

VOLUME!

Volume !

La revue des musiques populaires

10 : 2 | 2014

Composer avec le monde

Creativity, Globalization and Music

Créativité, globalisation et musique

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/volume/4561>

DOI: [10.4000/volume.4561](https://doi.org/10.4000/volume.4561)

ISSN: 1950-568X

Printed version

Date of publication: 10 June 2014

Number of pages: 30-45

ISBN: 978-2-913169-35-7

ISSN: 1634-5495

Electronic reference

Martin Stokes, « Creativity, Globalization and Music », *Volume !* [Online], 10 : 2 | 2014, Online since 01 June 2016, connection on 10 December 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/volume/4561> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/volume.4561>

This text was automatically generated on 10 December 2020.

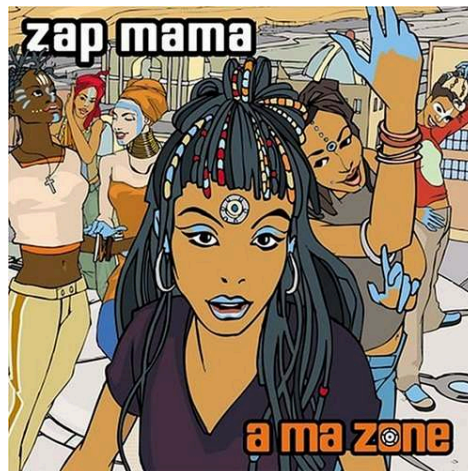
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Creativity, Globalization and Music

Créativité, globalisation et musique

Martin Stokes

1 THE POSTSTRUCTURALIST ASSAULT on the author and the romantic myth of genius has greatly inhibited discussion of “creativity” in recent decades. At least, it has inhibited them in academic discussion, and particularly in the social sciences. Outside academia, the high values attached to “creativity” and the so-called “creative industries” in the struggling economies of the West have persisted (see Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). Some kind of critical engagement is necessary. I approach the matter in this article from the point of view of globalization and post-colonial theory.



2 The concept of creativity has a complex history. It is essentially an Enlightenment term. But it draws on classical conceptions of *poesis* and *mimesis*, later entangled with monotheistic theologies. In many of the monotheistic traditions, God alone is deemed capable of “creating”; man merely imitating. Sometimes these capacities were treated with suspicion, in the fear that the artist assumes powers at odds with orderly social life, or that unwary souls might be confused and led astray.¹ At other times they were valued for their capacity to produce beauty, and lead people towards (spiritual) wisdom. Here, particularly in the neo-Aristotelian traditions that entered the worlds of Christianity, Judaism and Islam in the early Middle Ages, one finds sophisticated thinking about *how* the artist, or musician, or poet, produces effects on the person who watches or listens, with what tools, and in what relation to prior models. One also finds thinking about how these creative powers need to be schooled, trained and disciplined.

3 Doubts about the very concept of creativity have a long history, in other words. Contemporary theoretical anxieties might be regarded as extensions of these doubts. It is no surprise that it has dropped from the musicological and ethnomusicological agenda in recent decades. But certain music scholars have started to respond. There are three positions that furnish a starting point for this particular essay, which I would like to mention at the outset.

Georgina Born is interested in the possibilities afforded by new technologies to understand creativity as a *collective praxis*, dispersed over time and space (i.e. “relayed” creativity). In this she sees possibilities for a new cultural politics (Born 2005). Steven Feld is interested in how the global circulation of sounds detached from their source have stimulated new mimetic practices – particularly the appropriation of “pygmy” sounds by a variety of contemporary musicians. His picture of this kind of creativity is much less optimistic. New digital technologies and circulatory regimes have, for all of their utopian claims, deepened western fantasies, and western exploitation (Feld 2000). More neutrally, Jason Toynbee, drawing on Bourdieu, locates the question of creativity in a sociology of “field” and “habitus”. The field defines a more-or-less socially accepted space of artistic possibilities. Habitus, on the other hand, impels certain individuals or groups towards certain kinds of expression as a consequence of their social formation. Creativity, for Toynbee, is associated with historical moments and social arrangements where the fit between “field” and “habitus” is particularly loose (Toynbee 2012).

4 With these writers work in mind, I approach creativity as a social practice that is highly dependent upon a society’s technological and political arrangements. I share these writers’ interest in creative practices that effect broader kinds of *change*, changes that (might) increase social actors’ sense of connection, agency, possibility.² Musically speaking, as all of these writers suggest, these creative practices might be diverse. They may involve, in some situations, the transgression of past models; in others, their artful preservation. They may be accelerated, or inhibited, by changing relations in and around the medium of transmission: oral, written, digital. They will be valued very differently by the people involved. I also share these writers acknowledgment that creativity is located in a complex – indeed, peculiarly intense – field of social values.

5 The kinds of transmission practices we label “creative” in such terms will, then, be many and varied – not simply of one kind. So the term itself, “creative”, may be a loose one, in critical terms. But, as these writers suggest, it helpfully sharpens certain kinds of questions. Are certain historical moments, or certain locations in social space, or certain technological transformations, inherently “creative”? How – and by whom – is creativity recognized, validated and rewarded? Whose creative labour is obscured from view, appropriated, exploited? What kinds of struggle take place over these recognitions, and for what political stakes? All of these questions are thrown into particularly sharp relief when considered in the context of global cultural relations. These, of course, have a long history. I will examine two moments that are, I believe, particularly instructive. I will label them, broadly, as “early colonial encounter” and “World Music”.

Early Colonial Encounter

- 6 Globalization is associated broadly with the increasingly connected circulation of people, technologies, commodities and capital. It is thus intimately associated with colonialism. The Spanish imperial project was, arguably, the first to connect things globally with the conquest of Manila in 1570. One can start to speak of musical globalization at this early date, as Irving suggests in a recent study of “colonial counterpoint” in the Philippines (Irving 2010).

In commenting on the speed with which indigenous populations turned towards church counterpoint, and, in fact, became noted for their musical skill far beyond the Philippines, Irving observes that pre-colonial indigenous practice also involved multipart singing, and involved devotion to female deities. Many were, in other words, ready to participate in their colonial transformations – musically speaking, at least. Local elites, in which there was much intermarriage, came to understand themselves as mixed, and attribute value to their “mixed” cultural practices (“*mestizaje*”). They took particular pride in their church music. The Manilan church thus led in the development of a variety of new Marian repertoires, many of which were exported via Mexico to Europe.

- 7 A lively tradition of inquiry about music in what we would now call “cross-cultural” encounter developed. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Charles Perrault speculated about the connections between the music heard in the Ottoman and Persian courts, and the music of the ancient (biblical and Greek) world, known from scholarship. His writing on this subject took the form of an imagined debate between three characters: the Abbot, representing the church, the President, representing academia, and the Chevalier, representing nobility. Perrault published the various volumes of his *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (*Parallel between Ancients and Moderns*), between 1688 and 1692. One of the later volumes, published in 1697, discusses music along with astronomy, geography, navigation, war, philosophy, and medicine (Perrault 1991 [1697]).
- 8 It is worth describing in a bit of detail. Perrault imagines his characters strolling around the gardens of Versailles whilst waiting for the king to return from a trip. In this particular conversation, the Abbot takes the lead. He starts with a provocative observation: we think we know music, but actually know very little about music as it is understood by most of the world. “The music of the Ancients is still today the music of all the earth, except for one part of Europe...”; i.e. our own. The Abbot has heard stories about this “ancient” music, encountered at events and soirees in the French embassy in Constantinople. And they had got him wondering. When the French played their favorite opera overtures, “the Turks could not stand it, considering the mixture of parts, to which they were not accustomed (i.e. polyphony), to be a chaotic racket.” Musical values, he seems to think, might be relative, and not absolute. His companions seem momentarily dumbstruck.
- 9 The Abbot presses on. Like the Ancients, the Orientals have only cultivated monophony. As a result, they have developed a level of sensitivity to tuning and temperament that we have lost. Finally the President manages to splutter a response. The Germans, he observes, have invented keyboards in which the “irregularities” of the current keyboard tunings could be remedied by the addition of extra keys, to distinguish a D sharp from an E flat, and so forth. Surely this is a just a technical

matter? But the Abbot has his answer ready. Their musicians really must be regarded, in important respects, as more skillful than ours. When our violinists played favorite tunes, the “Persian” musician at court could play them back instantly. (“Persians”, from various parts of today’s Central Asia, represented the dominant musical style in the Ottoman court in this period.) Challenged in return, the French violinist could manage “no more than four notes” of the tune the Persian musician played.

- 10 The Abbot, Voltaire-like, playfully provokes his companions with suggestions that, from a certain perspective at least, it might be we who lack civilization, not they. He acknowledges, in passing, the areas in which western musicians enjoy superiority – in technology, in music literacy, in multipart polyphony. But he does so with an equivocation that seems calculated to provoke his colleagues. In the end, the Chevalier attempts to steer the conversation onto less contentious ground. Hadn’t Petis de la Croix, sent to study this music by the King, succeeded in learning this music tolerably well? The Abbot is suddenly struck by another flight of fancy. Having learned the music, “it would be nice to mix some bits of it into the Fêtes and Divertissements that His Majesty gave at his Court; to do a scene, for example, where the singers, dressed as Turks and playing the same instruments that are played in Constantinople, would sing the same songs and dance the same dances as are sung and danced before the Grand Seigneur, and another scene where the musicians would sing the same songs that are sung before the Sophi of Persia or the Grand Moghul.” The idea intrigues the President, who muses that it would be like being “transported in a single moment to all the different parts of the world” (Perrault 1991[1697]).
- 11 There are various things to note in this fascinating conversation. It is imagined, but it replicates some of what we know about musical diplomacy from other sources.³ In the first instance, it portrays a scene of exchange. The musicians play their own music, then swap, and see how they do. There is mutual inquisitiveness at play, as well as competition. A variety of restless musical transformations are set in train by these encounters, ones that will last centuries. Instruments circulate – violins, keyboards, triangles, bass drums, cymbals; their strangeness rapidly disappearing. The Ottomans begin to experiment with music notation, to adopt western instruments, to standardize their repertoires, and to facilitate performance in larger, coordinated ensembles. And they start to ask themselves questions about the powers of rationality and order that these practices seem to contain, or imply. The Europeans, for their part, start to experiment with intonation and temperament, to retrieve the – mysteriously lost – affective powers of the music of the Ancients. Something, they begin to feel, might be gained by studying this music, by taking it seriously.
- 12 The encounter initiates independent transformations of musical practice – broadly, “creative processes” – on both sides. Some of these are a consequence of the circulation of new technologies and ways of doing things (instruments, notation). Others (the quest for a style of composition that conveys the emotional power of words, for instance) may have been independently underway, but now receive a boost, as a rival power is deemed, possibly, to have an edge. It also initiates practices that somehow seek to combine these different musics, to think about them in relational terms, to bring them to bear on one another. Much later Arthur Koestler might have understood this in terms of “bisociation”, the creativity that emerges in the intersection and interaction of two frames of reference (Koestler 1964).⁴

- 13 So this was a creative moment, one might say, one rich in implication for both the modern West and the post-Ottoman world. But it was also entangled with a global struggle for power. There are many traces of this in the conversation. The Abbot wants to have costumed French musicians performing Ottoman music for the King, whose power might, somehow, be amplified by this act of mimesis. The capacity to *represent* in this way, to grasp the essences, structures and plans of things and impose them on others, became vitally important to Europeans in their colonies (Mitchell 1991). The President, for his part, is immediately lost in a daydream about musical teleportation, about music's capacity to enable us, somehow, to be everywhere at the same time. These might be understood as emergent fantasies of power at the dawn of European colonialism. They are, too, fantasies of value – of one kind or another – extracted from the Other, and accumulated by the Self. Certain historical conditions have been established, then, for thinking about creativity globally. Arguably, these continue to prevail today.

World Music

- 14 Many initially believed globalization to have reduced the sum total of creativity in the world. Alan Lomax, for example, spoke of the cultural “grey out” of modernity (Lomax 1968: 4). American films, popular music, soft drinks and fast food would conquer the planet. Cultural traditions would wither, the only creative options ones that involved copying of one kind or another. Lomax's cantometrics project was conceived – pessimistically – against this background.
- His views were widely shared. Somewhat later, a period of dominance by a handful of large media companies – Time-Warner, Thorn-EMI, Bertelsmann, Sony, PolyGram and Matsushita (the six “majors”) excited a great deal of discussion under the general rubric of the “cultural imperialism hypothesis”. In the mid 1990s, the International Federation for Phonographic Industries estimated that the majors controlled approximately 80-90 per cent of the sales of (legally) recorded music worldwide. These were widely understood to homogenize global tastes, and to commoditize culture in ways that broadly facilitated American hegemony.⁵
- 15 Enthusiasm for “World Music” in the industrial heartlands of Western Europe and North America the 1980s and 1990s suggested that this was not the case. The origins of the term and its history are debated.⁶ The concert promoters, journalists, musician and independent record company owners who coined the term in the UK intended to create “a handle for something that was already there, but needed to be identified” (Cottrell 2010: 62). This, at least, was the opinion of Ben Mandelsohn, one of the musicians and promoters present at the event. It was, then, in the view of those responsible for the term, a benign marketing device, intended to pull together the activities of “a bunch of people who were already friends, already working on things that they loved and supported” (Cottrell 2010: 63).
- 16 These people had recognized two things. Firstly, that far from “greying out”, or remaining trapped in tradition, the post-colonial world had, all along, been the scene of vibrant musical creativity. Secondly, that independent record producers in the West were already playing an active role in its diffusion and transformation. Following the punk rock explosion in the 1970s, the independents had become highly responsive to new confluences of youth, Black and migrant culture in European and American cities.

World music styles such as *rai*, a North African migrant music, were shaped and nurtured by independent recording companies, like the French label, Barclay.

- 17 The case of *rai* is instructive.⁷ PolyGram bought Barclay in 1978, and reaped the benefits when a *rai* album, Khaled's *Didi* of 1992, became an unexpected hit and sold in significant numbers across Europe. Khaled's success had a major impact on *rai* production in North Africa, accelerating transformations already underway. A genre formerly dominated by women (like Cheikha Remitti) gradually became a male dominated genre. Sounds earlier engineered and marketed with a North African audience in mind were fused with a variety of transatlantic black styles, and oriented to a broad European and American audience. PolyGram certainly profited, but this would not have happened without Barclay's cultivation of various underground and migrant markets in France. In part, then, the World Music phenomenon involved recognition that the "cultural imperialism" hypothesis had predicted matters quite wrongly, at least as far as media systems was concerned. Globally speaking, the interaction of large and small, official and unofficial media systems had had a productive and creative effect, transforming musics and markets in rather unpredictable ways.

World Music involved a recognition, then, of an "actually existing" globalization, one that had relatively little to do with American cultural hegemony, or the dominance of the six "majors". This might be thought of as a kind of "globalization from below".

- 18 It not only forged creative links *between* the industrial west and the "global south", but creative links *within* the global south. Musically speaking, these conversations have flourished, over significant periods of time, across the African diaspora, or what Paul Gilroy refers to as the "Black Atlantic", linked by significantly shared instruments, dance practices and performance techniques (Gilroy 1993). Religious movements and post-colonial solidarities would intensify these conversations, and spread them, later in the twentieth century. The West established the conditions of possibility for these musical interactions, through slavery and colonialism. But it has not necessarily been the dominant voice.
- 19 Consider, for example, that broad range of musical practices usually labeled "Afropop" in the West. The guitar, brought to sub-Saharan Africa by missionizing Christianity, was adapted to the interlocking aesthetic of indigenous lammelphones and chordophones. A guitar-based dance music, blended with rumba rhythms, and popularized in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in the 1950s, spread to a number of emerging African post-colonial states as a result of a political identification with both Cuba (for its revolution) and Zaire (for its glamour and modernity). Genres such as *Chimurenga* in Zimbabwe, *mbaqanga* in South Africa, *juju* and *highlife* in Nigeria, *makossa* and *bikutsi* in Cameroon might be seen in part as adaptations of the Zairean model, in part as independent local developments, and in part as responses to growing World Music interest in the West.⁸ The traffic in musical styles between West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be intense, as Rick Shain has shown in various publications (see, for example, Shain 2009).
- 20 So, on the one hand, World Music simply meant recognition, by white intellectuals in Western Europe and North America, of the incredible vitality of music in the "global south" in the twentieth century. There had been no "grey-out" of global tastes. Cultural imperialism did not mean the total domination of the "big six" media companies. Radio, recordings and guitars did not mean the triumph of western musical values. Far from being downtrodden and culture-less, migrant and black populations in the heart

of the Western metropolis had, all along, been vibrant global cultural actors, creating, shaping and circulating important new sounds.

- 21 But “World Music” also involved, perhaps inevitably, a desire to control and master. For some, there were commercial considerations. New metropolitan fashions for exotica were, and remain, profitable. For others, there were administrative and bureaucratic considerations. Given pressures in public life in the west to be more inclusive and aware of colonial pasts and the rights of minorities, difference had to be managed, ordered, bureaucratized. For others, there were considerations of intellectual capital. How was one to *think* diversity, multiculturalism, postcolonialism? What were the challenges for rethinking the arts, and who might seize the intellectual high ground in these debates? In the desire for control and mastery, I would argue, a new discourse of creativity came to play a complex and rather paradoxical role.

The distribution of creativity

- 22 Throughout the twentieth century, and well into the present century, non-Western music has continued to play a role in reinvigorating the creativity of the Western art music system. From the earliest period of European expansion, the non-West provided exotica – a stimulus to critical thinking, and some specific kinds of experimentation, as already mentioned. In the colonial period it began to justify a more general and systematic experimentation with scale, tonality and rhythm. The media revolutions of the twentieth century meant that these energies shifted to embrace popular music, from tango to rap and hip hop.
- 23 Ethnomusicology, from its earliest days, was hostile to such exoticism, primarily on the grounds of faulty representation. An ethical critique emerged only later over the attribution and ownership of creativity. Copyright laws involving non-Western music have always been easy to dodge. Concert audiences and CD listeners rarely expect attribution where, for example, Javanese gamelan, or Arab samai” forms, Breton bagpiping, or West African drumming are evoked, whether in western art or popular music. The “non-Western” creativity that is appropriated is, by implication, “traditional”, something disconnected from individual agencies and rights and thus not really “creativity” at all. Western creativity by contrast, enshrined in copyright legislation, is of a different, and by implication, more important order. The work of Brian Eno, Enigma, Peter Gabriel, David Byrne, Paul Simon and others was primarily criticized not for misrepresentation, but for exploitation (see, for recent examples, Feld 2000; Feld and Kirkegaard 2010).
- 24 This, then, is a picture of a world divided into two: a “traditional” non-West, and a “creative” West. A closely related picture simply inverts things: a West capable only of imitating; the non-West the site of a primal and powerful creativity. The latter assumes healing properties in a world damaged by industrial capitalism. Consider Peter Gabriel’s description of his attraction to African music in Philip Sweeney’s early World Music handbook:

“It was the choir I was drawn to initially – by Ladysmith Black Mambazo and others with their close kinship to Gospel and their blend of spirituality and sensuality at the same time... the spirituality of South African music appealed especially.... One of the most striking things about West African percussion is the fluidity of the rhythms. This is partly due to the actual equipment used. The little drumsticks that Senegalese drummers like Doudou N’Diaye use are often freshly cut from the tree,

so they're much more flexible than western drumsticks. They're also much shorter. The result is a more liquid tone, somewhere between a hand and a western drumstick in sound." (Sweeney 1991: 2)

- 25 African music here is deemed to operate in a space different to that of the industrial west, with its categorical and rigid distinctions between spirituality and sensuality, the body and technology, nature and culture. It involves "fluidity", "flexibility" and "liquidity". The west offers an alternative: a drumstick or a hand. Africa provides the space in between.⁹ The healing narrative is not difficult to discern. Gabriel's words echo long traditions of understanding Africa and the African Diaspora as the creative source of western popular music, one that white Europeans have come to consider "their own" only through appropriation or theft.
- 26 Afro- or Black-centric theft narratives are of course ubiquitous in Western pop music discourse, whether in relation to Elvis, the Rolling Stones, or Eminem. On the one hand, they involve a (no doubt sincere) recognition of musical exploitation on a global scale – one kind of exploitation among many. On the other they have done absolutely nothing to stop people exploiting African music, on one pretext or another. Criticisms of the way *other people* have exploited African music are usually intended to create an ethical space of possibility for more equitable appropriations of African music. These, as Feld notes in a damning critique (Feld 2000) are usually entirely self-deceiving. At issue here, though, is the way in which such narratives construct a world divided in two, in which the West either celebrates its creativity, or attempts to justify its appropriation of the creativity of others.

Hybridity, migrancy and fusion: a critical perspective.

- 27 World Music also perpetuates a rather different – though complementary – notion of global creativity: one associated with hybridity, migrancy and cultural "fusion".¹⁰ We could start with Philip Sweeney, in an early guide to World Music. World music might, he suggests, be understood
- as a sort of new mutated "First World" genre, a conscious fusion of traditional "Third World" forms with elements of Anglo-American rock and jazz. "I play world music," Salif Keita told me last year, "not African music." The new crossover/fusion area of music-making is currently booming, typified by the Brussels-based Belgian-Zairean female quintet Zap Mama, whose a capella arrangements mixing European, Central African pygmy, Zulu and Arab melodies, among other things, have made them one of the hottest attractions at this summer's European festivals (Sweeney 1992).
- 28 One must subject these terms, which simultaneously suggest and conceal struggles, accommodations and distinctions, to scrutiny. Salif Keita, for example, had followed a number of West African musicians to Paris, notably Manu Dibango. In his poignant memoir, Dibango describes the difficulties of life as an African musician in Paris in the 1950s, and, later, America. Dibango struggled with conflicting expectations and demands on his identity. In France he was expected to behave, musically, as a conduit for jazz, i.e. black American culture. In America, he was expected to behave, musically, as an African. Back in Cameroon, it was his European and American experience that mattered. "I am a divided man," he notes plaintively at the outset of his autobiography (1994: 2). But he eventually came to regard the way Americans and Europeans interpreted his Africanness with an amused detachment, and as a kind of creative

resource. Ad hoc musical experiments in one of these spaces might pay off, unexpectedly, in another, with other musicians and other audiences; returned to the original site of such experiments, an entire new genre might spring into existence. Such, indeed, is the story he tells of Soul Makossa, his major hit.

- 29 Hybridity here is linked to migration. Migrancy from the post-colonial world has, as is well known, been met by opposition, and, on the part of some, violence in the former colonial metropolitan heartlands. But attitudes all over Europe and North America are complex. Sociological and anthropological interest in “hyphenated identities” – Franco-Maghrebi, “Newyorican”, Irish-American, British-Asian and so forth – meant a rejection of the tenets of an earlier social science, which saw migrant culture as problematic, an inability to be fully one thing or another. Quite the reverse: such “hyphenated identities” came to be understood in terms of kinds of empowerment, agency, and creativity. The managers of metropolitan areas that increasingly felt a need to market themselves as “global cities” would subsequently make much of this (see Sassen 2001). “Ethnic neighborhoods” in such “global cities” signified diversity, energy and creativity, and thus an intelligent workforce, lively consumers, and a great place to do business. Hybridity has thus come to be equated with creativity, by many, for a variety of reasons.
- 30 In privileging migrancy as a particular site of creativity, there is a temptation to romanticize, and we need to be careful. Anna Tsing remarks trenchantly on the need to distinguish cosmopolitans and migrants. Cosmopolitans fashion their own world. Migrants have to fit into worlds made by other people, as anthropologist Anna Tsing once observed (Tsing 2002). Hybrid cultural practices – Sweeney’s “cross-over/fusion” – involve power relations that must always be carefully considered. Should there be any doubt about this, Manu Dibango’s autobiography speaks forcefully about the very real struggles faced by countless African migrants in Europe and America’s cities today, even when they are talented musicians.
- 31 Zap Mama, the well known “Brussels-based Belgian-Zairean female quintet” led by Marie Daulne, provides Sweeney with his second example of crossover, fusion and migrancy. This case, too, is worth exploring in a little detail. Daulne was born in Zaire, of a Belgian father and Zairean mother, and grew up in Belgium. Following Zap Mama’s initial success, she returned to Congo to learn traditional central African vocal techniques. After extensive travels, and a stay in New York, she returned to Belgium. Her story is reminiscent of Manu Dibango’s, though her struggles with her identity led in different directions. Manu Dibango seems ultimately to have come to understand his Africanness as a position, or stance, in a complex field of musical representations. Daulne, on the other hand, seems to have been animated by a more active fantasy of Africanness in music, one significantly shaped by ethnographic recordings. The track “Babenzélé”, for example, on *Adventures in Afropea* of 1993, closely mimics the densely layered interlocking of voices, whistles, and hand clapping on Simha Arom’s 1966 ethnographic recording, made among the Babenzélé, in the Central African Republic. For all of its studied fidelity to the Arom recording, the Zap Mama version contains a variety of subtly added elements. The women’s voices, for example, provide a sparse harmonic underpinning, in the form of an oscillation of tonic and dominant seventh chords throughout. Such combinations of the musical values of European a capella singing and African vocal technique prompt Sweeney to characterize their music as “hybrid”.

- 32 Musically speaking, the term “hybridity” is quite problematic, though. It might point, as Sweeney’s terms suggest, to a *consciousness* of fusion on the part of the actors involved. But there is always more to be said – beyond the contents of various social actors consciousness – about how musical practices have circulated, historically. “Anglo-American pop”, looked at in the broadest historical frame, comprises densely compacted African, Latin and Old World European folk elements. “African” musical practices are of similarly diverse origins, comprising, amongst other things, European elements that go back the earliest days of slavery, colonialism and missionary activity. Every element of a hybridized style is itself a hybrid, a bricolage of previous encounters, assimilations, blendings. At a given historical moment, a musicians such as Salif Keita or Marie Daulne may conceptualize their art and their creativity in terms of such “mixing”. But this might not be the most useful guide to understanding the broader conditions that permit these elements to “mix” in the first place, and how they will continue to circulate.
- 33 World Music discourse is associated with another ideological redistribution of creativity, this time onto migrants in the “global cities” of the West. It has been imagined in terms of hybridity – a term that, I have suggested, does not stand up to a great deal of critical interrogation. And it has been projected on migrants and migrant neighborhoods in ways that are, I have suggested, compensatory, and implicated in the marketing of “global cities”. Here, again, globalization has involved the intensification of myths surrounding creativity. How, then, do we think our way through them? I will make some tentative suggestions in the conclusion.

Conclusion: towards “creativity” in global perspective

- 34 “Globalization” is the term habitually given to late twentieth century transformations in the circulation of capital, labor and technology, or, more specifically, American hegemony. But, as we know, it has a much longer history, and it is not purely a western one. Neither, as we also know, is it simply a history of power. It is also a history of resistances and accommodations, identifications and senses of difference, tastes and pleasures, circulating on ever-increasing scales.
- “Creativity” is the term habitually given to acts by individuals within the process of cultural transmission. Something is added, through powers shrouded in mystique, that effects a transformation of materials, a breaking of forms and traditions. Such, at least, is the romantic myth. But it can be collective (i.e. distributed across social space) and relayed (i.e. distributed across time). It can also involve the preservation of materials, forms and traditions, just as much as their transformation. It is, as we have seen, a value attached to certain kinds of cultural transmission, usually of a positive nature, and thus a deeply ideological category.
- 35 These critical observations may, at first glance, suggest that there is nothing much to be said on “creativity in global perspective”. But some observations can surely be made. Firstly, whether in the guise of authenticity (ideally African), or hybridity (ideally migrant), fantasies and anxieties about authentic creativity persist, and are culturally consequential. These have motivated not just plunder and exploitation, but also, from the earliest period of colonial contact, wonder and play.¹¹ They have forced recognitions of the limits – and pretensions – of western hegemony (i.e. “universalism”). They have licensed critical thinking, and experimentation of a

consequential kind. They have involved imaginative efforts to bring things deemed separate together, whether to enjoy the play of difference, or explore (the possibility of) commonalities. All of this, too, might be said of World Music today, and its scholarly twin, ethnomusicology.

- 36 Ethnomusicology, the study of the music of the world, has an antagonistic and critical relationship with World Music, but the relationship has, actually, been extremely productive. David Byrne and Brian Eno's *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, of 1981, made extensive use of ethnographic and global popular music recordings; it pushed the technological envelope regarding analog sampling in ways that anticipated – and significantly paved the way for – digital sampling. It is also hard to imagine the minimalism of Steve Reich or Philip Glass without taking into account the ubiquity of Western African drumming ensembles and Javanese gamelans in North American ethnomusicology programmes in the same period. In the West, World Music, art music experimentalism and academic ethnomusicology (respectively, commerce, creativity, and critique in relation to the musics of the world) have been mutually implicated for much of the later 20th century, and remain so today. This “mutual implication” has not simply been a matter of western hegemony: it has often been critical, self-searching, and productive in unanticipated ways.
- 37 Secondly, globalization has been a matter of increasing scales of circulation and connection. This is not to imply equality: many are, of course, left out. Portable sound recording and reproduction technologies, from the cassette to the laptop, made sound objects (elements of style, timbre, musical technique) transportable in unique ways – ways that, moreover, have tended to fly under the radar of systems of cultural control and authority. Highly mobile migrant populations thus have had ways of staying in touch with home, musically speaking, and enabling imaginative connections with other migrant communities (who may have little in common other than skin color, or religion). Conjunctions of technological transformation, labor migration and urbanization have produced the 20th century's most enduring popular musical practices: tango, jazz, salsa, rai, rap and hip-hop – the list goes on. Metropolitan (most recently “World Music”) markets for some of these genres often came to be a significant factor in their production and stylistic development.¹² Creativity can usefully be understood in terms of the new global spaces opened up for musical communication and conversation through uneven, though ever-widening scales in the circulation of people, technologies and ideas.
- 38 Today, this would, then, be to explore “creativity” in relation to digital technologies, to ideologies that forge global connections amongst the powerless (e.g. “Blackness”), to markets in exotica (e.g. “World Music”), and to increasingly global patterns of movement and settlement (e.g. “global cities” and migrancy). It would involve, as I have argued throughout, thinking about creativity in more socially, historically and ethnographically grounded ways, in broader contexts of cultural transmission. And it would involve, as I have also argued, not only globalization “from above”, but “from below”; that is to say, in terms of multiple projects of world-imagining in multiple locales, and not just those of the twentieth and early twenty-first century's dominant powers.

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NOTES

1. Plato, as we know, banned the poet from the polis. The perspective I invoke here is, broadly speaking, that of Rancière's analysis of "the mimetic regime" (surpassed, in his view, by the representative and aesthetic regimes), which I consider to have been quite persistent.
2. I also share Jacques Rancière's recognition of the relationship between the "redistribution of the senses" in the aesthetic domain and other kinds of (political) redistribution (Rancière 2004). I see the intensity of this connection post 1800 European culture, and the very great usefulness of

rethinking the category of “the aesthetic” with this in mind, but it is surely by no means limited to Enlightenment European high culture.

3. This has been most systematically explored, in the English world, by Ian Woodfield. See, for instance, Woodfield 1995.

4. Koestler’s notion of bisociation, combined with some recent thinking in cognitive psychology, was significant to Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner; this has had an impact, in turn, on the work of musicologist Laurence Zbikowski, which, though not explicitly concerned with creativity in music, has important consequences for this discussion. In short, this suggests that cross-domain mapping may be a way in which certain currents of innovation are generated and made meaningful. See Zbikowski 2002.

5. For an early, and usefully critical, discussion, see Laing 1986.

6. In the UK, many regard a meeting in 1987 of concert promoters, journalists, musicians and independent record company owners in The Empress of Russia, a pub in Islington, London as being central. See Cottrell 2010 for a recent account.

7. I draw primarily on Virolle-Suibes 1995 and Gross, McMurray and Swedenburg 2003.

8. Key studies here include Turino 2000, Erlmann 1999, Meintjes 2003, and White 2008.

9. Gabriel’s terms resonate with characterizations of capital and labor in the context of globalization. “Creativity”, one should note, is much valued by governments pursuing austerity programmes in Europe at the moment, and very much in these terms. Their attitudes towards funding the arts and the humanities, where one might learn not only “flexibility” but also the ability to understand things critically, are full of contradictions, needless to say.

10. I draw here on critiques of World Music by Simon Frith (2000) and Timothy Taylor (1997).

11. I have Michael Taussig’s analysis of colonial mimesis in mind here (Taussig 1993). Copying, which reverberates on either side of perhaps the most violent colonial encounters, has complex cultural dynamics. The early colonists in Latin America noted powers of mimicry in native populations, and mimicked these themselves. The process reverberated either side of the colonial divide, in other words, as both sides attempted to gain some purchase on each other’s mysterious powers. Taussig’s discussion of the unruly *creative* energies set in play by colonial mimesis is highly relevant to this discussion. See also Stokes 2004, which explores, in the conclusion, how an analysis of play might be brought to bear on a discussion of musical globalization.

12. Jocelyne Guilbault (1993) notes a culture of dependency on French markets in her study of zouk in the Antilles, for instance.

ABSTRACTS

Globalization theory has been – however implicitly – highly concerned with the extent to which globalization either enhances or inhibits cultural creativity. Debates about “World Music” exhibit the same concern. These debates – grouped here under the three broad headings of “cultural imperialism”, “hybridity” and “authenticity”, and dealing briefly with case-studies from West and North Africa – imply a persistent anxiety about what might count as “true creativity” as opposed to “imitation”, “translation”, “cultural greyout”, or “bureaucratization”. These categories for describing various kinds of cultural transmission are ideologically-laden, obviously enough, and enshrine western aesthetic values. But they are under pressure from many of the new cultural practices associated with globalization. The task of much “World Music” discourse, I argue, is one of exerting a counter-pressure, of maintaining some of the essential lineaments of

western aesthetic ideology. My final case study – a brief discussion of Perrault's *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* – reminds us that what I am describing here as “World Music discourse” has a long history.

La théorie de la globalisation a été – bien qu’implicitement – fortement concernée par la question de savoir dans quelle mesure la globalisation accroît ou, à l’inverse, entrave la créativité culturelle. Les débats sur la *world music* relèvent de la même préoccupation. Ces débats – groupés ici autour des trois notions d’« Impérialisme culturel », d’« Hybridité » et d’« Authenticité » et des études de cas provenant d’Afrique du Nord et d’Afrique de l’ouest – montrent une anxiété persistante face à ce qui relèverait de « la vraie créativité » par opposition à « l’imitation », « la traduction », « la grisaille culturelle », ou « la bureaucratisation ». Ces catégories élaborées pour décrire les diverses sortes de transmission culturelle sont idéologiquement connotées, et reposent de manière assez évidente sur des valeurs esthétiques occidentales. Mais elles sont remises en question par de nombreuses nouvelles pratiques culturelles associées à la globalisation. Dans ce texte, je montre que la tâche du discours sur la world music consiste pour l’essentiel à exercer une contre-pression, dans le sens où il entretient certaines des caractéristiques essentielles de l’idéologie esthétique occidentale. Ma dernière étude de cas – une brève discussion de Charles Perrault dans le *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* – nous rappelle que ce je décris ici comme « le discours de la world music » a une longue histoire.

INDEX

Keywords: creation / creativity, acculturation / creolization / hybridization, authenticity, globalization, imperialism / (post)colonialism, alterity / difference, practices / uses (social)

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Mots-clés: création / créativité, authenticité, acculturation / créolisation / hybridation, mondialisation, discours, impérialisme / (post)colonialisme, altérité / différence, pratiques / usages sociaux

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