MAPPING (POST)COLONIAL PARIS BY EAR

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Abstract: What does the urban (post)colonial condition sound like? To what extent and how is France’s colonial history audible today on the streets, specifically in the Parisian quartiers populaires? Musical and sonic production has long been entangled with social movements in France and its overseas territories, and genres such as hip hop and raï have been closely associated with the urban spaces of Paris’s racialized neighborhoods and with political resistance. This Element refines and extends these analyses up to contemporary anti-racist and environmental struggles. Its novelty lies in telling these narratives from the perspective of the urban field recordist, reinventing the bourgeois figure of the flâneur as a feminist-decolonial activist and configuring listening as an expressly spatial practice of mapping the city. The discrete binaural microphones tucked in her ears capture everything from Franco-Maghrebi musical dissent through the sounds of police brutality and carceral capitalism to transcolonial reverberations with struggles elsewhere.

Keywords: sound, politics, postcolonial, Paris, field recording
Contents

1 The Voice of the (Post)colony: Radio, Hip Hop, and Soundscapes of the Street 1

2 Walking the City: Aural Flânerie from Baudelaire to Trespass 10

3 Soundstates of Emergency: Expressions of Bordering and Transgression 20

4 Cart-otographies: Soundmapping Urban Political Economies 28

5 Bursting the Eardrum: Reverberations of Violence and Protection 36

6 Circulation Struggles: Hip Hop and the Gilets Jaunes 47

7 Le Combat Adama: Solidary Resonances and Transcolonial Refrains from the Quartiers Populaires 55

Supplementary Material 64

Bibliography 67