



Music and the French Counterculture: 1966 – 1975

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music

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Abstract

The French counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s developed in connection to a network of countercultures across the globe. This thesis studies the role that these relationships had in the development of French countercultural music and musical discourses. To conduct this research, this study principally relies on analysis of three central then-contemporary music magazines: *Actuel*, *Rock & Folk*, and *Best*. The analysis of these magazines is complimented by musical and semiotic analyses. In this way this text balances a consideration of written cultural discourse and insight drawn from investigation of aesthetic choices.

This study offers new insight into processes of musical and countercultural development in France. These years saw a complicated and shifting discourse where French youth sought to work out how to both identify with a transnational youth movement and retain a sense of national individuality. Music is placed at the centre of this tension as it acted as a vehicle to engage with national Others and as a way of articulating a sense of the national Self. This study views the development of the French counterculture as a result of national and transnational processes. Chapters 2 and 4 view the reception and response to international actors by looking at France's relationship with the counterculture of the USA and the UK respectively. Chapter 3 turns the attention to circulations within French borders by considering the interplay between the French folk revival and the French counterculture. Chapter 5 features the most direct study, out of the chapters within this thesis, on the internal dialogue about the development of French rock music taking place within countercultural circles.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: La Révolution Française

Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil are best known for being the creators of the hit musicals *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*. What they are much less well known for is their role in the creation of France's first ever rock opera, *La Révolution Française*.¹ While *La Révolution Française* has not entered into the musical or rock opera canon, it represents a crucial moment within the development of the French counterculture as it encapsulates many of the cultural and political topics and tensions that were present within French countercultural discourse at the time. At the same time, *La Révolution Française* was profoundly international. The genre of rock opera was dominated by British and American acts in the late 1960s and early 1970s and, by putting forward a French entry into the rock opera arena, Schönberg and Boublil argued that France was part of the transnational counterculture and that its contributions should not be ignored.

If *La Révolution Française* was France's first homegrown rock opera, it was certainly not France's first experience of the format: *Hair* had already scandalised France in 1969 and The Who's *Tommy* was released in France in the same year.² Consequently, by *La Révolution Française*'s first run at the *Palais De Sports* in Paris in 1973, the French public were used to seeing and hearing rock music within the theatre. Schönberg and Boublil's rock opera was well received, leading to the release of a double LP.³ The show would even be rethought and adapted as the zeitgeist changed, and Jonathyne Briggs notes that by the two hundred year anniversary of the French revolution it had transformed into a celebration of the French revolution.⁴

The rock opera's narrative centres around a romance between the commoner Charles Gauthier, who is also a representative of the peasant class, and Isabelle de Montmorency, a French noblewoman. It is set during, and in the immediate aftermath of, the French revolution of 1789. The narrative sees the dramatic outcome of the revolution unfold, from the fall of the aristocracy to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Yet, the so-called Terror is also a part of

¹ Alain Boublil, Raymond Jeannot, Claude-Michel Schönberg, & Jean-Max Rivière, *La Révolution Française* (Vogue, 1973).

² Jérôme Guibert, *La production de la culture: le cas des musiques amplifiées en France: genèse, structurations, industries, alternatives* (Paris & Saint Amant Tallende: Mélanie Sèteun & Irma éditions 2006), 140.

The Who, *Tommy* (Polydor, 1969).

³ Jonathyne Briggs, 'Before Hamilton: Staging the French Revolution in the 1970s', *Age of Revolutions*, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2016/06/06/before-hamilton-staging-the-french-revolution-in-the-1970s/>, (accessed 8 July, 2019).

⁴ Ibid.

this narrative, and *La Révolution Française* sees both Gauthier and de Montmorency become victims of this ideological purge.⁵

La Révolution Française did not only speak of the revolution of 1789; it was also in many ways an exposition of many of the ideals that had been brewing within the French counterculture since 1966.⁶ Notably, it featured several significant figures of the French rock world including France's first disrupter of rock music Antoine, and the French progressive rock band Martin Circus.⁷ Combined with the presence of these counterculture figures, the narrative of *La Révolution Française* ties into the contemporary countercultural narrative: both narratives centre around a tension between a conservative establishment and a group that seeks societal change. These aesthetic choices, when united with the genre and form choice of rock opera and the various aesthetic symbols used throughout, situate *La Révolution Française* firmly within the logic of the French counterculture.

The LP of *La Révolution Française* is accompanied by a booklet that takes the form of a comic, with frames matching most of the songs (figure 1). The use of the form of the comic was quite common in the French counterculture, and the countercultural magazine *Actuel* (1970-1975) would often dedicate large sections to the display of comics. Beyond the genre, the booklet further demonstrates the countercultural edge of *La Révolution Française* through its portrayal of hypersexualised women – a reference to the (problematic) sexual liberation element of the counterculture – combining rock hair fashions with 1789 clothes, and a portrayal of a speech taking place in a rock concert with an electric microphone, guitar and amplifier.⁸ There is even an image of a woman holding an 'MLF' sign in one frame: a direct reference to the movement for the liberation of women and evidence that *La Revolution Française* was attempting to engage with countercultural ambitions.

The musical elements also firmly tie *La Revolution Française* into the countercultural and rock scene. As Jonathyne Briggs notes, Schönberg and his co-composer Raymond Jeannot assign certain musical traits to different social groups and classes. This is made most clear in the song 'Les États Généraux', which depicts the gathering of Estates General by Louis XVI (the first time since 1614) in order to work out how to deal with France's political and economic troubles. The General Estates was composed of three groups: the nobility, the

⁵ The French revolution of 1789 was a significant period that saw the monarchy overthrown and the creation of France's first republic. It would be followed the Terror, where the newly installed government would send thousands of citizens to the guillotine.

⁶ Briggs, 'Before Hamilton'.

⁷ For more information on Antoine, please see pages 44-50.

⁸ Briggs, 'Before Hamilton'.

clergy, and the Third Estate (the commoners/peasants). In ‘Les États Généraux’ the nobility is characterised by the genre of light pop; the clergy appear more traditionally religious in their musical representation through the use of organ sounds and prayer-like singing; the Third Estate, on the other hand, appear as a heavy progressive rock band.⁹



Figure 1: Lyrics and image for ‘Proclamation de la République’ from accompanying magazine and liner notes to Alain Boublil, Raymond Jeannot Claude-Michel Schönberg & Rivière, Jean-Max, *La Révolution Française* (Vogue, 1973). Artwork by Bernard Monié.

The symbolism of the genre choices is reinforced through the lyrical elements as the royalty’s chorus sings:

Oui Sire, bien sûr, nous ferons notre devoir	Yes sire, of course, we will do our duty
Toujours soucieux de ne pas vous décevoir	Always anxious to not disappoint you
Oui Sire, bien sûr, vous pouvez faire	Yes sire, of course, you can have
confiance	confidence
À la loyauté de la noblesse de France	In the loyalty of the French nobility

Equally supportive of the royalty, the Clergy sing:

Sire, nous sommes prêts	Sire, we are ready
À vous aider de nos lumières	To help you with our enlightenment
À vous aider de nos prières	To help you with our prayers
Afin de préparer l'avenir	In order to prepare for the future

On the other hand, the Third Estate are more rebellious in their speech:

⁹ Briggs, ‘Before Hamilton’.

Alain Boublil, Raymond Jeannot, Claude-Michel Schonberg, & Jean-Max Rivière, ‘Les États Généraux’, *La Révolution Française* (Vogue, 1973).

Députés, au nom du Tiers État
Nous ferons respecter le peuple dans
l'Assemblée
Nous sommes là par sa volonté

Deputies, in the name of the Third Estate
We will respect the people in the
Assembly
We are here by their will

Nous voulons oui, nous voulons enfin
Toutes les réformes dont le royaume a besoin
Faisons-les, sans tarder

We want yes, we want at last
All the reforms that the kingdom needs
Do them, without delay

Français, Français
Serrons les rangs, mettons nos forces en
commun
Français, Français
Notre destin, nous le ferons de nos mains
Serrons les rangs, l'espoir nous appartient¹⁰

Frenchmen, Frenchmen
Tighten the ranks, join our forces
together
Frenchmen, Frenchmen,
Our destiny, it is in our hands
Tighten the ranks, hope belongs to us

Considering the ideology of the various social groups and the genre assigned to represent those values, it is evident that Schönberg and Rivière were drawing parallels with contemporary cultural trends.¹¹ Rock music in France was placed in opposition to popular music by its fanbase. It was seen to embody something authentic and challenging, while popular music was seen to embody conservative values and suffer from commercialisation. Consequently, within *La Révolution Française*, pop music is cast as the conservative establishment of the French nobility and rock music is assigned to the Third Estate, who adopt rock music's role as disrupter of societal and aesthetic norms.

The scope of the French revolution even allows for the inclusion of references to the contemporary folk revival and regionalist movements occurring in France. The *chouannerie* was a period of royalist backlash against the French revolution, the hotbed of which was France's western regions.¹² In journalist Jacques Vassal's reading of the *chouannerie* uprising in Brittany, he argues that, at its inception, the *chouannerie* was actually a populist uprising against a centralised government.¹³ This reading fits with the representation of the *chouans* in the song 'Chouans, En Avant!': its opening lines discuss the injustice felt by those 'from the

¹⁰ Alain Boublil, Raymond Jeannot, Claude-Michel Schonberg, & Jean-Max Rivière, 'Les États Généraux', *La Révolution Française* (Vogue, 1973).

Lyrics transcribed by author.

¹¹ Briggs, 'Before Hamilton'.

¹² Paul R. Hanson, *Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Lanham, Toronto & Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), 67.

¹³ Jacques Vassal, *Folksong : Une Histoire de la musique populaire aux États-Unis* (Paris : Albin Michel, 1971), 34.

north to the midi' at being subjugated to laws imposed by Paris.¹⁴ This song thus makes reference to not only the counterculture/establishment dynamic but also the contemporary regional tensions that were occurring in places such as Brittany and Occitania.

La Révolution Française engages broadly with countercultural issues and concepts. It encapsulates many of the narratives of conflict between oppositional and normative/established culture through its portrayal of class conflict in the French revolution. It touches on themes of sexual liberation, women's rights, and the urban/rural divide that were all crucial elements of countercultural discourse, and it does this through recourse to countercultural mediums of rock music and comics. It shows that the French counterculture, as well as pop and mainstream culture, was listening to sounds emerging in foreign countercultures and, most importantly, it shows that France was incorporating these ideas within a localised framework.

Inspired by the ways in which *La Révolution Française* manages to situate itself both nationally and transnationally, in this thesis I explore the ways in which French rock music and counterculture were constructed in relation to emerging rock music scenes and countercultures occurring elsewhere in the world. I ask how did the French musical counterculture develop in relation to a transnational counterculture, and what role did musicians, critics, and music play as mediators of countercultural ideals. This is not to ask questions about how foreign popular culture exerted itself on French popular culture or a consideration of the ways in which French popular culture imitated foreign music. Rather it is an exploration of the ways in which foreign popular cultures acted as a resource, or a cultural warehouse, managed by French popular culture in its construct of the Self.

I am interested in the period between 1966 and 1975 as these years saw a crucial shift in French popular music's relation with the outside world and cultural politics occurring in France.¹⁵ 1966 acts as a significant point because it marked the release of Antoine's first album, which heralded a new era of anti-establishment ideology within French popular music, and the establishment of the formational French rock magazine *Rock & Folk*. The end date of 1975 has been chosen as this is the year that the French countercultural publication *Actuel*

¹⁴ 'Du nord au Midi'

Alain Boubilil, Raymond Jeannot, Claude-Michel Schonberg, & Jean-Max Rivière 'Chouans, En Avant !', *La Révolution Française* (Vogue, 1973).

¹⁵ There are instances within this study that step outside of this period in order to present the necessary cultural context.

ceased production.¹⁶ Within these years French popular culture had to negotiate itself in relation to the emerging rock and counterculture of the USA and the UK; it had to situate itself within a European context; and also deal with cultural and political changes occurring within France's own borders. As a result, this period acted as one of dialogue, differentiation, and partnership; it was a moment when French popular culture questioned its place in the world.

Beyond the introductory and conclusionary chapters, this thesis contains four central chapters organised into two thematic halves. The first half (chapters two and three) focuses on the way that the construction of the Other is embodied in a figure (the American hippie and the French peasant) and the process by which these figures provided utility for the French rock community and counterculture. Chapters four and five focus on the development of a narrative that considers a shift away from a popular music defined by the USA and the emergence of a European rock music. In essence, all four chapters deal with the use of national Others as a means of constructing the Self, and it would have been possible to apply the same thematic arguments across all the chapters.¹⁷ However, by exploring these two themes, multiple insights into the way France was situating itself within the world of rock and counterculture are elucidated.

Chapter 2 explores the relationship the French counterculture had with the USA. In particular, it focuses on the French interest in hippiedom and the various ways that the imaginary of the French rock culture community constructed the hippie. This discussion is embedded in the rich academic discourse on Franco-American relationships across the 20th century and presents the American hippie as a symbol of an internal Other of the USA. Crucially, this interest in hippiedom opened up an anti-establishment discourse within the realms of French rock music and culture and helped draw French attention to the nascent American counterculture. In turn, this would provide significant influences for the development of the French counterculture.

¹⁶ Chris Warne, 'Bringing Counterculture to France: *Actuel* Magazine and the Legacy of May '68', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 15/3 (2007), 309-323. In a similar vein, Marc Alvarado describes *Actuel* as 'the emblematic journal of the counter-culture' [le journal emblématique de la contre-culture].

Marc Alvarado, *La Chienlit: Le Rock Français et Mai 68 : Histoire D'un Rendez-Vous Manqué* (Paris : Editions Du Layeur, 2018), 20.

¹⁷ Chris Tinker's analysis of *Salut Les Copains*'s treatment of national Others provided the basis for this conceptualisation.

Chris Tinker, *Mixed Messages: Youth Magazine Discourse and Sociocultural Shifts in Salut Les Copains (1962-1976)* (Oxford, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 62-69.

The third chapter turns to face France's internal Others and considers the significance of the construction of the peasant as a crucial part in the French folk revival, which in turn was part of the French rock and countercultural community. The French folk revival existed in a liminal space between urban and rural. Importantly, at least within the confines of French rock culture and this study, the rural was largely constructed and imagined. It was a nation within a nation. The peasant was French but embodied a pre-modern, unattainable Frenchness. As a consequence, France's peripheries operated in a similar function for the French counterculture as hippiedom did. An engagement with it provided cultural and political resources with which, or against which, the identity of the French rock and countercultural community could be identified.

The fourth chapter places Franco-British relations as its central subject. Whereas the USA had the figure of the hippie, France's peripheries had the peasant, the British were not so easily encapsulated in a single figure. Yet, across the period discussed, it is possible to see a trajectory of stereotypes that shifts from a view of the British as a conservative nation to a hotbed of cultural activity. The Franco-British musical relationship is perhaps the most well known one within the public imagination due to the infamy of Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg and their scandalous recording of 'Je t'aime... moi non plus'.¹⁸ Although I will argue that this relationship was important, there are many more unacknowledged engagements between these two nations. This chapter culminates with a discussion of what I am referring to as the European turn. This was a brief moment when an optimism in the development of European rock music and counterculture was believed to be a vehicle of future transformation, and Britain was seen as a leading nation within this arrangement due to the innovation of groups such as Soft Machine and Pink Floyd.

The fifth chapter turns to France. It shifts the perspective and considers more of the internal ways in which the French youth was trying to engage with the transnational rock community. If the three previous chapters focused on how France was perceiving and responding to a variety of (inter)national Others, this chapter focuses on the development of the French music industry and the emergence of a discourse about French music within France. Across the nine years covered in this study, French rock music had to overcome many obstacles: culturally, politically, and structurally. French critics were acutely aware of the difficulties facing the development of the French popular music industry. It is also undeniable

¹⁸ Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin, 'Je t'aime... moi non plus', *Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin* (Fontana 1969).

that the UK and USA had a head start in their engagement with rock culture and out of them had come many of the defining bands and ideas of the movement. These years saw French rock culture seek an independent, but connected, identity. Once again, this chapter culminates in the discussion of the European turn, yet the focus here is on France and how critics were imagining French music's role within the movement.

1.1 Sources

The bulk of this research is drawn from my engagement with the catalogues of three magazines: *Rock & Folk*, *Best*, and *Actuel*.¹⁹ Through these sources a wide spectrum of social engagement with counterculture is present, with *Rock & Folk* and *Best* providing the most mainstream engagement with rock music and *Actuel* providing a more radical narrative. All three are firmly embedded in a countercultural discourse. I have also drawn on contemporary sociological and journalistic texts published within these years, allowing a deeper investigation of some of the topics discussed, as magazine articles are often limited due to the available space. Alongside considering the discourse present within these magazines, I analyse several musical examples in order to demonstrate the relationship between societal discourse and musical production.

Of the three central magazines within this thesis, *Rock & Folk* is the oldest. Founded in 1966 by Philippe Koechlin, Robert Baudalet and Jean Tronchot, *Rock & Folk* was the first magazine in France to dedicate itself to what it called 'rock music'.²⁰ The magazine focused primarily on Anglo-Saxon artists and consequently demonstrates that there was a French community eager to become informed about the rock music occurring in the UK and the

¹⁹ There has been a long precedent of utilising press as a method of exploring countercultural understandings of popular music. Alessandro Bratus's 'Scene through the Press: Rock Music and Underground Papers in London, 1966-1973' offers vital insights into the functioning of the press within a counterculture setting. He calls these publications 'barometers' that are 'indispensable to a deeper understanding of the British musical scene. Turning to literature devoted to 1960s and 1970s France, Christopher Warne draws upon the same metaphor of 'barometer', through referencing then-contemporary sociologists Gérard Mauger and Claude Fossé-Poliak to describe the importance of the magazine *Actuel* in understanding the wider French counterculture.

Alessandro Bratus, 'Scene through the Press: Rock Music and Underground Papers in London 1966-1973' *Twentieth Century Music*, 8/2 (2011), 227-252 (227).

Warne, 'Bringing Counterculture to France', 314.

While not looking explicitly at music, Manus McGrogan also places the press as central in his study of the French New Left.

Manus McGrogan, *Tout! In context 1968-1973: French radical press at the crossroads far left, new movements and counterculture* (Ph.D. thesis: University of Portsmouth).

²⁰ Gilles Verlant, 'Philippe Koechlin' in Gilles Verlant (eds.), *Le Rock et La Plume: Le rock raconté par les meilleurs journalistes 1960-1975* (Edition Hors Collection: 1999), (81-82), 81.

USA. By 1975 it was sold in Canada as well as much of Francophone Europe and had a large readership that would reach over 100,000 by the end of the decade.²¹ *Rock & Folk* would be paradigm-defining and set the stage for the subsequent rock music press that emerged. It demonstrated that the rock community in France was large enough in size to provide the necessary financial backing to sustain a rock music magazine. In its turn it would also help to grow the French rock community by disseminating information about the genre and its culture.

Best was formed two years later in 1968 by Gérard Bernar and Jacques Morlain.²² It started out as a twice monthly publication with a fanzine-like aesthetic but by the end of the 1960s had become a much more professional-looking magazine published monthly. It was a successful magazine and in 1974 was sold in Canada and Francophone Europe and had reached a readership of over 100,000.²³ In a similar vein to *Rock & Folk* it had its attention turned towards the Anglo-Saxon sphere; however, Luc Robène and Solveig Serre highlight that it had more of countercultural focus than *Rock & Folk* and aligned itself more closely with left-wing political groups.²⁴

Actuel was the last of these magazines to be formed and began to operate in 1970. It would also be the first to stop publication in 1975. Its 1970 appearance was actually a reorientation of a magazine that had previously been focused on jazz and arts, originally founded by Jean Karakos. In this format the magazine had limited readership and was not proving as successful as Karakos had imagined. Consequently, he gave the leadership of the magazine to Jean-François Bizot who had spent time in the USA and was inspired by the countercultural changes occurring there. Joined by Bernard Koucher, Patrick Rambaud and Michel-Antoine Burnier, *Actuel* was reborn into a magazine that was dedicated to countercultural politics and culture. It was a successful publication that would also be sold in Belgium and had a readership of over 90,000 by its closure in 1975.²⁵

The scholarship, concerning the same years that this thesis investigates, is primarily focused on *Rock & Folk*. *Actuel* then receives the second most attention, and *Best* has had no notable research conducted on it during this period, although it is used as a source in some

²¹ Luc Robène & Solveig Serre, 'The Punk Scene and the National Music Press in France (1976–1978): 'Dangerous Liaisons'?' in Paula Guerra & P., Pedro Quintela (eds.), *Punk, Fanzines and DIY Cultures in a Global World. Palgrave Studies in the History of Subcultures and Popular Music* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 183-189 (184).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Guibert, 217.

scholarly work. In ‘Deux exemples de presse musicale jeune en France, de 1966 à 1969’, Marc Savev notes that *Rock & Folk* was significant for creating an alternative model of music press that broke away with the widespread magazine *Salut Les Copains*. It did so by prioritising the view of the musician or critic; focusing on Anglo-Saxon rock; and discussing taboo subjects relevant to its readership in a non-dismissive way.²⁶ Elisabeth Donato considers discourse about national authenticity in *Rock & Folk*’s first year of publication in 1966-7. She concludes that while *Rock & Folk* was eager to give a platform to French groups and discuss national authenticity, it ‘could not help but define French rock in reference to its Anglo-American counterpart’.²⁷

There has been less research conducted into *Actuel*. The main work on this magazine has been conducted by Christopher Warne, who places *Actuel* as a force in not only influencing French countercultural thought but also in demonstrating the vitality of the counterculture.²⁸ His study of the French counterculture takes the catalogue of *Actuel* as its principal body of sources, and he is one of the few authors to take the starting date of their study as 1970, rather than in 1968 or before. Through an examination of *Actuel*’s existence and changing rhetoric, Warne provides a chronology of the French counterculture. This framework considers the French counterculture to have been born with the birth of *Actuel* in 1970 – as this is what Warne argues the editors of *Actuel* believed – and ended in 1975 when the publication ceased to run. Within this time span, Warne identifies three periods of countercultural development: the first runs from 1970-1972 and is defined by ‘optimism, energy and ambition’ and is very much focused towards the USA for inspiration and information about counterculture. Over the course of the two years there is also a shift away from left-wing political agitation to discourse based more on cultural politics.²⁹ The second period existed from 1972-1973 and sees a growing critique of American counterculture and a greater investment in the movement’s manifestation in France and Europe; the final period encapsulates the last two years of *Actuel*’s existence (1974-1975) and is marked by a pessimism surrounding the potential lack of realisation of many of the countercultural ideals the magazine had been espousing.³⁰

²⁶ Marc Savev, ‘Deux exemples de presse musicale jeune en France, de 1966 à 1969 : *Salut Les Copains* et *Rock & Folk*’, *Volume !: La revue des musiques populaires*, 3/1 (2004), 5-28 (7-9).

²⁷ Elisabeth Donato, ‘*Suis-Je Rock?*: defining French rock and roll artists in *Rock & Folk*, 1966-1967’, *Contemporary French Civilization*, 36/1-2 (2011), 5-18 (17).

²⁸ Warne, ‘Bringing Counterculture to France’, 309-323.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 315.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 317-321.

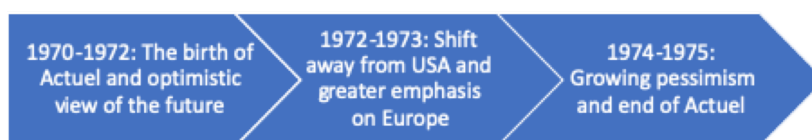


Figure 2: Christopher Warne's Timeline of French counterculture

All three magazines have points of crossover that allow multiple perspectives to be seen on similar topics of interest. They also have different scopes of interest and, at points, discuss quite dissimilar topics. As a result, using these three magazines, rather than one in isolation, allows moments to compare and contrast discourse on similar topics, as well as an examination of moments of difference. That is not to say that the similarities or difference of these magazines are the focus on this text. Rather, an analysis of these magazines allows a study of the French counterculture of 1966-1975 that balances breadth with depth.

1.2 French Popular Music Studies

In 2003 David Looseley wrote that 'French pop has been studied less than *chanson*, although neither has been studied very much'.³¹ In the past 17 years, much has changed and the field has expanded remarkably. However, French popular music studies has not treated all genres equally and the research has been heavily focused on *chanson*. This is especially the case in the English language: Peter Hawkins's foundational *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day* covers the genre from the 19th century until the time of its publication in 2000;³² Rachel Haworth has written on the genre's development in the 1960s and 1970s,³³ and Chris Tinker has delved into the narratives embedded in the texts of George Brassens and Jacques Brel in the post-war years.³⁴ As is discussed later, *chanson*'s gravitas for academic study comes from its perception as an authentically French musical product.³⁵ This study seeks to not diminish *chanson*'s importance or influence but to insist that French music is more than *chanson*.

The interest in other genres has also been developing but at slower rates. The study of French rap has become prominent with several texts being devoted to this subject in recent

³¹ Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 4.

³² Peter Hawkins, *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000).

³³ Rachel Haworth, *From chanson française to the canzone d'autore in the 1960s and 1970s: Authenticity, Authority, Influence* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

³⁴ Chris Tinker, *George Brassens & Jacques Brel: Personal and Social Narratives in Post-War Chanson* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005).

³⁵ For further discussion on *chanson*, please see pages 15 – 19.

years.³⁶ Research has also been conducted on French electronic music, French metal, and *yéyé*. Broader texts have also appeared, such as G  r  me Guibert's *La Production de la Culture*, which document the development of many of the changes in the music industry and musical practices that have occurred in relation to popular music in France since the 19th century. Further examples of the broad approach to French popular music studies can be found in *Made in France*, which consists of articles written on a wide variety of topics relevant to French popular music studies; and *Stereo*, which dialogues research on French and British popular music.³⁷

Most relevant to this study, the genre of French rock has received increased level of interest since the 90s. Pioneers of this are Antoine Hennion and Patrick Mignon who published a collection of essays on rock in the early 90s;³⁸ however, little progress was made in the following years, resulting in Looseley's critique. In recent years there has been a growing number of academic and non-academic publications centring on French popular music within English and French language. The discussion of the French counterculture of 1966-1975 still remains under researched, yet there are some key books and articles that my research is contextualised within that merit discussion. My research contains the most affinities with Jonathyne Briggs' *Sounds French*, in which Briggs covers the countercultural period of the late 1960s into the early 1970s and questions the role of popular music in the formation of communities.³⁹ Briggs' overall focus on the sense of global community created through popular music has resonances with the questions I ask within this thesis. In contrast to

³⁶ Alain-Philippe Durand (ed.), *Black, Blanc, Beur: Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the Francophone World* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002).

Steven Cannon, 'Globalization, Americanization and hip hop in France', in Hugh Dauncey, & Steve Cannon (eds.), *Popular Music In France from Chanson to Techno* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 191-204.

Charles R. Batson, 'Panique Celtique: Manau's Celtic Rap, Breton Cultural Expression, and Contestatory Performance in Contemporary France', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 27/2 (2009), 63-83.

Isabelle Marc Mart  nez, *Le rap fran  ais : Esth  tique et po  tique des textes (1990-1995)* (Bern : Peterlang, 2008)

³⁷ G  r  me Guibert, *La Production de la culture: le cas des musiques amplifi  es en France: Gen  se, structurations, industries, alternatives* (Paris & Saint Amant Tallende: M  lanie S  teun & Irma   ditions 2006).

G  r  me Guibert and Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018).

Hugh Dauncey & Philippe Le Guern, *St  r  o : Sociologie compar  e des musiques populaires France/G-B* (Paris & Saint Amant Tallende: M  lanie S  teun & Irma   ditions 2008).

³⁸ Antoine Hennion & Patrick Mignon (eds.), *Rock: de l'histoire au mythe* (Paris : Vibrations, 1992).

³⁹ Jonathyne Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, Pop Music 1958-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Briggs's consideration of the internal facing discourse surrounding popular music and French youth culture, I focus on the construction of the national Self in relation to national Others. Accordingly, I am much more interested in narratives surrounding external countercultures and the ways in which these helped define what French counterculture music could be. This question builds upon ideas that Briggs puts forward but focuses more on the use of the Other as a sounding board. The subject matter of Briggs' chapter on French counterculture is centred around the genre of progressive rock, which he identifies as 'the genre of choice of the French underground'; however, due to the definition of counterculture I have elaborated on in the introduction, I look for countercultural symbols across a wider range of genres.

On a thematic level Eric Drott's *Music and The Elusive Revolution* shares many common themes with my research.⁴⁰ He focuses on the use of genre in forming communities and the utility that is derived from genres: a core strand running through my investigation in this thesis. We differ on the perspective and the subject that we take: his chapter devoted to rock music focuses on the use of the genre's music and culture by New Left groups. I do not spend much time considering the radical left's engagement with rock: between Drott and Briggs this topic has been well covered and more attention needs to be paid to less radicalised uses of music during this period. Consequently, I will focus on a less politicised and more cultural definition of counterculture and the way France created a space for itself within the countercultural ecology.

Other authors approach the same era and some of the same subject matter, but not the same questions, as this text does. David Looseley is a key scholar in French studies, and his text *Popular Music in France* remains a significant contribution to the field of French music studies.⁴¹ However, his direct discussion of popular music in the period I am considering, let alone specifically rock music, extends to only a few pages, arguing that from 1968 more bands experimented with rock music as a genre, incorporated political ideas into their music, and that a music industry emerged simultaneously that was geared up to support this music.⁴² There is some commonality between the questions we both ask as Looseley is interested in questions of naturalisation, national response, and national authenticity. Yet, his view is much broader than the arguments set out in this chapter, and he also chooses to avoid discussion of

⁴⁰ Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2011).

⁴¹ David L. Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France: Authenticity, Politics, Debate* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003).

⁴² Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 39-40.

aesthetics. While this suited his purpose, my research considers aesthetic changes as intimately linked with social response and will explore both.

The other academic work in English that is worth mentioning is Larry Portis' *French Frenzies*. Unfortunately, his history of French popular music is extremely thin on any discussion of French rock music within this period. Indeed, he largely skips over 1968-1975 and thereby ignores this defining and culturally rich moment of French rock music's development. His critiques of the obstacles that the French music industry had to face provides some value, but his equation of musical importance with international sales is too rigid.⁴³ Thus, while Portis has devoted a book to the study of French popular music and provides a spattering of insights for this research, his dismissal of this period leaves a hole in the narrative and my research intends to help patch over this blind spot.

Gérôme Guibert's *La production de la culture* is one of the most relevant French academic texts on this subject.⁴⁴ Guibert does a particularly excellent job of discussing the development of the French music industry in these years, and also of considering the relationship between this industry and developing musical practices. Building on his work, I will delve deeper into the cultural and aesthetic elements involved in the development of French rock in the 1960s and 1970s and consider more fully the tension that surrounded the desire to find a French voice within a sphere dominated by Anglo-Saxon rock.

Turning to the popular literature on this subject: one of the earliest histories to be written on French rock was Christian Victor and Julien Regoli's *Vingt ans de Rock Français*.⁴⁵ Published in 1978 it tracks the previous twenty years of rock music in France, from the *blouson noirs* to the emerging French punk scene. It mainly consists of biographical entries on a variety of bands and brief commentaries on the various developments that were influencing or emerging as a response to the French music scene. In recent years a series of non-academic publications have also been printed that revolve around this topic. Éric Deshayes and Dominique Grimaud's *L'Underground Musical en France* and Serge Loupien's *La France Underground* are both non-academic histories of the music of the French

⁴³ Larry Portis, *French Frenzies: A Social History of Popular Music in France*, (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com, 2004), 162.

⁴⁴ Guibert, *La Production de la culture*.

⁴⁵ Christian Victor & Julien Regoli, *Vingt ans de Rock Français* (Paris: Rock & Folk/Albin Michel, 1978).

underground.⁴⁶ Both have been useful for situating the chronology of this thesis and providing historical insights to question and explore.

Overall, the interest in French rock music and counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s seems to be growing. This interest extends across academic texts, popular music histories, curated collectible editions, and into contemporary music journalism: recently, *Shindig* – a music magazine dedicated to the late 1960s – even featured a special edition that focused on French music, reminding its readers of the importance of French stars such as Françoise Hardy and Triangle.⁴⁷ Yet, to date, while some of the subject material I present has certainly been covered, the question of how the French musical counterculture situated itself within a transnational movement has not been fully addressed. We still know very little about how France situated itself within a framework of counterculture and the construction of France as a part of a transnational countercultural community.

1.2.1 Chanson

One genre's voice is not directly articulated in this study that a reader of the history of French popular music may expect to find: *chanson*. *Chanson* has become the defining feature of French music, not only for France, but for much of the world.⁴⁸ Part of the intention of this thesis is to demonstrate that French music is not just *chanson*. Nevertheless, *chanson* has played a crucial role in the discourse that emerged around counterculture music, and countercultural music did not exist in a context outside of *chanson*. It is worth briefly exploring *chanson's* relationship with the French counterculture of 1966-1975.

⁴⁶ Éric Deshayes and Dominique Grimaud, *L'Underground Musical En France*, (Marseille: Le Mot et Le Reste, 2013).

Serge Loupien, *La France Underground 1965-1979 : Free Jazz Et Rock Pop Le Temps Des Utopies* (Paris : Rivage & Rouge, 2018).

⁴⁷ Philippe Robert, *AGITATION FRITE: Témoignages de L'Underground Français* (Paris: Lenka Lente, 2017/2018).

Philippe Robert, *AGITATION FRIITE: Témoignages de L'Underground Français* (Paris: Lenka Lente, 2018).

Philippe Robert, *AGITATION FRIIITE: Témoignages de L'Underground Français* (Paris: Lenka Lente, 2018).

Gareth Jones, 'What is La Question', *Shindig* 90 (2019), 63-68.

Shindig, 'Phantastic Voyage', *Shindig* 90 (2019), 52-55.

⁴⁸ G  r  me Guibert, 'Introduction', in G  r  me Guibert and Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 1-16 (2)

While Catherine Rudent makes it clear that *chanson*'s definition is flexible, Christopher Hawkins attributes several qualities to *chanson*.⁴⁹ He describes it as 'a form of popular music' that has strong links with 'poetry'. While a vision of the *chanson* artist is often one of an independent talent, they are frequently reliant on teams to help them create and perform music. Hawkins also identifies *chanson* as being akin to literature, in the sense that a *chanson* may convey a range of emotions or narratives. Yet, it expresses these narratives through performance, which allows a sense of immediacy that is less present in the world of literature.⁵⁰ While these definitions are vague, Hawkins readily admits this and narrows his study down to something more commonly recognised as *chanson*. He chooses to focus on the singer songwriter, and it is this paradigm that has become the stereotype of *chanson*.⁵¹ Consequently, *chanson* is imagined as the music of Aristide Bruant, Charles Trenet, Charles Aznavour, as well as Léo Ferré, Georges Brassens and Jacques Brel.

Chanson has developed a reputation for being the most authentic of French popular music.⁵² As Looseley points out, *chanson*'s narrative of authenticity began in the early 1960s as *yéyé* began to take hold in France.⁵³ In the face of mass-mediated music that was perceived to have a foreign origin, Looseley argues that a 'national myth' was created around *chanson* that placed the genre as the pinnacle of authenticity in French music. Pop music was a music of the body and *chanson* of the head; pop music had insignificant lyrics, while *chanson* lyrics were more akin to literature or poetry; pop was something foreign and *chanson* something French.⁵⁴ *Chanson* was considered something authentic, painstakingly crafted, and motivated by artistic necessity, not commercial interests.⁵⁵

A second crucial development, that Barbara Lebrun highlights, is that a discourse emerged with post-war *chanson* that positioned the music as politically on the left.⁵⁶ The lyrics of the genre, particularly those of figures such as Brassens, Brel and Ferré often dealt

⁴⁹ Catherine Rudent, 'Chanson Française: A Genre Without Musical Identity', in G r me Guibert and Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 137-149 (148). Hawkins, 4-5.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 6-7.

⁵² Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 65-67.

⁵³ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁴ David Looseley, 'Coda: Rethinking the Popular? Some Reflections on Popular Music in France and Britain in G r me Guibert and Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 239-248 (242).

⁵⁵ Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 78.

⁵⁶ Barbara Lebrun, *Protest Music in France: Production, Identity, and Audiences* (Farnham, England & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 5.

with themes that provoked and challenged societal norms.⁵⁷ These narratives could challenge any part of the establishment from the military, to the bourgeoisie, and the French nation. Georges Brassens's 'Le Gorille' is a famous example of not only the way in which *chanson* could challenge society but also its ability to be shocking. In this simple song Brassens tells the story of a Gorilla trapped in a Zoo, which eventually breaks free and rapes a judge.⁵⁸ Its sexual themes were certainly provocative, but the song also stands as a critique of the death penalty and challenges the legitimacy of the French juridical system.⁵⁹ Other contextual factors were also important in creating this image. Post-war *chanson*'s geographical base was the Left Bank of Paris, which was an important site for the spread of progressive ideals and artistic experimentation.⁶⁰ Consequently, *chanson* developed a reputation for its left wing sensibilities alongside the emergence of the perception of the genre as an authentically French music.

While *chanson* may have defined itself as the negative of rock, the counterculture and its brand of rock did not define itself as the negative of *chanson*. Indeed, the authenticity of French rock and countercultural music of the late 1960s and 1970s was, to an extent, built on top of the precedent set by *chanson*. This music was considered to prioritise artistic creativity over commercial gain and was associated with left wing ideals. This was expressed through criticism of artists that were seen to have betrayed countercultural ideals by demanding too much money, the interest in the artist's point of view, and the exploration of the links between music and politics.

This is evidenced by the treatment of the canonical figures of *chanson* in French rock and countercultural magazines. In *Rock & Folk*'s initial years, it tried to fit *chanson* into tropes that had already been established in the Anglo-Saxon counterculture: Brassens became a 'folk singer' and Brel was on his way to becoming a 'rocker'.⁶¹ As Donato argues, this conflation of music perceived as Anglo-Saxon with French artists served to legitimise this foreign music and aided in its appearance as something French.⁶² As we shall see, a sense of inferiority compared to other countercultures was clearly present within French rock and

⁵⁷ Chris Tinker, *George Brassens & Jacques Brel: Personal and Social Narratives in Post-War Chanson* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 117-174.

⁵⁸ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 66-67.

Hawkins, 126-127.

⁵⁹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 66-67.

⁶⁰ Lebrun, 7.

⁶¹ Marc Savev, 18.

Donato, 8.

⁶² Donato, 17.

countercultural discourse, particularly during its early years, and the use of *chanson* as means of authentication became a tactic with which to find a sense of national footing. Consequently, connecting an artist with *chanson* became a way of authenticating them and establishing a home-grown form of music.

The most famous example of *chanson* being present in countercultural printed discourse is *Rock & Folk*'s 1969 interview with three canonical chanson artists: Georges Brassens, Jacques Brel, and Leo Ferré.⁶³ The conversation remains general, but topics such as The Beatles and hippies do come up, both receive positive responses from the trio, as well as questions around commerce and politics.⁶⁴ The interview creates a link between contemporary events and Brassens-Brel-Ferré. This article served to contextualise *chanson and rock*; Elisabeth Donato states that 'publishing this interview was a must for *Rock & Folk*. But one could also consider it an editorial decision made to affirm that French rock could not and should not turn its back on the French *chanson* tradition, but embrace it and use it as a point of reference instead'.⁶⁵ It helped to solidify the need to explore France's musical past in order to locate its musical present.

While figures such as Brassens-Brel-Ferré were pillars of the canon to be admired, they were not the principal subjects of these magazines. Different magazines would discuss these chanson stars to varying extents: *Actuel* and *Best* published no major articles on any of these figures, and *Rock & Folk* published only a handful of substantial articles dealing with Brassens-Brel-Ferré.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, a great number of other musicians who could be considered as operating within the realms of *chanson* also were present within the pages of these magazines. Artists such as Jacques Dutronc, Nino Ferrer and Maxime Le Forestier were all discussed or interviewed.⁶⁷

It is not easy to untangle the full extent to which *chanson* models of authenticity influenced the models of authenticity tied to countercultural music, as some of these

⁶³ François Cristiani, 'Trois hommes dans un salon', *Rock & Folk*, 25 (1969). I have been unable to get access to this edition of *Rock & Folk* and have been relying on its reproduction in François-René Cristiani & Jean-Pierre Leloir, *Trois hommes dans un salon : Brel, Brassens, Ferré* (Paris : Fayard/Chorus, 2003).

⁶⁴ Ibid., 34, 38-45, 52-57

⁶⁵ Donato, 17.

⁶⁶ François Christiani, 'Trois hommes dans un salon », *Rock & Folk*, 25 (1969).

Philippe Paringaux, 'Leo Ferré' *Rock & Folk*, 48 (1971), 54-57.

Ferré face's is also the front cover of *Actuel* 48

Jacques Vassal, 'Georges Brassens', *Rock & Folk* 70 (1972) 37-38.

Jacques Vassal, 'Georges Brassens', *Rock & Folk* 72 (1972) 50-54.

⁶⁷ Rudent, 140.

Hawkins, 216.

countercultural models would certainly have been encountered when looking at Anglo-Saxon countercultures and bands. Yet, it can certainly be said that *chanson* models of authenticity aligned with countercultural models of authenticity, and *chanson* was discussed within countercultural print. It is also true that *chanson* was highlighted as key model of national authenticity and that referencing *chanson* could be a way of authenticating an artist. Consequently, *chanson* as a genre and a ‘national myth’ played a formational part in framing French counterculture and rock music, even if it was not one of the main genres that has been associated with the movement.

1.3 Chronology

There are, of course, a great many ways in which one can organise time, and scholars dealing with a similar period and subject as this study have organised their timelines in a variety of ways. It is worth considering their chronologies in order to make greater sense of the decisions I have made here. This discussion focuses on the main books on music that deal with the particular period covered within this study. There are two exceptions to this self-imposed limitation: I will consider the historian Arthur Marwick’s *The Sixties* and Jean Fourastié’s *Les Trente Glorieuses*, as both texts have had a significant influence on the discussion of this era and their periodisation provides useful contextualisation.

1.3.1 The Broadview

Arthur Marwick’s substantial and influential text *The Sixties* takes the long 1960s (1958-1974) as its temporal remit.⁶⁸ His closing date of 1974 is, in part, inspired by Eric Hobsbawm’s ‘Golden Age’ period, which ran from 1945-1973. For Hobsbawm, 1973 was crucial as it saw an international oil crisis that had massive economic consequences throughout the world. Marwick shifts the closing year to 1974, as he argues that it was not until 1974 that the average worker started to suffer from the impact of this crisis. 1974 also corresponds with several other developments that Marwick identifies as significant, stating that ‘18-year olds in France and Italy got the vote in 1974, the year also of the referendum in Italy safeguarding the right to divorce and of the passing of abortion law reform in the French

⁶⁸ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

parliament'. Thus, in Marwick's view, 1974 offered a sort of conclusion to some of the 'crucial developments initiated in the sixties'.⁶⁹

Marwick's reasoning for his starting date of 1958 is more elusive and is dependent on a variety of events that took place from 1958-1959 across the USA, UK, France, and Italy. These include: the emergence of the teenager as a consumer class with an industry designed to capitalise on teenage desires; changing notions about morality and sexuality; the consequent growth of youth subcultures, such as the French *blouson noirs* and Italian *vitelloni*, who would presage the dynamic growth in youth subculture that would occur in the 1960s. At the same time new movements in various artistic communities were pushing the boundaries of who was represented and how: the British New Wave asserted a working class vote within theatre and literature; American literature was becoming increasingly sexually explicit; and French literature increasingly portrayed youth as a central topic.⁷⁰

Taking an economic perspective on history, Jean Fourastié's *Les Trente Glorieuses* is not about French music or even counterculture at all.⁷¹ Yet, his argument that France experienced thirty years of economic boom after the Second World War is influential and should be taken into account, as it helps to explain a great many of the material advancements that occurred in the post-war period. The contemporary French economist Thomas Piketty notes these years were pivotal for France as they acted as a catchup period that allowed Western European countries, including France, to exist on a level playing field with the USA.⁷² One commonly recognised factor in the emergence of youth culture across the western world is the growing consumer power youth had due to buoyant economies. Marwick's critique of Hobsawm's 'Golden Age' applies equally well to Fourastié's argument: he argues that if economic history is the main concern then this periodisation is logical, but if culture and social developments are considered, then this periodisation does not work so well.⁷³ The end date of 1975 coincides with the close of Marwick's history and adds further supporting evidence to the mid-1970s as a turning point for France.

Turning more directly to histories that deal with music, Jonathyne Briggs' study

⁶⁹ Marwick, *The Sixties*, 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 41-193.

⁷¹ Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses : ou, La Révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris : Fayard, 1979).

⁷² Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the twenty-first century* (Oxford and New York: Harvard University Press, 2017), 123.

⁷³ Marwick, *The Sixties*, 8.

stretches back to the arrival of rock 'n' roll in France in the late 1950s and takes the reader as far as 1980.⁷⁴ In his book's subtitle, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, Pop Music 1958-1980*, it is stated that its investigation starts in 1958: notably, it is the year that the Fifth Republic was established under Charles de Gaulle, and the late 1950s stands out as an important era as it was in 1956 that the first French rock 'n' roll record was produced and in 1959 that the first time the influential radio show *Salut les Copains* was aired.⁷⁵

The closing date of Briggs' study comes from the establishment of the *Fête de la musique* in France in 1982 by the Minister of Culture Jack Lang. Turning to Briggs' PhD thesis, which is the basis of *Sounds French*, provides a deeper understanding of his choice for taking this event as an endpoint:

The Fête encapsulates the divergent genres of music that developed in the contemporary period, the divisions and communities that these various musical genres created, and the aesthetic combinations that musicians fused together in response to the restructuring of French life, combinations that provided a powerful symbol for French musical culture.⁷⁶

Thus, for Briggs, this festival, which takes place yearly, highlights a crucial moment of integration of popular music into French society that stretches back to the establishment of the Fifth Republic and emergence of a market for post-war French popular music.

By taking such a large time frame Briggs also allows himself the opportunity to explore a variety of different musical developments. His research includes discussions on the birth of *yéyé* in the early 1960s and the formation of modern French youth culture; the developments of *chanson* and its discourse; the convergence of music and politics in progressive rock of the late 1960s and the 1970s; the rise of regionalism and the French folk revival; and the emergence of French punk in the second half of the 1970s. As a result, Briggs successfully traces key parts of the narrative that led to the official endorsement and integration of popular music and culture that took place in 1980s France.

Serge Loupien's focus is also on music and his timeline is the closest to my own. His study is journalistic, rather than academic, and mostly focuses on the musical developments between 1965 and 1979. However, his first chapter does look at the musical developments leading up to this moment and argues that the disruption caused at a 1963 concert prefigured

⁷⁴ Jonathyne Briggs, *Anarchie en France: Hypermodernity and French Popular Music, 1958-1981* (PhD Thesis: Emory University, 2006).

⁷⁵ Briggs, *Sounds French*,

⁷⁶ Briggs, *Anarchie en France*, 2.

the riots of May '68.⁷⁷ Loupien argues that the initial roots of the 'multidisciplinary underground' can be found in France as early as 1965.⁷⁸ Yet, beyond linking 1965 with the growth of free jazz in France, Loupien does not put forward a concise argument as to why he has chosen this date. Nor does he articulate why he chose 1979 as his closing date; indeed, it seems as if he places more emphasis on Mitterrand's election in 1981 than the year 1979.⁷⁹ Consequently, within Loupien's timeframe it is best to take the proposed dates as signifiers for the mid-1960s to the end of the 1970s, rather than strict boundaries.

1.3.2 May '68

Another possible form of periodising the musical history of this moment takes a longer perspective and places the protests of May '68 as its starting point. The protests of May 1968 saw Paris, and France more widely, brought to a standstill for nearly a month and, as Kristin Ross describes it, is a 'major reference point in recent French collective memory'.⁸⁰ In response to a disruption in March, the university of Nanterre decided to close down. This in turn led to a gathering on May 3rd of students in the Sorbonne, a separate French university, to listen to political speeches and voice their complaints about the closure of Nanterre.⁸¹ What started off as a small-scale disruption on Sorbonne University grounds quickly transformed: concerns surrounding the growing student gathering led to the French riot police being called in, and they began to arrest the students, causing outrage and sparking citywide resistance from the students. Ten days later, on the 13th of May, a 24-hour trade union and teachers' union strike was called and factories began to strike the following day.⁸² Large swathes of France were brought to standstill as nearly 9 million people were on strike;⁸³ at moments it seemed as if the French government was on the point of collapse. Yet, de Gaulle refused to

⁷⁷ Loupien, 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 14.

David Looseley also places the mid-1960s as the moment when countercultural ideas and sounds started to become influential within French youth culture.

Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 30.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 401-406.

⁸⁰ Keith A. Reader & Khurheed Wadia, *The May 1968 Events in France: Reproductions and Interpretations*, (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press, 1993), 1.

Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 182.

⁸¹ Drott, 21.

⁸² Bernard E. Brown, *Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt*. (Morristown: General Learning Press, 1974), 12-14.

⁸³ Drott, 25.

back down and called for a general election. This prompted a rapid surge in support for the state that saw a large Gaullist rally along the Champs-Élysées.⁸⁴ Ultimately, the events of May fizzled out in late May/early June and France began to return to normality.

Several key texts on French rock music place May '68 as a crucial moment for the development of musical politics and a French aesthetic. Yet, it has been argued that May '68 was a rather unmusical event in itself: Drott states that 'music remained strangely at the margins of *les événements*'.⁸⁵ The most obvious example of music's presence during these events was in the singing of 'La Marseillaise' and, particularly, 'The Internationale', which were used by right wing and left wing groups respectively to signify their political stance.⁸⁶ Another case of musical involvement in May '68 was the engagement of musicians in the protest, through acts such as political agitation or through participating in the strike.⁸⁷ Other connections have been noted: Larry Portis noted that, the French singer, Jacques Dutronc's song 'Paris S'éveille' was given new lyrics to fit the revolutionary spirit, and Rachel Haworth compellingly connects Dominique Grange's music and 1968.⁸⁸ There are also rumours of both free jazz and the modernist composer Karlheinz Stockhausen being played in the courtyard of the occupied Sorbonne.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, these narratives are all somewhat isolated and remain marginal in comparison to the engagement with other forms of creative practice during May '68. The role of popular music as part of the events of May '68 seems relatively unimportant.

Drott's text is the most heavily focused on May '68, and is at the core of his research.⁹⁰ In his discussion of rock music, Drott most strongly finds the connection between May '68 and rock music at the intersection of left wing politics and music. He identifies the disruption caused to many French rock festivals in the summer of 1970 as a result of political agitators who considered that such events should be free. In a similar vein, Drott sees a connection between groups such as the *Front de libération de la jeunesse* (FLJ) and *Force de libération et d'intervention pop* (FLIP) who believed in using pop music as a political tool.

⁸⁴ Drott, 63-64.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁸⁶ Drott notes due to the many different fractions involved in May '68 the meaning of the same song could be quite different for different groups.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 21-69.

⁸⁸ Portis, *French Frenzies*.

Rachel Haworth, 'Representations of 1968 in French Popular Music: The Case of Dominique Grange', *Modern & Contemporary France* 16/2 (2008), 181-194.

⁸⁹ Alfred Willener, *The Action-Image of Society* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 232.

Drott, 203.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 4.

Drott ends his discussion in 1981 with the election of François Mitterrand and, consequently, his study takes place across the long 1970s.

Sounds French by Briggs also draws a connection between the development of the French counterculture and the events of May '68 arguing that 'the burgeoning French counterculture [...] used cultural expressions to continue the struggle of '68'.⁹¹ Briggs argues, along the same lines as Drott, that New Left groups such as FLJ and FLIP were inspired to combine music and political action by the events of 1968. Where Briggs differentiates himself from Drott is in his consideration of aesthetic choices and in his greater discussion of cultural politics. Briggs highlights that the musical choices made by bands such as Red Noise and Maajun were part of this same post May '68 spirit and it was not only their affiliation or espousal of political ideals that are significant. He argues that the Freak Left wing of the counterculture believed that 'the politicisation of lifestyle choice' would result in 'the revolutionary intent of May '68 [being] fulfilled'. Musically this was found in the work of Magma and Heldon who, through their utopianism and collapse of high and low art, critiqued society and continued the challenge of May '68.

Notably, Guibert's *La production de la culture* avoids any in depth discussion of the connection between May '68 and developments in rock music. He certainly acknowledges that the years following May '68 were vibrant politically and evidences the connection between leftist politics and music.⁹² Nevertheless, the lack of discussion of May '68 compares drastically with many of the other authors discussed here and would suggest that Guibert does not place too much emphasis on May '68 as a transformative moment for the development of the French musical counterculture.

Drott's research is the most convincing on the connection between May '68 and musical developments. He maintains a fairly narrow scope in his discussion and focuses on the clearest examples of the engagement between culture and politics in the post-'68 years. Briggs' consideration of the aesthetic choices is also significant, and his argument about Red Noise is particularly useful. Yet, it is important to remember that the 1960s and 1970s countercultural was paradoxical: the more radical bands were only followed by a small group of fans and, while this does not reduce the aesthetic significance of these groups, their social significance was not large.⁹³ The arguments are based on the proximity of certain musical

⁹¹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 79.

⁹² Guibert, *La Production de la Culture*, 214.

⁹³ Richard Pinhas, from the French rock band Heldon, notes that these bands were 'A movement on the margin of the margin' ['Un mouvement à la marge de la marge']. Quoted in Alvarado, *La Chienlit*, 75.

developments and not direct causality. It is the testaments of the musicians, critics, and listeners who found May '68 to be a formational moment in their musical development that stand out as the clearest evidence that May '68 had an influence on music.

The connection between May '68 and any coterminous developments is often tenuous, and there are many arguments that suggest these events were likely to happen regardless: France was heavily inspired following the Isle of Wight Festival and Woodstock, which took place in 1969, and these would have undoubtedly been as important, if not more, than May '68 for the growth of the French festival industry. The French rock industry had been growing since 1966 when Antoine released his first album and as increasing amounts of rock music was imported into France in the second half the 1960s.⁹⁴ The growth in bands that occurred post-'68 is more likely to be a result of growing access to rock music and growing representation of French rock bands. Further, in regard to publication, *Rock & Folk* was formed before 1968 and even though *Best* was first published in 1968, its heavy Anglo-Saxon focus makes it unlikely that it was a direct result of the spirit of May '68.⁹⁵ *Actuel's* connection with May '68 is more palpable. Yet, the emergence of a countercultural press in countries that did not experience May '68 suggests that a counterculture press would have been established nevertheless, although it would have likely taken on a different rhetoric.

1.3.3 Chronology of this Study

All these texts cover roughly the same period but take different timeframes for their consideration in order to suit the narrative that these authors wish to construct. At the macro-level, the period that lasts from 1945 until 1981 seems to be an important period for cultural changes in France. If Fourastié's text is ignored, this period can be narrowed down to 1958-1981. This period saw several critical developments in France: the birth of the Fifth Republic; arrival of rock 'n' roll; the emergence of *yéyé*; the end of the Algerian War; the protests of May '68; the oil crisis of 1973; and the election of a left wing government in France under

⁹⁴ In Alvarado's book he quotes Richard Pinhas (guitarist of Blues Convention and, most famously Heldon) that 1966 was important for the arrival of the British Blues Boom in France. Alvarado, *La Chienlit*, 7.

For more information on the British Invasion on France, please see chapter 4.

⁹⁵ Throughout this study I will make use of the term Anglo-Saxon to designate the combined forces of America and Britain. There is a long history of using this term in France, and it is more nuanced than 'anglophone', which could imply any of the former British colonies. For more on the use of the term Anglo-Saxon within French discourse please see: Emile Chabal, 'The Rise of the Anglo-Saxon: French Perceptions of the Anglo-American World in the Long Twentieth Century', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 31/1 (2013), 24-46.

François Mitterrand. This plurality of significant events, which would have shaped the life of French citizens, means that there are many logical arguments for various timelines and historians have to be selective. This study is no different, and I have inevitably had to carefully choose my path through this period, avoiding many equally interesting and relevant narratives in order to put forward a coherent argument.

It would have been possible to begin my study in 1958 and align my timeframe with those of Marwick and Briggs. French popular music has long been engaged in a dialogue with foreign musical cultures, and there are many logical arguments for beginning earlier. A very obvious example is the importance of American popular culture for the development of early French rock 'n' roll and *yéyé* music. Indeed, at points, my discussion will stretch beyond 1966 and briefly step into the developments of the late 1950s and early 1960s. I chose to avoid such an early starting point for several reasons: Briggs' discussion of the emergence of *yéyé* already answers many of the questions that interest me about this period, and I did not want to unnecessarily duplicate research; another reason is that greater breadth would have limited my ability to explore deeply other areas of interest; and, as I will argue, there are significant events in the 1960s that suggest a different logical point for commencing a discussion that have been underdiscussed.

The next important date that occurs is May '68. Drott, Deshayes, Grimaud and, to an extent, Briggs all consider May '68 to be a significant moment of change for French popular music. While May '68 can be a useful framework around which to ask questions and there was certainly some radical engagement between political groups formed in the spirit of May '68, I am wary of placing too much weight on May '68. Indeed, as I have mentioned above, I believe that many of the structural and cultural factors were in play before 1968, and I see 1966 as a much more influential year for the development of French counterculture due to the release of Antoine's *Les Élucubrations d'Antoine* and the initial publication of *Rock & Folk*.

Several studies end their discussion in the 1980s. These chronologies all make sense with the research questions they ask and the narratives they wish to explore. Warne's timeline has been incredibly important for defining the chronology of my own research and his categorisation of the shifting cultural climate of the French counterculture is referred to throughout this work.⁹⁶ The end date of 1975 has helped me choose when to finish my

⁹⁶ Inevitably, there are limitations to Warne's study. The biggest issue with his chronology is that a single magazine's catalogue is not representational of the entire French cultural context. Warne is

research.⁹⁷ The end of *Actuel* did not mean the end of the French counterculture or rock community. Yet, the mid-1970s do stand out as significant for the French counterculture: by this point a rock music industry had been firmly established and many of the hurdles and difficulties that had to be faced even in 1970 had been overcome. Consequently, the collapse of *Actuel* marks a period that saw a transitioning to a more professionalised industry and a move away from some of the key political ideals that defined French counterculture and rock community during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

1.4 The Global 1960s & 1970s

This thesis also owes much to the study of the transnational youth of the 1960s and 1970s. Most profoundly Arthur Marwick's *The Sixties* has been influential in the development of my research and is cited numerous times throughout this text. *The Sixties* provides an excellent use of comparative study to demonstrate the way that multiple national narratives share an international connection. As mentioned above, through his study of the UK, USA, France and Italy, Marwick makes it clear that the youth were connected through transnational spread of ideas and culture, and that these became integrated into national causes and concerns.

In a different text, but considering the same period, Arthur Marwick condenses some of the key factors he sees to be central narratives of the 1960s: 1) the rapid growth of ideals and movements that were positioned against dominant societal institutions and expectations;⁹⁸ 2) expansions in sexual freedom and shifts in gender expectations;⁹⁹ 3) the growth in societal tolerance that dramatically relaxed censorship laws and prohibitions around male and female cohabitation;¹⁰⁰ 4) the final factor is the rise of consumerism and consumer power that the

certainly aware of this limitation and is clear to highlight that when *Actuel* states that before its existence there was no French counterculture is a form of 'rhetorical self-aggrandisement'. It is this lack of discussion on what came before *Actuel* that I seek to fill by expanding the starting point of this study before 1966.

Warne, 2007, 315.

⁹⁷ There are a couple of sources that I use which are published in the following years. Nevertheless, the narrative of my research ends in the mid-1960s. After selecting this end date of 1975, it has also come to my attention that Jeremi Suri also uses 1975 as an end-date for his discussion of international counterculture, arguing that the détente between cold war powers helped diffuse countercultural tensions.

Jeremi Suri, 'The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975', *The American Historical Review*, 114/1 (2007), 45-68 (65-68).

⁹⁸ Arthur Marwick, '1968' and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties (c. 1958-c. 1974)' in Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney (eds.), *Transnational moments of change: Europe, 1945, 1968, 1989* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2004), 81-94.

⁹⁹ Marwick, '1968' and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties', 89.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 90.

masses had.¹⁰¹ Such factors of change are useful but must be treated with caution in order that smaller narratives are not ignored. Nevertheless, in France during this period, and throughout this text, all these narratives are certainly present, and Marwick's observations ground this study in a sense of transnational adoption by western youth.¹⁰²

There are, of course, more recent publications that deal with this topic. Axel Schildt and Siegfried Detly's *Between Marx and Coca-Cola* is a powerful investigation of the interaction of the global and national in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰³ Another text that tackles similar issues is *The Transatlantic Sixties*, which looks at the transnational relations between Europe and the USA in the 1960s.¹⁰⁴ Both take into account a variety of political and cultural, including musicological topics and utilise a diverse profile of case studies to argue effectively that the events of the 1960s took place within a transnational framework. *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties* and *The Global 1960s* truly live up to the 'global' in 'global sixties'. It moves beyond studies of European and American relations, although it does include these, to look at the '60s as they occurred across the world.¹⁰⁵

The framework of this text is built around this core idea of the French counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s being both a national and a transnational movement; yet it does not seek to write a global or transnational history. Rather, this text is a study of the French counterculture's *experience* of the movement as a transnational and a national movement, and the way in which these narratives shaped its manifestation. My primary argument is not that the 1960s and 1970s counterculture was transnational; I argue that the French counterculture considered itself to be part of a transnational movement. Arguments around the transnationality of counterculture certainly emerge in this text; however, a different line of approach and a greater level of comparative study would be required to fully articulate and support such an argument.

¹⁰¹ Marwick, '1968' and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties', 91.

¹⁰² This thesis does not intend to treat each of these key points equally or seek to provide proportional representation of these narratives.

¹⁰³ Axel Schildt & Detly Siegfried (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006).

¹⁰⁴ Grzegorz Kosć & Clara Juncker & Sharon Monteith & Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (eds.), *The Transatlantic Sixties: Europe and the United States in the Counterculture Decade* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ Tamara Chaplin & Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney (eds.), *The Global 1960s: Convention, contest and counterculture* (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2018).

Chen Jian & Martin Klimke & Masha Kirasirova & Mary Nolan & Marilyn Young & Joanna Waley-Cohen (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building* (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2018).

1.5 Definitions

Academic and journalistic discourse has used a variety of terms to describe the movements of this era. Consequently, the choice of word to use as the core signifier of the community that is being studied has been a complicated process. Three possible candidates have emerged: counterculture, underground, and rock culture. Of the three terms, rock culture is the loosest concept, referring to a culture centred around rock music. Both underground music and countercultural music are part of rock culture, but rock culture extends beyond these categories. The majority of this study does focus on rock culture; however, the term will only rarely be used due to its looseness. Counterculture and underground each have quite a specific meaning and engaging in a brief discussion of these various terms will serve to both clarify how these terms understand within this study and allow for a clear understanding of how I understand my work to differentiate itself from other texts in the field

1.5.1 Underground

‘Underground’ is a term that has most commonly appeared in French studies of this period. Marc Alvarado’s *La Chienlit: Le Rock Français et Mai 68: Histoire d’un Rendez-Vous Manqué* uses this term. Critically, he highlights that the countercultural magazine *Actuel* adopted the term ‘underground’ and wrote a manifesto on what this meant in a 1972 special edition called ‘The guide to the French underground’.¹⁰⁶ *Actuel* defined the underground as oppositional, engaged in generation and anti-establishment struggle, as seeking alternative ways of living and accepting of those in marginal positions. They highlight a disjuncture between the underground and *gauchiste* politics, as they consider these groups to be ‘reflecting’ more than ‘acting’.¹⁰⁷ Underground in this sense becomes a way of not only distancing the movement from normative society but also as a means of demonstrating a rejection of pre-established modes of contention.

The title of Serge Loupien’s text - *La France Underground* - makes it clear that he adopts ‘underground’ as his key concept, although his argument draws from its use by the Anglo-Saxon world rather than French sources. Drawing inspiration from the use of the term during the 1960s and 1970s by bands such as The Velvet Underground and the jazz pianist

¹⁰⁶ ‘Le guide de l’underground en France’.

¹⁰⁷ *Actuel*, ‘Le Feu aux âmes et aux culs’, *Actuel* 17 (1972) reproduced in Marc Alvarado, *La Chienlit: Le Rock Français et Mai 68 : Histoire D’un Rendez-Vous Manqué* (Paris : Editions Du Layeur, 2018), 309-313.

Thelonious Monk, Loupien argues that the word is ‘indissociable from a desire for radical social change’.¹⁰⁸ Eric Deshayes and Dominique Grimaud also use the word ‘underground’ for their text and borrow a definition of the term from Alain Rey’s, *Le Robert, dictionnaire historique de la langue française*: ‘Artistic movements that are experimental and semi-clandestine, independent of dominant cultural currents and on the margin of traditional circuits of cultural distribution’.¹⁰⁹

All of these definitions are somewhat vague and lacking in substantial conceptualisation. Of the three definitions Alvarado’s is the most radical and most pertinent due to its contemporary origin. It bears parallels with Loupien’s understanding due to the perceived desire to enact social change. On the other hand, Deshayes and Grimaud’s is the most open as they understand ‘underground’ more broadly, as a way of signifying an existence outside of the mainstream. My research focuses on both the underground and the mainstream. It considers the influence of rock and countercultural ideas and the ways that this influence was felt across a variety of musical fields. Underground thus becomes too niche and excludes many areas that I discuss.

1.5.2 Counterculture

The term ‘counterculture’ is widely used in both academic and popular discourse and for a consideration of what is meant by the term, it is worth turning to Andy Bennett’s ‘Reappraising ‘Counterculture’’ and the introduction of Arthur Marwick’s *The Sixties*. Bennett considers counterculture as a concept and provides the broadest definition of the word:

Counterculture’ is used to denote a point of disjuncture between what are represented as *dominant* or *mainstream* values and alternative value systems that, although the purview of a minority, are articulated through various forms of media - music, writing, art, protest, and so on.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ ‘Indissociablement lié à un désir de changement sociétal radical’.

Loupien, 14.

In 1968 Thelonious Monk released an album with the title *Underground*.

Thelonious Monk, *Underground* (Columbia, 1968).

¹⁰⁹ ‘des mouvements artistiques expérimentaux semi-clandestins, indépendants des courants culturels dominants et en marge des circuits traditionnels de diffusion commerciale’.

Alain Rey, *Le Robert, dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Le Robert, 1998) quoted in Éric Deshayes & Dominique Grimaud, *L’Underground Musical En France*, (Marseille: Le Mot et Le Reste, 2013), 7.

¹¹⁰ Andy Bennett, ‘Reappraising ‘Counterculture’, *Volume! La Revue Des Musiques Populaires*, 9/1 (2012), 20-31.

Referring more explicitly to the counterculture of the long 1960s, Marwick takes a similar reading of the word: ‘‘counter-culture’ [referred] to the many and varied activities and values which contrasted with, or were critical of, the conventional values and modes of established society’.¹¹¹ Within these two definitions, ‘contrast’ and ‘disjuncture’ stand out as the key words, evoking a process of differentiation as much as opposition. Something can then be countercultural without being actively political. Building further on this point Marwick argues that counterculture ‘did not *confront* that society [mainstream society] but *permeated* and *transformed* it’. Thus, in some sense, it was not the counterculture of the 1960’s ability to oppose society but to integrate into it that has been its legacy.

A further pertinent point Marwick makes is that ‘there was no unified, integrated counterculture, totally and consistently in opposition to mainstream culture’.¹¹² Instead, ‘counterculture was in reality made up of a large number of varied subcultures’.¹¹³ Or in Bennett’s words, ‘the ‘term counterculture’ is seen to encompass a highly complex and diffuse range of lifestyles, sensibilities and beliefs that, although clearly connecting at some level, are rooted in varying biographical pathways and trajectory’.¹¹⁴ Counterculture was, and is, a plurality and cannot be considered as a sort of homogenous class. For different people it would have meant different things and different people would have engaged with it in differing levels of activity and differing ways. It is this plurality that makes counterculture a difficult notion as inherent in it is a level of ambiguity about what the word is actually referring to.

Another crucial aspect of the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s, and that emerges as a consequence of its heterogeneity, is its paradoxical nature. Following on from the work of Christopher Gair, I recognise ‘that there is a slippery and often uneasy relationship between the ‘mainstream’ and the ‘marginal’’ when considering counterculture.¹¹⁵ He argues that a range of representations of counterculture emerged between 1945 and 1972 within the USA, which included radical articulations and superficial ones. It is necessary to sample across these articulations in order to gain a sense of how society grappled with the concept of counterculture. Similarly, Bennett comments on this issue:

¹¹¹ Marwick, *The Sixties*, 12.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹¹⁴ Bennett, 10.

¹¹⁵ Christopher Gair, *The American Counterculture, 1945-1975* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 2.

there was, in many ways, an inherent contradiction in this understanding of the counterculture, in that the very foundations of countercultural ideology were based on products and resources made possible through mass media and mass consumption – the latter both representing significant arms of late capitalism.¹¹⁶

Ultimately, this counterculture critiqued the very society that provide the material and cultural means of supporting its existence. This paradox will appear throughout this text, whether it is in discussing the relationship between commerce and countercultural music, or the entrance of mainstream musical figures into the realm of countercultural aesthetics.

The frequent references to Johnny Hallyday within this thesis exemplify my willingness to engage with music that utilises aspects of counterculture as well as music that was firmly embedded in the counterculture. Hallyday is a particularly important case of this due to his continued prominence within French popular music and his role as mediator of rock music to France. From an early age, as a consequence of his family's involvement in show business, Hallyday became involved in entertainment.¹¹⁷ While he was born Jean-Phillipe Smet, he took his stage named from an anglicised version of his first name and the surname of his American uncle Lee Halliday, which then, due to a typo in by his record label, became Hallyday.¹¹⁸ He found success in the late 1950s and quickly became one of the central figures of French popular music culture.¹¹⁹

Due to his popularity, Hallyday was a powerful intermediary for Anglo-Saxon musical trends in France. The roots of this lie in his childhood when he was sent to London to study dance and learn English, two factors Santamaria suggests were crucial to his success.¹²⁰ His interest in anglophone culture was further increased through Elvis Presley films, his uncle's record collection, and through contact with American musicians when he was touring.¹²¹ Certainly, Hallyday and his song writing team were attentive to Anglo-Saxon musical developments and consciously adapted or took influence from them.¹²² This can be seen across, before and during the period discussed in this thesis, from his experimentation with rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s to his adaptations of 'Hey Joe' in the late 1960s. This interest in Anglo-Saxon music stems from Hallyday's own contact with music from the UK and USA,

¹¹⁶ Bennet, 5

¹¹⁷ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 23

¹¹⁸ David Looseley, 'Fabricating Johnny: French popular music and national culture', *French Cultural Studies*, 16/2 (191-203), 197.

¹¹⁹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 23-25.

¹²⁰ Yves Santamaria, *Johnny: Sociologie d'un Rocker* (Paris : La Découverte, 2010), 27.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹²² Looseley, 'Fabricating Johnny', 193-194

but also the French music industry's desire to capitalise on the success of these sounds. Through his early engagement with this he contributed to the normalisation of popular music in the first half of the 1960s. This would then help to set the stage for the development of rock and countercultural music in the late 1960s, which he would again help to normalise through continuing this role of intermediary.¹²³

For the purposes of this thesis, something will be considered countercultural if it articulates a worldview that challenges mainstream values. I am not overly concerned about the integrity of the statement or how believable the spokesperson is. Instead, I am interested in how countercultural ideas were mediated. Akin to Gair, many of my case studies deal with examples that demonstrate this relationship.¹²⁴ Consequently, included within this thesis is examples of Johnny Hallyday, Sylvie Vartan, and Les Fleurs de Pavot alongside Magma, Malicorne and Gainsbourg. Opening up a study of the French counterculture to include this spectrum of articulations allows for the heterogeneity of the French musical counterculture to be shown and a demonstration the breadth of interpretations of counterculture that existed.

1.5.3 French Counterculture

Manus McGrogan aptly argues that 'the French counterculture was not simply the importation of classic American forms; rather, it was a complex, hybrid phenomenon, blending the lifestyles themes of the US youth culture [...] with those of French libertarian, utopian traditions'.¹²⁵ Consequently, a level of specificity when using the term counterculture becomes increasingly important when using the word to describe the 1960s and 1970s counterculture outside of the USA and UK. The term inevitably undergoes a process of translation and comes to mean different things in different countries, and consequently the events and movements that 'counterculture' can signify become broader. I will not attempt to wholly define what the word meant in France, or what it might mean in the French context. Instead, I will layout how the understanding of counterculture that I am taking within this research is defined within a French setting.

One useful framework for considering French counterculture is provided by Briggs. He identifies a spectrum within the French counterculture of the New Left and the Freak Left: the New Left were formed of radical parties such as Maoists and Trotskyites and continued to

¹²³ Looseley, 'Fabricating Johnny', 202

¹²⁴ Gair, 2.

¹²⁵ McGrogan, 235.

seek some sort of political revolution in the aftermath of May '68. The Freak Left, on the other hand, were engaged in cultural politics and sought to transform society through lifestyle choices.¹²⁶ While I do not deny that the New Left were countercultural, my research is much more firmly located on the Freak Left end of the spectrum. Further, following the definition of counterculture taken from Bennett and Marwick, I am not limiting my consideration to only groups or artists that articulated a desire to change society through lifestyle and culture, engaging with these ideas is enough to be part of the countercultural remit.

Ultimately, what I am referring to is a community that articulated an identity centred around the consumption of genres and ideologies discussed in magazines such as *Rock & Folk*, *Best* or *Actuel*. I discuss rock music, underground music, folk music and popular music. What these categories have in common is an articulation of oppositionality through a cultural stance. In the broadest sense, counterculture seems the most pertinent term. Further, as this is a study focused on the music and attached culture of this moment in time, it would be putting the cart before the horse to place 'counterculture' before music. This limits my discussion even further: I will only be discussing cultural and lifestyle politics that help make sense of the music of this period, which inevitably excludes many potential areas of research. At the same time, taking this view opens up alternative doors. It allows for a consideration of the mainstream musical response to countercultural ideas, values, and sounds.¹²⁷ Thus, the music discussed in this study is music *inspired* by counterculture, if not always *of* counterculture.

Hallyday's role in this thesis is to show that mainstream musical figures were paying attention to the counterculture and dialoguing with it. Crucially, they also help disseminate and distribute its symbols, sounds, and ideas by incorporating them into their own musical makeup. They thus evidence the connected nature of the counterculture and the mainstream; the music industry was perfectly willing to capitalise on the choice aspects of the counterculture. Examining the mainstream appropriation of counterculture provides insight into the ways in which society viewed counterculture and sought to integrate aspects of it. Consequently, Hallyday, and others like him, played a crucial role in France's reception and response to counterculture between 1966 and 1975 and his inclusion, therefore, enriches this thesis.

¹²⁶ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 81.

¹²⁷ This ties back to Marwick's view that counterculture 'permeated' society.

1.6 Differentiation

I would like to spend a moment to more generally discuss the ways in which this study sits within French popular music studies and in what ways it differentiates itself from related work. I have more specific discussions of each chapter's contribution to the field in their respective introductions, but I believe it is useful to provide a bird's-eye view of these arguments at the outset.

My research stands apart from previous work in two fundamental aspects:

1. While texts such as Briggs' *Sounds French* and Drott's *Music and the Elusive Revolution*, at points, cover similar periods to my own research there are substantial differences in subject matter.¹²⁸ Drott devotes one chapter to rock music, and this is heavily focused on left wing agitation. My own research goes into much greater depth on rock music in France and avoids any large discussion on agitation and rock music. Briggs has a chapter on folk music and progressive rock music in his text, and consequently Briggs and this study share more in common than it does with Drott's text. There are still substantial differences: issues such as hippiedom, the European turn and Britishness are not touched upon in Briggs' text, whereas they are key components of my argument. In regard to the other texts on the period, the majority of them are non-academic and, while they provide in-depth information on the music, they do not engage in much musical analysis. One important difference between this study and the others in the field is that this study takes mainstream music much more seriously than other related work. The mainstream, at points, also engaged in using countercultural meanings and, consequently, acted as form of counterculture mediation.
2. Thematically my research is also differentiated from other work in the field. The majority of the texts that have been written on the music of the French counterculture are primarily focused on internal musical developments, whereas this thesis is focused on the transnational, as well as national, factors influenced the French counterculture. Briggs' book is, once again, the closest to my research in terms of thematics. He describes his book as 'an investigation of the production, mediation, and consumption of popular music in France' and as part of this process he acknowledges the role that music travelling across national borders

¹²⁸ Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution*.
Briggs, *Sounds French*.

plays.¹²⁹ In this study I focus on the way in which French countercultural music and discourse responded to foreign countercultural music to form not only a sense of national identity, but also a sense of transnational identity. There are inevitable points of cross over; however, I place a lot more emphasis on the way that France viewed its national Others, allowing a greater consideration of the resulting constructions of these national Others within a countercultural framework.

¹²⁹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 4.

Chapter 2: 'In Paris, like San Francisco': French Experiences of '60s and '70s Hippiedom

In 1970 the French pop star Johnny Hallyday released yet another single that, at a surface level, appears to be nothing special: it primarily features Hallyday singing gently over a soft instrumental backing. The narrative is a little more daring, as it focuses on a figure who, 'if they still existed today', would live in the USA, play guitar and smoke marijuana.¹ Yet the chorus of this song reveals that Hallyday is, in fact, singing about Jesus Christ. The negative backlash from mainstream society towards this song - 'Jésus Christ' - differentiates it from the many other songs in Hallyday's vast back catalogue: the wild proclamations that Jesus Christ would have been a hippie if he were born in the 1960s were too radical for a society that was still heavily defined by conservative Christian values.² It seems likely that Hallyday would have been aware of the provocation that 'Jésus Christ' would cause, but whether he predicted the extent to which it scandalised French society is uncertain. Regardless, the single was banned from state radio stations and several stores refused to sell it.³ This was not the first time that hippiedom challenged France: fears were raised over the use of drugs, and parents found the long hair of their sons upsetting.⁴ During the second half of the 1960s the hippie movement of the American west coast had a significant, but often overlooked, cultural impact within France, and its legacy carried on into the French counterculture of the 1970s.

Within this chapter I will consider the French musical and extra-musical discourse surrounding hippiedom during the 1960s and early 1970s in order to achieve an understanding of the relationship that French youth had with American popular culture. Hippiedom is, quite understandably, often defined by its American manifestation; however, this does not mean it is fruitful or fair to assume that all cultures had the same definition of the movement or experienced it in the same way. I will argue that French understandings of hippiedom were marked by a difference in perception as a result of various national and transnational factors, which led to a particular construction of the figure of 'the hippie'.

¹ 'S'il existe encore aujourd'hui'.

Johnny Hallyday, 'Jésus Christ', *Vie* (Philips, 1970).

² David L. Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France: Authenticity, Politics, Debate* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003), 32.

³ Jean-François Brieu, *Johnny: Une passion française* (Paris: Editions du Layeur, 2010), 78.

⁴ Looseley, 30.

Anne-Marie Sohn, *Age Tendre et Tête de Bois: Histoire des Jeunes des Années 1960* (Paris: Fayard, 2012), 278.

The current anglophone literature fails to address the importance of hippiedom and its associated musics within France during the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s. Both Eric Drott and David Looseley briefly mention the authenticity debates that surrounded hippiedom at this time, and Jonathyne Briggs mentions in passing that hippiedom was significant for challenging the ideology of national homogeneity present in then-contemporary French youth culture.⁵ Other texts look more broadly at youth culture in these years but also do not situate hippiedom as a direct object of investigation. In his book on French youth and the youth magazine *Salut Les Copains*, Chris Tinker only briefly touches upon hippiedom with the argument that it was seen by the readership of *Salut Les Copains* as a more favourable form of enacting politics than violent activism.⁶ Further, Arthur Marwick's comparative study of youth culture across the long-1960s brushes over French hippiedom in favour of its Anglo-Saxon manifestations.⁷

In French discourse the topic receives more recognition and there are two main academic studies: *La Révolution Hippie* by Frédéric Robert and *Le Monde Hippie* by Frédéric Monneyron and Martine Xiberras.⁸ However, both heavily focus on the American manifestation of the movement. Less academically, but with a greater focus on France, Jean-Pierre Boyxou and Pierre Delannoy have written a book on the hippie movement that discusses both its American and French manifestation.⁹ Boyxou and Delannoy's journalistic style favours rhetoric over nuance and consequently has limitations in its use for academic research. Similarly, the musical research on hippiedom's influence in France remains slim: Robert, Monneyron, and Xiberras dedicate at most a chapter to the subject (and this includes accounts of American psychedelic rock). Nonetheless, the French literature does take a broader view than the anglophone literature on this topic. For example, G r me Guiberts's *La*

⁵ Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2011), 162-163.

Looseley, 30.

Jonathyne Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, Pop Music 1958-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 43.

⁶ Chris Tinker, *Mixed Messages: Youth Magazine Discourse and Sociocultural Shifts in Salut Les Copains (1962-1976)* (Oxford, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 115-116.

⁷ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 488.

⁸ Frédéric Monneyron & Martine Xiberras, *Le Monde Hippie : De L'Imaginaire Psychédélique à la Révolution Informatique* (Paris, Imago, 2008).

Frédéric Robert, *La Révolution Hippie* (Rennes: PU Rennes, 2011).

⁹ Jean-Pierre Bouyxou & Pierre Delannoy, *L'Aventure Hippie* (La Fl che: Brodard & Taupin, 2004).

Production de la Culture may only devote three pages to the subject but acknowledges that hippiedom and psychedelic rock had a notable impact in France.¹⁰

More generally, considering French-American relations, there is a vast cornucopia of research that has been conducted. Richard Kuisel's *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, twenty-six years after publication, still stands as a foundational text in this area.¹¹ His analysis of the emergence of France's love-hate relationship with the USA across the 20th century provides a key analytical framework for this chapter. Musically this relationship is best expressed through the various books on jazz in France that have been published and, to varying extents, the English language research on French popular music that deals with this topic.¹² However, there has been little discussion of the role of hippiedom in facilitating this relationship, despite the clearly transnational nature of the movement and the connection that hippiedom created with American culture.

My research places the French interest in hippiedom within the framework of French-American relations in order to understand the ways in which the USA acted as a sounding board for the development of French rock music and culture during these years. I will also fill in some of the gaps in the literature by providing a level of insight into how hippiedom was received and assimilated into French youth culture. Doing so will enable a discussion about the influence of hippiedom outside of the anglophone sphere and the crucial role hippiedom played in forming a sense of transnational community amongst various youth movements.

While the argument presented within this text places the hippie as a construction – and therefore deals with the definition of what a hippie was seen to be throughout – it is useful to provide a definition of hippies and hippiedom. In a 1973 episode of *Les Dossiers de l'écran*, devoted to hippies, the show's host Armand Jammot describes hippies as 'youth who refuse the way of life of our society' and who seek to 'differ themselves by all means' including

¹⁰ G r me Guibert, *La Production de la Culture: Le cas des musiques amplifi es en France: Gen se, structurations, industries, alternatives* (Paris & Saint Amant Tallende: M lanie S teun & Irma  ditions 2006), 138-140.

¹¹ Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanisation* (Berkley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1993).

¹² Matthew F. Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

Colin Nettleback, *Dancing with DeBeauvoir: Jazz and the French* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2004).

Andy Fry, *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920-1960* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

clothes, behaviour, sexual politics, orientalism, and drugs.¹³ Hippies were imagined to wear floral attire or some sort of anachronistic outfit and the men, controversially for the time, had long hair.¹⁴ The philosophy of the movement was seen to be centred on seeking an existence outside of the confines of mainstream society. This was to be achieved through experimenting with mind-altering substances such as drugs, non-normative ways of living (the commune), and by exploring oriental ideals and practices.¹⁵ For the most part, the music of hippiedom was defined as psychedelic music for French critics,¹⁶ however hippiedom was expressed through a variety of musical genres in France: French forms of psychedelia, folk crossovers, and mainstream appropriations.¹⁷ Critically, hippiedom for the French was closely connected to fantasies of California and San Francisco. This was commented upon in many accounts such as the journalist Edgar Morin's *Journal De Californie* (1970) and Julien Clerc's single 'La Californie' (1969).¹⁸

This chapter will be split into three sections that explore the ways in which hippiedom was constructed in France and the cultural background against which it emerged. The first section will provide a discussion of the emergence of youth culture in post-war France in order to elucidate the context into which hippiedom arrived. The second section will consider hippiedom's integration into French youth culture and society. The third section will explore hippiedom within the paradigm of France's long-lasting love-hate relationship with the USA. This will consider the various ways in which the figure of the hippie was constructed as an

¹³ Jammot, as a respectable host of a discussion show, represents a conservative society's vision of hippiedom.

'Le phénomène hippie', *Les dossiers de l'écran*, by Guy Labourasse (1973).

¹⁴ Edgar Morin, *Journal de Californie* (Paris: Edition de Seuil, 1970), 72. Sohn, 277-278.

¹⁵ Michel Lancelot, *Je veux regarder Dieu en France (Le phénomène hippie)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968).

¹⁶ Ibid., 224-244.

François Jouffa, 'Psychedelic Music' in Gilles Verlant (ed.), *Le Rock et La Plume: Le rock raconté par les meilleurs journalistes 1960-1975* (Edition Hors Collection: 1999), 42-45.

¹⁷ France did seem to have its own subset of hippiedom: the *baba-cool*. While this term has come up in conversation, it is not a term that has appeared in much of the source material that I have consulted. Frédéric Monneyron and Martine Xiberras provide a definition of the *baba-cool* in their text on hippiedom: 'the *sadhous*, called *baba* in India, gave their name to the first hippies who completed the Indian pilgrimage, the *baba-cool*'. The *baba-cool* are not the focus of this chapter and, as mentioned, is not a term that appeared in my research. Yet, this does point out an area for future research and demonstrates that hippiedom did adapt to local cultures.

'Les *sadhous*, appelés *baba* en Inde, donneront même leur nom aux premiers hippies qui auront accompli le pèlerinage indien, les *baba-cool*'. Monneyron & Xiberras, 35.

¹⁸ Edgar Morin, *Journal de Californie* (Paris: Edition de Seuil, 1970).

Julien Clerc, 'La Californie', *Si Tu Reviens/La Californie* (EMI, 1969).

internal Other. Finally, the fourth section will consider the ways in which the Otherness of the hippie was overcome. By exploring how points of identification were created, insights into the relationship the French imagined themselves to have with hippiedom will be revealed.

2.1 Les Élocubrations d'Antoine

1966 was a noteworthy year for hippiedom's introduction into France. It was marked by the release of the first proto-hippie album, the first publication of the music magazine *Rock & Folk*, and it was when France had its first notable concerns about LSD usage. All these events signify important shifts within French youth culture. 1966 was a turning point for the development of a popular culture oriented youth movement that favoured ideologies of anti-establishmentarianism and a sense of individualism. Initially, I will briefly examine the development of French youth culture from the post-war ideological valorisation of youth through to the creation of the cultural community of the *copains*, which can be considered the first prominent popular culture oriented youth movement. By focusing on the singer Antoine's 1966 single 'Les Elucubrations', I will then explore how the ideology of hippiedom acted as a signifier of conflict, both inter- and intra-generationally.

2.1.1 Emergence of French Youth

France saw a rise in its population of young people in the post-war years. The significance of the actual increase in size of youth population is somewhat contested and depends on which figures are used and how. For example, Richard Ivan Jobs suggests that in 1958 an entire third of the French population was under the age of twenty.¹⁹ Anne-Marie Sohn argues that only 12.6% of the population was between the ages of 15-24 in 1965 and that the percentage of youth within this age bracket was actually higher during France's *Belle Époque* (1871-1914). Consequently, she warns us to be careful of over-exaggerating the numbers of young people active in youth culture during the 1960s.²⁰ Regardless of the statistic given to define the population size of France's youth population, both Jobs and Sohn agree that the real

¹⁹ Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007), 24.

²⁰ Sohn, 10.

significance of the baby-boom was that youth became increasingly visible within these years and began to be considered as a social category.²¹

The concept of 'youth' had been under construction since the end of the Second World War. In response to the massive structural, cultural and emotional damages with which France had to contend, there sprung a desire for newness and innocence. Youth were situated as France's potential for revitalisation and renewal and were often presented as being the salvation for the folly of their elders.²² At this point, youth identity in France was, to a large extent, imposed as part of a national project and thus was an identity constructed as much *for* the youth as *by* the youth.²³ Nevertheless, this construction remains significant as, due to both the association of youth with newness and the rise in their societal status, it would set the stage for the youth culture of the 1960s.²⁴

This was a period in which France was experiencing an economic boom that invested large swathes of the population with higher levels of consumer power.²⁵ This, in turn, would become a central factor in the development of youth as a self-defined factor. Even for young people not old enough to work, families had greater disposable income and, consequently, young people began to receive pocket money from their parents.²⁶ In France there was a recognition that youth were using material artefacts as a way of distancing themselves from previous generations.²⁷ Music was one important means through which this differentiation was enacted. The increased access to listen to music individually as a consequence of the development of the transistor radio and the reduction in price of equipment, such as the record player, enabled more people to have access to recorded music.²⁸ Thereby, French youth could purchase and listen to music without parental authority or supervision, finding ways of identifying that related to the music they claimed as their own.

French youth's use of material culture in order to differentiate themselves was predicated on the emergence of a youth-oriented market. The arrival of rock 'n'roll signified that music and popular culture were notable domains in which national industries could expand. The French music industry responded with the home-grown genre of *yéyé* and its associated

²¹ Sohn, 10.

Jobs, 1-2.

²² Ibid., 21 & 39.

²³ Ibid., 10.

²⁴ Ibid., 14.

²⁵ Looseley, 23.

²⁶ Jeremy D. Popkin, *A History of Modern France* (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), 308.

²⁷ Jobs, 34.

²⁸ Sohn, 67-68.

cultural community of the *copains*.²⁹ Simultaneously, radio shows and magazines, such as *Salut Les Copains*, emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s with an explicit intention to cater for the interest in music and popular culture. These outlets permitted their readers access to the lives and views of established singers and also allowed exposure to sounds coming from Britain, America, and Europe.³⁰

It was with the birth of *yéyé* and the *copains* that a French youth culture of the 1960s was formed; one that was centred around popular culture. Fundamental to the ideology of the *copains* was a sense of friendship and a shared community. Indeed, this ideology is symbolised in the word *copains* which translates to ‘friends’. The *copains* imagined themselves to be part of a nationwide - even transnational - community of youths.³¹ The creation of a cultural and marketable homogenous identity clearly separated French youth from previous generations on a national scale.³² As Briggs notes, consumption of the appropriate products was the only real requirement for entry.³³

Notwithstanding the clear desire to present themselves as different generationally, the *copains* presented youth as respectable and within socio-cultural norms.³⁴ Yet, this does not mean that *yéyé* music always managed to align itself to societal expectations. The infamous concert *La Nuit de La Nation* that took place at *Place de La Nation* in June 1963 is one example where the apparently tame identity of the *copains* proved to be challenging. Organised by *Salut Les Copains*, this event featured some of the biggest *yéyé* stars and saw an unexpectedly large turnout. Despite the issue being the lack of sufficient infrastructure to cope with the numbers, not a violent outburst by the attendees, several newspapers denounced the youth who attended this event and complained of the moral degeneracy that popular culture causes.³⁵

The rise of youth as a new social group was described by the French journalist Edgar Morin the following day after the shambolic, yet joyous, outcome of *La Nuit De La Nation*:

²⁹ Looseley, 26-30.

³⁰ Sohn, 75.

Chris Tinker, *Mixed Messages: Youth Magazine Discourse and Sociocultural Shifts in Salut Les Copains (1962-1976)* (Oxford, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 62-68.

³¹ Briggs, 15.

³² It is important to note that difference did exist within French youth culture and even with the community of the *copains*. However, the *copains* were the dominant youth cultural community and their ideology was founded on a notion of idea of youths being distinct from adults. Briggs, 42-43.

³³ Ibid., 16-17.

³⁴ Jobs, 274.

Briggs, 24-25.

³⁵ Jobs, 274.

‘The new class of youth appears as a microcosm of the whole society; it already carries the values of developed society – consumption and enjoyment – and it provides this civilization its own value: youth’.³⁶ From the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the event of *La Nuit De La Nation* in 1963, French youth and society had transformed. The economic boom affected all generations but, combined with the emergence of modern popular culture first from the USA and then France, youth were able to differentiate themselves radically from older generations.

2.1.2 Antoine

The arrival of Antoine in 1966 disrupted the perceived homogeneity of *yéyé* and compounded inter-generational tensions. In an antagonistic response to the *copains*’ sense of community and attempt to maintain a societally acceptable image, Antoine showed no respect for authority figures and championed a call for individuality. His album *Antoine* was one of the most successful of 1966 and sold a significant number of copies.³⁷ His commercial success not only demonstrates his influence, but also the profitability of countercultural airs and the speed at which the public consumed his anti-establishment stance. It is particularly notable that Antoine composed much of the music and lyrics for his music, a marked distinction from the practice of employing songwriters in *yéyé*. Across this album we see Antoine place himself with a model of authenticity established by *chanson*: by fore fronting his name, Antoine is cast into the sing-songwriter model; the act of writing of his own songs, parallels *chanson* models of production; by tackling a variety of political issues such as war and abortion laws, Antoine aligns himself with *chanson*’s left wing legacy; and Antoine goes through a similar process of authentication by placing himself in opposition to popular music. Consequently, Antoine is portrayed as an authentic antidote to the bland, impotent pop music of *yéyé* and *variétés*.

³⁶ Quoted in Briggs, 15.

³⁷ Christian Victor and Julien Regoli suggest that Antoine sold 600,000 copies; however, the database at *Top France* states 200,000 copies in 1966. Even if the smaller number is correct, it would be within the top 45 best-selling singles in France in that year.

Christian Victor & Julien Regoli, *Vingt Ans De Rock Français* (Paris: Rock & Folk/Ablin Michel, 1978), 84-85.

Author Unknown, ‘Top 45 Tours – 1966’, *Top France*, <http://www.top-france.fr/html/45tours/45t1966.htm> (accessed 27/10/2020)

Antoine, *Antoine* (Disques Vogue, 1966).

The most potent example of his anti-establishment stance can be found in the album's eponymous track 'Les Élucubrations'.³⁸ Within this song Antoine mocks several figures of authority and provides himself with an exaggerated sense of importance. These figures include his mother:

Ma mère m'a dit: 'Antoine, fais-toi couper les cheveux'	My Mother said to me: 'Antoine, get your hair cut''
Je lui ai dit: 'ma mère, dans vingt ans si tu veux	I said to her: 'My mother, in twenty years if you want,
Je ne les garde pas pour me faire remarquer	I do not keep it to make myself noticed,
Ni parce que je trouve ça beau	Nor because I find it beautiful
Mais parce que ça me plaît' ³⁹	But because it pleases me'

Antoine's mother's wish symbolises the parental authority of society at large, and thus his long hair acts as a revolt against societal expectations, in particular that of masculinity. His attachment to his long hair is not justified by a sense of aesthetic appreciation but through the unrationalized sense of pleasure he derives from it. In place of the dictates of socially expected behaviour, Antoine follows a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure.

Antoine also mocks figures of societal authority such as the judge and the president. With regard to the judge, Antoine tells a brief story of 'Jules' who killed his wife, but he did so because he loved her.

Le juge a dit à Jules: 'Vous avez tué'	The judge said to Jules: 'you have killed'
'Oui j'ai tué ma femme, pourtant je l'aimais'	'Yes I killed my wife, however I loved her'
Le juge a dit à Jules: 'Vous aurez vingt ans'	The judge said to Jules: 'You will have twenty years'
Jules a dit: ' Quand on aime, on a toujours vingt ans '	Jules said: 'When one loves, one always feels twenty years old'

Antoine subverts the authority of the judge through Jules' sentencing. In French the verb 'to have' is also used when stating one's age. Instead of saying 'I am twenty', in French one would say 'I have twenty years'. In the judge's sentencing Jules is told 'he will have twenty years' as a punishment for his murder. However, Jules mocks the judge by playing on the double meaning implied in the judge's statement and responds with a comment about his age. Similarly, the unapologetic nature of Jules' crime, and his constant recourse to the idea of love, seems to present the law as a system of meaningless importance.

³⁸ Antoine, 'Les Élucubrations d'Antoine', *Antoine* (Disques Vogue, 1966).

³⁹ These lyrics are taken from Pierre-Antoine Muraccioli, 'Les Élucubrations D'Antoine', *Paroles* <http://www.paroles.net/antoine/paroles-les-elucubrations-d-antoine> (19th April 2017) and cross-referenced with author's transcription of lyrics.

Finally, Antoine attacks the president of France:

J'ai reçu une lettre de la Présidence	I received a letter from the Presidency
Me demandant: 'Antoine, vous avez du bon sens	Asking me: 'Antoine, you have common sense
Comment faire pour enrichir le pays?'	How can we enrich the country?'
'Mettez la pilule en vente dans les Monoprix '	'Sell the [contraceptive] pill in Monoprix' ⁴⁰

By casting himself as an advisor to the president of France, Antoine exaggerates his importance and critiques the uselessness of the French government. His suggestion that putting the contraceptive pill in supermarkets is the best thing to do for the country can be seen as a critique of the conservative nature of France. Further, as a young man who embodies an anti-establishment and hedonistic ideology, the ability to avoid unwanted pregnancies and thereby kick-start the sexual revolution undoubtedly ties into his politics of pleasure.

While the figures mentioned so far mock symbols of societal or parental authority, Antoine's critique extends to the popular music establishment. Most notably, he mocks the star of the *yéyé* genre: Johnny Hallyday.

Tout devrait changer tout le temps	Everything should change all the time
Le monde serait bien plus amusant	The world would be much more fun
On verrait des avions dans les couloirs du métro	We would see planes in the corridors of the metro
Et Johnny Hallyday en cage à Médrano	And Johnny Hallyday in a cage at the Médrano

The reference to Johnny Hallyday appearing in the Médrano — a notable circus — seeks to expose the commercial spectacle that Antoine perceives Hallyday to be. By attacking Hallyday, Antoine attacks the entire ideology of *yéyé* through targeting one of its most representative symbols and disrupts the universalism that was at the heart of its ethos.⁴¹

In many ways Antoine's shocking portrayal of himself is based on models of authenticity both inherited from the *chanson* tradition and also emerging in rock music during the mid-1960s. His discussion of his mother wanting him to cut his hair demonstrates that he is having similar issues to his peers with equally long hair, rooting him in the quotidian; his critique of figures of authority (from his mother to the president) demonstrates an integrity and willingness to articulate his sentiments without fears of repercussions; finally, his attack on Hallyday and involvement in writing his own songs distinguishes himself from commercial

⁴⁰ Monoprix is a French supermarket.

⁴¹ Briggs, 42-43.

orientated musicians. In his role as a disrupter of the French musical establishment and shocker of bourgeois attitudes, Antoine serves to solidify French rock authenticity in manner reminiscent of canonical *chanson* figures such as Georges Brassens, who had set a precedent for singer songwriters challenging bourgeois values.⁴² He combines it with the roughness and energy of rock music from across the Atlantic and Channel into something that is rooted in transnational spirit and national heritage.

Ironically, Antoine's critique of authority renders him as a figure of authority and his critique of mainstream society turns Antoine into a commercial success. Antoine positions himself as the opposite of Hallyday; instead of toeing the line and conforming to the media friendly image of *yéyé*, Antoine purposefully crosses the line and avoids any attempt to present himself as media friendly. Yet, precisely because of this, his countercultural stance is found to be incredibly well received, albeit still remaining antagonistic. Consequently, he briefly becomes a figure of countercultural authority and is accepted by the musical mainstream through his significant sales. While this certainly shows Antoine's desire to change was actualising, it demonstrates the 'slippery and often uneasy relationship' between the counterculture and the mainstream that Gair mentions.⁴³ In Antoine's music, these elements overlap and it is precisely due to his disruptive qualities that he becomes integrated into the musical mainstream.

The cleavage that Antoine was part of is made explicit in Hallyday's 'Cheveux Longs et Idées Courtes' [Long Hair and Short Ideas], which acted as a retort to Antoine's assault and critiqued Antoine for his superficiality.⁴⁴ It parodies the authenticity that Antoine performs through exaggerating various key elements. The music of 'Cheveux Longs et Idées Courtes' certainly echoes that of Antoine's 'Les Élucubrations': Hallyday uses an acoustic guitar which he strums in a folk fashion, he also sings in a rough, ramshackle, aggressive manner and there is an interjection of harmonica. Hallyday does not so much ridicule the music of Antoine, rather he challenges any idea of uniqueness that Antoine claims to have. Hallyday is showing that Antoine's music is neither special nor unique and is, consequently, just as inauthentic as the symbols of society Antoine critiques.

Hallyday's mocking of Antoine and the early hippies is articulated further in the lyrics:

⁴² Peter Hawkins, *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 124.

⁴³ Christopher Gair, *The American Counterculture, 1945-1975* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 2.

⁴⁴ Johnny Hallyday, 'Cheveux Longs et Idées Courtes'.

Si monsieur Kennedy
 Aujourd'hui revenait
 Ou si monsieur Gandhi
 Soudain ressuscitait
 Ils seraient étonnés
 Quand on leur apprendrait
 Que pour changer le monde
 Il suffit de changer
 Da-da-da-da-dam
 Da-da-da-da-dam
 Et surtout, avant tout
 D'avoir les cheveux longs⁴⁵

If Mr. Kennedy,
 Today came back
 Or if Mr. Gandhi
 Suddenly revived
 They would be astounded
 When they learned
 That to change the world
 It is sufficient to change
 Da-da-da-da-dam
 Da-da-da-da-dam
 And especially, above all
 To have long hair

Hallyday criticises the perceived superficiality of the hippie aesthetic, suggesting that behind their long hair they only have ‘short ideas’.⁴⁶ He dismisses what he perceives as Antoine’s self-importance and disregard for authority (implied by Antoine in his suggestion that the President wrote him a letter) by mockingly comparing Antoine to revered figures such as John F. Kennedy and Mahatma Gandhi, and suggesting that they would be shocked that, despite their various struggles to make political change, ‘to change the world, it is sufficient to change’.⁴⁷ Hallyday does add one caveat: it is, in fact, not ‘sufficient to change’: ‘to change the world’ it is also important ‘to have long hair’.⁴⁸ These ripostes expose the true superficiality that Hallyday perceives the hippies to be hiding. In Hallyday’s eyes hippies are all aesthetics, without any real political basis.

Consequently, Hallyday defines himself in opposition to the music of Antoine and thereby rejects the mix of rock and *chanson* authenticity that Antoine puts forward. Hallyday’s position as one of the defining representatives of *yéyé* imparts him with a conservative air. He is one of the established figures whom Antoine challenges. Ironically, his response to Hallyday seems to reinforce Antoine’s critique. Hallyday becomes Antoine’s mother critiquing his hair, the judge who wishes to impose logic and the spectacle that Antoine accuses him of being.

⁴⁵ Lyrics taken from Author Unknown, ‘Cheveux Longs et Idées Courtes’, *Paroles*, <http://www.paroles.net/johnny-hallyday/paroles-cheveux-longs-et-idees-courtes> (19th April 2017) and cross referenced with author’s own transcription.

⁴⁶ Johnny Hallyday, ‘Cheveux Longs et Idées Courtes’.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

2.1.3 The Context of Antoine

The in-fighting within the youth community that Antoine's 'Les Élocubrations' and Hallyday's 'Cheveux Longes et Idées Courtes' symbolises can be read as a sonic symptom of the individualisation that was beginning to emerge within the youth generation. Indeed, the album marks a significant moment in the formation of youth identity within 1960s France. Antoine breaks with the societal compliance of *yéyé* and replaces it with an anti-establishment rhetoric. His attacks on symbols of authority emerged coterminous to the contestatory spirit that has become ossified in the image of May '68. In particular, Antoine's focus on pleasure gives an indication of the cultural revolution that was to come.

Importantly, Antoine's topics would have found resonances across wider society. For example, just as Antoine had long hair and bragged about his floral shirt, youth were experimenting with the use of fashion as a way of expressing alternative identities during these years. When Antoine was complaining about his mother pestering him to cut his long hair, he was not alone. As Sohn notes, many mothers were concerned about the length of their sons' hair and this often caused a lot of conflict between them.⁴⁹ The daughters, on the other hand, started to wear mini-skirts and trousers, which caused equal amounts of tension.⁵⁰

As mentioned in the introduction, *Rock & Folk* was also published for the first time in 1966. The scholar Marc Savev notes that *Rock & Folk* was significant because it not only represented a generational struggle but also an inter-generational struggle.⁵¹ The editorial staff of *Rock & Folk* decide to publish in a fashion that ran completely counter to the style of magazines such as *Salut Les Copains* and offered an alternative cultural identity. Whereas *Salut Les Copains* had sought to express the view of the public in relation to popular culture, *Rock & Folk* was more interested in the discourse of musicians and critics.⁵² The focus on the musician's point of view helped differentiate the musician from the idol of *yéyé*. Akin to *chanson*, these musicians were seen as artists who voiced political and philosophical ideals worthy of discussion and not mere puppets of a music industry. *Rock & Folk* was willing to challenge the status quo in a way that *Salut Les Copains* would – or could – not. Where the latter magazine had a strong anti-drug stance, due to the respectable image of the *copains*, the

⁴⁹ Sohn, 278.

⁵⁰ Henri Mendras, *Social Change in Modern France: Towards a Cultural Anthropology* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 177.

⁵¹ Marc Savev, 'Deux exemples de presse musicale jeune en France, de 1966 à 1969 : *Salut Les Copains* et *Rock & Folk*', *Volume !: La revue des musiques populaires*, 3/1 (2004), 5-28 (6).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 2.

former was willing to write about drugs and present critics' experiences of taking them.⁵³ Consequently, *Rock & Folk* was in many ways defined against *Salut Les Copains* and drew its claim of authenticity from this differentiation.

Antoine symbolises a powerful vocalisation of a cultural revolution that was already underway and was about to explode with the flourishing of French counterculture in the late 1960s and first half of the 1970s. His politics surrounding sexual liberty, pacifism, generational conflict and anti-establishmentarianism were found to be reflected across French society and would grow in the coming years. He articulated the tension that was felt both inter-generationally (between the youth and figures of authority) and intra-generationally (within youth culture itself). While he was undoubtedly not the first to put forward such ideas, he was formative in providing a platform and means for expressing them. No longer could youth be so narrowly equated with a singular form of popular culture, it became increasingly clear that there were many different avenues for youth to follow.

2.2 The Arrival of Hippiedom in France

With the growing rock community in France, the establishment of a rock press, and the questioning of societal values by French youth, hippiedom would quickly become a notable topic within societal discourse. Interest in hippiedom was swiftly picked up by the rock press. This interest manifested musically and sociologically and tended to focus on the hippie movement of the USA. Attention was paid to emerging figures of the hippie movement and counterculture, such as Frank Zappa and The Grateful Dead, and articles emerged placing these developments within a cultural context. In particular, Alain Dister became a crucial figure for reporting on the events taking place in the USA. Articles such as 'In the West: Journal d'un Étudiant Californien' - which describes a supposedly average week that Dister experienced in California during 1968 - gave the French public a sense of the political and cultural climate in the USA and encouraged a romantic view of current events and the American way of life.⁵⁴

The mainstream media also demonstrated a level of interest in hippie culture. Documentaries and filmed discussions were made that showed the movement in the USA,

⁵³ Savev, 3.

⁵⁴ Alain Dister, 'In The West: Journal d'un Étudiant Californien' in Alain Dister (ed.), *Rock Critic: Chroniques de rock'n'roll (1967-198)* (Paris : Le Castor Astral, 2007), 53-58.

UK, and Europe.⁵⁵ Mainstream newspapers such as *Le Monde* commented on the movement's various manifestations.⁵⁶ These discussions would not always be one-sided: an episode of *Les Dossiers de l'écran* on the topic of hippiedom hosted a panel featuring a variety of opinions that included the journalists Michel Lancelot and Thierry Maulnier, and a cohort of hippies.⁵⁷

Hippiedom even caught the attention of cultural theorists including Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard, who both identified the paradox embedded in it. In Barthes' 'Un Cas de Critique Culturelle' he highlights the cultural specificity of the hippie movement and argues that its basis on a culture of poverty as a symbol of resistance becomes hypocritical when displaced to poorer countries.⁵⁸ In Baudrillard's *The Consumer Society* he positions hippiedom as an inevitable consequence of contemporary society. Consequently, hippiedom only sought to serve the society it claimed to challenge.⁵⁹ For both these theorists, hippiedom was not so much a rejection of contemporary society but an extension of it. Further, it is significant that they understood hippiedom as something significant enough to warrant discussion, and their interest provides further evidence of the pervasiveness of the topic of hippiedom across French society.

Hippie culture made itself felt in France musically. Les Fleurs De Pavot were one band that formed entirely with the purpose of creating a hippie aesthetic.⁶⁰ This group had somewhat commercial origins: they were the brainchild of the French record producer Jean-Pierre Rawson who had helped to remould a pre-existing rock band into a psychedelic hippie group.⁶¹ They successfully drew upon many of the themes of hippiedom, although Les Fleurs De Pavot's attachment to hippie ideals also verged on the ridiculous due to their attempt to cram as many tropes of hippiedom into a single album. 'Pourquoi l'amour à deux' tackles the

⁵⁵ 'Le canyon des hippies', *Panorama*, by Michel Parbot (1969).

'Une autre jeunesse', *Journal Les Actualités Françaises*, by Polgoon (1967).

'Le pouvoir des fleurs', *Zoom*, André Weinfield (1967).

⁵⁶ Scare stories also appeared that warned of the connection between the movement and drugs. Some examples included: Anon, 'Le savoir vivre hippie' *Le Monde*, 15/02/1974; Jean Houecade, 'Berkeley Entre le Rêve Hippie et La violence Policière', *Le Monde* 16/06/1969; and, Claude Sarraute, 'Guétar' Hippie, *Le Monde* 23/06/1970.

⁵⁷ 'Le phénomène hippie', *Les dossiers de l'écran*, by Guy Labourasse (1973).

⁵⁸ Roland Barthes, 'Un Cas De Critique Culturelle', *Communications*, 14/1 (1969), 97–99.

⁵⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 180–181.

⁶⁰ Eric Drott does suggest that *Les Fleurs de Pavot* were commercially oriented. Regardless, the way they present hippiedom exposes some of the mythology built around hippiedom in France. Drott, 165.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

topic of free love and, in addition, the floral cover of the album (figure 3) and the brazenly titled track 'Hippies nous voila' impart a somewhat contrived image of hippiedom.⁶²

The band constructed a transnational image and created personas whose origins were distant from French urban centres. Each member of the group was cast as coming from a different place: Jesus came from San Francisco, Groovy Pat from London, Zorba from Catalonia, and Siddhartha from Northern France,⁶³ yet it was in Paris that they met and formed the group. As Eric Drott notes '[it] is telling that Rawson saw fit to identify the group's leaders as having come from San Francisco and London, the two epicentres of the transnational underground'.⁶⁴ However, it is also significant that they met in Paris, as it suggests that Paris has countercultural gravity that would attract hippies from other countercultural hot spots. The aura of transnationality and connection to the meccas of hippiedom gave the group a veil of authenticity, and the rootedness in Paris helped situate France as a notable site of hippiedom.⁶⁵



Figure 3: The front cover of *Les Fleurs De Pavot*, *Les Fleurs De Pavot* (Mercury, 1968).

In other cases, hippiedom made itself feel present in less ostentatious ways: Serge Loupien argues that psychedelic rock never became assimilated into French rock culture.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the influence of psychedelic rock music and the philosophy of hippiedom can

⁶² *Les Fleurs De Pavot*, *Les Fleurs De Pavot* (Mercury, 1968).

⁶³ The names of the members also further suggest a second layer of transnationality: Jesus evokes the bible and Israel; Zorba recalls the film and book *Zorba the Greek* and Greece/Crete; Siddhartha suggests India. It is also potentially a reference to Herman Hesse's novel of the same name and, as a result, also faintly brings Germany into *Les Fleurs De Pavot*'s transnational network. Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha* (London: Pan Books, 1974). Nikos Kazantzakis, *Zorba The Greek* (New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1981), *Zorba the Greek*, by Michael Cacoyannis (1964).

⁶⁴ Drott, 165.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Serge Loupien, *La France Underground 1965/1979: Free Jazz Et Rock Pop, Le Temps Des Utopies* (Paris, RivagesRouge: 2018), 114.

be found in varying degrees. Musically, elements of psychedelia influenced several groups: The Chico Magnetic Band are one example who were heavily inspired by the music of Jimi Hendrix, and Martin Circus's early music also suggests a psychedelic influence.⁶⁷ One of the most famous groups inspired by psychedelia to come out of France during the late 1960s was Gong, whose mixture of orientalist and drug influence would have a notable international impact.⁶⁸ These groups were certainly not as overt as Les Fleurs de Pavot in expressing their influence from hippie culture, however, they were an essential part of the dialogue surrounding youth, hippie culture and the USA.

Another significant moment for the spread of hippie culture in France was the French performance of the musical *Hair*. Having already been a success in Broadway and London, *Hair* was staged in France in 1969. *Hair* shocked the French public due to its open references to drugs, sex, and, within the first few seconds of the performance, the brief scene where the entire cast remove all their clothes.⁶⁹ Crucially, the singer Julian Clerc was cast in a leading role and had a hit with 'Laissons entrer le soleil', which would propel his career.⁷⁰ For the journalist Catherine Claude, the French adaptation of *Hair* was good, but not great. In crossing the Atlantic, and then the Channel, Claude felt that something had been lost.⁷¹ On the other hand, writing for *Rock & Folk*, François-René Cristiani found the French production of *Hair* outstanding, stating that 'It is necessary to see 'Hair', once, twice, three times... ten times'.⁷² *Hair* was obviously a comedy and would not have been taken as an authentic representation of hippie life, however the production – in presenting hippie and youth ideals on stage in this manner – was still shocking for French society and saw hippie and youth ideals presented on a stage.

Contemporary literature was equally influenced by ideas about hippiedom and, in turn, influenced others through its representation of the movement. In 1969 *Les Chemins De Kathmandou* by René Barjavel was published and, although a work of fiction, caught the

⁶⁷ Chico Magnetic Band, *Chico Magnetic Band* (Disques Vogue, 1971).

Martin Circus, *Acte II* (Disques Vogue, 1971).

According to Loupien, Martin Circus's 'Je m'éclate au Sénégal' was France's first psychedelic hit. Loupien, 116.

⁶⁸ For more information on Gong, please see pages 155-159.

⁶⁹ Guibert, *La Production de la Culture*, 139-140.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 140.

Julien Clerc, 'Laissons Entrer Le Soleil', *Hair* (Odeon, 1969).

⁷¹ Catherine Claude, 'Hair', *Best*, 13 (1969), 6 (6).

⁷² 'Il faut voir 'Hair', une fois, deux fois, trois fois... dix fois'. François-René Cristiani, 'Hair', *Rock & Folk*, 30 (1969), 3-4 (3).

zeitgeist of the moment.⁷³ Its narrative centres around the journey of young hippies who travel to Kathmandu in Nepal in search of an alternative to modern day life.⁷⁴ Crucially, it was quickly picked up by director André Cayatte and was made into a film featuring the infamous couple Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin in 1969.⁷⁵ While the end of the book sees the collapse of the idealism that the young hippies started out with - and can be read as a critique of this idealism - *Les Chemins De Kathmandou* paints the hippie as a romantic figure and helped to propel the trope of the hippie into the national imaginary.

Not all responses to hippiedom were positive or romantic. The journalist Michel Lancelot, while fascinated by American hippiedom, was critical of ways in which hippiedom manifested in France.⁷⁶ In 1968 he wrote

In France, we have not understood much of this movement 'hippie', commonly called Flower Power [...]. Of this phenomenon, we have only retained flowers in the hair, colourful clothes, a bit of orientalism, several melodies of the 'Beatles' and a maxim: 'Make love, not war'.⁷⁷

In many ways, the superficiality of French hippiedom that Lancelot identifies seems undeniable. It certainly was quickly commercialised and experienced a moment of popularity.⁷⁸

The commercialisation of hippiedom has already been suggested in the previous example of *Les Fleurs De Pavot*. The French pop star France Gall's 1968 album *1968* also

⁷³ René Barjavel, *Les Chemins de Katmandou* (Paris : Presses De La Cité, 1969).

⁷⁴ The significance of this portrayal of hippiedom can be found in the re-occurring narrative of 'hippie-travels-to-Orient' following Barjavel's book as publications such as *Flash ou le Grand Voyage* by Charles Duchaussois or *H* by Brigitte Axel gave quasi-autobiographical accounts of this journey Charles Duchaussois, *Flash ou Le Grand Voyage* (Paris : Fayard, 1974). Brigitte Axel, *H* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970).

⁷⁵ *Les Chemins De Kathmandou*, by André Cayatte (1969).

⁷⁶ Lancelot argues that this lack of understanding is a result of three reasons: the poverty of the information that reached France about the subject; the consequent stereotyping and misunderstanding of critics, and the difficulty of discussing drugs, particularly on television where state censorship becomes a factor. Nevertheless, if France was void of authentic hippiedom in Lancelot's eyes, it is undeniable that French understanding of hippiedom was becoming a crucial staple of the French imaginary.

Lancelot, *Je veux regarder Dieu en Face*, 25.

⁷⁷ 'En France, on n'a pas compris grand-chose à ce mouvement « hippie », communément surnommé Flower Power [...] De ce phénomène, nous n'avons retenu que les fleurs dans les cheveux, les vêtements bigarrés, un brin d'orientalisme, quelques airs de « Beatles » et une maxime : « Faire l'amour et non la guerre »'.

Ibid.

⁷⁸ The famous Breton harpist Alan Stivell even experimented with hippiedom briefly in 1967: Alan Stivell, *Flower Power* (Fontana, 1968).

easily fits into this logic.⁷⁹ The album cover (figure 4) features floral aesthetics that were common features of hippiedom, and the music incorporates elements of psychedelia and narratives around hippiedom. The song 'Chanson Indienne' attempts to capitalise on the orientalism of hippiedom through its slow pace, use of a flute, inclusion of sitar and pseudo-Indian melodic fragments. Yet this is contrasted with songs critical, or devoid, of hippie influence and heavily inspired by *yéyé*.⁸⁰ 'Teenie Weenie Boppie' is a song that musically is firmly within the paradigms of mainstream pop. More radical is its narrative: it tells the story of a young girl who took LSD and ends her night by drowning in the Thames. These examples demonstrate that, despite the music industry's desire to tap into the hippie market, there were certain lines, such as glorifying drugs, that they were not willing to cross.

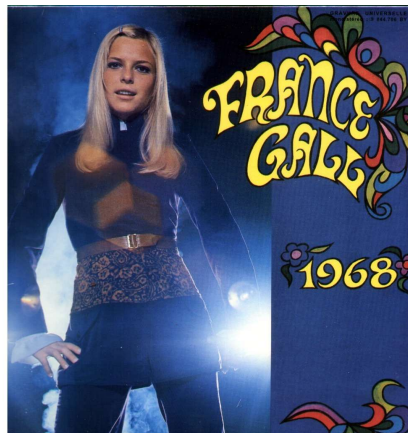


Figure 4: Front cover for France Gall's album 1968 (Philips, 1968).

Another example of a critique of French hippiedom can be found in a sketch for a New Year's special in 1967 called 'Le Bardot Show'.⁸¹ The musical sketch 'La Bise Aux Hippies' featured the French actress and superstar Brigitte Bardot, guitarist and singer Sacha Distel, alongside the multi-talented musician and songwriter Serge Gainsbourg, and mocked the superficiality of hippiedom.⁸² The lyrics are simplistic and revolve around Bardot and Distel telling the listener what they do not like, which are mainly symbols of Western consumption and literature (Aston Martin, Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Rimbaud). The chorus is the exception where Bardot and Distel tell the listener what they do like: 'kissing hippies'.⁸³ The lyrics

⁷⁹ France Gall, *1968* (Philips, 1968).

⁸⁰ Songs on the album such as 'Toi que je veux' and 'La fille d'un garçon'.

France Gall, 'Toi que je veux', *1968* (Philips, 1968).

France Gall, 'La fille d'un garçon', *1968* (Philips, 1968).

⁸¹ Dana Whitney Sherwood, *Integration by Popular Culture: Brigitte Bardot as a Transnational Icon and European Integration in the 1950s and 1960s* (Master's Thesis: University of Ottawa, 2011), 28.

⁸² Brigitte Bardot, 'La Bise Aux Hippies', *Show* (Disc' AZ, 1968),

⁸³ 'J'aime faire la bise,
La bise aux hippies'.

reduce hippiedom down to a caricature of stances for or against. The hippie is consequently positioned in opposition to Western culture, without actually having a considered critique of what it purports to be against.

The song features a guitar, electric organ, bass guitar, drum kit, percussion in reference to the tabla, and vocals. It is unclear if there was use of a sitar or not but judging by the tone and the video accompanying the sketch it is likely the sitar-like sound was made by Gainsbourg's guitar playing. The music is simplistic and revolves around a repeated verse and chorus groove with the musical interest provided in the sitar sound. The sitar sound has only two themes: a single note played at the start of each bar in the verse and a two-bar clunky phrase in the chorus. This is, once again, a comment on the superficiality perceived of hippiedom. Instead of tackling European culture, as the lyrics do, the sitar and tabla sounds reference the orientalism of hippiedom. The poor execution of these instruments, particularly the sitar-like sound, demonstrate a lack of deep knowledge of Indian music and suggest that these instruments were more for show than an object to be mastered.

Of course, a sketch is an exaggeration and cannot be taken as an accurate description of the French view of hippiedom. Nevertheless, sketches play on tropes common within society. While 'La Bise Aux Hippies' is a stereotypical portrayal of superficial hippiedom, it represents a view that hippiedom was often about posing and that many hippies did not truly embrace the ideals that they espoused philosophically. It is also worth noting that this critique must be taken with a pinch of salt, as both Bardot and Gainsbourg borrowed from hippiedom in their careers. Prior to this, Bardot had incorporated the sitar and Gainsbourg had dabbled in psychedelic soundscapes in their songs.⁸⁴ Moreover, Bardot occasionally wore outfits that were heavily influenced by hippie fashion. This is not to say they were ever committed to a hippie lifestyle, just that they incorporated the elements that suited them. In this sense the critique of 'La Bise Aux Hippies' is, in part, directed towards themselves. They are just as superficial as those that they criticise, but they are aware of how they use hippiedom and thus feel they have the power to mock it.

By the early 1970s, France had been exposed to ideas around hippiedom through a variety of mediums. It had successfully entered not only the rock press and countercultural discourse, but hippiedom was also a topic of interest for mainstream media and sociologists. Depending on the perspective, hippies were an example of liberation, degeneracy, superficiality, or a case

⁸⁴ Brigitte Bardot, 'Harley Davidson', *Harley Davidson* (Disc'AZ, 1967).
Serge Gainsbourg, 'Qui est 'in' Qui est 'out'', *Qui est 'in' Qui est 'out'* (Philips, 1966).

study to be examined. Hippiedom's influence was also felt in the realms of literature, cinema, and music and consequently, hippiedom's presence was undoubtedly witnessed by many.

2.3 Against the American Way of Life

French youth's interest in hippiedom was, in part, tied up with its identity as something particularly American. The hippie movement and its homeland of California were constructed as paradigms of modernity and tinged with exoticism and fantasy. Due to the critical role that perceptions of the USA played within this relationship, it is essential to contextualise the French interest in hippiedom within the framework of France's relationship with America throughout the 20th century, in particular, France's 'love-hate' relationship with America.⁸⁵ This relationship is one marked by the apparent threat that American cultural exports posed to the idea of French exceptionalism and an attraction to the vibrant aspects of modernity that were perceived to emanate from across the Atlantic.⁸⁶

Richard Kuisel notes that a fundamental tenet of the French-American love-hate relationship is the perception that America was 'a social model of the future'.⁸⁷ In a similar vein, Emile Chabal argues that much of the French dislike for America is due to the role that America played as 'a highly effective Other against which to imagine French exceptionalism'.⁸⁸ Thus, American success has often been understood as a challenge to the vitality of France as a nation. While the French animosity and fascination towards America stretches at least as far back as the 19th century, it was particularly after the First World War that French concerns about American modernity began to show.⁸⁹ The 1920s were a notable period for this, as the dramatic influx of Americans and their culture into France gave rise to fears surrounding the consequences of Americanisation for French national identity.⁹⁰ This was exaggerated further after the Second World War when the economic and technological strength of America was juxtaposed against a ravaged and impoverished Europe.⁹¹ The role

⁸⁵ Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanisation* (Berkley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1993), ix.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, ix-xiii.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁸⁸ Emile Chabal, 'The Rise of the Anglo-Saxon: French Perceptions of the Anglo-American World in the Long Twentieth Century', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 31/1 (2013), 24-46 (25).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-30.

Philippe Roger, *The American Enemy: The History of French anti-Americanism*, (Chicago & Bristol: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1-2.

⁹⁰ Kuisel, 10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

America played in the reconstruction of Europe and its various attempts to introduce France to its cultural and consumer goods only further heightened this fear.⁹²

America's connotations of modernity gave American products a sense of allure and excitement. During the 1920s, France enthusiastically embraced cultural exports such as jazz, movies and literature.⁹³ Similarly, certain aspects of American consumerism were successfully incorporated into French society: new models of shopping and ideas surrounding productivity primed France for the rise of mass consumerism.⁹⁴ Despite being disrupted during the Second World War, the post-war years saw a resumption of the French interest in American modernity. Having been deprived of many luxuries during the turmoil of the Second World War, post-war France was hungry for consumer goods, and America was more than eager to capitalise on these desires.⁹⁵

The attraction of American modernity also gave rise to fears of American soft imperialism. A prominent example of the cultural threat that America posed can be found in the discourses surrounding the emergence of jazz. It is undeniable that following the end of the First World War, and particularly in the 1920s, jazz received notable success in Paris. This was not only demonstrated by the large following it gained during these years, but also in the small expatriate African-American community that appeared in Paris, and the emergence of jazz bands formed by French citizens.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, despite the roaring success it received in 1920s France, jazz was subject to harsh criticism and high praise. Many critics warned against the threat that jazz posed to French morality and art: Jazz was seen as an entertainment and its popularity was an affront against the forms of high art privileged by the French elite. This was matched to a wider social concern regarding a society that was too centred on pleasure and entertainment and was paying too little attention to issues of propriety.⁹⁷

The fears about jazz epitomised a wider anxiety about American society during this period. It was not uncommon for critics to understand American society as being founded on a form of hyper capitalism that was inherently materialistic and opposed to the perceived

⁹² Kuisel, 25.

⁹³ Ellen Furlough, 'Selling the American Way in Interwar France: 'Prix Uniques' and Salons Des Arts Menagers', *Journal of Social History*, 26/3 (1993), 491-519 (491).

⁹⁴ Kuisel, 3.

⁹⁵ Kirstin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (Cambridge, MA & London: The MIT Press, 1996), 71.

⁹⁶ Colin Nettleback, *Dancing with De Beauvoir: Jazz and the French* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 33-37.

⁹⁷ Matthew F. Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 86-87.

distinguished nature of French society.⁹⁸ They were outraged by the standardisation involved in the development of American consumerism and sought state intervention to limit the corrosive influence of mass society.⁹⁹ Many of these fears carried on into the post-war years as America was seen to wax next to the waning of a war-torn Europe. Anti-Americanism rose in response to many of the fears similar to those seen in the interwar period (the erosion of French culture, fears of standardisation) as well as to the debt taken on by France as part of the American Marshall Plan.¹⁰⁰

Pertinently, the framework of this relationship can be seen to still be in existence in the 1960s. Such actions as Charles de Gaulle pulling out of NATO and the wide support he received from the public for standing up to American interests throughout the Fifth Republic showed that anti-Americanism was alive and well.¹⁰¹ Most notably *Le Défi Américain* by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber profoundly expressed the anti-Americanism felt by the French. Published in 1967 it became the best-selling book of the 1960s, and its fundamental message was a warning against the prospect of France becoming a colonial outpost of the American imperial machine.¹⁰²

Of course, popular music was one area of contention within the French-American relationship. Even the earliest adaptations of American rock'n'roll arriving in France were parodies, combining an interest in the music with an inability to take it seriously.¹⁰³ Further, when the French genre of *yéyé* emerged in the early 60s there were voices who critiqued it as a translated form of American cultural imperialism: Philippe Birgy notes that *yéyé* songs both gained the favour of those who were attracted by American culture and gave fuel to growing discourse surrounding American soft imperialism.¹⁰⁴ Even in music magazines there is evidence that youth were concerned with the hegemony of American culture. The teen magazine *Salut les Copains*, famous for its association with the *yéyé* phenomenon, acted as a site where questions around national identity and the threat of Americanisation were asked. As early as 1962, *Salut Les Copains* readers were questioning whether a French rock would or

⁹⁸ Furlough, 491.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 501-502.

¹⁰⁰ Kuisel, 140-142.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 142.

¹⁰² Ibid., 154

¹⁰³ Briggs, 19-20.

¹⁰⁴ Philippe Birgy, '« Si cette histoire vous amuse, on peut la recommencer » : Le yéyé et l'importation de la contre-culture américaine', *Volume! La Revue Des Musiques Populaires*, 9/1 (2012), 155-67 (152).

could be created, thereby demonstrating a love of an American cultural product and also a fear of the consequences of not developing a national variety.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, both French *yéyé* stars and anglophone pop acts received notable attention amongst the youth press during this period. It is also undeniable that the practice of ‘adapting’ American songs into a French style was not uncommon, and by the end of the decade over thirty percent of the French chart was occupied by songs sung in English.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that the market was willing to consume anglophone cultural products, even if certain critics demonstrated anxieties about the consequences this would have for French national identity.

Hippiedom posed a moral problem for France and received some criticism because of this. In the second half of the 1960s, *Salut Les Copains* was torn between commenting on the intriguing aspects of hippiedom and censoring the perceived dangerous aspects such as drugs, once again suggesting both a fascination with, and fear of, American cultural products.¹⁰⁷ However, societal critiques are not where the love-hate dialectic is most strongly articulated. Instead, the archetypal hippie was constructed as an embodiment of France’s love-hate relationship: the hippie was both *of America* and *anti-American*.¹⁰⁸ In other words, by constructing the hippie as American internal Other, the French could justify an interest and engagement with hippie culture, as well as an anti-American stance.

The hippie could both represent the attractive qualities of America and act as a symbol of opposition against those deemed less so. They were seen as embodying a modernity and ‘a social model of the future’.¹⁰⁹ In his book *Journal of Californie* the sociologist Edgar Morin praised California by saying that it was ‘the cultural hotbed of the American future’.¹¹⁰ Morin was not only impressed with the modernity of American houses and expansive highways, but was also fascinated by ‘the communes, the tribes, the Armed Love’ of what he calls ‘the new civilisation’.¹¹¹

Morin was not alone in this perception, the journalist Alain Dister also cast the West Coast of America as a site of importance. In a piece written for the magazine *Rock & Folk* in

¹⁰⁵ Kirk Anderson, ‘Song ‘adaptations’ and the globalisation of French pop, 1960 – 1970’, *French Cultural Studies*, 26/3 (2015), 330-342 (334-335).

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, 334-335.

¹⁰⁷ Marc Savev, ‘Deux exemples de presse musicale jeune en France, de 1966 à 1969 : *Salut Les Copains* et *Rock & Folk*’, *Volume !: La revue des musiques populaires*, 3/1 (2004) 5-28 (13).

¹⁰⁸ Morin, 76.

¹⁰⁹ Kuisel, ix.

¹¹⁰ ‘Le bouillon de culture de la future Amérique’.

Morin, 16.

¹¹¹ ‘les communes, les tribues, les *armed Love*’[sic], ‘La nouvelle civilisation’.

Ibid., 46.

1967, Dister travels across America from New York to San Francisco. While he finds a great cultural richness on the East Coast, it is in the West Coast where Dister locates a vision of the future. As soon as Dister arrives in Hollywood, the American West Coast is presented as a place of glamour and creativity. It is here that Dister recounts his numerous near misses of famous musicians and groups including ‘the Mamas & Papas, the Byrds and Elvis Presley’.¹¹² Nevertheless, he does manage to sit in on a recording session of Sonny and Cher and party with the Rolling Stones, as well as spend time with the Mothers of Inventions and watch free jazz being played on the beach to the sounds of anti-war cries.¹¹³ Things only get better once Dister arrives in San Francisco. He might not have access to the same big names, but he discovers a world ‘where everything is new, where everything is created’ and where the ‘people are magnificent’.¹¹⁴ He advises his French readership to ‘[k]eep an eye on San Francisco: It is there that the future Beatles or Stones will come from’.¹¹⁵ Dister clearly believes San Francisco to be a site of critical importance and reinforces the common trope in his writing that America equals modernity.

Similarly, the journalist and later presenter of the radio show *Campus* Michel Lancelot was also taken with the apparent vitality of the American West Coast. In a book that tells of his experiences with hippies, Lancelot exposes all the foreignness of the hippie movement, exploring everything from communes to LSD and the variations of Christianity that became associated with the movement. Most importantly, Lancelot considers the ‘beatniks’ and particularly ‘the hippies’ as an evolved form of subculture, one that ‘acts in a completely other dimension’. He contrasts them with previous subculture groups such as the French *blouson noirs*, the Roman *vitelloni* or the British mods.¹¹⁶ The hippies have abandoned any thuggishness of the aforementioned groups and have instead created a form of contestation born out of worldviews such as sociology, orientalism and psychoanalysis.

The modern aspects of the hippie were matched with discussions of the points of dissonance between them and mainstream American culture. In 1970 the journalist Jean-

¹¹² Alain Dister, ‘Rock, Folk et beatnik aux USA’, in Gilles Verlant (ed.), *Le Rock et La Plume: Le rock raconté par les meilleurs journalistes 1960-1975* (Edition Hors Collection: 1999), 46-5 (49).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ ‘Où tout est neuf, où tout se crée’.

‘Garde un œil ouvert sur San Francisco : c’est de là que viendront les futurs Beatles et autres Stones’.
‘Quel peuple magnifique’.

Dister, ‘Rock, Folk et beatnik aux USA’, 51.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ ‘nos « blouson noirs », les *vitelloni romains*’ and ‘*rockers et mods* britanniques’.

‘Les « hippies » ont évolué et agi dans une tout autre dimension’.
Lancelot, *Je veux regarder Dieu en Fance*, 24-25.

François Revel opened his book *Ni Marx, Ni Jesus* with the line: 'The revolution of the 20th century will take place in the United States'.¹¹⁷ While few stated this perception with such determination, the idea that American culture was the genesis of a significant cultural shift was far from uncommon in France at this time. In a similar vein, Edgar Morin states that he is attracted to the 'American youth because they revolt against *the American Way of Life*' and, as Kuisel highlights, by doing so Morin places the anti-Americanism of the French left in the same political camp as the emerging American counterculture.¹¹⁸

By paying attention to the elements of hippiedom that deviated from mainstream American values, a critical discourse emerged showing hippiedom as a form of internal revolt. A notable example is found in an early piece written on psychedelic music for the magazine *Bande à Part* in 1967. Throughout the article, the author François Jouffa shocks and tantalises his reader with the exoticness of the American hippie: he cites little known and orientalist practices such as a macrobiotic diet which balances 'yin' and 'yang' food, or meditation and Hinduism, as well as scandalising topics such as LSD. However, it is the opening section of the article that is the most shocking:

In the satanic church of San Francisco, the young prince of darkness Anton Lavey, a doctor of sorcery, has celebrated the first psychedelic marriage. The bride was dressed in red. A young naked girl was stretched out on a table of surgical operation. A real lion was held by a skeleton.¹¹⁹

The use of imagery that not only deviates from social norms but, through the ideas of Satanism, actively runs against it demonstrates the extent to which hippies were perceived to be revolting against the values of the society in which they were enmeshed. Jouffa was not alone in this representation of hippiedom as quasi-religious. The journalist and radio presenter Michel Lancelot describes two hippie music venues as a 'cathedral' and a 'psychedelic temple'.¹²⁰ Similarly, Edgar Morin calls the venue *The Matrix* a 'temple of rock' and

¹¹⁷ 'La révolution du vingtième siècle aura lieux aux Etats-Unis'.

Jean-François Revel, *Ni Marx, Ni Jesus* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1970), 9.

¹¹⁸ 'la jeunesse américaine parce qu'en révolte contre *l'american way of life*'.

Morin, 76.

Kuisel, 199.

¹¹⁹ 'Dans l'église satanique de San Francisco, le jeune prince des ténèbres Anton Lavey, docteur en sorcellerie, a célébré le premier mariage psychédélique. La mariée était vêtue de rouge. Une jeune fille nue était étendue sur une table d'opération chirurgicale. Un vrai lion était tenu en laisse par un squelette'.

François Jouffa, 'Psychedelic Music' in Verlant, Gilles (ed.), *Le Rock et La Plume: Le rock raconté par les meilleurs journalistes 1960-1975* (Edition Hors Collection: 1999), 42-45 (42).

¹²⁰ Lancelot, 232 & 235.

comments on the performance by The Sons of Champlin by saying ‘there is something mystical and religious in that music which reaches sublime moments of hysteria.’¹²¹

These images of religion were tied into a wider narrative of primitivism that surrounded hippiedom. Visiting a *park-in* in Hollywood during his time in California, Morin comments on the attire of the people in the parade, stating that they ‘resemble a non-industrialised humanity’, particularly citing the ‘Indian model’.¹²² Later, in his discussion of counterculture, Morin reinforces the importance of primitivism as a fundamental category for the movement. Amongst all the key points Morin gives, there is a strong belief that the fundamental purpose of the hippie is to escape the corruptions of modern society. Indeed, he argues that the hippies are fuelled by a *mélange* of philosophies that incorporate ‘a primitive Christianity, a primitive neo-communism’ as well as spiritual explorations through Asian philosophies and drugs.¹²³ Other texts that discuss hippiedom follow along similar lines: Revel suggests that the ideology of ‘confused orientalism and dubious primitivism’, and the majority of Lancelot’s book explores aspects of primitivism, such as the hippie version of Christianity and the retreat to nature.¹²⁴

This was not the first time that the French had relied upon the idea of the internal Other as a means of navigating the complexities of their American love-hate relationship. Beginning in the 1920s, a discourse emerged casting the African-American into a similar role. As a result of the popularity of jazz and the negrophilia that swept the genre during these years, the African-American was valorised as America’s internal Other.¹²⁵ This internal Otherness was constructed as a consequence of the racism that African-Americans were seen, by the French, to be subjected to in the United States, and the threat that American modernity posed to the perceived inherent ‘primitivism’ of the African-American. Through this construction,

¹²¹ ‘temple du rock’.

‘Il y a quelque chose de mystique et de religieux dans cette musique qui atteint des moments sublimes dans l’hystérie’.

Morin, 140.

¹²² ‘ressembler à l’humanité non industrielle’.

‘le modèle indien’.

Morin, 72.

¹²³ ‘du néo-christianisme primitif, du néo-communisme primitif’.

Morin doesn’t recognise the engagement with drugs and asian philosophies as primitive, although part of the attraction to of these ideas are that they were imagined to exist untainted by the decadence of modernity.

Morin, 136.

¹²⁴ Revel, 229-230.

¹²⁵ Andy Fry, *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920-1960* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 56-57.

listening to African-American jazz became a way in which the French could engage with this exciting form of modernity, while feeling that they were actually critiquing America. Indeed, the construction of the African-American as an internal Other can be seen to be perpetuated until at least the early 1970s – coterminous to the construction of the hippie as an internal Other – when authors such as Philippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli cast the African-American as being part of an anti-colonial struggle against American oppression.¹²⁶

There is, of course, a plethora of differences between the French construction of both the hippie and the African-American. However, being aware of the similar construction of the African-American as an internal Other, and therefore a medium in the French American love-hate relationship, sheds light on the tropes that the French used to navigate this relationship: 1) both the African-American and the hippie allowed access to choice aspects of American modernity; 2) the primitivist perspective taken on both (albeit a biological primitivism for the African-American and a cultural primitivism for the hippie) shows a simultaneous desire to avoid feeling overwhelmed by American modernity; 3) their construction as internal Others allowed critiques of America and its politics (including racism and the Vietnam war).

The construction of the hippie as an internal Other of America did not emerge without precedent. It is clear from the similarities between the French construction of the African-American and the hippie that there were several core themes within this construction. In the long-term it was important that the hippie was constructed with this political edge. It differentiated the movement from previous American subcultural styles and legitimised a sense of community with a distant youth movement. Through its adoption, and the critiques of the French misunderstanding of the movement, the French interest in hippiedom ultimately laid the foundations for the more established French counterculture that would emerge at the end of the 60s and start of the 70s.

2.4 A Tale of Two San Franciscos

The construction of the hippie as an internal Other may have allowed French youth to overcome the barrier of France's love-hate relationship with America, but various other points of identification had to be created in order to manage the perceived difference of hippiedom. The scholars Heide Fehrenbach and Uta Poiger note that America has a history of offering European youth 'alternative modes of identification' that allow 'the shaping of new

¹²⁶ Phillipe Carles & Jean-Louis Comolli, *Free Jazz Black Power* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

identities'.¹²⁷ Consequently, one of hippiedom's roles was to allow for a sense of differentiation from mainstream French society. The use of external elements to differentiate youth culture existed within a much larger narrative in France, and this is particularly true in relation to the use of American cultural products. In the Second World War, jazz culture was used as form of symbolic resistance against the Vichy government and the arrival of rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s was foundational for the formation of the subcultural group called the *blouson noirs* who adopted imagery from American films (particularly 'leather jackets and greased hair') as a way of distinguishing themselves as socio-cultural group.¹²⁸

The arrival of hippiedom in the 1960s follows a similar impetus for distinction from parental generations but also ties into a desire for intra-generational differentiation. As mentioned in the first section of this paper, the first half the 1960s was dominated by the youth culture of the *copains*, which revolved around *yéyé* music. This youth culture was founded on a perception of French youth as one homogenous cultural group and attempted to present itself as respectable to wider society. Hippiedom arrived as a disruptor to this ideology and presented an alternative based on individualism and anti-establishmentarianism. However, while hippiedom was constructed as an alternative to the mainstream culture, the perceived Otherness of hippiedom had to be overcome in order to allow its identification with the American hippie to be tangible. I will explore two strategies with which points of identification were created: 1) the reliance of the trope of America as a vision of the future; and 2) the creation of an impression of travel to places such as San Francisco, thus invoking a sense of imaginary tourism and transnational connection.

For Richard Kuisel's argument that America was seen as a 'social model of the future' for France to be true, France has to see itself as both similar and different to America.¹²⁹ For America to be able to act as a futuristic vision it has to be similar enough to France that the vision offered appears as a realistic and conceivable possibility for the nation. Following this logic, when journalists such as Edgar Morin or Alain Dister praise the modernity and innovation of the hippie subculture of San Francisco, they are also situating these cultural

¹²⁷ Heide Fehrenbach, & Uta G. Poiger, 'Introduction: Americanization Reconsidered' in Heide Fehrenbach, & Poiger, Uta G. Poiger (eds.), *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), xiv-xv.

¹²⁸ Matthew F. Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 232. Briggs, 24.

¹²⁹ Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanisation* (Berkley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1993), ix.

communities as the innovators of an international youth culture.¹³⁰ Thus, hippiedom was presented as an aspirational model for French youth culture.

A notable example of the reliance on the 'America as a vision of the future' trope is found in Johnny Hallyday's adaptation of 'San Francisco', most famously sung by Scott McKenzie.¹³¹ Released in 1967 'San Francisco' hit the market as France was swept by the hippie craze.¹³² Simultaneously, Hallyday adopted the hippie fashion style, despite only the year before mocking the hippie movement's aesthetics and philosophy.¹³³ Hallyday, in this instance, acts both an indicator and influencer of popular taste. By this point bursts of moral outrage had occurred in France in response to hippiedom, particularly drugs, and its influence had begun to be felt musically, thus Hallyday cannot be said to be an instigator.¹³⁴ Equally, hippiedom had not reached its apex of popularity in France and Hallyday, as one of France's biggest music stars, undoubtedly contributed to its popularity.

Hallyday's adoption of hippie attire might signify his belief in the possibility of a French integration into the hippie community, but a comparative analysis of the lyrics sung by Hallyday with the lyrics sung by McKenzie reveals the ideological differences involved in the production of the song, and therefore something of the ways in which these songs would have been perceived ideologically by their target audiences. One notable level of difference is the sense of inclusion and exclusion that is present McKenzie's lyrics. He asks us to 'wear some flowers in your hair' and tells us that 'you're going to meet some gentle people there'. The

¹³⁰ Edgar Morin, *Journal de Californie* (Paris: Edition de Seuil, 1970).

Alain Dister, 'Rock, Folk et beatnik aux USA', in Verlant, Gilles (ed.) *Le Rock et La Plume: Le rock raconté par les meilleurs journalistes 1960-1975* (Edition Hors Collection: 1999), 46-51.

¹³¹ Johnny Hallyday, 'San Francisco', *San Francisco* (Philips, 1967).

Scott McKenzie, 'San Francisco', *San Francisco* (CBS, 1967).

¹³² David L. Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France: Authenticity, Politics, Debate*, (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003), 30.

¹³³ Johnny Hallyday, 'Cheveux Longs et Idées Courtes' (Philips, 1966).

¹³⁴ A discussion of drugs did shock 1960s France, but by the early 1970s there was certainly a fascination with it. Considering texts such René Barjavel's *Les Chemins De Katmandou*, Charles Duchaussois's autobiographical, and drug-fuelled, adventure *Flash ou le grand voyage*, or the 1972 French translation of *Go Ask Alice (L'herbe bleue)*, an American novel that describes itself as 'the diary of a young, 15 year old, drug addict'. There was certainly enough of a market to inspire a series of discussions on the topic and did not shy away from shocking their audience with some of the most atrocious outcomes of drug misuse. If Michel Lancelot's comments about the lack of information on drugs in France were true (see page 53, footnote 75), then the amount of discussion on drugs must have increased rapidly after 1968.

René Barjavel, *Les Chemins de Katmandou* (Paris : Presses De La Cité, 1969).

Les Chemins De Kathmandou, by André Cayatte (1969).

Charles Duchaussois, *Flash ou Le Grand Voyage* (Paris : Fayard, 1974).

Anon, *L'herbe bleue: journal intime d'une jeune droguée* (Paris : Presses de la cité, 1972).

Anon, *Go Ask Alice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

Michel Lancelot, *Je veux regarder Dieu en Fance (Le phénomène hippie)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968).

listener is involved in McKenzie's song, they are told that if they choose to come to San Francisco they will be welcomed and integrated into the community. On the other hand, Hallyday's lyrics are more detached. He states that 'you will see people gentle and kind' and 'you will see flowers in the hair'. The frequency with which 'see' reoccurs in Hallyday's adaptation places the listener in the position of an observer, as someone who is distant from what is happening. Further, Hallyday actively names the people of San Francisco as 'hippies' — a word not mentioned in McKenzie's version — and, by doing so, situates the hippies as external.¹³⁵ Through the act of naming, the hippie becomes an Other and assumes an identity that must be overcome in order to be integrated.

Hallyday's adaptation does offer his listener a sense that they have the potential to be included within the hippie movement. Hallyday does mention the possibility of these hippies 'becoming your friends' and suggests that the listener shares the same values as the hippies when he sings: 'just like them you will say no to the hate, to the passions. We are all friends on this earth'.¹³⁶ Yet, the biggest statement of inclusion comes in the closing lines:

À Paris comme San Francisco
On verra beaucoup de gens comme eux¹³⁷

In Paris, like San Francisco
We will see lots of people like them

This line, which has no equivalent in McKenzie's version, reveals a lot about the ideological underpinning of Hallyday's adaptation.¹³⁸ Suddenly the listener is transported from the sunny paradise of San Francisco to the francophone capital of Paris. Paris is becoming an equivalent, even an equal, of San Francisco. It is implied that Paris will embrace the same qualities and values as San Francisco and will be populated by similar sorts of people. The musical changes that existed between Hallyday's adaptation and McKenzie's version are important to consider. This is particularly true because French audiences were aware of both versions, as evidenced by their appearance in the French charts, and indeed

¹³⁵ Lancelot, *Je veux regarder Dieu en France*.

¹³⁶ 'Tout comme eux vous direz non
A la haine aux passions
On est tous frères
Sur cette Terre'.

¹³⁷ These lyrics are taken from Author Unknown, 'San Francisco', *Paroles*, <http://www.paroles.net/johnny-hallyday/paroles-san-francisco> (19th April, 2017), and cross referenced with author's own transcription.

¹³⁸ Or indeed in any other version this author has yet found.

Scott McKenzie's version held its position in the charts significantly longer than Hallyday's.¹³⁹

Time (2:58)	'San Francisco'
0:00	Opening with acoustic guitar and light percussion
0:06	Vocals enter and verse 1 begins
0:42	Verse 2 and claps begin
1:19	Bridge
1:27	Sitar 1 st line begins
1:42	Sitar 2 nd line begins
1:50	Verse 3 begins
2:26	Outro

Table 1: Analysis of Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco' (CBS, 1967).

Time (3:09)	'San Francisco'
0:00	Opens with bells
0:02	Guitar enters
0:08	Vocals enter and verse 1 begins
0:44	Verse 2 begins and organ enters
1:24	Bridge
1:58	Verse 3 begins
2:36	Outro: 'In Paris, like San Francisco'

Table 2: Analysis of Johnny Hallyday's 'San Francisco' (Philips, 1967).

Hallyday's adaptation is slightly longer and slightly slower than McKenzie's, but structurally these two versions have much in common. However, there are notable differences in musical choices. The absence of the hand claps in Hallyday's version is one significant difference. Within McKenzie's version the clap signifies a sense of community. It is something that all can do to together without any musical training and creates an impression of physical proximity with others. The removal of this element in Hallyday's adaptation fosters a greater level of estrangement within the song. McKenzie's claps begin at the start of the second verse and at the same location in Hallyday's version, an electric organ enters. This organ creates something of a dreamlike effect helping to place San Francisco and the hippie as fantastical.

¹³⁹ Top France notes that Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco' first appears in the charts in September 1967 and remains there until December 1967. Hallyday's appears in October 1967 and remains until January 1968.

Author Unknown, 'Top 1967, *Top France*, <http://www.top-france.fr/html/1967/0167.htm> (accessed 03/12/2020)

Author Unknown, 'Top 1968, *Top France*, <http://www.top-france.fr/html/1968/0168.htm> (accessed 03/12/2020).

Perhaps one of the most distinctive musical changes in Hallyday's adaptation is the shift in tone of the guitar: McKenzie's version features a guitar tone that emphasises the treble whilst Hallyday's guitar is much more earthy and stresses the bass frequencies. The reasons for this difference in tone are unclear. It may have been an inability on Hallyday's team to recreate McKenzie's sound or it may have been a decision to compliment the treble provided by Hallyday's percussion and organ. In the bars immediately preceding and during Hallyday's singing of 'In Paris, like San Francisco' the music takes a dramatic turn. While following the same protocol as McKenzie's version, Hallyday's adaptation emphasises the electric bass and exaggerates the guitar through a distorted strum and lowers the volume in a way that juxtaposes against the rest of the song. These few bars represent a quasi-rebellion within the internal aesthetics of the song and, when considered in context of the shifting from San Francisco to Paris, transplant the hippie rebellion to France.

Hallyday presents San Francisco as a possible future for France. By placing the listener as an outsider to an idealised, exotic hippie community of San Francisco, a sense of alienation emerges, creating a growing desire for integration into this community, which is released at the end of the song. Through the aesthetic shift and the promise that Paris will be like San Francisco, the listener's alienation is alleviated, and thus, San Francisco is presented as a model of Paris's future, a future when Paris has joined the transnational youth movement of hippiedom.

The second point of identification found in musical and extra-musical discourse surrounding hippiedom is that of travel, or at the very least the potential of travel. Throughout the 1960s, and particularly after the events of 1968, travel had become increasingly desirable and ever more achievable for many French youths. Consequently, travel caught the imagination of many of those for whom it was not a realistic possibility. This led to a demand for alternative ways of experiencing travel, without having to actually undertake a journey. Paul Longley Arthur argues travelogues have the 'liberating effect of transporting readers to new imaginative terrains'.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, songs such as Michel Corringe's 1968 single 'La Route' and various forms of travelogue, both real and imagined, received notable success.¹⁴¹ As America was much further away than London or Berlin, it was less of a realistic prospect for the mass public, and thus the accounts of America that music critics or other writers sent

¹⁴⁰ Paul Longley Arthur, 'Capturing the antipodes: Imaginary voyages and the romantic imagination', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 25/67 (2001), 168-195 (189).

¹⁴¹ Richard Ivan Jobs, 'Les Soixante-Routards: travel, generation, and 1968', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 26/1 (2018), 1-14 (5-6).

back to France were increasingly important. These reports could offer the readers the opportunity to embark on an imaginary voyage and become familiar with the distant sun-soaked lands of California, or the bohemian metropolis of New York.

Yet, beyond acting as a form of imaginary travel, travel writing also symbolised a potential or imaginary inclusion in the transnational community of hippiedom. Travel was seen not only as a personal experience, but also as a social experience. Richard Ivan Jobs argues that travel came to be considered as a way 'to participate in a broader transnational youth culture' and claims that one of the ways in which travellers measured the success of their travel was through the extent to which they encountered other travellers.¹⁴² Consequently, more than just a form of imagined voyage, the surrogate form of travel involved in accounts of America did not only act as a form of imaginary voyage, but also became a way of fictionalising an integration into the imagined transnational hippie community.

Music was also an important medium that allowed French youth to construct an imagined community with American youth. In the same way that travel literature can act as a form of surrogate voyage for the reader, the 'travel song' similarly allows the listener to engage in a form of imaginary travel; the listener is taken along with the singer and feels a sense of shared experience. Maxime Le Forestier's 1972 single 'San Francisco' is another example of the travel song and provides a greater insight into the construction of the hippie. By the time of Le Forestier's 'San Francisco' the French had had adequate time to become familiar with, and create their own mythology of, hippiedom. Consequently, there had been more direct contact between the American hippies and the French. Le Forestier is one of the privileged few who spent time in San Francisco and engaged with hippies, having passed the summer of 1971 there with his sister.¹⁴³ 'San Francisco' is presented as a reminiscence of his time there and, while it may appear more sincere than Hallyday's 'San Francisco' due to Le Forestier's first-hand experience, it similarly portrays California, especially San Francisco, as an exotic location.

Le Forestier's recollection of his time in San Francisco imbues the song with a sense of nostalgia and longing. In particular the 'blue house backed on to the hill' that appears in both the opening and closing verse and the naming of people such as 'Lizzard', 'Luc', 'Sylvia', 'Tom' and 'Phil' invokes a sense of recollection of the past. This nostalgia is built

¹⁴² Jobs, 3-4.

¹⁴³ Maxime Le Forestier, *Né Quelque Part* (Paris: Don Quichotte, 2011), 57.

on top of this in the chorus when Le Forestier's asks Lizzard and Luc 'where are you?' and for Sylvia to 'wait for me'.¹⁴⁴ The greater sense of space made in the instrumental accompaniment of single lines played by the guitars under these lyrics furthers this sense of nostalgia by allowing a moment of reflection and poignancy before returning to the verse.

Within the song Le Forestier constructs San Francisco as a site based on a drastically different worldview. In the opening stanza, he mentions that those who live in the 'blue house' he stayed in had 'thrown away the key'. The abandonment of the ability to lock a house is radical: it suggests both a lack of attachment to material goods and an openness to people coming and going, and it paints San Francisco as a friendly, safe place. This idea is expanded upon throughout with the communal image that Le Forestier creates. These friends in San Francisco eat their meals together, listen and play music together, and by referencing the recounting of news from distant friends, it is clear that the community extends outside of San Francisco.¹⁴⁵

Time (2:59)	'San Francisco'
0:04	Introduction: two acoustic guitars
0:13	Vocals enter
0:40	Refrain
0:52	'Lizzard et Luc'
1:03	Verse 2 & bass guitar enters & density of song increases
1:29	Refrain
1:41	'Lizzard et Luc'
1:54	Verse 3: increased density and volume
2:19	Refrain
2:32	'Lizzard et Luc'
2:40	Coda

Table 3: Analysis of Maxime Le Forestier's 'San Francisco' (Polydoor, 1972).

Importantly, Le Forestier marks out the difference – in attitudes, in activities, in community – and emphasises the exoticness of the hippie and San Francisco. This difference entices the French imagination and suggests alternative ways of being. As a consequence of the autobiographical nature of the song, Le Forestier takes the listener on an imaginary journey or, at the very least, signifies the possibility of taking that journey. The difference of San Francisco and hippiedom is then presented as manageable; as something into which the listener can integrate. On a deeper level, underneath the superficial difference, this suggests

¹⁴⁴ 'Où êtes-vous?

Lizzard et Luc

Psylvia, attendez-moi'.

¹⁴⁵ 'C'est une maison bleue'

'Ont jeté la clé'.

the possibility of a fundamental similarity between the American hippie and Le Forestier's listeners. By doing so Le Forestier proposes that a transnational community between the two youth cultures is possible.

The ability to identify with, and integrate into, the transnational hippie community was clearly important. The figure of the hippie was presented as embodying Otherness, through both its association with America and its exploration of alternative modes of life. As outlined in the introduction, the impetus for this came from a desire for differentiation from both parental and mainstream youth culture. Difference was, therefore, one of the crucial elements of hippiedom's attraction for the French youth as it allowed the creation of a different kind of identity founded on non-normative values. This Otherness had to be tempered in order for it to be something the French could amalgamate themselves into. Hippiedom was consequently constructed as something different enough to provide a challenge for French parental authorities and the *copains* but similar enough so that it was possible for French youth to integrate into it.

Ultimately, the theme that joins these two songs together is the potentiality encoded within them. Within Hallyday's 'San Francisco' there is the potential for France to become like San Francisco, and in McKenzie's 'San Francisco' there is a potential for travel. These songs mark a desire to be part of a transnational community founded upon the ethos of hippiedom. Hallyday's 'San Francisco' is a clear early sign of this and provides a hint at the transnational perspective that the counterculture would later adopt in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Le Forestier, on the other hand, is singing during the prime years of France's counterculture and exemplifies the continued transnational perspective. This imagined community that existed between France and the American hippie is a fundamental part of the process of differentiation that the French youth found in hippiedom. Instead of identifying with the community of the *copains* or the ideology of the state, they situated themselves as part of a transnational youth community bound by a similar search for alternative modes of existence.

2.5 Conclusion

In many ways the French desire to be part of a transnational hippie community centred on the American hippie movement reinforces centre-periphery models of musical and cultural dissemination. The French youth at this time certainly saw themselves as peripheral during at least the initial years of their interest in hippiedom. However, to take such a view denies the

agency of French youth in constructing a mythology of hippie and the creativity involved in finding a means of identification and utility through identification with a foreign cultural community. The figure of the hippie was reconstructed in France and was often articulated through French voices to meet French needs.

As I have argued throughout this chapter, many factors were involved in forming an environment that not only welcomed hippiedom but found it a useful tool for distinction. First, youth was valorised in post-war France and fashioned within the logic of a national project of reconstruction. The birth of *yéyé* and the cultural community of the *copains* emerged as French youth were becoming increasingly self-defined and allowed a community to form through popular music and culture in a significant way for the first time. Hippiedom arrived as a disruption to the ideology of universalism present within the *copain* community and ushered in an era of intra-generational conflict, individuation, and pluralism.

Yet, it would be wrong to say that hippiedom was simply imported into France, rather it was reconstructed to make sense within the historical love-hate relationship between France and the USA. This construction of the figure of the hippie placed it as an internal Other within the United States of America and marked it with difference: this difference was essential for allowing an identification with hippiedom to be seen as rebellious for French youth. Yet in order for this difference to be something with which the French youth could identify, points of identification had to be created. With regard to song, a sense of potential inclusion was forged by presenting the hippie movement as a vision of the future into which France would soon be integrated and/or through allowing the listener to embark on an imaginary travel to these communities and consequently experience a sense of inclusion.

The French scholar Philippe Birgy positions America as an ‘Orient that France draws from to reinvigorate and renew itself’.¹⁴⁶ Birgy’s point exemplifies that the centre in the French-American hippie relationship does not simply imply a hegemonic, cultural imperialist machine, but rather it becomes a source of inspiration, a quasi-imaginary site on which French youth could project their ideals. The material culture that emanated out of it was deconstructed and reconstructed on French terms and became, at least, as much of a French cultural product as an American one. During this process the Otherness of the hippie was retained as it was this difference that gave the figure of the hippie its power. By then identifying with this Otherness, the French hippie could differentiate themselves intra- and

¹⁴⁶ ‘Un Orient auquel la France a recours pour se surprendre et se renouveler’. Philippe Birgy, ‘« Si cette histoire vous amuse, on peut la recommencer » : Le yéyé et l’importation de la contre-culture américaine’, *Volume!*, 9/1 (2012), 155–167, (158).

inter-generationally and consequently, the peripheral position of French hippiedom was one that the French hippies – at least in part and initially – imposed upon themselves.

Chapter 3: The French Folk Revival

The title of *Rock & Folk* is revealing; it illustrates that from the magazine's establishment in 1966 that folk music and rock music were considered to be complementary genres. Consequently, it is evident that the editorial staff of *Rock & Folk* were attempting to capitalise on the already established connection between the rock and folk communities within the American and British counterculture and that was taking place within the French counterculture.¹ As the connection between these two genres was apparent to the French counterculture itself, when it comes to considering the ways in which the French musical countercultural situated itself transnationally, it makes logical sense to include folk music within this study.

In this chapter I will consider the French musical and extra-musical discourse surrounding the folk revival, within a countercultural context, during the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, the engagement between the French folk revival and the French counterculture ties into the larger narrative of the national Self and Other that is central to this study. This is due to the reliance of the trope of the 'peasant' within the folk revival's discourse. In the strictest sense the French peasant cannot be considered a national Other, yet its position as an internal Other within France bears many resonances with the role of the national Others of the countercultures of the UK and USA. Due to the declining numbers of rural citizens and urban-based nature of the French counterculture, the peasant was distant enough to be imbued with elements of fantasy but near enough to feel tangible. The level of fantasy that was associated with the French countryside and peasant became a crucial way of connecting the French folk revival, and the French musical counterculture, to a notion of French national identity. At the same time the focus on folk music occurring in other countercultures imbued folk music with a sense of transnational connectedness.

On a general level, the field of folk revival studies has been growing since the early 1990s.² Collected volumes such as Neil Rosenberg's *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music*

¹ This is not to say that *Rock & Folk* were the instigators in the connection between the rock and folk communities in France. Rather, *Rock & Folk* is one of the clearest examples of the relationship between the two and was a principal actor in continuing these ties.

² Neil V. Rosenberg's 'A folklorist's exploration of the revival metaphor' makes it clear that the field of folk revival was coherently established before this period. Neil V., Rosenberg, 'A folklorist's exploration of the revival metaphor', in Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 94-115 (94).

Revivals Examined laid some crucial foundations for the contemporary field of folk revival studies. In the following years *Transforming Tradition* would be followed by influential texts, such as Tamara E. Livingston's 'Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory', Owe Ronström's 'Revival reconsidered' and Max Peter Baumann's 'Folk music Revival: Concepts between regression and emancipation'.³ More recently, increased interest in the field of revival studies has seen a growing engagement with this topic: *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* was published in 2014 and explores revivalism as concept, and dedicates several chapters to folk music;⁴ several texts have emerged on the UK and USA folk musical revival;⁵ and a popular example of interest in revivalism appealing to an audience beyond academia can be found in Rob Young's *Electric Eden*, which tackles folk rock's growth and context in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶

The current literature on the French folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s, especially from a countercultural perspective, is slim. Within the English-language scholarship on the subject, the majority of research focuses on a specific region and its associated folk revival as its site of enquiry. Whether it is Brittany, Occitania or Béarn, the starting point is the region, after which questions of external perception may be raised.⁷ The most relevant research on this topic in English scholarship has been conducted by Jonathyne Briggs, who argues that the

For a fuller overview of the development of revival scholarship please see: Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, 'An introduction to music revival as concept, cultural process, and medium of change', in Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 3-42 (5-9).

³ Tamara E. Livingston, 'Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory', *Ethnomusicology*, 41/1 (1996), 66-85.

Owe Ronström, 'Revival reconsidered', *The World of Music*, 3 (1996), 5-20.

Max Peter Baumann, 'Folk music revival: Concepts between regression and emancipation', *The World of Music*, 3 (1996), 71-86.

⁴ Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

⁵ Gillian Mitchell, *The North American folk music revival: nation and identity in the United States and Canada 1945-1980* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007).

Matthew Ord, *Sound recording in the British folk revival: ideology, discourse and practice, 1950-1975* (Ph.D. thesis: Newcastle University, 2017).

⁶ Rob Young, *Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music* (London: Faber, 2011)

⁷ Some examples of the heavy focus on folk music and regionalism can be found in:

Maryon McDonald, *We Are Not French!: Language, culture and identity in Brittany* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).

Donna Weston, 'Béarn Folk Rock: Language, Place and the Soundscape of the New Europe', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 33/2 (2012), 157-174.

Virgine Magnat, 'Occitan Music Revitalization as Radical Cultural Activism: From Postcolonial Regionalism to Altermondialisation', *Popular Music and Society* 40/1 (2017), 61-74.

Breton folk revival's incorporation of rock and pop sounds was crucial for making the music, and issues, of Brittany relevant to the outside world.⁸

The field of folk revival studies is not as large in France as it appears to be in the UK and the USA – although, there certainly has been research on French regionalism – and there is very little in the way of discussion of the connections between the folk revival and counterculture or of the folk revival as a movement connected to urban centres.⁹ A notable exception is François Gasnault's consideration of the importance of the 'Hootenanny' events run at the American Centre in Paris during the early 1960s for establishing the paradigm of the French folk club.¹⁰ Gasnault clearly positions Paris as fundamental to the creation of a folk community and as a paradigm of the folk club that would spread to the rest of France. The work that comes closest to that which I wish to achieve is Gerôme Guibert's *La production de la culture*.¹¹ In this he considers the folk revival within the larger cultural context of counterculture, popular culture and youth culture. However, his analysis of the folk revival lasts only a few pages and does not account for the construction of the rural citizen as Other, nor for the ideological attractiveness in associating with such a construction. This chapter will provide a more in-depth discussion of the counterculture's relation with the folk revival and explore the ways in which the rural citizen was constructed.

My research shifts the focus onto the attention that the counterculture paid to the French folk revival. This differentiates itself from previous research in this field as I place the urban centres at the core of my study, rather than considering the folk revival in a particular French rural region. Focussing on the discourse around the folk revival that the French counterculture was having enables a discussion of the internal circulation of music and ideas and of the role that France's history played in defining the shape of the French counterculture.

This chapter will be divided into five sections: the first section will briefly define what is meant by the term 'folk revival' within the context of this text and will provide an

⁸ Jonathyne Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, Pop Music 1958-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁹ Some examples of French-language literature on regionalism include: Tudi Kernalegenn, '1972: Le Réveil de la Bretagne', *ArMen*, 19/1 (2012), 20–27.

Madame Catherine Bertho, 'L'invention de la Bretagne ; Genèse sociale d'un stéréotype', *Acts de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 35 (1980), 45–62.

Philippe Martel, 'Révolutionnaire ou nationaliste?: La poésie occitane après 1968', *Terrain*, 41 (2003), 91–102.

¹⁰ François Gasnault, 'Hootenanny au Centre américain : L'invention de la scène ouverte à la française (1963-1975)', *L'homme* (2015), 149–169.

¹¹ Gerôme Guibert, *La Production de la Culture: Le cas des musiques amplifiées en France: Genèse, structurations, industries, alternatives* (Paris & Saint Amant Tallende: Mélanie Sèteun & Irma éditions 2006).

overarching chronology of the engagement between the French counterculture and folk revival; the second section will consider the emergence of French interest in the idea of folk revival from the mid-1960s until the mid-1960s; the third section will focus on the rise of the French folk revival and will consider the construction of the rural citizen within the trope of the peasant and thus as a pre-modern Other; the fourth section constructs an argument that part of the counterculture's interest in the folk revival was related to its oppositionality; and the final section continues with this argument and demonstrates that the rural citizen was constructed as symbol of this oppositionality, through an analysis of the counterculture's engagement with regionalism.

3.1 Definitions and Chronology of the French Folk Revival

The definitions and meanings of 'folk revival' have been discussed and debated in the academic literature on this subject. For the purposes of this study, I am taking a meaning of folk revivalism that aligns with the way the term is used to describe the resurgence in popularity of folk and traditional music in the post-war years across Europe and the USA. Like all revivals, the movement's ethos was to 'restore' a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past'.¹² Further, borrowing from Owe Ronström's metaphor, a revival is a staging of the past in the present and is necessarily contextualised by both contemporary social, economic and cultural circumstances, as well as contemporary imaginations and fantasies of the past.¹³ The majority of attention within English-language scholarship has focused on the anglophone sphere, which is represented by well-known names such as Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Fairport Convention. Yet, France had its own folk revival that was equally vibrant as, yet substantially different to, its anglophone counterpart.

Akin to other folk revivals, the central theme for the French folk revival was of ruralism. France's urban centres were important gathering points for the French folk revival, but the movement's imagination was captured by France's rurality. One of the more unique aspects of France's folk revival was the emphasis it placed on France's various regional identities. It was Brittany, Occitania and Berry that were the stars of this narrative, not Paris, Lyon, or even France as a nation. Central to the manifestation of the movement was France's history as an agricultural, rural and culturally diverse nation. The emphasis on regional

¹² Livingston, 66.

Hill and Bithell, 3.

¹³ Ronström, 43-44.

identities relied on historical constructions of France's rural citizens already firmly planted within the French national imaginary. The Otherness inscribed in the construction of the rural was positioned as the antithesis of the urban. Especially when combined with the historical difference of regions such as Brittany, an interest in the rural could signify a firm, oppositional stance to the modern world of the urban.

The importance of ruralism can be located in Catherine Perrier's 1973 album *Chanson Traditionnelles Françaises*.¹⁴ Throughout this album's sleeve the region of origin is clearly stressed (figures 5 & 6): each song is followed by its region of origin in brackets and at the end of each lyric Perrier provides a brief comment about the song and often cites from whom she learned it from or something about the song's history. It would have been entirely possible to publish the recording without such references; yet, this extra information ties the songs to a certain geography and history, which was unmistakably held to be an important part of the folk music experience. Folk music was both a source of pleasure derived from listening and a way of accessing and engaging with a distant culture.

The French folk revival ideology was compatible with the counterculture's challenge to contemporary society and the folk-rock crossover made by groups such as Tri Yann made the genre aesthetically accessible to members of the movement.¹⁵ As this chapter focuses on the convergence of the French folk revival and French counterculture, it is primarily those artists that were discussed in these magazines - or at least in works by authors associated with those magazines - that will be the focal points of this chapter.

When it comes to the association of the French counterculture and the folk revival the period of 1966-1975 can be broken down into two periods. The first period stretched from 1966-1970 and centred around the USA and UK as influential sites of the folk music revival. Bob Dylan's 1966 performance at the Olympia in Paris testifies to his popularity in France as the stars of the French popular music scene came out to meet him.¹⁶ Consequently, even at the start of the period explored within this thesis, folk music clearly had a strong foothold within France. It is only towards the end of this period that any discussion of French folk music gains serious attention.

¹⁴ Catherine Perrier, *Chansons Traditionnelles Françaises* (Le Chant Du Monde, 1973).

¹⁵ For more information on Tri Yann, please see Jonathyne Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, Pop Music 1958-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 140-142.

¹⁶ See page 80.

Notesfrom, 'Bob Dylan: The 1966 live records – sony – November 11, 36 cd box set' *Steve Hoffman Music Forums*, <https://forums.stevemoffman.tv/threads/bob-dylan-the-1966-live-recordings-sony-36-cd-box-set-november-11.599685/page-72> (accessed 11 July 2019).



Figure 5: Front cover of Catherine Perrier's *Chansons Traditionnelles Françaises* (*Le Chant Du Monde*, 1973).



Figure 6: Back cover of Catherine Perrier's *Chansons Traditionnelles Françaises* (*Le Chant Du Monde*, 1973).

The second period covers 1970 to 1975 and involves the rise of a definition of folk music that is more inclusive of the music emerging in France. Figures and groups such as Alan Stivell, Malicorne, and Bambouche garnered increasing levels of success across a variety of demographics. In part the growth in interest in homegrown folk music represents a maturation of French folk revival industry, and the growing influence of rock music. However, it was a result of the growing engagement with third worldist politics and French regionalist movements that fuelled a political motivation for listening to French folk music, alongside a cultural and aesthetic interest. It is not that this period saw a decline in interest in folk music coming from the Anglo-Saxon world; rather, this period saw a pluralisation of the genre to include a variety of different national sources as existing within the folk music genre.

3.2 Genesis of the French Folk Revival

3.2.1 The Influence of the Anglo-Saxon Community

The majority of interest in any idea of folk revival within the French rock press was focused on the Anglo-Saxon world until the end of the 1960s. The journalist Jacques Vassal was a key figure in creating this discourse and in 1971 published *Folksong: Une histoire de la musique populaire aux États-Unis*.¹⁷ His motivation in writing this book about American folk music comes from his belief in France's ignorance of the political and cultural importance of the genre in the USA.¹⁸ He argued that while French criticism has written about the rise of the New Left politics, racial politics, and hippies in the USA, very little has been said about the folk movement. This poverty of journalism exists despite the transnational popularity of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez. *Folksong* is positioned as a critical counter to this lack of attention and as a pioneering attempt to explain the socio-cultural importance of the genre to the French public.¹⁹

Vassal argued that France had long neglected its folk music and history. This, in turn, had led to France having a comparatively poor folk music scene in contrast to the vibrancy of the American folk revival. He further stated that 'the industrial revolution and urban concentration, the individualistic nature of the French, their relative lack of musical education, diverse political propaganda, the sclerosis of mass-market pop music and television' have all contributed to the decline of folk music in France.²⁰ Admittedly, he acknowledged that the USA has also had to confront many of these challenges. However, in his view, other factors had led to the presence of a stronger folk tradition in the USA: Vassal cites the large size of the USA, its sizable immigrant population and 'the creativity of black

¹⁷ A handful of pages of *Folksong* are devoted to the UK, Canada, and France, but this discussion is relatively short. This book was later translated into English. Notably, the discussion of French folk revival receives little attention in the English translation.

Jacques Vassal, *Electric Children* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1976).

Vassal, *Folksong*.

¹⁸ This felt 'need' of educating the French public about American developments was not uncommon amongst journalists. Referring back to chapter 2, Vassal's viewpoint here echoes Michel Lancelot's felt need to educate France about hippiedom.

¹⁹ Vassal, *Folksong*, 8-9.

²⁰ 'La révolution industrielle et la concentration urbaine, la nature individualiste des Français, leur manque relatif d'éducation musicale, les propagandes politiques diverse, la sclérose de 'variétés' et de la télévision'.

Ibid., 71.

people' as principal causes of the increased importance of folk music in the USA.²¹ Of course, this analysis remains rather superficial and acts as rhetoric more than academic discourse, yet it represents the existence of a particular discourse that viewed a lack within French folk music vis-à-vis its American counterpart.

Even if Vassal felt that the French public were somewhat ignorant about the topic of folk music, the American and British folk revival had already made its presence felt quite significantly before the publication of *Folksong*. This can particularly be seen in Bob Dylan's 1966 trip to Paris to perform. Recounting this moment in her memoirs, the French singer Françoise Hardy described Bob Dylan as one of her favourite artists of this moment and that she interrupted filming in Monaco to go to Paris to see him perform.²² Indeed, several members of France's pop royalty came out to see Dylan, including, France's most famous popstar, Johnny Hallyday (figure 7).



Figure 7: Françoise Hardy, Bob Dylan, and Johnny Hallyday meeting during Dylan's 1966 performance in Paris.²³

Beyond the rare live performance, the French rock press were discussing the American folk revival and even French quotidian newspaper were writing articles about Dylan.²⁴

²¹ 'la créativité musicale du peuple noir'.

Vassal, *Folksong*, 71.

²² Although, Hardy did note that she found Dylan's concert a bit disappointing.

Françoise Hardy, *Le désespoir des singe... et autres bagatelles* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2008), 73-74.

²³ Notesfrom, 'Bob Dylan: The 1966 live records – sony – November 11, 36 cd box set' *Steve Hoffman Music Forums*, <https://forums.stevemusic.com/threads/bob-dylan-the-1966-live-recordings-sony-36-cd-box-set-november-11.599685/page-72> (accessed 11 July 2019).

²⁴ Jacques Almaric, 'Bob Dylan, Joan Baez et leurs saints', *Le Monde* (1966), https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1966/03/25/bob-dylan-joan-baez-et-leurs-saints_2701217_1819218.html (accessed 16 August 2019).

Philidor, 'La 'Geste' De Bob Dylan', *Le Monde* (1966), https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1966/11/11/la-geste-de-bob-dylan_2687468_1819218.html (accessed 16th August, 2019).

It was not just the USA that the French press were paying attention to. As the decade unfolded, Britain increasingly became a site of interest for its folk revival. By early 1969, the French press had made a clear distinction between the folk music emerging out of the United States of America and that originating out of Britain. In an article for *Best*, Hervé Muller narrowed the differences down to two key features: 1) British folk music was considered to be less political and violent than American folk, in place it was more imaginative and poetic. To exemplify this, he uses the example of the Scottish singer Donovan who began by imitating Dylan's style but gradually developed a more introspective approach that differentiated him from Dylan; 2) Muller argues that the British folk movement is more experimental than the American manifestation. The American movement is presented as being more purist and locked into stricter ideas of tradition, while the British movement has a tendency to use 'exotic instruments' or insert influences from other genres. He states that the Incredible String Band demonstrate this quite clearly through their use of instruments such as the 'oud, the mandolin and the sitar'.²⁵ None of these groups mentioned would reach the popularity of Bob Dylan, but the emergence of a discourse beyond the USA demonstrated an acknowledgement that the folk revival was not confined to a single nation.

3.2.2 The French Roots of the Revival

Despite the attention he, and the rock press, paid to the Anglo-Saxon world during the second half of the 1960s, Vassal was one of the first French critics to argue for the existence of a French folk revival. He searches for the early roots of the folk revival by turning to the post-war French *auteurs-compositeurs-interprètes* of Guy Béart, Jacques Douai and Serge Kerval and, consequently, seeks to place the emergence of the French folk revival in the late 1950s and 1960s.²⁶ The importance of these figures is reinforced in a discussion on French folk amongst prominent folk musicians active in France - amongst them the famous harpist Alan Stivell - that is transcribed in *Folksongs*. They all agree that Béart, Douai, and Kerval were influential figures in the folk revival, and Catherine Perrier even states that 'many amongst

²⁵ 'des instruments exotiques'.

'l'oud, [...] la mandoline, du sitar'.

Hervé Muller, 'Le Folk Anglais', *Best* 6 (1968), 21 (21).

²⁶ Vassal, *Folksongs*, 306.

us had their first contact with folk song through [Jacques Douai]'.²⁷ Yet, they find that these characters do not fit easily within the contemporary folk rival.²⁸

Georges Brassens was another precursor of the French folk revival of the late 1960s and 1970s. He developed his craft in the post-war *chanson* scene and by the mid-1950s had achieved substantial success.²⁹ Brassens had a strong musical grounding in the French folk tradition and often include folk songs in his repertoire or situated his songs in rural settings.³⁰ He cultivated an image that suggested a level of rootedness and humility, sporting a thick moustache and dressing in a way that suggested he was the standard "middle-aged, provincial Frenchman" or, as Briggs states, "the stereotypical peasant".³¹ Further, his intimate, understated manner contrasted deeply with rock music and its associated technologies.³² While Brassens was not considered to be a folk musician by critics, elements of folk music were certainly found within his music and style.³³ By drawing upon folk music and enacting a level authenticity through his apparent ordinariness and rurality, he popularised a model that would be influential in the French folk revival.

More generally, the roots of the folk revival had been growing for quite some time by the end of the 1960s. The migrant communities that emerged in major cities became places where these traditions could live on and propagate. One important development in the history of the French folk music was the 'Hootenanny' at the American Centre in Paris. Started by two Americans in Paris during the autumn of 1963, the Hootenanny would begin to blossom when its management was taken over by Lionel Rocheman in 1964.³⁴ The Hootenanny welcomed a wide variety of music and became a formational event that would regularly bring together the French folk revival community. Regular attendees included Catherine Perrier and Alan Stivell, as well as expatriate musicians such as Steve Waring and John Wright.³⁵ Thus, from the end of 1963 the French folk revival was laying its foundations in Paris 'and this would have significant ramifications for the rest of France a few years later.

²⁷ 'beaucoup entre nous ont eu leurs premiers contacts avec la chanson folklorique par [Jacques Douai]'.
Vassal, *Folksongs*, 306.

²⁸ Ibid., 306-307.

²⁹ Briggs, 66-67.

³⁰ Peter Hawkins, *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 126-127.

³¹ Ibid., 131.

Briggs, 65.

³² Hawkins, 131-132.

³³ Ibid., 130-131.

³⁴ Gasnault, 152-153.

³⁵ Ibid., 155.

Folk revivals were also emerging in France's regions. In particular, the French region of Brittany saw early developments in its awareness of its musical heritage: a renewed interest in Breton piping traditions had been occurring since the early 1940s, with the formation of the *Bodadeg ar Sonerion* (gathering of pipers) in 1943; the singer-songwriter Glenmor was performing as in the late 1950s; and, Alain Stivell had recorded his first E.P. in 1959.³⁶ While these events and traditions were quite localised before the 1960s, they would gain momentum as the folk revival began to flourish. Consequently, before the boom in interest in the French folk revival in the late 1960s, there were communities in France already engaging with their local folk music and sowing the seeds for when Breton folk music would capture the attention of the wider public.

Alongside the developments of folk music communities and renewed interest in traditional musics in France, the concept of a folk revival, epitomised by the American folk revival, was taking root in the public imagination. This can be seen in the growing integration of American folk revival songs into the French popular music repertoire. In 1963 the French popstar — and later emblem of French disco — Claude François released a single entitled 'Si j'avais un marteau' to great success.³⁷ The song itself comes across as an up-beat ditty with a superficial narrative. This media friendly image is reinforced by his performance on the show *Age Tendre et Tête du Bois*, where in front of an audience of young *copains* François appears in a respectable suit, demonstrates his choreographed dance moves, and gets the audience to clap along with him.³⁸ Without any backing reference this song stands out as nothing too different from the standard French fare offered by the French popular music genre of *yéyé* at the time. Yet, 'Si j'avais un marteau' was in fact an adaptation of the American folk song 'If I had a hammer'.³⁹ Originally made popular by The Weavers in 1950 — under the name 'The Hammer Song' — this song was given a second life in the 1960s. While it was covered by a

³⁶ The revival of Breton piping can be traced further back to the formation of the *Kenreuriez ar Viniouerien* (gathering of *binou* pipers) in 1932.

Yann Bévant, 'Nations in Tune: the influence of Irish music on the Breton musical revival in the 1960s and 1970s', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 29 (2009), 30–44.
Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Bretonne*, 76.

Anny Maurussane & Gérard Simon, *Alan Stivell ou l'itinéraire d'un harper hero'* (Courtry: Salim-Canale, 2006), 30.

³⁷ Claude François, 'Si J'avais Un Marteau' (Philips, 1963).

³⁸ Claude François, 'Si J'avais Un Marteau', *Ina.fr* <https://www.ina.fr/video/I00009540/claude-francois-si-j-avais-un-marteau-video.html> (accessed 15 July, 2019).

³⁹ The Weavers, 'The Hammer Song' (Hootenanny Records, 1950).

great many artists, it is likely that François' adaptation was a response to the success of Peter, Paul and Mary's 1963 version.⁴⁰

Peter, Paul and Mary's adaptation of 'If I had a Hammer' is energetic but stripped back and features only acoustic guitars and vocals. Claude François' adaptation, on the other hand, is jammed packed with sonic ideas and attempts at audience participation. Whereas Peter, Paul and Mary's version opens with an acoustic guitar, François opens with an electric bass and is shortly joined by a full band. François's initial line invites the audience to clap along 'Everybody clap your hands with me' and the insertion of clap sounds into the recording evokes this sense of communal music making.⁴¹ This feeling is continued throughout the song with frequent invitations for the audience to become involved, such as the sing-a-longable 'woahs' at the end of each verse.

Time (2:49)	'Si j'avais un marteau'
0:00	Bass guitar opening
0:06	Full band: Inclusive statement: 'tapez les mains avec moi' 'Woah, woah, woah'
0:15	Verse 1 with synthesiser counter melody: Pause before refrain Inclusive statement 'Woah, woah, woah'
0:47	Verse 2 with bell sounds: Pause before refrain Inclusive statement 'Woah, woah, woah'
1:20	Verse 3: Pause before refrain Inclusive statement 'Woah, woah, woah'
1:52	Verse 4: Pause before refrain
2:15	Coda

Table 4: Analysis of Claude François' 'Si j'avais un marteau' (Philips, 1963).

Significantly, the lyrics are also modified. François introduces the whole family into his text and invokes the theme of hard, manual work. The hammer is transformed into 'the

⁴⁰ Peter, Paul and Mary were appearing in *Salut Les Copains* hit parade in 1963. While they were identified as commercial by Jacques Vassal, he also praises Peter, Paul and Mary's excellent musicianship and the way they maintain the spirit of the folk tradition. Author Unknown, 'Hit Parade', *Salut Les Copains*, 18 (1963). Accessed at <http://cicatrice.hautetfort.com/archive/2012/12/15/hit-parade-de-salut-les-copains-du-15-decembre-1963.html> (13th Jan, 2020). Vassal, *Folksong*, 248-250.

Peter, Paul and Mary, 'If I had a hammer' (Warner Brothers: 1962)

⁴¹ 'tout le monde tapez les main avec moi'.

hammer of courage’ and the bell becomes ‘the bell of liberty’.⁴² Within Peter, Paul, and Mary’s adaptation the hammer hints at left wing allegiances; the bell is meant as a warning that will encourage a national sense of love amongst ‘brother and sisters’. Both songs are focused on a sense of community; however, they approach it quite differently: François focuses on domestic and familial love, and Peter, Paul and Mary suggest a sense of left wing unity. François’ version comes across as much less radical and has adjusted the message and aesthetics to speak to the community of the *copains*.

The transformation of ‘If I had a hammer’ from a protest song to one that reinforced normative societal values illustrates that, in 1963, the French music industry were willing to pay attention to countercultural music, if it was successful, but were not willing to translate its countercultural edge when adapting it into French. At this point, a large market for an anti-establishment music outside of *chanson* in France had not yet been established and, youth-oriented music was kept separate from anything that could be considered countercultural rhetoric. Claude’s adaption does demonstrate, however, that the French music industry had an eye on the growing demand for countercultural music in the USA and were willing to incorporate potentially commercial elements, as long as the countercultural edge was removed. This connection would later help foster the success of French countercultural music with the arrival of Antoine in 1966.⁴³

Time (2:01)	‘If I had a hammer’
0:00	Guitar opening
0:05	Verse 1
0:30	Verse 2
0:54	Verse 3
1:18	Verse 4
1:40	Coda

Table 5: Analysis of Peter, Paul and Mary’s ‘If I had a Hammer’ (Warner Brothers, 1962).

More sincere attempts to translate folk music also occurred, and in 1965 Hugues Aufray released the album *Chante Dylan*.⁴⁴ As the title suggests, this album consisted of arrangements and translations of Bob Dylan songs. Aufray had spent time in New York from 1961-1962, had met Peter, Paul and Mary, befriended Bob Dylan, and could claim to be a direct link between France and the American folk revival. Upon his return he presented a weekly folk-music radio show - ‘Tout le long du chemin’ - for Radio Luxembourg, whereby he used

⁴² ‘le marteau du courage’.

‘La cloche de la liberté’.

⁴³ For more information on Antoine, please see pages 44-48.

⁴⁴ Aufray, *Chant Dylan* (Barlcy, 1965).

his American network to present the top picks of the USA folk revival. Through Aufray's role interpreting Dylan's work and his radio show he provided a pathway into the American folk revival.

3.2.3 The Growth of the Folk Revival Post-1968

1968 marks a shift in the popularity of folk music in France. To describe the state of French folk music before 1968 the journalist Jean-Pierre Lentin sets the scene of a secondary school. In this school you would find 'three types of musicians': 1) the first would be of classical training and would end up in a conservatoire; 2) the second would be a set of 'hairy individuals' with a passion for English blues; 3) the final group would consist of only 'one or two strange creatures' who would in appearance resemble the second group but would prefer the acoustic guitar to the electric.⁴⁵ Yet, after 1968 the folk explosion began in earnest and Lentin's 'strange creatures' were more likely to be seen in herds than in isolation.

It would be reductive to situate May '68 as the only influencing factor in the folk revival's growth in popularity. Another significant influence is that of pop/rock music and, significantly, the American and British folk revival. Musicians such as John Wright and Catherine Perrier reported to *Actuel* that popular music was an important precursor to the folk revival as it encouraged audiences to engage in music through dancing and singing and opened up the public's ear to a vast array of new musics and sounds.⁴⁶ Popular music was seen to have set the cultural context that allowed folk music to feel relevant. Further, as argued above, folk revival figureheads such as Bob Dylan had achieved a level of success in France. The idea of a folk revival was not new to French youth and some French musicians, such as Hugues Aufray, had already found some success in creating their own variant.

Structural developments would aid the growth of the folk revival in the late 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁷ The number of folk clubs across the country would increase in these years. The hootenanny model established by Lionel Rocheman and the community at the Centre

⁴⁵ 'Prenez n'importe quel lycée parisien vers 1968 : on y rencontre trois types de musiciens : Un fils de musicien classique se destine résolument au conservatoire, pour devenir virtuose, chef ou compositeur ; une dizaine d'individus hirsutes se passionnent pour Eric Clapton et le blues anglais tout en découvrant la défonce. Restent une ou deux créatures étranges, proches du groupe précédent par le vêtement, le cheveu et les amitiés [...] ils n'aiment pas trop le joint et préfèrent obstinément leur vulgaire guitare acoustique aux rutilants Stratocasters.'

Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'Le raz-de-marée folk' *Actuel*, 49 (1974), 43-46 (44).

⁴⁶ F., 'Le Roi de la Guimbarde et la Jeune Chanteuse', *Actuel* 32 (1973), 58-59 (58).

⁴⁷ Undoubtedly these developments would have been accelerated by the post-1968 spirit that Lentin commented on, but these structural shifts also have pre-1968 roots that are important to remember.

Américain spread itself across the country, and from 1969 onwards British style folk clubs began to emerge.⁴⁸ The Bourdon is probably the most famous of the French folk clubs after the hootenannies at the American Centre. Formed by a group of musicians who had frequented the hootenannies and who wanted to create a space that was more dedicated to the development of Francophone folk music than the American Centre. Its first fixed location was on the *Rue de la Sourdière* in the 1^{er} arrondissement of Paris and it had rapid success, selling over 1000 membership cards in its first month.⁴⁹ The growth of the folk revival club scene was so substantial that by 1971 Vassal could comment on not only a network of clubs across France but across Francophone Europe.⁵⁰

Festivals would also offer a chance for the French folk revival to congregate and share their passion for music. The summer of 1970 was the year of a significant folk revival festival, even if it was somewhat overshadowed by the mushrooming of popular music festivals across France.⁵¹ The *Festival folklorique de Lambesc (Bouches-Du-Rhône)* was rather small, with around 800 attendees. Despite its size, it featured many significant names of the folk revival movement including Alan Stivell and Catherine Perrier. In comparison to then-contemporary rock festivals the young people who attended were seen to be respectful, and the festival faced little in the way of difficulties.⁵²

In the following years the French folk revival festival industry would grow. However, they would also become narrower in scope as the various factions of the folk revival sought to assert themselves.⁵³ The Malataverne festival of 1971 would see a rapid increase of numbers compared to the *Festival folklorique de Lambesc* the previous year, with around 15 000 attendees.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Vassal comments that there was a growing gap between those who believed in the political engagement of folk music and those who did not.⁵⁵ The organisers of the Bourdon club and the staff at the folk magazine *Gigue* organised a festival at Vedun in Berry in 1972 and Pons in Rouergue in 1973, chosen for the association between their

⁴⁸ François Gasnault, *Hootenanny au Centre américain : L'invention de la scène ouverte à la française* (1963-1975), *L'Homme* (2015), 149-169 (161).

Jacques Vassals, *Français si vous chantez*, (Paris : Albin Michel/Folk & Rock, 1976), 44.

⁴⁹ Valérie Rouvière, *Le Mouvement Folk En France (1964-1981)*, (Master's Thesis : Modal/FAMDT, 2002), 49.

⁵⁰ Jacques Vassal, 'Les Fous Du Folk', *Rock & Folk*, 50 (1971), 17-18 (17-18).

⁵¹ For more information on the popular music festivals in France in the early 1970s, please see pages 178-182.

⁵² Valérie Rouvière, 35.

⁵³ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Vassal, *Français si vous chantez*, 46.

respective regions and rich musical traditions.⁵⁶ The scope of these festivals was narrower than Malatavanne and Lambesc as the Bourdon organisers became increasingly focused on musicians who sought to continue traditional and rural genres.⁵⁷ At the same time as the festival of Vesdun, the festival of Kertalg was taking place in Brittany. Kertalg was much more interested in expressing a Celtic identity and hosted many of the stars of the Breton folk revival: this included musical innovators Alan Stivell and Gweltaz Ar Fur, as well as more conservative musicians such as the Goadec sisters.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, despite their increasing specialisation, the first festivals were a relative success and led to a burgeoning of folk festivals across the following years.⁵⁹

As the French folk revival was growing in the post 1968 years, it also began to be a central feature of the French counterculture. The increased attention that the French folk revival received in countercultural critical discourse would aid in the movement's growth across the 1970s. In 1971 that *Rock & Folk* published the first regular column dedicated to folk music in a rock music magazine: *Fous Du Folk*, which precedes the emergence of the folk revival's own press.⁶⁰ Its opening line makes no effort to hide its optimism regarding the development of folk music within France: '1971 seems to be well placed for a (re)-birth of an authentic folk movement in France'.⁶¹ This first appearance of *Fous Du Folk* was not the first discussion of French folk within the French rock press, and it would precede a sustained interest in the folk revival from *Best* and *Actuel*. Nevertheless, it marks the growing integration between the French folk revival and the French counterculture.

With the growth of the festival industry across France there was increased opportunity for folk groups to appear on the same stage as many of rock bands. In the early days of the development of the French festival industry, and before the French folk revival had made a notable impact within French countercultural circuits, this was demonstrated by the presence of Anglo-Saxon folk musicians: at the Aix-En-Provence festival the Canadian songwriter

⁵⁶ Vassal, *Français si vous chantiez*, 47.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Valérie Rouvière, 36.

⁵⁹ Vassal, *Français si vous chantiez*, 46-52.

⁶⁰ A press emerged to diffuse information about the folk revival community in the early 1970s: *Gigue* was founded in 1972 and *L'escargot Folk* in 1974. These magazines were sold cheaply, and the information was gathered by a network of local informants in order that these magazines remained dedicated to the communities they were representing.

Valérie Rouvière, 43.

⁶¹ 'L'année 71 semble bien partie pour une (re)-naissance d'un mouvement folklorique authentique en France'.

Jacques Vassal, 'Les Fous Du Folk', *Rock & Folk*, 50 (1971), 17-18,

Leonard Cohen performed; at the festival at Valbonne, Country Joe sang; and at the festival of Biot, Joan Baez took to the stage.⁶² However, as the relationship between countercultural and folk revival circles strengthened, French folk revival acts and rock groups would occasionally be seen on the same line up. One notable example was the performance of Alan Stivell at the *Fête De L'Humanité* in 1973 along with one of France's most popular progressive rock bands, Ange.⁶³ While the appearance of such popular bands from each movement at the same festival was quite rare during the years covered in this text, this engagement is significant as it clearly represents a perceived affinity between the two genres.⁶⁴

Due to the work of Jacques Vassal, the French counterculture was made aware of French folk festivals and international appearance of French folk musicians abroad, regardless of the presence of rock bands or not. His regular column *Fous Du Folk* kept readers up to date with folk music they may be interested in. In addition, Vassal would also have longer articles that would cover live folk music. In a 1973 article for *Rock & Folk* he reports on four folk festivals: the first three are based in France (St. Uze, Avignon, and Kertalg), and the final is based in the United Kingdom (Cambridge).⁶⁵ This account serves to inform the readers of the various folk events occurring across the country, educated them on some crucial regional differences, and gloat about the success of Alan Stivell abroad. Further, although more sparingly, other authors such as Jean-Pierre Lentin or interviews with musicians would describe accounts of venturing into the provinces to experience folk music.⁶⁶ These articles suggest that rock audiences were interested in and attending folk festivals and events. Thus, implying that even if folk festivals were lacking in cross-over artists, the audience was likely to include a cross-over contingent.

⁶² Johanna Amar, *Les premiers festivals de musique pop en France en 1970 : Le Bourget, Valbonne, Aix-en-Provence et Biot* (Master's Thesis : Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2016), 49.

⁶³ Marc Alvarado, *La Chienlit: Le Rock Français et Mai 68 : Histoire D'un Rendez-Vous Manqué* (Paris : Editions Du Layeur, 2018), 157.

⁶⁴ Why the appearance of big-name folk acts and rock acts on the same stage did not occur more often is an interesting question. While I cannot give any definitive answers, the evidence I have come across raises a number of suggestions: first, the French counterculture, represented through the magazines examined, engagement with folk music seems to have been primarily based around a core handful of groups and this limits the possible engagement between the two groups; second, the connection between the folk revival and counterculture was peaking at the end of the dates set by this study, and it is likely that a continued examination of this relationship into the second half of the 1970s would find increased appearances of French rock and folk bands at the same festivals. To confirm this more research would be required.

⁶⁵ Jacques Vassal, 'La campagne de l'été', *Rock & Folk*, 80 (1973), 41-45.

⁶⁶ Jean-Pierre Lentin & Jean-Paul Ribes, 'Chauffe La Breiz' *Actuel* 32 (1973), 72-75.
F., 'Le Roi de la Guimbarde et la Jeune Chanteuse', *Actuel* 32 (1973), 58-59.

3.3 Modernity, Pre-Modernity, and Peasantry

3.3.1 Otherness of Peasants

Pete Martin notes in his preface to Georgina Boyes *The Imagined Village* that for the early 20th century British folk revival the ‘folk’ of ‘folk music’ ‘were always someone else’.⁶⁷ This holds true for the French counterculture’s perspective on both the American and French folk revival. When it came to the American folk revival, the Americans themselves were situated as the ‘someone else’. Returning to Vassal’s *Folksong*, folk music in the 1960s is seen to be very much an American phenomenon. The various factors that Vassal argues contributed to the folk revival in America, and hindered the folk revival in France, have situated the American folk music landscape as profoundly different. While the American folk revival was noticeably dissimilar from the movement in France, it is when the American folk revival is used as a reflection on the French folk revival that the Otherness of the American cultural context truly reveals itself. By showing what France lacks, Vassal positions the USA as a national Other and as a barometer to compare the situation in France.

When it comes to the French folk revival, the focus is squarely on the figure of the peasant and the romanticised countryside. Writing in 1976 for an edition of *Rock & Folk* dedicated to the French folk revival, Vassal describes the lamentable separation between the French citizen and rural France:

[S]ince the war of 1914-1918, the populations - who by will or force - constitute the French nation have tended to be more and more cut off and deprived of their traditional roots and cultures. We mean ‘culture’ in the largest sense: not only music and songs, but dances, minority languages, dialects, and patois, festivals, cuisine, outfits, habitat, working patterns and economic exchanges, familial and religious practices.⁶⁸

The 20th century, in the eyes of Vassal, has been one that has separated the French citizen from their cultural heritage. The French folk revival was centred around the peasant and the rural as symbols of this perceived loss of cultural heritage.

⁶⁷ Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology & The English Folk Revival* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), ix.

⁶⁸ ‘Depuis la guerre de 14-18, les populations qui - de gré ou de force - constituaient la nation française ont tendu à être plus en plus coupées et privées de leurs racines culturelles traditionnelles. Entendons ici ‘culture’ au sens le plus large: non seulement la musique et les chansons, mais les danses, les langues minoritaires, dialectes et patois, les fêtes, la cuisine, le costume, l’habitat, l’organisation du travail et des échanges économiques, les conceptions religieuses et familiales.’ Jacques Vassal, ‘Le vent nouveau’, *Rock & Folk*, 115 (1975), 43-46 (43).

The French counterculture's and folk revival's interest in figure of the peasant was based on a long history of seeing the peasant as both geographically and temporally distant from France's urban centres. This vision resulted from France's historically high rural population and slow urbanisation into the 20th century. The importance of agriculture throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th century combined with France's relatively slow industrialisation meant that there was little economic incentive to leave the cultural bonds of the rural village or town.⁶⁹ Further, Henri Mendras argues that, throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th century, the French elites sought to keep the French population predominately rural in order to reduce the chance of urban revolution, for political support, and in order to be able to derive income from their rural investments.⁷⁰

Despite there existing an interest in maintaining a large peasant population in France, the heterogeneity of the rural cultures that fell within France's borders became an issue from the late 18th century onwards. In the post-revolutionary period, there was a growing desire to create a strong and unified nation.⁷¹ Until this point, France's linguistic and cultural diversity was an accepted part of the nation's character.⁷² Yet, the project of imparting a homogenous national identity would inevitably seek to smooth over this difference. The peasant would become a victim of France's *mission civilisatrice* and the plurality of languages, superstitions and perceived differences of civilisational attainment had to be somehow effaced in order to impose a sense of unity.

Weber calls the mission of turning France's cultural heterogeneity into something more homogenous as a project of 'turning peasants into French men'. A variety of factors helped create a more unified nation in the late 19th century. Investments in roads and the expansion of railway lines increased the circulation between the urban and rural and helped propagate France's state-endorsed economic, cultural, and technological practices.⁷³ Similarly, the increased migration of rural dwellers to the urban centres — due to the rapid demand for workers as a consequence of the industrial revolution — and the participation of peasants in the military — as a result of the practice of conscription put into place in 1798 — also meant

⁶⁹ Until the first world war, ½ of the French population remained rural.

Henri Mendras, *Social Change in Modern France: Towards a Cultural Anthropology* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2.

⁷⁰ Mendras, 12.

James Lehning, *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.

⁷¹ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1874-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 9.

⁷² Ibid., 9.

⁷³ Ibid., 206.

that links between the rural and urban increased and helped breakdown the differences between them.⁷⁴ Perhaps most importantly, one of the most pro-active factors was the French state's imposition of compulsory education across the country in the 19th century. A consequence of this was that all of France (in theory) would have to learn French and engage in official French culture.

To a large extent the project of national unification across the 19th century was a success.⁷⁵ The initial obstacle of France's cultural diversity was subsumed under the more homogenous French national identity. However, this success was partial. Leading up to the First World War there were segments of France that had not been integrated into the French state's nationalising mission. Henri Mendras notes that many Bretons had not yet been given the opportunity to learn French and, importantly, this was not necessarily due to a lack of desire, as knowledge of French was perceived as 'an indispensable precondition for any upward social mobility'.⁷⁶ As the 20th century marched on, the transformation of the peasant into a French citizen would continue. Yet, it would also be met with a backlash in the growth of regionalist movements that sought greater autonomy, and by 1914 France was largely unified as a cultural and political entity.

Coterminous to the 19th century attempt to unify the French nation, there emerged a particular construction of the peasant, particularly in literature, that would inform the French folk revival of the 1960s. Sarah Farmer argues that the peasant would appear within one of two frameworks: either the peasant would be seen within the context of 'le mythe rose', in which she states 'peasants are wise, simple and authentic in their ways' or the peasant would be the 'brushing, backward, conniving and poor' figures of 'Le mythe noir'.⁷⁷ Reinforcing this point, Eugene Weber argues that 'when he [the peasant] is not a noble savage,[...] he is simply savage'.⁷⁸ The peasant existed as an internal Other within France and seemed to embody qualities that officiators of official French culture sought to downplay or erase.

Within societal discourse, the increased integration of the peasant into French national culture and the gradual migration of people from the countryside to the city prompted a defence of the value of rural and peasant life in the face of the threat of modernity.⁷⁹ This

⁷⁴ Weber, 293.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 494.

⁷⁶ Mendras, 91.

⁷⁷ Sarah Farmer, 'Memoirs of French Peasant Life: Progress and Nostalgia in Postwar France', *French History*, 25/3 (2011), 362-379 (366).

⁷⁸ Weber, 12.

⁷⁹ Kedward, 113-114.

rhetoric relied heavily on Farmer's 'le mythe rose' and took a romantic, idealised view of the peasantry. The historian Rod Kedward notes that the first half of the 20th century saw a slew of books, including one by the former French prime minister Jules Mélin, praising and defending the rural lifestyle.⁸⁰ These books would decry the allure of the city and, in its place, emphasise the purity of the countryside. In many ways, the peasant was presented as the idealised French man or woman, embodying the values that were seen to be definitive of French nationality; Joan of Arc was one particular site in which this myth would congregate: as a peasant and a national hero, she entwined the values of peasantry and national pride.⁸¹

This romanticisation in the face of modernity at the turn of the 20th century would co-exist with a view of the peasant as backwards and uncultured. This is particularly true for peasants from Brittany, who bore the brunt of the urban prejudice against the rural. The Breton stereotype was embodied in the figure of Bécassine (figure 8). Published in a cartoon for the first time in 1905, the Breton migrant woman living in Paris - Bécassine - became a long-lasting symbol of Breton Otherness for the French population.⁸² She was presented as comic character, idiotic, gullible and archaic while being full of empathy and sympathy: the noble savage in an urban environment. While in the second half of the 1930s Bécassine would cease to be printed, its legacy lived on. Indeed, the comic had so much success that Parisians would sometimes call female Bretons 'Bécassines' and male Bretons 'Bécasins' due to an assumed belief in the shared traits of the cartoon character and the people of Brittany.⁸³ The societal mocking of Brittany would abate somewhat following the Second World War, but even as late the 1970s Bretons moving to France's metropolises would find themselves having to confront the legacy of the Breton stereotypes ingrained in French society.⁸⁴

The post-war years saw a continued divide between the urban and the rural; however, as France became increasingly industrialised, and the majority of the population began to live in urban settings, the relation between the two altered. By the 1950s the peasant had largely been assimilated into the urban's vision of French nationality and the peasant had equally come to represent an important set of values within the French imaginary. From the 1950s

⁸⁰ Kedward, 113.

⁸¹ Ibid., 114.

⁸² Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs of Yesterday: Breton Migrants in Paris* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2012), 73.

⁸³ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁴ Even in the 21st century Bécassine's legacy lives on as in 2018 a film version of Bécassine was released and caused disconcertion amongst Breton critics.

Author Unknown, 'Le film *Bécassine*! déclenche à nouveau la fureur des indépendantistes bretons' *Le Figaro*, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/cinema/2018/05/29/03002-20180529ARTFIG00082-le-film-becassine-declenche-a-nouveau-la-fureur-des-independantistes-bretons.php> (accessed 15 August, 2019).

onwards, there came a rising recognition of the need to modernise French agriculture — which involved a loss of human jobs due to the increased efficiency of machines — and the growth in French industry compelled many to move to urban settings. The 1960s represented the peak of the rural to urban migration, with around 100,000 workers leaving for the cities each year.⁸⁵ By the end of the 1960s the peasant became less of a lived experience and more of a romantic, nostalgic trope onto which French folk revivalists could screen their pre-modern, naturalistic visions.



Figure 8: An image of the comic Breton character, *Bécassine*.⁸⁶

As late as the 1950s the French countryside and the peasant were perceived to incarnate the quintessential properties of the French nation and a vast number of books were published that idealised the peasant.⁸⁷ Ideologically, the valorisation of the peasant appealed to both political wings. Within right wing discourse, the peasant symbolised ‘all the traditional virtues of moderation and respect for God and the authorities’. While left wing discourse extolled the libertarian qualities of rural living. Regardless of political stance, Kedward argues that for many: ‘a call for the return of the population to the land and the social was more than a defence or celebration of rural values: it became strident denunciation of urban and industrial culture, politics and society’.⁸⁸ The peasant, as an ideological figure and trope, was well established before the resurgence of French folk revival in the late 1960s.

⁸⁵ Mendras, 16.

⁸⁶ Image taken from Nicole Volle, *Bécassine, une bonne bretonne*, <http://enfinlivre.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/08/06/becassine-une-bonne-bretonne/>

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Farmer, 367.

⁸⁸ Kedward, 113.

3.3.2 The Peasant in Societal Discourse

The French folk revival and counterculture's interest in the peasant was also a consequence and a constructor of a contemporary societal discourse in the mid-1960s that saw a renewed interest in rural and peasant life across the French intellectual and public domain. As the rural population declined in the 1960s, there was a re-evaluation of the intellectual merit of studying the French peasantry and numerous histories and anthropological texts were published that dealt with the subject. Coterminous to the intellectual legitimising of the subject, within the public sphere there emerged a fashion for, what Sarah Farmer calls, the peasant memoir. The trend-setter was the 1966 book *Grenadou, Paysan Français*, which recounted the life story of the farmer Ephraïm Grenadou. The success of this book propelled the author into the centre of national discourses and saw him become a focal point for media attention. Grenadou was not alone, and Farmer charts the success of several other peasant memoirs from the Grenadou's memoir until the early 1980s.⁸⁹

While the historical practices and narratives incorporated to signify pre-modernity may have tangible roots in the past, the insertion of these practices into the music of the folk revival or the establishing of a historical continuity between modern day practitioners and their claimed ancient counterparts is a very clear example of Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger's 'invention of tradition.'⁹⁰ By this Hobsbawm and Ranger mean a tradition that implies a historical continuity that the facts of history may prove to be tenuous. It relied on the precedent that the French peasant was the counter to the challenges of modernity. Pre-modernity was already inscribed in the vision of the peasant within the national imaginary; however, the folk revival and counterculture had to reimagine and construct this pre-modernity within the realms of their relevant cultural practices.

The rise in rural communes in the early 1970s represents part of this revalorisation of the rural by the counterculture.⁹¹ At the movement's peak there were between 300 and 500 communes with 5000-10,000 residents in the winter and 30,000-50,000 residents in the

⁸⁹ Sarah Farmer, 'Memoirs of French Peasant Life: Progress and Nostalgia in Postwar France', *French History*, 25/3 (2011), 362-379.

⁹⁰ Eric Hobsbawm & Terrence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

While I believe the reference to Ranger and Hobsbawm is ideal for getting across my point here, it is worth reading Neil V. Rosenberg's short take on the best way to interpret Hobsbawm within a folk revival context.

Neil V. Rosenberg, 'Introduction', in Rosenberg, Neil V., (ed.), *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals examined* (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1-25 (20).

⁹¹ Urban communes also emerged in these years, but the majority were rural.

summer.⁹² Wider France took an interest in the rise of the communes, and a spattering of articles would appear on the topic in mainstream media.⁹³ Countercultural publications such as *Actuel* became important vehicles through which information about communes and communal living was shared. However, it would not be until post-1975 that a larger migration back to the countryside began to take place.⁹⁴

One of the most successful rural manifestations of this was Zig-Zag. Based on a farm in Tours this commune held a strong musical ethos and included a recording studio. Its constant stream of visitors, from both France and abroad, saw a shifting array of groups and line-ups. On this farm all the tasks and resources were shared, and concerts were hosted when money was required. Yet, like many other communes, it had folded by 1975.⁹⁵ The hippies and freaks who visited and lived in these communes were inspired by the desire to search for alternative modes of existence and a romantic view of rural life, as well as the communes of the USA and Scandinavia. The rural commune represented an escape from the urban, the modern, and from 21st century capitalism.⁹⁶

Journalism led to quite specific constructions of France's rural citizens. In a 1973 article for *Actuel* describing the Breton *Fest-Noz* - a night party tradition - Jean-Pierre Lentin and Jean-Paul Ribes present the event as something exotic, something different, something Other. Even the use of Breton term '*Fest-Noz*' installs the event with an aura of difference. However, this is inscribed further through the description of the frantic dancing, the 'almost oriental' music and stamping of dropped glasses into the ground. Lentin and Ribes question the loss of these types of events across France: 'how can one ever give up this joy, so elementary'.⁹⁷ The authors suggest that the Bretons had managed to retain, or at the very least, to revive

⁹² Catherine Rouvière, *Retourner à la terre : L'utopie néo-rurale en Ardèche depuis les années 1960* (Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016), 33.

⁹³ Ibid., 83-84.

⁹⁴ Catherine Rouvière identifies this moment as the first wave of a larger migration to rural France that would take place from 1975 to 1985.

Catherine Rouvière, 32-33.

⁹⁵ Alvarado, 326-327.

⁹⁶ Of course, when it came to actually existing in this world that had been the subject of so many romantic notions, reality began to assert itself. The difficulty of surviving on subsistence work and the complexity of reconciling liberal attitudes with a need for everyone to do a certain amount of work meant that most of these communes had collapsed by the mid-1960s. The average duration of a rural commune was 13 months and 6 days.

Jean-Pierre Bouyxou & Pierre Delannoy, *L'Aventure Hippie* (La Flèche: Brodard & Taupin, 2004), 140-189.

⁹⁷ 'presque orientaux'.

'Comment a-t-on jamais pu renoncer à cette jouissance si élémentaire'.

Jean-Pierre Lentin & Jean-Paul Ribes 'Chauffe La Breiz' *Actuel* 32 (1973) 72-75 (72).

something that appeals to the most intrinsic nature of humankind. The Breton as Other is portrayed as being in touch with the authentic nature of humankind; consequently, this infers that those who live in the urbanised, industrialised metropolises of France are divorced from their true nature.

Another notable example of the linking between France's regions and historicity can be found in Jacques Vassal's 1973 *La Nouvelle Chanson Bretonne*. This book not only covers the emerging Breton music scene (as the title promises) but traces the history of Brittany back to pre-Roman times. Vassal goes beyond the point of providing relevant historical information and seeks to stress mythic themes and perceived continuities between the ancient Bretons and their 1970s counterparts. The forging of this connection is revealing of the ideology underlying Vassal's historiography. His emphasis of history paints the picture of the Bretons as not only having a long history but as having a history they have maintained connections to.

The continuation of ancient Breton traditions is most clearly exemplified in the trope of the bard. In his opening chapters, Vassal constructs the bard as an essential figure in Celtic society, whose role extended beyond the musical into the realms of fighting, medicine and spirituality. The figure is then transplanted onto contemporary musicians in Vassal's chapter 'The return of the bards'. The connection is unexplained as Vassal articulates no direct comparison between the Celtic bard and the musicians of the 1960s. Yet, it is not the directly relatable qualities that truly matter in this comparison. By associating the two Vassal grounds the modern-day Breton folk revival in a long history and signifies a return to some form of imagined authentic roots.

The musical choices of the folk revivalists further conjured up images of Otherness. The Parisian band Malicorne were one group whose mixture of contemporary influences and romantic interpretations of rural life relied heavily on a sense of the peasant as different. Formed in 1974 as the both the French folk revival and the French counterculture were well underway, Malicorne featured members who were already seasoned veterans of the French folk revival. Two of the group's main members Gabriel and Marie Yacoub had had success with an album in 1973, and Gabriel Yacoub had already toured extensively with the Breton harpist Alan Stivell across 1972 and 1973.⁹⁸ The group were also tuned into developments in

⁹⁸ Another of Malicorne's members, Marie Yacoub, appeared on Stivell's *Chemins À Terre* playing spoons.

Gabriel Yacoub & Marie Yacoub *Pierre De Grenoble* (Barclay, 1973).

Alan Stivell, *À L'Olympia* (Fontana, 1972).

Alan Stivell, *Chemins De Terre* (Fontana, 1973).

the rock music world: Gabriel Yacoub had been a fan of rock and popular musics since his youth, and, the group's bass guitarist, Hughes De Courson had previously been a member of rock bands.⁹⁹ It was likely this grounding that made Malicorne one of the most popular folk bands within countercultural critical discourse.

While Malicorne's popularity seems to have peaked after the date set within this study, they received high praise for their initial musical offerings. In 1976 Vassal called Malicorne 'the most interesting French folk band'.¹⁰⁰ He comments on their success so far in France and their spread into the international market, including the UK. Even as early as Malicorne's initial release in 1973, Vassal was telling the readers of *Rock & Folk* that Malicorne could be one of the first folk groups to expand the music beyond the folk touring circuit.¹⁰¹ Due to their own background and the positive press they received in *Rock & Folk*, Malicorne was ideally placed to experiment with ideas and influences from both movements.

One way in which Malicorne created a sense of Otherness was through their use of lyrics and narrative. This is clearly apparent in 'Le Chant des Livrées' from their 1974 album *Colin*, which focuses on a 19th century wedding ritual. The song centres around the groom's party and the bride (this is represented in the vocal arrangement): the groom asks the bride to open the door to her house and tempts her with gifts, such as scarf or a cross. All the while, Nanette — the bride — resists and cites the emotional distress of her parents and her role as a faithful daughter as the reason why she cannot open the door. Finally, the groom offers himself as a husband, and it is at this point that the bride relents and allows the groom entry despite her distressed parents.¹⁰² This tradition would have seemed outmoded, quaint and bizarre in the eyes of 1970s French citizens and draws a sharp distinction between contemporary urban life and the imagined pre-modernity of the French rurality.

The use of electric or acoustic instruments was one choice that could conjure images of rurality and pre-modernity. Consequently, Malicorne's instrumentation also led to a particular sonic construction of the peasant. Within *Colin* the group used a variety of instruments from the acoustic guitar to the hurdy gurdy, signalling a pre-modernity, even a mediocrity, of the

⁹⁹ Valérie Rouvière, *Le Mouvement Folk En France (1964-1981)*, (Master's Thesis : Modal/FAMDT, 2002), 74.

¹⁰⁰ 'le plus interessant groupe de folk français', Vassal, *Français si vous chantez*, 62.

¹⁰¹ Jacques Vassal, 'Fous de Folk', *Rock & Folk*, 82 (1973), 115.

¹⁰² Gabriel Yacoub points towards the 19th century French novelist George Sand's novel *La Mare au Diable* as an important source for the creation of this song.

Gabriel Yacoub, 'le chant des livrées', *Gabriel Yacoub*,

<http://www.gabrielyacoub.com/en/disque/titre.php?idTitre=144> (accessed 10 May, 2019).

George Sand, *La Mare au Diable* (Paris : Garnier Frères, 1962).

peasant. Further, many of the instruments Malicorne used were radically removed from anything seen in then-contemporary popular music. The use of instruments such as the crumhorn added to any perception of peasant culture as radically removed from 1970s urban existence.

Malicorne were not alone in using instruments in a way that cast peasant and rural culture as Other. In comparison to the dominant electric instrumentation of contemporary popular music, French folk revivalists often chose to use acoustic instruments. The transportability and comparative lack of technical sophistication required to make these instruments allowed them to be imagined having a history outside of the urban and modern. Most commonly this idea can be seen in the widespread use of the acoustic guitar, but it is also present, and perhaps more potent, in Alan Stivell's Celtic harp or the use of instruments such as the violin or dulcimer. In a similar way to Malicorne's use of the crumhorn, Otherness could be further evoked through using regional instruments, such as the Breton bagpipes or *epinette des Vosges*.¹⁰³

Beyond the writings of music critics and the musical choices of revivalists, folk's pre-modernity was shown in a variety of ways, not least through the stressing of the ways in which contemporary folk revivalists gathered and learned their repertoire. This dynamic was often expressed as a recovering of dying or abandoned practices. Sometimes this would take form of a musician/collector learning the music directly from ethnographic or historical research and in other cases, peasants who had maintained a connection with folk practices were 'found' and put on centre-stage. One example of this was the displaying of the Goadec Sisters, who were rediscovered in the mid 1950s and would perform with significant revivalists in the early 1970s.¹⁰⁴ Regardless, the folk revival's critics and musicians had a clear desire to establish a connection to history, often a history that pre-exists - at the very least- the Second World War and demonstrate an attraction to a sense of pre-modernity.

¹⁰³ The *epinette de Vosges* is a form of French zither used in the musical traditions of the Vosges mountains. For more information on the instrument see François Gasnault, 'Un Instrument, deux enquêtes de terrain, des archives : l'épinette des Vosges et ses dispositifs documentaires (1957, 1970-1972)', *Les sources de l'histoire de la lutherie* (2017), 103-111 (103).

Regional instruments could of course signal a sense of self for their home regions. However, for both non-regional listeners and regional listeners these instruments acted as a marker of difference between the modern and the pre-modern and could invoke some sort of romantic past.

¹⁰⁴ Jacques Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Breton* (Paris: Albin Michel/Folk & Rock, 1973), 61-63.

3.3.3 The Oppositionality of the French Folk Revival

Nostalgia was a key element in the resurgence of interest in the rural.¹⁰⁵ The 1960s represented the apex of the rural-urban shift and this displacement was felt acutely. Michael Bess notes that ‘the French [...] perceived the disappearance of the old rural world not just as an economic or demographic change, but as a spiritual loss, a deep wound in the tissue of their civilisation’.¹⁰⁶ The prominence of the rural and peasant within the French national imaginary meant that their perceived loss was felt profoundly. It represented a cleavage with the self-perception of France as a rural country and exposed the power of modernity as a disruptive force.

Farmer’s final examination of the cultural context that led to the success of the peasant memoir moves beyond an analysis of the renewed interest in the rural and the peasant as a consequence of nostalgia. She recognises that the feeling of nostalgia and a sense of displacement were an important factor; however, she extends this argument further:

In the 1970s, individual peasants who appeared in books and on television, rather than peasants as an aggregate or class, reassured French people that one could safely inhabit modern times while remaining connected to a rural past.¹⁰⁷

The peasants of these memoirs were not only symbols of the pre-modern but also of the ability of the pre-modern and modern to co-exist. Many of the authors of the peasant memoirs (and, indeed, all the examples in Farmer’s study) received media attention: whether it be television, radio, or journalistic and many also spoke of the ways in which they modernised their farms or lifestyles over the years. These narratives affirmed that it was possible to be both rooted and modern and offered an idealistic example of striking this balance.

This promise of the possibility of the coexistence of the old and the new, the rural and the urban, the traditional and the contemporary was at the core of the counterculture’s interest in the French folk revival. Undoubtedly, the folk revival was reliant on modernity: it made use of electric amplification, electric instruments, recording technology; it was distributed through radio, television, and glossy magazines; and required complex logistical chains to transport

¹⁰⁵ Catherine Rouvière, 36.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Bess, *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960-2000* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 40.

¹⁰⁷ Farmer, 377.

the bands and their merchandise. Despite the folk revival's fascination with the pre-modern, it was grounded in modernity.

Confirming Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell's argument that 'many of those who identify as traditional musicians would themselves argue that they are not aiming to, and should not be expected to, reproduce their music or dance exactly as it was at some putative point in the past', many French folk musicians argued strongly against an idea that folk music was nostalgic or an act of rigid preservation and purism.¹⁰⁸ In an interview Catherine Perrier states that 'folk music is completely contrary to static/fixed music' and evidences this by citing that there exist a great many versions of traditional songs such as 'Dans l'eau de la claire fontaine'.¹⁰⁹ The use of modernising factors was an essential part of the folk revival's success.

Using electric instruments allowed the revivalists to place folk music within a framework compatible and understandable to the rock/pop audience. Jonathyne Briggs most noticeably highlights this was the case with the Breton folk revival through his discussion of Alan Stivell and Tri Yann.¹¹⁰ By placing folk within a modern rock/pop context, the difference between the French urban youth and the peasant Other could be bridged. This bridging of the Otherness of the peasant allowed the peasant's pre-modernity and authenticity to be used as political tool. By being on the same side as the peasant Other, the revivalists stood against the disruptive aspects of modernity while safely inhabiting it.

Electrification was not only a method of connecting to rock audiences, for some artists it fitted into the narrative of authenticity that was central to the folk revival. The question of using electric instruments in folk music was put to Malicorne in a 1976 interview for *Rock & Folk*. The journalist, Jean-Marie Leduc, asks Malicorne if the use of electric instruments was a deliberate attempt to capture some of the rock market. In response Gabriel Yacoub replies:

It is necessary to recognise the reality of our situation as city dwellers; it would not be normal for us to ignore modern instruments and techniques. It is more natural and sincere [...] to use electric instruments than it is not to use them, otherwise we would have had and given the impression of playing music from a museum.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Hill & Bithell, 17.

¹⁰⁹ 'Le folk est tout le contraire d'une musique figée'.

F., 'Le Roi de la Guimbarde et la Jeune Chanteuse', *Actuel* 32 (1973), 58-59 (58).

¹¹⁰ Briggs, 130-131.

¹¹¹ 'Disons qu'il fallait reconnaître la réalité de notre situation de citadins ; il ne serait pas normal pour nous de se mettre à ignorer les instruments moderne et les techniques nouvelles. Il est plus naturel et sincère [...] d'utiliser des instruments électriques que de non pas en utiliser, sinon nous aurions eu et donné l'impression d'exécuter de la musique de musée' .
Jean-Marie Leduc, 'La Bamboche et Malicorne', *Rock & Folk*, 115 (1976), 40-43 (41).

As Malicorne come from a primarily urban background, and due to electric instruments being perceived as the domain of the urban musician, it makes logical sense to include electric instruments. Consequently, the inclusion of electric instruments, at least for urban musicians, was sometimes regarded as an act of authenticity.

By situating modernity and tradition with the same sonic and geographic space the folk revivalists made folk music both culturally and politically relevant. Folk music allowed a navigation through modernity and an agility of identity that embraced certain aspects of modernity and rejected others. From a countercultural perspective, the navigational power that folk music offered through modernity was a potent tool. Tamara Livingstone notes that, as a general trend, revivals are oppositional in nature as they rely on historical narratives to propose alternative social models.¹¹² She states that:

revivalists position themselves in *opposition* to aspects of the contemporary cultural mainstream, align themselves with a particular historical lineage, and offer a cultural alternative in which legitimacy is grounded in reference to authenticity and historical fidelity.¹¹³

The French folk revival was clearly powerfully connected to an idea of pre-modernity. As Georgina Boyes notes in regard to the English folk revival: ‘folk culture represented an uncontaminated, and non-aligned source from which all alter, less innocent forms developed’.¹¹⁴ Folk was able to be positioned as oppositional as it was believed to encapsulate a purity and authenticity that was lacking in many other contemporary genres.

The co-existence of the modern and pre-modern in the French folk revival allowed a reconciliation of some of the tensions inscribed in counterculture ideology. In a 1971 article on the emergence of the ‘New Culture’ for *Actuel*, Julien Vladimir positions ‘post-industrial’ society as the unifying enemy of the counterculture, due to the threat it poses to human existence through its scientific and technocratic advancements: the atomic threat, the disruption of the environment, and alienation. He further argues that the refusal of technology is and should be one of the tools of countercultural liberation. While not citing the French folk revival directly, and indeed the movement had not yet achieved the popularity it was about to,

¹¹² Livingstone, 66.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Boyes, 36.

the values that Vladimir puts forward are found in the folk revival's romanticised notion of rural life.

The connection between an oppositionality against contemporary society and folk music was further expressed in *Rock & Folk* in 1972 when a letter of Alan Lomax's was published. In this article Lomax identifies the threat caused by 'coca-colonisation' and the 'businessmen of the USA who are preparing for a cultural blitz'.¹¹⁵ He warns of the potential for 'hundreds of national musics across the globe' to be 'erased, forgotten' and the need to ensure that there is a diverse range of styles within the musical ecosystem.¹¹⁶ In his closing paragraphs, he calls out for the reader to take action: 'In your country, you should be able to construct your new music on the best of the old'.¹¹⁷ Consequently, to embrace national folk music was an act of defiance against global capitalism.

The French folk revival's duality helped negotiate this difficult realm of commercialism. The French counterculture and folk revival were highly disparaging of the interference of the market on musical endeavours. Yet, the market was essential for the production and distribution of music. Throughout the discourse on the folk revival within French magazines there is a reoccurring fear of the co-option of folk music by the destructive influences of show business. This is most strongly expressed in an article by Lentin in *Actuel* in 1974. Within this article Lentin warns of the impending doom that the emergence of 'la mode folk' [folk fashion] trend foretells. Pop stars such as Sheila were beginning to incorporate folk elements into their music and record labels were actively commercialising on the sound through industry-led 'mode folk' projects. Lentin sees this co-option of folk music by the music industry as inevitable due to the way in which the music industry capitalises on trends.¹¹⁸

Vassal takes very similar views on the incursion of commercial interests into the realm of folk, although places the roots of its co-option by the music establishment much earlier. The target of Vassal's critique is similar to those of Lentin, it is the stars of the music industry such as Hallyday, Sheila and Sylvie Vartan. Expanding his analysis, he sees 'le mode folk' as a consequence of the decline of the industry controlled *yéyé* genre in the mid-1960s and their

¹¹⁵ 'Il y a des d'affaires aux Etats-Unis qui préparent un blitz culturel'.

To be clear Seeger is not presenting himself as a luddite; he highlights the potential benefit that modern technology may bring but strongly warns against the possible negative outcomes.

Pete Seeger, 'Les Contes De Pete', *Rock & Folk*, 63 (1972), 43-45 (44).

¹¹⁶ 'centaines de musiques nationales du globe soient effacées, oubliées'.

Seeger, 44.

¹¹⁷ 'Dans votre pays, vous devriez pouvoir construire une votre musique nouvelle sur ce que l'ancienne a de meilleur'.

Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'Le raz-de-marée folk' *Actuel*, 49 (1974), 42-46 (46).

search for other forms of musical interest. He places Hugues Aufray's adaptations of Dylan as part of his larger argument concerning the decline of *yéyé* and the territorialisation of folk by the musical establishment. This is despite Hugues' claim to authenticity as a consequence of his time in New York and contact with Bob Dylan.¹¹⁹

This debate about the authenticity of folk music has parallels with *chanson* models of authenticity. Crucially, both are seen to embody something French, require that the artist act without commercial motivations and instead be inspired by a creative desire, and both are defined in opposition to commercial music. *La mode folk* existed in much the same way that popular music did for *chanson* in the late 1950s. It was seen as something foreign and artificial: an intrusion of the commercial world on a realm of national authenticity and artistry. Critics would construct arguments about what made the folk music that they praised as something different from *la mode folk*. For Vassal authentic folk singers are differentiated from commercialised attempts at folk as a consequence of their motives. He believes that folk music is sold in 'service of a struggle' (i.e. the mission to return the alienated masses to an authentic human nature), while commercialised music is marked by the intention of making money.¹²⁰

Through these sorts of arguments, folk maintained a sense of what was felt to be true and pure, uncorrupted by commercial interests. Folk music is thus reliant on the market, but it is not motivated by the market and thus can claim an anti-commercialist stance. In some ways the folk authenticity discourse of the folk revival would pre-date the emergence post-war *chanson* models of authenticity. Looseley clearly demonstrates that *chanson*'s authenticity relied on a mixture of both folk and art discourse.¹²¹ Yet, due to *chanson*'s significant cultural standing, the use of techniques of authentication already present in *chanson* helped tie the French folk revival to a pre-established relation of authenticity and music, even if the details of how this process of authentication manifested were somewhat different.

¹¹⁹ Vassal, *Folksong*, 283-284.

A 1967 edition of *Rock & Folk* suggests that Aufray had himself denounced his previous practice of singing adaptations.

Elisabeth Donato, 'Suis-Je Rock?: defining French rock and roll artists in *Rock & Folk*, 1966-1967', *Contemporary French Civilization*, 36/1-2 (2011), 5-18 (14).

¹²⁰ Vassal, *Folksong*, 297.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

3.4 The Folk Revival and Regionalism

3.4.1 Third Worldism

The oppositionality of folk music was dramatically enhanced through its association with regional struggles of places like Brittany and Occitania. As Fredric Jameson argues, third worldism was one of the most influential ideological trends of the 1960s. Championed by the likes of Frantz Fanon and fuelled by the processes of decolonisation taking place across the globe, this world view placed the citizens of the so-called third world as the new revolutionary subjects of Marxian progression.¹²² The shift to third worldism as a dominant ideology relied upon a disenchantment with the Soviet Union and frustrations concerning the inability of contemporary political institutions to act as appropriate vehicles for class politics. In response to the roadblock of traditional political avenues, third worldism changed the battleground and the subjects of history to areas where change was seen to be happening.¹²³

France was no exception to the sway of third worldism and, particularly in the years following 1968, its presence was strongly felt. Maoism was one area in which third worldism clearly had an impact on French society. Not only did the Maoists play a relatively notable role during May '68 but, as Richard Wolan argues, their influence was felt strongly in the following years.¹²⁴ Similarly, there was a fascination with the African American civil rights and black power movements, and a discourse emerged placing the African American as an internal Other within a form of colonial struggle.¹²⁵ Perhaps most significantly, the Vietnam war continued to rage on, without any sign of coming to a close. Its presence within the media made it a focal point of anti-imperialist and anti-American critique and profoundly influenced French left wing political thought. In Kristen Ross's words: 'it was the North Vietnamese peasant, and not the auto worker at Billancourt, who had become, for many French militants, the figure of the working class'.¹²⁶

The 1970s witnessed an important shift in the way that France engaged with third worldism: France's own colonial wars had almost all finished; the cultural attraction of Mao's

¹²² Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth* (London: Penguin, 2001).

¹²³ Fredric Jameson, 'Periodizing the 60s', *Social Text*, 9/10 (1984), 178-209 (178-186).

¹²⁴ Richard Wolin, *The Wind From the East: French Intellectuals, The Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹²⁵ Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2011), 111-154.

¹²⁶ Billancourt is a suburb of Paris that hosts a large Renault Factory.

Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 81.

cultural revolution was starting to decline; and the focus on Vietnam became gradually displaced. This caused a refocusing away from the colonial Other to the minorities within France's own borders. The 1970s French public discourse saw the rise of Women's Rights movements, Gay Rights movements, concerns about immigration, and, pertinently, a greater understanding of French regionalism. The battleground had shifted to home territory once again and this time it was focused on the internal Other.

Occitania was one area that saw a surge in a left-wing political ideology that decried the centralising policies of the French state.¹²⁷ This regionalism had its roots in the 19th century with the *Félibrige* literary movement and had a renewed wave of enthusiasm in 1936 with creation of the Toulouse Institute of Occitan Studies.¹²⁸ The Vichy years also saw a level of official interest in Occitania, and it would be partially a reaction to this form of right wing regionalism that would cause the emergence of its left wing variant in the 1970s.¹²⁹ With the rise in leftist ideals and radicalism following May '68, the regionalism of Occitania would come to light again. This wave of *occitanisme* conceptualised Occitania's regionalism within a third worldist framework. This view was particularly held by Robert Lafont, who was one of the figureheads of the movement. He argued that Occitania's position in France was that of an internal colony and Occitania's local culture had been repressed by a French state that demanded adherence to a centralised, official culture.¹³⁰ Consequently, 1960s and 1970s *occitanisme* understood '[o]ccitan as the idiom of a nation conquered and colonized by the French state over many centuries'.¹³¹

The rise and revival of Occitan music in this period was part of a large reassertion of Occitan identity. Occitania had not maintained as active folk music traditions as other regions. Yet, various groups emerged that focused on preserving Occitan traditions or imagining new ones. Particularly influential was the movement of *la nouvelle chanson occitane*, which took inspiration from American protest singers and sought to engage with contemporary political events through song.¹³² The first acknowledge recording of this movement was Gui Broglia's

¹²⁷ Virgine Magnat, 'Occitan Music Revitalization as Radical Cultural Activism: From Postcolonial Regionalism to Altermondialisation' *Popular Music and Society*, 40/1 (2017), 63.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

Catherine Rouvière, 10.

¹²⁹ Magnat, 67.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹³¹ Paul Cohen, 'Local Music for Global Action: Massilia Sound System's Political Intervention', *popmatters*, <https://www.popmatters.com/local-music-for-global-action-massilia-sound-systems-political-intervention-2495444383.html?rebelltitem=3#rebelltitem3> (accessed 11 January, 2019).

¹³² Magnat, 64.

Gui Broglia canta Robèrt Lafont, in which Broglia set Lafont's poems to music.¹³³ However, it would be in the years following May 1968 that the movement would start to gain traction.

One of the most representative musicians of the movement was Claude Marti. Marti's entry into music was quite sudden: he only began to sing in 1968 and would begin recording music within a year.¹³⁴ After struggling to write songs in French, he decided to write them in his local variant of Occitan and found this process to be more successful.¹³⁵ His first album *Occitania!* was released in 1970 and featured an array of songs affirming Occitan identity. In keeping with the third worldist ideology of the Occitan movement, the front cover of this record featured Che Guevara, thereby aligning Occitania's independentist movement with the revolutionary struggles of Cuba.¹³⁶ In 1973 a selection of Marti's song was awarded the *Grand Prix du disque* signifying that Marti did not only have a notable impact within the realms of Occitan, but also on a national level.¹³⁷



Figure 9: Front Cover of Marti's *Occitania!* (Ventadorn, 1972).

Particularly influential for *la nouvelle chanson occitane* was the label Ventadorn that helped record and disseminate the genre across France.¹³⁸ Named after a medieval Occitan poet, Ventadorn came into being in 1969 when it produced Marti's 45 rpm 'Lo país qui vol viure' and focused on recording small batches of Occitan musicians. More a collective than a record label, Ventadorn operated on a business model where its musicians renounced their right to royalties and volunteers would help run the business. Ventadorn's ideology was put to

¹³³ Annie Zerby-Cros, 'Ventadorn ou l'aventure d'une maison de disques occitans à Béziers', *Lengas*, 61 (2010).

¹³⁴ Vassal, *Français si vous chantez*, 91.

¹³⁵ Marti found inspiration in the *nova cançon* genre emerging in Catalonia. Evidencing the cross-regional dimensions of these various autonomy movements.

Vassal, *Français si vous chantez*, 91.

¹³⁶ Eric Drott, 'The *nova cançon* occitana and the Internal Colonialism Thesis', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 29/1, (2011), 1-23 (1-2)

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³⁸ Annie Zerby-Cros, 'Ventadorn ou l'aventure d'une maison de disques occitans à Béziers', *Lengas*, 61 (2010).

the test in 1973 as the French folk revival began to take off and attract the attention of major record labels. From 1973 onwards many of these labels would try to sign Ventadorn's musicians, nearly all would decline this offer.¹³⁹ Yet this attempt to steal its singers would cause Ventadorn to increase the quality of their products and more actively promote and distribute their musicians.¹⁴⁰ While this led to a moment of crisis in 1975 when these investments were not making the returns hoped for, Ventadorn would make it through this difficult moment and exist until its collapse in the mid 1980s.¹⁴¹

There are clearly notable ties to *chanson* models of authenticity within the work of *la nouvelle chanson occitane*, and regional folk movements in general. There is, again, this sense of oppositionality and national identity. Instead of expressing something French, however, the desire is to express something regional that is positioned against a perceived French hegemony. The musicians are portrayed as authentic through their oppositionality. Their music is seen to prioritise regional identity, artistic sincerity, and political goals over commercial engagement. Of course, by 1972 countercultural and folk models of authenticity were also become firmly established across France and *la nouvelle chanson occitane* was inspired by folk revival and protest songs. Yet, this mix of models of authenticity readable in the work of the performers of *la nouvelle chanson occitane* demonstrates an intertextuality of the folk revival. This intertextuality references both national and transnational models of authenticity thereby offering a logical connection between national and transnational movements.

One of the largest and most well-known periods of Occitania's politic activism was the protest that occurred in Larzac against the planned expansion of a military base. For the people of Occitania this intrusion onto agricultural land was another example of the state's lack of respect for their region. This site of protest also became a hotbed of musical activity with songs sung in Occitan being used to assert a regional identity in face of a centralist power.¹⁴² Not only were Occitan musicians heard at this event (including many of the members of Ventadorn), but several of France's folk musicians were present for this protest: Valérie Rouvière highlights that 'Bretons (Alan Stivell, Gweltaz Ar fur) and the team from Bourdon (Catherine Perrier, John Wright, Phil Fromont), without forgetting the folk singer

¹³⁹ One notable exception is Joan Pau Verdier, who would move from Ventador to the major label Philips. For more information see Drott, 'The nòva cançon occitana', 10-18.

¹⁴⁰ Vassal, *Français si vous chantez*, 100-101.

¹⁴¹ Zerby-Cros, 61.

¹⁴² Magnat, 63.

Graeme Allwright' were all at the Larzac protest.¹⁴³ This not only testifies to the international investment in the Larzac protest but also demonstrates that France's various folk movements were in dialogue with one another and expressing solidarity in face of the French state.

By far, the most discussed regionalist movement of the 1970s for the French counterculture was Brittany's. Breton nationalism had been in existence long before the rise of French third worldism in the 1960s. In 1911 the *Parti Nationaliste Breton* was formed, taking inspiration from Irish nationalism, and voiced secessionist politics. During the following years the *Parti Nationaliste Breton* would collapse, but its name would be reused for another secessionist group in 1930. Due to a belief amongst some groups that the war represented a chance to gain Breton independence there was a vocal support of the Vichy government under Pétain, although this support would not last the duration of the war. This, in itself, was not entirely unusual; however, there also existed a minority group of Nazi supporters who actively targeted Resistance members. The actions of these collaborators cast a long shadow over regionalists and independence movements in Brittany and caused a decline in nationalist activity in post-war Brittany.¹⁴⁴

The 1950s and 1960s saw the re-emergence of Breton regionalist ideals following the Second World War. The *Comité d'Etudes et de Liaison des Intérêts Breton* was formed in the early 1950s with the intention of providing information for the growth of Brittany's economy. While the popularity and significance of the group would start to decline in the mid-1960s, Maryon MacDonald highlights that it was important for its furthering of a 'regional' consciousness'.¹⁴⁵ Other significant political groups also emerged in this era: the *Union Démocratique Breton* founded in 1964, which held regional independence (although not always separatism) as a fundamental tenet of their political stance. More radically, groups such as the *Front de libération de la Bretagne* were formed and began to engage in terrorist activities from 1966 onwards.¹⁴⁶

By the start of the 1970s Brittany's politics were increasingly becoming known across the country. The scholar Tudi Kernalegenn places 1972 as a year that made apparent many of Brittany's concerns. Throughout the year a variety of strikes took place that critiqued the

¹⁴³ 'Les Bretons (Alan Stivell, Gweltaz Ar fur) et l'équipe du Bourdon (Catherine Perrier, John Wright, Phil Fromont), sans oublier le folk singer Graeme Allwright'. Rouvière, 35.

¹⁴⁴ Sharif Gemie, 'Roots, rock, Breizh: music and the politics of nationhood in contemporary Brittany', *Nations and Nationalism*, 11/1 (2005), 103–20 (104).

¹⁴⁵ Maryon MacDonald, *'We Are Not French!' Language, culture and identity in Brittany*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), 80.

¹⁴⁶ MacDonald, 79.

perceived exploitation of Breton workers and demanded salary raises and better working hours. Drawing on the third worldist rhetoric the regional office of the *Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail* compared the treatment of Bretons by the relevant business to a form of colonialism.¹⁴⁷ More radically, in the same year, paramilitary groups that were involved in the Breton regionalist movement carried out violent attacks across the region. These groups removed national symbols from public buildings, as they were perceived to be evidence of colonial power. The most notorious attack would take place on the 12th of April when the paramilitary group *Front de Libération de la Bretagne* would bomb the house of a real estate entrepreneur. The subsequent court hearing would become ‘the first grand trial of the [*Front de Libération de la Bretagne*]’.¹⁴⁸ The Breton demand for autonomy was not just a topic of issue for locals and officials by 1972 but had become a national issue.

3.4.2 Music

Music helped bring attention to the case of Brittany and most famously, the Celtic harp playing of Alan Stivell would come to signify the Breton and French folk revival for the outside world. Many scholars have named Stivell as a key figure for the not only the Breton musical revival but the French folk music revival across France in the 1970s.¹⁴⁹ The amount of historical significance placed upon Stivell has served to canonise him and has led him to being one of the few French folk musicians that the uninitiated in the anglophone world may have heard of. Nevertheless, sometimes the importance attached to Stivell has been hyperbolic: Sharif Gemie, for example, argues that ‘the modern revival of Breton music can be credited to one man: Alan Stivell’.¹⁵⁰

Regardless of any exaggeration, Stivell’s canonisation is well deserved, and he was seen as a central figure of the French folk revival from the French countercultural perspective. From the late 1960s onwards Stivell was one of the reoccurring names within the countercultural press. His fame grew to such an extent that in 1973 Vassal described Stivell as ‘by the far the most famous artist of the current Breton movement’ and even goes as far to

¹⁴⁷ Tudi Kernalegenn, ‘1972: Le Réveil de la Bretagne’, *ArMen*, 191 (2012), 20–27.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

¹⁴⁹ Yann Bévant, ‘Nations in Tune: the influence of Irish music on the Breton musical revival in the 1960s and 1970s’, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 29 (2009), 30–44 (37).

François Bensignor, ‘Alan Stivell’, *Hommes et Migrations*, 1293 (2011), 1–5.

¹⁵⁰ Gemie, 108.

suggest that Stivell has become ‘a sort of ‘pop star’’.¹⁵¹ He also received great success abroad: in 1971 he won the Celtavision contest that was hosted by RTE, BBC Wales and BBC Scotland, and in 1974 performed an extremely popular show in Dublin that Bévant argues put Breton music on the map for the Irish.¹⁵² Stivell came to represent the revival of Breton music not only for the French counterculture, but also for the so-called Celtic crescent.¹⁵³

Stivell purposefully constructed a Breton identity. He was born Alan Cochevelou in Brittany and began using the last name Stivell, meaning ‘source’ in Breton.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, his immersion in Breton musical culture and his choice to specialise in the Celtic harp served to firmly cast him as a Breton icon and reinforced the perception that Brittany was a Celtic nation, and thus different from France. Stivell’s experimentation with this idea can be found on his album *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique*.¹⁵⁵ Within this output Stivell took a largely purist approach and emphasises his engagement to traditional music. Further, as Briggs aptly notes, many of the ideas explored in this album referenced mythical or Celtic historical events, such as the lost city of Ys or the 18th century adventures of the Pontcellec brothers.¹⁵⁶

This exploration of Celticness is continued through the musical choices and developments present within the album. ‘Gaeltacht Medley: Caitlin Trial’ is a 19-minute epic that collates tunes from across the Celtic crescent in a way that articulates a strong identity.¹⁵⁷ ‘Gaeltacht Medley’ wanders from melody to melody and encounters various Celtic compatriots with each voyage. In this sense it reads as a traversing of the distance of the Celtic crescent, whilst reminding the listener of the perceived connection and commonality that each of the various nodes of this constellation share. The connection across the Celtic crescent is made clear through the attribution of each melody to its country of origin and the referencing of the origin of each of the instruments involved: Alan Stivell plays the ‘Irish

¹⁵¹ ‘Alan Stivell est de loin l’artiste le plus célèbre du mouvement breton actuel’.

Jacques Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Breton* (Paris: Albin Michel/Folk & Rock, 1973), 105.

¹⁵² Bévant, 37-38.

RTE is Ireland’s equivalent of the BBC.

¹⁵³ Alan Stivell’s success extended beyond France and Ireland: he played with the British rock band The Moody Blues in 1968; his 1973 album *Chemin Des Terres* was the album of the year in the British music magazine *Melody Maker*; his playing was a critical influence in the emergence of a Celtic music performance style in Galicia in Northern Spain. Alvarado, 153.

Javier Campos Calvo-Sotelo, ‘*We’re on the Celtic Fringe!:* Celtic Music and Nationalism in Galicia’ in Silva Martínez and Héctor Fouce (eds.), *Made in Spain: Studies in Popular Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 53-61 (55).

¹⁵⁴ Briggs, 122.

¹⁵⁵ Alan Stivell, *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique* (Fontana, 1971).

¹⁵⁶ Briggs, 128.

¹⁵⁷ Alan Stivell ‘Gaeltacht Medley: Caitlin Trial’ *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique* (Fontana, 1971).

flute', the 'Scottish cornemuse' and the 'Breton Bombarde'.¹⁵⁸ In both music and narrative, *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique*, testifies to not only Stivell's engagement in reviving elements of Breton culture perceived to be lost, but also in connecting Brittany with the Celtic world.¹⁵⁹

Time (18:13)	'Gaeltacht Medley: Caitlin Triall'
0:00	Caitlin Triall: Irish melody
0:57	Port Ui Mhuirgheasa: Irish jig
2:39	Airde Cuan: Irish melody
4:23	Na Reubairean: Scottish melody
4:58	Manx melody
5:32	Heman dubh: Work song from the Hebrides
7:45	Gaelic Waltz: Scottish traditional waltz
10:27	Struan Robertson: Scottish dance
11:20	The Little Cascade: Scottish dance
12:40	Braigh Loch Lall: Scottish melody
15:55	Port An Deorai: Suite of Irish slip-jigs

Table 6: Analysis of Alan Stivell's 'Gaeltacht Medley: Caitlin Triall' (Fontana, 1971).

Stivell's use of the Celtic harp was also of great significance and, while Stivell had been playing the Celtic harp for many years, the choice of name *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique* and its prominent place on the album cover stress the significance about the perceived potential of the Celtic harp. Indeed, as the album's liner notes make clear, the harp had been an instrument lost to Brittany, and Stivell's father began a process of trying to recreate it from images.¹⁶⁰ Alan Stivell did a spectacular job of repopularising it, and his promotion of the instrument was so successful that it became a mark of the revival beyond Brittany. Adverts for Lazkan - a seller of folk instruments - were centred around an image of the Celtic harp (figure 10).¹⁶¹ The Celtic harp came to symbolise a connection with Brittany's Celtic past and was seen to embody the romantic Otherness central to the folk revival.

Stivell's Bretonness was matched with a grounding in then-contemporary rock and pop musics. Often playing in groups that mixed electric guitars, and a drum kit with Breton instruments, Stivell mixed the modern and pre-modern, the central and the regional, the urban and the rural. A notable example of Stivell's exceptional ability to combine popular and folk music can be found in the widespread success of Stivell's 1972 single 'Pop Plinn'.¹⁶² This

¹⁵⁸ Liner notes of Alan Stivell, *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique* (Fontana, 1971).

¹⁵⁹ This connection is reinforced through the reference of to celticism in the title, the use of the harp, and his use of musical material from across the celtic crescent.

Alan Stivell, *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique* (Fontana, 1971).

¹⁶⁰ Briggs, 122.

¹⁶¹ Author Unknown, 'Lazkan Advert', *Best*, 64 (1973), 70.

¹⁶² Alan Stivell, 'Pop Plinn' (Fontana, 1972).

song lasts a radio-friendly 3 minutes and 13 seconds and heavily features electric guitar, bass guitar and a drum kit alongside Stivell's harp and a variety of other Breton instruments. The first half of this track is void of Stivell's harp entirely and is focused on the guitar playing of Dan ar Braz. Indeed, there is little in the way to suggest folk music in the first 1:25 of 'Pop Plinn'. It is in the second section with the introduction of Stivell's harp, and then fiddle and bombarde that the connection between the two genres is clearly made.



Figure 10: Cover of Alan Stivell's *Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique* (Fontana 1971).



Figure 11: Advert for Lazkan musical instruments (Best, 1970).

'Pop Plinn' goes beyond a tokenistic gesture and feels as if it has been written and performed by musicians who are versed in both the rock world and the folk world. The combination of elements from the Breton 'Plinn' dance and Stivell's rock band casts 'Pop Plinn' as a progressive rock and folk hybrid. Crucially, by incorporating influences from pop, rock and Celtic styles the song acted as a symbol of the folk music revival's reliance on both modernity and tradition.¹⁶³ Mixing pop/rock sounds with Breton and Celtic music was a defining feature of his music – although the balance between the influences would constantly shift – and brought notable attention to not only his music but the situation of Brittany.

¹⁶³ Briggs, 130.

For Stivell, Bretonness was not voiced politically as much as it was voiced culturally. In 1972 many Breton musicians signed the *Manifesto of Breton singers*, demonstrating their support for Brittany to receive greater regional autonomy.¹⁶⁴ However, while numerous of Stivell's peers demonstrated their commitment to the Breton cause by signing this manifesto, Stivell demonstrated his reluctance to engage directly in politics by refusing to sign it. His emphasis on culture over politics, or rather culture-as-politics, made him the ideal musician to translate Breton culture to the cultural revolution that France experienced following May 1968. Gemie notes that the lack of political messages lyrically within Stivell's music is matched through his clear articulation of not only a Breton, but also a Celtic and modern identity.¹⁶⁵ By forging these connections Stivell transmitted ideas of Bretonness nationally and internationally.

Time (3:13)	'Pop Plinn'
0:00	Introduction: electric organ and distorted electric guitar
0:35	Drum kit enters
0:42	A: Full rock band
0:53	B
1:03	A
1:14	B
1:25	C: Harp takes melody
1:55	D: Fiddle leads melody
2:17	C: Bombard takes melody
2:48	A Melody on electric guitar
2:57	Outro

Table 7: Analysis of Alan Stivell's 'Pop Plinn'.

Other musicians took a more radical position and sought to overtly express the concerns that were fundamental to the rise of Breton regionalism. Singers such as Glenmor and Gilles Servat were two of the most widely known and outspoken proponents of Breton regionalism. Glenmor born under the name Milig Ar Skanv, was raised in Brittany within a Breton speaking household. During his youth he was made to feel the prejudice that the dominant strains of French culture held against Brittany.¹⁶⁶ After having graduated he joined a Breton popular theatre company that sought to install within the Breton people a pride in their history. This experiment was short lived, after which Glenmor took to the road, exploring the

¹⁶⁴ 'Manifeste des chanteurs bretons'

Kernalegenn, 22.

¹⁶⁵ Gemie, 109.

¹⁶⁶ Jacques Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Breton* (Paris: Albin Michel/Folk & Rock, 1973), 72-73.

continent as far as the U.S.S.R and Turkey.¹⁶⁷ Upon his return he adopted the stage name Glenmor (Earth-Mother) and began his career as a professional musician.

Glenmor proudly incorporated his Breton identity into his music. He often sang in Breton, and his tendency to do so increased as the Breton regionalist movement gained momentum. He would also critique the French state and the appeal of Paris. In 'Recit Bardique', Glenmor takes on the ancient Bardic role for himself and provides his history of 'a Brittany disappeared'.¹⁶⁸ Yet, in the closing stanza the nostalgia is converted into hope as Glenmor emits a call-to-arms.

J'en appelle aux chemins	I call to the paths
Que l'on dit bien trop vieux	That we said were too old
J'en appelle au destin	I call to destiny
Dites-moi si la guerre est un jeu	Tell me if war is a game
J'en appelle aux soldats	I call to the soldiers
De bravoure et fierté	Of bravery and pride
J'en appelle au combat	I call to combat
Dites-moi si le monde est gardé	Tell me if the world is protected
J'en appelle aux vaisseaux	I call to the ships
Que l'on croise au soleil	That have crossed the sun
J'en appelle aux drapeaux	I call to the flags
Qui labourent le ciel	Who furrow the sky
Et signera de sang	And sign in blood
Toute gloire et fierté	All the glory and pride
Pour qu'au fil des ans	So that over the years
Nous reviennent nos libertés ¹⁶⁹	We retrieve our freedoms

Brittany's decline is, then, a presage to its resurrection. Glenmor does not make this call lightly and his use of militaristic imagery testifies to the intensity of his call for renewal. In other songs Glenmor denounces the degeneracy of Paris or references historical Breton figures.¹⁷⁰ Yet, for all the success Glenmor had, his significance comes not only from his ability to deal with important Breton topics, but also from his role as a principal instigator in creating an environment fertile for the explosion of Breton music in the late 1960s and into the 1970s.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Breton*, 75-76.

¹⁶⁸ 'Bretagne la disparue'.

Glenmor, 'Récit Barique', *Glenor À La Mutalitié* (Disques Ternel, 1967).

¹⁶⁹ Lyrics taken from Glenmor, 'Récit Bardique', *Wikiparoles*, https://lyrics.fandom.com/fr/wiki/Glenmor/R%C3%A9cit_bardique (accessed 12 March 2020) and cross-referenced with author's transcription.

¹⁷⁰ Glenmor, 'Sodome', *Cet Amour-Là* (Barclay, 1969).

Glenmor, 'Kan Bale Nevenoe', *Glenor À La Mutalitié* (Disques Ternel, 1967).

¹⁷¹ Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Bretonne*, 76.

Following from Glenmor's success and preparation, Gilles Servat would overtly address the contemporary political issues that Brittany was facing in his music. Born fourteen years after Glenmor, in 1945, Servat would belong to a different generation, yet would equally become conscious of the prejudice held against Bretons. Despite only beginning to write songs in 1967, by 1970 Servat would have his first success with his Breton nationalist album *La Blanche Hermine*. While he had long been aware of the prejudice against Bretons and Breton culture since his youth, Servat cites May '68 as crucial political awakening that would lead him to tackle the problems of Brittany directly within his music.¹⁷²

Servat approached the political situation of the Bretons in a variety of ways. Sometimes he referenced historical events, such as in the song 'Koch Ki Gwenn Ha Koch Ki Du' or the contemporary plight of Bretons, such as in 'Les Prolétaires'.¹⁷³ The third worldist perspective is most clear in 'Le Breton Typique', a *détournement* of the comic song 'Ils ont des chapeaux ronds', which mocks Breton culture.¹⁷⁴ In this song Servat does not so much highlight the difference of the Bretons but, rather, critiques the way that France treats Brittany as Other. The tourists that visit Brittany are presented as if they were visiting a zoo or going 'native' with a romanticised version of a colonial subject:

Les p'tites parisiennes en short
Viendront danser la gavotte
Et donneront des cacahuètes
Aux bretons en botoù-koad¹⁷⁵

The small Parisians in shorts
Come to dance the gavotte
And give peanuts
To the Bretons in botoù-koad¹⁷⁶

In reference to the founding of the Armorique regional park in 1969, Servat accuses the government of being 'jealous of the Americans' and thus making 'an Armorica Reserve'.¹⁷⁷ Once again this plays upon the trope of the Breton as 'native' as it echoes the idea of Native American reservations in the USA. He also attacks the stationing of nuclear submarines in Brittany and exposes the double-handed nature of the French state when he sings:

¹⁷² Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Bretonne*, 83-93.

¹⁷³ Gilles Servat, 'Le Breton Typique', *Gilles Servat* (Kelenn, 1992).

Gilles Servat, 'Les Prolétaires', *Gilles Servat* (Kelenn, 1992).

Gilles Servat, 'Koch Ki Gwenn Ha Koch Ki Du', *Gilles Servat* (Kelenn, 1992).

Koch Ki Gwenn Ha Koch Ki Du pays reference to a treaty signed between France and Brittany in 1532.

¹⁷⁴ I have also discussed Jacques Dutronc's use of this song. Please see pages 169-171.

¹⁷⁵ Lyrics taken from Gilles Servat, 'Le Breton Typique' *paroles-musiques*, 'https://www.paroles-musique.com/paroles-Gilles_Servat-Les_Bretons_Typiques-lyrics,p118971' (accessed 12 March 2020) and cross referenced with author's transcription.

¹⁷⁶ A type of wooden shoe which is part of traditional Breton dress, akin to a clog.

¹⁷⁷ Armorica is another term for Brittany.

Le clou du parc d'Armorique
C'est la merveille de la France
Le sous-marin atomique,

The highlight of the Amorique park
It is the wonder of France
The nuclear submarine

The Amorique regional park was perceived by Servat as being a subtle way of stationing nuclear warheads within Brittany. The Otherness of Brittany not only allows them to be a site of curiosity for Parisian tourists, but also legitimises the stationing of nuclear weapons in a region historically oppressed by the French state.

3.4.3 Countercultural Press

The many ways in which singers and musicians embraced Breton cultural and political issues within their music signified a flourishing of Breton music on a national level. They acted as standard bearers for Brittany's concerns and gave voice to these problems in a way that was perhaps more accessible than other forms of political rhetoric. The success of these musicians is evidenced through the rock press discussed within this chapter: Brittany was by far the site of interest that received most attention.

The attention that these musicians received contributed to the emerging discourse on Brittany. Once again this fell within a third worldist rhetoric that saw the Bretons as being under a form of colonial control. This, of course, was partly inspired by the rhetoric that Breton regionalists were using themselves. However, at this time, the politics of third worldism were widespread amongst leftist circles in France. Within musical discourse there was clearly present in the third worldist's rhetoric that emerged around free jazz in the late 1960s, which saw the African American civil rights movement as a process of decolonial struggle.¹⁷⁸ The desire to portray Brittany as an internal colony emerged from a variety of influences and fitted neatly into a pre-existing framework.

In his 1973 account of the emerging Breton musical sphere - *La Nouvelle Chanson Bretonne* - Jacques Vassal situates the narrative of Brittany and its music within a third worldist narrative. Vassal traces the history of the Bretons back to the Celts, during the pre-Roman era. He emphasises romantic myths of resistance that portray the indomitable, independent spirits of the Breton people. By doing so he constructs, through iterating a series of myths, a narrative of Brittany as long being embroiled within anti-hegemonic struggles. The constant reliance on the past to describe the processes involved in the development of

¹⁷⁸ Phillipe Carles & Jean-Louis Comolli, *Free jazz, Black power* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000). Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution*, 111-154.

Breton culture and its place as an internal colony in France also casts the Bretons as having a long history, and consequently, a 'claim' to the land. This serves to present the Bretons as noble people and fits neatly into a romantic, third worldist understanding of their past.

Vassal uses powerful rhetoric in order to stress the extent to which the government's negative and restrictive attitude towards Breton culture was oppressive. At one point he even goes as far to call the government's attempt to impose official French culture in Brittany as akin to the Nazi's 'final solution'.¹⁷⁹ By choosing such drastic terminology (less than twenty years since the end of the Second World War) to describe an enforced cultural hegemony, rather than genocidal actions, Vassal not only situates the French state as an authoritarian, even fascist, administration but also vividly portrays Brittany as being under a drastic level of external control.

While Vassal's text initially comes across as an account of the music emerging out of Brittany, his research develops a political edge that runs throughout his book. In his final pages he stresses the political truth that lies behind the rhetoric of the songs of the likes of Stivell and Glenmor. He highlights examples such as the relatively high number of Breton prostitutes there are in Paris, the high number of homeless Bretons, and the exploitative companies that only install themselves in Brittany in order to cheaply, and unfairly, hire Breton workers.¹⁸⁰ In his closing paragraph Vassal returns to the third worldist narrative and highlights that the 'Breton problem' is really a problem of 'interior colonisation' and is felt amongst other perceived colonies such as the 'Occitans, Basques, Corsicans, Catalans' amongst others.

Vassal's portrayal of the Brittany is ironic in that it reinforces stereotypes of the Breton to validate Breton demands for secessionism, which has largely been based on the prejudice they have been subjected to by wider France. As a spokesperson for the French counterculture, he paints a positive portrayal of Brittany and the Breton. Yet, Vassal also spends a significant amount of time stressing the difference between Brittany and its people. The heavy reliance on historical difference, and tropes such as the Celtic bard, serves to both justify and validate the Breton secessionist movement, by framing the movement as a logical outcome of the difference but inevitably reinforces stereotypes of Breton Otherness.

Brittany became a site of interest for the French folk revival/counterculture because of both the quality of the music and its ideological attractiveness. Not only did it fit into the

¹⁷⁹ Vassal, *La Nouvelle Chanson Breton*, 54.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

wider romanticised view of peasantry, Brittany became an exciting location of conflict and could easily meld into a third worldist narrative that was becoming increasingly focused on France's internal minorities. Vassal is not alone in his use of colonial terminology in order to frame Breton's place within France. In *Actuel* André Laude described both Brittany and Occitania as sites that were forced to integrate into France through violence.¹⁸¹ He cites the singing of songs 'that violently denounce an unacceptable situation and declare the revolution open' in Brittany during a recent stay by Charles de Gaulle as an example of the continued vitality and political fervour of Breton politics and musical culture.¹⁸²

The third worldist narrative did not only easily comply with the existing political climate but added an extra layer of richness and narrative to the Breton music that was so popular. The interest in Breton regional politics that emerged alongside the interest in music shows that music became a way of engaging and demonstrating a level of solidarity with the Bretons. Doing so confirmed and reinforced the oppositional nature of the counterculture. Due to the identification involved in listening to Breton music it became an oppositional act, one that relied upon the stereotypes mentioned above: the Breton as peasant and thus pre-modern and authentic. Further, it was built upon a perception of the Breton as a revolutionary subject of the 1970s and, consequently, a vehicle for radical social change.

3.5 Conclusion

Max Peter Baumann has noted that 'historically speaking, the impulse to keep alive or to revitalize traditions that are disappearing is a postulate that predominantly came, and still comes, from outsiders.'¹⁸³ In relation to the French folk revival, the French counterculture certainly seem to fill this pattern. The counterculture's interest in the folk revival was based upon the constructed difference of the 'folk', which relied upon historical frameworks and the contemporary cultural context. The rural citizen - or the 'peasant' - had been constructed in the French imaginary as backwards, simplistic but, at the same time, uncorrupted and authentically French. This construction was clearly expanded on by the counterculture and folk revival, which equally romanticised and exoticised these elements of difference. The

¹⁸¹ André Laude, 'La grande poussée du folk en France', *Actuel* 2 (1970), 62 (62).

¹⁸² 'qui dénonçaient violemment une situation inacceptable et déclaraient la révolte ouverte'. Laude, 62.

¹⁸³ Max Peter Baumann, 'Folk music revival: Concepts between regression and emancipation', *The World of Music*, 3 (1996), 71-86.

perceived Otherness of the rural citizen was ideologically attractive as it could be positioned against the urban and, more generally, modernity.

The peasant was seen to embody a strong sense of national identity while existing outside of dominant social structures; they were seen to exist in the modern world while maintaining a sense of historical rootedness; and they were seen to be able to engage with the market without becoming tainted by capitalism. In this sense they personified a contradiction at the core of the French counterculture; it was a movement firmly grounded in contemporary French society but sought to position itself against it. In order to navigate this contradiction, the French counterculture had to carefully construct the French peasant as different but similar. The difference of the rural citizen had to be managed and maintained in order to render an ideological association with folk music attractive and useful. Yet, if the peasant was constructed as too similar, they would cease to embody a sense of oppositionality.

One technique for creating points of identification was through portraying the folk revival movements as countercultural. In an article, Jean-Pierre Lentin and Jean-Paul Ribes identify the Breton revival as a counterculture in its own right. By calling the Breton *Fest-Noz* (and by doing so invoking the wider folk revival) a form of counterculture Lentin and Ribes situate the re-awakening of Breton culture as a brother-in-arms in the wider counterculture struggle against mainstream society. By using 'counterculture' as a descriptor or as a framework of understanding, *Actuel* put forward an idea that there was something shared themselves and the counterculture of the Bretons.¹⁸⁴

The sense of sameness is reinforced through the mixing of the countercultural types and rural citizens within Brittany. Lentin and Ribes as countercultural journalists themselves are prominent examples of the ability for integration. However, they do not stand alone as examples of the mixing of space between the two groups. They also note that the *Fest-Noz* was made up of a mixture of rural citizens and students in Indian shirts. Further, in the Breton city of Rennes they note a countercultural-esque shop called 'Clitus and Phallaris' that sold Indian outfits and artisan jewellery. The presence of the store suggests that it was not only countercultural types from outside of Brittany that were integrating themselves into the Breton folk revival, but also that there must have been a large enough countercultural community to support a basic level of countercultural commerce.

¹⁸⁴ In order to avoid confusion, I shall use the word counterculture to refer to the French counterculture centred around rock/pop culture and magazines such as *Actuel*. I will use Breton folk revival to refer to the Breton counterculture mentioned by Lentin and Ribes.

Lentin and Ribes do note that the Breton counterculture is different than the one spoken about in *Actuel*. They state that ‘there is there a true counterculture — not the counterculture of rock, of drugs, of oriental mysticism or of year 01, although not incompatible with these: a counterculture of roots’.¹⁸⁵ Referring to a counterculture of ‘roots’ draws upon the stereotypes of Brittany as historical and reinforces the difference of the Breton. It relies on 19th century tropes about the French peasant and grants them a level of authenticity as a consequence of their perceived pre-modernity. Whereas the counterculture of *Actuel*, *Best*, and *Rock & Folk* was relatively new and could not firmly ground itself in the past, Brittany’s folk revival was perceived to be based on historical *terra firma*. Initially, the Breton folk revival is positioned against the counterculture. It is not defined by the same music, ideologies, or quests for alternative modes of existence. The Breton folk revival is even awarded the descriptor of ‘true’ due to the stereotype of the Breton, and the French peasant, as more authentic than the demographic of the French counterculture. Consequently, the difference between the two groups is clearly marked, even if the possibility of community formation, mixing and allegiance is left open.

The solidarity and shared sense of purpose that was felt within the counterculture allowed a much stronger self-positioning against mainstream values. By creating spaces for points of identification, through the use of similar terminology, through aesthetic choices, or through an imagined ideological affinity, the Otherness of the peasant could be overcome, although, in the same breath, certain aspects of the peasant’s Otherness were reinforced. The counterculture could share in the imagined oppositionality of the rural citizen. They could become brothers-in-arms against the corruptive nature of capitalism, the alienation of modernity and the tyranny of the technocratic society. Ultimately, the countercultural engagement with one of France’s internal Others was not coincidental or unmotivated but fit neatly into the counterculture’s ideological framework and provided a cultural and political utility.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Il y a là une véritable contre-culture – pas celle du rock, de la défonce, du mysticisme à l’orientale ou de l’an 01, bien qu’incompatible avec aucune de ces dernières : une contre-culture par l’enracinement’.
Lentin & Ribes 'Chauffe La Breiz', 72.

Chapter 4: Franco-British Exchanges

In 1967 Jocelyne Boursier spent a summer in the United Kingdom. During this time she attended 'love-ins', music festivals, various rock clubs, and experienced British contemporary popular music. Describing one love-in in particular she remarks that for only £1 (or 14F) it was possible to experience 12 hours of music, with 10 different bands, amongst an audience of 15,000. Boursier's fascination with the scale of this event was a consequence of a lack of belief in the possibility of a similar event occurring within France at this moment. Further still, the event appeared as a realisation of a transnational youth community, and, as Boursier notes, there were hippies from across Europe (including France) and the event truly was 'an international love-in'.¹ This portrayal of the UK constructed it as exciting and vibrant, positioning London as a cosmopolitan centre of counterculture. Not only did the U.K. host events that seemed outside the realms of possibility for contemporary French youth, it also attracted people from all over Europe and stood out as a European innovator in countercultural activity and rock music.

Boursier's summer in Britain led her to conclude that 'for nearly a year, 'White Albion' has been coloured in a bizarre fashion'.² Referencing Britain by its oldest name, Albion, creates an image of an outdated nation resigned to the annals of history; a land of mythology with no real importance. Yet in Boursier's eyes, the slumbering giants of Albion are awakening and engaging in a process of reinvention and renewal. This shift from Britain being a country lacking in cultural vibrancy to a locus of countercultural activity would be a re-occurring trajectory amongst rock critics from the mid-1960s through to the mid-1960s and would have significant ramifications for the manner in which French rock music and counterculture would develop.

Up until 1966/67 the USA was the dominant site of counterculture for France and this was represented in the attention that *Rock & Folk* paid to American artists. In recognition of Britain's growing importance, Boursier's article was marked as an attempt to make up for the uneven coverage between the countries. The editorial line underneath the title notes that 'the articles of Alain Dister have kept us up-to-date with the development of popular music in the America'. Turning to the question of Britain, the editorial text reads 'And England?'. The

¹ Jocelyne Boursier, 'Un été hip', *Rock & Folk*, 15 (1968), 20-24 (20).

² 'La 'Blanche Albion', depuis près d'un an, s'est colorée d'un façon bizarre'. Ibid., 20.

brevity of the question acts as an acknowledgement of the lack of coverage that *Rock & Folk* had given the country.³ Boursier's article signifies a recognition of the growing cultural importance of the UK and the development of a discourse, within the rock press, around developments taking across the Channel.

The explosion that Boursier perceives to be happening in the United Kingdom marks Britain as a relevant and accessible site of interest for French youth. It is both culturally exciting and, due to its proximity, possible to visit. The development of this representation of the UK marks a crucial process of French engagement with their equivalents across the Channel. This engagement would allow access to musical and cultural developments that were not seen to be occurring in France at this time, as well as allow French youth to find, or at least imagine it was possible to find, a connection to the transnational counterculture by simply crossing the Channel.

The accessibility of Britain for French upper middle-class youth, however, raises a whole host of challenges that were absent from France's relationship with the USA. If the hippies of the USA could be established as an exotic Other, how was France to deal with Britain as a near Other? If the difficulties of the Atlantic do not exist to stop fantasies confronting reality, what role did the relative short distance of the Channel play in delineating France from England? In this chapter I will explore the way representations and responses to British popular music in France developed across the 1960s and into the 1970s. In particular, I am interested in the trajectory of representations of Britishness across this period. By considering this development I will gain greater insight into the way that French youth, and the emerging French counterculture, were locating themselves within a transnational context.

To do so I have segmented this chapter up into three rough periods: the first deals with the emergence and growth of the popularity of British music in France; the second explores the shifting connotations of Britishness that the 'British Invasion' of France signified to the French; and the third section explores what I call the 'European turn' in French rock discourse, which emerged surrounding the entry of the UK into the European Economic

³ 'Les articles d'Alain Dister nous ont tenu au courant des derniers développements de la pop-music en Amérique. Et l'Angleterre?'. Boursier, 'Un été hip', *Rock & Folk*, 15 (1968), 20-24 (20).

It is worth noting that Boursier was not the first to write on London. Almost a year earlier Jean-Noel Coghe set out his predilections for the importance of London in 1967. Nevertheless, Boursier's article was much longer than Coghe and stretched across two issues. Jean-Noel Coghe, 'Londres 67', *Rock & Folk*, 3 (1967), 35-37.

Community. Across these periods this notion of change will be strongly expressed: from a view of Britain as culturally conservative to a disruptor of social norms and creative practice.

Whereas the discussion of Franco-American relationship in the post-war period is a rich and vibrant field, Franco-British post-war cultural relations remain an under-exploited domain. The area that this seems to be richest in is cinema, as several texts exist, such as Lucy Mazdon and Catherine Wheatley's *Je T'Aime... Moi Non Plus*, discussing the cinematic relationships between the two countries.⁴ It is also important to not forget Arthur Marwick's indispensable book *The Sixties* and its comparative history across France, the UK, the USA, and Italy in these years. Some books have attempted to combine political and cultural history and Richard and Isabelle Tombs' *That Sweet Enemy* is an ambitious text that covers Franco-British relations since the 17th century, which has been particularly important for this chapter.⁵ Their mixture of political and cultural history provides a bird's eye view of developments occurring across the two countries and has provided a starting point for many of the ideas in this chapter. However, the broad-brush stroke nature of their work has necessarily led to a lack of detail and nuance; I intend to develop a more culturally focused narrative that is specifically concerned with 1966-1975.

This neglect is particularly the case when considering popular music. Passing references are made to Beatlemania in France or the UK's role in the fashion for anglophone cultural products in 1960s France, but very little consideration exists that explores the relation or dialogue that may have been occurring between these two nations. Throughout this chapter I will consider Britain as one of France's national Others. As Otherness is always constructed, I will explore the way in which this construction changed and morphed in the context of a variety of cultural and political circumstance.

4.1 Representations of Britishness

4.1.1 When Jimmy Met Johnny

In 1967 Jimmy Page, who would later become famous as part of Led Zeppelin, found himself, as a session guitarist, working for the French popstar Johnny Hallyday. He recorded

⁴ Lucy Mazdon & Catherine Wheatley (eds.), *Je T'Aime... Moi Non Plus: Franco-British Cinematic Relations* (New York : Berghahn, 2010), 1-16.

⁵ Robert Tombs & Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The British and the French from the Sun King to the Present* (London, Pimlico, 2007).

on two tracks for Hallyday and his team: ‘À Tout Casser’ and ‘Psychedelic’.⁶ ‘À Tout Casser’ is a guitar heavy Jimi Hendrix-style song that praises liberty and imbues Hallyday with a devil-may-care, maverick persona. The second is equally reliant on the guitar as a focal point but abandons some of the dissenting, rocker rhetoric for a greater affinity with the values of hippiedom. Page clearly contributes significantly to these tracks with his mastery of the fretboard, tone, and articulation. Yet it is curious that Hallyday sought to recruit Page and not a French guitarist: while Page had had some success at this point with the Yardbirds, he was not the superstar guitarist that he would later become.

This was not the first time that Hallyday had made use of British musicians and would mark a period in which Hallyday employed a variety of British musicians, engineers and songwriters. One notable long-term example is his guitarist and songwriter of the period: the Englishman Mick Jones, who would go on to garner success with the group Foreigner. After a modicum of success in the UK with the band Nero and the Gladiators, Mick Jones moved to France and established himself as a session musician and songwriter.⁷ Another prominent use of cross-channel employment can be found on Hallyday’s 1969 album *Rivière... Ouvre Ton Lit*, which featured the group The Small Faces and Peter Frampton.⁸ Hallyday’s continued engagement of British musicians highlights a desire to acquire an aesthetic that was not seen to be reproducible in contemporary French studios with contemporary session musicians.

The question remains, why did Hallyday and his team make such extensive use of British musicians? It is unlikely that this was a grab for some sort of cultural capital by association, as the credits on these recordings did not always make Hallyday’s choice of session musicians clear. Even if the musicians were clearly credited, such as in the frequent song writing credits for Mick Jones, French audiences would not necessarily be aware of who the songwriters and engineers were. Instead, it points to several other motivating factors. The rate at which Hallyday recruits British musicians came at a critical point in his career when he

⁶ Johnny Hallyday, ‘A Tout Casser’ (Philips, 1968).

Johnny Hallyday, ‘Pyschedelic’, *San Francisco* (Philips, 1967).

Author Unknown, ‘Johnny Hallyday’, *James Patrick Page Session Man*,

<https://jppsessionman.jimdo.com/johnny-hallyday/> (Accessed, 21 January 2019).

Corbin Reiff, ‘Jimmy Page Before Led Zeppelin: 20 Great Sixties Session Songs’, *Rolling Stone*.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/jimmy-page-before-led-zeppelin-20-great-sixties-session-songs-151465/jet-harris-diamonds-1963-172560/> (Accessed, 21 January 2019).

⁷ Mick Jones worked with a variety of establishment pop stars during his tenure in France, including Françoise Hardy and Sylvie Vartan.

Uli Twelker & Roland Schmitt, *The Small Faces & Other Stories* (Bodmin: MPG Books, 2002), 18-19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

was trying to move away from the teen-idol image of the *yéyé* star to more of a rock-based persona. Always aware of the way the wind is blowing, Hallyday made this shift in the late 1960s as London was seen as a significant centre of cultural and musical production and the popularity of rock was on the incline.⁹

It was not only British musicians that Hallyday was interested in hiring. He also made frequent use of British recording studios. Indeed, his first time in a London recording studio predates the British invasion and took place in 1961 when he recorded *Viens Danser Le Twist* at Studio Fontana. However, he would not frequently visit for recording until 1965.¹⁰ This is somewhat more easily explained than the use of British musicians. During an interview for *Rock & Folk*, Mick Jones explains that the British recording studios were considered to be better equipped for rock and popular music.¹¹ As French studios were set up for *yéyé* music and *variétés*, to create a sound inspired by Anglo-American rock and pop music it was necessary to travel to London.

Hallyday would have also, undoubtedly, found London a culturally attractive place during the second half of the 1960s; and indeed, it was certainly a city in which he would make important connections. One legendary relationship that was formed was Hallyday's friendship with the guitarist Jimi Hendrix. Hallyday stumbled across Hendrix when visiting the club Blaise's in 1966 and from this point they had something of a friendship.¹² Hallyday's and Hendrix's relationship would have important ramifications for both Hallyday and Hendrix. For Yves Santamaria, Hallyday's meeting with Hendrix in 1966 marks the transition away from Hallyday's *yéyé* to a more mature sound.¹³ In turn, through Hallyday's covers and the performance opportunities he gave to Hendrix, Hendrix was exposed to the French market.¹⁴

⁹ For more information on Hallyday's shift to a rock image please see pages 64-71.

¹⁰ Johnny Hallyday, 'Viens Danser le Twist' (Philips, 1961).

¹¹ To an extent, this provides one answer to Hallyday's use of British musicians. If he was recording in London, it would make economical and logistical sense to use London-based session musicians. However, this is only a partial answer, as with The Small Faces for example, he would sometimes bring British musicians to Paris to record.

Alain Dister, 'Mick Jones l'étranger', *Rock Critic : Chroniques de rock'n'roll (1967-1982)* (Paris : Le Castor Astral, 2007), 121-130 (124).
Twelker & Schmitt, 19.

¹² Guillaume B. Decherf 'Johnny Hallyday était-il si proche d'Hendrix qu'il le raconte?', *Les Inrockuptibles*, <https://www.lesinrocks.com/2011/03/26/musique/johnny-hallyday-etait-il-si-proche-dhendrix-quil-le-raconte-1117688/> (accessed 21 January 2019).

¹³ Yves Santamaria, *Johnny: Sociologie d'un Rocker* (Paris : La Découverte, 2010), 97.

¹⁴ Hallyday was largely responsible for giving The Jimi Hendrix Experience their first gig, which took place in Evreux, France.
David Moskovitz, *The Words and Music of Jimi Hendrix* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 9.

Thus London played a role as not only site for recording and as a source of musicians but also as place to form transnational connections.

To return to the question of the extent to which Hallyday's engagement with British musicians shaped the sound of his music: a comparison of Hallyday's pre-1967 work with his output made with British musicians between 1967 and 1970 is revealing of the aesthetic that Hallyday and his production team were seeking to create. The majority of Hallyday's music until 1967 was within the light, non-offensive pop styles of *variétés* and *yéyé*. It is from this point onwards that English musicians and engineers were increasingly recruited.

Time (2:13)	'Pour Moi La Vie Va Commencer'
0:00	Intro
0:07	Verse 1
0:28	Verse 2
0:49	Instrumental Verse
1:10	Verse 3 – modulation
1:30	Verse 4
1:51	Outro

Table 8: Analysis of Johnny Hallyday's 'Pour Moi La Vie Va Commencer' (Philips, 1963).

Taking the song 'Pour Moi La Vie Va Commencer' as an example allows for an exploration of the aesthetics and approach that Hallyday and his team were employing.¹⁵ Throughout this song Hallyday's voice is clean, controlled and is void of any large, unexpected interval shifts, and thus comes across as emotionally stable. The instruments that accompany him included a drum kit that is fairly low in volume, an undistorted guitar, a double bass, a horn section and a backing chorus. A fine equilibrium is struck between the instruments and the voice: the rhythm section remains unobtrusive throughout, the brass lines are not overwhelming but step forward when Hallyday stops singing. The song is emotionally constant and maintains a hopeful mood, which is further inscribed in the lyrics of the song that focus on the potential of 'life beginning' soon.¹⁶ There is little in the way of musical surprises and, perhaps, the only exception is an uplifting modulation that takes place at the beginning of the third verse. While he experimented with many styles during this period, this song remains stable, unchallenging, and parent friendly.

Shifting to his post-1967 output, the album *Rivière... Ouvre Ton Lit* abandons the emotional control that Hallyday had shown before and replaces it with the volatility of rock

¹⁵ 'Pour Moi La Vie Va Commencer' was a hit for Hallyday at the end of 1963 and into 1964. Author Unknown 'Johnny Hallyday', *Artistes, Chantes, Ventes*, <http://artisteschartsventes.blogspot.com/2014/10/johnny-hallyday.html> (Accessed, 14th January 2019). Johnny Hallyday, 'Pour Moi La Vie Va Commencer' (Philips, 1963).

¹⁶ 'la vie va commencer'.

music.¹⁷ In differentiation to much of his back catalogue, the whole album retains a consistent aesthetic throughout and comes across as a complete work. In the album's eponymous song, 'Rivière... Ouvre Ton Lit', the opening bars see the drums stutter and cymbals crash at a volume that makes sure the listener is acutely aware of what is happening. Over this rhythmic support Hallyday sings the title words of the song. He has forgone the clear control of his voice that he had as a *yéyé* singer and has replaced it with a sense of wildness and emotional charge. The guitar matches the vocal line and is distorted, asserting its powerful presence and intensifies the volatility of the song. After these opening bars, which are also the song's chorus, the song leads into the verse. The instruments are stripped back to bass guitar, drums, and electric organ with Hallyday's voice on top. The verse gradually builds in intensity through the introduction of the electric guitar, increasing the volume, and through a shift from a smooth timbre to one more rough and gravelly in Hallyday's voice. The chorus serves as a release to this tension and the process begins again. Notably, after the third chorus 'Rivière.. Ouvre Ton Lit' features a double guitar solo. The guitars are given a relatively long time to expand melodically, especially compared to Hallyday's pre-1967 work and act as another signifier of Hallyday's rock shift.

Between these two tracks there is a dramatic shift in style from one that was more conservative to one that was much more untamed in aesthetics and associated with a more anti-establishment lifestyle. Hallyday would experiment with many styles within these years but rock music, in a variety of forms, would receive the most attention. It would also be wrong to suggest that he stuck with this aesthetic for very long; however, it does mark a significant moment in Hallyday's career and represents a wider moment of experimentation within French popular music community.

Hallyday's transformation provides further evidence of his and the French musical establishment's ability to draw from countercultural elements when it was convenient for them and, consequently, the on-going interaction between the two musical realms. This is an instance where any pre-supposed binary opposition between counterculture and mainstream is obfuscated. Hallyday's immersion in Anglo-Saxon culture, his time spent in London, and his frequent use of British musicians resulted in continued contact with these sounds and community. Consequently, it cannot be assumed that this was merely a commercial move. It is equally, if not more, probable that part of Hallyday's motivation was based on interest and ideas emerging from his engagement with Anglo-Saxon musicians and culture. Hallyday as a

¹⁷ Johnny Hallyday, 'Rivière... Ouvre Ton Lit', *Rivière... Ouvre Ton Lit* (Philips, 1969).

mainstream figure was entangled in elements of counterculture through his time in London and conveys countercultural symbols and ideals to a mainstream audience.

Time (4:17)	‘Rivière...Ouvre Ton Lit’
0:00	Chorus
0:12	Verse 1
0:35	Verse 2
1:00	Chorus
1:12	Verse 3
1:35	Chorus
1:46	Double guitar solo
2:33	Chorus
2:45	Verse 4
3:08	Chorus
3:20	Extended outro

Table 9: Analysis of Johnny Hallyday’s ‘Rivière... Ouvre Ton Lit’ (Philips, 1969).

Hallyday was not alone in embracing the creative potential of cross-channel collaborations. Françoise Hardy was another prominent French pop star that recorded extensively in Britain.¹⁸ She recorded in London for the first time in 1963, working with the producer Charles Blackwell.¹⁹ Her relationship with Blackwell would continue throughout the decade, and in 1967 Hardy would often feature future Led Zeppelin musicians John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page in her studio bands.²⁰ Other examples include Michel Polnareff’s ‘La Poupée Qui Fait Non’ (which featured both Page and Jones) and Eddy Mitchel’s adaptation of Ray Charles’ ‘What I’d Say’.²¹ In the case of Hardy the engagement with English producers and musicians does not represent as a dramatic shift in style as Hallyday’s incorporation of British musicians. Yet, it does correlate with the beginning of a period of maturation and hints at a shifting away from her ‘idol’ position within the *yéyé* community.²²

¹⁸ Hardy was inspired by an even earlier example of the French rock singer Richard Anthony recording in London.

Françoise Hardy, *Le désespoir des singe... et autres bagatelles* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2008), 66.

¹⁹ François Hardy, *Françoise Hardy* (Vogue, 1964).

²⁰ John-Paul Jones can be found on: François Hardy, *Ma Jeunesse Fout La Camp* (Vogue, 1967). Tom Pinnock, ‘Françoise Hardy interviewed: ‘In my head I’m still very young,’ *Uncut*, <https://www.uncut.co.uk/blog/down-a-different-river/francoise-hardy-interviewed-head-im-still-young-105862/2> (accessed, 21 January 2019).

²¹ Michel Polnareff, ‘La Poupée Qui Fait Non’, *La Poupée Qui Fait Non* (Disc AZ, 1966). Eddy Mitchel, ‘What’d I Say’, *Curiosités 1963/1992* (Polgram, 1998).

²² The example of Hardy demonstrates that it was not only the French who were interested in the British, but that the British were also interested in the French. She notes that some of her songs were adapted into English and found a notable level of success in the United Kingdom and that the British press were interested in her as an example of French fashion, even more than they were interested in her as a musician.

Françoise Hardy, *Le désespoir des singe... et autres bagatelles* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2008), 115-116

It is, of course, impracticable to consider the micro-narrative of each musician's engagement with British musicians, producers and recording studios due to the vast amount of cross-channel musical engagement that was occurring at this point. However, on a larger scale, the desire to engage with the musical culture of London fits into a much wider narrative surrounding the inability felt by French musicians, for a variety of reasons, to be able to recreate, or create an authentic local version of, rock within national soil. Writing in the early 1970s, the journalist Alain Dister states that the 1960s France saw rock music as 'strictly Anglo-Saxon' and that the French felt reliant on 'Anglo-American productions' as they were 'incapable of creating their own'.²³ This sense of inferiority in relation to Anglo-Saxon music combined with the geographical proximity and cultural attractiveness of the music emerging out of London encouraged the use of British musicians to substitute for the *je-ne-sais-quoi* that the French felt themselves to be lacking.²⁴

4.1.2 The Beatles *Chez Les Gauls*

Britain had not always been a source of cultural envy for France; indeed, for a long time British culture had been perceived somewhat disdainfully. Britain's distinct 'uncoolness' can be found in several of the British caricatures that emerged in popular culture. The French comic series *Astérix* would frequently introduce caricatures of France's various national Others. In *Astérix et Les Goths* the Germans are represented by the Goths and come across war-like and in *Astérix en Corse* the Corsicans are defined by their exaggerated family feuds and by their insistence on a siesta.²⁵ These representations are clearly carefully constructed exaggerations of the general French perception of foreign cultures and consequently Astérix's encounters with various other nations elucidate contemporary stereotypes.²⁶

²³ 'strictement anglo-saxonne'.

'restent dépendants des productions anglo-américaines, incapables de pouvoir de créer leurs propres'. Alain Dister, *Le Rock Anglais* (Paris: Albin Michel/Rock & Folk, 1973), 144.

²⁴ For a discussion of the inferiority that the French felt when creating their own rock, please see chapter 5.

²⁵ Nicholas Rouvière, *Astérix Ou La Parodie Des Identités* (Paris : Éditions Flammarion, 2008), 138-141.

R. Goscinny, & A. Uderzo, *Astérix En Corse* (Paris : Dargaud Éditeur, 1973).

R. Goscinny, & A. Uderzo, *Astérix Et Les Goths* (Paris : Dargaud Éditeur, 1961).

²⁶ Pascal Lefèvre notes that the stereotypes used in *Astérix* were often not limited to France but can be considered to be trans-European stereotypes.

Pascal Lefèvre, 'The construction of national and foreign identities in French and Belgian postwar comics (1939-1970)', *Comicalités* (2012), <https://journals.openedition.org/comicalites/875#quotation>.

While the stereotype of British people is exaggerated in *Asterix Chez Les Bretons*, many of the symbols and themes found within the edition can be located within more widespread representations of Britishness. For much of France, pre-mid-1960s Britain was seen as being stuck within a prudish Victorian value system. Just as the ancient Britons of *Asterix* were too busy having tea to fight off Roman invaders, the contemporary British were seen to be too conservative to hold much significance in the world. Tombs and Tombs situate the Suez Canal crisis as a critical moment in French-British relationships that would dramatically alter the French perception of Britain. During this joint French-British operation to retake the Suez Canal from Colonel Gamal Abdel-Nasser, who had nationalised it in 1956, British forces dropped out due to pressure from Washington. The dramatic influence that Washington held over Britain demonstrated the weakness of Britain's position to the French. Consequently, 'for the first time since the 1860s - perhaps since 1812' France saw itself as a more independent and significant actor on the world stage than the UK.²⁷ Marred by economic decline, political weakness, and conservatism, Britain was not considered as likely to become a leading cultural force in French eyes.

A commonly discussed example of France's indifference towards British youth culture is The Beatles' 1964 performance at the Olympia in Paris.²⁸ The difference in reception of The Beatles in France, compared to Britain, was apparent from their arrival. Alain Dister states that '[i]n place of the thousands of girls that had said goodbye at the airport in London, only about fifty waited for them at Bourget'.²⁹ The concert they played at the Olympia was not to a full hall, and the audience were markedly reserved. The following day, Dister notes, the newspaper *Paris Soir* stated the concert was the 'worst yéyé they have heard in four years'.³⁰ It is interesting to note at this point the *Paris Soir* journalist uses the French genre 'yéyé' to describe The Beatles suggesting that French audiences were not *au courant* of what was happening in Britain and that the language being used to discuss this music had not yet crossed the channel. Conversely, Marwick reminds us to not read too much into the comparatively weak reception The Beatles received in France. As even though they did not

²⁷ Tombs & Tombs, 614-617.

²⁸ Alain Dister, *Les Beatles* (Paris: Albin Michel/Rock & Folk, 1972), 101. Tombs & Tombs, 633.

Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 461.

²⁹ 'Pour quelques milliers de filles qui leur avaient dit au revoir à l'aéroport de Londres, une cinquantaine seulement les attendaient au Bourget.' Dister, *Les Beatles*, 100.

³⁰ 'Leur yé-yé est le pire que nous ayons entendu depuis quatre ans'. Ibid., 101.

sell out the Olympia and many of the central French newspapers did not rate them highly, the majority of the youth magazines were, in fact, largely positive about the group.³¹ Nevertheless, despite The Beatles's poor initial reception, it would not be long until France was swept over with Beatlemania.

4.1.3 The British Boom

It was in the mid-1960s that the British craze truly took off in France. Suddenly, James Bond, The Rolling Stones, and Mary Quant were *à la mode*. Simultaneously, Britain's image transformed from a strait-laced, tedious society to a hotbed of culture and contemporaneity. Tombs and Tombs note that this period did not necessarily see an erasure of previous symbols of Britishness, but, rather, expanded the definition: 'If the bowler hat, the crown, the kilt and the teacup [...] represented Britishness in French imagination, they were now joined by long hair, miniskirts, 'yé yé', films. Television programmes, fashion designers'.³²

The cover art of Alain Dister's 1973 book *Le Rock Anglais* provides evidence of this *mélange* within the realm of music (figure 12).³³ A portrait of Queen Victoria looking dour takes the prominent position in the upper left quadrant of the front cover. Next to her, is placed an ornate tea pot on a lace doily, cup and saucer. The teacup's rim is decorated with a music stave and some lyrics praising tea. So far, the symbols that appear are fairly typical of representations of Britishness. Yet, a continued analysis of the cover confuses this representation. The bottom half of the front cover is dominated by a green amplifier and a bass guitar and thereby introduces the elements of rebellion and cultural change that were modernising and challenging stereotypes of Britishness. This is further articulated through Queen Victoria's unhappy gaze away from the bass guitar and amplifier, as if to symbolise revulsion or disgust at what these instruments represent. Turning to the back of the book, another symbol of the disruption to British identity that rock is causing is found in the image of the Union Jack. This quintessential symbol of Britishness seems to be falling out of a frame and, thus, represents a displacement of the symbolism of the British flag. While this displacement did not necessarily erase the bowler hat or the national importance of tea, the values that Dister locates in British rock and roll culture within the book challenged their dominance.

³¹ Marwick, 461-462.

³² Tombs & Tombs, 633.

³³ Alain Dister, *Le Rock Anglais*.

The juxtaposition of the elements of stereotypical Britishness with the elements of youth revolt is confusing. In many ways, as a symbol of youth culture, rock music seems to subvert, or at least challenge, standard paradigms of Britishness, especially as rock music became more radical in aesthetics and politics throughout the 1960s. The retention of stereotypical figures stands as a marker of Otherness for the French. In particular, these symbols represent the familiar Other; the recognised unknown. The challenges to these symbols of Britishness show change. Britain was not the same as it always had been and was undergoing a significant moment of reconsideration that sought to challenge previous representations. Consequently, Britain was not to be solely relegated to the Union Jack, tea, and Queen Victoria. It also became a place of excitement and a fertile landscape in which popular and rock culture is blossoming.

Dister further emphasises the cultural transformation that Britain underwent. His narrative stretches back to 1955, but really it is with the formation of The Beatles that Dister's narrative begins in earnest. The Beatles are described as critical to the vitality of British popular music. He claims that they 'woke London from its tendency to sleep, half forgotten, from its conformism, and from its monotony'.³⁴ Indeed, despite The Beatles' initial lack of success within France, they would turn out to be a dramatically powerful force for introducing and integrating British music and popular culture into France.

One area in which The Beatles' influence in France can be located is in the growing presence of English language music in the charts. Of course, the presence of English language songs within the French charts is not solely a result of the increased popularity of English culture within the French cultural sphere and it is equally an outcome of the increased popularity of American popular culture. Yet, Kirk Anderson notes that when considering the 1960s as a whole within France a list of top twenty best-selling artists would include The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and Petula Clark (although mainly as a consequence of her songs in French) and no American artists.³⁵ Therefore, while it is important not to deny or diminish the critical and large influence American popular culture had in France, it is equally as important to pay attention to the, perhaps under-appreciated, influence that British music and culture had in France from the mid-1960s onwards.

³⁴ 'Les Fab Four réveillent la capitale qui a tendance à sombre dans l'oubli, le conformisme et la monotonie'.

Dister, *Le Rock Anglais*, 31.

³⁵ Kirk Anderson, 'Song 'adaptations' and the globalisation of French pop, 1960 – 1970', *French Cultural Studies*, 26/3 (2015), 330-342 (330).

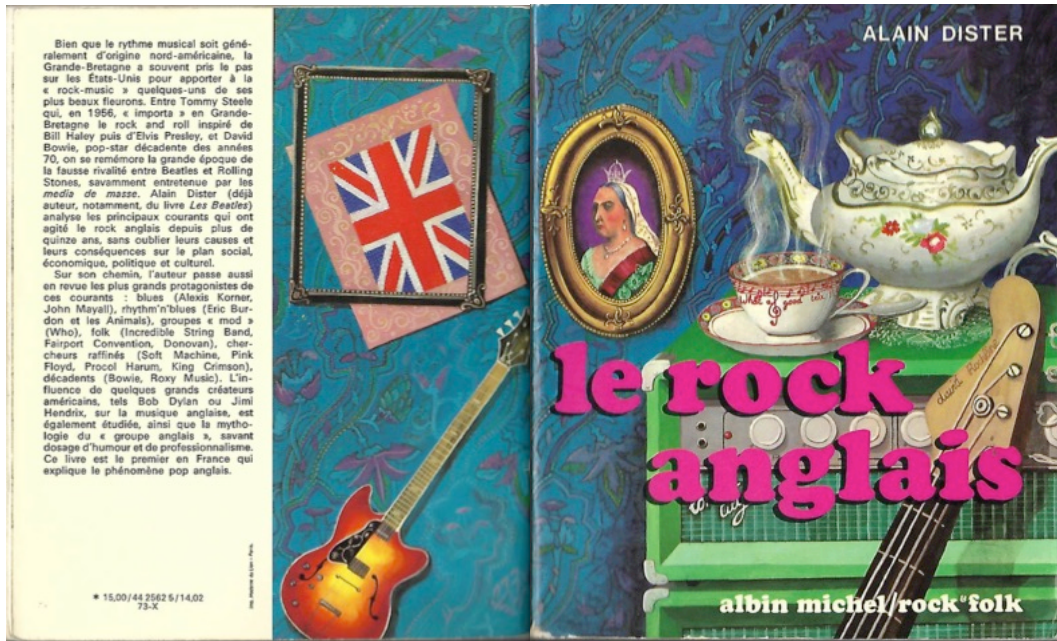


Figure 12: Back and Front cover from Alain Dister, *Le Rock Anglais* (Paris: Albin Michel/Rock & Folk, 1973).

Anderson argues that it was primarily due to the success of The Beatles that the English language proportion of the French popular music market increased dramatically throughout the 1960s. From 1965 onwards the cultural importance of the group would continue to grow and grow. In one edition of *Salut Les Copains* it was noted that even the listeners who were against the intrusion of English language songs in the French charts would often make an exception for The Beatles.³⁶ The Beatles, amongst other groups, became a trojan horse for the acclimation of French youth to the English language.

As they were seen to be such an important and creative band, it was often considered as inauthentic to adapt The Beatles' songs into French.³⁷ One letter cited by Anderson states that the lyrics of The Beatles had reached such a point of perfection that any attempt to render them into French would be useless, as if the act of translation would corrupt and degrade the song.³⁸ The attachment of authenticity to the English lyrics and the considerable popularity of these artists inspired fans to learn enough English to comprehend the lyrics. Magazines such as *Salut Les Copains* would publish the English lyrics to songs by The Beatles or The Rolling Stones in order to present the songs in their most appealing form.³⁹ Thus, The Beatles were a prime motivating force for the normalization and acceptance of English-language songs in the French youth charts.

³⁶ Anderson, 338.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 336.

From the rest of Dister's account one would think conformity and monotony to be experiences non-existent within Britain. Instead, Britain is portrayed, as it was in much other journalism, as a site of excitement and of action. One notable scene where this excitement is captured is in Dister's description of a Pink Floyd concert at the Roundhouse in London. From the outset the Roundhouse is portrayed as a dynamic place with Dister stating that 'the ambiance [...] is extraordinary'. This atmosphere was a result of many factors including the creative outfits that people have fashioned from whatever they could find and the liberalness with which acid was being distributed. Further, the gig was a multi-media event that not only incorporated music but involved a variety of screens showing everything from cartoons to vintage films and the creative use of lights (the so-called 'light show'). To top off the sensory overload of this multi-media event, the music was played at such a volume that the amplifiers struggled to cope.⁴⁰ Overall, the image Dister presents is of a vast deluge of sensory experiences, with the suggestion that such an event would, or could, not take place in France.

Accounts in the music press throughout the latter half of the 1960s extolled the vibrancy and cultural output of Britain. Published in the January 1967 issue of *Rock & Folk*, Jean-Noël Coghe discussed recent events in London and considered the potential influence the British music scene might have over the coming year.⁴¹ London for Coghe was an exciting place, full of opportunity for adventure. He recounts his exploration of the city, the prominence of pop culture, the easy access to pornography, and the constant supply of interesting people to meet. His account comes across as a little envious, especially as he explains the state of the British music industry. In one instance he directly compares France and the UK: 'British artists possess a professionalism rarely achieved by the French'.⁴² He also seems to admire the earlier age at which British youth leave their family home as this allowed them to 'express their independence'.⁴³ Ultimately, the article positions Britain, particularly London, as a hotspot of cultural activity and ends by suggesting that Britain is set to produce some outstanding popular music in the coming year.

Another example of the French excitement surrounding Britain and British music can be found in a 1968 article for *Best* that the journalist Catherine Claude wrote about a brief

⁴⁰ 'L'ambiance, à la *Roundhouse*, est extraordinaire'.

Dister, *Le Rock Anglais*, 91.

⁴¹ Jean-Noël Coghe, 'Londres 67', *Rock & Folk*, 3 (1967), 35-37.

⁴² 'Les artistes anglais possèdent un sens du métier rarement atteint par les Français'. Coghe, 36.

⁴³ 'D'exprimer leur indépendance'. Coghe, 36.

sojourn in London.⁴⁴ Noticeably, the title 'Quelques Jours À London' utilises the English language 'London' rather than the French 'Londres', suggesting that anglicisms are somewhat fashionable and that Claude wants to appear knowledgeable about London. Her opening paragraph confirms that the Swinging London trope is known in France:

It suffices to spend a few days in the pop capital to be completely reassured: boys' hair is quite long, girls' skirts are quite short, the music 'moves' and King's Road is always animated... In brief, everything is normal and reassuring: London is always this wild.⁴⁵

Claude puts forward the new stereotype of British youth and London, epitomised through the fashion choices, the vibrancy of the music, and the energy of the community and confirms it for French audiences. That London is being referred to as the 'pop capital' in 1968 emphasises how radically the reception of British music had changed since The Beatles' Paris performance in 1964. She confirms the significance of London for pop music throughout the rest of the article where she swaps between explorations of groups, such as Fleetwood Mac, Canned Heat and The Beatles, whom she cannot help but lavish with praise 'Our generation is conditioned by The Beatles' and 'all that The Beatles touch becomes amazing'.⁴⁶

In the closing paragraphs, Claude also ties London into the contemporary French fascination with hippiedom. Discussing a festival in Hyde Park she states that '[i]t was quite an extraordinary vision of prophets, of hippies, of Indians'.⁴⁷ This brief reference ties the London youth community to a much wider youth movement that was also seen to be taking place in the USA. Consequently, London was not only exciting for what was taking place within the city, but also for its status as a cosmopolitan hub, in tune with what was occurring elsewhere in the world.

Throughout the 1960s French youth's perception of Britain changed dramatically. British youth were transformed in popular imagination from dull unexciting characters to the personification of fun. Thanks to the popularity of groups such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, British popular music gained a strong footing on French soil and set the scene

⁴⁴ Catherine Claude, 'Quelques Jours A 'London'', *Best*, 3 (1968), 5-6.

⁴⁵ 'Il suffit de passer quelques jours dans la capitale pop pour en être tout à fait assurée: les cheveux des garçons sont toujours aussi longs, les jupes des filles aussi courtes, la musique 'bouge' et King's Road est toujours aussi animée... Bref tout est normal et rassurant: Londres est toujours aussi dément'. *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁶ 'Notre génération est conditionnée par les Beatles'.

Ibid., 6.

⁴⁷ 'C'est une vision assez hallucinante de prophètes, de hippies, d'indiennes'. *Ibid.*, 6.

for the later interest in popular and rock music that would emerge surrounding groups and figures such as David Bowie, Pink Floyd, and Soft Machine. As the 1960s gave way to the 1970s Britain's reputation as an epicentre of popular music production was solidified amongst the French youth. It is noticeable at this point that there was less discussion of Britain in the rock and countercultural press as a place than there had been in the early years of France's infatuation with the country. Yet, the interest in the music coming out of the country did not wane and the publication of books on English artists indicates that the French rock and pop press were well underway with the canonisation of British bands.

4.1.4 Britishness After the Boom

The explosion of The Beatles and the arrival of the British invasion in France signified a discernible change in perception of what Britishness meant for the French. This shift did not mark a clean, homogenous break in attitudes towards Britishness; these attitudes adjusted at different rates amongst different social and cultural communities across France. Nor did the break that the British invasion indicate an ossification into a static, single understanding of Britishness. Rather, throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s British identity would pluralise and morph in accordance with the various geopolitical shifts and cultural influences.

A crucial case study relates to the infamous Serge Gainsbourg and the wider socio-cultural shift in attitudes towards Britishness that can be located in his music in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Born in 1928, Gainsbourg had a career stretching from the 1950s until after his death in 1991. He originally intended to be a painter and only took a job as a guitarist and pianist for clubs on the right bank of Paris to fund his artistic career.⁴⁸ However, his song writing ability found a modicum of success and his first album, released in 1958, *Du Chant À La Une* received positive reviews.⁴⁹ Throughout his career, Gainsbourg shocked, scandalised, and profoundly transformed the French music industry.⁵⁰ Indeed, Gainsbourg is one of the most well-known French artists outside of France and this is, in a large part, due to the scandal surrounding 'Je t'aime... moi non plus'.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Peter Hawkins, *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 158.

Gilles Verlant, *Gainsbourg* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992), 28.

⁴⁹ Verlant, 28-43.

Serge Gainsbourg, *Du Chant À La Une* (Philips, 1958).

⁵⁰ Hawkins, 158.

⁵¹ Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin, 'Je t'aime... moi non plus', *Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin* (Fontana 1969).

While he learned and honed his trade in France during the 1950s, by the end of the 1960s London had become a significant site for Gainsbourg's musical development. As early as 1963 Gainsbourg began to make use of London's recording studios and session musicians.⁵² Sylvie Simmons suggests that Gainsbourg made this decision as a consequence of repeatedly being outsold by British groups, such as The Beatles; however, this is probably more likely due to Gainsbourg's desire to experiment than it was the popularity of British groups, as his decision to record in London predated the arrival of the British Invasion in France.⁵³ A more complete explanation is that Gainsbourg's decision to record in London was a response to the growing presence of *yéyé* and Anglo-American music more generally. Simmons quotes Gainsbourg to that effect: '[w]hen those guys with their electric guitars arrived [...] it was over for me'.⁵⁴ London, with its better equipped studios and emerging reputation as a hub of contemporary popular music production, was a location in which Gainsbourg could reassess and re-direct himself in a direction he felt to be more relevant.

It was not solely through recording in the UK that Gainsbourg would make trans-Channel connections. One of the most career defining aspects of Gainsbourg's life would be his relationship with the English actress Jane Birkin. They first met in 1968 to film *Slogan*, directed by Pierre Grimblat. At this point Birkin was unaware of who Gainsbourg was and had not yet mastered the French language.⁵⁵ In their first encounters, Birkin and Gainsbourg did not get along, and Gainsbourg even managed to reduce Birkin to tears. Their roles were paired, and Grimblat, realising that something had to be done in order to make sure the film could be complete, organised a dinner for Birkin, Gainsbourg, and himself. However, Grimblat purposefully did not show up and left his two quarrelling actors to work out their

⁵² In 1963 Gainsbourg recorded the EP *Vilaine Fille, Mauvais Garçon* at the Studio Philips-Fontana in London. While this album did not represent a complete change from his *chansonnier* roots, the EP was the most pop-oriented of his work at this point and marked the start of a shift in style that would come to define his music. Most of the EP became much more successful when adapted by various other singers. Reinforcing the importance of trans-Channel journeys, the album's title track was sung by the British singer Petula Clark in French.

Serge Gainsbourg, *Vilaine Fille, Mauvaise Garçon* (Philips, 1963).

Simmons, *A Fistful of Gitanes*, 38.

⁵³ The Beatles certainly influenced Gainsbourg, but to claim that he began to record in London in 1963 solely because of them seems unlikely.

Véronique Mortaigne, *Je t'aime: The legendary love story of Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg* (London: Icon, 2019), 68.

⁵⁴ Gainsbourg quoted in Simmons, *A Fistful of Gitanes* (London: Helter Skelter, 2001), 36.

⁵⁵ Verlant, 130.

differences. Grimblat's scheme was a remarkable success and Birkin and Gainsbourg spent the night partying in Paris and would quickly fall in love.⁵⁶

One of the most controversial outcomes of their collaboration was the 1969 album *Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin*, which shocked several countries with its raunchy single 'Je t'aime... moi non plus'.⁵⁷ The first recording of this song occurred in 1967 with the famous French movie star Brigitte Bardot.⁵⁸ Yet, Bardot's husband was outraged when he was made aware of the sexual explicitness of the song and the potential scandal it would cause and insisted that the recording not be made public.⁵⁹ Birkin became the next person Gainsbourg approached with the song. It was re-recorded in the Marble Arch Studios in London during 1968 and released the following year. This is not to say that Birkin's version was any less controversial than the version Gainsbourg created with Bardot; yet, the same barriers did not apply to Birkin as Bardot. Birkin, being English, and having already been involved in scandal around her sexuality with the film *Blow Up*, was far enough removed from France to exist as a sexual object of desire without threatening French moral decency.⁶⁰ Regardless, Birkin's version was immensely shocking and was banned by the BBC and several radio stations in the USA.⁶¹

It is not difficult to understand the controversy that this record caused, as even today its sexuality remains explicit. The breathy vocals of Birkin and Gainsbourg combined with Birkin's repeated utterances of 'I love you' and 'my love' explicitly suggests a sexual encounter. This reaches its peak in the middle passage where Birkin's breathy moans, rather than any lyrical or melodic line, take the focal point. The volume and intimate quality of these moans seem to be heard right next to the listener's ear and thereby suggests a physical proximity with Birkin. Further, the sexuality of the song is inscribed in lyrics that evoke

⁵⁶ Véronique Mortaigne, *Je t'aime: The legendary love story of Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg* (London: Icon, 2019), 65-68.

⁵⁷ Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin, 'Je t'aime... moi non plus', *Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin* (Fontana 1969).

⁵⁸ Verlant, *Gainsbourg*, 110.

⁵⁹ Mortaigne, 40-41.

⁶⁰ *Blow Up* centres around a photographer who accidentally photographed a murder in a park. However, all the photographs are stolen from his studio and any evidence in the park disappears, leaving the murder unsolved and the photographer lacking closure. Jane Birkin has a minor role in *Blow Up*, but her brief exposure of pubic hair attracted attention and helped construct Birkin as a symbol of English sexuality. Further, as Arthur Marwick has noted, *Blow Up* was a transnational endeavour: it was funded by Americans, directed by an Italian, and filmed in the UK with British actors. *Blow Up*, by Antonioni Michelangelo (1966). Marwick, 470.

⁶¹ Jon Stratton, 'Coming to the fore: the audibility of women's sexual pleasure in popular music and the sexual revolution', *Popular Music*, 33/1 (2014), 109-128 (110).

images of waves washing over the 'naked island' and, less poetically, 'coming' and 'physical love'.⁶²

It would seem as if Birkin represents a selflessness and a purity of love in the face of Gainsbourg's somewhat distant and selfish nature: whereas Birkin repeatedly refers to Gainsbourg, Gainsbourg tends to refer to himself. Indeed, most of the lines of the song are incredibly similar from verse to verse and it is the perspective that shifts. In the opening verse Gainsbourg sings 'I go, I go and I come' and in the following verse Birkin continues this idea and sings 'You go and you come'.⁶³ The most significant change is the swapping of the pronoun, which situates Gainsbourg as the partner in control. Gainsbourg is positioned as the person who is receiving the pleasure rather than giving it. However, in the closing line, the sexual power seems to swap from Gainsbourg's nonchalance to Birkin, who utters out the injunction 'no, now, come!'.⁶⁴ Whether she is speaking to herself or Gainsbourg is unclear (although Birkin's reprise of her breathy moans following this injunction may provide a clue) either way power is seized by Birkin who dictates the moment of climax and thus the culmination of the song.

The sexually explicit nature of this song is revealing of wider societal stereotypes and understandings. For Tombs & Tombs the role that Birkin played within the song was in line with contemporary stereotypes and fantasies around Britishness, particularly female Britons:

Birkin was the gawky, slightly toothy Home Counties daughter of a naval officer, with an angelic face, a strong English accent [...] and a choirboy voice - just what the French thought *les petites Anglaises* should be. Her cherubic vocalising gave the record more than a hint of perversity for the French knew that if the British were not much good at straight sex, kinkiness was their forte.⁶⁵

The 'choirboy' element of Birkin's version of 'Je t'aime' marks it as substantially different than Bardot's version. On the line where Birkin/Bardot sing 'you go and you come' Birkin jumps up the octave, whereas Bardot does not, and thereby creates the defining choirboy-like aesthetic of Birkin's version.⁶⁶ Apparently, this was a specific instruction from

⁶² Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin, 'Je t'aime... moi non plus', *Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin* (Fontana 1969).

⁶³ 'Je vais, je vais, et je viens'.

'Tu vas et tu viens'.

⁶⁴ 'Non, maintenant, viens'.

⁶⁵ Tombs & Tombs, 634.

⁶⁶ 'tu vas et tu viens'.

Gainsbourg who thought that this would increase the deviant nature of the song.⁶⁷ Whether Gainsbourg was trying to play on a particular English stereotype is unclear; nevertheless, as the contrasts between Birken and Bardot's version exemplify, he was certainly aware of how to draw out specific qualities from each singer and was undoubtedly aware of the controversy that would result of his musical directions.

Regardless of the intention of Gainsbourg or Birkin, 'Je t'aime... moi non plus' fits into the wider cultural shift of the sexual revolution that was happening on both sides of the Channel, as well as across Europe and the USA.⁶⁸ Unlike crossing the Atlantic, travelling to England was a practical possibility for many. England became a site of fantasy holding the possibility of becoming a reality. In place of the prudishness of Victorian Britain came a new representation that saw the UK as the 'vision of a modern and permissive country' and London, alongside its reputation as a popular and youth culture epicentre, became fantasised as a notable site of 'sexual permissiveness'.⁶⁹

For a long time, the stereotype in France was one that privileged French women over English women. To return to caricatures as an indicator of national stereotypes, the celebrated French humourist Pierre Daninos; *Les Carnets Du Major Thompson*, published in the mid 1950s, was based around the adventures of Major Thompson, an ex-member of the British Army living in France.⁷⁰ This book found widespread success due to its humoristic portrayals of the Britishness, embodied in the character of Major Thompson. It was subsequently made into a film and several follow-up novels were written.⁷¹ Major Thompson's first and second

⁶⁷ Stratton, 117.

It is worth noting that Gainsbourg had and would have a history of sexualising young girls in his music. A notable example is the song he wrote for an oblivious 18-year old France Gall 'Les Sucettes' that whilst on the surface being about lollipops carried strong sexual connotations. Another example would occur in his 1971 album *Histoire de Melodie Nelson* where Jane Birkin would be cast as a 15-year-old English girl who falls prey to a middle-age man.

France Gall, 'Les Sucettes', *Les Sucettes* (Philips, 1966).

Serge Gainsbourg, *Histoire De Melody Nelson* (Philips, 1971).

⁶⁸ A potent reminder of the importance of sexual politics in France is found in the oft repeated story that demands for the right to visit opposite gender university dorms were one of the initial sparks of the student protests of May '68.

Marwick 1998, 603-604.

Bernard E Brown, *Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt*. (Morristown: General Learning Press, 1974), 5.

⁶⁹ Wimmer, 'Jane Birkin', 223-236.

⁷⁰ Pierre Daninos, *Les Carnets Du Major Thompson* (Paris : Livre De Proche, 1978).

⁷¹ Gino G. Raymond, 'Renegotiating the Self: France and its Privileged Other', *French Cultural Studies*, 21/2 (2010), 53.

Les Carnets Du Major Thompson, by Preston Sturges (1955).

Pierre Daninos, *Le Secret du major Thompson*, (Paris : Hachette, 1956).

wife give insight into the differing perceptions of the desirability of English and French women at the time. His first wife is English and holds little appeal to Major Thompson: she is presented as obsessed with the British notion of decency and as a little boyish. On the other hand, Major Thompson's second wife, who is French, comes across as a perfect woman and fulfils him in a way this his first wife could not.⁷²

From the mid-1960s, Leila Wimmer observes that in this period 'the young London girl became established as an ultrafashionable icon of modernity and an exotic fantasy object of desire'.⁷³ Consequently, the stereotype of English femininity began to change, and young English women became more desirable in French eyes. As Tombs & Tombs highlight, this fantasy became widespread in France and was exemplified in the film *A Nous, les petites Anglaises* ('Come here, English Girls'). Released in 1975, the narrative centres around French boys who are in Britain with the intention of improving their English but instead spend most of their time attempting to woo English girls.⁷⁴ France was, of course, undergoing its own sexual revolution and by 1975 sexual politics was a noticeable in societal discourse. Yet, the trope of the English girl held some sort of exotic quality felt to be lacking in their French equivalents.⁷⁵

'Je t'aime... moi non plus' represents both a construction of Englishness located within Gainsbourg's imagination and a reflection of wider societal fantasies about British femininity. Yet, Birkin's agency is crucial to remember as she was essential to the development, contextualisation, and articulation of Gainsbourg's construction. Besides the various films they appeared in together and the role Birkin played as part of the celebrity *couple à scandale*, Birkin was the muse of Gainsbourg's following, and perhaps most acclaimed, album *Histoire De Melody Nelson*.⁷⁶ This influence was readily acknowledged in an interview Gainsbourg gave *Rock & Folk* in 1971 where he stated that 'Without Jane, there

Pierre Daninos, *Les Nouveaux Carnets Du major Thompson* (Paris : Hachette, 1973).

Pierre Daninos, *Le Major Tricolore : redécouverte de la France et des Français par le major W. Marmaduke Thompson* (Paris : Hachette, 1968).

⁷² Raymond, 53.

⁷³ Wimmer, 223-236.

⁷⁴ Tombs & Tombs, 633.

⁷⁵ France was not the only nation that bought into this fantasy. In Italy Claudio Baglioni's 'W L'inghilterra' represents another construction of the English girl as a sexualised Other. Claudio Baglioni, 'W L'inghilterra', *Amore Bello/ W L'Inghilterra* (RCA Italiana, 1973).

⁷⁶ *Histoire De Melody Nelson* is a concept album that holds a construction of the English female as a sexual Other at its core.

Serge Gainsbourg, *Histoire De Melody Nelson* (Philips, 1971).

would not be a disc'.⁷⁷ In many ways the concept of this album was drawn from Birkin's and Gainsbourg's relationship as it tells the narrative of a paedophilic romance 'between a middle-aged Frenchman and an under-age English girl'.⁷⁸ Indeed, in the same interview with *Rock & Folk*, a forty-three year old Gainsbourg affirms that the male character on the album is forty years old and directly states the English girl is Birkin.⁷⁹

Gainsbourg's collaboration with Birkin appears as a microcosm of the wider dialogue going on between France and the United Kingdom. British popular culture acted as a fantastical Other for French youth as a consequence of the British invasion. To an extent the British subject acted as a vessel in which French notions of Britishness were poured. The geographical proximity and possibility of contact with British youth limited the extent to which the British subject could embody French inventions. As with Birkin, Britishness was not simply a blank screen onto which images could easily be projected; rather, the French construction of Britishness had to dialogue and negotiate with the reality imposed by the accessibility of England.

4.2 Soft Machine

Considering the critical reception of the English jazz-rock band Soft Machine gives a broader cultural and temporal understanding of the way in which French constructions of Britishness developed across the 1960s and into the 1970s. Soft Machine was formed in 1966 and are considered to be part of the so-called Canterbury Scene. Its founding members were Robert Wyatt, Kevin Ayers, Daevid Allen and Mike Ratledge, and the group took their name from William S. Burrough's novel *The Soft Machine*.⁸⁰ While over the years the group's style has developed and the line-up has changed, Soft Machine are most known for their blend of jazz and rock influences. Initially, they did not find much success within the UK, and Paul Stump argues that they looked towards Europe (especially France) as an alternative market.⁸¹

Soft Machine became exceptionally well received within France and were identified, by French critics, as key players in the evolution of rock music, not only with the UK but within Western Europe. Their first appearance in France took place during the summer of 1967

⁷⁷ 'Sans Jane, il n'y aurait pas de disque'.

Lucien Roux, 'O Le Beau Serge' *Rock & Folk*, 53 (1971), 38-41 (40).

⁷⁸ Simmons, 63.

⁷⁹ Roux 40.

⁸⁰ Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 127-128.

⁸¹ Paul Stump, *The Music's All That Matters* (Chelmsford: Harbour, 2010), 20.

where they played at St Tropez and were involved in a staging of Pablo Picasso's play *Désir Attrapé Par La Queue*.⁸² They continued to perform in France throughout the second half of the 1960s and into the 1970s. These performances included the *Amougies* festival, hosted by the original owners of *Actuel* magazine and the *BYG-Actuel* record label Jean Georgakarakos and Jean-Luc Young, and were the headline act at a progressive rock festival held at the Bataclan on 25th June 1969. The group also appeared on the French music television program *Pop Deux* and received an award for the album *Volume Two*.⁸³

The French reception of Soft Machine was so strong that French critics sometimes positioned France as a crucial site for the development of Soft Machine's success. In 1973 Alain Dister noted that the music of Soft Machine did not initially receive much success in Britain. He argued that the music of Soft Machine 'appears very complicated to the English public' and that it was only 'small circles of intellectuals and people with taste' who appreciated their music in Britain.⁸⁴ However, '[h]appily for them, France is much more welcoming'.⁸⁵ A consequence of these statements is that Dister positions the French rock community as superior to their British equivalents, due to their ability to recognize the artistic talent of Soft Machine and, by doing so, claims French involvement in Soft Machine's success

The extent to which France's reception of Soft Machine had a decisive impact on their career is hard to determine. Yet, there are a few points where France's influence is tangible. Most notably, and inadvertently, it was due to a tour in France that Daevid Allen was forced to leave Soft Machine, as his visa was no longer valid his return to the UK.⁸⁶ This would force the line-up of Soft Machine to change, and Allen's presence in France would, in turn, be an important influencing factor for the development of the French music scene through the formation of Gong. Further, the success that the group found in France clearly encouraged them to return to the country periodically.

At the outset of the band's career, French criticism did not know how to fit Soft Machine into their contemporary framework of British popular music. In a very early account of Soft

⁸² Stump, 20.

⁸³ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁴ 'apparaît bien compliquée au public anglais'.
'petites circles d'intellectuels et de gens de goût'.
Dister, 1973, 93.

⁸⁵ 'Heureusement pour eux, la France leur est plus accueillante'.
Ibid.

⁸⁶ Marcus O'Dair, *Different Every Time: The Authorised Biography of Robert Wyatt* (London: Serpents Tail, 2015), 79.

Machine in 1967, *Le Nouvel Observateur* put forward Soft Machine as ‘the future Beatles’. The comparison between the two groups is extraordinarily thin, and Yvette Romi, the author, does not stretch it beyond the fact the group are: British; a quartet; have played in some of the same clubs; and appeared to be part of the same generation.⁸⁷ The comparison with The Beatles is revealing of the extent to which the Fab Four had already established themselves as the paradigm of English music. It also shows a rather superficial understanding of the music of Soft Machine, one that would be corrected in the subsequent explosion of interest in the group by the French music press.

By the early 1970s Soft Machine were seen as one of the leading figures in the diverse field of British popular music. The journalist Paul Inconnu commented on the recuperation of the ‘revolt’ that started in Liverpool (i.e., the phenomenon caused by The Beatles) and the general lack of an anti-establishment stance among British groups (with The Rolling Stones being a notable exception). Inconnu highlights that there were two schools that were responsible for testing English rock music’s limits: one played with poetry, nonsense, psychedelicism; the other, explores jazz, electroacoustic music and symphonic influences. Overall, Inconnu claims that the ‘Family Soft’ (the groups that can trace their lineage to Soft Machine) were leading ‘contemporary’ research in rock music.⁸⁸

Crucial to Soft Machine’s popularity was their integration of jazz elements. Dister described Soft Machine (or simply ‘Soft’ as he calls them) as ‘halfway between jazz and pop’.⁸⁹ Further, the group were just as likely to be discussed in jazz revues, such as *Jazz Hot* or the initial jazz incarnation of *Actuel*, as they were to be discussed in pop or rock orientated magazines.⁹⁰ The interest in Soft Machine’s use of jazz as a key influence was reliant on two crucial factors. The first was that Soft Machine’s fusion of jazz and rock was quite innovative for the time and, consequently, caught the attention of the French music critics. The second

⁸⁷ Yvette Romi, 'Les Bruits de la ville', *Le Nouvel Observateur* (1967), accessed at *Une Discographie de Robert Wyatt* (<http://www.disco-robertwyatt.com/images/Robert/interviews/NouvelObs1967/index.htm>) (Accessed January 2nd, 2019).

⁸⁸ Paul Inconnu, 'Les Eclaireurs Du Pop', *Actuel*, 5 (1971), 54-55.

⁸⁹ ‘À mi-chemin entre jazz et pop’

Dister 1973, 92.

⁹⁰ Michael Zwerin, 'Soft Machine', *Actuel* (1968), accessed at *Une Discographie de Robert Wyatt* (http://www.disco-robertwyatt.com/images/Robert/interviews/Actuel_Zwerin_1968/index.htm) January 3rd, 2019.

Jean-François Touzé, ‘Soft Machine’, *Jazz Hot*, 272 (1971) accessed at *Une Discographie de Robert Wyatt* (http://www.disco-robertwyatt.com/images/Robert/interviews/Jazz_Hot_mai_1971/index.htm), January 7th, 2019.

reason is more historical and was a result of France's long history of welcoming and assimilating jazz into their musical culture.

Arriving during the First World War with the American James Reese Europe and his band 'The Harlem Hellfighters', jazz quickly became a staple of the French musical landscape. Its popularity grew over the subsequent decades and, by the late 1940s, it was particularly popular with young people and intellectuals.⁹¹ Although the explosion of rock and pop from the mid-1950s onwards, to an extent, displaced jazz as a youth music genre, it retained a crucial level of cultural importance. In the 1960s this was matched with a social importance as the African American community received increased attention due to the ongoing civil rights movement. Free jazz embodied the radicalness that the French perceived to be found in the African American movement and garnered a notable level of popularity.⁹²

It was not uncommon for jazz and rock to be found within the same space, physical or sonic, in France at this time. A prominent example is the festival took place in Amougies in Belgium, which hosted both jazz and rock stars and saw Soft Machine share the bill with many contemporary free jazz artists, such as Steve Lacy and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Several French rock groups were also keen to experiment with the fusion of jazz and rock.⁹³ Soft Machine's style, while not the same as the French experimentation with rock and jazz, was ideologically compatible with the *zeitgeist* of their French counterparts. By the end of the 1960s jazz had a firm place within the French musical environment. Soft Machine's jazz influence slotted neatly into this cultural context and was undoubtedly found attractive due to the compatibility of their shared aesthetic logic.

Soft Machine's experimentation with western art music and the symphonic tradition was also found to be compelling as it shifted the focus away from an American-centric rock music to one that was beginning to suggest more of a European identity. As mentioned above, Inconnu commented on the symphonic trajectory that he found Soft Machine to be following. He was not alone in this observation and there were a great many critics who were eager to comment on the uniqueness of Soft Machine's path. In *Rock & Folk* Paul Alessandrini also noted that by 1970 Soft Machine were starting to develop a more symphonic sound and stated

⁹¹ Colin Nettleback, *Dancing with DeBeauvoir: Jazz and the French* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 63.

Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), 165.

⁹² For more information, please see Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2011), 111-154.

⁹³ Drott, 112-113.

that '[Soft Machine's] importance as initiators [of a symphonic sound in rock music] is considerable'.⁹⁴ Thus, the sonic experimentation that Soft Machine were seen to be conducting was clearly identified as a beneficial force for rock music amongst French rock critics.

Soft Machine's mixture of Jazz, western art music, and rock can be found throughout *Volume Two*: 'Out of Tunes' opens with a frantic jazz beat and saxophones extatically wailing; 'Fire Engine Passing with Bells Clanging' is a complex mess of sounds, and seems to reference both free improvisation and aleatoric music.⁹⁵ The closing track '10: 30 Returns to The Bedroom' is the second longest on the album, at 4 minutes and 13 seconds and shows Soft Machine exploring its various influences.

Time (4:13)	'10: 30 Returns to the Bedroom'
0:00	Minimalist style piano riff
0:05	Entry of distorted bass guitar
0:20	Entry of drum kit
1:03	Bass takes over piano riff
1:09	Jazz influenced electric organ harmony enters
1:25	Jazz influenced drum solo with heavy reverb
2:18	Reintroduction of guitars
2:29	Vocals enter
2:44	Organ takes prominent role

Table 10: Analysis of Soft Machine's '10: 30 Returns to the Bedroom' (Probe, 1969).

'10: 30 Returns to the Bedroom' opens with a four-note piano riff that lasts for over a minute, until the bass guitar takes it over. This repetition is reminiscent of musical minimalism, which had been gaining ground since the early to mid-1960s.⁹⁶ In the background, a distorted bass guitar enters quickly followed by a high-energy drum kit. Whilst maintaining a clear rock logic, due to the distortion and note choice, the bass guitar goes beyond its harmonic role and provides a melodic function below the piano riff. Consequently, it is the bass guitar that is melodically most important. This suddenly changes at 1:03 when the bass guitar abandons its distortion and takes up the piano riff. At 1:09 the piano switches from the riff and swaps to a

⁹⁴ '[Soft Machine's] importance comme initiateurs est considérable'.

Paul Alessandrini, 'La Machine en France', *Rock & Folk* 36 (1970), 31 (31).

⁹⁵ Soft Machine, *Volume 2* (Probe, 1969).

There are also references to European intellectual and artistic traditions throughout the album: Alfred Jarry's pataphysics is referenced in 'Pataphysical Introduction, Pt. I' and 'Pataphysical Introduction, Pt. II'; Dadaism in 'Dada was Here'; and, Arnold Schoenberg in 'Thank you Pierrot Lunaire'. This suggests a further embrace of European heritage within Soft Machine's music.

⁹⁶ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music: Volume 5 The Late Twentieth Century*, (Oxford University Press 2005), 351-382.

harmonic role as it starts to play jazz inspired chords, at this point as well the bass guitar drops down the octave to allow the piano adequate sonic space to articulate its chord voicings.

This track has a structure unlike most popular or rock music. Yet, its brevity is in-keeping with popular and rock music songs. At 1:25 all the instruments drop out, except for the drum kit, which then embarks on a solo lasting over a minute (section B). The vocabulary used is largely jazz based and quotes the rhythm of the opening minimalistic riff. The post-drum solo section can be then divided into two related, structural sections: the first section lasts from the closing of the solo (2:18) and is based around a full rock band, playing complicated rhythms and is heavily riff based; the second section starts at around 3:05 when the electric organ comes to the forefront and holds chords until the closing of the track, whilst the other instruments embrace a chaotic, improvised ending. Across *Volume Two* and particularly in '10: 30 Returns to the Bedroom' it is clear to see Soft Machine's capacity to mix a wide variety of influences and musical ideas within a relatively compact space of time. It was partly due to Soft Machine's balancing of popular and rock music aesthetics and logic with the experimentalising of art music, alongside the vibrancy of jazz, that they were seen to be the avant-garde of popular music by the early 1970s.

From Romi's 1967 article to the success of *Volume 2* in 1969, Soft Machine were reframed from imitators of existing popular music to instigators of a new sound. In part, this was due to a shift in perception in French rock criticism. Romi's initial article was written shortly after the birth of French rock criticism and was not for a rock or pop music magazine. In one sense, the trajectory through Boursier and Inconnu demonstrates the flourishing of the French rock critic discourse. The championing of Soft Machine also provides a commentary on the shift in reputation that Britain had within France: it demonstrates a move away from an image of a country that was exciting, vibrant and desirable, yet dominated by the image of the Beatles and overshadowed by American musics, to a perception of Britain as pluralistic and independent; yet, still imbued with cultural significance.

4.3 The European Turn

Christopher Warne, in his chronology of the French counterculture, notes that the middle period of *Actuel's* existence (1972-1973) involved a shift away from its previous pro-American countercultural stance to one that was much more critical of the USA. Warne argues that the French counterculture had become disenchanted with the development of its counterpart across the Atlantic and critiqued 'the recuperation and commercialisation of pop

music, the perceived selling-out of certain political leaders and groups once viewed as inspirational (notably Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin), the drift into spectacular terrorism (the Black Panthers and the Weathermen)'.⁹⁷ This period represents a crucial moment in the chronology of the French counterculture as, instead of being a site of inspiration and potential, the American counterculture started to be seen as being unable to live up to the revolutionary change that it promised.

In the USA's stead Europe became a new site of optimism for *Actuel*, and the wider French counterculture's, ambitions.⁹⁸ It is this shift from the USA to Europe that I am referring to as the 'European turn'. This transition emerges at a crucial moment in the development of the French counterculture; it marks a recognition of the maturation of European rock and countercultural movements and represents a perceived turn away from a USA defined counterculture to a European one.⁹⁹ While I will return to the significance of the European turn for the French in Chapter 4, it is worth considering how Britain is positioned within this discourse in order to understand more fully the changing nature of British music's representation within France during these years.

4.3.1 Britain and the European Turn

The European turn saw both a championing of the British avant-garde and a savaging of its previous titans by French critics. Certain groups, such as The Rolling Stones were critiqued for their loss of rebelliousness and their complicity in commercial endeavours. A 1972 edition of *Actuel* clearly articulates the despondency that was felt towards the British and American counterculture and the optimism that was starting to surround the idea of Europe as a countercultural centre. The opening article of this edition 'Exit les Super-Stars' critiques the corruption of the current state of affairs within the countercultural musical sphere. It opens with the line: "Rock culture", "Youth Revolution", the grand words of an epoch are drowning in champagne. Having become pop-stars, the false heroes of an epoch are entangled in the 'spectaculaire'".¹⁰⁰ The central themes of counterculture are understood to

⁹⁷ Chris Warne, 'Bringing Counterculture to France: Actuel Magazine and the Legacy of May '68', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 15/3 (2007), 309-323 (318).

⁹⁸ Ibid., 318.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 317-319.

¹⁰⁰ "Rock Culture", "Youth Revolution", les grands mots d'une époque se noient dans la champagne. Devenus des pop-stars, les faux héros d'une époque s'empêtrant dans le « spectaculaire ». Actuel, 'Exit Les Superstars', *Actuel* 19 (1972), 2-3 (2).

have become corrupt by commerce and capitalism and equally its musical idols were seen to have been tainted by the same factors.

It was not just those marred by capitalism who were critiqued by the writers constructing the European turn. A larger distinction emerged between the British groups perceived to be American-centric (The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin) and the Eurocentric avant-garde. In an article for *Best*, Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun wrote that '[t]his victory of rock 'n' roll is, if we analyse it, a victory of American musicians'.¹⁰¹ They even argue that, upon consideration, 'the British groups owe a large part of their success to their better understanding of the black American sources of rock 'n' roll'.¹⁰² Consequently, the British groups that had been championed as revolutionising rock music were re-evaluated as being derivative of American musical practices.

At the same time that these bands were critiqued for operating within an American-derived musical paradigm, the historic significance of British groups was acknowledged for its developmental importance. Both *Actuel* and *Best* positioned the UK as a key part of the European musical turn. In 'L'Eur-Rock est Né' *Actuel* acknowledged the historic role that Britain had played in progressing rock music in the second half of the 1960s, stating that 'the research of the English fertilised European music'.¹⁰³ Across both *Actuel* and *Best* there is a consensus on which British groups had been the most influential and are continuing to champion a European aesthetic. In particular, Pink Floyd and Soft Machine are championed as formational bands in the evolution of European rock music.¹⁰⁴

Actuel considers Soft Machine and Pink Floyd to have begun experimenting with a new paradigm of rock as early as 1967. The article states that 'the English groups are paving the way for the new music. The recourse to total improvisation and a chaotic sound provides them with a *tabula rasa* on which they can reconstruct'.¹⁰⁵ Narrowing the scope to be more specific to Pink Floyd and Soft Machine, *Actuel* states that it is Pink Floyd's 'instrumental freak-outs',

¹⁰¹ 'Cette victoire du rock 'n' roll est, si on l'analyse bien, une victoire des musiciens américains'. Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', *Best* 49 (1973), 72-80 (72).

¹⁰² 'Les groupes britanniques ont dû une bonne part de leur succès à leur meilleure compréhension des sources négro-américaines du rock 'n' roll'.

Ibid., 72.

¹⁰³ 'Les recherches anglaises fécondent les musiques européens'.

Actuel, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', *Actuel* 12 (1971), 12-17 (12).

¹⁰⁴ *Actuel*, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', 12.

Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', *Best* 49 (1973), 72-80 (72).

¹⁰⁵ 'Les groupes anglais jettent les bases de la nouvelle musique. Le recours à l'improvisation totale et au chaos sonore leur fournit instable rase sur laquelle ils pourront reconstruire'. *Actuel*, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', *Actuel* 12 (1971), 12-17 (17).

incorporation of symphonic influences, and exploration of sound effects that helped them to create a non-derivative sound and it was Soft Machine's use of a-tonal improvisation and exploration of rhythmic potential that made them so influential in France and elsewhere in Europe.¹⁰⁶

Alain Dister emphasises Britain's leading role in opening the door for the possibility of a European popular music. In the closing few pages of *Le Rock Anglais* he suggests that the Channel is becoming a much more important pathway than the Atlantic for the French. Britain is positioned as a European pioneer and a paradigm for other European countries. It is through British success within the realm of popular music that other European countries could have faith in their own ability to create music.¹⁰⁷ Britain was in fact a sign of the viability of resistance to the hegemony of the USA and site of self-determined creativity and musical production.

The new European music was imagined to be breaking free from the limitations set in place by American-derived rock music. In Lebrun's words '[t]he spirit of rock in Europe, must, to survive and to have real significance, find forms of expression more adapted to the social and cultural climate of the new generations on the old continent'.¹⁰⁸ In the view of *Actuel* this European rock should attack the 'binary rhythms' of rock music and replace it with a more experimental approach to rhythm that takes its influence, in part, from the syncopation of jazz.¹⁰⁹ This new European music would sometimes assimilate ideas from free jazz and/or could take inspiration from contemporary art music, particularly atonal music and/or incorporate influences from Europe's art music heritage.¹¹⁰ Ultimately, it pushes rock away from an American/African American framework and into a realm that is perceived to be defined by a sense of Europeanness.

Whether or not Winston Churchill truly stated that 'If Britain must choose between Europe and the open sea, she must always choose the open sea', it is certain that Britain was not seen as pro-European in France before the early 1970s.¹¹¹ The French president Charles

¹⁰⁶ Actuel, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', 17.

¹⁰⁷ Dister, *Le Rock Anglais*, 174.

¹⁰⁸ 'L'esprit du rock en Europe, doit, pour survivre et avoir une réelle portée, trouver des formes d'expression plus adaptées aux milieux sociaux et culturels des nouvelles générations du vieux Continent'.

Commin & Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', 72.

¹⁰⁹ Actuel, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', 12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Jon Danzig, 'A revealing deception about Winston Churchill', *New Europeans*, <https://new europeans.net/article/604/revealing-deception-about-winston-churchill> (accessed 14 February, 2019).

de Gaulle epitomised this view across the 1960s. Britain had, in fact, applied to join the EEC twice before it was finally allowed entry in 1973. Both of these applications had been blocked by de Gaulle, as he believed that Britain's attachment to its Empire and the USA to be in conflict with the European project.¹¹² In other words, de Gaulle 'wanted to force Britain to make the choice: Europe *or*, not Europe *and*'.¹¹³ The entry of Britain into the EEC signalled a choice to turn away from the open sea and, in exchange, a welcoming of Europe.

The emergence of narratives about the birth of a European popular music and the recontextualisation of Britain as a European musical force took place within a climate of a sense of increasing importance of Europe.¹¹⁴ I have already mentioned the article in *Best*, 'Rock Du Marche Commun' that makes direct reference to the common market in its title.¹¹⁵ Another prime example is Dister's *Le Rock Anglais* as it was published in 1973, the year that Britain joined the EEC.¹¹⁶ His discussion of the emerging European music and the influence that British groups had was undoubtedly influenced by his cultural and political context.¹¹⁷ The rhetoric of the critics of the European Turn demonstrate a shift in the years leading up to Britain's integration into European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973; as Britain is placed into an economic community with Europe, it also is placed at the centre of a European musical alliance.

As part of Britain's inclusion in the European turn, Britain was reframed from an actor in the Anglo-Saxon counterculture alliance to a comrade of the European countercultural fraternity. Sometimes this involved a reconfiguration of influencers into agents of the new European cause. This was the case in Leduc's assessment of Pink Floyd in his 1973 book *Pink Floyd*.¹¹⁸ Writing during the height of the European turn, Leduc's text presents the group as exemplifying a 'European' aesthetic. He argues that they did not look across the Atlantic for their inspiration. Instead, they embraced hallucinogenic drugs and science fiction, they

¹¹² Joanne Wright, 'The Cold War, European Community and Anglo-French relations, 1958-1998' in Alan Sharp & Glyn Stone (eds.), *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century: Rivalry and Cooperation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 325-328.

¹¹³ Tombs and Tombs, 622.

¹¹⁴ It is significant that this was occurring at the same time that the American counterculture was seen to be in a decline. As the USA was weakening in power, Europe was seen to be growing, politically and culturally, and Britain was to become a crucial part of Europe's ascendancy. Warne, 318.

¹¹⁵ Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', *Best*, 49 (1973), 72-80.

¹¹⁶ The Treaty of Accession, that allowed Britain to enter the EEC, was signed in 1972. Thus, Dister would have been well aware of the growth of the European project and this context may have helped shift the rhetoric surrounding Britain to being more Europeanist in tone.

¹¹⁷ Dister, *Le Rock Anglais*.

¹¹⁸ Jean-Marie Leduc, *Pink Floyd*, (Paris: Albin Michel/Rock & Folk, 1973).

combined classical and electronic music. In a particularly passionate and poetic line he states that '[f]or all, the music of Pink Floyd is the testimony of a certain European civilisation that strives to reconcile its ancestral values with the delights of the near future'.¹¹⁹ In Leduc's eyes, Pink Floyd had become foremost representatives of European popular music.

4.3.2 Gong

One member of the 'Family Soft' that exemplified the emergence of European music was the group Gong. The group, led by Australian Daevid Allen, was formed in the in 1969 and signed to the French record label BYG-Actuel, which was known primarily for its free jazz catalogue.¹²⁰ Allen was originally a member of the British rock group Soft Machine; however, after a tour in France he was denied re-entry into Britain.¹²¹ France became the home of Allen and nurtured Gong during the group's formational years. In 1972 the group, becoming dissatisfied with their record label and feeling frustrated at the state of the French music scene, signed to the British record label Virgin, and shifted their musical base to the UK.¹²²

Gong's music drew heavily on psychedelic rock styles but also includes elements from avant-garde jazz and European art music. The song 'Master Builder' from Gong's 1974 album *You* reveals much of Gong's eccentric and eclectic influences.¹²³ 'Master Builder' opens with a low vocal drone that is a continuation from the previous track 'Magick Mother Inovation'.¹²⁴ It conjures up images of monks singing in a deep unison and, given Gong's orientalism, invokes a sense of hippiedom's take on eastern spirituality. This vocal drone

¹¹⁹ 'Pour tous, la musique du Pink Floyd est le témoignage d'une certaine civilisation européenne qui s'efforce de concilier ses valeurs ancestrales et les délices du futur proche'. Leduc, 126.

¹²⁰ Jonathyne Briggs, 'The Pot Head Pixies: Drug Utopias in the Music of Gong, 1969-1974', *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 23, 1 (2008), 6-23 (11).

Gong, *Magick Brother/Mystic Sister* (BYG Records, 1969).

¹²¹ Stump, 20.

¹²² One may argue that Gong represents very little of Britain, as its leading figure Daevid Allen is of Australian nationality. However, his early role in Soft Machine and the importance of the UK as a base for Gong firmly entrenches Allen in a British musical world (not to mention the Britishness signified by the continuous references to tea and teapots). There were also other British musicians in Gong at various times, such as Gilli Smith and Steve Hillage, and Gong signed to the British record label Virgin in 1972. Others may question the extent to which Gong are French, and sometimes Gong are associated with the so-called 'Canterbury Sound' due to Allen's involvement with Soft Machine. Yet, Gong were formed in France, initially signed to a French label, and involved many French musicians.

¹²³ Gong, 'Master Builder', *You* (Virgin, 1974).

¹²⁴ Gong, 'Magick Mother Inovation', *You* (Virgin, 1974).

quickly fades out and is replaced with a slow build-up of vocal lines, bass guitar, drums, and flute. At 1:30 ‘Master Builder’ has commenced in earnest and a tenor saxophone improvises with a jazz logic over a strong rock-inspired bass and drum groove. A brief interlude begins at 3:25 featuring strong stabs, bird twittering, and brief cryptic utterances of:

Maybe you don’t know
 Maybe you know
 Maybe you know you know
 Maybe you don’t know what you know you know you know

These incomplete statements leave the listener wondering what it is that they may know or may not know and how aware they are of any knowledge they may or may not have. At 5:28 a rock-based distorted guitar solo commences that initially takes place underneath continued chants of ‘maybe you know’ and nonsense. After this fades out the tension builds across all the instruments until the 5:28 when the piece begins to close. In this closing section the vocals return asking the ‘master builder’ about their temple and informs the master builder that there is no need for a physical basis of his temple as ‘you could build an invisible temple in your own imagination if you will’.

From the monkish drone to the jazz tenor sax solo and the rock riffs and guitar solo ‘Master Builder’ mixes a wide range of musical elements from across a variety of genres. Combined with the incomplete statements of ‘maybe you know’ and the shifting ambient synthesiser sounds that runs throughout ‘Master Builder’ serves to destabilise the listener. It does so by existing neither in the rock or jazz world; by questioning the listener’s ability to know; and through evoking trance-inducing elements (the monkish drone, rock riffs, ambient synthesiser) as well as disruptive elements (the stabs of the interludes, the dynamic fluctuations of the tenor saxophone, and the disjointed guitar solos).

Time (6:18)	‘Master Builder’
0:00 – 0:20	Low vocal or synthesiser drone – continuation from previous track.
0:05 – 1:30	Fade in of vocal chant that has been modified with effects, as well as bass guitar, drums, & flute
1:30 – 3:25	Tenor saxophone jazz influenced improvisation over bass riff, rock drums, and synthesisers
3:25-3:51	Interlude, stabs, bird sounds, ‘Maybe you know’ vocals.
3:38-5:28	Electric guitar solo
5:28-6:18	Singing over bass guitar riff
Throughout	Ambient synth sounds

Table 11: Analysis of Gong’s ‘Master Builder’ (Virgin, 1974).

This eclectic mix of genre influences and disorientation of the listener is a common theme across Gong’s oeuvre. On their 1973 album *Flying Teapot* ‘The Potheaded Pixies’ mixes rock

and jazz and uses panning techniques in the vocal line ‘I am, You are, We are, Crazy’ to confuse the listener’s sense of spatial orientation.¹²⁵ Further, on their 1971 album *Camembert Electrique* Gong mixed heavy, frantic psychedelic rock tracks, with jazz saxophone, and musique concrète.¹²⁶ This blend of genres and exploration of techniques was well received, and Gong became one of the most vaunted of bands of the French counterculture.

Beyond their music, Gong are known for the mythology surrounding their work. This revolves around the idea of the ‘pot-headed pixies’ and the planet Gong, which is under threat from outside sources. In an attempt to save their planet, the pot-headed pixies are sending transmissions to Earth via Radio Gnome in order to find aid.¹²⁷ The hero they locate on Earth is called Zero. The majority of the storyline revolves around the journey of enlightenment that Zero goes through in exchange for helping to save Planet Gong. Zero, embarking on a drug-fuelled spiritual quest on Planet Gong, reaches a heightened level of consciousness and desires to spread his knowledge across earth. Unfortunately, the narrative ends with Zero being too pre-occupied to actually spread his message.¹²⁸

The group were received extremely positively by the French rock and countercultural press. *Rock & Folk* would publish several lengthy articles on the group, but it was *Actuel* who were Gong’s true champions.¹²⁹ Indeed, in 1974 *Actuel* reflected on Gong’s previous two albums and described their two previous albums as foundational pieces of work, even going so far as to describe this epoch of Gong’s existence as ‘the flourishing of spring, serenity re-found’.¹³⁰ Two years earlier, Jean-Pierre Lentin identifies Gong as one of the key musical actors within the French rock music scene, stating that, alongside Magma, they were one of the most representative groups to emerge out of the French counterculture. Further, he describes Gong as being attuned to the contemporary French cultural and social context: ‘Gong represent more than a music: an attitude, a way of life. They identify perfectly with the movement of the marginal and the French Freaks [...] and each concert ignites the

¹²⁵ Gong, *Flying Teapot* (Virgin Records, 1973).

¹²⁶ Gong, *Camembert Electrique* (BYG Records, 1971).

¹²⁷ Briggs, ‘The Pot Head Pixies’, 12.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²⁹ Alain Dister, ‘Le tour du gong’, *Rock & Folk*, 95 (1974), 52-57.

Paul Alessandrini, ‘Gong comma la lune’, *Rock & Folk*, 57, (1971), 37-41.

¹³⁰ ‘l’épanouissement du printemps, la sérénité retrouvée’.

Actuel, ‘La Dernière Coup De Gong’, *Actuel* 42 (1972), 33-34 (33).

imagination, spreads good vibrations'.¹³¹ Gong were clearly seen to articulate the engagement between the aesthetics, culture, and politics that was central to the counterculture, and it was due to this embodiment of countercultural values that they became one of the most symbolic groups to emerge in France for French critics.

Gong demonstrates the ways in which the expanding web of counterculture allowed the possibility for transnational collaborations. The group were inspired by a variety of influences that occurred in both France and the UK, as they incorporated a range of people from both sides of the Channel, worked with a record company on both sides of the Channel, and made their base on both sides of the Channel. They serve as a profound example of the ways in which French, British, and, to an extent, American influences could converge and create something not dominantly defined by any single nationality. This trans-national ideology was clearly articulated in the universalist and trans-planetary vision within their music and ideology.¹³²

The inspiration for Gong's mythology is varied and cannot be disassociated from wider contextual themes. In particular, there are two key strands that run throughout their work: hippiedom/psychedelia and anti-psychiatry. Gong are clearly inspired by many of the philosophies that were pervasive amongst the hippie movement. The music embodies the psychedelic and drug fuelled way of life that hippiedom espoused. This is extremely evident through the reference to marijuana in the naming of the 'pot-headed pixies'; however, the connection with hippiedom is almost apparent in the references to orientalist philosophy found within Gong's work. There are references to the 'Great Yogi Banana Anand' and the 'Banana Nirvana Monyana'. The representatives of the pot headed pixies on Earth have also based their 'Quaterheads' in the 'Hymnalayas'.¹³³ This first strand points towards influences primarily coming across from the United States, and secondarily through Allen's experience of British reception and articulation of hippiedom and psychedelia. It also points towards French hippiedom, as India was a crucial cite of inspiration for the French movement and the group was formed in France.

Jonathyne Briggs highlights the concurrent development of Gong's anti-psychiatric narrative. He argues that, just as French intellectuals were reassessing societal definitions of

¹³¹ 'Gong représente plus qu'une musique: une attitude, un mode de vie. Il s'identifie parfaitement avec le mouvement des marginaux et des freaks français [...] et chaque concert enflamme les imaginations, propage les bonnes vibrations'.

Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'France, ce rock pas dégénère', *Actuel* 17 (1972), 74-78 (74-75).

¹³² And, Australian, of course.

¹³³ Gong, *A Pocket Introduction to the Planet Gong* (Paris: BYG Records, 1971).

insanity, Gong's music embraces a form of insanity as a way of finding alternative modes of being.¹³⁴ He states that 'the 'insanity' of Planet Gong is offered as a healthy mode of living, suitable for rebuilding a human society that has failed to evolve after May '68'.¹³⁵ Thus, the second strand more firmly places Gong as influenced by their French context.

The mixture of inspiration from both sides of the Channel was also noted by Dister.

In France, Gong are a good example of the universalisation of music. We find in them elements of Englishness, thanks to Daavid Allen, who has kept a certain sound of the original Soft Machine, but also aspects that are very French, in the paraphysical humour.¹³⁶

For Dister, the group represent a mixture of British and French influences and, while the group did not actively espouse a Europeanist tone, they were identified by Dister as not only being an example of the potential of cross-channel collaboration, but also as a key component of the development of a European music. He places them alongside emerging groups in Germany (Amon Düül) and France (Magma, Lard Free, Crium Delirium) who together showed that a new sound was emerging across Europe, one that embraced a European aesthetic and moved further away from a genre that has been largely defined by American sounds. This was embodied in Gong's ability to combine both British and French influences in a way that allowed them to be constructed as symbol of the potential of transnational European musical engagement.

4.4 Conclusion

This narrative is, of course, one part of a much larger picture. At the same moment that the European turn was reaching its peak, there were discussions of British rising superstars, such as David Bowie, that existed entirely outside of any European dynamic. Yet, the European turn represented a crucially important narrative that demonstrates a shifting landscape of opinion about what counterculture consisted of, who could claim to be a countercultural leader and how European countercultural music could sound. Further, considering the changing nature of Franco-British musical relations through this framework

¹³⁴ Briggs 'The Pot Head Pixies', 14.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹³⁶ 'En France, le Gong est un bon exemple d'universalisation de la musique. On y trouve des apports anglais, grâce à Daavid Allen, qui a gardé un certain ton propre au Soft Machine originel, mais aussi des aspects très français, dans l'humour pataphysique.' Dister, *Le Rock Anglais*, 174.

offers alternative understandings of the way in which these two countries engaged with each other. It acts as a reminder that British music had an identity distinct from American music, and French musical discourse could position Britain strategically to suit its ideological needs and desires.

The differentiation between the UK and the USA within French rock music discourse is important to remember as the term 'Anglo-Saxon' often tactically conflates the UK and the USA into a single hegemonic group. As Emile Chabal notes the use of the term 'Anglo-Saxon' to describe the United Kingdom and the United States in France dates back to the late 19th century but gained increasing currency through Charles de Gaulle's post-war presidency in his defence of French exceptionalism and critiques of American and British perceived hegemony.¹³⁷ Thus, in the years leading up to the UK's entry into the EEC, the conflation of the USA and UK was common in French discourse. The attention paid to British music and popular culture from the mid-1960s onwards indicates a competing dialogue that, at times, differentiates between Anglo-Saxon communities. The refusal to conflate the UK and the USA and, indeed, the positioning of the UK *against* the USA as part of the European turn reminds us that the use of the term 'Anglo-Saxon' is a strategic construction that adapts according to the current socio-political climate.

The inclusion of Britain into a European music marks the closest moment of cultural fraternity between France and the UK within the time period covered in this thesis. The UK music scene is positioned as a brother-in-arms in the countercultural desire to find a voice outside of the realms of USA defined paradigms. This marks a notable shift from the perception of the UK as part of an Anglo-Saxon alliance (although, as the 1972 *Actuel* article 'Exit les super-stars' demonstrated, the UK could be strategically reinserted into the Anglo-Saxon framework).¹³⁸ It also demonstrates a reduction in the distance between the French Self and the British Other. The exotic, exciting Britain of 1966 was marked by a fundamental difference from 1966 France. However, this difference had reduced enough by the early 1970s that the inclusion of French and British rock within the meta-genre of European rock made logical sense.

The French would certainly consume and enjoy a lot of the popular culture that Britain exported, but its fantasies and imaginaries of Britain were a result of the national cultural and political context. The UK, as a national Other, would be continually constructed and

¹³⁷ Emile Chabal, 'The Rise of the Anglo-Saxon: French Perceptions of the Anglo-American World in the Long Twentieth Century', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 31/1 (2013), 24-26 (34).

¹³⁸ *Actuel*, 'Exit Les Superstars', *Actuel* 19 (1972) 2-3 (2).

reconstructed in a way that suited the ideological needs of the French counterculture. Whether these fantasies gave French youth a sense of inclusion in a transnational sexual revolution or helped legitimise the counterculture in Europe, Britain's construction in the French imaginary was based on the condition that it was useful.

Chapter 5: French countercultural music, discourse, and industry

Within this chapter I consider the ways in which France saw its own emerging rock music vis-a-vis the wider transnational counterculture. I will trace a narrative that begins with a perception of French rock as inferior in comparison to the music of the United Kingdom and the United States of America to the emergence of a critical discourse that began to seriously consider the notion of a French music that was on, at least, equal terms to rock from elsewhere. To do so, this chapter will appear in three parts. The first will briefly consider the establishment of French rock music and youth culture within France and then will focus primarily on the years 1966-1968 as an important moment when France took the first tentative steps to engaging with the emerging transnational counterculture and rock community. The second will consider the period between 1968 and 1971. In these years there was a growing realisation and self-consciousness about the manifestation of a French rock community. The third section returns to the discussion of the European turn began in chapter four. This time my focus is on the way that France placed itself within this movement. By looking across these three periods I will be able to trace and discuss the transformation of the French rock discourse and explore the national identity of French rock music that was constructed in relation to the transnational rock community emerging around it.

5.1 1966-1968

5.1.1 Salut Les Copains

While the years 1966-1968 are important to consider in themselves, to explore the place of rock within French culture it is useful to, briefly, take a step back and consider the assimilation of rock music from its initial arrival in France in the mid-1950s through to the engagement with the genre by the French music industry in the early 1960s.¹ Doing so will demonstrate the relationship that France had with foreign popular music leading up to the mid-1960s and will contextualise its role and significance within French society. By considering the routes of rock 'n' roll into France and French culture an important framework will be put in place for understanding the changes that occurred from 1966 onwards.

¹ For a more in-depth discussion of the development of post-war French youth culture and music, please see pages 40-43.

Rock 'n' roll arrived fairly quickly in France, and 1956 saw both the French screening of the transformative *Rock Around The Clock* and France's first ever rock 'n' roll songs.² In a manner similar to its appearance in other countries, rock 'n' roll's presence in France gave birth to a moral panic. This panic was centred on the emergence of the youth sub-culture the *blouson noirs*. Based on the greaser image that was so defining of contemporary youth-oriented American films, these gangs of youth would wear leather jackets and slick back their hair.³ Due to the violence, both between gangs and between gangs and the public, that some of these groups were involved in, the *blouson noirs* came to be associated with the worst aspects of youth culture.⁴

The reign of the *blouson noirs* was not to last and would come to be replaced by the genre *yéyé*, and its community of the *copains*. *Yéyé* would transform rock 'n' roll into an aesthetic and culture that was much more societally acceptable. David Looseley highlights that this transformation was cleverly managed by the French music industry, who took advantage of the conscription of the stars of the *blouson noir* as a chance for a re-branding: in place of a look of delinquency these stars would adopt 'a new look of clean-cut solemnity before the flag'.⁵ They also invested in female singers in order to combat the dominant male presence of the *blouson noirs* and create a more inclusive image. This transformation of French rock 'n' roll into *yéyé* during the early 1960s fundamentally shifted the French music towards a market dominated by popular music and drastically increased the importance of youth as a demographic.⁶

The community of the *copains* that was attached to the genre of *yéyé* was also a crucial element of the formation of the genre. Emerging as the first mass youth culture in France, the *copains* would help to define youth as a generation separate from their parents. Due to the economic boom that France was experiencing and the increased pocket money that young people had, the *copains* created a youth identity through consumption. Music was central to

² These songs were written as novelty pieces. Nevertheless, Jonathyne Briggs notes that these songs 'provided a gateway for rock and roll music in France'.

Jonathyne Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, Pop Music 1958-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), *Sounds French*, 19.

³ David Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France: Authenticity, Politics, Debate* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003), 24.

⁴ Ibid.

Briggs, *Sounds French*, 19.

Florence Tamagne, 'Juvenile Delinquency, Social Unrest and National Anxiety: French Debates and Controversies Over Rock 'n' Roll in the 1960s and 1970s', in G r me Guibert, and Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 35-46 (35-37).

⁵ Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 27.

⁶ Ibid., 27-28.

this movement. Briggs argues that the consumption of music signified something beyond an engagement with national music stars. Consuming music was an attempt to enter, what Paolo Prato calls, ‘pop modernity’ and to be part of a transnational youth culture that was predicated around a shared sense of culture.⁷

Central to the emergence of the *copains* was the radio show *Salut Les Copains*, which was established by Daniel Filipacchi in 1959 and was broadcast from outside of France, on the radio station *Europe 1*.⁸ *Salut Les Copains* would give a tangible sense of connection between *copains*, owing to the call-in nature of some of its episodes. The various direct engagement from the stars of *yéyé* that occurred would help also construct these singers as approachable and relatable to their fans, which further created a sense of the *copain* community. As a consequence of the success of this programme, a magazine, using the same name, was launched in 1962, which further gave a concrete identity to the *copains*. Beyond giving a sense of community to the French youth, the magazine of *Salut Les Copains* acted as proof-of-concept for the emergence of a pop culture press and would lay the foundation for the rock press that emerge in the second half of the 1960s.⁹

5.1.2 United States of America

While the philosophy of the *copains* would be central to the themes and narratives discussed in *yéyé*, many of the ideas and concepts would be drawn from images of American youth culture. Briggs highlights that many of the songs of French rock ‘n’ roll would discuss cars; yet, for the majority of French youth owning a car was economically impossible.¹⁰ The presence of the USA is also felt in the anglicised names taken by various artists: Johnny Hallyday was born Jean-Philippe Smet, and Richard Anthony was born Richard Btresh. Hallyday was seen, in his early years, as both French and American: he was connected to the national and the global. In this way, he represented the ambition of the *copains* to be connected to a sense of a transnational youth culture. As Briggs puts it ‘[t]he music that unified them [the *copains*] was not just American but a culture of all young people, making it

⁷ Paolo Prato, ‘Selling Italy by the Sound: Cross-Cultural Interchanges through Cover Records’, *Popular Music*, 26/3 (2007), 441-462 (444-445).

⁸ This is a particularly important point as the French state had a monopoly on the radio stations in France at this point. By positioning itself outside of France, *Salut Les Copains* gave French youth access to culture that otherwise would not have been found on the radio.

⁹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 27-29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21

equally at home in France'.¹¹ What American music represented to the *copains* was not dominance, but *access*.

In particular, Briggs argues that the French consumption of American pop culture acted as access to, what Prato calls, 'pop modernity'. The definition provided by Prato, which Briggs quotes, is 'sharing a feeling of modernity with not only schoolmates, but also with buddies of other countries, who would speak foreign languages but know exactly the same songs, dance to the same rhythms, cheer the same artists or the same typology of artists'.¹² Thus, while certain social and economic forces certainly gave American products prominence in not only France, but much of Western Europe, consumption of American products had a symbolic value that imparted a sense of shared modernity to its consumers. The establishment of American culture as a site of shared community would define the way that the French counterculture and rock community would emerge.

5.1.3 Adaptations

Adaptations were one of the key ways in which rock 'n' roll integrated itself into the French musical landscape.¹³ In 1963 adaptations occupied between 40-50% of the French charts.¹⁴ While Isabelle Marc argues that an adaptation 'becomes [...] a new, autonomous text', this denies the full power of the adapted work. In particular, it is the word 'autonomous' that causes the difficulty.¹⁵ Even though an adapted work is 'new' and distanced from the original, the adapted work is often connected with its original source, whether consciously or unconsciously for the listener. It is, in part, this connection that gives it power. As Prato and Briggs have argued, a shared popular music allowed a sense of connection to a transnational youth movement.¹⁶ Adapted works translate the work into a format that is understandable within a local framework and allow this sense of transnational

¹¹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 21.

¹² Ibid., 17.

Prato, 'Selling Italy by the Sound', *Popular Music*, 26/3 (2007), 441-462 (445).

¹³ The term 'adaptation' signifies the translation of a song into a different cultural context. At its simplest level this takes place through a translation or re-writing of the lyrics but can extend to include musical changes.

¹⁴ Kirk Anderson, 'Song 'adaptations' and the globalisation of French pop, 1960 – 1970', *French Cultural Studies*, 26/3 (2015), 330-342.

¹⁵ Isabelle Marc, 'Travelling Songs: on Popular Music Transfer and Translation', *IASPM@Journal*, 5/2 (2015), 3–21 (12).

¹⁶ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 17.
Prato, 445.

connectedness.¹⁷ Thus, while the adaptation is a new work, the palimpsest created by the combination of the original and new is easy to read.

To take one example of an adaptation that occurred in France, Chubby Checker's 'The Twist' was both a success in its original form and in a variety of adaptations.¹⁸ In 1961 Hallyday adapted this into 'Viens Danser Le Twist'.¹⁹ Even the title of Hallyday's adaptation presents no attempt to hide the strong trace of Checker's original version. Nevertheless, Hallyday's version is definitely different and located within a French framework. Hallyday's opening lines clearly demonstrate the target demographic of his adaptation as he calls out 'Come on *copains*, clap your hands'.²⁰ By directly referring to the community of the *copains*, Hallyday's adaptation signifies its cultural speciality and demonstrate that Hallyday's version was meant specifically for French audiences. There are also lyrical changes, which shift the meaning of the song. Whereas Checker's versions ('The Twist' and 'Let's Twist Again') implies a romantic element — 'Come on baby' — Hallyday's adaptation focuses on the dance itself. As Briggs notes this is in keeping with the *copain* philosophy of friendship.²¹ By making the song void of any comment surrounding the nature of any relationships, it can be accessible to all. Musically, in this instance, little changes. The adaptation of 'The Twist' gets its power from its relationship with Checker's version while at the same time naturalises the 'The Twist' into something French.

Isabelle Marc takes 'Vien Danser Le Twist' as an example of an adaptation where the connection to the original is erased.²² If Marc is correct, unless the original is known, then the connection between Hallyday's adaptation and Checker's original continues to exist but is unnoticeable. This does not mean that the connection between the two songs is not important or that Hallyday's version exists independently from Checker's. The aesthetic framework provided by Checker's version locates Hallyday's version within the logic of a shared,

¹⁷ The practice of adaptations was highly contested amongst the readers of *Rock & Folk* and several of France's musicians. One point of view saw it as inauthentic: this inauthenticity existed in various degrees as some artists were happy to do adaptations when they had the option to write new lyrics or pen new arrangements. Others saw it as necessary as they did not believe French to be a suitable language for rock music.

Elisabeth Donato, 'Suis-Je Rock?: defining French rock and roll artists in *Rock & Folk*, 1966-1967', *Contemporary French Civilization*, 36/1-2 (2011), 5-18 (13-17).

¹⁸ Chubby Checker, 'The Twist', (Parkway, 1960).

Chubby Checker, 'Let's Twist Again', (Parkway, 1961).

¹⁹ Johnny Hallyday, 'Viens Danser Le Twist', *Viens Danser Le Twist* (Disques Vogue, 1961).

²⁰ 'Venez les copains, tapez les mains'.

²¹ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 28.

²² Isabelle Marc, 'Travelling Songs: on Popular Music Transfer and Translation', *IASPM@Journal*, 5/2 (2015), 3–21 (10).

transnational youth network oriented around a popular culture. To refer back to Prato, pop modernity can exist through ‘typologies’ and direct knowledge of the original sources is not required for the sense of shared community that can be accessed through popular music.²³

Despite the trouble caused by the *blouson noirs* in its initial years, by the mid-1960s rock music had become largely assimilated into the French musical landscape. The careful use of adaptations and the management of the various music stars celebrated by *yéyé* allowed the promotion of a music that conformed to societal norms. Two critical, and interrelated, trends emerge in these years that become important for the way in which rock and counterculture would develop in France from the mid-1960s onwards: 1). French youths’ interest and fascination with America and American youth culture would make sure that they were attuned to developments occurring across the Atlantic; 2) Their desire to enter into the realm of pop modernity, and consequently be part of a transnational youth music. While *yéyé* and the *copains* laid the foundations for the development of French rock and counterculture, it would also become a victim of challenges around national and youth identity that emerged as new countercultural ideals became rooted. In particular, the homogeneity implied by the ideals of the *copains* and the dominance of the music industry would start to fragment.

5.1.4 Anglo-Saxon

In the 1960s a large amount of attention was paid to the music emerging out of the Anglo-Saxon world. This began with the arrival of rock ‘n’ roll in the late 1950s but would persist throughout the decade. In many ways it would be a question that was inextricable from rock music, due to the genre’s association with the USA and, later, the UK. As I have shown in previous chapters, throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s British and American rock music had a profound cultural impact on France.

One piece of evidence of the growth of interest in English-language music can be seen in the development of the music charts. While in the first half of the 1960s there had been a preference for adapting English-language songs into French, this practice had rapidly declined to the point where in 1970 between 10-20% of all songs were English language adaptations.²⁴ At the same time a dramatic growth in the percentage of the charts that songs sung in English occupied can be seen in the 1960s: from less than 10% in 1961 to between 30-40% in 1970.²⁵

²³ Prato, 445.

²⁴ Anderson, 332-334.

²⁵ Ibid.

This simultaneous decline of French-language adaptations and growth in English-language songs parallels the growth of the Anglo-Saxon rock world, particularly following the British Invasion. One of the reasons that Anderson puts forward for this shift is that as French youth became more acclimatised to English, they became more eager to hear the songs in their original language.²⁶ Thus, the dominance of English-language songs was not solely a musical innovation but also occurred due to a growing familiarity with the language.

By far the two most popular groups from England at this time were The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. While Beatlemania was relatively slow to gain momentum, by 1966 the Fab Four had had a profound impact on French youth. In the very first edition of *Rock & Folk* The Beatles received positive coverage: the title of the article gives a favourable impression to begin with — ‘The record of 66, it is without doubt ‘Revolver’ by the Beatles’ — and the approbation is lavished on them throughout. The author, Kurt Mohr, praises the group’s commercial savvy, artistic ‘collective genius’ and their challenge to bigotry.²⁷ It took until 1967 for The Rolling Stones to receive a multi-page article in *Rock & Folk*. Nevertheless, the article is extensive and covers a lot of bibliographic information around the band. It also mentions the moment in which The Rolling Stones rose to prominence in France. Citing a performance at the Olympia in Paris at the end of 1964 where ‘the [Rolling] Stones conquered in one evening the enthusiasm of French teenagers’.²⁸

On the American side of things, at this point, no groups had the same cultural weight as The Rolling Stones and The Beatles. As Anderson notes, these two groups appear in the top 20 best-selling artists in France in this period, whilst no Americans had.²⁹ Nevertheless, American popular music still a keen area of interest for the rock and countercultural press. *Rock & Folk* frequently discussed artists such as Jimi Hendrix or significant folk singers (Peter Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan). Otherwise, articles commenting on the social and cultural climate of the USA would be published: such as Dister’s 1967 article ‘Rock, folk et beatniks aux USA’ in 1967 or ‘In The West: Journal of a Californian Student’ published in 1968.³⁰

²⁶ Anderson, 332-334.

²⁷ Kurt Mohr, ‘Le Disque 66, c’est sans doute « Revolver » par les Beatles’, *Rock & Folk*, 1 (1966), 22-23 (22),

²⁸ ‘les Stones viennent de conquérir en un soir l’enthousiasme des teenagers français’. Philippe Rault, ‘Des Stones De Talent’, *Rock & Folk*, 6 (1971), 40-47 (47),

²⁹ Anderson, 330.

³⁰ Alain Dister, ‘Rock, folk et beatnik aux USA’, *Rock & Folk*, 4 (1967), 22-28.

Alain Dister, ‘In The West: journal d’un étudiant californien’ in Alain Dister (ed.), *Rock Critic: Chroniques de rock’n’roll (1967-1982)*, 53-58.

The birth of *Rock & Folk* gave French audiences access to knowledge about Anglo-Saxon (and French) rock artists that had previously been unavailable. The growing demand not only made this magazine sustainable but caused other magazines to emerge shortly afterwards, demonstrating that French fans were becoming increasingly eager to consume information about rock from across the Channel and Atlantic. Anglo-Saxon music allowed French youth a level of differentiation from older generations and part of this power came from its distance from France. The interest in Anglo-Saxon music and culture clearly demonstrates that there is still a desire, perhaps even a growing desire, to be engaged with a transnational youth community.

5.1.5 State of French Music Industry

The year 1966 would also mark the birth of the Beatnik and Hippie subculture and music in France. Breaking away from the conservative styles of *yéyé* and the homogenous dynamic of the *copains*, the Beatnik subculture would begin to challenge societal norms and pluralise youth culture.³¹ Inspired by the beat poets, the music of the British Invasion, and the emerging folk scene in the USA, this movement sought to retain its connection to the pop modernity offered by global popular music; however, the critical nature of the genre and its aesthetic developments would help locate the genre as something French.

Jacques Dutronc was a particularly notable singer and songwriter who was part of the French Beatnik movement and has had a lasting legacy as one of the most influential figures of this period. Initially working as a session musician and a songwriter for stars such as Françoise Hardy, Dutronc would release his first album *Jacques Dutronc* in 1966 and was touted as ‘one of the big names of music in 1967’ by *Rock & Folk*.³² As Larry Portis argues, Dutronc’s most significant innovation came from his adaptation of the French language into a rock-based music.³³ To do so, he builds upon the speaking-singing style of Antoine and extends the clear articulation of syllables further.

The development of Dutronc’s aesthetic can be heard in ‘Mini, Mini, Mini’.³⁴ Throughout the song Dutronc sings in a crisp and clear manner that allows the lyrics to be fully

³¹ Christian Victor & Julien Regoli, *Vingt ans de Rock Français* (Paris: Rock & Folk/Albin Michel, 1978). 81.

³² Jean Tronchot, ‘Le Tour Dutronc’, *Rock & Folk*, 3, (1967), 24-27 (25).

³³ Larry Portis, *French Frenzies: A Social History of Popular Music in France* (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com, 2004), 147.

³⁴ Jacques Dutronc, ‘Mini-Mini-Mini’, *Jacques Dutronc* (Disques Vogues, 1966).

articulated. The presence of the lyrics is aided by the sonic space that is left unoccupied within the song. This space is created by the stripped backed nature of the instrumentation and the strong crotchet rhythm that drives the music. The bare and basic accompaniment of ‘Mini, Mini, Mini’ means that Dutronc’s vocals do not have to compete with rich and dense timbres or get lost within a complex rhythmic tapestry. Rather, his vocals are left clearly expressed and unobstructed.

Dutronc would also distinguish himself from mainstream French popular music through his scepticism towards contemporary trends. When hippiedom was reaching a level of popularity in France in the late 1960s, Dutronc released ‘Hippie Hippie Hourrah’ that mocked the faddishness he perceived to be associated with the movement through the use of satire.³⁵ Within this song, Dutronc reduces hippiedom down to a handful of essentialised signifiers, such as flowers and love, and treats it as a superficial fashion trend:

J'aime les fleurs et la fumée	I love flowers and smoking
Je ne suis plus un révolté	I am no longer a rebel
Les beatniks c'est dépassé	The beatniks are outdated
Maintenant le monde, il faut l'aimer ³⁶	Now the world, it is necessary to love it

Most notably Dutronc ridicules the idea and hypocrisy of the hippies’ desire to spread love:

Papa, maman, toute la famille	Father, Mother, all the family
L'église, l'armée et la patrie	The Church, the army and the homeland
Je les aime	I love them

The first line of this stanza does not immediately sound out of place within normative models of love, and perhaps even a love of the church does not ring alarm bells. However, Dutronc’s declaration of love for the army certainly becomes a confusing statement. This is compounded when he mentions ‘the homeland’, a statement that might suggest patriotism but when placed in the context of the army begins to sound dangerously nationalistic. Indeed, within this stanza Dutronc mentions two out of three of the qualities in the national motto of occupied France under the Vichy government ‘travail, famille, patrie’. Whilst this is a subtle reference, it frames hippiedom as an ideology verging on fascism. Dutronc is exposing the folly of an ideology that believes in uncritical love. As without being aware of the subject of one’s love

³⁵ Jacques Dutronc ‘Hippie Hippie Hourrah’, *La Publicité* (Disques Vogue, 1967).

³⁶ Lyrics taken from Jacques Dutronc, ‘Hippie Hippie Hourrah’, *Paroles* <https://www.paroles.net/jacques-dutronc/paroles-hippie-hippie-hourrah> (accessed 13 March, 2020) and cross-referenced with author’s transcription.

one may end up embracing an ideology, such as at the Vichy government of occupied France, that one will later regret.

This mocking of love by association with nationalism is reinforced in the final stanza:

Si vous ne m'aimez pas	If you do not love me
Ça n'a aucune importance	It is of no importance
C'est moi qui vous aime	It is I who loves you
Et vive la France	And long live France

Dutronic's claim that it does not matter who loves him because it is he that does the loving is, once again, confusing. It suggests that for French hippies loving is an something that's primary purpose is to be seen; a performative act and not a genuine sentiment. Further, by ending the stanza, and indeed the whole song, with 'long live France', Dutronic alludes to a presidential declaration and reinforces the comparison between hippiedom's ideology of blindly loving everyone and each other, with the blind love for the idea of the nation that nationalism demands. By making these comparisons, Dutronic can expose the similarities and mock the logical inconsistencies and flaws in hippiedom.

'Hippie Hippie Hourrah' is built upon the comic song 'Ils ont des chapeaux ronds'.³⁷ This well-known song famously mocks the Bretons for their apparent backwardness. The song's chorus reveals Dutronic's critique in full:

Ils ont des chapeaux ronds	They have round hats
Vive la Bretagne !	Long live Bretagne!
Ils ont des chapeaux ronds	They have round hats
Vive les Bretons !	Long live the Bretons!

In 'Vive La Bretagne!' the round hats of the Bretons become a synecdoche for Breton culture as a whole. This is a notably superficial perception of Breton culture; it pins cultural difference down to minor aesthetic choices and, when compared to the rest of the song's lyrics, the Breton hat comes to stand for the perceived bizarreness of Breton culture as a whole. This meaning is then inferred onto the hippies Dutronic mocks. While Dutronic does not reduce hippies down to a single item, he does connect them to a collection of symbols and vague ideals. The intertextual referencing shows that Dutronic regards many of the French

³⁷ For more information on 'Ils ont des chapeaux ronds', please see page 116.

hippies as superficial; that they are simply donning the hat of hippiedom rather than committing themselves fully to hippie culture.³⁸

‘Hippie Hippie Hourah’ deals with issues of Americanisation and commercialisation. It shows a response to the increasing presence of Anglo-Saxon popular culture in France during these years. His critique is aimed at the faddish consumption of hippiedom (and Anglo-Saxon trends more widely). At the same time it validates Dutronc’s own brand of rock/pop music. By distancing himself from the hippie movement, Dutronc places himself outside of the ever-changing notion of fashion and positions himself as someone more serious than a popstar, even if his seriousness is articulated through parody. Dutronc becomes the homegrown counter to imported fads and, whilst he certainly has a grounding in the Anglo-Saxon pop tradition, he represents an important moment of integration for French rock.

5.2 1968-1971

The years 1968—1971 were fundamental for the development of French rock music. Philippe Robert captured this when he stated that ‘[i]n France before 1968, pop music didn’t really exist’.³⁹ Of course, France had its *variétés* and *yéyé*, but it still had relatively little exposure to rock and had not yet developed a substantial national rock scene. It is certainly undeniable that from 1968 onwards there was a huge growth in French rock. Many of the central bands of the French counterculture would be formed in these years: groups including Magma, Red Noise, Ange, and Gong.

It is important to pay attention to the structural changes that had been occurring in the previous years, as it was at this time that the French music industry started to experiment with establishing a ‘French’ rock music and that an increasing number of French groups began to emerge. These years would see the emergence of a much broader rock and countercultural press, the establishment of a French rock festival industry, and the continued growth of radio and television as channels for dissemination. A consideration of the development of music in

³⁸ This connection is clearly reinforced in a 1967 live broadcasted version of this song for the show *Le Palmarès Des Chansons*, where four men dressed in a comic hybrid of traditional Breton attire and stereotypical hippie accoutrements.

Jacques Dutronc, ‘Hippie Hippie Hourrah’, *Ina.fr* <https://www.ina.fr/video/I05207849/jacques-dutronc-hippie-hippie-hourrah-video.html> (accessed, 29 August, 2019).

³⁹ Dans la France d'avant 1968, la pop n'existe pas encore vraiment’.

Philippe Robert, *AGITATION FRITE: Témoignages de L'Underground Français* (Paris: Lenka Lente, 2017/2018), 13.

this era must account for both narratives. Regardless of the importance of May '68, there are clear longer-term trends that seemed to pick up pace from 1968 onwards.

5.2.1 Magazines

The expansion of the rock magazine market demonstrates that there was a growing demand for information on rock music and, more generally, shows that the rock music industry was becoming more firmly entrenched within the French market and therefore more mainstream. By 1968 *Rock & Folk* had been established for two years and rival competitors were starting to emerge. Akin to *Rock & Folk*, *Best* would emerge in 1969 and be largely devoted to Anglo-Saxon rock music. Staying within the realms of music, several further publications would appear; the weekly *Pop Music* and the monthly *Extra* were published for the first time in 1970. More countercultural publications would also begin to be circulated, such as *Actuel* and *Parapluie*, and, while they did not focus solely on music, they would be an important site for commenting on musical activity.

The magazines were key places for discussions of national authenticity in music. A noteworthy article to tackle this subject was published in *Rock & Folk* in 1970 and by the critic Paul Alessandrini. In an optimistic opening line, Alessandrini stated that 'for about a year now, we have begun to believe in French popular music'. A perception that French rock music is quite new is clearly present within this argument. This is despite the fact that French rock groups, in various forms, had existed for several years by this point. Alessandrini puts forward an argument that an authentically French, or national form, of rock music had only recently come into existence.⁴⁰

He begins his analysis of the state of French rock music by questioning the slow development of rock music in France. Alessandrini highlights Bob Dylan and The Beatles as canonical figures of this genre and asks why rock music has gained such a strong foothold in the Anglo-Saxon world, as well as in Scandinavia and Holland, but not France.⁴¹ He offers three principal causes: The first of which is due to the pride France places in 'reason' and 'intellect', the French have reacted negatively towards the importance of sensory perception in rock; another suggestion he offers is that the 'cultural imperialism of the U.S.A' has

⁴⁰ 'Depuis un an, on commence à croire à la pop musique française'. Paul Alessandrini, 'Pop Francais', *Rock & Folk*, 43 (1970), 50-53 (51).

⁴¹ Ibid.

delayed the development of French music.⁴² The dominance of Anglo-Saxon music in the French market meant there was little space for French music to develop and find an audience; Finally, Alessandrini highlights the difficulty of language. He writes ‘pop music seems to be foremostly defined by its relation to the English language, and French will be judged anti-pop’.⁴³ The issues he raises demonstrate both internal and external anxieties and represents common concerns.

Alessandrini does note that several groups have found relatively high levels of commercial success and discusses the complications that engagement with major record labels can cause. He cites Martin Circus as a notable example: in his view they began as a group trying to create their own sound. However, Alessandrini believes Martin Circus have come to stagnate in their creative development. He argues that their success will be important for the development of the French music industry. For even if Martin Circus have not gone far enough to create a ‘French’ sound, they have demonstrated that it is possible to have a commercially successful French band, and he hopes that this will inspire the French music industry to promote more home-grown talent.⁴⁴

If these groups endorsed by the music industry are not the torchbearers of the French music that Alessandrini is hoping for, he is more certain that his knights in shining armour can be found in the French ‘underground’. These groups do not define themselves solely within the realms of aesthetics, they articulate ‘their position vis-à-vis the society in which they live, in the world which surrounds them’.⁴⁵ Without delving deeply into any particular group, Alessandrini places both Red Noise and Gong as notable examples of a real ‘French sound’. He admires the former for their rootedness in societal problems and radicalism. In regard to Gong, he argues that it is their aesthetic experimentalism and unique sound that makes them one of the best French groups.⁴⁶

Alessandrini closes with a few words laying out his vision of the future of French rock. In his view French rock is inherently oppositional and seeks to challenge ‘bourgeois society’. He

⁴² ‘impérialisme culturel des U.S.A.’.

Alessandrini, ‘Pop Français’, 51.

⁴³ ‘La pop music semble tout d’abord se définir par rapport à la langue anglaise, et le français sera jugé anti-pop’.

Alessandrini believes that this problem is surmountable due to a trend that sees a declining of importance placed on the voice.

Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁵ ‘Leur position vis-à-vis de la société dans laquelle ils vivent, du monde qui les entoure’

Ibid., 52.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 52.

argues that the ‘true face of French pop music’ is found in ‘the destruction of order, of notes, of sounds, the sharing of the joy of creation’.⁴⁷ Musical transformation would also be societal transformation: ‘an alternative music, alternative methods of distribution, new places for pop festivals, an alternative press, in order to established an alternative culture’.⁴⁸ Yet, while Alessandrini is very clear about what a French music would do and how it would engage with society, he is not so clear on how a French music would sound. This text comes across as more of a manifesto about the methodologies and ideologies behind French music, rather than an attempt to put forth genre definitions. As he is clear that the music will depart from Anglo-Saxon models, Alessandrini seems to place faith in the idea that focusing on conceptualisation and process will result in a unique aesthetic outcome.

A few months after Alessandrini’s article on French pop, *Best* published their first article on the topic.⁴⁹ In this article Hervé Muller explores what it means to create a ‘national’ pop music. He begins his article by commenting on the difficulties that French groups face when trying to play rock music. He mentions that some of the problems are to do with structural and talent issues, arguing that France is lacking in people talented in the various creative and engineering skills used by Anglo-Saxon bands. Taking a fairly pessimistic stance, and contrasting sharply with Alessandrini’s optimism, Muller takes the view that ‘there is not, and there will probably never be, a real underground, spontaneous, in France’.⁵⁰ Demonstrating that by the end of 1970, despite the emergence of *Actuel* magazine and the various rock festivals that had been hosted over the summer, Muller was still not convinced in the possibility of a real French counterculture.

The biggest problem that Muller focuses on is that rock music is ‘attached to Anglo-Saxon culture’.⁵¹ This means that French groups have to deal with the issue of language and, consequently, have the difficult choice of deciding whether to sing poorly in English or well

⁴⁷ ‘le vrai visage de la pop française’.

‘la destruction de l’ordre, des notes, des sons, le partage de la joie de créer’.

Alessandrini, ‘Pop Française’, 53.

⁴⁸ ‘Une musique parallèle, des moyens de distribution parallèles, de nouveaux lieux pour les Fêtes pops, une presse parallèle, afin d’instaurer une culture parallèle’.

Ibid., 53.

⁴⁹ Hervé Muller, ‘Pop Française?’, *Best*, 29 (1970), 28-30.

⁵⁰ ‘Il n’y a pas, et il n’y aura probablement jamais, de véritable underground, spontané, en France’ Ibid., 30.

⁵¹ ‘la pop-music [...] se rattache à la culture [...] anglo-saxon.’ Muller, ‘Pop Française’, 30.

in French.⁵² Compared to other European countries Muller finds this to be a particular dilemma for France. He sees Holland and the Scandinavian countries as having developed some of the best pop music and, in part, puts it down to their strong grasp of the English language. Muller argues that it is not really possible to consider a French band singing in English as a ‘true national pop-music’, as it would only reinforce the dominance of Anglo-Saxon music.⁵³ French is not really suited to rock music, in Muller’s view, as ‘only the English language is perfectly adapted to the rhythms of rock and blues that are the foundations of 90% of contemporary popular music’.⁵⁴

Muller does offer some hope for the development of French rock music. He argues that a ‘a real French pop music is not conceivable without the elaboration of a form of music adapted to the language’.⁵⁵ To form this music he suggests that groups take inspiration from ‘classical music, contemporary music, atonal and electronic’.⁵⁶ Thus, there was hope and potential for the development of a ‘French’ popular music. It requires moving away from models set in place by the Anglo-Saxon world and moving towards musical paradigms that made more sense within the logic of French language and culture.

The need for a French rock music is felt in response to the emergence of rock music elsewhere and pre-existing attempts to create it in France. Alessandrini and Muller ask what it means to not be defined as imitative of the Anglo-Saxon world and how to exist as different from their cross-Channel/Atlantic counterparts. The desire to question what a French rock music would be emerges as a result of the need to define France’s place within the transnational rock community. By locating elements where national identity can be found, Alessandrini and Muller highlight that it is both possible to articulate a national identity and be part of a rock movement that extends across borders.

⁵² This dilemma over language choice provides a possible motivation for the French progressive rock group, Magma’s choice to invite their own language. It offered a third-way between singing in French or English, one that offered many of the hard consonant sounds of English, without having to learn or use English. In the words of the Magma scholar, Philippe Gonin, for Magma ‘English didn’t sound right, no more than French did’ [‘L’anglais ne sonnait pas, non pas? plus que le français’]. Philippe Gonin, *Magma: Décryptage d’un mythe et d’une musique* (Marseille : Le Mot et Le Rest, 2014), 88.

⁵³ ‘véritable pop-music nationale’.

⁵⁴ ‘seule la langue anglaise s’adapte parfaitement aux rythmes de rock et de blues qui sont la base d’environ 90% de la pop-music à l’heure actuelle’.

Muller, ‘Pop Française?’, 29.

⁵⁵ ‘Une vraie pop-music française n’est pas concevable sans l’élaboration d’une forme musicale adaptée à la langue’.

Ibid.

⁵⁶ Notably, this presages many arguments that would resurface during the height of the European Turn in 1973.

If Muller and Alessandrini were questioning what a French rock would be, French groups were arguing that a French rock already existed and that the French music press was failing to acknowledge it. In the 1971 January edition of *Rock & Folk*, the journalist Philippe Koechlin discussed this problem with several French musicians. They argued that the French press was heavily biased towards Anglo-Saxon and foreign bands, claiming that ‘90%’ of the content of these magazines focused on non-French groups. Even the treatment of national and foreign bands was considered to be imbalanced in the little space that French bands were given: the representative of the French rock band Triangle stated that ‘[w]hen a French group has a flop, we say ‘it’s normal’. When it is an English group we say: ‘[h]ow has this happened?’.’⁵⁷ This negative reception of French groups is clear in the above examples of Alessandrini and Muller, as they both place contemporary French rock music as imitative of, or inferior to, Anglo-Saxon styles.

Criticism was also launched at the influence that these magazines had over the reader. Koechlin notes that ‘there is a conviction that the press conditions the reader’.⁵⁸ It was not only that critics would ignore or disapprove of their music; it was also that the views of critics would negatively influence the public. Indeed, there were accusations of corruption as the representative of the band Dynastie Crisis argued that many of these journalists were paid by major labels and were giving preferential treatment to the groups of these labels.⁵⁹

The French rock and countercultural press were essential for the development and legitimisation of national rock groups. Koechlin, quoting one of his informants, states ‘[i]n France, we are not played on the radio. Thus, the only form of promotion, for us, is the written press’.⁶⁰ It is clear that bands were acutely aware of the influential role that journalism played. The implication is that the French press has a responsibility to help French bands grow and develop, whilst the perceived reality is that these French groups are being neglected in favour of their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

⁵⁷ ‘Quand un groupe français fait le bide, on dit : « C’est normal. » Quand c’est un groupe anglais on dit : « comment ça se fait » ’.

Philippe Koechlin, ‘Enquête Sur Une Musique Accablée De Soupçons’, *Rock & Folk*, 48 (1971), 61-65 (62).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ ‘En France, on ne pas en radio. Donc, la seule forme de promotion, pour nous, c’est la presse écrite’.

Ibid.

5.2.2 Festivals

By far the most significant structural development that occurred within the French music industry was the expansion of the rock festival industry. The French counterculture, at this point, had its eye turned towards the UK and USA and was inspired by the major festivals taking places across the Channel/Atlantic. In an article on the 1969 Isle of Wight festival the envy of the journalist Philippe Koechlin is palpable. He states that at the Isle of Wight he saw ‘a return to something precious, I don’t know what, it can be called kindness, friendship, an authenticity of *savoir-vivre*.’⁶¹ The 1969 Isle of Wight festival is idealised as a site where the ideals of hippiedom can be shared and articulated. Yet, the opening lines of the article demonstrate Koechlin’s despondency at the possibility of such events taking place in France: ‘transpose this thing into France. Difficult, 150 000 people without surveillance, free of all taboos and prejudices. We risk drunkenness, rape, fights’.⁶²

Koechlin’s prediction of the difficulty of hosting festivals in France was fairly accurate. 1969 was the year that the record label and magazine BYG/Actuel organised the first major French festival featuring rock music.⁶³ The BYG/Actuel festival was intended to be held in Paris; however, due to local government interdictions the organisers of the festival were required to look elsewhere. Unable to gain permission to host the festival anywhere else in France, the festival eventually was held in Amougies, Belgium. Nevertheless, this festival represents a critical moment for the development of the French music festival industry. While the organisation certainly faced a great many logistical issues and the festival ran a deficit, the BYG/Actuel festival acted as proof of concept, demonstrating that there was a clear demand for such festivals within the French rock market.⁶⁴

⁶¹ ‘un retour à quelque chose de précieux, je ne sais pas, ça peut s’appeler la gentillesse, l’amitié, un authentique *savoir-vivre*’.

Philippe Koechlin, ‘For Wight people only’, *Rock & Folk*, 33 (1969), 53-55 (53).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Due to BYG/Actuel specialising in free jazz, this festival hosted not only rock music but also free jazz. It is worth pausing to consider this apparent juxtaposition of genres as the dialogue between rock and free-jazz would be incredibly important as French rock developed over the next few years. Drott notes that the inclusion of free-jazz and rock met mixed responses. Some saw it as an opportunity to form connections between genres, others were annoyed that the avant-gardeness of free jazz was interrupting the performance of rock music. *Actuel* certainly did explore free jazz, particularly in its early years and, as will be seen, the inclusion of jazz elements within rock music would become a defining aesthetic of a ‘French’ rock music.

Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 113.

⁶⁴ Johanna Amar, *Les premiers festivals de musique pop en France en 1970 : Le Bourget, Valbonne*,

Best picked up on the difficulties that organisers had to face in order to find a suitable location and sought to explain them to their audience. The organisers confronted several issues with securing a location to host a festival: when attempting to organise the festival at *Les Halles* they received no response and their attempt to host it at *le Parc de Saint-Cloud* was thwarted when the press wrote an article that associated the organisers with the perceived moral degradation of the Isle of Wight festival. Mockingly, the author, Jean-Noël Coghe, critiques the logic of the Parisian authorities: ‘[a] festival of communists at Vincennes, yes: of hippies, no’.⁶⁵ The fear of student unrest and the moral values that these festival and the hippies that would be attending it prevented the Parisian authorities committing to any location.

The Actuel/BYG festival was widely covered by the French press and was marked as a notable step forward for the French rock community. Coghe noted that the festival was a risk due to the potential disruption that could have occurred due to the large number of attendees; however, he argued that the risk had been a success and that he hoped that the festival would repeat the following year.⁶⁶ Similarly, Alessandrini praised the festival in *Rock & Folk* stating that the audience responded passionately to the variety of genres presented to them and that the music was of excellent quality.⁶⁷ Once organised, the BYG/Actuel festival took place without much drama. Despite Koechlin’s fears about drunkenness and rape at French festivals, Amougies represented a positive first attempt at bringing rock music festivals to France.

The poster for the Actuel festival (figure 13) includes a section devoted to French bands. While the concert was dominated by Anglo-Saxon rock bands and African American free jazz bands, the inclusion of a specific slot for French rock groups indicates that this was a self-awareness of the emerging French scene at this moment. For Alessandrini this is significant, he states ‘in this surge of young French groups, one feels a decision, a searching, and perhaps soon a birth, [...], an authentically French perception’.⁶⁸ It suggests that by this point groups

Aix-en-Provence et Biot (Master’s Thesis : Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2016), 26-27.

⁶⁵ ‘Un festival de communistes, à Vincennes, Oui: de hippies, Non’.

Jean-Noël Coghe, ‘Festival Interdit’ *Best*, 17 (1969), 18 (18).

Coghe’s point is an interesting one. That communists, who idealise a radically different form of government, were more acceptable than youths experimenting with societal and cultural norms demonstrates the political significance that youth culture and festivals had at this time.

⁶⁶ Jean-Noël Coghe, ‘Amougies 69’, *Best*, 17 (1969), 19-22.

⁶⁷ Paul Alessandrini, ‘Les Folles Nuits D’Amougies’, *Rock & Folk*, 35 (1970), 46-57.

⁶⁸ ‘dans cette envolée des jeunes groupes français, on sent une décision, une recherche, et peut-être bientôt verra-t-on naître [...], une perception authentiquement française’.

Alessandrini, ‘Les Folles Nuits D’Amougies’, 52.

had had enough time to develop a level of professionalism and to reach a level of popularity that it was worth the time and effort to signal French rock out as a distinct group and, while Alessandrini believed that French rock still had some soul-searching to do, it was beginning to come into its own.

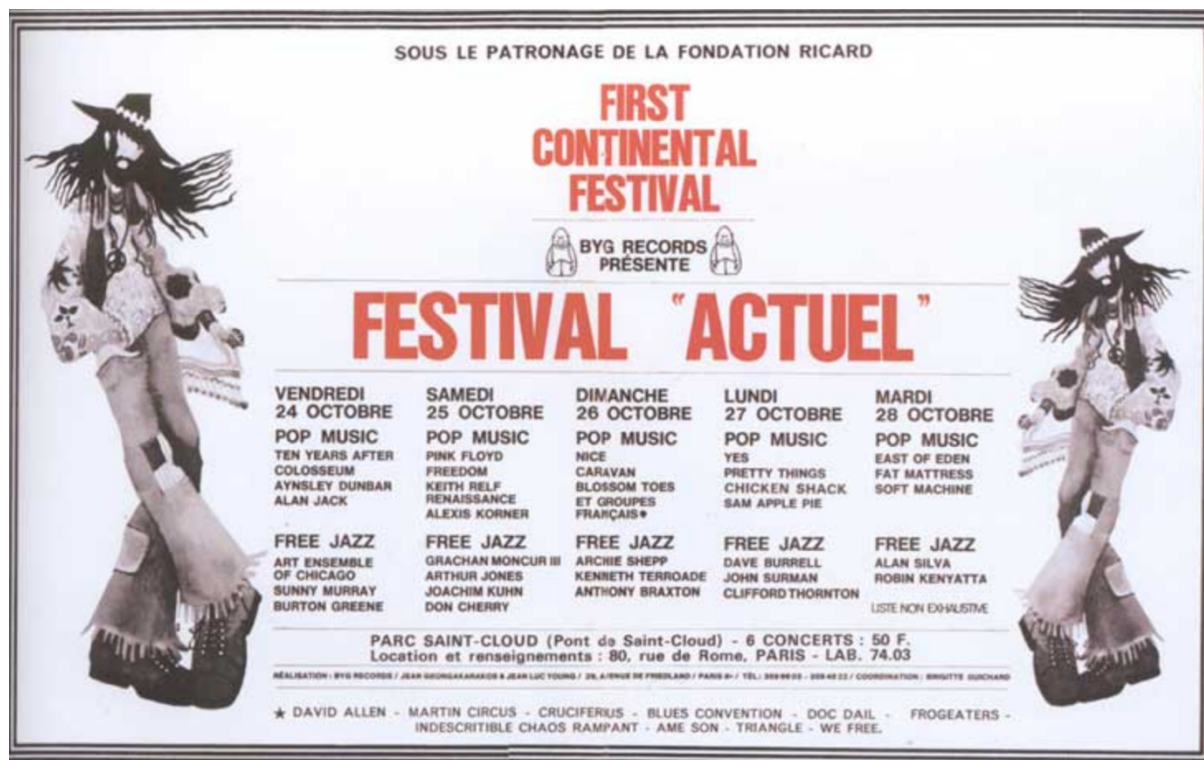


Figure 13: Poster for the Actuel festival that would later be forced to relocate to Amougies. Note the section for French groups at the bottom.⁶⁹

Obtaining the correct permits and licenses to hold festivals would be a reoccurring problem in these years. A festival held near Aix-en-Provence is another example of the difficulty faced in hosting festivals in France. This festival was hosted by a retired army general called Claude Clément who had links to the far-right; Joan Baez refused to play when she discovered the General's role in the Algerian war of independence. Nevertheless, Drott argues that Clément viewed the 'hippie movement as heralding a renewal of humanist values' and sought to create a French Woodstock.⁷⁰ The festival clashed with *the Festival international d'art lyrique local* and, consequently, the mayor of Aix sought to ban the event citing concerns surrounding security, fire safety and the disruption it would cause to the local art music festival.⁷¹ While the organiser of the festival at Aix-en-Provence decided to go-

⁶⁹ <http://www.plaisirsdujazz.fr/chapitre-cinq-sommaire/le-festival-pop-et-free-damougies/> (accessed 29th August 2019).

⁷⁰ Drott, 176.

⁷¹ Florence Tamagne, 'L'interdiction des festivals pops au début des années 1970 : une comparaison

ahead and run the festival as a one day event regardless, the festival was largely a failure. This was due to both a lack of attendees, who had been deterred by both the General's reputation and the police installed by the Aix-en-Provence authorities.⁷²

One of the reasons that obtaining permits for Festivals was so difficult was due to governmental fears of a political eruption along the lines of May '68. Drott argues that a significant legal obstacle to the establishment of festivals was the *anti-casseur law*. Passed in 1970 this law meant that 'protestors could be held legally and financially liable for damages inflicted during the course of an unauthorised demonstration, even if they were not personally responsible'.⁷³ The fear that this could make festival organisers responsible for any damages or disruption caused during the event made the risk of hosting a festival much greater. Further, the French government felt such fear concerning rock and pop festivals that Florence Tamagne notes 'Raymond Marcellin, the minister of the interior, a Gaullist who had been nominated just after the May 1968 events, explicitly denounced pop festivals in a circular dated 27 June 1970 and sent to all prefects'.⁷⁴

When festivals were permitted by local authorities, New Left agitators could cause as many difficulties as local authorities. The *festival de Biot* was organised by the original founder of *Actuel* Jean Georgakarakos and its new owner Jean-François Bizot in 1970. While the *festival de Biot* was never officially forbidden, it never received official approval to be held either.⁷⁵ Wary of the consequences of large gatherings of youth the local government placed riot police near-by in case of disturbances. However, it was not due to the police that the festival was cut short. Instead, it was a contingent of Maoists who forced entry to the festival and demanded that it be free that caused the early closure of the festival.⁷⁶ As a vast number of people were now entering the festival without paying, the organisers were not able to recuperate their costs and were unable to pay the bands their promised fees. This led to

franco-britannique', *Territoires Contemporains*, http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Festivals_societes/F_Tamagne.html (accessed March 8th, 2019).

⁷² Drott, 176.

⁷³ Ibid., 174.

⁷⁴ Florence Tamagne, 'Juvenile Delinquency, Social Unrest and National Anxiety: French Debates and Controversies Over Rock 'n' Roll in the 1960s and 1970s', in G r me Guibert, and Catherine Rudent, (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 35-46 (40).

⁷⁵ Serge Loupien *La France Underground 1965/1979: Free Jazz Et Rock Pop, Le Temps Des Utopies* (Paris, RivagesRouge: 2018), 167.

⁷⁶ Drott, 178.

groups, such as Soft Machine, refusing to play until they were paid in full. Without a full line-up, the festival had no choice but to terminate.⁷⁷

It is events like the *festival de Biot* that the fissures of the countercultural paradox are most exposed. The collapse of the festival was a result of the failure to recuperate costs, which was a consequence of countercultural ideologues refusing to pay to attend the festival. These festivals, even though hosting countercultural bands and appealing to a countercultural demographic, were capitalist enterprises. When the attempt to exist outside of established society went too far, it became impossible to actualise the wishes of the counterculture. Instead of making music free, the Maoists who tore down the barriers at Biot, deprived everyone of the music and consequently increased the inaccessibility they were protesting against.

While in 1969 France was still in awe of the festivals of the Anglo-Saxon counterculture, the summer of 1970 represents a turning point. The initial growing pains that the French rock festival industry faced emerged from both the left and the right. Governmental authorities made it difficult to obtain official permission for festivals to be held and sought to dissuade large gatherings post May '68. New Left agitators sought to make music free and caused festivals to be economically unsustainable. Admittedly, these initial years represent a brief moment of flourishing of the French festival industry and the ambition of these years would not be matched for several years. Despite the initial problems with hosting festivals, the festival industry would grow in France as rock music and the counterculture became more established.

5.2.3 Radio & Television

It is also worth paying attention to the existing infrastructure that groups had for disseminating their own music, beyond festivals and magazines. Broadly, two major factors restricted the development of French rock music: the first was the state monopoly granted to the *Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française*, which restricted popular music's broadcast over television and radio;⁷⁸ second, a slow development of industry interest and a lack of established production and distribution channels meant that French rock and countercultural

⁷⁷ Loupien, 168.

Another account of this can be found in: Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 178.

⁷⁸ G r me Guibert, 'Introduction', in G r me Guibert and Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 1-16 (6).

music had to overcome significant structural issues in order to get its music heard. Over the course of the period looked at there was certainly a trend towards increased access and growing consumption of pop and rock music, of both an international and national variety.

Radio was an incredibly important medium for French youth in the 1960s and 1970s. Thanks to the reduction in price and robustness that the transistor allowed, the radio became pervasive in French society in the 1960s, and, by 1966, 46% of French youth claimed to have their own personal radio.⁷⁹ Yet, the French state held a monopoly on radio in France and, consequently, this limited the amount of rock and countercultural music that was played. This had been an issue for French popular music since the early days of French rock 'n' roll and *yéyé* music in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At this point, the radio station *Europe 1*, which broadcasted from outside of France, became a significant actor in disseminating pop and rock music across France with its defining youth programme *Salut Les Copains*.⁸⁰

France also had access to other pirate stations such as *Radio Luxembourg*, and, as *Rock & Folk's* extensive 19 page article on pirate radio stations shows, there was a clear interest in what these pirate radio stations had to offer.⁸¹ Over the 1960s a few significant developments would take place in regard to radio programming: in 1965 *Pop Club* was created by the state-owned channel *France Inter* that played popular music from the USA and the UK.⁸² This allowed official access to much wider range of music that had involved clandestine listening previously.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s television would also become an increasingly important medium in France. Once again, the state had a monopoly, and this limited the potential exposure that rock and popular music had. One significant consequence of this state monopoly, alongside the relative youth of television as both a technology and a form of media, was the lack of available channels; it was only in 1964 that France received its second channel, and it would not be until 1973 that a third one was created.⁸³ Along with the growth in the number of channels, there was a doubling of the amount of hours of television

⁷⁹ Jean-Jacques Cheval, 'Mai 68, un entre deux dans l'histoire des médias et de la radio en France', *Site Internet du Grer*

http://www.grer2.fr/upload/articles_en_ligne/Mai_68_un_entre_deux_dans_l%5Chistoire_des_medias_et_de_la_radio_en_France.pdf (2009), 1-19 (3).

⁸⁰ Guibert, *La Production de la culture*, 106.

Matthieu Saladin, 'Yéyé Covers or the Keynote to a Societal Adaptation' in G r me Guibert & Catherine Rudent (eds.), *Made in France* (New York & London: Routledge, 2018), 23-34 (28).

⁸¹ Philippe Rault, 'A bord des pirates', *Rock & Folk*, 2 (1966), 31-50.

⁸² Marc Alvarado, *La Chienlit: Le Rock Fran ais et Mai 68 : Histoire D'un Rendez-Vous Manqu * (Paris : Editions Du Layeur, 2018), 304.

⁸³ Guibert, *La Production de la culture*, 126.

programmes available across the 1960s. As both a driver and an outcome of this increased choice, the number of households with a television set rose dramatically from 13.1% in 1960 to 70.4% in 1970.⁸⁴

Considering television choices for seeing rock and countercultural music, there were three main programmes: *Bouton Rouge* was the earliest and started in 1967.⁸⁵ It ran on a tight budget but still managed to attract names that have become canonical, such as Pink Floyd and Cream.⁸⁶ The second show was *Surprise Partie* that began in 1968.⁸⁷ Despite its significance, this programme was stopped in the spring of 1970.⁸⁸ Finally, *Pop 2* first aired on April 30th 1970. This programme showed a large amount of Anglo-Saxon groups but differentiated itself from *Surprise Partie* and *Bouton Rouge* by making a conscious effort to feature French rock and pop groups. Its lifespan was not remarkably different from *Bouton Rouge* or *Surprise Partie*, and it finished in 1973 after 56 episodes.⁸⁹

In January 1970 *Best* dedicated an article to questioning the relationship between popular music and television. This brief article was centred around an interview with a producer, Christophe Izard, from the programme *À L'affiche du Monde*, which featured popular music. Izard argues that most television watchers in France take a dim view of popular music and that he understands his job to be to increase their understanding by presenting popular music as 'not only a musical event, but also as a political and social event'⁹⁰: the French public needed to be educated about popular music, to understand it, in order for it to be appreciated. Consequently, Izard understood the lack of rock and popular music on television as being a direct result of a lack of demand.

Ultimately, countercultural music was to be heard on both French radio and television, even if the offerings on television were relatively slim. Radio was a key technology for disseminating counterculture and popular music due to its portable, affordability, and the presence of pirate radio stations to transmit music that was not getting played on French

⁸⁴ Chris Tinker, *Mixed Messages: Youth Magazine Discourse and Sociocultural Shifts in Salut Les Copains (1962-1976)* (Oxford, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 52-53.

⁸⁵ There were of course more than these three shows; however, they seem to have been the most significant. For more information please see Alvarado, 307.

⁸⁶ Alvarado, 305.

⁸⁷ Briggs' describes the 'surprise party' as a key event in adolescent, particularly female, life. For more information please see: Jonathyne Briggs, 'Sex and the Girl's Single: French Popular Music and the Long Sexual Revolution of the 1960s', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 21/3 (2012), 523-547 (539).

⁸⁸ Alvarado, 306.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 306-307.

⁹⁰ 'non seulement comme un événement musical, mais aussi comme un événement politique et social'. C. B. 'Le Pop et La Television', *Best* 18 (1970), 15 (15).

official stations. Television is unlikely to have been a central in disseminating rock and countercultural music, but it certainly supported other forms of distribution that existed. Due to the state monopoly on television, and the likelihood that televisions were stored in communal use, and thus under the watchful eyes of parents, it was not a device that offered the same sort of individualisation and access to countercultural music that radio offered.

5.3 European Rock

5.3.1 The European Turn

As discussed in chapter 3, from 1971-1973 French countercultural criticism turned its attention towards the emergence of a 'European' popular music. This discourse valorised the musical forms that were seen to be forging an aesthetic identity outside of the paradigm offered by American and British popular music. France was positioned as leading member of this movement, and French popular music was considered to be in a new relationship that placed it in a trans-(western) European, rather than a transatlantic, tripartite. In place of the USA and UK it was France, Germany and, the avant-garde of, the United Kingdom who were leading the way.⁹¹

The European turn emerged alongside a criticism of established counterculture and rock acts. From its inception in 1970 *Actuel* had begun to critique the music industry and the amount of money that the musical representatives of the counterculture were earning.⁹² By 1972 this assessment had intensified: whereas previously bands such as the Rolling Stones had been praised for their rebellious air, these groups were now considered to have stopped progressing musically and to have been co-opted by the music industry.

The rhetoric of the 'European turn' focused on the ascendancy of Europe as the USA was losing its gravity as a countercultural hub and as the European Economic Community (EEC) was expanding.⁹³ Due to the perceived failures of the American counterculture to live up to its own ideals, French countercultural critics placed France, and Europe more widely, as the site in which countercultural ideals could be fully actualised. Christopher Warne notes that the

⁹¹ This did not mean that rock music from the USA no longer had influence in France. Rather, the framework of the European Turn targeted the USA in order to differentiate itself. Outside of this discourse rock music from the USA maintained a high level of interest from French youth.

⁹² Jean-François Bizot, 'L'Argent Pop' *Actuel*, 1 (1970), 12-15.

⁹³ For more information, please see pages 149-158.

countercultural leaders at *Actuel* argued that France's consistent and long-lasting history of leftism would allow an actualisation of the ambitions that the American counterculture held but failed to complete.⁹⁴ The repositioning of potentiality was only buoyed by the growth of the EEC. The expansion of Europe as an economic force undoubtedly fuelled ideas about its ascendancy. In particular, the inclusion of Britain into the EEC confirmed that Europe was the new home of the counterculture and arguments that America, as a countercultural force, was waning.

The defining aesthetic landscape of the European sound was firmly grounded in the rock tradition but broke with American derived musical paradigms and instead sought influence in western art music and avant-garde jazz.⁹⁵ The progenitors of the movement were seen to be the English groups Soft Machine and Pink Floyd. The former was largely praised for its creative use of jazz elements within its music, and Pink Floyd was believed to have successfully incorporated symphonic elements into their music.⁹⁶ Thus the music of this movement was defined not by any rigid definitions or conceptualisations but rather as a broad church that articulated an aesthetic quality that connoted Europeaness.

While the use of western art elements to signify a European aesthetic makes logical sense, due to Europe's claim to be the founder of this tradition, the use of jazz elements to signify Europeaness and to break away with Americanness is somewhat less self-evident. It relies primarily on the argument that Europe was the first continent in which rock and jazz were fused.⁹⁷ Although, we must also take into consideration France's long-history with jazz, the naturalisation process that was occurring at this moment within the French and European free jazz sphere, and the frequent interaction between jazz musicians and progressive rock in France at this moment. All of these events would have contributed to perception that considered the use of jazz, in a certain form, as something distinctly European.

Rhythm was seen as an area of unique European development. According to the critics of *Actuel*, binary rhythm was one element that European music would challenge. While rock and jazz places the emphasis on the second and fourth beat, the writers of the article argue that

⁹⁴ Chris Warne, 'Bringing Counterculture to France: Actuel Magazine and the Legacy of May '68, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 15/3 (2007), 309-323 (319).

⁹⁵ For information of the development of progressive rock as a 'European meta-genre' please see: Chris Anderton, 'A many-headed beast: progressive rock as European meta-genre', *Popular Music*, 29/3 (2010), 417-435.

⁹⁶ See chapter 4, pages 151-154.

⁹⁷ The staff at *Actuel* claim that the first fusion of free jazz and rock was a result of a French-German group called Dr Leary and his amazing free rock band. *Actuel*, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', *Actuel*, 12 (1971), 12-17 (12).

French musical culture has historically emphasised the first and third beat, such as the *bourrée* dance.⁹⁸ The shift to a music based on the first and third beat is an act that reclaims a feeling of a French identity and emphasises a paradigm not defined by African American roots.⁹⁹

The aesthetic of the European turn was consequently radical and, in line with countercultural ideals, was considered to be transformative. The inclusion of avant-garde jazz and contemporary art music practices — atonalism, for example — demonstrates that while the ideological goal of this movement was to recapture a European identity away from American influence, this identity was to exist beyond the confines of music influenced by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. The new European groups were to pick up where their predecessors were perceived to have failed. In 'L'Eur Rock Est Né' *Actuel* praises the 'second generation of rock' (the generation of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, acid rock, and folk rock) for their musical experimentation but observes that they have reached a point where these groups have begun to stagnate.¹⁰⁰ The European turn was to rekindle this radical spirit of musical experimentalism and continue the countercultural quest of challenging established norms.

Of course, as with all discourses, the rhetoric built up around European rock was limited; nevertheless, it had far reaching implications. In its most blatant form, it was limited to two articles across two magazines. Its influence was more widespread in the growing recognition of the importance of other European rock musics.¹⁰¹ The emergence of this discourse certainly did not do much to destabilise the popularity of rock music operating within American defined framework and the rock and countercultural press would continue to devote significant amounts of discussion to these bands. From this point onwards, there can be found an increasing discussion of German, Italian, and French acts. As Christine Lebrun noted, the European Turn was about questioning the hegemony of one form of rock music.¹⁰² The European turn, then, opened up the field of possibilities to include the potential for a rock music, perceived to be authentic, that was not only made in Europe but embodied a European aesthetic.

⁹⁸ Larry Portis reinforces this claim that French music tends to rely on a strong first and third beat Portis, 128.

⁹⁹ *Actuel*, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', *Actuel* 12 (1971), 12-17 (12).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰¹ An increasing amount of articles would appear on other European rock music: Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'Le rock italien', *Actuel* 55 (1975), 37-41.

Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'Le rock allemand, enfin!', *Actuel* 27 (1973), 44-49.

Paul Alessandrini, 'Rock allemand', *Rock & Folk*, 73 (1973), 72-77.

¹⁰² Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marché Commun', *Best* 49 (1973), 72-80 (72).

5.3.2 France and European Rock

In one of the earliest pieces on the emerging European music scene *Actuel* decried the poverty of the rock music that had so-far fertilised the French musical landscape and perpetuated their own narrative that placed French rock music as inferior to the music emerging out of the UK and USA. The authors argue that in the music industry's attempt to create a rock music they have produced 'a music emasculated and degenerated that copies Anglo-Saxon rock but erases all depth'.¹⁰³ Consequently, rock music has never really existed in a French form and, instead, what has been sold to the masses is really a form of the banal genre of light popular music. Most noticeably, what is missing from this pale form of rock is 'authenticity' and 'revolt'.¹⁰⁴

This question of the authenticity of French rock and popular music had been debated since the arrival of rock 'n' roll in France in the late 1950s. It was certainly a prominent issue in the teen magazine *Salut Les Copains* from the early 1960s onwards. While this magazine would embrace many of Anglo-Saxon stars, it also strongly articulated a nationalistic pride. Whether this was claiming that Françoise Hardy was a national treasure or arguing that Johnny Hallyday was likely to be signed by an American major label, *Salut Les Copains* made sure to write France into the international popular music narrative.¹⁰⁵ Yet, the magazine included discussions of Anglo-Saxon artists and would hold panel discussions such as the 1964 panel, 'Rock français ou rock anglo-saxon?'.¹⁰⁶

The founding of *Rock & Folk* in 1966 continued this debate into the realms of rock and counterculture. Despite it being largely devoted to Anglo-Saxon rock, Elisabeth Donato notes that 'the covers of six of its first seven issues featured a French rock or folk star'.¹⁰⁷ Yet, this is not to say that *Rock & Folk* were always firm believers in French rock music. In the initial issue of the magazine an article – *Rock Story* – described the history of rock music. In the closing paragraph, the author, Kurt Mohr, turns to the topic of French rock and states that 'we are still in the stage of imitation'.¹⁰⁸ Regardless, the amount of discussion and space devoted

¹⁰³ 'une musique émasculée et dégénérée qui copie le rock anglo-saxon mais en gomme tout relief'. *Actuel*, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', 12.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Tinker, 2010, 77-78.

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, 330-342.

¹⁰⁷ Donato, 6.

¹⁰⁸ 'nous en sommes encore au stade de l'imitation'.
Quoted in Donato, 7

to French rock and folk stars, such as Michel Polnareff, Johnny Hallyday and Jacques Dutronc, provides evidence that *Rock & Folk* were grappling with the question of French rock and folk music, even if it was not ready to fully throw its weight behind it during these early years.

The discourse around the European Turn marked a shift in perception that demonstrated a musical transformation was occurring in France: while the French rock music of the past was considered something to be ashamed of, the music that was currently being produced in France demonstrated that French music could be as good, if not better, than the music coming out of the Anglo-Saxon world. This success rested on the shoulders of previous bands: ‘the first generation (Triangle, Variations, Zoo) tackled the initial problems and opened the doors’.¹⁰⁹ The role of the ‘second generation’ was to ‘create a new music’.¹¹⁰ The writers argue that, to a large extent, this has been achieved: as mentioned previously, they had identified an array of aesthetic features that articulated a French, and European identity (rhythmic experimentation, influence of art music, influence of jazz); French groups were experiencing unprecedented success; and, ‘the notion of a French band has definitely imposed itself in the midst of the critics and the public’.¹¹¹

Regardless of the potential that is available for French bands as part of the European turn, the critics at *Actuel* did not shy away from the difficulties that were facing French groups. They note that the champions of the European sound were having difficulties earning enough money to sustain themselves. However, they also argue that the French underground has expanded massively in the last two years and while groups may be currently having difficulty earning enough money, the momentum is growing.¹¹² What *Actuel* argues is missing is not the talent or creativity to produce a French rock, but the infrastructure that is required to support it.

According to *Actuel* there were not enough opportunities to perform in France. The critics argue that the musical talent is available in France but ‘not the club, nor the concert halls, nor the universities, nor the festivals offer [French rock groups] the necessary infrastructure.’¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ ‘La première génération (Triangle, Variations, Zoo) a essuyé les plâtres et ouvert des portes’. *Actuel*, ‘L’Eur-Rock Est Né’, 12.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ ‘La notion de groupe français s’est définitivement imposée aux yeux des critiques comme aux yeux du public’. *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 15

¹¹³ ‘Ni les clubs, ni les salles de concert, ni les facs, ni les festivals ne lui offrent une infrastructure suffisante’. *Ibid.*, 13.

The buildings in cities are often unsuitable for electric music, consequently noise complaints were common; universities are seen to be constricted by bureaucracy and a lack of organisers willing to demand that universities host gigs; and festivals of the l'été pop were seen to be a failure due to their inability to make a profit.¹¹⁴

The critics at *Actuel* were right to acknowledge the difficulties that structural issues were causing as the standard music venues in France were not well equipped to deal with rock music. The owner of The Golf Drouot in Paris, which had been a vital part of the early French rock and pop movement in the early 1960s, noted that the massive difference in volume levels from the early 1960s to the early 1970s was a critical issue that dissuaded clubs from amplified rock and pop music. He cited that he spent ten million francs to sufficiently soundproof his venue.¹¹⁵ This high cost of making venues soundproof acted as a deterrent in enabling clubs to be of adequate quality to host amplified music, and the potential market to be gained from doing so was clearly not large enough to warrant this sort of investment.

It was not, however, only structural issues that caused issues with the live music circuit: a variety of political and economic factors were also in play. After a fire at a club in Saint-Laurent-du-Pont in 1970 resulted in 46 deaths, strict safety regulations were put into place. The inability, or reluctance, of clubs to follow these regulations saw many get closed down.¹¹⁶ There was also the risk of disruption caused by either the French police and/or New Left groups. Further, during this period the DJ was becoming an increasingly significant figure in the night-time economy, and nightclub owners tended to prefer DJs due to both their comparative quietness and cost-effectiveness in relation to bands.¹¹⁷ A wide variety of dynamics came into play that made the underground or countercultural live music venues difficult to sustain.

Actuel was positive about the prospects of a French music and in 1972 published the article 'Exit Les Superstars', making abundantly clear the importance they were ascribing to

¹¹⁴ While *Actuel* notes that these festivals lost money, there are only hints that political agitation was to blame. References to fare-dodgers and the potential for violence are the only allusions. This is not entirely surprising due to *Actuel*'s leftist stance; however, it does indicate the limits of *Actuel*'s analysis of the situation.

Following on from 'L'Eur Rock Est Né', another *Actuel* published in 1972 by Jean-Pierre Lentin, would expose the continued difficulty that French groups would experience when trying to make a living. He argued that even a year later the larger groups, Magma and Gong, struggled to get enough to their concerts in order to break even.

Jean-Pierre Lentin 'La vie difficile des groupes français', *Actuel* 25 (1972), 30-31.

¹¹⁵ Alvarado, 136.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Guibert, 154.

France and Europe. The background image of the article features a rising sun and a cockerel midway through crowing in a new day (figure 14). The significance is evident: the rising sun connotes a sense of optimism and opportunity and the cockerel is the symbolic representation of the French nation. The crowing cockerel is a metaphor for France's leading role in heralding in a new countercultural era. Alongside this pictorial representation of France's vanguard role, *Actuel* continued to reinforce the idea that Europe was the new countercultural centre, stating that ' [t]he centre of [countercultural] activity is moving towards continental Europe, where the energy is still fresh'.¹¹⁸ This continued belief in the ascendancy of the European counterculture shows that the European Turn was more than just a moment and had assimilated itself into the discourse surrounding French counterculture and music.



Figure 14: Cockerel in front of rising sun in *Actuel*, 'Exit Les Superstars', *Actuel* (1972).¹¹⁹

While France was positioned as leading the way for the European Turn it was subject to various internal difficulties. The potential of French bands had clearly been identified and the Europeanist ideological framework constructed French groups as legitimate actors within the counterculture arena. Yet, there remained an issue with the actualisation of this potential due to the variety of structural problems the country faced. This period represents a point when the aspirations of the French countercultural scene outreached the practical possibilities.

¹¹⁸ 'Le centre des activités se déplace vers l'Europe continentale, là où l'énergie est encore fraîche'. *Actuel*, 'Exit Les Superstars', *Actuel* 19 (1972), 2-6 (3).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

5.3.3 Magma and Ange

As Briggs notes ‘progressive rock was the genre of choice of the French underground’ due to its ability to create a sense of community that crossed class divides.¹²⁰ For many of the same reasons, it was progressive rock that was seen to be championing the European turn. The malleability of the genre allowed it to include a range of musical influences, including that of the western art music canon. Combined with an ideological grounding in romanticism, and a sense of a similar aesthetic question across the continent, progressive rock offered a vehicle for articulating a European identity.¹²¹

Magma were one group repeatedly used, by contemporary journalists, as evidence of the maturation of France’s rock scene.¹²² Formed in 1969, Magma became one of the most influential bands of the French underground. Not only did they find success in France but were successful abroad.¹²³ Magma’s music mixed jazz, art music, and rock music into the formidable progressive rock identity of Zeuhl. Beyond their musical innovations, a particularly unique aspect of their vision was the creation of a science fiction dystopian narrative and the invention of a language created in order to tell it. This narrative centres around a dystopian future and an exploration into space in order to seek a solution for Earth’s ecology.

The experimentation with science fiction influences was not uncommon amongst French progressive groups, although Magma’s investment in their story arc was quite unique.¹²⁴ As a genre science fiction was taken quite seriously and in many ways narratives, such as Magma’s, tied into contemporary countercultural concerns about the environment and anti-

¹²⁰ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 79.

¹²¹ For more information on the emergence of progressive rock across Europe, see Chris Anderton, ‘A many-headed beast: progressive rock as European meta-genre’, *Popular Music* 29/3 (2010), 417-435.

¹²² For more information on Magma please see: Klaus Blasquiz, *Au Coeur Du Magma* (Marseille: Le Mot et Le Reste, 2013).

Philippe Gonin, *Magma: Décryptage d’un mythe et d’une musique* (Marseille : Le Mot et Let Rest, 2014).

Antoine De Caunes, *Magma*, (Paris: Albin Michel/Rock & Folk 1978 [2000]).

Kevin Holm-Hudson, ‘Apocalyptic Otherness: Black Music and Extraterrestrial Identity in the Music of Magma’, *Popular Music and Society*, 26/4 (2003).

¹²³ Magma had several international tours and even toured the USA in 1973 and the UK in 1974.

Klaus Blasquiz, *Au Coeur Du Magma*, 97-104 & 210-212.

¹²⁴ Briggs, ‘The Pot Head Pixies: Drug Utopias in the Music of Gong, 1968-1974’, *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs*, 23/1 (2008), 6-23 (12).

Jonathyne Briggs, ‘Retrofuturism in French Electronic Music’, *popmatters*, <https://www.popmatters.com/retrofuturism-in-french-electronic-music-2495420493.html> (accessed 30 September, 2019).

authoritarian modes of living.¹²⁵ Due to its transnational, and even trans-planetal, narrative, it also helps situate Magma as a band that transcends national boundaries. At the same time, the importance of science fiction as a genre for France tied Magma's narrative into a national imaginary. This mixture of the transnational and the national would have undoubtedly contributed to the image of Magma as not only a French band but as a champion of European music.

In an article on Magma, embedded in the 'L'eur rock est né', the band are praised as 'the biggest hope of French rock',¹²⁶ and commended for having achieved a sound that 'completely belongs to them'.¹²⁷ This statement came out in 1971, only two years after Magma had formed, and is a potent recognition of their ability to develop a distinctive aesthetic. A few years later in *Best's* 'Rock Du Marche Commun' Magma were equally praised for their originality and placed within the framework of the European turn.¹²⁸ Notably, the writer, whilst recounting his first experience of hearing Magma in early 1970s, comments that the concert had left an imprint in their mind equal to their first experience of seeing The Who live in 1965 and Soft Machine live in 1967. Through this comparison the author moves beyond the narrative of the inferiority of French music and stresses that French music has the potential to be as equally life changing as any music emanating from the Anglo-Saxon world.

When considering the larger discourse surrounding the European turn it is clear that it was Magma's use of influences from avant-garde jazz and the western art tradition that placed them within a suitably compatible aesthetic frame. After all, the articles that focused on the European Turn explicitly identified such elements as defining features of the movement.¹²⁹ Taking 'Mëkanik Kömmandöh' from Magma's 1973 album *Mëkanik Dëstruktïw Kömmandöh* (MDK) as an example it is possible to hear a wide range of influences in the way that the song

¹²⁵ In their book *L'effet science-fiction*, sociologists Igor and Grichka Bogdanoff demonstrate that not only was there a significant interest in science fiction in 1970s France, but there was also a tendency to assign a societal role to the genre. Further, Arthur Evans argues that in the political upsurge following May '68 a more concrete belief in the political importance of science fiction began to take hold. Igor Bogdanoff, & Grichka Bogdanoff, *L'effet Science-Fiction* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1979). Arthur Evans, 'Science Fiction in France: A Brief History', *Science Fiction Studies*, 16/3 (1989), 254-276 (262).

¹²⁶ 'Le plus grand espoir du rock français'.

Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'Magma', *Actuel* 12 (1971), 13 (13).

¹²⁷ 'qui lui appartient totalement'.

Actuel, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', *Actuel* 12 (1971), 12-17 (13).

¹²⁸ Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', *Best* 49 (1973), 72-80 (75-76)

¹²⁹ Actuel, 'L'Eur-Rock Est Né', 13.

transgresses and transverse genre boundaries.¹³⁰ The use of electric guitar, bass guitar, and drum kit place the group within a rock band framework. The saxophone and some of the melodic lines (sections A2 & B5) suggest a strong jazz influence. ‘Mëkanik Kömmandöh’s’ departure from simple forms for a more complicated arrangement breaks from rock and jazz normative arrangements and signifies a shift towards the world of western art music. Further, many have noted the comparison between Magma’s aesthetic on MDK and that of the work of the modernist composer Carl Orff.¹³¹ Magma’s work integrated all the various elements that these critics believed to be essential in the creation of a European aesthetic.

Time (4:09)	‘Mekanik Kommandoh’
0:00	Intro
0:40	A
0:40	A1
0:48	A2
0:58	A1
1:08	A3
1:17	Reappearance of intro
1:42	Interlude
1:51	B
1:51	B1
2:00	B2
2:09	B3
2:18	B4
2:26	B5
2:36	Guitar Solo
2:54	B6
3:12	C
3:12	C1
3:32	C2
3:44	Outro

Table 12: Analysis of Magma’s ‘Mekanik Kommandoh’ (Seventh Records, 2015 [Originally released in 1973]).

¹³⁰ Magma, ‘Mekanik Kommandoh’, *Mekanik Destruktiw Kommandoh* (Seventh Records, 2015). This analysis draws from a similar analysis conducted during my master’s research. Ruairidh Patfield, *Countercultural Capital & Magma: The Pluralism of the French Counterculture* (Master’s Thesis: Newcastle University, 2016).

¹³¹ Philippe Gonin, ‘Deciphering a creative process: Magma and *Mëkanik Déstruktïw Kömmandöh*’ https://www.academia.edu/25885224/MAGMA_MDK_EDINBURGH_PAPER_WORK_IN_PROGRESS (accessed 24th May 2019).

Instruments
Guitar
Bass Guitar
Drumkit
Marimba
Male Vocals
Backing Vocals
Bass Clarinet
Brass

Table 12.1: Instruments in 'Mekanik Kommandoh' (Seventh Records, 2015 [Originally released in 1973]).

Another group identified by *Best* as central members of the European turn were Ange. Formed in late 1969, the trajectory of Ange's career started to rise in 1971 when they won a fierce competition, at the famous Golf Drouot venue, for a recording contract with Philips.¹³² Even at this point, despite a level of amateurism, the critic Jacques Chabiron commented on the originality of their output. Notwithstanding their tendency to write long songs that departed from standard pop music paradigms, Ange found notable popularity in France and even toured with Johnny Hallyday.¹³³

Jean-Paul Commin and Christine Lebrun note that Ange come from outside of Paris and, as a result, have a different perspective than those groups congregating around Paris.¹³⁴ Perhaps, inspired by the nascent folk revival, they suggest that 'hope is reborn in the decentralisation of rock, in the possibility of a provincial solution.'¹³⁵ Commun and Lebrun state that although Ange have been influenced by the British group King Crimson by the release of their 1972 album *Caricatures* they had found a sound that was uniquely theirs. It is Ange's blend of elements within their music that Commun and Lebrun particularly consider to be successful: '[the] balance between rhythm and melody, between vocals and instrumental sections (one does not overwhelm the other as is so often the case), a general balance between the five units that truly merit to be baptised a group'.¹³⁶ The success of Ange comes down to their ability to push musical boundaries while still remaining listenable to a large public.

¹³² Jacques Chabiron, 'La Victoire D'Ange', *Rock & Folk*, 55 (1971), 11-12 (11-12).

¹³³ In 1972 Johnny Hallyday would ambitiously tour France with the 'Johnny Hallyday Circus'. This was an event of extraordinary proportions that included a tent that could seat 5000, 140 people in the entourage (Technicians, performers, etc) and 60 vehicles. Loupien, 232.

¹³⁴ Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', *Best* 49 (1973), 72-80 (75).

¹³⁵ 'l'espoir renaît dans la décentralisation du rock, dans une possibilité de solution provinciale'. Ibid., 72.

¹³⁶ 'équilibre entre le compartiment rhythm et le compartiment mélodie, équilibre entre le secteur

Ange demonstrated that it was possible to exist in a contradictory space within a countercultural logic, as they were commercially successful and rooted in an aesthetic defined by the counterculture. Ange's music follows a similar countercultural logic, in that it provided a challenge through its conflation of high and low arts, as was typical of progressive rock groups. However, the counterculture was heterogenous and, as Briggs argues, this contradiction was too much for certain sectors of the counterculture; *Actuel*, for example, do not devote any large articles to the group.¹³⁷ For others, such as *Rock & Folk* and *Best*, Ange's success came from the skill and musical taste demonstrated by the group and represented a triumph of countercultural aesthetics.

Time (13:43)	'Caricatures'
0:00	Opening – Theatrical vocals/monologue
1:15	A: Vocals end, and organ enters
2:02	Bridge: band enter
2:20	B: Full band playing together (no vocals)
3:01	C: Synthesisers and bass with light percussion. Occasional guitar interruptions
3:50	D: Organ takes lead melody
4:25	E: Full band together with the organ taking lead melody
5:08	F: Focus is on organ and drums with some hints of guitar and vocals
7:02	H: Classical piano lead that organ then takes over
8:25	I: Vocals enter above the full band
9:45	J: Reiteration of opening vocals over band
11:58	Fade out

Table 13 Analysis of Ange's 'Caricatures' (Philips, 1972).

Ange's music aligns with the European turn due to their use of influences from the western art tradition. The title track of *Caricatures* is one notable example of Ange's desire to experiment with forms and push the boundaries of popular.¹³⁸ Lasting 13:43 minutes 'Caricatures' spans a duration well beyond anything that could be considered radio friendly. Given the length of 'Caricatures' the form is more complex than the standard rock or pop song and is largely through-composed. The complicated form and extended length are accompanied by long instrumental sections and relatively few segments that contain vocals. When vocals do appear, they often take the part of a theatrical, nonsensical monologue, rather than a sung verse or a chorus. Ange's success comes from ability to mix high and low music into a mildly

vocal et le secteur instrumental (l'un n'érasant pas l'autre comme trop souvent) équilibre général entre les cinq unités de ce qui mérite vraiment d'être baptisé group'.

Jean-Paul Commin & Christine Lebrun, 'Le Rock Du Marche Commun', *Best* 49 (1973), 72-80 (76).

¹³⁷ Briggs, *Sounds French*, 80.

¹³⁸ Ange, 'Caricatures', *Caricatures* (Philips, 1972).

challenging, but still accessible, sound. The art influence expresses a French and European identity, while the rock influence makes places it within the framework of counterculture.

Throughout the period covered, Ange would continue to experiment with mixing popular and art forms. While few individual pieces would reach the length of ‘Caricatures’, they frequently explored the use of instrumental sections and the inclusion of elements of music from the European art music canon. Ultimately, this experimentation with European art music and narrative ideas allowed an articulation of an identity that was felt to not only represent France, but also a much wider notion of Europe.

The sound of the French groups championed as part of the European Turn were quite varied and reinforced that, musically, the European Turn was a broad church, that included a plurality of sounds and musical approaches. It is also worth noting that neither Magma or Ange were particularly politically active.¹³⁹ This translates more widely to the European Turn; the movement was thin on any discourse that discussed political agitation. It is now because these groups can embody something French, something European that they become significant.

5.4 Conclusion

The emergence and growth of the French rock industry across the 1960s and into the 1970s was driven by aesthetic and ideological desires. Across the 1960s, France had been experiencing an influx of sounds and ideas from across the Atlantic and the Channel. Combined with French perceptions about the nature of both these countries, this music would lead to the formation of a French rock community and the emergence of French rock artists. From 1966 onwards France would develop its own rock press and would experience its first home-grown rock stars. Ultimately, it would take until the 1970s for the French rock movement to really take off. The emergence and success of French groups such as Magma and Ange; the ideological justification of a sound distinct from USA models of popular music; and the structural developments that facilitated the creation, production, and performance of the music would set the French rock industry in a good place by 1975.

¹³⁹ Magma did identify as leftists, but they were openly against militarism and saw their creativity output as a political act. At points their political nature was commented on by critics; however, for the majority of critics it was Magma’s innovative sound, rather than political ideology that caught their attention.

Ruairidh Patfield, *Countercultural Capital & Magma: The Pluralism of the French Counterculture* (Master’s Thesis: Newcastle University, 2016), 49.

The development of French rock's musical development across the 1960s into the 1970s was dependant on the emergence of a transnational youth culture centred around the consumption of pop and rock culture. This chapter has shown that it is important to ask not only 'what is French rock music?' but also 'what is French rock music in relation to English or American rock music?' was a significant question. Considering Prato's pop modernity, it is clear that the desire to be part of a transnational community was a crucial factor across the period looked at. Yet, it does not go as far to explain the perceived need to develop a national sound that emerged in the critical discourse of the rock and counterculture press.¹⁴⁰

Rock's foreignness often made it politically and culturally attractive to the French counterculture. The consumption of a non-national culture with connotations of rebellion imbued rock music with utility. This music stood in opposition to the societally friendly sounds of *yéyé* and encouraged the formation of a youth identity distinct from the *copains* and at a transnational level. Combined with the ideological implications of consuming music associated with drugs, sex, and anti-establishment positions the foreignness of rock allowed it to be positioned in opposition to national values.

The utility of foreign rock had its limits and national variants were seen to be better able to express the French countercultural context. Two critical approaches can be found that sought to define what French music was or would be: the first was ideological and sought to state what French music would do and focused little on how it would sound. Particularly through the eyes of Paul Alessandrini this meant that French bands would be disruptive in both their aesthetics and actions; the second was aesthetic and argued that, in order to create a French rock music, groups would have to make use of French (and European) cultural heritage. In both cases a need for change was emphasised and this change had to draw from the cultural and political heritage of France.

The development of a French rock music did not displace American or British rock. Rather, it existed in conjunction with it. This is true across the period examined as French rock was never the only rock discussed in *Rock & Folk*, *Best*, or *Actuel*. In part this is inevitably a result of the few French rock groups that existed compared to British or American groups. However, it was also an enacting of the transnational community that rock music promised. If it was relatively difficult for these bands to share a stage (although they sometimes did), it was possible to place them within the same edition of a magazine. In this

¹⁴⁰ Prato's theory deals specifically with cover songs and was not designed to deal with this question.

way these magazines collapsed geographic distance and made material the connection that French youth felt with their colleagues in other countries.

Admittedly, the development of French rock was, at points, positioned in opposition to American rock music. The European turn marks a crucial moment for this discourse. Simultaneously to its anti-American stance, French rock was attached to an idea of Europe. Consequently, the French rock community was still considered to be part of some sort of larger movement. The sense of commonality that Prato's pop-modernity promises was not abandoned but rather re-calibrated. It seemed as if the rock communities of Germany and the UK had more in common, had more shared, with France than the rock community of the USA, which was seen to be losing its way.

The 1970s saw the assertion of a French rock music identity; one that was both independently defined and connected to the wider world. With the development of a discourse questioning French rock and countercultural music, French youth were no longer only a passive consumer of pop modernity but were an active participant in its enactment. Instead of only experiencing this modernity through originals and covers, pop modernity offered an alternative way of experiencing a sense of sharedness and dialogue. While some of the countercultural spirit would dissipate from 1975 onwards, these years had a lasting influence on French rock music due to the way they produced a critical discourse around music, a structure to support music, and a community to create and consume music

Chapter 6: Les Chemins de la Contre-Culture

Within this thesis I have considered the ways in which French musical counterculture was constructed in relation to emerging rock music scenes and countercultures developing elsewhere in the world. In particular, the countercultural communities of the UK, USA, and Europe were important for the manifestation of the French countercultural discourse on music. As I have argued, the discourse that emerged around other countercultures provided utility for the French counterculture through offering points of identification and/or differentiation. Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis has been to gain an understanding of the importance of counterculture as a transnational phenomenon for the French movement.

A fundamental set of related themes within this study is that of attraction, reception and response: What causes a group of people to be interested in a movement occurring elsewhere in the world? What does it prove to them? How is that interest expressed and articulated? Finally, what sort of responses emerge as a consequence of an engagement with sounds from elsewhere? These questions are vitally important as the Spanish musicologist Isabelle Marc notes that ‘what music means is determined by its cultures of production, distribution and reception’.¹ Considering these themes gives an insight into the dialogue that the French counterculture saw itself having with external countercultures. It also allows an elucidation of the layers of construction and fantasies that were woven into the French perception of their counterparts.

6.1 Lost and Gained in Translation

The standard narrative of the dissemination of popular culture into France is one that sees French popular culture of the 1960s and early 1970s as a poor imitation of the then-contemporary popular culture in, primarily, the USA but also the UK. David Looseley argues that it was with the growth of punk music in France that the French critics began to take rock music seriously: ‘[t]his DIY aesthetic [of punk] seems eventually to have released French pop from its self-imposed ‘colonial’ treadmill, showing it how to appropriate styles and evolve its own permutations and meanings. The first of these was a more authentic rock’.² This is due

¹ Isabelle Marc, ‘Travelling Songs: on Popular Music Transfer and Translation’, *IASPM@Journal*, 5/2 (2015), 3–21 (5).

² David Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France: Authenticity, Politics, Debate* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003), 46.

to punks individualisation, reliance on primitive materials and training, as well as the international success that several groups had.³

Kristin Ross, in *May '68 and Its Afterlives* argues for the inauthenticity of the French counterculture: '[u]nlike the United States and England, countries that saw flourishing and inventive countercultural developments in music, during the 1960s and 1970s, French countercultural forms after 1968 were largely imported'.⁴ While Ross does go on to celebrate the creativity that would occur in intellectual fields post May '68, she is dismissive of the importance of music and sees it as an element of the decline of political activity within Europe that was lacking in authenticity and creativity.⁵ Yet, a narrative assuming that the music of French counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s was inauthentic or imported is riddled with holes. It assumes that the French counterculture blindly consumed American and British culture and that its own forms of countercultural production were impotent.

It is true that a sense that the French counterculture was inferior to the British or American counterculture was far from uncommon in the then-contemporary discourse I have analysed throughout this text. It is important that this feeling of inferiority is recognised, and, stemming from these texts, there are many logical paths that would then lead to an analysis of French counterculture music of this era as imitative. However, whilst we have to take this then-contemporary narrative into account, scholarship has a role to reassess and reconsider its subject of choice. I have sought to consider the motivations and contexts that led French countercultural music to emerge in the way that it did, rather than comparing the manifestation of French countercultural music against its British and American counterparts; taking such a view will undoubtedly promote a view of the object of consideration as unique. Nevertheless, the view articulated throughout this text offers a counternarrative to any assumptions about imitation. It suggests that a deeper level analysis allows for a more nuanced consideration of outcomes and interactions.

6.1.1 *Passeurs*, Mediation, Differentiation

The French relationship with the USA and UK was based on historical perspectives on each country, as well as contemporary political and cultural shifts. Distance was necessarily

³ Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France*, 46-47.

⁴ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 13.

⁵ Ibid.

involved, and this relationship was actively mediated through cultural goods, such as recordings, and dispatches from journalists. This process of mediation was vital and has been a central point of consideration within this study. Within the French language, this crucial role is captured in the term *passeur* or *passeur culturel*. Marc Alvarado, noting the importance of music during the late 1960s and early 1970s, has stressed the importance of musical mediation in his argument that music was a '*passeur* for countercultural ideals'.⁶

For the anglophone reader the term *passeur* is likely to carry little significance. Consequently, it is worth exploring the concept further, not only to make sense of Alvarado's argument but to gain a deeper understanding of the role that music played in connecting cultures during the French counterculture of 1966-1975. In English *passeur* literally translates as a ferryman or a smuggler; however, in terms of culture, a *passeur culturel*, there are variety of related definitions: from 'intermediary' to 'mediator' to 'transmission agent'.⁷ A *passeur* can be a person, a group, or even an object. They can act as conscious, or unconscious agents.⁸ A *passeur* can be either a national or foreign citizen, and they can either share national or foreign content. Culture has to be transmitted from person to person, from generation to generation, and people such as journalists, historians, teachers, all play vital roles in the sharing of this knowledge. Alvarado is consequently arguing that music, as a *passeur*, played a central role in not only disseminating counterculture ideas but helping them make sense and become meaningful across cultural communities

Looking at the various adaptations of Anglo-Saxon records discussed in this study provides an ample body of evidence to showcase the profound mediatory effect that these records held. Translation clearly plays a pivotal role in any form of mediation, as they re-write a text within a new cultural context. As such, translators are powerful example of the *passeur culturel*.⁹ This is equally true of those involved in the translation and adaptation of songs, as they ferry a song or text from one culture and re-defined it within another culture. However, there are other agents involved in the process of the adaptation of the song that act as *passeurs*. Everyone from the record cover artist to the musician helps mediate a certain

⁶ C'est bien la musique qui joue le rôle de passeur pour les idées contre-culturelles'. Marc Alvarado, *La Chienlit: Le Rock Français et Mai 68 : Histoire d'un Rendez-Vous Manqué* (Paris : Editions Du Layeur, 2018), 41.

⁷ A full list of alternative definitions in French is given by Diana Cooper-Richet: 'Un 'passeur culturel', auparavant appelé 'intermédiaire', 'médiateur', 'agent de transmission, de diffusion, de liaison', voire de 'courrier de transmission'.

Diana Cooper-Richet, 'Transferts culturels et passeurs de culture dans le monde du livre (France-Brésil, XIX siècle)', *Patrimônio e Memória*, 9/1 (2013), 128-14 (131).

⁸ Cooper-Richet, 'Transferts culturels', 131.

⁹ Ibid.

image that contributes to a way of imagining another culture or time. Johnny Hallyday's brief foray into hippiedom with *San Francisco* was quite explicit in doing this through not only the process of translation and re-contextualisation involved but also through the travel-effect of the song.¹⁰ In the case of Hugues Aufray's adaptations of Dylan, he shares something of the American folk revival with France.¹¹ Or in Julien Clerc's adaptation of 'Laissons entre le soleil' from Hair, Clerc helps mediate hippiedom to the French.¹²

Record stores are another good example of a *passeur* dealing with both national and international material.¹³ They act as mediators between the public and music. The layout of the shop, the stock that is held, and any recommendations given by staff all play a crucial role in how the customer goes about purchasing music.¹⁴ Similarly, records, tours of foreign artists, national artists within a same topology, all act as *passeurs* in a variety of aspects and to differing degrees. They are all involved in mediating a counterculture to the French public. In terms of the French counterculture, the role of critics cannot be stressed enough. Whether they were commenting on American, British, or French events, critics acted as intermediaries letting their readership know about countercultural musicians, music, and musical moments.¹⁵

Through the *passeurs* the French counterculture engaged with ideas emerging from these nations. Engagement, however, does not equate to acceptance. The French counterculture was equally invested in a practice of rejecting, critiquing, and modifying these ideas. Part of this transformation occurred through the representations that the *passeurs* put forward; yet those receiving the images and the interpretations that they made of these ideas and sounds were equally important. Music's role as a tool of fantasy construction cannot be underestimated in these cases. Considering the power of imported records Susam-Sarajeva Sebnam noted that '[n]on-translation in the case of music allows the imagination more leeway'.¹⁶ It is as if the gaps in understanding allow the opportunity for significations to emerge that are more closely

¹⁰ For a full analysis of this song, please see pages 63-70.

Johnny Hallyday, 'San Francisco', *San Francisco* (Philips, 1967).

¹¹ Aufray, *Chant Dylan* (Barclay, 1965).

¹² Julien Clerc, 'Laissons Entrer Le Soleil', *Hair* (Odeon, 1969).

¹³ Unfortunately, this study did not find any relevant material about the role of record stores as *passeurs* in France during the period covered. This would be a fruitful area of future study and would likely require interviewing former record store employees and purchasers of records.

¹⁴ A very similar argument is made by Cooper-Richet about bookshops: Diana Cooper-Richet, 'Transferts culturels et passeurs de culture dans le monde du livre (France-Brésil, XIX siècle)', *Patrimônio e Memória*, 9/1 (2013), 128-14 (132).

¹⁵ Critics were well aware of this role, and several actively complained about the lack of knowledge of their subject in France, thereby claiming that they were in a privileged position; that they are the most important *passeurs*.

¹⁶ Susam-Sarajeva Sebnam, 'Translation and Music', *The Translator*, 14/2 (2008), 187-200 (192)

related to the listener's lived experience. Consequently, the listener's understanding of the singer's origin nation or city plays a role, the listener's understanding of melodic patterns plays a role, so does the listener's relationship with particular vocal sounds, and so on. Non-translation, then, allows the possibility of creating a special layering of meaning as the listener has to work harder in their interpretive role.

Translation is equally potent. In these instances, a lot of the interpretive labour has been done by the various *passeurs* involved. Yet, while these examples may not allow for as much scope for the imagination, in terms of interpretation, they allow other processes to be put into action. They make these songs or styles feel much closer to home and help foster a sense of inclusion. In particular, these sources are of great use to the musicologist or historian as they reveal, to an extent, the ways in which music, and its extra-musical semiotics, were imagined to function at the time.

Building on the idea of the mixture of reality and fantasy that is unavoidable in the national Other, another core concept put forward by Edward Said is that 'imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away'.¹⁷ In other words, historical and geographic distance are often imbued with an element of fantasy that crucially serves to construct the Self (the one who is fantasising about the distant place). Thus, the national Other is defined by what we imagine about the characteristics of the place they occupy.

Considering the role of the *passeur* allows for a great level of reflection on the ways in which nations engage with music. It demonstrates that just because something appears imitative from the outside, it is not devoid of meaning, thought, or creativity. This also applies to the dynamic between the counterculture and the mainstream. Throughout this text I highlighted the paradox that the mainstream French music industry, which the French musical counterculture was supposedly positioned against, was heavily involved in spreading countercultural ideas, admittedly in their own fashion. When the music industry insider Johnny Hallyday adapts Scott McKenzie or Jimi Hendrix, he acts as a *passeur* and allows entry points for his listener to explore countercultural ideas and musics. Thus, in many ways the adoption of countercultural symbols by the French mainstream music industry was an integral part of counterculture establishing itself within France. If these songs did not belong to the counterculture, they at least made the public aware that the counterculture existed.

¹⁷ Edward Said W, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 55.

6.1.2 *Passeurs* and the French counterculture

This importance of the *passeur*, the translation of cultures, and the engagement of fantasy can be seen across the chapters of this book. In the opening chapter on the French engagement with hippiedom, the French counterculture is in its infancy and the American one is just about to reach its peak. France is caught within a historic love-hate relationship, which sees it both marvelling at the advancements made in the USA and concerned about its implications for France. The distance between these nations, both culturally and geographically, meant that in order to fit within a French framework American hippiedom had to be reconfigured as both of America and against it.

A similar process can be seen in the second chapter, where the French folk revival was imagined by the French counterculture in way that allowed it to fit into a countercultural framework. The myth of the peasant and the perceived authenticity of the rural articulated a stance against the modernity and the urban. The rural citizen was transformed into a symbol of 'natural' living and authenticity; an Arcadian embodiment of utopian pre-industrial and pre-modern life. Further, an identification with, or at the very least an awareness of, the various regional struggles in France enhanced this sense of oppositionality by attaching cultural politics to a more tangible political cause.

Chapter three sees the *passeur* connect France to its historic frenemy the United Kingdom. At the start of the period considered Britain is conceived as a largely conservative, and rather dull, nation; although, it is believed to have its kinky side. Due to the explosion of the Beatles, Jane Birkin, and the great many rock bands, such as Soft Machine, that emerged out of the UK in this period, Britain developed an alternative identity; an identity that was still very much linked to existing stereotypes of Britishness, but one that was also exciting, vibrant, and, most importantly, cool.

These three chapters, in many ways, demonstrate Anahid Kassabian's idea of 'distributed tourism'. Through this concept Kassabian explains how world music allows the listener to experience a form of tourism that allows the 'there' – the location that the music is supposed to evoke – to be explored from the 'here' – the location of the listener.¹⁸ As Alvarado argued, music was a *passeur* for the French counterculture, it allowed the listener to experience countercultural ideals and feel connected to other countercultural communities: in chapter 1

¹⁸ Anahid Kassabian, 'Would You Like Some World Music with your Latte? Starbucks, Putumayo, and Distributed Tourism', *Twentieth century Music*, 1/2 (2004), 209–223 (216–222).

this connection was with the American hippie; in chapter 2 this connection is with the French rural citizen; and in chapter 3 this connection is with the British counterculture. Music's power to collapse geography and allow a level of fantasy was consequently crucial for forming these connections.

Finally, chapter five demonstrates that the role of the *passeur* and the importance of translating culture is something that did not only take place within the French counterculture's approach to its various Others (the British counterculture, the American counterculture, and the French folk revival) but were also crucial processes in constructing a sense of national consciousness in the counterculture. This is clearly seen in the various discussions on what a 'French' music truly was and then again in the insertion of France into the European turn. Ultimately, it was through this process of transcultural translation carried out by the *passeurs* and the French countercultural community that the French counterculture could create itself. Through recreating images within a framework based upon historical relationships and contemporary events, the French counterculture emerged not through imitation, but through dialogue and self-reflection. Indeed, Éric Deshayes and Dominique Grimaud, in contrast to Ross, see the result of this process as one of originality and creativity as they argue that: 'to emancipate itself from Anglo-Saxon models and French chanson, the creators [of French rock] had no other choice than to develop a [counterculture].'¹⁹ This musical counterculture positioned itself in opposition to the French musical establishment and, it is their view that, the French counterculture symbolised a move away from Anglo-Saxon paradigms.

6.2 Areas for Future Discussion

Like all studies, this thesis suggests many possible future areas of research. I was, in part, inspired to write this text out of a desire to learn more about this period than I could find in the currently available literature. Ultimately, this desire to dive deeper into the subject of French counterculture and music has only grown more intense throughout the writing process. While I have endeavoured to contextualise each of my musical topics in social and cultural contexts, each chapter of this text could be a full research project itself. As a brief example, the first chapter of this text that deals with hippiedom could be complimented with research

¹⁹ 'Pour s'émanciper des modèles anglo-saxon et de la chanson française, les créateurs n'ont d'autre choix que développer une contre-culture'. Éric Deshayes, & Dominique Grimaud, *L'Underground Musical En France*, (Marseille: Le Mot et Le Reste, 2013), 9.

into hippiedom's reception in mainstream youth press, a more in-depth discussion of hippiedom in French literature, its representation in film, and a greater discussion on generational concerns about the movement. To do so would have required that I step away from the domain of music and require access to a vast archive of alternative sources.

Staying within the domain set out in this text, there is the potential for different sets of sources to compliment this research. I have largely relied on analyses of the discourse present in the French countercultural and rock press, as well as analyses of contemporary music and album artwork. These sources have many benefits: the first is practicality, these sources are available to find in libraries, music shops, or online; the second, is that critics and musicians play a formational role in the development of discourse; finally, these two sources allow a level of cross-referencing, allowing a testing of ideas across domains. Of course, these sources inevitably leave out certain narratives and voices. As magazines and music privilege critics and musicians, they neglect the viewpoint of their listeners, readers, and fans.²⁰ One area of future research that would greatly enrich this study would be to engage in ethnographic research and talk to members of the French public who are old enough to remember this moment of history.

On a more general level, there are bigger and wider issues that require further study. I have spent a reasonable amount of time considering the European turn in relation to France and the French view on England. A logical extension of this narrative would have been to consider the way that other European countries were viewed in this framework. In particular, Germany received a lot of attention and was considered as a key player within the European turn.²¹ To go even further, a consideration of the French counterculture's musical relationship with other European countries, outside of the European turn, would also have been revealing of the way in which the French counterculture situated itself transnationally. While these relations were minor compared to that of the USA, UK, or even Germany, there is discussion of the music of Scandinavian countries, other Francophone countries, and Italy. This would have further stressed the importance of Europe as a countercultural centre in the first half of the 1970s.²²

²⁰ Magazines do have correspondent pages, but these are relatively short.

²¹ A relatively large number of articles were published on the German rock movement. Some of the larger articles include: Paul Alessandrini, 'Rock allemand', *Rock & Folk*, 73 (1973), 72-77. Rolf Ulrich Kayser & Paul Alessandrini, 'Outre-Rhin Outre-Rock', *Actuel* 12 (1971), 18-19. Jean-Pierre Lentin, 'Le rock allemand, enfin !', *Actuel* 27 (1973), 44-49.

²² The information on these relationships is rather limited within the sources I have examined in the course of researching for this text. Such a study would require additional sources on top of the material

My final suggestion for areas of future research would be that the British and American views on French music could be included. However, beyond a few rare examples, it does not seem that French bands had significant impact in these nations. This did not mean that they did not have any impact, and it would be a useful investigation to discuss the countercultural responses to Magma, Alan Stivell, and Gainsbourg. Unfortunately, this would require access to different sets of archives than I focus on in this study and would likely have had a low return-on-investment in relation to the time required to locate these sources.

More generally, I would be inspired to see transnational studies of the other countercultures. How did they understand and see what was coming out of countries such as Brazil or France? Within the anglophone world, these narratives may have been relatively minor, but they certainly exist: it is well known that Krautrock did well in the U.K.; Italy progressive rock also had its moment of fame; and several of the stars of the Brazilian counterculture were exiled to London.²³ Thus, it would seem as if there is some scope for such a study. Outside of the anglophone sphere, it would be interesting to know what Germany or Italy made of French counterculture music and how this fitted into their wider view of a transnational counterculture.

6.3 The Great Transnational Counterculture

The blurb for *Flash Ou Le Grand Voyage* by Charles Duchaussois reads: '[f]rom Marseille to Lebanon, from Istanbul to Bagdad, from Bombay to Varanasi, by boat, on foot, in car'.²⁴ This, apparently autobiographical, book, in a similar vein to *H* or *Les Chemins de Kathmandou*, tells a narrative of a French hippie's journey to India, along the way encountering adventures and fellow travellers from across the world.²⁵ When discovering

I have used. It would potentially be useful to look at evidence of touring, distribution of records, engaging in interviews, and any materials published in these various countries that mention connections with the French counterculture.

²³ Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Thomas Crushman, *Notes from Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999).

Vacca Giovanni, 'Music and Countercultures in Italy: The Neapolitan Scene', *Volume !: La revue des musiques populaires* 9/1, (2012), 67-85.

²⁴ 'De Marseille au Liban, d'Istanbul à Bagdad, de Bombay à Bénarés, en bateau, à pied, en voiture'. Charles Duchaussois, *Flash ou Le Grand Voyage* (Paris : Fayard, 1974).

²⁵ Brigitte Axel, *H* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970).

René Barjavel, *Les Chemins de Katmandou* (Paris : Presses De La Cité, 1969).

hippiedom in Istanbul for the first time the protagonist of *Flash Ou Le Grand Voyage* is taken aback with the transnational nature of hippiedom. Upon entering a 'pudding shop' that was a key gathering point for Istanbul's hippie community, he comments upon the diversity of its clientele, who were 'Norwegians, Germans, Swedes, Africans, English, etc.'²⁶ While travel was still a relatively expensive phenomenon at this point, and would have any been undertaken by a minority, the sense of counterculture being a youth oriented movement was pervasive in countercultural thought.

Further, the central character, Charles, is taken aback by the sense of generosity, acceptance and community that lies at the heart of the hippie experience. On his first night in the hotel at Istanbul he is welcomed into a circle of hippies who are all sharing a shilom.²⁷ He spends the next fifteen hours in the company of these hippies solely occupied by smoking shilom after shilom. Coming from Paris, where the cost of haschisch is exorbitantly expensive, Charles is surprised by the willingness of these hippies to share their drugs with him, without knowing him or asking him to contribute anything: 'Everything is shared. Who has, gives. Who has none, takes. It is the fraternity the most complete'.²⁸ Charles' experience here does not only show that the counterculture was an international project; rather, it demonstrates that it was a transnational community. One that did not only occur in several different countries, but also accepted those from elsewhere and found in each other a sense of shared ideal and purpose that crossed over any national boundary.

This sense of travel and transnational community is pervasive throughout accounts of the French counterculture. All of the chapters, excluding the final chapter, in this thesis have contained a discussion of travelogues from music journalists. Whether this is Alain Dister discussing hippies in the USA, Catherine Claude describing her time in London, or Jean-Pierre Lentin exploring Brittany, the readership of these magazines were constantly being informed about developments taking place elsewhere. Combined with the interest that the French counterculture had in America, Britain, or Germany (as well as Portugal, Brazil, and India) there is a profound sense of transnationalism inherent in the values and ideals that the French counterculture is expressing.

The theme of travel and transnational community is pervasive throughout accounts of the French counterculture. Alain Dister's recollection — or 'notes' — of his time in the USA

²⁶ 'c'est rempli de Norvégiens, d'Allemands, de Suédois, d'Africains, d'Anglais, etc.' Charles Duchaussois, *Flash ou Le Grand Voyage* (Paris : Fayard, 1974), 50.

²⁷ A shilom is a pipe for smoking haschisch.

²⁸ 'Tout est en commun. Qui en a, en donne. Qui n'en a pas, en prend. C'est la fraternité la plus totale'. Ibid., 49.

during the late 1960s reporting for the French press continues this narrative that the 1960s was about feeling connected and part of a wider youth movement beyond national borders for the French.²⁹ Similarly, Marc Alvarado's *La Chienlit* and Jean-Pierre Bouyxou and Pierre Delannoy's *L'aventure hippie* intertwines their narrative with the development of countercultures elsewhere.³⁰ Thus, there is recognition of the fact that the French counterculture emerged in relation to other countercultures, even if this relationship has not been fully explored.

Music was a fundamental part of this transnational connection: it, and its associated discourse, were cast as profound mediators between countercultural communities. It allowed access to a sense of a shared 'pop modernity'. In many ways, music played a crucial role due to its ability to collapse the there and the here, to allow the sense of distributed subjectivity, to allow a sense of shared experience despite geographical and cultural barriers. This took place through consuming records from different communities, cover records, and even national performances within the transactional countercultural style. Alternatively, music and journalism from abroad could act as a form of travel writing. These texts conjured up imagery of distant places, making them feel exotic but close. Narratives that focused on the acceptance of a French person into these communities explicitly demonstrated a level of connection and commonality amongst a transnational youth group. Consequently, acting as Prato's 'cross-cultural device' music allowed French youth to feel a sense of shared experience with their transnational counterparts, despite any geographical or cultural boundaries in place.³¹

This sense of transnational community that was central to the French counterculture shifted over time: at points the USA was the centre of attention but then became a place of failed ideals. For Britain, the opposite trend can be seen, once a boring land of conservative values, Britain became an exciting nation and some of its musicians were seen as the leaders of the European turn.³² This sense of shift is essential to remember, as it would be incorrect to view the French counterculture's relation with other countercultures as static.

²⁹ Alain Dister, *Oh, hippie days! Carents américains 1966-1969* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001).

³⁰ Marc Alvarado, *La Chienlit: Le Rock Français et Mai 68 : Histoire D'un Rendez-Vous Manqué* (Paris : Editions Du Layeur, 2018).

Jean-Pierre Bouyxou & Delannoy, Pierre, *L'Aventure Hippie* (La Flèche: Brodard & Taupin, 2004).

³¹ Paolo Prato, 'Selling Italy by the Sound: Cross-Cultural Interchanges through Cover Records' *Popular Music*, 26/3 (2007), 441-462 (445).

³² Of course, these are broad, generalised narratives. Relationships with different countries depended on the opinion holder, which band(s) were being discussed, and so on.

As the French counterculture's view on other countries changed, so did its opinion on itself. During the era of *yéyé* and the early years of the French rock press, French rock music was often considered with scepticism. Could there be such a thing? Did the French language allow for an authentic French rock music? How could France break away from mimicking the Anglo-Saxon world? Yet, while the discourse present within the countercultural press was rarely, if ever, completely inwards looking, from 1970s onwards the amount of discussion devoted to French rock music increases dramatically. This was, of course, partly related to the adaptation of the French music industry and the increasing number of French groups. However, it also reflects a growing self-consciousness about France's place within the countercultural world. Very consciously French countercultural identity is defined in contra-distinction to the American counterculture, and much of the British counterculture. This is what the European turn really represents; a search for France's position and identity within the transnational counterculture sphere.

Consequently, my research shows that the French counterculture not only held an ideal of transnational community at its core but was firmly embedded in an ever-changing web of transnational relations. Whether this was a shifting relationship towards the USA or an embrace of France's European heritage, the ideas and sounds circulating into, and around, France were complex. At various points, and amongst different groups, music, ideas, and nations signified different things. Yet this discourse around acceptance/rejection, like/dislike, cool/uncool was essential for providing not only meaning to the French counterculture, but for allowing it to locate itself.

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