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CIVILIZING THE METROPOLE: THE ROLE OF COLONIAL
EXHIBITIONS IN UNIVERSAL AND COLONIAL EXPOSITIONS
IN CREATING GREATER FRANCE, 1889-1922

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in History
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at the University of Central Florida
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Thesis Chair: Dr. Amelia H. Lyons

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ABSTRACT

During the era of New Imperialism, the French state had the daunting task of convincing the French public of the need to support and to sustain an overseas empire. Stemming from its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and hoping to regain its erstwhile global position, the French state set out to demonstrate the importance of maintaining an empire. Since the vast majority of the French people were apathetic towards colonial ventures, the French state used the 1889 Parisian Universal Exposition and the 1906 and 1922 Colonial Expositions in Marseille not only to educate the French about the economic benefits of the empire, but to entertain them simultaneously so that they unwittingly began to accept the notion of an interconnected Greater France. Each of these expositions contained a group of colonial exhibits in which indigenous colonial subjects, whom the expositions' organizers handpicked to come to France, displayed their daily routines and interacted with the visiting public. Visitors witnessed the lifestyles of indigenous cultures and took away from the exhibits a greater understanding of those who lived in the colonies. However, the vast majority of the French public who visited the expositions did not experience a shift in their mindset favoring the continuance of a colonial empire until after World War One. Until they could personally see an impact of the colonies onto their daily lives, the French public remained indifferent toward the French state's colonial ventures.

DEDICATIONS

For my loving mother, Nancy, and my partner, John, whose love and support sustain me.

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INTRODUCTION

When it came to power in the 1870s, the French Third Republic inherited a long tradition of imperial conquest. Beginning in the sixteenth century, France had participated in colonial expansion, extending the kingdom's boundaries beyond the confines of continental Europe. Within this manifold process, political and economic elements predominated. Not only did France strive to maintain a balance between itself and its largest colonial rival, Great Britain, but it also recognized the importance of joining the growing mercantilist economy. In the eighteenth century, two sometimes contradictory theories fueled expansionist thought: population theory and mercantilist theory.¹ Imperialist supporters shifted their attention to West Africa during this era, hoping it could compensate for the unstable position in which France found itself in the Antilles after the Seven Years War (1756-1763).² Following territorial losses in India, Canada, and the Caribbean to the British, Napoleon's reinstatement of slavery in 1802, and the loss of Saint-Domingue in 1804, the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed France's conquest of Algeria³ and continuous debate regarding race and slavery until its ultimate abolishment in 1848.⁴

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the geographic amputation of Alsace and Lorraine in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the sanguinary events of the Paris

¹ William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Responses to Blacks, 1530-1880* (1980; repr., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 155-7.

² *Ibid.*, 162.

³ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present*, trans. Michael Brett (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1991); Benjamin Stora, *Historie de l'Algérie coloniale (1830-1954)* (1991; repr., Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004); Jennifer Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁴ Cohen, 181.

Commune in 1871, and a reaction to the rise of industrialization and capitalism ignited a nationalist declaration favoring the expansion of France's empire among the nation's elite. Gary Wilder has argued that the Third Republic's management of the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, and industrialization during the interwar period changed "imperialism from a political inheritance into a state project."⁵ Building on Wilder's work, this thesis locates the shift in imperialism from a political legacy into a state mission during the late nineteenth century. This study argues that one element of this state project was the dissemination of the idea of Greater France to the French population. It does so by examining how the organizers of the 1889 Parisian Universal Exposition and of the 1906 and 1922 Marseille Colonial Expositions participated in the dissemination of the concept of Greater France.

The expositions' organizers proposed, planned, managed, and constructed these expositions in an effort to promote the French empire's perceived benefits to a metropolitan audience. This purpose of this study is to analyze the ways in which the organizers of the 1889 Parisian Universal Exposition and of the 1906 and 1922 Marseille Colonial Expositions used the expositions' colonial exhibits in an effort to imbue the French population with a colonial conscience. How did the expositions' organizers try to instill a colonial conscience into the expositions' visitors? What techniques and methods did they employ within the colonial exhibits to construct the notion of Greater France? This study, however, does not examine the efficacy of these methods and techniques since the organizers did not establish ways to measure the expositions' effectiveness in inculcating their visitors with the idea of Greater France.

⁵ Gary Wilder, "Framing Greater France Between the Wars," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 14, no. 2 (June 2001): 199.

Building upon the works of colonial scholars, my analysis of the expositions' planning meetings, the organizers' speeches, and contemporary newspaper accounts highlights the techniques and methods proposed and enacted in an effort to instill the notion of Greater France into the expositions' visitors. The organizers of all the expositions examined in this study relied heavily on the illusion of travel to persuade the expositions' visitors of Greater France's existence. Since the vast majority of the French population could not afford to travel, the organizers brought the empire to the French people through the construction and display of colonial exhibits populated by indigenous colonial subjects. The organizers used this idealized vision of a united empire, coupled with educational displays and entertaining spectacles, to attempt to shift the mentalities of an apathetic public unconcerned about colonial affairs to one in which the French public supported the civilizing work of the French state. Once the French people gained this colonial conscience, the organizers felt this new mindset could translate into a belief that France was united with its empire into one entity: Greater France.

The idea of Greater France circulated extensively during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Historian Raoul Girardet, who specializes in French nationalism and French military societies, claimed the phrase *La plus grande France* emerged during the 1885 parliamentary debates in which opposition members vehemently challenged Prime Minister Jules Ferry's expansionist position. Girardet identified the term as "a formula of [Paul] Déroulède," without expressly crediting him with its inception.⁶ In the 1990s Janet Horne, a French language and literature scholar, argued Greater France was a "figurative geography," suggesting the "campaigns for domestic reform and colonial expansion" constituted

⁶ Raoul Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (1972; repr., Paris: Hachette, 1995), 96.

elements of the pursuit of national regeneration. Horne argues French republicans “sought to avert the specter of national decline” after the loss to the Prussians and due to concerns of demographic decline by invoking the idea of Greater France to advance the resurrection of the colonial idea.⁷ More recently, Roger Little, also a French language and literature scholar, defined Greater France geographically as “France plus its overseas territories which had come under her control,” with the meaning transforming from an “ambition” during 1870s to a “*fait accompli*” by the opening of the 1931 Colonial Exposition in Paris.⁸

Beginning in the 1980s, scholars have interpreted these extravagant expositions from various perspectives. Paul Greenhalgh examines expositions as temporary and ephemeral events, despite the enormous expense required to clear the land, to construct the buildings, to import colonial subjects, and to demolish the vast majority of the buildings six months later.⁹ Edward Kaufman concentrates on national representation through cuisine, architecture, and agricultural and industrial displays. He argues these expositions created an unquenchable curiosity about the life of foreign peoples and boosted the study of anthropology and, more specifically, ethnography.¹⁰ Aram Yengoyan argues that the expositions’ nature was not altogether altruistic. Since local and state organizations planned, organized, and managed them, he argues that

⁷ Janet Horne, “In Pursuit of Greater France: Visions of Empire among Musée Social Reformers, 1894-1931,” in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 21.

⁸ Roger Little, “‘La Plus Grande France’: A Hypothesis,” *French Studies Bulletin* 26, no. 95 (Summer 2005): 19.

⁹ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988), 1.

¹⁰ Edward N. Kaufman, “The Architectural Museum from World’s Fair to Restoration Village,” *Assemblage* No. 9 (June 1989): 21-2.

expositions championed one dimension of civil society that the state could directly control and regulate.¹¹

More recent interpretations of the expositions have focused on the exhibitionistic aspect of the colonial exhibits. In an edited collection, scholars analyze the display of indigenous peoples at the expositions through ethnographical, anthropological, and racial perspectives.¹² Given its grandeur and international exposure, Van Troi Tran analyzes the 1889 exposition as a location for the exchange of ideas in the areas of international relations, scientific progress, urban development, domestic life, and the place of art within society.¹³ However, these scholars have not examined the techniques and methods the expositions' organizers used in an attempt to infuse the French public with a colonial conscience. This study's analysis of these techniques and methods in relation to the expositions' colonial exhibits will demonstrate how the expositions' organizers helped to disseminate the republican discourse surrounding Greater France.

Using newspaper articles, the expositions' visitors' guide books, the multi-volume general reports detailing the expositions' every aspect, minutes and speeches from the expositions' congresses, and governmental publications, I argue that the organizers of all the expositions examined in this study used the expositions' colonial exhibits to teach visitors about the French empire and to increase attendance through entertainment in order to influence a larger audience. The expositions' organizers planned the colonial exhibits as a way to offer visitors the

¹¹ Aram A. Yengoyan, "Culture, Ideology, and World's Fairs: Colonizer and Colonized in Comparative Perspective," *European Contributions to American Studies* 27 (January 1994): 81.

¹² Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Gilles Boëtsch, Éric Deroo, Sandrine Lemaire, and Charles Forsdick, eds. *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, trans. Teresa Bridgeman (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008). The original French version came out in 2002.

¹³ Van Troi Tran, "Vitrines coloniales : ethnologie plastique de l'Algérie à l'Exposition universelle de 1889 à Paris," *Revue d'histoire de la culture matérielle* No. 59 (Spring 2004): 23-4.

opportunity to journey through a quixotic version of the French empire, learning about the goods produced in the colonies and observing the colonial subjects carrying out their daily routines, without having to leave France. The human and material displays educated visitors about the professed progress of France's civilizing mission and about their colonial counterparts' lifestyles in an idyllic and idealized manner, devoid of any notion of resistance, conflict, pacification, or violence.¹⁴ Colonial ambitions, cloaked under the guise of the civilizing mission, aimed to spread the perceived superiority of French civilization to "inferior races."¹⁵ French notions of being civilized reflected the latest advancements that demonstrated how technology and science had mastered nature. This mastery shifted metropolitan priorities from imperial expansion to the "rational economic development" of existing colonies, a practice known as *mise en valeur*.¹⁶ In addition to teaching visitors about France's colonial efforts, the organizers understood that they needed to create some entertaining elements as well in order to attract large numbers of visitors to the colonial exhibits. Therefore, they planned restaurants in which visitors could sample indigenous cuisine, parades displaying indigenous customs and dress, and theatres in which autochthonous dance troops held several performances daily. These educational and entertaining methods and techniques aimed to instill a greater imperial cognizance into the visiting public, with the hope of leading to an idea of fraternity within the "imagined community" of Greater France.¹⁷

¹⁴ Edward Berenson, "Making a Colonial Culture? Empire and the French Public, 1880-1940," *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 133.

¹⁵ Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and in West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-3.

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (1983; repr., New York: Verso, 2006), 7.

The first chapter analyzes how the organizers of the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris attempted to use the exposition's colonial exhibits as a means to convert an apathetic French public disinterested in colonial affairs into a united population that believed in Greater France and supported the French state's colonial ambitions. The organizers, using education and entertainment to instill a colonial conscience into the visiting public, hoped this heightened awareness of the French empire would translate into a fuller understanding of France's developmental role in the empire.

The second chapter analyzes how the organizers of the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille also attempted to use the exposition's colonial exhibits to promote Greater France through education and entertainment. Parallel to the 1889 Parisian Universal Exposition, the organizers of the 1906 Colonial Exposition built colonial exhibits in which visitors could watch colonial subjects carrying out their daily routines and view samples of goods made in the colonies. However, the organizers modified the exposition's scope from universal to colonial. I argue that this shift in emphasis brought the economic ties linking Marseille with the French colonies to the fore. Marseille's port was the premier gateway through which colonial goods and colonial subjects entered France. Organizers stressed that Marseille's location on the Mediterranean Sea, providing direct access to colonial shipping lanes, made it the ideal city in which to hold a colonial exposition.

The third chapter analyzes how the organizers of the 1922 Colonial Exposition in Marseille continued to promote Greater France through its colonial exhibits. Building upon the other two chapters, I argue that the organizers of the 1922 Colonial Exposition continued to use education, entertainment, and economic interests to advance the notion of Greater France. The

colonial exhibits highlighted the financial benefits France could gain from its colonies. World War One and its aftermath, however, transformed the French public's indifference toward colonial affairs into cautious interest. The potential value of the empire, in terms of raw material and manpower, induced people to view the empire differently. The exposition's organizers used this transformation to further the promotion of Greater France.

An analysis of the methods and techniques the expositions' organizers used demonstrates how they participated in the state project of creating Greater France. The expositions' organizers hoped to influence a cross-section of the French population, including the urban working class and the middle and upper classes that had the financial resources to travel by train to these cities. It also raises more questions, such as the efficacy of their efforts and the effect of the expositions on the visitors, which are beyond the scope of this study, but propose future avenues of research and analysis.

PARIS 1889

Several anxieties plagued the early decades of the French Third Republic. The Franco-Prussian War and the subsequent territorial losses crushed France's global standing.¹ The Paris Commune polarized political affinities. Many Rightists condemned the armed insurrection, the killing of hostages, and the destruction of Parisian buildings. Many Leftists reproached the government for its policies toward Paris and the Franco-Prussian War and for the brutal suppression of the Communards.² Depopulation stemming from the rise of Social Darwinism, from concerns about moral and cultural degeneration, and from recent geographic ruptures resulted in a perceived race suicide. Industrialization coupled with modernization intensified the era's societal struggles.³ The combination of these anxieties damaged French pride and France's global reputation as a world power, both in politics and in culture. Consequently, the French government viewed the 1889 Universal Exposition as a means to try and recapture France's erstwhile position.

On 28 July 1886 a presidential decree named the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Édouard Lockroy, as General Commissioner of the 1889 exposition.⁴ At the first meeting of the Exposition's Control Commission in 1887, Lockroy demonstrated how the anxieties present during the early decades of the Third Republic translated into his aspirations for the exposition,

¹ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

² William Fortescue, *The Third Republics in France, 1870-1940: Conflicts and Continuities* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 31.

³ Joshua Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 1.

⁴ Alfred Picard, *Rapport général* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1891), 1: 340-1. Three General Directors served under Lockroy: Mr. Alphanand headed the exposition's planning and construction, Mr. Berger headed the exposition's daily operations, and Mr. Grison headed the exposition's finances.

“Out of this great exposition, France expects grand results. She sees it as a solemn demonstration to honor her among nations, as an act showing her power, as a pacifist victory returning her to her rightful rank in the world.”⁵

The organizers of the 1889 exposition recognized they faced an uphill battle vis-à-vis the French public. With the exceptions of urban areas with colonial economic ties – Paris, Lyon, Marseille – the vast majority of the French populace remained “stubbornly indifferent to colonial affairs.”⁶ Most exhibited only sporadic bursts of colonial enthusiasm during times of national crisis, while others were openly hostile to colonialism. The explorer Francis Garner wrote in April 1869, upon his return to France, that

one is struck by the public’s profound indifference to all aspects of the colonial contribution to our national greatness....There seems to be no connection between the overseas interests which one has just defended and that metropolitan power which, sunk back on itself, does not even dream of seeking overseas outlets for the restless activity consuming it at home.⁷

Indifference did not only reside amongst the French public, but, apart from merchants in port cities with colonial trading interests, metropolitan businessmen were also apathetic to Indochinese and West African business prospects. Setbacks in Tunisia and Tonkin, in addition to a planned Egyptian expedition, toppled administrations. The French retreat from Langson forced Ferry’s cabinet to resign, and the outcome of the 1885 election, in which the Right gained over one hundred seats in the Assemblée Nationale, testified to the unpopularity of overseas

⁵ Édouard Lockroy, *L’Universelle Exposition de 1889 illustrée*, 1 February 1887, 4.

⁶ C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, “The French ‘Colonial Party’: Its Composition, Aims and Influence, 1885-1914,” *The Historical Journal* 14, no. 1 (March 1971): 101.

⁷ Francis Garner, “Voyages d’exploration en Indochine,” April 1869, quoted in C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, “Centre and Periphery in the Making of the Second French Colonial Empire, 1815-1920,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 16, no. 3 (1988): 15.

expansion and of Ferry's colonial policies.⁸ The organizers of the exposition countered this indifference and hostility through entertainment in order to attract a larger visiting public and to guarantee the fiscal success of the event.

Threats to French pride and glory not only stemmed from past events. One potential danger existed in 1889 which could have derailed the opening of the exposition, thus jeopardizing France's ability to regain its status and glory. Most of the European monarchies informed the exposition's committee of their refusal to send official delegations to the opening ceremonies. One reason for their absence was a desire not to be associated with the centenary anniversary of the French Revolution.⁹ Instead of attending an event celebrating the overthrow of a monarchy and the implementation of popular sovereignty, the monarchs chose to show their solidarity with one another by abstaining. England, Germany, Italy, and Belgium only sent their *chargé d'affaires*.¹⁰ Representatives from Spain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia were completely absent, but some of them encouraged their industries to participate.¹¹ The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs used the argument of monarchical solidarity when he informed the French ambassador to Russia of his country's intent to boycott the 1889 exposition. Another reason for their absence was that no other country in Europe at that time had an active policy of holding international expositions. The German Secretary of State told the Baron of Courcel in 1886 that

⁸ Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, "The French 'Colonial Party,'" 99; Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, "Centre and Periphery," 21.

⁹ Picard, 1: 356.

¹⁰ "Les représentants des puissances étrangères," *Le Constitutionnel*, 9 May 1889, 2. This newspaper was a voice for the world of commerce, politics, and serial literature, including works by George Sand, Alexandre Dumas, and Honoré de Balzac. After the election of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, *Le Constitutionnel* became a major government newspaper of the Second Empire.

¹¹ Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 78; Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, "Les grandes puissances devant l'Exposition universelle de 1889," *Le Mouvement social* No. 149 (October 1989): 16; Susanne Berthier-Folgar, "The 1889 World Exhibition in Paris: The French, the Age of Machines, and the *Wild West*," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 31, no. 2 (June 2009): 131.

the German government questioned the usefulness of such events due to their burdensome demands on the state and on the exhibitors.¹²

Hailed as the “little Paris within the big one,”¹³ the 1889 Universal Exposition celebrated the centennial of the French Revolution.¹⁴ The exposition continued the tradition of displaying the latest advances in agriculture and technology begun in 1855 and was a milestone of global amalgamation and progress.¹⁵ It showcased not only the advancements that had been made in industry, trade, and transportation, but also in the arts, the sciences, and culture.¹⁶ Amongst the vast array of exhibits, the Eiffel Tower and the Gallery of Machines easily captured the preponderance of the visiting public’s attention. According to the General Report, Gustav Eiffel imagined the tower as a “sparkling manifestation of [French] industrial power,” and it would “attest to the immense progress made in the art of metal construction.”¹⁷ The Gallery of Machines also demonstrated the construction proficiency of the French due to the building’s size: 420 meters long and 115 meters wide.¹⁸

After the Eiffel Tower and the Gallery of Machines, the colonial exhibits were, according to the official guide book, the “star attraction” of the 1889 exposition.¹⁹ The colonial displays at

¹² Schroeder-Gudehus, 17.

¹³ Émile Berr, “Renseignements généraux,” *Le Figaro, numéro exceptionnel*, 6 May 1889, 4. Founded as a satirical weekly in 1826, *Le Figaro* appeared irregularly until 1854. In 1866 it became Paris’ leading newspaper. Its contributors included Émile Zola, Albert Wolff, and Alphonse Karr.

¹⁴ “Coup d’oeil général,” *Le Figaro, numéro exceptionnel*, 6 May 1889, 1; Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988), 36.

¹⁵ Patrick Young, “From the Eiffel Tower to the Javanese Dancer: Envisioning Cultural Globalization at the 1889 Paris Exhibition,” *The History Teacher* 41, no. 3 (May 2008): 340.

¹⁶ Raymond Corbey, “Ethnographic Showcases: Account and Vission,” in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 96.

¹⁷ Picard, 2: 265.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2: 57.

¹⁹ S. Krakow, *Guide bleu du Figaro et du Petit Journal* (Paris: Imprimerie Chaix, 1889), 246. The author also placed the word *clou* in quotes in the original guide.

the 1889 exposition had a major role in the conversion to a more “popular, immediate, and normalized access in mass culture” to something that had been viewed as exotic and cloaked in ambiguity. During this time in French history, the majority of Europeans drew their conceptions about distant and remote areas from paintings or traveler narratives. The publication of photographs in books and newspapers, offering an unprecedented level of precision and detail, was just in its infancy during this era due to technological and economic hindrances.²⁰ One author of an article in *Le petit français illustré* wrote, “The public...has learned more in six months by travelling through a reduced version of the colonial world than what the largest books could never impart to it.” He later added, “One forgets a large part of what one has learned in books; one forgets very little of what one has seen with one’s own eyes through observation.”²¹ The exposition itself transformed the conditions of contact between Western and non-Western peoples, presenting the latter as more real and as part of Greater France, and less distant than ever before.²²

Almost all of the pre-World War I expositions in Europe paid close attention to the perceived magnetism of Arab architecture. The official guide book of the 1889 exposition fulfilled its educational duty by informing the visitors about the type of weather under which the indigenous population would feel most at ease and more likely to interact. The guide book advised guests to visit the colonial sections only on a clear and hot day with full sun. Only on a bright day would the Western eye not be offended by the exotic architectural elements and the polychromatic colors used to paint the buildings. “Vividly illuminated and with a blue sky as a

²⁰ Young, 354.

²¹ “Ce qu’on voit à l’Exposition,” *Le petit français illustré: Journal des écoliers et des écolières*, 20 July 1889, 263.

²² Young, 354.

background, these decors come alive.” The guide book also suggested that European tastes in color and architecture were more refined and advanced than those of the colonized since multi-colored facades and abrupt edges were not typical of French buildings, implying that the sparkling colors and severe architectural lines, on a cloudy or overcast day, possessed the potential to offend the visitors’ sensibilities.²³ The organizers juxtaposed this refinement, based on the notion of European tastes as modern and civilized, with traditional elements of colonial architecture in order to construct and to regulate a “controlled diversity.”²⁴ Instead of creating a cohesive Greater France through architectural education, the exposition’s organizers actually buttressed the partition between the perceived modernistic metropolitan French and the traditional indigenous peoples.

Daily newspapers played their part in informing the French public about those who lived in the exposition’s pavilions whilst continuing the Othering of the exposition’s participants. An article in *Le Figaro* commented on the seven families inhabiting the Congolese village. “They are darker than those from Senegal. It seems to be very apparent that these subjects were handpicked to come to the exposition because all of them were beautiful and strong.”²⁵ With the intention that the viewing public could associate themselves with these colonial subjects because of their beauty and strength, the organizers selected these Congolese families to reinforce the concept of a strong and united Greater France. This article suggested that the organizers only desired to show the visiting public the best representatives of the empire’s black inhabitants whom the organizers handpicked and who represented a certain colonial imagination.

²³ Krakow. 246.

²⁴ Paul Rabinow, “France in Morocco: Technocosmopolitanism and Middling Modernism,” *Assemblage* No. 17 (April 1992): 55.

²⁵ Jules Richard, “Villages exotiques,” *Le Figaro, numéro exceptionnel*, 6 May 1889, 3.

Despite the Third Republic's anti-clericalism, missionaries normally held positive views of Western culture. William Cohen has argued that, despite the local conflicts between missionaries and colonial officials in the colonies, missionaries worked with colonial officials because they viewed imperialism as a system in which they could operate to evangelize the world. This led missionaries to "believe that certain values could be best spread through the expansion of European political power."²⁶ J. P. Daughton, however, has argued that the majority of Catholic missionaries did not view themselves as "agents of imperial expansion," but, in reality, "worried that French colonialism...would spell the end of evangelizing."²⁷ An article in *Le Temps* described a group of ten Kanaks from New Caledonia at the exposition belonging to the black and yellow races, all of whom spoke French thanks to the efforts of missionaries.²⁸ Not only did the newspaper article tout the efforts of French missionaries as agents of the civilizing mission, the article suggested to its readership that those whom the exposition's organizers arranged to come to France had been assimilated to some degree into Greater France through the acquisition of the colonizer's language. Speaking French facilitated elementary communication between the Kanaks and those with whom they came into contact, whether they were the visiting public or the organizers of the exposition. It also attempted to assuage any notion of fear and trepidation visitors may have had about encountering colonial subjects since they could understand the Kanaks.

²⁶ William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Responses to Blacks, 1530-1880* (1980; repr., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 277-8.

²⁷ J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 52.

²⁸ "Chronique de l'Exposition," *Le Temps*, 5 May 1889, 3. Published from April 1861 until 1942, *Le Temps*, from its first printing, declared itself to be a general newspaper without any ambition of political affiliation. Its early years were marked by a low readership, mainly due to its editor's pro-Protestant stance. However, circulation slowly grew, and *Le Temps* became the most important newspaper of the Third Republic.

The 1889 exposition built upon popular cultural sources of Orientalism and exoticism.²⁹ Edward Said defines Orientalism as a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”³⁰ Dana Hale’s analysis of commercial products reveals how trademarks “perpetuated an exotic view of Africans and Asians already familiar to the French populace.”³¹ Replicated mosques, cafes, markets, temples, and obelisks afforded visitors the opportunity to take a journey to an exotic and foreign land without ever leaving France.³² This led to the display of the world both as an exhibit and as an object.³³ This objectification engendered much curiosity about those on display. One newspaper article stated that the exposition became “all the more curious due to having specimens of diverse races, Asians or Africans, concentrated in the same location.”³⁴ In an article in *Le Temps*, the author wrote about the Kabyle buildings being “an exact copy” of villages in North Africa. Even though the reconstruction of North African buildings showed the viewing public the architecture of the region, the author later described the pavilions as a “barbarous layover,”³⁵ implying the less than civilized nature not only of the exposition’s indigenous participants, but also of the region’s inhabitants in general. While offering the visitors the opportunity to experience colonial culture in an attempt to construct a Greater France, the exposition’s organizers concomitantly reinforced perceptions of Orientalism and exoticism as less civilized than European culture.

²⁹ Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 54.

³⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 3.

³¹ Dana Hale, “French Images of Race on Product Trademarks during the Third Republic,” in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, ed. Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 131.

³² Aram A. Yengoyan, “Culture, Ideology, and World’s Fairs: Colonizer and Colonized in Comparative Perspectives,” *European Contributions to American Studies* 27 (January 1994): 69.

³³ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 161-79.

³⁴ “L’Exposition universelle,” *Le Constitutionnel*, 3 May 1889, 2.

³⁵ Paul Bourde, “Chronique de l’Exposition,” *Le Temps*, 11 May 1889, 2.

The illusion of travel was one way in which the exposition's organizers ventured to entertain the visitors. For the vast majority of the French populace, a visit to the exposition was the closest they would ever get to Africa or to Asia. No longer was it necessary to embark on a long, tiring, and expensive journey in order to see an exotic locale. A particular pavilion's success could be rated on its ability "to capture and recapitulate the experience of travel."³⁶ Even the colonial greenhouses, containing palm trees, orchids, and ferns, completed the "illusion of [a] voyage to the countries of the sun."³⁷ As Herman Lebovics has argued, "wrapping native cultures within the high culture of European France" legitimized colonial cultures "in the eyes of Europeans by relating them to European icons."³⁸ This legitimacy infused the pavilions with a supposed authenticity, which the organizers used to create a preformulated and comfortable area in which the viewing public could observe the world around them without ever leaving their backyard. An article in *Le Temps* reinforced this alleged authenticity. "You can abandon yourself without worry in the pleasure that [the buildings] give you. What you have before your eyes are not counterfeits."³⁹

Therefore, the pavilion's architects went to great efforts to reproduce an idealized version of each of the colonies on display. The main architect of the Algerian section, Albert Ballu, spent five years in Algeria drawing and sketching the main historical monuments of Arab architecture.⁴⁰ The detailed and meticulous recreation of indigenous buildings and gardens, including a Kabyle house, an artisanal well, tents, and a Moorish café, transported visitors across

³⁶ Edward N. Kaufman, "The Architectural Museum from World's Fair to Restoration Village," *Assemblage* No. 9 (June 1989): 22.

³⁷ Krakow, 263.

³⁸ Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 57.

³⁹ Paul Bourde, "Chronique de l'Exposition," *Le Temps*, 11 May 1889, 2.

⁴⁰ Picard, 2: 159-60.

the Mediterranean Sea without having to leave the Hexagon.⁴¹ The construction of a Kabyle house is significant in that it was not an Arab house. French authorities viewed Arabs as aggressive and unruly, but viewed Berbers as hard-working, passive, and more assimilable to French ways.⁴² The pavilion's exterior illusorily charmed the visiting public while the interior sought to educate it through an economically diverse display of goods and products. Believing that wine was a sign of a civilized culture, Algerian farmers catered to this characteristic. Educating the visitors about alternative sources for wine led to Algerian viticulture composing the largest exhibit within the pavilion, an industry that had been unaffected by phylloxera. Over 1,600 wine producers displayed their goods at the exposition,⁴³ and the Official Guide predicted that within twenty-five years, Algeria would become the world's principal wine supplier.⁴⁴

As with the Algerian exhibit, the scrupulous construction of colorful Tunisian buildings at the exposition aimed to educate the public further about the empire and to transport the viewing public, most of whom would never have the opportunity of traveling to the empire, into a world of exotic beauty. The Tunisian exhibit contained several buildings, including a central palace, a building housing Tunisian flora and fauna, a bazaar, various boutiques, and a café. The architect of the main palace did not draw his inspiration from just one building, but from many. Each of the façades contained elements from at least two buildings, and the architect did not duplicate any feature.⁴⁵ One newspaper article hailed the Tunisian exhibit, with its indigenous

⁴¹ Ibid., 2: 22.

⁴² Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 30.

⁴³ Ibid., 2: 162.

⁴⁴ Krakow, 249.

⁴⁵ Picard, 2: 162-3.

merchants and artisans working under the “eyes of the public,” as “one of the most marvelous attractions of the Universal Exposition of 1889.”⁴⁶

The organizers also used the notion of Orientalism in the Indochinese exhibit. The Cochinchinese pavilion did not replicate any extant building in the colony, but was an amalgamation of the indigenous architectural styles. Temples and autochthonous houses offered the inspiration for this building. Inside the pavilion nineteen Annamite artists, brought to Paris specifically to decorate the inside, executed colorful and typical representations of indigenous scenes. However, when Alfred Picard described their artisanship in the General Report, he reinforced the French assumptions about racial superiority. “Their imagination, their steadiness of hand, and their ability to work quickly were truly surprising.”⁴⁷ This statement highlighted the prevailing idea that only Western people were able to produce quality work at an acceptable rate in order to complete a task within the amount of time given. Georges Marx, the facilitator of the Annamite Theatre’s visit to Paris,⁴⁸ stereotyped its performers by saying, “The Annamites are too lazy.”⁴⁹ One newspaper article also commented on their ability to work. “These brave workers have a modest, exacting, and tenacious work ethic that would not embarrass our [French] workers, but which draws the admiration of the French public.”⁵⁰ The Annamite artists had to demonstrate that their abilities were equal to those of Western artists in order to gain praise and recognition from their colonizers.

⁴⁶ “La Tunisie à Paris,” *L’Universelle Exposition de 1889 illustrée*, 15 April 1888, 3.

⁴⁷ Picard, 2: 166, 168.

⁴⁸ Annegret Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 186.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Alain Ruscio, *Le credo de l’homme blanc: regards coloniaux français au XIXe-XXe siècles* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2002), 66.

⁵⁰ Jules Richard, “Ouvriers cochinchinois,” *Le Figaro, numéro exceptionnel*, 6 May 1889, 3.

These statements suggest that, regardless of talent, Europeans deemed non-Western peoples intellectually inferior, and these sources, in line with the organizers' goals to increase interest in the empire, attempt to counter these prejudices through education. The Cambodian pavilion, modeled on the ancient temple of Angkor Wat, stood to the right of the Cochinchinese pavilion. One newspaper article commented that this "was perhaps the most interesting of all the exotic village models."⁵¹ Picard recounted how Cambodia possessed numerous ancient monuments, then standing in ruins, which "testified to a very advanced ancient civilization and demonstrated the power of an extinct race that populated the region long ago."⁵² Picard's admission that a non-Western society was capable of constructing a "civilization" contradicted the mainstream Social Darwinian philosophy of the era in which racial hierarchy justified colonial expansion and domination under the pretext of development and progress.

While a major focus of the exposition's organizers centered on architecture and the illusion of travel to create a Greater France, the element of entertainment could not be overlooked. In addition to the exotic villages, the organizers used shows to enhance the entertainment aspect of the exposition. The special events – ceremonies, spectacles, celebrations – and the areas of interaction and consumption allowed the viewing public to engage actively with the idealized colonial subjects on display and to become more than just receptacles of a republican colonial discourse. These exchanges between the predominantly French audience and the colonized subjects expanded the former's knowledge and comprehension of the French empire, and subjected the latter to the perceived beneficial influence of the French way of life.⁵³

⁵¹ Jules Richard, "Villages exotiques," *Le Figaro, numéro exceptionnel*, 6 May 1889, 3.

⁵² Picard, 2: 168.

⁵³ Van Troi Tran, "L'Éphémère dans l'éphémère: La domestication des colonies à l'Exposition universelle de 1889," *Ethnologies* 29, nos. 1-2 (2007): 144, 146.

Alongside the Cambodian pavilion was an Annamite theatre, able to seat five hundred people. Several times a day, an indigenous troop, which had been brought from Annam complete with costumes, decorations, and accessories, performed traditional shows.⁵⁴ This group was part of the entertainment aspect of the exposition, used to attract a larger number of visitors to the exposition. So that the viewing public would comprehend what was happening on stage, the exposition's organizers arranged to have librettos written in French sold inside the theatre explaining the stage action. Men performed all of the roles, harkening back to the male-dominated theatre of ancient Greece. However, since the French "civilization demanded [that] women" be on stage, twenty female Tonkinese dancers accompanied the troop. At night, thanks to the use of electricity, the theatre produced a "diabolical effect on the crowd, and would be a grand success."⁵⁵

The spatial distribution of the non-white races on and around the exposition demonstrated the organizer's worldview of racial hierarchy and reinforced the entertainment element of the colonial exhibits. The white and Western races inhabited the buildings housing the artistic and technical exhibits. The organizers segregated the non-white races in a series of "mock foreign settings" according to their race's hierarchical rank.⁵⁶ Gustave Le Bon's study of skull volumes and Paul Broca's study of brain weights influenced the organizers' construction of the colonial section. These racial sociologists claimed that races with larger skull volume and heavier brains possessed more abilities, thus placing them higher than races with smaller skull volumes and lighter brains.⁵⁷ By separating the colonial subjects from the white and Western races, the

⁵⁴ Picard, 2: 171-2.

⁵⁵ Jules Richard, "Théâtre annamite," *Le Figaro, numéro exceptionnel*, 6 May 1889, 3.

⁵⁶ Berthier-Folgar, 137.

⁵⁷ Cohen, 230.

organizers attempted to guarantee that the foreign cultures did not threaten those of the colonizing nations. While virtually eliminating the geographic distance between the viewing public and the colonies, the colonial exhibits accentuated the cultural differences between them.⁵⁸ The organizers' effort to display an idyllic, pastoral vision of colonial life removed any perceived danger on the part of the visitors and maintained a distance between them which augmented the entertainment feature.

The organizers of the 1889 exposition, cognizant of the disgraceful standing in which France found itself during the final quarter of the nineteenth century and of France's desire to recapture its worldwide prestige, set out to make the Paris exposition one of the ways in which France endeavored to regain its reputation as a leader on the world stage. The exigency of recovering France's former glory was amalgamated with education and entertainment, found not only within the industrial and architectural elements of the exposition, but also within the colonial section, in order to teach the visiting public about French industrialization and *mise en valeur* and to entrance the visitors sensationally so that the illusion of a voyage around the world would have been plausible.

By exposing the French public to a carefully selected group of the empire's indigenous inhabitants and by offering visitors the illusion of traveling to the colonies, the exposition's organizers attempted to create the notion of a Greater France. The displayed and sanitized unity between the metropole and the empire, in the eyes of the exposition's organizers, would help France to regain its former place as a world power and would persuade the French people of the importance of maintaining the colonies. Despite the financial success of the 1889 exposition, the

⁵⁸ Young, 339.

French public's attitude toward the French empire did not alter much until after the outbreak of World War One.⁵⁹ Therefore, the creation of a Greater France was far from realized.

⁵⁹ C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914-1918." *The Historical Journal* 17, no. 1 (March 1974): 106.

MARSEILLE 1906

After having organized the colonial section of the 1900 Parisian Exposition, Jules Charles-Roux¹ proposed the creation of an exposition completely dedicated to the French colonies to the Municipal Council of Marseille in 1902.² On 1 March 1904 a presidential decree named Charles-Roux the General Commissioner of the Colonial Exposition and President of the Marseille Colonial Congress and appointed Dr. Édouard Heckel³ as Deputy General Commissioner.⁴ Charles-Roux, Heckel, and the other organizers of the 1906 Marseille Colonial Exposition hoped to instill the exposition's visitors with a sense of a Greater France through education and entertainment. The fusion of education and entertainment rendered the exposition a "vast, luminous, and useful activity" for the French public and, concomitantly, a practical way to teach the French about the utility of expanding "the movement of trade between the metropole and its colonial domain."⁵

The 1906 Marseille exposition's organizers broadened the colonial discourse in two ways. First, through their efforts to educate the French public about the empire in general, and, more specifically, about the economic benefits of the empire, the organizers showcased the empire's

¹ The son of a soap manufacturer, Charles-Roux modernized his father's soap factory upon his death. He championed economic liberalism and imperial expansion, especially in Tunisia, Dahomey, and Madagascar. He was the president of the Marseille Geographic Society and founded several colonial committees. See Isabelle Aillaud, ed., *Jules Charles-Roux: Le grand Marseillais de Paris* (Rennes: Éditions Marines, 2004).

² Laurent Morando, "Les expositions coloniales nationales de Marseille en 1906 et 1922: Manifestations locales ou nationales?" *Provence Historique* 54, no. 216 (April 2004): 230-1.

³ Trained as a pharmacist, Heckel worked in the French Antilles and in New Caledonia. He became director of the Natural History Museum in Marseille and founded the Colonial Institute and Colonial Museum, as well as starting a publication entitled *Annales du Musée Colonial*. See Georges J. Aillaud, "Édouard Heckel, un savant organisateur: De la botanique appliquée à l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906," *Provence Historique* 43, no. 172 (1993): 153-155.

⁴ *Guide officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906), 12-3.

⁵ "L'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille," in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie et d'Études Coloniales de Marseille, Tome Trentième - 1906* (Marseille: Société de Géographie de Marseille, 1907), 206. Hereafter as *BSG 1906*.

mise en valeur. By educating the French public about the potential economic benefits France could reap from its empire, the organizers essayed to alleviate some of the apathy residing within the visitors' mindset. Second, they set out to deepen the trade relations between metropolitan France and its colonies. Through a promotion of greater trade relations between the metropole and the colonies, the exposition's organizers attempted to highlight the unity needed to engender the exposition's visitors with a feeling of Greater France. The organizers entertained the visitors by offering them the opportunity to journey to the colonies and back again within one afternoon. The emphasis on education and entertainment parallels that of earlier expositions, but the prominence accorded to trade highlights the singular position of Marseille, not only within the metropolitan sphere, but also within the colonial one. An understanding of the role of Marseille, therefore, is a prerequisite to comprehending the main aspirations of the exposition's organizers and how they contributed to the construction of Greater France.

In 1903 the General Council of the Department of the Bouches-du-Rhône proclaimed that the era of colonial expositions had begun with the 1902 exposition in Hanoi and that the future sites should alternate between France's principal colonies and cities in the metropole. In order to showcase the city's imperial character, the departmental General Council deemed its headquarters, Marseille, to be the ideal location for the first metropolitan colonial exposition.⁶ The proposal of varying the location of upcoming expositions suggests that the General Council of the Department of the Bouches-du-Rhône believed metropolitan and colonial cities equally worthy and qualified of hosting these expositions.

⁶ "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille en 1906," in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie et d'Études Coloniales de Marseille, Tome Vingt-Huitième - 1903* (Marseille: Société de Géographie de Marseille, 1903), 439. Hereafter as *BSG 1903*.

The choice of Marseille as the site of the first colonial exposition brought to light a potential challenge. The French Colonial Union, a private organization founded in 1893 which assembled representatives from more than four hundred domestic companies with economic interests in the empire,⁷ inveighed against the organizers of the 1900 Paris exposition in its biweekly publication *La Quinzaine coloniale*, claiming they excessively concerned themselves with the entertainment element and did not provide the colonies with a sufficient amount of space to display their products effectively. The colonial exhibitors complained about the acute disproportion between the insufficient area afforded to the colonies and the French government's colossal effort to construct a colonial empire over the past twenty-five years. Joseph Chailley-Bert, founder of the French Colonial Union, complained about the image portrayed of the French empire since more than twenty other nations also participated in the 1900 Paris exposition. He felt that the inadequate space afforded to the French empire hindered an accurate portrayal and failed to demonstrate how the empire had grown recently.⁸ Because of this disparity, these colonial exhibitors unanimously called for a "genuine colonial exposition," intent on demonstrating what the colonies were and what they were worth and on encapsulating the colonial effort of the Third Republic.⁹

The exposition's organizers, under the aegis of Jules Charles-Roux, hoping to avoid a repeat of the Parisian embarrassment by directly addressing the exhibitors' concerns, dedicated an area that was five times larger than that of the 1900 Parisian exposition to the colonies, allowing them "to set up and to spread out at their leisure, far enough apart so that they do not

⁷ Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 101; Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and in West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 42.

⁸ William Schneider, "The Colonies at the 1900 World Fair," *History Today*, May 1981, 36.

⁹ "L'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille," in *BSG 1906*, 225.

disturb one another, but close enough, however, to allow visitors to see them all at a glance.”¹⁰

Despite the vast range of architectural styles displayed, the organizers hoped this “glance” would instill an impression of unity into the visitors’ mindset. This unity underpinned the concept of Greater France, not only for the visiting public, but also for the colonial subjects who worked in the exhibits. The public could witness the organizers’ ideal of cohesion between the metropole and the empire, while the colonial subjects could interact with their metropolitan analogues.

The local Geographical Society, calling Marseille the “Colonial Metropole,” claimed the Mediterranean port city was not only the premier maritime port in France, but the archetypal colonial city.¹¹ One newspaper article claimed it was the “link between the metropole and the majority of the colonies.”¹² Its location and its history of trade in the Levant¹³ equally contributed to its citizens’ love of adventure, economic initiative, and commercial liberty.

Not only due to its close ties with all of [France’s] large colonies was Marseille worthy of serving as the theatre for a colonial exposition; it was worthy also due to its sparkling sky, under which men, plants, and exotic things do not appear out of place...and due to the burning heat of the summer through which we just lived and which made the Phoenician city, for several months, a completely colonial place.¹⁴

The idea that Marseille’s climate mirrored that of the tropical French colonies imbued the port city with the same exoticism perceived in the empire. Viewing colonial subjects, exotic things, and indigenous flora as like entities ranked nature and humans equally, thus rendering them

¹⁰ Charles-Roux, “Séance d’inauguration,” in *BSG 1906*, 226.

¹¹ “L’Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille en 1906,” in *BSG 1903*, 439.

¹² Fernand Bournon, “L’Exposition coloniale de Marseille,” *Journal des débats*, 18 February 1906, 3.

¹³ Following the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Choiseul and Louis XVI wanted to restore Marseille to its erstwhile position as the main French port vis-à-vis the Eastern Mediterranean. By the eve of the French Revolution, Marseille had recaptured its status as France’s principal trading hub with the Levant, employing five hundred trading vessels that brought in over fifty-two million Francs in revenue. Louis Vignon, *L’Expansion de la France* (Paris: Hachette, 1892), 90.

¹⁴ Maurice Zimmermann, “L’exposition coloniale et le congrès colonial de Marseille,” *Annales de Géographie*, vol. 15, 1906, 463.

mutually exploitable under the pretext of *mise en valeur*. The city would become “an exotic explosion of peoples and dwellings, a vehicle to transport the mind [of the visitor] from routine and hardship.”¹⁵ The French Colonial Union argued that in no other French city could a higher degree of colonial spirit be found.

Its blue sky, the brightness of its sun, the screen of mountains that blocks its terrestrial horizon, the sea that bathes it, an open door toward infinity, the hum of activity on its streets, the joy of life one breathes there, all of this is already exotic and French at the same time, and what’s more, all of this is already colonial.¹⁶

Analogous to the 1889 Parisian Universal Exposition, weather played a noteworthy role in the illusion of travel. Visitors to the exposition, accustomed to a northern European climate, could imagine themselves transported to a sunny, distant land whilst watching colonial subjects performing their daily routines and appearing to feel right at home. Also, Depincé’s combination of “exotic and French” further supported the perceived necessity to unite France with its colonies to construct Greater France. The exposition’s exoticism offered something fresh and stimulating, while its Frenchness reflected its controlled and subjugated nature.

In his inaugural address to the members of the 1906 Marseille Colonial Congress, Jules Charles-Roux argued that the French empire constituted more than just the opportunity to increase France’s material interests. The empire, he said, “constitutes a portion of the moral grandeur of France, one of the essential elements of our influence in the world.”¹⁷ The leader of the Colonial Exposition, conscious of the unremitting need to regain France’s former world status, emphasized the empire’s significance in establishing Greater France. Later in his speech,

¹⁵ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 84.

¹⁶ Charles Depincé, “Une belle manifestation coloniale,” *La Quinzaine coloniale*, 25 April 1906, 226. Charles Depincé was the General Secretary and General Reporter of the Colonial Congress of Marseille.

¹⁷ Jules Charles-Roux, “Séance d’inauguration,” *Compte Rendu des Travaux du Congrès Colonial de Marseille, Tome I* (Paris: Librairie Maritime et Coloniale, 1908), 19.

Charles-Roux asserted that a sense of cultural and political supremacy underpinned this influence. “We claim to be the representatives of a superior civilization, and it is upon this superiority that we base our claims as a colonial power.”¹⁸

In his speech during the inaugural ceremonies, Georges Mastier, the prefect of the Department of the Bouches-du-Rhône, said, “France, by becoming better acquainted with its colonies, and the colonies, by visiting the metropole, will find new grounds of cohesion, of reciprocal trust, and of deep and patriotic union on this occasion.”¹⁹ Mastier’s statement alludes to his awareness of the concept of Greater France, and suggests that the exposition could offer the chance for France and its empire to expand their knowledge of one another, leading to a deeper bond between them.

Convinced of Marseille’s place as the quintessential colonial city, the Municipal Council of Marseille, the Chamber of Commerce of Marseille, and the General Council of the department contributed some of the financial resources required to bring the exposition to fruition.²⁰ These local government organizations, fully cognizant of their role in promoting Marseille as the exemplary colonial city, joined forces under the leadership of Jules Charles-Roux to ensure the successful planning of a colonial exposition. They also wanted to demonstrate that a provincial city was capable of planning, producing, and hosting a large-scale event without the assistance of Paris. No Parisian official attended the inauguration of the exposition, claiming that the legislative elections followed too quickly after the opening. But the true reason apparently stemmed from a “certain disdain with the Marseille initiative” and the trepidation of associating

¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁹ Jules Charles-Roux, *Rapport general, Exposition coloniale nationale de Marseille 15 avril-18 novembre 1906* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1907), 9.

²⁰ Depincé, 225.

with a major provincial event whose success was not guaranteed.²¹ If the officials lent their support to it and the exposition failed, they feared not being elected.

Contrasting with the 1889 exposition in Paris, to which the French state contributed almost half of the budget, the majority of the requisite financial assistance needed to plan, to design, and to construct the 1906 Marseille exposition had to stem from other sources.²² The 1.5 million Francs pledged by local metropolitan organizations, two state and one private,²³ did not come close to covering the overall projected budget of approximately six million Francs. The balance, according to the minutes of a 1903 meeting of the Municipal Council of Marseille, would have to be subsidized by the colonial exhibitors and by an issuance of bonds available to the general public from the Colonial Ministry and the Finance Ministry.²⁴ The colonial budgets of Algeria, Tunisia, and French West Africa would each contribute 400,000 Francs, and that of Madagascar would contribute 250,000 Francs.²⁵ If the vast majority of the funds to construct the exposition stemmed from the colonies, the French public would see that the work being done in the empire benefited the French state.

The exposition's organizers wanted to highlight the extraordinary economic development that France had fostered in its empire.²⁶ In contrast to the 1889 Parisian colonial exhibits, which employed the colonial displays to educate and to entertain the public, the Marseille pavilions manipulated the colonial displays to educate the French public about the economic benefits

²¹ Morando, 232-3.

²² Morando, 232.

²³ The General Council of the Department of the Bouches-du-Rhône contributed 250,000 Francs. The Marseille Chamber of Commerce contributed 250,000 Francs. The City of Marseille contributed one million Francs. "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille en 1906," in *BSG 1903*, 440.

²⁴ "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille en 1906," in *BSG 1903*, 439.

²⁵ Bournon, 3.

²⁶ "L'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille," in *BSG 1906*, 206.

France could reap from maintaining an empire. The diseases affecting the wine and silk industries during the last decades of the nineteenth century caused a shift toward the French empire for economic growth.²⁷ Algerian winemakers, untouched by phylloxera, increased their production tenfold between 1870 and 1890 and came to represent ten percent of French production in 1890.²⁸ This *mise en valeur* of the empire, however, did not emerge without consequences. Winemakers in Algerian were, in reality, French colonists who had expropriated the Algerians' land, consigning the indigenous population to the perimeter of its own country.²⁹ The combination of disease and less expensive Asian-imported silk proved catastrophic for silkworm growers and weavers, resulting in the loss of many jobs, especially in southern France.³⁰ The lack of information regarding the land grab and the loss of metropolitan jobs maintained the sanitized and idyllic version of the empire that the exposition's organizers wished to display. Parallel to the sanitized North African pavilions, the organizers offered a pastoral and idyllic vision of sub-Saharan Africa as well. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, French West Africa suffered from war, famine, and a continued slave trade between tribes. The recent French conquest of Western Soudan added to the region's destabilized nature, and the French military tolerated the inter-tribe slave trade for political reasons.³¹ The exposition's organizers consciously chose to exclude these scenes of strife and war in order to display a sanitized version of France's empire.

²⁷ Rondo Cameron, *The Evolution of International Business: France and the Economic Development of Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 70-1.

²⁸ Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 60.

²⁹ Aldrich, 28; Jeremy D. Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, 3rd ed., (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 132.

³⁰ Sowerwine, 60.

³¹ Conklin, 30.

The organizers used the exposition's Grand Palace to showcase Marseille's progress in various industries. Domestic producers of flour, soap, oils, sugar, foodstuffs, and chemical products displayed their goods at the exposition. These companies did not solely manufacture goods for domestic consumption. Partnering with shipping companies based in Marseille, these producers exported their products to the French colonies.³² In the five years prior to the exposition, colonial imports increased from 400 million Francs in 1901 to 453 million Francs in 1905. Exports to the colonies also increased over the same period from 510 million Francs to 585 million Francs.³³

If the visiting public saw the colonies as financially beneficial to France, the indifferent nature of the French public might have shifted to one of acceptance at worst and enthusiastic support at best. The organizers included a few celebrations and nighttime festivities for entertainment purposes, but these aspects of previous expositions did not have the same weight during this exposition. No longer were the colonies solely "slices of a different humanity" to be viewed collectively, but emerged as centers of economic activity between the metropole and the colonies that could accommodate the *mise en valeur* that the French state valued so highly.³⁴ It was the organizers' responsibility to portray a "faithful expression of the current economic life" of the French empire.³⁵ The organizers impressed upon the exhibitors that the colonial pavilions had "better and more important things to do than just entertain the public." They were to be the

³² Aimé Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille de son commerce et de ses industries* (Marseille: Typographie et Lithographie Ant. GED, 1907), 376-7.

³³ "Le commerce extérieur de la France et ses colonies françaises," *La Quinzaine coloniale*, 25 October 1906, 596.

³⁴ Depincé, 227.

³⁵ Zimmermann, 464.

most vivid, the most animated, and, more importantly, the most educative that visitors could have imagined.³⁶

In his speech during the inaugural ceremony, Jules Charles-Roux proclaimed, “The new France had not shied away from any sacrifice in order to demonstrate to the metropole the ever-growing role that overseas France plays in our commercial trade.”³⁷ A successful exposition should result in “an increase in trade transactions between the metropole and its colonial domain.” Charles-Roux believed the exposition attained its double purpose in part because the colonial exhibits “were inhabited by natives living their daily lives and carrying out their various trades under the eyes of the public.”³⁸ By displaying both the indigenous peoples and their goods, the French public could learn about colonial cultures and the potential fiscal benefits for France. The exposition emerged as the point of departure for more consistent and straightforward commercial relations between France and its colonies, as well as supplying a more precise notion of the resources available in the colonies to French industry and commerce.³⁹

For all the pomp surrounding the newest additions to the French empire, the organizers did not afford equal status to the older colonies, including French India, Réunion, the Antilles, Guyana, and the Congo. Seeing that one of the main goals of the exposition was economic education, the organizers neglected those regions that they considered to be “in decline” or “behind” because they were no longer economically successful. The organizers situated these colonies’ pavilions away from the majority of the colonial pavilions.⁴⁰ Their marginalization

³⁶ Depincé, 227.

³⁷ Speech quoted in Depincé, 230.

³⁸ Jules Charles-Roux, “La clôture de l’Exposition coloniale de Marseille,” *La Quinzaine coloniale*, 25 November 1906, 669.

³⁹ Bournon, 3.

⁴⁰ Zimmermann, 464.

during the event can be attributed to the alleged lack of future economic gain or profit to the metropole and to the lack of geographic expansion possible in these areas. If these colonies did not contribute to the future fiscal growth of France, the organizers felt there was no need to showcase them in the same light as Algeria or Indochina. These actions suggest that, while they still considered these colonies part of the French empire, the organizers believed that these areas did not symbolize fiscal triumphs and should not be placed near the more economically thriving colonies.

According to a speech Jules Charles-Roux gave, the Marseille exposition was to be “a vast, luminous, and useful hands-on activity for the general public.” One newspaper article stated that the exposition “truly merited that people come from far away to see its splendor and beauty, as well as the various teachings emanating from the powerful displays from all of [France’s] overseas possessions.”⁴¹ The emphasis on education provided the opportunity to expand both the visiting public’s familiarity with the empire and its perceived place within Greater France, and continued the momentum for universal education in the Third Republic. The Ferry laws of 1881 and 1882 decreed that “free, secular, and obligatory primary education be available to boys and girls.”⁴² In order to modernize society and to regain France’s global stature, French citizens needed to possess the knowledge that permitted them to modernize along with the State. The organizers believed this to be the exposition’s “own originality,” distinguishing it from all previous expositions and empowering it with a sense of “marked superiority.”⁴³ Educating the French public about the empire allowed the exposition’s organizers to civilize the metropolitan

⁴¹ “Ouverture de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” *Le Figaro*, 15 April 1906, 2.

⁴² Judith F. Stone, “The Republican Brotherhood: Gender and Ideology,” in *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870-1914*, ed. Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G. Fuchs, and Mary Lynn Stewart (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 52.

⁴³ Depincé, 226.

citizens. Education was one way to acculturate people “to fit into societies and cultures broader than their own” and to convince them that “these broader realms are their own.”⁴⁴ A cultured and civilized population understood and appreciated the significance of possessing an empire and supported the nation’s imperial projects, reinforcing the notion of a united Greater France.

In contrast to the 1889 Parisian exposition, during which the organizers confined the movement of the indigenous peoples to the grounds of the exposition, the organizers of the Marseille exposition chose not to restrict the colonial subjects’ mobility. The visiting public not only observed the colonial subjects within the grounds of the exposition, but those who came to Marseille to work from North Africa, Indochina, Madagascar, and French West Africa were free to explore the city and interact with the French populace. Through their daily interaction with the local population, the indigenous peoples actively, and most likely unknowingly, participated in the French government’s attempt to build a visual depiction of Greater France in which all races cohabitated peacefully. According to one newspaper article, all the “assembled races” come and go: “Arabs, Indochinese, blacks, Malagasies, etc. – a picturesque family.”⁴⁵ The notion of a “picturesque family” underpinned the concept of a Greater France in which France was the father and the colonies were its many offspring in need of tutelage. In an era awash with rhetoric about degeneration and depopulation, the family unit emerged as a major subject of political, social, and medical discourse during the Third Republic.⁴⁶ Seeing the family as a stable and united

⁴⁴ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 330-1.

⁴⁵ “Ouverture de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” *Le Figaro*, 15 April 1906, 2.

⁴⁶ Elinor A. Accampo, “Gender, Social Policy, and the Formation of the Third Republic,” in *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870-1914*, ed. Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G. Fuchs, and Mary Lynn Stewart (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 2.

entity not only countered the anxieties of the period, but extended the metaphor to the empire. A stable and united large Greater France had the potential to restore France to its former glory.

However, the exposition's organizers did not just have education as a main goal. Solely focusing on the "scientific and methodological aspect...of the exposition would result in a harsh and uninviting visit."⁴⁷ They understood that entertaining the visitors was paramount to having a successful event, and, if the exposition had an overly didactic tone, very few people would return. The organizers coordinated dragon parades, Cambodian dances, Annamite theatrical spectacles, and films depicting indigenous lifestyles. These divertissements piqued the visitors' interest in the exotic and introduced them to the "mysteries of the Far East."⁴⁸ The organizers used exoticism to lure in more visitors, thus rendering the exposition a financial success.

The exposition became the subject of many regional, national, and international press articles, which led to its popular success. The Parisian officials who initially snubbed the event eventually conceded that they had underestimated the efforts of the exposition's organizers, leading to the visit of the President of the Republic and the Minister of the Colonies in September.⁴⁹ The presidential and ministerial visit testified to the abilities of Charles-Roux, Heckel, and the rest of the exposition's organizers to plan and to administer effectively a colonial exposition without the assistance of Paris. The exposition's success also suggests a decentralization of power between a perceived monolithic Paris and provincial cities. Since Parisian officials did not participate in the event's planning and execution, Paris could no longer claim a monopoly on colonial affairs.

⁴⁷ Charles-Roux, *Rapport general*, 316.

⁴⁸ Isabelle Aillaud, "L'Exposition coloniale de 1906," in *Désirs d'ailleurs: Les expositions coloniales de Marseille 1906 et 1922* (Marseille: Éditions Alors Hord Du Temps, 2006), 100.

⁴⁹ Morando, 243.

Charles Depincé, in his account of the exposition, said, “This is a heartwarming event for all of France, in which one can find the justification and, at the same time, the reward for the required sacrifices made in order to become a great colonial power again.”⁵⁰ His concept of justification stemmed from France’s recent industrialization. The extraction of colonial raw materials, which metropolitan industries transformed into salable products and exported to France’s overseas markets for profit, benefited France. His statement demonstrates that almost four decades after the Franco-Prussian War and the formation of the Third Republic, France still possessed anxieties, stemming from its 1870 defeat, depopulation, and degeneration, about its former place among the world powers. But he considered this exposition to constitute a key step in the establishment of economic stability and in the French public’s acceptance of colonial projects. This recognition could lead the French to a fuller acceptance of Greater France.

During the exposition’s closing ceremonies, Jules Charles-Roux announced certain representatives from neighboring countries had asked French officials for colonizing lessons. This request “fully proved not only that France knew how to colonize, but that she still knows how to instruct those who claim to know more about colonization than she does.”⁵¹ This statement reaffirmed that France’s pride was still paramount to the organizers. Because other nations had inquired about the proper methods to colonize distant lands, these acts only bolstered French pride and gave the appearance that France had regained some of its former glory. According to the Geographical Society of Marseille’s annual report, the exposition “greatly

⁵⁰ Depincé, 228.

⁵¹ Charles-Roux, 669.

contributed to the popularization of [France's] colonies” and illuminated the “remarkable work accomplished in the definitive establishment of the French colonial empire.”⁵²

The exposition, lauded in the press, offered a small step toward the public's appreciation of the colonies and of what they could provide. Colonial products substituted for some crops, but also resulted in economic hardships for French farmers. But the idea of a united Greater France, despite the efforts of the State, still eluded both the administration and the majority of the French population during the first decade of the twentieth century. Not until World War One did the French people begin to appreciate the benefits of having an empire.

⁵² “L’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” in *BSG 1906*, 207.

MARSEILLE 1922

Following in the footsteps of the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris and of the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille, the 1922 Marseille Colonial Exposition continued France's quest to regain its former glory through the promotion of a cohesive empire. Paralleling the educational and entertaining aspects of the previous expositions, the display of colonial goods educated visitors about the French progress in the colonies, and the opportunity to visit each colony cover the course of an afternoon provided an entertaining aspect rivaled only by taking an overseas journey. The organizers of the 1922 exposition used colonial exhibits to further the creation of Greater France and benefited from a shift in the French public's mentality vis-à-vis the empire due to the colonial subjects' participation in the war.

In 1913 *Le Petit Marseillais* launched a press campaign calling for the city of Marseille to organize a colonial exposition every ten years to reaffirm the city's status as France's largest port, as the gateway to Muslim countries, and as the indisputable stopover for vessels leaving the Mediterranean.¹ That same year Adrien Artaud presented the Marseille Chamber of Commerce with a project for a new colonial exposition. After a successful showing in 1906, the Marseille Chamber of Commerce did not intend to compete with other French cities for the honor. Several cities, including Paris, Lyon, and Bordeaux, vied for the privilege to host the upcoming colonial exposition. To guarantee that the next colonial exposition be held in Marseille, the Marseille Chamber of Commerce swiftly approved Artaud's proposal and set the date for the exposition in

¹ Isabelle Richefort, "L'Exposition coloniale de 1922," in *Désirs d'ailleurs: Les expositions coloniales de Marseille 1906 et 1922* (Marseille: Éditions Alors Hord Du Temps, 2006), 107.

1916.² The outbreak of the World War One stymied the exposition's planning, but once the belligerents signed the armistice, Artaud took steps to relaunch his project. Some legislators proposed a Parisian exposition showcasing all the allied colonies. But those in Marseille countered this proposition by arguing that holding the exposition in Marseille "would represent a date in history not only for their ancient city, but, above all, would be a time for the whole nation...to reaffirm joyously her rebirth, her resurrection."³

Artaud portrayed Marseille as the cornerstone of the empire's administration and development.⁴ Marseille, located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, operated as both a point of entry for the colonies and a point of departure for France. The port city allowed colonial people and products to enter France, and French administrators, soldiers, and settlers to leave France for the colonies. In 1913, 14% of imports and 20% of exports passing through the port of Marseille involved the colonies. Those percentages increase in 1920 to 22.2% of imports and 40.2% of exports.⁵ With its intermediary role between the metropole and the empire and the increase in commercial traffic between the port city and the colonies, Marseille emerged as the rational and logical location for another colonial exposition. A new presidential decree set the date for the colonial exposition as 1922 and named Artaud as its general commissioner.

Soon after, Mr. Loisy, a former colonial inspector, became deputy general commissioner.⁶ When asked why planning for a new exposition was taking place in the midst of

² Laurent Morando, "Les expositions coloniales nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922: Manifestations locales ou nationales?" *Provence Historique* 54, no. 216 (April 2004): 244.

³ Charles Régismanset, *L'Exposition nationale coloniale de Marseille, 1922* (Paris: Françaises Réunies, 1921), 34.

⁴ Yaël Simpson Fletcher, "'Capital of the Colonies': Real and Imagined Boundaries between Metropole and Empire in 1920s Marseilles," in *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display, and Identity* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 139.

⁵ "Marseille Colonial," *Journal des débats*, 21 June 1922, 1.

⁶ Morando, 245.

financial, commercial, transport, and manpower crises caused by a devastating war, Loisy replied, “To enlighten the people.”⁷ He continued,

In the future, after a war in which [France] lost so many sons, to rebuild one of the grandest nations in the world, there must be the union of its children from every color. To realize this union, the French of Gaullist origin and the French from the new overseas provinces must know each other and appreciate each other....This spectacle, under the luminous sun of Provence, will show that an injured France will be healed and saved by its colonies.⁸

Loisy suggested that France was synonymous with a wounded soldier and that the colonies would nurse France back to health after the war just as the colonial soldiers aided the devastated French military during the hostilities. Loisy’s reply showed that he believed in the educational component of the exposition and in the unity of all the inhabitants of Greater France so that France could reclaim its former glory by “uniting all its children, black, yellow, or white, into an indestructible community of interests.”⁹

General Charles Mangin echoed this unity in his 1910 book, *La force noire*.

All of the French people will understand that France does not end at the Mediterranean or at the Sahara. She extends down to the Congo. She constitutes an empire even more vast than Europe, and which, within fifty years time, will have one hundred million inhabitants.¹⁰

Mangin’s concept of Greater France clearly included the French empire and its inhabitants. He argued that having a “black army” would make France “the most formidable of the adversaries.”¹¹ In order to regain France’s former global standing and in following the republican

⁷ Pierre-Louis Mallen, “L’Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille en 1922,” *Mondes et cultures* 57, no. 2/4/1 (1997): 205.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Richefort, 107.

¹⁰ Charles Mangin, *La force noire* (Paris: Hachette, 1910), 355.

¹¹ Ibid., 313.

idea of *mise en valeur*, Mangin championed the exploitation of male colonial subjects to defend France in the event of a future European conflict.

Albert Sarraut, Minister of the Colonies and a centrist within the Radical Party, believed that the French empire was indispensable for France's continued fiscal existence, was a crucial supplier of raw materials, and was an essential market for commercial products.¹² He commented that the war gave the French public a new awareness of the colonies. "Since [the end of the war], public opinion sensed, glimpsed, and perceived the colonies' vitality and richness, and [the public] discerned the value of the guarantees [the colonies] presented to the future of France."¹³ In the aftermath of World War One, the unmistakably overt indifference among the French population regarding the nation's empire shifted to cautious interest. The potential value of the colonial empire to the metropole, as both a source of raw materials and of manpower, shifted public opinion. Colonial soldiers came to the aid of a struggling and exhausted military, and colonial subjects filled in for the lack of metropolitan workers. In a speech to the Chamber of Deputies, Sarraut stated that over 500,000 soldiers and more than 180,000 workers from France's North African colonies came to France's rescue during the Great War.¹⁴ Colonial soldiers also came from French West Africa. In 1912, under the sponsorship of William Ponty, Governor General of French West Africa, the French government established an annual recruitment quota of 5,000 Africans over the next four years. Originally tasked with replacing French troops in Algeria, these soldiers defended France during World War One.¹⁵ One estimate put the number

¹² Clifford Rosenberg, "Albert Sarraut and Republican Racial Thought," *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 20, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 103.

¹³ Mallen, 206.

¹⁴ Rosenberg, 103.

¹⁵ Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and in West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 143.

of West African subjects mobilized between 1912 and 1919 at approximately 200,000.¹⁶ Both General Mangin and William Ponty believed that the Africans' loyalty and their warlike character would help France win the war.¹⁷

The war also changed the exposition's organizers' perception of the colonies and of France's role in the colonies. Artaud made a speech in which he mentioned the influence of the war upon the exposition.

The war has greatly augmented the reach of our exposition. No longer is the empire just a precious domain to exploit in its own interest and in ours...but a real Greater France which, when the day came, showed that it was resolutely with us and that we could count on its loyal assistance.¹⁸

Artaud's speech not only highlighted the republican *mise en valeur*, but suggested that the colonies themselves had advanced enough under French tutelage so they could exploit their own natural resources. Sarraut then addressed the assembled crowd. "The hour of resolute and powerful action has arrived. The great revelation of this exposition can no longer leave any Frenchman worried about his country's future inert and indifferent."¹⁹ The combination of French action and colonial loyalty testified to the administration's desire to make use of the empire to reconstruct France into one homogeneous entity with one hundred million inhabitants after its victory over the Germans.

After completing a tour of North Africa, the French president, Alexandre Millerand, visited the Marseille exposition three weeks after it opened. One newspaper article continued the illusory nature of the exposition in describing the president's three-hour visit. "The Colonial

¹⁶ Marc Michel, *L'appel à l'Afrique: Contributions et réactions à l'effort de guerre en A.O.F. 1914-1919* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1982), 407.

¹⁷ Chantal Antier, "Le recrutement dans l'empire colonial français, 1914-1918," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* No. 230 (June 2008): 26.

¹⁸ Émile Combe, "Le voyage du Président de la République," *Journal des débats*, 9 May 1922, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Exposition of Marseille recalled in the liveliest, most intelligent, and most picturesque way everything that [the president] had been able to see and retain of his long and studious voyage.”²⁰ This reporter continued the illusion that the exposition provided an authentic colonial experience. The architecture of the pavilions, the indigenous inhabitants, and the products on display ostensibly lent an air of legitimacy to the event. By equating the president’s brief stopover with his month-long tour of North Africa, the reporter claimed a day at the exposition for visitors would be synonymous with traveling to the French colonies.²¹

Marseille’s geographic and climatic resemblance to the coasts of North and West Africa upheld the illusion of traveling from France to its African colonies. The 1922 exposition, constructed on the same site as the 1906 exposition, offered visitors an atmosphere parallel to that its predecessor, one which idealized the exoticism of the overseas possessions. At the exposition’s inauguration, which “opened its doors to a substantial crowd,”²² Artaud described the colonial exhibition as an invitation to embark on an adventure. “Scattered through the gardens, covered at each point of the park with an exotic splendor, the colonial palaces compose a legendary city under the luminous sky of Provence.”²³ This shift from reality to fantasy created the illusion of a Greater France in which the colonies joined harmoniously with the metropole. An article in the newspaper *Journal des débats* also alluded to the concept of travel. “By walking through this exposition, in several hours one has the impression of taking a trip to the most diverse regions.”²⁴ The exposition’s organizers wanted this diversity to educate the visiting

²⁰ “M. Millerand à l’Exposition coloniale,” *Le Matin*, 8 May 1922, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “L’Exposition de Marseille,” *Le Figaro*, 17 April 1922, 3.

²³ Adrien Artaud, *Rapport général de l’Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille de 1922* (Marseille: Imprimerie du Sémaphore, 1924), 73.

²⁴ Édouard Payen, “L’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” *Journal des débats*, 17 April 1922, 1.

public about the French empire, while concomitantly providing a “picturesque manifestation” of Greater France.²⁵

A contemporary historical revue stated that the 1922 Colonial Exposition in Marseille offered visitors an instructive space in which they could view the comprehensive inventory of the possibilities of the French colonial empire.²⁶ In addition to the displays of colonial products, each pavilion displayed various historical documents. Neither in the expositions of the nineteenth century nor in the Marseille exposition of 1906 had a conscious effort been made to include historical artifacts.²⁷ The Chamber of Commerce pavilion, under the supervision of its archivist Joseph Fournier, showcased the documents, prints, medals, and coins germane to the history of Marseille.²⁸ Visitors visually learned about the history of Marseille by examining the picturesque items on display. According to one newspaper article, the collection of artifacts in the Chamber of Commerce pavilion paralleled the exposition’s goals by being both “instructive and pleasing to the eyes.”²⁹ The colonial territories followed suit by displaying historical documents, maps, and prints showing both indigenous history and France’s involvement in the regions. For example, the Syrian pavilion showcased not only the principal historical events of the indigenous population, but also of France’s role in Syria during the Crusades and during the reign of Napoleon III.³⁰ The addition of historical items into a colonial exposition allowed the visitors to view the extent to which these colonial regions had modernized under French tutelage. Not only had France experienced a period of transformation over the past half century, but the colonies

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Henri Froidevaux, “L’Histoire coloniale à l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* No. 39 (3è trimestre 1922): 115.

²⁷ Ibid., 144.

²⁸ Ibid., 120.

²⁹ Hubert Morand, “Le vieux Marseille à l’Exposition coloniale,” *Journal des débats*, 24 July 1922, 1.

³⁰ Froidevaux, 117, 121-2.

had also followed this modernizing route, lending credence to the efficacy of the civilizing mission. The colonial pavilions also showed cinematographic projections, allowing visitors to deepen their knowledge of the colonial possessions and to see examples of French success overseas.³¹

Throughout the thirty-four hectares of the exposition, the exposition's architects built "the most diverse and most characteristic pavilions of the architecture of each of [France's] colonies."³² The colonial pavilions offered visitors the opportunity to observe an assortment of colonial villages. These edifices constituted the main attraction at the Marseille exposition, and exotic plants, living inhabitants, straw huts, and artisan products completed the illusionary vision of the exposition's organizers. The buildings displayed a combination of various colonial architectural styles and showcased the "cultural heterogeneity of the French empire."³³ Since it was effortlessly accessible, architecture offered visitors a "quick and seemingly realistic impression of the culture and society represented."³⁴ The vast majority of French people would never have the opportunity to travel to any of the French colonies. Therefore, the expositions' organizers consciously constructed these pavilions according to their own colonial cultural concepts to teach visitors about the colonies and to offer them an entertaining journey through the empire over the course of one day.

A French journalist commented on the observational nature of the exposition. He described how the African women took precautions to maintain their privacy and only showed the viewing public their backs. This indigenous cultural tradition could suggest an unwillingness

³¹ Morando, 246.

³² "L'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille," *Journal des débats*, 17 February 1922, 3.

³³ Fletcher, 136.

³⁴ Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 1.

to participate in the exposition. Conversely, the African men gladly posed for photographs “just like we do.”³⁵ By posing for pictures, these African men unwittingly perpetuated the organizers’ goal of displaying the indigenous people to the visiting public in an idealized manner that did not reflect the conditions present in the colonies. These allegedly genuine displays of empirical cohabitation between the colonizers and the colonized never displayed scenes of conflict, pacification, or resistance.³⁶

Within the exposition’s boundaries, Indochinese artisans showcased their goods. African families engaged in their daily activities. Bedouin leaders camped in a courtyard. Each exhibition hall contained an honor guard composed of colonial men. These spaces formed points of contact and separation between the French people and the colonial subjects on display. This division reified colonial subjects as objects whilst maintaining their perceived inferiority. Instead of learning about African culture and how the colonized peoples formed part of heterogeneous Greater France, the French public unconsciously maintained the promotion of difference between themselves and the indigenous peoples through a planned system of controlled contact.³⁷ Yet, as the colonial subjects slowly adopted European ways, French authorities viewed them as possessing the “potential for evolutionary improvement, which justified the colonial act.”³⁸

One British journalist visiting the exposition commented on the West African pavilion as if it were a spectacle on display.

³⁵ F. Ronserail, “Les photographes, les noirs soudanais et l’Islam,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, 27 October 1922, 4; Fletcher, 148.

³⁶ Edward Berenson, “Making a Colonial Culture? Empire and the French Public, 1880-1940,” *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 133.

³⁷ Fletcher, 136.

³⁸ Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, “From Scientific Racism to Popular and Colonial Racism in France and the West,” in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, ed. Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Gilles Boëtsch, Éric Deroo, Sandrine Lemaire, and Charles Forsdick, trans. Teresa Bridgeman (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2008), 111.

Natives lead their ordinary, everyday life in rough tents, and perform their daily rites in a special little pavilion, set apart for their use as a mosque, perfectly unconscious of the why and wherefore of their temporary transfer to a foreign shore.³⁹

This journalist suggested that African subjects, executing their daily routines in full view of a visiting public and possessing little or no knowledge about the Greater France before their arrival, had hardly benefited from the civilizing mission begun decades earlier. The journalist recognized that the main contact between the French public and the indigenous peoples consisted of observation, not conversation and education. Through this unbalanced interaction, the visitors gained some appreciation for the indigenous spectacles meant both to educate them about Greater France and to entertain them during their colonial journey. The colonial subjects, on the other hand, returned home after the exposition to resume their daily lives.

The General Government of Algeria published its own guide book for the Algerian pavilion. Inscriptions containing extracts from President Millerand's recent speech in Algiers adorned the walls of the entry hall. One of these extracts testified to the perception of Algeria being a natural extension of France.⁴⁰ "In spite of the diversity of races that inhabit it, each day Algeria becomes more of a veritable French province with the same ideal and the same future as the metropole."⁴¹ Another extract alluded to the contribution of the Algerians to the exposition. "The exposition bears witness to the common labor and to the tight association between the colonists and the indigenous Algerians."⁴² These quotations offered visitors the chance to read how the French president purportedly felt about Algeria and how he believed in the concept of a

³⁹ W. Beldimano, "The Colonial Exhibition at Marseilles," *The Graphic*, 8 May 1922.

⁴⁰ Patrick Weil, *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789*, trans. Catherine Porter (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 207.

⁴¹ *L'Algérie à l'Exposition coloniale de Marseille* (Algiers: Gouvernement Général de l'Algérie, 1922), 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Greater France in which all inhabitants work together for the good of the metropole. Within the Algerian pavilion, visitors viewed samples of grains, wines, tobacco, and olive oils produced in the colony. Maps indicated which region manufactured which product. This form of instruction, “the least tiring for the visitors,” strove to demonstrate the economic benefits that Algeria could bring to the metropole and the extent to which the civilizing mission in Algeria had succeeded.⁴³ From the French perspective, upon its conquest, Algeria had an uncivilized population that could not be ignored and “offered no sought-after and easily exploited colonial product.”⁴⁴ Therefore, the samples on display bore witness to the visiting public of the amount of effort France poured into making the colony financially beneficial to France and into civilizing Algeria’s indigenous population in order to produce these goods.

The exposition’s General Commission organized a series of colonial congresses that accompanied the colonial exposition. Under the direction on Albert Sarraut, the four main congresses centered on colonial production, public works and transport tools, health and social benefits, and colonial organization.⁴⁵ At the inauguration of the Congress of Colonial Production, Artaud presented the need for a rational development of the colonial domain.

The Congress of Colonial Production has a goal of specifying the actual conditions of the cultivation of the principal plants composing the richness of our colonies and of the exploitation of their other resources. At the same time, [the congress] must determine the methods and processes used in modern science to ameliorate this production.⁴⁶

The exploitation of resources about which Artaud spoke continued the republican idea of *mise en valeur* that had constituted a major part of France’s civilizing mission. This development

⁴³ “L’Algérie à l’Exposition de Marseille,” *Journal des débats*, 30 July 1922, 4.

⁴⁴ Conklin, 19.

⁴⁵ Morando, 249.

⁴⁶ Artaud, 374-5.

purported to be beneficial to both the metropole and to the empire. The colonies would exchange their traditional, non-rational ways for the modern, industrial methods that France would export, and France, in turn, would gain access to all of the colonies' resources, including raw materials and indigenous labor.⁴⁷ The repetition of some of the same themes found in the 1906 Colonial Congress demonstrated that little real progress had been achieved. During the Congress of Public Works, Artaud expressed his disappointment that the colonies lacked the necessary infrastructure to carry out this exploitation sufficiently. The final two congresses highlighted two recent preoccupations within the metropole: the sanitary conditions in the colonies and the state of colonial administration. They offered the attendees an opportunity to reconcile France's civilizing mission with an enhanced fiscal development of the French colonies.⁴⁸

The 1922 Marseille exposition and its accompanying congresses offered visitors and attendees the opportunity to visit the whole of the French empire in one day, to learn about its economic benefits, and to interact with some of the colonial subjects who came to work. The number of visitors, estimated to be over three million, helped confirm the exposition's financial success.⁴⁹ The national and local press lauded the exposition's architectural representations, its pedagogical effort, the quality of art presented, and the variety of events held.⁵⁰ For the vast majority of the visitors, the colonial exhibits offered the only possibility to see colonial architecture and to sample colonial goods. In the aftermath of World War One, the exposition's organizers, through the colonial exhibits and spectacles, essayed to convince the French public of the connection between the metropole and the colonies through the creation of a Greater France.

⁴⁷ Conklin, 38-9.

⁴⁸ Morando, 250-1.

⁴⁹ Sylviane Leprun, *Le théâtre des colonies, Scénographie, acteurs et discours de l'imaginaire dans les expositions 1855-1937* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986), 173.

⁵⁰ Richefort, 125.

However, the extent to which the French public's mindset shifted from pre-war apathy to post-war acceptance is difficult to gauge.

CONCLUSION

Building on the work of Herman Lebovics and Gary Wilder, this study's analysis of the expositions' organizational meetings, the organizers' speeches, and contemporary newspaper accounts demonstrates the techniques and methods the expositions' organizers used in an effort to instill the notion of Greater France into the visiting public. The illusion of travelling to the colonies, a luxury only a few French could afford, offered the expositions' visitors the opportunity to escape from their daily lives and to experience an idealized version of the French empire. Visitors learned about the French colonies and their inhabitants visually through displays of colonial goods and of colonial subjects performing their daily tasks. Theatrical performances, parades, and the sampling of colonial cuisines entertained visitors during their afternoon journey.

During the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris, the exposition's leaders used the colonial exhibits to educate and to entertain visitors in an effort to instill the notion of Greater France. Firsthand observation of colonial peoples performing their daily tasks taught visitors about the organizers' version of indigenous lifestyles, and theatrical performances entertained them during their afternoon journey around a virtual empire. The shift in emphasis from universal to colonial during the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille stressed the concept of *mise en valeur* more than in previous expositions. In addition to education and entertainment, the exposition's organizers highlighted the economic ties between the port city of Marseille and the colonies, arguing that an increase in trade between them could benefit the French economy and reify the notion of Greater France. In the aftermath of World War One, the organizers of the 1922 Colonial Exposition in Marseille also accentuated the educational, entertaining, and economic

aspects of the empire. Building upon former expositions and the gradual shift in metropolitan mentalities regarding colonial subjects, the leaders used the potential value of colonial labor and raw materials to underscore the links between France and its empire.

The efficacy of the organizers' efforts, however, can be difficult to evaluate. On the one hand, these expositions were financial successes. The receipts from the first three days of the 1889 exposition, principally attributed to the presale of *bons*, equaled those from the first ten days of the 1878 exposition, which was a fiscal disaster.¹ These *bons* guaranteed money toward the exposition's expenses. Also, the Parisian planning commission charged with studying the city's financial contribution set out to have the pavilions constructed as cost efficiently as possible to allocate more money to the exposition's exhibits.² A combination of funds from metropolitan and colonial sources, in addition to an issuance of bonds, financed the construction of the 1906 and 1922 expositions.³

On the other hand, the extent to which the organizers were able to inculcate the French public with a colonial consciousness is difficult to assess. As Andrew and Kanya-Forstner have argued, before World War One, the vast majority of the French public remained indifferent toward colonial affairs except in times of national crisis.⁴ Even during the war, the Colonial Party proved "unable either to organize a press campaign in support of its objectives or even a

¹ Jules Richard, "L'Exposition de 1889," *Le Figaro*, 11 May 1889, 2.

² "Exposition universelle," *Le Constitutionnel*, 2 May 1889, 2.

³ "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille en 1906," in *BSG 1903*, 439-40; Laurent Morando, "Les expositions coloniales nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922: Manifestations locales ou nationales?" *Provence Historique* 54, no. 216 (April 2004): 244.

⁴ C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "The French 'Colonial Party': Its Composition, Aims and Influence, 1885-1914," *The Historical Journal* 14, no. 1 (March 1971): 101.

conference to agree on those objectives.”⁵ Without a cohesive and organized metropolitan organization to promote France’s empire, the French public’s support of colonial policies scarcely had the encouragement to evolve toward acceptance. However, once the French public witnessed how colonial soldiers helped to save France during World War One, attitudes began to shift cautiously.

Even though colonial soldiers fought in the trenches for France, which in itself could be viewed as another approach to persuade the French public of the existence of Greater France, colonial workers faced hardships and violence in the metropole. As Tyler Stovall has argued, French leaders exclusively recruited nonwhite males from the colonies to backfill the jobs that French men vacated due to being drafted. The government’s fear of the juxtaposition of “white (French) women and (colonial) men of color in the absence of white (French) men and nonwhite (colonial) women” resulted in the feminization of “wartime civilian life” and led to an increase in violence directed at colonial subjects in France.⁶ Clifford Rosenberg examines this disinclination to welcome colonial migrants as equals during interwar Paris. Concerns about Communism and fascism, many of whose adherents were foreign, engendered apprehension amongst French leaders who “feared that Communists and nationalist revolutionaries would exploit the freedoms of the metropole to prey on Paris’s growing colonial proletariat, and then export revolution overseas.”⁷ Mary Lewis also points out how colonial migrants faced inequality in Lyon and Marseille. She argues that even though most migrants did not join political

⁵ C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914-1918*,” *The Historical Journal* 17, no. 1 (March 1974): 94.

⁶ Tyler Stovall, “The Color Line behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France during the Great War,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (June 1998): 746-7.

⁷ Clifford Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 143.

organizations, “all migrants experienced the impact of political policing,” which could result in expulsion from France.⁸ These scholars demonstrate the reluctance on the part of the French population to accept colonial subjects as equals.

The desire to create Greater France was a long-standing project of the French state. In his analysis of the 1931 International Colonial Exposition, Herman Lebovics states that the event “offered visitors a magnificent celebration of the colonial achievement and the colonial future of France.”⁹ He argues that the exposition’s organizers’ intention centered on intensifying “the loyalty of the metropolitan population to the colonial empire so that the French visitors, and eventually the nation, would arrive at a deep realization that they lived in a new greater France with hometowns all over the globe.”¹⁰ However, even by 1931 the French public’s attitude toward the colonies had not reached the level desired by the state. In one interview regarding the 1931 International Colonial Exposition, Marshal Lyautey explained his reasoning for leading the exposition. He wanted the chance to educate the visiting public about racial unity in the empire and in the metropole. “The French have to become more and more convinced to the marrow of their bones that the whole nation must line up behind its colonies, and that our future lies overseas.”¹¹ This cohesion and unity was essential if the notion of Greater France was to succeed. Lebovics’ analysis demonstrates that the concept of a unified Greater France had still failed to garner widespread domestic support by 1931, and that, coupled with the expositions examined in

⁸ Mary Dewhurst Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 47.

⁹ Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹ Interview quoted in Lebovics, 53.

this study, Greater France remained a top priority for the expositions' organizers for several decades.

The exposition leaders examined in this study played their part in the “state project” referenced in the introduction.¹² French officials launched into the arduous and enormous task of creating the concept of Greater France in an attempt to unify metropolitan France with its colonial possessions, both geographically and figuratively. Colonial promoters viewed Algeria as an extension of France and felt that the colony was so vital that Algeria became legally and constitutionally part of France.¹³ France's involvement in Indochina grew in the nineteenth century as economic links brought the two regions together. The protectorate and mandate systems officially brought Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, and Lebanon under French rule, extending the French empire in North Africa and in the Near East. However, rising colonial nationalist movements and decolonization eventually shattered the tenuous vision of a fully integrated and cohesive Greater France.

One avenue of future research regarding expositions could be to examine the experience of the colonial subjects put on display. Did their experience with metropolitan French society (as opposed to French colonists) and culture motivate them to assimilate themselves more fully into the French way of life or did it inspire them to join indigenous nationalist movements that fought for independence? Another future research possibility is to examine other regional expositions – Nantes, Nancy, and Lyon – in order to establish if continuities or breaks exist amongst all the organizers of French expositions. A third opportunity would be to analyze the posters and

¹² Gary Wilder, “Framing Greater France Between the Wars,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 14, no. 2 (June 2001): 199.

¹³ Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 28.

postcards from the expositions. How do the artists portray the empire visually? From the sources examined in this thesis, these questions cannot be answered, but they do offer additional ways to analyze these expositions.

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