STANFORD HUMANITIES ReView

VOL. 3 · NO. 2
AUTUMN 1993

"And the walls come a-tumblin' down": MUSIC IN THE AGE OF POSTDISCIPLINARITY

Holly KRUSE
John SHEPHERD
Carolyn KRASNOW
Joyce COOK
David BRACKETT
Rick WOJCIK
Steve JONES
John CORBETT
Simon JONES
Lawrence SIEGEL
Geoffrey GREEN
Mark FENSTER
Ola STOCKFELT
The CHICAGO RECORDED MUSIC WORKGROUP

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR
Anahid Kassabian

CO-EDITORS
Robert Dulgarian
Stefano Franchi
John Gonzalez
Güven Güzeldere
Sujata Iyengar
Saba Mahmood
Beth McGroarty
Victoria Olsen
Amit Rai
Nancy Reynolds

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
Miranda Joseph

DESIGN · PRODUCTION
Barry Greenhut

SPECIAL THANKS
Theodore Antoniou
Marcia Bauman
David Brackett
Joyce Cook
Sue Dambrau
Pozzi Escot
Nick Hopkins
International Association for the Study of Popular Music
Matthew Kelly
Fernando López Lezcano
Leo G. Svendsen
Scott Walker
The Women's Philharmonic

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Russell Berman
W. Bliss Carnochan
Wanda Corn
Regenia Gagnier
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht
Janet Halley
Charles Junkerman
Suvir Kaul
Jocelyn Lutz Marsh
Diane Middlebrook
Andrew Parker
Marjorie Perloff
Adrienne Rich
Paul Robinson
Jeff Schnapp
Brian C. Smith
Gilbert Sorrentino
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
William Mills Todd III

The *Stanford Humanities Review*, edited and produced by Stanford graduate students, is an interdisciplinary journal intended for the broadest intellectual audience. SHR intends to engage current cultural issues and participate in vital debates over cultural policy. Encouraging the use of innovative methodological approaches, each number of the journal focuses on a defined topic in a variety of formats, including scholarly essays, fiction, poetry, and other arts, and aims to explore new publishing technologies. Motivated by an awareness of our geopolitical location at Stanford, in the Bay Area, on the West Coast, and on the Pacific Rim, we are committed to multiethnic and multinational approaches to each topic, as well as to reaching a national and international audience.

The *Stanford Humanities Review*, housed at the Stanford Humanities Center, is published twice yearly. Subscriptions: Individuals $20, Institutions $40. Outside the U.S. add $10. Address subscriptions and submissions to STANFORD HUMANITIES REVIEW, Stanford Humanities Center, Mariposa House, Stanford, California 94305. Electronic submissions are accepted in Microsoft Word 4.0 format; please include a printed copy of the text. Footnotes should conform to the Modern Language Association guidelines. Translations should be accompanied by the original text. No responsibility is assumed for loss or injury of submissions. ¶ Indexed with Modern Language Association International Bibliography, Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA), Film Literature Index, and the American Humanities Index. ¶ POSTMASTER: Send address changes to STANFORD HUMANITIES REVIEW, Stanford Humanities Center, Mariposa House, Stanford, California 94305-8630.

CONTENTS

ANAHID KASSABIAN iii Introduction

HOLLY KRUSE 1 Early Audio Technology and Domestic Space

JOHN SHEPHERD 17 Popular Music Studies: Challenges to Musicology

CAROLYN KRASNOW 37 Fear and Loathing in the 70s: Race, Sexuality, and Disco

JOYCE COOK 46 Mozart in the Car · Korean Opera

DAVID BRACKETT 49 Economics and Æsthetics in Contemporary Art Music

RICK WOJCIK 61 Pop That Coochie: The Video Jukebox and the Æsthetics of Consumption

LAWRENCE SIEGEL 72 The Village Store Verbatim

STEVE JONES 77 Critical Legal Studies and Popular Music Studies

JOHN CORBETT 91 Siren Song to Banshee Wail: On the Status of the Background Vocalist

SIMON JONES 103 Crossover Culture: Popular Music and the Politics of "Race"

GEOFFREY GREEN 119 "Your Sister and Some Wine!"

MARK FENSTER 145 Boxing In, Opening Out: The Boxed Set and the Politics of Musical Production and Consumption

OLA STOCKFELT 153 Adequate Modes of Listening

THE CHICAGO RECORDED MUSIC WORKGROUP 171 What are we listening to? What are we talking about? Recorded Sound as an Object of Interdisciplinary Study

REVIEW ESSAYS 176 Mark Slobin · Ethnomusicology in the 1990s
David Schwarz · Music and Disciplinarity
Romy Kozak · Musicology and Feminism

CONFERENCE REVIEWS 193 Larry Jackson · The Malcolm X Dynamic
Tonia Saxon & Mark Girouard · Imagining Japan: Narratives of Nationhood

199 List of Illustrations

200 Notes on Contributors

Simon JONES

CROSSOVER CULTURE: POPULAR MUSIC AND THE POLITICS OF "RACE"

THE BLACK AND WHITE MINSTREL SHOW

POPULAR MUSIC HAS LONG BEEN A KEY SITE OF communication across ethnic and racial categories. The interaction between European and African-derived religious and folk music traditions has been one of the central dynamos of American popular music's development. These traditions have crossed and fused with one another in a complex dialogical process of musical cross-fertilization that has taken place over the course of three centuries.[1] These interactions, however, have never been "neutral" processes of "free" musical exchange. They have always been politically charged, complicated by economic and cultural power relationships, and rendered problematic by racism. In this article, I examine some of the cultural and political effects of these processes, particularly within the cultures of young people in Britain and the United States.

The profound influence of African-derived musical traditions on European musical forms stands as one of the most significant developments of twentieth century popular music. That influence, however, has always been at odds with the realities of racial subordination and exclusion and with the representations of black musicians in the realm of popular music. White fears and fantasies have long been projected onto black music and musicians. White perceptions have been refracted through discourses that tap into centuries-old mythologies in which African music and culture symbolize the "exotic," "primitive" "Other" of European culture.[2] Within the mind/body dualities of European racist discourse, black music connoted the "corporeal," defined against a European musical tradition that represented the "cerebral" (Walton, *Music*; Middleton, *Pop Music*). Black music was seen to possess certain "natural," innate qualities that Western, Bourgeois society lacked, qualities of "passion," "rhythm," "spontaneity," innocence, emotion, and sexuality.

Framed by these discourses, black music has been perceived by whites as a sign of "authenticity" and "sexuality" and as a "pure," "uncommercial" folk form to be protected and preserved. From the long tradition of white bohemian romanticization of jazz, through the various subcultural appropriations of blues, r&b, and reggae, successive generations of whites have lived in their own particular "imaginary relation" to black music.[3]

The relations between black performers and white audiences have rested on a fundamental paradox: musical forms forged out of the specificities of racial oppression—crucial means through which blacks have celebrated their survival, affirmed their identities, and expressed their collective aspirations—have, for white listeners, been merely objects of pleasure and spectacles of "entertainment."[4] This contradiction has its origins in the period of slavery, when black musicians were obliged to "entertain" their white owners. It is a contradiction, however, that runs throughout the entire history of popular music.

Thus, while popular music has historically been an important site at which blacks have achieved public acclaim and visibility, that visibility has always been on specific terms. From the very inception of the American entertainment industry, black music was commodified, represented, and sold to whites in specific forms. In the nineteenth century minstrelsy tradition, white performers in blackface make-up caricatured and parodied the dialect, dances, and songs of black slaves. Blackfaced minstrelsy swept the nation in the 1840s to become the single most popular entertainment genre in nineteenth century America.[5] Minstrelsy provided a cultural counterpoint to the Abolition movement, attempting to rationalize slavery by presenting Northern free blacks as incompetent "buffoons" and Southern blacks as contented "plantation darkies" (Dennison, *Scandalize*).

Minstrelsy established a number of precedents that were carried over into the twentieth century music industry: white economic control of the business of black music, white influence over the content of black performances, and the reproduction of institutionalized images and stereotypes of black performers.[6] With the transcription of forms like ragtime, blues, and jazz into sheet music by music publishers, the forms, technologies, and modes of dissemination of black music became inseparable from the operations of the capitalist entertainment industry. The emergence of the phonogram opened up even further possibilities for the mass public circulation of black music. Black musical forms proved more compatible with the technological and aesthetic forms of the recorded medium than with notated sheet music. The electrification of the recording process and the development of the microphone enabled the subtleties and nuances of vocal and instrumental expression in black musical performance to be captured more faithfully (Hoare, "Mighty"). Records subsequently became the principal medium through which black music was popularized to whites.[7] Eisenberg suggests that it was through the phonogram that jazz "conquered" mainstream American culture in the interwar period.[8] Records, moreover, gave white musicians the opportunity to learn and imitate black musical idioms in a way that had hitherto not been possible with sheet music (Leonard, *Jazz and the White Americans*).

While granting a wider public circulation to black musical products, these commodification processes also inevitably wrested control of those products away from their creators. The result was a recurring pattern in American popular music, wherein styles pioneered by black performers came to be colonized, popularized,

and defined by white performers.[9] Detached from the cultural traditions and institutions that nourished them, black forms repeatedly became the unacknowledged sources of a "thousand variations and imitations."[10]

Throughout much of the "jazz era" in the 1920s and 1930s, a strict racial division of labor operated in the music industry, in which black and white musicians rarely played together and black musicians were denied representation by an exclusively white American Federation of Musicians.[11] As a result, when jazz broke through into the mainstream entertainment industry in the 1930s, top radio and recording contracts invariably went to white bands playing a bowdlerized, diluted form of jazz (Walton, *Music*; Hobsbawn, *Jazz*).

Up until the late 1940s, black music was institutionally segregated into a secondary "race" market with its own venues, distribution, and retail networks (Chapple and Garofalo, 1977). In this system, black musicians were routinely swindled out of royalties and performance fees, and received lower promotion and marketing budgets than their white counterparts. The copyright law in music publishing, based as it was on Western models of notated music and bourgeois property rights, worked to the disadvantage of black musicians (Frith, 1987). Since many compositions in traditions like blues and jazz tended not be notated, due to the importance of improvisation and the inseparability of music from its public performance in black musical practice, black musicians were particularly susceptible to exploitation by unscrupulous music publishers.[12]

In its incessant search for new musical material to maintain the steady turnover of products necessary for its continued profitability, the recording industry has turned, time and time again, to black musical forms to re-energize and revitalize itself. As Middleton argued in *Studying Popular Music*, capitalism's need for raw materials to feed its "expanding machinery" of commodification, and to refresh itself in non-productive time, is manifested culturally in an ideology of "romantic primitivism" and the need for a symbolic "Other."[13] In its search for remnants of pre-capitalist "folk" forms, the entertainment industry colonizes these musical cultures, dragging them into its dialectic and delivering them up for bourgeois consumption (Middleton 69).

Black and "Third World" musical forms have tended, as a result, to function as musical "colonies," raided periodically by Western musicians and record companies for their musical resources. This kind of colonization occurred, for instance, in the 1970s with the involvement of American and European transnational record companies in the marketing and distribution of African, Latin and Caribbean music grew. For corporations like CBS, EMI, and WEA, these forms represented untapped sources of cheap musical talent that could be exported and distributed to European, North American, and other global markets.[14] The marketing of black and "third world" musical forms to white audiences by Western record companies involved particular kinds of discursive strategies. Those strategies included surrounding black musical forms, commodities, culture, and performers with racialized discourses of "authenticity,"

exoticism, and sexuality.[15] In the marketing of reggae, for example, the circulation of various icons, texts, and visual images invariably accompanied the marketing of records; advertising copy and photographs, posters, album covers, and feature films tied into soundtrack album releases, which offered particular, romanticized visions of black life and culture.[16] These marketing strategies have been part of an ongoing attempt by the recording industry to tailor black musical commodities to white audiences by making them available in more "palatable" and unthreatening forms.

White appropriations of black music have not escaped the legacies of these discourses and power relations. They continue to frame and render problematic the ways black musical forms are consumed, perceived, and appropriated by white musicians and audiences. However, the history of popular music cannot be reduced to one of black creativity and white cultural plagiarism. Such notions simplify and conceal some of the complexities of these cross-cultural processes. In particular, they obscure the ways black forms have been appropriated and rearticulated by nonblack groups and the contradictory cultural and political effects that have resulted from these processes.

IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD, CHANGES IN THE PRODUCTION and dissemination of popular music created the conditions for an unprecedented crossover of black music to young white Americans. Radio, traditionally a key medium through which whites have been exposed to black music, played a central role in this process.[17] The dramatic expansion in the number of AM black stations in the late 1940s and early 1950s afforded white youth a new opportunity to eavesdrop on black music in a way that was impossible to segregate.[18]

White youth's turn towards r&b began independently of the mainstream music industry and prior to the commercial explosion of "rock 'n' roll." As early as 1950, David Riesman noticed an interest in jazz and r&b amongst a "minority" group of young white high-school and college students.[19] A similar interest in r&b developed amongst white youth in the Carolinas where a "beach culture" emerged in the summer of 1954 around dancing to black music on portable radios and record players.[20]

For these young whites, affiliation with black music represented a declaration of non-conformity and difference from the tastes of the "majority" and a rejection of the mainstream popular music of the day. Through their identification with r&b, white youth asserted their newly found cultural and financial independence, and signified their difference from the generations of the Depression and the pre-war era (Chambers, "A Strategy for Living"). The lyrical discourses of r&b were felt to articulate their experiences more honestly than the established idioms of Tin Pan Alley popular music. In its dance movements, emphatic rhythms, and more forthright expressions of sexuality, r&b offered young whites a liberating means of displaying private desires whose public expression had hitherto been tightly constrained.

The temporary desegregation of musical tastes in the leisure sphere brought about by "rock 'n' roll" challenged existing

patterns of black/white relations in a way that was profoundly subversive in the context of the 1950s. This musical desegregation presaged the movement for political desegregation that occurred later in the 1950s and early 60s.[21] The seditious implications of the heady connection in rock 'n' roll between youth rebellion, sexual expression, and "race" were confirmed by the moral panic and public condemnation that greeted the music in some sections of white America. In the various boycotting and banning campaigns waged by white adults, religious groups, and representatives of the music establishment, rock 'n' roll was condemned as a "primitive," "jungle" music that was corrupting the nation's youth and threatening social authority and moral order.[22] In its song lyrics, performance styles, and dance steps, it was considered to be sexually debased. More problematic still was the fact that its key performers behaved and sounded "black" or were indeed themselves black.

The "moment" of rock 'n' roll produced a whole generation of young white musicians for whom black music was a catalyst to create their own forms of musical expression. In both Britain and America, from skiffle and rockabilly in the 1950s to the "beat" and blues-based rock groups of the 1960s, black American forms were appropriated and adapted by a succession of young white musicians.[23] Transformed and rearticulated by young whites, they provided the departure point for a specifically youthful pop and rock tradition.[24]

By the late 1960s, rock musicians on both sides of the Atlantic were drawing heavily on blues conventions, on its rhythmic energy, vocal and instrumental techniques, lyrical discourses, and modes of performance (Frith, *Sound Effects*; Hoare, "Mighty"). The conventions and communal sensibilities of the blues were used to articulate the collective experience of "youth" and the "community" of rock. The 12-bar structure of the blues, in particular, became a stylistic lingua franca in rock, eventually absorbed into its musical and rhythmic fabric, and used by the more "progressive" rock bands as a musical framework for improvisation and solo instrumental work.[25]

During this period, white youth found in the blues a form that reflected their own defiance and rebellion and that addressed resonant questions of identity, powerlessness, and subordination.[26] Within the counter-culture, black music represented the antithesis of a white, suburban, middle-class culture that stressed work, planning, delayed gratification, and the constructive use of leisure time (Frith, *Sound Effects*). It was seen to embody a sensuousness and strong emotional expression that contradicted traditional bourgeois values of self-control and restraint (Frith, "Playing with Real Feeling"). Black music offered qualities of "freedom," "risk," and hedonistic pleasure unavailable in the dominant culture. It was a means through which counter-cultural whites could vicariously live out a romantic fantasy of "leisure" and "community" (Frith, *Sound Effects*).

In Britain this phenomenon was inflected in class-specific ways. For a succession of working-class white youth subcultures, from the Teddy-Boys through the Mods to the dance-based culture of "Northern Soul," black American forms were used not only

to undercut the dominance of bourgeois high culture, but also to provide an alternative to older working-class musical traditions centered around the music hall and folk song (Chambers, *Urban Rhythms*). However, in Britain, these forms tended to be consumed at a distance from the racial contradictions and power relations that had shaped them in the American context. As in other Western European countries, in Britain these forms came to stand for general notions of "modernity," "urbanism," "freedom," "rebellion," and "sexuality."[27] Emptied of some of their racial signifiers, their appeal was often refracted through fantasies of a generalized, mythical "Americana."[28] This situation was in marked contrast to the relationships between young whites and Afro-Caribbean music that evolved in Britain, relationships mediated by direct social encounters.

REGGAE

BRITISH BLACK COMMUNITIES, BECAUSE OF THEIR relatively small size and dispersed settlement patterns, have always provided points of access to whites through their cultural and musical institutions. Gilroy has shown how an expressive black British musical culture has emerged out of a rearticulation of Caribbean and African-American musical traditions.[29] An indigenous black musical performing tradition has developed in the areas of reggae, gospel, jazz and hip-hop, together with a complex infrastructure of musical institutions and spaces for the import, production, dissemination, and consumption of black music.

From the earliest days of post-war Afro-Caribbean migration to Britain, these traditions were transmitted to whites living in close proximity to black communities. Among the first groups to register these influences were white working-class youth. They "borrowed" and emulated elements of Afro-Caribbean style, language, and music. Hebdige found a "phantom history" of post-war race relations "played out" on the stylistic surfaces of these subcultures. He traced the ongoing "dialogue" between black and white youth cultures from the mods' and skinheads' affiliation to ska and rocksteady through to the punks admiration for reggae (Hebdige, *Subculture*, 44-45).

These relationships, however, have a substantive political and social, and not simply stylistic, history in the long tradition of encounters between black and white youth cultures. These connections were made explicit in the organization "Rock Against Racism" (RAR), which drew its momentum from the informal dialogue between black and white youth that had been evolving since the early 1960s, and had become particularly visible around the punk phenomenon. RAR attempted to politicize that dialogue by building a popular anti-racist movement to oppose the recruitment of white working-class youth by far-right, nationalist groups.[30] RAR involved a network of local grass-roots organizations that staged live music events in which punk and reggae bands often played together on the same bill. By mobilizing young people's common musical enthusiasms, RAR attempted to deliver a broad, cultural challenge to racism under the banner of slogans such as "Love Music, Hate Racism" and "Black and White Unite and Fight" (Gilroy, *Ain't No Black*).

The collaboration between black and white musicians around RAR and the punk movement bore fruit in the multi-racial Two-Tone bands, which attempted to use music as a medium through which to bridge the identities of black and white youth and to express a shared opposition to racism.[31] The Two-Tone phenomenon was one of the most visible indications of the unique rapport between black and white youth that existed in some urban areas of Britain. An important series of ethnographic studies have investigated the dynamics of these cross-cultural interactions in areas of London and Birmingham.[32] These studies have unanimously confirmed that mixed friendships are extremely common in these areas and are grounded in an experience of growing up together in the same integrated working-class neighborhoods, in the same classrooms, and often in the same predicaments of post-school unemployment. These social relations have produced a whole network of cross-cultural affiliations. Those affiliations extend into the leisure sphere: young blacks and whites often attend the same discos and youth clubs, and a sizeable minority of young whites frequent the black community's own leisure institutions and cultural spaces (Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth*).

Both Hewitt and Jones found that in many of these areas, the culture of young people draws on a syncretic mixture of Afro-Caribbean, Asian, and regional white working-class cultural elements. In these hybrid cultures, black style, speech patterns, and musical practices were invariably the dominant ingredients, functioning as common cultural denominators for youth from different ethnic backgrounds. The cultural magnetism of these forms was such that their influence extended to young whites in areas of sparse black settlement who had little sustained social contact with young blacks (Jones, *Black Culture*). For some young whites, identification with black music was frequently one element of a whole relation to black culture, in which a surrogate "black persona" was adopted and deployed as a marker of difference from other whites, or as a paradigm of cultural resistance in contexts such as school (Jones, *Black Culture*).

White youth also found their own meanings in the metaphors and oppositional symbols of black musical forms like reggae. Reggae articulated a number of resonant themes and discourses that young whites applied to their own life situations and experiences. In its openness to addressing themes of sexuality and eroticism, its ability to represent gender conflicts from both male and female perspectives, its egalitarian themes, and its critiques of work, the law, the state, and racism, reggae was available for different age-, class-, and gender-based readings (Gilroy, *Ain't No Black*; Jones, *Black Culture*).

White engagement with, and appropriation of, black culture was of course fraught with contradictions. Racism continued to proscribe that engagement and render it problematic at every turn. The popularity of black music among young whites did not guarantee anti-racist responses. Social tolerance of black people in general did not automatically flow from white engagement with specific forms of black culture and music. Even in the closest social relationships between black and white, elements of common-sense

racism often co-existed alongside attractions and identifications. Contradictions between collective racial identities and inter-personal relations were played out incessantly. Everyday social intercourse brought the political and ideological boundaries of "race" in and out of focus continually (Jones, *Black Culture*).

In order for young whites to maintain such affiliations and relationships, at least some disavowal of whiteness was called for on their part. Intimate white engagement with black culture and music, particularly when mediated by direct social interactions, could produce knowledges that disrupted common-sense racism and that served to deconstruct and demystify racial difference. Among some young whites, these affiliations could undercut and problematize their investments in racialized categories of "whiteness" or "Britishness." These affiliations could produce cross-cutting allegiances around notions of locality that emphasized social coherence and attenuated "race" as category of differentiation (Jones, *Black Culture*).

RAP

SINCE THE MID 1980S, RAP HAS BECOME THE SITE OF similar kinds of cross-cultural dialogue among young people in the United States. Rap and hip-hop have acquired a populist appeal far beyond the New York subculture that originally spawned and nourished them in the 1970s and beyond the African-American community in which they continue to occupy a central position in the 1990s. Since at least the mid 1980s, the majority of rap's audience has been non-black. Popularized through film, radio, advertising, selected exposure on rock radio, and especially music video, rap began to "crossover" into mainstream rock and pop markets in 1985/86. That crossover was facilitated by the music of white groups like the Beastie Boys, who combined rap with elements of punk and heavy metal, and by black groups like Run DMC, who sampled heavy metal riffs in their rap songs. They helped bridge the taste gap between black rap culture and the white rock market—the heavy metal riffs provided an entree into rap culture for white youth.[33] With the commercial viability of rap secured by the mid 1980s, major record companies moved in on the music, signing up important acts and scooping up independent labels with distribution and licensing deals.[34]

Music video has been a key factor in this crossover process, providing access to black musical culture for whites in much the same way that radio did in the 1950s with r&b. The acceptance of selected rap groups for airplay on rock radio, and on the hitherto almost exclusively white MTV, paved the way for the airing of shows like "Yo MTV Raps," which by the winter of 1988/89 had become the channel's single most popular program.[35] Music video remains the principal medium through which rap (and its full panoply of icons and symbols) reaches white audiences. In the face of continued spatial and cultural separation of black and white communities, not least in the leisure sphere, music video is one of the few widely available points of access to black culture, especially for suburban white youth.

As Stephens argues, rap's "double-voiced" symbols and rich intertextual qualities enable it to function as a discursive and

musical "crossroads" that can be inhabited by different social groups.[36] In its original New York incarnation, rap was always a multicultural movement, embracing large numbers of Puerto Rican youth. The resonance of rap and hip-hop for Latino/a youth has continued in the 1980s and 90s with Mexican-American and Cuban-American rappers like Kid Frost and Mellow Man Ace claiming a space for themselves in hip-hop culture by pointing to the relevance of rap to all subordinated minorities (Stephens, "Double-Voiced"). Young whites, as a result, have been able to find their own meanings in rap's symbols, inflecting and rearticulating them to their own specific needs and experiences. This process has been assisted by the universalist, non-race-specific discourses that run throughout rap and that offer a discursive entry point for white listeners. Through its analytical diagnoses of the ills of urban America, its incisive critiques of the dominant culture, its flamboyant transgression of the codes of the "moral majority" and the censorship lobby, and its bawdy, anti-authority stance, rap has tapped into the disaffected and rebellious sensibilities of significant numbers of white youth. If, as Wheeler suggests, rap is the "CNN that black kids never had,"[37] it now also appears to be functioning as a similar kind of didactic and discursive resource for white youth suffering from unemployment, miseducation, and the effects of deindustrialization. Some commentators have suggested that the music of rappers like Ice Cube gave white youth in areas like Nebraska a rudimentary framework and set of critical knowledges through which to understand the riots in Los Angeles, a framework that was, for the most part, unavailable to their parents.[38] Engagement with rap in this sense can sensitize some white listeners to the social forces and historical conditions that produced rap itself. The results are a substantial section of young whites who feel more in common with rappers like Ice Cube and Ice-T than with the popular cultural icons of white society and who regard such performers as personal hero figures or respected public spokespersons.

There are, of course, a number of significant contradictions inherent in white appropriations of rap. Inevitably, such appropriations are to varying degrees circumscribed by the linguistic codes and discourses of the genre itself, which can block and confound white comprehension. Part of rap's purpose is to address a race-specific community of listeners through elliptical discourses that are couched in a constantly shifting vernacular, a vernacular that can frequently confound non-black listeners. Such discourses are predicated, partly, on the exclusion of white listeners. Nationalist and race-specific discourses in rap, moreover, that dwell on the specificity of black experience or that articulate explicitly anti-racist or pan-African positions can also pose serious challenges to white listeners. The "limit case" to white identification is perhaps best represented by the radical "pro-black" rhetorical strategies of groups, like X-Clan, who portray whites as the inferior descendents of cave dwellers and the bearers of a diseased state of consciousness. Even these groups, however, have large numbers of white fans who have a variety of strategies at their disposal for negotiating these discourses: the potential remains for them to deflect, screen out, or misread such discourses, rather than to

engage with them in critical self-reflection.

There are inherent contradictions, too, in the consumption of rap through mass-mediated channels such as music television and video. Music video inevitably involves a more distanced and mediated relation to black culture than more direct encounters through shared social and leisure space. In watching videos, white viewers consume very particular constructions of black culture and music, constructions that offer them fantasies of an æstheticized urban "street" culture. This is partly an effect of the heavy promotion of "gangster rap" records to young white male consumers; for some of them, the appeal of rap turns around an attraction to images of black masculinity in which black male artists represent models of invulnerable "cool." They see these stereotypical images of self-aggrandizement and being "bad" as positive characteristics to be emulated. Such forms of identification frequently reaffirm mythologized notions of blackness and reproduce black culture in parodied forms.

In these instances, rap becomes yet another example of black music functioning as an idealized, imaginary "other" for white consumers. The danger is that, in this context, watching rap videos can become a kind of "visual tourism" for whites who lack any sustained social relationships with black people. Rap videos offer fictional substitutes for such relationships, substitutes through which the difficulties of sharing leisure space with real live black people can be circumvented.[39]

The emergence of white rap groups, however, has also highlighted clearly the contradictory dynamics of "race" in the field of rap. The musical and discursive positions occupied by these groups have tested out the political and ideological boundaries of "race" within the rap community. Thus, while a performer like Vanilla Ice has come to represent the acceptable and marketable "white face" of rap for the mainstream music industry, he has been the object of intense criticism from the black rap community. Suspected of fabricating his biographical credentials to gain legitimacy within the rap community and scorned for his inaccurate use of rap vernacular, Vanilla Ice has been seen as a latter day white "minstrel" and simply one more example of the long tradition of white artists expropriating black musical forms (Nelson and Gonzales, *Bring the Noise*).

The image of Vanilla Ice has contrasted somewhat with that of other white rap groups like 3rd Bass, Young Black Teenagers, and House of Pain who have managed to gain more respect and acceptance in the rap community by remaining "true to the music" and attempting to addressing issues of racism in their own music.[40] House of Pain, for example, have attempted to construct an Irish-American ethnicity in their music in dialogue with, and partly in answer to, black rap's Afrocentric discourses. Young Black Teenagers have claimed that their name, and their performance of songs with titles like "Proud to be Black," acknowledges their affiliation with black culture and reflects their "black" urban roots.[41] The group recognizes that they are caught in the contradictions between their whiteness and the black culture they embrace, between being seen as cultural expropriators by blacks and "race

traitors" by whites. They have attempted to articulate these contradictions in their music in songs like "Daddy Kalled me Niga cause I liked to Rhyme." As one member of the group pointed out:

> *I get my family saying stuff like, "what's with all the nigger music" and some blacks saying, "who do you think you are stealin' our culture? . . . There's a lot of us living between the racial lines right now and we're into exploring that in our lyrics"*[42]

The members of the group negotiate these contradictions by insisting that blackness is not a "skin color" but an attitude and a "state of mind."[43] While such attempts to "claim" blackness by middle-class white youth might appear somewhat precocious given the stark realities of racism, it is possible to detect in such strategies an attempt to forge subject positions that subvert fixed definitions of "race" and that refuse to reduce "culture" to biological characteristics. Such positions, I want to suggest, are merely one instance of a much wider process that is occurring in popular music, a process in which ethnic and racial categories and their boundaries are being reconstructed from both sides (Wood, "Who Says?"). The music of black hard core and heavy metal bands, such as Living Color, Fishbone, Bad Brains, and Body Count, have reclaimed black musicians' stake in the rock tradition, and the collaborations, on tour and in the studio, between bands like Jane's Addiction and Ice T., KRS1 and REM, Run DMC and Aerosmith, and Public Enemy and Anthrax are mutually redefining rap and rock.

CONCLUSION

IT IS CLEAR FROM THESE CROSS-CULTURAL MOVEMENTS THAT popular music remains an important site at which "racial" and ethnic identities are expressed, negotiated, and rearticulated in new syncretic and hybrid forms. Genres like rap are now at the forefront of emerging forms of polyglot cultural and musical creativity among young people. These processes are occurring, for the most part, beyond the scope of simplistic notions of "inter-cultural communication" or "race relations." Such discourses have been unable to explain adequately the complexities of these new cross-cultural formations, many of which have been developing on—and not simply across—the very borders between ethnicities. Their effects have been concealed under the massive weight of public discourses that have viewed "race relations" as a "problem" of cultural incompatibility and "natural" antagonism between discrete racial and ethnic groups. These cross-cultural identifications and syncretic processes clearly problematize such explanations. They undercut absolutist definitions of "race," "culture," and ethnicity, whether as monolithic, homogeneous entities or as fixed "variables" in interpersonal interactions between individual representatives of ethnic and racial groups.

Such ideas have been articulated across wide areas of public discourse from "liberal" discourses, such as "multiculturalism," through to popular racist ideologies founded on notions of cultural difference. These notions, as Carby has warned, have even found an echo in academic discourses:

We must ask ourselves at what point theories of "difference" as they inform academic practices, are totally compatible with the absolutist frameworks of segregation and ghettoization at work throughout our society (Carby, 178).

Perhaps we need to be more wary of discourses that are preoccupied with "difference," particularly when "difference" begins to assume the dimensions of an absolute social, cultural, and political division. These cross-cultural processes in contemporary popular music suggest that racial and ethnic categories are more malleable and fluid than notions of "difference" sometimes imply. These processes are, perhaps, a useful reminder that "culture" is not a homogeneous, solid, impermeable "block" fixed to particular racial or ethnic groups but a syncretic, heterogeneous process of making and remaking. As Stuart Hall has argued, racial identities are best conceived not as mutually exclusive, discontinuous phenomena, nor as stable attributes that subsist throughout all interactions, but as symbolic resources, constructed, negotiated, and put into play in complex articulations.[44] In the very constructedness and fragility of "race" lies the potential for its borders and boundaries to be destabilized and rearticulated.

I do not want to suggest, however, that cross-cultural movements in popular music offer a general panacea for racism. Close identification with black music by young whites clearly offers no guarantees of generating anti-racist responses. We must always caution against the tendency to "read off" anti-racist subjectivities purely from musical tastes and affiliations. The political potential of these processes will always be limited if they are considered simply in terms of narrow "text/reader" relations. Song lyrics, musical forms, and video images are clearly not enough, on their own, to undermine "common-sense" racism or to rearticulate identities in a non- or anti-racist direction. The potential of such relations will be insignificant if they are not connected to systematic, alternative discourses and formations in other spheres of social and cultural life, including the production, practice, and consumption of popular music itself.

There are important differences, moreover, in the dynamics of these cross-cultural movements in the United States and Britain—differences that clearly also determine their political potential. They are the products of different historical, social, and economic relations between black and white communities. Such differences in, for example, the dynamics of class, or in the degree of de facto cultural, economic, and geographical segregation, may suggest more pessimism about the anti-racist potential of cross-cultural processes in the U.S. than in Britain currently.

Nevertheless, I want to suggest that these processes do provide the potential groundwork and starting-point for anti-racist practices among young people. In the U.S. context, in particular, it seems that this potential has been largely untapped. Perhaps these processes represent a small counterweight to the effects of contemporary racisms that reproduce inequalities in "difference"; perhaps they point to new cultural formations and suggest possibilities for new kinds of political connections.

NOTES

[1] Tony Russell, *Blacks, Whites and Blues* (New York: Stein and Day, 1970); Richard Middleton, *Pop Music and the Blues* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972); Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in Afro-American Music* (London: John Calder, 1987); Michael Bane, *White Boy Singing the Blues: The Black Roots of Rock* (New York: Da Capo, 1992).

[2] E. J. Hobsbawn, *The Jazz Scene* (1959; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989); Ortiz Walton, *Music: Black, White and Blue* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972).

[3] Hobsbawn, *Jazz*; Ian Hoare, "Mighty, Mighty Spade and Whitey: Black Lyrics and Soul's Interaction with White Culture," *The Soul Book*, ed. Ian Hoare (London: Methuen, 1975); Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style* (London: Methuen, 1979); Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1989); Simon Frith, "Playing with Real Feeling—Jazz and Suburbia," *Music for Pleasure* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988)

[4] Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' roll* (London: Constable, 1983).

[5] Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Sam Dennison, *Scandalize my Name: Black Imagery in American Popular Music* (New York: Garland, 1982).

[6] William Barlow, *Looking Up at Down: The Emergence of Blues Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

[7] Neil Leonard, *Jazz and the White Americans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

[8] Evan Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa* (London: Picador, 1987) 73. The popularity of jazz was, of course, closely bound up with the popular cultural explosion in dancing in the 1920s and 30s. The history of white appropriations of black music is intimately connected with the history of dance, and African-American culture has been a prime source of dance styles in popular culture from the Cakewalk and the Turkey Trot to the Jitterbug and the Twist to bodypopping, the Roger Rabbit, and the Cabbage Patch.

[9] Roger Hewitt, "Black Through White: Hoagy Carmichael and the Cultural Reproduction of Racism," *Popular Music 3: Producers and Markets*, ed. Richard Middleton and David Horn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[10] Iain Chambers, "A Strategy for Living: Black Music and White Subcultures," *Resistance Through Rituals*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976) 162.

[11] Steve Chapple and Reebee Garofalo, *Rock 'n' Roll is Here to Pay* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977).

[12] Walton, *Music*. Such practices were particularly visible in the 1940s and 1950s, during the "doo-wop" vocal group era, when major record companies released white "cover versions" of songs written or initially performed by blacks.

[13] Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990).

[14] Roger Wallis and Krister Malm, *Big Sounds from Small Peoples: The Music Industry in Small Countries* (London: Constable, 1984).

[15] Paul Gilroy, "Sounds Authentic: Black music, Ethnicity and the Challenge of a Changing Same," *Black Music Research Journal* 11.2 (1991): 111-136.

[16] See the campaigns of record labels like Island and Virgin to package and market reggae to whites in the 1970s through the construction of reggae as a form of counter-cultural "rock" music, the use of key visual icons such as dreadlocks and ganja, and the use of feature films such as "The Harder They Come" and "Countryman."

[17] Lawrence N. Redd, *Rock is Rhythm and Blues* (Ann Arbor: Michigan State University Press, 1974).

[18] R. Kloosterman and C. Quispel, "Not Just the Same Old Show on My Radio: An Analysis of the Role of Radio in the Diffusion of Black Music

Among Whites in the South of the United States of America, 1920-1960," *Popular Music* 9.2 (1990).

[19] David Riesman, "Listening to Popular Music," *American Quarterly* 2 (1950): 359-71.

[20] Jonathan Kamin, "The White R&B audience and the Music Industry, 1952-1956," *Popular Music and Society* 5.3 (1975): 70-187.

[21] Steve Perry, "Ain't no Mountain High Enough: The Politics of Crossover," *Facing the Music*, ed. Simon Frith (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

[22] Charles Gillett, "The Black Market Roots of Rock," *The Sounds of Social Change* ed. R. Denisoff and R. A. Peterson (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972); John Street, *Rebel Rock: The Politics of Popular Music* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 15.

[23] Bob Brunning, *Blues: The British connection* (Poole: Blandford Press, 1986); Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985). The Beatles openly acknowledged their debt to r&b and early soul, as the Rolling Stones did to Chicago blues. Other notable blues-based rock bands in the 1960s included the Yardbirds, the Animals, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Spencer Davis, and Fleetwood Mac in Britain, and the Paul Butterfield Blues band in the US. White musicians also performed in soul and r&b genres, for example the multi-racial house band for the Stax label (Booker T and the MGs), the Muscle Shoals house band, and "blue-eyed soul" and r&b acts like the Righteous Brothers, the Young Rascals, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, and the Average White Band.

[24] While in the rock tradition, these forms, with significant exceptions, were predominantly white *male* appropriations of black male performance styles, there is a long tradition of distinctly white *female* appropriations of black music, in which black female performers have defined sexuality, femininity, and style for a succession of white female performers, from the "girl groups" of the early 1960s, who modelled themselves on black female vocal groups, to white female vocalists inspired by black r&b and blues singers, such as Janis Joplin in the US and Dusty Springfield, Lulu, Maggie Bell, Elkie Brooks, and more recently, Lisa Stansfield, in Britain.

[25] David Evans, "Blues and Modern Sound, Past, Present and Future," *Folk Music and Modern Sound*, ed.William Ferris and Mary Hart (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1982); David Hatch and Stephen Millward, *From Blues to Rock: An Analytical History of Pop Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

[26] Middleton, *Pop Music*; Steven Smith, "Blues and our Mind-body Problem," *Popular Music* 11.1 (1992): 41-52.

[27] Lars Lilliestam, "Musical Acculturation: Hound Dog from Blues to Swedish rock 'n' roll," *OneTwoThreeFour* 8 (1990): 37-63, 53.

[28] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge, 1979).

[29] Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

[30] David Widgery, *Beating Time* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986).

[31] Dick Hebdige, "Ska Tissue: the rise and fall of Two-tone," *Reggae International*, eds. Peter Simon and Stephen Davis (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

[32] Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); Roger Hewitt, *White Talk Black Talk: Inter-Racial Friendship and Communication Amongst Adolescents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Les Back, "Race, Nation and Identity within an Adolescent Community in South London," Unpublished paper, Department of Politics and Sociology, Birbeck College, London, 1991.

[33] Havelock Nelson and Michael Gonzales, *Bring the Noise* (New York: Harmony Books, 1991).

[34] David Toop, *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip-Hop*. New York: Serpent's Tail, 1991).

[35] Philip B. Harper, "Synesthesia, 'Crossover,' and Blacks in Popular Music," *Social Text* 23 (Fall/Winter 1989).

[36] Gregory Stephens, "Rap Music's Double-Voiced Discourse: A Crossroads for Interracial Communication," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 15.2 (1991): 70-91, 71.

[37] Elizabeth A. Wheeler, "Most of My Heroes Don't Appear on No Stamps: The Dialogics of Rap Music," *Black Music Research Journal* 11.2 (1991): 193-216, 194.

[38] See the comments made by James Bernard, editor of the hip-hop magazine "The Source," in the newsletter "Rock 'n' Roll Confidential" 100.2.

[39] Hazel Carby, "In Body and Spirit: Representing Black Women Musicians," *Black Music Research Journal* 11.2 (1991): 177-192, 178.

[40] Playthell Benjamin, "Two Funky White Boys," *The Village Voice*, 9 January 1990: 34-37; Joe Wood, "Who Says a White Band Can't Play Rap," *The Village Voice Quarterly*, March 1991 (supplement): 10-1.

[41] *Billboard*, 3 November 1990: 26.

[42] *Street Sound*, 1990: 43.

[43] *Newsweek*, 22 October, 1990.

[44] Stuart Hall, "Minimal Selves-Identity," *ICA Documents*, 6 (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1989) 12.