrition amongst the population at 30-60% (Swearingen 1987:160).

The lack of self-sufficiency in agriculture and foreign debt created problems for the majority of Moroccans. The government had low currency reserves and 8,600 government jobs were eliminated in 1983 adding to an unemployment rate of over 29% (Rhazaoui 1987:142). Due to the colonial legacy and chronic debt, landless workers needed to find wage labor elsewhere. Emigration to Europe began to increase in the early 1960’s. Documented Moroccan migrants in France jumped from 3,900 in 1961 to 11,000 in 1963 (1965). Numbers have continued to rise in France and elsewhere as families and individuals struggle to find the means to feed themselves. Moroccans comprise the largest group of foreign workers in the European Union (Huntoon 1998), which is fundamentally due to geographic proximity and easy access to Spain as tourists (Bodega, Cebrian, Franchini, Lora-Tamayo, Martin-Lou 1995). In 1986, the number of Moroccans in Spain alone was calculated at nearly 95,000 (Bodega et al. 1995:808), and significant numbers of Moroccans are found throughout Europe and North America.

Thus it becomes clear that despite the fact that the European historians and chroniclers became convinced that it was necessary to save Morocco from itself and that the colonial administration of Lyautey and the French were beneficial for Moroccans, the colonial discourse

and its subsequent events have had profound and sometimes detrimental effects on the lives of many of Moroccans. Though it may be true that the land of *Maghreb el Aksa* was indeed prone to rebellions and uprisings prior to European intervention, it most certainly was not the anarchy which western historians described. Prior to colonization there were far fewer Moroccans outside of the *Maghreb* and it can therefore be presumed that they had little need to migrate outside its plentiful soils in search of subsistence.

Today Moroccans are often displaced from this territory due to economic circumstances that were perpetuated by the self-interested actions of European merchants, bankers and governments throughout the colonial period. Although the colonial government has ended, its consequences have remained while new forms of economic domination have taken their place and Morocco, like other former colonies, continues to labor under debt to western banks. Still, the colonial projects have also formed new national identities and Morocco has had few major uprisings or rebellions since its independence remaining relatively stable, particularly when compared with other former colonies in North Africa, such as its eastern neighbor Algeria.

The lessons of colonialism and its historical discourse are numerous. Every account of events is fatedly biased and in some way self-interested, and the recording of these events from this biased perspective often leads to self-fulfilling prophecies of self-interest by various socio-historical actors. The discourse will often shift based on the events which surround them and the new discourse proceeds to perpetuate subsequent events, thus creating a feedback loop where events create new discourses and the discourses alter perceptions of the events.

The discourses of the present day have been altered and although one no longer hears about protectorates, annexations or colonizations, one can still hear the echoes of the past when present chroniclers and socio-historical actors speak of development, nation building, advancing

freedom and democratization. Such discourses likewise speak of liberation and assisting that which is Other, though it is likely that these discourses like their predecessors, are preordained prophecies of inevitability generated entirely for the economic benefit of interested and powerful socio-historical actors. What remains to be seen is if such discourses and the guidance they provide in actions will have the same long-term effects as their colonial forbearers.

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