

Not Citizens of a Classical Mediterranean: Muslim Youth from Marseille Elude a Linguistic Gentrification by the French State

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ABSTRACT

A moral panic is afoot in contemporary France surrounding what place French-Muslim youth hold within the national identity. The French state, in particular, is actively engaged in regimenting what it means to be a young Muslim person from France. This article examines how, during Marseille's year (2013) as the European Capital of Culture, the municipal government and the local branch of the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale spearheaded several initiatives, a number of which focused on Arabic-language education, with the aim of transforming French-Muslim youth from Marseille's housing projects into secular, upwardly mobile individuals. Ethnographic inquiry with the youth targeted by such "linguistic gentrification" programs reveals that the state's reimagining of them in these terms remained largely at odds with how they themselves understood their identities. This article, as such, illustrates the analytical importance of attending to people's uptake when evaluating the eventual scope of top-down discourses and projects, while also offering an example of how the label "Mediterranean" functions as a spatiotemporal shifter, deployed by different groups to activate alternative accounts of history, the present, and the future.

It was December 2010, and Anouar Ben Aziz stood to welcome the wide range of guests who had come to participate in the conference being hosted by his community association in central Marseille. Many of the attendees known to him, including Modern Standard Arabic teachers from other Muslim com-

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munity associations and from Marseille's private Muslim secondary school, raised palms in greeting or offered salaams in anticipation. Ben Aziz began with a welcome in French, before switching to Modern Standard Arabic:¹

À l'occasion de notre conférence de 2010 sur "L'enseignement de la langue arabe en Provence: Réalités et nouveaux enjeux," je ne peux concevoir d'un meilleur lieu que la bibliothèque Alcazar [al-ka-'sɑʁ], dans la ville de Marseille. ((pause)) *Al-qaṣar* [al-'qa-sər] fī l-Marsah, Marsīlia.

(On the occasion of our 2010 conference on "Arabic Teaching in Provence: Realities and New Challenges," how fitting to find ourselves convened in the Alcazar Library, in the city of Marseille. ((pause)) The castle in the port, Marseille.)

A rumble of laughter affirmed that the facilitator's puns were not misspent on at least some members of this audience, who, upon hearing the name of Marseille's central library (Alcazar) rendered as [al-'qa-sər], with the recognizable uvular *q*, trilled *r*, and syllable stress of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), promptly imagined the library transformed into an eleventh-century Andalusian fortress. Ben Aziz had in fact gestured in more than one way to a Marseille positioned within a culturally Arab and Muslim Mediterranean via this opening remark. Having recast the main library as an Al-Andalus-era fortress, he then located the building in a Marseille whose name derives, not from Greeks' baptism of the city as "Massalia" in the sixth century BCE, but from an etymological link to the Arabic word *marsah* 'port'. His pun on *marsah* worked on several levels: it suggested that perhaps Arabs—not Greeks—had named Marseille, and for her ports; it gestured to the library's physical location footsteps away from Marseille's historic Vieux Port; and it likewise drew an implicit parallel between Marseille and the suburb of the Tunisian capital, Al-Marsah. Al-Marsah, significantly, lies on the site of Ancient Carthage and saw protracted

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1. Anouar Ben Aziz, December 9, 2010. My participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms throughout this article. Arabic is transcribed either in IPA or in accordance with the conventions of the American Library Association and Library of Congress (see <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/romanization/arabic.pdf>). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

battles between its Semitic custodians, the Phoenicians, and marauding Greek and Roman forces between the sixth and second centuries CE.² In making this remark, not only was Ben Aziz thus offering a light-hearted opening to a conference about MSA teaching in the Marseille-Provence metropolitan area; he was also taking a decisive stance on an issue that polarized both Marseille's Arabic instructional sphere and the city's cultural politics in 2012–13. Did Marseille's cultural heritage lie in a Greco-Roman Mediterranean or in an Arab, Islamic Mediterranean?

Negotiating this discrepancy in perspective was in fact among the unstated objectives for the conference. Indeed, members of the community association hosting the conference, the Institut Méditerranéen d'Études Musulmanes (Mediterranean Institute for Islamic Studies, IMEM), along with other prominent Sunni Muslim leaders and educators, envisioned Marseille as a node within a network of culturally and historically Islamic cities around the Mediterranean basin and MSA, accordingly, as a language whose Semitic and Islamic history required consideration in the classroom. Ben Aziz's pun, together with the association's very name, bespoke this viewpoint. In contrast, state actors in Marseille's municipal government and MSA educational sphere concurred in a belief that Marseille's *Méditerranité* was traceable to classical antiquity, seeing MSA likewise as a language with important Greco-Roman ties. The IMEM had invited a coterie of state-employed individuals representing this perspective to participate in its conference. Thus, sitting in the audience were tenured Arabists from Aix-Marseille University (located in nearby Aix-en-Provence), teachers appointed to teach MSA in Marseille's public schools, those tasked with developing MSA curricula by the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, and also the mayor of Marseille's central first and seventh arrondissements at the time, Patrick Menucci.

Insofar as varying depictions of the Mediterranean, and of the cities and people along its shores, have served identifiable political ends historically, this article aims in a first instance to contextualize why this Greco-Roman depiction of Marseille and of MSA was activated and purveyed by Marseille's municipal and educational functionaries in 2012–13. In the following section, I discuss how this portrayal of Marseille's cultural heritage coalesced on the eve of 2013, as officials readied the city for the millions of visitors it would receive during its year as European Capital of Culture, an event referred to as Marseille-Provence 2013,

2. This third level of meaning carried with it the additional meaning that Ben Aziz is himself Tunisian and this allusion may therefore have had personal significance.

or MP2013. Drawing on Bakhtin (1981) and Agha (2007), I consider this Greco-Roman “chronotopic formulation” a depiction of Mediterranean times and spaces but also, significantly, of the people who inhabit those spaces and their qualities. More specifically, the article documents how this chronotopic formulation emerged as part and parcel of efforts to depict and thereby transform the cultural leanings of second- and third-generation French-Muslim youth from Marseille’s housing projects, whom city officials had come to identify as a threat to their investment aspirations for MP2013. I trace how, in response to nationally circulating secular-republican discourses deploring an Islamic revival among French youth from Muslim backgrounds (Fernando 2014) and local insecurity talk linking French-Muslim, project-dwelling youth to criminal and terrorist activities occurring in Marseille, the municipality and the Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale spearheaded various measures intended to steer these youth in directions perceived to be more productive.

The first spate of such measures I analyze are, on the one hand, an MSA-teaching initiative begun in the fall of 2012 in which selected high school MSA classes were co-taught with Greek and Latin as part of “Mediterranean Language and Culture Workshops” and, on the other, a municipal advertising campaign that used Mediterranean imagery to promote MP2013. These measures bore in common a chronotopic “interpellation” (Althusser 1971), or call from state institutions, impelling youth to replace their putative claims to Islamic personhood with a secular Greco-Roman model of personhood. A second type of measure undertaken by the French state, likewise with an eye to redirecting French-Muslim youth, was to rebrand MSA as an elite language in secondary-school MSA-as-a-foreign-language classrooms. Students participating in these classes, who were exclusively from Muslim backgrounds and from the disadvantaged housing projects in the city’s north, were instructed in the practical, upwardly mobile potential of MSA. Further, the academic inspector for these classrooms was active in portraying MSA as students’ ticket out of their blue-collar family environments and into white-collar professionalism.

When viewed together, these two sets of state-sponsored measures targeting French-Muslim youth from Marseille’s housing projects can be recast as attempted “erasures” (Irvine and Gal 2000, 38) of their religious affiliations, in the first instance, and of their class belonging, in the second. I contend, moreover, that these MSA-teaching initiatives should be considered alongside the visible forms of gentrification that characterized the period of MP2013, such as the large-scale public and private project to turn downtown Marseille’s third

arrondissement, a historic immigrant district and the site of the city's industrial port, into a business and leisure district. Although gentrification is typically understood to have spatial transformations as its outcome (the verb *to gentrify* itself taking a designated space as its grammatical object), gentrification is more accurately defined as comprising "social, subjective, and spatial" processes that operate jointly (Ben-Yehoyada 2012, 63). Distinct groups of people hence act as both agents and patients of gentrification, with each of these roles potentially reshaping their class memberships: some may be responsible for setting up gentrification's policy architecture; others may move into a historically lower-class neighborhood and in so doing shift its demographics; and still others may face eviction. Turning to the case at hand, then, it emerges that infrastructural gentrification during MP2013 and concurrent attempts to remake Marseille's marginalized, underprivileged youth, using MSA-language classes as a field of action, held in common that each carried spatial, as well as social or subjective, consequences for diverse stakeholders. By implementing infrastructure changes in central Marseille that focused on business and leisure, for instance, the municipality and the board of MP2013 effectively favored groups of people they believed to be cosmopolitan in the "right" way. These included tourists, in the short term, but also white elite cadres from outside Marseille whose settlement downtown was counted on to augment the city's prosperity and international standing in the long term. A consequence of this gentrification was that a number of immigrant descendants and their first-generation relatives, considered the "wrong" kind of cosmopolitan individuals, were displaced from central Marseille toward the neighborhoods along the city's northern littoral. Meanwhile, the French-Muslim secondary-school students who participated in my research found themselves at the receiving end, not of spatial transformations and displacements—likely due to their their location an hour or more off the tourist track by public transportation—but rather of language-centered gentrification measures aimed at changing their concepts of personhood. In an echo of the infrastructural project to eclipse the "wrong" cosmopolitans from MP2013's panorama, such youth were incited to leave behind their Muslim heritage and working-class affiliations by communicating in a revamped MSA. The unstated yet desired result was for youth to acquire an iconic resemblance to the incoming secular, affluent people with whom they might well rub shoulders were they to venture into central Marseille. The spatial dimension of this linguistic gentrification, in turn, was evinced through the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale's reliance on spatial imaginaries like that of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean.

The subsequent section of the article then highlights how French-Muslim youth themselves recontextualized (Bauman and Briggs 1990) and rejected these top-down efforts to transform their identities. While I have hitherto used the label “French-Muslim youth” to gather all of my research participants into an easily referenceable group of people, the youth I researched for fourteen months in 2012–13 had little in common beyond having parents or grandparents who had arrived in Marseille from Muslim countries in North, West, or East Africa and having grown up in housing projects in the city’s northern working-class districts. Indeed, they diverged from one another in their attachments to such identities as “French” and “Muslim,” often opting instead for more locally meaningful labels, such as *Arabe*, which certain youth used to indicate their cultural links to Islam but their disinterest in practicing the religion; or *Castellanois*, for youth who foregrounded their affiliation to La Castellane housing project and its working-class, diasporic subculture; or *Muslim*, for youth who wished to be considered Islamically pious first and foremost, rather than French or of Berber origin, and so on. Ben Aziz from the opening anecdote, for instance, claimed to belong to a Sunni Muslim community of young individuals who, while from Marseille, aligned themselves primarily with the MSA-sourced identity label *Muslim*. In addition to key practices affirming membership, this label carried with it an alternative chronotopic conception of Muslims’ place within Marseille and the world more generally, community members envisaging their home city as a node in a pan-Islamic chain of places between the Mediterranean and the Middle East (cf. Evers 2016). By contrast, the accounts examined here were collected mainly from youth who attended public-school MSA classes at the middle and high school levels and, by dint of this educational choice, revealed themselves not to belong to this orthodox Muslim community, in which children were sent to private Muslim schools. The students whose voices appear were ages 11–14 and came from two nearby housing projects in northern Marseille’s sixteenth arrondissement, La Castellane and La Bricarde. These students identified as Muslim only in a contrastive sense—in contrast to other religious backgrounds—and tended, rather, to claim allegiance to the ethnic, class, and linguistic subcultures of their respective projects, a fact gestured to by their preferred labels for themselves: *castellanois/e* and *bricardois/e*. The audio and video recordings I rely on proceeded from informal conversations I held with these students, as well as their MSA teachers, outside of class time. As for the interview I cite with the academic inspector overseeing these MSA classrooms, that interaction was conducted under more formal circumstances in the Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale headquarters.

The discussion thus features accounts by MSA students and teachers demonstrating their rejection of what I identify as the two languages ideologies of MSA purveyed by the state: the language ideology of MSA as a non-Islamic, Mediterranean language, articulated in Mediterranean language workshops; and the ideology endorsed in MSA foreign language classrooms according to which MSA is an elite, professional language. Students' accounts foreground the ongoing symbolic value of MSA as a religious, Islamic language. Indeed, they cite other languages, such as English, French, or Spanish, when musing on the professions they aspire to later in life. These differing takes on MSA are also linked to alternative models of personhood for French-Muslim youth, ones in which their diasporic backgrounds—their sort of cosmopolitanism—is the source, rather than the antithesis, of Marseille's cultural wealth. Accordingly, it is shown that state moves to ideologically transform MSA, which were inseparable from both the “place-making” (Bank 2011; Deumert 2013) processes that marked Marseille's landscape in 2012–13 and the “people-making” (Dick 2010, 2011; Deumert 2013) efforts to transform students in MSA classrooms, remained ineffective at interpellating youth from Muslim, working-class families into the persona of the secular, professionally bound cadre, speaking in Althusser's (1971) terms. Rather, in the final section I show how youth peered into these state imaginings of the Mediterranean, Marseille, MSA, and their persons and then opted for their own models of identity rather than partake in the script being authored for them by the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale and the municipality.

“Mediterranean” and “Classy” MSA in Context

In his definition of language ideologies, Kroskrity (2004) foregrounds how these conceptions relating to the uses of languages are products of “the social and cultural systems in which they are enveloped” (497). The language ideologies of MSA that I discuss below must consequently be described in reference to certain France-wide as well as Marseille-specific dynamics. The first of these language ideologies, that of MSA's reformulation by the state as a secular “classical Mediterranean” language, achieves relevance amidst nationwide concerns over the place of youth with Muslim familial backgrounds in the French national identity. Indeed, one of the conspicuous characteristics of the French *identité nationale* debate is that, while originally it questioned the cultural compatibility of Muslim immigrants with French republican values, it has in the past twenty years come to focus more squarely on the cultural assimilability of immigrant descendants. Such youth have become an ever more important part of the

French population, both demographically and culturally speaking.³ For second- and third-generation French youth of Muslim heritage, in particular, this increased visibility has been coupled with the shadow of pervasive scrutiny. Many European governments in the age of “fortress Europe” have matched their efforts to strengthen the external boundaries of the European Union with equally energetic efforts to police their Muslim minority communities, who in France have since the Algerian Civil War and the post-September 11 War on Terror been the object of increased surveillance due to a popular linking of Islam with terrorism (Silverstein 2004). In Marseille, French-Muslim youth from the city’s poorest neighborhoods are additionally singled out by local politicians and news media as being responsible for the city’s drug trafficking and violent crime. I describe below how the portrayal of such youth as unassimilable and unmanageable, at best, and dangerous, at worst, set the stage for efforts to secularize them that reached into the farthest corners of their lives, attempting to alter even their language practices. The second language ideology I scrutinize, namely, the impetus to render MSA a more professional or elite language, finds its place alongside gentrification projects undertaken by Marseille’s officials to make the city into a highbrow cultural destination on the eve of MP2013. Thus, in addition to rebuilding infrastructure, raising rents, and evicting tenants, educational functionaries also tried to elevate Muslim-identified youth from the city’s most disadvantaged areas by instructing them in a career-friendly form of MSA. After detailing the respective contexts for these MSA language ideologies below, I then demonstrate how these complementary proposals were institutionalized in Marseille’s MSA classrooms.

Contextualizing “Mediterranean MSA”

As intimated above, the secular revamping of MSA in Marseille’s public classrooms in 2012–13 took shape during a span of years when the debate over the place of French-Muslim youth in the French *identité nationale* was reaching an unprecedented order of magnitude and politicization. The public questioning of the cultural compatibility of Muslim immigrants and their descendants with French republican values had begun to assume public proportions in the 1980s, when family reunification policies made it likely that immigrants from

3. Today, four out of ten French youths in the Hexagon have a parent who is either an immigrant or an immigrant descendant (Breuil-Genier et al. 2011). Children of immigrants are especially well represented in urban youth populations, reaching nearly 15 percent of the cohort of 0- to 24-year-olds in France’s ninety-five metropolitan departments (Cour des Comptes 2004).

France's ex-colonies would settle with their families in France on a long-term basis. Then, as the demographic salience of immigrant descendants grew, the "assimilability" debate turned to focus more squarely on second- and third-generation French-Muslim youth. Academic voices in this debate were intent on trying to understand why French youth from Muslim backgrounds, and adolescents of Maghrebi and Sahelian descent specifically, experienced higher percentages of secondary school failure, delinquency, and joblessness than non-diasporic youth and French-diasporic youth of other backgrounds (Brouard and Tiberj 2005; Lagrange 2010). Findings from a state-organized survey (INSEE and INED 2010), in turn, traced connections between feelings of disenfranchisement related by French-Muslim youth and the greater degree of religiosity and transnationality they were reported to exhibit with respect to their first-generation parents and to non-Muslim descendants of other religious backgrounds. The implication of these findings, which the French seem increasingly inclined to support in the wake of terrorist attacks conducted locally by individuals born in France and Muslim foreign nationals with long-standing French ties,⁴ has been articulated in terms of a reverse secularization trend among French-Muslim youth. Further, French concerns over the possibility of an Islamic revival in France have often been couched within the recurrent idioms for tackling French-Muslims' difference more generally. Fernando (2014) has shown how individuals who identify as both French and Muslim are construed as, on the one hand, an affront to republican citizenship, which is grounded in the consignment of religious and cultural diversity to the private sphere, and, on the other, disruptive to *laïcité*, which through its application qua legal requirement reveals a normative core of cultural purism. Within France, in other words, scant space is allotted—and serial obstacles are placed before—the person who practices French citizenship as a pious Muslim.

People in Marseille took up and retooled these national discourses about French-Muslim youth in unique ways. In particular, local discourses about the city's French-Muslim youth amalgamated anxieties about criminal activities and the specter of terrorism. The tenor of insecurity talk—in the news media, in political speeches, and on the street—suggested that, although at the time of my arrival in Marseille to conduct research in the spring of 2012 the city had not yet suffered terrorist incidents, French-Muslim youth from the city's northern

4. These have included the attacks in early 2015 (upon the Charlie Hebdo Journal headquarters in Paris), late 2015 (upon the Bataclan Concert Hall, the Stade de France, and restaurants in Paris), and mid-2016 (upon the Promenade des Anglais in Nice), and 2017 (outside of Marseille's train station), among others.

housing projects had nevertheless become objects of a citywide moral panic. Krinsky (2013) defines a moral panic as a short or prolonged episode that follows “alarming media stories and reinforced by reactive laws and public policy,” during which a group of people are perceived as threats to social order and thus become the target of “exaggerated or misdirected public concern, anxiety, fear, or anger” (1). In Marseille, news media stories and political speeches and documents proved especially instrumental in defining the precise way in which French-Muslim youth were poised to threaten the social order. Notably, such texts held in common analogies drawn by their authors between violent occurrences in northern Marseille involving French-Muslim youth and wars in the Middle East involving terrorist groups, such as the Syrian War and its conflict with the Islamic State. Thus, four months before the opening ceremony inaugurating MP2013, the mayor of the northern fifteenth and sixteenth arrondissements, Samia Ghali, pleaded with Minister of the Interior Manuel Valls to send the French Army to northern Marseille to deal with violent crimes being committed by French-Muslim youth living in the *cités*. With an eye to the mounting number of turf-related homicides committed by young drug dealers wielding Kalashnikovs, Ghali had resolved that, “confronted with the war machinery used by these networks, only the army is capable of intervening.”⁵ She would again echo this interpretation of happenings in northern Marseille in terms of “war” when a couple of years later she commented on the *cité* La Castellane in the sixteenth arrondissement, stating “it’s Syria or the Balkans here, only it’s called La Castellane.”⁶

The idea of an equivalence holding between French-Muslim youth and Arab peoples was further underlined by Michel Vauzelle in a December 2012 interview he gave with the magazine *VMarseille*. Vauzelle, who at the time was president of the department of Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur, had in September 2012 been appointed vice president of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Méditerranée by then-President François Hollande. Previewing for the magazine what he would say to the youth from five Euro-Mediterranean countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Malta) and five Maghrebi countries (Algeria, Libya,

5. “Face aux engins de guerre utilisés par les réseaux, il n’y a que l’armée qui puisse intervenir” (“Hollande: ‘L’armée n’a pas sa place’ dans les quartiers,” *Libération*, August 30, 2012, http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2012/08/30/une-elue-ps-reclame-l-armee-pour-lutter-contre-le-traffic-des-cites-marseillaises_842837).

6. “C’est la Syrie ou les Balkans ici, sauf que ça s’appelle la Castellane” (Jérémy Collado, “Samia Ghali: ‘Dans les quartiers, le bonheur n’existe plus,’” *Slate*, February 21, 2015, <http://www.slate.fr/story/98097/samia-ghali-bonheur-politique>).

Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia) who would gather at the Union for the Mediterranean meeting in April 2013, Vauzelle addressed “Arabs” as a single category of people inhabiting the Maghreb as well as Europe: “Arab peoples would do best to ponder what their future could be. Today, they have a choice between a Euro-Mediterranean future and a future situated to the East. This is to say either toward Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism, an extreme model of Islam and the worse Islam has to offer in terms of intolerance, or toward a less extreme model, more like that endorsed by Turkey’s current government. The stakes are high.”⁷ Two months earlier, Vauzelle had penned an official letter to President Hollande titled “With Mediterranean Youth, Mastering and Building our Community of Destiny,” in which he suggested how Arab youth might avoid a terminus in radical Islam: “Today France must contribute to the search for a new model of society, Mediterranean but also Latin. . . . The Mediterranean is not a threat. Today it seems crushed beneath its history and fatality. It is on the contrary a chance for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa in the world of tomorrow, because its peoples, since antiquity, have never given up on their will to establish their identity and their love of liberty.”⁸ In this letter, Vauzelle locates the antidote to radical Islam in the coalescence of a larger Mediterranean society, founded upon antiquity-era principles such as liberty and led by France.

To summarize similarities between these examples, prominent political spokespeople on behalf of Marseille like Ghali and Vauzelle were shown to have engaged in a form of insecurity talk about French-Muslim youth in which recurrent slippages and equivalences were detectable. Politicians equated violent crime in northern Marseille’s *cités* with wars against terrorism in Middle Eastern countries and in so doing drew ties between French-Muslim youth from these housing projects and Middle Easterners. This vantage of insecurity talk functioned to position French-Muslim youth from Marseille as particularly unstable “elements” in the months preceding the inauguration of MP2013.

7. “Les peuples arabes ont intérêt à observer ce que peut être leur avenir. Aujourd’hui, ils ont le choix entre un avenir euro-méditerranéen et un avenir qui se situerait à l’Est. C’est-à-dire vers l’Arabie Saoudite et le wahhabisme, modèle islamiste extrême, tout ce qu’il y a de pire dans l’islam intolérant et le modèle, moins extrême, qui est celui du gouvernement actuel de la Turquie. L’enjeu est considérable” (Eric Besatti and Charlotte Pidoux, “Faire avancer le destin commun,” *VMarseille*, January 2013, 72–73).

8. “Aujourd’hui la France doit contribuer à la recherche d’un nouveau modèle de société, méditerranéen mais aussi latin. . . . La Méditerranée n’est pas une menace. Elle semble aujourd’hui écrasée par son histoire et par la fatalité. Elle est au contraire une chance pour l’Europe, l’Orient et l’Afrique dans le monde de demain parce que ses peuples, depuis l’Antiquité, n’ont jamais rien lâché d’une volonté identitaire et d’un amour de la liberté” (Vauzelle 2012, 5–7).

Huysmans (1998, 2014) has written about how insecurity talk, insofar as it delimits a threat and the vocabulary with which a threat is discussed, also lays the necessary groundwork for policy making. It is for this reason, he states, that insecurity discourses form “the energetic principle of politics” (2014, 5). Certainly, the identification of French-Muslim youth from northern Marseille as threatening on several counts, including violence, criminality, drug trafficking, and possibly, radical Islamism, prefigured the kinds of solutions that would be put in place to avert damage to Marseille’s reputation during MP2013. Concretely, the identification of Islam as a threatening presence in northern Marseille prompted the creation of various “soft power” (Vauzelle 2012) measures to de-Islamicize Marseille’s French-Muslim youth population, using efficient but noncoercive tools such as a revamped MSA-teaching initiative and innovative advertisements for MP2013’s cultural programming. These distinct but similarly inspired measures are the focus of the next subsection.

Mediterranean Measures for the De-Islamicization of French-Muslim Youth from Marseille

The concept of a Greco-Roman or Eurocentric Mediterranean, as opposed to that of a Mediterranean basin united by Islamic expansion, inhered in several activities and artifacts proper to MP2013. Here I analyze two particular instantiations of this Greco-Roman vision of Mediterranean culture: first, a ministerial initiative to teach MSA from a Mediterranean perspective and, second, images circulated by the municipality to advertise MP2013’s cultural programming. Whereas the former features mainly spoken allusions to the Greco-Roman Mediterranean and the latter visual ones, both act as illustrations of an antiquity-era chronotopic formulation being circulated by the French state. A term initially employed by Bakhtin (1981) to characterize different novelistic genres, chronotopes were, in a first instance, defined as jointly temporal and spatial backdrops upon which characters’ actions are inscribed. The term was later retheorized by Agha (2007, 2015), who speaks of “chronotopic formulations” and “cultural chronotopes” as a way of revealing how these spatiotemporal depictions are inseparable from culturally grounded depictions of personhood. Chronotopic depictions are, therefore, not static backdrops but formulations to which people may orient, discursively and semiotically, hence serving as resources for social action. One group of people may animate a chronotope, while another disregards it, however. This raises the question of whether, when the state activated its Greco-Roman chronotopic formulation through the activities

and artifacts presented below, it was in fact taken up by its intended targets, namely, the students from Muslim backgrounds who were thought to pose a problem for Marseille's image on the eve of MP2013. Was there, in other words, a successful "erasure" of the Islamic nature of MSA's history and of students' backgrounds, given the definition of erasure as when "facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away" (Irvine and Gal 2000, 38)? To answer these questions, let us first observe the state's animation of the Greco-Roman chronotopic formulation firsthand.

France is the only Western country where MSA is taught in public primary, secondary, and tertiary schools. At the primary level, the main offering consists of a "heritage language" program called *Enseignement des langues et cultures d'origine*, or ELCO. This program, which in fact teaches MSA and not heritage languages like Algerian, Tunisian, or Berber, inter alia, had approximately 48,000 students nationwide as of 2016. MSA in secondary schools is a much smaller program, with 7,500 students (Lorcerie 2017), and is defined as an MSA as a "foreign language" (*langue vivante étrangère*) program. Curricula for MSA as a foreign language at both the secondary and tertiary levels are created by the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, and teachers involved in this kind of MSA instruction have likewise passed the requisite exams: the CAPES or the Agrégation, for the second and third degrees, respectively. Madame Lara Durel is the academic inspector for Southern France's MSA secondary-school (*collège* and *lycée*) classrooms, and throughout the 2012–13 school year I met with her several times to discuss her vision for MSA instruction in Marseille. It was in one of these meetings that I learned by surprise of an initiative that Durel had begun in a handful of Marseille high schools in fall 2012. This initiative, Mediterranean Language and Culture Workshops (*Filières de langues et cultures méditerranéennes*), required that Latin and Greek be taught alongside MSA, with all three teachers cycling through the classroom to present their respective materials and occasionally co-teaching lessons. When I asked her how she had come up with the idea for the Mediterranean workshops, Durel shrugged and replied, "It's just the little pebble I bring . . . a real cultural project."⁹ Transcript 1 provides a better sense of what exactly Durel meant when she called her co-taught MSA, Latin, and Greek workshops a "real cultural project":¹⁰

9. "On essaie d'apporter notre pierre à cela . . . un vrai projet culturel" (April 3, 2013).

10. In this and the following transcripts, I make selective use of Schegloff's (2007) discourse analytic conventions. A dash within a speaker's turn indicates a self-interruption or rephrasing, while paired dashes between speakers' turns stand for an interruption.

Transcript 1. Mediterranean MSA classes

- 1 CE: Comment on les appelle ces classes-là? How might one call these classes?
- 2 LD: On les appelle "Filières méditerranéennes de langues et cultures méditerranéennes." We call them "Mediterranean sections for Mediterranean language and cultures."
- 3 CE: Voilà. Et comment ça marche exactement? I see. And how does it work, exactly?
- 4 LD: En vérité c'est un travail conjoint entre les professeurs de langues d'antiquité, grecque et latin, et langue arabe. Well, it's a co-taught project between teachers of languages from antiquity: Greek and Latin, and MSA.
- 5 Mais dans le projet peuvent s'adjoindre d'autres professeurs. Un professeur d'histoire . . . ou autre. But other teachers can also join the project. A history teacher or someone else.
- 6 Moi, dans le projet que j'ai à Cézanne un professeur de Provençal veut s'adjoindre. Moi je suis sûr qu'on Me, in the project I have at Cézanne [High School] a teacher of Provençal wants to join. I'm sure
- 7 pourrait faire des choses intéressants, sur la musique, sur la poésie d'amour, things we'll be able to do interesting things: on music, on love poetry, choses comme ça. things like that.
- 8 CE: C'est super comme idée. C'est récent donc? That's a great idea. Is it recent then?
- 9 LD: Ouais, ouais. Yes, yes.
- 10 CE: Et d'où s'est venue ce- And where did it come from th-
- 11 LD: -C'est venue d'une réflexion commune entre des gens de bonne volonté ((scoffs)) qui pensent que, -it began as a shared reflection between people of good faith ((scoffs)) who think that
- 12 euh, les langues anciennes chez nous sont en danger et l'arabe est en danger, et qu'il faut unir ces forces. uh, classical languages are in danger here, just like MSA is in danger. And that we must unite these forces.
- 13 Donc c'est une perspective comme ça, de Méditerranée. C'est à dire en vérité c'est toute cette réflexion sur la So it's that kind of perspective, of the Mediterranean. Which is to say, specifically, that it's all that that thinking
- 14 Méditerranée, vous savez Braudel eh mais même l'Union hein, pour la about the Mediterranean, you know, Braudel uh but even the Union
- 15 réflexion de- nous ancrons, nous ancrons la France dans un espace géographique européen mais hmm for the Mediterranean, et cetera. All this is to reflect on- we're anchoring anchoring France in a European geographic space but
- 16 il y a un autre espace qui a une vraie cohérence qui est la Méditerranée. there is another space that has a real coherence, which is the Mediterranean.
- 17 CE: Où la France est présente depuis bien plus qu'un siècle! Where France has been present for much more than a century!
- 18 LD: Voilà. Oui, oui, donc la Méditerranée, fin, Indeed. Yes, yes. So the Mediterranean, in sum, it's a very Braudelienne inspiration. C'est à dire qu'il y a une Braudelienne inspiration. By way of saying

Transcript 1 (Continued)

- 19 culture Méditerranéenne. Il y a eu des échanges. C'est un espace de vie très ancien, un espace de partage, de
- 20 combats et de liens–
- 21 CE: –politiques aussi, justement–
- 22 LD: –et que tout ça ça crée une culture commune qu'on exploite pas suffisamment.
- 23 CE: Et les élèves comment ils répondent à ce–?
- 24 LD: –Bah les quelques expériences qu'on a, très bien! Il n'y a pas de soucis. Ils sont contents. Par exemple, le
- 25 projet qu'il y a sur Victor Hugo, auquel participent deux professeurs de lettres classiques et Norah, c'est
- 26 chouette hein. Ils ont fait des trucs sur Aristote, sur Alexandrie, sur– ils sont allés à Paris pour voir les
- 27 manuscrits là, de la Bibliothèque Nationale, c'est-à-dire les manuscrits grecques et latins qui sont passés par
- 28 les Arabes. Ils ont été apportés au monde occidental par les Arabes. On essaie d'apporter notre pierre à cela.
- 29 CE: Je commençais à désespérer mais ça me semble une bonne stratégie, pour régler le statut de l'arabe.
- 30 LD: En arabe il faut mieux ne pas désespérer. Il faut mieux très pugnace et être comme ça.
- 31 CE: Oui, optimiste surtout. ((long pause)).
- 32 CE: Et ça existe aussi cette idée de Méditerranée dans d'autres programmes
- 33 d'arabe qui sont pas d'ici?
- 34 LD: Non, non c'est national. C'est national. Mais en dehors de nous qui s'intéresse à
- 35 l'enseignement de l'arabe? Personne! En termes scientifiques, personne! Dans le monde arabe il y a pas eu de
- 36 développement de didactique de l'arabe, de science pédagogique de l'arabe. Les autres pays européens, non,
- that there is a Mediterranean culture. Exchanges have taken place. It's a very ancient theater for life, a space of sharing, combats, and of ties–
- yes, political ones–
- and that all of this it creates a shared culture, one we don't make sufficient use of.
- And the students, how do they respond to–
- Well in the experiences we've had so far, very well! No problems to report. They're happy. For example,
- in the project at Victor Hugo [High School], where two classical language teachers and Norah [the MSA teacher] are collaborating, it's neat mmm! They did some stuff on Aristotle, on Alexandria, on– they went to Paris to see those manuscripts, from the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Greek and Latin
- manuscripts that passed through Arab hands, that were brought to the Occident by the Arabs. We try to put our little rock on the pile.
- I was starting to despair but this seems like a good strategy for sorting out Arabic's status.
- When it comes to Arabic, it's best not to despair. It's best to be very pugnacious and to leave it at that.
- Yes, to be optimistic, especially. ((long pause))
- And does this idea of the Mediterranean exist in other nonlocal MSA programs elsewhere?
- No, no, it's just a within-France thing. It's local. I mean, outside of us, who is interested in MSA instruction? Nobody! In scientific terms? Nobody! In the Arab world there hasn't been any development of MSA didacticism, of a scientific pedagogy for MSA. Nor in the other European

Transcript 1 (Continued)

37	non plus! Puisque ils n'ont pas– non que l'enseignement qui est universitaire. Nous avons une vraie spécificité	countries. Nope! Because they, no, they don't have– they just have university-level instruction. We have a real French specialty,
38	française nous. De part l'ancienneté de l'enseignement de l'arabe en France.	we do. On the one hand, the long years of experience teaching MSA in France . . .
39	Ça remonte au 16ème siècle. De part euh l'histoire coloniale aussi. Il faut pas	It goes back to the 16th century. On the other hand uh, the colonial history as well. We can't exactly
40	non plus l'omettre. C'est-à-dire nous avons eu une histoire coloniale dans le monde arabe, beaucoup au Maghreb,	omit it. To be exact, we have had a colonial history in the Arab world, mostly in the Maghreb, which
41	qui a fait que les études sur les Arabes– sur la culture d'arabe se sont beaucoup développées. Et ça a créé une vraie réflexion. C'est: comment on peut enseigner l'arabe en tant que langue vivante étrangère? Nous sommes les seules à réfléchir à ça.	has meant that the study of Arabs– of the culture of Arabic has been well developed. And it has given rise to a real thought process: which is, how can we teach MSA as a living foreign language? We are the only ones thinking about that.
CE:	En Europe vous voulez dire?	In Europe, you mean?
42 LD:	Ou même dans le monde arabe. Dans le monde arabe, qui réfléchit à ça? Personne!	Or even in the Arab world. Who in the Arab world is thinking about that? Nobody!

In this excerpt, Durel suggests that a “living” MSA is one that is not weighed down by its symbolic duties as a religious language. Thus, she echoes the conviction, commonly voiced in public sector discussions of MSA policy, that MSA’s history, as a language whose base variety lies in the language of the Koran and the pre-Islamic as well as early Islamic poetry of the Arabian Peninsula (Suleiman 2012), has made of it a stale, archaic language. Remarks by Bruno Levallois, who is both France’s general inspector for MSA instruction and chairman of the board at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, display a similar division between languages and cultures that are dead and backward-looking, on the one hand, and others that are alive and forward-facing, on the other. At a conference for Arabic instruction in Europe, held at the private, Islamic-founded Institut Avicenne des Sciences Humaines in Lille, Levallois gave a talk on the necessity of making MSA instruction more communicative. He assured the audience that languages, like cultures, “are only alive if they are able to project themselves into the future; otherwise they don’t give wings to many dreams at

all.”¹¹ Quite intriguingly, however, Durel reasons above that in order for MSA to become a living language that can project itself into the future, it needs to be coupled to a different past, namely, that of antiquity. More specifically, Durel indicates that achieving a tonic MSA depends upon France’s ability to anchor itself in a vision of the Mediterranean that is consistent with both the oeuvre of French Medittereanist Fernand Braudel and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Braudel ([1977] 1985) is well remembered for his historical portrayal of the Mediterranean as a vast and diverse region united by its sea. In this “liquid continent,” Braudel perceived a geographic and historical entity that had long functioned as a crossroads of civilizations (Silverstein 2002, 8). Others, such as Belgian historian Henri Pirenne and French novelist Louis Bertrand, sought alternatively to emphasize the Mediterranean’s potential for unity rather than diversity. I argue that Durel’s vision of the Mediterranean, which she describes as a space with “real coherence” (line 16), shares more with this unity-based vision than with Braudel’s account of a Mediterranean crossroads. Indeed, Durel’s lauding of Greek and Roman accomplishments in the region echoes the distinction between a Mediterranean unified by the Greeks and Romans and a Mediterranean marked by civilizational clashes after Islamic expansion in the seventh century (Ford 2015). Bertrand’s (1921) prose boasts perhaps the most vivid depiction of this contrast between a fraternal Latinate Mediterranean and a barbarous, derelict Islamic one. He dotes on the “golden cities” of Greco-Latin North Africa, portraying them as “entirely exposed, external, public, welcoming, wide open . . . with windows and porticos looking out on the vast world, letting in air and light” (1921, 30). With the arrival of Islamic expansion in North Africa though, Bertrand sees everywhere an Islam cloaking these cities’ former brilliance in a “white shroud of silence and death” (31), as Greco-Roman foundations peer out from beneath Arab baths, cafes, and mosques, awaiting liberation. This liberation, Bertrand deemed, would only come with French settlers’ arrival in North Africa. I have dwelled on these descriptions of Bertrand’s because in them one can almost detect the source of Durel’s distinction between a communicative, future-facing MSA that is classical in the sense of antiquity, and a silent religious MSA, ensconced in the blind alley of Islamic identity.

11. “Les cultures ne sont vivantes que si elles arrivent à se projeter dans le futur; sinon elles ne donnent plus rien pour faire rêver” (Bruno Levallois, from a talk titled “L’enseignement de la langue arabe en France: Les perspectives et les enjeux” / « تدريس اللغة العربية في فرنسا: الفرص والتحديات », presented at the sixth annual conference of the IASH, titled “Quel est l’avenir de l’enseignement de la langue arabe en Europe?” / « ما هو مستقبل تعليم اللغة العربية في أوروبا », June 23, 2012).

Durel also gestures to the fact that her Mediterranean workshops maintain sight lines with the perspective animating the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Begun in Marseille in 2008 by then-President Nicolas Sarkozy, the UfM aims for political, economic, and cultural cooperation between forty-three countries located on the southern, eastern, and northern shores of the Mediterranean (Emerson 2008). Sarkozy, too, was inspired by the perspective on the Mediterranean laid down by such thinkers as Bertrand, Pirenne, and Braudel. In his speeches introducing the UfM, for instance, he leaned heavily on the desirability of a reunified Mediterranean. For instance, in one speech he painted the Mediterranean as “the first fraternal civilization.” In yet another, he claimed to be “president of a France that places the Mediterranean on the pathway to reunification after twelve centuries of division and heartbreak.”¹² To summarize, then, colonial-era theorists of the Mediterranean, the UfM, and Durel’s Mediterranean workshops hold in common that, in seeking to manage the presence of Muslims, whether across the Mediterranean or within France, they relied on the chronotopic formulation of a Mediterranean united through its Greco-Roman heritage. One can speak of a transition, in other words, from French governments turning to this formulation of the Mediterranean as a means of steering foreign relations between the French and North African Muslims, to a more contemporary recourse by the Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale to the selfsame concept, only in this case in the service of managing the cultural affiliations of French-Muslim youth living in Marseille. The Mediterranean workshops were therefore, less a “pebble,” as Durel had described them, than the most recent node in a state-authorized chronotopic chain.

A brief tour of other activities that took place during MP2013 reveals a similar orientation to the chronotopic formulation of a special “classical” bond existing between France and the Mediterranean. Advertisements for MP2013’s cultural events and museum exhibits, for instance, were notable for their depiction of a Mediterranean culture grounded in antiquity. At the J1, a renovated hangar on the waterfront, an exhibit ran in the spring of 2013 titled “Méditerranées: Des grands cités d’hier aux hommes d’aujourd’hui” (Mediterraneans: From the Grand City-States of Yesterday to the People of Today). The advertisement for the exhibit showed a man whose shirtless torso and seafaring portrayal suggested the personage of Odysseus (fig. 1). The physical similarity between the Mediterranean landscape in the poster and the visitor’s view of Marseille’s har-

12. “La première civilisation fraternelle” (Nicolas Sarkozy, July 13, 2008, <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/087002335.html>); “le Président d’une France qui engagera la Méditerranée sur la voie de sa réunification après douze siècles de division et de déchirements” (Nicolas Sarkozy, February 7, 2007, <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/073000533.html>).



Figure 1. J1 hangar exhibit poster

bor from the J1 invited the viewer to make a parallel, between those who inhabited such Greek city-states as Ithaca and the descendants of such people who are the supposed members of contemporary Marseille's society. This reduction in the scope of those who qualify as Mediterranean citizens of Marseille was also apparent in the advertisements for the exhibit that ran on the bottom floor of the (then recently opened) Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations, MUCEM). Advertisements for the MUCEM's permanent exhibit, "Gallery of the Mediterranean," featured individuals photographed in front of recognizably Mediterra-



Figure 2. Bus stop advertisement for MUCEM's "Gallery of the Mediterranean." Photo courtesy of the author.

nean backdrops (figs. 2–3). The individuals in the images varied, including a man outfitted with a Roman Centurion helmet, a woman wearing a floral blouse, a boy smiling in a Moroccan kaftan shirt, and a man in a dress shirt holding out a handful of white sand. The caption—“Toute la Méditerranée se raconte au MUCEM” (All of the Mediterranean tells its story at the MUCEM)—remained the same, however. The caption functioned to set up a Mediterranean category,



Figure 3. Composite of four separate advertisements for MUCEM's "Gallery of the Mediterranean."

barring any outside the type of individual pictured from being a cultural representative of *Méditerranité*. It is interesting to note, then, that the people held up as representatives of this Mediterranean are overwhelmingly pale in skin color, relatively unthreatening (e.g., a child, a young woman), and free of any indicators showing religious observance of Islam. They are, more accurately, the antithesis

of the figure, which I identified as being at the center of a moral panic, of the French-Muslim, frequently male, youth from the *cités*.

These examples have highlighted how activities taking place in 2012–13, such as language education workshops and advertisements for museum exhibits, were conceptually organized around the chronotopic vision of a Greco-Roman Mediterranean. This chronotopic formulation was revealed, furthermore, to be of non-negligible significance in how France has managed its relationships with its Muslim neighbors historically. Its deployment at this particular juncture, then, suggests that the state actors involved had various strategic imperatives in mind as they undertook these cultural projects, to use Durel's expression. The most salient of these imperatives was the need to defuse the threat believed to emanate from French-Muslim youth residing in the city's poorest quarters. These youth, according to insecurity discourses that circulated nationally and locally, might harbor ties to terrorist organizations and thus posed a threat from within, as French citizens. On account of their visible religiosity and estimated involvement in drug trafficking and criminal activity, the municipality also feared that these youth might marr the city's reputation as European Capital of Culture. It was in this high-stakes political context that officials found it expedient to call upon the time-worn chronotopic depiction of a secular, Greco-Roman Mediterranean, seeking to persuade French-Muslim youth to cast aside their (putative) religious attachments and come to embody a different kind of *Méditerranité*. As demonstrated quite palpably by the museum advertisements, and more subtly by Durel's Mediterranean MSA program, both kinds of activities involved top-down attempts at "people-making" (Dick 2010, 2011; Deumert 2013), as French-Muslim youth were called on to reconceive of their identities in non-Islamic terms. This backdrop makes it necessary to reevaluate MSA language policy targeting French-Muslim students in Marseille as a protective move in the face of a potential threat; one that might be cataloged along with a variety of other distinctive sociolinguistic practices being generated by newly securitized environments in contemporary Europe (Charalambous et al. 2015).

"Classy MSA:" Professionalizing French-Muslim Youth to Gentrify the City

Always brimming with ideas, Durel at the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale had two other strategies, beyond Mediterranean MSA, which she was deploying to revamp the MSA classes she oversaw at the time of MP2013. One was an MSA initiative she called "international" or "excellence sections," and the other was to encourage teachers of MSA foreign language classes to convey the pro-

fessional utility of MSA to their students. Durel described these strategies as her dual means of elevating MSA, a language she perceived as too tightly linked to Islam and disadvantaged youth. As above, elevating MSA was also a people-centric task, however. Here, I examine how Durel's other language ideological goal, that of purveying a professionalized MSA, was intrinsic to the ongoing gentrification of central Marseille, a gentrification that culminated with Marseille's year as European Capital of Culture.

A couple of weeks after our initial interview in early April of 2013, Durel and I got together more informally over coffee. I was curious to hear what she thought of the front cover of that month's edition of the French-Maghrebi magazine *Le Courrier de l'Atlas*, and I had brought the magazine with me in my purse. The cover (fig. 4) featured a boy holding the Arabic letter *Lam* and the French letter *T*. Alongside him was the caption "Speaking (Modern Standard) Arabic, now that's classy!"¹³ I asked Durel if perhaps the magazine article was indicative of broadening French perceptions of MSA's utility. Durel, who it turned out had already read the article on another occasion, replied that the article's title was in fact quite in line with her impetus to repair MSA's image in Marseille's foreign language classrooms.

She elaborated on the predicament in which she found herself as the academic inspector for MSA. The large majority of students learning MSA did so in private settings, such as prayer rooms and Islamic community associations. Even those who participated in public school MSA enrolled for the most part because their parents thought they might learn more about the sacred language of Islam. MSA classes had as a result become associated in French society with economically disadvantaged French-Muslim students, a tendency Madame Durel found nothing short of tragic. Hence, by early 2013, Durel had implemented two strategies to try to elevate MSA, both of which would be recognizable within the language policy literature as instances of "status planning" (Kloss 1969). Like her Mediterranean MSA sections, these two strategies were also innovative at the national level. These strategies differed from Mediterranean MSA classes, however, insofar as they were centered on an understanding of MSA as a language that was, not Mediterranean in this instance, but professionally geared.

One of these strategies was to open an "excellence section" (*section d'excellence*) in a well-regarded high school in central Marseille during the fall of 2012. This class, she explained, specifically targeted "students other than (dialectal) Arabophone students," ethnically French students, in other words, who

13. "Parler l'arabe, c'est la classe!" (*Courrier de l'Atlas*, April 2013).



Figure 4. *Le Courrier de l'Atlas*, April 2013. Used with permission.

came from middle and upper-class families in that neighborhood. Durel saw in such a class the potential to “get us out of this mess.”¹⁴ It was her hope that, if students of any background found it appealing to study MSA, it might be considered on equal footing with other languages taught in the Hexagon.

14. “C’est-à-dire que le seul moyen pour nous de nous en tirer c’est que d’autres élèves que des élèves arabophones, d’origine arabe, puissent prendre l’arabe” (author’s personal communication with Lara Durel, Aix-en-Provence, May 5, 2013).

Durel's second strategy addressed this perceived problem at its source, namely, in the MSA foreign language classes throughout the city that were attended mainly by French-Muslim youth from the housing projects. This strategy was first described to me by the MSA teacher in the school I observed daily, which was located across from Cité La Castellane. The teacher, Madame Souad Chérif, explained that Durel strove to have the teachers under her supervision perform and speak about MSA in a way that would reframe it as a professionally valuable, communicative language. She attended a teaching workshop with Durel, for instance, in which Durel told the teachers that she expected students in her districts to use the MSA they were studying in the classroom to become interpreters at the United Nations, business people who exchange with the Arabic-speaking world, and flight attendants for Arab airlines. In conversation with Durel herself, I learned about how she was counting on this professionalized MSA to encourage students to enroll in MSA classes "on motivations that are not exclusively about identity, but on motivations that are professional, and cultural only in the broadest sense."¹⁵ Durel's language policy for her MSA foreign language classes can thus be summarized as one of foregrounding MSA's professional utility while cordoning off MSA's symbolic function as a language with a culturally and religiously specific past.

The distinction made by Durel, between the symbolic and the practical dimensions of language, is identified by Moore (2011) as representing "the fundamental dichotomy that organizes the language consciousness of EU officials and intellectuals" (9). He cites the European Commission's Maalouf Report, which reads: "We would encourage Europeans to take two separate decisions when it comes to language learning, one dictated by the needs of the broadest possible communication, and the other guided by a whole host of personal reasons stemming from individual or family background, emotional ties, professional interest, cultural preferences, intellectual curiosity" (European Commission 2008, 11). Moore (2011) identifies a discrepancy at the heart of this dichotomy, however, noting that "mere efficiency and symbolic value will always contradict each other, until we realize that efficiency is a symbolic value" (21). Underlying Durel's vision of a practical, communicative MSA was, in effect, more than just a pitch for the socioeconomic mobility of the *cité*-dwelling youth who attended MSA classes throughout Marseille. The promotion of a professionalized MSA simultaneously involved the "erasure" (Irvine and Gal 2000) of students' class backgrounds, together with a glossing over of the significant

15. "pas sur des motivations exclusivement identitaires mais sur des motivations qui sont, comme je vous ai dit, professionnelles, euh, culturelles au sens large" (author's personal communication with Lara Durel, Aix-en-Provence, May 5, 2013).

barriers they would face in acceding to international careers at the United Nations or in business. This erasure, moreover, was put into motion at a moment when Marseille's officials were acutely aware of what the city government stood to gain or lose from MP2013's success or failure.

The stakes that were associated with MP2013 emerge with particular clarity if one considers the proportions assumed by its actual outcome. Above and beyond the €102 million budget allocated to the event by the European Union and French municipal councils, MP2013 was able to attract €16.5 million from 207 private investors and 665 million euros for some 600 cultural events (AGAM 2015). The net economic impact of the event, in turn, was estimated at €500 million and 2,800 newly created jobs. Other positive impacts were more difficult to quantify in financial terms, like the result that 90 percent of the surveyed tourists who attended MP2013 reported being likely to recommend Marseille to their friends, or that 75 percent of the metropolitan area's inhabitants claimed to be "prouder than before" to be from Marseille-Provence (AGAM 2015, 12). Lasting infrastructural changes were also put into place with MP2013, including the €190 million MUCEM and the Villa Méditerranée complex that now connects Marseille's Vieux Port, the Fort of St. Jean, the MUCEM, the Majeure Cathedral, and the Joliette district via walkways.

MP2013's financial boon likewise reinforced other changes to central Marseille's physical and social landscape that had been ongoing since 1995. That year marked the beginning of a large urban renewal project known as the EuroMéditerranée, or EuroMéd. The EuroMéditerranée's stated mission was to construct "a city within a city" on the site of Marseille's old industrial port by 2025. This would include "infrastructure and public spaces" as well as "offices, homes, shops, hotels and cultural and recreational facilities."¹⁶ The EuroMéd reconstruction, as it is known by city residents, is today valued at €7 billion of which €5.1 billion are private. Many people continue to have mixed feelings about EuroMéd, however, seeing in it an "overt gentrification policy" (Trimaille and Gasquet-Cyrus 2013, 13). Borja (2013) provides several examples of the project's gentrifying spirit. For instance, he reports that one of the key thoroughfares for EuroMéd, the rue de la République, was the site of protracted negotiations in 2004 between an American investment fund that had bought some 1,000 homes and the previous residents. All of the previous residents, who lacked the means to pay the new higher rents, and the majority of whom were immigrants and their French descendants, were ultimately evicted toward poorer neighborhoods along the northern littoral. This case reflects on the broader

16. See <http://www.euromediterranee.fr/>.

fact that, today, those able to pay to live in La Joliette are mostly young professionals and affluent people from outside Marseille, whom locals refer to as “néo-Marseillais” (Trimaille and Gasquet-Cyrus 2013). Thus, EuroMéd’s economic vision is in effect underwritten by a cultural vision as well, namely, of a Joliette neighborhood “internationalized” in a very specific sense. To live within this “city within a city” one must meet a narrower definition of culture than that typically associated with Marseille, which some refer to as the “African crossroads” (Bertoncello 2000) or the “gate to the South” (Londres 1929), in light of its population’s multi-generational ties to Africa. The preferred denizens of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural space that EuroMéd represents are none other than those who can afford to live in its luxury flats, lease its airy cubicles, and consume its amenities.

In summary, this section detailed connections between the various language, people, and place-making efforts at hand in Marseille in 2012–13. First, I demonstrated how a ministerial language ideology of “Mediterranean MSA” sought to uncouple MSA from its roots in Islamic history and thereby secularize the French-Muslim youth receiving instruction. The second language ideology I examined, which involved a top-down view of MSA as a professional language with elite potential, gained traction during a period portending handsome investments for Marseille’s municipal government. The uniting factor across these ministerial efforts to remake French-Muslim youth in the image of the language they were learning, or in the image of Greco-Roman figures depicted in posters across the city, is that these efforts together aimed at youth’s gentrification. As these youth, raised by Muslim families in the housing projects and enrolled in public school MSA instruction, were targeted by either an MSA with Greco-Roman genealogy or an elite MSA, they were also in the process confronted with the prospect of being washed of their religious or class backgrounds, respectively. Such MSA language ideologies hence reflect in a fractally recursive way (Irvine and Gal 2000, 38): from the level of languages, into youth’s identities, and onto Marseille itself. They are likewise interdependent. Without the transformation of Marseille into a place resided by people who embody a secular Greco-Roman ethos or who are white-collar professionals, the city’s governing bodies could not paint the city in the latter way, as a European hub of sophistication and elite cosmopolitanism. These ideologies of MSA are interdiscursive as well. The Greco-Roman chronotopic formulation, for instance, echoes throughout projects to gentrify the city, such as EuroMéd, on whose website one can read about how this urban space in Marseille is the daughter of “the two shores of *‘Mare Nostrum,’* the Roman name for the Mediterranean Sea, the cradle of contemporary civilization.”

Finally, it is important to note that such projects targeting French-Muslim youth work through a blending of exclusion and inclusion. The linguistic gentrification of French-Muslim MSA students is easily identifiable as exclusionary given the attempted erasure of central dimensions of youth's identities. Officials such as Durel formulate the project in inclusionary terms, however, as a "boost" helping youth to better conform to the French national identity and to the life-ways of middle- and upper-class Marseillais. A similar impetus to include Muslim individuals by governing or changing them has been described in other European countries with a history of Muslim migration as well. Rogozen-Soltar (2012), for instance, documents how NGO workers in Granada offer services to new migrants in the name of equality with Spaniards, even as these workers attempt to correct what they perceive to be unequal gender relations among their North African clients. To summarize, this "ambivalent inclusion" (Rogozen-Soltar 2012), in Granada as in Marseille, appears to result from European governments' impulsion to integrate Muslim minority communities, and yet their reliance on erasing defining cultural characteristics of these communities in order to do so.

Opting Out of Linguistic Gentrification

I hope to have formed by now in the reader's mind the question of whether French-Muslim youth, when they participated in state-provided MSA classes or viewed advertisements for MP2013, were in fact being interpellated—in Althusser's (1971) sense—whether as subjects of this Greco-Roman version of Marseille or as professionally bound cadres. In other words, are the happenings described here a case of a state project that, in Althusser's idiom, "hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects" (1971, 173)? Althusser's theory of interpellation turns on two recognitions. First, there are the holders of some ideology, who must recognize a human target for their ideologizing. Then, there are individuals in the world who, upon their interpellation by an ideology, recognize themselves as "always-already" subjects of that ideology (1971, 176). In this final section, I present a handful of examples demonstrating how youth, and in some cases their MSA teachers as well, peered into this distinct imagining of the cultural tenor of Marseille's diasporic population, and then chose not to take part in the state's script.

I begin, first, by describing the forceful public response to the state's re-imagining of the city's cultural heritage penned by Minna Sif. A young woman who was born in Corsica and raised in a Moroccan family, Sif currently makes a living as a novelist in Marseille. She also works with second-generation youth from northern Marseille, where she lives, and supports their creative develop-

ment by organizing writing workshops and spoken word performances. Three weeks after Marseille's inauguration as capital, Sif (2013) contributed an article titled "Marseille: Capital d'une autre culture" (Marseille: Capital of Another Culture) to the daily newspaper *Libération*. In it, she deplored the disconnect between the municipality's "talk" (*bouche*) and their actions. Why was MP2013 sold to us as a capital "for all" (*pour tous*), she asks, when in fact its programming reveals a more exclusive definition of culture? She rages at the lack of spaces dedicated to hip-hop and the cultural production of Marseille's youth of color, for example, and quizzes the city's officials thus:

The ignominy of our decision makers, those fearful of a culture for all, was to instrumentalize the multiculturalism at the heart of this city during the period of Marseille's candidacy, only to better deny it after the fact [of Marseille's election to European Capital of Culture]. . . . Where did the poets and poetesses of rap disappear to? . . . To not offer them a platform from which to declaim their high hopes, rap about love and the fear of drugs, and denounce social injustice is nonsensical. . . . People talk to us about violence in our neighborhoods. The worst violence is to prevent the other from expressing their singularity, to deny them precisely the opportunity to manifest their cultural wealth.¹⁷

According to Sif, Marseille is not the next notch in a series of Greco-Roman Mediterranean moments, with stops in Egypt and colonial Algeria along the way. Sif describes her Marseille, rather, as "an emblematic place for the kind of multiculturalism I myself exemplify."¹⁸ She and other youth from Marseille have great-grandparents who, in their time, "roamed the *douars* [Arab villages] . . . with a shoulder bag to denounce the injustices and ridicule the extravagances of this or that *caïd* or *col blanc*."¹⁹ Sif's Marseille, in other words, has a heritage that is working-class, multicultural, and opposed to being blindly directed from above.

Students and teachers in the MSA classrooms I observed in La Castellane's MSA classrooms incarnated the same spirit of tongue-in-cheek humor in the

17. "L'ignominie des décideurs, ces peureux d'une culture pour tous, fut d'instrumentaliser le multiculturalisme qui fonde cette ville le temps de la candidature pour mieux le nier par la suite. . . . Où sont passés les poètes et poétesses du rap? . . . Ne pas leur offrir une tribune où clamer leurs hauts faits, rapper l'amour, la peur de la drogue et dénoncer les injustices sociales est un non-sens. . . . On nous parle de la violence des quartiers. La pire des violences c'est empêcher l'autre de s'exprimer dans sa singularité, le nier dans ce qui fait justement sa richesse" (Sif 2013).

18. "Un lieu emblématique de ce multiculturalisme dont je suis issue" (Sif 2013).

19. "ils sont les arrière-petits-enfants de ces hommes et ces femmes qui parcourraient les douars, rebâts et loutars en bandoulière, pour dénoncer les injustices et moquer les frasques de tel caïd ou tel col blanc" (Sif 2013).

face of top-down policies that Sif transmits above. They were similarly aware of their cultural heritage and, although they may have imagined themselves as professionally bound, they did not see MSA as the language that would accompany them in their career paths. Transcript 2, which dates from April 3, 2013, shows how three female *3ème* (eighth-grade) students in Chérif's MSA-as-a-foreign-language classroom perceive languages like English and Spanish as their ticket to socioeconomic stability. The students in this conversation with me were Maisara, whose parents are Comorians; Fouhda, who is third-generation Algerian on both sides; and Sabrina, who is half second-generation Algerian and half third-generation. None of them had substantial experience with MSA before *collège* (with the exception of Maisara, who had been exposed to Koranic recitation in a private religious preschool), and it was at their parents' and the school's urging that they had spent the last three years in the bilingual French-MSA track. The following conversation took place when, in the middle of an MSA tutoring session during which they were not applying themselves, I asked them why they had taken MSA:

Transcript 2. MSA is good for nothing

1	Maisara: Ça sert à rien l'arabe	Modern Standard Arabic is good for nothing
2	Fouhda: C'est vrai, ça sert à rien	It's true. It's good for nothing.
3	Cécile: Pourquoi?	Why?
4	Fouhda: Parce que déjà chez nous on parle pas arabe.	Because we don't even speak [Modern Standard] Arabic at home.
5	Ça sert à rien-	It's useless-
6	Maisara: [ouais eh eh]	[Yeah eh eh]
7	Fouhda: [Et en plus] si chez nous on parle arabe	[P l u s] even if at home we speak "Arabic" it's
8	c'est pas le même. Là c'est c'est l'arabe littéraire et,	not the same one. In this case it's Modern Standard
9	chez nous, c'est pas pareil	Arabic and, at home, it's not the same one
10	Maisara: Il y a trop de trucs ((sighs))	There are too many details ((sighs))
11	Fouhda: C'est pas du tout pareil donc ça va-	It's not at all the same one so it's not go-
12	va nous servir à rien!	gonna be good for a thing!
13	Sabrina: Arabe c'est bien pour lire le Koran	[Modern Standard] Arabic is good for reading the Koran
14	[et tout]	[and all]
15	Fouhda: [alors que] l'italien ou l'espagnol, je ne sais pas,	[Whereas] Italian or Spanish, I dunno,
16	pour plus tard et tout ça . . .	for later and all . . .

The transcript begins with Maisara stating that MSA is not useful in the least. Fouhda concurs, adding that with MSA she is unable to communicate with her Algerian Arabic-speaking family members. Maisara fleshes out their case further, sighing at the many grammatical details that require study in order to master MSA. Sabrina's conclusion is that perhaps MSA's only utility lies in the ability to read Koran "and all" (line 14), which likely captures the other religious duties for which MSA might be useful. Clinching the conversation, Fouhda then comments on how, whereas MSA is not useful "for later" (line 16), Italian and Spanish seem more bankable, so to speak. These three young women appear to easily dodge the ministry's hailing of them as professionally bound youth in-and-through a revamped MSA. Instead, they follow their parents' lead, understanding MSA as a language that, while not useful in the home, remains useful insofar as it can provide a deeper knowledge of scripture. In a word, these students perceive MSA's utility to coincide precisely with its cultural and religious symbolic value. Were it not good for "reading the Koran and all" (lines 13–14), it would serve very little purpose at all—though even that purpose held little interest for my three tutees. These young women were hence similar to Durel because they, too, placed high importance on their future professional options; where they differed, however, was on the languages they thought would guarantee them these futures.

Transcript 3 takes place with another group of female students from the same MSA class, named Sheyreen, Kenza, and Siwar. All three are second-generation young women from Arab families who speak Algerian at home. This conversation took place during a videotaped interview at the end of the 2012–13 school year (June 12), while we four were discussing how they felt about spending time with their extended families in Algeria over the summer. Sheyreen goes off on what is construed, by Kenza, as a tangential rant about her Algerian cousins' paltry language skills. Sheyreen draws explicit comparisons throughout between the efforts students in Marseille make to learn "other languages" and the lack of effort she believes her cousins show in learning to speak anything but "Arabic," which I understand broadly to refer both to the MSA that Algerians learn at school and the Algerian *darjah* spoken in most other contexts:

Transcript 3. The year 2013

-
- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Sheyreen: Moi, je me disais que peut-être parce | I was thinking that maybe since we're in 2013, |
| 2 | que on est en 2013, et que- | and that- |
| 3 | Kenza: -et elle, non?- | -What to do about her, hmm?- |

Transcript 3 (Continued)

4	Sheyreen: -c'est, c'est la nouvelle génération et que maintenant	-it's, it's the new generation and now, normally,
5	tout le monde normalement d-	everyone shou- speaks other languages . . .
6	parler d'autres langues. . . . Eux non! Ils restent . . .	Not them! They continue . . . like that: they speak
7	comme ça: ils parlent arabe, ils savent pas parler	Arabic, they don't know how to speak French,
8	français. Ils savent pas parler anglais. Ils savent	they don't know how to speak English. They don't
9	pas. . . 'Che pas! En fin, tout le monde dit ils font	know. . . I dunno! I mean, everyone makes an
10	des efforts-	effort-
11	Kenza: -Anglais-	-English-
12	Sheyreen: -et eux non. Ils sont là, ils restent cons.	-But not them. They're just there, staying dumb.
13	Euh, 'che pas.	Uh, I dunno.
14	Kenza: Ça y est! Elle est partie dans son délire.	There she goes! She's off on a rant.
15	((to Sheyreen)) Oh! Calme-toi!	((to Sheyreen)) Come on! Calm down!
16	Sheyreen: Non, mais ça m'énerve! Ça m'énerve.	No, but it bothers me! It bothers me.
17	En France on fait tous des efforts. On s'efforce à apprendre	In France we all try. We make an effort to learn
18	l'anglais pour parler au monde entier. Et eux	English to speak to the whole world. But not
19	non. Ils restent dans leur coin, dans leur bulle.	them. They stay in their corner, in their bubble.
20	Siwar: Ils connaissent que l'arabe, et ils mentent-	They only know Arabic, and they lie-
21	Cécile: -Mais, ils parlent bien français, non?	-But, they speak French well, no?
22	Kenza: Oui, moi- sérieusement-	Yes, in my-honestly-
23	Sheyreen: -Non, ça dépend	-No, it depends

Here, Sheyreen places special emphasis on the year 2013, using such turns-of-phrase as “we’re in 2013” (line 2) and “it’s the new generation” (line 4). She might, more succinctly, be said to be taking on the persona of the politicians and educators she has so often heard speaking about MP2013. The video shows that when Kenza hears Sheyreen say, “we’re in 2013,” she jerks her head up from doodling on a piece of paper, laughs, and throws up a hand in exasperation as she says, “what to do about her, hmm?” (line 3). Kenza’s strong reaction to Sheyreen, I believe, discloses her negative stance toward the kind of top-down talk about 2013 that Sheyreen is reanimating and what it promises to bring students like them. Interestingly, however, Sheyreen is not completely on

the same page with people like Durel. For one, she cites English as the language one must work to learn in order to “speak to the whole world” (line 18). Arabic of any sort, she implies, is backward, by contrast, and is associated with people who lack international flair. She too, like Fouhda in the previous transcript, craves an international lifestyle. To prove it, she is willing to make the effort to learn languages like English and French. MSA is, tellingly, absent from her list of international languages that befit the people of 2013. In sum, Sheyreen appears to harbor dreams about 2013 and beyond that do not fall too far from the mark of the municipality’s vision, namely, of a forward-looking, cosmopolitan Marseille. She finds her place within this Marseille, however, not via MSA but through English and other languages she recognizes to be international. Speaking MSA or regional varieties of Arabic, as she quips, indicates people who wish to “stay in their corner, in their bubble” (lines 19–20).

Teachers, too, challenged the state construction of MSA as a professional instrument with few cultural links to the Arab world or Islamdom. Madame Chérif, notably, commented to me on our bus ride home one day that, when she received instructions not to speak in Moroccan (her native variety of Arabic) or broach religious topics in class, it made her feel like “we [MSA teachers] are teaching a fabricated language.”²⁰ Chérif hoped the ministry would soon assign her a language assistant from the Arabic-speaking world, to return some real-world feel to her MSA classroom. Chérif also often leaned on Moroccan as a way of modeling for students the linguistic reality of dialectal varieties as compared to the type of “fabricated” MSA she was expected to teach. A switch to Moroccan could get a student to comply with her wishes, just as it could also be relied upon to help students understand how MSA functions. For example, on a day she was introducing a new lesson and the unknown vocabulary words *zawjah* (wife) and *zawj* (husband), she asked in French “what do these words remind you of?” She put up two fingers, the students paused to think, and then many of them shouted “*zuj!*,” the word for two, or a pair, in Algerian. Chérif likewise conducted impromptu class discussions on such unsanctioned topics as the difference between Arabs and Muslims, and on whether she and the students were permitted to miss school on Muslim holidays (all, including Chérif, agreed not to attend on Eid Friday).

Another teacher, Norah, was one of the MSA teachers named to implement a Mediterranean workshop in a high school where she had taught MSA for many years. Norah ultimately enjoyed the outcome of the workshop, though

20. “On enseigne une fausse langue” (March 14, 2013).

she explained that her enjoyment derived mainly from the fact that she became friendly with the Greek and Latin teachers, whom she had only seen in passing before. She also admitted, however, to being somewhat perplexed at what was expected of her within this new program and finding it difficult to really deepen students' knowledge of MSA within such a framework:

"I didn't know what I was going to do. Uh, Greek . . . MSA, really for me it meant nothing. Then we get together the three of us—it was funny because people called us the 'infernal trio.' You know, we were three and together all the time. . . . So we would say 'Okay, what are we going to do today?' It was good because, as long as we made a connection between Greek and MSA, we were left the freedom to choose our lesson plans. . . . For example, at the beginning of the year my colleague did his piece, then the second colleague did hers, then the third month was mine. Because we said that it made more sense to have continuity. I wasn't going to start the [Arabic] alphabet one week because the class was only once a week. I wasn't going to start and then leave off and then my colleague comes and talks with them about something else. . . . So I started with the alphabet, then when I finished the alphabet we did the civilization part. This meant they had to see the link between Greek philosophy and Arab philosophy: how the Arabs transmitted, translated, and explained Greek philosophy, and then passed it along. All of that part was in French. . . . Then we talked about Averroës [Ibn Rushd]. We talked about him. Umm, my Greek colleagues talked about Aristotle. Because, precisely, it was Averroës who translated and commented on Aristotle. So they dealt with that piece. Then they saw films about, I believe Alexander [the Great]. They saw Alexander [the Great], they saw Cleopatra and Antony, things like that. And we mostly talked about Alexandria because it was a link between the Arab world and Greece."²¹

21. "Moi je savais pas ce que j'allais faire. Euh grecque, arabe pour moi ça voulait rien dire. Et après on s'est réuni tout les trois. C'était marrant parce que on nous appelé le trio infernal. Tu sais on était que trois, tout le temps ensemble et on disait "bon, qu'est-ce qu'on va faire." . . . C'était bien parce que on nous a laissé la liberté de choisir le programme qu'on veut, du moment où on fait un lien entre le grecque et l'arabe, euh, on nous a donné la liberté du contenu. . . . Par exemple, on a fait au début de l'année mon collègue il a fait un mois avec eux tout seul, après l'autre collègue il a intervenu, et moi j'ai fait le troisième mois. Parce que on a dit que c'est plus logique qu'il y a une suite. Je vais pas commencer l'alphabet par exemple une semaine (parce que c'est une fois par semaine seulement, une seule fois), je vais pas commencer et en suite on arrête et l'autre collègue vient pour parler d'autre chose. . . . Donc j'ai commencé avec l'alphabet. J'ai terminé l'alphabet. Après on a fait la partie civilisationnelle. Ça veut dire il fallait qu'ils voient le rapport entre la philosophie arabe. Comment les arabes ils ont, euh, transmis la philosophie grecque et comment ils ont traduit la philosophie grecque, et comment ils l'ont expliqué, et fait passé en suite. Donc on en a énormément parlé. Tout ça c'était en français. Alors on a parlé de Averroës. On a parlé de lui. Euhm mes collègues de grecque ils ont parlé d'Aristote, parce que justement Averroës il a traduit Aristote et il l'a commenté. Donc eux ils s'occupaient de cette partie. Ils ont vu des films concernant-alors c'était Alexandre. Ils ont vu

When I followed up on this, wondering if the students learned to read or speak any MSA, Norah said that no, due to the few hours allotted to her, they mainly learned to recognize letters. She and the other two teachers also brought the class to the J1 Hangar exhibit mentioned in the section on Mediterranean MSA. “It was complementary and the students went to see the exhibit, of course. Oh yes, yes, yes, they went to see it,” she assured me.²²

The examples presented here suggest that students as well as teachers continued to view MSA in a way that had symbolic as well as instrumental facets. For students, MSA remained a language tied to Islam and hence to their parents’ countries. It was not, as such, simply a language relating to their personal identities, or “*identitaire*” in Durel’s words. Rather, youth thought they might use MSA to read Koran, perhaps garner recognition in religious settings, and please their extended families. In short, if MSA was recognized to have an international dimension, this was because youth knew the language to be admired in Muslim communities everywhere, not because they thought it would lead to jobs around the globe. Just as symbolically laden languages may prove instrumental for those who ascribe to those symbolic values, so may languages thought only to be instrumental also be shown to have significant symbolic dimensions. Indeed, comments by teachers Chérif and Norah pointed to their awareness that, in teaching an MSA that was supposed to be communicative and professional but not culturally linked to the Muslim world, they were carrying out a “fabricated” or “nonsensical” project on behalf of the ministry. In other words, although MSA was marketed in utilitarian terms to youth, along with it came a bundle of values endorsed by the local government. Indeed, the true efficiency of Mediterranean or professional MSA in effect lay in its presumed ability to maneuver Marseille’s French-Muslim youth population toward a secular, professional future that would render them less of a threat to the city’s goals for MP2013.

Conclusion

This article has contributed an understanding of linguistic gentrification as a process that seeks to erase (Irvine and Gal 2000) significant dimensions of the identities of marginalized and underprivileged people, using the languages they speak as a field of action. In the cases discussed here, students’ religious

Alexandre. Ils ont vu Cléopâtre et Antonio, des choses comme ça. Et on a parlé surtout sur la thématique d’Alexandrie parce que c’était un lien entre le monde arabe et grecque.” (Norah, March 28, 2013).

22. “C’était complémentaire et les élèves sont partis voir l’exposition, bien sûr. Ah oui oui oui! Ils sont allés le voir” (March 28, 2013).

and class affiliations were the target of this erasure, while the means were “soft power” measures like language education and advertising. One spate of measures directed at French-Muslim youth by the state comprised a novel Mediterranean MSA program and advertisements for MP2013’s cultural programming, both centered on a chronotopic formulation depicting the Mediterranean’s cultural heritage as traceable to Greco-Roman times. This chronotopic formulation involved the tracing of “imaginary complicities” (Foucault 1972, 4) between discontinuous nodes in time and space. Thus, an analogy was created, between how the Arabs and the French existed in a hypothetical unison in a Greco-Roman past, and how, in the present likewise, Marseille’s French-origin and French-Muslim populations might break bread together in a shared Euro-Mediterranean cultural space. A second set of measures were MSA educational initiatives created to encourage youth from the projects to pursue white-collar professions and hence lift themselves up beyond their blue-collar parents, most of whom worked in factories, shipyards, kitchens, and janitorial posts. I have argued that the political and economic backdrop for the attempted reconfiguration of Marseille’s diasporic youth in these terms is the context of Marseille’s ongoing gentrification, its period in the public eye during MP2013, and its desire to reshape its reputation: from a city associated perhaps more closely with crime, poverty, and its Algerian population (e.g., “Margérie”) than with being a highbrow “cultural” destination.²³

The municipality’s efforts notwithstanding, conversations with youth who took MSA classes evinced not only their uncertainty about MSA’s utility for their careers and their preference for English, French, or Spanish but also a perduring understanding of MSA as a religious language. Students were not, in this sense, interpellated through MSA programs to become the secular, elite representatives of a culturally Euro-Mediterranean Marseille. Rather, other understandings of youth culture proved themselves more significant. This became particularly evident when Minna Sif defined the cosmopolitanism at the heart of Marseille’s status as European Capital of Culture as being based in the city’s multicultural history and diasporic youth’s creative talents. Herzfeld’s (2005) invitation to anthropologists of the Mediterranean to “treat attributions of Mediterranean culture . . . as performative utterances that can, under the right ‘felicity conditions,’ actually create the realities that people perceive” (50) acquires particular relevance in this regard. Thinking in terms of felicity conditions, it

23. In a reference to Marseille’s numerous Algerians and Algerian descendants, youth blend *Marseille* and *Algérie*, which yields *Margérie*.

seems to be the case that, despite the state's dissemination of their definition of Marseille's cultural heritage in discourses and images during MP2013, ultimately that formulation failed to garner a following due to youth recognizing its incompatibility with their understanding of Marseille and of their place within it.

In this spirit, I consider that the state's ideologies pertaining to MSA and to the culture of French-Muslim youth existed primarily in one-sided performances, whether by Durel and some of the teachers she trained, or in the advertised images posted on billboards and museum façades for MP2013. The possibility for chronotopic formulations to be espoused, or alternatively to flop, is discussed by Michael Silverstein (1994). He explains how a chronotope can gain real-world relevance when social actors align themselves to that narrated world, hence allowing the chronotope to “break through” (52) into the horizon of real-life social interactions. Similarly, Agha (2015) describes chronotopic formulations as emerging and perishing through the uptake they are given, or not given, by those who encounter them. In sum, then, the invitation Marseille's governing bodies extended to youth from Muslim families, asking them to get behind a particular account of Marseille's cultural heritage, appears to have been rescinded by youth themselves. Like in Sufi mysticism, which “never assumes that everyone will always exist on the same plane, even if they physically exist in the same scene” (Varzi 2006, 5), the French-Muslim youth featured here appear to have opted not to stand by top-down efforts to reimagine their language, their persons, and their city.

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