

Article

# Lyrical Code-Switching, Multimodal Intertextuality, and Identity in Popular Music

Michael D. Picone

Department of Modern Languages and Classics, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487, USA;  
picone.michael@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Augmenting the author’s prior research on lyrical code-switching, as presented in Picone, “Artistic Codemixing”, published in 2002, various conceptual frameworks are made explicit, namely the enlistment of multimodal and intertextual approaches for their methodological usefulness in analyzing and interpreting message-making that incorporates lyrical code-switching as one of its components. Conceived as a bipolarity, the rooted (or local) and the transcendent (or global), each having advantages in the negotiation of identity, is also applied to the analysis. New departures include the introduction of the notion of “curated lyrical code-switching” for the purpose of analyzing songs in which multiple performers are assigned lyrics in different languages, as a function of their respective proficiencies, as curated by the person or persons having authorial agency and taking stock of the social semiotics relevant to the anticipated audience. Moving beyond the negotiation of the identity of the code-switching composer or performer, in another new departure, attention is paid to the musical identity of the listener. As a reflection of the breadth of lyrical code-switching, a rich assortment of examples draws from the musical art of Beyoncé, Jon Batiste, Stromae, Shakira, BTS, NewJeans, Indigenous songsmiths, Cajun songsmiths, Latin Pop and Hip-Hop artists, songs composed for international sports events, and other sources.

**Keywords:** lyrical code-switching; music and identity; multimodality; intertextuality; local and global; rootedness and transcendence; curated code-switching; Beyoncé; Jon Batiste



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## 1. Introduction

The present essay updates and expands upon this author’s prior research on lyrical code-switching, that is, switching between two or more languages in the composition and performance of a song, which first appeared in print in a general essay introducing the topic of “Artistic Codemixing” (Picone 2002), an essay which also provided a succinct sketch of some of the history of lyrical code-switching in the United States, with a concluding peek at the global level, where lyrical code-switching is also on the rise (cf. Gardner-Chloros 2010, pp. 193–94). In order to arrive at an enhanced methodology of analysis, the present essay adds key conceptual underpinnings, and in doing so, it also broadens the panoramic overview by augmenting the scope and the sources of exemplification. Before proceeding, it is important to reemphasize a point made in Picone (2002). It should be kept in mind that lyrical code-switching is a subfield subsumed within the overarching field of artistic codemixing. Whether used in reference to language incorporated in musical expression, as is the case in this essay, or in any other form of artistic expression (literature, film, theater, etc.), the term “artistic codemixing” is intentionally broad and includes all of the following phenomena (Picone 2002, p. 193): borrowings, both longstanding and nonce; code-switching, both intersentential and intrasentential; code convergence (e.g., accent); and code-crossing à la Rampton (1998, pp. 291, 300), “the use of a language which is not generally thought to ‘belong’ to the speaker” for the purpose of “exploring other people’s ethnicities, embracing them and/or creating new ones”. Having thus situated the wider parameters of the general topic of artistic codemixing, Picone (2002) then used the subfield

of lyrical code-switching, that is, switching between two or more languages in the same song by the same singer who thereby constructs a complex identity and/or enhances marketability, as its primary (but not exclusive) example. But the concept of “codemixing”, as broadly defined in [Picone \(2002\)](#), should be kept in mind because it offers advantages of perspective. For example, it obviates the need to pin down the formal classification of a given form in a particular occurrence—something that is a particularly tricky determination to arrive at when, for example, the form in question is a solitary noun, a compound, or a customary collocation, all of which are common—before proceeding with the aims of the overall analysis. In other words, achieving the goal of signaling mixed identity is the focus of interest in this essay, and the exact classification of the means—i.e., switching, borrowing, crossing, etc.—is not crucial in every instance since all are mechanisms for mixing languages in order to obtain the same desired effect in relation to mixed identity (and/or enhanced marketing at the global level). Indeed, the divergent grammatical models presented by [Poplack \(1980\)](#) and [Myers-Scotton \(1993\)](#) and others—all based on the analysis of conversational code-switching—for arriving at designations of category do not always coincide with each other in their determinations of what constitutes a true switch when applied to the analysis of a particular form or set of forms (concerning determinations based on the contrastive approaches of Poplack and Myers-Scotton, see [Picone 1994](#)). But, for the purposes of the present essay, such equivocal determinations are avoidable complications. For the purposes of the new departures outlined in the present essay, there are minimal advantages to be gained by attempting to analyze most of the forms exemplified below to determine whether or not each form qualifies as a bona fide code-switch in conformity with a particular grammatical model based on the features that typify a single speaker having demonstrable bilingual competence. While valuable and informative comparisons between the features of conversational code-switching and lyrical code-switching have certainly been made (see below), the latter should not be tethered to the former as a prior condition before performing an analysis. It would of course be interesting to determine if the observed alignment of the features of conversational code-switching and lyrical code-switching for an individual singer also apply, in part or in whole, to the analysis of the kind of “curated lyrical code-switching” introduced as a major new thread in this essay, in which multiple performers are assigned lyrics in different languages by an authorial agent, typically as a function of their respective proficiencies (see below). That would indeed be a worthy project for another study. But that is not the purpose of the present essay. Rather, one of the multiple objectives of this essay is simply to serve as a launch-point to open up the new topic of curated lyrical code-switching.

Given the abovementioned understanding, the reader should be aware that the term “code-switching” is used advisedly in this essay. The term is used here in conformity with general usage, but the possibility cannot be precluded that a form designated as a “switch” in any given instance in this essay might be classifiable in a different category (e.g., as a nonce borrowing) for the purposes of other types of investigation based on a particular analytical model. Mindful of the important caveat just expressed, suffice it to say that, using the taxonomy of switch types established by [Muysken \(2000\)](#), examples of “alternational” code-switching (i.e., where languages alternate between sentences or stanzas) appear to predominate in the following exemplification. In many cases, this is the natural consequence of curated code-switching, where the performance switches from one singer to the next, based on their respective linguistic competencies and affiliations. However, “insertional” code-switching (where a word or phrase from one language is inserted into an utterance in another) is also represented (for a salient example, see the commentary in [Section 4.2](#) on Jon Batiste’s “Worship”).

As was the case in [Picone \(2002\)](#), the main focus in this essay is lyrical code-switching, but it also ventures somewhat into other communicative modes (see especially [Section 3.3](#) below) for the following reason. Already implicit in [Picone \(2002\)](#), the present essay makes explicit the methodological usefulness of the conceptual frameworks provided by the notions of multimodality and intertextuality, which connect lyrical code-switching to other

modes of communication (see Section 2.3 below). This connection is natural. Intertextual multimodality allows for multilayered message-making, which is exactly what lyrical code-switching does. The message conveyed by the textual content of the lyrics constitutes one layer, the languages used constitute another, and the music carrying the lyrics constitutes a communicative layer as well, accompanied in many cases by additional layers embodied in album art and official music videos (all are part of the total musical product), permitting the creation of complex statements of identity. When it comes to establishing identity-related motivations for lyrical code-switching, the present essay also engages with the notions of the local (or rooted, cf. [Reed \(2020\)](#) regarding the dialectal incidence of various speech features as a function of “rootedness”) and the global (or transcendent). The difference here is that the focus is not primarily on gradations of rootedness; rather, the local or rooted and the global or transcendent are positioned as a bipolarity in the world of popular music, in which both tendencies exert an influence, each having advantages (cf. [Bentahila and Davies \(2002\)](#); [Monteagudo \(2020\)](#)).

Lyrical code-switching may be operated by a single composer/performer (or occasionally by a group singing lyrics in unison), but as stated just above, in many cases, there are multiple performers participating in the rendition of the same song, each one being assigned lines or verses in a different language in accordance with their respective proficiencies (but not as a dialog between the performers in most cases) such that there is still one overarching authorial agency, namely the composer or a team of composers, lyricists, and arrangers. In such cases, this authorial agent is characterizable as curatorial in nature: the authorial agent composes, samples, selects, and organizes lyrics and voices from different languages for inclusion in a single song or a suite of songs. Most lyrical code-switching research, including [Picone \(2002, 2018, 2025\)](#), has focused on the configuration of switches characterizing the musical art of a single composer/performer and the relation between the code-switches and personal negotiation of identity. Owing to the fact that the code-switching of a single composer/performer is perceived to align the most closely with the code-switching observable in the case of an individual speaker engaged in natural conversation, the analytical paradigms associated with conversational code-switching (especially those attributable to [Poplack \(1980\)](#) and [Myers-Scotton \(1993\)](#)) have sometimes been used as a point of departure and a point of comparison with the configurations found in lyrical code-switching, even though the latter is scripted. A range of commonalities with the switching occurring in natural speech have indeed been noted in lyrical code-switching (see [Bentahila and Davies 2002](#); [Loureiro-Rodríguez et al. 2018](#); [Moyna and Loureiro-Rodríguez 2022](#); [Loureiro-Rodríguez and Moyna 2024](#)). Indeed, whether intended or not, Eckert’s “third wave” of variation study, “in which speakers place themselves in the social landscape through stylistic practice” ([Eckert 2012](#), pp. 93–94), has the effect of blurring the boundary between the use of “performance speech” (including instances of code-switching) as a conscious positioning device for the establishment of identity in natural conversation (cf. [Schilling-Estes 1998](#); [Davies 2007](#)) and the conscious use of scripted artistic codemixing (including lyrical code-switching) in any artistic medium, including song, in order to attribute complexified identity to a character (see [Picone 2018](#), pp. 120–22). However, researchers must remain mindful of certain complications involved in comparisons between conversational code-switching and lyrical code-switching. One important difference to keep in mind is that code-switching data collection in natural unscripted speech typically targets the switching behaviors exhibited in the utterances of a single speaker or of each speaker engaged in a conversation, since agency resides with each individual speaker. Those behaviors can then be aligned with determinations of motivation for each speaker in relation to the negotiation of identity, whereas, regarding a song, in the initial phase and irrespective of the performer, agency resides with the original composer of the song or team of composer(s) and lyricist(s) who script the switches. Modifications may occur, of course, based on the input of subsequent arrangers and performers. When a song is performed, however, it is perceived as if agency resides with the performer, who in many cases might also be the original composer or a member of the

team of composers. Even if not the composer, in the act of performance, the performer is typically perceived as the stand-in for the composer, and this in fact is exactly what is intended in most cases (thus resonating with the trifold characterization of agency postulated by Chatman (1980) for literary fiction and film as follows: the “real author” of the text, the “implied author” who is shaped by virtue of artistic decisions in crafting the text, and the “narrator” who delivers the text). When a different performer subsequently interprets the same song, the original agency is hidden and is still perceived as belonging to the performer (excepting perhaps in the performance of covers of recognizable standards). In short, since agency is not always clearly assignable but, perceptually, resides primarily with the performer, who may or may not be the actual composer, the terminological convention “composer/performer” is used in this essay. The perceptual dynamic of assigning agency may change, however, when the organization of a song has been curated so that it can be performed by a team of performers with different linguistic proficiencies. In some cases, the agency is still clear, for example, in the curated suite of songs comprising Jon Batiste’s *World Music Radio* (see Sections 4.2 and 4.3 below). In other cases, agency cannot always be clearly assigned, perceptually, to any single individual.

In the present essay, some attention is paid to the code-switching of the single composer/performer (especially regarding the high-profile musical artist Beyoncé), but in an effort to break new ground, many of the examples of the code-switching analyzed in the following sections are the result of a curation of diverse languages and voices selected for inclusion in a single song or a suite of songs, under the auspices of an authorial agent (examples to come: “Mi Gente”; the official music video accompanying Stromae’s “Mon Amour”; some songs performed by Shakira; official theme songs for international sports events; a suite of songs in Jon Batiste’s *World Music Radio*; some K-Pop selections, etc.). Multimodal intertextuality plays an important role in such cases, but the appropriate analysis must also be informed by an awareness of contextually relevant social semiotics and other constraints related to audience awareness in order to arrive at a determination of the curatorial motivations underlying the choices made. In such cases, the construction of identity is no longer an exclusively personal enterprise, since identity construction becomes a group dynamic overseen by the curatorial motivations of the authorial agent(s).

Finally, in a further innovation, in this essay, the determinations made about the negotiation of identity via code-switched music are not limited to the composer/performer, but are also applied to the listener (see commentary on Jon Batiste, especially Section 4.3). The musical (and visual) sources of data used for the analyses proposed in this essay, constituting an intentionally rich assortment in order to demonstrate the breadth of multilingual codemixed music, are all freely available to the public, either commercially or online (usually the latter).

For those new to the field, other early studies that can be consulted on the topic of lyrical code-switching and identity negotiation in music include the following. Regarding code-switched lyrics combining French and colloquial varieties of Maghrebi Arabic in *raï* music, see Bentahila and Davies (2002), and Davies and Bentahila (2006); for switching between Korean and English in K-Pop, see Lee (2004); for Québécois rappers switching between French and a mix of other languages, see Sarkar et al. (2005), Sarkar and Winer (2006), Sarkar (2008), and Low et al. (2009); for switching between Japanese and English in J-Pop, see Moody (2006); for switching between Hindi and English in popular music in India, see Kachru (2006); for switching between Spanish and English incorporated in bachata musical expression in New York City, see Ohlson (2007); and for switching between Cantonese and English in Cantopop, see Chan (2009). This field is developing, and many other studies have been undertaken, some yet unpublished and others in print or online, some of which are cited below. Specifically in relation to French and French-lexifier creoles in North America and the Caribbean Basin, aspects of lyrical code-switching and identity negotiation are addressed not only in Picone (2002), but also in Picone (2018), (pp. 122–24), and in Picone (2025) (presently projected to appear in fall 2025).

## 2. Generalities

### 2.1. Popular Music and Identity: Global, Local, and Blended

In an increasingly globalized society, popular music has arguably become the paramount nexus of global art and culture (Picone 2002, 2025). Popular music, which has universal appeal for a humanity that is clearly hardwired to seek musical stimulation (cf. Yurdum et al. 2023), is easily commoditized world-wide on various for-profit platforms (e.g., Spotify) and is also easily democratized on various client-server platforms (e.g., YouTube) due to global electronic interconnectedness. Inherent to this dynamic there is, on the one hand, the conventionalization of globally dominant musical influences, typically Western in origin, and on the other hand, access to and contact with a gamut of localized musical legacies having their own characteristics and circumscribed conventions. The local may remain resistant and unaltered by the global, but diminishment or displacement of the former by the latter is also commonplace. However, a zero-sum game of musical chairs, so to speak, is not the only possible outcome. The global and the local can coexist indefinitely, and often do so. But the global can also blend with the local (in a number of disciplines, the portmanteau neologism *glocal* is used in reference to this phenomenon; see Robertson (1995); regarding music, see Hebert and Rykowski (2018)), producing a hybrid musical expression that is innovative and intriguing (cf. Bilby 1999). Currently, the world-wide explosion of hip-hop and rap provides a prominent example, taking on a life of their own in virtually every setting, sometimes remaining true to poetic roots, as in the art of Franco-African M.C. Solaar, and sometimes constituting a seemingly superficial, commercially hyped imitation, as in the approach often associated with K-Pop (Korean Pop). Note that both M.C. Solaar's musical expression and that of the most prominent K-Pop groups incorporate code-switching to English to various degrees (see commentaries on BTS and NewJeans below).

In southern California, the adjacent Southwest, and other locations in the United States, especially Texas, having a Chicano presence (that is, Mexican American populaces; some prefer the gender-neutral term Chicax), the commonplace mixing of Spanish and English in natural discourse, often referred to as "Spanglish", has been derided by those who are unaware of the structural regularity and grammatical complexity involved in code-switching, something which in fact reflects a high degree of bilingual competence (Lipski (1977); see Poplack (1980) regarding a Puerto Rican community in New York City; contra Stavans (2003), however, the assertion that Spanglish constitutes a new hybrid language in its own right has been challenged by Lipski (2015); see also Bullock and Toribio (2009, p. 12)). Indeed, for members of the community, Spanglish has become a point of pride emblematic of Chicano identity, including its special linguistic identity, and, as such, has transferred into the musical expressions of many pioneering *raperos* in the 1990s, including the following standouts: Kid Frost (aka Arturo R. Molina Jr., a leading participant in the early landmark rap studio album "Latin Alliance" released in 1991); rappers B-Real (aka Louis Mario Freese) and Sen Dog (aka Senen Reyes) teaming up to form Cypress Hill; the group Delinquent Habits/Los Tres Delinquentes; Dr. Loco's Rockin' Jalapeño Band (Dr. Loco, aka José Cuéllar), among many others (see Rothman and Rell 2005, p. 531; Balam and Shelton 2023). Caribbean American rappers have also made their mark and have often collaborated with Chicano rappers. Indeed, the first Spanglish hit of widespread notoriety, "Mentirosa" (1990), was composed and recorded by Cuban American rapper Mellow Man Ace (aka Ulpiano Sergio Reyes (Reyes 1990), also a contributor to "Latin Alliance"; a song of riposte, "Mentirosa's Not My Name", also in Spanglish, was recorded by anti-domestic violence activist and once aspiring rapper Laura Segura (Segura 1991; see memorial by Guild 2022)). Spanglish has also been recognized as an ingredient facilitating commoditization in media of all sorts (Rothman and Rell 2005, p. 532), which must of course include musical media. There can be little doubt that, due to its double merit in terms of both marketing and marking ethnicity, Spanish-English code-switching in song continues to find expression in the musical production of newer talents, such as Becky G (aka Rebbeca Marie Gomez) and Paloma Mami (aka Paloma Rocío Castillo Astorga). (For an insider's take on

Chicano rap and related culture, not shying away from a critical appraisal of negative elements in relation to gender and violence, see [McFarland \(2008\)](#)).

In other settings, rap sometimes constitutes a vital element that helps breathe life into a minoritized or stigmatized Indigenous language and culture, as is happening thanks to the musical art of many Indigenous rappers in the Americas, salient examples of which follow. Quechua rappers Javier Cruz (aka Sara Kutay), Renata Flores, Jojhan Barrientos Huallpa (aka Rumi Maki), Eduardo Kusunoki (aka Untérmino), Yerson Randy Huanco Canaza (aka Cay Sur), and a growing number of others “draw from multiple cultures and traditions—Spanish and Quechua speaking, global and local, ancient and modern [...] creating something entirely new: a soundtrack for Indigenous youth eager to reclaim their Andean roots and language” ([Aroni Sulca and Zea Díaz 2024](#)). Likewise, the hip-hop art of the group Juchirap, based in Juchitán, Mexico, and founded by Antonio Guadalupe Sánchez Ruiz (aka Antonio Sánchez), has become a force of renewal for the Zapotec language in the region ([Sánchez 2017, 2021](#)). And the rapping of Paul Wenell, Jr. (aka Tall Paul) is buttressing the vitality of Anishinaabemowin (or Ojibwa) around the Great Lakes ([Wenell et al. n.d.](#)). Since the focus is on revalorizing and preserving Indigenous languages, code-switching is typically excluded.

In yet other settings, hip-hop and rap are a vehicle to challenge the social structures leading to marginalization. Montréal rappers, such as Sans Pression, Muzion, and Nomadic Massive, mix French with English (Standard, African American, and/or Jamaican), Kreyòl (Haitian Creole), and a range of other languages (as described by [Sarkar and Winer \(2006\)](#)), to proclaim their hybridity and to challenge Québécois society to make room for them in shared social space (see [Sarkar et al. 2005](#); [Sarkar and Winer 2006](#); [Sarkar 2008](#); [Low et al. 2009](#); [White 2019](#); also mentioned in [Auger and Picone \(2023\)](#)). Likewise, notable Nova Scotian rap artists Jacobus (aka Jacques Doucet) and Maleco (aka Marc Comeau), who speak a stigmatized variety of Acadian French that incorporates much hybridization with English, use rap including a heavy dose of code-switches and hybridizations to establish an identity that stakes its claim for inclusion within the parameters of *Acadianité* ([Picone 2025](#); compare commentary on “Spanglish” rappers above). In a similar fashion, both first- and second-generation immigrants to Italy use rap as a vehicle of expression for the aspiration of “creating a shared space in which a translocal identity can be created which promotes inclusion and combats the notion of *italianità* as an exclusive identity” ([van Oosten 2021](#), p. 3). For more examples of rap and hip-hop artists making use of code-switching, see the commentary on “Mi Gente” below; see also [Mykhalonok \(2019\)](#); [Monteagudo \(2020\)](#); [Wensel \(2020\)](#); and [Hayes \(2022\)](#). For an insightful examination of the adaptation of rap as a function of local sociocultural particularities, including African American localisms in the vernacular, while simultaneously remaining mindful of mass appeal and marketability, see [Miller \(2012\)](#) on the rap of New Orleans, a city whose music has always been famously both local in origin and global in appeal and influence.

As shown, though dominant, current globally influential musical genres themselves are not static. Musical practitioners are constantly looking for ways to innovate and differentiate themselves, and, consequently, local musical forms can provide a valuable resource. To the extent that musical expression is associated with the expression of identity ([MacDonald et al. 2002, 2017](#)), it follows inescapably that blended global and local popular music lends itself to the expression of a blended identity, namely an identity that is both local in some respects, and thereby rooted, and also global in some respects, and thereby transcendent (cf. [Bentahila and Davies 2002](#); [Davies and Bentahila 2006](#); [Picone 2025](#), and Section 4.1 below). And when it comes to projecting a blended identity within popular music, the language of the lyrics has a complex role to play as well.

## 2.2. Global Appeal in Relation to the Problem of Lyrics

It is important to remain mindful of the fact that popular music, unlike most classical music, be it Western or Eastern, is more than just melody and instrumentation; it typically includes phonation, that is, a vocal component that may or may not be interpretable se-

mentally, depending upon the presence or absence of lyrics. Without lyrics, phonation is akin to the use of the human voice simply as another musical instrument, for example, when it takes the form of scat singing, yodeling, humming, and other types of vocalizing, which do not activate the lexicon or the morphosyntactic apparatus of a language and hence defy interpretation at the semantic level. To the extent that some instinctive or reflexive manifestations of phonation can be aligned with a seemingly universal set of basic emotions (cf. Sauter et al. 2010), such emotional states can indeed be so signaled—for example by means of a plaintive moan, a fearful scream, an amused laugh—and thereby convey a message. In rare cases, that signaling can then be musicalized and incorporated into a composition. Irrespective of their command of any language, all listeners hearing music that incorporates only those kinds of phonation, something that is admittedly uncommon, are on a level playing field, so to speak, when it comes to appreciating and interpreting what they hear. Hence, potential global appeal in such cases is not hindered by anything of a linguistic nature. However, despite the relatively recent rise of “post-rock” experimentation, which emphasizes instrumentation and often minimizes or eliminates lyrics (e.g., the group This Will Destroy You whose fourth album, released with success in 2014, is ironically and pointedly titled *Another Language*), this kind of music is pursuing its course in the margins of the popular mainstream. For in the vast majority of cases, in contrast to what was described above, phonation comes in the form of a set of lyrics that are to be sung and that are intended to activate the lexicon and the morphosyntactic apparatus of a language in order to communicate a meaningful message. Note that, in passing, the quaint usage of Italianisms, Gallicisms, Hawaiianisms, etc., in the popular musical output of American crooners and others (see Picone 2002) does not constitute an exception, since comprehension is virtually unhindered (this practice has of course faded along with the Big Band and crooner genres; regarding projections of identity, however, it is interesting to note that such Italianisms in songs, including faux Italianisms, were used to remake and rehabilitate the post-war Italian American image, according to Carnavale (2003); indeed, the Sicilianisms heard in the immediately recognizable chorus of “Saturday in the Park” by the group Chicago, released in 1972, are recycled from the earlier song “Eh, Cumpari”, by Julius La Rosa and Archie Bleyer, released in 1953). However, in most cases, language presents an important complication with regard to global musical appeal. For the choice of the language of articulation of the lyrics to be incorporated into a piece of popular music will have consequences in relation to the potential audience. Given today’s vast anglophone audience—composed not only of native speakers, but also of countless second-language users who have oftentimes grown up listening to globally prominent anglophone popular music—the go-to solution for many popular musical artists whose careers begin in non-English environments but who have grander ambitions, in terms of professional and commercial advancement, is to build a repertoire inclusive of compositions having English lyrics (e.g., Gloria Estefan and Céline Dion; see Picone (2002)). But for these popular singers, by and large, the different languages do not co-occur in the same song (for an analysis of the occasional exceptions in the musical repertoire of Céline Dion, see Picone (2002)). Shakira’s musical output provides another example. Her best-selling two-volume set *Fijación Oral, Vol. 1* (June 2005) and *Oral Fixation, Vol. 2* (November 2005) compartmentalized Spanish and English completely by confining them to their separate volumes and by eschewing any code-switching between those two languages (see below, regarding other switches employed by Shakira who has no doubt been cognizant of the growing incidence of code-switching and has conformed to the trend). Other artists, with similar ambitions to reach an international audience for the purpose of visibility and commoditization, are adept at making their music available in multiple languages (e.g., the Spanish singer Julio Iglesias). Belgian singer Lara Fabian (aka Lara Sophie Katy Crokaert) is also a good example, but, in her case, some of the languages in her linguistic quiver—i.e., French, Sicilian, Italian, and English—stand out from the others as being strongly linked to her own multilingual upbringing and identity. Having just released her first album in English, *Lara Fabian* (2000), she elaborated, “To have an international career, there’s a pure and simple

reality. You just can't be singing only French songs. This English record was evidently the thing to do, to be able to achieve that dream. But again, it's not just about singing in English for the purpose of singing in another language. It's singing in the language that translates to five billion people" (Fabian 2000).

More recently, however, the path to international stardom taken by BTS (aka 방탄소년단, *Bangtan Sonyeondan*, 'Bulletproof Boy Scouts'; formed in 2010; see Tan (2024)) deviated from the prior norm just described. Their debut single "No More Dreams", released in 2013, contained only a scattering of mostly very short code-switches from Korean to English in the lyrics. Even so, due to savvy marketing, the song proved popular, debuting at number 14 on the *Billboard* list of World Digital Songs. Then, the switching in their musical output increased over time (Spadaccini 2020) as a function of their accumulation of fame and their increased proficiency in English, until monolingual compositions in English, beginning with "Dynamite" in 2020, were finally introduced into their repertoire. Inasmuch as it entailed only low-level code-switching to English at the start, BTS's linguistic toehold, via-à-vis the targeted international audience, was slim at the outset. So, their surprisingly rapid path to popularity points to a new dynamic, namely the usefulness of code-switching, a phenomenon on the rise in popular music. BTS rode this wave on their way to success (aided by good marketing, it must be stressed), and others seem to be following a similar path (compare commentary on NewJeans below). The reggaeton composition "Despacito", by Luis Fonsi, Erika Ender, and Daddy Yankee (aka Ramón Luis Ayala Rodríguez), sung entirely in Spanish, save exclamatory "Hey, yeah" and "Oh, yeah", was released in 2017 to great success in Latin America, but then had even greater success globally due to the release of the remix (2019) that included English lyrics sung by Justin Bieber and Luis Fonsi. Likewise, another reggaeton hit, "Mi Gente", by J Balvin (aka José Álvaro Osorio Balvín) and Willy William (aka Willy Fauade William), was released in 2017 (just two months after "Despacito") to great success. Containing some token switches from Spanish to French and English in the original, the song became an even greater hit globally in the remixed version (2017) that included substantial English lyrics sung by Beyoncé (for more commentary on Beyoncé and "Mi Gente", see Section 3.2 below). The list is long and growing of other artists resorting to this strategy in order to garner a wider audience. No stranger to international collaborations, including remixes, the globally-minded, media-savvy Belgian songsmith and performance artist Stromae (aka Paul Van Haver) comes to mind (Thiery (2023); the name Stromae is derived from the reversal of the two syllables in *maestro*, in accordance with a longstanding neological device used in French, called *verlan*, for generating slang; à l'envers 'backwards' [lã.vɛʁ] > [vɛʁ.lã] *verlan*; see Picone 1996, pp. 253–54). Growing up as a francophone in Brussels, from what can be surmised, Stromae's ethnicity is a mix of Walloon, Flemish, and Rwandan. Originally all in French when released with the album *Multitude* (2022), his song "Mon Amour", co-written with his brother and frequent collaborator Luc Van Haver, and with Henry Durham, embodies a humorous take on the credibility gap characteristic of vows of eternal love. With the subsequent curated collaboration of the Cuban American Camila Caballo, the remix of "Mon Amour" with English lyrics sung by Caballo became the soundtrack for a very popular music video in which the humorous message was multimodally enhanced by embedding the song in a visual parody of the show *Love Island* (Stromae and Caballo 2022). Partly by virtue of such curated collaborations, Stromae has amassed a world-wide following, including in the United States, even as he himself continues to sing almost exclusively in French, though he is highly proficient in English.

Shakira's music has also evolved to incorporate a variety of code-switching techniques. One of her biggest earlier hits in English, "Hips Don't Lie" (2006), contains switches to Spanish, introduced with an expression of meta-linguistic awareness, as sung by featured Haitian rapper Wyclef Jean (aka Nel Ust Wyclef Jean, also co-composer): "She make a man wanna speak Spanish;/¿Cómo se llama? (¡Sí!) Bonita (¡Sí!)" (parentheses here indicate the inclusion of back-up singers). This switch, along with other linguistic queues (i.e., the social distance marked by the oblique use of "a man" and by the polite form of address



in Spanish), signals that Shakira has a linguistic identity that complexifies approachability. To gain entry into her circle and fully know her, one will also need to negotiate entry into the linguacultural space of her maternal language. See below for another example regarding code-switching between the different languages figuring in Shakira's "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)". And though there is no switching between Spanish and English in her two-volume set, switches to other languages do occur, and one of them corresponds to the only overlap of lyrics shared by both volumes. *Fijación Oral, Vol. 1* is composed of Spanish songs, but with a French verse at the start of the very first song "En Tus Pupilas" and with a German verse, twice, in "Lo Imprescindible". Whereas *Oral Fixation, Vol. 2* is composed of English songs, with switches to religious invocations in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew in the very first song "How Do You Do?" and with a French verse, the very same one that appeared in "En Tus Pupilas", reappearing at the start of "Something", which reprises the same melody as the former but not the same narrative. The establishment of a lyrical bridge by virtue of code-switching to French, this being the only instance of shared lyrics in the two volumes, provides an appropriate segue to the development of the topic of multimodal intertextuality. In this case, the explicit intertextual connection has been engineered, so to speak, but the forming and retrieving of intertextual connections are a natural cognitive process and is essential to message decoding, as explained in the next section.

### 2.3. Multimodality, Intertextuality, and Lyrical Code-Switching

In order to appropriately complete the positioning of this study and to elaborate on its methodological approach, it should be noted that the examination of lyrical code-switching can be situated within the larger dynamic of multimodal intertextuality. Taking a functionalist approach, according to M.A.K. Halliday, language "reflects the multidimensional nature of human experience and interpersonal relations" and hence embodies a "multidimensional architecture" (Halliday 2003, p. 29) that is partly shaped by social processes. Consequently, the meaning of any utterance cannot be determined if it is dissociated from the complexity of social interactions and practices, which figure among the indispensable mechanisms of meaning-making and which continue to modify meaning. Accordingly, Halliday's approach introduced the model of "social semiotics" as essential to any methodologically sound analysis of language (Halliday 1978; van Leeuwen 2004). Social Semiotics, as a research thrust specifically in relation to multimodality, was launched in the late 1980s by notable scholars, such as Gunther Kress, Robert Hodge, and Theo van Leeuwen (Hodge and Gunter 1988; Kress and van Leeuwen 1990, 2001). Initially, it focused on the integrated messaging obtained by pairing written texts and visuals (e.g., Royce 2013). Subsequently, it expanded to embrace other modes (sometimes the term "channels" is used) of communicating meaning and became the point of departure for Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Jewitt et al. 2016). Including, but not limited to spoken language, Multimodal Discourse Analysis also applies to every imaginable combination of communicative modes in the construction of a message: music and other acoustic modes, graphic arts, film and all visual modes, gestures and other nonverbal modes, texts of every kind, architecture, etc. Indeed, it hardly needs pointing out that popular songs, including most of the ones exhibiting code-switching mentioned in this essay, are now routinely paired with online music videos garnering millions of hits. In all these cases—and this is one of the axioms of the multimodal approach (recalling Aristotle)—the resulting message taken as a whole is greater than the sum of its multimodal parts. Intertextuality has much to do with that.

Implicit in multimodal communication, asserted here (in the company of others, e.g., Royce 2013; Xing and Feng 2023) is the notion of "intertextuality". As originally applied to literary theory (see Kristeva 1969), intertextuality is conceived of as the process whereby the establishment of the meaning of any text does not pass directly from author to reader, but rather is built upon the mediation of any number of prior related texts that have figured in the reader's experience, and which unavoidably bear upon the reader's ability to make sense of any new text and to construct its meaning. Extending this concept to multimodal message-making, what works for literary texts must work for every other

form of communication. Writ large, every communicative event, regardless of mode—that is, whether verbal, literary, musical, visual, cinematic, architectural, etc.—constitutes a “text” (for examples of this expanded view in the realms of painting and architecture, see [Damarchi Loo \(2018\)](#); on communicative architecture, see also [George \(2024\)](#); in the realm of music, see [Folkestad \(2017\)](#)). In other words, every spoken utterance, every written text, every piece of music, every image of art, every advertisement, every choreographed set of movements, every architectural design, every news report, etc., activates in the mind of the listener/reader/beholder an indeterminant number of other previously encountered utterances, texts, pieces of music, graphic images, designs, reports, etc., which are then brought to bear in order to situate a newly encountered message, to decode and determine the meaning of that message, whatever its mode or combination of modes, and to interpret the implications of the message. Folkestad’s notion of the “personal inner musical library” ([Folkestad 2017](#), pp. 128–29) permitting an array of “implicit and explicit” references can be expanded to include parallel yet interconnected inner libraries as sources of reference for all modes of communication (cf. [Folkestad 2017](#), p. 127). Note that the corollary theory ([Barthes 1967, 1968](#)), to the effect that authorship is never original but rather, in its entirety, always involves a re-assemblage of elements drawn from prior texts figuring in the author’s referential experience (“text” understood here in its extended, multimodal sense), is not ascribed to in this essay. The stance taken here is that experientially based intertextual reference to prior texts is necessary but not sufficient to account for creative authorship. Regardless, crucially for present purposes, as a cognitive undertaking, this intertextual process is now increasingly global in nature.

In a globally interconnected world, intertextuality is also operating at an increasingly global level. In the realm of music, citing [Folkestad \(2017\)](#): “Today, globally shared intertextual references have become very common, not least in popular culture. Musical imagination and creation thus involve acting in a global intertextual musical arena in which national or ethnic backgrounds are negotiated and reconfigured in new cultural surroundings” (p. 122). And it is asserted here that what is true for the music that carries the lyrics is also true for the lyrics themselves. Increasingly, a palette of languages presents themselves as candidates for potential incorporation into a linguistically mixed musical creation, as a function of the creator’s own diverse linguistic experiences and aspirations (often evolving over time, à la BTS and Shakira) and anticipating the linguistic experiences and possible aspirations of the listening audience.

Consider the implications of the above for lyrical code-switching. Lyrical code-switching is, by its very nature, a multimodal device facilitating multilayered message-making: the message conveyed by the textual content of the lyrics constitutes a layer, the languages used constitute another, and the music carrying the lyrics constitutes a layer as well. To elaborate, in the first place, regardless of the specific idiom, because the singing of lyrics is both a textual and a musical event, opportunities for multimodal intertextual connections that link these two domains abound. Then, the inclusion of multiple languages in this already-rich mix constitutes an additional layer of multimodal intertextuality because it activates and interconnects languages along with their co-occurring domains, that is, their characteristic demographic and geolinguistic spaces as well as associated cultural and socio-political relevancies. In this fashion, the multilingual lyrics, like multilingual texts of any kind, serve to connect, overlap, contrast, transcend or, in some cases, set on edge, lingua-cultural realms and boundaries, constituting a complexified feature of enriched message encoding, all of which is then also crucial in the process of message decoding, and all of which has important implications as well for negotiating projections of identity. This can happen across the entire spectrum of codemixed popular music (let the reader consult the overarching definition of “artistic codemixing” presented in [Section 1](#) to be reminded that lyrical code-switching is but one feature, among many, which may characterize a codemixed output).

As a source of instructive illustrations, consider the relevant phenomena in the world of high-profile international sports. Proof of the indispensable cultural centrality of pop-

ular music is its obligatory inclusion, in some form, at the highest-profile sporting events: the theme song specially composed for each iteration of the FIFA World Cup, the featured songs at the opening and closing ceremonies at the Olympics, and the half-time show at the Super Bowl. A few linguistically relevant examples, demonstrating the key role of multilingual code-switching, will suffice to validate the case. The following examples, engaging multiple voices, are also illustrations of the curatorial approach with regard to authorial agency, as described in Section 1 above. The attention paid to the situationally relevant social semiotics (and the consequences of ignoring social semiotics) in the curation of the lyrical code-switching contained in the following examples is also relatively easy to discern, but whether obvious or not, social semiotic considerations are implicit in all cases.

#### 2.4. Examples from High-Profile International Sports Events

The first example, relatively uncomplicated, comes from the official song for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, composed by an international team of songwriters, namely Jennifer Lopez (see below), Nadir Khayat (aka RedOne, Moroccan–Swedish), Armando Christian Pérez (aka Pitbull, see below), Daniel Murcia (aka Danny Mercer, Colombian American), Sia Kate Isobelle Furler (aka Sia Furler, Australian), Thomas Skov Troelsen (aka Thomas Troelsen, Danish), Lukasz Gottwald (aka Dr. Luke, American), Henry Walter (aka Cirkut, Canadian), and Cláudia Leitte (see below). At the event, the song was performed by three of the co-writers: Cuban American rapper Pitbull (aka Armando Christian Pérez), Puerto Rican American pop singer Jennifer Lopez, and Brazilian pop singer Cláudia Leitte (aka Cláudia Cristina Leite Inácio). The title of the song “We Are One (Ole Ola)” foregrounds and justifies, as it were, the incorporation of multilingual lyrics for the sake of a unified global audience while still providing an emblem of Brazilian particularity by including the parenthetical “Ole Ola” in Portuguese. Regarding the latter, it is an abbreviated version of the chant *Olê, Olê, Olê, Olá*, which is extremely common when Brazilians are cheering during international football and other sports matches, at Carnival, and sometimes at political gatherings, and it can be heard in popular songs as well, including the standard composed and recorded by Chico Buarque (aka Francisco Buarque de Hollanda) bearing the title “*Olê, Olá*” (Buarque de Hollanda 1966). Hence, the title of the song, at once global and local, like the song itself, caters to two partially overlapping audiences, simultaneously sending a message of aspirational global unity (“we are one”), as manifested in the passionate yet (hopefully) friendly competition that characterizes international football and unites its fans, but also a message of local pride in Brazilian particularity. These two messages are obtained by virtue of the strategic configuration of the lyrical code-switches incorporated in the song, as the relevant annotated excerpts demonstrate below (in the interest of brevity, bracketed suspension points indicate the omission of repeated components; explanatory annotations after each component are also bracketed; lyrics in parentheses indicate a chorus of back-up singers).

##### (1) “We Are One (Ole Ola)”

Put your flags up in the sky (Put them in the sky) *Jogue lá no alto*  
 And wave them side to side (Side to side) *Lado a lado*  
 Show the world where you’re from (Show ‘em where you’re from) We are one, Baby  
 Show the world we are one (One, love, life)

[The song begins in lingua franca English, for the sake of the global audience, but is sung by the well-known bilingual (English and Spanish), bicultural singer Pitbull, who sings in Spanish as well, later in the song. As an early nod to the home audience of Brazilians, the echo phrases *Jogue lá no alto* ‘Throw it up high’ and *Lado a lado* ‘Side by side’ in the first two lines are sung by Cláudia Leitte right after the chorus.]

Ole ole ole ola  
 Ole ole ole ola  
 Ole ole ole ola  
 Ole ole ole ola

[This chorus is sung by Pitbull and the back-up singers. The song loops back repeatedly to this Portuguese touchstone, ensuring that the local audience is given its due (see comments above). But, crucially, since intertextually related iterations of the chant *ole ole ole* also occur internationally (e.g., in Spanish-speaking countries, in Germany, in France, etc.; cf. “Allez Ola Olé”, performed by Jessy Matador as the official entry for France at the 2010 Eurovision Song Contest), this chant constitutes an ideal linguistically intertextual nexus for the song.]

When the going gets tough  
 The tough get going  
 One love, one life, one world  
 One fight, whole world, one night, one place  
 Brazil, everybody, put your flags  
 In the sky and do what you feel

[Also sung by Pitbull, the expressions of unity are followed by a compound vocative “Brazil, everybody” making it explicit that two partially overlapping audiences are being addressed, and also making it clear that global unity does not cancel out Brazilian pride and particularity.]

It’s your world, my world, our world today  
 And we invite the whole world, whole world to play

[...]

Es mi mundo, tu mundo, el mundo de nosotros  
 Invitamos a todo el mundo a jugar con nosotros

[More lingua franca English, but this time followed by the nearly identical lingua franca Spanish version, also sung by Pitbull, and foreshadowing the Portuguese version to come, thereby acknowledging and putting on a par these three linguistic heavy hitters in the Western Hemisphere. Their hegemonic status is the consequence of European colonialism, let it be duly acknowledged, which led to the diminishment or extinction of many Indigenous languages, none of which are represented in this song. Indeed, their omission contributes further to their erasure and excludes their populations from due recognition as part of a true multilingual vision.]

[...]

One night watch the world unite  
 Two sides, one fight and a million eyes  
 Full heart’s gonna work so hard  
 Shoot, fall, the stars fists raised up towards the sky  
 Tonight watch the world unite, world unite, world unite  
 For the fight, fight, fight, one night  
 Watch the world unite  
 Two sides, one fight and a million eyes

[More lingua franca English, sung by Jennifer Lopez.]

Hey, hey, hey, forza forza, come and sing with me  
 Hey, hey, hey, allez allez, come shout it out with me  
 Hey, hey, hey, come on now  
 Hey, hey, hey, come on now  
 Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey

[Also sung by Jennifer Lopez, intertextually appropriate linguistic code-switches represent nods being extended to two football powerhouses, namely Italy and France, by virtue of including their respective chants: *forza forza* recalls “Forza Italia!” without the vocative; likewise *allez allez* recalls “Allez les Bleus!” (in a mistranscription, note that *allez allez* often appears as *\*ole ola* on various websites). Interestingly, a similar linguistic nod to the perennial football powerhouse of Germany (second only to Brazil in the number of World Cup championships won) is omitted, this despite the fact that their most iconic chant “*Auf geht’s Deutschland*” could have been similarly reduced to the twice-repeated bisyllabic *auf geht’s, auf geht’s* (‘let’s go, let’s go’). One is left wondering whether or not the omission is due in part to the lingering intertextually based stigmatization of the German language when used partisanly, something that was only somewhat redressed eight years earlier at the 2006 World Cup event held in Berlin. Even then, however, it is notable that the official theme song composed for and performed at the 2006 event, “The Time of Our Lives”, was sung in English and Spanish, but included no German.]

[...]

É meu, é seu, hoje é tudo nosso  
 Quando chega o mundo inteiro pra jogar é pra mostrar que eu posso  
 Torcer, chorar, sorrir, gritar  
 Não importar o resultado, vamos extravasar

[In Brazilian Portuguese, sung by Cláudia Leitte, the first two lines echo the previous versions sung in English and Spanish and thereby complete the trilogy of linguistic hegemonies in the Western Hemisphere. But the Portuguese text is further developed, thereby providing the special recognition afforded to the home audience. The two additional lines in Portuguese translate as follows: Cheer, cry, smile, shout out / No matter the result, let’s give it everything we’ve got.]

To say that the inclusion of popular music is indispensable at these high-profile sports events does not mean that the selected song, which is typically curated to be multilingual when the audience is global, as shown above, is devoid of language-related controversy in every case. The omission of German in the example above already hints at that. Controversy can also spring from conflicting notions of linguistic proprietorship in a particular World Cup host country or region. Who has the right to compose and perform a World Cup theme song that includes lyrics in the regionally appropriate language(s)? Although the song went on to become a globally popular commercial success, much controversy surrounded the selection of “Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)” as the official theme song of the 2010 FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa. Prior to the opening kick-off, the song was performed by Shakira and the local multiracial Cape Town band Freshlyground, whose lead singer Zolani Mahola was featured singing a stanza in her native Xhosa, along with a large cohort of African back-up singers and dancers. Most sources indicate that the song was co-composed by Shakira and John Graham Hill (American composer and arranger). It would appear, however, that only the lyrics in English and one token line in Spanish, presumably in deference to Shakira’s lingua-cultural profile, along with the score accompanying those lyrics can be accurately attributed to Shakira and Hill. For the chorus—its uplifting melody and beat and the nearly verbatim lyrics in African languages—appear to have been “sampled” from the prior song by [The Golden Sounds \(1986\)](#); later the group adopted the name Zangaléwa), a Cameroonian group, composed of Jean Paul Zé Bella, Dooh Belley, Luc Eyebe, and Émile Kojidie. They released a very long song titled “Zangaléwa” (often appearing without accent) (‘who called you’ in Ewondo) in 1986, which culminates with a stanza, repeated several times in succession, matching almost perfectly the chorus of “Waka Waka” in both its music and lyrics. However, according to some reports, those lyrics may have been handed down and were not necessarily original to “Zangaléwa” either. In any event, the lyrics popularized by The Golden Sound came in the form of a trio of Bantu languages, namely, Douala, Fang, and Ewondo (or Beti), as well as switches to French and Pidgin English. Not only was the song widely popular in Africa after its initial release, it also had a prior history of popularity in Latin America, including in Shakira’s Colombia ([dj.henri 2020](#); [Stone 2021](#)). Hence, the World

Cup performance of “Waka Waka”, featuring Shakira as the lead singer in a song whose most prominent component appears to have been originally popularized by Cameroonians in their Central African languages but was now being associated with a non-African celebrity on the world stage, led to considerable controversy. Was this an acceptable instance of “code-crossing” (à la [Rampton 1998](#)), on the part of Shakira, adopting momentarily, one might argue, a posture of respect for and solidarity with Africa by means of a curated lingua-musical sampling? Some of her defenders, Africans among them, said so, but for other Africans, it was not to be so viewed. Rather, this was viewed as an uncredited lingua-cultural appropriation and an instance of supplanting of identity for the purpose of celebrity and commoditization. The one stanza sung in Xhosa by Zolani Mahola notwithstanding, there were many musically talented Africans who missed a singular opportunity to be featured and to embody an authentic African identity in the eyes of a global audience witnessing the very first World Cup held in Africa.

In this case, in addition to the issue of proprietary sentiments connecting music, language and identity, an interesting question arises (with legal ramifications in some cases) about the overlapping and sometimes blurred boundaries between code-crossing, curated intertextual linkage, appropriation, sampling, and outright plagiarism. And there are other potential linguistic pitfalls that must also be wisely managed. In counterpoint to the example just above, the anticipation of intertextual lingua-cultural associations deemed undesirable for different populations can also lead to an attempt to anticipate and minimize any troublesome associations that would have the potential to characterize the event and create linguistically sourced affronts to identity. By way of illustration, a final example comes from the summer Olympics held in Barcelona in 1992, which of course was in Spain, but also in the heart of Catalonia. Choosing the appropriate language for the official song is the problem. Anticipating, as it were, the attendant social semiotics, there can be little doubt that event organizers, promoters, and lyricists had to gauge the following. An unwelcome message would be communicated if the song were sung entirely (or even mostly) in Spanish or, conversely, in Català (Catalan), these being the two co-official languages of Catalonia. On the one hand, the pain associated with the longstanding suppression of Catalan, which intensified under Franco and was not lifted until 1978 (three years after Franco’s death), was still fresh in memory, just 14 years later, in 1992. Hence, for many Catalan listeners, intertextually speaking, a song entirely in Spanish would connect with the wrong kind of remembered lingua-cultural experiences, would likely be perceived as a snub since the event was taking place in their home region, and thus would be interpreted negatively and as an affront to collective identity. On the other hand, considering that the reclaiming and revitalization of the Catalan language would inevitably be associated, for some Spanish listeners, with proponents of Catalonian independence, a song entirely in Catalan might be perceived to be a linguistic emblem used to brazenly challenge national unity on an international stage and would also be interpreted negatively. And of course for countless members of the international audience, neither Spanish nor Catalan would be readily understandable. Curated lyrical code-switching provided the solution. Andrew Lloyd Webber was commissioned to compose a song, with Don Black (aka Donald Blackstone) as the lyricist, both being British. The result was “Amigos Para Siempre (Friends for Life)/Amics per Sempre”, which was sung by José Carreras (aka Josep Maria Carreras Coll; announced as Josep Carreras at the event). He was wisely chosen, being a native son of Catalonia and one of the world’s leading operatic tenors—for even casting is part of the multimodal equation for crafting the intended message—and sang the recurrent title of the song at various intervals in both Spanish and Catalan, and also in English. The latter, being an international lingua franca, was also the language chosen to carry the body of the song, thereby serving as a useful buffer between Spanish and Catalan. Carreras was accompanied in this by Sarah Brightman, whose signature ability to shift between singing styles and to occupy a space between operatic and popular music provided an appropriate musical bridge for a world audience. In this fashion, by taking stock of intertextually pertinent precedents and attendant hazards, and then by resorting to the strategic use of

lyrical code-switching, a multilingual, multimodal song was fashioned that recognized linguistic diversity, but largely finessed the danger of linguistic divisiveness and alienation in view of the configuration of ambient linguistic insecurities that was operative. On a multilingual level, this compares to the notion of dialectal accommodation to the audience, à la Bell (1997). In this case, the accommodation was achieved via a curated use of lyrical code-switching between languages and voices.

### 3. Beyoncé, Multimodal Intertextuality, Code-Switching, and Identity

At the time of writing this study, Beyoncé's *Act II: Cowboy Carter* album, kept under wraps for years, was finally released (29 March 2024), and the internet is now awash with spirited reactions (generally very positive) and critical analyses. In a timely fashion then, let us pursue and exemplify further the complexities of multimodality, intertextuality, code-switching in popular music, and related phenomena in the negotiation of identity by examining examples from the musical art (including some visual accompaniments) of Beyoncé (aka Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter, Queen Bey). Three examples of her lyrical code-switching are presented in Section 3.2 below. In the first example, "Partition", which comes from the album *Beyoncé* (2013), she is the composer/performer, but is also the curator when it comes to the inclusion of a code-switched section in French that uses another voice. In the second example, the curatorial remix of "Mi Gente", Beyoncé is a member of a team of performers, and she may also be a member of the curatorial team presiding over the organization of the remix that has been lyrically enriched to include English. In the final example, "Daughter", from *Cowboy Carter*, Beyoncé is positioned as the composer/performer of all lyrics and as the curator/performer of the intertextual insertion of Italian lyrics from "Caro Mio Ben". A discussion of Beyoncé's dialectal code-switching (Section 3.1) provides the lead up to those three examples, and they are followed by a multimodal, intertextual discussion of cover art related to her musical products (Section 3.3).

#### 3.1. Beyoncé, Dialectal Code-Switching (aka Style Shifting), and Identity

Possibly no other personality has forged a more salient public persona linking musical expression and the purposeful exploration and proclamation of her identity, be it personal or as a member or a sympathizer in relation to various socially marginalized populations, sometimes intersectionally connected, who need affirmation, usually having experienced a legacy of oppression and erasure: women, African Americans, Creoles of color, the gender nonconforming, black Country and Western originators, victims of police violence, and natural disaster victims in New Orleans. And we can safely assume that other social outliers, typically among communities of color, will be alluded to in future musical manifestations. Note that she is an activist on other fronts, working for example on behalf of the underfed, the homeless, and the medically underserved (see Lewis 2020; LiveKindly Collective 2024), but these themes do not surface as conspicuously in her music, possibly because she is sensitive to the fact that her wealth insulates her and makes personal identification with the directly affected populations perceptually problematical (on the complex interplay between her projected persona as an empowered minority Black woman and, simultaneously, a wealthy icon of the global music industry, see Olutola (2018–2019)). In short, the vibrancy and mutability of the link between musical expression and identity are signature features that shape Beyoncé's art to an extent that is virtually unparalleled and that constantly piques curiosity and invites speculation on the part of critics and the public. Not surprisingly, some linguists are looking at this, too. According to Eberhardt and Vdoviac-Markow (2020, p. 74), as she "increases the politicization of her music and makes more explicit the messages relating to Black lives and liberation", Beyoncé increases her use of zero copula (e.g., "We real cool", title and first line of a poem by Gwendolyn Brooks, 1959), which is an enregistered feature, though not a universal one, serving as an emblem of African American English (on "enregisterment", see Agha (2003)). This is an example of what has commonly been referred to as "style shifting" (that is, tailoring the incidence of one's speech features as a function of the speech of the co-interlocutor or audience; see

Bell 1997) but which, more recently, is being placed under the rubric of code-switching at the dialectal or sub-dialectal level. For example, in her 2017 TEDx talk, Chandra Arthur, founder and CEO of the Friendish app and co-founder of Black Orlando Tech, remarked, “I learned how to code switch and how to behave and speak in a way that made me a non-threatening person of color” (Arthur 2017; for a humorous musical cartoon—hence, especially appropriate in the current musical context—based on the perspective of a community insider about this kind of code-switching among African Americans, see Jak Knight (2020)). In Beyoncé’s case, whether we label it an example of style-shifting or an element of code-switching at the dialectal level, this coping strategy is doubtless part of her acquired experience growing up in Houston. For many other artists, however, this phenomenon may be partly acquired and partly aspirational. For example, Hayes (2023; appearing in the same special issue as this present essay, “Interface between Sociolinguistics and Music” edited by Loureiro-Rodríguez, Verónica, and María Irene Moyna) has demonstrated that the absence or presence of coda /s/ in Spanish varies in incidence when comparing the spontaneous speech and the “artistic performance speech” (i.e., in the performance of their songs) of the two top-selling Latin American singers, namely Bad Bunny (aka Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, known for the hip-hop derivative Latin Trap) and J Balvin (aka José Álvaro Osorio Balvín, known for highly popular reggaeton). For both of them, the manifestation of coda /s/ is variable in their normal spontaneous speech: for Bad Bunny, in keeping with Puerto Rican Spanish, there is very low incidence; for J Balvin, in keeping with Medellín Spanish, there is a much higher incidence (approximately 50%). In their songs, however, a movement in the direction of convergence emerges: Bad Bunny’s incidence increases whereas J Balvin’s decreases. Identity-wise, this convergence could be considered to be aspirational, inasmuch as it may be “the beginning of an identity-based pan-Latinx dialect leveling that is, on the one hand, the ‘in-crowd’ pronunciation with covert prestige but, on the other hand, is part of the formation of an evolving multi-regional connector variant diffused through popular music and pop culture” (Hayes 2023). In a kind of reverse scenario, in the realm of British pop-rock, in the early days, an elevated incidence of rhoticity was more prevalent in the performances of Mumford and Sons, apparently in imitation of the American articulation of rhoticity in popular song. This speech feature might be considered to be the dialectal emblem of an aspirational identity, more in keeping with the notion of code-crossing, à la Rampton ((1998, p. 291) “the use of a language which is not generally thought to ‘belong’ to the speaker”) in order to associate oneself with, or appropriate, a certain identity by virtue of linguistic markers. However, with the passage of time, although other factors have also surfaced, “the degree of rhoticity decreases as the band departs from Americana in their later albums, highlighting the relevance of music genre for accent stylization” (Campos-Astorkiza (2024); appearing in the same special issue as the present essay, “Interface between Sociolinguistics and Music”; cf. Trudgill (1983)).

Returning to the example of Beyoncé and *Cowboy Carter*, from track to track, it is with clear intentionality that she engages in various linguistic style shifts as she conducts a kind of musical Rodeo Parade, such as the yearly event held in her home town of Houston (witness her cover art wherein Queen Bey assumes the persona of the star of the parade, the mounted Rodeo Queen; see Section 3.3 for additional commentary). The result is a veritable cavalcade of shifting identities crafted for the songs comprising *Cowboy Carter*, each one replete with its own musical motifs and framing (as Beyoncé has maintained, “This ain’t a country album. This is a Beyoncé album”; see (Paul 2024)). But does Beyoncé, in her musical explorations of identity, ever incorporate lyrical code-switching between languages?

### 3.2. Beyoncé, Lyrical Code-Switching, and Identity

As indicated above, the current generalization of the term “code-switching” has led to the subsuming of “style-shifting” under the same rubric. However, when coined by American linguist Einar Haugen in the early 1950s (Milroy and Muysken (1995); but the OED attributes the first attestation to American linguist Charles Voegelin, in 1953), the term “code-switching” was originally associated with switching between languages in un-



scripted natural speech. Of course, when song lyrics are the site of code-switching, even though they are typically meant to be sung in order to have their intended effect, the lyrics are subject to analysis as scripted texts, as explained in the Introduction (Section 1). Note that, in cases where a song comes from one of her own albums, it is assumed that the main stakeholder, when it comes to attributions of agency and to issues of identity, is Beyoncé herself.

To pursue then the example of Beyoncé, in her musical explorations of identity, does she incorporate lyrical code-switching between languages? She does in fact do so to a certain extent. In one instance, in the newly released *Cowboy Carter* album, she inserts her rendition of the Italian aria-like song “Caro mio ben”. Contrary to what might be expected, the switch does not happen in the song “Spaghetti” (the title is an apparent nod to the Spaghetti Western genre) but rather in the song “Daughter”. Before assessing the import of this latest example, however, let us set the stage by considering a couple of earlier examples.

The first example clearly illustrates the intersectionality of code-switching and multimodal intertextuality. In Beyoncé’s self-titled album *Beyoncé* (2013), the song “Partition” is included. In it, a narration emerges describing a couple in a chauffeured limousine on their way to a club (in this case, a famous risqué Parisian cabaret, see below). The male partner, however, is already unable to contain his arousal. So, the directive is issued by the female partner (that is, the singer herself, Beyoncé), “Driver, roll up the partition”. Privacy secured, the listener then learns that, though compliant with her partner, she appears to be annoyed: “Took 45 min to get all dressed up, We ain’t even gonna make it to this club”. After a few more semi-explicit stanzas, the narrative part is complete, at which point, for the penultimate stanza, the song treats the listener to a recitation entirely in French. The French text, however, is not original (nor is it recited by Beyoncé; the liner notes credit Hajiba Fahmy, French backup dancer for Beyoncé during the Mrs. Carter World Tour in 2013). Rather, Beyoncé has sampled the text of the dubbed French version of the film *The Big Lebowski* ((1998); see Haglund and Wickman (2013)). At the outset, the sampled version recited in the song is verbatim, but a few alterations are made in the last two lines, which are reproduced below.

(2)

Les hommes pensent que les féministes détestent le sexe

Mais c’est une activité très stimulante et naturelle que les femmes adorent

First of all, with respect to these two lines, note that the French version in the dubbed soundtrack is not a literal translation of the English version in the original soundtrack. Compare the original from *The Big Lebowski*, as spoken by Julianne Moore’s character, Maude Lebowski: “The male myth about feminists, that we hate sex, it can be a natural, zesty enterprise”. In the dubbed soundtrack, this is loosely translated as: “En dépit du mythe masculin d’après lequel les féministes détesteraient le sexe, c’est une activité naturelle et très stimulante” (translation: “Despite the male myth that feminists hate sex, it’s a natural activity and very stimulating”). In the sample, this part has been reworded as shown above, employing a vocabulary and a phraseology that are less erudite and adding that sex is an activity “que les femmes adorent” (“that women love”; as recited by Hajiba Fahmy, an optional liaison [z] is not effected between the last two added words, which is mildly at variance with the coy, teasingly pedantic tone adopted in the articulation of the entire text). The French version, especially as altered and amplified for the song, suits Beyoncé’s purposes better, it can be supposed, than does the original English. Not only does this French passage foreshadow the arrival at the Paris cabaret, it also provides Beyoncé another opportunity to flag her own links to French ancestry (on the maternal side, by way of Louisiana, Guilbeau (2024)) and her liking for many things French (Vassell 2024). The French version also connects much more directly with her message in the following way: the French text is framed by the stanzas immediately preceding and following it, which repeat “I just wanna be the girl you like, The kinda girl you like is right here with me”. This brings the song to its conclusion and adjusts the initial interpretation of what happened in the limousine, revealing another possible layered meaning. The female lover—and femi-

nist, it is now known, thanks to the French text—is not necessarily expressing just annoyance and reluctance; she is also recounting a swift conquest that transpired in the limo, for she lacks nothing, the French text tells us, when it comes to libido and its fulfillment. The official video accompanying the song drives home this point in the form of a multimodal message. In the video, at the outset, before any singing even starts, it is Beyoncé whose libido is operative. In fact, the male partner is never even shown until late in the video, and then only as a cameo; clearly, his agency is not the focus. At the end of the video, Beyoncé herself, having already made proof of her irresistibility in the limo, then takes on the role of the central Crazy Horse dancer at the celebrated Paris cabaret. The message is clear: whatever the situation, she is the star of the show. The use of artistic elements uniting lyrical codemixing, the lingua-cultural invocation of the French language, music, visuals, and cinematic allusions, all work together to craft a powerful message by means of multimodal intertextual message making. (For the unpacking of an earlier non-Beyoncé example, including the crucial insertion of French lyrics, where multimodal intertextuality links code-switching in a popular song to literature, theater, and film, see the commentary on “Lady Marmalade” provided in [Picone \(2002\)](#), pp. 198–201).

For interested readers, though less germane for present purposes, other intertextual connections are suggested by the lyrics of “Partition” and by some of the images in the accompanying video. This is due to the plethora of movies, both in English and French, involving chauffeurs and limos. For example, in the surreal movie *Black Limousine* (2010), about an unsuccessful musician-cum-chauffeur (played by David Arquette), his love interest (played by Bijou Phillips) appears at one point in a beaded flapper cap, like the one worn by Beyoncé as a Crazy Horse dancer in “Partition”. For another example, in the critically acclaimed French movie *Indochine* (1992), the chauffeur is ordered out of the front of the vehicle by a wealthy, French colonialist widow-cum-mistress (played by Catherine Deneuve) so that she and her lover (played by Vincent Perez) can consummate their desire.

A second example of Beyoncé’s lyrical code-switching follows. As a lead-in to the example, let it first be mentioned that she has rerecorded a selection of her songs in Spanish, in order to reach Hispanic audiences. Notably, the successful release of her album *B’Day* (September 2006) was followed by the release of a double-disc deluxe edition (April 2007) including five Spanish-language songs: “Amor Gitano” (‘Gypsy love’) in collaboration with the popular Mexican artist Alejandro Fernández, followed by Spanish versions of “Listen” (“Oye”); two versions of “Irreplacable” (“Irreemplazable”), the second one having identical Spanish lyrics but recast as a Norteño musical arrangement; and two versions of “Beautiful Liar” (“Bello Embustero”), the second one being of special interest because it is recast as a “Spanglish” arrangement with line-by-line code-switching between English and Spanish. For [Drake \(2014\)](#), pp. 89–92), these Spanish songs represent a conscious attempt to forge an aspirational connection with *Latinidad*, as an expression of transnational feminism, and for the purpose of making marketing inroads (at the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Grammy Awards, see also her earlier collaboration, as a member of Destiny’s Child, in a live performance of Spaniard Alejandro Sanz’s song “Quisiera ser” ([Sanz and Destiny’s Child 2002](#)), in which she sings backup in Spanish and two solo lines in English). More recently, in another nod to the ever-expanding phenomenon of multilingual lyrical code-switching in order to signal mixed identity, be it real, aspirational, empathetic, or vicarious, Beyoncé quickly accepted an invitation ([Diaz 2017](#)) to team up with J Balvin, from Colombia, and French-born Willy William (Guadeloupean father and Ethiopian mother) in a remixed, curated version of their reggaeton hit “Mi Gente”, which was originally sung mostly in Spanish, with token segments in French and English, when it was released in 2017. In the remixed version, which was another massive hit (also in 2017), Beyoncé is the solo singer for a significant portion of the lyrics in Spanish and for virtually all of the lyrics in English, including a lengthy, entirely new verse in English that did not figure in the original (note that, at one point, her daughter Blue Ivey sings a short line in English: “Oh yes, I am” to answer her mother’s hybridized question: “Azul, are you with me?”). Singing in Spanish, Beyoncé’s voice is sometimes overlaid with one or both of the other two. Voices are also overlaid for

two of the three lines in French: “C’est comme-ci, c’est comme-ça/Ma chérie, la la la la la” (see [Osorio Balvin et al. 2017](#)). Having established Beyoncé’s penchant for using her music, and the lyrics of her music, to trace and extend the parameters of her identity in ways that fit her projected persona, one can only assume that participation in the remix, with its lyrical code-switching, was not random, but was embraced as another welcome opportunity to forge a Latin connection, and perhaps more specifically to strengthen a Caribbean Basin connection as well. On her maternal side, Beyoncé is a descendant of Louisiana Creoles ([Guilbeau 2024](#)), as previously referenced in her song “Creole” (on her B’Day album, 2006, but only in some deluxe editions) and which then reappears in the lyrics of “Mi Gente” as sung by Beyoncé: “And he say that Creole in my body’s like a potion”. At the same time, Beyoncé’s participation in the remix with Willy William constitutes a show of international solidarity among people of color. For Beyoncé, every people of color is indeed “mi gente” (‘my people’), partly in reality and partly aspirationally, one plausibly surmises.

A final example of lyrical codemixing and intertextuality in Beyoncé’s musical art arrived with the recent release of *Cowboy Carter* (March 2024). Included in the album is the poignant song “Daughter”, intriguing for a number of reasons. Co-written by Beyoncé, Camaron Ochs (aka Cam), Simon Maartensson, Terius Gesteelde-Diamant (aka The Dream), Shawn Corey Carter (aka S. Carter, Jay-Z), and Derek Dixie, the song’s selection of Western elements includes the following. Its so-called “gallop rhythm” suggests a horse advancing at a fast trot, which is sustained by a continuous Mexican-style arpeggio on an acoustic guitar playing a chord progression that is overlaid by the lilting strains of Beyoncé’s vocals, all of which evokes the Texas–Mexico borderlands and connects to the pathos of an unfolding tale of the perils of jealous love. Though the pace is less fevered in Marty Robbins’ classic Western ballad “El Paso” (1959), an intertextual connection can be made: both songs cause the listener to engage with an inauspicious ride on horseback, taking place in the borderlands, and embodying a tale of obsessive jealousy. Though a tragic narrative, “El Paso” tempers angst on the part of the listener because the song is performed in the key of D major and, consequently, feels less uneasy in tone than “Daughter”, which, performed in the key of A minor, conjures sorrow. “Daughter” is not a likely allusion to Beyoncé’s own two daughters, but rather to herself, for she sings in the twice-repeated chorus: “If you cross me, I’m just like my father, I am colder than Titanic water”. The lyrical codemixing comes in the form of the famous aria-like song “Caro mio ben”, in Italian, inserted before the final two stanzas. Beyoncé may surprise many listeners with her compelling rendition in quasi bel canto, operatic style, but her background does include some classical training. As for the song, “Caro mio ben” was written in 1783 and is attributed to a member of the musically inclined Neapolitan Giordani family (authorship is assigned variously to the father or one of two sons). The original version, which is oft performed, by both operatic and popular singers (see [Marzi 2024](#)), and hence recognizable, is in the key of E-flat major, but the version sung by Beyoncé in “Daughter” has been transposed to A minor, in conformity with the rest of the song, and incorporates occasional brief shifts to E flat, in order to reinforce tension. It is immediately followed by a luxurious, lyricless vocalization by Beyoncé, also in A minor and E flat. The original “Caro mio ben” has become a celebrated standard and has figured in various movie soundtracks, including that of *Amadeus* (1984). Most intriguing, however, when it comes to intertextual associations, is the appearance of “Caro mio ben” in the film *Bel Canto* (2018), where it is sung by the character Roxanne Coss, a highly celebrated opera singer who is played by Julianne Moore, with Renée Fleming as the voice over talent for all of Moore’s songs, including “Caro mio ben” ([Works & Process at the Guggenheim 2018](#)). Whether it was volitional and another example of engineered multimodal intertextuality or a product of pure happenstance, it is remarkable that two prominent code-switched passages in Beyoncé’s musical art, one switching to French in “Partition” and the other to Italian in “Daughter”, both connect multimodally and intertextually with filmic roles played by Julianne Moore, and that in neither case are the actual utterances articulated by Moore herself since the voice is dubbed in both. Might this be in part, one wonders, a gesture acknowledging Julianne Moore’s statement, during an in-

interview conducted on International Women’s Day, on 8 March 2019, to the effect that one of the powerful women who inspires her the most is Beyoncé? ([Associated Press Videos 2019](#)). Simultaneously, perhaps, might this also be a subtle indication that, when united for the purpose of empowerment, all women are speaking for each other with the same voice? Or, as tantalizing as these possibilities might be, is all this simple happenstance? A look at the Italian lyrics may shed some light.

(3) “Caro mio ben”

Caro mio ben  
Credimi almen  
Senza di te, languisce il cor  
Il tuo fedel  
Sospira ognor  
Cessa, crudel, tanto rigor

Note that the truncated words in these Italian verses, usually shortened by means of apocope (namely, *beneamato* > *ben* ‘beloved’; *almeno* > *almen* ‘at least’; *cuore* > *cor* ‘heart’; *fedele* > *fedel* ‘faithful’; *crudel* > *crudel* ‘cruel’; *rigore* > *rigor* ‘severity’) are common in opera and bel canto, as deemed appropriate in relation to the meter, as well as in many other registers in Italian. The typical translation found online is overly literal. An alternate version in brackets is provided, where deemed helpful, and includes the familiar form of the second-person singular, which sounds antiquated in English, but which underscores the intimacy in the original Italian.

(4) Translation of “Caro mio ben”

My dear beloved  
Believe me at least [this much]  
Without you, my heart languishes [Without thee ...]  
Your faithful one [Thy faithful one ...]  
Sighs always [Yearns incessantly]  
Cease, cruel one, so much punishment [... so much heartlessness]

The unrequited love expressed in “Caro mio ben” clearly connects with the jealous trope in “Daughter”. This connection is not undermined by the fact that there is nothing in the short text of “Caro mio ben” suggesting violent possessiveness per se, in contrast to “Daughter”. It is sufficient that “Caro mio ben” connects the listener, intertextually, to the world of Italian opera, and this it does with efficiency. For the informed listener knows exactly where jealousy and compulsive possessiveness inevitably lead in the “texts” of tragic opera, namely to someone’s dramatic demise. But the pleading voice embodied in “Caro mio ben” does something else. It also connects to the prayerful supplication figuring in “Daughter” (“Help me, Lord”, “sing hymns, Hold rosaries”, and “Cleanse me, Holy Trinity”) and thereby leaves the listener in suspension about how this inner struggle will end up resolving itself. Strong though they may be, “these fantasies in my head” might not lead to utter despair and might not be inescapably lethal if better angels are allowed to prevail. The other intertextual possibilities mentioned above that point to the empowerment of women notwithstanding, the spiritual interpretation seems to be the dominant message of “Daughter”, and this, too, is part of Beyoncé’s complex, multidimensional identity, the expression of which reposes once again on the use of multimodal intertextuality.

### 3.3. Beyoncé, Multimodal Intertextual Packaging of Music, and Identity

As we have seen, multilingual lyrics, like multilingual texts of any kind, can serve to connect, overlap, contrast and/or transcend linguistic realms, constituting a complexified feature of enriched message encoding and decoding in the realm of music and having ramifications for the construction of identity. Momentarily setting aside the topic of lyrical code-switching, however, let us focus on another aspect of multimodal intertextual message-making in relation to Beyoncé’s musical art and the related negotiation of iden-

tity. For in the totality of things, the message conveyed by any musical product may also be linked to what is characterized by the packaged form the music assumes when it is released to the public. This may well involve visual intertextuality, as is the case here. Having provided the rationale, we are properly positioned to enter into the fray of commentary surrounding the message and import of the cover art for two of Beyoncé's albums.

The cover art for *Act II: Cowboy Carter* depicts Beyoncé mounted on horseback, thus recalling her earlier appearance astride a gleaming silvery mannequin of a horse on the cover of *Act I: Renaissance* (2022). Because she wore barely-there attire for the latter, many commentators were quick to make associations with Lady Godiva, often drawing comparisons to Englishman John Collier's famous rendition of Godiva (1880–1898), painted in a pre-Raphaelite academic style, which is housed at The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, in Coventry, England (see [Collier 1880–1898](#)). Just as quickly, the claimed connection was swatted down by other commentators. [Gaskin \(2022\)](#) quotes Martin Roberts, the Curatorial Manager at the Herbert Gallery: "There is a fascination with Godiva, who is seen as an inspirational figure by many people, someone who stood up for the rights of ordinary people and for the rights of women in particular". Gaskin continues, "Some argue that in her song 'Break My Soul' Beyoncé is playing a similar role by looking out for the working class". But because of other, dissonant lyrics seemingly touting luxury brands and because of Beyoncé's uncowed countenance on the cover art, Gaskin is skeptical: "As Sarah Rose Sharp wrote for *Hyperallergic* ([Sharp 2022](#)), the Beyoncé on the album cover 'seems frankly unconcerned about everything, up to and including your taxes.'" However, the contrastive comparison to Godiva is too obvious to be so easily dismissed. In an instance of explicit engineering of intertextuality, Beyoncé's rewording of the lyrics to the Dolly Parton classic "Jolene", included in *Act II: Cowboy Carter*, replacing words of womanly pleading with the aggressive warnings of a woman fully in charge of her situation, point to another interpretation that Sharp and Gaskin appear to have overlooked: Beyoncé is not a subdued rider, head lowered, downward eyes hidden from our gaze, ashamed of the needful leveraging of her nudity (to obtain tax relief for Coventarians), like the Godiva portrayed by Collier and in many other renditions, virtually all of which seemingly conform to the "male gaze". The Beyoncé version of Godiva is akin to that of a fierce Valkyrie, astride an other-worldly steed, head held high, facing us, unashamed of the power of her physique laid bare. Contrary to quick judgments, this artistic reversal does not automatically equate with arrogance and disregard, but more plausibly empowerment and reclaiming control of the gaze (cf. [Frigeri 2018](#), pp. 104–21). Furthermore, another possible validation of the Godiva association, whether the intertextual target is Collier's painting or something more general, is the Rodeo Queen rider appearing on the subsequent cover of the sequel, *Act II: Cowboy Carter*, which constitutes a very plausible intertextual equestrian reference to another famous painting, *La Guerre* ('War'), in another demonstration of the effects obtainable via the multimodal intertextual genre-pairing of photographic cover art and iconic paintings. Painted by Frenchman Henri Rousseau, circa 1894 (hence contemporary with Collier's *Godiva*), *La Guerre* is housed at the Musée d'Orsay, in Paris. The painting is all the more relevant because of its alternate title, *La chevauchée de la Discorde* ('The ride of Discord'). Linguistically speaking, the painting's title plays on the dual functionality of gender in the French language: gender always signals membership in a certain word class (either feminine or masculine), but in appropriate cases, it can also signal status as male or female. At play then is the feminine grammatical gender of the word *discorde* and the female gender of the rider depicted and so named in the painting. (In addition to this double-entendre, the alternate title also suggests a meta-artistic allusion to the intrusion of Rousseau's own convention-defying form of expression. A discordant primitivism, his art is both anti-academic and post-impressionist, thus conforming to neither of the contemporaneous warring schools.) The possibilities for various connections with Beyoncé's art are rich. In the painting ([Rousseau 1894](#)), a white woman sits atop a pure black horse, leaping in a rightward direction, whose black mane and tail, jagged and dense, are matched exactly by the rider's own hair, all of which contrasts perfectly with Beyoncé, the black

woman, sitting atop a pure white horse, heading leftward with apparent dispatch but at a controlled pace, whose white mane and tail, smooth and flowing, are matched exactly by Beyoncé's own hair. There is an additional shared key feature that makes for an immediate connection. Neither rider is mounted astride; instead, facing us (their observers), they are situated improbably with both legs on the visible side of the horse, seemingly defying the downward pull of gravity as they ride. Note that, contra some commentators, rodeo queens typically do not ride side saddle; it is true that Victorian ladies, emulating the Queen herself (for a notable mounted portrait, see [Landseer 1865–1867](#)), rode side saddle, but not awkwardly in Western-style saddles, and of course they wore dresses, not stylized cowgirl chaps, like Rodeo Queen Bey. In any event, to continue with the comparison, Rousseau's rider—a primitivist Bellona perhaps, or a horsewoman of the apocalypse (see Revelation 6: 1–8), for she races over a corpse-littered field—holds a smoldering brand in one hand and a raised sword in the other. Beyoncé, less ominously, until possible symbolic associations are applied (read on), holds the horse's reins in one hand, the American flag in the other, and dons a white "good guy" cowboy hat. The fact that Beyoncé's mount for the photo shoot is purportedly named Chardonneigh ([Escobedo Shepherd 2024](#)), constituting a codemixed French–English onomastic pun, may well be entirely random, but it is nevertheless fortuitous, given the foregoing and given the overall codemixing preoccupation of this essay. Codemixed pun aside, weightier associations demand commentary.

Although she was not a Rodeo Queen at the time, for a performance at the 2004 iteration of the Houston Livestock and Rodeo Show, a premier event for many rodeo riders, Beyoncé herself made her grand entry mounted on horseback. But Queen Bey on the cover of *Cowboy Carter*, brandishing the flag just like a mounted Rodeo Queen, makes a transparent connection in another way. Just as the musical art constituting the tracks of *Cowboy Carter* are an important musical reminder of the oft-unacknowledged contribution of African Americans to the emergence and development of Country and Western music, the appearance of Rodeo Queen Bey on the cover art for the album is a transparent reminder of the pivotal yet oft-unacknowledged role of African American cowboys and the related traditions of Black rodeos and Black Rodeo Queens ([Cartwright 2021](#); [Kursh and Arkansas Farm Bureau 2023](#)). However, though veiled, there may yet be another level of meaning—for we know that Beyoncé's representational choices are not random and can rarely be taken solely at face value; rather, they are calculated and coded. Not only is she invoking the Black Rodeo Queen, but the specter of the most iconic cinematic image associated with mounted flag-bearing riders in the Wild West also comes to mind, namely the quintessential color bearing cavalryman leading the charge in the genocidal American Frontier Wars (also referred to as the American Indian Wars). And given the role of Black cowboys and some Black regiments (aka Buffalo Soldiers) in the "taming" of the West at the expense of Indigenous peoples, this association cannot be dismissed. The intertextual connection with Rousseau's disturbing painting is the interpretive key lending credence to this association.

So, how does all of this connect to issues of identity? As we saw, arguably the discomfited Lady Godiva recast as an unashamed and empowered woman in the person of Beyoncé on the cover of *Act I: Renaissance* sends a certain message, but it does not thereby erase the message pertaining to social awareness of which Lady Godiva is emblematic, leaving us to ponder the possibility of layered message-making. Likewise, a layered set of messages are being conveyed, it seems, via the cover art of *Act II: Cowboy Carter*, including one that is a somber reminder. For in addition to foregrounding the oft-disregarded role of Black cowboys and associated cultural manifestations, such as Black rodeos and Rodeo Queens, does the beautiful Black Rodeo Queen, mounted on a white horse, dressed in red, white, and blue, topped with a good-guy white cowboy hat and brandishing an American flag also serve as a reminder of something ugly, namely a portion of the culpability vis à vis Indigenous peoples in the furtherance of Indigenous displacement and white ascendancy? If so, then Beyoncé thereby adds another dimension to her own identity. For even as she acknowledges the largely effaced contributions of African Americans in the building of

the West, she may also be projecting herself as a person who looks at the big picture, heeds conscience, and is willing to face uncomfortable truths (cf. Gee (2024) for a summary of reactions, including his own). In all of this, she may also be taking a page from the playbook of the talented African American graphic artist, Kehinde Wiley (cf. Benzine 2024), who reconfigures art masterpieces, including equestrian ones, by removing the European nobility majestically depicted therein and, in their stead, placing urban American Blacks and other people of color, thereby crafting “both a critique of myth making and a bit of myth making itself” (Goldenberg 2022), a seemingly fitting description for much of Beyoncé’s own artistic *modus operandi* as well. Multimodal intertextual analysis makes possible all these layered interpretations and allows them to surface as manifestations of the negotiation of complex identity. Will an anticipated album, *Act III*, complete the cycle by resorting to a final motivated example of multimodal intertextuality in relation to equestrian cover art? It will hardly be surprising if it does. (For another commentary on multimodal intertextuality in the realm of the graphic arts, also joining “high art” and popular art but this time in a bidirectional arrangement, see Picone (2013) on the interplay between museum-grade art and French and Italian comic books and graphic novels).

#### 4. Code-Switching and Transcendent Identity: Composers/Performers and Listeners

In this final section, the focus returns to the role of lyrical code-switching in the negotiation of identity.

##### 4.1. *The Rooted and the Transcendent*

As mentioned above (see Section 2.1), composing and performing music that includes lyrical code-switching between local idiom(s) and a global one—typically English, but in some cases Spanish, French, and others—can be a means of appealing to a wider audience and thereby increasing marketability. At the same time, it can also be a mechanism for shaping an identity that is simultaneously rooted and transcendent. Depending upon the profile of the composer/performer, either the local (“rooted”) language or the global (“transcendent”) language, or both, might be part of lived experience or might be aspirational. For example, when BTS sings in Korean, they are connecting linguistically to the local audience based on a locally shared idiom, but by including switches to English, which have increased in frequency over time (Spadaccini 2020), they are also flagging their awareness of and aspirational engagement with the global realm of popular music and its internationalized sociolinguistic culture. Hence, their songs are emblematic of an identity that is both rooted and transcendent, this despite the obscuring factor of purely market-driven motivations. Of course Korean, though not generally ranked among global languages, has many speakers around the world and is certainly not an endangered language. To present an example of the latter, Cajun and zydeco songsmiths in Louisiana (e.g., Michael Doucet and BeauSoleil, Wayne Toups, and Boozoo Chavis) sometimes resort to the strategic use of “verse switching”, that is, a verse is sung in Cajun French (or Louisiana Creole in the case of zydeco songs) and then the English version immediately follows, in order to cater to an audience that is now primarily anglophone. This protocol can characterize both live performances in dance halls and recordings destined for distribution to a national and global market. In this way, even as the population of Cajun French speakers diminishes, the composers/performers of the music maintain their credentials as authentic, as signaled by the persistence of the French lyrics, and their identity as defenders of French and protectors of Cajun culture, while simultaneously transmitting to all listeners, whether or not those listeners have any command of French, the same unfolding narrative so that no one is excluded. Thus authenticity, as well as inclusivity vis-à-vis the entire audience, as well as improved marketing, are all maintained. The identity that emerges is characterizable as both rooted and transcendent. Even though Louisiana-based musicians of non-Cajun heritage are also the creators and performers of this music in many cases (for example, the successful and very talented band Feufollet, some of whose members have no ethnic ties but are products of French immersion schools in Louisiana), this occasions little contro-

versy since it is generally recognized that an endangered language needs new speakers by whatever means. In this case it is the songs, often the last register to survive when a language is severely endangered, which help provide the means (for more on lyrical code-switching in Louisiana, see [Picone \(2002, 2018, 2025\)](#)). For another early examination of the use of code-switching to establish an identity that is both local (or rooted) and international (or transcendent), see [Bentahila and Davies \(2002\)](#) and [Davies and Bentahila \(2006\)](#) on the topic of code-switched lyrics combining French and colloquial Maghrebi Arabic in North African *raï* music. After implanting in France in the 1980s and 1990s, many self-exiled *raï* musicians have achieved popularity in Europe as well and, in situ, are spawning a new generation of *raï* composers and performers. Both in North Africa and in Europe, the use of lyrical code-switching is emblematic of *raï*, its practitioners thereby marking themselves as both socioculturally rooted and internationally relevant, as they ride the wave of the globalization of popular music.

But, in another context, attempts by a complete outsider to use local language can lead to controversy. That is, even when taking the form of well-intentioned musical code-crossing or “sampling”, it can be controversial to attempt to signal aspirational solidarity with a linguistically minoritized community by borrowing lyrics sourced from the language of that community and then embedding them into the lyrics of a song composed and performed primarily in a global language by a non-member of the minoritized community. This can be viewed as exploitative and as an unwelcome attempt at appropriation, as was the case in the minds of some critics when Shakira sang “Waka Waka”, the theme song for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in South Africa (see Section 2.2).

#### 4.2. Jon Batiste, Universal Language, and Curated Code-Switching

A different kind of scenario, however, presents itself in the configuration characterizing the musical art of Jon Batiste when he composed and recorded his latest studio album *World Music Radio* (2023). The title chosen for the album is not referring to the usual genre associated with that label (for an example of lyrical code-switching in the World Music genre, in the usual sense of the term, as demonstrated in the music of Amina Annabi, see [Picone \(2002\)](#)), but announces a globally transcendent theme, where music is unrestricted and uncompartimentalized by geopolitical borders. And in this case, the theme of transcendence is not simply a self-disposition characteristic of Batiste as the composer/performer and musical curator for the suite of songs comprising this album. The theme of transcendence is aspirational at the highest level inasmuch as the goal is to encourage all listeners to experience music as a universal language and as a pathway to a unifying worldview of humanity (see the next section). Music is the message-making mode, and Batiste himself, being the music-making messenger, is calling the listener to join him on this path. While this path may be linked to notions of socio-political harmony, in this endeavor, Batiste does not project for himself a political profile. Rather, he is, in his own words, the *griot* (the widely used term, possibly derived from Portuguese, entered English via French, where it is paired with the feminine form *griotte*). The term *griot* applies to West African bards or orators who are multitasked with a range of interrelated duties, all vital for community life and well-being. They are storytellers, poets, singers, instrumentalists, living repositories of ancestries and of village histories, and keepers of oral traditions. And though they are sometimes called upon to be mediators of disputes, they are not tribal chiefs. During a *CBS Mornings* interview ([King et al. 2023](#)) broadcast just prior to the public release of *World Music Radio* (18 August 2023), Jon Batiste affirmed, “It’s really something that comes so deeply from my soul, and it’s a concept album, and you’re led through the album by an interstellar griot. There’s a character that I play that guides you through the album. His name is Billy Bob Bo Bob, but it goes all across the spectrum of music and culture and really makes connections to joy, makes connections to lineage, and really connects people ultimately to their own humanity and others”. Accordingly, Billy Bob Bo Bob, the transcendent DJ-cum-griot voiced by Batiste, kicks off the “program” of *World Music Radio* by remarking, “Music we have planned for tonight comes from all around the world. And



faithful listeners of World Music Radio know, this is an experience". For a musical project having such ambitions, Batiste, in his curatorial role, delivers the experience by including a number of tracks interspersed with verses or samples in languages other than English. The overarching, wholistic message is that music is the actual unifying universal language, not lingua franca English or any other single language. In the suite of songs comprising the album, this case is best made by sampling lyrics from a swath of languages. A summary, with interposed comments, appears directly below, followed by a detailed look at the code-switching in "Be Who You Are". Remarks on overall import follow, in Section 4.3.

1. Some English is interspersed, but most of "My Heart" features the Catalan Rita Payés (aka Rita Payés Roma), who specializes in jazz, bossa nova, and the trombone, singing in Spanish.
2. "Clair de Lune" begins with a faintly heard sample of "Par un beau clair de lune" sung in French by Michel Hindenoche (1993) who, as both vocalist and multitalented instrumentalist, specializes in traditional regional francophone music world-wide. But the sample quickly gives way to solo jazz riffs by the best-known sax player of popular music, Kenney G (aka Kenneth Bruce Gorelick). This is certainly not random and appears to be a double tip of the hat referencing French lineage in musical origins and influences, given that the saxophone, destined to be so musically impactful in ways that were unforeseeable, was invented by Antoine-Joseph Sax (aka Adolphe Sax (1814–1894)), the Belgian Walloon who relocated to Paris in 1842, where he invented and began manufacturing the instrument.
3. In the very moving song "Worship", in the midst of English lyrics, a single Spanish word is sung repeatedly, *Levantate* ("Get up, Rise up"), serving as a pivotal bridge to the remainder of the song.
4. The track "Chassol" corresponds to the eponymous French musician Chassol (aka Christophe Chassol), whose family originated in Martinique. For this track, he momentarily takes on emcee duties so that he can introduce Jon Batiste to be featured in the upcoming track. The introduction is entirely in French (for the benefit of fellow perfectionists, a couple of errors in the transcription appearing in the liner notes are corrected here, corresponding to what is actually spoken on the recording: *\*un grand plaisir et d'vous presenter > un grand plaisir et un honneur d'vous presenter; \*l'artiste le plus demande dans le show business > l'artiste le plus demandé dedans le show business*). By virtue of looping and the use of jazzy contours in the accompanying instrumentation—all played by Chassol (excepting percussion by Mathieu Édouard (aka Mathieu Edward))—contours that match the intonational and suprasegmental patterns of Chassol's utterances, the track strongly suggests Chassol's own signature "ultrascore" (his neologism). The term refers to a creative procedure by which the intonational patterns of real birdsongs and real snippets of human speech or synthetic speech, typically excerpted from real-life filmed sources, are looped, converted into musical scores, and harmonized with instrumentation. In live performances, the music is played while the corresponding filmed segments are viewable on a giant backscreen, thereby creating a pre-eminent example of multimodal, intertextual message making. For a particularly apt example, in the overall context of this essay, see *BIG SUN* (Chassol 2015), in which at one point a sample from a film featuring a French speaker talking about the origins of the sonority of Caribbean creole is itself looped and converted into a sonorous ultrascore; soon after, an example of another speaker switching seamlessly between English and a French-lexifier Caribbean creole also becomes a looped ultrascore. Exposed to Chassol's multimodal art, the beholder comes to the inescapable realization that the communicative act itself is profoundly musical, a perspective that aligns closely with Batiste's own vision.
5. In the track "Master Power", a sampling of invocations in Arabic (uncredited in the liner notes) is heard at the very beginning and twice in the body of the song.

But for present purposes, it is the second musical track in the album, "Be Who You Are", which is perhaps most interesting (the video version, despite lending its important

message to Coca Cola product placement, is worth watching; see [Batiste and Coke Studio 2023](#)). We are treated to an uplifting song which includes switches from English to Korean and then to Spanish. The Korean singers are the K-Pop girl group NewJeans (aka 뉴진스; *Nyujinseu*) who came to fame quickly by following the path forged earlier by BTS (see above), but with the difference that NewJeans included much more code-switching from Korean to English from the very start, facilitated by the presence of bilingual singers in the group. Hanni (aka Phạm Ngọc Hân) and Danielle (aka Danielle June Marsh, 모지혜, Mo Ji-hye) are native speakers of English and are also fully fluent in Korean. There can be little doubt that the music production company ADOR (a subsidiary of Hybe) recruited the bilinguals for inclusion in the group specifically because they had witnessed and understood the marketing advantages of lyrically hybrid songs featuring a heavy dose of English. For example, in the first single that NewJeans released, to considerable success, “Attention” ([NewJeans 2022](#)), more than half of the lyrics were in English. The same configuration characterizes their contribution to the song “Be Who You Are”, as shown below. The lead singer’s lines are briefly echoed by the full group’s English tags (in parentheses). The translations for Korean lines appear in brackets.

(5) Excerpted from “Be Who You Are” with bracketed translations of the Korean

언제나 걸고 있는 주문이 들리지 [‘I always hear the spell being cast’]  
 Clear all the talk away, there’s nothing better really (yes)  
 우리 이대로 다 go ahead and try [‘We’re all like this’]  
 완성됐어 이미 (yeah) [‘It’s finished already’]  
 Got into the spirit (yeah)  
 잘했어 we did it yeah, yeah [‘Well done’]

Notice that the first Korean line includes reference to “the spell being cast”, which does not appear anywhere in the code-switched English lines, but which connects with the lines rapped by J.I.D. (aka Destin Choice Route) immediately prior to this segment: “Don’t get mad at your imagination. If it’s real magic, you ain’t gotta chase it. You can only be who you are”. The other lines in Korean seem to be rather general, not central to the advancement of the narrative. In this case then, though the listener who does not speak Korean (but who understands English, it is assumed here) does not understand everything, the overall understanding of the message of the song is not diminished. The next verse, however, all in Spanish, which is the closing verse just prior to the last prolonged iteration of the chorus, takes a different turn. While it may constitute a double-entendre, it mentions for the first time in this song a partnered relationship that is framed as a romantic one. The Spanish lyrics are all performed by the highly regarded Colombian singer of Latin Pop, Camilo (aka Camilo Echeverry Correa; he is not known for code-switching in his own musical productions). No translation is sung on the recording (or in the liner notes), but one is provided here.

(6) Spanish lyrics excerpted from “Be Who You Are”

Ajá, voy  
 Que venga to’l mundo a ver  
 Que cuando estoy contigo es mi cosa preferida (ajá)  
 Que la vida es más grande mientras más es compartida (ajá)  
 Que cuando estamos juntos, mi vida  
 La magia no termina

(7) Translation

Aha, [here] I go  
 Let everyone come and see

That being with you is my favorite thing (aha)  
 That life is bigger the more it is shared (aha)  
 That when we are together, [love of] my life  
 The magic never ends

In this case then, a listener will not understand the content of this substantial switch between languages if that listener has little or no proficiency in Spanish. Is this of any consequence? This topic, which is related to the earlier theme of *Global Appeal in Relation to the Problem of Lyrics* (see Section 2.2 above) merits further commentary in the context of construction of identity (see Section 4.3).

#### 4.3. Jon Batiste and Transcendent Identity

The link between code-switching in the musical art of a composer/performer and identity has been the main focus up until now. But what about listeners? Is their self-perception—and possible projection—of identity somehow linked to their musical choices? At a general level, when considering non-musicians, Rickard and Chin (2017) confirm the obvious. Because of the universality of music, of necessity, musicianship includes listening and an engagement with music and is not confined to performance. Consequently, musical engagement becomes a feature of personal identity for the non-musician as well. But, more specifically, what about lyrical code-switching? Is there a special attraction associated with lyrically codemixed musical art, which, as we have seen, is becoming increasingly prevalent in contemporary globalized musical culture, even for those who do not understand all the languages in the mix? Are monolingual listeners engaged with the codemixed art in spite of the mixed lyrics or, partly at least, because of them? Lyricist Yip Harburg once famously said: “Words make you think thoughts, music makes you feel a feeling, but a song makes you feel a thought”. This remark presumes of course that the rhetorical “you”, as listener, are hearing a song with lyrics in a language that you understand and in which you think. Abandoning this presupposition, however, other scenarios emerge that also require consideration. When a listener hears a song in a language that is not understood, the sequence of the spoken sounds being sung are perceived only metalinguistically, as it were, in ways similar to the perception of musical notes, thereby contributing to the overall musical feeling while simultaneously hiding a verbal message that the listener knows exists but cannot ascertain. But what happens when lyrical code-switching is involved such that the listener understands part of the verbal message but not all of it? Partial understanding allows the listener to make the rational assumption, based on inferential reasoning, that the linguistic part that remains hidden resonates with and is a likely expansion of the same general theme as the linguistic part that is understood. Some passages might deviate, of course, as was the case for the Spanish stanza in the song “Be Who You Are” cited above, but the thrust of that verse connects well with the overarching theme of supportive partnership in our common human experience, which is a constant thread in *World Music Radio*. In other words, there does not have to be perfect alignment of the semantics of the texts in the code-switched languages of a song for a desired effect to be achieved. This does not preclude the possibility, in some cases, of the strategic use of code-switching to send one message to a bilingual audience and another to a monolingual audience (see Picone (2002); for a parsed example occurring in “Baby, Please Don’t Go” in the music of Michael Doucet and BeauSoleil, also making use of an intertextual connection to a Boozoo Chavis classic, see Picone (2018)). But, in most cases, code-switching creates points of connection and opens a door, as it were, to the monolingual listener who thereby is allowed to connect at some level with the multilingual identity being projected in the song. Hence, the code-switched song becomes a vehicle of transcendent identity not only for the composer/performer but also, vicariously, for the listener. Surely this is part of the novelty and attraction, and even marketability, of lyrical code-switching aimed at a general audience. And in the art of Jon Batiste, we can pursue this notion even further.

As indicated in the prior section, Batiste has refitted the term “World Music”. Wanting to free it from the constraints of a genre label, in a conversation with Ben Sisario (2023)

of the *New York Times*, Batiste pondered, “What if we could reimagine that term? What if we could reinvent? What if we could use it as a prompt to expand the diameter of popular music?”. Ultimately, in *World Music Radio*, the expansion of the term is dramatic: it is all-encompassing, all-embracing, and universal. Consequently, the identity Batiste is proclaiming for himself through his “World Music” is not a blend between some type of locally oriented rootedness and the global, as was the case, in different ways, for BTS and Cajun music makers, among many others mentioned earlier. Rather, for Batiste, all regional music, all genres, all lyrics in all languages, indeed every musical manifestation, regardless of origin, form, or category, is elevated and incorporated into a grand chorus, a grand orchestration, a veritable serenade to humanity. In fact, it is even more than that. Judging from his inclusion of many songs having spiritual themes and connections—“Worship”, “Calling Your Name”, “Movement 18’ (Heroes)”, “Master Power”, “White Space”, and “Wherever You Are”—this curated musical assortment is also a serenade to the Divine. The inclusion of code-switches to a variety of other languages in some of Batiste’s tracks plays an intertextual role here as well, recalling, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the ultimate assembly of all worshippers of every language (Daniel 7:14, Psalm 22: 27–28, Acts 2: 1–12, and Revelation 7:9; for a representative musical pre-enactment of the latter, with curated lyrical code-switches in a vocal procession of Hebrew, Hmong, Portuguese, Kreyòl or Haitian Creole [on the growing presence of Kreyòl in the United States, see [Picone 2025](#)], Russian, Italian, Spanish, and Arabic, and finally English with simultaneous interpretation in ASL, see [Riddle \(2004\)](#)). At the level of personal aspiration, Batiste clearly aligns with this dual perspective, embracing humanity and divinity, in a declaration of the ultimate transcendent self-identity.

Related to this, there is another important difference that sets Batiste apart and which bears directly on the listener’s identity. The self-expressed musical identities constructed so creatively by all the other artists cited above—Beyoncé, Shakira, Stromae, BTS, Beau-Soleil, etc.—are identities that we listeners can greatly appreciate—musically, lyrically, multilingually, multimodally, intertextually, and in every other way described—but the identities thereby created are essentially personal ones. Depending upon an individual listener’s background and life experiences, there can of course be degrees of identification and emulation, but ultimately these personal identities are ones that we cannot own, and we are not being entreated to do so. But, Jon Batiste is entreating listeners to do exactly that. He is inviting every listener to aspire to and own a transcendent identity, an identity that, via the language of music, including the curated code-switched music, unites composers, lyricists, performers, arrangers, curators, and listeners alike.

## 5. Conclusions

This essay was crafted to establish new departures in the field of artistic codemixing (see the definition in the introduction), particularly in the subfield of lyrical code-switching. This was achieved by highlighting various conceptual frameworks—namely, multimodal communication analysis (taking stock of attendant social semiotics), intertextuality, and the push and pull of globalization and localization (the former linkable to a transcendent stance, the latter to a rooted stance)—for their usefulness in association with the analysis of lyrical code-switching as it relates to establishing identity (and/or facilitating marketing in many cases). The analysis reveals an expression of identity that often exhibits complexity and layering, as facilitated by the creative affordances associated both with multimodal intertextuality and the possibility for positioning within the rooted-transcendent spectrum. This essay also presents the complexities of establishing authorial agency in many cases, especially in instances of curated lyrical code-switching, and it pays attention to identity considerations involving the listener. The main songs selected for analysis aptly exemplify the usefulness of these approaches, regardless of consumer frequencies (though most selections have been popular with the public). The spectrum of selections also demonstrates the breadth of multilingual codemixed music. As demonstrated in this essay, there is plenty of room to expand the analytical frameworks and parameters in the study of lyrical code-

switching, and there is good reason to do so since the expected dividend will be an enrichment of the discipline and the promise of future insights.

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