

## Literary Creolization in Layachi's A Life Full of Holes

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**Abstract:** In his article "Literary Creolization in Layachi's *A Life Full of Holes*" Maarten van Gageldonk discusses the publication of Larbi Layachi's 1964 book by Grove Press based on a transcription and translation by Paul Bowles. Both Bowles and the editors at Grove Press made numerous alterations to the content and form of Layachi's tales in order to make them more accessible for readers. In the process, Layachi's book became a "cultural creole" (Hannerz). Drawing on archival materials from the Grove Press Records housed at Syracuse University, van Gageldonk examines how in its published form *A Life Full of Holes* became a compromise between an oral tale in the Maghrebi storytelling tradition and the traditional Western autobiographical novel.

**Maarten VAN GAGELDONK**

### **Literary Creolization in Layachi's *A Life Full of Holes***

In the spring of 1962, Paul Bowles sent two episodes from a then unfinished and untitled autobiographical work by a young Moroccan man pseudonymously called Driss ben Hamed Charhadi to *Evergreen Review*, the literary magazine run by the New York publisher Grove Press. As Bowles explained, Charhadi, whose real name was Larbi Layachi, was around twenty-five years old, married, illiterate and "had worked at every sort of job, including five years as a shepherd" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1962.06.28.). Bowles had met Layachi on the outskirts of Tangiers, where the latter had a job as a night watchman at a café. Bowles later recalled their meeting in his autobiography *Without Stopping* (1972): "A few anecdotes he told about his life impressed me deeply, not with their unusual content, but because of the way he recounted them. His rhetorical sense was extraordinary; he knew exactly which nuances and details to include to make a tale complete and convincing" (348). At the same time, though, his interest was also piqued by Layachi's early bouts of criminality, one of which had resulted in a three-year prison sentence for helping to steal copper wire. In early 1962, Bowles met a few times with Layachi and recorded several of his autobiographical tales on tape. After sending a translation of one story to *Second Coming* magazine, Bowles recorded two episodes from Layachi's early childhood and adolescence, which he sent to *Evergreen Review*. As Bowles stressed in a letter to Grove Press senior editor Richard Seaver: "I think there is enough good material in the total of Charhadi's recollections to make a cohesive whole with a certain impact" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1962.06.28.). In Layachi, Bowles found a natural storyteller and one, he often noted in his letters, who was unspoiled by Western literary techniques. If Layachi's story was perhaps similar to that of many Moroccan men coming of age at the same time, Bowles saw in his manner of storytelling something unique to the Maghreb, a structuring device antithetical to the Western narrative tradition. Bowles himself had written extensively about Morocco from a Westerner's perspective in his novels *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) and *Let It Come Down* (1952); in this sense, Layachi's insider's perspective complemented Bowles's oeuvre well. Moreover, in Bowles's estimation Layachi skillfully mixed form and content. In particular, Bowles felt that this combination between an uncultured life and an innate gift to recount a tale multiple times in a "chillingly identical" way might appeal to Western readers ("Letter to Fred Jordan" 1963.03.13.). In a letter that dates from March 1963, Bowles relates how impressed he became by Layachi's capabilities during their recording sessions: "He's really a phenomenon, that shepherd! Like the girl in one of the *Contes de Perrault* who, each time she opened her mouth, spewed forth diamond and rubies. He drops in for a casual talk on his way back from the market, and all at once a tale is being told. The conversational tone and manner cease, the classical prose is adopted, and the entertainment is on. When the story is over, there is a definite pause, and with complete naturalness we are back in normal conversation" ("Letter to Fred Jordan" 1963.03.13.). Layachi, then, was a paradox: a talented begetter of tales with a distinct literary quality, who was, in fact, wholly illiterate. Layachi's tales, moreover, were told in Maghrebi Arabic, an umbrella term for several varieties of colloquial Western Arabic spoken throughout Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia (Sayahi 24-25). Magrebi, as it will be referred to below, was and is principally an oral language, strongly influenced by Berber, French and other local languages and used next to Standard Arabic, from which it differs considerably, sometimes up to the point of mutual unintelligibility (Behnstedt 237). As such, it is a language almost wholly unconcerned with literary writing.

In 1962 and 1963, *Evergreen Review* would publish two excerpts from the book that would eventually become *A Life Full of Holes* (1964). Looking closely, we can discern a distinct change over time in the way the material is presented to the reader. The first *Evergreen Review* publication, an episode called "The Orphan" that describes Layachi's early childhood, identifies the text as part of "an extended autobiographical work" (Charhadi 23). By contrast, the second *Evergreen Review* publication describes the work as a novel. When the completed book appeared in 1964, Grove's advance publicity also stressed the fictionality of the narrative. This raises the question why Grove's editors decided to market a book so obviously autobiographical as a work of fiction. A second question arises when the structure of the published work is examined. While strongly episodic in nature, *A Life Full of Holes* at the same time largely reads like a traditional novel: it is broken up into chapters, includes chapter titles and uses traditional paragraph divisions. All things considered, the book feels like a hybrid between a Western book and a string of Moroccan tales. What follows, explores how this hybrid came to be by focusing on the roles Paul Bowles and Grove Press played as literary mediators in the realization of *A Life Full of Holes*. As this article demonstrates, both Bowles and Grove Press were keen to present Layachi's tales to Western readers, but in doing so reshaped, and at times even censored, the materi-

al. In this context it is felicitous to employ the term *creolization*, as originally defined by Ulf Hannerz in his 1992 book *Cultural Complexity*. Initially a term mostly used in anthropology and linguistics, creolization refers to the hybridization of culture, but may also productively be adapted to literary studies. As Hannerz writes, creole culture is based on an inherently unequal relationship between two source cultures, which produces a unique third culture: "Creole cultures ... are intrinsically of mixed origin, the confluence of two or more widely separate historical currents which interact in what is basically a center/periphery relationship" (264). Hannerz's notion of creolization is particularly productive in a study of how literary works come to be in an international context. As Pascale Casanova has argued in *The World Republic of Letters* (1999), the literary map of the world is a distinctly unequal one: while some literatures dominate, others are "imprison[ed] within literary and linguistic boundaries" (22). For writers functioning within a national literature located in the margins of the international literary field, creolization is one way to enlarge their success on the international literary market. By seeking a middle way, for instance in style or themes, between the constraints of a particular national literature and the expectations of the global literary market, authors of so-called world literature can transcend the national. As we will see below, *A Life Full of Holes* was in many ways an example of such a compromise between the local and the global. Moreover, both Paul Bowles and Richard Seaver were acutely aware of what was needed to make Layachi's stories accessible specifically to US-American readers. From this point of view, the resulting book was a cultural creole, a work that came into existence on the borderline between two distinct literary traditions. Yet, at the same time both editor and translator felt the need to retain the otherness of the life recounted in Layachi's stories. As Octavio Paz has written, "thanks to translation, we become aware that our neighbors do not speak and think as we do" (38). As a publisher of many postcolonial texts, Seaver was certainly aware of the fact that "Americanization" needed to be applied with measure.

At the same time, Bowles's endeavor to bring Layachi's stories to an Anglophone readership needs to be seen within the context of Translation Studies. While the question of fidelity must be left unanswered here, since none of Bowles's original recordings of Layachi survive, it is fruitful briefly to frame *A Life Full of Holes* within the context of discussions on translation. As Walter Benjamin wrote in his foundational text "The Task of the Translator," a "real translation" requires transparency: "it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully" (79). Benjamin's understanding of the task of the translator is a distinctly idealistic one, in which fidelity to the purport of the source text is central. While his argumentation takes into account the need for flexibility in use of language to achieve comprehension, disavowing the insistence on literalness, he does not account for the contingent effects of cultural transfer. As we will see below, Bowles at times had no inclination to remain faithful to the recordings of Layachi's tales, and intermittently favored obscurity over clarity, a choice that also served to reinforce the otherness of the text discussed above. Yet, while deliberate processes were at work here, it is also imperative to stress that any act of translation involves accidental distortion as well. As Jean-Jacques Lecercle has observed, this process of distortion is two-way. On the one hand, translation can never avoid some loss of meaning and linguistic complexity in the source text, since certain elements do not carry over into the target language. On the other hand, inevitably some elements of the target culture will end up in the translation. This *remainder*, to use Lecercle's term, is largely to do with register and, as Lawrence Venuti has argued, particularly visible in literary texts, all the more so in those texts that use vernacular (471-72). Since Layachi's tales were recorded in Maghrebi, a language wholly unconnected to English, and stemmed from a culture highly dissimilar from American culture, it is important to acknowledge this process of distortion. In what follows, I will first briefly discuss what motivated Grove Press to publish *A Life Full of Holes*, before examining the editorial choices made during the translation and production process.

For Grove Press, *A Life Full of Holes* first of all fit its agenda as an emerging publisher of what would soon be called postcolonial texts. Founded in 1951 and run by Barney Rosset, Grove Press had shown an early interest in antiauthoritarian literature, both domestic and foreign. As Loren Glass has noted: "From its beginnings, Grove worked to provide an American venue for the literature of the 'new nations' rapidly emerging from the old empires, and of the so-called Third World more generally, making available many of the authors who formed the initial core of what later came to be known as postcolonial literature" (34). Accordingly, one of its earliest books was the novel *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) by the Nigerian writer Amos Tutuola, quickly followed by *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954), and *The Brave African Huntress* (1958). In 1961, Grove would also publish Janheinz Jahn's study *Muntu: The New African Culture*, which argued that African art needed to be understood on its own terms, instead of through the lens of European thought. Grove's key postcolonial publication would be its 1963 translation of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, which legitimized violence by the

former colonized against their former colonizers. Furnished with an introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre, in which the popular philosopher concluded that "passiveness serves no other purpose but to put you on the side of the oppressors," the book was soon to become a central postcolonial text (lviii). Grove Press also used *Evergreen Review* to cement its position as a publisher of postcolonial works, for instance publishing a translation of the so-called "Declaration of the 121," which called for the French government to recognize that "the cause of the Algerian people, who are making a decisive contribution to the destruction of the colonial system, is the cause of all free men" ("Declaration Concerning the Right of Insubordination in the Algerian War" 4). The publication of *A Life Full of Holes* needs to be seen within the context of this emerging trend in which North-African literature played a pivotal part.

In mid-1963 Richard Seaver wrote a reading report for Grove Press on the then still untitled book, a report based on half the number of pages the text would eventually run. Tellingly, in the heading for the report Seaver still wavered between calling the text a novel and an autobiographical work, opting for "novel," but putting "autobiography" behind it in parentheses. In the report, he noted he found Layachi's stories to be "a social document of great interest" for three reasons. Firstly, Seaver latched on to the unpolitical nature of the text, writing: "For the first time I have the feeling of what it is to be a Moslem indigene living today in North Africa. And, I might add, there is not a word of propagandizing in the text, i.e. Charhadi never offers tirades against the colons as do the intellectuals when presenting the 'oppressed' or 'underdeveloped' point of view." As such, Layachi's placid acceptance of his disadvantaged position in a newly liberated country provided a much-needed antidote against the acerbic writings of authors like Fanon. As Seaver noted: Layachi "reconvinces me that there is good in human nature— basic, unsullied good ... He has the fatalism of his Moslem training (inch'Allah is the key word), but untempered by our own cynicism." Secondly, Seaver felt Layachi himself to be "an amazing person—perhaps only or especially to a Western reader." Lastly, Seaver was struck by the particular deadpan, direct tone employed in the text, calling it "beautiful, often highly poetic" ("Reading Report").

For Grove Press there were two additional reasons why the book fit well within its catalog. For one, from its very inception Grove had intended *Evergreen Review* to be a mainstream alternative to the smaller mimeograph revolution magazines, in particular for those readers interested in the emerging Beat scene. As such, it had devoted its entire second issue (April-June, 1957) to the writers of the San Francisco Renaissance and few subsequent issues had been completely devoid of Beat poetry and prose. By late 1958, *Evergreen Review* dominated the market for Beat literature to such an extent that it prompted the Los Angeles *Mirror-News* to write: "While the Beat Generation has its bible of the *Evergreen Review*, millions of the Unbeat Generation have the Bible" (cited in: *Evergreen Review* no. 6, 140). As has been extensively documented, for the Beats, Tangiers held a special attraction, rapidly becoming what Francis Poole has called "a stimulating alternative to postwar American society in the 1950s with its urges towards conformity and regimentation" (52). As early as 1955, William Burroughs, himself drawn to Morocco by reading Bowles's novel *The Sheltering Sky*, had sketched an alluring image of an elusive, labyrinthine city that "seem[ed] to exist on several dimensions" at once (128).

For many of the Beats, in particular Burroughs, Moroccan storytellers held a particular fascination. In fact, in 1961 Burroughs had written a short appreciation for *Evergreen Review* of the work of another storyteller, Ahmed Yacoubi. Much like Layachi's work, Yacoubi's text was also originally recorded on tape and then translated and edited by Paul Bowles. In a letter to Richard Seaver, Burroughs noted that the text "should be of interest to the readers of *Evergreen Review*, especially in view of the mass experiments with [hallucinogenic] drugs which are being carried out by Doctor Timothy Leary of Harvard" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1961.05.08.). In the published text, Burroughs similarly stresses the drug element in Yacoubi's tale as the most significant and specifically connects it with his own drug experiments, identifying an "underlying unity of words and images that blossom like bottle genie from the hallucinogens now open to all the world of The Thousand and One Nights" ("Comments on the Night Before Thinking" 36). In an early essay entitled "International Zone," Burroughs had underscored the "special attraction" of Tangier to be "exemption" (128). Indeed, for many of the Beats and other expatriates the relative freedom from American restrictions on drug use and homosexuality added significantly to the allure of the North African harbor city. As far as local culture was concerned, however, the performative elements of the Moroccan storytelling tradition seem to have appealed to many of the Beat Generation writers as well. As F. Scott Scribner has contended, the writers of the Beat Generation "sought a 'supreme reality' through performative and experiential acts of defiance that defined a lifestyle, if not a philosophy" (10). In light of this focus on performativity and orality, the Moroccan storytelling tradition must have appealed, if only because it was antithetical to the Western emphasis on the printed word. Moreover, the Beat attraction to social outcasts of all sorts

connected easily with the Maghreb storytelling practices. If Jack Kerouac was early in noticing that in postwar America increasingly the "hobo [had] a hard time hoboining," then the Moroccan storytellers presented a foreign model to be emulated (172). Tellingly, Paul Bowles noted in a 1961 letter to Richard Seaver that "the literary tradition here is a strictly oral one, and it is not surprising that the most successful results should come, even at this late date, from illiterates" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1961.05.06.).

If in the U.S. Tangiers was more and more identified with the Beats, for Grove Press the minimalist style Layachi employed in *A Life Full of Holes* tied in with another pillar of its catalog, the Nouveau Roman. By publishing early works by Alain Robbe-Grillet and Marguerite Duras, Grove Press had become one of few American publishers to pick up on the so-called New Novelists, or anti-novelists, as they were often called in the press. The similarities between Layachi's narrative and the work of the New Novelists were also picked up on by several reviewers of *A Life Full of Holes* at the time. Esther Walls, for example, likened the book's "sparse language, lack of plot or sentimentality" to "*nouveau* literary experiments" in a review for *African Forum* (120). Not all reviewers responded positively to Layachi's limited use of vocabulary, though. Virginia Kirkus's influential review service somewhat condescendingly noted: "The monosyllabic neo-naturalism, the basic primitivism—which seems to fascinate certain exhausted intellects—requires a lot of the reader's patience, even one who's lived in Morocco and knows the core, or some of it. In a phrase, it's of Johnny-one-note dull" ("Virginia Kirkus Bulletin"). Bowles, on the whole, seems to have been keen to downplay his role in the realization of *A Life Full of Holes*, for instance refusing to have biographical information on himself included on the flap text. However, he insisted on being mentioned as an editor. When the English publisher Weidenfeld and Nicholson suggested the phrase "as told to Paul Bowles" be used, he objected vehemently, noting that this "is the formula used generally by biographies of personalities unable to write themselves, who get some hack to put them to paper" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.09.26.). His brief introduction to the book gives Layachi all the credit and notes that "once the material was on the tape, it was considered to be final and inalterable" (13). Yet, as Virginia Spencer Carr has demonstrated, while Bowles remained relatively faithful to the final recordings, he did at times ask storytellers to elaborate on certain aspects or stop the tape to have them gather their thoughts (270). In his letters to Richard Seaver, Bowles often underscored how working with Layachi was a fluid, uncontrolled exercise, in no way analogous to the writing of a novel. Thus, in one letter Bowles describes poetically how a section called "The Journey to Tanja" was "suddenly born and thus had to be translated" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.01.18.). Another letter stresses how drafting a conventional outline for the book felt pointless, since "new chapters keep getting spawned" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.01.29.). To Bowles, however, Layachi's inability to understand the limitations that the book form imposed on his story could also be frustrating. In mid-January 1963, in a hurry to finish the final recordings before the beginning of Ramadan at the end of the month, Bowles complained to Seaver that Layachi's "digressions are tremendous; I have to keep shutting him up." In the same letter he also complained about Layachi's sensibility, writing: "Conditions have to be just right for recording. However, I'll get the recordings out of him even if it kills both of us in the process" ("Letter to Richard Seaver," January 18, 1963).

Prompting Layachi to come up with a suitable ending for the book presented perhaps the most significant problem, and in a letter to Seaver, Bowles admits this to be "the one place in the book where I did a bit of forcing" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.12.12.). Initially, Bowles had Layachi end the book on the words: "Even a life full of holes, a life full of nothing but waiting, is better than no life at all. We can only have what Allah sends us, I said." Those lines, however, were picked by Bowles, not Layachi. Recognizing this to be a mistake, Bowles corrected it in the galleys, now ending the book on the lines: "The stork has to wait a long time for the locusts to come. Then he eats." While perhaps a better choice, the stork metaphor stills seems out of place in a book largely devoid of symbols, metaphors and introspection. But, as Bowles stressed numerous times, Layachi simply did not think in book-form and, accordingly, had no need for closure. As such, the ending of the book presents a clear example of creolization at work, being a compromise between Maghrebi content and a Western form.

Titles were, of course, also not really a part of the storytelling tradition from which Layachi came, so Bowles was left to make up not just the chapter titles, but come up with a title for the book. After some prompting, Layachi devised "How It Was and What It Has Become," a title in which in Maghrebi "it" referred both to his own life and the world at large, illustrating that when the world was good, his life was bad, while now that his life is good and the world is bad. Bowles swiftly realized, though, that not only would this double meaning not carry over to English, the title would also simply be too long and confusing to market effectively. For Bowles, finding titles for his books was always a particularly frustrating activity. As he wrote to Seaver: "It took me six weeks and many pages full of attempts to

get *No Exit* out of *Huis Clos*. The Bible was open at every book; Dante was spread out on the desk too, as you can imagine. In the end it was the Independent Subway which provided the two words ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.02.25.). In the end, Bowles settled on *A Life Full of Holes*, a phrase taken from Layachi's commentary on a local saying.

By March 1963, the manuscript of the book was more or less finished, but Grove's editors struggled with the final form. In particular, the last story of the book, which would take up around sixty pages, proved problematic. In this story Layachi discusses a period spent as an assistant to two French carpenters who have a house near Tangiers and, as one reviewer put it, "share a discreet homosexual life" (Mitchell 555). Rereading the book today, this long section, while often mentioned as the most interesting part of the book by reviewers at the time, seems out of tune with the fragmentary structure of the rest of the novel, yielding it "a disturbing continuity" as Richard Seaver remarked. As Seaver explained: "Whereas there is a fundamental continuity throughout the book which ties it all together beautifully, successive chapters do not have the normal surface continuity of, say, the Western novel. Each is an independent story and, however related, they do act as successive buttresses to what has preceded. But in the end, there is actually a kind of 'European' continuity, if you know what I mean" ("Letter to Paul Bowles" 1964.01.03.). While Layachi and Bowles felt that the story needed to constitute one long chapter, Grove Press in the end compromised and broke it up into three chapters, opting for the familiar structure of the Western novel.

A second question that arose during the final weeks of production was whether to add a glossary to explain the many Arabic, French and Spanish terms used in the book. While Seaver felt that a glossary might aid American readers, Bowles objected, noting: "One automatically recoils from using glossaries, just as one does from hiring guides" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.11.07.). Yet, a more profound process was at play here as well. As Bowles explained, during translation he had deliberately not translated certain terms. In one example from the final section of the book, a local merchant calls a key character "azzi," Maghrebi for "nigger," which Bowles felt should not be translated, since then "a whole vista is disclosed which would be better left unmentioned." Similarly, the two Frenchmen who are central to the last story in the book are constantly referred to as "the Nazarenes." As Bowles noted, in Tangiers the word was mostly used as an insult, "hurled after one as one walks through the street." In the end, Bowles seems to have felt that limited censoring through selective translation only strengthened the book's chances for the American market, writing: "The more one explains about what goes on in this book, the more one risks alienating the reader" ("Letter to Richard Seaver" 1963.10.10.). Both Bowles and Grove were perhaps all too aware that in the context of the tense race relations in the United States at the time, a foreign novel that contained racist taunts would certainly meet with hostility. The notion that Bowles objected to the inclusion of a glossary in *A Life Full of Holes* mostly to avoid translating racist expletives is only strengthened by the fact that his recent travel book *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* did in fact contain a two-page glossary, which translated a variety of Arabic and Berber words.

Before *A Life Full of Holes* was published in a hardcover edition of 5,000 copies in April 1964, Grove Press sent the novel in as its candidate for the \$10,000 Formentor Literary Prize. The prize was one of the pivotal reasons why Seaver decided to market Layachi's story as a novel, instead of autobiography, which would have made it ineligible for the Formentor. In his submission letter to the Formentor members, Seaver stressed how *A Life Full of Holes* straddled two worlds, the First and the Third, writing: "In a way, this work is a symbol of the age in which we live, for everywhere throughout the world [...] one continually sees side-by-side the most primitive and the most technically advanced: the donkey-pulled cart from the peasant countryside moving past a glass and steel skyscraper in cities around the world, from Kabul to Morocco" ("Letter to All Participating Members Prix Formentor," 1963.03.15). Although the prize in the end went to Jorge Semprun's *Le Grand Voyage* (1963), Grove entering the book in the contest thus altered significantly how it was perceived by American readers.

The result of these many editorial changes, both during the recording process and the editing of the manuscript, was that the book American readers found in bookstores in 1964 was, to return to Ulf Hannerz's term, a cultural creole. While its content and tone were distinctly Moroccan, during the transfer from tape to page, Layachi's meandering web of interlinked stories was fitted within a distinctly Western format, that of the traditional autobiographical novel. In this sense, the assertion that the book was the first to be completely produced in Maghrebi, as Grove Press stressed repeatedly in its press materials and on the book cover, needs some qualification; the final product was without a doubt a compromise between two literary traditions that were not only worlds apart, but also ostensibly incompatible. In line with Hannerz's observations that creoles are always the unique offspring of two or more source cultures, *A Life Full of Holes* needs to be seen as the hybridized result of these two literary practices. The above analysis of the genesis of the book also shows it to clearly be the com-

bined effort of two distinct authors, something several reviews at the time called attention to, including the *New York Times* review (Frankel). To return to Lecerle's concept of the "remainder" here briefly, it is clear that Richard Seaver's understanding of what constituted a marketable autobiographical work for American readers exerted a strong influence over the final form of the book, which resulted in textual changes and governed the organization of the published work. At the same time, Lecerle's concept can only be loosely applied here, since Bowles was perhaps more of a co-author than a translator.

Bowles's choice to censor the text in places also presented Americans with a less contradictory and confrontational image of Morocco, in particular in instances when racism or xenophobia were involved. Within the context of a progressive publishing house that throughout the 1960s became well known for its "uncompromising depiction of the marginality of a large sector of the gay population," this suppression of discriminatory language seems jarring today (McCord, 196). What is more, in light of Grove's commitment to the struggles taking place in many postcolonial nations, the effective excision of certain racist taunts undercut the veracity of the image of Moroccan society presented in the book, the more so since Grove repeatedly stressed the book's documentary value in its press materials. In this regard, Bowles evidently preferred to sacrifice some of Morocco's contradictions to provide a more homogenized and less offensive image. Lastly, the creolization of Layachi's original tales also points towards another process: in turning the stories into a book, Layachi's tales did not just cross from one culture to another, but also from the oral to the written sphere. This transmediation was not just a form of adaptation, but a crucial aspect of the genesis of *A Life Full of Holes*, in which recording, transcription, translation and editing conjointly engendered the published book, a book that bridged two cultures, as well as two literary traditions.

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