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Global music : recasting and rethinking the popular as global

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Introduction:

Framework, Aims and Structure

The present dissertation revolves around *popular music* as a global phenomenon. The research focuses on the form and meaning of its musical structures and their rapport with everyday experience¹ at the dawn of the 21st century. In what follows, I argue that the ontological² key to popular music lies in the dialectic between formal attributes and societal dynamics, between musical text and cultural context. To that end, this inquiry unfolds at the intersection of cultural musicology and media studies.

Questions, Problems and Approaches

This declaration of intent is not entirely accurate. Although I do pursue the research line above, the musical corpus it refers to is something of a slippery slope. As I discuss in Chapter 1 and elsewhere in this work, the ambivalence of the term ‘popular’ feeds into the proverbial equivocality of popular music as a *genre*, which adds significantly to the hardness of research projects in this field.

¹ By ‘experience’, I mean the *event* through which individuals engage with other entities and the *outcome* thereof—be it perceptual, emotional or whatsoever—which is neither universal nor mind-independent.

² Here, ontology refers to the question of being (what things are) rather than to the question of existence (that things are) (see Roos 2011b). In some theoretical traditions, e.g. analytic ontology of music, the problem of existence becomes a priority. Differently, my approach to ontology will unfold in a ‘continental’ style, according to which ontologies are ways of ‘being in the world’ in terms of making sense of it. Noteworthy, recent critiques of the epistemology of the social sciences align with this view (particularly those coming from the feminist quarters), e.g. Stanley and Wise 2002; Stanley 2013).

Grammatically speaking, 'popular' is an adjective. In English, according to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, it means (1) 'liked, enjoyed, or supported by many people' and (2) 'for or involving ordinary people rather than experts or very educated people'³. Understood in this sense, 'popular' cannot be a genre. That is because, to say it with Aristotle (trans. 1928), 'popular' is not a *genus* but a *differentia*; e.g. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* is a Baroque oratorio (*genus*) that is liked, enjoyed, or supported by many people (*differentia*). Although this argument holds water, I find it more productive to study popular music as a genre, namely as a *genus*, because that is how many musicians, audiences and scholars understand it. They do so by virtue of a presupposed relation of causality between media distribution and commercialization on the one hand, and the formal aspects of the musical material on the other. I present evidence and arguments supporting this claim in the first part of this study, especially in Chapter 3. In this context, there is no consensus as to how the causal relationship works, let alone the definitions of 'liked', 'enjoyed', 'supported' and 'ordinary people' that furnish the dictionary definition of 'popular'. With this study, I address this equivocal situation.

For the reasons above, making sense of popular music, as a global phenomenon, by means of a priori definitions, will not do. Thus, I invite the readers to suspend their preconceptions for a while. I contend that, in order to grasp popular music as a coherent whole, listening to the musical material with a view to its social setting and its semantic potential is in order. This investigation is a definitional enterprise, which strives to answer the question: *what is popular music?*

I should say something about how I intend to achieve this goal. One way of going about it is to provide a categorical answer to solve the problem of equivocality. In that

³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/popular>

case, my conclusion must be that popular music is, univocally, such and such. This alternative is inappropriate, because there is no omnibus definition that can cover the complexity of popular music, neither as a concept nor as a phenomenon. Hence, I shall discard it outright. Another option is to produce an analytical answer that qualifies and redefines the terms of the question. Should I try this, then my answer must be that it depends on the sense in which I understand popular music. Once that is clear, I may attempt to formulate a univocal response. This is a more promising option, because making distinctions about the meaning of popular music *as a global phenomenon* allows for useful clarifications while removing the grounds for a reductionist approach. For that reason, I deal with the question by reinterpreting its object of inquiry.⁴

Thinking with influential authors such as Bhabha (2012), Hall ([1981] 2010), Ortiz ([1940] 1987), and many others, one might argue that equivocality is not at all a problem, that it is actually desirable because it brings together ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ in ways that are artistically enriching and epistemologically enlightening. After all, that is precisely the source of creative tension at the heart of postmodern music, diasporic music, postcolonial music and many other repertoires of resistance. That is, also, the contrast expressed by the interplay of academic disciplines and cultural identities, which tends to promote the decolonisation and diversification of the academic field (I refer to these matters in the following chapters). In this account, understanding ‘identity’ as unfixed, ever changing and linked to negotiation and dialogue, compels us to celebrate equivocality as a liberating force. That said, even though I agree with such an approach, a word of clarification is in order.

⁴ This rationale leans on the fourfold classification of questions according to Theravada philosophy. The *Anguttara Nikaya* reads: ‘(1) There is a question to be answered categorically; (2) there is a question to be answered after making a distinction; (3) there is a question to be answered with a counter-question; and (4) there is a question to be set aside. These are the four ways of answering questions’ (AN 4.42: 432-433), cf. answers to Subha in the *Majjhima Nikaya* (MN 99). I am favouring the second option.

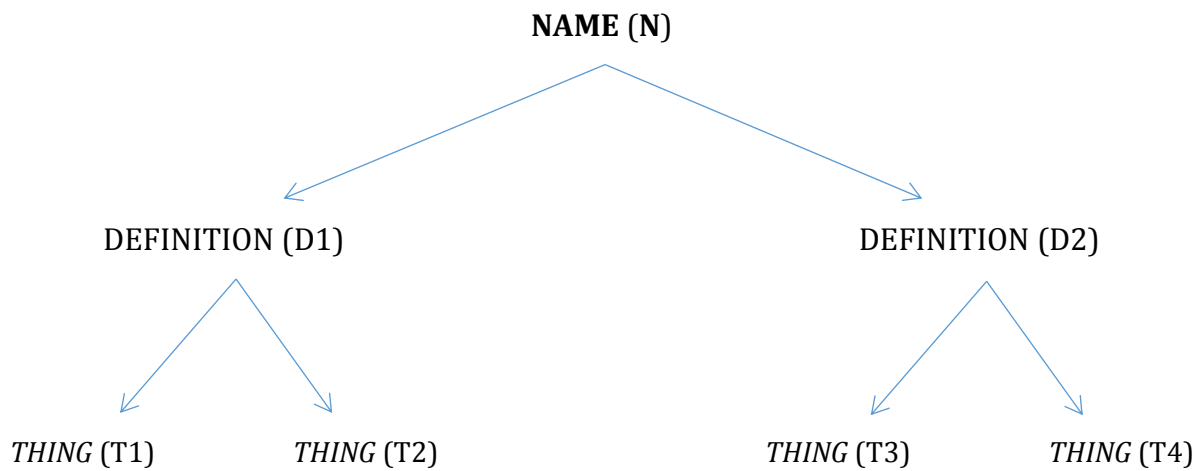
To avoid misunderstandings, I will elaborate—very briefly—on the notion of equivocality that I have in mind. Again, my approach to the matter builds on Aristotle's, which he introduces at the beginning of *Categories*:

Things are said to be *named* 'equivocally' when, though they have a common *name*, the *definition* corresponding with the name differs for each. Thus, a real man [a thing] and a figure in a picture [another thing] can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named, for, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each [thing]. For should any one define in what sense each is an animal, his definition in the one case will be appropriate to that case only.

On the other hand, things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common. A man and an ox are both 'animal', and these are univocally so named, inasmuch as not only the name, but also the definition, is the same in both cases: for if a man should state in what sense each is an animal, the statement in the one case would be identical with that in the other. (*Cat* 1, 1a1-12, trans. Edghill, 1928; emphasis mine)⁵

Notice that what is equivocal is the act of naming. Neither things nor definitions nor names are. In other words, equivocality is a specific mode of nominal relation between a single name and a number of things, by means of a number of definitions.

⁵ The revised Oxford translation: 'When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different, they are called *homonymous*' (Aristotle, *Cat* 1, 1a1-2, trans. Ackrill, 1984; emphasis original). Although the terminology changes, the meaning remains the same.



In the diagram above, equivocality and univocality play on the vertical axis. They are not directly concerned with the horizontal relations among things or definitions, which includes their sameness (e.g. T1-T2) and their differences (e.g. D1-D2, T1-T3). It follows that equivocality, in this sense of the term, is not the liberating overlap of such relations. It is neither the interstice space of culture (Bhabha 2012) nor the setting for negotiation of meanings (Hall 2006). In turn, univocality does not render the latter impossible, nor sameness and difference as mutually exclusive. In the end, it all depends on the sense in which things are different or the same (for the critical agent, that is, be it as a musician, a listener or a researcher). Thus, univocality does not cancel the possibility of dialogue. It promotes it, or so I argue, because any liminal formation or symbolic struggle springs from a positive ground⁶, the same ground that is to be accepted, rejected, or negotiated (Hall 2006), appropriated, hybridised or remixed (Hebdige [1979] 2002), McRobbie 2005; Bhabha 2012). Difference, in musical research and practice, represents a fleeting instant of univocal recognition of identity, as the 'self'

⁶ See Adorno ([1949] 2006),

that is neither identical to, nor dissociated from, the 'other'—a blasphemy, as Bhabha (2012) would put it (321-323)⁷. Univocality, therefore, does not relate to essentialism, nor is it opposed to discourses of fluidity.

This approach is consistent with the analytical manner of answering the question about popular music. That is because, in defining the global sense in which I understand the popular, I am also defining how the musical materials under consideration may or may not count as popular music *in that global sense*. Of course, the idea is not to reduce every single definition of popular music to global music. Instead, the objective is to open up a field of theoretical discourse that is less prone to the gridlocks and misunderstandings that result from the lack of positive grounds (incommensurability, fragmentation and so on).

The strategy implemented to that end consists in: 1) *reviewing*, as thoroughly as possible, the manifold theoretical approaches to popular music in order to assess the conceptual tangle we are dealing with; 2) *recasting* the notion of popular music with a view to the intrinsic and extrinsic relations displayed by the popular style. In that spirit, I advance a case for the construal of popular music *as global music* in attention to key processes of high modernity, such as institutional mediatisation and communicational globalisation (Hjarvard 2008b, 2013). My point is that, whereas popular music may refer to different musical bodies depending on cultural location, global music is a more stable category that can be traced to the specific coordinates of the transnational culture (Wallis and Malm 1990) and the global space of interaction (Hjarvard 2008, 2013). Global music is the distinctive contribution of this study and therefore the 'tonal centre' of the discussion.

⁷ See also Bhabha (2012: 232ff) on difference.

This approach mobilises a combination of disciplines. The initial move of *reviewing* popular music corresponds to an exploration of the field as regards (1) the comprehension of its limits and (2) the interpretation of its content. To achieve the former, I turn to relevant works in continental and analytic epistemology (Foucault [1966] 2005; Oppenheim and Putnam 1998). This I do in order to advance my own position without embracing any paradigm in particular. Regarding the latter, popular music studies is organised according to its theoretical traditions and commented in detail as to set the scene of the debate.

The moment of *recasting* is committed to make sense of the music world as it exists at the time of writing, namely, erected on an omnipresent platform of mediations that account for intense institutional changes in the musical materials it enables. Popular music takes place as a global phenomenon due to processes where media technologies and practices did play, and continue to play, a fundamental role. Mediatisation theory (together with media sociology, political economy and musical analysis) lends itself optimally to such a pursuit.

Institutional Mediatisation Theory

The version of mediatisation theory that informs my argument⁸ is the so-called *institutional approach*, developed by Danish scholar Stig Hjarvard (2013). By way of introduction, the scrutiny that follows will concentrate on two aspects: (1) the epistemological advantages of middle range theorization over micro and macro levels of analysis, (2) technology as the spatiotemporal bender of communication and action.

⁸ Albeit 'mediatisation' relates to a wide range of discussions in the social sciences, there is no single definition of it. Scholars have strived to get hold of such diversity, with numerous edited volumes (e.g. Lundby 2014; Hepp and Krotz 2014), and journal issues (e.g. Meitz 2012; Couldry and Hepp 2013a; Hepp et al. 2010; Hjarvard and Petersen 2013) devoted to sorting out definitional tangles while promoting the profitable aspects of such conceptual richness.

With *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (2013)⁹, Hjarvard puts together the fundamentals of a theory in the making since the 1990s. Although the term ‘mediatisation’ did not make it to Hjarvard’s headings until 2004—in occasion of his discussion of the global toy industry (Hjarvard 2004a)—the main ideas behind it can be traced back to his pursuits at the University of Copenhagen as the head of the Global Media Cultures Research Program (Hjarvard 1999). It was not until 2008, however, that Hjarvard’s view on mediatisation as the process whereby the media and other social institutions become reciprocally dependent reached full theoretical systematization through the publication of *En verden af medier* [The world of media] (2008a; see 2008b).

The book published in 2013 partially reproduces the organization of its Danish homologue, though it excludes the discussion on language (2008a: 123–154; see 2004b) and includes an introduction and an epilogue flanking the main corpus of the volume. Here, Hjarvard defines mediatisation against the background of two seminal traditions in communication studies, namely the effect paradigm and the audience research paradigm. The distinction between these and Hjarvard’s position hinges on the argument that, whereas the former rest on ‘the use of media for communicating meaning’ (i.e. mediation), mediatisation theory aims to long-lasting structural transformations where the media play a determining institutional role in social and cultural praxis (Hjarvard 2013: 2). Hence the label ‘institutional approach’: it treats media processes not as objects of study but as explanatory grounds for discerning human experience. This specificity also separates the theory from traditions that define mediatisation otherwise, e.g. as modification of communicative practice (Krotz 2007¹⁰),

⁹ Hjarvard (2013) uses the Oxford style (en-GB-oxendict), hence his book’s title reads ‘mediatization’ instead of ‘mediatisation’. Differently, I am using the -ise spelling throughout this work. This is the only occasion where the -ize spelling will show, for the sake of correct citation.

¹⁰ Also Hepp and Krotz (2014); Hepp 2009).

as form and format (Altheide and Snow 1979¹¹) or as a mediatic turn (Meyrowitz 1985¹²) (see Adolf 2012: 160-163; Couldry and Hepp 2013b).

The Meso Level of Analysis

The first aspect I shall refer to is meta-theoretical, and has to do with the balance between the generality and the specificity of the claims raised by academic research. Hjarvard makes clear from the outset that the explanatory scope of institutional mediatisation corresponds to a middle-range theory, or as he also calls it, a meso level of analysis (2013: 4, 11–14, 153ff, see Merton 1963: § 2). In this regard, the author argues for a mode of theory building meant to detach research from both over-generalizations and under-theorization. Such middle ground results from a well-gauged combination of fundamental theorization and empirical analysis attentive to the specificities of the phenomena under consideration. Mediatisation, by its own relational character, helps sensitise the concepts quickened by the eye of the analytical beholder. Therefore, in this account, mediatisation theory becomes an open and exploratory device instead of a limiting one. This allows the ontological frameworks and material conditions at work in every situation to permeate theorization in ways that make room for generalizations across socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts with a desirable degree of equanimity¹³.

The following example is illustrative. A cine-forum took place in 2014 about the volatile situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)¹⁴, where a civil war of a transnational scope has been devastating the country for years. Interestingly, the film

¹¹ See Altheide (2012).

¹² Cf. McLuhan (2003), Ong (2002).

¹³ Jensen (2013: 208–210) has questioned this position.

¹⁴ *'The Silent Chaos: a silent war narrated by voiceless people'* (March 14, 2014), cine-forum organized by Leiden International Short Film Experience (LISFE) and the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University.

programmed for the event was not only about belligerence in Central Africa but also about the manner in which the deaf experience such a situation in the east of the country. The title of movie is *The Silent Chaos* (Spanò 2013b). Its director, Antonio Spanò, comments:

The Silent Chaos was conceived as a documentary about one of the many on-going silent wars in the world. However, the initial script has been changed after an unexpected encounter with some deaf guys in Butembo. It was impressive to see that among the population they were those with more yearn to communicate. From that moment, it was clear that our way of describing the reality of that place would have changed. We finally found the starting point of the movie (2013a).

In many senses, theory building is analogous to documentary filmmaking, particularly in that both are narrative gestures about something else. Even in the absence of a plot in the strict sense of the term, fulfilling the will to describe, to explain, or to triangulate a standpoint from where to describe and explain, irrevocably involves the articulation of discourse and therefore an utterer that lets itself be felt in the spatiotemporal organization of the text. That productive moment of organization and shaping, i.e. articulation itself, is indebted to a certain positioning a priori that determines not only the incidental emplacement of the camera, or the strategic selection of the cases for scrutiny, but also the networks of significance from which the story is to be told. That constitutes the true 'starting point' of theorization. Now then, such a genesis is unavoidably twofold. In the film, the peculiar focus on the deaf population in a

context hostile to diversity (Spanò 2013a) determines the narrative outcome on all levels, as does the background of the young director as an Italian filmmaker who has witnessed the struggles of his people and the wars of others throughout his globetrotting career. On the one hand, Spanò's constellation of significances is the ontological foundation that enables his understanding of North Kivu; on the other hand, the Congolese region and its people, deaf or otherwise, is the intentional object of his cinematographic articulation.

When conducting individual studies on politics, religion or play, Hjarvard tends to choose the narrative standpoint of highly modernized societies, in an analytical gesture that simultaneously quickens his own episteme as a Scandinavian scholar. The meso level of analysis leaves room for adaptation and dialogue, for 'shooting the story' from the perspective that better fits the phenomenon at stake—yet without cancelling the academic context (the fundamental theories) to which mediatization theory subscribes.

The aspect of middle-range theorisation that I wish to emphasise concerns the epistemic moment of knowledge acquisition, the consideration of which is critical for the present dissertation. I maintain that without a balanced dialogue between a priori narratives and factual experiences, theoretical discourses run the risk to become over-generalisations or under-theorisations. This is particularly so in the field of popular music, as I shall argue in Chapter 1. The task of rethinking the popular as global begins here, by questioning the narrative perspective of the research itself, in terms of its cultural and disciplinary determiners. That is because depending on one's assumptions about music as a construct, the definition of the popular may change in significant ways.

There is more to our example than the epistemic agency of the researcher. During the Q&A after the screening, the audience asked the filmmaker about the media

landscape in North Kivu, in terms of the possibilities for the deaf to circumvent inconveniences with the aid of the digital technology. Spanò answered that, apart from the fact that illiteracy is rather common among the population and that electricity is not always available, media communications in the region shrink to non-smartphone-based telephony and a few community radio stations. In his view, oral communication is strong in the DRC, which is one of the reasons why the deaf have it so difficult when it comes to social interaction¹⁵. Later on, communication theory came into question. A participant observed that via the concept of *media logic* (Altheide 2012; Altheide and Snow 1979; Hjarvard 2013: 17-18, 44-45), it is possible to explain how the European media frame the Congolese experience according to the expectations of certain institutions. Such reflections took a good part of the debate. However, that line of inquiry tells us nothing about North Kivu. Instead, it refers to how highly modernized societies engage with Central Africa from a distance. In order to engage mediatisation in the DRC, one must acknowledge the local realities and institutions, including communicational cultures and media landscapes (all the more from the perspective of the deaf, the analysis of which demands attention to the meaningful experiences of that particular community).

Could mediatisation cope with this case? Being a middle-range theory, it is in an ideal position to do so. Concretely, this can be achieved by (1) analysing the unique ways of Congolese communication, for the regular citizen and for the deaf, as well as the position of the available media within that specific constellation, (2) highlighting the differences between that and other coexisting settings, such as that of highly modernized societies. The idea is to 'stipulate general patterns of development within particular social institutions or cultural phenomena, and within specific historical

¹⁵ Noteworthy, the impressions of the filmmaker are consistent with leading theories on oral communication in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Diagne 2005).

periods in particular social and cultural contexts' (Hjarvard 2013: 3). The fact that scholars discern such patterns through the lens of their own experience is not obtrusive, insofar as it is clear that theirs is one of many realities that high modernity affords qua historical period.

The suggestion to attune theory building to specific historical, cultural and technological coordinates is at the heart of the present dissertation. This has a twofold impact over the research. In terms of the locus of popular music as a global phenomenon, I pay special attention to the diverse spaces of social interaction where people disseminate, store and consume music. Noteworthy, the same musical products commonly exist in subcultural, national and global spheres simultaneously; therefore, one must be careful with the claims raised about the development of global musical materials. In a similar vein, middle range theorisation compels, also, to listen carefully to the repertoire under consideration. Defining global music as musical sound is key to this study. To that extent, the experience of musical sound is the empirical substance par excellence for the purpose of analysis. If a critical consideration of the narrative perspective is the theoretical starting point of this project, the first-hand experience of global sounds is without a doubt its empirical counterpart.

The meso theoretical position reminds us, on the one hand, of notable efforts to promote cultural/historical awareness as sine qua non of any critical enterprise. In the European tradition, this can be traced back to the end of the 18th century (at least), from Diderot's aesthetics and political thinking (Diderot et al. 1992; Diderot [1772] 1996) to Marx's historical materialism ([1859] 2009), to Adorno's cultural critique ([1955] 1983), to Foucault's archaeology of knowledge ([1966] 2005) and so forth. On the other hand, it also recalls ethnographical approaches to the rhetoric and linguistic elements of

human praxis (Wilkins and Wolf 2012; Geertz 1973b; cf. Said 1985). I shall profit from this compatibility by turning to these and other authors in the course of the argument. In terms of productive alliances, the cross-fertilization of mediatisation theory and other trains of thought (of which the aforementioned are only a sample) is instrumental in the consolidation of effective approaches to media products, such as popular/global music.

Technology as Spatiotemporal Bender

The second aspect to consider is theoretical and refers the agency of the media in the context of this research. The emphasis is on the structural changes that the media as institutions bring about in their interplay with other institutions. In what follows, I will limit myself to introduce the conceptual ground of Hjarvard's approach, without further considerations as to how these ideas relate to the study of popular music as global music—although the connections should not be too difficult to realise. I shall elaborate on the latter in further sections.

Following Giddens' (2013) structuration theory, Hjarvard defines institutions in a wide sense, as 'the stable, predictable elements in modern society' that 'constitute the framework for human communication and action in a given sphere of human life, at a given time and place' (Hjarvard 2013: 21). At the same time, in a narrow sense, institutions are organisations steered by implicit and explicit rules as well as tasked with the administration of authority and material resources. The media, on a par with any other social institution, display exactly the same kind of attributes. They are said to be semi-independent, a point that is brought home by means of a historical account, according to which they shift from 'instruments of other institutions' to 'cultural

institutions' to their current semi-independence (2013: 23–27)¹⁶. The discussion will focus on the latter with an emphasis on their non-organizational aspects.

Let us consider the most concrete features of the mediatisation process. Hjarvard underscores some elements of previous media research that are latent in his own contribution (2013: 11–14, see 63–66). Medium theory as advanced by McLuhan (2003), Ong (2002) and Meyrowitz (1985), and the media sociologies of Thompson (1995) and Krotz (2007), stand out as important currents of thought running through his own work. Such affiliations situate Hjarvard's distinctive definition of mediatisation in a tradition that gives great importance to the technological aspect of mediation and its impact over communicational practices.

The mediatisation of society is the process whereby the latter becomes more and more dependent on the media and their distinctive logic, Hjarvard states (2013: 17). On the one hand, the media integrate into the vast majority of contemporary social institutions; on the other hand, they hold a semi-autonomous institutional status of their own, whereby their norms, authority and resources become influential for other institutional compounds. Since human interaction increasingly happens in a mediated fashion, a powerful media logic (Altheide 2012; Altheide and Snow 1979) rises as the institutional, formal and technological *modus operandi* that structures such sort of social relations (2013: 17). This situation affects human communication and action in profound ways. The institutional interconnections described above—and hence the mediatisation of society—rely on the power of the media to crystallize such interactions through non-direct communication.

¹⁶ Noteworthy, Hjarvard's timeline refers to the development of the mass media, which is, in my view, a weak point in his exposition. I shall not elaborate on the matter, because it is not relevant for the purposes in hand and because it is not a fatal flaw in the reasoning.

From this perspective, it is reasonable to conceive the media as technologies that allow for the *spatiotemporal expansion* of human communication (Hjarvard 2013: 19). The medium qua substance displays unique social and aesthetic forms that frame communicative events in diverse social situations and contexts (Hjarvard 2013: 19). In this connection, a distinction is made between direct (strong) and indirect (weak) mediatisation, where the former refers to the conversion of formerly non-mediated interactions into mediated activity, whereas the latter spells the growing influence of media contents and devices over general social practices of all sorts.

In a different vein, as regards space and time, the argument turns to debates on human perception. Hinging on Gibson's (1986) ecological theory, Hjarvard proposes a theory of media affordances with a view to social interaction (in the sense of communicative as well as non-communicative action). In this context, affordances are the potential uses of an object according to its material characteristics. However, the actualization of the object's potential depends on the 'characteristics of the human or animal that interacts with the object' (2013: 27). Along these lines, Hjarvard observes, Norman and Berkrot (2011) add 'perceived affordances' to Gibson's theory, namely the 'user's psychological evaluation of the object in relation to his/her objectives' (Hjarvard 2013: 28). This includes cultural conventions and interpretations. In this light, the media are technologies with 'affordances that facilitate, limit, and structure communication and action' (2013: 28).

The media afford time-space expansions, multitasking, and simultaneity. In a rather administrative sense, they allow actors to optimize interaction by increasing the control over their personal investment in social activities, especially those involving the acquisition of useful information. Being *sociable*, in terms of interaction for the sake of

interaction (Hjarvard 2013: 146ff), is efficiently manageable via networked channels, but it is no longer a necessary preamble in order to engage in fruitful social interaction. This also involves higher control over information exchange. For instance, the impression of joviality or tiredness given to the interlocutor in a face-to-face conversation is subject to the enacting element in situ, whereas the same impression given off via instant messaging can be prepared and shaped in a strategic fashion—yet more promptly than via old-school posted letters. One should not read this observation as a cynic ode to hypocrisy and inauthenticity, but as a descriptive indication of the social distance and/or proximity that the media can afford. This situation goes hand in hand with the opening up of new spaces of communication and action, the restructuring of the social norms of acceptable behaviour for such spaces, and the emergence of new mechanisms of norm enforcement.

Following Hjarvard, diverse stages for social interaction, physical and nonphysical, become available with the technological bending of space and time. Hence, a process of *virtualisation* happens:

Earlier, institutions were more bound to specific places [...] As a consequence of the intervention of the media, individuals can take part in and partake of many different social institutions, irrespective of their physical location (Hjarvard 2013: 33).

Following Hjarvard, virtualisation structures a *new social geography*, where the space-time formations of the individual, the local, the national and the global host

interconnected flows of communication and action (2013: 36). This is a key feature of media technology as spatiotemporal bender. Institutional mediatisation theory deals with macro processes such as individualization and globalization in light of the (reformulated) spatiotemporal coordinates of high modernity. The structuring consequences of the media affordances over human interaction—of which virtualization is a case in point—are unequivocal signs of the mediatisation of culture and society at the micro-social level (Hjarvard 2013: 37). The plausibility of this claim is hard to resist.

The constitution of virtual spaces of communication and action is fundamental, also, for processes of inter-institutional interaction. This aspect of the theory moves from the objective features of technology to its ontological agency. I cannot begin to do justice to such an important aspect of mediatisation theory. I content myself with this brief mention and an invitation to look into it with a critical eye in Chapter 4, where the argument for global music is derived from it.

A Word on Global Music

The term ‘global music’ has been used in earlier research to denote repertoires similar to the one here under consideration. For example, German musicologist Walter Wiora ([1961] 1963) devoted serious attention to the constitution of a ‘global music culture’ (158) in the context of the so-called ‘technological age’ (153-157). The present study agrees with some ideas expressed therein, while emphatically opposing others.

As far as similarities go, the notion of global music from the standpoint of mediatisation is historically compatible with Wiora’s ‘fourth musical age’.¹⁷ The latter

¹⁷ Wiora contemplates four ages of musical development: ‘The prehistoric period is the first age. The second embraces Greece and Rome, and the Near and Far East. The third deals with the history of Western music down to the end of the nineteenth century. The fourth age is our own’ (J.A.W. 1966: 351)

begins at the outset of the 20th century and displays a remarkable plurality of musical practices (Wiora [1961] 1963: 154-155; cf. Attali 1977; Nettl 1985). Likewise, the conception of the media on a par with other institutions of transnational scope¹⁸ as key factors in the globalisation of music is congruent with mediatisation theory. According to Wiora, the technological developments in the fields of transport and media communications contributed to the establishment of a travelling public and pushed a redefinition of the 'audience' in terms of new possibilities of musical experience. Wiora recognised an element of standardisation as a force parallel to musical *syncretism*; the latter defined in a postmodern sense (Britto García 1991; Jameson 1991; Goodwin 1995; Rodriguez 1997; see § 3.3). Last but not least, Wiora's warning about ideologies and frameworks as relevant factors in the analysis of musical meaning ([1961] 1963: 199-201) is readily taken up in Chapter 1, in the context of a meta-theoretical analysis of popular music studies as a research field. In fact, the discrepancies between the present dissertation and Wiora's work draw precisely on that warning.

First, this research is incompatible with any version of progressivism or cultural evolutionism. That line of work has a history of its own, which I discuss in §§ 2.1.3 and 3.3.4.2 in order to understand its role in the definitional entanglement of popular musical studies. However, the notions of *evolution* and *progress*, which are present in current musicological debates (Morley 2013; Tomlinson 2015; Benzon 2013; see Dennett 2002, 1991), are not deemed explanatory here, except regarding the advancement of ICTs in an instrumental sense (with an eye to the historical frameworks of usefulness they rise from¹⁹). Instead of Wiora's stream from primitivism to artistic perfection to techno-industrial progress (Wiora [1961] 1963: 156; see Bor 2008: 36-37;

¹⁸ Namely, organisations concerned with development, commerce and education.

¹⁹ Heidegger [1954] 1977, [1950] 2001); cf. Adorno 2003); Hoggart 1957).

Treitler 1989: 129-131), this research suggests an understanding of discontinuities in music as correlative to their specific circumstances without implying any 'betterment' over time. In this vein, structural simplicity and complexity are not at all markers of musical progress.

Second, this study does not endorse any form of ethnocentrism. Wiora argues that the global music culture of the 20th century has its origins in the colonialist diffusion of European music since the 1500s, which continued well into the 20th century with the intensified spread of so-called Western music ([1961] 1963: 156). Given the particular features of the colonial process, the author portrays Western music beyond European borders as to include products from the Americas, the 'Orient' and the 'primitive peoples' outside the Euro-American context.

In Wiora's narrative, the American continent eventually surpasses the colonial phase of development and takes up a higher place next to Europe, which marks the definite establishment of Western music in the fourth age. At this point, Pan-American music feeds back into the global stream of distribution, via South American dance music (without further specification) and North American jazz (from New Orleans) as well as Broadway musicals and Hollywood soundtracks (*ibid.* 159). It is acknowledged that African and Afro-American musical traditions are key elements of some of these repertoires, and that a two-way flux between Europe and America became prevalent during the first half of the 20th century (saliently, in connection with jazz), still insisting in the primitive character of non-Western materials as remnants of the first musical age (*ibid.* 164-165). This interplay seems to encompass 'popular' and 'art' music alike²⁰, with the inclusion of Villa-Lobos, Copland, Gershwin and Sessions in the dramatis persona of

²⁰ The distinction between 'popular' and 'art' is controversial, as I discuss it in detail in § 3.1. I use the terms here as mere placeholders to summarise Wiora's position.

this musical history (composers who, except for Sessions, incorporated 'popular' elements to their compositions).

Meanwhile, the narrative goes, non-Western musical cultures gradually abandon their styles as part of the global process of transformation, the outcome of which is a 'general musical culture' with worldwide currency. In this context, the musical practices of 'high oriental civilisations' in the 20th century are pictured as spin-offs of European trends, not only as regards composition and performance, but also in terms of modes of distribution and consumption. It is true that key elements of global music, the way I conceive it in the present dissertation, are traceable to cultural exchanges that had started much earlier than the 1900s. Particularly interesting is the argument that such exchanges made way for 'national schools' as amalgams of 'local customs and foreign influences' ([1961] 1963: 158), where dominant Western models prevailed while affording a significant diversity of styles. A version of this theme will be latent in the characterisation of 'popular' as 'global' in Chapter 4. However, the ethnocentric understanding of musical value hinted by Wiora runs against the grain of my argument. I maintain that the core of global musical is a set of delocalised, de-territorialised rhythm structures that are detached from any particular culture, community or tradition.

This understanding of the global falls closer to an earlier work in cultural musicology: Fernando Ortiz' *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar* ([1940] 1987). Although the work remains under the influence of evolutionist thought (with references to 'primitive' peoples and similes between cultural and biological inheritance), the Cuban author introduces the concept of transculturation to account for the 'transit' from one culture to another in a non-ethnocentric manner:

It is our understanding that the term *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another, because the latter consists not only in acquiring a different culture, which is properly speaking what the Anglo-American voice *acculturation* indicates, instead the process implies the necessary loss or uprooting of a preceding culture as well, which might be called a partial *deculturation*, and, next to that, it involves the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena which could be denominated of *neoculturation* (Ortiz [1940] 1987: 96, italics in the original)

It is important to stress the generative character of transculturation, in the wake of which the difference between it and concepts such as *assimilation*, in the evolutionist sense of the *mission civilisatrice*, becomes evident. Transculturation does not refer to cultural communities embracing the values of a different, dominant culture—a sort of acculturation with normative weight in some migration and citizenship models (Siapera 2010: 45). That process would land us with the assimilated culture becoming part of the assimilating one, therefore subtracting it as a cultural phenomenon without creating a new one. Differently, Ortiz' envisions transculturation as a pattern of cultural change that always makes way for a new cultural formation.

Ortiz illustrates the nuances of the process by turning to Cuban history as a stream of successful and unsuccessful instances of transculturation. In his view, they are the result of the *contact* between the different cultures who have coincided on the island over time. Thus, the contact between the Taínos (Neolithic Amerindians) and the European conquerors is described as a 'failed transculturation for the indigenous people and a radical and cruel one for the upstarts' (Ortiz [1940] 1987: 94), with the result of

the former being eradicated and the latter being in need to repopulate the territory from the scratch. The contact between Europeans and Africans was different, for it was as an interplay between groups characterised by cultural uprooting and the need to adjust to new material and social conditions. Yet they are distinguished in terms of gains and losses: the masters' hopefulness versus the slaves' hopelessness regarding the possibilities ahead. For Ortiz, colonial Cuban culture was born from this seminal moment of transculturation, which paved the way to subsequent ones.

Notice that European and African cultures did not disappear as the Taínos did, nor did one dissolve into the structure of the other, as assimilationist discourses would have us believe. Nevertheless, if Ortiz is right and the history of the Cuban people is the history of its transculturation, then the disappearance of cultural groups remains a possibility. For instance, the productive contact among European, African, and Asian cultures in Cuba during and after the colony (which I do not recount here), is indicative of subsequent transformations of Cuban culture whereby earlier versions of it would have to make way for new ones, via transculturation.

The global aspect of music I argue for in the present study leans on this sort generative cultural transformation, through which the culture under consideration remains in flux without becoming incoherent, in perennial contact with other cultures whence it obtains momentum and symbolic nourishment. The culture in question, as I shall argue in the following chapters, is a global musical culture. At this point, the differences between Wiora's take on the matter and mine, based on the concept of transculturation, become clearer. Instead of a process of assimilation of all musical systems into a global, inescapable whole of westernised socio-musical practices, my proposal aims to define the popular as global in terms multi-directional exchanges of

musical material and the identification of a global corpus that owes its existence to an abundance of musical contact as never seen before. This position is fully compatible with transculturation, as the ‘complex process of fusion and transformation of impinging musical cultures, which is the logical end product of reciprocal cultural borrowing’ (Kartomi 1981: 233-234)

Different from Ortiz’, however, my thesis involves an element of de-territorialisation in tune with current states of affairs that was hardly conceivable in the context of Caribbean academia in the 1940s. By that token, the phenomenon created by transculturation, in this specific case, is not a single culture attached to a certain nation in the sense of cultural community. Instead, the phenomenon here under consideration is a transnational musical culture—shall we say, a transculture—the native ‘territory’ of which is the virtual space of communication and action that Hjarvard (2013) describes. That is why I will turn to a later version of transculturation, by Wallis and Malm (1990), who propose a similar pattern of cultural change but involving (1) more than two actors in simultaneous contact (2) the creation of a technologically supported transculture above the (cultural) nation and the (political) nation-state. I shall discuss their work in some detail in Chapter 4, as preparatory work for the recasting of popular as global via mediatisation. Now then, provided the wide recognition given to Ortiz in anthropological and musicological circles, it would not be arbitrary for the reader to associate his *Contrapunteo* with any reference to transculturation. Hence this brief discussion, to clear the way for my own elaboration after Wallis and Malm (1990).

Structure of the Dissertation

Three parts constitute the corpus of this dissertation, largely in agreement with the stages of reviewing, recasting and rethinking mentioned above.

Part One sets up the theoretical framework of the research. In Chapter 1, I articulate a meta-theoretical reflection on the current state of affairs in popular music studies. My claim is that the multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural character of the field contributes to the equivocality of its object, which begs the question as to how to assess research quality in that context. Here, categorical confusion and communicational obstruction stand out as the main problems caused by equivocality, against which definitional accuracy suggests itself as an epistemological and rhetorical asset (Quintana 2011; cf. Middleton and Manuel 2001). What follows is a dialectical succession of theses and antitheses around the question of quality control in popular music research. Besides mapping the field on the level of second-order theory, this chapter allows a better understanding of the timely contribution of this dissertation to the academic debate on popular music, as well as the rationale behind the constitution of the theoretical framework that follows it. Chapter 2 organises and recounts the scholarly threads of popular music research with relevance to our discussion, based on the concepts of *authenticity* and *commoditisation*. Of undeniable prominence in the field, these two constructs take the centre of the stage at this point, for their interplay constitutes the headstone locking together the assessment of *global music* as a useful theoretical contribution. It is worth noting that the selection of theories under consideration answers to the relevance they bear with relation to mediatization theory and in function of their role in recasting the popular as global. The concluding remarks at the end of Chapter 2 includes a 'road map' that displays the links between the different theories and their family resemblances, together with observations as to how these contents feed into the conceptualisation of global music.

Part Two concentrates on the recasting of the popular as global. With that purpose in mind, Chapter 3 draws on Chapter 2 to analyse a number of influential definitions of popular music. Although they are not always compatible, such conceptualisations have in common that they are negative enunciations in a logical sense. That is to say, they define what popular music is by stating what it is not. This *strategy of rejection*, as I shall call it, tends to render the popular as non-art and non-folk. The results are baffling. Multiple cultural settings and disciplinary frameworks are scrutinised through this stage—the latter rooted in the social sciences but within the humanistic tradition of philosophical aesthetics. In so doing, the core of the ontological problem as to what popular music is becomes recognisable; the tangle becomes evident. I make no claims to originality regarding the endeavour to criticise the triangulation of popular, folk and art. The purpose of this chapter is strategic: it serves as a *reductio ad absurdum* to prove the impractical character of the strategy of rejection and the negative definitions derived from it. Counting on a picture of the pitfalls ahead, the thesis moves on towards a positive definition.

Recasting proper takes place in Chapter 4. It is here where listening takes the front seat. It is here, also, where the question of definitions shows its maximum complexity. How to discern what counts as popular music, as a global phenomenon, if one cannot distinguish it by means of current definitions? For present purposes, my strategy consists in tracing the musical genealogy that leads from certain national markets to the transnational culture to the global space of social interaction. This is crucial, because the latter is the stage where the popular as global comes to happen. This search allows the recognition of localised sources and later tributaries to the mainstream of global music. In so doing, it gives us a clear idea of the formal attributes

that characterise the global repertoire. To that end, the chapter is organised in two parts. First, I sketch the structural features that identify the global musical material. Second, I introduce the socio-musical practices it has historically partaken in, with an eye to the intercultural flows and mass communications processes that shape said practices. Third, the related patterns of interaction at play are problematized and made instrumental to pinpoint the location of the musical corpus in question, this time in terms of a 'new virtual demography' proper to mediatised societies (Hjarvard 2013). Fourth, I discuss the coherence of global music in terms of its historical and cultural relations, based on relevant sociological concepts such as transculturation (Ortiz 1987; Wallis and Malm 1990) and mediatisation (Hjarvard 2008b, 2013).

Part One:

Reviewing Popular Music Studies

Chapter 1:

Meta-Theory of Popular Music

The present dissertation preserves the imprint of epistemic and rhetorical challenges that called for decisions at different stages of the research plan. With all certainty, valuable insights lie at the centre of those challenges under the form of the solutions they were given. Such fruits are not directly concerned with the theory of global music here advanced, for they are meta-theoretical in nature. Yet, they remain strongly connected to the research process to which they are indebted, to the extent of accounting for its relevance and explaining why the organisation of its results ended up being as it is. I would like to elaborate on those meta-theoretical challenges, in the hope they will enhance the comprehension of this study in terms of its epistemic and rhetorical foundations.

In what follows, I shall concentrate on the manner in which the acquisition and articulation of knowledge has been carried out for the purposes of this investigation. As explained in the introduction, Chapter 2 sketches in some detail the theoretical framework behind the argument for global music. Its aim is to represent the traditions and the state of the art in the field of popular music studies, upon which I recast the genre. It is my intention to account for the constitution of such a theoretical background, and more importantly, to stress the tension between it and the demands for comprehensiveness it must fulfil.

In a more general vein, the question I wish to consider is how to control the quality of research projects on popular music, in terms of sufficient expertise and potential for original

contribution?²¹ At first sight, quality control seems to require a clear picture of popular music studies as a field (the framework), or at least a defined body of knowledge on which basis quality criteria can be set and value judgements can be passed. We should distrust the clearness and distinctness of that picture. My position is that popular music studies as a field cannot be thoroughly grasped nor represented, a situation that has serious epistemological and rhetorical implications. I argue that its multicultural and multidisciplinary nature contributes to the *equivocality* of its object of study, and that in face of such ambiguity, the picture of popular music studies itself becomes utterly elusive. Consequently, controlling the quality of popular music research can be problematic.

This chapter is organised as follows: § 1.1 introduces equivocality as a systemic problem indebted to the very constitution of popular music studies; § 1.2 goes on to elaborate on the notion of *episteme*, which will be the basis for modelling and analysing the multicultural constitution of the field as carried out in §§ 1.3 to 1.5. Next on, § 1.6 combines the findings presented in the preceding sections into a more accurate architectural-structural model, towards the formulation and assessment of possible solutions to equivocality. At this point, the discussion takes a dialectical turn: § 1.7 advances the thesis that disciplinary and cultural limits could secure viable standards of academic quality, §§ 1.8 and 1.9 develop the antithesis thereof on epistemological and rhetorical grounds, and § 1.10 synthesises an alternative to the problem of equivocality based on what I shall call an argumentative strategy. Concluding remarks are presented in § 1.11.

²¹ The idea that the criteria for assessing research output are sufficient expertise and potential for original contribution has been derived from my own experience as peer reviewer for academic journals and international conferences in the field of communication studies. The forms provided for the assessment of submissions are explicit about the value of expertise and originality as described above. For reasons of confidentiality, I shall not report on the scholarly media and gremial institutions involved, nor share the documents in question. In addition to this, my own experience as a PhD candidate has made it clear that such parameters can be hold highly important.

1.1 The Problem of Equivocality

In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), Richard Middleton and Peter Manuel restrict their article on popular music to ‘the types of music characteristic of ‘modern’ and ‘modernizing’ societies’ (128). For clarification, key features of the genre are identified, such as large-scale consumption, mass dissemination and non-elite audience. Though these are considered relevant tendencies, they are found insufficient to conceptualise the musical corpus with any precision. Drawing on Hall ([1981] 2010), and admitting the difficulty to define the term, the authors suggest ‘to accept the fluidity that seems indelibly to mark our understanding of the ‘popular’’ (Middleton and Manuel 2001: 129). However, a thorough reading of the entry reveals that contemporary popular music is, in this account, the product of urban sensibilities, driven by the market, and consumed by the masses in a mediated fashion. The authors make it clear in subsequent sections: ‘‘popular music’ is used here to connote genres whose styles evolved in an inextricable relationship with their dissemination via the mass media and their marketing and sale on a mass-commodity basis’ (Middleton and Manuel 2001: 153).

Noteworthy, the article displays an obvious North Atlantic focus. For arguably historical reasons, it devotes its first part to popular music ‘in the West’, specifically as found in the US and the UK, while directing the reader to the second section on ‘World Popular Music’ (or to the individual entries on each country) for information outside such geo-cultural boundaries. This position has not gone without criticism. Germer (2001), in his review of the *Dictionary*, observes that ‘inter- and intracultural accounts appear in a number of conceptual articles, some enhanced from the previous edition but all ideologically significant’ (322). In

this vein, the reviewer indicates that ‘Popular Music [divides] into “West” and “World”’ (*idem*), thus demarcating an imagined metropolis and its periphery²².

Some theories and practices outside the English-speaking world run against the grain of this lexicographical contribution. On the South American front, for example, musicologist Hugo Quintana (2011) makes a revealing plea to his peers at the IASPM-AL²³. By means of a historiographical account of how ‘popular music’ has been used by Latin American scholars, journalists, chroniclers and laypeople from the 19th century until today, the author makes evident the ambivalence of the expression meant to denote the research object of popular music studies. Consequently, his argument revolves around the convenience, if not the urge, of revisiting the definition of the term in the international academic context, and invokes the need for accuracy regarding the ‘terminological emblem’ that characterises the scholarly association (Quintana 2011: 55). Following Quintana, the term ‘popular music’—*música popular* in Spanish²⁴—roughly meant ‘folk music’ in Hispanic America during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Callejo Ferrer 1915: 273ff; Machado 1919; Quintana 2012). By the late 20th century, it had come to embrace the Anglo definition, sometimes in ambiguous ways (Araújo Duarte Valente et al. 2011, cf. Napolitano 1998). This happened in a context, shall I add, where the socio-economic elite is the main consumer of North Atlantic music. Although some influential Latin American authors have agreed with the notion of popular in the style of Middleton and Manuel (e.g. Peñín 2003), the situation of ambiguity has raised strong criticism by other scholars from the region, some of whom have advocated for an upright folklorist understanding of *música popular* (e.g. Sagredo 1989, 1991).

²² Notice that the West/World distinction transcends the field of popular music, because the title *world music* tends to include, also, *classical* or *elite non-western* traditions. See §2.3.4.2.

²³ International Association for the Study of Popular Music—Branch Latin America

²⁴ Although Quintana (2011) does not refer to it directly, it is convenient to bear in mind the concept of *Música Popular Brasileira* in this connection (see Ch. 3 below)

Meanwhile, in the course of his doctoral research at the University of Leeds, Nikos Ordoulidis (2012a) agrees with Peter Manuel (1990) that ‘popular music’ in the Aegean context—Greek: *laikó* (λαϊκό)—means ‘modern Greek working class music’ (127), which forerunner is said to be *rembétiko* music (ρεμπέτικο), a form of Greek urban folk. Emerging from the marginal lumpen proletariat in the early 20th century (Middleton and Manuel 2001: 158) the latter’s origins can be traced back to the confluence of traditional Greek, Near Eastern, and Western European practices in the cities of Athens and Piraeus. Its genealogy tells us of a mixture of tonal and modal traditions, as well as of a rhythmic repository, that sets it far apart from its Western and Latin homologues. In the same vein, the position of *rembétiko* within the social structure of classes is different from that of ‘popular music’ and ‘*música popular*’ (see Ordoulidis 2012b). Anglo and Latin styles of popular music (as well as uncountable others) are varyingly produced, distributed, and consumed in Greece, to be sure; yet they are denominated by more specific genre tags, say ‘pop’ or ‘salsa’, but hardly by ‘popular’.

Although interesting, this state of affairs is rather confusing. Such a havoc is in general very inconvenient, for it brings about at least two kinds of risk: scholars might either work on the same object yet call it differently, or dwell on very different matters and call them the same. Both cases menace to hinder the effective communication of knowledge in international academia and to lay audiences, as well as obstructs the intercultural enrichment of the field (which requires collaborative alliances beyond cultural frontiers). In this context, Middleton and Manuel’s suggestion to ‘accept the fluidity of the popular’ resembles a call to accept equivocality in face of its apparent insolubility. Acceptance, however, seems not to alleviate the problem. In this sense, I tend to favour Quintana’s perspective on the matter, as regards the convenience of definitional accuracy. The question arises, of course, as to how to achieve it.

The equivocal situation illustrated above makes it clear that behind any attempt to map a scholarly field there awaits the question regarding *cultural location*²⁵. For example, the demands for contextual setting may apply to the institutional branches of research and education (e.g. social sciences), which ramify into self-standing disciplines (e.g. sociology, anthropology, economics) with their own histories, debates, and trends. Specific methodologies, practices, communities, and knowledge constitute these disciplines and feed into their distinctive institutional identities. Besides such inter-disciplinary differences, I maintain that intra-disciplinary nuances contribute to the individuation of culture-specific subdivisions of the same disciplines, in attention to the *cultural episteme* they draw on.

1.2 Foucauldian Episteme and Theory Building

A brief detour is necessary to clarify what I mean by cultural location and cultural episteme, and how their nuances could coherently subdivide academic disciplines from within. These notions take Foucault's idea of *order* as their point of departure, which he defines in *The Order of Things*:

Order is, at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law [...] and also that which has no existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language (Foucault [1966] 2005: XXI)

²⁵ The notion of 'cultural location' is compatible with Bhabha's (2012) well-known work on the 'location of culture', in that difference, as a challenge to universalism and essentialism, is given priority over liberalist versions of diversity (Rutherford 1990: 207-211; cf. Žižek 1997). However, for the purposes of this chapter, I place a lesser emphasis on the interstice space of culture as the locus of hybridity, because my interest at this point is the positive ground that enables the possibility of theory building (Foucault [1966] 2005). See below.

Order [...] is established without reference to an exterior unit: 'I can recognise, in effect, what the order is that exists between A and B without considering anything apart from those two outer terms' (*ibid.* 59)

The idea that order exists goes beyond merely subsuming items into categories. Rather, it has to do with the fundamental grounds thanks to which classifications make sense at all. Such coherence—the argument goes—relies on a *system of elements*, defined as the network of relations that orchestrates all entities in the world as an interconnected whole. Only on that basis, can taxonomies be drawn and things be such and such:

A 'system of elements'—a definition of the segments by which the resemblances and differences can be shown, the types of variation by which those segments can be affected, and, lastly, the threshold above which there is a difference and below which there is a similitude—is indispensable for the establishment of even the simplest form of order (Foucault [1966] 2005).

Systems of elements are present in all cultures throughout history, expressed in the human activities they shape. Through them, order comes into being in varying modes. Noteworthy, the definition above is consistent with Foucault's notion of *apparatus* as articulated at a later stage of his career. In 'The Confession of the Flesh'

(1980a), Foucault defines apparatus beyond the limits of discourse, that is, beyond the 'system of statements within which the world can be known' (Ashcroft et al. 2007: 62):

What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements (Foucault 1980a: 194).

The fundamental codes of a culture, integral to its own system of elements, govern the patterned structures of language, perception²⁶, and action, thus constituting the empirical order onto which human *praxis* hinges as a meaningful whole. At the same time, *theory* reaffirms, explains, and justifies—directly or indirectly—the same system of elements, under the form of scientific and philosophical knowledge. Cultural codes and theoretical discourses feed from and express a given system of elements, an apparatus, as it occurs in a culture at a given point in time (Foucault [1966] 2005: XXII).

An important characteristic of Foucault's apparatus is that it has strategic objectives, viz. that it has a 'major function at a given historical moment, that of responding to an urgent need' (Foucault 1980a: 195). Such a need springs from the very elements of the system. This responsiveness suggests a degree of reflexivity between the

²⁶ I understand perception here as the sensuous reception of meaningful units of content. Thus put, the perception of an item results not only in the awareness 'that it is' but also in the realisation of 'what it is' on the basis of a given conceptual framework.

elements themselves and their organised constitution. On the one hand, things certainly acquire their being out of the cultural order in which they are set up; on the other hand, such ordering is sensitive to the thrust of need that things are able to produce. By that token, the collision between the elements of a cultural apparatus 'as they should be' and 'as they are' remains a possibility. This indicates that the determining power of the cultural codes is not absolute; hence, the eventual divorce between words and things, and the advent of age-framing discontinuities, as described in *The Order of Things*²⁷.

Order lends itself to experience not in the positive moment of its expression, when it slips unnoticed with ease, but through negation, when codes and things become estranged in praxis, when the empirical order falls short of ordering power (Foucault [1966] 2005: XXII-XXIII). To say it with an everyday example: computer users would hardly be aware of device drivers unless performance problems indicated they are outdated, case in which not only the problem, but the locus of the problem, reveals its existence. If drivers slip unnoticed, then they are working fine; otherwise, updating may be necessary. Likewise, the shortcoming of the system of elements makes it evident that order exists, and triggers a critical attitude towards its concrete expressions, out of which profound changes and discontinuities occur. *The Order of Things* intends to trace back those historical discontinuities in the mode of being of order since the 16th century, which discloses the resulting networks of relations that characterise, following the author, the classical and the modern age.

This archaeological enterprise, as Foucault envisions it, does not account for such discontinuities at all levels of human activity. The concern here is specifically with theoretical reflections. The author introduces the term *episteme* in this context, to refer

²⁷ Not in vain, the original title of *The Order of Things* is *Les mots et les choses*, i.e. 'words and things'

to systems of elements in that vein: ‘what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge [...] grounds its positivity’, says Foucault ([1966] 2005: 23). Hence, the quest is for the system of elements behind theory production, for the legitimising apparatus of knowledge, for the historical a priori that makes our world-picture possible, and ultimately, for the diegesis within which science and philosophy render their fruits.

The emphasis of Foucault’s study of episteme, at least in *The Order of Things*, is on the historical aspect of order and its manifestations, or in other words, in the advent of the ages via epistemological discontinuities. Foucault does not neglect the question of culture, yet even recognising its importance, he concentrates on European culture—with a bend towards Western Europe, and particularly towards France. Ergo, cultural nuances remain unexplored. Differently, I am interested in the transversal dimension of this theory, namely, in the discontinuities that occur among different cultures (and their subsets) running in parallel in present times. Cultural location refers to such transversal variance.

Along those lines, and returning to our argument, let us define *cultural episteme* as the specific diegesis from which theorisation towers up in a given culture. Following Foucault, I shall characterise it as the positive ground substantiating theory, the ordering power of which derives from the ontological efficacy of the specific cultural codes it subscribes to. Based on this idea, an argument for culturally localised disciplines, with a view to making sense of popular music studies, can be attempted.

1.3 The Strategy of Cultural Limitation

Just as systems of elements vary transversally from culture to culture today, so do the epistemological fields they harbour. Cultural *epistemai* largely govern the structures of language, perception and action involved in theorisation, thus orienting, in distinctive ways, the methodologies and practices at the core of localised disciplines. This has an obvious impact over the knowledge they produce and grants a sense of community among their practitioners.

By that token, and back to the problem of equivocality, it follows that theoretical definitions of research objects ought to be sensitive to cultural location too, because their articulation—a fundamental product of academic labour—is also subject to the cultural specificities of language, perception and action. One could argue, then, that the divergence in conceptions of ‘popular music’ presented above is answerable to the cultural location of the Anglo, Latin, and Greek versions of popular music studies. The field is diverse in this sense of multicultural constitution, which is a result of cultural difference. This presents us with a multicultural model of popular music divided into cultural wings, as illustrated in Fig. 1.

From this point of view, we can try a preliminary answer to our question: for scholars to make sense of the field, and thus control and assess their contributions, they should stick to a single cultural location. This preliminary answer presupposes a strategy of *cultural limitation* regarding knowledge production. That is, popular music research should set the bar to a specific cultural episteme and the notions of popular music it harbours (see Fig. 2). This way, cultural *epistemai* stand out as the fragmenting forces that bring discontinuity, but also partial graspability and representability, to popular music studies.

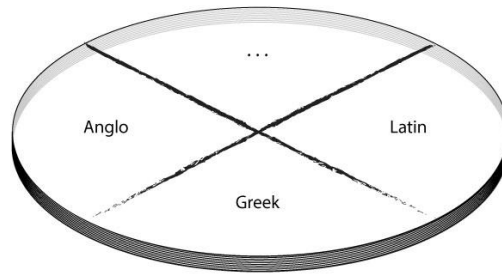


Fig. 1: Multicultural Model of Popular Music Studies²⁸.

Cultural episteme works as a dividing force: it fragments the field into several culture-specific wings with different structures of language, perception and action. They are represented radially as slices in a pie chart, including the Anglo, Latin and Greek quarters discussed above, as well as an indeterminate portion (...) meant as a placeholder for any other cultural location.

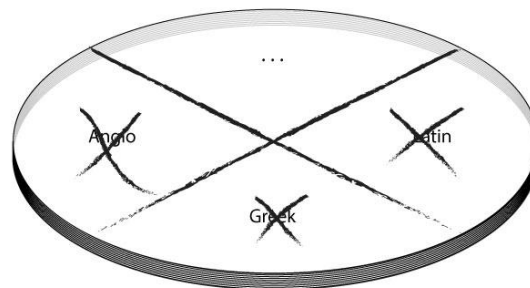


Fig. 2: Strategy of Cultural Limitation

By restricting theory building to a single wing, popular music scholars can grasp and represent their own portion of the field. This demands neglecting all other cultural locations, as represented above by crossing them all except the placeholder (which then represents the scholar's option of choice).

²⁸ This and all subsequent digital drawings by the author.

1.4 Contra Cultural Limitation: Radical Fragmentation

One could challenge this strategy on several grounds. For present purposes, I will focus on two objections. The first one has to do with the fragmentary character of popular music studies. The question arises as to whether and how localised disciplines remain connected despite their differences. Should that link be broken, one should reconsider the idea of 'popular music studies' as a multicultural field. The same holds true of the possibility of relevant contributions to it and the purposeful existence of international organisations around it.

Cultural location renders discontinuity indeed, but not total fragmentation. The sample theories presented here for illustration show a common repository of knowledge and suggest a multicultural community at work. For instance, the discrepancies about popular music's position along class structures hinge on *modern social theory*, a discourse that reaffirms, explains, and justifies relevant aspects of (social) order patent in the Anglo, Latin, and Aegean worlds. In so doing, this piece of theory expresses a facet common to their epistemai, which allows for theoretical products of cross-cultural validity (see Klein 2017: 24-26). Such kind of continuity, which I shall call *academic coherence*, binds up our localised samples of popular music studies.

Middleton and Manuel, Quintana, and Ordoulidis speak about things on the same level of analysis, which tells us about their belonging to the same branch of research and education. Oppenheim and Putnam (1998) work out this mode of organising theories into branches, based on *universes of discourse*. The authors propose a system of reductive levels that ranges from elementary particles to social groups (Table 1). The latter is the universe of discourse of our sample theories, wherein academics study popular songs (research object A) *qua* artefacts through which they learn about human

groups (universe of discourse B). Even disagreeing about which tunes are popular, scholars may gather together and listen to them on the same analytical level, approaching A *qua* B. Provided that different things A1, A2, ..., An can be studied *qua* the same sort of thing B, academic coherence can be formalised thus: A1, A2, ..., An *qua* B.

6	Social Groups	Empirical/Human
5	Multicellular Living Things	
4	Cells	Empirical
3	Molecules	
2	Atoms	
1	Elementary Particles	

Table 1: Reductive Levels according to Oppenheim & Putnam (1998)²⁹

That these theories share the same universe of discourse correlates with their partial *unity of language*. Even in the absence of total unity of laws, and despite definitional discrepancies, there remains a pool of observational and theoretical vocabulary accepted and deployed by social scientists, regardless of cultural location, to describe and explain the world. Such commonality testifies not only to a theoretical middle ground, but moreover, to a shared epistemological layer. This includes, for

²⁹ For further reference on the concept of reduction, see Kemeny & Oppenheim (1956).

instance, the conception of societies as stratified compounds, or the idea of scientific methodologies as legitimate procedures to create knowledge about social groups. Importantly, such basics are latent not only in academia, but also in the empirical order of all cultures that practice the social sciences. This common foothold forms the cross-cultural *academic episteme* (Fig. 3) that enables dialogue among localised theories.

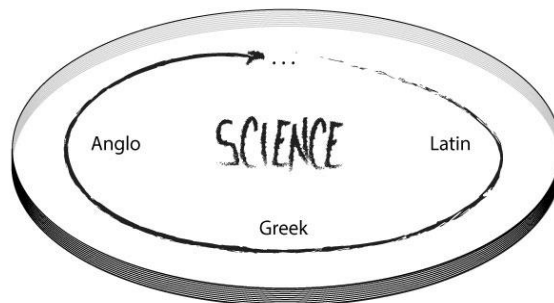


Fig. 3: Academic Episteme as Cohesive Force.

The common universe of discourse and the partial unity of language proper to the social sciences makes for an academic episteme that enables dialogue and promotes unity among culturally-localised theories, thus counteracting the dividing thrust of cultural episteme.

In light of this, the multicultural potential of the field seems to remain untouched. Ergo, neglecting exogenous viewpoints due to fragmentation represents a minor challenge to the strategy. Abiding by cultural limitation does not disable possible connections and debates beyond strategic limits, thanks to the academic episteme lying solidly across cultural settings. The latter stands out as the cohesive force that counterbalances the fragmenting effect of cultural epistemai, in ways consistent with

Foucault's notion of episteme as age-grounding positivity. Since interpretative approaches to exogenous theories remain open possibilities, acceptable margins of academic coherence remain available to popular music studies.

1.5 Contra Cultural Limitation: Objective Coherence

The second objection is directly concerned with the previous one. The strategy of cultural limitation falls short to make sense of popular music studies, because its scope is limited to mono-disciplinary ramification. As Cloonan (2005) puts it, popular music studies is actually not a single discipline, but a multidisciplinary field whose coherence is indebted to its object, namely popular music. The multifarious outputs on the matter, coming not only from social theory but also from music theory, humanities, and so forth, testify to that fact. This is not to say that all research in the field (methodology, practice and knowledge) is interdisciplinary to the highest degree of integration (Klein 2017)³⁰, but merely that it gathers scholars from different areas dealing with popular music, in monodisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary ways. This gathering of disciplines with diverse universes of discourse suggests a coordinated multidisciplinary model of popular music studies with potential for interdisciplinary practices (Fig. 4). I maintain that the latter leans on what I call *objective coherence*.

Provided the above is right, arguing for intra-disciplinary cultural nuances as parameters for limiting the field cannot be entirely correct, because that would imply the inexistent unity of popular music studies as a single discipline. Thus, the strategy of

³⁰ By interdisciplinarity I mean the liaison between two or more disciplines in the context of the same academic activity, in terms of 'the mutual integration of organizing concepts, methodology, procedures, epistemology, terminology, data, and organization of research and education' (OECD, in Klein 2017: 24). In contrast, multidisciplinary refers to a juxtaposition of disciplines, which results in a 'wider scope of knowledge, information and methods' (*ibid.* 23) without compromising their separateness and original identities (*idem*). For instance, a regular faculty of social sciences would normally be multidisciplinary, whereas an institute for psychoacoustics would probably be interdisciplinary.

cultural limitation collapses. Even keeping with a single cultural episteme, the research community must face an abundance of methodologies, practices, and bodies of knowledge, which are hardly manageable in terms of *graspability* and *representability*. So put, becoming a ‘specialist’ in the field would entail unreasonable demands for holistic expertise, in face of the field’s multi-disciplinary constitution.

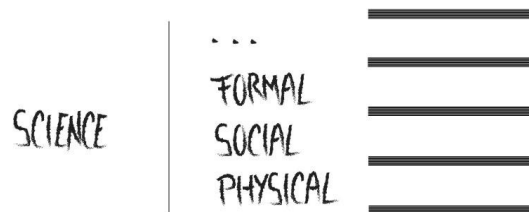


Fig 4: Multidisciplinary Model of Popular Music Studies.

Inspired by Oppenheim and Putnam (1998), this vertical model shows the universes of discourse mobilised by different branches of popular music studies, which structure the field in a non-reductive fashion. Following Foucault ([1966] 2005), the threshold of difference between them, as elements of the same system, is represented by the space between the lines on the right and identified by the adjectives on the left. The placeholder (...) represents levels of analysis not mentioned here.

Objective coherence is incompatible with academic coherence, because the former implies revolving around a single research object (*A qua B1, B2, ..., Bn*) instead of a single universe of discourse (*A1, A2, ..., An qua B*). In the example above, whatever continuity recognisable in modern social theory may contribute to the coherence of social science as an instance of B, but it aids little to articulate popular music studies. By way of contrast, think of musical analysis: in its *scientific formalist* version (Brackett 2003: 87; Attali 1977: 225-226), its universe of discourse is so far from social theory

that it does not even find a place in the system of reductive levels, simply because it is not an empirical discipline but a formal one. Not by chance, its pedigree associates it with mathematics since the times of the quadrivium, when it sat next to arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, as the study of proportions via harmonic intervals. Certainly, contemporary analyses of popular music are seldom purely formal, as we will discuss in the next chapter. However, their strictly formal aspects are enough evidence to drive the point home. Field cohesion is not manageable, for so radical a breach between formal and social sciences suggests the existence of significant blind spots regarding common methodologies, practices, and bodies of knowledge, as well as the relative irrelevance of a shared cultural episteme. The two disciplines do not talk about the same sort of thing: formal analysis treats music, in its utmost rigour, as an end in itself, not as a means to grasp the order of any social group. Not even a reduction of both disciplines to physics is at hand (in the reductionist spirit of Oppenheim & Putnam), for even assuming the physical character of music as sound, musical analysis speaks of sign systems, not of physical events.

1.6 An Architectural Model of Popular Music Studies

Debunking cultural limitation complicates further the question of how popular music scholars are to situate their research within an acceptable framework of legitimacy, if thoroughly accounting for their field, even within cultural boundaries, is not an option. It gives us insight, nonetheless, into the complexity of popular music studies, something of a labyrinthine edifice where getting lost is not that hard. To understand its structure, I suggest resorting to visual representation, as to have a clearer idea of its epistemic architecture by means of a metaphorical transposition to spatial architecture.

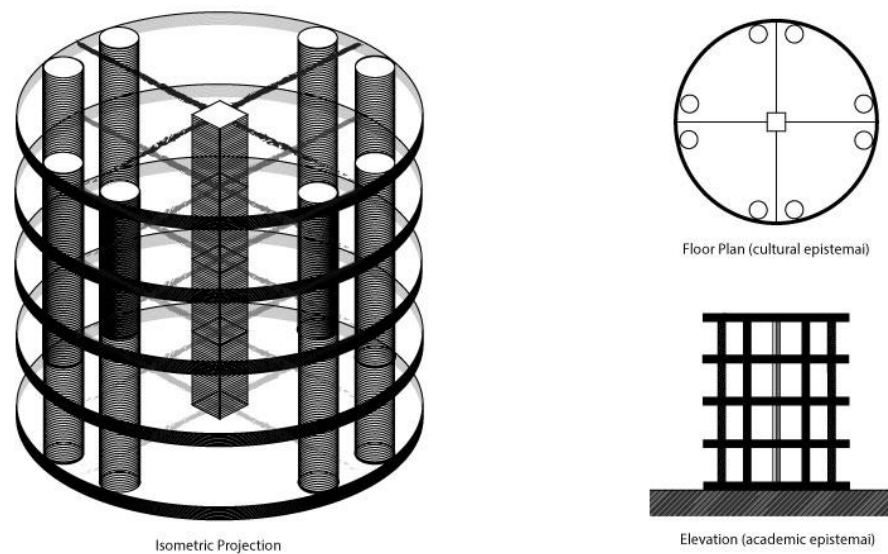


Fig 5: The Edifice of Popular Music Studies.

This architectural model combines the features of the multicultural and the multidisciplinary models. On the horizontal axis (breadth and depth), similar to Fig. 1, each storey is a multicultural locus wherein fragmenting and unifying forces, i.e. cultural and academic epistemai, are constantly at play. On the vertical axis (height) the distribution of the storeys as levels of analysis answers to the universes of discourse shown in Fig. 4.

In that spirit, one can imagine the field as a building that synthesises the multicultural and multidisciplinary dimensions elaborated on in the previous sections. This would land us with a towering structure in which centre lies ‘popular music’ as its single unifying object (Fig. 5). Peculiar to this rotunda is the horizontal division of its area into several wings, delimited radially and disposed concentrically (cf. Fig. 1), as well as its vertical organisation into a number of interconnected levels (cf. Fig. 2). Importantly, each floor displays the same ground division into wings. The storeys of the

building represent the academic epistemai, while the cultural epistemai correspond to its radial wings.

This architectural model reveals continuities as well as discontinuities. Institutional areas of research and education engulf their subsidiary disciplines in single floors, pooling together, in so doing, their theories and practices. Academic episteme operates here horizontally as the cohesive force maintaining each analytical level continuous; yet, it also acts vertically as the fragmenting force differentiating the storeys from one another. Similarly, cultural episteme works cohesively along the verticals, by grouping in wings the disciplines belonging to the same cultural location, while horizontally fragmenting and therefore defining distinct cultural spots. Continuities and discontinuities pose equally serious problems for researchers: the former contributes to the *immeasurability* of the field, while the latter add to its *incoherence*.

Continuities obtain in the multidimensional fashion described above, namely, horizontally embracing all disciplines with same universe of discourse, and vertically housing all disciplines with the same cultural bedrock. Characterised this way, popular music studies should display a formidable bundle of methodologies, practices and communities that contribute actively to an emphatically diverse pool of knowledge: an epistemological ocean impossible to grasp or represent in full. Furthermore, a cornucopia of musical materials moulds those disciplinary efforts, oftentimes in confusing ways. Finally yet importantly, interdisciplinary inquiries enlarge even more the immeasurable extension of the field via cross-fertilisations.

Discontinuities promote incoherence on the same dimensional planes. Horizontally, they bring about *equivocality*, driven by the fragmenting power of cultural epistemai. This has been our main concern from the beginning: the definitional

instability of the object due to cultural location, which hinders the effective dissemination of knowledge and obstructs intercultural alliances. Vertically, incoherence assumes the form of *discursive dissociation*, whereby the academic branches of popular music studies, in dealing with their own universes of discourse, do not refer to things on the same level of analysis. Not surprisingly, then, the ways in which popular music is understood and theorised are abundant and sometimes conflicting, without disregard to the worth of the achievements in each subfield. Similarly, the object of inquiry remains unclear. The problem is not that there be a degree of variance in the definitions of popular music, but rather that we are left with no common grounds of congruency. Therefore, it is often impossible to read theories in light of one another. Objective coherence cannot be taken seriously in this light; this is a crucial question to which I shall come back in Chapters 2 and 3.

In a more specific note, it is obvious that the continuities and discontinuities suggested by the architectural model are of great consequence for the undersigned, because the present research attempts to posit a definition of global music across cultural locations and disciplinary boundaries. In reflecting on immeasurability and incoherence, our question returns tinged with anxiety. How to control the quality of this or any other research project on popular music, in terms of expertise and potential for contribution, if the field itself remains ungraspable?

1.7 The Strategy of Double Limitation

For the sake of the argument, consider the hypothetical advice from an 'experienced scholar': 'a crucial part of any research process is the selection of the discipline and the theoretical tradition to navigate; that lays down the boundaries within which academic projects can be pursued with success. Obviously, this choice must suit

the background and actual conditions of the researcher. If you are a social scientist—let us suppose—then base your approach on the social sciences. Likewise, if you are a member of this or that culture, then stay with your own discipline as practiced here or there. Finally, do not make sense of the whole field in general, but of your subfield in particular. On that basis, it is feasible to grasp and represent your scientific playground (thus proving your expertise), and therefore to control the quality of your academic endeavour in a serious manner. Otherwise, scholarly contributions to knowledge are impossible’.

Concisely, the suggestion here is to add *disciplinary limitation* to cultural limitation. According to this rationale, triangulating our position into a single wing and a sole level of the edifice would keep us on the safe side. That is so because the coherence of the subfield would remain safeguarded by the definitional steadiness of the object on the one hand, and by the consistency of methodologies, practices, communities, and knowledge on the other hand. This double restriction would set up the borders of the subfield as ‘the research field’, thus rendering a workable overtone of popular music studies. This I shall call the *strategy of double limitation*.

The position above has long-range implications. Quite logically, the only way to minimise the immeasurability of the field is restricting its scope. In that connection, the strategy consists in acknowledging fragmentation and using it for our best advantage, namely, by resorting to discontinuities as the palliative against continuities. To that end, however, the interest for objective coherence must be suspended. Such a gesture would entail a conception of the field as a heterogeneous gathering of subfields with a merely

nominal topic in common³¹. Therefore—as under cultural limitation—‘popular music’ would remain incapable of bringing actual unity, but that fact would become instrumentally irrelevant for research purposes. Though not solved, the state of incoherence expressed by equivocality and discursive dissociation is bracketed by double limitation via seclusion in a subfield chamber.

Regarding the due literature review for research projects, the strategy reduces the theoretical framework, for starters, to disciplinary boundaries. Within such limits, the academic endeavours would be then conditioned to the proper scan and processing of the sources pertaining the cultural episteme in question. Demarcated this way, one can grasp and represent the research field, which makes academic demands for comprehensiveness reasonable and authors’ claims for thorough expertise valid. In following such guidelines, researchers meet two crucial academic requirements widely accepted as institutional imperatives. The first is *epistemological*, and concerns knowledge acquisition as a cognitive act. Thanks to the literature review as exploratory process, scholars would gain or corroborate the necessary expertise from which to identify theoretical gaps, formulate pertinent questions, control the quality of the process, as well as self-assess their work’s potential for innovative contribution. The second is *rhetorical*, and regards knowledge production as a discursive act. In representing the field via the literature review, the research output gains legitimacy as authentic science. In other words, the symbolic value of the framework feeds into the stream of the academic episteme, the latter thought of as ‘the ‘apparatus’ which makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific’ (Foucault 1980: 197). Here episteme reveals a

³¹ A similar situation has been observed in other academic fields, e.g. communication theory (Craig 1999, 2009; see also Simonson et al. 2013 on the multiple disciplines partaking in the field and the impact of such abundance over the definition of the research object)

rhetorical dimension prior to the moment of persuasion in the Aristotelian sense, where a statement is credible 'either because it is directly self-evident or because it appears to be proved from other statements that are so' (Aristotle *Rhet.* I.2, 1356b25-30, trans. Roberts, 1924). Under double limitation, scholars (not statements) are in a position to draw on the authority of the sources they call upon, as to become eligible for further examination as regards the soundness of their propositions. By demonstrating their expertise in the field, by conveying that they know what they are talking about *before getting to talk about it*, academics (particularly junior researchers) comply with the ruling ethos and rhetorically empower their contribution.

The double limitation to cultural location and disciplinary boundaries based on the researcher's background is a rather simple, almost intuitive strategic solution to the meta-theoretical challenges here addressed, so much so that it makes our case appear like one of 'much ado about nothing'. Appearances are deceiving. Certainly, we have found enough reasons to admit that the edifice of popular music studies is not suitable to be comprehensively grasped and represented, and that, consequently, setting boundaries is imperative in order to control the quality of academic inquiries. In this vein, partisans of the double limitation would win their point as regards the need for responsible scholarship within the limits of one's domain of expertise, both in cultural and disciplinarily terms: clearly, one should not talk about topics beyond one's ken. I agree that adhering to the strategy of double limitation is optimum in some cases, but I do not think it is the panacea for all difficulties hitherto described. We should bear in mind that the double limitation hinges on discursive dissociation and equivocality, and concomitantly on the incoherence of the field. I must insist in the problematic nature of this issue. There remains the menace of disciplinary and cultural isolation, as well as the

threat to the communication of knowledge inside and outside academia. Likewise, there persist the obstacles for interdisciplinary and intercultural collaborations, and so do the hurdles for definitional enterprises. Not only that; double limitation has a negative influence over these aspects. Next, I reason my objections to the strategy of double limitation from the disciplinary and the cultural perspectives.

1.8 Contra Double Limitation: Epistemology

My first objection is epistemological. The strategy of double limitation obstructs the optimal functioning of the field through the discouragement of *dialogue*³² among disciplines. Need for dialogue does not mean here that interdisciplinary research should become an institutional imperative. The call is for a propitious attitude, not for a normative protocol (provided true dialogue is never forced). Let me reiterate: there is nothing wrong with double-limited, mono-disciplinary research, nor is there any superiority in cross-fertilisation per se. Single disciplines often suffice to deal with the issues they set out to explain, there is no doubt about it. Still, the complexity of some questions may surpass their explanatory bite. It is in such cases that dialogical attitudes prove useful. Preventing discursive dissociation by fostering interdisciplinary research is not a question of fashionable slogans, but a move towards the *possibility* of unabridged thinking beyond homely chambers. If this possibility is not available, then implementing double limitation becomes counterproductive, because it deepens the fragmentation of the field and thus hinders its potential scope.

Dialogue entails a mode of relation whereby scholars discern each other's contributions across disciplines and utilise them outside their original domains. This

³² My approach to dialogue is largely indebted to Robert Craig's meta-theory of communication (Craig 1999).

requires, for starters, the will to listen to 'epistemic others', which requires the acquisition of knowledge in their 'outer disciplines' as to understand what they say. Only thus, the potential of the latter for enriching one's inquiry can be assessed. It follows, then, that dialogical attitudes motivate researchers to walk around multiple storeys of the edifice. To do so, they must diversify their investment of resources (time, money, labour) into more than one discipline, as to gain epistemic profit useful in dialogue. The investment size may vary, and so may the resulting level of diversified proficiency. This presents us with a grayscale of dialogical profiles, ranging from experts in one discipline with limited insight in others, to scholars fully committed to two or more academic branches simultaneously. Based on such investments dialogue becomes possible within the scholarly community.

Conversely, double limitation tends to seclusion. To illustrate the nature of the problem, let us consider two genetic moments of the process of inquiry. One is the conception of A as a research object, at which point the researcher pictures it within the coordinates of a discipline, i.e. *qua* B. The other is the reflexive thought given to the discipline, on whether or not the complexity of the object A is manageable on that level of analysis B. Out of such bidirectional activity (looking at A from B and vice versa), the strengths and weaknesses of the research design become graspable, realisation upon which it can be optimised. Double limitation turns this genesis into a unidirectional, determining process: if the problem A poses goes beyond the discipline's ken, even partially, it must be discarded. Then B and not A becomes the starting point of the query. For mono-specialists, this stream runs against any interaction with other disciplinary branches, therefore worsening the state of discursive dissociation. Multidisciplinary experts may seem to have better cards here, but that is not the case: they are exposed to

the same inconvenient stream, for there is no guarantee that the scope of their expertise, whatever ample and diversified, suffices to deal with all multi-level problems they come across.

It is worth insisting that no divine erudition is necessary to oblige by dialogue. As a matter of principle, researchers certainly should dismiss problems utterly outside their universes of discourse. Now then, if the problem remained totally or partially addressable via their disciplines, they are to judge whether a multi-level approach is really convenient, depending on the nature of the inquiry and the resources at hand. If that was the case, but their multidisciplinary acquaintance was insufficient, they could either postpone/quit/refer the inquiry, or else seek profit from collaborative alliances. For these judgements and decisions to take place (this ultimately is the point), their grounds of *possibility* must be granted through dialogical attitudes in the academic sphere.

Finally, notice that dialogue comes to replace academic episteme as the foundation of academic coherence, in which case sharing the same universe of discourse becomes a strategic advantage instead of an articulating principle. Nevertheless, the academic coherence of popular music studies remains into checkmate because of a different aspect of the same nemesis. Dialogue is possible only on a congruent basis, namely when the interlocutors talk about the same things. Therefore, in the wake of the architectural model, this version of academic coherence hinges on objective coherence (*A qua* B1, B2, ..., Bn) as a matter of necessity. As long as the latter is nominal and not actual, its possibility is compromised.

1.9 Contra Double Limitation: Rhetoric

My second objection is rhetorical. Taken to the extreme, the emphasis double limitation places on the framework neglects not only the object as the genesis of the research, but also the argument as its ultimate output. The discursive content of the doubly limited chamber expresses its academic episteme, which determines, following Foucault, what may from what may not be called 'scientific' (1980: 197). That could explain why literature reviews are sometimes valued on a par with the ideas they contextualise, even more when it comes to degree-seeking outputs (e.g. PhD dissertations). I contend that, at base, the validating device implicit in the strategy of double limitation is not epistemologically logical, but rhetorically authoritative: it hinges on the hegemonic discourses at the nexus of disciplines and cultures. Authority tends to define the canonical sources and the state of the art in the field, that is to say, the fraction of the chamber content that allegedly represents the history and status of the whole. I ought to manifest my scepticism about such representative character of the canon.

In principle, double restriction lands scholars with a repository of sources that constitutes all articulated knowledge in the chamber. However, it is just a part of it that is acknowledged as the authoritative picture of popular music studies. What are the grounds for such discrimination? In general, before the integration of digital technologies to academic day-to-day live, choices as to how to constitute theoretical frameworks were often linked to accessibility. Within the range of what was available (in the library, in stock, in a workable language), scholars discriminated the trunk from which the research was to spur. This may be the case in some contexts, where the lack of

financial resources and the digital divide trouble academia. In contrast, complications show different nuances wherever the situation is the opposite.

In face of globalisation, and perhaps despite it, picturing an academic field in full is a task of unmanageable proportions. In wealthy societies, that is so because abundance, instead of scarcity, becomes the challenge to cope with. Note that this becomes a matter of degree depending on the universe of discourse and the kind of methodology at stake. Natural and formal sciences call for quantitative methods, and so do behavioural and social disciplines when the object of inquiry is not human. In these instances, abundance is less problematic, because theorisation is furnished by competing empirical or formal claims suitable to rational theory choice. Ergo, in spite of incommensurability (not to confuse with immeasurability), the general tendency is to favour single explanations only replaceable by 'better' ones, say more accurate, updated, and so on (Sankey 2008). That makes the state of the art in those disciplines easier to grasp. Now, when *Homo sapiens* becomes the target, room is made for qualitative methods, which grant a crucial role to the interpretation of people's deeds, motivations, and ontologies. Here diverse claims on the same matters can coexist without exclusion. In this case, even assuming that immeasurability is palliated by the double limitation, there remains a remarkable overflow of content. Fair enough, the strategy contemplates the selection of a discipline and a theoretical tradition, meaning it is viable to restrict further the scope of the field by deciding for a subdivision of the chamber. However, abundance remains a serious problem that demands sharper selectivity.

That is where authority comes in. The same common sense approving double limitation invites scholars, as it were, to follow the leaders for the sake of legitimacy. This rhetorical stance, grounded on the dominant academic episteme, reinforces the

circuitry of theory consumption that positions and reaffirms the leaders on the top of bibliometric statistics, making it difficult for authors out of the loop, for whatever reason, to be read and discussed. Thus, hyperbolically speaking, a human pyramid towers up in the midst of the chamber, where freshmen look up the establishment until they establish themselves and can afford to relax the rhetoric deference to authority. I do not mean to argue for the axiomatic discredit of contributions by leading scholars, but I do wish to stress: 1) that oftentimes the attitude towards academic sources is not dialogical but hierarchically deferential; 2) that in such cases academic outputs are assessed rhetorically and not epistemologically, to the inattention of their propositions.

This state of affairs deepens the chasms between the wings of the edifice. On the one hand, it increases the insular character of the bigger circuits of theory distribution and their corresponding epistemai. On the other hand, it helps knuckling down less powerful circuits and their epistemai under dominant ones via institutional mechanisms of validation. In this context, it is worth thinking of what the position of expatriate scholars should be. This brings us back to the convenience of dialogical attitudes, this time from a cultural perspective. If the epistemological matter of cultural episteme is one of either/or, then academic mobilisation is less dialogical, and therefore less valuable, than institutional promotions would have us believe. Were guests to choose their own episteme thereby ignoring that of the host, troubling with a visitation that is business as usual would make little sense. Conversely, were the hosting episteme favoured by suspending that of the guest, neither visited nor visitors would perceive much profit from exogenous minds just going 'native'. This is an issue worth consideration, given the significant investments in mobilisation, internationalisation, and promotion of scholarly diversity being made worldwide.

Again, note that intercultural dialogue demands objective coherence, so that members of different cultures can possibly hold sensible debates—i.e. on the same things. That is why betting on horizontal discontinuity as to departmentalise theory building into cultural wings plays rudely, too, against the optimal functioning of the field from an epistemological perspective—for the sake of mere rhetorical validation. The question arises as to whether and how a definitional middle ground can be reached, so that objective coherence switches from nominal to actual. This is the key for tackling the question concerning the quality control and evaluation of research projects in popular music studies.

1.10 The Argumentative Strategy

Objective coherence is sine qua non of disciplinary and cultural dialogue, which in turn is indispensable for the optimal functioning of the field. In this connection, and in light of all arguments above, equivocality is the ultimate foe, the root of all incoherence. Not only is it responsible for theoretical isolation and communicational dysfunction related to cultural location, but also fuels discursive dissociation to the point of collapse. I have suggested above that it is possible to circle around vertical discontinuity by means of interdisciplinary dialogical attitudes, which bring academic coherence, enable multi-level approaches, and propitiates collaborative alliances. Then again, such alternative is viable only if actual objective coherence prevails, if horizontal discontinuity is sorted out, if the same thing A is examined on different B levels regardless of cultural location. This is one of the key insights alluded to at the beginning of this chapter.

On a theoretical level, I have chosen an epistemological rather than a rhetorical strategy to deal with the challenge. Instead of triangulating my epistemai and moving on,

I have decided to stop and ask what popular music is, in order not to bracket but to tackle equivocality straightforwardly. The answer to this question cannot be given here: that is the subject matter of this dissertation; its disclosure requires academic labour beyond the scope of this chapter. What I would like to stress, however, is that the theoretical goal taken up by this doctoral project originates in such a meta-theoretical challenge, and that its relevance is to be understood along the lines of a contribution to the epistemological optimisation of the field through the pursuit of objective coherence.

For reasons that should be obvious now, a (re)definition of popular music valid across cultures and disciplines cannot be achieved without dialogue. With that conviction in mind, I have essayed an alternative *modus operandi* to serve the purposes of this research by heading in the opposite direction of double limitation. Instead of resorting to discontinuities and neglecting incoherence to neutralise immeasurability, the move consists in embracing continuities and accepting immeasurability as to cope with incoherence. This I shall call the *argumentative strategy*. Next, I shall introduce and discuss its principles as was done with the strategy of double limitation, based on the rhetorical and epistemological aspects of knowledge production. Special attention will be paid to the conceptual match between these and the terms ‘sufficient expertise’ and ‘potential contribution’.

First off, let us clarify that fully embracing all continuities represented by the architectural model is unfeasible. It is a fact that no scholar can read all there is in the building of popular music studies; that is indisputable. Notwithstanding, that is no hurdle to the possibility of expert research. Based on the argumentative strategy, the sufficiency of a researcher’s expertise is a rhetorical parameter that remains bound *to internal epistemological demands*. I am persuaded that it is not the length of the reading

list or the names on it, but the sharpness of the argument, which determines the quality of academic outputs, regardless of the institutional context or the status of the scholar. No paragon divorced from what needs to be said (as different from all that has been said) should be admitted to dictate any minimum epistemological or rhetorical requirement. In order to answer the questions posed by their research projects, and in order to develop their full articulation, scholars are to use all resources at hand to that specific end—beyond the limits that culture and discipline initially lay down, in a dialogic spirit. In this vein, their expertise will be sufficient if it carries aloft their arguments, not necessarily if it sets the scene of their discussion by representing a single chamber of the edifice. Here a sense of intrinsic pertinence must prevail: the requirements to be met by philosophers and scientists spring inside-out, from riddle to solution (epistemic), from content to discourse (rhetoric), from A to B.

When it comes to the rhetoric of legitimacy and responsibility, instead of appealing to authority, I suggest resorting to the idea of the researcher as a *critical agent*. Scholars should be regarded as individuals-in-collectiveness who belong to certain culture(s) and cultivate some academic discipline(s), who count on limited resources and occupy certain positions in the cultural field, who hold individual and collective identities, and who partake in specific networks through which information and knowledge become available. These factors, among others, define the unique standpoint of the agent as theory builder, thus defining its strengths and limitations. In this connection, critical agency refers to the power to ponder the relations between the object we confront and the epistemic luggage we bring along, as to make sense of the former with the help of the latter *from our unique standpoint* and in constant revision of our own assumptions. No epistemic in triangulation or theoretical reservoirs should

dictate inexorable conclusions, as if they were muses of which Middleton and Manuel, Quintana, Ordoulidis, or the undersigned, are mere amanuenses. It is the authors themselves, in their capacity of critical agents, who quicken the voices of the edifice, gain insight into the matter, and raise their own voice to articulate their view—within the limits of their own possibilities. In so doing, they manifest their individual order of things (in a Foucauldian sense) without disregard of their collective dimension. In awareness of this interplay, researchers can consciously make theoretical and meta-theoretical choices—in the realisation that all frameworks are necessarily partial and that an unavoidable element of bias derived from every unique standpoint must be assumed responsibly.

Hence, it follows that although immeasurability might be a fact it has actually little to do with controlling the quality of scholarly research. Such processes, under the argumentative strategy, are not based on the impossible picture of a field which totality is beyond grasp and representation, but on the elegant relation between question and answer that obtains through the activity of the critical agent. Therefore, the performance of the researcher is to be controlled in terms of her/his acquisition and articulation of insight, and then self-evaluated altogether upon conclusion. Of course, the nature of the processes involved depends on the universe of discourse at a stake: empirical investigations hinge on correct data mining and analysis, whereas interpretative research depends on speculative exploration and internal argumentative coherence. In any event, all statements and facts should be responsibly corroborated, and all interpretative claims solidly crafted. Accuracy, in the sense British philosopher Bernard Williams has it, is the epistemic virtue to extol. 'If others are to rely on what you tell

them, you need [...] to take the trouble to make sure that your belief is true. This may affect the investigative investment you think appropriate' (Williams 2004: 149).

Finally yet importantly, whether or not academic outputs have the potential for significant contribution will depend on who is on the receiving end of the academic chain. Of course, since no scholar is without episteme, native inhabitants of a given wing and level of the edifice are in an advantageous position to assess if this or that contribution adds to the chamber content. To that purpose, the pool of knowledge of epistemic receivers and their relational capital in the academic community are very relevant, in terms of critical reading and peer consultation. Dialogue proves convenient in this instance too. However, it is important to realise that the validity of these judgements is limited to the regions of the edifice receivers are acquainted with. Evaluative claims with universal ambitions have no room here. One must avoid mistaking the part for the whole, a cubicle for an edifice.

1.11 Concluding Remarks

A meta-theory of popular music studies has been introduced in this chapter. The notion of cultural episteme has been defined as the individuating principle of localised disciplines, which rendered a provisional structural model of the field and furnished the strategy of cultural limitation. A first criticism to the latter was presented under the heading of radical fragmentation. Importantly, the latter made room for academic episteme as an important cohesive force in the field. Cultural limitation collapsed, however, because of another crucial aspect of popular music studies: its multi-disciplinary character. Academic coherence became untenable, for the field admits research on distant universes of discourse, and objective coherence was proposed, nominally at least, as the cement of the field.

Responding to the failure of cultural limitation, an enhanced model of the field was advanced by resorting to an architectural metaphor. The edifice of popular music studies made evident the continuities and discontinuities at work, from which the problems of immeasurability and incoherence (equivocality and discursive dissociation) were respectively deduced. A second attempt to make sense of research quality control was essayed by introducing the strategy of double limitation (cultural and disciplinary). In principle, it opened up the possibility of partial unity and therefore of partial graspability and representability of the field. Though my intention has not been to debunk it entirely, I have criticised this strategy for failing to promote dialogue and favouring rhetoric of authority over content-based appraisal. Disquietingly, that left us where we started: wondering how to control and assess research efforts in popular music studies. In contrast with double limitation, the argumentative strategy has been proposed as the path to follow, as argued for in the previous section, whereby the internal epistemological demands of the inquiry and the unique standpoint of the researcher as a critical agent are the factors to shape the development, control and assessment of research projects in popular music.

In attention to these claims, it is my duty to dispense with any illusion of absolute comprehensiveness regarding the present dissertation, particularly in relation to Chapter 2. Any impression that the exposition articulated in the following sections represents, really, the ultimate picture of popular music studies, must be discarded as a shortcoming of my own writing limitations. As it should be clear now, the mirage of the theoretical framework as a fully comprehensive 'state of the art' is simply untenable under the argumentative strategy.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, the general plan of this doctoral project is to revisit the concept of popular music towards its revamping as global music via mediatisation theory. Ergo, the picture of popular music studies presented in Chapters 2 and 3 includes only ideas about popular music that, in one way or another, challenge or are challenged by such a theoretical approach. That is the internal epistemological demand behind the construction of the framework..

In the vertical sense of levels of analysis, the titles consulted and the development of the argument focus on the societal dimension of music, yet integrating the phenomenological level of the human being *qua* consciousness and, to a lesser degree, the formal level of music as a structured system of signs.

Chapter 2:

Traditions and State of the Art in Popular Music Studies

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and discuss scholarly debates on popular music relevant to the argument for global music. In the process, I shall set forth a number of concepts that will frame the discussion about the popular and the global, as regards how the latter could answer some of the questions haunting the former. The review of perspectives on the matter will range from the establishment of fundamental cultural categories of the modern age (§ 2.1) to 'popular music' scholarship until the end of the 1960s (§ 2.2) to recent contributions to the field (§ 2.3). In that spirit, the coming sections will trace the notions of *authenticity* and *commoditisation* as the principles behind the arguments at stake, and, importantly, as the generic differentiators par excellence in popular music.

'Social groups', following Oppenheim and Putnam (1998), is the universe of discourse of the theories represented in this chapter. The recount concentrates on the relation between popular music and sociocultural reality, that is to say, on the ways in which popular songs, as fully-fledged articulations of the former, relate to the cultural settings that house them. Therefore, the connections I intend to stress are located on the level of the shared ontologies grounding human activity, as they obtain in different places at particular historical moments. The relations at stake include those of

production and consumption, social behaviour, aesthetics, musical communication and representation of identities. Academic discourses about these relational sets often combine diverse methods and perspectives. Studies of one aspect of popular music could unsurprisingly inform the narratives regarding another aspect. Likewise, distinct epistemic strategies could work together, interdisciplinarily or multidisciplinarily, into the same research output. Hence, by definition, classifications of popular music theories cannot be too rigid. I take the headings at the top of each section as referential nodes, in a loose manner, obviously not to the point of inconsistency, but certainly leaving room for folding and twisting the map of popular music studies in the quest for useful links.

2.1 Philosophical Antecedents

When it comes to the study of music outside the Austro-German canon, a number of sources would point at the work of Johann Gottfried Herder ([1807] 1846) on Ossian and the ‘songs of ancient peoples’ (compilation, philosophical commentary), as the seminal work of popular music studies (Gelbart 2007; Koskoff 2005; Bohlman 1988³³). Others would attribute the honours to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1768)³⁴ or reach further back for Marco Polo’s ([c. 1300] 1908) records of his travels in the 13th century (Bor 1988, 2008; Baud-Bovy 1988). I shall take a different stance in this regard. In fact, academia does owe Herder the popularisation of the term *Volk* to nominate poetry that ‘pre-eminently expressed the body of thought and the identity of a nation’ (Bor 2008: 28), which would remain a landmark in the study of cultural traditions until today. On the other hand, a long line of contributors from Marco Polo to Rousseau and many others populate the annals of what centuries after would go by the name of world music studies. Notwithstanding that, in the context of this dissertation, popular and folk (be it

³³ Bohlman (1988) also considers Thomas Percy (1729-1811) as a pioneer of folk music studies.

³⁴ First published in 1767.

‘national’ or ‘foreign’) are thought of as two related yet different musical corpora. Consequently, the thought of Herder and Rousseau, among others, will be dealt with in the next chapter, where I discuss the differences between popular and folk towards a working definition of popular music.

It is true that questions of verisimilitude and identity, in terms of the connection between ‘people’ and their ‘songs’, are present in many debates on popular music, importantly so in arguments on moral value. However, my suggestion is that the overarching preoccupations manifest in popular music studies from the early 20th century onwards answer to a mind-set different from that of folk studies, one connected to a wider spectrum of authenticity and in closer liaison with commoditisation processes. These motifs remain in critical approaches to contemporary music in general, including folk as well as classical, since the advent of the digital age. I elaborate on this, also, in Chapter 3. As for now, I shall focus on the key moments in European thought that brought about the aforementioned conceptual mind-set. Considering the philosophical origins of this framework aims to evidence relevant thematic connections traceable from pre-urban times to our days.

2.1.1 The Modern System of the Fine Arts

It is reasonable to think that organised societies sort out their cultural products, including music, following guidelines consistent with their particular worldviews. History offers an abundance of examples that testify to this practice. Sometimes these distinctions are binary, as well as loaded with value judgements—remarkably so towards the end of the early modern era (roughly between 1500 and 1800) in European societies. Sacred and profane, local and foreign, good and bad, are cases of such categories, traceable back to bygone cultures all around the globe. For our purposes, let

us begin by discussing a classification scheme widely accepted as the first 'clear-cut system of the fine arts [articulated] in a treatise devoted exclusively to this subject' (Kristeller 1952)³⁵, namely Charles Batteux' *Les Beaux-Arts Réduits à un Même Principe* (1747)³⁶.

The French abbot sets out *pleasure* as the goal, and *mimesis* as the principle, common to all the fine arts, i.e. music, poetry, painting, sculpture and dance (Batteux 1747: 6). As the first part of the treatise explains, the kind of mimesis at work in the fine arts has 'beautiful nature'—*belle Nature*—as its model, which involves an idealising gesture in artistic production via imitation. That is to say, things are not necessarily copied in an accurate fashion—*le vrai*—but rather imagined and then presented in aesthetically pleasurable ways—*le vraisemblable*—(Batteux 1747: 23-25). In this view, mimesis shows us nature 'not as it is in itself, but as it can be, and can be conceived by the mind'³⁷. Fine arts stand in contrast to mechanical arts, which use nature directly in order to cope with practical human needs. In this connection, both categories are related to a third kind of art, defined by its double end of being useful and pleasurable at the same time (rhetoric and architecture) (Batteux 1747: 5-7). Although Batteux proposes a seemingly tripartite system, the third class of mixed-purpose arts is a derivative of the fundamental distinction between 'fine' and 'mechanical', which is the actual basis of the scheme.

Batteux did not concoct the notion of the *beaux-arts*. For example, Charles Perrault ([1690] 1826) had already written about the subject towards the end of the

³⁵ The conception of Batteux' classification as a system, and its actual historical role, has been revisited by Porter 2009 and Kivy 2012. I sustain that the landmark character of the *beaux arts* as a template to sort out artistic activity in the modern sense, and any other sort of cultural production, remains patent.

³⁶ The correct date of Batteux' treatise is 1746. I keep with the year of the edition I have consulted, namely 1747, for the sake of an easier reading, provided the two do not differ significantly.

³⁷ 'En un mot, une imitation, où on voye la Nature, non telle qu'elle est en elle-même, mais telle qu'elle peut être, & qu'on peut la concevoir par l'esprit' (Batteux 1747: 24-25, translation mine).

17th century, though his account was 'slightly too broad due to its inclusion of optics and mechanics, which do not meet the subsequent specification that the fine arts produce aesthetic pleasure' (Makkreel 2006: 517). The work of Batteux remains relevant, however, for it brought to the fore the distinction between 'art' and 'handicraft' lingering the European intellectual spheres before 1747, the same that pervaded throughout the Enlightenment until the end of the 18th century and beyond. Even though the treatise was criticised by the most prominent thinkers of the time, the binary organisation it proposes finds correlates in the works of such notable detractors, indicating that, at the very least, it managed to express some of their own grounding assumptions.

For instance, Diderot was emphatic in his attack to mimesis as conceived by Batteux, disdaining it for its command to imitate 'beautiful nature' without clarifying what that means instead of emulating 'actual nature' in its infallible perfection (Diderot [1751] 1996, [1765] 1996, [1772] 1996, see also Versini 1996: 5-6, Funt 1968: 85ff)³⁸. Yet, the encyclopaedist developed his philosophy of art by hinging on the division into liberal and mechanical arts, which, although not identical to Batteux' fine/mechanical dichotomy, remains concerned with the question of usefulness—so much so that his entry on 'Art' for the encyclopaedia (Diderot [1751] 1994) is mainly devoted to the mechanical arts (in a rather vindictive spirit). Hence, his thoughtful reflections on painting, sculpture, theatre and music are clearly grounded on their distinctiveness as

³⁸ Diderot's problem is not with imitation, but with its object. The author states that, since everything in nature is as it is meant to be, the artist would be well advised in imitating things as they are, without idealisation, in their own terms (Diderot [1765] 1996). Moreover, in *Paradoxe sur le Comédien* ([1830] 1902) Diderot ponders the relevance of mimesis as an acute cognitive ability to imitate, and thus to reveal, the laws of nature inasmuch as universal order. Such disclosure is not art's exclusive prerogative, Diderot claims, for it is also achievable by means of technology (Gebauer and Wulf 1995).

liberal arts (shall we say, as fine arts in the modern sense), despite the mechanical techne required for their creation.

In a similar vein, Kant was not fond of mimesis as the principle of art either. The third Critique holds artistic *Genius* a productive talent for which no rule can be prescribed, and in that light, copying (*Nachmachung*) is reasonably disapproved as utterly harmful. Kant distinguishes such act of replication from the gesture of emulation (*Nachahmung*) whereby 'the [art] pupil's own talent and originality is stimulated' (Caygill 1995: 249, see Kant [1790] 2000: §47³⁹). Nonetheless, the sage of Königsberg also distinguishes between fine art and handicraft on the basis of their having or not an intention or purpose (Kant [1790] 2000: §43), discrimination anticipated to some extent by Batteux' observations on usefulness and beauty (Tilghman 2012: 97). Furthermore, the examples Kant discusses to illustrate his ideas on artistic beauty fall, by all means, within the realm of the *beaux-arts* as envisioned by Batteux (literature playing a prominent role).

Not only did the system of the fine arts serve as grounds for 1700s' intelligentsia to elaborate on aesthetic matters, as Kristeller observes (1952: 6-7), but it also managed to inform the modernist notion of art and announced how the hierarchy of cultural products would be institutionalised in the centuries to come. In this connection, it is important to observe that the binary trend of sorting out human practices and products remained patent in some foundational works of European cultural studies in the 1800s.

About a century after Batteux' treatise, Matthew Arnold drew the guidelines of what was to be known as the Culture and Civilisation tradition with a series of essays

³⁹ In Kant ([1790] 2000), Guyer & Matthews translate *Nachahmung* as 'imitation'. Instead, I am following Caygill's (1995) use of the term as 'emulation' to avoid confusion.

collected under the title *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). This book introduces an acute differentiation between *culture* as the best of humankind on the one hand, and *anarchy* as the undesirable rawness of the masses on the other hand. The scope of this dichotomy is different in nature from Batteux'. Arnold focuses on literature as far as the fine arts are concerned, to be sure, but his preoccupation is with the whole of social practices, well beyond the teleological concerns behind the fine/mechanical binomial. In other words, the split posited by Arnold is not based on the purpose of certain creative activities, as Perrault, Batteux, Diderot and Kant had it, but on the aesthetical, political and (prominently) ethical dimensions of praxis altogether. Still, dividing human affairs in elevated and mundane remains consistent with the binary schemes proper to the Enlightenment, of which the distinction between fine and mechanical is a case in point.

In order to understand Arnold's cultural critique, it is important to bear in mind the context in which his ideas came into being. Elitists as they might seem, and without disregard to his views about the inferiority of the masses (Storey 2015: Ch. 2; cf. Walton 2007: 22), let us remember that his conservative views were forged in times of political turmoil in Britain. On the one hand, the Reform League, a political organisation established 'to press for manhood suffrage and the ballot' (Cannon 2015: 768) had been active since 1865 struggling for profound political change, occasioning incidents in the public arena such as the Hyde Park railings affair in 1866⁴⁰. On the other hand, politicians whose ideological alignment was rather on the utilitarian side were handling the situation of instability.

⁴⁰ Riots that took place as 'a by-product of the mass protest meetings in July 1866' (Cannon 2015: 768), said to have propelled important reforms such as the Representation of the People Act of 1867, which gave male members of the British working class the right to vote in elections.

Against this background, Arnold's plea is for a recovery of ethical imperatives, that is, a take on social affairs neither from a blind liberal perspective that turns the individual right into an instrument of anarchy, nor from an instrumental stance that pushes the best of humankind into oblivion. Arnold's work shows sheer alignment with the classic idea that 'all men are persuaded by considerations of their interest, and [that] their interest lies in the maintenance of the established order (Aristotle *Rhet.* I.8, 1365b25-30, trans. Roberts, 1924; see Mazzeno 1999: 106-107). In this vein, culture is envisioned as the right path—one that is (or should be) the necessary inclination of humanity, one for which curiosity is natural, one that rehabilitates the right of a better life to everyone, particularly to the masses.

Arnold's wideness of scope feeds into the macro contrast between *elite culture* and *mass anarchy*, which exerted a strong influence on popular culture scholarship in English-speaking academia over the 20th century. This impact is significantly noticeable in the works by Frank Raymond Leavis, Denys Thompson and many others, together with the reactions that came thereafter⁴¹.

2.1.2 Historical Materialism

Moved by a similar preoccupation with culture and society, another train of thought originated in the 19th century also made sense of human affairs in a comprehensive spirit, yet in a manner radically different from Arnold's elitist position. Although its scope reaches far beyond cultural studies, Karl Marx's historical materialism hits upon the question of culture with remarkable strength, in ways that proved significantly influential for the study of popular music and urban culture in the

⁴¹ Arnold's work will be the object of attention and criticism until the end of the 20th century at least (see Mazzeno 1999)

20th and 21st century. Roughly speaking, this philosophical trend synthesises aspects of the German idealism and humanist materialism towards a comprehensive apparatus of social critique. This section will focus on its basic tenets, in light of key idealist notions as drawn by Marx from Hegel's thought.

Marx opens his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* ([1859] 2009) referring to his study on the Hegelian philosophy of law, where he concludes that legal relations and political forms cannot be understood in terms of the development of *Geist*, but rather in relation to the material conditions of life. At this point, it is convenient to clarify the way in which this controversial Hegelian term—*Geist*—will be understood henceforth. Also at play in Kant's third Critique as the faculty for the presentation of aesthetic ideas (Kant [1790] 2000: §49), *Geist* takes up a much wider scope in Hegel's work, where it nominates a manner of general consciousness, spirit, or mind that sets humankind on a universal metaphysical footing without disregard to its individual manifestations. Importantly, *Geist qua consciousness* serves an epistemological purpose as regards the 'self-conscious knowing subject' of Hegelian idealism (Solomon 1970) ⁴²

In that connection, it is fruitful to invoke Hegel's notion of culture—*Bildung*⁴³—which refers to the self-development of *Geist* as constitutive to the life process of all spirited entities, be they individual or collective (Wood 2005, see Hegel [1807] 1988: ¶132ff). As far as human communities are concerned, Hegel's culture speaks of 'society that emerges from legal status, in which subjects objectify their individuality and thereby produce an actual social world through language' (Burbidge 2001: 48). I suggest

⁴² Among other theories on the matter, Hegel's *Geist* has been said to originate in Kant's *Transcendental Ego* (Solomon 1970, see Kant [1781/1787] 1998). To my knowledge, there is no philosophical connection between Kant's *Geist* and Hegel's homologous.

⁴³ *Bildung* 'might be translated as 'education', but it could also be rendered, more appropriately in many contexts, as 'formation', 'development' or 'culture'.' (Wood 2005: 300).

reading Marx's historical materialism from the Hegelian standpoint of objective culture, specifically regarding physical and societal relations.

'In the social production of their existence', Marx explains in the preface to the *Contribution*, 'men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production' (Marx [1859] 2009: ¶6). Such material forces comprise 'means of labour' (equipment, land, and infrastructure) and 'labour power' (ability to work). It is the social relations of production, the philosopher sustains, that make for the *base* from which the legal and political *superstructure* of society towers up, for the 'mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life' (*idem*). Briefly, the idea is that consciousness does not determine existence (as German idealism has it), but the other way around. This means, in our reading of Marx, that material life holds sway over the process and objective outcomes of *Bildung* in a Hegelian sense.

Against this background, social revolution is defined as the moment of conflict between such forces, which occurs when the relations of production between the *bourgeoisie* (owners of the means of labour) and the *proletariat* (holders of the labour power) hinder the full productive potential to the detriment of the latter. Such conflict gives the cue to changes in the relational foundation of society, eventually leading to the transformation of the whole (cultural) superstructure. Therefore, awareness of the relations of production and their actual status is crucial for the dynamics of social life. Later cultural critiques informed by Marxism will draw heavily on this observation and give utmost importance to the problem of opacity in social relations.

In volume one of *Capital*, Marx states: ‘from the moment that men in any way work for one another, their labour assumes a social form’ (Marx [1867] 2010: *Ch.1* §4 ¶2). Opacity becomes fully manifest in the context of capitalist exchange—of wages, prices, and market trade—where the relations of production (who does what for whom) are not perceived as something social but rather as something objective, that is, happening among produced things instead of producing people. In Marx words, ‘the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as [...] material relations between persons and social relations between things’ (*ibid.* ¶6). The kind of socialisation that results from this mode of production necessarily unfolds, following this rationale, on the level of mere exchange value. It is not surprising, then, that people with such a transactional social existence take the exchange value of their labour and its products as intrinsic, though that is actually not the case. Marx finds such value judgements nonsensical:

Exchange value, at first sight, presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort, a relation constantly changing with time and place. Hence exchange value appears to be something accidental and purely relative, and consequently an intrinsic value, i.e., an exchange value that is inseparably connected with, inherent in commodities, seems a contradiction in terms (Marx [1867] 2010: *Ch.1* §1 ¶5)

The *fetish of commodities* is the terminology coined by Marx to refer to this unaware attribution of value. Under its rule, the moment of conflict that promotes social change may slip unnoticed, because values and compensations become ‘mystifying’ rather distanced from the straightforward usefulness of labour and its products. For that reason, disproportionate relations of production capable of fettering the productive forces may prevail under the opacity of the social. This dark picture renders the determining relation between base and superstructure upside down. In this case, it is culture (economic, legal, political, or otherwise) that defines social relations and shapes social existence, instead of the other way around. The hope to overcome opacity and the fetish of commodities lies in a robust mode of human consciousness—free, disciplined, and true; non-obtrusive regarding the primacy of the material conditions of life:

The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan. This, however, demands for society a certain material ground-work or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development. (Marx [1867] 2010: *Ch.1* §4 ¶16)

This quote brings the argument back to Hegel and culture, this time with an emphasis on its processes instead of its objective articulation. This shift makes room for the semantic nuances of *Bildung* as education and formation. For Hegel, *Bildung* is the inner activity through which objects are rationally known in ways that transcend the

immediacy of appearances. The principle behind the process is that true rational cognition does not content itself with the evident insight furnished by the familiarity of the object. Instead, *Geist* must find itself in the externality of things via the *concept*, for it is *Geist* the truth of nature, and the concept the essence of *Geist* (Hegel [1830] 1959: §§381 and 384). This involves a positive moment of recognition, a negative moment of estrangement, and a positing moment of unity with the object through the concept. Wood explains it eloquently:

What was given immediately as familiar at the start of the process is now an otherness overcome; the object is no longer present in its immediate form, but is now grasped by means of a universal concept produced by the mind [*Geist*], which therefore recognizes itself in the object (2005: 301)

This is what the freedom of spirit means in the Hegelian tradition: a state in which any reference to the obstructive otherness is discarded by virtue of dialectic activity. Culture is, in this connection, a process towards freedom beyond the positivity of the seemingly obvious, which beginning coincides with the 'removal from the immediacy of substantial life' (Hegel [1807] 1988: 5-6, translation mine). Thus conceived, yet with some adjustments, this definition of culture is compatible with what Marx envisions as the remedy to opacity, because its crystallisation would empower human beings as critical agents, free from the ambush of appearances (and therefore of fetishism), attentive to the truth. Only the primacy of consciousness (*Geist*) over material production (substantial life) would have to be reframed, from the extra-natural self-

identity of an absolute *Geist* to the mindful human consciousness fully aware of the material social existence it is indebted to. Thus, the idealist tenet of innate true concepts beyond objectivity is replaced by a materialist account that locates universal truth in the factual world shared by everyone.

This Hegelian reading of Marx is helpful to realise why cultural analysts influenced by Marxism are usually concerned about the dangers of false consciousness and cultural hegemony, as well as why they advocate for a critical relation to reality as a cultural stance. It illustrates culture's wide scope, in connection with education though far beyond educational institutions. It also tells us of its epistemological and ontological proportions. Finally, it makes sense of the quarrel of Marxist cultural theory against reification and commodification. All these tropes come back in the sequel of Marx's project into the 20th century and onwards—with notable momentum in popular music studies.

2.1.3 Early Cultural Anthropology

Another way of articulating cultural hierarchies that is relevant to the development of popular music studies can be found in the early days of cultural anthropology. According to Vermeulen (2003), and different from mainstream histories of anthropology (e.g. Lassiter 2014: 3-34), the first steps towards the institutionalisation of the discipline were given in 1770s Germany (Schlözer 1771) under the banners of *Völkerkunde* and *Volkskunde*, which were to become, respectively, ethnography and ethnology in the following years. The grammatical difference between the two is telling: *Völker* is the plural form of *Volk*, which means 'people' in the sense of 'ethnos' (ἔθνος),

i.e. nation⁴⁴. Consequently, one line of work focused on the study of ‘all peoples’ in the spirit of a universal history of nations (in contrast with the traditional world history of states), while the other concentrated on the study of ‘one people’ only. The German term *Ethnographie* was already in use at this stage as synonymous to *Völkerkunde*, whereas *Ethnologie* came about shortly after in the 1780s: first in Eastern European academia (*ethnologia*) and then in Swiss Romand and German sources (Vermeulen 2003: 39, 46-47). Since their institutionalisation in scholarly circles and until the end of the 18th century, both ethnography and ethnology remained tightly related as avenues for the analysis of nations, mostly on a cultural level.

It is important to realise that the new discipline acquired a distinctive character out of the confluence of older ones, including not only history and geography, whose impact was decisive, but also comparative linguistics and the systematic study of mores. Already from the start, anthropology showed some of the distinctive traits that would outlast until today. Some of them are the combination of descriptive and comparative methodologies (Lassiter 2014: 40-41), a keen interest in language and communication (Wilkins and Wolf 2012) and an eye for cultural products and practices as sorts of living documents, or texts, susceptible to analysis and interpretation (Geertz 1973c). That specific kind of epistemic labour was important in the political context in which the earliest anthropological studies came into being: Schlözer, the German pioneer of the ethnographic enterprise was at the service of the Russian empire, in a mission with the geopolitical goal of taking acquaintance of all peoples within the confines of Romanov territory (Vermeulen 2003: 43-44). This datum places the beginnings of anthropology in

⁴⁴ The academic study of ethnos as nation usually starts from an understanding of the concept in terms of either sociocultural or sociobiological communities (in contrast with the nation-state as political community); see Geertz (1973a) for the former and Van den Berghe (1987) for the latter, see also § 2.3.4.2 below.

a context of cultural diversity (with several nations under the same state) but also of outright imperialism. Considering the vast extension of the imperial Russian territory, these circumstances also underline the relativity, if not the complementarity, of 'all nations' and 'one nation' as levels of analysis. Russia was not, of course, the sole locus of early anthropological research; similar efforts were conducted elsewhere by scholars in France, England and other European countries.

Notice that at this point, in the 18th century, the dichotomies at work do not differentiate or pass value judgment on cultural products. Instead, they distinguish among the cultures themselves by descriptive and comparative means (historically, geographically, linguistically, behaviourally, and so forth). Nevertheless, and very importantly, there seem not to be textual evidence of what was later called orientalist approaches to culture (Said 1985, [1978] 2003) in terms of 'European versus non-European' or 'Western versus non-Western' cultures (Vermeulen 2003: 47-48).

The 19th century saw significant changes in the definitions of anthropology's original branches. Most remarkably, ethnology began to acquire additional characteristics that changed its scope in definite ways. Ethnological societies were founded and conducted business for the first time in France (e.g. the *Société Ethnologique de Paris* in 1839), under a definition that contemplated the study of nations in cultural as well as physical, phenotypical terms. Said societies became the template for the constitution of similar organisations in other countries, e.g. in England and the US (Vermeulen 2003: 50). The physical twist added a layer of complexity to the debates on culture, for it linked it to the bodily features of the community members involved in its production. In so doing, it arguably made way for racist positions within the discipline (Schippers 2003).

To the physical twist of ethnology, we must add the evolutionist one of ethnography. Darwin's theories resonated in the social sciences of the 19th century with remarkable impetus. The writing of authors such as Herbert Spencer and Edward B. Tylor influenced greatly the way of thinking of the social scientific community in Europe and America (Allen 1962; Lassiter 2014; Schippers 2003; Vermeulen 2003)⁴⁵. As a result, the now more 'racial' ethnology met an increasingly 'social evolutionist' ethnography. The distinction between so-called primitive and civilised cultures, as promoted by Tylor's *Primitive Culture* ([1871] 1920) and several other publications, gained credibility during this time, and so did the idea that the perceived primitive communities of the present are comparable with those out of which current civilisations developed. Noteworthy, the notions of culture and civilisation at play here are significantly different from what we find in Arnold's writings and the philosophy of Marx: for one thing, the level of analysis is 'all people' as an interconnected whole, engaged in a syncopated processes of development (in this sense, closer to Hegel's approach; see Geana 2003).

In a different vein, the same move towards the study of race and progress caused ethnology as a term to fall in disuse for some time. The discipline of physical anthropology was commonly practiced in the same scientific context of ethnology in the 19th century, and since the views and the research objects of the two became so close to each other, ethnology tended to be filed as (physical) anthropology ever since (Vermeulen 2003). These changes did not mean the total disappearance of ethnology as a term. In fact, it is currently alive and well in certain epistemai, for instance, in Eastern Europe, to refer to cultural anthropology and folk studies (Kiliánová 2012). Notice that the incorporation of ethnography to the anthropological corpus happened at a later

⁴⁵ The echo of this intellectual blast lingers to present date, as I suggest in the Introduction.

stage, with the crystallisation of cultural anthropology as a subfield next to archaeology, physical anthropology and linguistic anthropology. The terms ethnography and ethnology remain current to date and are commonly set in contrast with one another to denote the all-peoples/one-people distinction inherited from the pioneers of the 18th century (Lassiter 2014: 109-134; see Geertz 1973c).

Relevant conclusions for the picture of popular music studies can be drawn from this survey:

- The relationship between anthropology and its original branches is evident. The process through which, historically speaking, the former was able to encompass ethnography and ethnology is clear. This is useful to understand subsequent discussions on musical anthropology (§2.2.5) and ethnomusicology (§2.3.4.2).
- Specific dichotomies pertaining to early anthropology suggest themselves: (a) the study of all/one nation (which ties into later anthropological concepts such as particularism, holism and comparativism); (b) the cultural/physical study of people; (c) the study of primitive/civilised cultures. The latter relates to the section on Global Music in the Introduction to this study, as well as to matters of globalisation and decentralisation discussed in § 2.2 below.
- Finally, I suggest that the general dichotomy at the heart of early anthropology can be put in terms of inward/outward regarding sociocultural structures. That is to say, all specific dichotomies above can be mobilised to articulate cultural differences at the intra- and inter- community levels. This is very important to understand § 2.3.4.2 on ethnomusicology and some of the negative definitions explored in Chapter 3.

2.1.4 Into the 20th Century: Authenticity and Commoditisation

The ideas hitherto discussed allow us to preview the shape that the principles of authenticity and commoditisation were to acquire with the turn of the century in cultural studies in general, and in popular music studies in particular. Hinging on the hierarchical mode of organising culture (as displayed by Enlightenment aesthetics) and structuring society (as denounced by historical materialism), most academics from the 20th century onwards went on to make sense of the popular music in a critical vein. With remarkable steadiness, academics in the field tended to discard the idealisation of reality as a plausible strategy, and to pay close attention to processes of mass dissemination and large-scale commercialisation. The notion of authenticity we will be tracing in the next sections is informed by the modern interest in the *rapport with reality and/or with the truth*. Its span is divided, predominantly, into two aspects. One is the authenticity of the musical product itself, which is compelled to remain factual if it is to be deemed authentic. In this connection, the real character of popular music has been construed in various ways, from the idealist dialectical disclosure of the truth à la Hegel, to the realist/materialist ‘mirror carried along the road’, to say it with Stendhal’s words. Describers such as *genuine* and *banal* tell us about the extremes of the evaluative spectrum we will be dealing with. The other aspect of authenticity is that of the musicians and entertainers, the assessment of which is often related to their collective identities and sometimes to their uniqueness as individuals who ‘dare to be’ who they are—even in idiosyncratic yet alluring ways. The authenticity of the audience has also been taken into account, although less recurrently. This is not surprising, because theories committed to the standpoints described above resort to the *people*, mostly to those who listen, as the ultimate framework of authentication a priori. Accounts dealing

with modes of listening as grounds for the authenticity of the public are less common, and heavy with philosophical intricacies. The authenticity of the audience will not be referred to in this chapter, then, for it shall be elaborated on later in this dissertation.

Against the philosophical background above, the notion of commoditisation under scrutiny becomes also clear. Predominantly understood in Marxist terms, the idea of a product created for its exchange instead of for its use will remain steady in theories of popular music concerned with the matter from the 1900s onwards. Consequently, it follows that discussions on the commodity character of the popular song will take place in relation to its political economy in the widest sense, directly or indirectly, and with nuances that may embrace the material production of life as well as the subtle dynamics of symbolic, cultural, and celebrity capital. Noteworthy, music's being a commodity and/or being authentic will usually come intermingled, in theoretical settings where the two tend to represent polarities in the nature of the musical production.

As a closing remark to this section, notice that 'authenticity' carries a heavy philosophical burden of significance remarkably engrossed by European existentialism. Mostly concerned with the self, albeit also with the authentic character of things, influential thinkers from Søren Kierkegaard ([1846] 1992) to Martin Heidegger ([1927] 1996) devoted no little effort to the subject matter with relation to human beings as self-identical individuals. Jean-Paul Sartre ([1943] 2003), evidencing the influence of Marxism over his thought, also coped with the challenge in a manner that left more room for pondering the authenticity of non-human entities, largely along the lines of value attribution. Those approaches are not included in this recount, simply because they represent little contribution to popular music scholarship in its current state. Authenticity has a character of its own in popular music theory, which shall be explored

in the upcoming sections. I content myself with this brief mention as to rule out their status of philosophical antecedents of popular music studies in general—although they did play a role in the theoretical contributions of particular key players in the field, e.g. the Frankfurt School (see § 2.2.4).

2.2 First Wave of Popular Music Studies

As we shall elucidate in Chapter 3, popular music is often defined negatively by means of contrast with other musical bodies. In the sense of widely liked and consumed by the masses, it finds its earliest nemesis in the music of the elite, along the lines of the confrontations fine/mechanical or culture/anarchy. Let us explore, then, how different scholarly perspectives dealt with such cultural distinctions during the first half of the 20th century and until the 1960s. In this section, we will examine some ground classifications brought into the field by the pioneers of popular music studies, their dichotomist tendencies, and their attachment to value judgements based on varying ontological and deontological parameters.

Ideas on popular music can be sorted out in many ways. One of them consists in emphasising either *words* or *music* as integral elements of popular songs. On this level, decisions are made about the constitution of the object of study and the universe of discourse within which it will be placed. Some popular music theories show a tendency to focus on lyrics, which, according to Frith (1989), is consistent with the background in literary theory that characterised some of the most prominent forerunners of cultural studies (e.g. Leavis 1933a, 1972a; Hoggart 1957). Other research lines make room for musical analysis and social theory. This disciplinary spectrum is illustrated by the theories recounted in what follows: literary studies, cultural studies, sociology and critical theory.

A note on the theoretical samples under consideration. This section evidently centres on Anglo-European theories of popular music. That is so, because the institutionalisation of the field as different from folk studies and traditional musicology came about in North America and Northwest Europe during the early 20th century (Cloonan 2005) (arguably motivated by the fact that it was in the US and the UK where the commoditisation of popular music took place with utmost strength). The earliest works on popular songs qua urban phenomena, and the seminal formulations of what became the concerns of popular music studies thereafter, are available within the framework of such cultural episteme.

2.2.1 Leavisism

We have said that binary distinctions in culture, as seen in academia from Batteux to Arnold, were also fundamental in 20th Century scholarship. That was the case particularly in England, from where their influence resonated in popular music studies throughout the Anglo world and beyond. Among the heirs of this tradition were the partisans of Leavisism, so called after its founder, Frank Raymond Leavis. Here the dynamics of ‘civilisation’ and ‘culture’ was understood in terms of the strife between majority and minority (mass and elite) where ‘civilisation’ and ‘culture’ become ‘antithetical terms’ (Leavis 1933a: 39). Mass civilisation is thus deemed the debasement of culture, conceiving the latter as the crystallisation of the highest human values—overtly echoing Arnold's thought, and quite different a view from the Marxist stance⁴⁶. As a literary critic, Leavis paid special attention to literature, and more broadly to

⁴⁶ Leavis was skeptical of the Marxist approach to culture: ‘for most Marxists the attraction of Marxism is simplicity: it absolves from the duty of wrestling with complexities; above all, the complexities introduced if one agrees that the cultural values—human ends—need more attention than they get in the doctrine, strategy and tactics of the Class War’ (Leavis 1933b: 5)

language, as the key factor for the coherence or fragmentation of communities and the integral development of individuals (Leavis 1972b: 186-187, cf. 1972c).

Notice that not all civilisation, and therefore not all popular culture, is the exact opposite of high culture. Drawing on T. S. Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1921), Leavis (1972b) argues that individual talent is certainly responsible for artistic creation, but that such a 'private mind'⁴⁷, deprived from a relation to the community of minds it belongs to, becomes isolated and therefore sinks in pure private experience. This communal mind is termed here *tradition*, and the link to it is provided by language. The point is that high cultural products must have the support of a rich popular culture that quickens them and answers their call. Said support is the result of a profound linguistic correspondence. Language-based cultural coherence is traceable back in British history, the author claims, to old times when the link between literature and popular speech was still available (1972b: 196-197). As evidence of vigorous popular cultures in the 20th century, the author refers to the work of Cecil Sharp ([1932] 2012, ND), influential compiler of folk songs, arguing that in his expeditions into the Southern Appalachians in the United States he 'discovered [...] a civilization [...] that was truly an art of social living' (1972b: 190). Still, that is an exception to what Leavis deemed a generally discouraging state of affairs.

Following Leavis, the problem is not that the connection between culture and civilization is impossible, but rather that it broke down with the advent of industrialisation, particularly during the 1930s. Consequently, the language degradation it involved led to the hindrance of the linguistic community's 'emotional life' (Leavis and Thompson 1950), viz. the ruin of the 'mind'. That is precisely the cultural crisis

⁴⁷ The author borrows the use of the term 'mind' from Eliot, whose wording choice can be arguably related to the influence of Hegel over the thought of Eliot and his generation. See Cuddy 2000.

denounced by Leavisism. It is up to the cultured minority, the argument goes, to safeguard the vestiges of tradition inherited from a more fortunate past; therefore, resisting the charges of mass civilisation and its weakening products is a matter of duty.

In light of the above, it is no wonder that the Leavisite cultural critique picked on popular lyrics as samples of ill-conceived writing devoid of literary value. As Frith (1989) observes, *banality* is a constant reproach of this trend towards the verbal content of popular hits. The quarrel was with the deceiving world picture they advanced, heavy with sweetened ideals of romance and happiness rhymed in a cheap fashion.

A notable proponent of this approach is Wilfrid Mellers. In *Music in a New Found Land* (1964), the author reproduces the binary scheme of modernity by dividing the musical panorama into *art* and *commerce*, categories that resemble significantly those of *culture* and *civilisation* proposed by Leavis. Though the author warns about the actual lack of clarity of such a hierarchical scheme, he takes it as point of departure to highlight the evasive attitude towards reality pervading popular (commercial) music, traceable back to the librettos of 19th century European entertainment music. The musicologist draws a timeline that takes the reader from the works of Jacques Offenbach and Johann Strauss to the wholesale publications of Tin Pan Alley, in an account enriched with suggestive interpretations of the plots under scrutiny. Roughly speaking, the argument is that Offenbach's vulgarisation of the narrative and Strauss's dreaming escapism paved the way to the New Yorker hit factory. Mellers claims about Offenbach are illustrative: his work is said to display

a curious paradox typical of all attempts to create popular entertainment, as distinct from art: which is that although the play and music seem to be "up to the minute", immediately in touch with the texture of life, they depend on a *denial of*

reality. The zest can be indulged in only by obliterating the natural impulses of the heart (Mellers 1964: 243, italics mine).

The argument for denial is founded on the assumption of an 'inherent human nature', as Leavis wrote once (1972b: 184), which in this context is compatible with culture and not with mass civilization: the key to reality, the Leavisite argument goes, is enshrined in the tradition preserved by the cultured minority. There may be said to lie the deceptiveness of the worldview set forth by light music narratives, and hence its lack of authenticity. Yet, the commercial nature of the works as commodities, and hence the material conditions so disdained by Leavis, play an evaluative role in Mellers' approach.

The musicologist completes the picture with his analysis of some Stephen Foster's works. 'Beautiful Dreamer', and 'Jennie with the Light Brown Hair', two songs by the famed American composer, are compared precisely in terms of their being real. In Mellers' view, 'the Beautiful Dreamer [...] was, one suspects, a concoction of the fancy; Jennie was a real girl' (1964: 248). Leaving aside whether or not this suspicion was the case, two points are noteworthy here: first, not all civilised popular songs are blameworthy; second, *realness* is again the value that makes all the difference. The feelings in the songs would be corrupted without it, not only in terms of human essence, but also factually. Hence, emotional life, and therefore quality of experiences, would be perverted. In this context, banality is a destructive condition in a wide sense: aesthetical as well as ethical—preoccupations similar to Arnold's.

It is worth noting that Mellers, in his capacity as a trained musicologist, by no means limited his work to the analysis of lyrics. In an unapologetic subjective style, as

Brackett (2003) would describe it, he also transited the avenues of musical analysis to become a fundamental author in academic musical criticism. I shall come back to this in section 1.3.4.1.

2.2.2 British Culturalism

Subsequent trends of cultural theory gave continuity to the Leavisite train of thought, some of them with a distinctive Marxist orientation. That is the case, for example, of Richard Hoggart's commentary on popular songs from the multi-disciplinary standpoint of *British Culturalism*. In *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), the founder of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies agrees with the Leavisite critique in that popular music is able to deprave real feelings. That is, well-being is confounded with conformity and real dreams with weakening fancies in the saccharine world of the popular song. Similar to Mellers, Hoggart does not discard all popular lyrics at once; he safeguards for positive appraisal those from the pre-war era, describing them as more *genuine* than the jukebox hits so harshly condemned in his cultural analysis. He celebrates the former as vulgar but sincere, indulgent but not cynic, emotional but not calculated. This position is consistent with the manifest esteem of the author towards the cultural state of affairs of 1930s Britain in general, and with his salutation to a robust popular culture able to develop bottom-up. Interestingly, where Hoggart saw a genuine culture made by and for the people, Leavis saw an alarming crisis, as Storey (2015) observes. Nevertheless, Hoggart's *genuineness* and Leavis' *banality* remain on the same page, i.e. concerned with the same sort of cultural predicaments. To better understand Hoggart's position, it is convenient to examine his critique of working-class attitudes and values in more detail.

The author claims that a complex 'interplay of changes' propelled an attitudinal shift in Britain society by the mid-20th century. As a result, new values came to coexist with old ones in an ideological ecosystem where the success of the former depended on their relation to the latter. Hoggart's concentrates on the 'regrettable' aspects of such situation, with a view to the ways in which old and new values stand in relation to each other. For present purposes, I shall discuss three instances of that connection, as regards 1) tolerance and freedom, 2) equality and egalitarianism, and 3) present and progressivism.

The new idea of *freedom* relates to the old notion of *tolerance* inasmuch as self-determined thinking degenerates into limitless toleration for the sake of a free society. According to Hoggart, freedom is not being itself but the ground of being, a principle which was disregarded by British popular culture in the 1950s. Whereas in self-determination one is free to be and hence to think by oneself, under freedom-as-being s/he who chooses to think differently is seen as intolerant and dogmatic, as an agent of constrain. In order not to hinder freedom, then, the attitude towards the thought of others shrinks to boundless acceptance, which blockades one's own liberty of thought and judgement. 'The open mind has become a yawning chasm' (1957: 147), wrote Hoggart in this respect. The author highlights that this forced lack of conflict and disagreement tampers actual tolerance and social change: 'Genuine tolerance is a product of vigour, belief, a sense of difficulty of truth and a respect for others; the new tolerance [new freedom] is weak and unwilling, a fear and resentment of change' (1957: 148). Succinctly put, what is at stake is the cancellation of positive liberty (self-determination) by the anxieties of a negative liberty (freedom from restraints) that patronises the other at the expense of oneself.

Along the lines of the argument above, the author claims that 'counting heads' became a substitute for judgement around the same period. Maxims such as 'no one is superior' became 'everyone is just the same', in an expression of radical refusal to differentiate. Here the human need for group support turns into *egalitarianism*, which different from true *equality*, consists in lowering down people to what Hoggart calls the 'little man'. In the act of equalising people to such common denominator, 'the little man is made to seem big because everything is scaled down to his measure; his responses, the limits of his vision, are the recognised limits' (*ibid.* 150). Hence, the down-to-earth attitudes involved in egalitarianism are taken to the extreme as to become aggressive 'plain man' attitudes, as exclusive and hating as highbrow pedantry. Hoggart stresses the agency of the media in this regard: 'the 'you' who is cajoled, invited to laugh, flattered, is not simply the individual 'you', but a great composite 'you' of the unexceptional ordinary folk' (*ibid.* 156)

The author pictures 1950s British society aimless, in the sense that it moves, 'not forward to anywhere, but simply forward for forwardness' sake' (*ibid.* 160). In this account, the old notion of seizing the day and the new attitude of progressivism come together to nullify past, present, and future. Here, progressivism is the gesture of valuing the present in virtue of its novelty, in contrast to the undesirable and disposable nature of the past. In this vein, being up to date becomes an end in itself. Consequently, the sense of the past and the future is lost, for in the midst of incessant change, people inhabit a continuous present, solely seize the present day. However, this present looks forward into the future and not into the now, because the best is always yet to come. Noteworthy, Hoggart does not condemn progress as the emancipation of people from practical restraints via technical improvement; what he mistrusts is progressivism

insofar as it pointlessly fosters the acceleration of progress. Here advertisement, and therefore the mass media, play a central role in turning progress into progressivism.

It is against this background that Hoggart unfolds his critique of 1950s' popular music. For starters, the attitude of limitless tolerance makes sense of the dreamful character imputed to commercial lyrics. In face of the generalised avoidance of conflict at the heart of (negative) freedom, it is no wonder that expressions of dissatisfaction, criticism, or irony hardly show up. The invitation is not to endure the hardness of life, but to dream and wish (1957: 187). Adding to the sedative effect, popular lyrics exalt romantic love to religious proportions, in ways conveyed by singers through 'angelic' (feminine) or 'strangolato' (masculine) renditions. Such emotional content ties into conventions and patterns. In Hoggart's words, popular songs aim to

present to the hearer as directly as possible a known pattern of emotions; they are not creations in their own right as structures of conventional signs for the emotional fields they open. The metaphors are not meant to be imbued with complex suggestions; they are part of a fixed objective currency; very small change, in a few broad denominations, but recognisable in their own territory (*ibid.* 133).

This conventional character relates also to the scaling down of the world to the measure of the 'little man'. Such process demands *direct communication*, understood as the patronising articulation of content that already exists in the mind of the receiver in the simplest way possible. It is never the personal experience of the emitter that is at

stake. It follows, then, that its expression is incommunicable, at least directly. Consistent with the above, Hoggart's notes on popular literature are illuminating: 'The writer does not stand before his experience and try to recreate it in a form of words [...] popular writing cannot genuinely explore experience' (*ibid.* 150).

The communicational aspect of the popular song is not restricted to its words. Music itself, and particularly the melody, answers to the same principle. Entertainers 'must know the exact idiom in which to play' (1957: 128), the author explains, meaning that they ought to be acquainted with the repertoire and the technique, and be able to transmute the songs into the idiom. In so doing, they enable the possibility of triggering emotion, which awaits beforehand to be quickened on the receiver's end. Clichéd melodic movements are the basic resource of musicians to that end, which announce efficiently, for instance, if a sad part is coming or a song is about childhood (*ibid.* 133). The idiomatic suitability of melodies plays a crucial role in the success of popular songs, Hoggart claims, even above lyrics and beyond marketing schemes (*ibid.* 131).

The egalitarian thrust of sameness manifests itself also through fake intimacy, an effect that allows for 'over simplifications, soft deceptions and perilous distortions' (*ibid.* 165) to reach the composite 'you' of the unexceptional ordinary folk. Linguistic, emotional, and intellectual simplicity is important also in this sense, as the *sine qua non* of such a personalising effect. Closeness is cynical and exaggerated in lyrics and delivery, where personal experience 'shows up' as if it was universal.

Following Hoggart, remaining up to date with the musical fashion of the moment is important for entertainers too, because the manner in which popular music is consumed answers to the novelty-driven logic of progressivism. In this connection, he describes his impressions about 1950s' music consumption with a tinge of pessimism.

The jukebox boys, the typical listeners of popular music at the time, are pictured as 'the figures some important [...] forces are tending to create, the directionless and tamed helots of a machine-minding class' (*ibid.* 205). Ingesting the latest snippets of sensations without any commitments whatsoever, they come to reflect in Hoggart's narrative the tendency to fragmentation in consumption (*ibid.* 167).

Despite the sharpness of his critique, Hoggart does observe that popular songs are capable of sincerity and cynicism at the same time: although technical resources are deployed to achieve certain effects, singers may sincerely be part of the world they sing aloud, a world they share with their audience. In a similar vein, the author also recognises the capability of people to listen to songs in their own way, and to make them better than they actually are at the receiving end (1957: 191). This empowered conception of the listener is to be found in posterior accounts of popular music, particularly in Marxism and other approaches interested in ideological promotion.

2.2.3 American Sociology

Seminal articulations regarding the sociology of popular music bloomed in the United States between the 1930s and the 1960s. One of the most influential of the lot, and the one I shall emphasise here, builds on the study of deviant behaviour in the context of *youth and subcultural studies*. The American take on subcultures originates in the work of the Chicago School and the Functionalist tradition, and stretches from Albert K. Cohen's subcultural theory of delinquency in the 1950s to Howard Saul Becker's sociology of music in the 1960s. This section will briefly introduce this line of inquiry with a view to its contributions to popular music theory. Another important sociological undertaking, the Princeton Radio Research Project, I discuss in the next section.

2.2.3.1 The Chicago School

The Chicago School was housed by the first sociology department in the US, and influenced by the scientific debates in vogue at the turn of the 20th century (see § 2.1.3). This line of sociological research leans on the theoretical premise that society constitutes a balanced ecosystem and that what we now call subcultures are by-products of modern urbanisation (Williams 2007). In methodological terms, scholars such as William Thomas and Robert Park at the University of Chicago fostered methodologies favouring the researchers' direct experience of societal phenomena in the process of theory building, which by the time was a pioneering scientific attitude. Sociology students were encouraged to 'live up' the urban realities around them, so to speak, in order to get hold on the societal issues they set out to explain. The blend of acute fieldwork and comprehensive theorisation, in the spirit of urban ethnography, became the characteristic approach of the Chicago School to theory since its early years (Williams 2013: §2). Nevertheless, the academic output of such an enterprise remained sociological and not ethnographical, inasmuch as empirical data was integrated with theory towards the formulation of general scientific claims (Bulmer 1986: 3). In a different vein, the work of the Chicago School has been criticised on grounds of its alleged compatibility with cultural assimilation (against cultural diversity)⁴⁸:

The notion of the "melting pot" and the experience of European immigrants groups in the industrial cities of North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries [see below] had given rise to Park's "Chicago school," which saw assimilation as the final phase of the "race relation cycle" [...] a convenient and

⁴⁸ On assimilation and cultural diversity, see Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983); Siapera (2010: 21, 31-33, 52)

ostensibly liberal way of solving “minority problems” (Van den Berghe 1987: 3, in-text references removed⁴⁹).

Chicago sociology rendered fruitful approaches to urban socio-musical activity, as Paul Cressey’s *The Taxi-Dance Hall* ([1932] 2008) testifies to. Although not centred on the popular musical material per se, this work contributed to the sociological understanding of Chicago’s nightlife, and in so doing, to the wide range of practices related to dance music and socialisation through dancing in times of the prohibition in America. Furthermore, the study includes qualitative analyses of ethnic and gender matters unfolded around situations of musical consumption, as well as illustrative descriptions of the music and its modes of presentation.

It is noteworthy the attention given in this work to the question of status and prestige. The author recounts that the taxi-dancers (paid dance partners), who were normally girls of limited resources from immigrant families, found themselves poorly esteemed in their original societal context. In the wake of dissatisfaction, they became associated with ‘unconventional groups’ such as the taxi-dance halls, thus embracing ‘a system of rationalizations’ that protected them from self-condemnation and social reprobation—which involved separation from their families and other institutions—(Cressey [1932] 2008: 72). This process of association signified the construction of an enhanced social identity within an alternative system of norms where prestige was safeguarded (Williams 2013), regardless of the ‘improper dancing and sensuous music’

⁴⁹ The passage refers to Park (1950). Van den Berghe praises the Chicago School in the same publication for its avoidance of a distorting micro level of analysis (1987:41). On levels of analysis, see Introduction.

that, to the eyes of the moral establishment, was a hallmark of taxi-dance halls (Cressey [1932] 2008: 191).

Cressey's study delimits with fair clarity the marginal segment of society it purports to explain ('unconventional groups'), as well as the kind of deviant practices it focuses on. Thus localised, the interest in societal transgressions jeopardising the balance of the social ecosystem was to become a constant in American subcultural studies up to the 1950s. At this point, however, neither the term subculture nor any specific subcultural normativity were introduced.

2.2.3.2 American Subcultural Theory

Robert Merton (1938) also contributed significantly to the development of subcultural theory in the US. Grounded on the distinctive perspective of Structural Functionalism, the main idea running through his theory is that certain elements of the social and cultural structure propitiate the transgression of social norms, to the extent that breaking the rules becomes a natural response. Deviant behaviour, the argument goes, is the result of a misfit between the cultural *goals* a society prescribes and the institutional *means* individuals count on to achieve those goals. Such a diphasis generates significant psychological strain for people, which they cope with by enacting social adaptation in varying manners. Merton anticipates the concept of subculture in his coinage of *innovation*, viz. a problematic mode of social adaptation that deals with strain by relinquishing the institutional means while keeping with the social ends. This characterisation lands us, in plain terms, with the typical rule-breaker who illegitimately strives for socially recognisable success.

Against the background of Chicago urban sociology and Functionalist strain theory, Cohen came up with ideas that were instrumental to the institutionalisation of subcultural studies. Working in the field of criminology, Cohen submitted that the origin of subcultures in general lies in the gathering of individuals with similar needs who cope with their discontent by resorting to alternative frames of reference:

The emergence of these “group standards” of this shared frame of reference, is the emergence of a new subculture. It is cultural because each actor’s participation in this system of norms is influenced by his perception of the same norms in other actors. It is *subcultural* because the norms are shared only among those actors who stand somehow to profit from them and who find in one another a sympathetic moral climate within which these norms may come to fruition and persist (Cohen [1955] 1971: 65).

To put this definition in perspective, we may say that subcultural participants enact ‘innovation’ the way Merton suggests, though not solely as concerns the means to cultural ends but down to their ‘system of rationalizations’, to use Cressey’s terminology. In the process, they abandon mainstream social rules and embrace those of the delinquent subculture, which is created and re-created as long as it serves the purpose that engendered it (*id.*). Hence, social reward (not only money, but also status) is reachable by means that are institutionally condemned by the prevalent culture, e.g. criminal acts and vandalism. The criminological line of subcultural theory has consistently shown interest in the popular music related to subcultural communities,

and has been given continuity after the 1970s by works that draw on the American tradition and the later insights of British subcultural theory (e.g. Hamm 1993; Kauzlarich and Awsumb 2012).

Also in the American tradition, but one step removed from concerns about delinquency, Becker goes on to deal with jazz musicians as the participants of a non-criminal deviant group with a specific 'hip' subculture. In *Outsiders: Studies on the Sociology of Deviance* ([1963] 2008), the point is made that the values and way of life of jazzmen, while being at odds with regular social conventions, remained within the framework of legality. Therefore, even though a degree of 'innovation' can be recognised in the irreverence of such a lifestyle, the transgressions at work here are different in nature from those of delinquent subcultures. Becker feeds into a conception of deviance rather different from social pathology as the Chicago School and Cohen had it. In this account, deviance is no individual defilement but rather something engendered by society, not through strains, as Merton understood it, but via consensual labelling:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label (Becker [1963] 2008: 9).

Becker stresses that membership to the 'hip' subculture was a self-conscious enactment of identity on the side of the jazzmen, who 'worked hard to identify themselves as fundamentally different from the 'squares' whom they were forced to cater in order to earn a living' (Williams 2013: §2). As we will see in the sequel, the question of identity and representation via popular music will become a key concern of the scholarship that followed, particularly as regards the authenticity of popular music as a by-product of the musician's status (authentically subcultural, authentically artistic, and so on). Despite the sharp contrast between 'hip' musicians and 'square' audiences, Becker's theory address criticisms as to the alleged moral degradation and orgiastic excesses of popular musicians and their fans. It does so by aligning with the idea (contrary to the Leavisite 'human nature' and other essentialist assumptions) that deviant behaviour is a construct, that every society is characterised by different rules, and that therefore the repertoire of behaviours that may be deemed deviant (and/or authentic, shall I add) is ultimately unfixed (Buckley and Shepherd 2003: 206). This way of thinking will stand out with great momentum in later gendered theories of popular music.

2.2.4 The Frankfurt School

The line of research usually referred to as *critical theory* has its origin in the multidimensional, groundbreaking work of the Frankfurt School. Multidimensional, because it combines perspectives as diverse as German idealism, psychoanalysis, historical materialism and existentialism, as well as key insights from sociology and anthropology, in the pursuit of its goals. Ground-breaking, because a number of such goals, and the methodologies through which they are pursued, run against the grain of

dominant cultural apparatuses—in ways that challenge with equal impetus leftist and rightist ideologies as well as analytic and continental philosophies.

From a historical perspective, the most relevant contribution of critical theory to popular music studies comes from the pen of Theodor W. Adorno. His most prominent and controversial studies on the matter came about in exile, during his years of involvement with the Radio Research Project supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and hosted by Princeton University. The contribution of Adorno to this enterprise, under the direction of Paul Lazarsfeld, lasted about five years, from 1937 to 1941. There were, without a doubt, methodological, cultural, and philosophical differences that made the collaboration between Adorno and the rest of the New Jersey crew somewhat difficult. Many testimonies tell of the reserves that former colleagues held towards the thinker from Frankfurt and his peculiar personality (Hullot-Kentor 2009, Morrison 1978). In a similar vein, some of Adorno's writings (e.g. [1969] 1985) relate the hardness of working in a foreign culture and in a foreign language, mostly in terms of the compromises that on occasion were necessary for communicational ends. The tense dialectics of *Culture* (in English) and *Kultur* (in German), thus lived in the flesh, did not hinder but seemed to have encouraged the productivity of the author, who remained rather prolific during those years.

The season at the Radio Research Project provided Adorno with confrontational experience of the mass media and the scholarship around them. Leaving popular music aside for the moment, notice that Adorno came to join a milieu in which 'great musical material' (European classical music) was handled in accordance with the social character of the radio by the 1930s, namely that of a cultural institution with the 'mission to educate and enlighten' (Hjarvard 2008b: 118; see Hullot-Kentor 2009). In

this context, music was understood as educational content and the radio as the instrument of a cultural project committed to the formative dimension of culture (qua *Bildung*) that could hardly fit the shoe of the author's critical philosophy.

On the one hand, from an Adornian point of view, the mass delivery of classical music as a cultural good missed its critical aspect. That is because, apart from being used instrumentally as means to an end, its conditions of reception were structured in a way that fetishized the musical idiom of the common practice period, thus fostering absolute thinking *about* music instead of promoting any critical engagement *with* it. No wonder, Adorno found educational programming irreversibly affirmative as to the status of the cultural products it disseminated, and therefore prone to bolster dominant ideologies instead of calling for the negative moment of homological reflection (see Leppert 2002: 219). With the advent of the 20th century, Adorno claims, music underwent a profound change in its social character, whereby the autonomy of the musical work, as defended by traditional musicology (§ 2.3.4), was displaced by an intimate relationship between music and people expressed on the level of social and musical dissonances, far beyond 'clear-cut' social content (Adorno [1947] 2006). Later scholars will take up this notion of *homology* during the second wave of popular music studies (Attali 1977; McClary 2002).

On the other hand, 'the attempt to measure the quality of the audience experience with a machine' (Levy 1982: 30), as the Lazarsfeld-Stanton Programme Analyser did, was at odds with Adorno's ideas on experience and the judgement of taste. Adorno's concern is with the undesirable prominence of the 'identical' at the expense of the 'non-identical', or in other words, of abstract universal experience over collective subjective experience. Ultimately, the empirical interest of the Radio Research Project contradicted Adorno's deepest conviction that musical experience blooms in the radical obscurity of

human expression, which narrow categorisation (like/dislike) and communicative verbalisation necessarily spelled a form of betrayal (Adorno [1945] 2009: 140; Leppert 2002: 118).

The first-hand grasp of US radio, together with the institutional guidelines of the Princeton Project, had a definite impact over the articulation of the critical apparatus that Adorno began to sketch already at the outset of the American experience. In that connection, the notion of *standardisation* towered up as a key concept of his cultural theory, in at least two senses. One has to do with the standardisation of the radiophonic experience. The author claims that the American conditions of perception were consistent with a materially pre-established structure of experience that determined the significance of the mediated content. This claim embraces not only the physicality of the acoustic substance, i.e. the clear and distinct articulation of sound versus its distortion in transmission (Adorno 2009d: 113-120; see Leppert 2002: 218-219), but also the ubiquity-standardisation of the radio phenomenon itself: 'that the same material is impressed upon a great number of people' within the same space-time coordinates (Adorno 2009d: 95). This, according to Adorno, has a tremendous impact over the listener's attitudes. The other sense in which the author means standardisation has to do with the objective configuration of the musical material:

A clear judgment concerning the relation of serious music to popular music can be arrived at only by strict attention to the fundamental characteristic of popular music: standardization. The whole structure of popular music is standardized, even where the attempt is made to circumvent standardization ([1941] 2009: 281).

The author argues for a formal constitution persistent throughout the popular repertoire. Such is said to be the ultimate object of repetition, and hence the substance of the standard itself. Pseudo-individualising details are added to such a non-constructive structure, the argument goes. This results in songs that superficially sound different although they are not. Adorno ([1938] 1991, [1945] 2009, [1941] 2009) identifies some such traits of popular music, for instance:

- The length of choruses is limited to 32 bars
- The song structure is significantly fixed (e.g. the AABA form)
- The overall range is of one octave and one note.
- The songs are based on tonal harmony
- The harmonic facts are usually uncomplicated
- The rhythm patterns are remarkably stable and repetitive
- The melody is motivic and strongly associated with certain subject matters a priori

Standardisation, in the author's view, blocks the possibility of production and reception outside the schematic patterns it harbours. This sort of formal repetitiveness has a double repercussion. Over production, it comes to harness the musical expression of subjective experiences in favour of vacuous comprehensibility (cf. Hoggart 1957).

Over reception, it substitutes the judgement of taste with the automated recognition of the standard. Following Adorno, these practices are detrimental for musical experience, and contribute to the general thrust of the enlightenment towards reification in human experience (Adorno and Horkheimer [1944] 2002).

Given the formal specificities of the repertoire Adorno refers to, i.e. swing jazz and Tin Pan Alley hits, the argument for standardisation as a facilitator of easy listening becomes tenable as far as musical structure is concerned (Middleton 1990). There are some problematic generalisations in these ideas, however, namely the assumption that everybody engages with music the same way, that homological expression and the judgement of taste become impossible in the presence of the standard.

At a first glance, Adorno's concept of popular music appears to lie in opposition to serious music as its dialectical counterpart. Read from the standpoint of aesthetic value in terms of good or bad (§ 3.1), such position would mirror the distinction between high and low culture underlying a great deal of cultural theories along the lines of modernist aesthetics, as discussed above. Nevertheless, we must be careful with the serious/popular splitting here, because that is not exactly Adorno's suggestion. On the one hand, although Adorno compares serious and light music in his analyses, the point is made that there also exists 'bad serious music which', already from its composition, 'may be as rigid and mechanical as popular music' ([1941] 2009: 248). On the other hand, as we have already seen, 'good' compositions can be ruined by standardisation in more than one way, namely: (1) through musical performance dominated by ferrous guidelines as to how classics should be, and (2) through the imposition of listening attitudes dissociated from the actual object of listening (Adorno [1938] 1991, 2009b). Following this rationale, bad serious music is as regrettably idiomatic as popular music

can be. Yet, it does not follow that, in Adorno's view, all popular music is bad per se. His analysis of 'The Bells of San Raquel' is illustrative in this respect:

»Good« hits are by no means those which borrow heavily from the higher musical language. They are rather those which, within the established language of popular music, bring about a considerable differentiation and structural unity (2009c: 327).

Even though 'The Bells of San Raquel' is assessed positively, it constitutes an exceptional case that makes room for the possibility of quality in light music, but by no means represents the evidence of a dominant trend in Adorno's musical critique. The author highlights the commodity character of both popular and serious music under the rule of the mass cultural scheme, but is emphatic about popular music's being representative par excellence of the culture industry (Adorno 2009a: 190; see Bernstein 1991). This brings critical theory seemingly close to conservative theories in Marxist political economy (§§ 2.3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.2.3). Roughly speaking, they locate the driving force of popular music in the production of a supply for a demand shaped by the market. In this connection, not only the musician but also the sound engineer and the producer play key roles in defining how songs are meant to sound. Thus, the standard of the industry prevails, with the purpose of achieving commercial success. In turn, Adorno's standard goes beyond recording companies and their capitalist agendas.

Without ever excluding the question of political economy (see Adorno [1945] 2009), Adorno's concern is mostly about listening as socio-musical practice. In this sense, his stance is more consistent with Hoggart's (1957) elaboration on egalitarianism and direct communication. It is worth recalling that the culture industry Adorno refers to is not the sum of all so-called creative industries, but an ontological order of overall standardisation (Adorno [1963] 1975, cf. Foucault 1980a, [1966] 2005; see § 1.2). The problem is that culture becomes equalised down to its deepest grounds, in such a way that socio-musical practices are not really conducted upon commercial interests (or at least, not ultimately so) but upon a general pseudo-cultural cognitive hindrance. In Adorno's cultural theory, it is consciousness itself that is at stake. Hence, the commoditisation of music means production and consumption according to the dictum of the culture industry. Briefly, standardisation brings about commoditisation, not the other way around.

2.2.5 Musical Anthropology

For the purpose of this survey, I shall define musical anthropology ad hoc, as the body of musical research informed by ethnography and ethnology as it developed from the beginning of the 20th century until the institutionalisation of ethnomusicology during the 1950s. Following our previous discussion about the origins of cultural anthropology, this section covers, in a summarily fashion, the relations between key terms and ideas that shaped ethnomusicology into a viable framework for the study of popular music, as it became common practice in the 1970s.

One of such relations is that between the term 'popular' and the ideas associated with it. In this regard, it is important to highlight the role played by the cultural location of the scholars committed to the anthropological study of music. I said earlier that

'popular' and 'folk' should be thought of as two related yet different musical corpora. The warning answers to the various ways in which musical repertoires and practices can be named depending on the cultural setting, which more often than not lead to terminological confusion. I referred to this situation in Chapter 1 vis-à-vis relevant debates in Latin American academia. Next, I shall consider a similar instance as it obtains in the programmatic writings of French musicologist Julien Tiersot, published in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The contribution of Tiersot is abundant as it is important. In the course of his career, the author dealt with musical materials he deemed representative of diverse peoples of the world, based on methodological guidelines that contributed to the definition of musical ethnography in the decades that followed (although his methods were not exclusively ethnographical). As Montagnier (1990) explains, some of such guidelines are (1) the use of the comparative method (Mugglestone and Alder 1981), (2) the implementation of participant observation and active discussion with the musicians, (3) the notation of the musical materials in the most accurate way possible. Considered in perspective, some of these strategies were less successful than others.

Tiersot pursued with equal enthusiasm the scrutiny of French and non-French music. That means—in a deictic sense—that his writings deal with 'national' as well as 'foreign' materials along the same lines, in a simultaneous display of refreshing openness and occasional Eurocentrism (Montagnier 1990). On the one hand, for example, his *Histoire de la chanson populaire en France* (1889) traces the origins of the popular French song to socio-musical interactions from the Medieval Period to the late 19th century, paying attention to the links between lyrical content, rhythmic structures and melodic lines. On the other hand, his *Notes d'ethnographie musicale* (1905) begin

with a reasoned agenda for musical ethnography followed by a series of studies covering various Asian musical traditions, including the offshoots of 'Arab' music in the Mediterranean basin. The question of geo-cultural boundaries as a defining parameter of the research object is an important matter, to which I shall return in § 2.3.4.2.

Terminologically speaking, it is noteworthy that 'popular' (*populaire*) means here collective and anonymous (Tiersot 1889: v), in contrast with 'learned' (*savante*) music. This contrast may or may not amount to disconnection or antagonism: the latter category is referred to in the *Histoire* in terms of its intimate relation with the popular tune, and in the *Notes* as part of musical bodies wherein it occasionally serves as the antithesis of the popular. This early understanding of the popular song is certainly different from those of the first-wave theories discussed above. Here, no assumptions are made about the *urban character* of the musical material, nor about its *mediated distribution*, nor about its *ideological commitment*. The relevance of commoditisation is not evident either. This version of the popular, which is characteristic of the French and other romance language academe, is fundamentally anthropological, for it alludes to the (authentic) connection between the music and certain peoples as culturally coherent wholes. In that sense, Tiersot's 'popular song' is roughly equivalent to what most English-speaking scholars would call 'folk song'. Incidentally, notice the similarity between the works of the French musicologist and Cecil Sharp's—the father of the English folk song revival (e.g. Tiersot 1903; c.f. Sharp [1932] 2012, ND). I read Tiersot's studies along the lines of an 'ample definition' of folk music, which I introduce in § 3.2. Although I shall not discuss that here, I must highlight the historical relevance of Tiersot's work to better understand the advent of ethnomusicology and its intricacies.

'Ethnomusicology' is a coinage attributed to Dutch scholar Jaap Kunst introduced it in his essay *Musicologica* of 1950. The concept was meant as an alternative to comparative musicology as it was practiced in Europe and America at the time (Mugglestone and Adler 1981; List 1979; Bor 1988). There, Kunst defines ethnomusicology in terms of its object, namely 'the music and the musical instruments of all non-European peoples' (1950: 7), while observing that 'comparison', in that connection, was not the most distinctive procedure of the discipline. In the second edition of the same work, this time entitled *Ethnomusicology* (Kunst 1969: 1), 'Europe' was substituted by 'the West' as the cultural point of reference. I read the asymmetry of this West-centred definition in light of the opinionated musicological scene of his time, which Slobin (2003) describes in the following terms:

Modern ethnomusicology originated in the late nineteenth century as part of a quest for universal psychological principles that might be verified empirically and cross-culturally through careful analysis of data gathered from 'non-Western' peoples, many of them colonial subjects. Intersecting with other discourses [...] ethnomusicology developed three branches: the 'oriental', concerned with comparative analysis of 'high culture' European and Asian styles [...] the 'primitive', dealing with 'nonliterate tribal' peoples [...] and the 'folk', concerned with the internal 'primitives' of Europe and the United States (72).

This characterisation must be handled with care, for it is a high-contrast version of the facts, so to speak. Yes, the biases it describes held sway on academic circles at the

beginning of the 20th century (and later still) as we can reasonably infer from the discussion about 19th century anthropology. Still, Tiersot's work, commented above, suggests that there were lines of work available which made room for more nuanced views. Kunst's contribution was relevant but not a game-changer. Regarding the author's emphasis on comparative musicology, some scholars (Van der Meer and Erickson 2014, Bor 2008) suggest that circumscribing the history of ethnomusicology to the comparative method is inaccurate, on account that the theoretical kernel of Kunst's ethnomusicology was already at the heart of cultural anthropology since its inception in the 18th century. Although there is no reason to doubt Kunst's intention to react to comparative musicology, it should be noted that the ideas he mobilises are indeed present in earlier works of musical anthropology:

The Polish musicologist Łucjan Kamieński used the terms *etnomuzykologia* and *etnomuzykologiczny* (ethnomusicological), as well as *etnografia muzyczna* and *etnologia muzyczna* as early as 1929. Long before these specific formulations we find terminology that is very similar and refers to the same branch of learning: in English it is called "the ethnological study of music", and in French "*ethnographie musicale*" [e.g. Tiersot]. At once then we understand that the origins of this tradition are to be found in ethnography itself (Van der Meer and Erickson 2014: § 4, in-text references removed)

Kunst's elaboration on ethnomusicology can be understood as a defence of musical cultures outside Europe based on an egalitarian valuation of musical expression.

In this sense, one can read it as an argument for the artificiality of all musical structures (against organicism) and a suggestion that the aesthetic judgment of music (in the Kantian sense of pleasure and displeasure) is determined by familiarity among other factors (Kunst 1950: 7-9). Nonetheless, he seems to play the same game of his addressees, thus maintaining the status quo to a significant extent. In other words, his position leans on a dichotomy between primitive and civilized, flirts with cultural evolutionism and attempts to analyse musical expressions on scientific grounds, based more on physics and mathematics and less on the network of meanings at the heart of the cultures where music is produced and consumed. Although not an innovation in musical thinking (Rousseau 1768: 314-315; Tiersot 1905; see Baud-Bovy 1988: 82-87), Kunst's move was significant given the epistemic context of his claims and its terminological consequences.

It was not until the 1970s that 'it became possible for 'popular music' [understood in a non-folkloric sense] to be considered a fit object of study' for ethnomusicologists (Slobin 2003: 72). That sort of research, which focuses on genres such as jazz, pop and rock among others, will be discussed in detail in § 2.3.4.2.

2.3 Second Wave of Popular Music Studies

Roughly speaking, the main concerns of popular music scholarship until the 1960s were given continuity in the studies pursued thereafter, during the last part of the millennium and into the 21st century. A distinction ought to be made between both periods, nevertheless, not only because of the intrinsic dynamism of theory building as discursive practice, but also, and importantly, because of the deep changes in the configuration of the cultural panorama late modernity brought about worldwide. Such modifications rendered socio-musical practices significantly different from those that

preceded them, which demanded, in turn, renewed theoretical approaches to popular music. Likewise, they also enlarged significantly the spectrum of cultural epistemai involved in the theorisation of popular music as a sociocultural phenomenon of global proportions that nonetheless remains attached to local specificities.

I have thrown the division line alongside the end of the 1960s because of two reasons, both related to the advent of transculturation in popular music. First, I sustain that such a process came about in the wake of institutional *mediatisation* (Hjarvard 2008b, 2013), which in popular music theory is compatible with notions of *tectonic change* (Rojek 2011) and *mediaization—sic.*, mind the spelling—(Wallis and Malm 1990). Not only are these processes peculiar to late modernity, but also reached critical mass in the digital age since the development of the PC—and related information and music technologies—around the 1970s. Second, the tunes first distributed through late modern IT were predominantly Anglo productions, which, by the time they flooded into the global market (from the 1960s onwards), showed distinctive rock formal features. Such formal standard rose to primacy in the US around 1955 and settled in the transnational social space in the years that followed, thus displacing jazz as the popular form par excellence in Anglo-American music (Peterson 2004). All in all, popular music scholarship until the end the 1960s revolved around texts and contexts significantly different from those it dealt with afterwards. Indeed, this moment of transcultural inflection, I shall argue, is crucial for reaching towards the notion of global in music. I shall deal with this matter thoroughly in Chapter 4. Meanwhile, let us pan across the theoretical landscape of popular music studies after 1970 in the cultural epistemai here under study, as to evaluate the prominence of authenticity and commoditisation in its manifold articulations.

2.3.1 Marxist Approaches

As Martin Jay (1973) argues, Marxist aesthetic criticism displays two lines of work. One is based on the thought of Lenin: art's worth lies in political partnership. This line culminated in the Stalinist social realism that prevailed in the Soviet world for years. The other draws on Engels: art holds an inherent social significance beyond political intention. In this account, the objective social content of works transcends the author's intentions and the traces of his/her social class. Leftist research in popular culture largely fit Jay's characterisation. The studies discussed in what follows bend towards the latter trend—they prevail in most academic circles, allegedly due to the decline of Stalinism after 1989 (Harker 1996, 1998)—without losing sight of the critique of capitalism as their primary concern.

At first sight, it might look inaccurate to subsume the ideas in this subsection under the heading Marxist Approaches. As we have seen, Culturalism draws importantly on leftist ideas about culture and society, and as we will see, almost all works commented hereafter are touched by Marx's philosophy in one way or another. I maintain that the theories here represented belong within the boundaries of Marxist *orthodoxy* as their native episteme (Foucault [1966] 2005).

To date, 'perspectives explicitly informed by the work of Karl Marx have been conspicuous largely by their absence' in musicological research (Qureshi 2002: xiv), with Marxist scholars tending to draw mostly on derivative sources, as Jay's scheme already suggests. Although that leaves room for reflecting on Marx's thought from a diversity of viewpoints, it is undeniable that the effort of such academics is characterised by their attempt to critique social reality from the Marxist perspective without destabilising Marxism itself. Understanding critique in the original sense of treating the

question by considering the foundations in which the question is grounded (Kant [1781/1787] 1998: A484/B512), we may claim that these approaches operate critically on the level of the cultural codes without necessarily challenging their native episteme (see Chapter 1). Heterodox projects, with further epistemological ambitions, are grouped here under different headings.

2.3.1.1 Cultural Critique

The agenda of this cultural debate is based on the scrutiny of ideologies running throughout the superstructure of society. By way of illustration and by no way of limitation, let us begin with what has been an influential line of research in Marxist orthodoxy. In *One for the Money* (1980) David Harker starts from the position that the term 'popular' is an euphemism for 'working class', and that therefore 'popular culture' is nothing but 'working class culture'. Along these lines, the author argues that culture in a class society is a way of struggle on the level of shared meanings that arises from the social structure itself (1980: 23), and that it is culture as *class culture* that characterises people's belonging to particular classes. If cultural praxis equals struggle, the capitalist ruling class cannot be blamed for 'seeking to continue its dominance' (*idem.* 50). On the contrary, workers are responsible, in any case, for the conduction of their lives. Consequently, only their weakness might allow the popular song industry to control them and the ways in which they use music.

In this connection, Harker agrees with Hoggart that popular music means working class music, and that, although such repertoire carries an undeniable ideological load to the service of bourgeois interests, listeners can actively appropriate it. In other words, Harker's position is that the way in which popular songs are

consumed can readily change the direction of the ideological reinforcement out of clear class-consciousness:

Our role is by no means a passive one [...] The industry [...] gives the public what the industry wants [...] but we are always in a position to refuse to consume, or to consume and appropriate even commercial products in genuinely creative ways (Harker 1980: 9-10).

However, the ideological promotion carried out by the popular song industry occurs on an institutional level, through mass market mechanisms 'operated by or on behalf of particular people, whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) those of the majority population' (*idem.* 22). By that token, and without disregarding the potential active role of the consumers, the musical commodities circulated in the market remain predominantly biased and very capable of playing havoc with social reality through the promotion of faux paradigms. It follows that popular songs, on the levels of production and distribution, feed into the societal logic of capitalism by obscuring the relations between people and things (*idem.* 111).

The argument for biased supply is somewhat removed from the field of cultural critique and closer to political economy, where it has been object of much controversy. I discuss Marxist economics in the next section, but for present purposes, it is convenient to peep into it as to drive the following point home: being free from commercialism and ideological fetters, and therefore remaining authentic, stands out here as a rare and desirable virtue of popular songs, particularly of popular lyrics. Harker does identify this

feature in the early works of some songwriters, such as Bob Dylan and Alex Glasgow, although in his view the tendency is invariably towards commercialisation—even in the case of radical artists.

Conservative Marxists positions are often criticised for their radicalness and for reifying their theoretical assumptions. Harker's work in the 1980s was found to take the omnipresence of capitalism too far, to make no justice to major artists as regards their integrity, and in a more general vein, to force his personal views into the analysis of popular lyrics (Gammon 1986, Nugent 1981). Later works (e.g. Harker 1980, 1996, 1998) show more nuanced views.

Pessimistic overgeneralisation about creative freedom and ideology is a controversial point in Marxist commentaries on popular music, about which there is no real consensus. The question remains open, more than ever, in face of the blurred distinctions between producers and consumers proper to the digital age. In this vein, let us refer to two Marxist trends heading in a more optimistic direction. At the turn of the 21st century, some scholars of leftist orientation have recognised hit singles as expressions of true and free interests. Ahlkvist (1999) and Finley (2002) independently point out the alignment of certain metal bands' lyrics with the Marxist ideals, being Rage Against The Machine a well-known case in point. Interestingly, this lyric material is found useful by both authors for educational purposes in contexts as diverse as sociology and criminology respectively—that recalls the conflated meaning of *Bildung* as culture and education, commented above. From this perspective, the assessment of ideological promotion is positive insofar as its content remains truthful. Finley's commentary about Rage Against The Machine is illustrative:

"*Bulls on Parade*" [...] probably Rage's most popular song from the 1996 *Evil Empire* album, discusses the crimes committed by capitalists. "Weapons not food, not homes, not shoes, not need, just feed the war cannibal animal, I walk the corner to the cemetery that used to be the library." This is consistent with the radical suggestion [...] that human rights should be the foundation of all laws (2002: 157)

Another line of reflection worth consideration is the neo-Marxist approaches based on the work of Hardt and Negri, whose book coincidentally titled *Empire* (2000) has been credited to attempt a rewriting of the Communist Manifesto a tempo with global capitalism (Žižek 2001). The argument is that the kind of imperialism based on the sovereignty of nation states is over, and that Empire emerges in its stead as the de-centred and de-territorialised power that regulates global exchange and rules the world (Hardt & Negri 2000: xi). This form of sovereignty, the argument goes, is 'composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule' (*ibid.* xii), thus rendering Empire as neither reducible to the invisible hand of the market, nor attributable to a single orchestrating power in the conspiracy theory style (*ibid.* 3). Although the authors mention popular music just in passing (*ibid.* 408), other scholars have drawn on these ideas to approach popular musical phenomena. For instance, Mueller (2014) has suggested that British subcultures could be considered the beginning of Multitude, i.e. the set of singularities that constitute, at the same time, the *raison d'être* of Empire and a powerful source of anti-Empire (see Hardt & Negri 2000: 43, 407). Mueller stresses that Empire's omnipresence leaves no outside space to its logic of circulation of goods and accumulation of profit, and that, within it, 'affective

labour' (including musical labour) takes on a protagonist role. Given those coordinates, he goes on to argue for the ability of the music linked to British subcultures past and future to bring Multitude into being from within Empire's own mechanisms. Interestingly enough, Mueller argues for a twofold nature of what the counter-cultural musician must signify to the audience, in terms of 1) productive *Genius* endowed with something of a 'divine spark', and 2) radical transformer of materials into values and ideologies. In this account, as in the others above, ideological reinforcement remains important—and desirable, inasmuch as it is aligned with 'true' states of consciousness standing against the opacity of social relations.

2.3.1.2 Political Economy

Marxist economics aims at accounting for the forces and relations of production that constitute the base of society. Certainly, Marxism does not inform all studies on the political economy of popular music. As we will see in Chapter 4, some of them show moderate, descriptive views on the matter in a sociological or anthropological vein (Keightley 2004; Peterson 2004; Peterson and Berger 1990; Wallis and Malm 1990). Still, in terms of the relation between music and society, and the societal dynamics it calls upon, leftist takes on the matter appear the most illustrative for present purposes. The other extreme of the spectrum is mainly represented by studies in the fields of marketing and business administration, which are characteristically oriented to the benefit of determinate stakeholders and developed along the lines of applied research. Although I will be focusing on the Marxist version of economics here, works and ideas outside such a framework (pertaining the capitalist outlook) will be taken into consideration for the sake of comprehensiveness.

The trope of genuine creativity, to use Harker's term, plays an important role in the field of political economy, where the modes of, and motivations for, musical production are linked to authentically musical or lamentably commercial modes of musical praxis. From the Marxist perspective, the key to understand the intricacies of the popular song lies in the radical substitution of 'use value' by 'exchange value'. Commoditisation, and the will to market success, have been considered crucial indicators in discerning the commercial character of popular tunes. Following Frith, 'pop music as we know it now has been shaped by the problems of making music a commodity and the challenges of adapting money-making practices to changing technologies' (2004b: 26)—what Harker succinctly calls the 'profit motive' of the music industry (Harker 1980). Regarding the goal of professional musical practices as business, there is no disagreement between Marxist and Capitalist approaches to popular music economy. The disagreement is in relation to the allegedly monolithic constitution of the industry, and the idea that, as products conceived for exchange, popular songs need be conservative, standardised, conventional, and produced top-down by professionals (Chapple and Garofalo 1977; Frith 2004a; Harker 1980; cf. Berklee College of Music 2013; Moyon 2009; Nugent 1981; Rojek 2011). These tensions become more salient towards the end of the 20th century, in face of the profound changes in music production and consumption related to the affordances of new information and communication technologies. The direct-to-fan strategy is a case in point:

With a dark shadow cast on the industry's traditional revenue sources, proponents of the D2F strategy [e.g. Bandcamp and Kickstarter⁵⁰] point to an expanding number of channels empowering content creators to reach fans and supporters directly and independently (Berklee College of Music 2013: 24)

Such claim for productive empowerment is consistent with the 'long tail' distribution⁵¹ of cultural consumption along the large number of available digital media outlets, as Webster and Ksiazek 2012), e.g., have proven to be the case in the US. This statistical feature calls into question the monolithic nature of the creative industries and, by extension, of the music industry. Nevertheless, following the same study, it does not discard the influential role that providers may still have over public attention and consumption, under the form of recommendation systems meant to guide their users' activity. This has been found to be the case in the context of the music market, where 'downloads are powerfully affected by information on what other users have chosen' (Webster and Ksiazek 2012: 52; see Salganik et al. 2006). Moreover, the statistical observation is compatible with arguments for user disempowerment despite active reception. For instance, Crary (2013) expresses his concerns about the operational remaking of the user's attention in late Capitalism, and although the perspective shifts here from public attention (as in Webster and Ksiazek 2012) to individual attentiveness, the heterogeneous character of the media landscape remains crucial:

⁵⁰ <http://bandcamp.com/> ; <https://www.kickstarter.com/>

⁵¹ In a long tail distribution, 'units are arranged from most popular to least with the total audience for each [...] depicted vertically above the unit' (Webster and Ksiazek 2012).

[The] notion of [passive] reception disregards the status of current media products as resources to be actively managed and manipulated, exchanged, reviewed, archived, recommended, “followed” [...] The idea of long blocks of time spent exclusively as a spectator is outmoded. This time is far too valuable not to be leveraged with plural sources of solicitation and choices that maximize possibilities of monetization and that allow the continuous accumulation of information about the user. (2013: 52-53)⁵²

Removed from celebrations of the digital age, some artistic positions, popular beliefs, and academic views have it that the sound of popular music is emphatically market-driven (if not industry-driven), along the lines of Harry Cohn’s slogan: ‘give the public what they want and they will come out for it’. It is the commercial intention behind music production, the argument goes, which distinguishes popular music from other musical bodies, such as folk or art music. The difference between genres stands in direct relation with the values at play: whereas folk offers community experience and art proffers transcendent experience, popular music displays mere monetary value (Brackett 2000). Lack of authenticity, understood in this vein, goes hand in hand with commoditisation.

Some approaches to the political economy of popular music bring the analysis closer to music itself beyond its exchange value. In *Bruits: Essai sur l’Économie Politique de la Musique* (1977), Jacques Attali scrutinises the sound of the 20th century in light of a shift in the modes of musical production, from ‘performing’ (*représenter*) to ‘repeating’ (*répéter*). The latter is presented as the natural environment of popular music and

⁵² On simultaneous streams of attentiveness facilitated by digital media, see Hjarvard (2013).

characterised by a modality of consumption based on the stockpiling of phonograms. Despite the technological caducity of this approach (see above), said characterisation places the recorded musical material at the centre of the discussion, which remains pertinent in the contemporary panorama of music economy. Against this background, the author goes on to criticise the themes and rhythms of popular tunes in virtue of their plainness and repetitiveness. Attali recognises the potential revolting power of popular music, but observes that the supply of degraded songs is wider than that of meaningful ones, presumably due to the 'recovery, colonisation and cleansing' of popular music (Attali 1977: 217)⁵³. This argument falls close to the Marxist approaches above, with a difference: degradation here is not a matter of wrong ideological promotion, but of interrupted factuality, or as he calls it, of a general lack of 'sense'⁵⁴.

The semantic degradation of music is meant in terms that embrace and transcend its sensuous qualities. Interestingly, the term Attali uses to express this debasement in popular music is *banality*, which reminds of Leavisite conceptions of popular lyrics as shabbily composed and divorced from reality. *Bruits'* argument is not far from that thought, although its concern is not lyrical but musical. To understand in what vein that is so, it is important to highlight that what happens in music, following Attali, comes to mirror and forecast fundamental changes in society. 'Music is more than an object of study: it is a means of perceiving the world', the author claims (*ibid.* 9). In a nutshell, the problem with popular songs is as follows: 1) they become severed from the dynamics of

⁵³ Attali refers to rock music in this passage. I equalise it with the notion of popular music on the basis of the genealogy from jazz to rock he bases his commentary on, which is widely agreed upon in American music studies (cf. Mellers 1964, Peterson and Berger 1990). Such agreement has led many scholars to use rock and pop as interchangeable terms to refer to popular music after 1955.

⁵⁴ Attali's critique of repetition as a mode of musical production does not stop at popular music; on different grounds (i.e. scientism, universality, imperialism, depersonalisation, manipulation and elitism), he also attacks the *musique savante* of his time, which he identifies with serialism as well as with figures as disparate as Mauricio Kagel, John Cage and Iannis Xenakis. His conclusion is that such *musique savante* feeds into musical senselessness as much as popular music does (Attali 1977: 224-232),

the world, 2) what they announce has little to do with social reality, 3) the motion they express is cyclically irrelevant. For Attali, therefore, banality in music amounts to a degradation to 'formulaic tunes' deprived from content (sense), consumed by herds feeding from the hit parade, as Rojek would put it (2011). Understanding banality as an obstruction on this level, Attali's examples of authentic musicians are Jimmy Hendrix and Eric Clapton, celebrated guitar players characterised by their idiosyncratic, innovative styles—in contrast with the prevailing plainness and repetitiveness of the formula.

2.3.2 Social Research

This part of our review focuses on theories dealing with social behaviour (and the ontologies of which it becomes objective expression) in relation to popular music. As explained above, all lines of inquiry represented in this chapter have social groups as their universe of discourse. What gathers these 'social research' approaches is not, consequently, their level of analysis, but their attempt to understand the processes that make sense of social praxis. That is to say, while cultural critique focuses on ideologies, and political economy on relations of production, the social research discussed in this section puts *what people do* at the centre. Fair enough, people *do* hold ideologies, and *do* relate to each other, and to that extent critique and economics are undoubtedly about nothing but human *doings*. Moreover, the dynamic character of both societal aspects tells us about their procedural nature. What ultimately distinguishes the following ideas from the lot, however, is their grasping social behaviour above and below the economic levels of outright production and consumption.

On the one hand, theories with a sociological impetus attempt to model society on a scale such that their explanatory bite be not contingent to states of affairs but flexible

enough to encompass an undetermined variety of possibilities. As Cohen stately puts it: ‘Any explanation of a particular event or phenomenon presupposes an underlying theory, a set of general rules or a model to which all events or phenomena of the same class are supposed to conform’ ([1955] 1971: 49). Whatever the ideologies in conflict, and whatever the material conditions at play, sociological models aim to account for and predict the order of social functioning. In that regard, they constitute fixed points of entry from which social reality can be scrutinised, or in other words, settled structures of meaning through which prescriptive theorisation may be articulated. On the other hand, and conversely, works aligned with the interests of anthropology and ethnography purport to interpret the structures of signification at the heart of the conglomerates they study, with a view to the relation between those meanings and social behaviour (Geertz 1973b⁵⁵). This does not amount to the removal of theory, but that the enunciations that result from such inquiries refer to the specific communities under study—not to all events of the same class. Such inquiries take place on a scale much more restricted than in sociological modelling and socioeconomic diagnosis. Ergo, such studies are not *about* communities but develop *in* communities (Wilkins & Wolf 2011: 15), based on a descriptive attitude. This picture lands us with a productive state of tension between nomothetic and idiographic approaches⁵⁶.

The conflation of sociological and anthropological modes of theory building is remarkably persistent in popular music studies since its inception, as the works of the Chicago School (and in a sense, of British Culturalism) suggest. The wide open heading ‘social research’ has been selected to classify the following lines of investigation for that very reason, all the more in virtue of the habitual overlaps that all social sciences display

⁵⁵ Geertz’ approach is criticised by Said (1985).

⁵⁶ Dilthey (2010). See ‘The Meso Level of Analysis’ in the Introduction to this dissertation.

when it comes to social behaviour. Not only sociology, anthropology, and other related social sciences collide at that point; the theoretical coincidences reach even the farther regions of philosophy and psychology where the interest in the social prevails. Hence clear-cut divisions are hardly tenable, and largely inoperative.

For the sake of concision, this approach will be limited to two lines of inquiry proven influential in popular music studies: *field theory* and *British subcultural theory*.

2.3.2.1 Field Theory

The origins of field theory can be traced to physics, being classical electromagnetism its systematic illustration par excellence. There, the fundamental principles of the theory are clearly recognisable. Its aim to explain *changes* in elements within fields, that such changes involve the interplay between fields and elements, that elements are affected by fields because of their particular features, that the absence of elements involves potential yet not actual force, and that fields are organised and differential (Martin 2003: 5). Importantly, this physical account already envisions the field as directly immeasurable, invisible, only graspable via the changes it effects.

In sociology, Pierre Bourdieu is the standard-bearer of field theory. Transposing its basic tenets to his sociological project, while adding a great deal of sophistication to the core idea, the French intellectual unfolds his social topology along four general, autonomous fields: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Each of the latter is a 'structured space of positions' identified with a particular area of human endeavour, which makes his theory a very powerful explanatory device (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 212). The structure of a field expresses the distribution of the resources it harbours, that is, of the kinds of capital there are. The positions within the field determine the properties of

the individuals who occupy them, defined in terms of capital and in relation to all other positions. Note that granting field autonomy implies a degree of insulation of culture from economy, which logic, in the artistic field, 'has been suspended, nay, inverted' in favour of 'properly aesthetic standards of judgment [that] are affirmed over and *against* commercial criteria of profit' (Wacquant 1988: 300). Nevertheless, within the contemporary field of cultural production, this autonomous criterion of pure art remains in conflict with the heteronomous criterion of bourgeois art (mass production).

Bourdieu's project is monumental; it evolved through years by the hand of its author, and continues to be rethought in face of new sociological challenges. Although there is no room for a comprehensive account of Bourdieu's thought here, it is worthwhile to consider a couple of ideas that have had great impact on the study of popular music. One of them is the relevance of the position in a given field. In agreement with Marx, Bourdieu gives paramount importance to social relations. The two approaches differ, however. For Marx, class membership defines, in a vertical fashion, the social position of people and the nature of their relations (some above, some below) For Bourdieu, it is an omnidirectional tissue of social relations which determines the position of individuals in the field and the different kinds of capital they can acquire. Likewise, instead of discerning the truth of social reality by means of solid class consciousness, Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus as the ontological grounds of social praxis: 'a cultural unconscious, a matrix of dispositions that serves to affectively organize perceptions' (Martin 2003: 23). This makes room for a way of thinking social behaviour from the perspective of the individual agent. That is to say, the model cast lights over the social basis of individual behaviour, thinking of the individual qua exemplar.

Another idea worth considering is that of *legitimacy*. The field of cultural production has been defined as the ‘structured *space of positions and position takings*, wherein individuals and institutions compete for monopoly over artistic authority’ (Wacquant 1988: 300). Such competition is not only for momentary success, but also for the legitimate principles of hierarchy that will prevail in the sequel. In other words, the question of legitimacy is not about which player will be the winner, but about which kind of player will dominate the field in the future (Martin 2003: 23). This idea is helpful in the articulation of the forces at work in the social dynamics of popular music and its producers; even more considering that the sort of capital at issue embraces yet transcends the musical material.

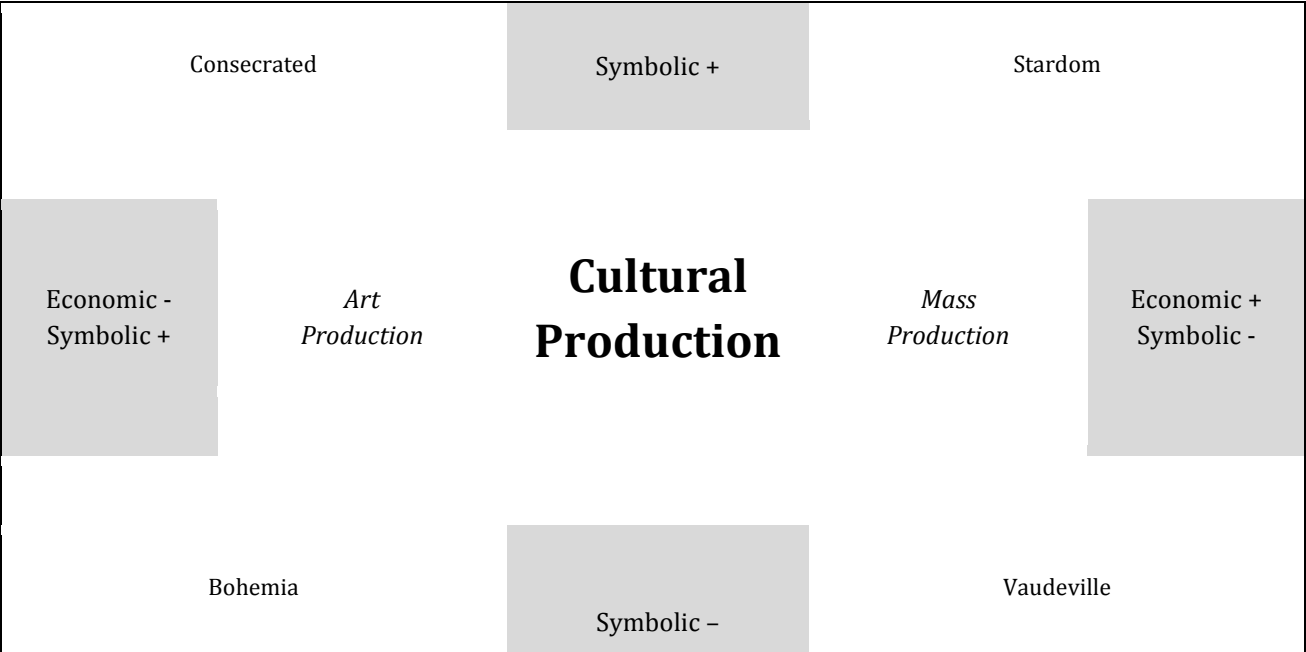


Fig.6: The field of cultural production. Adapted from Bourdieu (1996)

It may be suggested, for instance, that non-musical factors can make for the musicians' accumulation of what Bourdieu defines as symbolic capital, namely any form of capital 'perceived by social agents endowed with [common] categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value' (Bourdieu 1998: 47, cf. 1969). Importantly, such categories hinge on structural oppositions in the field of cultural production, where capital distribution displays poles of economic and symbolic concentration. These, in turn, structure the subfields of art and mass production as shown in Fig. 6⁵⁷.

The confrontation between consecrated art and commercial entertainment coheres with the constitutive interplay between subfields. On the side of mass production, the extra-musical aspects of musical legitimation are rather clear, for achievement is measured by commercial success (economic capital). On the side of art production, the case is less obvious. For popular musicians, the extra-musical accumulations may also contribute to the legitimation of their music beyond music, in the sense of *consecration*, out of their own artistry as symbolic capital. Ergo, their acquiring an 'artist' status locates not only them, but also what they do, away from the low-range mass context. Names such as Billie Holiday, Jim Morrison, or Kurt Cobain, probably give the reader a good idea of what we are talking about. Without giving any consideration to the musical quality of their production, the suggestion is that some biographical aspects, and the media exposition of their public persona, did play a significant role in their legitimation/consecration, in accordance with the maxim that if they are special, so their music is. The argument for the artistic legitimacy of entertainers, thus put, could land us with two kinds of appreciation: (1) they produce

⁵⁷ The subfields small-scale production and large-scale production have been renamed here as *art* and *mass* production respectively with the intention to attune Bourdieu's general idea to the state of affairs in the digital age. The distinction remains problematic, though, in light of digital reproduction and digital art.

art, or something else beyond tagging, but not 'commercial' popular music; (2) they produce artistic entertainment, a different kind of popular music, the kind of commercial product that is worth it. Research on these and other related matters has been advanced in sociological interpretations of popular music phenomena (e.g. Vulliamy 1977: 192ff, Lopes 2000; Regev 1997; see Prior 2011)

The dynamics described above implies the possibility for individuals to move across the field into positions from which different kinds of capital can be gathered. Put differently, it suggests the possibility of converting resources of one kind into resources of another kind—e.g. symbolic capital into economic capital or vice versa. This idea becomes important in studies on popular music based on the concept of *celebrity capital*. Conceived as an extension of Bourdieu's field theory, Driessens (2013b) defines it as 'accumulated media visibility through recurrent media representations' (553), 'a specific kind of attention-generating capacity that [...] cannot be reduced to symbolic capital' (550). Celebrity capital allows individuals to cross the boundaries between cultural subfields, enabling them to migrate within them or simply transgress them—a phenomenon rather salient in the field of popular music, as Giles (2013) explains. The same study shows, however, that the inter-field mobilisation of celebre entertainers guarantees neither the efficient conversion of celebrity capital into symbolic capital, nor the successful legitimation of the musical material generated in the process. Giles submits that Paul McCartney's ventures in classical music exemplifies the process of migration from the popular field to the classical field. Migration in this context is defined as 'the process through which celebrities use both their relative autonomy as public personality and their celebrity status to develop other professional activities either within their original field or to penetrate other social fields' (2013a: 648). With five

classical recordings in his personal catalogue, McCartney may be said to have trespassed the frontiers between popular and classical on the level of professional activity. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of the work in question is a different matter entirely. On the one hand, albums and shows have sold well, but on the other hand, press reviews have emphatically downgraded the quality of their musical content (Giles 2013). In this vein, McCartney's case makes it plain that: 1) the conversion of celebrity capital into economic capital can be a contributing factor in commercial success, and 2) that celebrity migration enables the potential, yet not actual, conversion of celebrity capital into symbolic capital.

2.3.2.2 British Subcultural Theory

Subcultural musical practices also display interesting mechanisms of legitimation, and in that vein, the British line of subcultural theory has been instrumental in explaining such processes. This academic undertaking was started in the 1970s at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham by the successors to Hoggart & company, with Dick Hebdige as its most prominent figure. In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* ([1979] 2002), the author understands subculture in terms of the expressive forms and rituals through which subordinate social groups articulate their refusal to the dominant order. The study concentrates on the symbolic dimension of everyday objects as they are made to mean anew, viz. as subcultural style, in a conspicuous demonstration of resistance amidst the social struggle for signification. With an interest in deviance on the level of cultural codes, and against a rich theoretical background including Arnold, Marx, Hoggart and Barthes, Hebdige makes the point that the strife between the subcultures and the establishment is for the 'possession of the sign'—discourses, definitions, meanings and ideologies. Subcultural participants enact

such symbolic battle via the appropriation of 'humble objects' as they are wittingly set to 'illegitimate' uses:

These 'humble objects' can be magically appropriated; 'stolen' by subordinate groups and made carry 'secret' meanings: meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination' (Hebdige [1979] 2002: 18)

This take on subcultures grants relevance to the question of deviance in ways that diverge from the criminologist approach while falling closer to Becker's sociology of music, yet on a larger extra-musical scale. In so doing, the subcultural space is envisioned as a desirable cultural locale for the necessary expression of contradictions latent in society.

When it comes to the legitimation of musical material in subcultural fields, it must be noted that the presupposed worth of a subculture is transferred, so to speak, to the musical repertoire associated with it. Therefore, musical value remains extrinsic to the songs themselves. For example, if subject A holds punk a legitimate subculture, then it is probable that A will deem punk music as legitimate a priori, not because of any musical qualities as such, but rather because it is authentically punk. Of course, all musical styles have more or less discernible canons, and punk music is certainly not the exception. Therefore, A's musical appreciation is not blind. Still, the musical traits operate as recognisable patterns within a prescriptive framework of correction; in their correspondence with the latter lies the formal authenticity of music as subcultural

expression. This kind of value transference is consistent with the concept of *homology* as conceived in subcultural studies, viz. ‘the symbolic fit between the values and life-styles of a group, its subjective experience, and the musical forms it uses to express or reinforce its focal concerns’ (Hebdige 1990: 56). It is important to highlight that A would still be in a position to make such association even if she was an outsider with no involvement in the punk subculture, for what becomes associated to music, ultimately, is A’s notion of punk—which may come into being through interpretation or otherwise without having to partake in the subculture. However, since ‘subcultural studies collectively seek to emically explore the functional, participatory, and lived aspects of young people’s material and non-material cultures’ (Williams 2007: 577), acquiring a critical ‘insider perspective’ is considered an asset for research purposes. This manner of thinking of subcultural groups, based on homology and first-hand experience, has inspired a generation of scholars in the fields of cultural theory and popular music studies.

In this vein, it is worth mentioning an approach to popular music that combines successfully subcultural theory and Bourdieu's sociology. In a gesture that reminds of Cressey’s interest in Chicago's nightlife, Thornton (1996) conducted research on London's ‘club subculture’ in the 1990s, in the course of which study the author introduced the concept of *subcultural capital*. The latter can be defined relying on the vocabulary of field theory, as ‘the resources that position an individual in the club field’ (Rojek 2011: 91). A relevant example of such capital is dance music, which lies next to language, dress and drugs, among other instances. This concept helps explaining not only the attribution of legitimacy and value to songs on the part of subcultural insiders, but also the role of songs as carriers of such kind of capital. On the one hand, it is logical

for subcultural participants to take ‘their’ music as positively legitimate and therefore better, in some sense, than any other kind of music—be it popular or otherwise. That is so because their songs are strongly connected with their values and experiences, as the concept of homology suggests. On the other hand, the legitimacy of such songs, as constitutive to that subculture, is indebted to their respective positions in the subcultural field and the fabric of relations among them. Thornton's research on subcultural capital suggests that not only human participants capitalise on songs (by knowing them, recognising them, publicly praising them, and so on), but that songs are also capable of accumulating subcultural capital in terms of value. This makes sense of the different levels of legitimacy that exist within subcultural repertoires, and explains why and how subcultural members can make use of them in order to position themselves in the subcultural field. Thornton's work on dance club music has been fundamental for later elaborations on the matter dealing with representations of femininity (e.g. McRobbie [1994] 2005) or dance club symbolisms (Seppälä and Hellman 2014), just to name a few examples.

2.3.3 Postmodern Theory

Postmodern theory is understood here as the set of academic elaborations, approving or disapproving, devoted to the scrutiny of postmodernity and its ontological grounds. Studies along this research line usually deal with aesthetics and epistemology in painstaking ways. For present purposes, I take ‘postmodern’ nominally, at its signifier value, for its meaning shows reluctance to accurate definitions even though its use has been profuse and controversial since the 1970s (Jameson 1991: 55ff; McRobbie [1994] 2005: 1-10). Despite the semantic fluidity of the term, it is possible to trace some common features to most postmodern ideas.

From its cradle in the field of architecture, proponents of postmodernism declared their resistance to what they considered the oppressive rationality of modernism. Against the functionalist thrust and the geometrical cleanness of modern architecture, architects Charles Jencks, Robert Venturi, and other pioneering postmodernists embraced eclecticism, playfulness, and contradiction as aesthetic values with deep social implications (Rodriguez 1997: 154, Wicks 2003: 243-244). This position persists in what has been called the 'return of postmodernisms' in the 2000s, as Jencks explains: 'Since the Millennium Post-Modernism, in all but name, has returned as a major movement in the arts [...] pluralism has been accepted as the global order of cultures, the post-modern commitment to the many-voiced discourse that the contemporary novel celebrates'⁵⁸ (Jencks 2011b: 9). Back in 1966, Venturi expressed the seminal postmodern ideals thus:

I speak of a complex and contradictory architecture based on the richness and ambiguity of *modern experience*, including that experience which is inherent in art... But an architecture of complexity and contradiction has a special obligation towards the whole; its *truth* must be in its totality or its implications of totality. It must embody the difficult unity of *inclusion* rather than the easy unity of exclusion. More is not less (Venturi 1966: 16, italics mine).

⁵⁸ 'A victory for the movement? No, it is not real political and cultural pluralism, and PM [postmodern] irony is still necessary to brace one against the occasional cynicism of the global marketplace; but it is preferable to a monolithic Modernism for the whole world' (Jencks 2011a: ¶3).

Rapport with *experience* and overarching *inclusion* vis-à-vis eclecticism: these concerns show up, with different nuances, in roughly all postmodern theories. In the midst them all, the question of truth shines out in disquieting complexity. Fundamental structures of modern thought were subject to revision by philosophy shortly after the architectural upheaval started in the 1970s. The result was the acknowledgement of epistemic instability to varying degrees. In this connection, the work of Lyotard is exemplary. In *La Condition Postmoderne* (1979) the author explains that modern science founds the legitimacy of its truth-seeking discourse on philosophical grounds, and that modern philosophy, in turn, explicitly relies on its own meta-narratives for the same purpose. Among them, the author lists key moments of modern thought: ‘the dialectics of Spirit’ [Hegelianism], ‘the hermeneutics of meaning’ [Phenomenology], ‘the emancipation of the rational or working subject’ [Marxism], and ‘the creation of wealth’ [Capitalism] (Lyotard 1979: 7)⁵⁹ (notice that, save the second instance, these are also crucial moments in the development of popular music studies⁶⁰). The postmodern condition spells generalised incredulity regarding such meta-narratives, a circumstance that leads, not without problems, to emancipation from the oppressive processes of knowledge legitimisation. This state of affairs comes to change drastically the ‘rules of the game’, not only in science but also in literature and art.

One of the meta-narratives more heavily shaken by this process is the binomial logic of cultural organisation, as expressed through distinctions of the kind fine/mechanical (Batteux), liberal/mechanical (Diderot), art/craft (Kant), mass/elite (Arnold) and bourgeois/proletarian (Marx). This structural logic was inherited by early

⁵⁹ Translation by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, in Lyotard (1984: xxiii).

⁶⁰ There exist a body of works in the phenomenological/existentialist/hermeneutical tradition dealing with popular music (e.g. Williams 2003; Örményi 2013b, a). However, comparatively, this line of research is less prolific than the others here addressed, and is oftentimes compatible with postmodern theory. In virtue of that, and for the sake brevity, I have decided against devoting a section to it.

20th-century academia—as Leavisism and British Culturalism illustrate—and made current with hardly any fundamental questioning until the 1970s. As far as the will to self-questioning is concerned, the postmodern could be deemed the epitome of Kantian critical thinking as conceived at the pinnacle of modernity. Note that Hegel and Marx, both part of the postmodern philosophical pedigree, were suspicious of Reason's suitability to criticise itself. 'For them, and for many 20th-century philosophers [arguably for Foucault, Lyotard and many others in the French front, for Vattimo in Italy, and for Rorty in the United States] critique must remain vigilant against the relapse into institutional and intellectual dogmatism' (Caygill 1995: 139). In this vein, postmodern theory can be situated near the end of the genealogical branch stretching from the Enlightenment and throughout Historical Materialism—which makes for a formidable contradiction in itself. The postmodern attack to modern institutions can be seen, in this particular light, as either the highest critical point of Reason or the total acceptance of its unavoidable failure.

Let us move now from epistemology back to cultural theory, where aesthetics lies at the core of the discussion. In France—arguably the epicentre of postmodern theory—the motivational kernel of the postmodern attitude has been associated with ideals of negative freedom and radical anti-totalitarianism in reaction to the excesses of the Second World War (Wicks 2003: 244). In this connection, Lyotard opposes vehemently the postmodern aesthetics 'in Jencks' sense' (Lyotard 1984: 76). In accordance with the emancipatory potential of the postmodern as the French author envisions it, agreeing with eclecticism becomes impossible because, in this view, it signifies giving up experimentation as the exercise of freedom from the unifying narratives of modernism. In other words, provided that eclecticism characterises 'the richness and ambiguity of

modern experience' (to use Venturi's words; see also Moist 2010: 1244), this version of postmodernism shrinks to a manner of imitative realism which assessment is based on established rules of correspondence. For Lyotard, being eclectic equals becoming familiar, which feeds into the commoditisation of art:

[O]ne listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner ... this realism of 'anything goes' is in fact that of money; in the absence of aesthetic criteria, it remains possible and useful to assess the value of the works of art according to the profits they yield (Lyotard 1984: 76).

In the United States, some authors (e.g. Anderson 1995; Barker 2002; Best and Kellner 2001) have discerned the postmodern condition with descriptive equanimity, understanding it as a moment of 'critical, self-conscious questioning' originating in the political and ontological tensions of the 1960s countercultures—and expressed, noteworthy, through their popular music and related products (Moist 2010: 1243, McRobbie [1994] 2005: 2-6). On the same side of the Atlantic, authors such as Frederic Jameson have taken a more radical stance. The theorist from Cleveland identifies in postmodernism the denouement of a debased mass culture as diagnosed by Leavis and Hoggart decades earlier. Yet it is observed, in piercing prose, that the postmodern reaction falls short to the challenge of the zeitgeist because, among other shortcomings, the critical bite of parody in cultural production is neutralised by the blind eclecticism of the pastiche (Jameson 1991: 16ff). This claim coheres with his position, similar to Lyotard's, that postmodernism is a paradoxical form of realism—qua 'mimesis of

reality’—that represents the historical and socioeconomic state of affairs in late capitalism while disguising its contradictions with drapes of ‘formal mystification’ (*idem*. 49). The theoretical pessimism about postmodern aesthetics is not unanimous. I shall come back to this later in this section.

If postmodernity is understood as an epoch of history, and postmodernism as its correspondent developments in art (Durham and Kellner 2006: xxxiv), then reckoning post-1970s popular music as postmodern music may seem just logical at a first glance. However, as Goodwin (1995) convincingly argues, asserting that contemporary popular music and postmodern music are equivalent terms would be stretching the historical connection to unacceptable extremes. Now then, even granting that ‘popular’ and ‘postmodern’ in music are two different yet intercepting notions, there are postmodern tropes certainly recognisable in a wide range of musical practices and products in the popular sphere. I suggest untangling the postmodernist trend by elaborating on two such tropes, which derive directly from its eclectic core: *retrospection* and *inclusiveness*.

The divorce from the ideal of overcoming old canons manifests itself in the retrospective attitude of much of contemporary popular music, that is, in the eclectic use of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and timbric elements from the recent past for the production of new musical content. This embraces all manners of audio sampling practices, musical citations, cover versions, reappearance of bygone stars based on refreshed hits, and so forth. It also includes retro proposals that use formal structures and even musical equipment popularised by past generations in order to evoke the sound and look of earlier eras, as the case of new-wave music, Britpop, indie pop, and other genres illustrate (see Covach and Boone 1997). These recycling practices have been deemed by some authors as the withering away of the personal style in

postmodern music, which correlates with the death of the historical subject as claimed by some voices of postmodern theory (Britto García 1991, Rodríguez 1997, Stiegler 2012). The position of Roland Barthes, an undisputed forerunner of postmodern thought, is paradigmatic in this regard. In 'The Death of the Author' ([1968] 2006) he goes on to affirm that 'the author is a modern figure, a product of our society', that is doomed to perish (41). Such demise would mean the fall of modern *Genius* as the epicentre of artistic production. Barthes explains:

a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author [...] the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author (*idem*. 45)

As commented previously, American New Left scholars such as Jameson remain sceptical about the creative practices connected with that state of affairs, for in his view postmodern materials no longer *quote* but *incorporate* into their very substance—which is symptomatic of the weakening of historicity and involves a kind of schizophrenic subjectivity (Jameson 1991: 1-6 and elsewhere). Following this critique, then, popular songs would seem but shallow grimaces with no originality. These ideas have been eloquently contested, among others, by McRobbie on the British front (see also Storey 2001; Goodwin 1995). In *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (2005), the prolific heir of

the Birmingham School addresses Jameson's claims by pointing to the critical sharpness of sampling and mocking in hip-hop subcultures:

To lament the decline of full wholesome subjectivity [viz. the advent of postmodern schizophrenic historicity] is literally to cast aspersions on unwholesome, un(in)formed, partial and hybridic identities. It is to refuse the challenge of the invented, fabulous identities of the DJs and MCs of black culture, to close the ears to the musical sounds and samples which by playing with the names and the uncertain origins of the cultural producers mock and resist the whole heavily authorial game of western art and artistic production [*Genius*], and disguise themselves and their artistry in the costume ball of fun and funk (McRobbie [1994] 2005: 4)

Also on the approving side, though in a less reactive spirit, authors interested in the analytic ontology of music⁶¹, have assessed positively such gestures of retrospective incorporation. For instance, in the context of a discussion on musical covers, Rings (2013) refers to 'generic resetting', namely 'the presenting of a song in a genre different from that of the original' (55). In his view, this constitutes an opportunity for musicians to critique the tradition without committing commercial suicide, while resisting, in so doing, the conservative thrust of mass music (63; see Gracyk 2001). In a similar vein, Griffiths 2004 mulls over remixing and covering as creative musical strategies in an

⁶¹ In the 'analytic' tradition of the philosophy of music, ontology tends to refer to the existence and nature of musical entities. The approach referred to in this section is consistent with that line of research, which differs from the 'continental' standpoint from which ontology is understood in this dissertation (see footnote 2).

overarching manner (as to include the musician's collective identities, the industry's marketing and technological shifts, and so on), taking into account the deep impact of appropriating gestures over pop music from the 1970's onwards. Notice that for all the authors above, the retrospective rapport to society operates alongside the historical axis of cultural memory, by referring to styles and products across the timeline of popular culture and beyond. Moreover, McRobbie's take on the hip-hop's eclecticism harbours further aspects of popular music quickened by the strategies of sampling, mocking and parodying—which brings us to the other postmodern motive running through many popular musical productions.

The second tendency I wish to address is the throwing down of barriers in favour of sheer inclusiveness, this time operating on the cultural axis. As regards *style*, and consistent with the anti-modern attitude attributed by some authors to postmodern music in general (Charles 1987; Rodriguez 1997), inclusiveness in popular productions comes to challenge the divide elite/mass in a number of ways. It may be said that low culture has found its way under the roof of high culture, or put differently, that classical music has opened its gates for popular music. Here we must be careful and reckon that we will be talking about pop rather than popular music. It is prudent to recall that European art music has always been in connection with the popular, and that the division of music into art, folk and popular is a relatively recent, modern invention, as Gelbart (2007) has argued. In any case, the postmodern conception of popular music I suggest here is applicable, for plain historiographical reasons, to music produced at least after the 1950s.

That said, the erosion of the elite/mass divide was already identified by the first wave of popular music studies. As previously commented, Mellers 1964 made manifest

his suspicions about the related split between art and commerce, and even went on to criticise Paul Whiteman and George Gershwin's efforts to 'make jazz respectable' through the 'symphonic perversions' materialised in *Rhapsody in Blue*. In a less poignant vein, other authors have recently recognised the stream running from the popular into the fine arts through specific cases, e.g. the migration of Paul McCartney from the popular field to the classical field out of his celebrity capital (Giles 2013), as commented above. The converse operation is also a noticeable trend in the contemporary music panorama, i.e. bringing classical musicians, pieces, and practices to popular grounds. Along these lines, for example, Jameson (1991: 1) notes with concern the alleged synthesis of classical and popular managed by minimalist composers Philip Glass and Terry Riley. Whether Glass and Riley (and certainly Gershwin) classify as classical composers dragged into popular grounds is an interestingly controversial matter, for it begs the question as to the direction inclusiveness takes in these cases. In a more updated note, the alliances between symphonic orchestras and entertainers for the remaking of the latter's hits (recurrent in the 2000s), or the Pavarotti & Friends charity concerts where the *Cavaliere* joined forces with first-class pop stars, are good examples of this inclusive trend.

Stylistic inclusiveness is not without complications. More recently, the binomial has been conveyed by the second wave in terms of art/pop. This division, largely in force in the dynamics of popular music appreciation, often takes on semantic equivalence not only with elite/mass but, as Goodwin (1995) observes, with art/trash, which points to a prevailing modernist logic behind postmodern socio-musical practices. In this vein, the following example is illustrative: that 'progressive rock bands aspired to a cultural capital of art' (Goodwin 1995: 92)—as jazz and minimalism did—makes sense of their

peculiar creative practices and products, while simultaneously subverting the one-to-one correspondence of the art/trash and art/pop schemes. From the perspective of field theory, this is an expected outcome, if the struggle in the artistic field is for legitimacy, that is, for defining the kind of player that is to prevail in the field. The case of progressive rock is neither a migration from classical to popular nor the other way around, but an attempt to rewrite the rules of the game, the opening of a midway path that cracks the aforementioned divides, at least on the productive side. Covach (1997, 2000) agrees with Goodwin as to the serious 'art-music' attitude displayed by progressive rockers, and explains their viewpoint in these terms:

Rock music, they believed, could be serious art (or at least, it could be more like serious art than rock music had been so far); and elevating rock to such a higher status required appropriating music-technical procedures mostly from classical music (though also from jazz) and rejecting the themes of romantic love that had so occupied pop-music lyrics for generations in favor of themes of a more intellectual or spiritual nature (Covach 2000: 14)

This kind of practices validate the postmodern emancipation from modernist dichotomies, fail to accomplish innovative experimentation (*à la* Lyotard), and challenge the conception of popular music as the playground of blindfolded anything-goers—all at the same time. Noteworthy, inclusiveness also plays on the levels of transcultural cross-fertilisations of the musical material, and representation of collective identities.

McRobbie hints to this connection in her commentary on hip-hop. The matter is not without complications.

Finally yet importantly, it is worth mention that some lines of postmodern scholarship develop in directions outside the picture above. Instead of tracing postmodernist attributes in pop musical productions, some studies opt for analyses where popular music is submitted to postmodern theoretical devices. An example of this *modus operandi* is available in Örmény's elaborations on Black Metal music (2013b, a). In this instance, the notion of the sublime, inherited from modern philosophy and worked out by postmodern theory, is set to use as to discern the nature of artistic screaming and its relation to silence. This is done in ways consistent with the postmodern interest in the un-presentable in art (Lyotard 1984) and the death of the author in writing (Barthes [1968] 2006, see Teodorescu 2013). Relevant, too, is the role of the pagan as a pervasive motif, namely, in the musical body under scrutiny and in the declaredly 'postmodern pagan' stance of the author himself. This appeal is compatible with claims about paganism as a creative force in popular music (Weston and Bennett 2014) and as a worldview intertwined with the postmodern condition (Bahnisch 2001, Lyotard and Benjamin 1989, Teodorescu 2013).

2.3.4 Contemporary Musicology

In the broadest sense, musicology can be defined as music scholarship with interests beyond the acquisition of competences in composition and performance, roughly encompassing all scientific universes of discourse from elementary particles to social groups (Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy 2012). Following this lead, musicology may be said to draw from physics, biology, psychology, social sciences, formal sciences, and humanities, mainly under the form of acoustics, physiology, organology,

psychoacoustics, pedagogy, anthropology, sociology, historiography, cultural analysis and formal analysis. Note that this range of approaches not only runs the gamut of reductive levels proposed by Oppenheim and Putnam (1998), but also includes the structural scrutiny of music qua system of signs. Therefore natural, social and formal disciplines alike have a say in musical investigations.

It would be logical to assume that musicology, as an institutional branch of academic knowledge, embraces all possible research on popular music. Taking the definition strictly it certainly should, but when it comes to the scholarly communities involved and their practices, that is not the case (Van der Meer and Erickson 2014). Important research lines stand at a distance from mainstream musicology, being institutionally grounded by their own disciplines of origin instead. That is the case of economics, sociology and postmodern theory as they bear on music, and that is why they have been allotted separate sections in this chapter. Such a degree of separation means no divorce, however. Those disciplines come first in our exposition precisely because they inform aspects of contemporary musicology, and by extension of ‘popular musicology’, that would be hard to understand without such a background.

For present purposes, I am basing the divide between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ on the rise of scholarly interest in repertoires outside the Austro-German tradition—inaugurated by J.S. Bach, developed by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and later enlarged by Schumann, Wagner, and Brahms among others. It is hard to pinpoint all the causes of this enlargement, but it is likely that the following factors played a role:

1. The advent of ‘new musicology’ in the cultural episteme of the US in the late 1970s, through which ‘new ways of thinking, made possible particularly by

developments in sociology, philosophy, and psychology' found enthusiastic acceptance in American music theory (Fallows 2011).

2. The epistemic and aesthetic storm of postmodern thought, which reached critical mass around the same decade.
3. The alleged crisis of musical composition where no successor to the throne of the Austro-German pantheon could be anointed after the 1960s (Kerman 1980: 319-320). These factors, and possibly others, fostered not only an interest in pre-Bach and post-Brahms European art music, but also on non-European and non-art music—including popular music. Consequently, and in accordance with our periodization of popular music studies, popular musicology as an institutional line of research must be conceived within contemporary musicology, where 'contemporary' means 'from the 1970s until the 2010s'.

Of all the levels of analysis available in the musicological palette, I shall keep with those most related to the societal aspects of the popular repertoire. For the sake of concision, then, I will limit the present discussion to the subfields of *musical analysis*, *ethnomusicology* and *representation studies*.

2.3.4.1 Musical Analysis

In very general terms, musical analysis strives to understand the formal structure of its objects from the functional standpoint of internal coherence. Analyses of popular songs fluctuate between textual and contextual approaches, yet displaying certain proclivity for the later. This is not surprising, considering that attention to context has been the plea to contemporary analysts made from the podium of 'new musicology'. In this regard, Joseph Kerman's position is exemplary. He argues for a peculiar distinction

between *analysis* and *criticism*, according to which the former concentrates on internal formal abstractions (deep structure), while the latter approaches music holistically as to mull over its external aspects too, considering elements such as intentions and biographies, genres and styles, or actual performances (Kerman 1980: 323ff). Some authors see in this divide a polarity of objective and subjective intentions as regards the comprehension of musical meaning (Brackett 2003; Tagg 1982). The musicologist believes that analysis, as understood by traditional scholarship, ‘exists to articulate the concept of organicism’—namely the natural functional concatenation of parts that integrate the musical whole—‘which in turn exists as the value system of the [ruling] ideology’, viz. the inherent superiority of instrumental Austro-German art music (Kerman 1980: 318). This view suggests an enlargement of the canon under ‘new’ musicological analysis, but is inconsequential regarding the problematic West-centred standpoint inherited from ‘traditional’ scholarship:

‘Musicologists deal with Western art music before around 1900, theorists [analysts] with the same after 1900, and ethnomusicologists with non-Western musics and Western music outside the elite tradition—folk and popular music (Kerman 1985: 15).

Such a ‘division of labour’ does not amount to radical isolation. In the spirit of contextual analysis characteristic of his project, Kerman observes that ‘new’ musicology does profit greatly from examining Western popular music as ancillary material to understand the intricacies of art music (Kerman 1985: 175-177). In any case, notice that the argument

against organicism suggests the circularity of 'traditional' analysis, for the principle that legitimises the greatness of the canon is drawn from the canon itself. The problem is that, within such parameters, it is difficult for analysts to remain in touch with 'true' musical meaning, and it is here where context comes in handy.

Although the newness of the contextual position has been called into question (Agawu 1997, 2004; Fallows 2011; Stefani 1987), it is true that contextual approaches saw a significant boost ever since the 1970s in the musicological scene. This is evident not only in the subfield of contemporary musical analysis, but also in ethnomusicology and representation studies, as manifestations of like preoccupation in different settings. Furthermore, popular music scholars share the distrust in traditional analysis. For example, McClary and Walser 1990 have observed that 'aesthetic approaches per se are incompatible with studies that treat music as socially constructed' (281), understanding musical aesthetics as based on claims of transcendental greatness that 'eliminate the possibility of political struggle over discourse' (*id.*). When it comes to popular music, the argument goes, what is relevant for grasping meaning and relevance lies at the blind spot of traditional musicology (*ibid.* 282ff). Brackett agrees with Kerman, McClary and Walser: 'the metalanguage of music analysis is not transparent [...] it is a medium that comes with its own ideological and aesthetic baggage' (2003: 19), namely concepts of distanced appreciation, autonomous art and absolute music without clear social foundations. Following Carl Dahlhaus, the author explains that early analysis focuses on European 'concert hall music', which instances became ritualised and sacralised by virtue of the prevalent mode of reception and the spatially fixed nature of the listening practices at the time. In the same vein, Philip Tagg (1982, 1987) argues for the impossibility of analysing popular music via traditional devices. That is because, in his

view, its material 'is neither conceived nor designed to be stored and distributed as notation', which results in 'a large number of important parameters of musical expression being either difficult or impossible to encode in traditional notation' (1982: 41). This joins other inherent limitations of traditional analysis, the musicologist claims, such as its incapacity to relate to extra-musical realities (cf. McClary and Walser 1990).

Although I shall not go too far with formal intricacies, notice that some analysts of popular music have been mentioned already in the course of this dissertation, each of them being an exponent of a different analytical style. I am loosely following Brackett's (2003) characterisation of the methodological spectrum by tracing a continuum from *formal analysis* to *semiotics* to *subjective criticism* (cf. Kerman 1980 above). It is important to realise that the relevance of the context for the analytic apparatuses at work in each case is not 'all or nothing', but always a matter of degree.

At one end of the spectrum, the formal quarter of popular music studies finds its ideal representative in Covach (1997, 2000), whose work was referred to in previous sections of this chapter. In the occasion of demonstrating the connection between art music and American progressive rock, the author utilises the methodological tools inherited from traditional formal analysis in order to establish structural parallelisms. Therefore, the discussion is based on a technical vocabulary that may seem rather arcane to those not versed in it. Likewise, the use of musical notation is significant. In this case, context is relevant as the starting point for grasping the meaning of the creative efforts at stake, i.e. the musicians' motivations and the intellectual milieu from where they arise. Nevertheless, meaning takes the back seat for the sake of structural scrutiny in a comparative spirit. These features are, to a greater or lesser degree, common to all formal studies that belong to this line of popular music analysis.

Interestingly, Covach's findings reveal the extent to which popular musicians attempt to dignify their work by relating it to classical music, which echoes the ideology referred to by Kerman. They also hint, in a way, at the prevalence of a similar ethos on the scholarly side, manifest in the careful selection of the analysis objects. Fair enough, the formal style tends not to advance value judgements, but it is conspicuous that only complex popular compositions are selected for analysis, and that complexity itself is usually the centre of attention. This mode of analysis could be criticised, then, for falling back in ethnocentrism, a case that has been made against comparative ethnographies of music as well. I shall come back to this in the next section.

At the other end of the spectrum, musical criticism has been represented in our account of the Culture and Civilization tradition, where the work of Mellers on American popular music has been referred to in some detail⁶². There, as elsewhere⁶³, the author brings many important points home with the help of formal analytical devices. Even though the use of traditional terminology and staff notation is certainly recurrent in Mellers' oeuvre, it remains an 'early example of music analysis used in the service of criticism', as Brackett (2003: 88) puts it. There the role of the analyst as critic is exemplified in ways that evidence both holistic hermeneutics and subjective interpretation.

In *Music in a New Found Land* (1964), Mellers goes on to analyse the production of renowned popular stars, not without poignant criticism. For example, he reproves the formal 'machine-like' nature of Glen Miller's Band: 'there is no melody, no rhythmic

⁶² Adorno's work fits the category of musical criticism as well. For the sake of concision, I will limit my discussion to Mellers.

⁶³ In this connection, it is worth mentioning Mellers' *Twilight of the Gods* (1974), where musical analysis becomes the weapon of choice for discussing popular music—more specifically, the work of The Beatles. I am not discussing that work here for the sake of brevity.

interest, and only the most rudimentary harmonic progression; such effect as it has on an audience [...] depends entirely on repetition and on sudden changes of dynamics: substitute excitement as a part of substantive living' (372). Likewise, the allegedly shallowness of Count Basie, whose music 'relies on the riff for its own sake', is also worth lamentation: 'Basie's tension between the riff and the melodic-harmonic identity of the solos has gone—and with it the *human truth* of music' (*id.*, italics mine). Mellers was not always antipathetic to the formal features popular music. Worth considering, in this regard, is his view on Billie Holiday's singing (380), which I shall refer to in the next Chapter. I am highlighting these reproving passages in particular because they contain number of important tropes that will remain at the heart of scholarly discussions during the second wave of popular music studies at large, e.g. repetitiveness, simplicity, internal consistency, and truthfulness.

Instead of exemplifying undesirable biases, I maintain that subjective stances as illustrated above may open up possibilities of dialogical engagement with analysis as criticism, and in so doing, invite the reader to listen critically to the music at stake. This is, of course, at odds with the authoritative position of traditional analysis. Despite that fact, Mellers was influential for the analysts that came after, formalists and critics alike. For instance, based on his remarkable mastery of European music history and theory, he argued for formal connections between classical, pop and jazz repertoires, as he did for the development of a concert hall attitude in rock music propelled by The Beatles (Mellers 1974), features that were significant for later formal and contextual analyses (e.g. Covach 1997; Goodwin 1995).

Occupying the middle ground, as it were, semiotic analyses focus on the communicational dimension of popular music on the level of connotations. The idea

running through this research line is that the units of meaning constitutive to popular songs (sound events) are answerable to certain structural form and the expression of certain extra-musical content, and that such associations constitute the musical codes to be scrutinised to cast light on musical meaning. The work of Brackett (2003), referred to above, is obviously concerned with those matters, in that the question leading his efforts is how to analyse the meaningful effects of popular music. His theorisation feeds from key semiotic models, e.g. Middleton's (1990) primary and secondary levels of signification, and Stefani's (1987) five levels of musical competence. Yet, his methodology brings his research closer to cultural studies.

Another variant of semiotic analysis of indisputable relevance for popular music studies is represented by the work of Philip Tagg (1982, 1987), whose proposal sets forth useful methodological tools to deal with the complexities of popular music meanings. The author advances what he calls a hermeneutic-semiotic method through which meaningful structural elements (*items of musical code* IMC), are extracted from pre-constituted repertoires (*inter-objective comparison material* IOCM) via procedures of comparisons that detect correspondences on the levels of formal structure and extra-musical association. On such a basis, preliminary results are drawn from the musical material regarding its collective meaning. The validity of such conclusions are then tested by means of falsification, operated through *hypothetical substitutions* that aim to evidence the factuality of the connections made during the first phase of the analysis. By systematically altering the parameters of musical expression, the analyst attempts to find out which of them really hold sway over the extra-musical associations and collective meanings they purport to represent. The interplay between form and meaning at the core of this method makes of hermeneutic-semiotic analysis a powerful research

tool, although its level of complexity, next to the jargon and the acronyms, may prove somewhat discouraging.

2.3.4.2 Ethnomusicology

Traditionally concerned with non-Western musical practices, and yet meant to deal with ‘music in culture’ in a broad sense (Kunst 1950, 1969; cf. Merriam 1964; see Brackett 2003), contemporary ethnomusicology can hardly be defined in straightforward terms; therefore, its scope has become a rather controversial matter (Van der Meer and Erickson 2014). Drawing on Alan Merriam (1964, see Slobin 2003), Kunst’s ‘classical’ definition of ethnomusicology could be said to represent one of the two theoretical sources of the discipline, namely the *musicological* trend—the other one being the *ethnological*:

Ethnomusicology carries within itself the seeds of its own division, for it has always been compounded of two distinct parts, the musicological and the ethnological [...] This dual nature of the field is marked by its literature, for where one scholar writes technically upon the structure of music sound as a system in itself, another chooses to treat music as a functioning part of human culture and as an integral part of a wider whole (Merriam 1964: 3).

Merriam suggests that ethnologists would unfold their research in opposition to cultural evolutionism while remaining attentive to the sociocultural context of music (4). It should be noted, however, that the very characterisation of ethnomusicology as the

comparative study of musical praxis outside the West may have risen from its early association with (19th century) ethnology, which for some authors remains in force to date (Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy 2012). That is important, and I shall come back to it in short. Before considering that matter, however, we should deal with a more fundamental question, namely—as Van der Meer and Erickson (2014) would put it—whether ethnomusicology is the musicology of *ethnic* music or the *ethnology* of music.

As observed in § 2.1.3, the prefix ‘ethno-’ comes from the Greek *ἔθνος*, which is generally translated as ‘nation’. Regardless of how we choose to read the latter, be it as kin groups (Van den Berghe 1987) or cultural communities (Geertz 1973a)⁶⁴, it is a truism that there is no music without a (bio)sociocultural context of musical experience. If that is right, it follows that all music is ethnic music by necessity and, therefore, that the distinction is trivial⁶⁵. That is so, unless ‘ethnic’ turns into a placeholder for the music of everybody else, to be contrasted with a ‘civilised’ centre as its framework of reference. That is the strategy, textual evidence suggests, that ethnomusicology has pursued with significant regularity since its inception, and that is why some scholars find it attuned to elitist, racist and sexist ideologies (Van der Meer and Erickson 2014).

The argument against ethnic music calls for reflection about inter-cultural comparison as the procedural principle of ethnomusicology. I have said in § 2.1.3 that anthropology’s roots in *Volkskunde* tell us of its original comparative spirit. The latter carried on into classic formulations of ethnology as the ‘branch of general anthropology which deals with the relations of the different varieties of mankind to each other’ (Keane [1896] 2011: 2). This idea endures in current textbook definitions, as the comparative study of culture for the sake of holistic theory building (Lassiter 2014: 58). The same

⁶⁴ For an overview of these and other relevant theories, see Siapera (2010: 14-28); Smith (1998).

⁶⁵ Bor (2008) makes a similar point regarding world music.

views permeated the comparative musicology of the 19th century and the musical anthropology of the 20th century, in contrast with the mono-focal and descriptive attitude attributed to *Völkerkunde* (Vermeulen 2003), ethnography (Geertz 1973b)⁶⁶ and the so-called ethnomusicology of the ‘broadly popular’ (Slobin 2003). I believe the problem is not the comparisons but their grounds of possibility, as Foucault ([1966] 2005) would have it (see Chapter 1). Ethnomusicology’s shallow conception as a comparative discipline interested in musical activity outside the West, as to measure it against the West, shows serious epistemological weaknesses, mainly because it lacks internal stability as far as its framework of reference is concerned. One could pose the question whether the concept of ‘Western music’ (and by extension, of ‘non-Western music’) is geopolitical (Austro-German, European, Euro-American), cultural (including former European colonies that were successfully ‘westernised’, if any), formal (musical praxis based on European guidelines) or something else. Who is ‘us’? Who is ‘them’? Ultimately, the kind of feebleness displayed by ethnocentric definitions proves unacceptable in face of globalisation.

Although still alive in lay imageries and some scholarly settings, the ethnocentric comparative approach lost momentum among ethnographers after the 1950s, with a tendency to integrate what Merriam calls the ‘musicological’ and the ‘ethnological’ aspects around the 1970s (Slobin 2003). As Kofi Agawu explains, a ‘profoundly ethical avoidance of a priori valuations of music imposed itself on fieldworkers from the second half of the twentieth century on’ (2014: 119), which fostered a common ground of legitimacy for all kinds of music as research objects, including popular music. This did not rule out the sway of the prejudices against popular repertoires underlying European

⁶⁶ The etymology of the suffix ‘-logy’ leads to *λόγος* and hence, roughly, to ‘word’, ‘theory’ and ‘speech’, whereas ‘-graphy’ relates to *γράφω* and therefore to ‘drawing’, ‘writing’ and ‘description’. See <http://www.etymonline.com>

and colonial musicology, as Agawu also observes (see Cloonan 2005; Van der Meer and Erickson 2014).

Ethnomusicology, in the sense of ‘ethnography of music’, has moved away from object-based definitions and thus has acquired a methodological tenor. One way to distinguish ethnomusicology from musical analysis and other branches in the field is to restrict its object to non-written music. In this case, the study of the leans on fieldwork and cultural immersion (Hood 1960; Koskoff 2005; Tagg 1987). This approach to music as an unwritten phenomenon, if taken too strictly, becomes problematic—even more in the case of popular music. It all depends on what we mean by musical writing, of course. Provided the involvement of the popular repertoire with processes of technological mediation (from singles to bootlegs), dismissing writing in a broad sense would rule out practically all kinds of popular music as viable research objects in virtue of their being fixed on record. It is worth recalling that the textual record of popular songs comprises not only staff notation and tablatures, but also audio, video and sometimes MIDI and DAW files⁶⁷. After all, as Kunst states in his seminal work, ethnomusicology ‘could have never grown into an independent science if the gramophone [and audio technology in general] had not been invented’ (Kunst 1950: 19).

To advance this discussion, I shall take the definitional guidelines in a loosen manner, focusing on methodological issues without attempting to claim exclusivity on any musical body as the province of the discipline. Understanding ethnomusicology as the ‘ethnography of music’, popular ethnomusicology is able to address socio-musical practices in any context regardless of geo-cultural location or any other factor, taking into consideration the individuals and groups involved in the production, distribution

⁶⁷ MIDI stands for ‘musical instrument digital interface, DAW for ‘digital audio workstation’.

and consumption of the popular song. In this vein, the inquiry is about the networks of shared meaning that inform the musical practices under study.

I have illustrated this trend in Chapter 1, by reference to Manuel (1990) and Ordoulidis (2012a) concerning Greek popular music and its peculiar modes. There, I highlighted Ordoulidis' use of musical analysis as ancillary to account for the wide range of scalar and melodic behaviours at the heart of *rembétiko* music. I introduced this study as an example of culturally located scholarship not only because of the author's belonging to the 'ethnic' field he studies (in theory as a scholar and in praxis as a musician). I also did it because of his ethnographical interest in the networks of significance behind the modes themselves, viz. the names they acquire and their relation with other musical systems of elements. Although he uses staff notation as an aid to his explanation, Ordoulidis' in-depth knowledge of the cultural codes and the practices involved play a key role to understand the music and its internal entangling.

In the same vein, it is worth mentioning the work of Agawu (2014) on African traditional [folk] and popular music. There, problems of misunderstanding akin to orientalism are identified and worked out with the help of ethnographic methods and a variant of formal analysis that bends toward cultural awareness—largely inspired by his critique of Adorno's work on musical criticism (Agawu 2004, 2005, 2006).

Interesting, too, is the work of Antoine Hennion (1990) whose sociological work on the milieu of a Parisian recording studio is a landmark work on urban musical practices. It falls, practically, within the domains of ethnomusicology due to its use of participant observation as data collection method (in the style of Tiersot and the Chicago school), and the rather idiographic nature of his conclusions. The author, and a number of other scholars worldwide, have been working consistently on this research line with

thematic nuances. The following instances are worth mention, since they will be referred to in the next chapter: Arroyo (2011) on the role of popular music in Brazilian conservatories; Keil (n.d)⁶⁸ on ‘grooving’, participation and mediation; Wallis and Malm (1990) on the ‘mediaization’ (*sic*) of transnational music in ‘small countries’ such as Sri Lanka, Sweden and Trinidad. The latter study will be at the centre of my own definition of global music; I will discuss it in Chapter 4. Ethnographic methodologies, as these and other studies suggest, can be powerful research tools. They lend themselves to cross-fertilisation with other frameworks in order to analyse the socio-musical and meaning-making practices of musicians and audiences anywhere.

2.3.4.3 Representation Studies

Hall (1997a, 1997b), defines representation as the process of attribution of meaning through language, whereby a diversity of idioms operate as ‘representational systems’ and ‘signifying practices’:

It is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them—how we represent them—that we *give them a meaning* [...] In part, we give things meaning by how we *represent* them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualise them, the values we place on them (Hall 1997a: 3, italics original)

⁶⁸ Other interesting works: Berger (2011) on the metal, rock and jazz scenes in Ohio, US, Keil and Feld (2005) on ‘grooving’ from America to Papua New Guinea.

A number of theories in this line of work (Barthes [1957] 2012; Fairclough 1989; Foucault 1980b, [1966] 2005; Lippmann 1997; Said 1985, [1978] 2003) are concerned with the perceptual biases and systematic distortions latent in the languages mobilised by representation, particularly when it comes to the mediated articulation of identity and difference (Siapera 2010: 111-130). Membership to specific social groups is a crucial aspect of that debate, especially when the identities at stake are those of the oppressed sectors of society (Holtzman 2000: 24-28).

Popular music scholarship interested in the representation of collective identities shows a strong appeal to the question of gender and ethnicity. Scholars carry out this agenda by setting to work practically all disciplines and perspectives in this chapter. Note, for example, that studies in gender and ethnicity tend to develop under a common *critical attitude* towards sociocultural normativity. Likewise, the use of popular songs for putting on the agenda topics sensible to disfavoured sectors of society is consistent with postmodern claims about the *inclusiveness* of popular music (Storey 2001), as well as with the idea of *style* as a mode of resistance as subcultural theory has it (Hebdige 1990, [1979] 2002). The pursuit of inclusiveness gathers those formerly or currently excluded from society, e.g. cultural foreigners, discriminated minorities, socio-economically vulnerable sectors, etc. This contributes, according to some scholars, to the democratisation of popular music, which results in inclusive platforms of productive musicians as well as in enlarged audiences (Griffiths 2004; Storey 2001, McRobbie [1994] 2005). Arguing for popular music's power to blow away social frontiers and allow the inclusion of those marginalised from the cultural panorama seems reasonable within the boundaries of such a theoretical background.

As we have discussed in § 2.3.3, however, the inclusive aspect of popular music is not without complications. Let us recall that it has been object of incisive critique, as well as defended on varying grounds. In any event, what is important is that inclusiveness in music makes room for vindication and contestation via *ideological promotion*. The latter is approved or rejected by specialists in gender and ethnicity on the same grounds the Marxist cultural critique does, that is, upon the *truthfulness* of its content.

Along the lines of ideological promotion, and in the wake of postmodern theory, musicologists interested in gender issues have enlarged significantly the list of commentators on popular music since the 1980s (Davies 2011). On the one hand, they have noted the momentum songs provide to the societal ethos they arise from, which does not correspond with things as they are, but with things as hegemonic horizons of thinking have them to be (Adams and Fuller 2006; Harker 1980; Stephens 2005). This calls for reflection on their impact over youngsters and children education (Sternheimer 2003; cf. Attali 1977: 218-220). That sort of ideological support, the argument goes, tendentiously results in biased representations of gender. On the other hand, notwithstanding that, gendered scholarship has assumed positive stances towards popular music, particularly as regards lyrics, without losing sight of the criticisms above (Whiteley 2000; Bowers 2000). In this connection, some authors (Ellis 2008: 196-200, 235-243; Wald 1998) set out to examine lyrics in combination with performance, visual images, and music vis-à-vis the appropriation of signifiers such as 'girl' or 'bitch' as a mode of resistance, pointing also to the use of irony as a discursive enhancer and to the immanent contradictions of such an strategy. Other approaches have gone on to explore the representation of feminine identities outside the confines of lyrical content, down to

musical form, a trend for which the work of Susan McClary has been instrumental. For present purposes, it is convenient to highlight her articulation of homology in music, as a 'public forum within which various models of gender organisation (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested, and negotiated' (McClary 2002: 8; cf. 1994). Importantly, the author claims in co-authorship with Walser (1990) that bearing such principle in mind is imperative for the adequate study of popular music—as Adorno, in their opinion, made clear already in the 1930s. Also in a non-lyrical vein, yet beyond representations of femininity *in* music, McRobbie has conducted research on the rave culture and the peculiar involvement of girls with it, from an overarching perspective that understands music *as practice*⁶⁹. Based on it, the author has conducted research on club dancing as a socio-musical practice—a theoretical gesture that reminds of the works of Thornton (1996) and Cressey ([1932] 2008) in that not music itself, but what happens around it, becomes the centre of the discussion.

The approaches to gender issues in popular music studies are not limited to women's studies. A significant body of literature along the lines of men's studies and queer theory has been growing since the 1990s. The latter has rendered key contributions to the theorisation of popular music through the same research lines hitherto discussed in this section. That is, scholars in this subfield work on the representation of identity in lyrical formulations, on musical and non-musical performances, on formal musical aspects and on socio-musical practices (e.g., in queer musicology: Wood 2006; see also Amico 2001; Dickinson 2001; Loza 2001; Maus 2001; Mazullo 2001; in men and masculinity studies: Jarman-Ivens 2013; Duffett 2001)⁷⁰

⁶⁹ 'As practice' refers here to Couldry's conception of 'media as practice' (2004, 2009).

⁷⁰ All sources from 2001 referenced here are available in *Popular Music* 20.3 (Gender and Sexuality special issue); see Bradby and Laing (2001).

The picture of gendered popular music studies is rather manifold, to be sure. I suggest making sense of such diversity as the scholars' recognition of varying modes in which music may relate to the matter, far from any essentialist attribution of ideological valence to popular music in general. In this connection, Koskoff's (2005) fourfold categorisation of musical performance vis-à-vis inter-gender relations may be useful. The idea of cultural products that *maintain*, *appear to maintain*, *protest* and *challenge* the social order is a rather plausible characterisation of the spectrum of possible relations between popular music at large and dominant gender ideologies.

This same trend of critical scholarship embraces discussions on ethnicity as regards representation and identity. In this vein, it is important to highlight a salient difference between this research line and more traditional approaches, as those illustrated by the Marxist cultural critique: whereas the latter focus on matters related to oppressed majorities (the working class), the ethnicity approach tends to concentrate in minority issues. Interestingly, ethnicity and gender mingle in critical examinations of popular music. For instance, the works of Bowers, Ellis, Finley, Harker, Stephens, and Wald, cited above in relation to the socio-musical role of women in popular culture, do tackle questions of ethnicity too. Moreover, the two aspects mingle under the heading 'social injustice', for whose ideological eradication popular music has been found pedagogically effective (Brkich 2012)—as some Marxist scholars have. It is important to underline the observation that not only the content conveyed by popular music texts, but even the language put into use when it comes to lyrics, becomes relevant in the process of articulating cultural/ethnic identities. Language choice may become a strategy played on the level of meaning and cultural heritage (Berger and Carroll 2003; Cutler 2000; Hyder

2004). Therefore, language choice, and the proficiency required to understand the lyrical content of songs, plays a key role in this mode of extra-musical association.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

Some consistencies in the development of the field are worth special attention. In order to form a general idea of such connections (with a view to the purpose of this dissertation), I invite the reader to consider these concluding remarks with the aid of the Appendix as ancillary material (synoptic tables).

This exposition has revealed a tendency to make sense of social structure and symbolic production in binary terms. A key feature of modern aesthetics, this mode of conceiving cultural practices has displayed varying nuances in the history of ideas. Consider, for example, the kind of vertical hierarchy proper to the 18th and 19th century in Europe, expressed in the binomials fine/mechanical (Batteux), liberal/mechanical (Diderot), art/craft (Kant), bourgeoisie/proletariat (Marx), and elite/mass (Arnold). This trope is at the heart of landmark developments in popular music after the 20th century under the form of art/commerce (Mellers), ruling-class/working-class (Harker), art/trash (Goodwin) and serious/popular (Covach). Other takes on the matter opt for a systemic organisation of cultural production and consumption. Here, the system in question can be a field structured by the art/mass polarity and determined by accumulations of capital (Bourdieu), a confrontational space for the advancement and contestation of conventional/unconventional systems of rationalization (Cressey), hip/squared attitudes (Becker), or dominant/subordinate segments of society (Hebdige). Others submit a hybrid organisation of cultural production, where radically horizontal schemes opposed to the binary logic of modernity coexist with all binomials

above (postmodern theory). Popular music is analysed and criticised from the perspective of such structural models (of which 'authenticity' is an ideological result).

The modernist either/or mode of organising cultural practices and products manifests itself in practically all popular music theories discussed in this chapter, remarkably so when it comes to the evaluation of popular music's worth. The songs' *rapport with real life* is the key to such an assessment. This evaluative principle, in the different shapes it takes depending on the theoretical background, is what I have conceptualised as *authenticity* in popular music. Radical antagonists to the popular culture argue that such a connection is weak, because, in their view, a serious lack of correspondence between songs and social/cultural/experiential reality pervades most popular tunes. For that reason, they sorely question the value of popular music. The classic notion of mimesis comes back in this style of cultural criticism, with idealisation playing a detrimental role. In this connection, a sort of social realism regarding content seems to dominate scholarly appreciations of the popular song. Other trends, however, see benefits in the use of popular music as the vehicle for ideological promotion to the service of social justice and freedom. In this line of work, the relation between music and society is central. For others, authenticity relates to the problem of originality and the figure of the *Genius* in a globalised context. Here, postmodern notions *pro* and *contra* creativity play a key role, in terms of the need for 'authors' in the modernist sense.

Commoditisation, as inherited from seminal debates on political economy in the 19th century, is a very influential concept that shapes several approaches to popular music as well. The commercial character of music, its profit-seeking nature, its professional machinery of production, and its importance as the *raison d'être* of a multimillionaire industry, serve as grounds for definitional gestures regarding what

popular music is. Marxism displays a very powerful influence over such arguments, directly or indirectly. More than any other parameter, the commodity character of popular music has furnished the arguments of scholars and musicians in efforts to lay down the boundaries that separate the popular repertoire from others, not without incurring in poignant value judgements. Such provisional definitions include what we may call the internal divisions of popular music (pop versus rap, rock, country, etc.) and its external distinctions against classical and folk. How those divisions and distinctions work in theory and practice, and the extent to which the arguments at play are good enough, is the subject matter of the next chapter.

The mind map at the end of this section is useful to trace the family resemblance of the theories addressed above. It also helps understand how their tropes feed into the theoretical discussion that follows. Using colour coding, I have identified the lines of research that begin (in this narrative) with the Modern System of the Fine Arts (§ 2.1.1), Historical Materialism (§ 2.1.2) and Early Cultural Anthropology (§ 2.1.3). For the purpose of this schematisation, I am attributing a dominant trope to each tradition, as shown below. I have simplified the headings for readability:

- Modern Aesthetics YELLOW Structural order of the musical field
- Historical Materialism RED Material order of the musical field
- Early Anthropology BLUE Semantic order of the musical field

These tropes tend to intersect in the different camps of popular music studies. That is not surprising, because they are aspects of the same 'order of things' as Foucault would put it (§ 1.2). The distinction I suggest is merely analytical. In the roadmap, I indicate the strongest links via line connectors (methodological or theoretical continuities) and moderate influences by combinations of colour. The yellow trend shapes the theoretical confrontation of the popular with poetry and art music (§§ 3.1.1 and 3.1.2) while the blue one does the same regarding lyrical and musical lore (§§ 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). Finally, the red trend informs the discussion about the relations between commoditisation, art and folk (§§ 3.1.3 and 3.2.3).

The same trains of thought join mediatisation theory in Chapter 4, in order to account for (1) the structural constitution of new spaces of musical interaction, (2) the technological factors that determine the rise of global music (red) and (3) the semantic repercussions of such phenomena for all participants in the musical field.



Fig. 7: A mind map of popular music studies (some titles are simplified)

Part Two:

**Recasting Popular Music
as Global Music**

Chapter 3:

Negative Definitions of Popular Music

*So you think you can hide this
But pop culture's so fucking worse
They got "punk" you give them "hardcore"
Sell a cool aesthetic what a fucking joke*

The above is the first verse of 'O.K.—We're Pop!?', a song by German punk band Lights Out! included in the EP *Out! Out! Out!* (2007). Enshrined in a vintage 7-inch vinyl record, in the finest underground style, this track makes a clear statement about the band's antagonism towards pop-punk in particular and commercial pop culture in the widest sense⁷¹. Notwithstanding, despite the carefree vocal technique, the overdriven guitars, and the uncomplicated studio production, the song's musical structure matches the core of the pop musical standard—yet against the grain of its evocative hardcore punk sonority. Though such a claim demands formal explanation beyond the scope of this chapter, musical analysis is not required to notice that any competent sound engineer could turn the same material into a pop-punk hit. As true as this might be, however, claiming that this one is not a punk song but a pop song would be awkward, simply because its surreptitious pop filiation does not invalidate its salient punk features

⁷¹ See Diehl 2013; Ellis (2008: 266-272); Lindner and Westhusen 2007; Meinert and Seeliger 2014.

(lyrics, sonority, storage medium, and so on). The question arises as to how to deal with the kind of apparent inconsistency this track exemplifies. Can we treat this song as a pop tune in contradiction to its abrasive lyrics? Should we ignore its pop attributes? Can punk ever be pop? If so, in what sense would that be the case?

Lights Out! charge vehemently against pop, but not against the popular. This I read along the lines of Diehl's (2013) recount of the pop-punk contradiction, and in the wake of Britto García's (1991) characterisation of both contenders as subcultural opposites. On the one hand, pop is defined as the 'consumer subculture par excellence of modern developed countries', which apparatus amalgamate 'the distinctive symbols of the margined subcultures [e.g. punk] with the styles of consumption imposed by its productive system' in order to sell them 'as universal categories' (Britto García 1991: Ch. II §2). On the other hand, and 'just like pop', punk 'raises against the alienated rationality, the aggressive way of life, the denial of intimacy and the repression from the system. But unlike pop [...] punk is the philosophy of the desperate, who neither believes in improvements nor even in the endurance of the culture it confronts' (*ibid*: Ch. IV §4⁷²). Though antagonistic, the musical products of pop and punk remain part of popular music in the general sense of urban mediated music⁷³, while differentiated by their conflicting dispositions to hopeful or resisting appropriation in the symbolic arena.

Contradictions of exclusion and inclusion such as the above exist all over the music world, where the definitional *strategy of rejection* (as displayed by Lights Out!) is very common. Many music makers define themselves by means of contrast, against the background of their undesirable other. In that context, adjectives such as pop, light, popular and the like, turn into negative epithets regarding musical and lyrical quality for

⁷² The translation of this and all previous Britto García's quotations are mine.

⁷³ See § 1.1

practitioners and scholars alike (e.g. Adorno 1991, 2009b; Bradby and Laing 2001; Frith 2004b, a; Rojek 2011). Rejection, expressed through lyrics and in other ways (e.g. declarations to the press, venue choice, modes of distribution, audio production), has been the mechanism of differentiation of many musicians, not only coming from the punk scene, but also from the quarters of rock, country, hip hop, and so on (Frith 2004a; Goodwin 1995; Wilson 2014). The picture remains contradictory, nonetheless. As Frith writes, 'pop can be differentiated from classical or art music and folk, but may otherwise include every sort of style' (2004a: 94). Next to its use as a pejorative label, 'popular music' and its variants is also employed inside and outside academia as a signifier of wide spectrum that covers everything unsuitable for art music and folk music (Brackett 2000; Rojek 2011). Although a negative definition is here at play too, this classifying principle makes room for Lights Out! and all other rejecters in Madonna's and Michael Jackson's kingdom. This situation begs the question of how to make sense of generic delimitations in music.

This panorama suggests at least two ways of defining popular music: first as a genre, where 'popular' stands against classical and folk; and second as a subgenre, where 'pop' is contested by punk, rock, country, hip-hop and so forth. The present chapter will focus on the former with a view to the latter, in order to get hold of the negative definitions of the 'popular' with currency in the music world. This focal choice does not prevent the terminological complications observed in previous chapters. However, it defines the specific levels of analysis to deal with the strategy of rejection. Admittedly, that the use of the tripartite division into popular, art and folk follows the mainstream of the Euro-American episteme, which has impacted the empirical order of other cultures (Eamsa-Ard 2006; Napolitano 1998, Quintana 2011, Richter 2012) and

become an academic episteme with paradigmatic status (Agawu 2014; Arroyo 2011). I shall proceed this way as to test the validity of the assumptions at the heart of this influential paradigm, which largely supports the strategy of rejection.

As we said in § 2.2, there are at least two ways of organising popular music as research material. One of them has to do with the choice regarding text or context as the focal point. The current state of the debate shows a tendency, already in place since the mid-1990s, to bridge these viewpoints (Brackett 2000)—even though the positions assumed in this respect continue to depend on the field of expertise of each scholar. Another way of organising the research material is by lyrics and music. Comprehensive approaches to popular music should dwell on both constitutive elements. However, it is unclear to what extent text and context on the one hand, and lyrics and music on the other hand, are equally relevant. I shall explore textual and contextual aspects of the popular song, as regards lyrics and music, in order to test the fitness of such perspectives for definitional ends. In this vein, the aims of this chapter are as follows:

1. To discuss critically negative definitions of popular music with currency in a wide spectrum of musical communities.
2. To determine what aspects of the popular song—lyrics/music, text/context—offer better definitional grounds.
3. To determine the availability of a negative definition that makes sense of popular music as a coherent whole.
4. To determine the soundness of the tripartite division and the negative strategy, with a view to the objective coherence of popular music studies.

3.1 Popular or Art?

Understanding the relation between the realms of the popular and the arts has been an important challenge for Euro-American art theory since the early 20th century. Two broad theoretical trends have been particularly influential in the treatment of this issue. One is the modern thought that there is clear discontinuity between the two fields; the other is the postmodern idea that there is none. The two extremes define a wide horizon in which manifold theories on the matter unfold. They range from the interdisciplinary views of Adorno and the first generation of the Frankfurt School (Adorno 1991 and elsewhere, Adorno and Horkheimer [1944] 2002), to the defenders and detractors of postmodern radical inclusiveness (Britto García 1991; Jameson 1991; Lyotard 1984; Örményi 2013b, a), to the sociological approaches based on field theory à la Bourdieu (1969, 1996, 1998). The list is by no means comprehensive.

The previous chapter makes it clear that aesthetic approaches to popular music answer to the same theoretical topology, with positions in favour of discontinuity dominating the first wave of popular music studies and positions against it prevailing in the second. In this context, arguments for inclusiveness in the sense of continuity and equivalence would bring us nowhere as regards the distinction of popular music from other repertoires. Therefore, I will start by focusing on discontinuity theories, particularly on instances where the breach between popular and art is the deepest. In such a theoretical context, the question of authenticity as the rapport with the truth plays a crucial role.

Depending on how one conceives it, authenticity as a value may lead to diverse negative definitions of the popular. Based on our preliminary approach in § 2.2.1, let us consider the case in the light of Leavisism, one of the most radical theorisations

concerned with the subject. The Leavisite critique belongs to the first wave of popular music studies and therefore deals with artefacts different from the musical items produced and consumed today. However, and despite its cultural location at the heart of the British tradition, it remains topical beyond such limits. That is so, because its binary assumptions match those of many musicians, audiences and scholars on a global scale. The following lines aim to clarify the level on which such a radical mind frame remains in force, and what its relevance is in definitional terms.

3.1.1 Popular Lyrics versus Great Poetry

Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize in literature 2016 ‘for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition’ (Nobelprize.org 2017). It is interesting that the Nobel Lecture of the singer-songwriter began with the confession that his first reaction to the news was curiosity:

When I first received this Nobel Prize for Literature, I got to wondering exactly how my songs related to literature. I wanted to reflect on it and see where the connection was (Dylan 2017)

Dylan’s statement is symptomatic of the relationship between ‘popular lyrics’ and ‘great poetry’: how do they relate to one another? On what grounds? Certainly, not everybody takes this connection for granted. Bearing in mind these developments in the global field of literary production, to say it with Bourdieu, let us examine this connection in light of some of the theories discussed in Chapter 2.

In the Culture and Civilisation tradition, the reference to assess popular writing is the notion of literature as art. In this connection, I have observed in § 2.2.1 that authors such as Leavis (Leavis 1933a, 1972b) and Mellers (1941, 1964) lay serious claims against pop artistry on grounds of over-emotional banality: they reproach popular literature its lack of realness in the twofold sense of facts and emotions, and hence posit high culture as the last bastion of real life. How does emotive content relate to the idea of reality? Actually, Leavisite critiques place emotional genuineness above factuality in their characterisation of aesthetic experience, whereby the notion of *real life* acquires the phenomenological tinge of *emotional life* (Leavis and Thompson 1950). Regarding music, consider Meller's ideas on the matter:

No one could ever prove [...] that Beethoven is a 'more philosophical' composer than Mozart; there is a very real distinction implied, but it is one that can be made only in terms of quality and kind of emotional response (1941: 96).

In the next paragraph, the musicologist expands the scope of his commentary, not only addressing music but also literature and the visual arts:

A word, of course, is something that can be held up for inspection; it has definable meanings, even though these meanings may be complex and not reducible to prose analysis. Yet even though we may know, ultimately, a little more about the relation of the experience of (say) 'King Lear' to the emotions of 'real' life than we

know about the relation to real life of the attitudes involved in a musical composition, I doubt if the matter is, in the literary case, so very much simpler; and when we consider the pictorial arts we realize only too clearly how troublesome, rather than helpful, the element of representation may be (*idem*).

Reading these arguments in the wake of their philosophical antecedents can be helpful to understand the connections they set into work. Mellers' aesthetic position is compatible with Kant's judgement of taste, which draws on the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, namely the *feeling of life* (Kant [1790] 2000: §1), rather than on the *concepts* that make sense of the object of cognition. Following Leavis (1972b), although the private mind is certainly responsible for artistic production, its optimal performance relies on its partaking in the communal mind. This recalls the Kantian definition of *Genius* as the innate talent of the mind through which nature prescribes the rule of art (Kant [1790] 2000: §46). The latter is subjective as regards the peculiarity of each original presentation (*ibid.* §49), yet bound to universality insofar as it answers to the dictum of nature itself. In this connection, we can also invoke Hegel's conception of the mind (*Geist*) as the ultimate *truth of nature* and the general consciousness that brings humankind to universal grounds of metaphysical identity (Hegel [1830] 1959: §381ff). Although neither Leavis nor Mellers took over the philosophical task of deriving their postulates from such sources, the presence of the latter in the European episteme of the early 20th century is noticeable in the partial consonances these theories display. The connections I wish to stress are the following:

1. The *Genius* of the individual ties into to the universal *Geist* of the collective mind.

2. This connection implies no normative function of the canon, for every cultural product receives the ideal support of a distinct, robust civilisation—unlike the masses.
3. The individual qua constituent part of the collective has full access to the truth of human nature through the ‘natural impulses of the heart’ (Mellers 1964: 243).
4. Aesthetic experience rises from feelings that bloom subjectively yet on universal grounds.

In tune with the above, Mellers claims that the judgement involved in the receptive experience of art is ultimately personal. It is the qualitative singularity of the emotional response that makes for the artworks’ distinctiveness (Mellers 1941: 96). It follows that the genuineness of the emotions quickened by lyrical content ought to rely on the bridge between the individual and the collective; it rests on the abidance of the lyricist by the feelings emanating from the universal roots of her/his own particularity. Hence, emotions of real life talk to the listener, not from the anecdotic factuality of the referent, but from the fundamental actuality of the mind and its universal psychological attitudes. This spells a mode of authenticity wherein emotional life stands out as the ultimate instance of *emotional truth* at which poetry must aim. Anything else is fleeing from human reality, for the sake of monetary profit or plain self-indulgence.

In this regard, although Mellers addressed ‘commercial music’ with less animosity than Leavis did ‘mass culture’, the musicologist never conferred popular rhymes the status of high poetry. Following the author, popular songs are defensible because of their perceived factuality, but the original sin of being schmaltz under the appearance of actuality remains unredeemed (Mellers 1964: 243-248). In this account,

this is the distinctive feature of commercial entertainment in its most representative instances. Although Leavisite critics do not offer clear-cut definitions of popular music via lyrics, we can deduce their position: popular lyrics are civilised yet not cultured, they are everything poetry is not due to their disconnection from real emotional life expressed by means of a degraded sentimentalist language.

The definition above is problematic, for it leaves us with an unstable picture of the civilised. There are a number of sung texts with aesthetic intentions that are neither classifiable as poetic in the Leavisite sense nor as banal concoction for the masses. This is not a matter of historical context: such was the case before the 1960s as much as today. The case of the 'patriotic songs' is illustrative in this respect. There is no room for an analysis of textual samples here, but the difficulty they represent to the Leavisite definition should not be hard to notice. Albeit some authors praise lyrics of this kind as poetic bearers of intense collective feelings (Ramón y Rivera 1982), it is worth noting the disputable universality of the emotional life quickened thereby, vis-à-vis the idealisations and extra-lyrical associations promoted by such compositions, and against the backdrop of conflicting nationalist agendas (Quintana 1995, 2006; cf. Eamsa-Ard 2006: 82-84). Factuality is not a necessary feature either. Still, anthems and suchlike would not fit the shoe of popular entertainment. As far as lyrics are concerned, the sphere of the *civilised*—as opposed to the cultured—is wider than that of the *popular*. Leavisism does not provide any device for the accurate delimitation of the latter; instead, it assumes it as part of the landscape of mass culture against which it is necessary to resist.

Remarkably, a similar kind of instability shows in the distinction between the institutionalised products of mass civilisation and those of elite culture. It is interesting

to note that some landmark works in the repository of high poetry, as Leavis himself conceived it, occasionally draw on popular material. That is the case of *The Waste Land*, Eliot's most celebrated poem, which declaredly appropriates stanzas from a popular song from 1912 (and other popular materials in earlier versions) into its own poetic agenda (Eliot [1922] 1928: §3; see Eliot and North 2001). For Leavis, the mass cultural debacle happened around the 1930s; therefore, 'That Shakespearian Rag'—the song in question—should be acceptable. The case is interesting, however, considering the stylistic contrast produced by the popular excerpt and the re-signification it undergoes in its transposition from the ballad to the poem.

Furthermore, there are well-informed arguments for the poetic quality of popular lyrics, some reported in cultural settings where the contestation to the trend of Euro-American modernity acquired institutional proportions (Britto García 1991: *Ch.* VI). Take for example the Russian rock scene in the 1970s and 1980s. Regev (1997) claims that the 'russification of the music took place mostly through lyrics and singing, interpreting them as sung poetry' (133). This came to happen in a context where rock musicians regarded themselves as 'inheritors and carriers' of the Russian poetic tradition (*idem*). Following the author, and according to the testimonial sources he draws on, this corresponds to a historical moment of institutional hindrances within the Russian literary field, which contributed to the enhancement of alternative loci for poetry to come into being—such as the underground Muscovite rock scene. According to Regev, the voice of these urban poets fed into the paradox of rock music in contemporary global culture, where it becomes an exponent of 'cultural imperialism' and a 'liberating force' at the same time (1997: 125ff; cf. Mellers 1964: 243; also Frith 1978; Laing 1986). It is noteworthy that lyricists and audiences value these rhymes not

only as regards the construction of alternative national identities, but also—and importantly—in poetic terms. This is consistent with the role of lyrics in the ‘attribution of ‘artistic authenticity’ to local versions of rock, and the emergence of a bohemian-oppositional ‘counter-culture’ which considers itself to be an avant-garde of the national or local conservative culture’, as Regev (1997: 132-133) observes. In cases such as this, popular verbal concoctions may be said to occupy a portion of the cultural panorama reserved for great poetry, even in the eyes of Culture and Civilisation theory, at least as far as tradition is concerned. These claims might be nonsensical from a radical Leavisite perspective. However, it is important to make the point as to highlight: (1) that the category ‘popular’ cannot be fully identified with any of the ‘hemispheres’ of human activity, neither highbrow culture nor lowbrow civilisation; (2) that popular lyrics are able to lie across both cultural fields.

The above suggests that a value-based binary organisation splits the field of popular music. As the rhymes of Lights Out! vehemently show, the lyrical repertoire of popular songs is internally divided into *high* and *low*—or more importantly for definitional ends, into *art* and *trash* (Goodwin 1995) or *authentic* and *inauthentic*. Of course, this mechanism operates not on the macro level of the genre but down to the distinctions among popular subgenres. Music makers (musicians, lyricists, sound engineers, promoters) and consumers (aficionados, journalists and general audience) equally enforce such distinctions. That is so, especially in cases where songs hold a specific emotional value for determinate communities. For example, the stanzas introduced at the beginning of this chapter surely get two thumbs up from the punk community they belong to, while the lyrics of any Blink 182 hit would probably have it much harder. This is not surprising, because the former spring from the emotional life of

the subculture: the rage against symbolic appropriation, against the neutralisation of punk, against the monetisation of style, and in all probability, against the band 'that put mall punk on the map' (Diehl 2013: 75; see Hebdige [1979] 2002; Bennett 2008: 421). The modern binomial split, under the form punk/pop, is even more radical here than it is in Leavisism. The 'cool aesthetics' of pop subculture is the unacceptable other of hardcore punk: the anti-establishment motto, in crude swearing sharpness, becomes the renewed canonical feature of hardcore authenticity.

The picture remains incomplete. In a sense, the same over-emotional banality attributed to pop by the Leavisite model remains at work in so-called authentic rhymes as well, turning the matter of emotional response into a question of ideological alignment. Against the grain of modern aesthetics, this tells us about the wide spectrum of cultural and subcultural frameworks within which emotional life can be defined. As Wilson observes, 'Punk, metal, even social-justice rock such as U2 or Rage Against the Machine, with their emphatic slogans of individuality and independence, are as much "inspirational" or "motivational" music as Céline [Dion]'s is, but for different subcultural groups. They are just as one-sided and unsubtle' (2014: 125-126). In this connection, it is convenient to make two observations that concern postmodern aesthetics. First, it becomes evident that eclecticism does not amount to a total absence of distinctions in popular culture, as Goodwin (1995) warns. This does not mean to submit any universal claim as the paragon of authenticity, but it certainly stresses the existence of evaluative principles, held by producers and consumers, that are site-specific, emotionally fuelled, and historically determined. Second, arguing for the poetical attributes of popular lyrics (Griffiths 2012; Regev 1997; Soto Cárdenas 2012; Varas *n.d.*) could read as an academic move towards the inclusion of the lowbrow in the highbrow in a postmodern spirit,

perhaps, but that is obviously not the same as claiming that all popular lyrics are instances of poetry—not universally at least. The issue becomes puzzling at this point, and mingles with our first observation in complex ways, because it is hard to draw any definitional line of plausibility out of judgements based on cultural location.

Few attacks to popular lyrics are as radical as that of the Leavisite critique. Nevertheless, other antagonist theories tendentiously resort to similar evaluative principles of authenticity in order to distinguish banal rhymes from genuine and truthful sung/written material, though often assuming positions less concerned with aesthetics. In this regard, it is important to recall that Leavis does not see ‘mass culture’ as integral to culture, but rather as something of an aberration extrinsic to it. Conversely, and despite their many differences, representatives of British Culturalism, Marxism, postmodern theory and alienation studies (on gender, race, ethnicity, and so on) tend to assume a more open stance towards culture, wherein mass and elite constitute a whole in intimate relation. In these accounts, rather than confronting lyrics with poetic paradigms, the general question of authenticity is whether popular lyrics are popular in the sense of standing for the people they allegedly belong to. I will have something to say about this in § 3.2.1.

3.1.2 Popular Tunes versus Great Music

Our approach to popular lyrics evidences the general framework against which music oriented inquiries are commonly articulated. Except in some conservative settings, theories concerned with the artistry of popular music hardly ever set out to divide the field of musical production into impermeable provinces of popular culture and art. What these theories mostly do, instead, is to articulate distinctions between praiseworthy creations and commonplace commercial items regardless of their

provenance (Frith 2004b; Mellers 1964; Goodwin 1995; see Wilson 2014). Authenticity, in the dichotomist sense of 'genuine needs' versus 'false wants' or 'branded identities' versus 'true selves' (Potter 2010: 3-4)⁷⁴, is at play in such theoretical distinctions too. Commonly, scholars organise such studies into textual or contextual approaches. For the purposes of this chapter, let us examine a representative selection of those approaches from the perspective of the ideas discussed in the previous section.

A strategy to ponder the distinction between pop and art is to consider extra-musical factors and their symbolic value. Some semiotic theories have linked the authenticity of popular music to that of the musician, in ways that evidence the great impact that journalistic critiques and published biographies may have over the meaning attributed to songs. That is to say, the worth of the musical item becomes, partially at least, something extrinsic to it. Brackett (2000) provides a good example of this evaluative trend by advancing a comparison between Billie Holiday and Bing Crosby's public personae with a view to the assessment of their artistic status on the audience end (34-74). According to this study, the critics' exclusion of Holiday as someone 'other' not belonging to 'us', together with the audience's knowledge about her tempestuous life, shaped positively the perception of her artistry to a significant extent. This is a completely different take on the interplay between oneness and otherness, where authenticity expresses the rapport with *individual truth*, and where exclusion reports symbolic capitalisation. A similar position shows in the Culture and Civilisation tradition. By way of illustration, consider the following comments of Mellers about Holliday:

⁷⁴ Potter is not fond of arguments for authenticity based on such oppositions: 'we need a new approach, one that takes seriously our desire for an authentic, meaningful, ecologically sensible life, but that recognizes that the market economy, along with many other aspects of the modern world, are not evils, even necessary ones, but are instead a rich and vibrant source of value that we would not want to abandon, even if it were possible (Potter 2010; cf. Mouffe 2007)

In her autobiography, Billie tells us that as a child she decided she would always try to speak the truth, or what she believed to be the truth, even though she knew that the world would kick her for it, and kick the harder because she was coloured. *This desire for honesty had direct musical consequences*, for although she was a pop singer she modelled herself on no preconceived cliché (1964: 397, italics mine)

It would seem that the source of Holliday's musical authenticity is correlative to her individual ethical position. Her music joins a peculiar framework of reception, where complex layers of meaning and value are attributed to her performance by means of extra-musical associations. Mellers proceeds:

Consider how, in 'I've Got a Date with a Dream', she sings the word 'dream' in a disembodied, ghostly tone, ending in a glissando sigh: which indicates that she knows, in her heart, what the dream is really worth' (1964: 380)

I do not mean to discuss Holiday's artistic qualities here, but to revisit the nature of the listeners and critics' judgement of her artistry. In principle, I find no wrong in Mellers' opening up to the semantic abundance of music, even by adventuring metaphoric speculations. After all, such a playful mode of engaging with music is what characterises the critical trend of popular music analysis, through which the critic

reports his personal emotional response. Now, that is different from reading Holiday's authenticity in her alleged communicative intention, or in other words, from projecting his interpretations onto his own representation of her psyche. Epistemologically, the expressive purpose behind her vocal inflections is very difficult to know for sure. The exploration of individual interpretations allows for insights in a psychological or phenomenological vein, but is not helpful in the way of defining popular music as different from art. Second, and importantly, granted the influence of the surrounding media discourses over the reception of her music, there is a latent risk of not listening to the singer but to her biographers instead. Should that be the case, the discussion would not be about music any longer.

This line of inquiry is largely compatible with notions of symbolic capital and celebrity capital in popular music studies (Driessens 2013b; Giles 2013; Prior 2011)⁷⁵. From that perspective, the extra-musical element of individual truthfulness play a role in the legitimation of Holiday's music because it facilitates her accumulation of such sorts of capital in the field of cultural production, which determines the recognition of herself and her deeds in virtue of shared categories of perception (Bourdieu 1998). This reading involves a conception of popular music as a cultural field with all its standard structural features (Bourdieu 1996). Regarded in this light, authenticity remains in tune with the fluid division of the popular into art/commerce, art/trash, or authentic/inauthentic—not in terms of emotions but of perceived symbolic value. Although this approach is useful for understanding the localised production of collective musical meaning, as in fieldwork-based sociology, social semiotics or ethnomusicology, it represents little contribution to any trans-localised conceptualisation of popular music, for reasons similar to those puzzling the argument for emotional truth.

⁷⁵ See § 2.3.2.1

The idea of authenticity as symbolic concentration is problematic on both definitional levels of genre and subgenre. As for the former, the strategy of promoting the persona and her authenticity through media exposure is not peculiar to pop subculture; that is common practice in all quarters of the music world. Now then, since popular, art and folk are all layers of the field of musical production, and hence answer to similar structures and laws, the framework of legitimacy provided by artistry thus conceived gathers together representatives of dissimilar styles, whose aesthetic traits are discriminated and tagged based on the musical text. Thus, for example, 'authentic' art, folk and popular remain distinguishable as different kinds out of their musical sonority, despite sharing the same kind of positive appraisal. A similar argument holds for 'inauthentic' productions.

On the intra-genre level, creating the persona with premeditation is common practice far and wide the music industry, equally so in pop as in 'authentic' subcultural divisions of popular music. That makes it difficult for anyone to pick out of the lot the kind of popular music 'that is worth it'. As Hennion puts it: 'The singer's real life story is the source of the meaningfulness of his voice. But, just like them, it is reconstructed according to the way it is projected visually, verbally, and musically in his songs' (1990: 200). In this account, authenticity stands out as discourse of media (re)construction. What popular song is not potentially worth it, one may wonder, if our judgement is based on the link between the persona of the musician and her music? On the other hand, what popular song really is? The answer to these questions takes us back to the domains of personal judgement, subcultural location and emotional response, which are instrumental for dialogical engagements between analysts and readers qua listeners of the musical material, but of no use in the way to sorting out popular music.

Other lines of research aim directly at the musical text in structural terms, e.g. the formal branch of music analysis. Cross-sections of specific songs and repertoires usually do not include the definition of popular music or its subgenres in the agenda, nor do they search for the truth content of the musical material. Such analyses tend to highlight the connections between instances of the popular repertoire and certain periods of classical music, mostly from the common practice era. The structural similarities at stake, commonly on the level of harmony but not excluding rhythm and meter, tend to emphasise *complexity* as the meeting point between the apparently dissimilar musical corpora. In this vein, although progressive rock tends to be in the spotlight of such analyses (Covach 1997, 2000) subgenres normally regarded as rather simple in their composition have been found exponents of remarkable technical intricacies, as the experimental drive of The Beach Boys beyond surf rock demonstrates (Harrison 1997).

Some scholars have taken the sufficiently elaborated character of progressive and other rock subdivisions as the main argument against the exclusion of popular music from the conservatory curricula, e.g. Lasuén Hernández (2014) in Spain and Rosenberg (2010) in the US. Some pedagogues have included pop-rock songs (on a par with classical samples) as illustrations for their textbooks (Clendinning and Marvin 2011). Others have advocated for the uniqueness of the rock style and the harmonic idiom it harbours, towards a distinction between it and classic tonal harmony for teaching purposes. 'The question becomes whether we should use pop-rock excerpts only to the extent that they can serve as illustrations of classical idioms, or instead engage pop-rock music on its own terms' (Doll 2013: 91; cf. Tagg 1987). Some formal approaches have characterised the popular song based on its harmonic simplicity, observing the limited extension and presumable laziness of its typical chord progressions (Swain 2013).

Mellers highlighted the same shallowness, specifically as regards some jazz productions, in terms of the unoriginality and repetitiveness proper to the loss of the truth content in music (Mellers 1964: 372; cf. Adorno 1991, 2009b; see Coker 1990: 65-67).

Understanding art music in the narrow sense of classical music, the above read as theoretical moves towards inclusion or exclusion amidst the interplay between popular and art. Two points are worth consideration in this regard. First, both genera lean on tonal harmony, which brings their repertoires to an equal harmonic foothold regardless of the level of complexity; that binds them together on a more fundamental structural level without disregard to the uniqueness of their musical idioms. Second, and in tune with the previous section, note that the structural affinities and differences highlighted by formal analysis refer to subgenres within the larger corpus of popular music. Ergo, though it would difficult for analysts to spell out a macro definition of the genre, pinpointing recurring features in popular styles is certainly feasible, without necessarily stepping into questions of artistic value or emotional weight.

In relation to pedagogy, some scholars discuss the exclusion of popular music from the classroom from the perspective of symbolic value, this time as concerns the worth of popular music. Along these lines, Arroyo (2011) has tackled the case of Brazilian music education in an ethnographical vein, arguing that the exclusion of the popular from the conservatory answers to the bias against the popular inherited from the European modern episteme (elite/mass)—of which the Culture and Civilisation theory is exemplary. Here, equating popular with art proves as difficult as distinguishing them from one another. Brazilian culture admits an art-exclusive definition of popular music against *música erudita* where ‘popular’ means whatever is not ‘classical’. At the same time, it admits an art-inclusive definition of *música popular brasileira* (MPB) that

embraces diverse musical materials in a complex tissue of Brazilian cultural markers (Arroyo 2011: 60; Napolitano 1998: 92; Majewski dos Santos and Abonizio 2010)⁷⁶. The latter conception is at the heart of *bossa nova* and in tune with the poetics of Brazilian modernism (Andrade 1981: 66-72, Dubin 2010). Notice that it does not harbour *música erudita* but allows for the integration of exogenous materials in a cosmopolitan vein—prominently jazz and rock. The latter fall within the framework of ‘legitimate artistry’ derived from their own processes of consecration in the field of cultural production (§ 2.3.2.1; Mellers 1964, 1974; Goodwin 1995; Covach 2000 for a description of such processes). Adding to the complexity of the case, Napolitano observes that MPB is ‘a cultural field in permanent discussion’ characterised by the juxtaposition of events and meta-narratives within a ‘discontinuous historicity’ (1998: 93, translation mine). It is not surprising, then, that MPB holds ‘elite music’ status for non-specialised Brazilian audiences, as Majewski dos Santos and Abonizio (2010) suggest.

Agawu (2014) makes a similar case in relation to music instruction and praxis vis-à-vis post-colonial representations of popular African culture in Ghana, where the ontological bias as to what sort of music is worth teaching, making and listening, still shows vestiges of Eurocentric elitism, which, as in the Brazilian case, is a formidable contradiction. The societal dynamics these cases exemplify recall our considerations about lyrics versus poetry. On the one hand, the examples suggest that the contrast between popular and art in music is always dependent on cultural and subcultural location, against the grain of universalist models of cultural organisation. On the other hand, and notwithstanding, they also show the extent to which the propositions and

⁷⁶ For clarification, notice that the art-exclusive definition of Brazilian popular music does include folk music, whereas the art-inclusive definition excludes it. The cultural markers at issue relate to *bossa nova*, of which MPB has been said to be the second generation. None of these definitions of popular includes ‘pop’.

immanent contradictions of the latter remain alive and in force in many contemporary societal realities.

3.1.3 Commodity versus Creation

The discussion should not end without addressing relevant debates in the field of political economy. In this context, authenticity of popular songs depends on their not being a musical commodity. There is a wide array of positions for and against the manufacture of tunes, wherein the radicalness of the arguments vary significantly (Adorno 1991, 2009b; Attali 1977; Brackett 2000; Frith 1989, 2004a; Adorno and Horkheimer [1944] 2002; Rojek 2011). This train of thought relates to lyrics and music alike, as our exposition hitherto suggests. Be art the product of *Genius*, of individual minds embedded tradition, or of accumulations and transformations of symbolic capital, be it the expression of individual truth or collective emotions, the question is whether the commodity character of music spells its inauthentic flaw as an accident of birth. In the theories documented in this chapter, the implication tends to be affirmative, i.e. that the monetary value that seems to define the popular song does not match the transcendence, the aesthetic quality or the symbolic value proper to authentic art specimens. In this vein, without disregard to the professional status of the classical or art musician, there seems to exist an underlying consensus among scholars that the motivation of art music should never be commercial in nature.

These preoccupations lie at the heart of the Leavisite critique. Mellers' commentary on American popular music hinges precisely on the distinction between *Art* and *Commerce*, overtly recasting Leavis' categories of minority culture and mass civilisation (Mellers 1964: 240). Noteworthy, the musicologist warns against making too naïve a distinction between the two, calling for equanimity and awareness as regards

the ways in which both modes of cultural production relate to human nature. Nevertheless, that implies no compromise with mass entertainment:

It is a truism that in a machine-made world we must expect to find two contradictory types of art which do their best to cancel one another out. One kind, gallantly (and precariously), keeps flying the flag of the human spirit; the other exploits mechanistic techniques to prostitute the spirit for material gain (Mellers 1964: 239)

Concerns about exploitation, alienation, and the corruption of emotional life for the sake of financial return are important points in Mellers' musical critique. Nonetheless, they play a supporting role in his musicological line of discourse. His approach is by no means economic. In order to get hold of the possibilities political economy offers for definitional purposes, I suggest exploring such concerns in the light of arguments centred in the social relations of musical production.

Attali's (1977) elaboration on the matter fits this shoe, for it brings together a number of tropes running through the theories presented earlier. Hinging on the Marxist model, the author unfolds his argument in an interdisciplinary spirit, whereby the combination of political economy and cultural critique, with a historiographical emphasis and a taste for music description, renders interesting results. Different from Mellers, whose study revolves around the history of American music, Attali's take on the popular song derives from his critique of repetition as the Capitalist mode of musical

production on a transnational scale. That pushes the discussion into the global context, as a cosmopolitan picture of the music world drawn from the francophone front.

Attali's genealogy of popular music sets America as the point of departure. The author traces the pedigree of popular music from Dixieland jazz to the emergence of rock music around the 1950s (Attali 1977: 205ff). As Mellers also explains, the deepest roots of jazz can be trailed back to the blending of Afro-American traditions such as Negro spirituals and work songs—as well as later genres like ragtime and blues—with structures inherited from European tonal harmony (Mellers 1964: 262ff, see Coker 1990). Attali's localisation of the origins of transnational popular music in space and time is plausible; that genealogy brings us closer to the development of the genre as an eminently musical phenomenon with recognisable formal traits. Although this is not to say that contemporary popular music is geo-culturally localised in the style of traditionalist arguments (below), this observation sets a musical scenery to its genesis, which provides a more solid ground of categorisation to the distinctions based on authenticity and commoditisation.

Attali's position is not without complications, however. Consider the following excerpt from *Bruits*:

Nowadays, music emerges mostly via its market component, that is to say, by means of the popular song, commercialised through the radio. The rest of the production, scholarly music [*la musique savante*], still fits the theoretical line of the performance and its crisis; it constitutes, apparently, a very different field where merchandise is excluded, money indifferent. But in fact that is not the case;

the rupture of the code of harmony relapses into abstract music, into noise without sense (Attali 1977: 202, translation mine).

Let us place these ideas in due context. On the one hand, as discussed in § 2.3.4, scholarly music is said to have faced a crisis after the 1960s (Kerman 1980), in which challenging dodecaphony and minimalism played significant roles. The formal and semantic content of *musique savante* underwent radical modifications thereafter, which announced, according to Attali, the advent of new social formations. On the other hand, radio broadcasting was certainly instrumental in the large-scale dissemination of popular music in the 1970s (Hjarvard 2008b: 112; Peterson 2004: 282ff; Wallis and Malm 1990). It is true that the US recording industry started to depend on radio exposure to promote their productions ever since the rock era (Peterson 2004; Peterson and Berger 1990). It is also true that the gradual transformation of European radio from cultural institution with educational purposes to semi-independent institution with commercial aims took place during the same period, until its definite consolidation in the 1980s (Hjarvard 2008b: 117-120). Without a doubt, this media landscape was of the utmost importance for the rise of North Atlantic popular music as a global phenomenon. These are key facts that will be analysed in the next chapter.

Against this background, the only alternative to popular music in the 1970s seems to have been scholarly music, the latter conceived of as distanced from the process of commoditisation yet constitutive to the dynamics of a repetitive society. For present purposes, note that Attali's binary distinction leaves no room for folk music, which is then confined, as non-mediated practice, to the realm of representation—either in a distant past before the regime of repetition or in a non-profitable present left aside

the dynamics of Capitalism (Attali 1977: 84). At face value, the argument sounds too radical. Claiming that all scholarly music after 1900 is de-commodified and incomprehensible, that most popular music is commercial and inescapable, and that all folk music is either history or commercially useless, would be an overstatement. Furthermore, this argument makes no provision for 'non-Western' music of any kind (see § 2.3.4.2)

The explanatory power of Attali's model lies in its nuances. For starters, the economist does not discard all popular music. Although the industry was much more concentrated and one-sided in the 1970s than it is today, the author leaves room for a kernel of resistance within the regime of repetition and its relations of production. Through felicitous idiosyncrasies in composition and performance, the *Genius* of some musicians 'gallantly (and precariously), keeps flying the flag of the human spirit', to use Mellers expression. As for scholarly music, it is reasonable to say that at the time *Bruits* was published *la musique savante* had set its path away from the masses⁷⁷. Nonetheless, Attali finds the repertoire of the common practice era exposed to repetition and hence to commoditisation. These inflexions improve the explanatory power of the model. For example, it allows the existence of musical styles within the jazz-to-rock genealogy whose characteristic ideology is antagonist to the logic of the market, such as the punk subculture to which *Lights Out!* belongs. Likewise, it is consistent with the intensification of postmodern attitudes in music, which has enabled compositions hard to classify as either scholarly or popular. A case in point is Yann Tiersen's score for the film *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001). His association to minimalism, his background as a popular musician, and the market success of this soundtrack, make his

⁷⁷ This was not necessarily the case in the decades that followed. In different ways, the work of artists such as Phillip Glass, André Rieu or the Three Tenors (Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti) testify to the mass reach and commercial success of so-called classical music.

a hard case to sort out. Yet, the question of folklore remains uncertain: then as now, there are a number of folk styles with great success among professional recording artists (Madoery 2011) whose productions reach local, national and global markets alike.

Attali's ideas are controversial and would require some update in order make sense in the music world today. However, I wish to stress the worth of his method, namely, the conflation of the economic argument and the musical insight. The reminder of the influence the market exerts over musical production and reception ties into the specific styles and repertoire sketched in the genealogy of the genre. In this sense, it is directly concerned with the identification of the music towards the understanding of its processes, as constituted by materials with specific formal traits and marked by a historical luggage that includes forced migration, colonisation and social injustice.

In terms of definitions, the argument of commoditisation looks less useful alone than combined with musical clues. This is consistent with Attali's heterodox take on the Marxist model, wherein the superstructure, and hence music, is not totally determined by material conditions. Instead, music is the herald of new social formations that the base of society eventually assimilates (Boer 2002: 43). This principle is important for definitional purposes.

3.2 Popular or Folk?

The debate on popular music's authenticity comes close to key topics in folk studies, where lore enthusiasts hold folk songs to be the 'historical record of popular consciousness', as Frith observes (1989: 82). Lyrical content, verbal as well as written, has been crucial for the birth and development of this line of research. Some of the most influential works of collection and classification that appeared in the 18th and 19th

centuries in Europe concentrated on song lyrics (Bohlman 1988: 35). The same focus became evident in early compilations produced in the colonial territories reached by the European episteme, for example in Latin American countries (Machado 1919, Cardenal 2005). It would be pointless to determine the earliest academic efforts on grassroots lyricism, for it is evident that the history of ideas about lyrics and music is untraceable to any particular period or episteme of origin. More useful for present purposes is to refer to German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder ([1807] 1846), who, following a long-lasting tradition of travellers and scholars (Bor 1988: 57), became instrumental for the consolidation of the lyrical approach to the *Volkslied* in Europe. As Joep Bor (2008) explains:

Herder played a key role in the notion that each people had a unique cultural heritage. For him, folk poetry and folk music pre-eminently expressed the body of thought and the identity of a nation. Since there was already concern that the original traditions would disappear, the collecting of popular stories and folk songs increased exponentially and official institutions began to provide support. Around 1850, hundreds of collections of folk poems and folk songs were published in Europe (28)

Recording and thinking musical sound through manifold technologies, from handwriting to digitisation, has also played a key role in the development of folk studies. In this vein, the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1768) is paramount as one of the precursors of ethnomusicology (Baud-Bovy 1988: 82-87; Bor 2008; Van der Meer and

Erickson 2014). The contribution of the *Genevois* to the institutionalisation of musical studies about *all peoples* is substantial. His writings on the matter, especially his *Dictionnaire de Musique* (1768), set out the academic agenda for centuries. His work invites discussion about the imprecision of staff notation and the questionable universalism of European musical principles, harmony in particular. It also promotes a relativistic stance on musical meaning and highlights the convenience of comparative methods, detached from ethnocentric values, for the study of the music of different peoples (Rousseau 1768: 236ff, 305ff). Agreements and disagreements in the history of ethnomusicology unfold along these lines⁷⁸.

A word of clarification is necessary about the notion of the folksong that I will be mobilising in this section. For the sake of the argument, let us return to the discussion in § 2.2.5, where I refer to early musicology as a discipline with three research lines defined in evolutionist terms. Paraphrasing Slobin (2003), they are:

1. Music of non-Western 'civilisations' vis-à-vis Europe.
2. Music of non-Western 'primitive' cultures.
3. Music of Western 'primitive' cultures.

The first one is not directly concerned with the goals of this section; therefore, I will not discuss it. The second and the third are on point. They are mostly distinguished by geo-cultural location while remaining equally 'primitive', which means that, discarding the pejorative jargon of cultural evolutionism, both refer to the music of the *Volk* in the sense 18th-century ethnography conceived it (§ 2.1.3). In the 2010s, the academic

⁷⁸ The resonance of these ideas is evident in the work of Tiersot (1889), 1905, Kunst (1950, 1969), Tagg (1987), Mugglestone and Adler (1981), Montagnier (1990) and many others.

tendency is to call 'folk music' the *Volk* materials and practices of one's own cultural locale and 'world music' those of everybody else, not without tinges of Western-centrism (Bor 2008: 40). The latter category may or may not include the musical systems studied by (1) in Slobin's classification⁷⁹. For the specific purposes of this section, I will skip the term 'world music' mobilise an *ample definition* of folk music meant to cover all *Volk* materials, one's own and everybody else's, regardless of geo-cultural location and without ethnocentric assumptions. This section will be devoted to the distinctions between popular music and folk music understood in that vein.

Before moving on, I must say something about the related category of 'national music'. From a historical point of view, the English term actually predates the German *Volkslied* that paved the way to the concept of folk music. The connection between them is conceptual, so much so that, according to some authors, they meant more or less the same in 18th-century Europe. Bor (2008), for instance, embraces this position (44), in the context of a larger historical account: 'we already come across the concept of 'national music' in 1776 in Charles Burney's history of music, thus two years before Herder published his collection of *Volkslieder*' (38). For Burney (1789), national music was music for the vulgar and the unlearned and hence antithetic to art (220). This is compatible with earlier distinctions about music advanced by some philosophers of the Enlightenment, e.g. John Gregory (1766). Herder's conceptualisation reproduces the same dichotomy but changes the qualitative value of 'the vulgar and the unlearned', in his characteristic anti-Enlightenment style. As Smith (1998) explains:

⁷⁹ For a detailed account of world music and the history of its representations, see Bor (2008)

For Herder, language was thought and it only developed within the context of social groups. Thought, therefore, like language, was group-specific and unique; so was every other cultural code—dress, dance, architecture, music—in tandem with the society in which it developed. In its original state of nature, as created by God, each nation is both unique and ‘authentic’ (87)

I will have more to say about this in short. For the time being, notice that the dichotomy between ‘art’ and ‘popular’, which I discuss in § 3.1 in the context of high modernity, has direct antecedents in the art/national debate of the 18th century. Discussions about *chants populaires* and *musique populaire* in the francophone context (which rose in the 1800s, see § 2.2.5 on Tiersot), belong to this history of ideas as well. Although not in the essentialist spirit of Herder, my ample definition of folk music compatible with the idea that music can be a marker of national identity, that is, in the anthropological sense of *cultural nations*.

In section 3.1, I have mentioned repertoires that promote national belonging. Patriotic songs, for example, are vehicles of ideological dissemination, but also instrument for the (re)construction of national identities. Quintana (2006) points to the piquant *sainete* in Spain and the revolutionary tunes in 1780s France as probable origins of this genre, both in the 18th century, though there exist older lyrics exalting national identities, of course. The patriotic element of such compositions is usually subject to the interests of political communities, namely, of existing and aspiring nation-states. That is why, for example, some patriotic songs in the colonial Caribbean in the 19th century were in favour of the independence movement, while others supported monarchical interests. Here, lyrical and musical content endorse a specific polity.

Differently, §§ 3.2.1 to 3.2.3 revolve around words and music which stand as representative symbols of an ethnos, while making room for the possibility of contradictions and negotiations.

3.2.1 Popular Lyrics versus the Voice of the People

From seminal songbooks to contemporary research in the field, lyrical substance has served as one of the key working materials to determine the songs' function in their original settings, as well as their comports with varying notions of 'folk'. Such academic efforts have resulted in organised anthologies as well as in critical deconstructions of their underlying principles. The verbal substance of folk music, from the standpoint of functional and semantic analyses, is supposed to reflect the connection between the lyrical material and the reality of the historical peoples who produce it; there resides its *authentic* character. Let us then begin our approach to the confrontation between popular and folk by exploring some relevant arguments on lyrical content.

The idea of correspondence between popular songs and social human praxis plays a key role in the thought of Herder ([1807] 1846), who addressed with enthusiasm what he called the 'songs of the people'. Associated with German romanticism and the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement at the turn of the 18th century, Herder's seminal work inaugurates the theoretical line that conceives folk songs as originating from the drive of the folk spirit in the unbridled context of a state of nature (Bohlman 1988: 6-7). In this connection, the folk is conceived of as essentially collective, rural and illiterate, as opposed to the urban literate minority occupying the pinnacle of the European social structure in late 18th and early 19th century. The philosophical esteem shown to the folk thus conceived testifies to the counter Enlightenment attitude of Herder's philosophy and the *Sturm und Drang* movement in general, as regards the salutation to the 'wild'

creativity springing from the *Volk* in contrast with the rational progressivism and individualism promoted by the Western intelligentsia of the time (Bor 2008: 27). It is true that the philosophy of the Enlightenment is manifold and complex beyond dead on rationalism. Certainly not all models of thought were subordinated to the perfecting principles of reason, as it was the case of Wolff's inaugural writings between the 1720s and the 1730s. In fact—as the discussion in § 3.1.1 suggests—plenty of room was left for sensibility, emotion and affect in later formulations advanced by prominent philosophers such as Baumgarten and Kant (Caygill 2003). Notwithstanding that, it is undeniable that reason was highly appraised in that intellectual milieu, and that it was in such a climate that Herder highlighted the truthful character of folk rhymes in virtue of their being the unbound expression of the collective soul.

Such a 'romantic' way of thinking, philosophically speaking, meant a social vindication of the *Volk* beyond the picture of the 'primitive', though based on essentialist conceptions of ethnic identity that lingered in the German citizenship model until the late 1990s (Siapera 2010: 34-36). These general ideas have been reworked ever since in diverse cultural epistemai, paving the way for the institutionalisation of folk studies with the aim of consolidating and promoting national identities (Bor 2008: 44; Slobin 2003) as well as producing new models to understand the link between songs and society. Folklorists have answered this call in various ways. They have dwelled on the question of nationalism and the crisis of the nation-state as the collective entity that music is occasionally said (forced) to represent (Callejo Ferrer 1915; Machado 1919; Ramón y Rivera 1982; Sharp [1932] 2012; cf. Araújo Duarte Valente et al. 2011, Bohlman 2004; Laing 1986; Quintana 2012; Regev 1997).

In all such theoretical instances, the role of ‘popular consciousness’ remains crucial. To explain it with the help of literary theory, it maintain that a *historical system* of production is at work in the articulation of folk lyrics, through which they manage to capture the epoch they belong to in a linguistic snapshot. This I understand at a distance from the concept of *Zeitgeist* and romantic nationalism. By historical system I mean the procedure of selection of motives in the real world based on their being semantically shared by a given social conglomerate. In other words, a historical system does not necessarily found its literary products on historical facts (though the latter remain important and are not to be discarded). Fantasy and expectations may well be its driving force inasmuch as its cradle rests on a communal ontology, within clear socio-historical coordinates, and veritably attached to collective reality⁸⁰. Thus, for example, the chants of the Omaha, the Guarani and the Nahua harbour for them the innermost moments of epiphany—the Fox and the Pawnee address their divinities by means of their singing—the Zulu and the Pygmies lament their gods’ abandonment through songs among the oldest known in Africa (Cardenal 2005: XII-XX). Beyond any guideline of historicity, the authenticity of their poesy remains undisputed as far as popular consciousness is concerned.

Discussions about popular and folk tend to mingle at this point. It is important to realise that close kinship to real social life is precisely the main feature of popular songs worth academic felicitation in the critiques of Hoggart (1957), Harker (1980) and McRobbie ([1994] 2005), as well as in most representation studies. In that context, and just as in folk music, it is the element of actuality, in the ontological sense described above, which makes popular songs authentic or inauthentic. In the wake of this

⁸⁰ I advance this notion of historical system in the context of a discussion about avant-garde drama (Roos 2011a), where I propose a synthesis of Creationist poetics and Pirandello’s notion of ‘historical writer’.

coincidence, it becomes difficult to tell between one genre and another based solely on this version of authenticity, even more without resorting to the musical component.

What is, then, the difference between popular and folk *in terms of lyrical content*? This question has been worked out by a number of scholars, among them, Park (2017) on Korean *minjung kayo*, Ramsdell (2012) on Cuban hip-hop, Harker (1985) on British folksongs and Middleton (1990) in a more theoretical vein (with North Atlantic examples). The list is far from exhaustive. Interestingly enough, the tendency in these studies is to discuss authenticity with an eye to political economy. Frith (1989) poses a similar question in the course of his discussion about lyrics and realism. Referring to Lloyd's (1967) work on English traditional music, the British socio-musicologist expresses his concerns about the unclear split between the 'consolations' provided by folk songs and the 'escapism' à la Mellers facilitated by their popular homologues, where the former is deemed a good thing and the latter a bad one. Frith's question drops the hint as to the degree of affinity between two supposedly antagonistic tendencies. That suggestion makes way for his attack on what he calls the 'sentimental socialist-realist argument' that defends folk over popular on the sole grounds that popular songs are commodities and nothing else. In Lloyd's approach, the reinforcement of the argument for authenticity via political economy becomes the rhetorical strategy of choice. I shall come back to this in the following section with a view to the musical aspect.

As for now, notice that the same kind of modernist either/or divide at work in the confrontation of popular music with art music (culture/civilisation, art/commerce) obtains also in definitional oppositions between popular and folk songs. Authentic versus inauthentic, in the sense of belonging to and representing the people, remains a structuring black-or-white dichotomy which correlates to value judgements similar to

those made about popular music: art/trash (Goodwin 1995) or simply good/bad (Frith 2004b). This grid of judgement is patent not only in academic forums, but also among contemporary folk and popular musicians, critics and journalists today (Wilson 2014).

Take for example Stick in the Wheel, a folk group from England devoted to what they term 'London traditional music'. The band has received good critiques from the alternative music press, emphasising its rawness, realness and honesty (Fintoni 2014, Gallacher 2014). On their website, the artists' statement reads: 'We play the music of our people. We sing in our own accents. We record in our kitchens and living rooms. This is our culture, our tradition' (Stick in the Wheel n.d.). Authenticity stands out here as the ground value onto which the identity of the band towers up. In a recent interview for the British radio station XFM, the musicians complain about the general lack of connection prevalent in the English folklore scene. On the one hand, traditional music seems to have fallen into oblivion, singer Nicola Kearey declares, and it is answering to that conspicuous absence which gives Stick in the Wheel focus and purpose. On the other hand, guitar player Ian Carter states that 'English folk music seems to be disconnected from the subject matter they're singing about', to which interviewer John Kennedy reacts with an agreeing suggestion: 'current folk music tends to live in a romantic realm' (Stick in the Wheel 2014). Old songs certainly deal with past realities, but they remain timely, the argument goes, insofar as they resonate meaningfully in the experience of the present—a signifying practice that demands some degree of historical awareness. Therefore, the quarrel is not really with well-aged rhymes put in music, but with the contemporary harvest of folk poesy. Kearey comments: 'people don't really write about everyday life so much anymore [...] People should just write some stuff themselves and do it!' (Stick in the Wheel 2014). The 'romantic realm' exists in the English folk scene,

not because the songs are quatercentenary, but because songwriters allegedly keep with outdated models, a sort of fetish for either pastoral dreams or lyrical formulas. For our purposes, whether or not these views are empirically true is not as important as this, that they render evidence of the role that authenticity plays in today's characterisations of English folk from within, ontologically so. Here, as in many academic circles, authentic is synonym with social realism, self-expression and critical attitude, while inauthentic spells banality, romantic illusion and idealisation. Between real and unreal, no room is left for grayscale musical identities based on truthfulness.

One could make a similar case for popular music, yet involving further complications. The concept of *Volk*, whatever inaccurate insofar as non-consensual—be it sociobiological, sociocultural or sociopolitical—invokes a certain historical, geographical and cultural coherence that binds together the *people* folk music is meant to represent (§ 2.1.3)⁸¹. True, cultural production is never isolated; neighbouring and global cultures tend to influence the workings local folk production (Callejo Ferrer 1915, Keil n.d.; Wallis and Malm 1990). Yet, there remains an ideal of unity at the heart of the *Volk*, which is somewhat blurry in the conceptions of popular music as a global phenomenon. Said ideal draws on cultural markers, historical discourse or geographical location in a folklorist style. Cases in point are the nativist definitions of Brazilian *música popular* (Napolitano 1998), the approaches to American pop via Afro-American lore (Mellers 1964; Attali 1977) and the geo-cultural profiling of German punk (Lindner and Westhusen 2007; Meinert and Seeliger 2014) or Russian rock (Regev 1997).

⁸¹ It has been observed in Chapter 2 and in previous subsections of this chapter that the German term *Volk*, and hence the English *folk*, are semantically related to *ethnos* and hence to *nation*, but also to *people* in the same sense of sociocultural community. In contrast with the Germanic term, *people* has its etymological origins in the Latin word *populus*; hence the Latin American *música popular* and the French *musique populaire* referred to in previous sections, which are congruent with the *Germanic Volksmusik* and *Volkstümliche Musik*. Hence, at least partly, the terminological confusion described in Chapter 1. I will discuss the aspect of representation of national identities in terms of national music (or national styles) in the next section Chapter 4.

Both contemporary folk and popular lyrics attempt to resonate in the ears of other audiences, beyond their original limits. They do so as players in the current dynamics of digital media (Berklee College of Music 2013; Crary 2013; Salganik et al. 2006). Moreover, they lend themselves to creative uses and appropriation by diverse sectors of the social whole—from local to global, from subcultural to mainstream. In this connection, the historical system mediating between social reality and lyrical creation is not a grantor of universal truth about the world, but a subjective creative procedure with collective foundations. Let us keep in mind the relative character of individual experience as lived up in varying social settings, and therefore the manifold nature of its lyrical expressions. Yet, the idea of authenticity as realism points to a sense of ontological belonging in folk music that remains unbroken even under the pressure of globalising and mediatising forces. In comparison, the collective truth to which popular songs hold rapport with seems diffuse.

The question arises: how does popular music engage with ‘social reality’? Phrased differently: what ‘social reality’ is the subject matter of authentic popular songs? The discussion on the possible reactions to Lights Out! and Blink 182 in the German punk scene has shed some light on the relative character of authentic emotional life, and therefore about the truth content of the popular song. A second thought on the matter, now from the perspective of realism, not only confirms such claims but also suggests a liaison between emotional responses and communal ontologies. The concept of homology, this time according to subcultural theory, spells a crucial mode of relation between lyrics and people. Following Hebdige (1990)—somewhat different from critical musicology—homology can be defined here as the semantic interconnection between verbal content on the one hand and the beliefs and practices of a subculture on the other

hand. This sort of interplay is compatible with the commitment to emotional life, and may be said to source the legitimacy of popular songs, because no collective emotion obtains without some communal ontology furnishing the relation between the musical event and the emotional response. In other words, the audience develops feelings about some entity or category, which makes sense only in the context of some network of significance. It follows that the realities lyrical snapshots are meant to capture are neither universal nor exclusively attached to any subculture in particular; it becomes a matter of perspective.

In addition to the above, it is worth pondering the extent to which the radical either/or logic of assessment set to work by Lights Out! in their lyrics relies not only on the emotional life of the subculture (as concluded in § 3.1.1), but also, inextricably, on the ideal of homological realism. The lines opening this chapter may bring the point home: the ‘fucking joke’ of pop culture consists in its selling authentic hardcore punk as a ‘cool aesthetic’, which is in absolute discrepancy with the beliefs of the community they arise from. It is the metaphysical transgression which quickens the anger of Lights Out!—as it would that of the Omaha, the Guaraní and the Nahua, of the Fox and the Pawnee, of the Zulu and the Pygmies, in face of profane re-significations of their cosmovision and narratives. Different from the later, however, the subcultural groups that constitute the sphere of popular music are not always localised on national levels, nor culturally determined in ethnographical terms. In the new virtual geography of the mediatised society (Hjarvard 2008b), the ‘peoples’ behind popular music relate to diverse communities and institutions simultaneously. That is why, for example, a Paraguayan youngster could perfectly partake in the punk subculture and the Guaraní

culture at once, and hence liaise with peers in both circles in individual, local, national and global spaces of interaction (*idem*). I shall come back to this in the next chapter.

It is clear that defining popular music negatively against folk, as the vehicle of escapist lyrics with no true connection to reality, is simply not a sound option. The approach to the popular/folk debate is important, however, because it deepens key insights obtained in our discussion about popular culture and the arts regarding the disparity between low and high on the one hand, and the popular on the other hand. In § 3.1 we concluded that 1) neither low nor high culture are identical to popular culture, and 2) that the popular lies across the high/low or any other similar dichotomy. The addition of this section to those ideas consists in showing that the same value-driven binary logic determines not only vertical distinctions where some qualitative hierarchy is implied, such as popular/art, but also horizontal confrontations of the kind popular/folk where the worth of both repertoires comes to be assessed on the same grounds of authenticity. Even though the split between the two is intended vertically by politico-economic approaches, as we will see in short, our argument suggests that commercial and non-commercial songs, just like authentic and inauthentic ones, are equally possible in both lyrical corpora, which levels them down to a common ground.

Before closing this section, let us note that authenticity as realism, as an intrinsic quality of the song, is an unstable concept because of some of additional reasons. For example, it becomes a confusing parameter when confronting individual and collective modes of self-expression, namely when what entertainers say or do stands against the status quo via honest idiosyncrasies that express individual life experiences. The case of Billie Holiday versus Bill Crosby is illustrative in this regard (see also Becker [1963] 2008). Realism shows dullness too, if we think of receivers as agents with an active role

in the process of meaning attribution—as the concept of appropriation (Harker 1980; Hebdige [1979] 2002; Rings 2013; Wilson 2014) and the postmodern evanescence of authorship (Barthes [1968] 2006, Örmény 2013a) seem to suggest. In such instances, the idea of any authentic message transmitted through the medium of popular music, as it were, becomes blurry.

3.2.2 Popular Music versus Traditional Music

Another way to understand authenticity, and hence the split between popular and folk, is based on the concept of tradition as it applies to musical heritage, where folklore is understood as the set of overarching, non-deviant, long-established beliefs and practices belonging to determined peoples, more or less localised in space and time. On such grounds, Bohlman (1988), defines authenticity succinctly, as

The consistent representation of the origins of a piece (or a style, or a genre) in subsequent versions or at later moments in the tradition's chronology [...] with regard to those aspects that are salient, the piece remains the piece (10)

In other words, there prevails a model with normative function that determines the standards to emulate without demanding exact duplication, in attention to established conventions and practices (Davies 2003: 159-160). This definition moves the focus from collective ontologies to socio-musical practices, inasmuch as the presentation of the musical material (the piece, the style or the genre) is placed at the centre.

Even though the question of origins is practically unanswerable based on empirical evidence, there is a strong drive in folk studies to relate to some original version, to some canon that came down from the past to sketch the guidelines for today's folk practices and products. This attitude has been called the 'cult of the original' in the context of discussions about cultural heritage. The influential notion of authenticity that derives from it, which could be described as a mode of historical truthfulness, has not gone unchallenged (Chan et al. 2014). That discourses of musical authenticity can turn into idioms, through which originals are altered, disfigured and forged⁸², or that new traditions can be raised out of fanciful invention⁸³, are topical debates in folk music studies, for which, regrettably, there is no room here. What is relevant to our inquiry is that the historical system behind this version of folk authenticity is not focused on the ever-changing present of the people. Instead, it concentrates on their fixed past, which is narrowed down to its basics and recognised as the genuine template of traditional production and consumption, as the social praxis that folk music must relate to.

This concept of folkloric tradition entails a positive definition of folk music: formal structures and practices that rely on long-established socio-musical patterns belonging to determined peoples, more or less localised in space and time. As we did with the Leavisite critique, let us derive a negative definition of popular music on such grounds, as the formal structures and practices that do not belong to any long-established socio-musical set of patterns, and therefore show no specific geo-historical location nor exclusive status of traditional cultural good. This suggests that songs not traceable back to someone's past in terms of preserved heritage are probably part of the

⁸² Gelbart (2007: 153); Montagnier (1990: 95-96); Baud-Bovy (1988: 103-123); Bor (1988); Tiersot (1905: 4-9); Rousseau (1768: 314).

⁸³ Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983)

popular repertoire. For the same reason, they should be unable to develop a homogeneous tradition of their own throughout time, for their localised peculiarities would be hindered by the almost unavoidable contact with the global field of cultural production. To this, we could add the urban nature of popular music, which contrasts with the broader seat of contemporary folk as indistinctly rural or urban, as the case of *Stick in the Wheel* proves.

There are two problems with this negative definition. One is that all branches of popular music do belong in the family tree of some folk musical body, either as a constituent part thereof or as a parallel trunk that nourishes from its genealogical roots. Concisely, popular music did not pop up magically from nowhere. This has been observed in passing in § 3.2.1. On the one hand, it was the development of the African and European musical traditions and their cross-fertilisation in America that gave rise to the unique musical idioms of jazz and rock (as distinguished by Doll (2013) and other musicologists), which opened up the gates for all global styles that came after. Similar processes engendered the forms of Latin American music behind the history of salsa, merengue, bachata and other styles of tremendous international success. Furthermore, the development of both lines to their current state undoubtedly answers to the crossbreeding of Anglo and Latin music from the early 20th century to our days (Callejo Ferrer 1915; Coker 1990; Mendoza 2014; Ramsdell 2012), as well as to the inclusion of plenty of musical material coming from other latitudes (Wallis and Malm 1990). In turn, as we have seen, certain musical bodies incorporate such global materials back into their very own substance, while articulating their identities based on the native element. Such contemporary styles of popular music tend to blur the boundaries between popular and folk, e.g. *música popular brasileira* (Napolitano 1998), the *musical worlds* of Yogyakarta

(Richter 2012) and the law-enforced Venezuelan *neo-folklore* (Mendoza 2014). In the same vein, it is well known that a number of styles commonly tagged as classical do have strong folkloric roots—say, the line of musical nationalism represented by Smetana and Dvořák, just to name an obvious example.

Fair enough, these musical materials are not representative of their folk origins; they are beyond the spread of variants that can be tolerated as authentic (Davies 2003: 160, cf. Wiora [1961] 1963). Deep changes in the musical idiom, in the compositional procedures, in the instrumentation, and so forth, set them apart from ideal folkloric instances: thus, the piece does not remain the piece, to put it in Bohlman's terms. That begs the question concerning the dynamic character of cultural production and the dangers of forcing ontological matters into deontological principles (Chan et al. 2014), or in other words, it compels to think about the limits beyond which the spark of innovation that turns folk into 'something alive' (Stick in the Wheel 2014) may expel music creations outside folk territory. Furthermore, it is important to recall that the signifier 'popular music' means 'folk music' in some cultural settings outside the Euro-American contexts (§ 1.1), meaning that the strategy of rejection therein, on the nominal level, is formulated as pop-rock contra popular music.

The other problem is significantly less nuanced: the negative definition of popular music as non-traditional seems to apply as fittingly to experimental art music too. The latter includes *musique concrète*, noise music, glitch music, algorithmic music, technologically randomised compositions and so forth. Tagging the latter as popular music would be simply far-fetched.

These two observations show that the traditionalist understanding of folk does not single out a dialectical counterpart in the style of modernist dichotomies. One could

say that 'folk tradition' was meant to antagonise with 'elite art' in a conceptual milieu that is gone: the art/folk dichotomy it relies on an intellectual concoction of the Enlightenment (Gelbart 2007) that eroded dramatically with the advent of popular music and 20th-century musical technologies. Nowadays, tradition might separate folk from everything else, but does not individuate of popular music. That leaves us in the same definitional nebula.

Nevertheless, comparing popular and folk in terms of tradition lands us with two relevant observations. Musical tradition not only provides folk with some discernible limits, but also tells us about the delocalisation of popular music, as already suggested in § 3.2.1. Now, whereas there we focused on ontologies, here we emphasise musical practices. It has been argued that 'the words 'pop' and 'rock' do not refer to well established traditions with clearly demarcated boundaries' (Frith et al. 2001: x). Thinking of popular music in the Anglo sense of pop-rock, the above brings theories outside and inside the Euro-American episteme to a workable middle ground. Certainly, it would be hard to argue against the fact that pop-rock/popular music today is neither ancestral nor geo-historically fixed. Conversely, it is involved in a pattern of transculturation in which 'music from the international music industry can interact with virtually all other music cultures and subcultures in the world due to the worldwide penetration attained by music mass media' (Wallis and Malm 1990).

This feature has very good cards in the game of defining the genera. However, in light of our observations on experimental art music, note that delocalisation may stand out as a necessary but not sufficient attribute to define popular music as a global phenomenon. This brings us to the next point.

The second observation is that the delocalisation of popular music *in the present* does not rule out the existence of localised traditions *in the past* from which popular music emerges. This point is valid not only for whatever ancestral roots popular music may feed from; it also refers to more recent socio-musical subcultural practices settled within the framework of late modernity, to which popular songs of today are indebted. Consider, for example, the description of *Out! Out! Out!* on the website of a retailer specialised in underground rock music:

What can you expect from a band that's named after an Angry Samoans song? 7 fast and dirty punk/HC [hardcore] songs. This one's for you if you like Reagan Youth, Black Flag or the Circle Jerks⁸⁴ (Interpunk 2015).

The punk/hardcore tradition *Lights Out!* belongs to is presented here rhetorically as a framework of legitimacy to suggest its authenticity, which serves at the same time as a marketing strategy to associate the hardcore sonority of those consecrated in the subcultural field with the EP by the pop-haters from Stuttgart. This is consistent with the idea that contemporary popular music harbours distinctive musical traditions, not only in the structural sense of the musical idiom but also as regards timbre, largely recognisable on the level of electro-musical treatment as a meaningful parameter of musical expression (Tagg 1987). The aural traditions of Anglo popular music were inaugurated about a century ago and are perennially in the making since the advent of electric and electronic audio technologies. Paying attention to the provenance of popular

⁸⁴ <http://www.interpunk.com/item.cfm?Item=69282&>.

music on this level is of the utmost importance, I sustain, towards a full understanding of its multifarious constitution as a musical repertoire and societal phenomenon. Normative models are at work here as much as in folk, whereby popular subgenera (hardcore punk, pop-punk, and everything else), gain formal individuation; abiding by it grants musical authenticity to material produced under such standards.

3.2.3 Commodity versus Folklore

In light of the above, tradition is not in a better position than social realism to define popular music. The arguments for authenticity as the parameter to distinguish popular music negatively from folk music fall short of definitional power. Hence, as in the art/popular confrontation, it is not surprising that they have been consistently reinforced by pointing to the commoditisation of the popular song. Perhaps deemed too obvious, the ground differences between folk and popular, and furthermore, the actual coherence and timeliness of such a theoretical divide, are not really theorised but just taken for granted by many rationales based on political economy, which tend to explain the separation of popular from folk in terms of authentic content and motivation.

What is then the difference between popular and folk? Frith paraphrases Lloyd's (1967) answer to the question as follows: 'folk songs were authentic fantasies because they sprang from the people themselves; they weren't commodities' (Frith 1989: 83). Likewise, though in a more radical vein, Harker (1985) has developed this line of research, antithetically if you will, by charging against the conceptual validity of 'folk song' as a category. Contradicting Leavis (1972b), Harker argues that the lyric material tagged as authentic Anglo folk—e.g. the repertoire compiled by Cecil Sharp ([1932] 2012)—has been appropriated, commoditised, and forced into ideological frameworks as to correspond with dubious conceptions of the folk, hence casting doubts on the

authentic character of such songs in terms of social realism and arguably of tradition. To put it in a nutshell, the idea is that commercial hits are aural designs manufactured industrially for the market, whereas authentic folk tunes are ideally produced bottom-up and consumed with few or no intermediaries, therefore safeguarding the self-expression contained in such cultural products. In this last section, I will advance a position against such arguments.

A good place to start the critique of commoditisation is the creative spiral of producers and consumers, submitted by some versions of postmodern theory as the current order of things. This is a setting where 'popular culture is as important as high art', or where 'the distinction no longer applies, which is not the same thing' (Goodwin 1997: 44). This idea of inoperative distinctions in the field of musical production can be enlarged from the popular/art binomial to the popular/art/folk tripartite classification. The system of elements at play here makes room for a cynic version of the story where all cultural products, including popular as well as folkloric productions, are commodities thrown into the marketplace with a price tag on the back. In this account, folk and art are as immersed in the contemporary dynamics of production, dissemination and reception as any other cultural artefact in the global market (Hesmondhalgh 2013, Rojek 2011; Wallis and Malm 1990). This is consistent with the idea of a supranational Empire that manifests itself as an inescapable logic of circulation and capitalisation (Hardt and Negri 2000). Of course, producing folk music out of philanthropy, for the sake of authentic expression, is an open possibility in an amateur context (understanding amateur in the sense of neither composing nor performing for a living). Yet, since we are talking about songs created by real people with real material needs, the commercial

aspect of folk music and the will to commercial success of its creators cannot be overlooked.

Of course, not all folk musicians make it to the market, and those who do not always join it with profit-making goals. This we have established already in § 3.1.3. Protest songs from all around the world, which commonly develop somewhere in between popular and folk, are illustrative in that respect. Now then, following Hardt and Negri, all counter-Empire musical actions originate and develop from within Empire itself, hinging on its own media landscape and logic of circulation (Mueller 2014, Novoselic 2014). These ideas run well against the argument for the subtraction of folk from global Capitalism. Be as it were, that not all folk musicians can allow themselves to be amateurs is an empirical fact: a glance at the catalogue of any music retailer makes it clear that many of them go in the opposite direction, which makes for a populated guild of professionalised folk (Madoery 2011). Hence turning to the economic speculation of non-commoditisation as a differentiator of folk would be inexact—unless the theoretical aim is to suggest the removal of ‘authentic’ folk music from the professional sphere altogether.

Furthermore, it is not the case that the rhymes ‘springing from the people’ were never conceived as properties suitable to trade nor understood in terms of intellectual property. Cardenal’s (2005) observations in this regard are fairly illustrative, worth quoting in some length:

Among the redskins, poems belonged to an individual, a clan or a tribe. One had to pay for singing someone else’s poem. Among the Chippewa, chants were

bought for considerable sums of money. A Navajo native said: "I have always been poor. I do not know any song". In Dobu Island, the author of a song preserves his rights over it, and it cannot be used for dancing without his permission; although after it has been danced, the song can be spread to faraway places carried in canoe (XVII, translation mine).

In a different vein, non-commoditisation is actually fully compatible with popular music. Although this matter has been alluded to in § 3.1.3 and elsewhere in connection with other topics, I shall sum it up under three different headings. The first is theoretical. Landmark characterisations of excellence in popular music hinge on the non-commodity character. Good examples of this are Mellers' approval of anti-cliché attitudes, Hoggart's celebration of the workers' songs and Frith's definition of 'good pop' (as that which does not bend to the weather of the market). The same parameter fuels the critical hopes of Marxists, Neo-Marxists, Feminists, queer theorists, postmodernists and many others who look forward to authentic social relations sung against the veil of ideological clouds. The list is not exhaustive and tends to grow by the day in light of the other two aspects.

The second has to do with productive practices. As in folk, it is worth highlighting that amateur production in popular music plays an important role. By way of an example: during the Rethink Music 2013 at the European headquarters of Berklee College of Music, reports were presented indicating that an important segment of musical instrument purchasers were youngsters outside the professional music business. The informant, being the owner of a music store and recording studio in Madrid, was in a position to estimate such distribution out of the bestselling models among the clientele. That report came to confirm my personal experience as a musical advisor to

the customer service department of a leader retailer of electronic instruments in Caracas in the 2000s. We need not dig into the data of these companies; as informal reports, they are reminders that there are numerous amateur popular musicians worldwide, arguably more than professionals, which contradicts the idea that popular music making is profit seeking by definition. This goes without mention of open-source collectives and radical anti-Capitalist popular musicians, for whom the profit checks in as symbolic capital and not necessarily as money.

The third is concerned with practices of distribution and reception. All music susceptible to recording and streaming confronts a period of extremely wide availability afforded by digital technologies devoted to the optimisation of data management for the sake of musical production and consumption. In a gesture that sets actual technological affordances above the priorities of commercial agendas, a community of developers and forkers have made musical practices and processes increasingly quicker, nomadic and very importantly, free of charge. As Crane puts it: 'Contemporary audiences continue to consume music, but a substantial portion of the listening audience, especially the youngest cohort, is not willing to pay overmuch for the pleasure of satisfying musical appetites' (2013: ¶3). The drawbacks of the digital age are many—among them, issues of fragmented attention (Crary 2013; Hjarvard 2008b) and the rise of new modes of exclusion in the Empire setting (Hansen 2015). However, it is undeniable that the consuming end of the musical chain is less and less bound to invest economic capital in musical goods. The music industry has lost a relevant quota of control over the reproduction and distribution of musical content. Rising artists are natives in this ecosystem of exchange and therefore tend to optimise their profitable engagement with it. The back catalogues of consecrated artists are hardly as profitable as they once were,

due to a 'thickening of time' (Hesselberth 2014, Sobchack 2000) whereby music past and present collide under conditions of open availability.

These three aspects of non-commoditisation rule out the commercial character of popular music as a defining feature intrinsic to it, and in so doing, open up a mode of analysis whereby political economy must ally with other disciplines towards an understanding of the patterns of change and exchange in the musical scene of the 2010s. Importantly, the third aspect dissembles the articulation of authenticity and non-commoditisation as a conceptual compound where both components instrumentally lean on each other. It breaks the circularity of the argument according to which good popular songs are authentic because they are not commodities because they are authentic indeed. Inauthentic popular productions, musical proselytisers and hegemonic propaganda share the same ocean of retrievable data with their 'authentic' dialectic counterparts. Ergo, the reinforcement of folk (or art) authenticity via commoditisation theories is no longer tenable.

3.3 Concluding Remarks

The scrutiny of negative definitions of popular music has landed us with a number of useful insights. The first I would like to highlight has to do with the focal point that our definitional enterprise calls for. We have examined relevant accounts on popular songs as cultural products based on the critique of their lyrical content. The survey has been carried out with a view to the definitional possibilities of the theories at issue. The present chapter reveals that the problem with making sense of popular music by means of its verbal content lies not only in the theories themselves, but also in the impossibility of lyrics to make sense of the popular repertoire as a coherent whole. An obvious deficiency of the lyrical approach is that it does not pay enough attention to

music proper, which is at odds with the fact that lyrics are hardly experienced as self-standing products. That is the main source of uneasiness behind the thought that 'O.K. - We're Pop!?' might be actually pop: that the track sounds as hardcore as it gets. Truly, certain topics are the trademark of some popular subgenera, say school-related narratives in teen pop songs, or demoniac themes in satanic heavy metal tracks. Yet, what lyrics say do not distinguish those productions as exclusively popular, for the same tropes can be found in other corpora, e.g. in teen salsa music, or satanic ritual chants. Those themes make songs and subgenres 'teen' or 'satanic', but not pop or heavy metal.

In that vein, the verbal attack of Lights Out! against pop culture is relevant, but not genre-determinant: Blink 182's music video for 'All the Small Things' (Siega 1999) mocks the pop stars of the late 1990s, and yet, the band remains the epitome of mall punk. It is the hardcore sound of Lights Out! which ultimately distinguishes it from any pop incarnation. Still, the authentic hardcore sound does not expel Lights Out! from popular music kingdom.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, the term popular music is highly problematic, and as we have seen here, its negative definitions are of little help in that regard. I remain convinced that a wide socio-musical category correctly formulated and musically informed would be able to house Lights Out! and most of pop detractors together with all pop stars in a non-contradictory way. Making this point requires, of course, a different analysis focused on the articulation of a positive definition.

The second key insight has to do with the internal divisions of popular music based on varying parameters of appreciation. Our approach to artistry in popular music indicates that authenticity, in terms of emotional response and symbolic value, rests on slippery grounds. An element of relativity concerning the field where meanings are

produced and assessments are conducted neutralises all efforts to define popular music as an overarching genre against art. The grounds for such value judgements are useful, however, for characterising musical subcultures. This invites us to reconsider the matter of macro definitions on a different level of analysis. It is here that Attali's political economy of the song comes in handy—in particular, his move towards the musical material and its history. Conceptualising popular music is achievable, I maintain, by paying heed to the sound of music beyond authenticity.

The third insight worth consideration is the notion of popular music as a delocalised musical corpus. As we have seen hitherto, many scholars argue that popular music is designed to appeal to everyone by default, and that consequently it is without homological links to any specific cultural location of origin. This delocalisation not only detaches popular music from authentic subcultures but also from the *Volk*, which authenticity has been explained in terms of social realism and tradition. According to this picture, popular music should be the global leftover of all authentic music. Nevertheless, we have found that idea at odds with the landscape of listening practices after the 1960s, and even more in the digital era. Increasingly ever since, I have argued, all styles of music tend to join the pattern of transculturation that began around 1970, whereby genres originally attached to ethnic or subcultural groups pick up from, and contribute to, a networked transnational culture (Wallis and Malm 1990) enhanced by web-based technologies. This process involves, of course, some degree geo-historical and cultural delocalisation for all kinds of musical products, not only for popular songs. This puts the authenticity of tradition and realism in a difficult position, at least as far as contemporary production and consumption is concerned, for it is hard to ignore the dynamics of globalisation all cultural products are increasingly going through. Although

this is not at all to announce the end of specificities, the point is that the production, distribution and consumption of 'authentic' music is hardly a closed circuit. No musical body belongs exclusively anywhere or to anyone.

What is, then, the way out of the definitional predicament? My bet goes, I reiterate, on a positive definition. Research in popular music tends to consider songs in context, that is to say, away from conceptions of music as a transcendent, autonomous reality detached from its societal surroundings. Without abandoning that agenda, I propose an approach focused on the sound of music qua textual substance, attentive to its delocalisation, and feeding from theories that allow reframing the insights of political economy by moving the focus from production and consumption to modes of global distribution. To that end, authenticity and commoditisation must be put aside during the construction of global music as a category. We will come back to authenticity and commoditisation once a workable concept of global music has been set in place.

Chapter 4:

Popular Music as Global Music

Our discussion hitherto makes it clear that the signifier ‘popular’ is used to describe music on multiple levels, which makes for the remarkable terminological havoc observed in § 1.1. As we have seen, the setting in which the concept is used comes to determine its manifold meanings, in virtue of the diversity of referents at play. Based on Chapter 3, my claim is not that people do not know what they are talking about when referring to popular songs; as producers, consumers, prosumers, impresarios, publishers, scholars, or in any other way, we are able to interact with the music and the community around it with acceptable proficiency on the basis of some common semantic foothold—largely based on authenticity and commoditisation as grounds for value judgements. My position is that such grounds are to be discerned on a *meso* level, i.e. ‘at the level of specific social institutions [...] and cultural phenomena [...] within a given historical and socio-geographical context’ (Hjarvard 2013: 4). That is to say, they must be theorised neither in the macro sense of a universal ontology, nor on the micro stage of individual constellations of significance—without disregard to their relevance in the constitutional interplay of the meso-theoretical perspective. Although such approaches (micro and macro) may enhance our understanding of the matter, they do not contribute to the definitional coherence of popular music across cultural fields and disciplinary boundaries.

The present chapter aims to recast the notion of popular music as global music as an alternative to alleviate the equivocal formulation of the genre. To that end, we will derive the latter from the former, with a focus on the specificities that make global songs samples of their kind. Finding out about such features, in disconnection from localised value judgements, contributes to the conceptual disentangling of the field because the resulting definition cancels the problematic ‘popular’ aspect of music in favour of its formal constitution and its institutional dimension as a transcultural happening.

In order to circle the problem of meaning variance, I shall proceed in two phases. First, in accordance with §§ 3.1.3 and 3.2.3, I shall draw a genealogy of Anglo popular music, with a view to its history and formal constants (§ 4.1) and in light of the impact mediation exerted over its transculturation (§ 4.2). As the coming sections will show, it is the latter repertoire that became the epicentre of the transnational music industry, which contributed to consolidate a repository of musical materials beyond local or national frontiers. Second, the global dimension of this music will be accounted for in terms of institutional mediatisation as proposed by Hjarvard (2008b, 2013). With that purpose in mind, the main tenets of the theory will be introduced (§ 4.3) in order to ponder, on such grounds, the interplay between the media and music as social institutions—importantly in terms of content distribution (§ 4.4). At this point, the inquiry will turn to sociological considerations on musical technology and its impact over music and society, not without assessing the peculiar societal relations at the base of the global productive apparatus, in tune with fundamental concerns in political economy.

4.1 American Popular Music

The point has been made in §2.3 that a change in the formal features of American popular music took place during the 1950s: what used to be a fundamentally a jazz-based repertoire turned gradually into a corpus with a salient rock sonority (Attali 1977; Chapple and Garofalo 1977; Griffiths 2004; Lopes 2000; Peterson and Berger 1990; Peterson 2004). A new generation of rock pioneers displaced the swing heroes and superstar crooners from the top positions in the charts. In the process, socio-musical practices such as group listening, phonorecord trade and entertainment dancing underwent profound changes in the US and beyond (Hoggart 1957; Keightley 2004; Wallis and Malm 1990). My thesis is that the basic formal features of both jazz and rock are the pillars of global music.

I maintain that the key to understanding the revolution of 1955 lies in the rhythmic substance that became the trademark of American popular music thereafter, in the deep rhythm structure that underlies, implicitly or explicitly, the productions after the rock era. Other aspects usually addressed in music analysis, e.g. melody, harmony, musical architecture and timbre, are determinant factors in the differentiation of subgenres within the same corpus, as argued in Chapter 3, but their impact over the individuation of the genre as a whole is limited. We will come back to this later. For the time being, what is important to highlight is the nature of the change operated in music within the socio-historical framework at stake.

Writing about rhythm is challenging. On the one hand, as observed in §2.3.4.1, the use of musical terms and staff notation might bring accuracy in some cases, but can also prove insufficient to account for certain parameters of musical expression. On the other hand, the musicological jargon can also be a hurdle for those unfamiliar with it, for

whom writings on the matter become intimidating. Following McClary and Walser (1990, cf. Mellers 1941), the difficulty of writing about music lies in the opaqueness of musicology's talk, which confronts analysts with the unfair choice between the 'poetic mystification' of musical critique or the 'technical mystification' of formal and semiotic analysis (this is recurrent in meta-critiques of popular music). The authors explain that visual content is comparatively easier to talk about, but that sound—and music, for that matter—can be better explained by resorting to aural samples. I shall take the cues from McClary and Walser and attempt to convey the formal traits at issue through visual and sound articulations.

Early rockers who defined the sound of the rising style dropped some hints about the rhythmic substance of their productions. Bill Haley explained his treatment of rhythm thus:

I felt that if I could take, say, a Dixieland tune and drop the first and third beats, and accentuate the second and the fourth, and add a beat the listener could clap to as well as dance, this would be what they are after (in Harker 1980: 54).

A couple of interesting points can be derived from this account. First, the tunes made through the machinery of the rock music are initially drawn from the jazz repertoire, which is consistent with the jazz-to-rock genealogies referred to in previous chapters, and with our claim about the limited role of melody and harmony in the definition of the genre. In other words, this points to certain continuity between the creative musical practices of jazzmen and rockers on those levels, even after 1955.

Second, Halley's explanation suggest a preference for rhythm patterns contained in four-beat bars. Third, such patters are expected to trigger observable bodily reactions that mirror their inner structure of sequential changes via corporeal performance. Fourth, and this is crucial, the accentuation scheme stresses the even beats (second and fourth) instead of the more obvious odd beats (first and third) that mark the checkpoint and the middle of each loop. This even logic is a key formal feature of rock music.

A better comprehension of the even accentuation scheme can be reached in audio-visual terms, through the concept of motion as sensation and embodiment. Emphasising the role of the body, yet at a distance from affective theories à la Deleuze and Guattari ([1980] 2008, see Baugh 2005; Swiboda 2005; also Gregg and Seigworth 2010), Middleton's (1993) theory of *musical gesture* comes in handy⁸⁵. Hinging on anthropology and cultural theory, yet drawing on musicology, the author states:

musical 'gesture' should refer here to the 'performance' [...] of somatic processes through structurally analogous musical processes. The analytic objective is to develop methods of identifying and categorising the structures concerned (1993: 178)

I suggest watching and listening to Bill Haley and His Comets performing their iconic hit 'Rock Around the Clock', as broadcasted in the heyday of the band (Haley

⁸⁵ Other relevant accounts on the role of embodiment in the non-formal analysis of popular music include McClary and Walser (1990) and Tagg (1982, 1987). On gesture and music analysis, see Sangild (2004).

2005⁸⁶). Let us pay heed to the gestures through which the sound patterns at play are embodied by the musicians and the audience. Within the repertoire of movements displayed in the video, I would like to draw attention to the merry clapping and crouching dancing that takes place here, because these gestures happen, precisely, on the second and fourth beat. Discerning the order of the beats demands recognising the checkpoint of the loop, for which listening to the introduction of the song can be useful. Right after the first three stanzas, Bill and the boys have a moment of call-and-response where the voice leads and the band follows ('we're gonna rock / around / the clock tonight'). In this instance, the words 'rock', 'around' and 'clock' mark the odd beat, while the orchestral stabs take on the even ones. The greater intensity of the response, to which the whole band gesticulates, makes evident the rhythmic design at work, the same that triggers the dance throughout.

Odd and even schemes are integral to specific *grooves*, viz. the 'different configurations of note placing, articulation and accent' that structure not only the backing part of the rhythm section but all other musical sounds (Middleton 1993: 180). Based on Middleton's view that the groove is 'a basic starting-point to the gestural modelling of song-types' that plays 'a large part in defining styles' (*idem*), let us now explore the groove behind the rhythmic formations of jazz and rock on deeper levels. As Coker (1990) explains, 'jazz is a music "with the big beat" or an emphasized pulse' (19). Its rhythm section originally had a timekeeping function from its early years at the beginning of the 20th century until the early 1950s, when the 'implied beat' started to show in the be-bop style (24). The concept of an inexplicit force suggested through performance without actual timekeeping figures, where 'everything was related to and measured by that pulse' (24-25) tells of the depth on which the big beat operates—with

⁸⁶ Available from Ban The Bomb 3-2-1 Go! 2007, click [here](#).

its metric regularity and its accentuation scheme thumping either all or just the odd beats. By 1955, in the pop jazz context, such a *pulse-beat* was the standard structure of choice. Having a listen to Billie Holiday's 'I've got a Date with a Dream' (in Holiday [1933-1944] 2001⁸⁷), discussed in § 3.1.2, suffices to illustrate the regularity of this groove. Conversely, rock music stresses the even beats, which becomes ubiquitous in the antagonist presence of the snare against the kick in most rock drumming patterns. The rhythmic substance expressed thereby reflects the deep *break-beat structure* of rock⁸⁸. Here another listen to 'Rock around the Clock', after the guitar solo, should drive the point home.

It is worth noting that, although the break-beat groove became central in American popular music at this point, the pulse-beat did not disappear from the musical panorama in the years that followed. It made a spectacular comeback to the popular scene during the 1970s through disco music, a presence that lasts to date under the form of house and other subgenres of club dance music. In fact, it continues to be utilised by jazz musicians today

Bearing in mind this general characterisation of the musical material at stake, we can now consider the more sociological and politico-economic aspects of Anglo popular music, such as the processes of transculturation, mediatisation and globalisation.

There is a straight relation between the rise of the rock groove in the soundscape of popular culture and the institutional status of mass communications. Peterson (2004) argues against the idea that rock music happened due to the *Genius* of some individuals

⁸⁷ Available from Billie Holiday (created by Канал на purple0accident 2010), click [here](#).

⁸⁸ The even accentuation scheme made its appearance in be-bop jazz around the 1940s (Coker 1990: 23) before the rock explosion in the 1950s. However, I maintain, it remained within the formal aesthetics of the pulse-beat groove, and hence distinctively jazzy. It did not determine the sonority of the genre as it did in the case of rock.

or the increase of the birth rate after World War II. He suggests that the key to the rise of rock n' roll lies in the structural transformations of the American creative industry around 1955, namely, in dramatic changes on the legal and technological fronts.

Following the author, copyright protection gave songs the legal status of a product 'that could be bought, sold and developed by its owner' (Peterson 2004: 276). The institutionalisation of musical commodities gave solid ground and proper momentum for the industry to grow and strive after further capitalisation of its activity. This is the context in which ASCAP⁸⁹, the first membership organisation in the US for the protection of copyrights and collection of royalties, pushed the restriction that only licenced music could be made public through theatre performance, radio or cinema in the US. That gave ASCAP almost total control of the musical material reaching the public by the 1950s. Noteworthy, ASCAP displayed a preference for jazz. BMI⁹⁰, an ASCAP homologue founded by the American radio networks in 1939, was created in the midst of a conflict over the raise of licensing fees. BMI took on its lap the ASCAP outcasts, and when the dispute reached critical mass, the radio networks decided to broadcast only BMI music. That made room for the alternative genera, and consequently for the alternative break-beat of the proto-rockers, to go in the spotlight and become profitable in the market economy. This hints to the role of mass media distribution in the processes of symbolic consecration and commercial success in which music is involved. Although the relation between media exposure and market success can be hardly said to be mechanical (Peterson and Berger 1990: 156) it is also true that only when the new material was mass mediated could rock music be recognised as an alternative to jazz; its escalating up the charts is largely indebted to that.

⁸⁹ American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

⁹⁰ Broadcast Music, Inc.

Not only dissemination media, but also storage media, proved to be important factors in the changes the music industry underwent during the 1950s. Peterson argues that patents over audio storage technologies fed into the battle of record speeds, a war for the ultimate gramophone standard, where classical and jazz music were identified with the LP, whereas the labels behind the new generation of rockers appropriated the affordable 7-inch 45 RPM instead (2004: 277-278). This split answers, the argument goes, to the durable and inexpensive character of the latter: small labels could afford its production and distribution with relative ease, and therefore use them for the promotion of their artists towards the capitalisation of their investments. Indeed, 7-inch vinyl became the standard radio single and jukebox feed. This picture of the uses and audiences of the storage media makes evident that the crooner style did not totally dry out after 1955; rather, it was given continuity under the form of *adult pop*, in contrast with *youth rock* (Keightley 2004). As a matter of fact, and although singles remained instrumental for some decades, the consolidation of the LP as the commodity form par excellence of music, and the institutionalisation of long-term catalogue sales as the business strategy of the record industry, started precisely during the 1950s with the music of stars such as Frank Sinatra (*ibid*: 376). Interestingly, some of the greatest hits by the singer from New Jersey came out after 1955, and coincidentally, they display the jazz traits on the higher textural levels, yet based on even accentuation schemes.

Another important force in the process was the re-allocation of radio stations in the US, as Peterson reports (2004: 278). With the novelty of television in the media horizon, the largest broadcasting networks migrated to the small screen, thus leaving room for a number of independent entrepreneurs to take their chances with the radioelectric spectrum. Applications for new allocations that had been blockaded by the

big players were now approved en masse. Independent stations sprouted all over the US, carrying with them the much of the alternative repertoire. It is important to note that before 1955 the common practice in music broadcasting was hosting artists live in studio or in concert/dance venues. That practice represented important investments. The independents, initially working on a budget, circled around that problem by playing back recordings, which significantly propelled the recording industry. It is convenient to realise that this state of affairs coincided with the rise of portable, transistor radio devices, which in contrast with their valve-based, furniture-like predecessors, looked friendlier to a society that already showed its allure for nomadic media consumption. The transistor radio quickly became the darling of American youth, namely the target audience of the new musical style.

This picture tells us of a move from integration to fragmentation in the industry that paralleled the inflection from jazz to rock in music (Mellers 1964; Peterson 2004; Peterson and Berger 1990). In 1948, the recording industry was concentrated in all directions, that is to say, horizontally integrated with other media and show-biz industries (including the radiophonic industry), and vertically insofar as the same corporations handled all stages of production, distribution and sales. Conversely, 1958 had a very different landscape to show. The radio business was taking place in a fragmented market (from national to local) different from the controlled environment the great networks owned before moving to the neighbourhood of television. Playback became the common practice of radio, the DJ rose to prominence as a media personality, and the recording industry started to depend on radio to promote their releases.

This media ecosystem was to grow in complexity during the decades that followed, opening up the transnational market as the new arena for all sorts of musical

exchange. The interplay between music and technology in terms of media communications became dramatically intensified in the second half of the 20th century, largely due to the continuous feed of technical improvements characteristic of the post-war era. Among them, I wish to draw attention to the history of developments in musical storage media, because they were, and continue to be, of the utmost importance for the dynamics that chiselled the musical world as we know it today. Therefore, I will close this section with some general considerations that allow us to put in perspective their role during the 1950s, as well as their tremendous impact over the transnational musical culture thereafter.

Following Frith (2001), and largely in tune with Attali (1977), four modes of music storage may be said to characterise different phases in the history of music as a social practice (see also Davies 2003). Under the first mode, music is carried in the cognitive makeup of the musicians themselves, retrieved out of their *memory* and instantiated through their fine motor skills in *performance*. In other words, music's existence becomes a matter of memory and doing—and its *poiesis* an activity that entitles the acquisition of some capital (economic or symbolic). The second mode is that of *notation and printing*. Music has been registered in writing since antiquity, being usually encoded together with lyrical content in a wide range of material media ranging from stone to paper (Salazar 1942: 15-31). The profound changes brought about by printing technologies made it possible to reproduce written signs by mechanical means, which brought new characters into the picture of the music world. That is the case of the publisher, whose activity led to sharper distinctions between commercial and non-commercial music. Notice that such divide is not the same as classical/popular or art/commerce (Mellers 1964). As a matter of fact, so-called 'classical' was the first kind

of music to be commercialised. The third mode refers to *analogue audio recording*, which represents the crystallisation of a transition in the music industry, from selling pianos to pianolas to vinyl records (and cassettes later on). Recording entails a different mode of existence of music, and appoints playback as a mode of retrieval for which no trained performance is necessary and no notation is required. Furthermore, it also enables the production of music beyond the recording of musical performance, towards a logic of studio composition where musical materials impossible in live conditions come into being. Hence, the idea of fidelity as regards the live act becomes blurry. The fourth and last modality of music storage is *digital recording*, which according to Frith involves much of the same dynamics at work in the case of analogue recording. This account calls for an update that stresses the differences between the two. I shall come back to this later.

The 1950s met the soaring of analogue recording as the dominant mode of music storage, even though performance and notation obviously coexisted with it. Nonetheless, the focus started to move during this period from live acts to recorded sounds, which production 'allowed the mass distribution for repetitive listening of the particularities of a specific performance' (Frith 2001: 31). Such repetition involved radio broadcastings, cinema representations of music, as well as private and/or public listening of records. Later on, socio-musical media practices expanded its gamut as to include television broadcasting, digital streaming and all sorts of music consumption based on different storage technologies, from the cassette to the mp3 file. It was by means of the analogue media, however, and in the context of its playback logics, that the internationalisation of what in principle was an American phenomenon happened. Registered and commoditised that way, the musical grooves of this geo-culturally located repertoire

broke into the transnational arena, with a head start for rock music. Thus the guitar-based sound of youth rock, only seconded by the orchestral dance music of the adult pop, cut across the Atlantic on a break-beat ride with an even accentuation scheme.

4.2 Transnational Music

The second half of the 1950s was the propitious time for rock stars to make it to other North-American territories as well as to Africa, Europe and Oceania. The spirited hits of early rock n' rollers skyrocketed to the first places of the international charts, including those of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway, South Africa, and the UK, with Elvis leading the musical invasion overseas. By the 1960s, however, American rock music began to show moments of depression. Elvis started to experiment with crooning à la Sinatra after the military service. The rock pioneers were practically out of the game, with Buddy Holly dead, Chuck Berry in jail and Little Richard pursuing religion. New rockers rose little interest in the audience at first, and the sales began to drop importantly (Berincua 2013: 66; Peterson and Berger 1990: 151; Stambler 1989: 533-537). During this period, the crooning ballad acquired a temporary new momentum.

Then the Anglo music world exploded anew: the British invasion stroke back with The Beatles and The Rolling Stones leading the way. Emblematic singer-songwriters of the period such as Bob Dylan came out in all sharpness; Californian psychedelia and surf rock jumped into the stage, and the hippie subculture bloomed strong in the same west coast garden to spread internationally at a rapid pace (Berincua 2013; Moist 2010; Peterson and Berger 1990). With this renewed impetus, and with the expansion of the Anglo influence worldwide (multinational business, proxy wars) the market reached by the transnational music industry was enlarged as to include East Asia, South America

and beyond (Eamsa-Ard 2006; Mogollón Trujillo 2011). Also in the 1960s, rock music grew roots in many non-Anglo cultural soils, rendering productions whereby the Anglo music delivered by the media fused with national languages and motives, with expressions that ranged from covers to original compositions. The case of the many Beatles tribute bands worldwide, and of a number of acts rocking in languages other than English testify to this fact (Eamsa-Ard 2006; Mogollón Trujillo 2011; Sánchez 2011; Wallis and Malm 1990). Productions in a hybrid spirit came into being around this time as well (Napolitano 1998). In most of the cases, the rock groove was behind the soundtrack of these events: break-beat structure, even accentuation patterns, and guitar-based higher textures were the mainstream rule.

The musical connections between America and Britain grew strong, and furthermore, their combined products kept flowing through the transnational commercial network with terrific efficiency. This aggressive world flood of Anglo music in the 1960s goes hand in hand with the impact of enhanced recording technologies. Through it, the music industries in the US and the UK—that by the time displayed an increased level of mirrored concentration (Peterson and Berger 1990: 152)—were able to position their products in profitable markets once beyond reach. It also allowed audiences in smaller markets to interact creatively with the music contained in the records and aired on the radio. Furthermore, an important expansion of the timbric palette redefined the sound of rock music up to its higher textural layers. Such an expansion is traceable back to the introduction of the electric guitar and signal processors such as the reverb—both of great importance for surf music and later styles (Berincua 2013: 68)—as well as to the enhancement of amplification devices and a number of innovative pieces of studio technology.

Wallis and Malm (1990) account for the musical dynamics of the mid-20th century in terms of patterns of cultural interaction that tended to conflate after the 1960s. The authors introduce four such patterns: exchange, domination, imperialism and transculturation. Notice that the latter are analytical guidelines, not accurate descriptions of any recurrent actuality in the field of musical production. In other words, they happen in praxis to different degrees of intensity, to varying results and often in complex combinations.

The pattern of exchange involves a two-way flow of musical features between cultures more or less on equal terms (1990: 173). The mode of interaction is usually bilateral and manifests itself in the contact between individual musicians as well as cultural communities. This pattern may result in a mutual influence on the music of both participants through the incorporation of exogenous materials, but also in the *synthesis* of new musical corpora (Kartomi 1981: 233-234) which may involve the formation of new musical communities.⁹¹ The process of *rembétiko* is a good example of this modality of interaction: the musicians immigrating from minor Asia brought their musical luggage into an already rich tradition, out of which the newcomers, the locals, and later the diaspora, established and recreated a musical style that integrated aspects of both musical cultures towards a distinctive urban scene (Ordoulidis 2012a). On the one hand, both Asian and European artists ‘profited’ individually from the situation; on the other hand, a new musical corpus emerged from this contact as a synthesis of musical materials, socio-musical practices, ideologies and human resources.

⁹¹ This generative aspect of *cultural exchange* falls close to Ortiz’ ([1940] 1987) *transculturation*. Since the fourth pattern by Wallis and Malm bears the same name but is different in meaning, I follow Kartomi (1981) and use *synthesis* to refer to such a generative aspect. See Introduction.

The second is the pattern of dominance, wherein the relation between musical cultures is vertical and hierarchical (Wallis and Malm 1990: 174-175). In tune with the concept of hegemony (Gramsci 2006)⁹², the general idea is that a dominant group imposes its musical culture on dominated ones. This is a common pattern in instances of colonial and neo-colonial relationships, though it is seldom absolute (Latouche 2005; Marín and Dasen 2007; cf. Ortiz [1940] 1987). Dominance becomes evident in the objective conditions of colonisation and the valorisation of subjugated musical cultures. The latter hinges on comparative models with an outright bias towards the paradigms of the dominant camp (Nettl 1985: 14; Schulte-Tenckhoff 1989). This pattern operates by virtue of imposition of musical materials and practices, but also as the promotion of ideological consent (Gramsci 2006; Lo Monaco 1982)—achieved by means of institutions such as politics, education and the media.

It is convenient to recall at this point that the difference domination makes is usually a matter of degree. To illustrate, consider the following example. Say that dominance was the pattern at play in the development of Latin American music since the colonial period. It could be argued that the construction of *música erudita*⁹³ as *art* and its vertical differentiation from *folk* are formally and ideologically connected to the European network of meanings transplanted to the Americas in the process of colonisation—a theoretical tradition that was internalised and given continuity until its critical revisiting in the 20th century. Still, notice that many instances of *música erudita* contain rhythm cells and micro-rhythmic peculiarities acquired from the cultural groups under colonial domination, which certainly makes the difference in performance and

⁹² Marx [1859] 2009; Marx and Engels [1846/1932] 1972; Hebdige [1979] 2002; Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000.

⁹³ Since the term *música erudita* has been used in previous sections, I am resorting to it to facilitate the formulation of the example. However, note that other expressions are used to denote the same concept in the Hispanic Americas, e.g. *música académica* or just *música clásica*.

style (Quintana 2010). The magnitude of this influence is inversely proportional to the intensity of the dominance that afforded it; hence, it varies depending on historical and cultural location. Wallis and Malm observe the same dynamics but the other way around, specifically as regards the development of Afro-American music:

The imposition of white culture on the black slaves was very loosely organized in some parts of the Americas, and more formally in others. This difference led to many variants in the pattern of change, with results varying from almost pure African music with a sprinkling of European features to the complete eradication of the African cultural heritage of the black people (1990: 174-175).

In that connection, it must be stressed that Latin American folk is not really native music—the unblemished voice of the dominated—but the echo of a cultural encounter in an ‘interstice space’—as Bhabha (2012) would put it—which gathered European, Amerindian and African peoples as the impinging cultures of a new synthetic whole (Kartomi 1981; Ortiz 1987). As this example suggests, patterns of domination and exchange are able to operate simultaneously on varying levels and degrees.

The third pattern is imperialism. As an augmented version of dominance, the hegemonic culture positions itself above a dominated one, with a difference. While the cultural forms of the former are pushed into the latter, the economic and cultural resources of the latter are appropriated by the former. Thus, the music of the dominated can be appropriated, processed and packaged into new (or pseudo-novel) forms, and then delivered to the marketplace. There, the dominated groups may well pay for it as

participants in the market economy. This approach is compatible with the views of orientalism and the ontological conceptions of cultural imperialism (Bor 2008: 27-33; Foucault 1980b; Said 1993; Laing 1986)⁹⁴. Wallis and Malm emphasise the economic aspects of this pattern, not only in terms of concentrated media ownership (Garnham 2006) but also of human exploitation (Attali 1977; see Elster 1978). In this vein, the focus goes to the forces of production, specifically as regards diverse forms of capital (Bourdieu 1996) and affective labour (Mueller 2014).

In this regard, let us return to the example of Afro-American music. I contend that dominance and exchange may account for the socio-musical changes that gave rise to so-called Afro-American folk, but that imperialism is better equipped to explain its phase of development in the 20th century. For brevity, consider the case of jazz music in the US before the turn of events of 1955, from the rise of Dixieland jazz to the outburst of rock n' roll. During this period, the Afro musical resources were widely appropriated under a discriminatory model (Lazear 2000), as Attali's observes:

Did albums sell well or not? The authors did not know it, and never could profit. Only the stars were regularly summoned to the North for recording; but, even there, they were paid per song and not per sale. This exploitation of black musicians existed for a long time. (Attali 1977: 207, translation mine).

⁹⁴ Theories of dominance, hegemony and imperialism are closely related. They embrace ontological and economic aspects in similar ways. See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007).

Attali's observations make for a good picture of the imperialist pattern. The white community imposes *commoditisation* as the organising logic of black musical production, which counts as the systematic imposition of an ideological cultural form. On the other hand, the hegemonic group withdraws the cultural capital from the black community in musical currency, which is later exchanged by economic capital through its commercialisation⁹⁵. It is just logical, then, that the imperialist effort to control musical production goes hand in hand with the will to seize the markets of the dominated cultures as well. To that end, a tremendous discursive apparatus was mobilised in the 20th century to push the system of elements of the American WASP⁹⁶ culture into national and transnational spaces of communication and action. The substance of that apparatus was music and film, to be sure. However, it is important to realise that such mediations are meant to tie jazz and rock n' roll to ideals of heteronormative masculinity and femininity, liberal democracy and 'coolness'. They contrasted, perhaps to the benefit of the American media industry, with the rhetoric of National Socialism after WWII and the Soviet bloc during the Cold War (Wagnleitner 1994: 1-7; see Wiora [1961] 1963 on Soviet music and ideological promotion). Imperialism, just as the other patterns of change, rarely operates in absolute terms.

The fourth pattern of change, and the most important for our purposes, is that of 'transculturation', a mode of interaction that began in the 1970s whereby music results from a combination of diverse musical elements joint in a transnational space. According to Wallis and Malm (1990: 176-177), the rapport here is bidirectional as in cultural exchange, but instead of unfolding between two single parties, it embraces all cultures touched by the transnational industry on a global scale.

⁹⁵ On an international scale, the withdrawal of resources does not exclude dubious copyright agreements and the transference of rights to collect royalties to cultural empires. See Wallis and Malm (1990: 176)

⁹⁶ White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

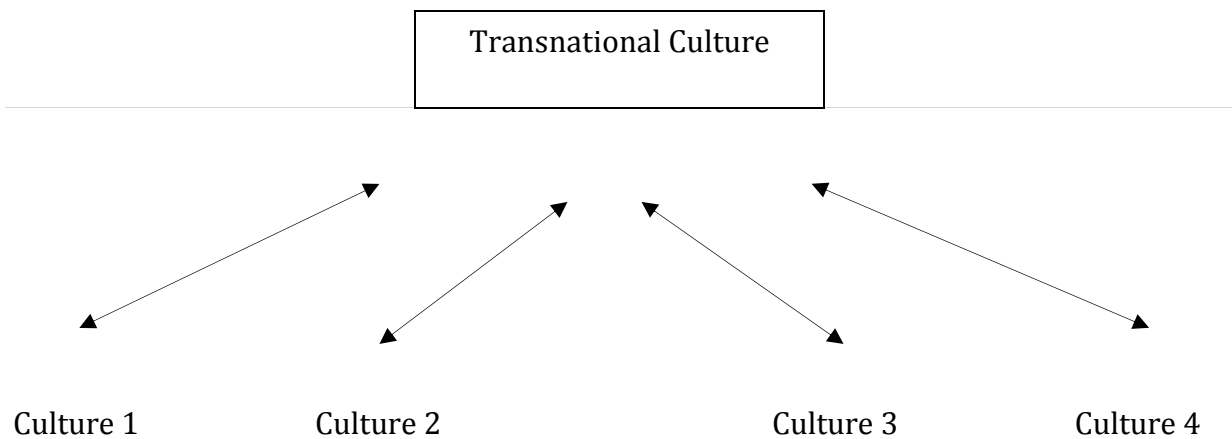


Fig. 8: Transculturation (adapted from Wallis and Malm 1990)

Here the relation each culture establishes, it must be noted, is not to any other culture in particular, but to a ‘transnational culture’ that houses a global repository of musical material. In this regard, the process of transculturation implies a mode of musical cross-fertilisation where the ‘lowest musical common denominator for the biggest possible market is identified’ (Wallis and Malm 1990: 176; cf. Hoggart 1957). It is here where the formal musical traits prove useful to decipher the foundations of global music. My suggestion is that the lowest common denominator the authors refer to must not be understood in the pejorative sense of low quality music, but rather, in terms of the deep structures alongside the jazz-to-rock genealogy.

To understand the connection between formal musical traits and the transnational music culture, it is convenient to invoke the notion of *mediaization (sic)*. Wallis and Malm define it as ‘the process whereby music becomes affected by the technology through which it is disseminated [...] the adaptation of music forms to the

constraints of entertainment media, recording technology, recording markets and so on' (1990: 170). The proposed repository of transcultural music becomes possible via mediaization, that is, by means of the deep engagement with technology that facilitated the spread of the rock groove in 1950 US, the same that in a short time period, and building upon its continuous advancements, made the same music globally accessible under a Capitalist agenda. In other words, the transnational culture theorised by Wallis and Malm would have been impossible without the following factors:

1. Analogue recording, the third mode of music storage as per Frith (2001).
2. Media-driven legal framework of copyrights and royalties as a mercantile motivation, as per Peterson (2004).
3. The playback logic of music consumption.
4. The logistic muscle of the mass media feeding content horizontally from the integrated core of the music industry.

In this connection, I maintain that recording is the cornerstone of the whole process. Incidentally, notice that the international success of stars such as Elvis was fully based on the mediation of the musical production: save Canada, he never performed professionally outside US territory, therefore his sound, and his image, were largely constituent of a media narrative that did not required the presence of the entertainer himself. Mediated sound prevailed.

The outcome of the transcultural pattern in the wake of mediaization, so the argument goes, is a general process 'whereby elements of music and music technology spread by the transnational industry are incorporated into local music' (1990: 179)—

elements which congruent constitution, let it be noted, is indebted to the American and later British musical articulations until the 1960s. From the 1970s onwards, and different from dominance or imperialism, transculturation is said to influence but not block the development of local musical styles (Wallis and Malm 1990: 179), which came to enlarge the transcultural repertoire. Yet, the authors emphasise the transformative agency of the transculture over local musical expressions, whereas the flow of contributions the other way around (from local to transcultural) is not so obvious. The internationalisation of the music business possibly began as a project akin to imperialist interests: as noted above, and as Wallis and Malm (1990) observe, the mass media can help such purposes. The role of rock music in this context is crucial, because it is with the Anglo flood after 1955 that the transnational culture came into being and the pool of transcultural music came in shape. Yet, obviously, the rocker groove is not all there is to transnational music.

Listening carefully to the sound of music is again in order. Wallis and Malm are right in dating the inception of the transnational musical culture and its pool of musical material at the 1950s and 1960s, and its crystallisation at the 1970s. Thought of in a simplistic vein, it should follow that the creation of the transnational space for music came about as the result of the Anglo commercial thrust, and that the substance of the transcultural repository should be American popular music. The repertoire that was exported by the time was congruently rock as far as the groove is concerned, meaning that the transnational space, and the relationship of cultures to it, developed on the basis of such lowest common denominator. This would allow us to move linearly in the genealogy from *jazz* to *rock* to *transcultural*, the latter represented in the 1970s by a wide spectrum of higher musical textures built on break-beat structures and even

accentuations, from the pioneers of punk and heavy metal to the mild eclecticism of Elton John. This picture is not wrong, but rather incomplete. The pulse-beat, the four-on-the-floor drumming, and the orchestral colour that once characterised the crooner song found their way into disco music in the 1970s, which, noteworthy, is identified as the best example of transcultural music by Wallis and Malm (1990). Although the disco culture has its roots in the discotheque, i.e. dance halls where group listening and dancing focused on jazz recordings, there is not enough evidence to support a claim for direct influence of the crooner repertoire on the articulation of disco music. What is indisputable, however, is that the abovementioned formal coincidences are factual (though mostly rendered via sound synthesis), and that disco music stood sharply in contrast with rock, as adult pop once did. This is enough place the former and the latter on the same genealogical branch, the same that leads to relevant segments of electronic music in the 1980s. The antagonism between disco and rock (notably punk), not at all disconnected from heavy ethnic and gender issues, defined greatly the panorama of transcultural music. The incipient strategy of rejection through which rockers started to affirm their collective identity against adult pop in the 1950s became radicalised in the 1970s amidst the disco/rock controversy (Campbell 2013: 335). 'Disco sucks' became the rocker slogan in America: the rock subculture portrayed itself as authentic in contrast with the perceived commercialism of disco music, and rockers flirting with disco sonorities would be reproved as sell outs. Without disregard to the higher textural parameters that distinguish both styles, I sustain that the features that ultimately differentiate the two parties in conflict remain on the deep level of the groove, i.e. structure and accentuation.

This climate continued into the 1980s, when new additions to the sonic palette came to affect the musical production once again. If the analogue technologies of the 1950s had already made the actual presence of the entertainer optional, the 1970s and 1980s propelled such affordances to the next level. Here the move goes from acts such as ABBA, who were fundamentally studio products with little stage activity (Wallis and Malm 1990), to the conflation of performance and playback in later pop and hip-hop onstage strategies. The enhancement of electronic instruments with superior sequencing functions (drum machines and the like), allowed the MC and the stage logic of rappers to break through in the 1980s. Electronic music came into its own, showing an internal split via the groove along the lines of the disco/rock divide, though in a less conflictive manner. On the one hand, there is the line of work that grew from disco into house and techno music, which is pulse-beat based and often flatly accentuated. This sonority became mostly associated with club dance music thereafter. On the other hand, there is the work of DJs who, remixing funk samples in innovative ways, gave rise to the rhythmic sonority of hip-hop, which leans on break-beat structures and even accentuation schemes. This formal configuration finds continuity in acid house and later electronic genera (down to UK garage and dubstep).

As for non-sequenced music the consolidation of rock as the driving force of the music industry, which started already in the 1960s, grew considerably in intensity during the 1970s and 1980s. This resulted in the institutionalisation of the sonority as the landmark of the artists who would keep the wheels of the record business turning. As Keightley (2004) argues, rock music took over the position of adult pop in the long-play logic of the album, in the double sense of its length (greater than that of the single), and the longevity of its commercial worth (as far as back catalogue sales are concerned).

Roughly speaking, while rock became the object of persistent appeal and praise, dance music took on the fleeting shine of the musical fad. These distinctions, of course, should not be taken too rigidly. There were, and continue to be, disposable rock hits and cult tracks of sequenced music. In a more technical note, the 1980s saw the progressive departure of the vinyl record from the mainstream, leaving room to the cassette and later the CD. In terms of the phonograms, the distinction between performed and playback, as well as between acoustic, electric and electronic sounds, reached outstanding permeability in the 1980s. These confluences, already at play in the 1970s, found outstanding expression in pop music as redefined by Michael Jackson, Madonna and many others, well until the end of the 20th century. Regarding the media landscape, the advent of music video television channels, prominently MTV in 1981 and VH1 in 1985 was a game changer for the music industry, as regards the nature and circulation of the promotional music content (Campbell 2013: 335-340).

Commonly, listeners in the 1980s and 1990s would find electronic grooves beneath the melodic articulation of their favourite stars, which might be (or not) staged by performing musicians instead of sequencing devices for the sake of the show. Often, too, they would find crossovers between pulse-beat and break-beat in all quarters of transnational music. The distinctive character of the break-beat as exclusively rocker eroded significantly, as to make room for hybrid pop patterns (Middleton 1993: 182-183) and punk/disco, dance-oriented rock—DOR—fusions (Campbell 2013: 335). The rock significance of the break-beat did not collapse entirely, although its truth-value as a mark of authenticity became blur. In the 1990s Nirvana made it through the veins of the industry as the hope of crude honesty, in contrast with the glam extravaganza of the previous decade, while Green Day incarnated the ‘alternative’ sound of commercial pop-

punk style—both MTV darlings, both rocking to the break-beat (Diehl 2013; Larkin 1995; Novoselic 2014: 125ff). By the same years, Rammstein toyed with the pulse-beat against heavily distorted guitars to the joy of the rising *Neue Deutsche Härte* militia—in the DOR tradition—whereas the sticky breaks of the big beat à la Chemical Brothers sprouted on the electronic front. Until today, both grooves lie mingled at the core of the transnational musical repository.

4.3 The Virtual Space of Social Interaction

The section above sketches the states of affairs roughly until the 2000s. At the time of this writing, about ten years later, some things have changed while others remain the same. The institutional theory of mediatisation (Adolf 2012; Couldry and Hepp 2013b), advanced by Hjarvard and others in recent years (Hjarvard 2004a; Auslander 2008; Hjarvard 2008b, a, 2013; Hjarvard and Petersen 2013; Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2013), can help greatly to put together the last pieces of the puzzle.

Hjarvard (2013) argues for a sociological approach that concerns ‘the long-term structural change in the role of the media in culture and society’ (2), understanding media broadly as the ‘technologies that expand communication in time space and modality’, which ‘also acquire social and aesthetic forms that structure how [they] come to be used in various contexts’ (19). In that vein, the media are thought of as social institutions and hence as conditions for sociocultural praxis, as the ‘stable, predictable elements in modern society’ that constitute ‘the framework for human communication and action in a given sphere of human life, at a given time and place’ (21).

Based on the above, mediatisation is defined as ‘the process whereby culture and society to an increasing degree become dependent on the media and their logic’ (*ibid*:

17), or phrased differently, the process through which mediated and non-mediated communicational practices grow interdependent (Hjarvard 2008b: 112, 2013: 15-16). This marks a departure from other media theories, e.g. the effect paradigm—what the media do to people—and the audience research paradigm—what people do with the media—for mediatisation theory does not focus on the use of the media for the communication of meaning but on the structural transformations they partake in. To that end, Hjarvard proposes a middle-range mode of theory building that aims to avoid over-generalisations and under-theorisations. The latter is based on a dialogical approach that opts for exploratory concepts meant to cope with different social settings by sensitising its propositions, towards the stipulation of ‘general patterns of development within particular social institutions or cultural phenomena, and within specific historical periods in particular social and cultural contexts’ (Hjarvard 2013: 3).

In historical terms, Hjarvard claims that the media were not sufficiently differentiated from other social institutions until the 20th century, when they came into their own as semi-independent institutions. In other words, they have towered up as distinct institutional compounds *in their own right* while simultaneously being *integrated* into other social institutions (Hjarvard 2013: 13, 17). In this vein, the process of mediatisation is historically located at the heart of high modernity. Therefore it is closely related to globalisation, roughly defined as ‘the intensification of global interconnectedness’ (Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 5; see Appadurai 2002; Ashcroft et al. 2007; Giddens 2012; Hardt and Negri 2000; Hjarvard 1999, 2004b; Marín and Dasen 2007). Mediated communication and institutional integrations are fundamental to that state of affairs. According to the author, there are two main points of connection between the processes of globalisation and mediatisation: first, the former relies on the

practical effectiveness of the latter as far as media technologies are concerned; second, globalisation promotes mediatisation through the operative institutionalisation of mediated interactions that challenge traditional spatiotemporal boundaries (see Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 18).

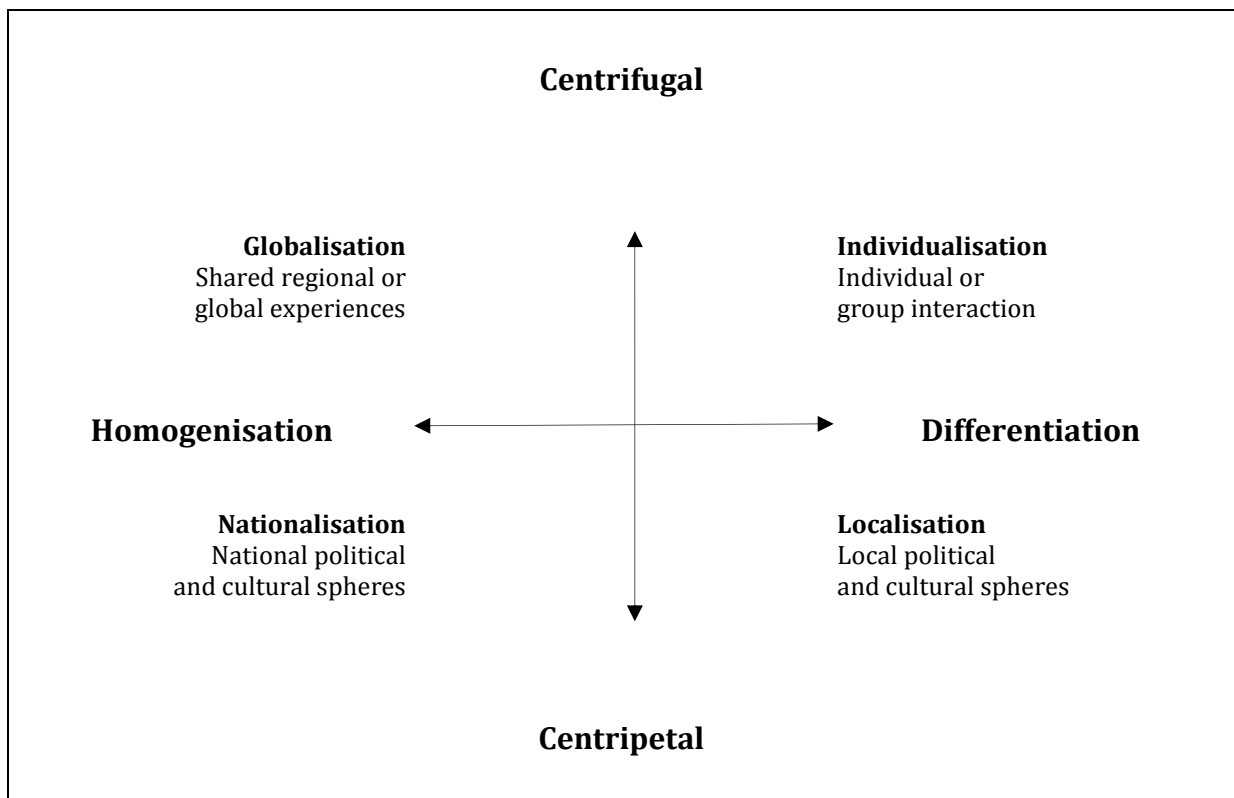
The reformulation of space and time correlates with what Hjarvard calls the virtualisation of social institutions (2013: 33-37). Conceived as a general effect of mediatisation, this process hinges on the dialectics of two stages of social interaction with varying norms of acceptable behaviour and norm-enforcing mechanisms, namely the physical stage and the virtual stage. It is respectively in such locales where mediated and non-mediated practices take place. For institutions, the rise of virtual spaces for communication and action represents a significant detachment from their immediate material setting and entails a degree of separation from local or national cultures. For that reason, the link between mediatisation and globalisation is relevant for understanding contemporary cultural dynamics. There are two sides to this story. On the one hand, following Hjarvard, the outcome of complex connectivity on a global scale is that 'virtually no culture will be able to develop in isolation from others' (*ibid*: 34). On the other hand, even though the virtual space of social interaction comes into being as a transcultural and de-territorialised locale, it does not necessarily rule out local and national scenes. Rather, its constitution is that of a force field structured by the media and set up by two sets of polarities, homogenisation versus differentiation, and centrifugal versus centripetal (*ibid*: 34-35), which results in four virtual quadrants corresponding to the spaces and processes of globalisation, individualisation, nationalisation and localisation (Fig. 9).

A glance to Figure 9 makes it clear that mediatisation theory does not suggest the general equalisation of all experiences and practices, but instead, it posits the existence of diverse trends and underlines the riddle as to the direction in which society is headed. This point echoes the idea of a meso-theoretical approach, in the sense that the answer to the question must be submitted to historical and cultural coordinates.

Hjarvard claims that the ways in which the process of mediatisation influences culture and society is proportional to the media's impact on social interaction, be it between individuals within institutions on the one hand, or between institutions themselves on the other hand. This lands us with micro-social and macro-social levels of communicational activity, wherein individual and institutional modes of socialisation respectively obtain. The impact of the media on the micro-social level becomes evident in the manner they facilitate, limit, and structure the mediated process of communication and action based on their affordances (Hjarvard 2013: 28; Hjarvard and Petersen 2013: 5).

The author recasts Gibson's (1986) ecological theory of perception into the mediatisation theory shape, whereby the potential uses that objects afford—media items in this case—are construed in virtue of their material, social and aesthetic characteristics (Hjarvard 2013: 27-30). Expanding Gibson's tenets, whose research focuses on the psychophysical aspect of affordance, Hjarvard's affordance harbours the manifold dimension of the media as technologies, organisations and social institutions. Consider, for instance, his observations on radio:

Radio made it possible for listeners to experience musical performance to an extent that was unprecedented. Before radio, concert music was available almost exclusively to a small, urban élite. But organisational factors in the institution of radio also limited the amount of music and the range of genres that were offered, while program schedules, signal range, and the quality of one's loudspeakers, gave structure to the listening experience: when one listened, where and how one sat to listen, and so forth. (2013: 28)



*Fig. 9: The virtual space of social interaction
Adapted from Hjarvard 2013: 36, 2008b: 131*

The determining character of the media based on its intrinsic features, as suggested by the quote above, is by no means absolute (as some instances of the effect paradigm would have it). Rather, it comes together with the premise that the actualisation of the object's potential use depends not only on the qualities of the medium, but also on the characteristics of the individual that interacts with it. In this context, the indication is made as to the 'perceived affordance' of the media, that is to say, the 'user's psychological evaluation of the object in relation to his/her objectives' (Hjarvard 2013: 28), including the cognitive structure of the user, her/his cultural conventions and her/his interpretations. A good example of this interplay is the case presented by Have and Stougaard Pedersen 2013 also regarding audio media—specifically the new uses of audio books. A case is made for the reframing of the literary experience, which based on the modes of engagement the medium affords, becomes akin to music and radio listening, thus challenging conceptions of the audio book as mostly suitable for users with reading deficiencies. From this perspective, then, affordances are 'materially founded in media as technological artefacts, are institutionally circumscribed, and are perceptually embodied by users and audiences' (Hjarvard and Petersen 2013: 5).

On the macro-social level of interaction, the author distinguishes three functions of the media that contribute to get hold on mediatisation, namely, as an interpretative *frame*, as an inter-institutional *nexus*, and as an *arena* for deliberations and decisions of collective interest. Of the three, and following Hjarvard's own strategy, I would like to put special emphasis on the first function because of its wide ontological scope. The author elaborates on it arguing that the media constitute 'a realm of shared experience, which means that they offer a continuous presentation and interpretation of "the way

things are”, and by doing so, contribute to the development of a sense of identity and community’ (Hjarvard 2013: 37; cf. Couldry 2003, 2009). This is important, I contend, because it is against this ontological background that the functions of nexus and arena make sense. The former, for example, delivers a picture of the media as an interface between institutional entities, which thorough understanding demands a mode of analysis beyond the mere perceptual aspects—beyond its physical affordance as facilitators of communication at a distance, that is—more concerned with the meanings of the connections at play in the exercise of its interconnecting function. Likewise, the arena wherein socially relevant discussions take place is defined by the realm of shared experience they refer to. In other words, the public sphere ‘within which institutions can pursue and defend their own interests and establish their legitimacy’ (Hjarvard 2013: 37) are tied to the experiential commons that determine their scope within the limits of this or that social compound, and therefore correspond to the quadrants of the virtual space of social interaction (see §§ 3.1.1 and 3.2.1).

Let us now come back to music. Based on mediatisation theory, our goal is to synthesise the different sociological and historical aspects of the musical corpus here under study as to posit a working definition of *global music*. I argue that the latter is a direct consequence of the overall mediatisation of music that started to take place during the first half of the 20th century and reached critical mass around the 1970s. This perspective demands an understanding of music as a social institution with constants and variables on the formal level of the musical material that condition and are conditioned by socio-musical practices. Hence, communication and action about music are addressed in the time frame of high modernity and within the limits of the cultural locations reached by the global media. This suggests a degree of relativity in the

explanatory power of the present model, in tune with the meso-theoretical approach characteristic of mediatisation theory.

The first point to underline is that transnational music is a mediatised institution from the outset. It has been indicated in § 4.1 that technological and legal factors were instrumental in the rise of rock music in America. However, a case can be made for the key role of media technology alone as the condition for the possibility of such legal developments, and hence for the growth of rock in institutional terms. Copyright protection as a legal framework makes sense only in the wake of Frith's second and third modes of musical storage, all the more during the phases in which recordings became the commodity par excellence of the music industry. It is true that organisations such as ASCAP and BMI were in a position to charge royalty fees for, say, the performance of licenced songs in theatres. However, the real business was in the mediation of the musical material; therefore the quarrel that gave rise to BMI, and the profitable momentum for rock music in the years that followed—down to its eventual integration to the dynamics of the long-play around the 1970s. Without an analogue media landscape fully capable of affording mass music mediation, the expansion of the market from local to national, and later to global, would have been just unthinkable.

Digital technologies came to magnify such a state of affairs. The rise of the cassette in the 1970s already pointed to the replication of musical content as a dangerous user practice for the record industry. Digital sound, with the increasing availability of CD burners in the 1990s and the popularisation of the mp3 format in the early 2000s, made it clear that the affordances of storage media and IT was to be a headache for the big labels. Despite the attempts to artificially limit possible media uses (legally and technologically), the state of affairs of the 2010s seems to indicate that the

profound mediatisation of music cannot be redrawn at will for the sake of commercial interests. Therefore, the commodity character of music becomes blurry, not only because of the dissolution of the record's physicality into the digital waters of the audio file, but also in terms of music ownership and the purchasing habits of the audience (Frith 2001; §§ 2.3.1.2 and 3.4). This is an important structural change: the uses of the music storage media have undergone profound modifications due to their own history of enhancements and to the implementation of user-perceived affordances beyond all corporate predictions; as a result, media uses play havoc against the organisational interests of the record industry, which remains a constituent part of music as institution. Here the interdependence of music and media becomes evident.

Back to the origins of transnational music, certain aspects pertaining media communications are also worth consideration. The organisational factors of the broadcasting networks first tampered and then propelled the appearance of rock grooves in the local and national spheres. In this connection, tube radio devices and phonographs not only structured musical experience, as Hjarvard indicates, but moreover, afforded simultaneous and/or intermittent engagements with diverse institutions at once, joining together, for example, family and music in the same physical context of the living room. At a later stage, with the increasing portability of radio and playback devices—from the transistor radio to the Walkman, the Discman, the iPod and suchlike—other institutions fell within the reach of music and vice versa, e.g. school and work, as well as subcultural formations in diverse physical settings. Musical experience changed forever, to be sure.

Patterns of behaviour regarding media content have change dramatically with the transition from analogue to digital. Online communication technologies hinge more and

more on practices of retrieval rather than the reception of broadcasted material. Although traditional radio is far from disappearing and the receptive practices of broadcast listening have not been eradicated, it is true that the consumption of music is increasingly characterised by on-demand listening (e.g. Spotify, Deezer), downloads (P2P/torrent platforms), networked streaming (e.g. Soundcloud, Grooveshark), and so on. The organisational agendas of the mass media, just as in the case of the record industry, are subject to the affordances of current technologies. Clearly, many of the service providers responsible for maintaining these access gates to music are either stakeholders in the music business or horizontally-integrated branches of multinational corporations, which means that they are certainly not without agendas. That fact should not slip unnoticed.

These aspects of music mediatisation are not exclusive to any kind of music: jazz and classical were also broadcasted before and after 1955, and the crooner song actually ruled a media-pervaded ecosystem once—one that changed to its disfavour due to economic interests and adverse market conditions. So-called classical music, experimental music, folk music from all corners of the world, arty and commercial jazz, noise and sound art, as well as many other repertoires, find themselves as interdependently attached to the media as the transnational musical corpus. Sufficient technological affordances are the grounds for the possibility of global music, but not its sufficient condition. Further thought must be given to the features that make it a distinct musical set. My position is that the key to the riddle lies in the process of transculturation itself, the delocalisation it implies, and lowest common denominator that defines its articulation on the level of the groove.

4.4 Global Music

I propose combining of the notion of transculturation as advanced by Wallis and Malm with the virtual space of social interaction posited by Hjarvard. The organisation of the locus wherein mediated communication happens is thought of by Hjarvard as a *new social geography* (2013: 33). I understand this as an approach to the distribution of people and their communicative actions across the virtual space, and therefore as a representation of the *arena* where mediated relationships obtain. On such a basis, it is viable to populate the map provided by Hjarvard with the peculiar social formations of high modernity and the contents they communicate. This amounts to something of a *new virtual demography* that conceives virtual space as a re-imagination of the physical space, as a domain that answers to its own rules and its own spatiotemporal logic.

Consistent with mediatisation theory, the move towards virtual demography goes without neglecting neither local and national cultures nor their physicality. Since mediated and non-mediated practices remain interdependent, all societal subsets ought to be simultaneously encompassed within the structure of mediatised society and rooted in direct experience. Although the level of analysis of Wallis and Malm is *culture* and Hjarvard's is *communicational space*, the two become compatible insofar as the cultures meant by the former can be distributed in the spaces enabled by the latter. Therefore, my formulation of global music involves a change in focus as regards virtual space: from a new social geography based on the media as the arena for social interaction, to the demographic representation of people and the contents they mobilise based on the media as inter-institutional nexus.

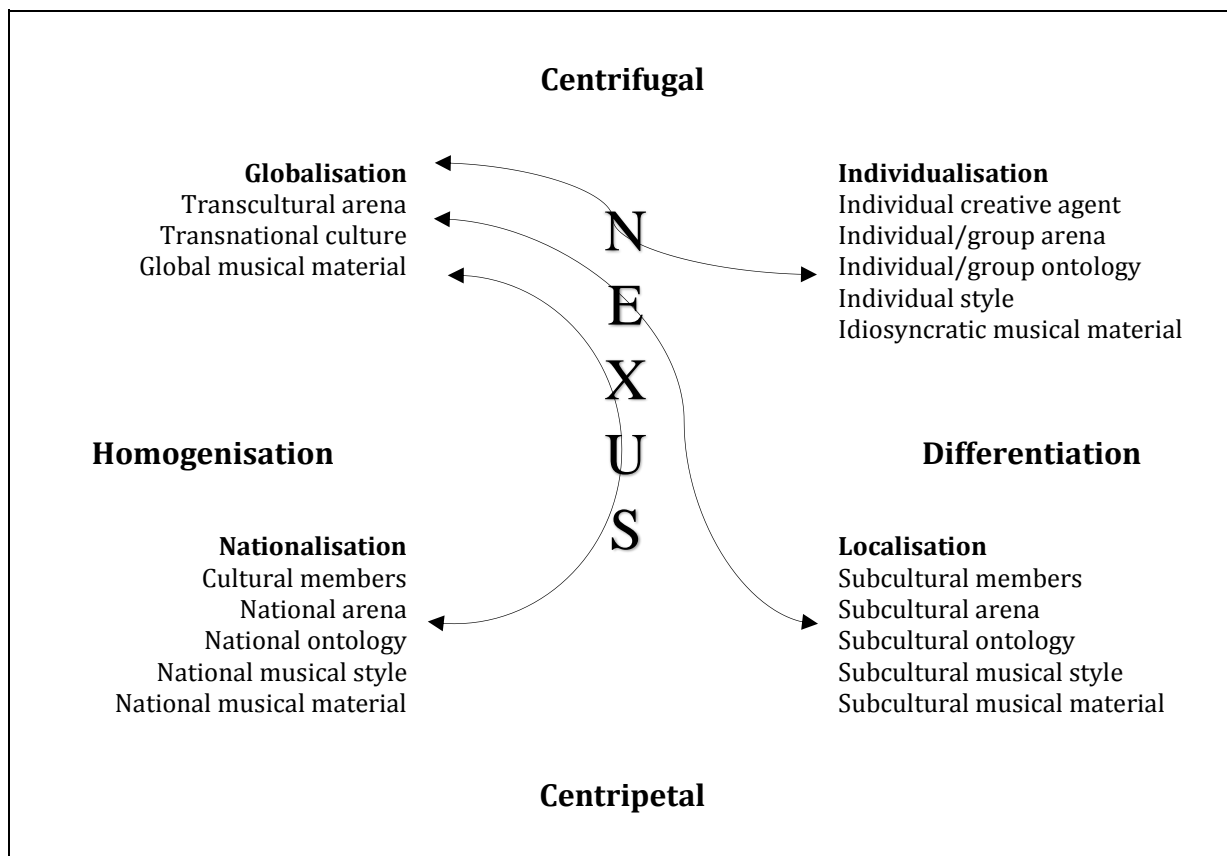


Fig. 10: New virtual demography

The virtual demography illustrated in Fig. 10 above is meant to locate diverse musical materials in the map of mediatised society, as to discern the interactions it enables particularly as regards creative practices. Different from Wallis and Malm, our diagram represents the interplay of nesting subsets, including a single national culture (nationalisation), a single subculture thereof (localisation) and a single individual or small group (individualisation). In turn, they are all set up in the overarching context of the transnational culture (globalisation). This configuration safeguards the meso-theoretical orientation of the model, in that the choice of the musical item to study, which belongs to specific individual, local and national compounds, defines the cultural and historical limits of the analysis. The centrifugal and centripetal forces act in relation

to the national culture of origin of the content at issue, while homogenisation and differentiation do on the axis of formal attributes, including all parameters of musical expression elucidated throughout §4.1.

The compatibility of *mediaization* (Wallis and Malm) and *mediatisation* (Hjarvard) hinges largely on their agreement as to the impact of technological affordances over the flow of music along virtual spaces and the cultural formations they host. Likewise, the two concepts seem to underscore the transformative power of the media down to communicational and non-communicational practices, as well as their power to enable institutional transformation in music. The processes of globalisation, nationalisation, localisation and individualisation remain pertinent to our virtual demography, for they are consistent with the paths of circulation that music follows in each case, as well as the levels on which the media, as institutionalising interpretative frameworks, come to operate. In other words, such headings indicate with accuracy the scope of the ontological claims about music raised by the media: 'what things are'.

The genealogy from jazz to rock to transnational music tells us of the rationale behind the settlement of the pulse-beat and the break-beat as the double core of the musical transculture. In this connection, having established that such structures, together with their accentuation schemes, are no longer American or Anglo but rather delocalised and therefore transcultural, my position is that they lie at the heart of the global sphere as the truly de-territorialised content that remains steadfast in global music. It is the presence of these formal traits in the musical constitution of songs, albums, catalogues, repertoires, and styles, which defines their being recognised as global music, and to that extent, which actualises global music as an observable and discernible musical corpus. Now then, this must be understood in the wake of two

related factors: 1) the coexistence of digitisation with all other modes of music storage, and 2) the advent of networked media. These are possibly the most salient differences between the transcultural media landscape described by Wallis and Malm and the current state of affairs. Defining global music in terms of groove against the backdrop of the current media landscape delivers a clearer picture of the two-way nature of transculturation, and hence marks its categorical differentiation from transnational music.

The manner in which global rhythm structures collide with individual, local and national spheres, and the way the contemporary media ecosystem works in this regard, can be explained from the vantage point of virtual demography, in terms of the multidirectional flow of musical material from everywhere in the communicational space, as it obtains on the three different levels.

4.4.1 Individual-Global

Creative persons and groups contribute to enlarge the global repository by mobilising their contents from the individual quarter to the global arena. Provided the necessary technological conditions, musical items that initially come to fruition in non-mediated praxis—say, in a series of rehearsals—are suitable to be recorded, digitised and then shared with the closest social environment, e.g., via the networked (so-called social) media. This moment of interaction is actually encouraged by many software manufacturers, as a number of digital audio workstations (among other audio applications) include functionalities or allow for plugins to that end. This step may become a sudden jump in the spotlight of the global sphere, as in the case of viral media content, but such outcomes are mostly bound to chance. The phenomenon of media convergence should not be overlooked in this regard (Berry 2016; Domingo et al. 2008;

Van Dijk 2004), considering that classic mass communications become increasingly mingled with network communications.

If the creative agent is part of the professional music community, then s/he may go on to publicise the material through mainstream or alternative incarnations of the music industry. The possibilities are many: from big labels to independent ones, from broadcast radio networks to podcast outlets and web radio stations, from television channels to on-demand streaming sites, from film producers to video game companies. This list of horizontal connections between media industries is obviously not exhaustive. Such moves may allow the material to reach the local, national and global spheres. In the professional field, both networked and mass mediation work together towards optimal exposure. In so doing, the creative agent joins communicational patterns whereby her/his musical production tends to reach the global virtual space. Now then, the digital mediation and transnational accessibility of music is not the same as its globalisation. For the latter to happen, the musical material ought to *appropriate* the idiom of the transnational culture—without necessarily hindering its individuation⁹⁷.

The contents of the transnational culture flow into the individual sphere via the mass media, the networked media, and diverse storage media, which in this instance also serve as the nexus between the music and micro-social institutions, such as family, friends and other small groups. Creative individuals and groups have access the repository of global musical material, which significantly informs their individual musical ontologies. By the latter, I mean the definitions as to what music is, how its taxonomy works (including strategies of rejection and radical dichotomies), what is good and what is bad, and so on. Likewise, the repository tends to condition the musical

⁹⁷ About individuation and musical idiom, see Adorno [2001] 2006

idiom at work in the creative process, thus holding sway on musical production. Deciding to 'speak' the musical language of the transculture involves, concretely, turning to global grooves as to maintain them, appear to maintain them, protest them or challenge them (Koskoff 2005).

It is reasonable to think that most creative agents will feed from the transnational musical culture. As individuals-in-togetherness, they nourish from the communal transcultural sphere, as well as from the individual idiosyncrasies that find their way into the transcultural repository, e.g. those of influential composers and performers. The latter are open possibilities: they do not dictate 'the way things are' (genre), but indicate 'the way things can be' (style). At the same time, the creative agents formulate and introduce their own singular contribution to the cultural pool, by reproducing and/or criticising the codes pushed into the virtual field. Said codes are retrievable from the digital transcultural arena, and therefore ever-present in the transnational culture. Such two-way pattern completes the globalisation of individual musical materials. This is just a facet of the process, which necessarily correlates with the other two paths of interaction.

4.4.2 Local-Global

The local sphere is here associated to subcultural forms of musical expression. The concept of subculture takes on a structural character, not in the sense of symbolic contestations against a dominant culture (as understood in criminology and cultural studies)⁹⁸, but in terms of the subdivisions that constitute national and global fields. That is to say, they articulate the existence and interrelatedness of all cultural subsets, marginal and dominant alike, where the pop subculture represents the musical

⁹⁸ Becker [1963] 2008; Cohen [1955] 1971; Hebdige [1979] 2002

mainstream (Britto García 1991). Here, 'subculture' does not entail deviance or resistance, but instead, it nominates the distinctiveness of musical materials vis-à-vis neighbouring repertoires. By that token, 'subculture' refers to (1) musical styles as definitional, formal traits, (2) their meaning inside and outside the subcultural community of origin.

The flow of content from local to global operates on the level of formal structures. The latter are meaning carriers that endow musical productions with the quality of being exemplars of this or that style. For instance, *Go! Go! Go!* by Lights Out, referred to in Chapter 3, is a hardcore album because it displays the formal features proper to that musical style. Any album by Blink 182 displays many of the same features, and yet (as I observed earlier), they are listened as tokens of different kinds. That is because the set of characteristics that defines a given style is neither monolithic nor impermeable. In other words, subdivisions and hybrids in the local arena are always possible. It is true that Lights Out! and Blink 182 share generic punk traits, such as the band format (guitar-bass-drums), the fast tempi (150-200 BPM) and the abundance of fifth chords in simple progressions (with the bass thumping the root notes). There are, however, key features that distinguish both musical acts as hard-core and pop-punk respectively, namely, the dissimilar treatment of the audio signal (instrument-to-amplifier as well as studio feed), the use of palm muting, the level of intricacy of the drum lines and the melodic character of the songs. Now then, what binds together Lights Out! and Blink 182 with all other rock-oriented artists is the obvious predominance of the break-beat groove. Since they share this feature with other global repertoires outside the local punk sphere, Lights Out! and Blink 182 may be said to be genealogically global—that is, vis-à-vis the history

of musical transactions that opened up the transnational arena around 1955. These bands, as many others, appropriate the global groove in their own ways.

Subcultural musical material circulates within the community of origin in attention to formal, ideological and functional norms. For example, as far as hardcore is concerned, the local live scene tends to be a relevant non-mediated locus for communication and action (a reminder of Frith's first mode of storage). Artists belonging to the same community also tend to mediate the musical material they produce. By way of illustration, Lights Out resorts to vinyl records (for sale in concert venues and specialised web sites) and networked media promotion involving the streaming of their tracks via MySpace (Lights Out n.d.). To my knowledge, they are not on Facebook (which is not surprising). Alternative media, such as community or web radio, are normally compatible with these distribution strategies. In contrast, a pop-oriented act such as Blink 182 would opt for a more horizontally integrated approach, including mainstream networked media (Facebook, Twitter) cinema, television, traditional radio, artist's website promotion—with merchandising playing a key role (see Blink 182 2015), recordings and audio-visuals delivered by digital retailers (occasionally in hard copy). However, the *Zeitgeist* of the 2010s points to a resurgence of performance as the focal point of mainstream music making practices, and as the driving force of the music business today.

Again, musical styles become global not only by reaching a transnational audience. On the one hand, subcultural styles raise from, or integrate into their own, the musical vocabulary of the global repository. Apart from the groove, musicians may or may not make use of exogenous formal elements that are already present in the global space, the meanings of which invoke the styles of other subcultures or individual

agents. If that is the case, then fusions, cross-fertilisations and musical citations come about. On the other hand, the local contribution affects the same repository on the level of musical possibilities and normative guidelines, as mediatised elements that become globally available to individuals and subcultures. This presupposes intense dynamics at the institutional foundations of music, that is, at the frameworks for musical communication and action.

Should a style reach global ears without abiding by the sonority of the transnational culture (cyphered in its groove), the result would be the appropriation of some elements of such style and their incorporation by the global transculture, yet without implying the globalisation of the musical subculture as such.

4.4.3 National-Global

Just as in the case of musical subcultures, there are concrete formal elements that distinguish every national musical style. By national, I mean the musical materials and practices connected to the identity an ethnos, viz. a more or less structured and limited sociocultural community. Said connection obtains on the levels of discourse and collective experience. This sense of nationhood includes nationalities within and across state borders, covering diaspora groups, peoples predating current political communities, and so on. Such ethnic identity finds representation through musical sound (via socio-musical markers), in ways that mean 'superficiality' or 'authenticity' to the ears of said community—as well as by third parties (Siapera 2010:131-164).

The relation of the local and the national to the global can be distinguished in terms of genealogy. On the one hand, the notion of musical subculture relates to the delocalised aspect of transnational music as a historical process. On the other hand, the

level of analysis of national music is rather ethnographical. That is to say, it is largely concerned with discourses of folklore, elite national styles and the notions of tradition they evoke. In this vein, notice that the centripetal differentiation that the national suggests is not strictly geopolitical but rather macro-cultural. This makes for a rather fluid working definition of 'the nation', one beyond the nationalist imperative of total congruence with the nation-state (Gellner 1983; Geertz 1973a).

As before, it is convenient to point out that global availability, global appropriation and globalisation are not the same. For instance, the inclusion of certain Asian materials in transcultural music, a common practice since the 1960s, does not drag the repertoires of origin into the global vortex. By that token, despite the cross-fertilisations operated by global musicians of diverse subcultural styles—from The Beatles to Thievery Corporation to Shakira—the musical bodies these elements belong to do not engage in globalisation, but in patterns of appropriation. In the process, the sound of particular string instruments and the scalar/melodic behaviours proper to some Asian modal traditions join the global repository in its potential form, i.e. they become globally available.

To illustrate, let us come back to the case of *rembétiko* (Ordoulidis 2012a, 2012b). In the wake of the distinction above, it is easier to understand how an argument against the global character of this corpus might look like. Prima facie, it appears to display a pulse-beat structure with an even accentuation pattern. However, a closer listen would reveal that it comes mingled with plenty of micro-rhythmic variations, free-time episodes, and irregular bars, the time signature of which challenges the common use in global music. As repertoire and style, it certainly preserves its distinctive centripetal peculiarities, in terms of timbre, melody, rhythm, and so forth. Moreover, neither its

groove nor its high textural features are compatible with the global deep structure; it does not abide by the lowest common denominator that shapes the global idiom and feeds its centrifugal force. Still, *rembétiko* is available to the global audience via the Internet (YouTube, Soundcloud, etc.), and is therefore susceptible to appropriation, e.g. to be ‘rocked up’ by bands such as Tri Sate Corner.

At this point, I will deviate from the path of positive definition for the sake of necessary clarification. The integration of culturally located elements towards their representation and re-signification under the regime of the global idiom, where their autochthonous colours become the focal point, is what the commercial versions of world music are about. I shall call this ‘pseudo-world music’. The occurrence of the term as a marketing tag must be thought of as something completely different from world music as an academic line of research and education (Bor 2008). As the concomitant of westernisation (Nettl 1985; Pennanen 1999), pseudo-world music should *not* be mistaken as representative of the dynamic of global music. Two reasons can be argued in this regard. First, the located materials of pseudo-world music may be available in the global pool without necessarily meaning ‘global’ but rather ‘national’. Neither their presence across communicational spaces is as pervasive, nor is their ontological agency as institutionally determining as global grooves are. Second, the epithet ‘world’ is actually a heavily ethnocentric misnomer (Bor 2008; Van der Meer and Erickson 2014; Germer 2001). Such an ideological bias is at odds with the notion of global at work here.

It is noteworthy that folk music is not the sole repertoire involved in the centrifugal displacements of the national on the homogeneous side of the virtual space. Just as any other cultural product—goods or services, musical or otherwise—all kinds of style can be domesticated in the process of globalisation (Regev 1997; see Caldwell

2004, Siapera 2010: 131-148). The global features of songs can be transformed into national products that allow discontinuities and reformulations of the *system of elements*—to use Foucault's ([1966] 2005) terminology—that furnish the definitions of national identities. As Regev argues in his discussion about rock music, cultural forms initially associated with American culture and with the commercial drive of the transnational industry can be instrumental in the articulation of difference and national authenticity (1997). The author explains:

constructing local styles of rock and their meanings as 'local authentic' music [in our terminology, 'national authentic' music] is an aesthetic strategy of identity formation which is determined by the 'thrownness' of musicians and audiences in two social spaces, or fields, of cultural practice: the field of *contemporary popular music* [global] and the field of *national/local identity* [national]. Making local [national] rock music 'solves' the apparent contradiction of participation in both these fields (Regev 1997: 126, italics mine; see Beck et al. 1997)

These reflections about rock hold for global music in general. They highlight a process of transculturation along the lines of Wallis and Malm, namely the confection of new repertoires and styles—and in certain occasions, distinctive moments in a national musical tradition (§ 3.2.2). On the one hand, they are articulated in local and global arenas at the same time; on the other hand, they condition and are conditioned by national and global ontologies, where the media operate as interpretative frames.

In this connection, and summarising, the use of pulse-beat and break-beat grooves remains sine qua non of national, local and individual (re)formulations of music in touch with the global sphere, for the meaning of these structures spells 'rock' or 'dance', and ultimately 'global'—what Regev calls 'contemporary popular music'. Such semantic luggage is part of the ontology fostered in the process of mediatisation, and conditions the uses of music, its production, storage, distribution, and consumption. Music as a social institution, as a constant guideline orienting communication and action (including its articulations and its related practices), determines and is determined by the media in profound ways, from the affordances of its manifold physicality to the strategic behaviour of its organisations.

Concluding Remarks

This research started a couple of years ago with the wish to conduct research about popular music. Soon I realised that the state of incoherence of the field (described in the first part of this research) was blocking my best efforts, perhaps because of my multidisciplinary background and my status of an expatriate scholar. I went astray in the labyrinthine structure of the edifice of popular music studies. I lost track of what I wanted to talk about, not because I did not know what I meant, but because it was not clear what everyone else meant by it. The grounding order of the field, in Foucault's terms, became uncertain. The question arose as to how, under such conditions, popular music theory could be pursued at all. It was imperative, I concluded, to sort out incoherence to get to talk about popular music. Thus the *raison d'être* of the present dissertation came about: what started as a means to an end became an end in itself.

The Road Taken

It is in this light that I would like to ponder the contribution of the present dissertation to the field of media/cultural studies in general and popular music in particular—however we choose to define them. Assuming a communicational perspective and focusing on the process of mediatisation, this academic output makes available an alternative to alleviate the serious problem of equivocality that haunts

popular music scholars in the global academic sphere. It has been made evident that keeping with inaccurate definitions of the object of study is, at the very least, disadvantageous for the optimal operation of the field as a scholarly community. Moreover, an argument has been advanced for the convenience of academic dialogue in the wake of the epistemological benefits it begets and in awareness of the abundant resources (economic or otherwise) being invested worldwide for the promotion of transcultural and interdisciplinary research.

In a dialogical spirit, then, different cultural and disciplinary epistemai were summoned to the task of evaluating the semantic intricacies of popular music as a genre, as a class of sound form that quickens complex networks of significance in diverse settings across the world. Authenticity and commoditisation have been identified as key factors in the constitution of the shared ontologies that ground the sense made of popular repertoires—and of the notion of the ‘popular’ in contrast to ‘art’ and ‘folk’. Such an approach has disclosed a singular pattern of signifying practices—what I have called ‘strategy of rejection’—the understanding of which allows the cultural analyst to get hold of what popular music is—in an ontological sense—in the dynamic context where it is produced, disseminated and consumed. In this connection, the being of the popular song is rendered negatively, that is to say, by telling very clearly what it is not: neither art nor folk. Noteworthy, negative definitions of popular music testify to the latent tension among music producers and consumers regarding the ‘eclectic force’ signalled by postmodern theorists and the value judgements passed on its concrete musical manifestations. It is amidst this contradiction of merge and separation that global music comes into being.

The next step of the research consisted in suspending the problem of value judgement for a while and focusing on the formal features of popular music qua musical sound with a view to its semantic dimension. In the course of a genealogical examination of the transnational repertoire from its cradle in the 1950s to date, a red thread of consistency started to appear on the level of its rhythmic characteristics. Observable beat patterns, recognisable throughout the history of the genre, have been said to constitute the nucleus of transnational music. On such basis, once the musical material at stake had been identified, an argument for popular music as a global phenomenon became viable. Institutional mediatisation theory came to furnish the discussion as to make sense of four divisions of the virtual space of communication and action: individual, local, national and global. On such a basis, four spheres of interaction were introduced under the headings of individual, subcultural, national and global, where contemporary flows of musical material are said to take place. In this account, global music was defined as displaying the same substance that furnished early American popular and transnational music, in terms of the pulse-beat and break-beat patterns observable on the deep level of the musical structure. This formal characterisation of the global repertoire was completed by further considerations on its mediatised dimension, that is, on the complex patterns of exchange along the four spheres of interaction that position such rhythmic cells in diverse contexts simultaneously. By virtue of this space-time dynamics, the musical materials at stake (and the socio-musical practices related to it) turn into a distinct institution that stands in a relation of inter-dependence with the media in a broad sense.

In this connection, it is prudent to note that the focus of the definitional argument here has not been the *discontinuities* in socio-musical practices (the 'patterns of change')

brought about by media technologies—which is the most common interest when it comes to studies on the mediatisation of music. Such emphasis is noticeable in the sources referred to in Chapter 4 and elsewhere (e.g. Wallis and Malm 1990; Frith 2001)⁹⁹. Differently, the present dissertation has concentrated on the *continuities* on the level of the musical material (form and meaning) that allow for a coherent definition of the global repertoire. In that sense, the present attempt may be said to mobilise mediatisation theory in innovative ways, yet following the steps of such valuable contributions.

How do these insights help alleviate the problem of equivocality in the field of popular music studies? The answer to this question comes in two instalments. For starters, I would like to be emphatic about the fact that *global* is not meant to substitute *popular* from now on in debates about the genre. The genealogy of global music shows that the Anglo-centric narrative of the popular articulated by Middleton and Manuel 2001 and many other authors is not at all random, and that criticisms can be raised not so much in terms of historical facts but of cultural episteme. Certainly, the origin of global music is Anglo popular music. Since not only the sound but also the concept of the latter has spread on a global scale, one can see why its materials have been systematically mistaken as the whole whereas it is actually a part of what can be called popular music. ‘Shooting’ the narrative from the Anglo perspective is not necessarily a problem; presenting it as a grand narrative is. Moreover, such discourse gains power only when it is acted upon as if it was the case—that is the real epistemological risk: that

⁹⁹ In this regard, works not strictly based on mediatisation theory but that share the same concerns about the relation between music and the media are worth mention here, e.g. Adorno 2009b, Attali 1977, Davies 2003, Peterson and Berger 1990; Peterson 2004; Rojek 2011. Auslander 2008 is another relevant source on the matter; I have not discussed it here because it deals with mediation and performance, which is somewhat removed from my own research question. In any case, note that all these sources concentrate, too, on the changes in socio-musical practices introduced by the media.

scholars may produce and reproduce a broken order of things that never really had a genuine explanatory bite. It is at this point, where the nominal predicament comes in. Both 'Anglo popular music' and 'popular music' become misnomers if they are meant to nominate what I have termed here 'global music'. That is because the materials constituting the latter (1) stopped being exclusively Anglo around the 1960s and (2) have never been the popular music of everyone (nor are they in the pedigree of all popular music there is, as colonial discourses would have us believe).

Global music could be said to be a peculiar subset of popular music, perhaps (one of its many senses, as I suggested in the introduction to this study). Then again—and here comes the second part of the answer—what is popular music? The examination of the negative definitions not only bears witness of the intra-genre tensions between self-proclaimed 'authentic' styles and so-called 'pop' music. It also shows the challenge to genre differentiation latent in the interactions between popular, art and folk. The postmodern observation about the unintelligibility of the borders between the three categories is, in my view, worth consideration. This is not to say that all music sounds the same, or that there is no subjacent order to musical materials and practices today, but that the mode of music organisation has changed significantly—in homological relation to the profound institutional changes in society that have taken place in the last decades.

An argument from global music becomes available: the idea that there is a nucleus—a deep structure—around which higher textural layers can be set tells us of a high degree of formal variability and inter-style permeability. In other words, we can think of this nucleus, viz. the standard of global music, as *an empty centre that is never reached but circled around by the musical instances under its influence*. Songs may take

positions closer or farther to it, which in turn locates them closer or farther to other musical nucleuses, e.g. those constituted by 'art' and 'folk' materials. Finding out what these nucleuses are and where in the virtual demography could be, whether the traditional categories of art, folk and popular still make sense, and consequently, what the structure of such a musical field could look like, requires a great deal of academic labour that the undersigned would very much like to see crystallise in the coming years.

Having achieved a workable definition of global music (in semantic and structural terms and in the wake of the media landscape it belongs to), the question remains: how could we account for authenticity and commoditisation, the leitmotifs par excellence of popular music studies? This theory of global music only allows for a descriptive, rather uncritical answer to the question. That is so because, by definition, the concept of global music is to serve a unifying purpose, or put differently, to allow for the positive grounds on which basis challenges to the order it suggest can be possibly advanced. Serious gestures of cultural critique or philosophical deconstruction would require further elaboration beyond the scope of the present dissertation. That said; let us make it clear that the descriptive approach at hand remains significantly useful, because it enables a detached understanding of the dynamics at play in the tagging games of authenticity and commoditisation. Moreover, it may serve as the point of departure for detecting discontinuities in the cultural order of the global age.

For starters, the idea that there is such thing as 'authentic' global music contradicts the multi-layered understanding of the space of interaction within which such meanings are constructed. In that vein, and different from ideologically committed analyses of music (popular or otherwise), global music theory disables any ultimate ground for authenticity. In accordance with our findings in Chapter 3, authenticity is, in

principle, a matter of ideological alignment for the members of national and subcultural formations, wherein specific shared ontologies prevail. The global space of communication and action displays neither such specificity nor any unified narrative, for its most salient feature is its perennial state of virtual connectivity. Instead, it acknowledges the wide diversity of symbolic capital able to support authenticity claims—to put it in Bourdieu’s terms.

However, a strong equalising drive remains active in many popular platforms and networks where global flows of all kinds take place. I am referring here to the de-territorialised forces of Empire as characterised by Hardt and Negri (2000), and denounced by other scholars in a similar vein (Crary 2013; Hansen 2015; Stiegler 2012). By virtue of such equalising attempts, formal regimes based on problematic modes of communication are continuously set up at the heart of the ‘media formats’ of our time, as warned by the first wave of popular music scholars in Europe (Leavis, Mellers, Hoggart, Adorno) and stressed out by leading media theorists today (Altheide, Snow). Still, to say it with Hardt and Negri, where there is Empire there is multitude. The global musical material is equally capable of being shaped in either direction. Even though the beat structures of global music are standardised (they certainly are ‘common denominators’), let us recall that the textural layer on which the standard takes place is deep enough as to allow the free moulding of all other attributes according to the forces ruling the individual, subcultural and national spheres. Whether or not such variability is the evidence of pseudo-individuation (as Adorno suggests) is a question I shall leave open.

It is important to recall that, despite such equalising drives, the relatedness of the four spaces of communication and action quickened by global music secure the diversity of ontological frameworks and hence the unfixed character of global musical

authenticity. Therefore, any study of the latter—and this is concretely the point in epistemological terms—must pay heed to the specific ways in which these spaces interact in the particular cases under consideration. This is directly related to the meta-theoretical view presented in the introduction and the first chapter of this dissertation, as regards the meso level of analysis and the conception of the researcher as a (culturally situated) critical agent.

As regards commoditisation, it is important to bear in mind the close connection between commercialisation and authenticity. At this point, global music theory is in a position to dialogue with radical Marxist and postmodern critiques by pointing out, first, the extent to which the current state of affairs in the political economy of the global song modifies the concept of ‘musical commodity’, and second, the possibility of commoditisation processes in a non-economic, non-capitalist sense. Regarding the former, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, it is no longer the case that mediated music is the commodity par excellence of the music industry. In fact, significant efforts have been devoted to reinvent the business model beyond physical and digital receptacles of musical sound, as the Rethink Music initiative exemplifies—just to name one relevant attempt on a transnational scale (Berklee College of Music 2013; Rethink Music 2015). Furthermore, Chapter 4 has walked the reader through the highlights of global music history, from its beginning in the national US market of the 1950s to the transnational arena of pop music to the premises of the new virtual demography. Such historical recount has hopefully made clear that the rhythmic standard of global music—the key to its identity as a genre—has grown in relationship with, but not determined by, the commercial aspect of music. In any event, without disregard to the purely market-driven projects up and running in the music world today, the point that commercialism is the

main force shaping the sound of global music is worth critical re-examination—or perhaps, thorough redefinition.

Where Further Research Could Be Headed

As mentioned earlier, an argument for commoditisation beyond commerce is certainly viable. This point I find particularly relevant, and I would like to elaborate on it within the framework of my suggestions for further research.

Earlier in this remarks, I have entertained the possibility of advancing studies on the field of contemporary music at large. Before embarking in such a project, a last move regarding global music is due. *Rethinking* the significance of the global corpus vis-à-vis contemporary socio-musical experience is necessary, I maintain, in order to acquire a thorough understanding of the processes and realities at stake. In other words, the idea that authenticity is a matter of positions in the virtual demography, and that commoditisation is a bygone preoccupation, must be submitted to painstaking dialectical revision. Put in a critical vein, the findings of this dissertation constitute the affirmative point of departure for the vital negation of the harmonious assertions it harbours, for the disclosure of the complex network of contradictions that global music is able to quicken. By that token, rethinking these matters should be in the agenda of further research on global music.

Without disregard to other possible frameworks, I think such a revision would have an optimal point of departure in a critique of Adorno's multifaceted work, a theoretical corpus concerned with music and culture as well as with the problem of standardisation in both fields (Adorno 1991, 2003, [1949] 2006; 2009b and elsewhere). Consistent with the wide spectrum of his critical theory, the argument should not only

take into account the author's writings on popular musicology, which mostly tackle the limited spectrum of Tin Pan Alley and the swing era, but also his philosophical train of thought regarding communication and expression in relation to human experience on the level of collective subjectivity. It is worth noting that the problematisation of the standard, on which Adorno's critique of popular music hinges, would offer a vantage point for a thorough elaboration on the intricacies of global music in relation to the homogenising forces that, as indicated above, remain fully active. In that wake, the purpose of such investigation should be to retrieve the core of truth in Adorno's polemical approach to popular music as to face it with the current states of affairs in the musical world. Could a critique of standardisation account for a more precise ontology of global music? This question is, indeed, complementary to the definitional project of the present dissertation.

Adorno's critical theory is useful for sorting out the problem of commoditisation in a setting where multi-platinum albums are not necessarily the object of desire of the industry. That is so because of the peculiar emphasis of the Adornian critique on the ontological aspects of musical experience. After all, for Adorno, the culture industry is not the sum total of the creative industries there are, but an anti-critical categorical scheme, an ontological order of standardisation (Adorno [1963] 1975). This perspective enables an argument for commodities as the representative products of such a system of elements, the value of which transcends the Marxist scheme (use or exchange). Instead, the value at stake is symbolic in nature. In this vein, the case of commoditisation relates to the concept of cultural *fetish*. An amalgam of Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxist philosophy, Adorno posits fetishism as a process through which commoditisation acquires an explanatory power far beyond political economy. This controversial

discussion should be furnished with a theory of value based on language and communication that exposes the risks of ontological debasement (if any) latent in global socio-musical practices. To that end, the theory hereby introduced could serve the purpose of updating the context of the discussion, as regards the media-scape of the 2010s and the sound of the global musical material.

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Dutch Summary–Nederlandstalige Samenvatting

Normalisatie en het Geluid van de Muziek: Herschikking en heroverwegingen van 'Populaire' als 'Global'

Vertrekkend vanuit een communicatief perspectief en concentrerend op mediatiseringsprocessen, formuleert deze dissertatie een alternatief voor het probleem van equivociteit binnen de studie naar populaire muziek. Verschillende culturele en theoretische perspectieven zijn ingezet om de diverse vormen en betekenissen van populaire muziek te evalueren, bijvoorbeeld het type van muziek dat via complexe netwerken van betekenis in verschillende ambits door de geglobaliseerde wereld snelt. Authenticiteit en commodificatie zijn geïdentificeerd als de belangrijkste concepten voor de duiding van populaire repertoires - en van het begrip 'populair' in relatie tot 'kunst' en 'folk'. Deze identificatie openbaart een patroon van betekenis-gevende praktijken, welke ik de 'strategie van afwijzing' heb genoemd. Deze strategie maakt het voor de cultuur-theoreticus mogelijk om inzicht te krijgen in de manier waarop het genre van populaire muziek is gedefinieerd, haar productie, verspreiding en consumptie. De essentie van het populaire lied wordt doorgaans negatief gedefinieerd, dat wil zeggen, door aan te geven wat het niet is: noch kunst noch folk. Opmerkelijk is dat negatieve definities van populaire muziek getuigen van latente spanningen tussen muziek producenten en consumenten, specifiek met betrekking tot de eclecticische krachten gesignaleerd door het postmoderne denken en de waardeoordelen toegekend aan haar verschillende verschijningen.

Gegeven deze spanning, bestaat de vervolgstap van dit onderzoek uit een tijdelijke opschorting van de problematiek van het waardeoordeel, door een concentratie op de formele kenmerken van de populaire muziek - muzikale klank en semantische dimensie. Met een

genealogisch onderzoek naar het grensoverschrijdende repertoire van populaire muziek - vanaf haar oorsprong in de jaren 50 van de 20e eeuw tot op heden - verschijnt een samenhang op het niveau van ritmische kenmerken. Waarneembare ritme patronen, te herkennen in de geschiedenis van het genre, vormen de kern van 'transnationale music' (Anglo populaire muziek in de transnationale markt). Zodra het muzikale materiaal in kwestie wordt geïdentificeerd, is een argument voor 'populaire muziek' als 'global music' mogelijk.

Institutionele mediatisering-theorie biedt inzicht in de vier domeinen van de virtuele ruimte van communicatie en handelen: individueel, lokaal, nationaal en mondiaal. Hiernaast zijn vier sferen van interactie geïntroduceerd: het individuele, subculturele, nationale en globale, waar hedendaagse stromen van muzikaal materiaal te vinden zijn. Vanuit dit perspectief, is de wereldwijde muziek omschreven als de weergave van eenzelfde structuur als de vroege Amerikaanse populaire en transnationale muziek, namelijk polsslag en break-beat patronen die waarneembaar zijn op het diepe niveau van het ritme. Deze formele kwalificatie van het mondiale repertoire wordt aangevuld met verdere overwegingen over zijn gemediatiseerde dimensie, dat wil zeggen, met de complexe patronen van uitwisseling langs de vier sferen van interactie die in verschillende contexten tegelijk gepositioneerd zijn. Op grond van deze ruimtetijd dynamieken, worden de muzikale materialen (en de sociaal-muzikale praktijken) geïnstitutionaliseerd, in een relatie van onderlinge afhankelijkheid met de media in brede zin.

Appendix:

Synoptic Tables

Antecedents of Popular Music Studies

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
18 th century	Enlightenment Aesthetics ¹⁰⁰	Kant ([1781/1787] 1998, [1790] 2000) Batteux (1747) Diderot ([1830] 1902, [1751] 1994, [1765] 1996, [1751] 1996, [1772] 1996)	Fine/Mechanical Liberal/Mechanical Arts/Crafts	The <i>vertical</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity
			Artistic Purpose Artistic Pleasure	The (teleological) definition of art	
			Mimesis – <i>Le Vrai/Le Vraisemblable</i> Beautiful Nature - Infallible Nature Critique - Dogmatism	The relation between art and truth/reality	
			Genius	Artistic originality	
Early 19 th century	German Idealism ¹⁰¹	Hegel ([1830] 1959), [1807] 1988	Culture as Education, Culture as Objective Processes and Outcomes Dialectics	The ideal grounds of culture	Other

¹⁰⁰ Secondary literature: Caygill (1995, 2003); Makkreel (2006).

¹⁰¹ Secondary literature: Wood (2005), Solomon (1970)

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
Mid-late 19 th century	Historical Materialism	Marx ([1859] 2009, [1867] 2010)	Base and superstructure	The material grounds of culture	Authenticity Commoditisation
			Social relations of production	The <i>vertical</i> organisation of society	
			Bourgeoisie/proletariat		
			Fetish of commodities – Values Critique – Mystification	The obscurity of social relations	
Mid-19 th century	Culture and Anarchy	Arnold (1869)	Elite/Mass Culture as optimal practices and products	The <i>vertical</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity
Late 18 th century and 19 th century	Early Cultural Anthropology ¹⁰²	Schlözer (1771) Tylor ([1871] 1920)	Ethnography - Ethnology	The historical, geographical and linguistic and socio-behavioural dimension of culture	Other
			All Nations/One Nation		
			Universal History of Nations		
			Cultural Evolutionism Ethnos/Race Primitive/Civilised	The linear progress of culture and society in the universal sense of humankind The question of sociocultural hierarchy	

¹⁰² See Rousseau, J.-J. (1768), Herder ([1807] 1846); Tiersot, J. (1889, 1905), Mugglestone, E. and Adler, G. (1981); see Chapter 3.

First Wave of Popular Music Studies

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
1930s-1970s	Culture and Civilization	Leavis (1933a, 1972a) ¹⁰³	Art/commerce, Elite culture/mass civilization	The <i>vertical</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity Commoditisation
		Mellers (1964)	Private/communal mind (tradition)		
			Linguistic cultural coherence/fragmentation Banality, vulgarisation, escapism Resistance (against mass civilization)	The relation between popular songs and real life	
Since 1950s	British Culturalism	Hoggart (1957)	Genuineness Freedom/tolerance (Positive/negative liberty) Egalitarianism/equality - Direct communication Progressivism (up-to-date-ness)	The relation between popular songs and real life	Authenticity

¹⁰³ See also Leavis and Thompson (1950)

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
1920s-1930s	Chicago School	Park (1950)	Societal ecosystem, Urban ethnography	The <i>systemic</i> organisation of cultural production	Other
		Cressey ([1932] 2008)	Prestige, Systems of rationalizations	The relation between popular socio-musical practices and deviant groups	
Since 1950s	American Subcultural Studies ¹⁰⁴	Cohen [1955] 1971	Subculture	The <i>systemic</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity
		Becker ([1963] 2008)	Conventional/Unconventional, Hip/squared Social construction of deviance Innovation – Status Deviation – Transgression	The relation between popular socio-musical practices and subcultures	
Since 1930s	Critical Theory ¹⁰⁵	Adorno (1991, 2009b) ¹⁰⁶	Culture Industry, Standardisation. Serious Music/Light Music, Communication/Expression Homology (socio-musical)	The relation between light music and experience. The (un)critical production and reception of musical materials	Authenticity Commoditisation
1900s-1960s	Musical Anthropology	Tiersot (1905) Kunst (1950, 1969)	Comparative method, participant observation, notation and recording.	The geo-cultural organisation of musical production.	Authenticity

¹⁰⁴ See Merton (1938).

¹⁰⁵ Secondary literature: Jay (1973)

¹⁰⁶ See Adorno and Horkheimer ([1944] 2002).

Second Wave of Popular Music Studies

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
Since 1970s	Marxist Cultural Critique	Harker (1980, 1996, 1998)	Class culture (ruling class/working class)	The <i>vertical</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity Commoditisation
		Mueller (2014) ¹⁰⁷	Ideological Promotion	The clarification of social relations	
		Ahlkvist (1999)	Creative Freedom and Genuine Creativity		
		Finley (2002)	Pedagogical Potential of Popular Music		
			Anti-Empire <i>Genius</i>		
		Omnipresent Sovereignty (Empire), Affective Labour	The obscurity of social relations		
Since 1970s	Political Economy	Peterson (2004)	Commercial Music and Professional Musicians	The teleological definition of popular music	Commoditisation Authenticity
		Berklee College of Music (2013)	Musical Technology		
		Attali (1977)	Homology (music as social forecast)	The relation between popular songs and society	
			Banality vs. Idiosyncrasy		

¹⁰⁷ See Hardt and Negri (2000).

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
Since 1970s	Field Theory	Bourdieu (1969, 1996, 1998) ¹⁰⁸ Driessens (2013a, 2013b)	Field of Cultural Production	The <i>systemic</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity Commoditisation
			Capital as Resources		
Mass/Art	The legitimacy of popular music				
Symbolic Capital					
Economic Capital					
			Celebrity Capital		
			Legitimation, Consecration		
Since late 1970s	British Subcultural Theory	Hebdige (1990, [1979] 2002) Thornton (1996)	Subculture	The <i>systemic</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity
			Dominant/Subordinate		
Style	The relation between popular socio-musical practices and subcultures				
Appropriation					
Resistance (against the dominant order)					
			Homology (values and music)		
			Subcultural Capital		

¹⁰⁸ Secondary literature: Wacquant (1988)

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
Since 1980s	Postmodern Theory ¹⁰⁹	Lyotard (1984)	The End of Metanarratives	The <i>hybrid</i> organisation of cultural production	Authenticity Commoditisation
		Jameson (1991)	Postmodern Music		
		McRobbie ([1994] 2005)	Art/Trash Serious/Popular		
Goodwin (1995)	Resistance (against modern rationality)	The relation between cultural products and experience			
Rings (2013)					
			Eclecticism		
			Irony		
			Complexity		
			Retrospection and Inclusiveness		
			The Death of the Author/ <i>Genius</i>	Artistic originality	
			Pastiche		
			Parody		
			Experimentation,		
			Hybrid Identities		

¹⁰⁹ See Venturi 1966, Rodriguez 1997 Jencks 2011a, Barthes [1968] 2006, Gracyk (2001).

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
Since 1970s	Musical Analysis ¹¹⁰	Kerman (1980, 1985) McClary and Walser (1990) Covach (1997, 2000) Mellers (1941, 1964) Tagg (1982, 1987)	Internal Coherence – Organicism Analysis Criticism Semiotics Extra-Musical Associations Musical Meaning	The relation between popular songs and society	Authenticity
Since late 1970s	Ethnomusicology ¹¹¹	Agawu (1997, 2004) Ordoulidis (2012a, 2012b) Arroyo (2011) Hennion (1990) Wallis and Malm (1990)	Anthropology of Music Musicology of Ethnic Music Written/Non-Written Music Field Work Comparison Description	The <i>methodological</i> organisation of cultural production The question of ethnocentrism	Authenticity

¹¹⁰ See Brackett 2003.

¹¹¹ See Van der Meer and Erickson (2014), Bor (2008), Slobin (2003), Merriam (1964).

Period	Research Line	Authors	Fundamental Concepts	Debates	Evaluative Principle
Since 1980s	Representation Studies ¹¹²	Brkich (2012) Ellis (2008) Adams and Fuller (2006) Wood (2006) Stephens (2005) Hyder (2004) Berger and Carroll (2003) Sternheimer (2003) Bradby and Laing (2001) Bowers (2000) Cutler (2000) Whiteley (2000) Wald (1998)	Representation of Identities Ideological Promotion Pedagogical Potential of Popular Music Resistance (against the dominant order) Homology (popular music and society) Symbolic Appropriation	The relation between popular socio-musical practices and society	Authenticity

¹¹² See Hall (1997a, 1997b), McClary (1994, 2002), Koskoff (2005).

Curriculum Vitae

Carlos Miguel Roos Munoz was born in Caracas, Venezuela, on October 22nd, 1979. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Art in 2005 from Universidad Central de Venezuela, with a specialisation in Performing Arts, under prof. Anaira Vázquez. His B.A. thesis, titled *The Treatment Subject Matters, Words and Pre-staging in Vicente Huidobro's Drama* was approved with honours; the evaluation committee officially recommended its publication.

From 2008 to 2010, he pursued a Research MA programme in Philosophy of Art under dr. Gerard Visser at Leiden University, the Netherlands, with the financial support of the Institute for Scenic and Musical Arts, Ministry of Culture of Venezuela. His MA thesis deals with the ontology of art by means of case studies, including ancient works from Southeast Asia as well as contemporary pieces from Northeast Asia and South America.

In 2010, Roos was awarded an Erasmus Mundus Doctorate Scholarship (EM Action 2 – VECCEU) by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), DG EC & DG DEVCO of the European Commission. This grant allowed him to begin doctoral studies on the relationship between the arts and the media with an emphasis on popular music and mediatisation theory. The research was conducted from 2010 to 2015 at Gent University under dr. Daniel Biltereyst (Centre for Cinema and Media Studies, CIMS) and from 2016 to 2017 at Leiden University under dr. Henk Borgdorff and dr. Wim van der Meer (Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, ACPA). In the context of this project, Roos won an ENITS Scholarship for Research in Thai Studies in 2011, awarded by the Empowering Network for International Thai Studies, the Thailand Research Fund & Chulalongkorn University. The latter included the publication of an article and the possibility to conduct fieldwork in Thailand. He was also a member of the PhD Colloquium 'Eastern Languages and Cultures' at Gent University from 2010 to 2012, and a visiting scholar at Berklee College of Music Valencia in Fall 2013, where he studied popular music analysis with Contemporary Performance profs. Enric Alberich and Victor Mendoza. Roos is a founding member of ACPA's PhD Council at Leiden University.

Roos began a second line of doctoral research at Leiden University's Institute for Philosophy in 2012, under prof. dr. Frans de Haas and dr. Gerard Visser, about art perception from a phenomenological perspective. This research covers a wide range of theoretical approaches, from ecological perception to existentialism to Theravada Buddhism. Here, again, the philosophical exploration is based on case studies of particular artworks in their cultural contexts, including samples of Caribbean kinetic sculpture, Dutch post-Impressionist painting, Southeast Asian visual arts, German naïve painting and a performance of his own authorship. He is a founding member of the PhD council of the Institute for Philosophy, serving from 2015 to 2017. As part of his teaching practices, Roos lectures at Webster University Leiden, Department of Media Communications and Fine Arts, in topics related to his research, e.g. Art and Social Engagement (with a practical focus on performance), Language and Power (on French philosophy), Sound art, Short Film and Popular Music Studies. Roos is the editorial assistant and book reviews editor of *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication*, where he has also served as a guest editor, together with dr. Pepita Hesselberth, for the publication of a special issue on Short Film Experience in 2015.

Roos' academic interests go hand in hand with his practice as an artist. He has been professionally involved in diverse artistic fields since 1999. His interests include music and sound art, performing art, photography, digital drawing and literature. His creative competences include artistic software proficiency (music notation, audio design, vector graphics), musical composition and performance, stage direction and acting, literary writing. His work has been shown at Nuit Blanche Brussels, Museum Night Rotterdam, Film Plateau Gent, Leiden International Short Film Experience, among others. Roos was a volunteer at the latter from 2010 to 2016, and its Managing Director in 2017. Current engagements include 'The Involved Stage', a project which focuses on theatrical productions based on a combination of methods derived from diverse performative disciplines and the social sciences.