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OCCITAN MUSICIANS, IMMIGRATION, AND POSTCOLONIAL REGIONALISM ${\rm IN} \; {\rm SOUTHERN} \; {\rm FRANCE}$

by

SARAH TROUSLARD

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Occitan Musicians, Immigration, and Postcolonial Regionalism in Southern France

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Sarah Trouslard

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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iv

ABSTRACT

Occitan Musicians, Immigration, and Postcolonial Regionalism in Southern France

by

Sarah Trouslard

Advisor: Jane Sugarman

Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in southern France, this dissertation analyzes contemporary Occitan musical expression in relation to postcolonial immigration. "Occitan" refers to a group of linguistic practices found in the south of France, including Provençal and Languedocien. Throughout this study, I discuss commonalities between postcolonial and regionalist history and theory, shedding light on notions of cultural citizenship that have defined French sociopolitics in recent decades. The historian Herman Lebovics (2004) coined the term "postcolonial regionalism" in reference to the impact of decolonization on regional protest movements in France during the 1970s. During that time, singer/songwriters of the nòva cançon occitana incorporated the internal colonialism thesis into their song lyrics. Drawing on the theoretical writings of the poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant, I argue that Occitan music reveals a new articulation of postcolonial regionalism. I demonstrate that, since the 1980s, decolonization has been replaced by postcolonial immigration as a social fact that informs Occitan song and discourse.

The Occitan music scene contains a wide variety of music styles and transnational borrowings. I profile four musicians, Daniel Loddo, Claude Sicre, Tatou (né François Ridel), and Manu Théron. These performers critique French official culture, research and reinterpret local music history, and create transnational musical alliances in the form of citation and/or

collaboration. I demonstrate that they espouse a simultaneously deterritorializing and rooting discourse that serves to position their anti-centralist search for cultural roots in contradistinction to right-wing evocations of territory. I situate my argument within a broad historical framework in order to examine how concepts such as universalism and what Glissant termed *mondialité* (world-ness) have informed Occitan music and discourse.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACTiv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTSvi
TABLE OF CONTENTSviii
LIST OF FIGURESxii
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLESxiii
INTRODUCTION1
Occitan, qu'es acquò? (What is Occitan?)5
The Occitan Movement and Its Music8
The Linha Imaginòt10
A Brief Overview of Immigration in France
Bridging Postcolonial and Regional Frameworks
On French Ethnomusicology27
Terminology: "Can One Speak of an Occitan Music?"
Research Methods
Chapter Overview41
CHAPTER ONE. The Place of Occitan in a Monolingual Nation44
The Troubadours and the Albigensian Crusades
Building a Monolingual Nation
The Revival of Occitan
Occitan and French within Current Language Politics
The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
Occitan Musicians on the Occitan Language

Musicians' Anecdotes	68
"Cançon de la Prima" (Spring Song)	71
Forom des langues du monde (Forum of the Languages of the World)	73
Conclusion	76
CHAPTER TWO. The History and Pitfalls of French Universalism	78
Theorizing Universalism	80
French Universalism from the Enlightenment through the Civilizing Mission	83
The Enlightenment Foundations of French Universalism	83
The French Revolution and the Universal Rights of Man	85
The Civilizing Mission	87
Universalism in the French Provinces: Making Colonial Frenchmen	90
Decolonization: A Crisis in French Universalism	96
Universalism in Postcolonial France: Laïcité	97
Postcolonial and Occitan Discourse on Universalism	102
Édouard Glissant and Félix-Marcel Castan on l'Un	102
Magyd and Tayeb Cherfi Address French Universalism	104
Tatou Addresses French Universalism	107
Occitanists: The New Universalists?	110
Conclusion	117
CHAPTER THREE. Daniel Loddo's Field-based Compositions	119
1970s Counter-Culture and the Occitan Folk Movement	121
Where Has All the Folklore Gone?	121
Gardarem lo Larzac (We Will Save the Larzac)	124

The Internal Colonialism Thesis	127
Daniel Loddo	132
La recherche du terrain: Daniel Loddo's Fieldwork and Compositions	138
The Craba/Bodega	140
La Talvera Repertoire	144
Legends and the Imaginary: Relocating Myths in the Land	151
Cross-Cultural Alliances: Occitanie and Brazil.	154
Applying Glissant's Rhizome Theory	158
Conclusion	160
CHAPTER FOUR. Claude Sicre's Reinvention of Folklore as a Pathway to Cultural	
Democracy	162
The 1980s: Decentralization and the Rise of the National Front	164
Towards a Cultural Democracy Part One: Opposing Cultural Centralism	171
Towards a Cultural Democracy Part Two: The Reinvention of Folklore	177
The Origins of the Fabulous Trobadors: A Search for the Occitan Blues	185
Arnaud-Bernard: "The Last Popular Neighborhood of Toulouse"	189
"Pasqua"	192
Conclusion	196
CHAPTER FIVE. Visions of Marseille: Moussu T e lei Jovents' "Boléga Banjò"	198
On Marseille	201
From Massilia Sound System to Moussu T e lei Jovents	203
Claude McKay's Banjo: A Novel without a Plot	207
"Boléga Baniò"	212

Applying Glissant's Theories of <i>Créolité</i> and Relation	218
Conclusion	221
CHAPTER SIX. Polyphonic Voices of Marseille: Manu Théron's Lo Cor de la Plana.	223
Mediterranean Connections.	227
France in Algeria/Algeria in France	231
Becoming a Postcolonial Occitan Musician.	236
Lo Cor de la Plana	238
"Al Mawlid"	241
Algerian Musical Elements of Lo Cor de la Plana Repertoire	244
Staging the Mediterranean: "La noviòta" (The Bride)	246
"Nòste país" (Our Country)	254
Lo Cor de la Plana as World Music	261
Conclusion.	265
CONCLUSION	267
Situating Occitan Music within Current Ethnomusicology	269
Marseille-Provence 2013 and the Creation of the MUCEM	277
Concluding Remarks	281
BIBLIOGRAPHY	284
Discography	314

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Occitan Concept: Henri Giordan and André Cornille. Production: Claire	;
Levasseur, PictoArte ©, 1994.	
http://www.sorosoro.org/wp-content/uploads/occitan@LEM.jpg	5
Figure 2. Banner and Occitan flag hung at the Congrès de calandreta	
(Calandreta Conference), May 15, 2010.	61
Figure 3. Daniel Loddo playing the <i>craba</i> . Photo taken by Jean-Luc Matte, 2004.	
http://musette.free.fr/stchart/ch04talvera.htm.	141
Figure 4. Musicians and dancers at the Fête de la Saint-Jean in Ariège. June 23, 2010	180
Figure 5. Album cover of Mademoiselle Marseille.	199
Figure 6. Flyer for Moussu T e lei Jovents' Opérette marseillaise performance	211
Figure 7. Photo of Lo Cor de la Plana, courtesy of Compagnie du Lamparo	239
Figure 8 Photo of the MIJCEM and Fort Saint-Jean	279

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Musical Example 1. "A la montanha"	148
Musical Example 2. Melody of "En Occitania sem de bons enfants"	149
Musical Example 3. Melody and <i>embolada</i> rhythmic pattern of "Bona annada"	184
Musical Example 4. "Boléga Banjò"	213
Musical Example 5. Haddaoui rhythmic pattern	245
Musical Example 6. Farandole, haddaoui, and pízzica rhymthic patterns	249
Musical Example 7. "La noviòta" in three part singing with handclapping of farandole	
rhythmic pattern	.250-251
Musical Example 8. "La noviòta" with <i>haddaoui</i> rhythmic pattern	252
Musical Example 9. Melody of "Es pobres no podem viure"	259
Musical Example 10. Melody of Lo Cor de la Plana's "Nòste país"	260

INTRODUCTION

Se canta, que cante (If it sings, let it sing) begins the chorus of the unofficial Occitan anthem. On a July evening in the southern French city of Rodez, "Se canta," a symbol of Occitan regional identity, is being performed by the Algerian Berber musician, Idir. He introduces the song with a brief melismatic vocal solo, and as he sings the first words, about half of the crowd rises. A few audience members wave the Occitan flag, a yellow cross against a red background. Some of those in attendance appear to know all the words; others sing only the chorus. This concert is part of the annual Estivada, the largest Occitan event of the year. The Estivada brings together musicians, Occitan language teachers, and political and cultural activists, all of whom can be called "Occitanists." The three-day long festival includes musical demonstrations, folk dancing, lectures on a variety of Occitan-related themes (e.g., the troubadours and medieval architecture), and evening concerts that draw crowds from several hundred to several thousand people. The musical performances at the Estivada are emblematic of the Occitan music scene more generally: one can hear a wide array of musical styles, from musique traditionnelle (traditional music) and Occitan polyphony to hip hop and heavy metal. Several of the groups I focus on in this study are present at the Estivada. I see Daniel Loddo walking with his wife, Céline Ricard, while playing the large bagpipes, the *craba*. I speak with Manu Théron, who is advertising a compilation of poetry by Victor Gélu, a nineteenth-century poet from Marseille. The book includes a CD with an arrangement by Théron's polyphonic singing group, Lo Cor de la Plana. It is the first summer of my fieldwork, and I have spent the past several months in southern France, acquiring a general overview of Occitanie.

In this dissertation, I analyze the songs, discourse, and *imaginaires* (imaginaries) of select musicians who identify themselves as Occitan. I argue that singing in Occitan, a regional

language that only a small portion of the French population speaks, provides these performers with a liminal space from which to critique French society and that these musicians illustrate a new expression of what historian Herman Lebovics (2004) has coined as "postcolonial regionalism." Whereas Lebovics employed this term to invoke the impact of decolonization movements on the ideology of French regional identity movements, I claim that, since the 1980s, decolonization has been replaced by postcolonial immigration as a social fact that informs the ideology of select Occitan regionalists. Through the lens of postcolonial regionalism, I examine ways in which the colonial legacy has shaped Occitan musical expression and how the theoretical writings of the Martinican poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant may provide a better understanding of Occitan musical identity. Drawing on Glissant's theories of Relation, mondialité (world-ness), and rhizome identity, I demonstrate that Occitan music performers have distanced their project of valorizing local identity from anti-immigrant rhetoric and essentialist interpretations of French identity through a simultaneously rooting and deterritorializing discourse conveyed through music sound. In so doing, I provide a new application of Glissant's theories within ethnomusicology (see Camal 2019). A postcolonial regionalist analysis is one that is neither strictly postcolonial nor strictly regionalist but rather investigates what can be learned by examining these categories in relation to each other. This framework sheds light on the historical forces that have shaped French sociopolitics and what is often referred to as the current crisis in French identity. However, this is first and foremost a study of Occitan musicians and so my focus lies there.

One of the signature aspects of the Occitan music sound is that, for an expression of local identity, it contains a remarkable mixture of rhythms and melodies borrowed from musical practices not typically associated with France. The incorporated musical genres include those of

Northeast Brazil, Jamaica, North Africa, Italy, and Spain. This study, then, began with the deceptively simple question: why does Occitan musical performance, as an expression of local identity, draw so extensively on music from elsewhere? As I listened to Occitan musicians speak on language, music, and politics and teased out common threads, I discovered that the reasons for this musical otherness are complex and are related to modern French cultural citizenship. The primary answers to my question shape the course of this study and include the consideration of decline of French folklore, cultural centralism, and the contemporary sociopolitics of immigration in France.¹

According to those who ascribe to the discourse, the cultural territory that they label as "Occitanie," occupies one third of France. It is home to many Occitan-speaking musical performers with differing ideologies. In this study, I profile four musicians: Daniel Loddo, Claude Sicre, Tatou (né François Ridel), and Manu Théron. Loddo is based in Cordes-sur Ciel, a medieval village near Toulouse; Sicre has spent the majority of his career in Toulouse; while Tatou and Théron are both based in Marseille. As innovators of traditional and popular music in France, these musicians are directly engaged with the question of folklore and *la culture* populaire (popular culture) in France. They attribute the erasure of French folklore to centuries of cultural elitism and centralism and address what French ethnomusicologists Luc Charles-Dominique and Yves Defrance call a "singular relationship to popular culture" in France (2008:13). As Charles-Dominique writes, "We are the product in France of a particular history which marginalized diverse forms of popular culture, which erased everything that evoked regional particularisms..." (2012:15). In opposition to this tendency, Occitan musicians have

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¹ Additional factors are the long tradition of exoticism in French literature, music, and art, and the more recent world music scene in France (see Warne 1995)

delved into the local history and musical traditions of their milieus, incorporating them into their compositions and performed imaginaries.

While the performers I profile promote local identity, they also express solidarity with other minority populations in France and elsewhere. They provide a noteworthy voice within Europe at large, where the past two decades have seen an increase in the politics of closure and the rise of populist anti-immigrant political parties, including the National Front, renamed the National Rally in 2018, in France. Since Jean-Marie Le Pen founded the National Front in 1972, this far-right party has focused on immigration. His daughter, Marine Le Pen, became its leader in 2011 and, despite her attempts to *de-diaboliser* (de-demonize) the party's reputation, has voiced many of the same anti-immigration values as her father.

It has become commonplace to state that Europe has historically defined itself in relation to an Other. Philip Bohlman (2004) describes two kinds of Others: those within the borders of Europe, for instance Jewish communities; and those beyond. In French political discourse since decolonization, the role of the Other within France has typically been ascribed to postcolonial immigrants, and today, more generally, Muslims. Edward Said studied colonial depictions of the Other in *Orientalism* (1978); more recent postcolonial scholarship has attempted to collapse binaries such as the self/Other. However, this trope appears frequently in the writings of Glissant and in Occitan musicians' speech surrounding music and cultural citizenship in France, evidenced by phrases such as "we are otherness from within" and "seeking out the Other." Furthermore, the identity of the Other shifts in Occitan discourse; at times it conveys the stereotypical definition of the Other as immigrant, at other times it suggests the divide between elite and popular culture, where folklore and the peasantry are imagined as the Other in France, or between the central state and the ex-centric populations of France. Ultimately, I argue that

Occitan musicians enact a process of self-othering and explore the motivations for why a musician or community might choose to do so.

Occitan, que'es acquò? (What is Occitan?)

Occitan, qu'es acquò? is a phrase that appears on the many pamphlets or booklets in circulation that attempt to acquaint the French population with the Occitan language. For Occitanists, this linguistic area extends from Bordeaux in the west, to Nice in the east, to Limoges in the north, and includes the Val d'Aran in Spain and the Occitan Valleys of Piedmont and Liguria in Italy.

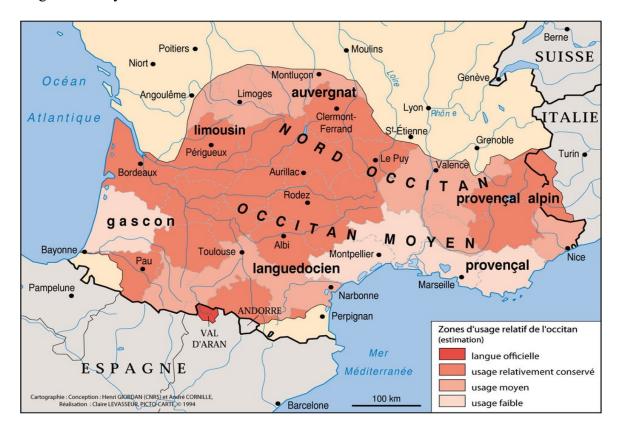


Figure 1. Map of Occitan. Concept: Henri Giordan and André Cornille. Production: Claire

Levasseur, PictoArte ©, 1994. http://www.sorosoro.org/wp-content/uploads/occitan©LEM.jpg

Occitan is typically defined as a Gallo-Romance language, composed of six variants:

Provençal, Vivaro-Alpin (also called Provençal-Alpin), Limousin, Languedocien, Auvergnat,

and Gascon (Costa 2017:5). The fact of calling Occitan a language is itself disputable, as the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who grew up speaking Gascon, argued (1980). Due to the fact that Occitan has never been an official language in France, there exist contrasting opinions on whether Occitan is a language composed of variants (e.g., Provençal and Gascon) or a dialect. The distinction between these two categories rests primarily on whether a language has been made official—whether it "has an army and a navy," to cite the colloquialism. There has never been an Occitan army nor an Occitan administrative state. I use the term "Occitan language" with the understanding that it is a project on the part of Occitanists, a term that denotes those who promote Occitan language and identity, to valorize the linguistic practices of the south. The classification of Occitan is also shaped by the fact that many of the scholars who have undertaken serious studies of the language, which began in the 1970s, have been involved in the Occitan identity movement (Blanchet and Schiffman 2004:3).

The history of Occitan and its status today are intertwined with nationhood in France. During the Middle Ages, Occitan was known as *langue d'oc*. Based on the different ways of saying "yes," the southern *langue d'oc* (oc for "yes") was contrasted with the *langue d'oil* that was spoken in the north. *Langue d'oc*, which philologists from the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century called "old provençal" (3), flourished as the chosen literary language of the troubadours, and was, in fact, the first written Romance language. Over the course of French nation-building, Occitan passed primarily into use as a vulgate, most commonly referred to as the *patois* of southern France, or, as the sociolinguist James Costa writes (2017), a "non-language." For centuries, however, Occitan remained the primary spoken language in southern France. Writing in 1835-1836, the novelist Stendhal noted that people in the south between Bordeaux, Bayonne, and Valence "believe in witches, cannot read, and do not speak French" (cited in

Pinkney 1986:8). Similarly, in *From Peasants to Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1014*, Eugen Weber detailed that in mid-nineteenth-century France at least one quarter of the population spoke a regional language with little to no comprehension of French (1976:67). Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the use of Occitan declined dramatically due to the internalization of negative connotations of the language and to broad social forces such as urbanization, mandatory education, military recruitment, rapid industrial growth, and the advent of modern radio. Furthermore, regional languages in France have received comparatively little support from the government, whose universalist model of cultural assimilation has sidelined regional differences. Previously omitted from the French constitution, in 2008, the regional languages of France were included in an amendment as "belonging to the French heritage." Subsequently, in 2014, the French government reinforced the primacy of the French language with a constitutional amendment that stated "the language of the republic is French."

Despite the efforts of Occitanists and measures taken by the European Union to protect regional languages, the use of Occitan continues to decline. According to UNESCO, Alpine-Provençal, Franco-Provençal, and Gascon are considered definitely endangered; Auvergnat, Languedocien, and Limousin severely endangered, and Provençal is listed as critically endangered. Today, there are roughly several hundred thousand Occitan speakers in France (Costa 2017:5).

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² In Spain, Aranese is designated an official language in the regional constitution, along with Catalan and Spanish. In Italy, the regional government of Piedmont has recognized Piemontese, since 2004, as an official language but the central government has not.

The Occitan Movement and its Music

The ideological underpinnings of the contemporary Occitan movement reside in the formation of Instituto d'estudis occitans (hereafter IEO) in 1945. The founding members of the IEO included Tristan Tzara, René Nelli, Max Rouquette, Joë Bousquet, Jean Cassou, and the Occitan historian and novelist, Robert Lafont. The main objectives of the IEO were to unify the various dialects of Occitan found in southern France as one language, "Occitan," and to create an Occitan dictionary with a standardized phonology. In his writings, such as *La révolution régionaliste* (The Regionalist Revolution) (1967), Lafont would subsequently emphasize the concept of "internal colonialism," a concept that would be seminal to the ideology of Occitan musicians in the 1970s (see Drott 2011).

During the 1960s and 1970s regionalist identity movements in France, namely Occitan, Corsican, Basque, Alsatian, and Breton, became increasingly mobilized in the wake of decolonization—hence Lebovics' term "postcolonial regionalism." These decades saw the peak of the Occitan movement as an overtly political cause. Many Occitanists during this time were involved with the Larzac protests in southwest France, an ultimately successful struggle to preserve the agricultural use of the Larzac plateau and to counter the government's plans for the expansion of a military base. Occitan musicians such as Claude Martí, who performed *nòva cançon occitana* (New Occitan Song), participated in this movement, singing in front of thousands of protestors at the Larzac. In "World Music and Activism Since the End of History [sic]" (2017), Peter Manuel discusses the protest song movements that emerged across the globe during the 1960s and 1970s and their decline in the following decades. He comments, "All these political movements shared an underlying commitment to the rationalist, secular, liberal values derived from the Enlightenment, whether inflected with Marxism or other local liberation

struggles" (3). The *nòva cançon occitana* was the southern French equivalent of the protest song movements, such as the *nueva cançion* in Latin America, that Manuel describes. The 1970s in France also witnessed a folk music revival, which led to the creation of associations throughout France devoted to the preservation of *la musique traditionnelle* (traditional music). Within the Occitan music scene, folk revivalists and Occitan protest singers remained two distinct communities. However, both movements paved the way for the careers of Daniel Loddo (see Chapter Three) and Claude Sicre (see Chapter Four).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Occitan bands, in particular the Fabulous Trobadors and Massilia Sound System, re-appropriated Occitan musical activism, transforming the musical style of the *nòva cançon occitana* into rap/Brazilian *embolada* (improvisatory sung poetry of northeast Brazil) and ragamuffin, respectively. Songs such as The Fabulous Trobadors' "L'accent," (Accent) (1998) and Massilia Sound System's "Parla patois" (Speak Patois) (1992), promoted the diversity of accents and languages found in France. These groups arose amidst an increasing awareness of postcolonial immigration, and their songs reflect the social agitations in French society at that time. They also set the stage for subsequent Occitan popular music performers, providing them with an ideology and an example of how to incorporate Occitan language.

The Occitan music scene today is multifarious and disjointed. At Occitan music concerts, one might hear male or female choruses, such as Los Pagalhús and La Mal Coiffée, slam poetry artists, such as Lou Daví, heavy metal bands that incorporate the hurdy-gurdy (*vielle-à-roue*), such as Familia Artùs, and many other possible group formats and styles. Notably, Occitan musical performance includes a wide range of musical styles derived from transnational musical collaborations and appropriations of musical practices from different parts of the world (cf. Hill 2007). One of the most common transnational musical partnerships occurs with performers from

nearby Mediterranean countries, specifically Italy and Spain (Catalonia). This connection is perhaps unsurprising given the fact of their geographic proximity; Occitan language can be heard in Italy, and Catalan is considered a "sister language" to Occitan. Forging these relationships, Occitan musicians place their music and identity within a larger Mediterranean cultural area that predates the French nation—one of several tactics by which they de-identify themselves from a centralized French official culture. Some Occitan music groups, such as Lo Cor de la Plana, also cultivate a Mediterranean musical identity along a North-South axis by creating relationships with and/or musical references to North Africa. Another, perhaps less predictable, connection is one that many Occitan musical performers make with Brazil. Although Brazilian music is popular in France (see Flechet 2007), the Occitan-Brazil connection has a specific imagined history and set of meanings, which I discuss in Chapter Three.

The Linha Imaginòt

The majority of the musicians cited in this study have been affiliated with the Linha Imaginòt.³ Occitan for the "Imaginary Line," the Linha Imaginòt emerged in the 1980s as a collective of musicians with shared goals for the greater recognition of Occitan language and creative expression outside of Paris. The imaginary line connects and provides solidarity among Occitan performers in cities and villages of southern France. Although the Linha Imaginòt has become less active as a movement, its members continue to perform and to maintain their solidarity. *Linha imaginòt* is also the name of a trimester review, founded by Claude Sicre. Published between 1990 and 2007 and distributed through the music sector of the IEO, the

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³ Daniel Loddo is not a member of the Linha Imaginòt, although he has performed with many Linha Imaginòt musicians. With that said, he and Claude Sicre began their musical and ethnographic careers together and their ideologies overlap, except around the question of folklore in France.

review was a forum for the primary concerns of Sicre and his colleagues. These topics include cultural decentralization, folklore, and the creation of counter-capitals. In an early issue of the *Linha imaginòt*, Sicre explains, "The Linha Imaginòt is a line, which first by means of the imagination, our first weapon, connects numerous places, numerous cities, numerous people attached to these cities (or to villages)" (1993:1).

The name Linha Imaginòt is wordplay on la ligne Maginot, a series of fortifications built during the 1930s along France's borders with Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. In contrast to the intended enclosure of la ligne Maginot, the Linha Imaginòt musicians have advocated ouverture (openness). Sicre writes, "The Linha Imaginòt is the opposite of la ligne Maginot, which was built by the French to protect themselves from Germany. We, we have a different logic: not to protect oneself from elsewhere, but rather to seek everywhere for elsewheres, and to bring them to us" (cited in Mazerolle 2008:239). The music sound of the groups along the Linha Imaginòt reflects this search for "elsewheres": the Fabulous Trobadors borrow from the Brazilian embolada and Massilia Sound System from Jamaican reggae. While the Linha Imaginòt may be of the mind—in contrast to the physical manifestation of la ligne Maginot—it is precisely the imagination that fortified its members' opposition to Paris-based centralism. The desire to impact the *imaginaire* of French audiences is one of the primary tactics these musicians have employed in their efforts to change French culture from within the provinces. As Claude Sicre writes in the liner notes to the album Duels de tchatche (Fabulous Trobadors 2003): "Another France, another civilization."

The Linha Imaginòt philosophy was born largely out of the writings of Félix-Marcel Castan (1920-2001). A poet, theorist, and festival organizer, Castan devoted himself to Occitan culture and encouraged other Occitanists to do the same. His vision of culture was not apolitical;

in fact, he saw politics and culture as inseparable (143): it was through educating oneself and others about Occitan culture and by creating Occitan cultural forms that one would cure the French mind of centralism and effect change. Castan spoke and wrote extensively about centralism. In Manifeste multiculturel (et anti-regionaliste): 30 ans d'experience decentralisatrice (Multicultural (and Anti-Regionalist) Manifesto: 30 Years of Decentralizing Experience) (1984), he writes, "Decentralization...is a new form of cultural life in France; which is to say, a rescue of French culture" (1984:107). Similarly, Sicre has stated, "Occitan culture is the future of French culture" (1988:44). Linha Imaginòt bands, including Massilia Sound System and the Fabulous Trobadors, have often paid tribute to Castan in their song lyrics. It is customary in France, and has been since at least the era of Louis XIV and Versailles, to refer to all the areas outside of Paris as le province. For instance, a writer based outside of Paris is called an écrivain de province (an author from the provinces). In response to this practice, Castan encouraged Occitan musicians to create counter-capitals: cities in southern France that he viewed as capable of offsetting the cultural dominance of Paris (Castan 1984). For Castan, identity was formed by action rather than a direct consequence of a place, encapsulated in his statement: "Occitanie, a militant concept. A concept one must unveil through and in action" (1984:107). The Linha Imaginòt musicians view themselves as cultural militants.

Linha Imaginòt performers have drawn on Castan's theories in, for example, their definition of folklore, which emphasizes the social function of music and dance and their own role as not simply performers but as sociocultural activists. In a country where folklore is associated negatively with the folkloric groups that had their heyday under Vichy France, Linha Imaginòt musicians seek to give folklore a positive connotation and to re-contextualize it for modern uses. They look to cultural practices in other countries, such as Brazil, where they

consider folklore to be intact and modern. Through a reinvented "folklore," they directly address ethnocentrism in France and put forth a pluralist vision of their local milieu—their neighborhood, city, Occitanie—and the nation as a whole.

A reference to la ligne Maginot also appears in the title of the first chapter, "La ligne Maginot de la laïcité," of *Le grand repli* (The Great Retreat) (2015), written by several scholars at the forefront of colonial and postcolonial studies in France: Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Ahmed Boubeker. In the face of an increasingly normalized ethnocentrist rhetoric that includes phrases like *le grand remplacement* (the great replacement), also evoked in current U.S. political discourse, and "the 'colonization' of France by the former colonies," the book is a call to examine the French colonial legacy and its role in shaping "defensive" attitudes towards postcolonial populations in France.

A Brief Overview of Immigration in France

As scholars and many others have observed, France is a *pays d'immigrés* (country of immigrants). In the 1930s, for instance, France received the greatest influx of migrants than any other nation. According to James Hollifield (2014), this lengthy immigration history sets France apart from other European nations. He writes, "What distinguishes France from other European countries is its early willingness to accept foreigners as settlers, immigrants, and citizens" (157).⁴ In French public discourse and scholarship, the primary topics related to immigration are cultural assimilation, government policy that seeks to control undocumented immigration and the nation's borders, and the challenges that cultural differences pose to the "unitary thrust of French

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⁴ The term *étranger* (foreigner) as an official category was created during the French Revolution. The first significant legislation regarding immigration was put in place during the Third Republic.

republican ideology" (Lewis 2011:232).⁵ Mary Lewis Dewhurst observes that "issues pertaining to immigration have been filtered through the lens of a republican citizenship whose origins lay in a revolutionary Jacobinism that eschewed difference in the name of radical equality and uniformity" (2011:232). Comparative studies of immigration in France and other Western European nations have focused on French republican citizenship as distinct from, for example, the British model of multiculturalism (Schain 2008; Ajala 2018). Although France has historically received large numbers of immigrants from other European nations, Muslim immigrants from the former colonies, particularly North Africa, have received the greatest attention in scholarship and public debates.

The majority of France's immigrant communities are located in Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and these cities' surrounding areas. According to a 2016 census conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, there were approximately 6 million immigrants living in metropolitan France (INSEE 2019). This number included roughly 1,9250,000 immigrants from North Africa, and 900,000 immigrants from other countries, primarily sub-Saharan, in Africa. There were a little over two million immigrants from Europe, including from nations within the European Union and those not, with the highest concentration from Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

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⁵ Francophone and Anglophone analyses of immigration in France have focused on postcolonial immigration (Hargreaves 1995; Noiriel 1988, 2001; Weil 2004, Boubeker and Haijat 2008; Tribalat 2017), official policies that have sought to restrict immigration (Lochak 2006; Wihtol de Wenden 2011, Thomas 2013, Bass 2014, Rodier in Bancel et al. 2017), universalism (Schor 2001; Balibar 2016; Samuels 2016), *laïcité* (Beaubérot 2004), and the emblem of postcolonial difference in France: the headscarf (Bowen 2007; Scott 2007; Winter 2008; Jopke 2009). Key themes that emerge from these writings include the reinforcement of ethnocentric attitudes in France through legislation and official discourses on assimilation, the French republican ideal of universalism, and the role of women in the "cultural wars" within France

Immigration in France can be traced to the mid-eighteenth century and was intertwined with the process of industrialization (Noiriel 1996; Hollifield 2014). As Gérard Noiriel writes, "immigration partook in the painful 'birth' of industrial society" (1996:228). Until World War I, immigration in France was primarily one of proximity: migration from other European countries, especially Italy, Belgium, Spain and Poland, was encouraged to satisfy the demands of labor shortages (Gastaut 2017:210). According to Lewis, in contrast to the emigration patterns characteristic of most European countries experienced in the late nineteenth century, France received an influx of foreigners that led to a doubling of the immigrant population between 1870 and 1890 (2011:21). After the decimating effects of World War I on the French population, immigrant laborers were recruited for the purpose of reconstruction and to serve as factory workers.

France experienced a large influx of migrants during the *Trente Glorieuses* (1945-1975), the prosperous thirty years after World War II (Allwood and Wadia 2010:50). Gill Allwood and Khursheed Wadia discussed this historical moment within a broader European context when large-scale immigration occurred through and into Europe (2010). Adding to the influx of foreigners resulting from labor recruitment was the establishment of "commonwealth citizenship" for colonial subjects, which granted mobility between the colonies and the metropole (Lewis 2011:236). Consequently, by 1954, the number of Algerian immigrants living in France was ten times what it had been in 1946 (236). The thriving economy of the 1950s and 1960s drew on workers from France's colonies and former colonies. The largest percentage of these workers came from Algeria; colonial laborers also came from other parts of North Africa and, to a lesser extent, from sub-Saharan Africa. In an effort to regulate migratory flows, the French state established the National Office of Immigration in 1945 (ONI) (Hargeaves 2007:20).

In 1963, the Bureau for the Development of Migration from Overseas Departments (BUMIDOM) was established to "facilitate the migration of five thousand Antilleans" (Camal 2019:97). Jérôme Camal writes that the BUMIDOM was established after the Algerian War ended (in 1962) because Algerian postcolonial migrants, who could no longer fulfill low-level positions in state-run industries as they were no longer French citizens (97-98).

In 1974, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's government closed France's borders to new immigrant workers due to the oil crisis and the start of an economic depression. This event "marked an important turning point in the demographics and economy of French immigration politics in France" (Feldblum 1999:21). The foreign population of predominantly male, temporary guest workers became, through family reunification in the 1970s and 1980s, increasingly settled, feminized, young, and non-European (21). According to a 1982 INSEE census, immigrants originating from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia constituted approximately 29 percent of France's immigrant population, immigrants from other African countries accounted for 4.3 percent, Asians for 7.9 percent, and Europeans for 67 percent (cited in Hargreaves 2007:19). Many immigrants from French former colonies settled in the housing projects built in the suburbs, or banlieues, of France's major cities. The early 1980s saw the emergence of the beur movement, which referred to the cultural and political expression of second-generation North African immigrants. In 1983, the March for Equality and Against Racism, also called the Beur March, was organized to address the violent acts committed against North Africans that had begun in the mid-1970s and had increased in the early 1980s.

Immigration regulation of the 1980s and 1990s included controversial legislation, such as the Pasqua Law (1993) and Debré Law (1997). The Pasqua law ended a policy, practiced since 1889, whereby children of immigrants were automatically citizens of France. The Pasqua law

mandated that these children apply for citizenship between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one through a *manifestation de volonté* (expression of choice) (Bass 2014:55-56). The Debré Law created a national registry of French citizens and their foreign guests, allowed officials to fingerprint anyone from outside of the European Union applying for a residence permit, and gave the police increased capability of tracking immigrants in France (Emmons 1997:358).

In 2007, former president Nicholas Sarkozy created the controversial Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-Development. Immigration and national identity had been central to Sarkozy's presidential campaign. As Dominic Thomas observes, "Sarkozy sought to capitalize on the tough positions he had taken as Minister of the Interior during the 2005 urban uprisings in France and the harsh declarations he directed at minority ethnic groups at that time" (2013:62). The Ministry created a more rigorous selection process that included proving one's mastery of the French language in order to obtain legal residency (see Thomas 2013).

Among the objectors to Sarkozy's Ministry were Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, who responded with *Quand les murs tombent: L'identité nationale hors-la-loi?* (When the Walls Fall: Illegal National Identity?) (2009). In this text, they state that with the creation of the Ministry, France "betrays" a "non-codifiable" aspect of its identity: "its exaltation of liberty for all, one of its fundamental aspects of its relationship to the world—the other being its colonialism" (2007:5-6). In their view, identity, whether national or individual, is an organic, mutable phenomenon. By contrast, the creation of this Ministry would lead to a collective life rendered "aseptic" and "infertile" through management (1); it was symptomatic of an *identité mur* (wall identity).

Overviews of contemporary immigration in Europe have largely addressed Islamophobia and racism as a common factor among these nations (Silverstein 2005; Taras 2012; O'Brien 2016; Abdek 2018). Paul Silverstein (2005) writes that the "racialized slot" once ascribed to Jews and Roma was, in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, assigned to Muslims. Raymond Taras (2012) and Peter O'Brien (2016) cite the controversy in Europe over secular citizenship, which primarily targets Muslims, as a xenophobic reaction to immigration that has taken the form of Islamophobia in recent decades. Taras cites two typical explanations for the specifically anti-Muslim fear of foreigners in Europe. One is to attribute Islamophobia to centuries of European Islamophobia; the other is to view it as a response to the increase in Muslim immigration since the 1970s. O'Brien prefers an approach that focuses on a crisis within European civilization, which he relates to liberalism, nationalism, and postmodernism. Recent scholarship on immigration in Europe has also examined the ways in which nations of the European Union have responded to the refugee crisis (De Genova 2017).

Bridging Postcolonial and Regional Frameworks

At the intersection of analyses of postcolonial and regional France, the theoretical framework for this dissertation draws to the greatest extent on the works of Herman Lebovics, a scholar of French modern history, and Édouard Glissant. Their works convey commonalities between postcolonial and regional France that have been useful for conceptualizing Occitan discourse. All of Lebovics' books on France (1992, 1999, 2004) are relevant to this thesis, in that they address issues related to cultural heritage, colonialism, folklore studies, ethnology, and how those issues have shaped debates on national identity. *Bringing the Empire Home: France in the Global Age* (2004), most pertinent to my argument, focuses on the colonial legacy. He establishes a triangular relationship between Paris, the regions, and the colonies that has been a

driving force behind my conception of the Occitan movement. It is of note that the first chapter of Lebovics' book entitled "Gardarem lo Larzac!" (Occitan for "We Will Save the Larzac") began with the Festival for the Third World, organized by the Paysans de Larzac (the Peasants of Larzac), that took place at the Larzac protest site. This performance is testament to the fact that the Occitan movement, since its inception in the late 1960s, has been oriented towards populations outside of the French metropole.

This global orientation is akin to Glissant's theory of *mondialité* (world-ness), which he characterizes in his writings as the positive aspect of globalization.⁶ Throughout this dissertation, I demonstrate that *mondialité* is a defining feature of Occitan music and draw on other concepts elaborated upon in Glissant's theoretical writings, including those of Relation and rhizome identity, *créolité* ("creole-ness"), and the detour.

Glissant was born in 1928 in Sainte-Marie, Martinique, and spent his early childhood in the city of Lamentin, where he encountered the strict rules that forbade speaking creole in primary school. At age ten, he received a scholarship to study at the prestigious Lycée Schoelcher in Fort de France, where Aimé Césaire, founder of the Négritude movement, had taught. Glissant moved to Paris in 1946 to continue his studies. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in philosophy at the Sorbonne, where he also received a doctorate in letters and social science, having studied ethnology at the Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man). In 1950s Paris, he became an active participant in anti-colonial intellectual circles and was a member of the Fédération des étudiants africains noirs en France (Federation of Black African Students in

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⁶ Globalization was a central theme in his later works, such as *Philosophie de la Relation* (2009).

⁷ Writing on the French Antilles in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon comments, "The official language is French; elementary-school teachers keep a close eye on their pupils to make sure they are not speaking creole" ([1952] 2008:11).

France) and the Société africaine de culture (African Society of Culture). Along with Paul Niger (né Albert Béville), Marie-Joseph Cosnay, and Marcel Manville, he established the separatist Front des antillais et guyanais pour l'autonomie (Front of Caribbeans and Guyanese for Autonomy) in 1959. President DeGaulle shut down the Front and, due to Glissant's political involvement, prevented him from leaving France between 1961 and 1965. Glissant returned to Martinique in 1965, where he founded the Institut martiniquais d'études (The Martinican Institute of Studies) (IME) two years later, whose mission was to provide an education to young Antilleans that was in accordance with their history and geography. Years later, in 2006, he established the Institut du tout-monde (The Institute of the Whole-World) in Paris. He spent the latter part of his career in the United States, first as a professor at the University of Louisiana (1988-1993) and then at the CUNY Graduate Center (1995-2011).

Raised in Martinique, part of Overseas France (France d'Outre-Mer), Glissant believed that the problems facing the island were cultural rather than economic. He argued that the fact of Martinique being part of France as an overseas department made the psychological impacts of colonialism all the more insidious and that the island suffered from an "alienated identification with French culture" (Britton 1999:4). When examining Glissant's writings, it becomes evident that several of his theories oppose specifically French constructs: French universalism, which he associates with colonialism, the universalism/particular dialectic, and top-down mentalities regarding culture. It is through these topics that his philosophy bears the most relevance to the Occitan movement, whose participants have reacted against what they perceive to be a universalizing and elitist approach to culture. In his *Introduction à une poétique du Divers* (Introduction to a Poetics of the Diverse), Glissant states "Because just as one cannot save one language while letting the others perish, one cannot save a nation or an ethnicity while letting the

others perish. And that's what I call Relation" (1996:99).

Glissant's theory of Relation is a broad, utopian concept. It is the notion that all phenomena, such as cultures, be valued equally and that Relation arises from the interaction between them. Sean Coombes writes that "Relation comes about as a process of interaction between phenomena which, though distinct, can be seen as integrally linked to each other through those interactions themselves (2018:9). According to Celia M. Britton (1999), one of the first Anglophone writers to provide an in-depth examination of Glissantian theory, the notion of Relation underpins all of the philosopher's theories. She writes:

The starting point for this concept is the irreducible concept of the Other; 'Relation' is in the first place a relation of equality with and respect for the Other as *different* from oneself. It applies to individuals but more especially to other cultures and other societies. It is non-hierarchical and non-reductive; that is, it does not try to impose a universal value system but respects the *particular* qualities of the community in question. (11)

Glissant's vision of Relation is intertwined with his ideas on diversity, alterity, and difference; it is the antithesis to ostracism and racism (Glissant 2009:72). In *Philosophie de la Relation* (Philosophy of Relation) (2009), his last theoretical work, Glissant defines Relation as the "realized quantity of all the differences of the world" (42) (italics kept from the original). In La Cohée du Lamentin, whose title is derived from a specific landmark in Martinique, he writes, "Relation connects, relays, relates. It does not relate one thing to another, but rather the whole to the whole. The poetics of Relation thus accomplishes the diverse" (2005:37). On the utopian aspect of Glissant's theory of Relation, Coombes states, "Glissant's Relation...can only ever remain a hypothesis, that is to say a speculative theory, because it is not grounded in states of affairs the reality of which could ever be proven." (2018:9).

Throughout his theoretical texts, Glissant contrasts rhizome identities with root identities.

He conceptualizes identities as the interconnected root systems of rhizomes rather than vertical

root systems of, for example, trees (Glissant 1997:11). Whereas single-root identity denotes a totalitarian singularity, Glissant emphasizes rhizome identity as a means to counter universalist cultural and political hegemony. Root-identity is linked to an individual's or group's claims on a given territory; by contrast, rhizome identity implies deterritorialization. Glissant bases his notion of rhizome identity on the rhizome theory put forth by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). However, in contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of rhizome theory, which opposes the concept of roots, Glissant does not completely refute the concept of roots but rather the notion of a single root.

Being a French Caribbean author engendered Glissant's interest in contesting the notion of a single root (i.e., French culture) and in promoting "archipelagic thinking," or creolization. He distinguishes creolization from hybridity, in that, in his view, the latter term assumes the notion of stable origins. In the same way that Relation is a means of reconfiguring the human imaginary at a time of accelerated globalization, creolization offers a necessary transformation of thought. In Le traité du Tout-Monde (The Treaty of the Whole-World) (1997), Glissant describes creolization in the follow manner: "I call creolization the meeting, the interference, the shock, the harmonies, the disharmonies, between [sic] cultures in the realized totality of the worldearth" (cited in Wiedorn 2018:6). Michael Wiedorn (2018) identifies four aspects of Glissant's concept of creolization. The first is the "striking speed" as technologies accelerate communication and transportation and have brought people into increasing contact with each other. Second, people are aware of this speed and interactions. Third, creolization entails a reevaluation of the cultural components that are brought into contact, a "revalorization," that links back to his notion of Relation. Lastly, the results of creolization are unpredictable: "Creolization is the unpredictable" (Glissant 1996:89). Throughout his theoretical writings, Glissant addresses

how certain thought patterns, such as the verticality of root-identity, generated colonialism. In his works, the West is portrayed not as a geographic location but rather as a project of domination (Wiedorn 2018).

Analyses of Glissant's works and applications of his theories have seen an efflorescence in recent years, notably in literary studies (e.g., Coombes 2018; Wiedorn 2018; Drabinski 2019). His theories have also been incorporated into two recent publications in ethnomusicology:

Jérôme Camal's *Creolized Aurality: Guadeloupean Gwoka and the Politics of Postcoloniality* (2019) and, to a much lesser extent, J. Griffith Rollefson's *Flip the Script: European Hip Hop and the Politics of Postcoloniality* (2017). Rollefson draws primarily on Glissant's essay "Cross-Cultural Poetics" (1973) in his discussion of the French rapper Seyfu. Camal, however, draws extensively on Glissant's theories of Relation, detour, opacity, and the abyss in his analysis of the Guadeloupean drumming and dance genre *gwoka*. On the relevance of Glissant's theoretical writings to understanding postcolonial France, Camal states, "Key concepts in his poetics of Relation...help us think through the musical practices and listening regimes that animate *gwoka's* aurality, and beyond that, a French (post)coloniality" (2019:26). Occitanie was not colonized by the French; however, Glissant's theories assist in understanding French postcoloniality within the metropole and how it informs current regionalist expression in France.

Contemporary Occitan music is not typically framed within scholarly discussions of French postcoloniality. Understandably, the term "postcolonial music" when applied to music in France most often designates the musical expression of performers who are *issus de l'immigration postcoloniale* (born from postcolonial immigration). Much of the literature on postcolonial music in France analyzes hip hop (Gross, McMurray and Swedenburg 1992; Prévos 200; Griffiths 2017), *banlieue* music (Oscherwitz 2000), and to a lesser extent *raï* (Gross,

McMurray and Swedenburg 1992; Virolle 1995; Marranci 2000) and rock (Lebrun 2007, 2012). The cultural anthropologist Jeanette Jouili (2013, 2014) has researched musical performances by Muslim performers in France, demonstrating how they negotiate republican citizenship and religious piety. In "Refining the Umma in the Shadow of the Republic: Islamic Performing Arts and New Islamic Audio-Visual Landscapes in France" (2014), she studies three Muslim theatrical performances whose directors strive to emphasize Muslim values, adapt their audiences to bourgeois conventions regarding audience behavior, and hold different stances regarding the potential to be viewed as underscoring *communitarisme* (communitarianism) in France. Her research draws attention to current issues in France surrounding Islamic revivalism, republican citizenship, gender, and the marginalization of postcolonial Muslim populations.

By examining Occitan musical expression from a postcolonial regionalist perspective, I draw attention to the fact the nation's colonial legacy is embedded in contemporary regionalism and that select Occitan musicians engage with and convey this social fact. Musicians I interviewed, especially those along the Mediterranean coast, are forthcoming about colonial history. Internal colonialism theory gives Occitanists a framework with which to consider their relationship to the French central government. For some Occitanists, Paris-oriented centralism is a symptom and an extension of a colonial mentality. Colonialism also presents Occitanists a lens through which to view the global dimension of France's history and current attitudes about otherness—what several musicians called "a pathological relationship to difference" in France.

Within French academia, scholarship on colonialism has historically existed on the margins (see Silverstein 2018); however, since the 2000s, French colonial history has acquired

greater visibility in the media and among select scholars in France. As the editors of the Colonial Legacy in France: Fracture, Rupture, Apartheid write, "the year 2005 [the year of the banlieue riots] was the year in which French people discovered the colonial past in journals, magazines, special editions of academic journals, and in academic books..." (Bancel, Blanchard, Thomas 2017:4). The Achac research group, founded in 1989 by Pascal Blanchard, has produced groundbreaking scholarship on colonialism and the colonial legacy in France. Publications include The Colonial Legacy in France (2017), which addresses the inseparability of French republicanism and colonialism, national memory (and amnesia), terrorism, and the "ghettoization" of postcolonial populations, and Zoos humains: Au temps des exhibitions humaines (Human Zoos: In the Time of Human Exhibits) (Bancel et al. 2004), on human zoos in nineteenth-century France.

Many recent colonial studies have examined the role of the colonial enterprise in the formation of French national identity (Savarèse 1998; Ezra 2000; Morton 2000; Conklin 2003; Gafaiti 2003; Levitz 2006; Murray-Miller 2017). *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (2002) and *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution* (Bancel et al. 2014) address the colonialist indoctrination of inhabitants of metropolitan France through advertisements, pedagogy, colonial exhibitions, the "invention of the native," and human zoos that supported the colonial agenda. Several of these scholars have begun to examine the colonial foundations of French republicanism itself (Gafaiti 2003; Murray-Miller 2017). Of note is Gavin Murray-Miller's (2017) analysis of modernist discourse in colonial Algeria; he argues that the modern French republic is not a product of Enlightenment principles and the French Revolution,

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⁸ The plethora of publications on the French overseas empire by Anglophone scholars continues to grow (e.g., Conklin 2003; Lorcin and Shepard 2016; Gamble 2017; Murray-Miller 2017; Semley 2017; Keller 2018).

as is often assumed, but rather of colonialism. His trans-Mediterranean approach is similar to Silverstein's (2004) transnational approach in the latter's study of postcolonial Algeria and France. A select group of historians has begun to study the impact of colonialism on the French metropolitan regions (Grondin 2010; Aldrich 2015). Reine-Claude Grondin (2010) examines the cultural experience of colonialism in Limousin. A reviewer wrote, "This work is at first view surprising: what are the links between Limousin and the colonial epoch?" (Rivallain 2011:341). It is this kind of question with which my research has engaged.

In the anthropologist Paul Silverstein's Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation, devoted to how the politics of postcolonial Algeria have played out on both sides of the Mediterranean, the author refers to "the specter of French regionalism that haunted" his research (2004:229). It is noteworthy that Silverstein should pay as much attention to French regionalist movements as he does in Algeria in France. In one section, he demonstrates the impacts of the militant tactics of the Algerian FLN on the regionalist movements of the 1960s, particularly the Breton and Occitan 1960s. In the last chapter, discussing the ties between "post-Beur Franco-Algerians" and regionalist groups in France, Silverstein describes a conference-debate held in 1996 and sponsored by the Mouvement culturel berbère-France (Berber Cultural Movement-France) in honor of the Berber Spring of 1980. In addition to Franco-Algerian men and women, also in attendance at the conference were Occitan and Catalan militants who had been invited to share their experience. Silverstein writes, "The conversations that ensued between participants and audience members were particularly fascinating in terms of their efforts to bridge the differences between the two struggles. Beyond trying to learn from each other's experiences, Berber, Catalan, and Occitan activists presented their movements as all part of a single struggle against the assimilationist ideology of the French nation-state" (229). The struggle against the

assimilationist ideology to which Silverstein refers, or cultural universalism, is a binding force between the two words that constitute Lebovics' phrase, "postcolonial regionalism," as I interpret it. In their de-identification with French official culture, Occitan musicians have oriented themselves towards other minority populations in France—although the label "minority" when applied to Occitan speakers is questionable (Costa 2017). Nonetheless, it is a category that Occitan musicians have used to describe themselves.

On French Ethnomusicology

In a country where scholars, such as Simha Arom, Miriam Rovsing-Olsen, and Bernard Lortat-Jacob, have contributed significantly to the field of ethnomusicology, it is of note that *l'ethnomusicologie du domaine français* (ethnomusicology on France) has remained a relatively small field. Claudie Marcel-Dubois (1913-1989), founder of *ethnomusicologie institutionnelle du domaine français* (Charles-Dominique 2006:151), furthered the recording of traditional music in France, and her writings, some of which were co-authored with Marie-Marguerite Pichonnet-Andral, include descriptions and analyses of traditional French music (1975), dances (1950), and instruments (1975), as well as reflections on French ethnomusicology (1960, 1961). For the greater part of the twentieth century, a schism existed in French ethnomusicology between the study of France and that of the exotic. This scholarly divide was reinforced by the physical separation of the Musée de l'Homme from the Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires (Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions) (MNATP), founded in 1937 during a government-

⁹ Given the relative neglect within French ethnomusicology of France, with the exception of the scholars cited above, the literature on music of southern France has primarily been written by folklorists. These studies were generally conducted on specific regions, or villages in France. Prominent folklorists have included: Félix Arnaudin, André Varagnac, and Arnold von Gennep.

sponsored promotion of regionalism. Marie-Barbara le Gonidec points to this separation as one of the pitfalls of Marcel-Dubois's *ethnomusicologie du domaine français* (Charles-Dominique and Defrance 2012).

Luc Charles-Dominique, Yves DeFrance, Denis Laborde, Lothaire Mabru, Eric Montbel, and Jean-Jacques Castéret are members of a subsequent generation of French scholars devoted to the ethnomusicology of France. Luc Charles-Dominique (1987, 2002) and Eric Montbel (2013) have conducted organological studies of Languedoc that deal primarily with the *hautbois* and the *cornemuse* (also known as the *craba* or *bodega*). Jean-Jacques Castéret (2016) has focused on polyphonic singing in Béarn and the Gascon Pyrenees. Denis Laborde (2006) has studied song and revivalism in the Basque country. Yves DeFrance (2000) has written on traditional music and innovations based on traditional music in Bretagne. Charles-Dominique (1996) has also written on the "engaged ethnomusicology" of the 1970s and its association with regionalist movements. The ethnomusicologists cited above have been active within academic institutions. There have also been other academically trained ethnomusicologists, such as Daniel Loddo, who have contributed to the knowledge of traditional music of France through associative structures while remaining on the periphery of French scholarly circles. The music revivalism of the 1970s and 1980s saw the formation of many of these associations.

In 2006, Luc Charles-Dominique and Yves Defrance published a "Manifesto in Favor of the Recognition of Ethnomusicology of France." In this document, they cite the tendency in France to marginalize scholarship on the French terrain in favor of those far away. The closure of the MNATP in 2005, which had been an important institution for ethnographic research on France, has also coincided with the displacement of ethnomusicology on France into the university system. However, of the thirteen universities in France offering courses in

ethnomusicology, only three provide positions for research scholars working on France. Similarly, of the French theses written strictly within the discipline of ethnomusicology, only three have focused on France. The authors of these dissertations were students of Luc Charles-Dominique, who, based at the University of Nice-Sophia-Antipolis, has been at the center of efforts to support ethnomusicological research on France. Granted, one must take into account the fact that, in France, ethnomusicology is often included in social anthropology or musicology departments. While there has been an increase in ethnomusicology programs in France, the discipline remains largely oriented towards musical traditions outside of France. The paucity of ethnomusicology studies of France is also attributable to the parameters of music genres that qualify as appropriate subjects of study for French ethnomusicologists. For instance, popular music, as the term is generally used in the United States, is rarely included, but rather falls under the domain of sociology. This model has been in existence since Marcel-Dubois founded the discipline and is still prevalent (le Gonidec in Charles-Dominique and Defrance 2012).

French ethnomusicology on France has started to expand in exciting ways in the past

¹⁰ Charles-Dominique and Defrance also cite the passing of the generation of musical informants encountered by the revivalists of the 1970s and 1980s and the need for a change in objectives. ¹¹ In France, the study of mediated popular music has primarily taken place within the field of sociology, and to a lesser extent, history. French sociologists of music include Antoine Hennion, Nicolas Donin, François Ribac, and Loïc Riom. They have researched a variety of topics related to music: cultural economy (Hennion 1978), mediation (Hennion 1993); cultural programming (Delcambre, Dutheil, and Ribac 2017); a comparative history of science and technology and the development of feedback (Ribac 2007); music in films (Ribac 2019); and indie rock bands as "translocal" music cultures analyzed through Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome identity theory (Roim 2016). Whereas in the United States, one might find such topics and approaches within ethnomusicology graduate programs and scholarly publications in ethnomusicology, in France, they are typically attached to separate institutions and published in distinct journals. One of these institutions is the Institut de recherche et coordination acoustique/musique (The Institute for Research and Coordination of Acoustics/Music), or IRCAM, located at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. A primary publication for the dissemination of research in popular music is *Volume!*, the French journal of popular music studies, founded in 2002.

fifteen years. In 2006, Charles-Dominique and Defrance organized a four-day conference, "The Ethnomusicology of France," at the University of Nice. The resultant collection of conference papers (2008) provides an important scholarly resource on the ethnomusicology of France. In 2007, Charles-Dominique and Defrance established the Centre International de Recherches Interdisciplinaires en Ethnomusicocologie de la France (International Center of Interdisciplinary Research in Ethnomusicology of France) (CIRIEF), whose inaugural congress was held at the Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Mediterranée (Museum of the Civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean) (MUCEM) in Marseille. One of the services of the CIRIEF website is to provide links to publications by ethnomusicologists who study France or who have been involved in French ethnomusicology. For instance, while Marie-Barbara le Gonidec has primarily researched the music of Bulgaria, she has played an important role in French ethnomusicology as former director of the *phonothèque* (sound archives) at the MNATP.

Scholarship in ethnomusicology in general, not just in France, has tended to overlook Western Europe in preference for more "exotic" musical traditions. ¹² For example, an examination of the Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology reveals that, of the sixty-nine existent ethnographies, four are devoted to a musical practice in Western Europe. ¹³ I am referring only to single-author ethnographies, not collections of articles such as Tullia Magrini's *Music and Gender: Perspectives from the Mediterranean* (2003). Western Europe fares slightly better in the journal *Ethnomusicology*: between 1999 and 2019 there were eleven articles devoted to a

¹² Some exceptions include Celtic music (Dwyer 2014; Smyth 2019), flamenco (Chuse 2003) and Portuguese *fado* (Gray 2013)

¹³ These include: Chris Goertzen's Fiddling for Norway: Revival and Identity (1997); Bernard Lortat-Jacob's Sardinian Chronicles (1995); Tina K Ramnarine's Ilmatar's Inspirations: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Changing Soundscape of Finnish Folk Music (2003); and Griffith J. Rollefson's Flip the Script: European Hip Hop and the Politics of Postcoloniality (2017).

Western European musical practice. None of these articles, however, has been on music in France. In fact, in the Wesleyan Series Music/Culture, Oxford Series in Ethnomusicology, and Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology combined, there have been no ethnographies of contemporary French musical practices other than hip hop. ¹⁴ This dissertation is a timely contribution to the scholarship in ethnomusicology on Western Europe and on France in particular.

Two books in the fields of history and sociology, respectively, served as my initial references on popular Occitan music. Mazerolle's *La chanson occitane: 1965-1997* (2008) provides a well-researched overview of the development of the *nòva cançon occitana* in the 1970s, the relationship between the *nòva cançon occitana* singers and Occitan political organizations, the turn towards musical folklore in the 1980s, and the innovations that were brought about in the 1980s and 1990s by such groups as Massilia Sound System and the Fabulous Trobadors. Her section on the Linha Imaginòt musicians, in which she discusses their identities as global citizens, their desire to reinvent folklore, and "the integration of immigrants" (314) served as my starting point for analyzing sonic articulations of these ideas. Focusing on a smaller geographic region, Elisabeth Cestor analyzes what she terms the *musique particulariste* (particularist music) of Provence, and includes a discussion of musical *métissage* and the world music industry in France. My analysis of Occitan music differs from those of Mazerolle and

¹⁴ Two exceptions to this trend in ethnomusicological publications are Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities, a series edited by Philip Bohlman and Martin Stokes and published by Scarecrow Press, and the Routledge Studies in Ethnomusicology, which in 2014, published Ruth Rosenberg's *Music, Travel, and Imperial Encounter in 19th Century France*.

¹⁵ Mazerolle writes, "The songs of the Linha Imaginòt address two central questions: the integration of immigrants and the reinvention of a multicultural identity and, also, the globalization of culture and the articulation of the local and the global, two questions which are those of the end of the twentieth century" (314).

Cestor in that I contextualize the Occitan music revival and the attached discourses to broader topics related to French national identity.

Since the publication of Mazerolle and Cestor's books, Occitan music has attracted the attention of several other scholars. Eric Drott (2011) examines the internal colonialism thesis adopted by *nòva cançon occitana* performers of the 1970s. Virginie Magnat (2018) writes on the Occitan promotion of cultural diversity and the evolution of Occitan musical ideology from postcolonial regionalism to anti-globalization. I offer a more in-depth examination of some of the issues raised at the end of Mazerolle's book and in Magnat's articles (2017, 2018) related to Occitan musicians' perspectives on cultural diversity and immigration. Furthermore, unlike these authors, I provide musical analysis to demonstrate how Occitan performers reproduce their ideology through sound.

Terminology: "Can one speak of an Occitan music?"

In 2017, Daniel Loddo, one of the musicians profiled in this study, was a featured participant in the IEO conference in Gaillac. The title of his panel was, "Can one speak of an Occitan music?" (Peut-on parler d'une musique occitane?). Essentially, Loddo's response was that there has existed a rich history of musical performance in Occitanie and that there continues to be musical creation in Occitanie; therefore, yes one can. In a recent interview, Loddo conveyed to me a preference for the phrase "music in Occitanie" (interview on August 3, 2019). In the twenty-first century, Occitan musicians have incorporated a plethora of musical styles ranging from heavy metal and hip hop to rock, and drawn from musical traditions from around the world. As one of my first interviewees, an Occitan music radio show host on France Bleu Périgord, stated, "Occitan music is like the Wild West: anything is possible." He continued, "There is no such thing as Occitan music." How could I not be intrigued by the prospect of

studying a music that is said not to exist? Examining the terminology that is raised in discussions of Occitan music provides insight into the different statements I have cited above as well as into how music is categorized in France. It also sheds light on the construction of and impediments to an Occitan identity.

"Occitan music" is a slightly misleading term that requires some explanation. It generally means music sung in Occitan or which conveys an Occitan identity. Regionalist cultural identity has been stronger in other parts of France, such as the French Basque Country and Bretagne than in Occitanie, evident in the plethora of Breton bombardes et binious (drum and bagpipe ensembles). Furthermore, Occitanie is much larger than Bretagne; its identity movement began almost a century later; and it contains a variety of disparate musical and linguistic traditions. Even to say that Occitan music is "music sung in the Occitan language" is somewhat inaccurate, since some of the most famous Occitan bands, notably the Fabulous Trobadors, sing in French more than they do in Occitan. Yet the Fabulous Trobadors promote an Occitan consciousness, and the group's founder, Claude Sicre, has formulated a set of theories espoused by other Occitan musicians. In general, Occitan music can be characterized as including some or all lyrics in Occitan and/or featuring traditional music or instruments of southern France. It often, but not always, conveys a politicized identitarian stance. Based on my observations of Occitan musical performance in southern France, I have concluded that a song is "Occitan music" if its performers say that it is.

In this dissertation, I employ the term "Occitan music" in order to avoid overly cluttered language. Elisabeth Cestor (2005) uses the terms *musique particulariste*, which translates rather awkwardly into English as "particularist music," to describe regionalist music in Provence. "Particularist music" must be viewed within the context of the historical tensions in France

between universalism and particularism (see Chapter One). Valerie Mazerolle (2008) uses the term *la chanson occitane* (Occitan song), which carries specific connotations of the 1970 protest song, and which, she states, is political song. I include below several terms and categorical binaries I have encountered that have framed my study of Occitan musical performance.

Musique actuelle ("current" music) vs. musique traditionnelle (traditional music):

Occitan music is usually divided into two categories: musique actuelle, what North Americans would typically call "popular music," and musique traditionnelle. I was often asked in France to specify which I was researching. The separation between these two categories is not always clearly identifiable. Some of the musicians I discuss in this thesis are performers of musique actuelle, although they draw on the traditional music repertoire, while others belong to musique traditionnelle but draw on popular music genres. I use the term "traditional music" in this study as an emic category that is still in use in French scholarship (e.g., Bonnemason and Albert 2009).

Popular music vs. *la musique populaire* (popular music): While the term "popular music" may sometimes signify generally "music of the people," the term has increasingly come to denote mass-mediated music. It should be noted, however, that in France, *la musique populaire* designates "music of the people," often connoting folk music, that is orally transmitted. It is frequently used in folklore studies in the context of the nineteenth-century Romantic fascination with *la culture populaire* (popular culture).¹⁶

Imaginaire (imaginary): Betsy Wing provides the following definition of the imaginary in her translation of Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*: "Glissant's sense differs from the commonsense English usage of a conception that is a conscious mental image...For Glissant the

34

¹⁶ The term *la culture populaire* is also used today in France in reference to *les quartiers populaires* (popular neighborhoods), a term which denotes poor neighborhoods and/or housing projects.

imaginary is all the ways a culture has of perceiving and conceiving of the world. Hence, every human culture will have its own particular imaginary (2011:xxii). Throughout this study I use the word *imaginaire* according to Wing's definition of the word. Furthermore, I presuppose that the imaginary operates not only on a cultural level but also on an individual or small group level, as, for example, in a music band.

Regionalist: I use the word "regionalist" with care, as many of the musicians I discuss in this thesis call themselves "anti-regionalists." However, there is a specific ideological background for this anti-regionalism that I shall clarify in subsequent chapters. Briefly stated, fashioning themselves as anti-regionalists serves to separate the promotion of Occitan culture from historical links between conservative right-wing politics and regionalism as well as between regionalism and separatist ideology. Through anti-regionalism, they place an emphasis on the cultural, rather than the political (one may argue about their inseparability), importance of Occitanie. They also adopt this phrase to ensure the validity of their critique of the French government: in resisting the concept of regionalism, they resist the concept of nation. Still, I have chosen to use the word regionalism in a more general sense in order to translate the Occitan movement to a wider audience.

Occitan: In French, the word *Occitan* refers to the language itself; one might also hear in France the phrase *les occitans* ("the Occitans"), which denotes those who speak the language. According to Occitanist lore, Dante Alighieri was the first writer to use this term and had considered writing *The Inferno* in Occitan. However, as I have mentioned, the word as it applies to the languages of southern France is disputable. There are two primary considerations here. One is that not all speakers of a southern French regional language, such as Provençal, wish to be included in the Occitan movement. As a musician from Martigues (a city adjacent to Marseille)

Provençal speakers who are more politically conservative are suspicious "of these communists from the West" (Toulouse being located northwest of Marseille) and their goal of sweeping all speakers of a southern French regional language into their movement (interview with Sébastien Spessa on September 21, 2018). Here, we see self-differentiation from universalizing efforts in France operating on a national macro level, as in the Occitan movement's response to the central government, and on a more micro level, within southern France. A second factor is that, for centuries, regional language speakers referred to their maternal language as *patois*—partly due to the lack of official recognition of the language. This situation points to the dynamics of categorization and who holds the power to label a language "a language." Pierre Bourdieu argues that categorization in itself, if it garners a certain degree of recognition, achieves power. In *L'identité et la representation: Éléments pour une refléxion critique sur l'idée de region* (Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region) (1980), he calls regionalist discourse a *performative* discourse and writes:

The fact of calling 'Occitan' the language spoken by those who are called 'Occitans' because they speak that language (a language that nobody speaks, properly speaking, because it is merely the sum of a very great number of different dialects), and of calling the region (in the sense of physical space) in which this language is spoken, 'Occitanie', thus claiming to make it exist as a 'region' or as a 'nation' (with the historically constituted implications that these notions have at the moment under consideration), is no ineffectual fiction. The act of social magic which consists in trying to bring into existence the thing named may succeed if the person who performs it is capable of gaining recognition through his speech for the power which that speech is appropriating for itself by a provisional or definitive usurpation, that of imposing a new vision and a new division of the social world. (Bourdieu 1980:66)

For Bourdieu, *performative* discourse is intertwined with the assertion of an identity as an "act of social magic," but for the musicians I discuss, Occitan is literally a language of performance.

Most of these musicians, with the exception of Daniel Loddo, do not employ Occitan in their

daily lives, but have carved out identities of resistance through the use of this language, and it is through musical performance that they convey these identities. Following Bourdieu's appellation of Occitan as "no ineffectual fiction" (in other words, an effective fiction), I explore the vocabulary, themes, and images of that fiction, or *imaginaire*. What benefits do these musicians' references to the troubadours, or Brazil, provide? Does being "open" to other cultures primarily stem from a sense of social responsibility (Mazerolle 2008)—the altruistic side of universalism—or are there other reasons for aligning themselves with minorities in France?

Occitanie: When I began the research for this topic, Occitanie was still a transnational linguistic area that had never been an administrative entity. However, in 2016, the French government under President Hollande reduced the number of regions in France from eighteen to thirteen, and Occitanie became the name of the combined regions of Languedoc and Midi-Pyrénées. The former director of the Estivada festival, Patric Roux, a militant Occitanist who has become a politician, lobbied as the recently elected delegate for Occitan language and culture to have this new region be called Occitanie. "Se canta" has since become the official anthem of Toulouse, the largest city of the newly coined Occitanie. The decision to name this region Occitanie has created agitations within the Occitan musical community for two reasons that are key to understanding its members positionality. First, it attaches the concept of territory to Occitanie, when, for years, many people involved in the Occitan cause had resisted this framework (although a small percentage of Occitan nationalists does exist). Second, it undermines the project initiated by the IEO in 1945 of unifying this highly varied cultural area that, according to Occitan musicians, is much larger than the new administrative region. This recent development and the resultant tensions reveal that the sociopolitics of the Occitan

movement, while they may not have the same mobilizing energy that they had in the 1970s, are still playing out in France.

Research Methods

The seeds of this research began in 2008, when I studied for a semester in Paris. During my time there, I attended the CNRS seminar at the Musée de l'Homme. I also conducted archival research at the MNATP under the guidance of Marie-Barbara le Gonidec, who was at that time the director of the *phonothèque* (sound archives). When I arrived for my first day of research at the MNATP, Madame le Gonidec was summoned from the basement, where she spent several hours each day organizing the MNATP's collections due to the absorption of the museum by the MUCEM in Marseille. She appeared in a white lab coat and showed me the way to the Galerie culturelle. I entered the darkened hall and walked alone among the displays of clothing, musical instruments, utensils, and other artifacts of preindustrial rural France that dangled behind glass panes. Georges-Henri Rivière, founding director of the MNATP, had curated this display, implementing his invented technique of suspending objects from nylon strings. During my time at the MNATP, I was generously given access to the sound archives, where I listened to field recordings made by Claudie Marcel-Dubois and her partner, Marie-Marguerite Pichonnet-Andral. I listened to the voices of elderly rural inhabitants who sang, mostly monodically, played a musical instrument, or responded to Marcel-Dubois's questions. Much of this music is no longer a part of cultural life in France, except through revivalist performances or interpreted by Occitan popular music performers who incorporate and adapt this material as local references for contemporary audiences.

While the majority of my research has consisted of ethnographic fieldwork, I have also conducted a smaller amount of archival research in France. In addition to the sound archives at

the Conservatoire occitan (Occitan Conservatory) in Toulouse and the former MNATP, I consulted primary sources at the Bibliothèque nationale (National Library) and the Musée du quai Branly in Paris. In these libraries, I examined documents related to the 1922 and 1931 colonial expositions in Marseille and Paris, respectively, and the 1937 regional exhibits in Paris. While I do not focus extensively on these historical moments, they are in the backdrop of my reflections on the French colonial legacy and regionalism in France. The 1930s and contemporary France share commonalities: a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, a weakened economy, and a search to define national identity (Noiriel 1996; Silverstein 2018).

My first fieldwork trip to "Occitanie" was in 2010. I place the word "Occitanie" in quotes because, growing up, I visited my father every summer in Toulouse in southern France. My father's family is originally from Champagne in northeastern France, but the fact that I spent a significant amount of time in the south without being aware of Occitan identity is testament to the limited visibility of Occitan culture. Looking back, I do remember my older half-brother playing me a cassette of the Fabulous Trobadors in his low-ceilinged, smoke-filled apartment when I was fifteen. In recent years, there has been an increase in the publicity of Occitan culture; in Toulouse for example, the street name signs have been translated into Occitan as are the announcements of stops on the metro.

During the spring and summer of 2010, I spent six months traveling throughout southern France to gain an overview of the terrain. I went as far west as Bordeaux and Pau and as far east as Nice. I visited agricultural communities in the Pyrenees, small villages in the heartland of Occitanie, and the large cities of Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nice, and Pau. I interviewed well-established and up-and-coming Occitan musicians, traditional bagpipe and oboe makers, Occitan language teachers, Occitan music festival organizers, record label mangers, and Occitan

band managers. I attended several important Occitan festivals, such as the Estivada in Rodez and the Samba al País festival in Négrepelisse. I observed bands' rehearsals, concerts, Occitan bals (dances), and attended an Occitan protest. In Ariége (in the Pyrenees), where Occitan language can sometimes be heard between farmers, I attended the transhumance festival, a revived ancient practice that celebrates the departure of livestock to higher pastures for grazing during the summer months. The spectators, mostly tourists, cheered as the vachers (cowherds) and bergers (shepherds) entered the villages with their flocks, accompanied by the cacophonous bells hung around the animals' necks. I observed the folkloric performances and followed a vacher and his Belgian apprentice as they led cows up into the mountains. On another occasion, I walked in an anti-bear rally to which a neighboring participant had invited me. Protestors' banners read "Non aux ours" (No to Bears) and "Non à l'écologie européenne" (No to European Ecology). Again, the soundscape was defined by the iron bells the vachers and bergers shook in protest—in addition to the firecrackers they set off in the streets. These two contexts for the sounding of cowbells provide a glimpse into the way different communities in France situate themselves in relation to the nation's agrarian past, its cultural patrimony, and the larger administrative structures of the French government and the European Union.

After this initial fieldwork, I returned to France for follow-up fieldwork trips that ranged between ten days and two months in length. My initial contact with the musicians whom I chose to study for this thesis was made during my fieldwork trip in 2010. I interviewed them again during my subsequent trips to France and also conducted phone interviews and email correspondence with them. Of the musicians profiled, I have had the greatest interaction with Manu Théron, partly because his band Lo Cor de la Plana has performed several times in the United States. Almost all of my interviews were conducted in French, not Occitan. French is still

the primary language spoken by these musicians, although they may speak Occitan when they encounter each other or in an Occitanist setting (e.g., an Occitan festival). Theron preferred to speak in English, as did the majority of the members of his band Lo Cor de la Plana, and so those interviews were conducted in English.

The musicians profiled in this thesis are important figures in the Occitan music scene. Their bands have all released several albums, ranging from three to fifteen in number, that I was able to analyze at home. Ultimately, I chose these four musicians because they held strong opinions that are reflected in their musical performance. I also selected them because there existed enough continuity between their discourses to create a cohesive argument and yet distinctiveness in their musical sound to provide variety and a different aspect of my overall argument. However, it is important to note that I do not intend to portray these musicians as representative of a uniform Occitan identity and ideology. During my fieldwork, I quickly ascertained that the Occitan flag is used to represent different ideologies and that Occitan music performers carry distinct motivations for singing in Occitan.

Chapter Overview

Chapter One provides an overview of language politics in France. I discuss key moments in the history of Occitan and French: the heyday of Occitan troubadour poetry, the rise of French, the decline of Occitan, and its subsequent revival. I also explain some of the issues at play regarding regional languages in France. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Occitan musicians on their relationship to the Occitan language and their promotion of multilingualism, evident in the Fabulous Trobadors song "Cançon de la prima" (Spring Song) and the Forom des langues du monde (Forum of the Languages of the World).

Chapter Two focuses on universalism, often evoked as a quintessential feature of French national identity, and traces its development from the Enlightenment to the present. I begin this chapter with an overview of theoretical analyses of French republican universalism. I then examine how universalism was applied in the colonies as well as in metropolitan France, and discuss its current incarnation in the form of *laïcité* (secularism). I demonstrate a discursive intersection between Édouard Glissant and the Occitan philosopher Félix-Marcel Castan, evident in their writings on *l'Un* (the One). I provide interview excerpts with Magyd Cherfi, Tayeb Cherfi, and Tatou that convey their critique of the national imaginary and of restrictive notions of Frenchness, or cultural universalism. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the song "Sus l'autura" by the Occitan musician Tatou. I provide his commentary on the song's lyrics and on the contemporary refugee crisis in France.

In Chapter Three, the first of four ethnographic chapters, I analyze Daniel Loddo's music and fieldwork as a prime example of the deterritorialization/rooting dynamic that is characteristic of Occitan musical performance and ideology. I begin with a discussion of the Occitan protest and folk movements of the 1970s in order to provide background information for better understanding Loddo's career and ideology. Loddo seeks to reacquaint local audiences with Occitan words, music, and legends inscribed in the land. Yet, as I show through Loddo's collaboration with the Brazilian musician Silverio Pessoa, his music and philosophy remain explicitly turned towards other cultures. I apply Glissant's rhizome theory to the cross-cultural alliances that Loddo cultivates.

Chapter Four focuses on Claude Sicre and his band the Fabulous Trobadors. In contrast to Daniel Loddo, Sicre is of the opinion that folklore has disappeared in France and he has sought to re-invent it. His ideas on centralism and folklore and his cultural activism in Toulouse

have initiated an interest in Occitan music among subsequent generations of Occitan music performers. I situate Sicre's theory of cultural democracy within a discussion of decentralization, the rise of the National Front in the 1980s, and immigration legislation of the 1990s.

In Chapter Five, I focus on Tatou, a founding member of the Marseille-based band Moussu T e lei Jovents. I analyze the role that the novel *Banjo* (1929), by Jamaican author Claude McKay, plays in the band's musical imaginary. I first discuss Tatou's Occitan ragamuffin band Massilia Sound System, which was formed during the rise of the National Front in the 1980s. I then discuss *Banjo* and the song "Bolega Banjò" as a musical interpretation of the novel. I use this literary reference to underscore the role of the imagination in the formation of Occitan musical identity. At the end of the chapter, I apply Glissant's theories of the detour, *créolité* (creole-ness), and Relation to Tatou's music and discourse.

In Chapter Six, I discuss Manu Théron's polyphonic singing group Lo Cor de la Plana. While Théron draws on a variety of musical practices, I focus on the Algerian musical elements in order to convey his ideology regarding postcolonial France. Théron overtly discusses the colonial legacy in France, and, in addition to adopting Algerian rhythms, instruments, and song structures, collaborates with Algerian musicians. I contextualize his music within a discussion of the Algerian War and Algerian immigration in France. Through a rhythmic analysis of the song "La noviòta," I address Théron's attempts to create a "Mediterranean" sound.

Like the southbound journey of the MNTAP's artifacts from Paris to Marseille, the trajectory of the four ethnographic chapters moves geographically southwards, from Cordes-sur-Ciel, to Toulouse, and then to Marseille. However, before we head south, it is important to discuss key aspects of cultural citizenship in France that frame Occitan identity, namely linguistic politics and French universalism

CHAPTER ONE

The Place of Occitan Language within a Monolingual Nation

Regional languages have for centuries held a problematic status in France, where the French language has been a defining principle of nationhood. In an article on French linguistic politics, Paul Cohen writes, "In few countries does language play a greater role in constituting national identity than in modern France" (2000:21). Benedict Anderson (1983) argues that it was precisely language in the form of print-capitalism that enabled the very concept of a nation, and the French historian Jules Michelet, writing in the late nineteenth century, stated, "The history of France begins with French. Language is the principal sign of nationality" (cited in Jennings 2011:146). Marc Fumaroli, a member of the Académie française, writes, "If there is a shared French site, it is surely that of the 'genius of the French language'" (1984:912). Today, anxieties about the changing national identity of France often crystallize around the French language. For instance, Marine Le Pen expressed in 2008 that allowing for signage in Breton in Brittany would lead to signs in Arabic in Seine-Saint-Denis. Similarly, as we shall see, reactions to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages reveal the intricate relationship between language and conceptions of the French republic.

In addition to French being a crucial symbol of national identity, French linguists, authors, politicians, and academicians have for centuries extolled the genius, elegance, and prestige of the French language and the culture it carries. Antoine de Rivarol, in *De l'universalité de la langue française* (On the Universality of the French Language) (1793), praised the clarity of the language and the beauty of its pronunciation: "the silent e, always resembling the last

vibration of the *corps sonore*¹ gives it light harmony that belongs only to it" (Rivarol and Dutourd 1991:80).² As Rivarol indicated, the southern French accent is markedly different from that of the north and contains variants within it. The influence of Occitan can be seen in the more pronounced articulation of the "silent e" that Rivarol eloquently praised, and, in the Occitan spoken in some parts of the south, the frontally rolled "r" in the manner of Spanish.³ In the first few pages of his text, Rivarol described that there existed in France two vernaculars, *picard* and *provençal*. While the former gradually rose to become the national, and for a time a universal, language, the latter—though once the language of troubadour poetry—primarily disappeared from literary life. Jean Dutourd, in his preface to a later publication of Rivarol's report, conveys his own views on Occitan and its decline: "These jargons are pretty and rich, but having not been ennobled by great authors, they have the misfortune of degrading everything they touch" (1991:96).

Occitan musicians have reflected extensively on the (now limited) place Occitan occupies in French society and prevailing monolingual definitions of French nationality. Their music and discourse dispel the notion of a monolingual French nation and by so doing challenge a fundamental tenet of French national identity. Occitan musician Jeremy Courault stated, "One language and one culture. That's completely crazy. It doesn't exist and it never existed. It's an invention, and it's a French invention" (interview on July 3, 2010). With its variety of dialects,

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¹ According to the French composer and music theorist Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1784), the *corps sonore* was a governing principle of music. It referred to "any vibrating system such as a vibrating string which emitted harmonic partials above its fundamental frequency (Christensen 1987:2). See Christensen (1987) and Burgess (2012) for further discussions of Rameau and the *corps sonore*.

² On the other hand, he characterizes the pronunciation of the *patois* of the Midi as fuller and more resounding.

³ In an interview with the musician Tatou, he described to me the accent that one hears on the radio as an ideal that does not really exist.

Occitan is presented as a language of pluralism; as Robert Lafont (1974) writes in *La revendication occitane*, "Nobody pretends that Occitan is one and indivisible" (19).

In this chapter, I address key moments in the historical narratives of Occitan and French, and, where relevant, discuss how Occitan music and discourse relate to these trajectories. Topics covered include the decline and revival of Occitan, the rise of French as a universal language and the unification of the nation through linguistic uniformity, and the current politico-linguistic landscape. I interweave the trajectories of these two languages to demonstrate that the Occitan movement has defined itself in opposition to the dominant language and culture. None of the musicians I interviewed speaks only Occitan—in fact many of them learned Occitan later in life—and all of them consider themselves French citizens. The musician Claude Sicre writes that "Occitan culture is the future of French culture" (1995:3), demonstrating that the Occitan struggle engages with and takes place within the framework of the French nation as much as it challenges it. I conclude with fieldwork examples to demonstrate Occitan musicians' discourse on the subject of the Occitan language and their advocacy for multilingualism, symbolized by the annual Forom des langues du monde (Forum of the Languages of the World) and the Fabulous Trobadors' song "Cançon de la prima" (Spring Song) (1998).

In recent decades, scholarship on regionalism and French national identity has focused on disproving or attenuating the long-held narrative that the central government considered regional particularisms and languages to be anathema to the unification of the nation (Bell 1995; Thiesse 1997; Peer 1998; Cohen 2000; Gerson 2011). These scholars seek a more nuanced approach to this issue, and address how the central government drew on local governments or cultural images to promote a certain national identity or to better unify the nation. Occitanists I interviewed, however, blame the disappearance of Occitan on the central government and on the resultant

internalized disregard for regional languages. The discrepancy between contemporary scholarship and first-person accounts is one with which I have grappled, and I have chosen an approach that resembles Jeremy Jennings' characterization of France's linguistic history: "Although some historians deny that the Republic treated dialects and languages with unrelenting hostility, it cannot be doubted that, for many, language reform and the imposition of French was an important means of realizing the universal aspirations of both the Revolution and the Republic" (2011:147). Although the historical narrative of the central government taking action to rid the nation of its regional languages may not provide the full picture, the general course of French history has resulted in a nation, and, at one time, colonial empire, unified under one language.

The Troubadours and the Albigensian Crusades

The heyday of Occitan occurred between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, during which time it flourished as a literary language, a lingua franca, and an administrative language. As historian Pierre Bec has indicated, although there were many dialects of Occitan, there existed a universally accepted *koine* (lingua franca) shared among lyric poets of the Middle Ages (Bec 1972). The troubadours dominate this period of Occitan cultural history, and their "influence as a cultural force reached from Lombardy to England" (Roach 1997:2). The golden age of the troubadours was between 1160 and 1210, and many of them heralded from central and western Occitanie. These years, preceding the Albigensian Crusades, were a time of relative peace and prosperity (Aubrey 1996:10). Today, there are over 2,500 extant poems, associated with approximately 460 poets, with 253 transmitted with music (Haines 2004:20).

The troubadours are a frequent referent within the contemporary Occitan musical world and figure prominently in the self-representation of a number of Occitan groups. Several Occitan

musicians studied in this dissertation, including Daniel Loddo and Tatou, call themselves the descendants of the troubadours. On an ideological level, Occitan musicians consider themselves to be the inheritors of the troubadour values of *paratge* ("peerness") and *convivencia* (conviviality).⁴ By affiliating themselves with the troubadours, Occitan musicians reach back to a point in time that predates the French nation. Cultivating continuity between their own music and that of the troubadours, they insert themselves into a history larger than that of France.

While it is not within the scope of this thesis to detail the widespread influence of troubadour poetry in Occitan music, it is of note that its performance has flourished since the Occitan revival of the 1970s. Claude Martí and Jan-Mari Carlotti, Occitan musicians who established their careers in the 1970s, have recorded their own versions of troubadour songs. The four musicians I profile have turned directly to troubadour poems for compositional ideas.

Claude Sicre of the Fabulous Trobadors⁵ and Daniel Loddo of La Talvera have used the structure of troubadour poems for their own songs; Massilia Sound System has incorporated samples of troubadour poetry into their songs; and Manu Théron performs troubadour poems in a musical project called Sirventés.

Throughout current-day Occitanie, troubadour terminology lends itself to vehicles of Occitan cultural diffusion in the form of record labels and associations. Similar to the phenomena Emily McCaffrey (2002) analyzes regarding Cathar imagery in southern France, the troubadour legacy is commercialized throughout the South. One example is the Occitan record

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⁴ According to troubadour poetry scholar Luisa Perdigó (2013), *paratge* is not easily translated; the word pertains to a world-view of balance, honor, and the recognition of difference. The recognition of difference underpins the sociopolitical views of many Occitan musicians I interviewed, although certainly not all. *Convivencia*, the ability to live together, is enacted through community events organized by these musicians.

⁵ Claude Sicre draws on an affinity he has discovered between the troubadour *tenson* and the Brazilian *repentista* repertoire.

label Ventadorn (in existence from 1969 to 1984), named after the troubadour poet Bernart de Ventadorn (1135-1194). Similarly, the word *Sirventés*, a form of troubadour political poetry, is the name of an Occitan music association and of Théron's aforementioned music group.

Andrew Roach has written of the fascination with "Occitania," the artificial name he assigns to this area, as a "lost nation," and the common narrative that it was a "nation in waiting, like France or England, but was cruelly cut off by a crusade" (1997:1). This version of history is one frequently reiterated by Occitan activists, and the Albigensian Crusades stand out as a crucial moment in their historical narrative. McCaffrey (2001, 20002) writes informatively on the gradual incorporation of this event into the rewriting of Occitan history. The Occitanist historian and poet Robert Lafont (1974) refers to the Albigensian Crusades as the "colonization" of the South, and to the ensuing efforts to impose French as a process of "internal colonialism."

The Albigensian Crusades, carried out between 1208 and 1226, were aimed in theory at Catharism, a heretical religion that had followers in southwestern France and received support from the local aristocracy. Cathars rejected the idea that God created the world and that Christ took on human form. Historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has argued that Catharism, frequently described as a dualistic religion, was not built on dualist ideology but was rather a sort of "Christianity of the extreme left" (2001:285). The Crusades were sparked by the murder of Pierre de Castelanau, a papal legate, whose death was blamed on the Cathars. Pope Innocent III organized a crusade against this religious group and was joined by French nobles including Simon de Montfort. The Cathar heresy was fully eradicated in 1243 with the siege of Montségur, where many Cathars (and non-Cathars) were burned at the stake. Many of the troubadours active during this time fled to Spain and Italy, and by the mid-thirteenth century, troubadours were struggling to "maintain a tradition" (Aubrey 1996:23) as a result of the decimation of the Occitan

nobility (Roach 1997:8). Montségur, the site of the massacre of the Cathars, has persisted as a historical landmark, where in 2016 the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pamiers made a formal apology. The crowd sang the Occitan anthem "Se canta" and Claude Martí, a founder of the Occitan music movement of the 1970s, performed his song "Montségur."

The Albigensian Crusades were also a war over territory, and in 1229, Raymond VII, the Count of Toulouse, ceded his county of Languedoc to the French Queen Blanche at the Treaty of Paris. The Albigensian Crusades resulted in an expansion of the northern territory and mark an important period in the formation of the geographical territory of contemporary France. Joseph Strayer writes that the crusades and the annexation of a territory that went from "the Pyrenees to the Rhone made France the most powerful, wealthiest, and most populous state in Europe" (1971:ii). As the monarchy increased its rule over the south of France, Occitan went into decline as a literary language, becoming a vernacular that thrived until World War I, while French ascended to become the national language.

Building a Monolingual Nation

The first step taken by the central government to establish French as the official language was the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts (1539). The Ordinance, under François I, who reigned from 1515-1547, declared that all administrative texts must be written in French, thereby replacing Latin and Occitan. Article 111 in particular states the required use of French, the "language maternal françois." Two perspectives appear in the arguments of historians writing on

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⁶ "Demande de pardon aux cathares de Montségur" (Request for the forgiveness on account of the Cathars of Montségur). YouTube video, 7:08, footage by Guy Miquel of the religious ceremony led by Jean-Marc Eychenne (the bishop of Pamiers) and of Claude Martí's performance at Montségur. Published October 17, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PIsKyAIc-k&t=314s

this edict. On the one hand, some scholars (Dauzat 1930; Lafont 1971a; Giacomo 1975; Szulmajster-Celnikier 1996) argue that this moment in history was the first step in the central government's imposition of French on the regions and reflected a desire on the part of the monarchy to demonstrate the supremacy of French over Latin and, by extension, regional languages in France. Robert Lafont points out in *Renaissance du Sud* (1970) that the edict coincided with a revived interest in the provinces in Occitan as a literary language in the sixteenth century, a Renaissance which would flourish into the early seventeenth century in the penmanship of Peire Godolin (1580-1649). Similarly, Robert Schneider (1989) writes that "Frenchification" occurred concomitantly with a revival of literary Occitan in Toulouse. On the other hand, scholars (Bell 1995; Cohen 2000) argue that while the edict may have reflected an intention to do away with Latin in public life, the kings of this period did not pay much attention to the local languages of their "humbler subjects" (Bell 1995:1410).

By the sixteenth century, French had become a language of prestige, spoken in the provinces by those with judicial power and by administrators of the central government (Giacomo 1975:14). Several other factors added to the growing status of French: it replaced Latin as the language of philosophy, medicine, and literature, and as of 1543, with the creation of a royal printing press, the central power encouraged publications in French (14). During this century, there were also efforts to systematize the French language. One of the most enduring texts of this time is Joachim du Bellay's *La déffense et illustration de la langue Françoise* (The Defense and Illustration of the French Language), first published in 1549.

In 1635, Cardinal Richelieu founded the Académie française, which would be recognized officially in 1637, as an establishment dedicated to the perpetuation of pure French and as a judge of literary quality (Gordon 1978:26). Richelieu's *Dictionnaire* was published in 1694, and

its orthography was adopted by the state (Szulmajster-Celnikier 1996:40). To this day, the Académie seeks to protect and control the integrity of the French language, and one of its roles is to maintain the French dictionary. The Académie's members, known as "the Immortals," have presented staunch opposition to regional languages. In the past several decades, the Académie has also tried to curtail the entry of English into the French language.

In the seventeenth century, as French increasingly became the language of the French court, the grammarian Malherbe (1555-1628) warned that spending long periods of time away from Paris could corrupt one's French (Gordon 1978:25), while Vaugelas (1585-1650) worked to "degasconner" (to "de-Gasconize") the court of Henri IV (of Béarn). Malherbe sought to systematize and purify the French language. Describing Malherbe's approach to French, Daniel Mornet writes:

These rules... banish from the language the large part of what the Renaissance had wanted to let in: Latinisms, Italianisms, words of provincial dialects and notably Gasconisms...expressions from popular language. Thus, in the place of spoken language, subject to all the disordered caprices of usage and to all the obscure fantasies of the imagination, one constitutes a literary language that developed not next to usage and life but would be its interpretation, its reasoned regimentation. (1929:286)

Édouard Glissant likens Malherbe's purification of the French language to a grim sieve (2003:107).

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also saw the incarnation of French as the "language of humanity" (Schor 2001:44)—a *universal* language. This claim would persist throughout the nineteenth century and until WWI. Before the French Revolution, universalism was linked to language (44), and philosophers of the Enlightenment, notably Voltaire, enshrined French as the language of reason and clarity. As a lingua franca, French was the language of

diplomacy and represented an art of living (*art de vivre*) cultivated in the courts of Paris and Versailles.⁷ Addressing the phenomenon of French as a universal language, Glissant writes:

At the court of czars of Russia and the royal court of England, French was accepted as a universal language, and French was commonly spoken there and elsewhere. This situation is very worrisome for a language: what does it mean to have the stature of being a universal language? It injects a neurotic principle (it can be said that there are neurotic languages), and in this regard, the French language is a neurotic one—perhaps even in the good old literal sense of the word. (2003:106)

French is no longer a universal language, having been replaced by English in the twentieth century, but the legacy of having been a universal language, combined with a particular attachment to the French language, persists in France. Several Occitan musicians with whom I spoke conveyed sentiments similar to Glissant's description of French as a neurotic language. Tatou, for example, often cited the paranoia in French society regarding its culture and language. Occitan linguists have also discussed the neurosis around Occitan language that is engendered by diglossia (see Lafont 1984).

At the onset of the First Republic, ⁸ government initiatives to spread French throughout the land became more pronounced and language above all was seen as a means for unifying the nation. Abbé Grégoire and Bertrand Barère were legislators for the promotion of French. In a report delivered to the National Convention in 1794, Barère argued, "The language of a free people must be one and the same for all" (cited in de Certeau, Julia, and Revel 2002:328). Confronting a situation in which regional languages were deeply entrenched in the provinces,

⁷ In *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (When Europe Spoke French) (2003), Marc Fumaroli illustrates the widespread admiration of French language and culture through examples of correspondence and relationships between French philosophers and European aristocrats.

⁸ With the French Revolution, the Republic was declared one and indivisible, in contrast to the fragmentation of society and territory that characterized the *Ancien Régime* (Thiesse 2010:94). The indivisibility of the nation would become a persistent phrase in twentieth and twenty-first century debates regarding language policy in France, as for example, in the objections to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Barère suggested that teachers be sent to instruct French in the provinces. Four months after Barère's report, Abbé Grégoire delivered to the National Convention his renowned *Rapport sur la nécessité d'anéantir le patois et universaliser le français* (Report on the Necessity of Destroying *Patois* and Universalizing French). This speech summarized the results of a questionnaire he had administered to various French provinces between 1790 and 1792. Questions 29 and 30 of the questionnaire are indicative of the project's objectives:

- 29) What would be the religious and political importance of entirely destroying this *patois*?
- 30) What would be the means?

According to the report, half of the inhabitants of the Midi (southern France) did not understand French (Gordon 1978:30). Grégoire lamented the relative ignorance of French in the nation in the following excerpt from his speech: "This language, used in political transactions, used in a number of cities in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, in part of the country of Liège, Luxembourg, Switzerland and even in Canada and on the banks of the Mississippi—by what fatality is it still ignored by a very large number of Frenchmen?" (cited in Certeau, Julia, and Revel 2002:332). Barère and Grégoire considered patriotism and French language acquisition to be synonymous, as Barère wrote, "To let citizens stay in ignorance of the national language, is to betray the homeland" (328). Grégoire's correspondents in the provinces noted that there was little patriotism in these regions (Weber 1976:98), and he blamed rural resistance to the Revolution on ignorance of French (Bell 1995:1415). The linguistic uniformity promoted by the National Convention was in part a reaction against the use of regional languages by the Catholic Church, from whom Jacobins, such as Barère, were wresting control over the peasantry. In Barère's report, Bas-Breton was characterized as a "barbaric instrument of superstitious thoughts

that priests use to keep rural inhabitants under their empire, to direct their consciences, and to prevent citizens from knowing the law and loving the Republic" (cited in Certeau, Julia, and Revel 2002:323). Even as early as the sixteenth century, the edict of Villers-Cotterêts had been, in large part, an attempt to decrease the power of the church. Despite its efforts, the French administration was not equipped to carry out its goals of universalizing French. As Anne-Marie Thiesse writes, "the project was not so easy to realize: universalization—on the French territory—of the French language would require a century" (2010:94). Nonetheless, the policies created during the revolutionary era were a symbolic turning point in the history of France: for the first time, language and nationality came to be equated (Bell 1995:1405).

Eugen Weber's landmark book *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976) recounts the transition to modernity and the incorporation of small towns and the French countryside into the official culture of Paris during the Third Republic. In a chapter devoted to regional languages, Weber writes, "French was a foreign language for a substantial number of Frenchmen, including almost half the children who would reach adulthood in the last quarter of the century...Until the First World War the 'langage maternel françois' [French maternal language] of Francis I was not that of most French citizens" (67-73). Weber argues that the French education system was in part responsible for disseminating patriotic values and the language of the capital (332). Some of Weber's conclusions, namely his emphasis on governmental antipathy towards regionalism during the Third Republic and the role of schoolteachers in disseminating French in the provinces, have drawn scrutiny from subsequent scholars. Anne-Marie Thiesse (1997) and Shanny Peer (1998) have written of the regionalist rhetoric that was incorporated into nationalist discourse. Thiesse has studied the educational pamphlets distributed throughout the schools, in

which schoolchildren were encouraged to emulate their *petit pays*. Nonetheless, it is inarguable that French became increasingly widespread at the end of the nineteenth century, in part due to the Jules Ferry laws (1881-1884), which made primary education obligatory and French the language of education.

The end of the nineteenth century also saw the consolidation of the French colonial effort, and the beginning of the francophone project, a different sort of French linguistic universalism. ¹⁰ Gabrielle Parker points out that the beginning of *francophonie* coincided with the proclamation made by Jules Ferry, minister of education, that French be the only language of instruction in metropolitan and colonial France. Parker states that through the civilizing mission, the French language was the "instrument of conquest" of "countries and mind" (2014:563). *Francophonie*, coined in 1880 to indicate "where French rules" (562), was an agenda that united the French colonies through the French language.

In *Bringing the Empire Home* (2004), Herman Lebovics writes on the administrative and ideological connections between the central government's control of its regions and its colonies. The French language was a common thread linking colonial subjects and "backwards" indigenous populations. As Cécile Van den Avenne concludes in her study of languages in colonial Sub-Saharan Africa, "French colonial history is such that, like Breton, Corsican, or Occitan, African languages, numerous, complex, and diverse (about 2,000 languages, or one

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⁹ Shanny Peer (1997), in her study of the 1937 exhibit, demonstrates that at the end of the Third Republic, the national discourse on identity incorporated regional particularisms into a larger French whole. Granted, this exhibit was orchestrated by the Parisian government, which controlled images of regional culture given to the public.

¹⁰ Primarily a literary field, francophone studies has become a vast area of scholarship encompassing postcolonial theory. See Tetu (1992) Batho (2001), Bensmaïa (2003), Apter (2005), Benalil 2006, and Migraine-George (2013).

third of the languages in the world) still struggle today to be recognized and are characterized at best as 'dialects' and at worst 'patois'" (2018:204).

The Revival of Occitan

The revival of Occitan language is often associated with the Félibrige movement, founded in 1854 by seven poets in Provence. The group's name was purportedly derived from a Provençal tale, *L'oraison du saint Anselme* (The Prayer of Saint Anselm), in which Jesus is found in a temple arguing with "seven doctors of the law" (*sei félibres de la léi*) (Laclavère 1904:482). Frédéric Mistral was the central figure of the Félibrige, and, in 1904, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his epic poem *Mireio* (1859). Mistral's primary concern was to cultivate the prestige of Provençal, and he created the Provençal dictionary *Lou tresor dóu Felibrige* (The Treasure of the Félibrige) (1878) to that end. Through *Lou tresor dou Felibrige* and the *Armana provençau*, an almanac whose texts followed the linguistic rules of Mistral's dictionary, the Félibrige attempted to codify and unify the language. The existence of a variety of dialects presented a challenge to the members of the Félibrige, who wished to elevate Provençal to the status of other European languages (Pasquini 1998:258).

The Félibrige wrote of a romanticized rural peasantry and idealized local traditions, cultivating a *Provence éternelle* (eternal Provence) (Guyonnet 2003). In this vein, Mistral founded the Musée Arlaten, an ethnographic museum in Arles. Subsequent Occitanists, such as Robert Lafont, would criticize Mistral for spreading a sentimental provincialism and folklorization of Provence (Gordon 1978:98). This folklorization was exemplified by Mistral's emphasis on costumes in Provence that were no longer in common practice; specifically, Mistral tried to popularize the garments once worn by men and women of Arles, which were displayed at the ethnographic museum. Subsequent generations of Occitanists dissociated themselves from

the Félibrige, due to its politically conservative values and its folkloric portrayal of Occitan culture,

The Instituto d'estudis occitans (The Institute of Occitan Studies) (IEO), which replaced the Societat d'estudis occitans (Society of Occitan Studies) (SEO), has been the most important vehicle of diffusion of Occitan language in the twentieth century. The latter was founded in 1930 by Antonin Perbosc, Prosper Estiu, and Louis Alibert, whose primary agenda was to create a common dictionary, grammar, and orthography for all the various Occitan dialects, focusing primarily on Provençal, Gascon, Limousin, and Auvergnat (Gordon 1978:101; Calin 2000).

Alibert in particular was responsible for unifying Occitan grammar in his *Grammatica occitana* ([1935] 2000), which was first published in Barcelona, a testament to the solidarity between the Catalan and Occitan movements of the 1920s and 1930s. In 1924 Occitanists received Catalanists fleeing the coup d'état of Primo de Rivera; upon their return, the Catalanists sent a library of 4,000 works intended as a foundation for an Occitan institute. Occitanists have continued to turn to their Catalan counterparts for solidarity due to the latter's "attainment of a degree of political power" (Calin 2000:196).

During the Vichy era (1940-1944), the SEO benefited from the traditionalist ideology disseminated by the Vichy regime, which called for a return to France's abandoned heritage—i.e., rural regional culture—for the moral rehabilitation of the country (Lebovics 1992:163). As early as 1940, the SEO sent a letter to Marshall Pétain that indicated the joint interests of the Occitanist movement and the administration (Abrate 2009:149). Although political power was increasingly centralized during these years, the Occitan language found support from the government, which permitted the teaching of regional dialects. In 1941, a decree authorized the teaching of regional languages in schools, outside of school hours; this was the first time that the

teaching of regional languages became officially recognized (149). Universities in Aix,

Bordeaux, Montpellier, Clermond-Ferrand and Toulouse created positions for teaching Occitan
language and literature (Faure 1989:207) and conferences were organized throughout southern

France on the subject of teaching Occitan.

While SEO members may have been eager at first to collaborate with Pétain, by 1942 resistant voices emerged, among them those of Ismael Girard and the poet, René Nelli, who would become the director of the SEO in 1943. However, as Laurent Abrate (2009) indicates, very few SEO members engaged in active protest against the Vichy government and the Germans. Abrate posits the cooperation with the Vichy Regime as a reason for the non-politicization of the Occitan movement after the war. It was not until the 1970s that the Occitan movement returned to the political arena, impelled by decolonization movements and the 1968 student uprisings.

In 1945, the IEO replaced the SEO, and its members were careful to dissociate their organization from the compromises made by the latter during the Vichy era. The IEO was organized into different sectors devoted to research, music, plastic arts, and publishing. Its founding members included René Nelli, Max Rouquette, Joë Bousquet, Jean Cassou, the Dadaist poet and artist Tristan Tzara, and Robert Lafont. Lafont (1923-2009) a prolific historian, poet and novelist, was general secretary of the IEO (1950-1959), and president until 1962. In 1962 he created the Comité d'action et d'études (The Committee of Action and Studies) (COEA), where he promoted the idea of internal colonialism; he argued that France's policies towards its

¹¹ He left the IEO in 1981.

¹² His many works include *La révolution régionaliste* (1967), *Renaissance du Sud: Essai sur la littérature au temps de Henri IV* (1970), *La revendication occitane* (1974), and *Décoloniser en France* (1971).

regions enabled its colonial rule (see Lafont 1974). Towards the end of his life, he became involved in the anti-globalization movement Gardarem la Terra (We Will Save the Earth), founded in Larzac in 2003, a topic to which I return in Chapter Four. The IEO is today organized into a federation of seven regional sections and twenty-seven departmental sections. It continues to function as a resource for the preservation, development, and "socialization" of Occitan. The association publishes works in Occitan, including translations from French, organizes conferences, prints various Occitan-related paraphernalia (teeshirts, maps, etc.), and sponsors Occitan language classes.

A series of laws in the second half of the twentieth century provided for the teaching of regional languages. The members of the IEO, notably Lafont, helped to bring about the now repealed Loi Deixonne, which in 1951 provided for the optional teaching of regional languages in French schools. This law allowed for the teaching of four languages: Basque, Catalan, Breton, and Occitan (Alsatian, Flemish, and Corsican were added later). The Loi Deixonne, which permitted only one hour a week of regional language teaching, was a catalyst for other laws including the Loi Haby in 1975, which declared that "the teaching of regional languages and cultures may be dispensed throughout schooling." Occitan became an option for the *baccalauréat* (high school graduation exam) and could be taught in universities.

In 1979, the first *calandreta* was established in Pau. *Calandretas* are bilingual (Occitan-French) primary schools, of which there are sixty-two in southern France. Today, there exist six federations of *calandretas*. Other regional equivalents to the *calandretas* are the *diwan*, founded in 1977, in Bretagne and the Basque *ikastola*, founded in 1914. The teaching method of the

Larzac, where the Occitan movement gathered around the viticultural protest in the early 1970s, is a symbolic site.

calandretas is based on early immersion and the pedagogy of Célestin Freinet. The word calandreta, a pan-Occitan word that means "little lark" (alouette in French), was chosen for its nursery connotations and because it symbolized the arrival of spring for the Occitan language (Confederacion calandreta, n.d.). Calandretas are incorporated into the Occitan music scene in the following ways: there are Occitan songs about calandretas (e.g, the Fabulous Trobadors' song "Calandreta"); students may be invited to sing with Occitan musicians; and calandreta conferences often include Occitan music concerts.



Figure 2. Banner and Occitan flag hung at the Congrès de calandreta (Calandreta Conference), May 15, 2010.

Concomitant with the increasing presence of Occitan in the education system was another set of laws that underscored the protection of French as the national language. The same year of the Loi Haby (1975), the Loi Bas-Auriol was passed to ensure the "preeminence of French in the face of menacing languages"—i.e., English (Szulmajster-Celnikier 1996:31). Subsequently, in

the 1990s, with growing concern about the widespread use of English, the government took steps with the passing of the Toubon Law (1994) to ensure that French remain the language of commerce, science, technology, and advertising. That same year, the Conseil supérieur de l'audio-visuel (Superior Audio-Visual Council) (CSA) mandated that forty percent of popular music songs played on the radio during peak listening hours be in French (Hare 1999; Cutler 2003).

Occitan and French within Current Language Politics

The encroachment of English in the public sector continues to be a source of concern in France. On February 4, 2013, several deputies of the National Assembly (Jean-Jacques Candelier, Patrice Carvalho, Gaby Charroux, André Chassaigne, Marc Dolez, and Jacqueline Fraysse) presented a *Proposition de résolution* (Motion for a Resolution) to the Assembly in defense of the French language (Candelier et al. 2013). The writers of the proposition pointed to the increasing use of Anglo-American language in commercial spaces, and cited the supermarket chain Carrefour's choice of names "Carrefour Market" and "Carrefour City," a poster of a "battle des prices" to advertise a sale, and the technological terms "livebox" and "freebox," as examples of the hegemony of English and global capitalism. They specified that the language of Shakespeare, Shelley, and Hemingway was not to blame but rather le "Business English," which they characterized as an impoverished code, ideologically formatted and cut off from history. In contrast, French was considered by the authors to be a carrier of a "certain civilization," which the authors reminded us is spoken across five continents, and "is the support and the vector of a flowering and prestigious literature, of theatre, of cinema, of song and of an *art de vivre* [art of

¹⁴ According to Alice Conklin, the French coined the term "civilization" in the eighteenth century and, she writes, "have celebrated the achievements of their own ever since" (2011:174).

living]." These words were almost identical to those of Rivarol, written two centuries prior in his *De l'universalité de la langue francaise*. Finally, the authors wrote that the French language "puts its richness and its diversity in the service of the world heritage of humanity." In addition to the echoes of the civilizing mission of the colonial era, when language was a cornerstone of the ideology that colonial subjects would benefit from French culture, one can read in the language of this document what Occitan musicians frequently refer to as a French preoccupation with *culture savante* (learned culture). Even if French no longer occupies the place it once did as a universal language, the French government spends large sums on its francophone projects. As Paul Cohen states, "In 1994, the French state supported 133 French cultural centers and institutes, close to one thousand alliances françaises [French Alliances], and 255 lycées français [schools where French is the primary language] throughout the world" (2000:41). In the context of the global economy, the writers of the proposition view French as a language in jeopardy, at risk of being washed out in a worldwide wave of cultural uniformity. Addressing globalization and the dominant use of English, the authors of the proposition write:

We are in the presence of a project of domination without comparison and of discrimination without precedent...This is starting to become a serious problem for spelling and syntax. The cultural and linguistic harm may become more prominent in an irreversible manner if the people and its representatives do not enter into resistance. Because, at the end of the day, in advertising, commercial logos, internal and external business communications, and henceforth, in secondary schools and university teaching, we can fear that the language of Molière will vanish very soon. (Candelier et al. 2013)

Interestingly, it is here that the concerns of the proposition authors intersect with select, but certainly not all, Occitan musicians whose use of Occitan is in part a reaction against globalization and the resultant cultural grey out. Such was the perspective conveyed by the folk

¹⁵ Rivarol writes, "France has continued to give theatre, habits, taste, manners, a language, a new *art de vivre* [art of living] and pleasures unknown is the surrounding states: a sort of empire that no other people has exercised" (1991:65).

musician Jacques Baudoin, who, over a meal of locally grown vegetables, lamented the omnipresence of McDonalds. The connection between Occitan language and culture and the anti-globalization movement is several decades old and can be seen in the figure of José Bové, who famously dismantled a McDonalds in 1999.

Several months after the proposition, though not in direct relation, regionalist protestors gathered outside the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Defenders of Occitan, Breton, Alsatian, and Corsican languages held signs that read, "French State Killing our Languages" (Hooper 2013). I mention this event to signal the various battles surrounding language in current-day France and to highlight the strata of perceived domination—on the one hand, global capitalism carried out in English, and on the other hand, the French central government vis-à-vis regional languages.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Current attitudes about regional languages in France can be discerned by examining reactions to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The charter is a complex issue that has elicited a variety of responses from politicians and from councils such as the Académie française. Responses to the charter demonstrate the pivotal role that the French language plays in public and political discourse. As Paul Cohen has written, "The debate surrounding the European's Council's charter demonstrates emphatically that French remains an intensely charged cultural object, and that many French leaders continue to locate the French language at the core of their conception of the French nation" (2000:4). While the French government has signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, it has yet to ratify it. The resistance to recognizing regional languages as part of French national identity is both a leftist Republican and right-wing concern—Occitanists often assert that discrimination against Occitan language crosses political lines. Opponents, like the socialist 2012 and 2017

presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, have declared that recognizing regional languages would threaten the indivisibility of the republic and give special rights to certain groups. Others, like Marine Le Pen, fear that the acknowledgment of France's historical minority tongues might lead to the recognition of France's immigrant languages (35).

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992 and became open for signatures in 1998. The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 and focuses on human rights, democracy, and "rule of law across Europe" (Taras 2012:42). Although it does not create laws, the Council of Europe can enforce laws in accordance with, for example, the European Convention on Human Rights, drafted in 1950. The organization's website states that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was designed "to protect and promote regional and minority languages and to enable speakers to use them both in private and public life" (Council of Europe). France is one of thirty-three European states to have signed the charter, which it did in 1999, and one of eight states to have signed but not ratified it. In 1999, the French Constitutional Council declared that the charter was unconstitutional on the grounds that it went against the principle that the French people is "indivisible" (as specified in Article 1 of the constitution) and that "French is the language of the Republic" (stated in Article 2). In 2008, the lower house of the French parliament voted in favor of including the sentence, "Regional languages are part of France's heritage" in the preamble of the French constitution. Subsequently, the Académie française released a statement decrying the parliament's decision, declaring that this amendment would be a violation of national identity. The Académie also stated that placing this amendment before Article 2, which states that the language of the Republic is French, was a "challenge to logic and a denial of the Republic." Consequently, the senate vetoed the bill. Ultimately, in July 2008, the amendment was included in the constitution

as Article 75:1, but the responses above are telling of the vehemence surrounding the French language, national identity, and French republican ideals.

Whereas the Charter was a topic of discussion during the 2012 presidential campaign, ¹⁶ in 2017 it was largely absent from conversation. However, Emmanuel Macron made the following speech in Pau on April 12, 2017: "...this indivisible France, she is plural, she has other languages. She has her beautiful regional languages so important in Béarn, which I want to recognize, which we will recognize. She has all these languages which from Brittany to Corsica, must be able to live in the Republic, without threatening the French language, but to make our diversity and our richness vibrant" (cited in Giordan 2017). Like his predecessor Hollande, Macron has said he will ratify the Charter. The charter came up several times in my interviews with Occitan musicians, and the most common response was that ratifying the charter would not actually make a big difference in the valorization and dissemination of Occitan. Nevertheless, the responses to the charter in the political arena are testament to the ways in which language and national identity are linked in France.

In his article on language policy in the European Union, Alexander Caviedes (2003) relates that while French was initially the working language of the EU, English came to share that role when the UK and Ireland joined in 1973.¹⁷ Subsequently, the French government, in

¹⁶ The centrist candidate, Francois Bayrou of the Mouvement démocrate (Democratic Movement), who speaks Béarnais (an Occitan dialect of the southwest), declared that regional languages are part of the cultural patrimony of France; François Hollande listed the ratification of the charter as one of his sixty promises if elected. On the other side of the issue, Nicholas Sarkozy and Marine le Pen expressed their opposition to the Charter primarily because it put the languages of France under the jurisdiction of the European Union. Jean-Luc Melenchon of the Parti de Gauche (Left Party), though of a very different political orientation, also opposed the charter, stating that it would harm the unity and indivisibility of the Republic because it gave special rights to certain language speakers.

¹⁷ Despite the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union, English may continue to be used as a lingua franca for the time being (Setter 2019).

fear of the general hegemony of English, advocated for policies that bolstered the official language of each member state. At the same time, the EU has supported regional languages exemplified by the Charter. Caviedes sees these contrasting policies as a demonstration of the changing model for European identity "in which identity should be variable and multi-faceted, rooted in the ability to shift between languages both via multilingual facility as well as psychologically by not relying on a monolithic source of identity" (265). His article, however, was written in 2003, and while Occitan musicians may argue for this kind of plural identity, the rise of nationalist tendencies in Europe in the last decade does not signal an embrace of Caviedes' proposed model. Caviedes also points out that immigrant languages have received less attention than regional and minority languages; he writes, "One of the relevant groups that have nevertheless been left out of the debate with regard to minority languages are immigrants from non-union countries" (260-261). He cites the four million Turkish speakers in Germany and greater number of Arabic speakers in Europe "whose language rights remain unaddressed by policies and initiatives of the Union" (2003:261). In more recent years, tensions regarding language choice, specifically the use of simplified English known as "Globish" within the European Parliament, have resurfaced. President Macron has voiced his hopes for the French language to be used once again, stating that the "domination" of English "is not inevitable...English is not destined to be the only foreign language Europeans speak" (cited in De la Baume 2018). With the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the role of English has yet to be determined.

Occitan Musicians on the Occitan language

Musicians' Anecdotes

Even if select scholars since the turn of this century have amended the long-held narrative that the French central government encouraged the disappearance of its regional languages, there are many personal accounts of Occitan being considered a shameful language. Take, for example, the oral history of Daniel Loddo, whose mother, raised outside of Cordes-sur-Ciel (in Tarn) spoke Occitan, and who learned Occitan from his grandmother, Irma:

My mother is from a village near Cordes...When I went to my maternal grandmother's house, they spoke Occitan there, and I was obliged to speak Occitan to understand her. She didn't want to speak French; she knew how to, but, at any rate, we always spoke Occitan—which was rare, actually. Because with the diglossia, the fact that there is a dominant language [French], people for a long time didn't want to speak Occitan to their children or their grandchildren because they said it was shameful. My mother, for example, she was ashamed when she went to the city with my grandmother. My mother would say to my grandmother, "ok, we're getting close to Gaillac, we're getting to the city, now, try not to speak *patois*; everyone will make fun of us." You see, my mother almost totally refused Occitan, like many of her generation. They refused it because they were punished at school for speaking Occitan; they were hit and punished. My grandmother, on the other hand, she spoke to us in Occitan. The more people told her it was a language for animals the more she spoke it—stubborn. (Interview on January 28, 2017)

Loddo's narrative attests to the *vergonha* (shame) associated with speaking *patois*. Occitanists argue that the Occitan language and associated customs disappeared from public and private life primarily due to centralist mentalities and elitist attitudes towards popular culture. Similarly, the fact of calling local languages of France *patois* demotes them to the status of a non-language. The situation that Occitan speakers describe is comparable to what Michael Silverstein (1996) discusses on linguistic standardization in the United States. He writes, "Standardization, then, is a phenomenon in a linguistic community in which institutional maintenance of certain valued linguistic practices—in theory, fixed—acquires an explicitly-recognized hegemony over the definition of the community's norm" (284). Silverstein demonstrates that this linguistic

hegemony engenders social value judgments in which speakers of the non-Standard are deemed inferior. As Loddo explained to me, it was primarily his mother's generation, those born between 1930 and 1950, which dissociated itself from the Occitan language. Loddo's reference to Occitan being a language for animals speaks to the, often pejorative, link between Occitan language and agrarian culture. Even today, farmers may say, "Occitan is the best language for talking to animals." This statement was made to me by a cowherd in Ariège, whose uncle had been punished for speaking Occitan in school and who used Occitan phrases to address his livestock.

Occitan musicians have varying levels of familiarity with Occitan; while many of them may have had grandparents who spoke the language, most of them studied Occitan formally, whether by taking classes or teaching themselves through books. Loddo, for example, learned to speak Occitan with his grandmother, chose Occitan as a subject for the national *bacalauréat* exam, and also studied Occitan at the university when he obtained his Masters level thesis.

Tatou, of Moussu T e lei jovents, was raised in Ivry-sur-Seine, a suburb of Paris. The concierge of his building, Madame Courtès, who was from Caussens in the Gers department of southern France, often watched him. His first encounters with Occitan occurred when he would travel with her each summer to visit her family, who spoke *patois* ¹⁸ (Martel 2014). He formally encountered Occitan in high school and then began to read about the Occitan language and Occitan history, as well as anthologies of medieval poetry. He further educated himself by listening to singers of the Occitan revival, such as Claude Martí. ¹⁹

¹⁸ Madame Cortès called him "Fransou," and he acquired the name Tatou from a young girl whom Cortès also watched, who was unable to pronounce Fransou.

¹⁹ As Camille Martel, the author of a biography of Massilia Sound System, writes, Tatou subscribed to the "Occitanist myths of the seventies: the tragedy of the Cathars, the Occitan people unjustly persecuted by the Inquisition and the Republic, the troubadours, and a vision of medieval Occitan society being egalitarian and advanced in terms of human rights" (2014:10).

Patric Lavaud, manager of a world music/Occitan record label Daqui and the festival Nuits atypiques, spoke of Occitan musicians' affective relationship to the language: "perhaps their grandparents spoke it, perhaps they heard it on the street, or were exposed to it in some other way" (interview on July 23, 2014). The characterization of Occitan as a language of affect is what Nice-based Louis Pastorelli, of the bands Gigi de Nissa and Nux Vomica, describes:

My grandmother ran a hairdresser supply store, and I used to go and listen to the women speaking Niçois. I liked the sound of the language. My father spoke Niçois as well but was of the generation that associated shamefulness with the language. I realized a long time later that the break happened with me (old people didn't speak Niçois with me). I had thought it was history, from a long time ago, but my father's first language was Niçois—he learned French when he was six. (Interview on June 15, 2015)

Pastorelli's description of listening to his grandmother speaking Niçois with her female customers both conveys the language as of one of intimacy and portrays his own affective and nostalgic relationship to the language. As with many Occitan musicians that I interviewed, the language is a means to connect to a familial past. Pastorelli often uses the term Niçois instead of Occitan; he is unique among the Occitan musicians I interviewed to do so. According to Pastorelli, the word "Occitan" "has no history here [in Nice]." His statement alludes to the fact that the Occitan movement has grouped together a variety of dialects under one name, Occitan, when previously many regional language speakers did not possess an Occitan consciousness. Autochthonous Occitan speakers would have referred to their language either as the local dialect (Niçois, Gascon, etc.) or, as was more often the case, *patois*—the latter a testament to the internalization of dismissive attitudes towards regional languages. This discrepancy between the ideals of the Occitan movement and the imaginary of provincial inhabitants has been an obstacle to the revival of Occitan, particularly in the early days of the movement, and something Daniel Loddo addresses in his activities as musician and fieldworker (see Chapter Three).

For the majority of the musicians I interviewed, there was at some point a *prise de conscience* (moment of awakening) when they became aware of Occitan, so little had it been mentioned in the French education system or other public arenas. For Claude Sicre, this awakening occurred in Paris, where he worked at Gallimard publishing house during the 1970s, at the apex of the Occitan revival. In fact, his grandparents had spoken Occitan but he did not call it that, and becoming aware of the language was like a "shock on the head. There was so much I didn't know of myself" (interview on June 8, 2010). For Louis Pastorelli, this awakening occurred when he lived in Brazil for three years, where he began to reflect on the language and culture of Nice. He stated, "Learning Brazilian Portuguese took me back to Niçois. At first, I didn't understand why I understood the language so easily" (interview on June 5, 2010).

That the knowledge of Occitan in addition to French allows for an openness regarding others is a frequently recurring statement in Occitan discourse. Pastorelli's multilingual experience—he speaks French, Italian, Portuguese, and Occitan (Niçois)—contributes to the following remark: "The nation is not something eternal. One language, France, no. French people always need normalization in relation to this, but it didn't exist. In my opinion, that can bring a vision of the world that is more open than to stop at the limit of speaking one language" (interview on June 15, 2015). Furthermore, because Occitan is composed of multiple dialects, and vocabulary may vary from village to village within those dialects, Occitanists state that the language carries an understanding of pluralism and otherness.

"Cançon de la prima" (Spring Song)

Claude Sicre, a cultural theorist, activist, and the founder of the band Fabulous

Trobadors, demonstrates his advocacy for a multilingual society through his song texts and nonfiction writings, which often include Occitan, French, and English vocabulary. The Fabulous

Trobadors' name itself is an example of this linguistic mixture, combining English and Occitan—French speakers, including Sicre, pronounce "fabulous" as "fab-u-LOOSE." While the linguistic pastiche may appear as witty wordplay, it can also be interpreted as a strategy used in opposition to the concept of monolingual citizenship. Through this kind of language, Sicre performs his global orientation and imposes a political act;²⁰ his medium of communication is in itself a means to challenge nationalist attitudes towards language and culture.

The song "Cançon de la prima" demonstrates Sicre's use of multilingualism and the political significance he attaches to language. At the time of this album's release, the constitution had not yet been amended to include the Article 75.1 that regional languages are part of France's patrimony. The song features children from a local *calandreta* (Occitan/French school) who sing two choruses. The first one combines Occitan, French and English:

Aiçi sem, where we go
A la prima cal que vengas
Egales y sont las lengas
Comme y sont les hommes égaux.

We are here, where we go
In spring, you have to come
Languages are equal there

The last two lines of the refrain, which parallel the equality of language with the equality of men, is a nod to the French constitution, which states that the Republic shall protect the equality of men, and in Article 2 that French (alone) is the language of the Republic. This song, however, goes beyond the advocacy of regional languages and includes eight different languages in addition to the three languages (Occitan, French, and English) of the first chorus. The verses that follow feature eight individuals singing a phrase, each in a different language (Polish, Arabic,

²⁰ Sicre's use of language shares traits with the *verlan* (slang) used in French hip hop, which subverts the French language by inverting words. Verlan is itself an inverted form of the word, *l'envers*, which means "backwards."

and Bahasa Indonesian, to name a few). In the second chorus, sung in French,²¹ language anthropomorphizes:

Dans tous les pays, les langues se délient. In all countries, languages liberate themselves.

Claude Sicre and the children's chorus exchange in call and response:

Sicre: D'ici à l'Australie, From here to Australia,

Chorus: les langues se délient languages liberate themselves

Sicre: Et jusqu'à Kabylie And as far as Kabylia

Chorus: les langues se délient languages liberate themselves.

In the liner notes, this song's lyrics are presented opposite a photograph of the Forom des langues du monde (Forum of the Languages of the World). The Forom, invented by Sicre, is an example of his ideology translated into civic action and is an annual celebration of multilingualism.

Forom des langues du monde (Forum for the Languages of the World)

In 2010, I visited the Forom des langues du monde, which takes place at the main square, la place du Capitole, in Toulouse. Bordered by cafés on one side and chain stores on the other sides, including a McDonalds, la place du Capitole is a major hub in the so-called *ville rose* (pink city) and now, like other historic centers in France, is accommodated by an underground parking lot. Pedestrians cross the gray and rose cobblestones of the square, which is engraved with a large Occitan cross. The offshoots of la place du Capitole lead to the Romanesque Basilica of Saint-Sernin, where in 1218, a stone was thrown that allegedly killed the crusader Simon Montfort when he besieged Toulouse during the Albigensian Crusades. Heading north on la rue

²¹ Sicre has been critiqued by some Occitan musicians for the fact that, while he may include Occitan vocabulary, his lyrics are predominantly in French. Other Occitan musicians and researchers consider him an important Occitan musician for the ideas that he has put forth in his lyrics and through his cultural activism.

de la Taur, one passes an Occitan bookstore; lining the shelves are books of Occitan poetry, literature, children's stories, histories, dictionaries, and language learning methods. A map of Occitanie covers the back wall. Further along, one arrives at the neighborhood of Arnaud-Bernard and the association Escambiar, where Sicre rooted his civic and cultural activism for over three decades before retiring to the village of Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val (in Tarn).

There were several Occitan stands at the Forom, and I spoke with a representative from the Maison d'Occitanie (House of Occitanie), who advertised a three-day crash course in Occitan. On the south side of the plaza was a stage where musicians and dancers performed folk traditions from various countries. On the north side of the la place du Capitole, bleachers lay perpendicular to a long table under a tent, where a debate would take place at three o'clock.

The debate at the 2010 Forom des langues du monde [in Toulouse] was dedicated to the late linguist and translator, Henri Meschonnic, who had passed away the previous year.

Meschonnic, linguist and translator of the Hebrew Bible, had been a frequent participant at these debates, invited by Claude Sicre. His *De la langue française: Essai sur une clarté obscure* (On the French Language: Essay on an Obscure Clarity) (1997) puts into question the myth of the "genius of the French language." His frequent presence at the debates demonstrates that inquiry and research into the role of language, both French and Occitan (as well as other regional languages), constitute an important facet of Occitan activism.

Sicre presided over the debate and had invited Michel Alessio and Xavier North, from the General Delegation for the French Language and the Languages of France and from the Ministry of Culture and Communication, respectively. The topic covered that afternoon included the role of the General Consul of the Midi-Pyrenées in the protection and promotion of Occitan, the European Charter on European Languages (which France did not sign), and the reformation of

the French constitution in 2008, specifically Article 75.1, which states that regional languages are part of the French patrimony. Audience members periodically contributed to the debate, like Patric Lavaud, who raised his hand to query rhetorically that the Ministère (Ministry) often spoke of shared responsibility, but had anyone actually done anything?

According to Francis Blot, current director of the Forom, the Forom des langues du monde began in 1992, inspired by a festival in Barcelona dedicated to European nations without states, which proposed that each group celebrate its language in a festival that would take place on the first day of spring (interview June 2010). Blot stated that festival organizers in Toulouse first honored minority languages but soon came to realize that all languages were interesting, whether unofficial or official. Occitanists wanted to negate a tendency to assemble under the category, patois, all the languages in France devalued in the eyes of French culture, which Blot compared to the Ancient Greeks' referral to non-Greeks as Barbarians. In the early 1990s, he and other Occitanists thought that the best way to counter this disregard for Occitan was to celebrate all languages; that one could not defend Occitan without defending all languages. As a result, in the words of Blot, "The Forom is a fair which has as its goals to both present all the languages spoken in Toulouse or elsewhere by anyone who wants to present their language in the form of a stand, and, in the middle of this, to create a place of debate on the comprehension of the relationship between language and culture." Blot cited highlights of the Forum in past years: Osage teachers, who had studied with the oldest living Osage speaker in Oklahoma; fourteen Indonesian students, each one speaking a different Indonesian language; and a man who told a story in Native American sign language, which was translated simultaneously into oral French

and French sign language. The Forom in Toulouse has been the catalyst for forums in other cities in France, including Lyon, Montauban, Pamiers and others. ²²

By examining debates of previous years, one can observe how Occitanists relate their cause to other politico-linguistic issues. Debate topics at the Forom des langues du monde have included: education and the development of multilingualism and the politics of languages in France (in 2004); the situation of languages in Algeria since colonization; and the role of languages in the fight against discrimination (in 2006). These subjects bring attention to the way in which the Occitan language revival connects to current concerns regarding racism, France's colonial history, and the politics of language in France.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have summarized key moments in French and Occitan language history and pointed to some of the debates regarding language and national identity in France.

Occitanists have to negotiate four factors as they attempt to valorize their language. First, there are the constitutional constraints on regional languages, exemplified by Article 2 of the Constitution, which have also been cited as a barrier for France's ability to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Second, there exists a historically entrenched ideology of monoligualism that has negated the importance of regional languages and considered them potential threats to national unity. Third, in the face of globalization, "Mcdonaldization," and the incursion of English, Occitanists have had to contend with protectionist attitudes towards

²² In addition to organizing the Forom, Blot is the manager of Org & Com, an association that produces and supports Occitan musicians. The mission statement indicates that the association seeks to cultivate "a real plurality and a dialogue between cultures of here and elsewhere." This statement is in line with the agenda of the Forom, and representative of the activities of the Occitan musicians I have chosen to discuss in this thesis.

the French language. Finally, in official discourse, French continues to be elevated as the universal transmitter of high culture. In the following chapter, I discuss another pillar of French citizenship: republican universalism.

CHAPTER TWO

The History and Pitfalls of French Universalism

"Who is this people that thinks it is always right and has good reason? Its slightest word, its slightest yawn for it has something universal." So sings Céline Ricard, the lead singer of La Talvera, in "Sénher francès" (Mister French) (La Talvera 2009), a song composed by ethnomusicologist, musician, and composer Daniel Loddo. The liner notes include the following statement: "In our way we speak here of memorial resurgence and the need for reparation with people who underwent slavery and colonization."² Ricard sings of the French government's pretext of civilization as a justification to colonize, its use of violence to quell disturbances, and its enlistment of colonized subjects during World War I. In short, the song addresses the tensions between France's universalist creed of human rights and its colonial past. It also points to the messianic and aggrandizing rhetoric surrounding French culture, a distinguishing feature of the Third Republic's "civilizing mission," which is evident to this day. But while "Sénher francés" articulates the colonial dispersion of French culture and republican values outside the borders of France, a primary complaint of the Occitan movement is the universalization of reductionist interpretations of French language and culture within metropolitan France. At the end of the song, as in many of Loddo's songs of political protest, music composition and performance are offered as a means of retaliation: "Once again we will rebel/....We will compose songs."³

In this chapter, I examine historical and contemporary articulations of what is most often referred to as French universalism; I analyze how it informs current debates on immigration and

¹ Qu'es auquel pòble que se crei/D'aver totjorn rason e bon dreit?/Son mender mòt mender badal/Per el es quicòm d'universal.

² À notre façon nous parlons ici de résurgence mémorielle et du besoin de réparation des peuples qui ont subi l'esclavage et la colonisation.

³ Un còp de mai serem faidits...Nautres margarem de cançons!

regional identities and how it appears in Occitan discourse. Whereas regionalism in France has often been posited as an anti-universalist response (Ford 1993) or at least to be antithetical to universalism, I provide a new reading that demonstrates the entanglement of regionalist and universalist discourses. French universalism raises questions about attitudes in France towards difference, often equated with particularism, whether in regards to religion, gender, or ethnicity. In recent years, much public attention has been given to the question of religious and cultural difference represented by immigrant communities, namely North African, and emblemized by the Muslim veil.

Born from the Enlightenment philosophy on rational human nature, universalism was an ideological cornerstone of the French Revolution and, since the late twentieth century, has become intertwined with discourses on immigration and French republicanism. Although not unlike universalist humanist values espoused in other nations of Europe, French universalism carries a specific history and set of meanings in France, which are worth unpacking for a better understanding of the cultural attitudes Occitan musicians contest—and, at times, adopt. French universalism is pervasive in the construction of French citizenship and has been studied by prominent historians, cultural theorists, and philosophers, including Jacques Derrida (1992), Naomi Schor (2001), Alice Conklin (2003), Joan Wallach Scott (2004), Édouard Glissant (2003, 2007), and Étienne Balibar (2016). In this chapter, I explain the concept of French republican universalism, provide a historical overview of universalism and its applications both in the French colonies and within metropolitan France, discuss how Glissant and an Occitan literary scholar Félix-Marcel Castan have refuted universalism, and relate the perspectives of two musicians, Magyd Cherfi and Tatou. I conclude the chapter with an inquiry into the "new universalism" (Ticktin 2013) by exploring an Occitan musician's response to the refugee crisis.

Theorizing Universalism

Writing on the invocation of universalism in political debates in France in the 1990s, Joan Wallach Scott writes, "Universalism was taken to be the defining trait of the French republic, its most enduring value, its most precious asset. To accuse someone of betraying universalism was tantamount to accusing them of treason" (2004:33).4 Since the late twentieth century, French politicians and academics have revisited French universalism as France has grappled with its national identity, its colonial legacy, immigration, and terrorist attacks. Republican universalism in the sense of political universalism is based on a contract between the nation and the individual, formulated during the French Revolution, and designates a form of citizenship in which citizens are granted universal equal rights before the law. What is specific to the French conception of universal rights (in contrast with, for instance, its American counterpart) is its basis in an individual abstracted from economic, familial, occupational, religious, and professional affiliations. The nation, an abstract idea, is an "expression of the people's will and articulated by representatives" (34). In order for individuals to represent the nation, they must be abstracted from their social attributes. An often-cited example is Clermont-Tonnerre's statement in 1791 regarding Jews: "We must deny everything to the Jews as a Nation, in the sense of a constituted body, and grant them everything as individuals" (cited in Birnbaum 2001:242). Communitarisme, identifying with a community, is considered a threat to the republican emphasis on the individual and the nation over communities as well as to the revolutionary creed of individuals abstracted from their social affiliations. As one reflection of the privileging of the individual over community identity, the French national census does not

⁴ Scott's work analyzes the *parité* (parity) feminist movement in France that led to the mandate that fifty percent of elected officials be women (2005).

contain questions on ethnic background or gender. Some scholars have cited this fact as an example of the ways in which discrimination is perpetuated through universalist discourse (c.f. Reiter 2013).

The antithesis of French universalism is particularism. The typical historical narrative states that particularism and universalism are mutually exclusive, and that the former is anathema to French conceptions of citizenship. This theory appears in much political discourse at both ends of the spectrum, and has often been invoked in critical moments that have challenged and reshaped conceptions of French national identity, such as the Dreyfus Affair,⁵ the "headscarf affair," and the women's equality (*parité*) movement. It is this story of citizenship that is passed along in popular dialogue and one that I have heard many times from Occitan "regionalists." In a similar vein, the majority of scholars writing on this topic have reiterated the definition of French universalism as an exceptional republican ideal that refutes particularism.

⁵ In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a military officer of Jewish descent, was falsely accused of treason and imprisoned for five years. This case, an instance of anti-semitism, drew much public attention and created two opposing camps: the *dreyfusards* and the *anti-dreyfusards*. The *dreyfusards* were those who took the side of Dreyfus and included the novelist Émile Zola, the actress Sarah Bernhardt (who was herself half-Jewish), the poet and novelist Anatole France (the only member of the Académie française to side with Dreyfus), and Georges Clemenceau, the future prime minister (1906-1909, 1917-1920). Maurice Samuels (2016) devotes a chapter to Zola's articulations of universalism in his open letter, "J'accuse" (1898), which the novelist wrote in defense of Dreyfus and of Jews more generally. Dreyfus was ultimately acquitted in 1906.

⁶ The first "headscarf affair" occurred on September 18, 1989 in Creil, a city in the Oise department of northern France, when three female students were suspended from school for refusing to remove their headscarves.

⁷ The feminist *parité* movement began in France in the 1970s but gained further momentum in the 1990s with the publication of *Au povoir citoyennes! Liberté, egalité, parité* (To Power, [Female] Citizens! Liberty, Equality, Parity) (1992) by Françoise Gasparde, Claude Servan-Schreiber, and Anne Le Gall. The parity movement resulted in a 1999 decree that fifty percent of elected officials must be women.

⁸ I use quotes here because many Occitanists are opposed to regionalism, stating that it is another form of nationalism.

In opposition to this trend, select scholars have demonstrated that models of French citizenship have at various points embraced the motto of "unity in diversity" and the coexistence of universalism and particularism. Jean-Francois Chanet (1996) has demonstrated that, despite the popular vision of the black-clad schoolmaster sent to the provinces to inculcate national pride and rid local inhabitants of their regional languages and customs, regional pride was, in fact, fostered in the classroom. Similarly, Stéphane Gerson (2003) has shown how regional pride in *la petite patrie* (the small homeland) was seen as a path towards pride in *la grande patrie* (the big homeland). Shanny Peer's *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair* (1997) examines the official discourse of unity in diversity in the regional exhibits at the 1937 World's Fair.

More recently, Maurice Samuels, in *A Right to Difference: French Universalism and the Jews* (2016), examines attitudes towards Jews at key moments since the French Revolution and provides a historical overview of French universalism in order to demonstrate the intractability of its interpretations in recent decades. As Samuels demonstrates, assimilation is a key component of discussions about universalism in France. He queries, "To what extent does the French commitment to absolute equality for its minorities come with the expectation—either explicit or implicit—that they shed all or part of what makes them different?" (7). He argues for a more flexible understanding of French universalism and suggests that theories of universalism, articulated in attitudes towards Jews, be placed on a pluralist/assimilationist continuum. He writes, "At the far end of the assimilation side of the spectrum lies the expectation that a minority group will completely shed its political, economic, cultural, and religious practices in order to join the majority culture. At the far end of the pluralistic side lies the total acceptance and recognition of minority difference by society and by the state" (9). This relationship between

universalism and assimilation is of particular concern to regionalists and other minority groups in France (see Silverstein 2004).

French Universalism from the Enlightenment through the Civilizing Mission The Enlightenment Foundations of French Universalism

The writings on human nature by Enlightenment *philosophes* (philosophers) such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot, are the direct antecedents to the republican universalism incarnated during the French Revolution. The *philosophes*, generally speaking, agreed on the universal existence of a rational human nature. Naomi Schor draws a parallel between the concept of a universal rational human nature that was transhistorical, transcultural, identical, and absent of particularisms, to the establishment of French as a universal language, "cleansed of its impure forms: *patois* and regional dialects" (2001:46).

The *philosophes* experienced a world expanding through colonialism and global commerce, evident in the writings of Voltaire (Kjørholt 2012), and came increasingly into contact with colonized "primitive" cultures, especially through travel writings. This changing awareness of the world through the colonial encounter can be observed in Enlightenment theories on cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan, the world-citizen, was "the off-spring of the global world" (62). The 1754 edition of Denis Didérot's and Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* defined the cosmopolitan as a "person of no fixed address" (cited in Kjørholt

modern Enlightenment..." (2016:136).

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⁹ According to Balibar, the origins of modern republican universalism predate the Enlightenment. He writes, "These are ancient categories of the One and the Multiple" (136) and "This is a long story that goes back to the conflicts between monotheistic and polytheistic religions in the ancient Helleno-Semitic world, but also entirely dominates the oppositions of

¹⁰ As the German philosopher Kant articulated in 1784, 'Have courage to use your own reason—that is the motto of Enlightenment."

2012:62). For select *philosophes*, cosmopolitanism was a moral and philosophical ideal.¹¹

According to Alice Conklin (2003), the term *civilisation* (civilization) developed at the end of the eighteenth century from the philosophes' desire to describe the advancement of rational thought in politics and religion. Whereas the verb civiliser (to civilize) had been in usage in France since the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the word civilisation was unusual before the late eighteenth century (Monnier 2008:108). In *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic* and Psychogenetic Investigations, Norbert Elias traces the concept of civilité and its transformation into the term civilisation ([1939] 2000). Elias writes, "Concepts such as politesse [politeness] or civilité [civility] had, before the concept of civilisation was formed and established, practically the same function as the new concept: to express the self-image of the European upper class in relation to others whom it deemed inferior" (34). Discussing the adoption of the notion of civilization by the French bourgeoisie at the end of the eighteenth century, he observes, "Unlike the situation when the concept was formed, from now on nations came to consider the process of civilization as completed within their own societies; they came to see themselves as bearers of an existing or finished civilization to others, as standard-bearers of expanding civilization" (43). Conklin observes that *civilisation* at that time was a word that bore a singular meaning, not plural, and one "that would capture the essence of French achievements compared to the uncivilized world of savages, slaves, and barbarians" (2003:14-15). Hafid Gafaiti argues that the Enlightenment concept of 'Man' and the anthropological project of distinguishing civilized man versus primitive man comprised a "metadiscourse" and

¹¹ Julia Kristeva, like many authors writing on cosmopolitanism, traces this philosophy to the ancient Greek Cynics and Stoics, and examines its usage during the Enlightenment and the French revolution. She demonstrates that the concept has historically been intertwined with its proponents' perceptions of foreigners and conceptions of otherness. One of Kristeva's conclusions is that "Only strangeness is universal" (1993:21).

"worldview" that have perpetuated binary categories of the universal/particular and the West/rest (2003:192).

The French Revolution and the Universal Rights of Man

Scholars most commonly associate the development of modern French universalism with the French Revolution, which laid the groundwork for French citizenship and the republican ideals of universal human rights and secularism. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, "the founding document of the French Revolution," was predicated on the universalist assumptions of natural rights derived from the Enlightenment (Samuels 2016:3). Article I, for example, states that all men are born and created equal. The association of universalism and human rights was one of the primary features of the Revolution and distinguished republican universalism from previous articulations of the ideal (Schor 2001:46). Among the noteworthy acts of the early Revolution was to give equal rights to the Third Estate (the commoners), the clergy, and the nobles: the three constituent bodies of the Estates General, which Louis XVI had convened in 1787 for the first time since 1614. Women and slaves were not included in this equation, and it is this contradiction embedded within revolutionary universalism that has led scholars to use the term "false universalisms" (Schor 2001; Jennings 2011; Reiter 2013). The eventual adaptation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen as the 1947 Universal Rights of Man "articulated Frenchness onto universalism" (Schor 2001:46-47).

French revolutionary universalism was inherited in part from France's relationship to the Catholic Church, *katholikos* being the Greek word for universal. In contrast to the particularism of Judaism, Catholicism asserted that salvation was available to all through Christ (Samuels 2016:2-3). To this belief in universal salvation, found also in ancient Christianity, the Catholic Church added the idea of Catholicism as the one true religion. Schor has observed that the

messianic undertones of the Revolution, which resulted in a decrease in the power of the Church, were in fact derived from the Catholic Church (2001:43). Countering Catholicism was both a philosophical ideal and a political tactic: Jacobins considered religion to be a vestige of irrational states of being but also sought to wrest control, especially in the provinces, from the Catholic Church. However, these efforts did not so much create a secular society as transfer aspects of the Catholic Church to the state (Ozouf 1988; Schor 2001; Silverstein 2004). J.P. Daughton demonstrates the ways in which revolutionaries, although anti-clerical, borrowed imagery from the Catholic Church. For instance, the Declaration of the Rights of Man inscribed on two stone tablets replaced the ten commandments, the church of Sainte-Genevieve was transformed into the Pantheon, and in the late 1870s, Marianne replaced the Virgin Mary (2006:7-9).

The Jacobin leaders were confronted with the vast diversity of regional languages and customs. With their privileging of the state, they initiated the national project of cultural and political centralization (Dewhurst 2007:13), although the real push for *cultural* universalism would occur during the Third Republic. ¹² Language, as I discussed in Chapter One, was seen as a primary tool for unifying the nation. The initial social group that constituted the target of the First Republic's efforts at national integration was the French peasantry, described by their

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¹² Mary Lewis Dewhurst states that the Jacobin legacy has greatly influenced scholarship on French society, which has been analyzed from the angle of the actions taken by the central state (2007:13). She argues for scholarship that demonstrates the ability of society to influence policy and studies the fluctuations of society and the state (13). There are exceptions to the central-periphery tendency in scholarship; for example, Alice Conklin's *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (2003) shows how the changing dynamics in the colonies shaped official colonial legislation. Dewhurst's own historical study of migration to Marseille and Lyons proves that migration rights were neither universal nor fixed; they fluctuated and the policing of these rights were negotiated "at many levels of social exchange" (2007:14). Emanuelle Saada's *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies* (2012) explores how legislation surrounding the racial category *métis* (her work brings race into the discussion of citizenship which had always assumed its absence) was shaped by the *métis* themselves.

educated urban compatriots as belonging to an alien and animalistic world (Bell 2001:207). Universal primary education was considered a primary means of converting peasants into citizens, although the Jacobins were ultimately unable to carry out this objective.

The French Revolution greatly altered the way the French viewed their nation and civilization on the global stage (Conklin 1997:16); its leaders perceived their actions to be of universal significance (Jennings 2011:145). Regarding the "civilizing mission" that would intensify during the Third Republic, Conklin writes:

In France, the Revolution convinced the French that they 'were the foremost people of the universe' and that *la grande nation* had an obligation to carry its revolutionary ideals beyond France's borders. [The] loss of the old empire [Saint Domingue], combined with France's new nationalism, had dramatic implications for the future of French colonization. Among other things, it helped transform the Enlightenment belief that barbarians *could* be civilized into the imperial doctrine that France *should* be civilizing fettered and depraved peoples everywhere. (1997:16-17)

This insistence that not only would inferior races benefit from French civilization, but that it was the French duty to bestow their civilization on barbarians, became the primary justification for colonial conquest during the Third Republic.

The Civilizing Mission

At the peak of the French colonial enterprise in the 1920s and 1930s, France possessed the second largest empire, consisting of over 100 million inhabitants on 11 million square

¹³ Suzanne Desan has observed the role of cosmopolitanism in the formation of republican universalism. She argues that the latter was a hybrid construction based on "an interaction with foreign people and powers" exemplified by the granting of citizenship to eighteen foreigners, including Joseph Priestley and James Madison (2013:87). If the universalist claims of the Republic were to be successful, the National Convention, the assembly that governed France from 1792 to 1795, would be a "congress of the whole world" (Chénier cited in Desan 2012:86). Furthermore, it was during the Revolutionary era that the word "foreigner" (*étranger*) came into use as an official category.

kilometers of land (Aldrich 1996:1). French colonial rule is often distinguished from British indirect rule by the former's ideology of making their colonial subjects French. On this subject, Glissant writes, "For in its very disdain, English colonialism respected the cultures involved, while French colonialism, which was humanist and all-embracing, which wanted to turn you into a good Frenchman, contributed to the erosion of cultures, except in the cases where those cultures rose up in opposition and armed rebellion. As was the case, for example, in Vietnam and Algeria" (2003:106). Whereas British missionaries used local languages for educational purposes, French colonialists implemented the French language.

Glissant refers in the above passage to the *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission), an ideology invoked and carried out to the greatest extent during the Third Republic (1870-1940). Frenchification of the empire was considered a means to maintain control and create enough development to return profits while garnering support at home (Aldrich 2015:168). Universalism was a defining attribute of the civilizing mission and hinged on the belief that it was the duty of France, due to its revolutionary past, cultural superiority, and industrial strength, to bring civilization to the uncivilized. Victor Hugo wrote on the conquest of Algeria: "It is civilization winning out over barbarism. It is an enlightened people finding another people in darkness. We are the Greeks of the world; it is our duty to enlighten the world" (cited by Vergés in Blanchard et al. 2014:251). As Conklin observes, the French nation had mastered tyranny, religious superstition, disease, and nature, and it was precisely the future colonies' inability to master these things that made them uncivilized (1997:6). The concept of the civilizing mission had existed in France, and elsewhere in Europe, before the Third Republic. Peter Mandler writes, "The French mission civilisatrice had included as far back as the Napoleonic period a powerful sense of Frenchness as a model for all the world's peoples" (2015:280). However, it increased in intensity after 1870, as an effort to reconcile republican ideology with aggressive imperialism (Conklin 2003:1).

For advocates of the colonial enterprise colonization itself was a sign of civilization. As the colonialist theorist Leroy-Beaulieu wrote in *De la colonisation des peuples modernes* (On Colonization by Modern Peoples), "savages or barbarians emigrate sometimes, often even...only civilized peoples colonize" (1874:i). Jules Ferry, prime minister (1883-1885), minister of public education and fine arts (1879-1881, 1882, and 1883), and ardent colonialist, advocated for the spread of French throughout the world as well as its "influence...its values, its flag, its weapons, its genius" (cited by Parker in Blanchard et al. 2014:563). He put forth humanitarian, economic, and political justification of colonization (Todorov 1993:260).¹⁴

The civilizing mission was first and foremost a rhetorical invention, although it came with certain practical applications. These practices, which were not carried out in a uniform manner throughout the colonies, included the establishment of the public school system, railroads, and improved healthcare (Chafer 2001). The civilizing mission was linked to France's assimilationist policy, whose fundamental conceit was that by accepting French culture and customs, colonial subjects would become French. Some areas of the empire became legally part of France and a small number of elite colonial subjects became French citizens (Chafer 2001). Assimilationist policy was evident in the Four Communes of Senegal, where residents were granted French citizenship but with limited rights.

¹⁴ Drawing a parallel between Ferry's discourse on colonization and on education, Tsvetan Todorov writes, "Civilized countries would be the masters of the young and uncultivated barbarian lands: what is as stake is a veritable "educational process," and the goal is not to exploit but to civilize and raise up the 'other races' to our own level, to spread the enlightenment that has been bequeathed to us; such is the meaning of the 'progress of humanity and civilization' that Jules Ferry desires" (1993:261).

The question of cultural assimilation was not unilaterally agreed upon. For instance, in 1889, at the Congrès colonial international (International Colonial Conference), Goustave Le Bon, who rejected the concept, expressed the following criticism: "Our institutions of the moment seem to us always as the best, and our temperament, which tomorrow will lead us to overturn them entirely, today impels us to impose them on everybody. The kind of instruction applicable to civilized men," he argued, "is not applicable to half-civilized man" (cited in Lewis 1962:138). He warned of the dangers of spreading democratic values of liberty. Overall, however, through integrationist policies of education and language instruction, France surpassed other European colonial powers in "breaking down the barriers between the colonies and the metropole" (Bell 2001:209).

Universalism in the French Provinces: Making Colonial Frenchmen

While the civilizing mission embodied an attempt to unify the empire through the dissemination of, albeit distorted, republican values¹⁶ and a standardized French language, a comparable ideology was used within France to educate the French peasantry and inculcate

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¹⁵ Tsvetan Todorov distinguishes assimilationist imperial ideology from that of "association," both espoused at various points in French history. The former, he claims, is usually accompanied by universalist theses that "seek to make over the indigenous 'races,' out of a belief that France is the perfect embodiment of universal values' (1993:258-259). The latter, implemented by the colonial administrator Louis Hubert Lyautey in Morocco and by General Gallieni in Madagascar, creates a protectorate, a "form of colony in which the mother country takes responsibility for military and economic control, but leaves to local, indigenous power the responsibility for choosing the most appropriate institutions and for managing everyday business" (259).

16 Conklin demonstrates that colonialists in West Africa believed they were applying the republican values of freedom and human rights in their efforts to abolish slavery and dismantle "feudalism" (1998:492). For instance, in 1895 the Government General "issued directives aimed at ending slavery and eroding the powers of chiefs—in true republican spirit—in the name of the rights and individuals" (492). She writes, "it was because the French accepted that all humans were born free that it [the civilizing mission] sought to extend—albeit in perverted form—the republican virtues of freedom, equality, and fraternity to the colonized" (492-493).

national sentiment.¹⁷ This process had been attempted during the French Revolution but achieved greater success during the Third Republic. France at the end of the nineteenth century was still a vast array of regional cultures, "a mosaic of different languages, traditions, architectures, styles of clothing, and most everything else," despite previous centralizing efforts of the state (Aldrich 2015:169). Furthermore, the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a surge of regionalist movements throughout France, notably the Félibrige movement in Occitanie, that promoted local folklore, established local museums, collected oral literature, and wrote in the local regional language (169). This regionalist activity can be viewed as a response to the Frenchification of the provinces, which was carried out through electoral campaigns, the press, military service, and, especially, the education system (169).

The Jules Ferry laws (1881-1884), which established mandatory primary school education, became an important means of uniting regional populations and for cultivating patriotic sentiment among young provincial inhabitants. The French language, as discussed in Chapter One, was one of the primary tools for creating French citizens. In addition, French schoolchildren read about the *patrie* (the homeland) in G. Bruno's *Le tour de la France par deux enfants* (The Tour of France by Two Children) (1904). This textbook recounted the adventures of two boys who set out from a small village in Lorraine (eastern France) to discover the diverse landscapes, military and literary heroes, great engineers and sculptors, local agriculture, and industries of France. Young readers could imagine themselves traipsing through the glaciers and high peaks of Mont Blanc or on a ship departing from the great industrial port of Marseille. They

¹⁷ Comparing the domestic civilizing mission to the colonial one, Aldrich writes, "the French tried to instill patriotism, a common standardized language, the national French culture, productive economic habits, and the institutions of governance into sometimes recalcitrant and even 'savage' populations at home and abroad" (2015:159).

learned of their blond blue-eyed "ancestors" the Gauls, of "savage" cannibals in Oceania, and of the four races of man: white, red, yellow, and black. These racial references situated France within a larger, uncivilized world.

Beyond the classroom, the colonial enterprise was also used to cultivate national sentiment among French citizens, a process that Robert Aldrich (2015) labels "imperial nationalism." Aldrich discusses the link between nation-building and colonialism during the Third Republic and the ways in which the nexus of *petite patrie* (the small homeland), *patrie* (the nation), and *la plus grande France* (Greater France) were reinforced. "The nation," he writes "was the interface between the provinces and the colonies, uniting a people and an empire from the smallest village to the most far-away overseas outpost" (170). Public schools, geographic societies, and colonial expositions served to promote the colonialist agenda in the regions.

The most overt displays of universalist ideals as they related to the civilizing mission were the colonial expositions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the 1888 and 1931 universal expositions in Paris have received the greatest scholarly attention, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, provincial fairs throughout France featured colonial exhibits. In 1850, Bordeaux was the first to present a colonial exhibit, followed by Nantes in 1861, Le Havre in 1868, and Cherbourg in 1869 (Aldrich 2015:175). As Aldrich observes, over the course of the Third Republic, "cities rivaled each other for the grandeur of their expositions just as they competed for colonial business and for the title of colonial capitals in France" (175). Nantes, Bordeaux, Lyon and Marseille became vital trade cities that linked the metropole to the colonies. Colonialism helped define the role of these cities within the national framework.

Marseille's colonial expositions of 1906 and 1922 outdid prior expositions in other cities of

France and would push Parisian authorities to organize the 1931 Colonial Exposition, the grandest and last of its kind.

The 1931 Exposition coloniale internationale de Paris (International Colonial Exposition of Paris) which took place in the Bois de Vincennes, encapsulated the colonialist agenda.

Publicized as *Le tour du monde en un jour* (The Tour of the World in One Day), it lasted from May 6 to November 15, 1931. In his inaugural speech, the minister of the colonies Paul Reynaud glorified "France's role in the discovery of the world," and declared that the primary objective of the exposition was to "make the empire a part of French consciousness" (cited in Lebovics 1992:64). Reynaud went on to emphasize the importance of "each of us coming to understand himself as citizens of a greater France" (64). Thus defined, French citizenship implied an awareness of belonging to an expansive empire. The program at the exposition, a collection of musical performances that Tamara Levitz has described as "a nascent world music scene," included the Ballet Royal Khmer from Cambodia, Tahitian singers, Balinese dancers, and Uday Shankar's Hindu dance company (2006:606). Visitors could hear tam-tams in the African pavilion, could dance the *beguine* in the Guadeloupian pavilion, and could enjoy camel rides (606).

The Colonial Exposition served a didactic purpose: to convince metropolitan French citizens of the importance of the civilizing mission in the colonies. Colonialists, including the exposition's lead organizer, Maréchal Hubert Lyautey, stated that colonialism provided material and moral benefits to the colonies. They argued that the civilizing mission had not been fully

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¹⁸ In *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition*, Patricia Morton writes, "In keeping with the fashion for imagined travel to a distant but seductive exotic realm, the 1931 Exposition was often described as if it were a substitute for an actual journey to the colonies, as if it were a distant point on the globe (2000:79).

accomplished, and that, in the words of General Olivier, "there still remain uncultivated expanses and populations in lethargy" (cited in Morton 2000:76). This was conveyed in part through the display of "natives" at the exposition and a cultivated aura of authenticity (112-113). For instance, they were instructed to wear indigenous costumes even though European dress had become common in colonial cities (Ezra 2000:91). Ethnology provided information about colonized peoples that was displayed in educational exhibits at the Musée des Colonies (Museum of the Colonies) (Morton 2000:82).

The civilizing mission in the colonies was still invoked in interwar France, although some colonialists had become less optimistic about the speed of its progress. Civilizing the provinces was presented by contemporary government officials and scholars with greater ambivalence. In fact, the 1930s saw an efflorescence of government-sponsored folklore studies and museums, including the cradle of French ethnomusicology on France, the MNATP, founded in 1937. That same year the Premier congrès international de folklore (The First International Folklore Conference) took place in celebration of the museum's opening. The director of the conference, the ethnologist Paul Rivet, defined folklore in his opening speech as "the study of everything that survives, in an evolved society, of customs, lifestyles, traditions, beliefs belonging to an earlier stage of civilization" (1938:26). This study, according to Rivet, was urgent and perhaps too late, given the "uniformity" of people as a result of modern means of communication, rural exodus, the diffusion of education, military service, and industrialization (26). Rivet called on his colleagues to save "these moving aspects of the particular life of our provinces and to conserve them for our successors" (26). This mentality was conveyed at the

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¹⁹ Rivet's comments were in line with the cultural evolution theory among Western European ethnologists and folklorists of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Bithell and Hill 2014:6).

1937 World's Fair in Paris: while the official mood at the 1900 World's Fair, as one commentator observed, was anti-regionalist (Lecoq cited in Peer 1998:58), in 1937, there was a newly placed emphasis on the regional traditions of France.

A juxtaposition of the 1931 Colonial Exposition and the 1937 World's Fair's regional exhibits highlights the role that these cultures performed in interwar constructions of French national identity. As in the case of the colonial exhibits, the organizers of the regional exhibits required "natives" to be in authentic dress. Along these lines, there was considerable debate over whether including Paris-based groups in folkloric performances in addition to regional performers would detract from audiences' experience of authentic France. Contrasting the two fairs, Elizabeth Ezra (2000) observes that the emphasis at the colonial exposition was on the novelty of the colonial artisans themselves, as opposed to the value placed on the objects produced by French craft workers. Whereas the "authenticity" with which colonial subjects were presented was cultivated to underscore their need for French civilization, folklore of the provinces was depicted with nostalgia, as a symbol of pre-industrial France. They were emblems of an "earlier stage of civilization" (Rivet 1938:26) that reflected the modernist ambivalence towards industrial progress. It was, in fact, the remnants of rural France that the central authorities embraced as a defining characteristic of French modern identity (see Peer 1998). The interwar period and World War II were salient exceptions in the particularist/universal opposition in official discourse. In the face of mounting tensions in Europe, the fair assumed added importance as a vehicle for uniting the French population and for defining Frenchness. These rural traditions became co-opted by the Vichy government during World War II, and subsequent Occitanists would have to distance their claims from this legacy.

Decolonization: A Crisis in French Universalism

The period of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century challenged the ideology of the civilizing mission as well as widespread universalist assumptions in France about the benefit to and embrace of French culture by the nation's colonial subjects.²⁰ The interwar years saw an increase in anti-colonialism movements in the metropole and in the colonies, foreshadowing the decolonization of the 1950s and 1960s. Revolts erupted in Syria and Morocco in the 1920s and in the mid-1930s Moroccan elites demanded reforms, including political equality with French settlers (Lawrence 2013:50).²¹ The Rif Wars in 1924 in Morocco mobilized dissidents in France, namely the French Communist Party (PCF). Founded in 1920 and inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the PCF founded the first anti-colonialist association, the Committee Against the Rif Wars. Generally speaking, whereas socialists espoused colonialist rhetoric and the colonial agenda, communists called for the withdrawal of French troops and generally denounced European colonialism (Aldrich 1996:117). In Paris, communists and surrealists united as the Ligue anti-imperialiste (Anti-imperial League) to protest the 1931 Colonial Exposition. They disseminated pamphlets: *Ne visitez pas l'exposition coloniale* (Do not visit the Colonial

²⁰ The first colony to gain independence was Haiti (1791) whose leaders were fueled by French revolutionary ideology of universal human rights. However, the majority of France's colonies gained independence between 1945 and 1962: Indochina/Vietnam (1945); Cambodia (1953); Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan (1956); Republic of Guinea (1958); Cameroun, Togo, Dahomey (now Benin), Madagascar, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Chad, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, Senegal, Mauritania (1960); Algeria (1962).

²¹ During the interwar period, local elites in a number of colonies embraced French republican values and called for political equality, including full citizenship. In other colonies, they "sought political equality via the establishment of local representative institutions that would permit colonized subjects to share political power, eliminating a system that privileged French citizens." (Lawrence 2013:18). Adria K. Lawrence (2013) makes the case that Algerian and Moroccan reform movements were separate from the nationalist movements that would gain momentum in the mid-1940s. These calls for independent statehood emerged in Morocco in 1944 with the founding of the Independent Party.

Exposition) and *Premier bilan de l'exposition coloniale* (First Assessment of the Colonial Exposition), and organized their own Exposition anti-coloniale (Anti-Colonial Exposition) (see Morton 2000).

The Algerian War (1954-1962) in particular presented a crisis to the political and cultural universalism constitutive of French national identity. Algeria had been upheld as a successful example of the cohesion of republican values and the colonial agenda. Its independence signified the end of the French colonial empire and the decline of French universalism. Consequently, as Fernando Mayanthi writes, "After 1962, France turned away from its former colonial empire and looked northwards. This did not of course break France's links with its former colonies, but simply reconfigured them, as former colonial subjects became postcolonial immigrants and, a generation later, French citizens" (2004:837). ¹ Jean-Marie Le Pen's involvement with the Organisation armée secrète (Secret Army Organization) (OAS), the right-wing paramilitary organization that fought against Algerian independence, exemplifies the connection between France's colonial past and nationalist antipathy towards postcolonial immigrants in France.

In the aftermath of decolonization, new invocations of universalist principles have appeared in France in public discourse on postcolonial immigration. As Catherine Wihtol de Wenden writes, "The revival of republican values, largely forgotten during the *Trente Glorieuses* [Glorious Thirty]...also helped set the tone for how immigration matters would be framed" (2011:61). Immigration debates have focused on the principle of *laïcité* (roughly translated as secularism) and reified evocations of French republican and secular citizenship.

Universalism in Postcolonial France: Laïcité

Laïcité is the primary idiom through which republican universalism is articulated in postcolonial France. Sparked by the "headscarf affair" in 1989, when three Muslim schoolgirls refused to remove their headscarves and were consequently suspended, public conversations and academic writings on French republican universalism have issued forth from French and Anglo-Saxon scholars. Right-wing and left-wing politicians alike have upheld universalism as an integral component of French citizenship. Both republicans and conservative nationalists have placed emphasis on universal secular citizenship, *laïcité*, as a requirement for participation in the polity. In France, *laïcité* and universalism have been inextricable: universal equal rights are grounded in the abstraction of the individual from their religious background.

Laïcité is a fundamental principle of the relationship between the state and religion in France. In contemporary France, laïcité implies that public spaces be free of religion. However, it originally designated the absence of religion from the political sphere. Otherwise stated, whereas laïcité once denoted the religious neutrality of the state as a governing body, it has come to mean the secularity of citizens in public spaces. The French historian Jean Beaubérot (2012) argues that the form of laïcité defended in contemporary political debates is a new one, what he calls la nouvelle laïcité, that differs from its historical conceptions. Beaubérot's primary argument is that laïcité, and the Republic itself, once accounted for greater diversity than current rhetoric presumes.

Although the secularity of the state was a fundamental development of the French Revolution, the word *laïcité* itself was defined a century later by the philosopher and educator, Ferdinand Buisson, in the *Dictionnaire de pédagogie* (Dictionary of Pedagogy) (1883).²³ He wrote, "*Laïcité*, or the neutrality of the school at all levels, is nothing other than the application

²² Kristeva 1993; Butler 2000; Schor 2001; Le Sueur 2003; Scott 2004, 2005; Lewis 2007; Jennings 2011; Beaubérot 2012; Reiter 2013; Balibar 2016.

²³ In 1842, the Académie française defined *laïcisme* as a doctrine that ensures "the right of laics to govern the Church" whose members are called *laïcistes* (Beaubérot 2005).

within the schools of a system that has been prevalent in all of our social institutions" (cited in Beaubérot 2005). According to Buisson, the Revolution had invented the neutral state that was independent of the clergy and free of all theological concepts. Buisson linked the concept of secularism and human rights by emphasizing the importance of this neutrality for the guarantee of the legal rights of citizens (Beaubérot 2005).

Recent invocations of *laïcité* have often referenced the 1905 Law of Separation of Church and State, which Buisson helped to formulate. However, this law's primary function was to "restrain the state from subsidizing or extending special recognition to any one religion" (Bowen 2007:2) and nowhere in the law does the word *laïcité* appear. Rather, for those who designed the 1905 legislation, *la liberté de conscience* (freedom of conscience) was the primary objective, and the separation of church and state was intended as a path towards this end (Cerf 2012:89).²⁴

In France, secular citizenship, or *laïcité*, as several scholars have observed, does not rigidly designate the absence of the sacred from public life, but rather, as Balibar contends, the "sacralization of the state" (cited in Silverstein 2004:143).²⁵ The sacralization of the state is inherited from the French Revolution, which placed the nation at the forefront of citizens' allegiances. The centrality of the French state in the life of its citizens is a double-edged sword. In contrast with the United States, French citizens benefit from a host of social services, such as

²⁴ The first article of this law states "...the Republic must give the same right to all, regardless of their ideas or party (*partis*)."

²⁵ In *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation,* Paul Silverstein writes, "In this way, French *laïcité* operates much like a religion, with the nation operating as the moral symbol of collective solidarity. It is not because the church and state in France are separated that public expressions of Islam remain a sticking point for French republican ideology. Rather, it is because they are functionally one and the same; the state is, for all practical purposes, the church of republican France" (2004:143).

universal healthcare, that are highly appreciated—and the subject of the recent heated "yellow vest" protests against President Macron's leadership. On the other hand, as evident in the debates around *laicité*, the cultural ramifications of French republican citizenship have proven to be problematic. To be a citizen of the Republic is to adhere to certain cultural requirements, including casting off one's cultural particularities, thereby assimilating to a strictly delimited version of Frenchness. In recent decades, minority populations, who are excluded from official definitions of French identity and thereby constitute "its contingent limit" (Butler 1996:46), have challenged French cultural citizenship and have pointed to its contradictions. For instance, as the preeminent feminist scholar of universalism Joan Wallach Scott indicated in an interview, some young female Muslims have protested the bans on headscarves on the grounds that these laws contradict the value of freedom of individual expression enshrined during the Enlightenment.²⁶

The veil is the ultimate symbol of debates in France over *laïcité* and immigration. After the 1989 headscarf affair, the Minister of Education Lionel Jospin put the decision to accept or ban headscarves in the hands of schools. In 1994, the Francois Bayrou circular, named after the then Minister of Education, distinguished between "discreet symbols" (small crosses, hands of Fatima, and Jewish stars) and "conspicuous symbols" (Islamic veils, large crosses, and *kippas*). Between 1989 and 2004, forty-one out of forty-nine cases brought to the Conseil d'État (Council of State), the highest court, were ruled in favor of the right to wear headscarves in school on the grounds of "freedom of conscience" (O'Brien 2016:105). However, in 2004, under President Jacques Chirac, "the veil law," which was supported by large majorities of right-wing and leftist members of the Senate and National Assembly, went into effect, banning conspicuous symbols

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²⁶ "*Laïcité*: Three Questions to Joan Scott." YouTube video, 4:27, interview with Joan Wallach Scott on Orient XXI. Published April 30, 2018.

from schools.²⁷ The "veil law" was a significant change in public policy regarding religious expression in France.²⁸ Subsequently, in 2010, the French senate voted for the adoption of a ban on face coverings, including masks, helmets, balaclavas, *niqabs*, and *burqas*, in public areas, with the exception of in cars and religious spaces. This law was challenged in 2014, when a woman wore a veil to the daycare at which she worked; she was fired on the grounds of "serious misconduct," and her employer cited the 2004 law. The case was brought before the European Court of Human Rights whose judges upheld the "veil law" (Willsher 2014).

Secular citizenship is not an issue restricted to France. Since the early 2000s, it has been the subject of legal actions taken in several nations of the European Union and most recently at the level of the highest court of Europe, the Court of Justice of European Union. On March 14, 2017, the Court of Justice of the European Union decreed, in its first decision regarding headscarves, that employers can bar staff from wearing visible religious symbols as a general policy regarding religious and political symbols (*Guardian* 2017). According to Peter O'Brien (2016), the recent bans on veils contradict the basic liberal and humanist values of the European Union. ²⁹

²⁷ The actual name of this law is Loi encadrant, en application du principe de laïcité, le port des signes ou de tenues manifestant une appartenance religieuse dans les écoles, collèges, et lycées publiques (Law surrounding, in the application of the principal of *laïcité*, the wearing of signs or garments demonstrating religious affiliation in public middle and high schools). In France, it is more commonly referred to as "La loi sur la voile" (The Veil Law).

²⁸ Elaine Thomas writes that North American perceptions of the law tend to ignore other factors that shaped it, namely the feminist movement Ni Putes Ni Soumises (Neither Whores Nor Submissive) that became active in 2002 and was "highly critical of traditional Islam" (2012:194). She writes, "the recent rise of this movement has drawn public attention to divisions within 'immigrant groups' in France, particularly tensions between more conservative elements and feminists sharply critical of tradition" (194).

²⁹ He writes, "Every European government formally honors in some way the liberal secular ideal of neutrality. According to this norm, the state should neither determine the religion of its citizens nor discriminate against them on the basis of the religion that they do (not) choose to

Having laid out historical and current expressions of universalism in France, in the following section, I explore postcolonial and Occitan critiques of universalism. I begin by examining the concept of *l'Un* (the One) as articulated by Édouard Glissant and the Occitan philosopher Félix-Marcel Castan. I then discuss Magyd Cherfi, Tayeb Cherfi, and Tatou in order to elucidate commonalities and differences between their commentaries on multiculturalism and the republican model of cultural assimilation.

Postcolonial and Occitan Discourse on Universalism

Édouard Glissant and Félix-Marcel Castan on l'Un

The theoretical writings of Édouard Glissant and Félix-Marcel Castan demonstrate how universalism serves as a point of intersection between the interests of ex-centric populations—in this case, postcolonial and regionalist. In their writings, Glissant and Castan employ the semantic symbol *l'Un* to refer to universalism and to denote a centralized, monolithic culture in France. In the opening chapter of *L'intention poétique*, Glissant writes, "Let us abandon childhood reveries, the dream of Truth: let us refute the One" (1969:13). For Glissant, *l'Un* is inseparable from France's colonial past and is "always supported by Conquest" (2009:98). It represents continental thought whereas the archipelago of the Caribbean calls attention to Relation. He contrasts atavistic cultures, which he defines as monotheistic cultures of the Mediterranean basin that have created genesis myths, with composite cultures, which he states were born of history, specifically colonial history. Furthermore, his theories of Relation are predicated on the importance of mitigating the discrepancy between the ex-centric peripheries of France, notably the French Antilles, and the center, Paris and, by extension, metropolitan France. Although the

follow...As regards Muslims, European governments have regularly transgressed this liberal tenet or have tolerated its transgression by others" (145-146).

102

primary concern in his theoretical works is the Caribbean, he conveys sympathy for the situation of regional languages in France.

In Castanian thought, centralism and unitarism are the two forces that have significantly shaped French culture. Castan writes, "Against the insanity of the One, Occitanie opposes with the truth of the plural³⁰" (1984:137). For Castan, Occitan cultural identity, which he writes is by nature plural, challenges this kind of unitarism (48). In his writings, pluralism is the tool of opposition against centralism and crucial to the survival of French culture. Whereas centralization refers to France's administrative organization, Castan considers centralism to be a mentality and a neurosis. He situates Occitanism as an agent of social change. Drawing parallels between the Inquisition and the forces he sees at play in twentieth-century France and in the world at large, he characterizes the Inquisition as a "refusal of the other, the pushing back against independent ideas, and resorting to force against consciousness." (155). By contrast, Castan posits that "Occitan thought is completely turned towards the Other; that is its grandeur" (29).

Like Castan, Occitan musicians I interviewed oppose the unitarism they perceive in France by "turning towards the Other" and emphasizing their own otherness. Manu Théron states, "As Occitan, we can give, along with people from Brittany, Corsica, etc. to help people deal with otherness from outside the land because we are otherness from inside the land. We can help each other; we can bring lots of things to each other in between minorities" (interview on June 28, 2014). While this statement may present problematic assumptions, it also reveals the role of mediation that he assigns to Occitan culture. Occitan musicians diversify the signs of French national identity by delving into their own regional history, by putting forth an alternate set of historical symbols, such as the medieval troubadours and the Cathars, and/or by examining

³⁰ À la folie de l'Un, l'Occitanie oppose la vérité du pluriel.

a Mediterranean historical continuum. In this way, their interests intersect with other populations in France who seek national symbols beyond those of Marianne, the Marseillaise, and the French flag.

Magyd and Tayeb Cherfi Address French Universalism

Magyd Cherfi, who rose to fame as the lead singer of the Toulousan band Zebda³¹

(Arabic for butter, or *beurre*—homonymous with *beur*— in French), has addressed the limiting demarcations of official culture and what constitutes Frenchness. In his autobiography, *Ma part de gaulois* (My Piece of Gaul) (2016), Cherfi writes, "The French exception is to be French and to have to become it" (8). The son of Algerian immigrants, Cherfi has questioned *le récit français* (the French narrative). In a televised interview he states, "We are waiting for the Republic to take us into her arms...There is nothing that makes room for all these children like myself, from Algeria, Senegal—there is nothing in which we can recognize ourselves." ³² He inquires, "Can we imagine a cosmopolitan nation? Can we imagine a nation with symbols that would speak to these children? There is Marianne, the blue-white-red flag, and the Marseillaise—that is okay, but what is there for this new France?" Tcherfi explains that children in the *cité* (or *banlieue*) are born French, but become less and less French as "we become aware that we are not welcome."

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³¹ In 1998, Zebda released a song "On est chez nous" (We Are Home), which it continues to perform. Its refrain "Là où on va/ On est chez nous" (Where we are going/We are home) serves today as a response to Marine le Pen's slogan *On est chez nous* that has been chanted at National Front gatherings in France and is the building block of much of the party's rhetoric.

³² "Magyd se raconte dans *Ma part de gaulois*." YouTube video, 7:27, interview with Magyd Cherfi on CNews. Published September 1, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxMuPOpIQBA

In a 2016 interview published in the newspaper *La Dépêche du Midi*, Cherfi states, "Me, the son of an Algerian, I am Toulousan, Pyrenean, Occitan...One is multiple. Is it possible for the Republic to accept that?" (*La Dépêche du Midi* 2016). His denunciation of the French Republic's inability to account for a multiplicity of identities amongst its citizens is comparable to what the Occitan musician, Tatou, expressed to me in an interview: "I feel French, Marseillais. I am able to function as a French person, an Occitan person, a European person, and as an inhabitant of the planet, all at the same time. The Republic can't understand that" (interview on June 5, 2010). Occitanists do not experience the discrimination and/or police surveillance to which descendants of postcolonial immigrants may be subject. Both musicians, however, point to reductionist views of French identity that are circulated within a nation grappling with how its identity might be changing.

At one point in the televised interview cited above, Cherfi addresses the backlash against the exclusion and discrimination experienced by young people living in the *banlieue*. He observes that he has never seen so many young people visibly identifying with an elsewhere, the home of their parents or grandparents, and cites teeshirts with logos such as "Algeria Number One" or *Sénégal Puissance* (Senegal Power) as an example. Cherfi's remarks are reminiscent of what the French philosopher and cultural theorist Étienne Balibar ascertains in one his many essays on French universalism, which have been published in *Des universels* (2016). In the second essay of this collection, Balibar discusses the relationship between the universal and the particular in France: the universal "appears sooner or later as a *particular* discourse, which consciously or unconsciously excludes others, and in return is excluded (defied, threatened) by them" (43; italics kept from the original). In addition to showing how the enunciation of universalism leads to its opposite, Balibar states that the more totalizing a discourse, the more "it

exposes itself to the rise of opposition, negation, and scission" (45). Similarly, Jacques Derrida observes, in *The Other Heading* (1992), that the imposition of the universal serves as a catalyst for oppositional assertions of identity.

In 2010, I interviewed Magyd Cherfi's brother, Tayeb Cherfi, in order to better understand the links between the Occitan and Franco-Maghrebi activist movements. In this interview, he emphasized different aspects than that of his brother's discourse on cultural citizenship in France. Tayeb Cherfi is the manager of Zebda and the founder of the association Tactikcollectif. The motto on Tactikcollectif's website is a phrase by Glissant: "Changer en échangeant sans craindre de se perdre" (To change through exchanging without fearing losing oneself). Cherfi is himself interested in Occitan music and its revival of Provençal. He stated that when he first listened to Massilia Sound System, he was struck by their ability to "describe the quotidian in a way that was universal." He heard the song "Mais qu'elle est bleue" (How Blue It Is), a song about the Mediterranean Sea that Massilia dedicates to all people on the Mediterranean, and could relate to it, having grown up by the sea. "When they sing of fishermen [pescadou in Provençal], I can see myself in it; my father was a fisherman." He bought the album Chourmo (1993) and began singing in Provençal to his parents' bemusement.

Despite his interest in Occitan, Cherfi emphasized that he must not fall into a multiculturalist discourse. He adamantly opposed multiculturalism as an identity discourse on the basis that "we are French." He stated, "That would say that we are more foreign than French, it would be participating in what all the elite say, 'that we are not quite French.' We ARE French—and we have influences that come from our parents. But first we are French. That is extremely important." Although Magyd and Tayeb Cherfi are basically communicating the same idea—that postcolonial immigrants are not fully accepted as French—Tayeb foregrounds the fact

that they are French, but with diverse origins. In this sense, his message is distinct from the articulations of otherness by Occitan musicians, whose primary objective is not to identify as French—because that is a given—but to prove that they are also Occitan, Mediterranean, and global citizens.

In 2005, two members of Zebda, Mustapha and Hakrim Amokrane, released an album with the evocative title *Origines controlées* (Controlled Origins), which became the name of the music festival that Tactikollectif has organized since 2007 as well as the name of their record label. The album consists of songs composed in France by Algerians between the 1940s and 1975. The songs, in Kabyle and Arabic, recount the experiences of young Algerian men in Paris, reflecting Algerian immigration patterns during those years. Tayeb Cherfi explained to me that the name *Origines controlées* refers to "our origins, the origins of our parents." The word *controlées* reflects the fact that "here in France, we, the population born of postcolonial immigration, we are very controlled and our origins are as well. They perpetually suspect our origins of robbery, delinquent behavior, and radical Islam. A synonym would be 'suspected origins.'" By contrast, the aim of the album was, in Tayeb Cherfi's words, "to present our origins and the origins of our parents. We are proud. They are plural. They are not simple."

Tatou Addresses French Universalism

Interviews with the Occitan musician demonstrate his understanding of and preoccupation with universalism. The word *l'universel* (the universal) arises frequently in Tatou's speech around his music. Although "the universal" is not the same as universalism, it was, in fact, the consistent use of the phrase "local and universal" in his and other musicians' mission statements, as well as in journalistic writings, that led me to pursue universalism in France as a line of inquiry. Why is there such fixation on the local and the universal? Moussu T e

lei Jovents' mission statement describes "a repertoire whose local nature is ultimately the best platform to universality." On the one hand, there is nothing unusual about a musician striving for universal recognition or for their music to resonate with a global audience. Tatou states that documenting the intimacy of local, daily life is a pathway to universal relevance. This attitude resembles what Martin Stokes writes in "Music and the Global Order": "locality...is constructed, enacted, and rhetorically defended with an eye (and ear) on others, both near and far" (2004:50). However, given ongoing debates on the particular, the universal, and difference in France, the phrase "the best platform to universality" accrues additional meaning. Tatou presents a model of republican citizenship in which not only is particularity a feature of universalism, but universalism also lies *in* particularity.

Delving more deeply into Tatou's discourse, one finds insightful commentary on immigration, cultural identity, and French history. In the following interview excerpt, he distinguishes universalism from "the universal," which for him denotes internationalism. For Tatou internationalism signifies a globally oriented cosmopolitanism, whereas universalism is a cultural messianism. He states:

Universalism: It is not internationalism. It comes from the idea that French culture is the best in the world, that everything it thinks is valid for the whole world, which is not true by the way. That is universalism. Universalism is a sort of phantasm for France. 'La grande culture' that everyone waits for. That it was a sort of canon that fell from the sky... And is always trying to teach a lesson: the rights of man, democracy, yet if it looked at itself it would see that sometimes it should shut up...We teach lessons but don't look at ourselves, because there is no point in looking: we, we are good. Because by definition, we are the grand humanities, the *lumières* they call that here in France—the grand ideals, the French Revolution...It stems from centralism also...as in, everyone one must be rangé [organized] in their place, because there is ONE truth in fact. (Interview on June 5, 2010)

Tatou covers a wide range of subjects: an official culture in France based on the intellectual legacy of the *lumières* (Enlightenment philosophers), the role of the Revolution in the formation

of French national identity, and the perduring sense in France of cultural superiority. In the last sentence, he refers to three topics that appeared frequently in our interviews: centralism, the idea that French citizens must be *rangé* (in one's place), and the notion of "One truth." This last concept is equivalent to what Glissant and Castan call *l'Un* (the One).

For Tatou, this unitarism is intertwined with centralism in France and the fact that certain members of the French elite continue to hold onto the nation's reputation as the cultural epicenter of the world. Tatou has a contrasting perspective on the reception of French culture by the international community: "Our country that is so loved... Well, me who has traveled...pfff.

I've seen more people around the world that listened to American rock n' roll than to Brassens.

One gets the impression that we are still in 1900 or something, when Russians spoke French"

(Interview on June 5, 2010). Furthermore, as indicated by the following statement, he believes that this cultural superiority begets resistance to foreigners: "The people in power say, 'we are the best in the world. The French language is the most beautiful in the world.' Well, if you are persuaded that you are the best in the world, you don't open your doors easily to others."

In our interviews Tatou often mimicked a non-specific government official, as he does in the following statement: "How lucky you are to be in France: ah, it's amazing, super. You will be able to learn French...leave your baggage at the frontier; your customs, we don't want that." In his imitation of a central authority, Tatou critiques the way cultural universalism within France is applied to immigrants and the expectations that the latter assimilate into French society. Granted, there have been, at least in rhetoric and public displays, articulations of a multicultural France. For instance, the 1989 bicentennial of the French Revolution, which took place the same year as the headscarf affair, has become known for its emphasis on cultural diversity. However, commentators on the Bicentennial have pointed to the discrepancy between

French policy and the presentation of multiculturalism at the event. For instance, it was that same year that President Mitterand announced that France had reached its threshold of immigrants "beyond which the nation's tolerance would become tested" (cited in Taras 2012:194).

Throughout this chapter, I have addressed what I perceive to be two inextricable characteristics of French universalism. The first is a monist tendency that engenders a restrictive conception of French republican citizenship. Glissant and Félix-Marcel Castan refer to this uniformity as l'Un (the One). The second is its world-oriented aspect (Balibar 2016). The worldorientation of French universalism is akin to what Glissant calls mondialité (world-ness or globality). For Glissant, the two primary manifestations of French *mondialité* are the nation's colonial past and its concept of human rights. Occitan musicians challenge the monist strain of universalism and the dispersion of l'Un through, for example, their choice to sing in Occitan, but they nonetheless embrace its world-oriented value that places emphasis on human rights. Furthermore, as I demonstrate in subsequent chapters, it is precisely the world-oriented aspect of universalism upon which they draw to contest reductionist (universalist) views of culture within France. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss what Miriam Ticktin identifies as the "new humanitarianism," which she perceives to be an expression of universalism, and explore how it is articulated in the song "Sus l'autura" (On the Hill), performed by Tatou's band Moussu T e lei Jovents.

Occitanists: The New Universalists?

In Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France (2011), Miriam Ticktin discusses what she calls the "new humanitarianism" that emerged with organizations such as Médecins sans frontières (Doctors without Borders) (MSF). Founded in 1971 by Bernard Kouchner, MSF countered the third-worldism of the 1950s and 1960s (and into

the 1970s) that had aligned Marxist solidarity with anticolonial struggles for independence. According to Ticktin, whereas French third-worldism recognized the political agency of the actors involved in independence movements, in 1970s and early 1980s, after the failure of May 1968 and the rise of totalitarian regimes in former colonies, such as the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the "anti-third-worldists" focused on their victimhood in the context of authoritarian governments, natural disasters, and their consequent need for salvation. Ticktin construes the humanitarian philosophy of MSF as a new form of universalism, 33 one that is morally, instead of politically, grounded in the individual.

One of MSF's mottos has been the "right to intervene," which Ticktin connects indirectly to the colonial civilizing mission. She writes, "France's colonial history haunts the debate over *le droit d'ingérence* [the right to intervene], shaping the present in a decisive way...French colonial policies were highly interventionist and were involved in nearly all aspects of life, from health to education to sexuality" (77). For Ticktin, the continuity lies in MSF's "attempt to challenge military discourses through the propagation of a new global ethics." While there are differences in outcome between the MSF's right to intervene and the interventionist policy of European governments, they are both expressions of universalism (see Wallerstein 2006).

³³ Ticktin studies how humanitarian measures were written into the 1998 immigration law that placed emphasis on the morally legitimate suffering body. Amidst the anti-immigrant sentiment of the 1990s, several exceptional humanitarian policies were instated, including the 1998 "illness clause," that "give legal residency papers to those already in France who have pathologies of life-threatening consequence, if they are declared unable to receive proper treatment in their home countries" (2). She also cites clauses that gave residency to victims of violence against women and of human trafficking. She examines the paradoxical results that such clauses created: it required that bodies stay sick, and led in some cases to self-innoculation with the AIDS virus. Those whose bodies were deemed exceptionally suffering were given permission to stay, reinforcing their status as second-class citizens (24).

Ticktin's research provides useful background information for Moussu T e lei Jovents' song "Sus l'autura" and Tatou's humanitarian commentary on immigration and borders. Like other Occitan musicians I interviewed, Tatou demonstrates his solidarity with refugees, undocumented immigrants, and descendants of postcolonial immigrants in France primarily through musical performance. In "Sus l'autura," he specifically addresses the passage of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, and what is generally known as the refugee crisis in Europe. The refugee crisis began on April 2015 when a boat carrying approximately 850 migrants and refugees capsized, resulting in the deaths of all but twenty-eight of its passengers (De Genova 2017:1). That event, in addition to subsequent migrant deaths, led Nicolas De Genova to state, "the Mediterranean has incontestably earned the disgraceful distinction of being the veritable epicenter" of deadly border crossings (3). Policing the maritime border of Europe has included the "use of boats, helicopters, and airplanes to intercept incoming migrants" (Watch the Med 2013). These were first deployed by border guard agencies of nations along the Mediterranean Sea and later by neighboring non-coastal EU members as a consequence of pressure placed on them.³⁴ The enforcement of maritime border patrols along the coast has not impeded immigration but rather has resulted in alternate longer and more dangerous routes of passage. Surveillance tools, such as radars, cameras, and satellites, are used to detect migrants before they enter EU waters, making it the responsibility of neighboring countries to intercept or rescue them. Border patrol has included ignoring migrants in distress, resulting in "left-to-die" cases (Watch the Med 2013).

³⁴ The premier agency used to detect and prevent illegal immigration is Frontex, founded in 2006.

Describing to me the political context in which he composed "Sus l'autura," Tatou explained, "I wrote it [in 2006] before the war in Syria, which is the source of problems of today. I wrote it when there were problems with Africans crossing the Strait of Gibraltar" (interview on February 12, 2018). However, Tatou added, the subject matter continues to be of relevance. In 2016 Manivette Records, the company that his wife Manue (née Emanuelle Timarche) directs and that has recorded all of the band's albums, uploaded a video in which the song is accompanied by a montage of black-and-white photographs of refugees and victims of human trafficking.³⁵

On the recorded version of "Sus l'autura," a melancholic and contemplative song, the guitar and banjo player for Moussu T e lei Jovents, Blu, plays a wistful introductory melody on the banjo that he interweaves in a conversational manner with a guitar line. The recording includes a few electronic sounds, such as one that resembles the blowing wind, which sonically portray the subject matter and position the listener as the narrator looking out at the Mediterranean Sea. The specific location Tatou had in mind was the Cap Canaille, France's highest cliff, located between the towns of La Ciotat and Cassis.

Quilhat coma un pin sus l'autura, Avau,

La mar sembla un jardin. Lo peis li mena l'aventura,

La nau

Li traça lo destin.

Ailà, si devina Marsilha, Bessai l'esquina d'un enser. L'aucèu que tòrna d'Argeria Crida lei nòvas dau matin.

Davant leis uelhs, ges de barrièra

Raised like a pine tree on the hill

Below,

The sea resembles a garden. The fish leads an adventure there.

The boatman

Traces his destiny there.

Over there, one makes out Marseille, Maybe the back of a dolphin. The bird that returns from Algeria

Cries the news of the morning

Before the eyes, no barriers

³⁵ "Sus L'Autura" by Moussu T e lei Jovents. YouTube video, 3:19. Published March 21, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5h4MpDjkCik

La sau

E l'aiga sens fin.

Lo vent si garça dei frontièras,

Ti fau

Viatjar ambé son trin.

Va t'en gabiòta se siás lèsta, Va t'en esclairar lo camin

Per lo vaissèu de ma mestressa

E lei barcas dei clandestins.

The salt

And the water without end.

The wind doesn't care about borders,

You must

Voyage with its speed

Go seagull if you are ready,

Go light the way

For the vessel of my mistress

And the boats of the clandestine ones.

Contrasting the picturesque Mediterranean landscape to which he refers in the song with refugees drowning in the same sea, Tatou described "Sus l'autura":

The song's principal subject is that people swim in the same waters that have passed over the corpse of a guy maybe one hundred kilometers from here. And if you reflect on that, it is just not possible. In front of this magnificent landscape at the Cap Canaille, the water is calm, not at all agitated; it's like having a beautiful garden. You would expect there to be only beautiful things: little *bars de peche* [fishing bars], etc... But no, there are really awful things. There are people who drown in the water that licks a person's feet. It is as if I lived next to a cemetery. (Interview on February 12, 2018)

According to Tatou, the nature metaphors in "Sus l'autura" encourage audiences to transcend political discourse on identity papers. His reference to the wind that blows from Africa and to the migration of seagulls that cross national borders is representative of his opposition to the way that European governments have enforced border patrol:

The song evokes the landscape to say, "Look, when you're high up, there are no limits in front of the horizon. You don't give a damn about borders." Look at the reality. The reality is that the wind, when it comes to me, has already blown in Africa. Nowhere did someone stop the wind and ask for its papers. I also use the image of the seagull. The seagull arrives; it has come from one or two hundred kilometers away. It brings news. Nobody stops it and says, "Stop. There are only French seagulls allowed here." You see that nature is one.

In contrast to songs about dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean Sea that have recently been documented (e.g., Ciucci 2019), "Sus l'autura" is performed from the perspective of a witness outside of the migrant community.

Tatou communicated to me the moral responsibilities that he believes inhabitants of the Mediterranean coast must assume. In his opinion, this moral responsibility is a local cultural trait:

As a Mediterranean person, I am even more concerned than anyone else. It is my home. It is also part of the culture here. People who live along the coast have this history of rescue that is anchored in the culture here. Any sailor knows that the first duty of a sailor is to save people who are drowning. When you are in your boat, you don't ignore people drowning. So, we also have this in our culture: you will save people in the sea.

We, who live by the sea, if someone is drowning, we bring them to shore. We don't ask for their papers; we bring them to shore. We, we cannot let people die. It is not possible. It is against our way of being.

Ships turn off their radars so that they don't know about people drowning, which is illegal and very dangerous. They shut down their transponders. In other words, people don't call them to help people drowning in the sea. It's insane to think that way. Can you imagine, someone who in total consciousness says, "Go ahead, die, drown." It's mindblowing. And that is drowning in so much discourse about the "invasion." This discourse has been around for a long time but is re-emerging.

There are things that you cannot let happen. It's as if you were going home and there were people dying in the streets, and you just went inside. No, you will call someone; you will do something. For me it's the same. So, too bad for your legislative choices, etc. We, we are obliged to rise above that.

In this passage, Tatou links the rescue of those in distress at sea to a specific cultural tradition: "it is part of the culture here" and later: "We have this in our culture: you will save people in the sea." Although France was historically the nation of asylum within Europe, Tatou's statement suggests that he views the local tradition of rescue to be at odds with French immigration policy.

In 2015, Klaus Vogel, a German former captain, founded SOS Mediterranée with aid from Doctors without Borders. SOS Mediterranée, whose headquarters are in Marseille, is a non-governmental organization that has rescued approximately 30,000 migrants traveling to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. It charters a ship called the Aquarius (re-named the Ocean Viking in 2019). Moussu T e lei Jovents, along with the Occitan groups Lo Cor de la Plana and Djé Balèti,

have performed at SOS Mediteranée benefit concerts, such as one which Moussu T e lei Jovents performed in 2017. That same year, for the annual *course de baignoires* (bathtub race) in La Ciotat, a community event that Tatou's association La Ciotat Chourma has created, the band decorated their bathtub in honor of the Aquarius. On the 2017 event, Tatou stated:

This year it was in homage to SOS Mediterranée. So, people arrived all worked up because they've heard all the political talk about "we're going be invaded" etc. But as soon as they start talking [with SOS Mediterranée representatives], they understand that all of this is 'blah blah.' It's not life. At their stall, SOS Mediterranée drew a square meter on the ground and put ten people to show them how many people have to fit on these boats. When you stop talking politics, and just about the reality of the situation, then people become what they never should have ceased to be: human.

Critiquing political discourse that circulates fears of an immigrant invasion, Tatou makes the distinction between politics and individuals' ethical duty towards each other. He takes up the humanitarian aspect of universalism where he perceives the French government to have failed. Tatou's anti-political discourse mimics what Ticktin calls MSF's "new universalism" in its emphasis on the individual. Whereas Ticktin critiques the interventionist tactics of groups like MSF, Tatou sees himself morally implicated and responsible for acting within the current situation at his doorstep. Ticktin takes a critical stance toward "practices of care that respond to suffering" and "mark the French as benevolent, as civilized, as humane" (2011:24). Naomi Schor connects this humanitarian legacy to French universalism: "To this day French national identity remains bound up—at least in official discourse, but also in ongoing intellectual debates—with universal human rights, of which France considers itself the inalienable trustee. French, accordingly, is the idiom of universality" (2001:46-47). While Tatou's discourse may represent the French universalist legacy of defending human rights, which Schor elides with the French language, his critique of the French government and musical compositions suggest that, for him, Occitan language and identity constitute the idiom of a new universality.

Conclusion

My objective in portraying Occitanists as neo-universalists is to exemplify how discourse circulates between government, associations, and individuals, carrying different meanings. Writing on Foucault's theory of discourse, Jane Sugarman states, "A discourse that is deployed in the name of dominant interests in one historical moment may be taken up as a site of resistance in the next..." (1997:28). This dynamic operates within Occitan musical discourse: concepts such as universalism and even democracy itself have becomes sites of resistance. As I discuss in Chapter Four, cultural democracy, which was a cornerstone of François Mitterand's socialist agenda, would also become the foundation of Claude Sicre's anti-centralist activism and re-invention of folklore.

Chapters One and Two have provided historical overviews of language and universalism in France in order to contextualize Occitan music and discourse. In this study, my discussion of Occitan postcolonial regionalism is contingent on the notion that musical performance not only provides the enactment of desired relationships (Small 1998) but also the enactment of a desired history. As I demonstrate in the four ethnographic chapters that follow, the musicians whom I discuss vary in terms of stylistic categories; however, they are united by an interrogation, retrieval, and reification of the past (cf. Hill 2007). Their musical performances and discourse convey "historical interpretations of music" and "musical interpretations of history" (Blum 1993:1). Through the revival of instruments, songs, and a language associated with the past, these performers are invested in historical representation in terms of what belongs within official and/or unofficial historical narratives and how these narratives might be reimagined. Anthony Seeger observes, in "When Music Makes History," that "history is the subjective understanding of the past from the perspective of the present. Events do not simply happen; they are interpreted

and recreated" (1993:23). Drawing upon this statement, Thomas Solomon defines historical subjectivities as "the sense of identity created by contemporary subjects in their present-day imaginations, appropriations, and mobilizations of the past—the way people today imagine themselves in terms of their understanding of the past" (2016:117). Since the 1970s, Occitan musicians have appropriated the past in multiple ways and for various reasons. In the next chapter, I discuss Daniel Loddo, who, for four decades, has researched the history and cultural practices of his native department of Tarn in southwestern France.

CHAPTER THREE

Daniel Loddo's Field-Based Compositions

The ethnomusicologist, composer, and performer Daniel Loddo is an important figure in the Occitan music world due to his prolific recordings of and writings about music in southern France. Several other bands I interviewed consult him and the archive that he has established. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which Loddo draws on, or is rooted in, the field for his songs, and argue that they exemplify the deterritorialization/rooting dynamic characteristic of Occitan music. I use the metaphor of the land suggested by the term "fieldwork" (in French: recherche de terrain) to construct my argument from the ground up, so to speak, beginning with the Occitan terrain. Loddo's compositions, ethnographic work, and cultural activism are rooted in the land but are devoid of territorial claims and contested borders. In this sense, his ethnographic projects and outlook convey the deterritorializing/rooting dynamic within Occitan discourse on music and identity. Like many Occitan musicians, he has cultivated partnerships with musicians outside of the Occitan music scene. I analyze the musical alliances (Diamond 2007) he has created with Brazilian musicians as musical illustrations of Glissant's theory of rhizome identity.

Steeped as they are in the field, Loddo's musical activities represent to the greatest extent that which pertains to the land, to tradition, and to the *terroir* (the local/land). Borrowing imagery from traditional music, Loddo infuses his songs with references to the natural world, referencing a time when people worked the land and lived in more direct contact with nature. Similarly, the songs on his recorded albums often include nature sounds he has recorded in the field; this means that the noises of rivers, cows, and fieldwork samples of agricultural labor make their way into his compositions, enlivening his sonic portrait of Occitanie.

The name of Loddo's band, La Talvera, is itself a metaphor that refers to a type of land. As Loddo explained to me in our first interview, *la talvera* (pronounced "la talvero") is the Occitan word for the uncultivated land that lies at the edge of the worked terrain. The following excerpt is the definition of *la talvera* that appears on the band's website: "La Talvera is the edge of the field that one doesn't labor, where the crazy and wild plants lie next to each other and mix. It is in this space of liberty that Daniel Loddo's songs are born, and where they rise, talk fast and strike if necessary, warble and laugh, shout out and get agitated, awaken and shake." This text and the group's name are a reference to the Occitan novelist Joan Bodon (1920-1975), who wrote, "It is on *la talvera* where freedom lies!" (Es sur la talvera qu'es la libertat!) This phrase has become one of the band's mottos, printed on teeshirts, stickers, and flags. In conversation Loddo has reiterated, "I prefer to stay on *la talvera*"—his response, for example, to the question, "For whom did you vote in the last election?" (He abstained). Although Loddo's compositions are deeply informed by the traditional music he researches, they are always mixed with other cultural references.

Loddo began his career in the 1970s, a decade defined, according to ethnomusicologist Luc Charles-Dominique, by a rejection of the "dominant culture," a fight for the recognition of dominated ones, a respect for the "right to difference," and regionalist and ecological protests, such as the Gardarem lo Larzac in southern France (1996:278-279). The 1970s saw attempts to revive regional languages, music, and dance, especially in the peripheral regions of the West, Southwest, and Southeast of France (279). In many ways, Loddo and his career fit Charles-Dominique's description of the zeitgeist of the 1970s. Ecologically minded, he has been involved with the recent Zone-à-défendre (Zone to Defend) (ZAD) protest, which protected a portion of land on which the government had plans to build an international airport. His fieldwork and

performance of traditional music are testament to the objective, during the 1970s and into the 1980s, of rehabilitating regional language practices as well as the music and dance forms. Furthermore, his songs often critique hegemonic power structures such as the central government and global capitalism and defend minority communities throughout the world. Therefore, before discussing Loddo, I provide additional background information on the folk revival, the internal colonialism thesis, and the beginnings of Occitan protest music.

1970s Counter-Culture and the Occitan Folk Movement

Where Has All the Folklore Gone?

As France moved out of thirty years of relative economic prosperity, known as the *Trente Glorieuses* (1945-1975), some of its citizens questioned the benefits of the modern way of life, and looked nostalgically to the small villages of France, to the *terroir*, for a pre-industrial past. In *L'identité de la France* (The Identity of France) (1984), Fernand Braudel concludes that the biggest change in modern France had been the disappearance of peasant culture, which transpired as a result of rural exodus as well as changes in village life, agricultural practices, and local worldviews. Writing on the rapid transformation of French society, Lebovics states, "In 1945, France had been a society with a significant peasant population, primarily small industrial firms, many local merchants...Two decades later...the country had become a highly urbanized, technology-driven society with growing numbers of technical and managerial white-collars" (1999:198). According to Henri Mendras in *La fin des paysans* (The End of the Peasants) ([1967] 1984), within one generation the thousand-year-old *culture paysanne* (peasant culture) had disappeared.

Rural exodus, or *la desertification* ("desertification") of the provinces, was a continual process in France that began in the nineteenth century. Suzanne Nash (1993) writes that in the

mid-nineteenth century, 80 percent of the French rural population lived and worked in the countryside. By 1960, the rural population constituted 38 percent of the total population (Macrotrends). In an article on male celibacy and the crisis of peasant culture in his hometown in Béarn, Pierre Bourdieu (1962) wrote of the impact of the abandonment of farms on the local village economy. He observed that peasant men, who primarily spoke the local Gascon language, or Béarnais, were unable to find wives because women were increasingly interested in moving to towns and speaking French (92). However, according to Mendras, the overall rural population in France increased slightly during the 1970s and included *ouvriers* (manual laborers), those seeking an alternative way of life, and second homeowners. A 1982 census indicated that the population of rural France was increasing at a faster pace than other parts of France, with 49 percent of manual laborers living in rural areas and 39 percent in urban areas (Mendras 1984:370). The population of the countryside and villages, as Mendras emphasized in *La fin des* paysans, was rural but not peasant. Life in the pays (countryside) changed significantly during the 1970s: inhabitants acquired access to all the amenities of urban areas, including running water, modern kitchens, telephone wires, and increased transportation to the small cities nearby.

This broad social context, as well as the North American folk-song revival, catalyzed the French mouvement folk (folk movement). Pete Seeger, in his "Open Letter" published in 1972 in the French magazine Rock & Folk, warned against coca-colonization and encouraged people in other countries to explore their folk music (Mazerolle 2008:180). Similarly, as one performer of traditional music of southwestern France explained to me, listening to Joan Baez and Bob Dylan sparked an interest among members of his generation in discovering their own folk music. Like

¹ In 2019, the rural population in France made up 19 percent of the total population, comparable to that of the United States (Macrotrends).

other folk revivals, the *mouvement folk* was motivated by a "dissatisfaction with aspects of the modern world" (Bithell and Hill 2013:10). Caroline Bithell situates the music revivalism that occurred in Corsica at the time within a larger European context: "The 1970s ushered in a wave of revival, revitalization, and retraditionalization across Europe, fueled by a loss of faith in the processes of modernization and secularization, together with an awareness of their social costs" (2007:109). The Occitan poet Roland Pécout writes in *La musique folk des peuples de France* (Folk Music of Peoples of France) (1978), "Folk [the folk movement] was born from a moribund popular culture and the industrial hell" (13), and "Folk was born, without fire or place, of this nostalgia for oneself and of being sick of this old so-called 'modern' world" (14).

Musicians who participated in the folk movement believed they were tracking down the last generation of folk musicians *de tradition* ("of tradition")—and, according to Luc Charles-Dominique, they were. They sought out teachers, made amateur field recordings, and performed what they collected in the field at *bals folks* (folk dances). Frustrated by the inaccessibility of archives at the Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires (MNATP) and working outside of the university system, folk music revivalists produced tens of thousands of hours of audiovisual recordings made in many regions of France (Charles-Dominique and Defrance 2012:16). The beginning of the revival was defined by militancy and a reaction against the university system. However, some of these musicians eventually enrolled in academic programs, notably Xavier Vidal, Claude Sicre, Daniel Loddo, and Charles-Dominique, where they learned scientific research and analytical techniques (16). They have since created associations including Sicre's Escambiar in Toulouse and Loddo's CORDAE in Cordes-sur-Ciel.

Gardarem lo Larzac (We Will Save the Larzac)

The 1970s also witnessed a massive counter-cultural protest in the southwest of France called Gardarem lo Larzac. In 1970, local farmers and activists from all over France convened at the Larzac plateau to protest the expansion of a military base and potential expropriation of the farmers' lands. This arid, largely forgotten land was primarily used for sheep grazing, and since the 1880s, its main economic resource had been the production of Roquefort cheese (Williams 2008:25). The core group of protestors consisted of 103 peasant farmers, whose interests "became the conditions for the outsiders' engagement in the Larzac" (27). The local farmers called themselves the Paysans de Larzac (the Peasants of Larzac) and, along with external sympathizers, held demonstrations locally, in nearby cities, and as far as Paris. They chose nonviolent methods; as the activist Paul Bourgière states in the documentary film Tous au Larzac (Everyone at the Larzac) (2011), "We had two things: sheep and tractors." One of their most dramatic gestures was to create chaos in the Champ de Mars in Paris with sixty sheep. Another Larzac activist, Michel Courtin states in the film: if the military would occupy their farms, they would occupy its camp. Other tactics included blocking roads with tractors and sheep, letting air out of the tires of military vehicles, distributing pamphlets, illegally constructing a stone barn, and organizing concerts and *universités* (universities) (Lebovics 2008). Their largest gathering, held in 1974, assembled 100,000 participants (Williams 2008:27). It brought together a diverse group of people: ecologists, hippies, the clergy, Maoists, anarchists, intellectuals, and pacifists (28). One of the Larzac movement's participants was Jose Bové, who had moved from Bordeaux to cultivate land nearby (see Lebovics 2008).

During the Larzac protest, the peasant worker became a symbol of opposition to capitalism and a militaristic government. Lyrics to Dominique Loquais's song "La chanson du

Larzac" (The Song of the Larzac) voiced a shared ideal: "Sheep, not cannons. We will never leave." The Larzac movement lasted eleven years and its outcome was ultimately successful: upon election in 1981, President François Mitterand put an end to the expansion. Gwyn Williams writes, "In a sense, the Larzac is considered not so much a place as a symbol of struggle and victory" (2008:29).

Although the struggle was not a uniquely Occitan one, as early as May 1971, Occitanists participated in protests (Williams 2008:26). As Valérie Mazerolle writes, "the Larzac is at the heart of the preoccupations of Occitan organizations and becomes a symbol for them" (2008:128). Concerts that took place at the Larzac helped launch the careers of several Occitan music performers, singers of the *nòva cançon occitana*. Claude Martí, the most acclaimed performer of this genre, became an ambassador for the Larzac movement. In 1971, he visited the site two months after the announcement of the military camp's extension, returned the following year, and conveyed to interested audiences elsewhere what was happening at the Larzac (Terral 2011). Other Occitan singer/songwriters performed at the Larzac gatherings as well, including Mans de Breish, Patric, and Miquela. The album *Larzac 73* features their songs interspersed with recorded speeches (Larzac 1973). On the album's cover is a photo of the Larzac plateau, where a large crowd is gathered bearing a banner that reads *Paysans travailleurs non à l'armée au service du capital* (Peasant Workers No to the Army in the Service of Capital).

² The first issue of *Lutte occitane* (Occitan Struggle),² the journal published by the political faction of the same name, had the word "Larzac" on its cover (Mazerolle 2008:129). Lutte occitane was the continuation of the Comité d'action occitane (The Committee of Occitan Action), a Marxist group formed after May 1968, which retaliated against capitalism and the central government (Mazerolle 2008:12-13). Of the various Occitan committees and political parties of the 1970s (see Mazerolle 2008 for a list) Lutte Occitane was the most engaged with Gardarem lo Larzac.

A salient feature of this historical moment is that, over the course of their struggle, Gardarem lo Larzac organizers enacted a sense of what Glissant called *mondialité* (world-ness) by aligning themselves with agrarian subcultures and liberation movements outside of France. Miriam Ticktin (2011) describes this orientation more specifically as third-worldism. For instance, in 1974 the Peasants of Larzac dedicated their harvest to the *paysans du tiers monde* (peasants of the third world). They also sent two farmer-militants with money to build a water reservoir for a village in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) in the Sahel region of Africa (Lebovics 2004:39). NCO singers also identified with liberation movements external to France. The cover of Martí's first album, *Occitania* (1972), features an image of Che Guevara. In the album's last song, called "Occitania saluda Cuba" (Occitanie Salutes Cuba), Martí lauded the reacquisition of the land by the Cuban people and lamented that "we must abandon what we have" (cited in Drott 2011:3).

One of the most famous songs of this era is Martí's "Montségur," whose title references the legendary site where members of the Cathar religious sect were massacred during the Albigensian Crusades. The first two of the three verses describe the events that took place at this citadel. The scene depicted in the first two lines of the third verse, whose lyrics are provided below, is that of the medieval massacre: "Here is the hour of defeat/The idea burns at the stake." However, in the third line, Martí bridges the past with the present. Singing, "We lead your combat now," he becomes the interlocutor for the defenseless Cathars and inserts the Occitan cause within his contemporary global context:

Vaqui l'ora de la desfacha L'idea brutla sul lenhièr Aqui l'alba de la victoria Menam vostra lucha avuèi Minoritats contra l'Empèri Indians de totas la colors Here is the hour of defeat The idea burns at the stake Here is the dawn of victory We lead your combat now Minorities against the Empire Indians of all colors Descolonizarem la terra Montségur, te dreiças pertot! Decolonize the earth Montségur, you rise up everywhere!"

By identifying with, and possibly as, "Indians"—i.e., Native Americans—Martí defines Occitan inhabitants as an indigenous population, consolidating colonialism with the northern takeover of Languedoc that occurred many centuries prior. In this song, Montségur becomes a symbol of hegemonic domination and of internal colonialism.

The Internal Colonialism Thesis

The internal colonialism thesis was developed during decolonization movements of the 1950s and 1960s that led to the French loss of its empire. Robert Lafont became the preeminent theorist of this idea, spelling out his thesis in several works (1967, 1971a, 1974). Occitanists were not the only regionalist group to espouse the concept of internal colonialism; it was also used by regionalists in Bretagne. As Paul Silverstein writes, the Algerian War in particular "served as a crystallizing moment for many Occitan and Breton militants in the radicalization of their political beliefs, taking on for themselves the image of the peasant-revolutionary" (2004:73). The Algerian War shaped the regionalist minority movements in the metropole: regionalist militants drew on the use of public strikes and demonstrations by the Front libération nationale (National Liberation Front) (73). While there were distinct differences between the situation of colonized Algerians and French regionalist militants, as Robert Lafont recognized, decolonization "became the general lens through which ethnic movements in France interpreted their struggle and refined their methods" (73). In 1962, the year of Algerian independence, Lafont founded the Comité occitan d'études et d'action (Occitan Committee of Studies and

3

³ Silverstein writes, "In this way, the anti-colonial nationalism in both Algeria and France provoked debates over the place of ethnolinguistic heterogeneity within the nation-state on both sides of the Mediterranean" (73-74).

Action) (COEA). In *La révolution régionaliste* (The Regionalist Revolution) he addressed the term "internal colonialism": "Internal colonialism is neither an easy revolutionary banner nor a means of attracting attention through scandal. It is the best expression we have found upon reflection to describe a number of economic processes that can be most perceptibly grouped together as examples of regional underdevelopment" (1967:140). These economic processes included the control of private industry by foreign capital; the concentration of farmland in the hands of a few absentee owners; the extraction of raw materials for manufacture elsewhere; and the development of industries like tourism that benefited foreigners at the expense of local inhabitants (Drott 2011:6). Lafont was, however, careful to distinguish internal from external colonialism:

One will do well, then, not to forget the adjective "internal"; it underscores that the processes in question separate a population that share the same civic rights into colonizers and colonized. The colonized French regional is not an Algerian during the colonial era. The acts of conquest that made him French are so ancient that they no longer have public vigor. Furthermore, the gradual remaking of the French nation, the national contract of 1789, theoretically abolished the negative consequences of the conquest. If, therefore, the regional citizen protests against an injustice imposed on him, he does it as a French national, underlining thereby that the contract was misunderstood, has become a means of oppression, when it should have been a means of emancipation. Let us go further: the regional only protests rarely, and under the weight of events; participating in the centralist ideology that has been inculcated in him... he will be himself solicited to partake in the deterioration of regional life. Internal colonialism becomes ineluctably auto-colonization. That is its gravest, most devastating, aspect. (1967:140-141)

While Lafont referred here mainly to processes that have deteriorated the regional economy, his body of work also sought to validate the cultural history and life of the region, as in the book *Renaissance du Sud* (Renaissance of the South) (1970), which focuses on sixteenth-century

⁴ Writing on the Larzac and internal colonialism, Lebovics states, "If we consider the ways in which the Larzac was like a colony of the metropole, the parallels are impressive. Here was a predominantly peasant region, living from exporting its single crop. The country was poor and forgotten in the capital. What money capital could be realized locally tended to be reinvested somewhere else, in more promising places" (2004:38).

Occitan literature during the reign of Henry IV.

The internal colonialism thesis appears in the lyrics of several NCO songs of the 1970s, including Patric's "La cançon del Larzac" (The Song of the Larzac) (*Patric* 1972).⁵ In this song, a father implores his son to leave home, to abandon sheep farming, and warns of the gun-bearing military.

Mon filh, demòres pas aquí Mon filh, l'òme que ven es l'enemi Mon filh, sus son espatla es un fusilh Mon filh, demòres pas aquí

Non! Paire te compreni pas Ieu tanben un jorn serai soldat Ieu amb aquel òme vòli jogar Daissa me paire, t'en fagues pas

Mon filh, demòres pas aquí Mon filh, daissa ta feda, vai morir Mon filh, tes darrers pas a respartir Mon filh, per un mestièr vai t'en daquí

Non! Paire, te comprèni pas D'esser pastre m'agrada plan E vòli viure sul Larzac La tèrra es nòstra, sabes plan

Mon filh, i a fòrça temps es arrivat L'armada es vengua colonisar E dempuei de veire que nos an pas tuats Mon filh, volon tornar començar... My son, do not stay here My son, the man that is coming is the enemy My son, on his shoulder is a gun My son, do not stay here

No! Father I do not understand you I too will be a soldier some day I want to play with that man Let me father, do not worry

My son, do not stay here My son, leave your sheep, they will die My son, do not wait to leave My son, for a job leave here

No! Father I don't understand Being a shepherd pleases me I want to stay on the Larzac The land is ours, as you know well.

My son, a long time ago
The army came to colonize
And after seeing that they didn't kill us
My son, they want to begin again...

By the end of this conversation, the son has convinced his father that he should stay and protect the land.

The theme of leaving the land is also articulated in one of Marti's best-known songs, "Lo païs que vol viure" (The Country That Wants to Live). *Païs*, like *pays* in French, conveys the

⁵ "La Chanson du Larzac" by Patric. YouTube video, 4:40. Published March 4, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xu g7KdyHgg

idea of country, home, or land, as well as the notion of "deep France" (*la France profonde*). This song pays homage to Marcelin Alibert, the leader of a winegrowers' revolt in southern France in 1907. In the voice of a young man who has left his village, Martí sings, "You said to me, mother, 'Where will you live, my son?' You said to me, mother, 'There are so many who have left." Throughout the song, he makes references to the "dead village, the abandoned land." In addition to articulating the internal colonialism thesis, these songs documented the decline of peasant culture and the revalorization of the farmer in the 1970s.

Throughout the greater part of modern French history, regionalism was predominantly associated with the far right (Ford 1993). In the late nineteenth century, the concept of rootedness in the land was one of the discursive building blocks of the regionalist French Action (Action française) political party, established by Charles Maurras. The pro-monarchist French Action stated that France had gone astray with the Revolution of 1789. Preaching ethnic nationalism, the organization also spread the xenophobic idea that Protestants, Jews, and foreigners were contributing to France's decadence. Maurras derived his discourse on "uprootedness" from the writings of the novelist Maurice Barrès, who suggested that uprootedness, people being detached from the land and traditional values, was the reason for modern depravity. In his novel Les déracinés (The Uprooted) (1897), Barrès portrayed the French national education system as an uprooting force leading to the "moral degeneration of the countryside" (Silverstein 2004:82). In their opposition to the republican government and its centralizing universalism, the members of the French Action promoted the use of regional languages (Ford 1993:23). Born in Provence, Maurras had ties to the Félibrige and to the poet Mistral, "who served as an inspiration for" the French Action (23). The ideas put forth by Maurras are considered an important ideological foundation of the Vichy government's back-tothe-land rhetoric during World War II. During the 1970s, the topic of land and agriculture, which had once preoccupied only the local aristocracy and politically conservative regionalists, became of interest to those at the other end of the political spectrum, epitomized by the Larzac protests (see Mendras 1984).

While NCO musicians of the 1970s may have upheld the peasant as a victim of internal colonialism, they did not engage in traditional musical practices associated with the rural south. Daniel Loddo explained to me that, for a long time, members of the Occitan identity movement "were fearful of all that is folklore, fearful even of everything that has to do with peasant culture" (interview on June 5, 2014).⁶ Many of the NCO singer/songwriters were teachers, who learned the language either from their parents or from books, but who often "completely denied their rural origins." They wanted to update Occitan music, and modeled their music style on Leo Ferrer and George Brassens of the Parisian *rive gauche* (Left Bank) or the style of the Spanish musician Paco Ibanez.

Herman Lebovics has observed a "direct line of connection" from the "regionalisms" of the 1970s "back in time to the wave of decolonization of the 1960s and forward to the antiglobalization movements in subsequent decades" (2004:19). Fueled by decolonization movements, Occitan regionalists in the 1970s inserted their own cause within that of imperial domination. A few decades after the Gardarem lo Larzac protest, a veteran of the movement, José Bové, became known worldwide for dismantling a McDonalds in Millau (a town in the Larzac) in 1999. Bové's gesture of anti-globalization defiance was prompted by pressure that the United States had been putting on the French government to accept hormone-fed beef by

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⁶ Cassandre Balosso-Bardin (2016) discusses similar attitudes towards folklore in Mallorca at the time.

increasing import tariffs on French goods. In retaliation, Bové, along with farmers arriving on tractors—reminiscent of the strategic use of these vehicles during the Larzac protests—became a national hero for his destruction of the fast-food chain restaurant.

In 2003, José Bové and Robert Lafont founded a Global Justice (altermondialiste) organization called Gardarem la Terra (We Will Save the Earth, in Occitan). Lafont wrote the organization's mission statement, which ends with the following sentences: "The peasants of Larzac knew how to save their land. It is up to us to save our planet' (Lafont 2003). According to him, it was important to pay homage to the peasants at the Larzac plateau thirty years prior who, attracting the attention of the whole world, had been successful in challenging the "machine of the State." In the manifesto, Lafont wrote that the oppressive forces that the Larzac protestors had once challenged had transformed into the "power of a global politico-financial oligarchy controlling the planet through a global economic system and a hegemonic State possessing a deathly power" (Lafont 2003). In 2007, Gardarem la Terra released a compilation album of songs by Occitan bands. On this album, Loddo's band La Talvera performs "Occitan berbèr," whose lyrics play on the word "language" and whose final verse references the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: "With the European Charter/ One will be able to speak all languages/ At school at the tribunal/ At the doctor's office or at work/ We won't need French to be a good republican/ That is why at la Talvera/ We are learning Berber language." The Occitan movement of the 1970s, which was emblemized by the Larzac protest, has shaped the ideological stance of Loddo. In the following sections, I focus on his career and musical compositions.

Daniel Loddo

Loddo was born in 1954 in Montels, a small village in the department of Tarn. His mother knew Occitan, but was of the generation born between 1930 and 1950 that was ashamed

of the language. As a result, his mother refused to speak it. It was Loddo's grandmother, Irma, with whom he spoke Occitan. His grandfather was a Sardinian *improvisateur* (improviser) and singer. When Loddo was six years old, he and his family moved to Gaillac, a town that lies fifty kilometers to the north of Toulouse. Loddo's first instrument was the harmonica. Loddo recounted that he and his father held contests to see who played better and who knew more repertoire. Loddo's father was a mason and would bring home parts of accordions he found in the old houses he worked on, with the hope of building an accordion for his son. Although this accordion was never built, at age twenty-four, Loddo bought one, originally intended for his ailing father, and has since become an accomplished accordionist.

In 1983, Loddo enrolled as a student of ethnology at the École des Hautes Études de Sciences Sociales in Toulouse (the School of Advanced Studies in Social Science), where he studied under Daniel Fabre and wrote a thesis on the itinerant musician Landou (1988). Simultaneously, he studied ethnomusicology at the Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires in Paris with Marie-Marguerite Pichonnet-Andral and completed a Masters II in Occitan Languages and Civilizations, for which he wrote a thesis on the accordionist Marcel Bacou (1985).

In 1979, Loddo and ten friends formed the association, first called La Talvera, now the Centre Occitan de Recherche, de Documentation, et d'Animation Ethnographique (Occitan Center for Research, Documentation, and Ethnographic Animation) (CORDAE). They conducted fieldwork in Tarn and disseminated their findings through presentations in schools and performances. According to Loddo, there existed very few ethnographic studies at the time: a few nineteenth-century ethnographies of the surrounding area, but none on Tarn. The authors always treated the culture as something dying, stating that they had met the last singer of

traditional repertoire. This approach contradicted what Loddo had experienced himself as a child listening to Occitan songs and stories that his father sang and told him.

The professionalization of La Talvera/CORDAE occurred gradually. The association members first formed an amateur musical group, La Talvera, to fund their fieldwork, because at that time, according to Loddo, neither government programs nor Occitanists had much interest in funding research on regional traditional music. Since the founding of La Talvera in 1979, the band has changed formation several times—Loddo is the only member of the original group. Today, it consists of Loddo and five other members. Loddo sings, plays accordion as well as two types of bagpipes, the *craba* and the *cabreta*. The remaining performers include Céline Ricard (his wife), who is the lead singer and plays the fife and *graile* (an Occitan oboe); Aelis Loddo (Ricard and Loddo's daughter), who plays the violin and sings; Thierry Rougier (clarinet); Serge Cabau (percussion); and Sergio Caraniche (guitar and bass). The band performs in Occitan festivals, in schools, and at Occitan dances called *bals occitans*.

In 1980, the association members published their first ethnographic recordings. Seven years later, they created a research library (*service de documentation*). They moved to Cordessur-Ciel in 1995 and created CORDAE, a research center that today contains 6,000 hours of sound recordings, and 39,000 images, manuscripts, and audiovisual documents. Their ethnographic research has taken place primarily in Occitanie but also in Canada, Portugal, Mexico, Argentina, the Maghreb, and Brazil. The association has published several monographs, *actes de colloque* (collections of conference papers), and *mémoires sonores* (sound memoirs).

CORDAE is one of many associations that have been founded in France since the 1970s, as part of what has been called an "associative movement of traditional music and dance" (Charles-Dominique n.d.). In southern France, some of the larger associative structures include

the Conservatoire occitan (Occitan Conservatory) in Toulouse, the Maison d'Occitanie (House of Occitanie), also in Toulouse, and the Institut Occitan (Occitan Institute) (InOc) in Pau, founded in 1996 and directed by the ethnomusicologist Jean-Jacques Castéret. In other regions of France, one finds the Centre de Musiques Traditionnelles (Center of Traditional Musics)—formerly Dastum—in Bretagne, L'Agence des Musiques Traditionnelles d'Auvergne (The Agency of Traditional Musics of Auvergne), and the Union pour la Culture Populaire-Métive (Union for Popular Culture-Métive) in Poitou-Charentes.⁷

Whereas NCO musicians avoided folk music, Daniel Loddo has done the opposite, immersing himself in the traditional repertoire and local history of Tarn and the surrounding area. In the beginning of Loddo's career, his research and performance of traditional music were met with animosity by the singer/songwriters who had formed the basis of Occitan musical expression. His experience was similar to that of Jan-Mari Carlotti, who recounts, "there really were people who treated us like whores because we dared to play traditional music" (cited in Mazerolle 2008:179). In the 1970s the singer/songwriters of the NCO and the folk revival movement comprised two separate camps. I have never fully understood the rift between these two groups, and in my own research, the line between them has not been as clear-cut as local ideology may insist. For example, while Loddo's compositions may fall more under the category of folk music revivalism, he considers his work to be an ideological extension of the "identity movement" (mouvement identitiaire) (Mazerolle 2008:183) of the NCO musicians.

The theme of resistance encompasses all of Loddo's work. For instance, the cover of La Talvera's album, *Bramadis* (Bellow) (2007), features a drawing of the group under a flag on

⁷ See Charles-Dominique 1996 for a more comprehensive list.

which is printed the word "Resistance." In his songs, protest takes the form of criticism of the French government, of social and economic inequalities, and—like many other Occitan musicians—he defends the minority groups in France and around the world. Most of all, his resistance is directed towards the *défense* (defense) of Occitan language and culture.

Cordes-sur-Ciel, where Loddo lives and works, is itself is a symbol of resistance. In 1222 the count of Toulouse, Raimon VII, had this bastide (fortified town) built during the Albigensian Crusades. Strategically located 100 meters high atop the Puech (Source) de Mordagne, Cordes was home to the Cathars, who were persecuted during the crusades, and to families affected by the crusade battles. Loddo and Ricard chose Cordes-sur-Ciel because there was a public space and a building with a recording studio, and because Cordes is heavily trafficked by tourists. At the base of the hill today are modern commercial buildings and homes, while a steep cobblestoned street takes one up to the old village. From various lookout points one can see the surrounding farmland of Tarn. The buildings of Cordes, which in 2014 was voted "the favorite village of the French" (le village préferé des français), date back to the thirteenth century and are well preserved. One of the village's medieval stone buildings houses CORDAE. The ground floor contains a store where the association sells recordings, ethnographies, and Occitan paraphernalia (maps, key chains, stickers, and flags). Also, on this level is a library devoted to Occitan culture. A dark staircase leads one to Loddo's office on the third floor. Opposite his office and on the second floor are archives and several workspaces.

In one of our interviews, Loddo stated that he lives according to the music he plays (June 5, 2014). When I asked him to elaborate on this statement, he explained that he and Ricard are in solidarity with groups that defend certain ideas. One of them is the Zone à défendre (Zone to Defend) (ZAD) movement, which has been considered a contemporary version of the Larzac

protest. There have existed different locations in France for the ZAD protests. One protest took place for ten years, between 2008 and 2018, at Notre-Dame-des-Landes, about twenty kilometers from Nantes, in western France. Here, farmers joined by militant anti-capitalists, eco-warriors, and squatters who claimed to be creating an alternative way of life—the site contained a *boulangerie* (bakery), a brewery, a vegetable market, and a pirate radio station (Willsher 2018)—protested against the government's plans to construct a large airport. President Macron put an end to this project; however, in April 2018, there were violent clashes during attempts to evict the *zadistes*. Loddo was a regular performer at the ZAD protest at Notre-Dames-des-Landes. La Talvera frequently posts videos of their performances online, and in one video Loddo and Ricard walk along a path toward the ZAD site while playing the *craba* (bagpipe) and *pifre* (flute).

The first time I saw Loddo, he was engaged in a solo bagpipe processional, although in a different context. This time it was the Samba al País festival in June 2010, devoted to Brazilian and Occitan music and their encounter. Since then, I have observed such a processional in several places, and each time it appears as a heightened moment that is visually and sonically anachronistic. The large *craba* itself makes a striking visual statement, being constructed of the body of a goat; the piercing timbre and the tonality of the instrument stand out from the modern musical landscape, as does the repertoire of *branles* and *rondos*. The image of Loddo, who is blind, walking while playing the *craba* is one of a march of resistance. For Loddo, reviving local folklore is itself an act of resistance. Furthermore, in his compositions he voices his identity as a militant musician, with lyrics that alternately restore local history or decry modern social inequalities and hegemonic forces, whether in reference to the central government or, on a larger scale, global capitalism.

La recherche du terrain: Daniel Loddo's Fieldwork and Compositions

The field (*le terrain*) is the primary source of Loddo's compositions. He explained, "All the fieldwork we have done, for us it is like a mine. I never stop drawing from it" (interview on June 5, 2014). He continued, "Fieldwork taught me how to make songs. We looked a lot at how people made songs before us, so as not to do as the singer/songwriters of the 1970s who made Occitan songs as they would have made French songs." In Loddo's opinion, one of the pitfalls of the singer/songwriters of the 1970s, like Martí, is that they presented an imaginary that did not correspond with that of Occitan people. In their efforts to modernize Occitan and dissociate themselves from the Félibrige movement and its folkloric representations, these earlier Occitan musicians had detached themselves from the rural aspects of Occitan culture. As a result, says Loddo, "The people did not recognize what they [the musicians] were doing." For instance, whereas these singers sang about Occitan, many people referred to the language they spoke as patois. La Talvera wanted to be bridge between their vision of revolutionizing French culture and *le peuple* (the people), to "hang our artistic movement onto the people we wanted to sing for." The way to do this was to better understand the people: "Their languages, their music, their stories, their legends, their imaginary, what makes them dream, what makes them cry, what makes them dance, and what makes them love... What we do, people recognize as Occitan music. There are even people who say, 'That song on the new disc, I danced to it in 1920,' even though I am persuaded that I created it." It is important for Loddo that his local audiences feel that the music he performs "belongs to them." There is a constant rapport between Loddo's research in the field and his songs. The field provides him with material for his songs, and through them, Loddo, who considers himself a voice for the people, teaches them about their local cultural heritage.

An additional means by which Loddo connects with his audiences is his careful study of local linguistic particularisms. In his song texts, he employs a mixture of standardized language, whereby only certain words and forms are used, and local particularisms, from his own region and others. He primarily writes his songs in the Occitan spoken in the city of Albi (the largest city in Tarn) and the surrounding area. He explained, "We do as the troubadours do" (interview on January 28, 2017). A significant attribute of the troubadours is that, though they heralded from far-flung regions of Occitanie (throughout southern France and in areas of Spain), they wrote in a standardized language, what scholars identify as a koine or lingua franca. The dialect spoken in Haut-Languedoc, including the cities of Albi and Toulouse and the surrounding area, became the koine used for legal documents: marriage contracts, charters, and sales contracts. In a similar fashion, Loddo uses the standardized Occitan of his region. However, for reasons of rhyme, he—like the troubadours—draws on vocabulary from other regions of Occitanie. As he stated, "we use words from other regions that please us, even if it is not used here, for the sake of rhyme, and also because we may find it more beautiful in terms of the musicality of the language."

For Loddo, local regional particularisms serve several purposes. On an aesthetic level, local vocabulary enriches the song texts. According to Loddo, some Occitan artists do not know the language of the people and write their songs using a dictionary. As he said, that is why sometimes in Occitan music, the lyrics can seem flat. In contrast, Loddo explained, "Since we have done a lot of fieldwork, we capture people's words. They always have expressions, and I mark them down. I have many documents with the expressions, proverbs, phrases that they use. When I make a song, I always try to enrich them with these expressions. We try as much as possible to color our songs with Occitan expressions."

In addition to enlivening the lyrics of his own songs, Loddo's use of local vocabulary and expressions is part of a broader objective, that of safeguarding the Occitan language. Listing six different ways to say the word "dog," including separate words based on their function: e.g., shepherding or guarding, Loddo said that Occitan allows for more precision than French. As he says, "We have a very rich language, and we try to preserve that." Furthermore, incorporating dialectal specificities is one of the ways in which he connects with Occitan-speaking communities he researches and for whom he performs. Vocabulary can vary from village to village and he listens for these nuances; it has been important to him to learn the particularisms of Occitan on a micro-level, the specific expressions of a village, when he does fieldwork, partly to garner the trust of his informants. As a result, people have said to him, "You really speak our language. It's not the Occitan we hear on the radio, on television, or what is taught in school." Loddo also feels that hearing their dialectal particularisms in his songs is one way in which people feel that his music belongs to them.⁸ Aside from using Occitan, Loddo's incorporation of traditional instruments of southern France is one of the most obvious markers of local identity in his music. The most striking instrument that he plays is an Occitan bagpipe called the *craba* or bodega.

The Craba/Bodega

Loddo's *craba* was built by Claude Romero, the first bagpipe-maker of the folk movement, whose workshop is located within the Conservatoire occitan (Occitan Conservatory)

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⁸ La Talvera uses a standardized Occitan on its albums for children. To make it easier for children to learn Occitan, a reduced vocabulary and grammar has been chosen for use in the classroom.

in Toulouse. Romero based his construction of the instrument on one that Loddo brought him from the ethnographic field. The *craba* was once played primarily in the departments of Tarn (the southern part), Aude (the northern part) and small sections of the departments of Hérault and Haute-Garonne. These four departments border a mountainous region in southwestern France called the Montagne Noire. The name *bodega* was used primarily in the Montagne Noire of Aude and somewhat in the Lauragais, where the bag of the instrument was usually made from a sheep (Loddo 2004:5). The word *craba* is Occitan for goat and was used within a larger perimeter, primarily in the areas where the skin of a goat was used (5).



Figure 3. Daniel Loddo playing the *craba*. Photo taken by Jean-Luc Matte, 2004. http://musette.free.fr/stchart/ch04talvera.htm.

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⁹ The primary *bodega/craba* makers today include Claude Romero (Toulouse), Claude Girard (la Vienne), Robert Matta (Toulouse), and Bruno Salenson (Nîmes).

The *craba/bodega* is the largest bagpipe of France and one of the largest bagpipes in Europe. The bag (*oire*, *bodega*, or *embaissa* in Occitan) is made of the entire skin of a goat or sheep (Loddo 2004:5). The skin is turned inside out, with the hairs on the inside for better absorption of humidity. The eight-holed *graile*, a reed pipe made of boxtree wood, is responsible for carrying the melody and is inserted into the neck of the animal's skin (Charles-Dominique 1987:10). The *graile* can be played independently of the bagpipe, and was often done so when musicians were learning to play the *bodega/craba* or when they were practicing songs, especially when taking care of animals (Loddo 2004:14). The drone, called the *bonda*, is attached to the skin below the neck and rests on the player's shoulder, like the drone of the *bodega*'s smaller cousins, the Breton *biniou* and the Galician *gaita*. The word *bonda* is related to the Occitan word *bondina*, meaning insect. Finally, a blowpipe, or *bufet*, is inserted into a hole near the *graile* allowing for the player to blow directly into the bag.

In his historical overview of bagpipe semiotics, Luc-Charles Dominique writes that bagpipes were semantically charged with a "symbolism around which developed a powerful and troubling imaginary" (2010:132). As portrayed in the iconography of the instrument, the *craba/bodega*, and bagpipes more broadly, held diabolical associations (132). This reputation coincides with Loddo's research, which demonstrates that the *bodega* was believed to be sinful and capable of attracting the devil. As one woman explained to him, "The rector did not permit us to dance to the *craba* because it was a big sin" (Loddo and Ribouillaut 2008:46). The animalistic aspect of the bodega also contributed to its supernatural connotations. Charles-Dominique writes of the zoomorphism of the instrument, demonstrated, for example by the name for the instrument, *craba* (goat). Similarly, the instrument's leather pouch, when inflated, resembles the animal's stomach. The close relationship to its animal origins can be found in

Medieval and Renaissance representations of bagpipe players, some of whom are depicted as half-human and half-animal. Furthering the marginalization of the instrument was the fact that bodega and craba players were typically of the lower sectors of society, most commonly farmhands (Loddo 1997:11). Disdain for the bagpipe was portrayed in certain expressions such as "That one is a bagpipe teacher" (Aquel es un professor de bodega), which referred to someone who does nothing good in life or who drinks too much (12-13). As bodega musicians moved up in social rank, they tended to leave the bagpipe behind (13). Loddo observes that it is perhaps due to its association with poverty and its diabolical reputation that, despite its certain existence in the Languedoc, little written record exists of the bodega before the regionalist writings of the late nineteenth century. As such, Loddo has described the instrument as being "unspoken" and "unwritten" (non-dit and non-écrit) (Loddo and Ribouillaut 2008:46).

According to Loddo's research, in the early twentieth century there were several hundred players of the *bodega* and *craba*. However, by the time Loddo started his fieldwork in the late 1970s, he met only three players. The last *crabaires de tradition* (bagpipe players "by tradition") were born between 1860 and 1880 and for the most part passed away in the 1950s and 1960s (Loddo 2004:28). Cassandre Balosso-Bardin (2016) describes a similar historical situation in her study of the Mallorcan bagpipe, the *xeremier*. *Bodega* performance was almost in extinction after World War I, with the rise in popularity of dance orchestras in the late nineteenth century and the widespread use of the diatonic accordion in the early twentieth century. ¹⁰ In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in the *craba/bodega*, and today, there are about three hundred musicians in France who play the instrument.

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¹⁰In "L'instrument musical populaire" (1938), a paper delivered at the Premier congrès international de folklore (First International Folklore Conference) in Paris, Claudie Marcel-Dubois lamented the fact that the accordion had replaced traditional instruments.

La Talvera Repertoire

On July 13, 2016, I attended a La Talvera bal (dance) held at a campground in Sévéracle-Chateau, in the department of Aveyron. The president of CORDAE, Thierry Cintas, is an avid dancer, and drove me and three other women, who study traditional Occitan dance and song, to the event. Cintas was wearing a teeshirt with the words "Anpo luta: Lakota Nation-Occitania" (Red man, Lakota Nation-Occitania) written on it. In 1991, Cintas donated a plot of his own land to the Oklahoma-based Lakota nation, a ceremony at which La Talvera performed. It is of note that Native Americans are frequently referenced in Occitan lyrics, as in the song "Indians de las Americas" (2008) by the Occitan hip hop group, Mauresca Fracas Dub. In my interviews, Occitan musicians often asked about Native Americans and whether, for example, schoolchildren are taught any Native American words. The dancers and I arrived just as Loddo and Ricard were forming a procession. Playing the *craba* and *pifre*, respectively, Loddo and Ricard led the audience to the dance floor. That evening, the group tailored their repertoire to include various bourrées. The bourrée is still danced in Aveyron, and at the bal one could see a few families who knew it well. In addition, La Talvera performed the branle, farandole, rondo, scottisch, polka, mazurka, waltz, and lesser-known dances. Thierry and his cousin led many of the dances. Ricard would periodically descend from the stage to demonstrate a dance, chiding and encouraging the audience, while Loddo interjected with jokes. There was an intermission for fireworks (Bastille Day would be the next day). I spoke with the band's percussionist, Serge Cabau. Cabau plays in another band, Roots de Rhum, which performs music genres from the Caribbean. With La Talvera, he adapts Caribbean rhythms to Occitan traditional music. As we spoke, a symphony blared from speakers while fireworks blasted across the night sky. The band

performed until 1:30, at which point Loddo, who appears to be indefatigable, and his daughter Aelis played duets on the dance floor.

La Talvera's repertoire can be loosely grouped into three categories: a) traditional songs, b) songs whose lyrics or melody are taken from traditional repertoire (primarily Occitan but also that of other countries), and c) original songs (with lyrics and music composed by Loddo). The majority of their repertoire consists of categories b) and c). While a large number of Loddo's songs are composed of original lyrics and/or melodies, he draws extensively on traditional repertoire for the structure of his songs, for various types of songs (political, humorous, biographical), and for literary devices. The source material for these songs may be found through fieldwork or archival research. As one example, the La Talvera album, *Cançons del Cap del Pont* (Songs of the Cap del Pont), is based entirely on a recently found manuscript by Gabriel Soulages (1838-1903) entitled *Chansons et poésies populaires récuillies dans l'Albigeois* (Popular Songs and Poems Collected in Albigeois), which includes almost 250 transcriptions of local sayings and songs.

Loddo's study of the construction of traditional songs results in borrowed formal and stylistics elements, such as metaphors and rhetorical devices. Several songs are based on enumeration, a common song form in Occitan as well as traditional French repertoire. One of the most salient formal elements derived from traditional repertoire pertains to meter. For the syllabic count of his compositions, Loddo deliberately does not use the twelve-syllable form of the French alexandrine, but prefers seven, or eight, or nine syllables for his verses, as is often used in Occitan and French traditional song (e.g., *Quand lo cocut cantava/leu me rejoissiái*) (When the cuckoo sang/I rejoiced). Loddo attributes this syllabic count to traditional song but also to the poetry of the troubadours and states that he is "very inspired by the way the

troubadours constructed their poetry" (interview on January 28, 2017). Loddo incorporates the rhetorical practice found in troubadour poetry of addressing the audience at the beginning. His compositions, however, tend to address a wider scope of people, such as in the song "Cuitadans de la tèrra entièira" (La Talvera 2003): "Ciutadans de la tèrra entièira/ Escotatz plan meu cançon" (Citizens of the whole world/Listen well to this song).

Nature metaphors are a common theme in traditional music repertoire, a reflection of the agrarian cultural context in which it was produced. Loddo borrows this thematic aspect and often incorporates bird imagery found in older Occitan songs as well as in oral literature. In Occitan, the word for cuckoo, *cocut*, is also used for cuckold (like the French word *cocu*), and this bird sings outside the windows of un-clever husbands to notify them that they have been cheated on by their wives. "Quand la nòvia se marida" (When the Bride Gets Married) recounts this situation. This song, which La Talvera performs, plays on the similarity between the Occitan words *cosin* (cousin) and *coisin* (cushion): the wife embraces the cousin (*cosin*) while the husband embraces the cushion (*coisin*). The husband puts his head to the window and hears the cuckoo singing, "Paure cocut!" (Poor cuckoo/cuckold!)

Since one of La Talvera's main roles is to accompany dances, many of their songs are based on traditional dance forms. These dances include well-known ones such as the *scottisch*, mazurka, polka, *farandole*, and *branle*, and may also include more esoteric dances learned through fieldwork. The love song "Ai tu ma còtia" (Ah You, My Half) (La Talvera 2014) is based on a *scottisch* that Loddo discovered during his research on the accordionist Marcel Bacou. The *scottisch*, a dance genre dating from the mid-nineteenth century, arrived in France in 1850 and became popular in bourgeois salons, subsequently working its way into popular dance gatherings throughout the country. Due to Loddo's interest in Brazilian music, he has composed

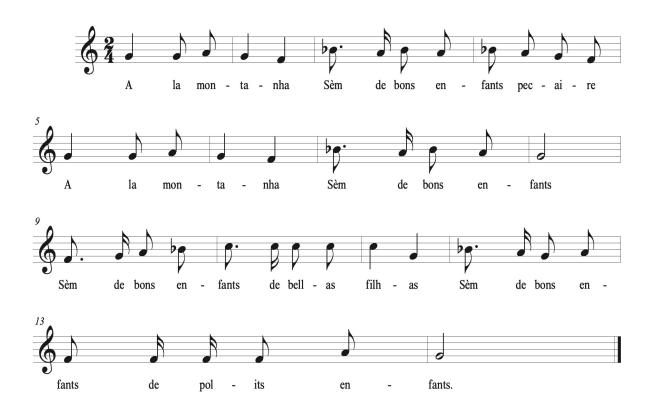
songs based on dance forms found in both countries. Some of these dances, including the mazurka, polka, and *scottisch*, are part of the *forró* repertoire of Northeast Brazil, and songs like "Ai tu ma cótia" borrow instruments used in Brazilian *forró*, namely the triangle and *zabumba* (bass drum).

Loddo does not perceive tradition as a static entity. While this idea has become commonplace among ethnomusicologists, it is an important aspect of Loddo's discourse. He provided the following explanation of his approach to traditional music: "We need to create, to speak out...Tradition is always alive, it cannot be frozen. We need to describe the current world. We cannot sing things that corresponded to a world that no longer exists" (interview on June 5, 2014). This conception of tradition allows for innovation and the freedom to compose layers of sounds regardless of their original contexts.

Historicizing the hybridity of Occitan music, Loddo explained, "We are not in a cultural isolation" (interview on January 28, 2017). He went on to give the example of the plague wiping out large segments of the Occitan population and, as a result, people from Bretagne and Picardie being brought to repopulate the region. He also discussed men who went to battle and who would come back with songs in French. "How else," said Loddo, "Can we explain that when one does fieldwork in this area, the oldest songs, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are in French and not Occitan?" Loddo himself has compiled lists that fill many books of the names and dates of people who passed through: bilingual bagpipe players, for example, from Italy and Spain.

Oftentimes, Loddo updates songs whose ideas and words please him and modifies the lyrics, instrumentation, and rhythmic texture. Such is the case with "En Occitània sèm de bons enfants" (In Occitanie We are Good Children) (La Talvera 2007), based on "A la montanha" (In

the Mountains), a song that Loddo collected in the Lot valley. Loddo's "En Occitània sèm de bons enfants" consists of an A and B section, which are very distinct in terms of melody and subject matter. I shall discuss the first section, since it is most relevant here. In section A, the melody that Ricard sings is the same as that of "A la montanha."



Musical Example 1. "A la montanha"



Musical Example 2. "En Occitània sèm de bons enfants"

Whereas "A la montanha" was once typically sung monodically with no accompaniment, Loddo sets the melody to an array of instrumental lines and a faster danceable rhythm. This is partly because one of the primary performance contexts for La Talvera is the *bal* (dance). The instruments one hears include the *craba* (bagpipe), which introduces the song and plays the melody throughout, several percussion instruments, clarinet, and electronic sounds.

The following lyrics of the song "A la montanha" conveyed a way of life in the mountains that differed from that of urban dwellers:

A la montanha Sèm de bons enfants pecaire A la montanha sèm de bons enfants Sèm de bons enfants de bellas filhas Sèm de bons enfants de polits enfants In the mountains
We are good children, what a shame
In the mountains we are good children
We are good children, pretty girls
We are good children, nice children

De napas blancas nautres n'avèm pas pecaire De napas blances nautres n'avèm pas Manjam ben sus de taulas Assetats sus de bancs com podam

De carn de vila nautres n'avèm pas pecaire De carn de vila nautres n'avèm pas Manjam de perdigals, de becassinas Qualque lebraudets corts e grassets White tablecloths we have not, what a shame White tablecloths we have not We eat well on tables Seated on benches as we can

Meat from the city, We have not, what a shame Meat from the city we have not We eat young partridges, snipes A few little hares small and fatty

Instead of contrasting mountain from urban dwellers, in "En Occitània sèm de bons enfants,"

Loddo describes Occitània in dialectical opposition to France. The following excerpts of Loddo's song demonstrate that, although he changes the lyrics, he borrows the tactic of contrasting identities to distinguish the imagined Occitània from France:

En Occitània Sèm de bons enfants pecaire En Occitania sèm de bons enfants Sèm de bons enfants, de polidas dròllas Sèm de bons enfants, de polits enfants

E d'académia nautres n'avèm pas pecaire E d'académia nautres ne volèm pas Avèm mai d'un parlar mai d'una lenga

Mas pertot ont anam nos comprenam

De capitala n'avèm pas pecaire De capital nautres ne volèm pas Anam de pòrt en pòrt de vila en vila E pertot ont passam nos agradam

Nem de frontièira nautres n'avèm pas pecaire Nem de frontièira nautres ne volèm pas Nòstre ostal es oubèrt a la tèrra entièira

I a totjorn per manjar e par trincar

In Occitanie

We are good children, what a shame In Occitanie we are good children We are good children, nice girls We are good children, nice children

And we don't have an academy, what a shame
And we don't want an academy
We have more than one way of speaking, more than one language
But they understand us everywhere we go.

We don't have a capital, what a shame We don't want a capital We go from port to port from city to city And everywhere we go we enjoy ourselves

We don't have borders, what a shame

We don't want borders
Our house is open to the whole world
There is always [enough] to eat and to toast

De cants de guèrra nautres n'avèm pas pecaire De cants de guèrra nautres ne volèm pas Pas besonh de tambor, de Marselhesa Nautres dempuèi totjorn cantam l'amor

We don't have songs of war, what a shame
We don't want songs of war
No need for drums, for the Marseillaise
We have always sung of love

In these lyrics, Loddo formulates his critique of France by rejecting constitutive elements of the French nation: one language, a capital, borders, and war songs. By contrast, in Occitanie people speak more than one language; they go from city to city; their houses are open to everyone; and they sing of love—a reference to the troubadours. "En Occitània sèm de bons enfants" encapsulates the ideological underpinnings of the Occitan movement and demonstrates the fact that Occitanie is often constructed in opposition to France. While there are Occitan regionalists, though few, who desire autonomy, Occitanie is primarily a utopian ideal. Occitanie emerges as an ideological site from which its music performers shed light on and critique the French nation. Through lyrics such as "we don't want borders," Loddo performs an ideological deterritorialization in opposition to the nation state. This disavowal of borders also serves to separate Occitanie and its performers from right-wing nationalism in France. Occitanie is a house "open to the whole world."

Legends and the Imaginary: Relocating Myths in the Land

Legends and myths have been a major focus of Loddo's fieldwork, and he teaches them to others as a means to revitalize the local imaginary. In one of our interviews, Loddo explained, "the key word is the imaginary" (interview on June 5, 2014). He and Ricard distribute legends by means of conferences, presentations in schools, and exhibits. Loddo also organizes "Journées de formation" (career development) for 200 or 300 people at a time. These people include those who work in the tourist industry—in hotels, gîtes (holiday cottages), small restaurants, and campgrounds—and who then retransmit legends within their communities and to tourists. As

Loddo puts it, "When tourists come here now, to Cordes, all of the old stones are not enough. They want to have information about the intangible cultural heritage [patrimoine immaterial]" (interview on January 28, 2017).

For Loddo, the desolation of the local imaginary is partly due to French cultural citizenship, but also to the impact of Americanization. In the following interview excerpt, Loddo explains his rationale for examining and teaching legends:

Before we became interested in legends, people no longer knew their legends, or had only fragments of the legends of their village. We were shocked to find that, in our region, the only imaginary that people reenacted was the legend of Halloween, brought from America...And we have done much research, and continue to do so because legends are something very resistant—everyone will continue to tell legends. In such a way, we have symbolically repopulated this world, this territory, with these legends. So, if they hear this song and they go there, they know that stone was put there by Gargantua. Or, for example, if they go into those woods, they know that there are fairies that tell them when to plant vegetables. In every village, we have given back their legends...The idea is to give the people back their history, their word. (Interview on June 5, 2014)

These lines are telling of Loddo's work to restore historical memory in his local community. In his opinion, teaching about local legends, which he describes as "very resistant," is a way to revive a town and to provide people with stories to tell. The subjects of these legends may be literary figures, such as Gargantua, or real people such as local heroes, musicians, or eccentric personalities. Loddo often cites these legends in his compositions.

For example, the song "Lo terrible de Pena" (The Terrible [One] of Pena) (La Talvera 2009) is based on a nineteenth-century legendary figure in Tarn lore, Alexandre Viguier (1835-1911), known as lo terrrrrrrrrrrible de Pena (with exactly thirteen r's). Viguier was famous for walking around with a lamp, which he attached to a stick two-meters long. He claimed to be shedding light on (*éclairer*) justice. In the 1870s, he envisioned a house of peace, similar to the United Nations, and global disarmament. He wrote political pamphlets, for example, on the right to fire the president of the Republic after a year if the people were unhappy with him. On a

mission to Paris to spread his message of justice, he was arrested and put in a mental asylum. Viguier went down in local lore alternatively as a rebel, a giant, a bandit who fought on behalf of poor people, and a hairy man who lived in a cave (Loddo 2005).

Another example is the song "Landon lo cançonièr" (Landou the Streetsinger) (La Talvera 2003), based on Landon, whom Loddo describes as the last wandering streetsinger (*chansonnier errant*) of the Montagne Noire. It is of note that in this song, the "soul of Occitanie," Landon, is a musician.

D'uèi s'anatz en passejada
Al dessús de Labessonié
Poiretz seguier las pesadas
De Landon le cançonièr
Qu'es vengut un bocin l'arma
D'aquel coet d'Occitaniè.

Today if you walk
Under the Labessonié
You can see the traces
Of Landou the streetsinger
Who has sort of become the soul
Of this part of Occitanie.

The last verse conveys La Talvera's objective of rehabilitating the imaginary of the local population. In the third line he uses the Occitan term *las pesadas*, or "traces," in reference to the itinerant musician, Landon. This idea is important given Loddo's attempts to re-insert a largely forgotten historical narrative into the lives of local residents.

Throughout this chapter, I have underscored the specifics of place, exemplified by Loddo's attempts to anchor myths in the land. However, his emphasis on local identity does not signify enclosure. Loddo places his research and performance of the history and cultural practices of Tarn in dialogue with other regional cultures in France, notably Breton, and with music cultures outside of France, notably those found in Canada and Brazil. La Talvera has at various times consisted of musicians with knowledge of North African or Latin American music genres. Zino Moudjeb, originally from Algeria, has joined the group for several albums, on which he plays *guembri*, *oud*, *darbouka*, and *bendir*. Paul Goillot, also from Algeria, has played these instruments on other albums, in addition to *karkabas*. More recently, the percussionist

Serge Cabau has joined the group and plays the Brazilian *surdo* and *caissa*, as well as bongos and other percussion instruments. Beyond the core members of the group, La Talvera often collaborates on stage with other artists from other regions (often Bretagne) of France and from around the world. In the next section, I examine the most significant cross-cultural exchange in his work: that with the Brazilian musician Silverio Pessoa.

Cross-cultural Alliances: Occitanie and Brazil

In conversation, Loddo uses the word *passerelle* (a footbridge or passageway) to describe the relations made between Occitan musicians and musicians from other regions of France and of parts of the world. One of the *passerelles* most trodden by Loddo is that with the musicians and music of Brazil. After Loddo's first trip to Brazil in 1985, he recorded an album *Batestas e cantarias: Blues paysan, jeux primitifs, et chants electroniques du Sud Languedoc* (Arguments and "Unpleasant Singing": Peasant Blues, Primitive Games, and Electronic Songs of Southern Languedoc) (1986) with Claude Sicre. On this album, Loddo and Sicre playfully deliver Occitan verses in the fashion of the singer-improvisers, known as *repentistas*, of northeastern Brazil, playing only tambourine and banjo. This album was a seminal recording for the Occitan encounter with Brazilian music. Loddo and Sicre went on to start the Fabulous Trobadors but parted ways shortly thereafter. La Talvera's first album *Far res o re fa* (Doing Nothing or Re Fa) (1993) includes songs that are similar in their acoustic simplicity to the recording he made with Sicre. Since *Far res o re fa*, singing in the fashion of the *repententistas* has been a stylistic signature of his musical performance.

After his first trip to Brazil, Loddo returned six times to conduct research on religious festivals and singer-improvisers. His initial research took place in Rondono, the Amazon, and Sao Paolo. With each trip to Brazil, he has invited Brazilian musicians to come to France. "Little

by little, we built like that all sorts of passageways between Occitanie and different regions of Brazil" (interview on June 24, 2010). Loddo has built the strongest link with musicians in the Northeast of Brazil, especially in Pernambuco, Pariaba, Ceara, Rio Grande de Norte, and Bahia. He has shared the results of his fieldwork in Brazil on the album *Repentistas nordestinos* (2007), a CD with ninety-six pages of liner notes.

In the past decade, Loddo has performed extensively with Brazilian musician Silverio Pessoa. In 2010 they began a performance and recording project called *ForrÒccitania*. The CD liner notes present the project as a creation between two "cultures of resistance" and draw parallels between *forró* of the Northeast of Brazil and contemporary Occitan music, in their "simple and direct poetry that speaks of everyday life and the political context," as well as in the shared use of accordion and fifes (*pifre* in Occitan and *pifano* in Portuguese).

The album and performances of ForrOccitània feature the song "Occitània"—first recorded on the album Bramadis—whose lyrics pay homage to the land, legends, and cultural treasures of this area. The song tells of Pirène, alluding to the creation myth of the Pyrenees. It lists the Montagne Noire; the bodega of Lacamareda, where two rocks were thrown by two giants—the myth says that when the rocks touch, the end of the world will come; and Conques, a town in Aveyron, where infertile women once rubbed their stomachs on the entry gate. The final lyrics speak to the cultural heritage of the troubadours: "Everywhere one hears the Occitan language/Joy, paratge and courtly love/Everywhere shines the grenada flower/Of the troubadours we are the inheritors." Troubadour poetry, in which joy, paratge, and courtly love are recurrent themes, occupies a large role in the Occitan imaginary and in Loddo's as well. And, as I discuss further on in greater detail, some Occitan musicians view Brazilian repentistas as modern-day troubadours.

For a song whose lyrics are rooted to such a great extent in the local landscape, mythology, and history of southern France, it is striking that the melody of "Occitània" is that of the Brazilian song "Asa Branca," popularized by Luis Gonzaga. In the liner notes, Loddo specifies that "Asa Branca" was itself based on a traditional tune that Gonzaga appropriated and popularized. "Occitània" represents a significant portion of contemporary Occitan music in its use of an exogenous rhythm and melody while immersed in a project of local identification. However, the motivations for this Brazilian reference go beyond the act of localizing a song that has been widely circulated along the world music mediascape.

The Occitan-Brazilian connection is cultivated throughout the Occitan music scene. Brazilian musical elements appear in the performances of various Occitan groups, and there exists an Occitan/Brazilian music festival entitled Samba al País. Part of the Occitanie-Brazil relationship hinges on a widely circulated myth that the Brazilian *repentistas* are the modern-day inheritors of the troubadour tradition. Claude Sicre has explained that the troubadours had widespread influence and the Portuguese were "very aware" (*à l'écoute*) of troubadour poetry, bringing these traditions with them to Brazil. Loddo has commented on the theories Occitanists have invented about the troubadours and the *repentistas*:

There are people in Occitanie who really believe that the descendants of the troubadours can be found now in Brazil. I heard someone (I won't say names) state at a conference recently that when the troubadours were forced to leave Occitanie, during the Albigensian Crusades of the thirteenth century, they got on a boat and went to Brazil, even though the conquest of Brazil took place a long time afterwards. (Interview on June 24, 2010)

Regardless of the veracity of the troubadour-*repentista* lineage, it is the act of forging this historical relationship that is of importance. The connections that select Occitan musicians make with Brazil are similar to the imagined histories that Thomas Solomon (2016) discusses in the context of the Norway-Azerbaijan origin myth. He writes that "history is thus always a

'fiction'...a contingent product and process of the historical imagination" (116). Occitan music performers have conveyed three main reasons for their fascination with Brazil. First, Brazilian culture serves as a foil for self-understanding: it is by going to Brazil that some musicians became aware of Occitan culture. Louis Pastorelli, based in Nice, explained that similarities between Brazilian Portuguese and the Occitan language and certain shared musical and dance genres, such as the *scottisch* as well as carnival rituals, reminded him of the culture of his city (interview June 5, 2010). This observation sparked his interest in learning more about Niçois and the cultural history of Nice. Second, these musicians perceive Brazil to be a country with an active folklore in contrast to their own. Third, the arc that connects Occitanie and Brazil serves to garner recognition and interest for Occitan musical activity: dances and music from Brazil are generally more appealing to French audiences than French folk music and dance.

When I asked Loddo what fascinated him about Brazil, he responded:

Why does Brazil fascinate us? Because we have the impression that it's a country that resists globalization extremely well, that everyone plays music everywhere; you have the impression that there is an enormous vivacity. When you go for the first time, you see that. But, when you live in Brazil, you realize that it is 100 percent harder for artists in Brazil than here. A singer like Silverio Pessoa, who is perhaps the most famous singer of Recife, cannot make a living from performing. (Interview in June 24, 2010)

The connection cultivated with Brazilian musicians has engendered what Loddo calls a "cultural alliance" (cf. Diamond 2007; Giroux 2018). Beverley Diamond (2007) formulated alliance studies as a way of looking at "connections to places, or networks of people" (169). When Loddo travels to Brazil, he makes appearances on radio and television shows, where he talks about Brazilian popular culture and why the French are fascinated by it. Conversely, when Brazilian musicians travel to France, they explain their own interest in Occitan music. Several Brazilian musicians, including Rita Macedo, who now lives in Toulouse, and Silverio Pessoa,

have performed regularly with La Talvera. Pessoa, who resides in Recife but frequently travels to France, has a tattoo of the Occitan cross on his arm.

Applying Glissant's Rhizome Theory

Of all the musicians profiled in this study, Loddo is most attached to preserving the Occitan language and other cultural practices of southern France. He stated to me, "We reckon, and we write in many songs, that the best way to save one's culture is to mix it" (interview on June 24, 2010). Discussing debates on "tradition," Nathan Hesselink writes, "this slippery and highly problematic concept is often posited in terms of a dichotomy: tradition as old and preservationist versus innovation and modernity" (2004:406). Hesselink adopts an "inclusive view of tradition, as comprising both preservation and innovation" (406) for his study of *samul nori* percussion in South Korea. Loddo utilizes solidarity as a means to preserve Occitan music and language by creating a relational dynamic between his own musical locality and that of other musicians. This process can also be viewed through the lens of rhizomic identity theory, which Glissant derived from the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Whereas the root system of a tree grows downwards into the soil as a single entity, a rhizome grows roots from its nodes. From this botanical fact, Deleuze and Guattari extrapolate in *A Thousand Plateaus*: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, "Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. The rhizome

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¹¹ As David Coplan notes, "tradition" is a term "just short of impossible to use without quarantine between quotation marks" (1993:36). By contrast, Benjamin Brinner defends the term, stating that it "is still useful to designate cultural knowledge that has been developed and shared by a group for considerable time. Whether we are talking about specific songs or ways of performing and listening, it is an appropriate term without a ready substitute" (2009:30).

is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple" (1987:21). Glissant's rhizomic theory does not completely deny the importance of roots, but rather counters the notion of the importance of one root over another—i.e., one culture over another.

In *Poétique de la Relation* (Poetics of Relation) (1990), Glissant defines rhizomatic identity in the following manner:

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari criticized notions of the root, and even perhaps, of being rooted. The root is unique, a stalk taking all upon itself and killing all around it. In opposition to this they propose the rhizome, an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently. The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root. Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other. (Cited in Glissant and Wing 1997:11)

For Glissant, the search for roots by Afro-Caribbeans was inevitable even if rootedness was impossible to attain.

Glissant's rhizome theory can be applied to all of the Occitan musicians I discuss; however, Loddo's work, especially, provides an illustration of this nature metaphor. He researches music cultures historically attached to the land and to the *terroir*, but his hybrid compositions, his reflections on tradition, and his global outlook convey Glissant's theory of rhizome, a corollary of Relation, "in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other" (11). Similarly, while Loddo has immersed himself in researching, performing, and teaching the traditions of the southwestern department of Tarn, where he resides, he places these traditions in relation with other "root systems," to borrow Glissant's phrase, by collaborating with musicians from other countries and incorporating non-native musical styles and instruments. Furthermore, as Deleuze and Guattari state, "the tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance" (1987:25).

In one of our interviews, Loddo stated, "And the words that we sing, we sing in Occitan and we certainly sing of Occitanie, however, when we sing in Occitan, we also sing of the whole world." For Loddo, Occitan culture is not an end of itself, but rather a means of encountering the world, and for the world to encounter La Talvera (interview on June, 5 2014). This opening out onto the world is central to Loddo's interpretation of Occitan music, and is a perspective that is shared by other Occitan musicians, including Claude Sicre, Manu Théron, and Tatou. Loddo states that because he is anchored in traditional music, he is able to engage with performers of many different genres: with jazz musician Bernard Lubat, Massilia Sound System, Berber musicians, rock musicians, rap artists. As he says, "Wherever I go on the planet, my instruments serve as a passport, my knowledge of Occitan culture serves as a key to friendship, to encounters, to learning" (interview on June 24, 2010).

Conclusion

Agnès Maillot states that the roots of right-wing ideology in today's France can be traced to the ideology of Maurice Barrès and Charles Marras during the Third Republic, "which saw the emergence of a counter-revolutionary discourse that rejected the universalism of the French Revolution and viewed the land as the organic repository of the nation" (2017:46). Founded in 1972, the original name of the National Front was the National Front for a French Algeria (Front national pour une Algérie française), thus demonstrating the connections between the French extreme right-wing political movement, the French colonial legacy, and earlier incarnations of right-wing nationalism, namely Charles Maurras' colonialist French Action, which had also been in favor of an French Algeria. Throughout the 1970s, the National Front was, as Peter Davies writes, "at best, a political irrelevance. It operated on the fringes of French politics and never rose above its own internal squabbles" (1993:3). In the 1974 presidential elections, Le Pen

obtained a paltry 0.76 percent of the national vote (Marcus 1984:508). However, in the 1980s, the National Front began to gain momentum, and public discourse became increasingly preoccupied with immigration, specifically that from France's former colonies.

In this chapter, I have discussed the back-to-the-land counter-culture of the 1970s in order to demonstrate the backdrop of Loddo's ideology and compositions. During the 1970s, the notion of the land, which had previously been associated with right-wing conservative nationalists whose discourse on rootedness foreshadowed the National Front's rhetoric on territory, became idealized as a symbol of a globally oriented, left-wing counter-cultural identity. I argue that, due to the evocations of territory that have become synonymous with the National Front, Occitan musicians have embraced a deterritorializing ideology in which the land is separated from territory. In this way, Glissant's concept of rhizome identity becomes particularly relevant to the Occitan project; rather than embodying *un repli identitaire* (withdrawing into a nationalist ideology), Occitan musicians demonstrate their desire to cultivate and valorize their cultural milieu while remaining relational, cosmopolitan citizens.

Whereas many singer-songwriters of the 1970s espoused rooting/globality in their lyrics, this aspect of the Occitan music *sound* really emerged in the 1980s, and is exemplified by the music styles of Loddo, Claude Sicre, Tatou, and Manu Théron. However, the musicians of the folk movement and those affiliated with the Larzac helped set the stage for their interest in folklore and ideology of resistance that underpin their musical projects. In the next chapter, I discuss Claude Sicre's efforts to recreate folklore as a pathway to cultural democracy against the backdrop of the emergence of the National Front and increasingly restrictive immigration laws.

CHAPTER FOUR

Claude Sicre's Reinvention of Folklore as a Pathway to Cultural Democracy

In 1982, the sociolinguist Henri Giordan drafted a report, commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture under President François Mitterand, on the status of regional cultures in France. The ensuing study was entitled *La démocratie culturelle et le droit à la difference* (Cultural Democracy and the Right to Difference). In the book's introduction Giordan wrote, "Regional cultural spaces are today, for the most part, spaces of crisis" (1982:21). Giordan voiced the key issues facing cultural life in the regions: the expectation of "integrating" into a "dominant culture" and the "marginalization of local creativity" (21). He saw these two forces as the major impediments to regions "mastering their cultural future" (21). The "right to difference," which has become a slogan also appropriated by the Far Right (see Lebovics 2004), is inseparable today from immigration and the question of cultural citizenship in France.

In this chapter, I examine Claude Sicre's definition of and advocacy for cultural democracy in France. Discussing his ideas on centralism and folklore and how these relate to cultural democracy, I emphasize Sicre's contributions as a cultural theorist and activist. Taking action in one's locale, evident in his sociocultural inventions the *repas de quartier* (neighborhood meal) and the *conversations socratiques* (Socratic conversations) and the founding of the association Escambiar (Occitan for "exchange"), is part of his project to dismantle French centralism and to revive French culture in the provinces and, therefore, of France. I begin with a discussion of the political context of the 1980s, for they serve as a formative matrix of French policy and ideology related to immigration, decentralization, and popular culture that reappear in Sicre's discourse. I then elaborate on Sicre's theory of cultural democracy, discuss the Occitanist philosopher Félix Marcel Castan, whose theories on

centralism and counter-capitals underpin Sicre's own ideas, and conclude with a contextual analysis of the song "Pasqua" (1995).

Sicre is best known for his band the Fabulous Trobadors, active between 1987 and the early 2000s, with occasional performances thereafter. Like Loddo, Sicre began his musical career and inquiry into Occitan culture in the late 1970s. He was a founding member of the experimental folk band Riga Raga, formed in 1977, whose members consisted of folk music revivalists, local musicians, and the ethnomusicologists Luc Charles-Dominique and Xavier Vidal. In contrast to Loddo, who has consecrated his career to the retrieval of local folklore, Sicre is of the opinion that folklore is no longer alive in France and thus he has sought to reinvent it. His efforts to create folklore have been concentrated in Toulouse, specifically in Arnaud-Bernard, which he calls "the last popular neighborhood of Toulouse." Although the basis of his musical style is the northeastern Brazilian *embolada*, in which singers improvise while playing tambourines, he incorporates sonic references to both French folklore and other music cultures. Sicre is also the founder of the Linha Imaginòt (Imaginary Line), a collective of Occitan music groups and artists that has included Massilia Sound System (from Marseille), Nux Vomica (from Nice), and Manu Théron's first band, Gacha Empega (from Marseille).

The Fabulous Trobadors, which consisted of Sicre and Ange B, a "human beatbox" who provided a wide range of rhythmic vocal accompaniment and sound effects, was one of the most widely known Occitan bands. They accompanied their witty French and Occitan language wordplay with tambourines on which they performed fast-paced rhythms derived from the

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¹ One of Sicre's contributions to the group's musical output was to add instruments from other music cultures such as the North African *bendir*. The experimental sounds, such as that of stones struck together, challenged the traditionalist folk music revivalism that was contempoareous with Riga Raga's formation.

embolada. In fact, Sicre credits himself for introducing Brazilian music into the Occitan music scene. The Fabulous Trobadors addressed the sociopolitical conditions of their time; their songs comment, somewhat ambivalently, on Americanization, and in an overtly critical way on centralist mentalities and anti-immigration policy. Although the duo disbanded in the early 2000s, Sicre and Ange B remain active in the Occitan music scene.² I focus on Sicre in this chapter rather than Ange B because the former's theories have greatly impacted many Occitan musicians in this study.

The Fabulous Trobadors released four albums: Èra pas de faire (There Was Nothing Else To Do, 1992), Ma Ville est le plus beau park (My City is the Most Beautiful Park, 1995),³ On the Linha Imaginòt (1998), and Duels de tchatches et autres trucs du folklore toulousain (Sung Duels and Other Things from Toulousan Folklore, 2003). The first album was produced by Roker Promocion, a record label started by Jali, one of the singers of the Occitan band Massilia Sound System. For their second album and third albums they signed with Mercury Records. Their last album was recorded by Tôt ou Tard, an independent label that began as a division of Warner Music France.

The 1980s: Decentralization and the Rise of the National Front

If the 1970s in France were defined by countercultural protests, regionalist identity movements, a radical back-to-the-land ideology, and the government's attempts to halt

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² Among his many activities, Sicre has been the director of the Bombes de Bal, a group of female performers for which he writes the music. Ange B currently performs with Manu Théron in Polyphonic Sound System and has performed with La Talvera, Rita Macedo, and other Occitan and non-Occitan musicians.

³ A journalist in the French popular magazine *Les Inrockuptibles* wrote that their title song, "Ma ville est le plus beau park," "develops the most beautiful anticolonial poem of today; it reminds us that the passion for the *pays* is not the hatred of the other" (Larréde 1994).

immigration, the 1980s were marked by decentralization, an increasing public preoccupation with immigration (primarily North African), the first major protests in the *banlieue*, and the incipient rise of the right-wing National Front. The early 1980s were also defined by a dramatic change in government, from Valery Giscard d'Estaing's center-right government to that of the socialist president François Mitterand (1981-1995).

Upon taking office in 1981, Mitterand carried out a promise he had made during his campaign: to decentralize administrative power in France. Through a series of laws known as the Lois Defferre, named after Gaston Defferre, the Minister of the Interior and of Decentralization (1981-1984), the government implemented unprecedented decentralization policies. The Lois Defferre, also known as Acte I de la décentralisation (Act I of Decentralization), transferred a number of responsibilities of the prefect to the presidents of councils, who were elected within the region. During this time the *régions* were established as political and territorial communities (Schrijver 2006:177). DeGaulle had attempted this project in a 1969 referendum; however, his lack of popularity by that time led people to associate other policies with his regionalist agenda. Vivian Schmidt has written of the various instances since the French Revolution that propositions had been raised to decentralize France; nonetheless, Mitterand's decentralization legislation was met with surprise at the time by most scholars studying France (1991:ix).

At the same time as decentralization policies were under way in the 1980s, postcolonial immigrant communities began to mobilize and to receive greater attention in public and political discourse. The postcolonial regionalism that Lebovics has attributed to the 1970s took on new meaning in the subsequent decade as a second generation of North African immigrants, known as the *beur* generation (referring to naturalized second-generation immigrants), began to voice their dissatisfaction with social inequalities in France. A series of events in the early 1980s drew

media attention to the *banlieue*. During the summer of 1981, violent clashes between the police and *banlieue* residents erupted, resulting in the immolation of two hundred cars. This was the first of a series of such events that would draw public awareness to the social unrest in suburban housing projects. In 1983, nine youths of Maghrebi descent performed a hunger strike. They wrote, "violence is to be twenty years old, without work, and policemen on one's back" (cited in Boubeker 2008:181). According to Ahmed Boubeker, the *beur* movement arose from this moment. In *La France de Zebda*, Danielle Marx-Scouras writes that the *beur* movement took form with the passing of legislation in 1981 that permitted the creation of associations (2005:49). This movement was both a cultural and political expression on the part of the children of Maghrebi immigrants. *Beur* literature, such as Mehdi Charef's *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* (Tea in Archi Ahmed's Harem) (1983), considered the first *beur* novel, described life in the *banlieues*. Bands, such as Zebda in Toulouse and Rachid Taha's Carte de Séjour in Lyon, blended North African genres with rock music and sang lyrics that commented on their experiences within French society.

It was during this time that the National Front grew as a serious electoral force. In the municipal elections of March 1983, the National Front gained 17 percent of the vote in the town of Dreux, located thirty miles west of Paris. The following year, it gained 11 percent of the polls at the European Parliament elections, "conducted on the basis of proportional representation," sending ten members to the European Parliament (Marcus 1984:509). In the 1988 elections, the National Front won 14.39 percent of the national vote. 4 Capitalizing on a weakened economy, the party's slogan in the 1983 municipal elections was: "Two million unemployed is two million

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⁴ In the 2019 European Parliament elections, the National Front received 23 percent of the national vote, earning more seats than any other political party.

immigrants too many. Priority for France and the French" (Marcus 1984:510). Observing the recent rise of the National Front, Jonathan Marcus wrote in 1984, "Le Pen plays up the threat of a vast wave of Islamic Arab influence penetrating and colonizing France from the third world" (510). Le Pen contended that immigrants, focusing on those from North Africa, were taking advantage of unemployment and welfare benefits; argued that hospital facilities, schools, and family benefits should be reserved for only the French; and advocated for repatriation. Driss Maghraoui writes in reference to Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose views on immigration have been largely reiterated by his daughter, Marine:

Since then, the Right has been able to put the issue of immigration and French identity at the center of the political debate in France. More importantly, Jean-Marie Le Pen gave a certain legitimacy to the themes of his party. By associating "illegal immigration" with juvenile delinquency and crimes, he has been able to draw much attention to a mythical reality about 'l'invasion des immigrés' [invasion of immigrants]. The discourse of the Right in France used also the notion of the decline of the French nation as a way of demonizing the presence of different ethnic groups. (2013:223)

In his speeches, Le Pen contended that he was not "waging a war against immigrants, but against the immigration policies pursued by governments of all political hues" (223).

In opposition to the growing popularity of the National Front and to public discourse that linked immigration and economic insecurity,⁵ multiculturalism was adopted during the 1980s as a political stance that informed musical expression. In 1985, Jack Lang's cultural ministry provided major funding for the first concert sponsored by the anti-racism organization SOS Racisme. SOS Racisme's slogan Touches pas à mon pote (Don't Touch My Friend), inscribed within a yellow hand, addressed xenophobic acts of violence. The organization enjoyed support from the Socialist government, and several of SOS Racisme's leaders, including the founder,

⁵ As the sociologist Eric Taïeb writes, "...the 1980s were the time when attacking racism, xenophobia and the new, tougher immigration laws (1986) and calling for a blending of the cultures and for tolerance became fashionable" (1998:72).

Harlem Désir,⁶ became politicians. This fact drew criticism from members of the *beur* movement, who stated that the movement had been co-opted by the Socialist Party. One of the bands that performed at the 1985 SOS Racisme concert was Carte de Séjour.⁷ In a documentary film about this concert, the band's lead singer, Rachid Taha, sang the first words of Charles Trenet's "Douce France:" "Douce France, cher pays de mon enfance" (Sweet France, dear country of my childhood).⁸ He stopped, and addressing the audience, stated, "We are touching your heritage, which belongs to us too, eh?" This performative act symbolized the issues in France, which have prevailed since the 1980s, pertaining to French identity, immigration, and French cultural heritage.

With the growing popularity of Le Pen, the Socialist Party began to take a more hard-lined approach to immigration, creating a paradoxical situation between the multiculturalist identity put forth by Jack Lang and the government's immigration policy. Furthermore, in 1986, the general public voted in a more conservative prime minister, Jacques Chirac. Chirac's election resulted in cohabitation of the socialist and center-right parties during the last two years of Mitterand's first term. This political shift facilitated the introduction of the Pasqua laws, named after the Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua (1986-1988, 1993-1995), which complicated the acquisition of French citizenship. Immigration debates of the 1980s and 1990s focused on insurmountable cultural differences and national identity. Since the early 2000s, particularly since the 2005 *banlieue* uprisings, these debates have increasingly focused on class and race

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⁶ Désir is a member of the European Parliament as a representative of the Socialist Party.

⁷ Kaya writes, "Proclaiming their 'Frenchness' they recorded (with his approval) an 'ironic' version of Charles Trenet's "Douce France" [Sweet France], blending *raï* with Mediterranean rock" (2002:103). For an analysis of Carte de Séjour see Barbara Le Brun (2012).

⁸ "Concert des Potes: Vive la Concorde. 1985. Daily Motion video, 59:29, documentary film by Alain Perisson. Published June 17, 2015. https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2u6oda.

(Thomas 2013:62).

The 1980s and early 1990s also saw a state-sponsored emphasis on popular culture with Mitterand's appointment of Jack Lang as Minister of Cultural Affairs (1981-1986, 1988-1992). Originally created by President Charles de Gaulle in 1959, the position of Minister of Cultural Affairs had first been occupied by the writer André Malraux until 1969. Herman Lebovics' biography of Malraux, *Mona Lisa's Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture*⁹ (1999), details the cultural aims of Malraux's ministry. In summary, Malraux's primary objective was to give a broader segment of the population greater access to French "culture," specifically one derived from the classical age. One of the Ministry's accomplishments was to establish Maisons de la Culture (Houses of Culture) in the provinces. However, Lebovics observes that rather than fostering local artistic production, these cultural centers essentially attempted to reproduce "the culture and sophistication of Paris in all urban centers of France" (5). Lebovics concludes that, ultimately, Malraux's attempts could not extend "cultured France beyond a small highly educated elite" (206).

In contrast to Malraux, Lang believed that "culture was everything and everywhere" (Lebovics 2011:350). During this time, the state financed "more popular practices such as rock and rap" (364). Ohristian Giordan (2013) perceives this change as a shift from a republican to a democratic model of culture, the word "republican" connoting the universalist from the center-to-the-periphery model. However, as Celestin and Dalmolin (2013) point out, in the paradigms of both Malraux and Lang, the central government still played a defining and interventionist role in

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⁹ The title is derived from the fact that Malraux accompanied the Mona Lisa on the painting's tour of the United States.

¹⁰ Cultural decentralization has meant that corporations have played a greater role in financing culture (Lebovics 2011:364).

the cultural lives of its citizens.

In *Mona Lisa's Escort*, Lebovics writes that his inquiry into the cultural policy of president De Gaulle and Malraux was driven by a wish to provide a better understanding of the displacement of concerns about the fate of French culture onto North African immigration in France. He writes:

The culture that many French statesmen believe is crucial for the safety and stability of the nation is losing both validity and resonance with the population. I think the perplexity raised by this dilemma is displaced, in part, into the intense concern, especially among the most culturally conservative parts of the population, about Islamic and African immigration, the new Europe, and overweening American cultural marketing. (1999:204)

Elsewhere he reflects:

I don't know if France has what we would call a vital "popular culture," the way, for example, Britain and the United States have. At this moment I think not. Jack Lang tried to include aspects of popular aesthetic forms and entertainments in the state's bounty...Nor do I know if a concept of "popular culture" or at least a more participatory version of the national culture will ever achieve a modicum of legitimacy in France. However, the top-down approach has been tested for some time. Its most resolute champion, Malraux, could not extend cultured France beyond a small highly educated elite. In our democratic age the elitist democracy—an open elite, to be sure—of the past republics cannot function. Is there any choice for France but to explore ideas for cultural democracy? (206)

These two passages by Lebovics encapsulate the focus of my analysis of Sicre's music and activism; I examine his discourse on popular culture in France, his attempts to create cultural democracy, and the coterminous and related issues surrounding immigration. I discuss what cultural democracy signifies for Sicre and how folklore relates to this concept.

Occitan musicians do not completely reject the culture that, as Lebovics writes, "many French statesmen believe is crucial for the safety and stability of the nation" (1999:206). Rather, they aim to broaden the definition of French culture from within, in contrast to a government-controlled definition of French culture, through a different set of cultural referents. Their discourse demonstrates the limits of government-sponsored cultural democratization and

decentralization. Although decentralization policy in the 1980s resulted in regional and municipal councils, with an allotted fiscal expenditure, these councils, according to Lebovics "still get their aesthetic ideas from Paris" (2004:75). Similarly, Occitan musicians I interviewed consider decentralization to have been a political move to satisfy the demands of regionalist groups and provincial inhabitants. In Tatou's opinion "it was to calm the game politically, but changed nothing about the situation...it was to pretend to be democratic" (interview on June 21, 2014). In fact, according to Tatou, the government created "little centers"—a statement also iterated by Louis Pastorelli who said, "when they speak of decentralization, it's Paris everywhere" (interview on June 15, 2015). Yet their discourse, especially that of Sicre, also demonstrates how Occitan musicians engage with and adopt the language of the government, such as cultural democracy, while they push back against the state.

Towards a Cultural Democracy Part One: Opposing Cultural Centralism

In the liner notes of the Fabulous Trobador's second album, *Ma ville est le plus beau park*, Sicre includes two quotes by the French cultural ministers André Malraux and Jack Lang, respectively. The first is an excerpt from a speech given by Malraux at the inauguration of a Maison de Jeunesse et de la Culture (youth and cultural center) in Grenoble: "Within ten years, the hideous word *province* will cease to exist in France." Opposite this statement is one by Lang: "It's pretty, *province*; I myself am from Lorraine...I don't like the word 'region." Sicre provides the following commentary in the liner notes: "Malraux was wrong in his predictions, because he had the wrong strategy (he hadn't read Félix Castan). But at least he understood what the primary flaw of French culture was—something Jack Lang did not see twenty years later, and which he still doesn't see." Sicre's critique of the word *province* is part of his mission to create a culturally democratic France.

Cultural democracy is at the center of Sicre's activism as a performer and community organizer. I have ascertained two overarching aspects to Sicre's definition of cultural democracy: the dismantling of cultural centralism, which includes increased artistic production in the provinces and its recognition, an dthe valorization of popular culture, for which objective Sicre reinvents folklore. As one can see, these components of cultural democracy are intertwined. The valorization of popular culture is meant to challenge what Sicre and other Occitan musicians have characterized as an elitist cultural centralism.

In L'ancien régime et la révolution (The Old Regime and the Revolution) (1856), Alexis de Toqueville observed, "Never since the fall of the Roman Empire had the world seen a government so highly centralized" (cited in Suleiman 1987:3). He distinguished governmental from administrative centralization and described the two centuries prior to the Revolution as an increasing imposition of the latter through "taxation, military conscription, public works, public order, the judiciary, and welfare" (cited in Pittz 2011:801). Pre-revolutionary monarchical centralization was strongest during the reign of Louis XIV (1648–1715), who claimed, "l'État c'est moi" (I am the State). The last two centuries of the Ancien Régime, a phrase coined during the French Revolution and whose starting date is not unilaterally agreed upon but which ended with revolution, were defined by an increasing attempt by the absolute monarchy to centralize power through the creation of the Royal Council. High-ranking administrators, known as intendants, ensured that royal policy was carried out in the provinces (801). The intendants would be replaced by the prefectoral corps in 1800 under Napoleon Bonaparte, who called the latter "small-scale emperors." Like the intendants of the Ancien Régime, the prefect was responsible for maintaining public order and for overseeing that state policy was being carried out in the departments. The prestige and power of the prefect peaked during the Second Empire

(1852-1870), and since 1982, the role of the prefect, appointed by the president, has been to ensure that local policy corresponds with state policy.

Scholarship on centralization has tended to polarize around the argument made by Toqueville in *The Old Regime* on the overly administrative centralization in France. Ezra Suleiman's critique of modern uses of Toquevillean analysis argues that the social forces that shaped France during Toqueville's time have changed drastically and that, "the capacity of groups to organize themselves has undergone a revolutionary change" (4). Suleiman calls for studies that account for the "permeability of the state" (1987:4).

Occitan musicians I interviewed generally reiterate the Toquevillean line of thinking, citing the centralization of state power and its impact on the lives of its citizens. For instance, the musician Louis Pastorelli stated, "The problem of France is that it is a centralized country; it is its Jacobinism, which is neither right nor left" (interview on June 15, 2015). "Jacobinism," a word frequently used in French political discourse, refers to the Jacobin project of centralization.¹¹

Despite the heightened degree of centralization, for Sicre it is not *centralization* per se that is the issue in France but *centralism*. Differentiating between the two, Sicre explains, "that things are centralized in Paris, is not a problem" (interview on June 8, 2010). Centralism, on the other hand, is "a disease" (*maladie*). He states:

I am for national, political, administrative centralization, but radical cultural decentralization. To democratize French culture, there must be capitals other than Paris. In brief, that the people of Marseille, Toulouse...have the ambition of thinking from Toulouse, Marseille...To become aware of the history of Toulouse is to become aware of

¹¹ Had the Girondins, who supported a degree of regional autonomy in France, had their way during the French Revolution rather than being beheaded by the Jacobins, things might have looked differently. The Girondins heralded from the southwestern department of la Gironde, whose largest city is Bordeaux, where a statue was built to honor local revolutionary heroes.

the history of Toulouse in relation to Paris and is to see France differently. And it is this plurality that will reinforce the French nation. (Cited in Mazerolle 2008:273)

This passage suggests that in order for cultural democracy to take place, there must be increased internal recognition of local artistic production and history. In Sicre's view, centralism makes inhabitants of the regions culturally dependent on Paris and cut off from their own agency as producers of culture. In this vein of thinking, centralist attitudes come from Paris and are then internalized by people in the regions. Furthermore, according to Sicre, centralism is an egotistical way of thinking that makes Parisian highbrow culture look only at itself. As I discuss in greater detail further on, Sicre's notion of capitals other than Paris, or counter-capitals, is informed by the Occitanist theory of Félix-Marcel Castan.

The dismantling of centralism also includes dismantling rigid associations between social class and culture. One of the most frequently cited criticisms of French society by Occitan musicians is the *cadres* (frames) imposed on culture and social class. Whereas France is known as the land of democracy, Occitan musicians have argued that, culturally, France is stuck in patterns that promote elitist, class-defined visions of culture that are undemocratic. Sicre, for example, was born into a working-class family, and although he went to schools attended by bourgeois families, stated that when he was a child, a person of his background would never have dreamed of becoming a writer. Sicre stated, "We are people who want that everywhere one goes on French territory and whomever one is with, rich people, poor people, one has the right to the grandest cultural ambitions and one has the responsibility to bring into play the highest cultural perspectives and ambitions" (interview on June 8, 2010). All four musicians profiled in this thesis were born into working-class or middle-class families, and their statements about cultural elitism in France mirror what Pierre Bourdieu documents in *Distinction: The Social Judgement of Taste* (1984). In this seminal text, Bourdieu demonstrated how "taste" is a social

construct and analyzed how cultural capital is created and maintained through education in France. The Occitan perspective resembles that which Bourdieu studies through sociological methods: how certain attitudes towards culture have been perpetuated in France. As Bourdieu writes in his preface to *Distinction*:

...I do indeed emphasize the particularity of the French tradition, namely, the persistence, through different epochs and political regimes, of the aristocratic model of 'court society,' personified by a Parisian haute bourgeoisie which, combining all forms of prestige and all the titles of economic and cultural nobility, has no counterpart elsewhere, at least for the arrogance of its cultural judgements. (xi)¹²

According to Sicre, what Bourdieu terms the "cultural nobility" of Paris and what Sicre calls "centralism," is the brake that holds back the democratization of cultural life.

Unlike many of the musicians I interviewed, Sicre conveyed an admiration for the United States, where he believes there to be an example of cultural democracy. He confessed to a "fascination with a world where...writers have had many different jobs." Although Sicre positively evaluated what he perceives to be American cultural democracy, his lyrics portray less overtly enthusiastic support of certain aspects of American culture that have been exported. Cultural globalization, in general, is a frequent theme in his lyrics, and the fast-food chain McDonalds, for instance, appears several times in his songs.

Generally speaking, the United States has historically represented a foil for France to define its own culture (see Kuisel 2007:2011). In *True France: The Wars Over Cultural Identity,* 1900-1945, Lebovics writes that the attempts to define national character in the 1930s responded in part to French debates about the "crisis of civilization" and related fears about the "Americanization" of France and Europe (1994:14). A reprisal of these fears emerged in the

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¹² In *Popular Culture in Modern France: A Study of Cultural Discourse* (1999), Brian Rigby devotes a chapter to Bourdieu's theorization of popular culture in France.

1960s with the development of a youth culture enamored of Anglo-American culture and would again appear in the 1980s amidst the growing impacts of globalization. Whereas North American culture may be considered anti-intellectual or non-intellectual and driven by commercial markets, French culture is often praised in France for its refinement. At the same time, since the early twentieth century, French popular music has been shaped to a great extent by Anglo-American genres, such as jazz, and then later, rock n' roll and hip hop. This cultural situation has engendered heated arguments and defensive attitudes in France, much in the same way that the prominence of English has.¹³ Tatou, for instance, provided the following anecdote:

When rock n' roll arrived, there was a *crispation* [tension]—it's American, Coca-Cola etc. Never did anyone say, "young people are interested in this, maybe there's something they are missing here." Rock n' roll—it's a popular culture and that [for some people] is impossible to understand. "Popular culture is okay for the Friday night dance, or for talking amongst yourselves during a break, but it holds no interest here." How did popular culture succeed in interesting so many people in the world? (Interview on June 21, 2014)

As a teenager, Tatou played in several bands and was primarily drawn to rock, punk, and folk music. He explained to me that young people were drawn to forms of popular music from abroad, such as rock music, as a result of the disdain and erosion of popular art in France. As he related, "I am in a country where the *savant* (learned) has the way, and outside of the *savant*, everything that is popular is completely stomped on and denigrated. And suddenly, what arrives: a popular music. So, it fills my hole." Similar to Sicre, one of Tatou's primary critiques of France addresses class structure and culture in France:

When I was young, we wore blue jeans. It was a worker's garment. But in France it was impossible. When we were invited to people's houses, I could not wear blue jeans. My mother had to excuse me, "Please excuse him; he wore a blue jean." But not because it

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¹³ Another important aspect to the reception of American popular culture in France is the way that it has enabled French musicians to examine their own popular culture. This was the case in the 1970s, when the American folk movement impelled young musicians in France to research their own folklore.

was American—in fact it's Occitan: it comes from De Nîmes—but because it was a worker's garment, and it is not polite, not *comme il faut* [proper]. (Interview on June 21, 2014)

Sicre perceives Occitan language and the reinvention of folklore as tools for dismantling centralist and elitist attitudes and for creating a cultural democracy. In the same way that speaking Occitan carries the stigma of the working class and speaking French has been a means to climb the social ladder, folk music represents popular culture in a country where high art has been privileged over the popular, exemplified by the terms *haute-couture* (high fashion) and *haute-cuisine* (high cuisine) (see Bourdieu 1984).

Towards a Cultural Democracy Part Two: The Reinvention of Folklore

The valorization of popular culture by Sicre and other musicians on the Linha Imaginòt is linked both to their critique of cultural centralism, discussed above, and to the gradual disappearance of folklore in France. Part of Sicre's ideological framework rests on the theory of what might be called a "weak" French popular music. Nevertheless, popular song has certainly existed throughout French history. Collections of *chansons populaires* (popular songs) abound, conducted by professional and amateur folklorists, novelists such as Georges Sand, and at times, as in the case of the Académie celtique (Celtic Academy), initiated by the French central government. Street songs, as Laura Mason (1996) has demonstrated, played a crucial role in shaping the French Revolution, evidenced by the thousands of revolutionary songsheets in existence. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the café concert and cabarets were thriving cultural scenes in Paris with equivalents in other major cities in France. Furthermore, the *chanson* that is associated with Edith Piaf, Georges Brassens, Yves Montand, and Serges Gainsbourg has defined Frenchness both within France and abroad (Briggs 2015). While Sicre's

ideas on the situation of popular culture in France certainly speak to the specificities of French cultural hierarchies, they can also be attributed to French popular culture's relatively low recognition and impact abroad in recent decades and to the inverse cultural impact of Anglo-American culture in France. For instance, whereas Occitan musicians may wonder where and how to locate their blues, I surmise that fewer musicians in the United States have sought to find their *chanson*.

Seated at the table in the conference room of the association he founded in 1981,

Escambiar, Sicre rapidly explained to me the reasons for the decline of folklore in France. He referred to two historical periods: the reign of Louis XIV (1648–1715), when performers of art music were invited to Versailles; and the French Revolution. Sicre has stated, "the seventeenth century is when France started to assassinate its folklore" (Gaudàs 1999:6). Louis XIV, the Sun King, who wished France to become the dominant power of Europe, was "convinced that the fine arts, especially music, contributed to a ruler's esteem, glory, and authority" (Isherwood 1969:156). In addition to a flourishing arts scene at Versailles, the king, together with Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's Comptroller-General of Finances as well as one of his most trusted advisers, elaborated on what had already begun in the early seventeenth century with the Académie française (1635): establishing royal academies, "state-sponsored collegial structures aimed at inventing and perfecting" art forms and scientific inquiry (Giroud 2010:12). Language Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) became the director of the Royal Academy of Music in 1672.

Commenting on Lully's role in French musical history, Sicre mentioned that he obtained "the

¹⁴ These included the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture (the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture) (1648), which would become the Académie des beaux-arts (The Academy of Fine Arts), the Académie des sciences (The Academy of Sciences) (1699), and the Académie d'opéra (The Academy of Opera) (1699), which would become the Paris Opera.

rights to the musical life and death for all." From what I have ascertained of Sicre's theorization of French musical history, the "assassination" of French folklore occurred in part due to what he perceives to be the absence of dialogue between popular and high art in France. It is not that musical activity beyond concert music at the time ceased to exist, but rather that, according to Sicre, it was not a creative source for composers. The ancien régime was the starting point for what Bourdieu identified as the perpetuation of behaviors and mentalities inherited from court society in France.

For Sicre, the French Revolution was the next phase in the eradication of folklore. In his opinion, although the Republican ideal of educating the masses was progressive, in its fight against the reign of superstitions and local particularisms, the government, instead of pulling out the weeds, "yanked out everything...they dried out the land" (interview on June 8, 2010). He continued:

This program, implemented by a relay of government officials, created a dynamic in which the populace was distrustful of itself, of spontaneous production; it no longer knew how to invent and grew accustomed to waiting for everything from above. The Republican desire to allow all to attain the same values as the elite in fact gave the elite a certain power over the public—the public could no longer discuss its [the Republic's] values while confronting them with its own realities. This situation has created a non-democracy, and even though attempts have been made to fix it, it is too late, because the Republic broke all threads [between the center and the regions].

Although there were external reasons for the decline of folklore in France, such as the profound transformations in French society in the twentieth century that led to the depopulation of the countryside, for Sicre, the primary cause was the internalization of disdainful attitudes towards popular culture.

Negative connotations of folklore are reflected in colloquial French expressions. For example, *c'est du folklore* (that's a bit of folklore) refers pejoratively to a situation that is a grand spectacle. In her ethnography of Corsican polyphony, Similarly, the adjective *folklo* denotes

something that is old-fashioned, not modern, and uncool. Caroline Bithell writes "Music described as *du folklore* is, by implication, derivative, sterile, or formulaic—something that might be offered to tourists but that is bereft of any deeper meaning, or something that has become so standardized that it now lacks any sense of creative vitality" (2007:xxxviii). In her study of folkloric groups in the twentieth century, Marie-Thérèse Duflos-Priot describes this negative reputation: "In French, in contrast to other languages, folklore, sometimes abbreviated to 'folklo,' signifies backwards looking, uncool, irrational. The expression 'folkloric group' often evokes the image of a few couples in faded costumes and clogs, accompanied by an unpleasant reed instrument, performing obsolete dance steps as best as they can …" (1995:7).



Figure 4. Musicians and dancers at the Fête de la Saint-Jean, with the Occitan flag. Ariège, June 23, 2010.

In opposition to this tendency, Sicre and other musicians of the Linha Imaginòt proudly assert their role as folkloric musicians. Sicre describes himself as an *ingénieur de folklore*, an engineer of folklore. The guitarist Blu, of Mousu T e lei Jovents, explained to me, "We aspire to be folkloric musicians" (interview on June 21, 2014). The self-proclaimed role of these successful rap and ragamuffin artists as folkloric musicians may at first appear surprising. From their perspective, folklore represents a valorization of popular, local culture in opposition to top-down, Paris-dominated, and bourgeois definitions of French culture. Reinventing folklore is one of the primary means by which Sicre and others subvert what they perceive to be hierarchical and fossilized visions of culture. Fashioning themselves as folkloric musicians is one of the primary tools that Linha Imaginòt musicians use to decentralize, or re-center, French culture. The music styles of these "folkloric" musicians, which are for the most part based on music of Brazil and Jamaica, are intertwined with their discourse on the decline and absence of French folklore.

Folklore for Sicre denotes specific musical properties pertaining to context, function, audience, and style. The first aspect, context, is related to the gradual shift in France from participatory to presentational performance (Turino 2008). Seeking to fill the lacuna of participatory music, Sicre composes songs for weddings, funerals, baptisms, birthdays, and other rites. He distances the folklore he creates and its context from that of traditional folkloric groups. He states, "One can't revive a music if it is only expressed by means of the concert or a *bal* [dance]. But, in France, the circumstances and the functions have been eliminated, which means that our country is the one with the least amount of amateur musical practice. It is so true, that

they had to make an official *fête de la musique* (Celebration of Music)" (cited in Mazerolle 2008:292).¹⁵

The second aspect of Sicre's definition of folklore emphasizes the social function of music. In the same way that the revival of Occitan is not his primary goal, music is important not so much for its aesthetic beauty but rather its social function. On composing songs, Sicre states, "I look at the functionality in relation to the public. The functionality of the dance, of making the public sing, of having them sing the refrain. My aesthetic comes from all of these functionalities." While his approach to composition may appear prescriptive, Sicre states that he creates not as if from a factory but rather from intuition. For Sicre, the social function of music includes the capacity of music to bring people together. He aims to unite people; to have them communicate with each other, eat together and dance together. His attempt to create community serves two purposes. On the one hand, it is an expression of the value of conviviality that Occitan musicians on the Linha Imaginòt promote. On the other hand, music performance, as well as other sociocultural events he has created such the *repas de quartier* (neighborhood meal) and the *débat socratique* (Socractic debate), serve as vehicles for creating active and informed citizens independent of state-controlled initiatives.

The third constitutive element of Sicre's definition of musical folklore is its multigenerational audience. He desires to play "a music that I can play to my grandmother...that I can play for children, that I can play for teenagers" (interview on June 8, 2010). Another musician on the Linha Imaginòt, Louis Pastorelli of Nux Vomica and Gigi de Nissa, also described wishing to

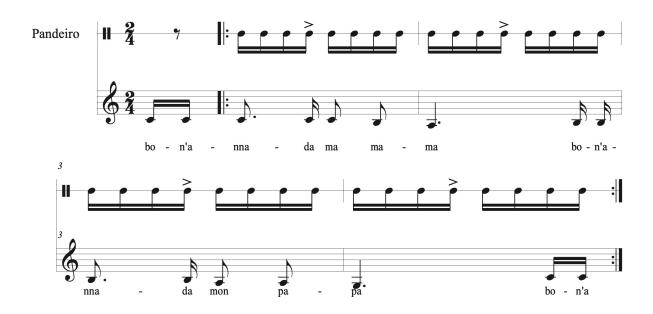
¹⁵ The *fête de la musique*, to which Sicre refers, is a national annual event invented in 1981 that takes place on June 21 all over France, and internationally, from large cities to small villages. It is a day devoted to musical performance, both amateur and professional, when everyone is encouraged to play an instrument.

create folk music for different generations. He explained to me, "We try to mix generations for the Niçois song workshop" (June 15, 2015). For Massilia Sound System, dance is one of the primary means of creating a multi-generational audience. In the song "Reggae fadòli" they sing, "Oh Good Mother/ Make the children dance/ Make the grandpas dance." Similarly, the 2004 album by Bombes de Bal, all but one of whose songs are composed by Sicre, is entitled *Danse avec ta grandmère* (Dance with Your Grandmother). Bombes de Bal, like Massilia Sound System, employs dance to create community. The stylistic basis of Bombes de Bal, which Sicre designed as a female band to perform *folklore toulousain* (folklore of Toulouse), is Brazilian *forró*, and their performances include directions to the audience on how to dance basic steps of *forró*, as well as dances common to French and Brazilian traditional repertoire such as the mazurka.

In the liner notes for *Ma ville est le plus beau park* (1995), Sicre describes the song "Bona annada" (Happy New Year) as a "true folkloric song in the deep sense of the word." The melody, structure, and lyrical content of the song are relatively simple: it is an enumerative song, wishing a happy new year to a series of addressees. According to the liner notes, "The enumeration can be enriched each year, each person can take it and adapt it to sing to his/her recipient of choice." The lyrics, which are in call and response form, begin with the Occitan verse:

Bona annada ma mama Happy New Year my mother Bona annada mon papa Happy New Year my father

The rhythmic underpinning of the song is one found throughout the Fabulous Trobadors repertoire: the Brazilian *embolada*, played on the pandeiro.



Musical Example 3. Melody and embolada rhythmic pattern of "Bona annada"

Sicre sings the first line, Ange B sings the second. The call and response format stays in place throughout the song. *Bona annada* is replaced by the French *bonne année*, and the circle of addressees grows from family members, fiancés, the people of Toulouse, the people of Marseille, Sète, Nice, Paris, unlucky people, people in love, homeless people.... to people on earth, and if any exist on Mars, and to the universe, after which on the recording there is sudden silence.

The music style of the folklore that Sicre invents and which has become the foundation of the Fabulous Trobadors' songs conveys the above categories of context, social function, and audience. It was born, as Sicre stated to me, from a lengthy quest to find "A music that I can play to my grandmother, that I can play in the country, that I can play for children, that I can play for teenagers, that touches all aspects of life, and that is as strong as African music or the blues"

(interview on June 8, 2010). ¹⁶ His use of the tambourine and voice are a result of his desire to find the Occitan blues.

For Sicre, as in the case of other Occitan musicians, the blues has played a large role in his musical imaginary. As he told me, when he was a teenager, "he fantasized about being an old bluesman strumming his guitar." Sicre's manifesto, *Vive l'Americke* (Long Live Americka) (1988), opens with a John Lee Hooker quote that is telling of the Occitan performer's musical orientation and aspirations: "The blues has become so powerful, in our day, that the whole world knows it. It is like a root in the earth. Anyone can have the blues; it is something that has existed since the world began" (11). The concept of the root is significant to understanding the appeal for this music in France. In Sicre's view, musical roots, as in folklore, that were once native to France, no longer exist. In the search for these roots, many Occitan musicians have looked abroad to genres such as the blues and reggae, or music cultures of Brazil, where they deem folklore to be intact. The musical basis of the folklore Sicre creates is an exogenous musical genre, a compositional approach that goes against the grain of typical folk revivals, which tend to delve into the instruments, melodies, and rhythms of a specific place.

The Origins of the Fabulous Trobadors: A Search for the Occitan Blues

Before embarking on a musical career, Sicre wanted to become a filmmaker and traveled to the United States to start a career in Hollywood. Upon his return, he worked in Paris at the publishing house Gallimard, where he encountered Occitan language. This was in the 1970s, during the Occitan revival. Sicre became increasingly interested in Occitan, and thought, "If there is a language, there must be a blues." In 1982, Sicre enrolled at the Université de Toulouse

 $^{^{16}}$ In this section, I paraphrase an interview I conducted with Claude Sicre at Escambiar on June 8, 2010.

to study under the ethnologist Daniel Fabre and simultaneously pursued studies in ethnomusicology at the MNATP and the Musée de l'Homme.¹⁷ He worked at the Instituto d'estudis occitans' music sector at the Conservatoire occitan (Occitan Conservatory) in Toulouse from 1977 to 1984.

Regarding his own musical explorations, he stated that he decided to "return to the basics" (revenir à la base): the voice and percussion. He tried various percussion instruments and after several years settled on the tambourine. According to Sicre, he chose the tambourine because it was a skin instrument that one played with one's hands and that one could find in parts of Europe. It had been played extensively in southern France; as he explained, engravings from the sixteenth century showed tambourine players. He stated, "It had been a strong tradition, even if it had disappeared a little." In addition, it was "light, portable, inexpensive, and was recognized in many cultures." Furthermore, in Sicre's opinion the tambourine is a quintessential folkloric instrument. The following description of his choice of instrument conveys his thoughts of popular vs. elitist musical culture:

The pairing of tambourine/voice, it is the pairing of the street musician, the vagabond, the workman, the beggar or the anarchist, a formula pared-down to the extreme, extremely poor, and at the same time, therefore, very mobile, it corresponds with my choice to be satisfied where I am, to live in the street, to not belong to institutions... to organize everything on the basis of society, in the neighborhood, with others and in the place, to do everything from below. The singer with tambourine, he is the proletarian, the folkloric musician who composes for birthdays, weddings, celebrations in the neighborhood or the city, but also for strikes, the concerns of the locals, always present in the local places and in debates, not the artist who is above his subjects. I am not a *putain* (whore) of an artist, I am a sort of neighborhood *griot*, that is my approach. (Cited in Mazerolle 2008:293)

In this paragraph, he summarizes his ideas about folklore: it is music that is not reserved for the upper classes, is performed at a variety of contexts, permeates many areas of lived experience,

186

¹⁷ His thesis, co-authored with Vidal, studied dances of Lauraguais (1986).

and is steeped in local concerns. Distinguishing himself from the "artist," he compares himself to a *griot*, West African praise singers and keepers of genealogical and historical narratives, placing emphasis on the social function of his own musicianship. The tambourine, according to Sicre, is the perfect instrument for civic engagement and grassroots activism.

As for the vocal aspects of what he was trying to create, this would take a little longer. With his interest in Occitan, he looked into troubadour poetry, and experienced a moment of discovery when he came across the tenson. Louisa Perdigó defines the tenson as "a kind of free argument or debate dealing with varied themes in which each poet speaks in alternate stanzas and defends what he believes to be more just or truthful" (2013:166). Sicre connected the troubadour tenson to other sung duels such as the Sardinian gara poetica and the Portuguese desafio. Since the tenson was a form involving two people, "One avoids singing all by oneself and becoming narcissistic" (interview June 8, 2010). He mentioned that the improvisatory element of the tenson appealed to him, as it would help renew the Occitan language. This statement refers to the fact that, by the late 1980s, when Sicre formed the Fabulous Trobadors, Occitan had fallen out of use as a vernacular language. No longer a part of everyday life, the language was, and continues to be, relegated to literature, educational contexts, and song lyrics of other Occitan music groups. Noticeably, the majority of the lyrics to Fabulous Trobadors songs are in French. Sicre stated that his choice to improvise in French with some Occitan words, rather than exclusively in Occitan, was intended to create a relationship with the audience, for only a small percentage of the French population speaks Occitan.

A defining moment occurred in 1983, when Sicre listened to a friend's cassette of examples of Brazilian music, which included the *embolada*, an improvisatory sung duel accompanied by tambourines. He commented:

What I wanted to do was what the emboladores had been doing for a long time. There was a set form and a precise meter, and the construction of stanzas was quite similar. The syllabic count was the same as in troubadour poetry; octosyllabic for the feminine and heptasyllabic for the masculine. In addition, the two languages, Occitan and Portuguese, were very close, more so than French and Portuguese; they were both neo-Latin languages with tonic accents...It was as if everything you were looking for, you find even stronger than you had dreamed.

At first, he did not want to simply mimic the *embolada*, so he varied it, but found what he created to be ugly. So, he studied the genre in depth, traveling to Brazil, but mostly teaching himself through recordings. In 1987, Sicre formed the Fabulous Trobadors, initially performing with Daniel Loddo, and then with Ange B.

When I interviewed Sicre, he pointed to Castan's *Manifeste multiculturel (et anti-regionaliste): 30 ans d'experience decentralisatrice* (Multicultural (and Anti-Regionalist)

Manifesto: 30 Years of Decentralizing Experience) (1984)¹⁸ on the bookshelf and said,

"Everything you need to know is in there" (interview on June 8, 2010).¹⁹ In *Manifeste multiculturel*, Castan posits that in order to dismantle centralist attitudes, it is important to create counter-capitals capable of opposing Paris. These counter-capitals should support each other (*se tenir la main*). In the Fabulous Trobadors' song, "Castan blues" (1988), Ange B sets a speech given by Castan to a loop of electronic sounds, tambourine, and banjo. "Castan blues" opens

¹⁸ It is of note that the multiculturalism Castan described in this book was in reference to the incorporation of regional, specifically Occitan, culture within the French framework at this time. Although post-colonial immigration was first becoming an issue in public discourse, there are no mentions of it in this text.

¹⁹ Many of Castan's writings have been published posthumously by Cocagne, a publishing house that he founded in 1984. Referring to the fact that Occitanie has never been a nation, Castan writes in *Manifeste multiculturel*, "Occitanie...has never known a national volition as one has seen elsewhere, in Bohemia for example. Its vocation was other; it manifested by means of a powerful creation, in sculpture and other plastic arts, in literature, music, and also in scientific, judicial, and philosophical thought" (30). In the same work, he discusses the composer Déodat de Séverac, the writers Antonin Perbosc and Ismaël Girard, and local painters. He takes to task other Occitanist intellectuals, critiques festivals, promotes his own festivals (Mostra del Larzac and the Festival d'Occitanie), and pays homage to Toulouse (139).

with Castan stating in French, "Culture should be polycentric. That is to say, the centers should have exchanges between each other, on equal footing." Castan's reference to a polycentric culture, comparable to Glissant's theory of Relation, is synonymous with the former's theory of counter-capitals.

Arnaud-Bernard: "The Last Popular Neighborhood of Toulouse"

Sicre's counter-capital is Toulouse, where, in 1981, he founded the association

Escambiar. Escambiar is located in Arnaud-Bernard, a working-class neighborhood northwest of la place du Capitole. Here, before his retirement several years ago to the town Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val, Sicre led three decades of civic engagement, organizing numerous cultural events.

These events included music concerts of all types, debates, presentations in schools, music classes, neighborhood meals, and a continuing film series *Musiques et peuples au cinema*(Musics and Peoples in Film), which focuses on several different geographic locations each year. Sicre is an avid debater, and instituted the "Socratic debate" (*débat socrate*) in Arnaud-Bernard as part of his vision of an educated and empowered citizenry. Indeed, in the liner notes to the Fabulous Trobadors album *Ma ville est le plus beau park* (1995), one of the dedicatees is Socrates.

Arnaud-Bernard takes on mythic proportions in Sicre's music and discourse. The neighborhood is represented on the album cover of the Fabulous Trobadors' *On the Linha Imaginòt*. Inside is a picture of la rua Arnaut-Bernard (written in Occitan), where the life of the neighborhood, drawn in bright colors, includes street soccer, a grocery store, people leisurely sitting in windows and cafés, and a Comitat del barri (Neighborhood Committee). Similarly, on the back of the liner notes to the album *Ma ville est le plus beau park* is a picture of the street sign for la place Arnaud-Bernard, but Arnaud has been crossed out and replaced by

"Ali." Sicre's emphasis on Arnaud-Bernard (or Arnaut-Bernard) is comparable to Arjun Appadurai's characterization of neighborhoods: "Insofar as neighborhoods are imagined, produced and maintained against some sort of ground (social, material, environmental), they also require and produce contexts against which their own intelligibility takes shape" (1996:184). The Fabulous Trobadors' album covers and inserts exemplify Sicre's construction of Arnaud-Bernard against French official culture and identity.

The song "Naut-Bernat" (Fabulous Trobadors 1998) presents several aspects of Sicre's activity as a musician and cultural organizer and conveys his vision of the neighborhood, and more largely, the Occitan culture he has tried to create. Sicre and his musical partner, Ange B, speak rapidly in Occitan and French over the *embolada* rhythm. The first two strophes are in French, followed by lyrics in Occitan:

"Naut-Bernat"

À l'ombre de Saint-Sernin C'est un faubourg populaire Le dernier du centre ancien Ils ne le foutront pas en l'air Nous pouvons vous l'assurer Nous, comité de quartier Associés citoyens Toujours à veiller au grain

On dit aussi Ali Bernard Quand on dit pas Arnaud Ben Ça pour le franchouillard Pour leur faire de la peine Naut Bernard à l'occitan Fait un peu americain Toutes ces choses melangées Colorient le français

Fasem repaisses de carriera Ont cadun mena sos vesins Fasem bals pel tresem atge Ont mesclam museta e raï.. "Naut-Bernat"

In the shadows of Saint-Sernin
Is a popular neighborhood
The last one of the old center
They won't throw it away
We can assure you
We, the neighborhood committee
citizen members
Always being vigilant

We say also Ali Bernard
When we don't say Arnaud Ben
This for the 'franchouillard'
To bother them
Naut Bernard in Occitan
sounds a little American
All these things
Color French language

Let's make neighborhood meals Where everyone brings their neighbor Let's have dances for old people Where *musette* and *raï* mix... Fasem tot ço que se pòt defòra Acamps e concersacions Travalh, siesta e folklore Interviews, repeticions... Let's do everything that can be done outside Meetings and conversations Work, siesta and folklore Interviews, rehearsals...

This song communicates several of Sicre's sociopolitical views, the most important being the awakening of citizens of the provinces to their political and cultural agency. Through songs like this, he articulates his attempts to revive the cultural life of these ex-centric populations.

Arnaud-Bernard is portrayed as a neighborhood where time passes more slowly, where people still take breaks in the day for siestas, where news is spread by word of mouth, and where there exist an active community and street life. Indicative of Sicre's desire to create music designed for mutlti-generational audiences is the lyric, "Let's have dances for old people/where musette and raï mix." There is a sizeable North African population in Arnaud-Bernard, where Sicre has organized rai concerts. The mixture of musette and rai, the Algerian popular music genre that is now also Franco-Algerian in its production and consumption, speaks to his vision of cultural pluralism in France. So does Sicre's statement that "Ali" and American sounds color the French language. As discussed in Chapter One, the linguistic varieties in Sicre's texts, or heteroglossia, are a means by which he challenges a universalized French identity. The Occitan/French identity he puts forth is in contrast to the term *franchouillard* in the first stanza, which appears elsewhere in Sicre's writings and interviews and has a pejorative connotation. In his memoir Vive l'Americke, he writes of the "franchouillard elite that wants to believe in ITS deep France" (1998:73). Franchouillard here denotes someone with a restricted view of French identity. In more general usage, it refers to someone attached to their land or to certain stereotypes of French culture, such as wine, baguettes, and berets.

"Pasqua"

The title of the Fabulous Trobadors song "Pasqua" is derived from the Pasqua immigration laws administered between 1986 and 1993. In *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*, Mireille Rosello writes:

In Europe in general and in France in particular, the 1990s were marked by a whole series of heated debates about immigration. Controversial new laws were discussed, amended, passed, and enforced, while the media regularly focused on their consequences on individuals and communities...In 1993, the so-called Pasqua laws became the most obvious manifestation of the French government's anti-immigration attitude. (2001:1)

The first Pasqua law made it easier to expel immigrants and gave local officials greater control in determining who could be repatriated. A symbolic moment was the deportation of 101 Malians on charter flights, an event that received much media attention and was meant to deter illegal immigration (Wihtol de Wenden 2011:71). In 1993, Charles Pasqua returned to the position of Minister of the Interior and stated a "zero immigration" objective.

Pasqua was able to implement legislation that restricted access to French citizenship on the basis of *jus soli* (Wihtol de Winden 2011:66). Often contrasted with Germany's *jus sanguinis*, which determines nationality on the basis of ethnicity, *jus soli* denotes that one is automatically French by the fact of being born on French soil. However, Rogers Brubaker (1992) and Sicre (2000) write that France has been moving towards ethnic definitions of Frenchness. Whereas prior to the Pasqua laws, children of immigrants had automatically been considered citizens, the new legislation required that they apply for citizenship between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one through a *manifestation de volonté* (expression of choice) (Bass 2014:55-56).²⁰

²⁰ In addition to limiting citizenship on the basis of *jus soli*, the Pasqua law "restricted family unification, prohibited polygamy, introduced town mayors' control of mixed marriages—especially when the partner did not have a valid residence permit, and abolished reintegration of French citizenship of former colonials, except for Algerian, who as inhabitants of a former French department, fell under a special regime" (Wihtol de Wenden 2011:72).

The 1993 Pasqua law decreased the validity of residency permits from ten years to one year. In many instances, foreigners who had arrived legally in France became "irregular" (McNevin 2011:103). Furthermore, the law coincided with a new government policy that made it a criminal offense to aid undocumented immigrants (Ticktin 2011:33). According to the law, immigrants who were married to French nationals or who were the parents of children born in France could not be expelled but were not given legal residence or permission to vote.

The narrative exchange between the two musicians in the Fabulous Trobadors' "Pasqua" tells of a woman named Fatima who does not have papers, who protests, and whom the government wants to deport. In this song, the Fabulous Trobadors play on the sonic similarity between the French word *parceque* (because) and the name Pasqua, reinforcing the "Franco-Occitano-Maghrebi alliance" through "linguistic contact" (Jablonka 2009).

	"Pasqua"	"Pasqua"
	Pourquoi Fatima a eu chaud, mon ami?	Why was it a close call for Fatima, my friend?
	Pourqoui Fatima a eu chaud?	Why was it a close call?
	Pasqua zont failli l'expulser, mon ami.	Because they almost expelled her, my friend
	Pasqua zont failli l'expulser.	Because they almost expelled her.
•	Pourquoi voulaient ils l'expulser, mon ami?	Why did they almost expel her, my friend?
	Pourquoi voulaient ils l'expulser?	Why did they almost expel her?
	Pasqu'elle n'avait pas les papiers, mon ami,	Because she didn't have papers, my friend
	Pasqu'elle n'avait pas les papiers	Because she didn't have papers.
	Pourquoi elle n'avait pas les papiers, mon ami,	Why didn't she have papers, my friend?
	Pourqoui elle n'avait pas les papiers?	Why didn't she have papers?
	Pasqua le dossier il trainait, mon ami,	Because the file dragged on, my friend
	Pasqua le dossier il trainait, mon ami,	Because the file dragged on.
	•••	•••
	Pourquoi Fatima les gonflait mon ami? Pourquoi Fatima les gonflait?	Why did Fatima annoy them, my friend? Why did Fatima annoy them?

Pasqu'elle avait manifesté, mon ami. Pasqu'elle avait manifesté. Because she had protested, my friend. Because she had protested.

In the recorded version of the song "Pasqua" the sequence of the lyrics, which cycle in a seemingly never-ending pattern, represents what a 1996 UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva report characterized as a "Kafkaesque limbo in which immigrants were stuck due to the hardline anti-immigration Pasqua law" (see James 1996). The report, drawn up by a UN special investigator, Maurice Glèlè-Ahanhanzo, stated that with anti-immigrant sentiments crossing political lines, "France is being shaken by a wave of xenophobia and racism that is highly prejudicial to its image as the 'homeland of human rights'" (James 1996). The Pasqua law also demonstrated that "French society was at odds with its venerable post-revolutionary tradition of welcoming foreigners in need" (Scullion 1995:30). In 1997, the Socialist-led government, with Lionel Jospin as prime minister, reversed a number of the Pasqua laws (Hargreaves 2007).

In 1996, the *sans-papiers* came to the forefront of French political consciousness when approximately 300 people occupied the Saint-Bernard church in Paris. Madjiguène Cissé, the delegate for the group of *sans-papiers*, which has since become a Sans-Papiers movement, wrote of the colonial background of the migrants involved in the Saint-Bernard occupation:

Where do we come from, we Sans-Papiers of Saint-Bernard? It is a question we are often asked, and a pertinent one. We didn't immediately realize ourselves how relevant this question was. But, as soon as we tried to carry out a 'site inspection,' the answer was very illuminating: we are from former French colonies, most of us from West-African countries: Mali, Senegal, Guinea, and Mauritania. But there are also among us several Maghreb people (Tunisians, Moroccans, and Algerians); there is one man from Zaïre and couple who are Haitians.

So it's not an accident that we all find ourselves in France: our countries have had a relationship with France for centuries...and of course, as soon as there is any question of leaving our country, most of the time in order to find work, it's natural that we turn to France. It's the country we know, the one whose language we have learned, whose culture we have integrated a little. (Cissé 1997)

Some supporters joined the *sans-papiers* in their occupation of the church. This incident was part of a larger crisis during the summer of 1996, when families of *sans-papiers* sought refuge in churches to avoid deportation. Media attention, including televised images of police forcing women and children out of churches, galvanized public opinion. 10,000 protestors took to the streets of Paris to speak out against these incidents. Film producers, movie stars, and intellectuals, including Pierre Bourdieu, displayed their support for the cause (Ticktin 2011:32). These agitations occurred during Chirac's presidency, and in 1997 he called for a legislative election one year early. The Socialists gained political control, creating a third co-habitation. Under Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, new laws were passed that "allowed for the legalization of *sans-papiers* under certain conditions" (34).

"Pasqua" is the only song I have found in the Fabulous Trobadors repertoire whose topic is explicitly immigration. However, throughout the Fabulous Trobadors songs there are lines such as "pas de France sans étrangers" (no France without foreigners), in the song "Pas de çi pas de ça" (Not This Not That) (Fabulous Trobadors 1992), which convey their political views.

Politically engaged, Sicre's songs depict Toulouse, his counter-capital, and more specifically the neighborhood of Arnaud-Bernard, as a reflection of a multicultural population and a nation built on immigration. My claim is not that he and other Occitan musicians compose their songs specifically or uniquely in order to counter xenophobia, although some of their lyrics do, but rather that in their anti-centralist cultural activism, they address communities in France that are politically and culturally marginalized.

Occitan discourse (far from uniform) contains contradictions, and one of these is the word "anti-regionalist." Within the Occitanist community there are those who advocate a regionalist image of Occitanie; however, Sicre and other Linha Imaginòt musicians vehemently

reject the word "regionalist" in their discourse. The notion of anti-regionalism, unexpected in that Occitanism appears to be oriented around the promotion of local regional culture, stems from Castan's theories on Occitanie as a concept. In his essay "Occitanisme restrictif?" Castan writes, "We must abandon the regionalist view. Without bringing in/acting on the concept of Occitanie, [it is] impossible to join names who belong to a constellation significant for another reason: non-restrictive" (1984:139). For Sicre, and members of Massilia Sound System, regionalism is another form of nationalism. As Tatou says, "We are totally opposed to the Partit occitan. It is not at all the same idea...Occitan nationalists, Occitan autonomists...In fact, they have a kind of French ideology regarding Occitanie, that is to say, for them, it is a territory" (cited in Traïni 2006). The efforts of the Linha Imaginòt musicians have strongly emphasized a sense of place; for Massilia Sound System this place is Marseille, for Fabulous Trobadors it is Toulouse, and for Nux Vomica it is Nice. However, territory implies ownership and borders. Occitan, as Sicre and Castan observe, is a language without a state. Furthermore, for many of the musicians I interviewed, Occitanie is a concept, one of global citizenship (see Mazerolle 2008) and cultural democracy. They liken themselves to troubadours who bypass national boundaries, conveying convivialitat (conviviality) and paratge (peerness). As focused as they are on an identity of proximity, these musicians oppose regionalist or nationalist rhetoric and remind regional audiences of this necessity.

Conclusion

At an early point in my fieldwork, I began to anticipate the explanations of the music performed by the bands I interviewed, particularly those affiliated with the Linha Imaginòt. "We aspire to be folkloric musicians," "finding the Occitan blues," and critiques of French centralism were common phrases in the interviews I held. In other words, these musicians demonstrated a

consistent theorization about their music and their role as performers within French society. Sicre is the primary generator of these theories, although his musical performance preceded his theorizing about its social meaning. The ideas that travel amongst the Linha Imaginòt performers create a shared imaginary, in which the themes of folklore, centralism, humanitarianism, a global orientation, and cultural democracy recur. With that said, Sicre's model of Occitan identity and activism has not been uniformly embraced by Occitan performers. However, he impacted a subsequent generation of Occitan musicians who grew up listening to the Fabulous Trobadors, such as Manu Théron, whose polyphonic arrangements do not at all resemble Sicre's musical style. Théron cites him as one of his first role models and due to Sicre's stature—he is very tall—calls him "Jésu Sicre."

In this and the previous chapter I have provided an overview of the sociopolitical context of the 1970s through the 1990s because in my view these decades were particularly formative of Occitan musical discourse and sound. The Occitan movement of the 1970s that centered on the Larzac protests positioned Occitan music as one of social protest. It also demonstrated the world—particularly third-world—orientation, of the Occitan movement and its performers. In the 1980s, the solidarity expressed with previously colonized people beyond the borders of France became combined with an increasing lyrical and discursive orientation towards those within France. Political and sonic multiculturalism of the 1980s inflected the sound of Occitan music in a way that has prevailed to this day. In the next two chapters, I discuss two musicians based in Marseille. Chapter Five disrupts the chronology I have established in order to examine the role of unofficial history and cultural expression external to France (notably that of Claude McKay and Bob Marley) in the musical imaginary of Moussu T e lei Jovents.

CHAPTER FIVE

Visions of Marseille: Moussu T e lei Jovents' "Boléga Banjò"

"His wonderful Marseilles! Even more wonderful to him than he had been told."

—Excerpt from *Banjo* by Claude McKay (1929:13)

Founded in 600 B.C. by Greek colonizers, Marseille is France's oldest city, sometimes referred to as the "Phoenician city." In the belly of the downtown shopping mall, le Centre Bourse (Trade Center), lies the Musée d'Histoire de Marseille (Museum of History of Marseille). To arrive at the entrance to the museum one must descend below ground—below the clothing stores, a smoothie stand, a recharging center for electronic devices, and pedestrian traffic. The first several exhibits of the museum include Greek and Roman artifacts: columns, small sculptures of fertility goddesses, amphorae, coins, bathhouse mosaics, and several commercial ships whose skeletal structures have been preserved. On the day of my visit, there were few people at the museum. School children sprawled out on the floor while their teacher lectured on columns. A few tourists lingered in front of displays, wearing headphones for the museum tour. Adjacent to these first displays is an outdoor excavation site, La Bourse, first discovered in 1967. Its findings date to the second century, some even to the fourth century B.C. I walked among the stone ruins of an ancient port as well as an aqueduct, a large water basin, and the Wall of Crinas, named after a doctor in Marseille who was a contemporary of Nero.

One story higher is a room devoted to the interwar period, where one can watch excerpts of cinematic representations of the city as well as a montage of black-and-white photographs that document immigration. Four of these photographs are accompanied by the following text:

"Numerous African colonial sailors, demobilized in 1918, decide after the war to settle in Marseille. Employed by default when local manpower is deficient, they are often relegated to the

docks as dockers." Amongst these photographs is one that I had seen before: it is on the cover of the album *Mademoiselle Marseille* (2005) by the band Moussu T e lei Jovents' (Mister T and the Youths). The snapshot is of a scene inside a café in which one of several men is dancing.



Figure 5. Album cover of Mademoiselle Marseille

In this chapter, I focus on the band Moussu T e lei Jovents, founded in 2004 by the singer and songwriter, Tatou (né François Ridel). I analyze the role that Claude McKay's novel *Banjo*: *A Story without a Plot* (1929), which takes place in interwar Marseille, plays in the band's musical imaginary and examine the reasons why Moussu T e lei Jovents identify with McKay's text. Tatou is best known for his Occitan ragamuffin band Massilia Sound System, which he started in the 1980s and with whom he continues to perform. I discuss Massilia Sound System and its members' political stance vis-à-vis the rise of the National Front in the 1980s. I then turn to the main topic of this chapter with a discussion of McKay's *Banjo* and Moussu T e lei Jovents' interpretation of the novel in the song "Boléga Banjò." I connect the novel and the song

by examining the shared use of what Glissant calls the "detour": a tactic for validating ex-centric unofficial cultures of France. In the final section of the chapter, I apply Glissant's theories of *créolité* (creole-ness) and Relation to provide a better understanding of why, according to Tatou, it is necessary to search beyond France to create a Marseille-based identity. I show how *créolité* is exemplified in Tatou's musical orientation and imaginary and discuss the concept's broader significance in relation to immigration and regional identity in Europe. Tatou's identification with cultural figures outside of France, as well as his own musical style, constitute a form of Relation that legitimizes his own artistry.

According to Moussu T e lei Jovents' website, the band draws on the "melting-pot marseillais" of the 1930s, when Provençal song could be heard alongside the opérettes marseillaises [operettas of Marseille] and "black music": jazz, blues, and music from the West Indies and Brazil. One reviewer has written, "Forever Polida, their second album...often feels like a close relative of the Cajun and zydeco music of neighboring Louisiana...Even though half the songs are in Occitan, there's a sense of warm familiarity about the music which lopes along rhythms that fall somewhere between reggae and blues" (Gillett 2006). Moussu T e lei Jovents' repertoire is not uniform in terms of music style; in some songs one hears traces of the banjo blues, in others the two-beat rhythm of Dixieland jazz, and later albums are closer to rock music with greater emphasis on the electric guitar. Apart from Moussu T e lei Jovents' performance of operétte marseillaise songs, their interpretation of the music in 1930s Marseille is not meant to be a strict copy but rather to draw attention to interwar Marseille, France's most important colonial port, as a musical crossroads. The band's rhetorical and musical references to the 1930s condense the past and the present and serve as an imaginative act that fuels Tatou's politicized discourse.

With this chapter, I also explore the possibilities for "literary ethnomusicology" (Barlow 2014). Studies of music and language are plentiful in ethnomusicology, as, for example, in analyses of sung poetry or works that examine musical practices in which the boundary between music and speech is blurred (see Feld and Fox 1994). Fewer ethnomusicologists have analyzed the connection between a novel and musical performance. The literary scholar Daniel Barlow (2014) analyzes the novel *Cane* by Jean Toomer as an example of literary ethnomusicology. Barlow's use of this term denotes fictional ethnography of music—in this case, the African-American spirituals that Toomer encountered during his time in Georgia. McKay's *Banjo*, which can similarly be analyzed as ethnographic fiction, falls within Barlow's characterization of literary ethnomusicology. However, my conception of the term and the phenomenon I analyze differ from Barlow's in that I examine the musical and social meanings that a band draws from a novel and how they are integrated into musical performance. I demonstrate that *Banjo* has informed Moussu T e lei Jovents' musical sound in terms of lyrics and instrumentation and that it functions as a generative symbol for the band's discourse on France and Marseille. The themes in Banjo are ones that run throughout this study: colonialism, immigration, and state-imposed identity. Banjo, as I demonstrate further on, is also a "musical novel," making it an apt entryway into discussions of a postcolonial regionalist musical imaginary. In the case of the Moussu T e lei Jovents, as well as Tatou's band Massilia Sound System, the articulation of postcolonial regionalism acknowledges the colonial past and postcolonial present of Marseille at the same time that it asserts agency in defining the culture of Marseille.

On Marseille

Marseille is France's second largest city, with a population of 855,000. In 2006,

Algerians constituted the largest foreign population of Marseille, followed by people from the

Comoro islands.¹ Approximately forty percent of the city's population is Muslim, although no official census may include national origin, ethnicity, or religion as a category. The National Front has a strong base in Marseille, where twenty-five percent of the city's population voted for Marine Le Pen in 2012 (fifteen percent of the national electorate voted for her). In 2017, this number rose to thirty-five percent. Stoking fears around immigration and crime has been the focus of the National Front's platform to obtain voters in Marseille. The National Front has also been successful in other areas of southeastern France, where a large number of *pieds-noirs* ("black-feet"), French people who lived in Algeria during colonialism, have resettled.²

Marseille has played a unique role within French colonial history and the French national imagination. The 1920s, in particular, marked an important turning point in Marseille's identity within the colonial enterprise. The elite class in Marseille "engaged in colonial activities in a particularly ambitious fashion" (Aldrich 2015:188); they portrayed Marseille as the colonial center of France, touting its role in colonial trade, evidenced at the Colonial Exposition of Marseille in 1922. In the *Guide officiel* (Official Guide) to the Exposition, Jacques Léotard praised Marseille for its pivotal role in the maintenance of the relationship between metropolitan France and the colonies, or "old France" and "new France." He situated Marseille as the primary bridge between metropolitan France and the colonies. "She [Marseille] is the door to the Colonies for France, and even more so, the door to France for the Colonies" (7). Today, this sentence rings with a certain irony given that the port-city was and continues to be a symbol of

¹ These islands, located off the coast of East Africa, were colonized by France in the late nineteenth century and became independent in 1974. In 1974, Mayotte, one of the four largest islands, voted to remain under French sovereignty, and, since 2011, has been an overseas department and region of France.

² Xenophobia and Islamophobia are not unique to right-wing conservative discourse and are also evident in French republican universalist discourse, as in that of the public intellectual Alain Finkielkraut.

the nation's anxiety over who and what enters the country.

The city's geographic location and its historical role as a colonial port have contributed to its reputation as a "site of contact with foreign-ness" (Témime 1985:37). Journalistic accounts of the city cite its corruption and crime. Likewise, many French crime novels, a literary sub-genre that emerged in the 1990s, are set in Marseille. Alternately, Marcel Pagnol's interwar films, based in Marseille, have brought about the verb *pagnoliser* (to Pagnolize), which denotes a skewed, often romanticized image of Marseille.³ Tatou once stated to me, "There is never a realistic vision of Marseille. [People depict it as a] city of crime, bandits, the sun, the climate, the beaches…never a reality" (interview on June 21, 2014).

From Massilia Sound System to Moussu T e lei Jovents

In 1978, at the age of twenty-nine, Tatou moved to Marseille from the Paris area. He had already become interested in Occitan language as a teenager, when he came across an article published in the newspaper *Libération*. This article cited Occitan as an option for the *baccalauréat* exam that is administered in France upon students' completion of high school (Martel 2014:10). He began to listen to songs by Claude Martí and other performers of the Occitan revival and to subscribe to Occitanist discourse regarding the troubadours and the

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³ According to Joseph Strayer, the negative stereotyping of southerners can be traced as far back as the twelfth century. Writing about attitudes held in the 1100s, Strayer states, "The northerners thought that the southerners were undisciplined, spoiled by luxury, and a little too soft" (1971:9). In turn, southerners found northerners to be "crude, arrogant, uncultured and aggressive" (9). As Pierre Bourdieu demonstrates in an article entitled "Le midi et le nord" (The South and the North) (1981), the reproduction of north/south stereotypes could later be seen in the works of the eighteenth-century writer, Montesquieu (1689-1755). Montesquieu's categorization, predicated on a theory of the impact of cold and hot climates on social behavior, included the following oppositional binaries between the north and the south: courage vs. cowardice, reduced imagination vs. lively imagination (which led to suspicion and jealousy), liberty vs. despotism, monogamy and equality between sexes/polygamy and domestic servitude, and calm music (English operas) vs. imported music (Italian operas).

Cathars (10). He first heard reggae through a Parisian friend and later at a youth hostel in Amsterdam, where he listened to Bob Marley's *Live at The Lyceum* (10). In 1981, he began hosting a radio show in Marseille, calling himself Prince Tatou, and playing reggae albums, over which he sang (12). He became particularly interested in the Jamaican sound system, after reading an article in *Rock & Folk* magazine about its popularity in the United Kingdom (12). In 1984, he started his own sound system for neighborhood gatherings, the first of which was interrupted by police authorities. That same year, Tatou founded Massilia Sound System with the dub artist Papet J (also known as Jali). Massilia Sound System became successful in the late 1980s and 1990s as the first Occitan ragamuffin band. In 1992, Massilia Sound System released the song "Parla patois" (Speak Patois), which demonstrated the members' encouragement of local audiences to reclaim the Occitan language. The band, which still performs today, has acquired a large fan base, attracting thousands of audience members at concerts, and has informed the musical and political expression of a younger generation of Occitan musicians.

Historian Paul Cohen writes of Massilia Sound System, "Stamped with its members unapologetic left-wing engagements, Massilia's songs are at once a product of and an intervention in recent French political history" (2016). One of the primary sociopolitical concerns of Massilia Sound System, when it was first formed, was the recent rise of the National Front. The band started performing amidst the growing tide of racism in Marseille in the 1980s, when polls showed that 28 percent of the population of Marseille was in favor of the National Front. Marseille in the 1980s and 1990s became an electoral stronghold of the far-right movement, and Jean-Marie Le Pen dreamed "of making Marseille into a symbol of national reconquest from migrant invaders" (Cohen 2016). The song "Ma ville est malade" (My City is Sick) on the album *Aiollywood* (1997) addressed xenophobia and the rise of the National Front in

Marseille. The lyrics of the first verse referred to the city's reputation as the "gateway to Africa," the fact that Marseille was a city built on immigration, and the increase in xenophobic attitudes. The song's second verse emphasized the cultural diversity of Marseille, listing some of the immigrant populations of the city: Armenians, Algerians, Tunisians, Italians, Moroccans, and Comorians, and described Occitanie as a place that "has always known how to integrate people from all countries." In the last verse, Jali sang of several generations of immigrants, united by the old port of Marseille, and directly rallied against the National Front: "If we love our city, together we say no to the Front...If we love our city, together we say NO!"

The specific incident that served as a catalyst for this song was the municipal election of 1995, which the National Front won in Marignane, Toulon, and Orange. On the recording of "Ma ville est malade," Jali announces at the beginning: "This song is dedicated to all who fight against the National Front, especially those in Vitrolles, Marignane, Orange, and Toulon. Boléga! (Move!) Hey cousins: in Marseille, like everywhere in France, in all the villages, in all the neighborhoods, it is urgent to speak up and to stop being scared. Boléga!" Boléga is an expression derived from Occitan and means "to get moving." In this song, Jali refers to the climate of fear that some French politicians and public intellectuals have continued to cultivate and disseminate when they discuss "the immigrant problem" and the "decline of French culture." Jali makes his introductory statement over a symbolic layering of synthesized sounds that conveyed "Arabness" (cf. LeBrun 2012): a short melodic riff on ouds and several taps on the derbouka at the end of each measure. When the reggae beat enters after several measures, it became intertwined with the derbouka pattern. These sounds serve to evoke a North African presence and a multicultural France.

Massilia Sound System is considered one of the most significant Occitan groups of the

post-1970s Occitan music scene. Their style of singing, sometimes called *trobamuffin* (they, like Sicre and Loddo, consider themselves modern-day troubadours), has attracted a large local fan base. Many of the band's lyrics are in French, as is the case with the Fabulous Trobadors, which has likely contributed to Massilia's success. In their performances, they draw on symbols such as the Occitan flag, and local vocabulary, playing on caricatures of the south. "Aiöli" (Provençal mayonnaise) becomes a humorously militant cry. They also use the term *oaï*, as in *mettre le oaï*, which means to shake things up, or to create chaos. Through these utterances, they create a shared imaginary with their audiences and fashion an identity that is separate from French official culture and centralist mentalities.

Several of Massilia Sound System's members have formed separate bands. In 2004, Tatou and Blu, the guitarist of Massilia Sound System, founded the group Moussu T e lei Jovents. Since their first album, *Mademoiselle Marseille* (2005), the band has released eight albums. In addition to original compositions, they have recorded two albums *Opérette marseillaise par Moussu T e l ei Jovents* (2014) and *Opérette Volume 2* (2018) on which they interpret songs from the *opérette marseillaise* (Marseille operetta) repertoire of the 1930s and 1940s. Moussu T e lei Jovents started as a long-distance trio consisting of Tatou, Blu on guitar, and the Brazilian percussionist Jamilson da Silva. Initially, on stage Tatou and Blu used da Silva's pre-recorded rhythms. When this situation became prohibitively complicated, they replaced da Silva with a French percussionist and a bass player. Moussu T e lei Jovents state that their style is derived from an exploration and imagining of interwar Marseille—although theirs is a loose interpretation. More specifically, they state that they recreate the music fictionally performed in McKay's novel *Banjo*.

Claude McKay's Banjo: A Novel without a Plot

Born in 1889, Claude McKay was the first Jamaican author to publish a book of poetry in Jamaican *patois*, entitled *Songs of Jamaica* (1912). In 1912, he moved to the United States where he became involved with the Harlem Renaissance. McKay wrote *Banjo* during his residence in Marseille in 1927-1928, and finished it in Barcelona, Casablanca, and Rabat (Edwards 2003:187). Brent Hayes Edwards states that "aside from Alain Locke's 1925 collection *The New Negro*, the book that had the most profound influence on black intellectuals in Paris between the world wars was McKay's *Banjo*" (187). At the time of its publication, Léon-Gontran Damas, one of the future founders of the Négritude movement, praised it as a "fountain of youth," and Léopold Senghor would (mis)quote it in 1937 in his first speech given in Africa (at the Foyer France-Senegal in Dakar) (187-188). Not all reviews were positive, however. Commenting on the English original, the critic André Levinson stated that the book "is an invertebrate tale with the inconsistency of a mollusk (cited in Edwards 2003:190). As a novel "without a plot," music is, in fact, one of the primary narrative themes throughout the book.

Although *Banjo* is a work of fiction, it is often referenced as a historical record of the neighborhood that McKay describes: "the Ditch," or la Fosse in French (see Denning 2015; de Barros 1999). This neighborhood, which was bombed by the Germans in 1943 and no longer exists, was home to the brothels and café-bars of Marseille. McKay's vivid descriptions detail the atmosphere of the *quartier* (neighborhood), including the musical activities that one could find there. Edwards (2003) has described the novel as a *roman à clef* due to its realist depiction of the time McKay spent in Marseille and the people he encountered there. In fact, McKay would later state that, "he may have sinned...by being too photographic, too much under the fetid atmosphere of the bottoms of Marseille" (cited in Edwards 2003:189).

McKay had an interest in music and folklore, and the text is filled with lyrics to songs that were popular at the time—the protagonist Banjo's favorite being Ethel Waters' "Shake That Thing." The word "jazz" is used throughout the novel in a variety of ways: from referring to music and dance (he "jazzes like a lizard with his girl") to living in an improvisatory manner, as Banjo does (De Barros 1999:313). With passages like "They played the *beguin*, which was just a Martinique variant of the 'jelly roll' or the Jamaican *burru* or the Senegalese '*bombé*'" (1929:105), McKay depicts Marseille as a crossroad of music genres from Africa and the African diaspora. Jazz historian Paul de Barros has observed that McKay is "documenting early instances of palm-wine guitar music being played in Europe, a precursor to West African Highlife" (1999:312). Michael Denning cites the musical descriptions in *Banjo* as portraits of "the world of cafés and dance halls in the colonial ports" during the 1920s (2015:53). The impressive scope of Denning's book *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution* (2015) focuses on what he calls the "vernacular music revolution" produced by the social interactions at settler and colonial ports.

The steamship, Denning points out, was a primary means by which these hybrid vernacular music genres circulated. Similarly, Paul Gilroy writes, "The involvement of Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, Claude McKay, and Langston Hughes with ships and sailors lends additional support to Linebaugh's prescient suggestion that 'the ship remained perhaps the most important conduit of Pan-African communication before the appearance of the long-played record" (1993:13). Ships, sailors, and the men who worked on the docks of Marseille, often as temporary laborers, feature prominently in *Banjo*. The opening lines of the novel foreshadow this theme: "Heaving along from side to side, like a sailor on the unsteady deck of a ship, Lincoln

Agrippa Daily, familiarly known as Banjo, patrolled the magnificent length of the great breakwater of Marseilles, a banjo in his hand" (1929:3).

Written at the height of French colonialism, *Banjo* provides a searing critique of the colonial project. In various passages, McKay describes the exploitation of colonial workers: "Sweat-dripping bodies" (67); "eternal creatures of the warm soil, digging, plucking for the Occident world its exotic nourishment of life, under the whip, under the terror" (313). Towards the end of novel, McKay writes, "For civilization had gone out among these natives, had despoiled them of their primitive soil, had uprooted, enchained, transported, and transformed them to labor under its laws, and yet had lacked the spirit to tolerate them within its walls" (313-314).

Throughout the novel, its main characters and author reflect on racism and the position of Africans and African-Americans in specific countries and in what McKay calls the "civilized" world at large. In a scene in which the characters discuss a change in British colonial policy regarding migrants, whereby the Nigerian character Taloufa is refused entry into England, Ray, the main character reflects:

West Africans, East Indians, South Africans, West Indians, Arabs, and Indians—they were all mixed up together...This was the way of civilization with the colored man, especially the black. The happenings of the past few weeks from the beating up of the beach boys by the police to the story of Taloufa's experiences, were, to Ray, all of a piece. A clear and eloquent exhibition of the universal attitude, which, though the method varied, was little different anywhere. (312-313)

Due to its geographic situ, Marseille was a hub of colonial activity, and by extension cultures, connecting the French-controlled West Indies, Southeast Asia, and North and West Africa. In the novel, the city, in particular the areas around the port, serves as a meeting ground for workers from the colonies and the African diaspora. The economy of interwar Marseille centered on the port, and the dockers (men who worked on the docks) were a quintessential

component of the everyday life and financial success of the city. They were identifiable by the *bleu de chine*, a light denim long-sleeved shirt with embroidered loopholes. This garment was modeled after the Chinese tabard, whose silk fabric was changed to denim for workers of southern France. In *Banjo*, McKay calls the *bleu de chine* the "proletarian blue." In the very first page of the novel, Banjo is described wearing this "blue-jean shirt" (3). In another passage, McKay describes, "A band of Senegalese, nearly all wearing proletarian blue, were hanging round the entrance of a little café" (71).

The *bleu de chine* is also one of the signature identity markers of Moussu T e lei Jovents. Although it has now acquired the connotation of a Provençal bohemian chic, this garment traditionally represented the working class. Tatou calls the *bleu de chine* the band's "uniform." In the song "À la Ciotàt," he sings:

Ma pichoneta

My little one
moi et mon blues de chine
À La Ciotat on fait ménage à trois
Ma pichoneta
Moi et mon blues de chine
Moi et mon blues de chine
Près du vieux port, on est comme des rois
My little one
Me and my bleu de chine
Me and my bleu de chine
Near the old port, we are like kings.

Moussu T band members wear the *bleu de chine* at all performances, in all their videos, and in all photographs of the group.



Figure 6. Flyer for Moussu T e lei Jovents' Opérette marseillaise performance

Tatou and his band mates read the French translation of *Banjo*, first published in 1931, in the early 2000s and identified strongly with McKay's portrait of Marseille. As Blu tells the story, "When we were recording our first album, we discovered the book *Banjo* also. There was a sort of epiphany that happened, an illumination that arrived" (interview on June 21, 2014). In this same interview, Tatou explained to me, "McKay is important for us, for the banjo...the vision he reflects of Marseille is a vision that interests us. It is he who crystallized our history." Tatou and Blu were drawn to McKay's depiction of a cosmopolitan Marseille that was a melting pot of black music cultures. It is of note that it is a non-French author to whom the group looks for this historical depiction. According to Tatou, it was McKay's foreignness that enabled a description of Marseille that contrasted with the stereotypes French authors have attached to the city. He continued that McKay's portrait of Marseille in *Banjo* is one that one would never find in French literature; it is one that he could see as a foreigner, a Jamaican-American spending time in La

Fosse. In his analysis of *Banjo* and its reception in France, Brent Hayes Edwards (2003) raises the topic of translation and the fact that certain subtleties from the English original get lost in French. The question of translation is also pertinent to a discussion of Moussu T e lei Jovents' interpretation of the novel, less in terms of linguistic nuances than with regard to what the band emphasizes in its interpretation of the novel.

"Boléga Banjò"

In a feat of what can be best described as "musical historical fiction," Tatou explained to me in his gravelly voice, "We invented what he [Banjo] was playing" (interview on June 21, 2014). In other words, he and the band recreate the music that the character Banjo, who plays the banjo, would have performed in the novel. After reading the novel, Blu replaced his guitar with a four-stringed banjo borrowed from Daniel Loddo. Blu relates: "Daniel Loddo loaned me his banjo—a banjo that was historically important because he had played it with Claude Sicre [on the album *Batestas e cantarias*]." From this time, Blu taught himself to play the banjo, and the resulting sound in their musical performance often loosely resembles the banjo blues of the American south. In Moussu T e lei Jovents' interpretation of *Banjo*, the significance of the referent "banjo" operates on three levels, with sonic and discursive results: it is a direct signifier for the instrument, thereby directly affecting their music sound; it refers to the main character of the novel, whose musical performance in the book provides an imagined blueprint for Moussu T e lei Jovents' musical style; and it refers to the world of McKay's novel, which has provided the band with a representation of Marseille that reinforces their own.

Moussu T e lei Jovents' integration of McKay's novel is most evident in the song "Boléga Banjò." The song begins with a pronounced rhythmic ostinato over D major and A major chords played on the electric guitar. The song evokes a non-specific Caribbean or West

African popular music style, and, according to Blu, "it just came to him" (interview on June 21, 2014). At some concerts, the performers invite the audience to clap a 3-2 clave pattern that resembles the electric guitar repeated pattern.





Musical Example 4. "Boléga Banjò"

Although Moussu T e lei Jovents state that their music is a reproduction of the music one might have heard in Marseille in the 1920s and 1930s, this historical allusion is not a literal interpretation. While some of their songs are more obviously in the style of the blues, many of them are stylistic blends of their multiple musical inclinations. "Boléga Banjò," for example, vaguely resembles *soukous*, the Congolese popular music genre that became popular throughout West and East Africa⁴ and which became popular in Paris in the 1980s. The musical style of this song has also been compared to Jamaican *mento* (RootsWorld). When asked to specify the musical influences in a given song, Tatou explained that perhaps a musicologist could decipher which aspects are derived from where but that they play whatever comes to them (interview on June 21, 2014).

Whereas the musical setting of "Boléga Banjo" may not be a strict performance of the music genres in interwar Marseille, the lyrics, written in Occitan, demonstrate a fusion between the song and novel:

"Boléga Banjò"

Un còp de mai lo soleu es anat dormer E çai siam sus nòstei dos pès. Un còp de mai lo soleu es anat dormer E siam encà tornats vivents De la bochariá. Anam!

Anam boléga Banjò boléga Que farai un refranh que serà pas dins la lenga dei generaus.

Marsilha, Marsilha, Ai ma copa plena Marsilha, Marsilha Vòli cremar ma codena "Move, Banjo"

One more time the sun has set And we are still here on our feet. One more time the sun has set And we have returned again alive From the butcher. Go ahead!

Go ahead, move, Banjo, move I'm going to do a refrain that is not in the language of the capital

Marseille, Marseille My cup is full Marseille, Marseille I want to "burn my pork rind"

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⁴ I thank Peter Manuel for this identification.

Marsilha, Marsilha,

Ambé ieu fagues pas la damòta

Encara una jornada que nos an pas Controlat lei papiers Encara una jornada qu'avèm escapata n'aquesto putan de contorole dei papiers. Anam!

Boléga Banjò! Boléga!

Marseille, Marseille

Don't be pretentious with me

Another day that they didn't check our papers
Another day that we escaped that bastard of papers control.

Go ahead!

Get moving Banjo! Get moving!

The song "Boléga Banjò" can be experienced as a potential scene from *Banjo* and reflects the book's interrogation of immigration and identity papers. The second verse, sung in the first person from the perspective of someone who escapes being harassed by local authorities, depicts a recurring situation in McKay's novel, in which the risk of apprehension by the police is a constant threat. This song points to Tatou's identification with the character Banjo and with Banjo's comrades. By assuming the persona of the protagonist of *Banjo*, Tatou also conveys his solidarity with undocumented immigrants. In "Boléga Banjò," Tatou locates his commentary in both the past and the present, using a historical and fictive reference (*Banjo*) to address contemporary French concerns. In live performances, Tatou has dedicated this song to *sans-papiers* (undocumented immigrants).

The song lyrics' evocation of escaping central authorities are meant to echo circuitous routes that the characters of the novel take. The following excerpt from *Banjo* describes these detours: "From the place de la Joliette, they took the quickest way of the boulevard de la Major to reach the Ditch...Some of them had not the proper papers to get by the police and tried to evade them always. By way of the main rue de la République they were more likely to be stopped, questioned, searched, and taken to the police station" (McKay 1929:23). The detours

taken by Banjo and his comrades serve as an important metaphor for the way in which the characters circumvent central authorities in general. This metaphor also characterizes Tatou's position regarding government authority and official culture.

Tatou stated to me, "We try to circumvent the fortress; it is always that" (interview on June 21, 2014). This statement was made in reference to the musical connections the band made with musicians of Northeast Brazil in the initial stages of forming Moussu T e lei Jovents. It also referred to his "lending a helping hand" to the Niçois musician Louis Pastorelli for the latter's album *Gigi de Nissa*, which Tatou helped to produce. Tatou explained:

Gigi de Nissa [the band], it's the same posture as us—in Nice. So obviously we lent a helping hand; we lean on each other. It's a kind of fraternity, a solidarity that takes place between us. Even on a global level, it's happened that way. We have a kind of solidarity with musicians from Northeast Brazil. We try to circumvent the fortress. It's always that.

Tatou's invocation of circumvention as a tactic of resistance is comparable to Glissant's conception of the "detour." Celia Britton defines Glissant's theory of the detour as "an indirect mode of resistance that 'gets around' obstacles rather than confronting them head on" (1992:25). In *Le discours antillais* (Caribbean Discourse) (1981) Glissant identifies this obstacle as the distant French government, which he argues is the source of oppression of Martinicans rather than the settlers there, who were economically dependent on the metropole (Britton 1992: 25). Glissant's concept of the detour also denotes the fact that understanding one's cultural environment, specifically the impacts of colonialism, requires going elsewhere (Coombes 2018: 41). Sean Coombes describes this notion as an inverted version of the cultural relativism described in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (Persian Letters) (1721), in which two fictive wealthy Persians travel to France and observe the customs of its inhabitants (2018:42). Coombes writes, "Glissant's focus is those communities and nations which the colonial power perceives

and portrays as a cultural *other* trying to make sense of the ways in which they have been oppressed by the French" (42).

These two interpretations of Glissant's concept of the detour, a desire to "circumvent the fortress," and the necessity of physical distance are recurrent in the discourse of the Occitan performers I interviewed. As I discussed in Chapter One, it was often by leaving France, that Occitan musicians gained awareness and interest in Occitan language. Furthermore, Tatou has often talked about the "complex" in France around the fact that he sings in Occitan, and stated that when he travels abroad, this *problématique* (problematic) disappears: "When I travel, all of this, Paris, etc., goes away" (interview on June 21, 2014).

Jérôme Camal (2019) has applied Glissant's concept of the detour in his analysis of Guadeloupean *gwoka*. Describing the transition from nationalism in the 1970s to cultural activism among *gwoka* musicians in the 1990s, he writes, "cultural activists shifted their strategy from an open confrontation with the French state to the tactics of subversive engagement of the *détour*" (114). He cites efforts to garner UNESCO recognition, or *reconnaissance*, of *gwoka* as an example of institutional detour, a "literal move to search elsewhere [beyond the French state] for recognition and legitimization" (168). Camal's observations of *gwoka* performers' use of detour are comparable to the tactics Occitan musicians employ.

Occitan musicians' reaching out towards other music cultures to create *passerelles* (footbridges) with, for example, Brazil, can also be viewed as a form of detour. Drawing on solidarity—both real and imagined—with other musicians, they "circumvent the fortress." For Moussu T e lei Jovents this occurs on an imaginary level with "black music:" the band's mission statement characterizes its music as being "between black music and Occitan tradition." Perhaps most significant in Tatou's identification with the character Banjo in "Boléga Banjò" is that

Banjo is a musician. Tatou thereby connects his own musical expression to that of the character, inserting his own musical production within a larger musical tradition of the black Atlantic.

Brent Hayes Edwards observes that, in McKay's novel, black cultural production—and music in particular—represents an active threat that is "constantly mocking...of 'civilization'" (2003:239). In Tatou's performances, including those with his Massilia Sound System, he draws on this music to enact his own identity of resistance. This strategy is representative of the ways in which Occitan musicians position themselves as outsiders as they comment on the oppressive forces of the French.

Applying Glissant's Theories of Créolité and Relation

In the final section of this chapter, I situate Tatou's music and discourse within a discussion of Glissant's theories of Relation and *créolité*. Glissant wrote extensively on the role of the Caribbean, as an archipelago, and creolization, in future ways of thinking Europe. According to Glissant, *créolité*, which does not favor one culture over another, is one of the major contributions of the Antilles to the world. In his formulation of the concept, *créolité* is not limited to the Caribbean but could be applied to other locations and cultures, including Europe. In 2011, he stated to a journalist:

Europe is becoming creolized. It has become an archipelago. It has several languages and very rich literatures that are interlinked and mutually influence each other. All the students learn them, they speak several of them and not only English. And then, Europe is composed of several regional islands, becoming more and more vibrant, more and more present in the world such as the Catalan, Basque or even Breton islands. Without counting the present populations from Africa, the Maghreb, the Caribbean, each drawing on centuries and millennia old cultures, some remain amongst themselves, others become immediately creolized like the young *beurs* or Antilleans. This presence of spaces configured by islands in the archipelago that will be Europe renders the notion of intra-European borders increasingly fluid. (Cited in Gutiérrez Rodriguez 2015:80)

Before discussing the broader implications of this passage, I first wish to point out the more

literal impact of Caribbean cultural expression on Tatou himself. While it is black transatlantic cultural expression more broadly that inflects his songs and fuels his oppositional stance, Bob Marley and Claude McKay and Jamaica itself are central to Tatou's speech about music. In the liner notes to the album *Opérette marseillaise*, he writes:

Like many of my contemporaries, my interest in music and song was inspired by Jamaican reggae. Indeed, the now famous Massilia Sound System was founded in 1984 to imitate this style. This required us to anchor our music in local traditions as well as to act as a mirror for Marseille's culture and therefore be aware of the city's urban and, of course, musical history. It was thus thanks to Jamaica and her artists that we developed a passion for popular culture and that our work of reinventing past traditions began.

Marley looms large in Tatou's musical discourse. He states that the reggae musician's use of *patois*, coupled with his ability to reach listeners around the world, is a model for what he himself wishes to accomplish through his music. It is what he describes as Marley's ability to portray what is "directly at his door" that he thinks has made the reggae artist so popular. This local/universal dynamic apparent in his evaluation of the Jamaican singer provides the template for many of Tatou's lyrics for Moussu T, which are close-up portraits of the world around him in Marseille and in the much smaller city of La Ciotat, where he resides.

By creating alignments, through citation, with Claude McKay and Bob Marley, Tatou constructs his vision of Marseille in opposition to French official culture. This dynamic draws on alterity, and the words "alterity" and "difference" recur frequently in his discourse on music and on French society. For instance, according to the band's mission statement, the band's musical style is motivated by a "desire to seek out and confront the Other": "Otherness and confrontation represent, for Moussu T e lei Jovents, a rite of passage that allows us to touch what is real, to face up to the global and commercial exploitation of our planet, and to seek a free and fraternal dialogue between peoples."

Tatou spoke several times to me about difference. In the following interview excerpt, he

describes the Other in terms of the typical category of foreigner but also with respect to social class:

Alterity is very difficult to fathom in French thought; when you change countries, languages, but also when you change social class. It's exactly the same thing. In France, there is a phobia of difference. As if being different is being against. If you are not one hundred percent *dans le truc de l'État* [in the thing of the state], you are not part of it at all. There are no differences. (Interview on June 21, 2014)

On the topic of difference and languages, Tatou stated, "There is really this kind of unitarisme (unitarism) in the world of the French state. À propos of Catalonia, they say 'can you believe it? In Catalonia they teach Catalan to their kids!' As if it were a horrible thing." Situating the existence of diverse cultural identities of Marseille in opposition to what he perceives to be French "phobia of difference," he stated, "It's a bit the stereotype, but it's sort of the genius of Marseille in a way. If you look, we are the most mixed place—due to history and our geographic location. It's also the place where people have the greatest sentiment of being together."

Returning to Glissant's passage, one can observe the connections he makes between archipelagic thinking and the languages and borders of Europe. He notes the emergence of Catalan, Basque, and Breton "islands." One could add Occitan to this list, although the density of this island is quite a bit smaller. According to Glissant, these islands, in addition to those created by Africans and Caribbeans within Europe, become spaces that challenge Europe's borders. In *Philosophie de la Relation* (Philosophy of Relation) (2009), Glissant likens borders to passageways—a concept he states is derived from relationships to borders in archipelagic spaces:

The borders between places that constitute an archipelago do not suppose walls, but passages, passes, where sensibilities renew themselves, where the universal becomes the consent of the impenetrable of one in accordance with the other, each one of extreme value to the other, and where the ideas of the world (common-spaces) finally circulate in the air. Frontiers without walls, nor barricades...revive henceforth from this denial of their existence, encouraging men to pass. (57)

His vision of passageways "where sensibilities renew themselves" is directly related to his configuration of the concept of Relation and can be applied to Occitan music. One of the primary features of Glissant's theory of Relation is its perspective on otherness and its assertion that all differences be placed on equal footing: "the Relation is understood here as the realized quantities of all the differences in the world, without any exceptions" (2009:42). Occitan musicians place their own self-chosen difference within a transversal relational network of musical cultures. This relationality can be read as an articulation of a utopian political ideology. In my view, it also serves to legitimize Occitan musicians' own cultural production as they draw on the cultural capital of music genres that have gained popularity within and beyond France.

Conclusion

By analyzing Moussu T's identity in relation to the novel *Banjo*, I seek to underscore the role of the imagination and history in fashioning Occitan musical identity. Occitanie, after all, is in some ways a fictional entity—it has never been a political state—and Occitan, in the eyes of Pierre Bourdieu, is not properly a language. To be an Occitan musician today is itself a kind of fictitious identity. However, as Bourdieu states, Occitanie "is no ineffectual fiction" (1991:221). Glissant wrote extensively on the importance of the imaginary as a vehicle for social change and for creating freer societies (Britton 1999:9). According to Michael Wiedorn, "The Caribbean was, for Glissant, a wellspring of potential for launching the insurrection of imaginary faculties" (2018:xv). Similarly Celia Britton states, "[Glissant] wrote of 'the necessity, of course, of supporting political and social struggles in the places in which one finds oneself, but also...the necessity of opening everyone's imagination up to something different, which is that we will change nothing in the situation of the world's peoples if we do not change that imagination." (1999:9)

The imagination is an important tool for Occitan musicians; it is, according to Sicre, "our first weapon." The Occitan musicians in this study use the imagination to refashion local identity and encourage local cultural expression. Loddo, for instance, spoke to me at length about the *imaginaire* and his attempts to re-fertilize the imagination through the collection and distribution of myths and through his fieldwork-based music. The same can be said for Tatou's performances with Moussu T e lei Jovents and Massilia System, which provide audience with cultural references that connect them to Marseille's history and a set of symbols that enhance local identity. In the next chapter, I focus on another group based in Marseille, Lo Cor de la Plana. I discuss Manu Théron's incorporation of Algerian musical elements and his emphasis on a Mediterranean Occitan identity.

CHAPTER SIX

Polyphonic Voices of Marseille:

Manu Théron's Lo Cor de la Plana

It is midnight in Marseille. Manu Théron has just given me a walking tour of his neighborhood. Within a few blocks of his apartment lies La Plaine, the square after which Théron's polyphonic singing group, Lo Cor de la Plana, is named. The plaza is not a low plain but rather a flat area atop a hill. Théron explains to me that the word plan in Occitan designates a plateau and that the closest word in French was *plaine* (plain in English), leading to an irony of nomenclature. It is clear after spending time with Théron that he enjoys such absurdities, including those that ridicule the French. There are only a few people out on this Monday night, primarily men in bars, watching a televised soccer game. Théron points to a tramline that cuts through the city and informs me, "To the north is the poor area; south is the wealthy area." We walk downhill along la rue Grignan, named after the man who, Théron states, "brought the plague to Marseille." A rat darts in front of us. Théron glances at the food truck nearby and chuckles. At the end of our walk is the renovated Vieux-Port (Old Port), where docked sailboats sway. The Mediterranean Sea reflects the night sky and the lights of hotels and restaurants. We have walked for an hour or so and, once arrived at my hotel, converse until four o'clock in the morning.

The general theme of our conversation this evening has been French universalism. As with the majority of the musicians I interviewed, Théron does not need many prompts to talk about French society. He speaks on a wide range of subjects: the French relationship to

¹ The following passage is derived from an interview with Manu Théron conducted on February 20, 2016.

otherness; the anti-racism movement; *l'écriture inclusive* (inclusive writing), which challenges the masculine character of the French language;² the recent development in France of postcolonial studies; the founders of the IEO; the Algerian War; the *code de l'indigènat* (Indigenous Code);³ the *pieds-noirs*;⁴ burkinis; Occitanie as a project without territory; and utopias. I have come to understand French universalism as a mentality that touches on all of these topics.

In the lobby of my hotel in Marseille, I am taking notes as Théron speaks: "France is still a colonial country but inside its own borders. It's trying to re-elaborate a *code de statut d'indigène* [Indigenous Code] within the country" (interview on February 20, 2016). He recounts a recent court case in which a French judge told a man, "Culturally you are Muslim." Théron comments, "This is colonialism. The French colonial system called Algerians 'Muslims.' Calling Arabs 'Muslims' is a regression, like to sixty years ago. It's not innocent; names mean something." Théron's comment, "France is still a colonial country but inside its own borders" underwrites much of his discourse on France in general and on the role of Occitan language within the postcolonial context.⁵ He continues:

Universalism has something to do with colony—politicians in the 1860s and 1870s

² For instance, in French one uses the masculine third person plural pronoun to refer to a group that includes as few as one male.

³ The *code de l'indigènat*, established in 1881 and applied to other African colonies as of 1887, created separate legal systems: "Muslim law" for "Muslim natives," who constituted the majority of the population, and "personal law" for "Israelite natives" (Gafaiti 2003:199; Shephard 2006: 26).

⁴ Pieds-noirs, literally "black-feet," refers to French colonial settlers in Algeria.

⁵ This phrase is also evocative of a passage in anthropologist Paul Silverstein's *Algeria in France*: *Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (2004). Assessing the resistance within France to migrant and minority cultural and political expression, Silverstein writes, "Above all, such ambivalence over the espousal and denial of subnational difference within the postcolonial metropole points to the perduring character of coloniality within postcoloniality" (Silverstein 2004:75).

claimed the *mission civilisatrice* [civilizing mission]—the point was just to take diamonds, oil, gas, everything territories could provide to support French imperialism. *L'empire française* [the French empire]. They needed to disguise it with the story of universalism; the exact opposite happened. They didn't actually build many roads, only to minefields. They didn't even build schools—less than one percent of the Algerian population had been to school when Algeria became independent. In 1830, sixty percent of Algerians could read [the Koran]⁶; three or four percent when the French left. Now in Algeria, most of the young people speak English instead of French. I like that—it's as if they got rid of something. (Interview on February 20, 2016)

James Le Sueur states that "decolonization" as a term has been applied to "an act or concept of (anticolonial) 'cleansing'" (2003:2). In this passage, Théron deploys an overtly decolonizing discourse as he observes that the use of English in Algeria indicates "getting rid" of something: French. He also draws attention to language as a primary legacy of the colonialist presence abroad. Choosing to sing in Occitan, rather than in the language of the colonizer, enables Théron's postcolonial critique.

In this chapter, I focus on Théron's all-male polyphonic singing group Lo Cor de la Plana. In his compositions for Lo Cor de la Plana, Théron incorporates southern Italian and Algerian rhythms, namely *pízzica* and *haddaoui*, as well as Italian vocal harmonies, and polyphonic singing styles from Bulgaria, Sardinia, and Georgia (among other polyphonic singing practices). At times, the singers create dissonant seconds in the style of Bulgarian polyphony and/or use the vocal timbre associated with Sardinian polyphony. The five voices of the group are usually organized into three parts. The singers accompany their singing with frame drums—primarily the North African *bendir* and the Italian *tamburello*—and a bass drum. They provide additional rhythmic layers, at times polyrhythmic, with handclapping and stomping. In my discussion of Lo Cor de la Plana repertoire, I first isolate the Algerian components in order to emphasize the postcolonial relevance of Théron's musical composition and discourse. I

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⁶ Other sources maintain that there was a 40 percent literacy rate in Algeria in 1830.

demonstrate how he bridges Occitan and Algerian cultures through musical collaboration with El Maya, an ensemble from Beni Abbès, Algeria, and through his appropriation of the music of the Algerian southwest. My analysis of this musical collaboration is an Occitan-centric one. Further research remains to be done on El Maya, their repertoire, and their role in performances with Lo Cor de la Plana. Although Théron deploys a postcolonial critique, his emphasis, as with all Occitan musicians, is Occitan culture. Therefore, at the end of the chapter, I return to a broader Mediterraneanism in his compositions and how his references to Algeria function within it.

In 2003, Théron created the Compagnie du Lamparo, an association devoted to Occitan culture of Provence. The Compagnie du Lamparo is located in the Cité de la Musique (City of Music) in downtown Marseille. *Lamparo* refers to the technique of using a flashlight to catch fish that swim close to the bottom of the sea. This image is an appropriate metaphor for Théron's work. Through performance and speech around his music, he spotlights the often tucked-away aspects of French regional and colonial history and their legacies in France. His group's repertoire consists of original songs as well as songs he has discovered through his research on local musical history. These historical texts challenge the official historical narrative and, as Théron states, provide "a missing history of France" (interview on February 20, 2016). He continues, "In France in every region, people want to know what happened before. They want to find something history doesn't tell."

The notion of a Mediterranean cultural area that includes the Balkans, North Africa (specifically Algeria), Italy, and Spain (Catalonia) is integral to Théron's musical imaginary and identity as an Occitan musician. Furthermore, the many projects he has created through the Compagnie du Lamparo reflect this Mediterranean bent: Madalena is a female chorus that joins women from different parts of Occitanie; Ve Zou Via is a collaboration with d'Assurd, a female

Neapolitan vocal trio; and Sirventés is a trio featuring vocals, *oud*, and percussion that performs arrangements of troubadour texts. According to the Compagnie du Lamparo website, the thread that connects all of these projects is an inquiry into local musical practices, while "He [Théron] imagines and forges links that it shares with cultures of the Mediterranean basin." As he says, "We look to the south: to Algiers, Barcelona, and Naples." "Looking south" is a multivalent expression frequently used by Occitan musicians I interviewed. It often goes together with "Our heads were turned up towards Paris, when we had been used to looking to the Mediterranean"—a phrase I heard throughout my fieldwork. The Occitan performers I interviewed, and many more that I did not, cultivate artistic relationships with musicians in Italy, Spain (Catalonia), Portugal, and, to a lesser extent, North Africa.

Mediterranean Connections

The Mediterranean, according to Daphne Trabaki, is "primarily an idea; an imagined entity of cultures, people, landscapes, morals, musics, dances—diverse, yet all united by the sea" (2005:49). Goffredo Plastino writes that the Mediterranean has alternately been imagined by music performers as an area in "which a culture (that may be musical) is notable for having left traces everywhere"; an area "which unites the countries bordering upon it" (thus a tautology); and/or "an area of intense contacts and exchanges" (2003:17). Caroline Bithell writes on the Mediterranean transnational musical alliances that performers make:

The forging of musical alliances by present-day artists stems from a range of motivations. For some, such interactions are an illustration and celebration of natural kinship, the interweaving of musical threads reflecting a historic reality. Others are motivated by a desire to re-embrace a broader identity with its roots in the more distant past in preference to, or in addition to, a present-day national identity. A type of pan-Mediterranean production also offers itself as a means whereby the reduction of an individual cultural form to quaint regional traditions or "folklore" can be avoided and, at the same time, "Mediterranean music" can take its place in the market alongside other more fashionable players such as "Celtic music." (2007:206)

The motivations that Bithell outlines can be ascertained in the relationships that Occitan music performers cultivate with musicians in Italy and Spain, and an additional motivation, as I discuss further on, is evident in Occitan references to North Africa. All of these relationships are comparable to what Benjamin Brinner (2009) describes in the context of Israeli-Palestinian musical encounters: the use of Mediterraneanism to deflect attention from borders.

Occitan musicians draw on two flows of pan-Mediterraneanism, each one serving these performers in distinct ways. The first flow connects Occitan music to a transnational European Mediterranean, placing it within a larger geographic area that challenges the assimilationist forces of the French government and the historical process of nation building. This strategy can be seen in the 2010 "Intercambio arc latin" (Latin Arc Exchange) conference in Nice organized by Louis Pastorelli and other members of the band Nux Vomica. The conference featured musicians from southern Italy, Catalonia, and Portugal, who sang in local languages. The purpose of this conference, according to Pastorelli, was twofold. First, he wanted to "change the direction of circulation—instead of with Paris" (interview on June 15, 2015). Pastorelli continued, "Before, we exchanged much more on this arc of the Latin Mediterranean." Furthermore, he stated that this Mediterranean arc distinguished eastern Occitanie from its western regions: "It's as if there is a fan that spans from Catalonia all the way to southern Italy. From the southwest [of France] to here it's not the same." He raised the issue that southwestern France, though considered part of Occitanie, shared fewer cultural traits with southeastern France than the latter shared with Italy and Catalonia. Pastorelli used the term Niçois more frequently than Occitan, and when I asked him about this, he answered, "The term 'Occitan' has no history here." He is, however, a key member of the Linha Imaginòt for promoting Occitan culture in Nice, where he resides.

The organizers of the "Intercambio arc latin" conference also wanted to demonstrate the "situations" in different nations regarding language, instruments, and music. Each of the musical groups invited had been engaged in a reflection on language and culture, although the cultural and political context was different for each one. In the Catalan case, for example, Pastorelli said, "It was interesting to see how they [the band El Belda i el Conjunt Badabadoc] presented themselves in relation to the language, that there was a normalization; they demonstrated a nonfolkloric facet of the language and culture." In France, the common perception that regional languages are "folkloric" has been an obstacle for Occitan musicians. Pastorelli noted that, like Piedmontese in Italy, Catalan is practiced much more in Spain than Occitan is in France: "it is in schools, in the street." For Pastorelli, the Occitan language and its local traditional music are less prevalent than its counterparts in neighboring Mediterranean countries.

One traditional dance that Occitan musicians in France have been able to perpetuate is the farandole. It is a dance and musical form in which the audience members link arms and weave in and out of the crowd of onlooking spectators. Like the serpentine shape of the dance itself, the farandole reaches across generic and national boundaries. According to Pastorelli, it is a dance one can find as far as southern Italy, in different déclinaisons (declensions). The farandole, or farandolo in Occitan, is related rhythmically to the southern Italian pizzica, as I discuss further on. In France, the farandole is commonly associated with Provence, but it was also historically danced in Nice and the surrounding area. Today, it is a regular feature of Occitan concerts: Lo Cor de la Plana, La Talvera, Nux Vomica, and Massilia Sound System all perform farandoles. Théron has composed the "Farandole dei bari," which renames all the neighborhoods of Marseille in Occitan. Massilia Sound System performs "Fuma la pipa" (Smoke the Pipe), a song about marijuana that is based on a traditional farandole. Lou Dalfin's performance of this dance,

at the Estivada festival he organizes in Italy, is an example of the circulation of this particular genre, and song, throughout the transnational Occitan music scene.

The second pan-Mediterranean directionality links the northern Mediterranean (i.e., southern European countries) to those of the southern Mediterranean (i.e., North Africa), and tends to accompany an anti-xenophobic discourse that emphasizes the interpenetration of French and North African Muslim cultures. For example, Claude Barsotti writes, "Occitanie, a place of commercial and cultural passage between the Muslim world and northern Europe, develops as of the eleventh century, a brilliant civilization characterized by a great tolerance with interpenetration of Mediterranean cultures" (Barsotti n.d.) Alem Surre Garcia, formerly in charge of Occitan language and culture at the conseil regional des Midi-Pyrénées (Regional Council of Midi-Pyrenees) (1990-2006), publishes and presents on the hybridity of cultural activity in Occitanie; he makes connections between Occitan gothic and *mudéjar* art (a hybrid ornate style of architecture and art associated with Moors who remained in Iberia after the Christian reconquest (711-1492)) and demonstrates the interconnections between Sephardic, Arabic, and troubadour literature (2005). These cultural references are noteworthy characterizations of Occitanie given current Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in France and elsewhere in Europe (see Taras 2012). With that said, the ethnomusicologist and Occitan musician Luc Charles-Dominique pointed out to me that Occitanie was also the site of massive pogroms during the Middle Ages (interview on June 23, 2014). Nonetheless, Occitanie as a place of tolerance and cultural exchange is the image many Occitanists wish to convey.

Of the musicians interviewed for this study, Théron has the strongest ties with North Africa, specifically Algeria, both personally, having spent part of his childhood there, and musically. Théron's performance and speech around/on his music—and on France more

generally—bring awareness to the historical relationship between France and Algeria and current cultural and political dynamics of postcolonial France. In the following section, I provide an overview of colonial ties between France and Algeria, decolonization, and Algerian migration to France.

France in Algeria/Algeria in France

Algeria, colonized in 1830, performed a crucial role within the French empire. Upheld by colonists as a successful example of the imperialist venture, Algeria was a testing ground for policies applied in other colonies (see Conklin 2003). Official policies, such as naturalization procedures, that were created for ruling Algerian *indigènes* (natives), also called *musulmans* (Muslims), provided a template for other French colonies (Shephard 2006:27). Further contributing to the unique status of Algeria among France's colonies was the fact that, as a French department, Algeria was technically France (Weil 2017:258)—in contrast to Morocco and Tunisia, which were protectorates. As of 1914, Algerians could circulate freely between Algeria and France.⁷ Algerians were French citizens, but within limits: discriminations against Algerian subjects included inequality before the law, unequal access to public employment, and restrictions on religious freedom. Between the mid-nineteenth century and the Algerian War (1954-1962), Algeria was also the destination of many French settlers; hundreds of thousands of French people established communities in Algeria, many of whose members fled during the war of independence.

The process of decolonization that culminated in the Algerian War was one of the most violent struggles for independence from the French metropole. Hundreds of thousands of

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⁷ Between 1830 and 1914, Algerians could only travel, even within Algeria, with a permit⁷ (Stora 1992:15).

Algerians died during the war; in 1962, tens of thousands of *harkis*, Algerians who fought in the French army, were killed (see Crapanzano 2011). 23,000 out of the one-and-a-half million French conscripts died. Violence was not limited to France's former colony. In October 1961, 11,000 Algerian protestors in Paris were arrested, some of who were drowned in the Seine River. In contemporary France, there are millions of people that were involved in the war, including *pieds noirs* (European settlers), professional soldiers, *harkis*, and *porteurs de valise* (French supporters of Algerian nationalists) (McCormack 2007:2). In the aftermath of the war, the former colony has held an uneasy place in French politics and collective memory.

For several decades after decolonization, the history and reverberations of the war remained suppressed in France. However, in 1991, Benjamin Stora published *La gangrène et l'oubli* (Gangrene and Amnesia), a groundbreaking work that brought attention to the denial in French and Algerian society of the Algerian War. The government's use of torture surfaced in the media in the year 2000, when an interview with Louisette Ighilahriz, who had been raped and tortured by French soldiers in 1957, was published in the French newspaper *Le Monde* (Kauffmann 2018). More recently, in 2018, President Macron made headlines for his visit, and apology on behalf of the French Republic, to Josette Audin, the widower of antiwar activist and mathematician Maurice Audin, who had died as a prisoner of war.⁸

As the details of the Algerian War surface in public discourse, tensions have grown around "when to commemorate, how to commemorate, the extent of the French army's use of

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⁸ Audin had been taken prisoner in Algeria in 1957, and although the French Army claimed that he had escaped while being transferred, it was later revealed that he had died either as a result of having been tortured or by execution. Sylvie Kauffman, chief editor of *Le Monde*, writes, "More remarkably, in a statement released that same day, Mr. Macron admitted what no French president before him had dared to acknowledge: that torture by French forces was widespread during the Algerian war as a product, in Macron's words, of a 'legally established system'" (Kauffmann 2018).

torture, the treatment of *harkis*, recognition of massacres, and so on" (McCormack 2007:2). Chapter Two of Jo McCormack's *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (2007) examines the methodology for teaching the Algerian War in the French public school system. McCormack concludes that the negligible discussions of the war in classroom textbooks stem in part from the vastly different communities (*harkis*, *pieds-noirs*, OAS members, and FLN supporters) that were created by the war and that have polarizing memories of it. His argument returns to the inescapable topic of French universalism, what he refers to as the French republican principle of negating difference. In his view, to teach the Algerian War would be to reinforce the existence of groups separated by starkly contrasting recollections of it.

Scholars and cultural activists in France have observed that echoes of the Algerian War, for decades referred to as the "war without a name," continue to reverberate within French society (cf. McCormack 2007). McCormack writes, "The replaying of the conflict is particularly discernible in and highly relevant to debates surrounding immigration and ethnicity in France, undoubtedly one of the most important issues in contemporary French society, since many of France's immigrants have come from the ex-colonies" (2007:2). The Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun (1984) states that the racism towards Maghrebi populations is reminiscent of and is an extension of the treatment of Algerians living in France at the end of the war.

According to the activist Tayeb Cherfi, "the treatment today of 'young people born from, or not from, postcolonial immigration" is directly related to the rupture created by the Algerian War. He stated, "Whether people talk about it or not, the war continues to have consequences on the approach (*traitement*) to immigration in France" (interview on June 27, 2010). Cherfi discussed the colonialist undertones of the contemporary treatment of the *banlieue*, including the employment of armed military and helicopters that recalled the Franco-Algerian War. Alec

Hargreaves observes that national memory of the colonial period also gathers around the *pieds-noirs*, the European settlers who fled to France after decolonization (2007:13).

As Paul Silverstein indicates (2004), Algerians have been present in France since the late nineteenth century. The destructive impact of the colonial system engendered a large population of impoverished peasant-laborers in Algeria that, after 1900, could be drawn upon by the French government to supplement the shortage of labor in metropolitan France (Macmaster 1997:3).9 In the early twentieth century, Algerian immigration to France was defined by a rotation system, in which one man would work for several years in France and then return to Algeria to be replaced by a brother or cousin (3). After World War II, Algerian families, along with those from Tunisia and Morocco, began to settle in France. Throughout the Trente Glorieuses, the three decades between the end of World War II and the oil crisis of 1973, an estimated 350,000 Algerian men contributed to the economic prosperity of the country through their work in manufacturing and construction industries in Paris, Marseilles, and Lyon (2004:4). In the 1970s and 1980s, the second generation of Algerian immigrants grew up in a society preoccupied with integration and the perceived threat that Maghrebi immigrants presented to French culture. The "Arab problem," which included Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan postcolonial immigrants, became an increasingly prominent term in public discourse, and North Africans were often accused of their inability and unwillingness to "integrate" into French society. Hostility towards Algerians in particular was exacerbated by the bombings of a metro station and markets in Paris and Lyons in 1995 by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA)—a guerilla organization that had been fighting against

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⁹ The historian Neil Macmaster states that the destruction of Algerian society and economy between 1830, when Algeria became a French colony, and 1900, was evident in the "appropriation of lands, the uprooting and dislocation of tribes, the collapse of artisan industry, and the creation of an impoverished peasantry, which was constantly subject to disease and hunger" (1997:3).

the Algerian government since 1992 (Silverstein 2004:1). Terrorism in France in the twenty-first century, notably the 2015 attacks (in Paris) at the Charlie Hebdo headquarters and the Bataclan theater, have heightened alarmist discourse around Islam and immigration from North and sub-Saharan Africa, and have drawn attention to France as a nexus of a globalized Islam.

In discussions of North African immigration in France, scholars have either demonstrated the parallel reception of European immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to that of Maghrebi immigrants today, thereby de-substantiating contemporary racist rhetoric of "cultural distance" (cf. Noiriel 1993); or they have specified the ways in which the Algerian context differed from European immigration patterns of the 1930s (Simon 2017). As an example of the former approach, Vassberg writes, "People forget in fact the difficulties and prejudices against these past migratory waves 'for the sake of an idyllic vision of both the reception and insertion of the concerned populations" (1997:710). The second approach is apparent in Patrick Simon's "Why Algerians are Not Italians" (2017), in which the author states, "from the beginning, Algerian immigration was different from other migrant groups" (192). Simon describes the discrimination against Algerians, citing forced repatriation of Algerian soldiers after World War I and segregation at work (193). 10

With this political and historical context as a backdrop, I discuss the Algerian components of Lo Cor de la Plana's musical performance as an expression of Théron's identification with Algerian culture and his critique of postcolonial France. First, I provide a brief biography of Théron, for his travels have informed his sociopolitical perspective and his musical compositions.

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¹⁰ He also cites a 1951 study in which Algerians were considered "second to last on a 'sympathy scale"—Germans being last (193).

Becoming a Postcolonial Occitan Musician

Unlike the majority of the musicians I interviewed, Théron does not have a familial connection to Occitan. He discovered Occitan at the age of eighteen through the music of Claude Sicre. Théron writes, "I do not come from an Occitan family, and I don't have nostalgia of grandfathers who spoke *patois*" (Théron 2012). Théron was born in 1969 in a miner's hospital in Lorraine, a department in northeastern France. His father worked in a steel factory; his mother was a nurse. Théron explained to me that the company for which his father worked was considered an example of *paternalisme industriel* (industrial paternalism), which implied that there was concern for the workers "when there wasn't at all" (interview on June 28, 2014). He stated, "I was born in a miner's clinic, so you might think 'oh great, they built a nice hospital for the miners.' In fact, I was the only person born that day who didn't die. All the others got sick. Nobody washed their hands at the time." When Théron was two or three years old, his family moved to Marseille.

Théron's father, who was a union organizer, was sent to Algeria in 1981 as a "punishment" for having initiated a protest at the factory where he worked. He was transferred to Skikda, Algeria to work at a gas liquefaction factory for a French gas company called Gaz de France, "although he had no background in petroleum." In Algeria, he "tried to start a new union, but there was a socialist dictatorship at the time, so it was impossible." Théron continued, "It was very difficult to get along with other French expatriates because they all were really racist. My father wasn't racist at all. If you had Algerian friends, they wouldn't consider you a normal person. It was quite a strange situation."

Théron joined his father in Algeria in 1983 at the age of thirteen. This move was in part because Russian had been his second language of study and his mother had had difficulty finding

a suitable school for Théron. He explained to me that he learned Russian "because my parents were Trotskyites." "It was actually much easier in Algeria," he commented, "because it was a socialist country and Russian was the language of the future there. So, I decided to join my father." He and his father and brother lived in Skikda and Théron attended the *lycée francais* in Annaba. Although it was a French school, Théron stated:

French people were a minority there [at the school]—about thirty percent, maybe less. Other pupils were Bulgarian, Yugoslavian, Polish. No one from Russia. Everyone was from the eastern European countries. And some Italians. Some Cubans. Some Chinese. All the socialist worlds. In fact, all the socialists were in Algeria at the time...Algeria was welcoming everyone regardless of their political past. It was a socialist country so everyone said we had to share everything, but the school was a wealthy school. I remember this guy, an Algerian. He was very wealthy—he was the son of a general in the army. He would come to school every week with a different motorcycle. At the same time, it was a very lively place. (Interview on June 28, 2014)

Théron's first lessons in Algerian percussion occurred during this time. "There was a woman who came to clean the house once a week. She was a percussion player. So, my first lessons in percussion were with her. She used to play the *derbouka*. But she played the traditional way, not the Algerian classical way: *derbouka* as a street instrument, not as an ensemble instrument." The two years that Théron spent in Algeria were formative in the construction of his musical universe as well as his political and cultural ideology. Théron stated, "I've always been concerned because I lived in Algeria."

At the age of twenty-one Théron went to Italy for two years to study music at a conservatory. He explained to me that, due to the dearth of traditional music performance in France, his first exposure to live performance of traditional music occurred in Italy at an engagement party he happened to observe at a restaurant. He found the non-tempered harmonies lively and raw and realized that "he wanted to sing in this way." After Italy, Théron went to Bulgaria, to teach French and to study folk music. Upon his return to France, he started a group

called Gacha Empega with Sam Karpeinia, who played guitar. In the late 1990s Gacha Empega worked with the Algerian musical group, El Hillal, which now goes by the name of El Maya. Together with the female vocalist Barbara Ugo, they recorded an album entitled *Polyphonies marseillaises* (1998), in which one can hear the seeds of Théron's polyphonic compositions for Lo Cor de la Plana.

Lo Cor de la Plana

In 1999, Théron founded Lo Cor de la Plana. This polyphonic singing group is Théron's most highly acclaimed musical project and arguably the most internationally recognized Occitan music group today. Théron teaches his invented Occitan polyphony extensively to amateur and professional singers, and it has become one of the primary genres that circulate throughout the Occitan music scene and that is being exported for international audiences. I emphasize the word "invented" because the only areas in metropolitan France where vocal polyphony has existed for more than several decades are the Alps and Béarn. The French ethnomusicologist Jean-Jacques Castéret, who is a founding member of the group Balaguera and a native of Béarn, researches and performs the polyphonic traditions of Béarn (see Castéret 2013). While Claude Sicre's Fabulous Trobadors and Tatou's Massilia Sound System may have larger audiences within France, Lo Cor de la Plana travels internationally along the world music network.

In addition to Théron, the group currently consists of Sébastien Spessa (bass), Benjamin Novarino-Giana (tenor), Rodin Kauffmann (tenor), and Denis Sampieri (bass). Théron, Spessa, and Sampieri play frame drums (the *bendir* or the *tamburello*, an Italian frame drum). Kauffman and Novarino-Giana stomp on amplified platforms and clap, and at times Kauffman plays a

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¹¹ Gacha Empega disbanded in 1999, and Sam Karpeinia has enjoyed a successful career as a member of the Occitan rock group Dupain.

standard bass drum. Sampieri is a conservatory-trained percussionist and composes all of the percussion lines for the group.



Figure 7. Photo of Lo Cor de la Plana, courtesy of Compagnie du Lamparo. From the left: Rodin Kauffmann, Benjamin Novarino-Giana, Manu Théron, Denis Sampieri, and Sébastien Spessa.

Under Théron's direction, the band presents a Marseille-based identity; however, its members live in different parts of southern France. Spessa, whose grandfather spoke Occitan, lives in Martigues, a city adjacent to Marseille. Novarino-Giana, who is originally from Nice and still resides there, grew up in a family that spoke Occitan. Kauffmann moved to France at age fourteen after living in Egypt and Morocco (his parents were French) and now lives in

Montpellier. His grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-aunt spoke Occitan. Sampieri is of Corsican descent and is also based in Montpellier. 12

Lo Cor de la Plana has released three albums: *Es lo titre* (It is the Title), *Tant deman* (Maybe Tomorrow), and *Marcha!* (March!), each one focusing on a different theme. The first album, *Es lo titre* (2003), is a compilation of religious repertoire and received the Grand Prix from the Académie Charles Cros in the world music category. As Théron seems to enjoy pointing out, although the texts were religious in theme, they included bawdy language.

Tant deman is an album of "dancing songs," released in 2007 through Buda Musique.

According to the group's website, these songs were "inspired by the ancient (popular dancing) or modern (rock, ragga, electro) Occitan repertoire." Tant deman features adaptations of local Occitan songs and written texts as well as the song texts composed by Théron and other members of the ensemble.

Their third album, *Marcha!* (2012), also distributed by Buda Musique, features the texts of several *trobaires marsillés*¹³ (troubadours of Marseille), poets who were active in Marseille between the 1870s and World War I. They wrote texts in Provençal that they performed at political rallies, banquets, and in the music-halls of Marseille. Théron obtained the poems of the *trobaires* from Claude Barsotti, an Occitan historian and journalist who resides in Marseille. Barsotti was the author of an Occitan column for several decades in *La Marseillaise* newspaper and had collected the texts of the *trobaires* since the 1960s. The *trobaires* used language that could be violent, crude, and humorous to comment on realities of life in Marseilles—unlike the

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¹² In recent years, these musicians have formed other musical groups. Spessa performs southern Italian songs with a trombonist and a percussionist in a band called Ferrago. Sampieri and Kauffman started a band UEI (Occitan for "today") that performs electronic music, as well as participating in other musical projects.

¹³ Trobaire means "to find" in Provençal.

Félibrige poets, who were writing at the same time of an idealized Provence. According to Théron, the *trobaires* were anti-imperialist, and their songs constitute a "historical account of the people." Furthermore, the appeal of the *trobaires* for Théron lies in their antiestablishment leanings and their political dissent, which he says "has become increasingly aseptic in France" (interview on June 28, 2014). One can find the same characteristics in Théron's own discourse and musical performance: political commentary, anti-establishmentarianism, anti-imperialism, and humor.

"Al Mawlid"

Théron wishes to create a Christmas show *Nöel des prophètes* (Christmas of the Prophets), to be performed by Lo Cor de la Plana and El Maya, a music group from Beni Abbès, Algeria. He once submitted a portfolio to the "district attorney of music" of Marseille for this project, but the application was rejected. Théron first traveled to Beni Abbès in 1989, where he collaborated with the group El Hillal, many of whose members have formed a new group known as El Maya. The musicians of El Maya, all but one of whom still reside in Algeria, include Houari Douli, Hafid Douli, Said Touati, Brahim Lahmani, and Khalifa Ben Ahmed. They accompany their singing with the *krakeb* (also written as *qraqab*), the iron or steel castanets often associated with Gnawa musicians; *guembri*, a three-stringed plucked lute also commonly associated with Gnawa music; *kellal*, a small single-headed drum similar to the *derbouka*; *oud*, a short-neck lute with eleven or thirteen strings; and *bendir*, a frame drum found throughout North Africa and other parts of the Middle East. According to Théron, the musicians of El Maya are "traditional Sufi and marriage and *hadra* musicians and perform in all regions of Algeria." *El*

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¹⁴ My description of the *trobaires* is derived from a document that Théron sent to me that he had written in response to a journalist's questions in 2012.

maya is also the name of a primary genre of music and a rhythmic pattern associated with the hadra ceremony, performed before someone travels to Mecca. There are similarities between this southwestern Algerian music, such as the use of the krakeb and call and response singing, and the more commonly known Gnawa music, and in France El Maya is often labeled Gnawa music.

In concert, Lo Cor de la Plana and El Maya have performed a song entitled "Al Mawlid." I base my analysis of this song on a recording of Gacha Empega-El Hillal, which was an earlier incarnation of the current musical performance project entitled, Lo Cor de la Plana and El Maya. The song "Al Mawlid" is still performed by these groups. In Algeria, as in other parts of the Middle East, the Mawlid is a celebration in honor of the birth of Mohammed. The city of Beni Abbès is known for its spectacular festival on this day with thousands of participants and spectators in attendance. Interspersed among chants in honor of Mohammed are the sounds of rifles shot into the air.

"Al Mawlid" opens with a prayer, "Salute O salute to the king, the lord of the Prophet of God," which is traditionally recited on the day of the Mawlid. The musicians then play a percussion pattern that one finds in the Mawlid ceremony in Beni Abbès. The singers continue with a call and response exchange of Arabic text *Abu l'Allah Rassul* ("God is the father of the Prophet"). At this point, at minute five on the recording, the Occitan performers enter with an Occitan Christmas song entitled "Novè dei Bomians." Rodin Kauffmann stated, "It's a Christmas song about Gypsies. It is from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, I think. It's included in a book called *Novè dei reires* (Ancestors' Christmas Carols). It's quite known, my great uncle used to play the organ at the Reformés church [in Marseille] and it's in his book" (interview on

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¹⁵ I have not personally attended these concerts and provide an analysis of the recording as it appears on the Compagnie du Lamparo's website.

January 29, 2019). A call and response vocal line in Arabic is sung underneath the Christmas song; as this section progresses, an additional layer of call and response singing is introduced. At the same time, the sound builds through variations of the processional rhythmic pattern played at the beginning of the song and through handclapping on each beat. The result is a complex layering of voice and percussion that interweaves Algerian and Occitan musical components.

The last section of this song begins with the same Arabic invocation as in the beginning: "Salute O salute to the king, the lord of the Prophet of God." This is followed by a blessing in honor of a saint, *A rassoul Allah Sidi Ma'azou*, which is part of the Sufi repertoire that El Maya musicians perform in Algeria. This Algerian melody is then sung to the Occitan phrase *A l'an que ven, se siam pas mai, que siguem pas mens* (Next year, if we are not more, let us not be less). Kauffmann explained that this "is a saying we have for the period between Christmas and New Year's Eve," and that "Manu stuck it to the melody the Algerians are singing."

The Compagnie du Lamparo website describes the general collaboration between Lo Cor de la Plana and El Maya in the following statement:

Lo Còr's energy at the service of the Algerian desert's trance!...Associating percussion and voices, emblematic instruments of Mediterranean popular spiritual music, both bands forge a music for collective elation, where trance and rhythms are born from this mutual fervor they enthusiastically explore. Their melodies call out to one another and answer to each other until they take the listener to a shared territory, playing humorously with their apparent incompatibility, and finding together a breath and a soul that make one think more of a genuine union than of some run-of-the-mill fusion.

Conversations with Théron reveal more nuanced intentions for bridging Algerian and Occitan cultures. Nonetheless, the description above makes an important statement of the desired audience reception of this musical performance. Lo Cor de la Plana's involvement with El Maya is more than "some run-of-the-mill fusion"; it is meant to be "genuine union." In Théron's

construction of Occitan music, Algerian stylistic elements (rhythm, form, instrumentation) are not a superficial reference but rather a building block of the musical sound.

Algerian Musical Elements of Lo Cor de la Plana Repertoire

In general, the most salient Algerian characteristics of Lo Cor de la Plana's musical performance are detectable at the level of instrumentation, rhythm, and song form. The Algerian musical tradition from which Lo Cor de la Plana draws is that of the southwestern Souara region—specifically, the city of Beni Abbès, as performed by El Maya. The *bendir* is the primary percussion instrument in Lo Cor de la Plana performances that is derived from traditional Algerian music. It is a wooden-framed drum fourteen to eighteen inches in diameter. A snare along the instrument's back, typically made of gut, creates a buzzing sound when the drum is struck. In live performances, Lo Cor de la Plana musicians play the *bendir*, but recordings also feature the *kallal* and the *krakeb*, often played by Hafid Douli and Saïd Taouti, two members of El Maya. On stage, Sébastien Spessa recreates the rhythmic role of the *krakeb* with a small shaker.

On a structural level, the most salient Algerian reference in several of Lo Cor de la Plana songs is found in the following tripartite song form: 1) a binary rhythm; 2) "break," meaning a pause in the percussive layers, with emphasis only on the downbeats; 3) a ternary rhythm that gathers in intensity. Sampieri explained, "It's a gimmick they [El Maya] do a lot—they start with a binary rhythm slow, and then there's a break. Then it starts again with a ternary rhythm.

Something we definitely stole from them" (interview on September 21, 2018). This format can be heard in the songs "La noviòta" (*Tant Deman*) and "La tautena e la patineta" (*Marcha!*). The *haddaoui* rhythm at the end of these songs, as I discuss further on in this chapter, is used to create this dramatic ending.

One of the main rhythms borrowed from southwestern Algerian music is one that Théron and an El Maya member referred to as *haddaoui*. It was shown to me individually by the three frame drummers of Lo Cor de la Plana: Théron, Sébastien Spessa, and Denis Sampieri.



Musical Example 5. Haddaoui rhythmic pattern

Théron stated, "The rule is that there is never a *dumm* on the downbeat at the beginning of the cycle. This confuses many French people and European people" (interview on June 28, 2014). In Middle Eastern drumming, the *dumm* is the bass sound produced with a flat hand at the middle of the drumhead. In contrast, *takk* refers to the crisp sound created by playing with one's fingers at the edge of the frame drum. Further elaborating on the *haddaoui* rhythm, Théron explained to me that in Algeria, when this rhythm is played as a binary rhythm, it is called *el maya* and when it becomes ternary it is called *haddaoui*. "European audiences often feel it [haddaoui] as a slower rhythm," he commented. In his remarks, one can detect a degree of gleefulness regarding his presentation of a musical alterity that challenges Western European rhythmic sensibilities.

When I asked Spessa to demonstrate the *haddaoui* rhythm to me, he looked at me with a puzzled expression (interview on September 22, 2018). I mention this fact in order to indicate that Spessa and other members of Lo Cor de la Plana learn and perform patterns derived from southern Algerian music only insofar as they need to create basic interpretations of them.

Théron says that the group plays Algerian rhythms in a "French way," comparing their interpretation of Algerian rhythms to that of the Paris-based band el Diwane de Bechar

(interview on June 28, 2014). In the case of Lo Cor de la Plana, this includes less improvisation than occurs in El Maya performances. As Denis Sampieri stated, "They improvise on the beats. The knowledge is there, in Algeria" (interview on September 21, 2018). Théron's goal for the group is not that its members become experts in Algerian music but rather that they create a new Occitan musical sound that builds on and references musical traditions from elsewhere in the Mediterranean. He wishes to situate his music within this Mediterranean soundscape and looks southwards for inspiration and collaboration. On the album *Marcha!* the *haddaoui* rhythm can be heard in "La tautena e la patineta" (The Squid and the Skateboard); on the album *Tant deman* it can be heard in the song "La noviòta" (The Bride). In "La noviòta" and "La tautena e la patineta," the transition into this rhythmic section occurs at the end of each song. "La tautena e la patineta" is a song about a mayor of Marseille, known locally as the Squid, who embezzled money and, as Théron describes in concerts, "had his hands in many places at the same time."

Staging the Mediterranean: "La noviòta" (The Bride)

At certain points during Lo Cor de la Plana performances, the singers move from the semi-circle formation they are seated in to the front of the stage. The approach of the musicians towards the audience signals as well as heightens the intensification that occurs of the musical sound. This spatial shift occurs during a musical transition into a markedly Algerian percussive sound—though it may also occur during quieter moments such as in "La libertat" (Liberty), when the singers form a tight semi-circle similar to that of traditional polyphonic singers in Sardinia or Corsica. When this change in position occurs during the *haddaoui* sections, the aural and dramatic effect is striking and symbolically resonant. On a basic level, the closer proximity of the drums raises the sound level and makes an impression on the seated audiences simply at the level of volume. However, it is also the type of music that they are playing that imbues this

moment with meaning. The overt Algerian musical reference is literally in your face; it is louder. In concert halls, these rhythmic patterns bounce off the surfaces of the room and fill the space.

The moment evokes the sonic presence of Algeria in France; it is a musical encapsulation of a larger cultural phenomenon.

During these high-energy, fast-paced musical moments, Théron begins to dance on the stage. He shuffles his feet and rolls his head as if approaching a trance state. These moments draw attention to Théron's body, which serves as a means to communicate salient aspects of his performed identity. Dance anthropologist Judith Hanna writes that dance is "an eye-catching way for humans to identify themselves and maintain or erase their boundaries" (1991:xiii). Théron, having lived in and traveled to Algeria, embodies a cultural crossing that is expressed through musical performance. He communicates, by means of his body, the mediating potential of Occitan musical performance (cf. Crapanzano 2004). This mediation also occurs at a rhythmic level. Not all of the non-French rhythms that Lo Cor de la Plana performs are Algerian; the group also incorporates the Italian pízzica rhythm, traditionally associated with tarantism ceremonies in the southern Italian Salento. In addition to the physical intensification that occur during the *haddaoui* sections, Théron's ecstatic dance moments also happen when the group plays the *pizzica*. In this way, he bridges rhythms and physical gestures associated with Algerian Sufi and hadra ceremonies and those found in Italian tarantella ceremonies. Théron's point is not only a lesson in comparative musicology but also serves a political purpose, which, as I discuss below, can be understood by examining the rhythmic format in the song "La noviòta."

"La noviòta" is a song, a version of which can be found in La Talvera's fieldwork archives, about a newlywed, whose husband's lengthy prayers on their wedding night drive her to run off and find another man.

"La noviòta"

"The Bride"

Ont'anarem paura noviòta, Ont'anarem passar la nuech? Amont dins una cambra, Totei dos dins un liech Ta la la leiro La la la la la la

Mai en disènt lo pater noster, Lop nòvi se's endormit La nòvia se's enanada Dormir 'mé lo cosin Ta la la leiro

La la la la la la

Quand lo nòvi si desrevelha Tròba pas la nòvia enluech "Portatz lo lume e la candela Que tròbi pas la nòvia enluech" Ta la la leiro La la la la la la

Quand met lo cap a la fenestra Entend cantar lo coguòu "Taisa ti donc marrida bèstia Coma l'auràs sachut tant lèu?" Ta la la leiro

La la la la la la la la

Where will we go poor bride?
Where will we go spend the night?
They go in a room
The two of them in a bed
Ta la la leiro
La la la la la la la

But while saying the *pater noster*The groom falls asleep
The bride has left
To sleep with the cousin
Ta la la leiro
La la la la la la

When the groom wakes up
He does not find the bride anywhere.
"Carry the light and the candle
for I can't find the bride anywhere."
Ta la la leiro
La la la la la la

When he puts his head to the window
He hears to cuckoo singing
"Be quiet terrible beast
How could you have known so quickly?"
Ta la la leiro
La la la la la la

"La noviòta" combines Algerian, Italian, and French (Occitan) rhythms. It begins with a clapped rhythmic pattern suggestive of the *farandole*, a dance of southern France, transitions towards the end into the *haddaoui* rhythm and concludes with the Italian *pizzica* rhythm. The *pizzica* rhythm is similar to the *farandole* but is much faster and with greater emphasis on the downbeat. Whereas the *farandole* is a group dance meant to be performed in a long line, the *pizzica* rhythm is part of the *pizzica tarantata* dance repertoire, originally performed by an individual (Inserra 2017:11). Today, however, as part of a broader *tarantella* revival, the *pizzica* is performed in urban secular contexts (11).



Farandole rhythmic pattern



Haddaoui rhythmic pattern



Pízzica rhythmic pattern

Musical Example 6. Farandole, haddaoui, and pizzica rhythmic patterns

In performance, the entire song text is repeated three times. The first iteration of the text occurs without any percussion instruments. Instead, it is sung either by Théron alone or by him and other members of the band, who harmonize the melody with seconds or thirds, over a rhythmic drone that continues until the *haddaoui* section. The second iteration of the song text includes all voices of the band, divided into three vocal lines, over a clapped shared rhythm that creates the *farandole* rhythmic pattern. During this time, Théron strongly accentuates the duple meter through syllabic emphases and foot stomping, while one or two other singers (depending on the performance) create the triple meter through the rhythmic drone and clapping.

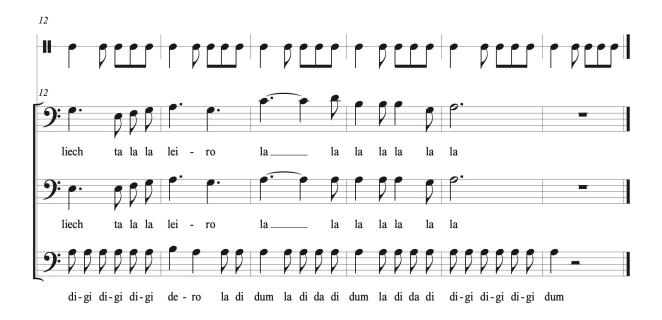


rem pa-ssar la neuch?

A - mont dins u - na cam-bra to - tei dins un
rem pa-ssar la neuch?

A - mont dins u - na cam-bra to - tei dins un -

la di dum la di da di dum la di da di



Musical Example 7. "La noviòta" in three-part singing with handclapping of farandole rhythmic pattern

The transition into the *haddaoui* section occurs first with the singers exchanging excerpts from the last line of song text. These excerpts consists of one, two, or three words: *coma* (how), *l'auràs sachut* (could you have known), *tant lèu* or (so quickly), or *coma l'auràs sachut* (how could you have known). During this time, three of the performers, Théon, Spessa, and Sempieri, prepare to play *bendirs*, stand, and approach the foot of the stage. Théron signals the change to the *haddaoui* rhythm with twelve quarter-note strikes on the *bendir*. This moment is what Denis Sampieri calls "the break" (interview on September 21, 2018). Throughout the majority of the *haddaoui* section, only text fragments of the last line are exchanged:



Musical Example 8. "La noviòta" with haddaoui rhythmic pattern

Towards the end of the *haddaoui* section, Théron sings the first strophe of the song. He then switches to the *tamburello*, while the other two drummers continue playing *bendirs*. The following three strophes of the song are performed to the *pizzica* rhythmic pattern. The

placement of the syllables is identical to that of the first (*farandole*) section of the song (see Musical Example 7) but is played at a faster tempo.

As one can see, on paper the *farandole* and the *pízzica* appear to be essentially the same rhythm, although in performance they differ in the ways I have mentioned. The use of these two rhythms in the same song provides audiences with an opportunity to hear their resemblance. This sonic act places southern France within a geographic sphere that emphasizes its Mediterranean history and identity. Furthermore, the *farondole* and *pizzica* rhythms from France and Italy frame the group's performance of the *haddaoui* rhythm. By featuring all of these rhythmic patterns, Théron highlights their compatibility. He stages the flow between each rhythm to point to what Tullia Magrini characterizes as "those musical phenomena that cross the sea, that have in their DNA a genetic patrimony that unites elements of different cultures, and that carry the historical memory of contacts within the Mediterranean" (2003:20). From this angle, his musical references to Algeria, in addition to conveying his postcolonial critique, remind audiences of the congruency of southern French, southern Italian, and southwest Algerian cultures as he seeks to construct a common Mediterranean cultural area. Through musical performance, "desired relationships are brought into virtual experience" (Small 1998:183). For Théron it is the frame drum, joined by the voice, that unites the musical practices of these areas, and he draws on these elements to invent a hybrid sound.

Whereas Magrini's description references practices that resulted from the interaction, or "cultural encounters," of musical communities ("social groups") over lengthy periods of time, Théron's compositions are the product of his individual experience, his travels, and his desire to seek out other possible musical identities. In this sense, his songs fall under Magrini's category of "popular music" that "often shows a strong tendency toward 'contamination' and creation of

countless hybrid repertoires" (20). Citing Steven Feld's article, "From Schizophonia to Schismogenesis: On the Discourse and Practices of World Beat" (1994), she writes that these repertoires are similar to other "practices of mixing, syncretic hybridization, blending, fusion, creolization, collaboration across the gulfs throughout the world" (20). Théron's music illustrates these various techniques of musical mixture that are used to convey a specific point of view. Through the performance of *farandole*, *haddaoui*, and *pizzica* rhythmic patterns, he separates himself from French official, northern, cultural identity, and asserts his "southernness."

"Nòste país" (Our Country)

Whereas "La noviòta" and "La tautena e la patineta" are examples of rhythmic elements of Lo Cor de la Plana repertoire, "Nòste país" includes lyrics that are demonstrative of Théron's political views and melodic material that exemplifies his orientation towards other cultures creative purposes. The lyrics tell of the travails of immigrants from Albania and Algeria, of a "racist government" in France, and of the exploitation of migrant laborers.

"Nòste país"

Au país que volèm viure Que li vengon d'estrangiers Emai que le seigon liuers De restar lo còr leugier

Se lo país fa son viure Dau trimar deis estrangiers Li fague toei venir liurs E demorar sense dangier

En pantaient la cocanha Vivon pièger que l'infèrn Dei caimans, dei maganhas Enduran toei lo govern "Our Country"

In the country where we want to live Let the foreigners come And let them be free To stay with a light heart

If this country makes a living Out of the foreigners' sweat Let them come freely And live secure from danger

They dream about the Gold Mine But their lives are worse than Hell They suffer the rule Of thieves and deceivers S'amolonan a la bruna Per bravejar lo dangier Subre de naus de fortuna De Tiranà vò d'Algier

E contra la sort enversa Laisson fins qu'au darrier sòu Entre l'espravent deis èrsas Que li vòlon far lançou.

Quand de lagremas van beure? Par pas si negar lo respiech De quant de sau van embeure Tant d'espèrs e de despiechs?

L'a qu'arribon pue en quista D'una sosta e de papier Que l'estrassa emai li pista Un òste mai qu'espitalier.

E de patrons esclavistas Lei fan crebar a son profiech Dau temps qu'un estat racist Lei menaça dau poarfèct

E tant lei menon a l'òbra Coma au mazelier leu buòus Lei pagon ce que s'astròba Leis abenon tant si pòu

Aduson lei esperanças E lo vam de l'avenidor Li porjissèm qu'abusança Arroïna e crebador They huddle together at night To face danger On makeshift boats From Tirana or Algiers

To adverse fate
They give up their last penny
Between the terror of the waves
That want to shroud them in their embrace

How many tears shall they drink? To preserve their self-respect In how much salt shall they steep So much hope and spite?

Then, some arrive, in search Of a shelter and papers That will be torn or be crushed By a more than welcoming host

And they work themselves to death Like slaves for the profit of their bosses While a racist government Threatens to report them to the police

And they're led to work Like cattle to the slaughterhouse They're paid with scraps And squeezed like grapes

They bring their hopes
And their enthusiasm for the future
When we give them only abuse
Ruin and death.

The first and second stanzas of "Noste país" include the phrase "let the foreigners come," and while I have focused on Algerian communities in France, "foreigners" in this song refers to immigrants more broadly. His invitation is intended to subvert protectionist rhetoric on immigration. When Lo Cor de la Plana performs this song, Théron announces, "In France, we

send immigrants back home on planes" or, "Come to France—this is how we will treat you," as he pretends to kick the audience.

When Théron and I discussed "Noste país," he stated that the song addresses increasing intolerance in France. He elaborated, "In France in the past ten years, there is an increasing feeling of intolerance growing really fast, which is quite scary. People are scared of foreigners and of difference and are not ready for the transformations taking place in French society" (interview on June 28, 2014). His statement is mirrored by a study conducted in 2015 by Ipsos, an international polling company based in Paris. According to this study, twenty-six percent of those polled stated that "France is in decline and that the situation is irreversible" (cited in Bancel et al. 2017:9). Seventy percent agreed with the statements, "In my daily life I seek inspiration from the past," "Things used to be better in France," and "We no longer feel at home in France" (a category with which respondents who also stated they were National Front supporters agreed at a level of ninety-five percent) (9). Additional questions revealed that twothirds of all respondents felt there were "too many immigrants in France" (9). The editors of Colonial Legacy in France: Fracture, Rupture, Apartheid, Nicholas Bancel, Pascal Blancard, and Dominic Thomas, summarize these findings in the following manner: "What we have, effectively, is a meeting between two ideologies, that of the 'enemy within' facing off against the anxiety of 'decline,' almost as if France now needed a designated enemy in order to define itself' (2017:9).

The rhetoric of fear has been a consistent political tool of the National Front as well as of Sarkozy's Union pour un mouvement populaire (re-named The Republicans in 2015). ¹⁶ This discourse incorporates a "vocabulary of threat," with terms such as "delinquency," "insecurity,"

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¹⁶ Fear also permeates republican discourse regarding the "decline of French culture."

"zero tolerance," and "immigration problem" (Bancel, Blanchard, Thomas 2017:63). Driss Maghraoui writes, "In the hope of winning the elections, French political parties have contributed to the perpetuation of a racist ideology that represents non-European communities as a threat to the French nation and Europe in general" (2003:224). These authors describe what Sara Ahmed (2004) identifies as "affective economies." According to Ahmed, emotions are not only located in the individual but serve to "mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective" (119). In her discussion of how fear creates borders, she writes:

Borders are constructed and indeed policed in the very feeling that they have already been transgressed: the other has to get too close, in order to be recognized as an object of fear, and in order for the object to be displaced. The transgression of the border is required in order for it to be secured as a border in the first place. This is why the politics of fear as well as hate is narrated as a border anxiety: fear speaks the language of "floods" and "swamps," of being invaded by inappropriate others, against whom the nation must defend itself. (132)

Ahmed's observations can be applied to the emphasis on borders in French political discourse that cultivates and circulates fear.

Théron directly addresses these ideological tensions in France. Describing his use of Occitan language in his compositions on the album *Marcha!*, Théron writes, "It was above all about showing that Occitan poetry of today can combat all those who attempt to reduce the citizens' understanding to a paranoid and binary vision of the world or of society" (Théron 2012). In one of our interviews, he spoke to me about ensuring that Occitan does not get coopted by the far right. The fear of this potential demonstrates the delicate balance that Occitan musicians must maintain: to cultivate a regional identity and yet separate themselves from nationalist ideologies in France. He stated in an interview, "We are proud to be from there [Marseille]. It's not nationalistic; it's in a nice way" (interview on June 28, 2014).

The musical setting of the lyrics to "Noste país" begins with a melismatic solo by Théron that he calls "a diatribe," honoring the people who have "drowned in the Mediterranean trying to get to Europe" (interview on June 28, 2014). Théron's reference to Tirana denotes Albanian refugees attempting to reach Western Europe in the early 1990s. The scalar pattern during this section is not derived from French traditional music: C D Eb (half-flat) F G A Bb C. According to Théron, it reminds [one of] the *Rāst* scale," or the *Rāst maqam* of eastern Arab music (see Marcus 2007).

Tonality is an important topic for Théron and for those studying French traditional music. Théron has tried to familiarize the members of Lo Cor de la Plana with non-tempered singing, such as that which he heard in Italy, and which he states is also a feature of traditional Occitan music and folk music in France more generally. Commenting on the transcription of folk music in France, Théron stated,

There is a big trend now in French folk music, which is based actually on truth. Lots of folk musicians say we must not notate the songs with the tempered scales anymore, because that's not what we are hearing. And if that is what we are hearing, then we need to learn how not to hear them. This comes from the fact that a lot of Arab musicians came to France and said, 'Oh you also have music that is not tempered.' But we were so used to music that is tempered, with the piano, etc. that we didn't hear that it wasn't tempered; we just thought it was out of tune. (Interview on June 28, 2014)¹⁷

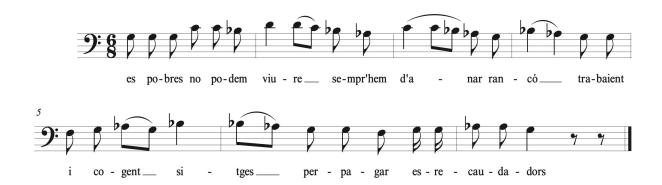
Daniel Loddo made similar comments to me on the non-tempered tonality of traditional singing in France. Théron's statement indicates an imposition of tempered listening and notation placed upon French traditional music. Noteworthy in his discourse is the role he ascribes to "Arab musicians" in assisting the decolonization of the transmission of French traditional music.

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¹⁷ When I asked Théron whether people still sing using non-tempered scales, he replied, "yes, sometimes in church you can hear it."

Otherwise stated, according to Théron, Arab music performers facilitate re-listening; they reacquaint French musicians with the non-tempered sounds of French folk music.

The melody of the chorus of "Noste país" is that of a 1976 Catalan song, "Es pobres no podem viure" (We Poor People Cannot Live), recorded by the Ibizan band, Uc. 18



Musical Example 9. Melody of "Es pobres no podem viure"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxamItmf74g.

¹⁸ "Es pobres no podem viure." YouTube video, 1:24. Published November 15, 2014.



Musical Example 10. Melody of Lo Cor de la Plana's "Nòste país"

The use of a Catalan melody is indicative of the Occitan-Catalan connection I have mentioned elsewhere in this study (e.g., Chapter One). Furthermore, the denunciation of the Spanish government in the Catalan song resembles the Occitan critique of the French government in "Nòste país," as well as in many other Occitan songs. ¹⁹ Whereas the Catalan version is sung in two-part harmony, Lo Cor de la Plana sings this melody in unison, more characteristic of the Algerian vocal practices upon which Théron draws.

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¹⁹ The Catalan original explicitly addresses the Spanish loss of its empire: "Spain…lost the Philippines, and Cuba…and now will lose the three islands Mallorca, Ibiza, and Mahón." Poverty, rather than colonialism is the primary subject of the Catalan version, which withholds overt judgment of the colonial past—the loss of the Spanish colonies is blamed on the lack of "good leadership."

Lo Cor de la Plana as World Music

According to Théron, his primary motivation for incorporating musical elements from other Mediterranean countries was to renew Occitan music. This aspect of his musical performance brings his project into the thorny domain of world music, appropriation, and power dynamics. In an article on "global folk music" in Finland, Juniper Hill writes, "Who has the right to perform, alter, and appropriate musical traditions?" (2007:74). Other scholars have examined issues of ownership (Zemp 1996) and inadequate financial recognition (Meintjes 1990). Steven Feld (1994) writes, "Musical appropriation sings a double line with one voice. It is the melody of admiration, even homage and respect, a fundamental source of connectedness, creativity, and innovation. Yet this voice is harmonized by a counter melody of power, even control and domination, a fundamental source of asymmetry in ownership and commodification of musical works" (cited in Hill 2007:77). Aleysia Whitmore's article, "The Art of Representing the Other: Industry Personnel in the World Music Industry" (2016), contributes to scholarship on world music through ethnographic interviews with industry personnel, whose voices, she states, have largely been left out of academic writings. Seeking to provide a better understanding of the role that these cultural intermediaries play in shaping world music, she describes ways in which they negotiate musicians' aesthetic choices, audiences' expectations of authenticity, and marketability. Her article addresses the "discourses of alterity, essentialist stereotypes, and unequal power dynamics that continue to be so problematic in the world music industry" (352).

Théron's own approach to the issue of appropriation can be summarized in the following passage on the Compagnie du Lamparo's website: "Don't look in Lo Còr for some bravado about a fantasized regional identity, but, instead, an approach that places a history, a heritage at disposal, inviting all those, whether or not they were born here, to know them and appropriate

them." I have demonstrated in this study that Occitan musicians espouse a deterritorializing discourse with regards to their promotion of local identity. Théron's approach to musical patrimony can also be said to be a deterritorializing one. Just as he invites others to appropriate "a heritage" that is "at disposal," he freely borrows from the musical genres to which he has been exposed through recordings or personal encounters. From a sociopolitical standpoint, his Mediterranean references, especially those to Algeria, point to larger historical relationships. The cross-cultural borrowing from Algerian musical practices embodies social inequalities—imperial conquest and its aftermath—at the same time as the stage serves as a platform for him to remodel Franco-Algerian relations. However, I surmise that that the postcolonial relevance of his compositions is unlikely a salient characteristic of his performances for audiences at world music concerts.

In 2008, Lo Cor de la Plana was heralded by Jon Pareles in the New York Times as the best act of Globalfest. He wrote,

The most striking group of Globalfast...was the one that traveled the lightest. It was six [now five] male singers, four of whom also played hand drums and tambourine. They sang in a disappearing language, Occitan...And with just those voices and percussion, they did remarkable things. They sang rich chordal harmonies and ricocheting counterpoint. There were drones and dissonances akin to Eastern European music, sustained solo vocal lines related to Arabic music and Gregorian chant, and percussive call-and-response hinting at Africa—all the connections of a Mediterranean hub. The music was equally robust and intricate—a local sound ready for export. (Pareles 2008)

With its highly rhythmic and intricate vocal arrangements of texts sung in a disappearing language, Lo Cor de la Plana fits comfortably into the world music category. Other groups profiled in this dissertation perform primarily for French audiences. While La Talvera does tour in nearby countries, the group mostly performs in small villages throughout France. Moussu T e lei Jovents perform in the many music festivals throughout France, including large ones such as Les Suds in Arles and smaller ones in villages and small cities, as well as locally in Marseille

and La Ciotat, where the members reside. Lo Cor de la Plana performs in France but often tours internationally along the world music circuit. As Théron stated, Occitan music tends to interest "the small world of Occitan militants" in France and the "Camif crowd," which refers to the furniture store Camif where, he explained, many educators shop. He added that Lo Cor de la Plana appeals to people more generally interested in world music (interview January 29, 2019).

As participants in the world music industry, Lo Cor de la Plana places Occitan language and music within a "discourse of alterity" (Whitmore 2016:352). The language has become part of the "story" that contextualizes their performance (340). Commentators on Lo Cor de la Plana have written of Occitan as "an ancient and disappearing culture" (Scoop 2009). The typical concert format opens with the group entering on stage and singing one to several songs before Théron speaks to the audience, in English when he is abroad and in French when he is France. When he is outside of France, Théron explains that the musicians are singing in Occitan, a language of southern France. With that said, most audience members in the United States with whom I have spoken, except for the occasional troubadour poetry scholar, have little to no familiarity with Occitan language and primarily perceive the group as French or as the "guys from Marseille."

During the concerts I observed in the United States, Théron briefly and humorously addresses the audience in order to provide information about the subject matter of a particular song. In fact, booking agents have come to expect and request these humorous interludes. At a concert in Chicago in 2018, Lo Cor de la Plana performed what Théron called the "anthem of Marseille," entitled "Mi parlètz pas de trabalhar" (Do Not Speak to Me About Working). After the group performed the song, Théron explained, "In Marseille, we sing this anthem lying down. That is the best way to sing an anthem." During these short but important speech acts, Théron

emphasizes the group's origins in Marseille, plays on the city's reputation within France, and/or situates himself and/or Marseille outside of France. Through statements such as "in France, they x, but in Marseille we y," he represents Marseille as separate from France. However, in my opinion, Théron is not truly implying that he is not French. Furthermore, when addressing foreign audiences, he also, at times, makes humorous allusions to being French. He simultaneously occupies French, Occitan, and Mediterranean cultural identities, and presents himself as both dissident and mediator. The emphasis on Marseille is also a means for audiences to identify the band; it is a memorable marker that distinguishes the band from other world music acts.

When I asked Théron in an interview to describe the ways in which the Lo Cor de la Plana represents Marseille, he explained:

It is related to the character of the place that has always been a bit abandoned by the central power, by the central government, so it allows you a kind of freedom and a kind of distance towards the authorities and authority in general. The people from Marseille are not very trustful of authority and anything that is governmental: the teachers, the police, the superiors. Normally people from Marseille, they don't like people who show their authority. Meanwhile, in other places in France, they fear these people—they don't like them, but they don't show it—they don't insult them—we do. We insult them. (Interview on June 28, 2014)

In this description, Théron alludes to two characteristics of Marseille: its marginalization by the central government and its anti-authoritarian streak. Addressing the city's reputation in the national imaginary, Théron commented, "Lots of people say it's a violent place, it's a ghetto. But I find it normal. I go to Montpellier; it's like some sort of invented paradise. They rejected people into the suburbs. Marseille along with Lille are the only cities where poor people live in the old center." The character of Marseille that Théron describes has begun to change in the last decade due to gentrification.

Conclusion

Little did I know, as I walked through the neighborhood of La Plaine with Théron in February 2018, that the square would be radically transformed later that year. In the fall, a municipally funded urban renewal project was carried out in the neighborhood, dislodging two thousand residents from buildings that were deemed uninhabitable. This project also oversaw the renovation of the square. Old tilleul (linden) trees were torn from the ground in order to be replaced by new ones. These actions were not met without resistance. Neighborhood residents and others, including members of Massilia Sound System and Lo Cor de la Plana, occupied the square and organized a protest along the Vieux-Port with signs that read Sauvons La Plaine (Let Us Save La Plaine) and On ne veut pas la meme ville partout (We don't want the same city everywhere). In reaction to the transformations of La Plaine, an elderly woman commented on the destruction of the trees, "Magnificent trees cut down like this, one would think it's a war. Me, I went this way on my way to school, I've always known these trees...And the market, it was so convivial, we were like a big village, one won't find this atmosphere anywhere else" (Sous le soleil la plaine: Journal insolent du quartier 2019). Another protester explained, "I've come here to defend La Plaine because it was one of the last squares like it in France and in Europe. I come from Spain...Before, in Madrid, we had a square like this but it has become gentrified. Now, there are only cops who surround it" (cited in Sous le soleil la plaine: journal insolent du quartier 2019). The renovations have been perceived by dissidents as an ongoing process in Marseille to clean up the city and rid it of its unique character, comparable to the 2013 Marseille-Provence festival, which provoked similar statements about the extension of the government's destruction of locality.

I often asked Occitan musicians whether France's membership in the EU had positively impacted the status and support of the Occitan language. They repeatedly told me that it had done nothing to this end. In fact, their constructions of locality can be seen as an effort to engender community-oriented agency on a grassroots level in response to what Théron described to me as an increasing asepticism (cf. Glissant 2009) and what Claude Sicre has called anonymity. Gentrification, tourism, and the supranational flow of capital have become of increasing concern to ethnomusicologists studying Western Europe (e.g., Gray 2019). From this perspective, Théron's compositions can be interpreted as his own version of Mediterranean identity, a localizing personal expression that reinforces human connections. When I asked Théron whether he thought he would always live in Marseille, he replied that due to the increasing number of gentrification processes taking place in the city, he no longer feels at home there. The costly renovations in Marseille suggest that the city is no longer, in Théron's words, "abandoned by the central authorities," a disregard that he considers to have previously engendered a sense of freedom, and also put into question the future role of Marseille within France.

CONCLUSION

By choosing the analytical angle of postcolonial regionalism for this study, my objective has been to open an avenue of inquiry. Pursuing connections between postcolonial and regionalist (or anti-regionalist) discourse, history, and academic writings, has served as a productive entryway for better understanding the agitations within contemporary French society that have accelerated since the 1980s and are related to French cultural citizenship. Glissant's theories of Relation, *mondialité* (world-ness), rhizome identity, the detour, and *créolité* (creoleness) have provided useful frameworks for discussing the position of resistance that Occitan music performers adopt vis-à-vis French official culture and the musical alliances they cultivate. I have also presented the opinions of Occitan musicians in order to demonstrate how they have responded to the gradual rise of the National Front. Further research remains to be done on the reception of Occitan music in France and abroad and on the musicians with whom Occitan performers collaborate.

Much of my approach in this study has been driven by a curiosity toward the paradoxes embedded within Occitan music and discourse and what they reveal about French society more broadly. Derrida, Balibar, and Glissant have observed that universalism, a pillar of French national identity, itself rests on a philosophical paradox: the notion that any singular religion, culture, or any other form of human behavior, should and could be applied to the whole world. Exploring the concept of republican universalism in its contemporary form has revealed the tensions within France regarding its humanitarian legacy, immigration policy, and its contemporary emphasis on *laïcité* and cultural assimilation.

Paradoxes, such as regional anti-regionalism and deterritorialization/rooting, are established by Occitan music performers in opposition to essentialist notions of regional and/or

national identity. Whereas Caroline Bithell (2007) describes the search for roots in the Corsican context as "cosmopolitan rootedness," a phrase she borrows from Kwame Appiah, I have had to use a different term to capture the specifics of the Occitan project. While Occitan musicians certainly present themselves as cosmopolitan citizens, they are outspoken about resisting territorial claims. Occitanie, as they imagine it—in contrast to the department established in 2016—is not a territory, nor do the performers I profile wish it to be. On the other hand, locality is of great concern to the musicians I study, both as a form of opposition to an official universalist culture imposed from above and as a resource for musical composition. Benjamin Brinner writes, "rootedness implies a connection to a particular place and set of cultural practices over time, often a very long span that reaches back into the realms of legend and myth" (2009:301). Rootedness in the Occitan imaginary at times reaches back into the distant past, evident in references to the troubadours, and at other times manifests in the establishment of local associations, singing in Occitan, and researching the more recent cultural history of a city, village, or region. The most obvious paradox within the Occitan music scene—as I have repeatedly shown—is that for a music that is meant to promote local identity, Occitan musical performance contains a large number of appropriated genres; its defining feature is its mondialité.

According to Michael Wiedorn, paradox underpins much of Edouard Glissant's work, evident on a syntactical as well as ideological level. "Nothing is True, all is living (cited in Wiedorn 2018:xiii) and "non-systematic system" (xvii) are but two examples of self-contradictory phrases that appear in his writings. In *Think Like an Archipelago: Paradox in the*

¹ An important distinction between Brinner's work and this study is the crucial role that territory plays in Israel and Palestinian politics.

Work of Édouard Glissant, Wiedorn argues that paradox allows Glissant to "pursue his—arguably quite political—goal of using art to breathe new life into thought" (2018:xv) and to "reformulate some of the fundamental categories of Western thought" (xv). Wiedorn lists four categories: totality, alterity, teleology, and philosophy, which serve as the organizing principle of his book. Wiedorn writes, "In a number of ways, the Caribbean exemplifies the paradoxical, modern zeitgeist for Glissant: there, subjects are at once rooted and adrift, deeply connected to a place they inhabit, but also profoundly aware that there is much more to the world than their island" (xvii). Perhaps Glissant's interest in paradox, and a shared utopianism, is what drew him in 2004 to an Occitan music festival in Uzeste, a town in southwestern France, organized by the self-proclaimed Occitan amusicien ("non-musician") Bernard Lubat. The result of this visit was a collaborative performance project between Lubat, who has enjoyed a successful career as a jazz pianist, and Glissant (Denouël and Granjon 2018).²

Situating Occitan Music within Current Ethnomusicology

Regionalism has become of increasing interest to ethnomusicologists. Rebecca

Bodenheimer (2009) examines regional conflicts in Cuba that lie underneath proclamations of
national unity. Stefan Fiol (2012) analyzes the role of vernacular popular music in the resurgence
of regionalist sentiment in Uttarakhand, India. Gregory Robinson (2018) studies the
appropriation of Argentine popular music as an emblem of regional identity in Aisén, Chile.

Drawing on political geography, Matthew Machin-Autenrieth (2015) evaluates flamenco in
relation to regional identity and sub-regional identity in Andalusia, Spain (see also Manuel
1989). Incoronata Inserra (2017) examines the revival of the *tarantella* of southern Italy and its

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 $^{^{2}}$ A future research project will analyze this collaboration.

performance abroad. This study, however, contributes most directly to emergent research conducted in post-imperial nations on how musical communities composed of members of the white majority situate their search for rootedness and/or assertions of national or regional identity amidst right-wing nationalist ideology (Keegan-Phipps 2017). It also intersects with recent ethnomusicological scholarship on alliance studies (Diamond 2007; Giroux 2018) and self-othering (Kaminsky 2015).

In "Identifying the English: Essentialism and Multiculturalism in Contemporary English Folk Music" (2017), Simon Keegan-Phipps describes the invocations of multiculturalism that contemporary folk musicians in England have used to reconcile their political ideology and nativist inclinations. He demonstrates that the contemporary folk resurgence in England, which began at the turn of twenty-first century, has coincided with preoccupations with national identity. Key factors that inform this preoccupation include divisive politics regarding England and the rest of the United Kingdom, the "specter of US-led cultural and economic globalization," and "fear about a general lack of integration" of immigrants (5). The case studies that he provides demonstrate ways in which English folk musicians perform an Englishness that "moves beyond a historically rooted, ethnically pure, green-and-pleasant-land vision of the English and towards a contemporary version of Englishness that reconciles the implied indigeneity of folk with the multiculturalism of modern England" (8).

Like the English folk musicians Keegan-Phipps studies, Occitan musicians are predominantly white and hold left-wing political values. In addition, Occitan musicians have also had to reconcile their search for cultural roots with the surrounding right-wing invocations of national identity. According to Keegan-Phipps, English folk performers enact this reconciliation by placing their own tradition in a relational position of equality. I discuss this dynamic as it

appears in Occitan music as an example of Glissant's theory of Relation. A primary difference, however, between the Occitan scene and the English folk scene that Keegan-Phipps analyses is the additional role that the central state plays in the discourse of Occitan musicians. From the Occitan perspective, searching for one's cultural roots is an act of retaliation against the French state, which they claim imposed a French culture non-native to their own. Throughout this study, I illustrate how Occitan musicians' discourse is framed by two major forces: the central government and right-wing nationalism, which, I argue, drive the simultaneous efforts to deterritorialize Occitanie and to locate cultural roots, sometimes as far away as Brazil. Keegan-Phipps demonstrates that one response to the great replacement theory is to establish English identity as inherently multicultural (10). In the same way, Occitan musicians convey French society and Occitan music, whether through references to other music cultures in France or elsewhere, as multicultural, and cultivate musical alliances to do so.

In "The Music of Modern Indigeneity: From Identity to Alliance Studies" (2007),
Beverley Diamond suggests studying alliances as a way of looking at "connections to places, or
networks of people" (169). In keeping with scholarship since the 1990s on globalization and the
world music industry, her concerns center on power dynamics and the marketing of indigenous
music cultures. Of course, I am not claiming that Occitan musicians are indigenous, and neither
do the musicians I discuss. Rather, examining the alliances that Occitan musicians create offers
an entryway into the way that these performers imagine their status within the central
state/provinces framework and represent themselves to the world. As Diamond wrote, "Our
alliances produce our identities" (171). She discusses four areas of study that she perceives to be
central to alliance studies: 1) genre and the technological means that help construct it; 2)

language and dialect choices; 3) practices of citation and collaboration; and 4) concepts about access, ownership, and intellectual property (187).

The alliances that Occitan musicians construct occur across a number of regional and international networks: within their own musical community, with musicians from other French regions, such as Bretagne, and with musicians in other countries, notably Italy, Spain, Brazil, and Algeria. Occitan music performers create transnational alignments with communities which may have lesser economic capital and yet greater cultural capital as the inheritors of what Occitan musicians perceive to be rich, or stronger, musical traditions. These alliances are exemplified by citation and collaboration.

Diamond defines citation as "a distanced process, one that is usually both intentional and emotionally charged. I don't have to know you to quote you, but if I quote you, I probably either admire your thoughts or want to take issue with them." (2007:183). Citations discussed in this dissertation include Manu Théron's use of a Catalan melody for "Nòste país" (see Chapter Six) and La Talvera's use of the melody of "Asa Branca" for "Occitània" (see Chapter Four). A more general form of citation is Tatou's use of reggae and ragamuffin. His initial interest in reggae was because he enjoyed the music, and he spoke of Bob Marley to me with great admiration (see Chapter Four).

Collaboration, Diamond observes, "involves immediate and intense negotiation. Paradoxically, it is not always intentional and emotionally charged. You may simply need to have something arranged, marketed, or recorded. Control is compromised. But potential for innovative thinking may also be maximized" (183). Collaborations in the Occitan music scene include Lo Cor de la Plana's performances with El Maya and La Talvera's performances with the Brazilian musician Sivério Pessoa. Daniel Loddo's album with Pessoa, *ForrOccitània*,

emphasizes the encounter of two cultures in resistance and the coalition-building aspect of the musicians' project. While the majority of the transnational collaborative recordings discussed in this dissertation have been initiated by Occitan musicians, Pessoa has traveled to France to record his own compilation of collaborations with Occitan musicians (Pessoa 2011). Manu Théron's citations of Algerian music and his collaborations with Algerian musicians are more politically charged due to the fact of Algeria having been a French colony and to the existing tensions surrounding postcolonial immigration in France. Given this context, Théron's citations and collaborations simultaneously allude to a historical entanglement predicated on imperial conquest and model potential relationships.

Diamond suggests that an alliance studies approach should examine ways in which "concepts and social relationships of the past are embedded in the present" (2007:171). Occitan musicians' reasons for appropriation are inextricable from their discourse on popular music in France. As Tatou said to me, "Since popular music disappeared in France, we have had the tendency to search elsewhere" (interview June 21, 2014). Another Occitan musician, Dje Baléti, commented, "It is a strange thing to be a musician in France today: one is 100 percent open to the foreign; one has a 100-percent supply of things that come from the whole world; and we, we have a past that is practically nowhere to be found. Sometimes, the closer one gets to it; the further it disappears" (interview June 23, 2010). These statements provide a fruitful basis for exploring French cultural history and performers' current perspectives.

In Occitan discourse, the "weakness" or "disappearance" of French popular music is combined with what the French anthropologist Benoît de l'Estoile calls *le goût des autres* (the

relationship to the world, or *mondialité*, that characterizes Occitan music exists in continuity with a long tradition of exoticism in French music, art, and literature. Some performers spoke frankly to me of the *exotisme* (exoticism) of their initial interest in Brazilian music, a sentiment that seemed to hold little to no negative connotations for them. In Chapter Two, I pointed to the relationship between "being of the world" and the colonial agenda, which were defining features of the French Revolution and the civilizing mission of the Third Republic. Musical *mondialité* in Occitan performance displays elements of a universalist legacy that are not solely attributable to the impacts of contemporary globalization and the decline of French folklore. Statements such as "bringing elsewheres to us" and "seeking out the Other" convey a spirit of openness, which has particular connotations within the contemporary debates on immigration and French identity. They also, sometimes discomfitingly, recall earlier claims of France's position in the world as a colonial power.

While Occitan *mondialité* conveys a colonial legacy, Occitan musical composition does not only display social relationships of the past embedded in the present. Occitan musicians turn to the past in order to enact the social relationships and identities they wish to create in the present. References to the troubadours situate Occitanie as part of an older Mediterranean cultural area that predates the French nation. The fact that the troubadours are pre-national and also pre-colonial allows Occitan performers to distance themselves from French colonial history at the same time as they reinterpret troubadour values of conviviality, peerness, and borderlessness in response to nationalist anti-immigrant ideology in postcolonial France.

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³ Le gôut des autres: De l'exposition coloniale aux arts premiers (The Taste of Others: From the Colonial Expositons to Tribal Art) (2010).

Finally, postcolonial regionalism, as I have formulated it, also ties into practices of self-othering. In an issue of *Ethnomusicology Forum*, David Kaminsky and other contributors (e.g., Silverman 2015; Pennington 2015) discuss the properties and functions, and their own concerns over, what Kaminsky calls the "New Old Europe Sound." Kaminsky identifies four features of this musical trend: appropriation, primal affect, postnationalism, and blurring. In his analysis, he argues that the New Old Europe Sound, an amalgam of Romani, Jewish and Balkan musical styles that have been appropriated by white northwestern European musicians is "the possibility of allowing white Europeans to actually become the Other, and so reject their privilege altogether" (2015:201). Part of Kaminsky's critique stems from the fact that the musicians he discusses do not accurately acknowledge the origins of the music they perform.

Although I do not reach the same condemnatory conclusions about Occitan musical appropriations as Kaminsky does on the New Old Europe Sound, there are commonalities between Occitan discourse and the social function he describes. Self-othering is evident in the discourse that posits the Occitan community as otherness within France (interview with Manu Théron on February 20, 2016). However, it is a self-chosen otherness. Whereas Occitan was once the maternal language for many southerners in France, this situation is no longer the case. Given the near extinction of the language, speaking and/or singing in Occitan today is a conscious choice (interview with Tatou June 21, 2014). Occitan speakers may once have been mocked among court society; however, in contemporary France they are not discriminated against on account of their physical appearance or cultural markers. As Frantz Fanon notes in *Black Skin, White Masks*, a Breton "was never civilized by the Whites" ([1952] 2008:14). From what I have ascertained, the extent of discrimination against Occitan-speaking musicians in current-day France is a difficulty entering the French music industry and certain prejudicial

assumptions about Paris as the epicenter of the arts in France. Not all Occitan musicians explicitly told me they represented otherness; however, they do present themselves as a resistant subculture and emphasize the concept of otherness, both musically and discursively, to do so. In addition, they draw on the historically low status of Occitan and "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu 1991) entailed in the formation and enforcement of French as the official language to fashion their identities as protesting citizens. The performers I discuss appropriate otherness, whether it be linguistic, musical, or ideological to: 1) reinforce their own subversive position within French society; 2) distinguish the current incarnation of Occitan regional identity from nationalist claims of what constitutes Frenchness; and 3) infuse their music with greater communicative power.

In summary, the Occitan musicians I profile create a fragmented community of dissent (Shelemay 2011) that explores regional culture as an opposition to the national culture they consider to have been imposed on them. They draw on transnational cultural alliances for political purposes: to separate their localizing project from longtime associations between land, territory, and right-wing nationalism, which began in France as a reactionary movement in the mid-nineteenth century and persists to this day. They also create these alliances to preserve and innovate traditional repertoire as well as to make their music more palatable to French and international audiences. Through a combination of the revival of local musical practices and musical transnationalism, these musicians promote the borderlessness that David Kaminsky (2014, 2015) equates with postnationalism. However, Jérôme Camal's definition of postnationalism is perhaps more applicable: "...in the new millennium, postnationalism preserves the nation as a desired community but subject to centrifugal forces that inscribe it within regional, diasporic and transnational networks" (2019:148). The use of linguistic and

musical practices of southern France and beyond allows the musicians I discuss to discursively situate themselves outside of the French state while not rejecting it in actuality.

Marseille-Provence 2013 and the Creation of the MUCEM

In 2013, Marseille became the forty-seventh city in Europe to be designated a European Capital of Culture, a title previously bestowed upon the French cities of Paris, Lille, and Avignon. The European Capitals of Culture initiative, first implemented in 1985 by the European Commission, was "designed to highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe, to increase Europeans' sense of belonging to a common cultural area, and to foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities" (European Commission). Marseille-Provence 2013 included over 900 cultural events and the inauguration of several major architectural projects in Marseille. These projects included the Villa Mediterranée, a conference center for promoting Mediterranean dialogue and exchange, and the Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Mediterranée (The Museum of the Civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean) (MUCEM), a national museum devoted to the cultures of Europe and the Mediterranean, which has inherited the collection of the former national ethnographic museum in Paris, the Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires (MNATP).

Manu Théron stated to me that the portfolio submitted during the application process emphasized Marseille's identity as a center for popular and North African culture, citing the rap group IAM, but that it was primarily Western European classical music that was featured during the festival. Tatou resented the fact that officials from Paris descended upon Marseille to determine the programming of its cultural events. In the voice of a Parisian official, he said, "Hello people from Marseille, this is how you do culture. We won't leave you the responsibility of culture...*les marseillais*...have you seen them? We will send two or three specialists...We

will have transhumance in the Canebière [a historic neighborhood of Marseille], we will have two thousand sheep. You will see how it amazing it is; we're in Provence!" Tatou's stance vis-àvis the festival exemplifies his critique of national culture imposed from above. He retorted, "Marseille has always been a capital of culture." On the topic of the MUCEM, he stated "Of all the languages on the walls in the museum, there is not a single word of Occitan" (interview on June 21, 2014).

The MUCEM, which opened in 2013, is within walking distance of the Vieux-Port (Old Port). The sun beats down on the newly renovated boardwalk, where fishermen sell their catch and vendors sell tourist trinkets. As the old port curves to the right, the museum complex becomes visible. On the left is the MUCEM, a large glass square encased in concrete lattice; to the right is Fort Saint-Jean, built in 1660 under Louis XIV; and between them is an overhead bridge. The museum was designed by Rudy Ricchiotti and is the first national museum outside of Paris. It is located at the edge of the Mediterranean Sea.

At the MUCEM, I interviewed one of the members of the équipe de programmation (programming team), Elisabeth Cestor, who is also the author *Les musiques particularistes en Provence* (Particularist Music in Provence) (2005). I wanted to find out why a national museum, the MNATP, which had formerly housed archives and collected objects from French rural society, had been absorbed by the MUCEM. I specifically wanted to know, given current issues of French national identity and immigration, why the collection was being placed within a museum dedicated to a larger geographic area encompassing Europe and the Mediterranean, as the museum's name suggests.



Figure 8. Photo of the MUCEM and Fort Saint-Jean

From this interview, I learned that the title of the museum stems from the fact that Marseille is part of an urban renewal project called Euroméditerranée. With an endowment of seven billion euros, it is the largest central-city renewal project in Europe. The Euroméditerranée initiative is part of a EuroMed cities network, founded in 1991 with the objective of "supporting environment protection from a local perspective" (MedCités). In 1992, the presidency was located in Marseille; it subsequently moved to Rome, in 2002, and then Tetouan, in 2015. In 2017, it obtained legal status as an independent organization and addresses three overall themes: city development strategies, urban services and the environment, and economic and social development. It claims to be "a Mediterranean voice for local authorities." This project is supported financially at many administrative levels: in the case of France, it receives funding from the European Union, the national government, the PACA (Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur) region, and the city. Its objective, according to Cestor, is to renovate the old neighborhoods, essentially along the tramway line, from the Vieux-Port (Old Port) to Joliette. The

Euroeméditeranéee website describes Euromed as *un laboratoire pour la ville de demain* (a laboratory for the city of tomorrow), and cites the fact that it has created 37,000 jobs and 555,000 square meters of office space. It portrays an immaculate city, composed of clean-cut businessmen, marveling tourists, a woman smiling while, seemingly carefree, riding a bicycle, and a man jogging along the waterfront. Despite the recent changes brought about by gentrification and the Marseille-Provence 2013 festival, this ultra-hygienic image is quite different from the Marseille I observed in my visits in 2014 and 2018.

As Cestor recounted, once the decision was made to close the MNATP, plans were begun to relocate the museum to a city other than Paris. There were several cities considered, including Marseille. This moment coincided, as Cestor explained, with Euromed's project to create a museum in Marseille. Cestor was part of the team that created a report, commissioned by the "director of the museums of France," on how to reposition the museum vis-a-vis the Mediterranean. However, the museum in Marseille was slow to get off the ground, literally, due to a lack of interest on the part of the *mairie* (city government). Cestor mentioned the fact that the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, the brainchild of former president Jacques Chirac, was conceived after the MUCEM but opened before it. The catalyst for the opening of the MUCEM was Marseille-Provence 2013. When Marseille presented itself as a candidate for the Capital of Culture project, the future museum became an asset for its selection. Cestor stated, "In a way the Marseille-Provence 2013 saved us."

As for the sound archives and artifacts formerly housed at the MNATP, original sound recordings were sent to the Archives nationales in Paris, while copies were sent to the MUCEM and other regional museums, such as the Conservatoire occitan (Occitan Conservatory) in Toulouse. The sound archives have been digitized by MUCEM employees and are accessible on

their website. One part of the artifact collection went to the Musée de l'Homme, which, in turn, sent instruments to the MUCEM, what Cestor called a *re-repartition* (re-redistribution). Material objects, namely instruments, are housed at the Centre de Conservation et de Ressources (Center for Conservation and for Resources) near the Saint-Charles train station in Marseille. Marie Barbara le Gonidec (2008), the former director of the MNATP's *phonothèque* (sound archives), has written of her concern over the legacy of Claudie Marcel-Dubois's ethnomusicology and the transition of the discipline out of the domain of museums and into the university system.

When I asked Cestor to what extent the programming at the MUCEM focused on immigration, Cestor cited several exhibits and events. The first one was an art installation "Nous Sommes Içi" (We Are Here) by an Italian artist, who hung flags made out of orange life jackets on the tower of the Fort Saint-Jean, adjacent to the museum. Cestor explained that the title held two meanings: "It is a way to say to people at sea, like a lighthouse, "Come, we are here," and to remind people that there are migrants who arrive every day and are here." Another event was a seminar featuring the Chinese filmmaker, Ai Weiwei, and the screening of his film *Human Flow*. This film is about immigration, broadly, but focuses on Mediterranean crossings. Cestor also mentioned plans for a 2021 program "to change the image of folklore, which holds a lot of connotations; to remind people that folklore is the culture of the people." I can only anticipate, and look forward to hearing about, how this program is received by the Occitan musicians of Marseille and of greater Occitanie.

Concluding Remarks

Writing on French universalism and creole language, Glissant (2003) states "For with every language that disappears, there disappears forever a part of the human imaginary. This we cannot allow. Everything possible must be done so that the languages of the world are preserved"

(113). On one level, Occitan music helps to preserve the Occitan language, and for Daniel Loddo safeguarding the language itself is a primary concern. For others, Occitan serves primarily as a marker of their identities as performers. Furthermore, in conversation an individual musician may present self-contradictory standpoints vis-à-vis the language. For instance, in the same interview, a musician may passionately point out ways in which the Occitan language has been left out of French official culture and yet state that his choice to sing in Occitan "is not about the language." Therefore, one of the primary questions I have sought to answer is: why do these musicians choose to sing in Occitan all?

While the lyrics of the songs I analyze in this study are charged with political opinion,
Occitan music performers sing of *ouverture* (openness) in a language that few people today in
France, let alone anywhere else, can comprehend. The political ideology of openness and
hospitality can therefore be viewed as an aesthetic reinforced through performance. On the
subject of comprehensibility, Tatou stated that French audiences are used to hearing songs in
languages they do not understand, especially English and that he captures much meaning from
songs without understanding the texts. He and other Occitan musicians frequently provide
French translations in their CD liner notes. Furthermore, during concerts, a song about
immigration may be introduced with or followed by a dedication to immigrants or an explanation
that local audiences will comprehend.

While these musicians could sing in French—and Sicre does—about immigration, the Occitan language itself communicates hegemonic linguistic relationships in France. As Occitan speakers and other people in France explained to me, the Occitan language in general has always been one of resistance; it has historically carried the capacity to critique and oppose partly because it has never been an official language. There is emphasis among Occitan musicians on

the contestatory, what they call *revendicatif*, character of Occitan song, beginning with the poetry of the troubadours—who did not only sing of love. In the introduction to *Global Pop*, *Local Language*, Harris Berger writes, "When a singer uses, for example, a high-status foreign language, a despised local dialect, or a formal linguistic register in song, he or she may be exploring, performing, or enacting a social identity rather than merely describing it" (2003:xv-xvi). Using the "despised local dialect" of Occitan is a performance of a social identity and an enactment of resistance due to the historical status of regional languages in France and, perhaps more importantly, the social critique and protest that have been inscribed into the language since the 1970s.

In fact, Occitan is becoming more visible in France, evident in the use of street signs and announcements of stops in Occitan in the metro of select cities, such as Toulouse. Daniel Loddo stated with irony that there has been a veritable "Catharization" of the region for tourism purposes (interview on January 28, 2017). Occitan culture is being incorporated into negotiations over cultural patrimony and intangible heritage (interview with Luc Charles-Dominique on June 23, 2014). The Occitan language, as well as the instruments and songs associated with traditional music of this area, continue to provide source material for musicians who creatively draw on it for various purposes that are not always as politically charged as the ones described in this study. The performers I profile are of particular interest because they offer thought-provoking perspectives on notions of culture in France and on what it means to be French.

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