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## Undoing Authenticity as a Discursive Construct

### A Critical Pedagogy of Ethnomusicology and “World Music”

*This chapter deals with the concept of authenticity in the pedagogy of ethnomusicology and “world music.” Yet rather than exploring the implications of a well-established conception of authenticity and adaptation from the conceptual perspective of music education, in this chapter I argue – whilst showing that authenticity is a discursive construct – that within the context of ethnomusicology, Western concerns with authenticity are deeply ingrained within the politics of race and ethnicity and may even be construed as implicitly racist. To this end, authenticity as a discursive construct will be outlined, showing how in ethnomusicology the authentic became defined through “otherness” in terms of “tradition” and race and ethnicity. Meanwhile, authenticity is equally relevant in the formal transmission of ethnomusicology at universities, which will be illustrated subsequently, showing how concerns with authenticity informed by Western politics of race and ethnicity are clearly evident in the perceptions of students who often evince strong opinions about difference and otherness in the world’s musics they encounter. Ultimately, I wish to emphasize the importance of “undoing” authenticity in the university classroom through deconstructing racial and ethnic imaginations, which is of pivotal importance for a more holistic, inclusive, and democratic pedagogy of ethnomusicology and “world music.”*

This chapter has grown out of a conference paper, which – upon an invitation by the conference organizers – engaged with the concept of authenticity and adaptation in music pedagogy in the West. Whilst grateful for the opportunity, my initial reaction to this invitation was one of surprise, as critical debates in our discipline surrounding authenticity have been somewhat exhausted. Indeed, “by now, we consider it [authenticity] an insoluble question, a moot point”<sup>1</sup> and “often seeing it as a useless and obsolete idea”<sup>2</sup>. I also felt that the sub-theme of “authenticity and adaptation” invited me to engage with the ways in which music cultures can and should authentically be transmitted and learnt by students in the West. Such focus resonates with somewhat uncritical calls in the music education literatures to pay more attention to and take greater responsibility for authenticity in formal teaching practices.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, this would mean recognizing the need for some degree of musical adaptation and assimilation into Western educational culture or “compromise” in removing

1 NETTL, Bruno (2010). *Music Education and Ethnomusicology: A (usually) Harmonious Relationship*. In: *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, p. 5.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3 JOHNSON, Sherry (2000). *Authenticity: Who Needs It?* In: *British Journal for Music Education* 17(3), p. 279–282. For examples of non-critical debates on authenticity in music education, see CAIN 2005 (specifically p. 106–107) and WIGGINS 2007.

music from its original setting.<sup>4</sup> Such debates typically relate authenticity to tradition<sup>5</sup> and are based on the premise that the transmission of non-Western musics in the Western institution necessitate a degree of Westernization, both of the music itself and the methods used for transmission with varying degree of overlap between “original” and “new” musical reality,<sup>6</sup> at times concluding that authenticity may in fact be incompatible with the reality of Western education.<sup>7</sup> Thus, much music education literature calls for authentic musical transmission and learning, even if little attention has been paid to the meaning of authenticity in music education.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, from a music education perspective on musical authenticity there still seems to exist a need for its critique, even though attempts to think along more critical lines have begun to emerge:

“The crucial questions are not ‘what is authenticity?’ but ‘who needs authenticity and why?’ and ‘how has authenticity been used?’ [...] I suggest that engaging with similar questions in music education would move us past the current paralyzing concern for authenticity [...]. For me as a music educator, the question is not ‘is this song/instrument/recording authentic?’ or even ‘is it more or less authentic?’ Rather, the questions [...] might be better phrased as: ‘How was this music produced? For whom? By whom? In what context? For what purpose? With what influences?’ These questions move us past the authentic/inauthentic dichotomy, and even past the authentic/compromise continuum, to look at each musical interaction in its specific context.”<sup>9</sup>

A similar line is adopted by world music educator Patricia Shehan Campbell, who suggests that “music – regardless of origin – is authentic or genuine to the group of people who perform it”<sup>10</sup>. Besides the debates concerning authenticity in music education, I believe that the topic of authenticity is still equally pivotal in current ethnomusicological thinking, specifically in the context of its transmission. For instance, in Solís’ excellent edited collection, we can find a strong critique of musical transmission, which is often staged and managed, for potentially constructing tradi-

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- 4 PALMER, Anthony J. (1992). *World Musics in Music Education: The Matter of Authenticity*. In: *International Journal of Music Education* 19, p. 38. VOLK, Terese M. (1998). *Music, Education, and Multiculturalism: Foundations and Principles*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 9. WIGGINS, Trevor (2005). *Cultivating Shadows in the Field? Challenges for Traditions in Institutional Contexts*. In: *Cultural Diversity in Music Education: Directions and Challenges for the 21st Century*, edited by Shehan Campbell, John Drummond, Peter Dunbar-Hall, Keith Howard, Huib Schippers and Trevor Wiggins. Bowen Hills Brisbane: Australian Academic Press, p. 20.
- 5 SCHIPPERS, Huib (2006). *Tradition, Authenticity and Context: The Case for a Dynamic Approach*. In: *British Journal for Music Education* 23(3), p. 333, 347.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 341–42.
- 7 SKELTON, Kevin D. (2004). *Should We Study Music And/Or As Culture?* In: *Music Education Research*, 6(2), p. 169.
- 8 PALMER (1992), p. 32. For a good, albeit uncritical overview, see SCHIPPERS (2006) and SCHIPPERS, Huib (2010). *Facing the Music: Shaping Music Education from a Global Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 47–53.
- 9 JOHNSON (2000), p. 284–85.
- 10 CAMPBELL, Patricia S. (1995). “Authentic” vs. “Traditional”. In: *Music Educators Journal* 82(1), p. 6.

tionalism and authenticity.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, from my own research into students' experiences of the teaching and learning of ethnomusicology and world musics, I was aware that the transmission of world musics in Western universities does still often reinforce deep-rooted – that is, culturally and psychologically hard-wired – concepts of authenticity in the university classroom when listening to, viewing and performing musics from around the world.<sup>12</sup>

Yet rather than exploring the implications of a well-established conception of authenticity and adaptation from the conceptual perspective of music education, or even re-reporting the results of my research,<sup>13</sup> I will adopt a different, perhaps more radical position in this chapter. Specifically, I wish to argue here – whilst showing that authenticity is a discursive construct<sup>14</sup> – that within the context of ethnomusicology, Western concerns with authenticity are deeply ingrained within the politics of race and ethnicity<sup>15</sup> and may by some critics even be construed as implicitly racist.<sup>16</sup> This becomes evident when we consider, for instance, how authenticity works in the context of “world music”: Youssou N'Dour's albums often get scorned by Western consumers for compromising the authentic in his music. Such Western demands for authenticity and passion for otherness, which may also be seen as the fetishization of difference based on deep-rooted Western ideas of race and ethnicity, put these musicians under immense pressure to remain musically and otherwise pure, untouched and pre-modern.<sup>17</sup> I will return to this example in the latter part of the chapter where I explore a case study of my own teaching practice.

Now, readers will perhaps note my affinity with British cultural studies. Indeed, I borrow unashamedly from the works of Stuart Hall, as his critiques of the politics of race and anti-racism are, to my mind, of pivotal importance for a more circumspect discussion of authenticity and adaptation and, ultimately, for a more holistic pedagogy of musics from around the world. I argue, therefore, that if the term authenticity cannot be scrapped from our dictionaries, its continued persistence in Western mindsets must at least be undone by engaging our students in critical debate on the politics of race and ethnicity.

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11 SOLÍS, Ted (2004). *Introduction. Teaching What Cannot Be Taught: An Optimistic Overview*. In: *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*, edited by Ted Solís. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 16.

12 KRÜGER 2009a, 2009b.

13 My prior research involves a more polite critique of authenticity in the formal transmission and learning of ethnomusicology in the UK, which I wish to challenge in this chapter: KRÜGER, Simone (2009a). *Experiencing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Learning in European Universities*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 71–88.

14 In the music disciplines, it is commonly accepted that authenticity is a socio-culturally constructed concept, and yet in music education, such critical debates have yet to emerge. I therefore wish to discuss authenticity as a discursive construct here at some length.

15 RADANO, Ronald/BOHLMAN, Philipp V. (2000). *Introduction: Music, Race, Their Past, Their Presence*. In: *Music and the Racial Imagination*, edited by Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 28–30.

16 It is important to acknowledge that the connection between authenticity and race/-ism is not entirely new (see e. g. BAUMANN 1997 on the German perspective). However, in the Anglophone ethnomusicology literatures, there is little mention of any such association.

17 TAYLOR, Timothy D. (1997). *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets*. New York: Routledge, p. 135.

## Authenticity as Discursive Construct

In the cultural studies sense, authenticity must be understood as a discursive practice, a shifting signifier that is used to organize a classificatory system of difference. Authenticity is more like a language, rather than being scientifically constituted. Its meaning, because it is relational, can never be finally fixed, but is subject to the constant process of redefinition and appropriation. In the context of musical classification, for instance, attempts to ground authenticity scientifically have been largely shown to be untenable. In other words, concepts of authenticity are differently constructed in various fields of musical study. Authenticity has dissimilar meanings in different academic contexts, in different historical formations, at different moments in time. We must therefore substitute a socio-historical or cultural definition of authenticity for the scientific one.

For example, folklorists saw (and often still see) “cultural purity” in music at the heart of their endeavors into the collecting, preserving and reviving of “rural” folk musics in the West.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, folklorists have shared a concern with “selecting the best and most authentic folk music” so as to “counteract the damaging effects produced by modern conditions”<sup>19</sup>. By comparison, classical musicologists constructed the concept of authenticity by attributing greater value and worth to certain musical expressions, notably so-called “great” art music of the past. Here, authenticity sparked debates particularly in the context of pre-Romantic music, with specific focus on the instruments and scores used in performance,<sup>20</sup> as well as in the context of contemporary art music, in which authenticity is apparently more convincingly demonstrated.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, popular music scholars have studied the ways in which certain forms of popular music, notably rock, have typically been regarded as real and genuine, while others, notably pop, have not.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, “notions of authenticity have been positioned around issues related to historical continuity, artistic expression and sincerity, autonomy from commercial imperatives, technology and production, and the expression of and engagement with the cultures of certain audiences, communities or localities”<sup>23</sup>.

18 BOYES, Georgina (1993). *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. SAYGUN, Ahmed Adnan (1951). *Authenticity in Folk Music*. In: *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 3, p. 7–10. WIORA, Walter (1949). *Concerning the Conception of Authentic Folk Music*. In: *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 1, p. 14–19.

19 KARPELES, Maud (1951). *Some Reflections on Authenticity in Folk Music*. In: *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 3, p. 13.

20 COOK, Nicholas (1998). *Music: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. SHELEMAY, Kay K. (1996). *The Ethnomusicologist and the Transmission of Tradition*. In: *The Journal of Musicology* 14(1), p. 37. SHELEMAY, Kay K. (2001). *Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds*. In: *Ethnomusicology* 45(1), p. 21–22.

21 HILL, Peter (1986). “Authenticity” in *Contemporary Music*. In: *Tempo* 159, p. 2.

22 COOK (1998), p. 11. LEONARD, Marion/STRACHAN, Robert (2003). *Authenticity*. In: *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World, Volume I: Media, Industry and Society*, edited by John Shepherd, David Horn, Dave Laing, Paul Oliver and Peter Wicke. London: Continuum, p. 164–66. See further, GRENIER, Line/GUILBAULT, Jocelyne (1990). “Authority” Revisited: *The “Other” in Anthropology and Popular Music Studies*. In: *Ethnomusicology* 34(3), p. 390–394.

23 LEONARD/STRACHAN (2003), p. 164.

In these three fields of study – folklore, musicology, and popular music – authenticity is a highly political discursive practice, as markers of authenticity are determined and defined in relation to class (music of the “simple folk”; elite music of the past; popular music of the “ordinary people”), without questioning Whiteness as the perceived norm, which served to establish certain musical hierarchies and to valorize certain categories of musics over others. In ethnomusicology, authenticity is equally political, yet the fundamental difference here is that the authentic became defined through “otherness” in terms of “tradition”<sup>24</sup> and, as I argue, through race and ethnicity. Ethnomusicologists have historically placed greater value on those authentic musical traditions that are embedded within the context and lived experience of non-Western peoples, whereby non-Western became equated with non-White, Black, non-European, foreign, East (as in Orientalist discourse).<sup>25</sup> Ethnomusicology’s “traditional ‘hunting grounds’”<sup>26</sup> grew out of a concern with folk, tradition, place and homogeneity. Early ethnomusicology thereby valorized tradition and fidelity in world musics, sharing an affinity with German comparative musicology’s emphasis on descriptive analyses of artifacts not from here and now.<sup>27</sup> This perception of authenticity has its roots in the long European romantic celebration of the native non-Westerner as being more real and therefore more authentic than the civilized Westerner,<sup>28</sup> a view that also marks a spectator position in terms of relating to the “other”.<sup>29</sup> This “other”, a highly political term, connotes what is deviant, unnatural and strange because it exists outside what the West deems normal and part of itself; it is also a highly judgmental term, as it supports the notion that Europeans are superior to their “others”. Comparative musicologists and early ethnomusicologists then tended to gather and study these other musics in remote regions, specifically musics that they deemed purer and less contaminated by other influences than those produced in

24 SHELEMAY (1996); SCHIPPERS (2006), p. 338.

25 Using binary oppositions as a framework, Orientalist definitions of Whiteness are always constructed in terms of their differences from non-Whites. The following is a list of categories used by White culture to define non-White culture: Non-White – White; primitive – civilised; savage – sophisticated; body – mind; irrational – rational; natural – cultural; eternal – historical; ancient – modern; mysterious – unknown; magical – scientific; Heathen – Christian; evil – good; innocent – knowing; exotic – ordinary; erotic – repressed; free – controlled.

26 REYES, Adelaida (2009b). *Urban Ethnomusicology: Past and Present*. In: Music in Motion: Diversity and Dialogue in Europe, edited by Bernd Clausen, Ursula Hemetek, Eva Saether, European Music Council. Bielefeld: Transcript, p. 178.

27 MERRIAM, Alan P. (1977). *Definitions of “Comparative Musicology” and “Ethnomusicology”: An Historical-Theoretical Perspective*. In: Ethnomusicology: History, Definitions, and Scope, edited by Kay Kaufman Shelemay. New York: Garland Publishing.

28 FRITH (2000), p. 308. GEBESMAIR and SMUDITS (2001), p. 112, explain that “the search for authenticity in the social and material world, as well as concerning the person (in psychoanalysis) began at the end of the last century, at a time when the citizens of the newly industrialised countries had an unprecedented variety of goods, lifestyles and artistic expressions at their disposal. This new range of choice in combination with a disrupted social order demanded an active positioning of the self. Authenticity came to be an orientation device and a mark of distinction”. According to this Romantic concept, cultural purity rather than hybridity became the measuring device for authenticity while as a result, Europeans began collecting folk music and music from exotic, faraway places outside their homelands thinking that “real” traditional musics were dying out.

29 TRIMILLOS, Ricardo D. (2004). *Subject, Object, and the Ethnomusicology Ensemble: The Ethnomusicological ‘We’ and ‘Them’*. In: Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles, edited by Ted Solís. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 27.

conditions of obvious cultural interchange. Authenticity thus became a measure for music that is

“accurately produced and genuinely representative of its actual history, cultural background, contexts of performance, or authorship. Certain instruments, voice styles, repertory, and recordings may be put forward as authentic, usually in critical opposition to other examples, which [...] are less valid as representations, less grounded in reality, less authoritative, and so not to be trusted or valued.”<sup>30</sup>

The 1950s marked a turning point in thinking about authenticity in predominantly US-based ethnomusicology, shaped by the critical project in anthropology and, since the 1980s, cultural and popular music studies when ethnomusicology became widely criticized for its blatant romanticization of the native and natural in contrast to the civilized and the modern.<sup>31</sup> This turning point, commonly called the “approach to subject matter”<sup>32</sup>, meant comparative musicology became less influential in modern ethnomusicology, both in the US and Europe.<sup>33</sup> Modern ethnomusicology is no longer framed by certain subject matters thus also to include art and commercial popular music regardless of its place of origin, also evident in the shift toward studying migrant musics in urban contexts.<sup>34</sup> This shift is marked by the introduction of new sub-fields like “urban ethnomusicology” or “ethnomusicology at home” to denote the new field sites where ethnomusicologists study musics today.<sup>35</sup> Since then, it has become less common for music scholars to make judgments about which musics are worthy of collecting and which are not. In fact, critics began questioning the concept of authenticity altogether and argued that certain musics are only inauthentic or less authentic in the framework of the above-described essentialist and dichotomous understanding of authenticity. This markedly changed situation led many ethnomusicologists to adopt the position that they could no longer approach music with the assumption that rural traditions are necessarily more authentic than those of urban centers.<sup>36</sup>

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30 STOCK, Jonathan P. J. (2011). *Authenticity*. Unpublished material, provided by author, p. 1.

31 FRITH (2000), p. 308.

32 REYES, Adelaida (2009a). *What do Ethnomusicologists Do? An Old Question for a New Century*. In: *Ethnomusicology* 53(1), p. 10.

33 See BOHLMAN, Philip V. (1992). *Ethnomusicology's Challenge to the Canon; the Canon's Challenge to Ethnomusicology*. In: *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons*, edited by Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 129 for the latter.

34 BARFIELD, Thomas (ed.) (1997). *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. Malden: Blackwell, p. 163.

35 NETTL, Bruno (2005). *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, p. 184–96. STOCK, Jonathan P. J. (2008). *New Directions in Ethnomusicology: Seven Themes Toward Disciplinary Renewal*. In: *The New (Ethno)Musicologies*, edited by Henry Stobart. *Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities*, No. 8. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow, p. 199–204. Even though the concepts and methods used to study musics in these new environments apparently still resemble those of comparative musicology or early ethnomusicology: REYES (2009b), p. 178.

36 STOCK (2011).

## **Authenticity in the Transmission of Ethnomusicology**

However, certain musical styles, most notably syncretic, popular or imported musics, are still today avoided as “unrepresentative” by some ethnomusicologists.<sup>37</sup> Authenticity still persists in our discipline today. Some ethnomusicologists still wish to explore and discover the “older” repertoires of “other” music cultures during ethnographic fieldwork:

“When I set out to do my fieldwork, I didn’t know how much music I would still find [...] with its primary functions intact [...] I had read about musics dying out [...]. People kept saying it’s like a swansong; it’s breathing its last breath. But then I would arrive at these fairs, half way up a mountain in the middle of the night and just find lots of people singing, improvising and [...] I would ask: ‘What’s that song you just sang?’ and they would say: ‘It’s about last year [...]’ It was still happening! [...] To find that it was happening for real was deeply satisfying at lots of different levels, particularly since it seemed quite happily to coexist with what was at surface level in the towns [...] the cosmopolitan [...]. But then in particular, they were still creating, often quite deliberately, spaces and contexts where they can operate in the old way, which seemed to be in space and time apart from the cosmopolitan.”<sup>38</sup>

In ethnomusicology and its transmission at universities, the study of popular musics emerged relatively slowly. In 2003 during my first round of research, I found that many world music courses were still dominated by musics that are traditional and not from the West, with popular, commercialized styles remaining peripheral to the core subject matters. Ethnomusicology courses at subsequent levels of study did include popularized musics more frequently, yet these styles were still treated as peripheral compared to more traditional, non-Western musics. Courses based entirely on popular music were rare. In explaining this trend, I suggested that the concern with traditional, non-Western styles may reflect ethnomusicologists’ continued research interests and specialism, particularly among the older generation of ethnomusicologists who have been trained in “the so-called old school of ethnomusicology” and could be described as “‘museum-culture’ people”.<sup>39</sup>

The appropriation of the other into formal education is obviously problematic as it brings significant ethical implications on the basis that

“[...] the failure to acknowledge the full range of a society’s musical life leaves the ethnomusicologist open to the charge of being interested in the most exotic material only, and thereby constructing an orientalist portrait that overemphasizes difference.”<sup>40</sup>

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37 Ibid., p. 2.

38 Originally published in KRÜGER (2009a), p. 47.

39 Neil Sorrell, York, 6 May 2006; quoted in KRÜGER (2009a), p. 217. See also SOLÍS 2004, p. 11, for similar discussions.

40 STOCK (2011), p. 2.

When such concepts are perpetuated in the academy, we run the risk of instilling or reinforcing certain hierarchical, value-laden attitudes and perspectives toward self and other that ethnomusicology sought so passionately to challenge since the 1950s. Thus, the appropriation of traditional musics not from the West into the academy has significant ethical implications and has been severely criticized.<sup>41</sup> As a result of post-colonial awareness, postmodernism, and globalization, the emphasis of ethnomusicological research began to shift also to acknowledging the dynamics of musics transculturally and, indeed, globally, and yet the transmission and learning in the UK academy followed only slowly. Nonetheless, in 2011, the situation had clearly shifted toward a more nuanced approach that deals with the fact that music cultures across the world are not static, frozen entities resembling some kind of continuity with the past. As a result, university programs in ethnomusicology in the UK became increasingly eclectic in their subject matters.<sup>42</sup> Today, many UK-based ethnomusicologists are interested in the study of popular music, both in their own research and in the classroom, and this interest is marked by interdisciplinarity and multiplicity of academic perspectives while drawing on approaches and perspectives from a wide range of disciplines and fields of study.

Even whilst ethnomusicologists may have changed their research foci in order to escape critiques surrounding orientalism, post-colonialism, and exoticism, I maintain that the authentic has a continuing force in the formal transmission of ethnomusicology and world musics in the West, specifically among students through their continued concern with “otherness” where the other is defined in racial or ethnic terms. Only recently, for instance, during an introductory session on my course, I projected images of different people onto the board (e. g., English football fan, Queen Victoria, as well as various indigenes, including an Aboriginal Indigenous Australian in a naturalistic setting, wearing “traditional” clothing and long hair whilst sitting on the floor). Afterwards I asked the students to describe their immediate reactions. One student referred to the latter image, commenting that it shows a “backward person, a primitive man”. Such a reaction, as shocking as it may be, is not uncommon amongst novice students. Their perception of so-called backwardness and primitivism derives from a long Western history of religious and scientific racism that sought to prove that there is a natural connection between the way people look (the differences of color, hair and bone) and what they think and do.<sup>43</sup>

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41 SOLÍS (2004), p. 17.

42 For detailed examples, see KRÜGER, Simone (2009b). *The Ethnomusicologist as Pedagogue: Disciplining Ethnomusicology in the United Kingdom*. In: *Ethnomusicology in the Academy: International Perspectives*. Special issue of *The World of Music* 51(3), p. 139–170.

43 For instance, the same image and question were used by Prof. Dr. Hartmut Möller in November 2011 to ask his music students at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock for their reactions, and what follows is a summary of some of their comments: “natürliches, körperliches Musizieren ... Urwald ... Stammesmusik, Trommeln, Rasseln, Gesang ... afrikanisches Naturvolk ... rhythmische Musik ... die Freiheit von der Freudigkeit des Lebens ... eine weniger entwickelte Zivilisation ... Ureinwohner ... Urvolk ... frei ... intuitives Handeln/ekstatisch/Ureinwohner ... Eingeborener, der Mensch stammt vom Affen ab.” I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Hartmut Möller for this initiative, as it provides a further level of evidence to my argumentation and greatly enhances the discussions by adding more current examples of students’ perceptions at a German Hochschule.

We all know that the racist project classified different ethnic or racial groups and ascribed characteristics to these different groupings so as to assume some kind of “normal” behavior or conduct about “them”, and to know the hard and fixed boundaries between “us” and “them”, and with that, binary concepts of science – nature, cultured – uncivilized, cultivated – barbarous/primitive and so on. Yet what is in fact really disturbing here is that the definitions of race, which have these negative and positive attributes built into them, are alive and prevalent today. Stuart Hall puts it as follows:

“The fact [is] that the biological, physiological, or genetic definition, having been shown out of the front door, tends to sidle around the veranda and climb back in through the window.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus, concerns with authenticity informed by Western politics of race and ethnicity are clearly evident when we look at the perceptions of our students who seem to evince strong opinions about difference and otherness in the world’s musics they encounter. Musical experiences work at many different levels of meaning, and students’ perceptions are particularly shaped by certain musical and extra-musical signifiers, including physical spaces, the material, literate and sonic aspects, as well as the ethnicity of the ethnomusicologist.<sup>45</sup>

### Impacting Factors on Students’ Perceptions of Authenticity

The physical space, in which students encountered “the other”, resembles one impacting factor on their perception, even if students’ experiences obviously differ from those which would emerge through complete exposure in the original music culture, as the instructional space can never be a true replication of the original culture. Returning to my research, I found that some ethnomusicologists seemed to reduce (whether deliberately or not) the difference between the original and the instructional culture by including displays of certain items and artifacts that evoke students’ sense of difference, and thereby recreate the authentic:

“I arrived at a small terrace house [...] The small room [...] contained a normal-size kitchen table [...] There were [...] lots of photographs of mainly Afghan musicians, of whom I recognized a few from the film *Breaking the Silence* [...], and quite a few instruments, including two rubab, some long-necked lutes, and other instruments from Afghanistan or India. Walls were covered with pictures, which looked a bit like ragamala paintings, Chinese wall plates, and other stuff; all together, a small cosy room reminding me that I am in an ethnomusicology course.”<sup>46</sup>

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44 HALL, Stuart (1997). *Race, the Floating Signifier*. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, p. 7.

45 This section has been partially informed by research initially conducted for my book, specifically chapter 4: *Listening to Music: Experiencing Authenticity*. In: KRÜGER (2009a), pp. 71–88.

46 Fieldnotes by author, Goldsmiths, 10 February 2004.

Marked by my own (past) quest for otherness and difference, my fieldnotes depict the teaching space at Goldsmiths College whilst particularly highlighting the non-Western artifacts. The experience of discovering that ethnomusicology and the musics transmitted in this space must be in some way different and other (and thus authentic) provided me with great pleasure. During conversations with the Goldsmiths students, I found that they similarly paid attention to the many “ethnic” things, like the carpets from Persia, lots of pictures of famous Afghan musicians, tablas and other instruments, Green tea from Asia, or the burning of incense sticks.<sup>47</sup> In some instances, ethnomusicologists used incense and “ethnic” table decorations. Students often found such accessories interesting and different to the norm. Material aspects like clothing, necklaces, earrings and wristbands similarly impacted on students’ perceptions of the authentic, which signified affiliation and belonging to another “non-White” music culture, referring in this instance to a kora teacher named Sekou Susso from the Gambia who dressed in the traditional Islamic dishdasha or djellaba (robe) and cap (Figure 1). These garments signaled to students instantly that both the teacher and the musics they listened to were authentic, as the musician, who looked “right”, represented the same ethnic origin as the music he transmitted. Yet this also potentially alienated the students from the teacher in their spectatorship position, whereby they adopted a stance of gazing at the other in terms of race and ethnicity.<sup>48</sup>

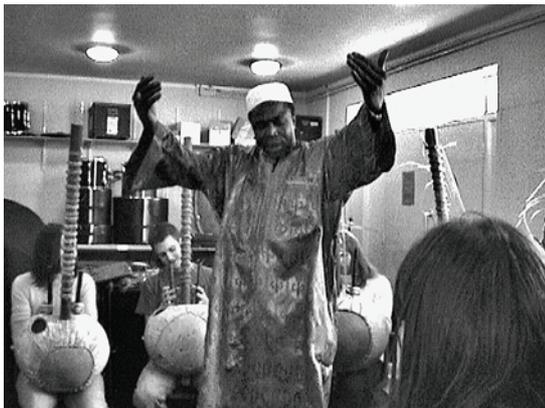


Figure 1:  
Sekou Susso in the traditional Islamic  
*dishdasha* or *djellaba* (robe) and cap;  
University of Sheffield, 5 December 2003.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, course and module handbooks contained visual imagery that occasionally projected a concern with “simple” and “old” cultures, signified by images of half-naked and “non-White” people playing unusual instruments or drums (Figures 2

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47 Group conversation, Goldsmiths, 12 February 2004.

48 For instance, when the German students were recently asked to reflect on this image, they described their perceptions as follows: “Besinnung auf Tradition, wird als Außerirdischer dargestellt, als Affe im Zoo ... Tradition bewahren ... Verbindung eines Instruments mit Kultur (Kleidung) ... Traditionelle Kleidung drückt Bedeutung der Musik aus ... die Kleidung zeigt Stolz an der Tradition ... ‘Uniform’ seiner Kultur ... Lebensfreude, Energie ... Traditionsverbundenheit ... Authentizität ... Authentisch” (comments gathered and provided by Prof. Dr. Hartmut Möller, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock, November 2011).

49 Photograph taken by author, used with permission. See also Seikou Susso’s website <http://www.seikoususso.freeuk.com> [last accessed 15 October 2012].

and 3). Such imagery reinforced traditionalist imaginations, signaling to students that their subject matter for study entails somewhat primitive, primeval people not from the West, or creatures not from here, and thus “the other”. For example, the first-year course handbook at Queen’s University Belfast contains an image of two creatures, which reminded some students of “cave drawings or extraterrestrial aliens”.<sup>50</sup> Such imagery led some students to construct a sense of traditionalism and authenticity that is deliberately selective and biased towards otherness, where the other is defined ethnically and racially.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 2: Undergraduate course handbook for students of Social Anthropology and Ethnomusicology; Queen’s University of Belfast, 16 November 2003.<sup>51</sup>

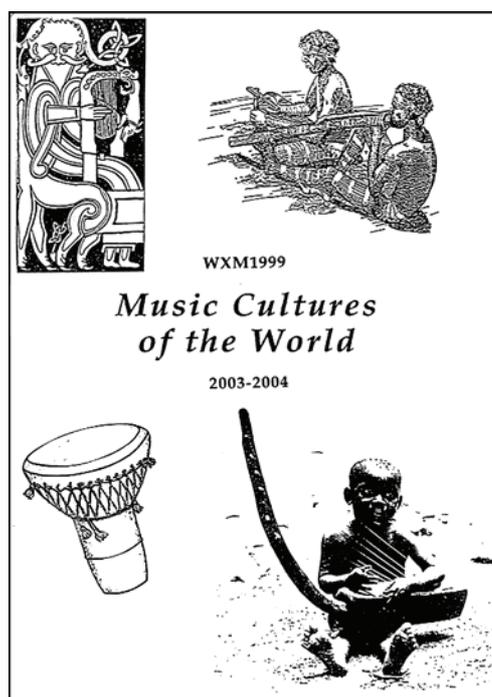


Figure 3: Module handbook for a first year, undergraduate module *Music Cultures of the World*; October 2003.<sup>52</sup>

50 Group conversation at Queen’s University Belfast on 18 November 2003.

51 For instance, reflecting on the front cover of another module handbook (Figure 3), the German students instantly associated the images with old and original, simple and unusual African (and thus “non-White”) traditions: “Konservative, veraltete Ansichten ... Urmusik, intuitive Musik ... Musik-traditionen ... Einfache Musik, fremde Musik ... Afrika, Musik der Urvölker ... Tradition, Stammes-abhängigkeit ... ‘außergewöhnlich’/Traditionsmusik aus dem ungewöhnlichsten Bereich ... fremde Musikinstrumente” (comments gathered and provided by Prof. Dr. Hartmut Möller, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock, November 2011).

52 First published in KRÜGER (2009a), p. i–244. Copyright © 2009.

53 For ethical reasons, the identity of the university and ethnomusicologist leading this module shall remain anonymous.

Musical aspects resemble another discursive practice that impacts on students' racial imagination. World musics are experienced as an "authentic other" when students noticed distinctly different sounds in comparison to familiar Western ones. For instance, Mongolian diatonic or throat or overtone singing "sounds somehow weird and unnatural".<sup>54</sup> Students could not relate such sounds to human actions, as the pitches moved outside the normal range of the human voice. The meaning potential here arose from the music's non-human qualities, an otherness that in turn authenticated students' listening experiences of such music. Meanwhile, "traditional" Spanish flamenco singing was described by some students as being "hoarse ..., rough ..., and sandy". They associated such voice qualities with the harsh living conditions of "gypsies with weather-beaten faces".<sup>55</sup> In contrast to much "Western" and so-called "White" music that features a perfect, clean and polished voice, Gypsy flamenco is far from such "smooth" and "sweet" vocal qualities, and thereby again indicative of a certain kind of authentic otherness that is informed by the racial imagination.<sup>56</sup>

Most obviously, the ethnomusicologist's ethnicity also enhances a sense of authenticity. Whilst the majority of ethnomusicologists in the UK and Germany are Caucasian, a "native" teacher, by contrast, personifies cultural difference, and thus embodies immediate authenticity.<sup>57</sup> Some students described their "native" teacher with astonishment, and as "strange" as the music he/she embodies. The native teacher was also often assumed to be better qualified to provide cultural knowledge:

"Getting people from there who know what they are doing and have experienced that would be much more authentic. It's exciting to see someone from that place playing their instrument. It makes it more real if they bring their culture to us, instead of us delving into their culture [...] I don't know though whether you learn more from it. It's probably just more exciting."<sup>58</sup>

"It's good to have actually a musician [...] from that culture [...] to know what they are talking about and to appreciate what it's like."<sup>59</sup>

A native teacher was seen as an expert who can contribute original experiences and anecdotes, thus having "an almost sacred position" as the musical insider who "culturally knows".<sup>60</sup> A native teacher was also granted immediate credibility as a master musician. After a guest session by an Iranian ethnomusicologist during which he demonstrated the santur (hammered dulcimer) and daf (frame drum), students commented "I just thought, Wow! Amazing! He is such an incredible performer! It was really fascinating!"<sup>61</sup> Many students voiced their appreciation of the excellent

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54 Kathrin, Rostock, 24 November 2003.

55 Group interview, Liverpool, 15 March 2005.

56 I appreciate that the term "White" music is arbitrary and complex, but for the purpose of stressing my point here, I deem its use important in order to highlight again the dichotomous thinking that informs Westerners' sense of authenticity in relation to an ethnic and racial other.

57 TRIMILLOS (2004), p. 23–52.

58 Rebecca, Sheffield, 5 March 2004.

59 Group interview, Sheffield, 12 December 2003.

60 TRIMILLOS (2004), p. 38.

61 Rebecca, Sheffield, 20 February 2004.

standard of playing during such demonstrations, yet they had in fact no knowledge of the music and its demands on the performer. Clearly, the ethnicity of the instructor authenticated students' perceptions of the musics encountered. The emphasis on ethnicity is thus a powerful means by which students experienced a sense of authenticity that is rooted in European Romanticism and illustrates that authenticity is a socially and culturally constructed concept that must be undone.

### **Undoing Authenticity**

Our task as pedagogues of ethnomusicology, then, is to “undo” authenticity by deconstructing racial and ethnic imaginations. This is the premise for a more holistic, inclusive and democratic pedagogy of ethnomusicology. My argument is based on the fact that authenticity is culturally and psychologically hard-wired in our students' mindsets. This continued persistence must be “undone” through critical debate and engagement with the politics of race and ethnicity. This resonates closely with my belief that ethnomusicologists – in their role as pedagogues – can and must pursue ideological, musical, cultural, political, and democratic ends as political beings and moral agents in discourses about musical, political, educational and other values.<sup>62</sup> In doing so, students should learn that world musics are only inauthentic or less authentic in the framework of an essentialist and dichotomous understanding of authenticity. Authenticity must thus be understood as socially and culturally constructed.

I am pleased to say that much ethnomusicology teaching and learning in the UK already facilitates such an education, based on the principles of “knowing by doing and experiencing” and realized through a range of different strategies that I have described under the three broad activities of listening, performing and constructing in a model depicting a pedagogy of ethnomusicology (Figure 4).

The model represents the ways in which ethnomusicology and its varied subject matters may be transmitted via a wide range of learning methods.<sup>63</sup> The transmission methods captured in the model engage students in active learning during ethnographic research and writing, listening and transcribing, learning about history and extra-musical aspects, performing, filmmaking, and/or composing. Depending on whether ethnomusicologists intend to develop musicological and/or anthropological understandings of world musics and their makers, they may utilize a range of different activities under the three broad activities of listening, performing, and constructing.<sup>64</sup> Focusing specifically on the left sphere of the model, listening while learning about extra-musical meaning is particularly useful here to illustrate a more concrete example of how to undo authenticity in the formal transmission of ethnomusicology and world musics. With this specific focus, the remainder of the chapter will provide a case study example of my own teaching practice.

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62 KRÜGER (2009a, 2011).

63 These methods have initially grown out of research conducted in 2003–04 and have been updated in the current depiction.

64 For detailed discussions on the model see KRÜGER (2009a), p. 210–220, and KRÜGER (2009b), p. 160–162.

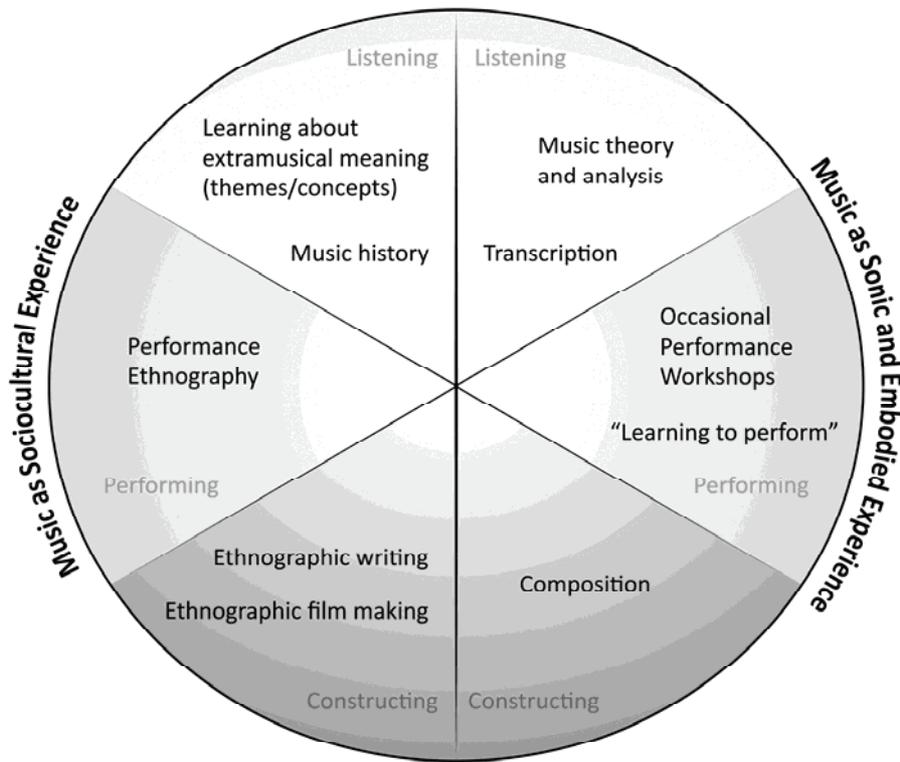


Figure 4: A conceptual model (updated version) for ethnomusicology pedagogy

### A Case Study Example

The genre of “world music” (also often referred to as “world beat” or “global pop”) serves as an excellent example for undertaking a critical examination of how concepts of authenticity and difference operate within its discourses. Here, I usually begin by introducing students to the idea of “genre as concept” whilst moving away from conventional approaches to genre studies and concerns for establishing genre taxonomies. Instead, I argue that genres are never “fixed”: genre divisions are highly fluid, and genre texts may fit under more than one classification, or shift between and across different categories during their existence. We view genre as a socio-culturally constructed concept depending on the intentions of those who create and receive it. Adopting a cultural studies perspective, I show students that genres are the products of commerce. They are the result of the market interests of media institutions. Meanwhile, genres can also satisfy the private interests and pleasures of audiences who actively participate in the construction and maintenance of genres. I therefore discuss how the genre of “world music” is produced and received, and by whom it is defined in the first place.

Students learn that the semiotic dimension is crucial for genre formation so that meaning is framed and social meaning construction becomes possible and even predictable for audiences. Genres thus “start” by establishing stylistic conventions or formulae, an overarching blueprint of some kind, which help the audience to make sense of the media text.<sup>65</sup> It also gives the media producer a clear foundation on which to compose the text. In popular music, for example, students are well aware that a genre is recognized by a community of people who assign recognizable criteria, such as stylistic musical features, performance practices and behavioral norms during production and consumption. Yet often they are not aware that musical categorization, and thus genre formation, is subject to commercial forces. Indeed, the music industry actively contributes to the “recognition” of new genres like “world music” and helps to create markets for it. For media producers, genre conventions function as a means for marketing and commercialism, which are manipulated in such a way as to tap into the beliefs and pleasures of the audiences, who are brought to want to consume the text.

Here, “world music” makes an interesting point, as it is not a clearly definable genre. Utilizing a range of musical examples, students agree that it includes “fusion music”, modern and traditional musics, musics outside the normal Anglo-American sphere, as well as some American and European “minority” musics. Nonetheless, in the music industry, “world music”<sup>66</sup> has become constructed as a genre and is now firmly institutionalized within the music industry – with its own sections in record stores, its own magazines, shops and labels, festivals, radio and television programs.<sup>67</sup>

At this point, I introduce the term “authenticity” in order to explore the way in which the music industry trivializes “difference” within its discourses, whilst creating a commercial desire for authentic and often nostalgic musical “elsewheres” in need of proper documentation and appreciation. Indeed, “world music” depended from the start on a displayed expertise, evident in the explanations and descriptions of particular musical forms and their roots in local traditions and practices. It became marketed for “proper” appreciation, which involved a kind of academicism from the consumer. Meanwhile, the very idea of “world music” is an assertion of Western difference: “World music” trades and promises a particular kind of experience to its consumers who often distinguish themselves from the mainstream of rock and pop purchasers. And it is usually the perceived cultural purity of the music and its connection with place that has selling appeal to this kind of consumer. Once again, authenticity becomes tied up by the politics of race and ethnicity:

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65 BURTON, Graeme (2005). *Popular Music: Questioning the Popular, Questioning Control, Questioning the Global*. In: *Media and Society: Critical Perspectives*. Berkshire: Open University Press, p. 168.

66 The beginnings of “world music” as a commercial music category in 1987 are well-known and described elsewhere; see FRITH, Simon (2000). *The Discourse of World Music*. In: *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 305.

67 In Steve Feld’s words: “the ‘world music’ phrase swept through the public sphere, first and foremost signifying a global industry, one focused on marketing danceable ethnicity and exotic alterity on the world pleasure and commodity map.” FELD, Steven (2000). *Anxiety and Celebration: Mapping the Discourses of “World Music”*. In: *Changing Sounds: New Directions and Configurations in Popular Music*, edited by Tony Mitchell, Peter Doyle with Bruce Johnson. Sydney: University of Technology, p. 11.

“The globalization driven by the world-music motor of transnational recording industries has rather unabashedly reinvented earlier forms of authenticity, remolding these into postmodern journeys in search of the ‘natural musician.’ World-music collectors, therefore, appoint themselves as the saviors who will rescue what is left of musical origins. The vocabulary of the postmodern search for authenticity makes it possible to construct a neomythology of musical and racial origins.”<sup>68</sup>

The consumption of “world music” as an authentic other is based on the Western view that music is an authentic expression of cultural identity. Senegalese musician Youssou N’Dour provides an interesting example. Throughout his long career, he sought commercial success and westernized his music to varying levels.<sup>69</sup> N’Dour, already an established popular music star within Senegal, was discovered in the West in the 1980s during the world music boom. At that time, N’Dour played in the originally named Star Band (renamed Etoile de Dakar and subsequently Super Etoile). The band coined the musical term “mbalax” to describe its blend of rhythmically complex Africanized music that utilized percussion instruments, particularly the tama talking drum, which is associated with local folk music played at rituals and festivals. Using the local Wolof language, N’Dour’s lyrics invoked Senegalese history and culture, particularly that of his own ethnic group, the Wolof, and to his lineage of a long line of griots. Musical examples suitably underpin students’ listening experience of this African pop music that is significantly different to Western popular music.

I then move on to describe the effect of N’Dour’s massive exposure to the Western media in the 1980s, when he increasingly aimed his music at the Western mainstream market and made significant alterations to his music. For example, in collaboration with Peter Gabriel, N’Dour’s album *The Lion* (1989), released on Virgin, was a hugely expensive undertaking: While mbalax was the main driving force, the music was combined with synthesizers and sophisticated arrangements requiring the most technically advanced studios. Meanwhile, his Sony-released number-one hit “Seven Seconds” (sung with Neneh Cherry) only contains very few “African” elements (such as some lyrics in the Wolof language) and is totally devoid of mbalax’s musical trademarks. The song was a commercial hit worldwide (with 1.5 million copies sold), through which N’Dour became known to the general public in Britain and America. The song enabled him to break through on the international scene, which benefited his subsequent album *Wommat* [The Guide] (1994), as it quickly entered the European charts and markets outside Africa.<sup>70</sup>

Another suitable example is his 2000 album entitled *Joko: From Village to Town*, similarly aimed at the international market, which features contributions from guest stars including Peter Gabriel and Sting. On this album, N’Dour makes the most significant alterations to his music in a continued attempt to break into the Western

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68 RADANO and BOHLMAN (2000), p. 30.

69 See also MURPHY (2007); TAYLOR (2004).

70 Apart from a cover of Bob Dylan’s song “Chimes of Freedom” and “Undecided”, a single that was remixed by the French duo Deep Forest, my students agree that the music generally adopts the conventions of international rock.

mainstream music market.<sup>71</sup> The album moves away from pure African sounds to experiment with international pop. Instead of abrupt tempo changes, polyrhythms, and N'Dour's unusually piercing vocals, the music is heavily produced and based on steady, regular rhythms, synthesizers, and toned-down vocals. In "New Africa", the final track of the album, the sound is heavily produced. The music maintains a slow tempo throughout and utilizes synthesizers to accompany the vocals. The album cover is noteworthy too, and students begin to notice the Westernized features: Behind a grey background, which is set off by modern-style art drawing in red tones, the cover depicts a close-up, frontal shot of the musician's face that stares directly at us, giving a feeling of confrontation and assertiveness. N'Dour's face is somewhat brightened as if it reflects artificial (instead of natural) light shone onto him, through which his ethnicity appears to be altered. The musician's assertive facial expression, together with the use of colors and lighting evoke a sense that N'Dour is a "modern" musician who lives in the city. Visually, it reflects the influences of urbanism and modernity that characterize the music on this album.

Altered in style and devoid of local or national distinctiveness, such African pop aimed at a Western mainstream market bears little resemblance to the music available in Senegal; it is a completely different style of music, and not necessarily the popular music heard in Africa.<sup>72</sup> Yet even so, the big breakthrough in the West never happened because N'Dour's music appeals to a relatively niche market of music consumers in the West. To this consumer, Afro pop takes on a different cultural meaning and significance: It is an alternative to mainstream pop, representing "otherness" and difference; it is the expression of an authentic, uncommercial culture. To this consumer, N'Dour's earlier music is regarded as a form of resistance to cultural homogenization, yet his later music reflects a desire to break into the lucrative Western music mainstream of international pop. As soon as music becomes "translated" for a Western audience, it acquires a different cultural meaning and significance, alongside more internationally recognizable musical features. Students grasp that authenticity is a constructed concept when I conclude that musicians like Youssou N'Dour are scorned for compromising their music for economic reasons: "As his fame and popularity have grown, N'Dour has had to face criticisms that his music, which was, early on, a conscious attempt to re-Africanize Senegalese music, has become too slick, too commercial, too western."<sup>73</sup> The perceived "deformation" of his music meant that (to them) it no longer sounded like an authentic expression of cultural identity. It put N'Dour under pressure to remain musically and otherwise pre-modern or authentic because of essentialism, ethnocentrism and Western demands for authenticity.<sup>74</sup>

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71 MURPHY, David (2007). *Where Does World Music Come From? Globalization, Afropop and the Question of Cultural Identity*. In: Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location: Between the Global and the Local, edited by Ian D. Biddle and Vanessa Knights. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 55.

72 Ibid., p. 44.

73 TAYLOR, Timothy D. (2004). *Strategic Inauthenticity*. In: *The Globalization Reader*, edited by Frank J. Lechner and John Boli. Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, p. 152.

74 TAYLOR, Timothy D. (1997). *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets*. New York: Routledge, p. 134.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested that the pedagogy of ethnomusicology and world musics should challenge ingrained and hard-wired concepts of an authentic otherness defined and marked by racial and ethnic imaginations. I argued, therefore, that in the formal transmission of ethnomusicology it is particularly important to approach musics from the perspective of British cultural studies. Back in 2004, the late Rüdiger Schumacher similarly proposed that:

“I think to us, the methods of cultural studies would be a good starting point [...] as a complementary possibility, a further method to be included into a holistic conceptualisation about ethnomusicology [...]”<sup>75</sup>

In the cultural studies sense, students should learn to regard markers of identity such as race and ethnicity as products of culture, and to understand that many contemporary representations of ethnicity in music are inherently racist, orientalist and exoticist, whilst contextualizing such critiques within the histories of European expansionism and colonialism, as well as contemporary processes related to globalization. I believe that such critical debates would enhance the inclusive and democratic view that students have of all peoples and their musics, and help them to develop open-mindedness, compassion and care for others. Yet this is not to suggest that students should discard their own cultural, ethnic, national, and gendered roots. Instead, the emphasis is on students' gentle transformation in attitude and perspectives towards the “authentic other”. If students grasped the basic human values of inclusion and equality on the grounds of race and ethnicity, such pedagogy of ethnomusicology would be more holistic for the benefit of all members in today's multicultural society.

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75 Rüdiger Schumacher, personal communication, Cologne, 22 July 2004.

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