

Editorial

For this issue 8.1, which will be published in January – as will all annual issues of the journal *ATEM* from 2024 onwards – the choice of our focus topic resulted from a problem of our planet that has become extremely urgent and increasingly threatening worldwide: the massive disturbance, indeed damage to the environment and nature, and thus also to humans, caused by factors such as pollution of the oceans, excessive CO₂ emissions, large-scale deforestation or extractivism, which in turn cause global warming and the associated weather extremes and natural disasters. In our view, surprisingly few responded to the call to explore the themes and issues of ecocriticism, cultural ecology and cultural Anthropocene research in popular music in the Romance language area, but they did so with very high quality contributions, two of which were written ‘in duet’, in line with a concept favored by our journal.

Interestingly, of the five articles on the main theme, two deal with the chanson in Occitan and establish a relationship between the destruction or endangerment of nature and the environment on the one hand and the language and culture of minorities on the other. **Primaël Despax** clearly focuses on this aspect in his contribution “Le cas de la chanson occitane dans les luttes écologiques locales et spécifiquement de la chanson ‘Ai Mamà’ de Rodín autour de la ZAD de Sivens”. As will be shown, Occitan already played a prominent role in the songs of Claude Martí, an important representative of the *Nova Cançon*, in the protest movement against the expansion of a military camp in Larzac in the 1970s. In more recent ecological protest and occupation movements, which are referred to by the abbreviation ZAD – *zones à défendre*, the use of the minority language again serves as an additional political marker, as Despax demonstrates using the example of the chanson “Ai mamà” by Rodín Kaufmann: Originating as a protest song against the construction of a dam for agricultural irrigation in Lisle-sur-Tarn, which threatened to flood twelve hectares of wetland, it subsequently became part of the repertoire of many environmental activist choirs. In **Jean-Pierre Zubiato**’s contribution “Entre lieu-dit et monde: cultures de l’habitat écologique dans la chanson poétique occitane et française des années 1960 aux années 1980”, the Occitan chanson – by singers-songwriters and performers such as Claude Martí, Joan Pau Verdier, Mans de Breish or Los de Nadau – represents only part of the research corpus under consideration. Zubiato examines the *chanson poétique* of an entire period, from the 1960s to the 1980s, when the awareness of an ecological culture first became clearly visible in the wake of the folk wave and the hippie movement, for its advocacy of regional languages, minority cultures and the value of the local. The same applies to its criticism of the then already massive tendency towards the homogenization

of sensitive spaces and the standardization of human communication. In addition to the Occitan chanson, representatives of the classical French chanson such as Brassens, Béart, Ferrat, Sylvestre, Beaucarne and Le Forestier are also discussed. The poetic quality of the ecocriticism formulated in the chanson also plays a central role in the contribution “De Pomme à *Paradis* de Ben Mazué: un hymne à la nature”, co-written by **Bernard Jeannot** and **Camille Vorger**. It is shown how the young French singer-songwriter Pomme and Ben Mazué, who also belongs to a younger generation, implement ecological themes which ultimately merge into a common or at least similar-sounding *voix écopoétique*. In fact, the specific poetics of both artists are characterized by natural places and images such as the sea, the stream or river (*rivière*), the sequoia tree (*séquoia*) or the island (*Île de la Réunion*); these are also given the status of places of refuge where conviviality, fraternity and consolation are possible.

The following two contributions by Esteves Rodrigues/de Barros and Florian Homann deal with human-nature relationships as they are thematized in contemporary Latin American popular music (Brazil and the Cono Sur). In both, ecocritical and decolonial theoretical approaches are linked, making visible the connections between colonization and the exploitation of natural resources (forest, water, mineral resources), but also ‘resistant’ concepts of human-nature relations, as they exist, for example, among indigenous population groups. In “La relation humain-nature: une lecture écocritique décoloniale du clip ‘Mundo Líquido’ de la brésilienne Maria Gadú”, **Arlindo Manuel Esteves Rodrigues** and **Sandra de Barros** analyze a video clip by the singer and composer Gadú, created to mark the 519th anniversary of the ‘arrival’ of the Portuguese in Brazil. On a visual, musical and textual level, the clip shows the transformation of the artist and protagonist from an unreflecting eurocentric, capitalist-inspired position to a world view that not only focuses on nature and connects to indigenous knowledge, but also allows a ‘reappropriation’ of Brazil’s national self-image. In this process the aquatic world of the Rio Negro, one of the lifelines of the Amazon region, forms the framework for a possible reconciliation with nature. **Florian Homann**’s contribution “Naturaleza, agua y resistencia ecológica en el rap del Cono Sur. Respuestas decoloniales y ecofeministas desde América Latina” is also about water, its fair distribution, its interactions with all living creatures and other biological elements of the ecosystem. In a balanced examination of ecocritical, decolonial and especially feminist concepts, Homann explores the question of which ecocritical perspectives are articulated in Latin American rap of the 21st century to give a voice to nature, but also to subaltern subjects, women and marginalized groups. By analyzing two rap numbers by two committed female artists – Ana Tijoux’s “Rio abajo” and Sara Hebe’s “Eco Sistema” – he proves that Latin American rap advocates a balance in the earth’s ecosystem, that it attacks colonialist-patriarchal structures of capitalist-oriented power systems and encourages resistance.

Michele Bevilacqua contributed an article outside of the focus topic to the annual issue with “Langues et cultures en contact dans la production musicale trap italienne des jeunes chanteurs d’origine africaine francophone”. He is interested – from a primarily (socio)linguistic perspective – in multilingualism and code-switching in the rap and trap

songs of young artists of francophone African origin. Specifically, he draws on songs by the Italo-Congolese singer Époque and the Italo-Tunisian artist Ghali for his investigation. Bevilacqua uses these songs to show, among other things, at which points the rap and trap songs are preferably ‘switched’ into French (or in Ghali’s case also into Arabic and Spanish), how the French insertions connect with the music as “phonic references” or how *polylanguaging* serves to signal a multi-layered, transcultural identity.

Apart from the review section, in which a number of interesting publications are once again presented in this issue, we would like to draw your attention to the “Forum” section with two contributions by Quebec chanson researcher **Nicolas De Surmont**. Together with two of the reviews, they form a small Quebec focus of their own, so to speak: In addition to De Surmont’s review of a recent anthology on Leclerc (*Félix Leclerc et nous, 40 regards sur l’homme et son œuvre*), his “Itinéraire chansonnier de Félix Leclerc” offers a chronological list of all concert appearances by the great Quebec artist, while the republication of the “Entretien avec Bruno Roy autour du livre *Pouvoir chanter*” connects to Robert Proulx’s review of the anthology *La chanson comme berceau de l’identité québécoise. Mélanges en l’honneur de Bruno Roy*, edited by De Surmont.

Last but not least, we would like to draw your attention to the next annual issue of *ATeM* (9.1), which we are co-editing with two young colleagues from Innsbruck, Marco Agnetta and Monika Messner. It is dedicated to the clearly interdisciplinary topic “Between Setting Music to Text and Setting Text to Music”, proposals for contributions with working title and abstract are to be submitted by February 29, 2024.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to this issue as authors or reviewers and wish all our readers a stimulating read!

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