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THE 'DARKENING SKY': FRENCH POPULAR MUSIC OF THE 1960S AND MAY

1968

AN HONORS THESIS

by

Claire Fouchereaux

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors
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Advisory Committee:

Frédéric Rondeau, Assistant Professor of French, Advisor
François Amar, Professor of Chemistry and Dean, Honors College
Nathan Godfried, Adelaide & Alan Bird Professor of History
Jennifer Moxley, Professor of English
Kathryn Slott, Associate Professor of French

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between ideas, attitudes, and sentiments found in popular French music of the 1960s and those that would later become important during the May 1968 protests in France. May 1968 has generated an enormous amount of literature and analyses of its events, yet there has been little previous work on popular music prior to May 1968 and the events of these protests and strikes that involved up to seven million people at its height. Using data from best-selling monthly charts in France from 1963 to 1968, this thesis links particular key aspects or ideas of May with the lyrics of popular songs that were released up to years prior to the protests. With a chapter devoted to each of the four included important aspects of May, this thesis deals, in particular, with anti-hierarchy and anti-authority attitudes, anti-capitalist sentiments, internationalism, and opposition to the Vietnam War that appeared both in these songs and, in some form, in the events of May. These songs, through their popularity and presence in the French social discourse of the time period, give further support to the larger theory that many of the causes of May were sentiments brewing much earlier than is generally thought.

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INTRODUCTION

MISCHARACTERIZATIONS OF MAY AND THE STIGMA AGAINST POPULAR MUSIC

Termed the “largest general strike in twentieth century Europe,” May 1968, on its most basic level, was a student protest that turned to a mass strike occurring all over France.¹ The height of May 1968, referred to later as ‘May,’ is perhaps the refusal to work of “six or seven million people,” with labor leaders hand-in-hand, chanting along with the students who began the revolt.² As mentioned by Jean-François Sirinelli, a leading historian of 1960s France, usually the University of Nanterre in Paris is pinpointed as the starting place for the national unrest of May.³ While the criticisms, tensions, and first protests that would later swell into May began years prior to 1968, the most tangible chain of events at Nanterre that led to May is the smattering of demonstrations that began in March involving reactions to police and university intervention against politically-engaged and radical students.⁴ The core of these individuals were leftists, espousing anti-capitalist and technocratic ideas and solidarity with the working class and desired political freedom of association and expression.⁵

Upon the closing of Nanterre “in response to student growing student involvement, a clear escalation of rhetoric, and outright clashes between leftists and right-wing students,”

¹ Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 3.

² Ibid.

³ Jean-François Sirinelli, *Mai 68*. (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 33.

⁴ Bourg, 19-21.

⁵ Ibid, 20.

the revolt spread to La Sorbonne, a much larger Parisian university, which was subsequently also closed on May 3rd and then occupied by students starting on the 13th.⁶ Desiring the reopening of their universities, the release of their imprisoned peers, and the withdrawal of the *Companies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS), a heavy-handed, French riot police, rising numbers of students took to the streets across France, in solidarity, to express their own anti-establishment demands, and to clash with the police.⁷ Labor unrest which had been occurring in France throughout the 1960s bubbled over in solidarity and in union with these students.⁸

In order to explain the complex events and sentiments involved with May 1968, it is important to understand the concept of the “kaleidoscope” of May, as Sirinelli terms it.⁹ Because of the vast scale of May, with students and workers all over France forming a collective struggle, the diversity of views, ideas, goals, and sentiments is key. In describing and creating an understanding of the multifaceted nature of May 1968, in this work, I have attempted to identify four directly related ideas to May: anti-hierarchical sentiments, anti-capitalist attitudes, internationalism, and opposition to war. These are some of the most concrete, tangible, collective ideas of May.

A number of works have previously studied the impact and the legacy of May 1968. At the same time, it may seem surprising to what point this fundamental event of contemporary French history has not been studied from a cultural perspective. In this sense, the uniqueness of this work is found in the parallels established between the attitudes, ideas, and positions of French popular music of the 1960s and those found in May 1968. It is

⁶ Ibid, 21-22.

⁷ Ibid, 20-22.

⁸ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 69.

⁹ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 212.

quite well-known that the first stirrings of May occurred years before its events. Sirinelli and Kristin Ross are quite adamant about the events of May taking place due to the rapid and dramatic post-World War II changes to France, both economically and as a result of the Algerian War, which led to a transformation in the French way of life and values.¹⁰ Responses by French people to these changes are visible in film, literature, music, and labor strikes throughout the nation, during, and even prior to, the 1960s.

The focus of this thesis on French popular music of the 1960s *and* May 1968 is where it deviates from other studies. There appears to be no work yet done on the links between May and the hits consumed *en masse*, especially by the French youth, leading up to its events, though the reason for this is only vaguely apparent. While film, literature, and French *chanson* have all been deemed respectable topics to study within the realm of May 1968, there is little attention paid to the popular music of the time. Although May is often characterized as a ‘youth revolt,’ no one has yet taken the time to systematically review the burgeoning, youth-dominated French music scene of the 1960s for the “darkened skies” before the ‘thunderclap’ of May, using Ross’ analogy.¹¹ This appears somewhat counterintuitive, in actuality. As a historian like Sirinelli places much importance in the massive scale of May, and Ross points out the importance of the worker and student union, involving several different segments of French society, studying contemporary mass culture could offer some insights into the changing French society out of which May came

¹⁰ Ibid; Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*.

¹¹“But [May] was not, as many have described it since, a kind of meteorological accident arising out of unforeseen planetary conjunctures or, as in the oft-heard cliché, “a thunderclap in the middle of a serene sky.” By 1968 the sky was already darkened. It was an event with a long preparation, dating back to the mobilization against the Algerian War and with an immediate afterlife continuing at least up to the mid1970s.” Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 26.

precisely because of the mass scale and similar young demographics of both of these groups.

Part of the reason that this subject has yet remained untouched by historians is the result of generalized dismissive attitudes towards the importance of popular music, especially in the realm of cultural studies in France. There is no greater evidence of this than the introductory caveat to Sirinelli's article "Des 'copains' aux 'camarades'?", where, in order to be willing to even discuss popular music of the 1960s, he states that he does not believe the aspects of French culture that he discusses to be part of "History" and that he merely thinks they provide an insight to "the spirit of the times," drawing a line between the fields of history and cultural studies.¹² A similar measure of disdain is present in several French works on music of the 1960s, often arising from the influence of American music on the hits of this period. Just one example of the presence of this attitude is in Stéphane Hirschi's book *Chanson: L'art de fixer l'air du temps*, in which this expert on French music mentions that lyrics are much less important in American hits, as they tend to fade into the background.¹³ Characterizing *yé-yé*, a type of music very much influenced by American hits and often based upon romantic relationships, he discusses it in more commercial terms than artistic ones, dismissing its significance.¹⁴ The focus on the commercial aspects of *yé-yé* and, more largely, popular music of the 1960s in France, discredits the content of these songs outright.

¹² Jean-François Sirinelli, "Des 'copains' aux 'camarades' ?" *Revue Historique* 2, no. 626 (2003): 28, accessed October 30, 2016. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-historique-2003-2-page-327>.

¹³ Stéphane Hirschi, *Chanson: L'art de fixer l'air du temps*, (Paris : Presses universitaires de Valenciennes, 2008), 26-28.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 195.

This attitude, that *yé-yé* and other popular music of the 1960s in France is not even worth exploring or was only important for making money, is widespread in French cultural studies. Oftentimes, *yé-yé* is placed in opposition to *chanson*, with the latter seen as more culturally valuable and the former being devoid of any larger meaning, as noted in Adeline Cordier's *Post-War French Popular Music: Cultural Identity and the Brel-Brassens-Ferré Myth* and found in works by Hirschi and Marc Dufaud.¹⁵ In part subverting this, Cordier mentions that the audience that supported *chansonniers* such as Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens, and Léo Ferré often overlapped with those who enjoyed *yé-yé*, as artists like Johnny Hallyday and Sylvie Vartan were often featured on the same television programs as the *chansonniers*.¹⁶ Although she demonstrates that *yé-yé* should be given at least some attention, she chooses to address *chanson* instead of *yé-yé* or early rock, only further demonstrating the lack of scholarship attention paid to these genres, in general. Though this refusal to consider these extremely popular genres as worthy of study exists, attitudes have been changing, and historians such as Chris Tinker and Jonathyne Briggs have begun addressing *yé-yé* from a historical perspective rather than that of a music critic.¹⁷ While their work is both needed and valuable because of the lack of attention to this subject in comparison with other elements of French culture such as literature or cinema, neither of these historians have addressed popular music of the 1960s in France in the context of May 1968.

¹⁵ Ibid; Adeline Cordier, *Post-War French Popular Music: Cultural Identity and the Brel-Brassens-Ferré Myth*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014); Marc Dufaud, *Monsieur Boris Vian, je vous fais une lettre... La chanson du Déserteur*. (Paris: Scali, 2008).

¹⁶ Ibid, 56-57.

¹⁷ Jonathyne Briggs, *Sounds French: Globalization, Cultural Communities, and Pop Music, 1958-1980*. (New York: Oxford UP, 2015); Chris Tinker, "Rock 'n' Roll Stardom: Johnny Hallyday" in *Stardom in postwar France*, ed. John Gaffney and Diana Holmes, (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2007).

The significance of this thesis is not only based upon the lack of scholarship on popular music of France in the 1960s; it also arises from the importance of reversing the disappearance of May from general consciousness and from the new perspective offered by younger historians, more detached from the tumultuous events of the 1960s. May itself is an important topic of study because of how its image has been twisted and its significance downplayed. In Ross' *May 1968 and Its Afterlives*, she cites a 1988 television special on May, "Le Procès de Mai," for example, as particularly egregious in its inaccurate portrayal of the protests and strike.¹⁸ She states that this program depicts May as a random event, as a ruckus made by touchy, spoiled students in a prosperous, idyllic time but does not show "police or state violence, the colonial pre-history of May, violence on the part of imperial powers like the United States, or the brutal showdowns between CRS and workers at Flins and Sochaux where workers and a high-school student activist died at the hands of the police," as these facts would go against this depiction of May as merely a *petit-bourgeois* brouhaha.¹⁹ She is particularly critical as a whole of the media's "[facilitation of] May's assimilation to a 1980s social vision of a society free from archaic conflict and social confrontation."²⁰ Similarly dismissive of the weight of May is the perspective taken by Tor Egil Førland in his article "Cutting the Sixties Down to Size: Conceptualizing, Historicizing, Explaining," which discusses the overblown significance of the unrest of the 1960s.²¹ He names the involvement of former *soixante-huitards* in academia, for example, as a cause for this inflation, which demonstrates some of the backlash against current

¹⁸ Ross, *May 68 and Its Afterlives*, 148.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 150.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 187.

²¹ Tor Egil Førland, "Cutting the Sixties Down to Size: Conceptualizing, Historicizing, Explaining," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 9, no. 2, Fall 2015, 125-148. <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/586969>.

academic focus on May.²² There are many problems with his argument, for one, he ignores that much of the ‘mass’ movement of May came from outside of academia, and his biggest argument is that leading historians of the 1960s were part of this era and often have this bias cloud their analyses of the significance of May.

However, precisely because of the fact that the events of May “have at last ‘entered history,’” according to Ross, and, because of the temporal distance between new historians and May 1968, it is high time for new scholarship, divorced from the politics of and personal emotional investment in May, to take place.²³ Førlund states that one of the only reasons that movements of the 1960s in various countries are given academic attention, aside from the supposed self-aggrandizing, is because of their large turnouts.²⁴ Contrary to his argument, it is precisely for this reason that the movements of the 1960s are significant: mass mobilizations in peacetime resulting from certain key issues. This had been unseen and unprecedented in France for more than decades, making their occurrence depart from the general norms of French society. Events that are distinguishable against the backdrop of normal life in France are inherently notable and deserve to be studied in the realm of French history.

Supporting Ross’ assertion that May 1968 is not a random, flash-in-the-pan, cry for attention on the part of privileged *soixante-huitards* who went on to inflate their own importance, this thesis addresses the build-up of May 1968 from a unique perspective, showing how the often-political sentiments behind May grew for years beforehand and rose to a fever pitch during the Spring of 1968, through the use of popular music. While

²² Ibid, 125.

²³ Ross, *May ‘68 and Its Afterlives*, 214.

²⁴ Ibid, 139.

there has been a significant amount of scholarship on topics surrounding 1968 and song, these are either on post-May music or on American music during this tumultuous year. In fact, there is an entire book of essays on the subject of 1968 and song, aptly entitled “Music and Protest in 1968,” edited by Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton. Documenting the role of American folk, soul, and rock as “gestures towards message” or “sonic signifiers of unrest and a foreshadowing of confrontations ahead,” the first article, “‘This Is My Country’: American popular music and political engagement in ‘1968’” by Sarah Hill, points out that there was “little direct protest” in 1968 in the United States.²⁵ At the same time, folk and rock, regardless of popularity, tend to be more accepted as vehicles for protest-related messages in the United States than *yé-yé* or early rock in France are. While it is impossible to name the exact reasons for this, there is an element of apparent French academic opposition to considering American-influenced, commercialized music consumed on a massive scale as a work of art or worth much more than a basic nod in their work, not without disdain.

At the same time, most of the scholarship on music and 1968 in France focuses on music during and after the events of May, ignoring the possibility that protest-related sentiments could be found in music anterior to May. Eric Drott, for example, specializes in this topic, adding the final chapter of “Music and Protest in 1968,” entitled “Music and May 1968 in France: Practices, Roles, Representations.”²⁶ This article endorses the previously-mentioned opposition of *chanson* with popular music, like most others in French cultural studies, excepting Briggs and Tinker. Between the presence of particular

²⁵ Sarah Hill, “‘This Is My Country’: American popular music and political engagement in 1968,” in *Music and Protest in 1968*, Ed. Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton (New York: Cambridge UP, 2013), 64.

²⁶ Eric Drott, “Music and May 1968 in France: Practices, Roles, Representations,” in *Music and Protest in 1968*, Ed. Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton (New York: Cambridge UP, 2013), 255-271.

songs in the protests, like *L'Internationale*, the reactions of certain artists to the protests, and the subsequent changes to French music as a whole that potentially could or could not have resulted from May, Drott indeed discusses the role of music in its events.²⁷ He, however, does not address the state of French music prior to May 1968, unless to mention *yé-yé* as “frivolous” in comparison to *chanson* and later popular music.²⁸

The only apparent work on music leading up to May 1968 has been done by Jean-François Sirinelli in the previously-mentioned article “Des ‘copains’ aux ‘camarades’?” and his book *Mai 68*, which touches briefly on this topic. He pays the most attention to the music of Antoine, who is one of the best-known anti-establishment popular music artists in France in the 1960s, citing, in particular, “Les élucubrations” in his article in order to help explain the “spirit of the times” that developed as May 1968 approached. His analyses of Antoine’s lyrics look quite similar to those that appear in this thesis, though this work goes much more in-depth on popular music of the 1960s and on the direct links of attitudes and ideas to May 1968 than Sirinelli’s article does. *Mai 68* similarly discusses “Les élucubrations” and Johnny Hallyday, though music is only discussed for a few pages out of the entire book, as a side note rather than as an integral topic.

As the first work dealing primarily with popular French music of the 1960s and May 1968 and, as it appears, the first systematic, specific study of French popular music of the 1960s in general, this thesis will attempt to overcome the judgements and gaps that exist within the field of popular music, as well as endorsing the long-term view of the rise of the May 1968 protests. In order to demonstrate the significance of popular French music of the 1960s to May 1968, the methodology of this study must be established. The primary

²⁷ Ibid, 262, 264, 267, 269.

²⁸ Ibid, 259-260, 271.

source of the data used in this thesis is from a website hosting data given in the book *Forty Years of Hits* by Fabrice Ferment.²⁹ Compiling its information from royalty payments, record from the Society for the Administration of Mechanical Reproduction Rights, and best-selling information from department stores, Ferment wrote and published this work for the National Syndicate of Phonographic Publishing in France.³⁰ The charts used for this study are monthly, listing the fifteen best-selling singles in France for that particular month. This thesis draws songs from January 1963 to May 1968, with the earlier date being chosen due to the lack of available data for prior charts during the research phase of this thesis. After having been compiled into a spreadsheet of all of the best-selling, popular songs for each month in France for these five years, these approximately 400 hits were given a preliminary listen before secondary sources were introduced to the project.

After the consultation of secondary sources, from leading historians in the field such as Ross and Sirinelli, the characteristics of these events began to take shape, though they were limited to four categories due to length constraints: anti-hierarchical sentiments, anti-capitalist attitudes, a sense of internationalism, and rising opposition to the Vietnam War. Following this research, the recorded popular songs in France during this time period were scoured for those with similar themes. Those that fit were then pulled from the spreadsheet and analyzed in greater detail. While originally, there were around fifty songs that appeared to demonstrate in some way, shape, or form, ideas linked to May, this list

²⁹ “Charts des Ventes Réelles de 45 Tours en France.” *Top.france.free.fr*. From Fabrice Ferment, *40 ans de tubes 1960-2000 : Les meilleurs ventes de 45 tours & CD Singles*. Clichy : Larivière, 2001. Accessed October 25, 2016. <http://www.top-france.fr/mensuel.htm>

³⁰ *Ibid.*

was narrowed down to the fourteen hits studied in-depth in this thesis, chosen in particular for their content as well as their cultural importance and their aesthetic qualities.³¹

The logic for connecting French popular music to May 1968 is based upon the idea that changes in French society occurring during the 1960s are reflected in cultural materials dating from this time period. Popular music is both a cultural and an economic product; a song is a means of expression for producers, songwriters, and musicians, regardless of the product it turns out to be. A criticism of the use of popular music for the purpose of observing attitudes is the tension between its expressive and commercial aspects. Although it is very well possible that any given producer's, artist's, or songwriter's main goal was to make money with piece of music and have it become popular, this is not possible without the audience, which, during this period, was mostly composed of the French youth. In order for a song to become popular, there has to be some sort of appeal of a particular song to the audience, whether within the lyrics, melody, or rhythm. As it is impossible to measure the exact reason for these songs' appeal to the youth of this time period, the fact that the lyrics to these songs, which reflect May 1968, existed repeatedly in the French social discourse, especially in such a mainstream fashion, up to several years prior to the 'thunderclap' of May is what is notable. It is because of this that I attempt to demonstrate parallels between May 1968 as a phenomenon in popular culture and successful French songs.

Though it would appear difficult to directly associate participants in May with popular music, its widespread nature and popularity with *petit-bourgeois* students lends

³¹ In the sense that it made more sense to analyze "Le déserteur" over "Baby Pop" by France Gall in the anti-war section due to the fact that "Le déserteur" provided more fruitful analysis and is, probably, more impactful upon the French cultural landscape. In any case, the original list of these fifty songs can be found in Appendix B of this thesis.

quite well to this argument. Young adults with disposable income are precisely who helped spur the growth of the music industry in France during the 1960s, and, during this time period, this demographic, younger people in the middle class, are responsible for much of the growth in university attendance.³² While it is impossible to be absolutely sure that there was overlap between those who listen to popular music during the 1960s and those who would later become involved with May, the scale of May points to at least some overlap, especially when considering the similar demographics of each. Of course, the student leaders of May 1968, the hard-core Maoists, probably did not listen to, for example, the *yé-yé* idol Sheila. However, the ‘foot-soldiers of May,’ as Sirinelli terms them, who were just as, if not more, important to the movement than its leaders, very well may have, especially considering their age and the widespread nature of both May and popular music.³³ Somewhat more questionable is the participation of the workers, who would have had less disposable income than wealthier members of society, but it would be wrong to assume that workers did not participate in the consumer society around them at all, as Sirinelli states that, on average, there was a trend towards increased spending on leisure activities rather than basic necessities in general, regardless of class, and these individuals still had access to the radio in any case.³⁴ In light of there being little evidence to the contrary, it is safe to assume that the best-selling hits all over France were fairly representative of the general popularity of these songs, though, due to sheer numbers, the younger generation’s tastes may be a bit overrepresented.

³² Cordier, *Post-War French Popular Music*, 53; Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 204.

³³ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 88.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 101.

In conclusion, the widespread nature of May 1968 lends itself to analysis through the use of music consumed on a massive scale, as there are a host of French songs during the 1960s that demonstrate sentiments similar to those later appearing in May. In particular, sentiments going against hierarchy or authority are present in French popular music of the 1960s and also played an important part in the events of May 1968. In addition, May 1968 also demonstrates anti-capitalist sentiments, which can be found in songs popular in France several years prior to its events. A similarly important element to May is a rising consciousness of the outside world and also present during May 1968. Finally, a related idea, opposition to war, was a key aspect of May that found its way into French popular music in the 1960s. Seeking to support the assertion by historians such as Sirinelli and Ross that May 1968 occurred following rising tensions in a changing French society, this thesis addresses ties between the sentiments, attitudes, and ideas of popular music in France in the 1960s and those that later became important facets of the May 1968 movement.

CHAPTER I

ANTI-HIERARCHY AND ANTI-AUTHORITY SENTIMENTS

Considering the fact that May 1968 is principally known for its student protests and clashes with police, the idea that May 1968 was linked to anti-hierarchy and anti-authority sentiments is quite evident.¹ The ensuing strike of six to seven million French workers is, indeed, a similar defiant act.² At the same time, there are certain types of authority or hierarchy that were targeted by the *soixante-huitards* in particular. Aside from the police, who were the focus of many slogans, such as “CRS = SS,” referring to the police force charged with containing the student demonstrations, the educational system was also a target.

Months before the eruption of May, there was a “brief strike against general working conditions at Nanterre” in November of 1967, as there were no spaces to socialize or cook for resident students, authorized political groups on campus, or moving furniture in the university dorms, which were viewed as restrictions upon students and their behavior.³ In fact, in March 1968, the same time protests on the Vietnam War were on the rise, and, eventually, caused the spark to the events of May, there were student protests against outdated university curriculums and for freedom of association with political groups within the university.⁴ These actions demonstrate student discontent with the

¹ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 75.

² Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 3.

³ *Ibid*, 19.

⁴ *Ibid*, 20.

educational system and with certain rules and limitations imposed on them by university authorities. Another example of students rising up against the rules and policies of educational institutions can be found in recordings analyzed by Kristin Ross depicting high-school students in May 1968 “demanding... to be able to freely organize in the schools in support of fellow students expelled for circulating a text of *Le déserteur* in the high schools.”⁵ Not only does this show that there was opposition to several specific, strict school policies on the part of *soixante-huitards*, it also demonstrates how adolescents during May 1968 were also against military service or action, as do similar protests against the Vietnam War that were the original catalyst for May.⁶ The same anti-authority or anti-hierarchy sentiments that were present in May 1968 were also present in popular songs in the 1960s in France, with overlap especially relating to the realm of education or relating to the military and the police.

One of the most emblematic figures of the counter-culture *à la française*, at least as it can be found on the charts during the 1960s, is Antoine, whose whole stage persona is based heavily on anti-authority or rebellious sentiments. In one of the few times that Sirinelli discusses popular culture in Mai 68, he chronicles the original shock that Antoine’s presence caused in the French popular music scene at the time: “In 1966, his long hair earns him the hostility of certain young people in *une France profonde* where standards of masculinity have not yet absorbed the shockwave started by the Beatles: thus, during his summer tour, he is attacked during a concert in Corsica...”⁷ In particular,

⁵ It is worth noting that, while it will be discussed later, *Le déserteur* is a song written about a conscripted individual who refuses to enter the military to fight in a war to which he is morally opposed. Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 189.

⁶ Ibid, 90.

⁷ “En 1966, ses cheveux longs lui valent l’hostilité de certains jeunes dans une France profonde où les critères de la virilité n’ont pas encore absorbé l’onde de choc des Beatles : c’est ainsi que durant sa tournée

Sirinelli mentions his song, “Les élucubrations d’Antoine,” as particularly shocking, due to his call to put the birth control pill on sale in grocery stores.⁸ “Les élucubrations d’Antoine” has already been discussed in the context of May 1968 by Sirinelli, so another popular song by Antoine, “Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux,” which is very much in the same vein, will be discussed in this section.⁹

Released in 1966 on the album *Antoine rencontre Les problèmes* and charting in June of that same year, “Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux” contains the same dissenting tone as “Les élucubrations,” which preceded it.¹⁰ In “Je dis ce que je pense...,” Antoine demonstrates his desire to be an individual and rejects the contemporary norms and conventions of larger French society when this song was written. Because of these elements, this song carries an anti-authority message that would later be an important theme of May 1968.

Aside from the title, which translates to “I say what I think, I live how I want,” this upbeat rock song contains lyrics that point to Antoine’s desire to set himself apart from other members of society, whom he addresses repeatedly and directly using the second person plural pronoun “vous.” By choosing to do this, he draws a clear distinction between himself and everyone else. For example, the first verse, in which mentions his ambivalence towards amassing wealth, ends with two lines stating “Je suis comme ça pour moi, pas pour vous / Comprenez-le.”¹¹ In these lines, he states that he has adopted these beliefs for

estivale, il est agressé lors d’un concert en Corse.” Jean-François. *Mai 68*. (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 233-234. All translations are my own.

⁸ Ibid, 51.

⁹ Ibid, 52, 231

¹⁰ “Antoine rencontre les problèmes,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed October 7, 2016, <http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/65023.html>.

¹¹ “I’m like this for me, not for you / Understand it.” “Paroles de Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux,” *Parolesmania.com*, accessed October 7, 2016.

himself and because it makes him happy, not for anyone else. Again, he later sings “Je fais tout ça pour moi pas pour vous / Comprenez-le,” imploring the listener and the general public to understand that he makes his choices based on what makes him happy and not on how anyone else expects him to act or present himself.¹² In this sense, Antoine embraces his individualism and seeks to separate himself or rebel against the rest of society.

Antoine also rejects the authority of traditional society to dictate his choices. One of these choices is, in particular, his personal style, which, as previously stated, deviated from the acceptable norms of the time period: “Que vous importe mes cheveux / J'ai les chemises que je veux.”¹³ Like Sirinelli mentions, his long hair and hippie-inspired style was a source of controversy, and he mentions it in this verse as way to separate his personal sense of style from that typically found acceptable in France at this time. Finally, Antoine discusses how his sense of morals differs from that of the general French populace, singing, “La fidélité et moi, croyez-moi, ça fait deux / Chaque soir m'amène une fille / Chaque matin nous voit repartir / Je suis comme ça pour moi, pas pour vous.”¹⁴ If stating that the birth control pill should be readily accessible was controversial, as Sirinelli mentions, this description of his promiscuity probably caused similar reactions, as such open sexuality went against norms of the time period.¹⁵ Also, as Julian Bourg states, for those participating in May 1968, “norms were the smoke and mirrors of bourgeois culture-- consumerist society, work, nationalism, family, religion, and morality—to be dispelled in the

http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles_antoine_&_les_problemes_16381/paroles_je_dis_ce_que_je_pense,_je_vis_comme_je_veux_1508018.html

¹² “I do all of this for me, not for you / Understand it.” Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Fidelity and me, believe me, makes two / Every night brings me a girl / Every morning sees us leave / I'm like this for me, not for you (all).” Ibid.

¹⁵ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 51.

revolution.”¹⁶ By eschewing traditional social rules and values, Antoine defies the authority that social norms and collective values have over the choices that he makes, just as the participants of May 1968, similarly, wanted to reject parallel norms.

Antoine’s “Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux” is anti-authority due to his focus on rebelling against mainstream French society’s norms and values and his desire to separate himself from this society by underlining his individualism. “Je dis ce que je pense” is related to the more general anti-authority aspects of May 1968, showing a defiant spirit similar to those of the protesters, who stood up to authorities by striking, demonstrating, and battling with the police; however, there are several popular songs of the 1960s relating to authority that deal with parts of French society that were also specific targets of the May protests. For example, “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur” by Christophe is highly critical of the French education system, which was also frequently criticized by the *soixante-huitards*. In “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur,” the narrator deliberately disregards the authority of his schoolteacher and criticizes the narrow curriculum taught in his classroom.

As the historian Chris Reynolds states, it is difficult to imagine the “authoritarianism at all levels” of the French education system prior to May 1968.¹⁷ A singer best known for *yé-yé* hits such as “Aline” and “Les marionnettes” seems like an unlikely individual to take on this system, especially years before the protests of May.¹⁸ Christophe’s “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur,” written with the help of Jean-Jacques

¹⁶ Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 6.

¹⁷ Chris Reynolds, “May/June 1968 and the French University System,” *Memories of May ’68*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), JSTOR, 96.

¹⁸ “Top - Septembre 1965.” top.france.free.fr, from Fabrice Ferment, *40 ans de tubes 1960-2000: Les meilleurs ventes de 45 tours & CD Singles*, (Clichy : Larivière, 2001). Accessed October 7, 2016. <http://top.france.free.fr/html/1965/0965.htm>.

Debout and Roger Dumas and charting in June 1966, is a much more serious song than the singer's better-known works and deals with the experiences of a, presumably, young boy's difficulties in school.¹⁹ This breathless *chanson à texte* opens with a biting statement: "If my ears are long / it's because an imbecile / went ahead and pulled on them one day."²⁰ In refusing to acknowledge that he may have caused the punishment given to him, the narrator only faults the teacher. It is as if the narrator believes this teacher is not worthy of the power that he has been given, considering the fact that he boldly calls this authority figure "un imbécile." In this sense, the narrator of "Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur" directly disrespects authority. It is, however, worth discussing that there are several mentions of corporal punishment in this song. This, in a way, reveals the authoritarian nature of the French education system that Reynolds mentions. The heavy-handedness of discipline in the French educational system is also criticized in Ross' anecdote about the expulsion of high-schoolers distributing anti-military materials.²¹ These expulsions, like the arrests of and the disciplinary actions against students that helped spark May 1968, were protested during this eventful month. In this sense, the general criticism and lack of respect demonstrated by the narrator of "Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur" is similar to attitudes of students and strikers in May 1968, just as the narrator's mentioning of harsh disciplinary actions mirror opposition to the arrests and expulsions of protesting students.

Further in the song, the narrator of "Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur" continues to directly defy authority in the form of his teacher. Talking about how nature is not touched

¹⁹ "Excusez-moi Monsieur Le Professeur," Encyclopédisque.fr, accessed October 7, 2016. <http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/4179.html>.

²⁰ "Si mes oreilles sont longues / C'est parce qu'un imbécile / Un jour s'est amusé à leur tirer dessus." "Christophe : Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur," *Lyrics.wikia.com*, accessed October 7, 2016. http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Christophe:Excusez-Moi,_Mr._Le_Professeur.

²¹ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 189.

on in the curriculum, the narrator remarks pointedly, “Et si j’aime les branches / Si j’aime la forêt / C’est parce que vous m’avez / Défendu d’y grimper.”²² He states that the reason that he loves trees is specifically because the teacher has made it against the rules to climb them. Deciding that the teacher’s authority is not worth listening to, the narrator does exactly what he has forbidden. It is difficult to imagine a more direct way to demonstrate one’s disregard for an authority than deliberately disobeying the rules that it has made. In this sense, the lyrics of “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur” appear defiant and contrary to a classic figure of authority, a teacher. As noted in the introduction, the students that were the spark of the May 1968 protests demonstrated similarly defiant behavior. They disobeyed the authorities and hierarchies in their universities and schools by protesting against policies with which they disagreed. On a smaller scale but a similar note, the narrator of “Excusez-moi” is acting against the authority in his classroom, his teacher, by refusing to submit to the policies with which he disagrees, as well as by rejecting the legitimacy of this authority.

“Excusez-moi” also resembles the education-related facets of May 1968 in that the narrator, too, questions the curriculum taught by his teacher. Starting this verse with “Si les pages sont blanches / De mes pauvres cahiers / C’est qu’il y a trop de branches / Aux arbres des forêts,”²³ the narrator is admitting that he refuses to do his schoolwork instead of spending his time climbing trees. Schoolwork does not engage him the way that nature does. Considering the lines that come after these (“Et si j’aime les branches...”), the curriculum only pushes the narrator away from school and acceptable conduct precisely

²² “And if I like branches/If I like the forest/It is because you have/banned me from climbing them.”
“Christophe : Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur,” *Lyrics.wikia.com*.

²³ “If the pages are blank/in my poor journals/it’s because there are too many branches/on the forest’s trees.” Ibid.

because of how little it connects with him. The narrator is criticizing the curriculum that the teacher is responsible for teaching, as it is unengaging to the point where that it causes the narrator to have a number of disciplinary issues.

Actually, nature is touched on several times in this song for this purpose of criticizing the curriculum of his school, with the narrator also stating “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur / si je connais les oiseaux par cœur.”²⁴ In these lines, the narrator is asking in a less-than-serious tone for the teacher to forgive him for knowing birds by heart rather than poems, as the memorization of famous poems is a staple of French elementary and middle schools. In a similar set of lines, “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur / Si je ne sais jamais rien par cœur,” he reveals feeling as if he will never be capable of learning anything by heart.²⁵ By placing that which interests him, nature, trees, and birds, in direct opposition to memorizing poems, which only discourages him, the narrator is showing how the educational system does not include aspects of life that he enjoys, feels like he can succeed at, or finds worthwhile. Due to the fact that students were similarly demonstrating their opposition to the outdated and out-of-touch curriculums at Nanterre within weeks of the spark of May 1968 and that it was a major issue with protesting students, the narrator’s criticism of the teacher’s curriculum in “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur” bears a resemblance to ideas integral to the May 1968 protests.²⁶

Problems relating to education and authority in the classroom are specific aspects of May 1968 that appears in “Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur” by Christophe, a hit in France in 1966. Between this song and Antoine’s “Je dis ce que je pense et je vis comme

²⁴ “Forgive me, mister the teacher / if I know birds by heart.” Ibid.

²⁵ “Forgive me, mister the teacher / if I never know anything by heart” Ibid.

²⁶ Reynolds, “May/June 1968 and the French University System,” 87-88.

je veux,” 1966 has quite a handful of *tubes*—hits—that seem to harbor anti-authority sentiments. Another notable anti-authority song that charted in 1966 and specifically criticized the same institutions that the protesters of May 1968 did is Pierre Pierret’s “Le service militaire.”²⁷ With a backing track that sounds like a military march, the narrator of “Le service militaire” sarcastically embraces the institution of the military and its hierarchy, providing an all-around negative portrayal of military life and of military leaders.

France, during this time period, had military service requirements for males. Participation in the military, in some way, shape, or form, was mandatory for all French men, barring those with medical disabilities.²⁸ During the Algerian War (1954-1962), for example, about 1.5 million conscripted men born between 1935 and 1942 were sent to Algeria for periods spanning eighteen, twenty-four, or twenty-seven months.²⁹ This policy was heavily protested, such as on September 11, 1955 in the Gare de Lyon, with those conscripted refusing to get on trains to leave and their families, friends, and loved ones joining in on the protest.³⁰ After the end of the Algerian War, the draft remained in place, though the length of service was reduced to sixteen months in 1963 and conscientious objectors began to be recognized by law, but it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain this status until 1983.³¹ This is the domestic context in which both “Le service

²⁷ “Top – Décembre 1966.” *Top.france.free.fr*. From Fabrice Ferment, 40 ans de tubes 1960-2000 : Les meilleurs ventes de 45 tours & CD Singles, (Clichy : Larivière, 2001), accessed October 8, 2016. <http://top.france.free.fr/html/1966/1266.htm>.

²⁸ Eugénie Bastié, “Petite histoire du service militaire en France,” *LeFigaro.fr*, published January 19, 2015, accessed October 8, 2016. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2015/01/19/01016-20150119ARTFIG00121-petite-histoire-du-service-militaire-en-france.php>

²⁹ Ibid; Marc Dufaud. *Monsieur Boris Vian, je vous fais une lettre... La chanson du Déserteur*, (Paris : Scali, 2008), 102.

³⁰ Dufaud, *Monsieur Boris Vian*, 124.

³¹ Bastié, “Petite histoire du service militaire en France.”

militaire” and the protests against the Vietnam War took place; participation in the military was not a choice for the men of France, it was a requirement.

A prolific artist known for his humorous songs including “Les jolies colonies de vacances” and “Tonton cristobal,” Pierre Perret’s “Le service militaire” deals with an individual’s abysmal time carrying out his military service.³² The narrator begins this hit by launching directly into sarcastic remarks on how he loves the army just as much as he loves the police: “C’est bien parce que j’aime autant l’armée que les flics / Que mes couplets d’un mauvais goût systématique / Vous racontent en trois coups de gamelle / Trois petits tours dans une poubelle.”³³ While this embrace of the police and the military may appear genuine at first, it becomes clear that the opposite is true once he states that the song will tell the story of the time he has spent in “a dump,” going on to describe his time in the French military.³⁴ Due to the fact that the narrator sarcastically mentions his love for the military and the police, “Le service militaire” contains anti-hierarchy and anti-authority sentiments. Because the students of May 1968 also targeted the police in their famous clashes with the police, the anti-authority and anti-police attitudes of “Le service militaire” resembles that of the protestors of May.

Moreover, the chorus of “Le service militaire” demonstrates similar anti-authority views by sarcastically discussing the benefits of this mandatory military service. The narrator declares, “Qu’est-ce qu’on rit / Au service militaire / C’est merveilleux, mes amis

³² “Top – Décembre 1966.” *Top.france.free.fr*.

³³ “It’s clearly because I love the army as much as the cops / that my systematically distasteful verses / tell you in three strokes / three tours in a dump.” “Paroles Le Service Militaire,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 9, 2016.

<http://www.paroles.net/pierre-perret/paroles-le-service-militaire>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

/ J'aime ma mère patrie / Je la servirai toute la vie."³⁵ By putting these apparently-positive remarks in context with the negativity of the rest of the song, the narrator's remarks seem more sarcastic than candid. As such, the narrator exclaiming, "I love my mother country" and that he would serve it, most likely militarily, his whole life, is the opposite of what he means. In this sense, these statements on the French government and the French military are actually critical of these enormously powerful authorities in French society. This idea fits in with the more general anti-authority sentiments and actions taken by the protestors of May, who were revolting, in part, against military action in Vietnam and, in part, against the way that France was being governed at the time.

The narrator continues to demonstrate anti-authority sentiments when describing military life in "Le service militaire," considering the undeniably negative portrayals he provides. Following the set of lines beginning, "Que mes couplets d'un mauvais goût systématique..." the narrator continues with stating how his song discusses "Comment on se retrouve à vingt ans / Crétin hilare et décadent."³⁶ By describing his experiences in the military as how he turns into a moron or cretin, the narrator is demonstrating negative attitudes towards the military, which is an institution well-known for its hierarchical structure and focus on the importance of authority. In fact, it appears that he is discussing mandatory military service in this song in particular, considering that one would normally be called to do their military service at the age of eighteen, remain in the military for about a year and a half, and exit around the age of twenty, which is the age that is mentioned in this verse. It seems quite unlikely that the narrator of this song would have joined the

³⁵ "Oh what a laugh / military service / it's marvelous, my friends / I love my mother country / I'll serve her for my whole life." Ibid.

³⁶ "How we end up at 20 / a decadent and high-spirited moron." Ibid.

military willingly. As such, his attacks on the military are from the point of view of someone who wanted to be a civilian his whole life but was forced to turn into something he found quite detestable, a soldier. As a result, this song is an attack on not only the institution of the military but on French mandatory military service as decreed by the ultimate authority, the French government.

The protestors of May 1968 appeared to harbor similar sentiments. Apart from their protests on the Vietnam War, which, in turn, sparked the events of May, certain students seem to similarly disagree with being forced to carry out military service. Looking back on the anecdote provided by Kristin Ross about the high school students desiring to “organize in the schools in support of fellow students expelled for circulating a text of *Le déserteur* in the high schools,” the students circulating *Le déserteur* could very well have been having the same negative thoughts about mandatory military service as the narrator of “Le service militaire.” In this sense, the anti-authority and, specifically, the anti-military sentiments of “Le service militaire” appear to be shared by some students who participated in May 1968.

Similarly, the narrator of “Le service militaire” also demonstrates his disgust with the higher-ranking officers in the military, therefore showing anti-hierarchy and anti-authority sentiments in another sense. He continues, “Le chef qui sentait la choucroute / Gueulait des j’en-ai-rien-à-foutre / Quand quelqu’un lui disait bonsoir / Il répondait ‘j’veux rien savoir.’”³⁷ In mentioning that his chief smelled like sauerkraut, he makes an allusion to the Germans and, perhaps, the Nazis. This comparison does not paint a positive picture of the French armed forces, just as the “CRS = SS” slogan of May 1968 did not reflect positively on the *Companies Républicaines de Sécurité*. However, on top of this allusion,

³⁷ “The chief, who smelled of sauerkraut / bawled out the slackers. / When someone told him goodnight / He responded, ‘I don’t want to know.’” “Paroles Le Service Militaire,” *Paroles.net*.

the narrator also mentions how the recruits would say goodnight to their chief, and he would respond rudely or brush them off. In this description, the narrator's chief disregards attempts from the recruits to interact on a human level. He rejects their politeness with brusque apathy, refusing to engage in even a basic conversation. Through describing this chief in an unlikeable way, the narrator demonstrates this is an individual he does not respect. Therefore, the narrator is demonstrating anti-hierarchy and anti-authority sentiments by condemning the conduct and personality of his superior, whom he should respect, which falls in line with the more general anti-authority feelings of May.

The anti-authority and anti-hierarchical content of "Le service militaire" resembles the attitudes demonstrated by individuals participating in the events of May 1968. Through sarcastically proclaiming his love for the police and the military, criticizing the government and mandatory military service in general, describing how the military turns people into morons, and providing a negative portrayal of officers in the military, the narrator of "Le service militaire" reveals his attitudes towards this hierarchy- and authority-focused institution. In a similar fashion, the protesters of May demonstrated anti-authority and anti-hierarchy sentiments, both in general, by going on strike and participating in demonstrations, and, specifically, by referring to the military. Not only did student protesters similarly attack the police, physically and by comparing the CRS to the SS, certain protesters were expelled from their schools for distributing materials that were against conscription.³⁸ Aside from this action being anti-military and against a hierarchical institution, this is also anti-authority in a more general sense due to the fact that conscription was a law decreed by the French government. More generally, again, May

³⁸ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 189.

1968's catalyst was a protest of military action in Vietnam, showing an inherent anti-military element. In conclusion, anti-military, anti-authority, and anti-hierarchy attitudes can be found in Pierre Perret's "Le service militaire" as well as in the actions of those involved in the May 1968 protests.

Opposition to hierarchy and authority were key aspects of the May 1968 protests in France, and these ideas can also be found in popular French songs of the 1960s, with specific overlap present in the realms of opposition to the contemporary education system and the military. Antoine's "Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux" demonstrates general anti-authority attitudes through his incessant desire to portray himself as an individual and in contrast to 'mainstream' French society by rebelling against typical values and norms. More specifically, Christophe's "Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur" contains sentiments similar to those prominent in May 1968 in that it criticizes a classic figure of authority, the teacher, and it discusses a student's difficulties connecting with the curriculum taught in his classroom, as curriculum, discipline, and university reforms were important issues of the student-led protests leading up to and during May.³⁹ Addressing another aspect of the May protests in particular, Pierre Perret's "Le service militaire" contains attitudes that resemble those present during May 1968 due to the narrator's sarcastic and negative discussion of the police, of the military and government, of mandatory military service, and of military officials, and the protestors of May opposed the police, the government, and of the policy of conscription. In summary, the protestors of May 1968 demonstrate anti-authority and anti-hierarchy attitudes, both in general and specifically in the realms of education and the military; in a parallel manner, these popular

³⁹ Reynolds, "May/June 1968 and the French University System," 87-88; Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 189; Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought*, 19.

songs in France in the 1960s, "Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux," "Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur," and "Le service militaire" all demonstrate homologous anti-authority and anti-hierarchy positions, whether generally or pertaining to education or the military, years before the events of May.

CHAPTER II

ANTI-CAPITALIST AND ANTI-INEQUALITY ATTITUDES

A major cause of the unrest of May 1968, according to Jean-François Sirinelli, was the changing state of French society as a result of unprecedented economic growth. About a decade after the Second World War, the French economy began to experience a post-war boom, with the economy growing about 5% per year.¹ This affected the way of life of many French people, and *Newsweek* commented in 1964, “France is light-years away from where it was during the beginning of the 1950s.”² A tangible example of the changes that this meant for many people is, simply, to look at the number of washing machines owned by French households. In 1954, only 8.4% of households had a washing machine, but, in 1968, just eighteen years later, 49.9% of households owned one.³ These rapid changes in the way of life of most French people during *Les trente glorieuses*, the thirty years post-World War II, are evident in French music of the 1960s, regardless of whether or not these changes are portrayed as positive or negative.

The growing-pains of France during *Les trente glorieuses* are evident in French popular music of the 1960s. Just a few examples of songs mentioning or reflecting these changes in French society are Claude François’s “Chaque jour c’est la même chose,” which focuses on the fast-pace at which the narrator works, reflects the repetitive nature of his job, and mentions how he takes pills to help him to forget these facts, and “La montagne”

¹ In comparison, average growth of Western economies is about 1% per year. Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 40-41.

² “La France est à des années-lumière de ce qu’elle était au début des années 50,” Ibid, 99.

³ Ibid, 101.

by Jean Ferrat, which contrasts life in the country with living in an “H.L.M.,” low-cost, project-style housing, eating “*poulet aux hormones*.”⁴ At the same time, there are artists like Sheila, one of the most popular *yé-yé* idols of the decade, who paint the modernization in a more positive manner. In her song, “L’heure de la sortie,” she sings, “L’heure de la sortie, / C’est le meilleur moment de la journée. / Pourtant nous sommes ravis en sommes / D’avoir choisi un métier qui nous plait,” describing how she and her group of friends work in jobs they enjoy but are, still, thrilled to be able to go home after work.⁵ Work and economic changes in France were an often-discussed topic in French music of the 1960s, which reflects the rapid changes of the time period. It is important to realize how modernization, capitalism, and a flourishing consumer society would come to affect France over the course of the 1960s, and these changes are part of the backdrop against which May 1968 occurs.

What is one of the most remarkable elements of May 1968, but often forgotten, is the widespread nature of its events, as millions of workers went on strike all over France.⁶ According to Sirinelli, their numbers dwarfed those of the students, with 600,000 students participating in May to, by his estimate, 7.5 million workers becoming involved, though the collective memory of May 1968 seems to focus on the actions of the students.⁷ Considering that “all regions of France... were touched by labor unrest in the years immediately preceding May ’68,” the fact that these worker uprisings occurred should not

⁴ “Paroles Chaque jour c’est la même chose,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 17, 2016.

<http://www.paroles.net/claude-francois/paroles-chaque-jour-c-est-la-meme-chose>;

“Paroles La Montagne – Jean Ferrat,” *Parolesmania.com*, accessed October 17, 2016.

http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles_jean_ferrat_15393/paroles_la_montagne_487230.html.

⁵ “The time we get out / is the best moment of the day, / although we are happy to have finally chosen / a job we like.” “Paroles Sheila L’heure de la sortie,” *Paroles-musique.com*, accessed October 17, 2016.

http://www.paroles-musique.com/paroles-Sheila-LHeure_De_La_Sortie-lyrics,p36930

⁶ Ross, *May ’68 and Its Afterlives*, 11.

⁷ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 193.

be terribly surprising.⁸ What is surprising, though, is how the unity between the students and the workers managed to paralyze France during the months of May and June. Sirinelli points out the importance of this alliance, considering how little these groups overlapped; the vast majority of French adolescents do not attend university in 1965, and, in 1960, only “2.5% of [factory] workers’ children and 1.5% of agricultural workers’ children obtained the *baccalauréat*,” which is necessary for going on to university in France.⁹ While the world of university students and the world of workers rarely intersected, there must have been common ground between them in order for the events of May 1968 to occur.

This common element appears to be opposition to capitalism and the inequalities that rose from the contemporary economic system. The students of Nanterre, which was the powder keg ignited by the spark of the Vietnam War protests, were well-aware of the distance between their lives and that of the immigrant workers whose slums they walked by every day in order to get to their university campus.¹⁰ This “daily lesson in uneven development” was one of the foremost causes of May, as described by Henri Lefebvre.¹¹ The anti-inequality aspects of May also become apparent when looking at the compromises between the workers’ unions and the managerial unions on the topic of pay. On Monday, May 27, 1968, it was announced that the minimum hourly wage in France, *le SMIG*, was to go up by 35%, from 2.22 to 3 francs per hour and that salaries would go up by 10% for those not affected by the hourly increases.¹² Since these reforms would make wages rise for workers, wealth would be more equally distributed than it was before. Considering this

⁸ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 32.

⁹ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 98, 204.

¹⁰ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 95.

¹¹ Quoted in Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 95.

¹² Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 273.

was a compromise between the workers and the managers of France, it would be safe to say that the workers probably had loftier or more radical ideas in mind, which would further demonstrate the anti-equality sentiments of May 1968.

Similarly, the anti-capitalist sentiments of May are shown through some of the slogans and images the workers and students used. Students adopted, for example, “black flags, barricades, occupations,” all traditionally radical, workers’ symbols, and the “CRS=SS” slogan, which was used in a strike by miners in 1947-1948.¹³ In addition, the students of Nanterre penned a “collectively-written manifesto” on April 22nd, leading up to May 1968, which “called for the rejection of the capitalist-technocratic university and for solidarity for the working class.” This desire for solidarity and explicit anti-capitalist and anti-technocratic rhetoric shows the worker-student unity and anti-capitalist sentiments that were a hall-mark of May 1968. To be even more specific, on May 24, 1968, during a demonstration from the Gare de Lyon to the Bastille, the slogan “No success is definitive in a capitalist regime” and the statements “No parliamentary solutions where de Gaulle leaves and management stays” and “No to negotiations at the top that only prolong a moribund capitalism” were chanted or endorsed by all groups participating in the protest. This fact, as it is stated by Kristin Ross, demonstrates the student and worker opposition to the prevailing capitalist order.¹⁴

Interestingly enough, several popular French songs of the 1960s carry similar anti-capitalist and anti-inequality ideas. “Sacré dollar,” written by Fernand Bonifay and performed by Les missiles, for example, is critical of greed and competition for wealth and rejects the idea of participation in this competition, though it is an adaptation of

¹³ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 107.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 69.

“Greenback dollar,” a song originally in English, written by Hoyt Axton and performed by the Kingston Trio, among others.¹⁵ In addition, Henri Salvador’s “Le travail c’est la santé” is another song that is critical of capitalism in that it connects the ideas of working diligently in a capitalist system with missing the pleasures of life; Salvador repeatedly associates work and death. Finally, “Et moi et moi et moi” by Jacques Dutronc contains anti-inequality content, as this song repeatedly highlights the differences between the lives of the *petite-bourgeoisie* and the experiences of millions of others around the world. All of these songs contain anti-capitalist or anti-inequality sentiments, which were also key elements of May 1968, several years after the writing, recording, and popularity of these songs.

The narrator of 1964’s “Sacré dollar,” a pop-y, harmonious song by Les missiles, demonstrates anti-capitalist attitudes through denouncing others’ desire to amass wealth and drawing a distinction between these individuals and himself.¹⁶ He begins by making observations on capitalist greed around him: “Je vois faire autour de moi / N’importe quoi / Pour toucher quelques billets.”¹⁷ People will do “anything” just to have small, fleeting amounts of money, pointing at the widespread, corrupting power of wealth in the society around him. By separating himself from the group of people who would give up their morals to “get their hands on a few dollars,” the narrator shows his apathy towards a system

¹⁵ “Sacré dollar,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed October 17, 2016.

<http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/33352.html>; Myrna Oliver, “Hoyt Axton, Singer, Character Actor and Hit Songwriter Dies,” *Los Angeles Times*, published October 27, 1999, accessed on October 16, 2016. <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/oct/27/news/mn-26812>

¹⁶ “Top – Janvier 1964,” *Top.france.free.fr*, from Fabrice Ferment, *40 ans de tubes 1960-2000 : Les meilleurs ventes de 45 tours & CD Singles*, (Clichy : Larivière, 2001), accessed October 17, 2016. <http://top.france.free.fr/html/1964/0164.htm>.

¹⁷ “I see people around me do / anything / to get their hands on a few dollars.” “Les Missiles/Sacré Dollar,” *Fr.lyrics.wikia.com*, accessed October 15, 2016. http://fr.lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Les_Missiles/Sacr%C3%A9_dollar

where greed runs rampant. Similarly, in the chorus, the narrator states, “Oui, c’est fou ce qu’on fait pour t’avoir / Sacré Dollar / Ça me fait rigoler.”¹⁸ He describes laughing at how money causes others around him to act, changing their behavior to the point where he describes it as “crazy.” Recognizing the absurdity of how money alters the behavior of other individuals, the narrator steps back and finds it worth laughing about. In refusing to take the power of money and capitalism seriously, the narrator undermines these ideas and demonstrates anti-capitalist attitudes.

Continuing to describe the effects on capitalism upon the people around him, the narrator further emphasizes its negative aspects. In the second verse, the narrator tells of the troubles capitalism has caused him, personally, in his love life. Stating, “elle m’avait promis de m’aimer / Même à moitié fauché / Mais d’autres avaient ce que moi... moi je n’ai pas,” he mentions how the desire for money and material objects caused his love interest to break promises and leave him.¹⁹ Not only does this show the consequences of competition for wealth in a more personal way, it highlights the idea that every aspect of life is affected by the influence of capitalism. As the slogan used in the protest on May 24th, 1968, says, “No success is definitive in a capitalist regime,” and, for the narrator, this even includes romantic success.²⁰ Even if his romantic interest promised to be with him, the narrator finds himself alone as a result of a capitalist world where greed influences morality, and he cannot match up with those who have wealth.

¹⁸ “It’s crazy what we’ll do to get you / good, old dollar. / It makes me laugh.” Ibid. It is worth noting the double-meaning of “sacré” in this context. According to Larousse Dictionary, “Sacré” can mean sacred, as in holy, or it can intensify the meaning of another word, like “damn” in the phrase “damn good” before a noun, though it can work also to intensify a negative. In attempt to capture these two meanings, I have selected “good, old dollar,” as to capture the ‘good’ or ‘sacred’ sense of sacré without losing the intensifying or even potentially sarcastic aspect of it.

¹⁹ “She promised to love me, / even half-broke. / But others had what I didn’t.” Ibid.

²⁰ Ross, *May ‘68 and Its Afterlives*, 69.

The narrator in Les missiles' "Sacré dollar" demonstrates anti-capitalist sentiments because of his negative illustration of contemporary capitalism through showing divisions between himself and those who participate and thrive in the current system. In fact, the narrator of this song appears to entirely reject the idea of participating in capitalism after seeing these behaviors. Later in the song, he states, "Pour moi seulement le vrai bonheur / Est au fond de mon cœur / Si l'on croit que je n'ai rien / J'ai mes copains" and "pour eux je donnerais... / le monde entier sans regret," showing that the only wealth that he needs is the wealth of friendship.²¹ Again, he is placing in opposition his existence to those who do have material possessions. In stating that he would give "the whole world" to his friends, it is to directly contrast himself with those who are only interested in acquiring material possessions or the money necessary to acquire them. By doing this, the narrator demonstrates that he does not accept the competition and greed of capitalism, as he would share or give anything to his friends. It is because of this distinction between himself, generous and focused on friendship, and those who desire wealth, willing to do whatever is necessary to obtain it, that the narrator of "Sacré dollar" appears to harbor anti-capitalist sentiments, which were an important part of May 1968.

Furthermore, the narrator describes how his life differs from that of those who participate in capitalism. Towards the end of the song, he personifies money, speaking to it directly: "Malgré tout, tu n'as pas pu m'avoir / Sacré dollar / J'ai gardé ma guitare / Je fais des chansons / avec l'horizon / Et si je les chante au hasard... / C'est pas pour toi, sacré

²¹ "For me the only happiness / is in the bottom of my heart. / If they think I have nothing / I have my friends" and "For them I'd give... / the whole without regrets." "Les Missiles/Sacré Dollar." *Fr.lyrics.wikia.com*, accessed October 15, 2016.
http://fr.lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Les_Missiles/Sacr%C3%A9_dollar

dollar.”²² In contrast to those who were ensnared by the charms of wealth, the narrator declares that he does not care about the power of money. Regardless of how much wealth he could amass by having a more traditional career, the narrator prefers to be musician, wandering into the horizon. By choosing to work as a free-spirited musician instead of fulfilling the role of a worker in a capitalist system, the narrator situates himself outside of this system. Refusing to participate as a ‘functional’ piece in capitalist society, the narrator of Les missiles’ “Sacré dollar” rejects the system of capitalism, criticizing it and its participants.

The anti-capitalist sentiments of this song become further apparent when comparing it to its original, English version, “Greenback Dollar,” written by Hoyt Axton and performed by the Kingston Trio in 1962.²³ This version focuses much more on the idea of being a traveling singer than on the impacts of wealth. A major part of “Greenback Dollar” is the social rejection and isolation of the narrator, which is in major contrast to the focus on friendship in “Sacré Dollar”: “I’ve learned that a bottle of brandy and a song / The only ones who ever care, poor boy.”²⁴ While the narrator of “Sacré dollar” uses friendship to show how little money matters to him, the narrator of “Greenback Dollar” has learned not to care about friendship and, instead, focuses on living life on the road. Similarly to the narrator in “Sacré dollar,” this traveling existence demonstrates a lack of attachment to material objects, to amassing wealth, or to living a traditional, capitalist existence.

²² “In spite of everything, you couldn’t manage to get me / good, old dollar. / I kept my guitar / I make music / with the horizon / and if I sing haphazardly... / it’s not for you, good, old dollar.” Ibid.

²³ Oliver, “Hoyt Axton, Singer, Character Actor and Hit Songwriter Dies,” *Los Angeles Times*.

²⁴ “The Kingston Lyrics- Greenback Dollar,” *Oldielyrics.com*, accessed October 17, 2016.
http://www.oldielyrics.com/lyrics/the_kingston_trio/greenback_dollar.html

At the same time, however, this individual will still participate in the capitalist system, with the narrator stating, “And I don’t give a damn about a greenback dollar, spend it as fast as I can.”²⁵ By still obtaining money and spending it, his wealth still flows through the system, allowing capitalism to continue. In contrast, the narrator of “Sacré dollar” makes no mention of receiving or spending money, though others in the song do. While this may situate the French version of this song less in reality than in a fantasy of a world where not participating in capitalism is possible, it does show a commitment to the idea that money is a corrupting force that is to be rejected. If anything, “Greenback Dollar” is much more focused on the sentiments of isolation and apathy, as well as giving the impression of the narrator embracing a beatnik or hobo-esque traveling, destitute lifestyle than on making a statement about capitalism. By comparing “Sacré dollar” with its original, English-language counterpart, “Greenback Dollar,” the anti-capitalist sentiments behind the former become more apparent. The narrator of “Sacré dollar” criticizes greed, rejects competition for wealth, and refuses to participate in the capitalist system, which are all elements that demonstrate an anti-capitalist message, resembling the anti-capitalist ideas and sentiments that played an important role in the May 1968 student and worker uprisings.

Anti-capitalist sentiments also appear in Henri Salvador’s 1965 hit, “Le travail c’est la santé.”²⁶ Born in the Caribbean, Salvador is well-known in France for his lengthy career and his comedy-driven music.²⁷ Like many of his popular songs of this decade, “Le travail c’est la santé” is written by Maurice Pon and meant to be humorous, but this song, in

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “Le travail c’est la santé,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed October 17, 2016. <http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/12665.html>

²⁷ “Discography- Henri Salvador,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed October 17, 2016. <http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/artiste/4149.html>

particular, pokes fun at and criticizes the capitalist culture that pushes individuals to work long hours.²⁸ Because of this, it appears to reflect some of the anti-capitalist sentiments that would later appear in the attitudes and events of May 1968. “Le travail c’est la santé” lampoons capitalist culture for placing too much emphasis on work and forcing its workers to miss out on the pleasures of life. Aside from this tongue-in-cheek message, the lyrics of “Le travail c’est la santé” also repeatedly equate work with death, demonstrating the darker side of this capitalist, hard-working way of life.²⁹ Similarly to sentiments central to May 1968, this work by Salvador is critical of the capitalist culture that focuses on productivity over the well-being over workers.

Beginning with describing how capitalist production is harmful to workers’ enjoyment of life, Salvador’s song begins with an observation of the behaviors of those around him. He sings, “Ces gens qui courent au grand galop / En auto, métro ou vélo / Vont-ils voir un film rigolo ? / Mais non, ils vont à leur boulot.”³⁰ By describing people rushing by, hustling to get somewhere, the narrator expects them to be heading to a place they want to be or to something they would enjoy doing, like going to “watch a funny movie.” Somewhat ironically, the narrator remarks that these people are, instead, rushing to work. It is the idea that these people are hurrying to get to a place where they do not necessarily want to be is used to make this song humorous, but it also points out that these people could be doing more enjoyable activity than working. Because these people are stressing themselves out, worrying about their tardiness to work, they are, in a way, robbed

²⁸ “Le travail c’est la santé,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*.

²⁹ Adding to this, it is difficult to ignore the similarity between the title of this song and the sinister phrase that could be found on the gate leading to the concentration camp at Auschwitz, “*Arbeit macht frei*” or “work will set you free.”

³⁰ “These people who run, galloping/in cars, on subways, or on bikes. / Are they going to see an amusing film? / But no, they’re going to work.” “Paroles Le travail c’est la santé,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 17, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/henri-salvador/paroles-le-travail-c-est-la-sante/>

of the time to “go see a funny movie,” which would be a more amusing or uplifting way to spend their time. The narrator directly contrasts working with going to see a comedic film, demonstrating that working is not an enjoyable activity and takes up the time of workers to participate in activities they appreciate more.

Later in the song, the narrator of Henri Salvador’s “Le travail c’est la santé” tells an anecdote that is similarly critical of the over-productivity of workers at the cost of enjoying life. He describes a hard-working village but is sure to mention the downfalls of working as hard as they do: “Maintenant dans le plus petit village / Les gens travaillent comme des sauvages / Pour se payer tout le confort / Quand ils l’ont, eh bien, ils sont morts.”³¹ Even though the inhabitants of this village work as hard as they possibly can to earn money to spend on material objects, they do not get to enjoy them. This relates to the idea that obtaining consumer goods, such as washing machines or dishwashers, will give more free time to their owners. Though these “comforts” are paid for, the fact that these workers spent all their time working tremendously hard to obtain them, therefore living an uncomfortable existence with little free time, is part of where the humor comes from in this anecdote. The other part of the humor in this portion of the song arises from the idea that these people worked diligently, spent their hard-earned money on these commodities, and now cannot even enjoy them. The narrator, in a way, is suggesting that it would have been a better use of the workers’ time to enjoy life while they still had time to live it instead of focusing on material objects. Because of this criticism of over-productivity in “Le travail c’est la santé,” this 1965 hit appears to demonstrate anti-capitalist sentiments that are akin to those found in May 1968. Considering that, during May, workers stopped working or

³¹ “Now, in the smallest village/People work like beasts/to pay for all their comforts/When they get them, well, they’re dead.” Ibid.

acting specifically as agents of production in a capitalist system, they rebelled against this system by refusing to be productive. The narrator's criticism of over-productivity and the workers' actions to halt productivity both demonstrate opposition to the French capitalist system.

Continuing to reveal his anti-capitalist sentiments, the narrator of "Le travail c'est la santé" often mentions working diligently and death together, showing these ideas as related. Aside from the above example, where the people toiling away for material objects are dead before they can enjoy them, the narrator also provides another anecdote on the harmful nature of working too hard: "Hommes d'affaires et meneurs de foule / Travaillent à en perdre la boule / Et meurent d'une maladie de cœur / C'est très rare chez les pétanqueurs."³² Those are participating too fervently, according to the narrator, in the capitalist system die of heart problems that those who lead a more calm, leisurely life, taking the time to play *pétanque* regularly, do not seem to have. The narrator, it appears, suggests that fulfilling a capitalist function leads to death, while leisure activities, like *pétanque*, does not. Associating death with a particular act is not a positive portrayal of this act. Therefore, these lines paint a negative picture of capitalism, which was a primary target of the May 1968 protests. As such, "Le travail c'est la santé" contains similar anti-capitalist sentiments to those present and integral to the events of May 1968.

Another example of this association of work with death and negativity can be found in the chorus of "Le travail c'est la santé." The phrase "Les prisonniers du boulot / Ne font

³² "Businessmen and leaders of crowds/work like crazy/and die of a heart condition/very rare in *pétanqueurs*." Note: *pétanqueurs* are players of the game *pétanque*, also known as *boules* or *bocce*, who tend to be older, retired men. These lines are actually a play-on-words, as those who work too much, unlike those who play *boules*, lose their *boule* (head). Ibid.

pas de vieux os" is repeated multiple times throughout this song.³³ While short and sweet, these couple of lines demonstrate just how negatively the narrator views work. "Prisonniers du boulot" is a phrase that points to the idea that workers are trapped in their jobs, unable to escape work, and not involved in their jobs by choice. This begins the negative portrayal of work, but the second half of this couplet, "ne font pas de vieux os" completes the picture. The second phrase repeats the concept that work will cause the demise of those who are "prisoners of" their jobs, just like the narrator describes in the previous line. Discussing how a particular activity that one is forced to do or is trapped into doing will bring death upon its participants does not paint this activity in a positive light. Because of these references to death along with describing those who work too hard, the narrator of "Le travail c'est la santé" criticizes the capitalist system that made this situation arise. Anti-capitalist sentiments were also a main tenant of the workers and students participating in the May 1968 protests.

Due to the fact that the narrator of Henri Salvador's "Le travail c'est la santé" connects the idea of being over-productive with missing the little pleasures of life and with death, this song contains anti-capitalist attitudes. Anti-capitalist slogans, activities, and manifests were all notable facets of May 1968, not to mention the disruptions to the capitalist order caused by the strike of millions of French workers. Even though Salvador's song is humorous, it discusses fairly dark, serious subject matter, which turned out to be serious enough to be one of the main causes at the center of the events of May.

Another rather tongue-in-cheek song that demonstrates ideas that ended up being fundamental to the events of May 1968 is Jacques Dutronc's debut single, "Et moi et moi

³³ "Prisoners of work / don't live long." Ibid.

et moi.” One of the first French rock stars to sing texts originally written in French, Jacques Dutronc is well-known for his catchy songs and his attitude. His first popular single, 1966’s “Et moi et moi et moi,” in particular, was written by Jacques Lanzmann, who was directed by Jacques Wolfsohn, a higher-up at the Vogue record label, to write a song in the same vein as Antoine’s “Les élucubrations.”³⁴ The result is a three-chord hit song with a fairly cynical tone that discusses *petit-bourgeois* life in comparison to lives of others around the world. “Et moi et moi et moi” juxtaposes the cushy, *petit-bourgeois* lifestyle with the less-than-cushy lives of millions of other people, thereby demonstrating the inequalities in the world, a key factor in the causes of May 1968.

“Et moi et moi et moi” highlights the differences in how the narrator lives and how millions of others live, illustrating the height of his privileged life. He remarks, “Neuf cent millions de crève-la-faim / Et moi et moi et moi / Avec mon régime végétarien / Et tout le whisky que je m’envoie.”³⁵ Opening this verse with the mention of nine-hundred million people who are starving to death, the narrator draws attention to the people in the world who are much less fortunate than himself. He quickly follows this statement with a description of his particular diet and the luxury of drinking all of the whiskey that he can, enjoying the ability to choose what he eats and drinks while other people do not even have enough food to keep themselves alive. Through juxtaposing these two ideas, of people literally starving to death and of this *petit-bourgeois* narrator who elects to forgo what the

³⁴ The “intended meaning” of this song is highly questionable. While Leydier makes it sound as if Wolfsohn was intending for this song to be a “parody” of Antoine, Lanzmann and Dutronc seem to have been ignorant of this desire, as Lanzmann supposedly was just aiming to make a song that would have a protest-song air to it to compete with Antoine, who was very successful at the time. In any case, this song was just as popular, if not slightly more popular, than “Les élucubrations,” regardless of its “intended meaning.” Michel Leydier, *Jacques Dutronc, La Bio*, (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 2010), 91-92.

³⁵ “900 million starving people/and me, and me, and me/with my vegetarian diet/and all the whisky that I can knock back.” “Paroles Et moi et moi et moi,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 17, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/jacques-dutronc/paroles-et-moi-et-moi-et-moi>.

latter individuals would be desperate to have, the narrator reveals the inequalities that exist between his lifestyle and that of those less fortunate than him. Mentioning these differences demonstrates his consciousness of this situation, though there is little that he can do about it, so he goes on with his life.³⁶ Acknowledging and becoming conscious of the inequalities that exist in the world was one of the key contributing factors for the student of the University of Nanterre to radicalize and rebel against the capitalist order in their May 1968 protests.³⁷

Continuing to point out how his existence is vastly different from those of others with less privileged lives, the narrator remarks, for example, on race. While he begins another verse with, "Trois ou quatre cent millions de noirs," he continues it with "Et moi et moi et moi / Qui vais au brunissoir / Au sauna pour perdre du poids."³⁸ By stating he goes to the tanning salon right after he mentions the existence of millions of people with darker complexions, he draws attention to the hypocrisy of, as a *petit-bourgeois*, white Frenchman, wanting to look more brown while millions of others are discriminated against precisely because their skin is dark. He then rounds out this recognition of inequality, he conveys that he goes to the sauna, in addition the tanning salon, in order to lose weight. In referencing his need to lose weight, the narrator is, once more, describing the difference between his life and the lives of many others, as the set of lines about hundreds of millions

³⁶ Every verse of this song ends with "j'y pense et puis j'oublie / C'est la, c'est la vie," the implications of which are discussed later in this section. Ibid.

³⁷ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 95.

³⁸ "Three or four hundred million black people" ... "and me and me and me / who go to the tanning salon / to the sauna to lose weight." While most of the definitions I found of "brunissoir" related to implements used to polish metal, this translation of "brunissoir" made little sense for this context. Considering "brunir" can also mean "to make brown" and the ending "-oir" is often attached to verb stems with the intent to transform the meaning of a word into the location where this verb occurs, it was more logical to understand this word in this context as "place where people are made brown;" this therefore led me to the translation of "brunissoir" as 'tanning salon.' "Paroles Et moi et moi et moi," *Paroles.net*. <http://www.paroles.net/jacques-dutronc/paroles-et-moi-et-moi-et-moi>.

of people starving to death are just a few verses away from this comment. The narrator of “Et moi et moi et moi” highlights the gap between his privileged life and the life of the underprivileged, showing a consciousness of the inequalities in the world, whether these inequalities be in the realm of race or income.

This narrator continues to describe the disparity between his life experiences and the experiences of millions of the world’s inhabitants. He makes comments that can be taken as a realization that he has the privilege of not experiencing war: “Cinquante millions de vietnamiens / Et moi et moi et moi / Le dimanche à la chasse au lapin / Avec mon fusil, je suis le roi.”³⁹ While he gets to spend his Sundays leisurely hunting rabbits with his gun, his mention of fifty million Vietnamese people to contrast this occurrence appears to point to the narrator’s awareness of the Vietnam War, which was escalating in 1966. While the narrator gets to “be the king” with his gun, using a firearm for what is largely considered a sport of the upper-classes, rabbit-hunting, the Vietnamese people have to consider guns as a deadly object, used for war rather than leisure activities. The narrator thus appears further aware of the vast differences between his experiences and those of others, at least fleetingly, resulting in a consciousness similar to that of students at Nanterre that helped spur the events of May 1968.

As a result of the juxtapositions between the lives of the impoverished, those who face racial discrimination, those who experience war, and those who can manage to have a vegetarian diet, go tanning, and hunt for rabbits in his spare time, “Et moi et moi et moi” makes apparent the inequalities in the world. In a similar manner, the students of Nanterre leading up to May 1968 received a “daily lesson in uneven development” by passing by

³⁹ “Fifty million Vietnamese people / and me and me and me / On Sundays, rabbit hunting / with my gun, I’m the king.” Ibid.

immigrant workers' camps near the university, which helped result in the events of May through raising these individuals' consciousness of the inequalities in the world and in the French economy.⁴⁰ It is worth making the observation, though, that this song also appears to be quite critical of 'protest singers,' perhaps like Antoine, through the act of pointing out inequalities, mentioning them, then forgetting them rather than taking action, considering the repetition of "j'y pense et puis j'oublie" after every verse.⁴¹ At the same time, the writer of this song had to become conscious of these inequalities in order to write about them and in order to criticize other people for pointing them out but taking no further action than that, a consciousness which he disseminates in musical form. Regardless of the over-all 'intended' message of this hit, "Et moi et moi et moi" contains lines demonstrating consciousness of inequalities in the world that resemble the consciousness of "uneven development" that helped spur the anti-capitalist sentiment of May 1968.⁴²

As illustrated by "Sacré dollar," "Le travail c'est la santé," and "Et moi et moi et moi," several French popular songs of the 1960s contained anti-capitalist or anti-inequality attitudes, which were important in causing and were highly present during the events of May 1968. Les missiles' "Sacré dollar," for example, contains anti-capitalist sentiments in that it is critical of the greed and the competition for wealth that arises from capitalist systems, and the narrator of this song seeks to distance himself from those who are involved with this competition. "Le travail c'est la santé," as performed by Henri Salvador, shows anti-capitalist ideas due to the fact that its narrator repeatedly refers to hardworking, well-

⁴⁰ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 95.

⁴¹ "I think about it, then I forget." "Paroles et moi et moi et moi" *Paroles.net*. This cynical, attack-from-the-sidelines attitude is fairly typical of Dutronc's politics. For example, in September of 1968, he released "L'opportuniste," mocking the political flip-flopping that occurred during and after May 1968, an event on which he refuses to express an opinion. Leydier, *Jacques Dutronc, La Bio*, 123-124.

⁴² Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 95.

behaved, capitalist workers missing the pleasures of life and equates working diligently with dying prematurely. Finally, Jacques Dutronc's "Et moi et moi et moi" juxtaposes the suffering of millions of people around the world with the thriving of the narrator, a *petit-bourgeois* Parisian, revealing consciousness of the inequalities that exist in the world, while a similar consciousness helped drive students at Nanterre to adopt anti-capitalist positions that helped cause and were very present during May 1968.

CHAPTER III

FOREIGN AND INTERNATIONALIST IDEAS

The consciousness of inequalities demonstrated in Jacques Dutronc's "Et moi et moi et moi" is related to the opening of France to the influences of the larger world. It is precisely because the narrator in "Et moi et moi et moi" is aware of the experiences of others, regardless of nationality, that he manages to reflect on his own experiences and recognize his own, privileged position in the world. This widening of consciousness is evident in many other songs popular in France in the 1960s, and they played a fundamental role in causing May 1968.

According to Kristin Ross, awareness of the larger world and its injustices was a major cause for May, as well as one of its most forgotten aspects. As it was mentioned in the previous section, Nanterre was built near slums filled with immigrant workers, transforming students' trips to and from classes into this "daily lesson in uneven development."¹ Aside from this, Ross names the "colonial subject," along with the worker, as the "lost figures of May," as she views them as integral to the explanation of its events.² Considering how protests against the War in Vietnam were the spark for the rest of May, the importance of students' rising consciousness of the rest of the world, particularly the third world, should not be ignored. Anti-Vietnam activities will be specifically discussed in the next chapter, but it is worth mentioning that the demonstrations against the War in Vietnam were based on the idea of "knowing the war by reverberation," as were all pro-

¹ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 95.

² *Ibid*, 215.

third world sentiments at this point. France was not directly implicated in the War in Vietnam anymore; it was the American presence and the American violence against which the students were acting. It is because of this that the mobilization against the Vietnam War differs from that against the Algerian War. French people, either by association with the French government or through conscription, were directly implicated in the colonial war in Algeria during the 1950s and early 1960s in France. Divorced from relevance to the vast majority of French people, the Vietnam mobilizations were more symbolic than anything else, but they were also more demonstrative of the rising consciousness of the rest of the world because of the fact that the Vietnam War pertained less to French people than, say, the Algerian War, especially because student protestors seemed to ignore the historical role of France in Vietnam.³

Part of the student mobilizations against Vietnam, especially leading up to May, were the work of French Maoists, who, according to Ross, cared little about the tensions between Vietnam and China.⁴ Maoism grew popular in France as an alternative to the more Leninist leanings in French Communism, as represented by the French Communist Party during this period. An example of this growing popularity, and rising consciousness of the outside world, is the publishing of *Révolution*, “an anti-imperialist journal... between 1963 and 1965, whose first editorial was one of the first stirrings of Maoism in France,” let alone the Maoist groups forming in France during this period.⁵ The popularity of Maoism leading up to May 1968 can also be seen in the French New Wave film *La Chinoise* by Jean-Luc Godard, demonstrating, again, both the rising radicalism and the opening of young

³ Ibid, 98.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 80.

extreme-leftists to international influences. By May 1968, the popularity of Maoism was high enough that Ross reports documentary footage from May depicting “discussions in the courtyard of the Sorbonne, under enormous portraits of Mao and [Che] Guevara, between young and old debating the value of workers’ councils.”⁶ These two figures, both foreign nationals with radical anti-capitalist convictions, are testament of the international influences on display leading up to and during May.

At the same time, though, France was also opening up to American influences. While this may seem paradoxical, it is important to remember the vast scale of May, as well as its numerous causes, contributing factors, and influences. The “kaleidoscope” of May allows for these seemingly contradictory influences to interact and help shape this complex and multifaceted event. It is true that workers and anti-imperialist students were bound together by anti-American sentiments, providing common ground, but the influence of American counterculture upon France and the French youth should not be understated either.⁷ Sirinelli, for example, finds it “essential” to recognize that the “effervescence of... [American college] campuses was anterior to [May] 1968.”⁸ In the next few sentences, he notes “a larger porosity between the socio-cultural sensibilities from one side of the Atlantic to the other” starting in the 1960s, implying the influences of each group of students upon the other. More directly, certain individuals close to the media prior to and during May 1968 can attest to the importance of American influence upon its events, as Michel Drucker does in his text “Il était une fois la révolution.” Drucker, an extremely

⁶ Ibid, 189.

⁷ Ibid, 89.

⁸ “Aux États-Unis, l’effervescence des campus est antérieure à 1968... Ce principe d’antériorité est ici essentiel. Depuis plusieurs années, en effet, il existe une porosité plus grande entre les sensibilités socioculturelles de part de d’autre de l’Atlantique.” Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 125-126.

well-known French television personality, wrote this piece for a collection entitled *68 Nos Années Choc* describing his impressions and experiences leading up to May. He writes, “A brutal but romantic revolt, inherited here and there from America’s Flower Power, *le Pouvoir de la Fleur* against that of the gun in reaction to the Vietnam War... all surrounded by a political folk-song, brought by the American campuses,” demonstrating his perception of American influence especially leading up to the spark of May in a rather lyrical fashion.⁹ International influences on the events and attitudes of May 1968 cannot be discounted, whether they are in the form of awareness of colonial subjects, the rising popularity of Maoism, or countercultural styles and ideas arriving from America, and similar foreign influences can be found in the popular music of France in the 1960s.

From a more general standpoint, the up-tempo, grand “Emmenez-moi,” released in 1968 by Charles Aznavour, demonstrates a desire to experience a different way of life than the contemporary French existence through the narrator’s description of his potential existence in an idealized, exotic country.¹⁰ The narrator’s wish to change his lifestyle to resemble that of the lives of foreigners illustrates an opening of this narrator’s worldview to include other nations, which happened amongst many leading up to and during May 1968. Similarly, the narrator’s description of this faraway, exotic land also point to ideals that resemble those held by those involved with the events of May.

The narrator’s dream of this exotic, unnamed country begins when he spots sailors transporting fruits off of a ship that will soon return to this land. Thinking about his life in

⁹ “Révolte rude mais romantique, héritée pêle-mêle du *Flower Power* américain, le *Pouvoir de la Fleur* contre celui des fusils en réaction à la guerre du Viêtname... le tout bercé par un *folk-song* engagé, porté par les campus américains...” Michel Drucker, “Il était une fois la révolution,” in *68 Nos Années Choc*, ed. Patrick Mahé (Paris: Editions Plon, 2008), 97.

¹⁰ “Emmenez-moi,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed October 22, 2016. <http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/39738.html>.

comparison to his potential existence in this country, the narrator states, “Moi qui n’ai connu toute ma vie / Que le ciel du Nord / J’aimerais débarbouiller ce gris / En virant de bord.”¹¹ Describing his life as “gray,” the narrator evokes the idea that he lives a depressing, dreary existence in France. Because of this life, he desires a change, and entirely changing geographic location and lifestyle by stowing away on the coming ship is how he would like to cause it. The narrator, thus, equates leaving France with escaping all his worries, which is also demonstrated in the lines, “Je fuirai laissant là mon passé / Sans aucun remords.”¹² These lines, in the most basic sense, show how the narrator is attached to his desire to leave France, revealing his openness to the outside world. At the same time, the narrator also reveals his idealized notion of new life in this exotic country by deciding it would erase his past and troubles, even before describing the nation concretely.

When he does describe this faraway land, he mentions the most exotic, fantastic elements of it. Picturing a tropical paradise in contrast to his current, drab life, the narrator imagines “Unknown lands / And eternal summers / Where we live almost naked / On beaches.”¹³ Of course, this is not a realistic vision of life in this country, but this does show a different, desired way of life. It is this change in life that the narrator desires, and the inspiration of these changes is life in a foreign country, regardless of whether or not these are realistic ideas. This demonstrates the narrator’s openness to life in and lifestyles originating from foreign countries, which, in turn, is related to the more general concept of internationalism as it was manifested in May 1968.

¹¹ “Me, having known my whole life / Only the Northern skies / I’d like to wash away this grayness / By stowing away [on this ship].” “Paroles Emmenez-moi.” *Paroles.net*. Accessed October 22, 2016.

<http://www.paroles.net/charles-aznavour/paroles-emmenez-moi>

¹² “I’ll flee, leaving here my past / Without any remorse.” Ibid.

¹³ “De pays inconnus / Et d’éternels étés / Où l’on vit presque nu / Sur les plages” Ibid.

In addition, several the descriptions that the narrator provides of this fantasy country fall in line with ideals of May 1968. Julian Bourg suggests that some of “the ‘values’ of the movement included: imagination... enjoyment, freedom... non-utility, utopia, dreams, fantasies... and romance.”¹⁴ In imagining that he lives a peaceful life in eternal summer, nearly naked and on a beach, the narrator is demonstrating “imagination, enjoyment, freedom, non-utility, dreams, and fantasies,” at the very least. In another story of what his life in this imagined country would look like, the narrator describes, “Prenant la route qui mène / A mes rêves d’enfance / Sur des îles lointaines / Où rien n’est important / Que de vivre / Où les filles alanguies / Vous ravissent le cœur,” which, again, covers “freedom, non-utility, dreams, and romance” directly.¹⁵ In sharing similar ‘values’ with those who acted in May 1968, the narrator of “Emmenez-moi” resembles these later individuals.

Charles Aznavour’s “Emmenez-moi” demonstrates ideas similar to those present in May 1968 due to the narrator’s willingness to accept life and lifestyles coming from different parts of the world, with the characterization of these parts of the world containing similar ideas to the values of May, as described by Julian Bourg. While the resemblance between “Emmenez-moi” and May 1968 is relatively general, there are other popular French songs from the 1960s that are more specifically similar to the opening of minds to the outside world that happened before and during May 1968. The songs “San Francisco” by Johnny Hallyday and “Mao et moa” by Nino Ferrer, for example, both demonstrate vague consciousness of highly politicized events occurring in other countries, therefore

¹⁴ Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 7.

¹⁵ “Taking the road that leads / to my childhood dreams / on faraway isles / where nothing is important / except living where languid girls / steal your heart.” “Paroles Emmenez-moi.” *Paroles.net*.

showing a growing awareness of the larger world but reduce these events to merely their most kitsch or exotic elements. “San Francisco” addresses the counterculture movement in the United States, while “Mao et moa” arose from the context of the current of Maoism in France. As stated in the introduction, these two seemingly-paradoxical resemblances are, in fact, testament to the kaleidoscopic nature of May 1968.

In order to understand Johnny Hallyday’s “San Francisco” and its resemblance to attitudes present in May 1968, it is important to understand its context. While American influence pervaded popular music in France during the early 1960s, it changed leading up to May 1968. Anglo-Saxon influence, as Sirinelli calls it, was manifested in French music in mainly two forms during the early and mid-1960s, through the similar genres of *yé-yé* and rock ‘n’ roll.¹⁶ Johnny Hallyday, also known just as Johnny, is one of the most visible figures of these two genres and remains, even today, an incredibly famous and beloved celebrity and, still, one of France’s biggest rock stars.¹⁷

Well-known, at first, for his bad-boy persona, wearing a leather jacket and doing his best Elvis impression, Johnny Hallyday mostly recorded and performed French-language covers of American hits, like nearly any *yé-yé* or early French rock artist. As the 1960s went on, the Anglo-Saxon influence in popular music began to change, bringing in a more countercultural current and popularizing more folk-song or protest-song hits.¹⁸ Antoine, showing a more American countercultural persona than the *blouson noir* style of Johnny at the time, is a good example of this change. Antoine, in particular, wrote a lyric

¹⁶ Sirinelli, *Mai '68*, 125-126.

¹⁷ Actually, Johnny Hallyday’s is so well-known that a 2006 movie, entitled *Jean-Philippe*, depicts a comedic tale about one of Johnny’s fans waking up in a bizarre, alternate reality where Johnny Hallyday is not famous. Chris Tinker, “Rock ‘n’ Roll Stardom: Johnny Hallyday” in *Stardom in postwar France*, ed. John Gaffney and Diana Holmes, (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2007), 67.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 37.

about Johnny in his song “Les élucubrations,” starting a feud between the two artists.¹⁹ Johnny, rising to the challenge as his bad-boy image dictated, went after Antoine with a response song, “Cheveux longs, idées courtes,” that criticized both Antoine’s hippie-like appearance and the protest-songs he performed that were, according to him, ineffective in actually changing the world.²⁰ This clash of the more traditional rock ‘n’ roll star, popular notably among the lower classes of France, with the American-influenced, rebellious Antoine demonstrates these two currents of influence interacting.²¹ Barely even a year after this conflict began, Johnny Hallyday reinvented himself for the song “San Francisco,” a French-language adaptation of Scott Mckenzie’s hit of the same name.²² Clad in an Antoine-esque flowery shirt, Johnny’s new song sings the praises of the countercultural movement in San Francisco.²³ Touching on several typical countercultural ideas, “San Francisco,” while not being as blatantly anti-establishment or political as, say, Antoine’s music, Johnny’s version is more political than the American original.

Considering that the original “San Francisco” was written by John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas as the “ultimate advertisement for the [1967] Monterey Pop Festival,” it is relatively unsurprising that this version merely touches on the most inoffensive, generic aspects of the countercultural movement.²⁴ Mckenzie’s version

¹⁹ The lines in question are “Tout devrait changer tout le temps / Le monde serait bien plus amusant / On verrait des avions dans les couloirs du métro / Et Johnny Hallyday en cage à Médrano,” or “Everything should change all the time / The world would be a lot more entertaining / We’d see airplanes in metro stations / and Johnny Hallyday in a cage at Médrano,” with Médrano being a circus. “Paroles Les élucubrations,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 23, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/antoine/paroles-les-elucubrations-d-antoine>.

²⁰ “Paroles Cheveux longs, idées courtes,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 22, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/johnny-hallyday/paroles-cheveux-longs-et-idees-courtes>

²¹ Tinker, “Rock ‘n’ Roll Stardom,” 73.

²² Sirinelli, Mai 68, 232.

²³ *Ibid*, 81.

²⁴ “San Francisco,” *Scottmckenzie.info*, accessed October 24, 2016. <http://www.scottmckenzie.info/san-francisco.html>

repeatedly mentions “flowers,” “gentle people,” and a summertime “love-in.” This may be due to the countercultural movement in the United States being less radical than its European counterparts, but the nebulous American countercultural movement *was* tied to political positions, such as opposition to mass media, rejection of rapid industrialization and technocracy, opposition to the war in Vietnam, and support of movements for minority rights.²⁵ The closest that the original version of “San Francisco” gets to mentioning the political edge to the countercultural movement is in the lines “All across the nation such a strange vibration / People in motion / There’s a whole generation with a new explanation.”²⁶ A “new explanation” for what, exactly, is not explained, and these remarks are vague enough to be referring to nearly any sort of mass-cultural phenomenon, political or not.

In contrast, Johnny’s version is slightly more political and was slightly more popular than McKenzie’s version, with the former peaking at #2 and the latter peaking at #4 on their respective countries’ best-selling charts.²⁷ Johnny’s take on this hit still softens the political aspects of the counterculture.²⁸ For example, the narrator of the French version of the song touches on ‘hateful’ attitudes found around the world, “Tout comme eux vous direz non / A la haine aux passions / On est tous frères / sur cette Terre,” which is a fairly stereotypical, ‘brotherly-love’ depiction of hippies but apparently too political for

²⁵ The lack of mention of politics in San Francisco is particularly ironic considering San Francisco’s geographic proximity to Berkeley, California, a hot-bed for student activism and protest. Frédéric Rondeau, “Contre-Culture” *Socius*, accessed April 24, 2016. <http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/60-contre-culture>.

²⁶ “San Francisco,” *Scottmckenzie.info*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Rondeau, “Contre-Culture.”

Mckenzie's version.²⁹ While the narrator recognizes that individuals involved in the counterculture tended to display opposition to hate, presumably in the form of discrimination or war, this statement lacks the political edge of clarifying which hate, in particular, this movement was opposed to. On the other hand, this characterization of the hippie movement as "saying no / ...to passions" divorces the countercultural movement from its political context. Specifically because strong, open opposition to the Vietnam War was a hall-mark of this movement and an example of a position that required, at the very least, enough political passion to be informed about the war and form an opinion on the subject, to characterize the countercultural movement as devoid from passion is to soften and downplay its political aspects. Because of this vague description of the views of hippies, describing them as apathetic, the narrator of Johnny Hallyday's "San Francisco" is slightly more political than that of Scott Mckenzie's, though not nearly as pointed or political as the subject of the countercultural movement should be, considering it is an inherently political movement.³⁰

Vague, apolitical depictions of the countercultural movement can be found throughout the song, "San Francisco" by Johnny Hallyday and Scott Mckenzie. In lines not present or even remotely close to resembling those in Mckenzie's version, for example, the narrator of Johnny's version remarks, "Dans ce monde en fusion / Il y a trop d'explosions."³¹ He is abstractly referring to the contemporary, changing world, and the violence that occurs inside of it. In mentioning "explosions" in a song about the American

²⁹ "Like them, you'll say no / To hate, to passions / We are all brothers / On this Earth." "Paroles San Francisco," *Paroles.net*, accessed October 24, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/johnny-hallyday/paroles-san-francisco>

³⁰ Rondeau, "Contre-Culture."

³¹ "In this molten [changing] world / there are too many explosions." "Paroles San Francisco," *Paroles.net*.

countercultural movement, the narrator is probably making a reference to the Vietnam War but avoids naming it. As a result, Johnny's "San Francisco" flirts with the topic of anti-war attitudes in the countercultural movement in the United States without mentioning any specific, political positions that are inextricably linked to it, instead repeating statements the presence of "fleurs" and the "gentils" people in the movement.³²

At the same time, the narrator does note, though, a similar, rising movement in France: "A Paris comme San Francisco / On verra beaucoup de gens comme eux."³³ This statement is an observation of the international nature of growing countercultural movements, which is one of the most important aspects of this hit. "San Francisco," in itself, demonstrates this internationalism, considering how the entire song is about a movement happening in another country, showing a consciousness of the outside world. In fact, by vaguely mentioning a war that hippies would criticize, the narrator also demonstrates a roundabout consciousness of the Vietnam War and opposition to it. Because of the presence of international elements and a consciousness of the outside world in Johnny Hallyday's "San Francisco," this song contains ideas similar to those present during the events of May 1968. As previously noted, the influence of both the Vietnam War and the American counterculture is integral to the protests of May 1968, linking this song to those events, though this hit tends to show the most exotic, apolitical parts of the American counterculture that it portrays.

Similar to "San Francisco" due to this focus on the kitsch more than on the political, the song "Mao et moa" by Nino Ferrer is a particularly quirky and nonsensical tune. Popular around the same time as "San Francisco," Ferrer's 1967 song, consisting of fairly

³² "Flowers" and "gentle or nice" people. Ibid.

³³ "In Paris, like San Francisco / We'll see lots of people like them." Ibid.

unrelated statements with references to Chairman Mao in each one, reflects the growing popularity of Maoism in France.³⁴ Maoism was a foreign ideology that played an important part in May 1968, though in “Mao et moa” it is depoliticized and appears to be, to the narrator, a wacky accessory rather than a serious school of political thought.

Instead of treating the concept of Maoism seriously, the narrator of “Mao et moa” seems to discuss this topic because of its foreign and exotic nature, as well as its popularity during the time when this song was written. Perhaps the first clue of the lack of serious consideration given to the subject matter at hand is what appears to be racist, pseudo-Chinese babble included as the introduction and bridge to this organ-infused, jazzy rock song, leaving little room for doubt that the reason for choosing this topic was its exoticism. The narrator begins the lines in French with, “Si je suis rapide et rusé / Quand je fais mes Mao croisés / Me disait un esquimo / C'est grâce à la pensée de Mao.”³⁵ Changing “Mots croisés” into “Mao croisés,” “esquimo” into “esquimo,” and the “pensée de Mao” into a joke, the narrator appears to show little respect for the political philosophies behind other world powers. The narrator turns these very influential ideas for millions of people into merchandise, a consumable novelty. However, he demonstrates enough knowledge about the outside world to name-drop Mao and reference his ideology, which acts as testament to its popularity in contemporary French society. Similarly, without being at least acquainted with the existence of Maoism and its exotic nature, it would be difficult for this song to have been created. Because of this, the beginning verse of “Mao et moa,” at the

³⁴ “Mao et moa,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed October 24, 2016.
<http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/6475.html>

³⁵ “If I’m fast and clever / When I do my *Mao croisés* / an EskiMao said to me / It’s thanks to Mao’s way of thinking.” Note: “*Mao croisés*” is a play on “mots croisés,” a crossword puzzle. “Nino Ferrer: Mao et moa,” *Lyrics.wikia.com*, accessed October 24, 2016.
http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Nino_Ferrer:Mao_Et_Moa

very least, demonstrates the rising consciousness of French society as a whole to Maoism and, more largely, the outside world, both of which, in turn, played a large part in May 1968.

Although, this vague knowledge of the affairs of other nations and of foreign ideologies on the part of the narrator develops once the song reaches the chorus. In perhaps the most lucid moment of this tune, the narrator demonstrates a passing knowledge of contemporary Chinese affairs, if just for a moment, singing, “C'est moa que je suis pour Mao contre Liu Chao-Chi / J'ai mon bréviaire de révolutionnaire / Dans tous les bouges moa je bois des quarts de rouge / Le quart de rouge c'est la boisson du garde rouge.”³⁶ Not only does the narrator, in these lines, show knowledge of the existence of the Red Guard and the Little Red Book, he appears to reference the power struggle between the individual also known as Liu Shaoqi and Chairman Mao.³⁷ Because of this, the narrator appears to be fairly conscious of the happenings of China during this time, while the Cultural Revolution was occurring, though he does not mention the political ideology or the events occurring in this period, only the actors.³⁸ By divorcing the players of the Cultural Revolution, such as the Red Guard, Mao, and Liu Shaoqi, from the highly political events that occurred during this period, the narrator, again, emphasizes the wackiness or exoticism of these events instead of their gravity. Rather than take Maoism and turmoil in China seriously, he

³⁶ "It's *moa* [me] that I am for Mao against Liu Shaoqi / I have my revolutionary handbook / In dive-bars, *moa* [me], I drink quarters of red [wine] / quarter of red is the drink of the Red Guard." Ibid.

³⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica, online ed., s. v. "Liu Shaoqi." <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Liu-Shaoqi>

³⁸ Actually, since the “je” in this song agrees that Mao should win the struggle between the Chairman and Liu Shaoqi and professes to drinking “quarts de rouge,” just like the Red Guard, the idea that the narrator is a member of the Red Guard could make sense of this strange song. In a way, the narrator could be mocking the fervor of the Red Guard, due to the fact that the narrator turning every possible word into Mao. This, however, would still make Ferrer’s song focus on the most kitsch or wacky elements of these events since it would target the fervor and devotion of the Red Guards.

just names some famous people or groups related to it and plays word games with Mao's name.

Due to this superficial knowledge of the political situation concerning the groups mentioned in "Mao et moa," the narrator demonstrates a growing understanding of the outside world, though still limited to kitsch or shallow elements, similar to the countercultural movement's portrayal in Johnny Hallyday's "San Francisco." Maoism in France was an important contributing factor and important facet of May 1968, and Nino Ferrer's "Mao et moa" helps show its rising popularity in France, even if its subject matter limited to the least political or hard-hitting parts of this ideology, as well as the rising consciousness of the outside world preceding and during May 1968.

Rising consciousness of the outside world in France, admittedly, had been happening for a while prior to May 1968, though it is difficult to state exactly how far back the particular consciousness that would affect and influence the actors of May 1968 went. Sirinelli, though, mentions the impact of the televised War in Vietnam upon the French adolescents and young adults leading up to May, as they had never really lived through a war like the previous French generations had.³⁹ These individuals were too young to really understand or feel the deepest impacts of the Algerian War when it occurred earlier in the decade, let alone mobilize against it, which would increase the importance of the Vietnam War for the *piétons de Mai*, the younger individuals who made up most of the student protestors.⁴⁰ In 1963, after the Algerian War, *pied-noir* musician Enrico Macias released "Enfants de tous pays," topping the French best-selling charts for months with this guitar-and-lyrics-focused hit. "Enfants de tous pays" demonstrates internationalism, and its

³⁹ Sirinelli, 170.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 88.

popularity a rising consciousness of the outside world in that the lyrics show a desire to end borders and divisions and advocate for peace and love.⁴¹ These ideas seem fairly relatable to the desires of many French students protesting the Vietnam War before and during May 1968, as they, similarly, wanted peace, equality, and joy, especially for those embroiled in the Vietnam Conflict.

One of the elements of “Enfants de tous pays” that demonstrates its internationalism is how the narrator speaks in broad, inclusive terms to create a sense of unity in the world. An example of this is in the lines “Enfants de tous pays... / C’est dans vos mains / Que demain / Notre terre / Sera confiée.”⁴² By addressing the “children of all countries” as a collective group, using “vous,” the narrator overlooks differences that would normally divide them. He does this throughout the song in order to emphasize the potential unity between all countries, in hopes of avoiding a conflict like the Algerian War that led to Macias’s expulsion from his native country. The narrator continues to develop this desire, stating, “Enfants de tous pays / Et de toutes couleurs / Vous avez dans le cœur / Notre bonheur.”⁴³ Similarly to the last set of lines, the narrator carefully mentions the importance of overlooking race in order to forge this unity and create happiness, presumably in the form of peace, for the whole world. One of the key causes for May 1968 was the protests and agitations against the Vietnam War. These protests developed due the identification of the French students with the “colonial subject” that Ross mentions. Specifically, French protestors and strikers saw also themselves as victims of American imperialism regardless

⁴¹ “Top – Août 1963,” *Top.france.free.fr*, from *Fabrice Ferment, 40 ans de tubes 1960-2000 : Les meilleurs ventes de 45 tours & CD Singles*, (Clichy : Larivière, 2001), accessed October 25, 2016. <http://top.france.free.fr/html/1963/0863.htm>.

⁴² “Children of all countries / It’s in your hands / That tomorrow / Our land will be entrusted.” “Paroles Enfants de tous pays,” *Paroles.net*, accessed October 25, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/enrico-macias/paroles-enfants-de-tous-pays>.

⁴³ “Children of all countries / And of all colors / You have in your heart / Our happiness.” *Ibid*.

of nationality or race.⁴⁴ Due to the fact that the narrator of “Enfants de tous pays” demonstrates a desire to overlook race and create peace in the world, this song displays international sentiments that were also important facets of May 1968.

In several other instances in "Enfants de tous pays," the narrator continues to call for peace and love around the world, again resembling sentiments involved in May 1968. Demonstrating his support for the creation of a world without guns or sadness, he says, "Séchez vos larmes / Jetez vos armes / Faites du monde / Un paradis."⁴⁵ After recovering from the tragedy of war, the narrator suggests taking measures to ensure peace and making earth a joyous, stable place, “a paradise,” similarly to the set of lines, "Et puis le jour / Où l’amour / Sur la terre / Deviendra roi / Vous pourrez vous reposer."⁴⁶ These remarks, in particular, demonstrate the narrator’s belief in the importance of love in creating a better, more peaceful world. In addition to the idealism, the dialogue, and the equality that this utopic vision would require, which are all stated by Julian Bourg to be ‘values’ of the May movement, these lines call for the end of violence and the proliferation of love, also resembling the anti-war sentiments of May 1968.⁴⁷ Because this peace would arise through collective action in “all countries” against war, the narrator of this song also demonstrates internationalist attitudes that resemble the general opening of France to the outside world that occurred during May. Due to this calling for love, peace, and joy rather than violence, sadness, and division, “Enfants de tous pays” illustrates international sentiments similar to those during May 1968, which were also important during May.

⁴⁴ Ross, *May '68*, 89.

⁴⁵ “Dry your tears / Toss [out] your weapons / Make the world / A paradise.” “Paroles Enfants de tous pays,” *Paroles.net*.

⁴⁶ “And then the day / Where love / On Earth / Will be king / You will be able to rest.” Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 7.

“Enfants de tous pays” shows the desire for unity across nations, as well as for peace and love, which, in turn, displays international sentiments. These ideas, as well as its popularity, demonstrate rising consciousness of the outside world in France, an important aspect of May 1968. In particular, the narrator calls for “all children,” regardless of color, to join together and create happiness and stability, and this sense of identification with individuals of other races and nationalities is what helped give rise to the importance of the “colonial subject” during May 1968.⁴⁸ Similarly, the specific calls by the narrator to people across the world to “toss [out] your weapons” in order to create peace and joy demonstrates several key ‘values’ of May, including anti-war sentiments, the desire for equality, and idealism. As a result, the hit “Enfants de tous pays” by Enrico Macias appears to demonstrate sentiments, particularly pertaining to internationalism, that would go on to be important during the May 1968 protests.

In conclusion, the songs “Emmenez-moi,” “San Francisco,” “Mao et moa,” and “Enfants de tous pays” all demonstrate rising consciousness of an international nature, resembling the opening of France “aux vents venus d’ailleurs” that occurred leading up to and during May 1968.⁴⁹ Because “Emmenez-moi” by Charles Aznavour deals with a narrator who desires to leave France for an idealized, exotic, tropical country, it reveals a willingness to adopt elements of foreign lifestyles and other values that cause it to resemble aspects of May 1968. “San Francisco” by Johnny Hallyday and “Mao et moa” by Nino Ferrer show an understanding of the countercultural movement and Maoism, respectively, which both had a great influence upon those involved with May 1968; though, similar to Aznavour’s song, this understanding appears to be somewhat stunted, especially in relation

⁴⁸ Ross, *May '68*, 89.

⁴⁹ “The winds come from elsewhere.” Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 39.

to the concrete political aspects of these currents. Finally, “Enfants de tous pays” by Enrico Macias discusses the importance of peace, love, and internationalism in the wake of the Algerian War, but these ideas would later become important in the events of May 1968, as, once again, the spark of these events was student protest and agitation against the American War in Vietnam. All four of these popular French songs of the 1960s demonstrate attitudes, ideas, influences, and sentiments that would become important during the protests and strikes of May 1968 before this movement erupted.

CHAPTER IV

OPPOSITION TO WAR

A further demonstration of the rising consciousness of the outside world that accompanied the events of May is its aforementioned spark, the Vietnam War protests that took place on March 20, 1968.¹ When “a student [broke] a window of the American Express building in Paris,” police began arresting student demonstrators assembled in protest after the Tet Offensive.² Because of these arrests and ensuing disciplinary actions taken by the administration of Nanterre, more protests erupted, calling for the freedom of the arrested and punished students.³ These events exacerbated tensions already existing at Nanterre between left and right-wing student groups and between students and university administration, ending with administrators closing Nanterre indefinitely on May 2nd and La Sorbonne on May 3rd, after the unrest spilled over to what was, at the time, Paris’s largest university.⁴

Most simply, the eruption of the May protests and, later its strikes, were a part of a series of events that had been happening and tensions that had been growing throughout 1967 and 1968 at Nanterre, but these tensions were enflamed and protest action heated up after the events of March 20th. This protest against the Vietnam War was integral to the development of the later events in May, as it is one of the most tangible and direct causes,

¹ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 90.

² Most basically, the Tet Offensive was an attack by the National Liberation Front (backed by the North Vietnamese) upon several cities held by American and South Vietnamese forces. It resulted in enormous retaliation from the Americans, mostly in the form of airstrikes in North Vietnam and search-and-destroy tactics in South Vietnamese villages. Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 20-21.

in the beginning, for student protest, which then spiraled into a larger movement with even more complex and varied demands, values, and ideas.⁵ As Jean-François Sirinelli states about the March 20th protest, “[this] incident is to be placed within the context of the American War in Vietnam, and it takes a nonnegligible place in the rising agitation” that caused May.⁶

Leading up to May 1968, however, there were anti-Vietnam War sentiments already present amongst French Leftists. In fact, the Vietnam War appeared to galvanize the extreme-left, the French Communist Party, as well as students in universities and high schools.⁷ Though their numbers were small, anti-Vietnam War committees were present in France for at least three years prior to the protests that sparked May.⁸ Student agitation was “endemic” in both universities and high schools, with sporadic protests occurring in the spring of 1967 and 1968 where demonstrators burned American flags and effigies of Lyndon Johnson.⁹ With the number of American troops in Vietnam rising to hundreds of thousands around the middle of the 1960s, French opposition to the War increased but not just with students.¹⁰

Sirinelli makes a point to mention the ‘cultural opposition’ to the War, making it known that it was not just students that were opposed to American involvement. This larger opposition, he mentions, was rooted nearly daily on the nightly news in France and could be heard in *la chanson française* but also in popular music.¹¹ In his article, “Des ‘copains’

⁵ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 90.

⁶ “L’incident est à replacer dans le contexte de la guerre américaine du Vietnam, et celle-ci prend alors une place non négligeable dans l’agitation qui monte”. Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 55.

⁷ *Ibid*, 56-58.

⁸ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 93.

⁹ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 60, 64.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 60-61.

¹¹ Jean-François Sirinelli, “Des ‘copains’ aux ‘camarades’ ?” *Revue Historique* 2, no. 626 (2003): 28, accessed October 30, 2016. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-historique-2003-2-page-327.htm>

aux ‘camarades, ’” he touches on the “One-hundred artists for Vietnam” petition, where popular singers like Hugues Aufray, Serge Reggiani, and Georges Moustaki, confirm their opposition to the War.¹² He even goes as far as mentioning particular songs by Aufray, Reggiani, Moustaki, and Antoine that all contained anti-war or anti-Vietnam messages, demonstrating the widespread nature of the opposition and the changing *air du temps* prior to May 1968.¹³ However, he does not directly connect these specific sentiments with the later events of May 1968, showing how popular culture of the time period foreshadowed the sentiments of unrest to come.¹⁴

Building on the ideas of Sirinelli, this section will address these anti-war sentiments in several popular songs of the 1960s, which are similar, specifically, to the anti-war attitudes demonstrated at the spark of and during May 1968. The first of these songs is Charles Aznavour’s 1966 hit, “Les enfants de la guerre,” which describes the effects of war upon the innocent and provides negative characterization of those who are responsible for wars.¹⁵ Also displaying anti-war sentiments is Les Sunlights’ 1966 cover of Boris Vian’s “Le déserteur,” in which the narrator refuses conscription, thus demonstrating anti-war actions, and also shows values that resemble those that characterize May 1968 in general.¹⁶ The follow-up to this song, which was released in 1967, “Ne joue pas au soldat” illustrates anti-war sentiments though criticizing children’s games and costumes pertaining to war, as the narrator immediately associates war with death and tragedy.¹⁷ In Jean Ferrat’s “Maria,”

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Spirit of the times*. Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Les enfants de la guerre,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed November 2, 2016.
<http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/787.html>

¹⁶ “Le déserteur,” *Encyclopédisque.fr*, accessed November 2, 2016.
<http://www.encyclopedisque.fr/disque/17570.html>

¹⁷ “Top – Mars 1967,” *Top.france.free.fr*, from Fabrice Ferment, *40 ans de tubes 1960-2000* :

he tells a story of a mother's loss during the Spanish Civil War in order to demonstrate the tragedy of war, which shows similar anti-war sentiments. Because anti-war sentiments were a key element of the May 1968 protests, these popular French songs of the 1960s demonstrate ideas that resemble those important during May.

Charles Aznavour, one of the most internationally renowned French singers, wrote and released "Les enfants de la guerre" in November of 1966.¹⁸ Aznavour himself lived through the Second World War, and his father was part of the Resistance. Aznavour became quite close with several of the members of this group, including Missak and Mélinée Manouchian, two very prominent Communist *résistants*.¹⁹ Spending his early adulthood in this environment, the idea that Aznavour created a song that paints war in a negative light should not be terribly shocking. However, the fact that Aznavour wrote it in 1966, when the American War in Vietnam was ramping up quite considerably, is more notable. This haunting, building song demonstrates opposition to war through describing its impacts on children and portraying those responsible for them in a negative light.

While the casualties and destruction of war are often discussed in terms of statistics and battlefield losses, "Les enfants de la guerre" describes the psychological, human toll that war takes on the youngest members of society, though they are not directly involved in its causes. He sings, "Ces enfants de l'orage / Et des jours incertains / Qui avaient le visage / Creusé par la faim / Ont vieilli avant l'âge... / Sans toucher l'héritage / Que doit

Les meilleurs ventes de 45 tours & CD Singles. Clichy : Larivière, 2001, accessed November 2, 2016. <http://top.france.free.fr/html/1967/0367.htm>

¹⁸ "Les enfants de la guerre," *Encyclopédique.fr*.

¹⁹ Victor Hache, "Charles Aznavour: 'Missak et Mélinée Manouchian étaient des amis intimes,'" *L'humanité.fr*, published February 19, 2014, accessed August 7, 2016.

<http://www.humanite.fr/charles-aznavour-missak-et-melinee-manouchian-etaient-des-amis-intimes>

léguer l'amour."²⁰ Aznavour mentions the hunger and instability that comes with wartime, but he also mentions less-considered parts of a child's wartime experiences. In saying that "ces enfants... ont vieilli avant l'âge," he is describing that these children were forced to grow up too quickly and forced to worry about aspects of life no child should have to worry about rather than getting to experience their childhoods. Even more heartbreaking is his remark that these children grew up with less of a chance to experience love and tenderness, presumably because of the brutality around them. He describes the effects of the war, but he also discusses how the war will most affect those least responsible for it, as these children were forced to experience these difficult experiences during their formative years without having done anything to cause the war. By describing war in such a way, Aznavour stresses its most negative and destructive aspects, which, in turn, reveals the anti-war message of this song.

He continues to illustrate the negative aspects of war later in the lyrics, as well as further demonstrating the human cost of war. Aznavour sings about the suffering of these 'children of war': "Ces enfants sans enfance / Sans jeunesse et sans joie / Qui tremblaient sans défense / De peine et de froid... / Mais vivaient d'espérance / Sont comme toi et moi."²¹ Describing the direct losses that these children experienced because of the actions of others, he pinpoints pain, cold, lack of joy, and wasted youth as casualties of war. At the same time, he does mention that these children, despite everything that they have lost in their troubled, short lives, still cling to hope, which demonstrates their tenacity in light of all of

²⁰ "The children of the storm / And of uncertain days / Who have faces / Sunken by hunger / Aged too quickly / Without receiving the inheritance / That love should leave." "Paroles Les enfants de la guerre." *Paroles.net*, accessed November 2, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/charles-aznavour/paroles-les-enfants-de-la-guerre#fC8co4BzwsKMeqjt.99>

²¹ "These children without childhoods / Without youthfulness and joy / Who tremble, defenseless / Against the pain and the cold... / But lived with hope / Are like you and I." *Ibid.*

these painful experiences. Due to this tenacity, he draws a connection between himself, the listener, and the children about whom he sings. Not only does he see himself in the pain and hope of these kids, he implores the listener to realize that war-stricken children could have been and could be any of us; it is precisely because of their innocence that their tumultuous upbringing is tragic. Through seeking to connect himself and the listener to victims of war, highlighting its negative impacts, Aznavour creates an anti-war message in “Les enfants de la guerre.”

This identification with the innocent victims of war is, as Kristin Ross notes, an important idea involved in the anti-Vietnam War attitudes leading up to May 1968. As stated in Chapter III, militant French leftists saw connections between the colonized Vietnamese, who were under attack by Americans at the time, and themselves. Militant journals like *Partisans* and *Tricontinental* helped “make French militants aware of the global struggle of people of color.”²² “United against “the common enemy [of] American imperialism,” it is precisely because the French militants saw themselves in solidarity with the Vietnamese that the American War became intolerable.²³ The French struggle against the American War in Vietnam relies on this identification, especially because France and the people of France were not directly invested in the war, unlike the War in Algeria, which was also protested.²⁴ On a larger scale, too, Jean-François Sirinelli mentions how the dissemination of news footage from Vietnam purely from the American point of view on French television helped foster the general climate of opposition to the war specifically because of its unilateral nature.²⁵ Anti-Vietnam protests were the direct catalyst for the

²² Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 89.

²³ *Ibid*, 58.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 25.

²⁵ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 128.

chain of events that led to the later protests and strikes during May.²⁶ Because it demonstrates a parallel sense of identification with the victims of war in order to get others to understand its tragedy, “Les enfants de la guerre” contains sentiments and ideas relating to those behind May 1968.

Furthermore, this song is critical of those whom Aznavour views as responsible for the situation of these children. Illustrating their misery, he also begins to assign blame: “Ils ont vu la misère / Recouvrir leurs élans / Et des mains étrangères / Égorger leur printemps.”²⁷ By stating that “foreign hands” were responsible for the pain and sadness that these children experience, he starts to characterize the actors of war. Using violent imagery, Aznavour describes how these foreign entities killed the children’s “spring,” as spring is often associated with vitality and new life but also repeats the idea that these children are in no way responsible for the conflict that surrounds them. Placing blame on foreign actors for the struggle of innocent people, he describes a power dynamic that could be seen as similar to the American encroachment in Vietnam, with War imposed on the Vietnamese from the outside, without their ability to choose their own destiny. Because French Leftist groups, including those of students, were critical of American Imperialism and the Vietnam War in which it resulted, these lines by Aznavour resemble attitudes present in the anti-war struggle leading up to and during May 1968.

In the same sort of way, both of these hits by Les Sunlights demonstrate anti-war sentiments that were later connected to the spark of the events of May 1968. “Le déserteur” is a song about a narrator who refuses to be conscripted into the army, showing direct

²⁶ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 90.

²⁷ “They have seen poverty / Cover-up their energy [or vitality] / And foreign hands / Slit the throat of their spring.” “Paroles Les enfants de la guerre.” *Paroles.net*,

resistance to war. It also appears to demonstrate values that would come to characterize the actors of May. Its follow-up, “Ne joue pas au soldat” also shows anti-war sentiments, as its narrator focuses on the tragic, painful experience of war. In order to do this, he criticizes children’s war-related games and costumes because of his association of war with death. As a result, both of these songs by Les Sunlights show opposition to war that would later be integral to the events of May 1968.

Originally written by Boris Vian on the eve of the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, “Le déserteur” proved to be an anti-war statement and symbol leading up to and during the Algerian War.²⁸ However, Vian was actually not the first to record this song. Mouloudji, another French singer, recorded an edited version of Vian’s original text and released it even before Vian’s version came out.²⁹ It is worth noting that “Le déserteur” was banned in France during the Algerian War because it was feared to be capable of provoking even more demonstrations than the ones already occurring, and Mouloudji was actually blacklisted on both television and radio for his version of the song.³⁰ During the early 1960s, while “Le déserteur” was still banned in France, Peter, Paul, and Mary recorded a cover of Mouloudji’s version at the start of the Vietnam War, adding an introduction in English to accompany the untranslated song.³¹

It was in 1966 that Les Sunlights “brought the song back... with the firm intention of making it a hit,” since the Peter, Paul, and Mary version made little impact in France.³² Les Sunlights, a band of talented sibling musicians, were unaware of the furor that this

²⁸ Marc Dufaud, *Monsieur Boris Vian, je vous fais une lettre... La chanson du Déserteur*, (Scali, Paris 2008), 11, 46.

²⁹ The differences between the two versions are discussed extensively in *Monsieur Boris Vian, je vous écris une lettre*. Ibid, 74-85.

³⁰ Ibid, 82.

³¹ Ibid, 155-156, 171

³² Ibid, 169.

song generated before it had been banned over a decade prior to the recording of their cover, a slow pop ballad that turned out to be a hit in France and Belgium.³³ Keeping the English introduction that made the song relevant to anti-Vietnam American listeners, Les Sunlights' version has the same text as the Mouloudji version but comes out of a different context.

Because of its popularity as an anti-war song in general, the lyrics to "Le déserteur" will be covered quite rapidly in this section. Unsurprisingly, "Le déserteur" demonstrates anti-war sentiments, as the entire song tells of how the narrator rejects his conscription into the army. For example, the narrator sings in the first verse, "Je viens de recevoir / Mes papiers militaires / Pour aller à la guerre... / Je ne suis pas sur terre / Pour tuer les pauvres gens."³⁴ Stating that he has been conscripted, he refuses to join the armed forces, as he objects to the idea of killing innocent people, especially because he has been told to by someone else. He demonstrates to what point he is opposed to this idea by telling those who are responsible for his conscription, "S'il faut verser le sang / Allez versez le vôtre."³⁵ He implores those responsible for his situation to stop involving innocent people in the war and that, if they wanted to send people to war, they should go by their own accord. The narrator, because of his refusal to carry out the orders from above to participate in war, demonstrates direct anti-war sentiments.

Perhaps the strongest anti-war sentiments in this song are in the last lines. They show how the narrator realizes the consequences of his refusal to follow orders and join

³³ Ibid, 171.

³⁴ "I just received / My military papers / To go to the war / I'm not on earth / To kill those poor people." "Paroles Le Déserteur," *Paroles.net*, accessed October 11, 2016. <http://www.paroles.net/boris-vian/paroles-le-deserteur>.

³⁵ "If blood must be spilled / Go spill your own" Ibid.

the war: “Si vous me poursuivez / Prévenez vos gendarmes / Que je serai sans armes / Et qu’ils pourront tirer.”³⁶ These lines only highlight the pacifism of the narrator, as he will not defend himself against the potential consequences of his actions. At the same time, the fact that he, basically, dares the police to shoot him for refusing to participate in legally-sanctioned killing is a demonstration of the absurd situation in which conscription places all parties involved. Refusing to personally place other people’s lives in danger may, ultimately, place his own life in danger. In any case, the narrator’s willingness to put his life and his safety on the line in order to stay out of the war shows to what point he is committed to his ideals of pacifism. It is because of this that the narrator of “Le déserteur” demonstrates attitudes pertaining to opposition to war.

“Le déserteur” and its anti-war sentiments are directly linked to May 1968. Just as it was previously stated, opposition to the Vietnam War, which is linked to this song both through its content, its context, and the fact that Peter, Paul, and Mary’s introduction in English remained in Les Sunlights’ version, is what sparked the events of May 1968. More precisely, though, “Le déserteur” is tangibly linked to May 1968, as mentioned by Kristin Ross. In footage taken during May, “one can hear *lycéens* demanding... to be able to freely organize in the schools in support of fellow students expelled for circulating a text of ‘Le déserteur’ in the high schools.”³⁷ This illustrates the idea that the position taken in this song directly resonated with participants of May 1968. Not only was this text specifically present during May 1968, the youth of the students involved with circulating it is quite important, as they were merely high school students. Considering Peter, Paul, and Mary’s lack of success in France during the early 1960s, the banning of the two French versions in the

³⁶ “If you pursue me / Warn your policemen / That I will be unarmed / And that they can shoot.” Ibid.

³⁷ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 189.

1950s, and the fact that Les Sunlights themselves had not known the song prior to recording it, it is entirely feasible that perhaps these students would not have known this song prior to the Les Sunlights' version becoming popular.³⁸ The lyrics of "Le déserteur" demonstrate ideas that connected with those involved with May 1968, and it is quite possible that Les Sunlights' particular version was the one to which these students were originally drawn.

On top of all of this, the text of this version also shows values that can be linked to the typical values of May, as stated by Julian Bourg. The narrator says that he will spend his time "Sur la terre et sur l'onde / Du Vieux au Nouveau Monde" saying to people "Profitez de la vie / Éloignez la misère."³⁹ Out of the list of attributes of the May movement listed in *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought*, these lines demonstrate enjoyment, speaking out, antiauthoritarianism, and self-management, at the very least.⁴⁰ By choosing to spend the rest of his life promoting peace and love of life, all while evading capture for disobeying laws in which he does not believe, the narrator is living up to several of the ideals of the movement. Actually, in saying that he will travel "on land and on waves," the narrator also demonstrates the idea of internationalism as well, just as the next set of lines do: "Vous êtes tous des frères / Gens de tous les pays."⁴¹ He calls for dialogue, community, association, and fraternity, to name a few more values of May but also appears to demonstrate similar sentiments to those present in Enrico Macias's "Enfants de tous pays." Between this internationalism and the other values of May

³⁸ Dufaud, *Monsieur Boris Vian*, 155, 171.

³⁹ "On land and on waves / From the Old to New World... / Enjoy life / Banish destitution." "Paroles Le Déserteur," *Paroles.net*.

⁴⁰ "The 'values' of the movement included: imagination, human interest, communication, conviviality, expression, enjoyment, freedom, spontaneity, solidarity, de-alienation, speaking out, dialogue, non-utility, utopia, dreams, fantasies, community, association, antiauthoritarianism, self-management, direct democracy, equality, self-representation, fraternity, self-defense—and romance." Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 7.

⁴¹ "You are all brothers / People of all countries." "Paroles Le Déserteur," *Paroles.net*.

contained in the version of “Le déserteur” recorded by Les Sunlights, this hit demonstrates similar ideas to those later present in May 1968.

Because of its anti-war sentiment and direct relevance to the participants of May 1968, as well as containing values homologous to the movement, “Le déserteur” by Les Sunlights appears to resemble and reflect the attitudes found in May 1968. These corresponding values are also visible in Les Sunlights’ follow-up hit to “Le déserteur,” entitled “Ne joue pas au soldat,” another ballad. Almost as popular as “Le déserteur” on the French popular music charts, this song is actually another cover of an older song, this time from 1925. “Ne joue pas au soldat” was originally written by Léo Lelièvre and Paul Dalbret, and it contains anti-war sentiments due to its criticism of children’s games and costumes related to war.⁴² Because the narrator automatically associates these activities and articles with death and loss, it provides a negative portrayal of armed conflict.

Beginning his characterization of the toys he sees at *Carnaval*, the narrator immediately draws a negative association from seeing children dressed as warriors to the destruction of war. He states, “Les sabres et les fusils / Ne sont pas des jouets / Plus tard tu en auras... / Je ne veux pas voir ces choses / Entre tes doigts fluets.”⁴³ Because of the narrator’s belief that this child will grow up to have to fight in a war, the use of toy swords and guns just appear tragic to him rather than cute or make-believe like children’s costumes tend to be. This belief colors the narrator’s ability to accept these costumes, as he later castigates parents as “brainless” for allowing their children to dress up as “infantrymen”

⁴² Dufaud, *Monsieur Boris Vian*, 172.

⁴³ “Sabers and guns / Are not toys / Later on you’ll have them... / I don’t want to see these things / Between your tiny fingers.” “Paroles Les Sunlights- Ne joue pas au soldat,” *Paroles-Musique.fr*, accessed November 2, 2016. http://www.paroles-musique.com/paroles-Les_Sunlights-Ne_joue_pas_au_soldat-lyrics,p05625990

during *Carnaval*.⁴⁴ He accentuates the human toll of violent conflict using children, as Aznavour does, in order to demonstrate the destructiveness and tragedy of war.

Furthermore, he continues, explicitly describing the reasons why he is opposed to children wearing war-related apparel and wielding toy weapons: "[Ces jouets] ont fait trop pleurer / Le cœur des pauvres mères / Quand leurs enfants sont morts / En jouant aux soldats."⁴⁵ He refuses to treat these objects as toys, instead immediately turning his thoughts to actual weapons and the reality of war. By describing the pain that mothers go through when these items function as they are intended, the narrator merely continues to plead for the idea of war to be treated seriously and with reserve instead of playfulness. He takes this somber tone even further in the lines, "La cape militaire / Est le dernier emblème / Le linceul dans lequel / Vos fils dorment..."⁴⁶ He speaks directly to a child's parents in order to describe a pretend war cape as a "shroud" in which this child could very well die. The narrator refuses to even treat costumes depicting war as elements of play or pretend due to the losses and tragedies resulting from the activities for which they are really used. As a result of these lines, the narrator appears to constantly associate war with death, as he cannot help but mention the casualties of war when talking about it.

Because the narrator of "Ne joue pas au soldat" is critical of children's costumes and toys pertaining to war and immediately associates them with death and tragedy rather than make believe, he accentuates the human toll and negative consequences of war. In doing this, he paints war in a negative light, showing anti-war sentiments that would go on

⁴⁴ "Do parents have to / Have nothing in their heads / On Carnival nights / To dress their children as infantrymen." Ibid.

⁴⁵ "[These toys] have caused too many tears / From the hearts of mothers / When their children died / Playing soldier." Ibid.

⁴⁶ "The military cape / Is the last symbol / The shroud in which / Your son will sleep." Ibid.

to be important during May 1968 in a more general sense. These attitudes mirror those on the rise leading up to and during May 1968, especially amongst the French Left and students. Even more directly, though, this song, like “Les enfants de la guerre,” focuses of the effects of war on the most innocent in order to demonstrate the most damage and loss. In terms of media coverage of the Vietnam War in France during this time period, Sirinelli mentions that the Vietnam War was often viewed as one-sided, with the Vietnamese victimized.⁴⁷ Focusing on victims of war rather than more traditional or positive elements such as sacrifice and bravery, this song aligns with typical portrayals of war in the media leading up to May 1968. The booming 1967 song “Maria” by Jean Ferrat is very much in the same vein as the previous songs, as it also seeks to demonstrate the tragedy of all war. Rather than picking a political position, the narrator of this song discusses the more human side of the conflict, which focuses on the loss of life and humanity during war through a particular anecdote on the Spanish Civil War in which all sides lose.

Setting up this story, the narrator begins by detailing the shared background of the men involved. He says, “Maria avait deux enfants / Deux garçons dont elle était fière / Et c’était bien la même chair / Et c’était bien le même sang.”⁴⁸ By stating that they shared the same flesh and blood, as they are brothers, it highlights their similarities above all, regardless of the politics and tragedy to come. Moving along in the anecdote, he begins to develop the tragedy of Maria’s loss: “L’un était rouge, et l’autre blanc / Qui des deux tira le premier / Le jour où les fusils parlèrent / Et lequel des deux s’est tué / Sur le corps tout

⁴⁷ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 128.

⁴⁸ “Maria had two children / Two boys of whom she was proud / And it was the same flesh / And it was the same blood.” “Paroles Maria,” *Parolesmania.com*, accessed November 2, 2016. http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles_jean_ferrat_15393/paroles_maria_j2_1539151.html

chaud de son frère ?”⁴⁹ One of the brothers took the side of the Communists, the reds, and the other joined the Nationalist side. This divisiveness only leads to tragedy, since one brother is a casualty of war and the other, shocked with his own actions, is driven to suicide by the inhumanity of killing another human being. While it is impossible to know, in this story, who was ‘responsible’ for the deaths, the point is that, in war, everyone is harmed. It results in nothing but loss and tragedy in this tale.

The narrator of "Maria" similarly shows how the divisiveness that leads to war only fades away in its wake precisely because of the losses that it causes. The next set of lines, “Tout ce qu’on sait / C’est qu’on les retrouva ensemble / Le blanc et le rouge mêlés / A même les pierres et la cendre,” demonstrate how little politics mattered after the deaths of both brothers.⁵⁰ Although they identified with different parties, the reds and the whites, these distinctions disappear in death, as they both end up together with their bodies lying on dirt and ash. The narrator reiterates the inutility of politics, ultimately, in the aftermath of such tragedies by returning to the mother of these men: “Si vous lui parlez de la guerre / Si vous lui dites la liberté / Elle vous montrera la pierre / Où ses enfants sont enterrés.”⁵¹ Faced with the tragic loss of both of her sons, it appears that Maria cares very little about the motivations for war, as nothing good, according to her point of view, can come from these kinds of losses. While war may appear to be the answer and worth the sacrifice as it breaks out, the narrator suggests stepping back to look at the actual, human cost of war before resulting to violence, as, then, no one wins.

⁴⁹ “One was red, the other was white / Which of the two shot first / The day where guns spoke / And which of the two killed himself / On the warm body of his brother?” Ibid.

⁵⁰ “All that we know / It’s that they were found together / The red and the white mixed together / On rocks and ashes.” Ibid.

⁵¹ “If you talk to her of war / If you say to her liberty / She’ll show you the stone / Where her children are buried.” Ibid.

“Maria” by Jean Ferrat contains anti-war sentiments due to the use of a narrative about the human cost of war, the uselessness of divisiveness, and the tragic results of violence, and these anti-war attitudes are later demonstrated in the May 1968 protests. Although to many people “liberty” may seem to be a good reason for war, for Maria, this would only result in more losses and more tragedy for other families. Sirinelli summarizes the public opposition to the Vietnam War in France by stating that “American wings, seen as bringing liberty during the Second World War and even during the Cold War, found themselves all of a sudden corrupt, seen from then on as a tool of oppression and of death.”⁵² While the Americans were supposed to bring “liberty” and freedom to Vietnam, they only brought death, therefore mirroring the criticism of war as needlessly divisive and tragic in Jean Ferrat’s “Maria.” Because of this and the fact that May 1968 was sparked initially by student protests against American involvement in Vietnam, this hit reflects the anti-war sentiments that would be present during the events of May.

Popular French music of the 1960s reflects the same anti-war attitudes that would later help drive the May 1968 protests. Charles Aznavour’s “Les enfants de la guerre” focuses on the effects of war upon society’s most innocent beings, which is similar to the ideas of May 1968 through the specific identification with innocent victims of war, in this case, the colonized Vietnamese. Next, the narrator of Les Sunlights’ version of Boris Vian’s “Le déserteur” shows an opposition to war through a refusal to participate in armed conflict upon being conscripted. Not only does this show anti-war ideas, but this song, and, perhaps this version of it, was also distributed in schools during May 1968, leading to

⁵² “Les ailes américaines, perçus comme porteuses de liberté durant le second conflit mondial et encore à l’époque de la guerre froide, se trouvèrent brusquement diabolisées, perçues désormais comme une arme d’oppression et de mort.” Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 128.

expulsions, which only caused more demonstrations during May.⁵³ “Ne joue pas au soldat,” another song by Les Sunlights, also illustrates an opposition to war, focusing on the narrator’s association of children’s costumes and toys with the most tragic aspects of war. Again, this connects with the specific opposition to the Vietnam War present in May due to its focus on the effects of armed conflict upon innocents, which is how the French perceived the Vietnam War during this time period. Finally, Jean Ferrat’s “Maria” tells a story of a mother of two soldiers that shows the human cost, the uselessness, and the tragic results of war, which parallels the anti-war attitudes leading up to May 1968 in France through the perception of that America’s attempts at transmitting freedom was overshadowed by the death it brought. Principally, because the fervor of anti-imperialist and anti-war sentiments grew leading up to May 1968 and because the events of May began specifically due to anti-Vietnam War protests, all of these songs with anti-war messages and ideas reflect attitudes present during May 1968.

⁵³ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 189.

CONCLUSION

CONTEMPORARY VISIONS OF MAY 1968

French popular music of the 1960s demonstrates similar sentiments to those which would later become integral to the May 1968 protests, especially pertaining to opposition to authority and hierarchy, anti-capitalist attitudes, a rising sense of internationalism, and pro-pacifist or anti-war ideas. Opposition to authority and hierarchy were shown during May by students and workers in general through the actions of striking and protesting but also by demonstrating their opposition to specific institutions, such as the educational system or the military. Corresponding attitudes can be found towards authority and hierarchy in general in Antoine's "Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je veux," towards the educational system in Christophe's "Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur," and towards the military in Pierret Perret's "Le service militaire." Opposition to capitalism was similarly palpable in May 1968 precisely because of the strikes associated with the events, as well as the anti-capitalist, pro-worker positions that were endorsed by the students, unifying these groups. "Sacré dollar" by Les Sunlights is anti-capitalist through its criticism of contemporary greed and materialism, "Le Travail c'est la santé" by Henri Salvador demonstrates similar sentiments through denouncing the hold work had on contemporary life, and Jacques Dutronc's "Et moi et moi et moi" is critical of the inequalities of the world caused by capitalism, all showing ideas in popular French songs from the 1960s that mirror the sentiments of May 1968.

Internationalism, which is also shown in “Et moi et moi et moi,” was an element of May 1968 that is “often overlooked,” according to Kristen Ross, but was integral to the movement, especially considering the influence of ideas and styles of other nations upon the actors of May.¹ A rising consciousness of the outside world is also visible in popular French songs of the 1960s, such as “Emmenez -moi” by Charles Aznavour, discussing the narrator’s desire for a different life based on the existence of individuals in other nations. “San Francisco” by Johnny Hallyday and “Mao et moa” by Nino Ferrer also demonstrate the rising consciousness of foreign ideas and styles, though their portrayals of them are often limited to their most basic and least political elements, and Enrico Macias’s “Enfants de tous pays” also shows internationalist ideas through its calls for peace and love regardless of borders. An extension of this idea is the similarity between French popular songs of the 1960s and the anti-war facets of May 1968, most demonstrated by the anti-Vietnam War protests that sparked May. Charles Aznavour’s “Les enfants de la guerre” reflects anti-war attitudes through its focus on the most innocent members of society affected by war, and Les Sunlights’ cover of Boris Vian’s “Le déserteur” demonstrates pacifist ideas, as well as having a very strong chance of directly influencing the *soixante-huitards*’ knowledge of this previously-banned anti-war anthem. Les Sunlights’ follow-up, “Ne joue pas au soldat” also takes an anti-war position just as “Maria” by Jean Ferrat does, as they both consider the human cost of war in lieu of any possible political gains that could result from it. Because of all of these songs’ resemblance to particular key parts of May 1968, opposition to authority or hierarchy, anti-capitalist attitudes, a rising consciousness

¹ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 10.

of the outside world, and anti-war sentiments, popular French songs of the 1960s seem to foreshadow the positions and ideas that would later erupt into May.

This thesis, having directly made a correlation between important aspects of May 1968 and concepts present in popular French songs of the 1960s, differs from much of the scholarship on both French popular music of the 1960s and May 1968. Because of the general lack of attention paid to these songs as a primary source within the French cultural studies discipline, the act of using them in order to better understand the build-up of May 1968 has not been previously executed by other academics. While there is now just beginning to be a willingness to analyze French popular music of the 1960s, May had not been directly addressed by those at the helm of these changes, Jonathyne Briggs and Chris Tinker. The role of music within May 1968 and after May 1968 has been similarly addressed by Eric Drott, though he does not comment on music leading up to May. In this sense, this thesis approaches both a fairly new topic and a more traditional topic of academic study in a unique way.

If the lead-up to May 1968 was complex and dynamic, its aftermath was perhaps even more so. The end of May 1968 is often considered to be the 30th of May, as 300,000 Gaullists took to the streets in Paris, the “silent majority” expressing themselves after a month of mayhem, joining individuals who Ross characterizes as “parallel police, hit men, strike breakers, *anciens combattants* [referring to the veterans of the colonial wars], and hired thugs.”² This protest action, though grossly outnumbered by the mobilizations of May, as well as the Left’s loss of the following election, have caused some academics, such as Drott, and members of the general public to dismiss the significance of the events of

² Although, the student occupation of the Sorbonne and some strikes lasted into June. Ibid, 59.

May, viewing it as just a talked-up fluke with only perceived repercussions instead of actual ones. However, this understanding of May as a merely a moment in time instead of a larger movement or ‘turning point’ in French society is clouded by the French government’s strong reactions to May, which have only been downplayed.

While it is rarely discussed or acknowledged, it is entirely possible that the general perception of May 1968 is, at least, in part due to the policies that muted the visibility of subsequent French protest actions. For example, Ross notes that, after May, protests were banned for eighteen months, foreigners engaged in politics were deported, and footage of the May protests was repressed.³ Journals and cartoons demonstrating opposition to the United States were also seized.⁴ Furthermore, she states that “the least political slogan hostile to the government (or deemed as such) led to prison.”⁵ Leftist groups were outlawed, and even ‘insulting the police’ was a chargeable offense in post-May France.⁶ When a protest against Vietnam was called for November of 1969, after the eighteen-month ban ran out, 11,000 demonstrators showed up to the demonstration, which had been forbidden by the government in any case, and were met by 12,000 police officers.⁷ May was reimagined, with the help of the government, notably Raymond Marcellin, the minister of the Interior, as “a flash of lightning,” perhaps electrifying but ultimately insignificant.⁸ Nonetheless, Julian Bourg cites the impacts of May upon the movement for the rights of French women, the movement for prison reform, the French sexual revolution, and the development of modern French ethics as a whole. Finally, he comments that “May’s festive

³ Ibid, 62.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 61-62.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 63.

⁸ Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 41, 61-62.

revolt significantly addressed the transformation of everyday life, the here-and-now relationships of people” rather than institutions, which would have been a more tangible change and harder to deny.⁹

Even today, there are those who try to downplay May’s significance. Drott, in the article “Music and May 1968 in France: Practices, Roles, Representations,” treats May as over-hyped, apparently unaware of its impacts though the main focuses of his article were music during and after May. He states, “A strange, circular logic is at work [in the logic of pointing to May as having changed the French music scene]: the protest movement is deemed to have altered musical preferences, even as this change in preferences is itself taken as a symptom of the movement’s far-reaching impact on social and cultural life” without putting in the effort to find out that May did, in fact have far-reaching impacts on the above-stated movements.¹⁰ While he may have been attempting to just understate the power of May rather than overstating it, his statements contradict those of Sirinelli, who mentions the changes in French music after May as part of a longer process of a changing France. Although Antoine shockingly sang in “Les élucubrations” about putting the birth control pill on sale in supermarkets in 1966, this content was not even nearly so shocking the year afterwards. And, if this statement was enough to cause controversy in 1966, it seems almost unheard of that, just three years later, Serge Gainsbourg would release a much more suggestive “Je t’aime... moi non plus” with Jane Birkin to great success.¹¹ Because of this, Sirinelli shows that the trend towards changing values in French society, visible in popular music, is part of a much longer trajectory than that of just May and its

⁹ Ibid, 340.

¹⁰ Eric Drott, “Music and May 1968 in France: Practices, Roles, Representations,” in *Music and Protest in 1968*, Ed. Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton (New York: Cambridge UP, 2013), 271.

¹¹ Jean-François Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 233.

aftermath, which is more than Drott will admit though referring to the post-May changes as “circular logic.”

Figures such as Nicolas Sarkozy, during his 2007 presidential campaign, have gone even further than dismissing May, desiring to “liquidate” its legacy instead, though he desperately mischaracterizes these events.¹² Stating that “we should not yell police state and provocation every time that the police seeks to uphold the law,” he generalizes the *soixante-huitards* as overreacting and damaging to ‘traditional French society’ throughout a speech given on April 29, 2007 in order to criticize the modern French left.¹³ However, responding to this example in particular, he ignores the facts of the past and the political context of France of the 1960s. He does not mention brutality of the CRS both upon the *soixante-huitards*, arrested *en masse* and beaten with billy clubs, and prior to May, essentially characterizing the French police as inherently good and accusing the *soixante-huitards* of refusing to understand this. By creating these caricatures, he only manipulates the realities of May 1968, as these protests erupted for particular reasons, and of the 1960s as a whole, for political gains while being factually incorrect.

In denouncing May 1968 for its “systematic position against the forces of order” and the prevailing order in general, Sarkozy seriously neglects the authoritarian nature of many aspects of French society in this time period, notably found in the educational system, the chipping away of representative institutions under de Gaulle, and the enormous powers of the police, to name a few examples.¹⁴ While the authoritarian nature of the French

¹² “Nicolas Sarkozy veut “liquider” l’héritage de Mai 68,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, published April 30, 2007, accessed November 13, 2016. <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/politique/elections-2007/20070430.OBS4781/nicolas-sarkozy-veut-liquider-l-heritage-de-mai-68.html>

¹³ “Il ne faut pas crier à l’Etat policier et à la provocation à chaque fois que la police cherche à faire respecter la loi.” *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Chris Reynolds, “May/June 1968 and the French University System,” *Memories of May ’68*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), JSTOR, 96.

schools has been covered in chapter one as a key aspect of May, this thesis has not addressed much of the rest of this authoritarianism because of its little direct influence on the foot soldiers of May, who were too young to understand it, though Sarkozy especially characterizes the French police in the 1960s in a positive light and protestors of May 1968 in a negative light. His misrepresentation of the events of May 1968 and, more largely, the 1960s in France only demonstrate how the facts about this tumultuous period in French history have been obscured over time, often intentionally.

Although Sarkozy paints the days of de Gaulle positively, he conveniently neglects to mention how de Gaulle actually “gained power through a coup, under the guise of carrying out the people’s will,” and, in response to May, amnestied members of the colonialist, extreme-right wing *Organisation armée secrète*, around fifty of whom were responsible for assassinations, in order to make room in French prisons for newly-outlawed leftist groups in May’s aftermath.¹⁵ Though Sarkozy tries to change the perceptions of the context of May and its outcomes upon French society, May’s most tangible legacy was a crack-down on protest and a stripping of freedoms from the French people, as discussed earlier in this section. Concerning the police, especially the Parisian forces, that the *soixante-huitards* were supposedly wrongly accusing of heavy-handed tactics, these forces were actually responsible for a number of atrocities during the Algerian War, not even ten years before May, which were the last large-scale mobilizations before 1968.¹⁶ For example, these forces were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Algerian protesters at a time, throwing live and dead bodies into the Seine, as well as racist curfews and mass

¹⁵ Ross, *May 68 and Its Afterlives*, 58-69, 61-62.

¹⁶ Sirinelli, *Mai 68*, 78.

questionings of Algerians held in football stadiums.¹⁷ This is not to mention the mass arrests of student protestors that were a main cause for the spiraling of the events of May in the first place.¹⁸ While Sarkozy criticizes the “intellectual and moral relativism” imposed on French society by May 1968, he himself proves his argument wrong, as he does not even begin to try to present a non-biased perspective on the political and societal context from which the May protests came before denigrating the *soixante-huitards* and blindly lauding the French forces of order during the 1960s.¹⁹ Because of this, he not only demonstrates his desire to recast France of the 1960s and May 1968 for his own political purposes, criticizing the left that is perceived as the ‘heirs’ of the May movement.

In this sense, there is much more work to be done concerning the larger understanding of May 1968, both its context and ideas, not to mention the overlaps of these ideas with the popular music of the 1960s. May 1968 remains a misunderstood part of history, both by the general public, academics, and politicians, and deserving of scholarship in order to actually understand the environment from which it came. Concerning the similarly discounted, other main topic of this thesis, while it is merely a starting place, this work will hopefully encourage others to understand the importance of music as a reflection of the society in which it is produced, as well as its time period, regardless of its perceived ‘quality.’ Often wrongly discounted because its commercialization, *yé-yé* and rock in the 1960s are a valuable source for understanding the shifts in France of the years leading up to and after May 1968. Given the mischaracterizations rampant in the fields of the main topics addressed in this thesis, it is my hope that the ideas, methods, and analyses in this

¹⁷ Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 42-44.

¹⁸ Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 21.

¹⁹ “Nicolas Sarkozy veut “liquider” l’héritage de Mai 68,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

work will help start a conversation about these important yet still fresh aspects of French cultural studies and history.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INITIAL LIST OF SONGS

This is a list of songs that I flagged as having content that could potentially be linked to ideas important to May 1968. These songs were set aside after the initial listening stage of my research, after which I began my research using secondary sources. Using the works of specialists on May, I created what would become the four-categories approach used in this thesis. Because I read the lyrics and listened to these songs before my secondary research stage, these songs were initially marked based on my knowledge of May 1968 from my courses and extracurricular interest. Some of these songs were not used in the body of my thesis because they did not demonstrate as strong ties to the four categories discussed in this thesis as the songs I did use. Others were not chosen because they related to aspects of May 1968 that were not discussed in this thesis for reasons of length, such as the planned section on technocracy, which was reduced to a paragraph for specifically this reason. They are organized by year and alphabetically by artist name within each year's section.

1963

"Dimanche à Orly" by Gilbert Bécaud
"Les tantes jeannes" by Gilbert Bécaud
"Les amours d'antan" by Georges Brassens
"Trompettes de la renommée" by Georges Brassens
"Pauvre petite fille riche" by Claude François
"Si j'avais un marteau" by Claude François
"Enfants de tous pays" by Enrico Macias
"Le martien" by Henri Salvador

1964

"Hum hum hum" by Frank Alamo
"Je me bats pour gagner" by Frank Alamo
"Les sabots" by Alain Barrière
"L'orange" by Gilbert Bécaud

"Nathalie" by Gilbert Bécaud
"Un air de banjo" by Sacha Distel
"La montagne" by Jean Ferrat
"Nuit et Brouillard" by Jean Ferrat
"Chaque jour c'est la même chose" by Claude François
"Sacré dollar" by Les Missiles
"Sentimentale" by Eddy Mitchell

1965

"Je me suis souvent demandé" by Richard Anthony/Bobbejaan Schoepen
"Viva la pappa" by Dalida
"Poupée de cire, poupée de son" by France Gall
"La tendresse" by Marie Laforêt
"Le travail c'est la santé" by Henri Salvador

1966

"Les élucubrations d'Antoine" by Antoine
"Je dis ce que je pense" by Antoine
"Un éléphant me regarde" by Antoine
"Les crayons de couleur" by Hugues Aufray
"Les enfants de la guerre" by Charles Aznavour
"Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur" by Christophe
"Et moi et moi et moi" by Jacques Dutronc
"Les Playboys" by Jacques Dutronc
"Potemkine" by Jean Ferrat
"Baby Pop" by France Gall
"Le service militaire" by Pierre Pierret
"Le déserteur" by Les Sunlights

1967

"Fille Sauvage" by Richard Anthony
"Je l'appelle Cannelle" by Antoine
"Les cactus" by Jacques Dutronc
"Maria" by Jean Ferrat
"Mao et Moa" by Nino Ferrer
"San Francisco" by Johnny Hallyday
"Tonton Cristobal" by Pierre Perret
"Ne joue pas au soldat" by Les Sunlights
"L'heure de la sortie" by Sheila

1968

"Emmenez-moi" by Charles Aznavour
"Il est cinq heures, Paris s'éveille" by Jacques Dutronc
"Jacques a dit" by Claude François
"Le temps des cerises" by Nana Mouskouri
"Comme un garçon" by Sylvie Vartan

APPENDIX B: FULL LYRICS AND TRANSLATIONS OF EACH ANALYZED SONG

"Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux " (1966)
Par Antoine

Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux
Je gagne beaucoup d'argent, mais quand
j'en avais peu
Je n'étais pas plus malheureux, oui mais
Je n'étais pas plus heureux
Je suis comme ça pour moi, pas pour vous
Comprenez-le

Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux
Je mets Johnny en cage, je n'aime pas
Edith Mathieu
Que vous importe mes cheveux
J'ai les chemises que je veux
Je fais tout ça pour moi pas pour vous
Comprenez-le

Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux
La fidélité et moi, croyez-moi, ça fait
deux
Chaque soir m'amène une fille
Chaque matin nous voit repartir
Je suis comme ça pour moi, pas pour vous
Comprenez-le

Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux
Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux
Je dis ce que je... veux
Je dis ce que je pense, ce que je veux
Je dis ce que je pense, je vis comme je
veux
Ce que je veux, ce que je pense
Et merde !

"I say what I want, I live how I
want" (1966)
By Antoine

I say what I think, I live how I
want
I earn lots of money, but when I didn't
have much of it
I wasn't unhappier, yeah, but
I wasn't unhappier
I'm like this for me, not for you
Understand it

I say what I think, I live how I
want
I put Johnny in a cage, I don't like Edith
Mathieu
Whatever you think of my hair
I have the shirts that I want
I do all of this for me, not for you
Understand it

I say what I think, I live how I
want
Fidelity and I, believe me, makes
two
Every night brings me a girl
Every morning sees us leave
I'm like this for me, not for you
Understand it

I say what I think, I live how I
want
I say what I think, I live how I
want
I say what I... want
I say what I think, how I want
I say what I think, I live how I
want
What I want, what I think
And shit!

"Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur"
(1966)
Par Christophe

Si mes oreilles sont longues
C'est parce qu'un imbécile
Un jour s'est amusé à leur tirer dessus
Si mes doigts n'ont plus d'ongles
C'est parce qu'un imbécile
Un jour s'est amusé à leur taper dessus

Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur
Si je ne connais pas mes leçons par cœur

Si je me tiens debout
Tout au fond de la classe
C'est parce que je n'aime pas
Faire les choses à moitié
Si je me tiens debout
Tout au fond de la classe
C'est qu'un autre à ma place
Est toujours le premier

Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur
Si j'ai toujours les idées ailleurs

Si les pages sont blanches
De mes pauvres cahiers
C'est qu'il y a trop de branches
Aux arbres des forêts
Et si j'aime les branches
Si j'aime la forêt
C'est parce que vous m'avez
Défendu d'y grimper

Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur
Si je connais les oiseaux par cœur

Si quand vous faites l'appel
Je vous répons "absent"
C'est parce que j'ai perdu
Votre école et pourtant
Je la cherche partout
A travers mille champs
J'ai perdu mon chemin
Je reviendrai demain

"Forgive Me, Mister the Teacher"
(1966)
By Christophe

If my ears are long
It's because an imbecile
Went ahead and pulled on them one day
If my fingers no longer have nails
It's because an imbecile
Went ahead and rapped on them one day

Forgive me, mister the teacher
If I don't know my lessons by heart

If I stand up
At the back of the class
It's because I don't like
To half-do things
If I stand up
At the back of the class
It's because another student in my place
Is always the best

Forgive me, mister the teacher
If my thoughts are always elsewhere

If the pages are blank
In my poor journals
It's because there are too many branches
On the forest's trees
And if I like the branches
And If I like the forest
It's because you have
Banned me from climbing them

Forgive me, mister the teacher
If I know birds by heart

If when you take attendance
I reply to you "absent"
It's because I lost
Your school and even though
I look for it everywhere
Across a thousand fields
I lost my way
I'll come back tomorrow

Excusez-moi monsieur le professeur
Si je ne sais jamais rien par cœur

Si mes oreilles sont longues
C'est parce qu'un imbécile
Un jour c'est amusé à leur tirer dessus
Si mes doigts n'ont plus d'ongles
C'est parce qu'un imbécile
Un jour s'est amusé à leur taper dessus

Forgive me, mister the teacher
If I never know anything by heart

If my ears are long
It's because an imbecile
Went ahead and pulled on them one day
If my fingers no longer have nails
It's because an imbecile
Went ahead and rapped on them one day

"Le service militaire" (1966)
Par Pierre Perret

C'est bien parce que j'aime autant
l'armée que les flics
Que mes couplets d'un mauvais goût
systématique
Vous racontent en trois coups de
gamelle
Trois petits tours dans une poubelle
Comment on se retrouve à vingt ans
Crétin hilare et décadent

Qu'est-ce qu'on rit
Au service militaire
C'est merveilleux, mes amis
J'aime ma mère la patrie
Je la servirai toute la vie

Sa langue épaisse était chargée comme
un mulet
La voix cassée par les ballons de
muscadet
Le chef qui sentait la choucroute
Gueulait des j'en ai rien à foutre
Quand quelqu'un lui disait bonsoir
Il répondait j'veux rien savoir

Qu'est-ce qu'on rit
Au service militaire
C'est merveilleux mes amis
J'aime ma mère la patrie
Je la servirai toute la vie

Quand le major nous parle d'hygiène on
voit ses crocs
Plus noirs que la conscience de mon
impresario
On devine à son haleine
discrète
Qu'y se les brique avec une chaussette
Il peut voir Chicago content
C'est pas lui qu'on traitera de sale
blanc

Qu'est-ce qu'on rit

"Military Service" (1966)
By Pierre Perret

It's clearly because I love the army as
much as the cops
That my systematically distasteful
verses
Tell you in three
strokes
Three tours in a dump
How we end up at twenty
A decadent and high-spirited moron

Oh what a laugh
Military service
It's marvelous, my friends
I love my mother country
I'll serve her for my whole life

His course tongue was loaded like a
pack-mule
Voice broken by glasses of
Muscadet
The chief that smelled of sauerkraut
Bawled out the slackers
When someone told him goodnight
He responded I don't want to know

Oh what a laugh
Military service
It's marvelous, my friends
I love my mother country
I'll serve her for my whole life

When the major talks to us about
hygiene we see his teeth
Darker than the conscience of my
impresario
We guess from the subtle smell of his
breath
That he scrubbed them with a sock
And he could see Chicago happily
It's not him that would be called a
honkey

Oh what a laugh

Au service militaire
C'est merveilleux mes amis
J'aime ma mère la patrie
Je la servirai toute la vie

Y a un musclé, il a demandé à
rempiler
Il est si ouvert que dans le civil tout lui
est fermé
Quand il nage dans la vinasse
Il nous sort des plaisanteries grasses
Et la photo de sa Marion
A poil comme un morceau de savon

Qu'est-ce qu'on rit
Au service militaire
C'est merveilleux mes amis
J'aime ma mère la patrie
Je la servirai toute la vie

Je rencontre parfois des vieux poteaux
d'antan
Qui se tapent sur les cuisses en parlant
du vieux temps
Si je réprime ma tristesse
Mon envie de leur botter les fesses
C'est qu'au prochain casse-pipe
joyeux
Y faudra bien des mecs comme eux

Qu'est-ce qu'on rit
Au service militaire
C'est merveilleux mes amis
J'aime ma mère la patrie
Je la servirai toute la vie

Aujourd'hui on nous prétend que tout va
changer
Que pour être intelligent suffisait d'y
penser
Les casernes feront peau neuve
On va placarder ce chef-d'œuvre
Ordre aux gradés bêtes et méchants
D'être un peu moins cons qu'avant

Qu'est-ce qu'on rit

Military service
It's marvelous, my friends
I love my mother country
I'll serve her for my whole life

There's a muscle-head, he asked to re-
enlist
He's so open that civilian life is closed
to him
When he swims in jug-wine
He comes out with crude jokes
And the photo of his Marion
Stark naked like a piece of soap

Oh what a laugh
Military service
It's marvelous, my friends
I love my mother country
I'll serve her for my whole life

I sometimes meet buddies from the old
days
Who slap their knees, taking about old
times
If I suppress my sadness,
My desire to kick them in the pants
It's that at the next cheerful deployment
to the front
We'll definitely need guys like them

Oh what a laugh
Military service
It's marvelous, my friends
I love my mother country
I'll serve her for my whole life

Today, they tell us that everything will
change
That thinking one is intelligent is
enough to become it
The barracks will shed their skin
This masterpiece will be displayed
Order the stupid and mean NCOs
To be a bit less stupid than before

Oh what a laugh

Au service militaire
C'est merveilleux mes amis
J'aime ma mère la patrie
Je la servirai toute la vie

Military service
It's marvelous, my friends
I love my mother country
I'll serve her for my whole life

"Sacré dollar" (1965)
Par Les Missiles

Pour ce petit bout de papier
Qui peut tout acheter
Je vois faire autour de moi
N'importe quoi
Pour toucher quelques billets... c'est
vrai
Tout le monde se battrait

Oui, c'est fou ce qu'on fait pour t'avoir
Sacré dollar
Ça me fait rigoler
J'aime mieux chanter
Avec ma guitare
Tant pis pour ce sacré dollar, eh
oui
Tant pis pour ce sacré dollar.

Elle m'avait promis de m'aimer
Même à moitié fauché
Mais d'autres avaient ce que moi, moi je
n'ai pas
Et quand brille la monnaie, c'est vrai
L'amour doit faire ses paquets

Oui, c'est fou ce qu'on fait pour t'avoir
Sacré dollar
Ça me fait rigoler
J'aime mieux chanter
Avec ma guitare
Tant pis pour ce sacré dollar, eh
oui
Tant pis pour ce sacré dollar.

Pour moi le seul vrai bonheur
Est au fond de mon cœur
Si l'on croit que je n'ai rien
J'ai mes copains
Et pour eux je donnerais, c'est vrai
Le monde entier sans regret

Malgré tout tu n'as pas pu m'avoir
Sacré dollar
J'ai gardé ma guitare

"Good, Old Dollar" (1965)
By Les Missiles

For this little piece of paper
That can buy everything
I see people around me do
Anything
To get their hands on a few dollars... it's
true
Everyone would fight each other

It's crazy what we'll do to get you
Good, old dollar
It makes me laugh
I prefer to sing
With my guitar
Too bad for this good, old dollar, oh
yeah
Too bad for this good, old dollar

She promised to love me
Even half-broke
But others had what I, what I
don't
And when the coins shine, it's true
Love has to pack its bags

It's crazy what we'll do to get you
Good, old dollar
It makes me laugh
I prefer to sing
With my guitar
Too bad for this good, old dollar, oh
yeah
Too bad for this good, old dollar

For me, the only happiness
Is in the bottom of my heart
If they think I have nothing
I have my friends
For them I'd give, it's true
The whole world without regrets

In spite of everything
Good, old dollar,
I kept my guitar

Je fais des chansons
Avec l'horizon
Et si je les chante au hasard, eh oui
C'est pas pour toi, sacré dollar.

Pour ce petit bout de papier
Qui peut tout acheter
Je vois faire autour de moi
N'importe quoi
Pour toucher quelques billets, c'est vrai
Tout le monde se battrait

Oui, c'est fou ce qu'on fait pour t'avoir
Sacré dollar
Ça me fait rigoler
J'aime mieux chanter
Avec ma guitare
Tant pis pour ce sacré dollar, eh
oui
Tant pis pour ce sacré dollar

I make music
With the horizon
And if I sing them haphazardly, oh yeah
It's not for you, good, old dollar

For this little piece of paper
That can buy everything
I see people around me do
Anything
To get their hands on a few dollars
Everyone would fight each other

It's crazy what we'll do to get you
Good, old dollar
It makes me laugh
I prefer to sing
With my guitar
Too bad for this good, old dollar, oh
yeah
Too bad for this good, old dollar

"Le travail c'est la santé" (1965)
Par Henri Salvador

Le travail c'est la santé
Rien faire c'est la conserver
Les prisonniers du boulot
N'font pas de vieux os.

Ces gens qui courent au grand galop
En auto, métro ou vélo
Vont-ils voir un film rigolo ?
Mais non, ils vont à leur boulot

Le travail c'est la santé
Rien faire c'est la conserver
Les prisonniers du boulot
N'font pas de vieux os.

Ils bossent onze mois pour les vacances
Et sont crevés quand elles commencent
Un mois plus tard, ils sont costauds
Mais faut reprendre le boulot

Dire qu'il y a des gens en pagaille
Qui courent sans cesse après le travail
Moi le travail me court après
Il n'est pas près de m'rattraper.

Maintenant dans le plus p'tit village
Les gens travaillent comme des sauvages
Pour se payer tout le confort
Quand ils l'ont, eh bien, ils sont morts.

Hommes d'affaires et meneurs de foule
Travaillent à en perdre la boule
Et meurent d'une maladie d'cœur
C'est très rare chez les pétanqueurs !

"Work is health" (1965)
By Henri Salvador

Work is health
To do nothing is to conserve it
Prisoners of work
Don't live long

These people who run, galloping
In cars, on subways, or on bikes
Are they going to see a funny movie?
But no, they're going to work

Work is health
To do nothing is to conserve it
Prisoners of work
Don't live long

They work eleven months for vacation
And they're exhausted when it starts
A month later, they're hefty
But they have to go back to work

To think, there are loads of people
That constantly chase after work
Me, work chases after me
It's not about to catch me

Now in the smallest village
People work like beasts
To pay for all their comforts
When they get them, well, they're dead

Businessmen and leaders of crowds
Work like crazy
And die of a heart condition
Very rare in *pétanqueurs*!¹

¹ Players of the game *pétanque*, usually retired men

"Et moi et moi et moi" (1966)
Par Jacques Dutronc

Sept cent millions de chinois
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Avec ma vie, mon petit chez-moi
Mon mal de tête, mon point au foie
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Quatre-vingt millions d'indonésiens
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Avec ma voiture et mon chien
Son Canigou quand il aboie
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Trois ou quatre cent millions de
noirs
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Qui vais au brunissoir
Au sauna pour perdre du poids
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Trois cent millions de soviétiques
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Avec mes manies et mes tics
Dans mon petit lit en plume d'oie
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Cinquante millions de gens imparfaits
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Qui regarde Catherine Langeais
A la télévision chez moi
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Neuf cent millions de crève-la-faim
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Avec mon régime végétarien
Et tout le whisky que je m'envoie
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

"And me and me and me" (1966)
By Jacques Dutronc

Seven-hundred million Chinese people
And me and me and me
With my life, my little one at home
My headache, my liver pain
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Eighty-million Indonesians
And me and me and me
With my car and my dog
His dog food when he barks
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Three- or four-hundred million black
people
And me and me and me
Who go to the tanning salon
To the sauna to lose weight
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Three-hundred million Soviets
And me and me and me
With my obsessions and my habits
In my little goose-feather bed
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Fifty million imperfect people
And me and me and me
Watching Catherine Langeais
On television at my house
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Nine-hundred million starving people
And me and me and me
With my vegetarian diet
And all the whiskey I can knock back
I think about it and then I forget
That's life, that's life

Cinq cent millions de sud-américains
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Je suis tout nu dans mon bain
Avec une fille qui me nettoie
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Cinquante millions de vietnamiens
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Le dimanche à la chasse au lapin
Avec mon fusil, je suis le roi
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Cinq cent milliards de petits martiens
Et moi, et moi, et moi
Comme un con de parisien
J'attends mon chèque de fin de mois
J'y pense et puis j'oublie
C'est la vie, c'est la vie

Five-hundred million South Americans
And me and me and me
I'm completely naked in my bath
With a girl who's cleaning me
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Fifty million Vietnamese people
And me and me and me
Sundays, rabbit hunting
With my gun, I'm the king
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

Five-hundred billion little Martians
And me and me and me
Like an idiot Parisian
I wait for my monthly check
I think about it then I forget
That's life, that's life

"Emmenez-moi" (1967)
Par Charles Aznavour

Vers les docks où le poids de l'ennui
Me courbe le dos
Ils arrivent, le ventre alourdi
De fruits des bateaux

Ils viennent du bout du monde
Apportant avec eux
Des idées vagabondes
Aux reflets de ciel bleu
De mirage
Traînant un parfum poivrées
De pays inconnus
Et d'éternels étés
Où l'on vit presque nu
Sur les plages
Moi qui n'ai connu toute ma vie
Que le ciel du Nord
J'aimerais débarbouiller ce gris
En virant de bord

Emmenez-moi
Au bout de la terre
Emmenez-moi
Au pays des merveilles
Il me semble que la misère
Serait moins pénible au soleil.

Dans les bars à la tombée du jour
Avec les marins
Quand on parle de filles et d'amour
Un verre à la main
Je perds la notion des choses
Et soudain ma pensée
M'enlève et me dépose
Un merveilleux été
Sur la grève
Où je vois tendant les bras
L'amour qui comme un fou
Court au-devant de moi
Et je me pends au cou
De mon rêve
Quand les bars ferment, que les marins

"Take Me Away" (1967)
By Charles Aznavour

By the docks where the weight of *ennui*
Bends my back
They arrive, stomachs full
Of fruit from the boats

They come from half a world away
Bringing with them
Wandering ideas
To reflections of blue sky
Of mirages
Dragging in a peppery perfume
Of unknown lands
And eternal summers
Where they live nearly naked
On beaches
Me, having known my whole life
Only the Northern skies
I'd like to wash away this gray
By stowing away

Take me away
To the edge of the world
Take me away
To wonderland
It seems to me that misery
Would be less tiresome in the sun

In the bars at nightfall
With the sailors
When we talk about girls and love
A glass in hand
I lose the notion of things
And suddenly my thoughts
Take me away and put me
A wonderful summer
On the shore
Where I see, arms outstretched
Love that crazily
Runs before me
And I throw my arms around the neck
Of my dream
When the bars close, when the sailors

Rejoignent leur bord
Moi je rêve encore jusqu'au matin
Debout sur le port

Emmenez-moi
Au bout de la terre
Emmenez-moi
Au pays des merveilles
Il me semble que la misère
Serait moins pénible au soleil

Un beau jour sur un rafiot craquant
De la coque au pont
Pour partir je travaillerai dans
La soute à charbon
Prenant la route qui mène
A mes rêves d'enfants
Sur des îles lointaines
Où rien n'est important
Que de vivre
Où les filles alanguies
Vous ravissent le coeur
En tressant m'a-t-on dit
De ces colliers de fleurs
Qui enivrent
Je fuirai laissant là mon passé
Sans aucun remords
Sans bagage et le coeur libéré
En chantant très fort

Emmenez-moi
Au bout de la terre
Emmenez-moi
Au pays des merveilles
Il me semble que la misère
Serait moins pénible au soleil
Emmenez-moi
Au bout de la Terre
Emmenez-moi
Au pays des merveilles
Il me semble que la misère
Serait moins pénible au soleil

Go back aboard
Me, I dream until the morning
Awake in the port

Take me away
To the edge of the world
Take me away
To wonderland
It seems to me that misery
Would be less tiresome in the sun

One beautiful day in a tub, cracking
From the bilge to the deck
To leave I'll work in
The coal bunker
Taking the route that leads
To my childhood dreams
On faraway isles
Where nothing is important
Except living
Where languid girls
Steal your heart
In braiding, I've been told
Flower necklaces
That intoxicate
I'll escape, leaving here my past
Without any regrets
Without baggage and with a freed heart
Singing very loud

Take me away
To the edge of the world
Take me away
To wonderland
It seems to me that misery
Would be less tiresome in the sun
Take me away
Half a world away
Take me away
To wonderland
It seems to me that misery
Would be less tiresome in the sun

"San Francisco" (1967)
Par Johnny Hallyday

Si vous allez à San Francisco
Vous y verrez des gens que j'aime bien
Tous les hippies de San Francisco
Vous donneront tout ce qu'ils ont pour
rien

Si vous allez à San Francisco
Vous verrez des gens doux et gentils
Le long des rues de San Francisco
Parler de fleurs devenir vos
amis

Dans ce monde en fusion
Il y a trop d'explosions
Pour la destruction

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

Si vous allez à San Francisco
Vous les verrez des fleurs dans les
cheveux
Tous les hippies de San Francisco
Plein d'amour brûlant dans leurs yeux

A Paris comme San Francisco
On verra beaucoup de gens comme eux

"San Francisco" (1967)
By Johnny Hallyday

If you go to San Francisco
You'll see people I like there
All the hippies of San Francisco
Will give you everything they have for
nothing

If you go to San Francisco
You'll see gentle and nice people
All along the streets of San Francisco
Talking about flowers becoming your
friends

In this changing world
There are too many explosions
To create destructions

Like them, you'll say no
To hate, to passions
We're all brothers
On this Earth

If you go to San Francisco
You'll see them, flowers in their
hair
All the hippies of San Francisco
Full of love burning in their eyes

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

"Mao et Moa" (1967)
Par Nino Ferrer

Si je suis rapide et rusé
Quand je fais mes Maos croisés
Me disait un esquiMao
C'est grâce à la pensée de Mao
S'il est vrai que plaisir d'amour
Ne dure qu'un Maoment très court
Moa je dis qu'un bon Maoment
Vaut bien deux cornes d'éléphants

C'est Moa que je suis pour Mao contre
Liou Chao-Chi
J'ai mon bréviaire de révolutionnaire
Dans tous les bouges moa je bois des
quarts de rouge
Le quart de rouge c'est la boisson du
garde rouge

Lorsque je dîne avec Thérèse
Je prends des œufs durs Maonaises
Thérèse prend un gelati Maotta
Le chat prend du Maou pour les chats
Le dimanche en autoMaobile
On va visiter la Sicile
Ses plages et ses Maonuments
Quand on rentre on est bien content

C'est moa que j' suis pour Mao contre
Liou Chao-Chi
J'ai mon bréviaire de révolutionnaire
Dans tous les bouges moa je bois des
quarts de rouge
Le quart de rouge c'est la boisson du
garde rouge

Si j'aime bien la marche à pied
C'est à cause de la Société
Protectrice des AniMao
Qui protège mon ChaMao
Si la chromolithographie
Engendre la Maonotonie
La Maontagne ça a du bon
Et c'est normal car c'est NorMaond

² Moa is a play on "moi" or 'me' in French

"Mao and Moa"² (1967)
By Nino Ferrer

If I'm fast and clever
When I do my *Mao croisés*³
An *EskiMao* said to me
It's thanks to Mao's way of thinking
If it's true that love's happiness
Lasts only a brief *Maoment*
Moa I say that a good *Maoment*
Is worth two elephant's tusks

It's *moa* that I'm for against Liou Chao-
Chi
I have my revolutionary handbook
In all the dive-bars, *moa*, I drink quarters
of red
Quarters of red is the drink of the Red
Guard

When I eat with Theresa
I get hard-boiled eggs with *Maonnaise*
Theresa gets a *Gelati Maotta*
The cat gets *Maou* for cats
Sunday in an *automMaobile*
We'll visit Sicily
Its beaches and its *Maonuments*
When we come home, we're quite happy

It's *moa* that I'm for against Liou Chao-
Chi
I have my revolutionary handbook
In all the dive-bars, *moa*, I drink quarters
of red
Quarter of red is the drink of the Red
Guard

If I like to walk on foot
It's because of the Society
For the Protection of *aniMaols*
That protects my *CaMaol*
If chromolithography
Cause *Maotonie*
The *Maontagne* helps
And it's normal because it is *NorMaon*

³ These words are all plays on Mao's name

Monsieur Maorice a été Maordu
Par un guitariste barbu
Monsieur Maorice est Maoribond
Gai, gai, dansons le rigaudon

Si je suis rapide et rusé
Quand je fais mes Mao croisés

Mister *Maorice* got *Maordu*⁴
By a bearded guitarist
Mister *Maorice* is *Maoribund*
Gay, gay, dance the Rigaudon

If I'm fast and clever
When I do my *Mao croisés*⁵

⁴ Bitten

⁵ Cross-word puzzles

"Enfants de tous pays" (1963)
Par Enrico Macias

Enfants de tout pays
Tendez vos mains meurtries
Semez l'amour
Et puis donnez la vie
Enfants de tout pays
Et de toutes couleurs
Vous avez dans le cœur
Notre bonheur
C'est dans vos mains
Que demain
Notre terre
Sera confiée
Pour sortir de la nuit
Et notre espoir
De revoir la lumière
Est dans vos yeux
Qui s'éveillent à la vie
Séchez vos larmes
Jetez vos armes
Faites du monde
Un paradis
Enfants de tout pays
Tendez vos mains meurtries
Semez l'amour
Et puis donnez la vie
Enfants de tout pays
Et de toutes couleurs
Vous avez dans le cœur
Notre bonheur

Il faut penser
Au passé
De nos pères
Et aux promesses
Qu'ils n'ont jamais tenues
La vérité
C'est d'aimer
Sans frontières
Et de donner
Chaque jour un peu plus
Car la sagesse

"Children of All Countries" (1963)
By Enrico Macias

Children of all countries
Hold out your bruised hand
Spread love
And then give life
Children of all countries
And of all colors
You have in your heart
Our happiness
It's in your hands
That tomorrow
Our land
Will be entrusted
To get out of the night
And our hope
To see the light again
Is in your eyes
That discover life
Dry your tears
Toss out your weapons
Make the world
A paradise
Children of all countries
Hold out your bruised hand
Spread love
And then give life
Children of all countries
And of all colors
You have in your heart
Our happiness

You must think
Of the past
Of our fathers
And of the promises
That they never kept
The truth
Is to love
Without borders
And to give
Every day a little more
Because wisdom

Et la richesse
N'ont qu'une adresse
Le paradis

And wealth
Only have one address
Paradise

Enfants de tout pays
Tendez vos mains meurtries
Semez l'amour
Et puis donnez la vie
Enfants de tout pays
Et de toutes couleurs
Vous avez dans le coeur
Notre bonheur

Children of all countries
Hold out your bruised hand
Spread love
And give life
Children of all countries
And of all colors
You have in your heart
Our happiness

Et puis le jour
Où l'amour
Sur la terre
Deviendra roi
Vous pourrez vous reposer
Lorsque la joie
Couvrira
Nos prières
Vous aurez droit
A votre éternité
Et tous les rires
De votre empire
Feront du monde
Un paradis

And then the day
When love
On earth
Becomes king
You will be able to rest
When joy
Will cover
Our prayers
You'll have
Your eternity
And all the laughter
Of your empire
Will make the world
A paradise

Enfants de tout pays
Tendez vos mains meurtries
Semez l'amour
Et puis donnez la vie
Enfants de tout pays
Et de toutes couleurs
Vous avez dans le cœur
Notre bonheur

Children of all countries
Hold out your bruised hand
Spread love
And give life
Children of all countries
And of all colors
You have in your heart
Our happiness

"Les enfants de la guerre" (1966)
Par Charles Aznavour

Les enfants de la guerre
Ne sont pas des enfants
Ils ont l'âge de pierre
du fer et du sang
Sur les larmes de mères
Ils ont ouvert les yeux
Par des jours sans mystère
Et sur un monde en feu

Les enfants de la guerre
Ne sont pas des enfants
Ils ont connu la terre
A feu et à sang
Ils ont eu des chimères
Pour aiguïser leur dents
Et pris des cimetières
Pour des jardins d'enfants

Ces enfants de l'orage
Et des jours incertains
Qui avaient le visage
Creusé par la faim
Ont vieilli avant l'âge
Et grandi sans secours
Sans toucher l'héritage
Que doit léguer l'amour

Les enfants de la guerre
Ne sont pas des enfants
Ils ont vu la colère
Étouffer leurs chants

Ont appris à se taire
Et à serrer les poings
Quand les voix mensongères
Leur dictaient leur destin

Les enfants de la guerre
Ne sont pas des enfants
Avec leur mine fière
Et leurs yeux trop grand
Ils ont vu la misère
Recouvrir leurs élans

"The Children of War" (1966)
By Charles Aznavour

The children of war
Are not children
They're as old as stone
Iron, and blood
In their mothers' tears
They opened their eyes
Through days without mystery
And on a world on fire

The children of war
Are not children
They knew the world
Fiery and bloody
They had dreams
To help them teethe
And took cemeteries
For kindergartens

These children of the storm
And of uncertain days
Who have faces
Sunken by hunger
Aged too quickly
And grew up without help
Without receiving the inheritance
That love should leave

The children of war
Are not children
They saw anger
Stifle their songs

They learned to become silent
And to ball their fists
When lying voices
Dictated their destiny

The children of war
Are not children
With their proud appearance
And their too-big eyes
They have seen poverty
Cover up their vitality

Et des mains étrangères
Égorger leurs printemps

Ces enfants sans enfance
Sans jeunesse et sans joie
Qui tremblaient sans défense
De peine et de froid
Qui défiaient la souffrance
Et taisaient leurs émois
Mais vivaient d'espérance
Sont comme toi et moi

Des amants de misère
De malheureux amants
Aux amours singulières
Aux rêves changeants
Qui cherchent la lumière
Mais la craignent pourtant
Car
Les amants de la guerre
Sont restés des enfants

And foreign hands
Slit the throat of their spring

These children without childhoods
Without youthfulness and joy
Who tremble, defenseless
Against the pain and the cold
Who defied their suffering
And hid their agitation
But lived with hope
Are like you and me

The lovers of misery
Of miserable lovers
To singular love
To changing dreams
That look for the light
But are afraid of it
Because
The lovers of war
Stayed children

"Le déserteur" (1996)
La version des Sunlights

Messieurs qu'on nomme Grands,
Je vous fais une lettre
Que vous lirez peut-être
Si vous avez le temps
Je viens de recevoir
Mes papiers militaires
Pour aller à la guerre
Avant mercredi soir
Messieurs qu'on nomme Grands,
Je ne veux pas la faire
Je ne suis pas sur terre
Pour tuer les pauvres gens
il faut pas vous fâcher
mais il faut que je vous dise
Les guerres sont des bêtises
Le monde en a assez

Depuis que je suis né
J'ai vu mourir des frères
J'ai vu partir des pères
Et des enfants pleurer
les mères ont trop souffert
quand d'autres se gambergent
Et vivant à leur aise
Malgré le tout disant
Il y a des prisonniers
On a volé leur âme
On a volé leur femme
Et tout leur cher passé
Demain de bon matin
Je fermerai la porte
Au nez des années mortes
J'irai par les chemins

Je mendierai ma vie
Sur la terre et sur l'onde
Du Vieux au Nouveau Monde
Et je dirai aux gens:
Profitez de la vie
Eloignez la misère
Vous êtes tous des frères
gens de tous les pays

"The Deserter" (1966)
The Sunlights' version

Sirs considered Great,
I'm writing you a letter
That you'll read perhaps
If you have the time
I just received
My military papers
To go to the war
Before Wednesday night
Sirs considered Great,
I don't want to do it
I'm not on earth
To kill those poor people
You mustn't be mad
But I must tell you
Wars are a mistake
The world has enough of them

Since I was born
I've seen brothers die
I've seen fathers leave
And children cry
Mothers have suffered too much
When others ponder
Living at their ease
Regardless of all saying
There are prisoners
Their souls were stolen
Their wives were stolen
And all of their past
Tomorrow, early in the morning
I'll close the door
In the face of dead years
I'll go on the paths

I'll beg for a living
On land and on waves
From the Old to the New World
And I'll tell people
Enjoy life
Banish destitution
You're all brothers
People of all countries

S'il faut verser le sang
Allez verser le vôtre
Messieurs les bon apôtres
Messieurs qu'on nomme Grands,
Si vous me poursuivez
Prévenez vos gendarmes
Que je serai sans armes
Et qu'ils pourront tirer
Et qu'ils pourront tirer...

If blood must be spilled
Go spill your own
Sirs, since you're such saints
Sirs considered Great,
If you pursue me
Warn your policemen
That I won't be armed
And that they can shoot
And that they can shoot...

"Ne joue pas au soldat" (1967)
Par Les Sunlights

Ne joue pas aux soldats
Mon cher petit bonhomme
Les sabres et les fusils
Ne sont pas des jouets
Plus tard tu en auras
Quand tu seras un homme
Je ne veux pas voir ces choses
Entre tes doigts fluets

Ces joujous-là, vois-tu,
Rappellent trop la guerre
Les chagrins et les deuils
Que l'on voit ici-bas.
Ils ont trop fait pleurer
Le cœur des pauvres mères
Quand leurs enfants sont morts
En jouant aux soldats

Faut-il que les parents
N'aient rien dans les méninges
Les soirs de carnaval
Pour déguiser encore leurs enfants en
 poilus
Comme des petits singes
Qui seraient habillés
Dans la veste d'un mort.
La cape militaire
Est le dernier emblème
Le linceul dans lequel
Vos fils dorment là-bas
Au moins respectez-les
Les soirs de carnaval
Et ne déguisez pas
Vos enfants en soldats

Ces joujous-là, vois-tu,
Rappellent trop la guerre
Les chagrins et les deuils
Que l'on voit ici-bas.
Ils ont trop fait pleurer
Le cœur des pauvres mères
Quand leurs enfants sont morts
En jouant aux soldats

"Don't Play Soldier"
By Les Sunlights

Don't play soldier
My dear little boy
Sabers and guns
Are not toys
Later on you'll have them
When you'll be a man
I don't want to see these things
Between your tiny fingers

These playthings, you see
Too strongly recall war
Sorrow and mourning
That we see from here to there
They have caused too many tears
From the hearts of mothers
When their children died
Playing soldier

Do parents have to
Have nothing in their heads
On Carnival nights
To dress their children as
 infantrymen
Like little monkeys
Who would be dressed
In a dead man's jacket
The military cape
If the last symbol
The shroud in which
Your son will sleep
At least respect them
On Carnival nights
And don't dress
You children like soldiers

These playthings, you see
Too strongly recall war
Sorrow and mourning
That we see from here to there
They have caused too many tears
From the hearts of mothers
When their children died
Playing soldier

"Maria" (1967)

Par Jean Ferrat

Maria avait deux enfants
Deux garçons dont elle était fière
Et c'était bien la même chair
Et c'était bien le même sang

Ils grandirent sur cette terre
Près de la Méditerranée
Ils grandirent dans la lumière
Entre l'olive et l'oranger

C'est presque au jour de leurs vingt
ans
Qu'éclata la guerre civile
On vit l'Espagne rouge de sang
Crier dans un monde immobile

Les deux garçons de Maria
N'étaient pas dans le même camp
N'étaient pas du même combat
L'un était rouge, et l'autre blanc

Qui des deux tira le premier
Le jour où les fusils parlèrent
Et lequel des deux s'est tué
Sur le corps tout chaud de son frère ?

On ne sait pas. Tout ce qu'on sait
C'est qu'on les retrouva ensemble
Le blanc et le rouge mêlés
A même les pierres et la cendre

Si vous lui parlez de la guerre
Si vous lui dites liberté
Elle vous montrera la pierre
Où ses enfants sont enterrés

Maria avait deux enfants
Deux garçons dont elle était fière
Et c'était bien la même chair
Et c'était bien le même sang

"Maria" (1967)

By Jean Ferrat

Maria had two children
Two sons of whom she was proud
And it was the same flesh
And it was the same blood

They grew up on this land
Near the Mediterranean
They grew up in the light
Between the olive and orange tree

It was almost the day of their twentieth
year
That the civil war broke out
Spain was seen red with blood
Yelling in a motionless world

Maria's two boys
Were not on the same side
Were not fighting the same fight
One was red and the other white

Which of the two shot first
The day when guns spoke
And which of the two killed himself
On the warm body of his brother?

We don't know. All we know
It's that they were found together
The red and the white mixed together
On rocks and ashes

If you speak of her of war
If you say to her liberty
She'll show you the stone
Where her children are buried

Maria had two children
Two sons of whom she was proud
And it was the same flesh
And it was the same blood

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Claire Fouchereaux grew up in Yarmouth, Maine and graduated from Yarmouth High School in 2013. She is a December 2016 graduate of the University of Maine, studying French and History during her time there. She studied abroad at l'Université de Montréal in 2015 as a 2014-2015 Killam Fellow, was the president of the University of Maine French Club, as well as of the University of Maine History Club, and was a sister of Gamma Sigma Sigma National Service Sorority while at UMaine. As for the future, she plans to attend graduate school after a gap year, though she is undecided on which discipline she would like to specialize in. Her favorite French musician of the 1960s is undoubtedly Jacques Dutronc, though, throughout this project, she has come to appreciate the merits of a whole host of musical artists.