



***Trajectories and Themes in World Popular Music: Globalization, Capitalism, Identity* by Simone Krüger Bridge.
Equinox, 2018.**

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THIS COMPREHENSIVE BOOK does not only present trajectories and themes in world popular music as promised in the title. It also examines the fundamental tenets of recent scholarship on popular music. This review investigates the book within the context of these recent trends, consisting of a set of shifts in terminology and focus such as from ‘world music’ to ‘world /global popular music’ and from musical identities in culture to musical identities in capitalism, respectively.

These shifts naturally have implications for both ethnomusicology and popular music studies. It is known that the phrase ‘world music’ initially emerged as a “friendlier” alternative term to ethnomusicology and was included in curriculums as of the early 1960s. It reflected a quest for the usage of the correct terminology to avoid and overcome the effects of the domination of Western art music in the academy (Feld 2000, 146). However, the introduction of the term as a musical genre by the music industry in early 1980s reproduced a binary division between the musics of ‘the west’ and ‘the rest’ (ibid.) that it had intended to dissolve.

It was around this period that popular music gradually became an important topic of study in the field of ethnomusicology thanks to the development of popular music studies. Peter Manuel’s *Popular Musics of the non-Western World* (1988) was no doubt a milestone, which paved the way to this recent trend.

Recently, new terms instead of ‘world music’ have been utilized to address this contemporary coverage: ‘global popular music’, ‘world popular music’ or ‘popular music of the world’ are among such terms, as epitomized by the titles of the reference books published such as *Bloomsbury*

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Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World (2003–), *Routledge Global Popular Music Series* (2015–), *The Oxford Handbook of Global Popular Music* (2021–), etc. This new terminology corresponds to a crucial step for the dissolution of binary opposition between the west and the rest.

The author, Simone Krüger Bridge writes in line with this new trend and thus covers traditional and art music practices as well as popular music practices, from Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, United States and Europe, which were hitherto studied rather within distinct disciplinary boundaries.

Another recent trend of situating the musical identities within the context of the dynamics of capitalism, makes it possible to relate these ‘distinct’ musical practices to each other and approach them as a whole. Until recently, capitalism has never been referenced in such an explicit way within either popular music studies or ethnomusicology. For a long time, ethnomusicology, which appeared as a mainly American enterprise during the Cold War, has never included Marxism and thus political economy in its scope. Even though ethnomusicology joined to popular music studies in the early 1980s, which has clear roots in Western Marxism, political economy approaches continued to be out of the scope of scholarly discussions. The reason is that popular music studies inherited a phobia of economic determinism from Western Marxism, and the political economy is conceived of as the hallmark of a reductionist and vulgar understanding of Marxism.

The Political Economy of Music (1985) by Attali, already a political economist not a music scholar, breaks the long silence haunting us since the works of Adorno in mid-twentieth century. *Music and Marx* (2002) edited by Qureshi was not only a groundbreaking study in the sense of bringing together ethnomusicologists, musicologists and popular music scholars together studying on Marx, but also in the sense of having a special focus on political economy. Finally, *Music and Capitalism* (2015) by Taylor became a new milestone since it considers capitalism as a cultural system, as well. In particular, the chapter, ‘Marxist Approaches to Music, Political Economy, and the Culture Industries: Ethnomusicological Perspectives’ by Manuel (2019) is a unique source. Furthermore, *The Oxford Handbook of Economic Ethnomusicology* (2020) edited by Morcom and Taylor reveals this trend powerfully. Nevertheless, neither the kind of Marxism nor the political economy approaches are orthodox in these studies. Krüger Bridge also clearly follows this second trend.

While the book shares some strengths and weaknesses of this new trend of scholarship, it also possesses certain characteristics that need to be evaluated in its own right. In this sense, it would be fair to review the book primarily in terms of its own promises, which is stated as “a concise introduction to modern popular music studies” (xi). Similarly, the content of the book is expressed as author’s “culmination of fifteen years of teaching modules on world music cultures, world music, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, music censorship, and musical globalization” (ibid.).

The chapters are mainly historically organized. The background of this historical narrative is presented with regard to several periods of globalization corresponding to different stages of capitalism such as market capitalism (ca. 1700–1850), monopoly capitalism (ca. 1850–1945), organised capitalism (1945–1980/90), neoliberal capitalism (1980/90–2008) and finally, after globalization (2008–2018). Globalization is mainly considered as a strong discourse that “helps to conceptualize globalizing processes and effects, and that it was used obscure and disguise ‘capitalism’ since the Cold War” (ibid. 1).

The book connects the technological, social, and cultural aspects of globalization to the economic logic of capitalism and its historical dynamics. Moreover, this holistic approach per se and its theoretical underpinnings are noteworthy as it embraces contrasting theories in a challenging way. It is thanks to this holistic approach that Krüger Bridge discusses the theories both against and in favour of globalization—similarly the top-down and bottom-up theories of culture—in the context of such music-related issues as ethnicity, race, gender, feminism, democracy, technology, fascism, neoliberalism, cultural imperialism, racism, nationalism, resistance, branding, expressive isomorphism, authentic hybridity etc.

However, the author’s approach is more than a simple eclectic collection of these contrasting positions, reminding the approach of Stuart Hall (1981, 228) who theorizes cultural processes as neither top-down nor bottom-up but as “the double movement of containment and resistance”. Furthermore, the political position of the book reminds us of political commitment of early cultural studies as clearly expressed by Hall (1981, 239): Popular culture “[...] is one of the places where socialism might be constituted. That is why ‘popular culture’ matters. Otherwise, to tell you the truth, I don’t give a damn about it”.

Similarly, Krüger Bridge expresses her motivation as follows: “the book challenges issues of social stratification, used to order society into hierarchies of people for the purpose of privileges, and seeks to understand social

injustices, such as discrimination, stereotyping, and disadvantage” (Krüger Bridge 2018, 3). In this sense, it seems that the author gives a positive answer to the question once asked by Lawrence Grosberg related to his disappointment about popular music studies, more than a decade ago: “Where are the outraged and articulate voices that attempt to make sense of, give voice to, and intervene into these struggles?” (Grosberg 2002, 30). Especially, the final chapter, ‘Popular Music in Postdemocracy,’ which considers more recent times, is dedicated to the resistance to global capitalist hegemony in popular music.

Consequently, the comprehensiveness of the book is threefold; historically, theoretically and musically. As the author acknowledges, the theoretical background of the book is based on critical social theory, which embraces a very wide range of musical practices from famous to non-famous ones, from European classical music to traditional and popular musics of both ‘near’ and ‘remote’ geographies within a long period, from eighteenth century up to date. Afropop, Latin American pop, Art Music of the Arab Middle East, Rock Music in Paraguay, Nazi Rock, Orientalist Pop, Global Hip Hop, Global Bollywood and a special emphasis on feminist and subversive musical practices could be briefly listed to give an idea of comprehensiveness of the musical practices covered in the book.

It could be argued that these challenging qualities of the book ‘suffer’ partly from its comprehensiveness and partly from the recent trends it follows. While plenty of contemporary theoretical concepts and approaches are presented and applied to musical cases, a considerable part of them are either superficially explained or left unexplained. Concepts central to the book such as capitalism, hegemony, musical commodification and social democratic citizenship are not even defined; defining these controversial concepts could reveal the theoretical position of the author, respectively. Similarly, while some theoretical sources such as Appadurai’s and Robertson’s studies on globalization are skipped, some recent theoretical concepts such as Robertson’s ‘glocalization’ or Anderson’s ‘long tail’—used to explain characteristics of post-fordist cultural production and consumption—are simply ignored.

Given the ‘concise’ nature of the book, it would clearly be unfair to expect to see in-depth theoretical explanations or all relevant musical practices. However, it is surprising to see the absence of musical practices which are explicitly counter-hegemonic such as Inti-Illimani and Victor

Jara in Chile, Rock Against Racism (RAR) movement in Britain, Composer's Collective in United States or Hanns Eisler in Germany, in such a book with a rather clear political position.

Another surprising point is almost the absence of 'class' which is not peculiar to the book but a common feature of the relevant literature considering music in capitalism. The retreat from class has a long history within cultural studies, from Stuart Hall, who takes into account the class relations but with a caution of not reducing the cultural identities to class formations to simply ignoring it wholesale due to the hegemony of post-modernist theories. It seems reasonable that the return of capitalism and political economy to popular music studies soon recalls 'class,' which is supposed to be at the core of any conception of capitalism per se.

Last but not least, the final chapter and afterwords that are devoted to recent period, discuss the end of neoliberalism and the emergence of a new uncertain era, 'after globalization,' respectively. It is ironic that the current growing interest on the part of popular music studies in contemporary crisis-ridden neoliberalism was almost absent in its "heydays" (Gedik 2017). At this point we have rights to expect that current discussions on neo-fascism or authoritarian neoliberalism defining the state of contemporary social formations will find their place in popular music studies soon, before they further damage our lives, like the "decaying" neoliberalism.

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