

GLOBALIZATION, THE CONFÉDÉRATION PAYSANNE, AND SYMBOLIC POWER

Sarah Waters
University of Leeds

If all European nations have faced the challenge of globalization, it is in France that this has produced the deepest tensions and generated the greatest resistance. Nowhere else has the question of globalization sparked such a scale of social unrest, widespread anxiety, political opposition, and intellectual self-enquiry. A number of recent studies have described the French experience of globalization in terms of a broad crisis of identity that goes beyond economic or material considerations alone. For instance, in their book *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization*, Philip Gordon and Sophie Meunier note that globalization strikes at the heart of national identity and “challenges some of the most fundamental principles and values on which the French republic was built.”¹ Some of the factors that explain why globalization constitutes a particular challenge for France are, in their view, the statist political tradition, enduring republican principles, an attachment to national culture and identity, and a desire to provide an alternative model to the United States. For Timothy Smith in *France in Crisis*, the French perceive globalization as a threat to identity because they believe that it challenges France’s distinctive social model, with its blend of strong state intervention, republican values, and a unique historical legacy. To accept any part of globalization, for the French, is to call into question a whole way of life and a political tradition with its roots in the Revolution and the ideals of the Enlightenment.² In *Globalaboney*, Michael Veseth is interested in the following puzzle: “Why do the French hate globalization so?” and he refers to the French reaction in terms of a “deep and sometimes violent animosity.”³ He locates this animosity in France’s colonial past and its self-image as a great power on the world stage. French identity, he suggests, is inextricably bound up with a belief in grandeur and in France’s civilizing mission beyond its own borders. What is clear from these differing

accounts is that globalization in France assumes a significance that transcends its economic impact alone; at stake are complex, deeply-rooted, and irreducible questions of identity. Whereas in countries with a different political tradition, globalization may be perceived as a piecemeal market reform, a matter of economics alone, in France it is experienced as a wholesale assault on identity and on the essence of Frenchness itself.

This paper looks at the case of the *Confédération paysanne* and its remarkable success within French society at a time of globalization. On the surface, the *Confédération* seems to be a force that is at odds with the political and socio-economic realities of contemporary French society. It is a marginal farmers' union representing the vested interests of a tiny and shrinking minority, and it is cut off from the concerns of the general population. It is characterized by a traditional and nostalgic outlook, one that extols the virtues of family farming, of rural village life, of agrarian traditions, and of *produits de terroir*. Moreover, the *Confédération* flies in the face of all dominant trends towards socio-economic change. Whereas France is increasingly globalized and integrated into an international economy, the *Confédération* calls for a withdrawal from international markets, a closure of borders to trade, and a massive increase in state protection. It envisages a return to a traditional closed society, one that is protected by the state and sheltered from outside influences. Yet if the *Confédération* appears anachronistic, it has not been overlooked or pushed to the margins of French society. To the contrary, at the height of its influence, the *Confédération* was hailed as a champion of the "general interest" and commanded deep-seated support across French society. Politicians from both Left and Right rallied to its side and declared their vociferous support for its "cause." Beyond its own interests, the *Confédération* seemed to speak for all ordinary French men and women, embracing their anxieties and fears and articulating them in the public sphere.

I argue that the success of the *Confédération* had little to do with conventional political or institutional patterns, but was derived instead from its symbolic power and its capacity to reinvent its own cause as one of opposition to neo-liberal globalization. I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic power" to examine the *Confédération* and to explain the reasons for its success within French society. For Bourdieu, power was not limited to formal political instruments but assumed an essential symbolic dimension as well, which involved a capacity "to produce and impose representations ... of the social world"⁴ and thereby to shape consciousness and the way people understood social reality. What interested Bourdieu was the potential of vivid images, clear rhetoric, and colorful symbols to serve the interests of those who used them to generate power within society.

The *Confédération*, I argue, used its symbolic and discursive resources to transform itself from an obscure farmers union from the Midi into a force of opposition to globalization that was waging a broad crusade against a malevolent external threat to the French nation. By redefining its enemy as neo-lib-

eral globalization, the Confédération was able to acquire new status, recognition, and popular support within French society. On the one hand, it was able to transcend narrow farming circles and reach a mass public audience, giving expression to deep-seated tensions and anxieties within French society. Indeed, its invective against globalization instantly found resonance within a population fearful and anxious about the nature of globalizing change. On the other hand, the Confédération was able to posit itself as the defender of a traditional cultural identity, laying claim to a whole symbolic repertoire linked to peasant farming. In its rhetoric, the Confédération skilfully juxtaposed peasant farming against all the perceived ills of a globalizing world, seeming to offer a refuge and a bulwark against a world of ceaseless change, a place that “stays warm however cold the winds outside.”⁵ The Confédération’s success was due to its ability to transform a narrow economic cause into a broad cultural mission and to posit itself as the defender of a fragile and precious French identity under attack from the ravages of a globalizing world.

Symbolic Power

In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu argued that power in modern societies was not confined to institutional and structural forms, but assumed an essential symbolic dimension as well. This “symbolic power” involved a capacity to produce meanings, norms, and representations in the public domain and thereby to shape consciousness and the way people understood the world: “a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force.”⁶ Here power was exerted by expressive, interpretive, and representational means that operated outside the formal mechanisms of apparatus or structure. Yet symbolic power was not a mystical or obscure disposition but a potent means of extending power within society and of fulfilling instrumental or political ends: “a power of maintaining or subverting the social order.”⁷ His intention was to expose and analyze the often hidden mechanisms behind this symbolic power and to examine the way it could be used to further vested interests: “we have to be able to discover it [power] in places where it is least visible, where it is most completely unrecognized.”⁸ For him, power in modern societies was seldom exercised as overt physical force, but was instead transmuted into a symbolic form and thereby endowed with a legitimacy that it would not otherwise have. Symbolic power was in fact an “invisible power,” all the more forceful because it was rarely recognized as such and this was a “gentle, invisible violence, unrecognized as such.”⁹

Bourdieu first developed the notion of symbolic power in the context of analyzing kinship relationships in Kabyle society, and he went on to use this

concept to examine the educational system, the political field, and gender relationships.¹⁰ For Bourdieu, the political field was the site *par excellence* in which the symbolic character of power was at stake. Politics in modern societies was characterized by “a struggle over the specifically symbolic power of making people see and believe, of predicting and prescribing, of making known and recognized.”¹¹ Through a production of slogans, metaphors, and programs, agents in the political field were continuously engaged in symbolic struggles by which they sought to construct and impose a vision of the social world, while at the same time seeking to mobilize those upon whom their power ultimately depended. Symbolic power was therefore derived partly from a capacity to express, make visible, and objectify otherwise latent and unexpressed sentiments within society, and it was the role of parties or groups to articulate these sentiments and to “name the unnameable”: “the political labor of representation ... gives the objectivity of public discourse and exemplary practice to a way or seeing or experiencing the social world that was previously relegated to the state of a practical disposition of a tacit and often confused experience.”¹² For Bourdieu, symbolic power in the political field was a means to legitimize and reinforce the institutional power held by parties or groups, by mobilizing the support of those outside the political field.

Yet this power was not arbitrary or available equally to all, but was “socially determined” and reflected existing hierarchies and class divisions in society.¹³ Bourdieu believed that symbolic power was the preserve of dominant social groups who alone possessed the means of cultural production necessary to dispose of this power. Symbolic power was a means for dominant groups to extend their power beyond the institutional realm and to acquire the support and complicity of dominated groups in society. Thus, in the political field, “political professionals” held a monopoly on symbolic power which was used to mobilize support and obtain a consensus in relation to their programs.¹⁴ Through a symbolic production, dominant groups were able to impose a representation of the social world and thereby define values, norms, and rules for the rest of society. Some commentators, however, have criticized what they see as the determinism of Bourdieu’s theoretical framework. Thus, for John Girling, the notion of symbolic power tends to predetermine social relationships and preclude the possibility of meaningful social change.¹⁵

Yet Bourdieu did recognize that under certain conditions, groups that were institutionally or politically weak could appropriate symbolic power and use it to serve their own interests. Thus, at times of profound crisis, weak or “dominated” groups could challenge the established order and impose their own representations of the social world, but this “presupposes a conjunction of critical discourse and an objective crisis, capable of disrupting the close correspondence between the incorporated structures and the objective structures which produce them.”¹⁶ In order to succeed, all political opposition required a cognitive subversion (“a conversion of the vision of the world”¹⁷) which could serve to challenge or subvert established representations or schemes of

classification. Indeed, Bourdieu suggested that symbolic power was a potent means for a group that lacked formal institutional instruments to transform its position or status within society. Through symbolic power, a group could transform the way it was perceived by itself and by others and thereby constitute itself as a group: "The categories according to which a group envisages itself and according to which it represents itself and its specific reality, contribute to the reality of this group."¹⁸

I will draw on Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power to examine the Confédération paysanne, looking at its remarkable success within French society at a time of globalization. The Confédération was an organization that lacked the political or material resources to make itself heard beyond narrow farming circles. Yet, at a time of crisis, it used its symbolic resources to redefine its purpose within French society, to assume a new and urgent mission and to mobilize widespread popular support. The Confédération manifested a kind of symbolic power or a capacity to use vivid images, colorful symbols and clear rhetoric "to transform the social world in accordance with [its] interests"¹⁹ and thereby to attain an influence and a status that it did not otherwise possess. For purposes of this discussion, I will define symbolic power in the following way: (i) a capacity to use symbolic and discursive resources to construct new meanings and representations within society; (ii) the power to articulate and make visible latent sentiments and tensions within society; (iii) a capacity to use symbolic resources to generate power and within society.

In from the Margins

Describing the victory of Pierre Poujade in the parliamentary elections of 1956, the historian Jean Touchard wrote: "For the first time in the history of France, a man finds himself brought to the first rank by his obscurity itself."²⁰ Had he lived to the present decade, Touchard might have thought that history was repeating itself. In 2007, José Bové a sheepfarmer from the Massif Central, but also activist and erstwhile leader of the Confédération paysanne, stood as a candidate in the French presidential elections. His purpose, as set out in his manifesto, was not to represent the specific interests of sheep farmers like himself, but rather to defend the "general interest" of all French citizens at a time of globalizing change. Indeed, Bové had "accepted" the invitation to stand for France's highest political office on behalf of the French people as a whole in order to protect their collective values, their distinctive social model and their well-being. France's interests, he declared, lay in a defence of social gains or "acquis" (in welfare, pensions, health, education) and in a vigorous rejection of neo-liberal globalization, seen as responsible for a whole host of social ills from unemployment, and *précarité*, to racism and social exclusion: "Il est temps de décréter l'insurrection électorale contre le libéralisme économique."²¹

Bové's decision to stand for French president was a culmination of the meteoric rise of himself and the *Confédération paysanne* during the preceding decade. Thus following the "McDonald's affair" of August 1999, this small and once obscure farmers' union had been catapulted to the center of public debates and Bové, its unofficial spokesperson was recast as a national hero. This protest attracted many weeks of sympathetic coverage from the French media and gained for the *Confédération* the support of a majority of French citizens. In a poll taken at the time of Bové's trial in June 2000, 45 percent of people said that they "supported" or "felt sympathy" for him and 51 percent said they agreed with his position on economic and financial globalization. Large majorities said they agreed with Bové on the issues of defending small farming and avoiding "la malbouffe."²² Meanwhile, the *Confédération's* "cause" inspired the vocal support of party leaders from across the political spectrum and also from intellectuals, celebrities, and trade unionists. Following José Bové's arrest, political leaders across the Left rallied to his side and called for his immediate release. In September, the French president at the time, Jacques Chirac, visited Bové and François Dufour at the Salon de l'Agriculture, where he was offered a signed copy of their book. Bové was subsequently invited to a much publicized dinner at a Parisian restaurant by the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin. This popularity was evident again in November 1999, when Bové flew to Seattle with a cargo of three hundred kilograms of Roquefort cheese, to take part in protest against the World Trade Organization. On 27 November, when Bové addressed a citizens' forum in Seattle, he received a standing ovation from its three thousand participants.²³

When José Bové and François Dufour's book *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise* was published in 2000, it was an instant bestseller, with 92,000 copies sold in the space of just a few weeks and with translations subsequently published in several languages. This book extended the growing reputation of Bové and the *Confédération* outside France, in particular, among a burgeoning movement of opposition to neo-liberal globalization. From its inception, the *Confédération* had in fact fostered international links with other farmers' associations: as a means to exert influence within international decision-making while simultaneously reinforcing the status of an otherwise marginal farmers' union. *Confédération* leaders helped to create the Coordination paysanne européenne in 1986, which aimed to represent the interests of small farmers in European policy-making. The *Confédération* was also a founding member of Via Campesina in 1993, which continues to represent farmers' associations from across the world. This movement now claims fifty million members representing sixty-nine organizations from thirty-seven different countries. If the McDonald's affair was a media coup in France, it also found resonance within public opinion across an international stage. In October 1999 an image of Bové, smiling with raised handcuffed fists, was published on the front page of a number of foreign newspapers, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Furthermore, the *Confédération's* actions found widespread sup-

port among American farming associations; it was in fact the American National Family Farming Coalition that helped to raise the bail necessary to secure Bové's release from prison. Upon his release, Bové declared outside the Montpellier courthouse, in front of an eager press audience, that his intention was to construct a new international movement which would challenge the supremacy of markets over politics. On 12 June 2000, *Business Week* ranked Bové amongst the fifty personalities most likely to shape the new Europe.

Bové's growing popularity was evident again in 2003 when 250,000 people gathered on the barren plateau of Larzac deep in south-western France during the weekend of 8 August in response to Bové's call for a mass rally against globalization. Described in the French press as "a historic turning-point" for anti-globalization protest, Larzac was intended to strike a blow against "a system of capitalist barbarism" and to reclaim democratic control over governments.²⁴ In their public statements, the Confédération identified itself with a broad and universalist project of social transformation, one that transcended the borders of France and embraced the interests of humanity itself. Their ambition was nothing less than to challenge a prevailing ideology of neo-liberalism and to affirm the rights of people before profits. They sought to reclaim the world from the grasp of greedy multinationals and to refashion it along democratic and humanist lines under the slogan "le monde n'est pas une marchandise." Moreover, its cause was not one of economic or material interests but of higher irreducible principles: "Nous nous battons pour des valeurs d'humanisme, d'équité et de solidarité."²⁵ It was a question of defending fundamental democratic values and traditions in the face of the globalizing forces that assailed them.

Following his decision to stand down as leader of the Confédération in April 2004, Bové went on to become a prominent figure in leftist politics in France (the "gauche de la gauche"), leading the movement of opposition to the European Constitutional Treaty in the run-up to the referendum of 29 May 2005. It was the success of this campaign and the subsequent victory of the "no" vote that led Bové to announce his candidacy for the French presidential elections in an interview with *Libération* in June 2006: "Je suis candidat à rassembler, à la gauche du PS, une gauche antilibérale, écologique, antiproductiviste et altermondialiste. Et je suis prêt à assumer d'aller à l'Élysée."²⁶ Bové hoped to lead a new leftist alliance bringing together all those outside the mainstream parties, including social movements, far Left parties, and trade unions who opposed neo-liberalism. However, divisions within the far Left and the failure to agree on a common candidate to represent them resulted partly in Bové's weak score in those elections (1.32 percent and tenth position out of twelve candidates). Undaunted by this setback, Bové has continued to pursue his political career. He responded to the recent collapse of world financial markets with virulent and outspoken criticism, calling for a new international tribunal to judge the "financial criminals" who were responsible.²⁷ More recently, Bové was nominated as a candidate in the 2009 European elections as part of the Europe Ecologie group.

When looking at the Confédération, we are faced with a puzzling contradiction. On the one hand, the Confédération achieved massive popular support, was widely identified with the general interest, and aligned itself with a universalist project of social transformation. On the other hand, this was, and still is, an institutionally weak organization with limited political strength, poor representation, and few material resources. The Confédération is typical of what Bourdieu would describe as a “dispossessed” group that lacks “political capital” and the structural means to exert power or influence within French society.²⁸

While the Confédération appealed in its rhetoric to the whole of French society, in reality it continues to represent only a tiny and shrinking minority on the fringes of French society. When the Confédération was created in 1987, its chief purpose was to provide representation for peasant farmers, “les paysans,” a group undergoing severe demographic and social decline and pushed to the margins of French society. Whereas in 1945 small farmers constituted 40 percent of the national population, in 1987, when the Confédération was formed, they constituted less than 3 percent. Small farmers had fallen victim to the “productivist” mode of agricultural modernization which, from the early 1960s onwards, had favored large holdings and intensive agricultural methods, and which had spelt disaster for small family farmers. The purpose of the Confédération was to provide representation specifically for small farmers, to defend their material interests, protect their incomes, and promote an alternative agricultural model. This new union was born out of a concrete material situation affecting a particular social group, and it sought to alert public opinion to the catastrophic fate confronted by small farmers and to the imminent demise of family farming within the national context, “le naufrage de la paysannerie française.”²⁹ It denounced the poor conditions faced by family farmers, their declining living standards, their crippling indebtedness, their dwindling numbers, and the collapse of their traditional way of life. From its inception, the Confédération therefore spoke not from a position of popular support or mass representation, but from one of vulnerability and marginality, representing a declining social group and lacking the “instituted political interests”³⁰ that might characterize a more powerful organization.

The Confédération occupies a marginal position in the “political field” as a dissident leftist union on the fringes of a powerful agricultural lobby. From the outset, the Confédération was marred by “isolation and financial crisis”³¹ and lacked the formal means to influence government policy or make itself heard. In 1986, the French government’s new agricultural minister, François Guillaume, introduced a system of majority representation for farming unions, which meant that only the larger, more representative unions were granted national recognition and by thus public funding and inclusion in policy-making processes. The Confédération, from the outset, was relegated to a secondary role and was denied national status and recognition. It was and still is overshadowed by the dominant farmers’ union, the FNSEA, which continues to represent the majority of French farmers and enjoys a close relationship with political power

and a role of “co-gestion” in the formulation of government policy. In the 1989 Chamber of Agriculture elections, two years after the Confédération’s creation, it gained 18 percent of the votes of French farmers, against 64 percent gained by the FNSEA. In 2001, when it was at the height of its popular influence, the Confédération paysanne’s support rose to 27 percent in the Chamber elections, against 52 percent for the FNSEA. In the wake of the most recent presidential elections and Bové’s weak score, this support fell to 19 percent in the 2007 Chamber elections, as the Confédération lost its position as the second farmers union in France to the right-wing Coordination rurale. Marginal, weak and unrepresentative, the Confédération paysanne lacked the “objectified political resources”³² needed to exert power and influence within the political field.

At its peak, the Confédération was identified as a champion of the general interest, defending the common good of French society as a whole. Yet from the outset, this was a highly particularist organisation that defended the vested interests of one group against all others. For Jacques Capdevielle, the success of the Confédération manifests the rise of a “new corporatism” within French society and a resurgence of particularist interests in a context of globalization.³³ The Confédération defined its central project as “l’agriculture paysanne,” which it saw as an alternative model of agricultural production, but also as a model of society. This project was first outlined in the 1987 Confédération report and has since been reformulated as a set of ten principles for an alternative agricultural model. As part of this project, the Confédération argues that small farming should be accorded a privileged status within French society and be given special recognition from the state. Farming, it suggests, is different from any other economic activity (“l’agriculture n’est pas une activité comme les autres”) in that it is intrinsic to the well-being and vitality of the French nation: “notre métier est d’utilité publique.” On these grounds, the Confédération argues for greater protectionism, a redistribution of public subsidies, fixed prices for agricultural produce, a renationalized market, and control over imports. It envisages a highly regulated model of agricultural production, in which the state would be responsible for regulating farm size, levels of production, pricing on agricultural produce, and the degree of intensification: “Nous revendiquons une politique agricole qui régule les marchés, qui répartisse les moyens de production et qui protège les plus faibles au nom de la solidarité nationale.”³⁴ In addition, the state would engage in a policy of farm creation, setting up new small holdings so that farmers could establish themselves on the land. The Confédération believes that farmers’ incomes should not be determined by market forces but should be guaranteed from year to year through fixed prices on agricultural produce: “L’accès à un revenu décent doit être garanti par des prix rémunérateurs pour une certaine quantité de produit.”³⁵ While assuming the mantle of the collective good, the Confédération calls for a defense of the particular and for the special status of small farmers against all other interests.

In its political aims, the Confédération seems to swim against a tide of socio-economic transformation and its interests seem at odds with those of the

general population. Although France is integrated into a world economy and is now the second exporter of agricultural produce in the world, the Confédération calls for a return to a closed economy and a withdrawal from the international market. From the outset, the Confédération was characterized by virulent opposition to unregulated market forces, which it saw as destructive, predatory, and invasive. Jean-Philippe Martin has situated the Confédération within a leftist anti-capitalist current on the margins of the French farmers' movement, with its origins in the late 1960s ("la nouvelle gauche paysanne").³⁶ At first, the Confédération's target was a "productiviste" model of agricultural modernization, and it engaged in a radical critique of this model. Beyond its impact on agriculture, productivism was linked to a broad set of social problems (environmental decline, poor food quality, declining social conditions, and increased health risks) and was seen to undermine the very fabric of French society: "c'est la destruction de tout un tissu social qui est à l'oeuvre."³⁷ But this discourse was also inspired by a broader post-1968 leftist critique of consumerism that called into question the value and ends of economic production. Since the mid-1990s, however, the Confédération has increasingly shifted the focus of its opposition from state-led productivism to economic globalization that has its origins outside France's borders. Globalization is portrayed as a profound threat to the economic interests of small farmers because it intensifies market competition and leads to an influx of cheap products that usurp locally-produced goods. In its public discourse, the Confédération denounces globalization as a vast imperialist project that seeks to impose American power across all four corners of the world. Thus, it describes globalization variously as "le diktat des marchés," "la dictature des marchés," or "l'impérialisme américain."

Critical to its response to globalization was the notion of "food sovereignty," which it helped to devise in 1996 and which has since become a key principle for the international farmers' movement. According to this notion, farmers would have a fundamental right to "protéger leurs agricultures vis-à-vis des importations à bas prix"³⁸ and would have exclusive access to their own local and national markets. Trade between countries would only take place in strictly controlled circumstances: "Only the surplus should be traded, and that only bilaterally."³⁹ In addition, governments would be required to reorient their policies in favor of family farmers through a system of "public financial support" that confirms their vocation as "guardians of the land." At a time of increased economic liberalization, the Confédération seems to fly in the face of the dominant trends by favoring a completely opposing model of economic development.

Cheese and Hamburgers

For Bourdieu, power can be exerted by symbolic means through a capacity to produce meanings and representations in the public domain and to impose a certain interpretation of the social world. This symbolic power is distinct from

the logic of apparatus or structure and is expressive, interpretive, and representational in its forms: "symbolic power is a power of constructing reality."⁴⁰ If the Confédération lacked institutional strength, had limited political influence and weak representation, the key to its success lay elsewhere in its symbolic potential and its capacity to draw on symbolic and discursive resources to further its own interests. Jean-Philippe Martin has noted that the Confédération, from the outset, laid emphasis on symbolic forms of intervention and that this was a conscious strategic choice on the part of its leadership: "Cette multiplication et cette recherche constante de nouveaux moyens d'action sont liées à la faiblesse de l'implantation du syndicat qui ne dispose pas d'un réseau solide."⁴¹ Indeed, José Bové favored a style of political action that was symbolic and representative in nature, seeking to communicate a message to society rather than making a physical display of force: "l'action passe toujours par une mise en scène."⁴²

Critical to the Confédération's success was its capacity to reconfigure its own narrow economic cause as part of a broad crusade against "globalization." Erza Sulieman has referred to the way in which certain French interest groups invoked globalization for instrumental ends, as a way of transforming otherwise sectional interests into a higher universal cause.⁴³ For the Confédération, globalization offered a powerful symbolic tool, an "illuminating metaphor," a means to transform the nature of its struggle and assign itself a new and compelling mission. Firstly, this allowed the Confédération to transcend farming circles and reach out to a mass public audience. By invoking globalization, the Confédération was able to tap into widespread societal concerns and a major source of anxiety and tension within French society. At a time of social upheaval, cultural dislocation, and widespread malaise, its invective against globalization instantly found resonance within public opinion. Secondly, this was a means for the Confédération to aggrandize its own cause and open it up to new layers of meaning and interpretation. It was no longer a question of routine matters of trade and market competition, of issues that were of interest to farmers alone. The Confédération had assumed a new and critical mandate, one that implicated all French citizens and concerned all of French society.

The Confédération's transformation from obscure farmers' union to champion of resistance to globalization was sudden and dramatic, the outcome of one specific episode of symbolic action, or what Bourdieu would describe as an "act of symbolization and representation."⁴⁴ The events of 12 August 1999, when a group of farmers affiliated to the Confédération paysanne dismantled a McDonald's construction site in the small town of Millau in Southwestern France, are well known and I do not intend to recount them in detail here.⁴⁵ Instead, I will consider this episode as an example of the Confédération's symbolic power and the way in which it was able, through skilful use of symbols and rhetoric, to transform a routine protest about trade sanctions into a wider mission to defend France against globalization. The importance of this episode lay not in what objectively took place or in the

actual course of events, but in the meaning that was later ascribed to them. This was a high symbolic moment, or what Kenneth Burke has described as a “mystic moment” that provided “a stage of revelation after which all is felt to be different.”⁴⁶ It allowed the *Confédération* to transform its status within French society and to assume a power and influence that it did not possess in organizational or material terms.

Ivan Bruneau has shown that the action of 12 August 1999 was a continuation of grassroots protest carried out by local activists over the previous decade and which was confined to questions of economic calculus, market competition, and trade position. For those involved—members of the local branch of the *Confédération paysanne* and the sheep farmers’ union (SPLB)—it was experienced as “une action comme les autres,” little different from others carried out over many years and concerned a defense of product sales on foreign markets.⁴⁷ However, the *Confédération*’s choice of symbols on this occasion and, in particular, the juxtaposition of two culturally-charged symbols (McDonald’s versus Roquefort) served to open up this action to new layers of meaning and interpretation. Through their action, the *Confédération* opened up a “semiotic ground,”⁴⁸ a space in which new meanings and representations could be constructed. In the aftermath of this event and the intense media attention that it attracted, the *Confédération*’s leaders were eager to present their version of events and to impose their own interpretation of what had occurred. During frequent press interviews, television appearances, and orchestrated media appearances, José Bové and others argued that this event was about something of far greater urgency and universal import than the specific interests of farmers caught up in yet another skirmish over trade. Rather, the “meaning” of the episode was about challenging “globalization” by making McDonald’s a symbol of “la mondialisation par le fric au détriment du droit des peuples, de leur santé et de la démocratie.”⁴⁹

In their public discourse after 12 August 1999, the *Confédération*’s leaders constructed a new “interpretive repertoire”⁵⁰ that recapitulated the events and transformed their meaning in a number of fundamental ways. Firstly, this was no longer about the particular interests of farmers caught up in a dispute over trade. Rather, it was a question of the “general interest” and the need to safeguard French society from the health risks posed by globalization. By attacking McDonald’s, the *Confédération* argued that it was striking a blow against mass-produced, industrialized, hormone-filled food that was sapping the health, vitality and well-being of the French nation. Here globalization is portrayed as a pernicious, toxic force that seeps quietly across borders and contaminates everything that it touches: “on s’est rendu compte d’un seul coup que la mondialisation pouvait nous obliger à ingurgiter des hormones.”⁵¹ José Bové used the term “malbouffe” for the first time on 12 August 1999 to denounce the poor quality standardized food epitomized by McDonald’s hamburgers. They were counterposed against Roquefort, which became its symbolic opposite: pure, earthy, traditional, and healthy. As he remarked, “c’est le Roquefort

contre le boeuf aux hormones."⁵² In their discourse, Confederation leaders repeatedly affirmed the traditional role of farmers as guardians of the nation's well-being. Through their actions, local farmers were in fact reasserting this primordial mission to defend public health and vitality. Thus, in a dramatic speech made by José Bové outside a Montpellier courthouse on 17 August, following an offer of release on bail, he vowed that he would remain in prison to continue his struggle and to safeguard the integrity of French agriculture and hence the good of the whole nation: "Si la lutte contre l'organisation mondiale du commerce, si la lutte pour une agriculture saine et une agriculture propre nécessitent que les paysans restent en prison alors je reste en prison."⁵³ Bové had become the eternal peasant-citizen sacrificing his own freedom to protect the French people and to defend their interests in their hour of peril.

A second aspect of this discursive strategy was to present their action not as one of economic defense but of cultural necessity. By attacking McDonald's, Confédération leaders argued that they were taking a stand against the American cultural model that threatened France's identity, its traditions, and entire way of life. Thus a protest about trade sanctions was reconstituted as a "combat culturel anti-américain."⁵⁴ McDonald's was portrayed as a symbol of an Americanized popular culture imposing its bland and uniform model across the French territory. In fact, the creation of a new branch of McDonald's in Millau seemed to confirm the image of a cultural onslaught stretching into every corner of deepest rural France. The Confédération was thus defending France from a threat far greater than that posed by market competition, which was "l'uniformisation des goûts,"⁵⁵ conceived as an assault on French tastes, high culture, and distinctive traditions. Here, food takes on its full resonance as a maker of cultural identity. Some authors have shown how, in the French case, food products as diverse as wine, cheese, bread, or chocolate are often imbued with a symbolic meaning that transcends their economic value alone, and that this can be a means of furthering purely instrumental goals.⁵⁶ In its rhetoric, the Confédération emphasized the importance of food as an intrinsic cultural act, whereby one affirms one's own identity and communes with past generations. Fast food, by contrast, was portrayed as a form of cultural decadence signifying a loss of identity, roots, and familial ties: "c'est à la fois une perte des racines familiales, et des racines liées à un terroir ou à un lieu de vie. Cette façon de vivre ne correspond pas à un ancrage, à un territoire, à une culture. En fait, les gens vivent 'hors sol'." By explaining its actions via reference to the dangers of globalization, the Confédération was able to transform its own cause into one of cultural defense and into an expression of "le terroir contre la puissance d'une multinationale."⁵⁷ This strategy was likely to garner far greater popular support than an appeal to the material interests of small farmers.

Thirdly, this episode did not concern economic or material interests but involved higher irreducible principles. According to this scenario, activists were impelled by a desire to safeguard democratic principles and freedoms. McDonald's was portrayed as a "symbole de l'impérialisme économique" and

the vanguard of a system of global capitalism that was fundamentally at odds with French democratic traditions. By targeting McDonald's, the Confédération was protecting the French way of life and its civilization from the corrupt and barbaric forces that were gathering strength at its borders. In its rhetoric, the Confédération identified globalization with images of an imperialist and totalitarian power that was endangering democratic rights and freedoms. This was "la tyrannie des marchés" or a "dictature des marchés financiers," which was imposing a market-controlled system across the entire French territory: "c'est une volonté hégémonique du commerce consistant à vouloir tout dévorer."⁵⁸ In the face of globalization, the Confédération posited itself as the voice of democracy and freedom. Its mission was nothing less than to reclaim the world from the grasp of greedy multinationals and to refashion it along democratic and humanitarian lines. Meanwhile, José Bové was recast in the media as a sort of reincarnated Asterix defending French territory against barbaric invading hordes. He was the "héros des valeurs traditionnelles"⁵⁹ defending France's democratic soul and engaged in a David and Goliath struggle against the might of powerful corporations. Thus a dispute over trade sanctions was recast as a Manichean battle of good against evil with the Confédération lined up squarely on the side of virtue and righteousness.

The McDonald's affair marked a triumph for the Confédération's symbolic power, bringing rewards equivalent to those that might be gained by other more conventional political means. This episode represented an "événement-rupture"⁶⁰ that utterly transformed the Confédération's status within French society and the meaning ascribed to its actions, leading to its "re-naissance publique"⁶¹ as a force completely different to the one created more than ten years previously. Bourdieu has argued that political agents are involved in a symbolic struggle aimed at "imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests."⁶² By reconfiguring their cause as one of opposition to globalization, the Confédération articulated and gave expression to deep-seated anxieties within French society and simultaneously assigned itself a new and urgent mission. From an obscure and marginal farmers' union, it became a symbol of the general interest, speaking for all French men and women concerned about the nature of globalizing change.

Peasants Against Markets

If the Confédération Paysanne articulated widespread fears and anxieties about globalization, it also offered a refuge from them, a retreat into a world of tradition, rootedness, and belonging. Critical to the Confédération's symbolic power was its capacity to reconstitute peasant farming as a symbol of French identity at a time of globalizing change. It is well known that peasant farming represents an essential component of identity in France with its roots deep in national culture and historical experience. As the American anthro-

pologist Susan Carol Rogers has observed, "In France, it is the *peasant* farmer who has long stood for the *soul* of the nation, evoking deep-rooted cultural traditions and implantation in the national territory which define France."⁶³ In the French case, peasant farming assumes a significance far beyond its economic importance alone and survives as a "highly charged and manipulable symbol" that represents tradition, cultural identity, national heritage, and the social good. Yet as Rogers has shown, such symbolism is not static or permanent but responds to external contingencies in society at any one time. Peasant farming has in fact been revived at various points in French history as a means to resolve tensions in society and to manage processes of change. As she remarks, "it is no wonder that peasants should be made to disappear and reappear over time as change is managed, controlled and interpreted."⁶⁴ The symbolism of peasant farming is therefore as much about France's past as it is about the exigencies of the present moment; it becomes a critical rhetorical resource at times of crisis or change.

What explains the Confédération Paysanne's success is that it revived such symbolism at a time of globalization, widely experienced by the French as social upheaval, cultural dislocation, and ultimately, a threat to identity. It was at this critical juncture that the Confédération was able to capture one of the nation's most enduring myths, laying claim to a whole symbolic universe linked to peasant farming. Anthony Cohen has shown how communities tend to reconstruct identity symbolically when faced with outside pressures for change: "Indeed, the greater the pressure on communities to modify their structural forms to comply more with those elsewhere, the more are they inclined to reassert their boundaries *symbolically* by imbuing these modified forms with meaning and significance which belies their appearance."⁶⁵ The Confédération did not simply revive a well established repertoire of symbols and images, but rather posited this as an *antidote* to all the evils of a globalizing world. The force of such symbolism lay in its *oppositional value* and the way in which it was used to counterpose the dominant tendencies of globalization. It became a refuge, an anchor, a bulwark against a world of ceaseless change and uncertainty. What characterizes the Confédération's discourse is a symbolic game of opposites whereby peasant farming is aligned with all that is virtuous, traditional, and authentic, and globalization is recast as its irreducible opposite: evil, predatory, and alien. In its discourse, the Confédération skilfully juxtaposed peasant farming against a dominant image of global society, so that it became its cultural nemesis, a place in which identity was reaffirmed, tradition was preserved, and social bonds were restored. It used symbolic power to pursue, in the words of Bourdieu, "the possibility of changing the social world by changing the representations of this world which contributes to its reality."⁶⁶

Identity

Where globalization was seen as an alien, homogenizing force, one that obliterated cultural specificity, peasant farming was presented as a symbol of identity

that was pure, distinctive and unchanging. In its monthly magazine, *Campagnes solidaires*, the *Confédération* sets out an economic case for the protection of small farming by presenting objective facts and figures, concerning, for instance, the declining numbers of local cheese producers or pig farmers in certain regions, the decimation of farming incomes, the unfair distribution of production quotas, or the dwindling percentage of European funding allocated to small producers. Yet these economic arguments are conflated with broader cultural themes that implicate French society as a whole. Thus in a recent edition devoted to the wine industry entitled "Le vin n'est pas qu'une marchandise," an image of a typical French vineyard was depicted alongside an image of a traditional French peasant pulling a horse-drawn carriage through the fields.⁶⁷ The message was that wine was not simply a product that can be bought and sold at the cheapest possible price. Rather, like cheese, milk, or pâté, it embodied all the virtues of "terroir": the special qualities of local soils, specific places, and cultural traditions that cannot be replicated elsewhere. "Les viticulteurs qui ont choisi de faire des vins de qualité, avec la notion fondamentale de terroir sont tous menacés par la réforme de la PAC."⁶⁸ This reflects a wider discourse within the *Confédération* that small farming should be protected not only on economic grounds, but on the basis of cultural necessity. It is a question of preserving a sacred and fragile world, one embedded in tradition and which was an essential part of identity: "Or l'identité culturelle, c'est aussi l'identité agricole, s'ils ne sont pas paysans, même s'ils ne sont pas ruraux, même s'ils vivent en ville, ces gens ont des racines paysannes. Racines qui les relient à toutes nos régions françaises. Cette force, l'Europe et la mondialisation ne peuvent pas nous l'enlever."⁶⁹ Globalization is therefore seen to represent a threat far greater than that of market competition: that of impending cultural loss.

Yet this was not identity as a submissive or docile state, but as a form of cultural resistance and, in particular, of resistance to change. The *Confédération's* evocation of peasant farming as a symbol of identity is most striking in the personality of José Bové. Through a carefully honed physical appearance and an orchestrated media campaign, Bové cultivated an image as the eternal French peasant who was proud, steadfast, and resolute. The press commented endlessly on his image, his "moustaches gauloises," his pipe, checked shirt, and corduroy trousers, seen to characterize the timeless qualities of the French peasant: "Ce descendant de Robin des Bois est favorablement accueilli car il incarne le droit fondamental à la diversité des cultures; et il le fait en un point central de nos mythologies collectives, la paysannerie: la vraie, celle d'hommes fiers de leurs terres, de leurs bêtes, de leur travail."⁷⁰ Yet Bové also personified the peasant who was fiercely attached to the land, to local traditions, and customs, and who stubbornly refused all external pressures.

Tradition

Where globalization was experienced as ceaseless change and upheaval, peasant farming was presented as a symbol of tradition and continuity, one that

anchored the French to their past and to a shared cultural legacy. Peasant farming was posited as a model of simplicity, timelessness, and purity that was untainted by the evils of modern society, by ever-expanding markets, and by mass agricultural production. It was counterposed against an image of globalization as all-encompassing change, a neo-liberal tide that transforms, uproots, and destroys everything in its path. The Confédération made ample use of images to evoke a traditional and nostalgic rural world, with images of horse-drawn carriages, ploughs, village festivities, and peasant farmers toiling in the fields. In its discourse, it extolled the virtues of traditional farming methods, favouring “les techniques utilisées par nos parents, les rotations de cultures, l’utilisation de fourrages variés et de prairies permanentes.”⁷¹ These methods, it argued, were essential to preserve the environment but also to maintain a precious link with past generations. Deploying traditional methods, the peasant farmer was portrayed as a guardian of the land, safeguarding a shared heritage and ensuring the transmission of a precious culture from one generation to the next. In *Campagnes Solidaires*, the Confédération encouraged farmers to abandon modern intensive methods and to embrace the traditional methods of their forefathers. Thus, the magazine regularly features families who have “taken the plunge” and made the decision “to return to the soil” and to traditional family farming. One couple decided to abandon intensive cereal farming and devote itself to regional cheeses produced using artisanal methods (“le couple choisit de faire le fromage comme les grands-parents”). This allowed them to rediscover the joys of family life and to work “auprès de leur fils, toujours prêt à donner un coup de main.”⁷² This return to traditional farming was portrayed as a courageous act, an acknowledgement of the debt that we all owe to past generations.

Community

Whereas globalization was portrayed as a profit-driven machine that eroded social bonds, peasant farming embodied a traditional model of social relationships characterized by close familial ties and rural village life. If the Confédération Paysanne defended farmers’ economic interests, it also claimed to defend a whole way of life rooted in small family farms, *fêtes de village*, and agrarian ceremonies. It held an idealized image of society in which familial and social bonds were preserved and where the family farm was handed down from one generation to the next: “la famille paysanne devait rester responsable de son outil de travail et si possible demeurer—ou devenir—propriétaire de l’ensemble de ses moyens de production.” The Confédération Paysanne argued that economic modernization had destroyed not only farmers’ livelihoods but a model of social relationships that was the cornerstone of French society: “c’était participer au renversement du vieux monde qui encadrait les paysans.”⁷³

The Confédération’s particular style of protest is steeped in a world of village solidarities and kinship relationships. In fact, the very idea of creating the Confédération Paysanne originated, according to its leaders, during a village

celebration at a local farm where a couple was celebrating their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Over a banquet laid out in the hen-house, local farmers and activists chatted “entre copains” and came to reflect on “la condition paysanne”: “Dans la joie et la bonne humeur, les convives fêtent le couple en passant une journée entière à festoyer autour d’une table dressée dans le poulailler. Pendant les deux repas successifs, certains ne peuvent s’empêcher de confronter leurs idées sur le fond quant à la condition paysanne.” In fact, the *Confédération*’s politics can be characterized as a mixture of radicalism and village festivity where local farmers get together to affirm their rights, but also to share local produce and celebrate village traditions. Thus François Dufour described one protest action as a kind of giant picnic where farmers chanted slogans, proclaimed their rights, but also passed around *produits de terroir* and enjoyed the odd glass of wine: “Nous avons organisé des pique-niques, des dégustations de produits de terroir, des parties de grillades sur les terrasses d’une quarantaine de McDonald’s.”⁷⁴ With close family relationships and a solid social structure, peasant farming seemed to offer a reverse mirror image of an alienating and unfamiliar globalizing world.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, the *Confédération* and its former leader José Bové have been at the forefront of a national and international movement that challenges neo-liberal globalization and proposes an alternative model for society. At the height of its influence, the *Confédération* commanded extensive public support, was widely identified with the general interest, and aligned itself with a universalist project of social transformation. I have argued here that the *Confédération*’s remarkable success was derived less from formal political means than from its symbolic power, which it used to transform its position within French society and the meaning ascribed to its actions. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu argued that at times of profound crisis, otherwise marginal groups could assume a symbolic power that was normally reserved for established elites: “But the constitutive power of ... language, and of the schemes of perception and thought which it procures, is never clearer than in situations of crisis: these paradoxical and extra-ordinary situations call for an extra-ordinary kind of discourse, capable of raising the practical principles of an ethos to the level of explicit principles which generate (quasi-) systematic responses and of expressing all the unheard-of and ineffable characteristics of the situation created by the crisis.”⁷⁵ In France, globalization constituted just such a crisis and was widely experienced as social upheaval, cultural dislocation, and an assault on Frenchness itself. In this context, the *Confédération* intervened symbolically by constructing new meanings and symbols and by imposing its own representation of the social world. Thus, it transformed an otherwise complex, distant, and intangible process of globalization into a

symbolic game of opposites between two opposing universes. On the one hand, the French model, symbolized by Roquefort cheese, with its cultural distinctiveness, democratic traditions, and social cohesion; and on the other, globalization represented by McDonald's, a world of ceaseless change, cultural dislocation, and savage greed. In so doing, the Confédération articulated deep-seated fears, tensions, and anxieties within French society, bringing them out into the open and giving them concrete expression and visibility. It seemed to speak on behalf of all French men and women concerned about the nature of globalizing change and its effects on French society.

Yet the Confédération did more than simply express these tensions; it also offered a refuge from them, a retreat into a world of tradition, timelessness, and security. At a moment of crisis, the Confédération revived a traditional symbol of identity, one that captured the essence of a lost Frenchness and "a stable core of self, unfolding from the beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change."⁷⁶ Peasant symbolism is hardly new in the French context and it is periodically revived at different points in history as a means of responding to the tensions and conflicts of the present moment. The Confédération's particular skill was to counterpose peasant farming against a prevailing image of neo-liberal globalization, so that it became a kind of cultural nemesis and an irreducible opposite. Where globalization was seen to threaten or homogenize identity, peasant farming embodied an identity that was culturally specific and rooted. Where globalization was viewed as ceaseless change and uncertainty, peasant farming represented a world of tradition and timelessness. Where globalization was seen to destroy social bonds, peasant farming offered an ideal of community rooted in rural village life. It became an antidote to all the evils of a malevolent globalizing world, one in which identity was reaffirmed, tradition preserved, and social bonds restored.

SARAH WATERS is Senior Lecturer in French Studies at University of Leeds. She is author of *Social Movements in France: Towards a New Citizenship* (2003). She has published widely on the theory and practice of French social movements in journals including *Modern & Contemporary France*, *West European Politics*, and *Mobilization*.

Notes

1. Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 9. Gordon and Meunier's observations are backed up by recent polls, which reveal a degree of popular anxiety, fear, and malaise about globalization that has few parallels elsewhere. According to a 2006 poll, 46 percent of French people saw globalization as a danger to France and to the French way of life. (CEVIPOF-Ministère de l'Intérieur, *Baromètre politique français*, "Déclin, modèle français et mondialisation 2006-2007," 2007). During the 2007 presidential campaign, according to another poll, 74 percent of French people declared that they were concerned about the globalization of the economy (against 64 percent in 2002) (IFOP poll cited by Hubert Védrine, *Rapport pour le Président de la République sur la France et la mondialisation* [Paris, 2007], 4). In an official report carried out by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, at the request of the current French president Nicolas Sarkozy, the former summed up French attitudes to globalization in the following terms: "Depuis une quinzaine d'années au moins, l'attitude française envers la mondialisation se caractérise par une méfiance persistante, et par un pessimisme constant des Français quant à leur devenir, leur pays, l'avenir de leurs enfants." *Ibid.*, 3.
2. Timothy Smith, *France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality and Globalization since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
3. Michael Veseth, *Globaloney: Unraveling the Myths of Globalization* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 205, 203. The idea that fears about globalization are bound up with fears about French decline is backed up by recent opinion polls. In a 2006 poll, 52 percent of people believed that France was in a state of decline and 46 percent of people attributed this decline to a loss of stature on the international stage. This sense of a France in decline has been fed by a spate of recent books on the subject. Thus authors such as Nicolas Baverez, whose book *La France qui tombe* (Paris: Perrin, 2003) reached best-seller status, have lamented France's national decline, referring to a "sick France in a decadent Europe." Meanwhile Jean-Marie Rouart has seen in France's current crisis a disappearance of France itself (*Adieu à la France qui s'en va* [Paris: Grasset, 2003]). Similarly, the historian Jacques Julliard has sought to discover the sources of what he describes in his book as "Le Malheur français" (Paris: Flammarion, 2005).
4. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 127.
5. Zygmunt Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 15.
6. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 170.
7. *Ibid.*, 170.
8. *Ibid.*, 163.
9. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 127.
10. This research is presented in the following texts: Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice; La Noblesse d'État* (Paris: Minuit, 1989); *Language and Symbolic Power; La Domination masculine* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).
11. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 181.
12. *Ibid.*, 129-30.
13. *Ibid.*, 170.
14. *Ibid.*, 172.
15. John Girling, *Social Movements and Symbolic Power* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2004).
16. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 128.
17. *Ibid.*

18. Ibid., 133.
19. Ibid., 127.
20. Cited by Sean Fitzgerald, "The Anti-Modern Rhetoric of Le Mouvement Poujade," *Review of Politics* 32 (1970), 168.
21. José Bové, *Candidat rebelle* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2007), 173.
22. Gordon and Meunier, *The French Challenge*, 2.
23. Jacques Capdevielle, *Modernité du corporatisme* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2001).
24. Raphaëlle Besse Desmoulières and Gaëlle Dupont, *Le Monde*, 12 August 2003.
25. "Larzac 2003 – José Bové: en avril 2004, j'arrête d'être porte-parole," *L'Humanité*, 11 August 2003.
26. "Je suis prêt à assumer d'aller à l'Elysée," *Libération*, 14 June 2006.
27. "Bové souhaite un tribunal international pour faire la chasse aux 'criminels financiers,'" *Agence de Presse*, 10 October 2008.
28. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 174.
29. Régis Hochart, "Discours de clôture du Congrès du Mans," 23 and 24 May 2007.
30. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 175.
31. Ivan Bruneau, "La Confédération paysanne," *Regards sur l'actualité* 269 (March 2001), 21.
32. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 181.
33. Capdevielle, *Modernité du corporatisme*.
34. Confédération paysanne, *Elections chambres 2007: Le Programme* (Paris: Confédération paysanne, 2007), 2, 5.
35. Confédération paysanne, *Penser globalement, agir localement*, Assemblée générale du 19 et 20 avril 1989 (Paris: Confédération paysanne, 1989), 9.
36. Jean-Philippe Martin, *Histoire de la nouvelle gauche paysanne: Des Contestations des années 1960 à la Confédération paysanne* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005).
37. Confédération paysanne, *Penser globalement, agir localement*, 9.
38. Confédération paysanne, *Elections chambres 2007*, 2.
39. Amory Starr, *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements against Globalization* (New York: Pan Books, 2005), 57.
40. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 166.
41. Martin, *Histoire de la nouvelle gauche paysanne*, 213.
42. José Bové, "Ce n'est qu'un début," *Télérama* 2613, 9 February 2000.
43. Erza Suleiman, "Les Nouveaux habits de l'antiaméricanisme," *Le Monde*, 29 September 1999.
44. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 191.
45. This action was prompted by high import duties imposed by US authorities on certain French products (including Roquefort cheese) in retaliation for the European Union's decision to ban American hormone-treated beef. For farmers within the Massif Central region who depended for their incomes and livelihoods on the sale of Roquefort cheese in foreign markets, this decision posed a specific threat to their interests. See José Bové and François Dufour *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise*; Gwyn Davies, *Struggles for an Alternative Globalization: An Ethnography of Counter-power in Southern France* (London: Ashgate, 2008).
46. Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), 305.
47. Ivan Bruneau, "La Confédération paysanne et le 'mouvement altermondialiste.' L'international comme enjeu syndical," *Politix* 17, 68 (2004), 123.
48. David E. Apter in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics and Ritual*, ed. Jeffrey L. Alexander, Bernard Giesen, Jason L. Mast (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 221.
49. Gilbert Laval, "Le briseur de McDo reste au frais," *Libération*, 1 September 1999.
50. Apter in *Social Performance*, ed. Alexander et al., 220.
51. Bové and Dufour, *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise*, 23.

52. Claude Belmont, "Le Monde paysan envahit les McDo," *Le Figaro*, 1 September 1999.
53. Gilbert Laval, "José Bové préfère la prison aux 'chaînes de la mondialisation,'" *Libération*, 3 September 1999.
54. François Grosrichard, "Le monde agricole, entre surenchères et défis," *Le Monde*, 28 September 1999.
55. Jean-Paul Besset, "Le Robin des bois du Larzac se livre à la justice," *Le Monde*, 21 August 1999.
56. In their study of a protest in the Languedocien village of Aniane against the plans of the multinational wine producer Mondavi to purchase local land, Barthel-Bouchier and Clough show how the terms of the dispute were reconfigured by local activists as that of Astérix and Obélix against the invading Romans, and how this symbolic recasting helped to protect the vested interests of opponents to Mondavi's plans (Diane Barthel-Bouchier and Lauretta Clough "From Mondavi to Depardieu: The Global/Local Politics of Wine," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 23, 2 [Summer 2005]). See also Robert C. Ulin, *Vintages and Traditions: An Ethnohistory of Southwest French Wine Cooperatives* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996). On the symbolic importance of bread, see Steven L. Kaplan, *Le Retour du bon pain: Une histoire contemporaine du pain, de ses techniques et de ses hommes* (Paris: Perrin, DL, 2002) and *Le Pain maudit: Retour sur la France des années oubliées, 1945-1958* (Paris: Fayard, 2008). On chocolate, see Susan J. Terrio, *Crafting the Culture and History of French Chocolate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), and on cheese, see Pierre Boisard, *Le Camembert, mythe national* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1992).
57. Bové and Dufour, *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise*, 81, 7.
58. *Ibid.*, 24, 193.
59. Capdevielle, *Modernité du corporatisme*, 148.
60. Bruneau, "La Confédération paysanne et le 'mouvement altermondialiste,'" 113.
61. Ivan Bruneau, *La Confédération paysanne: S'engager à juste distance* (PhD thesis, Université Paris X, November 2006), 66.
62. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 167.
63. Susan Carol Rogers, "Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 18, 1 (Spring 2000), 62.
64. Susan Carol Rogers, "Good to Think: the 'Peasant' in Contemporary France," *Anthropological Quarterly* 60, 2 (April 1987), 56, 60.
65. Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), 44.
66. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 128.
67. Confédération paysanne, *Campagnes solidaires* 221 (September 2007), 9.
68. Confédération paysanne, *Campagnes solidaires* 212 (November 2006), 4.
69. Bové and Dufour, *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise*, 39.
70. Jean Viard, "Bonne terre, bonne bouffe, bonne France," *Le Figaro*, 29 September 1999.
71. Bové and Dufour, *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise*, 91.
72. Confédération paysanne, *Campagnes solidaires* 214 (January 2007), 16-17.
73. Bové and Dufour, *Le Monde n'est pas une marchandise*, 89, 96.
74. *Ibid.*, 70, 45.
75. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 168.
76. Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, 17.