“Authority” Revisited: The “Other” in Anthropology and Popular Music Studies

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This paper was conceived in reaction to the following assertion:

(….) The act of representing the exotic other [in anthropology] is an act of construction involving multiple filters, layers of distance and translation. . . . As in anthropology, ethnomusicological monographs and articles present idealized versions of musical cultures captured as if within a camera frame.” (Turino 1989)

Initially, we focused on the seemingly taken-for-granted ideas underlying these assertions, namely, that anthropological concerns can be transferred to other disciplines and be dealt with in the same fashion. But is it in fact possible to import into other fields of study anthropology’s latest preoccupations concerning ethnography and ethnographic authority and if so, should scholars then address these issues exactly as anthropologists do, regardless of their respective objects of study?

Our aim is to highlight some of the issues raised by the latest findings in anthropology, the alternatives being developed, and their relevance for scholars working on different objects of study. Following a critical examination of the anthropological “diagnosis” of the current state of ethnography, we focus on and discuss the implications of one of the central issues it raises, namely, that of the “Other.” We then turn our attention to popular music studies to examine the particular ways in which this issue is being addressed. This discussion leads to the conclusion that recent anthropological arguments should not be transferred mechanically, but must be considered with great care and thought, since they not only shed a new light on the already existing debates, but also widen their scope.

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Issues of ethnographic writing are clearly central to the current debate. Yet the series of historical pressures that have forced anthropologists to reflect on their practices of (re)presentation have also led them to review the traditional ways of defining the so-called exotic cultures as the Other. Although the Other at one time was easily observable within certain presumably homogeneous enclaves, it is now more difficult to locate:

The more recent scattering of encapsulated peoples across the globe—Algerians in France, Koreans in Kuwait, Pakistanis in London, Cubans in Miami—has only extended the process by reducing the spacing of variant turns of mind, as has, of course, jet-plane tourism as well. (Geertz 1988:132)

Following Geertz’s argument, it is evident that the “audience” has also become confused with the “object” of study. As he remarks:

This inter-confusion of object and audience... leaves contemporary anthropologists in some uncertainty as to rhetorical aim. Who is now to be persuaded? Africanists or Africans? Americanists or American Indians? Japanologists or Japanese? And of what: Factual accuracy? Theoretical sweep? Imaginative grasp? Moral depth? (ibid.:133)

The ethnography of the Other is further complicated by the penetration of the world economy, mass communication, and problems of identity and cultural authenticity. As Marcus and Fischer explain, this is related to the “widespread perception that the world is rapidly homogenizing through the diffusion of technology, communication, and population movement” (1986:38).

As a result, anthropologists, in the process of developing a more realistic view of their capacities and roles, have revised their historical position of power in the field by reexamining the notions of “Us” and “Them” and by ensuring a greater interaction of both parties in the fieldwork itself. Moreover, they have been challenged to combine micro and macro analyses within the same research, that is, “to capture more accurately the historic context of its [ethnography’s] subjects, and to register the constitutive workings of impersonal international political and economic systems on the local level where fieldwork usually takes place” (ibid.:39). As a corollary, they now face the problem of representing textually these two analytical dimensions as interrelated.

THE OTHER: FROM LOCATION TO DEFINITION

Anthropologists seem to agree that their object of study is getting increasingly difficult to locate, especially because of recent demographic and socioeconomic changes. The intensification of migration movements as well
as the development of jet-plane tourism and mass communication might indeed be "reducing the spacing of variant turns of mind," as Geertz suggests. Nevertheless, that this inevitably makes the Other more difficult to locate is an assumption that needs to be questioned. Why should today's intensified presence of Algerians in France, for instance, be more problematic than that of the French in Algeria during the Algerian Independence War, or that of occidentals in Korea during the Korean War? Was the location of Others easier when Algerians and Koreans stayed within the boundaries of their "homeland" or their "own country?" And then why should they be defined as Others more readily than the French, the Spanish, or the English, for example? Could it be that locating the object of study is more difficult not because of the new social and demographic conditions as such, but because the premises upon which the search was based are no longer adequate or even relevant? If this were the case, the key problem would not be locating Others but rather defining "Them," and hence, "Us."

**The Twofold Meanings of "Nation"**

It could reasonably be argued that, within the Western tradition of mainstream social sciences, anthropology included, the definition of the Other has evolved mainly from the idea of nation. Until recently, nation was considered as one of the most significant and original forms of social groupings—a status, however, that is now also granted to social class, subculture, gender, age, and ethnicity. As a concept, it has nevertheless remained an ambiguous term, having been assigned at least two distinct but often confused meanings: people and state.

In 12th-century Europe, nation originally meant *people*. The term was used to designate a human group whose members, as a result of complex historical processes, had attributes in common such as language, customs, and beliefs (Todorov 1989). This so-called cultural acceptance rested on a presumably shared sense of belonging and on the concrete forms of human relationships that stem from it (Person 1976). By the end of the 18th century, however, the cultural meaning had been almost totally usurped by the emerging political economy view developed in Western societies of Northern Europe. Geographical and political criteria became the determining factors, leading to another accepted definition of nation as *state*. In this context, the term has since denoted either the space controlled by a state or, by extension, a human group whose members have succeeded in identifying with a state, having gained access to political power and autonomy within a territory they control and over which they rule (Bauer 1978).

For well over a century, both meanings have been used, "nation" referring sometimes to a political, sometimes to a cultural entity, and in yet other circumstances, to both at once. The political meaning, however, seems to
have assumed precedence in many different milieux (Person 1976). For instance, in the ongoing debates that have taken place in Quebec since the 1960s, the “national question” has been predominantly addressed in reference to a nation-(as-)state. Indeed, most Canadians do not recognize Quebec as a nation even though they widely acknowledge the existence of a “Québécois people” as a group with common characteristics. Accordingly, Quebec is not considered a nation because it is only one of the ten provinces forming the Canadian federation and does not have full political autonomy and control over its territory.2

This is a typical example of how the political meaning of nation has come to subjugate the cultural one, but also one that demonstrates that nation-as-people and nation-as-state coincide only partially. As Todorov rightly explains, it is true that in certain political, historical, and economic contexts, “because there exists a national cultural consciousness . . . the idea of political autonomy can arise; reciprocally, the State may enable a culture to assert itself and to develop” (Todorov 1989:202; authors’ translation). Even if logically speaking, the two entities are neither dependent nor complementary, in practice they have become almost equivalent terms3 in that the forms of human relationships considered inherent to any communal life have been confused with one historical form of sociopolitical grouping, namely, that of the modern capitalist State.

The concept of nation then has undeniably played a key role in the anthropological definition of the Other as an object of study. Knowing the typical emphasis on culture in anthropology, it could be argued that the underlying concept of nation was that of nation-as-people. Since scientific discourses do not exist in a vacuum, however, but play an active role in the production of the “régime of truth”4 in which broader sociopolitical debates

2According to sociologist Lise Noël, such a view is present even in official political documents such as the Canadian Constitutional Act. She claims that when Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1982 used the expression “Us, the Canadian people” in the preamble of the constitutional project, he “aimed at denying Quebeckers the status of nation” (Noël 1989:17; authors’ translation).

3As Clastres rightly claims, a new axiom has developed in the West according to which “any real society unfurls under the protective umbrella of the State” (Clastres 1976:164-65; authors’ translation).

4According to Foucault, “Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. ‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A ‘régime’ of truth” (1980:133). In other words, the “régime of truth” refers to all that contributes to the definition of what socially stands as true, including not only the discourses (as well as their epistemological foundations) through which “truth” is produced as knowledge, but also the various social practices and institutions through which “truth” is passed on and enacted as power.
take place, the dominant acceptance of nation-as-state might nevertheless have had some influence upon anthropology.

**Non-Western Peoples as Others: Implications**

In the recent debates over ethnography, various components of anthropology's "classical legacy" apart from the traditional practices of textual representation have been put under scrutiny. Among these, the almost exclusive focus on non-Western collectivities as objects of study has been almost unanimously questioned. The felt "need to anthropologize the West," to use one of Rabinow's expressions (1986:241), has already led to the construction of new objects of study as well as to the undertaking "at home" of research on new "domestic topics" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:112). Is this change at the empirical level indicative of a more profound epistemological reorientation? Does it lead to a critical examination of the theoretical and methodological foundations of the classical approach, and hence, the typical ways of defining the Other in "national" terms? There are indications, as will be shown below, that such a broader reorientation is, in fact, in progress.

To a large extent, studies of non-Western peoples traditionally focused on "sociocultural units, spatially and temporally isolated" (ibid.:86). They usually dealt with collectivities considered from the viewpoint of the shared attributes of their members. Others thus tended to be defined according to the cultural meaning of nation (-as-people): groups founded on communal rather than associative relationships, where the orientation of social action is based on the intersubjective feelings of the parties rather than on mutual agreement (M. Weber 1971; Juteau 1979).

It should be noted that, by the same process, Others were often equated with peoples living elsewhere, an ethnocentric way of thinking that is clearly not exclusive to the Western world. In light of Western history, however, this equation took on a particular meaning since it was developed to a great degree within a colonial (and neo-colonial) framework (Asad 1973; Leiris 1950). While the enduring inequalities of power that resulted from colonial ventures have undoubtedly constrained ethnographic practices in many ways, "undermining the West's ability to represent the Other," as Clifford argues (1986:10), they have most likely also informed, one way or another, the theoretical construction of non-Westerners as Others (Bennett 1988). As colonized peoples, they had been historically deprived of the status of nation-as-state. Indeed, not only did European colonial powers control their respective territories and govern the destiny of their own people, they also claimed control over the territories and populations of "foreign" countries. As self-appointed nations-states, they denied Others that presumably exclusive Western "privilege."
In this context, considering the legacy of the colonial era, the discourses of classical anthropology were thus, consciously or not, delivered from the "still-privileged vantage point" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:33) of the members of dominant Western states which aimed to account for dominated non-Western peoples. Following the critique of colonialism as a system of power, its ideological and cognitive dimensions as a system of knowledge are now being carefully examined. More specifically, the reappraisal of the exclusive focus on non-Western Others as objects of study in anthropology should bring forward new theoretical criteria for defining Others. For instance, as Eco submits (1988:14), an "alternative anthropology" would not only be reciprocal, involving Western studies of non-Western phenomena and vice-versa, but also, and perhaps more importantly, reconsider the universality of the principles underlying scientific logic "as the reflection of a developmental mode characteristic of European societies" (Le Pichon 1988:17; authors' translation).

As indicated above, the political meaning of nation is closely related to the advent and expansion of the Western capitalist state, whose political and economic boundaries came to be considered equivalent since its beginnings. Having appointed themselves responsible for the institution and keeping of the social order, states had rendered legitimate the single sets of rules that prevailed within the territory over which they ruled, thereby establishing, by the same token, their jurisdiction over their respective economic markets. Historically speaking, the growth of the nation-as-state can be seen as the result of the merger of the leading political and economic interests of the European (and later, the United States') metropolis (Polanyi 1957), a development made largely at the expense of poorer local populations but also of "foreign" peoples. In the colonial context, conquered lands and subjugated non-Western peoples served Western powers' ends as means for widening their "local" economic markets, for access to additional natural resources as well as to various rare and exotic products that were highly praised by European buyers (Bernier 1979). In short, colonies became foreign branches of Western states' local markets, ensuring both a political and economic hegemony over non-Western dominated and exploited peoples. As will be shown below, the historical merger of economics and politics that accompanies the idea of nation-as-state and that reaches a peak under colonialism needs to be taken into account to grasp fully anthropology's traditional approach to Others. It puts into context the widespread

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5As anthropologist Bernard Bernier argued, racist discourses and theories functioned as the main ideological legitimation of such a process, as "an ideology of racial superiority has also served, after the final conquest of the territory, to transform whole populations into slavish or half-slavish labour" (1979:29; authors' translation).
reliance on criteria of political economy in defining non-Western peoples and cultures—a tendency that might well be indicative of the ways in which the view of nation-as-state might have subtly influenced the works and findings of generations of researchers.

Analyses have shown how theoretical assertions and notions were based on these criteria. Clastres (1976), for example, has demonstrated the tendency to characterize non-Western collectivities in essentially negative ways, that is, as societies-without-State but also as nonliterate, classless, ideology-free societies—attributes that have long stood as the preferred means for depicting non-Western, so-called “primitive” peoples (Lévi-Strauss 1962). Moreover, as sociologist and ethnologist Marcel Rioux argues, a similar “infiltration” by the categories of monopolistic capitalist societies can be observed in some of the most influential and pervasive anthropological theories on culture. He claims that by defining cultural phenomena as mere reflections of an encompassing technical and instrumental rationality, many neo-evolutionist frameworks (such as Leslie White’s), far from escaping the typically capitalist tendency to “autonomize economy,” have actually granted it the status of universal rule. This, Rioux asserts, clearly illustrates that the “advent of economy in the capitalist mode of production and that of political economy in knowledge go hand in hand” (1978:75; authors’ translation).

Political criteria might also have influenced the empirical construction of Others as objects of study. Few scholars have studied entire nations, but many have chosen smaller groups, especially tribes, as units of analysis. For example, rather than undertaking anthropological research on the Melanesian nation as a whole, one would rather study the 'Are'are people.6 In so doing, and while still analyzing local rather than “national” phenomena, researchers might, involuntarily and unconsciously, apply on a small-scale, the political and economic criteria used to deal with nations on a broader scale. A tribe could usually have been identified as a people occupying a certain territory, who could be distinguished from the overall national population in reference to their particular (often marginalized and traditional) mode of political and economic organization. In comparison, there seem to be fewer studies of linguistically identifiable groups—instead of tribes—who might well have been spread over a wider territory, and whose economic practices and political systems might not be at all homogeneous. Refusing to a large extent to subscribe to the generalizing view based on political economy, opposing its homogenizing tendency by focusing on small-scale realities instead, mainstream anthropology might nevertheless

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6This example is based on an existing ethnomusicological study by de Coppet and Zemp (1978). Please note, however, that the following remarks do not, in any way, refer to this particular research.
have contributed to the reproduction of the dominant view in that it might have used a preordained set of criteria in studying non-Western peoples on a local level.

The pivotal role that nation has played in the definition of objects of research in anthropology is now being reevaluated in light of some of the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological implications outlined above. For instance, instead of assuming that nation (-as-people or -as-state) is paramount in defining identity, scholars are inclined to examine the various ways by which, under certain economic, social, and political conditions, individuals and groups “build” it. This by no means considers nation as unimportant, but rather no longer regards it as the key definitional parameter a priori (Fischer 1986). As long as the object of study was considered static and peoples as predetermined, that is, fixed realities the ethnographer could readily observe, describe, or even interpret (Clifford 1986:18-19; Turino 1989), the impression was that they were perceived as undifferentiated groups. Since other forms of social differentiation (such as gender, social class, and age) were largely played down, the coherence of these social groups tended to be thought of as the index of the consensus that presumably prevailed within their boundaries (Cohen 1985).

In recent years, significant epistemological reorientations have indeed been initiated. While the former views discussed above are definitively losing ground to newly developed frameworks, Otherness is still at stake. It is, however, no longer a synonym for exoticism, nor the exclusive property of foreign individuals or groups (Rabinow 1986:241). It has become obvious that there are significant “sites of difference,” such as gender, age, physical or mental handicap, that cross so-called national boundaries. Others, be they groups or individuals, now tend to be assigned the status of subjects instead of objects.7 Cultures are now treated either as symbolic and material wholes in the process of becoming and changing (Sahlins 1976), or as complex “webs of significance” (Cohen 1985), and are thus regarded as dynamic and interactive. The assumption of consensus has almost totally vanished as idiosyncrasies (individualities) and subgroup realities have gained a new importance (Bennett 1986). Consequently, identities are viewed as constructed from conflict, divergence, and opposition, at least as much as (if not more than) from order and similarity (Rosaldo 1980).

Paradoxically, homogeneity might still remain as a haunting figure, perhaps the last survivor of the traditional approach to Others. Deprived of its reference to some national entity, it is now often conceived as an inescapable result of “something” happening in the “world-out-there” outside the

7For a discussion of the interaction between researcher and “informants” as subjects, see Rabinow (1986:254-56).
social sciences, that is, as an outcome of the new world political economy. To a large extent, it is indeed imputed to the development of mass communications and is associated with the “global village” that is presumably emerging. But as was suggested previously, political economy has been embedded in classical anthropological frameworks for years. What has happened recently to make researchers suspicious, increasingly uniting in criticizing the globalizing effects of this not-so-new form of social organization? Is it, as Rioux suggested more than ten years ago, that “we are so much immersed in world political economy that even to fight it and to try to overcome it we borrow from its very vocabulary” (Rioux 1978:99) and analytical categories? Why should homogeneity necessarily be the basic characteristic of this new “world culture?” The world political economy is not a force imposed from “above” upon totally deprived individuals and groups. Rather, it is a complex set of institutions, social relationships, and economic practices that are socially and historically mediated and that are the object of multiple differentiated actualizations by individuals and groups within their respective environment (Martín-Barbero 1988). Otherwise, one might assume that a Western phenomenon such as Bruce Springsteen carries the same meanings for a 16-year-old teenager in Canada as for one in Kenya, for instance; or that Kassav’s performance of zouk music has the same role and function in France as in the French Antilles. Hence, the concept of “world political economy” should not be confused with the reality of local forms or phenomena that are related to both the prevailing international politics and economics as well as to regionally-inspired issues.

It is certainly important to recall that, even in the most tightly organized post-industrialized countries, social realities do not answer exclusively to instrumental rationality, that is, they are not only the predictable results of some carefully planned activity, nor the presumably rationally chosen “means” designed to attain, as efficiently as possible, a pursued and calculated end. Symbolic or communicational activities (Habermas 1975) also need to be considered in order to distinguish real human beings from the universal Homo Economicus depicted by such a pragmatic view (Sahlins 1976). Thus, even the most systematic efforts to impose world political economy patterns are bound to produce counter-effects and contradictory results. For instance, in the 1970s, the so-called international music industry had become more and more powerful, distributing and marketing its products in newly conquered non-Western markets. While this contributed to the development of a transnational music, it also led to the emergence of national and regional styles of pop and rock music sung in local dialects or languages rather than in English. Moreover, as Wallis and Malm argue, music is “so close to the heart of men [sic],” that any process of homogenization “would continually be ‘disturbed’ by the activities of an underground cultural guerilla” (1984:324).
This brief critical analysis hardly exhausts the current anthropological debates over ethnography. Nevertheless, having focused on the key issue of the Other and discussed the premises on which it is based, it becomes clear that anthropological concerns cannot be transferred mechanically to any other area of study. These concerns need to be recontextualized, even in those areas in which culture occupies the center of researchers’ preoccupations, such as popular music.

**The Case of Popular Music**

Since it does not constitute an academic discipline as such, the field of popular music studies cannot be discussed as though it were something parallel to anthropology. Nevertheless, combined with its obvious links to culture, its shared concern with the world political economy, as well as its unavoidable involvement with the problem of the Other (to which we shall soon return), it is an ideal area of study in which to investigate further the significance of the issues discussed so far.

Researchers have first been faced with the problem of “constructing” their object of study. Several essays\(^8\) have tried to come to grips with the object by asking questions such as what is popular music, what does “popular” mean in this context, and how is popular music related to groups and communities? The theoretical debates on the meaning of popular have been either quantitative, referring to sales and radio airplay time, for example; qualitative, focusing on the privileged relationships established by people through music; comparative, analyzing so-called classical, jazz, or traditional music; and political, examining the powerful musical institutions and commercial enterprises involved in naming or labeling music.

The media are by and large considered key elements in defining either the conditions of production and distribution to the public or the commodity forms of music. Researchers have focused particularly on the complex networks of production, distribution, consumption, and marketing, thus highlighting the relationship between the media and the music industries. Studies on the control and management of the musical production and reception processes have been concerned with the development and politics of the record industry, the impact of commercial recordings, and the musicians’ status in the corporate industry. In this respect, two main arguments prevail: on the one hand, the “big” industries are said to control, determine, and plan the whole process in an almost Machiavellian way—often dubbed “the Big Plot” argument (Tagg 1985); on the other hand, even though the “big”

\(^8\)See, for example, Cutler (1985); Fabbri (1982); Fiori (1985); Hamm (1982); Middleton (1989); Shepherd (1985); and Tagg (1982).
industries are recognized as fully involved in the music-making process, they are seen as only one of the important partners in the decision-making process and not as the sole deciding agent.

In the midst of the broader controversy about the presumably negative impact of the mass media on culture, the debates over the status of popular music as a media product monopolized the attention of researchers. One of the striking and most fruitful outcomes of these debates is that popular music has since been rightly perceived in terms of the industrialization process in which it is embedded. One other outcome of the impact-oriented approach, however, has been the tendency to address popular music as the raw material of this complex process of industrialized production (Frith 1987). Indeed, popular music is still largely considered as an object fully formed from the very beginning and that is merely “processed,” like soap, through a chain of technological or economic devices.9

By focusing originally on North American and European mass-mediated popular musics, scholars have taken into account phenomena such as international marketing and distribution, transnational production networks, and corporate industries. From the outset then, they have raised questions about what is commonly known as the world political economy. With the intensified globalization of markets as well as the markedly increased presence of the mass media, researchers have been forced to pay careful attention to the issues of cultural identity, which have gained importance in view of the fear of global homogenization (for example, see Cuthbert 1985; Wallis and Malm 1984; and Frith 1981). In this spirit, they have also dealt with phenomena such as cooptation (Garofalo 1987; Perez 1987), resistance (Manuel 1987; Vila 1989), and fusion music (Cowley 1985).

Considering that until recently most studies on popular music were conducted by Westerners in Western societies of the northern hemisphere, it is interesting to note that they were mainly concerned with the musics of particular groups, such as youth (Brake 1980), social classes (Harker 1980; Maróthy 1974; Chapple and Garofalo 1977; W. Weber 1975), Blacks (Roberts 1972; Russell 1970; Toop 1984), subcultures (Clarke 1976; Hebdige 1979), and women (Bradby 1985; Frith and McRobbie 1978; McRobbie and Garber 1976). Even if unintentional, could such a convergence be purely coincidental? Was not the music of these peoples implicitly held as the very symbol of popular music? Could these discourses be seen as writings for and about Others? If so, this convergence is symptomatic of the particular mode of addressing the Other within that field. Whereas, as shown above, the Other in the traditional anthropological approach has centered on the

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9As Frith argues, popular music should be addressed as the result of the industrialized production process rather than as its starting point (1987).
"non-Western," it has seemingly been equivalent in popular music with the "here" (as opposed to "elsewhere"), the "minority," and the "oppressed." Since attention has focused on these groups, can one conclude that their music is the most culturally or socially significant, more authentic than that of male, middle-aged, white, English-speaking, middle-class groups? If so, the implication is that Otherness lies outside music, for example in age, class, race, or gender. Would this assumption not unduly involve the reproduction of a reflection framework whereby music is seen as the mere mirror image of presumably more important cultural, social, or economic realities? Popular music studies now face the challenge of accounting for the specific character of music as it actually constructs, and not only reflects, "sites of difference" (Barrett 1987; Grenier 1989).

**EMERGING QUESTIONS**

The examination of the premises underlying the issue of the Other in recent anthropological debates followed by the analysis of the ways in which this same issue has been addressed in popular music studies has shown not only how central the question is, but also how it is articulated differently in the two areas of research. But the interest of such an approach goes beyond these findings. This investigation points out how some of the dimensions of the issue of the Other emphasized in the anthropological debate have been overlooked in popular music studies and, furthermore, how a discussion of its implications in the anthropological field throws new light on some of the questions already addressed in this distinct area of study.

Among the many new orientations that have been formulated as a result of the critical examination of the Other with regard to anthropological concerns, three stand out: the definition of the Other within an object-subject relationship; the development of mixed analyses which could combine micro and macro dimensions in reference, especially, to the workings of the world political economy at the local level; and the relational character of the Other viewed in terms of the often silenced "Us" it implies. These could be

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The reflection framework is a thesis according to which cultural phenomena are said to reflect other phenomena that are typically perceived as noncultural, such as social structures or class struggles. In this context, music is implicitly viewed as bringing forth nothing of its own. This framework has formed part of several schools of thought: for example, in Marxist theory of ideology, infrastructure (which commonly refers to politics and economics) is conceived as the embodiment of superstructure (equated with culture or ideology); see Harker 1980. In structural-functionalist theory, cultural phenomena such as music are seen as the mere reflection of their social functions; see Silberman 1968.

It should be noted that the reverse is also true, that is, that popular music studies also brings new insights to anthropological research. But developing further goes beyond our scope here.
regarded as so many premises from which new directions for popular music research could be derived, while still taking into consideration the specific attributes of the objects as well as the area of study.

One result of the anthropological debate is the new focus on the definition of the Other, not as a self-enclosed or independent object of study, but, rather, as an object that can be defined only in its relation to the researcher. It is by and through this relation that anthropological discourses aim today to construct their representations in ethnographic writings. In popular music studies, the Other is rarely addressed explicitly in the context of a relation that involved the researcher as subject—a tendency that might also account for overlooking the process of representation of the Other in the discourses of popular music studies. If this relation were taken into account, the emerging question would aim to elucidate how, in popular music studies, the researchers' discourses contribute to constructing the Other and how, by the same token, they position their own discourses vis-à-vis those of critics, musicians, or music industry people, for example. This could in turn lead them to present popular music according to multiple viewpoints.

As previously discussed, the traditional anthropological definition of the Other used to be embedded in a nation-oriented framework; the aim of new approaches is to consider the Other in the context of the world political economy, and to try to integrate a macro analysis with the customary micro analysis, thus bridging the international and local dimensions of the phenomena under study. In popular music studies, concerns with the world political economy were present from the very beginning, connected as they are to the industrialized character of these mass-mediated musics. Macro analysis has been largely predominant in this area of research, and it is only recently that more attention is being paid to local practices. By combining macro and micro dimensions, researchers may well arrive at new insights on how certain dimensions of a musical phenomenon can actually contribute to its very construction on the international level, and how its meanings and practices differ in each context. In this sense then, the local and international meanings and practices related to a musical phenomenon would be seen as feeding one another.

Finally, the current anthropological redefinition of the Other in relational terms plainly contrasts with its traditional definition in popular music studies. As has been shown above, music has traditionally symbolized the Other or creatively articulated “sites of difference” such as class, age, or ethnicity. Drawing on the newly developed relational approach, the very definition of popular music could be challenged. Instead of considering it by and for itself, that is, according to its own inward characteristics, popular music could be looked at in the broader context of the musical field (Mid-
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dleton 1989), that is, within the spectrum of (past and present) musics. The particular attributes of popular music would thus emerge from its ongoing interactions with various musics at distinct historical and social moments.

By and large, in the act of writing about and accounting for Others, whether cultures, peoples, or musics, anthropologists as well as students of popular music are becoming involved in an increasingly self-conscious venture. More and more, scholars are acknowledging that they do indeed construct and produce Others in different ways, within specific contexts, and for no less specific purposes, and in the process, they are also constructing themselves.

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