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*Romancing Europe: Staged Multilingualism and Accentual Affectation in Post-War Popular Music*

We want to take up the hypothesis in the CfP for this section: that popular music has functioned – or that it *used* to function – as a connection between European cultures and nationalities. In spite of our situation as scholars in Anglophone Studies, we also recognize that on a European basis English has not invariably been the most potent linguistic binding link. While it has been eminent as a practical tool of transnational exchange, English – vying with other, and differently anchored, *lingue franche* – arguably failed to arrive at the ideological/affective centre of pronouncedly *European* transactions. And although English presently dominates popular music, this has not always been the case. On this basis, we propose to investigate the accentuation of language in post-war European popular music. We will look at the period from the late 1940s into the early 1980s, when the 'Schlager,' the chanson and related genres still operated close to the centre of the European mainstream.

Our focus is on the multilingual practices and xenophonic (Rey Chow) potentialities evident in this kind of music. In particular, we are interested in the frequent – and, we suggest, central – *phenomenon* of emphatically staging the sound and tonality of French. This practice was not restricted to French artists or to songs sung in French. Rather, performers from various European nations either sang in French or displayed/affected a French accent while singing in their own or in other languages. Indeed, French phonotypes apparently could facilitate concatenations of affectively charged and ideologically relevant interlingual transactions. An example is the Turkish star performer Ajda Pekkan: having gained a footing in European entertainment culture by singing French chansons in the 1970s, her *Viens Dans Ma Vie* (an arrangement of the Iranian singer Marjan's *Kavir-e Del*), released in French before its Turkish version in 1977, became the best-selling foreign language album in Turkey. Ajda eventually performed songs by Udo Jürgens – in German but with an accent reminiscent of South Eastern Europe – before she withdrew onto the terrain of arabesque music primarily designed for the Turkish market.

We wish to investigate such practices more closely, paying attention not only to the phonetic and prosodic features that are at play but also to their cultural contexts, discursive framings and political implications. We propose to read the display and affectation of French accents as an instance of using linguistic articulation as a mark and facilitator of sociocultural articulation, i.e. of linguistically performed transnational negotiations. How, then, were French accents used in relocating the affective energies of the European imagination? On what basis were they supposed to operate as a mediatory device between concepts of selfhood and otherness? How, in particular, was the sound of French positioned in the cultural and ethnic forcefield between 'the North' and 'the South'?

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